



Report on Transport: Barriers to Access for Persons with Disabilities and Their Families



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The Shonaquip Social Enterprise: Reaching for more beyond service delivery

The Shonaquip Social Enterprise (SSE) is a hybrid of Shonaquip PTY Ltd, Uhambo NPC, and the Champions of Change Trust. As a Social Enterprise we have been working to support and capacitate the networks around children with disabilities and their families for more than 30 years. Grown from our founders' personal experience as the mother of a child with a disability, we focus on capacitating and resourcing individual children, parents, teachers and community stakeholders with skills and tools to remove barriers that exclude children with disabilities. The SSE has over 21 000 direct annual programme beneficiaries¹ and through local capacity building these programmes impact the lives of 270 000² people a year.

How big is the problem we are trying to solve?

8 850 000 Persons with Disabilities in South Africa, directly affecting **28 320 000** family members.

At the SSE, we are committed to going above and beyond the ordinary to build long term, sustainable ecosystems for inclusion. We believe in the combined power of changing behavior and influencing systems by focusing on the quality of practice.

The four components we use to define and build ecosystems for inclusion in order to create an enabling environment for change are as follows: (1) Barriers and perceptions (in the community), build local referrals, (2) Posture support and seating services, (3) Education and (4) Learning and economic participation for persons with disabilities and their families. We believe that the combined strength of these four components is the catalyst for sustainable systemic change.



¹ Visit our live Impact Dashboard to find out more: [click here](#)

² See our impact report 2020: [click here](#)

Exploring an Ecosystemic Lens to Transport Barriers

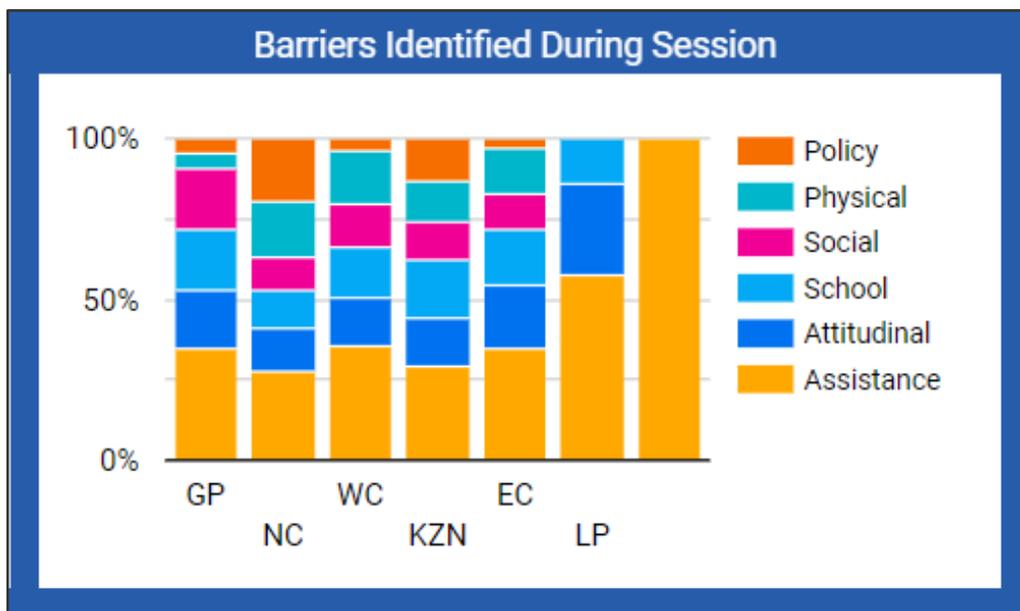
The following sections detail the transport related barriers, presented through the lens of the four ecosystem components that the SSE addresses (through programmes and services).



Barriers, perceptions & local referral pathways

Through an analysis of the SSE’s work, transport is reported as the single biggest barrier persons with disabilities and their families face. It denies them equal and full participation in school, community life and the ability to be the key decision makers in their lives³.

Below is a chart detailing the percentage that transport (assistance barriers) is reported as a barrier by participants in the Let’s Talk Disability⁴ (LTD) programme.



It is clear from this, that transport is absolutely the highest reported barrier that persons with disabilities and their families face at local level.

Barriers recorded in KwaZulu Natal, Western, Northern and Eastern Cape 2019/20

³ SSE annual impact report 2020

⁴ The Let’s Talk Disability (LTD) is one of the programmes the SSE facilitates to address barriers under Ecosystem Component 1. The LTD dialogue is a community dialogue that discusses the social model of disability and identifies local resources and referrals to address barriers to promote participation of persons with disabilities and their families.

