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Decent Work for People with Disabilities



**MOVING  
TOWARDS  
DISABILITY  
INCLUSION**

# **MOVING TOWARDS DISABILITY INCLUSION**

**Supported by  
the ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme**

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First published 2011

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#### ILO Cataloguing in Publication Data

Moving towards disability inclusion / International Labour Office. - Geneva: ILO, 2011  
64 v.

ISBN: 978-92-2-125211-5 (print pdf); 978-92-2-125212-2 (web pdf)

International Labour Office

disabled worker / employment opportunity / disability / integration of the disabled / legislation / comment / Cambodia / Ethiopia / Thailand / Viet Nam

15.04.3

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Printed in Switzerland

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## About the ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme



*For nearly a decade the International Labour Organization (ILO) has partnered with the Government of Ireland through Irish Aid to create greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent work and income as a way out of poverty and inequality.*

*The ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme, which takes the form of multi-year strategic relationship, supports two disability-specific projects. The Promoting the Employability and Employment of People with Disabilities through Effective Legislation, or PEPDEL, project supports governments in improving disability-related laws and policies. Phases 1 and 2 of PEPDEL covered 2001 to 2008, with Phase 3 coming to an end in 2011. The project Promoting Decent Work for People with Disabilities through a Disability Inclusion Support Service, or INCLUDE, project works to build capacity at regional and national levels to effectively support the equal access of persons with disabilities to training, employment services, entrepreneurship and business development services and micro-finance. The INCLUDE project arises from experience in promoting the participation of disabled women in mainstream women entrepreneurship activities under the ILO-Irish Aid project components 'Developing Entrepreneurship among Women with Disabilities' and Women's Entrepreneurship and Gender Equality (WEDGE); Phases 1 and 2 of the INCLUDE project operated from 2001 to 2008 and Phase 3 is soon to conclude. Both projects operate in selected countries of South East Asia and East and Southern Africa.*

# INTRODUCTION

## Moving towards disability inclusion

Over the past two decades, understanding about disability and persons with disabilities has evolved dramatically in many parts of the world. There is a growing realization that limitations on the participation of persons with disabilities in society and its institutions stem from interactions between the individual's impairment and attitudinal and environmental barriers. This trend has fostered an increasing recognition of the rights and abilities of persons with disabilities, and their potential to contribute to society.

*Moving towards disability inclusion* provides insights into how disability perspectives may be incorporated into policies, laws, services and programmes and the essential elements for sustainable and inclusive growth and development of societies. The stories were identified by ILO-Irish Aid project staff and written by Jeannette Sanchez, the communications officer of the Partnership Programme on disability. They highlight approaches, methodologies and instruments that are proving effective in working toward the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all spheres of life, in effect illustrating the application of a rights-based approach to disability.

The ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme works in selected countries of South East Asia and East and Southern Africa to promote decent work and a better life for people with disabilities through effective legislation and its implementation (the PEPDEL project); and, through their inclusion in training, employment services, entrepreneurship and business development services and micro-finance (the INCLUDE project). Actual project experiences provide the basis for the summaries, examples of good practice and lessons learned presented in this publication.

Meeting developmental goals of poverty reduction and equality in a sustainable way requires a change in society to accommodate diversity in all of its forms. It also requires providing appropriate access to services and programmes to all persons, with and without disabilities.

It is hoped that sharing of the disability project experiences through these stories will help inform other organizations and partnerships that are interested in supporting inclusive and sustainable development.





# Ethiopia



## CASE STORY: **DISABILITY INCLUSION SUPPORT SERVICES**

*In recent years a growing number of stakeholders around the world - development agencies, civil society organizations, the private sector, parliamentarians, foundations and governments, among others - have begun to recognize the importance of including disability as a cross-cutting issue in policies, programmes and services to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy the same rights and access to opportunities as other citizens. This rights-based approach and the removal of barriers that prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in society<sup>1</sup> together form part of a strategy crucial to reducing poverty and creating more inclusive and sustainable development.*

*The Ethiopian Center for Disability and Development (ECDD<sup>2</sup>), a non-governmental organization (NGO) established in 2005, combines its knowledge of disability and development to enable others to include people with disabilities. Government agencies, NGOs, donors, employer and worker organizations and service providers are among those with whom ECDD collaborates. They also seek to ensure that disabled persons are engaged in the planning, design, implementation and evaluation of development programmes, plans and general services. This involvement helps to ensure that the aspirations, needs and rights of disabled persons are catered for through an improved infrastructure for services and provisions to enable their effective participation and economic life. ECDD is supported by the International Labour Organization-Irish Aid Partnership Programme's INCLUDE project to promote disability inclusion in services and programmes.*

### **The challenge**

The estimated 1 billion people with disabilities worldwide represent some 15 per cent of the global population<sup>3</sup> and 20 per cent of the world's poor. An estimated 82 per cent of disabled people in developing countries live below the poverty line, and often lack access to key areas of development, including health, education, training and employment.

In many developing and developed countries, unemployment among persons with disabilities is widespread, due to a lack of access and adequate services. When they do work, disabled persons are more likely to be underemployed, earn less money, experience less job security and have fewer chances for advancement. Yet, access to training and sources of employment are critical to overcoming poverty and exclusion.

As Ethiopia's only centre dedicated to promoting disability awareness for inclusive development, ECDD is uniquely placed to promote acceptance, dignity and opportunity for the country's nearly eight million disabled persons. Through its activities and initiatives it builds organizational capacity-building to help bridge the equality gap between non-disabled and disabled persons and full inclusion in programmes and services. However, like all new

ideas, disability awareness for inclusive development has been hard to promote at the outset. Slowly, though, the idea is starting to take off.

Disability and Development Training (DDT) is a key component of ECDD's strategy that aims to foster greater access to opportunities and social inclusion of all people with disabilities. It's a strategy that is proving to be effective in improving opportunities and access and in empowering disabled persons and their families who are routinely stigmatized and isolated in Ethiopia. The implementation of DDT and training of DDT facilitators, supported by International Labour Organization (ILO), has helped challenge participants to view disability differently, identify changes for the services and programmes they run to ensure equal participation by disabled persons, and plan strategies to implement change. Development of an "action commitment" plan whereby participants apply the understanding they've gained through the new approach to their programmes and services, to make them more inclusive, is a key result of the initiative.

Under a service contract arrangement with the ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme begun in 2008, ECDD offers DDT courses to staff members of relevant organizations and institutions and facilitates development of their respective action plans to achieve the goals of including a disability perspective in employment and training programmes and services, such as micro-credit. Because ECDD employs its team of trainers with disabilities to lead DDT workshops, it challenges participants to interact with disabled trainers and helps them to deal constructively with mistaken assumptions about disability and disabled people.

DDT represents a new approach to raising awareness of the situation of people with disabilities and the barriers they face in earning a living and participating in the development of their communities and the nation. It's an approach that is supported through the application of ILO standards and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). What makes DDT distinctive is that it helps participants understand how barriers are created, including how they may be contributing to a disabling environment through the way they organize their work. Through DDT participants become agents for organizational change and through their actions help to prevent or break down social barriers.

Since its establishment, ECDD has seen a surge in its activities and staff size: from five to 18 full-time staff members and 27 part-time assistant facilitators, disability and development trainers and accessibility surveyors - most of whom are women and all of whom have a disability. Presently, it is active in Addis Ababa and four Regions of the country (Amhara, Oromia, Tigray and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State).

**Disability inclusion support services provided by ECDD are made possible by funding through the INCLUDE project, as well as several other donors. INCLUDE works to build capacity at national level to effectively support the full participation of persons with disabilities in mainstream programmes and services focussing on vocational training, entrepreneurship development, employment, and micro-finance.**

## **The ECDD vision**

*ECDD envisions an inclusive Ethiopia, where children, youth and adults with disabilities, regardless of gender or type of disability, as well as their parents and families, enjoy the same rights and have access to the same medical, educational and social services, training and work opportunities enjoyed by other citizens. In such an inclusive society, people with disabilities are accepted, have a voice and participate actively in the life and development of their communities.*

## **Articles 8 and 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**

Article 8 of the UN CRPD specifically requires ratifying States to promote awareness throughout society about the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities and their capabilities and potential contributions. It also requires them to combat stereotypes, prejudice and activities that might harm people with disabilities. Measures to support these aims include, among others, public awareness campaigns and awareness-raising training programmes about disabled persons and their rights.

Article 27 of the UN CRPD recognizes the right of people with disabilities to earn a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities.

The UN CRPD together with major international conventions such as ILO Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983, (No.159), which requires countries to adopt and implement a national policy based on the principles of equal opportunity and equal treatment, provide a platform for advancing equal opportunity in the world of work.

## **Meeting the challenge**

*Since its establishment over five years ago, ECDD is demonstrating it can be a major influence and central force in promoting greater access of persons with disabilities to mainstream services, programmes and activities, including employment services, credit, skills and business training, and self-employment in Ethiopia.*

## **Access to employment services**

In Addis Ababa, the ECDD has been working with Info Mind Solutions PLC (IMS), a private employment agency with nearly 95 per cent of market share, to help job seekers with disabilities access employment opportunities. For IMS, providing better services for qualified disabled job candidates is not difficult given its commitment to providing employers with skilled workers and heightened awareness of disability inclusive principles, resulting from the agency's roots in the United States and familiarity with the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990).

As the leading recruitment agency in Ethiopia, IMS connects employers to some 180,000 qualified job seekers, operating largely as a web-based company. Employers registered with IMS use their online services to obtain information on prospective applicants. IMS has modified its website to encourage disabled job seekers to apply for job vacancies through the addition of a few questions about their disability and job support needs, if required; and employers are asked to consider hiring disabled persons. In addition, when asked by a registered employer for a list of qualified candidates for a new job vacancy, IMS typically includes a disabled candidate among its short-list of five candidates.



Since 2008 with support provided by the ILO through ECDD, IMS employs a candidate relations officer to assist disabled job seekers with CV writing and in honing interview skills. The candidate relations officer also reviews all relevant vacancy postings publicized through newspapers and online services and transcribes them into Braille. Some 40 to 50 vacancies are incorporated into a single Braille booklet, from which an additional five booklets are prepared and circulated weekly in selected locations such as the blind association libraries and through disabled persons' organizations. The Braille booklets are also available at various locations at Addis Ababa University, where visually impaired prospective graduates and campus community members can access them easily.

## ***Working to change perceptions among human resource professionals***

In close collaboration with the Society of Human Resource Management in Ethiopia (SHRME), an association of Human Resource (HR) managers founded three years ago and more than 100 members strong, the ECDD has also been instrumental in helping to change the perceptions of HR professionals towards hiring workers with disabilities. Training workshops designed to influence HR professionals to pay attention to the needs of disabled professional job seekers, providing guidance on how to work with disabled workers and on implementing inclusive employment policies help provide modern ways of working, sharing experiences and bringing greater efficiencies to their respective organizations.

## ***Job fairs***

Job fairs provide an opportunity for university-educated job seekers with disabilities to demonstrate their talents to potential employers. In Ethiopia, job fairs with the participation of persons with disabilities were initially organized by IMS in 2007, with the participation of ECDD, but since 2008 have been organized by SHRME.

Orientation sessions, led by SHRME in close collaboration with ECDD, form part of the pre-event activities designed to inform employers interested in hiring disabled workers. These include meetings to determine their labour market needs and disability awareness training that highlights the business case for hiring disabled persons, illustrating the advantages of hiring disabled jobseekers. SHRME also provides prospective employers with a list of interested professionals with disabilities who have applied for jobs posted with IMS. From this, a short list is prepared.

