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**The Barriers to Employment for Persons with Intellectual
Disabilities and its Effects in Zambia**

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Abstract

Persons with intellectual disabilities (PWID) are one of the most socially excluded groups in Zambia (Mung'omba, 2008). Negative perceptions towards PWID permeate into the labour market via direct and indirect discrimination, leading to one of the highest rates of unemployment relative to other marginalized populations. The lack of access that PWID have to economic capital restricts their ability to obtain basic physiological needs, quality healthcare services, and inclusive education which further their social exclusion from society. While Zambian legislation outlines the country's commitment to equal opportunity for persons with disabilities (PWD), implementation and enforcement are weak.

In order to gather information on structural systems that facilitate PWIDs' access to employment, applicable literature was reviewed and semi-structured interviews with relevant stakeholders were conducted. This paper is aimed at analyzing the relationship between disability and employment, with a specific focus on employment barriers for PWID in Zambia. The research discusses the various aspects in Zambia that have led to, or perpetuated, the marginalization of PWID. A variety of factors are examined, including, but not limited to, traditional beliefs of ID, conflation of ID and mental illness, geographic immobility, and the supported employment model. Results detail broad classifications for barriers that restrict PWIDs' access to the labour market, including attitudinal, structural, economic, and legal barriers. Concurrently, opportunities for labour market infiltration are found in restaurant and cleaning industries, expatriate employers, grassroots advocacy, streamlined communication across disabled persons organizations (DPOs), and other entry points as outlined in this paper. A general set of recommendations are offered for creating a disability culture that will provide access to employment for all PWID in Zambia in an effort to ensure equitable and equal opportunity for all Zambian citizens.

Acronyms

AAIDD	American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CP	Cerebral Palsy
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DPO	Disabled Persons Organisation
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRM	Human Resource Manager
ID	Intellectual Disability
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IRB	Institutional Review Board
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
PWID	Persons with Intellectual Disabilities
SNDP	Seventh National Development Plan
SE	Supported Employment
SES	Socio-Economic Status
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCRPD	UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UTH	University Teaching Hospital
WHO	World Health Organisation

Introduction

Although legislation is in place to protect the rights of PWID, policies are poorly enforced and do not effectively allow PWID to access employment. The 2010 ratification of the United Nations Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) was a crucial step on behalf of Zambian lawmakers in affirming the rights of PWD. Furthermore, in ratifying the UNCRPD, the Zambian government symbolically acknowledged that the discrimination against, and opportunities denied to, PWD operate as a human rights issue as opposed to a moral one. PWD, like all other persons, are human beings entitled to the innate rights they are provided as citizens of Zambia (UN, 2006). The ratification of the UNCRPD was a necessary, but limited, progressive course of action towards the full inclusion of PWD, as the ideologies that it outlines lack clear mechanisms for enforcement. Similarly, other protective policies lack enforcement and implementation mechanisms which allows for widespread ignorance of said policies that ensuingly translates to direct and indirect discrimination against PWID (Leonard Cheshire Disability and Inclusive Development Centre, 2017). These discriminatory employment and social practices are built upon a foundation of negative perceptions concerning PWID.

Understandings of and perceptions toward intellectual disability (ID) are often rooted in traditional beliefs. These traditional beliefs use phenomena such as witchcraft and cursing to explain the development of IDs (Mung'omba, 2008). Because of the shame that develops in conjunction with ID, many families hide their children with ID in the home, further excluding PWID as they are not visible nor perceived as “normal” members in their communities. This issue is not unique to Zambia as globally, PWD are separated from society and viewed as a subclass of citizens, unworthy of the equal rights awarded to other persons. Stigmatizing attitudes prevent PWID from accessing the educational and healthcare services that remain open for persons without disability.

Education is an institution that allows people to develop communication skills via informal socializing with peers, in addition to acting as the vessel that allows students to gain the necessary skills they need to enter the workforce. Because PWD are largely excluded from the education sector and thus opportunities for economic independence, they live in poverty at

higher rates than their non-disabled counterparts (Carm et al., 2003). Furthermore, because employment is the gateway to independence and empowerment, many PWID are reliant on family members and others for basic needs.

Through this research, it was discovered that intangible negative perceptions toward PWID create and compound tangible barriers that hinder the access that PWID have to the labour market. Misconceptions surrounding disability ostracise PWID socially and economically, as communities prefer to not engage with them.

While several barriers to labour market access for PWID were discovered, opportunities to access the labour market were also found. Improved collaboration and communication within the disability sector will strengthen the ability of DPOs to aid PWID in their access to the labour market. Additionally, the progressive mindsets and economic means of expatriate employers offer an avenue through which PWID can obtain employment, with particular opportunities in restaurant and cleaning industries.

Given the barriers and opportunities discovered for PWID to access the labour market, research implications were concluded with specific recommendations offered for communities, employers, and DPOs.

Literature Review

Intellectual disabilities are characterized by a cognitive delay that limits reasoning, learning, and problem-solving skills, which usually manifests in early childhood and has long-term effects on development (AAIDD, 2018). These developmental disorders are caused by an irregularity of the nervous system that can be the result of genetic anomalies, maternal health status during pregnancy, or abnormal birth processes. After birth, IDs can develop due to infections, poor

nutrition, or trauma (Jamison, 2006). Although the causes of many IDs are known, Zambian community members are often unaware of the etiology of IDs. Families tend to lack the understanding of children's cognitive and behavioral abnormalities and because of this, PWID are excluded and left with little to no resources and support.

The Zambian Constitution defines disability as, “a permanent physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment that alone, or in a combination with social or environmental barriers, hinders the ability of a person to fully or effectively participate in society on an equal basis with others” (Constitution of Zambia, 2016). This progressive definition uses the social model in describing disability's relationship to society's organizational structures and culture that create and exacerbate existing impairment-based barriers. Disability transcends medical conditions and is often exacerbated by external, environmental factors.

Generally, the aforementioned definition of disability should be utilized when determining prevalence rates of disability globally and in Zambia. However, it is widely accepted among disability scholars that the Zambian prevalence rates of disability are outdated and underestimates, particularly when considering ID due to antiquated and stigmatising language. The 2000 census reported that 2.7% of the population in Zambia has a disability (Republic of Zambia, 2015). Conversely, the 2010 census reported a national disability prevalence rate of 2%, with 1.1% of that 2% having an ID (CSO, 2010). Both the 2% and 2.7% figures are staggering underestimates when compared to the World Health Organisation's (WHO) prevalence rate of 15% of the global population living with some type of disability (WHO, 2011). The disparities between Zambian and global statistics are representative of poor methodological practices for obtaining data in Zambia, but also the difficulties in identifying the PWID population due to cultural stigma that discourages people from disclosing their disability.

In Zambia, traditional beliefs surrounding the causes of disability foster negative perceptions of PWD. The myth of “divine retribution or witchcraft” as a cause of disability leads to the ostracisation of PWID as familial shame pushes PWID out of everyday view (Mckenzie et al., 2013). This lack of exposure to PWID within society further compounds the stigma and discrimination against PWID.

In terms of employment, PWD are “more likely to be unemployed and generally earn less even when employed” (WHO, 2011). This income disparity is exacerbated by the fact that employment and income outcomes worsen with the severity of the disability. This causes PWID to face difficulties accessing basic physiological needs, health care, education services, and other opportunities that persons without disabilities have access to.

