

KOFORIDUA YOUTH MANIFESTO

STATUS REPORT 2025



KOFORIDUA YOUTH MANIFESTO STATUS REPORT-2025

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the Koforidua Youth Manifesto Project

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We are especially grateful to STAR-Ghana Foundation and Foundation Botnar for their generous financial and technical support, which were pivotal in the successful development of the first-ever Koforidua Youth Manifesto and the subsequent production of this Status Report.

This project has not only empowered the youth of the New Juaben South Munic-

ipality to take ownership of their development processes, but has also acted as a catalyst for increased youth participation in local governance and civic technology.

Through the KofKro Project, we have seen the rise of a new generation of young leaders who are harnessing technology to amplify their voices, promote accountability, and drive positive change within their communities. We are confident that this initiative has laid a strong foundation for more inclusive and participatory governance in the municipality, and we are proud to have contributed to shaping the future of youth civic engagement in Ghana.

We are grateful for the trust and confidence our partners have placed in us, and we are proud of our collaboration in creating a platform that amplifies youth voices.



RESEARCH TEAM

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TABLE OF CONTENT

6	FOREWARD
7	PREFACE
8	ABBREVIATION
9	NEW JUABEN SOUTH MUNICIPALITY- OVERVIEW
12	KOFKRO PROJECT OVERVIEW
13	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
13	Demographics
13	State of Health Care Delivery
14	State of Youth with Disability
14	State of Young Women and Girls' Empowerment
14	Recommendations
16	CHAPTER ONE:
18	REMARKS FROM THE MUNICIPAL HEALTH DIRECTORATE
18	Context/Rationale
19	Situational analysis
25	Figure 1.13: NHIS Effectiveness
26	Space for youth action
28	Recommendations to municipal authorities and stakeholders.
28	CHAPTER TWO:
29	REMARKS FROM THE MUNICIPAL GENDER DESK
30	Context/Rationale
32	Situational Analysis
41	Space for youth action
41	Recommendations to Municipal authorities
42	CHAPTER THREE:
43	REMARKS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE
44	Context/Rationale
46	Situational Analysis
57	CONCLUSION
58	REFERENCES

FOREWORD

The future of any nation is intrinsically linked to the energy, creativity, and inclusion of its youth. In the New Juaben South Municipality, where young people aged 15–35 make up nearly half of our population, this reality is not just a demographic fact, it is a mandate for action.

It is with great pride and a deep sense of responsibility that we present the Koforidua Youth Status Report. This document is a cornerstone of Phase 1 of the Action for Youth Development (AfYD) Project, affectionately known as the “Kofkro” Project. Launched as a collaborative three-year initiative supported by the STAR-Ghana Foundation and Fondation Botnar, the Kofkro Project seeks to bridge the gap between youth aspirations and governance outcomes.

This report is far more than a collection of data; it is a mirror reflecting the lived experiences of our young people. By focusing on three critical pillars: Healthcare Delivery, Disability Inclusion, and the Empowerment of Young Women and Girls, we have sought to uncover the structural barriers that prevent our youth from reaching their full potential. From the persistent challenges faced by youth with disabilities in accessing government services to the socio-cultural hurdles affecting the health and reproductive rights of young women, the findings herein are both sobering and instructive.

Central to our approach is the Koforidua Youth Manifesto. Developed by AFES-Ghana in collaboration with our partners, this Manifesto serves as a roadmap for duty-bearers. It ensures that development planning is not merely something done for young people, but something shaped by them.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our implementing partners; the New Juaben South Municipal Assembly, the NYA, and the NCCE for their unwavering technical support.

As we move forward, let this report serve as a catalyst for evidence-based policy and inclusive governance. We call upon all stakeholders to move beyond consultation and toward genuine partnership. Only by integrating the voices of our youth into the heart of decision-making can we build a Koforidua (Ghana) that is truly inclusive, responsive, and prosperous for all.



**Paul Nana Kwabena
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AFES-Ghana / Board Member

PREFACE

As the National Youth Authority (NYA) continues its mission to develop the creative potential of Ghana youth and ensure their effective participation in national development, it is with great pride that we provide this message for the Youth Status Report 2025. This report, prepared by AFES Ghana, serves as a vital tool for evidence-based policymaking within the New Juaben South Municipality, reflecting our collective commitment to a “Reset Agenda” that prioritizes grassroots empowerment and inclusive governance as we enter 2026.

This publication highlights three critical thematic areas that are central to the NYA’s strategic framework:

Youth with Disabilities: In alignment with the 2021-2031 National Youth Policy and the recent inauguration of the Ghana Network of Youth with Disabilities (GNYD), we remain dedicated to ensuring no young person is left behind. We recognize the need to move beyond policy and into actionable inclusion, particularly in eliminating the physical and social barriers that still hinder young persons with disabilities (PWDs) in our communities.

Healthcare Delivery: Access to quality, adolescent-friendly, and gender-responsive healthcare is a fundamental right. Our focus in 2026 remains on addressing structural barriers to primary healthcare,

ensuring that young people, especially those in marginalized groups, can make informed health choices regarding sexual and reproductive health and mental well-being.

Empowerment of Young Women and Girls: Empowering young women is not merely a goal but a necessity for sustainable development. Through programs like the “Generating Equality” agenda, we are fostering safe spaces for girls to lead, innovate, and participate in decision-making at all levels.

The future of Ghana is built by its youth, who must be its “chief architects”. The NYA encourages all stakeholders including local government authorities, traditional and religious leaders, Civil Society Organizations, and development partners to use the insights from this report to sustain efforts toward participatory governance. By integrating youth voices into the 2026 District Medium-Term Development Plans, we ensure that our development is both actionable, sustainable, and owned by the youth themselves.

We commend AFES Ghana for this timely contribution and look forward to our continued partnership in building a prosperous and inclusive nation for all.



Elizabeth Delali Kufalor
Municipal Youth Director
National Youth Authority

ABBREVIATION

AFES – Anchito Foundation for Education and Self-Help

BBF – Bebia Beye Fine

CDD- Ghana Center for Democratic Development

CSOs- Civil Society Organizations

DACF- District Assembly Common Fund

DMAC – Divine Mother and Child Foundation

DSWCD- District Social Welfare and Community Development

DOVVSU- Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit

GHS- Ghana Health Service

KYM – Koforidua Youth Manifesto

MCE- Municipal Chief Executive

MHD- Municipal Health Directorate

MMDAs- Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies

NCCE- National Commission for Civic Education

NJSMA- New Juaben South Municipal Assembly

NYA – National Youth Authority

STAR- Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness

YP – Youth Parliament

NEW JUABEN SOUTH MUNICIPALITY-OVERVIEW

Ghana operates a decentralized system of administration, comprising sixteen administrative regions and 261 Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs). The New Juaben South Municipality was created in 2017 as one of the thirty-three MMDAs in the Eastern Region. The municipality spans approximately 60 square kilometres, with Koforidua serving as its administrative capital.

The area experiences a bimodal rainfall pattern, with temperatures ranging between 20°C and 32°C. It lies within the semi-deciduous rainforest zone and is characterized by diverse flora and fauna.

The municipality is socially heterogeneous, dominated by the Akan ethnic group alongside significant populations of other ethnic communities.

Chieftaincy in Ghana is constitutionally recognized as an integral traditional system of governance with national status. The Omanhene, who is the Paramount Chief, exercises traditional authority based on established cultural, historical, and ancestral jurisdictions. The Queen Mother serves as the female traditional leader. Together, the Omanhene and the Queen Mother play pivotal roles in traditional governance and community leadership within the municipality. In our project, the Omanhene served as a key chair of the Local Project Advisory Committee, providing strategic advice and raising concerns that supported the growth and success of the initiative.

Ghana's local government structure is a multifaceted system aimed at promoting effective governance and grassroots participation. The structure comprises Town, Urban and Zonal Councils, with Unit Committees as the lowest structure in the decentralization arrangement. The local authorities, administratively and in policy realms,

are composed of two distinct forms – the bureaucracy and policy wings. The formal administrative staff fall under a district administrative coordinating unit headed by a Metropolitan/Municipal/District Coordinating Director (MMDCD), while the policy wing, is headed by an appointed government representative, the Metropolitan/Municipal/District Chief Executive (MMDCE) with its local assembly that ensures the development of district by-laws, composed of both elected and appointed assembly members. The General Assembly constitutes the “Local Parliament” serving as the House for policy deliberations and by-laws making. Like national parliament, the General Assembly has committees and subject matter sub-committees to support its work.

Key Components of the Local Assembly Structure

Zonal Councils

Zonal Councils consist of representatives responsible for overseeing defined zones within the municipality. The municipality has eight Zonal Councils that focus on specific geographic areas and development concerns, enabling more targeted governance and community development efforts.

Unit Committees

Unit Committees operate at the grassroots level and focus on addressing local issues and promoting community development. The municipality has 70 Unit Committees, which play a critical role in engaging residents, identifying community needs, and initiating local development activities. They also serve as the implementing structures for decisions taken by the legislative arm of the local authority, including the enforcement of by-laws, and to supervise the execution of local projects.

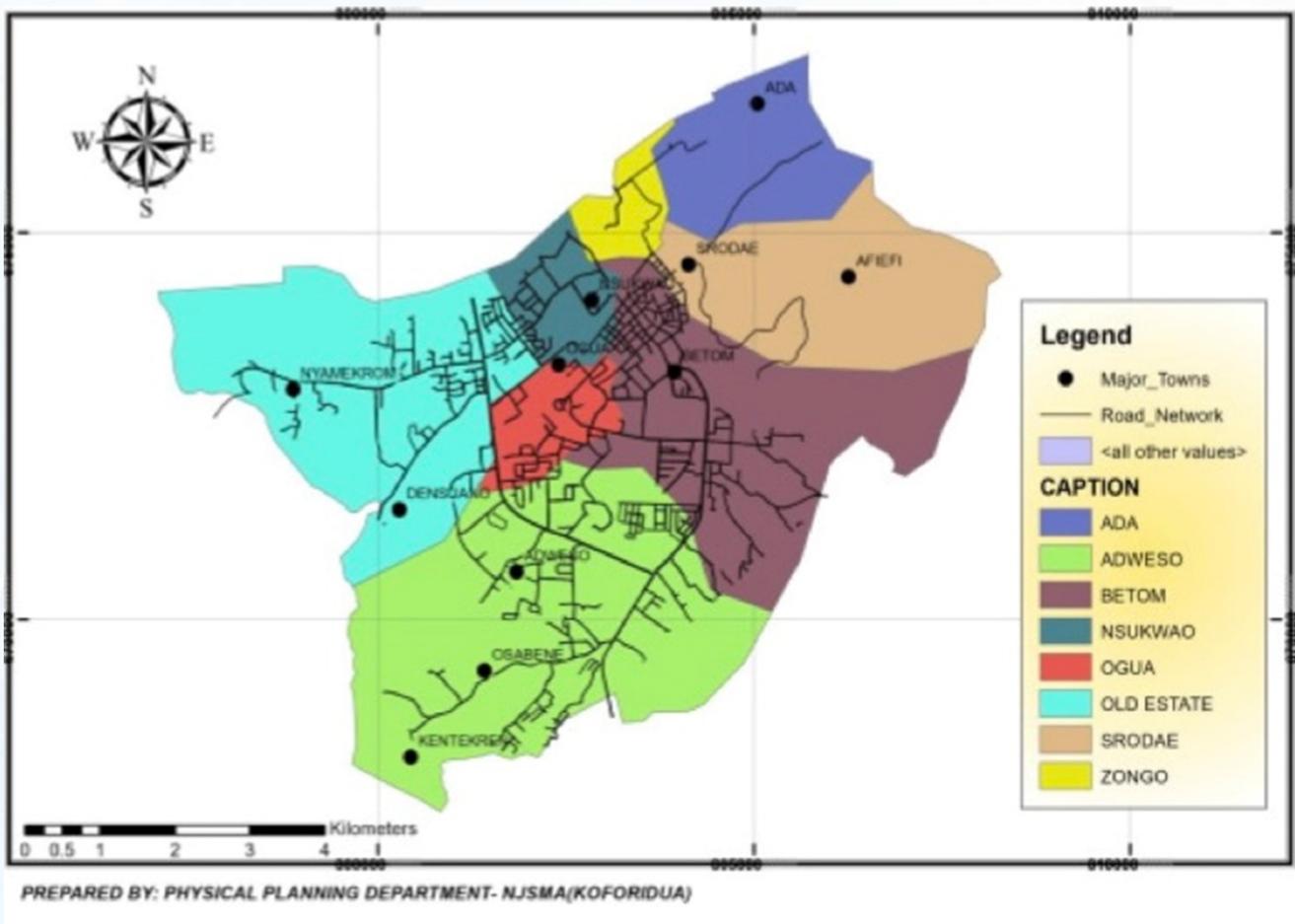
General Assembly

The General Assembly serves as the principal governing body of the municipality. It comprises 51 members who are responsible for formulating policies and by-laws, as well as overseeing the overall development of the municipality. The Assembly includes both elected and appointed members, ensuring an appropriate balance between grassroots representation and national oversight.

The municipality’s economy reflects the broader national economic structure, with industrial activities concentrated in the central business district and agricultural production taking place in smaller local settlements. Commercial ac-

tivities are prominent in the municipality, supported by two major markets located in the Central Business District of Koforidua, along with several smaller markets distributed across towns and villages. In rural areas, designated “market days” are observed, during which residents engage in the buying and selling of foodstuffs and other household goods.

The municipality also possesses significant untapped tourism potential, with notable attractions such as the Kentenkeren Waterfall, the Akyekyeso Crocodile Sanctuary, and the Obuotabiri Bird View and Green Belts.



The New Juaben South Municipal Assembly was established by Legislative Instrument (L.I.) 2301 of 2017.A

KOFKRO PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Action for Youth Development (AfYD) Project, also known as the “Kofkro” Project, phase 1, is being implemented by the STAR-Ghana Foundation with financial support from Foundation Botnar. This three-year initiative (September 2023 to January 2026) aims to strengthen an enabling environment for youth inclusion, active participation, and influence in governance, thereby improving young people’s access to quality public goods and services in the New Juaben South Municipality.

The project provides financial support to four organizations to implement various components of the initiative. These include the Anchito Foundation for Education and Self-Help (AFES), Divine Mother and Child (DMAC) Foundation, the Koforidua Youth Parliament (KYP), and Bibia Be Ye Fine (BBF), a youth self-help group.

The overarching goal of the Kofkro project is to foster a municipality where young people are well-informed, empowered, and actively engaged in governance processes, leading to improved service delivery across all sectors. The project promotes collaboration between duty bearers and citizens to ensure that development planning and implementation are responsive to the needs of young people. It also seeks to strengthen the capacity of youth-led organizations to mobilize, represent, and

engage constructively with duty bearers, ensuring that youth priorities are sustainably reflected in decision-making and resource allocation. By adopting an inclusive approach, the project contributes to reducing inequalities in access to social services among diverse groups of young people.

Structure of project implementation

The project is implemented in close collaboration with the New Juaben South Municipal Assembly, the National Youth Authority (NYA) at both the Regional and Municipal levels, and the Municipal Office of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE). These institutions provide technical and professional support based on their individual mandates within the local governance system. AFES-Ghana’s role within the partnership focuses on evaluating, compiling, advocating for, and tracking the implementation of the Koforidua Youth Manifesto. This Manifesto serves as a comprehensive document that articulates the needs, priorities, and aspirations of young people in the municipality.

Beyond the broader project objectives, AFES-Ghana seeks to develop a specialized Youth Manifesto as a foundational tool for youth-centered decision-making and policy formulation. Through the use of this Manifesto, policies, programs, and decisions will be deliberately aligned with the expressed needs and aspirations of young people, leading to targeted interventions that effectively address key youth-related challenges within the municipality.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Koforidua Youth Status Report presents a comprehensive assessment of the situation of young people in the New Juaben South Municipality, with particular emphasis on youth with disabilities, healthcare delivery for young people, and the empowerment of young women and girls. The report analyses youth demographics, key priorities, prevailing challenges, internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats influencing youth development in the municipality. It underscores the critical importance of data-driven and evidence-based youth policy planning and programming to effectively respond to the diverse and specific needs of young people.

