

# Guyana Council of Organisations for Persons with Disabilities

## Annual Report

# 20 21



**G C O P D**



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# ABOUT GCOPD

The Guyana Council of Organisations for Persons with Disabilities (GCOPD) was established in January 2009 and was officially registered with the Ministry of Labour Co-operatives Division under the Friendly Societies Act on September 15, of the same year. The organisation serves as the umbrella body for the majority of Organizations for Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), across Guyana, with a present membership of 24 OPDs from Regions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 10.

The Guyana Council of Organisations for Persons with Disabilities (GCOPD) is the main civil society advocacy body for Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) at the national level, working to promote the rights of PWDs. GCOPD works in partnership with the National Commission on Disability (NCD) and other agencies to change the negative culture towards PWDs that exists in Guyana. The organization also partners with the government, the private sector, and funding agencies to implement various projects and initiatives to benefit the disability community.

# LAUNCHES

## Guidance and Counseling Programme Launch

On July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, GCOPD, in partnership with the Office of the First Lady of Guyana, launched its Guidance and Counseling Programme for young persons with disabilities at the State House Baridi Benab. Speakers present included Mr. Ganesh Singh (GCOPD programme coordinator), Ms. Savvie Hopkinson (the Ministry of Education Special Education Needs National Officer). The GCOPD Guidance and Counselling programme for young persons with disabilities was piloted with students from the Special Education Needs (SEN) schools, young members of the Disable People Organisations (DPOs) and the orphanages that house young persons with disabilities in Regions 3 and 4. Through the programme, the beneficiaries benefitted from job coaching, psychosocial support, career guidance, capacity building, among other areas of support and empowerment.



Group photo showing the speakers

# Orientation and Mobility Programme Launch

On Tuesday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021, GCOPD in partnership with ExxonMobil Guyana and the Office of the First Lady, launched its Orientation and Mobility programme for persons who are blind and visually impaired. The workshop was held under the Bardi Benab, State House (Carmichael street entrance, Georgetown). Speakers present included Mr. Ganesh Singh (GCOPD Programme Coordinator), Her Excellency Arya Ali, First Lady of Guyana, Her Excellency Sarah Ann Lynch (US Ambassador to Guyana), and Mr. Allister Routledge (President of ExxonMobil Guyana).



Group photo showing the speakers

# **BOARD OF INDUSTRIAL TRAINING SKILLS TRAINING SESSIONS**

## **Introduction**

The Board of Industrial Training (BIT) aims to provide opportunities for persons with disabilities to acquire skills that would enable them to become fully functional members of the workforce. Through workshops and training sessions, participants learned a variety of skills, such as food preparation, general office administration, and numerous others. These skills allow participants to be independent and create their own opportunities, such as opening a food business or working in an office environment. The BIT sessions have greatly contributed to the growth and development of the participants, and have made a positive impact on their lives.

## **Disability Studies Training Course for Persons with Disabilities**

The programme ran from July 1st, 2021 to September 29th, 2021, totaling 12 weeks. The method of delivery was via the virtual platform Zoom, and the total number of trainees was 16. This programme provided training to individuals in the Caribbean region, who are living with a disability, on the use of assistive technology to increase inclusion and empowerment.

# **Introduction to Spanish for Persons with Disabilities**

Training was delivered twice a week on the online platform; Zoom. The five trainees were provided with recordings, handouts, and presentations to learn the course content. Topics covered are as follows; Greetings and farewell, personal information, the family, telling time, the weather, parts of the body and preferences. In summary, the programme was a success, and all trainees were able to practice the words and terms used, and all five of them scored well in their assessments.

## **General Office Administration for Persons with Disabilities**

A total of twenty-one trainees were given training in the area of General Office Administration. The sessions ran over a period of four months from May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021 to September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021 via the Zoom online platform. Trainees completed a total of sixteen modules under the topics; preparation for work, application of basic communication skills, delivery of quality customer service, handling telephone calls, developing keyboard skills, typing and copying routine documents, receiving visitors, locating and storing files in a paper based system, operating a personal computer, using business equipment and developing professionalism, working efficiently in a business environment, participating in workplace safety procedures, providing information to clients, recording, storing and supplying user information using a paper and lastly, displaying human relations skills.

