

DRPI AWARE: ROADMAP TO WORK

A MODEL FOR
EMPLOYMENT FOR
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



JANUARY 2019

FORWARD: NOTHING WITHOUT US

Disability provides us with challenges from many perspectives. It makes us question the assumptions that underlie our every action and puts in front of us an opportunity to find new ways of doing things and new ways of approaching the challenges of exclusion faced by many. Often, it seems easy for employers, governments, non-governmental organizations, international development agencies and others to assume that the reason people with disabilities don't work is because they lack the skills to fill the labour force needs. It is an easy excuse to identify the issue as an individual deficit and to fall back on the idea that if people with disabilities just get more training – in writing resumes; in job-readiness; in computer skills; in telephone etiquette – they will get a job. These assumptions fail to recognize that every person with a disability has a set of skills which can be utilized within the labour force. In a few cases, more training may be what is demanded but not in most cases. In many more cases, the issue is the ability to recognize the skills that people have and the skills that a job requires. There are also many issues related to both covert and overt discrimination faced in the working world. It is not just employers but some of those with disabilities themselves who cannot see their own potential but can see the potential of others. Or perhaps because of current practice, it is difficult to imagine the possibilities.

Recognizing early that new strategies are needed shifted the focus of the project to why employers are not hiring. There was a need for greater recognition that people with disabilities have skills and employers have jobs to be filled. The emerging question in work and employment was how to match those skills and the market. *The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD) gave us the incentive to re-think the direction of inclusive employment and a mandate to design a roadmap. The era of employment as charity was challenged. And an important lesson for us was to stop and reflect and think about what we could learn from South

countries. The North countries do not have a monopoly of good ideas to ensure inclusion of those with disabilities, otherwise the employment figures would be much better. So we listened and learned.

One of our partner employers told us why it was worth his while to work with our field staff and hire people with disabilities.



My working at X has been very fruitful from various standpoints; firstly, I am becoming more and more aware of the importance of the inclusive society where everyone has a chance to succeed if they are passionate about accomplishing their goal in whatever field; secondly I have seen a very rare phenomena here in Nepal which is these people with disabilities have raised the bar very high in terms of working with passion and fulfilling the duty assigned to them... In short, I can calmly lean on my conviction that by hiring the people with disabilities it has proven really good for X services because their single-minded devotion to the work is really infectious in the most positive sense possible. I just hope we all learn from them about the work ethic. They really value the work and that's the reason we will continue hiring more and more people with disabilities in the days to come and hope that other business houses also learn from us.

His reflections are both moving and instructive. The model used by DRPI AWARE does not view employment as an add-on, but as a fundamental aspect in the implementation of the CRPD and of fairness and justice in the labour market. He realizes the benefits of inclusive hiring and is putting that in practice. It is not charity, it is good business practice. And so he hires those people who are best for the job and can best contribute to the business. If there is any training he or she does that on the job as part of the orientation to the job just as happens with other employees. It is not “special” work or “special training” for people with disabilities.

The reason I have named this forward ‘Nothing Without Us’ (changed a little from the usual rallying cry of the disability movement) – is that an inclusive labour market requires much more than changing people with

disabilities. It is shifting and rethinking and adapting the work situation to enable the employer to hire the best employees available. It is not enough to worry just about people with disabilities – the shift has to be to remedy a labour market that excludes people. To make that happen there has to be a broader change. It is not just about disability but is about fairness and equality and inclusion and accommodation. We are in a new era. This project has been able to show that finding jobs for individuals – honouring the right to work – is more about the labour market than about people with disabilities. One-by-one this project has integrated hundreds of people into the labour market, not by changing the people, not by re-training the individuals. Alternatively it has addressed the barriers that exclude people – the attitudes, the assumptions, the misconceptions that continue to prevail. One of the key findings for us has been that when an employer hires one individual, their prejudices melt away and they come back to our project officers and ask for more people to hire. Often the barrier is the mindset. And the unawareness of how to evaluate the skills a person has because the disability is mistaken for a deficit or for an inability and people see the disability in place of the skills and the potential contribution to the employers jobs.

We are very grateful to all those who have worked with us to develop a model for employment for persons with disabilities. We are presenting the model in this manual to provide ideas and encouragement to others to understand that there are jobs out there and there are people with disabilities who can fill them. We don't need to continue to have the dismal labour force participation figures for those with disabilities. We can turn it around – not simply to provide more training – but to secure jobs. It is an exciting time that finally there is recognition of what an inclusive labour market can be.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Marcia H. Rioux". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Marcia" being more prominent and the last name "Rioux" following in a similar style.

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DRPI AWARE: Roadmap to Work

A Model for Employment for Persons with Disabilities

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Published by: Disability Rights Promotion International (DRPI)

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As we set out to record this ambitious six-year project attempting to explore and navigate the sphere of employment for persons with disabilities, we want to acknowledge those whose efforts went into its success. The project has been a success because of the extensive collaborations with local disabled peoples' organizations (DPOs), employers, government officials and other stakeholders, and has strong support from grassroots organizations in India, Bangladesh and Nepal. DRPI AWARE builds on the recommendations from local, national, and international initiatives addressing employment barriers faced by persons with disabilities.

Disability includes a multitude of issues. Personal experience and in-depth studies have time and again shown that discrimination, poverty, ill-health, lack of education and the denial of the most fundamental necessities of life follow disability¹. Employment appears to be a potential solution to this otherwise vicious cycle. There is no proof that persons with disabilities are in any way less competent than their "able-bodied" peers when they are recognized as having the skills for the job and are provided with accessibility and reasonable accommodation. The skills needed in the labour market are diverse and varied, and people with disabilities already have the talent and skills to fill these labour demands. It was with this understanding that our organizational partners along with Disability Rights Promotion International embarked on this project to increase inclusive work.

First, we must recognize the individuals with disabilities and DPOs who have shared their insights and contributed to the development and innovation of the DRPI AWARE project. Your time and contributions to this work have

1 Ann Elwan, "Poverty and Disability – A Survey of the Literature", SP Discussion Paper 9932 [21315], December 1999, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/488521468764667300/pdf/multi-page.pdf>

been critical to our understanding of the experiences, challenges and opportunities for employment of people with disabilities in India, Nepal and Bangladesh. We hope to continue to share knowledge and best practices to achieve our mutual goals of promoting quality and inclusive employment for people with disabilities not only in these countries but also in other parts of the globe.

We want to particularly thank the project's DPO partner organizations who have been leading the initiative in each city with endless commitment and local leadership. The three core DPOs are: Bangladesh Protibandhi Kallyan Somity (BPKS, Dhaka, Bangladesh), National Federation of the Disabled Nepal (NFDN, Kathmandu, Nepal), and Swadhikar Centre for Disabilities Information, Research and Resource Development (Hyderabad, India); as well as Subhi Association for Women with Disabilities (West Bengal, India) that has provided extensive direction for the gender and evaluation component of the project.

I would like to specifically recognize the work of Monica Ackermann in putting this Manual together – she played a lead and a key role in determining the material to be included: in editing; and in design. Others who put in a special effort on this Manual included Anne Jackson, Sukaina Dada, and Paula Hearn. This would certainly not have happened without the four of them.

The strength of the DRPI AWARE team derives from the energy and commitment by those who have worked on a day to day basis towards implementation. We would like to thank our hard working Country Coordinators, Workplace Coordinators, and colleagues in the three countries and in Canada. For a full list of those who have been a part of the DRPI AWARE team please see Appendix A.

Congratulations and thank you to all the employers in India, Nepal, and Bangladesh who have worked to create inclusive workplaces and have provided employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. We also want to recognize the time, effort and contribution of various NGOs involved in this sector, government representatives and many others who have all gone the extra mile to make this project a success. Our thanks are due to each and every one of you. We assure you that we will share these experiences to achieve our goal of promoting gainful and secure employment for persons with disabilities. This project started as a

navigational exercise and we are confident that by the time this reaches you it would serve as an invaluable roadmap to your destination of providing persons with disabilities their rightful place included in your workplaces.

This project is undertaken with financial contributions from the Government of Canada (Global Affairs Canada); York University, and Laval University. We would also like to acknowledge the foundational work of Mr. Bengt Lindqvist (3 June 1936-3 December 2016). Mr. Lindqvist was the co-founder and co-director of Disability Rights Promotion International. Bengt Lindqvist had a singular influence on disability of the 20th and well into the 21st century as a teacher, politician, advocate, and as a UN Special Rapporteur on Disability (1994-2002). He had a clear vision that we could create a world in which people with disabilities could expect equality and to exercise their rights. We dedicate this Manual to him.



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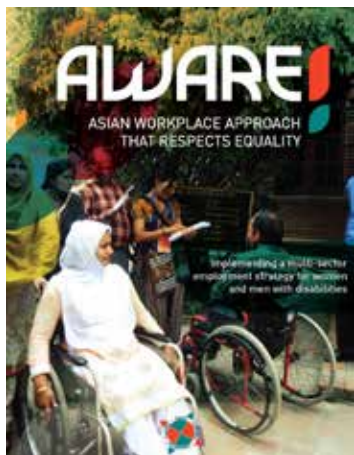
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DPO	Disabled Persons' Organization
DRPI AWARE	Disability Rights Promotion International Asian Workplace Approach that Respects Equality
DRPI	Disability Rights Promotion International
ILO	International Labour Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UN CRPD	United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
WPC	Workplace Coordinator



INTRODUCTION

Building an Inclusive Employment Ecosystem



DRPI AWARE (Disability Rights Promotion International-Asian Workplace Approach that Respects Equality): Roadmap to Work is aimed at individuals and organizations committed to the employment rights of persons with disabilities. Employers, Non-Governmental Organizations, National and International Development Organizations, Disabled Person's Organizations, UN Agencies and persons with disabilities can find something useful in this manual.

DRPI AWARE is a collaborative six year project promoting access to opportunities in the labour force for people with disabilities. With an evidence-based understanding of the reasons for the under-employment, unemployment, and precarious employment, DRPI AWARE works with employers to increase job opportunities for people with disabilities in Dhaka (Bangladesh), Kathmandu (Nepal) and Hyderabad (India)².

The DRPI AWARE project team is sharing this model because it has been tested and used in India, Nepal, and Bangladesh with significant success. It represents a new way forward for realizing the employment rights of people with disabilities and ensuring jobs for people with disabilities. The model can be used as a guide by others who are designing new, or revamping existing, employment projects, strategies, schemes, programs, and inclusive employment practices.