Demographics

New Juaben South (Koforidua) is a predominantly urban area in Ghana's Eastern Region, with a population over 125,000 (2021 Census), slightly more females (52%) than males (48%), and a large youth component, dominated by Akans (Asantes, Kwahus, Akims) and Christians, with significant service, industrial, and agricultural sectors, and mostly compound housing. Notably, young people aged 15–35 constitute a substantial share of the population, accounting for 45.8 percent, or 57,367 individuals. This demographic pattern highlights the critical need to better understand the characteristics, needs, and priorities of this youthful group.

The remobilization survey, which collected data from 2,255 respondents, offered additional insights into the age composition and gender dynamics of the youth population. Findings showed that 35.85 percent of participants were between the ages of 21 and 25. The survey also recorded a gender distribution of 42 percent males and 58 percent females, reflecting an improved female-to-male ratio compared to earlier surveys.

State of Health Care Delivery

This report examines the state of healthcare delivery for young people aged 15–35 years in the New Juaben South Municipality, within the broader context of Ghana's National Health Policy, the Ghana Health Service (GHS) strategy, and the National Healthcare Quality Strategy (2024–2030). The report presents key recommendations for municipal health authorities, including strengthening youth participation in health policy and program development, partnering with youth organizations, particularly in rural communities, to disseminate health information, and expanding preventive education initiatives on issues such as drug abuse. Collectively, these actions are intended to enhance the quality, inclusiveness, and responsiveness of healthcare delivery for young people in the New Juaben South Municipality.

State of Youth with Disability

The report also assesses lived experiences of young people with disabilities aged 15–35 in the New Juaben South Municipality, within the context of Ghana’s Persons with Disability Act (Act 715) and relevant international frameworks. The findings reveal that while young people with disabilities generally feel socially accepted and perceive education and healthcare services as moderately accommodating, they continue to face significant structural barriers, particularly in access to government institutions, employment opportunities, and participation in governance and decision-making. Awareness and accessibility of key support mechanisms, including the Disability Fund and disability-focused organizations, remain extremely low, limiting the impact of existing policies and programs. The report highlights persistent societal perceptions that undermine the employability of persons with disabilities and contribute to economic exclusion, despite their clear aspirations for education, entrepreneurship, and employment.

State of Young Women and Girls’ Empowerment

The report again assessed Young Women and Girls Empowerment on how gender-related policies and interventions are shaping the lives of young women and girls aged 15–35 in the New Juaben South Municipality. While national and local frameworks demonstrate strong commitment to gender equality, the findings reveal persistent gaps in women’s representation in education, skills training, governance, and decision-making, largely due to limited information and sensitization

rather than lack of interest. Although most respondents reported low levels of direct gender-based discrimination and expressed a high willingness to report abuse, cultural practices, fear, stigma, and limited trust in institutions remain key barriers to justice. The report also highlights challenges in sexual and reproductive health awareness, menstrual health management, and access to affordable sanitary products, which contribute to school and work absenteeism among young women.

Recommendations

To respond to the challenges and gaps highlighted in the report, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Ensure the full participation of youth in the development and promotion of health-related programs and policies that enable them to become agents of change in their respective communities.
- Implement comprehensive policies, action plans, and initiatives based on equality in order to end discrimination against girls and young women and to guarantee their full enjoyment of human rights and basic freedoms.
- The Municipal assembly shall, first and foremost, make sure that the 5% of funds from the District Assemblies Common Funds for Persons with Disability are strategically used to further the development of youth with disabilities.

A close-up, low-angle shot of a person's arm and hand resting on the large rear wheel of a wheelchair. The person is wearing a light-colored, short-sleeved shirt and light blue jeans. The wheelchair is on a light-colored, textured paved surface. The background is a bright, clear blue sky with a hint of green grass in the distance. The overall tone is positive and focused on the individual's experience.

- Institute, and decentralize participation forums at the Unit Committee levels across the Municipality, to facilitate citizens' inclusion, participation and active engagements in decision-making processes, especially in developing, implementing, and evaluating policies and programs that affect youth and young people in the Municipality.

Conclusion

The report serves as an essential resource for understanding the scope of youth related issues and challenges in healthcare, disability, inclusion and the empowerment of young women and girls within the municipality. Its findings and recommendations will guide policy formulation and programmatic planning, contributing to accelerated advancement of youth development in the municipality.

CHAPTER ONE

STATE OF HEALTH CARE DELIVERY



REMARKS FROM THE MUNICIPAL HEALTH DIRECTORATE

The New Juaben South Municipal Health Directorate mostly educate the Public on health issues through community information centers, volunteers, media, informing institutions and organizations through letters and assembly members. However, since the youth patronize the use of media largely, it is in the right direction that their source of information is through social and traditional media. Health programs organized by the Municipal Health Directorate (MHD) are in collaboration with respective stakeholders within the community hence the need for the youth to get involved in community activities and cooperate with assembly members and health volunteers for the opportunity to effectively participate in the health delivery system. While pharmacies and private clinics are accredited facilities that complement government efforts, relying on them as the first point of contact for health care can be limiting. The MHD has established effective, accessible, affordable, and timely interventions by ensuring that all sub-municipal health facilities are operational and ready to provide care at their respective levels. Delays in public health facilities often occur because many people bypass health centres and visit the regional hospital for minor ailments, resulting in overcrowding, heavy workloads, and slower service delivery. Pharmacies can provide first aid and dispense medication to relieve symptoms, but hospitals and health centres remain the better option for comprehensive examinations and investigations when

symptoms persist.

The healthcare services are youth friendly, however when youth access health care and the outcomes are unfavourable or negative, most youth refuse to adhere to treatment regime especially persons living with non-communicable diseases or diseases related to lifestyle.

Regarding drug abuse, there has been much education but the abuse of Alcohol is regarded by youth as non – harmful habit. Other health issues like Malaria could be prevented if the environment is kept clean. The youth believe NHIS is fairly effective, yet quality of service is fairly poor. There are many factors that come to play in the delivery of health care; Adequate resources and logistics, rightful education on service rendered, patient cooperation and good customer care among others, Also, youth engagement in health activities requires some technical knowledge and the policies on public health matters are guided from the national level to regions and districts and all stakeholders are involved. However, the MHD will consider youth concerns raised and attend to them accordingly at the district level. The MHD will consider the existing challenges and collectively address them through stakeholder engagement involving the youth.

Phyllis Emefa Mensah (Miss)

Nurse Specialist,

New Juaben South Municipality

Context/Rationale

There is a general demand by citizens and efforts by government to improve healthcare delivery in Ghana, guided by the National Health Policy which is being implemented by the Ministry of Health

As a result, the Ghana Health Service (GHS) strategy focuses on achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) by strengthening infrastructure, workforce, financing, governance, leveraging public-private partnerships (PPPs), digital tools like AI and drones, and prioritizing primary health care, especially for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and family planning, within the context of the Health Sector Medium-Term Development Plan (HSMTDP 2022-2025) and the National healthcare quality strategy 2024-2030

The National Health Policy, Ghana Health

Service Strategy, and the National health-care Quality Strategy, are consistent with international health policies and strategic regimes including the Africa Health Strategy, World Health Organization's Health Policies and Service Delivery guidelines and the targets and indicators of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 3)- "Good health and wellbeing.

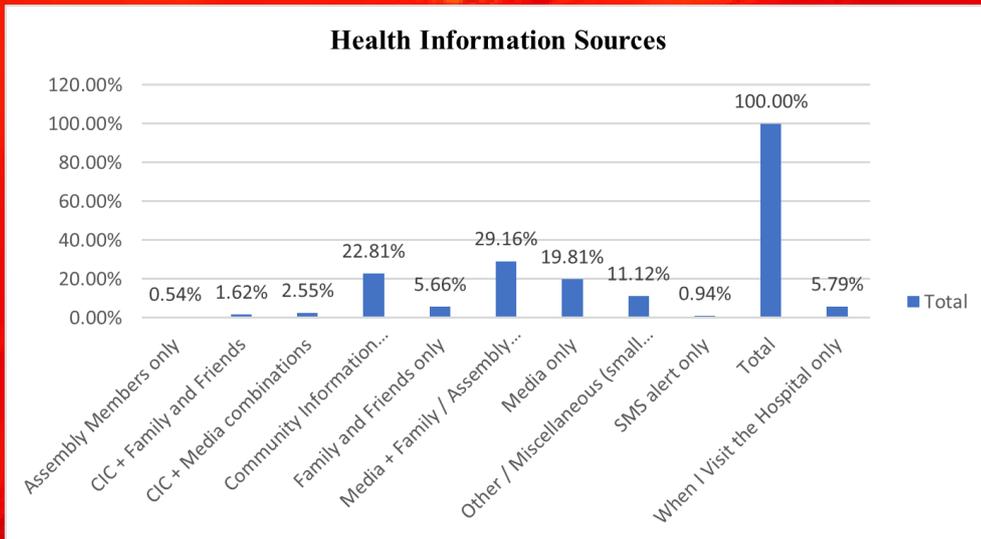
Each of the policies and strategies outlined above recognizes the crucial need to effectively involve young people in addressing prevailing health challenges such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, mental health issues, among others.

In the specific case of the New Juaben South Municipality, the Municipal Health Directorate has been implementing its localized strategy to ensuring good health and wellbeing of its residents



Situational analysis

The analytics below tells the perspectives of young people between the ages of 15 and 35 years about the state of healthcare services within the municipality

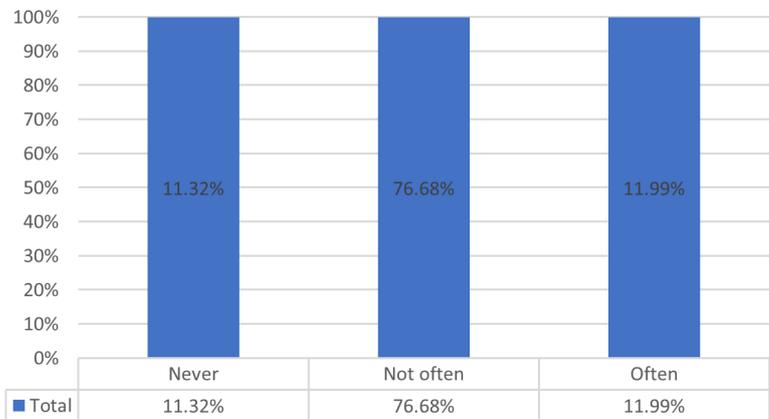


When participants were asked to identify their source of health information, 29.16% indicated media and family members, 22.81% indicated community information system and 19.81% indicated media only. This suggests that the youth of New Juaben South Municipality largely source their health information through social and traditional media.

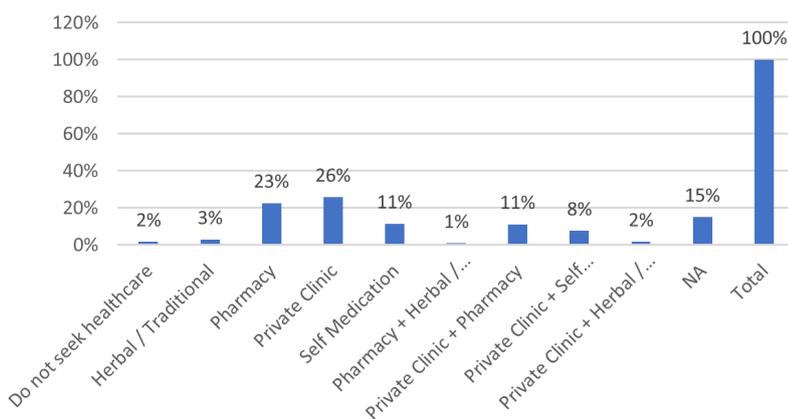


There is a low level of youth inclusion in health programming. When respondents were asked about their frequency of attending health programs organized by the municipal health directorate, whilst 11.32% said they never attended any health program, 76.68% said they only got opportunity to attend once in a while. Only 11.92% frequently got the opportunity to attend

Frequency of attending to health-related programs

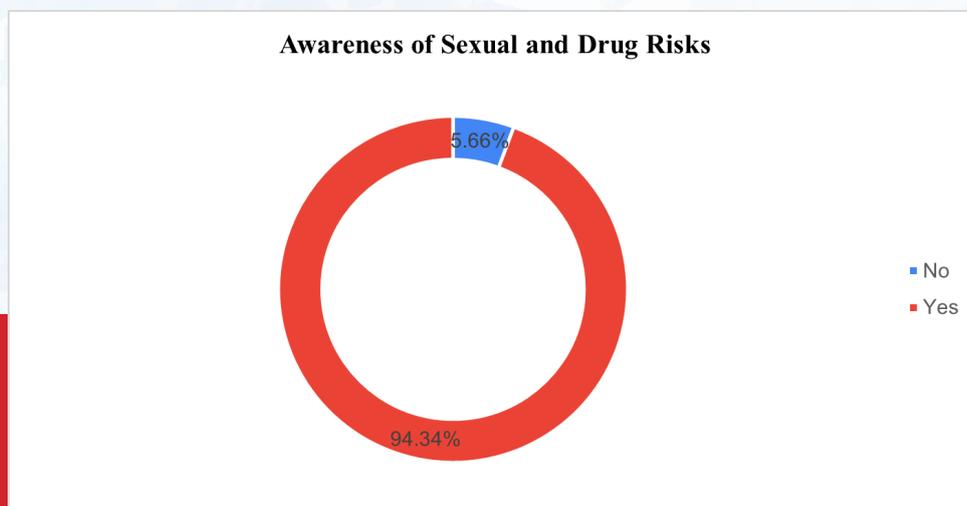
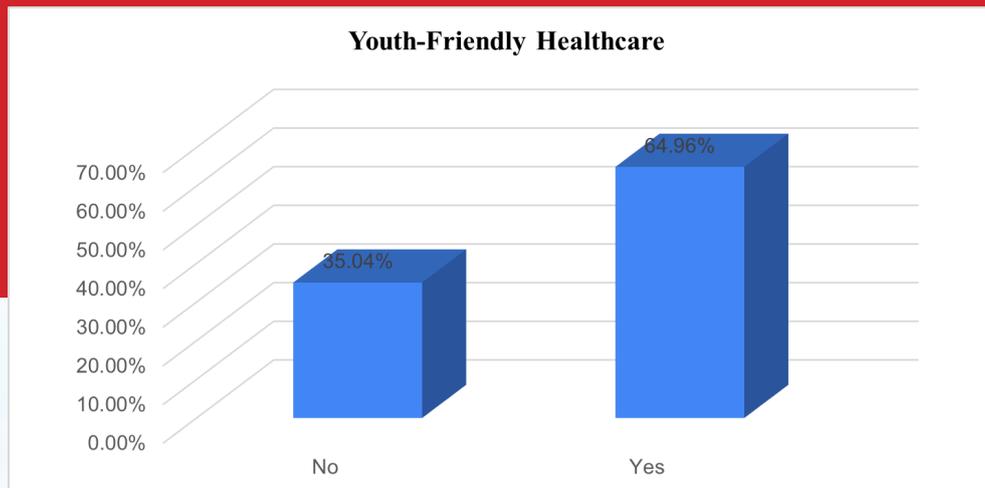


Place of healthcare access



A significant population of youth in the municipality access their health-care services at pharmacies and private clinics representing 23% and 26% respectively

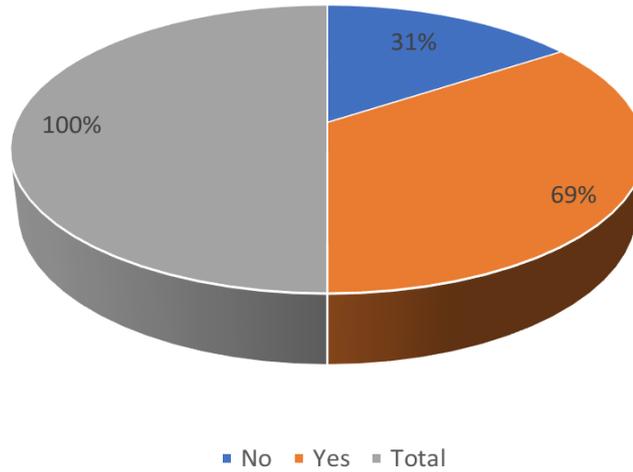
Healthcare services in the municipality are fairly youth friendly with 64.96% of respondents saying that services are provided with a youth-friendly environment



