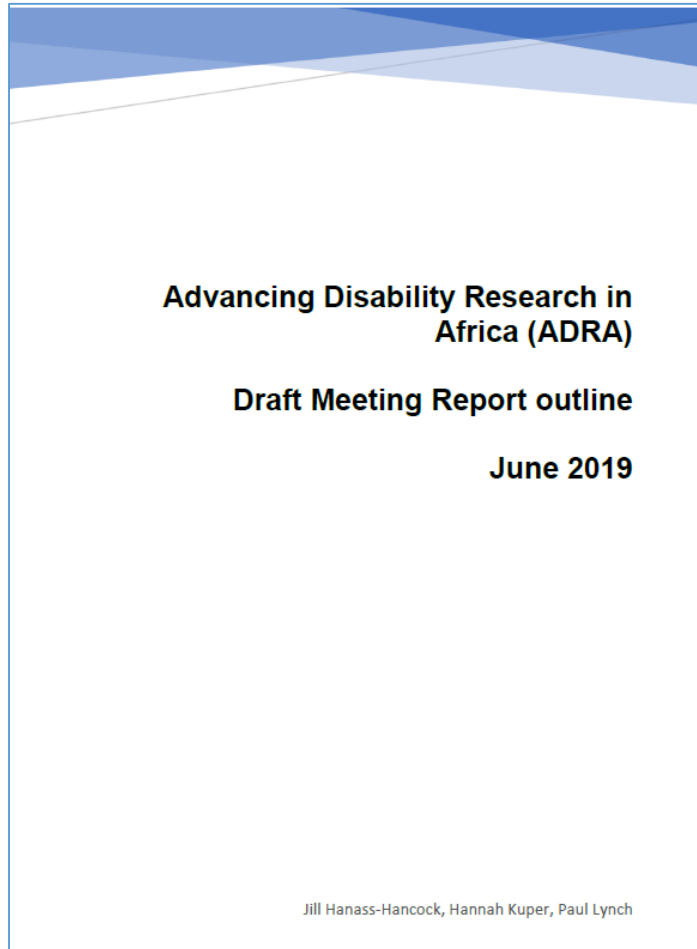


# ADVANCING DISABILITY INCLUSIVE RESEARCH IN AFRICA

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# What is ADIRA?



The idea of ADIRA was developed in 2019 by African academics and research institutes with the support of Northern collaborators, with long term experience in disability research in Africa (the first meeting report is accessible on the ADIRA website).

The space is created with the understanding, that evidence-based programmes, meaningful involvement of people with disabilities, leadership from Africa, as well as community co-creation of applied research are all essential parts of developing a more equitable and inclusive society in Africa.

The space encourages South-South-North learning and aims to connect and build the capacity of researchers in Africa with support from the Global North. The network particularly encourages research led by researchers from Africa including researchers with disabilities.

# Why do we need ADIRA?

- 1) Providing better and more data about all aspects of disability and rehabilitation in Africa and from an African perspective and from a perspective of people with disabilities in Africa
- 2) Building a network of researchers that can drive disability research to inform policy and practise in Africa
- 3) Building capacity of emerging researchers and providing a 'disability research warehouse' for researchers
- 4) Improving disability inclusion and accessibility in academic institutions and programmes
- 5) Raising awareness for resource allocation to African based researchers and support for researchers with disabilities
- 6) Driving knowledge translation and dissemination
- 7) Involving people with disabilities in research long term and meaningful

# Who can conduct disability research in Africa?

The 2019 ADIRA meeting conducted a rapid assessment of research projects and funding known to the participating 25 disability researchers from Europe and Africa.