This manual provides lessons learned and the outcomes of the DRPI AWARE project and proposes a model for building an **inclusive employment ecosystem**. It calls for a new way of thinking about disability and of how to ensure a labour market that equally welcomes all, including those with disabilities. It starts with recognizing the barriers that have led to and continue to exclude some people. It focuses on connecting the skills of people with disabilities to labour market demands. The key underlying principle is that every person has a set of skills and we need to recognize and identify those skills and find a job that needs those skills. It recognizes that to ensure full inclusion of people with disabilities into the labour force there has to be broader social change. This includes promoting a society that addresses public attitudes and entrenches human rights along with

2 Swadhikar Center for Disabilities Information. Monitoring of Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities in India, 2009. Praisai, S., Pant, A. Monitoring Employment Rights of People with Disabilities in Kathmandu, Nepal, 2018

full inclusive education, greater societal accessibility generally, and fully accessible transportation. We have evidence that one of the reasons why people do not get jobs is that they cannot get to the workplaces. And no amount of training is going to solve that issue. In this project, we have not addressed all those areas in which we know changes need to be addressed. We are working to include people in the labour force in an imperfect and exclusionary labour market situation. It is not an equal playing field for all but still, there are many ways to find and secure jobs.

The purpose of the project is to move away from a charity model of employment that can disempower persons with a disability by giving them a job out of pity and without the labour market and workplace supports needed. DRPI AWARE recognizes the significant contribution that people with disabilities can make in the labour force as regular employees. One of the key learnings of the project has been to recognize that the mindsets of employers are sometimes negative towards persons with disabilities. Based on assumptions and stereotypes there is a tendency to see the disability first, rather than first recognizing the skills of the individual. As a result, a good deal of public relations time and development in this model has been directed to helping employers to recognize that a skill is a skill, even in the face of a disability. A key role for those working in the project in all 3 countries has been to develop effective strategies to support the sustainable non-precarious employment of persons with disabilities while ensuring that employers' needs are recognized and met.

The initiative can be differentiated from other approaches to addressing unemployment through its way of addressing the business case for hiring people with disabilities with the right to employment. Inability has been replaced by a presumption of ability and knowing that there are employment opportunities for everyone. We are not rehabilitating people in the context of this project. The model does not encompass training and education, that should start in the early years of school through the right to education (Article, 24, UNCRPD, 2006). We are recognizing that people with disabilities already have skills and those skills should not be discounted. We are building on those already existing skills to gain entry into the labour market with all its flaws. This is about changing minds, and changing current practices in the labour force that leads to practices that result in finding the right place in the labour market for the right person independent of their disability. In other words, it is not about disability, it is about employers being able to fill their job needs in a feasible and effective way.

The Manual Is Organized Into 3 Parts:

1

DRPI AWARE Project Description

Development and outcomes of the DRPI AWARE project:
Shaping and informing a new way forward

2

DRPI AWARE The Right to Work - a Legal Framework

A brief historical and legal context on the right to work.

3

DRPI AWARE Skills-Based Employment Model

A model for a multipronged employment strategy that acknowledges the complexities of an employment ecosystem.



DRPI Asian Workplace Approach that Respects Equality (DRPI AWARE)

Over the past few decades, there has been a shift in understanding disability. People have come to recognize and understand that disability is an issue not just of impairment but more importantly an issue of social justice and discrimination³. Its origins can be found in the interaction of impairment (the medical/charity model) and the structural conditions that lead to discrimination and exclusion and the inability to exercise basic human rights⁴. This brings into focus the context of the right to work and the exploration of systemic conditions that are found in employer attitudes and workplace barriers. This calls for a new way of thinking about disability and of how to open up the labour force to equal access for those with disabilities.

The DRPI AWARE project focuses on identifying and addressing the key labour market causes of chronic unemployment, underemployment, and poverty of persons with disabilities in three urban areas in three countries: Bangladesh (Dhaka); India (Hyderabad); and Nepal (Katmandu). We recognize that local conditions prevail and anyone using this model for addressing employment gaps will have to adapt the ideas to fit with local culture and types of businesses. No one size fits all, but the general principles can be followed in any country.

3 Rioux, M.H., & Carbert, A. Human Rights and Disability: The International Context., 2003.

4 Rioux, M.H. On Second Thought: Constructing Knowledge, Law, Disability and Inequality, 2003.

The DRPI AWARE project began the way many projects begin their journeys of moving towards employment of people with disabilities and included a training component to address labour market skills gaps. The initial presumption was that people with disabilities had limitations that prevented them from entering the labour force. That is the message that is commonly found in the disability literature and in many of the mainstream development projects that are underway. The assumption was that people needed to be changed to fit the jobs available.

Early in the project, stakeholders and employers reported that focusing on training did not yield the employment outcomes they desired. DRPI AWARE quickly pivoted in a new direction, starting with a different perspective – that is that everyone has a skill that can be identified and that is needed in the labour market.



It was clear that the project needed to go **beyond training** if we were to realize our vision and that called for an innovative approach; one that shifted the focus and paradigm away from the supply side (i.e., adapting the candidate to fit the job available) to the demand side (i.e., what does the employer need).

The multipronged approach implemented focuses on job matching, rather than training individuals with disabilities. This shifts the focus from individuals to job skill identification. Job seekers are encouraged to identify their existing educational or employment experiences as relevant to job opportunities. Job seekers are also encouraged to identify and reflect upon the transferable skills that they have acquired through their lived experiences outside of formal employment or education.

More importantly, the DRPI AWARE project uses an integrated, employer-driven approach. By working closely with employers to understand their business and employment needs, Disabled People's Organizations work closely with these employers to promote employment and help navigate accessibility and inclusion. As a result, the employment practices have developed in response to identified challenges and best practices as well as the needs of employers, and interests and skills of people with disabilities.



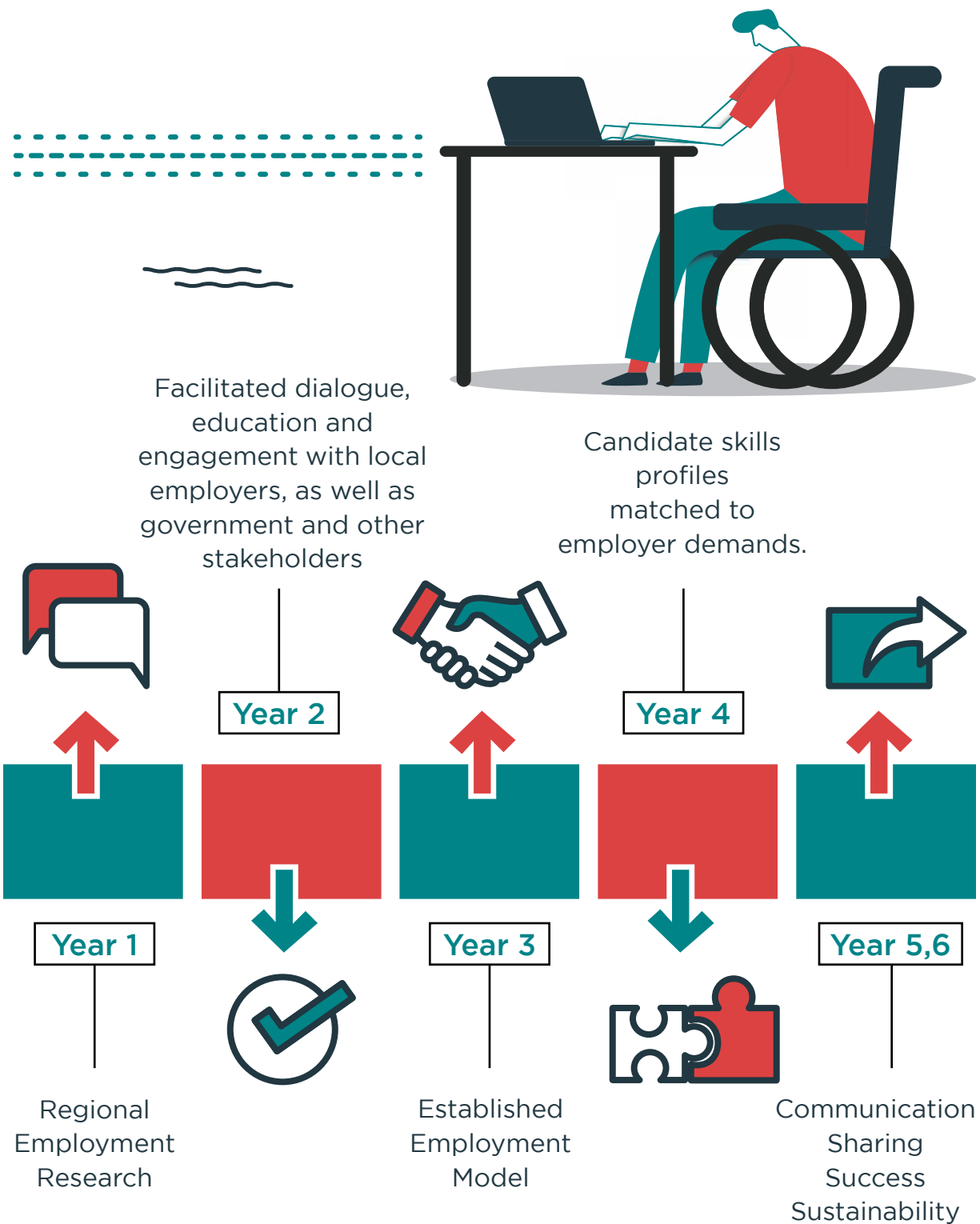


Figure 1: DRPI AWARE awarded Zero Project 2017 Innovative Employment Practice Award



LISTEN FIRST



To understand the basis of the disconnect between current approaches to employment and the impact on the lives of persons with disabilities, DRPI AWARE sought to listen first, to hear the voices of people with disabilities and to understand the perspectives of employers and labour market conditions.

Voices of People with Disabilities

The DRPI AWARE project began with an analysis of the labour market and developing a systemic map in each of the three countries to provide evidence-based knowledge upon which to build a model for employment. This systemic view provided benchmarks against which the progress could be measured as the project moved forward.