The positive correlation between poverty and disability is substantial, and further research needs to be done to investigate the specificities leading to the correlation. Poverty may increase the chance of a person with a pre-existing health condition becoming disabled, in addition to exacerbating the severity of an individual’s disability (WHO, 2011). Perceptions also go to alienate PWD making them more likely to fall below the poverty line (Watermeyer, 2006). The lack of resources and support for PWD is a human rights issue, as PWD continuously experience larger social and economic inequalities in comparison to persons without disabilities.

Employment Legislation

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) was adopted by the UN General Assembly in December of 2006 and was ratified by Zambia in 2010. Zambia’s attendance and Article 27 of UNCRPD “recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others; this includes the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive, and accessible to persons with disabilities” (UN, 2006). While the ratification of the UNCRPD is a necessary stepping stone in the journey to achieve full inclusion for PWID, it is not properly implemented. Zambia provides protections for PWD via legislation such as the National Social Protection Policy, National Gender Policy, National Youth Policy, and Gender and Equality Bill, but citizens’ awareness of said policies is minimal and the legislation fails to be properly implemented. PWD continue to function as subclass citizens without effective legislative backing to support a movement towards independence.

The Companies Act of 2017 provides that “228. (1) *The following persons are **not eligible** for appointment or competent to act as signee for a holder of debenture issued by a company: (b) a*

person -- (i) under any legal disability” (Republic of Zambia, 2017). The recency of this Act is alarming given its blatant discrimination against PWD. In passing the Act, Zambia enshrines its perspective of PWD as lesser than and incompetent to perform certain business activities that persons without disabilities are given the right to perform. The implications of this Act likely perpetuate the negative perceptions of PWD, thus continuing to restrict labour market access for PWID. Additionally, the 2015 Employment Act fails to make any mention of disability, thus leaving the rights that PWD have in employment open to interpretation. Both the Companies Act and the Employment Act, along with others that hinder PWD, must be amended to communicate and validate the rights that PWD have to equal and equitable access to life’s activities.

The Income Tax Act, however, provides a potential opportunity for PWID to access the labour market, as employers are incentivized to hire PWID because of the tax rebate for doing so. Section 43d. (1) of the Income Tax Act states in part: *“43d. (1) A deduction shall be allowed in ascertaining the gains or profits of a business in respect of each person with disability who has been employed full-time by such business for the whole or substantial part of the charge year for which the deduction is claimed. (2) The amount of the deduction referred to in subsection (1) shall be five hundred thousand kwacha. Tax credit to an individual who is a person with a disability for any charge year is eighteen thousand kwacha.”* The employer and employee incentives within this Act should theoretically increase labour market access for PWID. However, the effectiveness of the Act is weak because not only are employers unaware of this tax rebate, but the tax rebate is minimal and implementation mechanisms remain unclear.

By and large, Zambia’s economic development is guided by the country’s national development plan and their 2017-2021 strategy clearly lays out the necessity for employment access for PWD. The Seventh National Development Plan (SNDP) aims to make strides to fulfill the “Vision 2030” goal in which “...the Zambian people live in a strong and dynamic, middle income industrial nation that provides opportunities for improving the wellbeing of all” (SNDP, 2017). This goal acknowledges the overall high unemployment rates in Zambia and consequently requires increased economic security in which all persons are included in the labour market. In fact, this notion is outlined in the first strategic objective in which the need to “diversify and make economic growth inclusive” is emphasized (SNDP, 2017). It is clear that, for the most

part, on paper Zambia is committed to the economic and thereby social inclusion of PWD. However, existing negative perceptions of PWD work to prevent these progressive ideologies from becoming realities.

Perceptions of Intellectual Disabilities

ID and Mental Health

The Zambian understanding of ID is misguided as people improperly conflate ID and mental health. This misunderstanding is exacerbated by the perceived similarities in the manifestation of mental illness and ID. Some behaviors of PWID may be similar to that of people with mental illnesses (e.g talking to oneself, pacing, etc.), which serve to validate community members' perceptions of mental illness as the same as ID. According to the World Health Organization, mental illness refers to a broad range of mental health conditions in which one's mood, thinking, and behavior is affected (WHO, 2018). Symptoms associated with a mental illness can often be treated with medications, whereas an intellectual disability is characterized by a cognitive delay that limits reasoning, learning, and problem-solving skills (AAIDD, 2018). Depending on the individualised nature of one's intellectual disability, a PWID may have health concerns such as seizures and heart conditions that can be treated with medications. However, the neurocognitive intellectual impairment itself cannot be treated with medications like a mental illness can.

The conflation of mental illness and intellectual disability further compounds the social exclusion of PWID because both PWID and persons with mental illness are marginalised populations. Confusion and conflation surrounding the manifestation of conditions, in addition to the traditional beliefs about the causes of ID and mental illness, further marginalise PWID.

Traditional Beliefs

Traditional beliefs attributing phenomena such as witchcraft or curses as causes for ID serve as a barrier to the full inclusion of PWID in the workforce. Generally, there is a lack of knowledge among Zambian citizens of the causes of ID. Cerebral palsy (CP), for instance, is a developed disability that occurs as a result of oxygen deprivation at birth or soon after birth (Mayo Clinic, 2016). However, many parents and community members are unaware of the actual cause of CP

and thus seek answers and understanding from traditional healers (Mung'omba, 2008). Many of the traditional beliefs surrounding the etiology of ID are rooted in the idea that a child with ID is cursed and/or is a curse to their family. Because of this, many community members also fear that the supposed curse is contagious and thus choose to not associate with PWID (Mung'omba, 2008).

Furthermore, traditional healers offer “treatment” for the ID that can often exacerbate the initial condition. This is worsened by the fact that the causes of some IDs are unknown, so an increasing number of parents and caretakers turn to these traditional “treatments”, hoping to “cure” the individual and the family of the “curse” associated with ID. Not only can these traditional treatments be detrimental for the health of the PWID, but when they prove to be ineffective, the social exclusion of the PWID is intensified. Blatant social exclusion exacerbated by traditional beliefs of the etiology of ID severely limit the ability of PWID to enter the workforce.

Effects of Perceptions

Public Health

The inferior role of PWD in Zambia creates and compounds public health issues. Employment allows individuals to access services that are necessary for survival. Accumulation of economic capital creates opportunities for access to food, water, shelter, and other basic physiological needs. The high unemployment of PWID puts them at risk for health issues as they are unable to utilize economic capital to gain access to necessities. While ID on its own presents itself as a risk factor for health complications, genetics are not the only explanation for the lower life expectancies of persons with profound ID (Patja, 2000). The surrounding environment and marginalisation of PWID at the community level make it difficult for them to obtain full access to the healthcare system. While healthcare in Zambia is, in theory, free to all persons, there are no provisions made for PWD that facilitate their access to these services. Consequently, if one does not have the economic capital to pay for support persons and/or services, physical wellness will be at risk. Furthermore, PWID and their families are responsible for paying for any

necessary medications. Without economic capital, obtaining medications can be difficult and/or impossible.

The ensuing financial instability of PWID contributes to decreased mental wellness for the PWID and their families. The excessive stress, fear, and unhappiness associated with financial instability exacerbate the already immense pressure on families to combat external shaming and stigma while caring for a PWID. Obtaining and sustaining employment is important for instilling a sense of pride in oneself and fostering a positive self-image, but PWID and their families are often denied these opportunities.

Education

Zambia has attempted to improve the access that its citizens have to adequate education, but negative perceptions and lack of accommodations makes this struggle exponentially larger for PWD. This is also exacerbated by the fact that many PWD are unaffected by government funding directed toward education programmes, given that the remote locations of PWD in rural areas restrict their geographical access to schools. A 2006 SINTEF report found that 24% of PWD in Zambia had never attended school, compared to only 9% of their non-disabled peers (SINTEF, 2006). This startling statistic exemplifies the immense disparities in educational opportunities and access for PWD when compared to persons without disabilities.

