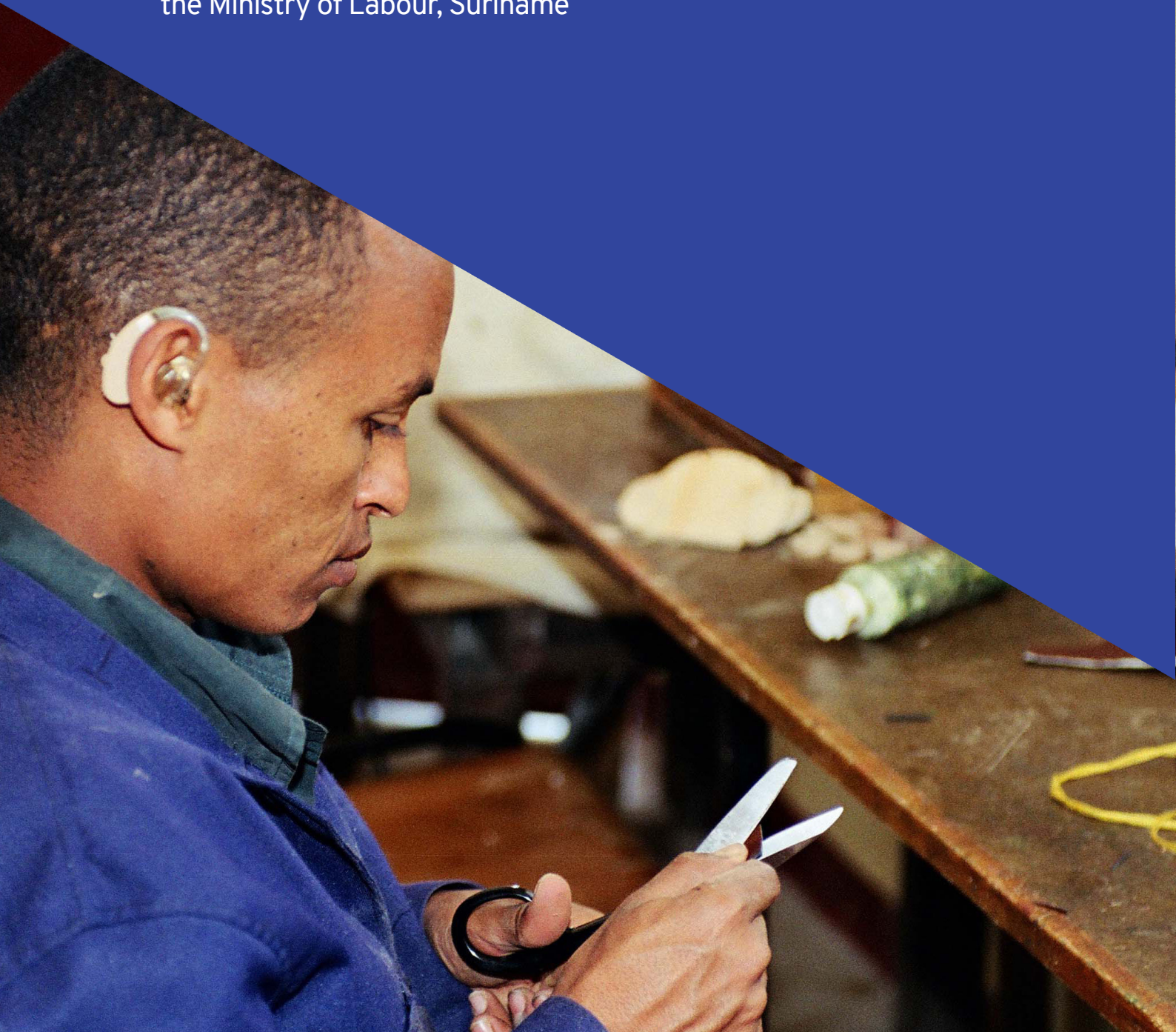




International
Labour
Organization

► Employability of people with disabilities in Suriname

A baseline study by the
International Labour Organization and
the Ministry of Labour, Suriname



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International Labour Organization
and the Ministry of Labour, Suriname

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This version of the publication dated August 2020 includes a revision of some indicators and related analysis which were inadvertently excluded from the previous publication.

The reader is invited to refer to this current publication and disregard what was previously distributed in March 2020.

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Foreword

Ensuring socio economic inclusion and development of most vulnerable workers and, in particular, of people with disability, is a cross cutting issue across the United Nations Caribbean Multi-country Sustainable Development Framework (UN MSDF) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In particular, the pervasive and monitoring framework of the SDG agenda calls for specific measurement of labour market performance of people with disabilities. Such priority is also a cornerstone of the Suriname Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) (2019-2021). Approved in November 2019 by national tripartite constituents, the DWCP intends to contribute to the achievement of higher-level social and economic development goals through the three priority areas of 'Economic diversification and social progress', 'Strengthening the rights and compliance agenda' and 'Increased tripartite capacity to advance the Decent Work Agenda and social dialogue'.

The present research provides a much-needed background to describe not only the labour market performance of the people with disabilities, but also the actual and perceived barriers to their employment in the country. While a holistic approach to remove such barriers is most likely required, the analysis and recommendations presented are a solid starting point to initiate policy and programmatic changes.

The report was prepared by Dr Presella Young-A-Fat of the Instituut voor Maatschappijwetenschappelijk Onderzoek (IMWO) and Mrs Orphilia Graham, under the supervision of, and with contributions from Mr Diego Rei, Employment and Labour Market Policies Specialist at the International Labour Organization Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean, and the Labour Market Information Unit of the Suriname Minister of Labour.

Claudia Coenjaerts,
Director
ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean



Hearing impaired worker making toys. Photographer: Crozet M, © ILO



Preface

Throughout the world, people with disabilities are participating and contributing in the world of work at all levels. Opportunities for, and participation of persons with disabilities in the workforce is still a challenge in Suriname. Many persons with disabilities who want to work do not have the opportunity due to many barriers. The Government of the Republic of Suriname has recently expressed its will to tackle such barriers by approving the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on 29 March 2017. It was approved in August 2017 by the Council of Ministers.

On 27 February 2018, a new start was made to support people with disabilities and their inclusion in the labour market through the establishment of the “Alliance for Decent Work for people with disabilities”. The Alliance consists of the Ministries of Labour, Social Affairs and Housing, Trade, Industries and Tourism, the NGO’s Nationale Stichting voor Blinden en Slechtzienden in Suriname (NSBS), Stichting Unu Pikin, Kennedy Stichting, Stichting Wan Okasi, Stichting Productieve Werkeenheden Suriname (SPWE), Stichting Arbeidsmobilisatie en Ontwikkeling (SAO), United Nations Development Programs (UNDP) and Suriname Trade and Industry Association/ Vereniging Surinaams Bedrijfsleven (STIA/VSB).

The aim of the Alliance is to realize Decent Work and entrepreneurship for disabled people. In June of 2019, the Alliance developed a database to match disabled jobseekers with potential employers, as well as to guide them in their efforts to start their own companies.

Data on people with disabilities are essential for the development and design of informed policies and programmes on the issue. We are therefore thankful that data on the employability of people with disabilities are now available.

Writing special policy programmes and the implementation of these programmes is impossible without adequate research providing reliable and detailed statistical data on the nature and extent of the challenges faced by people with disabilities.

Therefore, it is a big challenge for the Government and the Ministry of Labour to formulate and implement evidence-based policies, not only focused on people with disabilities but on all kinds of labour-related matters.

It is hoped that this baseline study will contribute to an increase in the number of people with disabilities entering the labour market and that opportunities for job seekers with disabilities will improve.

The baseline study on the employability on people with disabilities was guided by the Sub Directorate Labour Market of the Ministry of Labour, with the technical and financial assistance of the International Labour Organization (ILO). The Research Institute for Social Sciences (IMWO) of the Anton de Kom University of Suriname conducted the study.

The Government of Suriname, especially the Ministry of Labour, is very grateful to the ILO for facilitating this baseline study with their technical and financial assistance, and to the Research Institute for Social Science (IMWO) of the Anton de Kom University of Suriname for conducting the research and the analysis of the data.

It is now up to the Government to formulate policies and execute targeted programmes to increase the employability and labour market integration of people with disabilities in Suriname. With the design of these policies and programmes, people with disabilities shall be included in the world of work because a well-known slogan of people with disabilities is 'Leave no one behind'.

His Excellency Dr Soewarto Moestadja
Minister of Labour
Government of the Republic of Suriname



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Participants at an ILO meeting aimed at promoting equality of opportunity and treatment in training and employment of disabled persons. © ILO



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Acronyms

ABS	General Bureau of Statistics
AMZ	General Social Care
BSO	Bureau Special Education
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
EBS	Electrical Company of Suriname
GLO	Primary Education
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMWO	Institute for Social Science Research
KMW	Subdirectorate of Categorical Social Work
MINOWC	Ministry of Education, Science and Culture
MOB	Medical Education Office
NGO's	Non-governmental organizations
NSBS	Foundation for People with a Visual Impairment in Suriname
NVB	National Transport Company
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OWTC	Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Communication
PWDs/PWD	People with disabilities/ People with a disability
SAO	Foundation for Labour Mobilization and Development
SoZaVo	Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SPWE	Foundation of Productive Working Units
SRD	Surinamese dollar
SSLC	Suriname Survey of Living Conditions
STIA/VSB	Suriname Trade and Industry Association/ Vereniging Surinaams Bedrijfsleven
SuDoBe	Foundation for people with a hearing impairment in Suriname
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VOJ	Lower secondary education
VSO	Special education for children with learning disabilities
WG	Washington Group



Braille computing technology to boost potential in the school system and in the job market.
Photographer: Crozet M © ILO



Executive summary

This study intends to provide the Ministry of Labour and national stakeholders with a comprehensive situation analysis concerning the integration of people with disabilities (PWDs) into the labour market. Having, amongst others, agreed and signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the Surinamese Government is called to support such policy goals and report the status of people with disabilities on a regular basis.

The study is a combination of analysis of survey-based microdata (quantitative data) and in-depth interviews (qualitative data). The latter allowed researchers to capture the view and perceptions of the number of PWDs living in Suriname, providing insights on the type of disabilities, the labour market status and barriers to entry. Such analysis is further elaborated with the opinion of employers and key stakeholders.

Census 2012 data showed that 12.3 per cent of the population had some type of disability. This is in line with the percentages in the region and the rest of world. The Suriname Survey of Living Conditions (SSLC) on the other hand reported only 9.2 per cent of persons in such a situation.

Both surveys show that there are more women than men with disabilities. Difficulty seeing and walking are the most common types of disabilities in Suriname. The highest group of PWDs was found among the working-age population (15-64 years). Approximately two-thirds of people with disabilities are more likely to have completed at most, primary or lower secondary education. Completion of higher education seems to be more challenging for PWDs than for the rest of the population. At the extremes, there is a non-relevant share of the PWDs who attained tertiary education degree, while about 17 per cent of PWDs completed no formal education (vs 5.5 per cent of the rest of the population).

According to the calculation based on the 2016-7 SSLC, the labour market performance of people with disabilities is rather dismal. On the one hand, the vast majority of them are not active in the labour market (57.7 per cent inactivity rate vs 42.1 per cent of people without disability) and tend to show a substantial detachment from it (not looking or being available for work). For those who actively participate, the employment rate is substantially lower than their counterpart (39.9 per cent vs 53.2 per cent), but so too is the unemployment one (2.4 per cent versus 4.7 per cent).

This study also shows that PWDs mostly work as salaried workers (as those without disabilities) and are less likely to participate in informal employment than people without disabilities (46.3 vs 53 per cent). Conversely, they are more likely than the latter to have a permanent written contract but less so to have a written temporary one (52.0 per cent), but are more likely to have no contract (77.9 per cent) than people without disabilities (74.9%). In terms of industries, they are mostly employed in manufacturing, wholesale and retail, education (especially women), administrative and support service activities, public administration and defence, and in construction. They are also more concentrated in mid-to-low-skilled occupations, although less so than their counterparts without disabilities.

The story that appears from the data and qualitative findings is a tale of two situations. On the one hand, there remain substantial barriers to labour market participation of PWDs originating from refusals, doubts, prejudice and lack of qualification and skills stemming from limited education possibilities or barriers to completion. Those lead most people with disabilities to refrain from actively engaging in (or finding) employment or performing job search. On the other hand, those PWDs who actually access the labour market and become employed, a subset of the total, while not necessarily enjoying decent work, perform, perhaps due to the self-selection process, close or better than their counterparts. Indeed, data seem to show - with some exceptions - no systematic disadvantage or divergence from the average. The latter applies to status in employment (even if PWDs tend to be less likely to be self-employed, especially women), quality of employment (similar or better access to formal employment and written contracts), distribution by industry (although some differences exist, especially regarding the industries more directly in contact with the public such as wholesale trade, retail trade, restaurant and hotels) and occupation (PWDs are surprisingly more represented amongst the managers and professionals category and less represented in elementary occupations).

