

***We should be given a chance: Identifying barriers
and enablers from Disabled People's employment in
the Office of the Premier of the Eastern Cape
Provincial Government, South Africa***

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Abstract

Disabled people have not been part of the employment processes, especially within government. They have always been encouraged to pursue income-generating projects like sewing, knitting or carpentry. These ventures have resulted in very few disabled people becoming employed in the formal sector and thus being part of the economic growth of the country. The aim of the study was to determine the barriers and enablers to the employment of disabled people in the Provincial Government of the Eastern Cape.

The literature review investigates the reasons why disabled people have not been involved in mainstream activities. It also elaborates on why disabled people have felt the need to advocate for their inclusion in mainstream activities, especially employment, and how this lobby has led to the inclusion of disability in the Constitution, the Bill of Rights (Republic of South Africa, 1996), and further the formulation and adoption of the Employment Equity Act (Department of Labour, 1998). Literature on the barriers to the employment of disabled people is lacking, and most writers refer to the challenges of disabled people who are already employed.

Using a qualitative, descriptive research design, a case study approach was utilised to explore the employment experience of disabled people in Office of the Premier (OTP) of the Eastern Cape Provincial Government. Purposive sampling was used to select participants from the OTP, an NGO working in the disability field and members of a Disabled People's Organisation. Data collection included semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion. The interviews were transcribed, and the concepts that emerged were grouped into categories and then further grouped together to form a theme. Three themes emerged, namely, *Paying lip service*, *Perceptions of disability* and *Giving disabled people opportunities*. The discussion explored the disabling and enabling factors under three subheadings: firstly, creating accessible environments; secondly, transforming recruitment strategies for implementing policies; thirdly, challenging and changing attitudes and myths; and lastly, integrating skills development as an area which plays a central role in

ensuring that all the abovementioned factors result in the employment of disabled people.

However, the study shows that despite the existence of the legislative framework, disabled people still continue to be unemployed. Recommendations included the suggestion of road shows and sensitisation programmes undertaken to assist in fast tracking the employment of disabled persons in the Office of the Premier of the Eastern Cape Provincial Government.

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Definition of terms

Able bodied people/non-disabled people are people who do not have an impairment (author's interpretation).

Disability is "the loss or limitation of opportunities that prevent people with impairments from taking part in the normal life of a community on an equal basis with others due to physical and social barriers" (Barnes in Marks, 1999:79).

Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPOs) are those organisations that are operated and owned by disabled people themselves.

A disabled person is a "person who has a long-term or recurring physical or mental impairment which substantially limits their prospects of entry into, or advancement in employment" (Department of Labour, 1998). This term is used interchangeably with "person with a disability" or "people with disabilities"

Impairment is the term used for an individual's condition, that is, physical, sensory, intellectual, behavioural (Stone, 1999).

Open labour market (OLM) means a place open to public competition for services where services of goods are offered for sale and where labour (the workforce) provides services and skills (*Reader's Digest Illustrated Dictionary*, 1984).

PERSAL is the computer software program for the administration and management of salaries in the Public Service Sector.

Physical barriers refer to those in the environment, such as architectural, structural and institutional barriers.

Special Programmes Unit is comprised of the Office on the Status of Women (OSW), Office on the Status of Disabled Persons (OSDP) and the Office on the Rights of the Child and Elderly Persons (ORC&EP). The Special Programmes Unit is a Directorate within the Office of the Premier of the Eastern Cape and there are

similar structures within other departments in the province (Eastern Cape Strategic Planning Document, 2006/7).

The researcher's story

As a disabled person, I have experienced some of the prejudices and stereotyped attitudes that discourage disabled people from participating meaningfully in everyday life, especially within the open labour market. A few years back, I was travelling in a taxi when the man sitting next to me asked whether I could sew. When I said no, he asked why, as he felt I should be able to do something with my hands. He actually stated that it is necessary that I should by all means be engaged in sewing and if I could not, I should try and get some training because I would not survive without the art of sewing. This experience brings voice to the historical exclusion of disabled people from the workplace, as they have been regarded as incapable and therefore as needing to acquire other basic skills in order to survive.

I am a disabled woman and the Deputy Director in the Office on the Status of Disabled Persons (OSDP) in the Office of the Premier of the Eastern Cape Province. The Office on the Status of Disabled Persons is responsible for facilitating, co-ordinating and monitoring the integration of disability into plans, programmes and strategies of government at all levels, that is, national, provincial and local government. Disabled people approach the OSDP on a regular basis with their challenges and experiences.

I joined the Office of the Premier in 1999. One of the first projects that we undertook in 2000 was an audit of the provincial government to determine the number of disabled employees within administration in all departments and regions. The audit was also aimed at educating and sensitising government officials about the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (Office of the Deputy President, 1997), the Employment Equity Act, (Department of Labour, 1998) and issues of accessibility for disabled people.

Subsequent to the audit, the OSDP on numerous occasions intervened in cases where disabled people suffered discrimination in departments throughout the province. Two of the cases are outlined below, one referring to my personal experience, and the

other to a disabled person who approached the office with challenges in the workplace.

When I joined the Office of the Premier I experienced some of the barriers alluded to in this study. On the first day that I reported for work I had to stay with the security for three hours because there was no office on the ground level where they could accommodate me. Ultimately they decided to give me the day off so that they could vacate someone in order to give me a work station. When I reported on the second day, I discovered that they had vacated one of the offices downstairs, but the whole office or directorate that I would be working with and reporting to was on the first floor. There was and there still is no lift to get there. Therefore, I struggle along by always sending messengers to and fro with my stuff. This situation was not a comfortable position because I had to be overly nice to people in order for me to get assistance and in order to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in my work. It frustrated me a lot and I was and I still am angry because the situation has not changed for other disabled people who continue to experience similar difficulties. The situation changed for me when we moved our offices to another building.

Another case is that of a disabled young woman who is currently employed in one of the departments of the Eastern Cape government. She was stationed at a local service office. All offices were housed in park homes and in order to access the different offices one had to climb makeshift steps. One park home that was utilised for bathroom facilities had no steps at all. As a result she could not access the bathroom when she was at work.

The issue was reported to the Office on the Status of Disabled Persons and meetings between the OSDP and the department resulted in her being transferred to an office that had accessible bathrooms. To compound her problems, because she is a wheelchair user, she was always assisted by a family member or a helper who wheeled her to work. However, on rainy days the road leading to the office would be muddy to such an extent that she could not get to work. When she was moved to the other office her problem was that the office was further from her place of residence

and she needed motorised transport to get there. Initially we thought the problem had been solved, but when I last spoke to her she was in constant communication with her immediate supervisors in order to make her working environment more comfortable.

Although these two stories refer to disabled people who are already in employment, they indicate that accessibility is one of the major barriers that disabled people face both before and during employment. This study therefore explores this phenomenon further.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Disability has historically been regarded predominantly as a health and welfare issue and state intervention was channelled through welfare institutions. These institutions took on the role and responsibility of caring for disabled people. Their intentions, although good, crippled disabled people and created a society where disabled people were and still are dependent on other people. These institutions further spoke for and took decisions on behalf of disabled people. Russel (2000:13) confirms that society still largely perceives disability as a medical problem. He further notes that society associates disability with physiological, anatomical or mental defects and holds these conditions responsible for the disabled person's lack of full participation in the economy. However, the social model of disability views the circumstances of disabled people and the discrimination they face as socially created phenomena having little to do with the impairments of the disabled (Office of the Deputy President, 1997). The social model emphasises two things: the shortcomings of society in respect of disability; and the abilities and capabilities of disabled people themselves.

Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) developed as a direct action against the oppression of the medical and rehabilitation model of professional and social workers. Disabled people decided to unite and speak with one voice in terms of representing themselves in matters affecting them. It was for this reason that they participated in the formulation of the South African Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Chapter 2 of the Bill of Rights of the South African Constitution guarantees equal rights to everyone, including disabled people. Discrimination based on disability is specifically mentioned in Clause 4 and states thus that

the State may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sexual

orientation, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth (Republic of South Africa Constitutional Act, 1996:7).

Based on this policy document, disabled people influenced the inclusion of disability as one of the targeted areas that had to be addressed in the Employment Equity Act (Department of Labour, 1998).

The majority of disabled people in South Africa have been excluded from the mainstream of society and have thus been prevented from accessing fundamental social, political and economic rights. The exclusion experienced by disabled people is the result of a range of factors, including the political, social and economic inequalities of the former apartheid system, as well as social attitudes, which have perpetuated stereotypes of disabled people as being dependent and in need of care.

The White Paper on An Integrated National Disability Strategy (INDS) (Office of the Deputy President, 1997:3) confirms the exclusion of disabled people in political, social and economic areas by stating that

the key forms of exclusion responsible for the cumulative disadvantage of people with disabilities are poverty, unemployment and social isolation.

The INDS states that unemployment remains a fundamental problem affecting the majority of people with disabilities and their families (Office of the Deputy President, 1997). In the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 1994) employment was identified as an area to be focused on. It is reflected as follows:

States should recognise the principle that persons with disabilities must be empowered to exercise their human rights, particularly in the field of employment. In both rural and urban areas they must have equal opportunities for productive and gainful employment in the labour market (United Nations, 1994:25).

The 2001 South African Census (Statistics South Africa, 2003) indicated that there were 2 255 982 people with various forms of disability. This constitutes 5% of the total population.

According to the Commission for Employment Equity Annual Report (Department of Labour, 2003) employers reported a total of 26 539 employees with disabilities, which represents 1% of all employees included in the 2002 employment equity reports. In 2004, employment equity reports revealed that only 2 007 people with disabilities were employed in the public service (Department of Public Service and Administration, 2004).

A study conducted by the Development Bank of South Africa (Development Bank of Southern Africa, 2005) evaluated the employment of disabled people during the period 1994–2004 and found that disabled people continue to face challenges in respect of employment opportunities.

The Employment Equity Act (Department of Labour, 1998) was promulgated therefore to redress some of the challenges of the past to achieve equity in the workplace by

- (a) promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination; and
- (b) implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups, in order to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce.

