

In 2020, the population in Tonga was estimated 105,695 (UN Data)

The 2016 Housing Census, estimated that there are over 4,000 (roughly 4.6% of the population) disabled people aged five years and older in Tonga

There is a higher prevalence in Tongatapu Rural (47.1%) and lower prevalence in Ongo Niua at (0.7%)

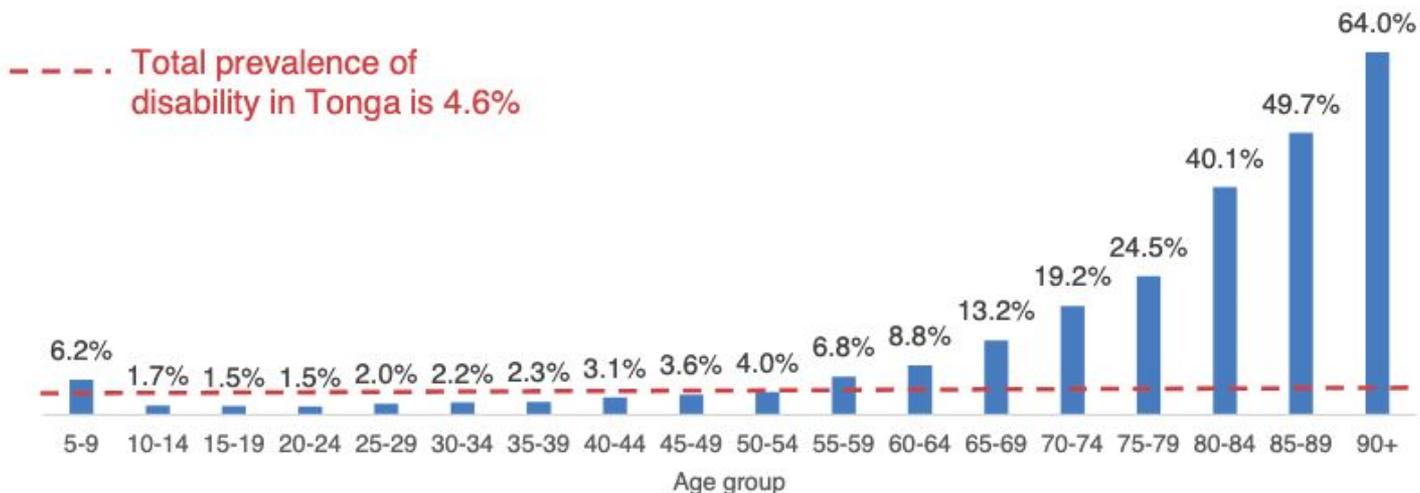
TYPES OF DISABILITIES



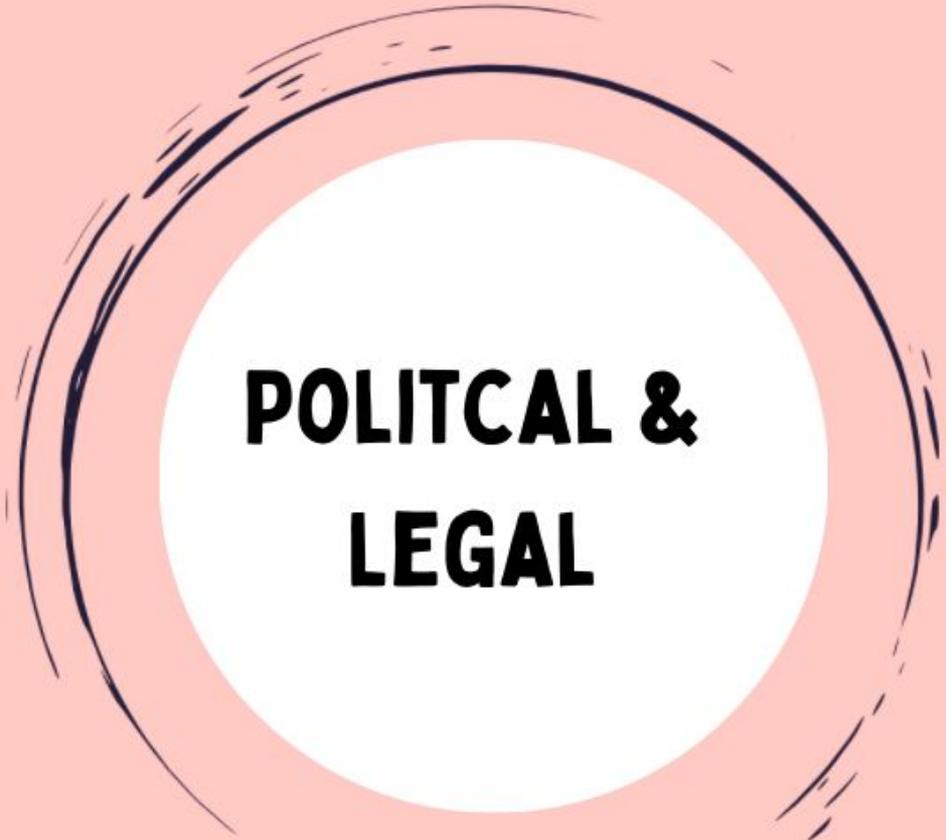
Disability in Tonga: Analysis of the situation of people with disability based on the 2016 Population and Housing Census

