THE EFFECTS OF LOCAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES ON PERSONS LIVING WITH DISABILITIES: A CASE OF LEPELLE-NKUMPI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

by

Selemela Charles

(59045329)

Submitted in accordance with the requirement for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

In the subject

Public Administration

(Department of Public Administration and Management)

at the

University of South Africa

Supervisor: Professor Bethuel Sibongiseni Ngcamu

Co-Supervisor: Professor Valery Nicoline Louw

(2026)

DECLARATION

Name: Charles Selemela

Student Number: 59045329

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy (Public Administration)

THE EFFECTS OF LOCAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES ON PERSONS LIVING WITH DISABILITIES: A CASE OF LEPELLE-NKUMPI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

I declare that the above thesis is my own work and all the sources used have been acknowledged and included on the reference list.



Signature

15 February 2026

Date

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to persons with disabilities who are economically marginalised.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity with much gratitude and sense of appreciation to thank God for giving me life, wisdom and knowledge to complete this thesis. The following people highly deserve special mention and acknowledgements:

The research supervisor Professor Bethuel Sibongiseni Ngcamu, I greatly appreciation your dedication, commitment, guidance and uncompromised support for the completion of this study. I consider you as one of the progressive academics globally and in Africa who play significant role in transforming, empowering and capacitating emerging scholars to contribute to existing body of knowledge.

To co-supervisor, Professor Valery Nicoline Louw thank you so much for unwavering support and guidance on this study.

My supportive Wife, RL Mphahlele, three daughters (Chegofastso, Kgaogelo and Mokgethwa), and my mother, MM Selemela, thank you all for the support and believing in me.

Finally, I want to sincerely thank all participants for their valuable contribution in this study. I am highly grateful to the University of South Africa for study support systems and the opportunity afforded to me to study at this prestigious institution.

ABSTRACT

In South Africa, as a developing state, persons with disabilities (PWDs) continue to experience marginalisation, inequality, and exclusion from economic interventions, which limits their participation in development. Unemployment among PWDs remains extremely high, particularly in rural areas. Despite the existence of inclusive and transformative policies, local economic development (LED) coordinated empowerment programmes have had limited impact on improving the economic participation and quality of life of PWDs. Many municipalities have not fully integrated disability issues into local development programmes, resulting in continued exclusion from social and economic opportunities.

This study explored the effects of local economic empowerment programmes on PWDs in Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality in Limpopo. The study was motivated by the lack of empirical research on the effects of local economic empowerment programmes on PWDs within South African municipalities. A mixed-methods approach was used, combining quantitative data collected through structured questionnaires and qualitative data obtained through in-depth interviews. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS, while qualitative data were analysed using ATLAS.ti. The findings informed the development of an implementation framework for inclusive disability economic empowerment.

The results show that PWDs are poorly represented in economic empowerment initiatives and face unequal access to economic opportunities. Both quantitative and qualitative findings confirm ongoing economic marginalisation linked to weak implementation of inclusive economic empowerment initiatives. Limited participation in empowerment programmes negatively affects the economic wellbeing of PWDs. The study also found a general lack of understanding of disability integration in economic projects.

Further findings indicate fragmented knowledge on disability, limited recruitment of PWDs, and the presence of environmental, attitudinal, and educational barriers. The municipality lacks a comprehensive disability database, and project information is often inaccessible. Weak planning, ineffective monitoring and evaluation, limited strategic support, and poor policy implementation further hinder inclusion.

The study concludes that poor representation, ineffective policy implementation, and limited understanding of disability contribute significantly to the economic exclusion of PWDs. The study findings contribute to policy, theory, and practice by supporting improved mainstreaming of disability in local economic development initiatives.

Key Terms: Persons with disabilities; Limpopo; Economic empowerment; Programmes; Integration; Lepelle-Nkumpi municipality; Participation.

KAKARETŠO

Ka Afrika Borwa, bjalo ka mmušo wo o hlabologago, bagolofadi (diPWD) ba tšwela pele go itemogela go kgaphelwa thoko, go se lekalekane, le go se akaretšwe go magatotokišo a ekonomi, tšeo di fokotšago go kgatha tema ga bona tlhabollong. Go hloka mešomo magareng ga diPWD go sa dutše go le godimo go fetiša, kudu dinagamagaeng. Ka ntle le go ba gona ga melawana ye e akaretšago le ya phetogo, mananeo a matlafatšo ao a rulagantšwego a tlhabollo ya ekonomi ya selegae (LED) a bile le khuetšo ye e lekanyeditšwego go kaonafatša go kgatha tema ya ekonomi le boleng bja bophelo bja diPWD. Mebasepala ye mentši ga se ya kopana ka botlalo ditaba tša bogolofadi mananeong a tlhabollo ya selegae, gomme seo sa feletša ka go se akaretše ka menyetleng ya leago le ekonomi.

Nyakišišo ye e nyakišišitše ditlamorago tša mananeo a matlafatšo ya ekonomi ya selegae go di-PWD ka Masepaleng wa Selegae wa Lepelle-Nkumpi ka Limpopo. Nyakišišo ye e hlohleleditšwe ke go hloka dinyakišišo tša diphihlelelo ka ga ditlamorago tša mananeo a matlafatšo ya ekonomi ya selegae go di-PWD ka gare ga mebasepala ya Afrika Borwa. Tsela ya mekgwa ye e hlakantšwego e šomišitšwe, go kopanya dintlha tša boleng tšeo di kgobokeditšwego ka dipotšišo tše di beakantšwego le dintlha tša ya boleng tšeo di hweditšwego ka dipoledišano tše di tseneletšego. Dintlha tša boleng di sekasekile ka go šomiša SPSS, mola dintlha tša boleng di sekasekilwe ka go šomiša ATLAS.ti. Dikutollo di tsebišitše tlhabollo ya mokgwa wa motheo wo o ka dirišwago go phethagatšo matlafatšo ya ekonomi ya bogolofadi ye e akaretšago.

Dipoelo di laetša gore diPWD ga di emelwe gabotse ka maikemišetšo a maatlafatšo ya ekonomi gomme di lebane le phihlelelo ye e sa lekanego ya menyetla ya ekonomi. Bobedi dikutollo tša khwanthithethifi le tša khwalithethifi di tiišetša go kgaphelwa thoko ga ekonomi mo go tšwelago pele mo go kgokagantšwego le phethagatšo ye e fokolago ya maitapišo a matlafatšo ya ekonomi ao a akaretšago. Go kgathatema go go nago le magomo mananeong a matlafatšo go ama gampe bophelo bjo bobotse bja ekonomi bja diPWD. Nyakišišo e hweditše gape tlhokego ya kwešišo ya kakaretšo ya kopantšho ya bogolofadi ka diprotšekeng tša ekonomi.

Dikutollo tše dingwe di laetša tsebo ye e aroganego ka ga bogolofadi, go thwalwa go go nago le magomo go diPWD, le go ba gona ga mapheko a tikologo, maikutlo le

thuto. Masepala o hloka polokelo ya tshedimošo ya bogolofadi ye e feletšego, gomme tshedimošo ya protšeke gantši ga e fihlelelege. Peakanyo ye e fokolago, tlhokomelo le kelo ye e sa šomego gabotse, thekgo ye e lekanyeditšwego ya maano, le phethagatšo ye mpe ya pholisi di šitiša gape go akaretšwa.

Nyakišišo e phetha ka gore boemedi bjo bo fokolago, phethagatšo ya pholisi ye e sa šomego gabotse, le kwešišo ye nnyane ya bogolofadi di na le seabe se segolo go kgaphelweng ka ntle ga ekonomi ya diPWD. Dikutollo tša nyakišišo di na le seabe go pholisi, teori, le tirišo ka go thekga go tsenywa ga bogolofadi mo go kaonafetšego ka maitapišong a tlhabollo ya ekonomi ya selegae.

Mareo a Bohlokwa: Bagolofadi; Limpopo; Matlafatšo ya ekonomi; Mananeo; Kopantšho; Masepala wa Lepelle-Nkumpi; Botšeakarolo.

ISIFINGQO

Eningizimu Afrika, njegombuso osathuthuka, abantu abaphila nokukhubazeka (PWDs) basaqhubeka nokubhekana nokubandlululwa, ukungalingani kanye nokungafakwa ngokugcwele ezinhlelweni zokungenelela kwezomnotho. Lokhu kunciphisa amathuba abo okubamba iqhaza ngokugcwele ezinhlelweni zentuthuko. Izinga lokungasebenzi kubantu abaphila nokukhubazeka (PWDs)lisalokhu liphezulu kakhulu, ikakhulukazi ezindaweni ezisemakhaya. Naphezu kokuba khona kwezinqubomgomo ezihlose ukubandakanya wonke umuntu kanye nokuletha uguquko emiphakathini, izinhlelo zokuhlomisa umnotho ezihlelwa ngaphansi kohlelo lokuThuthukiswa koMnotho Wasekhaya (LED) zibe nomthelela omncane ekuthuthukiseni ukubamba iqhaza kwezomnotho kanye nezinga lempilo kubantu abaphila nokukhubazeka (PWDs). Omasipala abaningi abakakahlanganisi ngokugcwele izindaba ezithinta abantu abaphila nokukhubazeka njengengxenye yezinhlelo zabo zokuthuthukiswa kwendawo. Ngenxa yalokhu laba abaphila nokukhubazeka bayaqhubeka nokungabandakanywa emathubeni enhlalo yomphakathi kanye nawomnotho.

Lolucwaningo luhlole imithelela yezinhlelo zokuhlomisa nokuthuthukisa umnotho wendawo kubantu abaphila nokukhubazeka (PWDs) kuMasipala Wasekhaya iLepelle-Nkumpi esifundazweni sase Limpopo. Lolucwaningo lugqugquzelwe ukuntuleka kwezifundo ezisekelwe ebufakazini ezihlola imithelela yalezi zinhlelo zokuhlomisa umnotho wendawo kubantu abaphila nokukhubazeka ngaphakathi komasipala baseNingizimu Afrika. Lolucwaningo lusebenzise indlela yocwaningo exubile, ehlanganisa izindlela zobuningi nezekhwalithi, ukuze kutholakale ukuqonda okubanzi ngesihloko okucwaningwa ngaso. Idatha yobuningi yaqoqwa kusetshenziswa imibuzo ehleliwe kanye nedatha yekhwalithi etholwa ngezingxoxo ezijulile. Idatha yobuningi yahlaziywa kusetshenziswa uhlelo lwezibalo olwaziwa njenge- Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), kanti idatha lekhwalithi yahlaziywa kusetshenziswa i-ATLAS.ti. Imiphumela yalolucwaningo ibe nomthelela ekwakhiweni kohlaka lokuqalisa nokusebenzisa izinhlelo ezibandakanyayo zokuhlomisa ngokwezomnotho abantu abaphila nokukhubazeka.

Lolucwaningo luveza ukuthi abantu abaphila nokukhubazeka (PWDs) abamelelekile ngokwanele ezinhlelweni zokuhlomisa ngokwezomnotho futhi babhekene

nokungalingani ekufinyeleleni kumathuba omnotho. Imiphumela yakho kubili okungokwezibalo kanye nekhwalithi, ikhombisa ukuthi ukuqhubeka kokucwaswa kwezomnotho kwabantu abaphila nokukhubazeka (PWDs) kuhlobene nokusetshenziswa okubuthakathaka kwezinhlelo zokuhlomisa ngokwezomnotho ezibandakanya wonke umuntu. Ukubamba kwabo iqhaza okunganele kulezi zinhlelo kuthinta kabi inhlalakahle yabo yezomnotho, kanti futhi lolucwaningo luthole ukungabi bikho kokuqonda okujwayelekile mayelana nokuhlanganiswa kokukhubazeka kanye nemiklamo yezomnotho.

Okunye okutholwe ucwaningo kukhombisa ukuthi kunolwazi olungaphelele noluhlakazekile mayelana nezindaba zokukhubazeka, kanye nokuba khona kwezithiyo zemvelo, ezokuziphatha kwabantu, nezemfundo. Ucwaningo luphinde lwathola ukuthi umasipala awunalo ulwazi olugcwele noluhleleleke kahle lwabantu abaphila nokukhubazeka olugcinwe kwisizindalwazi esisodwa,ngaphezu kwalokho ulwazi mayelana nemiklamo nezinhlelo zokuthuthukisa umnotho luvame ukungafinyeleleki kalula kubantu abaphila nokukhubazeka, okunciphisa amathuba abo okubamba iqhaza kanye nokuzuza kulezizinhlelo.

Lolucwaningo luphetha ngokuthi ukumeleleka okunganele kwabantu abaphila nokukhubazeka, ukusetshenziswa okuphambene kwezinqubomgomo, kanye nokuqonda okuncinyane ngezindaba zokukhubazeka kunomthelela omkhulu ekuqhubekeni kokungabandakanywa kwabo emathubeni ezomnotho.Imiphumela yalolucwaningo inegalelo elibalulekile kwinqubomgomo, emcabangweni wezifundo, kanye nasekwenzeni ngokweseka ukuhlanganiswa nokufakwa kwezindaba zokukhubazeka ngokugcwele ezinhlelweni zokuthuthukiswa komnotho wasekhaya.

Amagama Abalulekile: Abantu abaphila nokukhubazeka; Limpopo; Ukuhlomiswa ngokwezomnotho; Izinhlelo; Ukuhlanganiswa; Umasipala i-Lepelle-Nkumpi; ukubamba iqhaza.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION i
DEDICATION ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iii
ABSTRACT iv
LIST OF FIGURES xvi
LIST OF TABLES xvi
LIST OF ACRONYMS xvii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND 1
1.1 INTRODUCTION 1
1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY 2
1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT 5
1.4 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES 6
1.4.1 Aim of the Study 6
1.4.2 Research Objectives 6
1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS 7
1.6 HYPOTHESES 7
1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY 8
1.8 THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY 9
1.8.1 Geographical Location and Economic Profile 9
1.8.2 Discipline and Sub-Discipline 11
1.9 LITERATURE REVIEW 11
1.9.1 Theoretical Framework 12
1.9.2 Legislative Framework 14
1.9.3 Conceptual Framework 15
1.9.4 Participation of PWDs in Local Economic Empowerment 16
1.9.5 Local Economic Empowerment Matters for PWDs in South African Rural Municipalities 16
1.9.6 Municipalities' Role in Promoting Economic Empowerment and Development Programmes that Support PWDs 17
1.10 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY 18
1.11 DEFINITION OF THE STUDY CONCEPTS 19
1.11.1 Persons with Disabilities 19
1.11.2 Disability 19
1.11.3 Empowerment 19
1.11.4 Economics 20
1.11.5 Programme 20
1.11.6 Disability Mainstreaming 20
1.11.7 Economic Empowerment 20
1.11.8 Municipality 20
1.12 CHAPTER BREAKDOWN 21
1.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY 22
CHAPTER 2: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON LOCAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT FOR PWDS 23
2.1 INTRODUCTION 23
2.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK 23
2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 26
2.3.1 Inclusive Development Model 27
2.3.2 Economic Empowerment Theory of Change 30

2.4 LOCAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT EVOLUTION 32
2.5 INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON LOCAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT 34
2.5.1 LED Perspective in Europe 34
2.5.2 Asia Perspective on LED 36
2.5.3 Local Economic Empowerment in Africa 37
2.5.4 Tanzania Perspective on LED 37
2.5.5 Ghana Perspective on LED 38
2.5.6 India Perspective in LED 39
2.6 INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION OF PWDS IN LOCAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES 41
2.6.1 Equalisation of Economic Participation 42
2.6.2 Financial Inclusion and Independence 43
2.6.3 Sustainable Community-Led Economic Development 44
2.6.4 Advancement of Economic Rights 45
2.6.5 Capacity-Building for PWDs 45
2.7 MUNICIPALITIES' ROLE IN PROMOTING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES THAT SUPPORT PWDS 47
2.7.1 Community Advocacy on Inclusive LED 47
2.7.2 Disability Inclusion Development 48
2.7.3 Promoting Inclusive Economic Opportunities for PWDs 49
2.8 The BARRIERS TO ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT 50
2.8.1 Environmental Barriers 50
2.8.2 Institutional Barriers 50
2.8.3 Attitudinal Barriers 51
2.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY 52
CHAPTER 3: THE SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE ON LOCAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT ON PWDS 54
3.1 INTRODUCTION 54
3.2 LOCAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN The CONTEXT OF SOUTH AFRICAN MUNICIPALITIES 54
3.3 MUNICIPAL STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES TO ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF PWDS IN SOUTH AFRICA 57
3.3.1 Comprehensive Economic Empowerment Services 57
3.3.2 Mainstreaming Disability in Local Government 58
3.3.3 Inclusive Rural Economy 59
3.3.4 Access to Services and Resources 59
3.3.5 Promoting the Employability of Persons with Disabilities 60
3.3.6 Disability-Inclusive Participatory Approach on Municipal Structures 61
3.3.7 Inclusive Local Society Empowermen 62
3.4 MUNICIPAL IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES FOR LOCAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES FOR PWDS IN SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT 63
3.4.1 Fragmented Knowledge on Disability 63
3.4.2 Political Instability 63
3.4.3 Lack of Municipal Financial Viability 64
3.4.4 Institutional Arrangement Challenge 65
3.4.5 Incapacity and Competency Limitation 66
3.5 The EFFECTIVENESS OF PARTICIPATION OF PWDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA OF THE MUNICIPALITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA 67

3.5.1 Municipal Planning and Decision-making 68
3.5.2 LED Empowerment Programmes 69
3.5.3 Small, Medium and Micro-Enterprises 70
3.6 The OBSTACLES INHIBITING PWDS FROM PARTICIPATING IN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES PWDS IN SOUTH AFRICA CONTEXT 71
3.6.1 Limited Employment Opportunities 72
3.6.2 Inadequate Education and Training 73
3.6.3 Accessibility Challenge 74
3.7 The EFFECTS OF ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT INTERVENTIONS ON QUALITY OF LIFE FOR PWDS 75
3.8 DISABILITY PREVALENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA 76
3.9 PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN LEPELLE-NKUMPI MUNICIPALITY: PREVALENCE AND SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS 78
3.10 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK THAT PROMOTE INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION OF PWDS ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES ... 80
3.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY 81
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY 83
4.1 INTRODUCTION 83
4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY 83
4.2.1 Research Design 83
4.2.2 Research Methods 84
4.2.3 Mixed-Method Approach 84
4.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM 86
4.3.1 Positivism 87
4.3.2 Interpretivism/Constructivism 88
4.3.3 Pragmatism 89
4.4 MULTIPLE CASE STUDY 89
4.5 TARGETED POPULATION 90
4.5.1 Sample Frame 90
4.5.2 Sampling Procedure 91
4.6 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS 93
4.6.1 Questionnaires 93
4.6.2 Document Analysis 94
4.6.3 Interviews 95
4.8 DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES 96
4.8.1 Quantitative Analysis 96
4.8.2 Qualitative Analysis 104
4.9 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY 104
4.9.1 Reliability and Validity Testing Quantitative Data 104
4.10 TRIANGULATION 106
4.11 CRONBACH'S ALPHA 106
4.12 FACTOR ANALYSIS 108
4.13 STATISTICAL TESTING TOOLS 111
4.13.1 Kruskal-Wallis Tests 111
4.13.2 Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Model 112
4.14 RESEARCH ETHICAL GUIDELINES 113
4.14.1 Anonymity and Confidentiality 114
4.14.2 Voluntary Participation 114
4.14.3 Briefing 114

4.14.4 Informed Consent 114
4.14.5 Data Management 114
4.15 CHAPTER SUMMARY 115
CHAPTER 5: PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF QUANTITATIVE DATA 116
5.1 INTRODUCTION 116
5.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES 116
5.3 NULL AND ALTERNATIVE HYPOTheSIS 117
5.3.1 Null Hypothesis (H_0): 117
5.3.2 Alternate Hypothesis (H_1): 117
5.3.3 Null Hypothesis (H_0): 118
5.3.4 Alternate Hypothesis (H_1): 118
5.3.5 Null Hypothesis (H_0): 118
5.3.6 Alternate Hypothesis (H_1): 118
5.3.7 Null Hypothesis (H_0): 119
5.3.8 Alternate Hypothesis (H_1): 119
5.3.9 Null Hypothesis (H_0): 119
5.3.10 Alternate Hypothesis (H_1): 119
5.4 PARTICIPATION OF PWDS IN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES 120
5.4.1 Limited Equal Participation 122
5.4.2 Inadequate Advocacy and Awareness 123
5.4.3 Lack of Enabling Mechanisms 123
5.4.4 Lack of Participatory Approach 124
5.4.5 Inconsiderate Participation of PWDs in Development 124
5.4.6 Underrepresentation of PWDs in Empowerment Initiatives 125
5.4.7 No Disability Integration on LED 125
5.4.8 Participation of PWDs in LED Not Valued 126
5.4.9 Limited Empowerment Opportunities in Rural Areas 126
5.5 The ROLE OF LEPELLE-NKUMPI MUNICIPALITY IN PROMOTION OF ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT FOR PWDS 127
5.5.1 Lack of Capacity-building for PWDs 129
5.5.2 Social Welfare Programmes Dominance 130
5.5.3 Lack of Inclusive LED Mechanisms and Monitoring Tools 130
5.5.4 Absence of LED Stakeholder Coordinated Efforts 131
5.5.5 Poor Implementation of Inclusive Policies and Strategies 132
5.5.6 Economic Marginalisation of PWDs 132
5.5.7 Development Programmes Not Responsive to the Needs of PWDs 133
5.5.8 Lack of Promotion and Prioritisation of Disability Representation 133
5.5.9 Poor Workforce Representation of PWDs 133
5.5.10 Lack of Understanding of Disability Integration 134
5.5.11 Absence of Disability-Focused Economic Training and Support 134
5.6 CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS OF PWDS PARTICIPATION IN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT 135
5.6.1 Empowerment Projects are Politicised 137
5.6.2 Inadequate Access to Education and Training Opportunities for PWDs 138
5.6.3 Lack of Inclusivity for Disability Development Issues and Compliance Approach 138
5.6.4 Inadequate Capacity to Implement Programmes and Policies 138
5.6.5 Poor Monitoring and Enforcement of Institutional Framework 139

5.6.6 Ineffective Leadership and Management 139
5.6.7 Lack of Dedicated Resources for PWDs 140
5.6.8 Inaccessible Municipal Infrastructure 140
5.6.9 Financial Limitation for PWDs in Rural Areas 141
5.6.10 Absence of PWDs in Planning of Empowerment Programmes 141
5.6.11 Lack of Understanding of LED 142
5.6.12 Lack of Political Commitment and Will 142
5.7 INVOLVEMENT OF PWDS IN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES 143
5.7.1 Inclusion of PWDs in Empowerment Programmes Is Driven by Compliance 145
5.7.2 Limitation of PWDs' Right to Inclusive Participation 146
5.7.3 Exclusion of PWDs in Development Structures 146
5.7.4 Poor Representation of PWDs in Programmes Implementation 146
5.7.5 Reasonable Accommodation Resources Restrictions 147
5.7.6 Lack of Equitable Participation in IDP 147
5.7.7 Shortage of PWDs in Community Workers Programmes 148
5.7.8 Limited Education on Disability 148
5.7.9 Lack of Special LED Outreach Programmes 149
5.7.10 Struggle for Economic and Social Empowerment 149
5.7.11 Ineffective Economic Empowerment Projects 150
5.8 EFFECTIVENESS OF INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES, POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES 150
5.8.1 Lack of a Monitoring and Evaluation System 153
5.8.2 Weak Institutional Structures and Poor Governance 153
5.8.3 Marginalisation of PWDs in SMMEs Programmes 153
5.8.4 Disabling Environment for PWDs 154
5.8.5 Ineffective Implementation of Disability Policies 154
5.8.6 Programmes Not Impactful on PWDs Financial and Income Inequality 155
5.8.7 Development Strategies Not Responsive to Disability Initiatives 155
5.8.8 Lack of Effective Disability Strategies 156
5.8.9 Misalignment of Empowerment Initiatives and Needs of PWDs 156
5.8.10 Insufficient Stakeholder Support 157
5.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY 157
CHAPTER 6: PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF QUALITATIVE DATA 159
6.1 INTRODUCTION 159
6.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES 159
6.3 STUDY THEMES 160
6.3.1 Representation of PWDs in Economic Empowerment Activities 160
6.3.2 Role of Municipality in Economic Empowerment 167
6.3.3 Challenges of Empowerment Programmes Promotion 171
6.3.4 Barriers to Economic Empowerment 176
6.3.5 Aspect Impeding Involvement of PWDs in Development 181
6.3.6 Deficient Features of Inclusive Development Process 184
6.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY 188
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS 189
7.1 INTRODUCTION 189
7.2 OVERVIEW OF MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS ON QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE FINDINGS 189

7.2.1 Quantitative Findings 190
7.2.2 Qualitative Findings 196
7.3 INTEGRATED SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY 201
7.4 THE STUDY LIMITATIONS 203
7.5 STUDY CONTRIBUTION TO The BODY OF KNOWLEDGE 204
7.5.1 Policy Impact 204
7.5.2 Practical Implementation 205
7.5.3 Theoretical Impact 205
7.5.4 Conceptual Impact 206
7.6 MAJOR CONCLUSION IN RELATION TO STUDY FINDINGS 206
7.6.1 Framework for Implementation 208
7.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EACH STUDY OBJECTIVE 212
7.7.1 Representation of PWDs in Economic Empowerment Activities 213
7.7.2 Role of Municipality in Economic Empowerment 214
7.7.3 Challenges and Barriers to Economic Empowerment 215
7.7.4 Involvement of PWDs in Economic Programmes, Strategies and Policies 217
7.7.5 Impact of Economic Programmes, Strategies and Policies on PWDs 218
7.8 Advise for future researchers as per each objective 219
7.9 CONCLUDING NOTE 221
REFERENCES 222
ANNEXURES 286
ANNEXURE A: ACCEPTANCE LETTER TO STUDY AT UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA 286
ANNEXURE B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE 287
ANNEXURE C: GATEKEEPER'S LETTERS 290
ANNEXURE D: INFORMATION SHEETS 312
ANNEXURE E: INFORMED CONSENT 317
ANNEXURE F: QUESTIONNAIRE 318
ANNEXURE G: INTERVIEW GUIDE 328
ANNEXURE H: ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX 331
ANNEXURE I: TURNITIN REPORT 336
ANNEXURE J: LANGUAGE EDITOR'S CONFIRMATION LETTER 337

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Map of the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality 10
Figure 3.1: Disability prevalence by province in South Africa 77
Figure 4.1: Gender composition 99
Figure 4.2: Age categories 100
Figure 4.3: Educational qualifications 100
Figure 4.4: Forms of employment 101
Figure 4.5: Current job level 102
Figure 4.6: General work experience and experience in economic empowerment programmes 103
Figure 4.7: Five key latent constructs from PLS-SEM model 112
Figure 6.1. Identified main themes of qualitative data 160
Figure 6.2: Limitation factors for PWDs representation in economic empowerment programmes 161
Figure 6.3: Role of municipalities in integration PWDs in empowerment initiatives 168
Figure 6.4: Challenges of empowerment programmes promotion 171
Figure 6.5: Barriers to economic empowerment faced by PWDs 176
Figure 6.6: Aspect impeding involvement of PWDs in development 181
Figure 6.7: Deficient features of inclusive development process 185

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4:1. Municipal disability profile in the LNLM 90
Table 4.2: In-depth interviews dimension sampling composition 95
Table 4.3: Structured questionnaire sampling composition 97
Table 4.4: Cronbach's alpha coefficient 107
Table 4.5: KMO and Bartlett's Test 110
Table 5.1: Participation of PWDs in economic empowerment programmes 121
Table 5.2: Role of municipality in promotion of economic empowerment for PWDs 128
Table 5.3: Challenges and barriers for PWDs participation in economic empowerment 136

LIST OF ACRONYMS

BAC	Business Advisory Centres
BBBEE	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
CAQDAS	Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis
CFA	Confirmatory factor analysis
CWP	Community Work Programme
DEPWD	Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities
DOL	Department of Labour
DWYPD	Department of Women, Youth, and PWDs
EEA	Employment Equity Act
EETC	Economic empowerment theory of change
EFA	Exploratory factor analysis
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
FA	Factor analysis
IBM	International Business Machines
ICT	Information and communication technologies
IDP	Integrated development plans
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
KW	Kruskal-Wallis
LED	Local economic development
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-governmental organisations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PEPUDA	Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act
PPP	Public–private partnerships
PWD	Persons with disabilities
PWDS	Persons with Disabilities
SACN	South African Cities Network
SADC	South African Development Countries
SALGA	South African Local Government Association

SASSA	South African Social Security Agency
SDBIP	Service delivery and budget implementation plan
SEM	Structural equation modelling
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SMME	Small-, medium-, and micro-enterprises
SPSS	Statistical Package of Social Science
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
WPRPD	White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
WYPD	Women, youth, and persons with disabilities

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Local economic interventions designed to empower and develop persons with disabilities (PWDs) appear to be ineffective due to discrepancies between policy formulation, programmes implementation and their impact on PWDs. Consequently, Dlamini and Magidimisha (2025) argue that programmes may be implemented but fail to address inequalities and needs of PWDs due to these discrepancies. Shreshta, (2021) posits that numerous programmes developed to encourage PWDs' participation in society often focus on social welfare rather than broader economic empowerment at the local level (Ganshanga & Twinamasiko, 2025). Significant barriers hinder the translation of empowerment programmes for PWDs into effective measures, and there is insufficient evidence regarding their impact on poverty alleviation and developmental participation (Tinta & Kolanisi, 2023; Panda & Kaur, 2024). This situation triggered interest in investigating PWDs' involvement in local economic empowerment programmes within the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality (LNLM) and their contributions to economic development.

PWDs' inclusive participation in economic empowerment must become a core focus in contemporary local government development initiatives (Abdulrahman, 2023; Fernandes & Samputra, 2022). PWDs are disproportionately represented amongst those living below the poverty line and encounter additional barriers to economic empowerment in an already complex local environment (Sandness & Schjødt-Osmo, 2020; Basson, 2023:214; Kipchumba, 2025; Rakgwata, Rannzida, Munzhelele & Muthala, 2026). Ganshanga and Twinamasiko (2025) concur with contention that barriers prohibit PWDs to benefit from participation in economic opportunities. Local government must seek "to advance economic justice, to create opportunities that foster inclusion of PWDs to achieve financial independence and income equality" (Tinta & Kolanisi, 2023:4). However, efforts to support PWDs are often based on charity as opposed to inclusive participation in economic empowerment initiatives (Ayoo 2022; Ganshanga & Twinamasiko, 2025).

PWDs' participation in economic programmes is crucial in realising their rights and promoting economic growth for sustainable food security (Panda & Kaur, 2024;

Sigwaza & Jili, 2022). However, Ayoo (2022) and Singh and Chudasama (2020) reveal that PWDs are often excluded from poverty-reduction efforts, minimising their participation in economic activities, decision-making and social life (Dlamini & Magidimisha, 2025). Studies on disability-inclusive development indicate that PWDs are still undervalued concerning participation in economic empowerment programmes (Daniels-Mayes & Howe, 2021; Dineshan & Geetha, 2023; Faizal, Kusnandar & Sulaeman, 2020), contributing to this population's unusually high unemployment rate. This requires municipalities to implement LED strategy plans that meet the economic needs of marginalised society (Johnson, 2021; Ngobeni, Nekhavhambe & Mahole, 2025). According to Dineshan and Geetha (2023), promoting inclusion of disability needs in economic interventions reduces PWDs reliance on government grants.

A review of the literature reveals an empirical gap regarding the effects of PWDs' participation in economic empowerment programmes as a foundation for food security (Fernandes & Samputra, 2022). PWDs' involvement in economic empowerment is lacking, resulting in a lack of knowledge. There is also a shortage of theoretical analysis and a significant gap in understanding of whether PWDs are actively involved in decision-making processes and mainstream of economic empowerment opportunities. This highlights a gap in municipal efforts to include PWDs in local economic empowerment programmes, which are not widely disseminated to them (Ngcobo & Gumede, 2022). In South Africa, many PWDs have been denied access to fundamental economic rights due to absence of explicit policies (Monareng, Soeker & Naidoo, 2025; Ngcobo, 2021; Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority [W&RSETA], 2022). This study is motivated by municipalities' struggle to empower PWDs, implement policies, and launch initiatives to foster their participation in the local economy (Matyana & Thusi, 2023; Tinta & Kolanisi, 2023). This study aims to investigate PWDs' involvement in economic empowerment programmes and to determine why the LNLM has failed to fulfil its developmental mandate of integrating disability into local development programmes to enhance PWDs' quality of life.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Economic empowerment is crucial for PWDs to maintain a good standard of living, as depending solely on government grants can often limit financial independence and opportunities for growth (Tinta, Steyn & Vermaas, 2020).

According to Stats SA (2022), in the study area, the general unemployment rate is 48%, while the unemployment rate among PWDs is 81.4%. Although the South African government has implemented people-centred development initiatives, achieving meaningful outcomes requires the collective participation of PWDs as active beneficiaries of economic development (Matyana & Thusi, 2023). Despite PWDs comprising 7.5% of the South African population, access to public services is challenging, and they continue to be classified as poor (Matyana & Thusi, 2023; Sherry, Ned & Engelbrecht, 2024).

According to the World Health Organisation (2022:v) an "estimated 1.3 billion people with 16% of the global population experience a significant disability". This growing number implies that there is a chance for PWDs' underrepresentation in economic activities. PWDs are the world's largest minority group and generally have poorer health, lower academic achievements, fewer economic opportunities, and higher rates of poverty than people without disabilities (Matyana & Thusi, 2023; Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), 2024). The prevalence of disability in South Africa is considered significant, with an estimated 7.5% of the population living with disabilities (Stats SA, 2024; Morris, 2021). In this study's context, Stats SA (2024) reports that the overall disability prevalence was 6.0% in 2022, while the black African group recorded the second-highest prevalence at 14.7%. In Limpopo, the prevalence rate was 12.8%. These statistics underscore the importance of this study, which aims to highlight the significance of inclusive participation of PWDs in economic programmes to improve their socioeconomic status.

South Africa's Constitution guarantees PWDs' right to equal treatment (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 [Act No. 108 of 1996], hereafter referred to as the Constitution of 1996). All three spheres of government and state institutions must ensure that PWDs enjoy the same fundamental rights and responsibilities as other citizens. The White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2015) "is a call to action for government, civil society and the private sector to work together to ensure the socioeconomic inclusion of PWDs in all development programmes" (Stats SA, 2024:3). The purpose of this policy is to integrate disability issues into all government development strategies, planning and programmes. According to Tinta and Kolanisi (2023), in the South African context, the economic empowerment of PWDs has been

addressed through the development of welfare programmes such as social grants and expanded public works programmes. No sufficient information available that prove that empowerment programmes meant for PWDs have made significant stride in enhancing their lives and participation in the economic activities as basis for food security (Ngcobo & Gumede, 2022).

The South African government must advance the inclusion of PWDs in the national, provincial, and local development agendas (Stats SA, 2022). PWDs' effectiveness in this process is influenced significantly by the investment municipalities make in human capital, focusing on PWDs (LaPeer, 2020). The engagement of PWDs can directly impact social welfare and economic growth at the local level if supported by appropriate strategies (Nicole, Ardoin, Bowers & Kannan, 2022). Although South Africa's national government supports the empowerment of PWDs, many municipalities have struggled to implement this in practice and to include them at all stages of development because of limited local capacity (Abdulrahman, 2023; Pilke & Waliyua, 2022; Sithole, 2021). The lack of empirical research and literature on the participation and failure of local implementation of government programmes and policies aimed at economically empowering PWDs is a significant gap that requires attention (Ngcobo, 2022; United Nations [UN], 2024; WHO, 2022). This study attempts to address and highlight the barriers that hinder the translation of policies and programmes aimed at empowering PWDs and proposes a review of these programmes. The study intends to establish the economic benefits of PWDs' participation to achieve inclusive sustainable development to improve quality of lives for PWDs. The study also intends to advance active inclusive participation and meaningful contribution of PWDs in the mainstream of economic programmes, policies and practices.

Section 152 (1) (e) of the Constitution of 1996, stipulates that the public must be encouraged to participate in local government matters, including economic empowerment programmes initiated by municipalities to enhance local community members' lives. The LNLM is within the Capricorn District in Limpopo. The area is predominantly rural, with approximately 95% of its land under the jurisdiction of traditional authorities (LNLM, 2024). The LNLM faces various economic challenges, including high levels of poverty and unemployment, with more than 15% of households

having no source of income. In municipalities such as the LNLM, there is a lack of case study research, as they struggle to develop disability strategies and promote representation of PWDs in economic activities. In the study area, the general unemployment rate is 48%, while the unemployment rate among PWDs is 81.4% (LNLM, 2024; Statistics South Africa [Stats SA], 2022).

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

PWDs in the LNLM face various challenges in participating in the mainstream economy, including unemployment, limited access to empowerment opportunities, inadequate resources, and poverty (LNLM, 2024). The municipality currently does not have a disability strategy, which is a significant barrier to inclusion of PWDs in its economic activities (LNLM, 2024). Furthermore, the municipality struggles with achieving equitable representation of previously disadvantaged groups at all levels of its structure, especially the representation of PWDs (LNLM, 2024:101). This is partly due to the lack of leadership capacity and understanding of how to evaluate municipal projects (Yekani, Ngcamu & Pillay, 2024).

PWDs are amongst the most marginalised members of the community (Basson, 2023:215; Pillay, Saruchera & Chivandire, 2023) and are often not economically empowered (Matyana & Thusi, 2023). Marginalisation of PWDs in economic empowerment activities within the LNLM is, therefore, a critical issue, prompting the researcher to seek an understanding of why some programmes fail at the local level. Despite municipal challenges, the core issue is that policy or no policy, what matters is a commitment to change (Mukheli & Naidoo, 2023; Munzhedzi, 2020; Sithole, 2021). A gap exists, as municipalities are not addressing the disabling environment and barriers to implementing empowerment programmes for PWDs to join the mainstream of economy (Charles, Gie & Musakuro, 2023; Ramolobe, Ngcamu & Pillay, 2023). This study highlights sound practices for PWDs mainstreaming in economic development activities and promote an enabling environment for PWDs' empowerment. Thus, this study aims to fill a crucial gap by proposing a clear strategic direction to establishment of a professionally capacitated municipal team to drive meaningful change.

Although the LNLM has implemented a LED strategy, economic empowerment challenges remain a significant problem for PWDs due to minimal participation (LNLM,

2024). PWDs in the municipality often fail to achieve economic empowerment because municipal development programmes are not responsive to their needs and do not allow their full involvement. Although welfare programmes such as social grants and expanded public works programmes are in place, they have not improved PWDs' wellbeing (Sandness & Schjødt-Osmo, 2020; Tinta & Kolanisi, 2023). The municipality faces obstacles in translating policies and programmes designed to empower PWDs for meaningful action.

Municipalities must meet local communities' service delivery needs and recognise, understand, and accommodate PWDs' needs by allowing them to participate in and benefit from development initiatives (Matyana & Thusi, 2023). This inclusion cannot occur in isolation; it must be a priority in municipal economic empowerment activities that will drive growth and promote development. The highlighted issues reveal the negligence of excluding PWDs from the municipality's economic empowerment activities, which are essential for food security. Individuals must be able to actively and equally participate in their municipality's economic activities to exercise their economic rights. It is important to note that PWDs' lack of participation in economic activities exacerbates poverty, increasing isolation and economic pressure not just for the individual but often for their families, thereby contributing to food insecurity. This study is crucial, as numerous PWDs are not participating in economic activities, such as small-scale farming, which could improve their lives and help achieve local food security.

1.4 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.4.1 Aim of the Study

This study aims to investigate PWDs' involvement in economic empowerment programmes in the LNLM, South Africa.

1.4.2 Research Objectives

The primary research objectives are listed below.

- To assess the status of representation of PWDs for inclusive participation in local economic empowerment programmes in the context of South African municipalities.

- To explore the role of municipality in promotion of inclusive local economic empowerment programmes that support PWDs.
- To ascertain the challenges and barriers inhibiting PWDs from participating in local economic empowerment programmes in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality.
- To explore the extent to which PWDs are actively involved in development and implementation of economic programmes, strategies and policies.
- To assess the effectiveness and impact of implementation of inclusive development strategies, policies, programmes and support from the government on economic empowerment programmes in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions are listed below.

- What is the status of representation of PWDs for inclusive participation in local economic empowerment programmes in South African municipalities?
- What role does the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality play in enhancing inclusive economic empowerment and development programmes that support PWDs?
- What are key challenges and barriers that prevent PWDs from participating in economic empowerment programmes in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality?
- To what extent are PWDs actively involved in developing and implementing economic programmes, strategies and policies?
- How effective and impactful is inclusive development strategies, policies, programmes and support from the government on economic empowerment programmes in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality?

1.6 HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses listed below are proposed for the study.

H_1: Poor mainstreaming of disability issues into municipal development agenda causes a lack of participation by PWDs in economic empowerment programmes.

H_2: The lack of inclusive economic empowerment programmes that support PWDs in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality is due to poor disability awareness and a shortage of competent and skilled staff to address disability issues effectively.

H3: Political interference and fragmented knowledge on disability issues within municipalities cause the challenges and barriers that prohibit the participation of PWDs in economic empowerment programmes.

H4: The absence of PWDs in the development, economic programmes, strategies and policies is due to a lack of a disability strategy and poor implementation and planning.

H5: The lack of effective development strategies, programmes, and support from the government for the economic empowerment of PWDs is due to insufficient monitoring and evaluation system.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study contributes to theory, policy, practice, and society by supporting the integration of PWDs into local economic empowerment programmes. The research aims to assist the municipality in taking significant steps towards involving PWDs in economic activities and developing a municipal disability strategy to guide this process. The strategy can help transform and integrate opportunities in rural areas into employment and productive economic ventures for vulnerable groups, including PWDs. This study provides feedback on PWDs' contribution to economic empowerment programmes, helping government agencies and policymakers evaluate the progress made through implemented programmes and potentially triggering policy and programme reviews. The empirical findings support evidence-based policy-making for policy makers in the municipality and beyond.

On a practical level, this study aims to propose strategic actions that can remove barriers that hinder PWDs' meaningful participation in economic empowerment programmes and other areas of public life. The motivation for this study was to investigate the knowledge gap on why economic empowerment programmes for PWDs have not been successful or impactful, particularly in improving quality of life and reducing poverty and economic inequality.

The study's relevance rests in its potential to enhance knowledge about the inclusive engagement of PWDs in the LNLM's economic activities. It may also help formulate measures to promote and manage economic programmes that address PWDs' needs. Thus, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge and the current

literature. The findings provide a better understanding of the importance of PWDs' participation in economic activities, enabling them to realise their value and lead lives of comfort, security and material wellbeing. Through the empirical findings of this study, the researcher was able to develop an implementation framework for inclusive disability economic empowerment to improve PWDs' involvement in economic development.

Using the inclusive development model, empowerment theory and economic empowerment theory of change, the study aimed to contribute good governance theories and validate its effectiveness in increasing the participation of PWDs in municipal economic activities. It encourages policymakers to enforce reasonable policies that promote inclusive economic empowerment at the municipal level. Furthermore, the study contributes to the proper formulation and implementation of policies for PWDs, expanding new and existing knowledge. The research contributes significantly to advancing knowledge regarding inclusive disability economic empowerment, assisting municipalities to prioritise access to resources and opportunities for PWDs.

This study contributes to contextualising the concept of inclusive disability economic empowerment within the economic benefits framework. The study encourages the municipality take effective measures to heightened disability public awareness to eradicate discrimination, stigma and systematic exclusion.

1.8 THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is categorised in terms of geographical location and discipline and sub-discipline.

1.8.1 Geographical Location and Economic Profile

Lepelle-Nkumpi is situated in the southern region of the Capricorn District and is one of the four local municipalities that make up the Capricorn District Municipality in Limpopo as shown in Figure 1.1 (Google Maps, 2024).

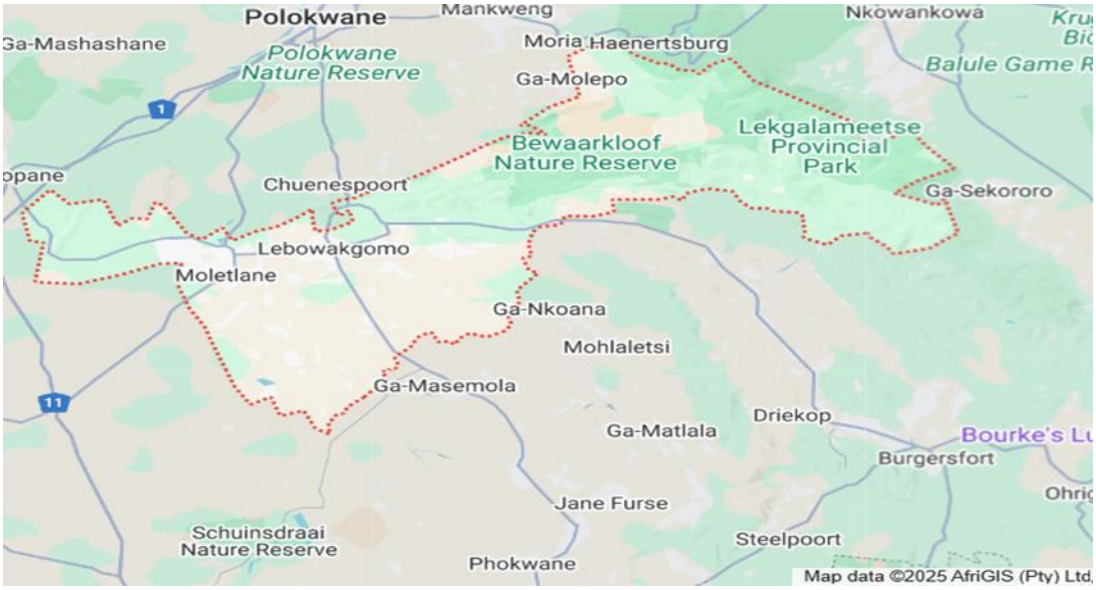


Figure 1.1: Map of the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality

Source: Google Maps (2024)

According to the Stats SA's Census (2022) results, the municipality has an estimated population of 284 404 people with a total of 78 217 households and an average household size of 3.6 (LNLM, 2025). The municipality has 30 wards, each having an average population of 9 400. The municipality comprises of four clusters, namely, Zebediela, Lebowakgomo, Mphahlele and Mafefe-Mathabatha. Most of these areas require economic empowerment, infrastructure development and service delivery. Approximately 95% of its land is in the control of traditional authorities. In terms of income distribution, the municipality has a very high level of poverty, with more than 15% of households without any form of income (LNLM, 2025).

LNLM economic activities are conducted in sectors such as agriculture, tourism, mining (platinum and diamond), beneficiation/ value adding, property development, retail trade and accommodation (LNLM, 2025; National Treasury, 2021). These sectors have potential in the LNLM to generate employment and support economic growth if properly managed and coordinated through the LED strategy. The municipality is ideal for large-scale, small-scale and subsistence farming activities with well-known projects such as Zebediela Citrus, Lebowakgomo Chicken Abattoir and Broiler (LNLM LED, 2025). These projects can provide economic opportunities to local society and small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) (LNLM, 2025:5). LNLM

LED Strategy (2025), revealed that Zebediela Citrus is one of the biggest citrus farms in the Southern Hemisphere, growing macadamia nuts and citrus fruit but need revitalisation due to its dysfunctionality. Hence, in LNLM, agriculture (farming, forestry, and fishing) continues to be a crucial pillar of economic development. The plantation of vegetables and raising of animals are part of small-scale/subsistence farming whereas large stock includes beef cattle and the production of both broilers and layers (LNLM, 2025).

LNLM is a significant contributor to Capricorn District municipal gross geographic product at 13.86%; and second in government and retail (LNLM, 2025:66). Limpopo Provincial Legislature is situated within LNLM and residents view Legislature as their heritage whilst the SMMEs are benefiting as well. Tourism in LNLM remains underdeveloped with no strong established destination areas, but holds significant untapped potential in eco-adventure, heritage and agri-tourism (LNLM, 2026). Tourism has minimal impact on Jobs creation in LNLM (LNLM, 2026). The economic opportunities which local communities can benefits from LNLM include, growing of small-scale subsistence agriculture, business opportunities for SMMEs development, expansion of agricultural produce products, agri-processing, tourism development and establishment of fresh markets to alleviate poverty.

1.8.2 Discipline and Sub-Discipline

The study is located within the discipline of public administration and management, specifically in the sub-discipline of LED. The study examines the effects of local economic empowerment programmes on PWDs in the LNLM. The study explores how PWDs are integrated into local government empowerment programmes, policies and strategies to achieve inclusive disability development. This includes how municipalities provide support for PWDs on equal training opportunities, employment and empowerment programmes (Mafongoya, 2025; Tinta & Kolanisi, 2023).

1.9 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is comprehensive synthesis and exploration of existing body of knowledge on specific topic placed on study context (Chigbu, Atiku & Du Plessis, 2023; Snyder, 2024). The researcher reviewed various forms of literature such as credible published journal articles, books, government legislations on connection

between local economic empowerment and PWDs. Snyder (2024) argues that a well-conducted literature review identifies research gaps, highlights areas requiring further investigation, and provides a theoretical foundation for the study and the development of a conceptual model. In this study, literature gaps were identified in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively:

1.9.1 Theoretical Framework

This study's theoretical framework is grounded in the inclusive development theory (Gupta, Pouw, & Ros-Tonen, 2015), the empowerment theory (Rappaport, 1987), and the economic empowerment theory of change (Mahbub, 2021), which serves as the roadmap for this research. Besides the mentioned theories, there are several other theories related to this study, such as the youth development theory (Erikson, 1994), the neo-classical economic theory (Smith, 2022), and the location theory (Capello, 2011; Weber, 1909). However, these theories are irrelevant to the current study, as they are not directly linked to the research questions and scope and may add unnecessary complexity. For instance, the youth development theory focuses on youth empowerment, while this study focuses on PWDs in general. Similarly, the location theory focuses on economic activities within the local community but does not address how to integrate or mainstream PWDs into those activities (Capello, 2011).

1.9.1.1 Inclusive development theory

The inclusive development theory promotes marginalised groups' empowerment and wellbeing, such as PWDs, by integrating social, political, and economic processes to ensure equitable development benefits (Liu, Yang & Gong, 2022:2). Inclusive development's primary goals are to eliminate poverty, foster individual development, promote equity and economically empower all individuals (Liu et al., 2022; Pilke & Waliyua, 2023; Rauniyar & Kanbur 2010). This theory is concerned with promoting equality and the inclusion of PWDs in mainstream development opportunities (Pilke & Waliyua, 2023). Inclusive development involves providing accessible services and activities and mainstreaming disability to ensure the full inclusion of PWDs as required by White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [WPRPD] (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 2015).

The application of this model within the LNLM should prioritise on enabling PWDs to participate actively in transformation processes to improve their quality of life within the development context (Tinta et al., 2020; Tinta & Kolanisi, 2023).

1.9.1.2 The empowerment theory

The empowerment theory provides a valuable framework for enabling PWDs to participate in economic activities (Tinta & Kolanisi, 2023). It is perceived as one of the most effective approaches for supporting PWDs' interests (Budeli, 2012). This theory is relevant to this study because it offers a value-based framework that encourages economic development and practical solutions to fight injustice and enhance individuals' power, resilience and wealth. According to this theory, empowering processes include activities, structures, and actions that can economically empower individuals, prompting the LNLM to address the representation of PWDs in various structures and improve their participation in economic empowerment programmes (Mahbub, 2021). These processes enable individuals or groups to develop skills and obtain resources that make them financially independent, thereby addressing poverty and food insecurity (Moran, Gibbs & Mernin, 2017; Tinta et al., 2020). For instance, PWDs may participate in the municipality's empowerment programmes to acquire new skills and realise their full potential as contributors to economic growth.

1.9.1.3 Economic empowerment theory of change [EETC]

For economic empowerment to become meaningful, PWDs must have the liberty and confidence to make changes in their lives, with the support and ability to participate in decision-making while enjoying equal rights (Kidder, 2021; Kidder et al., 2017). The EETC advocates for representation of PWDs in economic activities, including business. Mahbub (2021) argues that society becomes more equitable when policies and practices incorporate all individuals' perspectives. At the household level, this theory's empowering process leads to economically independent individuals who can raise healthier and better-educated children (Reinholz & Andrews, 2020). Achieving this goal requires the full and equal participation of PWDs as economic actors at the municipal level to ensure sustainable food security. The EETC emphasises that programme implementation improves when the larger community, including PWDs, is involved and consulted during programme development (Ghate, 2021; Reinholz &

Andrews, 2020). The EETC focuses on strengthening municipalities and economic stakeholders' capacity to propose and implement policies and allocate budgets that support PWDs' economic participation (Kidder, 2021; Regina, Heckert, Paz & Cabnal, 2024;). A policy or programme's success can be evaluated using the participation, benefits and empowerment conceptual framework, as explained by Malapit, Meinzen-Dick, Quisumbing and Zseleczky (2020). The EETC is crucial to this study, as it provides a framework for understanding and analysing the significance of inclusive participation of PWDs in mainstream local economic empowerment activities, making it highly relevant to this research.

1.9.2 Legislative Framework

The South African government has introduced various policies, frameworks, and guidelines to create conducive environment for PWDs' inclusion or empowerment in mainstream of society (Tintal & Kolanisi, 2023; Ramolobe, et al., 2023; Sherry et al., 2024). These policy frameworks include, among others, the Constitution of 1996; the Code of Good Practice on the Employment of People with Disabilities (2002); the White Paper on Integrated National Disability Strategy 1997; the Employment Equity Act (Act No. 55 of 1998); and the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030. The core pillar of this framework is Constitution as the supreme law of South Africa which upholds the socioeconomic rights and dignity of PWDs and promote equal opportunity for all as stipulated in Section 9 of the Constitution of 1996. However, despite these frameworks, PWDs' quality of life, more specifically in rural areas, has not improved (Matyana & Thusi, 2023) Thus of poor implementation.

The above-mentioned policies and frameworks aim to address the past and present challenges that limit PWDs' inclusion in society (Sherry et al., 2024; Stats SA, 2024). This initiative is noticeable in White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Department of Social Development [DSD], 2015a, Employment Equity Act (EEA) of 1998), Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (PEPUDA) (Act 4 of 2000a). These polices and acts guide the implementation for reasonable accommodation, mainstreaming of PWDs in workplace and empowerment programmes. Although South Africa's policy frameworks for PWDs are comprehensive, gaps remain in municipal implementation, largely due to weak monitoring and enforcement (Kusek & Rist, 2004; Mumba & van der Waldt, 2023;

Matyana & Thusi, 2023; Ngumbela & Juta, 2025). Furthermore, municipalities often lack the employee capacity required to implement monitoring and evaluation systems (Yekani et al., 2024). This study will help to identify the barriers municipalities face in implementing empowerment policies and to propose solutions. There is also an absence of methodologies and evaluation tools to measure the progress of these frameworks aimed at advancing PWDs.

1.9.3 Conceptual Framework

The key concepts in this studied comprises of disability, LED and economic empowerment with special focus on local government. The definition of the concept of disability is:

> "the loss or elimination of opportunities to take part in the life of the community equitably with others that is encountered by persons having physical, sensory, psychological, developmental, learning, neurological or other impairments, which may be permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, thereby causing activity limitations and participation restriction with mainstream society" (DSD, 2020; WPRPD, 2016).

Economic empowerment refers to an individual's ability to participate equally in markets through access to productive resources, decent work, economic independence, increased agency, and meaningful involvement in economic decision-making at all levels of government (Besnier et al., 2023; Kumari, 2024; Mahbub, 2021). LED is an approach which requires various stakeholders in the local area to collaborate and harness resources for sustainable economic growth and community empowerment (Chomane & Biljohn, 2023). Municipalities have faced significant barriers in integrating PWDs into economic development programmes. Economic empowerment is an essential development feature, as it enhances economic growth, promotes socioeconomic development, and improves economic participation while reducing poverty (Jedi, 2022). This study interlinks these variables to achieve effective participation of PWDs in economic activities and helps municipalities adopt effective strategies for inclusive disability economic development.

1.9.4 Participation of PWDs in Local Economic Empowerment

Pillay et al., (2023) highlight the significance of PWDs' participation in economic activities to realise their full potential and address their needs across all aspects of their lives within communities. Municipalities therefore need to prioritise disability development issues to encourage PWDs to become active beneficiaries of economic empowerment programmes rather than merely recipients of social welfare charity, as noted by Moyake and Buthelezi (2018). Providing access to economic empowerment programmes is a crucial step towards enabling PWDs to achieve financial independence and enhance food security (Ntombela & Mahlangu, 2019; Sandness & Schjødt-Osmo, 2020). Municipalities and social partners must work together with communities to facilitate PWDs' access to economic and vocational guidance programmes, placement services and ongoing training to achieve this. Tinta and Kolanisi (2023) agree that economic empowerment also increases access to economic resources and opportunities, such as jobs, productive assets and skills development.

PWDs must be involved in conceptualising, developing, implementing, and monitoring economic development policies and programmes (Malapit et al., 2020). Their participation in such programmes is critical for attaining sustainable development goals, such as poverty reduction, gender equality and inclusive economic growth (Reshi & Sudha, 2022). Empowering PWDs can lead to increased productivity and economic growth. Generally, including vulnerable groups in decision-making processes for economic development activities leads to better governance and enhanced social justice (Chomane & Biljohn 2023; Dlamini & Magidimisha, 2025; Manase, 2025). Their participation in economic activities paves the way for their recognition as contributing members of their communities. Hence, the need for inclusive participation of PWDs in economic empowerment programmes cannot be overemphasised.

1.9.5 Local Economic Empowerment Matters for PWDs in South African Rural Municipalities

Municipalities are mandated to implement programmes, policies, and projects related to empowering PWDs within their jurisdiction (Department of Public Works &

Infrastructure, 2024; Ngcobo, 2021; South African Local Government Association [SALGA], 2014; DSD, 2016). This responsibility is particularly relevant because municipalities operate at the local level close to communities. Municipalities must ensure that disability components are integrated into municipal integrated development plans (IDPs) and considered at all levels of municipal empowerment activities and service delivery initiatives (Matyana & Thusi, 2023). Economic empowerment of PWDs can support sustainable, people-centred development and reduce dependency on municipal resources (Tinta & Kolanisi, 2023). However, this study observes that PWDs in rural municipalities often have fewer opportunities compared to urban areas due to a lack of capacity and resources to provide reasonable accommodations (Dineshan & Geetha, 2023; Panda & Kaur, 2024).

Roux (2022) supports this above contention by indicating that PWDs in rural areas have limited employment opportunities and often work in low-paying or unskilled jobs (Stats SA, 2024). The researcher identified a need to integrate empowerment programmes for PWDs into all local government processes to achieve sustainable LED. Ngcobo (2022) posits that expanding employment opportunities for PWDs boosts the production of goods and services, positively impacting the local economy by affecting demand and supply. Although economic empowerment of PWDs is considered a basic human right and a vital precondition for achieving food security and economic advancement, it is essential to recognise the importance of addressing these issues.

1.9.6 Municipalities' Role in Promoting Economic Empowerment and Development Programmes that Support PWDs

Municipalities in South Africa have a constitutional mandate to promote economic development (RSA, 1996). Section 153 of the Constitution of 1996 stipulates that municipalities must organise and manage their administration, make financial arrangements, and plan processes that prioritise essential services for the community and stimulate social and economic development, including for PWDs. Local government is responsible for implementing policies and developing disability strategies that address PWDs' needs and ensure their maximum participation (Ned & Lorenzo, 2016; Ramolobe, Ngcamu & Pillay, 2024). Municipalities must take the lead in providing accessible resources to facilitate economic empowerment opportunities

for PWDs to enhance the local economy and promote quality of their lives (Lorenzo, 2016; Panda & Kau, 2024). The availability of sufficient resources creates a conducive environment to reduce inequality by ensuring that PWDs are not excluded from LED initiatives.

Section 152 of the Constitution stipulates that municipalities must play a significant role in implementing the IDP, which must include a LED strategy, as specified in Section 26 of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act of 2000. The municipal IDP should incorporate economic empowerment programmes for PWDs tailored to their specific needs to ensure inclusive participation and enhance their living standards (SALGA, 2024). The White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2015) calls on the government, civil society, and the corporate sector to collaborate to ensure the socioeconomic inclusion of PWDs (DSD, 2021). This implies that municipalities as local authorities, must facilitate this process.

1.10 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study adopted mixed-method approach to comprehensively analyse the effects of local economic empowerment programmes on PWDs within the LNLM. The mixed-methods approach enabled a deeper understanding of the research phenomenon than standalone quantitative or qualitative designs by integrating the strengths of both, thereby enhancing the reliability and validity of the research findings (Creswell, 2020; Dawadi et al., 2021). The rationale for mixed-methods in the study allowed for integration of qualitative and quantitative results to obtain a better understanding of research problem (Ahmed, Pereira & Jane, 2024; McLeod; 2024). The structured questionnaires were distributed to 210 participants for this study within area of the LNLM. In contrast qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews with 15 officials within an area of The LNLM who are responsible for empower PWDs, advocate for their inclusion in programmes and interact with them daily. The study utilised multiple case study approach which aided generation of robust and reliable data, through diverse findings to address the research questions (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Halkias et al., 2022). In terms of data analysis, quantitative data was analysed using SPSS version 29.0, while qualitative data was analysed through thematic content analysis and ATLAS.ti software (Version 25.01.32924) through co-occurrence analysis to generate themes.

The detailed discussions of research design and methodology adopted in this study are provided in Chapter 4. The research design and methodology chapter also outlines the relevance, benefits, strengths, weakness and rationale for the chosen research design and methodology.

1.11 DEFINITION OF THE STUDY CONCEPTS

The key concepts are defined in this study to establish a clear understanding of the terms within context of this study:

1.11.1 Persons with Disabilities

A PWDs is a person with a long-term, recurring, or progressive physical or mental impairment that significantly limits their prospects of equally participating in economic activities within the society (DSD, 2015a; WPRPD, 2016:11; National Council of and for Persons with Disabilities, 2023; United Nations [UN], 2006; Republic of South Africa, 1996). In the context of this study, PWDs include those who have perceived and/or actual physical, psychosocial, intellectual, disabilities neurological and/or sensory impairments (WPRPD, 2016).

1.11.2 Disability

The definition of disability is widely contested by scholars based on individual context. Disability is defined as “results from the interaction between persons with impairments, attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others” (WPRPD, 2016:18; United Nations, 2006). For the purposes of this study, disability refers to existing barriers that limit full engagement of PWDs in economic empowerment programmes (WPRPD, 2016).

1.11.3 Empowerment

Empowerment is defined as a process of enabling society members to freely and independently participate in decision-making that affects their lives (Malta, 2023). In this study, empowerment refers to unrestricted participation of individuals in social, economic and political empowerment activities, decision-making and planning.

1.11.4 Economics

Economics is the study of how community share or manage resources for production, distribution and consumption, both individually and collectively (Hayes, Kelly & Li, 2025). For purposes of this study, economics is based on equitable opportunities of all municipal endeavours to achieve inclusive economic benefits within the community.

1.11.5 Programme

A programme is defined as multiple collection of projects which together focus on activities required to attain common set of objectives (Pellegrinelli, 2011).

1.11.6 Disability Mainstreaming

Disability mainstreaming is a systematic integration of PWDs concerns in all strategic initiatives, policies and programmes to realise disability development needs (WPRPD, 2016; Chataika & McKenzie, 2016; Ganshanga & Twinamasiko, 2025). The DSD (2015) states that PWDs should be included in implementation, monitoring and evaluation of legislation, standards, policies, rules and regulations and strategies to address their concerns. In the context of this study, mainstreaming means that disability is central to all empowerment initiatives and requires budget allocations.

1.11.7 Economic Empowerment

Economic empowerment is defined as the transformation process to capacitate individuals to decide and take action on the management and distribution of economic resources to improve their economic wellbeing (Braid & Wood, 2020; Martinez, 2022; Musekiwa, Kudzotsa & Mlambo, 2025). In this study, economic empowerment refers to the integration of PWDs into economic opportunities to enable equitable participation and access to skills and economic resources.

1.11.8 Municipality

A municipality is defined as the closest local sphere of government comprising of political and administrative municipal structures as per Section 2(a) of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000. In this study, the LNLM is classified as a Category B municipality entrusted with executive authority.

1.12 CHAPTER BREAKDOWN

Chapter 1: The first chapter provides the introduction and background to the study, problem statement, aims, objectives, research questions, clarification of key concepts, research methodology, significance of the study and limitations. The orientation provides an in-depth overview of the research theme and contextualised disability prevalence statistics, from global to local municipal levels in South Africa, highlighting the marginalisation of PWDs.

Chapter 2: This chapter covers the conceptual framework, theoretical framework and international perspective on local economic empowerment for PWDs. Inclusive development model, economic empowerment theory and economic empowerment and the EETC were used as a basis for understanding the effects of local economic empowerment programmes on PWDs. These theories provided the foundation for interpretation of findings and analysis of research phenomena. The international perspectives on the study topic provided significant lessons that can be learned from other countries concerning the economic empowerment of PWDs. This allowed for exploration on the role of municipalities in the promotion of local economic empowerment, and as well as a critical review of literature on barriers limiting participation of PWDs in empowerment activities.

Chapter 3: Third chapter critically reviews primary, secondary and tertiary data from the South African perspective on local economic empowerment and brief legislative framework that support PWDs inclusion. The chapter focuses on the municipal strategies and approaches to economic empowerment of PWDs in South Africa. This chapter also examines the municipal implementation challenges for local economic empowerment programmes and effectiveness of participation of PWDs in municipal development agenda. Furthermore, this chapter examines literature on the impact of economic empowerment interventions on the quality of life of PWDs and the legislative framework that promotes inclusive participation of PWDs in economic empowerment initiatives.

Chapter 4: In this chapter, a comprehensive account of the research design and methodology adopted in the study is outlined. It examines how mixed-methods research was carried out in this study.

Chapter 5: The chapter presents the interpretation, analysis and discussion of findings obtained from the quantitative data (questionnaire survey) with the previously reviewed literature on the effects of local economic empowerment programmes on PWDs.

Chapter 6: This chapter analyses, interprets and discusses the qualitative findings derived from in-depth interviews conducted with participants within an area of the LNLM.

Chapter 7: This last chapter presents a summary of the findings, the research contribution to the body of knowledge, proposed implementation framework, actionable recommendations and recommendations for future research.

1.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the context, orientation and background on economic empowerment programmes for PWDs was examined. It outlined the research objectives, significance, research questions, scope of the study and provided a definition of key concepts. The next chapter presents the conceptual and theoretical framework that underpin this study, and reviews literature from an international perspective on local economic empowerment.

CHAPTER 2: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON LOCAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT FOR PWDS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter discusses relevant theoretical and conceptual frameworks which serves as roadmap for the study. In this study, the inclusive development model and the economic empowerment theory of change (EETC) are used to comprehend the effects of local economic empowerment programmes on persons with disabilities (PWDs). The chapter covers the international perspective and lessons that can be learned from other countries concerning the economic empowerment for PWDs. The chapter also discusses the evolution of local economic empowerment. Furthermore, existing literature emphasises the importance of inclusive participation in development programmes for the benefit of marginalised societies within a local government context.

2.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Local economic development (LED) is a composite and interdisciplinary area of study defined differently by several scholars and practitioners. LED is a method and process for enhancing economic development at local level for realisation of inclusive developmental local government mandate within a developed and developing countries (Kgobe, Mabeba & Mamokhere, 2023). In this study, key concepts such as LED and empowerment were studied and discussed in detail. Through LED, municipalities are required to facilitate inclusive processes that encourage collective action to achieve sustainable economic growth and improved quality of life for all, including PWDs (Mahole, 2017; Ngubane, 2011; Ramukumba, 2024). In this study, effects of LED programmes on PWD are investigated and the issue is put into perspective (Michailova, 2024). Ngcobo and Gumede (2022) are of view that local economic empowerment programmes initiated by the municipalities should be inclusive for PWDs to actively participate in the mainstream of economy.

Chomane and Biljohn (2023) describe LED as a complex approach which requires various stakeholders in a local area to collaborate and harness resources for sustainable economic growth and community empowerment. In public administration, LED refers to processes through which municipalities maximise their economic

potential by leveraging existing resources to stimulate inclusive participation and sustainable local economic growth (Wilson & Polter, 2020; Zaaijer & Sara, 1993). It is evident from these definitions that LED at municipal level must play a critical role in ensuring that development is delivered to marginalised communities in collaboration with community-based groups and the private sector as well (Shava, 2023). Hence LED must stimulate local economy to achieve sustainable development through creating inclusive employment opportunities, advance social and economic benefits for all including PWDs (Kgobe, 2023; Maela et al., 2024; Mahole, 2017). In the context of this study, LED is defined as an approach to attain inclusive sustainable development aimed at enhancing the economic wellbeing of marginalised communities at local level as means of expanding research (Dineshan & Geetha, 2023; Kgobe et al., 2023).

Economic empowerment is concerned with an individual's ability to participate equally in existing markets by having access to and control over productive resources, decent work opportunities, economic independence, increased voice and agency, and meaningful engagement in economic decision-making at all levels of government (Besnier et al., 2023; Kumari, 2024; Mahbub, 2021). Municipalities have faced significant barriers in integrating PWDs into economic development programmes to enhance their participation. Economic empowerment is an essential development feature, as it enhances economic growth, promotes socioeconomic development, and improves economic participation while reducing poverty (Jedi, 2022). This study interlinks these variables to achieve effective participation of PWDs in economic activities and helps municipalities adopt effective strategies for inclusive disability economic development.

There is gap in terms of existing literature on how economic empowerment as concept can integrate with PWDs to embrace inclusivity for economic benefits for all at municipalities. In support of this, Hunting et al., (2017:3) point out that there are not many programmes that allow sector experiences to increase knowledge about economic engagement of PWDs to enhance their economic wellbeing. This study emphasises the crucial role of municipalities in implementing inclusive and accessible development programmes by integrating LED into IDPs to improve implementation outcomes for PWDs and other stakeholders.

Another key concept for this study is development which is a multifaceted and constant process especially in the context of LED with the objective of reducing poverty and inequality by using government empowerment policies (Enaifoghe & Vezi-Magigaba, 2022; Maela et al., 2024). The definition supports LED initiatives with a special focus on enhancing competitiveness, increasing sustainable developmental growth and ensuring that growth is inclusive to all. For the purpose of this study, development refers to inclusive and attainment of social, economic and political empowerment change which enhances the rights of marginalised society to realise their potential in socioeconomic development process (Basson, 2023; Maela et al., 2024). Van Rooyen (2013) asserts that LED is all about development of the communities and has a long history in developmental practice from national, provincial, regional and local government-led development growth to more inclusive participatory and localised processes.

By focusing on these aspects, municipalities can effectively implement LED as a mechanism for fulfilling their developmental responsibilities stipulated in Municipal Structures Act No. 117 of 1998, (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 1998). In view of the above, the current study seeks to determine the effects of local economic empowerment programme on PWDs. Empowerment refers to enabling a marginalised community to match the participation of the elite in society (Lean et al., 2019). Empowerment is the interpersonal process of giving others the right instruments, materials, and setting to help them grow and improve their capacity to establish and accomplish personal objectives (Haddad & Toney-Butler 2023; Lu, Zhao & While, 2019). Al-Taii (2023) contends that strategies for PWDs empowerment involve policy change, education and training initiatives and peer support groups, which have shown great potential.

However, the literature shows that empowerment is seldom integrated in local government initiatives to attain sustainable goals for empowerment. Empowerment is referred to as a social action approach that motivate groups or communities to take charge of their lives through different programmes in their local communities and wider society (Mahbub, 2021, Stein, 1997). Empowerment can be categorised into various types based on the context and the areas in which it is applied (Mahbub, 2021). In context of this study, empowerment is categorised in term of economic, political,

community, environmental and social empowerment. This is because empowerment is the process of building the autonomy, greater decision-making power, confidence and greater participation to pave the way for a better future.

Academics and practitioners hold different views on concept of disability because the term is dynamic, multifaceted and complex (Ramolobe, Ngcamu & Pillay, 2024). The complexity could be a contributory factor to the ineffective integration of disability into LED at government level. According to Groce, Kett, Lang and Trani (2011), there is no comprehensively accepted definition of disability globally. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2015), disability refers to long-term physical, mental, sensory or intellectual impairments that limit equal participation in society and development. In the inclusive development model, disability is understood in the context of empowerment as lack of participation of PWDs in all stages of development processes, from inception to monitoring and evaluation. Disability as a term has been widely neglected by academics as an area for study until the emergence of a paradigm shift to the development concept which advocates for inclusivity in all processes (Furaida et al., 2023; ILO, 2015; Saptaningtyas et al., 2023). In light of these definitions, disability is defined in this study as limited opportunities or lack of participate in economic development activities (Akinsola, 2006; Kamyuka, Carlin, McPherson & Misener, 2020). This definition of disability provides a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of the term.

This study noted the limitations in expanding research on disability in order to integrate it into economic empowerment for better understanding in practice and policy. With reference to the conceptual framework, this study seeks to extend research on the experiences of PWDs in South Africa by assessing the impact of local government economic empowerment programmes, using the LNLM as a case study.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study's theoretical framework is grounded in inclusive development model (Gupta, Pouw & Ros-Tonen, 2015), and the EETC (Mahbub, 2021), which serve as the roadmap for this research, as discussed in detail below. These theories assist in understanding the effects of local economic empowerment on PWDs. These theories are vital in the study because they advocate for inclusive participation of PWDs in LED

and the role of municipalities in integrating disability in their development initiatives. Besides these theories, there are several other theories, such as the youth development theory (Erikson, 1994), the neo-classical economic theory (Smith, 2022), and the location theory (Capello, 2011; Weber, 1909). However, these theories are irrelevant to the current study, as they are not directly linked to the research questions and scope and may add unnecessary complexity. For instance, the youth development theory focuses on youth empowerment, while this study focuses on PWDs in general. Similarly, the location theory focuses on economic activities within the local community but does not address how to integrate or mainstream PWDs into those activities (Capello, 2011).

2.3.1 Inclusive Development Model

Inclusive development's primary goals are to eliminate poverty, improve individual development, promote equity and economically empower all individuals (Liu et al., 2022; Pilke & Waliyua, 2023; Rauniyar & Kanbur 2010). This model is concerned with promoting equality and the inclusion of PWDs in mainstream development opportunities (Pilke & Waliyua, 2023). Inclusive development involves providing accessible services and activities and mainstreaming disability to ensure the full inclusion of PWDs as equals (RSA, 2015). The application of this model by local government prioritises the enablement of PWDs to participate actively in transformation processes to improve their quality of life (Tinta et al., 2020; Tinta & Kolanisi, 2023).