In terms of policy environment, several bodies and measures are in place to support PWDs. The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (MinOWC) is responsible for providing quality education for people with disabilities and has 24 basic education schools and nine vocational schools for children with extreme difficulties in learning (Voortgezet Speciaal Onderwijs; VSO). The Bureau Speciaal Onderwijs (BSO) is investing in new learning methods for the pupils and an instruction module for teachers. They put a lot of effort into finding internships for the pupils. A bottleneck they face is insufficient cooperation from the private sector.

The Ministry of Labour is mostly responsible for protecting the rights of employed people with disabilities. It also has an Employment Service (Dienst Arbeidsbemiddeling) which assists all jobseekers, including those with disabilities, in entering the labour market. The Ministry acknowledges the inclusion of PWDs in employment and urges an integral approach between the Government, community based-organizations and businesses. The stakeholders who participated during the validation workshop, which was held after the completion of the data collection, also emphasized this integral approach.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing provides a social benefit of SRD 325 per month and also subsidizes supporting organizations such as Stichting Matoekoe, Kennedy Stichting and Huize TylTyl. Persons with disabilities can only receive the social benefit upon submitting a statement from a physician or from the Medical Education Office (MOB) that provides information on the state of their disabilities and capabilities for employment. Enabling elements such as subsidies and social benefits are certainly of help but interviewers highlighted concerns by key intermediary organizations regarding the timeliness of the transfers, which in turn may hinder operations and payment of salaries.

Findings of this study suggest that there could be possibilities to increase the participation of PWDs in employment. However, since a key deciding factor for hiring is their educational level, investments will need to be made to the workplaces' infrastructure to accommodate PWDs. In

addition, it is a shared opinion that guidance in the job search process and labour integration may be a critical element.

Any employability-enhancing intervention must start with awareness raising led by the Government and key organizations for PWDs in order for campaigns that focus on reducing barriers and removing stigmas to go a long way. In terms of labour market policies, more investment in special education combined with job search assistance, vocational rehabilitation, and special employment programmes for PWDs can help participation and employment rates. Any intervention aimed at enhancing the generation of employment opportunities should be carried out in collaboration with the private sector and key organizations for PWDs.



Visually impaired man at training. Photographer: Crozet M. © ILO



1. Introduction

In 2007 Suriname signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which was ratified by the Government in 2017. Amongst others, the ratification of the Convention includes the commitment to report on PWDs and their labour market situation, with the aim of creating better opportunities for the target group.

There is hardly any information available on the participation of PWDs in employment in Suriname. This study will allow having a baseline of the situation. As an initial reference, one could consider the World Bank (2004, p. 1) which reported that in Latin America and the Caribbean *“About 80-90% of persons with disabilities are unemployed or outside the work force. Most of those who have jobs receive little or no monetary remuneration.”*

The objective of this study is to determine the number of people with disabilities in Suriname and the level of their employability and labour market integration in order for the Ministry of Labour to develop sound policies on this matter.

Critical questions which the study intends to answer are:

- How many people live with disabilities in Suriname?
- What is their labour market status?
- What is their actual and perceived employability and why?
- What are the main barriers to labour market integration for PWDs and why?

Specific insights are sought regarding:

1. Type of disabilities affecting the population.
2. Relevant policies, social benefits and interventions in place to accommodate PWDs in the labour market, their coverage and related investments (in terms of Governmental budgetary allocations and private initiatives).

This study is based on a mixed methodology. First, it analyses the microdata of two household surveys and the administrative registry of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing (SoZaVo), the Government institution responsible for registering and providing financial aid for people in need of social benefits. Secondly, it reports on and analyses the findings from in-depth interviews conducted with key stakeholders, including companies and organizations with or without employed PWDs and individuals living with disabilities themselves.

This report is structured as follows: Section 2 presents the research methodology in detail. Section 3 summarizes the research findings, focusing on the labour market situation for the whole population and for PWDs, existing policies, education options and private initiatives. It also presents the findings of the in-depth interviews. The final chapter provides conclusions and recommendations.

Due to rounding, the numbers presented throughout the document may not add up precisely to the totals provided and percentages may not precisely reflect the absolute figures.

2. Methodology

The present study is divided in two parts. The first part hinges on the analysis of microdata from: (i) the 2012 Census. Census data were collected by the General Bureau of Statistics (ABS); (ii) the Suriname Survey of Living Conditions (SSLC) 2016-2017. The survey was carried out by the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and; (iii) the administrative data on persons living with disabilities registered for receiving financial support from the Government, specifically the SoZaVo. The second part of the study is based on evidence gathered through field interviews with key informants including the private sector, civil society organizations and a small sample of people with disabilities. Annex I provides more details on the methodology.

The target group for this study are persons with disabilities living in Suriname with a focus on those actively involved in the labour market. The interviews were mainly conducted in district Paramaribo and one in district Wanica. The focus was on relevant organizations (public and private sector) working with this target group. Most organizations are situated in the capital district Paramaribo. Annex II gives an overview of important organizations registered by the SoZaVo. For each respondent category a limited sample is drawn (Table 2.1).

▶ Table 2.1

Sample size per category and number of respondents reached

No.	Key informants/respondents	N	Respondents
1	Preparatory phase: key organizations	10	7
2	Ministries & semi-public companies, Private companies	10	9
3	PWDs employed/unemployed	10	10
Total		30	26

In the preparatory phase, seven key informants were interviewed to have a quick scan about the target group and to have access to PWDs employed and unemployed. Stakeholders identified for the subsequent single interviews are semi-public and private companies as well as organizations responsible for the guidance, care and education of PWDs. The stakeholders (companies) are selected based on the following criteria:

- companies employing or not employing PWDs;
- various industries; and
- whether it was a public or private company.

A total of ten PWDs were interviewed. A distinction was made between employed and unemployed PWDs and the type of disability was also taken into account, to have an overall view of the target group. Annex III includes a copy of the questionnaires used for the interviews.

To complete the qualitative results, a validation workshop was organized to verify the findings of this report. Stakeholders interviewed and the ones unable to be interviewed were invited to participate in a work group session to share their views on the findings and the contributions of the Government, the businesses and the non-governmental organizations. They also discussed the following topics:

- issues surrounding education and health and their contribution to PWDs;
- accessibility of buildings, roads and pedestrians;
- employability in terms of type of disability, kind of employment and possibilities for PWDs;
- the role of the Employment Service Unit of the Ministry of Labour; and
- suggestions for follow-up studies.

Inputs from the validation workshop is included in the findings. Annex IV provides details on the validation workshop.

For the data processing and analysis, all data from the interviews were collected via voice-notes and directly processed and analyzed for the reporting in Microsoft Word. The data sources were either processed in Microsoft Excel or Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for further analysis.



3. People with disabilities (PWDs) in Suriname

Suriname has not defined the term "people with disabilities" in its national legislation. The Ministries of Social Affairs and Labour both use the United Nations definition for any legal and practical purpose. Such definition declares that *"People with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others"* (United Nations, 2006: 3).

The ILO and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2018, p.2) reported that 15.0 per cent of the world population has a disability. The World Bank (2004, p.1) wrote that in Latin America and the Caribbean about 80.0 to 90.0 per cent of the working-age population with a disability were unemployed or outside the work force.

3.1 Economic outlook and labour market

The economy of Suriname shows signs of recovery after the recession from 2015-2016. In 2017, the economic growth climbed to just above 1.5 per cent and more signs of an increase was noticed in the first months of 2018 (Ministry of Finance, 2019). The recovery is driven by the increased output and services of the mining sector, especially the production of gold and oil exploration activities, and an increased production for export in the wood and food sectors.

Zooming in on the Surinamese economy and employment, the Planning Office (2017) projected for 2017-2021 a moderate growth of 1.8 per cent on average for jobs in both private and public companies. It is expected that as a result of the estimated average annual growth of the working-age population group of 2.0 per cent, the labour supply will increase steadily. In 2012, the Suriname working-age population accounted for 64.5 per cent of the total population, and the labour force participation rate was 60.0 per cent. The same year, the unemployment rate was estimated at 10.3 per cent (ABS, 2014).

3.2 Data on PWDs in Suriname

Antonius-Smits (2016) analysis of 2012 Census data indicates that 12.5 per cent of the population had at least one disability, and of that number 14.3 per cent were women and 10.7 per cent were men. This trend was common to all ten districts. The highest number of persons with disabilities lived in the interior (districts Brokopondo and Sipaliwini). The number one disability in all districts is difficulty seeing (even with glasses), followed by difficulty walking/climbing stairs and difficulty with upper body function. Antonius-Smits referencing estimates for both developing and developed countries, ranging between 10.0 and 14.5 per cent, noticed that the situation in Suriname is similar to the international and regional one.

The following is a summary of data sources ABS (2014) and IADB (2018) on specific indicators of the population and especially of people with disabilities.

General characteristics of people with disabilities in Suriname

The ABS conducted the Census in 2012 and until now, this was the only ABS data on people with disabilities and was collected according to the Washington Group (WG) indicators. According to ABS, 12.3 per cent of the population has a disability. This differs with the data from an IADB Survey for 2016-2017 which found that persons with disabilities represented 9.2 per cent of the population. (Table 3.1). The difference between men and women is in line with the international report which shows that there are more women than men with a disability (Table 3.2).

▶ Table 3.1

Number of persons with disabilities per data source (in %)

	Census 2012	SSLC 2016-2017
With disability	12.3	9.2
Without disability	82.1	90.8
Unknown	5.6	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Note: ABS data is 10% sample (n=53960) and IADB data (n=494372) in weighted measures.
Source: Own elaboration based on ABS, 2014 and IADB, 2018.

▶ Table 3.2

Share of persons with disabilities by sex and data source (in %)

	Census 2012		SSLC 2016-2017	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
With disability	10.5	14.2	7.7	10.7
Without disability	83.7	80.5	92.24	89.24
Unknown	5.8	5.3	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Own elaboration based on ABS, 2014 and IADB, 2018.

Data showed that most people have one or two disabilities (Table 3.3). Difficulty seeing and walking are the type of disabilities that are most common in Suriname, as aforementioned by Antonius-Smits (Table 3.4).

► Table 3.3

Persons with disabilities by number of disabilities

	Census 2012	SSLC 2016-2017
One or more disabilities	%	%
1 disability	67.0	87.3
2 disabilities	15.9	10.9
3 disabilities	6.6	1.7
4 disabilities	4.3	0.1
5 disabilities	2.4	N/A
6 disabilities	1.4	N/A
7 disabilities	2.4	N/A
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Own elaboration based on ABS, 2014 and IADB, 2018.

► Table 3.4

Type of disabilities in Suriname (%)

	Census 2012	SSLC 2016-2017
Type of disabilities	% of PWDs	% of PWDs
Difficulty seeing	67.9	70.0
Difficulty hearing	17.4	12.7
Difficulty walking	29.5	23.2
Difficulty remembering	17.0	0.0
Difficulty with self-care	11.0	0.0
Difficulty with upper-body function	21.2	0.0
Difficulty with communication	8.9	9.0

Note: Multiple response answers.

Source: Own elaboration based on ABS, 2014 and IADB, 2018.

There are different reasons why persons become disabled. The biggest group reported 'other cause' and 'disease' but there is no further clarification in the data source (Table 3.5).

► Table 3.5

Main cause of disability

Reason for disability	% of cases
Congenital/since birth	12.1
Disease	55.4
Traffic accident	3.5
Other accident	11.2
Other cause	60.8
Don't know	7.0
No answer	23.6

Note: Multiple response answers; only available for census data.
Source: Own elaboration based on ABS, 2014

Table 3.6 shows the number of persons by status of disability in all ten districts sorted by region (urban, rural and interior) and Table 3.7 shows the survey results of SSLC. Most PWDs reside in the urban area contrary to the findings of Antonius-Smits (2016) where most PWDs live in the interior.

► Table 3.6

Disability status by region and sex (a)

Gender and disability status (in %)						
Region	Males		Females		Total	
	With disability	Without disability	With disability	Without disability	With disability	Without disability
Urban	62.0	66.9	60.2	68.4	61.0	67.6
Rural	19.7	21.5	18.2	20.8	18.9	21.2
Interior	18.2	11.6	21.6	10.7	20.1	11.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Own elaboration based on ABS, 2014

▶ Table 3.7

Disability status by region and sex (b)

Gender and disability status (in %)						
Region	Males		Females		Total	
	With disability	Without disability	With disability	Without disability	With disability	Without disability
Paramaribo	43.4	36.8	47.4	39.8	45.8	38.3
Paramaribo outskirts *	30.0	35.8	25.4	33.9	27.3	34.9
Rest of the coastal region **	16.9	21.7	16.9	20.7	16.9	21.1
Interior ***	9.6	5.6	10.1	5.4	9.9	5.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* Paramaribo outskirts are districts Wanica, Saramacca and Commewijne.

** Rest of the coastal is districts Nickerie, Coronie, Para and Marowijne.

*** Interior is small villages located in most part of districts Sipaliwini, southern half of Brokopondo and small portions of other districts.