As a result of the Employment Equity Act, the Code of Good Practice on Disability and the Technical Assistance Manual (Department of Labour, 2002) were formulated and adopted in August 2002. However, the employment of disabled people remains a challenge, as was confirmed by the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) in a road show undertaken in July 2004.

The Council focused on people with disabilities and stated that disabled people in the Northern Cape are still facing challenges due to lack of education and skills.

The Minister of Labour, Mr Membathisi Mdladlana, noted during his 2004 budget speech that there remains much to be done in the area of employment equity to provide opportunities to blacks, women and people with disabilities so that they can be equitably represented across all levels and occupations. As at the end of March 2004, the Office of the Premier (OTP) in the Eastern Cape had employed 389 people (PERSAL, 2004). The statistics of the department reveal that there are only three, (about 0.77%) disabled people employed within the OTP.

Problem statement

Although the employment of disabled people is happening in the province, it is still minimal. The overall picture in the public service is rather bleak and this motivated the Public Service Commission, as part of its monitoring and evaluation of affirmative action policies in the South African Public Service, to initiate an investigation of how far the South African Public Service has progressed towards employing disabled people.

The Public Service Commission Report (Department of Public Service and Administration, 2002), states that the objectives of the Public Service Commission project relevant to this study are

- (a) to determine progress made nationally and provincially in narrowing the gap between disabled and non-disabled employees;
- (b) to establish the reasons why disabled people have not been employed; and
- (c) to determine the barriers that make it difficult for disabled people to access or enjoy their work.

The Public Service Commission Report on research undertaken in 2002 showed that government is not even near the halfway mark. It found that disabled people comprise approximately 0.25% of public service personnel (Department of Public

Service and Administration, 2002). According to the Department of Public Services and Administration, disabled people remain a marginalised group despite the enabling policy. Furthermore, the view is that the impact of the Employment Equity Act in the public service has been minimal.

The results of the audit conducted in 2000 by the OSDP does not give a true reflection of the status of the Eastern Cape Province because the audit forms were not completed properly and the information supplied was not adequate (Office on the Status of Disabled Persons, 2001). Departments at the time of the audit were not properly organised. As a result, the task of following up on the audit was given to any official who was available and the project was not given the attention it deserved. The justification for this statement is that at the time of the audit the majority of departments had not employed designated officials in the Special Programmes Units. Consequently, departments would assign junior officials or the people who were not absorbed in the organogram of the department to oversee tasks of the Special Programmes Unit.

In summary, the audit revealed that there were 0.05% employees with disabilities within the provincial government. The audit also revealed that the majority of disabled people who were audited had been within the system for a number of years before the advent of the Employment Equity Act. Thus the numbers did not represent new recruitment as a result of the Act. These reports indicated that the implementation of the Employment Equity Act is not adhered to by the very department that is charged with co-ordinating and monitoring the integration of disability.

Purpose of the study

When posts are advertised and disabled people apply, there are various reasons given informally about why they are not employed (Office of the Premier, 2001). The reason for investigating why disabled people are not being employed is based on the fact that government had set a target in 2000 that by 2004, government and the

private sector should have employed 2% disabled people. The Department of Public Service and Administration therefore prepared a cabinet memo proposing that the 2% target set in 2000 (Public Service Commission, 2002) and which should have been achieved by 2005 should still apply and it should be achieved by the 31 March 2009 (Department of Public Service and Administration, 2006).

This target will be achieved by identifying the barriers and enablers to disabled people's employment in the Open Labour Market. The findings of this research will inform the process as to how disabled people can be assisted in the employment process.

Research question

The research question addressed in this study is: What are the barriers and enablers to the employment of disabled people in the Office of the Premier of the Eastern Cape Provincial Government?

Aim

The study aimed to explore the factors influencing the employment of disabled people within the Office of the Premier of the Eastern Cape Provincial Government.

Objectives of the study

- (a) to identify the barriers that hinder the employment of disabled people;
- (b) to describe enablers that would accelerate the employment of disabled people;
and
- (c) to make recommendations to the Office of the Premier of the Eastern Cape Provincial Government.

Chapter 2

Literature review

There is very little literature illuminating the reasons why most disabled people are not employed in the South African context. Most of the literature provides employers with guidelines on how to employ disabled people. The literature, both internationally and locally, clearly indicates that there are barriers to the employment of disabled people.

Internationally, there are some reasons or arguments that have been given to explain the low employment of disabled people. Westmorland and Pennock (1995) refer to the March of Dimes Report, which stressed that the high percentage of people with disabilities who are excluded from the workforce was the result of low self-esteem experienced by people with disabilities. The report highlighted lack of education as being one of the major factors hindering the employment of disabled people. According to Westmorland and Pennock (1995), two Canadian studies revealed discrimination by employers who often could not see beyond the specific limitations of people's disabilities in order to recognise their abilities, skills and qualifications. Therefore, many disabled job seekers had given up dealing with the discriminatory employment system. The Council of Canadians with Disabilities Report (1994), addressed to the Canadian Government, also stressed that physical and attitudinal barriers remained a problem for the employment of disabled people.

Locally, the issue of the unemployment of disabled was identified through the development of the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (INDS) (Office of the Deputy President, 1997) Thus, employment was one of the policy areas that was focused on. The INDS (*ibid*) has attributed the extremely high levels of unemployment amongst disabled people to a number of factors, which included low skills levels due to inadequate education; discriminatory attitudes and

practices by employers; inaccessible transport; inaccessible and unsupportive work environments; and ignorance in society.

Silver and Koopman (2000:16) state that

a national study undertaken in 1999 and published in January found that 88% of people with disabilities were unemployed and seeking work. Furthermore, it was established that there are approximately 2.5 million people with disabilities in South Africa representing around 6% of the population

Brading and Curtis (2000) concur that disabled people are under-represented in higher level jobs. They argued that it may be hard to pinpoint the reason for the low employment rate of disabled people apart from the fact that employers are reluctant to risk employing an unknown entity such as disabled people, particularly if they equate disability with ill health.

The report on a study undertaken by Disability Empowerment Concerns Trust (DEC) in 2004 on Employment Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities cite some of the causes of extremely high levels of unemployment amongst people with disabilities as inadequate access to education for children with disabilities; discriminatory attitudes and practices of employers; inaccessible public transport; and ignorance within society. In discussing disability and development, Stone (1999:33) states that “most people are so frightened by anything to do with disability that their reaction to including it on the agenda is inevitably one of rejection”. She goes on to say further that

proponents of this view do not understand that disabled people are quite capable of participating, but are usually prevented from participating by other’s attitudes and social barriers.

There are myths and stereotypes with regard to disability that range from the moment of birth to the functioning and mobility of disabled persons. Burton and Hyatt (1998)

confirm the myth that disabled people have limitations because of their impairments which render them less productive than non-disabled people.

Hogan (2003:93) defined these myths and stereotypes by stating that “[d]isability myths are the ideas, standards, practices and habits born of misinformation, thoughtlessness and prejudice that are often applied to those with physical or mental limitations”. He further identified myths related to increased costs, increased danger, decreased productivity, and the one on specialness. It is important to understand how each of each of these myths relate specifically to the employment of disabled people.

The myth of increased costs applies to the assumption that to employ disabled people would be costly for the organisation or company because ramps would have to be built, door handles lowered and software purchased and installed to assist blind and deaf people. Other businesses fear that by employing disabled people they would experience increased health and disability insurance costs.

Exemplifying the myth of increased danger, one woman became disabled in a car accident. When she returned to her work situation, that is, the classroom at school, parents and the school governing body refused her entry, because she would be a danger to herself and would frighten their children (anecdote outside of the study). Hogan (2003) emphasises this position when he states that the reason why employers are fearful of employing disabled people is that they perceive that this will increase the danger to others around them, including fellow employees, customers and the public.

The myth of decreased productivity, as Russel (2000) puts it, refers to employers characteristically assuming that they will receive lower productivity from a disabled worker. In the *South African Journal of Labour Relations* (2002:15) both Campbell (1996) and Cronan (2000) state that some employers also fear that disabled workers are more likely to be absent from work because of illness.

The myth of specialness refers to the tendency for people to regard disabled people as being more different than they really are, and that they would require more unusual provisions than otherwise necessary. Hogan (2003) states that many people view disabled people as being so special that everything associated with them has to be extraordinary. This can be related to the fact that there are special schools, special needs in education and a special programmes unit where disability is one of the targeted areas.

Silver and Koopman (2000:17) further refer to a study conducted by the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE) where it was found that most of the people interviewed, both from rural and urban areas, experienced marginalisation and exclusion from and by society. The process of marginalisation starts at home and extends into most primary, secondary and tertiary education facilities.

Some private companies in the Eastern Cape have employed disabled people because of initiatives by the disability sector in the province. In a report on a study entitled "Economic Empowerment promotes Sustainable Livelihoods of Disabled People" (McLaren, et al. 2003), it was found that the insight and experience that Eskom (Southern Region Distribution in East London) has had in addressing racial and gender equity could be used to address disability equity. The company found that raising awareness on disability is part of the broader management of diversity. Another engineering company, Fabkomp, situated in King William's Town had employed about 25 disabled people at an engineering plant. The company has demonstrated that integrating disabled people into the workplace is empowering and assists able-bodied people to understand the importance of tolerance and inclusion.

The findings of the Public Service Commission study on employment equity implementation reflect the limited progress that has been made in enhancing the status and representation of disabled people in the public service (Department of Public Service and Administration, 2002). The environment in the workplace within departments and provincial administrations are far from significantly supportive to disabled employees. In addition, the training and development of disabled people

should be accelerated in order to enable them to add greater value to organisations, because the majority tend to be employed in the lower levels or ranks.

The employment of disabled people does not seem to be increasing at a satisfactory rate, despite the findings and recommendations in the previously mentioned report (Department of Public Service and Administration, 2002). Although it may be too soon to expect this 2002 report to have resulted in a significant difference, the Employment Equity Act (1998) and the Code of Good Practice (draft 2000, finalised 2002) should however have started to make an impact on the experiences of disabled people.