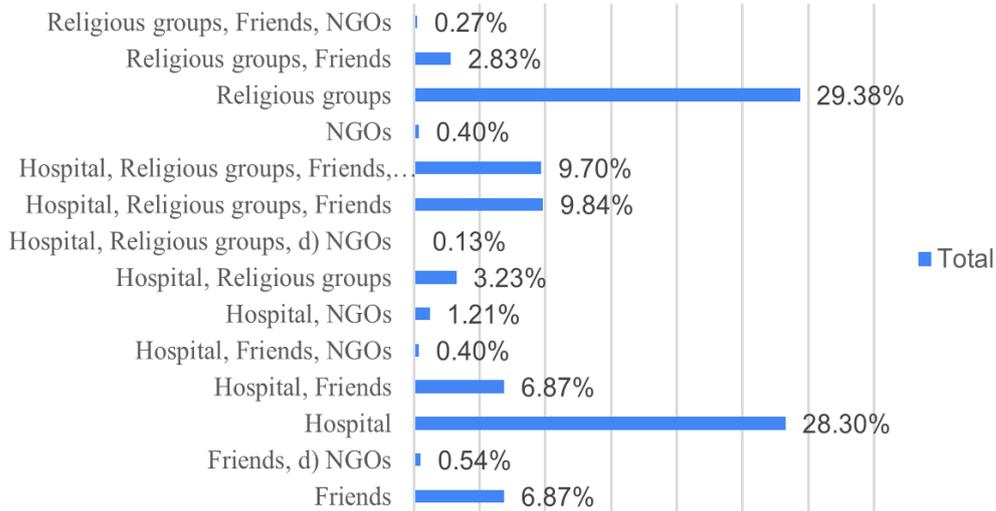
The Youth of the municipality are well informed on issues concerning their sexuality and the dangers of drug abuse

Majority of the youth in the municipality are conscious of both their mental as well as their emotional health

Mental and Emotional Wellbeing

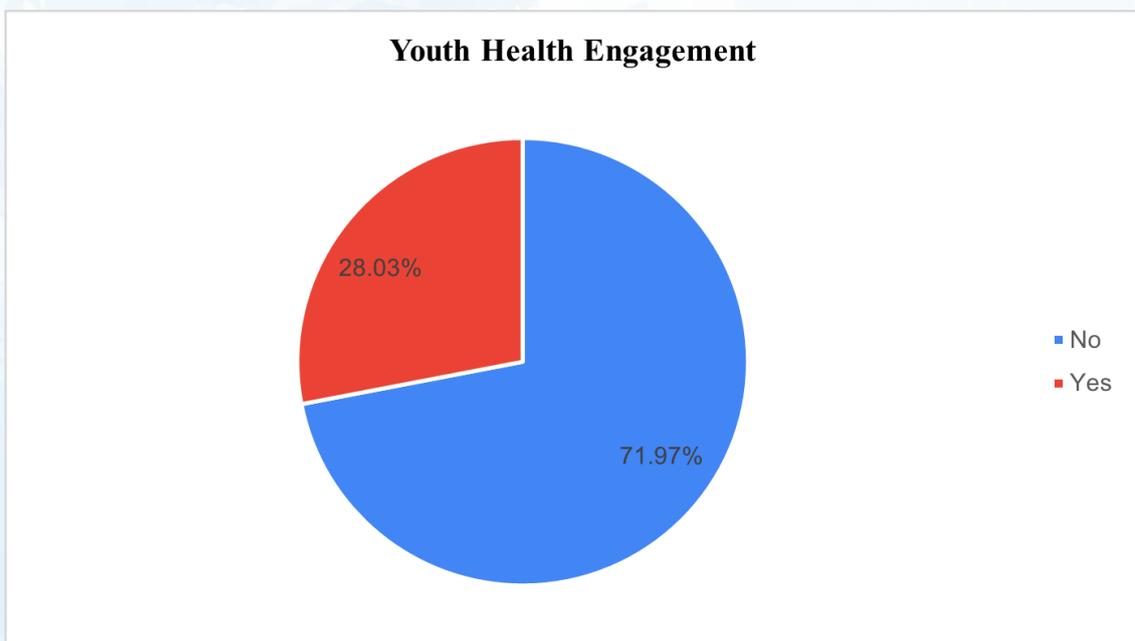
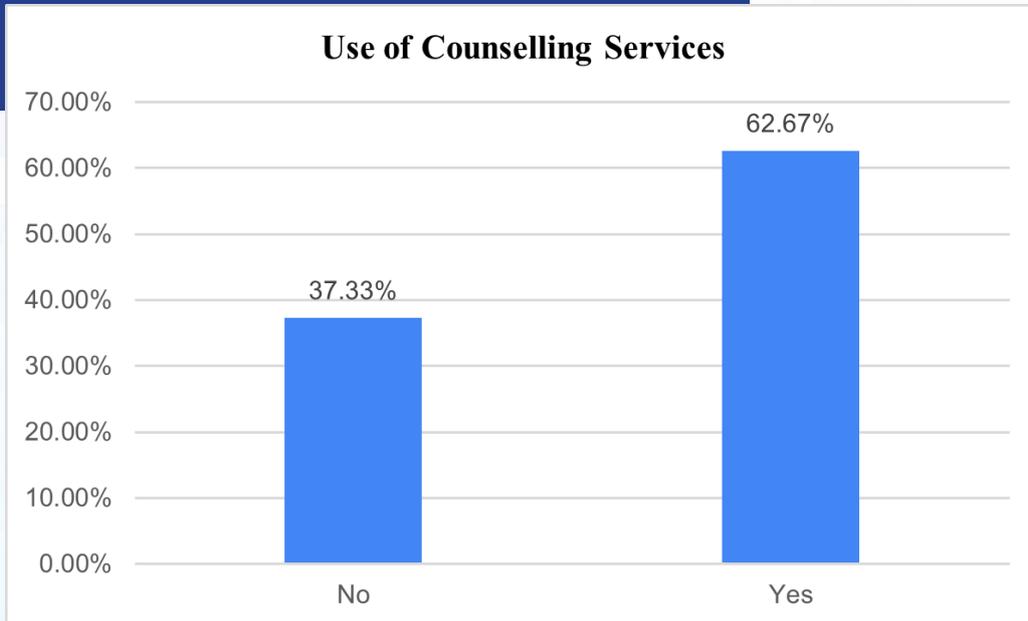


Source of Health Education



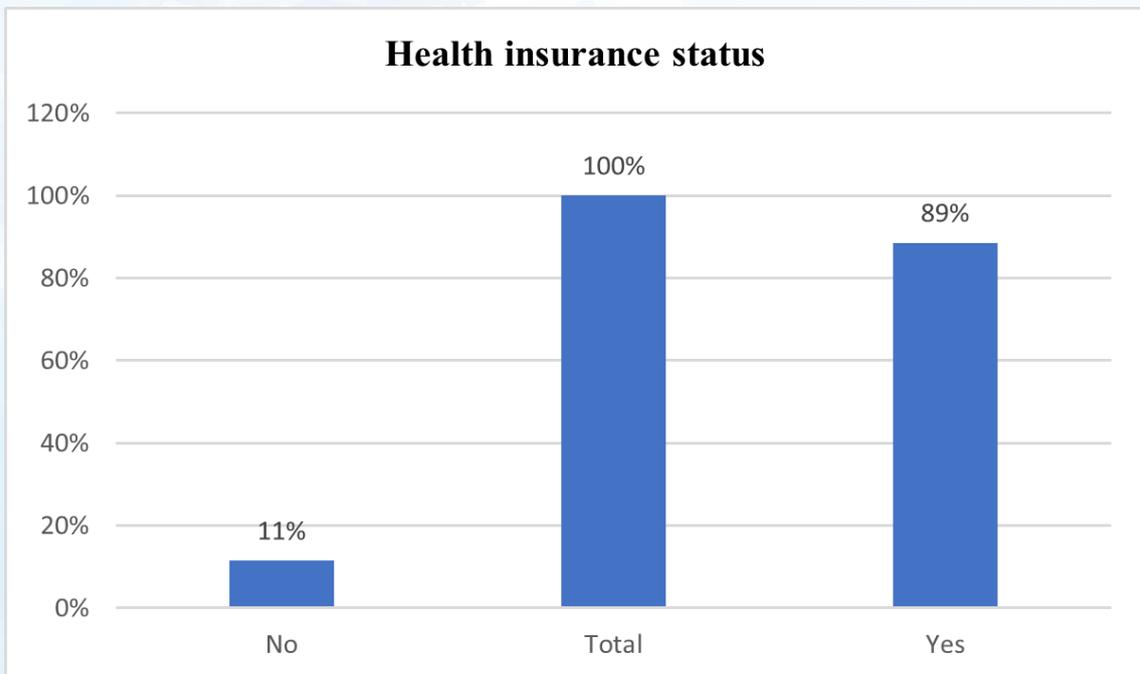
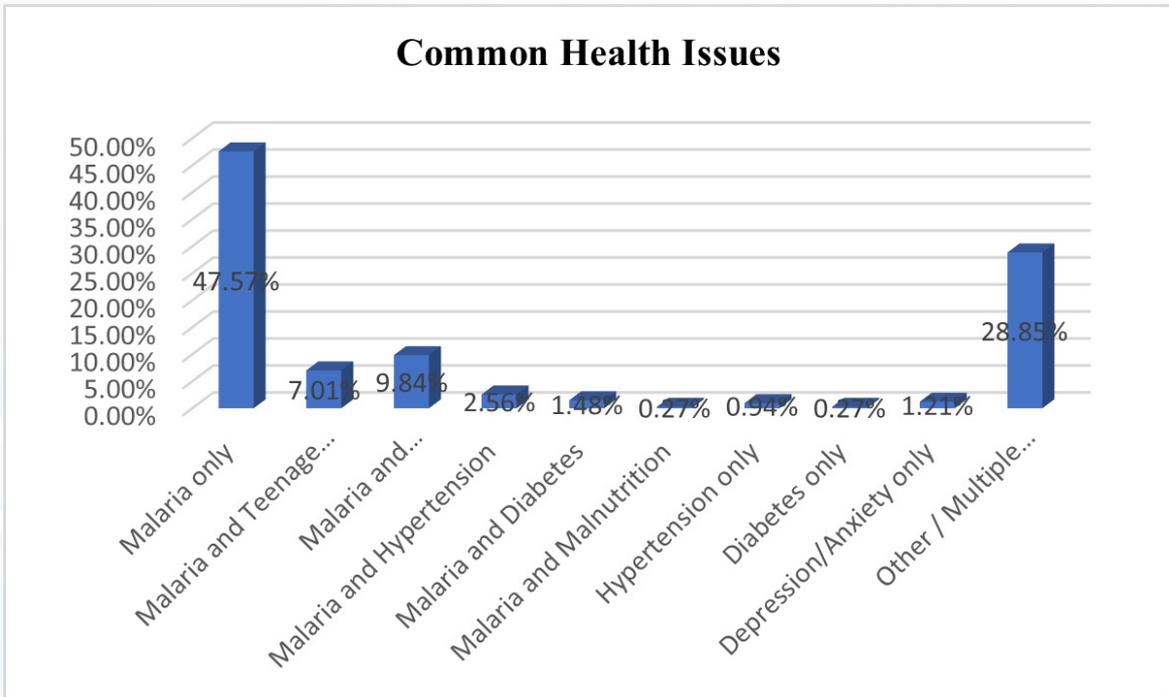
Youth in the municipality acquire their health education largely from hospitals and through religious bodies

When respondents were asked if they have ever accessed health counselling services, 62.67% said yes and 37.33% responded in the negative



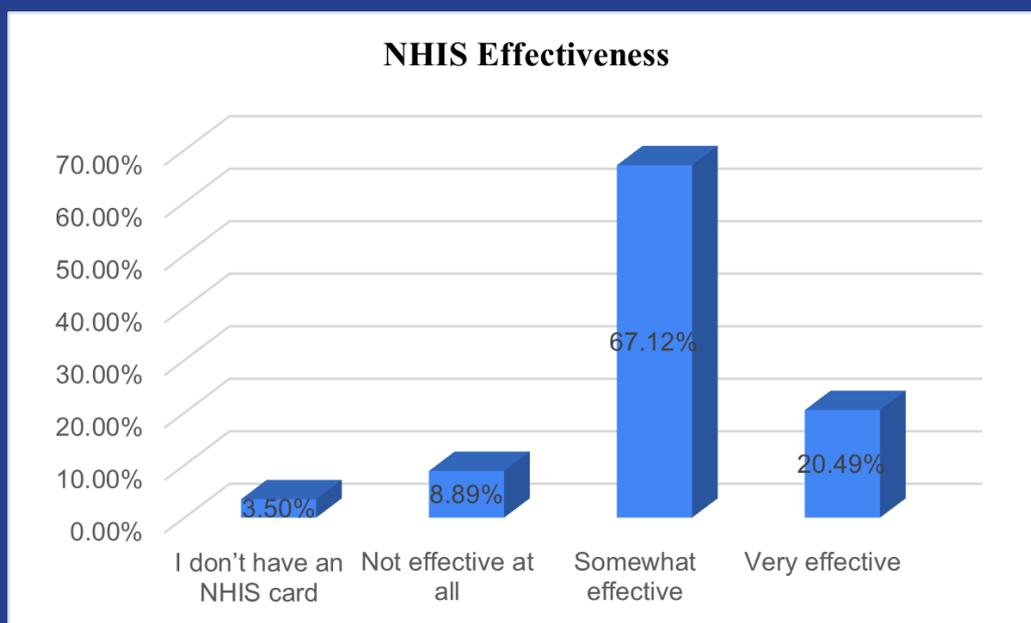
Youth leaders and health-related youth-led organizations are not involved in public health planning, promotion, monitoring and evaluation

The most prevalent health issues facing the youth of the municipality is Malaria and other non-communicable diseases

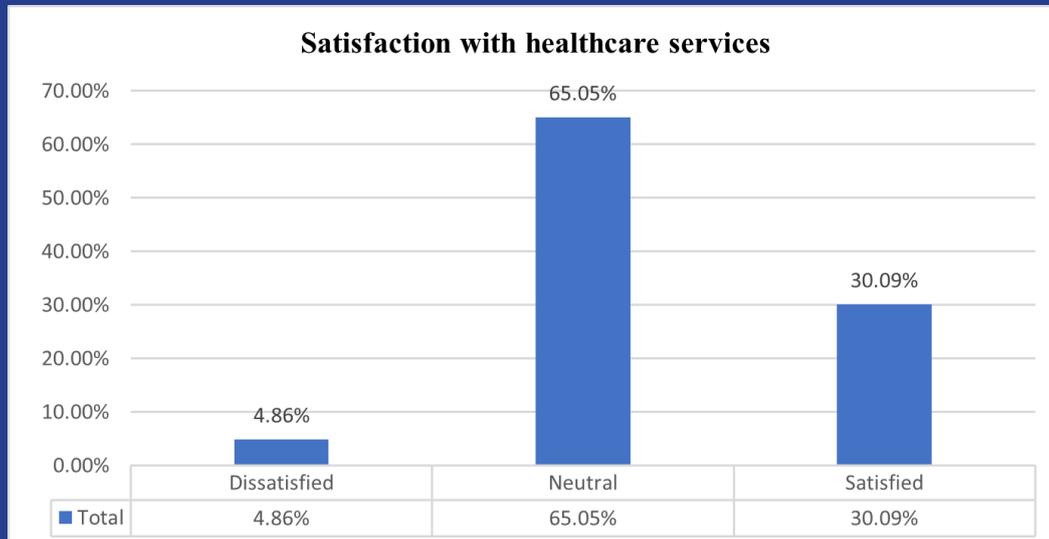


Majority of youth are benefiting from the National Health Insurance Scheme with 89% of respondents been beneficiaries

Figure 1.13: NHIS Effectiveness



Youth of the municipality believe that the NHIS is fairly effective. When respondents were asked about the effectiveness of the scheme, whilst 20.49% said it was very effective, 67.12% said it was somewhat effective. Only 8.89% however said, it is not effective at all



Generally, the youth of the New Juaben South Municipality believe that the quality of health care service delivery is fairly poor. When respondents were asked if they are satisfied with healthcare services by the municipal health directorate, whilst 65.05% were neutral, 4.86% said they are dissatisfied. Only 30% said they are satisfied.

