

## Executive Summary

### 2022 Disability Survey

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The Disability Survey was first conducted by the National Statistical Office of Thailand in 2002 and has been conducted every five years since. The fifth Disability Survey was conducted during October–December 2022, collecting data on persons with disabilities and their access to public services and welfare, use of computer and internet, and personal assistance. Persons with disabilities are defined as (i) persons who have difficulties or health problems<sup>1/</sup> which limit their activities or (ii) persons with physical, mental and/or intellectual impairment. The sample size of the survey is 88,273 households.

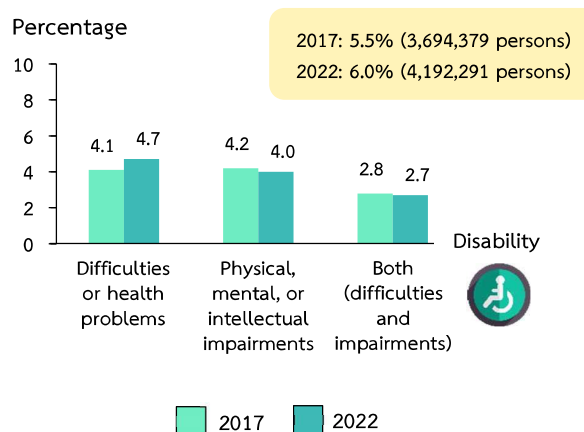
The main findings of the 2022 National Disability Survey are as follows:

#### 1. Persons with disabilities

**The number of persons with disabilities has increased slightly over the last five years.**

The survey found that the number of persons with disabilities as a percentage of the total population had increased from 5.5 per cent in 2017 to 6 per cent in 2022. The number of persons with difficulties or health problems also increased from 4.1 to 4.7 per cent. The main difficulties experienced were mobility issues, namely walking, upper - body movement (lifting objects, such as a drinking bottle) and changing position from lying to sitting. Meanwhile, the percentage of persons with both difficulties/health problems and impairments stayed much the same, at 2.7 per cent.

Figure 1 Percentage of persons with disabilities by type of disability, 2017 and 2022



Note: Respondents can have more than one type of disability.

#### 2. Levels of educational attainment of persons with disabilities aged 5 years and over

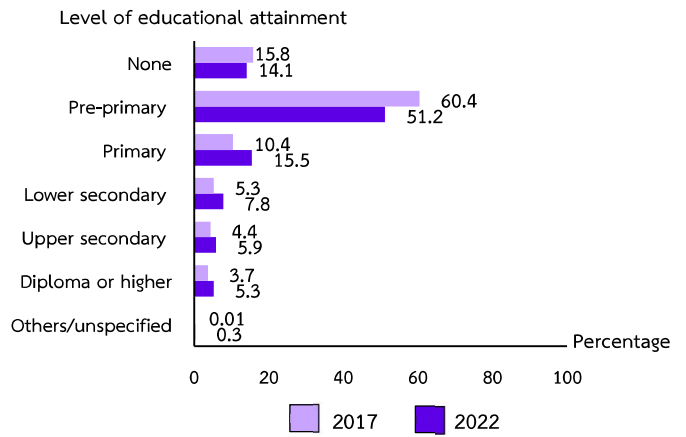
**The inclusion of persons with disabilities in education seems to have improved since 2017.** The survey found that the percentage of persons with disabilities aged 5 years and over receiving education had increased from 84.2 per cent in 2017 to 85.9 per cent in 2022.

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<sup>1/</sup> The 2022 Disability Survey used the Child Functioning Module (CFM) developed by the Washington Group (WG) and UNICEF to collect information on the characteristics of disabilities for children aged between 2-17 years; and used the WG extended question set for adults aged 18 years and over.

The increase was observed at primary and higher levels of education. However, more than half of persons with disabilities still graduated at lower than primary level or did not receive an education at all.

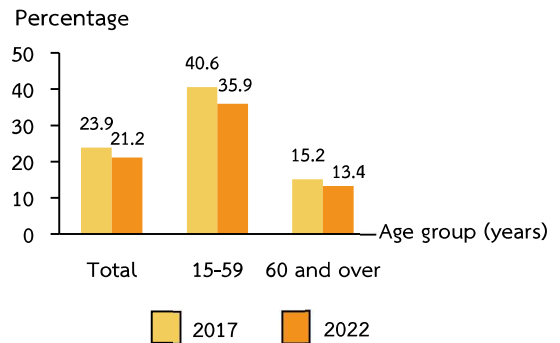
Figure 2 Percentage of persons with disabilities aged 5 years and over, by level of educational attainment, 2017 and 2022



### 3. Employment of persons with disabilities aged 15 years and over

**Persons with disabilities are less likely to be employed.** Looking at the employment of persons with disabilities aged 15 years and over in the last 12 months before the survey was conducted (October 2021–November 2022), it was found that only 1 in 5 (21.2 per cent) were employed. Meanwhile, 35.9 per cent of working age persons (aged 15-59 years) and only 13.4 per cent of older persons (aged 60 years and over) were employed in 2022. These ratios are lower than in 2017.

