

Commission on Human Rights  
Human Rights Centers Management Office  
**Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights Center**

**DOCUMENTATION REPORT**

Date	30 March 2021
Topic	Socio-economic conditions of persons with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly employment and livelihood
Summary	The effects of and response to the COVID-19 pandemic have undeniable intersections with poverty, disability, and gender. For example, one of the initial control measures to curb the spread of the COVID-19 such as mobility restrictions and social distancing also have unprecedented effects on certain livelihoods. As the government-imposed lockdowns, limited services to what was essential (e.g. agriculture, manufacturing of essential goods such as food and beverages, hygiene products, medicines and medical products; hospitals; essential retails; logistics; etc.) and shifted to a skeletal workforce, a number of workers have either lost jobs or their main source of income. During the time of the quarterly meeting, there were no available statistics on the number of Filipinos with disabilities who have lost jobs, but in the United States, approximately one million workers with disabilities have lost their jobs in 2020 (Smith, 2020). <sup>1</sup>

**AVAILABLE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS**

National Council on Disability Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of assistive devices</li> <li>• Referral Services</li> <li>• Disability sensitivity orientation/ trainings for private employers and national government agencies (NGAs)</li> <li>• Consultations with NGAs and stakeholders for policy development</li> </ul>
Department of Labor and Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PESO Employment Information System (PEIS)</li> <li>• PhilJobNet</li> <li>• JobStart Philippines</li> <li>• Government Internship Program (GIP)</li> <li>• Trabaho Negosyo Kabuhayan (TNK)</li> <li>• Kagabay Program (Katulong at Gabay sa Manggawang may Kapansanan)</li> <li>• DOLE Integrated Livelihood and Emergency Employment Program (DILEEP)</li> </ul>
Department of Social Welfare and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community-based Services</li> <li>• Auxiliary social service for persons with disability</li> <li>• Job Search Services</li> <li>• Residential Care Facilities</li> <li>• Non-residential Care facilities</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Smith, A. S. (2020, August 28). A million people with disabilities have lost jobs during the pandemic. Retrieved from SHRM at <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/legal-and-compliance/employment-law/pages/coronavirus-unemployment-people-with-disabilities.aspx>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National/Area Vocational Rehabilitation Center (N/AVRC)</li> <li>• Center for Handicapped in Region XII (Cotabato City)</li> <li>• Rehabilitation Sheltered Workshop</li> <li>• Sustainable Livelihood Program</li> <li>• Livelihood Assistance Grant (LAG)</li> <li>• Livelihood and Entrepreneurship Assistance for Persons with Disabilities (LEAP)</li> </ul>
Department of Trade and Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMERA Training</li> <li>• Shared Service Facility Program</li> <li>• Consumer Advocacy</li> <li>• Bottom Up Budgeting</li> <li>• Business Advisory Services</li> <li>• Mentor Me</li> <li>• Pondo sa Pagbabago at Pag Asenso (P3)</li> <li>• Livelihood Seeding Program-Negosyo Serbisyo sa Barangay</li> </ul>
Local Government of Quezon City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kailangang QC</li> <li>• QC Version of SAP</li> <li>• The Joy of Urban Farming</li> <li>• Food Assistance</li> <li>• Livelihood Trainings</li> </ul>

## ISSUES

Economic concerns raised by Christian Handicapped Association of Massagist Inc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated their situation in the poverty line, moreover when it resulted in job losses and inability to work as (blind) musicians and massagists because of mobility restrictions and social distancing measures</li> <li>• There is a need for the recognition of the rights of persons with disabilities and the obligations of the State.</li> <li>• Being a person with a disability is a challenge but they do not want to be a “burden” to society and government agencies, rather, they continuously look for opportunities for capacity building to be economically independent and self-reliant.</li> <li>• There is continuous discrimination, stigma, and “distrust” faced by persons with disabilities.</li> <li>• There is a necessity to recognize the need for able-bodied assistance for the blind.</li> </ul>
Situation of Workers with Disabilities During COVID-19 as reported by the Project Inclusion Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are still issues on access to information (e.g. absence of sign language interpretation and closed captioning; incompatible formats for screen readers or voiceover technology; unclear and complex information)</li> <li>• Employment has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic with many terminated.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are difficulties to work in the new normal: access to safe transportation to workplace, unfamiliarity with the use of technology (devices, software, internet) and rapid transition on remoted work, and difficulty to focus and concentrate.</li> </ul>
Other issues raised by members of the sector during open forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a need to strengthen the presence of NCDA, especially during the pandemic.</li> <li>• Programs are not specifically designed for persons with disabilities and are, therefore, inaccessible to some members of the sector.</li> <li>• Programs are politicized in the local government.</li> <li>• There is no provision of sign language interpretation or closed captioning.</li> <li>• There is a lack of information dissemination on the services provided by different government agencies.</li> <li>• Transportation remains to be inaccessible, especially now in the pandemic.</li> </ul>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

From Project Inclusion Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in, and implement programs that bridge the gap on employability skills and encourage entrepreneurship of Persons with Disability</li> <li>• Ensure representation and inclusion of the disability sector in the design and delivery of economic empowerment and poverty alleviation programs</li> <li>• Review and improve the collection, interoperability and storage of data on persons with disabilities to provide better references for public and private sector agencies to implement accessible and disability-inclusive recovery programs</li> <li>• Advocate or strengthen budget of PDAOs to deliver specialized services for PWDs, along with promoting their mainstream participation and availment of the government programs</li> </ul>
From Leonard Cheshire Disability Philippines Foundation, Inc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information sharing among employers, government agencies, and local government units who may be interested in the tool and technology</li> <li>• Provision of technical assistance and work with these entities on setting up this tool which can be managed by them independently.</li> <li>• Partnership with employers, local and national government agencies and disability organizations in promoting inclusive employment for people with disabilities.</li> </ul>
From other members of the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For NCDA to help CHR complete the directory of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs)</li> <li>• For the agencies to have initiatives to continue providing the services amidst pandemic; provide analysis on what programs can be introduced or developed</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide sign language interpretation and closed captioning in digital platforms</li> <li>• Strengthen information dissemination of the programs of different agencies and organizations</li> <li>• Address accessible transportation for persons with disabilities and include the Department of Transportation in the next discussion</li> <li>• Establish employers network at employers forum that would include establishments, PDAO, LGUs, and different concerned stakeholders</li> <li>• Include Department of Tourism for Accessible Tourism next time as this would be a good opportunity for employment for persons with disabilities aside from the influx of persons with disabilities and senior citizens tourists local as well as international as soon as our tourism will be fully opened after this pandemic</li> <li>• Create a tripartite agreement with the departments, federation, and NCDA so that the programs would be directed to the federation of persons with disabilities</li> </ul>
<p>From National Council on Disability Affairs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give credible data to everyone in order to create policies and programs based on the needs of persons with disabilities</li> <li>• Look into/amend BP 433 as to why it is not implemented properly</li> <li>• Focus on the employment and livelihood of persons with disabilities during this time of pandemic through coordination with NGOs such as Project Inclusion and LCDPFI</li> <li>• Continuous capacity building of persons with disabilities</li> <li>• Skills matching for persons with disabilities</li> <li>• Given that the massage industry is unlikely to rise anymore during the pandemic, NCDA will focus more on the skills training of the blind</li> <li>• Focus also on children with disabilities to give them the opportunity to study Disseminate the best practices of organizations so others can follow</li> <li>• Strengthen PDAO locally</li> </ul>