Inclusive education for PWD is a highly debated topic as many people do not truly understand what inclusion entails. Many feel that including children with and without disabilities in the same classroom would be ineffective because children with disabilities would not be able to learn as quickly or as thoroughly. In fact, a study found that 78% of teachers in Zambia believed that inclusive education was not effective (Ndhlovu, 2008). These attitudes are representative of a general apprehension to inclusive education for PWD. There is great importance in not only physically including PWD in the classroom, but academically engaging them as well. In this sense, children with physical disabilities would need physical accommodations (e.g. ramp, accessible restrooms, etc.) in addition to individualised attention to ensure they grasp academic concepts. Although children with ID may not require as many physical accommodations, they

would likewise need an increased level of individualised attention that, due to many attitudinal barriers, they are not given.

Education works as a negative feedback loop with poverty; the less education one receives, the more likely they are to live in poverty. Not only does primary education provide an individual with the elementary skills necessary to function in the professional world, it also provides an environment to develop human capital. Education is the social method in which people learn how to reduce poverty for their immediate family as well as practical skills that increase national productivity (Carm et. al, 2003). This is extremely costly for PWD because, as aforementioned, they are more likely to struggle to access proper education. Preconceived notions about disability result in a lack of access to education for PWD that consequently drives them deeper into poverty.

Zambian Labour Market

The total population in Zambia is approximately 17.2 million, of which 6 million are members of the labour force (Trading Economics, 2017). While the Zambian labour force received an average of 300,000 new entrants each year between the years 2004-2014, this increase did not translate to an equal rise in formal sector employment (Danish Trade Union, 2014). In comparison to the labour force, the formal sector of employment has lagged behind in its growth, with an average increase of only 50,000 formal sector jobs between 2004 and 2014. Because the formal sector grows too slowly to absorb the 300,000 new entrants to the labour market each year, many of those new entrants end up in precarious and informal jobs (Danish Trade Union, 2014).

The informal sector accounts for approximately 89% of the employed population in Zambia, thus vastly exceeding the number of employed persons in the formal sector (Danish Trade Union, 2014). However, the informal sector is not necessarily a desired place of employment, as workers in the informal sector often lack the benefits and job stability found in the formal sector, leaving them vulnerable to poor working conditions (Danish Trade Union, 2014).

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) in Zambia found that the unemployment rate for persons without disabilities hovers around 10%, compared to 13% for PWD (CSO, 2010). The national unemployment rate is approximately 8%, with a higher percentage expected for PWD (Trading Economics, 2017). These statistics are likely inaccurate, particularly regarding the precision of the statistics for PWD. In finding these results, data collectors are much more likely to quantify PWD who are visible and active participants in the community. The PWD who remain confined and isolated in their homes are likely not considered when calculating the unemployment rate.

Methods

In order to gather information on structural systems that facilitate PWIDs' access to employment, applicable literature was reviewed and semi-structured interviews with relevant stakeholders were conducted. This research used qualitative methods to collect and analyze data. Qualitative methods were chosen based on their effectiveness in obtaining cultural specific information relevant to the research topic. Qualitative methods were used to evaluate the current status of PWID, their access to employment, and the relationship of these variables to the beliefs, values, and behaviors of Zambian citizens.

This research was performed in collaboration with the Southern African Institute for Policy and Research (SAIPAR) and the Sani Foundation, with whom contacts at relevant organizations were obtained. Journal articles, reports, and government policies that detailed the state of employment in relation to PWID in Zambia were reviewed and analyzed. We interviewed 12 stakeholders, including employers like The Deli, Pick n Pay Stores, and The Orange Tree as well as non-governmental organizations such as the Special Hope Network and the Zambian National Federation of the Blind (ZANFOB). These stakeholders were contacted via phone or email using contact information available online or by reference of the Sani Foundation and SAIPAR. Most of these interviews were conducted in person and notes were taken on a laptop. When permission was given, a cell phone was used to audio record the interview for reference. All interviews were semi-structured in nature, due to the fact that representatives of organizations and companies

were asked a list of questions, however the questions were open ended and the conversations were guided by the responses from the interviewees.

As a means to protect the identities of those interviewed, specific names and organisations will not be used in this paper. Results garnered from interviews are henceforth organised and discussed by topic, in order to examine the barriers and opportunities for PWID to access employment. This qualitative field research was conducted during the months of June and July of 2018 in Lusaka, Zambia.

Results

Barriers

It was discovered that intangible beliefs and values towards PWID lead to institutionalized barriers, and those barriers validate and compound the already-existing negative perceptions of PWID.

Attitudinal Barriers

Traditional Beliefs

Traditional beliefs attributing phenomena such as witchcraft or curses as causes for ID serve as a barrier to the full inclusion of PWID in the workforce. Like all belief systems, traditional beliefs in Zambia are comprised of constantly changing attitudes and practices. All beliefs are somewhat difficult to evaluate in present time and cannot be generalized with absolute certainty. With all of this being said, most of the widely recognized attitudes concerning PWID are resoundingly negative. Generally, there is a lack of knowledge among Zambian citizens of the causes of ID. Many of the traditional beliefs surrounding the etiology of ID are rooted in the idea that a child with ID is cursed or is a curse to their family. This presents itself as a seemingly insurmountable barrier for the inclusion of PWID in the workforce, as they are ostracised by society entirely.

In an even more tangible sense, traditional beliefs concerning PWID leave them vulnerable to sexual assault. Not only are PWID perceived as a subclass group of citizens, but they are also

assumed to be sexually inactive (Mckenzie et. al, 2013). In certain cases, this presumption and associated myths surrounding the cures for sexually transmitted diseases lead to sexual assault against PWID. For example, according to the “virgin cleansing myth”, if an HIV-infected person engages in sexual intercourse with a virgin, it will cure that person of HIV. In a country where the HIV prevalence rate is 12.4% (UNAIDS, 2017) and PWID are assumed to be virgins, Zambian PWID are especially vulnerable to sexual assault. In an interview with a mother of children who have ID, she explained that her greatest fear for her children is their risk of being sexually assaulted. She cited stories of young children with ID who had been sexually assaulted by relatives and community members attempting to cure themselves of HIV. These attitudinal perceptions concerning PWID not only have physical health effects, but they also cause a sense of fear for PWID in the community. This fear is a hindrance to their ability to interact in society and pursue positions of employment. The reality of the danger that is present, as a cause of attitudes towards PWID, impedes the inclusion of PWID in the workforce.

Social Exclusion

Without social acceptance and inclusion into society, PWID will not be able to obtain full access to and participation in the workforce. Social inclusion and workforce participation for PWID function as a positive feedback loop: higher levels of social inclusion foster an open-minded attitude to hiring, creating more job opportunities for PWID, which further integrates PWID into society and promotes the full social inclusion of PWID. Conversely, the opposite is true: minimal social inclusion lends itself to discriminatory hiring practices that limit access to employment, thus limiting avenues through which PWID can gain social inclusion and economic independence.