With some 7,000 job seekers attending the 2010 job fair and over 120 prospective employers in attendance, competition was stiff. To prepare disabled job seekers invited to interview - some 20 from a list of 75 individuals - the IMS candidate relations officer coordinated sessions on writing CV and how to prepare for an interview. In total, nearly 300 scheduled interviews took place during the 2010 job fair held at the Addis Ababa Exhibition Center.

***Dina Makonnen, Info Mind Solutions PLC***

***"A diverse workforce contributes to a healthy workforce and the growth, efficiency and success of any organization."***

## **Access to credit**

ECDD provides sector-specific training on disability awareness for business, industry, and public sector organizations. In the rural area of the country's northernmost region, it works with Dedebit Credit and Savings Institution (DECSI), a provider of small lines of credit and financial services with 140 branch offices throughout Ethiopia and some 2,000 staff. DECSI's main aim is to provide credit to poor people who have the capacity to engage in productive activity and to convert that talent into goods and services. The institution's non-discriminatory loan policy treats disabled loan applicants on an equal basis with others and allows aspiring entrepreneurs to start their businesses. Yet, in previous years DECSI was reluctant to give loans to disabled applicants. DECSI's policy has evolved since 2007 as a result of the influence of the Tigray Disabled Veterans Association (TDVA) and convincing



arguments made by TDVA, based on a study which showed that disabled persons make credit-worthy clients.

Loans are also provided to disabled entrepreneurs who already operate a business. Loan periods range from three to five years with a maximum amount of 20,000 Ethiopian Birr, or US \$1,200. Close to 90 per cent of the DECSI loans are for non-collateral businesses.

In 2010, DECSI served 421,000 applicants, with just over 18,300 applying for regular loans. Loans to disabled clients totalled over 900, or just over 5 per cent. A majority of these are to disabled veterans whose loans are subsidized in part by the TDVA as a first step out of poverty. Yet, it was ECDD's awareness raising activities that has encouraged DECSI to keep track of the number of loans to disabled clients. Quantitative information on the financial results and impact of the loans on individual businesses will help facilitate more accurate monitoring of its inclusive lending policy and provide baseline data against which future improvements in this area can be measured. Their cooperation has also led to discussions about DECSI's sub-branch offices and what can be done to remove any existing physical and communication barriers - for example, lack of elevators, sign language interpreters for deaf clients or bank brochures, and forms and books in a format suitable for visually impaired persons.

## **Access to skills training, business skills and management**

*Amhara Regional Micro and Small Enterprise Development Agency (ReMSEDA)*

Micro- and small businesses are powerful drivers of economic growth and job creation globally. They provide income generation and employment for many poor and low-income individuals. Established in 2001, Amhara ReMSEDA is a government organization established to provide basic skills and business management skills training, information and consultancy services for small and micro enterprises (SME). One of its main objectives is to tackle poverty by creating long-term and sustainable job opportunities for unemployed citizens. With offices at woreda, zonal and the grassroots or kebele levels, ReMSEDA beneficiaries include operators of start-up and expanding businesses such as shops, small manufacturers, food processors, makers of handicrafts and others.

Over 1,000 ReMSEDA extension workers operate at the grassroots level, each handling some 10 to 15 business operators for a six month period. Emphasis is placed on ensuring that women make up 50 per cent of those assisted, a decision made by policymakers. Though no specific targets have been established for disabled persons, awareness is high and a responsibility to include them in the implementation of programmes is "to be given due attention". This commitment has been largely stimulated by Disability and Development Training (DDT) organized by ECDD and attended by ReMSEDA staff in May 2010. DDT training has provided staff with a more comprehensive understanding of disability. It has also enabled them to become aware of their potential to reorganize their work so that it is inclusive. As a result, there is closer examination of how best to capture data on the number of disabled beneficiaries assisted through the agency. What is more, at the zonal level a recent proposal for business development services which cater to people with different types of impairments has been submitted for consideration, demonstrating the positive outcomes of disability awareness-raising for inclusive development.

### *Amhara Women Entrepreneurs' Association (AWEA)*

From a membership base of 60 when it was established in 1999, the Amhara Women Entrepreneurs' Association (AWEA) now boasts 3,000 members. Disabled women entrepreneurs currently make up approximately 15 of its membership, still a low number but a marked increase since its early days when there were no disabled members. Operating in four major cities in Amhara, including Bahir Dar, Gondar, Debre-Markos and Dessie, its mission is to improve the economic status of women in the region. AWEA's main objectives range from providing training and business development services to securing work premises to facilitating access to credit for women in business.

ECDD workshops on disability mainstreaming and awareness has enabled AWEA to incorporate social issues - disability, HIV/AIDS, environmental protection, and other issues - into their programme and action plan for 2010 and beyond. In many respects, this builds on earlier commitments made by AWEA dating back to 2007, under the Partnership Programme project on Promoting Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality (WEDGE), in which disabled women entrepreneurs were invited to take part in AWEA-supported events such as trade fairs. Association members are asked to "help bring out disabled women entrepreneurs who are working in hidden places" and encouraged to assist them in overcoming challenges - lack of business knowledge and working premises, for example. More significantly, AWEA has been working with women with disabilities from the Ethiopian Federation of Persons with Disabilities (EFPD), now called FENAPD, encouraging their members to take part in training and business development services offered by AWEA.

## **Representation and "voice"**

Experience shows that promoting equality of opportunity and inclusion is easier if there is a commitment from the highest levels. At Addis Ababa University (AAU) much has been accomplished as a result of its President's, Professor Andrias Eshete, commitment to accessibility and increased enrolment of students with disabilities. Since he took office, the number of disabled undergraduate students has nearly doubled to 450. What is more, under the University-Wide Strategic Plan for 2008 - 2013<sup>4</sup>, all building space is required to be accessible to users with different impairments and all ICT resources should be accessible.

The situation regarding accessible materials has improved over the past years. For example, the law library has acquired computers equipped with JAWS software to assist students with visual impairments. However, not all materials are available in an accessible format. For example, most legal codes and laws have not yet been translated into accessible formats.

Disabled students have created their own associations for deaf, blind as well as for those students with a mobility impairment. ECDD supports the activities of the three AAU associations of students with disabilities through financing select activities in support of International Day of Persons with Disabilities, International White Cane Day and Deaf Week as well as recreational activities for both disabled and non-disabled students. Through the Student Affairs Office, ECDD has also worked with the university's library to make it more accessible and to purchase assistive devices. Collaboration with the AAU Center for Students with Disabilities provides assistance to current students and new graduates and helps prepare for the transition into employment<sup>5</sup>.

*Since 2008 under the ILO INCLUDE project, ECDD's Disability and Development Training has been provided for personnel of local development NGOs (45 persons); micro-finance institutions (29 persons); small enterprise development programmes (37 persons); private sector employers (29 persons); and, government bureaus (61 persons).*

## Other organizations benefiting from ECDD services

### **Ombudsman's Office**

Training on disability mainstreaming provided by ECDD to key leaders and 30 staff members of the Ethiopian Institution of the Ombudsman has led to the hiring of two disabled persons to investigate complaints. In addition, forms to be completed by complainants now require individuals to indicate if they have a disability.

### **British Council**

Following DDT training to some staff, the British Council asked ECDD to conduct an accessibility audit of its facilities and to prepare an audit report with recommendations. This then led to ECDD providing disability awareness training for all British Council personnel.

### **WaterAid**

ECDD works with WaterAid Ethiopia to train staff on equality and inclusion while also advising on accessibility issues as it relates to water and sanitation, more concretely, in terms of appropriate designs for latrines for people with motor impairments.

### **Donors working with ECDD**

*ECDD has attracted funding from multiple donors who are interested in including disabled persons as part of their mainstream programmes and services. For example, in terms of expanding employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, ECDD also works with the International Orthodox Christian Charities, with funding provided by the United States Agency for International Development, to provide career counselling services to disabled jobseekers.*

*As the representative organization for the Abilis Foundation, an NGO based in Finland, ECDD processes applications for grant funding. Founded by people with disabilities, the aim of the Foundation is to support activities to promote the economic empowerment of disabled persons through the provision of small grants. The 10,000 Euro grant-making programme benefits groups of persons with disabilities engaged in skills development and income generating activities.*

## ECDD promotional activities

**Guide to Accessible Addis Ababa** - The first of its kind in Africa, the Guide<sup>6</sup> provides information on accessible premises in Addis and features everything from hotels, restaurants, banks, travel agencies, and cafes to parks and public buildings. Over 600 establishments were reviewed by five ECDD disabled surveyors to help create awareness of accessibility issues. It is an important contribution for Ethiopians with disabilities, disabled tourists, business people and guests from other African countries. As a result of the activities associated with



the Guide, several hotels and restaurants have requested assistance in making their facilities more accessible to customers with disabilities.

### **Inclusive employment awards**

More and more businesses are recognizing that persons with disabilities are valued employees and customers in their community. To recognize business leaders that practice and promote sustainable strategies to create fair, diversified and inclusive work environments, ECDD organized an "Inclusive Employment Awards" ceremony in December 2010. Award categories included: employer hiring the greatest number of disabled persons, employer with highest number of disabled persons in their personnel, small business employing disabled persons, and an achievement award to a human resources employer who has made a commitment to disability.

## **The good practice**

Increasing the participation of disabled job-seekers in services that promote their access to decent work.

## **Lessons learned**

ECDD has opened up possibilities for a range of stakeholders (government services, employment recruitment agencies, human resource professionals, business development service providers, among others) to try "new ways" for making their services and programmes more inclusive, thereby helping to ensure equal participation by disabled persons. Though it is still early days and additional follow up work is required over the short and long-term, here are some of the lessons learned thus far:

- Working towards the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in all levels of society takes time and is part of a long-term process. Not only do policies and laws need to be changed but also attitudes and misconceptions about disabled persons.
- Support and commitment at the highest organizational levels is a key to disability inclusion.
- The involvement of people with disabilities as trainers and facilitators helps others learn through interaction.
- Follow-up support to organization personnel, in particular as it pertains to disability "action plans", is important in building long-term efforts towards inclusive development.
- DDT is proving to be effective in getting people to view disability differently and become agents for organizational change through their proactive actions to break down the barriers. Changes have been significant even in cases where only a few dozen persons have been taken part. Change starts with a few committed individuals and builds up little by little.
- Sharing and publicizing success stories encourages other organizations to work towards the goal of inclusive development.
- Disabled persons' organizations need to think "development inclusion" and to more assertively work with service providers and programme planners to include disabled persons.

## Success story

### Haftom Kahsay - "Possibilities", Mekele, Ethiopia

At 23, Haftom Kahsay says life is good and *"everything is possible"*. But things weren't always that way. Four years ago, he was barely making ends meet selling snacks and biscuits along Mekele's busy streets, averaging 10 Ethiopian birr (ETB), or the equivalent of US 60 cents, per day, moving from place to place and working late into the night. A loan of 5,000 ETB (approximately US \$300) with a three year repayment period from Dedebeit (DECSI) micro-finance institution enabled him to increase revenues by selling phone cards. One evening, however, things took a turn for the worse. "Stress came to me as I learned that 300 ETB in phone cards were stolen. I was not aware that a group of young men had intentions to steal from me. When I handed them the cards I thought they would give me money. I had no idea that they would steal from a blind person. I became hopeless. I stopped selling for a few days", says Haftom.