According to Rehal (2023), this model advocates for a development approach that aims to ensure that the benefits of economic growth are inclusive to all members of society irrespective of their background or disability status. The model aims to ensure that local government economic empowerment programmes create opportunities and reduce inequalities by promoting the participation of traditionally marginalised groups in the mainstream economy (Rehal, 2023; Zhu, 2022). The theory of inclusive development is a holistic and people-centred approach towards economic development. This is because it prioritises the wellbeing of all individuals and communities in the development process to create an equitable society by addressing barriers that contribute to economic exclusion, thereby promoting opportunities for all (Dörffel & Schuhmann, 2022; Rehal, 2023; Zhu, 2022).

Participation and empowerment are key principles of the inclusive development theory which serves as guiding approach to fostering economic and social progress in a way that involves and benefits all people including PWDs (Rehal, 2023). This theory is appropriate to this study because empowerment is an important variable for the current research and a key principle in the inclusive development model.

The supporters of this model advocate that local government developmental initiatives should allow PWDs to participate in decision-making, share resources and benefit from development programmes (Borel-Saladin & Turok, 2013; Liu et al., 2022; Oosthoek & Gills, 2013). Participation in decision-making entails ability of PWDs to fully participate in planning and implementation of LED programmes. The key aspects of the inclusive development model support this study, as one of the research objectives is to examine the extent to which PWDs are actively involved in the development and implementation of economic programmes. The inclusive development model aims to ensure that all individuals have equal access to empowerment opportunities (Dörffel & Schuhmann, 2022; Liu et al., 2022). This study contributes to the development of a framework that municipalities can use to promote the inclusion of PWDs in local economic development initiatives. The model relies on four pillars, namely, physical, social, economic and environmental inclusivity which are key for empowerment of PWDs.

The notion of inclusive economic empowerment was introduced in this study as a sub-concept of inclusive development to address lack participation of PWDs in the economic activities (Zhu, 2022). Dörffel and Schuhmann (2022) add that the model of inclusive development effectively benefits larger segments of society and enhances the perceived legitimacy of the development process. To support this Hickey, Sen and Bukenya (2016) see inclusive development as a methodology which ensures that material and social gains derived from LED are dispersed fairly across communities. To achieve inclusive development in the implementation of economic empowerment programmes municipalities must employ effective strategies to attract political support, because politics can shape the delivery of development at local context (Hickey et al., 2016; Mokoena, 2019). Municipalities must therefore assume their facilitation role in LED through involving PWDs, councillors for political support, stakeholders, community members and traditional authorities to attain necessary resources for

inclusive economic empowerment programmes (Koma, 2010; Mumba & Van der Waldt, 2023a; Maela et al., 2024). In the context of this study, this model is applicable since it advocates for a framework for implementation where all individuals have equal access to participate in empowerment opportunities at local level.

The inclusive development theory was first posited by Gupta, Pouw and Ros-Tonen (2015). This theory is strongly supported by Wei Liu, Jie Yang, Yue Gong, and Qi Cheng (2022). The strengths of this model are that it helps in the development of pertinent knowledge for community empowerment and has the capacity to change governance into interactive governance to facilitate empowerment programmes for marginalised communities (Gupta et al., 2015). On the other hand, Zhu (2022) identifies this model's weakness as its complexity in implementation, which occurs since the theory necessitates a thorough comprehension of many social, political, and economic situations (Saleth, Galab & Ellanki, 2020; Gupta et al., 2015).

Critics such as Rammelt (2021) contend that the model place too much emphasis on redistribution or policies that prioritise the underprivileged over efficiency, an emphasis on inclusive development may actually impede overall economic progress. While it is anticipated that economic empowerment initiatives will raise incomes over the poverty line, resulting in additional economic growth, such growth is also thought to be unsustainable over the long term (Rammelt & Gupta, 2021; UN, 2020). One advantage of this model is that it advocates for policies that enhance access to resources, foster active involvement in decision-making, and create capacity in order to empower marginalised people. Thus, this theory will help the researcher to offer a feasible solution and direct municipalities in developing more inclusive empowerment programmes and policies, increasing their efficacy and relevance. The theory's shortcomings include inconsistent methodologies and limited data availability, which leave local governments with little guidance for attaining inclusive empowerment (Gupta et al., 2015; Rammelt & Gupta, 2021). Therefore, this study attempts to provide comprehensive scientific data for inclusive empowerment and propose practical methodologies to help municipalities to make informed decisions on inclusive programmes.

2.3.2 Economic Empowerment Theory of Change

For economic empowerment to become meaningful, PWDs must have the liberty and confidence to make changes in their lives, with the support and ability to participate in decision-making while enjoying equal rights (Kidder, 2021; Kidder et al., 2017). The EETC advocates for PWDs' representation in economic activities, including business. Mahbub (2021) argues that society becomes more equitable when policies and practices incorporate all individuals' perspectives. At the household level, this theory's empowering process leads to economically independent individuals who can raise healthier and better-educated children (Reinholz & Andrews, 2020). Achieving this goal requires the full and equal participation of PWDs as economic actors at the municipal level to ensure sustainable food security. The EETC emphasises that programme implementation improves when the larger community, including PWDs, is involved and consulted during programme development (Ghate, 2021; Reinholz & Andrews, 2020).

The EETC focuses on strengthening municipalities and economic stakeholders' capacity to propose and implement policies and allocate budgets that support PWDs' economic participation (Kidder, 2021; Regina, Heckert, Paz & Cabnal, 2024). A policy or programme's success can be evaluated using the participation, benefits and empowerment conceptual framework, as explained by Malapit, Meinzen-Dick, Quisumbing and Zseleczky (2020). The EETC is crucial to this study, as it provides a framework for understanding and analysing the significance of inclusive participation of PWDs in mainstream local economic empowerment activities, making it highly relevant to this research.

According to Martinez (2022), economic empowerment theory focuses on improving the economic status and financial independence of individuals or communities. Kidder (2021) describes economic empowerment theory as approach to provide access to resources, training and opportunities to create sustainable livelihoods, build assets and improve economic wellbeing. This theory intertwines with the study since it promotes financial independence of PWDs and provision of access training as part of attaining empowerment in the mainstream of economy (Reinholz & Andrews, 2020; Shava, 2023). Participation of PWDs in LED should serve as vital step to unlock sustainable economic empowerment. Municipalities ought to promote implementation

of inclusive economic empowerment programmes as driving force for social and economic development to the disadvantage groups such as PWDs (Shava, 2023). Martinez (2022) posits that effective economic empowerment of PWDs can be beneficial to improve the municipality and community as well.

The EETC could potentially be used to evaluate the effects of LED programmes on PWDs (Shava, 2023). This theory will assist the researcher in this study to analyse economic empowerment programmes and propose new changes in implementation of those programmes for inclusivity (Liu et al., 2022). To address the failure of LED methods in South African local government, the EETC provides a critical programme evaluation framework for examining the assumptions that guide social, economic, and political transformation initiatives (Kgobe, 2023; Shava, 2023). Brest (2010) describes EETC as more than just process of generating knowledge or determining whether a scenario is effective. This theory also describes how and which strategies can be employed to improve the effectiveness of a development programme. The EETC is critical to this study since it explores the implementation of an inclusive LED to improve quality of life for PWDs (Maela at al., 2024; Shava, 2023).

Economic empowerment is the capacity to decide and take action on the management and distribution of financial resources (Golla et al., 2011; Martinez, 2022). Municipal LED interventions that aim to increase the economic power of PWDs, may improve disability independency and reduce economic vulnerability of households of PWDs (Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities [DWYPD] , 2015). This theory supports the political empowerment of PWDs to increase their influence and participation in political structures of municipal processes and decision-making development initiatives (Zhu, 2022). It should be noted that in the reviewed literature, not much focus has been placed on to the application of EETC to LED programmes for PWDs. This attributed by the fact that disabilities at municipal level is associated with social welfare (Ofuani, 2021; Tjahjanti, Sumarmi & Widodo, 2018). These studies seek to position the EETC as the basis for inclusive LED implementation.

The study is theoretically informed by Mahbub's EETC (Mahbub, 2021). According to Reinholz and Andrews (2020), Carol Hirschon Weiss (1995) popularised the phrase "theory of change" through the efforts of the Roundtable on Community Change and the Aspen Institute. Encouraging people to actively engage in economic activities,

which fosters a sense of control and ownership over their life and leads to long-term sustainability, is this theory's strongest point (Koleros, Adrien & Tyrrell, 2024). This theory's weakness is its minimal attention to social and political issues that can impede economic advancement, such as social exclusion or political repression (Reinholz & Andrews, 2020). According to Mousumi and Chompa (2022), there is a contradiction in the theory since it frequently makes the assumption that greater economic participation or personal wealth will result in more significant social and economic advancements like less inequality and poverty. The relationship between social development and economic progress is not necessarily linear, though. As a critic of this idea, Pruijt (2013) contends that this presumption ignores the possibility that economic development does not always translate into a fair distribution of income.

This theory will help current study by offering a methodical framework for examining how interventions meant to boost people's economic agency can result in positive effects on society and the economy (Tsantila, Coppens & De Witte, 2023). This approach frequently emphasises individual agency, which may minimise the necessity of systemic or implementation change. The study will close the gap in literature through review of existing systems meant to empower PWDs at local level and propose programmes review which support collective efforts. Its success, though, depends on removing both structural and personal impediments. For this study to be successful, it will incorporate current programmes for economic empowerment into more comprehensive social, political, economic and environmental approaches that support inclusivity, equity and long-term resilience.

2.4 LOCAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT EVOLUTION

LED has evolved from a policy approach used in the early 1970s by municipalities in some countries referred to as local or regional government and in South Africa referred to as municipalities (Ababio & Meyer 2012; Chomane 2023; Sekhampu 2010). In the late 1990s, however, enterprise development, improving infrastructure, building partnerships with local communities, and generally promoting an inclusive and dynamic framework became the dominant strategy (World Bank, 2020). The socioeconomic conditions that occurred due to globalisation had an impact on the evolution of LED (Ntetha, 2021). Three development waves have shaped LED, and

some elements of these waves persist today as disused below (Swinburn, Goga & Murphy, 2006).

The first wave of LED in the 1960s adopted a pro-market approach that focused on place marketing to external investors, with economic development policies largely directed by national and provincial governments (Isaacs, 2006; Patterson, 2008; Rodrigues-Pose & Tijmstra, 2005; Sekhampu, 2010; Swinburn et al., 2006). The second wave, from the 1980s to the mid-1990s, retained this pro-market orientation but expanded its focus to include retaining and growing local businesses by targeting key sectors within specific geographical areas (Isaacs, 2006; Sekhampu, 2010; Swinburn et al., 2006).

From the 1990s onwards, the third wave of LED maintained a pro-market approach but placed greater emphasis on infrastructure investment, business networking, public–private partnerships, a supportive business environment, and improved quality of life within communities in the global South (Sekhampu, 2010; Swinburn et al., 2006). Moreover, cities are concentrating on networking, establishing PPPs, and using private sector investments for the benefit of the public (Malefane, 2021). To strengthen local economies, the majority of cities are also concentrating on attracting foreign investment. In order to promote cluster growth and enhance quality of life, cities devote special attention to inbound investment.

Chomane and Biljohn (2023) contend that pro-market and pro-poor approaches are features of the LED. In South African metropolitan towns LED is primarily characterised by a dual economic system that concurrently operates pro-poor and pro-market strategies (Chomane & Biljohn, 2023; Nel & Rogerson 2016:4; South African Cities Network (SACN), 2019). In smaller municipalities, LED strategies are dominated by pro-poor interventions with a focus on support for small-, medium-, and micro-enterprises (SMMEs), the informal economy, aspects of tourism (Koma, 2012; Nel & Rogerson, 2015). To this extent, a distinct focus on pro-poor LED limits opportunities to collaborate with the business or the private sector on pro-market interventions (Nel & Rogerson, 2015). The implementation of inclusive LED in smaller municipalities is hindered by various challenges to have effects on PWDs. Chomane and Biljohn (2023), and Kgobe et al. (2023) highlight the following challenges inadequate LED capacity, and different interpretation of LED as well as its objectives and targets

regardless of whether a pro-poor and pro-market is adopted (Malele, 2018; SACN, 2019; Sekhampu, 2010). It would be prudent to municipalities to integrate PWDs in two approaches to LED.

The literature has not been able to highlight effects both approaches for achievements inclusive development and increase public sector capacity (Ned, 2016). The first approach to LED which is pro-poor has not contributed to general empowerment since local government programmes were only addresses disability issues as a matter of compliance and not economic inclusivity (SALGA, 2024; Tinta, 2023). There are gaps in the existing literature regarding the experiences of PWDs, as they are insufficiently capacitated and inadequately included in LED programmes, which in turn affects their economic status. Even though a pro-market approach was adopted, municipalities have failed to integrate disability into their development programmes to increase competitiveness. This has contributed to a lack of accessible infrastructure, inadequate skills training programmes, discriminatory hiring practices, limited transportation options and social stigma for PWDs (Jagoe et al., 2023; Kgobe et al., 2023; Tinta, 2023). The study seeks to highlight the significance of municipality in implementing both approaches inclusively through the integration of disability empowerment issues. Furthermore, to improve the infrastructure, training and transportation for PWDs to achieve inclusive sustainable development. This study has the potential to contribute to this sparsely researched subject (local economic empowerment) in theory, concept, policy and practice regarding best practice, resilience and strategies for municipalities.

2.5 INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON LOCAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

2.5.1 LED Perspective in Europe

LED planning originated in Europe and then extended to other economically developed nations before making its way to late-developing economies in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa (Blair & Carroll, 2008; Malizia et al., 2021; Rowe, 2016). The effects of LED programmes on PWDs with disabilities have minimal impact in improving quality of their life and involvement in the mainstream of economy even though LED planning emerged in Europe (European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities [EASPD], 2021). PWDs are more likely to experience

poverty and social exclusion in the European Union (EU) (29%) than people without disabilities (19%), and they commonly face discrimination in their daily activities (European Commission, 2020; 2021; Eurostat, 2020). In Europe, PWDs continue to be a disadvantaged group in terms of participating in empowerment programmes and labour market whereby this considered as notable and increasing prevalence. To support this, European Court of Auditors (2023) reported that the effects of empowerment programme on employment has not improved the key equality indicators for PWDs lately.

The EU has made less success in promoting accessibility and inclusion in the workplace, moreover PWDs remain underrepresented in local government (EASPD, 2021). Stein and Stein (2022) posit that the information that is currently available demonstrates that PWDs encounter significant obstacles when trying to obtain inclusive education, and meaningful involvement government development programmes (EASPD, 2021; Stein & Stein, 2022). This entails that PWDs are among the first and most adversely impacted by the economic transition to fulfil quality of standards of living and suffer from limited economic resource availability (Stein & Stein, 2022). This is attributed by weak LED planning and fragmented knowledge on inclusive disability empowerment. However, it worth noting that LED in countries such as Germany is promoted through partnership which is considered as an important vehicle for addressing social and economic for an improved governance (Kozma, Saidi & Molnár, 2024; Scott & Scoppetta, 2013).

According to Weck (2009), Germany acknowledged the significance of LED as an approach to developing disadvantaged areas through improved infrastructure. Municipalities in Germany are encouraged to implement an LED-coordinated initiative called “Social City” funding programme for the promotion urban-development projects in marginalised society. This programme has successfully managed to enhance jobs creation for communities and support local business for sustainable development (Busch, Franck & Ley 2025; 2009). In contrast to Germany, LED initiative in Portugal is driven by promotion of smart cities, entrepreneurship and tourism to improve the livelihoods of citizens (Almeida, 2024). Despite the potential of smart cities in Portugal to generate revenue for public services and create employment, PWDs experience poverty, minimal jobs opportunities and discrimination (Lambros, 2025).

2.5.2 Asia Perspective on LED

In Asian Pacific LED (LEDAP) plays a significant role in tackling more general national development issues, its primary focus is on local development issues, enabling local stakeholders to take charge of their communities and take proactive measures to address them (Chomane & Biljohn, 2023; LEDAP, 2015). Many countries of Asia Pacific have empowered local and regional government to play an increased role in sustainable development (LEDAP, 2015). LED is territorial and bound by local jurisdictions (local authority, districts, municipalities, regions) who adopt it through their local powers and jurisdictions to address need, inequality and opportunity and unlock potential. Despite an estimated global disability prevalence of 650 million, PWDs in many Asian and Pacific countries remain marginalised in the labour market due to persistent discrimination, particularly against women with disabilities (Ramolobe et al., 2023; UN, 2020b; WHO, 2020). Khambule (2018) states that East Asia through LED initiatives has managed to achieve inclusive economic growth with contribution of citizens including PWDs.

LED plans are inclusive strategic instruments which set out the priorities for development of PWDs as well and raise awareness, build understanding and trust between all local stakeholders to ensure effective LED implementation (Commonwealth Local Government Forum [CLGF], 2015; Khambule, 2018; Kim, 2010). In Asia LED plans target maintaining and developing the local skills base and promoting sustainable job creation and diversification of the local economy (Chomane & Biljohn, 2023; Khambule, 2018). Furthermore, economic empowerment programme planning in Asia supports SMMEs by promoting human capital development and maximising local resources, and skills development for PWDs to participate in the mainstream of economy (CLGF, 2015; WHO, 2020). Soko (2020) posits that LED in Asia enables district administration, PWDs involved in farming and business to be aware of common tasks and to work together to deal with common issue. This is what drove Asia’s economic success stories which offers improved knowledge on the opportunities for inclusive LED benefits (Khambule, 2018; Kim, 2010; Soko, 2020).

2.5.3 Local Economic Empowerment in Africa

In Africa, Enaifoghe and Vezi-Magigaba (2022) recognised the emergence of LED thus of the constant problems of slow economic growth and poverty, changes in national and international economic environment due to globalisation (Rodríguez-Pose & Tijmstra, 2005). Most of African countries adopted LED as strategy in response to globalisation with pro-growth and pro-poor approaches (Meyer, 2014; Shongwe, Lukhele & Zulu, 2024). In African nations like Ghana, Uganda and Zimbabwe, a pro-poor approach to LED was applied through community-based planning for successful inclusive programmes, as noted by (Ntetha, 2021; Sebugwawo 2011). Local development initiatives in Botswana are primarily underpin by LED, which identifies district development plans that involve all significant local players (Jili, 2019; Richards & Stetten, 2000; Van Rooyen, 2013).

According to Ntetha (2021), LED in Africa seeks to strengthen local economies, encourage the development of jobs and revenue, and enhance municipal performance and governance. Scholars such as Mensah, Domfeh, Ahenkan and Bawole (2013) concur with Ntetha (2021) that African governments identify LED as a key priority to enhance inclusive development and governance at local levels. However, it is worrisome that PWDs have been neglected for their participation in development programmes to improve their quality of life. LED has the potential to be a significant factor in tackling the rising rates of poverty and inequality in Africa (Rodríguez-Pose & Tijmstra, 2005). It is essential that it is built into mainstream processes of socio-cultural and economic development, in order to achieve its goals of equalising opportunities for PWDs by ensuring their full inclusion in all development processes.

2.5.4 Tanzania Perspective on LED

In Tanzania, LED has gained popularity recently as a development approach at the local and community levels. (Bishagazi, 2021b; Olomi & Gerwen, 2018). According to Bishagazi (2021a) it focuses on building strong, inclusive local economies that take advantage of local opportunities, meet local needs and support natural development goals like economic growth and the eradication of poverty, particularly for venerable groups. According to the Tanzania Development Vision (TDV) 2025, LED is being implemented in Tanzania under the framework of the Small and Medium Enterprises

(SMEs) policy, which represents a significant portion of Tanzania's business community (TDV, 2025). The government implemented a number of programmes and policies during the economic reforms' implementation to address some of the main local barriers that the community, including PWDs are facing (Bishagazi, 2021b; TDV, 2025. According to Bishagazi (2021a), these policies and initiatives are microfinance policy, strategic trade policy, rural development strategy, agricultural sector development strategy and poverty alleviation strategies. Even though these initiatives are in place, Tanzania LED is still in its early stages of adoption, has a lower adoption rate (Olomi & Gerwen, 2018; United Nation Economic Empowerment for Africa, 2024). PWD empowerment strategy should be an integrated part of community development in order to meet their needs.

2.5.5 Ghana Perspective on LED

Ghana's national LED policy and operational guideline was created in 2013 to help municipalities deploy LEDs in a way that works. (Sarfoh, 2020). However, there is a misunderstanding regarding even what the concept of LED is amongst three category municipalities and who owns it (Akudugu, 2018, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, 2019). This has also led to confusion of integrating the disability issues into economic empowerment programmes (Musekiwa, Kudzotsa, & Mlambo, 2022; 2025; Nutsugbodo, Anaafo, Ankamah & Bannor, 2022). LED implementation in Ghana is still constraints by limited specific sector guidance, lack of experienced officials and skills to form partnership (Akudugu, 2018; Osei-Kyei & Chan, 2017). Beside above obstacles, Article 29(1) (8) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana makes provision for the inclusion, protection and participation of PWDs in the socio-cultural and economic activities of Ghana. Akudugu (2018) and Sarfoh (2020) posit that Ghanaian LED strategies initially were not inclusive and relied on interventional development agencies for assistance. Ghana faces a shortage of empowerment programmes for persons with disabilities, limiting their ability to generate income and increasing long-term dependence on families and communities, with broader social implications (Grischow & Mfoafo-M'carthy, 2021; Mulubiran, 2021).

Inaccessible school buildings contributed to uneducated PWDs which resulted in lack of participation in LED and informal sector because their opportunities are limited (Mulubiran, 2021; WHO, 2011). Lack of access to public space has also resulted in

the underrepresentation of PWDs in the socio-political and economic arenas (Mulubiran, 2021; Van Pletzen, Kabaso & Lorenzo, 2021). The government has embarked on a few interventions such as recruiting over 80 PWDs to operate tollbooths and increasing the Common Fund for PWDs from 2% to 3% (Abodey et al., 2020). The support for PWDs in Ghana is mainly on focused social welfare as opposed to engaging them in economic activities of LED (Shrestha, 2021). South African could learn from Ghana by increasing the procurement target to 7% of PWDs and ensuring strict enforcement of business opportunities allocation to PWDs (DWYPD, 2024). Because there is a special concession of 30% of all local contracts to be given to PWDs in Ghana but this has not been achieved (Persons with Disability Amendment Bill, 2020). This reveals a lack of commitment from Ghana to making significant progress in integrating disabilities in their economic activities to allow active participation of PWDs.

2.5.6 India Perspective in LED

South Asia is developing LED at different speeds and in different ways. India, Bangladesh and Pakistan do not appear to use the language of LED, even though they emphasise the importance of local economic development (Lall & Chakravorty, 2005). The Indian government runs many government programmes through local governments, which are the ones that drive LED. In rural areas, local governments frequently focus on improving farming practices, improving market access, and promoting rural enterprises, including cooperatives that benefit elites only (Sarkar & Samanta, 2023). There is a high degree of social, economic, and political exclusion experienced by PWDs in India (UNDP, 2012).

PWDs are generally viewed as unproductive resources that cannot contribute to nation-building economic activity in India (Blakeslee, Aaditya, Fishman, Malik, Heitor and Bagavathinathan, 2023). Their talent, skills and potential remain mostly untapped, under-used or under-developed. In addition, PWDs have lower rates of employment and education than non-disabled people (Qiu, Jiang, Sun & Du, 2023; UNDP, 2012). Persons with disabilities in India face limited income opportunities alongside higher living costs, contributing to their disproportionate levels of poverty. The LED in India has not made positive effects on PWDs particularly since they face serious barriers in getting jobs through empowerment programmes (Qiu et al., 2023). This is made worse

by unequal access to training and education programmes, which is a serious issue that has to be addressed immediately. They must then be able to find and learn about employment that they can physically work at in spite of their disability. The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPWD) in India started the Accessible India Campaign in 2015 as a national initiative to integrate disability into developmental issues and accomplish universal accessibility for PWDs (DEPWD, 2015). This campaign did not manage to promote the employment and participation of PWDs in economic activities.

2.5.1.1 Summation of Comparative Analysis of International Perspective Local on Economic Empowerment

Based on above international experiences on LED, South Africa, and specifically LNLM, can draw lesson from successful approaches to the implementation of LED. In Europe and Asia, LED is advanced through partnerships to stimulate economic growth (Kozma, Saidi & Molnár, 2024; Scott & Scoppetta, 2013). South Africa could draw lessons from Europe by promoting a conducive environment to enable effective multi-stakeholder engagement in society (business sectors) to support LED coordinated projects through financial and non-financial resources (Enaifoghe & Durokifa, 2023; Mkhize & Mutereko, 2022). As a result, for LNLM to grow its potential in the agricultural and retail sectors as their key drivers of economic growth, a collaborative effort from key players such the farmers' forum and entrepreneurs should be involved in LED decision-making for possible job creation (LNLM, 2025; Enaifoghe & Durokifa, 2023). Kgobe et al. (2023) posit that inclusive engagement of society in LED initiatives can lead to shared economic benefits to improve the livelihoods of communities. However, despite success stories of stakeholder collaboration, LNLM has faced institutional challenges not limited to ambiguous stakeholder roles in LED implementation (Makhaye & Subban, 2024).

LNLM can learn from Asia and Tanzania by supporting SMMEs and promote farming programmes for vulnerable groups to improve access to social protection and reduce inequalities (Soko, 2020). This could lead to development of a local skills base and sustainable job creation (Chomane & Biljohn, 2023; Khambule, 2018). Through its SMME policy and local economic development programmes, the Tanzanian government implemented initiatives to expand business opportunities for small

enterprises, offering valuable lessons for countries such as South Africa (TDV, 2025; Bishagazi, 2021b). Similarly, South African should ensure that its SMMEs and co-operatives funding policy is disability-driven and effectively implemented at local level to expand local businesses. Despite many African countries such as Ghana, Uganda and Zimbabwe adopting pro-poor approaches to LED, vulnerable groups inclusive of PWDs still experience exclusions in development plans and projects (Tigere & Moyo, 2022; Shakespeare, Mugeere, Nyariki & Simbaya, 2019). For a successful LED initiative in South Africa, all empowerment programmes should allow for equitable participation and benefits. By allowing equitable participation, local actors become development agents.

LNLM should develop an agricultural sector development strategy, similar to that of Tanzania, to guide LED agricultural projects, promote agricultural production and agri-processing and attract trade and investment opportunities. South Africa needs to develop a balanced LED approach (pro-poor and pro-market) to support tourism, mining, local informal sector and SMMEs (Koma, 2012; Nel & Rogerson 2015:8) as opposed to focusing more on social welfare programmes like Ghana. For instance, LED irrigation projects in India helped villages increase crop production, which improved agricultural productivity (Blakeslee et al., 2023). Investment in LED aligned agri-processing training in South Africa can improve farming practices, market access and promote rural enterprises or subsistence farmers. Hence, capacity building is crucial for LNLM to achieve successful LED implementation and avoid challenges of unequal access to education or training experienced by India. Finally, the LNLM could pilot “Social City” funding projects from Germany which has managed to create jobs and enhance infrastructure to realise their aspiration of smart cities as noted in their IDP 2026/2027 (LNLM, 2026:40)

2.6 INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION OF PWDS IN LOCAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES

Inclusive participation entails affording individuals the opportunity to express themselves and engage actively in societal and democratic frameworks, thereby fostering equitable processes and results (Ntombela & Mahlangu, 2019). Pillay, Saruchera and Chivandire (2023) highlight the significance of PWDs’ participation in

economic activities to realise their full potential and address their needs across all aspects of their lives within communities.

Municipalities must prioritise disability issues to encourage PWDs to become active beneficiaries of economic empowerment programmes rather than merely recipients of charity. Providing access to economic empowerment programmes is a crucial step towards enabling PWDs to achieve financial independence and enhance food security (Sandness & Schjødt-Osmo, 2020). Municipalities and social partners must work together with communities to facilitate PWDs' access to economic and vocational guidance programmes, placement services and ongoing training to achieve this. Tinta and Kolanisi (2023) agree that economic empowerment also improves access to economic resources and opportunities, including jobs, productive assets and skill development.

PWDs must participate in the planning, creation, execution, and oversight of economic development policies and initiatives (Malapit et al., 2020). Their participation in such programmes is critical for attaining sustainable development goals, such as poverty reduction, gender equality, and inclusive economic growth (Reshi & Sudha, 2022). Empowering PWDs can lead to increased productivity and economic growth. Generally, including vulnerable groups in decision-making processes for economic development activities may possibly leads to better governance and enhanced social justice (Chomane, 2023; Shava, 2023). Their participation in economic activities paves the way for their recognition as contributing members of their communities. There are gaps in the literature on how PWDs' involvement in LED programmes is critical to building stronger and more sustainable government economies. Thus, the need for inclusive participation of PWDs in economic empowerment programmes cannot be overemphasised.

2.6.1 Equalisation of Economic Participation

Mbukanma and Strydom (2022) postulate that promoting equality cannot be achieved if PWDs have fewer economic rights, less control over economic resources, and fewer economic advancement opportunities than the rest of the population. Municipalities have a duty to ensure inclusive participation in economic empowerment programmes which has potential to contribute to the nation-building and beyond (Zhu, 2022). Thus,

PWDs empowerment fosters a sense of belonging and national integration which are two essential elements for any nation-building (Mbukanma & Strydom, 2022; Zhu, 2022).

Therefore, addressing the underlying economic inequities that have hindered PWDs' progress in modern society in local government is important. Inclusive citizen participation is a core element of inclusive governance, as it promotes local inclusion, equal opportunities for all and the integration of a gender perspective in local policy to eliminate discrimination (Council of Europe [CoE] 2022; Shava & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2023).

Equal participation in LED can be used to advance the empowerment of PWDs globally by strengthening their economic, social, and political inclusion (Hunting et al., 2017). In this context, Zhu (2022) observes that increasing global calls for inclusivity have drawn substantial scholarly attention across disciplines to inclusive economic development. However, the literature remains limited in its focus on participation outcomes and quality of life for PWDs. This study aims to fill the gap by assessing the effects of economic empowerment programmes on PWDs and propose strategies to implement inclusive LED strategies.

2.6.2 Financial Inclusion and Independence

It is imperative for municipalities to ensure that PWDs attain an enhanced financial standing through equitable access to credit and financial assistance initiated through empowerment programmes (Mbukanma & Strydom 2022). Hence such measures would significantly bolster their capacity to contribute to local economic growth and achieve financial independence if disability issues are correctly incorporated into LED activities (DSD, 2015a; Peprah et al 2023). Furthermore, it is important that PWDs are allowed to participate in budget and programmes planning of municipalities for integration of their economic needs. As a results, equitable participation in empowerment programmes is key driver that can enable access to financial services and products that meet needs of PWDs, including credit, insurance, savings and transactions (Koomson, Villano & Hadley, 2020; Omar & Inaba, 2020; Shava & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2023).

The accessibility of financial accounts and products for PWDs from all socioeconomic levels should form part for focus of LED programmes at local level since economic activities include the financial exchange of goods and services (Koomson et al., 2020; Mbukanma & Strydom, 2022). This might help local markets and ensure that vulnerable groups are catered to in the financial markets, promoting disability inclusion and helping to realise the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Furthermore, the study may assist municipalities in reducing the disparity between PWDs and those without, even though PWDs face numerous challenges in society such as limited access to financial services, which is not well documented (Jiya et al., 2021; Peprah et al., 2023). DWYPD and key economic development stakeholders collaborated on entrepreneurship programme called specialised economic empowerment for PWDs to advocate for funding opportunities for disability targeted entrepreneurship (DWYPD, 2026). The programme provided PWDs with practical guidance on starting and formalising businesses to ensure inclusive economic participation (DWYPD, 2026). Municipalities such as LNLM should consider executing the programme to ensure that PWDs are empowered to engage in local business opportunities.

2.6.3 Sustainable Community-Led Economic Development

The government's intentional inclusion of PWDs in LED programmes is not only morally required but matter of sustainable inclusiveness (Tigere & Moyo, 2022). It must be a strategic approach contained in LED programmes which can lead to more effective and sustainable community-led development. To accomplish this, Mokoena and Molepo (2024) posits that PWDs must be involved in development stages of any economic programmes and policies that have an impact on their areas. Thus, PWDs' distinct viewpoints and abilities can spur innovation and progress when they actively engage in economic activities, which can benefit the community as a whole (Mbukanma & Strydom, 2021; Tinta & Kolanisi, 2023). In order to improve standards of living for everyone, municipalities have a civic duty to ensure that PWDs' rights to participate in economic decisions that impact their lives are realised (DSD, 2015b).

All economic development initiatives require inclusive contribution, which ensures that everyone who is impacted can participate. The inclusive nature of economic development work according to Rauhut and Humer (2020) does not only benefits everyone, but it also makes the power of agency available to everyone, which benefits

future results. Kgobe et al. (2023) advance that promoting PWDs' involvement in empowerment programmes requires intentionality and active LED strategies from the local government concerned to fulfil their developmental mandate. This entails that effective implementation of inclusive LED strategies has the potential to address disability inclusion to improve the standard of living of PWDs. This study highlights the significance of having LED strategies that responds to the inclusive development needs communities in the municipalities.

2.6.4 Advancement of Economic Rights

Municipalities are mandated to advance economic rights of PWDs which serve as the focal points of participation in economic policies, plans and programmes (Ngcobo, 2021; SALGA, 2024; W&RSETA, 2022). The ability to participate fully in economic processes and activities on an equal basis with human dignity and independence is a prerequisite for exercising one's economic rights (DSD, 2015b). Economic rights encompass the ability to obtain resources including land, capital, labour, dignified job, and capital infrastructure facilitated through LED activities at local level (Chumo, Kabaria & Mberu, 2023) which is significant gaps mostly not addressed on literature. However, the DSD (2015b) emphasises that local government must create conducive environment for participation and realising the economic rights of PWDs through LED programmes to meet their basic human needs with dignity and self-respect. Furthermore, PWDs as beneficiaries for economic programmes, must be taken into account when municipality plan for projects, and any obstacles to entering the mainstream economy must be removed (DSD, 2015b).

2.6.5 Capacity-Building for PWDs

In the context of this study, capacity-building is defined as the process of strengthening local government and PWDs with skills, knowledge and abilities to develop their potential for achieving inclusive development (Durokifa, Johnson, Ramlachan, Mdhluli & Magqirana, 2023). In South Africa, the empowerment of PWDs can also be realised through capacity-building (Durokifa, et al., 2023). Persons with different types of disabilities (physical, sensory, intellectual, psychosocial and neurological) as per definition of impairment in the WPRPD (2016) can be capacitated differently through inclusive education (braille and sign language), call-centre training, accessibility to

adaptive technology, specialised skills development and subsidies for assistance devices. However, a twin-track approach will need to be applied to achieve successful capacity-building for PWDs to meet their different needs and enable their maximum participation in all aspects of life (WPRPD, 2016).

Physical impairment usually affects PWDs' mobility and or physical appearance which limits their full engagement in society (Ellis, 2012; WPRPD; 2016; Sadiki & Kibirige, 2022). To achieve the objective of inclusive development, physically impaired PWDs need to be supported with mobility aid like prosthetic legs or wheelchairs considering their different special needs. The LNLM could coordinate this process through donations request from well-established LED funded business as part of giving back to the communities. Sensory impairment affects sight, hearing and taste amongst others. Therefore, empowerment projects information should be made readily available in braille to ensure engagement of visually (sensory) impaired people in municipal activities (Mahlungulu & Khalema, 2023). The LNLM needs to advocate for, support and coordinate the establishment of more rehabilitation centres for different types of disabilities.

Ned and Lorenzo (2016) state that it is essential for PWDs to have full participation in society to gain economic independence as part of enhancing their capacity and knowledge on LED. The abilities and competencies of LED practitioners in the public sector to deliver inclusive empowerment are essential to ensure the full participation of PWDs in the rural context (Thani, 2020). Despite some PWDs receiving government support in the form of social grants, their economic empowerment opportunities are limited, and this deprives them of the chance to showcase their capacity (Ned & Lorenzo, 2016; Ngcobo, 2022; Roux, 2022). This study attempts to highlight importance of inclusiveness of PWDs in economic empowerment programmes to unlock their capabilities through training and skills opportunities derived from LED. Active participation of PWDs facilitated by municipalities would provide access to education, knowledge, skill training, and other revenue-generating options in an effort to improve their participation opportunities and elevate their status and position (Faizal, 2020; Tinta & Kolanisi, 2023; Tinta et al., 2020). Consequently, persons with disabilities would gain self-confidence, become aware of their rights and

responsibilities, and participate more actively in decision-making and economic programmes.

2.7 MUNICIPALITIES' ROLE IN PROMOTING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES THAT SUPPORT PWDS

This section examines the role of municipalities in advancing economic empowerment and development programmes that promote the inclusion, participation, and employability of PWDs.

2.7.1 Community Advocacy on Inclusive LED

Community advocacy is key to mainstreaming of disability into the local government agenda (Juta, 2023). The municipalities ought to play a central role in raising awareness of inclusive community's economic needs and rights (DSD, 2016; Ferreira et al., 2024). This can be done during their IDP community participation sessions (Chomane & Biljohn, 2023). Therefore, this concurs with objective of the current study which seeks to assess the role of the LNLM in promotion or advocacy economic empowerment programme which support PWDs (NDP, 2020). The advocacy enables the marginalised people in the rural communities to have in-depth understanding of what, why, how and which local economic projects or programmes are going to be executed with the sphere of their communities (Chomane, 2023; Juta, 2023). The advocacy thus serves as a forerunner to inclusive competitiveness between communities. It is relatively an inclusive approach in which municipalities involve internal and external stakeholders to engage in local government system meant to improve the local communities and business community sector as a cross-cutting issue (Juta 2023; Shongwe, Lukhele & Zulu, 2024; UN, 2018).

Networking and intersectoral collaboration, according to Hess-April (2006) and Philpott (2004), are crucial for successful disability awareness and inclusion as well as for bolstering referral systems. Juta (2023) posits that LED has an element of improving the quality of life for many in communities, including the poor and marginalised. Even though there is gap in practice and literature for promotion inclusive LED as a tool attract investment and contribute to sustainable economic growth (Shava, 2023). A study conducted by Tinta (2020) on employment empowerment in a sheltered workshop in Bloemfontein, South Africa, for example,

found that participants felt disempowered because they were excluded in decisions that affected their employment programme. A grey area in literature exist as to why often PWDs face exclusion from decision-making processes in community development projects. This highlights that municipalities encounter challenges in implementation and advocacy because there is absence of literature on effects of LED programmes in promoting decision-making PWDs within economic space. This study highlights the need to re-evaluate municipal policies and LED programmes to better address the specific economic needs of persons with disabilities, recognising that awareness, sensitisation and education within municipalities are essential for inclusive and effective development.

2.7.2 Disability Inclusion Development

Fleming, McGilloway and Thomas (2021) argue that effective inclusion in development requires local governments to build the capacity of PWDs through structured, policy-coordinated empowerment programmes. According to Lang, Schneider and Kett (2019), the inclusion and involvement of marginalised groups in the policy-making process are issues that are now being discussed in international development discourse (Furaida et al., 2023). This means municipalities should prioritise training programmes for officials involved in LED initiatives, to understand importance of integrating disability in municipal development agenda (Department of Cooperative Governance & Traditional Affairs [COGTA], 2009; Mamokhere, 2023). Municipalities should establish disability units and local forums to ensure representation in LED processes and coordinate capacity-building support, including coaching and mentoring, market intelligence, and legal assistance (Sarfoh, 2020). In light of this, empowerment through LED aligned opportunity centres within the municipality (SMMEs incubation programme) is a significant means of providing non-financial business help to potential entrepreneurs (Fleming et al., 2021; Sarfoh, 2020).

Municipalities must coordinate for enable environment of PWDs to learn life and social development skills to facilitate their full and equal participation in education and LED process. In other countries educating PWDs about direct programmes and policies on municipal economic activities empower vulnerable groups at large with the skills to move out of poverty (CoGTA, 2018). There is grey area in literature to provide more evidence required to drive the success of disability-inclusive development (Davey,

Banks & Shakespeare, 2020). This study will provides data on the effects and importance of inclusive economic empowerment programmes on PWDs to achieve UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This is because development maybe sustainable when it is equitable, inclusive, and accessible for all.

2.7.3 Promoting Inclusive Economic Opportunities for PWDs

Local government is charged with accountability to promote more inclusive societies and employment opportunities for PWDs in both developed and developing countries. Municipalities facilitate this process by providing better access to basic education, vocational training pertinent to labour market demands, and jobs that fit their skills, interests, and abilities (Ghosh, Ghosh & Bahl, 2012; World Health Organisation & World Bank, 2020). Municipalities ought to promote employment among business partners and other companies and collaborating with national employer and business networks on disability, as well as with organisations working to advance the rights of PWDs (Furaida, Karsidi, Kartono & Anantanyu, 2023). Economic inclusion can also be facilitated by collaborations with universities and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) providers, especially if these organisations submit applications for jobs or workplace learning opportunities with individuals with disabilities (DWYPD, 2021; Tinta & Kolanisi, 2023). The relationship between municipalities and the education sector is key for inclusivity in employment.

The researcher has identified a gap in the facilitation role by the municipalities in terms of creating sustainable partnerships with local institutions to assist them with mainstreaming employment of PWDs at municipal structures. This study contributes to literature significance of partnership with local intuitions to mainstream employment of PWDs in the municipality. In the context of this study, The LNLM struggles to employ PWDs despite its proximity to Waterberg TVET College, which could serve as a source of qualified graduates with disabilities to strengthen municipal capacity (LNLM, 2024).

The study by Furaida, Karsidi, Kartono and Anantanyu (2023) on disability inclusion in 2023 has further identified that no formal municipal evaluation tool or framework is in place to ensure transparency and accountability for disability inclusion. The ability of PWDs to earn an income for themselves, rather than depending on others for a living is a cornerstone for their economic empowerment (Reshi & Sudha, 2022). The

importance of programmes that support provision of jobs for PWDs by increasing public knowledge about their potential cannot be overstated. To support this, SALGA (2020) emphasises the need for specific LED strategies for increasing employment of PWDs to be developed. However, municipality promote inclusivity through more comprehensive use of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and Community Work Programme (CWP), whereby these labour absorbing initiatives support local economies in various ways (CoGTA, 2018).

2.8 THE BARRIERS TO ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

The economic independence for PWDs is hindered by barriers which affect their economic empowerment such as environmental barriers, institutional barriers and attitudinal barriers (WHO, 2022). These barriers are discussed in detail below.

2.8.1 Environmental Barriers

PWDs encounter various barriers to access municipal resources and participating in society which others take for granted (Panda & Kaur, 2024). The barriers to full social and economic inclusion of PWDs include inaccessible physical environments and transportation, the unavailability of assistive devices and technologies (Jagoe et al., 2023; World Bank, 2022). It remains challenging for PWDs and their families to gain economic independence and participate in community life due to inaccessible public transportation (DWYPD, 2023).

Thus, PWDs are unable to find employment opportunities, complete an education and access local healthcare services. Tinta and Kolanisi (2023) found that barriers to the economic participation of PWDs include limited communication with municipal officials due to the lack of braille materials and sign language interpretation at the municipal level. The researcher has found that some PWDs may face language barriers in communicating as some can only use sign language which implies that such issues are not integrated into municipal programmes designated for PWDs.

2.8.2 Institutional Barriers

The institutional barriers for PWDs occur when the institutions fail to provide a conducive work environment to meet their needs or segregate against them in various ways (Barnes, 1991; Tinta et al., 2020; W&RSETA, 2022). The institutions of particular

relevance to economic empowerment are not limited to municipalities only at local level but educational and vocational training establishments and financial institutions. PWDs are more likely to live in poverty than those without disabilities due to societal barriers, particularly limited access to employment, which restricts their ability to reach their full potential (Abdulrahman, 2023). Charles, Gie and Musakuro (2023) note that municipal efforts to employ persons with disabilities in the post-apartheid period have had limited success, leading to poor transformation outcomes due to the failure to integrate PWDs into mainstream government employment. The researcher has observed that most municipalities in South Africa lack the necessary strategies to effectively integrate PWDs within the workplace for benefits of food security and social development.

There is growing evidence of poor standards of living of PWDs and worsen by limited employment opportunities in rural areas. Unemployment among persons with disabilities is largely driven by limited access to education and skills, which research identifies as a major barrier to their economic participation (Parey, Enightoola & Kutscher, 2023; Tinta & Kolanisi, 2023). Thus, disability is a major development matter specifically in municipalities already encountering constraints to provide basic services for their residents.

2.8.3 Attitudinal Barriers

Attitudinal barriers are created by negative perceptions of disability are likely to hamper any efforts on the part of PWDs to participate in mainstream of economy to uplift themselves out of poverty (Jagoe et al., 2023). According to Panda and Kaur (2024), in some communities PWDs may be stigmatised or marginalised which make it difficult for institutions to provide accessible resource for empowerment. This perception about abilities of PWDs is the main barrier to the empowerment of PWDs to advance their careers through promotion (W&RSETA, 2022). In contrast, discrimination and negative stigma toward disability extend beyond social settings and continue to undermine empowerment initiatives and service delivery (Matyana & Thusi, 2023). In the context of South Africa, it is worth noting that the Constitution forbids all forms of discrimination against all people including PWDs.

Oskouie et al. (2017) revealed a major need for more theoretical study to expand context-specific knowledge on disability stigma and discrimination. This study identified a greater need to investigate participation of PWDs in economic empowerment and verify if discrimination is not one of barrier for their exclusion. This study will contribute to existing literature supported by scientific data to confirm exclusion of PWDs as cause of discrimination. The researcher found that persons with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty and experience food insecurity than those without disabilities, due to limited economic participation and reliance on social grants. From a social model of disability perspective, these challenges arise from how society is organised, increasing vulnerability to poverty.

This study highlights an urgent need to empower PWDs and municipalities to formulate explicit strategies for removing barriers, creating conducive environments for empowerment of PWDs. The scarcity of literature and research on how socioeconomic status impacts economic opportunities for PWDs is matter of concern for this study. Furthermore, there also gaps in the literature on how institutional and environmental barriers have negatively contributed inactive participation of PWDs in economic empowerment programmes. This study contributes to advocating for inclusive economic programmes and policy change at municipal level by addressing environmental barriers that limit the participation of persons with disabilities in local development. It highlights the importance of effective LED implementation for achieving sustainable development and financial independence for PWDs. The study also addresses gaps in research on informal economy programmes, training, and workplace accommodations, showing how empowerment initiatives can inform better practice, reduce stigma, and support inclusive decision-making. In general, it provides empirical evidence on the effects of LED programmes in promoting inclusivity across all stages of development.

2.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter examined the conceptual and theoretical foundations that guided the study, with particular emphasis on the Inclusive Development Model and the EETC as frameworks for understanding inclusive local economic empowerment. The evolution of local economic empowerment was traced to show how approaches developed over time, while international perspectives from Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa

including specific experiences from Tanzania, Ghana, and India provided comparative insights. The chapter further explored the inclusive participation of PWDs in local economic empowerment programmes, focusing on equalisation of economic participation, financial inclusion, sustainable community-led development, advancement of economic rights and capacity-building. The role of municipalities in promoting economic empowerment and development programmes that support PWDs was also discussed, highlighting community advocacy, disability inclusion development, and employability promotion. Finally, the chapter identified key environmental and attitudinal barriers that continued to limit the economic empowerment of PWDs. The next chapter focuses on the South African perspective on local economic empowerment.

CHAPTER 3: THE SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE ON LOCAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT ON PWDS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter examines local economic empowerment (LED) in South African municipalities within the context of disability. This chapter reviews municipal strategies and approaches to economic empowerment of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in South Africa. The municipal implementation challenges and factors that inhibit PWDs from participating in local economic empowerment programmes in South African form part of the discussion for this chapter. The chapter also interrogates the impact of economic empowerment programmes on quality of life for PWDs in municipalities. The disability prevalence in South Africa is examined inclusive of socioeconomic status of PWDs in the context of the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality (LNLM).

3.2 LOCAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF SOUTH AFRICAN MUNICIPALITIES

Leaving no one behind in local government has LED programme worked to achieve economic inclusivity for PWDs. Niewohner, Pierson and Meyers (2019) contend that despite the existence of inclusive policies, PWDs are disproportionately excluded from many economic development activities. The extent of special disparities and inequalities across South Africa as a whole, is the reason why LED become significantly introduced as feature of development planning (Kgobe et al., 2023; Makamo, 2020; Ntetha, 2021; Rogerson, 2010). This necessitated the municipalities in South Africa to adopt pro-growth and pro-poor approach to development of local government communities in respond to inequalities and developmental issues (Chomane & Biljohn, 2023; Kahika & Karyeija, 2017). Hence, LED is a territorial approach to development in South Africa, an inclusive and innovative process to empower marginalised communities (COGTA, 2018; Masuku, Jili & Selepe, 2016; Ntetha, 2021). Therefore, economic and social development responsibilities granted to the local government by Sections 152 and 153 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa form part of disability integration in the development activities of municipalities (Chomane & Biljohn, 2023; Koma 2012; Mashamaite & Lethoko, 2018; Mlambo & Maserumule, 2023). This highlights local economic empowerment as a

priority area, making it compulsory for all municipalities to implement effective LED initiatives to empower marginalised communities, including PWDs, in pursuit of sustainable development (Mumba & van der Waldt, 2023; SALGA, 2022).

Hence, scholars like Mokoena and Molepo (2024) and Tinta (2023) postulate that municipal IDPs should incorporate economic empowerment programmes for PWDs tailored to their specific needs to ensure inclusive participation and enhance their living standards (MSA, 2000; SALGA, 2024). Soga and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2021) and Reddy (2016) argue that LED initiatives in local municipalities are aimed at addressing inequality and the under-participation of marginalised communities. In contrast, Juta (2023) notes that empirical evidence on inclusive LED implementation in municipalities remains limited. This can be attributed to lack of understanding of LED (Rogerson, 2019; SACN, 2019).

The overarching objective of this research is to investigate effects of local economic empowerment programmes on PWDs. This because municipalities have role play through implementation of inclusive LED to improve standards of living for PWDs and promote reasonable accommodation (Winchester, 2024). Although most municipalities in South Africa have continue to implement LED as programme or policy, but there is limited evidence to track its effects on PWDs' quality of life (Niewohner, Pierson & Meyers (2019). This concurs with objectives of this study which seeks to broaden knowledge on significance, involvement, effects and effectiveness of LED programmes on the PWDs. The literature review highlights key areas which need attention, including the confinement of disability to social welfare; the failure to internalise LED within disability agendas; the poor integration of disability into municipal development planning; and the absence of mechanisms, frameworks, and monitoring tools to guide LED-based empowerment programmes for PWDs. Other gaps in the literature are noted in other subsections.

In this study, the effects of LED programmes on PWDs are investigated and the issue is put into perspective to improve the existing body of knowledge on economic inclusivity (Michailova, 2024). The study contributes to increased knowledge on the significance of participation of PWDs in municipal economic activities and policies for purposing of achieving economic rights for all.

This will ensure that empowerment programmes for PWDs do not focus only on social welfare, but also promote economic empowerment, allowing PWDs to manage their own lives and participate actively in community development (Pillay, Saruchera & Chivandire, 2023). The study intends to address and highlight the barriers that hinder the translation of policies and programmes aimed at empowering PWDs, and to trigger the review of programmes or policies. Thus, this will reduce marginalisation of PWDs in mainstream of economy and promote effective integration of disability development needs in LED programmes.

Municipalities in South Africa are obligated to meet their economic empowerment utilising LED as a tool to achieve their constitutional mandate of promoting economic development to marginalised society (Mlambo & Maserumule, 2023; Constitution of South Africa, 1996). To achieve this, Section 153(a) of the Constitution, as the supreme law of the country, requires municipalities to organise their administration, finances and planning processes in a way that prioritises essential services and promotes inclusive social and economic development for PWDs (Khambule, 2018; Makamu, 2024; Matyana & Thusi, 2023; National Treasury, 2022). Thuss, promotion of economic participation is a component of social and economic development. Based on the above, Ned and Lorenzo (2016) state that municipalities have duty to implement policies and develop disability strategies that address PWDs' needs to maximise their participation in developments.

While allowing maximum participation, municipalities must take the lead in providing accessible resources to facilitate economic empowerment opportunities for PWDs to enhance the local economy and promote food security (Panda & Kau, 2024; SALGA, 2020). Despite these huge responsibilities, most South Africa municipalities do not prioritise inclusive LED initiatives for PWDs as evidenced by limited success of LED projects overshadowed by welfare programmes (Ntetha, 2021; SALGA, 2020). Hence, one of study objectives is to explore how the LNLM effectively promotes inclusive economic empowerment programmes that support PWDs as opposed to social welfare only. The literature found fragmented capacity to mainstream disability in municipal economic activities derived from LED. This current study seeks to broaden knowledge on mainstreaming of disability in municipal economic development agenda

through highlighting credibility and significance attached to LED by many local authorities in achieving inclusive sustainable empowerment programmes.

3.3 MUNICIPAL STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES TO ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF PWDS IN SOUTH AFRICA

South African municipalities as the most accessible level of government, it is well-positioned to help achieve government aims in service delivery and economic empowerment (Matloga et al., 2024; Mashamaite & Lethoko, 2018). In essence, the approaches or strategies are a commitment to building a more equitable and prosperous conducive local government, where the economic empowerment of PWDs is not just an aspiration but a reality (DSD, 1997; Ned & Lorenzo, 2016; WPLG, 1998c). Through this strategic approach, government aims to catalyse meaningful change, driving forward a vision of an inclusive economy that harnesses the potential of all its citizens (DWYPD, 2024; National Planning Commission [NPC], 2020). The following section discusses municipal approaches and strategies to local economic empowerment which intend to promote inclusivity.

3.3.1 Comprehensive Economic Empowerment Services

A comprehensive economic development services means the inclusion of marginalised community members and groups such as PWDs in social and economic processes to increase their standard of living (Crelis & Gupta, 2021; Van Gent, 2021:9). Dineshan and Geetha (2023) assert that this strategy aims to achieve sustainable economic empowerment for everyone with integration PWDs needs and involvement. This strategy requires municipalities to ensure that all members of society contribute to achieving sustainable development without marginalisation whereby full participation is imperative (UN, 2024). Furthermore, local government as closest to people has the responsibility to capacitate communities to consider needs of PWDs in the societal activities through implementation of community-based empowerment programme (Bachfischer et al., 2023).

Comprehensive economic development is built on the idea of creating disability self-reliance through development of human resources, community empowerment and skill development. This strategy focuses on merging employment training, human services and enterprise development so as to raise access to and creation of jobs, careers and

self-sufficiency for disadvantaged communities (Chomane & Biljohn, 2023). Through a study of the literature, the researcher has realised that this strategy in municipalities has not provided vulnerable groups to make use of existing job opportunities and develop new career prospects through opening of enterprises and small businesses derived from municipal programmes. Hence, one of study objectives is to explore the extent to which PWDs are actively involved in developing and implementing economic programmes. The study thus contributes to promoting the municipal strategies that place emphasis on self-development and empowerment such as starting one's own business. This would allow inclusive economic participation to be realised goal.

3.3.2 Mainstreaming Disability in Local Government

Municipal disability mainstreaming is an approach which is about promoting the inclusion of, and addressing the barriers that exclude, PWDs from full and equal participation in all aspects of socioeconomic life (SALGA, 2020; Sherry et al., 2024). Hence mainstreaming it in local government is about inclusion, not just involvement or integration (NPC, 2020; Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2011). The goal of mainstreaming disability in municipal LED policies and programmes is to ensure that PWDs participate completely in their implementation and benefit equally from them (Kok, 2017; PEPUDA, 2000). This is done to ensure that PWDs enjoy and exercise their socioeconomic and human rights in the same way as other members of society (Basson, 2023; DCIT, 2024; Kidder, 2021; Ngcobo, 2021). The above statement supports the objective of this study which seeks to explore inclusion of PWDs in design and implementation of economic programmes, strategies and policies. It therefore frames inclusion as a participatory imperative, with Saran et al. (2019) arguing that the cycle of poverty and discrimination can only be broken when persons with disabilities are fully integrated into the local economy through LED. Literature needs to be extensively supplemented on guidance and strategic practical support on the application of framework on disability mainstreaming. Hence, this current study will broaden knowledge on effective coordination, monitoring or enforcement of disability mainstreaming as an integral part of municipal IDPs and implementation of the LED framework.

3.3.3 Inclusive Rural Economy

An inclusive rural economy is one approach which emphasis the need for a quality access to basic services, health care, education and food security to attain a prosperous rural economy (Matyana & Thusi, 2023; Ngomane, 2012). Rural municipalities require tailored, inclusive LED strategies that reflect the economic prospects of persons with disabilities (Atkinson, 2012; Daniels, 1989). Such approaches focus on agricultural and rural economic opportunities through LED (Ellis & Biggs, 2001) and align with the NDP 2030 by enabling PWDs to contribute to agricultural value chains. This is particularly important given that many rural PWDs in South Africa remain marginalised, with limited participation in economic development beyond informal or agricultural work (Etim & Daramola, 2020; Sango et al., 2022; Tigere & Moyo, 2022).

The inclusive rural economy is relevant to this study, which examines the participation of persons with disabilities in economic empowerment programmes and the benefits they receive. Although the NDP 2030 aims for PWDs to benefit from an integrated and inclusive rural economy, this has not been effectively implemented in LED programmes. As a result, many municipalities have failed to align with these targets, leaving PWDs economically vulnerable and largely excluded from rural economic development (Ramolobe et al., 2023; Sango, 2022). Inclusive rural economy (agriculture) as a component of LED needs to be in different municipalities. The current study highlights the importance of inclusive economic empowerment initiatives which are aligned to LED projects to achieve inclusive rural economy benefits for PWDs.

3.3.4 Access to Services and Resources

The access to services and resources is a basic human right that PWDs are entitled to get (Basson, 2023; Matyana & Thusi, 2023). For instance, constitutional and human rights recognise that all citizens have the same rights and should not be discriminated because of disability, economic, ethnic or social status (Thusi, Mayisela & Matyana, 2023). To add to the previous assertion, PWDs are entitled to access basic services provided by municipalities as well as the user friendly and enjoyment of public facilities (Thusi et al., 2023; The Presidency, 2000). This is part of their constitutional obligation to respect the rights of PWDs through provision of basic services to promote conducive

environment for inclusive economic development (RSA, 1996). The strategy emphasises that persons with disabilities can be economically empowered through access to loans and vocational skills, supported by municipalities and key stakeholders, to achieve sustainable livelihoods and food security (Mandlik & Kadirov, 2020). The current study through reviewed literature has realised that municipalities have not facilitated above issues with relevant institutions and mainstreaming disability into their LED initiatives is major constraints (SALGA, 2024). Empowering PWDs reduces the number of families on the indigent register and promotes the independence and financial freedom of the community (Chomane & Biljohn, 2023; Dineshan & Geetha, 2023). In turn as a consequence, the PWDs who benefit would be able to pay their taxes and rates, giving the municipality more options to draw in private investment and improve its economic sustainability.

3.3.5 Promoting the Employability of Persons with Disabilities

The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (Department of Public Service and Administration, 1997) proposed 7% representation of PWDs in the workforce. This entails that municipalities should ensure that staff position including middle and senior management are allocated to qualified PWDs to empower them (SALGA, 2024). Municipalities ought to promote or facilitate employment within their local communities with stakeholders, SMMEs, micro and macro business sectors inclusive of NGOs that advocate for the rights of PWDs (Furaida, Karsidi, Kartono & Anantanyu, 2023). Partnerships with universities and providers of TVET also promote economic inclusion, particularly if educational institutions put forward candidates with disabilities for job vacancies or workplace learning opportunities (DWYPD, 2021; Tinta & Kolanisi, 2023). In the literature review, researcher has identified gaps in the coordination role of the municipalities in terms of creating partnerships with local institutions to assist them with mainstreaming employment of PWDs at municipal structures. This current study contributes to existing literature on the significance of partnerships with local institutions to incorporate employment of PWDs in the municipality to achieve equity. For example, within the study area, the LNLM struggles to employ PWDs in its municipal structures, despite being located near Waterberg Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College, which could serve as a source of qualified graduates with disabilities (LNLM, 2024).

SALGA (2012) has acknowledged that no formal municipal evaluation tool or framework is in place to ensure transparency and accountability for disability inclusion. This has the potential to contribute to marginalisation of PWDs on employment opportunities and create an impression that integration of disability in municipal economic development agenda is unfunded mandate. It worth mentioning that the ability of PWDs to earn an income for themselves, rather than depending on others for a living is a cornerstone for their economic empowerment (Reshi & Sudha, 2022). This is motivated by the current study objective which seeks to ascertain the challenges and barriers inhibiting PWDs from participating in economic empowerment programmes. In turn this help this current study to propose scientific recommendation that contribute effective implementation of inclusive employment programmes or policies. Therefore, the importance of municipal coordinated programmes such as learnerships that support exposure of jobs for PWDs by increasing their knowledge cannot be overstated.

3.3.6 Disability-Inclusive Participatory Approach on Municipal Structures

Participation means being actively engaged in community life and achieving a sense of belonging to the community (Haim-Litevsky, Komemi & Lipskaya-Velikovsky, 2023). According to Local Government Municipal Systems Act No. 32 of 2000b, municipalities are mandated to apply mechanisms, processes and procedures for participation of PWDs and take into account their special needs. However, the right to participate in society is not enjoyed by all. Inclusive participation is enriched by effective government that offers rural municipalities a chance to include PWDs within the municipal agenda in accordance with the disability motto “nothing about us without us” (Bahner, 2022). This relates to the core idea of participation, which respects the capacity of PWDs to make their own judgements and choices. To support this, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2024) reported that representation and involvement of PWDs in all interactions at each structure of municipalities are crucial for compliance.

Local government has the responsibility to ensure participation of PWDs in municipal forums, committees and IDP sessions to facilitate greater inclusion and for the realisation of a society based on equal rights (Chomane & Biljohn, 2023). The theme emerged from this is “disability-inclusive participation” which municipalities struggle to

implement at local level. The current study revealed gap in reviewed literature that, most municipalities have failed to integrate the disability participatory approach in municipal structures and forum into practice at local level. In support of above statement, Mokoena (2019) points out that one challenge experienced by many South African municipalities is poor leadership and is reflected by failure to integrate community participation mechanisms and procedures in LED. For effective participation, disability-friendly venues where community meetings are conducted (Doshi et al., 2014; Milner & Kelly, 2009), as well as the dissemination of information in an appropriate way especially in braille and sign language, will help to build inclusive society without barriers (Hayes & Bulat, 2017).

3.3.7 Inclusive Local Society Empowermen

Inclusive local society empowerment is a crucial component to ensure inclusiveness and advocate PWDs local improvement (Agusiegbe, 2023). Municipalities in South Africa have often grappled with gender-based disparities that hinder the full potential of PWDs and their economic contribution at local level (Chitiga et al., 2022; DWYPD, 2023). Empowering PWDs, promoting gender equality and ensuring social inclusion are integral to building effective social systems. Local society empowerment initiatives at municipal level actively work towards breaking down societal barriers that limit the participation of certain groups in mainstream of the local food system (Tinta & Kolanisi, 2023). This includes ensuring equal access to local education and health facilities and societal food security programmes. To further support this statement in addressing disability and social inequalities at the municipal level, social systems become more equitable, just and reflective of the diverse makeup of South African communities (Watermeyer, McKenzie & Kelly, 2022). Locality society empowerment focuses more on the physical and constructed environment, infrastructure, and local organisation (Bagnall, Southby, Jones, Pennington, South & Corcoran, 2023).

This is also envisaged in the Constitution that local government must provide conducive environment and reasonable accommodation for PWDs (MSA, 2000; RSA, 1996, SALGA, 2012). The researcher has observed that although infrastructure for PWDs is essential for their empowerment, most municipalities such as the LNLM has not achieved allocation of proper infrastructure to communities at large. Therefore, an unconducive environment prohibits marginalised communities from participating in the

mainstream of economy. This study contributes to knowledge on how inaccessible municipal buildings and infrastructure impact the ability of PWDs to participate in local government matters.

3.4 MUNICIPAL IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES FOR LOCAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES FOR PWDS IN SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

3.4.1 Fragmented Knowledge on Disability

Disability fragmentation is considered as major impediment to the implementation of effective empowerment programmes for PWDs in South Africa. In most cases this has led to disability problems addressed as a matter of compliance and not for inclusivity (Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2009; SALGA, 2012). It should be noted that even historically, disability issues have been addressed in a piecemeal, fragmented way with few implemented empowerment programmes at disposal (Charles et al., 2023; Ngcobo, 2021). This has been one of the key factors contributing to the marginalisation of PWDs and the dire poverty of the circumstances in which the majority find themselves (Agmon, Sa'ar & Araten-Bergman, 2016; Gathiram INDS, 1997). The majority of municipalities' inability to incorporate disability concerns into their established development agendas, such as IDP and LED, is evidence of this (SALGA, 2012; Stats SA, 2022). This has attributed to negative consequences on the implementation of LED programmes designed to support PWDs. The knowledge gap seems to exist in understanding and integration of disability matters into development agenda of the municipality to ensure implementation of LED programmes designated for PWDs. This study aims to contribute to the existing literature by highlighting and sensitising the significant of inclusive LED programmes to enhance participation of PWDs in development at local level.

3.4.2 Political Instability

Municipalities are duty-bound to support council-led economic development initiatives by using LED approach as a tool to develop marginalised communities (Khaisi, 2022; Mlambo et al., 2019; Ntetha, 2021). This has not been the case, though, as municipalities are struggling with implementing inclusive LED programmes into place to empower PWDs. To support this, scholars such as Tsagae (2023) and Mngomezulu (2020), reveal that political instability is a major obstacle to effective LED

implementation in local government municipalities in South Africa. Political instability actually prevents the majority of municipalities from having political commitment and support for LED implementation programmes that meet the demands of PWDs (African National Congress, 2010; Du Toit et al., 2020; Mashinini, 2017; Thakur & Nel, 2024). This shows grey area in terms of understanding of coordinated efforts and commitment to successful LED implementation by council members in the municipalities. Meanwhile Mashiteng (2017) and Mashinini (2017) note that political factors impede the institutionalisation of LED activities, particularly by displacing LED's arrangements. Regarding the aforementioned, Mphahlele (2023) notes that political disputes within a municipal council can occasionally result in deadlocks on crucial issues like the adoption of a municipal budget that can support LED projects.

This aligns with Mashiteng's (2017) finding that when LED empowerment projects become trapped in quick-win and anchor initiatives, municipalities often yield to political pressure to appease community dissatisfaction (Koma, 2012). Consequently, programmes such as community works projects frequently experience nepotism and political patronage, with recruitment prioritising loyalty over merit, to the exclusion of PWDs and other marginalised groups (Mphahlele, 2023; Mlambo, Zubane & Thusi, 2022; Shava & Shingi, 2018; Reddy, 2016). Consequently, the politicisation of CWP programmes continue to have negative impact on PWDs empowerment, because of political dysfunctional municipalities (Magagula, Mukonza, Manyaka & Moeti, 2022). This motivated Mlambo and Maserumule (2023) to suggest that training on political education to advance political leadership has the potential to foster local government developmental accountability in South Africa. This is because there is a scarcity of knowledge on the impact of political instability on development programmes. Hence, this is a research gap that needs to be filled. As a result, this study seeks to broaden the research on the necessity of political support for municipal LED initiatives to achieve the developmental mandate envisaged in Sections 152 and 153 of the Constitution. Thus, the successful implementation of LED requires understanding of political, economic, social and environmental factors since they are interconnected.

3.4.3 Lack of Municipal Financial Viability

Insufficient monetary resources (i.e. budget) exist and much debate is centred on assistance in the form of conditional grants to municipalities to assist them in achieving

their disability mandate. The continuous sources of funding currently available are not enhancing the implementation of strategic LED programmes for PWDs (COGTA, 2020; Makhaye & Subban, 2024) In the current literature, a knowledge gap exists on better coordination and leveraging private sector and state-owned enterprise resources to support empowerment activities. Hence, the reality is that lack of funding and financial mismanagement continues to hinder successful implementation of LED at municipal level (Kgobe et al., 2023; Mishi, Mbaleki & Mushonga, 2022). This is because most municipalities in South Africa are not immune from non-compliance with financial reporting requirements (MFMA) and poor revenue collection (Auditor General SA, 2022; Nzama, Moloi & Marx, 2023; SALGA, 2022/2023). This is due to weak financial management and oversight of municipal infrastructure grants, poor law enforcement, and the absence of effective monitoring and evaluation systems (National Treasury, 2020a; Nzama et al., 2023; Yekani et al., 2024).

Thus, the National Treasury (2020b) observes that lack of municipal officials' capabilities and skills in financial reporting are the main contributors to the non-compliance and unsustainability of funds for empowerment initiatives. Taking the above into account, most empowerment programmes for PWDs are not implementable due to inadequate funding, failure to spend the MIG funds and double dipping (DPME, 2023; Makamu, 2024). A long overdue gap of mismanagement of funds needs to be closed. Improved revenue collection and financial management may make it possible to finance LED initiatives and enable PWDs to serve as contributing ambassadors for local development (SALGA, 2024). Kgobe et al. (2023) assert that municipalities need strong internal financial control led by dedicated staff who are able to source funds or investment for LED programmes to achieve this. This study contributes to financial management and monitoring for the benefits of inclusive empowerment of the community.

3.4.4 Institutional Arrangement Challenge

The institutional arrangement in this context refers to the networks and organisational structures that support the implementation of economic empowerment programmes interchangeably (Matlala & Motsepe, 2015; 2020; Meyer, 2013). The institutional challenge is results of internal obstacle which often result in incorrect interpretation of LED which affected implementation process (Isaac, 2006; Makamu, 2024; Makhaye

& Subban, 2024). Municipalities also face other institutional issues such as low participation and poor LED strategy execution, misunderstandings and misalignments, weak policy enforcement, and ambiguous stakeholder responsibilities in LED initiatives (Makhaye & Subban, 2024; Marks-Bielska, Wojarska, Lizińska & Babuchowska, 2020). Despite this, Makamu (2024) notes that the institutional arrangement challenge is caused by weak institutional framework and poor governance within municipalities in South Africa.

In addition, due to institutional displacement, most municipalities' disability units or officers of special programme units are not represented on internal LED forums and some municipalities still do not have a disability unit in place (SALGA, 2012). It is important that municipal structures and LED forums are inclusive of PWDs for purposes of integrating disability issues in implementation of LED initiatives. However, this has not been the case since municipalities lack sufficient capacity, structure and process to coordinate efforts of different stakeholders' roles on the implementation empowerment programmes (Makamu, 2024; Mashinini, 2017; Matlala & Motsepe, 2020; Meyer, 2013). The reviewed literature reveals a gap in understanding the role of functional and effective institutional structures in implementing LED programmes for PWDs. This study addresses this gap by highlighting the importance of well-defined municipal institutional arrangements and clear stakeholder roles in the successful delivery of economic empowerment initiatives.

3.4.5 Incapacity and Competency Limitation

Kgobe, Mabeba and Mamokhere (2023) identified a noteworthy obstacle to local government's capacity to fulfil its constitutional duties of executing LED programmes as the absence of suitable skills on the side of municipal executives and officials (SALGA, 2014). Hence competencies such as project management, programme design, development planning and coordination are key for LED practitioners. A persistent skills gap among qualified LED officials and local government leadership continues to undermine LED activities, including the provision of reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities (Kgobe et al., 2023; Makhaye & Subban, 2024; SALGA, 2020). Therefore, Kgobe et al. (2023) noted with great concern that assigning LED responsibilities to incapacitated personnel makes it challenging to implement inclusive LED programmes. A study by Juta (2023) and Shilangu (2019),

observed that in South Africa, municipalities have often struggled to adequately embrace inclusive LED programmes due to lack of leadership capacity.

In additions, the major shortcomings of LED implementation are lack of capacity in as far as human and capital resources within municipalities (Malele, 2018). Incapacity in local governments dates back to 2010, when the South African government found that most municipalities had staff members that were unable to fulfil the mandate for service delivery (IDASA, 2010, cited in Mashiteng 2017:5). Thus, that Mlambo and Maserumule (2023) postulate that robust local government capacity is a distinguishing feature of a developmental state and is achieved through creating an inexpensive, efficient and effective development programmes. Koma (2010) emphasises that capacitated local government has ability to meet empowerment needs of marginalised society to economically succeed. In light of the above, it is regrettable that SALGA (2020) reports that there are small municipalities that cannot afford to attract better and capable skills. This study attempts to close the gap by proposing necessary comprehensive capacity-building and retention of staff to enhance competence or capacity for effective empowerment initiatives.

3.5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PARTICIPATION OF PWDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA OF THE MUNICIPALITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

South African municipalities have to prioritise disability issues, as a means of encouraging PWDs to participate in the development agenda programmes of municipalities (Parliamentary of Republic of South Africa, 2011; SALGA, 2012; 2024). Despite these responsibilities, Mokoena and Molepo (2024) and SALGA (2024) note that the limited participation of PWDs in community forums and structures restricts their meaningful engagement in economic empowerment programmes. This entails that municipalities are required to advocate for the mainstreaming of disability into the local government agenda within the parameters of local economic empowerment initiatives (SALGA, 2024). Furthermore, Matloga, Mahole and Nekhavhambe (2024) identified lack of public participation and social distance between officials and marginalised communities as stumbling block to empower PWDs. This led SALGA (2020) to introduce a programme aimed at strengthening governance and capacity in local government to address these challenges and promote participatory social and economic development in municipalities.

Mlambo and Maserumule (2023) further highlight that municipalities have to develop effective mechanisms or plans to encourage inclusive participation in local government developmental needs from communities and community organisations. It possible because scholars such as Maela et al. (2024) argues that local government is close to the people and has authority design empowerment programmes that will promote and prioritise inclusivity. To achieve the objective of successful inclusive local economic empowerment programmes, participation from role players or stakeholders and disability forums is key to realising this goal (Chiloane & Meyer, 2024; Maela et al., 2024; Mlambo et al., 2019; Rodríguez-Pose & Tijmstra, 2005). In both practice and the literature, disability is often not integrated into participatory forums that address development needs. This gap prompted the study to examine the value of creating inclusive opportunities for persons with disabilities within municipal empowerment programmes and representative PWDs structures. The analysis of involvement of PWDs in developing and implementing economic programmes is based on the activities described in the following sections.