So long as the stigma surrounding disability exists, PWID will not obtain full access to the labour market. As the Managing Director of a DPO explained, once an individual is declared to be a PWID, that individual is “no longer worth anything”. The cultural norms that equate disability with deficiency permeate the social settings for all PWD. When the Human Resource Manager (HRM) of a large company in Lusaka was asked about the social relations of her employees with disabilities, she explained that the employees with and without disabilities work together in harmony. To her knowledge, there had been no instance of social exclusion or

discrimination against the employees with disabilities. However, she explained that customers do not always respond well upon seeing a PWD working. A customer may become frustrated when speaking to a deaf person, for example, and proceed to yell at that employee. Employers need to keep customers happy in order for their businesses to prosper, and so the idea of customers becoming angry or unpleasant upon seeing an employee with a disability may deter employers from hiring PWD. While it appeared that at this particular branch of the company, the employees with disabilities are socially included into the larger cohort of employees, the employees with disabilities are often ostracised and viewed as less than from the point of view of some customers. Full social inclusion has thus not been achieved at this particular branch of the company. For PWD, the social acceptance that they yearn for and deserve has been denied to them because of societal stigma. The ensuing ostracisation prevents PWD from infiltrating the labour market and is thus one of the largest barriers to PWIDs' access to employment in Zambia.

Education

The catalyst for employment is education. In Zambia, education systems fail to provide the resources that are necessary to support students with disabilities including extra time, individualised attention, and alternative teaching methods. Many towns and villages lack special needs schools. With nowhere to go and shame surrounding disability, families often force their child to remain home. Even at special needs schools and schools that offer services for students with disabilities, these services are insufficient. Most teachers lack training on how to cater their teaching to the best methods for students with disabilities. Students with ID are often overlooked and deemed incapable of proper learning. This foundation of discrimination against PWID translates into lower graduation rates which further limit PWIDs' entry into the workforce as they are perceived as weaker job applicants.

As they are often deemed incapable of learning, students with ID are denied the opportunity to develop their human capital. For students without disabilities, however, education is the mechanism that allows them to develop the human capital that ensuingly allows them to infiltrate the labour market. With unequal access and opportunities for PWID to obtain a proper education, it severely limits their ability to enter the workforce.

Exclusive education systems inhibit students without disabilities from interacting with students who have disabilities, preventing those students from exposure to different learning styles and the capabilities of students with disabilities. As students without disabilities develop their communication and social skills through interactions with their classmates, students with disabilities are denied the opportunity to do so as they remain largely excluded from educational systems.

Thus, the current state of education in Zambia is a barrier to employment, but the future of education provides an opportunity for employment of PWID. Future education systems need to be fully inclusive with regards to accommodation and social integration of students with disabilities. Doing so will mitigate the widespread stigma surrounding disability, as students of all needs and abilities interact with one another. Inclusive education means that all students have the opportunity to develop the social and human capital that are necessary for obtaining and sustaining employment.

Conflation of ID and Mental Illness

Upon examining the relationship between social discrimination and employment access for PWID, it was reiterated that there is extreme conflation between mental health and ID in Zambia. Community members and employers often worry that when PWID enter the workforce, they pose a threat to other members of the community. Employers cite threats of violent outbursts that are associated with mental health illnesses as opposed to ID for their hesitation to hire PWID.

According to the WHO, mental illness refers to a broad range of mental health conditions in which one's mood, thinking, and behavior is affected (WHO, 2018). Symptoms associated with a mental illness can often be treated with medications, whereas an ID is characterized by a cognitive delay that limits reasoning, learning, and problem-solving skills (AAIDD, 2018). Depending on the individualised nature of one's ID, a PWID may have health concerns such as seizures and heart conditions that can be treated with medications. However, the neurocognitive intellectual impairment itself cannot be treated with medications like a mental illness can.

As aforementioned, in Zambia, community members lack understanding of the difference between mental illness and IDs as they tend to improperly conflate the two. This misunderstanding affects the perceived employability of PWID from the perspective of community members. The results garnered suggest that social stigma and inaccurate expected behaviors of PWID impede them from accessing the labour market, largely due to the conflation of PWID and persons with mental illnesses.

Perceived Homogeneity of PWD

Through semi-formal interviews with various civil society organizations, it was discovered that a common struggle for DPOs in their advocacy for PWD is the perception of PWD as a homogenous group. In terms of employment, classifying all PWD as having the same supposed sub-average productivity levels prevents the advancement of PWD in the workforce. Through an interview with the Vice President of a DPO, it was discovered that people often assume that if one has a physical disability, they also have an intellectual disability. This assumption limits the ability of PWD to enter the workforce as employers instantly doubt both the physical and cognitive capabilities of PWD.

Disability policy is complicated by the heterogeneous population it serves (Mont, 2004). The abilities and inabilities of a person with a physical disability will differ significantly from those of a person with an ID. Even among PWID, the capabilities and challenges associated with ID vary uniquely with each person. The perception of homogeneity of PWD, however, translates into policies that target PWD as a whole and rejects the individualised needs of PWD. The government must recognize the individualised nature of impairment and thus tailor policies to allow for the flexibility of accommodations to PWD. Blanket statements and far-reaching policies that supposedly help PWD often do more harm than good as the specific needs of the individuals are ignored. One individual's disability creates challenges and opportunities that are entirely unique to that person and differ significantly from the needs of a different individual.

Additionally, there is a tendency to perceive the needs of PWD as similar to other marginalised groups. This perception is misguided. Government policies need to separate PWD from other vulnerable groups in light of the additional and individualised challenges they face.

Lack of Collective Action Among DPOs

A disability movement in Zambia began with advocacy by blind persons, followed by a movement amongst persons with physical disabilities. The movement for equal rights of PWID is still developing, and greater cohesion across DPOs is necessary. Acknowledging ID as a disability and not a mental illness is a necessary precursor to the success of DPOs advocating for PWID.

Additionally, PWID themselves need to be included in the communication and coordination across and within DPOs. DPOs need to incorporate PWID and ensure that their voices are heard, as opposed to DPOs taking initiative to advocate for PWD without including the necessary perspectives from PWD.

Confusion Surrounding Supported Employment

In recent years, the supported employment (SE) model has risen to prominence in Zambia, thanks to the work of NGOs such as the Sani Foundation that attempt to train and place PWD into employment. SE programs are a tool through which PWD can be directly integrated into the labour market. SE involves ongoing support services via a job coach who helps PWD learn and perform their job. Job coaches are a key component of SE programs as they provide individualized assistance to enable PWD to progress at their own, appropriate, pace (Mont, 2004). Job coaches are the link between employee and employer, often facilitating accommodations and communication between the two and ensuring that both parties function happily and successfully.

However, through interviews with key stakeholders, it was discovered that there is vast confusion surrounding SE programs, specifically the job coaching aspect of SE. Even for an employer who is interested in hiring PWID, she expressed concern and confusion about the idea of a job coach. Her immediate perception was that a job coach would be an added cost for the

company via wages and training costs. Her perception was misguided as employers do not need to pay wages to job coaches.

After explanation of the functionality of SE programs, the aforementioned employer accepted SE as an effective model to place PWID in employment without detrimental effects to the company. Thus, SE models are an opportunity through which PWID can enter the labour market, but the current employer confusion surrounding SE presents a barrier to labour market access for PWID.

Structural Barriers

Geographic Immobility

Even when employment is obtained, geographic immobility acts as a barrier to sustained employment for PWID. The main method of public transportation in Zambia is via minibus, but minibuses are frequently overcrowded and inaccessible for PWD. In an interview, a stakeholder described her personal struggle as a blind woman using public transit who needs someone to help her get off at the right minibus stop and cross the road. A lack of rules and regulations for the use of shared spaces means that neither the minibus driver, conductor, nor passengers are obligated to assist PWD. Coupled with negative attitudes and stigma surrounding disability, the already existing geographical issues are compounded. The ensuing inability to use public transit restricts the stakeholder geographically and isolates her emotionally as she is forced to resort to other methods of transportation that are accessible for her individualised needs. This dependence on other people and other methods of transportation further prevents PWD from obtaining economic independence via employment. An inaccessible societal infrastructure that caters only to the entirely able-bodied persons prevents PWD from reaching their full potential and obtaining the full inclusion that all persons deserve.