The following are direct quotes from participants during facilitated LTDs that refer to transport barriers, as experienced in their communities.

- Taxis and busses don't have enough space for wheelchairs and other equipment
- No appropriate transport for disabled
- Increase rate in taxi fare with device
- No space for device in taxis
- Limited transport options available for people with disabilities
- Need to call a meeting with the taxi association for ask to accommodate people with disabilities
- Taxis and busses don't have enough space for people with disabilities

“Taxi drivers feel that they waste their time”

The issue of attitudinal barriers has a direct link here, as often parents report that it is the attitude of transport drivers that results in them not being able to access transport. As summarised by one of the Network Parents below:

“Hi (facilitator) today I spent 1hr on the road waiting for a taxi with my daughter on a bakkie. I even cried because all the drivers were in a hurry I wasted their time. Just for them to get off and help me it was too much.”



Posture support & seating services

Transport for persons, and children, with mobility disabilities who utilise devices is a complex, challenging and expensive dynamic. Through nearly 35 years of field experience, interactions with Government and other stakeholders the SSE is well aware of disability-specific costs. Transport is perhaps the greatest example of this. The cost of transport suitable to accommodate a wheelchair along with carers and family members, is prohibitive for many and leads to nonadherence to regular follow-up appointments at recommended intervals. Barriers in access to services result in the exclusion of the most complex and advanced wheelchair users, particularly when living in rural and inaccessible areas. Sadly, the burden of the cost of care (amongst other costs) falls to a part of the South African population that is mainly dependent on social (disability) grants to cover these costs. This also impacts on other family members' ability to earn money.

A study conducted in the Swarland and Witzenberg district municipalities⁵ indicate that transport impacts the frequency of wheelchair follow-ups.

“It is too difficult to travel there”

These findings increased in the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal, the Northern Cape and Eastern Cape where 55% of the study respondents indicated they never go for follow ups due to challenges with travel. The parents and caregivers who do take their children to follow-ups indicated a high out of pocket cost to do so.

“It is a struggle to get public transport to take myself and my child who has CP anywhere because of the wheelchair”

The issue of not being able to attend follow-up rehabilitation services due to transport barriers is shared by one of the parents in the Parent Network. This is captured in Quote 4 in, *Appendix A: WhatsApp messages from parents of children with disabilities about Transport Barriers*.

A Network Parent expressed this same sentiment:

“What happens if you as a parent couldn’t reach the hospital when the child needs a new chair or device?”



Education

The additional cost of transport for children with mobility disabilities not only affects their ability to access support services, as mentioned above, but also their right to education.

Many parents have to pay the additional cost for accessible transport to local full service schools as their children cannot a) access the schools independently, due to their mobility impairment or b) use regular transport due to the inaccessibility of the transport.

The unfortunate reality is that most parents, and children with disabilities, cannot access full service schools in their areas and their only option is a specialised school. The majority of families in small and remote towns in South Africa require their children to travel outside of their towns to access their educational rights. This is made additionally more challenging by poor transport systems and structures that parents have to afford themselves in order to access an appropriate school that families of children without disabilities can simply do so in their own town.

“She needs to get up at 05:30 every morning to take a taxi to Beaufort West. It is the only school for her - she travels 104km every day to attend school”

⁵ Barriers to inclusion. A case study: Swartland and Witzenberg regions Western Cape. September 2020

One of the parents shared this experience in the Parent Network as captured in Quote 2 in, *Appendix A: WhatsApp messages from parents of children with disabilities about Transport Barriers*.



Learning & Economic Participation

Transport related barriers, presented through the lens of ecosystem component 4: Learning and Economic Participation will be discussed in the following two sections (The Let's Talk Parents Tool and the National Parent Network, and the Economic Study).