The Disability Rights Monitoring Methodology is open source and free to learn and use by anyone all over the world. To access the methodology please visit:

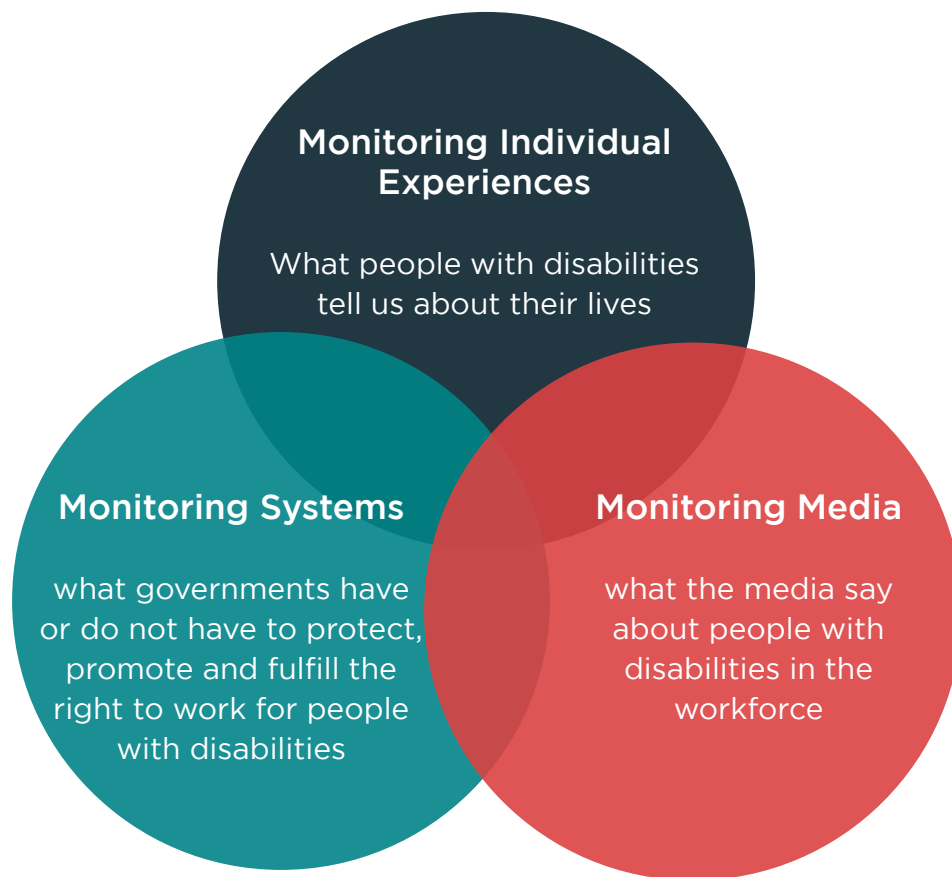
<http://drpihub.research.yorku.ca/disability-rights-monitoring>

The DRPI AWARE project builds on the work of DRPI that has established a holistic and sustainable global system to monitor the movement towards the human rights of people with disabilities (<http://drpi.research.yorku.ca/>).

The DRPI rights monitoring methodology was used to guide holistic monitoring studies which provided information and



understanding of employment for persons with disabilities across the three countries. The DRPI methodology has three broad areas for monitoring the rights of persons with disabilities; monitoring systems, monitoring individual experiences, and monitoring media. The methodology has been developed to support the goals of the CRPD and has been field-tested around the world.



In each of the three project sites (Hyderabad, Dhaka, Kathmandu), participants in the monitoring process used an interview and focus group guide to capture a specialized dataset and analyze violations of the right to employment. The interview and focus group guides were designed to capture various components of the employment process; including experiences of people with disabilities while job searching, during the interview process, during the training process, and on the job. People with



In this era of evidence-based advocacy, we cannot simply equate discrimination with the low employment rates of people with disabilities. There is a need for material evidence and case stories that illuminate the challenges facing people with disabilities in Nepal. This evidence supports targeted advocacy efforts to support a stronger movement for change. This holistic monitoring report about the employment rights of persons with disabilities has become one such tool. The report presents the gap between existing laws and policies, and their implementation, through firsthand experiences of people with disabilities themselves.”

**-Mr. Sudarshon Subedi,
National President,
National Federation of the Disabled Nepal**

disabilities themselves carried out the data collection, analyzed the data, and wrote the country monitoring report ensuring these activities were by people with disabilities. Monitoring results have been used to identify barriers to employment, which directed actions for increasing sustainable employment for persons with disabilities.

Using this monitoring⁵ process we found there is a need for greater focus on employment outcomes. Many persons with disabilities are unemployed or underemployed and need better support to help them connect to the labour market in tangible ways. It is important to remember that prior disappointment and low expectations for getting a job translates into individuals believing they lack skills and the ones they do have are not easily identifiable. Many persons with disabilities have had few opportunities to enhance their self-esteem and confidence in the workforce. And many people with disabilities also reflect generally negative social attitudes to people with disabilities – attitudes that they have lived with for so long. Using this evidence based approach our employment model evolved to encompass the broader employment ecosystem.

5 DRPI, Asia Pacific Publications & Resources, 2018.

Perspectives of Employers

With this new knowledge, the DRPI AWARE team moved to engage local employers in collaboration with the DPO's in each of the three countries. We began by building relationships with local employers who had experience working with employees with disabilities and were considered local champions of inclusive hiring. These supportive employers provided a foundation for understanding local labour market practices and have developed successful recruitment, hiring and inclusive employment practices that add up to a body of business management knowledge that has informed our project throughout and can benefit other employers.

Meetings with employers and other stakeholders were facilitated with open, candid dialogue in an atmosphere of collaboration, cooperation, and non judgment. An open dialogue meant that we could appreciate and address the issues, concerns, perceptions and assumptions that employers had about employing persons with disabilities. Some of the questions we heard were:

- Can someone with a disability work as efficiently as someone without a disability?
- Which job roles are best suited for someone with a disability?
- What happens if they are given a job and then they can't do the job?
- What about illness, time off work and reliability?
- Will it take extra time to manage an employee with a disability?
- How do I manage the costs of workplace accommodations and adaptations?
- How do I deal with other employees?



We're not here to impress, we're here to impact."

**-Pankaj Pradhananga
Four Seasons Travel Nepal**

Hearing the concerns of employers and recognizing constraints based on business, allowed us to address some of the persistent perceptions and assumptions. Evidence based information collected in our country systemic holistic studies was used to dispell the myths



and stereotypes around disability through a series of employer-focused information activities (e.g. workshops, meetings, presentations), alongside larger public awareness campaigns.

Some businesses are using their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Programs to offer employment opportunities to people with disabilities and other marginalized communities. This hiring model often uses a process of “giving back to the community” through a charitable model of employment that is not connected to business outcomes. This kind of CSR activity can pose a barrier when trying to educate employers about skilled individuals with disabilities who are available to meet their labour force needs. We have to keep emphasizing that it is not about disability or “doing the right thing”, but about getting good employees with the right skills. Other challenges include the common refrain of interest in hiring people with a specific impairment (i.e. only people who are deaf or blind), or the need to fill a government mandated quota.

The knowledge and insights gained by talking to employers helped promote a deeper understanding of the locally relevant business case for accessibility and for employing people with disabilities.

RETHINKING PREVAILING STEREOTYPES



Rethinking employment for persons with disabilities implies that we re-think many stereotypes, some of which have become entrenched in the establishment of projects designed to increase the employment of persons with disabilities.

In rethinking stereotypes, We have uncovered new insights and learnings and, as importantly, acknowledge what wasn't working.



While walking in road, going to office, people say, -

'He' is deaf. He can't do anything. What will he do with eyes? He can't do anything". Similar things happen to me when I apply for job in any organization. Everyone makes derogatory comment about my disability.'

**-Male, Aged 31,
Kathmandu, Nepal**



Moving beyond dependence on pre-employment training

Typically international development funds are devoted to short-term to mid-term “training” based on assumptions about the deficits of people with disabilities and where the labour market is headed. The training is usually general, including, for example, writing resumes, learning job readiness, exploring how to do an interview and generalized workplace communication skills. These frequently do not match the labour market skills demand or specific jobs that are available. They tend to assume inability rather than emphasizing the specifics about a particular job. The impact is discouraged workers who have been through too many trainings without a job so they begin to define themselves as incapable of working. This also leads to inappropriate placements. What is needed is more time spent with individual job seekers to explore and learn about the context of particular jobs that suit their interests and skills, for example learning about a company by reading their website; ways to travel to a job, understanding the specific skills the employer is looking for.

Education and training, while important, do not lead to jobs unless they are individualized and targeted to the needs of the specific employer. To provide appropriate training we must involve government and education institutions because they are in the best position to predict employment needs through their analysis and forecasting of trends in the labor market before they arise.



Questioning the effectiveness of job fairs

Another common but questionable practice are job fairs targeted at people with disabilities. They are rarely connected to actual open job positions, and may do no more than provide a place for generalized resumes to be collected for non-specific jobs. These platforms do not allow specific skill identification and job matching to take place and remove opportunities for discussing individualized accessibility and inclusion in the workplace. They can also be discouraging for people with disabilities who enthusiastically attend assuming that someone will contact them to follow up.

Addressing precarious jobs

The overall absence of regular, salaried, formal jobs in the region is another reason why there are so many unemployed, underemployed and underwaged people with disabilities and is a major cause of poverty. Many jobs are in the informal economy and are unregulated or low waged. When labour laws do exist, they are often not enforced and frequently violated⁶. The collapse of a Bangladesh garment factory in 2013 killing nearly 1200 people and disabling hundreds more is one example of the potentially hazardous working conditions in the region.⁷

For many people with disabilities, especially women, the alternative to formal employment is unpaid or poorly paid work on family farms or other enterprises, domestic service or manual wage labour⁸. Structural challenges in the region mean that improvements in the employability of individual women will not compensate for the overall dearth of decent employment opportunities. Even those women who are involved in income generating activities may not have regular incomes, and jobs are gender stereotyped. For example, many women are working in traditional female positions such as tailoring, housekeeping, handicrafts making, within the informal economy.

6 Kabeer, N., Women's Economic, Empowerment and Inclusive Growth, 2012

7 Bangladesh factory collapse toll passes 1,000", 10th May 2013.

8 Supra n. 32, pp. 37.

The overall lack of quality formal employment opportunities raises important concerns about the resilience of precarious jobs. The concept of precarious employment encompasses a range of attributes associated with employment quality and is therefore not defined strictly by the nature of the employment contract. Precarious work is often described as work arrangements characterized by the uncertainty of ongoing employment, unpredictability, irregularity, lack of protection and benefits, and insecurity across various dimensions of work.⁹

Access to quality employment can be a strategic pathway out of poverty and oppression towards economic empowerment and increased inclusion, well-being, and quality of life.

What did we learn?

Shifting from a focus on the labour market supply to labour market demand can create long term change

Training job seekers using arbitrary skill development frameworks that are based on deficits and inabilities do not lead to higher rates of employment for persons with disabilities. This traditional supply-side approach (i.e., providing medical, psychological, educational and vocational services to improve functioning, physical stamina, and job skills) without consideration for organizational behaviours, employer needs and the changing labour economy is not adequate for achieving meaningful employment outcomes for people with disabilities. Conversely, the demand-side approach, which understands the needs and interests of employers and clearly identifies skills and aptitudes of job seekers to meet those needs and interests increases the likelihood of successful job placement.

9 Benach, J., et al. Precarious Employment: Understanding an Emerging Social Determinant of Health. Annual Review of Public Health, 2014.

Importance of a locally relevant business case

Starting with the business case for individual employers, for Chambers of Commerce or other business organizations, employers are encouraged to build a commitment to a diverse workforce by increasing their own knowledge and expertise about inclusive hiring and employment practices and by challenging their own biases and stereotypes about people with disabilities. Inclusive employers adopt business strategies that differentiate them from competitors and are concerned about the broader social and environmental impact of doing business. When speaking with employers about hiring with disabilities, the emphasis should be on skills and ability, not on disability.

Employers do the training they need for their particular labour force

Typically, employers do their own on-the-job training for all employees (including employees with disabilities) because they have specialized training processes and models that meet their particular business needs.