# Food Preparation and Pastry Making Skills Training for Persons with Disabilities

This was a four month course instructed by Ms. Lorean Brower, to a total of eleven trainees which were all persons with disabilities. The training ran from March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021 to August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, and covered areas such as hygiene rules, different methods of cooking, creating dishes suitable for different food preferences, making desserts etc. After teaching was over, in the final week of the programme, trainees were required to pick a dish that was taught to them and individually prepare it at home. Below are some of the dishes made.



Dishes prepared by trainees for their final presentation



# STEM ROBOTICS

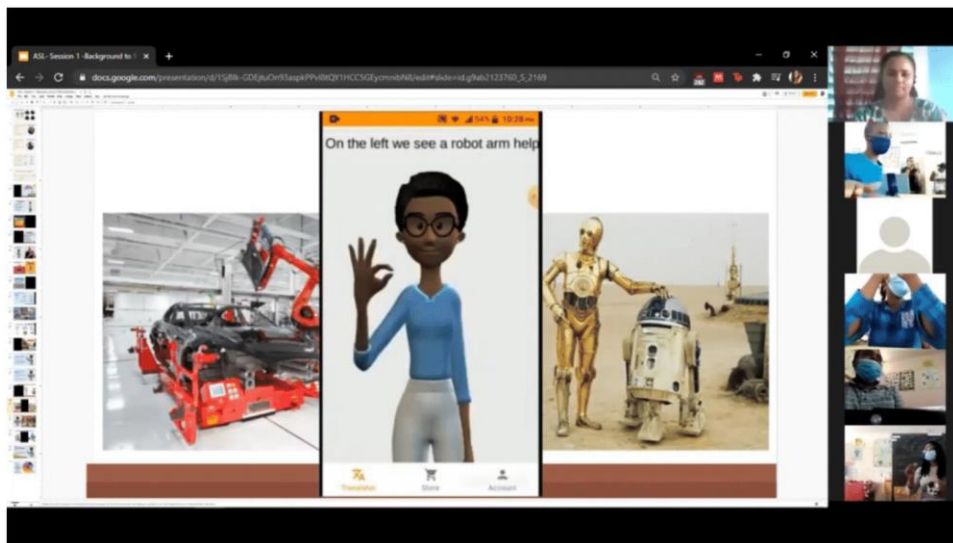
The STEM-Robotics Special Educational Needs (SEN) Program was initiated by Guyana Council of Organisations for Persons with Disabilities (GCOPD) in conjunction with the Computer Science Department at the University of Guyana and the University of Guyana Robotics Club (UGRC). It was designed to introduce students to STEM and Robotics' fundamentals with the hope to equalize opportunities and education for persons with disabilities.

Face-to-Face learning was planned and executed in February 2020 with UGRC mentors: Timothy Sinclair, Lisa Persaud and Penelope DeFreitas visiting the David Rose Special School. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, an online mode for learning was adopted where UGRC mentors virtually joined the teachers and students at the school. The lead mentors for this group were Obena Vanlewin and Joyann Todd with support mentors from Farnaz Baksh and Matevž Zorec.

During the program's planning stages, Amazon Fire Tablets were sourced and distributed to each student to remove device availability as a limitation. Additionally, Green Science DIY Solar Rover Kits were purchased so that each student was allowed to use their hands for building and learning about Robotics.



