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A study using black physically disabled women leaders’ experiences to examine how a developmental state can deal with economic disparities faced by black young physically disabled women

by

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SPKOLW001

A mini-thesis in partial fulfilment of the degree in Master of Philosophy: Disability Studies

April 2011

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Definition of Terms

**Black young physically disabled women:** For the purpose of this study, black young physically disabled women will be referred to as ‘disabled women’.

**Developmental State:** A developmental state is primarily an interventionist state that seeks to amongst others diversify the economy, sharpen the state organs’ effectiveness in their delivery of services to the people and speed up economic growth (Woo-Cummings, 1999).

**Disability rights movement:** Disability rights movement is the broad church of organisations and individuals participating in the struggle for the equalisation of opportunities and human rights for disabled people.

**Financial Capital:** Using the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) financial capital refers to access to cash or its equivalent for purposes of engaging in livelihoods (DFID, 1999, p. 15).

**Human capital:** Consistent with the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) human capital refers to skills, knowledge, ability to labour and good health; these are important for a person’s access to income. Education and health are seen as important components of human capital (DFID, 1999, p. 7).

**Intersectional Analysis** is defined as an analytical tool that theoretically and politically examines the social positioning of individuals through various axes of historical oppressions i.e. disability, sexuality, religion, etc. (Conaghan, 2007, p. 321).

**Physical Capital:** Physical capital refers to infrastructure needed to support a person’s livelihood (DFID, 1999, p. 13).

**Rehabilitated sexist:** a person who has benefited from patriarchy but who has embraced the principle of gender equality (Sipuka, 2007).

**Social Capital:** In the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA); social capital is defined as “social resources upon which people draw in pursuit of their livelihood objectives” (DFID, 1999, p. 9). It thus defines the support systems that a person relies on to survive.

**Unemployment:** Unemployed people are those people within the economically active population (aged 15-65) who: did not have a job or business during the 7 days prior to the interview, want to work and are available to work within two weeks of the interview, and have taken active steps to look for work or to start some form of self-employment in the 4 weeks prior to the interview. (Stats SA, 2006)
Abbreviations

ANC: African National Congress is a political organisation leading the government of South Africa.

BBBEE: Broad-based black economic empowerment strategy specifically targeting previously disadvantaged populations i.e. black, women and disabled people.

BEE: Black Economic Empowerment.

COSATU: Congress of South African Trade Unions.

DoE: Department of Education.

DPSA: Disabled People South Africa is a cross disability umbrella body.

DPO: Disabled People’s Organisation.

DTI: Department of Trade and Industry.

EEA: Employment Equity Act.

IDC: Independent Development Corporation.


NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation.


NYS: National Youth Service.

ODP: Office of the Presidency.

OSDP: Office on the Status of Disabled Persons.

SETA: Sector Education and Training Authority.
Abstract

The post-apartheid South Africa signalled change in various segments of our society including the socio-economic status of young black disabled women. This study was conducted to examine the impact that equality and equity strategies and interventions had on the economic status of young black disabled women of South Africa.

This study contains a literature review on the cornerstone concepts of the study to provide a rich theoretical base to ground the research. In this regard a literature review was done on study key concepts such as, a developmental state, gender, and disability and the economy.

Using narrative descriptive qualitative methods, the researcher used convenience sampling of four physically disabled women who are leaders in the disability rights movement. The sample took into cognisance provincial boundaries, different disabilities, races and ages in an endeavour to have as diverse a population as possible. During interviews, open-ended questions were utilised as a means to collect data. In some instances the researcher went back to participants for further data until data saturation was reached. The data were analysed and grouped into themes.

Three themes emerged from the data and these themes were discussed to inform our conclusion. The themes were:

1. The role of the state and legislation in promoting the economic mainstreaming of disabled women.
2. The role of civil society organisations in bridging the economic disparities faced by disabled women.
3. The role of education in the economic mainstreaming of disabled women.

Using the developmental state as its framework, this study explored the nature and character of disabled women’s participation in the economy of South Africa. Using voices of black physically disabled women who were leaders, the study highlighted the opportunities and tribulations of disabled women as it related to their economic
participation. All participants had physical disabilities. This study also explored disabled women’s socialisation as it relates to their economic participation.

This study found that although there are strategies that seek to empower the broad South African population, disabled women are not sufficiently catered for. The study further suggested some developmental interventions that the state can apply in order to mitigate the insufficient economic participation of disabled women.
1.1 Introduction

The concept of a caring society is strengthened and deepened when we recognise that disabled people enjoy the same rights as we do and that we have a responsibility towards the promotion of their quality of life (Mbeki, 1997, p. i).

The former President of the Republic makes this statement to set the tone for the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (INDS) (Office of the Deputy President, 1997). His statement confirmed that society had a role to play in ensuring that inequalities in the quality of life of disabled people become something of the past.

Chapter two of the Constitution acknowledges inequalities that are perpetuated through discriminating against those who are disabled, of different race, gender, or belief, etc. (Constitution, 1996). Patriarchy also enforces these inequalities through perpetual subordination of women (Walby, 1989). The effects of patriarchy also relate to labour force participation, occupational distribution and earnings differentials (Rives & Yousefi, 1997).

The Census 2001 report on the Prevalence of Disability in South Africa (Stats SA, 2005), a disability-specific study on the quality of life of disabled people, paints the picture of economic disparities faced by disabled women. In relation to disabled women’s quality of life and economic status, the report states that:

- Disabled women constitute 1 173 939 of the population;
- 10.7 per cent of disabled women have had no education whatsoever;
- Only 2.9 per cent of disabled women have been to a higher education institution;
- Only 15.2 per cent of disabled women were employed (according to the referenced definition of unemployment) relative to 27 per cent of non-disabled females (Stats SA, 2005, pp. 12, 13).
1. Putting the Study into Context

In fact this report acknowledges that disabled women are bound to bear the costs of these economic disparities given that, amongst others, they are less likely to be employed. Consistent with an intersectional analysis (Conaghan, 2007), the report argues that women face “double disadvantage – being disabled and female” (Stats SA, 2005, p. 22).

Because of the stigma attached to disability, the Census report moves that its findings might not be accurate as other disabled people might not have had the courage to accept their disabilities and therefore come out and be counted under disabled people. As a result of this, the report asserts that its findings are not accurate and therefore to a certain extent cannot be used to make targeted interventions (Stats SA, 2005). This writer argues that the report is extremely useful and can be used for targeted interventions; in particular since such studies are almost non-existent in South Africa.

The picture of disparities that the Census report (Stats SA, 2005) paints are against the backdrop of South Africa having very good pieces of legislation. Some of these laws seek to redistribute wealth to those who were previously disadvantaged. Amongst other policies is the Employment Equity Act, No 55 of 1998, which is a tool to implement affirmative action, therefore prioritising the employment of designated groups i.e. women, disabled people, etc. (Department of Labour, 1998). Despite this legislation, most disabled women who should be a priority in relation to affirmative action (Department of Labour, 1998) remain economically inactive (Stats SA, 2005, ).

Redistribution is about prioritising those facing most axes of oppression progressively to those facing least axes of oppression or no axes of oppression whatsoever; it is about unequal attention (especially resources) being paid to various sectors of society for the maximum benefit of the most oppressed (Taylor et al. 1997) – in this case disabled women, especially black rural disabled women (Stats SA, 2005).

The purpose of this research is to examine the role that South Africa as a developmental state should play at ensuring that the economic disparities faced by disabled women of South Africa are made issues of the past. This study will look at ways of how best such a state can decisively intervene towards improving disabled women’s economic status by using experiences of physically disabled women leaders.
Woo-Cummings (1999) defines a developmental state as primarily an interventionist state that seeks to amongst others diversify the economy, sharpen the state organs’ effectiveness in their delivery of services to the people and speed up economic growth. In our South African context, the Secretary General of Cosatu (Congress of South African Trade Unions) argues that we need not just a developmental state, but a strong developmental state that will be able to undertake fundamental interventions that are central to development (Vavi, 2001). If this aspiration is linked to the opening statement made by former President Mbeki in the INDs one would then say that such a state should look into the quality of life of disabled people (Mbeki, 1997).

1.2 Background

The International Investment Council has congratulated South Africa for its steady economic growth which the Council links to employment creation (The Presidency, 2005). This growth is only at a macro level and does not help the people on the ground with the disputed official unemployment rate still at 25.5 per cent (South Africa info, 2007).

Countries continue to be spoken about as ‘developing’ yet people at grassroots do not benefit from this development. Consistent with this, during his campaign, President Obama talked of America as a country economically strong yet its people are facing challenges such as unemployment, crime, exorbitant costs of health care, inaccessible higher education for the poor and people going to bed without a meal etc. (Obama, 2008). The very same picture is painted of India by Ghai (2001) who acknowledges that India is spoken about as a developing country that is fast gaining ground on the economic front. India, which in light of globalisation, is seen as widening access to services and the economy to its people; yet disabled women are marginalised. The veracity is that these developing and developed countries are developing at a macro level with the ‘development’ assumed to be benefiting the majority of people when in actual fact the poor are getting poorer and rich even richer. This assumption is the result of the ‘trickle-down’ theory of economics, which others like Sowell (2005) perceive as rhetoric that benefits the rich under the guise of possible benefit to the middle and lower classes.
The researcher identifies easily with the picture painted by President Obama and Ghai (in particular because Ghai comes from a developing country and is a disabled woman). This relation is based on the researcher having been a pamphlet/poster boy for the African National Congress (ANC) from 1991–1997; because people saw him in organisational regalia they would raise their issues with him. As an organiser then, the researcher has interacted with people from all walks of life. Through these engagements it emerged that people face different and mostly simultaneous hurdles. People want to engage whoever they perceive as close to power as they usually feel unheard.

With so many loud voices being unheard, the researcher has taken a stance to be a voice with the loud yet unheard. The researcher has dedicated his activism to speaking with those facing most axes of oppression. Having worked for Disabled People South Africa (DPSA), and therefore being exposed to disabled women and their plight, the researcher has taken the position of being an ally to disabled women.

The researcher has chosen this question primarily because he wants the findings to be utilised in strengthening policy and programmatic interventions towards disabled women. Having worked for the Presidency as a National Youth Commissioner and a secretary of the ANC is his ward; the researcher is in a position to ensure that the research findings are infused into the government agenda.

1.3 Research Problem

In his analysis of the draft resolutions of the 2007 ANC National General Council resolutions, Turok identified the lack of disabled people’s inclusion in the transformation resolution (Turok, 2008). Turok however does not make tangible alternatives for the inclusion of disabled people in the economic transformation discourse. Central to South Africa’s economic transformation is the introduction of the developmental state model. This study attempts to provide an alternative to the policy gaps as identified by Turok.

The Employment Equity report that was conducted in 2006 reported that women account for 43.9 per cent of the total country workforce (Employment Equity Commission, 2006). That is an overwhelming 889 210 of women against 1 494 049 of men. Interrogating this further, the report shows that out of the 889 210 women currently employed, only 23 252 of those are disabled women (Employment Equity Commission, 2006).
Report, 2006). Only 2.6 per cent of the female workforce is disabled women, which is not acceptable because our state cannot be truly developmental if not truly diversified. Our state cannot be truly redistributive and developmental when such disparities exist; particularly since disabled women make up a critical 5 per cent of the total female population (Stats SA, 2005).

This study will be confined to the available data on employment, government strategies and views of disabled women leaders.

### 1.4 Research Question

This study seeks to look at the economic status of disabled women. It further looks at the possible role that the state can play in ensuring that these women are made more economically active.

Therefore the research question is:

- How could a developmental state help in bridging the economic disparities faced by disabled women?

With the following as sub-questions:

- Does the state and legislation support disabled women’s economic participation?
- What is the role of civil society in the economic mainstreaming of disabled women?
- Do education and skills development play a role in the empowerment of disabled women?