A recent study undertaken for the International Labour Organisation by the Thabo Mbeki Development Trust for Disabled People (TMDT), DPSA and the Human Sciences Research Council (Thabo Mbeki Development Trust for Disabled People, 2006) still refers to the lack of jobs, lack of awareness of employers, lack of skills training, as well as the inaccessibility of the workplace as some of the barriers to the employment of disabled people.

In summary, the literature, both internationally and locally, confirmed that there are barriers to the employment of disabled people and that some of the barriers are perceived negative attitudes or structural barriers.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter gives an overview of the research method and process used in the study on the employment of disabled people in the Provincial Government of the Eastern Cape. Furthermore, it presents the strategies and techniques that were employed to obtain data, as well as the ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

Research design

The research was conducted as a qualitative, descriptive study to explore the employment of disabled people in the provincial government of the Eastern Cape and focussed mainly on the Office of the Premier. Qualitative methods produced detailed information in the form of words, which were subjected to a form of analysis that would make sense out of these words (Marlow, 1998). A case study approach was employed in an attempt to understand people's perceptions, perspectives and to gain an understanding of a particular situation and context (De Vos, 2002).

Study population

The study population included the staff of the Office of the Premier in Bisho, Eastern Cape; REHAB, a non-governmental organisation in East London; and disabled people in Ginsberg and Bisho, the latter areas are suburbs in King William's Town.

REHAB is an organisation that works with the community and individuals so as to attain the highest possible level of achievement for all, especially for those with visual, mental and physical disabilities. The organisation was tasked by the disability sector of the Eastern Cape to house and operationalise a job placement programme for disabled people.

The organisation is still operating the programme and has been successful in placing a number of disabled people in the open labour market, for example, Pick 'n Pay, Eskom, Shoprite and Fabkomp Engineering company. The organisation has also developed and maintains a database of unemployed disabled people seeking employment.

The setting for this research, that is, the provincial government and specifically the Office of the Premier, represents the centre for both policy making and policy implementation in the provincial public service in the Eastern Cape. The Office of the Premier is the overarching department responsible for co-ordinating policy planning, formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Therefore, the Office of the Premier should provide the model for employment practice throughout the rest of the province.

The OTP had the following branches (Office of the Premier, 2003):

- Management: This programme relates to the support function provided to the Premier by the Premier's core staff.
- Cabinet Office: This branch includes sub-programmes, such as Provincial Strategy and Planning, Intergovernmental and Protocol Services, Children, Disability and Gender affairs, Communications and the Cabinet Secretariat.
- Corporate Services: The programme is tasked with rendering support and administrative services to the Office of the Premier, and, in the case of the Provincial Government Information Technology Officer, to the whole province.
- Organisational Development and Governance (ODG): Amongst other responsibilities, the programme provides policy advice on transformational change and ODG related matters leading to public sector transformation, strategic leadership on ODG matters, support policy implementation and innovative service delivery strategies and development, research and implementation of human resource development strategies.

- Shared Legal Services: This programme provides assistance with policy, legislation development, legal advice, training and education to provincial departments.
- Shared Internal Services: this programme provides an independent and objective assurance and consulting function to the Eastern Cape Provincial Government by developing a systematic and disciplined approach to evaluate systems of internal control, risk management and governance processes to assist the Accounting Officers and Management in achieving their objectives.

The divisions of the Office of the Premier are given to present a clear picture of how the department is structured and to give an indication of the department's relevance to the topic being investigated. All divisions within the Office of the Premier have an important role to play towards the implementation of the Employment Equity Act.

Sample

The sample was drawn from the Office of the Premier as the site of the study since the Office on the Status of Disabled Persons (OSDP) is housed there; REHAB; and the membership of DPSA. In choosing the key informants, the researcher used purposive sampling. According to Collins (1999), the procedure involves researchers using their own knowledge and experience to select the most suitable respondents for the purposes of the study. In this study, the researcher had to identify individuals who were strategic and could provide information relevant to the study. The following key informants were selected for interviews:

- the Director of Human Resources in the Office of the Premier to give a governmental perspective of the unemployment of disabled people;
- the Placement Officer working for the Association for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disability (REHAB); and
- a disabled person who had applied for some of the posts advertised in the province, but who had so far not been successful. The researcher was referred by REHAB to the interviewee because the management of REHAB was aware that

he had applied for several posts in the provincial government, but that he had not been called for even one interview.

The focus group was comprised of disabled officials currently employed within the provincial government, were not specifically from the Office of the Premier, because there were not enough disabled people employed in the Office of the Premier. The researcher explained the project to the officials of the departmental Special Programmes Units (SPUs) who then assisted by nominating one disabled person from their department to be part of the focus group. Participants were selected using convenience sampling from the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Economic Affairs, and the Provincial Treasury. The reason for choosing these specific individuals, was to get different perspectives on why disabled people are not being employed. The other focus group of non-disabled people was to be representative of the various directorates of the Office of the Premier. This focus group had been approached in order to gain a perspective on what participants think are the barriers and enablers to the employment of disabled people. Disabled people were approached from the angle of giving their own experiences whether personal or from knowledge of other disabled people.

Thus sample consisted of three individuals (interviewed separately) and a focus group of five disabled people who participated in the focus group discussions.

Data gathering

Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were used to gather data.

Semi-structured interviews

Marlow (1998:160) states that "in a semi-structured interview, the interviewer has more freedom to pursue hunches and can improvise with the questions". Marlow adds that sometimes semi-structured interviews are called open-ended interviews.

Grinnell (1998:266) outlines the advantages of interviews by explaining that interviews have the highest response rates and that respondents tend to provide more thoughtful answers. They allow for longer, more open-ended responses and the recording of non-verbal information. They can reach disabled and illiterate respondents and the interviewer can clarify questions for respondents. In an interview, respondents may be more willing to answer sensitive questions

In spite of the above advantages, interviews also have limitations which Grinnell (1998) summarises as expensive. Another limitation would be that interviews present the highest opportunity for the introduction of experimenter bias. Respondents may react to the personality of interviewer rather than the content of the interview and the interviewer may misreport responses.

A semi-structured interview questionnaire was drawn up for the interviews with the HR Director (Annex A), REHAB placement officer (Annex B) and the disabled person (Annex C). The questions served to facilitate the data collection and additional probe questions were used.

Each individual was interviewed once for approximately an hour. All interviews were recorded using a tape recorder. A second interview was done as a form of member checking. Where this was not possible, a written copy of the main findings was sent to the respondents for verification.

Focus group discussions

Kitzinger and Barbour (1999:4) define a focus group discussions as “group discussions exploring a specific set of issues”. They add that “[f]ocus groups are distinguished from the broader category of group interviews by explicit use of group interaction to generate data”. Kitzinger and Barbour (1999:5) point out that focus groups are ideal for exploring people’s experiences, opinions, wishes and concerns.

Initially the research intended to have two focus groups, but only one focus group discussion was undertaken in Bisho for approximately two hours. The researcher facilitated and interviewed the focus group. The members of the focus group related their particular experience, how they were employed and their experiences in the workplace (see Annex D for focus group schedule).

Data analysis

The information received from the interviews and focus group discussions was transcribed verbatim from the tape. All interviews and focus group discussions were done in English because all the interviewees understood and could converse perfectly well in English. Thereafter, it was studied and contextualised so that each sentence or paragraph could be given a description or name, in keeping with the way De Vos (2002) describes how a phrase or sentence can stand for or represent a phenomenon. A phenomenon, according to Strauss and Corbin (cited in de Vos, 2002:346) is a process of breaking down and taking apart an observation, sentence or paragraph and attaching to each piece of evidence, idea or sentence, something that it stands for. Once a particular phenomenon in the data had been identified, the researcher grouped the concepts around related phenomena and created sub-categories (codes), which were grouped into categories and then further grouped together to form a theme.

The researcher had initially planned to utilise a video recorder, however this did not come to pass due to a change in the procedure. The dates of the focus group discussions were rescheduled three times because interviewees could not make the set appointments. On these particular dates, the video recorder was organised but had to be cancelled. When interviewees were eventually available, the video recorder was not available. As time was running out, the researcher went ahead with the focus group discussion and used a tape recorder to record.

Ethical considerations

Williams et al. (cited in De Vos, 2002:62) state that the fact that human beings are the objects of study in the social sciences brings unique ethical problems to the fore. They add ethical issues are pervasive and complex for researchers in the health and social sciences, since data should never be obtained at the expense of other human beings. During the study the researcher had to be aware of these ethical issues during the interaction with the participants.

Informed consent

Williams et al. (in De Vos, 2002:65) suggest that informed consent implies that all possible or adequate information pertaining to the goal of the investigation, the procedures that will be followed during investigation, the advantages and disadvantages, be rendered to potential subjects or their legal representatives. Bailey (1987:409) maintains that participants should be legally and psychologically competent to give consent and be aware that they are free to withdraw from the research at any time.

All the individual respondents and group participants were informed about the aims and objectives of the research undertaken (see Annex D). All participants in the focus groups, that is, the group of disabled people and the representatives of the various directorates of the Office of the Premier, were contacted individually and informed about the research, what the research seeks to achieve and how and what will be done with the findings. Each participant was requested to complete an informed consent form before participating in the research project (Annex D). They were informed of their right to withdraw from the research at any point with no penalty. Permission was sought from the Office of the Premier (Annex E) so that information received in the interview and focus group could be used in the final research report.

Confidentiality

Grinnell (1998:74) strongly believes that the protection of participants' privacy is a right, not a privilege. Marlow (1998:190) points out that anonymity and confidentiality help participants avoid harm. He makes a distinction between these two concepts. For Marlow (1998) anonymity means that the researcher cannot identify a given response with a given respondent. Confidentiality means that the researcher knows the identity of the respondents and their associated responses, but ensures that this information is not disclosed. In this study confidentiality was used.

