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Participatory communication, COVID-19, and people with disabilities in Nigeria**Dennis Ekwemnachukwu Okeke***Pan African University (The African Union University), Yaounde, Cameroon*

This paper sets out to investigate access to COVID-19 updates by people with disabilities in Nigeria, and the instrumentality of participatory communication in the global pandemic.

The global pandemic heightened inequality and the marginalization of people living with disabilities in Nigeria. Largely unnoticed in the general media, disabled individuals face increased healthcare social, and economic risks hence, this paper was born out of the need to shed light on the implications and the importance of an all-inclusive response through participatory communication to limit the impact of coronavirus disease on people with disabilities in Nigeria. The paper utilized mixed methods in achieving its objective. The area of study was restricted to Anambra state, Nigeria.

This work revealed that in addition to the extreme hardship people with disabilities face, a majority of the respondents lack access to sources of information on COVID-19; thereby increasing their susceptibility to the pandemic. This paper ascertains the need for access to information by people with disabilities. The paper concludes by emphasizing the need to adopt an all-inclusive communication approach in health crises, which is the core principle of participatory communication, in protecting the most vulnerable.

Biography

Dennis Okeke is a Nigerian and African Union Scholar at the Pan African University, Yaounde, Cameroun. He co-founded TRI-AFRICA and handles her Communications and Social Relations department in Nigeria. Dennis Okeke graduated among the top 1% from Nnamdi Azikiwe University with a first-class honors degree in Mass Communication. He speaks French and English. Mr. Okeke's research interests cut across health communication, media effect theories, and research methods. He has received numerous awards and recognitions and has published peer-reviewed research works in reputable journals. Mr. Okeke has participated in international conferences, where he presented most of my research papers.

okekeekwemnachukwu@gmail.com