Eventually, he regained his confidence and came up with a solution to protect himself from future theft. *"I decided to set up my business near the premises of the university. I also decided to rent a small kiosk, or container, and started a public phone service. Slowly, things began to improve and I was able to hire someone to run my business and I returned to my studies. I am now studying law at the university."*

Haftom has successfully repaid his first loan from Dedebeit. With a second loan of 40,000 ETB, or US \$2,400 obtained in mid-2010 he now offers, for a fee, laundry services to university students, and computer and photocopy services. Being an entrepreneur has not only had a great impact on Haftom's life, but also that of his family. He employs two of his sisters, in addition to three other workers. With an average income of nearly 3,000 ETB a month, he is able to cover salaries, rent and loan payments. He has also embarked on a new business initiative which he calls "Possibilities" which includes setting up a studio for the production of accessible educational material for blind students. *"I am full of life and life is good. I am getting loans and returning the money month by month. It's important to give thousands of others like me a chance. Everything in life is possible"*, says Haftom.



Photo: ILO / J. Sanchez

## CASE STORY: **PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP THROUGH INCLUSIVE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AND BUSINESS SKILLS TRAINING**

*Disabled women are more likely to be poor than disabled men and non-disabled women. Their poverty is linked in part to the fact that they have limited opportunities for education and skills development. In Ethiopia, a strong theme of the ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme has been to promote entrepreneurship development among women with disabilities so that they could optimize their income-generating potential, allowing them and their families to escape from poverty.*

### **The challenge**

A majority of Ethiopian women entrepreneurs operate their businesses under adverse conditions. Not only do they encounter difficulties in finding working premises, markets for their products and access to finance, but they also have limited access to training in entrepreneurship skills and management.

Disabled women entrepreneurs face even greater disadvantages arising from discrimination on the basis of their disability. They are often marginalized, and denied opportunities for employment, decision-making and leadership. Women entrepreneurs with disabilities have very limited marketable skills and training. Many are not targeted for training and are constrained by accessibility issues (such as lack of ramps, sign language interpretation or information in accessible formats) from participating in training, accessing credit or business development services.

Yet, these services need to be accessible to disabled women if they are to grow and expand their enterprises, and in the process create jobs and income for themselves and others.



## Meeting the challenge

### *Building strategic alliances*

The Federation of Ethiopian National Association of Persons with Disabilities (FENAPD) was one of the key ILO-Irish Aid implementing partners responsible for developing entrepreneurship among women with disabilities in the early phases of the Programme, which operated from 2001 and focused particular attention on enhancing employment opportunities for disabled persons. Women with disabilities were included on the project management committee - a 'first' in empowering these women to take charge.

Founded in 1996, FENAPD is an umbrella association of the four single disability-focused national associations<sup>7</sup>. Supported partially by (external) programmes such as ILO-Irish Aid, FENAPD coordinated, planned and implemented business training for disabled women entrepreneurs, facilitated access to microfinance and mobilized women with disabilities to participate in mainstream training in business, vocational and marketing skills, alongside non-disabled women<sup>8</sup>.

A similar strategic partnership involved the Tigray Disabled Veteran's Association (TDVA), based in the country's northernmost region. TDVA was established in 1996 with the aim of rehabilitating and integrating veterans into society. As a result of both the country's civil war which ended in 1991 and the conflict against Eritrea which ended in 1998, the region is now home to over 100,000 persons with disabilities.

As an implementing partner of Phase One of the Partnership Programme, TDVA organized basic business skills training, supported by a network of trainers, covering topics such as market analysis, preparing business plans, creative problem solving, risk taking and bookkeeping. It was TDVA's ability to convince the Dedebit Credit and Savings Institution to provide small lines of credit to its veterans, all with disabilities, which made the difference in terms of overcoming one of biggest barriers to business: access to credit. A 3 per cent loan subsidy provided through the ILO by the TDVA, together with business skills and vocational training for association members and awareness raising workshops aimed at some members and lending partners helped to facilitate access for disabled persons to financial services. In the end, aspiring or existing entrepreneurs who provided a viable business plan together with proof of completion of business management skills training received loans. Today, TDVA serves 25,000 registered members, including disabled persons who are not war veterans; disabled women veterans make up 10 per cent.

### *Associations of women entrepreneurs*

Women entrepreneurs associations also play a key role in the strategic partnership alliance. The second phase of the Partnership Programme, which operated from 2004 to 2008, saw an expansion in partnership network to include women's entrepreneurs associations (WEAs), such as the Amhara Women's Entrepreneurs' Association (AWEA) and the Adama Women Entrepreneurs' Association. Known for providing a platform for strengthening representation and advocating for the rights of women entrepreneurs, WEAs also provides its members with access to training and development.

It was interesting to note that getting women's entrepreneurs associations (WEAs) to accept disabled women entrepreneurs as members and provide them with appropriate services proved to be less challenging than convincing representatives of some disabled person's organizations (DPOs) to encourage their members to take part in training and business development services offered by WEAs. Several DPOs were concerned that because of isolation experiences some of their disabled women members would be shy or lack the confidence to attend integrated training. To tackle these issues, several measures were taken by the ILO-Irish Aid National Programme Co-ordinators and project management partners, of which women with disabilities form part. First, leadership and empowerment training was provided to better prepare disabled women entrepreneurs for inclusive training. And second, trainers and facilitators were offered disability-related training to assist them to run fully inclusive programmes.

Closer links between the ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme on disability and another Ireland-funded ILO project Promoting Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality (WEDGE) during the second phase of the Partnership Programme also enabled access to business development services, promotional events and a wider range of training tools by disabled women entrepreneurs. WEDGE supports women micro- and small entrepreneurs through building the capacity of government agencies, organizations representing workers and employers, and community groups to support them at all stages of their economic growth. Among the packet of ILO training tools offered to assist in the area of small enterprise development is the Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) programme, designed to assist business service providers and new or existing entrepreneurs in developing effective and practical techniques for managing their businesses. In addition to the range of training tools offered, events such as the Month of the Woman Entrepreneur, organized to benefit women entrepreneurs in general, help to draw attention to the achievements of women-operated businesses.

***In 2001, Irish Aid entered into its first, three-year partnership programme with the ILO. In the first phase the focus was on developing entrepreneurship among women with disabilities, including women with disabled dependents. Phase two, however, which operated from 2004 to 2008, supported the participation of disabled women entrepreneurs in training activities and events as part of another Irish Aid funded project, Promoting Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality, (WEDGE), in addition to dedicated entrepreneurship training for women with disabilities. WEDGE is part of the ILO's Small Enterprise Programme.***

"I had attended ILO-Irish Aid sponsored training on 'Improve Your Exhibiting Skills (IYES)' and it has helped my business," says Shemsiya Hiyar, a disabled woman entrepreneur who operates a successful fine leather crafts shop in central Addis Ababa. "First, they taught me how to organize my products and how to prepare them for exhibitions, then it was all about applying the business skills and knowledge on marketing, handling income and expenditures which I'd gained," she said of her experience.

*In less than ten years, the ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme's approach has helped bring many women entrepreneurs with disabilities into mainstream society, perhaps for the first time in their lives. Most importantly, it is an approach designed to have long-lasting effects, with collaborating groups and associations further disseminating and institutionalizing the message of inclusion.*

## Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB)

Components of the SIYB programme include Generate Your Business Idea (GYB) for potential entrepreneurs to determine whether they are the right person to start a business and to develop a feasible business idea; Improve Your Business (IYB) for entrepreneurs who want to improve the management processes of their business; and, Expand Your Business (EYB), an integrated business training and support package for small to medium-sized enterprises that have growth in mind. Among other innovative tools developed by the ILO to promote entrepreneurship are: Improve Your Exhibiting Skills (IYES), which is designed to facilitate women entrepreneurs' successful involvement in trade fair and exhibitions and access to new markets; and, GET Ahead for Women in Enterprise, which is used to train poor women entrepreneurs in business skills and on how to obtain support through groups, networks and institutions.

## The Month of the Women Entrepreneur (MOWE)

*Held annually in Ethiopia since 2004, MOWE celebrations draw attention to the achievements of women entrepreneurs - with and without disabilities or living with HIV/AIDS - through a series of national events such media campaigns, workshops, trade fairs and exhibitions, and promotional activities. The events are planned and coordinated with government, workers' and employers' groups and organizations in small enterprise development. MOWE celebrations are designed to showcase women as role models, give women entrepreneurs the opportunity to advocate or lobby on issues that are relevant to them; and, facilitate that exchange of information and good practices on women's entrepreneurship. ILO WEDGE created MOWE to promote women's entrepreneurship and gender equality in entrepreneurship development, with support provided by the Partnership Programme.*

*"The MOWE activities helped me much more than I expected", says a disabled woman entrepreneur who produces textile goods. "Until then I had been indoors, selling mostly to neighbours. Through the MOWE exhibitions she got orders, and now things are improving "bit by bit, step by step". In particular, she gained confidence about marketing her products and about exposure. "I'd ask retailers now to sell my products. Integration made my shyness go away."*

## Amhara Women Entrepreneurs' Association (AWEA)

*From a membership base of 60 in 1999 when it was established, the Amhara Women's Entrepreneurs Association (AWEA) now boasts 3,000 members. Disabled women entrepreneurs currently make up approximately 15 of its membership, a marked increase since its early days when there were no disabled members. Operating in four major cities in Amhara, including Bahir Dar, Gondar, Debre-Markos and Dessie, its mission is to improve the economic status of women in the region. AWEA's main objectives range from providing training and business development services (BDS) to securing work premises to facilitating access to credit for women in business.*

*A majority of AWEA members operate under the micro- and small- enterprise level. Many have limited income and operate under critical conditions. BDS facilitators, located throughout the region, provide assistance to entrepreneurs for a period of six months, with each facilitator assigned 50 women. A main task of the BDS facilitators is to work with clients in coming up with individual action plans to solve critical problems.*



## Success story

### Eleni, Meshesha, Costume Jewellery

#### Member, Ethiopian National Association for the Deaf (ENAPD) and Women in Self-Employment (WISE)

Eleni Meshesha is an award-winning entrepreneur. She has been honoured numerous times for her creative jewellery designs. Eleni produces handcrafted beaded necklaces and bracelets, in addition to a number of other goods using recycled materials such as plastics, glass and corks.



Born deaf, Eleni initially started an embroidery business, but then switched to beads and necklaces as it proved to be more lucrative. Premises secured by FENAPD provided her and other disabled women with the practical support needed to overcome work-related obstacles. Over the past years, she participated in a several skills training and business development initiatives, including ILO-WEDGE supported business management training, trade fairs and exhibitions in addition to events and activities organized during the Month of the Woman Entrepreneur. *«One of the most important things I've learned through training is that if you improve the quality of your product, the turnover will be fast and profits will improve. I've also been encouraged to be more creative. Both quality and creativity are key factors in running a successful business.»*

After nine years in business, Eleni has established a network of six suppliers who she has trained in bead jewellery design; three are disabled workers. Though the profits generated from her business varies depending on the price of raw materials, investments of Ethiopian Birr 500 (ETB) for production of finished goods could, for example, result in a 500 ETB profit (approximately US \$30), after input costs have been covered.

## Past project beneficiaries - Where are they now?

### Almaz Gebrekidan

#### Member, Tigray Disabled Veterans Association (TDVA)

Almaz runs a successful butcher shop in Mekelle. She has been in business for eight years now and one day hopes to expand it into a related service such as a small restaurant. *"I am able"*, says Almaz who sustained a leg injury in 1992 while serving in the Tigray Region

People's Liberation Front Army. ILO training on Basic Business Skills provided in 2003 through TDVA helped to equip the disabled veteran with the knowledge and information needed to start her business. *"Business continues to be good and is profitable"*.

Over the years with savings generated from her profits, Almaz has been able to buy a plot of land on which she build a new home with an adjacent facility for her business. She says that many of her neighbours appreciate that she is both disabled and running a business that provides a service to the community. Almaz says that she is happy to be able to feed her family and send her four children to school.