Ageing is a major characteristic of disability, with most of the disabled population in Tonga being aged 50 years or older

Figure 1 Percentage of the population with a disability, by age group, Tonga 2016



Source: Based on data from the 2016 Population and Housing Census of Tonga



**POLITICAL &
LEGAL**

National Laws & Policies



Tonga National Health Strategic Plan 2016-2020

- Aims to increase access to health and rehabilitation services for Disabled People



Division of Social Protection and Disability within the Ministry of Internal Affairs

- Launched in 2015 to support Tonga's National Policy on Disability Inclusive Development
- Activities are implemented through the Ministry of Internal Affairs Social Protection and Disability division (MIA-SPD).



National Policy on Disability Inclusive Development 2014-18

- The Policy adopts the UN CRPD definition of disability as an evolving concept recognising the role of societal barriers, as a result increasing awareness around Disability Rights

National Laws & Policies: Education & the Workplace



Inclusive Education Policy

- Ensures that children with disabilities receive appropriate education



Tonga joined the [International Labour Organization](#) (ILO) on 24 February 2016

- The ILO and Tongan constituents developed Tonga's first Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) covering the years 2018 to 2022.
- Priority 3 is the Ratification and Application of International Labour Standards where tripartite partners and representative organisations in the informal economy assist workers, including women, youth and disabled persons in the informal economy and facilitate a just transition into the formal economy.



No National Disability Workplace Policy

- The Draft Tongan National Policy on Disability Inclusive Development 2019-2024, which is awaiting approval, aims to implement reasonable accommodations and start an award for employers who employ disabled people

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

In 2007, the Tongan government signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

However Tonga are yet to ratify the convention

Priorities are to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Ensure realisation of all human rights
- Access to opportunities for education and work,
- Access to necessary services & public infrastructure

Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2015-2025

The framework is structured around 5 pillars:

1. **Livelihoods:**
Promote livelihood opportunities through inclusive economic development and decent work
2. **Mainstreaming**
The rights of persons with disabilities in development strategies, national and local policies and community services
3. **Leadership & Enabling Environment**
Develop leadership and an enabling environment for rights-based disability inclusive development
4. **Disaster Risk Management**
Include persons with a disability in climate change adaptation measures and disaster risk management plans and policies
5. **Evidence**
Strengthen disability research, statistics, and analysis.

**Protecting
Disabled
People's
Rights.**

**The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable
Development:**

17 Sustainable Development Goals, aim to mobilise global efforts to end poverty, foster peace, safeguard the rights and dignity of all people, and protect the planet.

- Goal 4:
Quality Education
- Goal 8:
Decent Work and
Economic Growth
- Goal 10:
Reduce
Inequalities
- Goal 11:
Sustainable Cities
and Communities
- Goal 17:
Partnerships for
the Goals



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

17 GOALS TO TRANSFORM OUR WORLD





ECONOMIC

The Tongan Education System is governed by the Education Act 2013.

Basic education from age 4 to 18 years (inclusive) is compulsory or until the child has completed twelve years of schooling.