The Let's Talk Parents Tool and the National Parent Network

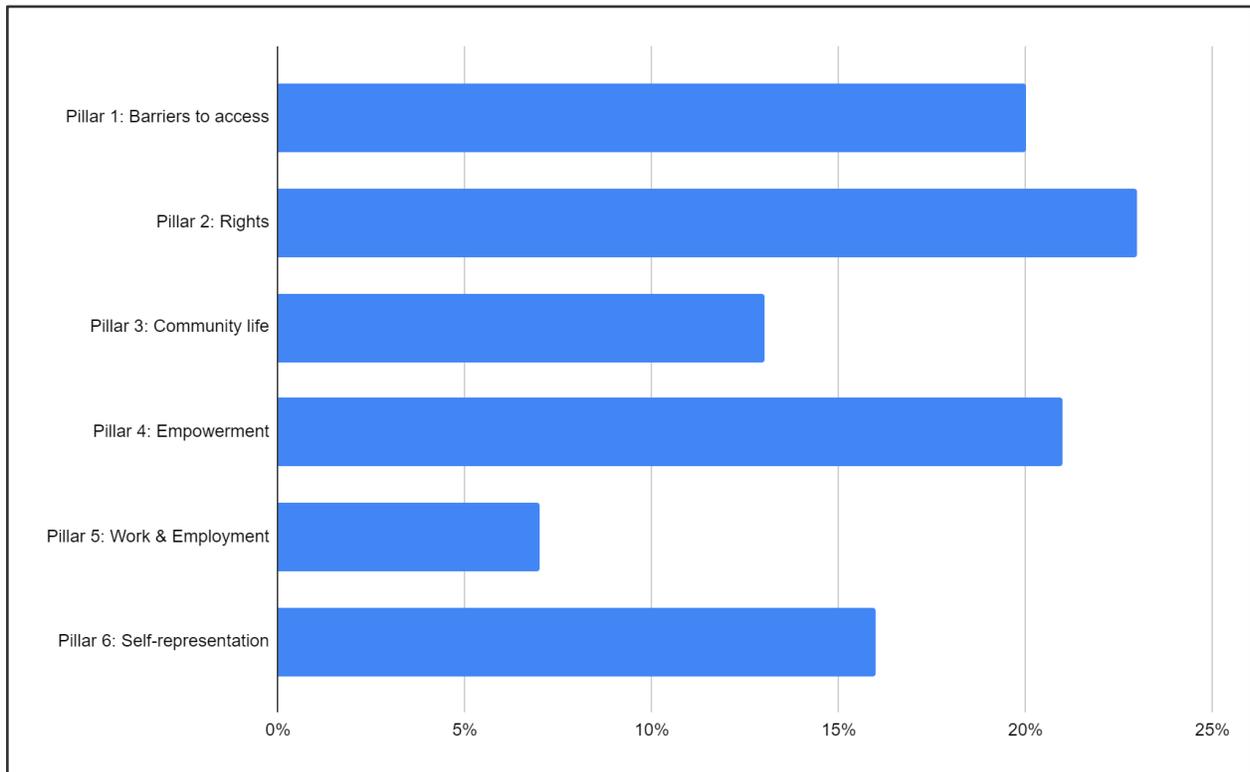
The Parent Network is a digital network that uses free, existing technology to allow parents of children with disabilities (CWDS) across South Africa to break the isolation caused by complex, unjust, and already strained Government systems and societies. In addition to enhancing existing social capital, the network works to influence policy setting and the monitoring of implementation of policy.

The Let's Talk Parents human rights monitoring tool⁶ is an e-Tech innovation that offers the opportunity to persons with disability and their families to engage with complex legislating documents in a user-friendly way based on lived experiences of persons with disabilities and their families. The tool has been designed to monitor the implementation of the WPRPD whilst being conscious of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Therefore, by monitoring a strategic pillar of the White Paper, it is possible to understand which Article of the CRPD as well as which SDG is indirectly monitored as well.

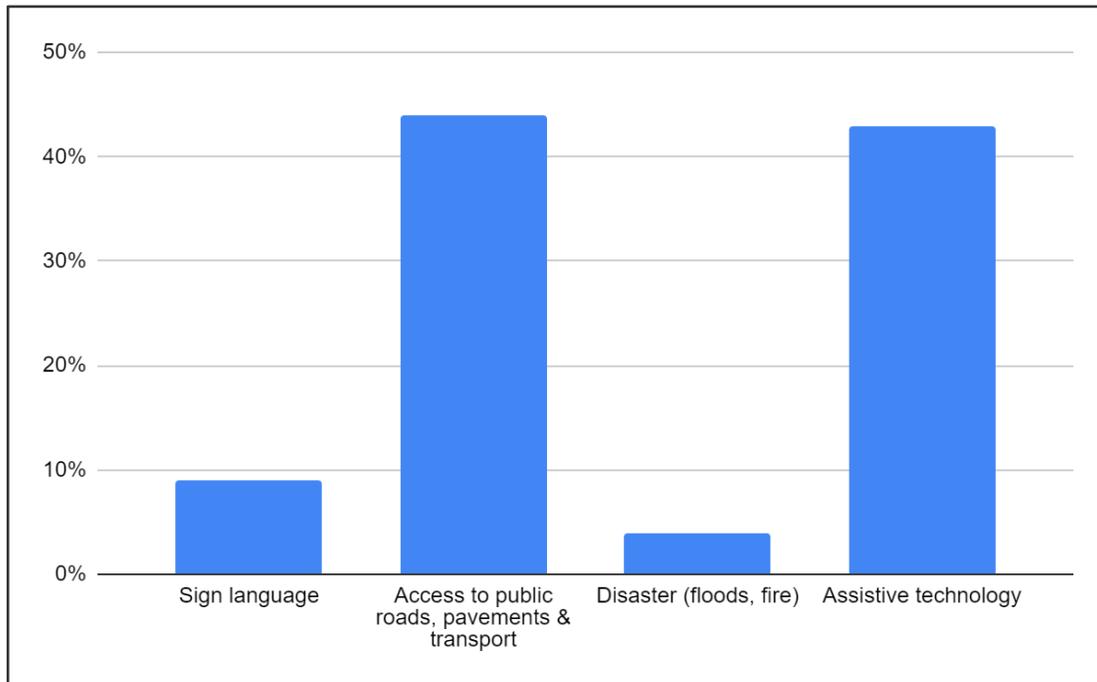
Findings from the Let's Talk Parents Tool: Access Barriers