The researcher assured the participants that their responses and identity would remain anonymous and confidential. The researcher did not influence the participants to respond in any particular way. Participants were allowed to relate their opinions regarding the study while at the same time following the questions as tabulated. During the interviews with the individuals and during the focus group discussions, a tape recorder was used to record the proceedings and the interviewees were informed and agreed that the interviews would be recorded. After the information had been transcribed, the tapes were stored in the archives of the Office of the Premier until the transcription had been completed. Thereafter they were destroyed. This served as an accurate record while protecting confidentiality.

The researcher used all information received with full regard for confidentiality. A negotiation of confidentiality was facilitated with focus group members to ensure the same behaviour from each of them. In addition, each person was able to make an informed choice about what they wished to disclose and share with the group.

Ensuring rigour

Lincoln and Cuba (1985:290) (in de Vos, 2002:351) state that a research study should respond to a set of questions in order to establish its trustworthiness. The four

alternative constructs that more accurately reflect the assumptions of the qualitative paradigm are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

In verifying the credibility of the study, the researcher undertook a member checking exercise. A brief summary of the study outlining the aims and objectives of the study, the interviewees and the findings with short explanation of the themes that emerged was developed and presented to five of the seven respondents. The responses from the nominated participants confirmed that the analysis of the data and the conceptualisation of the findings reflected their experiences accurately.

Secondly, De Vos (2002:352) points out that checking for transferability is an alternative to external validity, where the burden of demonstrating the applicability of one set of findings to another context rests with the investigator. Descriptions of the context were given in detail so that any other researcher could undertake similar research and compare results. This ensures that those who conduct studies within the same parameters can then determine the transferability of the findings.

Thirdly, the researcher checked confirmability of the study. Confirmability captures the concept of objectivity (De Vos 2002). The researcher constantly compared her analysis with that of the co-coder to verify interpretation. The researcher was advised to incorporate personal reflections as a separate paragraph in the study report.

Fourthly, dependability examines whether the findings would be consistent should the inquiry be replicated in the same context (Krefting, 1991). To meet this challenge, the researcher explained in detail the methodology used for data collection.

Limitations of the methodology

The type of methodology used, as well as the way in which the researcher conducted it, revealed some weaknesses. Limitations emerged in terms of the sample and the process of qualitative analysis.

In terms of sampling, the researcher had to utilise purposive sampling because there were very few disabled people in the Office of the Premier, as well as in the other provincial departments.

The focus group of non-disabled people (the senior managers from all directorates of the Office of the Premier) was earmarked to gain an in-depth understanding of barriers and enablers to the employment of disabled people from the interviews. However, a focus group of senior managers from all the directorates in the Office of the Premier proved to be too difficult to organise. Unfortunately, the focus group was abandoned, and this may have limited the depth of understanding gained.

The focus group of disabled people was selected through the Special Programmes Units (SPU) in the Departments of Economic Affairs, Provincial Treasury, Environment and Tourism, Agriculture and Education. Initially representatives from the Departments of Social Development and Health were supposed to be part of the focus group, but on day scheduled for the focus group, they did not arrive and provided no forewarning.

Chapter 4

Findings

This chapter presents the findings that emerged from an analysis of the processes of transcripts, interviews and the focus group discussions. It aims to identify the barriers and enablers related to the employment of disabled people in the Office of the Premier in the Eastern Cape. The themes, categories and sub-categories are set out in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Summary of the barriers and enablers of employment of disabled people in government

Theme 1	Categories	Sub-categories
Paying lip service	• <i>"It's just on paper"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unfamiliar with Employment Equity Act • We are still struggling • Motivated by compliance purposes • Casual jobs with no contracts • No funding for vacant posts
	• Ineffective recruitment strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only senior positions available • No access to adverts • Disabled people in database inexperienced • No disclosure of impairment
	• <i>"It's a hell of an experience"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical structures are not accessible • Unfriendly environment • Access to benefits • Confined to own space
<i>Table 4.1 continued overleaf</i>		

Table 4.1 continued

Theme 2	Categories	Sub-categories
Perceptions of disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Belief that disabled person cannot do the job ● Perceived favouritism ● Limited understanding of disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Thinking that all disabled people have mental disability ● Non-disabled person acting on behalf of disabled person ● Non-disabled are narrow-minded and ignorant ● Only disabled persons requested to prove disability ● Not known ● Headhunted versus applying ● Placing disability before the person ● People don't understand us
Theme 3	Categories	Sub-categories
Giving them opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attempts to address disability equity ● Essential access ● Creating possibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Targets set ● Review of structure ● Integrated committee to monitor employment equity ● Consulting with Disabled Peoples Organisations ● Widen dissemination of adverts in the media ● Enforce stricter measures in future advertised posts ● Create database of eligible disabled job seekers ● Sensitise employers ● Road shows to conscientise ● Giving disabled people exposure and experience through learnerships

Theme 1: *Paying lip service*

The theme relates to the barriers encountered by disabled people. These barriers mostly refer to recruitment policies and the workplace environment. The findings highlight that officials are *paying lip service* to the whole process of implementing the Employment Equity Act and that there is no serious effort to enforce recruitment.

“It’s just on paper”

The findings indicate that most participants were not familiar with the Employment Equity Act (Department of Labour, 1998), especially as it relates to disability, despite the fact that it was promulgated in 1998. One of the barriers identified was that since the adoption of the Employment Equity Act very few or no disabled people have been employed; the ones existing in PERSAL (a statistical computer program) were employed long before the advent of the Act. A non-disabled respondent attested to the minimal effort applied by the government to employ disabled people:

... It has not been so conscious, so that it has been said, OK, come rain, come sunshine if [one] can't find a person with disability this position will not be filled. So meaning that the area of commitment, serious serious commitment, where we don't just put a target in terms of black and white, but it be a target in terms of saying: Here, whether we like it or not. But I think our focus has been more on women employment than on disability.

Thus, the participant voices the minimal effort made by government to employ disabled people compared with the effort to employ women that has resulted in an increase of women in the public service especially. As one disabled respondent puts it:

...It's a futile exercise to say that disabled people should be employed precisely because to those people out there it's just on paper that there is the Employment Equity Act and that all people should have a job. It's

just in the paper, but in reality we are really struggling. And, yes, they are still paying lip service.

The reason for this low level of employing disabled people that was given by employers, either from the provincial government or the private sector, was that disabled people do not apply for advertised posts. The overwhelming perception was that they are employed so as to comply with the requirement of the legislation. A disabled respondent added:

... they started calling me and said that it is important to be there because they need disabled people there. They are following up on disabled people who had applied and the MEC has stressed that he wants a disabled person.

The disabled respondents expressed the perception that when disabled persons are employed, their position does not feel secure. Rather it seemed that employers want to be seen to be complying with the law. The fact that the MEC and the department desperately headhunted the particular disabled person, “*because they need disabled people there*” confirms the findings of the study.

Furthermore, a non-disabled respondent mentioned that disabled people have been relegated to casual jobs for years. She expressed shock that in one of the big companies, a staff member in a high position showed no understanding and interest in disability to the extent that the disabled person was employed on a temporary basis and paid by cheque. In this case she had no contract and her payment was treated as if she was just part of the expenditure from the petty cash.

... because you would expect people in those positions to know and understand what it means for a person with disability to be able to work and what it means for the organisation and the implications. ... [S]he was placed at reception but they have never given a contract They pay her by cheque and the supervisor has to claim it as an expense. She

is an expenditure in that organisation, she is the only one who does not have a contract.

Another disabled respondent (an amputee with a BA Degree) had been employed in various short-term contracts. He confirmed this experience:

... I have six months or three months [in different jobs] and have never been employed in a permanent job.

Another factor influencing the employment of disabled people in the provincial government was the fact that the vacant posts available are not funded. The policy is such that the post has to be funded before it can be filled. As a result, disabled people cannot be employed. In the provincial government the practice is that an organogram with all the posts is approved, and then the posts are filled with the existing personnel. Thus those posts that are vacant should be budgeted for before they are filled. The response from a non-disabled participant verified this situation:

... One contributing factor in the aspect of employment in the public sector [is that a] position must be vacant and funded.

Ineffective recruitment strategies

The findings revealed that posts that are advertised are often for senior positions whereas the majority of disabled people would only be eligible for junior positions related to their level of education. As such, they do not have adequate skills for senior posts. A non-disabled respondent confirmed:

... I see government posts when they are advertised, they want experience, it's always a high up post, and that person may be having a degree but they have never worked before ...

Another barrier related to recruitment strategies was that disabled people have limited access to advertisements disseminated in the print media, as many of them cannot afford to buy newspapers because of their material poverty. Even when they

do access a newspaper, illiteracy poses another barrier to accessing the information. A non-disabled respondent put it quite clearly:

... One reason perhaps would be if you talk disability you talk across [impairment]. Other people are blind for instance, they might not be able to read the advertisement, [also] because advertisements that are through the print media such as Sunday Times are sometimes expensive

A database of disabled people looking for employment exists in one of the non-governmental organisations working with disabled people. However, the reality is that some of the disabled people in the database have no work experience, and therefore, do not possess the necessary knowledge and skills to access employment at a senior level. One of the non-disabled respondents noted that:

... the [disabled] people on my database have never worked before and they don't have the kind of experience and even the qualification [required for the posts on the market. They may have] a different degree from the one that's advertised. That creates a problem and most of them have got diplomas ... It's not [specialised degrees or diplomas] like IT.

A non-disabled respondent also indicated that disabled people do not apply for posts, and even when they apply, they do not indicate their disability. He stated:

...in the majority of applications that we received, you would find that in the application itself, you don't find an indicator where a person would say, [indicate], whether a person is disabled or not.

It's a hell of an experience

It emerged that the environment was not ready to accommodate disabled persons in the workplace. According to one of the non-disabled respondents:

... what they say is: I will have to change the workplace to accommodate a person in a wheelchair, how will they get through the door because we need a ramp.

