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Integration of adult persons with disabilities into the workforce of developing rural villages in South Africa.

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Summary

The researcher was invited by the CSIR (formerly known as the Council for Industrial and Scientific Research in South Africa) to investigate the work opportunities for persons with disabilities (PWD) in a rural area in the Eastern Cape in which they were planning to implement their Integrated Rural Development Project (IRDP). The community development committee had requested assistance with the plight of the unemployed PWD in their community.

The aim of the study was to investigate work opportunities for PWD in rural developing communities. The study allowed the researcher to also explore possible means to maximise current services to reach into areas that are underserved in terms of professional rehabilitation services.

A participatory research approach was used for the study in which the research team consisted of the author, members from the community development committee including the sister in charge of the community clinic and three research assistants from the community.

In a two-phase disability survey in the 475 household of the area, adults with disabilities in the working age group were identified and their abilities assessed. Five development projects from nearby communities, similar to projects planned by the community were analysed. A scale had been developed that would allow a direct comparison between the abilities of the PWD and the work abilities required for the projects. The data were plotted on a spiral graphic, the Work Abilities Web (WAW), to illustrate compatibility and components for which adaptations might be needed. Taking the PWDs' level of motivation and aspirations into account job matches were made. The intellectual process of making such matches was investigated and described.

Because of a lower disability prevalence found in the area than expected from international projections the data were presented as 12 case studies.

In the feedback to the community three scenarios were provided for the employment of PWD in their midst for implementation by the community. A committee of PWD was established, which would have representation on the development committee to drive the process and to ensure that disability issues would be considered in all future community planning.

The study contributes the following innovations to the knowledge base of health and social sciences theory, in terms of disability and development issues:

- A refinement of a participatory research model, the Mutual Benefit Research model (MBR), for research projects with communities.
- A functional assessment format, developed for possible use by community health workers.
- The recording and comparison method used for the WAW.
- An analysis of the job match process used by occupational therapists in vocational rehabilitation.

In conclusion the study and the results were critically evaluated and recommendations made for the integration of PWD into the workplace in rural communities, as well as for further investigation into the methods proposed for vocational rehabilitation in underserved areas.

Key words: Employment equity, vocational rehabilitation, adults with disabilities, development projects, income generating projects, rural communities, integration of persons with disabilities, poverty alleviation, participatory research.

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1 Definitions

1.1 Rural

A non-urban area whose inhabitants do not have adequate access to all the necessary services required for health, education, work and communication.
(Reference page 7)

1.2 Sustainable development

“Sustainable development is positive change which does not undermine the environmental or social systems on which we depend. It requires a coordinated approach to planning and policy making that involves public participation. Its success depends on widespread understanding of the critical relationship between people and their environment and the will to make necessary changes”²⁵

1.3 Person with disability

A person who experiences long-term activity limitations, which prevent him/her from performing activities successfully and safely.

1.4 Occupational performance context

Performance contexts are the temporal and environmental factors that influence an individual's engagement in desired or acquired activities or daily living, work and leisure.¹³⁰

1.5 Occupational performance areas

Occupational performance areas are activities of daily living, work and productive activity, and play and leisure activities.¹³⁰

1.6 Occupational performance components

Occupational performance components are sensorimotor, cognitive, psychosocial and psychological skills used to engage in daily activities.¹³⁰

2 Abbreviations used in the thesis

CBR	Community-based rehabilitation
CHW	Community Health Worker
CRW	Community Rehabilitation Worker
CSIR	Formerly known as the Council for Industrial and Scientific Research in South Africa now used as in its abbreviated form
DALYs	Disability-Adjusted Life Years
DART	Disability Action Research Team
DEAFSA	Deaf Federation of South Africa
DPI	Disabled People International
DPSA	Disabled People South Africa
DPO	Disabled People's Organisation
FIM	Functional Independence Measure
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy
ICD	International Classification of Disease
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
ICIDH	International Classification of Impairment, Disability and Handicap

ILO	International Labour Organisation
INDS	Integrated National Disability Strategy
IRDM	Integrated Rural Development Model
IRDP	Integrated Rural Development Project
MBR	Mutual Benefit Model
LDDF	Lubisi Dam Development Forum
MET	Metabolic Equivalents
NCPPDSA	National Council for Persons with Physical Disabilities of South Africa
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PHC	Primary Health Care
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SAFCD	South African Federal Council on Disability
SAFMH	South African Federation for Mental Health
SANCB	South African National Council for the Blind
SANEL	South African National Epilepsy League (now Epilepsy SA)
SMME	Small, Medium & Micro Enterprises
TDC	Tsilitwa Development Committee
UN	United Nations
UP	University of Pretoria

UPIAS	Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation
WAW	Work Abilities Web
WPA	World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons
WHO	World Health Organisation
WPA	World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons
YLD	Years Lived with a Disability

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