

# Political participation in Senegal :

The effective participation of men and women with disabilities in political life

The political participation project is implemented in Senegal since 2017 with the aims to support the country in delivering on its democratic priorities by promoting an inclusive societal and political environment; by addressing the weak engagement and representation of women and men with disabilities that exists.

## What did we do in this study?

We measured the level of political participation among adults aged 18 and above years, with and without disabilities. We explored the relationship between disability and participation in elections, political parties and political discourse.

We did this to evaluate the impact of activities implemented as part of the political participation project between 2017-2021 and to inform future work.

## Where did we do it?

We conducted the study in 4 urban areas of Senegal: Dakar (Pikine district), Kaffrine, Kaolack and Louga.

## How did we do it?

We conducted a cross-sectional population-based study of adults aged 18 and above using a survey. A total of 4723 people participated in the survey: 15% in Dakar (Pikine), 12% in Kaffrine, 51% in Kaolack et 22%

à Louga. The mean age of participants was 38 years and 64% of respondents were female. The prevalence of disability was 11% and mobility impairment was the most reported (6%).

### The survey had 4 sections that included questions about:

1. Socio-demographic characteristics
2. Economic status of households
3. Disability, using the Washington Group Short set of questions
4. Political participation, looking at the following factors: possession of key documents (birth certificate, ID card, voter registration card); being registered to vote; having participated in past elections; ever having voted; being a member of a political party; regularly discussing politics.

In our statistical analysis to compare political participation by people with and without disabilities, we took into account the different age, sex, education and location of respondents.

# Key findings

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## Prevalence of disability

**8% men**

**12% women**



The prevalence of disability was higher among women (**12%**) than men (**8%**). This prevalence also increased with age.

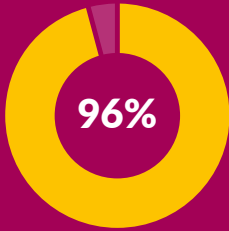
People with disabilities were **slightly poorer** than people without disabilities.



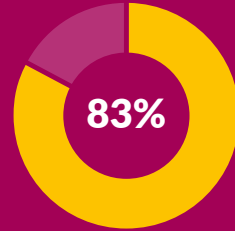
More people with disabilities had never been to school (**51%**) than people without disabilities (**35%**).

# Political participation

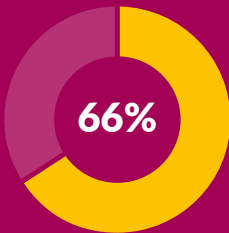
## Possession of key documents for effective participation



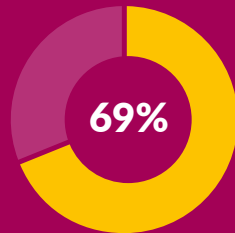
Overall, **96%** of respondents had a birth certificate



**83%** of respondents had national ID card



In total, **66%** were registered to vote



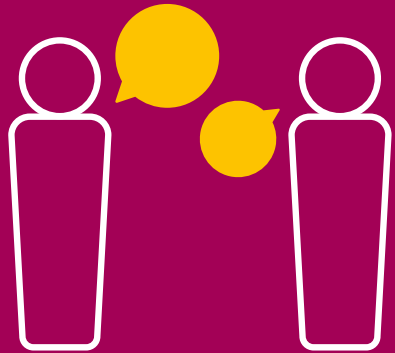
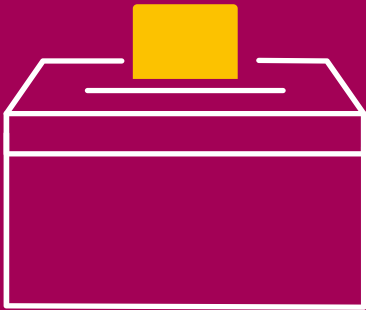
and **69%** had a valid voter card.

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Taking into account age, sex, education and location, we found that people with disabilities were around **2.2 times more likely** to not have a birth certificate and **2 times more likely** to not have a national ID card. People with disabilities were also **2.8 more likely** to not be registered to vote and **2.6 times more likely** to not have a voter card.

## Participating in past elections

Overall, **64%** of respondents ever voted, **25%** were members of a citizens' movement, **27%** were members of an economic association. **11%** were registered members of a political party, and **41%** discuss politics. In total, **11%** of the respondents had participated or been observers in the town hall meetings and **18%** had participated or been observers in the religious council meetings of the of locality.



People with disabilities were around **2.9 times** more likely to never have voted in elections and **1.4 times** more likely not to be a member of an association economic than people without disabilities.

However, people with disabilities were **1.6 times** more likely to have attended or been an observer at the town hall meeting.

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The comparison between the political participation of women with and without disabilities produced **similar results** to those of the entire sample.

## Implications for programmes



In our studies, people with disabilities reported being just as interested in discussing politics as people without disabilities. Yet they were less likely to have voted in an election. Our results show that people with disabilities were less likely to meet the basic administrative requirements to be able to vote, which is to have a birth certificate, a national ID card and a valid voter card. These findings suggest that our programmes should focus on supporting people with disabilities to address these administrative challenges



Policymakers should take a twin-track approach to disability – ensuring that people with disabilities are systematically included in mainstream development policies and programmes. They should also develop distinct initiatives that respond to the specific needs of people with disabilities.



Organizations of people with disabilities can play a critical role in facilitating access of people with disabilities to essential documentation and thus increase their participation in election and other aspects of political life.

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