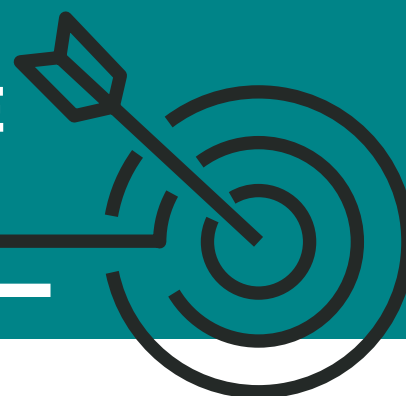
Job matching matters

The premise is simple, but the effects are profound. Matching a job seeker's skills to a job that requires those skills leads to successful employment outcomes for both employers and job seekers. This is achieved by taking the time to look beyond the job description and to uncover the job demands. Using this knowledge of specific job demands it is then possible to source candidates whose skills match those demands.

Building collaborative networks and bolstering successes keeps the momentum going

Collaboration with Disabled People's Organizations, with training facilities including universities and colleges, with government agencies, with human resource agencies has an impact. It leads to knowledge about what jobs are available and a knowledge of the job seekers in their area who have a wide variety of skills. Sharing success stories is a way to celebrate both the small and large achievements made, to demonstrate positive movement forward and to increase awareness. Success stories inspire, excite and celebrate the people who are taking steps to inclusive employment.

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE DRPI AWARE PROJECT



DRPI AWARE efforts in India, Bangladesh, and Nepal have proved that successful employment of people with disabilities is a result of matching skills, abilities, education, and training relative to employers' actual needs and introducing job accommodation on an individual basis, if and where needed.

Over the 6-year period, over 600 employers have hired or expressed interest and support for the employment of people with disabilities or are actively looking for jobs for people with disabilities.

The following infographics shows one impact of the DRPI AWARE employment program. But the overall impact is greater than the quantitative numbers. DRPI AWARE is not prescribing a single approach to employment nor is it prescribing a single outcome. For example, the regional data collected and analyzed highlights the number of females employed and the range of industries in which persons with disabilities are being employed and the number of employers contacted. This model is directed at how the employer can find the best qualified candidates for the available jobs¹⁰.

Furthermore, according to the United Nations Data Booklet on Household Size and Composition around the World (2017), Nepal, Bangladesh, and India have an average household size of 4.56 persons. This means that for every household earner, instead of one person being impacted by employment, on average 4.56 persons may depend on that income. Consequently, of the 661 job matches by DRPI Aware in Nepal, Bangladesh and India, is likely to impact over 3000 persons when we include the families who also benefit by having a productive contributor to the family.

10 Data is collected and reported by the Country Workplace Coordinators

NEPAL

450  **JOB SEEKERS**

 **180**
EMPLOYER CONTACTS

NUMBER OF EVENTS
 **17** 

142  **NUMBER OF JOBS**

16  **PENDING JOBS**

INDUSTRY/SECTOR



BANGLADESH

633  **JOB SEEKERS**

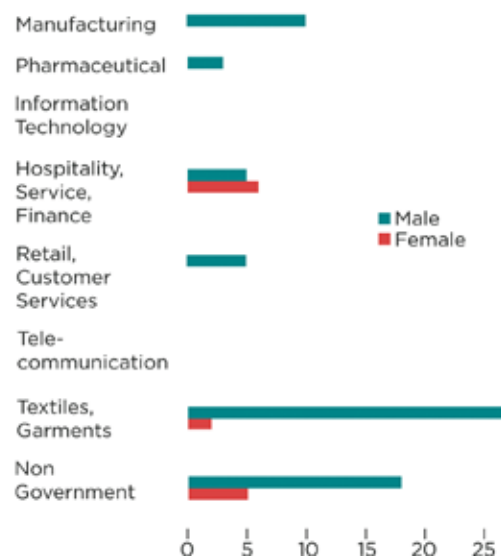
 **387**
EMPLOYER CONTACTS

NUMBER OF EVENTS
 **8** 

81  **NUMBER OF JOBS**

6  **PENDING JOBS**

INDUSTRY/SECTOR



INDIA

1251



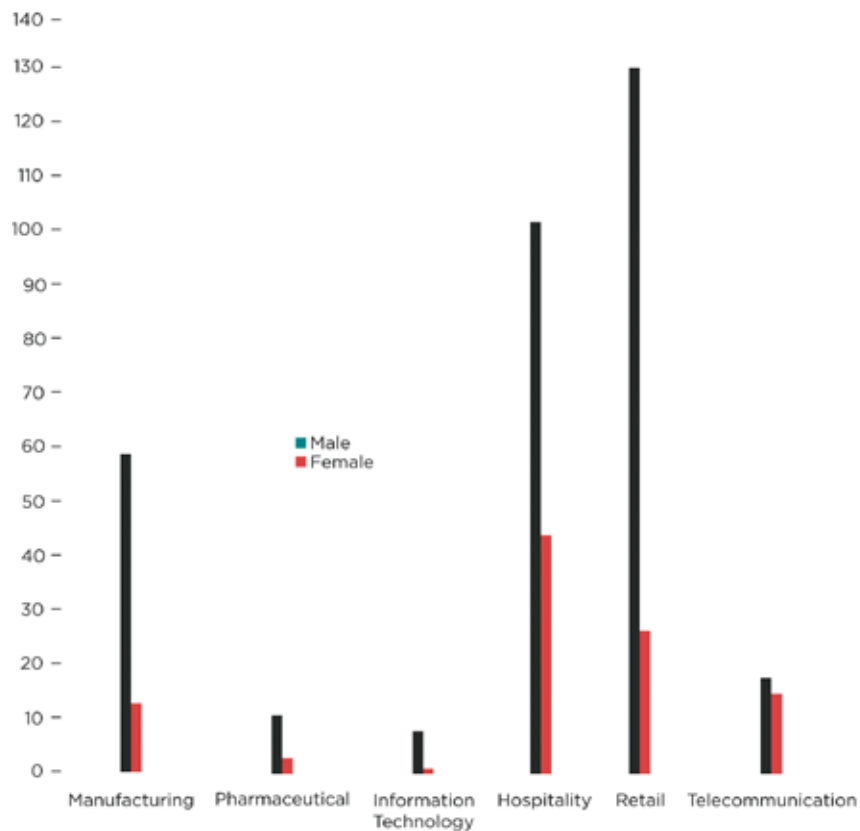
JOB SEEKERS



NUMBER OF
JOBS

438

INDUSTRY/SECTOR



590

EMPLOYER
CONTACTS



NUMBER OF
EVENTS



14

PENDING
JOBS



I am respected by my mother-in-law after I found a job."

-Rockwell Employee, India

2

The Right to Employment

The DRPI AWARE project uses international standards as the fundamental principles for moving towards the right to employment and is linked into the broader rights agenda supported by DRPI and the world disability movement. Equal access to paid employment as a human right benefits us all as we increase recognition and respect for human diversity and to building inclusive workplaces. This means that every individual with a disability who gains secure paid employment has the potential to make a greater contribution to their family/household income, to their community, as consumers and active participants, and to society by gaining more recognition in the labour market. And the labour market benefits because it has a larger labour pool to draw from and to whom it can market.

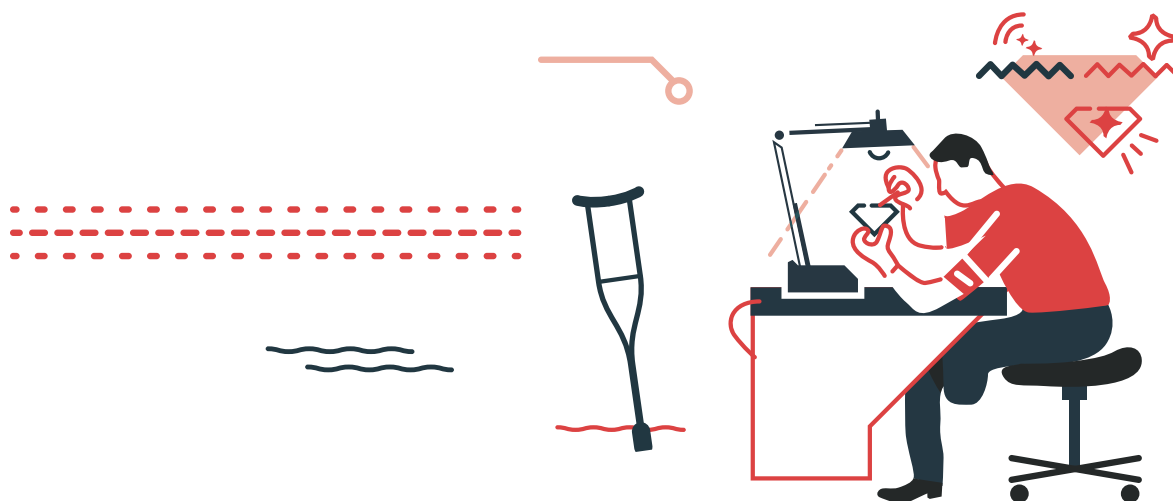
The right to work is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and recognized in international human rights law, as well as in national and regional legislation.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD)



Article 27 of the CRPD spells out the expectation of rights in employment for persons with disabilities including the right to work on an equal basis with others and the right to obtain a living by employment freely chosen in a safe, accessible and inclusive environment.¹¹

¹¹ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Article 27 - Work and employment, 2018



Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The importance of global poverty reduction is articulated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The purpose of Goal 8 is to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, the international community aims to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.¹²



International Labour Organization (ILO)

The ILO is a United Nations organization that connects governments, employers and employees. The ILO identifies labour standards, sets out policies and develops programs that promote appropriate employment.¹³

National and Regional Regulation

Regional frameworks are increasingly important in addressing social and economic issues that face individual countries. While outside the scope of this manual to identify country-level regulations, it is important for stakeholders in an inclusive ecosystem to recognize and understand social policy, labour laws and anti-discrimination laws in determining the best practices for engaging people with disabilities in the labour market. Working with disability organizations has provided us with the knowledge about regional and country specific laws and policies.



12 United Nations Development Programme, SDG Goal 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth, 2018.

13 International Labour Organization (ILO): www.ilo.org

3

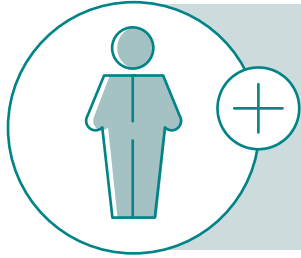
DRPI AWARE SKILLS BASED EMPLOYMENT MODEL



The model that DRPI AWARE has developed and piloted and operationalized in Nepal, Bangladesh, and India is based on evidence of the labour market realities in each of the three countries . It takes the grounded knowledge of the community and the country and uses that as a basis for moving forward to find jobs. Its basic premise is that every person has skills so there is no person who cannot be employed and it is our task to surface those skills and to match them with labour market needs. We have worked within the parameters of a recognition of the right to employment. We do not start with the disability but with the marketable skills that people can match with the market needs. Recognizing that we are not working from the charity/training model, has meant that we could more easily find employers who were on-board with hiring when their labour force needs could be met. That has led to significant progress in finding jobs.