Education System at a glance:

- Early childhood education (age 3 to 5)
- Primary school (age 6 to 12)
- Secondary school (age 13 to 18)
- Tertiary education (age 19 to 24)
- Non-formal education – other forms of education other than the above

In 2020, the Tongan Government spent 11% on health and 12% on Education

Tonga's Progress on the Sustainable Development
Goals, 2020

Tongan Red Cross Society operates Ofa Tui mo 'Amanaki (OTA) Disability Centre which offers disabled people:

- Classroom Lessons and Training
- Home visits to improve abilities and confidence.
- Sufficient assistance of transportation to OTA centre

Education Statistics

- In 2016, 897/ 32,984 disabled students were attending school
- The most common form of disability among current school students is self-care, followed by communication
- Adults with a disability have a lower level of education than the total population

2018, Tonga Disability Survey Report

Percentage of disabled students aged 5+ out of the total school population, by educational level (2016)



2018: Highest Level of School Attended

- 61.2% Disabled People dropped out of school compared with 30.4% non Disabled People
- From the % of Disabled people who dropped out of school, 64.0% were females and 30.0% males
- Looking at the different islands shows Ha'apai, Eua & Ongo Niua show a disparity in school attendance.

Percentage of Population aged 3 years + above by school attendance, Tonga, 2018

	No Disability	Disability
School Attendance		
Currently Attending	38.3	6.6
Completed School	25.4	24.2
Dropped out of School	30.4	61.2
Never Attended	5.8	8.1

Percentage of population aged 3 years + by highest level of school attended, Tonga, 2018

	No Disability	Disability
Level of School Attended		
Never Attended	5.8	8.1
Pre-School	1.8	0.5
Primary	19	13.3
Secondary	59.3	66.5
Technical & Vocational	9	5.8
University	5.1	3.8
Special School	0	1.8
Other	0	0.1

Population Aged 3 + years main reason for never attending school, Tonga 2018

	No Disability	Disability
Reasons for never attending school		
No School/School is too far	0.1	0
Not able to obtain school supplies and uniforms	0.1	0
Could not obtain tuition fee	0.4	0.3
No dormitory available at school	0.1	0
Myself not interested in school	0.8	1.4
Help at home with household activities and on the farm	0	0.7
Family does not allow schooling	0.2	0
Illness/Disabled	0.5	78.6
No Birth Certificate	0.4	0
Too Young	97.2	19
Other	0.3	0