Geographic mobility is a multi-faceted barrier to sustained employment for PWID. Given the inaccessibility of public transit, PWID may have to rely on other forms of transportation in order to arrive at their place of employment. Taxis can transport individuals directly to their place of work, but with this comes the high costs of private transportation. There is the added concern of using a new taxi driver who may take advantage of a PWID fiscally and/or sexually. Even if an

individual has a trusted taxi driver to resort to, the individual is dependent on that driver's availability. It was discovered via interview with a parent of adult children with ID that parents of a PWID often cannot guarantee that their child can arrive to work safely unless they drive their child to work themselves. However, many families are limited in their resources of a car and available time, both of which are necessary for transport.

The times during which it may be safe and/or feasible for a PWID to travel to and from work are limited. Because of this, PWID are often restricted to the shift times they are able to work, which provides a barrier to employers via limited flexibility. An interview with an employer of PWID revealed that her company employs two drivers for the purpose of picking up and/or dropping off her employee with ID if the employee cannot manage on her own. Without a company car, the employer expressed her concerns of transport for her employee with ID and the related shift times that the employee would be able to work. While this specific employer had a company car to facilitate transport, many businesses either do not have the funds or are unwilling to spend money on private transportation for employees. Without the assurance that an employee will arrive to work on time, employers may be less likely to hire PWID.

The decreased reliability of transport associated with geographic immobility for PWID leaves employers and their businesses vulnerable. Employers value certainty in knowing that all scheduled employees will arrive to work on time and if at all. Because transportation is often inaccessible for PWID, employers may be apprehensive to hire PWID because employers want to know that they can rely on their employees to come to work. Thus, even after successful obtainment of employment, geographic immobility acts as a barrier to the sustained employment of PWID.

Economic Barriers

Perceived Undue Burden of Employing PWID

An additional barrier to employment access for PWID is the perception of the additional costs to the employer of employing PWID. Through semi-formal stakeholder interviews with various employers in the Lusaka region, it was discovered that employers perceive an undue burden in the hiring, training, and retention of an employee with ID. In one notable case, a specific branch

of a large company preferred to hire people with physical disabilities over those with ID because of the relatively shorter training times and thus comparatively lower costs incurred. The HRM for that branch stated that new hires without disabilities required two weeks of training, whereas new hires with physical disabilities required two months of training. The HRM went on to explain that hiring a PWID would lend itself to a training time that exceeds two months, which would be detrimental to the fiscal livelihood of the company.

Persons with physical disabilities often require tangible accommodations to facilitate their progress and success in the workplace. Conversely, PWID often require intangible accommodations such as patience and flexible attitudes on behalf of management and staff. However, employers perceive an immense burden in having to tailor accommodations to each individual employee's specific needs. Employers are often unwilling to bear the perceived costs of accommodations that make PWD equally productive to their fellow co-workers. However, these perceived costs often do not include monetary costs, rather, the costs of extra time dedicated to aiding the progress of an employee and the cost of a flexible attitude that, in actuality, is to the benefit of all employees.

Success of PWID in employment is often dependent on the workplace environment's inclusive or exclusive setting. Flexible attitudes allow PWID to learn the skills they need in their place of employment at the pace that is most suitable to their needs. Accommodations for PWID can be as simple as developing a flexible attitude and a willingness to be patient that creates an inclusive workplace and encourages the PWID to reach their highest potential. Doing so not only accommodates the employees with disabilities, but the employees without disabilities as well, as all employees are accepted and recognized for their unique skills and contributions to the workplace.

If an employer simply hires a PWID but fails to provide the accommodations that employee needs to succeed, the employee will likely become frustrated and unable to perform. Employers must be patient with their employees, acknowledging that all people undoubtedly vary in their strengths and weaknesses.

Discrimination Against PWID in Employment

The Constitution of the Republic of Zambia defines discrimination as “directly or indirectly treating a person differently on the basis of that person’s birth, race, sex, origin, colour, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language, tribe, pregnancy, health, or marital, ethnic, social or economic status” (Republic of Zambia, 2016). Through interviews with key stakeholders in the disability sector, it was discovered that both direct and indirect discrimination against PWD occur in the labour market.

The intangible stigma surrounding disability manifests itself through tangible barriers for PWIDs’ access to employment. In a country where unemployment is relatively high at 8% (Trading Economics, 2017), employers do not want to give jobs to PWD when there is a large population of “normal” people who remain unemployed. Employers use high unemployment as an excuse to discriminate against PWD in their refusal to hire them.

Employers also cite lower productivity levels as a reason for choosing not to hire PWID. This, inherently, is discrimination against PWD as employers deny PWD the opportunity to exhibit their capabilities and be successful in employment. During an interview at a large company in Lusaka, the HRM for that branch described how their company is limited to employing five PWD at a given time. This was discovered to be indirect discrimination against PWID and all PWD as the company actively limits its number of employees with disabilities. To compound this discrimination against PWD, the company additionally restricts itself based on an individual’s type of disability. For example, when hiring PWD, the company prefers to hire persons with blindness or deafness as opposed to PWID. The company perceives PWID as incapable of becoming successful employees, whereas persons with blindness and deafness can be more easily trained to adapt, but at the necessary cost of an additional employee to support them.

When prompted about the topic of employment discrimination of PWD, the Vice President of a Lusaka-based NGO that advocates for PWID said that she has “personally never seen a person with an intellectual disability working in Zambia.” She explained her awareness of organisations such as the Sani Foundation that place PWID into employment but explained that said

organizations are not the norm. She argued that improvement and progressive change toward employment access for PWID will only arise if more of the large businesses hire PWID.

Furthermore, it was discovered that discrimination can be subjective. What one individual believes to be discrimination could be another person's perception of an opportunity and a way in which to support the individual needs of that person. PWID are often employed and confined to jobs that involve simple and repetitive tasks, such as cleaning. Some view this restriction of employment for PWID in a limited number of industries as discrimination. Conversely, others perceive it as a means for integrating PWID into the workforce through tasks that utilize their skills. Nevertheless, weak enforcement of protective labour legislation leaves PWD vulnerable to the prejudices of employers. Future policies and goals must clarify employment standards for employment of PWD and rid employers of the ability to reject an applicant on the basis of disability.

Legal Barriers

Contradicting Policies and Lack of Awareness and Enforcement

Currently, protective legislation for PWD exists in Zambia. However, it was discovered that said legislation presents two main barriers to PWID and their access to the labour market: 1) policies contradict one another, resulting in confusion surrounding which piece of legislation is to supersede the other and 2) lack of enforcement and awareness of legislation prevent proper implementation and allow for policy violations to go unnoticed.