Space for youth action

Youth, youth leaders, youth organizations and other relevant stakeholders should strengthen collaboration and strengthen their efforts to amplify their common voice in their continuous demand for greater quality in healthcare service delivery in the municipality through the platform of the Municipal Youth Coalition. This will only be possible if consultations and engagement platforms are created to offer the opportunity for effective and meaningful youth engagement along health policy development and implementation processes. In addition, there should be platforms for collaborative periodic evaluation of health policies in the Municipality.

Recommendations to municipal authorities and stakeholders.

The youth recommend the following actions for the municipal health authorities to be implemented to enhance the quality of health care services in the municipality

- The MHD, through support from Municipal Sub-committee on Health, and in partnership with CSOs, should create platforms for meaningful youth engagements along Municipal health policy development and review processes.
- The MHD, and the General Assembly should ensure the full participation of youth in the development and promotion of health-related programmes and policies that enable them to become agents of change in their respective communities.
- The MHD should collaborate with youth organizations especially in rural communities to disseminate health information especially on social media.
- The MHD and CSOs should intensify public health education to increase awareness amongst youth and create preventive education programmes for youth on the dangers of drug abuse through partnerships with youth, youth organizations and local communities. The MHD and the General Assembly should collaborate with youth for periodic reviews of health policies and programs to re-align policies to changing health dynamics, focusing on emerging priority areas.



CHAPTER TWO

STATE OF YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS' EMPOWERMENT



REMARKS FROM THE MUNICIPAL GENDER DESK

The key function of the Gender Desk is to mainstream gender equality and social inclusion into policies, programs, and operations, ensuring equitable participation and opportunities for men and women, promoting women's empowerment, and addressing gender-based inequalities in the municipality. In other words, the office is the focal point for coordinating gender activities, conducting audits, providing training, and ensuring compliance with national gender policies and laws, such as the Affirmative Action Act, 2024 (Act 1121).

Much like the recent situational assessment on gender inequality, which surveyed residents aged 15–35, the AFES-Ghana youth status survey highlights deep-seated disparities within our municipality. Key areas of concern include unequal access to education and jobs, limited representation in governance, and the failure of existing systems to adequately address harassment and discrimination

There is therefore, the need for stakeholders to collectively act in respect of the following. The Municipal Gender Desk, in collaboration with CSOs, should establish women and youth leadership development programs, including mentorship to build confidence, public speaking, policy literacy, and civic participation skills. The Municipal Assembly should commit resources to this.

The Ghana Education Service (Skills and Vocational Training Unit), through the Municipal Education Directorate should consider municipal vocational and entrepreneurship training, targeted at young women, particularly in ICT, trades, agribusiness and emerging industries. Partner with private sector institutions to provide internships, and employment channels for trained girls and women.

The NCCE and the Social Welfare and Community Development Department, with support from the Municipal Assembly and CSOs, should establish youth clubs in schools, churches, mosques, to facilitate effective and positive Gender Socialization and human rights education.

The General Assembly, led by the Presiding Member and the MCE, in line with national legal frameworks against discrimination and abusive human rights practices, should introduce by-laws in the Municipality to discourage discriminatory cultural rites and practices

affecting women and girls.

Stakeholders in the Municipality, including journalists, religious leaders, schools, CSOs, NCCE, Community Radio, etc, should integrate Gender Equality and rights into their religious and education and awareness programs, and in school clubs, radio discussions, community forums, and local media programs.

The Municipal Assembly, in partnership with Gender Based CSOs, and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, should institute annual commemoration days, like the International Women's Day, Menstrual Hygiene Day, National Day of the Girl Child with community-wide participation. The Municipal Assembly should commit resources for this activity, while it seeks support from development partners and CSOs to make the day more impactful.

The Gender Desk should lead an initiative that will seek to establish and strengthen confidential Gender Reporting Desks at various Schools, Marketplaces, and Health Centers.

Josephine Ohenewaa
Gender Desk Officer.
New Juaben South Municipality

Context/Rationale

Ghana has shown strong commitment to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment over the years which is evident in policies, interventions, and programs aimed at integrating gender concerns and inclusivity into socio-economic development.

Supported by strong policies and legislation such as the National Gender Policy and the Affirmative Action (Gender Equity) Act, 2024 (Act 1121), Ghana is making strides in gender equality and empowerment. The National Gender Policy, is inclusive of financing sources to strengthen gender-focused institutions, is one of the innovative approaches Ghana has pursued. The implementation of key programs such as the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) program, the Ghana School Feeding Program, and the Free Senior High School initiative have not only aimed at empowering women and girls but also at creating equal job opportunities and a systemic response to alleviate poverty.

In efforts to eliminate violence against women and girls, Ghana has taken comprehensive and robust actions over the years, including the establishment of the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit of the Ghana Police Service, and the Child-friendly Gender-based Violence Courts. The institutional frameworks which have been backed by high priority national programs exemplify

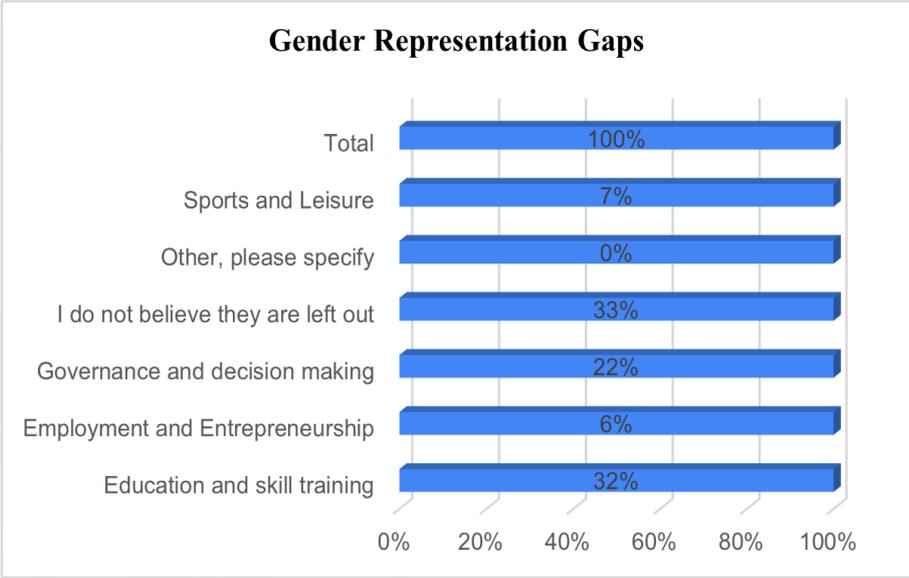
Ghana's determination to eradicate violence against women and girls.

At the district-level, the Gender-Desk office of the Department of Social welfare has been making efforts to educate families on the need for women's participation in decision-making at the household level whilst promoting girl child education among others

It is against these efforts been pursued by government that this survey seeks to assess how gender-related policies in general are empowering or rather disempowering the lives of especially young women and girls in the New Juaben South Municipality

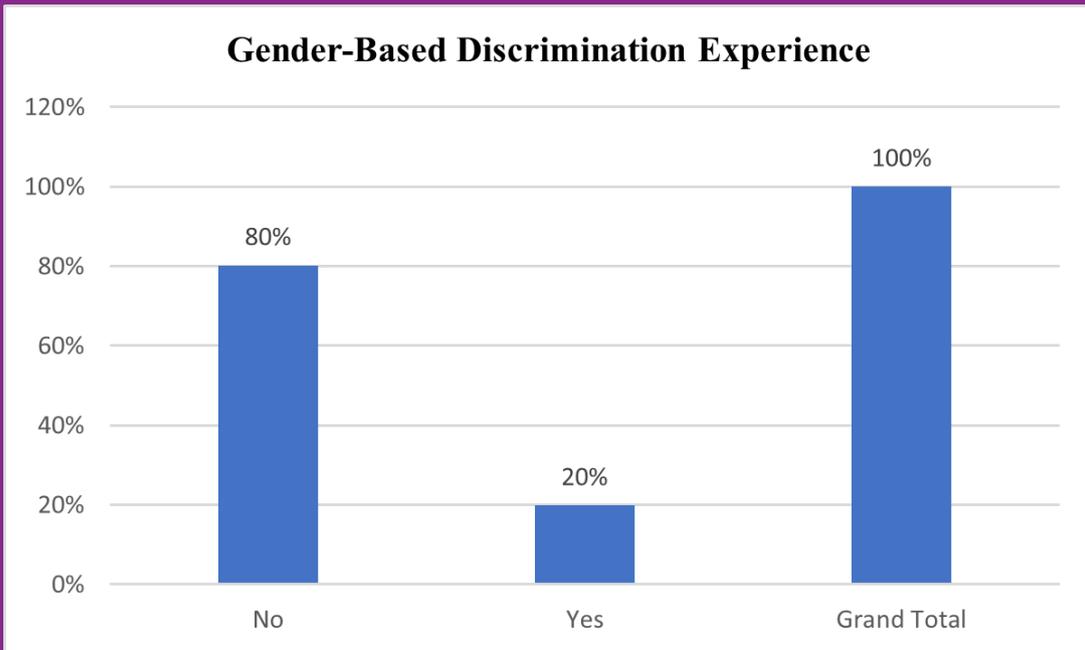


Situational Analysis
 The analysis below presents the views of young people from age 15 to 35 years on issues of Gender, sexual rights and gender-related cultural practices among others, within the municipality.

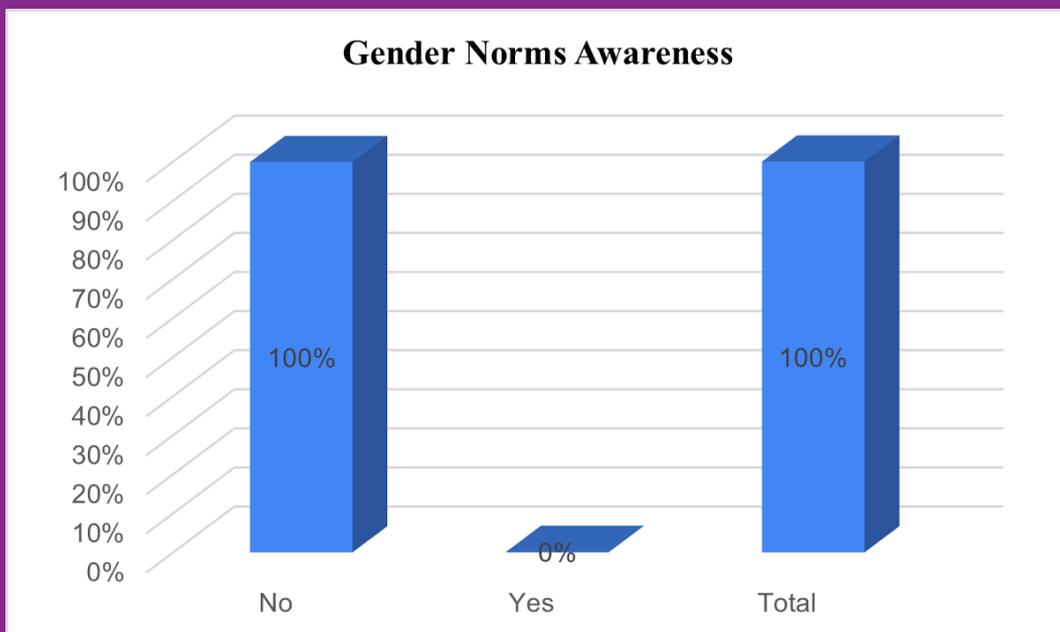


When interviewees were asked on their assessment of women representation in various capacities, 33% believe women are well represented in public spaces, 32% believe there is low women representation in Education and Skill training, and 22% believe there is low women representation in the area of Governance and Decision Making. This depicts a significant disparity in the representation of women and girls in various spheres of life in the municipality relative to men.



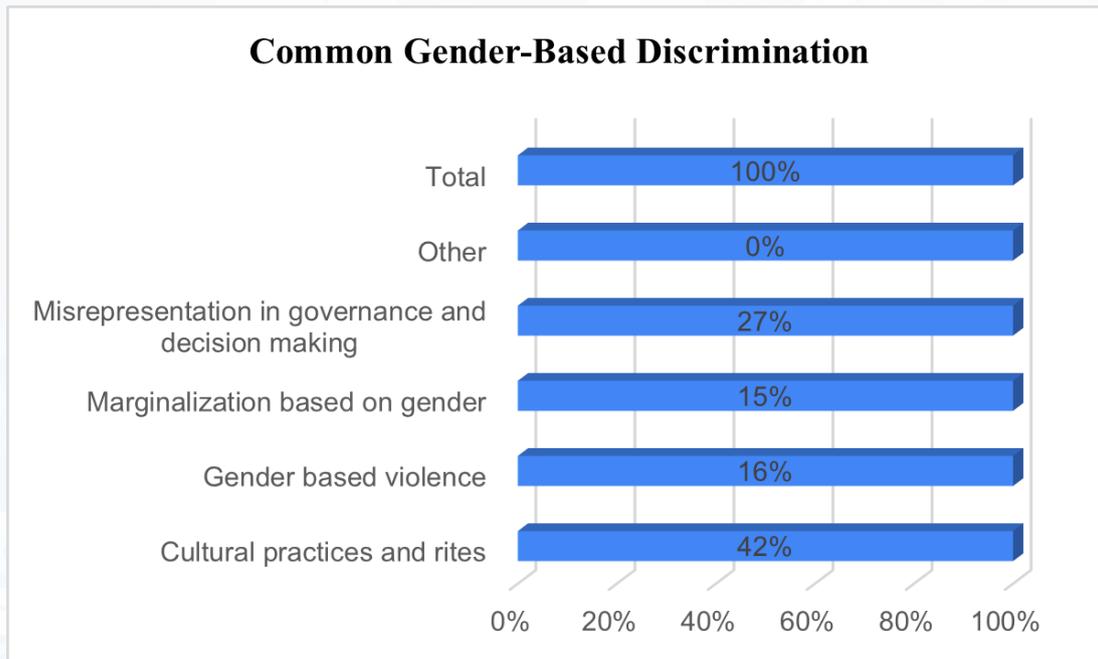


When respondents were asked if they had faced any form of gender-based discrimination, 80% had experience no forms of such discrimination. This suggests that issues of discrimination against women and girls are fairly negligible in the Municipality with only 20% of respondents saying they have experienced gender-based discrimination in one way or another.



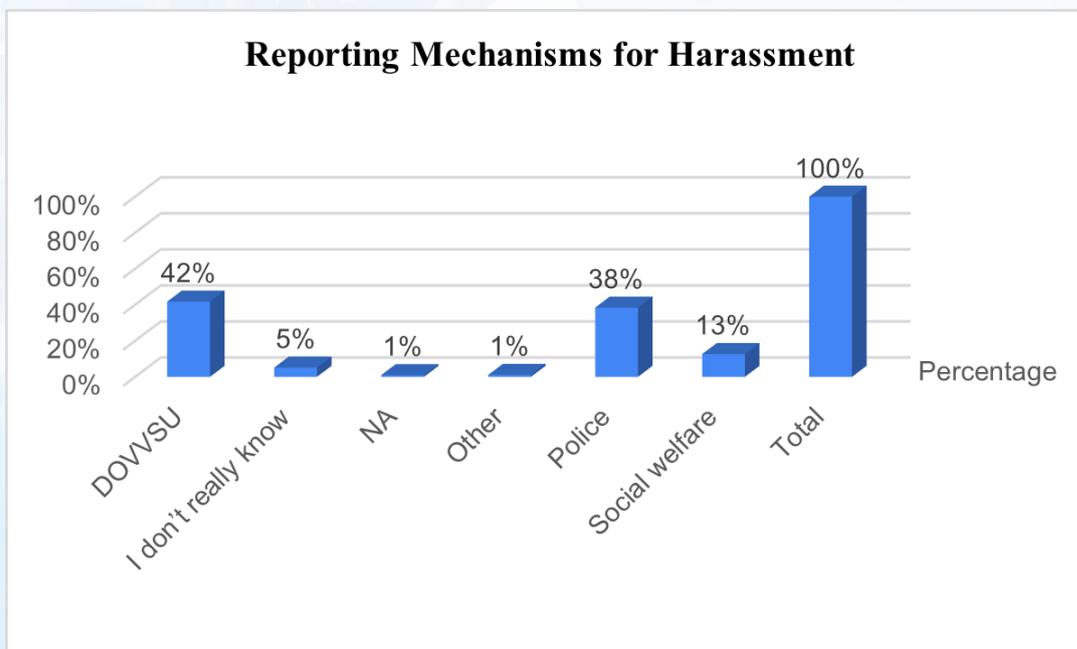
Young people are largely aware of gender norms in their various communities within the municipality.