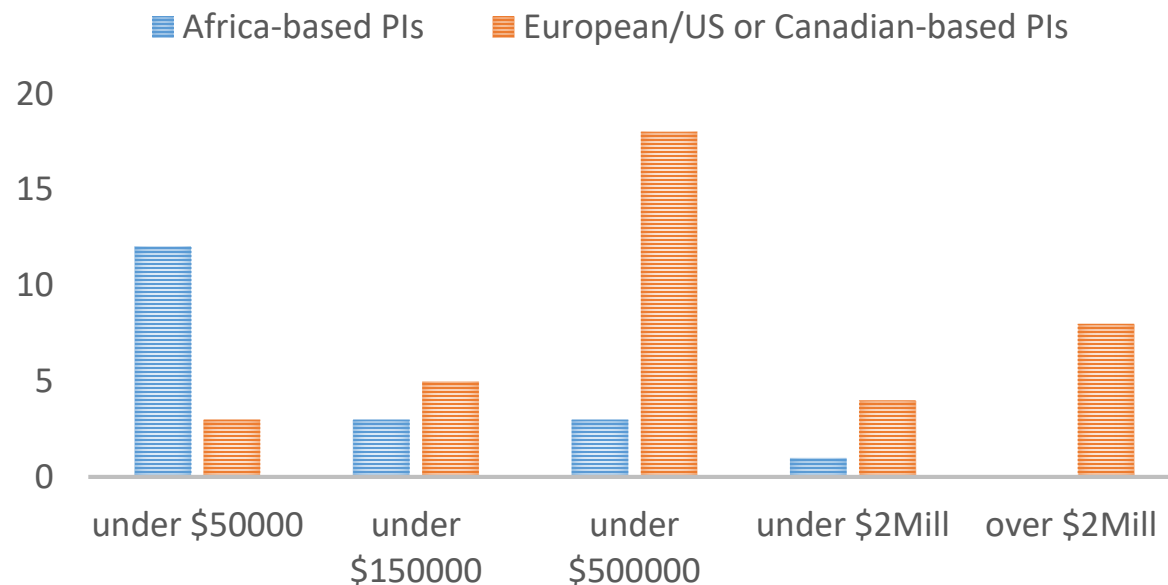
The graph on the right is not representative, but suggests high funding and support inequalities of researchers based in Africa versus those from Europe/US or Canada.

## Question:

Are disability researchers double disadvantaged?

- 1) Because less investments are made into their academic development and growth?
- 2) Because there is less funding and support for disability studies?
- 3) Because African based researchers are less likely to receive major grants?

SNAPSHOT OF FUNDING FOR DISABILITY RESEARCH IN AFRICA



# Who can publish disability research in Africa?

Funding is essential to allocate resources and time to publications (below an extreme example of a publication rejection of an African based researcher, who has conducted most research utilising spare time and support from students and other colleagues in the field)

*Thank you for submitting your manuscript [title of article] to BMC Public Health.*

*I have assessed your manuscript and regret to inform you that it cannot be considered for peer-review. Please find my comments at the end of this email. Please note that this decision applies across the BMC-series journals (<https://www.biomedcentral.com/authors/bmcseries#journalist>).*

*I wish you every success with your research and hope that you will consider us again in the future.*

*Best wishes, (editors name withheld)*

*BMC Public Health*

*<https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/>*

*Editor comments:*

*Thank you for your submission to BMC Public Health. Unfortunately, as outlined in our submission guidelines (<https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/submission-guidelines/preparing-your-manuscript/study-protocol>), **we cannot consider protocols for studies that have not received major external funding.***

# Why do African-based researchers need to lead?

- 1) They understand their local context
- 2) They are available in their country after a research project has been completed
- 3) They are continuously engaging with key stakeholders and governments and can translate research into policy and programmes

Without enabling African based researchers to lead research we will continue to see “helicopter science” that has little long-term impact on policy and practice. This specifically includes African based researchers with disabilities! In order to get there we need:

- Capacity building for emerging researchers and a ‘disability research warehouse’
- Funding and resources for African based emerging and established researchers as PIs
- Respect for research approaches and innovation from Africa (including publishing, sighting and promoting African based researchers’ publications)

# What are ADIRAs goals and objectives?

The Advancing Disability Inclusive Research in Africa Network (ADIRA) aims to increase innovative and high-quality research in Africa, led by African researchers, to improve the lives of people with disabilities in Africa.

ADIRA sets to:

- Build capacity to conduct research on disability by African researchers, in particular researchers with disabilities
- Conduct innovative and high-quality research on disability in Africa, that has the potential to shape policy and programmes
- Develop a network of researchers in Africa and beyond, to enable sharing evidence and learning on disability in Africa

# What are the next steps?

- 1) ADIRA has developed a basic website in 2019 and interim base at the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) and a LinkedIn young researcher group site
- 2) ADIRA has developed an approach and agenda for the next ADIRA symposia (this has been withheld because of the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic). A funding proposal has been developed and needs to be resubmitted (rejected because of COVID-19 lock down restrictions)
- 3) The ADIRA PhD group has developed an outline for a disability research PhD programme. A proposal needs to be further developed and submitted to potential funders)
- 4) ADIRA needs resources to build a 'disability research warehouse' and for this purpose resources to build a comprehensive and accessible website
- 5) ADIRA needs to identify a long-term base in an academic institution that will have the capacity to reach out to many Universities in Africa



# Thanks you

Interim Website

<https://www.samrc.ac.za/intramural-research-units/ADIRA>