## Tigist Negasa

### Member, Ethiopian National Association for the Deaf (ENAD)

For four years Tigist operated a wooden crafts and gift shop business together with her husband on premises provided by a relative. Both are deaf. Tigist had participated in a number of ILO-supported activities through ENAD, including Basic Business Skills training and participation in a trade fair designed to promote women entrepreneurs, where she gained a lot of knowledge and confidence to pursue a career as a self-employed business woman. The business had been going well, with the young couple averaging monthly turnovers of ETB 12,000 (approximately US \$1,280) and employing two deaf persons.

In early 2010, however, she and her husband decided to close the shop in search of other personal and career development growth. She enrolled in a full-time degree programme at the Department of Sign Language at the University of Addis and hopes to complete her programme in 2011. She is also working part-time at ENAD as a coordinator for a donor funded programme on HIV/AIDS (prevention, care and awareness) and skills building. *"I'm very happy. In many ways I feel like I have been given a promotion. I would like to pursue a masters' degree and continue working at ENAD, but if it were not possible I would return to the crafts business in a more expanded way."*



## Chaltu Hassen

### Member, the Ethiopian National Association of Ex-Leprosy Patients (ENALP)

At 70, Chaltu continues to carry out her business selling organic hops known as "gesho" (gay'-sho), found only in the highlands of Ethiopia, and charcoal in a small market in Addis Ababa. She is self-employed. But, her rise to self-sufficiency was not easy. Having contracted Hansen's disease (or leprosy) during her childhood, Chaltu was accustomed to begging for a living. But, in 2004 things changed for the better when she learned about training programmed supported by the ILO called "Improve Your Business (IYB)". The experience helped changed her life. *"First and most importantly, my attitude is positively changed and this gave rise to my confidence to interact with people without being intimidated by my physical appearance," she says. "In addition, I have gained knowledge on marketing and credit."*

With the income generated from her business, Chaltu eats three meals a day, pays the rent, helps pay for her grandchildren's education, and puts aside some savings for the future.

*For complete stories of these and other project beneficiaries, please visit: Voices of women entrepreneurs in Ethiopia at [http://www.ilo.org/skills/what/pubs/lang--en/docName--WCMS\\_106509/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/skills/what/pubs/lang--en/docName--WCMS_106509/index.htm)*





# The good practice

Women entrepreneurs with disabilities are included in mainstream programmes and services aimed at building business skills and knowledge, accessing new markets for their products, and acquiring working premises and finance.

## Lessons learned

- Association memberships help disabled women entrepreneurs have access to business skills training and development, exchange of information and experiences and strengthen women entrepreneurs' voice and representation, among other benefits.
- Association memberships help promote job creation through entrepreneurship development, including for disabled persons.
- Holding events and celebrations featuring women entrepreneurs with and without disabilities is an effective way to showcase their achievements and have their roles as entrepreneurs recognized by the wider community. These events and celebrations also build women entrepreneurs' self-confidence.
- Involving government decision-makers, representatives of employer and workers organizations and organizations of and for disabled persons, business development service providers, and women's entrepreneurship associations, among others, as partners in the planning of public events and activities is a key factor in ensuring agreement on outcomes and aims, promoting ownership and transparency.
- Increased cooperation between enterprise-related associations and organizations, both public and private, helps facilitate understanding and awareness about the nature of supports required by women entrepreneurs with disabilities, creates synergies, leverages limited resources and builds long lasting, sustainable relationships. Over the long-term, such cooperation helps to change attitudes, policies and actions.







## **CASE STORY: DISABILITY INCLUSION THROUGH EFFECTIVE LEGISLATION AND POLICIES**

*Over the past four years in Ethiopia, several factors have played a pivotal role in intensifying the focus on disability and better understanding the barriers faced by disabled persons. At the international level, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which came into force in 2008 and was ratified by Ethiopia in 2010, stimulated much discussion on the implications of the new international human rights instrument and how it might be utilized to support disability-inclusive policies and practices. At the national level, the synergies and complementarities created by two recent instruments - "Right to Employment of Persons with Disability" (Proclamation No. 568/2008) and the Growth and Transformation Plan for 2011 to 2015 - provide a framework for more effective participation of disabled persons in Ethiopian society and embrace a disability perspective.*

*Together, all three instruments help to strengthen and support legal protection, policymaking and inclusive planning for development. The ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme's PEPDEL project has made significant contributions to the legislation process of the disability employment law (Proclamation No. 568), advocacy efforts to support CRPD and the inclusion of disability as a development issue in the national development plan. Working through the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and in collaboration with the Federation of Ethiopian National Association for Persons with Disabilities (FENAPD)<sup>9</sup>, the Partnership Programme has facilitated dialogue to encourage support for the implementation of legislation and policy, enhanced the exchange of information and the development of capacity in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities.*

## **The challenge**

Public misunderstanding about the capacity of disabled persons and negative attitudes towards them still present major barriers to their being able to access employment opportunities in Ethiopia. As a result, a majority of disabled persons remain dependent on their families and society for their economic needs. This has contributed to a negative public perception that disabled persons lack the capacity to work and need the support of others to survive. Laws often based on this 'caring approach' work against a rights-based view. Yet, over the past two decades, understanding about disability and persons with disabilities has started to change worldwide. There is a growing emphasis that barriers to participation in society and its institutions stem from the societal and physical environment in interaction

with impairments rather than the individual. This trend has fostered an increasing recognition of the rights of persons with disabilities and their status as citizens.

The new "Right to Employment of Persons with Disability" (Proclamation No. 568/2008)<sup>10</sup> seeks to ensure equal opportunities in employment, participation in training programmes and that rights of persons with disabilities are protected and respected. It also requires employers to make reasonable accommodation by providing "appropriate working and training conditions and working and training materials for persons with disability". Many of these same principles are supported by Article 27 on 'work and employment' of the CRPD and key ILO Conventions and other legal standards.

Proclamation No. 568 replaces Proclamation No. 101/1994 on the "Right of Persons with Disabilities to Employment", which included a provision calling for select vacancies to be reserved for disabled persons, implying that there were certain jobs that they could do. To a large degree, Proclamation No. 568 complements existing labour laws in effect which, while making no specific references to the employment of disabled persons, do contain provisions on workers who become disabled in the course of employment.

The new Right to Employment Proclamation sets out to tackle society's deeply rooted negative perceptions about disabled persons, and together with key ILO Conventions, the CRPD and other legal standards, will play a significant role in creating opportunities for persons with disabilities.

## Meeting the challenge

*The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA)*

For nearly a decade, the ILO- Irish Aid Partnership Programme has been working with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) to raise awareness of the need for review and reform of legislation and policy on disability and employment. At Federal level, MOLSA - specifically its Rehabilitation Affairs Department - is responsible for policy formulation concerning persons with disabilities, including protection and employment rights<sup>11</sup>. To this end, it helped promulgate the "Right to Employment of Persons with Disability" (Proclamation No. 568/2008).

The ILO-Irish Aid PEPDEL project has provided MOLSA with support in both development of the law and raising awareness of Proclamation No. 568. More concretely, project staff, in particular, the National Programme Coordinator, have shared materials related to other countries' employment legislation concerning persons with disabilities and provided technical support for a series of national, regional and woreda-level awareness raising workshops aimed at enforcement agents (judges, labour inspectors, employers and worker representatives), regional officials of the Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs (BOLSAs) and other ministries. Additional workshops are also being planned. The workshops have provided valuable inputs for the drafting of the directives that will help to ensure proper implementation of the Proclamation. MOLSA aims to have a draft directive for consideration by the Council of Ministers by the first quarter of 2011. Following approval by the Council, the directives must be approved by the House of Parliament.

Proclamation No. 568 will make a difference in the hiring practices of many government agencies as well as several non-governmental organizations and international organizations. At present, MOLSA employs six disabled persons, with the Addis/BOLSA employing an equal number, if not more. The Ministry of Justice has also employed several disabled persons as has the Institution of the Ombudsman. What is more, "Ethiopian Building" Proclamation No. 624/2009, still in draft form, requires all new building constructions over four floors to have elevators, in addition to accessible toilets - a first step in the direction of greater accessibility.

Ethiopia's National Plan of Action for Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, 2010 -2020, which is to be finalized in 2011 and presented to the Council of Ministers for endorsement, also reflects the government's focus on disability mainstreaming. The document has been designed in line with the provisions of the CRPD. Once finalized, all sectors of the economy - health, education, labour - will have a role to play in its implementation, promoting a better standard of living and the equal rights and full participation of disabled persons in society.

#### *The Federation of Ethiopian National Association for Persons with Disabilities (FENAPD)*

The past three years of the ILO-Irish Aid's long history of collaboration with FENAPD has centred on advocacy in support of ratification of the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) by the Ethiopian government, and promoting the inclusion of disability as a development policy issue in the national development plan (the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) for 2011 to 2015)<sup>12</sup>. Other groups, in particular, the Ethiopian National Disability Action Network (ENDAN) - a consortium of Ethiopian Resident and International Charities working on disability - have also played a role and supported these advocacy efforts, in part with ILO sponsorship.

With financial and technical support provided by ILO-Irish Aid, FENAPD has organized a series of informational and awareness raising workshops on the CRPD which targeted parliamentarians, ministers and disabled persons' organizations at the federal and local levels. One particular workshop on how to ratify the CRPD which targeted at over 120 members of parliament helped forge a stronger partnership between the non-governmental organization and government. Ethiopia ratified the CRPD in July 2010. Consequently, a review of existing national legislation is required to ensure that its provisions are aligned with the international instrument.

Committed to sustained dialogue with its members, FENAPD organized consultative meetings with other disabled persons' organizations to discuss the GTP, in particular, areas of concern, identification of needs, views on priorities, services, and other issues.

FENAPD also contributed to the development of Proclamation No. 568, having participated in the drafting committee and in promoting discussions and awareness of the new employment law both to inculcate positive public attitudes and to boost confidence and self-esteem among disabled persons.

Some progress has been made in the past years on including a disability perspective in national laws and policies. Yet, many challenges remain. Negative attitudes, mistaken assumptions, lack of awareness of the rights of disabled persons and access issues persist. Additional technical and financial resources are needed to continue awareness raising initiatives and

help build the government's capacity to implement many of the new legislation and social protection policies that aim to empower people with disabilities and offer them real choices, in particular, in the world of work.

## Building capacity

*For nearly ten years the ILO-Irish Aid PEPDEL project has supported capacity building efforts aimed at MOLSA, FENAPD and ENDAN. Leadership training, information exchange based on disability legislation in other countries, and workshops in subject areas ranging from small enterprise development to association building to training and employment of disabled persons have contributed to the main project aims of inclusive employment laws and policies. Highlights of both recent and past capacity building activities and events aimed at Ethiopian stakeholders and partners include their participation in:*

- Training courses on Labour Market Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in collaboration with the ILO's International Training Centre (ITC) in Turin, Italy;*
- A distance learning course on Mainstreaming Disability Equality in The World of Work, organized through the ITC;*
- A disability law and policy course at the Centre for Disability Law and Policy at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa.*

## The good practice

Disability perspective mainstreamed in key national laws and policies, in particular, as it concerns equal opportunities in skills development, training and employment. What is more, laws specifically dealing with persons with disabilities have been reformed to reflect a rights-based approach.

## Lessons learned

- Building knowledge of and skills for effective advocacy is central to the work of ILO-Irish Aid in promoting change - *changes in attitudes, laws, policies and actions* - that are important to opening opportunities for disabled persons to engage in all spheres of society (social, political and economic).
- Targeted capacity building yields sustainable results.
- Targeted awareness-raising efforts are a key to gaining the support and buy-in necessary for creating a favourable environment for persons with disabilities.
- Disabled persons' organizations (DPOs) play an important role in raising the visibility of disability and the needs and concerns of disabled persons among government, international bodies and other civil society groups. They also raise awareness among disabled persons who might not even be aware of their basic rights, such as their right to education, training, employment or a better quality of living.
- Despite their limited resources, which include limited or no physical offices in parts of the country, many DPOs in Ethiopia have developed a tremendous capacity to influence policy shapers and decision makers.