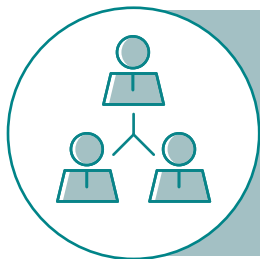


The methodology for the DRPI AWARE skills matching employment model includes the following:



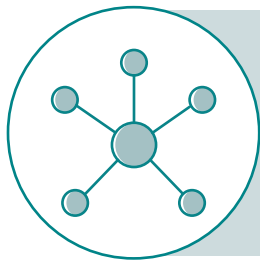
BUILD YOUR TEAM:

Establish a rights-based employment program that starts with the premise that all people with disabilities have skills.



CONNECT WITH EMPLOYERS:

Develop an understanding of the employer needs in the particular community through getting to know them, their attitudes and biases and their work places, recognizing that they are not NGOs but profit oriented.



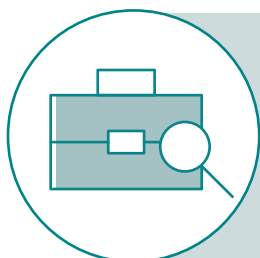
ENGAGE THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY:

The disability community, and their associated organizations, are a central resource in any strategy to increase employment of people with disabilities.



BUILD A TALENT POOL:

Using various outreach strategies, create a talent pipeline of job seekers with disabilities that prioritizes skills over disability

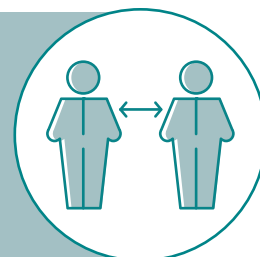


IDENTIFY JOBS AND UNDERSTAND JOB DEMANDS:

Through continuous engagement with the business community, identify job opportunities in multiple sectors. If an employer successfully hires one person, they will hire more.

MAKE GOOD MATCHES:

Connect the skills of people with disabilities to labour market demands to find the right candidate for the right job



PLAN ACCESSIBILITY AND WORKPLACE

ADJUSTMENTS: Recognize that a creative, adaptable workplace with a culture of inclusion is likely to attract the best workers and to keep employees on a long-term basis.



MAINTAIN ONGOING SUPPORT: Address issues before they become problems: It is important to assist job seekers, employees and employers with support to facilitate successful workplace integration.



THE BIGGER PICTURE: SHARE SUCCESS STORIES - COMMUNICATE, CELEBRATE and AMPLIFY: Celebrate leaders and success stories to create awareness and recognition of the benefits of a diversified labour force.



MAKE SUSTAINABILITY AN END GOAL:

To be sustainable, employment programs should be employer led with a goal of building an inclusive employment ecosystem .



EMPLOYMENT ECOSYSTEM

BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

SKILLS IDENTIFICATION AND
JOB MATCHING

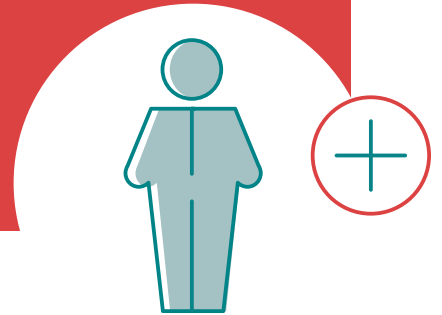
AWARENESS

SUSTAINABILITY



BUILD YOUR TEAM

Moving from pre-employment training to employment facilitation.



The roles and responsibilities of the members of the DRPI AWARE team evolved over the course of the project as they responded to the needs of the participants and stakeholders of the employment program. The DRPI AWARE team was built on the employee-employer requirements and the resource boundaries the team faced. Other teams however may look different as teams are dependent in part on local contexts and resource availability.

Shifting to a skills-based employment program requires a new approach for defining the roles and responsibilities for staff in the program. This approach requires a move from pre-employment training to employment facilitation. With this in mind, in each country the team is made up of 2 key roles:



Country Coordinator

The Country Coordinator is the conduit to local business leaders and is responsible for developing and maintaining relationships with local employers to identify meaningful, paid employment opportunities and to identify jobs for which people with disabilities have the skills.

Key Accountabilities Include:

- ◆ Understanding local labour market conditions in various industry sectors
- ◆ Identifying and engaging with employer and HR organizations
- ◆ Providing resources and collecting requests from employers related to positions they have available and into which they could hire and employ people with disabilities
- ◆ Connecting with skills training providers, disability-specific skills training providers, and job search companies
- ◆ Developing and delivering communication plans, materials, processes and social media presence
- ◆ Setting targets, developing and maintaining workplans
- ◆ Developing and maintaining tracking and progress reports
- ◆ Managing the Workplace Coordinator
- ◆ Organizing and coordinating public relations activities and events including the Inclusive Employer Award Ceremonies

Key Competencies For The Country Coordinator Include:

- ◆ Leadership
- ◆ Communicaton
- ◆ Strategic influence
- ◆ Knowledge of Human Resource practices
- ◆ Broad knowledge of the local community and labour market
- ◆ Familiarity with local employment and disability laws and policies



Workplace Coordinator (WPC)

The WPC has a primary relationship with job seekers and is the conduit for job seekers to the employers. The WPC works primarily with hiring managers and Human Resource departments once the leadership relationships in a company have been established by the Country Coordinator.

- ◆ Conducting intake interviews with job seekers with disabilities and preparing an employment profile that highlights their job skills
- ◆ Maintaining a job candidate database
- ◆ Working with persons with disabilities to assist with identifying job opportunities that match their skills and work interests and facilitating a successful transition into employment
- ◆ Acting as a liaison between people with disabilities and employers
- ◆ Supporting employer human resource departments to build inclusive workplaces, and facilitating successful workplace accommodations



Being a WPC means being told NO hundreds of times a week. You need to get used to rejection until you find success. Keep the person with disability at your centre. That's what matter. This is ground level work , find one employer and have them hire one person. That's where we find our success."

-WPC

To be successful in the role of Workplace Coordinator key competencies include:

- ◆ Understanding of human resources practices
- ◆ Strong networking skills
- ◆ Familiarity of how the for-profit and not for profit business sector works
- ◆ Basic knowledge of identifying job seeker skills and job demands
- ◆ Knowledge of the disability organizations in the placement area
- ◆ Empathy and understanding of population who have lived with discrimination and exclusion on a daily basis
- ◆ Excellent communication skills
- ◆ Ability to listen and understand the needs of job seekers and employers



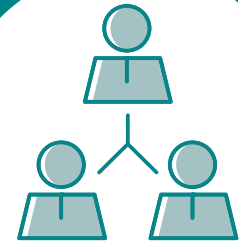
The DRPI AWARE team have gone through the best Human Resources practices and extreme networks with job seekers and employers/ organisations to match the skills as per the present trends for development.”

-Sreedhar Ganta, Country Coordinator, Hyderabad, India



CONNECT WITH EMPLOYERS

Shifting The Responsibility To Get The Best Outcome



There are several key factors in realizing the benefits to employers of employing persons with disabilities. Most importantly, change starts at the top, where the support of senior management is important. Leadership from the top that is visibly committed to supporting employment of persons with disabilities sets the tone for success. Diversity is championed by those with power and influence within an organization. These champions can raise the profile of diversity, break down barriers to inclusion and create pathways to employment for persons with disabilities. Diversity and inclusion embrace not only those with disabilities but are intersectional and also include women, LGBTQ+, caste and class, immigrants and refugees and other characteristics that are not found in the traditional labour force.



We are working toward a ‘market correction’ and are striving to achieve an inclusive labour market that includes people with disabilities, women, and others who have been excluded.”

-Mr. Ashok Gupta
Chair of the Hyderabad Employer Council
and CEO of Rockwell Industries

Relationship building and networking are important to gathering support within the business community and the labour market and is the foundation

of success for the DRPI AWARE model for securing jobs. This is not a one step process. As with any engagement strategy, there is a need to focus on the long-term goals of the process. Development of employer engagement involves using the voices and experience of employer champions who have successfully employed people with disabilities. Listening to these employers leads to a clear recognition and understanding of the benefits of an inclusive workforce and real employment opportunities to them. Employer-to-employer dialogue also facilitates increased credibility of the initiative.

DRPI AWARE uses a number of strategies to connect with the business community.

Knowing The Local Conditions

A successful employer engagement strategy starts with a broad understanding of the labour market conditions in the city or region or locality in which you operate. Knowing the types of businesses is essential to knowing which employers are most fruitful to approach and what both the employment barriers and opportunities are. Out-migration of workers to other countries turned out to be an important factor in both Dhaka and Kathmandu. The resulting worker shortage and need to backfill that out-migration resulted in the availability of jobs. It is also helpful to identify employers who have already created a diverse workforce – including women and people with disabilities and other marginalized members of the community. They can be considered “employer champions” who, in turn, can encourage other employers to hire more persons with disabilities.

Attending Business Network Meetings and Events

Engagement and networking includes activities such as attending business events in all sorts of environments with employers and key stakeholders in the business community. Providing a venue for a discussion and opportunities for networking can be identified through connections with local chambers of commerce, industry associations, trade exhibits, mentorship programs, service clubs, and others. This experience helps to better understand who is connected within a national network of employers. We have found that employers look toward the Country Coordinator and the Workplace Coordinator for practical advice and knowledge about including people with disabilities in their workplaces.

For example, the Human Resource Society Nepal is a network of HR professionals who organize an annual conference where hundreds of HR professionals will meet. Our Country Coordinator and Workplace Coordinator attend local meetings of this society and participate in the annual conference.

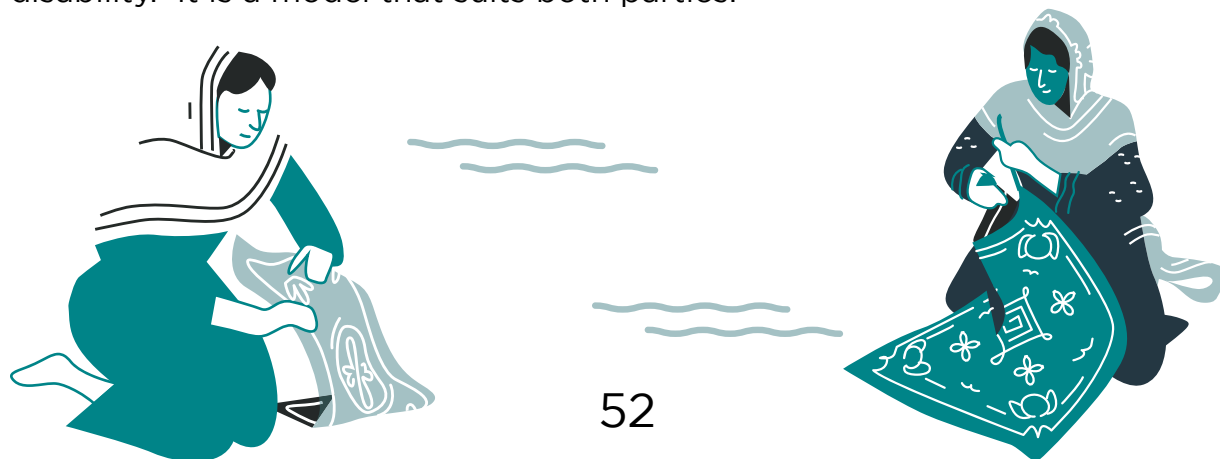
Partnering With Mainstream Employment Agencies And Job Matching Companies.

