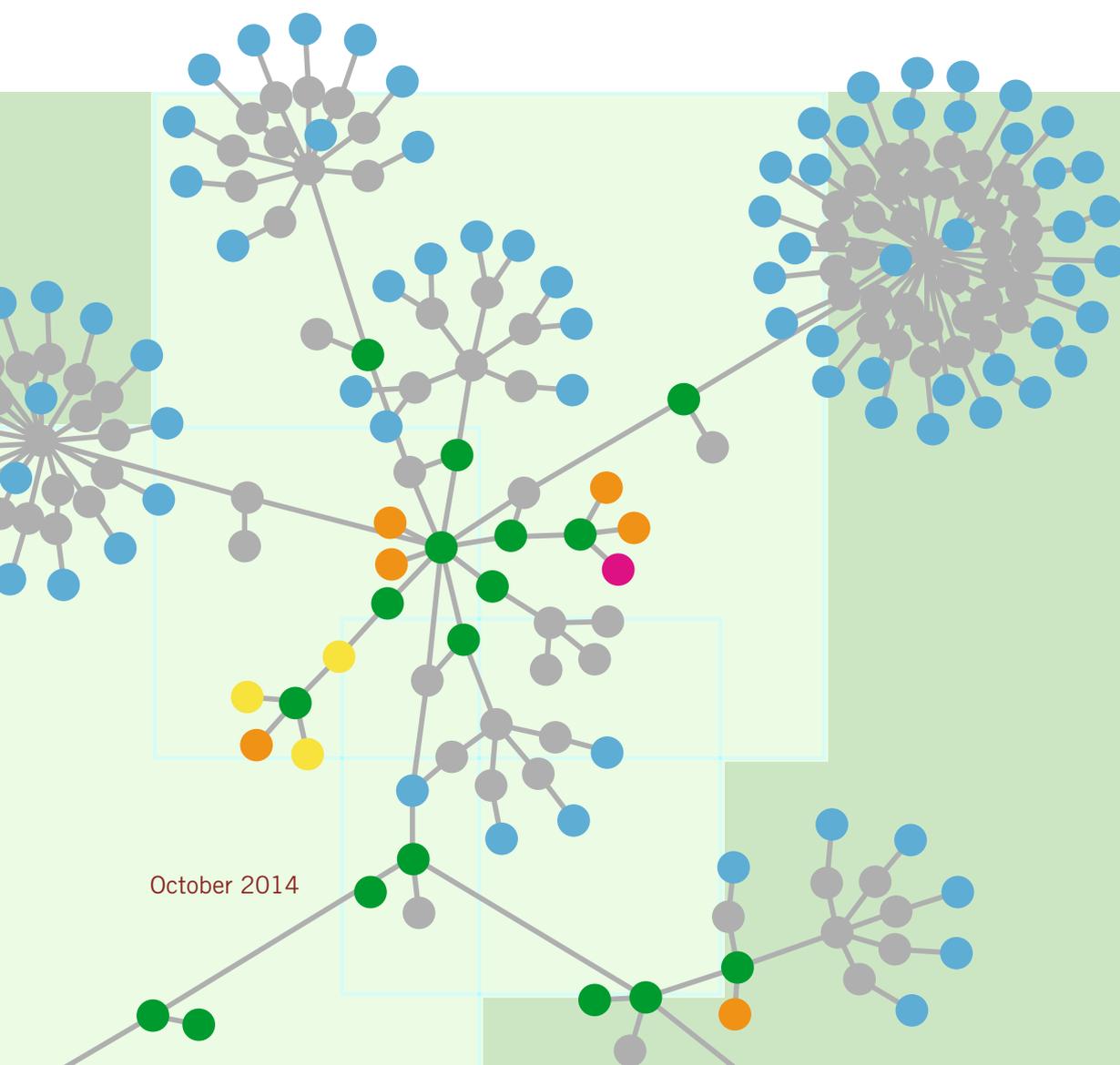




International  
Labour  
Organization

# Business as unusual:

Making workplaces inclusive  
of people with disabilities



October 2014

Conditions  
of Work and  
Equality  
Department  
(WORKQUALITY)