Source: Own elaboration based on IADB, 2018

Amongst women, those older than 64 years of age present the highest incidence of disabilities. When comparing the ABS and IADB results, the highest group with disabilities for both men and women, in terms of age distribution, is the working-age population 15-64 years (for both sources; Table 3.8 and Table 3.9).

▶ Table 3.8

Disability status by age and sex (a)

Gender and disability status (in %)							
Age	Males		Females		Total		Total
	With disability	Without disability	With disability	Without disability	With disability	Without disability	
< 15	1.7	50.4	1.7	46.1	3.4	96.5	100.0
15-64	5.5	44.0	7.5	42.9	13.0	86.9	100.0
> 64	20.3	24.2	28.9	26.6	49.2	50.8	100.0
Total (all ages)	5.6	44.3	7.5	42.6	13.1	86.9	100.0

Source: Own elaboration based on ABS, 2014

► Table 3.9

Disability status by age and sex (b)

Gender and disability status by age bracket (in %)							
Age	Males		Females		Total		Total
	With disability	Without disability	With disability	Without disability	With disability	Without disability	
< 15	1.1	48.7	1.9	48.3	3.1	96.9	100.0
15-64	3.9	46.0	5.3	44.7	9.2	90.8	100.0
> 64	10.6	30.8	17.2	41.2	27.9	72.1	100.0

Source: Own elaboration based on IADB, 2018

Analysis shows that people with disabilities tend to have lower levels of education than those without disabilities: while attendance rate may be similar, there seems to be obstacles to complete the studies. While combined attendance rates for primary or lower secondary education are similar (Table 3.11), completion rates are lower for PWDs starting from lower secondary education (Table 3.10). Note also that lower secondary education includes education provided by MinOWC or from private organizations for PWDs. There is also a substantial share of PWDs who attend tertiary education (14.8 per cent, see Table 3.11) although the completion rate seems lower for PWDs than the rest of the students (4.6 vs 6.1, see Table 3.10). Not to be neglected, the share of PWDs who have completed no education is 16.8 per cent according to the 2014 Census.

► Table 3.10

Highest educational level attained by disability status and sex (a)

Gender and disability status (in %)						
Highest educational level attained	Males		Females		Total	
	With disability	Without disability	With disability	Without disability	With disability	Without disability
Primary (kindergarten and basic education)	40.6	39.7	34.2	35.8	36.9	37.8
Lower secondary education (VOJ)	27.2	31.3	25.9	30.6	26.5	31.0
Upper secondary education (VOS)	7.6	11.6	8.3	14.5	8.0	13.0
Tertiary education	4.8	4.8	4.5	7.5	4.6	6.1
No education	11.9	4.8	20.4	6.3	16.8	5.5
Don't know	6.6	6.4	5.3	4.1	5.9	5.2
No Answer	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Own elaboration based on ABS, 2014

► Table 3.11

Highest educational level attended by disability status and sex (b)

Gender and disability status (in %)						
Highest educational level attended	Males		Females		Total	
	With disability	Without disability	With disability	Without disability	With disability	Without disability
Primary (kindergarten and basic education)	31.7	25.0	33.1	22.6	32.4	23.8
Lower secondary education (VOJ)	36.8	47.4	31.6	38.5	33.9	43.1
Upper secondary education (VOS)	16.2	17.7	13.1	23.3	14.5	20.4
Tertiary education	12.3	7.6	16.8	11.6	14.8	9.6
No education	0.7	0.6	0.3	0.7	0.5	0.6
Other	2.4	1.7	5.2	3.3	3.9	2.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Own elaboration based on IADB, 2018

Labour market performance of people with disabilities

A study by the ILO and the OECD (2018, p.3) reported that people with disabilities are generally less likely to be employed than people without disabilities. Also women with disabilities are employed at lower rates than women without disabilities or men with disabilities. It was also reported that among those employed, a larger proportion is self-employed. This is likely due to the lack of opportunities in other types of employment.

A short unpublished study prepared by the Ministry of Labour in 2012 on employed PWDs in Suriname's public sector showed that 9 of the seventeen ministries² had PWDs working in Government offices (Table 3.12). The inventory also showed that more men than women with disabilities were employed by the Government. More than two-thirds worked in maintenance and administration. Even though not all ministries have employed persons with disabilities, the findings arguably showed the willingness of the Government to include PWDs in the labour market.

► Table 3.12

Number of persons, by sex and with disabilities, employed by ministries

No.	Ministry	Sex		Total
		Male	Female	
1	Labour (Arbeid)	2	4	6
2	Home Affairs (BiZa)	5	3	8
3	Defence (Defensie)	1	1	2
4	Trade and Industry (HI)	0	1	1
5	Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries (LVV)	1	1	2
6	Regional Development (RO)	5	3	8
7	Physical Planning, Land and Forestry Management (ROGB)	1	1	2
8	Social Affairs and Public Housing (SoZaVo)	23	7	30
9	Transportation, Communication and Tourism (TCT)	0	2	2
	Total	38	23	61

Note: Some Ministries have been reorganized or Departments are moved to another Ministry by now.
Source: Own elaboration based on Ministry of Labour, 2012

To shed some further and much needed light on the labour market performance of people with disabilities, this section provides some original indicators. Table 3.13 shows general labour market indicators calculated on the basis of data from the survey of SSLC. The data show that:

² Sixteen of the seventeen ministries participated in the study. The Ministry of Education did not participate.

1. People with disabilities are considerably less active in the labour market than people without disabilities. The Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR = Labour force/working-age population) is 56.1 per cent for the total population, 42.3 per cent for PWDs, and 57.9 per cent for people without disabilities.
2. The vast majority of people with disabilities (57.7 per cent) is outside the labour force with what appears to be a sensible detachment from the labour market.³
3. People with disabilities are less likely to be employed than people without disabilities (39.9 versus 53.2 per cent).
4. People with disabilities are less likely to be unemployed. The unemployment rate for PWDs is half of that for people without disabilities (2.4 versus 4.7). Unemployed people are those who were not employed during a reference period, and were looking for and available for work.

► Table 3.13

Labour market indicators

Labour Market indicators	Total	With disability	Without disability
Total population	489 419	45 354	444 065
Working-age population	367 082	41 663	325 419
Employed	189 680	16 632	173 048
Employment rate	51.5	39.9	53.2
Unemployed	16 307	1 013	15 294
Unemployment rate	4.4	2.4	4.7
Labour force	205 989	17 645	188 343
Labour force participation rate	56.1	42.3	57.9
Out of labour force	161 094	24 017	137 077
Inactivity rate	43.9	57.7	42.1

Source: Own elaboration based on IADB, 2018

³ Further calculation not presented shows that the percentage of people with disabilities who may belong to the potential labour force because they are either seeking work but not available (Unavailable jobseekers), or they are not seeking work but are available (Available potential jobseekers), is minimal.

Figure 3.1 shows that PWDs represent only 8.4 per cent of the total employed population.



In terms of status of employment, most people with disabilities are salaried workers (72.6 per cent), similar to those without disabilities. Data from the Census 2012 (Table 3.14) show that employed women with disabilities are more likely than those without disabilities to be own account workers (21.9 versus 13.6 per cent) and, conversely less likely to be salaried workers. On the other hand, data from the SSLC (Table 3.15) hints that disabilities may be barriers for men and women willing to be own account workers (12.8 versus 14.3 per cent).

► Table 3.14

Employment status by disability status and sex (a)

Gender and disability status (in %)						
Employment Status	Males		Females		Total	
	With disability	Without disability	With disability	Without disability	With disability	Without disability
Employer	2.8	3.7	1.6	1.7	2.2	2.9
Own account worker	27.5	26.0	21.9	13.6	25.1	21.6
Contributing family worker	0.7	0.5	1.0	0.8	0.8	0.6
Salaried worker	67.5	68.4	75.1	83.2	70.9	73.7
Intern/apprentice	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.05	0.1
Volunteer	1.3	1.4	0.4	0.6	0.9	1.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Own elaboration based on ABS, 2014

► Table 3.15

Employment status by disability status and sex (b)

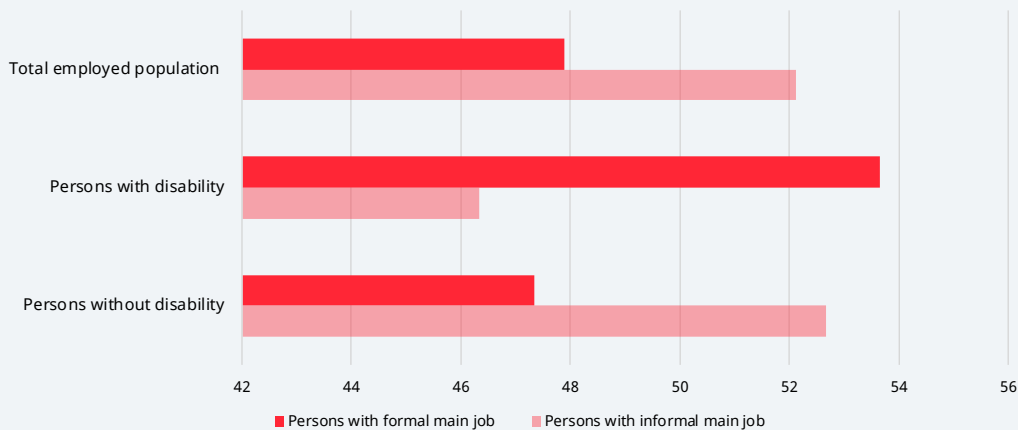
Gender and disability status (in %)						
Employment Status	Males		Females		Total	
	With disability	Without disability	With disability	Without disability	With disability	Without disability
Employer	4.8	5.6	1.4	1.0	3.2	3.8
Own account worker	14.5	15.8	11	11.9	12.8	14.3
Contributing Family worker	4	3.4	4.7	5.7	4.3	4.3
Salaried worker	69.5	71.1	76.1	77.5	72.6	73.6
Not classifiable	7.2	4.1	6.8	3.9	7.0	4.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Own elaboration based on IADB, 2018

In terms of quality of employment, data show that 52.1 per cent of all employed persons is in informal employment, and of that number, 46.3 per cent of all PWDs are informally employed⁴ as opposed to 52.7 per cent of all people without disabilities (Figure 3.2).

► Figure 3.2

Formal/informal employment by disability status



Source: Own elaboration based on IADB, 2018

In addition, most of the PWDs employed (85.8 per cent of the men and 76.3 per cent of the women) do not have a written contract. Interestingly, men without disabilities are significantly more likely to have a written contract for a job of limited duration than their counterparts with disabilities, hinting that temporary or casual work for men with disability is more likely to be unregulated. In addition, this may hint preference for people without disabilities for punctual tasks or seasonal work (Table 3.16). It is however noteworthy that most persons employed do not have a written contract (80 per cent).

In terms of industry of employment, people with disabilities mostly work in manufacturing, wholesale and retail, education, administrative and support service activities, public administration and defence, and in construction. Women with disabilities work more in education and public administration and men with disabilities in manufacturing and construction (Table 3.17).

⁴ In line with the existing international Standard, ILO (2018, p.9) provides an operational framework of reference which is the same one adopted by the present paper. The latter can be summarized as follows: (i) in the case of own-account workers and employers, the informal employment status of the job is determined by the informal sector nature of the enterprise (registered or not); (ii) all contributing family workers are classified as having informal employment; and (iii) in the case of employees, informal employment is defined in terms of the employment relationship. Specifically, to be considered informal, the employment relationship should not be, in law or in practice, subject to national labour legislation, income taxation, social protection or entitlement to certain employment benefits.

▶ Table 3.16

Type of contract by disability status and sex

Gender and disability status (in %)						
Type of contract	Males		Females		Total	
	With disability	Without disability	With disability	Without disability	With disability	Without disability
Written permanent contract	11.4	9.0	13.8	13.7	12.5	10.8
Written contract for limited time	2.8	7.6	9.9	9.9	6.2	8.5
No contract	85.8	83.4	76.3	76.4	81.3	80.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Own elaboration based on IADB, 2018

▶ Table 3.17

Industry of employment by disability status and sex

Industry	Males		Females		Total	
	With disability	Without disability	With disability	Without disability	With disability	Without disability
Manufacturing	19.5	14.8	7.8	9.2	13.5	12.6
Wholesale trade, retail trade, restaurant and hotels	8.5	11.4	5.5	12.2	7.0	11.7
Education	4.4	3.2	26.2	21.5	13.8	10.0
Administrative and support service activities	3.8	9.6	6.7	9.4	5.2	9.5
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	7.5	8.5	10.2	8.8	8.8	8.6
Construction	10.6	13.2	1.9	1.0	6.5	8.4
Agriculture, forestry and fishery	6.3	9.0	4.0	5.8	5.2	7.8
Transportation and storage	2.6	8.7	2.8	2.5	2.7	6.3
Other industries	36.8	21.6	34.9	29.6	37.3	25.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Own elaboration based on IADB, 2018

People with disabilities are more concentrated in service occupations (Table 3.18). Interestingly, the highest share of people with disabilities tends to be employed in professional occupations (18.7 per cent, including teachers on all education levels, and religious and health professionals not elsewhere classified) and service and sales workers. Interesting also is that people with disabilities seem to be less represented than their counterparts without disabilities in occupations typically requiring physical fit (elementary occupation, plant and machine operators) and more represented amongst the higher managerial occupations.