Common Gender-Based Discrimination



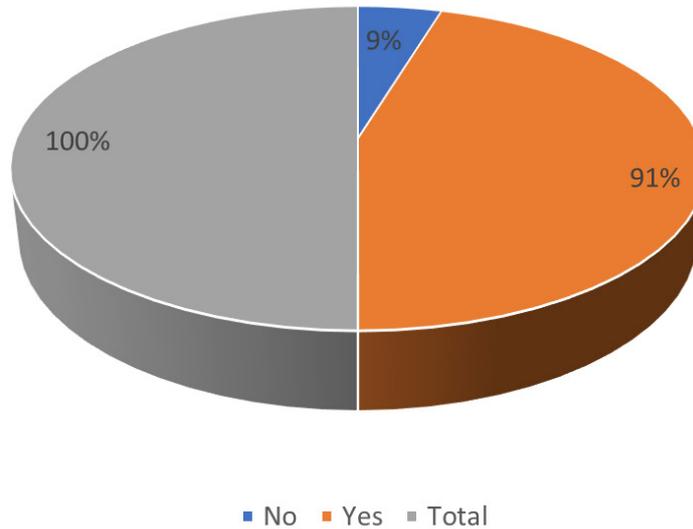
The most common gender-based discrimination identified was cultural practices and rites with a whopping 42% of the total responses, showing the height at which cultural practices influence gender-based discrimination in the Municipality.

Reporting Mechanisms for Harassment



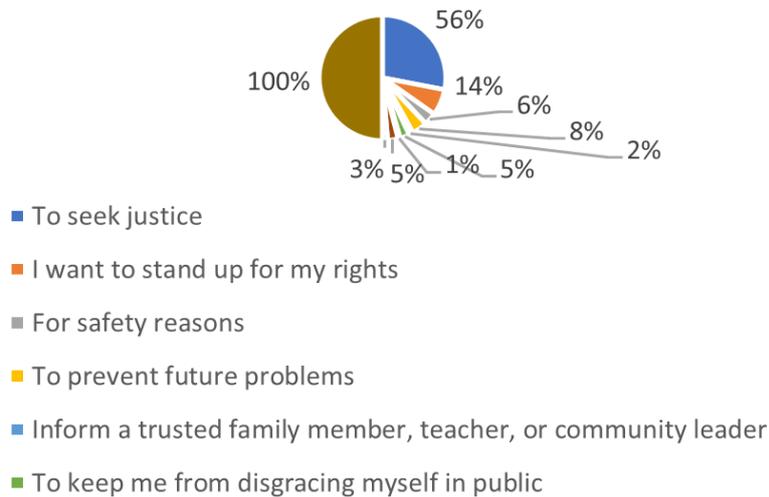
A significant number of respondents (42%) identified Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVSU) of the Ghana police Service as their preferred office to report issues of sexual harassment; 38% report to the police station; whilst 13% prefer to report to the department of social welfare. Together, 80% of respondents report cases of gender-based harassments to the police (42% directly to DOVSU, and 38% through the normal police stations).

Willingness to Report Abuse



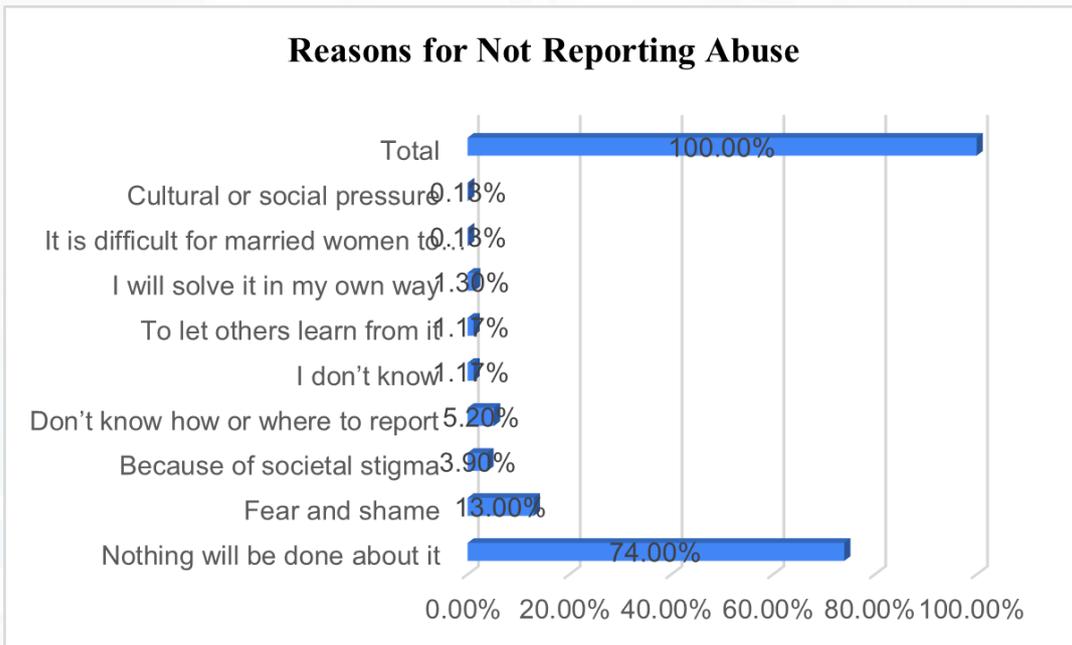
Among women and girls interviewed, 91% showed strong wiliness to report issues of abuse or harassment if they fell victim.

Reasons for Reporting Abuse



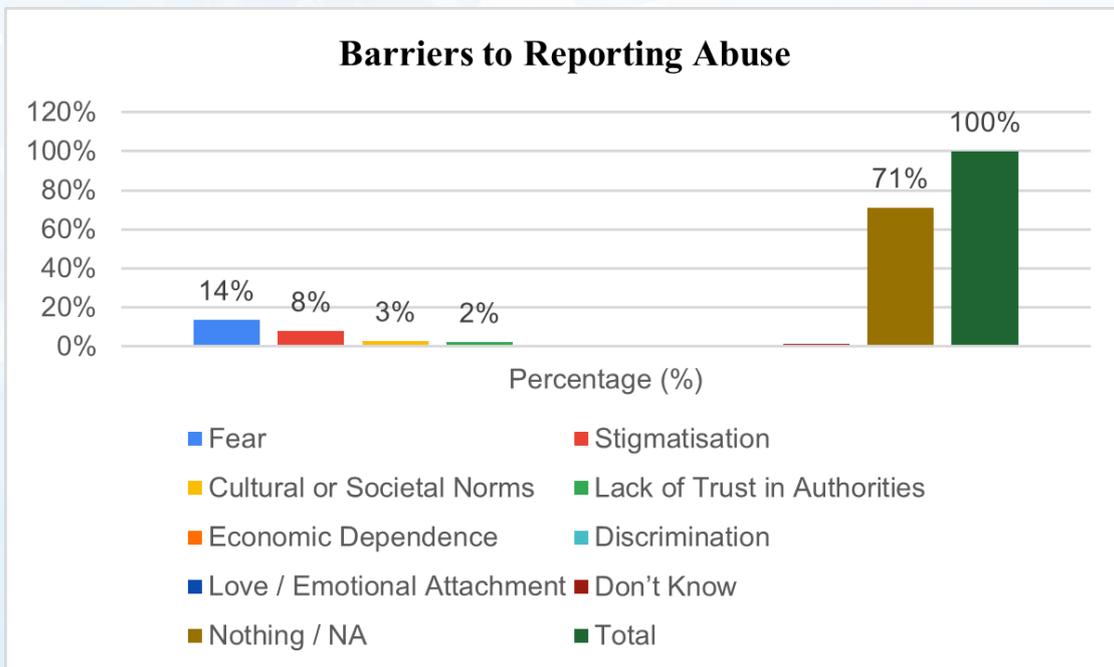
Among the 91% of women and girls that said they will report abuse, 56% believe reporting cases of abuse helps seek justice, while 14% will report abuse because they want to stand up for their rights. This demonstrates the level of awareness and willingness to uphold and defend their rights in the Municipality.

Reasons for Not Reporting Abuse



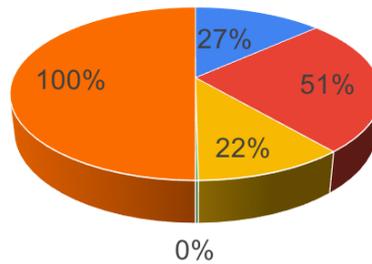
Nearly three-quarters (74%) of those who would not report abuse cited a lack of faith in the response system. This reflects a significant deficit in institutional trust, highlighting an urgent need for duty-bearers to rebuild credibility with the public.

Barriers to Reporting Abuse



When respondents were further asked to state some hurdles that are likely to prevent them from reporting circumstances of abuse, 14% cited fear of reporting, 8% cited stigma as an obstacle. This uncovers some lapses in the justice administration systems and requires awareness creation and sensitization among women, girls and their families so as to embolden them to report issues of abuse

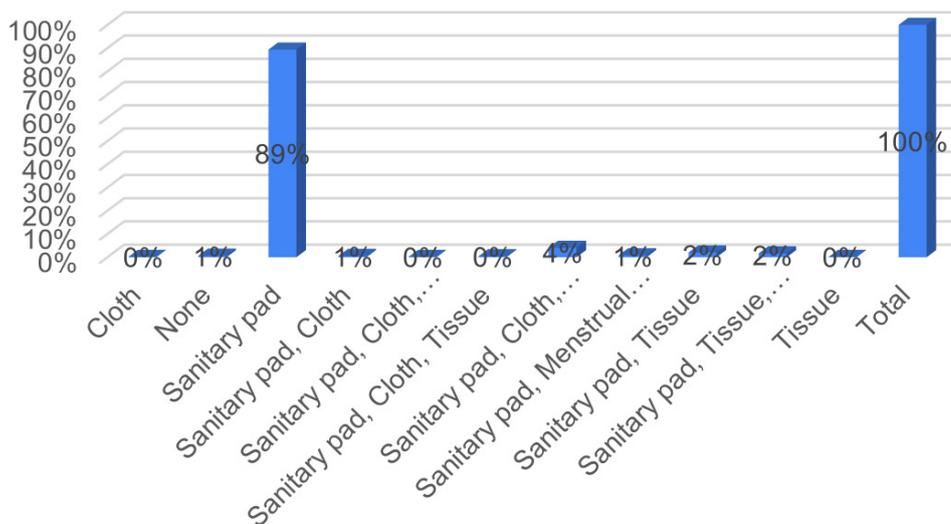
Barriers to Women's Political Participation



- Disinterest
- Lack of information
- Low sensitization and awareness on women
- Other, please specify
- Total

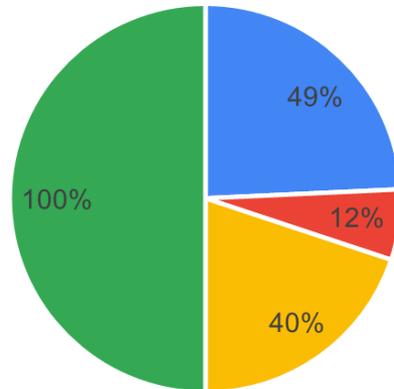
In terms of women representation in governance, there is a general phenomenon of low involvement and participation rate. Whilst 27% of respondents believe that most women are not interested in partisan politics, about 73% attribute low women participation to issues of lack of information and sensitization

Menstrual Hygiene Products



89% of young women and adolescent girls interviewed said that they use sanitary pad during menstruation.

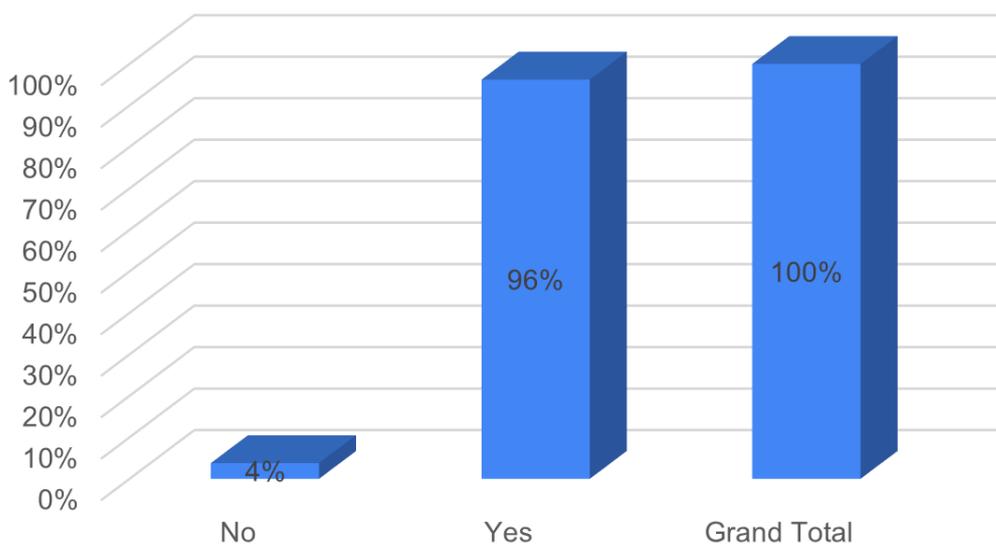
Access to Menstrual Products



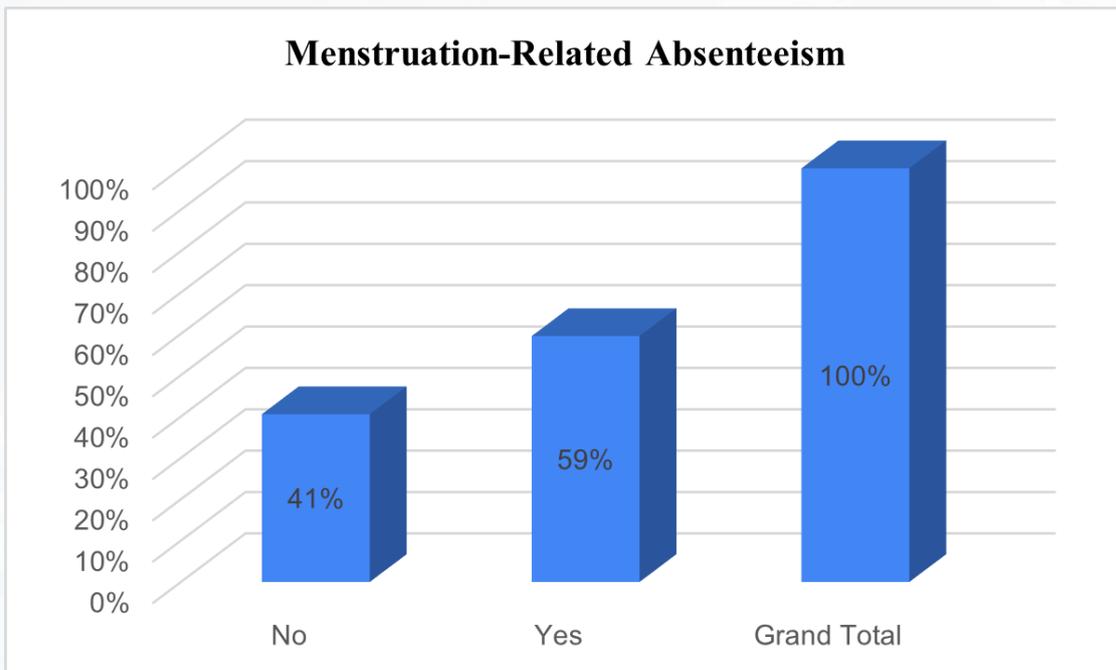
■ No ■ sometimes ■ Yes ■ Total

With sanitary pads being the most used material for women during menstruation, 49% of these women argued that, they do not have access to affordable sanitary pads every month due to its high cost.