Section 35 of The Persons with Disabilities Act of 2012 reads: “35. (3) *The Minister shall...issue regulations and take measures to ensure the following: (g) employing persons with disabilities in the public sector*” (Republic of Zambia, 2012). Section 35 thus acknowledges the inequities that PWD face in employment and, in an attempt to mitigate such inequities, strives to employ PWD in the public sector. However, the Companies Act of 2017 contradicts Section 35 of The Persons

with Disabilities Act of 2012 when it reads: “228. (1) *The following persons are **not eligible** for appointment or competent to act as signee for a holder of debenture issued by a company: (b) a person -- (i) under any legal **disability***” (Republic of Zambia, 2017). Section 228 thus restricts the rights that PWD in the workforce as they are deemed ineligible for certain positions within a company. Such a blanket and exclusive legislative statement goes against the attempt at inclusion found within The Persons with Disabilities Act of 2012. It becomes unclear as to which Act takes priority over the other.

It is important to note that even within protective legislation for PWD, there are exceptions that allow for the removal of rights for PWD in certain circumstances. Section 7 of The Persons with Disabilities Act of 2012 reads: “7. **Except** where a person with disability is required to be in a specialized institution due to the nature of the disability, a person with disability shall not be deprived of the right to choose their place of residence, to live with that person’s family or the right to participate in social, political, economic, creative or recreational activities” (Republic of Zambia, 2012). Thus, the Act creates a loophole through which, in the case of severe disability, PWD forgo their human rights. The confusion and exceptions surrounding supposed protective legislation do not, in practice, substantially protect PWD.

A lack of enforcement and awareness of protective legislation on behalf of both employees and employers presents a barrier to labour market access for PWID. Legislative acts often lack clear enforcement mechanisms that should be written into the Acts themselves. Additionally, many employees and employers are unaware of the labour legislation that exists. This, in turn, means that when policy violations occur, they are often unrecognized due to ignorance.

Opportunities

Collaboration Between DPOs

In order for the national disability movement to progress, it is imperative that DPOs communicate and develop relationships with one another, acknowledging their common goals for PWD. It was discovered via interview with an employment agency in Lusaka that DPOs need to mobilize their advocacy for PWD, beginning with the various stakeholders within the

disability sector. Doing so will strengthen the voice of DPOs and legitimize their attempts to obtain full social inclusion and economic independence for PWD. A common and visible agenda for a disability movement will allow external companies to easily follow and aid in the movement.

A common challenge for DPOs is obtaining the funding and resources that are necessary for a movement. However, opportunities exist if DPOs collaborate, as they would be more likely to obtain funding from the government and external donors. If the DPOs work alongside one another, the result will be greater than the sum of its parts. There is confusion within civil society organizations regarding the DPOs who are actually effective in the work that they conduct. Increased organization and communication can mitigate this confusion and organize the disability sector to best advocate for PWD.

Grassroots Advocacy

Grassroots advocacy offers opportunities for community exposure to, and ensuing acceptance of, PWID. It is possible to infiltrate and change attitudes regarding disability on a community level via respected community leaders advocating for the inclusion of PWID. For example, church leaders could preach the inclusion that all people, regardless of disability, deserve. They could also involve persons with different disabilities in the routine activities of the church, like greeting newcomers, reading Bible verses aloud, and collecting the offering. In this way, PWID can be seen as normal members of the community and dispel the familial shame that is currently associated with IDs.

Although in theory this is a great opportunity for PWID to be further included at the community level, grassroots advocacy is a complex point of entry. This is because often times, church leaders are also the ones emphasizing many of the negative traditional beliefs surrounding the cause of IDs. In order for grassroots advocacy to be the most effective, DPOs need to pursue a targeted approach in finding church and other community leaders who already believe that PWID are an asset to society. In this way, PWID can be steadily involved in important social environments, like the church, and others will follow suit.

Community leaders also exist as an opportunity to clarify the distinction between ID and mental health. If respected community leaders advocate for full inclusion of PWID, perceptions of ID may start to change. Exposing communities to PWID allows community members to interact with and witness the capabilities of PWID. It is necessary to target the reservoirs of social capital and change perceptions of PWID there so that there can be progress towards increased employment opportunities for PWID.

Local radio stations are an additional a point of entry in changing the negative perceptions about PWID. These radio stations facilitate communication on a large scale and in theory would be able to reach different types of people. In reaching this broad audience, DPOs and governmental organizations have the opportunity to spread knowledge about IDs. They could send short messages through these community radio stations that discuss PWID and their abilities. Testimonials from employers who hire PWID could also be played through the airways. In this way, the taboo nature surrounding PWID can continue to be removed.

Legislation

Awareness and enforcement of existing protective legislation for PWD provide an opportunity for PWID to access the labour market. The Income Tax Act, for example, offers a tax rebate to employers of PWD. Many employers, however, are unaware of this tax rebate. Even for those employers who are aware of the rebate, there is a need for proper implementation as the government often delays or fails to provide the rebate to employers.

However, the limitations of the Income Tax Act in allowing PWD to obtain employment must be acknowledged. Interviews with expatriate employers of PWD revealed that the Act currently does not play a role in employers' decisions to hire PWD. They explained that the money awarded to them via the tax rebate is insignificant. While the Act is progressive in its tangible tax rebate, the rebate is not significant enough to push employers who are debating to hire PWID into following through with the employment. Thus, proper awareness, enforcement, and an increased rebate are opportunities through which PWID can obtain employment.

Expatriate Employers

Through interviews with employers of PWID in Zambia, it was discovered that all of said employers were expatriates born in other countries and had relocated to Zambia. More specifically, these employers were South African and cited attitudinal differences as a reason for their willingness to hire PWID, whereas Zambian companies are often more hesitant to do so. A South African restaurant owner and employer of PWID in Lusaka explained that to some extent the Zambian cultural and societal structures propagate antiquated belief systems concerning disability. The owner proceeded to explain the ideologies of his country that have come to recognize the basic human rights of PWD. He said that when he brought his business to Zambia, he brought his open-minded and accepting ideology along with him.

By contrast, Zambian employers are generally more apprehensive to hire PWID because of the cultural stigma surrounding disability. Many companies that hire PWID are international because they not only have the progressive attitudes needed, but they also have the economic means to accommodate a PWID. The aforementioned restaurant owner explained the need for a massive cultural shift in Zambia to promote progressive attitudes. According to him, this shift will not occur so long as the elderly population holds onto the restrictive and discriminatory views of the past. The views of the elderly, coupled with their status as the most respected members of society, allow for antiquated beliefs to be maintained.

One of the biggest opportunities for PWID to infiltrate the labour market exists with large, South African owned companies. A South African owned company's HRM explained that although corporate social responsibility (CSR) law applies to all companies in Zambia, it is more enforced for international companies. The HRM of this company's branch cited this enforcement as a reason for why they choose to hire PWD. Stricter enforcement of CSR laws often result in companies hiring more PWD in comparison to companies that are not forced to abide by CSR with the same intense scrutiny. If large and visible international companies begin to openly hire PWID, it will be the catalyst through which full social inclusion of PWID can eventually be obtained. These equal opportunity hiring practices would ensuingly permeate to Zambian owned companies and rural regions, thus increasing the access that PWID have to the labour market.

Improved Understanding of SE Model

Greater exposure to and employer understanding of the supported employment model presents an opportunity for clarification and reduced apprehensions when employers consider hiring PWID. Specifically, guide-books explaining SE and the role of a job coach should be created and distributed to current and potential employers of PWD and employment agencies such as the Zambian Federation of Employers. In one notable case, the HRM at a large company perceived a job coach to be too much work and an additional cost, via wages, that the company would have to incur. Upon explanation of the SE model to key stakeholders, SE was perceived to be an effective means to facilitate the hiring and sustained employment of PWID. An employer with experience in hiring PWID alongside a job coach said that the job coach provided her with a sense of security. The employer found comfort knowing that she was not solely responsible for her employee with ID in addition to her other employees.