It is good practice to tap into the networks and connection of local employment agencies to include job candidates with disabilities and to identify employers who are hiring. Influencing these agencies helps to promote the hiring of candidates with disabilities and to encourage them to make their own recruitment websites and practices accessible.

Developing An Ongoing Relationship With An Employer Who Hires Persons With Disabilities

Country Coordinators spend 75% of their time identifying and meeting with employers with the goal of uncovering current or future job openings. They meet them in their office or factory and provide a brief overview of the project and share some relevant/same industry success stories in which employees with disabilities have brought business value to a company.

This allows our team to learn about new or upcoming employment opportunities. Often when a candidate is successful in their employment the employer will return to the Country Coordinator or the Work Placement Coordinator to fill other positions. This is because they see the value of the last individual that we found them, and they want more. This repeat business will develop over time and can lead to many jobs that are within the marketplace but often hard to identify. Once having hired someone with a disability successfully, employers start to see the skills and not the disability. It is a model that suits both parties.



Tips When Meeting Employers:



Listen and understand the mandate of the business, the types of jobs available and to gain a clear understanding of the challenges that an employer may be having in recruiting, hiring and retaining staff. Keep the focus of the conversation on the employer's needs and the skills they need candidates to have.



Change the value proposition to the employer from: "you should hire a person with a disability because it's the good thing to do" **TO** "You need a job filled with a skilled individual, and we have many people with those skills."



Find out if there are open positions. If there are openings then a follow-up meeting should be suggested so that the Workplace coordinator can explore the potential job seeker profiles from your database that suits their requirement. All job opportunities that come from these conversations should be recorded in a job tracker.



Let the employers know that you are offering a value-added recruitment service that includes:

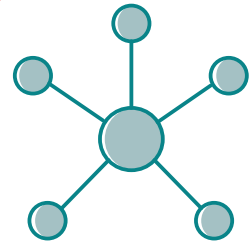
- Sourcing candidates that match the employer's requirement
- Initial screening and pre-interview
- Supporting from the day of the interview, through the hiring and onboarding process to address any challenges/issues that might arise.



People need to understand that disability is not a curse and disabled people can contribute to the society. Disabled people have different skills and talent. Many differently-abled people have achieved great heights. Disabled people are like everybody else. They too have dreams and hopes. They need a smile, a chance to earn respect

Kirti Deshmukh, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories

ENGAGE THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY



The disability community, and their associated organizations are a central resource and key partner in any strategy to increase employment of people with disabilities. In our model, the support of individuals with disabilities in the community and other relevant community groups, such as Disabled Person's Organizations (DPO's) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) is helpful. They provide not only local knowledge about disability programs and policies, but they also provide a direct link to their membership and are a referral source for job seekers.

In conversations with DPO's we share success stories of people with different disabilities working in various occupations and industries. These success stories illustrate the emphasis on tapping into the existing skills and abilities of job seekers with disabilities.



BUILD A TALENT POOL AND SKILLS PROFILE



In order to be responsive to employer needs and to meet their recruitment and human resource needs, the Workplace Coordinator can build a network of job seekers with varied educational backgrounds, skills, experiences, and job interests. This cannot be achieved just by looking at resumes.

Individuals seeking employment will engage in an intake process during which the process of skills identification begins. This understanding of individuals' skills and employment objectives requires active listening and is achieved by engaging with individual job seekers in one-on-one meetings and conversations with the Work Placement Coordinator. It is an iterative process of understanding the hidden skills, interests, abilities, needs and dreams of the individual job seeker and may involve more than one meeting.

The intake process:

- ◆ Is organic in practice and focused on skills identification
- ◆ Develops a professional relationship with a job seeker in a comfortable environment
- ◆ Highlights available employment opportunities and provides insight into the local labour market
- ◆ Results in a personalized job seeker profile that the Workplace Coordinator stores in a candidate database.

Often this is a new process to individuals, some may be unsure of what to say, others will have trouble seeing themselves as valuable and as employees. DRPI AWARE recommends that the individual thinks about the skills that they use in everyday life, and how they may be transferable to other areas of employment.

Here are a few examples of probing questions to assist job seekers to identify their hidden skills and the type of job they are looking for:



- ☐ Do you do any volunteer work?
- ☐ Tell me about what things you are responsible for in your home?
- ☐ How did you travel to the meeting today?
- ☐ You have worked in your family business for many years, what do you do there?
- ☐ What are your hobbies?
- ☐ How much monthly income are you seeking?
- ☐ Do you know anyone that works at the company you want to apply to?
- ☐ Why do you want to apply to [insert company name]? Why do you think they would be a good employer?
- ☐ Is there any job that you would not do? Why?



After being rejected from the earlier job, I raised my confidence and thought that if not here, I will surely get job in some other places and I looked for the job in other places and finally I am here doing this job.”

**-Male, Aged 35,
Kathmandu, Nepal**

The DRPI AWARE team emphasizes that it is out in the business community selling skills of potential employees and not focusing on their disability. Job seekers will be presented to employers as “skilled, capable, and ready to work” not as a member of a specific disability group.

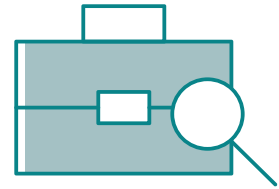


“I might have lost my legs but mentally I have not lost anything. I have studied so much that I can do all works that a non-disabled person does by sitting.”

**-Female, Aged 27,
Kathmandu, Nepal**

Using various communication strategies, Workplace Coordinators maintain contact with job seekers. A few ways to do this are to create a social media profile such as a Facebook page to share information, sustain engagement, highlight successes and attract new job seekers. Our Workplace Coordinators also communicate via text-messaging IMO (Video Call Indian Sign Language) and WhatsApp, to share information about new job opportunities to the job seekers on the roster. By actively publicizing the success of the program and communicating regularly with job seekers, the program may receive more referrals as word reaches friends and family.

IDENTIFY JOBS AND UNDERSTAND JOB DEMANDS



A detailed analysis and deep understanding of the job skills requirements and the job seekers qualifications is important to getting a job.

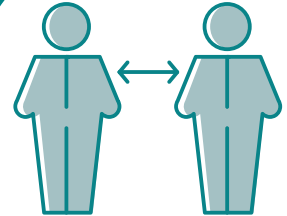
When a job opportunity is identified, the Workplace Coordinator contacts the employer to learn more about the specifics of the job. Job descriptions tend to be high level and do not always describe the actual tasks, tools or work environment. The Workplace Coordinators visits the workplace and conducts a job analysis to have a clear picture of the skills needed. Information gathered from the employer and a visit to the proposed job site includes:



The Employer has to see the person as valuable to their business process.

- Evaluation of the physical workspace.
- Examination of all the factors in the job skills required with a chance to present options to the employer as the job requirements and site visit develop.
- Identify availability, quality, and quantity of peer or collegial support; workplace accommodations and job supports as well as informal social support.
- Examine the management and reporting structure.
- Recognize workplace policies, procedures, and culture.
- See how current employees are doing the job.
- Determine any transportation challenges for getting to and from work.
- Determine if working conditions are safe and identify risks of exposure to physical, biological, chemical, radioactive, or other hazards.

MAKE GOOD MATCHES



At home I help my father in the store and when the trucks come in I record the deliveries in the books.

These transferable skills were matched to an inventory job.

Once a job opening/requirement has been identified, the Workplace Coordinator will screen interested candidates from their roster for suitability for available positions and share more information about the job with those who are qualified. The Workplace Coordinator will forward applicable candidates' resumes to the employer who will provide a shortlisted selection of candidates to be invited for an interview.

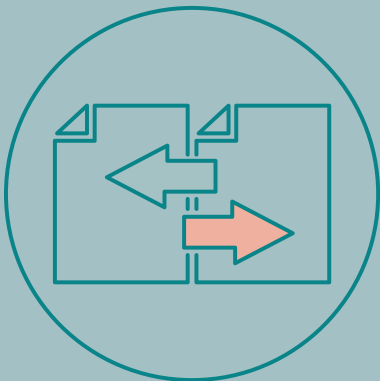
The information collected during the intake meetings is documented in a candidate database that is indexed and categorized according to skills, interests, and education so that it can be cross-referenced to the employers who are looking for positions and the requirements for the vacant position.

When a potential job match is identified, the Work Placement Coordinator supports qualified and interested job candidates to prepare for a job interview and to meet the employer.



Develop An Information Sheet About The Employer

- Brief outline of the job description and skill requirements
 - Any additional information (eg. shift schedules, performance expectations)
- Encourage job seeker to learn as much as they can about the company and job.



Confirm Job And Interest Match

Review the job seeker's resume and skills inventory to confirm match to job requirements.



Apply For The Job

- Tailor the resume to the job position.
- Assist with completing paper or online job application forms.

“

I always wanted to work in non-disability sector so that I could mainstream disabilities. Teaching small kids has allowed me to do so.”

-Nirmal Bista
Head Teacher,
Shree Kabir English Boarding School.



Interview Preparation

- Support the job seeker to develop questions for the interview that reflect their interests or highlight their skills.
- Workplace Coordinator reviews or practices basic interview skills to put the job seeker at ease with the process.
- Prepare for the interview by learning more about the company. Conduct research to understand the company's culture, mission and values, their product or service offerings and the skills they are looking for in an employee.



Interview Support

- Verify location of interview and time
 - o Is the location accessible?
 - o What is the plan to travel to the interview?
- Send reminders of interview time the day before and the morning of the interview
- Accommodations for the interview are identified and put in place, including accessible transportation
- Provide advice on appropriate attire and etiquette for the job interview.



Post Interview Review

- Follow-up to see what worked well and what didn't work in the interview process.
- Candidates who do not receive the position will debrief with the Workplace Coordinator to discuss strategies for improvement for the next job opportunity and/or other reasons why they may not have received this opportunity

PLAN ACCESSIBILITY AND WORKPLACE ADJUSTMENTS

Supporting A Culture Of Inclusion



“Hiring people with disabilities features in our store like ramps, accessible washrooms and changerooms is good for business. We can hire a more diverse workforce and it lets us attract more customers.”

- Clothing retail store, India.

Corporations that establish a culture of inclusion value diverse opinions and characteristics. This diversity enables creativity in the workplace both in terms of product and in terms of how the workplace operations. It provides an opportunity to integrate people with various experiences, perspectives, skills, and abilities. Fundamentally it is a respect for difference and recognizing the contributions of a broader perspective to the front lines. Usually once an employer has given someone a job, their barriers to employing those with disabilities begins to disappear. Employers want a stable well-balanced labour pool who are good workers.

There is a myriad of options for workplace accommodations or adaptations to support the productivity and inclusion of employees with disabilities. These are innovative and adapted to the particular business. Accommodations tools, modifications or adjustments to a job or the work environment creates access and is required when barriers have not or cannot be removed.