3.5.1 Municipal Planning and Decision-making

The inclusion of PWDs as policy and decision-makers in local government will help pave the way in addressing such shortcomings and challenges experienced by PWDs (Saran et al., 2019; Parliament of Republic of South Africa, 2011). Therefore, it is a cross-cutting issue that should be mainstreamed throughout local decision-making to include PWDs in all of these levels of local government planning (Kgobe, 2023; Wiegant, Dewulf & Van Zeben, 2024; Wissenbach 2019). Scholars such as Sherry, Ned and Engelbrecht (2024) note that limited notions of disability inclusivity are reflected in present decision-making. Pillay et al., (2023) maintains that PWDs have equal rights to all other members from the community to participate in the planning, implementation and develop their self-reliance. Thus, that municipalities must develop plans or structure that will allow PWDs to be active participants in planning, implementation and monitoring of IDP (Matloga, 2024; Mokoena & Molepo, 2024; Tinta, 2023). For example, establishment of PWD forums which can form part of IDP and LED forums in the municipality to mainstream disability issues in the planning process.

The municipalities are required to promote participation and representation of PWDs in municipal affairs not limited to planning of special empowerment projects and decision-making. However, it regrettable that SALGA (2020) has identified a lack of participation by PWDs in various municipal community forums, structures and decision-making. Ramolobe et al. (2023) postulate that marginalisation of PWDs municipal decision-making process created apathy to participate in development plans. This is because municipalities are struggling with lack of capacity and resources to provide reasonable accommodation for PWDs (Sherry et al., 2024). Meanwhile, Matloga et al. (2024) emphasise that municipalities in South Africa are unable to implement IDP as a shared responsibility that allows inclusive participation of all communities to guide their administration. Several municipalities do not yet have a disability mainstreaming policy and strategy to align the needs of PWDs into their IDP (Ouwencamp & van der Waldt, 2024; SALGA, 2020). For example, the LNLM as case study in this research does not have a disability strategy (LNLM, 2024). On this basis, IDP and budget processes should be guided by community-based planning that prioritises the participation of persons with disabilities, ensuring they benefit equally and take part in decision-making (Saran et al., 2019).

The study identified a gap in practice and literature due to fact that municipalities lack resources to provide reasonable accommodation for PWDs in planning and decision-making at local level. This grey area is also caused absence of inclusive participatory plans and targets in the municipalities. For this reason, the study contributes to realisation of inclusive participation to assist municipalities in ensuring that all local PWD structures are socially, politically and economically equipped to participate in all planning and decision- making platforms.

3.5.2 LED Empowerment Programmes

Numerous initiatives, like the Community Work Programme (CWP) and the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), were put into place at the local government level to combat inequalities and unemployment (Kobedi, Swanepoel & Venter, 2022). These programmes are implemented locally with the intention of strengthening poor communities by promoting social and economic inclusion of marginalised community (CoGTA, 2015). They create job opportunities (Kobedi et al., 2022). In spite of the South Africa government’s attempts to improve the rights of PWDs, there has been a

gap in the local implementation of these programmes to embrace inclusivity (Ngcobo, 2022:93). Thus, PWDs in rural areas have faced difficulties in becoming involved in EPWP, CWP and LED projects because they are generally not included or targeted for participation (SALGA, 2020). During the early implementation of these programmes, there was confusion that persons getting disability grants would have to forfeit their grants if they chose to work on EPWP or CWP disability projects, but it was later clarified that PWDs have rights to engage this projects (Department of Public Works, 2012). Despite provided clarity, this contributed to the decline and demoralisation of PWDs to effectively participate in empowerment programmes.

It should be noted that inaccessible LED empowerment programmes hinder participation of PWDs and is considered as both formal and informal discrimination (Grech 2015; Tigere & Moyo, 2022). The EPWP, seen from the perspective of PWDs, is the first national opportunity coordinated and implemented in municipalities through LED to highlight the importance of disability on the social and economic agenda. It is thus a leveraging tool that should be used to advocate for the achievement of stated 7% employment equity target of PWDs. However, the EPWP has not met the set disability target (DWYPD, 2015; Mohapi, 2016; Kobedi, et al., 2022). Despite the mushrooming of self-help projects and LED business development initiatives by PWDs, this sector has had virtually no access to financial assistance for sustainability or technical support from municipalities (Chomane & Biljohn, 2023; Nel & Rogerson 2015).

The EPWP or CWP as labour initiatives promote social welfare while neglecting the economic development initiatives to empower PWDs with business skills to contribute to the economic growth. This study identified a gap in the sense that PWDs are only considered eligible for welfare initiatives with limited training on economic empowerment programmes and establishment of SMMEs to capacitate them.

3.5.3 Small, Medium and Micro-Enterprises

Municipalities are required to promote socioeconomic development through integration of inclusive SMMEs programmes into LED agenda to address communities' demands for development (Bango, 2023; Tsoabisi, 2012). Besides that, inequalities on SMME programmes that support PWDs such as tax relaxation and

financing has led to exclusion of PWDs (DSD, 2020; Maziriri & Madinga, 2016; OECD, 2022; Ogujiuba et al., 2021; 2022). This often has potential to derail active involvement of PWDs in LED and SMME coordinated programmes which cause isolation or marginalisation of PWDs. For instance, the LNLM is struggling with finalisation of their disability strategy and representation of PWDs in finance forums of the municipality as indicated on their IDP (LNLM, 2021). The readily available municipal disability strategy can advocate and inform participation of PWDs in supported SMMEs programmes and create path for their representation in municipal finance forums. Ramolobe, Ngcamu and Pillay (2023) highlight the significance of promoting disability inclusion in municipalities to achieve positive social and economic participation. On this basis, local government can achieve meaningful participation by PWDs by prioritising municipal resources, policies and practices that include SMMEs.

Hence, the DSD (2015) proposed the implementation of SMME promotion, training and micro and industrial credit resources which targeted PWDs through local government LED coordinated efforts. The reviewed literature shows a gap in municipal practice on how to integrate or promote inclusive SMMEs through LED as a development strategy for sustainable local economic growth. Guertler and Sick (2021) recognise SMMEs as an essential feature of LED for inclusive job generation. In addition, Sibiya, van der Westhuizen and Sibiya (2023) emphasise that SMMEs foster business skills and knowledge generation which can empower PWDs. To enhance inclusive participation of marginalised municipal communities, this study advocates for disability inclusion in municipal SMMEs development programmes, training and policy implementation.

3.6 THE OBSTACLES INHIBITING PWDS FROM PARTICIPATING IN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES PWDS IN SOUTH AFRICA CONTEXT

The economic independence for PWDs is hindered by challenges which affect their economic empowerment such as limited employment opportunities, inadequate education and training; and accessibility (DWYPD, 2023). These challenges are discussed below.

3.6.1 Limited Employment Opportunities

Despite efforts by municipal civic organisations to promote the recruitment of PWDs, South Africa has a significant unemployment rate for this group (Department of Labour 1998; Monareng, Soeker & Naidoo, 2025; Morwane, Dada & Bornman 2021). Municipalities are failing to create conducive LED empowerment employment opportunities as a means to integrate disabilities into the workforce. PWD employment rates in lower skill levels (skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled) varied from 0.8% to 1% (Commission of Employment Equity, 2019; NPC, 2020). This indicates that PWDs tend to have limited access to education and training which is of concern as it leads to poor labour market outcomes. In turn, this contributes to low rates of employment and PWDs are therefore more likely to be trapped in poverty (NPC, 2020).

The results of a study by Ramolobe et al. (2023) show that PWDs in South Africa continue to face barriers to accessing basic services and job opportunities, particularly at municipal level (Matyana & Thusi, 2023). It on this basis that Charles et al. (2023) note that non-compliance with South African prescripts and programmes targets for promoting employability of PWDs is the root cause. Thus, one of the objectives of this is to assess the effects of LED programmes on PWDs for purpose of improving standards of living and secure employment opportunities. Meanwhile, Keating and Worsteling (2023) contend that many local governments now prioritise LED to increase employment of PWDs as a means of boosting economic participation and improving health outcomes.

A study conducted by Monareng et al. (2025) found that the majority of PWDs are uninformed about local government LED employment programmes. Many of PWDs are unemployed due to discrimination and a lack of advocacy awareness campaigns or appropriate integration measures for PWDs in local government workforce (Charles et al, 2023; CRPD, 2014; Niewohner et al., 2019; NPC, 2020). This study through existing literature has found that there is a lack of mainstreaming employment prospects for PWDs through LED initiatives (Ned & Lorenzo 2016). This has led to disability considered in social welfare context which have financial implications for PWDs in municipalities (Hanass-Hancock & McKenzie, 2017). To lessen financial pressure while enhancing access to wellbeing outcomes that result from increased economic participation, the study will try to promote PWDs' employability through

encouraging implementation jobs empowerment programmes (Keating & Worsteling, 2023). The study supports and proposes measures to mainstream the hiring of PWDs in economic empowerment projects.

3.6.2 Inadequate Education and Training

Runde, Bandura and McLean (2023) postulate that effective education is pivotal in steering PWDs towards participation in economic development matters (Kamara et al., 2017; Shikwambana & Fourie, 2023). It is for this reason, that education and training have potential to improve persons' employability and contribution in the government economy. It is widely recognised that most PWDs, in both rural and urban areas, lack access to adequate education and training needed to participate in the mainstream local economy, constituting a violation of their educational rights (Musenyente, Han & Knigge, 2022; Strohwald, 2021). To support this, research conducted by Chirowamhangu (2024) revealed that approximately 70% of PWDs drop out from schools because of lack of resources to transform inclusive education. Municipalities also encounter shortage of resources to attract key role players that support, facilitate and coordinate special needs schools' development needs (Chirowamhangu, 2024).

To a certain extent, lack of progress in the implementation of inclusive education has contributed to less participation of PWDs in economic empowerment activities (Engelbrecht, 2006; Mosalagae & Bekker, 2021; Mpu & Adu, 2021). Many municipalities in South have failed to contribute to skills and training needs for PWDs in their empowerment programmes and this has barred them from receiving benefits in the development agenda of the municipality. Thus, one key role of local government in LED initiatives is to facilitate empowerment programmes with key stakeholder such as local TVET institution, education and training on business or SMMEs. This has inspired Becker (2009), who stated that the focus of municipal LED policies should be on funding inclusive initiatives that offer education, training, and chances to improve one's abilities. The gap exists in planning practice and literature on municipalities to coordinate or implement LED educational and training opportunities as alternatives for PWDs to develop their capabilities and knowledge (Dlamini & Magidimisha, 2025). This concurs with objective of this study which seeks to determine obstacles which hinder participation of PWDs in economic empowerment. In addition, Chiloane and Meyer (2024) and Mphahlele (2023) believe that LED training programmes can

enhance the entrepreneurial activities and empower individuals with the requisite skills to access economic opportunities. This can lead to elimination of factors such as inadequate education and training which exclude involvement of PWDs in LED activities.

Moyake and Buthelezi (2018) revealed that some PWDs do not have equal access to training opportunities and thus have a lack of skills. This study has identified several gaps in literature on designing, implementation, coordination and facilitation of municipal LED programmes for capacitation of PWDs. The study provides scientific evidence which will inform the implementation of inclusive planning capacity and training programmes for PWDs.

3.6.3 Accessibility Challenge

The accessibility challenge faced by PWDs consists of complex issues including but not limited to infrastructure, transport, financial and designated skills development programmes (Gibberd, 2021; Gibberd & Hankwebe, 2022; Moyake & Buthelezi, 2018). In this context, Sithole (2021) argues that these longstanding challenges facing South African local government since the advent of democracy have contributed to the limited participation of PWDs in economic activities. Warren et al. (2023) postulate that a lack of accessible facilities and public transport prohibit marginalised South Africa communities from benefiting from development projects. In many instances, PWDs are unable to access skills development opportunities at municipalities due to poor infrastructure and unavailability of transport to provide reasonable accommodation for them (Gibberd & Hankwebe, 2022; Moyake & Buthelezi, 2018).

Dlamini and Magidimisha (2025) note that limited access to resources reinforces segregation by isolating persons with disabilities and undermining their dignity and potential. This exclusion reduces opportunities for PWDs to participate in the mainstream economy through municipal programmes, as barriers such as inaccessible buildings, transport and assistive technologies limit their involvement in LED planning and implementation (Gibberd, 2021; Moyake & Buthelezi, 2018; Neven & Ectors, 2023). Despite that, SALGA (2020) notes with great concern that inaccessible municipal infrastructure impacts on the ability of PWDs to participate in LED programmes which infringe their economic rights. This led Aghaabbasi,

Moeinaddini, Shah and Asadi-Shekari (2017) to advocate that inclusive programme design, accessible infrastructure and supportive legislation are cornerstones in attracting PWDs to take role in socioeconomic development.

The majority of PWDs in rural areas in South Africa are subjected to poor facilities, poor road conditions and inaccessible transport (ILO, 2015; McDaniels et al., 2018; O'Reilly, 2003; Ramolobe et al., 2023). Consequently, this affects both physically or virtually impaired PWDs and prevents them from taking part in designated empowerment programmes or training that can enhance their lives. The NPC (2020) encourages municipalities to adopt a coordinated approach to disability inclusion by ensuring access to infrastructure, empowerment programmes, policies, and equal legislation, so that persons with disabilities benefit from infrastructure projects that support economic growth and development. There is a need for research on the importance of transportation, infrastructure and skill development accessibility for PWDs to be drawn in as key players in LED projects. Thus, this study seeks to expand research on understanding of the impact of inclusive accessible resources such as infrastructure as tools to enhance inclusive economic empowerment for marginalised community.

3.7 THE EFFECTS OF ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT INTERVENTIONS ON QUALITY OF LIFE FOR PWDS

The economic empowerment of PWDs requires shared responsibility and collective action from multiple stakeholders; however, this study focuses specifically on the role of local government (DWYPD, 2021; Vitálišová et al., 2021; WPRD, 2016). Local economic empowerment was introduced to build the economic capacity of a specific locality to improve its economic future and quality of life for all inclusive of marginalised society (Nkwinika & Munzhedzi 2016). Tinta and Kolanisi (2023) believe that governments can accomplish this through the creation of opportunities for economic empowerment to self-sufficiency for PWDs. Although there is little data for the effects of economic interventions on PWDs in South African local government due to the fact that most disability development matters are traditionally considered through social welfare interventions (Saran, White & Kuper, 2019). For example, the LNLM is more vocal on social grants recipients for PWDs rather than economic opportunities to work (LNLM, 2024; South African Social Security Agency, 2016). This prompted Saran et

al. (2019) to postulate that there is inadequate reliable disability data on successful economic interventions to assess its effects on quality of life of PWDs. Hence, looking at this gap, this study contributes to assessing the effectiveness of available social, economic and political interventions aimed at enhancing quality of life for PWDs in municipal level.

Despite municipally coordinated economic empowerment interventions such as survivalist entrepreneur programmes and the CWP, the living standards of PWDs have not improved due to persistent poverty (Du Toit et al., 2020; Mongale, 2022). Supporting this, the DSD (2015) reported that these initiatives failed to meet the 2% disability employment target, and despite the increase to a 7% minimum target, implementation at local government level remains limited (Charles et al., 2023; DOL, 2022; Kahn, 2017; Maclean, Geiger & Ned, 2024). Thus, SALGA (2012) reported that PWDs are not sufficiently capacitated and included in LED programmes which can influence their economic and living status. Despite that, the approach to improve the economic status PWDs has been inconsistent and irrelevant (Saran et al., 2019).

Given that PWDs continue to face unemployment, insufficient business skills and frequent exclusion from prospects for livelihood, the existing local economic measures have had little beneficial effect on the crisis of their economic wellbeing (Hunt, Saran, Banks, White & Kuper, 2022), household hunger and food insecurity (Bhattarai & Smedema, 2023; Lister, Mostert & Pillay, 2021). Despite the introduction of LED programmes to stimulate the economy, Stats SA (2022) reported that PWDs are the most vulnerable group and have fewer economic opportunities and a high rate of poverty (Buthelezi et al., 2024; Mphahlele, 2023; Sherry et al., 2024). Literature reveals a grey areas in identifying why disability in local government focuses on social welfare as opposed to implementation of inclusive economic benefits. This study contributes towards better implementation of inclusive economic activities coordinated through LED to improve standards of living and self-reliance of PWDs.

3.8 DISABILITY PREVALENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Globally, about 16% of the world's population (about 1.3 billion people) is estimated to have some form of disability (WHO, 2022). In South Africa, PWDs constitute 7,74% (3,8 million) of the total population (Buthelezi, Zondo, Nxumalo & Vilakazi, 2024; NPC,

2020; Stats SA, 2024). Graham (2020) and Moyake and Buthelezi (2018) believe that PWDs are more likely to face economic deprivation and subsequently poverty, because previously in South Africa disability was considered within the context of health and social welfare framework. This contributed to limited economic opportunities and inaccessible resources as norm by PWDs which has influences their economic status. This is evident in South Africa, where PWDs are economic vulnerable to poverty and unemployment (Buthelezi et al., 2024; Hanass-Hancock & McKenzie, 2017; Stats SA, 2011).

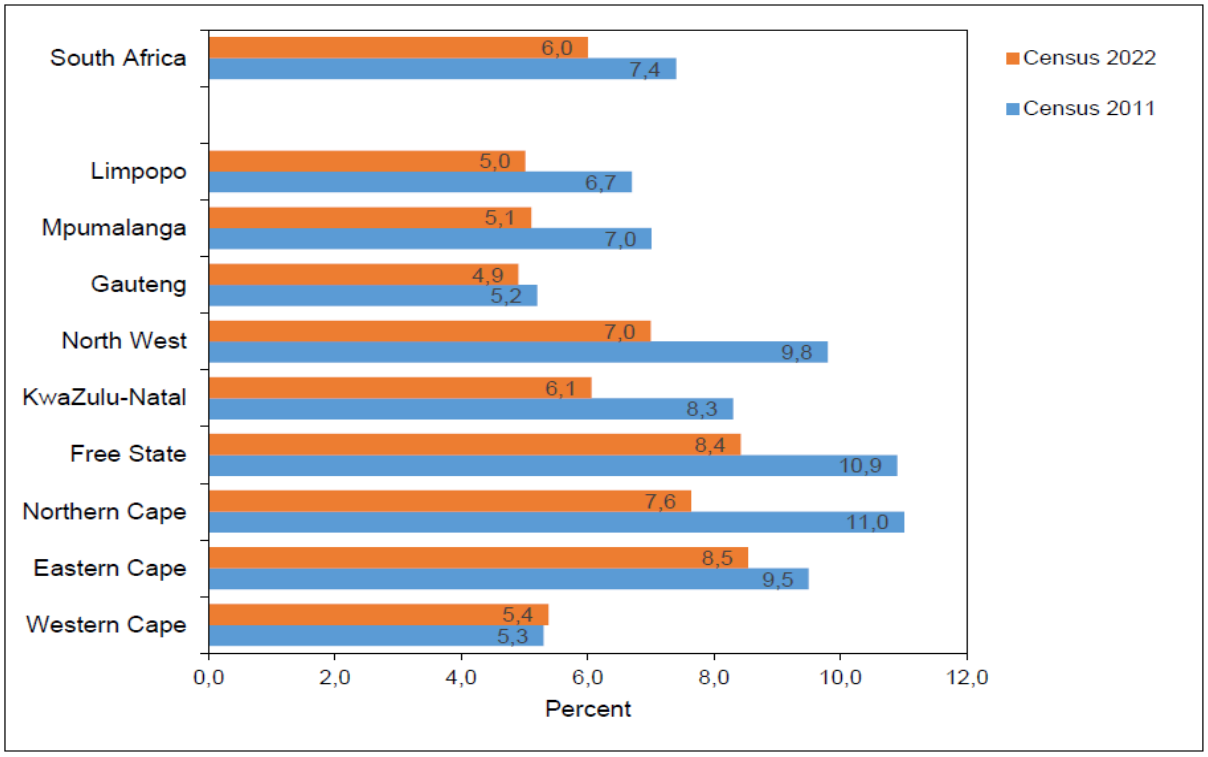


Figure 3.1: Disability prevalence by province in South Africa

Source: Stats SA Census (2024:78)

According to Stats SA (2024), disability prevalence varies across provinces. Earlier data show higher rates in the Northern Cape (11.0%), Free State (10.9%), and North West (9.8%), with Gauteng recording the lowest rate (5.2%). However, the 2022 census indicates that disability prevalence was highest in the Eastern Cape (8.5%), followed by the Free State (8.4%), Northern Cape (7.6%), and Limpopo (6.7%), while Gauteng again recorded the lowest rate (4.9%) in the year 2011. The predominantly urban province, namely, Gauteng, recorded the lowest disability prevalence in Census

2022 as shown in Figure 3:1. Tinta (2020) contend that disability in developing countries is associated with limited participation on economic opportunities, development and inclusive education (Moyake & Buthelezi, 2018). This is because many government institutions still struggle to integrate disability issues in their development initiatives and evaluate their impact on their lives.

3.9 PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN LEPELLE-NKUMPI MUNICIPALITY: PREVALENCE AND SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

Generally, there is limited statistical on the disability prevalence and/ or socioeconomic status of PWDs in South Africa during first term of democratic administration (DSD, 2016; NPC, 2020). This is the situation with the LNLM where reliable information about disability on municipal documents such as Integrated Development Plan (IDPs) is not adequate. For instance, the disability prevalence cited in the current IDPs for financial year 2024/2025 is from a community survey conducted in 2016 which is not true reflection of the recent statistics. According to the LNLM (2024), almost 4.5% of the population is living disabilities (Stats SA, 2016). The data is inaccurate and outdated whereby is even copied on the on previous 2016 IDPs of the municipality. SALGA (2012) reported that disability is not accurately incorporated into all municipal plans and activities due to unavailability or inaccurate LED registration database and municipal vulnerable groups database for PWDs. However, despite the Stats SA (2022) publishing baseline data on disability prevalence and profiling of socioeconomic status of PWDs in South Africa in 2022 as per Figure 3:1. Thus, collecting and maintaining accurate data on PWDs will enable municipalities to respond more effectively and support evidence-based policy-making (City of Johannesburg, 2021).

The socioeconomic status of PWDs has not improved in rural municipalities such as the LNLM due triple challenge of poverty, food insecurity and inequality (Shava & Hosifi, 2019; Strydom 2016:73). This triple challenge has contributed to general unemployment rate of 48% and, with 81.4% for PWDs within the municipality (LNLM, 2024; Stats SA, 2022). Besides this catastrophic unemployment rate, the equitable representation of PWDs in all levels of municipal structures is major challenge dating back as far as from 2015 reported on their IDPs to date (LNLM, 2015; 2024). This has been a persistent issue affecting employment and economic status of PWDs negatively.

Despite municipality-led LED employment programmes such as the War on Poverty, the CWP, and labour-intensive infrastructure projects, the 7% employment target for PWDs has not been met. Hence, municipal inclusive socioeconomic development needs for PWDs are critical from a social and public administration standpoint, but it is also poorly understood and inadequately described in the scientific literature (Wolniak & Skotnicka-Zasadzie'n, 2021). For example, the IDPs of the LNLM do not address the socioeconomic development of persons with disabilities, a gap compounded by the absence of a disability strategy.

This reveals a lack of municipal commitment to integrate disability in their plans and disability strategy which has been overdue as cited on IDPs in 2016 (LNLM, 2016). Therefore, it is necessary to close this research gap. Thus, this study seeks to broaden research on promotion of inclusive economic empowerment programmes that support PWDs in municipalities with special focus on the LNLM.

3.9.1 Status of Reasonable Accommodation for PWDs and IDP in LNLM

The LNLM organisational structure recognises PWDs and has a disability unit which facilitates the integration of disability components into budgets, programmes, policies, legislations and strategies (LNLM, 2025). In LNLM there is a "total of 299 positions of which 184 are filled and 113 (37.7%) are vacant" (LNLM IDP, 2025:43). Out of the 184 filled positions, six employees are PWDs and two are employed on a permanent basis while four are temporarily employed during last three years (LNLM, 2024:99). The disability unit is run by two officials who are PWDs. The Integrated Development Plan 2025/2026 of LNLM reveals that the municipality is struggling with representation of PWDs in all municipal structures not limited to LED (LNLM, 2025). According to the LNLM IDP (2025:46), the disability strategy is still in the development phase.

The employment equity plan of LNLM is aligned with the 7% target for persons with disabilities (PWDs) set by the National Development Plan, 2030 (NPC, 2012). Although the municipality has not yet achieved this target, the 2025/2026 IDP reflects the Municipal Council's intention to establish a Portfolio Committee on Special Programmes (LNLM, 2025). However, the IDP also highlights the ongoing challenges faced by PWDs in relation to employment opportunities, inclusion in municipal planning, and representation in development structures within LNLM (Niewohner et

al., 2019; Ned & Lorenzo, 2016). These findings suggest that limited progress has been made in integrating PWDs into empowerment programmes and the municipal workforce, thereby constraining inclusive development within the municipality.

3.9.2 Functions of LNLM Disability Forum

In 2016, LNLM relaunched the disability forum to mainstream the needs and recognise the rights of PWDs as noted in their 2025/2026 IDP (LNLM, 2025:46). The key functions of LNLM disability forum are to ensure equitable access to municipal opportunities for PWDs, advocate for inclusive communities and monitor implementation of reasonable accommodation for PWDs which aligns with EEA [1998] (LNLM, 2017). The establishment of the LNLM disability forum is informed by WPRPD (2015) and EEA (1998) since these acts require all spheres of government to have a functional representative forum/body for PWDs. LNLM disability forum face institutional capacity challenges and ineffective participation (Makamu, 2024; Makhaye & Subban, 2024).

3.10 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK THAT PROMOTE INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION OF PWDS ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES

The South African government has introduced various policies, frameworks, and guidelines to create an empowering environment for PWDs' inclusion in mainstream of society (Ramolobe et al., 2023; Sherry et al., 2024; Tintal & Kolanisi, 2023). Several scholars such as Sherry et al. (2024), Ramolobe et al. (2023) and Swanepoel (2020) describe the legislative framework which promotes inclusion of PWDs. The frameworks include the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), the Code of Good Practice on the Employment of People with Disabilities (2002), the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2015, the EEA (Act No. 55 of 1998) and the NDP 2030, the White Paper on Integrated National Disability Strategy 1997 and the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016.

However, despite these, PWDs' living standards, particularly in rural areas, have not improved (Matyana & Thusi, 2023) and lack of improvement is primarily due to these policies absence or poor implementation. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996) upholds the rights and dignity of PWDs and promotes equal opportunity for all.

The legislative framework established by the South African Constitution imposes an affirmative duty on the state to uphold equality, giving local government institutions primary responsibility for implementing inclusive empowerment programmes (Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, 2025). Hence, several Acts and policies have been enacted to assist local government to redress past injustice and inequalities amongst PWDs (Sherry et al., 2024). This initiative is noticeable in the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (DSD, 2015a), the EEA of 1998a, and the PEPUDA (Act 4 of 2000). These Acts guide the provision of reasonable accommodation, mainstreaming of PWDs in workplace and empowerment programmes. The intentions of these Acts such as EEA are to achieve an equitable labour force, remove barriers, eliminate discrimination in every workforce or empowerment initiatives (Thomas, 2002). The EEA (1998a); and White Paper Affirmative Action in the Public Service (1998b) advocate for 2% representation of PWDs participation in employment opportunities within municipal coordinated programmes such as CWP (DSD, 2015b; EEA, 1998a; Maclean et al., 2024). The NDP 2030 envisions an inclusive society and a fairer economy that provides opportunities, particularly for those who were previously disadvantaged, such as women and PWDs.

Despite the set unachieved target, PWDs continue to face limited economic opportunities and discrimination at a local level (Ned & Lorenzo, 2016; Niewohner et al., 2019). Although South Africa's policy frameworks for PWDs are comprehensive and holistic, there is a gap in the municipal implementation of these policies, primarily due to a lack of a monitoring and enforcement system, a significant concern that municipalities must address (Matyana & Thusi, 2023; Yekani et al., 2024). This was confirmed by a 2022 progress report by the DWYPD, that there is little implementation of popular policy directives. Despite legislative efforts to empower PWDs (Tintai & Kolanisi, 2023), gaps between policy formulation and programme implementation persist, limiting PWD participation in local government development initiatives and requiring actionable solutions (Pillay, Saruchera & Chivandire, 2023).

3.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the South African perspective on local economic empowerment. Through the adoption of appropriate strategies and approaches, South African municipalities are accountable for ensuring that disability concerns are

mainstreamed in local government development agenda. This must be achieved through implementation of inclusive policies, plans and programmes to meet empowerments needs of PWDs and improve their participation in economic activities. However, this chapter found the municipal implementation challenges impede the empowerment of PWDs such as fragmented knowledge on disability, political instability, minimal financial resources, institutional arrangement challenge, incompetence and capacity limitation. Moreover, the need for political commitment and will to integrate disability issues within the municipal development agenda was emphasised. The effects of economic empowerment interventions on the quality of life of PWDs was discussed as informed by LED initiatives. The next chapter presents the research methodology.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research design and methodology that were used for the study on the effects of local economic empowerment on persons with disabilities (PWDs) in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality (LNLM). A mixed-methods approach was applied to collect and analyse data in order to achieve the study's objectives. This study adopted the research methodology guided by the research problem and objectives to achieve the study objectives outlined in Chapter 1. This chapter expounds on the following: research objectives and questions, research paradigm, hypotheses of the study, multiple case study, research instruments and ethical guidelines.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.2.1 Research Design

Research design refers to the plan of research action which comprises of a clear problem statement, data collection methods and interpretation to answer the research question or test the research hypotheses (Khaisi, 2022; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Basically, the research design is a plan for how the researcher intends to conduct the study, focusing on the method to be used and how the findings of the research are interpreted and applied (Cook & Cook, 2016; Kekeya, 2021; Jansen & Warren, 2020). Due to the nature of research problem being investigated, the study followed mixed research approach. The benefit of the mixed research method it is that it combines the qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem within its context (Mohamed & Mahmoud, 2024; Sharma, Bidari, Bidari, Neupane & Sapkota, 2023; Wasti, Simkhada, van Teijlingen, Sathian & Banerjee, 2022). It allows the study to generate a practical knowledge which will resolve research problem that is investigated (Turyahikayo, 2021).

This study adopted a convergent parallel design, collecting qualitative and quantitative data concurrently. The benefit of the convergent parallel is that it allows for a deep exploration of the research topic by combining different research methods and

perspectives. This design is a mixed-methods approach in which qualitative and quantitative data are collected and analysed concurrently and then integrated to form an overall interpretation (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, the combination of strengths and non-overlapping limits of qualitative and quantitative data methods will be very beneficial for this study. Quantitative-deductive approach testing, and qualitative-inductive approach building will be used in this study. Rovai, Baker and Ponton (2014) asserts that quantitative research is regarded as a deductive technique, whereas qualitative research is regarded as an inductive method of inquiry. The difference between deductive and inductive research methods is that “an inductive approach is concerned with the generation of new theory emerging from the data; while a deductive approach is concerned with testing the theories” (Alharahshah & Pius, 2020:23). This is supported by Gabriel (2013) and Varpio, Paradis, Uijtdehaage and Young (2020).

4.2.2 Research Methods

Alharahsheh and Pius (2020) describe methodology as the overall research strategy that is employed in the study and would specify the data collection techniques that should be employed in conjunction with the research strategy (Jansen & Warren, 2020). In support of the above assertion, Keong, Husin and Kamarudin (2023) add that research methods are focused on data collecting and analysis strategies used to generate and advance knowledge. Thus, Alharahsheh and Pius (2020) further postulate that generally research methodology comprises of three types namely, quantitative, qualitative and mixed research. For the purpose of this study, a mixed research methodology was adopted to achieve study objective and solve the research problem. The methodology in this study was segmented into two divisions (quantitative part 1 and qualitative part 2). The advantage of applying mixed-methods is that combination of qualitative and quantitative provides better understanding of research problems than either one approach alone (Maemu, Munzhedzi & Mathebula, 2023).

4.2.3 Mixed-Method Approach

Mixed-methods research refers to research procedure that integrate both qualitative and quantitative method in a single study or across multiple related studies (Ahmed, Pereira, & Jane, 2024; McLeod; 2024; Sharma, et al., 2023).

The mixed-method approach allows the study to gain a more complete understanding than using only qualitative or quantitative methods, as it combines the strengths of both and improves the reliability and validity of the findings (Creswell, 2020; Dawadi et al., 2021; Poth & Munce, 2020). The rationale for using a mixed-method approach is that it allows for integration qualitative and quantitative methods while retaining the originality of each. Jili (2019) notes that a qualitative approach focuses on understanding the effectiveness and relevance of initiatives and their impact on people's lives, which in this study relates to local economic empowerment initiatives for PWDs in the LNLM.

Furthermore, this will enable the researcher to combine the results of the two data kinds into a coherent whole (Leedy & Ormrod, 2021). Mixed-methods research as a transformative approach will help to provide understanding of social context of research problem to advocate for empowerment of PWDs (Contreras-Villalobos, Escudero & Leiva, 2024). The researcher used a case study research design within this mixed-method approach to gather insights from respondents in their natural settings and investigate the participation of PWDs in economic activities. A single or multiple case study technique can incorporate one or more core designs (explanatory sequential, exploratory sequential, transformative or convergent) into a mixed-methods case study design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This study adopted a convergent parallel design, collecting qualitative and quantitative data concurrently and analysing the merged data for a deep exploration of the research topic. The mixed-methods approach is aligned with the EETC, which aims to advance the lives of marginalised groups such as PWDs. This mixed research methodology is inclusive and relevant to the current study, in such way because PWDs with vision impairment were accommodated through qualitative data collection methods and those with speech impairment through quantitative data collection methods.

Mixed-method research design is appropriate for current study to build on strength of both data in a purposeful way to gain wider view (Ahmed et al., 2024; Sharma et al., 2023). This permitted the researcher to valid quantitative data which were obtained from PWDs about experience on economic marginalisation. In contrast while qualitative data were collected from role players (Municipality, Disability Forum, Limpopo Development Agency) to get their views on mainstreaming disability in

economic empowerment activities in the LNLM. The researcher did this in an effort to test both the quantitative and qualitative approach's findings. This enabled the study to obtain a valid understanding of the research problem by comparing findings of one research method to another (Clark & Ivankova, 2016; Dawadi et al., 2021; Wasti et al., 2022). By using both methods, the strengths of one method can compensate for the weaknesses of the other, leading to more rigorous conclusions (Sharma et al., 2023; Dawadi et al 2021; Clark & Ivankova, 2016). In research this procedure is called data triangulation which increase credibility and accuracy of research conclusion (Ahmed et al., 2024; Venkatesh, Brown & Bala, 2013). By combining the strengths of both methodologies, researchers can triangulate data, validate findings, and gain deeper insights into research questions (Ahmed et al., 2024; Dawadi et al 2021; Clark & Ivankova, 2016).

Quantitative research is about measuring quantity to apply to a specific phenomenon by testing existing theories and is expressed in numbers or statistical quantities (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020; Keong et al., 2023). On the other hand, qualitative research explores the complex nuances and settings of human experience and viewpoint to gain deep understanding of phenomena (Lim, 2024). A mixed-method approaches integrate positivist (quantitative) and interpretivist (qualitative) philosophical frameworks, they offer numerous benefits for addressing complicated research topics. (Fetters, 2016). Enosh, Tzafrir and Stolovy (2014) postulate that qualitative and quantitative methods allow a study to answer study questions with adequate depth and width. The study used in-depth interviews for the purpose of collecting qualitative data and survey questionnaires for quantitative data.

4.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Ebohon, Ajayi and Ganiyu (2021), define research paradigm as a collection of accepted ideas and viewpoints among specialists in a field regarding how issues need to be perceived and resolved. It also commonly known as a worldview and set of beliefs that direct actions or shape our understanding of what we know (Creswell, 2014; Mohamed & Mahmoud, 2024). Whitehead, LoBiondo-Wood and Haber (2012) indicate that a paradigm denotes a worldview based on a set of values and philosophical assumptions that are shared by a particular academic community and that guide their approach to research.

In this study, a combination of positivist, interpretivist and pragmatic paradigms was considered. The research paradigms which this study pursued has influenced the data collection and analysis procedure to be used (Ebohon et al., 2021; Keong et al., 2023).

This study therefore integrated interpretivist and positivist paradigms by using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Although positivism, constructivism, and interpretivism are commonly used research paradigms (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014), the study primarily adopted interpretivism through qualitative data collection. Positivism was applied through quantitative methods, which rely on scientific measurement to test and predict outcomes (Dawadi, Shrestha & Giri, 2021). The use of two paradigms will allow the researcher to gain a comprehensive understanding of individual behaviours, interactions, and environmental considerations (Welman et al., 2005). Furthermore, the benefits of adopting two research paradigms in this study, contributed to improved research instruments and limited methodological biasness (Keong et al., 2023). Positivism, interpretivism/constructivism and pragmatism are discussed in the following sections.

4.3.1 Positivism

According to Pawlikowski, Rico and Van Sell (2018), the scientific perspective on the world is expressed through the term “positivism.” Ajayi, Ganiyu and Ebohon (2021) hold the view that the “scientific” method is the exclusive means of establishing truth and objective reality, and that positivism is the only reality. Hence, this paradigm recognises honest scientific procedures. Henning et al. (2004:16) make the affirmative claim that “when a researcher uses test and predict, a positivist theoretical framework is used in the purpose of the study.” These authors further indicate that “when one adopts a positivist perspective, science is viewed as the means of discovering the truth and gaining sufficient knowledge of the world to allow for prediction” (Henning et al., 2004:16). The data that was obtained from this study can assist the LNLM to implement successful inclusive local economic empowerment programmes for PWDs.

Alharahshah and Pius (2020) claim that the positivist philosophy revolves around the researcher working with observable reality within society, leading to generalisations. The benefit of using positivism in this study is its rigorous emphasis on raw facts and

data, free from the biases of human perception (Saunders et al., 2012; Scotland, 2012).

4.3.2 Interpretivism/Constructivism

Interpretivism is different from positivism as it prioritises the richness of the research context (Alharahshah & Pius, 2020; Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022). Welman et al. (2005:6) state that the positivist and interpretative paradigms “allow the investigator to determine how the subjects of the study think, cooperate and behave in their natural environment.” According to Berkovich (2018), the qualitative technique is comprehensive in nature and is derived from an interpretive perspective. Its main objectives are to understand social life. Thus, according to Bryman (2012), qualitative research aims to provide details and a better understanding of social phenomena. Because the goal of interpretivist research is to understand and explain the meanings in human behaviour to a certain extent, rather than to generalise and predict causes and effects (Neuman, 2013), the interpretative approach is therefore the most suitable tool for this research topic. The benefit of this paradigm is that is a method of establishing a deep understanding of meaning by paying attention to more details (Irshaidat, 2019). The literature review revealed economic marginalisation of PWDs in local government and data collection is required to provide details of the root causes. Hence, Livesey (2014) asserts that explanation and observation are the most effective methods. Purposive sampling was used to align participants with the study objectives, thereby strengthening research rigour, data quality, and reliability (Campbell et al., 2020). This approach enabled the researcher to select participants who could provide relevant and meaningful insights to support the interpretive analysis.

A study is regarded as interpretivist if it meets the following criteria (Ebohon et al., 2021):

i. There is a common emphasis on understanding through ‘thick’ description.
ii. Use of qualitative data focuses on patterns in the text instead of numbers.
iii. Research findings are limited to specific cases without any claim of generalisation.
iv. Research usually adopts the inductive approach with a focus on theory generation.

v. They often engage ethical and social issues raised through the research.

This study acknowledges the value of interpretivism in comprehending people's goals, motivations and meanings as well as the implementation of inclusive economic empowerment for PWDs.

4.3.3 Pragmatism

According to Mohamed and Mahmoud (2024), pragmatism focuses on the use of both subjective and objective ways to comprehend the world and address research problem. This paradigm therefore supports mixed methods research by valuing both objective quantitative perspectives and subjective qualitative data (Mohamed & Mahmoud, 2024; Morgan, 2014). Foster (2024) further argues that this approach situates the research problem within its real-world context. Thus, in pragmatism the research instruments centralise perceptions and value life experiences of participants to resolve research problem (Kaushik & Walsh 2019; Liu, 2022). So, pragmatism puts emphasis on experience. In contrast to positivism and interpretivism, pragmatism holds that knowledge can never be a true representation of reality (Ebohon et al., 2021). The advantage of this paradigm in this study is that it allowed for multiple perspectives or tools to resolve research problem (Mohamed & Mahmoud, 2024).

4.4 MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

This study used a multiple case study approach. The benefits are that it generates robust and reliable data, as diverse findings add value by addressing the research questions (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Halkias et al., 2022). The rationale for using a multiple case study in this research is that data is collected from diverse organisations and participants, including municipality officials, traditional leaders, special school representatives, caregivers, PWDs and non-governmental organisations, providing a range of perspectives. Khalifa and Ersi (2020) attest that with multiple case studies, a researcher can examine data across diverse contexts or groups. A multi-case study was useful tool in this study for illustrating the intricacy of a phenomenon and providing deep insights into the context in which it occurs (Halkias, Neubert & Harkiolakis, 2023). The advantage of adopting this approach was that it allowed the researcher to acquire comprehensive perspectives of individuals within the municipality and other targeted

organisations that deal with PWDs. A multiple case study allows for different perspectives on the responses to the research questions (Brink, 2018).

4.5 TARGETED POPULATION

In research, the targeted population refers to the specific subset or group of individuals within a larger population of the study's focus (Banerjee & Chaudhury, 2010; Willie, 2023). The targeted population assists the researcher to ensure accurate research findings and make appropriate generalisations. The targeted population of the current study was informed by the research objectives and questions (Willie, 2023). The study investigated the effects of economic empowerment programmes on PWDs. Therefore, the study targeted PWDs to explore their experiences, as well as key stakeholders, including municipal officials responsible for economic empowerment in the LNLM, to achieve data saturation. Bloomfield and Fisher (2019) note that an adequate population size ensures accurate representation of the research topic. According to the Stats SA (2024), the estimated number of PWDs in the municipality is 53 270. Table 4.1 below reveals details statistics of PWDs in LNLM.

Table 4:1. Municipal disability profile in the LNLM

	Some difficulty	A lot of difficulty	Cannot do at all	Do not know
Seeing	16594	2627	318	132
Hearing	6390	1173	127	125
Communication	3242	532	231	109
Walking	7555	2083	419	112
Remembering	5301	1137	167	136
Self-care	3501	1126	747	128
Total	42583	8678	2009	742

Source: Stats SA (2024)

The rationale for the sampling frame, sampling procedure and techniques is discussed below.

4.5.1 Sample Frame

In the current study, the sample comprised of representative population of all administrative grouping within LNLM (Zebediela, Lebowakgomo, Mphahlele and Mafefe-Mathabatha area) to ensure inclusivity. LNLM is divided into four localised administrative grouped areas which share 30 wards to improve service plans.

4.5.2 Sampling Procedure

Sampling is the selection of a sample from individual or subgroup of entire population of study to identify relevant research participants (Bhardwaj, 2019; Mkata, 2010; Turner, 2020). The study used both probability and non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling is associated with qualitative research, whereas probability sampling is linked to quantitative research. The study used purposive sampling, which aligns with qualitative research, to obtain in-depth knowledge and experiences on an individual basis from organisations and municipal officials responsible for implementing economic empowerment programmes for PWDs (Kumar, 2019; Turner, 2020). In addition, stratified random sampling (a quantitative sampling technique) was used to select participants across relevant stakeholder groups involved in the empowerment and advancement of PWDs, ensuring reliable and balanced representation to meet the study's objectives.

The 15 participants for the study was broken down as follows:

a. Four persons with disabilities in the LNLM (inclusive of PWDs involved in in businesses (micro and macro) and traditional council;
b. One coordinator of the LNLM disability forum;
c. Four caregivers for PWDs (this encompasses caregivers employed by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and parents/guardians); and
d. Six municipal officials who are responsible for economic empowerment and disability matters (municipal manager, executive manager for the IDP and LED, the mayor; IDP manager, LED manager, public participation manager and infrastructure development manager). The sampling of six officials from the LNLM yielded several benefits such as researcher receiving real time results through face-to-face interviews and participants shared their direct knowledge on subject matter.

The rationale for the sampled participants is that some are practitioners and experts who are responsible for promoting, implementing and coordinating inclusive policies and programmes for PWDs in local government. This contributes to the rigour of the research results, since participants provided vital information.

4.5.2.1 Qualitative data collection

In the current study for qualitative data collection, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with 15 officials within an area of the LNLM. Scholars assert that a qualitative study sample size of 12–15 participants is sufficient to reach data saturation (Clarke & Braun, 2013; Fugard & Potts, 2015; Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). This allowed for thematic analysis in this study. Braun and Clarke (2006) recommend a sample size of 12–20 participants for qualitative data collection. The sample size was determined by selecting them from the 214 funded posts of senior management positions within the municipality (LNLM, 2021). The researcher appointed a social worker to assist with interviews involving PWDs engaged in micro and macro businesses.

The rationale for choosing this sample size was that some participants were directly responsible for advancing PWDs and interacted with them daily. Others were senior managers in the municipality who were accountable for planning and executing economic empowerment and development initiatives. The study used a purposive sample to gain extensive knowledge, insights, and experiences from organisations and municipal officials responsible for implementing economic empowerment programmes for PWDs (Kumar, 2019).

The interviews dimension consisted of various themes as illustrated below:

a. Biographical profile;
b. Representation of PWDs in economic empowerment activities;
c. Role of municipality in economic empowerment;
d. Barriers to economic empowerment;
e. Aspects impeding involvement of PWDs in development; and
f. Deficient features of inclusive development process.

4.5.1.2 Quantitative data collection

The study adopted probability sampling as it aligned with the quantitative research approach. Using probability sampling ensured that each member of the population or sampling frame had an equal chance of being selected, which enhanced the study's external validity (Kumar, 2019). The sample size n = 210 is based on Sekaran's (2003) sampling table, which indicates that for a population size of 284 404, the sample size

should be 210. The municipality has an estimated population of 284 404 people (Stats SA, 2022). The researcher used stratified random sampling for the quantitative approach, dividing the population into strata or subgroups and then randomly selecting a sample from each subgroup to gather data (Jili, 2019). The sample included participants from the Municipal Disability Desk, Lepelle-Nkumpi Disability Forum members, community project leaders, PWDs involved in businesses, caregivers, community members, traditional leaders, portfolio committee members on LED, administrative officials from the IDP and LED, and teachers from the Special School within LNLM.

4.6 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

In this study, data was collected over a period of approximately four months. The researcher used in-depth interviews and questionnaires to collect data, as the study used a mixed research design involving qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2020; Dawadi, 2021).

4.6.1 Questionnaires

To obtain quantitative data, structured questionnaires were distributed by email and hand delivery to 210 participants within all clusters (Zebediela, Lebowakgomo, Mphahlele and Mafefe-Mathabatha cluster) of the LNLM as mentioned under quantitative sampling. The structured questionnaire used a 1–5 Likert scale (where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree) (Appendix D).

4.6.1.1 Quantitative questionnaires dimensions

The research instrument consisted of 66 items, with a level of measurement at a nominal or an ordinal level. The questionnaire was divided into six sections which measured various themes:

Section A: Biographical Profile of the Respondents
Section B: Status of representation of PWDs for inclusive participation in local economic empowerment programmes
Section C: The role of municipality in promotion of economic empowerment and development programmes that support PWDs.

Section D: Challenges and barriers that prohibit participation of PWDs on local economic empowerment

Section E: PWDs actively involved in the development, implementation of economic programmes, strategies and policies

Section F: Impact of municipal inclusive development strategies, policies, programmes and support from government on economic empowerment programmes

In the study, dimensions 1–7 were based on biographical statistics (Ramolobe et al., 2023). Dimensions 8–16, which address status of inclusion of PWDs, were guided by the views of Fernandes and Samputra (2022), who posit that the participation of PWDs must be a significant focus in local government development initiatives to reduce poverty (Pillay et al., 2023). Dimensions 17–27 were based on Rappaport's (1987) empowerment theory and influenced by the constitutional mandate that municipalities in South Africa must play an active role in economic development initiatives at the local level (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Dimensions 28–40, which address the challenges and barriers hindering PWDs' participation in economic empowerment, were based on the views expressed by Matyana and Thusi (2023), who attribute these issues to poor implementation of LED policies. Lastly, dimensions 41–62 were informed by the EETC (Mahbub, 2021); and inclusive development (Liu at al., 2022) emphasising additional representation of PWDs in development activities.

In total, 125 questionnaires were returned which gave a 59.5% response rate. Holtom, Barcuch, Aguinis and Ballinger (2022), posit that in a survey-based research, 30% response rate is considered acceptable. This sample formed the basis for the quantitative analysis presented in this chapter.

4.6.2 Document Analysis

Furthermore, the researcher used desktop reports in regard to economic empowerment and development of PWDs for purpose of identifying the gaps in the literature. These documents are available on the LNLM's official website and included the IDP, which assisted the researcher in verifying if PWDs' developmental needs are integrated into the municipality's primary implementation plan. To enhance triangulation in this study, document or desktop analysis was adopted. This helped the researcher to comprehend the research problem and compare the findings of primary

data (Kabir, 2016). Hence, this method will permit researcher to analyse variety of materials like organisational reports, newspapers, journal articles and books. Document analysis, according to Morgan (2022:64), is a useful research approach because it enables researchers to systematically examine existing records to gain contextual, historical and factual insights that support and complement other data sources. These documents were available on the LNLM's official website and included the IDP, which assisted the researcher in verifying or evaluating if PWDs' developmental needs were integrated into the municipality's primary implementation plan. Additional documents that were reviewed included LED documents, NDP 2030, Stats SA survey and policies such as the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (DSD, 2016).

4.6.3 Interviews

For purpose of conducting in-depth interviews, 15 interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data on the effects of LED programmes on PWDs. The researcher arranged appointments with participants to conduct the interviews telephonically or face-to-face.

Table 4.2: In-depth interviews dimension sampling composition

Participants No	Gender		Disabled		Employed		Economic Empowerment Experience	
	Male	Female	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
D1	X		X		X		X	
D2	X		X		X		X	
D3	X		X		X		X	
D4		X		X		X		X
D5	X			X	X		X	
D6		X	X		X		X	
D7	X		X		X		X	
D8		X		X	X		X	
D9		X	X			X		X
D10		X		X		X	X	
D11	X			X	X		X	
D12		X		X	X		X	
D13		X		X	X			X
D14		X		X	X		X	
D15	X			X		X	X	

Source: Author

In-depth interviews were used for collection of qualitative data for purpose of obtaining very informative data and to gain deeper insight into experience or perspectives of participants on the research problem (Dawadi et al., 2021).

The benefit of face-to-face interviews is that is a direct natural interaction with participants (Horsfall, Eikelenboom, Draisma & Smit, 2021). The interviews were audio recorded and the participants were informed during the signing of consent form. To generate rich perspective on the effects of local economic empowerment on PWDs the researcher will utilise a designated interview guide for all in-depth interview. The existing literature helped to guide the questions and topics from the interview guide. To ensure comfortability, interviews were conducted at a time and place suitable for the participants and will last between 30–45 minutes.

4.6.3.1 Qualitative interview questions

As shown in Appendix E, Questions 1–1.3 were informed by the lack of empirical research and literature on the participation and failure of local implementation of government programmes and policies aimed at economically empowering PWDs (Pillay et al., 2023; Ngcobo, 2022). Questions 2–2.6 were guided by Ned and Lorenzo, (2016) view that local government must play a vital role in promoting economic empowerment as a key component of the development agenda to achieve inclusive participation and benefits. Questions 3–3.4 focused on the challenges and barriers to accessing opportunities to participate in economic empowerment programmes provided by municipalities (Panda & Kaur, 2024; Matyana & Thusi, 2023; Sigwaza & Jili, 2022). Questions 4–4.3 were grounded in the belief that promoting disability inclusion in economic empowerment not only benefits PWDs but also reduces their reliance on government grants and enhances their involvement in the development process (Dineshan & Geetha, 2023; Mahole, 2017; Matyana & Thusi, 2023; Ngcobo, 2022). Lastly, questions 5–5.3 were influenced by Mahbub's (2021) EETC, aimed at improving the standards of living for PWDs, as supported by Tinta and Kolanisi (2023).

4.8 DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

The mixed-methods approach is deemed suitable for the proposed study, which comprises quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis.

4.8.1 Quantitative Analysis

For quantitative data analysis, descriptive statistics were used by the researcher. Descriptive statistics can help in summarising data in the form of simple quantitative

measures by explaining how the variables in a population or sample relate to one another (Kaliyadan & Kulkarni, 2019; Kaur, Stoltzfus & Yellapu, 2018). Descriptive statistics allowed the researcher to use frequencies and percentages to analyse questionnaire data. The graphs, charts and tables were generated from the SPSS version 29.0 from International Business Machines and Microsoft Excel 2016. This helped the researcher present data concisely.

4.8.1.1 Biographical data analysis

This section provides a summary of the biographical characteristics (gender composition, age, education, education, employment status and experiences) of the respondents as shown in Table 4.3. These attributes are presented using descriptive statistics, which helps to place study into context and responses reported in the subsequent sections of the questionnaire.

Table 4.3: Structured questionnaire sampling composition

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
1. GENDER		
Male	41	32,8
Female	84	67,2
Other	0	0%
Total	125	100
2. AGE		
18-20 years	7	5,6
21-30 years	26	20,8
31 – 40 years	36	28,8
41 – 50 years	30	24,0
51 – 60 years and above	26	20,8
Total	125	100
3. EDUCATIONAL LEVEL		
Lower than Matric	7	5,6
Matriculation	24	19,2
Trade certificate	14	11,2
Degree /diploma	48	38,4
Postgraduate degree	32	25,6
Total	125	100
4. EMPLOYMENT STATUS		

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Employed	50	40,0
Unemployed	32	25,6
Self-employed	13	10,4
Other (Specify)	30	24,0
Total	125	100,0
5. CURRENT JOB LEVEL		
Junior level	43	34,4
Junior management	28	22,4
Middle management	41	32,8
Senior management	13	10,4
Total	125	100
5. EXPERIENCE		
0– 5 years	35	28,0
6 – 10 years	30	24,0
11 – 15 years	23	18,4
16 – 20 years	24	19,2
21 and above	13	10,4
Total	125	100
6. EXPERIENCE IN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME AND DEVELOPMENT		
0– 5 years	60	48,0
6 – 10 years	38	30,4
11 – 15 years	17	13,6
16 – 20 years	7	5,6
21 and above	3	2,4
Total	125	100,0

Source: Author

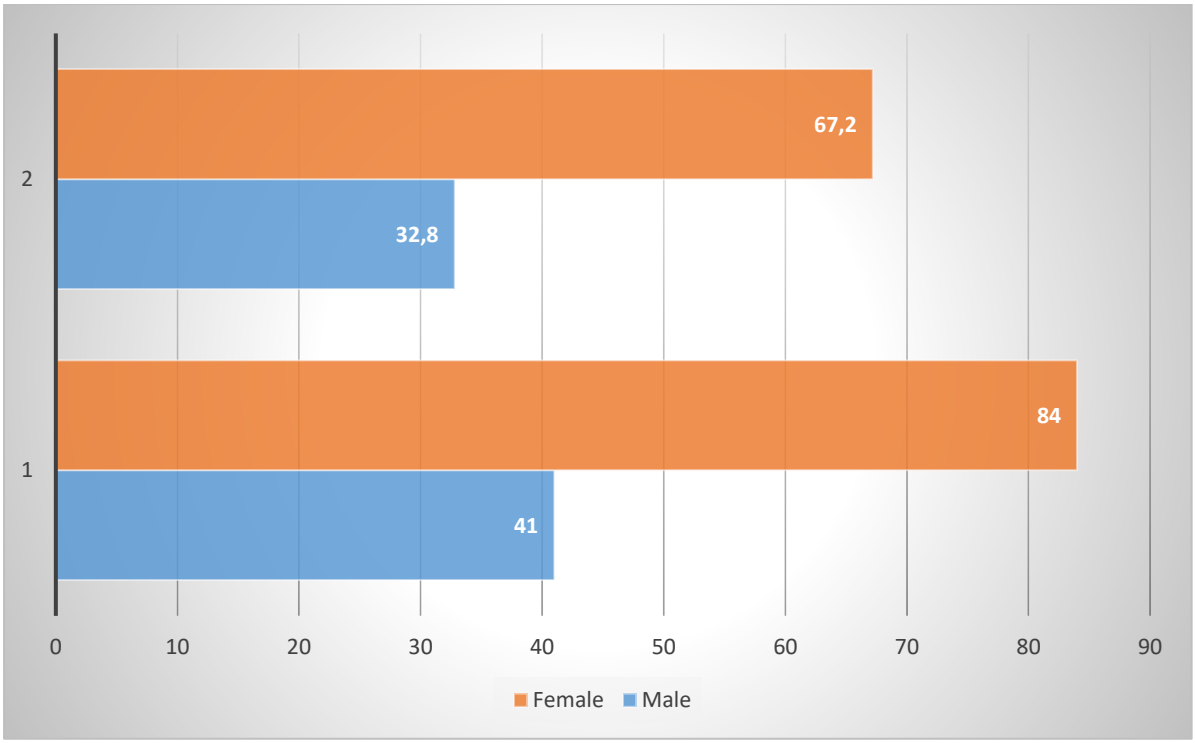


Figure 4.1: Gender composition

Source: Author

The results show that female participants formed the majority 67.2% (n = 84), while male participants made up 32.8% (n = 41) of the sample ($p < 0.001$). This indicates that the study was characterised by a higher proportion of female respondents compared to males. In the LNLM, these statistics do not reflect gender equity. Gender inequalities exist in the social, economic, physical and institutional environment of the municipality (LNLM, 2025). These findings are consistent with the LNLM IDP quo analysis report 2024-2025, that reveal that women constitute a higher population, 55% whereas men contribute to 45% of the population. However, the municipality relied on the Community Survey of 2016 for these statistics as reflected in LNLM 2024-2025 IDP report (LNLM, 2025). This reveals a lack of competencies by municipal officials responsible for drafting IDP to source the updated data from Statistics South Africa.

Figure 4.2 presents the age profile of the respondents.

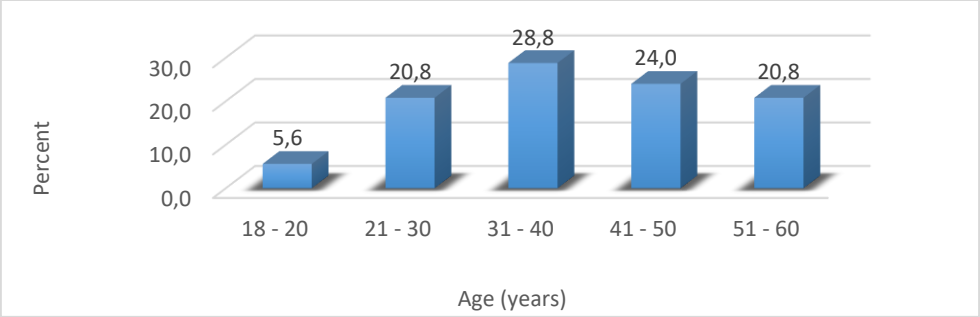


Figure 4.2: Age categories

Source: Author

The largest group of participants was aged between 31–40 years (28.8%, n = 36), followed by those aged between 41–50 years (24.0%, n = 30). This finding on the representation of people between 31–40 age, align with the LNLM IDP (2023). Respondents IDP quo analysis report 2024-2025 that people between ages of 31-40 constitute to 28% of total population. Respondents in the 21–30 years and 51–60 years' categories were equally represented (20.8%, n = 26 each). The smallest proportion of participants were aged 18–20 years (5.6%, n = 7). The findings contradict the LNLM IDP quo analysis report of 2024-2025 which claims that people on age of 18–20 years constitute 10%. The trend indicates that participation increased steadily from younger to middle age groups, peaking at 31–40 years, before gradually declining in the older categories ($p < 0.001$).

Figure 4.3 shows the range of qualifications of the respondents.

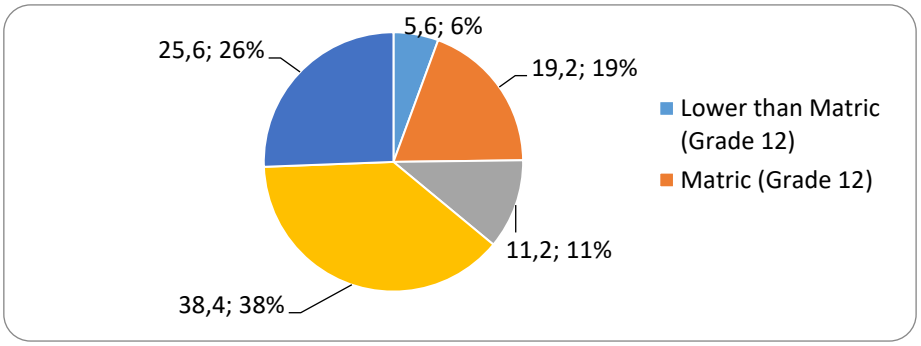


Figure 4.3: Educational qualifications

Source: Author

The largest proportion of the participants hold a degree or diploma (38.4%, n = 48), followed by postgraduate qualifications (25.6%, n = 32). Those with a Matric qualification represented 19.2% (n = 24), while respondents with trade certificates accounted for 11.2% (n = 14). The smallest group had less than Matric (5.6%, n = 7). The trend shows that the sample was skewed towards participants with higher education, particularly those holding tertiary qualifications ($p < 0.001$). This study finding reveals that responses came from knowledgeable participants, because most informants completed higher education. This finding aligns with the OECD (2025), which reports that South Africa has the lowest tertiary completion rate among OECD and partner countries, with most individuals holding only a high school qualification, a degree, or post-school non-tertiary certificates.

Figure 4.4 shows the forms of employment of the respondents.

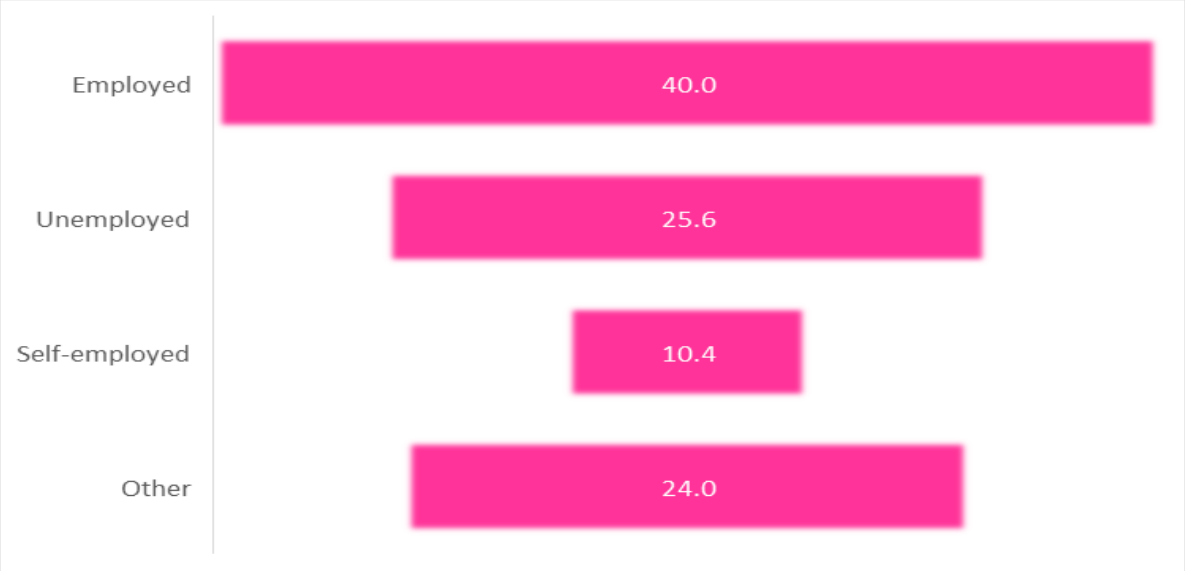


Figure 4.4: Forms of employment

Source: Author

The largest proportion were employed (40.0%, n = 50), followed by unemployed participants (25.6%, n = 32). Those who selected “other” made up 24.0% (n = 30), while self-employed respondents formed the smallest group (10.4%, n = 13). Formal employment was most common, while self-employment was relatively uncommon among participants ($p < 0.001$). The unemployment rate of 25.6% is matter of concern as noted by Zondo et al. (2024). Scholars such as Du Toit et al. (2020) Mongale (2022)

and Zondo et al. (2024) claims that most communities in rural areas struggle with employment while relying on social grants. This was confirmed by the LNLM IDP (2024), unemployment rate is 48%, and more than “15% of households have no source of income” (LNLM, 2024; Stats SA, 2024). This finding implies that LED initiatives in the municipality are not contributing towards employment initiatives which affect the participation of PWDs in municipal workforce.

Figure 4.5 shows the current job levels of the participants.

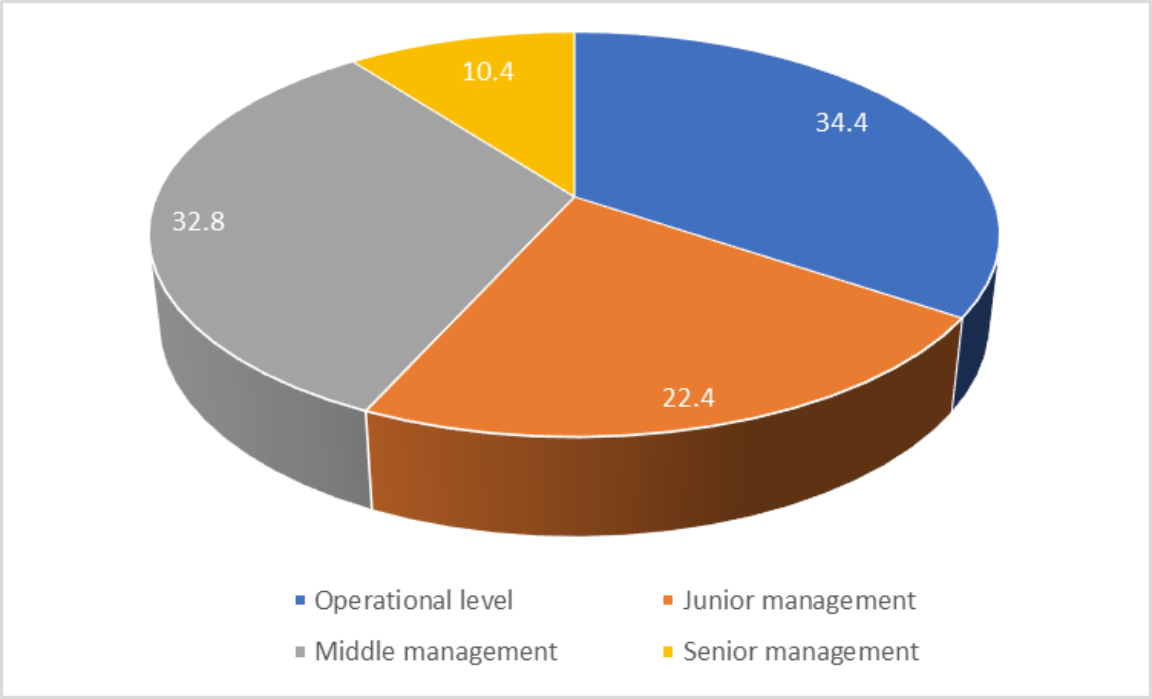


Figure 4.5: Current job level

Source: Author

The largest group were at the operational level (34.4%, n = 43), closely followed by those in middle management (32.8%, n = 41). Junior management accounted for 22.4% (n = 28), while senior management formed the smallest category (10.4%, n = 13). This shows that the majority of participants were concentrated at lower and middle job levels, with relatively few at senior management level, as is expected in organisational structures ($p < 0.0010$). The implication of this findings is that data was collected from the relevant officials with a balanced ratio of personnel who are responsible for the implementation of local economic empowerment programmes (Ngobeni, Nekhavhambe & Mahole, 2025).

In contrast, a study by Surju, de Metz and Davis (2020) who contend that traditionally top management are accountable for planning while middle management are influential planners as per modern approach.

Figure 4.6 shows the general work experience and experience in economic empowerment programmes of the respondents.

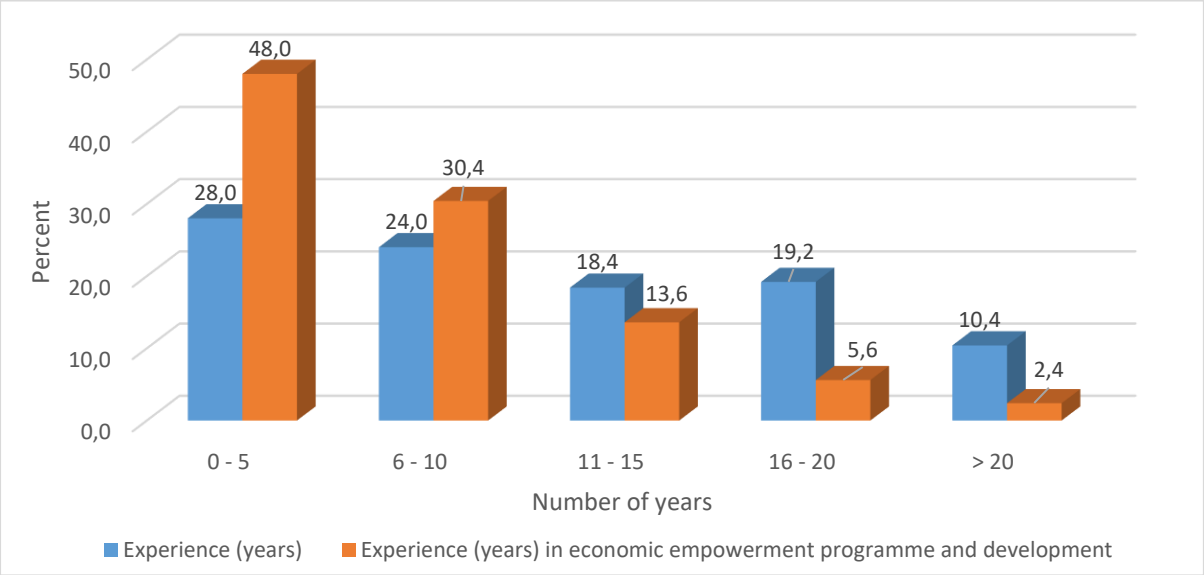


Figure 4.6: General work experience and experience in economic empowerment programmes

Source: Author

The analysis of respondents' general work experience revealed that most participants were concentrated in the early to mid-stages of their careers. Those with 0–5 years of experience formed the largest group (28.0%, n = 35), followed by 6–10 years (24.0%, n = 30). A further 18.4% (n = 23) reported 11–15 years, while 19.2% (n = 24) indicated 16–20 years. Only 10.4% (n = 13) had more than 20 years of experience. The trend suggests that the sample was dominated by individuals with less than 15 years of work experience, while long-serving participants were fewer ($p < 0.001$). When considering experience specifically in economic empowerment programmes, the distribution shifted even more heavily towards the lower end. Almost half of the respondents had 0–5 years of such experience 48.0% (n = 60), and nearly a third reported 6–10 years (30.4%, n = 38). Smaller groups indicated 11–15 years (13.6%, n = 17), 16–20 years (5.6%, n = 7), and over 20 years (2.4%, n = 3).

The trend shows a steep decline in representation as the number of years in economic empowerment increases, pointing to a concentration of respondents with limited direct experience in this field ($p = 0.027$). The results indicate that 48.0% of the respondents has less than 0–5 years' experience in which might be reason for limited implementation of economic empowerment programmes (Monareng, Soeker & Naidoo, 2025; Pillay et al., 2023).

4.8.2 Qualitative Analysis

Thematic content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data from interview schedules and also one open-ended question from survey questionnaire, allowing the researcher to identify themes for discussion. Jowsey, Deng and Weller (2021) assert that thematic analysis helps researcher to examine qualitative data through identification and exploration of patterns of meaning, across a data set. This affords an opportunity for the researcher to understand ideas or views of respondents obtained from the interview to organise data accurately. The qualitative data in the study was analysed using ATLAS.ti software (Version 25.01.32924) through co-occurrence analysis. The co-occurrence analysis in ATLAS.ti helped the researcher to review quotations linked to the created codes to understand relations and meaning of the associations (Esteve-Mon, Postigo-Fuentes & Castañeda, 2023; Mastrobattista, Muñoz-Rico & Cordón-García, 2024). In this study, ATLAS.ti facilitated the identification, management and organisation of emerging themes and patterns from data from the in-depth interviews (Mastrobattista et al., 2024). For the benefits of this study, ATLAS.ti was used to identify themes, codes and create patterns. ATLAS.ti assisted in presenting data in the form of graphs, Sankey diagrams and bar graphs to visualise findings generated from interviewed respondents.

4.9 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

4.9.1 Reliability and Validity Testing Quantitative Data

4.9.1.1 Reliability

Reliability in research refers to the consistency and stability of research methods and results when the study is repeated under similar conditions (Willim, 2024). For the quantitative data, the language used in designing the questionnaires is simple and

easy to understand. A pilot study involving 20 participants from the municipality was conducted to assess whether the questionnaire aligned with the study's objectives. Participants included officials involved in economic empowerment programmes, NGO representatives, and PWD entrepreneurs, and their responses were used to evaluate the relevance of the questionnaire items and the reliability of the data. Each dimension's reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha or coefficient alpha values, with a high coefficient indicating strong acceptability and consistent scoring across the different categories of this research (Taber, 2018).

4.9.1.2 Validity

Validity in research refers to the extent to which a study accurately measures what it is intended to measure (Karnia, 2024). The researcher applied factor analysis in this study to identify patterns and connections between the variables (Tavakol & Wetzel, 2020). The primary purpose was to reveal the underlying links between the observable variables (or items) the respondents provided. According to Tavakol and Wetzel (2020), factor analysis benefits a study by simplifying a complex set of variables or items through statistical methods, helping to ascertain the underlying dimensions that explain the correlations between the variables or items.

4.9.2 Reliability and Validity Testing for Qualitative Data

4.9.2.1 Reliability

Validity and reliability were ensured by focusing on trustworthiness, which is revealed in the credibility, transferability, dependability and the validation of the study instruments to align with the research questions (Simon & Goes, 2016; Tavakol & Wetzel, 2020). This approach helped ensure that the study effectively addresses the research questions. Credibility was strengthened by gathering multiple perspectives from participants during data collection to ensure the relevance of the data. Transferability was demonstrated by showing that the research findings could be applicable in other contexts. The researcher used audio recordings to ensure the dependability of qualitative data. Participants were given a copy of the transcriptions of the audio recordings to review their responses (Carlson, 2010; Tavakol & Wetzel, 2020). This review enhanced accuracy.

4.9.2.2 Validity

Internal and external validity is crucial in evaluating the trustworthiness and significance of a study's findings (Tavakol & Wetzel, 2020). The study followed a research design and analysis technique that addressed the research questions, avoiding bias to ensure internal validity. Ensuring internal validity is essential for the proposed project: all data collection instruments were unbiased and all data was analysed. For external validity, the researcher aimed to ensure that the findings could be generalised to similar situations or groups, except for PWDs in future applications. Researchers are advised to use internal and external criteria to assess the credibility of the data, such as consistency, accuracy, transferability and confirmability of the findings.