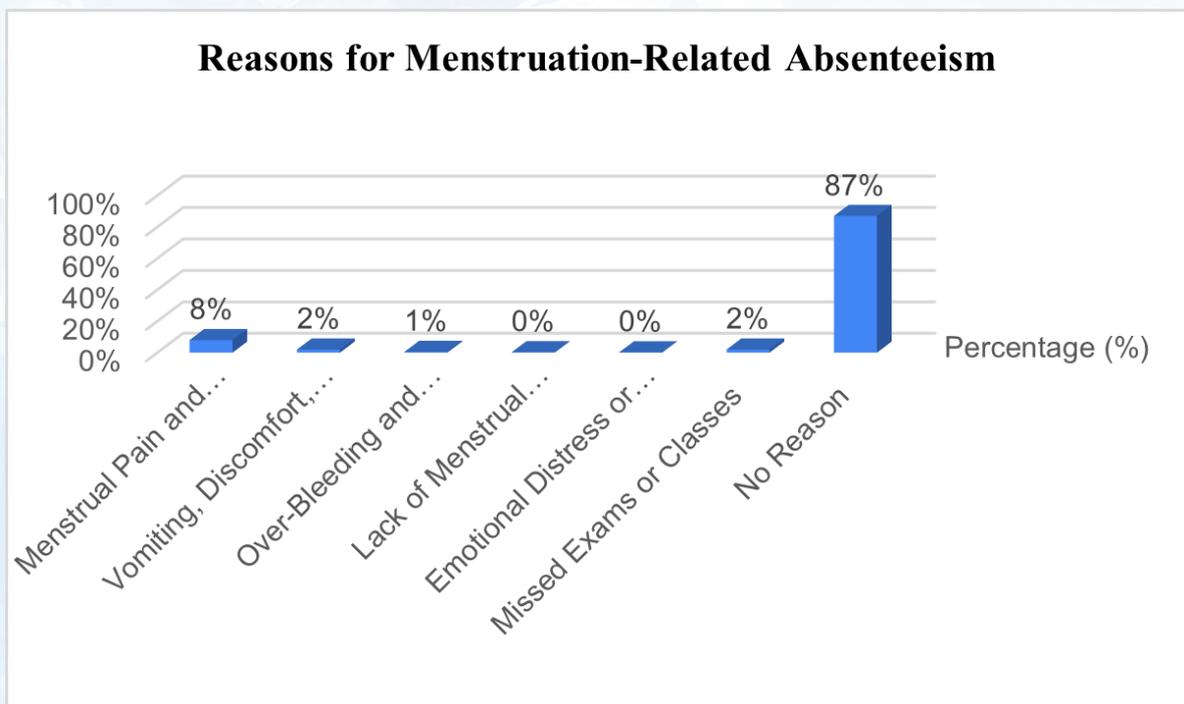
Menstrual Hygiene Facilities



When young women were asked if they have access to clean, private toilet during menstruation, 96% of women agreed to having such access.

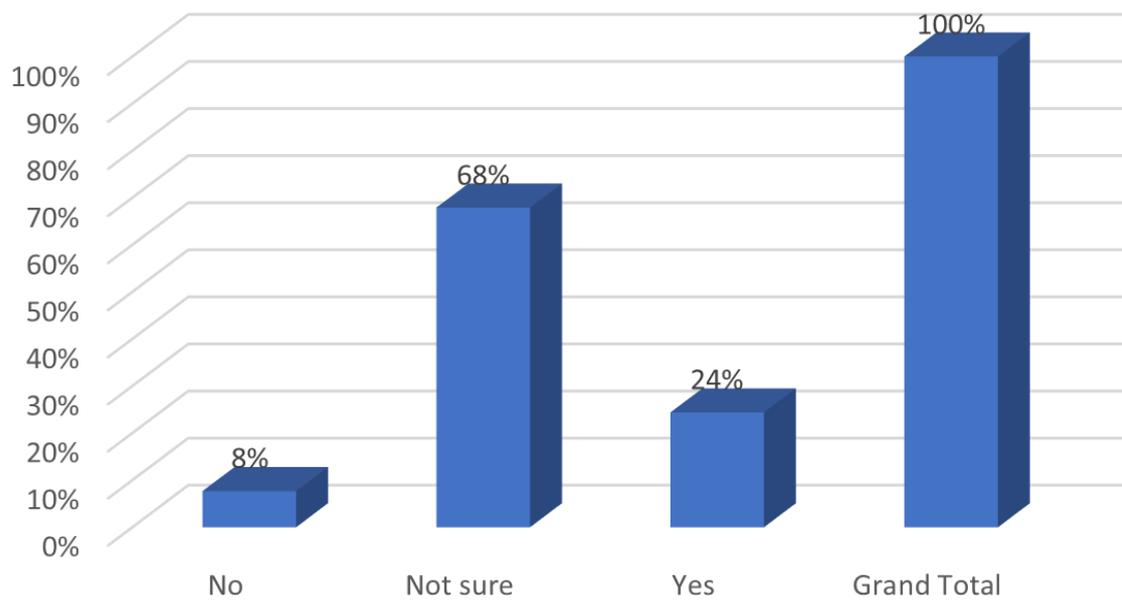


Young women were asked if they have been absent from school or work due to menstruation. 59% of the respondents had such experience. This shows young women occasionally do not feel comfortable to engage socially during menstruation.



Out of the 59% of women who agreed to have being absent from school or work due to menstruation, 8% stated menstrual pain as the driving force.

Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services



The youth of New Juaben South Municipal believe that, sexual and reproductive health services are not well known in the municipality. 68% of the respondent said they are not aware of these services at all.



Space for Youth Action

The Municipal Assembly, through the MHD, the Municipal Gender Desk, the Social Welfare and Community Development Department, in partnership with CSOs and other youth-focused organizations, including the DOVVSU in the municipality, should consistently promote full participation of young women and girls across all spheres of development planning in the New Juaben South Municipality, especially in health-related policies and programs affecting girls, and young people.

Through the proposed girls' clubs in schools and churches, the young women and girls by themselves should be motivated to join efforts with relevant associations to advocate for their wellbeing in the municipality.

Recommendations to Municipal authorities

The youth of the municipality recommend the following actions to be taking by the municipal authorities and stakeholders responsible for facilitating young women and girl's empowerment and wellbeing.

- The Municipal Assembly, the MHD, in partnership with DOVVSU and CSOs should implement comprehensive policies, action plans, and initiatives based on equality in order to end discrimination against girls and young women and to guarantee their full enjoyment of human rights and basic freedoms;
- The MHD, the Gender Desk and DOVVSU, in partnership with CSOs should establish programs that educate young women and girls about their rights and opportunities to participate as equal members of society and to guarantee their full participation in decision-making at the community and municipal levels.
- The Gender Desk, the Social Welfare and Community Development Department, in partnership with CSOs, should facilitate programs that guarantee that young women and girls can engage in social, educational, economic, political, cultural, and civic life at all levels in society.



CHAPTER THREE

STATE OF YOUTH WITH DISABILITY



REMARKS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE

The Department of Social Welfare and Community Development (DSWCD) remains a critical partner to the Municipal Gender Desk in addressing Gender-Based Violence, Child Protection and family welfare. Its core services include:

Child and family welfare services, Child maintenance, custody and access services. Family reconciliation, fosterage and adoption services, Registration and Inspection of Early Childhood Development (Day Care Centres), Justice Administration Services, Community Care and Social Services.

The DSWCD has indicated that some of the findings from the AFES-Ghana led youth status survey may not fully reflect the realities of service delivery at the Department. According to the Department, a significant number of respondents may have provided responses that do not accurately represent their engagement with social welfare services.

The Department further noted that many clients who seek interventions approach the office with unrealistic expectations, particularly regarding decisions on child maintenance, custody, family reconciliation, and justice administration. Dissatisfaction often arises when outcomes are guided by legal frameworks, child protection principles and professional social work standards rather than individual expectations. This has, in some instances, influenced negative perception of the Department's effectiveness.

The findings however, clearly demonstrate that the municipality must invest in protection, education, inclusion, leadership and cultural reforms. These recommended actions will strengthen systems that empower women and girls.

The DSWCD also remain committed to the provision of protection to all clients from all spheres of life through creation of reliable opportunities and portfolios for all Genders.

James Ayee
Municipal Social Welfare Officer
New Juaben South Municipality

Context/Rationale

Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) are one of the most marginalized in society, facing daily discrimination in the form of negative attitudes, exclusion from public policy decision making, inadequate enforcement of laws policies affecting their wellbeing. They are largely deprived from realizing their rights to basic social services including healthcare, education, and even survival in worst-case scenario.

Following the enactment of the Persons with Disability Act, 2006 (ACT 715) by the Parliament of Ghana, which is been implemented in consistency with related international policies such as the African Disability Protocol of the African Union and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5, grounded in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Ghana has been striving to support PWDs to meet basic needs and requirements that have the potential of empowering them against extreme poverty.

The 2021 Population and Housing Census, indicates 8% of the Ghanaian population (representing 2.1 million) have various forms of disability, with females representing 8.8% more affected than males representing 6.7%. These figures reflect the local context of New Juaben South Municipality

Research shows that young people living with disability face even more challenges than their adult counterparts to the extent that they hardly get opportunity to either attain basic formal education or acquire any technical or vocational training within the context of fast changing political, economic, social and cultural dynamics. They are largely invisible!

Through the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and the DSWCD, the Government of Ghana has institutionalized several support mechanisms for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). These include their integration into the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme and the allocation of 3% of the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) to PWDs within each MMDA. However, despite these strategies, evidence suggests that thousands of PWDs remain excluded from these benefits and continue to live on the margins of society.

It is against this background that this survey seeks to evaluate the real impact of government policies on the lives of young people with disabilities in the New Juaben South Municipality.



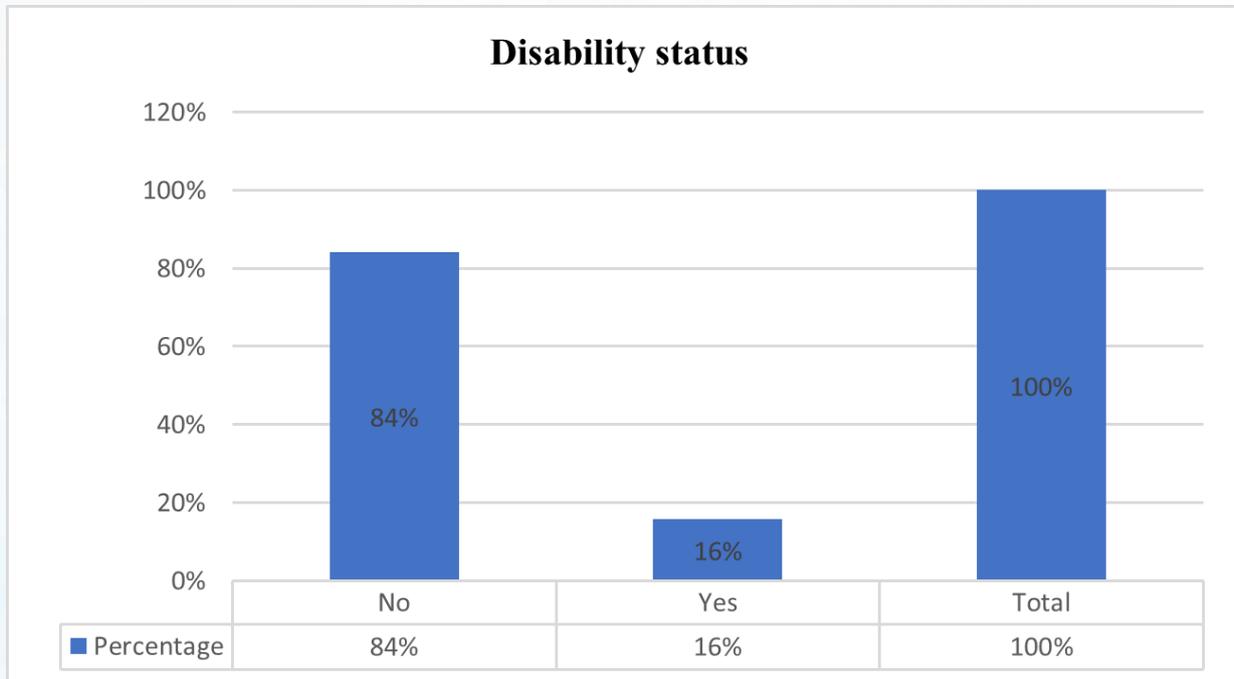
KOFORIDUA YOUTH MANIFESTO

A Call to Action

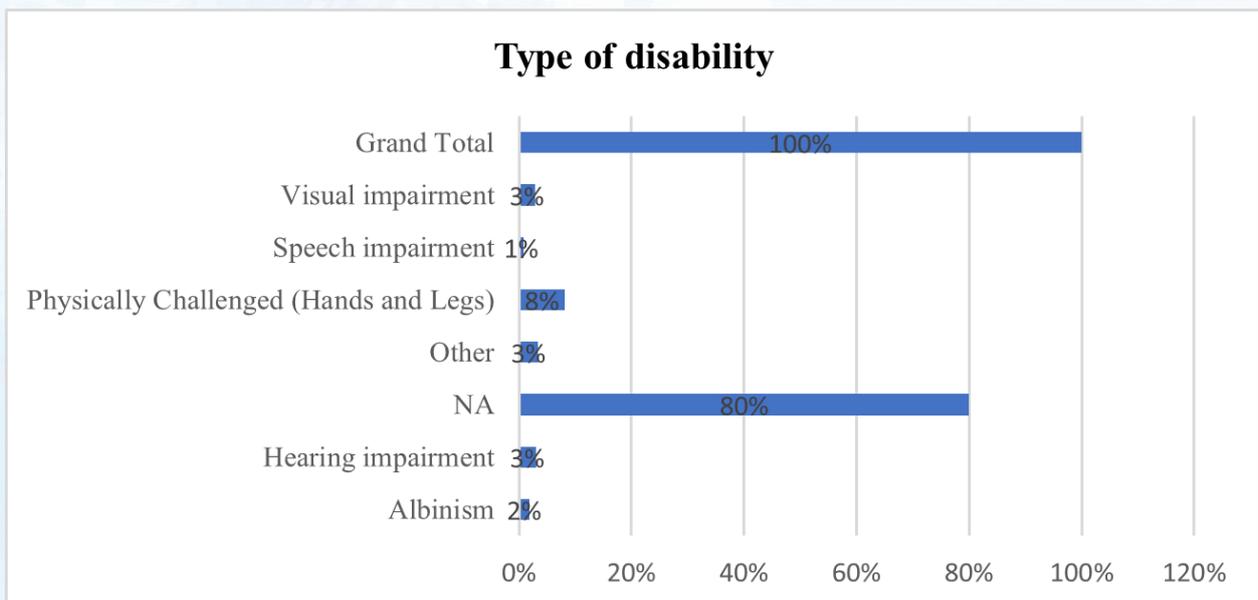
Youth Participation in City Governance Now!

Situational Analysis

The assessment below illustrates the perspective of young people living with disability, aged 15 to 35 on issues concerning their general welfare within the municipality.

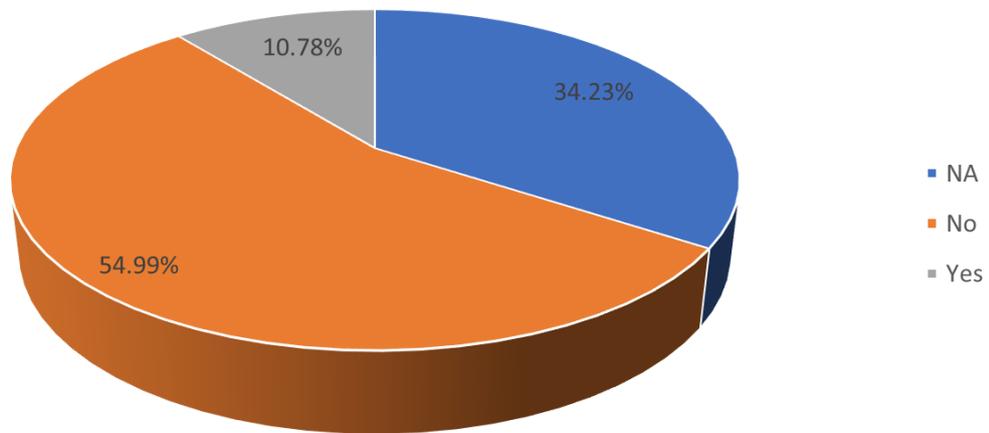


16% of the participants interviewed indicated that they have some form of disability.