Additional concerns related to being bullied and corporal punishment

Population of Disabled People Aged 5 + years stopping education, Tonga 2018

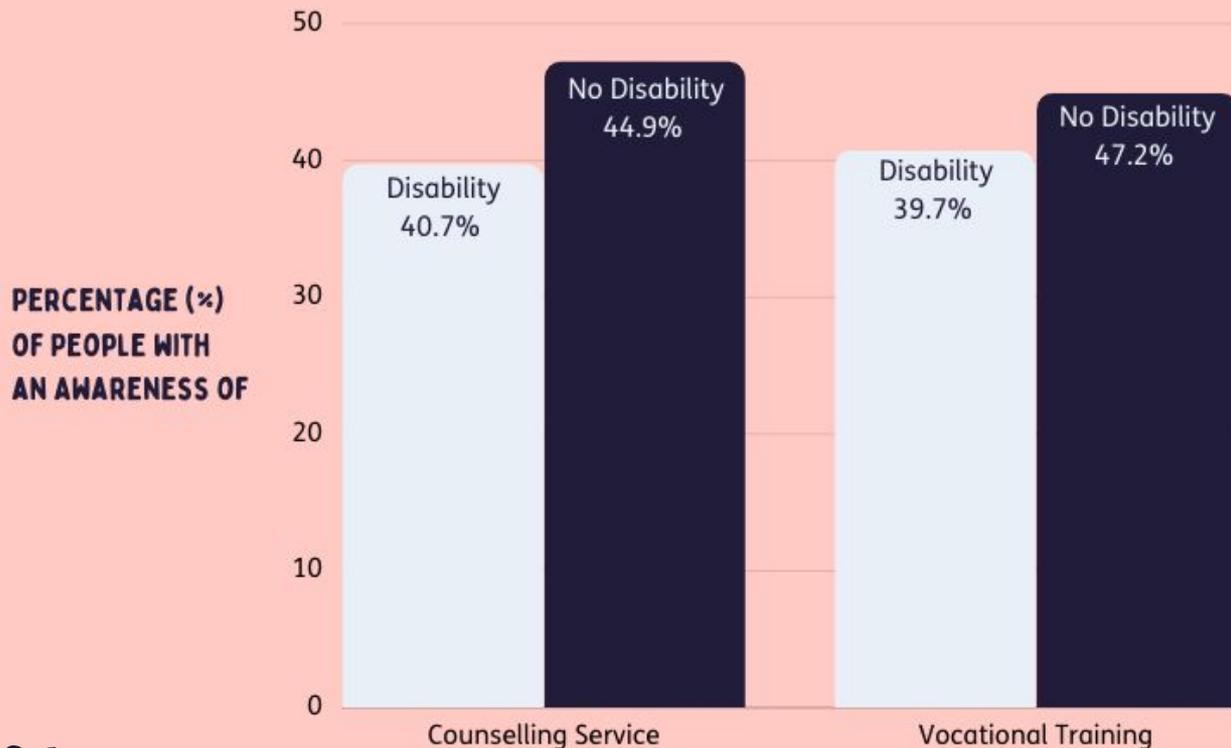
	Urban	Rural	National
Reasons for Stopping			
Transport is inadequate and insufficient	0	1.6	1.3
Buildings and equipment is not appropriate and not adapted to the needs	0	0.2	0.1
School does not provide personal assistant and educational support needed	5	7.3	6.8
Not interested in learning	12.8	11.8	12
People and families negative attitude	5.1	4.3	4.5
Lack of family support	4.3	11.5	10
Finance Issues	6	17.1	14.8
Lack of education information	7.1	14.7	13.1
Other	59.8	31.4	37.3

Education, Disability & Accessibility

When asking about education and accessibility, the 2018 Tonga Disability Survey Report found:

- 62.4 % of Disabled People viewed that their disability affected or limited their access to education
- 21.5 % stated that due to their disability they had to stop their education sooner than they wanted
- Persons with disabilities in rural areas were more deprived of access to education than those in urban areas