4.10 TRIANGULATION

The study adopted various techniques for data collection and analysis which will allow the researcher to triangulate the findings to support the conclusions of the current study complemented by evidence from numerous sources (Sharma et al., 2023:6). This study will triangulate data received from 210 (questionnaire survey) participants, 15 (in-depth interviews) and official documentations accessed from the LNLM, and other government public websites to cross-check statements and facts (Yin, 2017). In mixed-methods research, data triangulation is recognised as the best technique for validating findings from one method, either qualitative or quantitative (Bergman, 2008). Consequently, it leads to robust inferences, increasing the accuracy and credibility of the conclusions drawn from the research (Clark & Ivankova, 2016; Venkatesh, Brown & Bala, 2013).

4.11 CRONBACH'S ALPHA

The reliability of qualitative questionnaire results was examined with Cronbach's alpha in the current study. Cronbach's alpha is considered as key measure for internal consistency and scale reliability. A new generated construct is considered acceptable provided that reliability coefficient is 0.60 or more (Shrestha, N., 2021:6; Taber, 2018). According to Shrestha, N. (2021) and Taber (2018), Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.70 to 0.95 are deemed appropriate. Thus, a high composite alpha value indicates strong internal consistency among test items and suggests that participants

are likely to respond consistently across different conditions (Bandalos, 2018; Lavrakas, 2008; Shrestha, N., 2021). Factor analysis was incorporated in this study to determine the underlying dimensions of the test (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011) and to identify correlations and patterns among the variables (Babbie & Mouton, 2004). Table 4.4 presents the Cronbach's alpha scores for all the items included in the questionnaire across the five sections.

Table 4.4: Cronbach's alpha coefficient

Section	Clustered conceptual meaningful dimensions	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
B Status of representation of PWDs for inclusive participation in economic empowerment programmes in the municipality	Structural Barriers	3	0.728
	Representation Deficit	4	0.550
	Rural Exclusion	2	0.573
B - All items included		9	0.713
C Role of municipality in promotion of economic empowerment and development programmes that support PWDs	Capacity Constraints	3	0.504
	Policy Ineffectiveness	3	0.547
	Institutional Responsiveness	3	0.506
	Knowledge Gaps	2	0.531
C - All items included		11	0.534
D Challenges and barriers that prohibit the participation of PWDs in local economic empowerment	Politicisation Barriers	3	0.552
	Capacity Limitations	2	0.586
	Institutional Weaknesses	3	0.541
	Infrastructure Exclusion	3	0.538
	Strategic Deficit	2	0.472
D - All items included		13	0.593

Section	Clustered conceptual meaningful dimensions	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
E The active involvement of PWDs in the development and implementation of economic programmes, strategies and policies in the Municipality	Tokenistic Practices	4	0.546
	Resource Constraints	2	0.546
	Educational Disadvantage	3	0.541
	Municipal Ineffectiveness	2	0.536
E - All items included		11	0.542
F Effectiveness and impact of implemented inclusive development strategies, policies, programmes and support from government on economic empowerment programmes	Governance Failures	2	0.681
	Programme Ineffectiveness	4	0.545
	Support Deficiency	2	0.530
	Strategic Misalignment	3	0.528
F - All items included		11	0.565
Overall - All items included		55	0.771

The overall Cronbach's alpha for all 55 items was 0.771, which reflects an acceptable level of internal consistency for a newly developed instrument. At the construct level, most sections produced alpha values that approximate the 0.60 threshold, indicating that the items are reasonably consistent in measuring their intended dimensions. Taber (2018) and Shrestha, N. (2021) a value of 0.60 to 0.70 is generally considered acceptable for newly developed constructs which shows good reliability.

4.12 FACTOR ANALYSIS

Factor analysis (FA) is often used in data reduction to extract a small number of factors that explain most of the variance that is observed in a much larger number of manifest variables (Hinton, Hinton & McMurray, 2004; Shrestha, N., 2021).

Researchers can simplify a collection of complex variables or items by using FA to study the underlying dimensions that explain the interactions between multiple variables/items (Tavakol & Wetzel, 2020). Tavakol and Wetzel (2020) assert that to examine links between items in FA a simple examination of a 20-item test would yield 400 correlations. The current study adopted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) as two important approaches to FA (Shrestha, N., 2021). In survey research, FA is normally used when a researcher wants to represent a high number of questions with a small number of hypothetical factors. For example, respondents may answer three distinct questions regarding environmental policy in a national political opinion survey, reflecting issues at the local, state and national level. The use of FA in this study enabled the identification of items that were not relevant to the questionnaire, thereby facilitating the extraction of key factors from the survey data (Shrestha, N., 2021). For this study, EFA was used to identify the underlying features of PWD participation in LED and the effects of LED programmes on PWDs. In contrast, CFA was applied to confirm existing theories and test the study's hypotheses.

Prior to conducting FA, the suitability of the dataset for structure detection was assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. The KMO statistic indicates the proportion of variance in the variables that may be explained by underlying latent factors (Sürücü, Yıkılmaz & Maşlakçı, 2022). Values closer to 1.0 suggest that the data is well-suited for FA, while values below 0.50 indicate limited usefulness. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity evaluates the null hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix, meaning that the variables are unrelated and unsuitable for structure detection. A significance value less than 0.05 provides evidence that the data contains sufficient correlations to warrant FA. In this study, FA was performed only on the Likert-scale items of the questionnaire, as these items captured perceptions across the constructs of representation, municipal role, barriers, involvement and effectiveness. Where applicable, larger components were further divided into finer sub-components. This structure is elaborated in the rotated component matrix, which identifies the specific groupings of items that cluster together under common underlying dimensions.

A summary Table 4.5 is presented below showing the KMO and Bartlett's test findings:

Table 4.5: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Section	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		
		Approx. Chi-Square	df	Sig.
B Status of representation of PWDs for inclusive participation in economic empowerment programmes in the municipality	0.653	254.161	36	< 0.001
C Role of municipality in promotion of economic empowerment and development programmes that support PWDs	0.524	185.592	55	< 0.001
D Challenges and barriers that prohibit the participation of PWDs in local economic empowerment	0.503	247.948	78	< 0.001
E The active involvement of PWDs in the development and implementation of economic programmes, strategies and policies in the Municipality	0.505	195.094	55	< 0.001
F Effectiveness and impact of implemented inclusive development strategies, policies, programmes and support from government on economic empowerment programmes	0.599	148.646	55	< 0.001

Source: Author

As illustrated in Table 4.5, the results of the KMO and Bartlett's tests confirmed that the data was suitable for FA. All sections produced KMO values above the minimum threshold of 0.50 and Bartlett's tests were highly significant ($p < 0.001$), indicating adequate sampling and sufficient inter-item correlations for structure detection. FA became an important tool in this research to reduce data. The rotated component matrices confirmed the factor loadings, with most above the acceptable threshold of 0.40. Items within each section clustered together under conceptually meaningful dimensions. The names of these dimensions are specified in the Table 4.5 on reliability statistics. Overall, the rotated matrices provided empirical support for the proposed component structure. All 55 items were retained across the five sections, confirming both the adequacy and the conceptual consistency of the factor structure**.**

4.13 STATISTICAL TESTING TOOLS

The study used Kruskal-Wallis Tests and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM) as statistical tools for this research, which are explained in detail below.

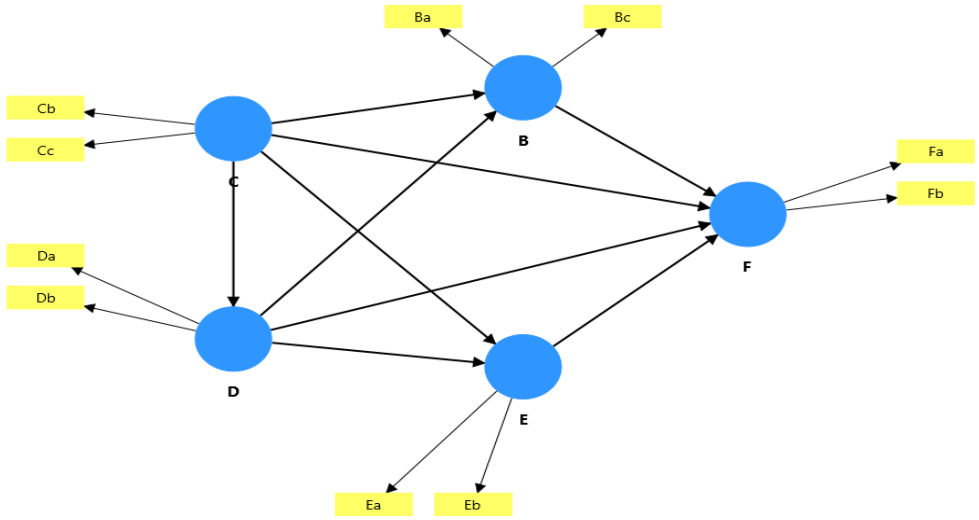
4.13.1 Kruskal-Wallis Tests

Kruskal-Wallis test is a non-parametric statistical test that evaluates whether two or more samples are drawn from the same distribution (Guo, Zhong & Zhang, 2013; Zhang, 2024). To determine whether perceptions of the study constructs differed significantly across biographical categories, the Kruskal-Wallis (KW) test was employed. This non-parametric test is appropriate when comparing responses across two or more independent groups, particularly when data do not meet the assumptions of normality required for parametric alternatives. The test evaluates whether the distributions of responses is the same across groups. For each hypothesis, the null states that there are no significant differences between the groups, while the alternative posits that at least one group differs. Statistical significance was assessed at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$). Where significant differences were identified, descriptive means were used to interpret the direction and magnitude of the differences across categories.

4.13.2 Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Model

PLS-SEM is a very useful technique for evaluating complex theoretical relationships between multiple variables when conducting a research (Hair & Alame, 2022; Pereira, Sanchez Rodrigues & Freires, 2024). This PLS-SEM model was constructed to evaluate the dynamics of inclusive economic empowerment for PWDs within the context of municipal development programmes. The model integrates five key latent constructs: C (Municipal role), D (Barriers), B (Representation), E (Involvement), and F (Effectiveness/Impact). Each construct is measured through its associated reflective indicators, ensuring alignment with the conceptual framework of inclusive governance and participatory development. The structural model represents both enabling and constraining forces. Municipal capacity and initiatives (C) are hypothesised to positively influence representation (B), involvement (E), and ultimately effectiveness (F). Conversely, challenges and barriers (D) are modelled as inhibitors that may undermine outcomes. Representation (B) and involvement (E) are positioned as mediating mechanisms, translating institutional and structural conditions into tangible empowerment outcomes. Figure 4.7 depicts the five key latent constructs from PLS-SEM model.

Figure 4.7: Five key latent constructs from PLS-SEM model



Source: Author

4.13.2.1 Justification of model design

This section outlines the key constructs of the study and explains how each functions within the conceptual framework to influence the effectiveness of inclusive LED initiatives for PWDs.

- Representation (B): A necessary precondition for empowerment, serving as both a mediator and a direct driver of effectiveness.
- Municipal Role (C): Treated as an exogenous construct influencing representation, involvement and effectiveness directly, reflecting the expectation that institutional commitment can remove obstacles.
- Barriers (D): Incorporated as a constraining force, hypothesised to reduce effectiveness and distort pathways to representation and involvement.
- Active Involvement (E): Reflects the extent of active participation, mediating the effect of both municipal action and barriers.
- Effectiveness and Impact (F): The final endogenous construct capturing whether inclusive strategies deliver real outcomes.

4.14 RESEARCH ETHICAL GUIDELINES

As stipulated by the University of South Africa [UNISA] policy on research ethics approved by the Council on 27 June 2024 and UNISA research ethics policy dated September 2016, this research project will adhere to all ethical standards and guidelines. An application for ethical clearance was submitted to UNISA's College Economics and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee - Public Administration and Management for the scope of this study (Appendix B). Upon approval, permission was sought from the LNLM (Appendix C) and all targeted participants. All participants were requested to provide their informed consent to take part in the study (Appendix D and E). This study employed a qualified social worker who collaborated with disability forums from the Department of Health during data collection, as they are experts in disability issues. This collaboration assisted the researcher in communicating with PWDs appropriately.

4.14.1 Anonymity and Confidentiality

The researcher complied with the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (POPIA) (Act No. 41 of 2013) to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents in this study. This Act aims to protect the personal information processed by public and private entities as envisaged in Chapter 1, Section 2(a) of the POPI Act 2013. Therefore, the researcher ensured that no names or personal details that could reveal participants' identities appear in the report (POPIA, 2013).

4.14.2 Voluntary Participation

Participants were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary, their privacy would be protected, and they could withdraw at any time.

4.14.3 Briefing

Briefing was conducted to clarify any misinterpretation, explain what is expected from the participants, and answer any questions they might have about the study.

4.14.4 Informed Consent

The study aim, purpose and procedures were explained to the respondents. Participants were requested to acknowledge in writing that they understand what their participation entails in the study before the data gathering begins. The informed consent and information sheet from University of South Africa were used for both in-depth interviews and survey questionnaires.

4.14.5 Data Management

The researcher will store the completed questionnaires for fifteen (15) years in a locked filing cabinet, and voice records will be stored on an external drive on a password-protected computer. Research data will be securely stored in accordance with the data management measures (UNISA, 2021). "Researchers should preserve research records for at least fifteen years (or as required by policy or legal frameworks) after submitting the report or the results" (UNISA, 2021; UNISA, 2024).

4.15 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter outlined the research methodology and design of the current study titled “The effects of local economic empowerment programmes on PWDs within the LNLM”. The mixed research methodology which used both quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (in-depth interviews schedules) was deemed appropriate for the purpose of achieving the study objectives. A brief presentation and the rational for choosing multiple case study, mixed research method, sample size, data collection instruments and analysis technique was discussed. The cross-sectional survey allowed the study to gather data from different groups. The current chapter also outlined the ethical guidelines to ensure compliance with POPIA, 2013 and adhered to principles of anonymity and confidentiality of participants in this study. The next chapter concentrates on data presentation, analysis and discussion.

CHAPTER 5: PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed research design and methodology that were used to guide the data analysis and collection for the current study. This chapter presents the results and compares the findings obtained from the quantitative data with the previously reviewed literature on the effects of local economic empowerment programmes on persons with disabilities (PWDs) in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality (LNLM). The chapter covers the alternative hypothesis, descriptive statistics, factor analysis (FA), study objectives with findings discussions, reliability testing, validity testing, KW Tests and PLS-SEM. The descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) are presented to provide an overview of respondents' demographic characteristics and their perceptions of empowerment programmes. The correlation analysis is applied to determine the strength and direction of associations among constructs. To further address the study objectives, inferential statistics were used. The findings are presented in line with the study objectives, integrating descriptive patterns, statistical associations and structural model pathways. The statistical significance is established at the conventional threshold of $p < 0.05$, with results interpreted in terms of their implications for representation, municipal role, barriers, involvement and programme effectiveness whereby clustered themes emerged from the data were discussed. These are illustrated using tables, graphs and cross-tabulations to highlight distributional patterns in this chapter.

5.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In pursuing the study's aim, the specific research objectives were set out as follows:

- To assess the status of representation of PWDs for inclusive participation in local economic empowerment programmes in the context of South African municipalities.
- To explore the role of municipality in promotion of inclusive local economic empowerment programmes that support PWDs.

- To ascertain the challenges and barriers inhibiting PWDs from participating in local economic empowerment programmes in the LNLM.
- To explore the extent to which PWDs are actively involved in development and implementation of economic programmes, strategies and policies.
- To assess the effectiveness and impact of implementation of inclusive development strategies, policies, programmes and support from the government on economic empowerment programmes in the Municipality.

5.3 NULL AND ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS

Below, each null and alternative hypothesis for distributional differences across all objectives is tested, using Chi-square value test (χ^2) to determine if the association between variables is statistically significant.

5.3.1 Null Hypothesis (H_0):

There is no significant association between respondents' perceptions and the overall barriers (structural, representational, and rural) affecting the participation of PWDs in local economic empowerment initiatives.

5.3.2 Alternate Hypothesis (H_1):

There is a significant association between respondents' perceptions and the overall barriers (structural, representational, and rural) affecting the participation of PWDs in local economic empowerment initiatives.

The overall χ^2 test yields a highly significant result ($\chi^2 = 355.48$, $df = 4$) $p < 0.001$), indicating that the respondents' perceptions were not evenly distributed across the Likert categories. Instead, responses were strongly skewed toward agreement, confirming that participants consistently perceived structural, representational and rural barriers as major factors limiting the inclusion of PWDs in local economic empowerment initiatives. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis (H_1) is accepted.

5.3.3 Null Hypothesis (H_0):

There is no significant association between respondents' perceptions and the overall barriers (capacity, policy, institutional, and knowledge-related) affecting the participation of PWDs in local economic empowerment initiatives.

5.3.4 Alternate Hypothesis (H_1):

There is a significant association between respondents' perceptions and the overall barriers (capacity, policy, institutional, and knowledge-related) affecting the participation of PWDs in local economic empowerment initiatives.

The overall χ^2 result ($\chi^2 = 367.78$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.001$) indicated a highly significant association between respondents' perceptions and the combined barrier dimensions. This shows that responses were not evenly distributed but strongly skewed toward agreement, confirming that respondents widely recognised capacity, policy, institutional and knowledge barriers as key obstacles limiting the economic participation of PWDs. Accordingly, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis (H_1) is accepted.

5.3.5 Null Hypothesis (H_0):

There is no significant association between respondents' perceptions and the overall barriers (politicisation, capacity, institutional, infrastructural, and strategic) affecting the participation of PWDs in local economic empowerment initiatives.

5.3.6 Alternate Hypothesis (H_1):

There is a significant association between respondents' perceptions and the overall barriers (politicisation, capacity, institutional, infrastructural, and strategic) affecting the participation of PWDs in local economic empowerment initiatives.

The overall χ^2 statistic ($\chi^2 = 384.26$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.001$) demonstrated a highly significant association between respondents' perceptions and the collective barriers influencing PWD inclusion. The responses strongly leant toward agreement and strong agreement, indicating that participants widely acknowledged these barriers as major impediments to equitable participation in local economic empowerment. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis (H_1)

is accepted, confirming that politicisation, limited capacity, weak institutional structures, infrastructural exclusion and strategic deficits are statistically significant obstacles affecting the empowerment of PWDs.

5.3.7 Null Hypothesis (H_0):

There is no significant association between respondents' perceptions and the overall barriers (tokenistic practices, resource constraints, educational disadvantage, and municipal ineffectiveness) affecting the participation of PWDs in local economic empowerment initiatives.

5.3.8 Alternate Hypothesis (H_1):

There is a significant association between respondents' perceptions and the overall barriers (tokenistic practices, resource constraints, educational disadvantage, and municipal ineffectiveness) affecting the participation of PWDs in local economic empowerment initiatives.

The overall χ^2 result ($\chi^2 = 379.62$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.001$) reveals a highly significant association between respondents' perceptions and the collective barriers to economic participation. Responses were strongly skewed toward agreement, indicating a shared view that PWD inclusion is often tokenistic, with persistent resource and education gaps and limited effectiveness of municipal interventions in achieving equitable inclusion. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis (H_1) is accepted, confirming that these multidimensional barriers significantly influence the participation of PWDs in local economic empowerment initiatives.

5.3.9 Null Hypothesis (H_0):

There is no significant association between respondents' perceptions and the overall barriers (governance failures, programme ineffectiveness, support deficiency, and strategic misalignment) affecting the participation of PWDs in local economic empowerment initiatives.

5.3.10 Alternate Hypothesis (H_1):

There is a significant association between respondents' perceptions and the overall barriers (governance failures, programme ineffectiveness, support deficiency, and

strategic misalignment) affecting the participation of PWDs in local economic empowerment initiatives.

The overall Chi-square statistic ($\chi^2 = 372.85$, $df = 4$) $p < 0.001$ indicates a highly significant association between respondents' perceptions and the combined structural and governance-related barriers. Responses were strongly skewed toward agreement, indicating broad consensus that weak governance structures undermine programme sustainability and effectiveness. Persistent support gaps and misalignment between empowerment policies and actual needs continue to limit meaningful outcomes for PWD empowerment. Accordingly, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis (H_1) is accepted, confirming that these multidimensional governance and strategy-related barriers significantly hinder inclusive economic development for PWDs.

5.4 PARTICIPATION OF PWDS IN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES

Table 5.1 provides an overview of the themes and sub-dimensions on the status of representation of PWDs for inclusive participation in economic empowerment programmes. The respondents in this section perceived municipality struggle across all three clustered dimensions which emerged from the data. Those clustered dimensions include weak structural support, inadequate representation and persistent exclusion particularly in rural areas as depicted in Table 5.1:

Table 5.1: Participation of PWDs in economic empowerment programmes

Clustered dimensions	Sub-dimensions	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly agree		Chi-Square p-value
Structural Barriers	Current economic empowerment initiatives do not allow for the equal participation of all community members, including PWDs	12	9.6%	35	28.0%	23	18.4%	45	36.0%	10	8.0%	< 0.001
	Inadequate advocacy and awareness for participation of PWDs in inclusive local economic empowerment initiatives	20	16.0%	26	20.8%	20	16.0%	33	26.4%	26	20.8%	0.326
	Lack of enabling mechanisms to promote the participation of PWDs	16	12.8%	26	20.8%	12	9.6%	54	43.2%	17	13.6%	< 0.001
Representation Deficit	Lack of inclusive participatory approach in LED initiatives	13	10.4%	14	11.2%	29	23.2%	38	30.4%	31	24.8%	0.001
	PWDs' participation in economic empowerment is not considered significant for their development	15	12.0%	25	20.0%	27	21.6%	50	40.0%	8	6.4%	< 0.001
	PWDs are not well represented in empowerment programmes	8	8.8%	16	12.8%	21	16.8%	48	38.4%	32	25.6%	< 0.001
	Integration of disability in LED is not internalised	7	5.6%	20	16.0%	28	22.4%	58	46.4%	12	9.6%	< 0.001
Rural Exclusion	The municipality does not adequately value the participation of PWDs in local economic development	23	18.4%	35	28.0%	11	8.8%	47	37.6%	9	7.2%	< 0.001
	There is unequal access to empowerment and employment opportunities in rural areas for PWDs	16	12.8%	23	18.4%	10	8.0%	35	28.0%	41	32.8%	< 0.001

Source: Author

As per Table 5.1 which summarises the scoring patterns. The overall trend in demonstrates a clear pattern of concern among respondents, with the majority highlighting weak structural support, inadequate representation and persistent exclusion, particularly in rural areas which are identified clustered themes. Findings under the structural barriers theme (Table 5.1) show that most respondents agree that current economic empowerment initiatives do not allow equal participation (36.0%, n = 45) and that enabling mechanisms to support participation are lacking (43.2%, n = 54). The χ^2 chi square test revealed a positive association among the respondents in these dimensions at $p<0.001$. This implies that the vast majority of respondents agreed with the variables. By contrast, views on advocacy and awareness were more evenly distributed, with no dominant response pattern emerging.

The representation deficit as the second clustered dimension as shown in Table 5.1, noted a strong levels of agreement amongst respondents at $p<0.001$. Nearly half of respondents agreed that disability integration in LED is not internalised (46.4%, n = 58), while more than half confirmed that PWDs were not well represented in empowerment programmes (55.2%, n = 69). In addition, about a third to nearly half agreed that PWD participation was undervalued and that inclusive participatory approaches were lacking. As per Table 5.1, under rural exclusion clustered dimension the perceptions of disadvantage were evident. Over one-third agreed that the municipality did not adequately value PWD participation (37.6%, n = 47), while a substantial proportion strongly agreed that unequal access persisted in rural areas (32.8%, n = 41). The findings are discussed and analysed in detail below for each sub-dimension together with the related literature, their implications and divergence or alignment with previous studies.

5.4.1 Limited Equal Participation

According to Table 5.1, 44% of the respondents agreed that the available economic empowerment initiatives do not allow for the equal participation of segment of the society while 37.6% of the respondents disagreed with this statement, and 18.4% of the respondents were undecided. The empirical findings of 44% of the respondents who agreed is not contrasts with the study conducted by Chumo, Kabaria and Mberu (2023), which reveals lack of disability-friendly opportunities and information on how

PWDs can participate, an indication of limited and misdirected resources (Evans-Lacko & Knapp, 2016). The percentage of the respondents who disagreed (37.6%) is divergent from findings of Ofuani (2011:639), who posits that there is lack of economic empowerment opportunities to enable PWDs to participate in municipal empowerment programmes. This finding implies that PWDs participation needs are not integrated in municipal empowerment initiatives and this contributes to discrimination PWDs in economic projects.

5.4.2 Inadequate Advocacy and Awareness

Despite municipalities' obligation to promote public awareness, 36.8% of respondents disagreed that advocacy and awareness for PWD participation in economic empowerment activities are inadequate (Table 5.1). Moreover, this finding concurs with Charles et al. (2023) who assert that limited disability awareness and advocacy impede participation of PWDs in development initiatives. However, a study by Ned and Lorenzo (2016) found that project managers do not have capacity to implement initiatives and mobile PWDs to participate in the empowerment initiatives. As per Table 5.1, a total percentage of (47,2%) of respondents agreed that there is inadequate advocacy and awareness and only 16.0% were undecided. The above findings 47,2% of respondents concur with Hussein El Kout, Pilusa, Benjamin-Damons, and Kagura (2025:3) that there is insufficient disability awareness and advocacy for PWDs. This finding implies that marginalisation of PWDs in implementation of inclusive local economic empowerment initiatives is caused by inadequate advocacy and awareness. Conversely, Malemane and Nel-Sanders (2021) posit that participatory awareness and advocacy campaigns have the potential to empower all segments of society to be actively involved in local government development matters.

5.4.3 Lack of Enabling Mechanisms

Table 5.1 reveals that 56.8% of the respondents agreed that there is lack of enabling mechanisms to promote the participation of PWDs, while 33.6% of the respondents disagreed with this statement. Despite that, a total percentage of 9.6% respondents were undecided. This finding aligns with Chapter 1 of the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (1997), which identifies the lack of enabling mechanisms and inaccessible information on participation opportunities as major barriers for PWDs,

as discussed in the literature review. The findings of 56.8% of the respondents who agreed as depicted in Table 5.1, suggest that municipalities are unable to provide reasonable accommodation to meet the participation needs of PWDs in their workforce and programmes (Hamunakwadi, 2025; Winchester, 2024). In addition, this finding suggests that most municipalities do not have an available disability strategy which contains mechanisms to foster participation of PWDs (Mthethwa, 2023). This finding implies that majority of respondents believe that there is limited promotion of PWDs in various community forums and structures within the municipalities as noted by Ned and Lorenzo (2016), which is of great concern.

5.4.4 Lack of Participatory Approach

Table 5.1 indicates that a total of 21.6% of respondents disagreed with the statement on lack of inclusive participatory approach in LED initiatives within municipalities, whereas 23.2%, n=29 of the respondents was undecided. The majority of the respondents 53.6% n=69 agreed that most municipalities lack inclusive participatory approach in LED initiatives. This result confirms the empirical findings of Alaji and Shefer (2024), which established that lack of meaningful participatory development approach as factor which prohibits marginalised communities to be actively involved in decision-making of IDP and LED initiatives. As per Table 5.1, 53.6% of respondents agreed, which denotes that LED programmes are bound to fail due to the absence of an inclusive participation approach and local support within municipalities (Malemane & Nel-Sanders, 2021). This finding implies that municipalities are unable to embed a participatory approach in LED programmes which contributes to isolation of PWDs and worsens their economic status as noted by the respondents.

5.4.5 Inconsiderate Participation of PWDs in Development

The data presented in Table 5.1 reveals that 32.0% of respondents disagreed with the statement that PWDs' participation in economic empowerment is not considered significant for their development, while 21.6% of respondents were undecided and 46.4% agreed with the statement. This finding on Table 5.1, aligns with Widianingsih et al.'s (2024) findings that many of PWDs are excluded from participating in local development projects due to disability. Despite section 9 of the Constitution which guarantees equality for everyone even in participation in local government

development, marginalised groups are not treated equitably. The finding that 46.4% of respondents agreed with the statement is consistent with Faizal, Kusnandar and Sulaeman (2020), who similarly found that PWDs are often overlooked in favour of non-disabled peers in local government economic empowerment activities. However, the level of disagreement (32.0%) highlights potential gaps in identifying the marginalisation of PWDs in development initiatives (Ngcobo & Gumede, 2022), which require training interventions. This implies that municipalities are not fulfilling their constitutional obligation as stipulated on Section 152(1) of the Constitution [Act No. 103 of 1996], which encourage the involvement of communities in the development matters of local government.

5.4.6 Underrepresentation of PWDs in Empowerment Initiatives

As per Table 5.1 above, 19.2% of the respondents disagreed that PWDs are not well represented in empowerment programmes, while 16.8% of the respondents were undecided. The findings indicate that, 64.0% of the respondents agreed that PWDs are poorly represented in social and economic empowerment activities due to discrimination (Pillay et al., 2023:34). Furthermore, the literature reveals that PWDs are excessively underrepresented in development programmes, decision-making and employment opportunities derived from economic projects (Mandicheta, Mabvurira & Ndebele, 2019; Pillay et al., 2023). With 64.0% of respondents agreeing, this concurs with findings of Ofuani (2011) who postulates that PWDs are least represented due to limited economic empowerment opportunities designated for them in local government. The implication of this findings triggers a need for municipalities such as Lepelle-Nkumpi to prioritise access to equitable development programmes for PWDs to enhance their wellbeing and achieve objective of NDP which seeks address inequalities (NPC, 2012).

5.4.7 No Disability Integration on LED

Table 5.1 reveals that 56.0% of the respondents agreed that disability integration in LED is not internalised, while 21.6% of respondents disagreed, whereas 22.4% of respondents were undecided. This outcome concurs with a report of SALGA (2012) which found that disability is not treated as an important component of LED planning in the municipalities to drive special LED programmes. While 56.0% of the

respondents agreed, this implies that disability integration is not considered as a cross-cutting approach within LED initiatives and planning in most municipalities (Tigere & Moyo, 2022). As per Table 5.1, 21.6% of respondents disagreed that integration of disability in LED is not internalised. Conversely, the finding is contrary to South Africa's White Paper on Integrated National Disability Strategy (Republic of South Africa, 1997) which advance for integration of disability in all local government development planning, strategies and implementation.

5.4.8 Participation of PWDs in LED Not Valued

As per Table 5.1, 46.4% of the respondents disagreed that municipality does not adequately value the participation of PWDs in special LED, followed by 44.8% of respondents who agreed and 8.8% who were undecided. The null hypothesis is rejected in light of these findings, which also show that, at the 0.001 level of significance, people are aware of the importance of participation of PWDs in LED. With 46.4% of respondents disagreeing with statement, in reality there no reasonable accommodation for participation of PWDs in LED and staff at the municipalities are not capacitated to coordinate disability special programmes LED (SALGA, 2012). Whereas 44.8% of respondents were in agreement with the statement, this align with the literature that there is limited disability-inclusive development and PWDs are still undervalued concerning their participation in economic empowerment programmes (Daniels-Mayes & Howe, 2021; Dineshan & Geetha, 2023; Faizal, Kusnandar & Sulaeman, 2020). This finding implies that municipal LED programmes are not inclusive and furthermore, PWDs are not actively recognised for their participation in all levels.

5.4.9 Limited Empowerment Opportunities in Rural Areas

From Table 5.1, 31.2% of the respondents disagreed that there is unequal access to empowerment and employment opportunities in rural areas for PWDs, 8.0% were undecided, while the dominant response was 60.8% who agreed with the statement. The findings indicate that 60.8% of respondents who strongly agreed is consistent with literature in earlier chapter that PWDs are deprived equitable access to empowerment opportunities and face unprecedented discrimination in accessing jobs (Monareng et al., 2025; Morwane, Dada & Bornman 2021; Mprah 2020). The result that 60.8% (n =

76) of respondents agreed supports Kahn's (2017) finding that no South African municipality met the 2% employment target for PWDs set by the EEA. However, the level of disagreement suggests gaps in awareness and training among public sector officials, which may limit compliance with this target (Botha & Leah, 2020; Morwane et al., 2021). This finding reveals a failure of the local government transformation process and lack of support for PWDs to achieve their economic independence.

5.5 THE ROLE OF LEPELLE-NKUMPI MUNICIPALITY IN PROMOTION OF ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT FOR PWDS

This section critically investigates how LNLM promote initiatives such awareness campaigns, disability strategies, policies, training and advocacy to assist with integration of PWDs in special economic development programmes. Table 5.2 explores respondents' views on how effectively the municipality promotes inclusive economic empowerment and development for PWDs to gain different perceptive. The respondents in this section perceived that municipalities struggle across all four dimensions.

Table 5.2 shows four clustered dimensions, namely, limited capacity, poor policy effectiveness, weak institutional responsiveness and persistent knowledge deficits, which together constrain the municipality's ability to adequately promote economic empowerment and development programmes for PWDs. According to Table 5.2, capacity constraints are a major challenge for the LNLM in playing an effective role in the promotion of economic empowerment for PWDs.

The results indicate that 65.6% of respondents agreed that capacity-building for PWDs is absent from the municipal development agenda and economic empowerment programmes are overshadowed by social welfare programmes (73.6%). Furthermore, the majority of participants (68.0%) highlighted a lack of mechanisms and monitoring tools to implement inclusive development. These results indicate that municipal structures are perceived as ill-equipped to deliver sustained empowerment programmes for PWDs.

Table 5.2: Role of municipality in promotion of economic empowerment for PWDs

Clustered dimensions	Sub-dimensions	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly agree		Chi-Square p-value
Capacity Constraints	Capacity-building for PWDs is absent from the municipal development agenda	4	3.2%	26	20.8%	13	10.4%	41	32.8%	41	32.8%	< 0.001
	Economic empowerment programmes are overshadowed by social welfare programmes	8	6.4%	5	4.0%	13	10.4%	54	43.2%	38	30.4%	< 0.001
	There is lack of mechanisms and monitoring tools to implement inclusive local economic development	15	12.0%	30	24.0%	20	16.0%	40	32.0%	45	36.0%	0.003
Policy Ineffectiveness	There are no coordinated stakeholder efforts to facilitate LED activities for PWDs	22	17.6%	27	21.6%	17	13.6%	34	27.2%	25	20.0%	0.176
	Policies on inclusivity and strategies related to PWDs are poorly implemented	5	4.0%	19	15.2%	35	28.0%	43	34.4%	23	18.4%	< 0.001
	PWDs remain economically marginalised due to limited implementation of inclusive LED initiatives	3	2.4%	15	12.0%	51	40.8%	36	28.8%	20	16.0%	< 0.001
Institutional Responsiveness	Municipal development programmes are not responsive to the needs of PWDs	16	12.8%	17	13.6%	24	19.2%	55	44.0%	13	10.4%	< 0.001
	Promoting the representation of PWDs is not prioritised due to fragmented knowledge about disability issues	9	7.2%	20	16.0%	18	14.4%	46	36.8%	32	25.6%	< 0.001
	Municipality is still struggling to achieve 7% of representation of PWDs in the workforce	21	16.8%	23	18.4%	12	9.6%	34	27.2%	35	28.0%	0.005
Knowledge Gaps	There is a lack of understanding of disability integration	7	5.6%	21	16.8%	12	9.6%	63	50.4%	22	17.6%	< 0.001
	Disability-focused economic training interventions and support initiatives are absent	15	12.0%	33	26.4%	20	16.0%	43	34.4%	14	11.2%	< 0.001

Source: Author

The clustered dimension of policy ineffectiveness shown in Table 5.2 reveals that 52.8% of respondents agreed that inclusivity policies are poorly implemented, and 44.8% (n = 56) indicated that PWDs remain economically marginalised due to weak policy execution. However, responses on the lack of coordinated stakeholder efforts were more evenly distributed, suggesting less consensus on this particular issue. Overall, the results underscore concerns that the municipality has been unable to translate policy into meaningful action. As shown in Table 5.2, over half of respondents (54.4%) felt that municipal development programmes are not responsive to PWD needs, while 62.4% (n = 78) indicated that representation is not prioritised due to fragmented knowledge of disability issues. In addition, a total of 55.2% (n = 69) of participants observed that the municipality continues to struggle to achieve the 7% workforce representation target for PWDs. Collectively, these findings point to systemic weaknesses in institutional arrangements that limit the municipality's responsiveness to inclusivity demands.

Table 5.2 reveals knowledge gaps with a total of 68.0% of respondents who agreed that there is a lack of understanding of disability integration, and nearly half (45.6%, n = 57) noted the absence of disability-focused training interventions. These patterns highlight a shortage of knowledge and specialised skills within the municipality, which undermines effective planning and implementation of inclusive economic empowerment. This dimension reveals that respondents perceived the municipality as struggling across all four dimensions. The χ^2 test reveals a positive association among the respondents in these sub-dimensions at $p<0.001$. The findings are discussed and analysed in detail below for each sub-dimension.

5.5.1 Lack of Capacity-building for PWDs

As per Table 5.2 above, 24% of the respondents disagreed that capacity-building for PWDs is absent from the municipal development agenda, with 65.6% of the respondents in agreement with the statement, and 10.4% of respondents undecided. This agreement aligns with a report of SALGA (2012) that PWDs are not sufficiently capacitated and included in LED programmes which influence their economic status. This finding implies that majority of respondents have realised that PWDs are not fully integrated in capacity-building programmes of the municipalities. In contrast, Department of Provincial and Local Government (2014) noted great concern that

municipalities lack resource to offer reasonable accommodation and capitate PWDs in economic empowerment projects. A total of 24% of respondents who disagreed, this reveals gaps in acknowledging that municipal officials are not capacitated or equipped to address disability development needs during the implementation of projects (SALGA, 2012; 2020). The literature indicates that several municipalities lack disability mainstreaming policies and strategies to align the capacity-building needs of persons with disabilities with IDP and LED programmes, reflecting insufficient institutional capacity (Khambule & Mtapuri, 2018:40; Ouwencamp & van der Waldt, 2024; SALGA, 2020). The findings reveal the absence of a disability mainstreaming policy and strategy as a result of institutional incapacity which might contribute to poor integration of PWDs in IDPs in LNLM.

5.5.2 Social Welfare Programmes Dominance

Table 5.2 indicates that the majority of respondents (73.6%) agreed that economic empowerment programmes are overshadowed by social welfare programmes. This includes 43.2% who agreed with the statement and 30.4% who strongly agreed. In contrast, 10.4% of respondents were undecided, while 16.0% disagreed with the statement. The finding, with a 73.6% level of agreement, aligns with the conclusions of Graham (2020) and Moyake and Buthelezi (2018), who indicate that disability has historically been approached primarily within health and social welfare contexts, thus contributing to limited opportunities on economic welfare programmes targeting PWDs (Tintal & Kolanisi, 2023). Niewohner, Pierson and Meyers (2019:1171) contend that PWDs are disproportionately excluded from many economic development activities. This concurs with the objective of study which seeks to explore exclusion of PWDs to trigger programmes reviews (Ayoo, 2022; Singh & Chudasama, 2020) and ensure that municipalities play an effective role in disability integration. This finding implies that economic welfare for PWDs has been minimal which does not help them to improve their financial independence. Furthermore, this reveals that empowerment of PWDs in LNLM as local government is socially driven.

5.5.3 Lack of Inclusive LED Mechanisms and Monitoring Tools

As shown in Table 5.2, 68% of respondents agreed that there is a lack of mechanisms and monitoring tools to implement inclusive LED, while 16% disagreed and a further

16% were undecided. The findings correspond with the findings of Kusek and Rist (2004) and Mumba and van der Waldt (2023) that poor mechanisms and monitoring tools to implement inclusive LED projects. This rate of agreement of 68% reveals deficiencies in municipal monitoring and evaluation structures as noted by Ngumbela and Juta (2025). With 68% of respondents agreeing with the statement, this finding concurs with studies conducted by Kusek and Rist (2004) and Yekani et al. (2024) that municipalities are facing monitoring and evaluation systems challenges for the implementation of development projects. Therefore, the absence of mechanism and monitoring systems for LED projects implementation has potential to impede the sustainability of the projects. The level of disagreement of 16% reveals limited knowledge about the significance of mechanisms or monitoring tools to enhance performance of LED implementation in local government (Mabizela & Zwane, 2023). This finding reveals the failure of the LNLM to implement inclusive LED programmes is due limited mechanisms and monitoring tools to guide the implementation process.

5.5.4 Absence of LED Stakeholder Coordinated Efforts

Table 5.2 above shows that 47.2% of the respondents were in agreement that there are no coordinated stakeholder efforts to facilitate special LED activities for PWDs, while 13.6% are undecided, and 39.2% of respondents who disagreed. This finding, with 47.2% of respondents in agreement, aligns with the literature which indicates that municipalities lack the structural support and processes required to coordinate stakeholders' roles in implementing empowerment programmes (Mashinini, 2017; Masuku, Jili & Selepe, 2016; Matlala & Motsepe, 2020). The EETC which underpins this study underscores the significant of strengthening stakeholder relations to support PWDs economic participation (Kidder, 2021; Regina, Heckert, Paz & Cabnal, 2024). The finding that 39.2% of respondents disagreed contrasts with Chiloane and Meyer (2024), who found that municipalities lack a facilitation role with relevant LED stakeholders in addressing the development needs of marginalised groups. Nevertheless, this suggests that stakeholder support is critical to the successful implementation of targeted LED programmes in LNLM.

5.5.5 Poor Implementation of Inclusive Policies and Strategies

According to Table 5.2, a total of 19.2% of respondents disagreed that policies on inclusivity and strategies related to PWDs are poorly implemented, and 28.0% who were undecided. This shows that policies on inclusivity and strategies related to PWDs are poorly implemented in South Africa which worsen the exclusion of PWDs in development projects (Uwizeyimana & Munzhedzi, 2022). The level of agreement of 34.4% concurs with study conducted by Taing (2019: 536) who noted that weakness of South African local government is poor policy implementation and strategies which has dire economic consequences to venerable groups. The 19.2% of respondents who disagreed reflects a limited understanding of inclusive policy implementation, which can negatively affect policy practice (Klefbeck, 2024), as evidenced by municipalities' failure to achieve the 2% workforce representation of PWDs due to poor implementation of the EEA. This finding implies that inclusive policies and strategies are not correctly applied due to noticeable exclusion of PWDs in development initiatives in the LNLM. As noted on previous literature review chapter in this study, the LNLM has no existing municipal disability strategy in place to foster inclusion of PWDs in economic initiatives (LNLM, 2024).

5.5.6 Economic Marginalisation of PWDs

Table 5.2 shows that 44.8% of the respondents were in agreement that PWDs remain economically marginalised due to limited implementation of inclusive LED initiatives, while 40.8% or n=51 of respondents was undecided and 14.4% disagreed with the statement. The level of agreement of 44.8% aligns with study of Basson (2023) that PWDs are marginalised segment of society in economic empowerment initiatives. To support this, a study conducted by Tigere and Moyo (2022:1) noted that in rural areas, PWDs have few opportunities and are excluded in implementation of community development activities. The 14.4% of respondents who disagreed with the statement contrasts with inclusive development theory, which advocates for the integration of marginalised groups in the implementation of economic activities to ensure equitable benefits (Liu, Yang & Gong, 2022). However, 40.8% of respondents who were undecided highlight a potential gap in the realisation of PWDs' economic integration, which can be attributed to "lack of understanding of disability" as noted by Spaan,

Trigt, and Schippers (2024:2). This finding reveals existing discrimination of PWDs or little progress in the implementation of the LNLM's special LED programmes.

5.5.7 Development Programmes Not Responsive to the Needs of PWDs

Table 5.2 shows that a total of 54.4%, of respondents believed that municipal development programmes are not responsive to the needs of PWDs, follow by 19.2% who were undecided, and 26.4%, of the respondents who disagreed. The finding that 54.4% of respondents agreed aligns with Moyake and Buthelezi (2018), who found that disability-related services and programmes often fail to meet the needs of PWDs. In contrast, the 26.4% who disagreed may reflect limited understanding of reasonable accommodation, possibly due to the absence of a dedicated disability strategy within LMLN to align development initiatives with the needs of PWDs (Chirowamhangu, 2024). This finding reveals a need for skills audit or database of PWDs linked to project planning to align their needs to the implemented empowerment programmes within the municipality.

5.5.8 Lack of Promotion and Prioritisation of Disability Representation

As per Table 5.2 indicate that 62.4% of the majority of respondents agreed that promoting PWDs representation is not prioritised due to fragmented knowledge about disability issues, while 23.2% of the respondents disagreed, and 14.4% of the respondents were undecided. The dominant response, with 62.4% of participants in agreement, aligns with SALGA (2012: 4), which reports that knowledge of disability among municipal officials is highly fragmented. The fragmented knowledge on disability integration was also noted by van den Brink, Elbers and Ibrahim (2020). The fact that 23.2% for respondents disagreed highlights a need for training initiatives on disability integration in local government as noted by Ramolobe et al. (2024). These findings imply that absence of promotion of PWDs representation is exacerbated by fragmented knowledge on disability issues as opposed to resources constraints which requires necessary attention to achieve inclusivity in local government.

5.5.9 Poor Workforce Representation of PWDs

Table 5.2 reveals that 55.2% of the respondents agreed that the LNLM continues to struggle to achieve the 7% workforce representation target for PWDs, followed by

9.6% of respondents who were undecided, and 35.2% disagreed with the statement. The level of agreement of 55.2% aligns with empirical findings by Kahn (2017) and Davids (2024) that PWDs are not fully integrated into local government employment force as evident by the unachieved 2% initial representation target. In addition, the LNLM as case study for this research is struggling with representation of PWDs in all municipal structures (LNLM, 2024). This finding reveals limited transformative process and unequal employment opportunities in local government as evident by unachieved 7% current set target of representation of PWDs in the workforce.

5.5.10 Lack of Understanding of Disability Integration

Table 5.2 reveals that 22.4% of the respondents disagreed that there is a lack of understanding of disability integration in local government, while 50.4% agreed, and 17.6% strongly agreed and 9.6% of the respondents were undecided. The majority of respondents (68.0%) who agreed aligns with the findings of Spaan et al. (2024), which confirm a lack of understanding of disability integration among public officials, contributing to the marginalisation of PWDs in the local economy. The NDP (2030) disability analysis identifies significant gaps in disability mainstreaming and calls for appropriate integration measures for PWDs in local government planning and development implementation, a position that contrasts with the 22.4% of respondents who disagreed. The above findings imply that PWDs face social, economic and political exclusion as results of limited understanding of disability integration by programmes implementers.

5.5.11 Absence of Disability-Focused Economic Training and Support

As per Table 5.2, nearly half 45.6% of the respondents noted the absence of disability-focused training interventions, while 38.4% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, and 16.0% of the respondents were undecided. The level of agreement of 45.6% correlates with the study by Moyake and Buthelezi (2018) which found that PWDs experiences limited disability-focused municipal coordinated services such as economic training opportunities. The outcome indicates that 38.4% of the respondents disagreed that disability-focused economic training interventions and support initiatives are absent. This finding aligns with W&RSETA's (2022) assertion that government's present economic intervention efforts to train and support PWDs are

available but appear to be failing to produce significant results. The findings reveal a lack of dedicated disability-friendly economic training support for PWDs to ensure their involvement in the mainstream of municipal economy.

5.6 CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS OF PWDS PARTICIPATION IN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

This section analyses the challenges and barriers identified by respondents that limit the effective participation of PWDs in local economic empowerment. Overall, this section highlights the extent of systemic barriers that inhibit the participation of PWDs in economic empowerment. According to Table 5.3 findings reveal intertwined political, institutional, infrastructural and strategic obstacles, with the strongest patterns pointing to politicisation of programmes, insufficient municipal capacity and enduring exclusion in infrastructure and rural access. The clustered dimensions and sub-dimensions are discussed in detail in this section.

Table 5.3 shows the themes on the current challenges and barriers facing PWDs participation in economic empowerment programmes. Within the politicisation barriers dimension, a substantial proportion of respondents agreed that empowerment projects are politicised (66.4%, n = 83) and that access to education and training opportunities for PWDs remains inadequate (62.4%, n = 78). In addition, 51.2% (n = 64) indicated that disability development issues are addressed as a matter of compliance rather than genuine inclusivity. These findings point to strong perceptions of political interference and tokenistic approaches to disability development. Furthermore, as shown in Table 5.3, responses relating to capacity limitations reveal that 58.4% (n = 73) of respondents believed that employee capacity is insufficient to effectively implement empowerment programmes, while 60.8% (n = 76) indicated that the LNLM fails to address inequalities, negative attitudes, and broader socioeconomic barriers. This points to significant shortfalls in human resources and institutional commitment at the municipal level.

Table 5.3: Challenges and barriers for PWDs participation in economic empowerment

Clustered dimensions	Sub-dimensions	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly agree		Chi-Square p-value
Politicisation Barriers	Empowerment projects are politicised	3	2.4%	10	8.0%	29	23.2%	49	39.2%	34	27.2%	< 0.001
	Inadequate access to education and training opportunities for PWDs	10	8.0%	20	16.0%	17	13.6%	51	40.8%	27	21.6%	< 0.001
	Disability development issues are addressed as a matter of compliance rather than inclusivity	9	7.2%	23	18.4%	29	23.2%	34	27.2%	30	24.0%	0.004
Capacity Limitations	There is inadequate employee capacity to fully implement local economic empowerment programmes, policies and strategies	15	12.0%	21	16.8%	16	12.8%	45	36.0%	28	22.4%	< 0.001
	Municipality does not address inequalities, negative attitudes, the lack of services, social, economic, political and environmental barriers for PWDs	6	4.8%	14	11.2%	29	23.2%	43	34.4%	33	26.4%	< 0.001
Institutional Weaknesses	Inadequate monitoring and enforcement of the institutional framework	8	6.4%	13	10.4%	30	24.0%	46	36.8%	28	22.4%	< 0.001
	Ineffective leadership and management to guide disability strategy implementation	13	10.4%	33	26.4%	9	7.2%	48	38.4%	22	17.6%	< 0.001
	Lack of dedicated resources and budget	14	11.2%	16	12.8%	32	25.6%	37	29.6%	26	20.8%	0.003
Infrastructure Exclusion	Inaccessible municipal buildings, transport and infrastructure have a major impact on the ability of PWDs to participate in the local economy	13	10.4%	7	5.6%	25	20.0%	44	35.2%	36	28.8%	< 0.001
	Lack of access to financial resources in rural areas for PWDs	5	4.0%	23	18.4%	39	31.2%	48	38.4%	10	8.0%	< 0.001
	Limited involvement of PWDs in the planning of economic empowerment programmes	2	1.6%	18	14.4%	29	23.2%	57	45.6%	19	15.2%	< 0.001
	Lack of understanding of LED	8	6.4%	26	20.8%	14	11.2%	52	41.6%	25	20.0%	< 0.001
Strategic Deficit	Lack of political commitment and will to mainstream disability needs in rural areas	4	3.2%	28	22.4%	39	31.2%	31	24.8%	23	18.4%	< 0.001
	Empowerment projects are politicised	3	2.4%	10	8.0%	29	23.2%	49	39.2%	34	27.2%	< 0.001

Source: Author

The clustered dimension of institutional weaknesses highlights further concerns. Nearly 59.2% (n = 74) agreed that monitoring and enforcement of institutional frameworks are inadequate, and 56.0% (n = 70) viewed leadership and management as ineffective in guiding disability strategies. In addition, half of the respondents (50.4%, n = 63) felt that a lack of dedicated resources and budgets undermines local empowerment. Together, these findings underscore weaknesses in institutional structures and governance. Under infrastructure exclusion, 64.0% (n = 80) agreed that inaccessible municipal buildings, transport and infrastructure restrict participation in the local economy. Similarly, 46.4% (n = 58) confirmed that PWDs have limited involvement in planning empowerment programmes, while 46.4% (n = 58) also highlighted lack of access to financial resources in rural areas. These patterns show that environmental and economic exclusions remain entrenched.

Table 5.3 presents the strategic deficit dimension, indicating that 61.6% (n = 77) of respondents perceived a lack of understanding of LED, while 43.2% (n = 54) reported insufficient political will to mainstream disability issues in rural areas. The responses point to strategic shortcomings at both conceptual and leadership levels within the LNLM which need effective intervention from political leaders and management of the municipality. The findings are discussed and analysed in detail below for each sub-dimension.

5.6.1 Empowerment Projects are Politicised

As shown in Table 5.3, a substantial majority of respondents (66.4%) agreed that empowerment projects are politicised, while 10.4% disagreed and 23.2% were undecided. This finding is consistent with the earlier empirical study by Bruce (2015), which highlighted political manipulation of programmes such as the CWP, where patronage systems prioritised political loyalty over the needs of marginalised communities. The 10.4% of respondents who disagreed contrasts with the findings of Tsagae (2023), who reported that political interference frequently undermines the effective implementation of empowerment projects. Generally, these findings suggest that the severe inequalities faced by PWDs can, in part, be attributed to political interference in the administration of municipal projects. Thus, local government will require strong political education interventions and commitment of leadership on projects to achieve equitable benefits.

5.6.2 Inadequate Access to Education and Training Opportunities for PWDs

Table 5.3 reveals that a total of 62.4% of the respondents agreed that PWDs experience inadequate access to education and training opportunities, while 24.0% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, and 13.6% of the respondents were undecided. The finding concurs with literature which reveals that most PWDs do not have adequate education and training interventions to enhance standards of living especially in rural areas (Musenyente, Han & Knigge 2022; Strohwald 2021). The findings of 24.0% of respondents who disagreed suggest a gap in understanding of the significance of inclusive education and training, as a consequence of the availability of special schools in rural areas as noted by Chirowamhangu (2024). The findings imply that training and educational support is vital to empower PWDs to access economic resources within their municipal area to attain sustainable development. In addition, the implication of these findings is that education and training has an influence on the participation of PWDs in empowerment projects.

5.6.3 Lack of Inclusivity for Disability Development Issues and Compliance Approach

Table 5.3 shows that 51.2% of respondents indicated that disability development issues are treated as a matter of compliance rather than inclusivity, while 25.6% disagreed and 23.2% were undecided. This finding aligns with SALGA (2012: 4), which reports that many municipalities approach disability development as a compliance exercise rather than a genuine commitment to inclusive empowerment. In contrast scholars such as Manase (2025) noted the absence of a comprehensive framework for inclusivity that goes beyond compliance approach to ensure the participation of PWDs in development is advocated for at municipal level. The findings imply that the LNLM is not ensuring effective integration of disability development needs for inclusive empowerment projects to move away from the traditional approach of compliance with inclusivity policies.

5.6.4 Inadequate Capacity to Implement Programmes and Policies

Regarding the challenge of inadequate employee capacity to fully implement empowerment programmes and policies, 58.4% of the respondents agreed with statement, while 28.8% disagreed, and 12.8% were undecided. This outcome concurs

with the findings of Juta (2023:165), who argues that capacity limitation and staff inadequacy in LED unit within South African municipalities has attributed to implementation deficiencies of economic programmes and policies. The findings respond to the one of the objective of this study which seeks to ascertain the challenges inhibiting PWDs from participating in economic empowerment programmes. However, 28.8% of the respondents who disagreed underscore potential inconsistencies or gap in recognising importance of employees' capacity to implement LED projects and empower community members as noted by Ngobeni, Nekhavhambe and Mahole (2025). The implication of these findings is that economic projects, strategies and policies of the municipality cannot prosper without adequate staff capacity to drive this process.

5.6.5 Poor Monitoring and Enforcement of Institutional Framework

While 59.2% of the respondents agreed that monitoring and enforcement of institutional frameworks are inadequate, 16.8% of the respondents (6.4%, n=8 disagreed with the statement, and 24.0 were undecided as shown in Table 5.3. The above finding is no different from a previous empirical study conducted by Hart (2024), who asserts that lack of effective municipal monitoring and institutional framework enforcement is the reason for failure of several municipal empowerment projects. With 16.8% of the respondents who disagreed with the statement, the finding reveals a grey area or gaps in the identification of a weak institutional framework as alluded by Makamu (2024). This finding implies that poor monitoring and enforcement of the institutional framework may result in mismanagement of development initiatives which often affect stability of municipal empowerment projects as noted on current study area.

5.6.6 Ineffective Leadership and Management

Overall, 56.0% of respondents agreed that ineffective leadership and management exist in guiding disability strategy implementation, while 36.8% disagreed and 7.2% were undecided. This finding, as reflected in Table 5.3, may be attributed to weak or poor leadership within the municipality. However, 36.8% of the respondents who disagreed with statement, contradicts a study conducted by Mamokhere (2024) who found that ineffective municipal political leadership is unable to drive implementation

of development strategies Thus of poor leadership skills or ethics. In contrast, Mamokhere (2024) emphasises that municipal leadership plays a critical role in guiding the effective implementation of mandatory disability policies and strategies to ensure inclusive development outcomes. The findings imply that ineffective leadership and management can negatively affect implementation of municipal development strategies if not addressed.

5.6.7 Lack of Dedicated Resources for PWDs

Table 5.3 shows that 50.4% of the agreed that there is lack of dedicated budgetary resources, while 24.0% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, and 25.6%, of the respondents were undecided. The 50.4% of respondents who agreed that municipalities lack dedicated resources and budgets reflects the practical disparities experienced by PWDs, as noted by Basson (2023). The above findings shown on Table 5.3 correlate with COGTA (2014) which claim that there is limited budget and resources to economically empower PWDs within rural municipalities due to revenue limitations. The 24.0% of respondents who disagreed aligns with Mabunda, Mvunabandi and Chonco (2023), who argue that while municipal budgets and resources exist, constraints stem from mismanagement, misallocation, and a lack of skilled officials. The implication of this findings reveals unavailability of well managed designated resources, qualified officials and budget to funds disability special programmes meant to enhance quality of their lives.

5.6.8 Inaccessible Municipal Infrastructure

Table 5.3 reveals that 64.0% of respondents agreed that inaccessible municipal buildings or infrastructure restrict participation of PWDs in the local economy, followed by 16.0% of the respondents who disagreed with the statement, and 20.0% who were undecided. This finding indicates that majority of respondents (64.0%) agreed that inaccessible municipal buildings, transport and infrastructure restrict participation of PWDs in local economy. The current literature is in agreement with this findings, which reveal poor municipal disability-friendly infrastructure and transport as a limitation for PWDs to be actively involved in economic activities (Dlamini & Magidimisha, 2025; McDaniels et al., 2018; Ramolobe et al., 2023). Inaccessible infrastructure can hinder the economic independence of PWDs, underscoring the need for urgent municipal

action to provide and coordinate reasonable accommodation from the planning stage, in line with disability-compliant building specifications (Osman, Karuri-Sebina, Jia, Gibberd, Hlongwane, Paterson & Mammon, 2023).

5.6.9 Financial Limitation for PWDs in Rural Areas

Table 5.3 reveals that 46.4% of the respondents agreed that there is lack of access to financial resources in rural areas, while 22.4% disagreed with the statement, and 31.4% were undecided. This outcome of (46.4%) of the respondents who agreed with the statement, concurs with literature review that confirms that PWDs are not economically empowered due to limited access to financial services mostly in rural areas (Peprah, Avorkpo & Kulu, 2023). However, while 22.4% of the respondents who disagreed with statement is potentially inconsistent with study conducted by Sarker (2020) which noted disability limited financial access as results of discrimination against PWDs. The LNLM faces inadequate financial support to implement special programmes (Khambule & Mtapuri, 2018). The findings imply that, addressing accessibility to financial support will require the LNLM to coordinate effective stakeholder relations with financial institutions to support PWDs business or projects as emphasised by Tinta and Kolanisi (2023).

5.6.10 Absence of PWDs in Planning of Empowerment Programmes

Table 5.3 also shows that 60.8% of respondents agreed that PWDs have limited involvement in planning empowerment programmes, whereas 16.0% of the respondents who disagreed with the statement, and 23.2% of the respondents who were undecided. This outcome concurs with study conducted by Sherry et al. (2024) which posits that limited misconceptions of disability by programmes implementers or policy makers has consequently contributed to negligence of PWDs in municipal decision-making. However, 24.0% of the respondents who disagreed suggested limited knowledge or understanding on inclusion of PWDs from economic or social welfare programmes planning which aligns with findings of Tinta and Kolanisi (2023). These findings imply that PWDs are not at the centre of planning, design and implementation of empowerment projects to assist in aligning municipal projects scope with their economic development needs.

5.6.11 Lack of Understanding of LED

According to Table 5.3 shows that 61.6% of the respondents perceived a lack of understanding of LED, followed by 27.2% of the respondents who disagreed and 11.2% of the respondents who were undecided. This finding indicates that a total percentage (61.6%) of the respondents agreed that lack of understanding of LED as challenge for municipal LED officials. This finding aligns with the literature reviewed in the previous chapter, which indicates that many municipalities do not prioritise special LED programmes due to limited understanding of their purpose and significance in improving the socioeconomic conditions of marginalised communities (Meyer & Meyer, 2016; Rogerson, 2019). The 27.2% of respondents who disagreed may reflect a gap in recognising that numerous LED projects fail because of this limited understanding, underscoring the need for robust training and adequately resourced, competent LED units, as suggested by Mumba and van der Waldt (2023). This finding implies that limited LED understanding is reason behind incorrect implementation of LED initiatives which is not inclusive to all community members.

5.6.12 Lack of Political Commitment and Will

From Table 5.3 a total of 25.6% of the respondents disagreed that there is lack of political commitment and will to mainstream disability needs in rural areas, 31.2% were undecided, and 56.0% agreed with the statement. The finding of 56.0% of the respondents who agreed with statement concurs with outcome of Pillay et al. (2023) who assert that municipalities encounter an absence of political commitment and will to integrate disability needs in empowerment programmes for them to be self-reliant. To support this, a study by Tsagae (2023) noted that lack of political will and instability displace needs of PWDs and worsen their exclusion in development activities. That fact that 25.6% of the respondents disagreed exposes a potential grey area on understanding the significance of political leadership’s commitment and support in addressing disability needs which will require political education, as noted by Thebe (2016). The findings reveal that political leaders are not prioritising the support of empowerment PWDs in municipal programmes which is unfortunate and unjust for PWDs.

5.7 INVOLVEMENT OF PWDS IN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES

Table 5.4 shows the views and perspectives of respondents to gather evidence if the PWDs are involved in municipal economic strategies and programmes. This was necessary to check if disability development needs are only acknowledged on paper without actionable application. This section identified five clustered dimension (tokenistic practices, resource constraints, educational disadvantage and municipal ineffectiveness) which reveals an inactive involvement of PWDs in development matters of the LNLM as per Table 5.4.

The responses in this section highlight a strong perception that PWDs' involvement remains limited and often tokenistic. Persistent resource shortages, educational barriers and municipal ineffectiveness were identified as major constraints, suggesting that greater institutional commitment and resource allocation are required to achieve genuine inclusion. Table 5.4 identified tokenistic practices as a clustered dimension where a large share of respondents agreed that PWDs involvement in empowerment programmes is driven by compliance rather than genuine inclusivity (65.6%, n = 82). Similarly, 68.0% (n = 85) indicated that PWDs' rights to inclusive participation are not being adequately addressed. Limited involvement in development forums and unsatisfactory representation in programme planning were also confirmed by 60.8% (n = 76) and 64.0% (n = 80) of respondents, respectively. The χ^2 test results show that, at <0.001, there is agreement among respondents' perceptions. This implies that the majority of the respondents were in agreement with the variables. These results show that PWDs' participation is widely perceived as symbolic rather than substantive.

The dimension of resource constraints was also strongly evident. More than 64.8% (n = 81) agreed that insufficient resources hinder reasonable accommodation in LED, while just over half (52.0%, n = 65) confirmed that equitable participation in IDP is lacking. These findings underscore the practical resource shortages that restrict meaningful inclusion.

Table 5.4: Involvement of PWDs in economic empowerment programmes

Clustered dimensions	Sub-dimensions	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly agree		Chi-Square p-value
Tokenistic Practices	The involvement of PWDs in empowerment programmes is driven by compliance rather than true inclusivity	4	3.2%	16	12.8%	23	18.4%	62	49.6%	20	16.0%	< 0.001
	PWDs' right to inclusive participation in the mainstream local economy is not being adequately addressed	4	3.2%	12	9.6%	24	19.2%	46	36.8%	39	31.2%	< 0.001
	Limited involvement of PWDs in municipal various development structures in rural areas	9	7.2%	21	16.8%	19	15.2%	51	40.8%	25	20.0%	< 0.001
	Representation of PWDs in programmes implementation and development is unsatisfactory	5	4.0%	20	16.0%	20	16.0%	54	43.2%	26	20.8%	< 0.001
Resource Constraints	Insufficient resources to provide reasonable accommodation for all communities' needs, LED initiatives	8	6.4%	10	8.0%	26	20.8%	52	41.6%	29	23.2%	< 0.001
	Lack of equitable participation in IDP	11	8.8%	21	16.8%	28	22.4%	38	30.4%	27	21.6%	0.003
Educational Disadvantage	No involvement of PWDs in the community workers and comprehensive rural development programmes	5	4.0%	21	16.8%	30	24.0%	38	30.4%	31	24.8%	< 0.001
	Limited education on disability contributes to discrimination resource sharing and decision-making	12	9.6%	14	11.2%	20	16.0%	51	40.8%	28	22.4%	< 0.001
	Lack of LED outreach programmes in the municipality	12	9.6%	19	15.2%	25	20.0%	50	40.0%	19	15.2%	< 0.001
Municipal Ineffectiveness	The Municipality is struggling to empower communities economically and socially	6	4.8%	8	6.4%	25	20.0%	65	52.0%	21	16.8%	< 0.001
	Economic empowerment projects targeting communities, including PWDs, have not had a positive impact on economic growth or improved the economic status of PWDs	26	20.8%	25	20.0%	18	14.4%	36	28.8%	20	16.0%	0.098

Source: Author

Regarding educational disadvantage, 55.2% (n = 69) of respondents indicated that PWDs are excluded from key community and rural development programmes ($\chi^2 < 0.001$), while 63.2% (n = 79) reported that limited disability education contributes to discrimination in decision-making and resource allocation. Furthermore, 55.2% (n = 69) indicated that LED outreach programmes are minimal. This pattern reveals that educational and outreach gaps perpetuate disadvantage and limit awareness of disability issues.

Table 5.4 reveals that municipal ineffectiveness was strongly recognised in this clustered dimension. More than two-thirds of respondents (68.8%, n = 86) agreed that the municipality is struggling to empower communities economically and socially. In contrast, views on whether empowerment projects have improved the economic status of PWDs were more evenly distributed, with less clear consensus emerging. Persistent resource shortages, educational barriers and municipal ineffectiveness were identified as major constraints, suggesting that greater institutional commitment and resource allocation are required to achieve genuine inclusion. The findings are discussed and analysed in detail below.

5.7.1 Inclusion of PWDs in Empowerment Programmes Is Driven by Compliance

As shown in Table 5.4, a substantial majority of respondents (65.6%) agreed that the involvement of PWDs in empowerment programmes is driven by compliance rather than genuine inclusivity, while 18.4% were undecided and 16.0% disagreed. The outcome reveals that a total percentage (65.6%) of respondents agreed that PWDs involvement in empowerment programmes is driven by compliance rather than true inclusivity. The findings indicate that majority of respondents 65.6% are in agreement with findings of Charles et al. (2022), that PWDs in various programmes in government is treated as paper compliance work rather than true strategic commitment for inclusivity. The findings of 16.0% of respondents who disagreed is inconsistent with literature which reveals that PWDs inclusion in empowerment projects has been a tick-box exercise due to absence of municipal commitment to change (Charles et al., 2022; Ngcobo & Gumede 2022). This finding implies a need for the LNLM to shift from compliance to intersectional commitment model as noted by Mahomed and Stein (2017) to ensure disability true developmental integration.

5.7.2 Limitation of PWDs' Right to Inclusive Participation

The data presented in Table 5.4 indicates that 12.8% of respondents disagreed with the statement that PWDs' right to inclusive participation in the mainstream local economy is not being adequately addressed, while 19.2% of respondents were undecided. The outcome of 68.8% of respondents who agreed, concurs with literature that local government is compromising right of PWDs to participate and failing to fully integrate PWDs in economic activities as evident by unachieved 2% representation target (Charles et al., 2022; Moyake & Buthelezi, 2018). The findings indicate that PWDs' rights to inclusive participation are not being adequately addressed, with 12.8% of respondents disagreeing with the statement. This outcome contravenes section 9 of Constitution which emphasis equality and discourages all forms of discrimination (Republic of South Africa, 1996). However, this finding implies that municipalities such as LMLN are not intentional about disability participatory plans to adequately address equitable economic integrations benefits.

5.7.3 Exclusion of PWDs in Development Structures

Table 5.4 reveals a total percentage (60.8%) of respondents who agreed that involvement of PWDs in various municipal development structures in rural areas is limited, followed by 24.0% of the respondents who disagreed with the statement, and 15.2% who were undecided. The outcome aligns with studies conducted by Moyake and Buthelezi (2018) and Tinta (2020) which reveal that PWDs are confronted with limited engagement in various development forums, specifically in deep rural areas. Conversely, Tigere and Moyo (2022) assert that PWDs in rural areas are economically marginalised because they cannot advocate for their needs in development forums. This outcome implies that limited involvement of PWDs in municipal development forums is a result of structural deficiencies as noted by Sambumbu and Boniface (2017).

5.7.4 Poor Representation of PWDs in Programmes Implementation

Table 5.4 indicates that a 20.0% of the respondents disagreed that there the representation of PWDs in programme implementation and development is unsatisfactory, 16.0% of the respondents were undecided, and 64.0% of the respondents agreed with the statement. The outcome is in agreement with LMLN's

IDP (2024) which reveals that the municipality struggles to achieve equitable representation of PWDs at all stages of programme implementation and development. Conversely 20.0% of the respondents who disagreed, reveal a potential limitation gap on “transformative agenda of PWDs which require operational changes” as suggested by Charles et al. (2022:142). This finding implies that deficient representation of PWDs in formation and implementation empowerment projects exists which derails the opportunities for PWDs to unlock their potential.

5.7.5 Reasonable Accommodation Resources Restrictions

As per Table 5.41, a total of 64.8% of respondents agreed that insufficient resources hinder reasonable accommodation in LED, followed by 20.8% of the respondents who were undecided, and 14.4% who disagreed with the statement. The findings indicate that insufficient resources hinder provision of reasonable accommodation in LED which might be the reason for marginalisation of PWDs in development initiatives as raised by 64.8% of agreed respondents (Basson, 2023). The literature indicates that the lack of LED project documents in braille and inadequate sign language interpreter training in the LNLM are major barriers to integrating PWDs into LED programmes (Hlohlolo, 2023: 224; Panda & Kaur, 2024), a finding that contrasts with the 14.4% of respondents who disagreed. These findings further suggest that LED initiatives will fall short of reducing inequality and poverty among marginalised groups if municipalities continue to face resource constraints and the absence of a dedicated disability strategy, as reflected in the 2024–2025 IDP. This implies that effective collaboration with disability stakeholders or advocacy rights groups is necessary to mobilise resources to attract involvement of PWDs in LED.

5.7.6 Lack of Equitable Participation in IDP

The data presented in Table 5.4, indicates that 56.0% of respondents are in agreement that lack of equitable participation in IDP exist in the municipality, while 31.2% of respondents were undecided and 25.6%, disagreed with the statement. The findings show that nearly over half of respondents 56.0% agreed that absence of equitable participation in IDP is real in municipalities. Conversely, a report by SALGA (2020) noted inadequate participation of PWDs in IDP programmes. Again, this finding aligns with empirical study of Nkgapele and Mokgolobotho (2024) who contend that the

PWDs participation government is not prioritise and given attention it deserves especially in planning of IDP. The 25.6% of respondents who disagreed with statement, suggest a fragmented knowledge on inclusive integration of PWDs in IDPs, since disability historically has been addressed in a piecemeal and fragmented way with limited engagement on decision-making (Manase, 2025). This findings reveals lack of inclusive IDP planning approach to accommodate PWDs which has dire consequences for municipal IDPs to respond to the development needs of PWDs.

5.7.7 Shortage of PWDs in Community Workers Programmes

From Table 5.4, 55.2% of the respondents agreed that PWDs are not involved in key community and rural development programmes, whereas 20.8% of the respondents disagreed, and a total of 24.0% of the respondents were undecided. This result aligns with the literature that PWDs are excluded from CWP due to nepotism and political interference in recruitment process within municipalities (Bruce, 2015; Kobedi et al., 2022; Mlambo et al., 2022). The findings divulge reasons why PWDs are often frustrated for being recipients of social welfare programmes only as opposed to economic programmes which is noted INDS (1997). The 20.8% of the respondents who disagreed with this statement, reveal a potential gap in the integration of PWDs in the mainstream of government programmes as alluded by Charles et al. (2023). This finding implies that the LNLM relies on a blanket approach to engage PWDs in programmes without specified project approach for their inclusion and not immune from political interference in the administration.

5.7.8 Limited Education on Disability

As per Table 5.4, 63.2% of respondents highlighted that limited education on disability contributes to discrimination in decision-making and resource sharing, followed by 20.8% of the respondents who disagreed with the statement, and 16.0% were undecided. This results aligns with the findings of Al-Taii (2023) who note that limited education about disability has worsen discrimination by producing ignorance and prejudice which attributed to exclusion of PWDs in public resource sharing or decision-making in government. With 20.8% of the respondents who disagreed that lack of education about disability contribute to segregation, this highlights limitations in awareness campaigns to enable support of local government officials to provide

inclusive equitable economic opportunities (Chumo et al., 2023). This finding implies that disability educational sensitisation by the LNLM and training investment is lacking for purpose of creating an enabling environment for equal benefits in resource sharing or decision-making.

5.7.9 Lack of Special LED Outreach Programmes

Table 5.4 shows that 60.0% of the respondents agreed that special LED outreach programmes in the municipality is lacking, while 24.8% of the respondents have disagreed with this statement, whereas a total of 20.0% were undecided. The level of agreement aligns with findings of Mukwarami, Mukwarami and Tengeh (2020) who assert that lack of LED outreach programmes in the municipalities is caused by poor financial support and revenue deficit. However, 24.8% of the respondents who disagreed is inconsistent with literature which posits that lack of special LED outreach activities is due to potential institutional capacity to drive programmes (Makamu, 2024; Makhaye & Subban, 2024). The findings reveal a noticeable absence of outreach programmes which reveals challenges with internal municipal capacity as shown by underrepresentation of PWDs in LED programmes in municipalities.

5.7.10 Struggle for Economic and Social Empowerment

The findings show that majority of respondents at 68.8% agreed that the LNLM is struggling to empower communities economically and socially, followed by 20.0% of the respondents who were undecided, and 11.2% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. The findings align with study conducted by Shilangu (2019) which noted that South African municipalities are struggling to empower marginalised people socially or economically due leadership incapacity. Leadership capacity constraints have potential to deprive communities' members economic and social opportunities. Mokoena and Molepo (2024) agree that municipalities are failing to involve communities in economic and social projects to empower them. This finding implies that PWDs wellbeing will not improve socially or economically since the LNLM is unable to empower them.