Figure 3 Percentage of persons with disabilities aged 15 years and over who are employed by age, 2017 and 2022

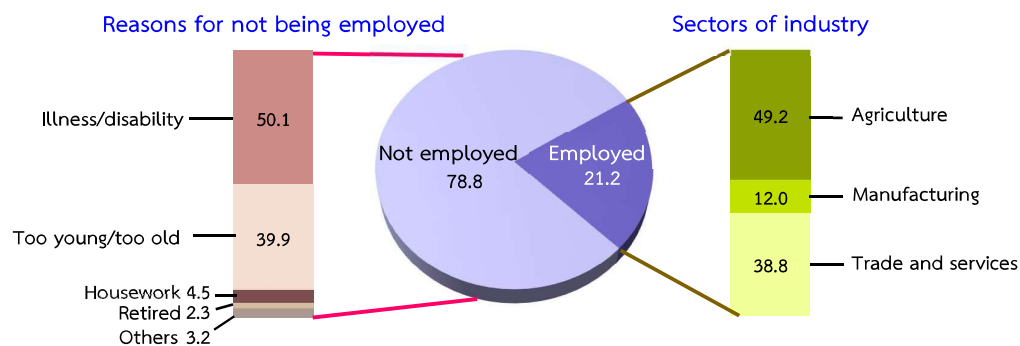


Note: Being employed is defined as working over 1 hour in exchange for cash/non-cash compensation, being a contributing family worker, or having a full-time job.

In 2022, almost half of employed persons with disabilities (49.2 per cent) were employed in the agricultural sector, followed by the trade and service sector (38.8 per cent) and manufacturing sector (12 per cent).

For persons with disabilities who were not employed during this period, 50.1 per cent cited illness and disability as the reason, while 39.9 per cent cited age (either being too young or too old), and 4.5 per cent cited housework as their reason for not working.

Figure 4 Percentage of persons with disabilities aged 15 years and over by employment status, sector of industry and reason for not being employed, 2022



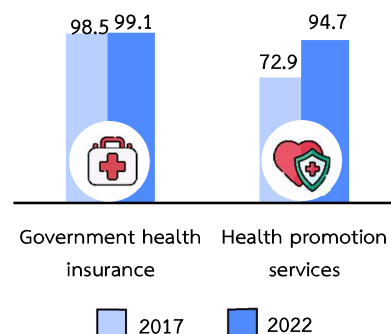
Note: Other reasons included studying, losing a job due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and caring duties (looking after patients/persons with disabilities/children/elderly persons, etc).

#### 4. Access to public welfare

Persons with disabilities in Thailand generally have access to government health insurance and health promotion services.

The survey found that, in 2022, almost all persons with disabilities have access to government health insurance and health promotion services (99.1 and 94.7 per cent, respectively). The inclusiveness of public welfare for persons with disabilities has improved considerably compared to 2017.

Figure 5 Percentage of persons with disabilities who have access to public welfare by type of welfare, 2017 and 2022



Note: Health promotion services include, for example, annual health screening, diabetes screening, vaccination, etc.

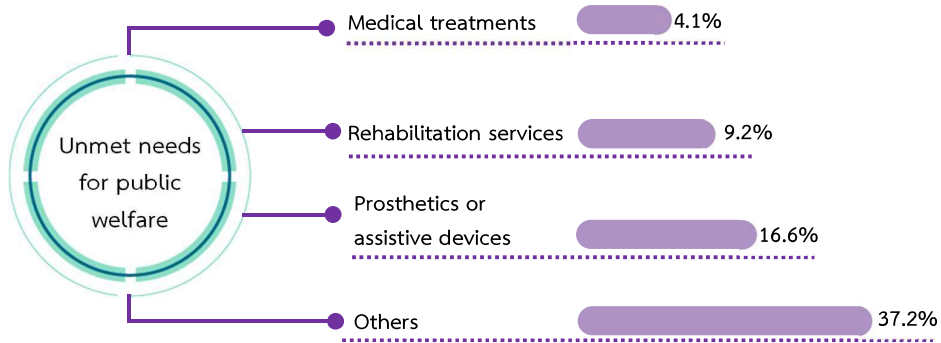
However, when respondents were asked about their unmet needs – including access to medical treatments, rehabilitation services, prosthetics or assistive devices for persons with disabilities, or other needs – it was clear that several gaps remain.

Firstly, 4.1 per cent reported a lack of access to medical treatments, while 9.2 per cent did not have access to rehabilitation services, mostly because there was no-one who could take them to get the services, the journey was too far or involved inconvenient transportation, or the respondent had no money to pay for the services or transportation costs, etc.