## CASE STORY: **MAINSTREAMING DISABILITY IN THE LAW CURRICULUM AT THE UNIVERSITY**

*Introducing a disability perspective into a law curriculum helps provide a more comprehensive basic education for all students and expands understanding of diversity for both faculty and students. The ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme's PEPDEL project works with the Faculty of Law at the University of Addis Ababa to include consideration of disability rights in the law curriculum. Over the long term, this will help to ensure that future generations of lawyers and judges will routinely consider the impact of their work on disabled people and improve possibilities for creating legal frameworks that promote full inclusion in the open labour market.*

### **The challenge**

The past two decades have produced a dramatic shift away from viewing persons with disabilities as "objects" of protection, treatment and assistance to recognizing them as individuals with rights. This shift to a human rights perspective requires a review of the social and physical environment that constrains the participation of disabled persons in society. It also necessitates an assessment of national laws and policies to ensure that disability rights issues are taken into account and that they advance equal opportunities for people with disabilities. Developing an active interest in disability among future generations of lawyers and judges who one day will be responsible for promoting and protecting human rights is vital to achieving the aspirations enshrined in international instruments and conventions such as the ILO Convention concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons), No. 159, and United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Towards this aim, institutions of higher learning are strategic partners in the process of change.

### **Meeting the challenge**

For nearly three years, the ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme's PEPDEL project has been fostering a disability perspective in the regular curriculum on labour and employment law and policy at the Faculty of Law at the University of Addis Ababa (UAA).

There are two curricula at the Faculty: Bachelor of Laws (LLB), a five year programme; and, Master of Laws (LLM), a two year programme. Both incorporate the theme of disability, a relatively new development resulting from the Memorandum of Understanding signed between with the UAA and ILO-Irish Aid. At the Masters' level, disability is incorporated in several of the courses offered, and through a separate course on the rights of persons with disabilities. At the undergraduate level, disability is addressed in several of the programmes offered, including children's rights, rights of prisoners, rights of persons with disabilities, and others. Disability may also be included in a number of other courses, for example, on human rights.

For lecturer Murado Abdo, including a disability perspective in the law means "no longer creating separate laws but diffusing the issue of disability into all aspects of law."



"Disabled persons may have some special requirements, but this should not merit separate legislation. Disabled persons are like us. Another important aspect of integrating disability in the law, for example, in contract or employment law, is that it allows for the inclusion of special considerations for this group, which makes it easier to interpret."

Similar initiatives to incorporate disability considerations into the law curricula are currently underway in Zambia in addition to China, Thailand and Viet Nam.

*Ethiopia ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in July 2010. It has also ratified the ILO Convention concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons), No. 159.*

*The PEPDEL project encourages interest in disability and law by providing grants to support research undertaken by faculty lecturers and students on the theme. To date, two research papers have been written by university lecturers: "Disability and the Right to Work: An Assessment of Proclamation 568/2008" and "Disability and Access to the Criminal Justice System in Addis Ababa". Some five visually impaired students enrolled in the undergraduate law programme contributed working papers which provided background information for the final papers prepared. These papers were formally presented at a colloquium held for faculty for the purpose of informing and sensitizing on disability issues and the law.*

*What is more, the ILO-Irish Aid's PEPDEL project supplies the Faculty of Law with Amharic language versions of "Achieving Equal Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities through Legislation" - guidelines for policy-makers and drafters of legislation to help improve the effectiveness of national laws concerning training and employment of disabled persons.*

*Also supported by the project is a Centre for Disability Law and Policy at the University of the Western Cape, in South Africa. The Centre has been established to act as a regional resource, carrying out research and organizing training courses, as well as offering a Master's course in disability law and policy from 2011.*

### **The Disability Centre at the University of Addis Ababa**

*The Disability Centre caters to the needs of all disabled students. It serves two main functions: provides IT space, including computers equipped with JAWS software for students who are blind or visually impaired; and, facilitates the purchase of materials that may be used by students, for example, Braille paper, micro-cassettes. The Ministry of Education disburses funds to support services provided by the centre.*

## **The good practice**

Law students and faculty benefit from an improved awareness on the rights of persons with disabilities. Future lawyers take disability rights into account.

## **Lessons learned**

- Involvement of students in research is a key to generating interest, building capacity and knowledge of disability and may help to create a new cadre of disability-law specialists. In addition, student involvement helps sensitize and raise their awareness on disability rights issues.
- Building a knowledge base on disability rights issues among future lawyers, judges and legislators provides a solid base for further advocacy work.







# Thailand



## **CASE STORY: TRADE UNIONS PROMOTING DISABILITY INCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE**

*In Thailand, the ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme's PEPDEL project is working with the trade union movement to promote equal rights and equal opportunities for disabled workers. Some of these efforts are already bearing fruit with trade unions taking leading roles at workplaces and within their communities to influence attitudes and opinions about the rights and capacity of disabled persons.*

### **The challenge**

Many women and men with disabilities can and want to work. Yet, the majority are less likely to be employed than their non-disabled peers because of different types of barriers they face: unequal access to training and education and physical and social discrimination. In applying for jobs, these obstacles may include unnecessary or unfair job requirements or negative perceptions about their abilities. On the job, disabled workers may face difficulties in being treated fairly, lack a formal employment contract or fail to receive comparable wages and benefits. And they may be the first to lose their jobs in the event of lay-offs.

Because of their commitment to equality, solidarity and social justice, trade unions are uniquely positioned to promote equal opportunities for, and equal treatment of, disabled workers. One important way is to recruit, organize and integrate them into the movement, making it clear that disabled persons are as important as any other worker, and have an equal right to have their voices heard. Unions can also campaign and negotiate on behalf of persons with disabilities to ensure that employers comply with legislation and offer equal opportunities and full job satisfaction for disabled staff. In addition, unions play a vital role in raising-awareness among employers and co-workers about the capacity and rights of persons with disabilities.

In Thailand, the push for greater recognition in the workplace of the rights of people with disabilities has received a boost from four trade unions representing approximately 450,000 workers in different sectors, which are working with the ILO-Irish Aid's PEPDEL project.

### **Meeting the challenge**

Since 2010, the Labour Congress of Thailand (LCT), National Congress Private Industrial of Employees (NCPE), State Enterprises Workers' Relations Confederation (SERC) and Thai Trade Union Congress (TTUC) have worked with the PEPDEL project to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in their programmes to provide decent work for all.

For many unions, promoting the rights of disabled persons in the world of work is a new concept. Contributing to this growing interest in the issue is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) that came into force in 2008 and was ratified by Thailand in the same year. The second was the enactment of the Persons with Disabilities' Quality of Life Promotion Act B.E. 2550 (2007), a comprehensive rights-based law for persons with disabilities which contains an anti-discrimination component. Thailand also ratified the ILO Convention concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons), No. 159, in 2007. The third, and possibly the most significant, was ILO-Irish Aid's role in equipping trade unions to advocate and actively campaign on behalf of disabled people through activities designed to build understanding on disability equality and law, including discussions on Proclamation 2550; sharing information on international good practices that promote inclusive approaches in the workplace; and, disseminating ILO tools and standards.

"Management had not heard about the new Proclamation 2550, so I thought it was important to print and distribute several copies for everyone to know", said a representative of the SERC secretariat who, motivated by his participation at an ILO-Irish Aid sponsored event on the role of worker organizations in promoting employment for persons with disabilities, decided to take the first small step on the path to inclusion.

As part of its awareness-raising efforts, the PEPDEL project provided Disability Equality Training, or DET, to 15 trade union members from LCT, NCPE, SERC and TTUC. DET explores the concept of people being disabled by society's barriers and attitudes. It highlights the role of the organization or group in removing those barriers and in helping to change attitudes. With DET training completed in June 2010, trade unions were motivated to create a small group of disability focal points who could support inclusive approaches to disability within each of the movements. "I feel more confident about promoting the issue of disability in the workplace", says Ms. Paveena Sittipoolthong, an active member of the Port Authority of Thailand Workers' Union, a member of SERC.

To engage the trade unions more actively, ILO-Irish Aid launched a Disability Champion Initiative in the summer of 2010 inviting trade union members to submit proposals for activities to promote issues related to persons with disabilities in the workplace. Six proposals were selected for grants in amounts of up to US\$ 700 each. Among the proposals chosen were:

**LCT's** proposal to undertake a survey on the concerns and needs of disabled persons and to train labour union committee members on national disability laws. Over the long-term, increased awareness of disability legislation will enable trade unions to better negotiate with employers issues related to the employment and welfare of disabled workers.

**NCPE and TTUC's** proposal to set up a working group made up of representatives of local communities and municipalities to help create employment for disabled workers. Awareness-raising on disability aimed at local leaders would form a key part of their initial activities, followed by a survey on the needs of disabled persons. Results of the survey would be shared with government-supported service providers and employers.

**SERC's** proposal to undertake disability awareness-raising activities among its members, including a focus on barriers preventing the participation of disabled workers in the workplace

and information on international and national laws on disability. Members would also be encouraged to organize activities and campaigns to push for non-discrimination in the workplace.

On the basis of the work completed by mid 2011, 'Disability Champion awards' will be given by the PEPDEL project to the trade union representatives who have demonstrated the greatest achievement towards greater equality for people with disabilities in the workplace.

At the workplace, accessibility audits have also been supported by trade unions, in particular, TTUC and SERC. In essence, a disability access audit identifies barriers, measures ease of access of premises and provides options for improvement of a building. Following an audit, an accessibility report with recommendations is provided. Within the past year, several audits have been organized in close cooperation with the trade unions. Through TTUC an audit was conducted at the Thai Nylon Company and SERC's support enabled accessibility audits at the Port Authority of Thailand and the Bangkok Mass Transit Authority. Although some enterprises had made provisions to make work environments more accessible by introducing ramps, sliding doors and toilets for wheelchair-users, more improvement is needed, especially in older buildings.

With a view to giving greater emphasis to the issue of inclusion and full participation of disabled persons in the world of work, trade unions and disabled persons organizations have agreed to enter into discussions on the possibility of organizing a joint activity on the theme over the coming months and year.

### ***Changing times***

Over the past year, actions taken by unions have demonstrated their collective commitment to taking the 'first steps' towards facilitating full inclusion. Still, these are early days. There is a need to continue to build and strengthen these initiatives and to ensure that trade unions' capacity is sufficient to effectively bring about change in attitudes and opinions about the rights and capacity of disabled persons.

### **Thai employers also promote disability inclusion**

*Thai employers have also demonstrated an interest in promoting more inclusive workplaces. In February 2011, the Employers Confederation of Thailand (ECOT) organized an event entitled "Law and Tax Benefits for Hiring People with Disabilities" designed to inform employers about their roles and responsibilities vis-à-vis the new requirements under quota system for employing disabled persons. Changes introduced to the quota system in June 2010, which will come into force in mid 2011, require public and private organizations to hire one disabled person for every 100 employees, instead of 200 employees. The new provisions introduce sanctions, such as asset seizures, for enterprises found not to be in compliance.*

*With some 120 ECOT members in attendance, employers actively participated in discussions and raised specific questions on what the new provisions would entail and how to comply with the requirements. Participation of persons with disabilities also allowed for dialogue on more practical issues of discrimination in the workplace. The event was supported by the ILO-Irish Aid PEPDEL project.*



## The good practice

DET motivates trade unions to take action in advocating for the rights of disabled persons in the workplace.