### 1.5 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to explore the physically disabled women leaders’ views with regards to economic challenges experienced by disabled women. These views will assist the researcher in recommending strategies that a developmental state could implement to ensure that these economic inequalities are addressed. He does so also through examining the extent to which equity strategies and processes assist disabled women economically.
1.6 Objectives of the Study

- To look at the barriers preventing disabled women from participating in various strategies that could be used to facilitate their entry into the economic mainstream.
- To identify strategies from disabled women leaders on what needs to be done to ensure that disabled women move into the centre of our economy.

1.7 Significance of the Study

There is limited research done in the area of a developmental state and disabled women especially in the African context. Sono (1994) moves that the oratory nature of African intellectualism explains why many African academic resources are not documented. This study seeks to advance the documentation of African literature. This study will then bridge the knowledge gap on disability in South Africa as identified also by Priestley (2006), thereby contributing to local content.

Literature on the developmental state does not touch on its relevance to disabled women. Quinn et al. (2002) move that developmental studies often do not focus on disabled women but on women in general; this study will be specific to disabled women and contribute to closing that gap. This study could influence policy making in South Africa, particularly in as far as disabled women’s economic participation is concerned. The intention is to provide the findings of the study to policy makers and DPOs so they may utilise the findings in their policy formulation processes.

Equally, organisations working in the field of women and or disabled women will be provided with the findings so as to help them strengthen their cases when advocating for the mainstreaming of disabled women.

A comprehensive literature review on all the underpinning concepts is covered in Chapter 2.
CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Key fields for review in this research are the developmental state, gender and the economy, disability and the economy, and intersectional analysis.

2.2 Developmental State

There seems to be consensus amongst some writers on the origins of the developmental state; notably Woo-Cummings (1999), White (1988) and Johnson (1995) trace its origins in East Asia. The developmental state creates and regulates its economic and political relationships to support sustained industrialisation and growth (Woo-Cummings, 1999). Also of critical importance for this kind of a state is the establishment of institutions such as the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MITI) in Japan (Johnson, 1995) that seek to move from concept to implementing the ideology of a developmental state. In South Africa, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) was established to foster and regulate our development as a country.

There are different kinds of states i.e. a welfare state, a communist state, capitalist state etc. South Africa has adopted a model of a developmental state (Fine, 2007), which infers that some of its pillars are:

The capacity to intervene in the economy in the interest of higher rates of growth and development; Effective sustainable programmes that address challenges of unemployment, poverty and underdevelopment; and Mobilise the people as a whole, especially the poor, to act as their own liberators through participatory and representative democracy (Godongwana, 2007, p. 2).

The ANC (ANC in Turok, 2008, p. 11) foresees the characteristics of South Africa’s developmental state, given our context, as:
2. Literature Review

- A state having a strategic orientation for people's economic participation and socio-economic inclusion;
- A state with capacity and systems to interact with social partners towards forging ahead with the notion of a developmental state;
- A state with sufficient organisational and technical capacity through education and training in order to deliver the developmental agenda; and
- A state that undertakes ongoing transformation in order to strengthen its delivery and engender the culture of “appropriate representation of women and people with disabilities” (ANC in Turok, 2008, p. 11).

Flowing from these characteristics, South Africa is currently transforming an economy that for centuries has been in the hands of a colonial minority at the expense of the vast majority of the people (Erwin, 2007). Vavi (2001) argues in the same vein as Godongwana (2007) that in this transformation, the economy needs to be diversified to accommodate the poor, included in these are many disabled women (Stats SA, 2005). This means that such interventions by the developmental state must accommodate disabled women. These interventions must move disabled women into the mainstream economy.

One such intervention is the National Youth Service (NYS) programme which is a second economy intervention that seeks to move people from the second economy into the first (NYS, 2007). The ANC also talks about Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) as one of the key pillars for the diversification of the economy (ANC, 2007). BEE has been recently modified into Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) to accommodate disabled people and the youth. BBBEE is a purposive procurement tool that advocates for black people, women, youth and disabled people to be prioritised in procurement processes. The policy is consistent with the definition of redistributive policies as defined by Taylor et al. (1997).

2.3 Gender and the Economy

All whites are racist in this use of the term because we benefit from a systematic white privilege. Generally whites think racism is voluntary, intentional conduct done by horrible others. Whites spend a lot of time trying to convince ourselves and each other that we are not racist. A big step would be for whites to admit
that we are racist and then consider what to do about it (Wildman & Davis, 2000, p. 56).

The point that Wildman and Davis are driving home is that there are structural systems that are embedded in our society which we perceive consciously or unconsciously as normal. We do nothing against a hegemony that affords us these privileges, as we may perceive ourselves as powerless to stand against that hegemony. White people benefited from racial segregation and oppression of blacks in the past to an extent that their ongoing position of privilege over blacks today is because of past racial policies and practices. It is because of apartheid policies that proportionally the white population is, for example, more educated; such are systematic privileges that come with race. Likewise, most so-called able bodied people in society have not questioned the status quo as they have benefited at the expense of disabled people.

As a male researcher who has interacted with Harro (2000) and Mikki van Zyl who is a gender activist, I know of the gender privilege that I, as a man, have over women. When we chose subjects at school for example, women were not allowed to choose technical subjects or agriculture. Women were forced into particular disciplines that perpetuated the subordination of women. You would for instance not have many women who are engineers as engineering was perceived as a masculine discipline. In the same breath as Wildman and Davis (2000) talk about race, the researcher is a rehabilitated sexist as he benefited from patriarchy that was and continues to be a cornerstone in our societal roles and destinies.

Patriarchy can thus be described as a set of social relations between men, which have a material base, and which create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women. The ‘ideology of patriarchy’ therefore seems to have developed as a result of the elevation of ‘the idea of the leadership of the fathers’, to a position of paramount importance in society (Coetzee, 2001, p. 301).

Patriarchy removes all kinds of power from women including economic power and bundles it onto men as though men are the panacea to societal problems (Sipuka, 2007). It is through patriarchy that women have to perform unpaid labour in the homes whilst men are working for money. Wildman and Davis (2000) speak about American culture as that which categorises everybody as a ‘he’ subjecting women into invisibility and perpetual subordinates. Young (2000) talks about the power and
privilege that men have as a result of women working for them. This subordination and isolation of women, in particular on the economic front, is prevalent in the laws that prevented women from owning property (Federation of South African Women, 1954). It is through patriarchy that disabled women have been economically disempowered.

The ushering in of democracy in South Africa marked the dawn of a new era in the gender struggles in South Africa, also reflected in countries in the rest of the world. Central to our Constitution is the equality clause that moves that nobody should be discriminated against on a basis on gender (Constitution, 1996). This constitutional cornerstone is further supported by the affirmative action policy – amongst others this policy argues that women have to be prioritised during employment processes (Department of Labour, 1998). Nonetheless, the emancipation of women remains the responsibility of the whole society.

2.4 Disability and the Economy

There is a close relationship between poverty and disability: malnutrition, mothers weakened by frequent childbirth, inadequate immunisation programmes, accidents in over-crowded homes, all contribute to an incidence of disability ... Furthermore disability exacerbates and creates poverty by increasing isolation and economic strain ... little doubt that disabled people are amongst the poorest in poor countries (Coleridge, 1993, p. 64).

Coleridge acknowledges the link between poverty and disability. This link is prevalent primarily because of how our society has been structured in relation to disability. The dominant ideology driving issues of disability in the global North has been the medical model. The medical model implies that the disabling factor is within the person with impairment and not the system in which the person lives. The medical model says that you must cure the person with an impairment and if you fail to do so institutionalise the person (DPSA, 2001) and this contributes to the isolation that Coleridge (1993) speaks to. This medical model reduces disability to a person’s physical, psychological and or neurological deficiency (Soudien & Baxen, 2006). The economic model also isolates disabled people from society, and in particular the economic community, as it perceives disabled people as an additional cost that society must bear (DPSA, 2001). The economic model focuses on the additional cost that an employer may deploy in order to ensure that the workplace is accessible to disabled people.
The use of these models in defining disability has also affected how we as disabled South Africans interface not only with society, but with the economy of the Republic.

Under apartheid, the experiences of disabled people were also the experiences of a deeply divided people living in a profoundly unequal society ... for the majority of black disabled people, their lives were about struggling on a daily basis to cope with poverty, deprivation and violence of the apartheid system, a struggle compounded by their disability ... also of importance is that both black and white disabled people had limited access to fundamental socio-economic rights such as employment, education, appropriate health and welfare services (Howell, Chalklen & Alberts, 2006, p. 42).

Howell, Chalken and Alberts (2006) also speak to how white disabled people enjoyed their position of privilege based on race, were dependent on the health and welfare system run by non-disabled people, effectively declaring them their spokespersons.

There is a school of thought that argues that the person’s impairment does not lead to the person being disabled, but that what disables a person is the society that the person finds herself in. Stone argues that:

Society disables people with impairments, through negative attitudes, environmental barriers and institutional discrimination. The result is that people with perceived impairments become disabled people, denied the opportunities and support to take up the rights and responsibilities of full citizenship, to follow ordinary life course pathways, to enjoy ordinary life chances (Stone, 2001, p. 51).

On the other side you have the disability rights movement advocating the social model of disability, which states that it is not the person who is at fault, but the society that fails to take cognisance of the person’s needs in order to fully participate in that society (DPSA, 2001). Schneider (2006) also supports the fact that it is the disability movement that introduced and promoted the social model. According to Howell, Chalklen and Alberts (2006), this movement came about in South Africa with the formation of Disabled People South Africa (DPSA). This model is an empowering model in that it encourages disabled people to claim their rightful place in society, which is not only about their independence but also about them having greater influence over societal structures (Priestley, 2001a), including the economy.

On economic participation, Priestley (2001b) argues that in the current world set-up work and employment are basic tools for independent living of adults. He
raises a key issue: disabled men and women continue to be disproportionately unemployed, underemployed and underpaid. Clearly if we are to be a truly developmental state, these exploitative tendencies need to be dealt with in a manner that consistently acknowledges the human rights of disabled people – including economic rights. Disabled women are even more disadvantaged than the rest of society (Jans & Stoddard, 1999).

South Africa’s national policy framework for women’s empowerment and gender equality (The Presidency, 2000) outlines and locates disabled women’s empowerment within the human rights discourse. It further proposes strategies to be used in order to ensure that women’s and disabled women’s empowerment are achieved.

In an endeavour to intervene in disabled women’s economic challenges, our developmental state has introduced programmes such as the women empowerment fund, BBBEE, Employment Equity Act, etc.

An intersectional analysis is an important tool to use in arriving at possible recommendations towards young black disabled women.

### 2.5 Intersectional Analysis

An intersectional analysis is defined as an analytical tool that theoretically and politically examines the social positioning of individuals through various axes of social and historical oppressions i.e. disability, sexuality, religion, etc. (Conaghan, 2007).

By using an intersectional analysis we assume that knowing, for example, that a woman lives in a sexist and heteronormative society is insufficient information to describe her experience; instead, it is also necessary to know her race, her sexual orientation, her disability, her class, etc. This will not only help one to holistically understand for example her daily obstacles, but also to holistically understand her.

Coleridge, for instance, argues that “an analysis of disability-based on poverty alone is not only inaccurate; it is also misleading” (Coleridge, 1993, p. 66). He advocates for the engagement of the multiple layers of oppression so as to understand the complete picture.

An intersectional analysis will assist in the analysis of the actors to look at the multiple discriminations that disabled women face. This analysis will also help reveal
privilege in the light that an intersectional analysis is multi-dimensional and therefore not only focuses on oppression but also on privilege (Harro, 2000).

In the next chapter the researcher outlines the methodology used in the study.
CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Study Design

3.1 Introduction

This chapter articulates the methodological parameters under which the study was conducted.

3.2 Methodology

The methodology of the study was a narrative descriptive qualitative research (Creswell, 1994). Boeije (2010) argues that qualitative research is a design that is open and fluid. One of the key strengths of qualitative research is its ability to change the question in the interest of being pragmatic (Greenhalgh & Taylor, 1997). This strength is also perceived as the weakness of qualitative research as others argue that flexible and practical designs are not ‘scientific’ (Myers, 2000). It was in this light that this study followed the descriptive genre of a study. Descriptive studies describe the phenomena accurately either through narrative type descriptions, classifications, or measuring relationships (Myers, 2000). This study therefore tells a narrative based on the experiences of disabled women leaders in relation to disabled women’s economic challenges.