Furthermore, the SE model must be flexible and adapt to employer preferences and experiences. It was discovered that an employer of PWID had some concerns in using a job coach to help her employee. Namely, the employer said that the job coach can be somewhat overbearing and overtake the tasks that the employee with ID is meant to be doing. Thus, the SE model could be improved and further clarification of the model itself would help encourage PWID involvement and a less-overbearing role of the job coach.

Restaurant and Cleaning Industries

Restaurant and cleaning industries proved to be points of entry for PWID to access the labour market. Almost every interviewee cited the restaurant and cleaning industries as fields that would be reachable for PWID because the labour involves repetitive tasks that are essential for basic operations. However, many persons without disabilities consider these tasks to be menial, which consequently leads to notoriously high turnover rates in these industries. In contrast, many PWID have been shown to be successful in performing these repetitive tasks in work. Because of this, these routine jobs would be an opportunity for trained PWID to penetrate the labour market.

In addition, restaurant jobs allow employees to be creative. One internationally-owned restaurant commented on the restaurant's expressive food preparation practices. The manager of the restaurant said that in addition to the standard items on their menu, they allow their employees to

make whatever they want and place it for sale at the till. If the items sell, the manager then allows the employees to continue crafting the refreshments. This creative freedom would also allow PWID to hone their skills and allow them to be successful in the food and beverage industry.

Research Implications

Upon evaluation of the findings obtained above, we suggest several ways in which our research may be important for policy, practice, and subsequent studies. The issue of PWID accessing employment is multifaceted, but the foundational challenge surrounding negative perceptions towards PWID must be addressed. These negative perceptions are disastrous in their effects on the ways in which community members regard PWID, and DPOs play a vital role in correcting these negative perceptions. We outline concrete steps that community leaders, employers, and DPOs can pursue in order to further the inclusion of PWID in the community at large, as well as the labour market.

Recommendation at the Community Level: Destigmatisation of IDs

It is believed that many barriers PWID face would be reduced if they were seen as more visible members of society. There is a great need to destigmatize IDs in order to eliminate the shame that families with PWID feel. This could be facilitated by involving community leaders such as church figures and teachers in the advocacy of PWID. By having community leaders partner with PWID in the neighborhood, PWID will become increasingly integrated into the various social environments that persons without disabilities frequently participate in. Increased visibility of PWID is an essential step in combating the shame associated with IDs to further include them in all aspects of society, including the labour force.

Recommendation for Employers: Increased Visibility for PWID

It was discovered that many expatriate employers that hire PWID exist within a professional network with other expatriate employers, but to a lesser extent with Zambian employers. It is suggested that a recommendation system be developed by DPOs who deal primarily with employment concerns. In this way, companies that already employ PWID, namely expatriate employers, can write a recommendation letter to other companies encouraging them to hire PWID based on their experiences. The letter could detail the benefits of hiring PWID from the point of view of an employer. These letters would be distributed to companies in the area and would allow for more companies to hire PWID, including Zambian owned companies.

A individualised referral system for PWID would also ease the facilitation of employment access for PWID. For example, if an employee with ID needs to change employers, the current employer could provide a reference for the future employer, detailing the specific experience that the employer had in employing that PWID. The reference should include general affirmation that the employee with ID is valuable and capable as well as tasks that the employee is particularly successful at performing. Learning strategies that facilitate the success of the employee into the workplace should also be included. These reference letters could incorporate any other information that would assist in making the employee's job transition smooth.

Employers already employing PWID should also implement signage or a statement on their menus that summarize their hiring practices and willingness to hire PWID. Although the food and beverage industry was found to be the largest opportunity for involving PWID in the workforce, it has a limited effect on social inclusion. This is because most of the PWID hired are in the kitchen or work the preparation shift in the mornings. Because of this, customers often do not physically see the employed PWID nor interact with the PWID. Social inclusion is thereby limited to the staff level. However, if these food and beverage companies place a statement about their hiring practices in plain view, more attention would be given to the fact that they hire PWID. Environmentally friendly restaurant businesses will often put statements on their menus about why they don't use plastic straws, for example, and a similar approach could be taken with hiring practices in order to further the inclusion and visibility of PWID.

Recommendation for DPOs: Increased Collaboration & Communication

While few DPOs exist with a specific focus on ID, all DPOs play essential roles in the movement towards full inclusion of PWID into society. When possible, further coordination and collaboration is needed in order to have the greatest impact. For example, a mass sensitisation program campaign to inform society that all PWD are capable of working would be a greatly influential if DPOs worked together to execute it. Additionally, there are Lusaka-based legal advocacy nonprofits that could work with organisations focused on ID, such as the Sani Foundation, to make employers aware of PWIDs' legal right to work. These legal advocacy groups could additionally ensure that employers receive the tax rebate provided in the Income Tax Act when they employ PWD.

The voices of PWID need to be heard as progressive programmes are implemented. Collectively, this would ensure not only a larger impact of the programmes, but also help to reframe the fight for equal employment opportunity for PWD as a human rights issue and not a moral one.

DPOs are needed in order to fill the gaps and inadequacies of the education sector concerning PWD. Although education is an innate right for everyone, including PWID, fixing the education system to be as inclusive and specialised as it needs to be is a long-term goal. It is uncertain how long it will take for the Zambian education sector to be repaired and because of this, the training and education programmes developed by DPOs are vital for PWD. However, training and special education services are often expensive and out of reach for PWD of lower socioeconomic status (SES). In order to further assist PWID of lower SES to access these services, it would be helpful if DPOs could apply for governmental and international grants to offer financial support. This financial aid could be an important next step for the expansion and development of DPOs focused on PWID because it would draw in other marginalized groups.

Together, DPOs should also call for increased government monitoring and enforcement of protective legislation for PWID. In many instances, there is adequate legislation clearly outlining the rights of PWD in Zambian law. However, enforcement mechanisms are not clearly stated and

therefore these policies are unsuccessful. The many DPOs in Zambia, especially in the city of Lusaka, have the opportunity to unite and advocate for the enforcement of these policies. Implementing ground inspections would be a concrete way in which governmental officers could ensure that PWD have equal opportunity in accessing employment. If DPOs could join together to call on their government to implement this enforcement mechanism, visible changes may occur.

Our research also revealed that employers were generally unclear about the way in which SE truly functions. There were many myths and assumptions about SE that work to actually dissuade employers from hiring PWID, instead of encouraging them. These assumptions could be easily corrected if DPOs that focused on getting PWID employed created a written SE guide. In this way, employers could have a concrete, accessible means of learning about SE. These written guides could be distributed to employers as a means to properly explain SE and encourage them to employ PWID.

Conclusion

As a result of our research, we have concluded that there are immense barriers for PWID to access employment in Zambia. These barriers are not only attitudinal, but they are structural, legal, and economic as well. While traditional beliefs have condemned PWID, like all beliefs they are not static, but dynamic. With these ever changing and developing beliefs, community members have the opportunity to change the narrative surrounding the status of PWID. By removing the shame associated with IDs, PWID will not only be able to penetrate the labour market, but they will be fully included in society as a whole.

However, it will be difficult for this inclusion to occur without the removal of structural barriers in communities across the nation. Geographic immobility hinders the progress made in other aspects of the social inclusion of PWID. Reliable transport is a necessary and deserving right for PWD and without it, they will likely always struggle to fully access employment.

Employers should not have to bear the complete costs of accommodating PWD as this presents to be a tremendous economic barrier. Smaller companies tend to perceive these economic costs to be too large of a burden and are therefore more hesitant to hire PWD. With the government's help, these accommodation costs can be lessened and PWID can be further involved in places of employment.