I always had difficulty in travelling because of my condition. However, this job has given us opportunity to work even from home. It's awesome."

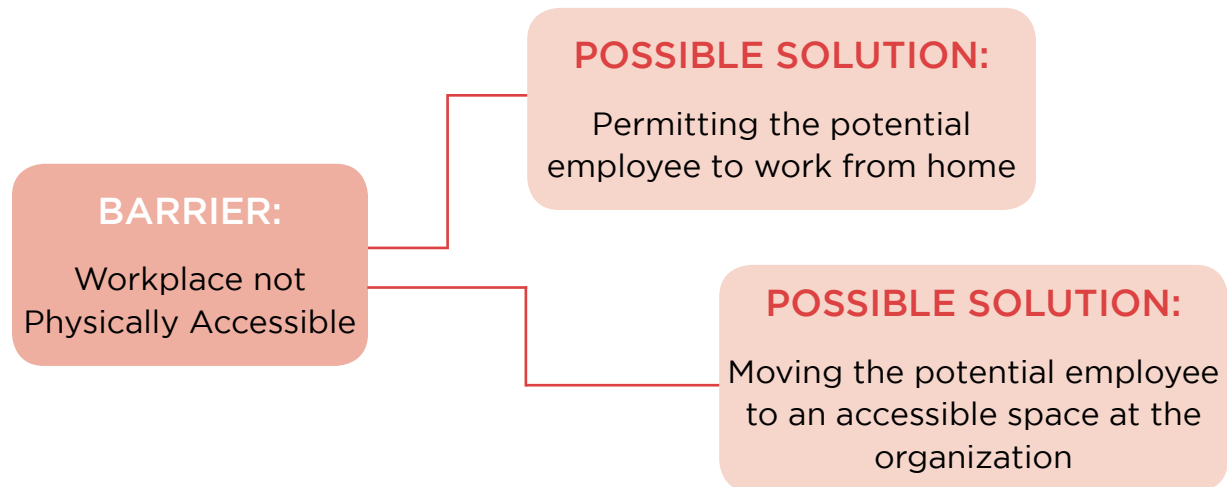
**-Pooja Chettri,
Cloud Worker
(Data Entry),
Cloud Factory**

The UNCRPD defines reasonable accommodation as:

"[N]ecessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms".

Adaptations may be necessary as they are in the case of other employees – and those adaptations usually benefit everyone in the workplace¹⁴. The International Labour Organization provides a number of helpful and thoughtful tips on ways to address workplace accessibility barriers¹⁵.

Some employer on-site orientation can address the potentially negative view of accommodation as “special treatment’ of some employees, that is too often heard.



14 Rloux, M. "Employment Equity and Disability: Moving Forward to Achieve Employment Integration and Fulfill Promises of Inclusion and Participation", 2014.

15 International Labour Organization Promoting diversity and inclusion through workplace adjustments: A practical guide, 2016

Workplace Accommodations Or Adaptions:

Respect dignity

Meet individual needs

Are unique to a person and contextual to the job

Promote integration and full participation

Shift focus to ability

Facilitates a better job match



Accessibility can be built with intention and support – it is an iterative process and is a process that engaged the employer, the employee and DRPI AWARE Work Placement Coordinator. Lack of accessibility is not a barrier to job candidates when we think creatively about other options. We focus on finding alternative workplaces and spaces that will facilitate opportunities for candidates to demonstrate their skills and abilities.



DRPI AWARE employer partners have demonstrated a culture of inclusion and accommodation through:

A hotel chain in working towards inclusive hiring practices recognized that there are cultural and caste stigmas around cleaning toilets. While the job they had involved cleaning complete hotel rooms, this was a part of the job duties. To address the parents very strong concern about their family member working at such a low-status job, the hotel chain decides to hold an annual picnic for all family members of employees to show them that each member of the staff is equally valued.

- ◆ Providing sign language training for all staff so that they can communicate with co-workers who are deaf.
- ◆ Inviting families of employees with disabilities to the workplace to allay any concerns they may have about the safety and security of their children with disabilities.
- ◆ Visiting organizations that support people with disabilities to learn about physical accessibility development, meet potential employees and share information about their hiring needs and requirements.
- ◆ Workplace education/training for supervisors and co-workers that address the stereotypes and myths about disability.
- ◆ Designing and building websites that are accessible¹⁶.
- ◆ Ensuring that all employees, including employees with disabilities, are considered for promotions recognition, and professional development within the company.
- ◆ Ensuring that employees with disabilities are not separated or compartmentalized within the workforce.
- ◆ People managers are expected to respect and support employees with disabilities so that they can be successful.

16 <https://www.nfdn.org.np/publications/web-accessibility-guide.html>

Job Offer Accepted: Maintain Ongoing Support

Addressing issues before they become problems



The process of recruitment, interviewing and onboarding can be a time of uncertainty for both job seekers and employers. Providing support through this transition period builds trust, sets expectations and creates an environment of collaboration and problem solving that increases successful employment outcomes.

When an individual has secured a job and a start date has been established it is important for the Workplace Coordinator to meet the new employee at the workplace on their first day of work to provide them with the support and confidence they may need.

The presence of the DRPI AWARE Workplace Coordinator on the first day of work will help to identify any foreseeable issues as the new employee transitions into the workplace. To address concerns and questions that both the new employee and the employer may have regarding onboarding, integration, and accessibility.

Employers may be nervous about how well a person with a disability will integrate into the workplace. Demonstrating ongoing support will help the employer feel more confident and will support the relationship development. Supporting this initial transition can build the foundation from which the employee and employer can communicate, identify issues, problem solve, and remove any apprehension.

THE BIGGER PICTURE:

Share Success Stories
– Communicate, Celebrate, Amplify



Persons with disabilities should be provided with the opportunity to work. Awareness should be raised among people, and especially among employers of all kinds. Recognizing the skills of persons with disabilities is a first step. The benefits of incorporating people with disabilities in the labour force needs to be clear to employers. For that purpose, we need to make people aware of the legal rights of persons with disabilities and make employers behave in a respectful manner towards persons with disability. In the course of doing so, we can use newspapers, FM and other social media to create awareness.”¹⁷

While we can get jobs using the DRPI AWARE model there is more to be done than that. We need to address the mindset of employers and job seekers and the public so that over time, seeing and working with people with disabilities will become commonplace and no longer a rarity. As we challenged the systems and showed what people can do, we also realized that a broader awareness program needed to be implemented.

To do that, the DRPI AWARE project has developed a public relations campaign. Locally, we have created videos, pamphlets, billboards and employer awards to raise awareness of the skills and abilities of persons with

17 Praisai, S., Pant, A. Monitoring Employment Rights of People with Disabilities in Kathmandu, Nepal, 2018

disabilities, facilitate role models and promote sustainability. This campaign highlights persons with disabilities as equal citizens with the rights, skills and abilities to work productively in the local labour market.

All of the promotional materials produced by DRPI AWARE can be found on the DRPI AWARE EMPLOYERS PORTAL (<http://drpi.research.yorku.ca/aware-for-employers/>). They are specific to the norms of the particular culture.

The public relations campaign includes:

Media

Videos

The DRPI AWARE team (with professional videographers in each city) has created a series of **short videos** to share employment success stories of people with disabilities and the organizations that employ them.

Promotional Material

The DRPI AWARE team created material such as bookmarks, flyers, and postcards that are used to promote employment of persons with disabilities, adapted to the local culture.

Social Media

Social media has been used not only to connect with job seekers and employers, but also to celebrate success.



fb.com/DRPI



[@YorkU DRPI Modules](https://@YorkU%20DRPI%20Modules)



@DRPI_global

Workshops

The Country Coordinator and Workplace Coordinators regularly conduct workshops and participate in conferences to contribute to a productive discussion of the employment of persons with disabilities. Key outcomes of workshops and meetings with employers include:

- Engaging in conversation
- Mapping interest in innovation and engagement
- Identifying employer needs
- Building sustainable relationships between employers and organizations of people with disabilities
- Recognizing champions

Inclusive Employer Awards

Employer councils, established in each country, in collaboration with the DRPI AWARE team have instituted employer awards to recognize and highlight companies for their leadership in inclusive hiring. The award is bestowed on employers who have contributed to the inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace. The **Bengt Lindqvist Inclusive Employer Award** recognizes an employer who demonstrates best practices and human resource policies and processes in one or more of the areas of recruiting, interviewing, hiring and accommodating people with disabilities. An Inclusive Employer treats everyone with respect and all employees are valued for their contributions. Based on these criteria, we recognize employers who treat their employees with dignity and equality, which is preserved in the organization's workplace culture.



The Bengt Lindqvist Inclusive Employer Award.

The Road to social justice is through innovation.

Local employers, project team members, government representatives, DPOs, the media, and other supportive organizations are invited to attend the ceremony. The purpose of the public relations campaign is not to push the new agenda for hiring but to let other employers know that there is an untapped labour market.

MAKE SUSTAINABILITY AN END GOAL

Establish Employer Councils



Councils of employers who are working toward inclusive employment have been established in each city – to provide a way for employers to have an on-going discussion and to bring on board other employers. Employer organizations, councils and business networks can play a major role in providing information and services to employers when accommodating workers with disabilities and developing an inclusive workplace¹⁸. Employer councils are run for employers and are led and governed by employers usually with their request for consultation and cooperation with the Workplace Coordinators and the Country Coordinators.

The purpose of the DRPI AWARE Employers Council Initiative is to bring together employers who are committed to creating a diverse workforce and including people with disabilities in their workplaces. Through the commitment to diversity hiring, employers will work together to increase access to employment for people with disabilities and to raise awareness about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities; specifically the business case for including people with disabilities in the workforce.

The council is made up of decision-makers who recognize that a diverse workforce is a productive workforce and they work to achieve these goals. The members of the council are employers who are showcasing innovative diverse hiring. The council will grow as people identify other employers working to achieve a diverse workforce.

18 ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities and Skills and Employability Department, 2011.

At meetings, employers talk about their experiences of diversity hiring and share their experiences among themselves and communicate the way forward and to meet the following objectives:

- 1) To move away from employment based on charity to employment based on skills.
- 2) To strategize ways to reach agencies that work for employing people with disabilities.
- 3) To recognize that senior executives supporting this initiative will make a difference in the labour market.
- 4) To share the model of successfully hiring people with disabilities in a way that focuses on the skills of the job seekers.
- 5) To lead an initiative to bring onboard major employers in the region to change the culture of exclusion.

Members meet regularly to share experiences and perform or sponsor activities. These groups are well placed to link business interests and the inclusion of people with disabilities in the labour market.

Some of these activities include:



Raising awareness and building capacity for disability inclusion in the labour market – possibly through workshops, training programs, consultancy services, networking events, and publicity campaigns. Making plans to bring other employers on board with inclusion.



Providing information and tools on disability and employment – including best practice examples, practical advice on local laws and workplace accessibility.