## Lessons learned

- Equipping trade unions with appropriate knowledge, skills and tools helps them advocate and campaign more effectively for disabled workers' rights, both during the recruitment process and in retaining disabled workers, including workers who become disabled while employed.
- Trade union representatives' knowledge about the workplace and legislative changes, along with their expertise in advocating for workers' rights, means that they can be effective in raising awareness about disability and combating inequality and discrimination in the world of work.
- Trade union representatives benefit from training with regard to workers with disabilities in the workplace to understand the needs that their disabled co-workers might have, such as the need for workplace accommodations, and knowledge of the obligations that employers might have under national legislation that protect the rights of people with disabilities.
- Empowering trade union representatives to develop their own solutions to inclusive approaches in the workplace and within their communities creates ownership of ideas and fosters legitimacy.



Photo: ILO / P. Brown



## **CASE STORY: PROMOTING DISABILITY INCLUSION IN THE MEDIA**

*The media - television, radio, newspapers, magazines, the internet, social media and other forms - play an important role in influencing public opinion and attitudes. In Bangkok, Thailand, the ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme's PEPDEL project works through Disabled Peoples' International/Asia Pacific (DPI/AP) to promote positive images of people with disabilities in the media and to stimulate a climate of non-discrimination and equal opportunity for disabled persons at all levels of the economy and society. A main aim of the collaboration is to influence the development of a media industry policy on disability.*

### **The challenge**

How people with disabilities are portrayed and the frequency with which they appear in the media has an enormous impact on how they are regarded in society. While there are some disability-specific media programmes, such as television documentaries, disabled people rarely appear as part of mainstream programmes. When they do, they are often stigmatized or stereotyped and may appear as either objects of pity or super heroic figures. Including them in regular programmes on television or radio in addition to other types of media can help provide fair and balanced representation and helps to counter commonplace stereotypes that perpetuate negative perceptions of disabled persons.

Portraying people with disabilities with dignity and respect in the media can help promote more inclusive and tolerant societies. Why is this important? First, because people with disabilities make up more than one billion of the world's population. In Thailand, nearly 3 per cent of the population, or two million women and men, have a disability. Many are subject to discrimination or exclusion from basic services such as health, education, training and work opportunities. Second, in many countries, disabled persons often lack access to information about policies, laws and improvements in programmes and services that directly affect them. This perpetuates their exclusion from life.

Promoting equality of opportunities and access to services and information for people with disabilities is also critical to strategies for reducing poverty. Initiatives and actions by individual journalists can make a difference in helping disabled persons feel less isolated, while at the same time challenging negative attitudes and mistaken assumptions about their abilities.

## Meeting the challenge

In Thailand, few groups are able to effectively engage in disability advocacy and provide results. DPI/AP, a non-governmental organization (NGO) of people with disabilities, is one of them. It has adopted the slogan '*Nothing About Us Without Us*', which is used by the disability movement internationally, to communicate the idea that no policy should be decided by any representative or group without the full and direct participation of disabled persons that are affected by the policy.

DPI/AP has demonstrated its commitment to full participation and equality by their actions on the ground. Initiatives undertaken by DPI/AP have included promoting the concept of universal design, which calls attention to the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. Yet another is accessible tourism, or travel arrangements designed to accommodate the broadest range of tourists possible. Under this initiative, the NGO works together with partners from business and government in Thailand and within the Asia region to promote accessible tourism.

But, it was DPI/AP's participation in the Disability Equality Training (DET) workshop in 2007, supported by ILO-Irish Aid, which expanded the NGO's capacity to offer its wealth of knowledge and real insights on disability issues to a wide range of actors interested in increasing disability awareness within their groups or businesses. ILO-supported implementation of DET and training of DET facilitators from different countries has helped challenge participants to view disability differently, identify new approaches in work practice, and plan strategies to implement change.

Later on, an agreement with the ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme in 2009 allowed DPI/AP to begin outreach activities aimed at the media. The main objectives were to promote balanced and accurate reporting on persons with disabilities, encourage positive images of disabled persons, and advocate for their rights. Success in these areas would also provide a platform for further work towards the development of a media industry policy on disability.

As part of the process of preparing to work with the media, DPI/AP began a review of the Thai media's portrayal of disability over the past years, mostly to track how the issue has been presented over the years and to share its findings at a subsequent gathering of journalists. Next, it prepared and disseminated a questionnaire to a select group of national newspaper and broadcast journalists to gauge their views and understanding on disability. Initially, questionnaire responses were low which led DPI/AP to rethink its strategy. A decision was made to establish contact with two well-known and respected media companies – JSL Global Media and the Radio-Television Broadcasting Professional Federation (RTBPF) – as a way of connecting with journalists. The move paid off and enabled DPI/AP to gain more credibility with the media, a better understanding of the needs and interests of media personnel and information on current trends in the portrayal of disabled persons. Retired, prominent journalists with an interest in social issues were also approached and asked to volunteer their knowledge and 'connections' with current management of key media companies in the country as a way of facilitating access for DPI/AP.



Awareness-raising exercises aimed at representatives of the national media in Bangkok by DPI/AP began in August 2010 with a Disability Equality Training (DET) workshop. The exercise also served to introduce the *ILO Media Guidelines for the Portrayal of Disability*, which includes a chapter on appropriate terminology, review of the British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC's) policy on disability, which is often referenced as the model for disability inclusion in the industry, and information on what the media can do to positively shape public perceptions and attitudes towards disabled persons. The workshop was instrumental in forging closer cooperation between the NGO and the media to promote and support issues related to disability and disabled persons; encouraging media companies to make their buildings more accessible; and, in stimulating media representatives to consider policy guidelines for hiring disabled persons as well as their portrayal in the media.

Building on the workshop, DPI/AP subsequently organized another gathering. This time the invitation was made through RTBPF, whose president has expressed her commitment to doing her share to help break down the barriers. "The media, especially the private ones, can have an impact in society when it portrays people with disabilities. We have duty to give aid and help. Today, we gather here to exchange views to see what we can do and what people with disabilities want", says Ms. Jamnan Siritan, President of Radio-Television Broadcasting Professional Federation of Thailand.

At present, draft guidelines for the Thai media on disabilities, which has pulled together elements from the previous meeting's discussion on the subject, have been created. The draft guidelines provide a framework for presenting disabilities in the media, using appropriate language, and interviewing disabled persons. It also provides a list of key messages about the employment of disabled persons, in addition to a checklist for promoting accessibility. Further dialogue on the draft guidelines for Thailand, including how best to move on formulating a final draft, is envisioned in 2011.

DPI/AP's vision is to continue working closing with the media, creating a more formal collaboration with its representatives to ensure that disability is at the forefront of news and reporting on human rights issues and that the disability community is consulted. Already, DPI/AP has established close cooperation with Thai Public Broadcasting Station, Channel 3, Channel 5, The Nation, The Bangkok Post, and Persons with Disability Media.

### **Enhancing Media Awareness on Disability in Viet Nam and China**

*In both Beijing and Hanoi, translated versions of the ILO "Media guidelines for the portrayal of disability", prepared under the ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme, have also been used as a basis for conducting workshops aimed at sensitizing media representatives to disability concepts and appropriate terminology, considering new angles for stories on disability and stimulating media companies to increase the presence of people with disabilities both on the air and on screen, in addition to their respective work environments.*

### **Disabled Peoples' International/Asia Pacific**

*Founded in 1981, Disabled Peoples' International (DPI) is a global network of grassroots organizations of people with disabilities, headquartered in Canada with National Assemblies in more than 120 countries. Eighty percent of DPI's National Assemblies are in developing countries.*

*DPI/AP represents one of the six regional offices of DPI; there are 26 member organizations in the Asia-Pacific region. Half the DPI/AP staff have disabilities.*

## Disability Equality Training

*The ILO's Disability Equality Training (DET) gives participants the opportunity to explore the concept of people being disabled by society's barriers and attitudes. It highlights the role of an organization or group in removing those barriers and in helping to change attitudes. A key element of the ILO's DET is that it respects participants as experts in their own fields, and so aims to build on their existing knowledge and skills. In the Asia-Pacific region, ILO-Irish Aid organized a DET Training of Facilitators workshop, which was attended by DPI/AP.*

*Another group trained to facilitate DET is the Network of Music and Arts of Persons with Disabilities (NMAD), an NGO which promotes the full participation and equal opportunity of persons with disabilities in the mainstream music and arts industry. NMAD has also been trained on conducting 'accessibility audits' based on international guidelines, in addition to measures on accessible environments for disabled persons provided by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. In essence, a disability access audit identifies barriers, measures ease of use of premises and provides options for improvement of a building, business or service. Following an audit, an accessibility report is provided. The report contains recommendations that are easily followed and understood with realistic and manageable timescales. Within the past year, NMAD has organized several audits of work premises of select companies represented by and in close cooperation with the trade unions - for example, with the Thai Trade Union Congress, or TTUC, and the State Enterprises Workers' Relations Confederation, or SERC.*

## The good practice

Media guidelines promote more positive, inclusive images of disabled persons. Representatives of the media become 'disability champions', taking an interest in disseminating fair and balanced information on the issue and in promoting a rights-based to persons with disabilities.

## Lessons learned

- Advocacy efforts aimed at the media may be more effective when planned in partnership with established media outlets.
- Support from established media outlets helps to tackle negative attitudes, mistaken assumptions about persons with disabilities and in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities.



## CASE STORY: **MAINSTREAMING DISABILITY IN THE LAW CURRICULUM AT THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY**

*Integrating a disability perspective into a law curriculum helps provide a basic education for all students and expands understanding of diversity for both faculty and students. The ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme's PEPDEL project works with the Faculty of Law at Thammasat University in Bangkok to include disability in the law curriculum. Over the long-term, this will help to ensure that future generations of lawyers and judges routinely consider the impact of their work on disabled people and improve the possibilities for creating legal frameworks that promote their full inclusion in the labour market.*

### **The challenge**

The past two decades have witnessed a dramatic shift from viewing persons with disabilities as 'objects' of protection, treatment and assistance to individuals with basic human rights. This shift to a human rights perspective requires a review of the social and physical factors that constrain the participation of disabled persons in society. It also necessitates an assessment of national laws and policies to ensure that disability issues are taken into account and that they advance equal opportunities for people with disabilities. Developing an active interest in disability among future generations of lawyers and judges who will be responsible for promoting and protecting human rights is vital to achieving the aspirations enshrined in international instruments and conventions such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>13</sup> and the International Labour Organization Convention concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons), No. 159. Towards this aim, institutions of higher learning are strategic partners in the process of change.



## Meeting the challenge

Under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the Faculty of Law at Thammasat University and the PEPDEL project in April 2010, several initiatives have been undertaken to ensure that future generations of judges and lawyers receive as broad an exposure as possible to the various facets of law and equal rights. Within this framework, the university provided a two-month summer course on disability law and awareness (April-May 2010). Nearly 200 students attended the course which included two lectures delivered by the Sub-regional coordinator of PEPDEL highlighting issues of discrimination against disabled persons in the context of employment. The ILO's work in this particular area was presented, in addition to an opportunity to engage with students on issues related to negative perceptions of people with disabilities and attitudes of society.

The collaboration between the two institutions also supported original research on Thailand's quota system for employing disabled persons. Research outcomes showed a lack of awareness among employers of current laws on persons with disabilities. Preliminary outcomes also suggested that for many Thai employers, the concept of discrimination was difficult to understand as were quota systems, underscoring the need for concrete examples to increase compliance, and reasonable accommodation. Students played an important role in administering the research questionnaire and in processing the data gathered, facilitating their learning experiences and awareness about the issue.

"The quota system is, perhaps, a good thing for Thailand at the moment", says Professor Wiriya of Thammasat University. "For the time being, however, I think more needs to be done in the area of job matching, specifically getting quality information about the jobs and matching those with the skills of the jobseeker."