5.7.11 Ineffective Economic Empowerment Projects

Table 5.4, reveals that 44.8% of the respondents agreed that economic empowerment projects targeting communities and PWDs have not had a positive to improve their economic status, followed by 40.8% of respondents who disagreed, and lastly 14.4% were undecided. This aligns with Kanayo, Ndlovu, and Agholor (2021: 106), who note that while economic empowerment programmes such as the EPWP have improved wages and skills in some areas, they have failed to achieve inclusivity or provide sustainable solutions to high unemployment. LNLM is also struggling with the implementation of an exit strategy for economic programmes such as EPWP or CWP, which disadvantage people who want to participate in the programme for first time (LNLM, 2025). These findings imply that few exist empowerment projects in the LNLM are not meeting disability development needs and are not helpful for PWDs' economic enhancement. Again, this reveals a lack of implementation or enforcement of programmes which will have positive economic effects on PWDs.

5.8 EFFECTIVENESS OF INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES, POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

Table 5.5 provides respondents' views on the effectiveness and impact of inclusive development strategies and programmes that aim to empower PWDs. This section underscores that effectiveness and impact are constrained by persistent governance failures, inadequate programme outcomes, weak support structures and poor strategic alignment. The results reflect widespread perceptions that, despite the presence of policies and initiatives, these have not translated into measurable empowerment gains for PWDs.

Table 5.5: Effectiveness of inclusive development strategies, policies and programmes

Clustered dimensions	Sub-dimensions	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly agree		Chi-Square p-value
Governance Failures	Lack of a monitoring and evaluation system affects the sustainability of empowerment programmes	11	8.8%	12	9.6%	34	27.2%	49	39.2%	19	15.2%	< 0.001
	Ineffective empowerment programmes are a result of weak institutional structures and poor governance	16	12.8%	13	10.4%	30	24.0%	51	40.8%	15	12.0%	< 0.001
Programme Ineffectiveness	PWDs are marginalised in programmes for small, micro and medium enterprises that are coordinated through LED initiatives	21	16.8%	17	13.6%	32	25.6%	32	25.6%	23	18.4%	0.122
	The current programmes and policies are not impactful in addressing the disabling environment for PWDs	14	11.2%	12	9.6%	26	20.8%	42	33.6%	31	24.8%	< 0.001
	Municipal empowerment programmes are not impactful on PWDs' quality of life	10	8.0%	26	20.8%	39	31.2%	26	20.8%	24	19.2%	0.002
	Disability policies are not effectively implemented to ensure reasonable accommodation	22	17.6%	15	12.0%	39	31.2%	28	22.4%	21	16.8%	0.010
Support Deficiency	Economic empowerment interventions for PWDs have not improved their financial independence and reduced income inequality	1	0.8%	25	20.0%	35	28.0%	41	32.8%	23	18.4%	< 0.001
	Municipality development strategies do not adequately support disability initiatives within communities	16	12.8%	16	12.8%	39	31.2%	31	24.8%	23	18.4%	0.003
Strategic Misalignment	Lack of effective disability strategies undermines the promotion and evaluation of empowerment programmes	11	8.8%	12	9.6%	36	28.8%	42	33.6%	24	19.2%	< 0.001
	Economic empowerment initiatives and strategies are not aligned with the actual empowerment needs of PWDs	5	4.0%	21	16.8%	32	25.6%	40	32.0%	27	21.6%	< 0.001
	Insufficient support from stakeholders and government departments in implementation	16	12.8%	17	13.6%	39	31.2%	31	24.8%	22	17.6%	0.004

Source: Author

Table 5.5 identified governance failures, inadequate programme outcomes, weak support structures and poor strategic alignment as four clustered dimensions. In the clustered dimension of governance failures, over half of respondents (54.4%, n = 68) agreed that a lack of monitoring and evaluation systems undermines the sustainability of empowerment programmes. Similarly, 52.8% (n = 66) indicated that weak institutional structures and poor governance contribute to ineffective empowerment outcomes. These findings highlight concerns about the inability of governance structures to ensure accountability and programme continuity. The dimension of programme ineffectiveness showed varied responses. While one-quarter of respondents (25.6%, n = 32) agreed and another 18.4% (n = 23) strongly agreed that PWDs are marginalised in programmes for small, micro and medium enterprises, this item showed less overall consensus. By contrast, a majority identified shortcomings in current policies and programmes, with 58.4% (n = 73) reporting limited impact on disabling environments and 40.0% (n = 50) indicating no improvement in the quality of life of PWDs. Furthermore, 39.2% (n = 49) agreed that disability policies are not effectively implemented to ensure reasonable accommodation.

The general trend suggests that while marginalisation within specific programmes is contested, broader perceptions of ineffectiveness dominate. Table 5.5 highlights a support deficiency, with 51.2% (n = 64) of respondents indicating that empowerment interventions have not enhanced financial independence or reduced income inequality among PWDs. Similarly, 43.2% (n = 54) confirmed that municipal strategies do not adequately support disability initiatives within communities. These responses point to limited institutional and systemic support for meaningful empowerment. The theme of strategic misalignment also emerged strongly. More than half (52.8%, n = 66) agreed that a lack of effective disability strategies undermines the promotion and evaluation of empowerment programmes. Furthermore, 53.6% (n = 67) indicated that current initiatives are not aligned with the actual empowerment needs of PWDs, while 42.4% (n = 53) observed insufficient support from stakeholders and government departments in implementation. These findings indicate that empowerment strategies often fail to match practical realities and lack external reinforcement. The findings are discussed and analysed in detail below.

5.8.1 Lack of a Monitoring and Evaluation System

As shown in Table 5.5, 54.4% of respondents agreed that inadequate monitoring and evaluation systems undermine the sustainability of empowerment programmes, 18.4% disagreed, and 27.2% were undecided. The findings indicate that 54.4% agreed and 18.4% of the respondents disagreed that lack of M&E systems undermines the sustainability of empowerment programmes. However, Shava (2023) asserts that the LNLM has no M&E system for LED programmes which align with views of 54.4% of respondents who agreed with the statement above. The sustainability of projects depends on effective M&E system to help track progress to achieve desired results (Nalubega & Uwizeyimana, 2019 cited in Nkgapele & Mofokeng, 2024:159). The findings imply that absence of M&E has potential to disrupt progress and intended outcome of municipal projects which necessitate a need for effective M&E on each project.

5.8.2 Weak Institutional Structures and Poor Governance

Table 5.5 indicates that 52.8% of respondents agreed that weak institutional structures and poor governance contribute to ineffective empowerment outcomes, 23.2% disagreed, and 24.0% were undecided. The findings indicate that 52.8% of the respondents agreed with the statement. This aligns with views of Makamu (2024) that weak institutional framework and poor governance hinder progress of municipal programmes by diverting resources. With 23.2% of the respondents who disagreed is On the other hand, with literature which recognised poor political leadership and weak oversight structures as reason behind programmes ineffectiveness (SALGA, 2022; Shava, 2023). These findings imply that municipality should strengthen enforcement frameworks and ensure compliance with policies for purpose of improving accountability in projects implementation.

5.8.3 Marginalisation of PWDs in SMMEs Programmes

According to Table 5.5, 44.0% of respondents agreed that PWDs are marginalised in LED coordinated SMMEs, followed by 30.4% of the respondents who disagreed with the statement, and 25.6% of the respondents were undecided. The findings indicate that 44.0% of the respondents that PWDs are marginalised in LED coordinated SMMEs. This finding concurs with study conducted by Monareng et al. (2025) which

reveal absence of disability-focused business training and limited financial support for PWDs to pursue entrepreneurial ventures in the LNLM has led to marginalisation of this minority group. The 30.4% of the respondents who disagreed with the statement suggest a potential gap in understanding significance of disability business training which might be attributed to insufficient database of PWDs owned business in the municipality (Saran et al., 2019). The findings imply that municipality must develop a LED database of PWDs and coordinate SMMEs training for them to improve their financial independence in local economy.

5.8.4 Disabling Environment for PWDs

The current programmes and policies are not impactful in addressing the disabling environment for PWDs whereby 58.4% agreed, while 20.8% disagreed with this statement, and a total of 20.8% were undecided. On the other hand, the findings indicate that majority of respondents 58.4% agreed current programmes and policies are not impactful in addressing the disabling environment for PWDs in municipal areas. This finding aligns with W&RSETA (2022), which reported that current local government interventions and policy efforts have limited impact, as PWDs continue to face multiple barriers to improving their quality of life. The 20.8% of respondents who disagreed may reflect fragmented knowledge regarding the implementation of disability-inclusive policies and programmes, as noted by the Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria (2023). Overall, the findings suggest that limited implementation of programmes and policies for PWDs contributes to the continued ineffectiveness in addressing disabling environments and their needs.

5.8.5 Ineffective Implementation of Disability Policies

The findings show that 39.2% of respondents agreed that disability policies are not effectively implemented to ensure reasonable accommodation, 31.2% were undecided, and 29.6% disagreed. The results indicate that 39.2% of the respondents agreed concur with the study of Winchester (2024) which cited non-reasonable accommodation as results of lack of capacity to understand implementation of legislative frameworks that empower PWDs. Conversely, the LNLM (2025) does not have a disability strategy to translate disability components into budgets, programmes and policies which contravene implementation Disability Framework for Local

Government 2009 and White Paper Integrated National Disability Strategy (Republic of South Africa, 1997). Therefore 29.6% of the respondents who disagreed, can be attributed to failure or potential gaps in reasonable accommodation measures in policies due to blanket approach as noted by Gresse (2025). This finding implies that the LNLM must intensify training of disability reasonable accommodation policies to achieve the intended outcome them. Again, this finding reveals that the LNLM apply blanket approach in implementation of policies contribute to ineffectiveness of programmes as well.

5.8.6 Programmes Not Impactful on PWDs Financial and Income Inequality

Table 5.5 shows that 51.2% of respondents agreed that empowerment interventions have not improved financial independence or reduced income inequality among PWDs, 20.8% disagreed, and 28.0% were undecided. The findings indicate that 51.2% of the respondents agreed with the statement which correlate with existing literature review claims that PWDs quality of life has not improved and mostly rely on support grants due to high rate of their unemployment (Du Toit et al., 2020; Mongale, 2022; Zondo et al., 2024). In addition, Saran et al. (2019) support these findings, indicating that disability programmes aimed at improving the economic status of PWDs have been inconsistent and poorly aligned with their needs, resulting in continued marginalisation. Conversely, local government reports have acknowledged that interventions for PWDs had little appreciable positive impact (LNLM, 2025) which reveals need for programmes reviews. These findings imply that municipal implemented economic projects has not financial assistant them to be self-reliant on income.

5.8.7 Development Strategies Not Responsive to Disability Initiatives

About 43.2% of respondents agreed that existing municipal development strategies do not adequately support disability initiatives within communities, followed by 31.2%, of the respondents who were undecided, and 25.6% who disagreed. The results in Table 5.5 show undivided responses. The findings show that 43.2% (n = 54) of respondents agreed with Mumba and van der Waldt (2023) that municipal LED strategies face internal obstacles such as misalignment, poor integration, and weak stakeholder coordination. In contrast, 25.6% aligned with Makhaye and Subban

(2024), who argue that while strategies exist and are linked to special programmes, weak enforcement due to limited understanding of LED special projects remains the main barrier. This finding implies that the LNLM is struggling to support disabilities initiatives, strengthen relationship with disability sectors and involve them on planning of municipal development strategies such as IDP or LED to match their project's needs.

5.8.8 Lack of Effective Disability Strategies

Taking into account that the LNLM must have an effective disability strategy to promote and evaluate empowerment programmes with a total of 52.8% of the respondents agreeing that a lack of effective disability strategies undermines the promotion and evaluation of empowerment programmes. Table 5.5 indicate that 18.4% of the respondents disagreed with this statement, whereas a total of 28.8%, of the respondents were undecided. This finding concurs with literature that unclear municipal strategies adversely affect the promotion of PWDs engagement in economic interventions and decision-making (Ayoo, 2022; Singh & Chudasama 2020). The 18.4% of the respondents who disagreed, aligns with findings of Tinta and Kolanisi (2023) that development strategies are available but need to have strategies interventions attract participation of PWDs and assist tracking impact of this intervention.

5.8.9 Misalignment of Empowerment Initiatives and Needs of PWDs

As per Table 5.5, 53.6% of the respondents agreed that current initiatives are not aligned with the actual empowerment needs of PWDs, followed by 20.8% who were undecided, and 20.8% who disagreed with the statement. The results show that majority of respondents 53.6 agreed that current initiatives are not aligned with the actual empowerment needs of PWDs. This concurs with recent literature that that disability targets and needs are not effectively incorporated into economic empowerment interventions within local government (Ramolobe et al., 2023; Sango, 2022). Hence, a study conducted by Kudzotsa and Mlambo (2025) noted lack of consultation and inconsideration of needs of PWDs during the designs of the programmes. The 20.8% of respondents who disagreed suggest that municipalities may lack intentional and measurable disability targets, limiting the alignment of

economic empowerment initiatives within the IDP (Majam & Uwizeyimana, 2018). This finding implies that the LED strategy for the LNLM is not aligned with principle of inclusive development to ensure that PWDs are not left behind in the pursuit of equitable economic development benefits.

5.8.10 Insufficient Stakeholder Support

Table 5.51 shows that 42.4% of respondents agreed that stakeholder and government support for implementing empowerment programmes is insufficient, 31.2% were undecided, and 26.4% disagreed. This aligns with Makhaye and Subban (2024), who attribute limited implementation support to unclear stakeholder roles and responsibilities, leading to reluctance to support disability projects. With 26.4% of the respondents who disagreed, this can be attributed to unnoticeable failed and unsustainable empowerment projects as results of lack of collaboration (Mumba & van der Wald, 2023). The implication of this findings reveals significance of fostering partnership in the implementation of projects to ensure prosperity and resource attraction of economic projects for PWDs.

5.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided and examined the findings of effects of local economic empowerment programmes on PWDs within the LNLM. The research findings were presented and statistically analysed in this chapter, and the significant findings were discussed. The findings provide both descriptive and inferential evidence that highlight systemic shortcomings as well as areas of partial progress. Taken together, the results indicate that while policies and programmes for disability inclusion formally exist within the municipality, their practical implementation is inconsistent, unevenly experienced and frequently undermined by structural barriers, weak governance and insufficient capacity. The representation and effectiveness emerged as the most reliable predictors of empowerment outcomes, yet both are presently inadequate. The representation significantly contributes to empowerment outcomes, underscoring its importance as a structural driver. Active involvement of PWDs remains largely symbolic, further limiting the realisation of inclusive development for PWDs. The PLS-SEM highlighted the municipality’s role as a significant contributor to empowerment, but the inconsistency of its impact illustrates shortcomings in inclusive programme

design and implementation. The barriers and challenges economic empowerment remain deeply embedded at the LNLM. These barriers include capacity constraints, politicisation and institutional weaknesses which has a negative influence on empowerment outcomes, highlighting entrenched structural and institutional deficiencies. Perceptions of barriers were varied by job level and experience, with senior and experienced respondents recognising them more strongly. The effectiveness and impact of inclusive empowerment strategies are inconsistent. PLS-SEM results confirmed effectiveness and impact as the strongest predictor of empowerment outcomes, yet these strategies are undermined by uneven implementation, limited resources and weak governance. Furthermore, strategic misalignment between empowerment policies and actual needs of PWDs contributes to poor implementation. The study concludes that the LNLM has not fully achieved its developmental mandate to integrate disability into economic empowerment programmes. For PWDs' quality of life to be meaningfully improved, the municipality must strengthen their representation, ensure consistency in implementation, dismantle entrenched barriers and transition from tokenistic to genuine participation of PWDs in empowerment programmes. The next chapter presents the qualitative data findings.

CHAPTER 6: PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF QUALITATIVE DATA

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the results obtained from the analysed quantitative data gathered through the research survey questionnaire. This chapter focuses on the qualitative findings derived from in-depth interviews conducted with participant within an area of the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality (LNLM) with municipal officials, caregivers, PWDs involved in business (micro and macro), persons with disabilities (PWDs), traditional leaders, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and stakeholders. The primary aim of the interviews was to examine the effects of local economic empowerment programmes on PWDs within the LNLM. The chapter begins with an analysis of the main themes identified in the study, with findings discussed in relation to the research objectives. The themes were coded through ATLAS.ti software (Version 25.01.32924) and presented in the form of graphs, Sankey diagram and bar graph to virtualise findings generated from interviewed respondents.

6.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In pursuing the study's aim, the specific research objectives are set out as follows:

- To assess the status of representation of PWDs for inclusive participation in local economic empowerment programmes in the context of South African municipalities.
- To explore the role of municipality in promotion of inclusive local economic empowerment programmes that support PWDs.
- To ascertain the challenges and barriers inhibiting PWDs from participating in local economic empowerment programmes in the LNLM.
- To explore the extent to which PWDs are actively involved in development and implementation of economic programmes, strategies and policies.
- To assess the effectiveness and impact of implementation of inclusive development strategies, policies, programmes and support from the government on economic empowerment programmes in the LNLM.

6.3 STUDY THEMES

Guided by the interviews with the 15 participants, the main themes identified are presented in Figure 6.1.

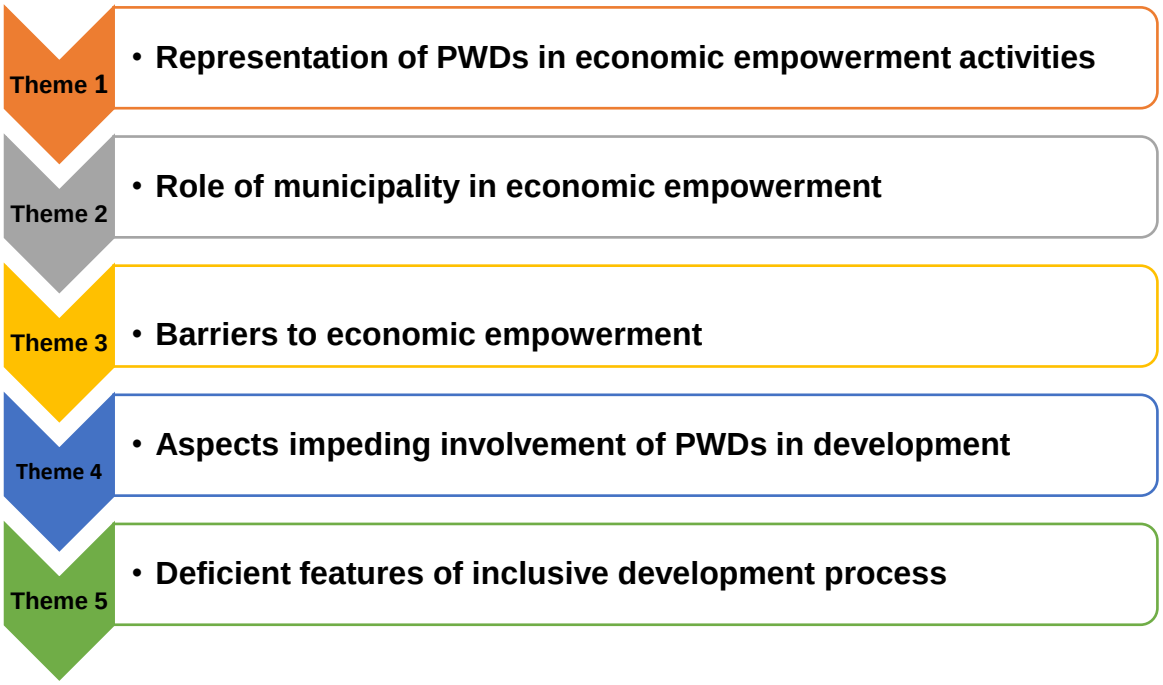


Figure 6.1. Identified main themes of qualitative data

Source: Author

To facilitate easy reference, the analysis was aligned with the five key themes discussed, as outlined in Figure 6.1. The findings from interview data are discussed and analysed in detail below with literature reviews, its implications and divergence or conversely on previous studies, and are organised according to following themes.

6.3.1 Representation of PWDs in Economic Empowerment Activities

This primary theme examines status of representation of PWDs for purpose of inclusive participation in economic empowerment programmes in the LNLM. The major findings which emerged from the qualitative data included LED forum non-participation, PWDs recruitment limitation, no promotion of disability participation, poor understanding of PWDs and deficient PWDs representation within the municipality as depicted in Figure 6.2.

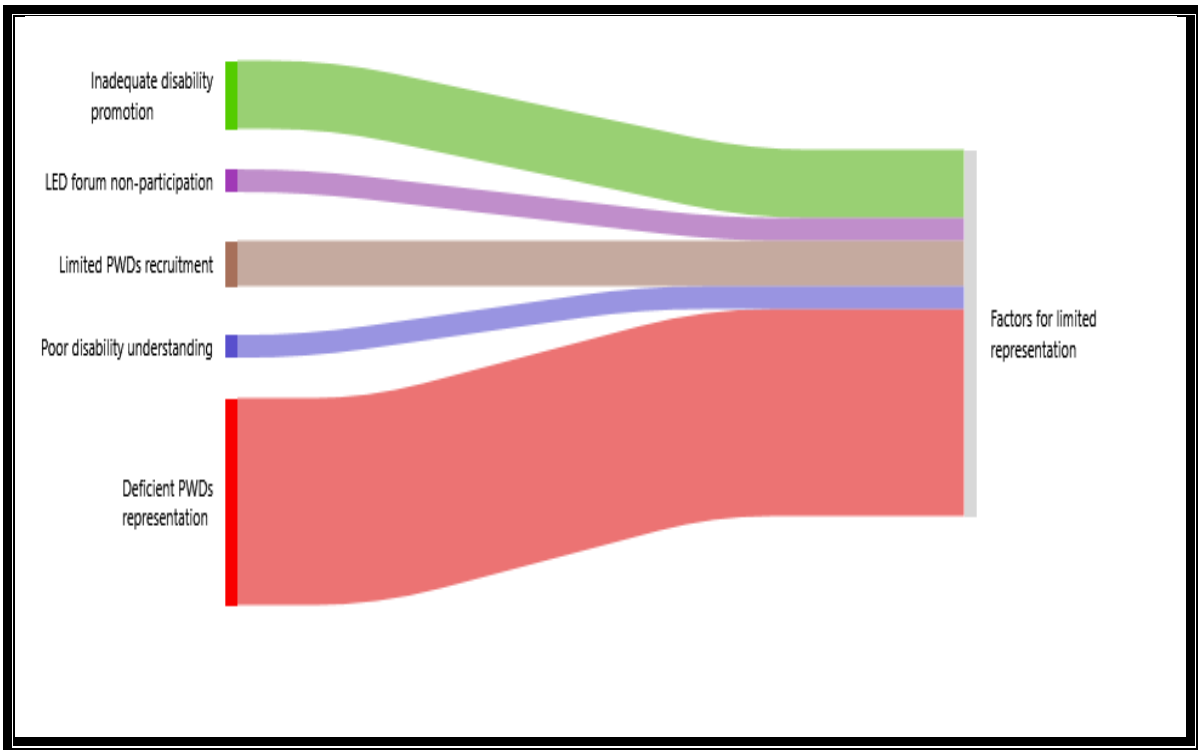


Figure 6.2: Limitation factors for PWDs representation in economic empowerment programmes

Source: Author

The sub-themes illustrated on Figure 6.2 reveals systematic exclusion of PWDs in economic empowerment activities (Tigere & Moyo, 2022). The limitation factors for PWDs representation in economic empowerment programmes are discussed in detail below:

6.3.1.1 Deficient PWD representation

The majority of respondents (Figure 6.2) have consistently identified deficient PWDs representation as compared to other variables. This has been confirmed by a Senior Manager within LNLM Disability Unit with more than 15 years of experience who stated that:

> *"The PWDs are not fully represented and integrated into municipal economic empowerment programmes within different municipality due to lack of implementation of inclusive participation of PWDs."*

The above findings align with Tigere and Moyo (2022) who concluded that the majority of PWDs in rural areas are systematically excluded from participating in rural development programmes in South Africa at local government level. However, a study conducted by Tinta (2020) on empowerment of PWDs in Bloemfontein, South Africa found that PWDs who participant in sheltered workshop project felt disempowered because they were excluded in decisions that affected their employment programme. In contrast, Bechange et al. (2021) found in rural Uganda that PWDs, particularly youth, were actively involved in and benefited from economic empowerment projects, contradicting the findings of Tigere and Moyo (2022). This postulation concurs with the comment from the Disability Rights Coordinator with more 10 years' experience who stated that:

> *"Let me say that municipalities some are represented, and others are not. If we have to say PWDs are fully represented in LNLM you must find functional disability coordinator who is PWDs, you should find active LED disability consultative forum, councillors who live with disability and PWDs doing business with the municipality. But as a matter of fact, currently I do not know of any municipality with full representation in the workforce, projects and also on various development structures"*

This outcome is congruent with a study conducted by Ramolobe et al. (2024), that PWDs continue to face exclusion on economic and social activities participation due to lack of reasonable accommodation systems. The findings are consistent quantitative data outcome discussed in Chapter 5 that representation of PWDs in programmes implementation and development is unsatisfactory. The majority of respondents confirmed that PWDs are not represented in projects. This finding implies that PWDs are extensively underrepresented in local government developmental which might be associated with lack of implementation of inclusive participatory approach. However, the theoretical framework that underpin this study (inclusive development theory) advocates for the representation of PWDs since through promoting equality and the inclusion of PWDs in mainstream development opportunities (Pilke & Waliyua, 2023).

6.3.1.2 Poor understanding of PWDs

Many participants noted poor understanding of PWDs which second dominant responses as a major limitation factor for PWDs representation and participation in economic empowerment programmes. The knowledge gap seems to exist in understanding PWDs integration in economic activities (Charles et al., 2023; Manase, 2025). A member of LED forum in the LNLM municipality with more than 10 years' experience revealed that:

> *"Only special focus unit deals with PWDs in the municipality. But generally, in the municipality no fair participation of PWDs, unless we hard hunt them into LED projects. For example, previously there was a disability economic empowerment project coordinated by Capricorn District Municipality within LED unit, but however an official responsibility LED was sceptical to work with PWDs thinking that their empowerment is only the responsibility of special focus unit. So, the LED coordinator thought that empowerment of PWDs belongs to special unit focus due lack of knowledge about disability inclusion on LED projects. You know I had to convince the LED officials who is accountable to implement LED projects that's his area of responsibility to mainstream PWDs in LED initiatives, because if you neglect the PWDs you have not done much, because disability is one of the important sector of society. This revealed that even PWDs are not represented in LED forum even though this group of people are in businesses."*

The above findings are consistent with a study conducted by van den Brink, Elbers & Ibrahim (2020) posits that disability fragmentation amongst public officials has led to marginalisation and limited value of PWDs. Hence, knowledge on disability is very fragmented within municipal officials which impede PWDs to fully participate in economic empowerment programmes, because officials they do not know how to work with them (SALGA, 2012:4). Consequently, poor understanding of disability has led to municipal officials assume that PWDs empowerment is responsibility of special programme unit only. Therefore, a PWDs in a Middle Management position responsible for special programmes in the LNLM, confirmed that:

> *"We are not doing well in working with PWDs because even some of our frontline workers do not have a basic sign language training to fully engage with*

PWDs which may contribute to weakness to understand their service delivery needs. Integration of PWDs in development is difficult within the municipality because we can't meet their economic needs."

This outcome is congruent with a study by Ramolobe et al. (2023:205) who argues that most public sector officials have limited knowledge about mainstreaming disability matters in local government. This finding implies that poor understanding of disability has disadvantaged PWDs to engage in empowerment initiatives within the municipality such as CWP and the EPWP. However, a report by International Labour Organisation (2015) disagrees with the findings that local municipal officials are empowered to advance inclusive governance through disability mainstreaming and social inclusion. The above sentiment is not consistent with reality because most municipalities continue to operate with systems that do not consider the needs of PWDs and struggle with participation of PWDs in empowerment programmes (Hunt et al., 2022; Tinta & Kolanisi, 2023). The findings imply that most municipal officials are not familiar in working with PWDs which might be reasons for lack of integration of disability in economic empowerment programmes.

6.3.1.3 Limited PWDs recruitment

This sub-theme explores status of representation and the extend of margination for PWDs in economic employment opportunities within the LNLM. Many participants in this sub-theme revealed limited PWDs recruitment as an obstacle prohibiting the full representation and participation of PWDs in local economic empowerment programmes (Monareng, Soeker & Naidoo, 2025). This finding was confirmed by a PWDs who is the Manager of Disability Centre in NGO which has been operating for 18 years within the LNLM, as follows:

"The honest truth is that recruitment of PWDs is not prioritise and practically representation for participation of PWDs in employment from economic programmes is not considered significant. What I have realised is that most municipalities are trying to close gap of PWDs in incorrect way by headhunting the PWDs through their pull of existing staff members. For example, if person have accident and apparently the finger is removed you will find out that those people will be registered as PWDs in the municipality just to increase statistics

of achieving 7% representation of PWDs in their workforce. Again, they are limited internship and learnership designated for PWDs as part of economic empowerment initiatives."

The results concur with findings of Kahn (2017:69) that PWDs are denied access to equal representation and participation in local government workforce and empowerment projects which lead to unachieved previous 2% set employment target by EEA in South Africa. Most of the municipalities are failing initial recruitment target of 2% for PWDs representation due lack of strategy to recruitment PWDs in empowerment projects. The Site Manager of Community Workers Programme (CWP) who work for CWP since its inception in 2009 within the LNLM, stated that:

"The municipality is not really promoting the employment of PWDs in empowerment programmes due to current struggle to reach 2% representation. In LED we have a coordinated programme called Community Workers Programme, but it does not help to achieve the desired outcome for PWDs representation because out of 1000 employed CWP workers, PWDs constitute 0.05% which reveal underrepresentation. And the CWP projects is running in ten (10) wards out of 30 wards in the municipality."

The above finding reveals underrepresentation of PWDs in CWP described by the participant which aligns with the unemployment rate among PWDs (81.4%) within the LNLM (LNLM, 2024; Stats SA, 2022). Moreover, the LNLM (2024) acknowledges the challenge of unequal representation of previously disadvantaged groups at all levels of its structure, especially the representation of PWDs (LNLM, 2024). These findings are consistent with the reality observed by the respondents and reports from the municipality. The proponents of inclusive development revealed that PWDs are often excluded to participate in economic empowerment programmes which influence their high unemployment rate (Dineshan & Geetha, 2023; Daniels-Mayes & Howe, 2021; Faizal, Kusnandar & Sulaeman, 2020). This finding suggests that limited recruitment of PWDs contributes to high unemployment and marginalisation, highlighting the need for urgent strategic action by municipal leadership to promote reasonable accommodation in the workforce (Ngwena, 2023). The employment of PWDs can only be realised in the LNLM as catalyst for the inclusive participation of PWDs in the economic development as acknowledged by Mafongoya (2025).

6.3.1.4 LED forum non-participation

This sub-theme highlights non-participation and exclusion of PWDs in LED forum which negatively impact on advancement of disability needs into economic empowerment programmes within the municipality. The few informants observed LED forum non-participation as one of the limitation factors to PWDs participation in economic empowerment programmes. Noting the significance of PWDs' participation the IDP Officer within the municipality, noted that:

> *"PWDs are not represented in forums such as LED and even in the community structures is very rear to find ward committee and councillor who is PWDs. This is a serious gap which shows marginalisation of PWDs in municipal development matters."*

The results align with Mokoena and Molepo (2024) and the SALGA (2024) report, which found that PWDs often do not participate in community forums and LED structures, limiting their ability to engage fully in economic empowerment programmes. However, a study conducted by Lugu, Odoom, Dick-Sagoe and Asumang (2024) in Ghana disagrees with these findings that PWDs are engaged in structures of municipal development plan, but the only challenge is low participation of them. Hence, low participation of PWDs on LED structures can be associated with poor consultation or participatory approach within the municipalities (Lugu et al., 2024). This finding implies that PWDs non-participation in LED forums is likely to be caused by the municipality's lack of inclusive participatory approaches designed to attract specific segment of society into its development agenda. An inclusive community participation is very critical in LED forum to achieve inclusive benefits as noted by Mokoena and Molepo (2024). Based on the preceding data, it can be suggested that PWDs are not equitably represented and engaged in empowerment programmes as results of lack of non-participation of PWDs LED forums.

6.3.1.5 Inadequate disability promotion

This sub-theme explores the factors that prohibit promotion of disability into economic empowerment programmes.

Several participants have noted that the LNLM is often confronted with constraints for representation of PWDs for inclusive participation due to limited promotion of disability inclusion in the projects. A Ward Councillor in the municipality, stated:

> *"In the municipality such as Lepelle-Nkumpi there is minimal promotion of PWDs because if you check on current staff only two PWDs are employed permanently. So, unless the disability consultative forum make noise for their inclusion LED programmes will not going to see progress. This goes with disability slogan "Nothing about us without us" which is a powerful slogan advocating for the full and direct participation PWDs in the decision-making process."*

This outcome concurs with the findings of Winchester (2024), who highlights limited promotion of disability on equal opportunities as a challenge to achieve reasonable accommodation for PWDs. The lack of promotion of PWDs for active participation in economic empowerment activities revealed by the informants 'maybe caused by deficient advocacy, lack of inclusive participatory approach and poor communication strategy as noted by Lugu et al. (2024). In contrast, Sherry et al. (2024) and Swanepoel (2020) argue that government promotes the inclusion of PWDs through measures such as disability inclusion in existing policies and support services. The literature review discussed in Chapter 3 reveal that local government municipalities are unable to implement the plans for promotion and inclusion disability in their development agenda (Uwizeyimana, 2022; Matloga, 2024). The findings imply that the LNLM is not promoting disability inclusion and awareness in their development agenda which influence PWDs inactiveness in local economic empowerment programmes. The absence of PWDs inclusion in development agenda has serious consequences for the realisation of their developmental needs and quality of their life.

6.3.2 Role of Municipality in Economic Empowerment

The participants revealed that, the role of the municipality is to facilitate, coordinate and implement disability empowerment programmes, policies and strategies as shown in Figure 6.3. The integration of PWDs is not just about involvement for compliance purpose. It means making PWDs developments needs a centre of every design,

implementation and monitoring of economic empowerment projects (W&RSETA, 2022; Suich & Schneider, 2022).

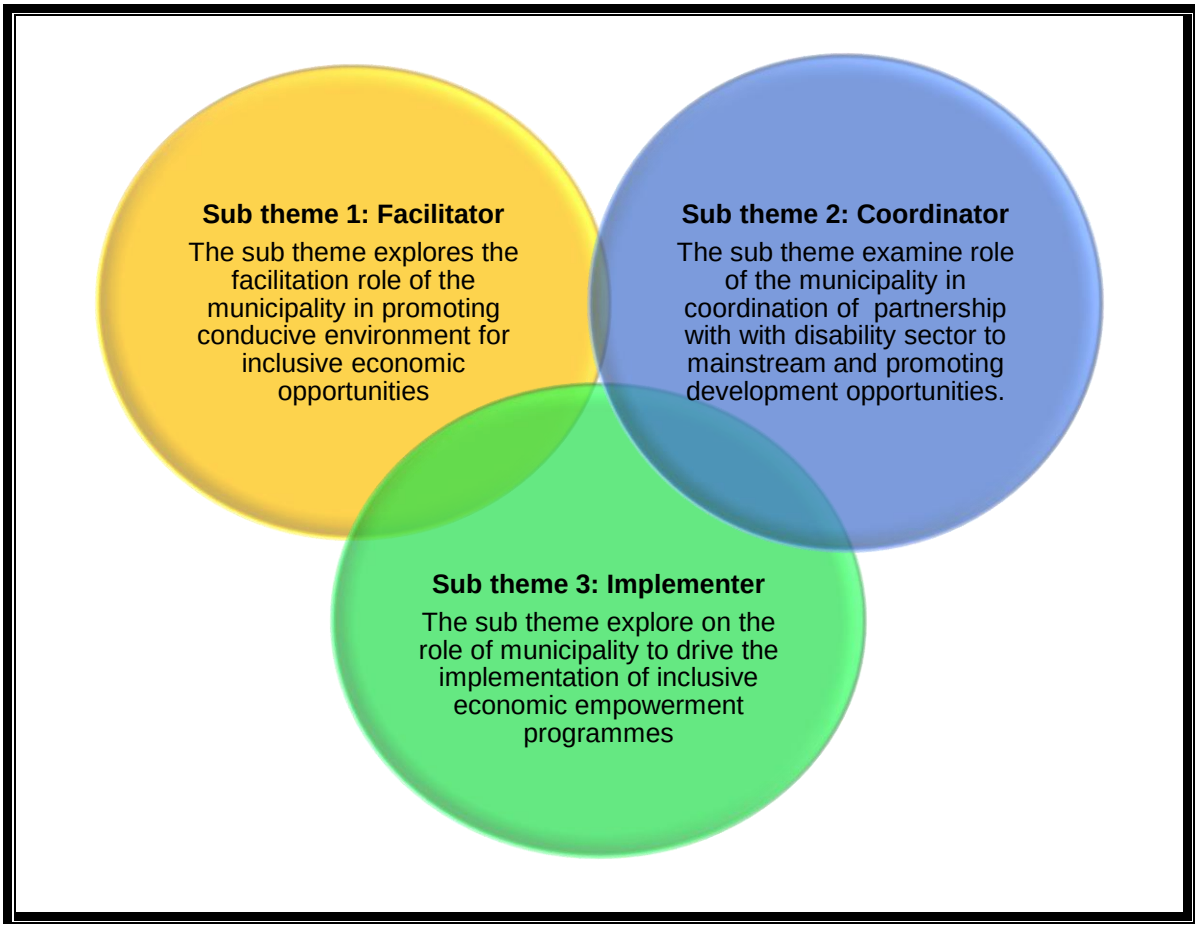


Figure 6.3: Role of municipalities in integration PWDs in empowerment initiatives

Source: Author

Figure 6.3 illustrate the sub-themes on the role of municipality in implementation of inclusive local economic empowerment programmes that support PWDs.

6.3.2.1 Facilitator

The majority of responses indicated that the role of the municipality is to facilitate the promotion PWDs inclusion on local projects. The Manager in LED Unit with more than 8 years' experience in LED projects, stated that:

> *"The municipality must exercise their facilitation role in identifying the PWDs through disability centres to develop them or capacitate them through municipal*

empowerment programmes. The municipality must facilitate provision of reasonable accommodation of PWDs in empowerment projects. “

The above results are in agreement with study finding of Mumba and van der Waldt (2023a) and Maela et al. (2024) that municipalities must assume their facilitation role through promotion of inclusive LED for PWDs to attain necessary resources for their economic independence. In contrast the finding of Zitha, Maela and Matloga (2025) postulate that facilitation role of the municipality is mostly affected by inadequate development planning. This finding implies that municipality faces facilitation role deficiencies for the promotion of inclusive economic opportunities. To eliminate this challenge, collaborate with disability centres is key for purpose of fulfilling municipal constitutional obligation of creating a conducive environment for economic development in terms of section 153 (a) (Constitution, 1996; Mumba & van der Waldt, 2023b).

6.3.2.2 Coordination

The coordination role as the second dominant response was identified by the participants as an approach to promote inclusive LED through partnership with key stakeholders (Shava, 2023). This is confirmed by a principal at a Special School, as follows:

“The municipality must have solid collaborative relationship with special schools, government department or NGOs that advocate for rights of PWDs and disability sectors to meet developmental demands of PWDs.”

The participant expressed a positive view of the role of municipalities in integrating PWDs by strengthening coordination with disability agents and advocacy groups to better respond to their needs (Saran et al., 2021). This implies that collaboration is key in unlocking opportunities to meet developmental needs of all society members. The Disability Forum Coordinator, conveyed a divergent view on collaboration role of the municipality in promotion of inclusive LED that support PWDs as follows:

“Yeah, there is limited engagement of PWDs about economic development opportunities. The municipality is not collaborating with key stakeholders such

as PWDs in disability forums and NGOs that's why the municipality is struggling to empower this group economically."

The above statement is congruent to results of Mumba and van der Waldt (2023a) which noted that absence of coordination between municipality and key role players in LED as a barrier to the promotion empowerment projects. Hence, for success LED initiatives to exist various stakeholders' inputs and support through clear roles are significant (Chomane & Biljohn, 2023; Makhaye & Subban, 2024). These findings implies that through collaboration the LNLM can play an effective role and harness financial or non-financial support for inclusion of PWDs to improve quality of their lives.

6.3.2.3 Implementation

The participants have stated another key role of the municipality is to implement local economic empowerment programmes. Besides this role, other participants observed that there is lack of implementation of municipal inclusive local economic empowerment programmes (Juta, 2023). This was confirmed by the Senior Corporate Manager in the municipality, who attested that:

"To be honest with you in LED we are currently understaffed, and we lack resources to implement the economic empowerment programmes within the municipality. Yeah, also the communities always expect monetary support as opposed to non-financial support which contribute to non-attendance of people during our IDPs and LED meetings to enable inclusive participation."

This result concurs with findings of Maela, Munzhedzi, and Mathebula (2025) which found that majority of local municipality are unable to implement inclusive local economic empowerment due to lack of capacity. To support these findings, Kgobe et al. (2023) noted with great concern that assigning LED responsibilities to incapacitated personnel makes it challenging to implement inclusive LED programmes. On the other hand, a study conducted by Bishagazi (2021b) in Tanzania revealed that the government has been able to drive successful implementation of economic programmes and policies for PWDs which contradict contention of Maela et al. (2025). The participants' opinion on lack of implementation of LED aligns with Ngcobo (2022)

who stressed that there is a limited promotion of economic projects which embrace inclusivity. The implication of this findings suggest that municipality must strengthen their implementation role through capacity build to secure PWDs' active participation and meaningful contribution in the mainstream of economic programmes, policies and practices.

6.3.3 Challenges of Empowerment Programmes Promotion

Given this significant role that municipality must play in promotion of economic empowerment programmes for PWDs, in reality complex challenges have been met by the municipalities and PWDs in South Africa (Kgobe et, al., 2023; Maela et al., 2025). However, equitable integration of PWDs and actionable approach is paramount importance. Figure 6.4 illustrates constraints to promoting economic empowerment for PWDs, with most respondents identifying abuse of public office, ineffective policy implementation, absence of a disability strategy, and poor stakeholder collaboration as key barriers to their integration into local government development programmes.

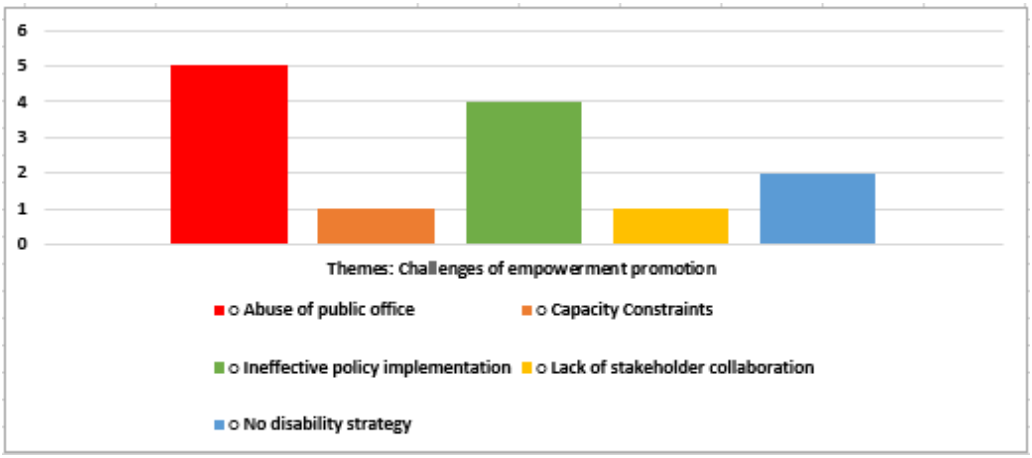


Figure 6.4: Challenges of empowerment programmes promotion

Source: Author

Figure 6.4 presents the sub-themes on the hindrances to effective promotion of economic empowerment programmes for PWDs.

6.3.3.1 Abuse of public office

This theme explores the abuse of public office by municipal officials which affect the role of municipality in promoting PWDs inclusion in economic empowerment activities.

The participant who had previously participated in EPWP and had worked also on CWP as a Supervisor in the LNLM for five years, expressed the following opinion:

> *"The recruitment of this programmes is championed by the ward councillors in our municipality as representative close to the communities and unfortunately political preference or loyalty play a role. The CWP coordinators are not responsible to source the participants in this project."*

The above narration concurs with findings of Bruce (2015) and Mlambo et al. (2022) which state that community empowerment projects such as CWP and EPWP attracted abuse of public resources and manipulation of programmes by politicians in the service of systems of patronage. Consequently, political benefits over marginalised society became a new norm. The political leaders' interference in the administration of empowerment projects has dire consequences in ensuring the merit-based participation of PWDs and subsequently contributed to the abuse of public office (Mngomezulu, 2020). In contrast, the municipal projects such as CWP are recognised as a unique local empowerment initiative in paper worldwide, whereas in practice majority of municipalities failed to provide reasonable accommodation for PWDs on them (Shumba & Moodley, 2018). This is because projects such as CWP or EPWP lack disability integration strategy and monitoring tools (Suich & Schneider, 2022). These findings imply that abuse of public office by municipal administration officials and political office bearers contribute to exclusion of PWDs in various projects.

6.3.3.2 Ineffective policy implementation

Ineffective policy implementation is second dominant responses as depicted in Figure 6.4, which suggests that the LNLM struggles with the implementation of inclusive policies due to weak policy enforcement as noted by Makhaye and Subban (2024). In terms of ineffective policy implementation, a Traditional Council member, had this to say:

> *"Most of the rural municipalities such as Lepelle-Nkumpi still struggle with implementation of the inclusive policies even though the Constitution is explicit on issues of inclusiveness. The procurement policies are not adequately implemented to support the SMMEs owned by PWDs. If policies were correctly*

implemented we were not going see marginalisation of PWDs in jobs, businesses and economic projects. "

Furthermore, the participant who is Senior Manager in the Special Unit within the municipality since 2005, stated that:

"Lack of policy implementation on reasonable accommodation for PWDs is challenge. I just suspect that there is lack of willingness or incapacity to implement these policies for inclusive economic development. For example, I have a car allowance in the municipality since am blind, but municipality does not provide a driver for me as staff, I opted to use my personal driver. So, they disregard policies on reasonable accommodation as well.

The above outcome concurs with study of Ramolobe et al., (2024) that there is a gap in the municipal implementation of policies which exacerbate exclusion of PWDs in local government. The issue of lack of policy implementation it a result of many factors such as capacity and incompetence in most municipalities in South Africa as alluded to by the participants (Moagi & Nhede, 2025; Ned & Lorenzo, 2016; Sherry et al., 2024). Consequently, addressing disability inclusion for policy support and engagement is vital to achieve a progressive participatory local governance. This can enable PWDs with SMMEs to benefit from Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) points when participating in development projects procurements bids (The BBBEE Act, Act 53 of 2003, as amended by Act 46 of 2013). However, this will need a twin-track approach and effective awareness campaigns so that PWDs can enjoy equitable benefits of South African policies. The findings implies that LNLM is not playing an active promotional role in implementation and coordination of inclusive policies to ensure that PWDs benefits from the development prospects. For these reasons, ineffective implementation of inclusive economic policies might be associated with lack of understanding of local government policies that drive inclusive development (Makhaye & Subban, 2024)

6.3.3.3 Capacity constraints

The major highlights which emerged from this sub-theme revealed that the LNLM does not have sufficient capacity to drive promotion of inclusive LED. This was confirmed

by an LED officer who had been working in the municipality for seven years, who stated that:

> *"But you can see even our offices are not accommodating PWDs, so to honestly answer you we do not have enough resources and capacity in LED to promote the inclusion of PWDs in our coordinated projects."*

These findings are congruent with findings by Juta (2023) and Shilangu (2019), who observed that municipalities battle to drive implementation of inclusive LED programmes due to lack of leadership capacity (Kgobe et al., 2023). The literature review aligns with this outcome that incapacitated personnel fail to implement inclusive LED programmes and policies which negatively affects PWDs to benefits from the existing prescripts in South Africa (Kgobe et al., 2023). In contrast, Munzhedzi, Phago, and Mubangizi (2022) found that municipalities have some internal capacity to develop LED projects, but their effectiveness is undermined by political interference, as also noted by Tsagae (2023). The implication of this findings is that the LNLM does not have institutional sufficient capacity to promote the inclusion of PWDs in LED programmes (Makamu, 2024; Makhaye & Subban, 2024). The promotion of inclusive programmes will need strong leadership intervention and resources support in form of comprehensive capacity-building and retention of staff to close the capacity gap as noted in Chapter 3.

6.3.3.4 Lack of stakeholder collaboration

Several participants under this sub-theme noted that promotion of inclusive LED is hindered by absence of stakeholder collaboration on empowerment issues of PWDs. Participants working in NGOs that support PWDs indicated that:

> "*There is no collaboration between the municipality and disability-focused stakeholders, such as NGOs, disability forums, and associations, and that they had never received invitations or oversight visits from the municipality*".

These results are similar to the findings of Mumba and van der Wald (2023a) who argues that most empowerment projects are unsupported due lack of collaboration with potential beneficiary of the projects. In contrast, Munzhedzi et al. (2022) observed that while stakeholders do participate in LED projects, their involvement is often

inadequate, which Makhaye and Subban (2024) attribute to unclear stakeholder responsibilities. This lack of collaboration is not unique to the LNLM, as many South African municipalities lack effective structures and processes to coordinate stakeholder roles in LED initiatives (Makamu, 2024; Matlala & Motsepe, 2020; Mashinini, 2017; Meyer, 2013). These findings necessitate a need for municipality to establish and maintain a good relationship with disability advocacy groups to integrate their needs in empowerment opportunities. In addition, Munzhedzi et al. (2022) argues that one benefit of including stakeholders in the promotion of inclusive LED projects is sufficient support for municipal plans and policies.

6.3.3.5 No disability strategy

The sub-theme explores available municipal economic disability strategy which meant to promote inclusion of PWDs in economic activities. The participants confirmed that a disability strategy was non-existent in the municipality. The Ward Councillor who served on the LED forum as from November 2021, stated that:

> *"The municipality must urgently have disability strategy that guide the inclusion of PWDs in LED initiatives. Municipality currently still in the process of developing disability strategy which need to be approved by the council*."

This aligns with the IDP Report of the LNLM that no existence of municipal disability strategy in place to foster inclusion of PWDs in economic initiatives (LNLM, 2024). The findings align with the quantitative analysis and literature review, which indicate that many municipalities lack disability mainstreaming policies and strategies to integrate the needs of PWDs into IDPs and support LED (Ouwencamp & van der Waldt, 2024; SALGA, 2020). In contrast a study conducted by Niewohner et al. (2019) revealed that in United Kingdom they are government inclusive strategies which promotes the inclusion of PWDs in economic empowerment to enhance their participation in development matters. However, this strategy demonstrated commitment to inclusive disability empowerment (Niewohner et al., 2019). These findings call on the municipality to implement DSD (2016) which makes provision that municipal councils must establish a disability rights consultative forums and implement municipal disability strategy to integrate PWDs in development activities.

6.3.4 Barriers to Economic Empowerment

This main theme examines barriers hindering PWDs from participating in local economic empowerment programmes within the LNLM. The key findings which emerged from this theme consists of disabling environmental barrier, attitudinal barrier, communication barrier, educational barrier and institutional structure barriers. Figure 6.5 illustrates the barriers identified by participants which prevent participation of PWDs in economic empowerment programmes.

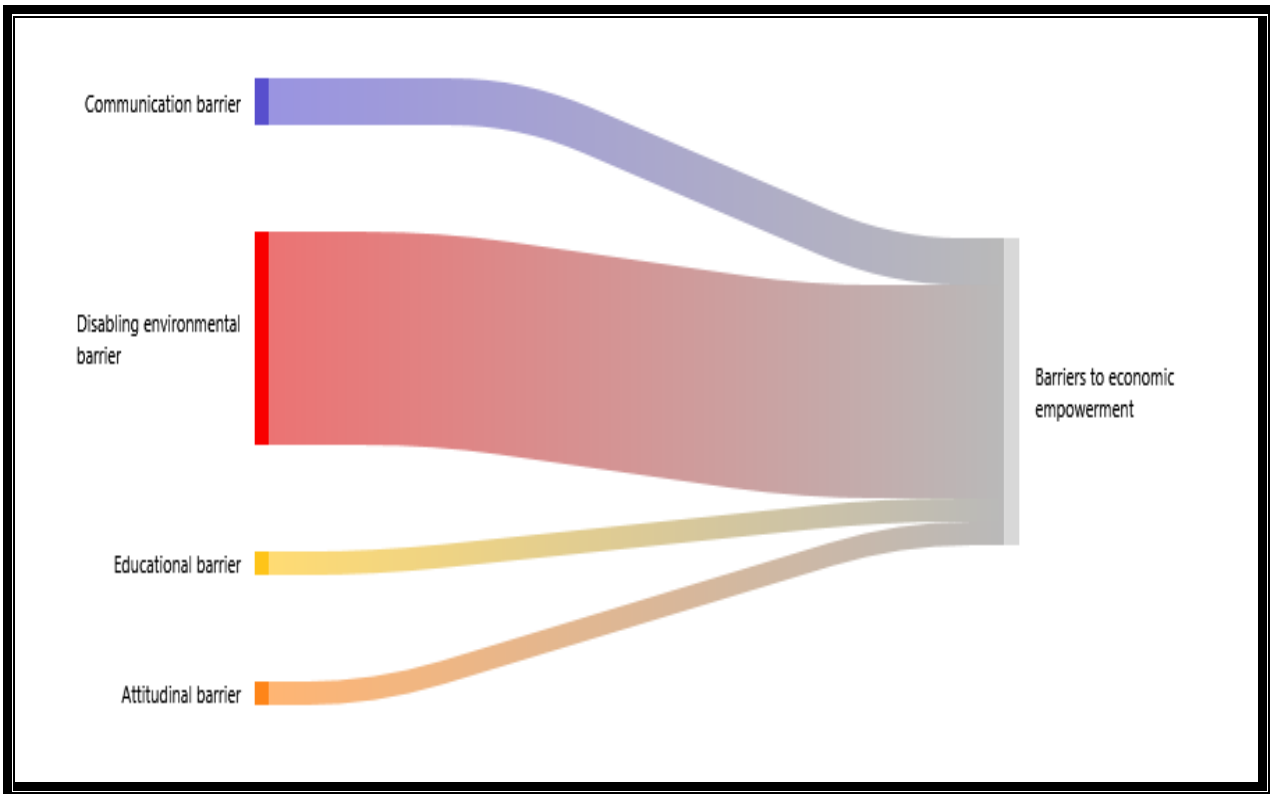


Figure 6.5: Barriers to economic empowerment faced by PWDs

Source: Author

6.3.4.1 Disabling environmental barrier

The sub-theme explores disabling environmental barrier which prevent active participation of PWDs in economic empowerment programmes. As per Figure 6.5, the majority of the respondents identified disabling environmental as limitation barrier for inclusive participation of PWDs (Saran et al., 2018). This finding aligns with previous literature that significant gap exists, as municipalities are not addressing the disabling environment for PWDs to join the mainstream of economy through the initiated

programmes (Ngcobo & Gumede, 2022; Tinta & Kolanisi, 2023). The disability rights coordinator, revealed that:

> *"The PWDs are not able to participate due to physical barriers they encounter to access the economic opportunities within municipal building areas. For example, in our municipality (Lepelle-Nkumpi) some public places such as stadium are not user friendly for PWDs with disability and also LED unit does not have ramp or lift. It will be a challenge if PWDs need to access service from LED unit."*

This outcome aligns with the findings of Matyana and Thusi (2023), who argues that PWDs face environmental barriers due to lack of disability-friendly municipal offices and limited access to municipal services due to location of offices. On the other hand, a study finding of Moyake and Buthelezi (2018) revealed that an approximately 65-80% of PWDs living in rural areas lack access to the bare minimum of public facilities. Participants noted a lack of supportive public infrastructure and municipal offices as disadvantage for PWDs to access development programmes benefits (Jagoe et al., 2023; Panda & Kaur, 2024). The above outcome concurs with previous findings on quantitative data analysis that revealed that inaccessible infrastructure has potential to impede PWDs involvement in economic activities.

These findings imply that PWDs are exposed to environment barriers in the LNLM due inaccessible LED unit and physical local of municipal office since they are no satellite offices within the municipality. Thus, this will limit the participation of PWDs in economic empowerment programmes which will make them to remain underdeveloped. These findings necessitate review on implementation of municipal building policies or plans and ensure that buildings are inclusive for everyone to achieve inclusive service delivery. These findings reveal that municipality does not comply with reasonable accommodation policies (DSD, 2015a; Maclean et al., 2024; Nyamwanza et al., 2025). To ensure effective participation of PWDs, physical resources such as accessible buildings, machinery and equipment are important for PWDs involvement in projects as noted by Moyake and Buthelezi (2018). Furthermore, these findings imply that even municipal infrastructure systems are not yet consistent or convenient for PWDs.

6.3.4.2 Attitudinal barriers

This sub-theme explores on attitudinal barrier which impact on participation of PWDs due to the perception that disability is inability, and this perception may worsen exclusion of PWDs in economic empowerment programmes (Jagoe et al., 2023). The findings on attitudinal barrier are the second dominant response from the informants. A PWDs in business within LNLM, said the following:

> *"The attitudinal barrier in the municipality exist which influence the consideration of disability development issues as a mandate of Department of Social Development and The South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) only."*

Again, disability forum coordinator in LNLM shared same sentiment from the above articulation and had this to add:

> *"Yeah, I believe that attitudinal barriers are a major one because communities and municipal officials still think that PWDs should be kept a home and not expose them to outside world economic opportunities, perhaps because of the stigma to hide them by their families"*

The findings are consistent with the study of Panda and Kaur (2024) who postulate that PWDs may be stigmatised either by society or government officials which make them to be economically vulnerable. The participants have noted that PWDs continue to face multiple discriminatory barriers due to the attitudes of communities (Mashala & Majola, 2024; NDP, 2012). In contrast DWYPD (2024) report noted improvement in representation and participation PWDs in the municipalities demonstrating a shift in attitude which contradicts the contention of Mashala and Majola (2024). The implication of this finding is that the attitude of communities' members and municipal officials has an influence towards non-inclusive participation of PWDs. Furthermore, this finding highlights the need for appropriate training and the integration of disability considerations into all aspects of planning, recognising that there is no one-size-fits-all approach (Lungu 2024; Osman et al., 2023). Pillay et al. (2023) emphasis that for PWDs to benefits from economic empowerment programme government need to assist with training to eliminate attitudinal barrier to foster positive mindset.

6.3.4.3 Communication barrier

This sub-theme examines the communication barrier experienced by PWDs with officials responsible for LED programmes. The participants noted that PWDs continue to face limited opportunities about the projects due to poor communication strategy, officials who are not competent in sign language and lack of LED documents in braille. Thus a caregiver in an NGO, stated that:

> *"You know communication has effects on participation of PWDs because now municipality only outsource sign language interpreter during IDP sessions. So, this means in normal LED meeting PWDs who has hearing challenges might be disadvantaged to follow proceedings of the meeting and lastly even LED projects information are not readily available braille."*

This outcome aligns with Tinta and Kolanisi (2023), who found that PWDs face communication barriers with municipal officials due to limited braille-transcribed information and the absence of sign language interpretation at municipal level. This finding aligns with discussion on literature review chapter which identified a gap that some PWDs may face language barrier which might negatively impact activeness in the municipal programmes designated for PWDs. This sentiment was also echoed by PWDs with more than 15 years' experience as senior manager within the municipality, who stated that:

> *"No currently, we have one PWDs who own an SMMEs and got a subcontract on a road construction within Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality, but currently the main contractors they are unable to work with this person and they are struggling to provide training to them on how to work with him."*

The above outcome aligns with a report of SALGA (2020) which stipulate that ineffective communication about empowerment services to PWDs exists within local government. Hence, communication barriers arise out of systemic disparities that have historically marginalised these groups, hindering their full economic participation and contribution to local development. This finding reveals a need for municipality to enhance their disability communication strategy to promote access to the means of information and preconditions required for economic participation. The implication of this findings is that the LNLM is non-compliant with implementation of inclusive

workplace communication guidelines contained in Code of Good Practice of 2002 as noted on the study conducted by Tinta et al. (2020). The study highlights the importance of effective communication in ensuring inclusive participation and in conveying clear information about projects to all community members.

6.3.4.4 Educational barrier

Minority of the participants reveals that PWDs face substantial barriers, with education and training access which prohibit their involvement in economic empowerment programmes (Niewohner et al., 2019). The previous sub-theme was focusing on communication barriers which is one variable which might impact on educational settings and may prevent PWDs from accessing educational skills to enable them to participate in economic activities. The principal of the Special School with more than 20 years' experience, stated that:

> *"Yeah, in terms of education there is limited resource for inclusive education for PWDs within the municipality. Remember there are different categories of disability, because us we deal with mild intellectually disabled but other categories of disability schools are very limited within Limpopo. Lack of special higher education trainings designated for PWDs, because some learners cannot cope with the standards of learning set by the TVET Colleges in South Africa. Again yeah, families do not support PWDs to such extend that they hide them and PWDs experience limited education which prohibit them to participate in empowerment programmes."*

This outcome aligns with study conducted by Moyake and Buthelezi (2018) who argue that PWDs encounter inadequate education and limited economic training opportunities on daily basis. Participants' views on lack of inclusive education and training as barrier, concur with the findings of Stein and Stein (2022) that PWDs encounter significant obstacles when trying to obtain inclusive education which adversely affect their involvement in development activities. On the other hand, a study conducted by Hove and Phasha (2024) postulate that PWDs has been benefiting from the government support on inclusive education through provision of reader assistance and tuition fees. This sentiment is contradicting contention of the participants on lack of inclusive education, and view of Chirowamhangu (2024:1) who postulate that

approximately 70% of PWDs are drop out in schools because of lack of resources to transform inclusive education. This finding implies that the LNLM should intensify collaboration with educational centres, seek investors and facilitate inclusive LED training. It may yield positive results since education is an effective tool to economically empower PWDs to increase access to their economic resources (Ofuani 2011; Tinta & Kolanisi, 2023). Although education provision is not key responsibility of the municipality, however creation of conducive economic environment to attract investors within educational institution is significant for inclusive development.

6.3.5 Aspect Impeding Involvement of PWDs in Development

The theme examines factors that impede PWDs active involvement in development and implementation of economic programmes, strategies and policies. The participants revealed that limited disability database, disability consideration as social welfare, inaccessible projects information and planning approach deficiencies as depicted in Figure 6.6. These interconnected factors impede the active involvement of PWDs in development process.

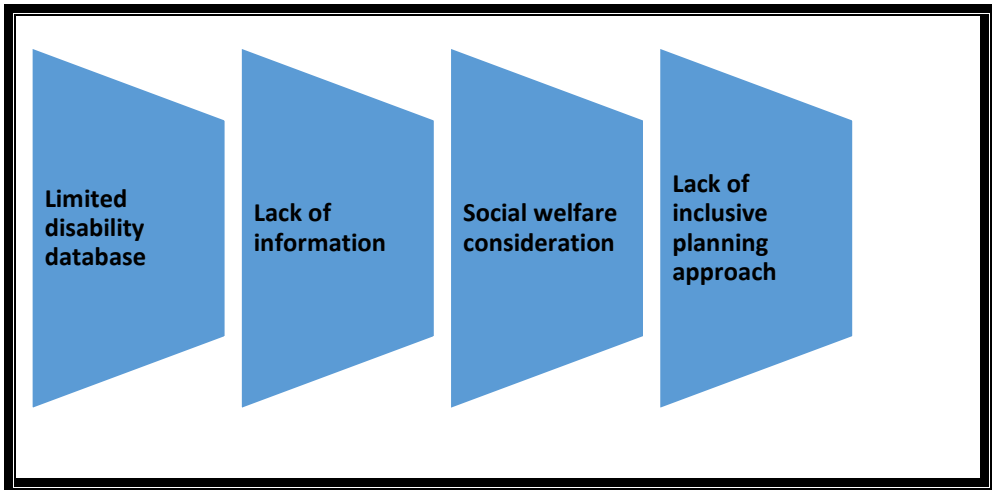


Figure 6.6: Aspect impeding involvement of PWDs in development

Source: Author

6.3.5.1 Limited disability database

Majority of the respondents noted that the LNLM is unable to achieve active involvement of PWDs on economic programmes, strategies and policies due to limited

disability database. The participant who is on the executive level within the IDP unit in the LNLM, stated that:

> *“Municipality must develop database of PWDs which contains their developmental needs, qualifications, expertise and experience to assist in planning of programmes, policies and strategies. Because currently we do not have disability database.”*

The above outcome concurs with Bezuidenhout (2022) who asserts that disability data limitation prevents most municipalities to integrate PWDs into local government planning and monitor their participation. Henceforth, SALGA (2012:9) previously reported that disability is not accurately incorporated into all municipal plans because PWDs do not even appear on the LED registration database. The implication of this finding for the LNLM is that unavailability of data will exacerbates unequal involvement in local government planning (City of Johannesburg, 2021; Bezuidenhout, 2022). The availability of quality disability data can improve accountability and support evidence-based planning of programmes, local policies and strategies within the municipalities (City of Johannesburg, 2021). In addition, accurate disability data will assist municipalities to address injustice on the experience by vulnerable groups and promote equitable participation in all municipal level.

6.3.5.2 Lack of information

Several participants noted that PWDs face inadequate municipal information to participate in local government projects planning and implementation of policies. Scholars such as Matyana and Thusi (2023) argues that physical local of municipal office in rural areas is reason why most PWDs lack information about development process. Two participants (the NGO Coordinator and the Manager of CWP) indicated that:

> *"PWDs are not adequately informed about planning processes, decision-making, or economic empowerment opportunities within municipalities. They further noted that PWDs in rural areas are the most affected, as they are often unaware of LED initiatives.*

The lack of information about empowerment programmes is a widely recognised problem, particularly in disadvantaged and rural communities in South Africa (Ngcobo, 2021). This serves as an obstacle for PWDs to access available municipal economic opportunities. Findings in the study by Tinta and Kolanisi (2023) revealed that PWDs are unable to participate in economic activities due to scarcity of information or communication barriers. Hayes and Bulat (2017) assert that dissemination of information in an appropriate way especially in braille and sign language, will help to build inclusive society without barriers. This finding implies that since municipalities are responsible for ensuring inclusive participation in planning, they have to facilitate equitable information-sharing and assist with technological devices to enable PWDs to enjoy their economic rights.

6.3.5.3 Social welfare consideration

Disability welfare consideration emanated from both qualitative and quantitative data whereby participants observed that PWDs are excluded in economic planning because they benefit from social welfare programmes as opposed to economic welfare within the municipality. This because of stigmatisation or negative attitude that PWDs are meant to be social welfare beneficiaries only. A Traditional Council member who is PWDs within the LNLM area, stated that:

> *"You know, most programmes focus on social welfare because many people in government still think that if PWDs receive RDP houses and SASSA grant their needs are sufficient or fulfilled."*

Saran, White and Kuper (2019) concur with above outcome about disability development matters be associated with social welfare interventions. Henceforth, this reason why PWDs are not involved in implementation of economic projects planning, policies and strategies. This finding aligns with study objective which seeks to explore the extent to which PWDs are actively involved in development and implementation of economic programmes, strategies and policies of economy. This finding highlights the need for municipalities to adopt a balanced planning approach that integrates both social and economic welfare opportunities, while also ensuring that officials actively promote inclusive economic participation.

6.3.5.4 Lack of inclusive planning approach

Some of the participants reveals that municipality lack inclusive planning approach to ensure that every segment of the society is engaged on planning processed and implementation of local economic projects, policies and strategies. The site manager on the EPWP programme, explained that:

> *"You know PWDs exist with potential but the municipality is not involving them when they plan about development projects and strategies to empower communities. Instead, they involve non-disables people to decide on their behalf. That's why municipality is struggling with representation of PWDs even on EPWP."*

The above findings are consistent with the LNLM IDP (2024) which acknowledges that the municipality is unable to have equitable representation of PWDs at all levels of its structure such as planning, development and forums. Consequently, exclusion of PWDs in planning can exacerbate social and economic inequalities and bring about a decline in public trust due to lack of municipal inclusive planning approach as noted by Mpolweni, Kabange and Fagbadebo (2024). In contrast, Nyamwanza, Chakwizira, Beattie and Ingwani (2025) revealed that in Brazil, an inclusive planning approach has improved communities to take ownership of empowerment processes because they are included in decision-making. Inclusive development theory which unpins this study supports the active involvement of PWDs in decision-making with the aim of creating capacity to empower marginalised people. It for this reason that effective involvement of PWDs in planning can directly impact social and economic welfare at the local level if supported by appropriate strategies which respond their inclusive service delivery needs (Nicole, Ardoin, Bowers & Kannan, 2022). The implication of this finding is that the exclusion of PWDs from the planning process has increased their economic vulnerability, thereby requiring strategic interventions from municipalities and key stakeholders to promote equity within the mainstream local economy.

6.3.6 Deficient Features of Inclusive Development Process

The theme seeks to explores the impact of implementation of inclusive development strategies, policies and programmes on PWDs within the LNLM. The major themes

that emerged from the qualitative data are poor standards of inclusive programmes, absence of M&E, deficient strategies and support as shown on Figure 6.7.

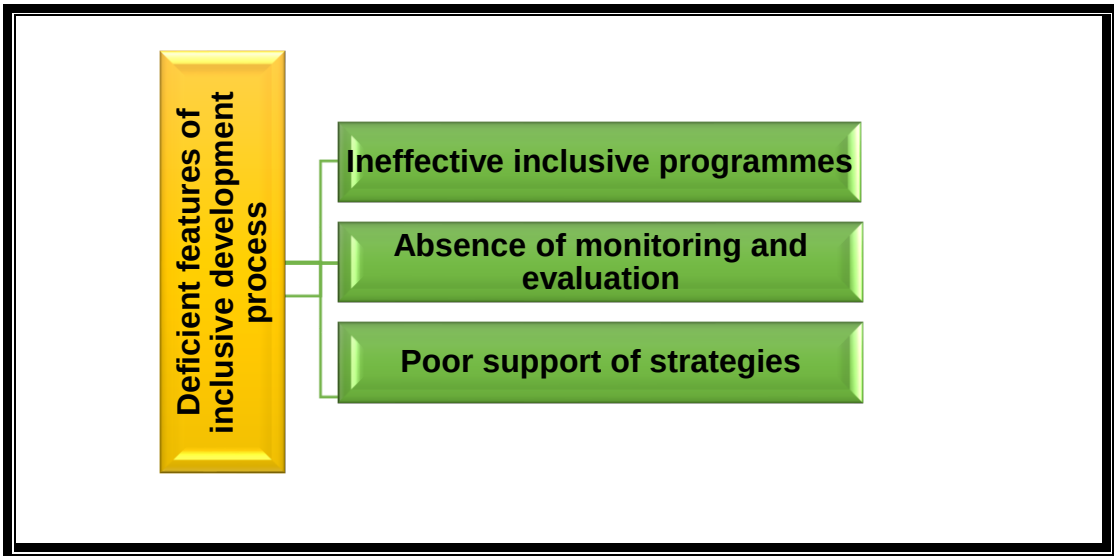


Figure 6.7: Deficient features of inclusive development process

Source: Researcher

Figure 6.7 illustrates the factors that hinder effective inclusive development strategies, policies, and programmes aimed at improving the quality of life for PWDs.

6.3.6.1 Ineffective inclusive programmes

Several participants under this sub-theme highlighted that programmes, policies and strategies are not responding to the developmental needs of PWDs to improve quality of their lives. The site manager on the EPWP programme within LNLM, attested that:

> *"You know most projects are not effective in improving the lives of PWDs because they are either excluded or their economic needs not considered. The ineffectiveness of programmes can be evaluated through standard of living of PWDs because currently majority are still poor due inaccessible economic opportunities. Are not impactful and limited because we are not mainstreaming disability on LED projects, because you cannot empower person only through Reconstruction Development Programme."*

The finding shows that the participants have noted exclusion of PWDs from empowerment activities which make them prone to poverty as noted by Niewohner et

al. (2019). Stats SA (2022) through census data report revealed that PWDs are subjected to poverty with little access to local government services (Bezuidenhout, 2022). The above attestation by the participants aligns with Majikijela, Swartz, Nkonki and Chinyamurindi (2025) that empowerment projects are not making much impact due to ineffective implementation which worsen poverty amongst PWDs. However, despite these, PWDs' living standards, particularly in rural areas, have not improved (Matyana & Thusi, 2023) and lack of improvement is primarily due to poor policy implementation. This finding implies that inclusive LED seems to be ineffective due to discrepancies between policy formulation, programmes implementation and their impact on PWDs as discussed on chapter one of this study (Charles et al., 2023; Niewohner et al., 2019).

6.3.6.2 Absence of monitoring and evaluation

This sub-theme assesses the availability of M&E towards the effectiveness or impact of implementation of inclusive development strategies, policies and programmes within the LNLM. The major findings which emerged from this qualitative data reveals that there is weak or absence of M&E system within municipalities (Yekani et al., 2024). The two participants at senior management level expressed similar concerns regarding the absence of monitoring and evaluation in the municipality. They indicated that:

> *"The municipality lacked dedicated monitoring and evaluation tools to track the progress and impact of empowerment projects for PWDs, noting that such tools were also absent within the LED unit. They explained that, instead, the municipality relied on a standard general instrument, namely the Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan, which was used to assess key performance indicators and to monitor the allocation of budget portions against each indicator in relation to whether activities were implemented in line with the set targets".*

This finding is similar to the findings of Matyana and Thusi (2023); and Yekani et al. (2024) that a lack of M&E has led to South African municipalities not to assess the impact of implemented policies and projects. Despite that, most municipalities in South Africa have continued to implement LED as an economic approach, but there is limited

evidence to track its effects on PWDs' quality of life (Niewohner et al., 2019:1172). However, a blanket approach towards empowerment of PWDs will not yield positive results in achieving the NDP 2030 vision of inclusive development as discussed in Chapter 3 (Maemu et al., 2023).

This finding implies that the LNLM does not have adequate M&E mechanisms to monitor or evaluate the inclusion of PWDs on empowerment programmes and impact of this programmes on quality of their lives. Thus, the ineffectiveness and inability to assess the impact of inclusive projects for PWDs within the municipality can be attributed to the absence of effective monitoring mechanisms and an appropriate evaluation system (Nzama et al., 2023; Yekani et al., 2024). The quantitative data analysis similarly revealed deficient structures for M&E (Ngumbela & Juta, 2025).