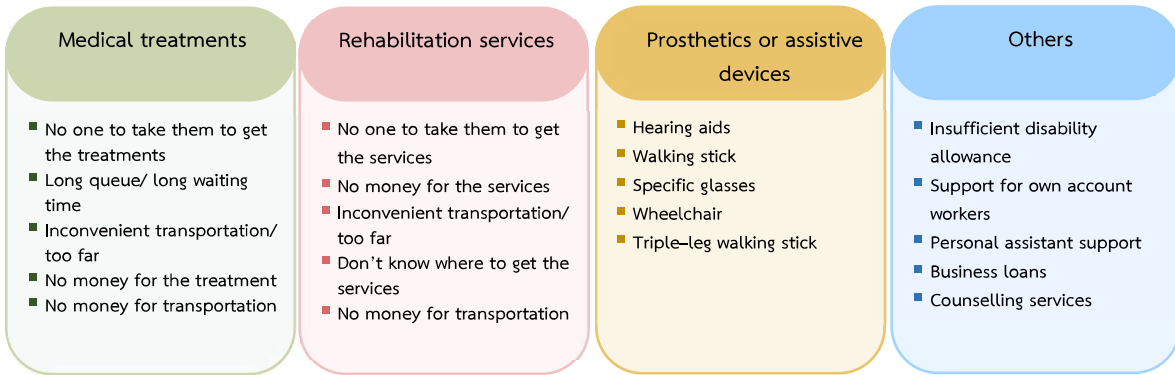
Moreover, 16.6 per cent did not have access to prosthetics or assistive devices in the last five years before the survey took place. The top five equipment items needed were hearing aids, walking stick, specific glasses, wheelchair and triple-leg walking stick.

Lastly, over 1 in 3 persons with disabilities (37.2 per cent) still had other unmet public welfare needs, including insufficient disability allowance, lack of support for own account workers, and difficulty accessing personal assistants, business loans and counselling services.

Figure 6 Percentage of persons with disabilities having unmet public welfare needs by type of welfare, 2022



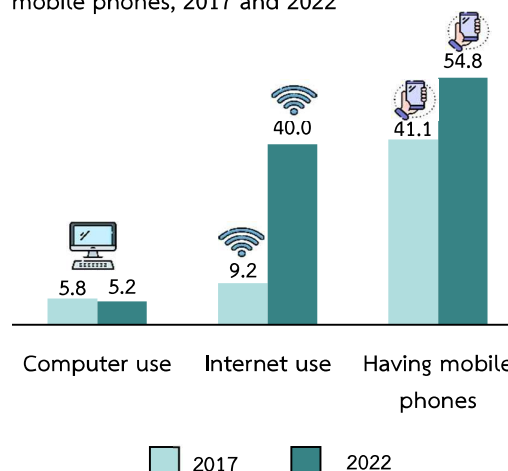
Top 5 difficulties or unmet needs of persons with disabilities



## 5. Access to information and communication technologies

The 2022 Disability Survey found that persons with disabilities are more likely to have access to information and communication technologies through internet and mobile devices. The survey found that 40 per cent of persons with disabilities aged 5 years and over had internet access, and over half (54.8 per cent) owned mobile phones, while not many (5.2 per cent) used computers.

Figure 7 Percentage of persons with disabilities aged 5 years and over with access to computers, internet and mobile phones, 2017 and 2022



The percentage of persons with disabilities with internet access in 2022 has increased over four times, compared to 2017. The possession of mobile phones has increased over 10 per cent, while computer use has decreased slightly.

## 6. Policy recommendations

The government should provide support to enable persons with disabilities to be independent, attain a decent quality of life, and fully participate in society in a sustainable manner. As such, the following recommendations are made:

**6.1 Support persons with disabilities to have equal access to education or be able to continue study at higher levels,** so that they can develop themselves, gain knowledge and skills to earn a living, and have access to social security. They should also have access to business loans to enable them to be independent and improve the quality of their lives.

**6.2 Enhance the employability and career opportunities of persons with disabilities.** As well as improving access to entrepreneurship programmes, the government or concerned agencies should develop partnerships with the private sector to incentivise them to employ more persons with disabilities. This could include measures such as tax deduction for businesses which recruit persons with disabilities.

**6.3 Improve access to medical treatments and rehabilitation services** by deploying mobile units to provide healthcare services at homes or in communities. This will reduce the barriers currently faced by persons with disabilities, such as transportation issues or costs, and facilitate persons with disabilities to continually receive appropriate medical treatment and rehabilitation services.

**6.4 Provide equipment, prosthetics or assistive devices for persons with disabilities in an inclusive manner.** The top five equipment items needed by persons with disabilities are hearing aids, walking stick, specific glasses, wheelchair and triple-leg walking stick. Other welfare needs should also be addressed, including improved provision of personal assistant support and an increased disability allowance amount. These measures will improve persons with disabilities' access to education, employment, social participation and public welfare and services, thus improving their quality of life and reducing social inequality.

**6.5 Support all persons with disabilities to have access to information and communication technologies,** as these technologies will help to facilitate lifelong learning and keep persons with disabilities updated on the world around them, which will prevent them from falling victim to online and telephone scams and other criminal activities.