Bureau for  
Employers'  
Activities  
(ACT/EMP)

**Business as unusual:**  
Making workplaces  
inclusive of people  
with disabilities

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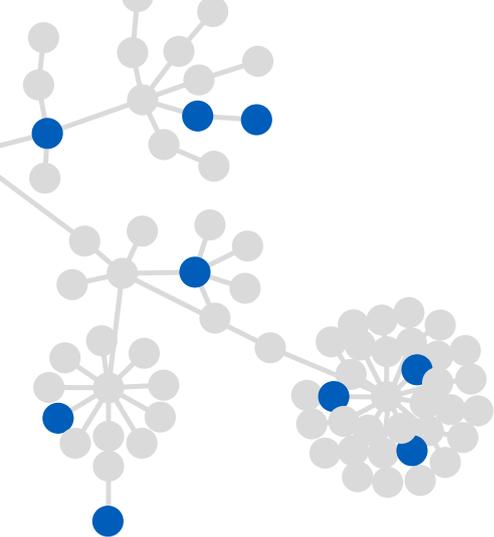
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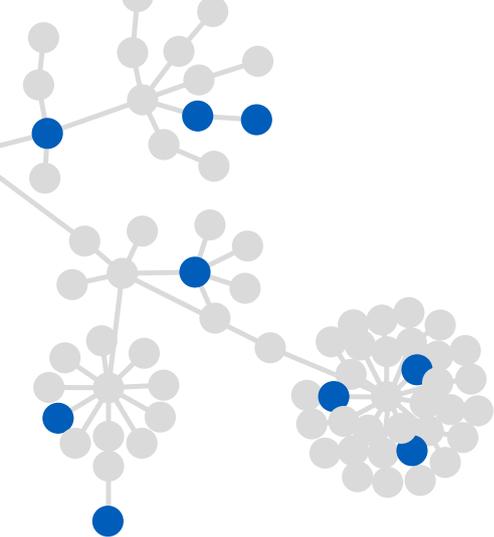
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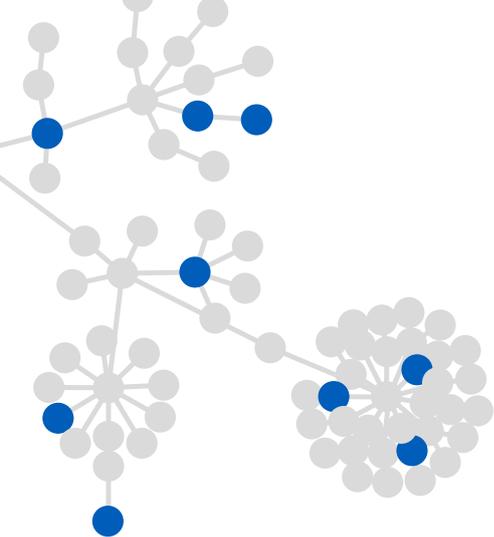
# Acknowledgements

The ILO Global Business and Disability Network is grateful to the many companies, employers' organizations and business networks that contributed to this publication *Business as unusual: making workplaces inclusive of people with disabilities*. We would like to express our special thanks to the company representatives of Accor, Accenture, Adecco, AXA, Carrefour, Casino, Dow Chemical, IBM, L'Oréal, Novartis, Sodexo, Standard Bank, and representatives from the Employers Federation of Ceylon, Chilean Federation of Industry (SOFOPA), and Qaderoon Business Disability Network. We are grateful for their contributions to the publication.

This guide was produced under the oversight of the ILO Senior Disability Specialist Stefan Trömel, with the assistance of Sara Park and Jürgen Menze. Our special thanks go to Adam Adrien-Kirby and Joseph Pisicolo who conducted the interviews with the companies, authored the highlights and collaborated with the company representatives to ensure the presentation of inspiring and interesting company practices on disability inclusion globally. We would also like to thank the editor Jorinde Singh.