6.3.6.3 Poor support of strategies

This theme explores the alignment of existing strategies and initiatives meant to economically empower PWDs within the LNLM. The participants stated that the current municipal economic strategies are not socially or economically favour of inclusive community empowerment needs. This sentiment of informants can be associated with misalignment of LED strategies and support (Mumba & van der Waldt, 2023a). The middle manager with nine years' experience in the LNLM IDP Unit, postulated that:

> *"Yeah, look on paper they are inclusive strategies and lot has been said about inclusion of PWDs but the practically nothing is happening. I believe that current programmes and strategies are not meeting economic and social needs of PWDs, maybe because of insufficient leadership will and support."*

Municipal institutional challenges have led to a misalignment between development needs and implementation programmes Thus of strategic misunderstandings and lack of coherence (Makhaye & Subban, 2024; Marks-Bielska et al., 2020). Thus, inadequate planning and lack of leadership support on municipal strategies or empowerment initiatives are also contributory factors in limited integration of PWDs in implementation of economic and social programmes. Thus, Juta (2023) argues that unskilled leadership affects implementation of LED programmes. Leadership support and clear direction are critical for the effective implementation of programmes intended

to develop communities. Overall, these factors influence the effectiveness of municipal projects aimed at improving the economic wellbeing of PWDs. The findings suggest that municipalities need to assess and clearly identify the skills needs of PWDs in relation to LED, and to develop targeted skills strategies that address these needs within economic activities.

6.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented qualitative findings from in-depth interviews conducted within the LNLM, highlighting the effects of local economic empowerment programmes on PWDs. The findings revealed limited understanding of disability, weak representation of PWDs, inadequate promotion of empowerment programmes, ineffective policy implementation, and poor access to information. Participation of PWDs was largely symbolic, limiting their involvement in decision-making and ownership of empowerment initiatives. Institutional, capacity, and political challenges further constrained inclusive economic outcomes. In general, the study underscores the importance of inclusive, municipality-driven local economic empowerment to enhance the economic wellbeing of PWDs, strengthen local economies, and reduce economic vulnerability. The next chapter concludes the study.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the discussion of the quantitative and qualitative research, providing a deeper contextual understanding of the empirical results on the effects of local economic empowerment programmes on persons with disabilities (PWDs) within the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality (LNLM), South Africa. This chapter synthesises these findings, offering the conclusion and practical recommendations based on the study's findings. Chapter 1 provided an introduction, background and significance of this study on effects of local economic empowerment programmes on PWDs. The study positioned the inclusive development model and economic empowerment theory of change (EETC) as the theoretical framework for understanding of local economic empowerment (Kidder, 2021; Mahbub, 2021; Liu et al., 2022; Pilke & Waliyua, 2023) as noted in Chapters 1 and 2 of this study.

The study used the inclusive development model and EETC as approaches to realise the attainment of inclusive participation of PWDs in local economic empowerment within the local government context. These theories aided the understanding of the effects of local economic empowerment on PWDs. The strengths and weaknesses of the inclusive development model and EETC were identified in Chapter 2 of this study in Sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 respectively. This chapter begins by highlighting the major quantitative and qualitative findings and provides an integrated summary of major findings of the study. It then proceeds to a discussion on the contributions to the body of knowledge. The chapter concludes by offering actionable recommendations to address barriers, challenges and factors prohibiting the active participation of PWDs in local economic empowerment programmes.

7.2 OVERVIEW OF MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS ON QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

The section presents the major highlights in relations to study objectives and findings derived from the mixed research methods (quantitative and qualitative data). These findings were analysed, interpreted, and presented in terms of their dimensions, and the major highlights were addressed and presented.

7.2.1 Quantitative Findings

The following sections provide a summary of the quantitative results.

7.2.1.1 Participation of PWDs in economic empowerment programmes

The major highlights which emerged from the quantitative data include weak structural support, inadequate representation and persistent exclusion, particularly in rural areas which negatively affect representation and participation of PWDs in economic empowerment programmes. The study found that due to weak structural support in the LNLM the current economic empowerment initiatives do not allow equal participation in all segments of society. This is because the municipality lacks enabling mechanisms to promote participation of PWDs in economic activities to enhance their representation. This finding contradicts the inclusive development model as discussed in Chapter 2 which seeks to promote equality and the inclusion of PWDs in mainstream development opportunities (Pilke & Waliyua, 2023). The findings suggest that PWDs are discriminated against and excluded from economic empowerment programmes because of weak structural support to attract PWDs living in rural areas.

According to the findings, representation of PWDs is lacking in the municipal development programmes. This finding suggests that disability integration in LED is not internalised within the municipality which worsens PWDs economic status and exclusion in decision-making. Besides this finding, the empowerment theory as discussed in Chapter 1 can provide a valuable development approach for enabling PWDs to participate in economic activities within the municipality. In addition, one of the major findings reveals that PWDs participation is undervalued and that inclusive participatory approaches are lacking. These findings present a bleak picture that PWDs' participation needs are not integrated in municipal empowerment initiatives which may be perceived as discrimination against PWDs in economic projects. However, the inclusive development model can assist with integration of PWDs' needs and ensure equitable benefits of all members of society irrespective of their background or disability status (Rehal, 2023).

There is a lack of disability-friendly opportunities and information on how PWDs can participate due to limited and misdirected resources. The general findings show a miserable picture which contributes to marginalisation and underrepresentation of

PWDs in economic activities due to inadequate advocacy and awareness, lack of enabling mechanisms and no disability integration strategy on LED. This suggests that municipalities need to be intentional in fulfilling their constitutional obligation as stipulated in the Constitution section 152(1) to encourage inclusive involvement of communities in the development matters of local government (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Furthermore, the findings prompt municipalities such as the LNLM to prioritise access to equitable development programmes for PWDs and develop strategies that advocate for their intentional inclusion.

7.2.1.2 Role of municipality in promotion of economic empowerment for PWDs

The theme exposed the municipality's absence of effective role in promotion of economic empowerment for PWDs. The major highlights which emerged from this theme included limited capacity, poor policy effectiveness, weak institutional responsiveness and persistent knowledge deficits, which together constrain the municipality's ability to adequately promote economic empowerment and development programmes for PWDs. The findings suggest that weak institutional responsiveness and capacity constraints are major challenges prohibiting municipality to play an effective role in promotion of economic empowerment for PWDs. Furthermore, the result of this study confirms that capacity-building for PWDs is absent from the municipal development agenda and disability considered as social welfare programmes. The findings disagreed with Liu, Yang & Gong (2022) on inclusive development model which advocate for empowerment of PWDs in social, political and economic processes activities led by the municipality. According to findings there is lack of mechanisms and monitoring tools to implement inclusive development. These research results suggest that municipal structures are perceived as ill-equipped to deliver sustained empowerment programmes for PWDs.

The findings have demonstrated that inclusive economic policies are poorly implemented within the municipality. This study finding suggest that PWDs will remain economically marginalised within the LNLM due to weak policy execution such as EEA. This finding entails that municipality lacks effort to implement economic empowerment policies which can potentially hinder PWDs access to resources to improve quality of their lives (Klefbeck, 2024; Taing 2019). Overall, the results underscore concerns that the municipality has been unable to translate policy into

meaningful action. Considering the above findings, the hypothesis of this study can be verified, namely ineffective economic policy implementation negatively impacts on participation of PWDs economic empowerment and their financial status. The findings align with the inclusive development model which advances policies that enhance access to resources and foster active involvement of marginalised society in development decision-making (Gupta et al., 2015; Rammelt & Gupta, 2021).

Furthermore, the findings revealed that municipal development programmes are nonresponsive to the needs of PWDs because of weak institutional responsiveness. From the EETC view, strengthening municipalities' capacity to implement policies that support PWDs' economic participation is vital to achieve inclusivity (Kidder, 2021; Regina, Heckert, Paz, Cabnal, 2024). Moreover, the findings noted that promoting representation is not prioritised due to fragmented knowledge about disability issues. In addition, the findings showed that the LNLM continues to struggle to achieve the target of 7% representation of PWDs within their workforce. Collectively, these findings point to systemic weaknesses in institutional arrangements that limit the municipality's responsiveness to inclusive demands. Thus, this study demonstrated that there is knowledge gap with municipal officials to facilitate and address disability development needs during the implementation of projects which aligns with literature review outcome. This study concluded that the disability knowledge deficit negatively impacts on coordination of disability needs into the municipal development agenda. These findings highlighted a shortage of knowledge and specialised skills within the municipality, which undermines effective planning and implementation of inclusive economic empowerment. Finally, the findings revealed a lack of dedicated disability-friendly economic training which contribute to PWDs exclusion in the mainstream of municipal economy.

7.2.1.3 Challenges and barriers for PWDs participation in economic empowerment

According to the findings, the LNLM faces intertwined political, institutional, infrastructural and strategic obstacles for the implementation of empowerment programmes. However, the findings revealed strong patterns pointing to politicisation of programmes, insufficient municipal capacity and enduring exclusion in infrastructure as common barriers inhibiting participation of PWDs in economic empowerment. These findings are inconsistent with the empowerment theory which posits that

empowerment process should consist of effective structures, strategies and actions that can economically empower PWDs (Mahbub, 2021). This outcome indicates a need for the LNLM to address the representation of PWDs in various structures, eliminate political interference in projects and improve participation of PWDs in municipal economic activities.

The findings demonstrated that politicisation of municipal projects has negatively impacted on access to education and training opportunities for PWDs. The findings align with Jagoe et al. (2023) that PWDs are facing economic exclusion due to institutional, educational, infrastructural and strategic barriers. In addition, the findings demonstrated that disability development issues are treated as matter of compliance rather than true inclusivity. These results reflect strong perceptions of political interference and tokenistic approaches to disability development. The findings suggest that there is inadequate employee capacity to fully implement inclusive empowerment programmes showing that the LNLM is failing to address inequalities, negative attitudes and broader socioeconomic barriers. This points to significant shortfall in human resources and institutional commitment at the municipal level.

The findings reveal strong concern on institutional weaknesses as results of lack of monitoring and enforcement of institutional frameworks. In order to improve monitoring and enforcement framework, the EETC recommends evaluation of PWDs in programmes through involvement, benefits and level of integration as explained by Malapit et al. (2020). The results also demonstrated that poor leadership and management are ineffective in guiding disability strategies within the LNLM which aligns with literature reviews in Chapter 3 (Juta, 2023). Together, these findings underscore weaknesses in institutional structures and governance. The findings showed that infrastructure exclusion such as inaccessible municipal buildings, transport and infrastructure restrict participation of PWDs in local economy. Therefore, inaccessible infrastructure undermines the economic independence of PWDs and demands urgent municipal action to ensure reasonable accommodation, including at the planning stage, in line with disability legislation (Osman et al., 2023)

Similarly, findings confirmed that PWDs have limited involvement in planning empowerment programmes and limited access to financial resources in rural areas. The findings revealed that environmental and economic exclusions remain entrenched

within the municipality. Furthermore, the findings showed strategic deficits due to a lack of understanding of LED, and lack of political will to mainstream disability issues in rural areas. These research findings point to strategic shortcomings at both conceptual and leadership levels within the LNLM which need effective intervention from political leaders and management of the municipality. Overall, these findings revealed extent of systemic barriers that inhibit the participation of PWDs in economic empowerment. The study concludes that free barriers for PWDs in economic activities will need enforcement and accountability mechanisms from various sectors.

7.2.1.4 Involvement of PWDs in economic empowerment programmes

The major highlights derived from this theme include tokenistic practices, resource constraints, educational disadvantages and municipal ineffectiveness which reveals an inactive involvement of PWDs in development matters of the LNLM. The findings suggested that PWDs involvement remains limited and often tokenistic. In contrast, EETC postulates that implementation of programmes improves when the larger community inclusive of PWDs are involved and consulted during programmes development planning (Ghate, 2021; Reinholz & Andrews, 2020). The findings identified tokenistic practices whereby PWDs involvement in empowerment programmes is driven by compliance rather than genuine inclusivity. This finding suggests that PWDs rights to inclusive participation and involvement in decision-making is compromised by these tokenistic practices. On the other hand, literature on the EETC contends that society becomes more equitable when policies and practices incorporate all individuals' perspectives (Mahbub, 2021). These results suggest that PWDs' participation is widely perceived as symbolic rather than substantive, which reveals the many disparities PWDs face.

The finding on the resource constraints is strongly evident within the LNLM. For example, the municipality frontline workers do not have basic sign language training and LED unit building is inaccessible for PWDs. This is because of insufficient resources to provide reasonable accommodation in LED and participation thereof in development forums. These findings underscore the practical resource shortages that restrict meaningful inclusion of PWDs. These results suggest major shortcomings facing PWDs integration in LED programmes (Hlohlolo, 2023; Panda & Kaur, 2024). The findings have demonstrated that limited education or awareness on disability

exacerbated discrimination in decision-making and resource sharing for PWDs. The findings suggest that educational and outreach gaps perpetuate disadvantages and limit awareness of disability issues. Educational sensitisation and training is crucial to creating enable environment for equal involvement in planning and benefits in resource sharing.

Surprisingly, the findings showed that the LNLM is ineffective towards involving PWDs in economic planning. The findings reveal that municipality is struggling to empower communities economically and socially. Finally, persistent resource shortages, educational barriers and municipal ineffectiveness as major constraints, suggesting that greater institutional commitment and resource allocation are required to achieve genuine inclusion. Nonetheless, the economic empowerment theory holds that empowerment is meaningful only when persons with disabilities have the freedom and confidence to shape their lives, supported to participate in decision-making and to exercise equal rights (Kidder, 2021; Kidder et al., 2017). The findings show that the LNLM does not have an effective disability and participatory planning approach. The findings present a bleak picture of economic marginalisation of PWDs in the municipality which has contributed to legacy of economic inequalities and poverty.

7.2.1.5 Effectiveness of inclusive development strategies, policies and programmes

Findings in this section underscore that effectiveness and impact are constrained by persistent governance failures, inadequate programmes outcomes, weak support structures and poor strategic alignment. The results reflect widespread perceptions that, despite the presence of policies, strategies and initiatives, these have not translated into measurable empowerment gains for PWDs in the municipality. In support of findings of governance failures, the outcome reveals that lack of M&E systems undermines the sustainability of empowerment programmes. However, EETC could potentially be used to evaluate the effects of LED programmes on PWDs as noted by Shava (2023). The literature on this theory posits that changes in implementation are necessary to ensure positive effects of inclusive economic empowerment programmes (Liu et al., 2022).

Similarly, the findings show that weak institutional structures and poor governance contribute to ineffective empowerment outcomes. These findings highlight concerns

about the inability of governance structures to ensure accountability and programmes continuity. Thus, the current policies and programmes do not address the disabling environment to improve the quality of life for PWDs. The finding aligns with literature presented in Chapter 3 that municipalities apply a blanket approach to empowerment due to poor governance structure in implementation of policies which contribute to ineffectiveness of programmes (Kahn, 2017). The outcome suggests that marginalisation within specific municipal programmes is contested, but ineffectiveness projects are evident challenge facing the LNLM.

The findings also demonstrated that empowerment interventions have not improved financial independence among PWDs. Similarly, the outcome reveals that municipal strategies do not adequately support disability initiatives within communities. Thus, these findings point to limited institutional and systemic support for meaningful disability empowerment. Lack of effective disability strategies and stakeholder support undermines the promotion and evaluation of empowerment programmes. This is because strategies and programmes to enhance the economic status of PWDs has been inconsistent and irrelevant which worsens marginalisation of PWDs. The findings suggest ineffective policies, strategies and programmes are caused by strategic misalignment with the general developmental needs of PWDs. The findings confirmed that current initiatives are not aligned with the actual empowerment needs of PWDs. The findings are consistent with Singh and Chudasama (2020) and Ayoo (2022), indicating that unclear municipal strategies within inclusive development models negatively affect the participation of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in economic interventions and decision-making processes.

The findings present a gloomy picture that the LNLM does not embrace inclusive LED as the findings demonstrated inadequate programmes outcomes, weak support structures and poor strategic alignment which has consequently affected PWDs' quality of their lives within the LNLM. Through these findings, it can be concluded that empowerment strategies often fail to match practical realities due to lack of external support on reinforcement of strategies.

7.2.2 Qualitative Findings

The sections below present a summary of the qualitative findings.

7.2.2.1 Representation of PWDs in economic empowerment activities

This primary aim was to explore the status of representation of PWDs for purpose of inclusive participation in economic empowerment programmes in the LNLM through interviews. The findings demonstrated that there are major limitation factors which prohibit PWDs representation and participation in economic empowerment programmes. These factors include limited PWD recruitment, no promotion of disability participation, poor understanding of PWDs and deficient representation of PWDs within the municipality. This finding implies that PWDs are extensively underrepresented in municipal economic activities because of the absence of an inclusive participatory approach. The above findings differ from the literature on inclusive development theory, which aims to advance the representation of persons with disabilities (PWDs) by promoting equal participation in mainstream development opportunities (Pilke & Waliyua, 2023).

This finding of poor understanding of PWDs has dire consequences for their involvement in empowerment initiatives within the municipality. These findings show that there is a fragmentation of disability knowledge within municipalities has impeded PWDs from fully participating in economic empowerment programmes. Consequently, this has led to the perception that PWDs are only meant to be empowered socially. This is contradictory to the inclusive development model which seeks to empower representation of PWDs through social, economic and political activities to enhance individual development (Liu et al., 2022; Pilke & Waliyua, 2023). The findings also demonstrated that PWDs recruitment is limited due to lack of recruitment strategy for PWDs. Thus, limited recruitment of PWDs has prevented the full representation and participation of PWDs in local economic empowerment programmes (Monareng, Soeker & Naidoo, 2025). This concurs with Dineshan and Geetha (2023) on inclusive development model, that PWDs are often excluded from employment opportunities which lead to a high unemployment rate.

These findings show a gloomy picture of factors that contribute to exclusion, discrimination, underrepresentation and inactive participation of PWDs in municipal economic activities. This finding suggests that limited recruitment of PWDs and poor understanding of disability negatively affect their economic prospects and increase the

marginalisation of PWDs thus requiring urgent strategic interventions from the municipal leadership.

7.2.2.2 The role of the municipality in economic empowerment

This theme explores the role of the LNLM in the promotion of inclusive economic empowerment programmes. The role of municipality is to facilitate, coordinate and implement disability empowerment programmes, policies and strategies. However, this finding aligns with the EETC that the role of municipalities is to promote implementation of inclusive economic empowerment programmes for disadvantaged groups such as PWDs (Shava, 2023). This implies that facilitation, collaboration and implementation are key in unlocking opportunities to meet the developmental needs of all society members. These findings suggest that facilitation and collaboration within the LNLM can enhance their role and harness financial or non-financial support on economic activities. In contrast, the study also found that the municipality is not effectively playing its role in promotion of LED.

Surprisingly, despite this significant role that municipality must play in promotion of economic empowerment programmes for PWDs, many obstacles were encountered. The findings revealed complex challenges facing the municipality in the promotion of economic empowerment activities not limited to ineffective facilitation and implementation. The findings demonstrated the constraints to promotion of economic empowerment for PWDs which comprises of abuse of public office, ineffective policy implementation, no disability strategy and lack of stakeholder collaboration. These major findings limit integration of PWDs in local government development programmes. Shockingly, the study found the abuse of public office by municipal officials which affects the role of the municipality in promoting PWDs inclusion in economic empowerment activities. On the other hand, inclusive development model literature posits that principles of good governance and systematic changes are necessary to prevent abuse of power to ensure that development benefits are equitable for all communities (Rehal, 2023). The inclusive development model could thus assist to reduce the abuse of power.

The findings revealed that the LNLM is not immune from ineffective policy implementation. The findings demonstrated that municipality continues struggle with

implementation of inclusive policies due to weak policy enforcement (Makhaye & Subban, 2024). Furthermore, ineffective policy implementation exacerbates exclusion and increases economic vulnerability for PWDs (Ramolobe et al., 2024). Thus, PWDs within the municipality are denied access to economic opportunities to develop themselves. Again, the findings reveal that the LNLM does not have sufficient capacity to drive the promotion of inclusive LED. This makes it difficult to implement inclusive LED programmes and policies which negatively affect PWDs. Similarly, the findings showed that the LNLM does not have a disability strategy to accommodate the inclusion of PWDs in economic initiatives. However, empowerment theory literature provides a valuable framework for enabling PWDs to participate in economic activities (Tinta & Kolanisi, 2023).

This finding highlights the challenges and gaps associated with role of the municipality in promotion LED initiatives. The ineffective facilitation and coordination of programmes affect the accountability, support and sustainability of the projects. Thus, this study suggests that promotion of inclusive programmes will need strong comprehensive capacity-building to enable facilitation of policies, coordination of stakeholders and development of strategies to guide inclusion of PWDs.

7.2.2.3 Barriers to economic empowerment

This theme investigated the barriers inhibiting PWDs participation in local economic empowerment programmes within the LNLM.

The findings indicate that disabling environment, attitudinal, communication and educational barriers serve as boundaries for participation of PWDs in economic activities. The findings demonstrated that PWDs encounter disabling environment barriers which limit their involvement in the LNLM development agenda. This finding aligns with previous literature review results which reveal significant disabling environment which prohibits PWDs from joining the mainstream of economy (Ngcobo & Gumede, 2022). Through these findings it can be concluded that municipal infrastructure systems are not yet consistent or convenient for PWDs. Again, the results revealed attitudinal barrier due to discrimination and stigma amongst PWDs participation in economic activities.

The findings show that PWDs within the LNLM experience communication barriers. Amongst others is limited information about project opportunities, officials who are not competent in sign language and lack LED disability-friendly documents. This study concludes that municipality is non-compliant and disregard reasonable accommodations policies for PWDs. In addition, the findings proved that PWDs in the municipality face substantial barriers regarding education and training access which prohibit their involvement in economic empowerment. These findings suggest that the LNLM should intensify collaboration with educational centres, train officials on disability issues, improve communication strategy, seek investors and facilitate inclusive LED training.

7.2.2.4 Aspect impeding involvement of PWDs in development

The theme explores factors that impede PWDs active involvement in development and implementation of economic programmes, strategies and policies. The major findings which emerged from this theme include limited disability databases, disability consideration as social welfare, inaccessible projects information and planning approach deficiencies. These findings present a bleak picture that disability database is absent from the LNLM. Thuss, the findings suggest that absence disability data can worsen the exclusion of PWDs in planning of development process. Similarly, the findings demonstrate that PWDs face inadequate municipal information on how to participate in projects planning and policy implementation.

The research outcome points out that municipality lack inclusive planning approach to ensure that every segment of society is engaged in planning and implementation of local economic projects, policies and strategies. This outcome contradicts the EETC literature, which emphasises that PWDs should have the freedom to shape their lives, participate in decision-making, and enjoy equal rights, with appropriate support (Kidder, 2021). This theory suggests that changes in planning to incorporate all development needs is right step towards inclusive society.

Shockingly, the above aspects impeding involvement of PWDs development planning, policies and strategies reveal serious gaps even on integration of disability in LED. Thus, the study concludes that limited data, inaccessible projects information and planning approaches to systematic isolation of PWDs which need strategic efforts from

municipality. The above outcome reveals serious void because municipalities are obligated to ensure inclusive participation for all in decision-making regardless of their status or background within the community.

7.2.2.5 Deficient features of inclusive development process

The theme seeks to explore the impact of implementation of inclusive development strategies, policies and programmes on PWDs within the LNLM. The major findings which emerged from the qualitative data comprise poor standards of inclusive programmes, absence of M&E, deficient strategies and support. The findings reveal factors that prevent the effectiveness and impact of inclusive development strategies, policies and programmes towards quality of lives for PWDs within the municipality. These findings agree with EETC posits that lack of inclusive programmes, M&E negatively affects the effects of economic interventions on PWDs quality of lives. On the other hand, EETC claims that effective economic empowerment for PWDs can be beneficial for both municipality and community (Martinez (2022), if implemented correctly.

The findings reveal gloomy picture that ineffective programmes, policies and strategies within the LNLM are not responding to the developmental needs of PWDs to improve their economic wellbeing. As results of this misalignment PWDs are now prone to poverty. The study has come to conclusion that the LNLM does not have adequate M&E mechanisms to monitor or evaluate the inclusion of PWDs on empowerment programmes. Thus, this can be associated with the absence of support and misalignment of strategies which need to be rectified.

7.3 INTEGRATED SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study achieved its aim and purpose through realisation of major findings which prohibit participation and integration of PWDs in economic empowerment programmes as per each study objectives. These findings derived from both quantitative and qualitative data collected in this study:

The overall major findings which emerged from the quantitative data include weak structural support, inadequate representation and persistent exclusion, particularly in rural areas which negatively affect representation and participation of PWDs in

economic empowerment programmes. The weak structural support in municipalities suggest that the current economic empowerment initiatives do not allow equal participation. Inadequate representation is one of the key findings which emerged from both quantitative and qualitative data which reveals that PWDs disability integration in LED is not internalised. This finding aligns with literature that PWDs are systematically excluded from local economic empowerment initiatives. In addition, major findings which emerged from the qualitative data included LED forum non- participation, PWDs recruitment limitation, no promotion of disability participation, poor understanding of and PWDs within the municipality.

The role of the municipality is to promote inclusive local economic empowerment programmes that support PWDs to enhance their quality lives. However, quantitative major insights revealed limited capacity, weak institutional responsiveness and persistent knowledge deficits, which together constrain the municipality's ability to adequately promote economic empowerment and development programmes for PWDs. Equally, the qualitative findings noted abuse of public office, ineffective policy implementation, no disability strategy and lack of stakeholder collaboration as a major obstacle prohibiting integration of PWDs in municipal programmes.

The municipality faces several challenges as revealed in quantitative outcome comprises of politicisation of programmes, capacity limitations, institutional weaknesses, infrastructure exclusion and strategic deficit as challenges affecting the implementation of programmes. In contrast qualitative insights revealed disabling environmental, attitudinal, communication and educational barriers as factors affecting active involvement of PWDs in economic initiatives. The findings align with literature reviews which noted structural and systemic challenges facing PWDs (Matyana & Thusi, 2023).

The major highlights which emerged from quantitative findings include tokenistic practices, resource constraints, educational disadvantage and municipal ineffectiveness which reveals an inactive involvement of PWDs in development matters of the LNLM. Similarly, the insights of qualitative finding revealed limited disability database, disability consideration as social welfare, inaccessible projects information and planning approach deficiencies as a concern. Thus, these are factors that hinder PWDs' engagement in development and implementation of economic

programmes, strategies and policies. This finding suggests that municipal systems are not yet convenient for PWDs participation in planning.

The effectiveness and impact of inclusive economic empowerment programmes are constrained by persistent governance failures, inadequate projects outcomes, weak support structures and poor strategic alignment as noted in quantitative findings. However, the results reflected widespread perceptions that, despite the presence of policies and initiatives, these have not translated into measurable empowerment gains for PWDs. However, the major findings which emerged from the qualitative data comprises of ineffective inclusive programmes, absence of M&E, deficient strategies and support. The above findings affect the effectiveness and impact of economic initiatives towards enhancing the economic wellbeing of PWDs.

7.4 THE STUDY LIMITATIONS

The study focused primarily on the effects of local economic empowerment programmes on PWDs in the LNLM within all four identified clusters/group area in the municipality as detailed in Chapter 4. The study could not cover the entire population of the municipality due to researcher's limited capacity and resources. The future researchers could consider expanding the geographical scope of the study to provide more understand of the research problem. The researcher faced constraints in obtaining the permission letter to conduct the study due to ever changing acting municipal managers in the LNLM. There was thus a delay in the receipt of the approval letter from the municipality. The study may be limited by its focus on participants with multiple disabilities, as it did not explore exclusion based on specific types of disabilities.

Even though researcher made a great effort to ensure that study methodology was comprehensive, certain factors might have impacted on study conclusions. The researcher had to reschedule some of the interviews with the participants due to their unavailability. Nonetheless, the results were not impacted by this limitation of rescheduling interviews. To ensure the comfort of the participants during in-depth interviews, some interviews were conducted in their native language (Sepedi). This means that some meaning of words might have been lost during the transcription of

Sepedi words into English. This is because several Sepedi words have deeper meaning that proved to be difficult to articulate in English.

The empirical literature review findings revealed existing limitations. The study found scarcity of literature review on inclusive LED participation with special focus on PWDs at municipal level as noted on Chapter 2. However, the mixed-methods approach in this study contributed to new knowledge on the significance of integrating PWDs in LED. The analysis in this study did not cover which PWDs are most excluded from local economic empowerment programmes since the study engage the participants with multiple disabilities. This limitation highlights a need for future studies to investigate inclusion of PWDs based on their types of disabilities in economic activities at municipal level.

7.5 STUDY CONTRIBUTION TO THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

The study's relevance rests in its potential to enhance knowledge about the inclusive engagement of PWDs in municipal economic activities. The study on effects of local economic empowerment programmes on PWDs within the LNLM contributes significantly to the existing body of knowledge in various areas specifically in policy, practice, theoretical and conceptual as follows:

7.5.1 Policy Impact

The PWDs integration on economic initiatives it has been acknowledged by many prescripts and directives with aim of achieving inclusivity. The South African government formed various legislative frameworks and policies to address the economic injustice or discrimination of the past for purpose of integrating PWDs in the mainstream of the economy. However, on several occasions the public and private sector has failed to implement inclusive policies for PWDs to be economically active. For example, the LNLM is failing to achieve 7% employment of PWDs in their workforce and empowerment projects. The study recommends that PWDs should be given first preference on recruitment of empowerment programmes such as CWP and be considered for appointments on light duties jobs such as cashier, receptionist and telephone operator in the municipality. The findings of this study will trigger review of current policies by decision-makers within South African government to ensure realisation of economic rights of PWDs. In addition, the study will assist in ensuring

the future policies are aligned with PWDs economic needs for these policies to have positive effects on quality of life of PWDs. It will encourage policymakers to enforce reasonable policies that promote inclusive economic empowerment at the municipal level.

7.5.2 Practical Implementation

The recommendations should comprehensively capacitate municipal officials and political leadership to understand the significant of disability integration in all municipal development agenda. The findings should help LED practitioners develop realistic inclusive local economic empowerment programmes to actively execute the policies and strategies for NDP 2030 which advocate inclusion of PWDs in economic activities. The study recommends that the LNLM must coordinate SMME training through the LED strategy to improve the financial independence of PWDs in local economy. The study contributes to realisation of the need for collaboration on implementation of inclusive programmes (social and economic) through involvement of PWDs, key stakeholders and government departments. Furthermore, the findings catalogue disability responsive programmes to increase access to economic opportunities for PWDs. The findings should assist in developing a municipal disability strategy to guide the inclusion of PWDs in economic empowerment.

7.5.3 Theoretical Impact

The inclusive development model (Gupta et al., 2015), the empowerment theory Rappaport (1987) and the EETC (Mahbub, 2021) were applicable to the current study. The inclusive development model and EETC impact the participation of PWDs in economic initiatives. These approaches can be used to identify and resolve the barriers and obstacles prohibiting participation of PWDs in the mainstream of economic initiatives, thereby enabling their inclusion to enhance their economic wellbeing. The above approaches simultaneously play a critical role in realising the economic inclusion of PWDs for inclusive sustainable development. The inclusive development model focuses on individual development and equal opportunities while the EETC focuses on change in the implementation of programmes to actively foster individual involvement in decision-making while enjoying equal rights. The study contributes to these theories by exposing ways in which economic marginalisation

intersects with PWDs to limit their ability to participate in economic empowerment programmes. This research recommends a frequent review of the inclusive development model and the EETC to determine their relevance to society and their effects on economic participation of PWDs.

7.5.4 Conceptual Impact

The municipality must take effective measures to heightened disability public awareness to eradicate discrimination, stigma and systematic exclusion. PWDs face disparities in social, pollical and economic activities due to fragmented knowledge on disability. It is necessary for all segments of society to be familiar with disability concepts that promote reasonable accommodations. Those concepts include mainstreaming, integration, accessibility, equality, physical or mental illness, visual impairments, negative attitudes, economic exclusion and inclusion, to make community members accept PWDs. The LNLM must be in a better position to understand disability concepts such as accessibility since they are accountable for empowering PWDs.

7.6 MAJOR CONCLUSION IN RELATION TO STUDY FINDINGS

The study aimed to assist the LNLM to understand the economic needs and challenges faced by PWDs to participate in local economic empowerment programmes to enhance the quality of their life. The researcher focused on providing the municipality with insights into challenges, factors and barriers that PWDs frequently encounter which prohibit them to participate in economic initiatives or the mainstream of the local economy. Thus, the study produced valuable insights into the effects and integration of PWDs in local economic empowerment programmes to participate in the mainstream of economic activities. The study comprised of five themes emanating from interviews and structured questionnaires on the effects of local economic empowerment programmes.

The study established that weak structural support, inadequate representation, absence of disability advocacy and rural exclusion adversely affect the status of representation of PWDs in municipal economic empowerment programmes. This study concludes that these challenges are experienced by the LNLM because the enabling mechanisms to promote representation of PWDs are absent. In terms of

qualitative findings, this study concludes that limited recruitment of PWDs and poor understanding of disability are stumbling blocks in the achievement of inclusive participation in municipal development agenda. The study concludes that fragmented knowledge on disability results in limited integration and discrimination of PWDs in economic empowerment initiatives.

The results have clearly demonstrated that the LNLM is not effectively playing an active role in promotion of economic empowerment activities due to weak institutional responsiveness, capacity constraints and persistent knowledge deficits. The study concludes that the absence of capacity-building within the LNLM has negatively impacted policy implementation, disability knowledge deficit and ill-equipped municipal structures. Thus, the LNLM faces several challenges such as abuse of public office, absence of disability strategy and lack of stakeholder collaboration to integrate PWDs in municipal programmes. In general, the study concluded that municipal institutional weakness is a major barrier preventing the LNLM from facilitating and implementing empowerment initiatives for PWDs.

The outcome highlights the extent of systemic barriers and challenges that inhibit the participation of PWDs in economic empowerment. Besides institutional exclusion, strategic deficit and capacity limitations, the study concludes that politicisation of programmes is one of the dominant barriers inhibiting participation of PWDs in economic empowerment. The study suggests that local government requires strong political education interventions for purpose of achieving inclusive development (Mlambo & Maserumule, 2023). In contrast, insights from the interviews revealed disabling environmental barriers, communication barriers and educational barriers as factors affecting active contribution of PWDs in economic initiatives. The study concluded that the LNLM infrastructure and communication systems are not convenient for PWDs which requires strategic change as per the EETC. These disparities have affected the economic independence of PWDs.

The study concluded that PWDs' involvement in economic programmes, policies and strategies remains limited and is often tokenistic within the LNLM. The study found persistent resources shortages, educational barriers and municipal ineffectiveness as key constraints. This study suggests involvement of PWDs in planning programmes or policies will require greater institutional commitment and resource allocation to

achieve genuine inclusion. However, according to the literature on the EETC, PWDs must have liberty to enjoy equal rights in decision-making (Kidder, 2021). This theory supports engagement of all members of society on all process of development projects (Ghate, 2021; Reinholz & Andrews, 2020). The findings derived from interviews revealed interconnected factors impeding the active involvement of PWDs in development process (a limited database on disabilities, consideration of disability from a social welfare perspective, inaccessible information on projects and planning approach deficiencies). The study concluded that the LNLM is unable to address economic injustice and integrate PWDs in planning because of limited data on disabilities and deficiencies in the planning approach. As a result, the study suggests the urgent development of a disability database to inform policies planning and identify PWDs for participation.

The results highlight that the effectiveness and impact of economic programmes or strategies are constrained by persistent governance failures, inadequate programmes outcomes, weak support structures and poor strategic alignment. Thus, the study concludes that the current economic initiatives and policies have not translated into effective or meaningful empowerment benefits for PWDs. The study suggests that governance failure on empowerment projects is due to lack of M&E systems that undermines the sustainability of these projects. Similarly, this shows that weak institutional structures and poor governance contribute to ineffective empowerment outcomes. This means that PWDs will remain poor and underdeveloped because of lack of effective programmes outcomes. The study concludes that ineffective programmes are the result of misalignment and poor support of implemented economic strategies. This is a result of a blanket approach to programmes, policies and strategies in the empowerment of PWDs.

7.6.1 Framework for Implementation

The inclusive development model and EETC were used in the development of an implementation framework for inclusive disability economic empowerment, supported by the themes emerging from the findings. This framework should help the municipality integrate disability into LED initiatives to achieve inclusive development. Figure 7.1 seeks to integrate the inclusive development model and EETC as discussed in

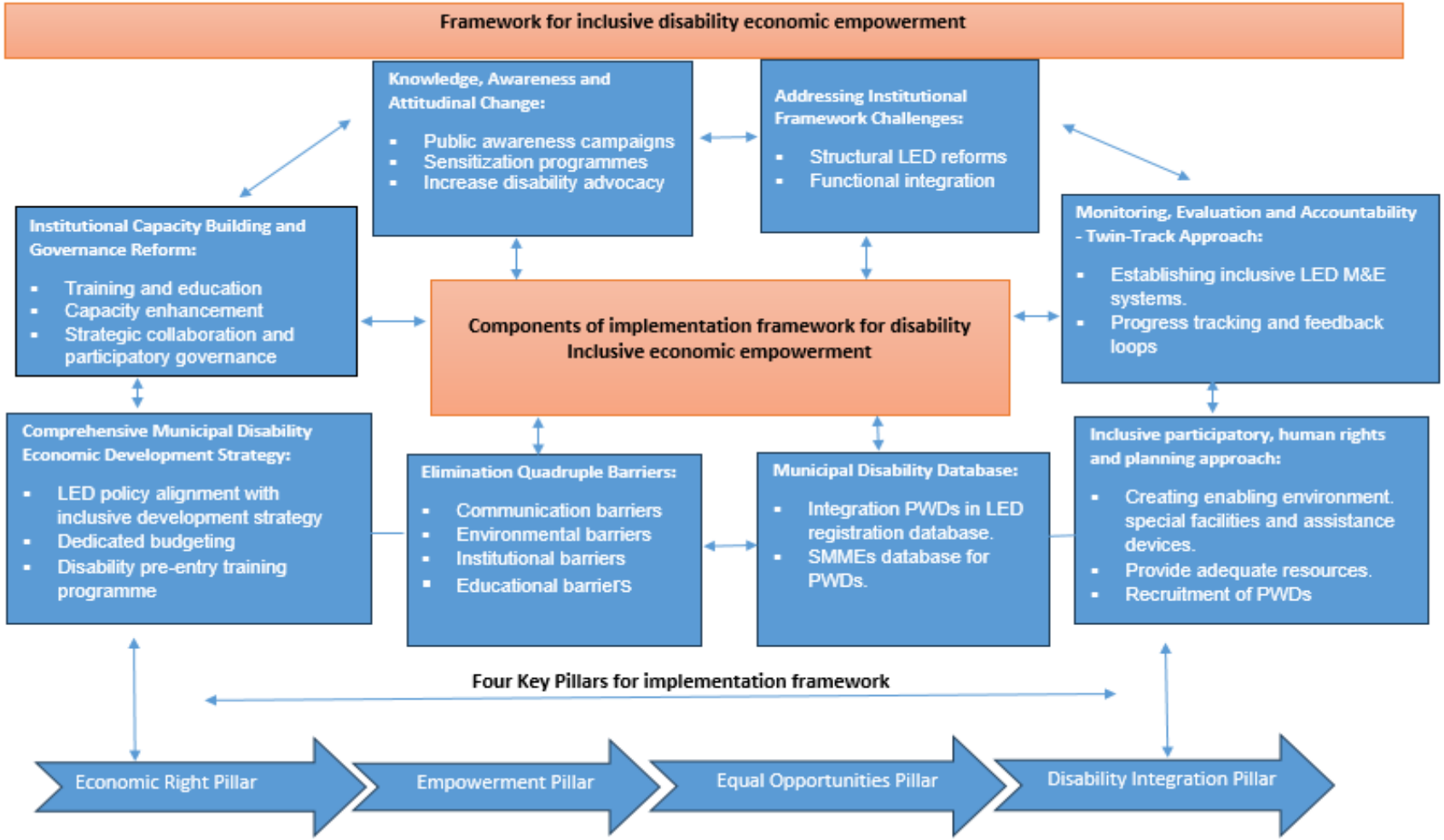
Chapters 1 and 2 while emphasising the meaningful economic participation of PWDs in the municipal development agenda.

Figure 7.1 presents the proposed framework and highlights the critical components and key pillars for consideration in the implementation of inclusive disability economic empowerment. The researcher constructed Figure 7.1 based on the analysis of reviewed literature, the theoretical lens of the study and empirical findings. The interconnected themes and codes from the findings were conceptualised and integrated into an implementation framework for inclusive disability economic empowerment for PWDs. Figure 7.1 provides a broad process map on integration of PWDs in LED initiatives starting from comprehensive municipal disability economic development strategy to elimination quadruple barriers guiding more detailed and focused implementation plans aimed at realizing the economic empowerment

As per Figure 7.1, the framework consists of eight (8) components which are crucial for South African municipalities in guiding effective engagement and inclusion of PWDs in economic empowerment programmes. Knowledge, awareness and attitudinal change is key components aimed at eradicating stereotypes and discrimination towards PWDs in municipal development initiatives. Municipalities must ensure that public and internal staff are well informed about providing reasonable accommodation to PWDs to unearth their talents through development activities. As a result, municipalities are tasked with the responsibility to conduct disability awareness campaigns, sensitisation programmes and disability advocacy. The second component includes addressing institutional framework challenges which requires municipalities to establish structural LED reforms and promote functional integration of disability within municipalities. To address this challenge, municipalities will need to bridge a gap between policy design and implementation. In addition, merit-based appointment, LED capacity building, partnerships and inclusion of PWDs in LED forums are essential in every institutional framework to strengthen LED structures and process.

Thirdly, the application of the monitoring, evaluation and accountability component will require municipalities to implement a twin-track approach to assist with identification of PWDs' needs and ensure access to targeted disability empowerment projects. This will also require establishing inclusive LED M&E systems to track progress on PWDs inclusion in every empowerment initiative.

Figure 7.1: Schematic illustration of implementation framework for inclusive disability economic empowerment



Source: Author

Fourthly, successful participation of PWDs in the municipal development agenda depends on adoption of inclusive participatory, human rights and planning approach. Local government must embrace inclusive participation, allocation of resources and creation of an enabling environment that supports special facilities and assistance devices for PWDs. Municipalities should enforce recruitment of PWDs in all internal and outsourced development projects.

The fifth component, the municipal disability database aims to ensure that PWDs are incorporated into all development plans and ensure readily available, accurate data on PWDs. To achieve this, municipalities must maintain PWDs LED registration and SMMEs databases to offer them opportunities when projects arise. To ensure that PWDs are at the centre of economic empowerment projects, quadruple barriers (communication, environmental, institutional, and educational) must be adequately addressed. Municipalities must ensure that project documents are available in braille and ensure enforcement of disability friendly facilities. To eliminate institutional and educational barriers, municipalities must transform PWDs through provision of short or long training opportunities (learnership or internship) relevant to municipal development plans.

The seventh component is the comprehensive municipal disability economic development strategy which focuses on an inclusive rights-based approach, dedicated disability budget, skills development and business incubation that support PWDs to ensure inclusive economic development. As a result, municipalities must implement a disability pre-entry training programme for officials and ensure alignment of the LED policy with an inclusive development strategy to achieve their development goals. The last component focuses on institutional capacity-building and governance reform to strengthen municipal capability in performing its role efficiently to achieve inclusive sustainable development. Governance reform is necessary for municipalities to enforce accountability and openness in inclusion of PWDs. Training, capacity enhancement, strategic collaboration and participatory governance are of paramount importance to achieve this component.

The successful implementation of the framework will also require strict adherence to four interconnected key pillars. First, the economic rights pillar is based on the logic that PWDs are entitled to universal human rights which requires the development of

initiatives to meet or advance their rights. The municipality is obligated to ensure that the rights of PWDs to participate in economic activities is safeguarded and PWDs are empowered through municipal economic opportunities.

Second, the empowerment pillar intends to ensure that municipality creates a conducive environment to enable PWDs to access equal economic opportunities and resources. The application of this pillar within municipalities will reduce social welfare programmes which are financially taxing and capacitate marginalised communities with skills to participate in the mainstream of economy.

Equal opportunities as the third pillar will unlock the potential of PWDs to change their economic status and improve their financial independence. The municipality must ensure the economic programmes implemented allow equal participation through adopting of an inclusive participatory approach to serve as a tool for integration of PWDs in empowerment initiatives.

Finally, the disability integration pillar seeks to ensure that PWDs are at the centre of planning, implementation and M&E of economic activities to achieve equitable opportunities and benefits.

The objective of above framework is to contribute to the discipline of public administration and management, specifically in the sub-discipline of LED. Thus, this study is the first of its kind which focus on empowerment programmes derived from LED initiatives for PWDs to enhance inclusive economic participation. The application of the components of this framework should follow an iterative cyclical process to ensure that application is grounded in reality to ensure continuous improvement.

7.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EACH STUDY OBJECTIVE

This section outlines key recommendations aimed at enhancing the impact of local economic empowerment programmes on PWDs to improve their quality of life within the LNLM. The recommendations are influenced by the empirical findings, existing literature and the researcher’s perspective on the research outcomes:

7.7.1 Representation of PWDs in Economic Empowerment Activities

Taking the study's findings on status of representation of PWDs for inclusive participation into account, recommendations are made as follows:

- The LED unit within the LNLM should integrate PWDs' development needs into programmes derived for LED initiatives within the municipality to enhance the status of their representation. To achieve this, the LNLM should implement inclusive participatory approach in economic empowerment programmes planning and M&E. This will help the municipality to use an inclusive participatory approach in LED. In the context of the inclusive participatory approach, this means the municipality needs to have intentional strategies and supportive development structures such as a disability LED forum to drive inclusive community economic involvement.
- The community participation unit within the municipality needs to launch public awareness campaigns to allow or attract participation of PWDs in economic empowerment activities and combat negative preconception. This can be achieved by developing capacity-building programmes for key actors, agencies and structures – including NGOs, civil society and the corporate sector – using appropriate methods such as workshops, toolkits, manuals and on-demand online training.
- The human resources unit within the municipality needs to use different approaches to recruit and retain PWDs in order to meet the disability target of seven percent as part of Employment Equity Plan and NDP Vision 2030. This will help to promote acceptable inclusion of PWDs in workforce and implemented programmes. To increase employability of PWDs, both the public and private sectors should collaborate with institutions of higher learning to create internship or learnership opportunities to upskill PWDs to be competitive in labour market.
- Through the Human Resource unit, the LNLM should modify their recruitment and selection processes to accommodate the needs of participants with impairments or disabilities even on programmes such as CWP. This means ensuring that all stakeholders responsible for recruitment and selection decisions are disability-aware and confident in their knowledge.

- The Disability Forum and DSD should ensure that disability is an integral part of LED project planning. PWDs need to be actively involved in all stages of LED process and the LNLM should provide reasonable accommodation for them (information in braille and sign language interpreters) to increase opportunities for their representation. This would ensure that empowerment of PWDs is not relegated to municipal special unit only.
- The municipality training unit needs to implement compulsory pre-entry disability training for municipal officials to enhance knowledge and understanding on PWDs' economic development needs. The prioritisation of disability training and educational sensitisation to create an enabling environment for equal benefits in resource sharing decisions is necessary.
- To reduce the inequalities, the municipality needs to prioritise access to equitable participation in development programmes for PWDs to enhance their wellbeing and achieve the objectives of the NDP. This will need strategic leadership support and commitment which aims to resolve imbalances in economic benefits.
- The disability special unit and forums need to advocate for promotion of PWDs inclusion in programmes and decision-making to unlock the potential of PWDs in the mainstream of the economy and reduce financial dependency.

7.7.2 Role of Municipality in Economic Empowerment

There were significant findings on this dimension on role of municipality in promotion of economic empowerment for PWDs. The following recommendations are made:

- The LED Unit within the LNLM should facilitate the implementation of inclusive empowerment projects and move away from the traditional approach of compliance to an inclusive system.
- The municipal manager should take effective measures to ensure awareness and understanding of the causes, impact and meaning of economic exclusion on PWDs respectively. This should trigger and encourage the inclusion of PWDs in various stakeholders' economic projects implemented within the municipality. Programme planners and implementors should thus be able to realise the economic disparities PWDs face.

- The Communication and Media Unit within the municipality should collaborate with media fraternities to educate the public about the inclusive local economic empowerment. The platforms can eliminate negative attitudes and stigma towards PWDs.
- The LNLM disability forums or advocacy groups should intensify the promotion self-determination and empowerment of PWDs.
- The Council Support and Training unit needs to intensify ethics and political leadership education in the municipality because council members have a prominent role to fulfil in ensuring an active interest of PWDs in economic empowerment. The process would also allow the municipality to obtain a commitment from the political leadership to support and, where possible, drive implementation of inclusive projects.
- The municipal policy and planning unit should develop an effective disability mainstreaming policy and strategy to promote the inclusion of PWDs in economic empowerment programmes. Again, it will require the LNLM to appoint competent staff to drive the execution of these strategies and policies that foster participation of PWDs in municipal development structures.
- The municipality should ensure that there is balance approach of programmes focusing on both economic and social welfare for PWDs.
- The LED executive manager in the municipality should ensure effective implementation of a multifaceted approach focusing on internal LED capacity-building, collaboration with key disability sectors and marginalised community advocacy groups in economic activities to eradicate municipal weak institutional responsiveness.
- The effective LED empowerment programmes on PWDs require implementation of a twin-track approach in the LNLM to track the progress of integration of PWDs in local government programmes.
- Municipality should develop a LED database of PWDs and coordinate SMMEs training for them to improve their financial independence in local economy.

7.7.3 Challenges and Barriers to Economic Empowerment

In light of the shocking findings on challenges and barriers, it recommended that:

- The human resources development unit in the municipality should empower line managers with disability-focused training interventions to realise how PWDs fit into broader development of the municipality. To ensure commitment from senior managers and political office bearers of the municipality, the annual performance plans and agreements should have a disability empowerment target. For example, municipal managers' scorecard should include special LED programmes. This would enhance accountability and commitment to towards implementation of inclusive economic empowerment.
- The municipal manager should drive the establishment of dedicated LED political champions and participatory governance structures to support and potentially trigger political commitment in projects.
- The public and private sectors should commit to a strong and continuing commitment that sets a tone of inclusion and promotes change or reinforce professionalism and managerial/employee behaviours.
- Municipal planning unit should collaborate with local disability centres, DSD and NGOs to develop inclusive economic strategic plans and implementation of frameworks which guide rollout of the strategy on the empowerment of PWDs.
- The municipality should establish partnerships with professional and technical industry stakeholders such as Department of Higher Education to intensify education programmes which capacitate and accommodate the needs PWDs. Subsidies for PWDs on the designated educational programmes would assist in closing skills gaps of PWDs to enable them to be actively involved in economic development activities.
- The LNLM Human Resource Department should ensure that LED champions in the municipality are trained to know that PWDs is part of their competency and disability should be integrated in LED activities.
- The municipality especially in LED unit should do a LED disability responsive planning, budgeting, monitoring, evaluation and auditing to ensure equal participation. This means that LED unit plans should include disability and the issue of reasonable accommodation because it is important in economic empowerment. For example, when LED planning meetings are conducted, they should be in accessible venues, sign language should be used in meetings and LED information should be in accessible formats like braille.

- The municipality should ensure strategic advocacy is used to engage key stakeholders, in particular the core departments that spearhead implementation, to ensure their programmes and budgets are geared towards improving the economic inclusion of PWDs.
- The municipal council should ensure equal access to basic services, training opportunities, resources sharing, technology, infrastructure systems (transport and office buildings) for PWDs to reduce inequalities and dependency syndrome especially in rural areas. Imbalances in access to services should be addressed through the development of new infrastructure, and rehabilitation and upgrading of existing infrastructure.

7.7.4 Involvement of PWDs in Economic Programmes, Strategies and Policies

The study makes the following recommendations for involvement of PWDs in planning of economic programmes, strategies and policies:

- The municipal planning unit in the LNLM need to ensure that PWDs are at the centre of planning, design and implementation of empowerment projects to assist in aligning municipal projects scope with their economic development needs. This means that disability issues should be made an integral part of local government conceptualisation of projects planning and implementation.
- It is of paramount importance that the municipal LED unit ensures that PWDs appear on the LED business registration database. Reliable data would also enhance support evidence-based policy-making. Furthermore, the municipality should have a database of disability associations or organisations, community-based and non-governmental organisations to allow their participation in programmes planning.
- The LNLM planning and policy section should design effective enforcement strategies for practising of inclusivity for PWDs in economic planning.
- The LNLM should create a conducive policy framework for mainstreaming, while engaging in an advocacy drive to enlist support for the strategy on the economic empowerment of PWDs, leveraging the strengths of stakeholders through partnering.

- To enhance equal participation in empowerment strategies and policy planning, the information should be in an acceptable format for PWDs who are visually impaired or physically disabled. For example, IDPs and LED documents should be available in braille. To achieve this, the municipality should collaborate with the private sector to assist with technological devices to enable PWDs to enjoy their economic rights.
- The municipal M&E unit should support enforcement of balanced empowerment approach to social and economic planning within the municipality. This would allow the municipality to empower all communities economically and socially in decision-making fairly.
- The municipal manager should advocate the need for dedicated resources allocation for PWDs to foster their genuine inclusion in the municipal planning process not just for acknowledgement.
- The municipality should shift from compliance to an intersectional commitment approach when involving PWDs in development initiatives and enforce a human rights approach to development.
- Line managers should take progressive steps to remove barriers for PWDs and promote access to the means required for economic participation.

7.7.5 Impact of Economic Programmes, Strategies and Policies on PWDs

The recommendations are based on the impact of economic initiatives, strategies and policies on PWDs:

- The municipality should enforce regular M&E to track progress made in achieving economic inclusivity for PWDs on implemented projects and make the necessary adjustments to programmes or policies as the need arises.
- There is a need for economic empowerment programmes to promote entrepreneurship and engage relevant stakeholders to assist with SMME registration for PWDs.
- The municipality should strengthen training on policies for reasonable accommodation of disability for all employees and policymakers to ensure effective implementation and to avoid a blanket approach to policy application. This means that municipal officials responsible for policy implementation should receive

refresher or regular policy training interventions to enhance the effectiveness of policy or programmes implementation.

- Through its planning and policy unit, the municipality should develop a strategy to identify policy and implementation gaps and use this to guide policy reform and programmes that address strategic misalignment and reduce the marginalisation of PWDs.
- The municipal community participation unit should develop strategic advocacy to advance social and economic policies which support equal benefits or opportunities for PWDs and should lobby for participation of relevant stakeholders.
- The municipal manager should ensure that economic programmes and policies (social and economic) which are not disability responsive are redesigned or revised with key partners and government department such COGTA for better inputs.
- The municipality should strengthen enforcement frameworks and ensure compliance with policies for purpose of improving accountability in project implementation.
- The LED strategy of municipality should foster partnerships in the implementation of projects to ensure prosperity and attract economic resources for projects for PWDs.
- The municipal human resource development unit need to analyse and establish the skills needs of PWDs in relation to LED and develop skills strategies to address these needs in economic activities.
- Promotion of inclusive LED and institutional transformative structures in a consultative, systematic and strategic manner is key to have impactful projects on livelihood of communities.

7.8 ADVISE FOR FUTURE RESEARCHERS AS PER EACH OBJECTIVE

This study has offered vital insights into effects of local economic empowerment programmes on PWDs. The major highlights in the study warrant further investigation. Researchers can also delve deeper and expand on the findings to comprehend the phenomenon under investigation:

7.8.1 Representation of PWDs in Economic Empowerment Activities

Firstly, a comparative cross-sectional study across multiple provinces in South Africa or selected international contexts could provide broader insight into the level of representation of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in economic activities. This study could use desktop analysis and policy review methodologies to generate evidence on underrepresentation and support evidence-based policymaking for equitable participation.

7.8.2 Role of Municipality in Economic Empowerment

Secondly, a diagnostic qualitative study should be undertaken to examine the key limiting factors affecting the promotion of economic empowerment programmes. This study could focus on policy effectiveness, institutional responsiveness, and knowledge gaps that hinder successful implementation. A municipal case study is needed to investigate why municipalities are failing to integrate PWDs into local economic development (LED) activities. The study should explore the role and significance of specialised LED programmes in raising awareness and strengthening commitment across municipal units.

7.8.3 Challenges and barriers to economic empowerment

Thirdly, future research could adopt an exploratory qualitative study to examine the root causes of systemic barriers that prevent the effective provision of reasonable accommodation for PWDs within inclusive LED initiatives.

7.8.4 Involvement of PWDs in economic programmes, strategies and policies

A participatory action research study is recommended to investigate balanced disability empowerment approaches that enhance the meaningful involvement of PWDs in planning and decision-making processes.

7.8.5 Impact of economic programmes, strategies and policies on PWDs

Finally, an implementation evaluation study could examine the methods used by municipalities to implement programmes, policies, and strategies. This research could identify policy implementation gaps, weak support structures, and poor strategic alignment, as well as assess the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation systems

in tracking the impact of economic empowerment initiatives on the quality of life of PWDs.

7.9 CONCLUDING NOTE

The study examined the effects of local economic empowerment programmes on PWDs within the LNLM. In summary, this study revealed the systematic exclusion and economic marginalisation of PWDs in the mainstream of local economic activities due to deficient representation of PWDs in local government development agenda. The findings that derived from empirical literature, qualitative and quantitative data provided an understanding of the extent of the disparities PWDs face in participating in empowerment programmes which are facilitated through LED initiatives within the municipality. Despite the existence of inclusive policies, the LNLM has not made much progress in the integration of PWDs in planning and implementation of development projects. The municipality needs to effectively implement a twin-track, participatory and inclusive rights-based approach for effective integration of PWDs in development matters. There are institutional arrangement challenges and fragmented knowledge about disability. The study contributes to the promotion of economic rights and equitable participation of PWDs in economic initiatives by providing an inclusive disability economic empowerment framework to guide the integration of PWDs in programme implementation.

REFERENCES

Ababio, E.P. & Meyer, D.F. 2012. Local economic development: Building blocks, strategy and implementation for local government in South Africa. *Administratio Publica*, 20(4): 6–27.

Abdulrahman, I.A. 2023. Re-thinking disability inclusion towards achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) for, by and with persons with disabilities. *Journal Sustainability Development*, 12(1): 1–25.

Abodey, E., Vanderpuye, I., Mensah, I. & Badu, E. 2020. In search of universal health coverage - Highlighting the accessibility of health care to students with disabilities in Ghana: A qualitative study. *BMC Health Services Research*, 20(1): 1–12.

Aghaabbasi, M., Moeinaddini, M., Shah, M.Z. & Asadi-Shekari, Z. 2017. A new assessment model to evaluate the microscale sidewalk design factors at the neighborhood level. *Journal of Transport & Health*, 5(0): 97–112.

Agmon, M., Sa'ar, A, & Araten-Bergman, T. 2016. The person in the disabled body: a perspective on culture and personhood from the margins. *International Journal for Equity in Health,* 15(1): 147–155.

Agusiegbe, O. 2023. Local empowerment: A catalyst for building effective social systems in African countries. *Environmental Buzz Publisher*, 8(1): 105–110.

Ahmed, A., Pereira, L. & Jane, K. 2024. *Mixed methods research: Combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches.* [Online]. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/384402328_Mixed_Methods_Research_Combining_both_qualitative_and_quantitative_approaches [Accessed 14 March 2025].

Akinsola, H.A. 2006. *AZ of community health in medical, nursing and health education practice.* Ibadan College Press and Publishers. pp. 103–150.

Akudugu, J.A. 2018. Institutionalising local economic development practice in Ghana. *Local Economy*, 33(4): 405–420.

Alaji, F. & Shefer, T. 2024. Women's participation in grassroots development: Insights from the integrated development plan in Kayamandi, South Africa. *Gender Questions*, 12(2): 20–31.

Alharahsheh, H. & Pius, A. 2020. A review of key paradigms: Positivism vs. Interpretivism. *Global Academic Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(3): 39–43.

Almeida, F. 2024. The role of partnerships in municipal sustainable development in Portugal', *International Journal of Urban Sustainable Development*, 16(1): 231–244.

Almeida, F. 2024. The role of partnerships in municipal sustainable development in Portugal. *International Journal of Urban Sustainable Development*, 16(1): 231–244. https://doi.org/10.1080/19463138.2024.2380052.

Al-Taii, A.M. 2023. Breaking barriers: A comprehensive review of literature on empowering women with disabilities. *Journal of Natural Sciences Publishing*, 12(12): 2479–2490.

Astuti, E.P., Sulaeman, E.S., Lestari, E. and Saptaningtyas, H. 2025. Family support of health promotion on improving the quality of life of preschool children. In *Proceedings of the International Conference on Multidisciplinary Studies (ICoMSi 2024)* (Vol. 926, p. 274). Springer Nature.

Atkinson, A. & Messy, F. 2012. Measuring financial literacy: Results of the OECD/International Network on Financial Education (INFE) pilot study. *OECD Working Papers on Finance, Insurance and Private Pensions, No. 15,* OECD Publishing. [Online]. Available at: http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/finance-and-investment/measuring-financial-literacy_5k9csfs90fr4–en [Accessed 20 July 2025].

Atkinson, D. 2008. *Inequality and economic marginalisation: Creating access to economic opportunities in small and medium towns*, Urban LandMark. [Online]. Available at: https://www.tips.org.za/files/u65/economic_opportunities_in_small_towns_-_atkinson.pdf

Ayoo, C. 2022. Poverty reduction strategies in developing countries. *Rural Development Education, Sustainability Journal*, 18(1): 461–479.

Babbie, E. & Mouton, J. 2004. *The practice of social research*. (2nd edition). London: Thomson Wadsworth.

Bachfischer, A., Barbosa, M. C., Rojas, A. A. R., Bechler, R., Schwienhorst-Stich, E. M., Kasang, C. & Parisi, S. 2023. Implementing community based inclusive development for people with disability in Latin America: a mixed methods perspective on prioritized needs and lessons learned. *International Journal for Equity in Health*, 22(1), 147.

Bagnall A.M., Southby, K., Jones, R., Pennington, A., South, J. & Corcoran, R. 2023). *Systematic review of community infrastructure (place and space) to boost social relations and community wellbeing: Five-year refresh*. London: What Works Centre for Wellbeing.

Bahner, J. 2022. Nothing about us without, who? Disability rights organisations, representation and collaborative governance. *The International Journal of Disability and Social Justice*, *2*(2): 40–64.

Bandalos, D.L. 2018. *Measurement theory and applications for the social sciences*. London: Guilford Press.

Banerjee, A. & Chaudhury, S. 2010. Statistics without tears: Populations and samples. *Industrial Psychiatry Journal,* 19(1): 60–65.

Bango, B. 2023. *The role of local government in the empowerment of youth owned small, medium, and micro enterprises in Cape Town.* [Doctoral dissertation. Cape Peninsula University of Technology]. https://etd.cput.ac.za/bitstream/20.500.11838/3899/1/Bango_Bongani_213001624.pdf

Barnes, C. 1991. *Disabled people in Britain and discrimination: A case for anti-discrimination legislation.* London: Hurst and Co/BCODP.

Basson, Y. 2023. Multiple discrimination experienced by women with disabilities in the workplace in South Africa. *Law, Democracy and Development Journal*, 27(1): 1–26. https://dx.doi.org/10.17159/2077–4907/2023/ldd.v27.8

Baxter, P. & Jack, S. 2008. Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(4): 544–556.

Bechange, S., Jolley, E., Gascoyne, B., Smith, K., Griffiths, A., Ngorok, J. & Schmidt, E. 2021. Livelihood outcomes in a cohort of youth with disabilities following participation in an economic empowerment programme in rural Uganda. *Disability and Health Journal*, 14(3), 101069.

Becker, G. 2009. *Human capital: a theoretical and empirical analysis, with special reference to education*. (3rd edition). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Berkovich, I. 2018. When the going gets tough: Schools in challenging circumstances and the effectiveness of principals' leadership styles. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 28(5): 348–364.

Besnier, E, Hlabana, T, Kotzias, V, Beck, K, Sieu, C & Muthengi, K. 2024. Exploring economic empowerment and gender issues in Lesotho's child grants programme: A qualitative study. *Journal of Health Policy and Planning*, 2(39): 95–117, https://doi.org/10.1093/heapol/czad009.

Bezuidenhout, B. 2022. *Opinion: Better data is first step in improving services for persons with disabilities*. [Online] Available at: https://www.spotlightnsp.co.za/2022/09/23/opinion-better-data-is-first-step-in-improving-services-for-persons-with-disabilities/ [Accessed 20 December 2025].

Bhardwaj, P. 2019. Types of sampling in research. *Journal of the Practice of Cardiovascular Sciences*, 5(3): 63–157.

Bhattarai, M. & Smedema, S. M. 2023. Improving health of persons with disabilities living in poverty: A scoping review. *Rehabilitation Counselors and Educators Journal*, 12(1). https://doi.org/10.52017/001c.37747.

Bishagazi, K. 2021a. Sustainable local economic development in Tanzania: Exploring economic challenges in growing the economy. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*, 11(2): 210–228. http://dx.doi.org/10.5296/jpag.v11i2.15695

Bishagazi, K. 2021b. Promoting local economic development (LED) in Tanzania: Exploring opportunities and challenges in the local value chains in Kigoma Region. *International Journal of Innovative Science, Engineering & Technology,* 8(8): 178–190.

Blair, J.P. & Carroll, M.C. 2008. Local economic development: *Analysis, practices, and globalization*. SAGE.

Blakeslee, D., Dar, A., Fishman, R., Malik, S., Pellegrina, H.S. and Bagavathinathan, K.S. 2023. Irrigation and the spatial pattern of local economic development in India. *Journal of Development Economics,* 161(1): 102997. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2022.102997

Bloomfield, J. & Fisher, M. J. 2019. Quantitative research design. *Journal of the Australasian Rehabilitation Nurses Association*, 22(2): 27–30. https://doi.org/10.33235/jarna.22.2.27–30

Bonaccio, S., Connelly, C.E., Gellatly, I.R., Jetha, A. & Martin Ginis, K.A. 2020. The participation of people with disabilities in the workplace across the employment cycle: Employer concerns and research evidence. *Journal of Business and Psychology,* 35(2): 135–158.

Borel-Saladin, J.M. & Turok, I.N. 2013. The green economy: Incremental change or transformation? *Environmental Policy Government Publishers*, 23(4): 209–220.

Botha, P. & Leah, L. 2020. Exploring public sector managers attitudes towards people with disabilities. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 18(0): 10. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v18i0.1421

Braid, S. & Wood, G. 2020. Economic empowerment: A conceptual framework. In Coles, A., Gray, L. & Momsen, J (eds). *The Routledge handbook of gender and development.* London: Routledge.

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2): 77–101.

Brest, P. 2010. The power of theories of change. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, *8*(2): 47–51. https://doi.org/10.48558/NPZS-C374

Brink, R. 2018. A multiple case design for the investigation of information management processes for work-integrated learning. *International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning*, 19(3): 223–235.

Bruce, D. 2015. Preventing crime and violence through work and wages: The impact of the Community Work Programme. *South African Crime Quarterly*, 52(0): 25–37.

Bryman, A. 2012. *Quantitative data: A guide for social scientists*. New York: Routledge.

Budeli, M.C. 2012. *Barriers and coping capacities experienced by people living with disability in the Nzhelele area of Limpopo province*. [Unpublished master's thesis. The University of Johannesburg]. https://ujcontent.uj.ac.za/esploro/outputs/graduate/Barriers-and-coping-capacities-experienced-by/9912799107691

Busch, S., Franck, M. & Ley, A., 2025. Integrating the SDGs into urban renewal practices: Recommendations from participatory SDG monitoring in Stuttgart-Münster. *Urban Planning*, 10(0): 1-10. https://doi.org/10.17645/up.i433.

Buthelezi, S.P., Zondo, N.M., Nxumalo, L.T.M. & Vilakazi, M. 2024. Determining the digital divide among people with disabilities in KwaZulu-Natal. *South African Journal of Information Management,* 26(1): a1820. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajim.v26i1.1820

Campbell, S., Greenwood, M., Prior, S., Shearer, T., Walkem, K., Young, S., Bywaters, D. & Walker, K. 2020. Purposive sampling: complex or simple? Research case examples. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 25(8): 652–661.

Capello, R. 2011. Location, regional growth and local development theories. *Aestimum*, 58(1): 1–25.

Carlson, J.A. 2010. Avoiding traps in member checking. *The Qualitative Report*, 15(5): 1102–1113.

Charles, W.P. 2022. *The integration of people with disabilities into mainstream employment: a model for provincial government departments* [Doctoral dissertation, Cape Peninsula University of Technology]. https://doi.org/10.25381/cput.24574666.v1.

Charles, W.P., Gie, L. & Musakuro, R.N. 2023. Barriers to the employability of people with disabilities in the South African public service. *African Journal of Disability* 12(1): 1125–1178. https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod. v12i0.1178

Chataika, T. & McKenzie, J.A. 2016. Global institutions and their engagement with disability mainstreaming in the south: Development and (dis) connections. In *Disability in the global south: The critical handbook* (pp. 423–436). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Chigbu, U. E., Atiku, S. O. & Du Plessis, C. C. (2023). The science of literature reviews: Searching, identifying, selecting, and synthesising. *Publications,* 11(1): 2. https://doi.org/10.3390/publications11010002.

Chiloane, S. & Meyer, D.F. 2024. Local economic development in the Ekurhuleni metropolitan municipal region. *Administratio Publica,* 32(3):181–201.

Chirowamhangu, R. 2024. Inclusive education pandemic: Learning barriers for children with disabilities in South Africa. *African Journal of Disability (Online)*, 13:1–10. https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v13i0.1462

Chitiga, M., Henseler, M., Mabugu, R. E. & Maisonnave, H. 2022. How COVID-19 pandemic worsens the economic situation of women in South Africa', *The European Journal of Development Research*, 34(3): 1627–1644.

Chomane, P.P. & Biljohn, M.I. 2023. South African local economic development policy approaches and challenges: Finding a sustainable approach in social innovation', *Journal of Local Government Research and Innovation* 4(0): a147.

Chumo, I., Kabaria, C. & Mberu, B. 2023. Social inclusion of persons with disability in employment: what would it take to socially support employed persons with disability in the labor market? *Frontiers in Rehabilitation Sciences*, 4(0): 1125129. https://doi.org/10.3389/fresc.2023.1125129

City of Johannesburg (2021). *Demographic profile of people living with disabilities in the City of Joburg in South Africa, Gauteng Province*. [Online] Available at: https://joburg.org.za/about_/Documents/Issue%2027%20PWD%20in%20the%20City%20of%20Joburg_Final.pdf [Accessed 13 February 2026].

Clark, V. L. & Ivankova, N. V. 2016. *Mixed methods research. A guide to the field*. London: SAGE.

Clarke, V. & Braun, V. 2013. S*uccessful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*. London. SAGE.

Commonwealth Local Government Forum. 2015. *Southern Africa programme*. [Online]. Available at: www.clgf.org.uk/southern-africa-programmes [Accessed 11 May 2025].

Contreras-Villalobos, T, Escudero, EB & Leiva, V.L. 2024, Digging and building: How transformative mixed-methods research contributes to explaining and responding to educational exclusion and school dropout. *Methods in Psychology*, 11(0): 100170. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.metip.2024.100170

Cook, B. G. & Cook, L. (2016). Research designs and special education research: Different designs address different questions. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 31(4): 190–198. https://doi.org/10.1111/ldrp.12110

Creswell, J. W. & Creswell, J. D. 2020. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE.

Creswell, J. W. & Plano Clark, V. L. 2018. *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Creswell, J. W. 2013. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Creswell, J. W. 2014. *Research design: Quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approach* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE

Daniels, T.L. 1989. Small town economic development: Growth or survival? *Journal of Planning Literature*, 4(4): 413–429.

Daniels-Mayes, S. & Howe, I. 2021. The need for inclusive design: going beyond the minimum standards in the built environment. *Academia, Article* 474. https://doi.org/10.20935/AL474

Davids, S. 2024. The representation of persons with disabilities in the South African workforce [Doctoral dissertation, University of the Western Cape]. https://uwcscholar.uwc.ac.za/items/4356f285–6c47–42bf-896b-f4438d07505c

Dawadi, S., Shrestha, S. & Giri, R. A. 2021. Mixed-methods research: A discussion on its types, challenges, and criticisms. *Journal of Practical Studies in Education,* 2(2): 25–36. https://doi.org/10.46809/jpse.v2i2.20

Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA). 2018. *National framework for LED: Creating innovation-driven local economies, 2018-2028*. [Online]. Available at: https://www.CoGTA.gov.za/cgta_2016/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/National-Framework-for-LED-2018-2028.pdf [Accessed 9 February 2025].

Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA). 2020. *The National Framework for Local Economic Development (LED): Creating Innovation Driven Local Economies 2018 – 2028*. [Online] Available at: https://www.CoGTA.gov.za/led/?page_id=4 [Accessed 30 June 2025].

Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs. 2009. *Report on the state of local government in South Africa*. [Online]. Available at: https://static.pmg.org.za/docs/091017tas.pdf [Accessed 9 February 2025].

Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs. 2015. *National framework for local economic development (LED) in South Africa (2006 – 2011): Stimulating and developing sustainable local economies* [Online]. Available at: https://www.CoGTA.gov.za/led/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/National-LED-Framework.pdf [Accessed 28 February 2025].

Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs. 2014. *Stimulating and Developing Sustainable Local Economies*. [Online] Available at: https://www.cogta.gov.za/index.php/local-economic-development-led/ [Accessed 10 March 2025].

Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities. 2015. *Accessible India Campaign*. [Online] Available at: https://depwd.gov.in/en/accessible-india-campaign/ [Accessed 10 April 2025].

Department of Labour. 2022. *22nd Commission for employment equity annual report 2021/22*. Pretoria. Government Printers.

Department of Provincial and Local Government. 2009. Disability framework for local government, 2009-2014. [Online]. Available at: https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/dplgdisabilityframework07042009.pdf [Accessed 30 May 2024].

Department of Provincial and Local Government. 2009. *Disability framework for local government 2009–2014*. [Online] Available at: https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2019/10/South-Africa_Disability-Framework-for-Local-Government-2009-2014.pdf [Accessed 4 December 2025].

Department of Provincial and Local Government. 2014. *Disability framework for local government 2009–2014.* [Online]. Available at: https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2019/10/South-Africa_Disability-Framework-for-Local-Government-2009–2014.pdf [Accessed 18 October 2025].

Department of Public Service and Administration. (1997). *White paper on the transformation of the public service*. [Online]. Available at: https://www.dpsa.gov.za/dpsa2g/documents/acts&regulations/frameworks/white-papers/transform.pdf [Accessed 9 February 2025].

Department of Public Works & Infrastructure. 2024. *Report Framework to enhance the participation of persons with disabilities in the EPWP*. [Online] Available at: http://www.epwp.gov.za/documents/1763645934777_Frameworkon_enhancing_participation_of_PWDs_in_the_EPWP.pdf [Accessed 22 September 2025].

