



**THE IMPACT OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR ON PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES HOUSEHOLDS IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH: A
CAPABILITY APPROACH FROM SIERRA LEONE**

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of Study: This research aims to quantify the impacts of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war on households, particularly those with persons with disabilities (PwDs), in Sierra Leone. It investigates how the war affects PwD households more significantly than non-PwD households and how these effects contribute to increased vulnerability and poverty.

Statement of Problem: Existing literature has largely ignored the specific vulnerabilities of PwD households during crises like the Russia-Ukraine war, focusing instead on macroeconomic impacts or treating all households as homogenous. This study seeks to address this gap by examining the channels through which the war affects PwD households in Sierra Leone.

Methodology: The study employs Sen's capability approach as the framework to assess the war's impact on PwD households. Data was collected by Statistics Sierra Leone from November 2022 to January 2023, with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), involving 5,760 households. Percentages, Chi-Square, and Diffusion Index were used to analyze the dataset.

Result: The study found that the Russia-Ukraine war has significantly reduced the capabilities of PwD households to function and achieve their goals through the following channels: worsening employment outcomes, increased food insecurity, harmful coping strategies, and a decline in social network support. This has heightened the risk of vulnerability and poverty among these households.

Conclusion: The paper concludes that the Russia-Ukraine war has disproportionately impacted PwD households in Sierra Leone, exacerbating their vulnerability to poverty. The reduction in their capabilities to function effectively has worsened their overall well-being.

Recommendation: The study recommends targeted social protection support for PwD households, including food assistance and support for micro, small, and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs), to shield them from the lingering impacts of the war-induced inflation and economic slowdown.

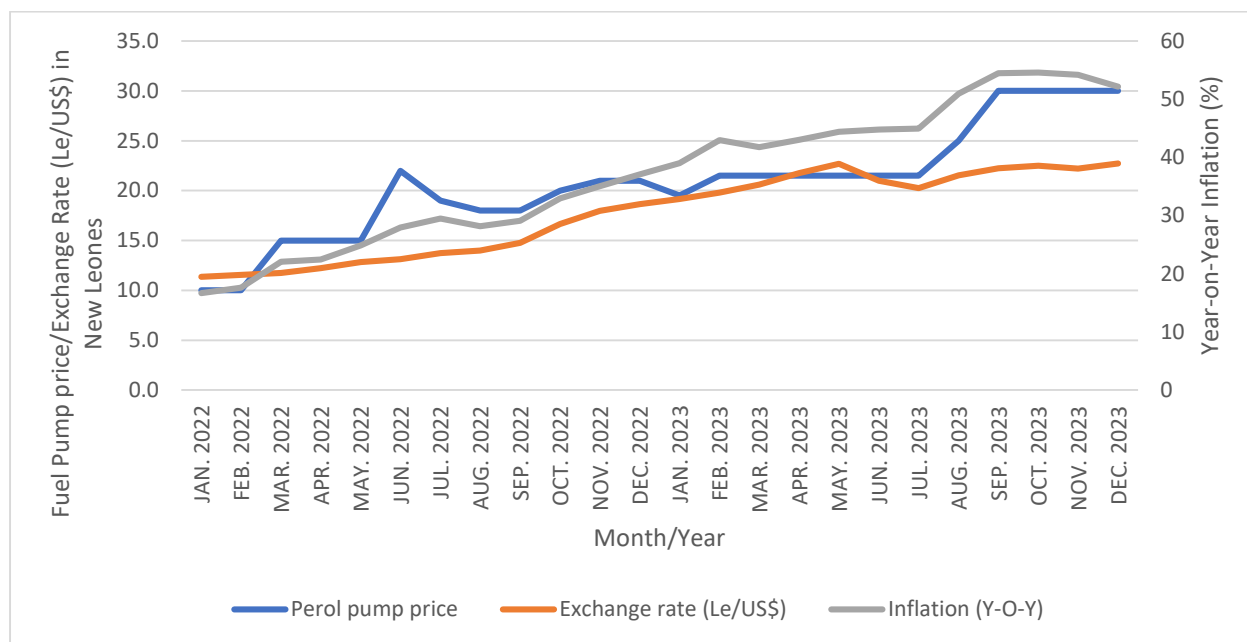
Keywords: *Persons with disabilities, Russia-Ukraine war, household, capability approach, impact.*

INTRODUCTION

The Russia-Ukraine war, which began on February 24, 2022, has had widespread global impacts, particularly on food, fuel, and economic stability, hindering the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and affecting efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in many developing countries (UN, 2022). The conflict has exposed 1.7 billion people to food and other crises worldwide (UN, 2022). It has also caused global economic volatility, trade disruptions, and reduced fiscal space for many countries in the global south (Khudaykulova et al., 2022; Al-Saadi, 2023; Pavel & Oksana, 2023). Net food and oil-importing countries, like Sierra Leone, have been disproportionately affected due to the war's impact on key agricultural exports from Russia and Ukraine, such as wheat, sunflower, and fertilizers. Russia's role as a major oil exporter also contributed to rising fuel prices (Abay et al., 2023). The UN report highlights the severe food insecurity facing millions, with 181 million people affected in 2022, and 19 million experiencing chronic undernourishment in 2023 due to reduced exports and price increases. The war has led to commodity price fluctuations, supply-chain disruptions, and financial sanctions, which have exacerbated global economic instability (Chenaker, 2022; Zaid & Khan, 2022).

Sierra Leone, like many Global South countries, has been struggling with a rising cost of living driven by global increases in fuel and food prices, exacerbated by the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The 2023 Budget Speech highlights how these price surges have worsened food insecurity and eroded citizens' incomes, particularly affecting vulnerable groups and leading to social tensions. The war's impact has also led to a downward revision in GDP growth projections (from 5.9% to 2.8%) and reduced government revenues. In response, the government increased expenditures, raising debt risks, with a debt service

ratio of 37% of domestic revenue. The conflict disrupted global supply chains, causing fuel prices to rise by 120%, a 14% depreciation of the currency, and inflation to reach 54.2% by November 2023.