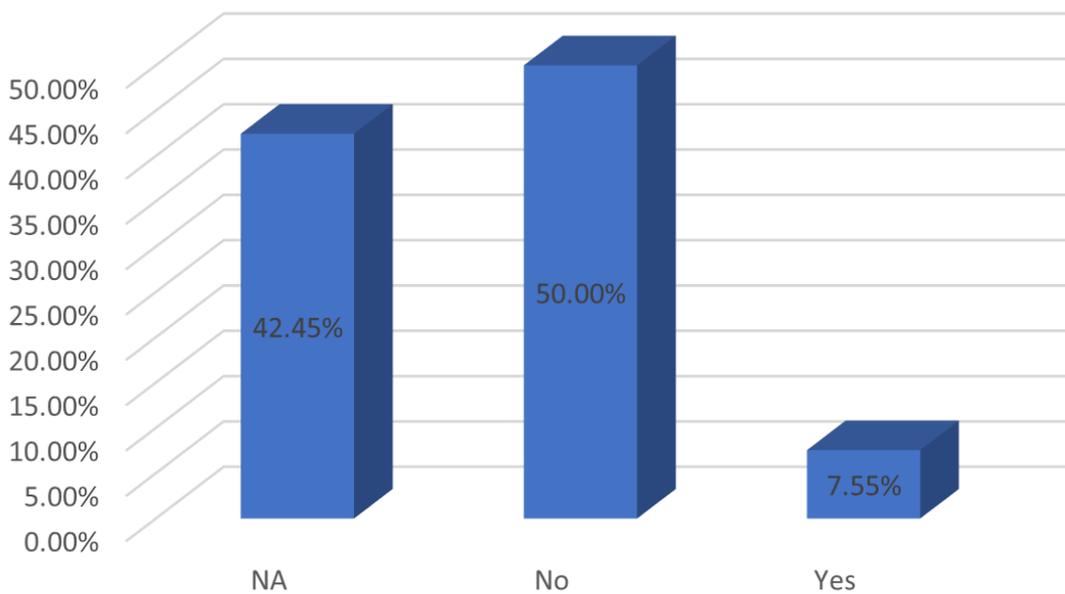
From the 16%, 8% are young people are physically challenged affecting either their hands or legs, 3% are visually impaired, 1% are speech impaired. This clearly shows that physical impairment is the highest form of disability among young people in the municipal.

Reception of disability-specific medical care



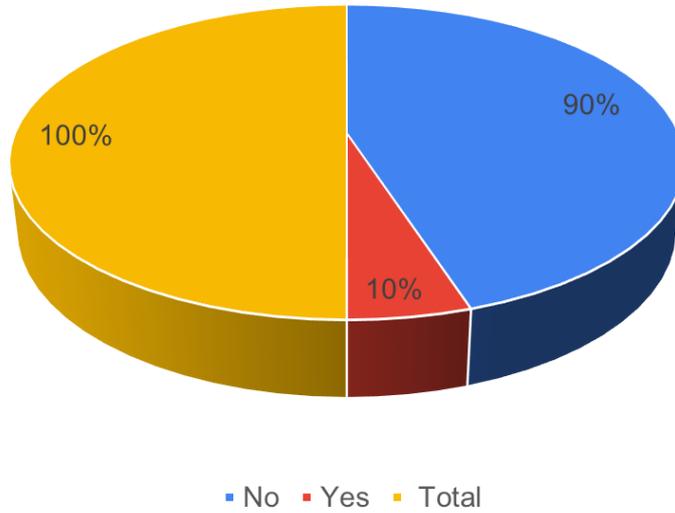
Majority of young people, (54.99%) agreed that people living with disability are given special attention and medical care in healthcare centers across the municipality.

Unfair treatment due to disability



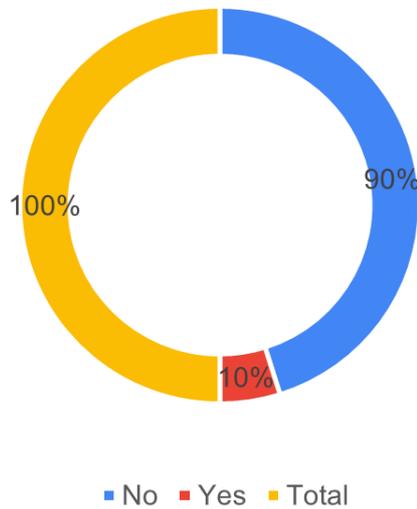
Whilst 42.45% of respondents said they were not sure if PWDs experience unfair treatment due to their physical state in relation to employment, health care delivery, access to resources etc, 50% said they did not experience any unfair treatment. Only 7.55% said they experienced some kind of unfair treatment

Accessibility of Government Institutions for PWDs



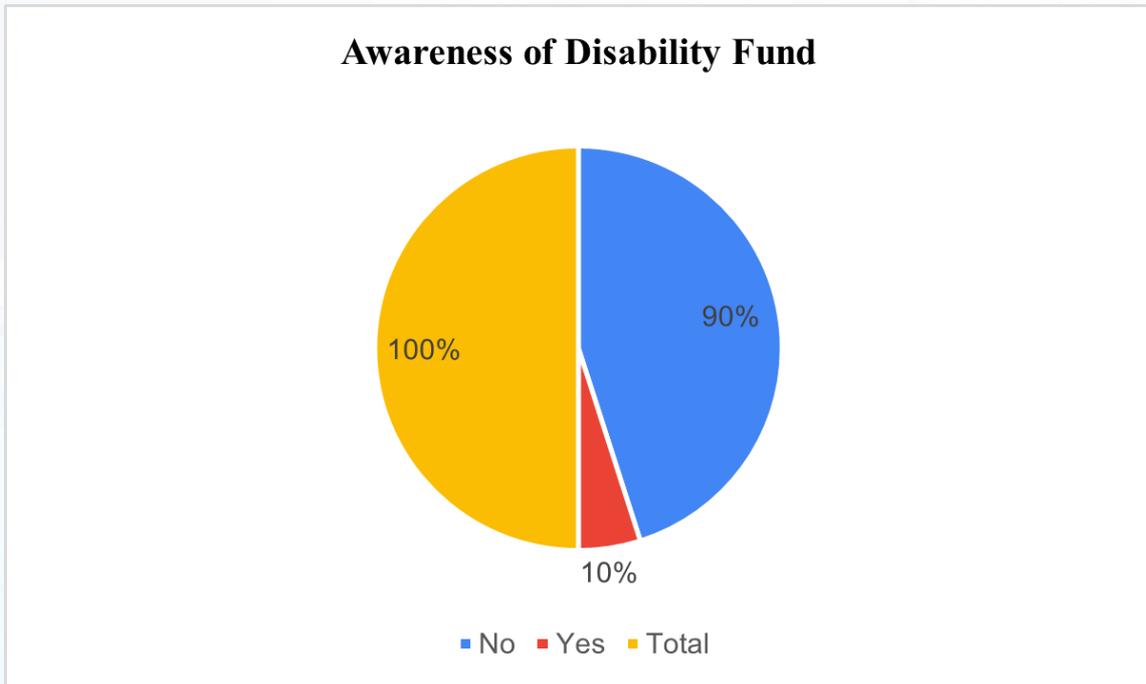
90% of respondents responded that government institutions were not disability friendly, this shows a huge gap in accessing government institutions by PWDs.

Membership in Disability Groups

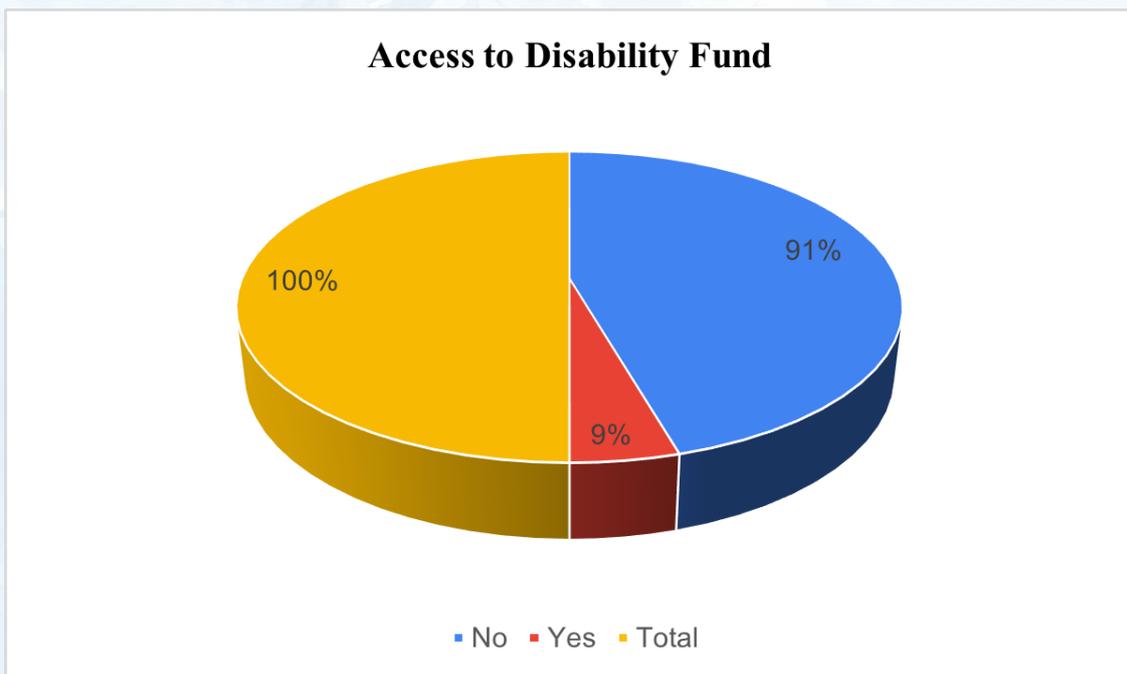


When respondents were asked if they belonged to the disability group or association in the municipality, 90% did not belong to any disability related association. This calls for the need to strengthen the capacity of the disability association in the municipality to reach out to all PWDs

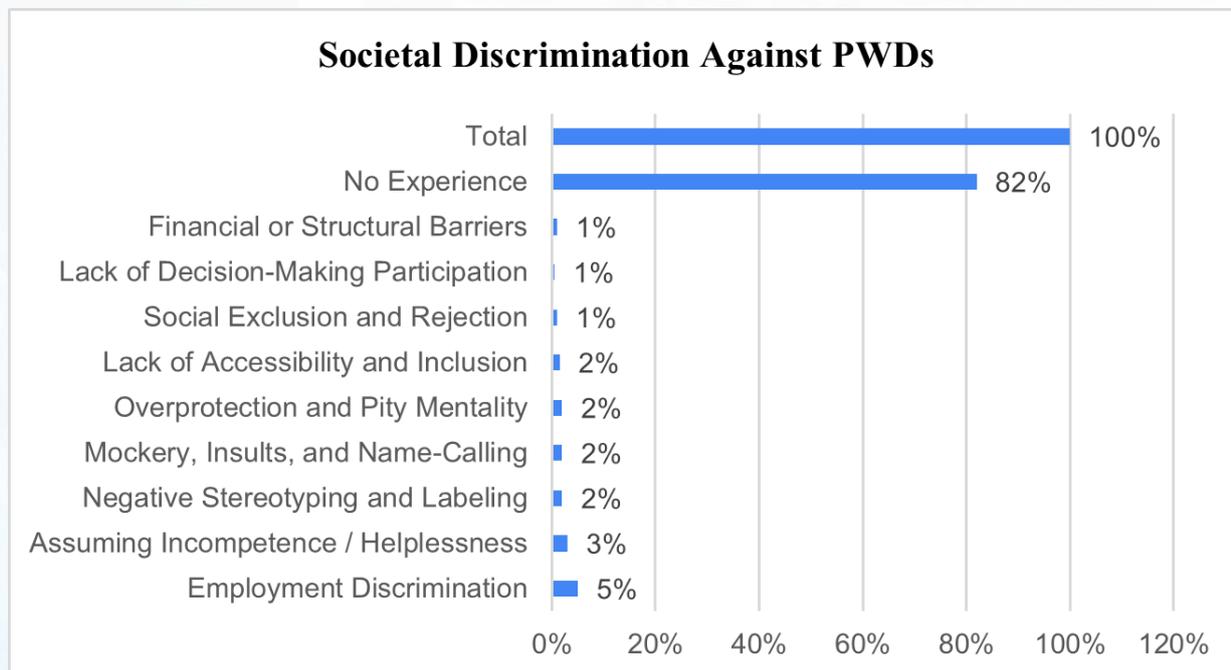
and rope them into the formal Assembly structures in order to be recognized and be able to access benefits available to them.



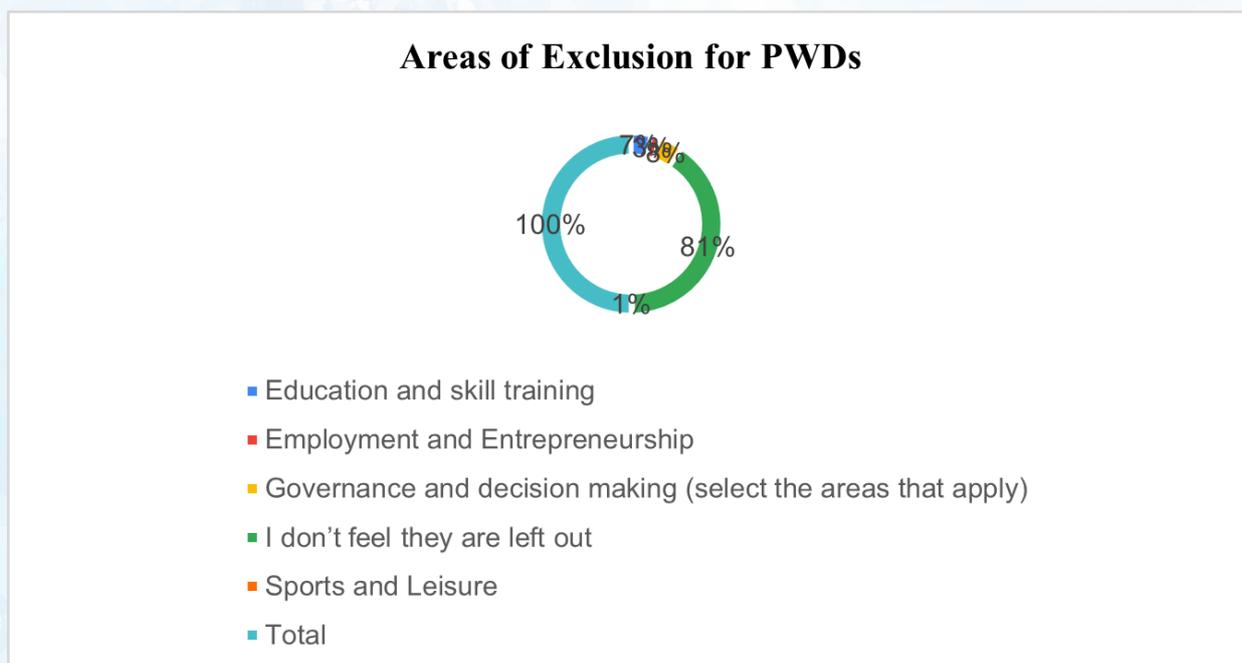
Subsequently, when respondents were asked of their awareness of the disability fund, 90% had no knowledge of that. This shows the need for local authorities and stakeholders to make the administration of the disability fund more visible and impactful.