► Table 3.18

Occupation in employment by disability status

Occupation	Total		Total
	With disability	Without disability	
Service and sales workers	16.4	18.8	18.6
Craft and related trades workers	11.1	14.3	13.9
Elementary occupations	9.0	13.3	12.9
Professionals	17.4	11.5	12.1
Technicians and associate professionals	10.2	10.0	10.0
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	5.4	10.1	9.7
Clerical support workers	12.3	7.4	7.7
Managers	10.4	7.0	7.3
Skilled agriculture, forestry and fishery workers	4.9	5.5	5.5
Armed forces	0.4	1.0	1.0
Not classified	2.5	1.1	1.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Own elaboration based on IADB, 2018

In addition to the above sources, for comparison purposes, we present the data from SoZaVo regarding the number of people registered therein. A quick comparison of the totals shows that only 12.1 per cent of people with disabilities (all ages) are registered by the Ministry (Table 3.19). The figures refer to the PWDs per district receiving the social benefit of SRD 325.

▶ Table 3.19

Number of PWDs per district in 2018

District	Number of PWDs
Paramaribo	1 944
Wanica	951
Nickerie	413
Coronie	70
Saramacca	54
Commewijne	573
Marowijne	400
Para	564
Brokopondo	210
Sipaliwini	329
Total	5 508

Note: Registered data of January 2019

Source: Ministry SoZaVo, Sub-directorate General Social Care, 2019

Indeed, a problem the Ministry faces is not having insight into the exact number of people with disabilities due to gaps in the registry data and unwillingness to register. Even though every person with a disability has the right to social support, a large portion is not willing to come forward, is being held in 'isolation' by their family, or want to know what the added value is for registration. Also, in light of the above, in 2018, the Ministry started a campaign to encourage all PWDs to register. To this date, the results are far from satisfying.

3.3 Policies and interventions

There are both public and private initiatives to enhance the labour market participation and employability of people with disabilities in Suriname. Various entities and bodies have taken it upon themselves to create awareness aimed at inclusion of this target group in the community and the labour market. Amongst them are, Stichting Wan Okasi, Stichting Surinaamse Doven Belangen (SuDoBe), Nationale Stichting voor Blinden en Slechtzindenden in Suriname (NSBS), Kennedy Stichting and Stichting Matoekoe.

Public sector initiatives

The ILO and the OECD (2018, p.3) stated that the average level of education of persons with disabilities tends to be lower than that of people without disabilities. This is seen as a common result of non-inclusive school environments and other access barriers.

In Suriname, the MinOWC is responsible for regulating and creating equal education possibilities for all children. Three Departments within the Ministry are directly mandated to ensure the assignment of pupils and teachers to special needs education. These are the Bureau Speciaal Onderwijs (BSO), the Department of Guidance and the Pedological Institute. There are 33 special education schools with a distinction between 24 for basic special education (SO) and 9 for the Voortgezet Speciaal Onderwijs (VSO) schools (BSO, n.y.). Children with learning difficulties are assigned to a VSO school and will learn a skill such as engineering, facility services, car assembly, horticulture (gardening), fashion and care (BSO, n.y.).

The BSO focuses primarily on providing education for cognitive impairment. The children are assigned to various levels within special education depending on their disability. Those who pass the tests for regular education, transfer to a mainstream school. This bureau invests in new learning methods for the pupils and an instruction module for teachers. A lot of effort is put into finding internships. A bottleneck they reported is insufficient cooperation from the private sector.



When it comes to businesses, employers are often not accommodating enough. There are a few who are willing to place the children for an internship, but not everyone cooperates. (Head, BSO)

The few existing private education institutions are mostly focused on one type of disability and some provide vocational education. Annex II presents a list of such institutions (Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing, 2018). There are specific schools for children with a hearing impairment (Kennedy Stichting), visual impairment (NSBS has Louis Braille School) and for all other types of disability (example, Mytyl School and Grietjebie School). It is however to be noted that in some cases late school attendance of young children with disabilities at special need institutions, such as the NSBS and Kennedy Stichting, is limited. Respondents of this study suggested that a lack of knowledge of disabilities and oftentimes acceptance, together with a sense of shame or 'taboo', may be relevant underlying causes in such choices.

Inclusion of these children in regular education mostly takes place thanks to advocacy of key representatives. The director of the NSBS stresses how important it is to include these children in regular education with the assistance of experts for the target group.



We say, no (to keep the children only in special education), we go for inclusion. That is why we only have nine children here at the school. When I started working here, there were 40 children here at the school. Now, we really look more specifically at the child, at the possibilities: if it is a child that can simply be placed in regular education, of course with our guidance because we do that too as a service, or that child needs extra guidance so that he/she first has to come here. This is why we more often send the children to regular, education because the child will have to enter society at point. (Director, NSBS)

The representatives of SuDoBe, who specializes in sign language interpretation, and the General Director of the Kennedy Stichting, have similar opinions.



Why can't a student go with an interpreter to the MULO (lower secondary education) or to the university? Why not? Why does it have to end here (at Kennedy school), then they have to look for a job. Then they have to start painting under supervision. While, if he/she could develop his/her painting skills further, then he/she would also become independent. There are people with hearing impairment who can do it (she emphasizes this) and that's it. (General Director, Kennedy Stichting)

In relation to the above, it may be worth noting that following the participation, in June 1994, at the World Conference on Special Needs Education in Spain, Salamanca, Suriname signed the UNESCO Salamanca Statement. This Statement specifically identifies the need for inclusive education and timely monitoring of progress. Unfortunately, it is uncertain whether there are underlying documents on the progress made on the inclusion of special needs children in regular education in Suriname. In addition, upon ratifying the CRPD, the Government of Suriname noted that for the time being, the implementation of Article 24 Paragraph 2(b), which calls for fully inclusive education, cannot be guaranteed (Box 3.1). They explained that the educational system in Suriname is far from inclusive education (United Nations, 2017⁵).

▶ Box 3.1

Suriname signature of CRPD in 2007, Ratification/accession: 2007

Declarations and reservations: “ [...] the Government of the Republic of Suriname makes the following reservation/declaration in relation to articles 9 paragraph 2 (d) and (e); 19 paragraph b; 20 paragraph (a); 24 paragraph 2 (b) and 26 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that was adopted on 13 December 2006:

- the Government of the Republic of Suriname recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to education and determines to guarantee free primary education for every person. Accordingly, it declares that it shall not for the time being guarantee the application of the provision 24 paragraph 2 (b) on the condition that the educational system is still far from inclusive education;

Source: United Nations, 2017.

In addition to what was previously said on inclusive education and education opportunities for children with a disability, it is helpful to quote the General Director of the Kennedy Stichting.



[...] there are children with a high IQ. The test is often done within the Kennedy School. [...] an intelligence test for all children. And you do have differences in IQ level. You have some bright children among them. I want you to know that. But if you ask ‘where in Suriname can children develop further?’ It ends right here at the Kennedy school. So after the Kennedy school, there is nothing else. (General Director, Kennedy Stichting)

All stakeholders agreed that more investments in education are needed. Specific modules could be introduced at the teacher training schools focusing on PWDs such as sign language and Braille for gradually creating inclusive education.

The Ministry of Labour acknowledges the inclusion of PWDs in society and especially in employment. They emphasized that to mobilize this target group, an integral approach is needed from the Government, community based-organizations and businesses. During the validation workshop held in preparation for this study, all stakeholders emphasized the integral approach, especially among Government institutions, to work more cost efficiently and to create more transparency on the responsibility of each institution (Box 3.2).

▶ Box 3.2

Integral approach for PWDs

Stakeholders proposed that the Government formulates a masterplan for people with disabilities. The responsibility of each organization should be clear: who, what, when and why?

Example:

- Ministry of Health: Registration of new-borns and how many have a disability.
- Ministry of SoZaVo: Financial support for these children.
- Ministry of Education: Starting from the age of four until 18, enjoy education possibilities.

Source: Stakeholders, Validation workshop, December 2019.

Other initiatives of the Ministry of Labour include a law drafted in 2018 on “Gelijke behandelend Arbeid” which promotes equality of treatment of all persons concerning labour, inclusive of people with disabilities and to prevent discrimination in the workplace. This law still needs to be ratified by the National Parliament. The Ministry also provides services to economically active persons seeking employment through the Employment Service Unit which, in any case, does not have targeted nor has special programmes for PWDs. Informants interviewed for this study seemed to be largely unaware of the objectives and activities of the Unit.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing is responsible for providing financial support to PwDs. This takes the form of a monthly compensation of SRD 325. In the period 2015 to 2018, an average amount of SRD 46.9 million was earmarked for such financial support (Ministry of Finance, 2019). This Ministry registered 5508 persons by January 2019 (see Table 3.19) receiving social benefit for themselves or for their under-age children with a disability. Through the responsible Department, Sub-directorate General Social Care (AMZ), every person needs to submit underlying statement to receive the benefit. This statement should be from a physician (paid for) or from MOB (free of charge) providing information on the state of their disability and capability for employment. This request must be submitted annually. Most PwDs visit the MOB every year for this statement because it is free of charge. This is seen as very inefficient by the MOB Director who urges for a more shortened approach to accommodate the target group.



We declared (in the statement) that people have a disability for life so you should not repeatedly ask them. They (Department AMZ of SoZaVo) should actually keep a copy in their file so that they can request it for re-registration of PwDs. What is the nature of the disability? If you know it is a chronic disorder then people do not always have to come. And that's why people come to the MOB because it is free of charge. (Director, MOB)

One proposed way to shorten such a process is by mandating the Ministry of Health (see Box 3.2) which registers all children from birth and follows these children throughout their adolescence. The registration could be done through the MOB, which is an office of this Ministry. The MOB is already responsible for most children with disabilities assigned at a very young age for guidance on education level. This would broaden the scope of this office.

The justification of monthly compensation of SRD 325 is a Government agreement. It is still a point of discussion among stakeholders responsible for PwDs who should receive this social benefit and the amount of the benefit. There are no specific criteria yet. In the opinion of some Government officials, PwDs who work and can take care of themselves should not receive social benefits while representatives of the PwDs believe that regardless if persons with disabilities work, they should receive the social benefit.



[...] all our files are outdated/polluted. People who should not qualify for social benefit for PwDs get it because not enough investigation has been done or because they do not tell the truth. As long as you have not cleaned up the database and have not built anything to protect you as a Ministry you have to ... you have to keep going on the same way while you are not really working with an increase (helping the ones who really need the benefit?). (SoZaVo)

The Ministry also partially covers the cost for healthcare transportation. The National Transport Company (NVB) is a Government company which provides public services throughout the country. As of 2005 they also offer transportation to PWDs. Interviewees highlighted a few crucial perceived limitations of the offer of such service: the availability is limited to office hours (early in the morning until 14:00 hr), is restricted geographically (bus routes not in all resorts and districts) and does not include health care workers (not always available).



If you have a disability, you are dependent on healthcare transport. The thing is healthcare transport from the National Transport Company (NVB) is limited as it stops by one o'clock in the afternoon or so. (Respondent)



Yes, those are the wheelchair buses, which are specially equipped for wheelchairs. With equipped, I mean, there are only a few buses and every bus must also have a driver and an assistant. If there is no assistant, the buses cannot transport PWDs. [...] transport also plays a role. If they want to use private transportation. That will cost a lot. (Respondent)

Civil society initiatives

Some key organizations, such as Stichting Matoekoe, Kennedy Stichting, Stichting in de Ruimte and Huize TyITyI, receive subsidies from the Ministry. Information collected for this study estimates a total amount for 2018 of SRD 3 million (SoZaVo, 2018). Such subsidies are mostly used to cover the costs of care for PWDs, consumption, housing, education, costs of personnel and maintenance. In Suriname, most of these organizations rely on third party funding. Some of the funding comes from the public sector, some from international donors or supporters, some from the private sector and some from in kind contributions from the community.

Interviews with informants seem to suggest that most organizations receive subsidies from the Government except NSBS. Informants from organizations that are (solely) dependent on Government funding shared a concern related to the timeliness (most of the time it is not received on time or within the needed period) and extent of such support (received amount is less than requested).

The Stichting Wan Okasi, is an initiative for and by people with disabilities. It is very active and a medium to reach the target group and to hear their voices and needs. The Foundation fights for inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community. They are also a member of the Alliance (see the next section on details of this organization). The Foundation recently launched their own transportation company to provide services to all PWDs and the elderly. Their personnel are well-trained to fulfil the need of the target group. There is a high demand in healthcare transportation. Wan Okasi is not able to fulfil all the requests yet.