Source: Data from Bank of Sierra Leone/Statistics Sierra Leone/Petroleum Regulatory Agency

Figure 1: Selected Economic Indicators

At the household level, the WFP Food Security Report confirms that about 73 percent of Sierra Leone’s population was food insecure by December 2022 (WFP, 2022). In other words, the war exacerbated the already precarious living conditions of many population groups nationwide due to rising food and fuel prices. Consequently, the war is blamed for the social disorder that boiled out in the August 10, 2022, protests, which drew thousands of protesters into the streets of Freetown and other parts of the country, to demonstrate against the rising cost of living, food, and fuel in the country. However, the protest turned violent and caused the deaths of more than 30 citizens including police officers (IFRC, 2022), which obscured the initial goal of drawing the attention of the government and partners to the economic conditions at the time.

While the global impact of the Russia-Ukraine war on oil and wheat prices has eased since mid-2023 following an agreement facilitating Ukraine's wheat exports, the market remains volatile (Abay et al., 2023). The ongoing conflict continues to affect domestic prices, cost of living, and government budgets, especially in net food and fuel-importing countries. However, existing literature tends to focus on macroeconomic impacts, with limited

attention to household-level assessments, particularly of vulnerable groups like persons with disabilities (PwDs). Studies often treat households as homogeneous, neglecting the specific challenges faced by PwDs, who are disproportionately affected by crises and often excluded from development programmes. This gap in data and research leads to ineffective crisis mitigation strategies and higher poverty and unemployment risks for PwDs (Diba & Zakaria, 2021; Park et al., 2020).

Furthermore, there is growing evidence in the literature of the applicability of Sen's Capability Approach (CA) in addressing PwDs issues, covering the aspects of education, health, public policy, access to services, and poverty. For example, Mizunoya et al., (2018) adopted the CA to explore how to deliver practical schooling opportunities for children with disabilities; and the authors concluded that children with disabilities have a reduced probability of school attendance due to their conditions. Ton et al. (2021) employed the CA to assess the plight of PwDs during disasters and concluded that PwDs are usually disproportionately impacted by disasters than their non-disabled peers. Other studies focus on health and disability covering epidemics and services (e.g. see: Ruger & Mitra, 2015), public policy and disability (Trani et al., 2011, Biggeri et al., 2011), and disability and multidimensional poverty and food insecurity (Trani & Cunnings 2013). However, the CA application on the impact of geopolitical tensions and war, especially on PwD households remains limited; the subject has so far eluded researchers, especially in Sierra Leone.

This study aims to address these gaps in the literature by applying the capability approach to assess the impacts of the Russia-Ukraine war on households with persons with disabilities (PwDs) in Sierra Leone. It examines how the war has diminished the capabilities of PwD households, leading to a decline in their freedom and well-being. Specifically, the study focuses on the impact of the war on employment, income, and livelihoods of these households; investigates their coping strategies and the effects on their functions and well-being; and explores the impacts on access to services and social network support. The findings contribute to the capability approach by identifying the channels through which the war affects PwD households, increasing their risk of heightened poverty. The paper is structured as follows: Section II discusses the status of PwDs in Sierra Leone, Section III outlines Sen's Capability Approach as the theoretical framework, Section IV details the methodology, Section V presents the findings and discussions, and Section VI concludes with recommendations based on the study's findings.

Status Of Persons with Disability (PwDs)

Disability has evolved from being seen solely as a medical condition to a significant development issue, particularly under the 2030 Agenda's "Leave No One Behind" principle. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) adopted in 2006 marks a milestone in recognizing the rights of PwDs globally. According to the WHO, about 15% of the global population, or more than a billion people, are disabled, with this number increasing due to the aging population (WHO, 2011). Disability is closely linked to issues like marginalization, discrimination, social exclusion, and lack of economic empowerment, and therefore, policymakers are working to mainstream disability issues into development activities to reduce poverty and vulnerability sustainably (Trania et al., 2009). This study shifts the focus from identifying impairments to understanding how the Russia-Ukraine war has diminished the capabilities, functions, and well-being of PwDs, aiming to inform policies that enhance their capacity and choices.

In Sierra Leone, PwDs face significant discrimination, with limited government action to address their rights and needs. However, the establishment of the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities in 2012 under the 2011 Persons with Disability Act was a positive step in promoting the well-being of PwDs across education, employment, healthcare, and access to services. This Act domesticated the UNCRPD, ensuring the protection of PwDs in conflict and disaster situations. Despite these efforts, data on PwDs in Sierra Leone remains inconsistent, with estimates ranging from 1.3% to 4.3% of the population. The civil conflict (1991-2002), which led to widespread human rights violations, including severed limbs, further increased the PwD population, adding a layer of complexity to the ongoing challenges.

There is growing research on the impact of crises like the 2007-2008 economic crisis, the 2014-2015 Ebola outbreak, and the COVID-19 pandemic on PwDs. Studies show that PwDs face increased discrimination, poverty, unemployment, food insecurity, and limited access to healthcare and education, with these challenges intensifying during crises (Magnusson et al., 2022; Nayar & Mehrotra, 2022). Health crises, particularly Ebola and COVID-19, exacerbate inequalities, as PwDs face a higher risk of contracting diseases and experiencing severe illness and death (Kett et al., 2021; Sheppard-Jones et al., 2021). Additionally, during natural disasters, PwDs suffer from inadequate infrastructure and lack of consultation in response planning, which, combined with limited economic resources, further hampers their ability to cope effectively (Ton et al., 2021). However, much of this

research focuses on individual PwDs rather than examining households, where the burden of care and decision-making often rests. This highlights the need to consider the household as a unit of analysis when assessing the capabilities and resilience of PwDs in crises.