Another initiative under the MOU included awareness-raising. Twenty-five students, a majority third year students, from the Asia Law Students' Association (ALSA) were invited to take part in Disability Equality Training (DET). DET explores the concept of people being disabled by society's barriers and attitudes. It highlights the role of the group or individual in removing those barriers and in helping to change attitudes.

"The training stimulated me to think", said third year law student Chonlathan Supphalboonlerd who participated in the training. "Imagine you are a wheelchair user looking for a job but there is not a company with a front door wide enough for you to get through. Circumstances like these happen every day with disabled persons. If we are able to get through the door to get into the building so should disabled persons. They just need different types of doors and other facilities. Think about it, if all facilities were accessible, some day many more people with disabilities would be able to work just like everyone else."

Introducing a disability perspective into the law curriculum is being perceived by many as an innovative way to connect with future generations of lawyers and judges and offer exposure to broad international human rights issues and participation research initiatives.

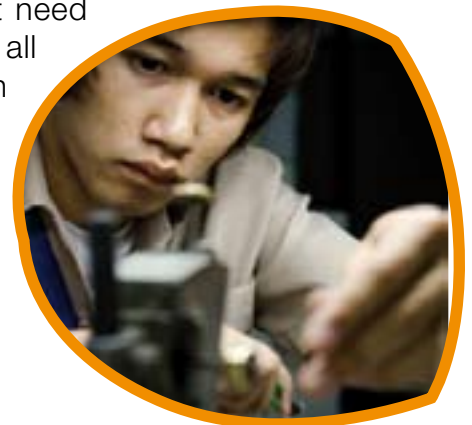


Photo: ILO / P. Brown



**Student members of ALSA express their views on what is needed to promote a more inclusive society:**

*"I think disability inclusion begins with the individual."*

*"Awareness-raising and support from the media."*

*"Education."*

*"I think it's time to put an end to discrimination."*

*"Make things accessible for everyone to use."*

*"Support not only equality but also humanity."*

*"Make simple accessibility for everyone in society."*

*"Make a starting point, make it important and do it from yourself."*

*"Equality for every disabled person."*



## The good practice

Students and faculty benefit from an improved awareness on disability.

## Lessons learned

- The involvement of law students in disability research helps build their knowledge and understanding of disability and helps create a new cadre of disability-law specialists.
- Students make the best advocates when equipped with knowledge, skills and means to affect change.



*Members of the Thailand chapter of the Asia Law Students' Association (ALSA)*





Photo: ILO / Thoi Luu Thuan



**Viet Nam**

## CASE STORY: **DISABILITY INCLUSION SUPPORT SERVICES**

*Disability inclusion refers to the active involvement of people with disabilities in programmes, services, plans and opportunities available to others without a disability. It requires the recognition of all people with disabilities as members of society, respect for all of their rights and the removal of barriers - physical, attitudinal, and others - that might prevent the enjoyment of these rights. In Viet Nam, the Disabled Peoples' Association, or DP Hanoi, works on behalf of the ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme's INCLUDE project to promote disability inclusion.*

### **The challenge**

Nearly seven million women and men have a disability in Viet Nam. Very few who are of working age have stable jobs and regular incomes. Many remain outside of formal employment due to discrimination and negative attitudes and mistaken assumptions about their abilities. As a group, their unemployment rates are high - some estimate as high as 30 per cent<sup>14</sup>.

In Hanoi, the Disabled Peoples' Association or DP/Hanoi, an NGO representing over 40 organizations of disabled persons in 24 districts of the province with a combined membership of some 5,000, works to raise awareness and promote the participation of people with disabilities in society. Since April 2010, the association has been helping to further the INCLUDE project's primary aim of mainstreaming a disability perspective in general programmes and services available to public.

As the project's designated INCLUDE Agency, DP-Hanoi offers Disability Equality Training (DET), the main tool used as part of its strategy to promote greater access to opportunities and social inclusion. The ultimate goal of DET is to foster a better understanding of disability based on the principles of rights, equality and non-discrimination. Its approach leads participants to examine ways of removing the barriers in the environment that prevent participation and equality for disabled people, rather than focusing on the disabled person and their impairment as something to be 'cured' or minimized.

To realize these aims, DET has two objectives and components. The first aims to provide disability awareness-raising for non-disabled participants that help them develop an alternative view of disability. The second facilitates development of their own concrete action plans to break down barriers that hinder the participation of disabled people in relation to their own work and daily lives.

DET is distinguished by the way in which it helps participants understand how barriers are created, including how they may be contributing to a disabling environment, and how to prevent or break through them. A key element of the INCLUDE project's brand of DET is that it respects participants as experts in their own fields, and so aims to build on their existing knowledge and skills.

Perhaps, more significant, however, is that through DET participants become agents for organizational change and through proactive efforts help break down barriers.

## Meeting the challenge

DET complements a range of other services and activities offered by DP Hanoi such as skills training, job interview skills, business management and the ILO's training package Gender and Entrepreneurship Together (GET Ahead) which introduces discussions on gender around topics related to running a business.

Yet, both the concept and implementation of DET has been slow in getting off the ground. For example, building DP Hanoi's capacity to effectively manage and deliver workshops as DET trainers has taken longer than expected, requiring more involvement from project staff. Additional challenges have included cultural beliefs about equality and negative attitudes of officials about the aims of DET. These factors necessitated some revisions to the training. For example, the first part of the training now contains a module on national laws and policies on disability and emphasizes the government's commitment to disabled persons' human rights. DET trainers have noticed that the changes have contributed to a more attentive audience and less attrition over the three-day training.

Despite initial difficulties, there has been noticeable progress. DP Hanoi has delivered several DET workshops with the joint participation of disabled and non-disabled persons representing a variety of stakeholders including: the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) together with their Provincial and district representatives of Departments of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (DOLISAs); disabled persons organizations; trade union (women's union); employment centres under MOLISA/Hanoi; and, the media.

Following training, several participants have expressed their readiness to use their new experiences to promote change. For example, the Social Policy Bank, the agency responsible for issuing microfinance loans, has asked DP Hanoi for assistance in implementing their action plan. DP Hanoi currently supports the Social Policy Bank in the development and dissemination of information on requirements for accessing microfinance loans and procedures for filing applications. Another important outcome has been the commitment made by the Social Policy Bank's representative to encourage the leadership of the bank (the People's Committee) to lend additional support to disabled persons in the form of specifically earmarked funds to extend as loans to this group.

Other positive changes have included the Hanoi Employment Centre's willingness to explore together with DP Hanoi a series of interactive sessions aimed at employers: the first would focus on identifying their concerns about employing disabled job seekers; the second would cover difficulties in recruiting disabled workers and providing support, if needed. These activities can be perceived as a new way forward in bridging the employment gap between disabled and non-disabled workers. Moreover, it represents a break from traditional job fairs which are held as often as three times per month but which do not include the participation of disabled persons.

DET workshops have also been extended to groups beyond the traditional ILO constituents and partners. Both the Spanish Red Cross and the Viet Nam Red Cross, working in the Lâm Đông and Hu'ng Yên provinces and districts on a project focussing on employment for disabled persons, have requested disability equality training for its staff.

Still, much more work remains for DP Hanoi to effectively influence and make further inroads towards closing the gaps of opportunity and the full inclusion of disabled persons. It's a process that requires time but that, in the end, will have a positive impact on inclusive approaches to the provision of services for persons with disabilities.

### **What is needed to promote a more inclusive, open society?**

*"I think two things are necessary to create a more open society for disabled people. First, disabled persons should raise their capacity. Second, some barriers in society need to be removed. For example, enterprises need to open their doors to disabled persons so that they can work and earn a living. In addition, there's the issue of education. Schools need to be open to disabled children, in particular, children with autism as well as those with an intellectual disability. Regarding transportation, we need a more open and accessible environment."*

*- Duong Thi Van, Vice-Chairwoman, DP Hanoi*

## **The good practice**

Helping disabled job seekers access employment services. Promoting access to microfinance for people with disabilities interested in starting or already in business.

## **Lessons learned**

- Support and commitment at the highest levels is a key to disability inclusion.
- The concept of disability inclusion is complex and takes time to explain. Providing examples of how disability inclusion is promoted in a variety of settings and situations is important.
- Follow-up support, in particular, as it pertains to disability 'action plans' is important in building long-term efforts towards inclusive development.
- The involvement of people with disabilities as trainers and facilitators helps others learn through the challenge of interaction.
- Greater need for disabled persons' organizations to think 'development inclusion' and to more assertively lobby service providers to include disabled persons.





## CASE STORY: **DISABILITY INCLUSION THROUGH EFFECTIVE LEGISLATION AND POLICIES**

*The ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme's PEPDEL project has made significant contributions to Viet Nam's national Law on Persons with Disabilities, which was enacted on 17 June 2010 and came into effect on 1 January 2011. The new law mandates equal participation in society for people with disabilities through accommodation and access to health care, rehabilitation, education, employment, vocational training, cultural services, sports and entertainment, transportation, public places and information technology.*



## The Challenge

In many countries around the world, including Viet Nam, views on disability have evolved considerably over the past two decades. From being treated as objects of charity, medical services and welfare, there is now more general acceptance of people with disabilities as citizens with legal rights. This human rights approach is increasingly being reflected in many new laws and social policies.

In Viet Nam, the national Law on Persons with Disabilities<sup>15</sup>, promulgated in June 2010, represents the country's first comprehensive national law guaranteeing the rights of persons with disabilities. The new law mandates equal participation in society for people with disabilities through accommodation and access to health care, rehabilitation, education, employment, vocational training, cultural services, sports and entertainment, transportation, public places, and information technology. The origins of this law can be traced back over a decade to the passage of the national Ordinance on People with Disabilities in 1998 and a series of initiatives to advance the rights and interests of people with disabilities, including:

- The establishment of the inter-agency National Coordinating Council on Disability (NCCD);
- Enactment of the barrier-free access code and standards for public construction;
- Enactment of barrier-free access standards and regulations for public transport;
- Disability inclusion provisions in the Vocational Training Law; and,
- Implementation of a five-year National Action Plan on disability (2006-2010).

These achievements in policy reform and implementation have the potential to directly benefit nearly seven million Vietnamese with disabilities. The Vietnamese government has already begun work to develop a regulatory framework and implementation guidance for the new law. Once established, a strong mechanism for enforcement will be necessary to give effect to the new disability law.

## Meeting the challenge

Technical contributions by the ILO-Irish Aid PEPDEL project towards the development of the new law have been considerable, resulting in a law that reflects global perspectives on disability. For example, consultations sponsored jointly by the ILO, the Bureau of Social Protection and the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs' (MOLISA's) drafting committee (specifically, the Social Policy Unit), held prior to the law's enactment, allowed for the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders from central and provincial government, employer representatives from 40 enterprises, worker representatives from the Viet Nam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL) and other smaller unions, and national and international organizations to take part in the discussions on disability and employment. For the employers and trade unions, it was the first time they were invited to dialogue with such a wide range of partners on the issue.

Consultations were also instrumental in increasing awareness on the concept and the need for provisions on reasonable accommodation. Earlier drafts of the law did not contain these articles which are critical for removing barriers for people with disabilities. In the workplace, for instance, these may include obstacles in the environment or in the job application process. The inclusion of these provisions are also necessary for bringing the law into compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), specifically article 5, section 3 which requires ratifying States to ensure reasonable accommodation in order to promote equality and non-discrimination; reasonable accommodation is defined in article 2 of the Convention.

Discussions on the theme of reasonable accommodation proved a bit contentious with employers arguing that government should cover related costs and government representatives suggesting that employers bear the costs as part of their corporate social responsibility. In the end, however, ILO inputs helped to convince those present that actual costs may not be as high as some might expect.

