



# **IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON PWD LED MSMES AND SPECIFIC RECOVERY MEASURES.**

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# BRIEF OF NCPWD

- ❖ The National Council for Persons with Disabilities is a State Corporation which was established in November 2004 following the enactment of the Persons with Disabilities Act No. 14 of 2003.
- ❖ The main objective of the Act is to provide for the rights of Persons with Disabilities, rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities and the provision of equal opportunities
- ❖ The Council is charged with the responsibilities of formulating and implementing policies that are geared towards mainstreaming of Persons with Disabilities issues to the National Economy and to create an enabling environment in which Persons with Disabilities can operate effectively and efficiently in order to contribute positively to the National Economy.

# **BRIEF OF NCPWD CONT..**

## **Vision of the Council**

A barrier free society for Persons with Disabilities

## **Mission Statement**

To Promote and protect equalization of opportunities and realization of Human rights for PWDs to live decent livelihood

## **Motto**

Disability Rights are Human Rights

# **FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNCIL**

- **Registration** of Persons with Disabilities, organizations and institutions.
- **Mainstreaming of disability** in all private and public sectors of the government.
- **Economic empowerment** of persons with disabilities by providing, provision of grants to groups.
- **Assistive devices and adaptive technologies.**
- LPO Financing
- Tools of Trade
- Education Scholarships.
- Job Placement
- Infrastructure improvement
- Social protection CTPWSD.
- Albinism programme (sunscreen lotions and protective clothing. Eye care)
- Training and capacity building DPOs.

# IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON PWD LED MSMEs

## INTRODUCTION

When COVID 19 hit our country those who were adversely affected were those in business. The ones hit hard were PWDs in business since most of them depend on MSMEs for survival and for supporting their vulnerable families. MSMEs in general were abruptly confronted with changed consumption patterns, demand, product distribution and consumer behavior.

Micro enterprises were most affected in comparison to medium enterprises. Movement restrictions, lockdown and enforcement of social distancing measures all had a significant impact on MSMEs. Disruptions of supply and demand for raw materials both locally and internationally also influenced the ability of MSMEs to continue with business.

# IMPACT OF THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC ON PWD LED MSMEs

## a) Physical disabilities

- Most PWDs in MSMEs comprises of those using wheelchairs, Tricycles, with limping gaits and those using crutches or walking sticks to aid their mobility. During COVID 19, PWDs under this category were adversely affected since they were very vulnerable. Most of them depend on their assistive devices, for mobility which are prone to contamination by the virus.

Most of them who were earning an income from MSMEs were forced to close shop due to the above mentioned reasons.

## **b.) Hearing or Speech Impairments**

PWDs with hearing impairment, ranges from Totally deaf and partially deaf(low hearing).

More often, PWDs under this category get information by lip reading (follow spellings by looking at your mouth movements during your speech). Putting on masks during this period made it difficult for them to communicate effectively, sell their products, agree or disagree to an issue.

## **c.) Visually impaired**

Individuals who are blind or with visual challenges were adversely affected by COVID 19 measures which included cashless transactions.

Entrepreneurs under this category of disability can access information in audio and by touching. Most often transactions were in form of MPESA and other M-Transaction modes of payment. This brought challenges in conducting business during this period.

Persons who are blind also depend on guides for information and movement.

#### **d.) Persons with albinisms**

Most persons with albinism are vulnerable and they can easily be affected by COVID 19. As a result, persons with albinism were struggling to access healthcare facilities for skin cancer testing and treatment, get treatment for visual impairments or sunscreen lotion, which is not always readily available particularly in rural areas. This made it difficult for them to conduct their businesses.

#### **e.) Disruption in demand supply or goods supply**

With the introduction of lockdown and travel restrictions, most PWDs in business could not travel freely to different places in such of goods and opportunities. Agricultural based businesses were adversely affected as the produce got spoilt as a result of the travel restrictions hence incurring losses.

#### **f.) Financial Fragility**

Most people in business depend on loans and PWDs in business are not excluded. Most of them had taken loans to expand their businesses and with the onset of COVID 19 most of them could not be able to finance their loans as there was reduction in cash flow. This affected their credit scores



### **g.) Cash Flow**

MSMEs are more dependent on consistent cash flow and stable funding chains. COVID 19 resulted to late payments which subsequently limited the investment into the organization, people and future projects

### **h.) Technology**

An investment in new technology such as Zoom to support working from home and hybrid working patterns was seen across all organizations and sectors given the sudden onset of the pandemic. Most MSMEs didn't have the cash flow or business need to invest in such comprehensive tools . While this technology was brought in to support businesses, it didn't always support business development for PWDs led MSMEs

# RECOVERY STRATEGIES

# Business levies and waivers.

## 1. Pwds ACT 2003.

- Section 35(1) speaks about government levies imposed to PWDs in MSMEs, be waived under this section. PWDs may apply to the person/body responsible for collecting levies (national or county), to grant them this opportunity.

### Strategy:

- **Disability Mainstreaming:** Government departments doing business with PWDs or engage their services to PWDs might not have adequate information about business waivers for licence or levies. The Council through the department of DMD is pursuing trainings by sensitizing staff and Committees responsible for disability mainstreaming on best approaches in regard to this article.
- **NCPWD Legal department:** To engage counties and government agencies to promote this article by a way of requesting waiver for PWDs in MSMEs. Most county governments are reportedly doing waivers to this category of MSMEs.

## **Tax exemption:**

- The Council under Article 35(1),&(2) of the Persons with Disabilities act is mandated to facilitate tax exemption to PWDs. PWDs who are in receipt of an income may apply to the Minister responsible for finance for exemption from income tax and any other levies on such income.
- The Council has fast tracked the process of tax exemption for applicants who are entrepreneurs in MSMEs and are registered PWDs and with AGPO.

# Access to capital by MSMEs under AGPO.

- Most PWDs in MSMEs, under the category of AGPO, during the COVID 19 pandemic, it became difficult for them to do business especially those with mobility aids such as wheelchairs, crutches and other assorted devices.

**Council developed an LPO financing program** in collaboration with KCB for MSMEs under this category of AGPO with LPO, LSO or contracts to supply items like Newspapers etc. This loan is repayable within 90 days with a small management fee of 5%.

## Technology as an enabler for business resilience.

- Technology was/is most appropriate, to adopt as it involves less physical interaction.
- Most counties adopted use of **technology** as mode of payments, e.g. business permits and licenses and application of waiver.
- The use of tools such as **social media**, e-commerce platforms and websites to support PWDs in MSMEs to access wider markets. Most PWDs involved in selling their items on social media, and other forms of technology.
- Provide use of adoptive technology to do transaction that is suitable for persons with visual impairments.
- Council provides advice that those with visual challenges have their phones programmed for audio/speaking software.

# **Distribution of sunscreen lotion and protective gears to PWAs**

- The Council is involved in post recovery strategy by ensuring every person with albinism has access to sunscreen lotion and protective gears so that they can lead a normal life and engage in their business effectively.

## **CONCLUSION**

PWD led MSMEs face barriers in carrying out their business due to the COVID 19 pandemic and the response measures put in place for COVID 19.

The Government and other public bodies responsible for supporting MSMEs should monitor the impact of the pandemic to this MSMEs and offer the necessary support.



**THANK YOU**