The Capability Approach Theoretical Framework

This paper adopts the Capacity Approach (CA) credited to Professor Amartya Sen, the 1998 Nobel laureate for Economics, which is increasingly leveraged as an alternative measure of human well-being and social justice (Robeyns, 2017). The CA was first proposed in the 1980s as a normative framework to conceptualise poverty and inequality. Since then, it has been extensively applied in many domains of development research and policy including the production and publication of the Human Development Reports (HDRs) since 1990 and the shift in poverty measures from income-focused to multidimensional poverty and social welfare and freedoms (Robeyns, 2017; Clark, 2005; Grech, 2019; Kimhur, 2020). Unlike the resource-based approach, the CA focuses on what people can be or do in a given circumstance to maximise their well-being, rather than relying solely on the material resources they possess or consume (Naz, 2016). This implies a development process that enables people to utilize their reasoned agency and improve their well-being through the choices they set to achieve.

Many scholars have adopted the CA as a relevant framework for addressing disability issues including assessing the status of PwDs in health, education, public policy, food insecurity, poverty, natural disasters, and the interaction between individual characteristics and socio-economic restrictions that relate to choices and freedoms. (e.g. see Mizunoya et al., 2018; Ruger & Mitra, 2015; Biggeri et al., 2011, Trani and Cunnings 2013; Ton et al., 2021). Dubois & Trani (2009, p.17) argue that compared to the medical, social, and other models of disability analysis, the “capability approach offers the widest opportunity to understand and analyse disability issues” since it provides the platform for addressing issues of agency, collective capabilities and responsibility towards PwDs and supporting development policy interventions.

Although the Russia-Ukraine war has been ongoing for nearly three years, its specific impacts on persons with disabilities (PwDs) and their households remain underexplored, especially in the global south, where PwDs already face social exclusion and discrimination (Mbah & Wasum, 2022; Park et al., 2020). This study adopts the capability approach (CA) to assess how the war has affected the capabilities of PwD households,

resulting in a decline in their freedom and well-being. Disability, in this context, is viewed not just as a limitation but as the reduction in the set of capabilities that were previously available to PwDs, restricting their ability to pursue their goals and aspirations. The UNDP (2024) Human Development Report highlights Sierra Leone's low human development score, where cultural and traditional barriers already marginalize vulnerable groups, including PwDs. The war has exacerbated these existing inequalities, pushing PwD households further into poverty by diminishing their mental, economic, and social network capabilities. As a result, the war has compounded the deprivations faced by these households, affecting their overall welfare. This paper contributes to the application of the capability approach by analyzing how the war impacts the capabilities and welfare of PwDs, focusing on the challenges faced during times of geopolitical conflict and war, which has been largely overlooked in previous research. The study draws on household data collected during the war to highlight how the depletion of PwDs' capabilities has worsened food insecurity and overall deprivation in these households.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes a dataset collected by Statistics Sierra Leone from November 2022 to January 2023, with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to assess the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war on households in Sierra Leone. The survey aimed to provide evidence-based policy support to mitigate the impact of rising petroleum prices due to the conflict, especially on vulnerable households. While the survey was not specifically designed to assess the war's impact on PwD households, disability status was included as part of the household characteristics in the data collection. The survey involved face-to-face interviews with 5,760 households across Sierra Leone's 16 administrative districts, predominantly in urban and peri-urban areas. It covered various topics, including income, employment, coping strategies, financial access, and social network support. The Washington Group (WG) definition of disability, in line with the 2006 UNCRPD, was used to assess disability status. A household was considered a PwD household if it included at least one member with a disability, regardless of their role in the household. The data was then recoded into two categories: PwD and non-PwD households and comparisons were made between these groups. To analyze the data, the study employed statistical tools such as percentages, the Chi-Square test (X^2), and the Diffusion Index (DI). The Chi-Square test was used to examine differences in opinions between PwD and non-PwD households regarding the war's impact on household incomes. The DI, adapted from OECD (2003),

was used to gauge household sentiments about the war's impact on their incomes in both the recent past and future months.

$DI = (100 + B)/2$ (eg. 1), where: DI is the Diffusion Index and B is the Net Balances computed as in eq.2 below.

$B = 100 * (P - N)$ (eg. 2), where: P is the fraction of positive responses and N is the fraction of the negative responses in the sample.

The Diffusion Index (DI) was computed based on household income-related questions assessing both the current status and future expectations regarding income since the onset of the Russia-Ukraine war in February 2022. The questions covered whether household income had increased, remained the same, or decreased; the extent to which income had been negatively affected; and expectations for income changes over the next six months. Respondents' answers were assigned specific weights: -1 for a decrease, 0 for no change or uncertainty, and 1 for an increase. Net balances (B) were calculated separately for PwD and non-PwD households by subtracting the number of negative responses from positive ones and then multiplying by 100. These net balances were used to compute the DI, which ranges from 0 to 100. A DI of 50 indicates neutral sentiment, above 50 reflects more positive sentiment, and below 50 indicates more negative sentiment. The DI captured household perceptions of the war's impact on their income and their ability to achieve their goals and function during the conflict.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Prevalence of households with PwDs

The most common form of disability reported is 'limited use or loss of legs', and women-headed households have more persons with disabilities (PwDs) as members than male-headed households. The data in Figure 2 shows that 14.1 percent of households covered had PwDs, and female-headed households are more likely to have a PwD member (15.2%) than male-headed households (13.4%). However, this estimate (based on households) differs from Statistics Sierra Leone's estimate of 4.3 percent, based on the population. Of the households with PwDs, 30.2 percent reported limited use or loss of legs, which is slightly more prevalent among female-headed households (31.8%) than male-headed households (29.2%)