3.3 Study Population

The respondents were politically active and informed disabled women who have enormous volumes of experience in the disability sector in general and disabled women in particular. This population consisted of disabled female adults who were within the ages of economic activity. The research relied on the impeccable credentials of participants from all over the country to produce qualitative
3. Methodology and Study Design

knowledge. The credentials of the participants were also looked at in order to achieve dependability, transferability, credibility and conformability.

3.4 Sampling

This study used convenience sampling whereby researchers rely on their experience, ingenuity and/or previous research findings to deliberately seek out participants in such a manner that the sample obtained may be regarded as representative of the relevant population (Huysamen, 1994). Convenience sampling is defined as sampling that is easily available to the researcher and also that this sample is inexpensive (Stat Pac, 2008). The researcher also looked at cross disability (three were paraplegic whilst one was quadriplegic), class (one is self employed whilst the others are working) from the sample as a means of inclusion. For purposes of this study the sample was four physically disabled women leaders who were conveniently available to the researcher. This study specifically used a critical case, which is strategic sampling saving time and money in researching the problem (Stake, 1995), hence the use of leaders. This was the sample best suited to respond to the questions (Creswell, 1994).

3.5 Data Gathering Techniques

The researcher conducted two or more open-ended interviews (see appendix 1 for interview schedule) with each participant, which were audio-taped and transcribed. Here the researcher used the experiences of these leaders to arrive at the conclusion for the study. In unstructured open-ended interviews, respondents give answers in their own words (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003), allowing them to open up (Bernard, 2005). Using this interview genre, the researcher interviewed respondents within their daily settings, i.e. their offices, etc. These interviews were based on a clear plan that the researcher kept in mind although the interview was characterised by minimum control over respondents' responses (Bernard, 2005). Minimum control hopefully allowed the respondents to speak freely without feeling intimidated or forced to respond in a particular manner.

The open-ended interviews were useful in building initial rapport with respondents before a formal interview; they also allowed respondents to respond in
areas of their own comfort (Bernard, 2005). They can also be used to study sensitive issues or ‘hot’ topics (Bernard, 2005, p. 204). Some of the weaknesses of this genre are that the interview lacks structure and control (Bernard, 2005).

The interviews were conducted in places that the respondents deemed convenient. The researcher conducted interviews with each participate and later conducted up to two follow-up interviews until data saturation occurred. Each interview took an hour and thirty minutes. The researcher conducted interviews at the provinces of the participants and another via a video link. The researcher went back to respondents when he required additional information this also informed member checking. The data gathering process took place over three months. The interviews were held in the language of the respondent’s choice. The transcriptions were translated into English by the researcher.

3.6 Data Analysis

The researcher used thematic coding whereby he first familiarised himself with the data and contexts to provide thick descriptions of the contexts in which each of the respondents worked. Codes that emerged from the raw data were grouped together to form categories, which were further grouped to form themes. This was followed by interpretation and checking (Creswell, 1994).

The researcher rigorously undertook various verification strategies including redoing the interviews in order to ensure validity and reliability (Morse et al. 2002). “Together, all these verification strategies incrementally and interactively contribute to and build reliability and validity, thus ensuring rigour” (Morse et al. 2002, p. 13).

The researcher looked at issues of credibility, dependability, transferability, confirmability, in order to ensure rigour and trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Trustworthiness was established in the follow-up interviews through participants verifying the information they had given previously.

Credibility was achieved as the researcher was able to give feedback to participants after each interview and participants were given an opportunity to verify the data captured by the researcher as a true reflection of their information.

Dependability refers to the consistency of the findings with any other research probing the same question using the same sample although of different people (Morse et al. 2002). This study explains in detail the procedures that were
undertaken in order to achieve its conclusion and therefore the study could be replicated elsewhere.

Transferability describes the capacity of the study to be replicated in different contexts (Morse et al. 2002). The researcher describes and documents the context in which the study was conducted in order for its findings to be transferred and utilised by any other researcher.

Confirmability refers to the impartiality and objectivity of the researcher (Stake, 1995). During the period of this study, the researcher worked outside the economic empowerment of young disabled women and therefore had no direct interest in the findings.

Ryan and Bernard (2000) define rigour as the researcher’s ability to unpack and dissect respondents’ responses to the bare minimum and thus exposing all the details and angles of the responses. In this study, rigour was arrived at as the researcher probed further some details that were given by the participants. This revealed all the detail that was required to sufficiently respond to the research questions.

The researcher further engaged the participants on the information they provided in order ensure validity and rigour.

3.7 Ethics

Informed consent was obtained from the participants before involving them in the research. Informed consent was necessary as a person’s right to freedom and self determination could be tampered with during the research. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) argued that informed consent should encompass four principles namely competence, voluntarism, full information and comprehension. In other words the participants understood the information that the researcher provided and based on that they made a decision to voluntarily participate in the research. These four principles were adhered to. The process of voluntary participation went with the understanding that respondents are allowed to stop the interview at any time they deemed fit without any resultant disadvantage. The information sheet attached (see appendix 2) guided the process towards the achievement of these four principles. Also attached is the informed consent form (see appendix 3), which participants were allowed to go through before participating in the study. The raw data have been kept in a safe place known only to the researcher, who conducted the study in a
confidential manner, and therefore managed all information in that manner (Creswell, 1994).

The researcher also applied for and received ethical clearance from the Faculty of Health Sciences, Research Ethics Committee University of Cape Town (clearance number 482/2008- see appendix 4).

3.8 Introducing the Participants

**Sandie**

Sandie is a young quadriplegic woman, who became disabled when she was involved in a car accident. She stays in a township in the Eastern Cape with her mother, brother and helper. She perceives her life to have been negatively affected by the accident and her disability. From this accident, she lost her independence and loved ones. She has served in various structures in the disability sector including Disabled Women Development Programme of Disabled People South Africa, South African Women in Dialogue and many other structures.

She runs her own catering company, construction and garden services amongst others. During the period of this study, she was in the process of starting her magazine. The researcher (through advice and some interventions) went through the journey of ups and downs with Sandie and her team to have their dream realised. The researcher is happy to proclaim that in September 2009, the first ever disabled women owned Magazine was launched primarily for the South African market.

**Connie**

Connie was born a paraplegic and stays in a township in Gauteng. Her childhood was characterised by inadequacies because she could not do many things that her peers could. She grew up with members of her family doing many things for her to an extent that she thought of herself as an eternal child. She is a married mother of two and stays with her family. She holds leadership positions. Connie has had the opportunity to represent disabled people and disabled women in particular at various forums, especially on issues of agriculture and employment. She is a community development coordinator running a project of disabled people that are trying to empower themselves through sewing and selling their products.
3. Methodology and Study Design

**Nono**

Nono has studied widely and currently holds a post-graduate qualification. She currently lectures health professionals. She has a lower limb mobility impairment. She had one leg amputated in an motor vehicle accident. At one point she was at loggerheads with the department because the department did not want to give her a car allowance because she could not drive. She is thankful for the advocacy skills she received from DPSA because she was able to argue for her rights as a disabled person and was awarded the allowance and a driver.

She stays with her children in a rural area in the Eastern Cape. She commands over ten years of disability activism. Within the disability sector she has occupied various positions. She also sits in the Disability Economic Concerns Trust.

**Patty**

Born in a rural part of the Eastern Cape, Patty was born with polio which has left her with a mobility impairment. Her personal reflection of life with polio is that she had no major obstacles. She reflects that she was able to go to school without any major challenges as a result of her disability. Patty holds a post-graduate qualification. She currently works for one of the chapter 9 institutions. She is a member of various boards. It was in 1991 when she was introduced to disability politics and since then she has never looked back, holding many position within and for the sector. She has a daughter. She stays in a suburban area in the Eastern Cape.

In the next chapter, the researcher discusses the findings from the research.
CHAPTER 4

Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings that emerged out of an inductive analysis of data collected from the four participants. Three themes emerged namely: *we are tired of projects*, *same opportunities as others* and *no education, no future*.

This chapter will table the themes, detailing the content of findings within each of the categories and sub-categories by using substantiating quotes followed by a conclusion which captures the essential information that emerged from the data.

4.2 Theme 1 – *We are tired of projects*

In this theme, the participants speak to how economically disabled women remain on the economic periphery even though there is a supportive economic policy (redistributive policy) infrastructure for their mainstream economic participation. Findings indicate that despite maximal effort on their part to optimise the opportunities presented by project-based initiatives, they gained little besides feeling *tired of projects* because of the multiple hurdles they had to overcome such as *compromised economic strategies* and *legislative and financial bias*. (See Table 1 overleaf).
TABLE 1: THEME 1 – WE ARE TIRED OF PROJECTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>SUB-CATEGORY</th>
<th>CODES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compromised economic strategies</td>
<td>Peripheral informal sector activities</td>
<td>involved in income generating projects like sewing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>other disabled people try selling things like sweets and vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obstructed SMME business activities</td>
<td></td>
<td>I run my small cc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>submitted proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>these are mostly in the survival mode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Income generating skills</td>
<td></td>
<td>do not posses adequate skills and experience for business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>not properly capacitated economically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“we are tired of projects”</td>
<td>Facilitatory systemic factors</td>
<td>EEA says employ disabled people on larger scale</td>
<td>constitution assures equality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>force private companies to employ disabled people</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>points in the awarding of tenders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>must be disabled people centred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obstructive systemic factors</td>
<td></td>
<td>they tell me stories</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>created an elite</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>access to finance though not easy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>only benefits members of the ANC</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>very difficult to get a loan</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>do not own any property for collateral</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>disability useful transport</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>our transport is worse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>drop out of school because of transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative and financial bias</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Olwethu Sipuka, 2011  
M.Phil Disability Studies, UCT
4.2.1 Compromised economic strategies

While the disabled women in the study identified a number of strategies and programmes they use in order to participate in the economy, they nevertheless operated at the margins of survival using informal sector activities such as beadwork. They indicated that these informal activities seldom yielded a significant profit margin, mostly providing a small source of additional income that is used to meet basic consumption needs. Their businesses or projects remain in survival mode.

Patty was of the view that disabled women and disabled women’s economic activities have been reduced to small income-generating projects that are not sustainable due to lack of support. These projects are typically within the survival, hand-to-mouth mode.

Many that I know are involved in income-generating projects like sewing, knitting, poultry, beadwork, etc. and these are mostly in the survival mode. There are very few disabled women that have their own businesses which are running as we speak.

Connie also acknowledged that there are disabled people who are doing some informal trading such as selling sweets in order to sustain their households and in so doing, participating in the local economy.

Other disabled people try to sell things like sweets and vegetables. These businesses mostly do not thrive because of our limited training and business skills.

The women also highlighted areas in which they know about other disabled women being involved in SMME business activities. Unlike many disabled women, Sandie is business minded as she runs her own company which offers catering, construction and gardening services. Sandie’s case exposed that disabled women also have the necessary will to participate in the economy.

I run my small cc which tenders for catering, cleaning and currently looking into the construction field.

Even with Sandie’s energy and ability to seek economic opportunities, it appeared that all she seemed to hit were brick walls, in particular as far as the government was concerned. From her experience it appeared as though the government was not actively playing its role in the empowerment of disabled women.
They [referring to government] are just not helping the situation. They are not helping disabled people achieve their livelihoods goals. I do not know how many proposals I have submitted with no positive reply.

Sandie argued that the government wanted disabled women to be mere participants in the non-profit sector rather than formal business. She experienced attitudinal and logistical obstructions to her attempts to gain substantive capital support for her business venture from some organs of government.

I am now in the process of setting up my own publishing company with the view of publishing a monthly magazine by disabled people. This magazine is not going to speak about disability issues but broad issues of interest to society (which may include disability). For this initiative, I had a meeting with an official in the provincial government and one guy from the provincial treasury. They have advised me to change from [being a] company to a cooperative structure or NPO.