Another opportunity for the ILO to influence the content of the national law on disability came in January 2010, five months before the law was enacted. At that time, the ILO's expertise was sought on how to direct employment policies for disabled persons. One of the main areas of interest was the quota system for employing disabled persons, in particular, whether it offered particular advantages and is justifiable from the perspective of equality of opportunity. A presentation on evolving global trends on the issue by the ILO, including to the National Assembly, was instrumental in encouraging deep thought and careful consideration about the opportunities and risks presented by a quota system. The matter concluded with a decision to remove the system.

In addition to technical expertise provided by the ILO on the legal framework, the ILO-Irish Aid's INCLUDE Agency, the Disabled Peoples' Association of Hanoi, or DP Hanoi, was at the forefront of disability awareness raising efforts. Responses provided by both observers and participants of these initiatives testify to its powerful impact on views and perspectives on disability.

"The establishment of the INCLUDE Agency aids in promoting inclusion because this concept is new to Viet Nam. Inclusive services are important. Yet, we need more general acceptance by society. The INCLUDE Agency helps to provide this support", says Ms. Yung of MOLISA.

Vietnam's new disability law is a step in the direction of conformity with several international standards on disability, chief among them, the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and ILO Convention concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons), (No. 159). Viet Nam is a signatory to CRPD (October 2007) and has placed ILO Convention No. 159 in the list of conventions to be ratified during the period 2011-2015.

In Viet Nam, the ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme supports two disability specific projects. The Promoting the Employability and Employment of People with Disabilities through Effective Legislation, or PEPDEL, project supports governments in improving disability-related laws and policies. The Promoting Decent Work for People with Disabilities through a Disability Inclusion Support Service, or INCLUDE, project works to build capacity at regional and national levels to effectively support the equal access of persons with disabilities to training, employment services, entrepreneurship and business development services, and micro-finance. Both projects operate in selected countries of South-East Asia and East and Southern Africa.

## Reasonable accommodation

*Making reasonable adjustments in the workplace refers to measures or actions taken by employers to help disabled persons work or to take part in training on the same basis as non-disabled workers. Most workers with disabilities require no special adjustments and the cost for those who do is minimal, or much lower than many employers believe.*

## The good practice

A national law on persons with disability that reflects a global perspective and promotes opportunities for Vietnamese people with disabilities to be productive and achieve economic independence.

## Lessons learned

- Many countries and disability advocates look to the ILO for leadership, models and examples of how to promote inclusion in laws, policies and services such as training and employment. More importantly, many seek ILO guidance on establishing legal frameworks in line with international good practices on disability.
- Disability awareness-raising is a key to building inclusive laws and policies and to their effective implementation.



Photo: ILO / Hung Truong Dinh





# Cambodia



# IN TAKEO, ILO PROJECTS HELP TO FORGE PATHWAYS OUT OF POVERTY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

**TAKEO, Cambodia** - On a hot Saturday afternoon in a small village in Takeo, Kaeng Kor makes her way to Meas Savary's home to begin weaving split pieces of bamboo that will be used to make pencil cup holders, handheld fans, baskets and wallets.

Though the short walk may take her a bit longer than most due to the uneven lengths of her legs - a condition she's had since birth - she doesn't mind. Kaeng Kor looks forward to enjoying the company of the other women and men who form part of the business association to which she belongs.

The 48-year-old has been a member of the association for nearly four years now. She's been in the handicrafts business for most of her life, but things have changed for the better since joining the group. "Savary has taught me how to design new products. Also, my limited mobility makes it difficult for me to go and visit clients. Association membership has helped to facilitate this interaction and provide a steady stream of income."

From another part of the village, Cham Sophal walks alone to Meas' to join the others. The 47-year-old father of four also works in the handicrafts business. In his spare time, he cultivates rice and grows vegetables. In the past, Cham Sophal used to earn a living repairing motorbikes, a skill he learned while serving in the army, but a land mine accident 21 years ago resulted in his losing a leg.

"I learned about the association through an awareness-raising workshop conducted by Savary. She explained the aims and functions of the association. I was shown the products, something I was familiar with given that my parents were in the handicrafts business."

"I'm happy with this job. It's comfortable, flexible and I now have the skills. I make a good income through this work: from US\$ 45 to US\$ 50 a month. Most of it goes to support my son's education; he's attending the university. I also use my money to provide food for my family. I earn more from this business than I did repairing motorbikes", says Cham Sophal. "I like it here. People see me no different from themselves."

In Takeo, access to skills training, business association membership, financial education and credit has improved since the mid-2000s as a result of the Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality project (WEDGE), which seeks to include women with disabilities as part of its strategy. Synergies established between WEDGE and another ILO project, the INCLUDE project, which supports the inclusion of disabled persons in programmes and services, including in entrepreneurship development and vocational training, work together to make a difference in the lives of women and people with disabilities who are struggling to change their economic condition.

Though estimates vary significantly, there may be some 700,000 disabled people in the country<sup>16</sup>. They are among the most vulnerable group in Cambodian society.

Kaeng Kor and Cham Sophal are individuals who have benefitted from the ILO projects, thanks to their joining the local business association. Yet, in Takeo it is Meas Savary, a known handicraft maker, who has demonstrated how just one person can influence the lives of many people in her community.

An opportunity to take part in WEDGE-supported business skills training in 2006 exposed Savary to new knowledge and learning<sup>17</sup>. "I didn't know about business principles, nor did I fully understand what was meant by 'quality control' or 'product diversification' and why this is important. WEDGE training changed all of this. I'm happy to share this information and new skills with other members of my association", says Savary.

Since then, Savary has participated in several WEDGE activities, including Improve Your Exhibiting Skills (IYES). IYES is designed to improve market access by facilitating the organization of trade fairs and exhibitions. Shortly after, she formed a business association - the Khmer Women's Handicraft Association - with several other members of her community who are also involved in the production of similar crafts.

Association membership has helped to promote the group's economic interest through more effective marketing and promotion, reduce social risks and vulnerabilities, and facilitate exchange of information and knowledge.

Two years ago, Meas Savary decided to form a self-help savings group, another component of the WEDGE strategy designed to assist women gain financial literacy and access credit. WEDGE provides guidance on how groups should organize - preferably into groups of up to 20 members - setting up administrative procedures and internal regulations. The fund is owned by the group and consists of the savings that each member contributes weekly, which becomes the resource for making short-term, low interest rate loans to members. Dividends are equally split among members at the end of the year.

Committed community leaders like Meas Savary are a key to promoting economic security and forging pathways out of poverty for many of Cambodia's poorest family, including disabled women and men.

### **ILO strategy on promoting women's entrepreneurship development (WED)**

*ILO WED Strategy was built from the expertise developed under WEDGE. WEDGE is comprised of technical cooperation projects that are funded by donor governments of Ireland (Irish Aid) and Norway (NORAD) and enable the WED strategy to be operationalized. Building on local partnerships, WEDGE projects have developed a series of tools and approaches, based on the research and experience from pilot projects organized with local partners and country offices. WED aims to include women entrepreneurs with disabilities and HIV/AIDS within WEDGE projects. The WED strategy provides a flexible and innovative response to promote women's entrepreneurship development based on local needs and circumstances. Gender equality is and will remain at the forefront of the WED strategy.*

## ENDNOTES

### ETHIOPIA

#### Case story: Disability inclusion support services

- <sup>1</sup> Barriers that prevent people with disabilities from full participating in society include physical, attitudinal, legal, regulatory, policy and communication (information in a format that is accessible such as Braille, easy-to-understand language or Sign language).
- <sup>2</sup> In November 2009, the Ethiopian Center for Disability and Development (ECDD) re-registered as an Ethiopian Resident Charity.
- <sup>3</sup> WHO and the World Bank, 2011: World Report on Disability.
- <sup>4</sup> Addis Ababa University-Wide Strategic Plan for 2008-2013, [http://www.aau.edu.et/AAUBPR%20TOBE/University\\_Level\\_SP\\_Final\\_Revision,\\_\\_\\_Jan\\_\\_2008.pdf](http://www.aau.edu.et/AAUBPR%20TOBE/University_Level_SP_Final_Revision,___Jan__2008.pdf), accessed 02/02/11.
- <sup>5</sup> At the Addis Ababa University, activities aimed to support access to higher education for students with disabilities are provided by the Ethiopian Center for Disability and Development (ECDD) with funding made possible by Threshold Association, a Finnish DPO.
- <sup>6</sup> The Guide to Accessible Addis Ababa was funded by Light of the World, Austria.

#### Case story: Promoting entrepreneurship through Inclusive business development services and business skills training

- <sup>7</sup> The Charities and Societies Proclamation No. 621/2009 of Ethiopia (Civil Society Law or CSO law), which came into effect in January 2010 required many civil society organizations to re-register. Since two of the member associations of the original six which formed part of the Federation of Ethiopian National Association of Persons with Disabilities (FENAPD) consortium re-registered as 'local charities', they are now precluded from benefiting from support provided by the ILO-Irish Aid Programme. FENAPD is registered as an Ethiopian Resident Charity under the new law.
- <sup>8</sup> Since the late 2000s, many of the training activities and services aimed at women's entrepreneurship development available through FENAPD have declined, with greater emphasis being placed on advocacy and capacity building of member associations to lobby and raise awareness on disability rights and access to employment opportunities.

#### Case story: Disability inclusion through effective legislation and policies

- <sup>9</sup> Founded in 1996, FENAPD, originally called the Ethiopia Federation of Persons with Disabilities, is an umbrella association of four single disability-focused national associations. They are the Ethiopian National Association for the Deaf; the Ethiopian National Association of Ex-Leprosy Patients; Ethiopian National Association for Intellectual Disability; and the Ethiopian National Association for the Deaf-Blind.
- <sup>10</sup> Ethiopia: The Right to Employment of Persons with Disability (Proclamation No. 568/2008), <http://www.ilo.int/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/85197/95284/F845089098/ETH85197.pdf>, accessed on 10.02.11.
- <sup>11</sup> In Ethiopia, at Regional level it is the 11 Regional Bureaus of Labour and Social Affairs (BOLSA), or their equivalent, that are responsible for actually providing services to persons with disabilities.
- <sup>12</sup> In Ethiopia, the Growth and Transformation Plan 2011-2015 supersedes the National Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP) for 2006-2010.

### THAILAND

#### Case Story: Mainstreaming disability in the law curriculum at the university

- <sup>13</sup> Thailand ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 29 July 2008.

### VIET NAM

#### Case Story: Disability inclusion support services

- <sup>14</sup> ILO Fact Sheet: Inclusion of people with disabilities in Viet Nam, (Geneva, Switzerland, 2009), [http://www.ilo.org/skills/what/pubs/lang--en/docName--WCMS\\_112407/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/skills/what/pubs/lang--en/docName--WCMS_112407/index.htm), accessed 14.03.11.

#### Case Story: Disability inclusion through effective legislation and policies

- <sup>15</sup> The National Assembly of Vietnam promulgated the National Law on Persons with Disabilities on 17 June 2010.

### CAMBODIA

#### Feature story: In Takeo, ILO projects help to forge pathways out of poverty for people with disabilities

- <sup>16</sup> ILO Fact Sheet: Inclusion of people with disabilities in Cambodia, (Geneva, Switzerland, 2009), [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---ifp\\_skills/documents/publication/wcms\\_115096.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_115096.pdf), accessed 17.03.2011.
- <sup>17</sup> In Cambodia, WEDGE works with through government agencies, community organizations representing workers and employers and local non-governmental organizations.



## MOVING TOWARDS DISABILITY INCLUSION



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Labour  
Organization



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ISBN: 978-92-2-125212-2