On behalf of the contributors to this publication, the ILO Global Business and Disability Network and its Steering Committee hope this publication with diverse company practices on ensuring disability inclusion in workplaces will inspire business and employers around the world to continue working for the workplace inclusion of people with disabilities.

*ILO Global Business and Disability Network Secretariat*



# 1. Introduction

People with disabilities and their inclusion in the workplace are no longer absent from the business agenda. Disability inclusion now features in many policies and is fast gaining momentum in business strategies.

Including people with disabilities and accommodating their disability-related needs are important moves for companies in terms of talent resourcing and social responsibility as well as compliance with national legislation. Managers are well aware of the importance of disability inclusion for their business success but might still have questions on how initiatives can be implemented successfully. How do they get started effectively? How can initiatives be improved? What structure do they take in multinational enterprises (MNE) operating in countries across the globe?

This publication answers these questions and presents the key factors leading to the successful inclusion of people with disabilities in the private sector. It is based on work undertaken by the ILO Global Business and Disability Network (GBDN), a public-private partnership between multinational companies, employers' organizations and national business networks as well as selected Disabled Persons' Organizations (DPOs) and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs).

The business case for disability inclusion is the core of the first section, in which we explore *why* the inclusion of people with disabilities is a must for competitive businesses today. The second section shows us *how* disability inclusion can be achieved, by highlighting current, practical examples of companies' initiatives to include people with disabilities in their workforce. Highlights of these initiatives are taken from members of the GBDN and detail good practices that can serve as inspiration to other companies – both those looking to improve and expand existing practices as well as those just starting their journey.

There are some striking similarities between the participating companies' approaches to disability inclusion despite differences in geographical location and industrial sector. For instance, most formalised initiatives began to gain traction after the year 2000. Furthermore, a governance structure underpinned by strong top management support and the existence of national legislation are often cited as two important catalysts for the development of disability inclusion initiatives. In multinational enterprises, structures for disability inclusion often centre upon the establishment of a global support team, tasked with knowledge sharing, statistical analysis and promotion of internal advocacy campaigns. These headquarters-based teams are supplemented by country teams, whose responsibility it is to implement initiatives in a way that complies with national legislation, conforms to local culture and is supported by the buy-in of employees at the local level.

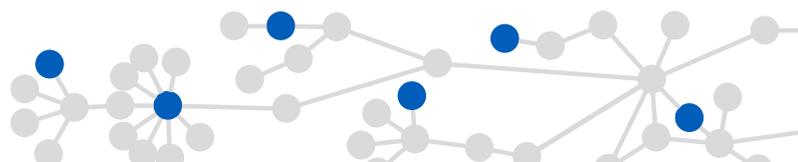
There are three main recurring lessons learned by the participating companies:

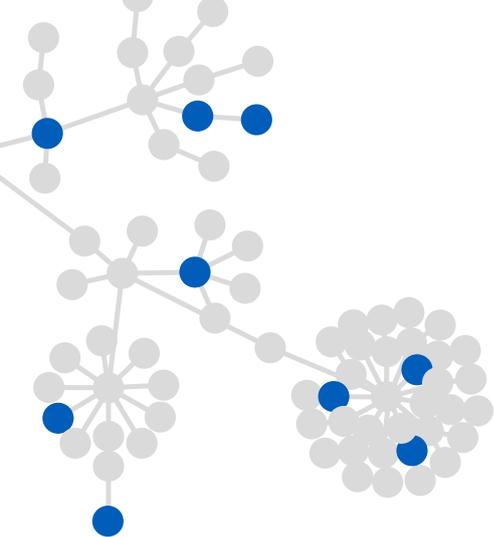
- The first is the importance of focusing on expelling myths in the business of what it is like to work with people with disabilities. These myths can be detrimental to the advancement of even the most well-planned disability inclusion initiative.
- The second is the increase of an initiative's effectiveness when people with disabilities are included in its development and implementation. Inclusion is not just the goal of business initiatives but also the key to their success by involving the very employees they are designed to address.
- The third common lesson is the added value of focussing efforts on the operational side of the business. Initiatives are more likely to gain traction when they are no longer the exclusive affairs of human resources or Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) departments, but rather when operational managers endorse the efforts and incorporate them into the daily operation of the business.