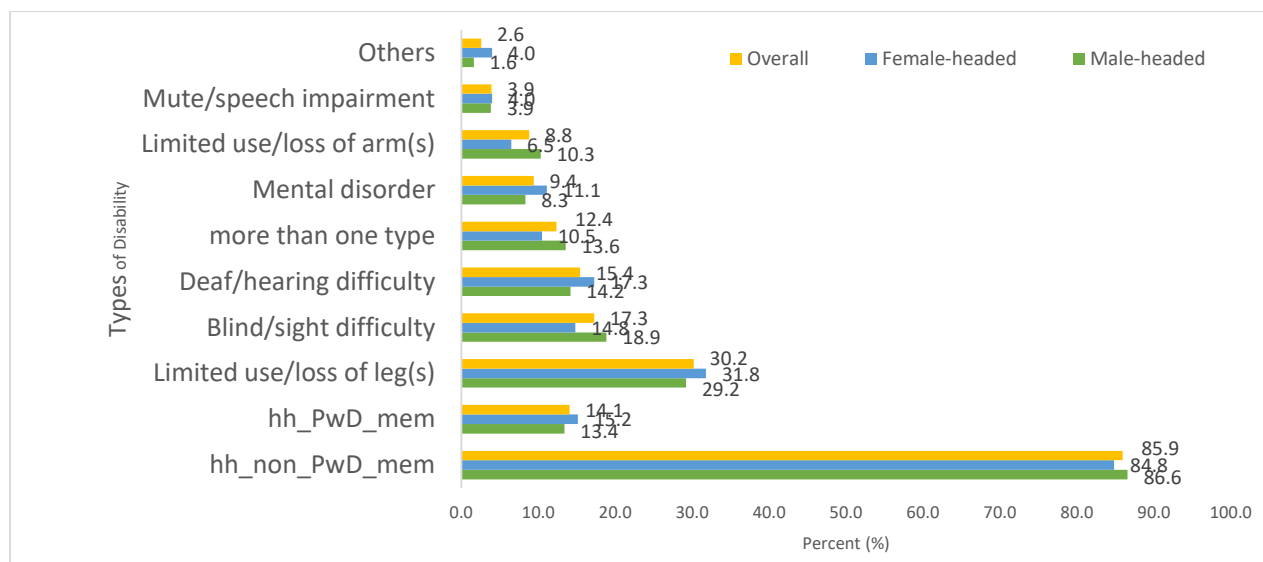


Figure 2: Prevalence of households with PwDs

Other forms of disabilities reported include blindness/sight difficulties (17.3%), Deaf/hearing difficulties (15.4%). More Female-headed households reported having members with mental disorders (11.1%) than male-headed households (8.3%). However, 13.6 percent of male-headed households have members with more than one type of disability compared to 10.5 percent of female-headed households.

Within the context of Sen’s capability approach, disability represents a constraint on the functions of the individual even in normal times, but especially during crises, when everyone else prioritizes his or her survival over others. Consequently, the PwD households are more likely to be impacted by the war than their male counterparts.

Reduced Labour market outcomes

The Russia-Ukraine war worsened labor market conditions in Sierra Leone, where poverty levels were already high, with 60% of the population affected by income or multidimensional poverty. PwD households experienced higher unemployment rates (30.8%) compared to non-PwD households (26.3%), a significant rise from pre-war figures. Additionally, PwD workers were more likely to work informally, often without contracts (19.1% vs. 14.7%). The country's high food insecurity (73%) and low social protection further exacerbated the vulnerability of PwD households to war-induced shocks.