However, the government's role is not just an economic one. There is still room for development in terms of legislation because not only is there a lack of clear enforcement mechanisms, but there still exists discriminatory loopholes. The legislation is still substandard, to some extent,

because there are blatant ways in which the law allows for PWD to be discriminated against when seeking higher positions of employment. Zambia has made great strides in validating the rights of PWD, however, until this is represented in the entirety of legislation, the legitimacy of governmental support will be in question.

The effects of these barriers are detrimental to the further social inclusion of this marginalized population. In order to explain the importance of PWID accessing employment, we have developed a concept map that can be found in Appendix I. Fundamentally, accessing employment allows PWID to reach a level of economic independence. They are then able to access basic physiological needs, health care, specialised education and training programmes. This all works in tandem to assist PWID in maintaining their emotion and physical well-being, while developing the soft skills necessary for employment. Eventually, they will be further included socially and seen as “normal” members of society. Social inclusion works as a positive feedback loop because the more socially included PWID are, the more likely employers will be willing to hire them. Likewise, the more PWID are present in the workforce, the more they will be seen as visible members of society. The barriers to employment that were discovered through the course of this research threaten this progression.

Opportunities for labour market infiltration are found in restaurant and cleaning industries, expatriate employers, grassroots advocacy, and streamlined communication across DPOs, amongst others. To a greater extent, the barriers to accessing employment found outweigh the opportunities. This imbalance demonstrates the severity of the issue concerning PWID accessing the labour market.

In light of these results, it is clear that the disability movement is a fight to obtain the rights that PWD deserve. As with all progressive movements, time is of the essence. The acknowledgement of all persons as equally deserving of the rights awarded to them lay the foundation for a movement of inclusion of all persons into society.

The movement for PWIDs’ access to the labour market cannot wait. Nor can the movement to end gender-based violence. Nor can the movement to end child labour. Human rights abuses

occur every second. Acknowledging this fact is daunting. However, doing so is necessary in order to enact change. We must expose one another to the injustices of the world. We must converse, strategize, and be active, not reactive, members of our respective communities. When we begin to see PWID as members of our community deserving of the rights freely given to non-disabled persons, then they will be able to access the labour market and socialize in our communities.

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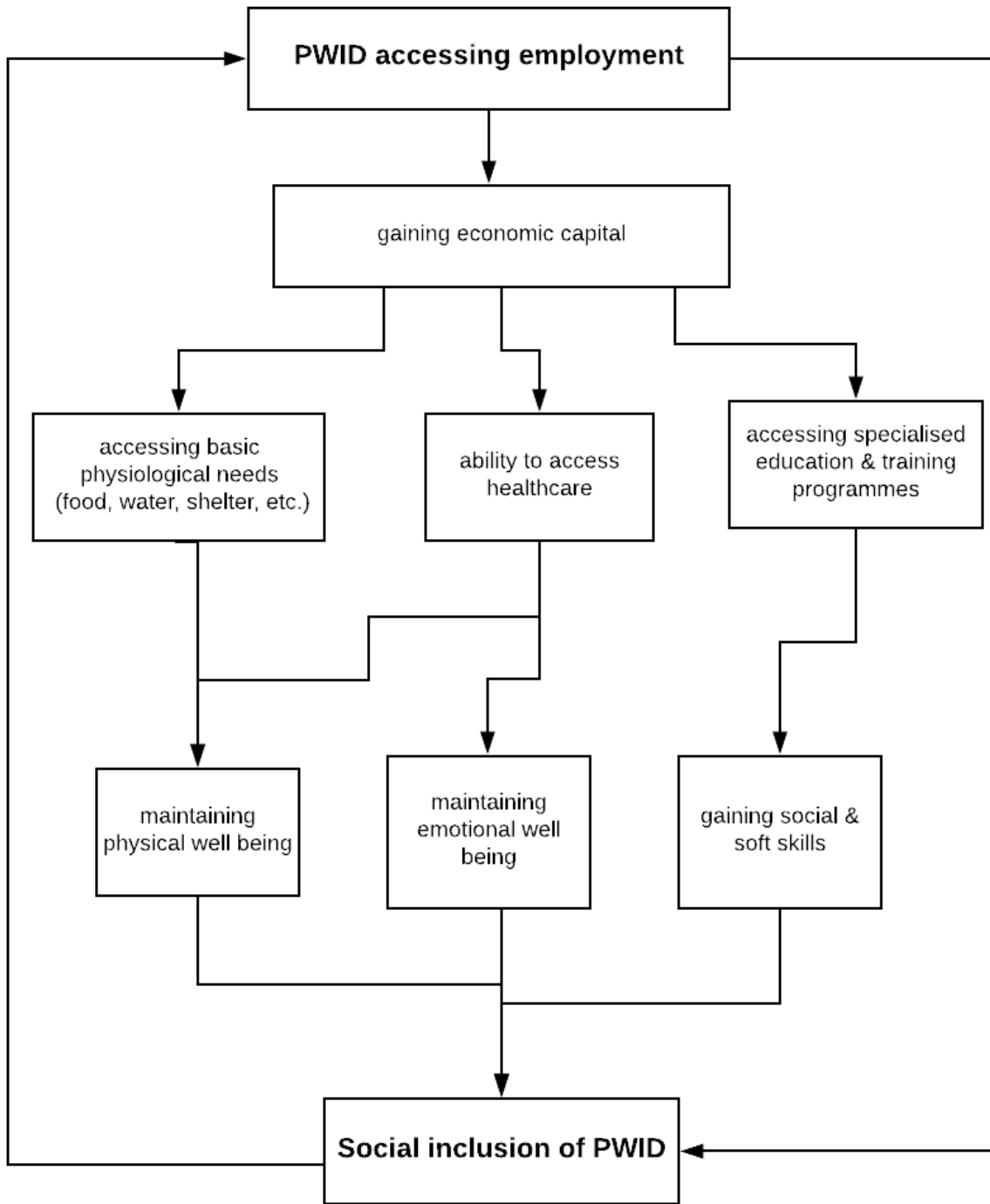
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Appendix I: Importance of Employment Concept Map



Appendix II: Limitations

While this research allowed for discoveries of the barriers, opportunities, and effects concerning PWID accessing employment, it also had many limitations. These limitations included the extreme time constraint as there were less than 8 weeks to research and record findings. There was also a general lack of large Zambian companies in the area, so we relied on second hand accounts to determine the point of view of these employers. In addition, we were not cleared by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), so we were unable to conduct semi-structured interviews with vulnerable populations, including PWID. We ensuingly struggled to make conclusions without the first-hand experiences of PWID easily accessible.

Another limitation was the fact that many employed PWID are in the informal sector, a sector that is difficult to quantify and evaluate. Generally, the availability of employment statistics for PWD is limited in low and middle-income countries, but this was exacerbated by the large size of the informal sector as well. A lack of statistics concerning PWD, and more specifically PWID, limited our understanding of their current status. This lack of labour market data contributed to major gaps in knowledge that would have been helpful in evaluating the severity of the unemployment problem for PWID as well as the effects this would have on the population.

The results of this study may not be generalized and applied to the population of PWID as a whole. A limited sample size of interviews with employers and DPOs were conducted as a direct consequence of our limited time and resources. Because of this, our findings are restricted to the city of Lusaka and will likely not be representative of employment access for PWID in rural areas. Further research is needed to draw conclusions about the lived experiences and employment access for PWID in rural areas.