



FINANCIAL INCLUSION OFFICE

## **Virtual Briefing Session on the Results of Focus Group Discussions With Persons with Disabilities**

26 February 2026

# FGD Results and Proposed Financial Inclusion Initiatives for the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Sector





# Outline

1. Past BSP initiatives on PWDs
2. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) for the PWD sector
  - a. Overview
  - b. Questions asked during the FGDs
  - c. Profile of respondents and descriptive statistics
  - d. Details of responses and common themes
3. Recommendations and proposed initiatives

2019



The BSP, in collaboration with the NCDA and Maybank Foundation, organized a financial literacy orientation and trade fair specifically designed for PWDs.

2020

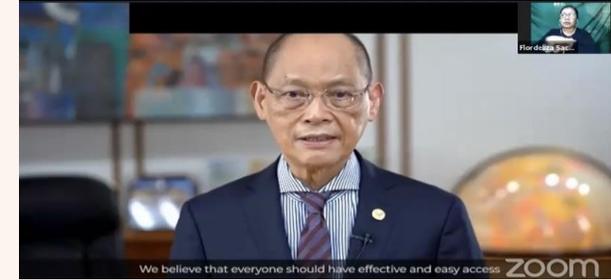


The BSP introduced additional tactile marks on banknotes, enhancing the ability of visually impaired individuals to distinguish between different denominations, thus making currency more accessible.

2021



BSP reinforced its commitment to PWD inclusivity by issuing Memorandum 2021-040. This memo was a decisive step towards eliminating discriminatory practices, such as the refusal to accept PWD identification cards for opening accounts or other financial transactions. It also addressed the issue of banks turning away visually impaired persons or limiting them to joint "and/or" accounts.



In celebration of the 43<sup>rd</sup> National Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation (NDPR) week, BSP offices conducted the "Webinar on Empowering Persons with Disabilities through Digital Financial Inclusion on 19 July 2021

# Memorandum 2021-040

Reminded banks to provide

- Mobility ramps
- Braille system
- Express lanes for PWDs

Reference No. SPRD-202107-0046

 **BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS**  
**MEMORANDUM NO. M-2021-040**

**OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY GOVERNOR  
FINANCIAL SUPERVISION SECTOR**

To : **All BSP-Supervised Financial Institutions (BSFIs)**

Subject : **Reminder to BSFIs to Refrain from Discriminatory Practices Toward Persons with Disability (PWD)**

Pursuant to the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons or Republic Act No. 7277, as amended by Republic Act No. 10754, Batas Pambansa No. 344, Executive Order No. 4177 as well as BSP regulations on fair treatment and effective recourse under Section 1002 of the Manual of Regulations of Banks (MORB) and Sections 1002-Q, 702-N and 702-S of the Manual of Regulations of Non-Bank Financial Institutions (MORNBI), as amended by Circular No. 1048 dated 06 September 2019, and customer acceptance and identification policy under Section 921/921-Q of the MORB/MORNBI, all BSFIs should take into account the needs of PWDs, such as but not limited to, those with learning difficulties, people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and the visually impaired. This is to ensure that their rights as PWDs to participate fully in the social life and enjoyment of opportunities available to other citizens are upheld at all times.

All BSFIs are sternly reminded to adhere to laws and regulations against discriminatory practices toward PWDs, including but not limited to, the following:

- non-acceptance of government-issued PWD identification cards for the opening of accounts and other financial transactions;
- turning away visually impaired persons from opening bank accounts; and
- requiring the visually impaired customers to open only joint ("and/or") accounts.

Apart from mobility ramps and Braille system in bank premises and automated teller machines (ATMs), all BSFIs are also reminded to provide express lanes for PWDs similar to those express lanes reserved for senior citizens and pregnant women within their premises.

For guidance and strict implementation.

 Digitally signed by  
Chuchi G. Fonacier  
Date: 2021.07.16  
20:56:48 +08'00'

**CHUCHI G. FONACIER**  
Deputy Governor

16 July 2021

Reminded banks to adhere to laws and regulations against discriminatory practices toward PWDs, including but not limited to:

- Non-acceptance of government-issued PWD identification cards for the opening of accounts and other financial transactions
- Turning away visually impaired persons from opening bank accounts
- Requiring visually impaired customers to open only joint ("and/or") accounts

# Overview of Focus Group Discussions

4 focus group discussions (FGDs) with 61 respondents conducted in:

- NCDA Office, Quezon City - 8 Nov 2024
- BSP Visayas Regional Office, Cebu - 12 Nov 2024
- BSP Mindanao Regional Office, Davao – 12 Feb 2025
- BSP Cotabato branch – 6 Mar 2025



# Profile of Respondents

By gender	Shares
Male	51%
Female	49%

By age group	Shares
20-29	17%
30-39	17%
40-49	33%
50-59	33%

By type of disability	Shares
Physical	47%
Visual	37%
Hearing	8%
Speech	5%
Learning	3%





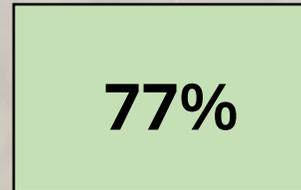
## Questions asked during the Focus Group Discussions

- Financial services/products currently used
- Use cases for financial services
- User experiences (positive and negative)
- Other financial products and services they would like to avail
- Improvements or features they would like to see in financial services/products

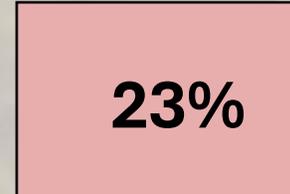
# Descriptive Statistics: Mode and Usage of Financial Services

Are you currently using any financial services or products?

**YES**



**NO**



Usage	%
1 – 3 years	38%
4 – 7 years	31%
8+ years	31%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Frequency	%
As needed	35%
Daily	35%
Weekly	26%
Monthly	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Platform	%
Digital	62%
In-person/ Over the counter	23%
Both	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

# Descriptive Statistics: User Experience of Financial Services

User Experience	
Note: Respondents may answer that they had a positive, negative experience, or both.	
Positive	Negative
56%	52%



Number of respondents with positive experiences who reported <b>needing assistance to use financial services</b>	%
Yes	53%
No	47%

Number of respondents with negative experiences who reported having <b>reduced trust in FSPs</b>	%
Yes	14%
No	86%

## Most Used Financial Products and Services by PWDs

### *Most frequently used*

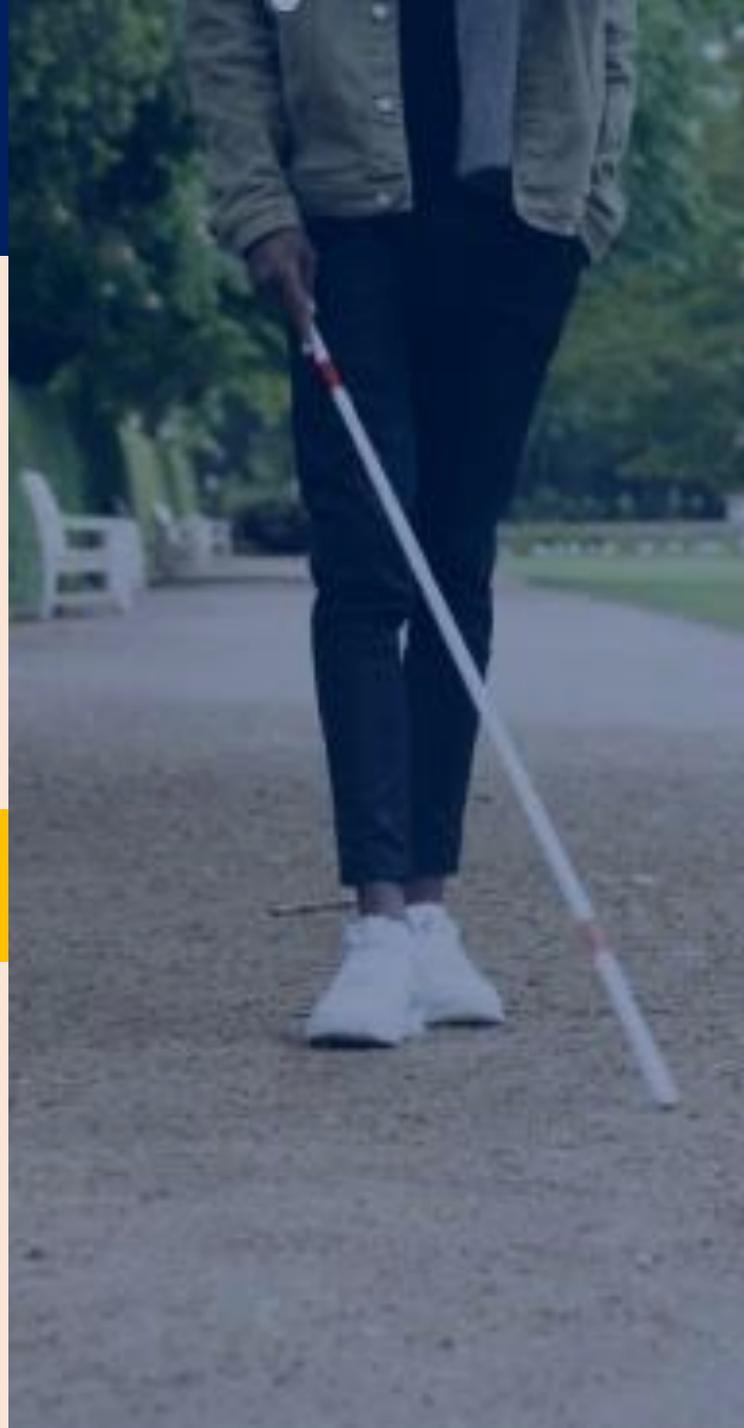
Bank accounts  
Digital wallets  
Savings