These findings are the result of interviews conducted with GBDN focal points within the respective companies. These focal points are, primarily, senior diversity and inclusion managers and also include sustainable development and operational managers. Participating companies operate in a variety of industrial sectors, ranging from mass retail, financial services, hospitality, business-to-business services and others. The questions posed to the interviewees were based on four themes:

- the company's overall strategy to disability inclusion;
- a particular geographical or thematic initiative as part of implementing the general strategy;
- the impact of this particular initiative;
- the key lessons learned from the process of developing and implementing the initiative.

As interviews focused on the implementation of a particular initiative, the company highlights are not a comprehensive report of the full range of initiatives undertaken by each company – they are rather examples of specific initiatives that have been seen to effectively support a company's overall disability inclusion strategy.





## 2. The business case for employing people with disabilities

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### 2.1 Pertinence of the question

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When asked about the business case for employing people with disabilities, some of the GBDN member companies that have been promoting the employment of people with disabilities for a long time struggled to give an answer and to some extent questioned the relevance of the question.

Some of these company representatives would say that “we employ people for their skills and talent. People with disabilities have skills and talents. What more is needed?” Others would say that people with disabilities are part of the general population and therefore would naturally also be part of the workforce.

These answers indicate that a moment will come when asking about the business case for employing people with disabilities will no longer be a relevant question since companies and their staff will have internalised disability inclusion as a natural business practice.

Nevertheless, the fact that very low levels of employment of people with disabilities persist, shows that our societies are still far from a situation where this question is irrelevant.

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### 2.2 Key drivers for the employment of people with disabilities

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When companies are asked what led them to promote the employment of people with disabilities, a number of, often concurring, elements are mentioned. The most frequent ones are:

- **Corporate Social Responsibility.** Initiatives on disability inclusion, and projects related to people with disabilities, although still largely absent in CSR, are increasingly mentioned in companies’ annual CSR reports.<sup>1</sup>
- **Personal commitment from the founder or CEO of the company.** This is quite often the case and raises the prevalent issue of long lasting commitment by the company.
- **Financial incentives.** This is usually an interesting incentive for small and medium enterprises. Grants to compensate for expenses linked to reasonable accommodation are particularly important to ensure that these expenses do not lead to candidates with disabilities not being employed.
- **Pressure from society.** As more companies (and organisations in general) become more disability-inclusive, the level of societal pressure put on other companies increases. The work of DPOs as well as of NGOs advocating for people with disabilities can play an instrumental role in increasing this pressure.
- **Legislation.** As this is usually the most relevant initial driver, the following paragraphs address this in some more detail.

1. ILO: Disability and corporate social responsibility reporting: an analysis comparing reporting practices of 40 selected multinational enterprises, Conditions of Work and Equality Department (Geneva, 2014).

### **Box 1 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – in a nutshell for multinational enterprises**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is an international treaty that establishes globally recognised benchmarks for disabled people's rights in all areas of life, including the economic, social, political, and cultural spheres. It sets out how human rights apply in the context of disability and requires States to bring their legislative

frameworks in line with the CRPD to promote and protect the rights of people with disabilities.

The CRPD was adopted in 2006 and entered into force in 2008. It has been ratified by more than 150 countries as well as by the European Union, which for the first time became party to an international human rights treaty.

#### **The CRPD is extremely relevant for a number of reasons**

The CRPD provides a common framework, and State Parties to the CRPD commit to align their laws and policies to the provisions of the CRPD. While national differences will continue to exist, States are revising their disability specific and mainstream legislation. This trend is of particular relevance to multinational enterprises. There is in particular a push for non-discrimination legislation, which also covers the area of employment.

While the CRPD is only binding for Governments, the changes in legislation and policies that the ratification of the CRPD will bring in each country will affect enterprises as well. The fact that the CRPD refers to the private sector in a number of its provisions is of particular relevance to MNEs.