[...] demand is high. The buses that we have are not enough. We have 5 buses. There is a waiting list of people who want to be picked up [...] of subscriptions anyway. Because there are subscriptions and taxi rides. Those taxi rides are slightly cheaper than the normal taxi. If you have to go to the doctor and so on. (Wan Okasi)

Private sector initiatives

The Suriname Trade and Industry Association/ Vereniging Surinaams Bedrijfsleven (STIA/VSB) is one of the private institutions aiming at promoting decent work for PWDs, through their own 'leaving no one behind' campaign. In collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Alliance for Decent Work for People with Disabilities (Alliance) was initiated. Members of the STIA/VSB are encouraged to hire PWDs.

Through the Alliance, awareness meetings are held with member companies. The STIA/VSB expects to monitor the performance of the hired PWDs and to have evidence-based information for measurement purposes of all initiatives by the Alliance. The Alliance strives to promote decent employment and entrepreneurship among PWDs in Suriname. That is why a database was launched for assisting PWDs in employment. Member organizations of the Alliance are the Ministries of Labour, Trade and Social Affairs, SAO, SPWE and also NSBS, Stichting Wan Okasi and Unu Pikin.

3.4 Actual and perceived employability

This section presents the findings of the interviews with key informants, which complements and expands on the information presented in the previous sections. The goal is to present some personal experiences to confirm or expand on the general trends and identify additional key factors which could contribute to enhanced employability of PWDs.

Participation of PWDs in education

Our respondents had a diverse educational profile. All went to school, either to regular education or to both regular and special education. The highest educational attainment, which was not necessarily completed, is diverse (for more information see Annex I).

One initial finding is that children with any type of disability do not necessarily have to attend only special needs schools to succeed in the labour market. Moreover, in cases where the respondent went to regular education or to both, the persons' level of thinking, capabilities, perseverance, and in some cases, the commitment of the parents/caregivers and/or contribution of the organizations representing them, was the deciding factor for continued mainstream education. By induction, one might conclude that the social environment of the PWDs plays an important role to determine educational choices. The average number of years attended school is 16 years.

Participation of PWDs in the labour market

Interviewees are working in diverse industries with various occupations, from a typist with a visual impairment to a dispatcher with a physical disability. These are not the stereotypical jobs that PWDs are in most cases hired for. Their job position highly depends on their level of education. This finding complements the analysis in section 3.2 on industry and occupation in employment by PWDs.



You know, these aren't positions like they used to give us; sitting behind a telephone [...] it has (needs) a certain level (of education). Now it depends entirely on the target group to study. If you want to work, you must have a diploma. (PWD, visual)

Employment

Employed interviewees claimed to be very motivated and sometimes encouraged to start working. A common element behind their successful transition to employment seems to be the presence of family, friends or organizations supporting them. In terms of jobs, most require social and technical skills such as: communicative skills, writing skills, critically thinking and listening, computer skills and teamwork.

The following quote shows that even though PWDs work in various industries, some still get hired because of their personal network and connections.



[...] Or someone should make a phone call and say listen 'I have someone with a disability, can you help that person?' [...] I also received help because I knew a certain manager. Not that I applied and they said 'come, work for us', no. (PWD, physical)

People with disabilities, especially with a physical or a visual impairment, use healthcare transportation to reach their workplace. Unfortunately, as already mentioned, public health transportation is limited but with Wan Okasi private health transportation, the gap can be compensated.



[...] you get up in the morning, you get dressed, you wait for the bus and you do not see them coming and when you call you hear they are on a strike. It once happened that they stopped driving for 2 weeks. Then you are limited or you have to take a taxi, but the money you earn is not enough to take a taxi every day. (PWD, visual)

People with disabilities have the same working conditions as all other employees such as terms of working hours and contract. Depending on the type of disability it could be possible that some persons need adjusted work conditions. These conditions will probably differ for the industry and occupation.



[...] I had mentioned in the beginning, that due to my disability I am not allowed to sit to long, so I ask them if I may leave earlier and it was arranged for me (working hours 7:00 – 12:00 hrs). (PWD, physical)

Just like all other employees, PWDs who are employed receive the same social and economic benefits. Some social benefits are, health insurance, paid sick leave and annual vacation. No extra medical benefits are provided for personnel with a disability. Economic benefits are their monthly income (salary) and some have opportunities for in-house trainings. Where needed, minimum changes were made to enter the work premises such as an easy walkway for physical impairment. Those changes were jointly agreed between the worker and the employer.

The study showed that the interviewees did not experience, at least recently, any internal disagreements with other employees. Consensus is that cooperation and assistance is given where needed. People with disabilities confess that the attitude of people, their colleagues, changes over time when getting acquainted with them. One recommendation given by multiple interviewees is to inform companies on PWDs, in order to prevent unwanted attention from other employees. This also gives PWDs the space they need to adapt to their work environment.



[...] sometimes some people at work want to treat you differently. Look when the bus drops me off in the morning, they put me at the door where we just came in and then I walk by myself, but then there are some people in the building (does not know them), they run to you asking 'Is everything, ok? Let me bring you..., you know. But, maybe a little bit too careful, because they do not really know how the target group works. So maybe the target group ... If you will start working somewhere, maybe a small introduction can be given. (PWD, visual)

There are debates among various organizations whether working people with disabilities, given the amount of their monthly income (gross salary), should still be eligible to receive the social benefit. The monthly income for the respondents is on average SRD 2,000. The monthly income of employed PWDs is just enough to cover some basic needs, nothing additional. Some still receive the social benefit.



Actually, yes, it is still just on the edge because if you want to do more things with your income such as buying a house, then it is not enough. (PWD, physical)



[...] as a person with a visual impairment, things are a bit rough [...] so a lot needs to be considered (thought through), to make ends meet. (PWD, visual)

The ILO and OECD (2018, p.15) noted that cash benefit is insufficient as an effective disability policy instrument. They further suggested creating a 'participation package' adapted to the needs and capacities of everyone. This package does not have to be in cash but could also be in kind, such as possibility of vocational training or health support related. The Surinamese Government could benefit from providing various education and employment opportunities.

Businesses and key organizations in Suriname on participation of PWD

Another set of interviews took place with businesses and key organizations. The ILO and OECD (2018, p.6) noted *"There are also barriers stemming from misconceptions held by the business sector, which reflect a wider societal attitude. Notwithstanding the evidence on the benefits of employing persons with disabilities as part of a diverse workforce, many employers still perceive persons with disabilities as less productive than persons without disabilities and are not aware that the costs for workplace adaptations are oftentimes minimal."*

This statement seems to accurately reflect the situation in Suriname. Even though some companies employ persons with disabilities, PWDs are still neglected by the majority. The presumption is that PWDs are usually hired out of goodwill.



Apart from companies that conduct corporate social responsibility based on goodwill, I know that De Surinaamsche Bank, Telesur, Staatsolie have such a policy (hiring PWDs), but that is not a legal policy. This is based on corporate social responsibility. So the incentives on the part of the Government are also missing.(PWD, physical)



Certainly if employers can choose between someone with a disability and without a disability. The person without a disability, you do not have to create other facilities for him/her, he/she will be employed immediately. The person with a disability, in some circumstances you will have to make changes. (Director, STIA/VSB)

Informants mentioned the following main challenges for employing PDWs:

1. Low education level of PWDs. All made note that if employers need to choose between a person without disabilities and one with disabilities, the person without would be preferred taken into account additional cost (reasonable accommodation) for hiring someone with disabilities. Some asked themselves what the added value would be for companies to hire PWDs.
2. Unwillingness of colleagues without disabilities to collaborate and assist PWDs. Employees are often hesitant to work with PWDs simply because they do not know what to expect, how to work with someone with a disability and are unaware of their capabilities.



[...] I think people also have to get used to the idea of ... you know, a person with a visual impairment or a person who has difficulty seeing in the labour process. So the majority of the time, we actively look for companies, to actually make companies enthusiastic. (Director, NSBS)

3. Concerns regarding safety issues requiring the company to invest in special safety matters such as construction of an elevator or warning signs in case of a fire hazard.
4. Brand damage for the company. Concerns regarding the reputation of the company, their brand, because of peoples' perception, which can have an impact on the companies' revenues.
5. The business sector has more micro and small businesses that do not always have the resources for investments. This makes it impossible to accommodate PWDs. In these cases, the STIA/VSB is trying to collaborate with bigger companies to invest in minimum changes in the workplaces of these micro and small companies who have available positions.

It is a common situation in Suriname that infrastructure, such as roads and schools, is not always accessible for PWDs on every level. Some businesses create their own walkway without keeping the necessary rules in mind. Most places are hardly accessible especially to persons with visual impairment and physical disabilities. All interviewed stakeholders agreed that infrastructure is a problem and that the Government should focus on specific regulations to make areas more accessible for PWDs. Specific regulations for constructions focused on PWDs do not exist in Suriname as yet. These regulations are the responsibility of the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Communication. Companies that employ PWDs have made small changes to make the environment bearable for them. Small things that have been done include construction of an easy walkway for physical impairment or changing the working hours for an employee who has difficulty seeing in the dark.

There are organizations for PWDs that assist their pupils to find appropriate employment and guide them in their labour process. These organizations consider the types of disabilities and guide PWDs from the first day of employment until they are confident enough to handle it on their own. One of these organizations is Stichting Matoekoe, which accommodates pupils in finding and keeping employment. Some companies do provide job coaches or have a department heads who are responsible for guidance, but it is mostly the external organizations that provide these services because they want to make sure that their pupils understand their work and keep their jobs. Even though a lot of effort is made by these organizations the following statement implies that there are still barriers to overcome.



The business community is also a bit reluctant [...] The remaining 10 dropped out because they could not keep their jobs. They needed constant guidance, and to indicate that people are not actually waiting for someone with a disability. (PWD, Physical)



4. Conclusions and recommendations

People with disabilities make up 12.3 per cent of Suriname's population. This number might be even higher as parents or caregivers may not declare or register children with disabilities, and are keeping them out of sight. These children are hardly traceable, let alone not integrated in society to engage in early education development opportunities, and later on in employment.

Suitable incentives for this target group to come forward for registration are a possibility. Collaboration between the Ministry of Health and SoZaVo, together with key PWD organizations, is recommended for the registration of all persons, starting from a young age. Identifying children with a disability at a very young age gives relevant stakeholders the opportunity to provide parents with the needed guidance. This could lead to better awareness raising among the parents but also for awareness raising among the community since the ministries are informed on the number of people with disabilities and type of disabilities that exist. An integral approach of all responsible ministries and organizations is suggested for more cohesion and coordination. This integral approach should be described in a masterplan for PWDs.

The monthly Government social benefit of SRD 325 for PWDs is dis-incentivizes due to the way the policy is implemented. The process of annually submitting a request for this fee is inefficient and the issue of who may still receive the fee upon employment is unclear. One solution for submitting a request could be for SoZaVo to create a digital registration system with information on PWDs and the status of their disabilities. This database should be for persons with permanent disabilities. This way submitting a request every year can be eliminated. On another note, reflecting on the amount of the social benefit, a state decree should be drafted (instead of a Government agreement) to clarify the social benefit in detail for PWDs, including the conditions for PWDs employed.

The ILO and the OECD stated that the Government should do more than provide cash benefits to PWDs. The suggestion to provide a participation package adapted to the needs and capacities of each individual is something the Surinamese Government could benefit from. Reflecting on the statement of the Government on not being able to meet the article on inclusive education (CRPD) yet and looking at the employment limitations, providing such a service in Suriname could be a benefit for this target group. It could possibly eliminate the discussion on whether working people with disabilities are entitled to the monthly social benefit of SRD 325.

Education possibilities are limited for PWDs. There is no inclusion. It still remains special education with limited possibilities for follow-up. This means low educational attainment. The highest educational level for most PWDs is primary education or lower secondary education. Those with parents/caretakers or organizations that closely guide them end up in regular education. Suriname reported that investing in inclusive education is not

financially possible for now. Also, from a practical perspective, due to the structure of the education system in Suriname, it will not be possible to physically include all children with PWDs in regular schools. However, opportunities by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture to invest more in all special need schools on all levels will make it easier for PWDs to transition to the labour market. The quality of education for PWDs needs revision. It needs to be the same level as regular education where any distinction between regular and special education will disappear over time. In this regard, the BSO is working on a revised curriculum for special education. A potential improvement could be to create better education opportunities for PWDs by first assessing what already is in place and what is needed for further investments.

Labour market analysis showed that people with disabilities (53.5 per cent) are less likely to be employed than people without disabilities (59.5 per cent). This analysis supports the study done by the ILO and the OECD on PWDs employed. In terms of total employed persons, PWDs are represented for only 8.4 per cent in the labour market, which means that compared to people without disabilities, they hardly contribute to the labour process. This study indicates that this might be due to lack of access to employment caused by refusals, doubts, prejudice, but also because of the lack of qualification and skills required for the labour market.

Even though the ILO and the OECD reported that large proportion of PWDs employed are own account workers, this is not the case for PWDs in Suriname. They are mostly salaried workers, but 43.5 per cent of all PWDs are in informal employment and 77.9 per cent do not have a contract. This means that their position in the labour market is unclear and uncertain.