4.2.2 Legislative and financial bias

Within the broad legislative and financial systems for disabled women's economic participation, the participants identified facilitatory and obstructive systemic factors for disabled women's economic participation. Participants revealed that there was a legislative and financial bias in the implementation of the policies meant to help disabled women.

4.2.2.1 Facilitatory factors

The participants highlighted how despite some facilitatory factors in the systems supporting their economic ventures, they nevertheless experienced high levels of legislative and financing bias towards disabled people's businesses and especially for young women's economic participation.

Sandie argued that the South African Constitution was a facilitatory mechanism that does highlight the importance of non-discrimination towards disability. Within the constitution she specifically spoke to the equality clause that states that all citizens are equal regardless of gender, race, and disability. She felt that disabled women’s equality in all spheres, including the economy should be protected.

You have an equality clause in the constitution which talks about how we should be not discriminated against because of our disability.
According to Nono, even though disabled women do not fully enjoy their rights, the constitution and other legislation in the country affords them the opportunity to access those rights in the same manner that the next person would.

*Stemming from the equality clause, the constitution assures equality irrespective of gender or disability; this is very important because many other legislations based on the constitution follow the same trend ... remember the constitution is the most supreme document in the country.*

Amongst other legislation, the Employment Equity Act (EEA) was identified by the participants as facilitatory because it seeks to ensure that disabled women and disabled people in general are preferred in the employment process for purposes of ensuring workplace equity. Although seen as promoting the interests of disabled people, Sandie argued that the EEA is not effective.

*The employment equity aside because it has not increased the number of disabled people employed. It has failed.*

In Patty’s view of the BBBEE policy, she acknowledged that it awards points to disabled women. However even for those with knowledge of the policy only a few of them have benefited from BBBEE.

*Strategies like BBBEE, skills development, access to finance, points in the awarding of tenders where it specifies points for Previously Disadvantaged Individuals, women and disability so in this situation disabled women would benefit three times, etc.*

Sandie is aware of BBBEE’s existence and is of the view that it has never worked for the disability sector in general. She argued that if it had worked for the disability sector, like it is alleged in the general population [where it benefits members of a political party], it only managed to create a disabled elite that functions in disability structures or who are linked to a political party.

*I know about BBBEE but it has never worked for our sector, if it did it managed only to create an elite within the sector just like it has on black people and the women ... I mean that out of black people there are those who looted opportunities to the detriment of others; as a result they show off their wealth which the bigger chunk of blacks failed to get is not helping.*

Sandie was of the view that small scale projects do not empower disabled women. She thought that more vigorous programs such as BBBEE needed to ensure that
disabled women are afforded an opportunity to get into business. In her view, the facilitatory role of BBBEE is to vigorously move disabled women into big business.

*You are saying projects and that constitutes part of the negative attitudes out there, because what this stereotype implies is that disabled women are better off in 'projects' rather than business. We are tired of projects we want pure businesses that prioritises the bottom line and profits. That is one of the ways best to empower disabled young women ... take them out of the projects, properly mentor them and throw them into big business.*

From Connie's perspective, facilitatory interventions should directly benefit disabled women and their central thrust should be enabling disabled women.

*BEE and all these Asgisa must be disabled people-centred. Partnerships between institutions and the disability sector need to be created to make sure that this happens.*

### 4.2.2.2 Obstructive systemic factors

The findings also surfaced participants’ concerns about obstructive systematic factors that ebbed disabled women out of the economic mainstream. Connie argued that although the objectives of the BEE policy are noble in terms of redress, on implementation the policy benefits those that are members of the ruling party. She thinks that those who are connected to the government get to use the policy for their own benefit. She points to newspaper and television clips in particular around her province as evidence of her view.

*I know about BEE, it only benefits members of political parties and not the truly intended beneficiaries. When you read the Daily Dispatch it will tell you about people at Bisho who are members of the ruling party that steal from the poor through BEE. I do not think that many people who are not linked to a political party actually get tenders.*

This view was supported by Nono; she acknowledged the overarching objective of BBBEE but claimed that it has created some kind of disabled elite.

*BBBEE also serves as a means to redress within the economical segment of things. Like with the rest of society also in the disability sector it has created disabled elite ... those that had money and connections can buy into deals leaving the poor, poor. I was also meant to make us make our mark in the economy.*

*A few disabled women who are exposed to information have benefited from these strategies but those that are illiterate and living in the rural areas have not yet benefited.*
When asked why this has not worked for the disability sector 15 years into democracy, Sandie pointed to non-compliance. She is of the view that people do not comply partly because they do not take the disability sector serious.

_The truth is that our government is largely non-compliant in all areas that relate to laws. I also think that because we are not taken serious as a sector is another reason for these legislations to not be realised._

When probed further about the reality of disabled women not accessing their full constitutional rights, Nono relegated the reasons to poor enforcement of legislation. When further asked about the existence of the equality court in an event that a person’s equality has been undermined, she spoke to the low levels of power of such courts and the court’s inaccessibility.

_Disabled women will always be in the outskirts of all of society’s life because there are no proper institutions to fully enforce legislation … the equality court is not known by the ordinary disabled woman or person out there (generally)._ 

Another **obstructive systemic factor** was the lack of implementation of facilitatory mechanisms. As much as Sandie argued that South Africa has progressive disability legislation, she was also of the strong view that such legislation was not backed with strong implementation systems.

_What does the White Paper on Inclusive Education 6 [DoE, 2001] say and many other legislations that appear to be disability friendly? There are high levels of hypocrisy when it comes to the implementation of laws in our country. If you had not grown up from a rich family, without education you will not make it business and corporate wise._

Sandie was also of the view that even though there is the EEA, education levels of disabled people were used as an excuse not to affirm them. She further argued that society, despite the EEA, viewed the hiring of disabled people as an expense rather than a legislative imperative.

_Well after being disabled I was looking for opportunities because as you know an adult has to have income. I went from pillar to post with everybody telling me that I am firstly disabled and therefore an additional cost. Secondly I was told that I am uneducated and therefore cannot even fit at reception because I will be expected to speak English … disabled therefore means an additional cost._

Connie proposed means to make sure that these employment equity targets are met.

_In order for the targets to be met, you need to force private company owners to employ disabled people. In this way you get to achieve the targets. I am saying_
private companies because a lot of emphasis is on government which, even though slowly, is coming to the party.

Sandie argued the broken link between policy and implementation was evident in how financial institutions implement the policy. She argued that instead of these institutions implementing policy through prioritising disabled women, they instead gave disabled women problems.

You then need to make it popular in all institutions of the country and ensure that it is adhered to ... The sole reason I understand for BEE is to redress, I suffered all sorts of discrimination and when we have laws to undo that, and the status quo remains, something is wrong. I just think that government does not talk or instruct banks and other financial institutions to provide people like myself with the necessary resources to undo past economic injustices. All they do is tell us stories.

Nono highlighted clear distinctions between government policy intentions and the actual implementation of those intentions. The financial institutions in their lending criteria for business seem not to be adhering to the government's intentions on redress.

We are told of these BEE and other things. However it is a known fact that many disabled people are poor so the bank's lending criteria need to be relaxed when it comes to disabled women. Where do they think we will get the money for collateral from? We do not have property for collateral. Simply put, business needs funds we do not have. Getting a loan is very difficult, we are in a crossroads.

Transport remains one of the key systemic barriers for disabled women. Disabled women need transport to commute from home to business interactions or work. Sandie has been faced by inaccessible transport; this has impacted on her being less economically active. She was of the view that had there been an accessible transport system, she could have even received some other business deals she tried to get without success.

We have an inaccessible transport system and this contributes to our not getting some of the business deals. We get to meetings late and sometimes do not arrive at all.

The transport system rather than being an enabler is a disabler. Connie could not finish schooling mainly because of the poor transport system that made her late for school to an extent that she could not be on a par with her peers.

I had to drop out of school because of transport problems. I could not arrive on time at school and sometimes could just not get taxis to stop for me.
Transport remains a vital component in the economic set-up of any country and its people. Transport links people to their places of trade, employment and education. Once it fails to do this, it has a negative impact on people’s livelihoods and economic participation. Connie argued that the transport system was not assisting people (in particular disabled people) in their endeavours to participate in the economy.

Many of our systems to support disability are bad, but our transport system is worse. Disabled women cannot depend on it for their economic participation.

This view was supported by Nono.

We need a proper transport system that will be accessible to disabled people, but of now the word ‘inaccessible’ defines our transport.

4.3 Theme 2 – Missed opportunities

In the first theme, the findings revealed the participants’ perspectives on the multiple structural challenges that impacted on their economic participation. In the second theme the findings speak to the personal challenges faced by the women as members of their households, social circles and disability organisations. They revealed how family and sociocultural dynamics contributed to suppressed economic potential and how the strengths and weaknesses of disabled people’s organisations (DPOs) combined to subvert the disability sector support. (See Table 2 overleaf).
### TABLE 2: THEME 2 – MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>SUB-CATEGORY</th>
<th>CODES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“missed opportunities”</td>
<td>Suppressed economic potential</td>
<td>Family dynamics</td>
<td>then was treated more like a child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>family can gain dowry</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>being minors for life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>parents do not expose them as they would disabled men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Socio-cultural dynamics</td>
<td></td>
<td>society that segregates me</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>school and some members of the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>African community where a woman was seen only fit to be married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>disabled women were not considered to be marriage material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subverted sector support</td>
<td>Strengths/role of DPOs</td>
<td>same opportunities as others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>use organisations of disabled people to publicise the strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>issues of self-representation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>DPSA must toyi-toyi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weaknesses of DPOs</td>
<td></td>
<td>have resource challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>my friend pleaded with me to accept a nomination for the position of secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>provides DPOs with skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>self sustainable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.3.1 Suppressed economic potential

This category conveys how the participants view the manner in which society suppresses their economic participation potential. The data reveal that families and broad society are partly responsible for the suppression.
4.3.1.1 Family dynamics

Sandie was born non-disabled and was always treated as an ‘able-bodied’ person. She now thinks that all that treatment (as an equal) was taken away immediately she became disabled. She reflected how her sense of independence was taken away as she was then treated more like a child. The independence was taken away in all spheres of her societal interaction, including the economic sphere.

Secondly by my family then [I] was treated like a child where things will be done for me and decisions taken for me. I had lost sense of independence ... in one accident.

This was the same for Patty who grew up with a disability. She believed that the constant protectionist approach towards disabled women takes away their sense of independence. In her view, disabled women were reduced to mere consumers rather than economic participants.

Disability by its nature, especially for disabled women, places them in a position of being minors for life and therefore not being assertive to demand their rightful place in society.

It was evident from Patty that unlike their male counterparts, disabled women were even bereft of opportunities that could enable their economic participation. She was of the view that families also perpetuate gender discrimination to an extent that they did not provide the same support structure to disabled women as for disabled men. She argued that black disabled men were provided with more economic participation choices in life than disabled women.

You find a situation where parents do not expose to them as they would to disabled men; this has a bearing on how disabled women will interact with society and society with them.

4.3.1.2 Socio-cultural dynamics

Sandie thought that even though she personally tried to acquire as much knowledge as she could for her economic participation, the community still kept her on the economic periphery. She felt that disabled women had the capacity and interest to participate in the economy. However non-disabled members of the community do not give disabled women the opportunity to participate in the economy.

I do not see myself as totally ‘blind’ ... I am at least aware of my rights and it is just society that segregates me from it; it is purely society that thrusts me into the economic periphery. At least I know of various rights-related services that are
offered and am able to access some ... there are a lot of disabled young women who are unable to go to school or live 'normal' everyday lives ... relative to me now, I am not ‘blind’ at all.

When probed further on how the community segregated disabled women, Sandie pointed out the preferences that her non-disabled neighbours have received in various community projects. Even though the people were of the same educational level as she was, they were absorbed into the projects and she was not. She believed that her positive outlook on life was one of the reasons she should have been prioritised over the people she claimed were lazy.