### *Also mentioned*

Loans  
Insurance  
Stocks

## Most recurring account challenges

- Some banks require totally blind individuals to create joint accounts.
- Digital financial services have KYC requirements that are challenging for the visually impaired.



## Financial Service Providers

### *Most frequently used*

Banks  
E-money issuers  
Pawnshops

### *Also mentioned*

Insurance  
Stockbrokers

## Use Cases

Receiving salary  
Government subsidy  
Savings  
Credit  
Business  
Investments

# User Experiences

## Positive

1. Some bank branches/staff provide assistance for PWDs
2. PWD lanes make asking assistance easier
3. Digital banking reduces need for face-to-face transactions
4. Pawnshops serve as efficient channels for disbursement of government subsidies in Mindanao

## Negative

1. PWD IDs not recognized in account opening
2. Inaccessible bank branches
3. Lack of sensitivity towards PWDs' needs
4. Lack of accessibility of digital apps for the visually impaired
5. Do not know how to use apps and lack financial literacy



# Recommendations from Positive Experiences

**Some bank branches/staff provide assistance for PWDs**

**PWD lanes make asking assistance easier**

**Digital banking reduces need for face-to-face transactions**

**Pawnshops serve as efficient channels for disbursement of government subsidies in Mindanao**

Conduct disability sensitivity training for BSFIs so more staff are equipped to aid PWDs

Encourage more banks to provide special lanes and accessibility facilities to PWDs

Promote digital banking for the PWD sector

Explore additional use cases, channels, and platforms for financial services



# Recommendations from Negative Experiences



**PWD IDs not recognized in account opening**

**Inaccessible bank branches**

**Lack of sensitivity towards PWDs' needs**

**Lack of accessibility of digital apps for the visually impaired**

**Lack of financial literacy among PWDs**

Conduct awareness campaign on Memorandum 2021-040

Promote digital banking for the PWD sector; remind banks to comply with accessibility standards

Conduct DST training for BSFIs

Request the industry to make mobile apps more inclusive for PWDs

Develop finlit and app usage materials for PWDs; Conduct financial literacy training and account onboarding activities



# Key Recommendations



## Engage local partners

- ➔ Disability sensitivity training for bank employees (coordination among BSP, NCDA, and industry associations)
- ➔ Account onboarding and financial literacy for PWDs
- ➔ Promote accessibility assessments



**Thank you!**



# Open Forum



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# BSP Consumer Assistance Mechanism

**Report your concern first to the BSP Supervised Institution's (BSI) Financial Consumer Protection Assistance Mechanism (FCPAM) or customer service channel.** All BSIs are mandated by law to establish their FCPAM as the first-level recourse for consumer complaints.

**If you are not satisfied with the BSI-FCPAM's action or response, you may escalate your complaint to the BSP CAM through:**

Option 1: Click the BSP Online Buddy (BOB) robot icon on the BSP website<sup>1</sup>

Option 2: Click the Message button on the BSP Official Facebook page<sup>2</sup>

If you have no access to BOB, download a Complaint/Inquiry/Reply (CIR) Form,<sup>3</sup> fill-out and email to [consumeraffairs@bsp.gov.ph](mailto:consumeraffairs@bsp.gov.ph) with proof of your availment of the BSI's FCPAM.

Links:

1. <http://www.bsp.gov.ph/>

2. <https://www.facebook.com/BangkoSentralngPilipinas/>

3. <https://www.bsp.gov.ph/Inclusive%20Finance/CIRForm.docx>

# Thank you!

[financialinclusion@bsp.gov.ph](mailto:financialinclusion@bsp.gov.ph)