Vocational Training and Other Services

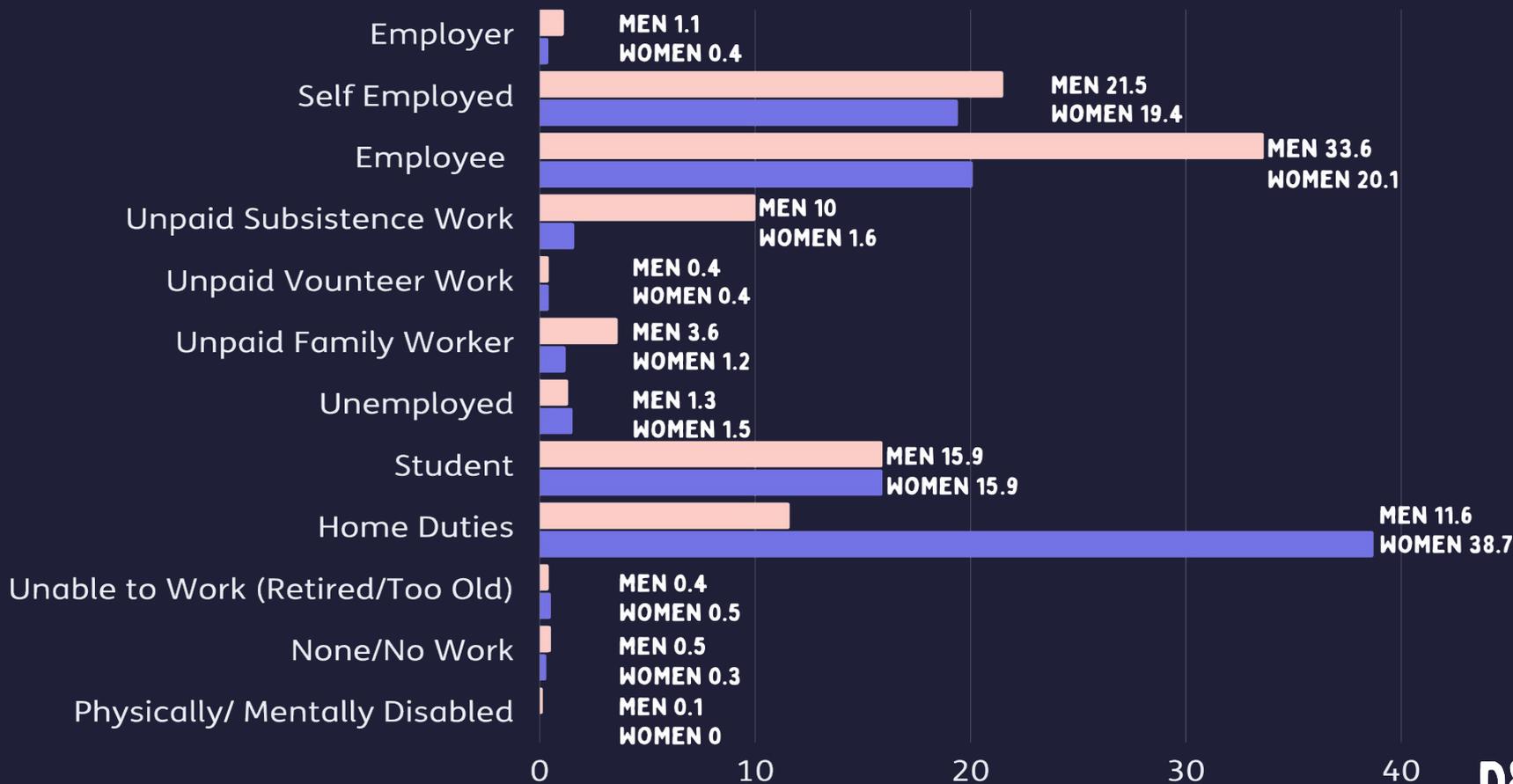


The difference in awareness on vocational training and counselling services suggests outreach programmes need to be targeted to disabled people.

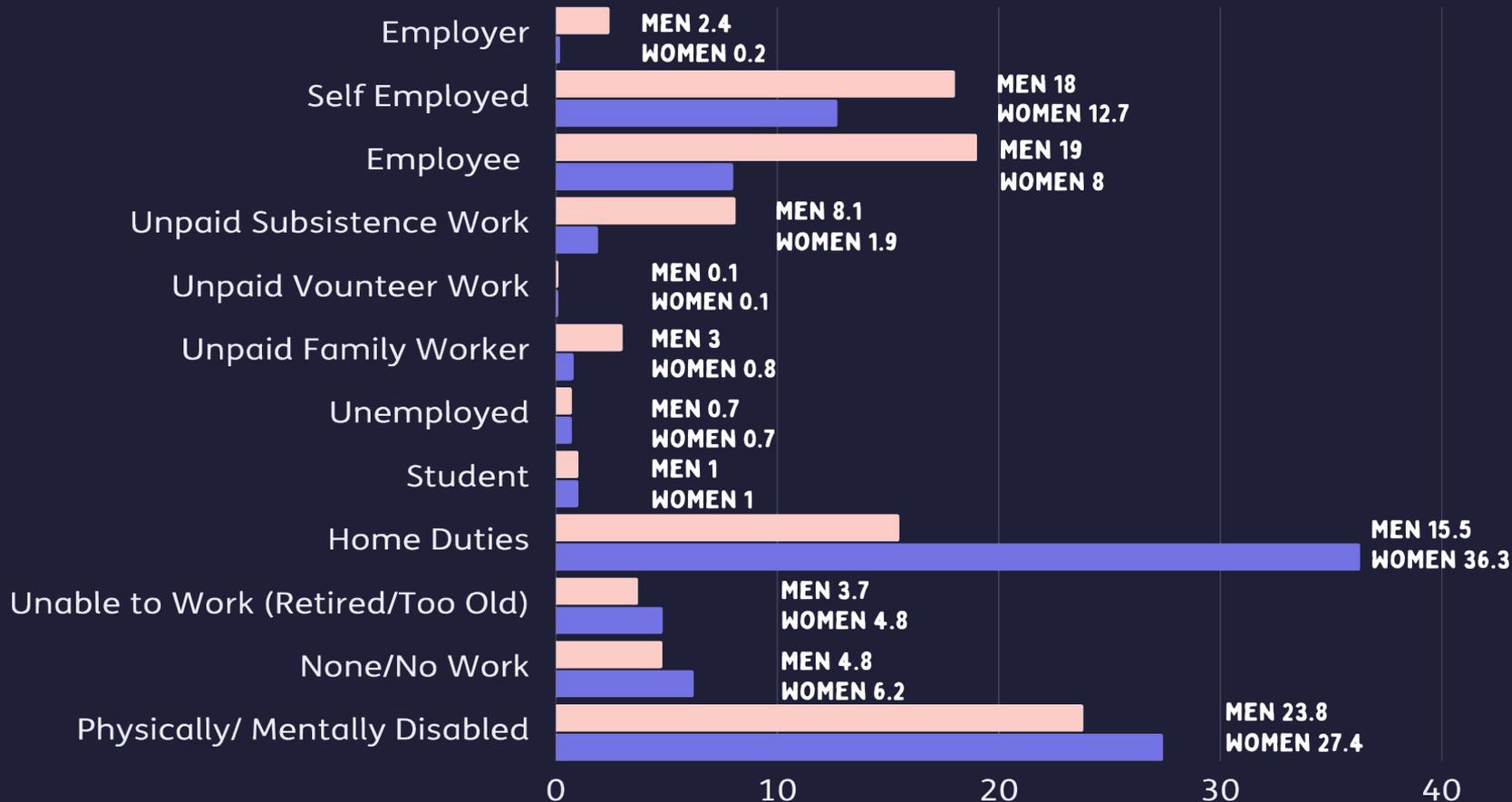
Disabled people did have more awareness around services relating to welfare, assistive devices and medical rehabilitation.