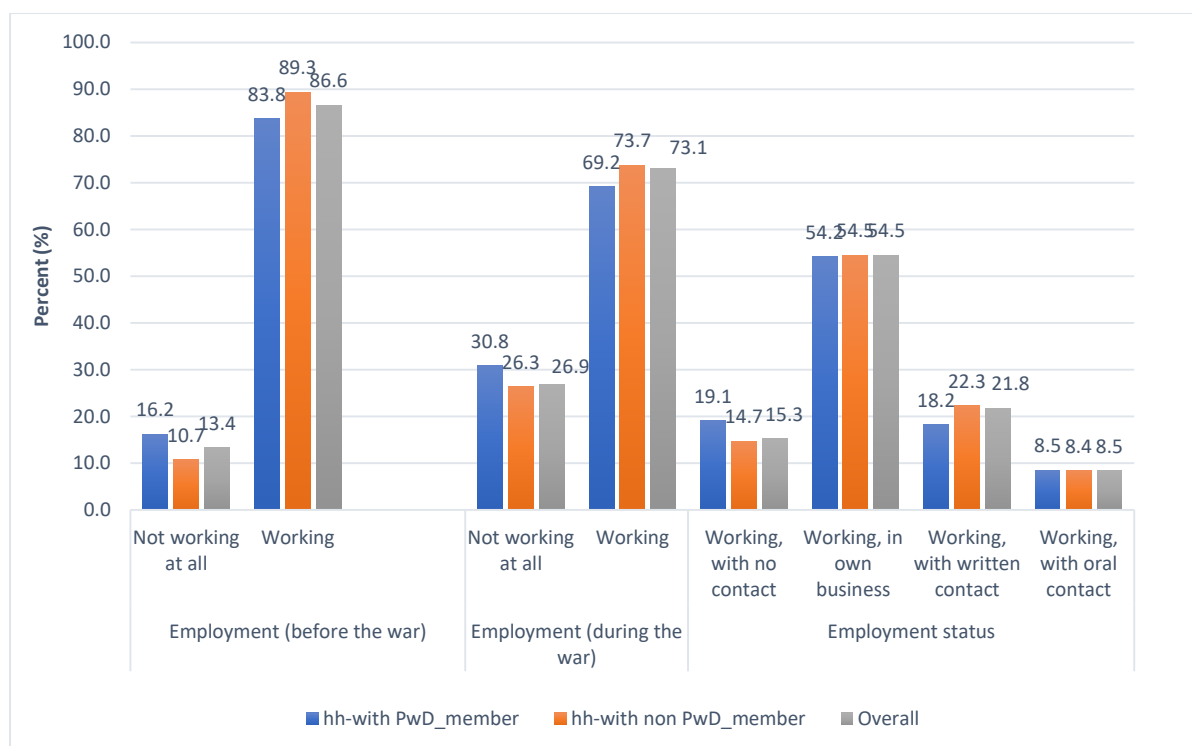


Figure 3: Employment status of household members

Businesses, mostly micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) remain a lifeline for most households in the country, many of them are informal household businesses. Although MSMEs are mostly informal (Statistics Sierra Leone, 2022), most households depend on such businesses (45.2%) or subsistence agriculture activities (17.4%) for their income and livelihood. Non-PwD Households are more likely to have someone in paid employment (24.6%) compared to PwD households (20.3%). Other sources of income covered in the survey include gifts, begging and personal services, some of which are performed by PwDs as a coping strategy more than non-PwD households (Table 1).

Table 1: Source of income for the household

Source of Income	hh_PwD	hh_non-PwD	Overall
Paid work	20.3	24.6	23.9
own or family agriculture	22.6	16.5	17.4
own or family business	42.4	45.6	45.2
Other sources	14.7	13.3	13.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Household Sentiments about The Impact On Incomes

Since February 2022, many households, especially PwD households, have experienced reduced incomes, and expectations for an increase remain dampened in the recent past and

future months of the war, underlining the negative impacts of the war on households with PwDs more than their non-PwD counterparts. The results of the Diffusion Index (DI) in Table 2 below are shown for both PwD and non-PwD households for each of the questions targeting the recent past and future expectations of income increases. All the indices are below 50, which means sentiments are below average. The DI scores on household income loss are all in the twenties (20s), which captures the extent to which households feel their incomes have been negatively affected by the war. Households with PwD tend to slightly hold stronger negative feelings of income loss (22.3%) than households with non-PwDs (24.4%). The DI reveals deep negative sentiments toward the war regarding its impact on household incomes. This means that households with PwDs have disproportionately experienced greater income losses during the course of the war than non-PwDs.

Table 2: Diffusion Index

Category	Diffusion Index (DI)-percent (%)		
	Hh_PwD	Hh_n-PwD	Overall
Has the Income of the household increased, remain the same or decreased since the beginning of the war (February 2022)	28.8	32.6	32.1
To what extent you feel your household income was affected since February 2022	22.3	24.4	24.1
Do you expect the level of household income to increase, remain the same or decrease in the next 6 months of the war?	43.4	50.3	49.3

Chi-Square Tests:	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	27.898a	4	0.000

Also, the DI of 43.4 percent shows that households with PwDs are less positive about their expectation of an income increase during the war period than non-PwD households (50.3%).

The Chi-square (X²) test carried out to show the degree of association between the sentiments and disability status of the households has a value of 27.90, which is significant at the 1% level. The test shows a significant difference in the sentiment expressed by households with PwDs and non-PwDs households regarding the impact of the war on their respective incomes. It shows that households with PwDs expressed far negative sentiments regarding the negative impact of the war on incomes than households without PwDs

Shocks Experienced During the War

Shocks tend to render households vulnerable and increase their risk of falling deeper into poverty; the war exposed many households in Sierra Leone to shocks. The results in Figure 4 show that 74.8 percent of households interviewed faced Russian-Ukraine war-induced shocks such as an increase in fuel and food prices in the country, which reduced people’s purchasing power, and caused widespread poverty (WFP, 2023). Although most households seemed to have been exposed to shocks, Households with PwDs are more likely (83.0%) to face such shocks than non-PwD households (73.5%). PwD households faced more food insecurity in terms of price and availability and fuel crises; while non-PwD households (26%) are more likely not to have experienced shock than PwDs households (17%) during the first 12 months of the war.

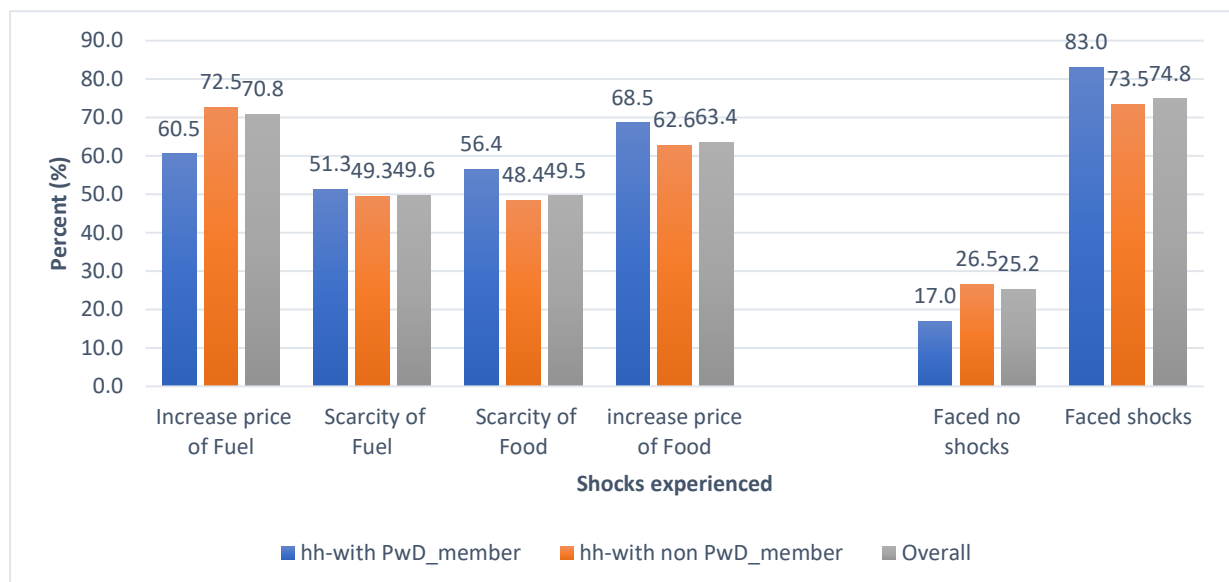


Figure 4: Shocks experienced by the households during the first 12 months of the war