In terms of social and economic benefits, such as monthly income and health insurance, the interviewed and employed PWDs seem to receive the same fair working conditions as their colleagues without disabilities. It still remains that there are only a few jobs, mostly administrative, available to accommodate PWDs even though the microdata of IADB shows that PWDs also have occupations as professionals.

Although PWDs are integrating into the labour market, most employers do not have any policy regarding hiring PWDs. Businesses have a lack of knowledge on the situation surrounding this target group. Searching for a job as a person with disabilities is still an open-ended approach. PWDs who have persons guiding them, have a better chance of finding a job. In this regard, the Ministry of Labour should step in to raise awareness of the existence, the purpose and activities of the Employment Service Unit among businesses and the rest of the community.

Another point is investment in work place adjustments. Businesses are unaware of the possibilities and think that it will cost a lot of money to adjust the workplace for PWDs. Future improvement could include awareness raising among businesses; along the path that the STIA/VSB and the Alliance is already trailblazing. Also non-governmental organizations should be more involved by being in the front row on awareness raising of the PWDs and providing more training for PWDs on effectively entering the labour market.

In terms of infrastructure, with the establishment of the Alliance in 2018, it is expected that a close collaboration will exist between public and private companies and key organizations for PWDs. This collaboration can also have a direct effect on creating revised regulations. The policy on infrastructure (such as buildings, schools and pedestrians' access) should be adapted to accommodate all persons with all types of disabilities. The Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Communication (OWT&C), being the responsible Ministry, should look closely into abidance of these rules, as of now. The needed regulations are just a means to an end. The Ministry should work on discussing and revising the Building Decree.

Reflecting on the previous section, the Government contribution should also expand to investment in supporting tools to make the transition for PWDs to the labour market easier. These include white sticks, advance wheelchairs, smartphones, laptops and screen readers. People with disabilities need to move around freely particularly in order to go to school and work. There is still limited health transportation for all PWDs and accessible public transportation for people with visual and hearing impairments. Being dependent on healthcare transportation, and not being able to move around without good transportation, makes it difficult for PWDs to integrate. The services provided by the NVB for transportation of PWDs are considered limited. Wan Okasi tries to overcome that barrier with their health transportation services, but this is also limited because they cannot cover the whole target group with the number of buses they have. The Government should look into providing more transportation for the target group to overcome this social barrier. They should be able to move around as much as people without disabilities without being concerned for their safety.

Follow-up studies, could be:

1. More research on the employability of people with disabilities in Suriname.
2. Installation of an interdepartmental committee to effectively handle all matters on PWDs, and for formulating and implementing a masterplan.



Hearing impaired student studies dressmaking. Photographer: Crozet M © ILO



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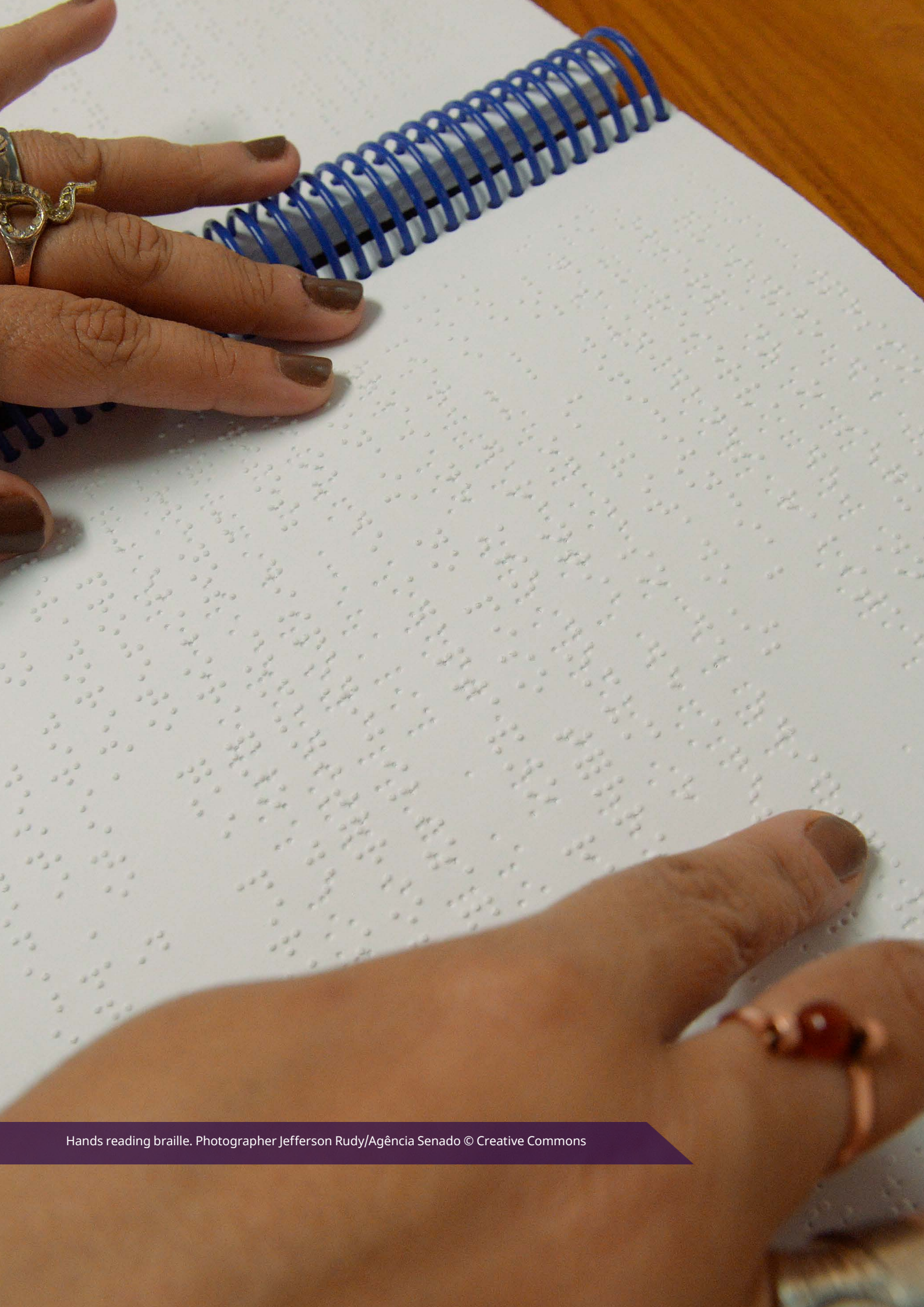
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► Annexes



Hands reading braille. Photographer Jefferson Rudy/Agência Senado © Creative Commons



Annex I - Methodological review

Sample frame for interviews and data collection

All interviews were conducted between 25 July and 10 September 2019. Two IMWO researchers were responsible for conducting these interviews, with an average length of 30 minutes per interview.

Interviewees were identified through the key organizations and by using the snow ball technique. The criteria for the selection of interviewees were,

1. Representative of key organizations:
 - Responsible for care, guidance and education of PWDs (various types of disabilities). Focused on one or more type of disability.
2. Representative of companies:
 - Employing or not PWDs,
 - Different sector (industries) as much as possible.
 - Public, semi-public or private companies.
3. People with disabilities:
 - Type of disability.
 - Employed/unemployed (previously worked or not).
 - General characteristics: gender and age.

The key organizations of the drawn sample gave their full support and were more than pleased with this study. This opinion was also shared by the target group (employed and unemployed). Some of the PWDs were approached on location. The challenging group were the companies. Contacting human resource managers (HRM) or other managers was time consuming. Companies had to be contacted (via e-mail and/or telephone) multiple times and in some case without success. Conducting the interviews relied very much on the availability and consent of the respondents.

In the preparatory phase key informants were interviewed to have a quick scan on the situation of the target group and to have access to PWDs employed and unemployed. It was decided to also interview a representative of one of the ministries responsible for the reporting of the convention of the rights for PWDs. For this a representative of the Subdirectorate of Categorical Social Work (KMW) of the Ministry of SoZaVo was selected. Also two brief meetings were held with the representative of the sub-directorate General Social Care (AMZ) of SoZaVo concerning the registered data. Table 1 gives an overview of the interviewed key informants. The meeting with the Ministry of Social Affairs was a group meeting with also in attendance representatives of the Ministry of Labour.

▶ Table 1

Key informants reached in the preparatory phase

No.	Date	Organization	Description
1	25/07	SoZaVo/KMW	Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing, the Subdirectorate of Categorical Social Work
2	25/07 and 21/08	SoZaVo/AMZ	Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing, the sub-directorate General Social Care
3	15/08	NSBS	Guidance and education for people with a visual disability.
4	15/08	VG/MOB	Ministry of Health; an outpatient care organization for children whose optimal development is threatened.
5	16/08	MINOWC/BSO	Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, Special Education Department
6	21/08	STIA/VSB	Association of Surinamese Business. Founder of the Alliance and PWDs database.
7	26/08	Wan Okasi	Foundation for and by PWDs.

Note: : Interviews one and two are one organization; Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing

Stakeholders identified for the single interviews are listed in Table 2. This is a list of semi-public and private companies as well as key organizations responsible for guidance, care and education of PWDs.

▶ Table 2

Interviews conducted with companies and organizations

No.	Date	Company/Organization	PWDs	Type of company
1	26/08	Furniture company	Hearing impairment	Private company
2	27/08	Kennedy Stichting	Hearing impairment	Foundation
3	27/08	Stichting Surinaamse Doven Belangen (SuDoBe)	Hearing impairment	Foundation
4	29/08	Suriname Port management	Hearing impairment and mental disability	Semi-public company
5	29/08	Water production and computer equipment company	Visual disability (some difficulty seeing)	Private company
6	29/08	Auto dealer	No PWDs working	Private company
7	29/08	Stichting Huize TylTyl	Physical disability	Foundation
8	30/08	Stichting Matoekoe	Mental disability	Foundation
9	09/09	Peanut butter company	No PWDs working	Private company

A total of ten PWDs were reached for interviews (Table 3). The aim was to reach respondents with various types of disability to have an overall view of the target group. There were some restrictions such as people with a hearing impairment and with multiple disabilities were excluded from this study due to the lack of assistance of experts to conduct the interviews and the extent of the disability of the respondent. In one case there was an expert present and the person with a hearing impairment could be interviewed. A group interview was conducted with Kennedy Stichting and Stichting SuDoBe and this respondent.

The unemployed interviewees received an incentive as a reward for their cooperation. This was given at the end of the interviews to make sure that it would not influence the validity of the interviews. The researchers made sure not to ask these interviewees for other unemployed persons so that there was a minimum chance of communicating this information further which could lead to people reaching out to the researchers.

▶ Table 3

Number of PWDs interviewed

No.	Date	Sex	Status	Type of disability	Industry
1	16/08	Male	Employed	Physical	Education
2	26/08	Female	Employed	Visual	National Parliament
3	27/08	Female	Employed	Hearing impairment	Special need children day care
4	29/08	Female	Employed	Physical	Healthcare transportation
5	29/08	Male	Employed	Mental	Suriname Port management
6	02/09	Male	Unemployed	Difficulty seeing	---
7	02/09	Female	Unemployed	Difficulty seeing	---
8	02/09	Male	Unemployed	Physical	---
9	02/09	Female	Unemployed	Physical	---
10	04/09	Female	Student	Physical	University

Research material

There were three different questionnaires (topic lists) developed for the in-depth interviews (single and group interviews); a combination of open, closed and semi-open questions. When needed, additional questions were added given the focus of some of the key organizations for the target group.

The three questionnaires are,

1. people with disabilities,
2. key organizations and
3. companies (employed/unemployed).

For the development of the questionnaire different data sources were consulted:

1. Preparatory interview with Ministries of Social Affairs and Labour and Suriname Trade and Industry Association/Vereniging Surinaams Bedrijfsleven (STIA/VSB).
2. Washington Group (WG) on Disability Statistics.
3. A report on the right of persons with disabilities to work. Written by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the United Nations.
4. International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) by World Health Organization.
5. Labour market inclusion of people with disabilities by ILO and OECD.
6. The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
7. UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD).
8. ILO Labour Force Survey.

For the analysis of the quantitative part, the following microdata was studied:

1. Census 2012 on PWDs in total and in employment of ABS (2014).
2. Registration of Disability Benefit for PWDs at Social Affairs (SoZaVo, 2019).
3. Suriname Survey of Living Conditions (SSLC) 2016-2017 by the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB, 2018).

The Washington Group (WG, 2018) has formulated a short set of disability questions in order to identify persons with disabilities and to promote the participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life.⁶ The set of questions needs to be included in questionnaires in order to report internationally on persons with disabilities (Figure 1).

▶ Figure 1

Number of PWDs interviewed

Introduction: The next questions ask about difficulties you may have doing certain activities because of a HEALTH PROBLEM.

1. Do you have difficulty seeing, even if wearing glasses?
2. Do you have difficulty hearing, even if using a hearing aid?
3. Do you have difficulty walking or climbing steps?
4. Do you have difficulty remembering or concentrating?
5. Do you have difficulty (with self-care such as) washing all over or dressing?
6. Using your usual language, do you have difficulty communicating, (for example understanding or being understood by others)?