In one municipality project that offered positions, I had thought that I will be employed. Instead some of my lazy neighbours with no commitment whatsoever who were employed in the project. My assessment based on education and attitude is that if society was not segregating against disabled women, then I should have been employed in the project not my neighbours.

This view was supported by Connie when she said that community attitudes were responsible for lowering disabled women’s confidence levels. For persons to participate in the economy, they need to have self-confidence before they could have confidence in things they do for a living. She argued that if communities had a positive attitude towards disability, then disabled women should have been able to freely practice their trades.

You have a backward society that still sees disability in a negative light. Towards disabled women, attitudes both at school and some members of the community are just negative.

Growing up in an African community, Patty believed that some of the community ethos around women limited women’s economic participation to mere objects for marriage. Typically in this marriage they will be child-bearers without any direct economic participation. Patty went on to say that even if marriage was perceived as an accolade, disabled women are bereft of that accolade. Disabled woman are perceived as those that are not marriage material because of their outlook and perceived sense of dependence.

In the African community where a woman was seen only fit to be married; a community where disabled women were not considered to be marriage material.

Connie proposed that for the negative stigma and perception towards disability to be removed, all of society needs to be active citizens towards a society that sees
disability in a positive light. With this ideal society realised, then disabled women would have the ability to fully participate in the economy.

*The responsibility to undo the injustice done by stigma and negative perception does not only lie with disabled people and their organisations, but society at large.*

### 4.3.2 Subverted sector support

The previous category highlighted disabled women’s suppressed economic potential through family dynamics and socio-cultural dynamics. This category raises the question of the massive role that disability sector organisations have to play in the emancipation of disabled women. This category speaks to the strengths and weaknesses of DPOs in order to overcome the subverted disability sector support.

#### 4.3.2.1 Strengths and roles of DPOs

Skills remain a pivotal component towards economic participation; Sandie thought that DPOs help in bridging the skills gap by providing disabled women with skills (amongst others).

*... then found a DPO that provides disabled people with skills (it was during the early 2000s).*

Patty argued that in particular DPOs play a very important role for spreading the vital information and strategies to disabled women. There seemed to be a view that these structures are closer to the people than any other structures and therefore were important vehicles to help reach disabled women.

*Use organisations of disabled people to publicise the strategies that can assist disabled women.*

Connie further gave advice on what needs to be done to make sure that disabled women’s freedoms are realised.

*Disability organisations must toyi-toyi to make sure that government listens to them. They must toyi-toyi until their needs are met.*

#### 4.3.2.2 Weaknesses of DPOs in fostering economic participation

Consistent with the rest of society, organisations of disabled people were viewed to be gender discriminatory, with men dominating leadership positions in the DPOs. Patty said that male dominance saw no boundaries as it also goes to projects of disabled women. The male dominance in female projects further took away women’s
economic activities. This male dominance was not the role that DPOs should play in the economic emancipation of disabled women.

This one can observe in organisations of and for disabled people where you will find that disabled men are in the forefront of everything, even in projects which have been started by disabled women.

When asked about the cause of this dominance in the disability sector, Patty expressed the inward spiral effect that society has on disabled people. She said that the disability sector was not different from the rest of society and therefore it also disempowered women.

Even to this day, patriarchy finds itself deep-seated in all areas of society. I work with gender issues and am aware of how entrenched patriarchy is in our country. So the disability sector cannot see itself outside that society, it is an integral part of it and therefore both good and bad practices of that society are replicated by the sector.

4.4 Theme 3 – No education, no future

There seems to be some consensus amongst the participants on the role of education in increasing the levels of economic participation for disabled women. Although education for disabled women was characterised by poor access to basic education and higher education and training needing transformation, the consensus was clear that; without education there is no future. This theme talks to that. (See Table 3 overleaf).
TABLE 3: THEME 3 – *NO EDUCATION, NO FUTURE*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>SUB-CATEGORY</th>
<th>CODES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| “no education, no future” | Poor access to basic education | Limits of special schools | 12-year olds that have never been to school  
I had to drop out of school  
I went to a school for disabled children  
no proper early childhood for disabled children |
| | | Barriers to mainstream schools | school physical environment not friendly  
most common barrier is illiteracy  
I could not go to the school closest to where I live  
have not had an opportunity to get education |
| | Inaccessible higher education and training | Barriers to universities and colleges | how much more without degrees?  
stipend is very appetising  
have a target programme for disabled women focusing on literacy |
| | | Limits of skills development | vicious cycle of skill and re-skill  
go back to township without jobs  
unemployed because of limited schooling |

### 4.4.1 Poor access to basic education

Basic education is received mainly through special and mainstream schools. This category reflects the under-resourced special schools and mainstream schools for maximum absorption of disabled women.

#### 4.4.1.1 Special schools

Patty was of the view that in order to ensure disabled women’s participation in the economy, there needed to be concerted efforts to ensure that illiteracy levels amongst disabled women were drastically reduced.
You need to have a target programme for disabled women focusing on literacy, this programme should ensure that disabled women get in and out of the education terrain with degrees at least or enough grasp for them to get into any venture they may so wish.

Even though Sandie did not have a personal disability-basic education encounter, her experience in the field of disability had shown her the harsh realities faced by black young disabled children in basic education. She pointed to how legislation relating to basic education had not been implemented to an extent that disabled children as old as twelve years have not had an opportunity to go to school.

*In our groups for instance there are kids as old as 12 that have never seen the inside of a classroom ... that is a huge problem.*

The state of our education was not supportive of disabled women. Even though there is legislation that supports inclusive education, our education system is not fully cognisant and accommodating of disabled women. Connie had to drop out of school because of the obstacles within the system.

*The school environment was so bad that I had to drop out of school. The education system is not disability friendly. It is for this reason that I could not be employed for some time. It is the reason that many disabled women and disabled people are not employed.*

The first challenge that Connie had with the schooling system was on the proximity of ‘schools for the disabled’. She pointed out that she could not go to the nearest school because it was not for disabled people. Secondly she pointed out that societal attitudes have a negative effect on disabled people’s access to education.

*I could not go to the nearest schools purely because it was not for disabled people. I am in a wheelchair and there is nothing wrong with my reasoning capacity. Society however will have thought that because I am in a wheelchair I cannot cope educationally ... you need to change attitudes both at the school and (of) some members of society.*

Patty seemed to have experienced few or no problems in relation to accessing the schooling infrastructure.

*I was invited to a meeting by a friend of mine with whom I went to a school for disabled children.*
4.4.1.2 Mainstream schools
With the adoption of the Inclusive Education White Paper Number 6 (DoE, 2001), a clear education trajectory was mapped out for disabled women. According to Nono, one of the key pillars to inclusive education was the issue of access to education for disabled people.

Buildings are one of our biggest barriers and this is seen in the schools as well. Even before you get to issues of the curriculum, the schools physical environment is not friendly to, amongst others, wheelchair users.

Basic education is one of the key pillars in ensuring that people get to participate in the economic blood of any country. Nono acknowledged the inadequacy of the basic education system in South Africa. She also acknowledged the opportunity that her parents provided her with when they took her to school.

I am one of the few privileged disabled people that were provided an opportunity to go to school. Even though I had personally gone through the system without major challenges, there remains no proper early childhood development for children ... early childhood is poor for children in general but even worse for disabled children in particular.

Connie further provided advice on the kind of schools and schooling system that is required in order for the developmental state to be fully responsive to the economic needs of disabled women.

What you need in order to answer the key study question is a disability friendly education and schooling system; through this you also develop the kind of capacity required to build the state.

4.4.2 Higher Education and Training for Economic Participation
Higher education and training is represented by University and College education including skills development programmes such as learnerships. In this category, these are interacted with.

4.4.2.1 Barriers to higher education
The Census Report on the Prevalence of Disability in South Africa (Stats SA, 2005) paints a horrific picture as far as the numbers of disabled people who went into and through the higher education system. Sandie raised this.

I am sure you have gone through the Census report on our lives and are aware of how shocking our levels of education are.
Sandie’s view was that non-disabled people had better chances of securing livelihood strategies even if they did not have degrees. She was also of the view that a disabled person with a degree was worse off than a non-disabled person with a grade 12 certificate. Her argument also touched on how society perceived disabled people in general regardless of their standing or education. She conceded that disabled women needed to take higher education seriously so that society will take them seriously.

The point I am driving home here is that if ‘abled’ people with degrees cannot access jobs how much more for disabled young women? I mean attitudes of society are still hell-bent and ensuring that we are marginalised. The point is that we as disabled women have to try to outdo able-bodied people in education so that our CVs do not turn people away after they discovered that we are disabled. Our only hope is education. I would imagine that a BA for a disabled person is equal to a standard eight for a non-disabled person, therefore the more educated we are the better our chances of being taken seriously.

Sandie spoke to the importance of higher education and how steep entry requirements continue to marginalise disabled people from acquiring higher education degrees. She also highlighted the disability unfriendliness of higher education curricula.

Firstly the Census Report talks to the low numbers of disabled people with matric, let alone disabled women with matric. Now this means fewer numbers of disabled women getting into tertiary [education] to boost their economic participation. Even the few that get in, the curriculum is sometimes not sensitive to their needs, this may lead to their dropping out. Our constitution that talks equality is being compromised by this sector.

There was a strong view that failure for disabled women to acquire higher education degrees will lead to their failure to secure jobs or livelihoods programs. There was also a view that disabled women needed to be more qualified than their peers in order for them to be considered for opportunities. Sandie made a comparison between a non-disabled person who had a degree and a disabled young woman with the same degree. Her argument was that a non-disabled person with the same degree as her disabled counterpart may be given priority over a disabled person with the same degree. She felt that without education a disabled person does not have a prosperous future economically.

No buthi; you have got me wrong, I am not saying that it is the only and exclusive way in which disabled women can get economically empowered. However I am stressing the role of education in whatever area one would like to venture into ...
either in business or formal employment. Without education there is no future for both the country and especially for disabled young women. In fact you have worked in the sector for some time now, tell me how many non-educated disabled women do you know that have made it in life? How many of them have made it to merely deputy director level at government ... how many of them own successful companies?

4.4.2.2 Learnerships
According to Connie, the recent intervention of learnerships was not providing the kind of training and employment intervention that it was initially intended to. It appeared that disabled women were recruited into learnerships only to get a certificate and go back to the township. There was a view that learnerships need to link its entrants to sustainable employment after completion.

Disabled women get absorbed into learnerships and during that period they also get paid a stipend. I must say the stipend is very appetising especially for a young person who has never worked. The problem is a person goes through the learnership only to go back to the township without a job. You need to link our children to jobs after completing these learnerships otherwise you skill and re-skill forever without making the necessary impact.
4.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has been able to isolate important issues to be discussed in the next chapter. These issues in the main are:

1. The role of the state in promoting the economic mainstreaming of disabled women.
2. The role of society and legislation in bridging the economic disparities faced by disabled women.
3. The role of education in the economic mainstreaming of disabled women.

These areas provide a fertile basis for the discussion chapter.


5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this discussion chapter is to engage the issues that emerged from the findings in order to provide interpretation and reflections in relation to the focus of the study. The characteristics of a developmental state (Turok, 2008) will be used as a framework for the discussion. This chapter will be structured around the three themes that emerged from the findings chapter:

1. The role of the state and legislation in promoting the economic mainstreaming of disabled women.

2. The role of civil society organisations in bridging the economic disparities faced by disabled women.

3. The role of education in the economic mainstreaming of disabled women.

5.2 The Role of the State and Legislation in Promoting the Economic Mainstreaming of Disabled Women

Our developmental state is not economically mainstreaming disabled women. There appear to be bottlenecks in our developmental system; these bottlenecks stifle disabled women’s progression into the economic mainstream.

5.2.1 Compromised economic strategies

Essentially a developmental state has a responsibility to create an environment for entrepreneurs to thrive (Machete, 2008). Turok (2008) pre-empts the role that South Africa as a developmental state should play towards women with potential. He argues that the developmental state has to encourage disadvantaged women to fulfil their potential regardless of their material conditions. Turok anticipates that the state must
not focus on the person's barriers; but the person's potential in aiding the developmental efforts of the Republic.