Food and fuel scarcity have significantly stressed PwD households, with 69% reporting higher food prices and 56% facing shortages. These price increases, compounded by inflation, reduce real incomes and strain household budgets. PwD households also experienced reduced demand for goods and services, higher transportation costs, and fewer business clients. Despite many working or owning businesses, their income remained insufficient to meet basic needs, heightening their poverty risk.

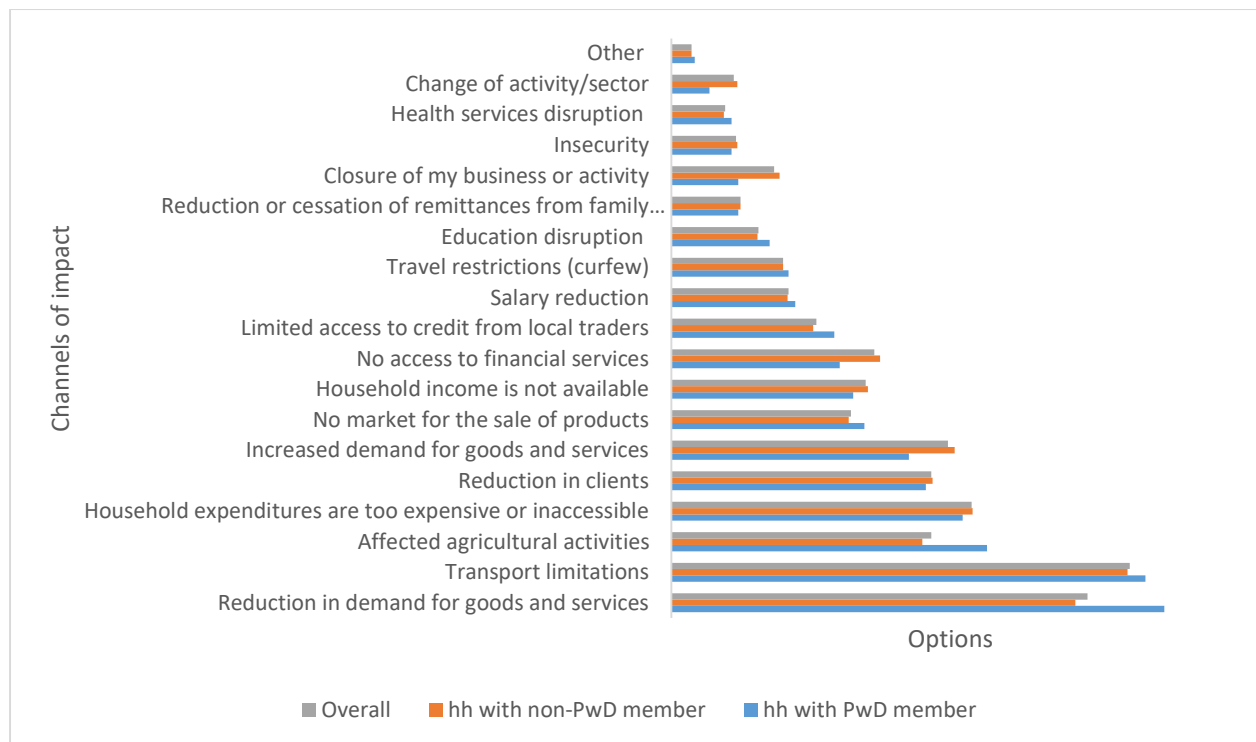


Figure 5: Channels of Impact On Households

The war had also resulted in the closure of businesses and disrupted access to health services of especially the PwD households. Households highlight the lack of access to basic services such as financial services and credit as one of the main stressors of the PwD households during the war.

Period of Food Insecurity

The war increased households' food insecurity around the country. The WFP (July 2023) update report revealed that over 8,500 families were food insured in just 3 districts (Port Loko, Pujehun, and Tonkolili), which relied on the second round of cash assistance provided by the organization. The results in Figure 6 show that 72 percent of PwDs and 60 percent of non-PwD households experienced food shortages. Of this, almost two-thirds of households with PwDs (63.9%) have experienced food insecurity for between one to four full days during the first year of the war. On average, the impact of the food crisis appears to be higher on PwDs households in the short term than in the longer term of weeks and months.