Tonga Disability Survey Report, 2018

Tonga Disability Survey Report, 2018: Percentage of population without a Disability aged 15 years and over by economic activity



Tonga Disability Survey Report, 2018: Percentage of population with a Disability aged 15 years and over by economic activity



Reasons why Disabled people aged 15 years and older are not working or have left work, Tonga, 2018

	Male	Female
Reasons for Leaving Work or Not Working		
Transportation is inconvenient	3.9	5.6
Working Environment is not adaptable	4.8	8.3
Isolation and discrimination of the employer and colleagues	2.3	3.6
Work is difficulty	26.4	28.9
Cannot adapt	18.5	21.6
Health Condition	77.5	78.9
Work is not suitable for my difficulty/disability	85.6	79.2
Work is out of interest	10.2	11.9
Other	3.4	2.8

← 3rd Highest

← 2nd Highest

← Highest % of people gave this reason



**SOCIO-
CULTURAL**

“50% of Disabled People in Tonga suffer because of poverty”

In 2017, the World Health Organisation began working with the government of Tonga to reach out to the communities and raise awareness about the services available in the country and how to access those services

This is still an ongoing project, so disabled people and their families can access these services to reduce the number of disabled people living in poverty.

Tongan Disability Welfare Scheme and Retirement Allowance

The Disability Allowances began in 2015:

People are given monthly allowances of \$30, \$60, \$90 per month depending on the severity of their disability (This is it due to be increased in the next financial year)

For elderly people there is a retirement allowance, which began in 2012:

- \$70 per month for age 70-74
- \$75 per month for age 75-79
- \$80 per month age 80--84
- \$90 per month age 85-89
- \$100 per month age 90 and above

Participation and Social Inclusion



The 2018, Tonga Disability Survey Report found that:

- 75.4% of Disabled People experienced difficulties in participating in community activities
- 75 % experienced difficulties in participating in employment
- 41.4% experienced difficulties in participating in education
- 32.4% in household decision making

Although a lower percentage of disabled people (67.4% compared to 94.2%) experienced difficulties in participating in government decision making, more effort is needed in fostering lived experiences in inclusive decision making.

A high proportion of people with disability, notably women, find it very difficult to go out in public places.

Therefore more needs to be done to make public places, facilities for compulsory events like voting and commercial precincts accessible to people with disability.