Sandie’s circumstances reflect the findings of Turok (2008) and Makgetla (2008) since inequalities persist in post-apartheid South Africa. That she runs her own business is important for both sustainable livelihoods and the role of the developmental state in dealing with economic emancipation of disabled women. South Africa, like most parts of the world, follows a superimposed structure of privilege (Wildman & Davis, 2000). This structure of privilege prioritises white men over black men, the able-bodied over the disabled, male over female, etc. (Conaghan, 2007). Opportunities therefore flow from the prioritised to the less prioritised. Sandie, like many disabled women, has the potential to make it in life. However, due to limited economic opportunities for black disabled women, she appears to be overlooked when opportunities arise. The superimposed structure places them at the lowest echelons of privilege.

Writing on African disabled women and discrimination, Grobbelaar-du Plessis (2007) argues that disabled women are more likely to live in poverty than disabled men. Disabled women’s chances to equal opportunities for economic inclusion remain almost impossible to realise. Therefore, disabled women who are eager to be entrepreneurs need to have access to a suitable environment for their economic participation. This study found that often the focus is on the areas where disabled women are lacking rather than in their commitment and potential. There is a need to focus on real talents, abilities and competencies rather than physical impairments (Sing & Govender, 2006). As they try to set up businesses, they are told of their lack of education; the focus moves away from disabled women’s spirit and drive of wanting to be innovative business moguls. Inconsistent with the interventionism of a developmental state, the current circumstances of the women participating in this study suggest that the structural set-up continues to relegate disabled women to the economic periphery. People’s ignorance about disability steers them away from giving disabled women opportunities. This study has confirmed that there remains a view in society that disabled people and women in particular are an object of pity and charity. This view essentially argues that disabled people should not be economically mainstreamed. This study points out that attitudes and ignorance remain key barriers to economic development of disabled women.
5.2.2 Legislative Bias

5.2.2.1 Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment

Machete (2008) comments that a developmental state should ensure that developmental fruits are enjoyed by the broad population which would include disabled women. This study (although its focus was not on BBBEE) found that while broad-based black economic empowerment (BBBEE) primarily seeks to ensure broad sharing of our developmental fruits through equitable ownership and development, the spirit of sharing is not cascaded down to disabled women.

BBBEE seeks to economically empower those facing most axes of oppression. Young African disabled women face more than double discrimination (Grobbelaar-du Plessis, 2007). They are in fact the most marginalised sector of society (Muthukrishna, Sokoya & Moodley, 2009). DPSA recognises the additional oppression faced by disabled women in a patriarchal society hence DPSA has a specific programme for women (Howell, Chalklen & Alberts, 2006). The findings of this study indicate the domains for particular action that would advance the nurturing of disabled women programmes with a specific focus on economic emancipation. Such programmes have a potential to address the intended benefits of BBBEE to disabled women. In a study by Van Niekerk, Lorenzo and Mdlokolo (2006) on developing disabled entrepreneurs in Cape Town, a programme of this nature was introduced. There is a need to learn from that study and create proper accounting systems and structures. Therefore through these programmes we need to entrench a culture of accountability, business ethics and etiquette on the disabled women we seek to mainstream economically.

BBBEE is clear in terms of procurement; start with black women and if they are disabled then it’s a bonus, prioritise them. The key question to be asked is: why are the targeted individuals not enjoying benefits of BBBEE?

There has been a trend of flamboyant and conspicuous lifestyles that BBBEE beneficiaries who are high profile members of the ruling party continue to lead. This life of crass materialism by some BBBEE beneficiaries of the ruling party is lived whilst many people live in abject poverty. There also seems to be consensus amongst the participants that BBBEE has not benefited disabled women or disabled people in general. The participants are of the view that BBBEE has largely benefited members of the ruling party and is characterised by corruption. Writing on key messages of the
developmental state, Tilley (2010), raises the issue of political pressures that may be applied on state officials leading the officials into granting tenders to the politically connected. In her paper, Tilley (2010) argues for politically insulated state officials that will be able to execute their duties without fear of political pressure. Participants in this study are of the view that that BBBEE should not be used to benefit members of the ruling party but all South Africans and disabled women in particular. Disabled women are raising this new lifestyle as something that embezzles their potential economic opportunities.

Other writers claim that corruption is identified as a key feature in developmental states (Johnson, 1995; Fine, 2007; Woo-Cummings, 1999). Corruption features primarily because as the countries gear themselves up for development (often rapid), other people see this as an opportunity to enrich themselves against the very developmental trajectory to be traversed. Even though corruption might be synonymous with some developmental states, surely in our country and context this should not be. This cannot be because the country is in a reconstruction phase and once it succumbs to corruption, its reconstruction efforts may be compromised. In his work on the developmental state, the chief executive of the Independent Development Cooperation of South Africa, Mondi (2008) argues for a contextual developmental state. For a contextual developmental state, Mondi means a developmental state that would take into cognisance individual country needs and conditions. In our context corruption should not be accommodated. Participants in this study abhorred corrupt practices as those practices that hinder economic development of poor communities.

Acknowledging that there never is a ‘worker-manager free society’, redistribution of wealth through BBBEE has to equitably benefit disabled women. This equitable distribution has to take into cognisance the importance of minimising income and economic disparities within the disability sector and society at large. Therefore unlike the perceived creation of a disability elite, there needs to be fair redistribution of wealth to the disability sector. This study found that this redistribution should also spread through to disabled women.

5.2.2.2 Other policies
South Africa has been hailed the world over for its legislation which is based on the human rights framework. The change in government initiated a change in ideological
framework. For this to happen, a change in the legislative set-up had to be effected towards the developmental state model (Erwin, 2008). Our constitution promotes equality amongst all in the population, including black young disabled people (Howell, Chalden & Alberts, 2006). The 1994 democratic breakthrough for our country hallmarked an important shift for the economic rights of disabled people. The Bill of Rights provides for the non-discrimination of disabled people in all spheres on the basis of their disability (Grobbelaar-du Plessis, 2007). For a very long period of time, unfair discrimination has undermined the dignity and socio-economic standing of disabled people (Ngwena, 2006; 2007). The participants in the study are conversant with the legislative gains made by the disability sector post 1994. At the level of awareness of the SA Constitution and various other laws, the participants pointed to the gaps in implementation of these legislations as the greatest barrier in their path to economic participation.

Flowing from the constitution are various other pieces of legislation that clearly pronounce on how such economic mainstreaming should be carried out. The White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (INDS) (ODP, 1997) is one of those pieces that was crafted in order to advance the development of the poor (Latchman, 2010; Sing & Govender, 2006). It speaks to a broad range of issues that need attention in so far as the development of disabled people is concerned, and specifically argues for the full mainstreaming of disabled people into the economy. It clearly pronounces on the importance of having disabled people, including disabled women, taking centre stage in the economy. Some of the participants related very well to the objectives of the INDS but raised a concern in the levels of awareness of such by the officials that are supposed to implement the strategy. Matsebula, Schneider and Watermeyer (2006) expose the poverty of passion for disability that exists in government officials including in the Presidency (from where disability mainstreaming was supposed to be driven). Patty, for instance, worked for an organ of state whose main objective was to lobby for the advancement of the INDS, yet she also expressed this lack of understanding by government officials. The implementation challenges were not identified only in as far as the constitution is concerned, but also the Employment Equity Act amongst others.

In the EEA, disabled people are afforded preferential status for purposes of achieving employment equity (Ngwena, 2005a). The EEA has not sufficiently
5. Discussion

5.2.2.3 Financial bias– financial institutions are not coming to the party

The government has created policies that seek to economically empower disabled women; the implementation of those policies rests with the government and other institutions. These institutions include all financial institutions. This study points to how financial institutions would want collateral from disabled women with no previous business risk information. The stringent and inflexible requirements to access funding relegated the disabled women who participated in the study to mere projects rather than business. This seems to be the key reason why disabled women’s business ventures are not funded. Financial institutions do not take unknown risks and largely depend on available risk data; hence their easy financing of already established businesses (Mondi, 2008). Black people’s business, just like businesses of disabled women, largely have no previous business risk information (Mondi, 2008).

Another barrier seems to be the risk analysis model used by the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA). As a youth specific funding entity, it uses primarily this model against the youth it should serve who mostly have no prior business involvement (NYDA, 2006). The model dictates that before you are granted a loan, you must have years of successful business experience, cash-flow and collateral. As such, the participants found that it hinders disabled women’s economic participation. Sandie, for instance, argues that disabled women largely do not have business
experience nor do they have collateral or any of the requirements of the risk analysis model. The Chief Executive Officer of the Industrial Development Corporation of South Africa (IDC), Mondi (2008) confirms that they are also using the same financing model against the vast majority of the population needing developmental financing.

Consistent with the risk analysis model, most development financing institutions (DFIs) want collateral from someone who stays in a shack, has never been employed nor had a business. Shisana (2008) further describes people in this category as the most marginalised as they are low income earners, are not taxable, do not use banks and cannot access loans because they do not have collateral. Participants in the study by Van Niekerk, Lorenzo and Mdlokolo (2006) relate to the barrier of not having enough seed capital which can be used as collateral. The women in this study also related to this.

The veracity is that the risk analysis model is used by free market economies (Jahed & Kimathi, 2008) like ours. In its documents the ANC projects South Africa as a mixed economy advanced by the developmental state model (Peet, 2002). Free market economies and mixed economies advance and support individual prosperity. In this regard a developmental state would work on a person-to-person basis, effectively maximising their individual potential. Disabled women in this study were no exception, they have to be evaluated on the basis of their proposals and how sustainable those proposals are. The data showed clearly that disabled women need to be evaluated individually against what they are bringing to the table.

Disabled women are not asking or begging for charity, all they are asking from DFIs is a fair opportunity. Our developmental financing needs to be reconsidered to maximise participation of disabled women in the economy. The role of development finance institutions is to fund development and they therefore should focus on development (Mondi, 2008). DFIs should fund disabled women’s businesses and in this way they would be responding to their mandate towards development and the diversification of the economy.

Former Minister of Public Enterprises, Alec Erwin (2008) argues that progressive legislation is not enough to drive development and that DFIs that support legislation play an even a bigger role. It is therefore vital for DFIs and other financial institutions to come to the party and start supporting diversified development which includes disabled women. Participants argue that DFIs have not made reasonable
grounds to necessitate their continued existence without a disability specific agency working with them. The precedent created through the youth and women funding agencies provides substantive grounds for the possibility of the disability fund (since all these sectors are marginalised). This study did not go into any depth in exploring why these entities have not done much in funding disabled people's programmes and this study would suggest as a possible future study to explore which DFIs have funded disabled people.

5.2.3 Transport

Transport remains one of the key challenges facing the participation of disabled women in economic development in the country. Ngwena (2004) claims that the inaccessibility of the transport system contributes to disabled women’s perpetual dependency and social inferiority. In an ‘enabled environments’ comparative study between Pretoria and New Delhi, Coulson, Napier and Matsebe (2006, p. 340) found that key transport challenges facing disabled people include:

- Inability to afford regular taxi use;
- Negative attitudes of taxi drivers to disabled people;
- Long distances between bus/taxi stands and home or destination;
- Difficulty getting on and off transport.

This study found that one of the participants dropped out of school because of inaccessible public transport. Connie’s school was far away from her home and the transport was not disability friendly. Sandie argues that it is the very inaccessible transport that makes them arrive late in business meetings, thereby limiting their ability to fully participate in the economy. There has to be a transport system; it needs to be fundamentally altered to accommodate disabled women's needs.

5.3 The Role of Civil Society Organisations, Particularly DPOs in Bridging the Economic Disparities Faced by Disabled Women

A person survives life’s challenges and makes it in life through various support systems that nurture, influence and guide the person through their life's journey. These support structures include the family, society, civil society movements and legislation amongst others. Disabled women appear to be only partially
accommodated by these structures for their economic participation. This theme interrogates the position of the participants.