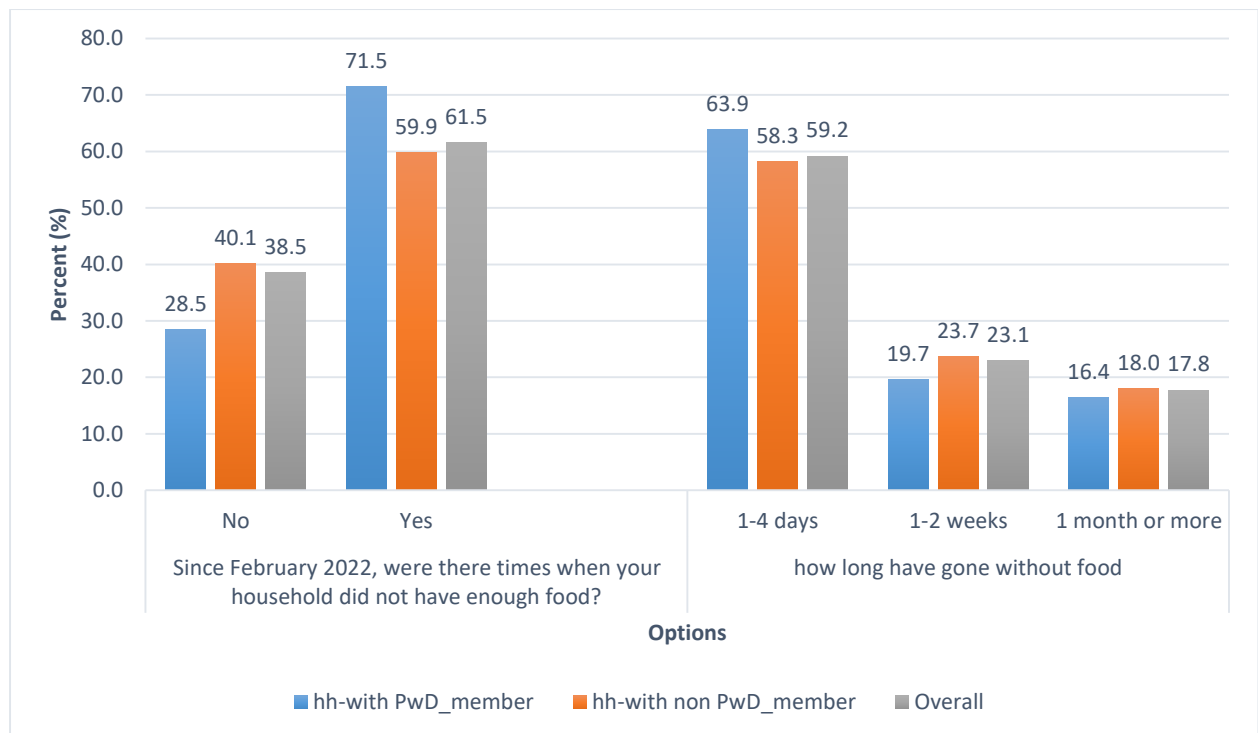


Figure 6: Food Security Assessment

Coping strategies

As the war persisted, both PwD and non-PwD households adopted various coping strategies, though PwD households were more likely to resort to detrimental measures. PwD households, at 58%, were more inclined than their non-PwD counterparts (45%) to buy cheaper food, reduce meals, and deplete savings, negatively impacting their health and well-being. They were also more likely to sell assets, withdraw children from school, or incur debt, with 47.6% of PwD households borrowing money compared to 32.9% of non-PwD households. However, borrowing led to increased debt, with only 24.4% of PwD households repaying their debts, compared to 28.3% of non-PwD households, highlighting the severe economic strain on PwD households during the war.

Table 3: Household coping strategies

Coping Strategies		Hh_PwD	Hh_non-	Overall
		mem	PwD mem	
since February 2022 have you borrowed money?	No	52.4	67.1	65.0
	Yes	47.6	32.9	35.0
If Yes, have you refunded everything?	No	75.6	71.7	72.4
	Yes	24.4	28.3	27.6
How do you cope with the crisis				
Sold house/land/asset		2.7	1.8	1.9
Sold productive assets		4.5	3	3.3
Reduced non-food expenses on health		9.9	10.4	10.3
Borrowed money/food		21.2	15.8	16.5
Compared prices at several markets		21.2	18.3	18.7
Sold household light assets		25.2	16.5	17.7
Buy less prepared foods		29.4	29	29
Withdrew children from school		37.8	25.2	31.5
Spent savings		43.5	35.2	36.3
Reduced proportions of meals		49.4	52.1	51.7
Reduced number of meals per day		54.5	39.5	41.5
Buy less expensive foods		57.9	44.7	46.6

The household uncertainties

The war has created a high level of uncertainty over the household business and job prospects, especially for PwD households. The data in Figure 7 shows that the level of uncertainty is higher among PwD households (45%) than non-PwD counterparts (41%).

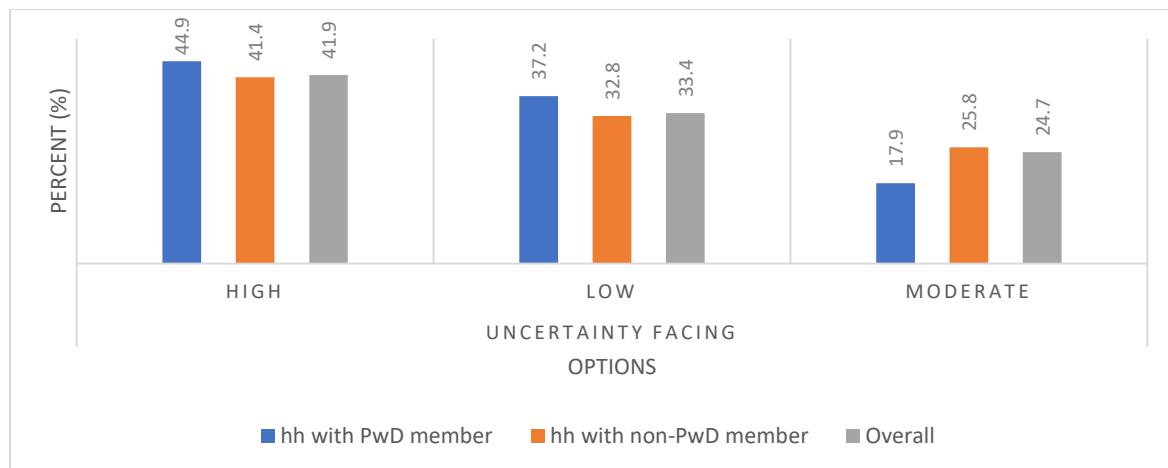


Figure 7: Level of uncertainty facing household business/work for the next 12 months