Department of Public Works (DPW). 2012. *Expanded Public Works Programme: briefing by Department of Public Works*. [Online] Available at: https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/14840/ [Accessed 20 May 2025].

Department of Social Development (DSD). 2021. *Annual report 2020/2021.* [Online]. Available at: https://www.gov.za/documents/annual-reports/department-social-development-annual-report-20202021–28–oct-2021 [Accessed 30 May 2025].

Department of Social Development. 2015a. *White Paper on the rights of persons with disabilities: National disability policy.* Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Social Development. 2015b. *Annual report 2015/2016.* [Online]. Available at: https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201705/dsd-annualreport-20152016reduced.pdf [Accessed 05 April 2025].

Department of Social Development. 2020. *Policy on disability*. [Online] Available at: https://www.westerncape.gov.za/assets/departments/socialdevelopment/national_disability_policy.pdf [Accessed 28 July 2025].

Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities [DWYPD]. 2015. *The National Development Plan 2030 Persons with Disabilities as Equal Citizens*. [Online] Available at: https://dwypd.gov.za/ova_doc/disability-rights/ [Accessed 11 March 2025].

Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities. 2021. *The fifth annual progress report on implementation of the white paper on the rights of persons with disabilities.* [Online]. Available at: https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202309/49325gon3901.pdf [Accessed 13 June 2025].

Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities. 2022. *Annual report 2021/2022.* [Online]. Available at: https://www.dwypd.gov.za/wpcontent/uploads/2019/07/Annual-Report-DWYPD.pdf [Accessed 13 February 2025].

Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities. 2024. *Strategy for economic empowerment of women, youth and persons with disabilities (WYPD).* [Online]. Available at: https://www.dwypd.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Strategy-for-Economic-Empowerment-of-Women-Youth-Persons-with-Disabilities-WYPD-2024–Abridged-FINAL-VERSION.pdf [Accessed 12 September 2025].

Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities. 2026. *Economic Empowerment Session for Persons with Disabilities to advance inclusive entrepreneurship, 26 to 27 February 2026*. [Online]. Available at: https://www.gov.za/news/media-advisories/conferences-summits-seminars-and-workshops/women-youth-and-persons-4 [Accessed 29 May 2026].

Dineshan, A. & Geetha, B. 2023. Inclusive sustainable development and disability - need for bridging the gap. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science Studies*, 12(1): 11–23.

Dlamini, S. & Magidimisha. H.H. 2025. Walkability and accessibility for people with disabilities in eThekwini municipality: A qualitative exploration of challenges and opportunities, *Journal of Inclusive Cities and Built Environment*, 5(8):1–14.

Dörffel, C. & Schuhmann, S. 2022. What is inclusive development? Introducing the multidimensional inclusiveness index. *Social Indicators Research,* 162(3): 1117–1148. DOI:10.1007/s11205–021–02860–y

Du Plooy-Cilliers, F., Davis, C. & Bezuidenhout, R. 2014. *Research matters*. Paarl: Paarl Media.

Du Toit, M., de Witte, H., Rothmann, S. & van den Broeck, A. 2020. Positive deviant unemployed individuals: Survivalist entrepreneurs in marginalised communities. *South African Journal of Business Management, 51*(1) :1–10. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajbm.v51i1.1627

Durokifa, A., Johnson, U., Ramlachan, P., Mdhluli, S. & Magqirana, A. 2023. Strengthening developmental local government in South Africa: The role of capacity building. *Journal of Public Administration*, 58(2): 491-508.

Ebohon, O., Ajayi, T. & Ganiyu, S. 2021. Understanding research paradigms in social. sciences: A critique of two papers on critical success factors for BIM implementation. *Journal of Environmental Technology*, 2(1): 64–70.

Ellis, F. and Biggs, S. 2001. Evolving themes in rural development 1950s–2000s. *Development Policy Review*, 19(4): 437–448.

Ellis, K., 2012. Taste is the enemy of creativity: disability, YouTube and a new language. *In Digital Dialogues and Community*, 2(0): 121-134. Chandos Publishing.

Enaifoghe, A. & Durokifa, A. 2023. The global challenges and strategic implementation of Local Economic Development (LED): Lessons for South African local development plan. *Journal of Studies in Social Sciences and Humanities* 9, (4): 294-305.

Enaifoghe, A. & Vezi-Magigaba, M.F. 2022. Re-thinking the sustainability of local economic development through entrepreneurship in South Africa. *Expert Journal of Business and Management*, 10(2): 77–90.

Engelbrecht, P. 2006. The implementation of inclusive education in South Africa after ten years of democracy. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 21(3):253.

Enosh, G., Tzafrir, S. S. & Stolovy, T. 2014. The development of client violence questionnaire (CVQ). *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 9(3): 273–290.

Erikson, E., 1994. *Theory of identity development*. E. Nueva York: International Universities Press.

Esteve-Mon, F.M., Postigo-Fuentes, A.Y. & Castañeda, L. 2023. A strategic approach of the crucial elements for the implementation of digital tools and processes in higher education. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 77(3): 558–573.

Etim, E. & Daramola, O. 2020. The informal sector and economic growth of South Africa and Nigeria: A comparative systematic review. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 6(4):134–140. https://doi.org/10.3390/joitmc6040134.

European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) 2021. *EASPD's position on the draft general comment on Article 27 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.* [Online]. Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/CallCommentsDraftGeneralComments.aspx [Accessed 13 February 2026].

European Commission. 2020. *Policy on State of the Union 2020*. [Online]. Available at: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/state-union/state-union-2020_en [Accessed 10 November 2025].

European Council Report 2022. Efficiency and quality of justice in Europe: 2022 CoE report. [Online]. Available at: https://www.iaj-uim.org/iuw/efficiency-and-quality-of-justice-in-europe-2022–coe-report-2/ [Accessed 08 June 2025].

European Court of Auditors. 2023. *Special report 20/2023: Supporting persons with disabilities – Practical impact of EU action is limited.* [Online] Available at: https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/publications?ref=SR-2023–20 [Accessed 28 February 2025].

Eurostat. 2020. *Annual activity report*. [Online]. Available at: https://commission.europa.eu/publications/annual-activity-report-2020–eurostat_en [Accessed 23 January 2025].

Evans-Lacko S, Knapp M. 2016. Global patterns of workplace productivity for people with depression: absenteeism and presenteeism costs across eight diverse countries. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology,* 51(11):1525–37.

Evans-Lacko, S., Koeser, L., Knapp, M., Longhitano, C., Zohar, J. & Kuhn, K. (2016). Evaluating the economic impact of screening and treatment for depression in the workplace. European neuropsychopharmacology. *The Journal of the European College of Neuropsychopharmacology*, 26(6): 1004–1013. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euroneuro.2016.03.005

Faizal, R., Kusnandar, H.F.& Sulaeman, M. 2020. Empowerment of people with disabilities through the establishment of joint ventures and entrepreneurship training in Banjar City. *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute (BIRCI-Journal): Humanities and Social Sciences,* 3(4): 3806–3812.

Fernandes, M. & Samputra, P. 2022. Exploring linkages between food security and economic growth: A Systematic mapping literature review'. *Potravinarstvo Slovak Journal of Food Sciences*, 16(1): 206–218. https://10.20935/AL60610.5219/1734

Fetters, M. D. 2016. Haven't we always been doing mixed methods research?: Lessons learned from the development of the horseless carriage [Editorial]. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 10(1): 3–11. https://doi.org/10.1177/155868981562088

Foster, C. 2024. Methodological pragmatism in educational research: from qualitative-quantitative to exploratory-confirmatory distinctions. *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, 47(1): 4–19.

Fugard, A.J. & Potts, H.W. 2015. Supporting thinking on sample sizes for thematic analyses: a quantitative tool. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 18(6): 669–684.

Furaida, L., Karsidi., Kartono, D. & Anantanyu, S. 2023. Promoting disability community in supporting inclusion development: A preliminary study. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Multidisciplinary Studies*, 11(1): 204–210. https://10.2991/978–2–38476–072–5_21

Gabriel, D. 2013. *Inductive and deductive research approaches.* [Online]. Available at: https://deborahgabriel.com/2013/03/17/inductive-and-deductive approaches-to-research/ [Accessed 13 February 2026].

Ganshanga, A. & Twinamasiko, S. 2025. Bridging the gap: Integrating human rights-based approaches to disability welfare in local government in Uganda, *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, 27(1): 714–727. https://doi.org/10.16993/sjdr.1286

Ghate, D. 2021. Developing theories of change for social programmes: co-producing evidence-supported quality improvement'. *Palgrave Communications*, 4(1): 1–12.

Gibberd, A. 2021. *Universally accessible public transport systems: Experiences with implementation in the thirteen integrated public transport network municipalities in South Africa*. [Master's thesis: University of Pretoria]. https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/78921/Gibberd_Universally_2021.pdf?sequence=1

Gibberd, A.E. & Hankwebe, N. 2022. Transport experiences of people with disabilities during learnerships. *African Journal of Disability (Online*), 11: 1–7. https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v11i0.936

Golla, A.M., Malhotra, A., Nanda., P & Mehra, R. 2011. *Understanding and measuring women's economic empowerment: definition, framework and indicators.* Washington, DC. International Center for Research on Women. [Online]. Available from https://www.icrw.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Understanding-measuring-womens-economic-empowerment.pdf [Accessed 24 February 2025].

Google Maps. 2024. *Google map of Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality*. [Online] Available at: https://www.google.com/maps/place/Lepelle-Nkumpi+Local+Municipality/. [Accessed on 10 June 2024]

Graham, L. 2020. Differences in employment and income poverty between people with and without disabilities in South Africa. *Alter*, 14(4): 299–317.

Grech, S. 2015. Disability, poverty and development: Mapping the terrain. In *Disability and Poverty in the Global South: Renegotiating Development in Guatemala* (pp. 1–27). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Gresse, E. 2025. The duty of employers to return disabled workers back to employment: A comment on the 2023 draft regulations on rehabilitation, reintegration and return to work. *Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal*, 28. http://dx.doi.org/10.17159/1727–3781/2025/v28i0a18013

Grischow, J. & Mfoafo-M'carthy, M. 2021. The lived experience of disability rights in Ghana: A case study from the Eastern Region. *Journal of Social Inclusion*, 12(1): 37 50.

Groce, N., Kett, M., Lang, R. and Trani, J.F. 2011. Disability and poverty: The need for a more nuanced understanding of implications for development policy and practice. *Third World Quarterly, Taylor & Francis Journals*, 32(8):1493–1513.

Guertler, M. R. & Sick, N. 2021. Exploring the enabling effects of project management for SMEs in adopting open innovation – A framework for partner search and selection in open innovation projects. *International Journal of Project Management,* 39(2): 102–114.

Guest, G., Namey, E. & Chen, M. 2020. A simple method to assess and report thematic saturation in qualitative research. *PLoS ONE*, 15(5): e0232076. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0232076

Guo, S., Zhong, S. & Zhang, A. 2013. Privacy-preserving Kruskal-Wallis test. *Computer Methods and Programs in Biomedicine*, 112(10): 135–145.

Gupta, J. Pouw, N.R.M. & Ros-Tonen, M.A.F. 2015. Towards an elaborated theory of inclusive development. *European Journal of Development Research*, 27(4): 541–559. https://doi.10.1057/ejdr.2015.30

Haber, D.W., Whitehead, D., Schneider, Z. and LoBiondo-Wood, G. 2012. *Nursing and midwifery research: Methods and appraisal for evidence-based practice.* Melbourne: Elsevier.

Haddad, L.M. & Toney-Butler, T.J. 2023. *Empowerment*. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing LLC.

Haim-Litevsky, D., Komemi, R., Lipskaya-Velikovsky, L. 2023. Sense of belonging, meaningful daily life participation, and well-being: Integrated investigation. *International Journal of Environmental Research Public Health*, 20(5): 4121–4129.

Hair, J. & Alame, A. 2022. Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) in second language and education research: Guidelines using an applied example, *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics* 1 (3): 1–16.

Halkias, D, Neubert, M & Harkiolakis, N. 2023. Multiple case study data analysis for doctoral researchers in management and leadership. *Social Science Research Network Publisher,* 0(1): 1–12. http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4423757

Halkias, D., Neubert, M., Thurman, P.W. and Harkiolakis, N. 2022. *The multiple case study design*: *Methodology and application for management education*. New York: Routledge.

Hamunakwadi, P. 2025. The protective role of the reasonable accommodation principle in the dismissal of employees with disabilities in South Africa. *Journal of Law, Society and Development*, 12(1):1–21.

Hart, A.K. 2024. Institutional framework for sustainable community engagement for development in Nigeria. *Journal of Humanities and Social Policy*, 10(2): 14–37.

Hayes, A., Kelly, R.C & Li, T. 2025. *Economics defined with types, indicators, and systems.* [Online]. Available at: https://www.investopedia.com/terms/e/economics.asp [Accessed 15 November 2025].

Hayes, A.M. & Bulat, J. 2017. *Disabilities inclusive education systems and policies guide for low- and middle-income countries*. Research Triangle Park (NC):

RTI Press. [Online]. Available at: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK554622/ [Accessed 6 May 2025].

Henning, E., Van Rensburg, W. & Smit, B. 2004. *Theoretical frameworks*. In Henning, E. Van Rensburg, W. & Smit, B. (Eds.). *Finding your way in qualitative research.* Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Hennink, M. & Kaiser, B.N. 2022. Sample sizes for saturation in qualitative research: A systematic review of empirical tests. *Social Science & Medicine*, 292, 114523. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114523

Hess-April, L. 2006. Partnerships in service-learning evaluation. In Lorenzo, T. Duncan, M., Buchanan, H. & Alsop A. (Eds.), *Practice and service learning in occupational therapy: Enhancing potential in context*. New York: Whurr. pp. 157–169.

Hickey, S., Bukenya, B. & Sen, K. 2014. *The politics of inclusive development: Interrogating the evidence*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198722564.002.0003.

Hinton, D., Hinton, P. R., McMurray, I. & Brownlow, C. 2004. *SPSS explained* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

Hlohlolo, S.D. 2023. Recognising South African sign language: implications for South African local municipalities. *The Proceedings of International Conference on Education and New Developments*, 1(2): 224–228. https://doi.org/10.36315/2023v2end047

Holtom, B., Baruch, Y., Aguinis, H., and A Ballinger, G. 2022. Survey response rates: Trends and a validity assessment framework. *Human Relations*, 75(8): 1560–1584.

Horsfall, M., Eikelenboom, M., Draisma, S. & Smit, J.H. 2021. The effect of rapport on data quality in face-to-face interviews: Beneficial or detrimental? *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(20): 10858–10600.

Hove, N. and Phasha, N.T. 2024. Support services for learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms using capability theory. *South African Journal of Childhood Education,* 14(1): 1–10.

Hunt, X., Saran, A., Banks, L. M., White, H. & Kuper, H. (2022). Effectiveness of interventions for improving livelihood outcomes for people with disabilities in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review. C*ampbell Systematic Reviews*, 18(3), e1257. https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1257

Hussein El Kout, N.A.R., Pilusa, S., Benjamin-Damons, N. & Kagura, J. 2025. Understanding barriers and facilitators to disability and rehabilitation policy implementation in Gauteng, South Africa: A qualitative CFIR-informed study. *Health Science Reports*, 8(3): e70515.

International Labour Organization. 2015. *Decent work for people with disabilities: promoting rights in the global development agenda*. Geneva: ILO.

International Labour Organization. 2024. *A study on the employment and wage outcomes of people with disabilities.* [Online]. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/publications/study-employment-and-wage-outcomes-people-disabilities [Accessed 13 February 2025].

Irshaidat, R. 2019. Interpretivism vs. Positivism in political marketing research. *Journal of Political Marketing*, 1(1):1–35.

Isaacs, D.N. 2006. *Evaluating local economic development in the City of Cape Town*. (Master's degree, Stellenbosch University). https://scholar.sun.ac.za/bitstreams/19723c0c-f63f-4b65-9628-698ae80c62d8/download

Jagoe, C., O'Reilly, C. F., James, L. E., Khaled, E., Alazzawi, H. & Enright, T. 2023. Interpersonal violence experienced by people with communication disabilities in Iraq: Sustainable Development Goals 16 and 5. *International Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 25(1): 130–135.

Jansen, D. & Warren, K. 2020. *What (exactly) is research methodology?* [Online] Available at: https://gradcoach.com/what-is-research-methodology [Accessed 30 April 2025].

Jedi, F.F. 2022. The relationship between financial inclusion and women's empowerment: Evidence from Iraq. *Journal of Business and Management Studies*, 4(3): 104–120.

Jili, N.N. 2019. *The Implementation and sustainability of pro-poor local economic development initiatives in the King Cetshwayo District Municipality.* [Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. University of Kwazulu-Natal]. https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/handle/10413/18381

Jiya, A.N., Opoku, M.P., Nketsia, W., Dogbe, J.A. & Adusei J.N. 2021. Achieving financial inclusion for persons with disabilities: Exploring preparedness and accessibility of financial services for persons with disabilities in Malawi. *Journal of Disability and Policy Studies*, 33 (1): 92–102.

Johannsmeier, C. 2017. *The social and economic effects of the disability grant for people with disabilities and their households: A qualitative study in Kwazulu-Natal province.* The Institute of Development Studies and Partner Organisations. Report. [Online] Available at: https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12413/1735

Johnson, H. 2021. *Examining the differences in perceived stress, academic success, and potential protective factors between first-generation college students and continuing-generation college students*. [Unpublished PhD Dissertation. United States: Middle Tennessee State University]. https://jewlscholar.mtsu.edu/handle/mtsu/6411

Jowsey, T., Deng, C. & Weller, J. 2021. General-purpose thematic analysis: a useful qualitative method for anaesthesia research. *Elsevier BJA Education*, 21(12): 472–478.

Juta, L.B. 2023. Local economic development in South African municipalities: prospects and challenges. *African Journal of Development Studies (AJDS) Special issue* 2, 153–177. https://doi.org/10.31920/2634–3649/2023/sin2a9

Kabir, S. M. S. 2016. Methods of data collection. In *Basic guidelines for research: An introductory approach for all disciplines*. Bangladesh: Book Zone.

Kahn, S.B. 2017. Equality for people with disabilities in the South African public service. *Administratio Publica*, 25(2): 69–99.

Kaliyadan, F. & Kulkarni, V. 2019. Types of variables, descriptive statistics, and sample size. *Indian Dermatology Online Journal,* 10(1): 82–86.

Kamara, R., Leonard, S. & Haines, R. (2017). Enhancing the capabilities of municipalities for local economic development through skills training. *Socioeconomics Challenges*, 1(4).35–44. https://doi.org/10.21272/sec.1(4).35–44.2017

Kamyuka, D., Carlin, L., McPherson, G. & Misener, L. 2020. Access to physical activity and sport and the effects of isolation and cordon sanitaire during COVID-19 for people with disabilities in Scotland and Canada. *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, 2: 594501. Doi: 10.3389/fspor.2020.594501

Kanayo, O., Ndlovu, P. & Agholor, I. 2021. Impact of local economic development programmes on livelihood: Evidence from Mpumalanga, South Africa. *International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues*, 11(4):105–114.

Karnia, R. 2024. Importance of reliability and validity in research. *Psychology and Behavioral Sciences*, 13(6): 137–141.

Karyeija, G. & Kahika, G. 2017. Institutional roles and the implementation of local economic development, Kasese District, Uganda. *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review*, 5(1):1–9.

Kaur, P., Stoltzfus J. & Yellapu, V. 2018. Descriptive statistics. *International Journal of Academic Medicine*, 4: 60–63.

Kaushik, V. & Walsh, C. A. 2019. Pragmatism as a research paradigm and its implications for social work research. *Social Sciences*, 8(9): 255–261. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci8090255.

Keating, B.W. & Worsteling, A. 2023. Improving employment outcomes for people with disability in small and medium enterprises: protocol for a scoping review. *BMJ open*, 13(4), p.e069573. Doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2022–069573

Kekeya, J. 2021. Qualitative case study research design: The commonalities and differences between collective, intrinsic and instrumental case studies. *Contemporary PNG Studies*, 36(0): 28–37.

Keong, Y., Husin, M.M. & Kamarudin, S. 2023. Understanding research paradigms: A scientific guide. *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Business and Government*, 27(2).

Kgobe, F. K. L., Mabeba, S. J. & Mamokhere, J. 2023, The effects of public participation on local economic development in South African municipalities. *International Journal of Environmental, Sustainability, and Social Science,* 4(6): 1773–1789.

Khaisi, C.G. 2022. *The role of community participation in local economic development (LED) projects to alleviate poverty in the City of Ekurhuleni.* [Master's Dissertation. University of Johannesburg]. https://hdl.handle.net/10210/503024

Khalifa, A.S.D. & Ersi, L. 2020. Categorization of case in case study research method: new approach. *Knowledge and Performance Management*, 4(1): 1–14.

Khambule, I. & Mtapuri, O. 2018. Assessing the role of local economic development agencies in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *Local Economy*, 33(4): 438–455.

Khambule, I. 2018. The role of local economic development agencies in South Africa's developmental state ambitions. *Local Economy*, 33(3): 287–306.

Kidder, T, Romana, S, Canepa C, Chettleborough, J. & Molina, C. 2017. Conceptual framework on women's economic empowerment Oxfam background report. [Online]. Available at: https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/ [Accessed 20 July 2024].

Kidder, T. 2021. *Women's economic empowerment theory of change*. Oxford: Oxfam GB. [Online]. Available at: https://www.oxfam.ca/publication/womens-economic-empowerment-theory-of-change/ [Accessed 07 July 2024].

Kim, E.M. 2010. Limits of the authoritarian developmental state of South Korea. In *Constructing a democratic developmental state in South Africa: Potential and challenges*, Cape Town: HSRC Press, pp. 97–125.

Kim, M., Malizia, E., Nelson, M., Wolf-Powers, L., Ganning, J, & Schrock, G. 2024. Real estate development and economic development planning education: Pragmatic turn or Trojan Horse? *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 44(1): 9–15.

Kipchumba, E. 2025. Destigmatizing disabilities? Evidence from a disability-inclusive anti-poverty program in Uganda. *WIDER Working Paper 2025/87.* Helsinki: UNU-WIDER. https://doi.org/10.35188/UNU-WIDER/2025/646–9

Klefbeck, K. 2024. Implementing assessment protocols in compulsory school for students with intellectual disabilities: challenges and opportunities for teachers educating students with intellectual disabilities. *International Journal for Lesson & Learning Studie*s, 13(5): 76–91.

Kobedi, K.C., Swanepoel, E. & Venter, M. 2022, Community work programmes as job creation mechanism: A case of Tshwane Metropolitan municipality. *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review*, 10(1): a590.

Kok, A. 2017. The promotion of equality and prevention of unfair discrimination Act 4 of 2000: How to balance religious freedom and other human rights in the higher education sphere. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 31(6): 25–44.

Koleros, A., Adrien, M. & Tyrrell, T. 2024. *Theories of change in reality: strengths, limitations and future directions* (eds.). New York: Routledge.

Koma, S.B. 2010. The state of local government in South Africa: Issues, trends and options. *Journal of Public Administration*, 45(1):111–120.

Koma, S.B. 2012. Local economic development in South Africa policy implications. *African Journal of Public Affairs*. 5(3): 125–139.

Koomson, I., Villano, R.A. & Hadley, D. 2020. Effect of financial inclusion on poverty and vulnerability to poverty: Evidence using a multidimensional measure of financial inclusion. *Social Indicators Research*, 149(2): 613–639.

Kozma, G., Saidi, F.A. & Molnár, E. 2024. Local economic development strategies in a medium-sized city on the European periphery: a path to become an economic center of Eastern Central Europe importance. *Frontiers in Political Science,* 6(0): 1335735. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2024.1335735

Kumar, R. 2019. *Research methodology: A step-by-step guide for beginners*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Kumari, K. 2024. SHG play a big role in the economic empowerment of women. *Journal of Women Empowerment and Studies*, 4(44): 36–42.

Kusek, J.Z. & Rist, R.C. 2004. *Ten steps to a results-based monitoring and evaluation system: a handbook for development practitioners*. Washington DC: World Bank Publications.

Lall, S.V. & Chakravorty, S. 2005. Industrial location and spatial inequality: Theory and evidence from India. *Review of Development Economics*, 9(1): 47–68.

Lambros, A. 2025. The Intersection of Disability and Poverty in Portugal. [Online]. Available at: https://borgenproject.org/disability-and-poverty-in-portugal/ [Accessed 30 May 2026].

Lang, R., Schneider, M., Kett, M., Cole, E. & Groce, N. 2019. Policy development: An analysis of disability inclusion in a selection of African Union policies. *Development Policy Review*, 37(2): 155–175.

LaPeer, D. 2020. We were all kind of by ourselves. Understanding the challenges faced by first-generation college students in Fentress County. *McNair Scholars Research Journal,* 3(12): 153–194.

Lavrakas, P.J. 2008. *Encyclopedia of survey research methods*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Lean, M., Fornells-Ambrojo, M., Milton, A., Lloyd-Evans, B., Harrison-Stewart, B., Yesufu-Udechuku, A., Kendall, T. & Johnson, S. 2019. Self-management interventions for people with severe mental illness: systematic review and meta-analysis. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 214(5): 260–268.

Leao, R. and Goulao, L.F. 2024. Rural development projects in Latin America: The need to integrate socio-economic, political, and empowerment lenses for sustained impact. *Societies*, 14(7):131.

Leedy, P. D. & Ormrod, J. E. 2021) *Practical research: Planning and design* (12th ed.). Pearson.

Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality 2025. *Integrated development plan (IDP) 2021/2026*. [Online]. Available at: https://www.lepelle-nkumpi.gov.za/lepelle-nkumpiadmin/pages/sites/lepellenkumpi/documents/idp/INTEGRATED%20DEVELOPMENT%20PLAN%202021–202607072021.pdf [Accessed 18 January 2025].

Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality. 2015. *Integrated Development Plan (IDP) 2015/2016*. [Online]. Available at: https://www.lepelle-nkumpi.gov.za/lepelle-nkumpiadmin/pages/sites/lepellenkumpi/documents/idp/LEPELLE%20NKUMPI%20MUNICIPALITY%20FINAL%202015–2016%20IDP.pdf [Accessed 13 June 2024].

Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality. 2017. *Reasonable Accommodation Policy*. [Online]. Available at: https://www.lepelle-nkumpi.gov.za/lepelle-nkumpi-admin/pages/sites/lepellenkumpi/documents/policies/REASONABLE%20ACCOMODATION%20FOR%20PEOPLE%20WITH%20DISABILITY%20POLICY%202017-2018.pdf [Accessed May 2025].

Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality. 2024. Draft Integrated Development Plan (IDP) 2024/2025. [Online]. Available at: https://www.lepelle-nkumpi.gov.za/lepelle-nkumpi-admin/pages/sites/lepellenkumpi/documents/idp/2025–

2026%20DRAFT%20INTEGRATED%20DEVELOPMENT%20PLAN.pdf [Accessed 13 June 2024].

Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality. 2017. Reasonable accommodation policy for people with disabilities. [Online]. Available at: https://www.lepelle-nkumpi.gov.za/lepelle-nkumpi-admin/pages/sites/lepellenkumpi/documents/policies/REASONABLE%20ACCOMODATION%20FOR%20PEOPLE%20WITH%20DISABILITY%20POLICY%202017-2018.pdf [Accessed 30 May 2026].

Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality. 2026. *Draft Integrated Development Plan (IDP) 2026/2027*. [Online]. Available at: https://www.lepelle-nkumpi.gov.za/lepelle-nkumpi-admin/pages/sites/lepellenkumpi/documents/idp/2026-2027%20DRAFT%20INTEGRATED%20DEVELEPOMENT%20PLAN.pdf [Accessed May 2026].

Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality .2021. *Integrated development plan 2021-2026.* [Online]. Available at: https://www.lepelle-nkumpi.gov.za/lepelle-nkumpi-admin/pages/sites/lepellenkumpi/documents/idp/INTEGRATED%20DEVELOPMENT%20PLAN%202021-202607072021.pdf [Accessed 22 July 2024].

Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality. 2025. *Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Economic Development Strategy*. [Online]. Available at: https://www.lepelle-nkumpi.gov.za/lepelle-nkumpi-admin/pages/sites/lepellenkumpi/documents/strategies/LNM%20REVIEWED%20LOCAL%20ECONOMIC%20DEVELOPMENT%20STRATEGY%2020242 5.pdf [Accessed 11 December 2025].

Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality. 2026. *Integrated development plan (IDP)* 2025/2026. [Online]. Available at: https://www.lepelle-nkumpi.gov.za/lepelle-nkumpi-admin/pages/sites/lepellenkumpi/documents/idp/FINAL%202025–2026%20INTEGRATED%20DEVELOPMENT%20PLAN25.pdf [Accessed 11 December 2025].

Lim, W. M. 2024. What is qualitative research? An overview and guidelines. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, 33(2): 199–229. https://doi.org/10.1177/14413582241264619

Lister, H.E., Mostert, K. & Pillay, M. 2021. Teaching about disability and food security in the School of Health Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *African Journal of Health Professions Education,* 13(4): 264–269.

Liu, W, Yang, J, Gong, Y & Cheng, Q. 2022. An evaluation of urban renewal based on inclusive development theory: The case of Wuhan, China. *ISPRS International Journal of Geo-Information,* 11(11): 563. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijgi11110563

Liu, Y. 2022. Paradigmatic compatibility matters: A critical review of qualitative-quantitative debate in mixed methods research. *Sage Open*, 12(1): 21582440221079922.

Livesey, C.S.R. 2014. *A qualitative exploration into the impact that working as a nurse in a children's hospice has on one's thoughts and feelings surrounding personal mortality*. [Master's thesis. University of Chester]. https://chesterrep.openrepository.com/handle/10034/344055

Lu, H., Zhao, Y. & White, A. 2019. Job satisfaction among hospital nurses: A literature review. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 94 (8): 21–31.

Lugu, L.K., Odoom, D., Dick-Sagoe, C. & Asumang, E. 2024. Do Persons with Disabilities Really Participate in Community Development Services in Ghana? Evidence from the Adenta Municipality, *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences,* 5(6): 917–936.

Mabizela, H. and Zwane, Z. 2023. Monitoring and evaluation as critical approach to enhance the performance of local government: South Africa. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science*, 12(7): 74–84.

Mabunda, L. T., Mvunabandi, J. D. and Chonco, C. M. 2023 Investigating the Effect of Financial Mismanagement on Municipalities Service Delivery: A Case

Study of eThekwini Municipality-South Africa. *Journal of Accounting and Finance in Emerging Economies*, 9(4): 639–654.

Maclean, N., Geiger, M. & Ned, L. 2024. Employment equity targets: How a state-owned enterprise recruits people with disabilities. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management/SA Tydskrif vir Menslikehulpbronbestuur*, 22(0): a2355. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v22i0.2355

Maela, K. D., Munzhedzi, P. H. & Mathebula, N. E. 2025. Challenges associated with the implementation of local economic development in Polokwane Local Municipality, South Africa. *African Journal of Governance and Development*, 14(1.1): 53–66.

Maela, K.D., Zitha, H.E. & Maemu, E. 2024. Developmental State as a catalyst for sustainable development: Praxis of local government. *Journal of Public Administration and Development Alternatives* (JPADA), 9(1): 68–85.

Maemu, E. 2023. *The impact of COVID-19 on the implementation of the National Development Plan 2030: a case of Vhembe District Municipality*. [Doctoral Dissertation University of Venda]. http://hdl.handle.net/11602/2536

Mafongoya, T.J. 2025. Exploring the right to work for persons with disabilities in Zimbabwe as an enabler to inclusive participation in economic development. *Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal (PELJ),* 28(1): 1–18.

Magagula, D.N., Mukonza, R.M., Manyaka, R.K. & Moeti, K. 2022. The role of district municipalities in service provision in South Africa: Dissecting challenges faced by Ehlanzeni District Municipality. *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review,* 10(1): 628. https://doi.org/10.4102/apsdpr.v10i1.628

Mahbub, M. 2021. Women empowerment: Theory, practice, process and importance. *African Journal of Gender, Society and Development,* 10(1): 1–9.

Mahlungulu, Z. & Khalema, E.N. 2023. Causes for the Exclusion of Visually Impaired Individuals in Community Development Projects in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. *African Journal of Development Studies*, 13(1): 131. https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-aa_affrika1_v13_n1_a7

Mahole, E. 2017. *The role of traditional leaders in the promotion of local economic development: a case of Vhembe District Municipality*. [Doctoral Dissertation, University of Venda]. https://hdl.handle.net/11602/114

Mahomed, F. & Stein, M.A. 2017. De-stigmatising psychosocial disability in South Africa. African Disability Yearbook, 5:64–83.

Majam, T. & Uwizeyimana, D.E. 2018. Aligning economic development as a priority of the integrated development plan to the annual budget in the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality. *African Journal of Public Affairs*, 10(4):138–166.

Majikijela, Y., Swartz, M., Nkonki, N. and Chinyamurindi, W.T. 2025. Effectiveness of local economic development agencies in the Eastern Cape: Findings from 2023 Auditor General Report. *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review*, 13(1): 954.

Makamo, W.P. 2020. *Interrogating the implementation of local economic development for poverty alleviation in Nkomazi Municipality, Mpumalanga* [Doctoral dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal]. https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/handle/10413/20198

Makamu, T. 2024. The failure to spend the municipal infrastructure grant and the lack of consequence management. *Dullah Omar Institute: Local Government Bulletin*, 19(2). [Online]. Available at: https://dullahomarinstitute.org.za/multilevel-govt/local-government-bulletin/archives/volume-19–issue-2–june-2024/the-failure-to-spend-the-municipal-infrastructure-grant-and-the-lack-of-consequence-management [Accessed 23 December 2025].

Makhaye, A. & Subban, M. 2024. Leading local economic development in the new normal: Urban and rural challenges in the case of a district municipality in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *African Journal of Governance and Development*, 13(1): 110–134.

Malapit, H.J, Meinzen-Dick, R.S., Quisumbing, A.R. & Zseleczky, L. 2020. Women: Transforming food systems for empowerment and equity. In *2020 Global*

Food Policy Report. Pp. 36–45. Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

Malefane, M. 2021. Export-led growth hypothesis: Empirical evidence from the Southern African Customs Union countries. *Entrepreneurial Business and Economics Review*, 9(2): 55–69.

Malele, L.E. 2018. *The implementation of the local economic development strategy by the Greater Tzaneen Municipality in Limpopo* [Doctoral Dissertation University of Limpopo]. http://ul.netd.ac.za/handle/10386/2278

Malemane, K. & Nel-Sanders, D. 2021, Strengthening participatory local governance for improved service delivery: The case of Khayelitsha. *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review*, 9(1): 500. https://doi.org/10.4102/apsdpr.v9i1.500

Malizia, E., Feser, E.J., Renski, H. and Drucker, J. 2020. *Understanding local economic development*. Leeds: Taylor & Francis.

Malta, M. 2023. The concept of strategy in community empowerment: A literature review. *Influence: International Journal of Science Review*, 5(3): 24–34.

Mamokhere, J. 2023. Sending a message to the top: the influence of service delivery protests on service delivery planning in South African municipalities. *Insights into Regional Development*, 5(2): 60–71.

Mamokhere, J. 2024. Why leaders fail? Exploring issues affecting leadership in realising sustainable service delivery in South African municipalities. *Journal of Public Administration and Development Alternatives (JPADA)*, 9(si1), 159–178.

Manase, N. 2025. Postcolonial perspectives on disability management at South African universities. *Journal of Culture and Values in Education*, 8(1): 267–284.

Mandicheta, H., Mabvurira, V. & Ndebele, B. 2019. Disability, the invisible handcuff: Challenges faced by learners with disabilities in institutions of higher education in Zimbabwe. *Higher Education of Social Science*, 16(2):17–22.

Mandlik, M. & Kadirov, D. 2020. Towards a theory of integrated empowerment: a service ecosystems agenda for future. *International Journal of Qualitative Research in Services*, 4(1): 56–75.

Marks-Bielska, R., Wojarska, M., Lizińska, W. & Babuchowska, K. 2020. Local economic development in the context of the institutional efficiency of local governments. *Engineering Economics*, 31(3): 323–333.

Martinez, H. 2022. *What is social empowerment? Empowerment definition & theory.* United Way NCA. [Online] Available at: https://unitedwaynca.org/blog/social-empowerment/ [Accessed 13 February 2026].

Mashala, P.R. & Majola B.K. 2024. The barriers to promotion experienced by persons with disabilities in South Africa. *Journal of Public Administration, Finance and Law,* 32(20): 270–282. https://doi.org/10.47743/jopafl-2024–32–20

Mashamaite, K. & Lethoko, M. 2018. Role of the South African local government in local economic development. *International Journal of eBusiness and eGovernment Studies*, 10(1): 114–128.

Mashinini, I.N. 2017. *Factors influencing the implementation of local economic development policy in Gert Sibande District Municipality, South Africa.* [Master's dissertation. University of Witwatersrand]. https://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/items/545d0fdc-58e3–4e1b-94d3–402846ac7366.

Mashiteng, M. 2017. Assessing the capacity of Mbombela Local Municipality to drive local economic development initiatives. [Masters Dissertation. University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban]. https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/handle

Mastrobattista, L., Muñoz-Rico, M., Cordón-García, J.A. 2024. Optimizing textual analysis in higher education studies through Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis (CAQDAS) with ATLAS.ti. *Journal of Technology and Science Education*, 14(2): 622–632. https://doi.org/10.3926/jotse.2516

Masuku, M.M., Jili, N.J. & Selepe, B.M. 2016. The implementation of local economic development initiatives towards poverty alleviation in Big 5 False Bay Local Municipality. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 5(4): 1–11.

Matlala, R.L. & Motsepe, D. 2020. Institutional arrangements to support the implementation of local economic development in the City of Tshwane. *Journal of Public Administration*, 55(1): 82–90.

Matlala, R.L.G. & Motsepe, D. 2015. Institutional arrangements to support the implementation of local economic development in the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4(2): 325–336.

Matloga, S.T., Mahole, E. & Nekhavhambe, M.M. 2024. Challenges of public participation in improving basic service delivery in Vhembe District Municipality, Limpopo, South Africa. *Journal of Local Government Research and Innovation*, 5(0): 160. https://doi.org/10.4102/jolgri.v5i0.160

Matyana, M. & Thusi, X. 2023. Making public service delivery more accessible to people with disabilities: The South African government narrative. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Scienc*e, 12(1): 413–418.

Maxwell, J.A. 2009. Book Review: Bergman, MM (Ed.). Advances in mixed method research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 3(4): 411–413.

Maziriri, E.T, & Madinga, N.W. 2016. A qualitative study on the challenges faced by entrepreneurs living with physical disabilities within the Sebokeng township of South Africa. *International Journal of Research in Business Studies and Management,* 3(5):1–13.

Mbandlwa, Z., Dorasamy, N. & Fagbadebo, O. 2020. Leadership challenges in the South African local government system. *Journal of Critical Reviews*, 7(0): 1642–1653.

Mbukanma, I. & Strydom, K. 2021. Theoretical exploration on improving women inclusiveness and participation: A study of South African foreign policy decision-making. *Gender and Behaviour*, 19(1): 17696–17712.

Mbukanma, I. and Strydom, K. 2022. Local economic development, women's empowerment, and nation-building in South Africa: Insight from the COVID-19 period. *Journal of Nation-Building and Policy Studies*, (si1): 101–125. https://doi.org/10.31920/2516–3132/2022/s1s1a6

McDaniels, B.W., Harley, D.A. & Beach, D.T. 2018. Transportation, accessibility, and accommodation in rural communities. In Harley, D.A., Ysasi, N.A., Bishop, M.L. & Fleming, A.R. (Eds.), *Disability and vocational rehabilitation in rural settings: Challenges to service delivery.* New York: Springer. pp. 43–57.

McKenzie, T. & Hanass-Hancock, J. 2017. People with disabilities and income-related social protection measures in South Africa: Where is the gap?. *African Journal of Disability,* 6(1): 1–11.

McLeod, S. 2024. Mixed Methods Research Guide With Examples. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research (Simply Psychology)*. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.31329.93286

Mensah, J.K., Domfeh, K.A., Ahenkan, A. & Bawole, J.N. 2013. Policy and institutional perspectives on local economic development in Africa: The Ghanaian perspective. *Journal of African Studies and Development*, 5(7): 163–170.

Meyer, D. F. & Meyer, N. 2016. A comparative analysis of the perceptions of business chambers in rural and urban South Africa on the developmental role of local government. *Polish Journal of Management Studies*, 14(1):151–162.

Meyer, D.F. 2014. Local government and the creation of an enabling developmental environment. *Administratio Publica*, 22(1): 24–46.

Michailova, S. 2024. Chapter II: Theory as a tool in the craft of conducting research. In *A guide to key theories for human resource management research.* Cheltenham: Edward Elgar. pp. 18–43.

Milner, P. & Kelly, B. 2009. Community participation and inclusion: People with disabilities defining their place. *Disability & Society*, 24(1): 47–62.

Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. 2019. *Unpublished report on local economic development data needs, data collection methodologies and*

implementation assessment and implementation analysis: To assess performance, evaluate and make recommendations for review of key performance indicators. [Online]. Available at: https://www.psef.org.za/sites/default/files/Coetzee%20Article%20LED%20Analysis.pdf [Accessed 13 February 2026].

Mishi, S., Mbaleki, N. & Mushonga, F.B. 2022. Financial mismanagement and efficiency trade-off in local municipalities: Lessons from Eastern Cape, South Africa. *Journal of Local Government Research and Innovation*, 3(16): 68. https://doi.org/10.4102/jolgri.v3i0.68

Mkata, G.P. 2010. *An assessment of the impact of traditional leaders and ward councillors relations on service delivery: The case of Nquma Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape.* [Unpublished Master's Thesis. University of Fort Hare]. https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/145051315.pdf

Mkhize, T.G. & Mutereko, S. 2022. Grassroot Engagement in Local Economic Development: A Case Study of eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality. *African Journal of Development Studies*, 12(1): 1-10. https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-aa_affrika1_v12_n1_a10

Mlambo, D. N. & Maserumule, M. H. 2023. Constitutional and legislative frameworks for the local sphere of government in South Africa: Analytical and interpretive perspective. *Insight on Africa*, 16(2): 211–229. https://doi.org/10.1177/09750878231211887.

Mlambo, V.H., Zubane, S.P. & Thusi, X. 2022. Interrogating governance challenges and cadre deployment in South Africa. *Cihan University-Erbil Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 6(1): 11–18.

Mngomezulu, S. 2020. Political interference in the administration of service delivery in Umlalazi Local Municipality of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *Journal of Economics and Behavioral Studies*, 12(1): 38–45.

Moagi, L. & Nhede, N.T. 2025. Exploring the Challenges of professionalising local government management in South Africa. *Administratio Publica,* 33(1): 89–106. https://doi.org/10.61967/adminpub.2025.33.1.5

Mohamed, E. & Mahmoud, A. 2024. Pragmatism as a research paradigm. *European Conference on Research Methodology for Business and Management Studies*, 23. 71–74. https://doi.org/10.34190/ecrm.23.1.2444

Mohapi, B. J. (2016). The social sector of the expanded public works programme as a strategy to alleviate poverty amongst vulnerable groups in Gauteng. *Development Southern Africa*, 33(5): 644–657. https://doi.org/10.1080/0376835X.2016.1204227

Mokoena, N.P. & Molepo, J.N. 2024. Participation in local economic development: Insights from Benoni, South Africa. *Journal of Local Government Research and Innovation* 5(0): 162. https://doi.org/10.4102/jolgri.v5i0.162

Mokoena, S.K. 2019. The role of local economic development on small, medium and micro enterprises. *Acta Universitatis Danubius. Administratio*, 11(1): 59–83.

Monareng, L.L., Soeker, M.S. & Naidoo, D. 2025. Successful self-employment in microenterprise for persons with disabilities in a rural setting. *African Journal of Disability*, 14(0): 1564. https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod. v14i0.1564

Mongale, O. 2022. *The role of the community work programme (CWP) in poverty alleviation: a case of Naledi Local Municipality in Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District, North West Province*. [Master's thesis. University of the Witwatersrand]. https://hdl.handle.net/10539/38410

Montero, S. & Chapple, K. 2018. *Fragile governance and local economic development: Theory and evidence from peripheral regions in Latin America.* London. Routledge.

Moran, T.E., Gibbs, D.C. & Mernin, L. 2017, The empowerment model: Turning barriers into possibilities. *Journal of Palaestra*, 31(2): 19–26.

Morgan, D.L. 2014. Pragmatism as a paradigm for social research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20(8):1045–1053.

Morgan, H. 2022. Conducting a qualitative document analysis. *The qualitative report*, 27(1): 64–77. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160–3715/2022.5044

Morris, L.D., Grimmer, K.A., Twizeyemariya, A., Coetzee, M., Leibbrandt, D.C. & Louw, Q.A. 2021. Health system challenges affecting rehabilitation services in South Africa. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 43(6): 877–883.

Morwane, R.E., Dada, S. & Bornman, J. 2021. Barriers to and facilitators of employment of persons with disabilities in low- and middle-income countries: A scoping review. *African Journal of Disability,* 10(0): 833. https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v10i0.833.

Mosalagae, M. & Bekker, T.L. 2021. Education of students with intellectual disabilities at technical vocational education and training institutions in Botswana: Inclusion or exclusion? *African Journal of Disability*, 10(0): 1–13. https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v10i0.790

Mousumi, Y. & Chompa, M.Y. 2022. Understanding of women empowerment and socio-economic development: A conceptual analysis. *Patan Pragya*, 10(01): 135–144.

Moyake, M, & Buthelezi, S. 2018. *Challenges of accessing skills development opportunities for people with physical disabilities in South Africa: An HWSETA reflection.* [Online] Available at: https://www.hwseta.org.za/ [Accessed 02 April 2025].

Mphahlele, A. 2023. An overview of a local economic development strategies framework for growth and development. International Business Conference. University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa. October 2024. 1–17. [Online]. Available at: https://internationalbusinessconference.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/CP184–Mphahlele-Overview-Local-economic-strategies-final-corrected.pdf [Accessed 13 February 2026].

Mpolweni, N., Kabange, M. & Fagbadebo, O.M. 2024. Integrated development plan strategies for service delivery in Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality. *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review*, 12(1): 835. https://doi.org/10.4102/apsdpr.v12i1.835

Mprah, R.K. 2020, Employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in the Kumasi metropolis of Ghana: Illusion or reality. *All Nations University Journal of Applied Thought*, 7(2): 65–85.

Mpu, Y. & Adu, E.O. 2021. The challenges of inclusive education and its implementation in schools: The South African perspective. *Perspectives in Education*, 39(2): 225–238. https://doi.org/10.38140/pie.v39i2.4583

Mthethwa C.S. 2023. *Community-based rehabilitation as a strategy for disability services and for encouraging the involvement of disabled people in the community development of the City of uMhlathuze Municipality*. [Doctoral Dissertation. University of Zululand]. https://uzspace.unizulu.ac.za/handle/10530/2554

Mukheli, P.D. & Naidoo, V. 2023. Change Management in a South African Municipality: Can it Work?. *European Conference on Management Leadership and Governance, Academic Conferences and publishing* limited, 19(1): 294-304. https://doi.org/10.34190/ecmlg.19.1.1960

Mukwarami, S., Mukwarami, J. & Tengeh, R.K. 2020. Local economic development and small business failure: the case of a local municipality in South Africa. *International Journal of Business and Globalisation*, 25(4): 489–502.

Mulubiran, T. 2021. Livelihood assets and strategies of people with disabilities in urban areas of Ethiopia. *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, 23(1): 63–73.

Mumba, N.B. & van der Waldt, G. 2023a. Reconfiguring local economic development strategies: The case of JB Marks Local Municipality. *Administratio Publica*, 31(1): 98–121.

Mumba, N.B. & van der Waldt, G. 2023b. Systemic and institutional local economic development (LED) challenges: The case of JB Marks Local Municipality. *African Journal of Public Administration & Environmental Studies (AJOPAES),* 2(2).

Munzhedzi, P.H. 2020. Evaluating the efficacy of municipal policy implementation in South Africa: Challenges and prospects. *African Journal of Governance and Development,* 9(1): 89-105.

Munzhedzi, P.H., Phago, K. & Mubangizi, B. 2022, Contending for the designs and features of integrated development planning in South Africa? An empirical analysis of the Limpopo Province. *Journal of Local Government Research and Innovation*, 3(0): 77. https://doi.org/10.4102/jolgri.v3i0.77

Musekiwa, P, Kudzotsa, C.P. & Mlambo, K. 2025. Bridging the Gap: Integrating disability-friendly economic empowerment programs into child and family support systems. *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews*, 27(03): 306–315. https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2025.27.3.3042

Musekiwa, P., Kudzotsa, C.P & Mlambo, K. 2025. Bridging the gap: Integrating disability-friendly economic empowerment programs into child and family support systems. *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews,* 27(03): 306–315.

Musenyente, E., Han, M.L. & Knigge, M. 2022. Implementation of UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in public and private schools in three districts of Uganda. *African Journal of Disability*, 11(2): 908–915.

Nalubega, T. & Uwizeyimana, D.E. 2019. Public sector monitoring and evaluation in the fourth industrial revolution: Implications for Africa. *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review,* 7(1): 1–12.

National Council for Persons with Disabilities. 2023. *Definitions of persons with disabilities in SA legislation*. [Online]. Available at: https://ncpd.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Definitions-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-SA-legislation.pdf [Accessed 13 February 2026].

National Planning Commission. 2020. *Report disability background paper: The status of disability in South Africa.* [Online]. Available at: https://www.nationalplanningcommission.org.za/assets/Documents/Disability%20Background%20Paper%20_The%20Status%20of%20Disability%20in%20South%20Africa_%20August%202020.pdf [Accessed 27 February 2025].

National Treasury. 2020a. *MFMA Circular No. 102.* [Online]. Available at: https://www.tralac.org/documents/resources/covid-19/countries/3762–mfma-circular-102–emergency-procurement-in-response-to-national-state-of-disaster-south-africa-with-annexes-and-amendments-national-treasury-5–may-2020.html [Accessed 12 January 2025].

National Treasury. 2020b. *Instruction No. 05 of 2020/2021: Emergency procurement in response to national state of disaster*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.treasury.gov.za/comm_media/press/2020/Instruction%205.pdf [Accessed 07 December 2024].

National Treasury. 2021. *Municipal Socio-Economic Profiles*. Pretoria. Government Printers.[Online]. Available at: https://lg.treasury.gov.za/ibi_apps/rs/ibfs//WFC/Repository/Public/Municipal_SocioEconomic_Profiles/Profiles/Municipal_Profiles/Limpopo/Lepelle-Nkumpi.pdf?IBIRS_action=run [Accessed 28 May 2026].

National Treasury. 2022. *Integrated development plan 2022/2023*. [Online]. Available at: https://lg.treasury.gov.za/supportingdocs/NW392/NW392_IDP%20Final_2023_Y_20220715T112313Z_jjrobiyane.pdf [Accessed 08 December 2024].

Ned, L. & Lorenzo, T. 2016. Enhancing public sectors capacity for inclusive economic participation of disabled youth in rural communities. *African Journal of Disability,* 5(1): 1–9. https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v5i1.189

Nel, E. & Rogerson, C.M. 2015. Planning for local economic development in spaces of despair: Key trends in South Africa's 'distressed areas'*. Local Economy,* 31(1–2): 124–141.

Nel, E. & Rogerson, C.M. 2016. The contested trajectory of applied local economic development in South Africa. *Local Economy*, 31(1–2): 109–123.

Neuman, W.L. 2013. *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (Revised edition). Boston: Person Education.

Neven, A. & Ectors, W. 2023. I am dependent on others to get there: Mobility barriers and solutions for societal participation by persons with disabilities. *Travel Behaviour And Society*, 30(0): 302–311.

Ngcobo, L. & Gumede, M. 2022. The welfare of women living with disabilities in the rural areas of South Africa: A policy assessment. *African Journal of Gender, Society and Development*, 11(4): 93–111.

Ngcobo, L. 2021. *The assessment of policy regulating the welfare of women living with disability: the case study of Nkandla Municipality,* [Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa]. https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/handle/10413/19798

Ngobeni, T., Nekhavhambe, M. & Mahole, E. 2025. Importance of local economic development as a strategy to enhance community development projects in Thulamela Local Municipality. *International Journal of Social Science Research and Review*, 8(1): 112–131.

Ngomane, T. 2012. Rural development in South Africa: the role of Agriculture. *AgriSeta Annual Seminar*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Ngubane, M.M. 2011. *Land beneficiaries as game farmers in the" new" South Africa: land reform in relation to conservation, the hunting industry and chiefly authority in KwaZulu-Natal*. [Master's thesis. University of the Free State]. https://scholar.ufs.ac.za/items/edc29ca7–2a8c-4dc6–951a-1da710aff6c9

Ngumbela, X.G. & Juta, L.B. 2025. Service delivery conundrum and the use of monitoring and evaluation in the province of the Eastern Cape, South Africa. *Journal of Local Government Research and Innovation,* 6(0): 222. https://doi.org/10.4102/jolgri.v6i0.222

Ngwena, C. 2023. Applying the intersection between defence of the inherent requirements of the job and the duty to provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities in the workplace: Damons v City of Cape Town. *South African Journal on Human Rights,* 39(2–3): 210–224.

Nicole, M., Ardoin, W., Bowers, A. & Kannan, K. 2022. Positive youth development outcomes and environmental education: a review of research. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 27(1): 475–492.

Niewohner, J., Pierson, S. & Meyers, S.J. 2019. Leave no one behind'? The exclusion of persons with disabilities by development NGOs. *Disability & Society*, 35(7): 1171–1176.

Nkgapele, S. M. & Mokgolobotho, R. M. 2024) Developing transformational strategies to improve the accessibility of e-governmental services in the South African local government. *International Journal of Law, Social Science, and Humanities (IJLSH),* 1(2): 56–68. https://doi.org/10.70193/ijlsh.v1i2.147

Nkwinika, M.K.K. & Munzhedzi P.H. 2016. The role of small and medium enterprises in the implementation of local economic development in South Africa. *SAAPAM Limpopo Chapter 5th Annual Conference Proceedings 2016*. 78–82.

Ntetha, J.T. 2021. *Pro-poor local economic development as a development tool to address unemployment and poverty: a case of uThukela District Municipality.* [Master's Dissertation. University of the Free State]. http://hdl.handle.net/11660/11606.

Ntombela, S. & Mahlangu, V.P., 2019. The inclusion and support of students with disabilities in the South African higher education system: Supporting students with disabilities. In *Diversity, equity, and inclusivity in contemporary higher education*. Hershey: IGI Global Scientific Publishing. pp.195-210.

Nutsugbodo, R. Y., Anaafo, D., Ankamah, S. & Bannor, R. K. 2022. Discrimination in the rental housing market in the Sunyani Municipality, Ghana. *Urban, Planning and Transport Research*, 10(1):159–180. https://doi.org/10.1080/21650020.2022.2072947

Nyamwanza, S., Chakwizira, J., Beattie, M. & Ingwani, E. 2025. Spatial planning constraints in historically marginalised areas: An integrative review. *Town and Regional Planning,* 86(0): 62–76. https://doi.org/10.38140/trp.v86i.8765

Nzama, L., Moloi, T.M. & Marx, B. 2023. Measures that may assist non-performing municipalities in improving their performance. *Journal of Local Government Research and Innovation*, 4(0): 136. https://doi.org/10.4102/jolgri.v4i0.136

Ofuani, A.I. 2011. The right to economic empowerment of persons with disabilities in Nigeria: How enabled? *African Human Rights Law Journal*, 11(2): 639–658.

Ogujiuba, K.K., Ebenezer O., Agholor, I. & Boshoff, E. 2021. Are there gender differences in sustainable entrepreneurship indicators amongst SMEs in South Africa? Application of MANOVA. *International Journal of Financial Research,* 12(5): 151–161.

Ogujiuba, K.K., Ebenezer, O., Azikiwe I.A., Estelle B. & Phetole, S. 2022. Impact of government support, business style, and entrepreneurial sustainability on business location of SMEs in South Africa's Mpumalanga Province. *Administrative Sciences*, 12(117): 1–19.

Olomi, R.D. & Gerwen, F. 2018. *Sustainable promotion of Public-Private sector dialogue in rural areas: The case of Tanzania (Technical Report).* Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: SNV.

Omar, M.A. & Inaba, K. 2020. Does financial inclusion reduce poverty and income inequality in developing countries? A panel data analysis. *Journal of Economic Structures*, 9(1): 1–25.

Oosthoek, J. & Gills, B.K. (Eds.). 2013. *The globalization of environmental crises* London: Routledge.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2022. *Financing SMEs and entrepreneurs 2022: An OECD scoreboard* [Online]. Available at: https://www.oecdilibrary.org/sites/4bada6a3–en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/4bada6a3–en [Accessed 01 December 2024].

Osei-Kyei, R. & Chan, A.P.C. 2017. Implementation constraints in public-private partnership: Empirical comparison between developing and developed

countries. *Journal of Facilities Management,* 15(1). https://doi.org/10.1108/JFM-07–2016–0032.

Oskouie, F., Kashefi, F., Rafii, F. and Gouya, M.M. 2017. Qualitative study of HIV-related stigma and discrimination: What women say in Iran Electron Physician. *Journal of Social Science*, 9 (7): 4718–4725.

Osman, A., Karuri-Sebina, G., Jia, B., Gibberd, A., Hlongwane, R., Paterson, J. and Mammon, N. 2023. *Space, people and technology: Reclaiming the narrative on cities* (p. 170). AOSIS. DOI:10.4102/aosis.2023.BK323.01

Ouwencamp, S. & van der Waldt, G. 2024. A public participation model for integrated development planning in local government. *African Journal of Public Affairs*, 15(1): 1–21.

Panda, S. & Kaur, N. 2024. Leaving no one behind: Achieving the sustainable development goals through accessibility for people with disabilities. *International Journal of Educational Communications and Technology (IJECT)*, 4(1): 16–26.

Parey, B., Enightoola, H. & Kutscher, E. 2023. From the equal opportunity commission case files: experiences among persons with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago. *Journal of Disability & Society*, 25 (2): 1–26.

Parliamentary Monitoring Group. (2011). *Disability advocacy campaign beyond 2011 Local government elections and other activities.* [Online]. Available at: https://static.pmg.org.za/docs/120726disability.pdf [Accessed 9 February 2026].

Patterson, C. 2008. Country report local economic development in South Africa. Unpublished Report prepared for GTZ Strengthening Local Governance Programme in South Africa, Pretoria. [Online]. Available at: https://knowledge.uclga.org/IMG/pdf/country_report_led_in_south_africa.pdf [Accessed 18 April 2025].

Pawlikowski, P., Rico, N., and Van Sell, S. 2018. *Positivism: a concept analysis*. Graphy Publications.

Pellegrinelli S. 2011. What's in a name: Project or programme. *International Journal of Project Management,* 29(2): 232–240.

Peprah, J. A., Avorkpo, E. A. & Kulu, E. 2023. People with disability and access to financial services: Evidence from Ghana. *Regional Science Policy & Practice*, 15(6), 1198–1216.

Pereira, L.M., Sanchez Rodrigues, V. & Freires, F.G.M. 2024. Use of partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) to improve plastic waste management. *Applied Sciences*, 14(2): 628. https://doi.org/10.3390/app14020628

Pervin, N. & Mokhtar, M. 2022. The interpretivist research paradigm: A subjective notion of a social context. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 11(2): 419–428.

Philpott, S. 2004. *Budgeting for children with disabilities in South Africa.* Institute for Democratic Alternatives in South Africa (IDASA). [Online] Available at: http://www.idasact.org.za/bis/nota/Research_cbu.htm#hit [Accessed 13 February 2026].

Pilke, R. and Waliyua, W. 2022. Persons with disabilities: participation and politics – the case of Zambia. *Development in Practice*, 33(4): 387–399.

Pillay, P., Saruchera, M. & Chivandire, L. 2023. Unlocking potential examining the effectiveness of non-governmental organisations in empowering people with disabilities in Zimbabwe. *African Journal of Public Affairs*, 14(1): 19–42.

Poth, C. & Munce, S.E. 2020. Commentary--Preparing today's researchers for a yet unknown tomorrow: Promising practices for a synergistic and sustainable mentoring approach to mixed methods research learning. *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches*, 12(1): 56:64.

Pruijt, H. 2013. Employability, empowerment and employers, between debunking and appreciating action. Nine cases from the ICT Sector. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24(8): 1613–1628.

Qiu, N., Jiang, Y., Sun, Z. & Du, M. 2023. The impact of disability-related deprivation on employment opportunity at the neighborhood level: Does family socioeconomic status matter? *Frontiers in Public Health*, 11, 1232829. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1232829

Rakgwata, P.A, Rannzida, H., Munzhelele, D & Muthala, M. 2026. Barriers to social inclusion: An exploratory survey of perceptions among people living with physical disabilities in Limpopo Province, *International Journal of Business Ecosystem & Strategy*, 7(6):431– 441. https://doi.org/10.36096/ijbes.v7i6.1003

Rammelt, C. & Gupta, J. 2021. Inclusive is not an adjective, it transforms development: A post-growth interpretation of inclusive development. *Environmental Science & Policy*, 124(0): 144–155.

Ramolobe, K.S., Ngcamu B.S. & Pillay S. 2023. Towards an inclusive society: Promoting disability inclusion in local government municipalities. In Muchie, M. & Moloto, A.N. (Eds.), *The South African public sector administration: Some critical contemporary case studies*. Polokwane: Batalea. pp. 205–213.

Ramolobe, K.S., Ngcamu, B.S. & Pillay, S. 2024. Understanding people with disabilities in a local government arena: A Limpopo dilemma. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 73(1): 135–145.

Ramukumba, T. 2024. Rural tourism in South Africa: A local economic development strategy. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Rural and Community Studies*, 6(3): 1–16. https://doi.org/10.38140/ijrcs-2024.vol6.03

Rappaport, J., 1987. Terms of empowerment/exemplars of prevention: Toward a theory for community psychology. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 15(2): 121–148.

Rauhut, D. & Humer, A. 2020. EU cohesion policy and spatial economic growth: trajectories in economic thought. *European Planning Studies,* 28(11): 2116–2133.

Rauniyar, G.P, & Kanbur, R. 2010. Inclusive development: Two papers on conceptualization, application, and the ADB perspective, *Working Papers*. 72: 523–530. Cornell University, Department of Applied Economics and Management,

Reddy, P. 2016. The politics of service delivery in South Africa: The local government sphere in context. *The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa,* 12(1): 1–8. https://doi.org/10.4102/td.v12i1.337

Regina, V., Heckert, J., Paz, F. & Cabnal, E. 2024. Needs and opportunities for measuring rural women's empowerment in Guatemala: Possible applications of a Women's empowerment metric for national statistical systems (WEMNS). *International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI),* 14(5): 300–315.

Rehal, V. 2023. *Inclusive development: Meaning and features. Spur economics learn and excel.* [Online] Available at: https://spureconomics.com/inclusive-development-meaning-and-features/

Reinholz, D. & Andrews, T. 2020. Change theory and theory of change: what's the difference anyway? *International Journal of STEM Education*, 7(1): 45–51.

Republic of South Africa Parliament. 2011. *South African Municipalities: Disability Action Plan*. [Online] Available at: https://static.pmg.org.za/docs/120726disability.pdf [Accessed 22 June 2024]

Republic of South Africa. 1996. *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Republic of South Africa. 1997. *White paper on integrated national disability strategy 1997*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Republic of South Africa. 1998a. *Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Republic of South Africa. 1998b. *White paper on affirmative action in the public service, 1998*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Republic of South Africa. 1998c. *White paper on local government, 1998*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Republic of South Africa. 2000a. *Promotion of equality and prevention of unfair discrimination act, 4 of 2000*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Republic of South Africa. 2000b. *South African local government: Municipal systems act, 32 of 2000*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Republic of South Africa. 2003. *Broad-based black economic empowerment Act, 53 of 2003*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Republic of South Africa. 2013. *The protection of personal information, Act 41 of 2013*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Republic of South Africa. 2015. *Draft white paper on the rights of people with disabilities, 2015.* Pretoria: Government Printers

Republic of South Africa. 2016. *White paper on the rights of people with disabilities*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Republic of South Africa. 2030. *National development plan (NDP) 2030*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Reshi, I.A. & Sudha, T. 2022. Women empowerment: a literature review. *International Journal of Economic, Business, Accounting, Agriculture Management and Sharia Administration (IJEBAS),* 2(6): 1353–1359.

Richards, K. & Stetten, J. (Eds.). 2002. Trends in local economic development in SADC countries. *Issues in Development, 19*. Johannesburg: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

Rodrigues-Pose, A. & Tijmstra, S. 2005. *Local economic development as an alternative approach to economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa*. *A report for the World Bank*. Washington: World Bank.

Rogerson, C.M. 2010. Local economic development in South Africa: Strategic challenges. *Development Southern Africa*, 27(4): 481–495.

Rogerson, C.M. 2018. *Local economic development in the changing world.* New York: Taylor and Francis.

Rogerson, C.M. 2019. Revamping local economic development policy in South Africa. In *The geography of South Africa: Contemporary changes and new directions*. Cham: Springer International. pp. 253–259.

Roux, M.F.L. 2022. Key considerations for an inclusive framework for youth with disabilities in post-apartheid South Africa', *African Journal of Disability (Online*), 11(1): 1–9. https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v11i0.954

Rovai, A.P., Baker, J.D. and Ponton, M.K. 2014. *Social science research design and statistic: A practitioner's guide to research methods and IBM SPSS Analysis*. Chesapeake: Watertree Press.

Rowe, J.E. 2016. Towards an alternative theoretical framework for understanding local economic development. In *Theories of local economic development*. *Linking theory to practice*. New York: Routledge. pp. 351–376.

Runde, D.F., Bandura, R. & McLean, M. 2023. *Investing in quality education for economic development, peace, and stability.* [Online] Available at: https://www.csis.org/analysis/investing-quality-education-economic-development-peace-and-stability [Accessed 13 February 2026].

Sadiki, M.C. & Kibirige, I. 2022. Strategies employed in coping with physical disabilities acquired during adulthood in rural South Africa. *African Journal of Disability,* 11(0): a907. https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v11i0.907.

Saleth, R.M., Galab, S. and Revathi, E. 2020. *Issues and challenges of inclusive development: Overview and synthesis. issues and challenges of inclusive development: Essays in honor of Prof. R. Radhakrishna*, New York: Springer. pp.1–24.

Sambumbu, A.M. & Boniface, O. 2017. Integrated strategies for creating citizen-centric public sector organisations. *Public Policy and Administration Research,* 7(5): 61–72.

Sandnes, E. & Schjødt-Osmo, M. 2020. *Empowering people with disabilities in Developing Countries: An evaluation of two group saving programs in Northern Uganda*. [Unpublished Master's thesis. Norwegian School of Economics]. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3143674

Sango, P.N., Bello, M., Deveau, R., Gager, K., Boateng, B., Ahmed, H.K. and Azam, M.N. 2022. Exploring the role and lived experiences of people with disabilities working in the agricultural sector in northern Nigeria. *African Journal of Disability,* 11(0): 897. https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v11i0.897

Saran, A., Hunt, X., White, H. & Kuper, H. 2023. Effectiveness of interventions for improving social inclusion outcomes for people with disabilities in low-and middle-income countries: A systematic review. Campbell systematic reviews, 19(1): 1316.

Saran, A., White, H. & Kuper, H. 2019. Protocol: Effectiveness of interventions for people with disabilities in low-and middle-income countries—An evidence and gap map. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, 15(1–2): 1006.

Sarfoh, K.O. 2020. *Making local economic development (LED) work in Ghana: An extract from the GGA-WA Publication titled Economic Development Pathways for Local Area Development*. Good Governance Africa West Africa, Center Publishers.

Sarkar, R. & Samanta, G. 2023. Local economy as the key driver of urbanization in the Indian Sundarbans. *Environment and Urbanization ASIA*, 14(2): 203–217.

Sarker, D. 2020. Discrimination against people with disabilities in accessing microfinance. *ALTER, European Journal of Disability Research*, 14(4): 318–328. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.alter.2020.06.005

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. 2012. *Research methods for business students*. (6th edition). Pearson.

Scotland, J. 2012. Exploring the philosophical underpinnings of research: Relating ontology and epistemology to the methodology and methods of the scientific,

interpretive, and critical research paradigms. *English Language Teaching*, 5(9): 9–16.

Scott, L. & Scoppetta, A. 2013. Promoting local economic development through multi-level partnership arrangement in Europe. *Skills@Work: Practice and Theory*, (6): 2–12.

Sebugwawo, M. 2011. Service delivery protests in SA: Lessons for municipalities. *The Transformer*, 17(3), 17–18.

Sekaran, U. 2003. *Research methods for business: A skill-building approach* (4th edition). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Sekhampu, T.J. 2010. *An investigation into the economic sustainability of Kwakwatsi.* [Doctoral thesis. North-West University]. https://repository.nwu.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10394/12776/Sekhampu_TJ_TOC.pdf.

Shakespeare, T., Mugeere, A., Nyariki, E. & Simbaya, J. 2019. Success in Africa: People with disabilities share their stories', African Journal of Disability 8(0): a522. https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v8i0.522.

Sharma, L.R., Bidari, S., Bidari, D., Neupane, S. & Sapkota, R. 2023. Exploring the mixed methods research design: types, purposes, strengths, challenges, and criticisms. *Global Academic Journal of Linguistics and Literature*, 5(1): 3–12.

Shava, E. & Hofisi, C. 2019. Cooperatives as Strategies of Local Economic Development in the City of Tshwane. *Journal of Contemporary Management,* 16(2): 23–42.

Shava, E. & Shingi, C. 2018. Cadre deployment policy and its effects on performance management in South African local government: A critical review. *Politeia*, 37(1): 3849–3861.

Shava, E. & Vyas-Doorgapersad, S. 2023. Inclusive participation in information and communication technologies (ICTs) processes for smart services in the city of Johannesburg. *Insights into Regional Development*, 5(1), 26– 40.

Shava, E. 2023. Inclusive local economic development for effective service delivery in high-risk municipalities. *The USV Annals of Economics and Public Administration*, 2(38): 196–207.

Sherry, K., Ned, L. & Engelbrecht, M. 2024. Disability inclusion and pandemic policymaking in South Africa: A framework analysis. *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, 26(1).

Sherry, K., Ned, L. and Engelbrecht, M. 2024 Disability inclusion and pandemic policymaking in South Africa: A framework analysis. *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, 26(1): 227–243. https://doi.org/10.16993/sjdr.1066

Shikwambana, M.M. & Fourie, J.V. 2023. Supporting a Tsonga learner living with Bardet-Biedl syndrome, a rare complex disability. *African Journal of Disability* 12(1): 181–123. https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v12i0.1181

Shilangu, L. 2019. Enhancing local economic development through effective leadership and service delivery in South African municipalities. *4th Annual International Conference on Public Administration and Development Alternatives* 03 - 05 July 2019, Southern Sun Hotel, OR Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Shongwe, M.A., Lukhele, T.M. and Zulu, H.P. 2024. Exploring the factors of enabling environments for business investment projects in rural communities: stakeholders' perspectives. *Frontiers in Sustainable Cities*, 6, p. 1467635.

Shreshta, D. 2021. It's dignity not just a welfare measure which is needed for PWD. *Academia Letters Article,* 4(0), 606. https://doi.org/10.20935/AL606.

Shrestha, N. 2021. Factor analysis as a tool for survey analysis. *American Journal of Applied Mathematics and Statistics,* 9(1), 4–11. http://pubs.sciepub.com/ajams/9/1/2

Shumba, T.W. & Moodley, I. 2018. Implementation of disability policy framework in Namibia: A qualitative study. *South African Journal of Physiotherapy,* 74(1): a400. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajp.v74i1.400

Sibiya, A., van der Westhuizen, J. & Sibiya, B. 2023. Challenges experienced by SMMEs and interventions by the South African national and provincial government: A literature review. *African Journal of Inter/Multidisciplinary Studies,* 5(1): 1–11.

Sigwaza, S. L. & Jili, N. N. 2022. Policy implementation for the disabled to access healthcare services in rural spaces of King Cetshwayo District Municipality. *Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences,* 5(4): 389–396.

Simon, M. and Goes, J. 2016. *Reliability and validity in qualitative studies. Dissertation & scholarly research: recipes for success.* [Online]. Available at: http://www. dissertationrecipes.com/reliability-validity-qualitative-studies [Accessed 29 June 2025].

Singh, P.K. & Chudasama, H. 2020. Evaluating poverty alleviation strategies in a developing country. *Journal of Social Development PLOS ONE*, 15(1): 227–229.

Sithole, N.A. 2021. The challenges faced by local governments since democracy: How far have we come? *Journal of inclusive public policy*, 1(1): 4–15.

Smith, M. 2022. Economics: A fragmented and troubled scientific discipline? A review of Alessandro Roncaglia's 'The Age of Fragmentation: A History of Contemporary Economic Thought'. *History of Economics Review*, 82(1): 55–76.

Snyder, H. 2024. Designing the literature review for a strong contribution. *Journal of Decision Systems*, 33(4): 551–558.

Soga, B. & Vyas-Doorgapersad, S. 2021. Assessing local and national government interaction in LED: A policy evaluation of South Africa's metros. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 12(6):183–193.

Soko, M. 2020. *What drove Asia's economic success stories, and what should Africa emulate?* [Online]. Available at: https://www.wits.ac.za/news/latest-news/opinion/2020/2020–07/what-drove-asias-economic-success-stories-and-what-should-africa-emulate.html. [Accessed 01 June 2025].

South African Cities Network (SACN). 2019. *Rethinking LED: Local economic development in intermediate cities.* Johannesburg: South African Cities Network. [Online]. Available at: www.sacities.net [Accessed 18 May 2025].

South African Local Government Association. 2012. *Disability framework for local government & reasonable accommodatio*n. *Report.* [Online]. Available at: https://www.salga.org.za/app/webroot/assets/files/Research_Results/Report%20on%20Disability%20Framework%20for%20Local%20Government%20&%20Reasonable%20Accommodation.pdf [Accessed 10 July 2024].

South African Local Government Association. 2012. *Disability framework for local government & reasonable accommodation*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

South African Local Government Association. 2014*. Disability framework for local government 2009 – 2014*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

South African Local Government Association. 2020. *Strengthening governance and capacity in local government*. [Online]. Available at: https://www.salga.org.za/Documents/Knowledge-products-pertheme/Community%20Development%20n%20Services/Lessons%20Learne%20Report%20%20Strengthening%20Capacity%20in%20Local%20Government%20%28EU%20Funded%20Programme%29.pdf [Accessed 25 June 2024].