Each question has four response categories, which are read after each question.

1. No, no difficulty
2. Yes, some difficulty
3. Yes, a lot of difficulty
4. Cannot do it at all

Disability is determined, according to the WG-SS, as anyone having at least 'a lot of difficulty' on at least one of the six questions.

Source: Washington Group on Disability Statistics, 2018.

There are differences between the two data sources Census 2012 and SSLC 2016-2017:

1. In the Census of 2012 the full set of recommendations of the Washington group (WG) was included. As a result, the Census data appear to be most complete and accurate for the goal classifying people with disability according to the Washington group's set of questions.
2. The Survey of Living Conditions did not utilize the full set of questions from the Washington group but it is rather limited to four types of disabilities (see Table 4).
3. To draw the sampling frame for the Survey of Living Conditions, household data of the Energie Bedrijf van Suriname (EBS; the only electrical company in this country) that has

⁶ See: www.washingtongroup-disability.com/methodology-and-research/the-purpose-of-disability-measurement/

a household coverage of all districts (except for part of Brokopondo and Sipaliwini). For the districts not covered by EBS, data from the Ministry of Natural Resources (NH) were used as the population of reference.

The Ministry of SoZaVo is responsible for the registration of persons with disabilities who are in need of social support. This data, although based on a non-probabilistic sample, may be useful to give an overall view of the present situation. However, one potential source of bias is the fact that in some cases the caretaker is mentioned instead of the person with a disability especially when it involves a minor (recipient of the social benefit). The data received on registered PWDs needs to be reviewed thoroughly. Table 4 gives an overview of the three data sources in relationship to the recommendations of the WG.

► Table 4

Concepts and definitions used in the three data sources

Organization	Period data collection	Concepts	Description WG indicators	Representative sample
ABS - Census	2012	Difficulties in performing basic activities (WG)	All six domains are covered, but self-care is divided in namely, self-care and lifting/ reaching/ carrying. The options are the same as WG, but included are 'not applicable due to age', 'do not know' and 'no answer'.	✓
SoZaVo - registration data	January 2019	None. The terms are not defined yet.	The ministry does not implement the WG set of questions for the registration of persons with disabilities.	It gives an indication of PWD in need of social support.
IADB - SSLC	2016-2017	Impairments/ disabilities	Not described according to the WG set of questions. Four types of disabilities reported: speech, sight (partially or totally visual impaired) and hearing. The fourth found is physical but this is not further described. Other indicators are diseases and conditions. It is unclear whether these are also defined as part of the cause of a disability.	✓

For the data processing and analysis, all data of the interviews (voice-notes) were directly processed and analysed for the reporting in MS Word (brief summary reports of the interviews). All quotes in this report are translated from Dutch. The secondary data from ABS, the Suriname Survey of Living Conditions and Ministry of Social Affairs (registration data PWDs) were, given the extent of the delivered statistics (data), further processed in SPSS or MS Excel for analysis.

Regarding the data from ABS, IMWO was granted permission to use the census data for analysis purposes but permission was not granted to share the data files with the donor. IMWO received access to randomly selected 10% of the microdata which is a representative total of the population of the last Census of 2012. The registration data from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing should be analysed cautiously because of the limitations of the data.

Prior to the interview each respondent was asked for permission to record the interview with a voice recorder and everyone gave their consent. To guarantee the confidentiality of the information of the respondents, all voice notes were destroyed right after the finalization of this study.

To justify the quality of the data, a number of control mechanisms were put in place.

- The use of diverse source materials (existing materials, conducting preparatory interviews and in-depth interviews with key informants and the target group).
- Keep a (written) logbook with all dates of interviews, background information gathered and limitations of the study.
- Peer reviewing by assigning colleagues involved and not directly involved in the study to read the results.

Limitations of the study

There were some challenges to conduct the study.

I. Microdata

1. Each requested microdata from the organizations had different sets of disability indicators that were not according to WG set of questions (only ABS data). Also some questions were missing from the ABS data, causing difficulty in making comparisons and analysing the indicators for both sources.

II. Conducting in-depth interviews

1. The time period to conduct the in-depth interviews took longer than planned. Appointments with representatives of companies had often to be re-scheduled due to their agenda. Some of the managers were not available to even have a conversation on the phone. Some companies never replied to our invitation letter for participation.
2. Another bottleneck was the time period of the field work. August and September are vacation months in Suriname which led to the non-availability of some respondents.

General background information on the respondents with a disability

Educational attainment

Ten respondents with disabilities were reached for their perception on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market in Suriname. Five of the ten are employed and one is a student at the University of Suriname. The average age of the respondents is 37 years old. Unintentionally, more women (6) than men (4) were reached (Table 5).

► Table 5

Type of school versus type of disability (educational profile of interviewees)

Type of school	Highest educational attainment	Type of disability
Both schools	Upper secondary (vocational)	Physical (difficulty walking)
Both schools	Lower secondary (vocational)	Mental
Both schools	Tertiary	Physical
Regular education	Tertiary	Physical (difficulty walking)
Regular education	Upper secondary (vocational)	Visual
Regular education	Primary	Difficulty seeing
Regular education	Upper secondary	Physical
Special education	Primary	Hearing impairment
Special education	Primary	Difficulty seeing
Special education	Lower secondary (vocational)	Physical

Type of disability

Each of the respondents has different types of disabilities. Five of the respondents had more than one disability. Three of the ten mentioned that they were born with a disability (congenital) and five had an accident. Some were medical accidents or through sickness. Five of the respondents mentioned that their disability first started between birth and the age of 15, while one indicated their disability started between 15 and 29 years of age and another between the ages of 30 and 65.

Labour market status

Looking closely at their labour market status, as aforementioned, five are employed and of the four unemployed, one is in self-employment on some occasions (holidays), and one is a

student (works holiday jobs, only during school vacation). All of the respondents except one, have work experience. All five work for public or private companies, where two work directly for foundations responsible for PWDs. The respondents are working in various industries such as education, other service activities, human health and social work activities, and transportation and storage. Their occupations are also diverse; there is one person who is a high official, one person works as a typist for a high government department, one provides day care guidance for small children with a hearing impairment, one is a dispatcher for a healthcare transportation company, and one is a office postman and administrative assistant. The four persons not employed, are still searching for work and try to make ends meet by doing small jobs. One has been declared 'unfit for work' because a tumour was discovered which makes it difficult to work. This person still tries to find light work to do because it is impossible to live off a social benefit of SRD 325 each month.

All persons working have a written contract for an unlimited period. Only one person has a limited contract of six months because she just started working at the current company. The working hours are the same as for all other employees with approximately 40 working hours per week for five days, except one person who is working in shifts which is approximately 25 hours for 5 days of work.



Worker making toys. Photographer: Crozet M, © ILO

Annex II - Key organizations for PWDs

Key organizations for PWDs

No.	Organization	Description
1	Medisch Opvoedkundig Bureau (MOB)	A department of the Ministry of Health responsible for guidance for special need children.
2	Nationale Stichting voor Blinden en Slechtzinden (NSBS)	Guidance and education for people with a visual disability.
3	Stichting Opleidingscentrum voor jeugdigen met een beperking	Children with a learning disability (14-18 years old).
4	Ergotherapie revalidatie centrum	Centre for revalidation.
5	Stg. Wan Okasi	Foundation for and by PWDs.
6	Kennedy Stichting	Education for deaf and hearing impaired.
7	Stichting Surinaamse Doven Belangen (SuDoBe)	Promote better position for people with a hearing impairment in society.
8	Stichting Huize TylTyl	Care for people with a physical disability (4-17 years old)
9	Stichting Matoekoe (Wanica)	Care and guidance for people with a mental disability (6-30 years old).
10	Stichting vroege stimulatie crèche therapeutisch dagcentrum: Annie crèche	For young children (0-8 years old) with a development disability (mental and physical disability).
11	Stichting Wi Oso	For every person with a physical disability. Guidance to have an independent life and employment.
12	Stichting Zonder Naam (Stizona)	Pupils of special needs education (15-18 years old).
13	Stichting Unu Pikin	Labour, care and internship for PWDs.
14	Dienst mensen met een beperking	Services to guide PWDs (0-59 years old) to the right organizations.
15	Soroptimist trainingscentrum	Education for girls with a mental disability.
16	Esther stichting	Ex-leprosy patients.

Key organizations for PWDs (Continued)

No.	Organization	Description
17	S.O. Jenny Mullerschool (Wanica)	Children (4-15 years) with a physical or mental disability.
18	Stichting in de ruimte (Wanica)	Care and education for people with a physical disability.
19	Stichting voor gehandicapten van Nickerie (district)	Care and guidance for PWDs (3-28 years old).
20	Jules Fernandes School	Special needs children (mental disability).
21	Vereniging Dyslexie Suriname	Guidance of parents with dyslexic children.
23	Duchenne Spier Dystrofie Suriname	Guidance of all children (1-20 years) with muscular dystrophy.
24	Bureau Speciaal Onderwijs	Structural development of the potential of children (6-18 years) with a disability.
26	Frank Cameron Centrum (SOGK)	Provide learning, recreation, work and sports opportunities to people with intellectual disabilities (from 16 years).
27	Molemann mental health clinic	Psychological assistance to children / youth / adults with psychological complaints.
28	Mr. Huber Stichting	Exercising custody / family custody of minors and children with disabilities.
29	Neuropsychologie praktijk psycaire	Psychological assistance to people with cognitive disorders.
30	SBH-Hoorkliniek (Service in Beter Horen)	Care for the deaf and hearing impaired.
31	Stichting Betheljada	24 hours of care and day care for children and young adults with a severe multiple disability.
32	Vereniging Verder Na een Beroerte (VVB)	Supporting and guiding people after a stroke.
33	STIGESU	Daycare for the promotion of the development and independence of children and adults with a severe intellectual disability.



Annex III - Questionnaires

Questionnaire/Topic list 1: Person with disabilities

Baseline Study on the Employability of People with Disabilities (PWDs) in Suriname

Period:	13 – 30 August 2019
Time:	08:00 – 15:00 hr
Length:	30 – 60 minutes
Location:	Face-to-face on location / IMWO (telephone)
Interviewer:	Presella Young-A-Fat / Orphilia Graham
Sample:	n = 10
Objective:	The objective of the study is to know how many people with disabilities there are in Suriname and insight into their labour market status.

Date:/.../2019	
Interviewer:	
Data processed and analysed:	
Description: Some questions are closed for the processing after the in-depth interviews (mostly the general respondent characteristics). The formulated questions (except the general respondent characteristics) are a combination of open and closed questions. Depending on the course of the interview, more in-depth questions can be asked.	
If needed, sign 'informed consent'.	
General: background information	
1	<p>Welcome and introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - interviewer introduces herself - background information of the study (rationale and objective) - guarantee anonymity + use of voice recorder - questions? <p>Background information study: The IMWO is assigned by the Ministry of Labour in collaboration with the International Labour Organization, to conduct a study on employability status of persons with disabilities. The objective is to find out how many people with disabilities live in Suriname and insight into their level of employability and labour market integration. The results will be used for policy purposes.</p>
2	General information of the respondent and education
	Before starting with the questions, I would like to give you the opportunity to introduce yourself.
	Give an example what to talk about (if necessary) such as age, family structure and education attained.

Characteristics of respondent	
	<p>Q1. Gender:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Male 2. Female
	<p>Q2. What is your age?years</p>
	<p>Q3. What's your ethnic background?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. White 2. Chinese 3. Creole 4. Mixed 5. Hindostani 6. Indigenous 7. Javanees 8. Maroon 9. Other, namely
	<p>Q4. District of residence? (Region: urban, rural or interior)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Paramaribo 2. Wanica 3. Para 4. Saramacca 5. Coronie 6. Nickerie 7. Commewijne 8. Marowijne 9. Brokopondo 10. Sipaliwini
	<p>Q5. What is your marital status?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Married 2. Unmarried 3. Living together 4. Widow/Widower
	<p>Q6. Do you have children?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No
	<p>Q7. How many children do you have? And how old are they?</p>
Educational attainment	
	<p>Q8. Have you ever attended school?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No
	<p>Q9. Which schools have you attended?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Special education 2. Regular education 3. Other, namely
	<p>Q10. What is your highest attended schooling? Place the code afterwards (do not ask this question, see Q9)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Primary 2. Lower secondary (MULO etc.) 3. Upper secondary (VWO/HAVO etc.) 4. Tertiary
	<p>Q11. How many years have you attended school?</p>

Health information - Type of disability

Type of disability: determine this according to the Washington Group Disability Questions [difficulty: seeing, hearing, walking, remembering/concentrating, self-care and communicating]. Also severity of difficulties (none, some, a lot, cannot do it at all)

Q12. What was the main cause of your disability?
(Carefully ask this question; keeping in mind the respondents' attitude during the interview)

1. Congenital/ since birth
2. Occupational disease
3. Ordinary disease
4. Occupational accident
5. Housekeeping's accident
6. Traffic accident
7. Other, namely

Q13. When did the first of these difficulties start?

