



Including Persons with Disabilities in Employment Promotion



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EMPLOYMENT SITUATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

An estimated 15% of the world's population or one billion people live with some form of disability¹. About 80% of them are of working age and live in

developing countries². However, a range of attitudinal, physical and informational barriers severely hamper their access to vocational skills development and employment: Persons with disabilities experience discrimination, lack of interest of governments, donors, employers as well as negative preconceptions about their work capacities, lower educational

achievements due to exclusionary practices, and inaccessible transport, training infrastructure and workplaces. As a result, they are more likely to be unemployed and economically inactive³. They face a higher risk of working in the informal sector, in low-paid jobs with poor career prospects, lacking adequate social protection and ultimately, falling into or being trapped in poverty. The effects of gender inequalities put women with disabilities at an even further (labour market) disadvantage, yet the intersection of disability, gender, unemployment and poverty goes often unrecognized.

In the past nine years, the Sector Project 'Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities' on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has been supporting programmes in more than ten partner countries to promote the economic empowerment of persons with disabilities. Our efforts specifically include access to vocational skills development (Technical, Vocational Education and Training [TVET]), workplace and informal learning, lifelong learning etc.) which plays a vital role in improving their labour market situation. This publication consolidates our lessons learnt from a review of disability-inclusive employment promotion in five GIZ projects and offers guidance and tools around how to increase persons with disabilities' access to employment promotion. It is intended as a resource for development practitioners and a Community of Practice, in order to design and implement disability-inclusive employment promotion projects. This corresponds to BMZ's commitment of strengthening disability-inclusive development cooperation.



DEFINING DISABILITY

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

(UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006, p.4)

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STRATEGIC AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS FOR DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT PROMOTION

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL INSTRUMENTS GUIDING THE INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN EMPLOYMENT, VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED PROGRAMMING:

INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK

The **ILO Convention No. 159 concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons)** (1983) pioneered the vital link between vocational rehabilitation and employment: The convention stipulates the development of national policies on vocational rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities and the involvement of their representative organisations (DPOs) in implementation processes.

The **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD)**, 2006 reflects the fundamental shift towards disability as a human rights issue. Germany and most of its partner countries ratified the UN CRPD. The convention recognizes the importance of international cooperation to support its implementation at national level:



DISABLED PEOPLE'S ORGANISATIONS (DPOS)

Organisations that are governed, led by and comprise a majority of persons with disabilities, and thus are representative of persons with disabilities. They operate as individual organisations, coalitions, cross-disability or national, regional or international umbrella organisations.

Art. 32 obliges States Parties to ensure that their development programmes are accessible to and inclusive of persons with disabilities. Art. 27 recognises the right of persons with disabilities to work: in an inclusive, non-discriminating and accessible labour market; with equal opportunities across private and public sector, and self-employment; and with relevant support, including work place adjustments, vocational training and rehabilitation. The realization of Art. 27 is closely linked to Art. 24 on education which mandates access to vocational training and lifelong learning for persons with disabilities.

The **2030 Agenda's** commitment to 'leave no one behind' underpins the importance of the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the development journey. The agenda and the SDGs explicitly reference disability and persons with disabilities: SDG 4 seeks to ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for persons with disabilities (4.5) and inclusive learning environments (4.a). SDG 8 includes employment and decent work and equal pay for persons with disabilities (8.5). The global indicator framework requires data disaggregation by disability and contains 11 specific disability indicators.

NATIONAL INSTRUMENTS

Many partner countries have already national commitments to the employment of persons with disabilities which provide an important framework to align our work with: These may include policies and action plans on disability that include a reference to employment issues or national employment plans that refer to persons with disabilities.

The inclusion of persons with disabilities has become a prominent principle of German development cooperation. A new strategy for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in German development cooperation replaces the first action plan of the BMZ for the inclusion of persons with disabilities from 2013. It specifies the commitment to disability inclusion across all sectors and the implementation of the obligations under Art. 32 of the UN CRPD.

TRANSLATING DISABILITY INCLUSION INTO EMPLOYMENT PROMOTION PRACTICE: METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1.

KEY APPROACHES

Participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations

The participation of persons with disabilities is a key ingredient to achieving disability-inclusive employment promotion: The UN CRPD highlights the obligation to actively involve persons with disabilities and DPOs in the implementation of the Convention. This also applies to work and employment: Involving DPOs provides us with a deeper understanding of the employment situation of persons with disabilities, the barriers they experience in accessing employment and vocational skills development and related needs. It offers expertise how we can address them in our programming and implement legal obligations such as reasonable accommodation. Our experience has shown that the meaningful participation of DPOs should be institutionalised in programme processes (e.g. as partner or member of advisory or steering committees), as opposed to tokenistic approaches. This is likely to increase the effectiveness of employment promotion programmes for persons with disabilities. In order to ensure full participation, capacity development programmes should be combined with those of other CSOs. Furthermore, CSOs and their members should receive targeted (demand-driven) support in order to help shape disability-inclusive employment promotion activities.