Attitudes towards physical and hidden disabilities

Understanding and awareness of different disabilities is a major factor in contributing to general attitudes around disability.

This also impacts on service usage and disclosure amongst disabled people.

In the 2018 Tonga Disability Survey Report, disabled people stated people's attitudes was one reason for having difficulties in accessing community activities, education, employment, health services and transport



Information and Communication Technology (ICT) & Connectivity

For the overall population 51.7% of women and 24.8% of men aged 15-24 years old have relevant ICT skills

In 2019, the overall share of adults aged 15-49 years old who own a mobile phone was 86.4% The proportion of women owning a mobile phone is 4% fewer as opposed to men

Tonga's National ICT Strategy, 2007

Vision Statement 4:

“We will make ICT accessible and affordable for all, using its power and versatility to share our ideas and information and to create knowledge and innovation”

ICT Strategic Planning for the Kingdom of
Tonga, Commonwealth Connects

Six focus areas for ICT development:

- **Enabling Technical Infrastructure**
ICT's in Homes and Communities
- **Education and Skills Development**
Develop the curriculum to include ICT education (from primary school level)
Promote and develop long-distance online learning courses
Increase access to ICTs to disadvantaged groups, including early learners
- **Industry Growth and Economic Development**
- **ICT Related Legislation**
- **E-Government**

Results of implementing the policy

First Fibre-Optic Submarine Cable System for Tonga in 2013:

Yet in 2020 it was reported that only 2 in 10 people who are not living in poverty had home internet access and this dropped to 1 in 20 (5%) who are living in poverty

Line Ministries on broadband

Introducing e-commerce and e-business in banking systems and private sector operations

Online Teaching Resources

The Ministry of Education and Training have built a platform with relevant resources for all classes from early childhood and inclusive education to primary, secondary, TVET and tertiary levels of schooling.

Tongan teachers have been instrumental in providing the learning resources in varied forms such as paper-based, on radio and TV or a combination.

Statistics on the use of Assistive Technology in Tonga

13.9% of visually Impaired people stated they are using a “personal companion” to assist them with their mobility whilst 6.6% indicated they used a walking aid (stick/cane)

35.9 % of people with a hearing impairment used assistive products, however $\frac{1}{3}$ indicated they are in need of a hearing aid

42% of people with mobility difficulties needed a zimmer frame, 41% needed a wheelchair and 20.3% indicated they needed crutches

The Tonga Disability Survey Report 2018 recommends

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Good quality, affordable & publically accessible assistive technology

Appropriate assessments to be done to make assistive technology relevant

Training for technicians and users of the assistive device



ENVIRONMENTAL

Public Transport Accessibility

The 2018 Tonga Disability Survey Report found:

- Disabled people required the adaptation of harmonising the transport services to complete their education
- A higher proportion of disabled people did not know how to use transportation
- The inconvenient transportation was one reason for leaving work
- Out of 6,527 disabled people:
 - 10.3% used the bus only
 - 9.5% used both bus and taxi
 - 8.2% used taxi only
 - 72.0% didn't use any public transport
 - 57.7% used private transport as passenger only
 - 23.8% used private transport as both a driver and passenger

Percentage of population aged 15 + reporting on difficulty in using public transport

	No Disability	Disability
Difficulty using public transportation		
The service is not available where I live	24.40%	22.70%
Unreliability of transportation service	38.30%	34.80%
Service is not adjusted to my needs	64.30%	61.70%
Do not know how to use transportation	6.70%	12.70%
Boarding and disembarking from the transportation	5.90%	16.70%
Difficulty to access the service	14.30%	39.80%
Cannot afford the cost of using public transportation	32.20%	31.20%

When asking disabled people why they had stopped their education or employment one reason was due to unsuitable buildings/infrastructure

Core Considerations:

- Public transport/ Pavements
- Geographic location- Rural/ urban
 - Services too centralised? Too far away?
- School facilities- library, outdoor space, equipped classrooms, resources
 - Are there any regulations relating to accessibility in the Building Acts/Policies?
 - If there are, are they imposed by Local Authorities where development and building permits are not issued if not complied with?

KAU HE LAU, LAU HE KAU



INCLUSIVE OF ALL/INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

CELEBRATE DIFFERENCE



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