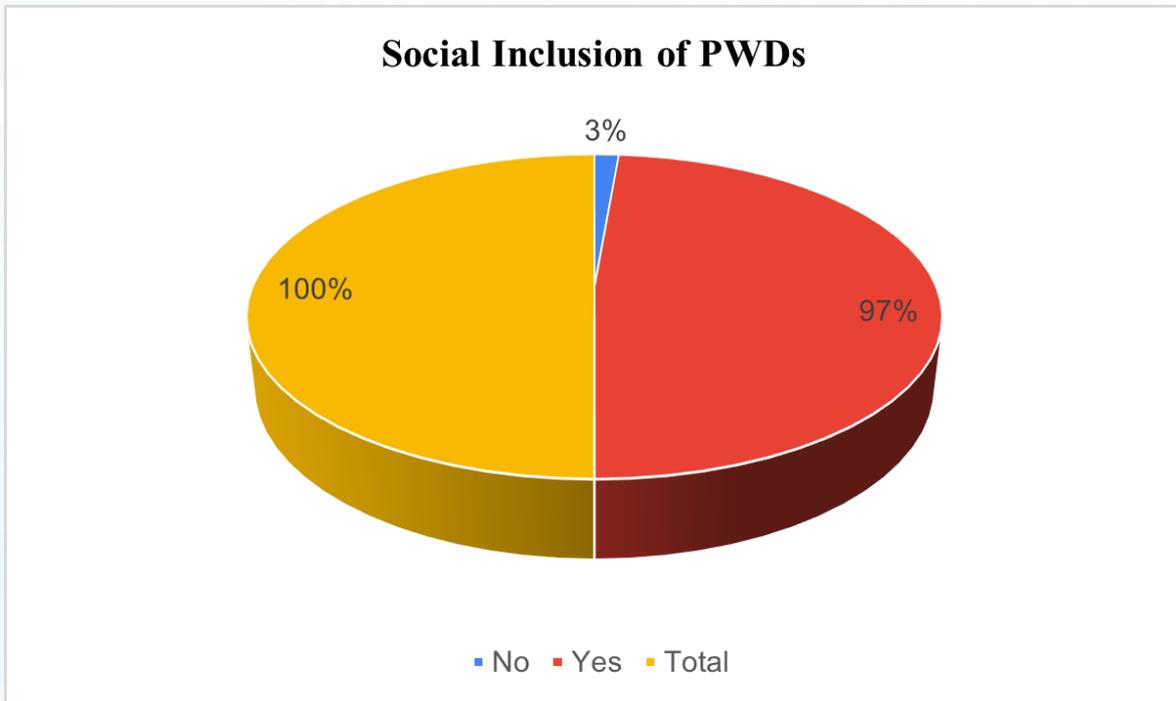
Out of the 10% who had knowledge of the disability fund, a whopping 91% argued that the fund is not accessible to all.



82% of respondents noted that society had a perception of PWDs not having basic experience in various job descriptions and deny them employment opportunities. This is posing as a barrier to their wellbeing



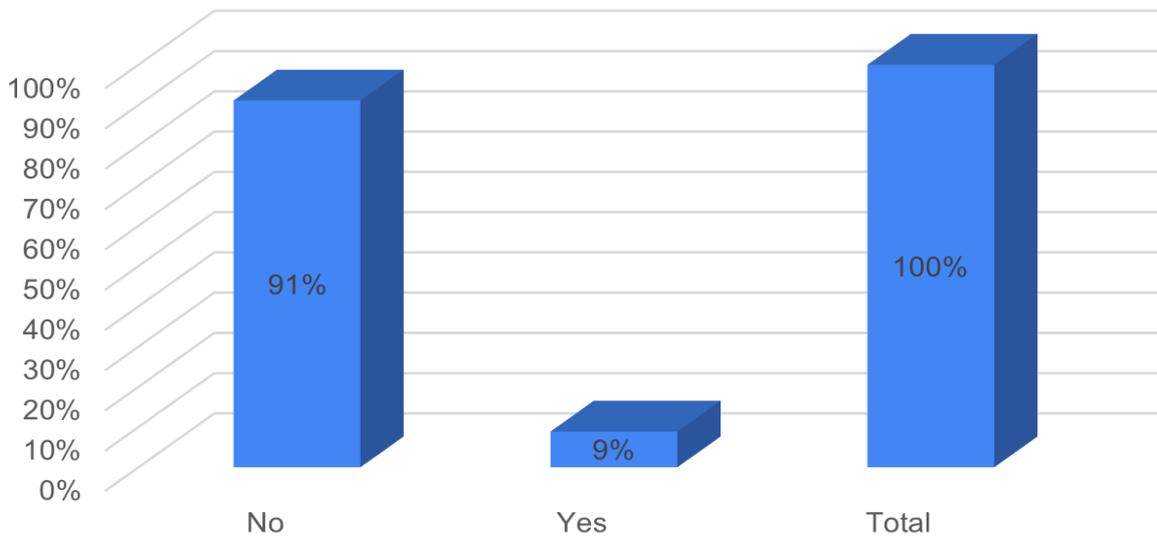
When respondents were questioned on the level of exclusion from social development, 81% trust that persons living with disability are included in developmental activities, 8% believe they are left out in governance and decision making, 7% agreed they are left out in education and skill training, 3% agreed they are left out in employment and entrepreneurship and 1% agreed they are left out in sports and leisure.



97% of the respondents confirmed that they feel welcomed and accepted in the municipality, this shows that the municipal authorities seem to embrace young people with disability. How can the municipal authorities translate their apparent care for PWDs into real impact on the lives?



Awareness of PWD Support Organizations



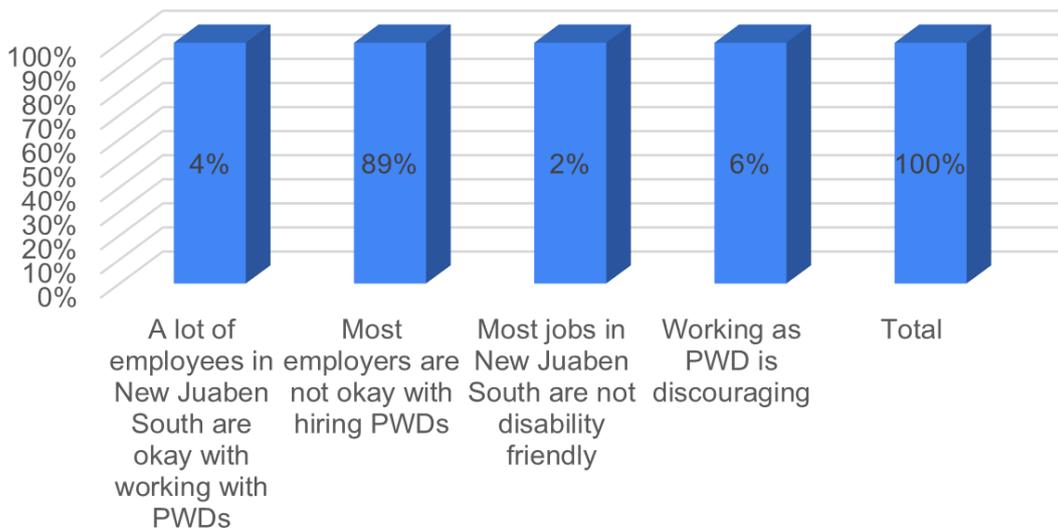
Young people with disability are largely not aware of any organization that provides targeted services or support for PWDs

Education Accessibility for PWDs



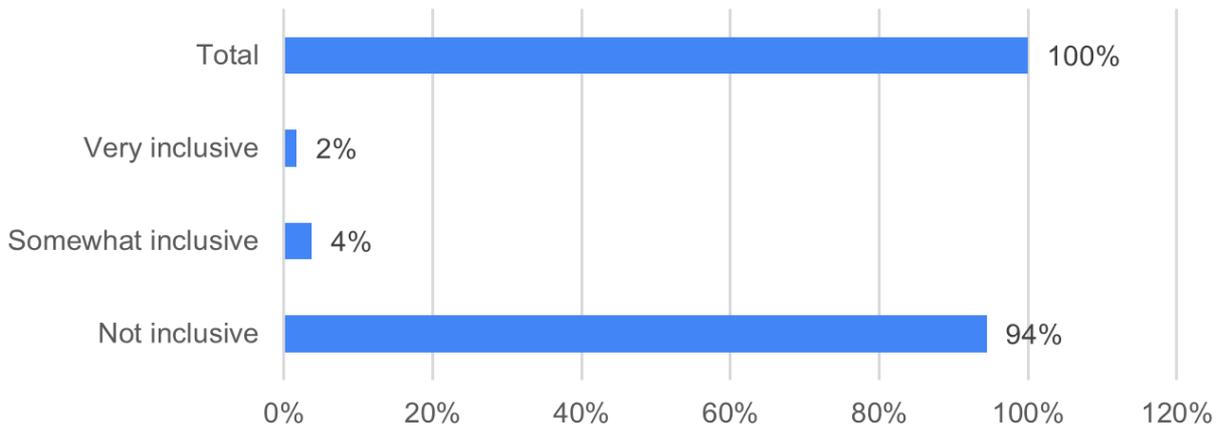
Respondents were asked to evaluate education accessibility in the Municipality, 82% confirmed that the education system was accommodating, 18% agreed the system is very stressful and 1% said it is not accommodative at all. This suggests that education system for persons living with disability in the municipality is fairly empowering.

Employment Opportunities for PWDs

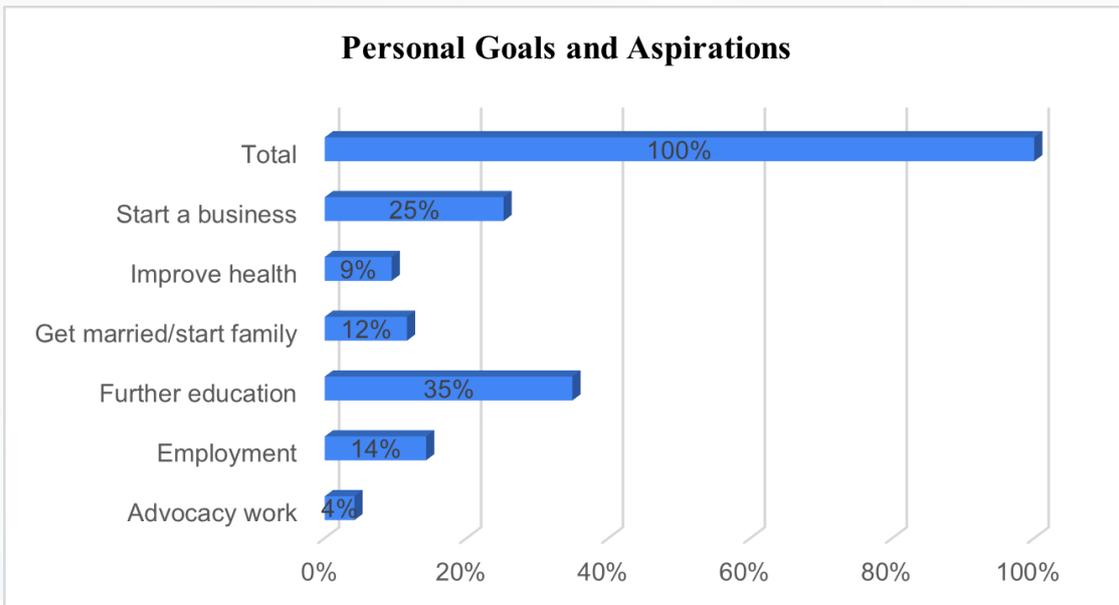


A significant number (89%) of persons with disability in the municipality agreed that, most employers are not willing to hire them for any job opportunity. This perhaps is one of the key reasons why PWDs are at the basement of affluent communities.

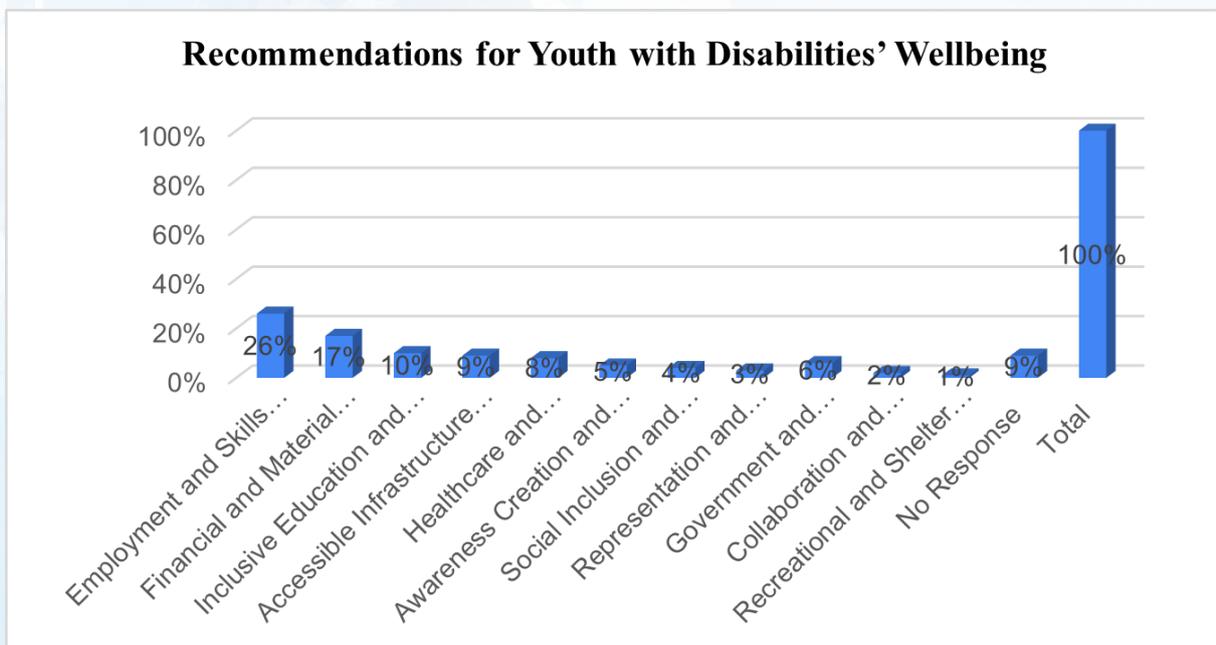
Governance and Decision-Making Inclusion for PWDs



Among the persons living with disability interviewed, 94% showed strong disagreement to their representation in governance and decision-making in the municipality. This depicts that, there must be conscious efforts by the municipality to ensure inclusive governance and decision making.



When respondents were further asked to state their aspirations for the next three to five years, 35% aimed to further their education, 25% desired to start a business, 14% hoped to gain employment, 12% wished to be married and start a family, 9% sought to improve health and 4% aspired to be involved in some advocacy work. With these varied responses there is a trace of future financial freedom or rather financial burden on young people with disability in the municipality as they strive to achieve their respective aspirations.



In a nutshell when respondents were asked to make some recommendations for the wellbeing of young people living with disabilities, 26% suggested that the area of employment and skills development should be paramount, this shows that for an inclusive municipality, the financial freedom of persons living with disability should be prioritized.



Space for Youth Action

The Municipal Assembly should lead, and collaborate with other youth organizations and CSOs in the municipality to promote full participation of young people with disability across all spheres of development planning in the New Juaben South Municipality.

The DSWCD should institute sensation and awareness drive to reach out to young people with disability and encourage to join the association of persons with disability to contribute to the advocacy effort towards their wellbeing.

The DSWCD should start special registration drive to capture all PWDs in the Municipality and officially enrol them on their roster and integrate them into all PWD activities and benefits.

Youth with disability should make efforts to follow-up, collaborate with relevant stakeholders and take advantage of the promise made by the ruling government on their seven-point plan for inclusion which focuses on free tertiary education for PWDs, establishment of disability centers, initiating legal reform and boosting the Disability Fund.

Recommendations to the Municipal authorities

The youth of the municipality recommend the following actions to be implemented by the municipal authorities in order to advance

the welfare of especially all young people with disability.

1. The Municipal assembly shall, first and foremost, make sure that the PWDs share (5%) of the DACF is strategically used to further the development of youth with disabilities.
2. The Municipal Assembly, through the DSWCD, and in partnership with CSOs, should give youth with disabilities the tools they need to take care of their fundamental requirements.
3. The General Assembly should deepen the by-laws to eliminate all forms of social exclusion and involve young people with disabilities in all decision-making processes at all levels.
4. The Gender Desk, DSWCD, and CSOs should strive to provide mentorship to youth with disabilities in order to empower and encourage them to realize their full potential for both personal and municipal development, including starting their own businesses.



CONCLUSION

The report serves as an essential resource for understanding the scope of youth related issues and challenges in healthcare, disability inclusion and the empowerment of young women and girls within the municipality. Its findings and recommendations will guide policy formulation and programmatic planning, contributing to accelerated advancement of youth development in the municipality.

Thank You
AFES-Ghana, 2025.



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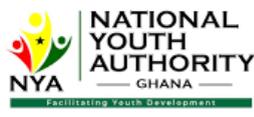
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