Influencing policy on employment and training of people with disabilities. Some councils may work with governments to develop policies on education, training, and inclusion. They may also have established corporate policies and procedures that promote inclusive workplace practices.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The DRPI AWARE project on navigating employment for persons with disabilities is the culmination of a six-year journey. This journey took the team to Hyderabad, India, Dhaka, Bangladesh and Kathmandu, Nepal, countries where the number of unemployed persons with disabilities is staggering. However, in keeping with DRPI's guiding principal of vigilant monitoring of the human rights of persons with disabilities, this is a small yet significant step in ensuring that the right to work and gainful employment of persons with disabilities becomes a reality and also results in promotion within the sector..

The DRPI AWARE project is based on the work in the field in the three countries. Moving from rights on paper to rights on the ground; from employment as charity to employment as entitlement has predictably raised challenges for us. In some cases, it has run up against traditional practices of development projects in employment that were really general training and job readiness, all still grounded and premised on disability. It has been challenging to get people accepted as skilled employees and then integrated into a diverse workforce. The project has certainly encountered skeptics who are selling disability to employers rather than bringing skills to the employer for a better workforce. For example,

- “Why do I need two arms if I can sew as quickly with one arm missing as someone with both arms?”
- “Why do I need to be able to hear to stock shelves at Walmart?”
- “Does my disability matter at all?”
- “Why do I need training if I have skills?”
- “Do I really need to be rehabilitated if I have skills?”
- “Do I really need another workshop on writing a resume/CV if it is not for a specific job opportunity?”

These are hard questions bringing to the forefront the weaknesses in the current models of work placement for people with disabilities. This project was not a retraining exercise, it was an employment exercise.

Employment is an important step to including and empowering persons with disabilities. The Roadmap to Work is a collaborative effort between the DRPI, AWARE, Global Affairs Canada, York University, Laval University and DPOs from India, Bangladesh and India. It is a pioneering example of the idea nothing without us – recognizing that the norms and values have to change rather than creating a specialized workforce. The environment has to be a focus of our attention in filling jobs. As people with disabilities, we need to be included in re-shaping a world that excludes disability. This is a report by persons with disabilities about persons with disabilities and also employers. We know that inclusion and dignity and autonomy are important and we, more than anyone, recognize and respect the differences that make a better workplace and a better society. This Manual looks at employment rights of persons with disabilities in this region in the context of the UNCRPD and other relevant laws. DRPI AWARE and the NGO partners in the project have engaged with people with disabilities to understand their human rights and needs and to put into effect their right to meaningful employment.

The aim of this project was to contribute to the growth of employment of persons with disabilities in private businesses and public undertakings. We collected information about the barriers and challenges to participation in the workforce. People with disabilities were asked to tell their own stories about when prevented from participating in the workforce because of their disability. These stories give us information about the real human rights situation faced by persons with disabilities in the area of employment. The trials and tribulations of persons with disabilities in finding and retaining gainful employment and the entire process from application to appointment has been recorded from the perspective of job seekers, employees' and employers.

It is hoped that this publication acts as a guide to persons with disabilities who have been conferred the right to seek a job under Article 27 of the UNCRPD and as a roadmap to employers who can now realize that disability is not a ground for denial of employment to an otherwise qualified individual. It is also hoped that this work highlights to the employer the benefits of having persons with disabilities in their workforce and brings

to the fore the indispensable right of a person with disability his or her right to have a career befitting his or her abilities. Having hoped to have achieved this end, we at DRPI AWARE take this opportunity to remind ourselves that our task of disability rights monitoring has just begun and shall never end. This is not a onetime audit but an on-going process of collecting information, reviewing it and seeing if real change is taking place. The outcome is not one more general training, not one more job-readiness activity, not one more resume writing workshop but having a secure job that pays real wages and has the potential for advancement.

It is hoped that this publication has awakened employers, rekindled hope amongst job-seekers and will serve its purpose in aiding the navigation of employment avenues to persons with disabilities.



APPENDIX A: PROJECT TEAM

Principal Investigator and Project Director:

Marcia H. Rioux, C.M., PhD, Distinguished Research Professor, School of Health Policy & Management, Graduate Program in Critical Disability Studies & Graduate Program in Health Policy & Equity Studies, York University, Toronto, Canada

Local Partners:

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Pavan Muntha, CEO, Swadhikaar Centre for Disabilities Information, Research and Resource Development, Hyderabad, India

Shudarson Subedi, President, National Federation of the Disabled, Kathmandu, Nepal

Canadian Partners & Co-Investigators (Canada):

Annie Bunting, Associate Professor, Law & Society, York University, Toronto

Amin Mawani, Associate Professor, Schulich School of Business, York University (2013)

Rachel Gorman, Assistant Professor, Critical Disability Studies, York University, Toronto

Thomas Klassen, Professor, Political Science & Public Policy and Administration, York University, Toronto

Cameron Graham, Professor, Accounting, Schulich School of Business, York University (2014-2016)

Normand Boucher, Professor-Researcher, Professeur associé, Faculté des sciences sociales Sciences sociales- École de travail social et de criminology, Laval University, Quebec City

Paula Hearn, DRPI Project Coordinator (2013-2018)

Mehmet Yilmaz, DRPI Project Coordinator (2018)

Rachael Dempsey, DRPI Research Assistant (2014-2016)

Natasha Atlin, DRPI Research Assistant (2013-2014)

Layla Rich, DRPI Research Assistant (2013)

Consultants:

Monica Ackermann, Workplace Accommodation and Digital Accessibility Specialist, Toronto, Canada

Sean Wiltshire, CEO, Avalon Employment Inc., St. John's, Canada

Regional Specialists:

Kuhu Das, Gender Analyst Specialist, Subhi Association for Women with Disabilities, Kolkata, India

Kalpana Kannabiran, Labour Market Specialists, Director of Council for Social Development, Hyderabad, India (2013-2015)

Country Coordinators:

India

Anuradha Echambadi, Country Coordinator, Hyderabad, India (2013-2015)

Sreedhar Ganta, Country Coordinator, Hyderabad, India (2015-2018)

Nepal

Sagar Prasai, Country Coordinator, Kathmandu, Nepal (2013-2018)
Kiran Wagle (2013)

Bangladesh

Ferdousi Begum, Country Coordinator, Dhaka, Bangladesh (2017-2018)
Ishaque Mia, Country Coordinator, Dhaka, Bangladesh (2015-2016)
Shirin Akhter, Country Coordinator, Dhaka, Bangladesh (2013-2014)

Workplace Coordinators:

India:

Keerthana Bezawada, Workplace Coordinator, Hyderabad (2016-2018)

Nepal:

Bishal Dahal, Workplace Coordinator, Kathmandu, Nepal (2015-2017)

Bangladesh:

M. Minhaz Reza, Workplace Coordinator, Dhaka, Bangladesh (2016)
S. M. Mayeen Ahmed, Workplace Coordinator (2014-2016)

Graduate Research Assistants (based in Canada at York University and Laval University throughout 2013-2018) and other students based in Laval

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Tammy Bernasky	Valentina Sisti
Cameron Crawford	Sukaina Dada
Dana Corfield	Anne Jackson
Douglas Waxman	Yan Grenier
Emily McIntyre	Marie Gagnon
Veronique Garcia	

Note: The DRPI AWARE team has had the pleasure of working with many talented sub-contractors including translators, sign-language interpreters, videographers, media companies, website developers, graphic artists, disability personal assistants, among many other professionals.

Appendix B:

DRPI'S PARTNER ORGANISATIONS IN INDIA, BANGLADESH AND NEPAL

Swadhikaar Centre for Disabilities Information, Research and Resource Development, Hyderabad, India:

SWADHIKAAR has been involved in training and capacity building for various marginalized social groups such as persons with disabilities, indigenous people, women, youth and farmers. SWADHIKAAR provides education and awareness about individual and collective entitlements, as well as how to access government schemes and programs. Special focus is on persons with disabilities and the most marginalized in this sector.

SWADHIKAAR is involved in raising awareness among relevant United Nations committees, leading international NGOs and the Indian State Government of Andhra Pradesh. They advocate for social policy changes that promote equal distribution of resources, wealth and inclusion for all Indians.

Mr. Pavan Muntha is the CEO of the organization and Mr. Sreedhar Ganta is the country coordinator of SWADHIKAAR.

Subhi Association for Women with Disabilities, West Bengal, India

Association for Women With Disabilities is a grassroots non-profit organization formed in 2002 with 2 units in West Bengal, India. Primarily working in Kolkata's slums and 24 South Pargana – an area of rural deprivation; AWWD works with poor, young and disabled women who are denied their fundamental human rights even on a daily basis. The heart AWWD's work is capacity building at the individual, collective and societal levels. AWWD focuses on enabling girls and women to take control of their lives including their social, economic, cultural, political and material

resources and become part of mainstream society. The organization also creates platforms for women with disabilities to collectively raise their voices, undertake advocacy and awareness building activities with key societal stakeholders and works in partnerships with NGO's and CBO's to influence policy and legislation. It works towards long-term sustainable mainstreaming, community engagement, and advocacy and awareness. Subhi Association for Women with Disabilities is part of the Women with Disabilities Group.

Kuhu Das, Gender Analysis Specialist of the Subhi Association of Persons with Disabilities is part of the project team.

National Federation of the Disabled, Kathmandu, Nepal

National Federation of the Disabled Nepal (NFDN) is legally registered nongovernmental organization (NGO) under the institutional enrollment act of Nepal. It is the national umbrella body of persons with disabilities, represents more than three hundred member organizations working for promoting the rights of disabled people throughout Nepal.

As the nongovernmental and nonprofitable organization NFDN has been leading disability rights movements in Nepal since 1993 through its working strategies - Advocacy, Awareness raising, Capacity building, Networking & Collaboration. Internationally, NFDN is the member assembly of Disabled Peoples' International (DPI) and also representing Nepal in the DPI Asia Pacific region as vice-president, and South Asia as president. In national level, NFDN is the member of the Disability Advisory Desk under Prime Minister's office, Special Education Council under Department of Education, National Development Council and Law Improvement Commission under the Ministry of Law and Justice.

NFDN has been very influential and proactive in roles for formulating, changing, implementing disability-related legal provisions, and building the leadership and advocacy capacity of Disabled Peoples' Organizations (DPOs) in Nepal. It has very good networking and cooperation with different government and nongovernment stakeholders working various domains of development. NFDN has five regional offices in the leadership of regional committees in different five development regions and 10 district working committees.

Mr. Shudarson Subedi is the president of NFDN.

Bangladesh Prothibandhi Kallyan Somity (BKPS)

BPKS is a non-governmental, self-help organization of persons with disabilities committed to directly working with persons with disabilities to enable them to be self-reliant and to contribute to the development of a non-discriminatory society for all.

The organization's goal is equality and opportunity in all activities by emphasizing the needs of persons with disabilities through ensuring the attainment of their equal rights, equal access to all opportunities and full participation in national-building activities.

To safeguard the principles and rights of disabled people and increase their access to opportunities and participation through establishing and strengthening disabled people's organizations, promoting non - discriminatory system and performance of various agencies and providing exemplary and technical supports including resources and training for different stakeholders.

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