STEM Robotics Programme Launch



Sign language avatars used in the presentation to communicate with the students and teachers at

David Rose Special School



Student assembling his solar rover kit with the aid of the Zoom PowerPoint presentation

# SURVEY REPORTS

## The Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on the Quality of Life of People with Disabilities in Guyana

Over the period November 20, 2021 to December 6, 2021 the Guyana Council of Organisations for Persons with Disabilities (GCOPD) surveyed 1,523 persons living with disabilities in Guyana, in order to determine the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on their quality of life. A questionnaire was constructed around two **primary research questions**:

1. For persons living with disabilities in Guyana, how has the pandemic affected the quality of life?
2. For persons living with disabilities in Guyana, which areas of life were most affected by the pandemic?

Table 1: Calculation of Number of Persons to be Interviewed, by Region

Region	No. People with Disabilities ( $R_i^D$ )	Percentage of People Living with Disabilities ( $\frac{R_i^D}{R_i} \times 100$ )	Number of People Living with Disabilities Sampled
2	958	7	111
3	2,572	20	298
4	3,906	30	452
5	1,159	9	134
6	3,221	25	373
10	1,137	9	132

# Results

## Demographic Information:

Figure 1: Ages of Respondents

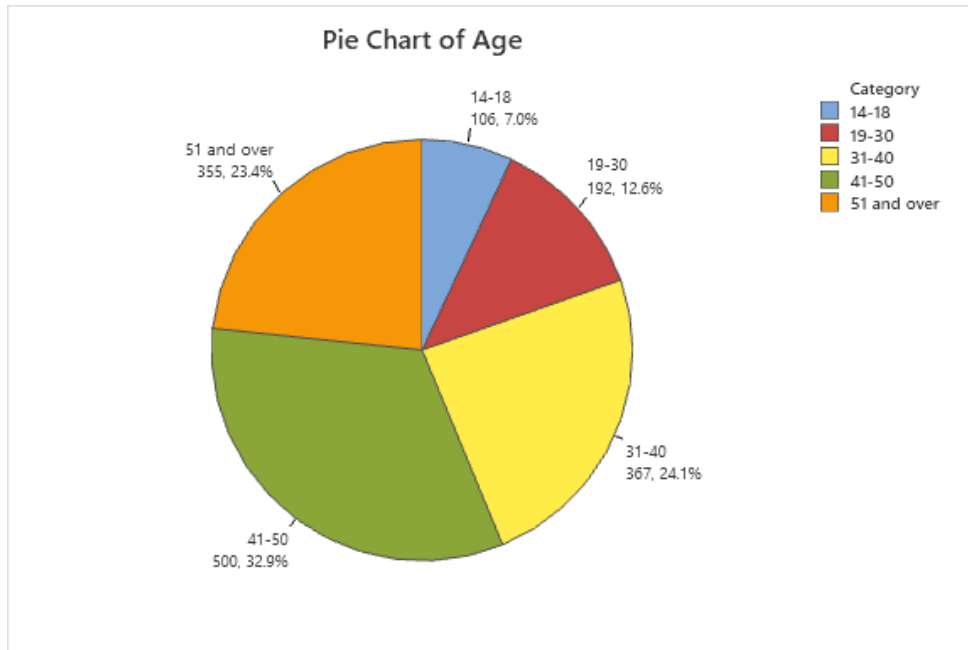


Figure 2: Gender of Respondents

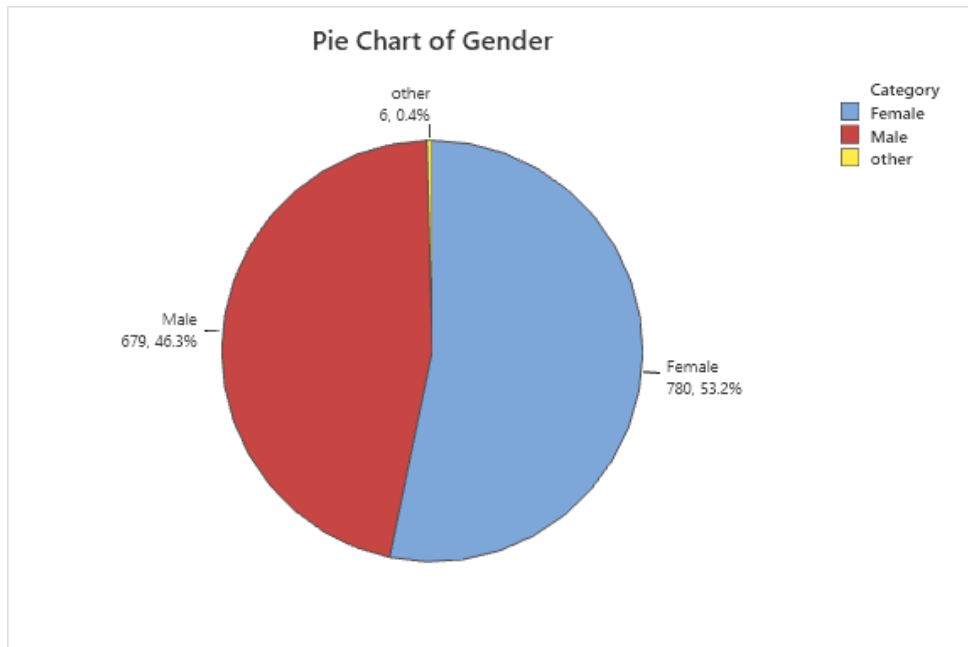


Figure 3: Respondents by Administrative Region

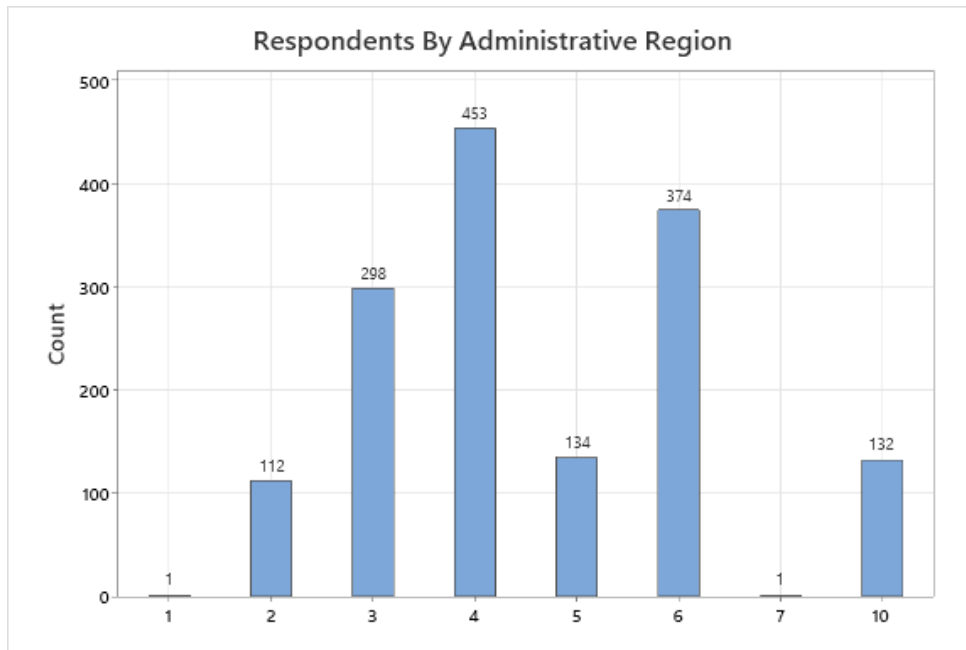
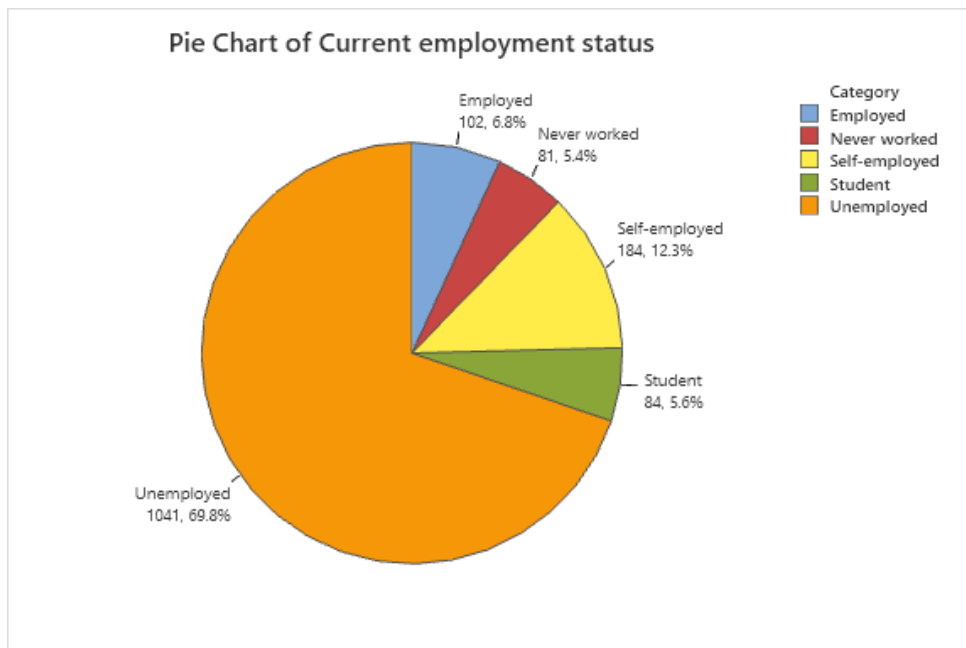