Social networks

The Russia-Ukraine war has reduced social capital by reducing the support from households' social networks and access to social services. Social network support that comes in the form of social assistance and transfers in different forms including cash and in-kind transfers from friends and family has been a lifeline for many households in the country given the low state-led social projection programmes in the country. In the Statistics Sierra Leone (2019)'s SLIHS Report only 2.2 percent of PwD households have access to formal social transfers, while 14.7 percent received from informal sources in 2018. The data in Figure 8 shows that 4.7 percent and 9.6 percent of PwD households have received money from abroad and from within the country respectively compared with non-PwD households which has received monies from abroad (12.6%) and from within the country (14.2%)

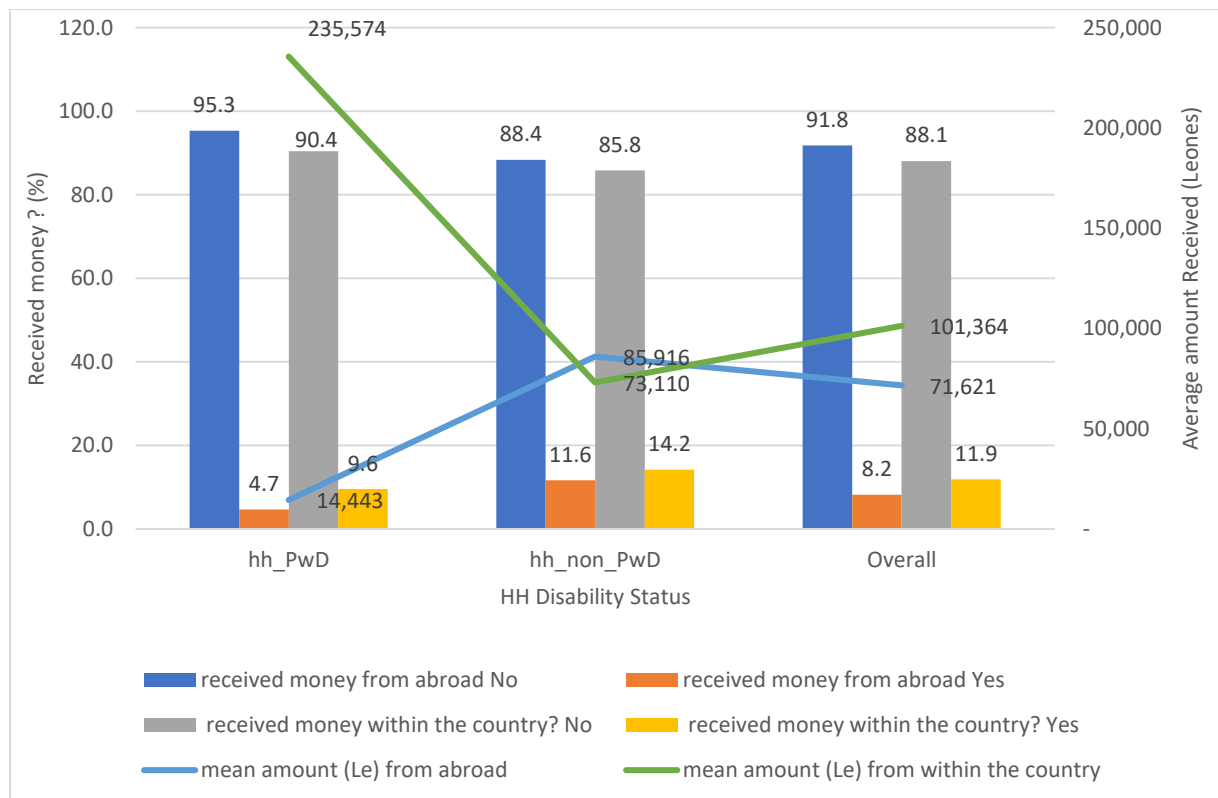


Figure 8: Social Assistance from Networks

PwD households have received less amount from abroad and within the country, when compared to non-PwD households. The lack of access to basic services such as access to financial services has exacerbated vulnerabilities and deepened the impact of stressors such as the loss of a job or livelihood. This shows that the Russia-Ukraine war has significantly increased uncertainty for global south households, especially PwD households. This is a reflection of the price volatility and rising cost of living, which affects production, distribution, and consumption decisions. The findings show less than 5 percent of PwD households have borrowed from a formal financial institution including micro-credit institutions compared to 17 percent in 2018.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the Russia-Ukraine war has exacerbated the vulnerability of PwD households in Sierra Leone, amplifying the challenges they face in employment, food security, coping strategies, and social network support. The findings highlight that, compared to non-PwD households, PwD households are more likely to experience higher unemployment, greater food insecurity (Magnusson et al., 2022; Park et al., 2020), harmful coping strategies, and a decline in social support. These factors have deepened their poverty and reduced their ability to function and achieve their aspirations, underscoring

the inequality of capabilities that PwDs already face in society. The study contributes to the literature and the capacity approach on the impact of geopolitical crises on marginalized groups, particularly PwDs, and emphasizes the need for targeted policies to address these compounded deprivations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that global diplomacy and international trade must play a central role in addressing geopolitical tensions and conflicts, as these directly impact vulnerable populations such as PwD households through inflation and scarcity. Strengthening African regional trade links, particularly through the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), is crucial to mitigate the effects of global shocks on the continent. Additionally, targeted social protection programs for PwD households should be initiated or expanded to safeguard against the loss of livelihoods and to prevent further poverty. Food assistance and social support can serve as vital lifelines to ensure the well-being of PwD households, especially during prolonged crises. Moreover, supporting micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), particularly those led by PwDs, is essential to help these households regain their economic footing and access the labor market. Providing access to finance, offering tax exemptions, and facilitating business re-establishment will help create sustainable opportunities and reduce the vulnerability of PwD households in the long term.

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