1. At birth
2. Between the birth and the age of 15
3. Between the ages of 15 and 29
4. Between the ages of 30 and 65
5. After age 65
6. Don't know

Q14. What kind of health insurance coverage do you have? (o.a. SZF, Azpas)

Employment

Work stitation

Q15. Are you working at the moment? Are you employed?

1. Yes
2. No (go to Q18)

Q16a. Where do you work at the moment?

Name of company/organization:
Or is self-employed?

Q16b. What kind of company/organization is this?

1. Public or semi-public company
2. NGO or CBO
3. Private company/organization
4. Other, namely

Q16c. What are the main activities of the company/organization? (Categorize according to ISIC rev.4 (industry code))

1. Retail/wholesale
2. Construction
3.

Q17. Please describe your work (according to ISCO: occupation code)?

.....

Q18. Have you ever worked or have you worked before? This depends on their answer to Q15.

1. Yes (go back to Q16 and Q17 and rephrase the questions)
2. No (go to Q19)

<p>Q19. How come you are not employed at the moment?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I am not fit to work/unable to work (go to Q36) 2. I am not capable of doing the job: why not?; what did you have to do? (go to Q35) 3. I can't adapt to the work environment/the work environment is not adapted to my disability. 4. I am still searching for work: how do you search for a job and who assists you in your job search? 5. Other, namely..... <p>*Go to Q35 or Q36 if the respondent has never worked (Q18). This depends on their answer to Q19.</p>
<p>Q20. How many years of work experience do you have (total) or have you worked for this company/organization?</p>
<p>Duration of contract and formality of employment</p>
<p>Q21. What kind of contract do you have: written contract or verbal agreement?</p>
<p>Q22. Was/Is the agreement for a limited or unlimited period of time?</p>
<p>Q23a. Does your contract or agreement specify the number of hours you are supposed to work? What are your agreed or contractual working hours per week in this job?</p>
<p>Q23b. How many hours per day and week do you usually work or have you worked?</p>
<p>Q24. What kind of benefits does your employer (company) provide? (e.g. training/ education, contribution to Pension Fund, medical expenses, paid sick leave, annual paid leave, transportation)? Try to get information on all benefits.</p>
<p>Financial situation (monthly livelihood)</p>
<p>Q25a. Do you receive a salary at the end of every month? Yes/No Which of the following types of pay do you receive for this work?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A wage or salary 2. Payment by piece of work completed 3. Commissions 4. Tips 5. Fees for services provided 6. Payment with meals or accommodation 7. Payment in products 8. Other cash payment (Specify):_____ 9. Not paid
<p>Q25b. How much is your monthly income from employment? If respondents refuse to answer this question, ask him/her to give an estimate or between ranges. SRD</p>
<p>Q26. Can you survive with this monthly livelihood? Yes/No (Keep asking more questions on his/her living conditions)</p>
<p>Satisfied, accessibility workplace and reasonable accommodation</p>
<p>Q27. Are you satisfied with your work (Motivation)?</p>
<p>Q28. Has your work situation (workplace, work schedule and work tasks) been adjusted to account for difficulties you have in doing certain activities? Is your workplace accessible for you?</p>
<p>Q29. Are there (other) obstacles/barriers to do your work? Are there things/situations which keep you from doing your job accordingly? (Reasonable accommodation)</p>

	Q30. How willing are your colleagues to work alongside you (people with disabilities)? And do you receive the same treatment regarding social benefits and salary as the other employees?
	Q31. Are there work training opportunities for better performance at work? (Work training)
	Q32. Can you explain how you got this job? (Job search capabilities)
Transportation	
	Q33. How do you get to work? Do you use healthcare transportation?
	Q34. Determine with the respondent the distance from home to work (in km or minutes?).
Unemployed PWD	
	Q35. What have you done to find a job? See Q19_4 (if answered there, do not repeat)
Policy for PWDs	
	Q36. Do you receive any cash benefits linked to your disability from the government (Social Affairs)?
	Q37. Could you explain the extent and amount of this financial support?
	Q38. What is your opinion on employment possibilities for PWDs in Suriname?
	Q39. Recommendations: What should be changed?
	Do you have anything additional to add for this study?
Thank you for your cooperation!	

Questionnaire/Topic list 2: Companies

Baseline Study on the Employability of People with Disabilities in Suriname

Name: _____
 Telephone number: _____
 Position: _____
 Company name: _____
 Key activities/objectives: _____

Sector(s) according to ISIC rev. 4:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture, forestry and fishing | <input type="checkbox"/> Financial services and insurance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mining and minerals | <input type="checkbox"/> Public administration and defence; compulsory social insurance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wholesale and retail trade; repair of cars and motorcycles | <input type="checkbox"/> Real estate activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transport and storage | <input type="checkbox"/> Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water supply; waste and waste water management and remediation | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional, scientific and technological activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electricity, gas, steam and cooled air | <input type="checkbox"/> Health and social services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information and communication | <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative and support services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Production | <input type="checkbox"/> Art, entertainment and recreation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hotels and restaurants | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

IMWO guarantees your complete anonymity. Statements will never be traceable to you in the final report. Recordings will only be used for the benefit of the compilation of the final report and will be deleted at the end of this investigation.

Date: _____ Place: _____

Interviewer:	
Data Processed and analysed:	
Description: The formulated questions are a combination of open and closed questions. Depending on the course of the interview, more in-depth questions can be asked.	
If needed, sign 'informed consent'.	
General: background information	
1	<p>Welcome and introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - interviewer introduces herself - background information of the study (rationale and objective) - guarantee anonymity + use of voice recorder - questions? <p>Background information study: The IMWO is assigned by the Ministry of Labour in collaboration with the International Labour Organization, to conduct a study on employability status of persons with disabilities. The objective is to find out how many people with disabilities live in Suriname and insight into their level of employability and labour market integration. The results will be used for policy purposes.</p>

2	General information of the company (see page 1)
	Employment opportunities for PWDs
Participation PWDs in the labour process	
	<p>1. Are you aware of the convention that protects people with disabilities? (If not, briefly describe the CRPD)</p> <p>2. How many people with disabilities work in your company? When did you start hiring PWD (years)?</p> <p>3. What kind of disability do they have?</p> <p>4. What kind of work are they doing? What position do they occupy? (According to ISCO)</p> <p>Are there persons with disabilities who fulfil a management or managerial position in your company? How many persons?</p>
Changes in company policy	
	<p>5. Have you made changes to the company policy to accommodate people with disabilities? (such as: a fixed quota, how many people to hire with a disability?)</p> <p>What policy do you have to hire people with disabilities? Since when do you have this policy?</p>
Accessibility of the company	
	6. Which adjustments have been made in your company (infrastructure) to accommodate the target group? (if persons with disabilities work here)
Reasonable accommodation	
	<p>7. What possibilities does your company offer people with disabilities to have flexible working hours? How many working hours per week?</p> <p>What possibility does your company have for people with disabilities to perform business activities from home?</p> <p>8. Is it possible to adjust work assignments in your company to accommodate people with disabilities?</p> <p>9. Is there a job coach or are there people who guide employees with a disability?</p> <p>10. Do people with disabilities earn the same amount (salary) as other employees for the same work? (Fair working conditions)</p>
Benefits	
	11. Which benefits have been included by your company for their work? Such as: weekly day off, medical expenses, training, paid sick leave, annual vacation, paid leave, transportation, representative allowance (clothing)? Do they receive extra benefits due to their disability?
Work training	
	<p>12. Are you willing to invest in, or does your company provide training for, people with disabilities to support their work? Through further study and training?</p> <p>13. How do you want to do that?</p> <p>14. How are your employees motivated to guide people with disabilities?</p>
Competencies of people with disabilities	
	<p>15. What is your opinion on the competencies of people with disabilities in your company?</p> <p>16. What do you think other employees think about the competencies of employees with a disability in your company? How do they deal with it?</p> <p>17. Is it a point of discussion if during a job interview you notice that the applicant has a disability? Has it ever happened that someone with a disability applied for a job?</p> <p>18. Have there been vacancies focused on hiring PWDs?</p>

Perception on integration	
	19. If we think about integration of PWDs; What are the main barriers/challenges of companies to hire PWDs?
Closing	
	Do you have anything additional to add for this study?
Thank you for your cooperation!	

Questionnaire/Topic list 3: Organizations/Institutions

Baseline Study on the Employability of People with Disabilities in Suriname

Name: _____

Telephone number: _____

Position: _____

Organization name: _____

Year of affiliation and legal form: _____

Objectives and key activities: _____

Sector(s) according to ISIC rev. 4:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture, forestry and fishing | <input type="checkbox"/> Financial services and insurance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mining and minerals | <input type="checkbox"/> Public administration and defence; compulsory social insurance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wholesale and retail trade; repair of cars and motorcycles | <input type="checkbox"/> Real estate activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transport and storage | <input type="checkbox"/> Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water supply; waste and waste water management and remediation | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional, scientific and technological activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electricity, gas, steam and cooled air | <input type="checkbox"/> Health and social services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information and communication | <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative and support services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Production | <input type="checkbox"/> Art, entertainment and recreation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hotels and restaurants | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

IMWO guarantees your complete anonymity. Statements will never be traceable to you in the final report. Recordings will only be used for the benefit of the compilation of the final report and will be deleted at the end of this investigation.

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Data Processed and analysed:

Description: The formulated questions are a combination of open and closed questions. Depending on the course of the interview, more in-depth questions can be asked.

If needed, sign 'informed consent'.

General: background information

1	<p>Welcome and introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - interviewer introduces herself - background information of the study (rationale and objective) - guarantee anonymity + use of voice recorder - questions? <p>Background information study: The IMWO is assigned by the Ministry of Labour in collaboration with the International Labour Organization, to conduct a study on employability status of persons with disabilities. The objective is to find out how many people with disabilities live in Suriname and insight into their level of employability and labour market integration. The results will be used for policy purposes.</p>
2	<p>General information of the company</p>
Activities of the organization	
Target group	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who is the target group? 2. Which services are offered by the organization/institution to people with disabilities? 3. How many people with disabilities are registered by your organization/institution? What kind of disability do they have? (Ask the second question if necessary). 	
Guidance and training	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. How is the target group guided and trained by your organization/institution to be employed? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Where in the labour market do they find work? What kind of work are they doing? 5. How many people have already been trained in the last three years (2016 – 2019)? 6. What obstacles does your organization/ institution encounter when guiding and training the target group? 	
Social benefits	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Which social benefits are regulated by the government for the target group? 8. What is the contribution (financial and in-kind) of the government to your organization/institution? 9. Recommendation: What can be done by the government to promote guidance and education of the target group? 	
Community contribution	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. What is the contribution of the community to support the target group? 11. In what way does the support take place? Which activities? 12. Recommendation: What can be done by the community to promote guidance and education of the target group? 	
Closing	
Do you have anything additional to add for this study?	
Thank you for your cooperation!	



Annex IV - Stakeholders list of the validation workshop

The validation workshop was held on Thursday 12 December 2019

Ministry of Labour, Sub-directorate Labour Market		
Nr.	Name	Organization/Position
1	Mr. R. Noredjo	Sub-director Labour Market Department
2	Mrs. N. Esajas-Frierson	Head of the Labour Statistics Unit
3	Mrs. M. Samuels	Policy Officer of the Labour Market Development Unit
4	Mrs. X. Hardajal	Policy Officer of the Labour Market Development Unit
Research Institute for Social Sciences (IMWO)		
1	Mrs. N. Moe Soe Let	Director IMWO
2	Mrs. S. De Vries	Moderator
3	Mrs. P. Young-A-Fat	Presenter
4	Mrs. O. Graham	Junior researcher
Participants		
1	Mrs. M. Dwarkasing	Suriname Trade and Industry Association
2	Mrs. R. Wartes	Kennedy Stichting
3	Mrs. R. Etnel	Stg. SuDoBe
4	Mrs. S. Held	Stg. SuDoBe
5	Mrs. S. Jaccott	N.V. Havenbeheer Suriname
6	Mrs. J. Manhoef	Huize Tyl Tyl
7	Mrs. M. Zschuschen	Stichting Matoekoe
8	Mrs. G. Willemsberg	Handelmaatschappij Willemsberg
9	Mr. M. Veldkamp	Ministry of SoZaVo (Categorical Social Work)
10	Mrs. E. Esten Cohen	Stichting Wan Okasi Healthcare Transportation
11	Mrs. M. Struiken	Bureau Speciaal Onderwijs
12	Mrs. R. Jangbahadoor	Ministry of OWTC (Bouwkundige Werken en Dienstverlening)
13	Mrs. A. Nijon	Ministry of MINOWC (Afdeling zorg)
14	Mr. N. Koningsbloem	Ministry of MINOWC (Secretariat Director)
15	Mr. B. Creeburg	Ministry of Labour (Sub-directorate Labour Market, Department Employment Counseling)
16	Mrs. S. Dekkers	Stichting Unu Pikin