Another disabled respondent added:

... the environment is not friendly. The first thing: they don't even know your disability, you find that [the office] is on a top floor and the lifts were out of order during that time. Now climbing to the tenth floor on crutches is a hell of an experience.

Disabled respondents also mentioned that the problem was not only about access to the building, but access in general, even to facilities and benefits that other non-disabled employees receive:

... when you start saying that you going to be travelling and they find you somebody to drive. When you say you have a driver's licence, they say: Is it a real licence card? I then said: Uh do they also issue real licence cards, all I know is what I have everybody has.

One of the non-disabled respondents attested to the fact that it was difficult to employ wheelchair users because employers viewed them as expensive for the organisation or company. When they have been employed they become confined to their work station, as it is not possible to move around to other work stations. This is captured in the response:

... most of the places were not set out for people with disabilities, they are not accessible, they are not user friendly ... Now you find that [a disabled person] is unable to go to certain places around the workplace. They are confined in a certain area or a certain space, so they are unable to interact with other people or other departments because it's quite far or it's upstairs.

Another non-disabled respondent confirmed this:

... they just want a person who is mobile, even with a person in a wheelchair you cannot get employed quite easily. It's better for a person who at least is mobile using crutches.

She went on further to say when names are requested by potential employers she would send names of people using wheelchairs. However, the potential employers would request additional names without giving any reason why they did not choose a candidate from the list forwarded.

Furthermore, although the employer would adapt the environment, this adaptation is restricted only to the place where the disabled person works. A non-disabled respondent said:

... what I have found which I don't like is that, OK, the employer will create an accessible environment for that person, but they are confined in one area and they have got no movement there.

In summary, the findings related to the theme *Paying lip service* illustrated that disabled people experience difficulties related to recruitment processes and procedures, which create barriers to their employment. Moreover, even though a database exists, most disabled people in the database have no specialised qualifications and no work experience. Another factor that came to the fore was that physical structures are not accessible or ready to accommodate disabled people. Even when they have been employed, they may be restricted to their particular work stations.

Theme 2: Perceptions of disability

This theme refers to attitudes and perceptions that non-disabled people have towards disabled people. The categories provide illustrations of these perceptions.

Belief that disabled people cannot do the job

This study highlighted the perception amongst non-disabled people that disabled people are incapable of doing any work. Disabled people bear witness to this, stating that the attitudes of employers indicate that they think that disabled people are incapable of doing any kind of work because of impairment. As one of the non-disabled respondents said:

... It may not be [an] attitude that says I don't want you to be employed. [A non-disabled person will] fuss around [the disabled person and] if [the disabled person is] employed they think that the [disabled person is] incapable of doing something. I think it's like when you go out to work there is nobody. Like, for instance: I am an able bodied person, there is nobody who comes before me and says [person's name] is such and such a person before I get employed, I think they first see me and then look for a reference after that, not first look for a reference.

The respondent is voicing the perception that a disabled person is subjected to a lot of questions and verification processes aimed at checking whether he or she is capable of doing any kind of work. Another disabled respondent added:

... you will notice that they don't give you a room to try and give it your best. They think that disability is all about mental disability. It's about the physique of a person and not the mentality.

The feeling, therefore, amongst disabled respondents is that non-disabled people perceive the person with any kind of impairment as if it were an intellectual

impairment, whether it be the limbs or the sensory organs that are impaired is immaterial to non-disabled people.

The findings also revealed that the incapacity and lack of assertiveness of disabled people are of such a nature that they need the intervention of non-disabled people to speak on their behalf. One of the non-disabled respondents commented:

... I phoned that person. Luckily I got hold of him and I talked to him and I made him understand that he must not have that attitude of saying that he can't do, let him do. So that at the end of the day let him do what he is capable of doing and if he is unable then come and say to me he is unable to do as needed.

Another aspect that emerged is that non-disabled people may be ignorant and become narrow-minded about issues pertaining to the employment of disabled people, as indicated in the disabled person's response:

... you will notice that when you go to these departments, people are rushing up and down; they will [comment that] this [disabled] person is delaying us, what does he want here? It is indicative of the fact that people need to be conscientised about disability.

Furthermore, some disabled persons have been requested to prove impairment. Before employment some respondents were requested to fill in a form while other potential non-disabled employees were not required to do that:

... then when they wanted me to fill this form: had I not resigned from where I [worked before], I would have gone back because the form asked lot of things, which were not relevant to disability. It was totally irrelevant, as it asked me about technology, which I could not understand, so I had to take the form to a doctor.

Perceived favouritism

One of the disabled respondents indicated that if one is not known then it is difficult to get employment. He stressed that:

... the whole question of employment in our province, it's an unfortunate situation, precisely because if you are not known by the employer the chances that you can get employment are very slim, honestly.

The disabled respondent felt very strongly about favouritism regarding the employment processes. He went on further to say:

... but if you just submit your CV without being known there you are just wasting your time. I think that's my perception of the whole thing.

The disabled respondent referred to a case where he saw someone who had been roaming the street who when asked how he got a job, responded:

... if people don't know you well ..., they must stop employing their brothers and sisters, that's the order of the day in our provincial government.

Another disabled respondent confirmed this when he said he was headhunted for the post in the provincial government. The fact is that there were people who knew him even before he applied and they suggested his name. He states:

... actually for me it was a bit of both, meaning headhunted and applied. I had applied for the post.

Limited understanding of disability

The majority of the respondents, both disabled and non-disabled people, indicated that impairment is always placed before the person. There is no understanding of the difference between impairment and disability.

People are not conscientised on disability, as one of the disabled respondents indicated:

... but in our provincial government people don't understand us, they just take all those things for granted. There should be road shows where people need to be conscientised that, we are people as well and we have commitments, and life must go on even to us. The bottom line is that people need to be educated about disability.

According to Theme 2, it seems that society, especially employers, still perceive disabled people as people who cannot do anything and therefore are not employable. Potential employers do not understand disability and do not understand why disabled people should be part of their staff complement or institution.

Theme 3: *Giving them opportunities*

The categories under this theme provide suggestions that emerged from the findings concerning the importance of both qualifications and experience in addressing disability equity.

Attempts at addressing disability equity

Respondents suggested that employment equity targets should be set in line with the employment equity plan of the department, which should reflect a particular percentage for the employment of disabled people. Departmental organograms are reviewed on an ongoing basis. The suggestion was, therefore, to ensure that when the

organogram is reviewed, the recruitment of disabled people for the upcoming year should be determined. One of the respondents attested to this:

... Now after the review, we are of the view that [sections within all the branches of the Office of the Premier] are given enough time to look at their structures to apply their minds in terms of saying: This is the structure that is required to deliver this mandate on [disability equity]. Once they have done that they will then be required to indicate in terms of targets [what] each component will contribute to achieving the target.

This outcome was further emphasised by a non-disabled respondent:

... government is a potential employer for disabled people because they are the ones that have set up the policies. It is government's responsibility to set the trend and employ [disabled people].

A non-disabled respondent suggested a new initiative to be implemented:

... have one integrated committee which is made up of very powerful people in the department, senior managers. If [this committee] said: OK, each directorate or section must have a target of x%, [then] if they take a decision, its not gonna be something that [will still have to be negotiated] with the directorate or section.

A non-disabled respondent suggested that organisations of and for disabled people should be consulted so that they can assist with the recruitment and facilitate the process of disclosure. He stated thus:

... what we need to do now is to go back and begin to say to the forum that deals with disabled people [that] these are the posts that are available ...

Essential access

Non-disabled respondents showed an understanding of the different types of impairment. Both disabled and non-disabled respondents indicated that advertisements are not accessible to disabled people especially, because they are placed in the newspapers. All of them concluded that the print media may be inaccessible for various reasons with the nature of the person's impairment, financial costs and illiteracy being the most common. A senior government official suggested:

... let us not only think in terms of advertising and say we are done when we have advertised through the Sunday Times.

In order to ensure that disabled people access the adverts, the Office of the Premier intends approaching the Disability Forum or organisations working with disabled people to assist in disseminating advertisements as much as possible. The non-disabled respondent referred to organisations like DPSA, REHAB as a Disability Forum. This suggestion was proposed in view of the fact that a database of unemployed eligible disabled job seekers has been developed and is being maintained by one of the organisations operating in the disability field.

... We've got people on our database, I think about four hundred and something, and some of those people have got degrees and some have got certificates and they need to be placed somewhere they need to work.

A non-disabled respondent made a strong statement that:

... when the selection committee is sitting, that if in their applications there are no [disabled people], we should not even consider to sit for interviews.

Creating possibilities

Both disabled and non-disabled respondents in the study shared the same view that there is a need to target a few employers and sensitise them on disability issues, as

well as on why it is necessary and important to employ disabled people. The non-disabled respondent commented:

... the placement programme should go with targeting a few employers, and sensitise them. Those that contact us, even though we sometimes contact [them ourselves and they inform us that] they have vacancies [we have to] sensitise them make them aware of the needs and adjustment that employing people with disabilities will have on the organisation.

Both disabled and non-disabled respondents emphasised that road shows should be conducted to conscientise the general public but especially employers in all respects. A disabled respondent stated:

... there should be sort of a road show where people need to be conscientised that we are people as well, and we have got commitments, and life must go on even to us. The bottom line is that people need to be conscientised about disability, especially those that are employers.

Every effort should be made to include disabled people in learnerships, thus preparing them for employment by giving them the exposure and experience they need. A non-disabled respondent refers:

... but we give them the experiential exposure, because I think we did with the learnerships in the department, where we exposed them to employment, so it's something that [can be done].

In summary, this theme related mostly to enablers to the employment of disabled people. The respondents stressed that employers need to be sensitised and conscientised in order to have better understanding of disabled people.

