Accessibility to ICT Services by Persons with Disabilities – South African Perspective

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Population size: 44,819,778
PwD: 2,255,982
Percentage of PwD: 5%
Sight disability: 32%
Physical disability: 30%
Hearing disability: 20%
Emotional disability: 16%
Intellectual disability: 12%
Communication disability: 7%

Source: Stats SA 2001
CONSTITUTION OF SOUTH AFRICA

• The right of people with disabilities are protected by the Constitution

• Government departments and state bodies have a responsibility to promote and protect the fundamental rights of PwDs
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DISABILITY STRATEGY

STANDARD RULES

• Implies a strong moral and political commitment by the State

• Offers an instrument for policy-making and action

• Outlines crucial aspects of socio-economic policies in the disability field

• Outlines national mechanisms for close collaboration between the State and the organs of the UN, NGOs and DPOs
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PUBLIC EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

• Negative attitudes that lead to the social exclusion and marginalisation of PwDs
• PwDs are viewed as helpless and dependent
• Perception of PwDs as different or ‘outsiders’
• Changing is a complex process
• Public education and awareness is central to the changing of attitudes
• Raising of awareness of disability is a human rights and development issue
ASSISTIVE ICT TECHNOLOGIES

• Assistive ICT technology enables PwDs to participate on equal terms

• PwDs must have access to appropriate ICT technologies that are appropriate and affordable

• Assistive ICT technologies will enable PwDs to access their rights and participate in society as equal citizens

• Initiatives to develop appropriate assistive ICT technology took place

• Standardisation of ICT technologies need greater enhancement
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COMMUNICATIONS

• Communications is an important aspect of access to public services

• Sign Language is the first and natural language of people with hearing disabilities

• Special Language Systems/Augmentative and Alternative Communication for people who can not use a spoken or sign language (Braille, Touch, Bliss symbols)
COMMUNICATIONS Cont.

• Interpreter Services are linked closely to the communication needs of Deaf people and people with limited or no speech

• Technology that will ensure inclusive use of public amenities by all consumers is required and should be standardised
ACCESSIBILITY STUDY CONDUCTED

Mobile telephony

- Only 57% of PwD have a cell phone
- Cost is a primary driver of choice of mobile provider

Fixed line telephony

- 11% of PwDs have access to a landline in the home
Public phones

- People with physical or sight disabilities are more likely to use a public access phones compared to those with hearing and communication disabilities

Community phones

- Community service phones were found to be within a walking distance from PwD’s homes
- Community service phones were found to be accessible PWDs (ramps, assistive technologies)
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NATIONAL SUMMIT FOR PwDs

Resolutions

• ICASA, in conjunction with the SABS to develop accessibility standards

• ICT operators to broaden the use of Sign Language in their service provision

• ICASA to establish a consultative forum to with associations for PwDs
Resolutions Cont.

- ICASA to set up a monitoring structure for the promotion and protection of consumers’ rights including PwDs
- ICASA to establish a forum to consult with Persons with Disabilities on a regular basis
- ICASA to set up a monitoring structure for the promotion and protection of consumers’ rights, including PwDs
REGULATIONS

- Developed and published regulations to regulate ICT industry in the public interest
  - To promote competition
  - To protect consumers
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CODE ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

• Broadcasters to ensure that services are accessible to PwDs
• ECS and ECNS service providers to provide assistive technologies such as text phones, amplified telephony, relay services, hearing aids etc
• ECS and ECNS service providers to provide access ramps and visible signage
Thank you.