When looking at the overall reporting of the Let's Talk Parents tool, Pillar 1: Barriers to Access is the third most reported pillar (20%).

⁶ Please take note that an equivalent tool, Let's talk nothing without me, is in its final stages of design which offers persons with disabilities the opportunity to monitor themselves.



A closer look at Pillar 1 indicates that Access to public roads, pavements and transports is the most reported topic (44%), by parents of children with disabilities. Note that assistive device monitoring includes challenges in procurement and the lack of support services but are significantly influenced by a lack of transport to public clinics, hospitals and services.



66% of parents believe that having a child with a disability affects their ability to access public roads, pavements and transport.

When asked how this makes parents feel, they responded with:

“Not-respected”

“Unworthy”

Feedback and Experiences: Access Barriers

Parents of children with mobility disabilities regularly discuss the issue of transport in the Parent Network, as one of the predominant barriers that they experience. *Appendix A: WhatsApp messages from parents of children with disabilities about Transport Barriers* details some of the messages which have been shared on the Network around this issue.

Parents show a clear understanding of their rights to access services and support through accessible transport, as stated in national policy. But often their experiences, on the ground, differ significantly. As one parent shares in Quote 1 of *Appendix A*.

It is clear however, through Quote 4 & 5 that parents understand and value their role in using the Let’s Talk Parents tool to monitor and report on barriers to access in order to mobilise change.

Transport: the biggest financial barrier for families of a child with a disability

The SSE partnered with parents of children with disabilities in the Swartland and Witzenberg districts of the Western Cape. The goal of this research project was to estimate the out-of-pocket disability-related

costs and their influence on generational poverty affected by disability. We interviewed three groups of families:

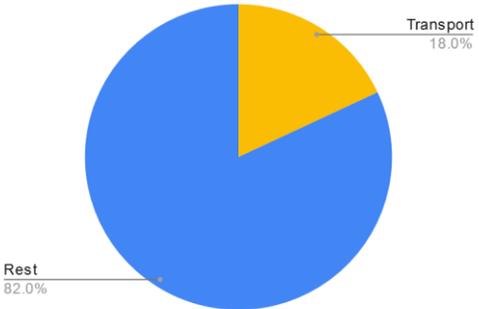
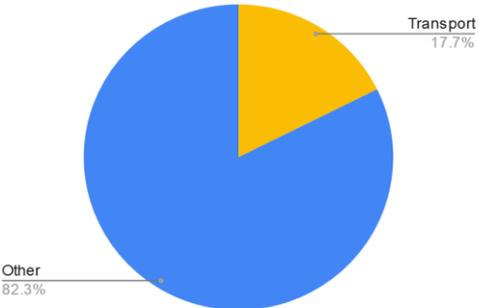
1. Families of children with mobility disabilities
2. Families of children with other disabilities (including sensory, psychosocial, intellection, sensory disabilities)
3. Families with no children with disabilities.

Several financial barriers have been identified for families of which transport is significantly higher for both families A & B vs a family with no child with a disability. The following section explains these findings in more detail:

COST PER ANNUM	FAMILY A COST PER CHILD WITH MOBILITY DISABILITY	FAMILY B COST PER CHILD WITH ANOTHER DISABILITY	FAMILY C COST PER CHILD WITHOUT A DISABILITY
Clinic visits	R429	R300	R209
School fees	R4,009	R3,560	R1,622
Transport to school	R2,986	R2,364	R1,222
Referral hospital	R357	R328	n/a
Medicine	Negligible	Negligible	n/a
Therapy	R1,638	R649	n/a
Transport to Follow-ups	R363	n/a	n/a
Nappies	R6,448	R6,208	n/a
Wipes	R4,550	R1,833	n/a
Special food	R1,876	R1,587	n/a
Mattress	R265	R107	n/a
TRANSPORT TOTAL	R4 135	R 2 992	R1 431