Summary of findings

The findings of the study presented three themes that emerged from the data analysis, namely, *Paying lip service*, *Perceptions of disability* and *Giving them opportunities*. All respondents proposed that potential employers should to be educated and sensitised on disability. Furthermore, disabled people need to be exposed to the work environment so that they can gain the necessary experience. The factors influencing the employment of disabled people will be discussed in depth further in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Discussion: *We should be given a chance*

From the three themes that emerged as the findings of the study, the disabling and enabling influences on disability equity in government and environment were identified. Therefore, the discussion attempts to integrate the findings by focusing on three critical tensions: firstly, create accessible environments; secondly, transform recruitment strategies; and thirdly, challenge myths and change attitudes. The tensions are further influenced by the level of skills development. These critical tensions determine the employability of disabled people. I have illustrated the relation of the critical tensions to the influences of employment of disabled people, which were identified in the themes that emerged in the study findings in Figure 5.1.

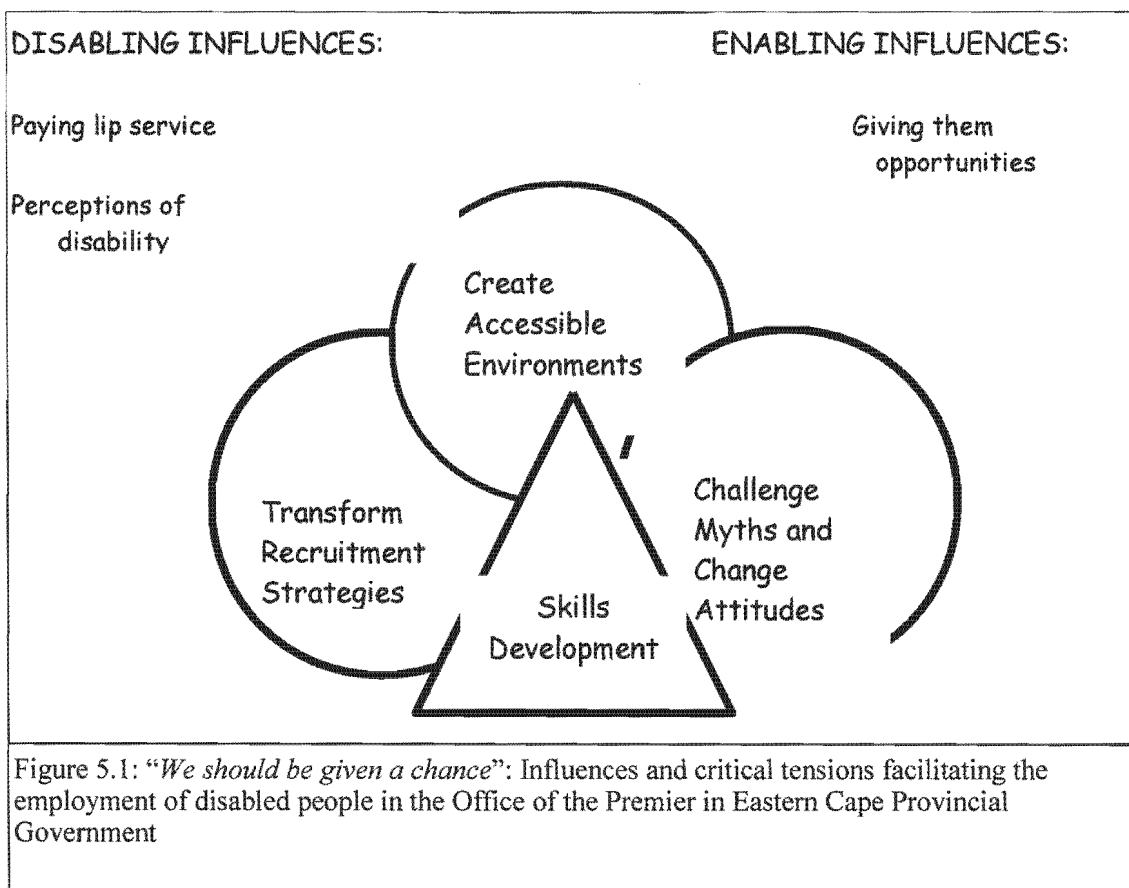


Figure 5.1 depicts potential factors that would facilitate the employment of disabled people. The circles show the three critical tensions related to disabling and enabling factors. The influences and critical factors can be addressed through skills development (the triangle). The triangle in the centre overlaps with the three circles, which shows that the critical tensions, if intertwined with skills development of both disabled and non-disabled people, will facilitate the employment of disabled people. The enabling influences for employment from Theme 3 of the findings (that is, creating opportunities, providing essential access and sensitising potential employers) can address any of the three critical tensions so as to promote the employment of disabled people. The disabling influences from Theme 1 (that is, *It's just on paper*, Ineffective recruitment strategies and *It's a hell of an experience*) and Theme 2 (that is, Belief that disabled persons cannot do the job, Perceived favouritism and Limited understanding of disability) exacerbate the critical tensions and hinder the employment of disabled people in the Office of the Premier. It shows there is a need for skills development in terms of universal design for accessibility, transformative recruitment strategies that are disability-friendly and disability sensitisation to challenge myths and change negative attitudes. This chapter seeks to further illustrate the integration of the study findings and to provide a convincing argument of factors that will foster employment opportunities for disabled people.

Creating accessible environments

Integrating the three themes of the findings reveals that the influences on disability equity in government employment in the Eastern Cape relate mostly to creating an accessible environment both in terms of information and physical structures, as well as change of attitude. Before disabled people can be employed they must first have access to the advertisements, to information about the posts and, thereafter, to the buildings that house governmental offices.

Access to the environment featured prominently in the study. Most interviewees stated that one of the barriers to the employment of disabled people is the fact that physical structures are not accessible. The study confirms what has been stated by writings such as the Council of Canadians with Disabilities Report (1994). This

report stressed to the Canadian Government that physical and attitudinal barriers remained a problem for the employment of disabled people.

Apart from physically inaccessible structures, it also came to light that even when disabled people are employed, they are restricted to their particular work station. As such, the person becomes further isolated from the rest of the workforce. This finding was similar to the finding of the Public Service Commission (2002), which stated that the environment in the workplace within departments and provincial administration is far from significantly supportive of employees with disabilities.

Other studies in this field have revealed similar findings concerning the inaccessibility of buildings, stating that in many instances workplaces are not user-friendly and, therefore, employers are reluctant to employ disabled people because they would have to make renovations (Lomofsky, Roberts and Mvambi, 1999 in Engelbrecht et al., 1999). Dovey and Graffam (1987) state that in many contexts the vast majority of centres of learning and work are inaccessible to a large number of people with disabilities. The physical environment of any building, including the surrounding terrain, as well as issues of safety and health, are all concerns in this regard. These are all important aspects to consider in terms of whether they constitute a barrier or an opportunity for learning and for the development of skills of disabled and non-disabled people.

Both the reports undertaken by the Development Bank of Southern Africa (2005) and the Disability Empowerment Concerns (2004), although they also identified access as a barrier to the employment of disabled person, did not touch on the issue of universal access, where access does not only refer to the physical structure but to the environment and all its surroundings. This study highlighted that access is not only about making the environment where the disabled person works supportive, but also about enabling him or her to access the entire work environment, both physically and attitudinally. Holistic approaches to access have to be considered. Although many writers, like Marks (1999) and Disability Empowerment Concerns (2004) refer to access to physical buildings, there is minimal reference to universal access. Van

Rooyen in Marks (1999) states that inclusion is not only about making the building physically accessible, the environment must be readable and comfortable. This study highlights that there is a need for further research on why buildings are not made universally accessible, both from the employer and the disabled person's perspective. Therefore, it means that recruitment policies and processes need to be transformed in order to facilitate the employment of disabled people.

Transforming recruitment strategies

The study revealed that recruitment processes and policies play a major role in enabling or disabling the employment of disabled people. The fact that some of the respondents were not even familiar with the Employment Equity Act (1998) may be an indication of poor commitment towards its implementation by government. Harman (in Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard and Henry, 1997), when defining policy gives the impression that when policies are generated, there is general agreement on policy formulation so as to address strategic issues and to make implementation straightforward and unproblematic. However, this study revealed that the implementation of the Employment Equity Act has not been without hiccups, especially in relation to disabled people. The report of the Development Bank of Southern Africa (2005) states that while support for the formulation and adoption of policy could be first rate, the implementation remains a challenge. Reasons given could be the capacity of officials at programmatic level to ensure implementation.

The challenges in implementing the Employment Equity Act reflect similar challenges to the implementation of the Education reform policy. Jansen (2000) asks the relevant question of why it is that despite the production of thousands of pages of formal policy documents, there is little change in school and classroom practice. Jansen attributes the reason for the weak link between policy and practice to the fact that implementation was never on the policy agenda at all. During the Woman's Day activities, on the 9 August 2007, SABC2 flighted a programme called *Rights and Recourse*. The main theme that was discussed was the progress that had been made in implementing the Employment Equity Act to advance women in the workplace.

From the discussions, it was evident that although some progress had been made, it was still far from achieving the intended results. If not much progress has been made in terms of implementing the Employment Equity Act in relation to women, how much less progress has been made for disabled people. Further comparative studies of the impact of the Employment Equity Act on black women and disabled people have yet to be undertaken.

Silver and Koopman (2000) reaffirm and state that a closer working relationship with disability organisations and recruiting agencies should be forged in order to speed up the process of employing disabled people. They further suggest that a recruitment strategy should be developed and linked to the company's commitment to undergo a culture change in order to be inclusive of disabled employees.

The results of study confirm the findings of a study undertaken by the Development Bank of Southern Africa (2005) where it came to light that some of the challenges and constraints relating to employment that impact negatively on disabled persons include amongst others, recruitment practices that are not creative enough to ensure the employment of disabled people.

Another disturbing fact emerging from the interviews is that the majority of disabled people in PERSAL were employed before the Employment Equity Act came into being. Even so, South Africa still identified the need to formulate and adopt the Employment Equity Act to redress imbalances of the past by affirming marginalised or vulnerable groups like disabled people. Disabled People South Africa (DPSA) recognised this gap and referred to the need to address the issue of the employment of disabled people in the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (Office of the Deputy President, 1997). In spite of this, South Africa, has not met its target of employing 2% of disabled people by 2005, even though the Employment Equity Act was promulgated in 1998. The South African government, particularly the Department of Labour, has recognised the challenge and has set a target that 4% of the budget for skills development must go to disabled people.