South African Local Government Association. 2022. *Strategic plan for financial year 2022–2027.* National Conference. [Online]. Available at: https://www.salga.org.za/Documents/Documents%20and%20Publications/Annual%20Performance%20Plans/SALGA%20Strategic%20Plan%202022%20–%202027.pdf Accessed 20 August 2024].

South African Local Government Association. 2024. *Disability framework for local government through realising human rights through the provision of municipal services*. Pretoria: South Africa.

South African Social Security Agency. 2016. *Report on the sustainability of South Africa's social grants system.* Pretoria: South African Department of Social Development. [Online] Available at:

https://www.sassa.gov.za/SitePages/Disability-Grant.aspx [Accessed 12 August 2025].

Spaan, N, Trigt, P.V, & Schippers, A. 2024. Integration of a disability lens as prerequisite for inclusive higher education. *European Journal of Inclusive Education (EJIE),* 1(3): 1–24. https://doi.org/10.7146/ejie.v3i1.137271

Statistics South Africa. 2011. *Mid-year monitoring report estimates the mid-year population*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.

Statistics South Africa. 2016. *Community survey 2016.* Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.

Statistics South Africa. 2022. *Mid-year monitoring report*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.

Statistics South Africa. 2024. *Profiling the socio-economic status and living arrangements of persons with disabilities in South Africa, 2011–2022*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.

Stein, J.C. 1997. Internal capital markets and the competition for corporate resources. *The Journal of Finance,* 52(1): 111–133.

Stein, P.J. & Stein, M.A. 2022. Disability, human rights, and climate justice. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 44(1): 81–110.

Steyn, H., Tinta, N. & Vermaas, J. 2020. Barriers experienced by people with disabilities participating in income-generating activities. A case of a sheltered workshop in Bloemfontein, South Africa. *African Journal of Disability*, 9(1): 1–9.

Strohwald, A. 2021. *The child's rights to, in and through basic education: an analysis of South Africa's international obligations* [Doctoral dissertation, Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University]. https://www.academia.edu/146302917/Rights_based_analysis_of_basic_education_in_South_Africa

Strydom, B. 2016. Applying strategic management in local economic development: a challenge for municipalities in South Africa. *Journal of Public Administration*, 51(1): 73–84.

Suich, H. & Schneider, M. 2022. Monitoring disability inclusion: Setting a baseline for South Africa. *African Journal of Disability* 11(0): 1020. https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v11i0.1020

Surju, J., de Metz, N. & Davis, A. 2020. The strategizing roles of public sector middle managers. *Acta Commercii*, 20(1): 1–11.

Sürücü, L., Yıkılmaz, İ., & Maşlakçı, A. (2022). Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) in quantitative researches and practical considerations. *Gümüşhane Üniversitesi Sağlık Bilimleri Dergisi*, 13(2), 947-965.

Swanepoel, M. 2020. Aspects of the impact of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with disabilities on South African health law: Section 1. *Forensic Science International: Mind and Law*, 12020. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fsiml.2020.100014

Swinburn, G., Goga, S. & Murphy, F. 2006. *Local economic development: A primer developing and implementing local economic development strategies and action plans*. Washington, D.C: World Bank & Bertelsmana Stiftung.

Taber, K.S. 2018. The use of Cronbach's alpha when developing and reporting research instruments in science education. *Research in Science Education,* 48: 1273–1296. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11165–016–9602–2

Taing, L. 2019. Policy implementation considerations for basic services: A South African urban sanitation case. *Water SA*, 45(4): 536–546.

Tavakol, M, & Wetzel A. 2020. Factor Analysis: a means for theory and instrument development in support of construct validity, *International Journal Medical Education*, 6 (11): 245–247.

Tavakol, M. & Dennick, R. (2011). Making sense of Cronbach's alpha. *International journal of medical education*, 2: 53–55. https://doi.org/10.5116/ijme.4dfb.8dfd

Thakur, S.S. and Nel, A. 2024. Taking a back seat: the politicization of municipal environmental governance in South Africa. *South African Geographical Journal= Suid-Afrikaanse Geografiese Tydskrif*, 106(2): 212–229.

Thani, X.C. 2020. Local economic development (LED) and the fourth industrial revolution (4IR). *Administratio Publica*, 28(3): 81–97.

The Presidency. 2000. *Local government municipal systems act No. 32 of 2000.* [Online]. Available at: https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/a32-000.pdf [Accessed 9 December 2025].

Thebe, T.P. 2016. Political education for good governance in South Africa's local government and communities. *African Journal of Public Affairs*, 9(5): 123–135.

Thomas, A. 2002. Employment equity in South Africa: Lessons from the global school. *International Journal of Manpower*, 23(3): 237–255.

Thusi, X., Mayisela, N. & Matyana, M. 2023. An investigation into the effectiveness of public participation mechanisms on service delivery within the Newcastle local municipality. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science,* (2147–4478), 12(4): 363–373.

Tigere, B. & Moyo, T. 2022. Disability-inclusive community development: A case of a community garden in Limpopo province in South Africa. *African Journal of Disability (Online),* 11(1): 1–11. https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod. v11i0.850

Tinta N. 2020. *Empowerment model for people with disabilities participating in income generating activities: a case of a protective workshop in Bloemfontein.* [Doctoral thesis, University of the Free State]. https://scholar.ufs.ac.za/server/api/core/bitstreams/201d31b5–457b-45f0–a3b5–4490adf5b007/content

Tinta, N. & Kolanisi, U. 2023. Overcoming barriers for people with disabilities participating in income-generating activities: A proposed development

framework'. *African Journal of Disability, 12*(1): 1–10. https://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v12i0.1133

Tinta, N., Steyn, H. & Vermaas, J. 2020, Barriers experienced by people with disabilities participating in income-generating activities. A case of a sheltered workshop in Bloemfontein, South Africa. *African Journal of Disability* 9(1): 1–9. https://10.4102/ajod.v9i0.662.

Tjahjanti, P.H., Sumarmi, W. & Widodo, E. 2018, January. Social welfare for disabled communities. In *1st International Conference on Intellectuals' Global Responsibility (ICIGR 2017)*. Atlantis Press. pp. 193–196

Tsagae, N. 2023. Political instability: An impediment to good governance in local government–The case of selected municipalities in South Africa. *Journal of Public Administration,* 58(2): 430–445.

Tsantila, F., Coppens, E. & De Witte, H. 2023. Developing a framework for evaluation: A theory of change for complex workplace mental health interventions. *BMC Public Health,* 23(10): 1171–1190. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-023-16092-x

Tsoabisi, S. 2012. Supporting small medium and micro enterprises in South Africa. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(12): 35–50.

Turner, D.P. 2020. Sampling methods in research design. Headache: *The Journal of Head & Face Pai*n, 60(1): 8–12. https://doi.org/10.1111/head.13707.

Turyahikayo, E. 2021. Philosophical paradigms as the bases for knowledge management research and practice. *Knowledge Management and E-Learning*, 13(2): 209–224.

United Nation Economic Empowerment for Africa Report. 2024. Thirtieth anniversary of the fourth world conference on women and adoption of the Beijing declaration and platform for action (1995) narrative report: united republic of Tanzania. [Online]. Available at: https://www.uneca.org/ [Accessed 13 February 2026].

United Nations .2018. *Disability and development report: Realizing the sustainable development goals by, for and with persons with disabilities*. [Online]. Available at: https://social.desa.un.org/publications/un-flagship-report-on-disability-and-development-2018 [Accessed 17 October 2025].

United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. 2024. *Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Seventeenth session* New York, 11–13 June 2024. [Online]. Available at: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4065218/files/CRPD_CSP_2024_SR.2–EN.pdf [Accessed 28 April 2025].

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. 2024. *Report.* [Online]. Available at: https://www.inclusionlondon.org.uk/campaigns-and-policy/uncrdp/uncrdp-2024–24/report/.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2012. *Towards an inclusive and accessible future for all: Voices of persons with disabilities on the post-2015 development framework.* United Nations New York. [Online]. Available at: https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/Towards%20An%20Inclusive%20and%20Accessible%20Future%20for%20All_Web%20Version.pdf [Accessed 15 July 2025].

United Nations Development Programme. 2020. *Inclusive sustainable growth*. [Online]. Available at: https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/2030–agenda-for-sustainable development/prosperity/development-planning-and-inclusive-sustainable growth.html.

United Nations. (2020). *The policy guidelines for inclusive sustainable development goals: Rural areas.* [Online]. Available at: https://www.who.int/westernpacific/health-topics/disability#tab=tab_1

United Nations. 2006. *Possible definition of 'disability': Discussion text suggested by the chair*. [Online]. Available at: https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/rights/ahc7pddisability.htm

University of Pretoria Centre for Human Rights. 2023. *South Africa disability legislation & policy gap analysis.* Report. [Online]. Available at: https://www.chr.up.ac.za/images/researchunits/dru/images/Disability_Rights_Gap_Analysis_Report_-_Centre_For_Human_Rights.pdf.

University of South Africa [UNISA]. 2016. Policy On Research Ethics. [Online] Available at: https://www.unisa.ac.za/static/corporate_web/Content/Colleges/CLAW/Research/Docs/Policy%20on%20Research%20Ethics%20-%20rev%20appr%20-%20Council%20-%2015.09.2016.pdf [Accessed 10 June 2024].

University of South Africa. 2021. *Standard Operating Procedure Research Ethics*. [Online] Available at: https://www.unisa.ac.za/static/corporate_web/Content/Colleges/CAES/Research/docs/SOP_1_Management_allegations_research%20integrity_transgressions.pdf.pdf [Accessed 13 February 2025].

University of South Africa. 2024. *Policy on Research Ethics*. [Online] Available at: https://www.unisa.ac.za/static/corporate_web/Content/Apply%20for%20admission/MD/Documents/20222922%20Policy%20on%20Research%20Ethics%20to%20be%20Published%201%20October%202024%20.pdf [Accessed 13 February 2025].

Uwizeyimana, D.E. & Munzhedzi, P.H. 2022. Municipal policies versus implementation: Continued disjuncture. *African Journal of Governance and Development*, 11(1.2): i-vii.

Uwizeyimana, D.E. 2022. Analysing the importance of e-government in times of disruption: The case of public education in Rwanda during Covid-19 lockdown. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 91, p. 102064.

Van den Brink, A., Elbers, W. & Ibrahim, A.F. 2020. Fragmented yet together: the disability movement in Sierra Leone. *Disability & Society*, 36(7): 1035–1052. https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2020.1782174

Van Pletzen, E., Kabaso, B. & Lorenzo, T. 2021. Community-based workers capacity to develop inclusive livelihoods for youth with disabilities in Botswana. *African Journal of Disability*, 10(1): 1–12.

Van Rooyen, D. 2013. *Civic culture and local economic development in a small town*. [Doctoral dissertation, University of the Free State, South Africa]. http://hdl.handle.net/11660/2057

Varpio, L., Paradis, E., Uijtdehaage, S. & Young, M. 2020. The distinctions between theory, theoretical framework, and conceptual framework. *Academic Medicine*, 95(7): 989–994.

Venkatesh, V., Brown, S. A. & Bala, H. 2013. Bridging the qualitative-quantitative divide: Guidelines for conducting mixed methods research in information systems. *MIS Quarterly*, 37 (1): 21–54.

Vitálišová, K., Murray-Svidroňová, M. & Jakuš-Muthová, N. 2021. Stakeholder participation in local governance as a key to local strategic development. *Cities,* 118(1): 264–275.

Wasti SP, Simkhada P, van Teijlingen ER, Sathian B, & Banerjee I. 2022. The growing importance of mixed-methods research in health. *Nepal Journal of Epidemiology*, 12(1): 1175–1178.

Watermeyer, B., McKenzie, J. A. & Kelly, J. 2022. Dealing with disability as matter out of place: emotional issues in the education of learners with visual impairment. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 10(1): 1–16.

Weber, A. 1909. *The theory of the location of industries*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Weck, S., 2009. Local economic development in area-based urban regeneration in Germany. *Local Economy*, 24(6-7):.523-535.

Weiss, C.H., 1995. Nothing as practical as good theory: Exploring theory-based evaluation for comprehensive community initiatives for children and families. *New approaches to evaluating community initiatives: Concepts, methods, and contexts*, 1: 65–92.

Welman, C., Kruger, F. & Mitchell, B. 2005. *Research methodology* (3rd ed.). Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

White, H., Saran, A. & Kuper, H. 2018. *Evidence and Gap Map of studies assessing the effectiveness of interventions for people with disabilities*. London: Campbell Collaboration and International Centre for Evidence and Disability.

Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority. 2022. The disability development strategy 2022/23 - 2026/27. Pretoria. Government Printers. [Online]. Available at: https://www.wrseta.org.za/downloads/Disability%20Strategy.pdf [Accessed 11 April 2025].

Widianingsih, I, Abdillah, A & Adikancana Q.M. 2024. Inclusive development policy research: research identification, and future agenda. *Cogent Social Sciences Journal,* 10(1): 235–245.

Wiegant, D Dewulf, A. & Van Zeben, J. 2024. Alignment mechanisms to effectively govern the sustainable development goals. *World Development*, 182(0): 10672. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2024.106721

William, F.K.A. 2024. Mastering validity and reliability in academic research: Meaning and significance. *International Journal of Research Publications*, 144(1): 287-292.

Willie, M.M. 2023. Distinguishing between population and target population: A mini review. *Surgery Research Journal*, 3(2): 1–2.

Wilson, D. & Polter, R. 2020. Sustainable local economic development indicator framework: A tool for property building redevelopment projects, Community Development, *Journal of Humanities and Social Science Studies* 51(5): 609–627.

Winchester, J. 2024. Making the world differently: A transformative approach to reasonable accommodation. *Constitutional Court Review*, 14(1):71–114.

Wissenbach, L. 2019: *Conceptual framework. Planning inclusive cities and human settlements. Entry points for International Development Cooperation*. Siegen: Universitätsverlag Siegen.

Wolniak, R. & Skotnicka-Zasadzień, B. 2021. Improvement of services for people with disabilities by public administration in Silesian Province Poland. *Sustainability*, 13(2): 967. https://doi.org/10.3390/su13020967

Word Bank. 2021. *International day of persons with disabilities (IDPD).* [Online] Available at: https://social.desa.un.org/issues/disability/international-day-of-persons-with-disabilities-3–december [Accessed 30 June 2025].

World Bank. 2020. *Community and local development*. [Online] Available at: https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/communitydrivendevelopment [Accessed 13 February 2026].

World Bank. 2022. *Disability inclusion overview*. [Online] Available at: https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/disability.

World Health Organization. 2020. [Online]. *World Health Organization policy on disability.* Available at: https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/disability/who-disability-policy-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=a50e8d5a_1

World Health Organization. 2022. *Global report on health equity for persons with disabilities.* Geneva: World Health Organization. [Online]. Available at: https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240063600.

Yekani, B., Ngcamu, S. & Pillay, S. 2024. Management and leadership considerations for managing effective monitoring and evaluation systems in South African municipalities. *Journal of Local Government Research and Innovation*, 5(1): 1–8. https://doi.org/10.4102/jolgri.v5i0.154.

Yin, R. K. 2017. *Case study research and applications: Design and methods*. Washington DC: SAGE.

Zaaijer, M. & Sara, L. M. 1993. Local economic development as an instrument for urban poverty alleviation: a case from Lima, Peru. *Third World Planning Review*, 15(2): 127–142.

Zhang, P. 2024. The rapid construction path of null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis. In *2024 8th International Seminar on Education, Management and Social Sciences (ISEMSS 2024)*. Atlantis Press. pp. 938–944. https://doi.org/10.2991/978–2–38476–297–2_113

Zhu, C. 2022. Conceptualising and evaluating inclusive economic development: a productivity perspective. *Development Studies Research*, 9 (1): 219–229.

Zitha, H.E., Maela K.D. & Matloga S.T. 2025. Localisation of developmental local government from theory to practice: A case of Thulamela Local Municipality. *Journal of Public Administration and Development Alternatives*, 10(1): 159–174.

ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A: ACCEPTANCE LETTER TO STUDY AT UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

UNISA university of south africa

0961 MIRET

KHUMBULA C MR
TSANKWA
0850

STUDENT NUMBER : 5904-632-9

ENQUIRIES NAME : SMITH LD, MRS
ENQUIRIES TEL : 0124415702

DATE : 2024-05-20

Dear Student

I wish to inform you that your registration has been accepted for the academic year indicated below. Kindly activate your Unisa myLife (https://myunisa.ac.za/portal) account for future communication purposes and access to research resources.

DEGREE : PHD (PUBLIC ADMIN) (90024)

TITLE : Working title: Evaluation on promotion and management of local economic development in rural municipalities: a case of Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipalities in Limpopo Province.

SUPERVISOR : Prof BE NGCAMU (ngcambe@unisa.ac.za)

ACADEMIC YEAR : 2024

TYPE: THESIS

SUBJECTS REGISTERED: TPADM01 Thesis: Public Administration

A statement of account will be sent to you shortly.

You must re-register online and pay every academic year until such time that you can submit your dissertation/thesis for examination.

Students registering for the first time for a dissertation or thesis must complete a research proposal in their first year of study. Guidelines will be provided by your supervisor/contact person.

If you intend submitting your dissertation/thesis for examination you have to submit an Intention to submit form (available on the website www.unisa.ac.za) at least two months before the date of submission. If submission takes place after 15 November, but before the end of February of the following year, you do need not to re-register and pay registration fees for the next academic year. Should you submit after the end of January, you must formally reregister online and pay the full fees.

Please access the information with regard to your personal librarian on the following link.
https://bit.ly/3hcKqVr

Yours faithfully,

Prof MM Sepota
Acting Registrar

UNIVERSITEIT VAN SUID-AFRIKA
PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

ANNEXURE B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

College of Economic and Management Sciences_ERC Public Administration and Management

Ref #: 7160
Name: Mr Charles Selemela
Student #: 59045329

Date: 08/07/2025

Dear: Mr Charles Selemela

Decision: Ethics Approval from 08/07/2025 to 07/07/2030

Researcher: Mr Charles Selemela

Limpopo Province, 28 Peace Street, Tzaneen

Polokwane

Email address: 59045329@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Contact number: 015 306 1323

Supervisor: Professor Bethuel Sibongiseni Ngcamu

Email address: ngcambs@unisa.ac.za

Co-Supervisor: Dr Valery Louw
Email address: louwvn@unisa.ac.za

The effects of local economic empowerment programmes on persons with disabilities (PWDs): A case of Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality of Limpopo Province, South Africa

Qualification: PhD in Public Administration

Thank you for the application for research ethics approval by the College of Economic and Management Sciences_ERC Public Administration and Management for the above-mentioned research study. Ethics approval is granted for {five years}.

The **{low } risk application** was **reviewed** by the College of Economic and Management Sciences_ERC Public Administration and Management and it is in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising during the undertaking of the research study that may affect the ethical integrity of the study, including those involving research participants, third parties, or juristic persons, must be reported in writing to the College of Economic and Management Sciences_ERC Public Administration and Management without delay.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that may affect study-related risks to research participants, juristic or third persons, must be reported in writing to the College of Economic and Management Sciences_ERC Public Administration and Management, accompanied by

5. The researcher will ensure that the research study complies with all applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines, and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Where applicable, adherence to the following South African legislation is essential: the Protection of Personal Information Act (No. 4 of 2013), the Children's Act (No. 38 of 2005), and the National Health Act (No. 61 of 2003)

6. Future use of this research data is permitted only in de-identified form and only for secondary research with objectives similar to those of the original study. Any secondary use involving identifiable human data will require additional ethics clearance.

7. No fieldwork activities may continue beyond the stated expiry date (07/07/2030). A completed Research Ethics Progress Report must be submitted as an application for renewal and is subject to approval by the Research Ethics Committee. A Close-Out Report must be submitted upon completion of the research study.

8. The College of Economic and Management Sciences_ERC Public Administration and Management may require the submission of regular progress reports on a [monthly/quarterly/annual] basis, in alignment with Section 7.2 of the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics (2024).

Additional Conditions

1. Disclosure of data to third parties is prohibited without explicit consent from the research participants and Unisa.
2. Research data must be stored in compliance with the university's research data management policy for a period of up to 15 years.
3. When publishing the results, the researcher must take appropriate precautions to safeguard the confidentiality and privacy of the research participants, juristic persons, third parties, and the university, in accordance with institutional policies and ethical standards.
4. Adherence to the National Statement on Ethical Research and Publication Practices, specifically Principle 7 on Social Awareness, must be ensured. This principle states: 'Researchers and institutions must be sensitive to the potential impact of their research on society, marginal groups, or individuals, and must consider these when weighing the benefits of the research against any harmful effects, with a view to minimising or avoiding the latter where possible.' The University of South Africa (Unisa) accepts no liability for any failure to comply with this principle.

Note

The reference number 7160 should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Kind regards,

Dr Promise Raseala
Chair of College of Economic and Management Sciences_ERC Public Administration and Management
E-mail: raseaps@unisa.ac.za

Prof Maelekanyo Christopher Mulaudzi
Executive Dean / By delegation from the Executive Dean of College of Economic and Management Sciences_ERC Public Administration and Management
E-mail: tshilmc@unisa.ac.za

ANNEXURE C: GATEKEEPER'S LETTERS

UNISA university of south africa

GATEKEEPER RESEARCH PERMISSION APPLICATION FORM

A. GATEKEEPER CONTACT INFORMATION

TO:

Name of organisation/company/stakeholder/community leader – referred to as the 'gatekeeper':

Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality

Contact person (name and surname):

Donald Maphoru

Designation/position within company/organisation/community:

Municipal Manager

Email:

Theresho.lekgaule@lepelle-nkumpi.gov.za

Contact number:

015 633 4508

B. APPLICANT INFORMATION

FROM:

Name and surname of applicant/student/researcher:

Charles Selemela

Degree registered for or research for non-degree purposes:

Doctor of Philosophy in Public Administration

Department and College:

Department of Public Administration & Management; College of Economic & Ma

Email:

59045329@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Contact number:

015 306 1323 / 076 904 5087

Address:

Limpopo Province, Zebediela Area, Madisha Ditor Village

Details of supervisor (if applicable):

Prof. Bethuel Sibongiseni Ngcamu, Cell No: 060 601 6568

Email of supervisor (if applicable):

Ngcambs@unisa.ac.za

Supervisor's position, e.g. lecturer/senior lecturer/professor, etc.:

Professor

Supervisor's Department:

Department of Public Administration & Management

Funding Body (if applicable):

N/A

Reason for funding (if applicable):

N/A

C. REQUEST FOR SUPPORT/ ACCESS TO DATA/INFORMATION/ PARTICPANTS

I/We are requesting your assistance in a study entitled:

The effects of local economic empowerment programmes on persons with disab

Overview of study: (100-200 words)

- What, how and why of the study
- Objectives, time and resources used/required
- Deadline/timelines for the project – possibility of follow up interviews? If further information will be required

The topic of the study: The effects of local economic empowerment programmes on persons with disabilities: A case of Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality of Limpopo Province, South Africa
This study aims to investigate persons with disabilities involvement in economic empowerment programmes for food security and to determine why Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality has failed to fulfil its developmental mandate of integrating disability into local development programmes to enhance PWDs' quality of life.

The primary research objectives are listed below:
• To assess the importance of including persons with disabilities (PWDs) in economic empowerment programmes within South African municipalities.
• To explore how Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality effectively promotes inclusive economic empowerment programmes that support PWDs.
• To ascertain the challenges and barriers inhibiting PWDs from participating in economic empowerment programmes in Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality.

• To explore the extent to which PWDs are actively involved in developing and implementing economic programmes, strategies, and policies.
• To explore the extent to which PWDs are actively involved in developing and implementing economic programmes, strategies, and policies.
• To assess effectiveness is Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality in implementation of NDP 2030 for PWDS, development strategies, policies, and the support provided by the government and other stakeholders.
• To evaluate the effects of economic empowerment interventions on quality of life for persons with disabilitie

Timelins and Resource required:
In terms of timelins the research data will be collected for period of one month. The resource to be used will be a voice recorder, interview guide and questionnaires and one 1 social worker (Assist with interviews).

Deadline/timelines for the project:
The study/thesis is expected to be completed in December 2026.
One month will be sufficient to collect data.

My/our request is/are for: (Tick appropriate options and/or add additional information.)

- ☑ Permission and/or support to conduct a study about or within the organisation/company/stakeholder group/community
- ☐ Access to possible participants and assistance for recruitment and identification purposes
- ☐ Assistance in the recruitment process of possible participants via internal communication
- ☑ Permission to distribute questionnaire/survey/research information to potential participants
- ☐ Access to organisational data – not in the public domain
- ☐ Other (specify below):

Provide a full description of the intended research sample. Motivate why the data must be gathered from the specific stakeholder group/organisation/company/community.

1.Qualitative data sampling

In current study for qualitative data collection researcher will conduct in-depth interviews with 15 officials within an area of Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality. The sample will consist of PWDs involved in businesses (micro and macro), caregivers, traditional leaders, NGOs, stakeholders such as disability forums, and key municipal officials, including the municipal manager, executive manager for the IDP and LED, the mayor; IDP manager, LED manager, corporate services manager, public participation manager and infrastructure development manager. The rationale for choosing this sample size is that some participants are directly responsible for advancing PWDs and interact with them daily. Others are senior managers in the municipality who are accountable for planning and executing economic empowerment and development initiatives.

2. Quantitative data sampling
The Structured questionnaires will be distributed to 210 participants for this study. The sample will include members from the Municipal Disability Desk, Lepelle-Nkumpi Disability Forum members, community project leaders, PWDs involved in businesses, caregivers, community members, traditional leaders, portfolio committee members on LED, administrative officials from the IDP and LED, and teachers from the Mahlasedi Special School. The main reason for choosing this sample size is that some participants are directly responsible for advancing PWDs and interact with them daily. Others are beneficiaries and contributory members of society who contribute economic empowerment and development initiatives or activities.

Explain how the participant identification and recruitment process of your research adhere to the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013.

Anonymity and confidentiality: The researcher will comply with the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (POPIA) (Act No. 41 of 2013) to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents in this study. This Act aims to protect the personal information processed by public and private entities. Therefore, the researcher will ensure that no names or personal details that could reveal participants' identities appear in the report (POPIA, 2013).

Provide a description of the data collection tools (e.g. interview, questionnaire, questions).

Interviews and questionnaires:
The researcher will use interviews and questionnaires to collect data, as the study will employ a mixed research design involving qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis.

Provide a description of the data gathering process that will be followed. (What will be expected of the research participants and exactly how will the data be collected?)

Voluntary participation: Participants will be informed that their participation in the study is voluntary, their privacy will be protected, and they may withdraw at any time.

1. Interviews:

The interviews will be conducted at times determined by the participants in order not to crowd their daily schedules, and to allow for enough time as determined by their availability. The interview views schedule will made in advance.

2. Questionnaires
The questinnaires will be distributed to the participants either via email or face to face and they will be given period of 1 week to return them.

Indicate who will have access to the raw data and in what formats?

Researcher and Social Worker(Field Worker) - Completed questionnaires; Transcripts Notes and Voice Records.

Provide a full description of the perceived and actual risks of the study to participants and the organisation/company/stakeholder group/community. (Keeping national disasters in mind.)

Potential for minor discomfort or inconvenience from participants.

Describe the potential benefits of the study to the organisation/company/stakeholder group/community.

The research will assist the municipality in taking significant steps towards involving PWDs in economic activities and developing a municipal disability strategy to guide this process.This study will provide feedback on PWDs' contribution to economic empowerment programmes, helping government agencies and policymakers evaluate the progress made through implemented programmes and potentially triggering policy and programme reviews. At a practical level, this study aims to propose strategic actions that can remove barriers that hinder PWDs' meaningful participation in economic empowerment programmes and other areas of public life.
The study will help formulate measures to promote and manage economic programmes that address PWDs' needs. As a result, this study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge and the current literature. The findings will provide a better understanding of the importance of PWDs' participation in economic activities, enabling them to realise their value and lead lives of comfort, security, and material well-being.
The study will contribute to empirical research supporting the empowerment theory of change and validate its effectiveness in increasing the participation of PWDs in municipal economic activities. It will encourage policymakers to enforce reasonable policies that promote inclusive economic empowerment at the municipal level.
Furthermore, the study will contribute to the proper policy implementation and formulation for PWDs, expanding new and existing knowledge. The research will contribute significantly to advancing knowledge regarding inclusive disability economic empowerment to prioritise access to resources and opportunities for PWDs.

How will risks be mitigated and managed? (Keeping national disasters and relevant protocol in mind.)

Use of questionnaires/qualitative research methods that do not involve sensitive questions.

Interviews- location for interviews can be chosen by the participants to feel confortable.

Questionnaires - Completed questionnaires will be droped in a sealed box file.

Explain the extent and processes to which confidentiality of information will be maintained by the researcher.

All information, including identity of participants and responses during interviews or completed questionnaires will be kept confidential and only used for research. No names will appear on each questionnaires or introduction of names of partcipants during interviews.
The respondents' names will not appear in the report in order to apply and to avoid the likelihood of any views expressed in the report to be linked to them.

The researcher will comply with the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (POPIA) (Act No. 41 of 2013) to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents in this study. Therefore, the researcher will ensure that no names or personal details that could reveal participants' identities appear in the report (POPIA, 2013).

List the expected deliverables of the study. (For example, a research report, journal articles and/or conference proceedings. Also indicate how privacy will be protected in any publication of the information.)

This study is expected to have deliverables such as research report, journal articles and/or conference
proceedings.

Therefore, the researcher will ensure that no names or personal details that could reveal participants' identities appear in the report on the data analysed(POPIA, 2013.

The results of the study will be generalised also to other municipalities in South Africa.

How will the organisation/company/stakeholder group/community be informed of the results or outcomes? (If applicable.)

Not applicable.

Attach a copy of the research instrument (questionnaire/interview schedule/focus group questions) to your email and mark as Annexure A

C. OFFICIAL USE ONLY – TO BE COMPLETED BY COMPANY/ORGANISATION/COMMUNITY

Decision:

☑ Permission granted.
☐ Permission with conditions is granted.
☐ No permission could be granted at this time.

Special Conditions (if any – Expectations of the outcomes of the study must be stated. For example: Will feedback/a report be required before submission of the publication?):

No special conditions.

The following person and/or department/and or committee has been appointed to assist the researcher in the data collection process (if applicable):

Not applicable

By signing this form, you are indicating that you have read the description of the study, **have the legal and delegated authority to grant permission for the study on behalf of the company/organisation/stakeholder/community** and that the company/organisation/stakeholder/community in principle agrees to the terms as described in the short questionnaire that follows:

1. **I/We have reviewed the application form and received a copy of it. The purpose and nature of this study are clear, and all questions and issues of concern have been answered to satisfaction.**

☑ **Yes**
☐ **No**

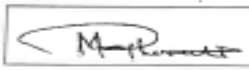
2. **I/We (name of the person responsible and/or name of company/organisation/stakeholder/community)**

Donald Maphoru - Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality

agree to support this study and hereby grant permission for the data generated from this research to be used in the researcher's publications on this topic.

☑ Yes
☐ No

Signature



Name and surname of the person with delegated authority to grant permission on behalf of the company/organisation/stakeholder/community

Donald Maphoru

Designation/Position

Municipal Manager

Email:

Theresho.lekgau@lepelle-nkumpi.gov.za

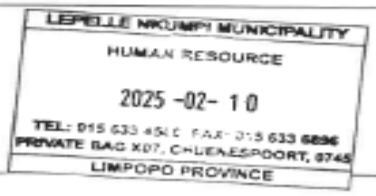
Contact number:

015 633 4508

Date:

10 February 2025

Official stamp (if available):



Additional documents for permission to conduct research

LEPELLE-NKUMPI
LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Postal Address
Private Bag X07
CHUENESPOORT
0745

www.lepelle-nkumpi.gov.za

Physical Address
170 BA Civic Centre
LEBOWAKGOMO, 0737
Tel : (+27)15 633 4500
Fax : (+27)15 633 6896

Enquiry: Mpho Mphahlele

UNIVERISTY OF SOUTH AFRICA
FACULTY OF ECONOMIC AND MNAGEMENT SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

Attention: Mr. C Selemela **(student No: 59045329)**

Dear Sir,

SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY: THE EFFECTS OF LOCAL ENONOMIC EMPWERMENT PROGRAMMES ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES(PWDs): A CASE OF LEPELLE-NKUMPI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA. Your letter dated 23 January 2025 bears reference.

Municipality hereby grants you permission to conduct research within our Municipality for your PhD in Public Administration with University of South Africa as requested. We hope that the research will be conducted with strict adherence to all the human rights andresearch ethics and that once published, it will also benefit our local community.

LEPELLE NKUMPI MUNICIPALITY
HUMAN RESOURCE
2025 -02- 10
TEL: 015 633 4500 FAX: 015 633 6896
PRIVATE BAG X07, CHUENESPOORT, 0745
LIMPOPO PROVINCE

Wishing you all the luck in your academic endeavours.

Kind regards,

MAPHORU L D (Mr.)
DELEGATED MUNICIPAL MANAGER

2025/02/10
DATE

MUNICIPAL CALL CENTRE NUMBER: 0800 222 011

"Motho ke motho ka batho"

HEAD OFFICE
PO Box 769
Lebowakgomo
0737
Tel: +27 15 633 4700
www.leda.co.za

ROOTED IN THE FUTURE

23 January 2025

Enquiries: **Ms. QZ Mashele**
Manager Organisational Development

Ref: Permission to Conduct Research
Mr. Charles Selemela (Student no: 59045329)
Doctor of Philosophy in Public Administration Candidate
University of South Africa (UNISA)

Dear Mr. Selemela

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT ACADEMIC RESEACH AT LEDA

It is our pleasure to inform you that your request to conduct academic research at LEDA has been approved.

Approval is granted with the following ethical principles: -

1) **Respect for LEDA staff-** Respect the LEDA staff and treat them fairly.
2) **Legality-** Know and obey relevant regulations and institutional policies.
3) **Honesty** – Strive for honesty in all scientific communications.
4) **Integrity-** Keep your promises and agreements; act with sincerity; strive for consistency of thought and action.
5) **Respect for Intellectual Property-** Honor patents, copyrights, and other forms of intellectual property. Do not use unpublished data, methods, or results without permission.
6) **Confidentiality-** Protect confidential communications and information.

Please liaise with Mr. Monkoe for all administrative arrangements and communications relating to the Agency. He can be contacted on 015 633 4700 or 063 699 7778.

Best wishes with your research.

M Moshidi
Executive Manager: Corporate Services

Registered address: Enterprise Development House, Main Road, Lebowakgomo, 0737, South Africa

Directors:

Mr TC Lithole (Chairperson), Ms TP Nkambule (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr J Motswaledi, Mr ZS Makhubela, Ms N Magadagela CA(SA), Adv MA Mahotha, Ms R Malapo
Mr TR Makhuvha (GCEO), Mr NS Mokobane (GCOO), Ms LS Mavhasha CA(SA) (GCFO)

Company Secretary: Ms NP-C Molewa

UNISA university of south africa

GATEKEEPER RESEARCH PERMISSION APPLICATION FORM

A. GATEKEEPER CONTACT INFORMATION

TO:

Name of organisation/company/stakeholder/community leader – referred to as the 'gatekeeper':

Lepelle-Nkumpi Disability Forum

Contact person (name and surname):

John Mathabatha

Designation/position within company/organisation/community:

Coordinator

Email:

John.Mathabatha@gmail.com

Contact number:

072 216 8529

B. APPLICANT INFORMATION

FROM:

Name and surname of applicant/student/researcher:

Charles Selemela

Degree registered for or research for non-degree purposes:

Doctor of Philosophy in Public Administration

Department and College:

Department of Public Administration & Management; College of Economic & Ma

Email:

59045329@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Contact number:

015 306 1323 / 076 904 5087

Address:

Limpopo Province, Zebediela Area, Madisha Ditor Village

Details of supervisor (if applicable):

Prof. Bethuel Sibongiseni Ngcamu, Cell No: 060 601 6568

Email of supervisor (if applicable):

Ngcambs@unisa.ac.za

Supervisor's position, e.g. lecturer/senior lecturer/professor, etc.:

Professor

Supervisor's Department:

Department of Public Administration & Management

Funding Body (if applicable):

N/A

Reason for funding (if applicable):

N/A

C. REQUEST FOR SUPPORT/ ACCESS TO DATA/INFORMATION/ PARTICPANTS

I/We are requesting your assistance in a study entitled:

The effects of local economic empowerment programmes on persons with disab

Overview of study: (100-200 words)

- What, how and why of the study
- Objectives, time and resources used/required
- Deadline/timelines for the project – possibility of follow up interviews? If further information will be required

The topic of the study: The effects of local economic empowerment programmes on persons with disabilities: A case of Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality of Limpopo Province, South Africa
This study aims to investigate persons with disabilities involvement in economic empowerment programmes for food security and to determine why Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality has failed to fulfil its developmental mandate of integrating disability into local development programmes to enhance PWDs' quality of life.

The primary research objectives are listed below:
• To assess the importance of including persons with disabilities (PWDs) in economic empowerment programmes within South African municipalities.
• To explore how Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality effectively promotes inclusive economic empowerment programmes that support PWDs.
• To ascertain the challenges and barriers inhibiting PWDs from participating in economic empowerment programmes in Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality.

• To explore the extent to which PWDs are actively involved in developing and implementing economic programmes, strategies, and policies.
• To explore the extent to which PWDs are actively involved in developing and implementing economic programmes, strategies, and policies.
• To assess effectiveness is Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality in implementation of NDP 2030 for PWDS, development strategies, policies, and the support provided by the government and other stakeholders.
• To evaluate the effects of economic empowerment interventions on quality of life for persons with disabilitie

Timeline and Resource required:
In terms of timeline the research data will be collected for period of one month. The resource to be used will be a voice recorder, interview guide and questionnaires and one 1 social worker (Assist with interviews).

Deadline/timelines for the project:
The study/thesis is expected to be completed in December 2026.
One month will be sufficient to collect data.

My/our request is/are for: (Tick appropriate options and/or add additional information.)

- ☑ Permission and/or support to conduct a study about or within the organisation/company/stakeholder group/community
- ☐ Access to possible participants and assistance for recruitment and identification purposes
- ☐ Assistance in the recruitment process of possible participants via internal communication
- ☑ Permission to distribute questionnaire/survey/research information to potential participants
- ☐ Access to organisational data – not in the public domain
- ☐ Other (specify below):

Provide a full description of the intended research sample. Motivate why the data must be gathered from the specific stakeholder group/organisation/company/community.

1.Qualitative data sampling

In current study for qualitative data collection researcher will conduct in-depth interviews with 15 officials within an area of Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality. The sample will consist of PWDs involved in businesses (micro and macro), caregivers, traditional leaders, NGOs, stakeholders such as disability forums, and key municipal officials, including the municipal manager, executive manager for the IDP and LED, the mayor; IDP manager, LED manager, corporate services manager, public participation manager and infrastructure development manager. The rationale for choosing this sample size is that some participants are directly responsible for advancing PWDs and interact with them daily. Others are senior managers in the municipality who are accountable for planning and executing economic empowerment and development initiatives.

2. Quantitative data sampling
The Structured questionnaires will be distributed to 210 participants for this study. The sample will include members from the Municipal Disability Desk, Lepelle-Nkumpi Disability Forum members, community project leaders, PWDs involved in businesses, caregivers, community members, traditional leaders, portfolio committee members on LED, administrative officials from the IDP and LED, and teachers from the Mahlasedi Special School. The main reason for choosing this sample size is that some participants are directly responsible for advancing PWDs and interact with them daily. Others are beneficiaries and contributory members of society who contribute economic empowerment and development initiatives or activities.

Explain how the participant identification and recruitment process of your research adhere to the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013.

Anonymity and confidentiality: The researcher will comply with the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (POPIA) (Act No. 41 of 2013) to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents in this study. This Act aims to protect the personal information processed by public and private entities. Therefore, the researcher will ensure that no names or personal details that could reveal participants' identities appear in the report (POPIA, 2013).

Provide a description of the data collection tools (e.g. interview, questionnaire, questions).

Interviews and questionnaires:
The researcher will use interviews and questionnaires to collect data, as the study will employ a mixed research design involving qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis.

Provide a description of the data gathering process that will be followed. (What will be expected of the research participants and exactly how will the data be collected?)

Voluntary participation: Participants will be informed that their participation in the study is voluntary, their privacy will be protected, and they may withdraw at any time.

1. Interviews:

The interviews will be conducted at times determined by the participants in order not to crowd their daily schedules, and to allow for enough time as determined by their availability. The interview views schedule will made in advance.

2. Questionnaires
The questinnaires will be distributed to the participants either via email or face to face and they will be given period of 1 week to return them.

Indicate who will have access to the raw data and in what formats?

Researcher - Completed questionnaires; Transcripts Notes and Voice Records.

Provide a full description of the perceived and actual risks of the study to participants and the organisation/company/stakeholder group/community. (Keeping national disasters in mind.)

Potential for minor discomfort or inconvenience from participants.

Describe the potential benefits of the study to the organisation/company/stakeholder group/community.

The research will assist the municipality in taking significant steps towards involving PWDs in economic activities and developing a municipal disability strategy to guide this process.This study will provide feedback on PWDs' contribution to economic empowerment programmes, helping government agencies and policymakers evaluate the progress made through implemented programmes and potentially triggering policy and programme reviews. At a practical level, this study aims to propose strategic actions that can remove barriers that hinder PWDs' meaningful participation in economic empowerment programmes and other areas of public life.
The study will help formulate measures to promote and manage economic programmes that address PWDs' needs. As a result, this study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge and the current literature. The findings will provide a better understanding of the importance of PWDs' participation in economic activities, enabling them to realise their value and lead lives of comfort, security, and material well-being.
The study will contribute to empirical research supporting the empowerment theory of change and validate its effectiveness in increasing the participation of PWDs in municipal economic activities. It will encourage policymakers to enforce reasonable policies that promote inclusive economic empowerment at the municipal level.
Furthermore, the study will contribute to the proper policy implementation and formulation for DWDs, expanding new and existing knowledge. The research will contribute significantly to advancing knowledge regarding inclusive disability economic empowerment to prioritise access to resources and opportunities for PWDs.

How will risks be mitigated and managed? (Keeping national disasters and relevant protocol in mind.)

Use of questionnaires/qualitative research methods that do not involve sensitive questions.

Interviews- location for interviews can be chosen by the participants to feel confortable.

Questionnaires - Completed questionnaires will be droped in a sealed box file.

Explain the extent and processes to which confidentiality of information will be maintained by the researcher.

All information, including identity of participants and responses during interviews or completed questionnaires will be kept confidential and only used for research. No names will appear on each questionnaires or introduction of names of participants during interviews.
The respondents' names will not appear in the report in order to apply and to avoid the likelihood of any views expressed in the report to be linked to them.

The researcher will comply with the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 [POPIA] (Act No. 41 of 2013] to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents in this study. Therefore, the researcher will ensure that no names or personal details that could reveal participants' identities appear in the report [POPIA, 2013].

List the expected deliverables of the study. (For example, a research report, journal articles and/or conference proceedings. Also indicate how privacy will be protected in any publication of the information.)

This study is expected to have deliverables such as reasearch report, journal articles and/or conference
proceedings.

Therefore, the researcher will ensure that no names or personal details that could reveal participants' identities appear in the report on the data analysed(POPIA, 2013.

The results of the study will be generalised also to other municipalities in South Africa.

How will the organisation/company/stakeholder group/community be informed of the results or outcomes? (If applicable.)

Not applicable.

Attach a copy of the research instrument (questionnaire/interview schedule/focus group questions) to your email and mark as Annexure A

C. OFFICIAL USE ONLY – TO BE COMPLETED BY COMPANY/ORGANISATION/COMMUNITY

Decision:

☑ Permission granted.
☐ Permission with conditions is granted.
☐ No permission could be granted at this time.

Special Conditions (if any – Expectations of the outcomes of the study must be stated. For example: Will feedback/a report be required before submission of the publication?):

No special conditions.

The following person and/or department/and or committee has been appointed to assist the researcher in the data collection process (if applicable):

Not applicable

By signing this form, you are indicating that you have read the description of the study, **have the legal and delegated authority to grant permission for the study on behalf of the company/organisation/stakeholder/community** and that the company/organisation/stakeholder/community in principle agrees to the terms as described in the short questionnaire that follows:

1. **I/We have reviewed the application form and received a copy of it. The purpose and nature of this study are clear, and all questions and issues of concern have been answered to satisfaction.**

☑ **Yes**
☐ **No**

2. **I/We (name of the person responsible and/or name of company/organisation/stakeholder/community)**

John Mathabatha - Lepelle-Nkumpi Disability Porum

C. OFFICIAL USE ONLY - TO BE COMPLETED BY COMPANY/ORGANISATION/COMMUNITY

Decision:

☑ Permission granted.
☐ Permission with conditions is granted.
☐ No permission could be granted at this time.

Special Conditions (if any – Expectations of the outcomes of the study must be stated. For example: Will feedback/a report be required before submission of the publication?):

No special conditions.

The following person and/or department/and or committee has been appointed to assist the researcher in the data collection process (if applicable):

Not applicable

By signing this form, you are indicating that you have read the description of the study, **have the legal and delegated authority to grant permission for the study on behalf of the company/organisation/stakeholder/community** and that the company/organisation/stakeholder/community in principle agrees to the terms as described in the short questionnaire that follows:

1. **I/We have reviewed the application form and received a copy of it. The purpose and nature of this study are clear, and all questions and issues of concern have been answered to satisfaction.**

☑ **Yes**
☐ **No**

2. **I/We (name of the person responsible and/or name of company/organisation/stakeholder/community)**

John Mathabatha - Lepelle-Nkumpi Disability Porum

ANNEXURE D: INFORMATION SHEETS

INFORMATION SHEET FOR AN STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

Dear Prospective participant,

You are invited to participate in in-depth interview conducted by **Charles Selemela** under the supervision of **Prof Bethuel Sibongiseni Ngcamu**, and co-supervision of **Dr Valery Nicoline Louw** in the **Department of Public Administration and Management** towards a **PhD in Public Administration** at the University of South Africa.

You were selected to participate in this survey because you contribute to implementation of economic empowerment programmes for PWDs. Participants would not be eligible to complete the survey if you are younger than 18 years. By participating in this project, you agree that the information you provide may be used for research purposes, including dissemination through peer-reviewed publications and conference proceedings.

It is anticipated that the information we gain from this survey would help us to complete this study for economic advancement of persons with disability. You are, however, under no obligation to complete the survey and you can withdraw from the study prior to submitting the survey. The questionnaire is developed to be anonymous, meaning that we would have no way of connecting the information that you provide to you and your name would not appear on the completed questionnaires or report of this study. If you choose to participate in this survey it would take up no more than thirty (30) *of* your time. You would not benefit from your participation as an individual; however, it is envisioned that the findings of this study would help formulate measures to promote and manage economic programmes that address PWDs' needs. We do not foresee that you would experience any negative consequences by completing the survey *OR* We foresee the following consequences in completing the survey, discomforts or inconveniences to return the questionnaires, however all questionnaires would be delivered to the researcher and be put on storage box to be stored at locked location known by the researcher. The researcher(s) undertake to keep any information provided herein confidential, not to let it out of our possession and to report on the findings from the perspective of the participating group and not from the perspective

of an individual.

The records would be kept for five years for audit purposes where after it would be permanently destroyed hard copies would be shredded and electronic versions would be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer. You would not be reimbursed or receive any incentives for your participation in the survey.

The research was reviewed and approved by the UNISA College of Economic and Management Sciences Ethics Research Committee - Public Administration and Management. The primary researcher Charles Selemela can be contacted during office hours at 076 904 5087. The study leader Prof Bethuel Sibongiseni Ngcamu and co-supervisor Dr Valery Nicoline Louw can be contacted during office hours at 068 100 3566/012 429 6247. Should you have any questions regarding the ethical aspects of the study, you can contact the chairperson of the Dr Promise Raseala, 012 429 6996. Alternatively, you can report any serious unethical behaviour at the University's Toll-Free Hotline 0800 86 96 93.

You are making a decision whether or not to participate by continuing to the next page. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time prior to clicking the send button.

It is anticipated that the information we gain from this survey would help us to identify the need for research ethics training in the South African Development Countries (SADC) region. You are, however, under no obligation to complete the survey and you can withdraw from the study prior to submitting the survey. The survey is developed to be **anonymous**, meaning that we would have no way of connecting the information that you provide to you personally. You may **withdraw** by exiting the survey before you have clicked the send button. If you choose to participate in this survey it would take up no more than **30 minutes** of your time. You would not directly benefit from your participation as an individual; however, it is envisioned that the findings of this survey may assist in addressing research ethics training needs in the SADC region. We do not foresee that you would experience any negative consequences by completing the survey. The researcher(s) undertake to keep any information provided herein **confidential**, not to let it out of our possession and to report on the findings from the perspective of the participating group and not from the perspective of an individual.

The records would be kept for five years for audit purposes where after it would be permanently destroyed. Records would be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer. There is **no financial compensation or incentives** for your participation in the survey.

You are making a decision whether or not to participate by continuing to the next page. By completing the survey, you imply that you have consented to participate in this research.

INFORMATION SHEET FOR IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Dear Prospective participant

You are invited to participate in in-depth interview conducted by **Charles Selemela** under the supervision of **Prof Bethuel Sibongiseni Ngcamu**, and co-supervision of **Dr Valery Louw** in the **Department of Public Administration and Management** towards a **PhD in Public Administration** at the University of South Africa.

You were selected to participate in this survey because your responsible and contribute to implementation of economic empowerment programmes for PWDs. Participants would not be eligible to complete the survey if you are younger than 18 years. By participating in this project, you agree that the information you provide may be used for research purposes, including dissemination through peer-reviewed publications and conference proceedings.

It is anticipated that the information we gain from this survey would help us to complete this study for economic advancement of persons with disability. You are, however, under no obligation to participate and you can withdraw from the study prior to completing the interview. If you choose to participate in it would take up no more than forty-five (45) minutes of your time.

You would not benefit from your participation as an individual; however, it is envisioned that the findings of this study would findings would assist the municipality in taking significant steps towards involving PWDs in economic activities and developing a municipal disability strategy to guide this process. We do not foresee that you would experience any negative consequences by completing the survey *OR* We foresee the following consequences in completing the survey minor discomfort or inconvenience about location of interview to feel open to talk and this would be mitigated by allowing the participants to choose time and location of interview for comfortability. The researcher(s) undertake to keep any information provided herein confidential, not to let it out of our possession and to report on the findings from the perspective of the participating group and not from the perspective of an individual.

The interview would be voice recorded either face-to-face or via MS-TEAMS. The records would be kept for five years for audit purposes where after it would be permanently destroyed hard copies would be shredded and electronic versions would be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer. You would not be reimbursed or receive any incentives for your participation in the survey.

The research was reviewed and approved by the College of Economic and Management Sciences_ERC Public Administration and Management. The primary researcher, Charles Selemela, can be contacted during office hours at 076 904 5087. The study leader Prof Bethuel Sibongiseni Ngcamu can be contacted during office hours at 060 601 6568. Should you have any questions regarding the ethical aspects of the study, you can contact the chairperson of the ERC-Public Administration and Management at 012 429 6996. Alternatively, you can report any serious unethical behaviour at the University's Toll-Free Hotline 0800 86 96 93.

ANNEXURE E: INFORMED CONSENT

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

Research title: The effects of local economic empowerment programmes on persons with disabilities (PWDs): A case of Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality of Limpopo Province, South Africa

---

I, ……... (participant name & surname), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

- I have read and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I am aware that the findings of this study would be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation would be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.
- I agree to be interviewed and/or to complete a questionnaire.
- I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant's name and surname	**Date**	**Signature**
Researcher's name and surname	**Date**	**Signature**

ANNEXURE F: QUESTIONNAIRE

Title: The effects of local economic empowerment programmes on persons with disability (PWDs): A case of Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality of Limpopo province, South Africa

This questionnaire is designed to obtain information on in relation to above-mentioned research title. To obtain such information, it would be appreciated if you could humbly take a few minutes of your time and respond to the questions; and, your responses would be strictly used for academic purposes only. Respondents are also accorded anonymity; participation in the study is voluntary. I request you to respond to the questions to your level best and honestly.

- Do not write your name or any personal details that could reveal your identity
- Please mark with an **X** where appropriate

Section A: Biographical Profile of the Respondents

1. Gender

Male	01
Female	02
Other	03

2. Age

18–20 years	01
21–30 years	02
31 – 40 years	03
41 – 50 years	04

51 – 60 years and above	05

3. Educational level

Lower than Matric	01
Matriculation	02
Trade certificate	03
Degree /diploma	04
Postgraduate degree	05

4. Employment Status

Employed	01
Unemployed	02
Self-employed	03
Other (Specify)	04

5. Current job level

Junior level	01
Junior management	02
Middle management	03

Senior management	04

6. Experience

0– 5 years	01
6 – 10 years	02
11 – 15 years	03
16 – 20 years	04
21 and above	05

7. Experience in economic empowerment programme and development

0– 5 years	01
6 – 10 years	02
11 – 15 years	03
16 – 20 years	04
21 and above	05

Instructions

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by placing a check mark in the appropriate box.

1- Strongly disagree; 2– Disagree; 3– Undecided; 4– Agree; 5–Strongly agree

Section B: Status of representation of PWDs for inclusive participation in economic empowerment programmes in the municipality	Please place **X** in the box that applies to you.				
I believe that:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
8. PWDs' participation in economic empowerment is not considered significant for their development	1	2	3	4	5
9. The municipality does not adequately value the participation of PWDs in local economic development.	1	2	3	4	5
10. PWDs are not well represented in empowerment programmes	1	2	3	4	5
11. Lack of enabling mechanisms to promote the participation of PWDs	1	2	3	4	5
12. Integration of disability in local economic development is not internalised	1	2	3	4	5
13. Current economic empowerment initiatives do not allow for the equal participation of all community members, including PWDs.	1	2	3	4	5

14. Inadequate advocacy and awareness for participation of PWDs in inclusive local economic empowerment initiatives	1	2	3	4	5
15. Lack of inclusive participatory approach in local economic development initiatives	1	2	3	4	5
16. There is unequal access to empowerment and employment opportunities in rural areas for PWDs	1	2	3	4	5
Section C: Role of municipality in promotion of economic empowerment and development programmes that support PWDs	Please place **X** in the box that applies to you.				
I believe that:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
17. There is a lack of understanding of disability integration	1	2	3	4	5
18. Disability-focused economic training interventions and support initiatives are absent.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Economic empowerment programmes are overshadowed by social welfare programmes	1	2	3	4	5
20. Promoting the representation of PWDs is not prioritised due to fragmented knowledge about disability issues	1	2	3	4	5
21. Municipality is still struggling to achieve 7% of representation of PWDs in the workforce	1	2	3	4	5
22. There is lack of mechanisms and monitoring tools to implement inclusive local economic development	1	2	3	4	5

23. Policies on inclusivity and strategies related to PWDs are poorly implemented.	1	2	3	4	5
24. There are no coordinated stakeholder efforts to facilitate local economic development activities for PWDs.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Capacity-building for PWDs is absent from the municipal development agenda.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Municipal development programmes are not responsive to the needs of PWDs	1	2	3	4	5
27. PWDs remain economically marginalised due to limited implementation of inclusive local economic development initiatives	1	2	3	4	5
Section D: Challenges and barriers that prohibit the participation of PWDs in local economic empowerment	Please place **X** in the box that applies to you.				
I believe that:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
28. There is inadequate employee capacity to fully implement local economic empowerment programmes, policies and strategies.	1	2	3	4	5
29. Inaccessible municipal buildings, transport and infrastructure have a major impact on the ability of PWDs to participate in the local economy.	1	2	3	4	5
30. Inadequate access to education and training opportunities for PWDs	1	2	3	4	5
31. Limited involvement of PWDs in the planning of economic empowerment programmes	1	2	3	4	5

32. Ineffective leadership and management to guide disability strategy and inclusive policy implementation.	1	2	3	4	5
33. Municipality does not address inequalities, negative attitudes, the lack of services, social, economic, political and environmental barriers for PWDs.	1	2	3	4	5
34. Empowerment projects are politicised.	1	2	3	4	5
35. Lack of dedicated resources, capacity and budget	1	2	3	4	5
36. Inadequate monitoring and enforcement of the institutional framework	1	2	3	4	5
37. Lack of political commitment and will to mainstream disability issues in rural areas	1	2	3	4	5
38. Disability development issues are addressed as a matter of compliance rather than inclusivity.	1	2	3	4	5
39. Lack of understanding of local economic development	1	2	3	4	5
40. Lack of access to financial resources in rural areas	1	2	3	4	5
Section E: The active involvement of PWDs in the development and implementation of economic programmes, strategies and policies in the Municipality	Please place **X** in the box that applies to you.				
I believe that:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree

41. Lack of local economic development outreach programmes in the municipality	1	2	3	4	5
42. Limited involvement of PWDs in various development forums, IDPs and structures in rural areas	1	2	3	4	5
43. The involvement of PWDs in empowerment programmes is driven by compliance rather than true inclusivity.	1	2	3	4	5
43. Insufficient resources to provide reasonable accommodation for all communities' needs, local economic development initiatives	1	2	3	4	5
45. Economic empowerment projects targeting communities, including PWDs, have not had a positive impact on economic growth or improved the economic status of PWDs.	1	2	3	4	5
46. Representation of PWDs in programme planning, implementation and development is unsatisfactory	1	2	3	4	5
47. No involvement of PWDs in the community workers and comprehensive rural development programmes	1	2	3	4	5
48. The Municipality is struggling to empower communities economically and socially	1	2	3	4	5
49. Limited education on disability contributes to discrimination against PWDs in development, resource sharing and decision-making	1	2	3	4	5
50. Lack of equitable participation in local economic development planning and implementation	1	2	3	4	5
51. PWDs' right to inclusive participation in the mainstream local economy is not being adequately addressed.	1	2	3	4	5
Section G: Effectiveness and impact of implemented inclusive development strategies, policies, programmes and support from government on economic empowerment programmes	Please place **X** in the box that applies to you.				

I believe that:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
52. Economic empowerment initiatives and strategies are not aligned with the actual empowerment needs of PWDs.	1	2	3	4	5
53. Municipality development strategies do not adequately support disability initiatives and projects in the community	1	2	3	4	5
54. Economic empowerment interventions for PWDs have not improved their financial independence and reduced income inequality	1	2	3	4	5
55. There is a lack of effective implementation of disability policies to ensure reasonable accommodation.	1	2	3	4	5
56. Municipal empowerment programmes are not impactful on PWDs' quality of life	1	2	3	4	5
57. Lack of an effective disability strategy to promote and evaluate empowerment programmes	1	2	3	4	5
58. The current programmes and policies are not impactful in addressing the disabling environment for PWDs	1	2	3	4	5
59. Ineffective empowerment programmes are a result of weak institutional structures and poor governance.	1	2	3	4	5
60. Lack of a monitoring and evaluation system affects the sustainability of empowerment programmes.	1	2	3	4	5
61. There is insufficient support from stakeholders and other government departments on the implementation of empowerment programmes	1	2	3	4	5

62. PWDs are marginalised in programmes for small, micro and medium enterprises that are coordinated through local economic development initiatives	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you very much for your time and contribution.

ANNEXURE G: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Title: The effects of local economic empowerment programmes on persons with disabilities (PWDs): A case of Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality of Limpopo province, South Africa

Thank you very much for affording me this opportunity to interview you. It would be appreciated if you can take some time to respond to the questions, which are aimed at soliciting perceptions and views from a sample of PWDs on local economic empowerment programmes. The information sought is only for academic research for the fulfilment of a PhD in Public Administration.

1. **How is status of representation of PWDs for inclusive participation in economic empowerment programmes in the context of South African municipalities?**

    1.1 To what extent does the municipality promote the participation of PWDs in local economic empowerment programmes?

    Please provide details to support your answer.

    1.2 In your understanding, what causes non-participation of PWDs in economic empowerment programmes?

    1.3 How would you describe is the representation and participation of PWDs in various municipal development forums (IDPs and LED), committees and structures in rural areas?

2. **What is the role of the municipality in promotion of economic empowerment and development programmes that support PWDs?**

    2.1 What measures do you think should be taken to mainstream PWDs in local economic development programmes in the Municipality?

    Please elaborate?

2.2 What are the available municipal monitoring and evaluation tools to track progress and impact of empowerment projects for PWDs?

2.3 Have local economic development initiatives assisted the municipality in achieving 7% representation of PWDs in its structures or workforce.

If not, why? Please suggest strategies to improve the representation of PWDs in the municipality.?

2.4 What training programmes and support mechanisms are available to capacitate PWDs to contribute to the municipality's development agenda?

Are these programmes and mechanisms effective? Please provide details of any capacity-building programmes for PWDs you are aware of in your community.

2.5. What is the role municipality in providing reasonable accommodation for PWDs in planning and decision-making in rural areas?

2.6. Do you think the current empowerment programme focus on social welfare or economic welfare? Please provide details to support your answer.

3. What are the key challenges and barriers that hinder the participation of PWDs in economic empowerment initiatives in the municipality?

3.1 What are the major economic empowerment programmes implementation challenges that the municipality face and propose solutions?

3.2 Does the municipality have disability strategy to guide the inclusion of PWDs on economic development activities?

Please support your answer with a detailed response.

3.3. What are the main barriers faced by PWDs in participating in economic empowerment programmes which municipality struggle to address?

3.4 Do you think municipalities have the capacity, competency and resources to provide reasonable accommodation for PWDs through the implementation of policies, programmes and strategies? Please elaborate.

4. To what extent are PWDs actively involved in the development, implementation of economic programmes, strategies and policies in Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality?

4.1 Which government legislative framework and policies that support the empowerment of PWDs are you aware of?

4.2 What can be done for the municipality to accelerate efforts for the implementation of inclusive local economic development for PWDs?

Please comment if disability is considered a matter of social welfare compliance programmes, not economic inclusivity

4.3. What are reasons for PWDs in rural areas not be involved in planning and decision-making of municipal development agenda?

5 How effective and impact of inclusive development strategies, policies, programmes and support from the government on economic empowerment programmes?

5.1 Are the current economic empowerment initiatives and strategies aligned to meet the economic and social needs of communities, inclusive of PWDs?

If so, kindly provide details of any empowerment programmes which achieve the objective of PWDs' inclusiveness.

5.2 How effective are interventions from stakeholders in supporting municipality to enhance development programmes for PWDs?

5.3 What is the impact of local economic empowerment programmes had on PWDs' quality of life?

Please explain and comment on the living status of PWDs.

Thank you very much for your time and contribution.

ANNEXURE H: ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX

B	Component		
	1	2	3
Current economic empowerment initiatives do not allow for the equal participation of all community members, including PWDs	0.875	-0.034	0.045
Inadequate advocacy and awareness for participation of PWDs in inclusive local economic empowerment initiatives	0.737	0.213	-0.053
Lack of enabling mechanisms to promote the participation of PWDs	0.689	0.263	0.472
Lack of inclusive participatory approach in local economic development initiatives	0.040	0.747	0.036
PWDs' participation in economic empowerment is not considered significant for their development	0.036	0.734	0.069
PWDs are not well represented in empowerment programmes	0.198	0.546	0.094
Integration of disability in local economic development is not internalised	0.066	0.444	0.291
The municipality does not adequately value the participation of PWDs in local economic development	0.386	0.003	0.833
There is unequal access to empowerment and employment opportunities in rural areas for PWDs	-0.204	0.254	0.767

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation.
a. Rotation converged in four iterations.

C	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Capacity-building for PWDs is absent from the municipal development agenda	0.708	-0.099	-0.141	0.118
Economic empowerment programmes are overshadowed by social welfare programmes	0.671	-0.224	-0.090	0.399
There is lack of mechanisms and monitoring tools to implement inclusive local economic development	0.598	0.206	0.143	-0.195
There are no coordinated stakeholder efforts to facilitate local economic development activities for PWDs	-0.204	0.738	0.043	0.224

Policies on inclusivity and strategies related to PWDs are poorly implemented	0.033	0.635	0.344	0.002
PWDs remain economically marginalised due to limited implementation of inclusive local economic development initiatives	0.285	0.561	-0.187	-0.338
Municipal development programmes are not responsive to the needs of PWDs	-0.098	0.329	0.723	-0.025
Promoting the representation of PWDs is not prioritised due to fragmented knowledge about disability issues	0.410	0.092	0.673	-0.167
Municipality is still struggling to achieve 7% of representation of PWDs in the workforce	-0.382	-0.240	0.666	-0.032
There is a lack of understanding of disability integration	0.022	0.323	-0.096	0.761
Disability-focused economic training interventions and support initiatives are absent	0.071	-0.100	-0.046	0.625

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation.
a. Rotation converged in seven iterations.

D	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
Empowerment projects are politicised	0.772	0.293	0.139	0.035	-0.110
Inadequate access to education and training opportunities for PWDs	0.689	-0.133	0.148	0.120	0.187
Disability development issues are addressed as a matter of compliance rather than inclusivity	0.639	-0.114	-0.432	-0.017	0.099
There is inadequate employee capacity to fully implement local economic empowerment programmes, policies and strategies	-0.041	0.820	0.105	-0.027	0.151
Municipality does not address inequalities, negative attitudes, the lack of services, social, economic, political and environmental barriers for PWDs	0.066	0.740	0.168	0.048	-0.005
Inadequate monitoring and enforcement of the institutional framework	0.272	-0.373	0.638	0.175	0.114

Ineffective leadership and management to guide disability strategy and inclusive policy implementation	0.066	0.188	0.618	-0.374	-0.055
Lack of dedicated resources, capacity and budget	-0.014	0.271	0.611	0.019	0.009
Inaccessible municipal buildings, transport and infrastructure have a major impact on the ability of PWDs to participate in the local economy	0.297	0.185	0.204	0.713	-0.264
Lack of access to financial resources in rural areas	0.070	-0.147	-0.053	0.691	0.071
Limited involvement of PWDs in the planning of economic empowerment programmes	-0.333	0.296	-0.121	0.484	0.120
Lack of understanding of local economic development	0.153	0.070	-0.019	-0.062	0.898
Lack of political commitment and will to mainstream disability issues in rural areas	-0.108	0.241	0.422	0.230	0.430

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation.
a. Rotation converged in seven iterations.

E	Component			
	1	2	3	4
The involvement of PWDs in empowerment programmes is driven by compliance rather than true inclusivity	0.729	0.156	0.034	0.063
PWDs' right to inclusive participation in the mainstream local economy is not being adequately addressed	0.612	0.477	-0.137	-0.247
Limited involvement of PWDs in various development forums, IDPs and structures in rural areas	0.597	-0.211	0.126	0.140
Representation of PWDs in programme planning, implementation and development is unsatisfactory	0.560	-0.459	-0.344	0.030
Insufficient resources to provide reasonable accommodation for all communities' needs, local economic development initiatives	-0.174	0.740	-0.070	-0.081

Lack of equitable participation in local economic development planning and implementation	0.171	0.718	0.161	0.084
No involvement of PWDs in the community workers and comprehensive rural development programmes	-0.142	-0.026	0.851	-0.104
Limited education on disability contributes to discrimination against PWDs in development, resource sharing and decision-making	0.268	0.289	0.662	0.331
Lack of local economic development outreach programmes in the municipality	0.366	-0.315	0.372	-0.136
The Municipality is struggling to empower communities economically and socially	-0.123	-0.083	-0.046	0.820
Economic empowerment projects targeting communities, including PWDs, have not had a positive impact on economic growth or improved the economic status of PWDs	0.174	0.047	0.033	0.692

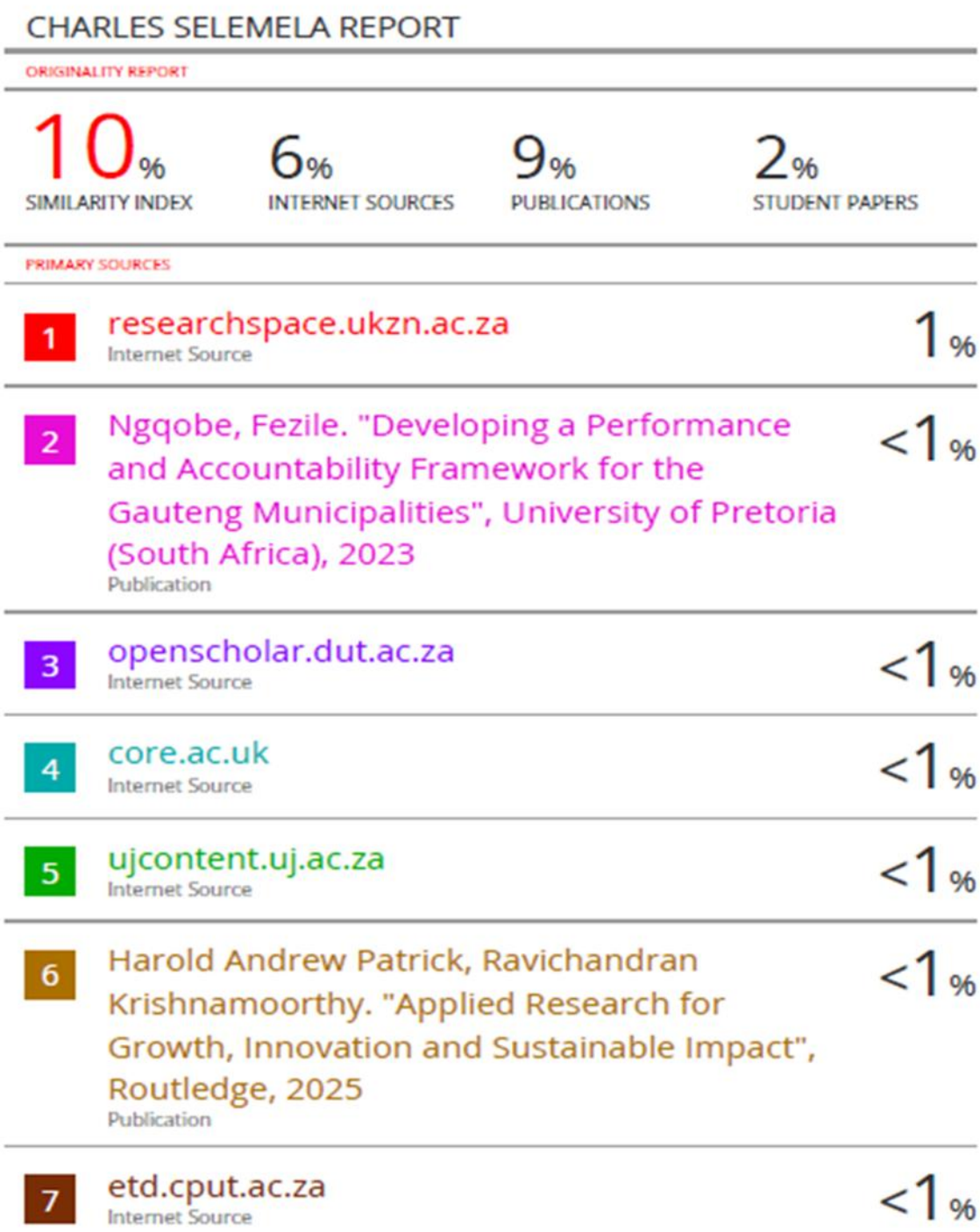
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation.
a. Rotation converged in seven iterations.

F	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Lack of a monitoring and evaluation system affects the sustainability of empowerment programmes	0.828	0.095	0.075	0.127
Ineffective empowerment programmes are a result of weak institutional structures and poor governance	0.810	0.107	-0.096	-0.112
PWDs are marginalised in programmes for small, micro and medium enterprises that are coordinated through local economic development initiatives	0.202	0.745	0.216	0.137
The current programmes and policies are not impactful in addressing the disabling environment for PWDs	0.048	0.738	-0.181	0.246
Municipal empowerment programmes are not impactful on PWDs' quality of life	0.169	0.547	-0.322	-0.268
There is a lack of effective implementation of disability policies to ensure reasonable accommodation	-0.030	0.518	0.114	-0.080
Economic empowerment interventions for PWDs have not improved their financial independence and reduced income inequality	0.084	0.000	0.777	0.003
Municipality development strategies do not adequately support disability initiatives and projects in the community	-0.383	0.038	0.557	-0.123

Lack of an effective disability strategy to promote and evaluate empowerment programmes	0.110	0.007	0.070	0.743
Economic empowerment initiatives and strategies are not aligned with the actual empowerment needs of PWDs	-0.206	0.011	-0.361	0.618
There is insufficient support from stakeholders and other government departments on the implementation of empowerment programmes	0.327	0.153	0.382	0.416

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation.
a. Rotation converged in six iterations.

ANNEXURE I: TURNITIN REPORT



CHARLES SELEMELA REPORT

ORIGINALITY REPORT

10%	6%	9%	2%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	researchspace.ukzn.ac.za Internet Source	1%
2	Ngqobe, Fezile. "Developing a Performance and Accountability Framework for the Gauteng Municipalities", University of Pretoria (South Africa), 2023 Publication	<1%
3	openscholar.dut.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
4	core.ac.uk Internet Source	<1%
5	ujcontent.uj.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
6	Harold Andrew Patrick, Ravichandran Krishnamoorthy. "Applied Research for Growth, Innovation and Sustainable Impact", Routledge, 2025 Publication	<1%
7	etd.cput.ac.za Internet Source	<1%

ANNEXURE J: LANGUAGE EDITOR'S CONFIRMATION LETTER

Blue Diamonds Professional Editing
Services (Pty) Ltd.

Email: jacqui@bluediamondsediting.co.za
OR
Email: chris@bluediamondsediting.co.za
WhatsApp: +447895146059nds.co.za
Website: https://www.bluediamondsediting.co.za/
Accounts: accounts@bluediamondsediting.co.za

Enhancing YOUR brilliance

13 February 2026

Declaration of editing

THE EFFECTS OF LOCAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: A CASE OF LEPELLE-NKUMPI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

by

Selemela Charles

I declare that I have edited and proofread this thesis. The editing was restricted to language usage and spelling, completeness and consistency, technical formatting and formatting the references.

I am qualified to have done such editing, being in possession of a Bachelor's degree with a major in English, having taught English to matriculation, and having a Certificate in Copy Editing from the University of Cape Town. I have edited more than 600 Masters and Doctoral theses, as well as articles, books and reports.

As the copy editor,

- I am not responsible for detecting, or removing, passages in the document that closely resemble other texts and could thus be viewed as plagiarism.
- I am not responsible for editing AI generated text.
- I am not accountable for any changes made to this document by the author or any other party subsequent to the date of this declaration.

Sincerely,



Dr J Baumgardt
UNISA: D. Ed. Education Management
University of Cape Town: Certificate in Copy Editing
University of Cape Town: Certificate in Corporate Coaching

Professional EDITORS Guild 30+ Est 1993
Promoting excellence in editing

Jacqui Baumgardt
Full Member

Membership number: BAU001
Membership year: March 2025 to February 2026

+44 7895146059
jacqui@bluediamondsediting.co.za
bluediamondsediting.co.za

www.editors.org.za

ciep Intermediate Member