Figure 4: Employment Status of Respondents



## Health Services & Access to Health Services:

Figure 5: Access to Health Services

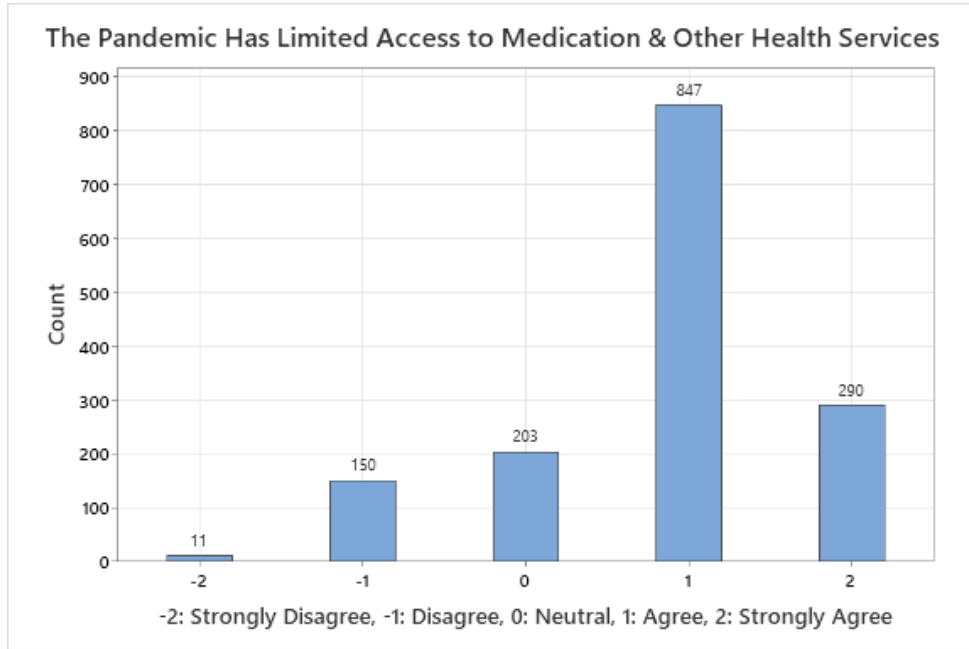


Figure 6: Inability to Access Health Services

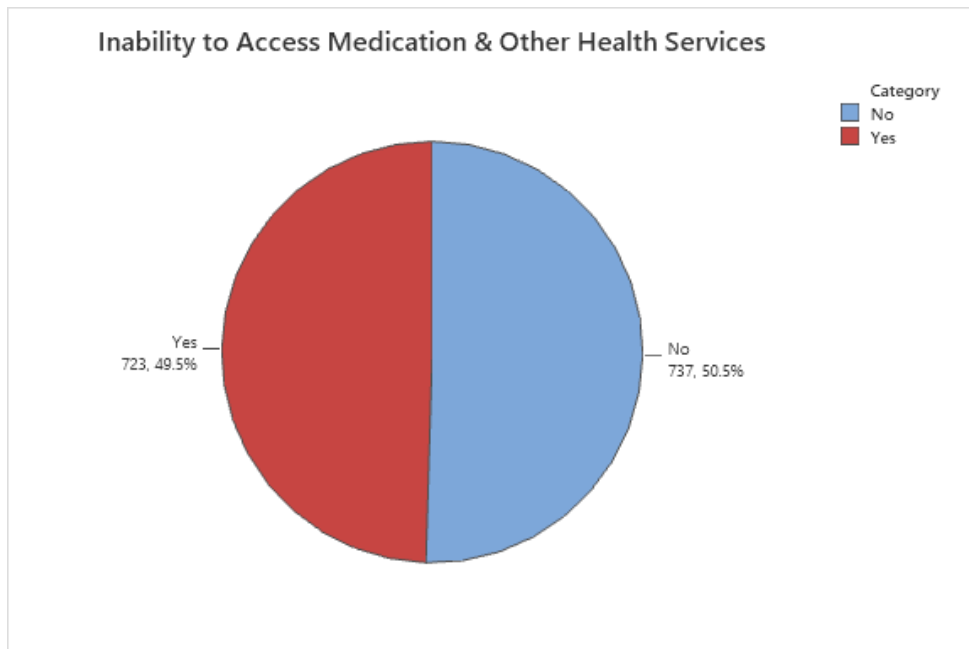


Figure 7: Transportation to Health Services

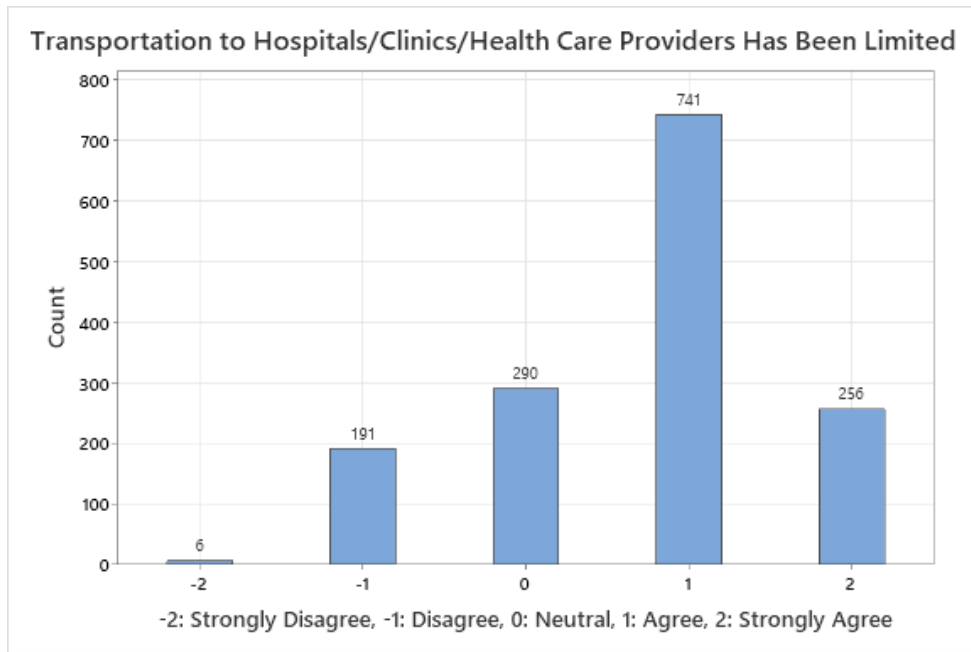
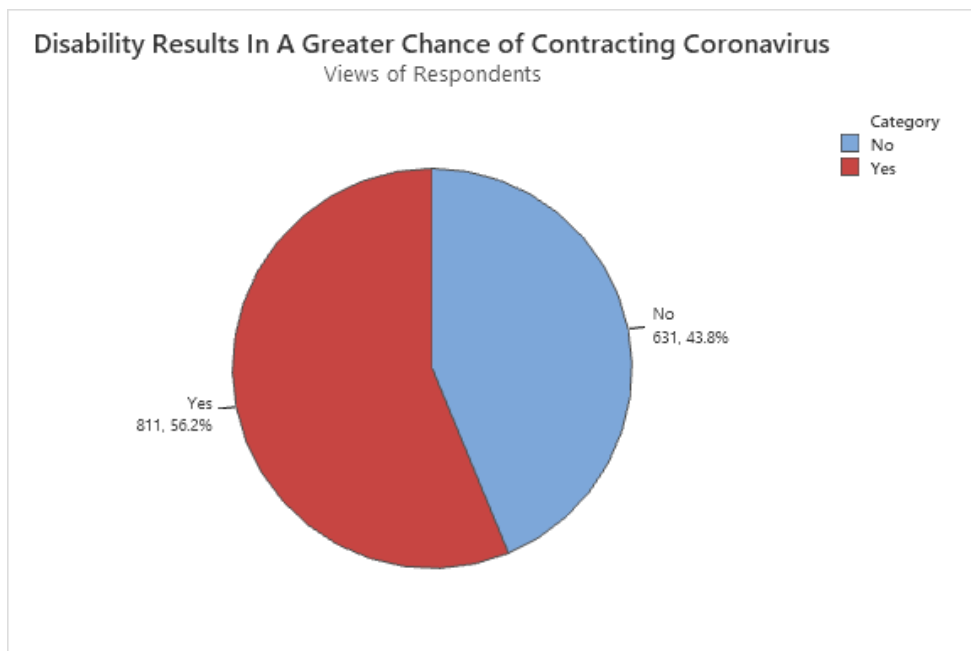


Figure 8: Risk of Contracting Coronavirus





## Discussion of Pandemic's Impact on Health Services and Access to Health Services

1137 persons, or 75% of the respondents (*see figure 5*), indicated that their access to medication and other health services had been limited by the pandemic, while 723 respondents (47.5%, *see figure 6*) were completely unable to access such health services. More specifically, 997 respondents (65.5%, *see figure 7*) had their transportation to hospitals/clinics/healthcare providers limited. Using the 3% estimate stated in the previous paragraph, approximately 37,755 people with disabilities have had their access to health services limited, with 23,912 people completely unable to access health services. These figures, although they are rough estimates, clearly highlight the widespread impact of the pandemic on one critical aspect of the lives of people with disabilities in Guyana. Moreover, 811 respondents (53.3%, *see figure 8*) felt that their disability resulted in a greater chance of them contracting coronavirus.

An examination of the results of the questionnaire shows that, of the categories dealt with, many were negatively impacted, some remained neutral, but none changed positively. Thus, an aggregation of the impacts of the pandemic on these aspects of life could only reveal a net negative impact. Therefore, an answer to the first question posed in the conclusion can be reached.

The quality of life of those living with disabilities in Guyana has decreased as a result of the pandemic, particularly impacting access to health services and social well-being.



## **Guyana Council of Organization for Persons with Disabilities**

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