Available literature only refers to the development and adoption of the Employment Equity Act (1998). The writings relate to the purpose of the Employment Equity Act but only the report of the Public Service Commission refers to the level of attainment of Employment Equity targets and the reasons why the set targets have not been achieved. The report states that the level of disabled people employed stands at 0.25% because buildings or offices are not supportive, and because the majority of disabled are at lower levels of education. The findings of this study correlate to the findings of the Public Service Commission because respondents stated that a number of disabled people cannot access advertisements because they are illiterate and most advertisements are placed in newspapers. The INDS (Office of the Deputy President, 1997), as well as the report of a research undertaken by Disability Empowerment Concerns (2004) refer to high levels of illiteracy amongst disabled people.

In the study, respondents suggested that information on advertisements should be disseminated to organisations of and for disabled people so that these organisations can ensure that potential disabled job seekers can have the opportunity to apply. A review of the literature, while confirming this finding, does not suggest a strategy for how this challenge could be resolved.

Challenging myths and changing attitudes

The perception about the incapacity of disabled people to perform or to do the job featured prominently throughout the interviews. According to Russel (2000), employers characteristically assume that they will receive lower productivity from a disabled worker. The perception is related to attitudes that non-disabled people have towards disabled people, and vice versa. Dovey and Graffam (1987) assert that negative attitudes create the greatest barrier to successful social inclusion. They argue that for many disabled people their own internalised attitudes about disability and their experiences in a rejecting world have fostered strong negative feelings about themselves. The results of these feelings manifest themselves in the way disabled people are incapacitated and lacking in assertiveness to such an extent that the intervention of a non-disabled person becomes necessary. Silver and Koopman

(2000) are of the same opinion that disabled people face several barriers to employment; and one of the most difficult to overcome is that of attitude. They refer to Freud's theories that suggest that non-disabled people display attitudes towards disabled people because they fear being disabled. They further state that people in general fear incapacity and the potential inability to deal with disability. As a result they project these fears onto others, in this case onto disabled people.

Watermeyer (2006:35) states that notions and images of disability are so firmly attached to ideas of vulnerability, frailty and damage, that by consequence, our own internal struggles are brought rapidly near the surface of consciousness. He further states: "the interaction and exposure to the image of disability before us arouses in us those parts of our own experience which are particularly difficult for us to own" (*ibid.*). In discussing disability and development, Stone (1999:33) states that most people are so frightened by anything to do with disability that their reaction to including it on the agenda is inevitably one of rejection. She indicates that disabled people tend to be most disempowered because they are caught up in a vicious circle whereby negative social attitudes create low self-esteem, which in turn produces a type of behaviour that fosters negative social attitudes. Lorenzo, et al. (2002) found a similar experience in their study on the social and economic development of disabled women in informal settlement where few disabled women entering the public service.

The INDS (Office of the Deputy President, 1997) further confirms the influence that attitudes has on employability, when it states that one of the greatest hurdles that disabled people face when trying to access mainstream programmes are negative attitudes. It is these attitudes that lead to the social exclusion and marginalisation of disabled people. The INDS further states that negative attitudes are continually reinforced. Disability is portrayed as a problem. People with disabilities are viewed as helpless and dependent, as ill and in constant need of care and medical treatment or as tragic victims (Office of the Deputy President, 1997:23). This perception can be attributed to the attitudes non-disabled people have about disabled people.

Lonsdale (1990) makes reference to a disabled woman who could not get employment as a lawyer, that is, her profession. Therefore, she ultimately decided to take up a permanent job in a community programme. When she was eventually offered a reasonable job, she was turned down on medical grounds because they discovered that she had some difficulty walking and needed to use a stick. Such experiences relate to the findings of this study. Respondents alluded to the fact that employers lose interest when they see a disabled person in a wheelchair, whom they assume cannot do anything and employers even communicate that they need someone who is mobile. Both Campbell (1996) and Cronan (2000) in the South African Journal of Labour relations (2004), state that some employers also fear that disabled workers are more likely to be absent from work due to illness. Disabled people are therefore perceived to be a burden to society and to the state.

The INDS (Office of the Deputy President, 1997) argues that disability has historically been regarded mainly as a health and welfare issue and that state intervention has thus been channelled through welfare institutions. As a result, there has been very limited or no commitment towards dealing with disability in other spheres of government. Besides, the INDS (Office of the Deputy President, 1997) states that people concerned with creating a more 'caring' environment have assisted the vast majority of people with disabilities. Their aims were to provide medical treatment or to create alternatives to begging or 'hiding away'. This exclusion has been justified on the basis that it is for the good of the disabled. The assumption within the medical model is that being disabled means that one is suffering from an illness and, therefore, cannot think for oneself or do anything for oneself. As such, a disabled person has to be taken care of (Vlachou, 1997).

The study found that people in general express the view that disabled people are not capable of doing any work, and actual cases were referred to. Jackson et al. (2000) suggests that employers underestimate the capability of people with disabilities and generally view them as undesirable workers or as being less dependable and less productive than other employees. They are seen as having the potential to jeopardise safety at work. Such discriminatory attitudes resulting from ignorance, fear and

subscription to myths about people with disabilities result in unwillingness to hire people with disabilities. Stone (1999) agrees with this argument where she states that proponents of the view that disabled people cannot do anything do not understand that disabled people are quite able to participate, but are prevented from participating by the attitudes of others and by social barriers. As a result such unwillingness may be linked to the underestimation of productivity (Campbell, 1996) in the South African Journal of Labour Relations (2004), the fear of additional costs (Russel, 2000) or greater probability of litigation.

The findings of the study confirm the recommendations made by Disability Empowerment Concerns (2004), concerning disability awareness to employers so that they can better understand disability in general and change their attitudes towards disabled people. An aspect of these campaigns would be to educate employers regarding their duties in terms of the disability related aspects of the Employment Equity Act (Thomas and Hlahla, 2002). French (1993:23) confirms the responses from this study by stating that

... although attempts to change people's attitudes to disability have not been particularly successful, it does not mean that attitudes of some people, including disabled people themselves, cannot be modified by an understanding of the complex experiences of disabled people.

The literature study confirms that employers should be encouraged to value and manage diversity. Silver and Koopman (2000) state that to achieve wide diversity, an organisation can draw on a myriad of individual experiences and creativity.

The experience of Fabkomp is a good example of practising diversity in the workplace (Disability Empowerment Concerns, 2004). The company demonstrated that integrating disabled people into the workplace is empowering and assists others (non-disabled people) to understand the importance of tolerance and inclusion. The management of Fabkomp found that integrating disabled people within the company has had positive spin-offs. Firstly, disabled people are so integrated in the company

that they are not seen as different from other people. Secondly, it has given the company “a normality and a balance” (McLaren, et al., 2003:28).

Investing in skills development

Throughout this study, it has become evident that there is an underlying factor which influences the unemployment of disabled people. The ineffective implementation of the legislative framework, discriminatory attitudes and myths of disabled and non-disabled people result in creating environments which are inaccessible. This may be attributed to inadequate skills development in terms of understanding and universal access. Respondents have throughout referred to the need for sensitising and educating employers on disability.

The Technical Assistance Guidelines on the Employment of People with Disabilities, confirm that the only way to overcome fears, myths and negative attitudes about the abilities of employees and applicants with disabilities is through vigorous education and training within the private and public sectors (Department of Labour, 1998). Therefore, this implies that there is a need to invest in skills development, both for disabled and non-disabled people. In this case in the face of change, Watermeyer (2006:42) states:

[D]isabled and non-disabled alike, all struggle with difference, and all carry the universal fallibilities of our humanness, which emerge to trip us up in the face of threat.

The issue of human resource development features strongly in the INDS, where it was observed that in order to achieve the integration of disability into the mainstream, existing personnel in the various public institutions have to be re-oriented and new personnel should be inducted on the shift from the medical model to the social model (Office of the Deputy President, 1997). The shift can be attained when disabled and non-disabled people have been capacitated and consequently, this has implications for skills development. One of the purposes of the Skills Development Act is to improve the employment prospects of persons previously

disadvantaged by unfair discrimination and to redress those disadvantages through training and education (Department of Labour, 1998). The National Skills Development Act makes provision for learnerships that lead to recognised qualifications through training based on a combination of theory and practice (McLaren et al., 2003). It has been recognised by the disability sector that due to the high rate of illiteracy amongst disabled people, the implementation of learnerships is a necessity. The disability sector further suggested that some disabled people should be subjected to a pre-learnership programme before they could be placed in learnerships. The disability sector agreed that this programme should be implemented through the Thabo Mbeki Development Trust (Disability Empowerment Concerns, 2004).

The study and the literature confirm that there are barriers to the employment of disabled people and until such time that potential employers and potential disabled employees are trained or sensitised in order to change attitudes and apply methods to fast track the process, disabled people will continue to experience problems.

Personal reflections

The process of the study has had its own frustrations. To me it illustrated that government officials may not be serious about implementing government policy. My observations were that disability is not considered to be a priority. Although letters were written two weeks before the interview, I was very disappointed when people cancelled at the last moment. At a certain stage I felt demotivated and even considered withdrawing from the course.

The worst disappointment was when disabled people in the focus group also proved to be too difficult to organise. Even when they had been informed of the scheduled date, it had to be shifted because of their unavailability. It was only after I consulted the supervisor for advice on how to resolve the problem that I regained confidence in continuing with the study. Only two respondents were eager to share their knowledge and experience on the subject. Even with the member checking process, the response

was frustrating and disappointing. All the respondents were informed telephonically before the questions for member checking were forwarded to them but all of them had to be reminded time and again to forward their responses. I had emphasised the importance of having their responses in good time but even this did not help.

The reflection on personal experience and interaction sought to show that the findings from the study were not something new to the researcher. My personal experiences have been confirmed in the findings of disabled people included in this study.