5.3.1 Family beliefs subvert our economic needs
Family is the primary pillar, influence and nurturer of any individual. It is upon families that we rely, trust, expect and learn from. The family set-up does not enable disabled women to actively play a role in the economy. This is done through some families (that disabled women should depend on for support) who do not give disabled women the same opportunities as other children. This study found that disabled women do not get the same opportunities that families afford their male siblings. Grobbelaar-du Plessis (2007) found that disabled women are seen as unfit to fill the traditional role of mother, wife and economically productive members of society. Disabled women are, therefore, seen as the economically dependent.

African families in South Africa create environments that will enable their non-disabled girls to grow and get married so as to gain a dowry. In a study conducted by Lorenzo (2005, p. 80) in Cape Town, the disabled women who participated described societal beliefs as seeing only a “fat and beautiful” able bodied woman capable of getting married and therefore able to care for her family. Also in a study conducted by Malinga (2008) in Zimbabwe, in his reflective note he speaks to how disabled women are not seen as marriage material. Patty attests to this. In this study Patty relates to how this occurs in African communities. Even before disabled women can prove themselves capable of being independent and caring for their families, they are not granted that opportunity but rather thrust into perpetual dependency. Whilst young non-disabled girls may be allowed limited schooling, she felt that their disabled counterparts might not be given half a chance. The commoditisation of women denies disabled women all opportunities since they are seen as having nothing to offer (Lorenzo, 2005). Malinga (2008) relates to this commoditisation of women and how it further limits disabled women’s exposure to economic opportunities since they are not perceived as marriage material.

5.3.2 Social attitudes create barriers to accessing the economy
Disabled women and girls are commonly stereotyped as sick, helpless, childlike, dependent, in need of care, incompetent, ‘asexual’ and ‘genderless’, and their
options and opportunities are therefore greatly limited because they are seen as ‘roleless’ (Grobbelaar-du Plessis, 2007, p. 406).

Through myths and many other untruths peddled about disability, some people in society have developed negative attitudes towards disability. As a result, disabled people usually encounter attitudinal challenges from society (Grobbelaar-du Plessis, 2007). Societal attitudes towards disability and disabled women in particular shape how sections of society perceive disability. Sandie, for instance, is of the view that her proposals are not turned down on merit alone, but squarely on the basis of societal attitudes towards disability. Sandie’s argument is that social attitudes embed a sense of disability as baggage and therefore negatively mobilise sections of society against disabled people. This is further collaborated by Lorenzo’s findings (2005) on how disabled women are made to feel roleless by society. Ngwena (2005a) found that most disabled women in Kwa-Zulu Natal are not accommodated by society through being made “roleless”.

In a study in Kwa–Zulu Natal, Muthukrishna, Sokoya & Moodley (2009) found that disabled women often do not have a supportive network due to social attitudes, which is fundamental for their economic participation. In her study on disabled women’s access to training and employment in London, Ingham-Wright (1991, p. 48) says:

> [E]xisting evidence shows that the best way to combat prejudice against disabled men or women is to provide the disabled person with skills and income generating activities that help to restore productive value of disabled people in the eyes of the non-disabled and remove them from the category of helpless, dependent people who can only be a burden to others and objects of pity.

Given that Ingham-Wright (1991) confirms scientific methods of effectively changing attitudes, the developmental state has to use such methods to deal with societal attitudes. This is also given that the participants point to societal attitudes as one of the barriers preventing disabled women from participating in the economy. In this way South Africa will be creating a diverse society of equal opportunities also for disabled women.

### 5.3.3 Incapacity of DPOs to foster economic participation

The disability rights movement of South Africa was established to remove the political and economic oppression imposed on disabled people (Howell, Chalklen &
Alberts, 2006). However, the limited resources of these DPOs were also cited as a key challenge to the cause of ensuring disabled women’s economic participation. In Van Niekerk, Lorenzo and Mdloloko (2006) this challenge is also identified. The view is that for DPOs to have resources, they need programmes; therefore, DPOs’ lack of sufficient economic programmes is linked to the DPOs’ limited resources.

The other issue that the participants raised is the relevance of DPOs in the economic struggles of disabled women. This issue also talks to the potential that these organisations have as key organs to advance disabled women’s economic needs. Former Minister of Social Development, Zola Skweyiya, raises one of government’s expectations from NGOs as that to “assist in expanding access to social and economic services that create jobs and eradicate poverty among the poorest of the poor” (quoted in Barnard and Terreblance, 2001, p. 17). In disabled women’s advancement, Sandie is of the view that DPOs need to ensure that disabled women are sufficiently skilled to take up their position in the economy. The expectations of both the government and disabled women from the DPOs are the same. DPOs therefore needed to be equal in the expectations of both government and disabled women.

For a developmental state to be realised, you need a visionary leadership that will mobilise the people towards a common developmental vision (Erwin, 2008). This is supported by Makgetla (2008, p. 140) when she says “the developmental state depends on the ability of the state to mobilise the nation around economic development”. For all these to happen, you need a strong civil society movement. Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs) therefore need to be capacitated enough to be able to aid our developmental state trajectory.

This study found that one of the challenges facing DPOs is leadership. Malinga (2008) found that one of the challenges include leadership power struggles. In this process of power struggles, leadership often focuses on positions rather than delivery to its constituency. In this study, Patty was asked to take up a leadership position in her first meeting. Unlike in Malinga’s study, Patty being asked to take up a leadership position could suggest that in her case there were no leadership tussles on positions. Although there are a number of DPOs in South Africa, it appears as though leadership in those structures is lacking. The identified lack of leadership translates directly into the inability of the structures to sufficiently lobby for, implement and monitor economic participation programmes in which disabled women could benefit. On their
second part report on the economic empowerment of black disabled people in Cape Town, Lorenzo, Van Niekerk and Mdlokolo (2007) found that when leadership took responsibility for their groups, the groups prospered. In the same study they found that disabled people did not want to take up leadership positions due to the perceived pressure of holding those positions. Therefore leadership has a crucial role to play in the nurturing of disabled people’s economic emancipation programmes.

The other challenge identified by the participants was the inability of disabled males to provide space and time for their female counterparts in the structures. There appears to be a high level of male domination in the structures of these organisations. This domination, therefore, suggests that those closer to information are male, further limiting disabled women’s participation since information is also vital for economic participation. Malinga (2008) found that DPOs are weak in the area of information dissemination. The texture of the participants’ responses suggests that this weakness could be deliberate in order to maintain the ‘disabled elite’. That there are some disabled people with access to the policy makers and implementers does not suggest that all disabled people have the same access and therefore the same information. Most disabled women do not have access to the information that the ‘disabled elite’ has. This is confirmed by Malinga (2008) in his study conducted in Zimbabwe. In his study Malinga found that disabled people’s organisations are poor in information dissemination (Malinga, 2008). In the light of Malinga’s findings, it is possible that the leadership with information is the perceived ‘disabled elite’. Information on programmes and opportunities enable people to access those programmes and opportunities. It is therefore extremely vital that information on economic opportunities is spread across the disability sector in order to increase disabled women’s participation in the economy.

5.4 The Role of Education in the Economic Mainstreaming of Disabled Women

Education remains a central element in the drive for a developmental state. Education is also an important area for economic activity for disabled women as it enables them to be on the same footing as non-disabled women (Muthukrishna, Sokoya & Moodley, 2009). The education system appears to have insufficient capacity to provide disabled women with education that will strengthen their hand in economic participation. The
discussion will look separately at factors of basic education and higher education that influence provision of economic development of disabled women.

5.4.1 Poor access to basic education

Education is one of the most vital pillars to ensure that the population is innovative and contributes to the developmental discourse of the country (Makgetla, 2008).

The participants point to the Census 2001 report on disability (Stats SA, 2005) that paints a bleak picture on the education levels of disabled people: that 10.7 percent of disabled women have had no education whatsoever (Stats SA, 2005). Disabled people experience serious challenges in accessing mainstream and special schools (Ngwena, 2005b). There remains a broad reasoning for these unacceptably high levels of minimal education within the disability sector, which includes our families, communities and the system itself.

5.4.1.1 Special schools

There are few special schools leaving the vast majority of disabled women without schools to attend. The protectionist approach to disabled people is not only restricted to families of disabled women but also extends to the educational set-up. For some years now, black young disabled people in South Africa have been thrust into the special schools set-up. Special schools further isolate disabled women from society and economic opportunities (Muthukrishna, Sokoya & Moodley, 2009). The special schools do not have sufficient capacity to propel disabled women into the economic mainstream. Special schools also lack the funding to create well-rounded people (Soudien & Baxen, 2006). These schools continue to be divided along the racial lines of apartheid in terms of resources. This then suggests that young black disabled women would have lesser resources than their white counterparts. Sandie was able to relate to a special school that always faces possible closure due to limited resources.

5.4.1.2 Mainstream schools

According to a participant in the study, the situation of limited mainstream schools that accommodate disabled children has led to disabled children as old as twelve years not having seen the inside of a school. The White Paper on Inclusive Education 6 (DoE, 2001) provides for the creation of a universal schooling system that will allow
all children access to the same schooling system regardless of disability. In this way the system fights the cocooning of disabled women and children into schools that provide limited opportunities. In this study there were clear lines between those who were born disabled and those who became disabled with time in as far as schooling is concerned. For instance, the ones who acquired their disability had better access to the schooling system than their counterparts who were born disabled.

5.4.2 Higher Education and Learnerships

A developmental approach has to be applied within the Higher Education and Training establishment so as to ensure that disabled women bolster their chances of participating in the economy. One of those approaches may be the provision of reasonable accommodation to learners accessing higher education or training programmes (Ngwena, 2004).

5.4.2.1 Higher education

Policy documents around higher education correctly position disabled students as a target group for accessing and completing higher education in order to broaden social and economic inclusion (Howell, 2006). The skewed manner of resourcing the schooling system for disabled people reflects, therefore, a skewed representation of disabled women in the higher education sector. Against this backdrop, only 2.9 percent of disabled women have been to a higher education institution (Stats SA, 2005). In this study the researcher deliberately chose two women with degrees and two with no degree in order to explore the comparative depth of the challenges of accessing higher education for black young disabled people. These findings suggest that the two women with degrees credit their ability to go through basic and higher education to the support their families provided them. The study found that without intersectoral support, disabled women are most likely to not access higher education.

Howell (2006) found that the few disabled women and men who get into the higher education band experience enormous challenges such as an inflexible curriculum. Inevitably this leads to a high dropout rate. This is collaborated by Sandie who is of the view that even the small numbers of disabled women who access higher education continue to be sidelined by issues of rigid and disability non-accommodating curricula.
5.4.2.2 Learnerships

In the period post 1994, the higher education framework has been bolstered to incorporate skills development through learnerships. The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) regulates how learnerships and other skills development programmes should be implemented. The government further established well-resourced implementing institutions such as the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs).

Makgetla (2008) advocates that a country expresses its seriousness to development through its investment in skills development. The South Korean and Singapore governments charge 5 per cent towards the skills levy (Makgetla, 2008) whilst South Africa charges 1 per cent (DTI, 2010). Also within the South African context there are disability quotas for skills development intake. The NSDS prescribes a 4 per cent quota for disability intake.

Due to the monthly payment made to learnership participants, disabled women seem to have embraced this opportunity. In this study it was found that the stipends are more appetising to disabled women as they are sometimes higher that the disability grant. This study further identified the non-guaranteed employment on completion of the learnerships as a shortcoming. This then leads to disabled women being permanently engaged from one learnership to another without gaining full-time employment. The disability targets in learnerships have not been met by most SETAs. Although these skills programmes have provided relatively limited opportunities for disabled women, there has to be greater enforcement to make sure that the targets are met. Surely these skills programmes provide the necessary capacity to effectively deliver a developmental state, therefore serious interventions are required towards ensuring that SETAs are meeting targets.