Multi-stakeholder and multi-level approach and empowerment

There is a range of different stakeholders at different levels (from national policy-making to sub-national implementation level) who play a role in the employment promotion of persons with disabilities and need to be identified. They all have different (support) needs in terms of disability-inclusive employment promotion:

- Government actors need to be equipped to enforce, revise or develop relevant laws and policies
 - Employers need to be willing and able to improve recruitment and retention of persons with disabilities
 - Vocational skills development providers need to be willing and able to include persons with disabilities
 - DPOs need to have space and capacities to engage in and contribute to relevant processes
- Employment placement services need to be capacitated to offer services that are accessible for and responsive to persons with disabilities.

Engaging multiple stakeholders across national, regional, and local levels to address these needs is crucial in order to create a broad basis of support and ownership for the promotion of employment of persons with disabilities and their inclusion in related programmes.

Using an integrated approach to employment promotion

German development cooperation pursues an integrated approach to employment promotion which embraces five components (policy framework, tools, supply and demand sides and matching). The approach offers a solid basis to effectively mainstream disability and persons with disabilities into employment promotion. It identifies relevant areas of action but also highlights their interdependence and the need for the inclusion of persons with disabilities across all components and along their interdependencies in order to be successful: Improving access to TVET will not necessarily lead to an increased rate of employment of persons with disabilities if no appropriate effort is made on the demand side of the labour market. Applying an existing sector approach also offers unique opportunities for mutual learning among development practitioners and the development of a community of practice around disability-inclusive employment promotion.

3.2.

EFFECTIVE MEASURES AND MECHANISMS

There is a range of measures and mechanisms along the components of the labour market to promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the context of employment promotion programmes.

INTEGRATED APPROACH TO EMPLOYMENT PROMOTION, ADAPTED FOR THE INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

FAVORABLE FRAMEWORK POLICIES FOR EMPLOYMENT

Promoting policies that support access to employment and vocational skills development for persons with disabilities, including for example:

- Disability-inclusive national vocational skills development and employment policies
- Disability employment strategies

TOOLS

Improving labour market data on persons with disabilities, including for example:

- Inclusion of disability in labour force surveys (e.g. ELMA)

SUPPLY SIDE OF LABOUR

Promoting accessibility and availability of vocational skills development for persons with disabilities, including for example:

- Disability-inclusive labour market oriented TVET system
- Inclusion of persons with disabilities in (non-) formal education/ entrepreneurship education

MATCHING

Promoting availability and accessibility of employment services for persons with disabilities and employers, including for example:

- Disability-inclusive career guidance and placement services
- Enforcement of disability-related labour market regulations (e.g. disability employment quota)

DEMAND SIDE OF LABOUR

Promoting disability-inclusive employer practices and workplaces, including for example:

- Inclusion of disability in business development services
- Disability-inclusive promotion of self-employment and business start-up schemes

POLICY FRAMEWORK

Well-designed policies can significantly increase the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market. Whilst they often gravitate towards the supply side it is equally important to focus on the demand side to remove barriers in the social organisation of work and the infrastructures that support it. Inclusive employment promotion provides space for DPOs to engage in and influence the formulation and evaluation of employment and disability policies in line with the UN CRPD. It also offers opportunities for the direct involvement of projects, e.g. through advocacy, policy influencing or the membership in UN CRPD monitoring committees.

SUPPLY SIDE

Measures aim at increasing access to mainstream vocational skills development: Capacity Development and raising awareness among training institutions, trainers and national training authorities, establishing disability focal points to promote and coordinate disability inclusive practices, reviewing training curricula to include disability or developing inclusion checklists to guide training institutions and develop inclusion standards. Yet, it also involves targeted measures, including internships for persons with disabilities, working with disability-specific vocational training providers to increase their quality, demand-orientation and recognition and link them to the open labour market. Furthermore, case management approaches offer comprehensive support to persons with disabilities in training, transition and retention.

EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENT

Creating links between persons with disabilities and employers also involves a two-pronged approach: Disability-specific services such as case managers or specific job centres that support employers in finding the right job candidates. Such case managers or specific job centers will also help job seekers with disabilities identify a suitable workplace and offer counselling to both parties in order to facilitate the transition. Mainstream employment placement services and agencies should also be capacitated through trainings and tools in order to become more accessible and responsive for the needs of persons with disabilities.

DEMAND SIDE

Weakening stereotypes and discrimination is vital in supporting the labour market inclusion of persons with disabilities: Awareness-raising and sensitization among employers and trade union organisations and dissemination of inclusive workplace good practice in cooperation with DPOs should highlight the benefits and win-win of workplace inclusion (access to skills, innovation, reputation etc.). Equally important is guidance and counselling for employers on how to attract, recruit and retain persons with disabilities, related mechanism (e.g. the establishment of disability focal points) and information on available support.





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