Chapter 6

Conclusion and recommendations

The study sought to investigate the factors influencing the employment of disabled people in the Office of the Premier in the Eastern Cape government, especially now that the Employment Equity Act and the Code of Good Practice in conjunction with the Labour Relations Act, Affirmative Action and others have been promulgated.

In the introduction, the study highlighted the background to the discrimination of disabled people and why they still remain unemployed despite the existence of a conducive legislative framework. Literature reviewed confirmed that attitudes and perceptions, compliance and lack of strategies for the implementation of policies and accessible environments are some of the barriers making it difficult for disabled people to be employed. The research used a qualitative, descriptive case study design to explore the factors influencing the employment of disabled people in the Office of the Premier in the Eastern Cape. Purposive sampling to identify participants was used, and data collected was transcribed from the tapes and thereafter analysed. The concepts that emerged were grouped around a phenomenon and sub-categories were created which were grouped into categories and further grouped to form a theme.

The findings revealed three themes, namely: *Paying lip service*, *Perceptions of disability* and *Giving them opportunities*. This study demonstrated that there is a need for potential employers to be sensitised on disability issues and efforts have to be made to accelerate the implementation of the Employment Equity Act so as to increase the percentage of disabled people in employment. Opportunities for learnerships for disabled people and the development of scarce skills need to be created.

In conclusion, the study was aimed at examining the barriers and enablers to the employment of disabled people. The themes in the findings and discussion confirmed that barriers were largely related to inaccessible environments, which are

negatively influencing the employment of disabled people. The enabling factors related to challenging myths and changing attitudes to generate transformative recruitment policies and disability-friendly environments. The rest of the chapter makes recommendations that will hopefully assist the Office of the Premier in the Eastern Cape Provincial Government to meet employment equity targets related to disability.

Recommendations

The recommendations and suggestions for further research and implementation of policies related to employment and disability equity are discussed in two parts: firstly, those that emanate directly from the study; and secondly, those that would invest in the implementation measures outlined in international and national policies for the equalisation of opportunities for disabled people (United Nations, 1994; Office of the Deputy President, 1997).

From the study itself:

- (1) The Office of the Premier should establish an integrated committee comprised of senior officials from each of the directorates. The reason for utilising senior managers is that they will be able to take decisions that can have a positive impact on the implementation of the targets agreed upon.
- (2) Targets should be set in line with the Employment Equity Plan and each directorate has to be allocated a percentage to achieve these targets. The Employment Equity plan that was recently formulated is more aligned to the recommendation in (a). In 2001 the Eastern Cape government had set a target of 1% disabled people to be employed by the year 2005. Further research should be undertaken to monitor and evaluate the achievement of the targets.
- (3) During the recruitment processes, there was a recommendation from the non-disabled respondent that, if there are no disabled applicants on the shortlist, then interviews should not be conducted. This process has been undertaken in the province to accelerate the employment of women. The respondent attested to

that. Research could explore what is happening in other provinces, where a strategy of this nature has been undertaken and if so the results thereof.

- (4) The effectiveness of road shows for targeted employers must be monitored and evaluated to ensure an increased intake of disabled people in the workplace.
- (5) Further development of strategies to address the high rate of illiteracy and the impact on skills development for employment are required.

The Eastern Cape Provincial Government's action programme should include the following:

- (1) In their capacity as potential employers, provincial government departments should undertake research to identify feasible strategies to create favourable conditions to ensure the employment of disabled people. Participatory action research must be engaged in to explore measures to implement a holistic approach in the workplace through the design and adaptation of workplaces and work premises so as to increase accessibility.
- (2) The literature reviewed could not identify whether strategies have been implemented to accelerate the employment of disabled people. Thus, collaborative research should be undertaken on how provincial government departments should co-operate with organisations of and for disabled people concerning all measures to implement reasonable accommodation, including flexi hours, part-time work, job sharing and the attendant care for disabled people.

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Annex A

Interview with senior manager in the Office of the Premier responsible for Human Resource Management

Name:

Occupation:

1. Can you give me the number of employees of the Office of the Premier?
2. Of that number, what is the number of disabled employees?
3. Were the disabled employees employed before or after the implementation of the Employment Equity Act?
4. In the last two year have you received any applications from disabled people?
5. If not what do you think is the reason?
6. What is the target that has been set by the department for disabled people according to the Employment Equity Plan?
7. Can you elaborate on what you think are the reasons and barriers why the department is not meeting the target of 2% set out nationally?
8. Please give suggestions on how you think the department should address the issue of increasing the number of disabled people employed within OTP.

Annex B

Interview questions for placement officer (REHAB)

Name:

Occupation:

1. How familiar are you with the Employment policies?
2. Do you think that the public service is a potential employer for disabled people?
3. If *yes*, why?
4. If *no*, what do you think needs to be done for the public service to be a potential employer?
5. Do you have an idea of the number of disabled people employed in the Office of the Premier?
6. Do you see the Office of the Premier increasing the number of disabled people employed in the department in the near future?
7. If *yes*, why do you say so?
8. If *no*, state why?
9. What do you think are the barriers to the employment of disabled people, firstly, from the perspective of the organisation; and then, from the perspective of your clients?
10. According to your knowledge and experience in placing disabled people, what would you suggest needs to be done in order to increase the employment of disabled people?

Annex D

Participant consent form

Research title: Disabled people's employment experiences within the Provincial Government of the Eastern Cape: Identifying barriers and enablers

Researcher: Portia Loyilane

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Contact numbers:

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I appreciate your willingness to participate in this research project. The researcher will contact you to make arrangements for the workshop or for the interview.

Your involvement in this study is voluntary, you are not obliged to divulge information you would prefer to remain private, and you may withdraw from the study at any time.

The researcher will treat the information you provide as confidential. You will not be identified in any document, including the interview transcripts and the research report, by your surname, first name, or by any other identifying information. You will be referred to in the documents under a code name. No one outside of your group, other than the researcher and research supervisor will be informed that you participated in the research.

The research may include risks to you, but these will be minimal and no different to those encountered by people on a daily basis. Every effort will be made to minimise possible risks.

The research findings will be made available to you. Should you have any queries about the research, now or in the future, you are welcome to contact the researcher at the above address.

I have read the letter and understand the context of this document and the purpose of the research. I agree to participate in this study.

Signature:

Date:

Name in full:

Annex E

Study on disabled people's employment experiences within the Provincial Government of the Eastern Cape: Identifying barriers and enablers

The researcher requests you, as one of the respondents who participated in the study, to read through the summary below of the study that was undertaken and to answer the questions. The questionnaire is aimed at verifying the findings of the study that was undertaken in order to check whether they are in line with the responses that were given out in the interview process. Your response will assist in enriching and enhancing the research. Your response should also indicate whether you are in agreement with the findings in a more detailed manner, and if not in agreement also give explanation and details.

Brief summary of the study

Aims

To explore barriers and enablers to the employment of disabled people within the Office of the Premier of the Eastern Cape Provincial Government

Objectives of the study

- (a) To identify barriers that hinder the employment of disabled people
- (b) To describe enablers that would accelerate the employment of disabled people
- (c) To make recommendations to the provincial government

Interviews were carried out with the following:

- Director of Human Resources in the Office of the Premier to give governmental perspective of the unemployment of disabled people
- Placement Officer working for the Association for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disability (REHAB)
- A disabled person who had applied for some of the posts advertised in the province but so far has not been successful

- Focus group of disabled people from the Departments of Economic Affairs, Environment and Tourism, Agriculture, Treasury and Education
- Senior manager from the Office of the Premier – TODCOS

Findings

From the interviews, the following themes depicting the barriers and enablers to the employment of disabled people emerged. They are briefly explained below.

- (a) Disabling recruitment policies and the environment – in this theme the findings revealed that potential employers are not seriously committed to employing disabled people. Although there is a database of disabled people seeking employment, the requirements of posts offered are often very high compared to the pool. Furthermore, respondents identified inaccessible environment as one of the barriers and the fact that some disabled people (because of mobility challenges) face even more barriers because they become confined to their workplace and cannot socialise or access other areas within the workplace.
- (b) Enabling recruitment policies and environment – most respondents expressed the view that stringent measures should be taken to ensure the implementation of the Employment Equity Act. It also emerged that access to the advertisements is key to the recruitment of disabled people. Respondents also agreed that it is necessary for employers to effect changes to the environment and this would enable disabled people to access workplaces.
- (c) Perception of incapacity disables – the majority of the interviewees attested to the perception that disabled people are incapable of doing any job, let alone that some disabled people have been requested to prove that they are disabled by filling in a form which non-disabled people are not requested to fill in. One of the respondents felt that one of the reasons why disabled people are not employed is because nepotism is rife in the province. If one is not known by people in authoritative and senior positions then the chances of one getting a job are next to nil. All disabled respondents attested to the fact that understanding of disability is limited and that society sees disability or the impairment before the person.

- (d) Overcoming the myths of qualification and experience – The study revealed that disabled people have qualifications even if it is not in the fields that are in demand. The problem identified is that they do not have the necessary experience that is always requested and therefore do not meet the criteria for employment. Furthermore, although they have been marginalised in the past, the reality is that the unemployment rate is too high. As a result they are compelled to compete equally with non-disabled people. Respondents also expressed the need for potential employers to be sensitised about disability issues and how the employment of disabled people can benefit their establishments or organisations.

Questionnaire

Name and surname:

Occupation:

1. How do you relate to the findings as set out below and in the attached document, are they relevant in your situation?
 - (a) Disabling recruitment policies and the environment
 - (b) Enabling recruitment policies and environment
 - (c) Perception of incapacity disables
 - (d) Overcoming the myths of qualification and experience
2. Do you think that the findings give a true picture of the barriers and enablers out there?
 - (a) If *yes*, why do you think so (elaborate)?
 - (b) If *no*, why do you think so (elaborate)?
3. In your own view what has not been captured through the interview process?
4. What other issues do you think should be addressed to assist with the study?