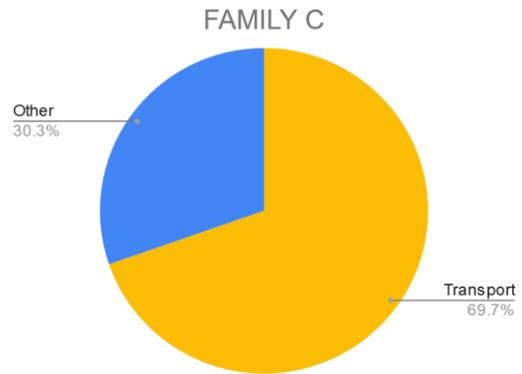
TOTAL	R22,920 Disability grant: R21,360	R16,936 Disability grant: R21,360	R3,054
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Below is a further analysis of the spend for transport to families (A, B & C scenarios) and its impact on family income:

<p>% of household income spend on transport to access basic services for a CHILD WITH MOBILITY DISABILITY</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>Transport</td> <td>R4,135</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Remaining income</td> <td>R22,920</td> </tr> </table>	Transport	R4,135	Remaining income	R22,920	<p style="text-align: center;">FAMILY A</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Transport 18.0%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Rest 82.0%</p>
Transport	R4,135				
Remaining income	R22,920				
<p>% of household income spend on transport to access basic services for a CHILD WITH ANOTHER DISABILITY</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>Transport</td> <td>R2,992</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Remaining income</td> <td>R16,936</td> </tr> </table>	Transport	R2,992	Remaining income	R16,936	<p style="text-align: center;">FAMILY B</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Transport 17.7%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Other 82.3%</p>
Transport	R2,992				
Remaining income	R16,936				

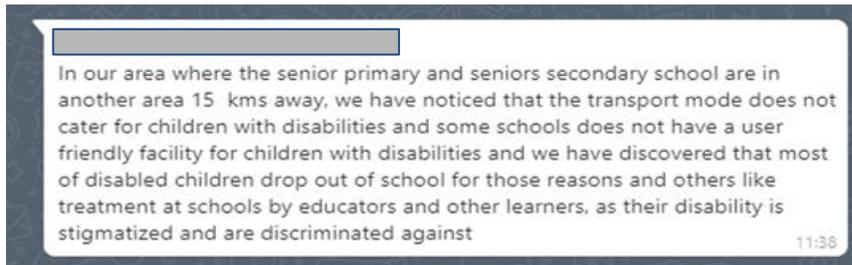
% of household income spend on transport to access basic services for a CHILD WITH NO DISABILITY

Transport	R1,431
Remaining income	R2,054



Appendix A: WhatsApp messages from parents of children with disabilities about transport barriers

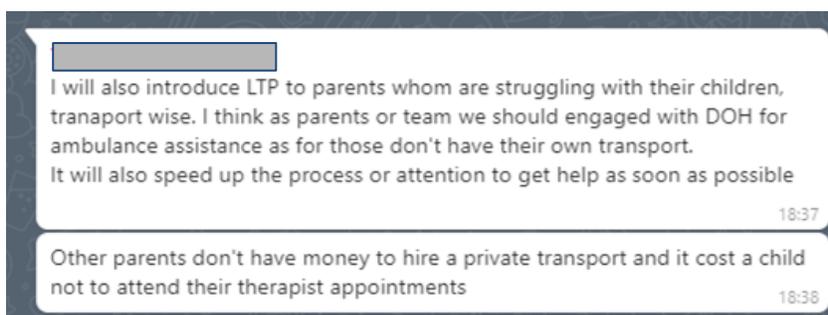
Quote 2



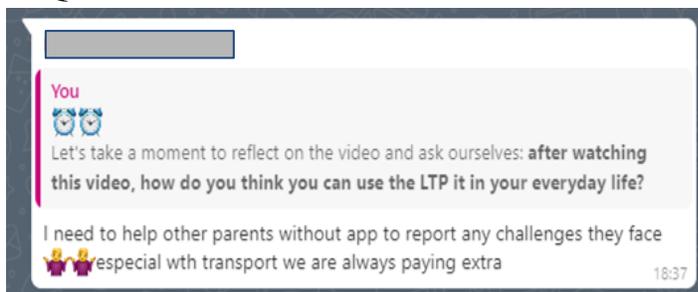
Quote 3



Quote 4



Quote 5



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