5.5 Conclusion

The discussion chapter has been able to lift out very important issues to be considered in order to make South Africa a developmental state that will foster economic participation for its disabled women. These include education and skills development, transport, economic interventions and support structures for economic emancipation.
The next chapter will make recommendations that can be utilised by the developmental state in order to advance disabled women’s economic participation. It will also provide a conclusion to the study.
CHAPTER 6

Recommendations and Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide recommendations and a conclusion for the study. The recommendations will follow the flow from the (previous) discussions chapter, namely:

1. The role of the state and legislation in promoting the economic mainstreaming of disabled women.
2. The role of civil society organisations in bridging the economic disparities faced by disabled women.
3. The role of education in the economic mainstreaming of disabled women.

This chapter will consist of recommendations, probable future studies and conclusion.

6.2 Recommendations

6.2.1 The role of the state in promoting the economic mainstreaming of disabled women

6.2.1.1 Disabled women’s positive energy must be embraced

This study found that not all disabled women lack the confidence to engage the business fraternity. It is therefore vital for disabled women lacking in the confidence to find ways to lift up their self-confidence. It is important for the disabled women to always keep in mind that “development is a product of struggle by the people” (Lorenzo, Van Niekerk & Mdloko, 2007, p. 433). Therefore disabled women should strive for these opportunities knowing that it will not be an easy road. In this regard,
employers and DFIs should focus on what disabled women bring to the table and not on areas where they lack.

In so far as the young women with the confidence and ability to engage the business and economic areas are concerned, they have to be encouraged to further their engagements with the sectors. In this regard, the business community needs to be seen to be encouraging these women through mainstreaming the disabled women in their economic programmes. This will provide positive black young disabled female role models which will help the broad population of disabled women and the disability sector in general.

6.2.1.2 Policy implementation has to be improved
The participants acknowledge that South Africa has progressive legislation that could assist disabled women in their endeavours. However, they highlighted the low levels of implementation of such policies in particular as they relate to disability.

6.2.1.2.1 Broaden BBBEE to accommodate disabled women
Acknowledging the objectives of BBBEE, this study found that disabled women and disabled people have not sufficiently benefited from BBBEE. Furthermore this study found cronyism as an issue that stifles BBBEE’s inclusivity of disabled women. The study further found that BBBEE has benefited only a few disabled people and in so doing, created a ‘disability elite’.

BBBEE has to be truly broadened in order to fully accommodate and benefit disabled women. In this regard we need an entity that could monitor disabled women’s reaping of BBBEE fruits. This institution will, amongst others, actively monitor the broadening of the pie to the disability sector and those not politically connected. All the DFIs and other agencies would have to be monitored and given equity targets to reach by this entity. This entity should also focus on subverting the tender rigging and fronting practices. The BBBEE scoring cards also need to increase points for disability ownership and not fundamentally focus on the pricing structure of bidders.
6.2.1.2.2 *We need to vigorously implement all empowerment legislation*

At a policy level, there needs to be strategic shifts aimed at increasing disabled women’s access to finance. This should move beyond being rhetorical, and should actually have measurable indicators.

As one of the empowerment policies, the EEA needs to be tightened. In so doing, the EEA has to have timeframes attached towards its realisation. The targets alone seem not to work as illustrated by various Employment Equity Commission reports (2006, 2010). For this reason, workplaces need to be fully trained on the importance of a diverse workforce. Also there may be a need to attach equity targets to performance contracts of Ministers and Director Generals. The private sector will have to be regulated through hefty fines imposed on those not meeting the employment equity targets.

6.2.1.3 *Financial institutions have to come to the party*

The risk analysis model used by many financing institutions prevents disabled women’s economic participation. A decisive interventionist state has to work on other models that could encourage disabled women to participate in the economic mainstream. These models may not necessarily look at business history or collateral but some qualitative characteristics of the disabled women seeking seed funding or business opportunities.

Although a separate disability specific funding institution may not be necessary (in the light of mainstreaming against separate development), such a possibility may have to be considered since the risk analysis funding model has not yielded the desired results for disabled women. This entity should fund disabled people’s businesses. Some of the participants raised concerns with the current DFIs’ interventions towards the disability sector.

6.2.1.4 *A complete transport overhaul is required for disabled people to fully participate in the economy*

Government and the private sector need to invest more into accessible transport. Such a transport system should be safe, reliable and efficient. In this way disabled women would be enabled to go to places of learning, work and business.
6.2.2 The role of society and legislation in bridging the economic disparities faced by disabled women

6.2.2.1 Families have to create home environments that encourage economic participation
In order to create homes that are pillars for the advancement of disabled women’s economic mainstreaming, families need to:

- Expose disabled women to the same opportunities as other children.
- Move away from some African views that disabled women are not marriage material.
- Always strive to build their children’s self-confidence regardless of disability or gender.

6.2.2.2 A change in societal attitudes goes a long way
Societies need to provide positive role models for disabled women who will allow disabled women an opportunity to model their development around those individuals.

Community members in business have to be encouraged to work on mentoring disabled women in their communities.

The negative societal attitudes towards disability have to be uprooted. This will help facilitate inclusion of disabled women in economic and other opportunities.

6.2.2.3 DPOs have to be capacitated
In order to have responsive DPOs there needs to be:

- Sufficient funding directed at disability organisations with clear programmes on the emancipation of disabled women.
- Relevant capacity building programmes that seek to advance economic participation.
- Leadership development programmes that address a broad range of issues including those of gender, information dissemination, etc.
- Recruitment of skilled people into the sector, perhaps even beyond disabled people.
- A central disability funding pot (where a threshold for all government funding into disability is coordinated and distributed) that should not limit DPOs’ fundraising efforts; but rather encourage and strengthen DPOs’ fundraising drives.
6.2.3  The role of education in the economic mainstreaming of disabled women

6.2.3.1  It all starts with basic education

The findings revealed that schools are far from where black young disabled people stay and are largely inaccessible. When planning to build schools, we need to take into account the proximity of that school to the population. Universal access has to be achieved because an inaccessible environment is more disabling than impairment (Ngwena, 2004).

Further, there has to be:

- more special schools built for the learners who may need to use such schools;
- a non-blanket approach that thrusts all disabled children into special schools – inclusive education and mainstreaming should also be encouraged as not all disabled people require special schools;
- more funding ploughed into special schools;
- a focus on building only inclusive schools (based on universal access) rather than any other;
- better resources directed at the empowerment of disabled women through education which encourage better school to work transition from secondary school level.

6.2.3.2  Make higher education and learnerships more accessible

There needs to be a consideration for the provision of reasonable accommodation and assistive devices to students at tertiary level. In this way disabled women are provided the necessary infrastructure to enable them to competitively participate in higher education.

Disabled students have to be supported by properly formed disability units and other structures such as student organisations that focus on disabled students. This will help the students overcome their daily hurdles such as rigid curricula within higher education.

In so far as skills development is concerned, there needs to be clear exit opportunities for learners entering into learnerships. In this way one can prevent learners from rotating in learnerships without being freed into the mainstream economy. In the light of lower numbers of disabled people who finished matric, there
have to be bridging programmes that SETAs use to take disabled women through to the mainstream programmes.

6.3 Areas for Possible Future Research

This study identifies three areas for possible future research. These areas are:

- The feasibility of a disability development funding institution (funding disabled people’s businesses);
- The impact of learnership and other skills development strategies in bridging economic disparities;
- The feasibility of an entity that mobilises resources for disability organisations.
- Similar research on other disabilities.

6.4 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore how South Africa as a developmental state can advance the economic emancipation of disabled women. It explored the broad areas of state intervention in the diversification of the economy towards the disability sector, with a specific focus on disabled women. This conclusion is largely based on the views of the participants.

This study found that although there are interventions towards the absorption of disabled women into the economy; there remain fundamental barriers. These barriers include DFIs’ funding models, lack of access to education, poor transport infrastructure and legislation implementation.

The study further suggested means that could assist in the removal of the barriers. These means included high investment towards transport infrastructure, relaxing of current funding criteria, opening of the doors of learning to disabled women and legislative focus areas.

The study also highlighted areas that may require further research. These are funding institutions directed at disabled people specifically and the other of funding disabled people’s organisations specifically. These organs may help boost disabled women’s and disabled people’s economic participation.
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Appendices
APPENDIX 1

Open-Ended Interview Questions

1. For how long have you been in the disability rights movement and how did you get involved in the sector?
2. What can you tell me about disabled women's participation in the economy?
3. Do you think there are any barriers for disabled women's participation, and if so, could you tell me what they are?
4. Is there anything in disabled women's upbringing which is important for participating in the economy?
5. What is the state doing in addressing disabled women's economic inequalities?
6. Do you know of any equity strategies and policies in place to ensure that disabled women can participate in the economic mainstream? If yes, describe them.
7. How have these strategies helped or hindered disabled women's economic participation?
8. What should the government do to ensure that disabled women economically participate?
9. What should others, like disabled women themselves or civil society organisations do so that disabled women may participate in the economy?
Interview Information Letter

Dear Participant

This letter is an invitation for your participation in a study that I, Olwethu Sipuka am conducting for a Masters in Philosophy: Disability Studies Degree at the University of Cape Town.

Research Title
“\textit{A study using disabled women leaders experiences to examine how a developmental state can deal with economic challenges faced by disabled women}”

Research Aims
The research aims to discover economic challenges faced by disabled women from disabled women leaders so as to ascertain the kind of interventions that should be deployed to ensure disabled women's economic mainstreaming.

I intend using the findings of the research as an advocacy tool in strengthening of the case for economic emancipation of disabled women.

Note that
Your participation is voluntary and you may decide to withdraw from the study at any time if you so wish, without any negative consequences. All information you provide will be confidential and the study has no known risks. No sensitive information will be published without your permission.

Please feel free to contact me and I will clarify any questions you may have at any given point. This interview will take place for an hour and that I may come back should I require more information.

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Yours Sincerely,

__________

Olwethu Sipuka
Tel: 012 309 7800
Fax:012 309 7822
Cell: 078 456 1411
Email: osipuka@gmail.com
Consent Form

I have received the letter of information and understand the information about the study being conducted by Olwethu Sipuka for a Masters in Philosophy: Disability Studies Degree at the University of Cape Town.

I am aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in the research. I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time I wish to. I was informed that my participation is voluntary and may decide to withdraw from the study at any time I wish, without any negative consequences. All information I provide will be confidential and the study has no known risks. I am also aware that the raw data collected will be kept safe for a period of six months thereafter destroyed. No sensitive information will be published without my permission. Given my standing in the disability sector I also consent to my name being publicised.

I was also informed that I am free to contact the researcher and be clarified on any question I may have.

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree freely to participate in this study.

YES / NO

Participant Name: ____________________________ (Please print)

Participant Signature: _________________________

Date: ____________________________

Researcher contact details: Olwethu Sipuka
Tel: 012 309 7800
Fax: 012 309 7822
Cell: 078 456 1411
Email: osipuka@gmail.com
APPENDIX 4

Ethical Approval

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Health Sciences Faculty
Research Ethics Committee
Room ES2-24 Groote Schuur Hospital Old Main Building
Observatory 7925
Telephone [021] 406 6338 • Facsimile [021] 406 6411
e-mail: nosi.nyawu@uct.ac.za

09 December 2008

REC REF: 482/2008

Mr O Sipuka
C/o Prof T Lorenzo
Health & Rehab Sciences

Dear Mr Sipuka

PROJECT TITLE: A STUDY TO EXPLORE THE ROLE OF A DEVELOPMENTAL STATE IN BRIDGING THE ECONOMIC GAP BETWEEN DISABLED WOMEN AND NON-DISABLED WOMEN.

Thank you for submitting your study to the Research Ethics Committee for review.

Before formal approval can be granted, please address the following issue/s raised:

- Please include contact details in the informed consent form for the Human Research Ethics Committee in the Faculty of Health Sciences (Prof Max Blockman 021 406 6496)
- Please indicate in the consent form what will happen to the raw data at the end of the study.
- Minor typo: add an apostrophe to leaders' in the title of the study in the consent form.

Please note that the ongoing ethical conduct of the study remains the responsibility of the principal investigator.

Please quote the REC. REF in all your correspondence.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

PROFESSOR M BLOCKMAN

CHAIRPERSON, HSF HUMAN ETHICS