For example:

- Article 2 establishes that the denial of a reasonable accommodation is a form of discrimination, unless it imposes a disproportionate or undue burden.
- Article 4 requires States to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability by any person, organization or private enterprise.
- Article 9 requires States to ensure that private enterprises that offer facilities and services to the public take into account all aspects of accessibility for people with disabilities.
- Article 21 requires States to urge private enterprises providing services to the general public, including through the internet, to provide information and services in accessible and usable formats for people with disabilities.
- Article 27 requires the recognition of the right of people with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others; this includes the right to work in an environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to people with disabilities.

The CRPD is also making an important contribution to the process of increasing the visibility of people with disabilities, in particular in developing countries. This process will contribute to an environment that will be more conducive to the employment of people with disabilities,

benefitting also companies that will play a leading role in this.

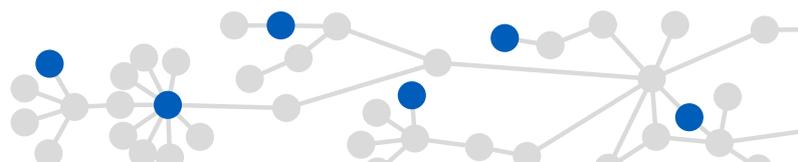
Public authorities from countries that have ratified the CRPD will increasingly be looking to do business with companies that they know are acting in accordance with the CRPD. For instance, accessibility standards in the public procurement of goods and services from the private sector in areas like health, education, transport or information will play an ever-increasing role. Thus, being an enterprise inclusive and accessible to people with disabilities means having a competitive advantage.

As the CRPD also requires States to promote the right to work for people with disabilities through inclusive and accessible work environments, it is to be expected that mainstream employment and vocational training services will increase their attention to persons with disabilities.

Further, many employees acquire their disabilities during their working lives and making simple adjustments to the work environment can allow employers to retain their valuable skills and experience, while maintaining maximum productivity. Significant savings can be made in terms of health costs, insurance payments and time lost, if an effective disability employment strategy is in place.

In the development and implementation of policies related to disability inclusion it is crucial to actively involve people with disabilities through their representative organizations, so they become an integral part of the decision-making processes. DPOs will be able to guide businesses on different aspects of inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace. Their involvement and indispensable contributions are not only beneficial to all, but an obligation State Parties to the CRPD have to fulfil.

Of great importance to enterprises are the changing expectations of people with disabilities, their families and friends. As customers, disabled people and their families will have higher expectations of accessible goods and services. As jobseekers and employees people with disabilities will have higher aspirations in terms of jobs and careers.



## Employment quota legislation

For most companies, the initial driver for employing more people with disabilities is national legislation, most often so-called quota legislation that obliges companies with more than a certain number of employees to employ a set percentage of disabled employees in their workforce.<sup>2</sup>

As a general rule, companies do not support quota legislation. However, many company representatives would also admit that in the absence of such a driver, most companies would not even start considering the employment of people with disabilities.

This is not the only paradox with quota legislation. Quota legislation, even in those few countries where it is effective, risks undermining the idea that people with disabilities should be employed for the same reasons as non-disabled employees, that is for their skills and talent. Employing people because of their disability in order to avoid the fees or sanctions foreseen in many quota-based laws could lead employers to treat employees with disabilities differently, for instance, offering fewer opportunities for career development. This would obviously not be good for people with disabilities, but also not for companies.

Another disadvantage of quota systems is that employees with disabilities are obliged to reveal their disability, as employers need to be able to show to the relevant public authority how many people with disabilities are employed in order to meet the quota. This raises obvious privacy-related issues, as people with disabilities often do not want to declare their disability. This is especially the case for invisible disabilities, such as psychosocial disabilities.

Nonetheless, many companies, including the GBDN members, are examples that the risks of quota legislation can be avoided and that quota legislation, where it does exist, can be an initial trigger of the process towards the employment of people with disabilities, in particular when it is well designed and accompanied with additional measures.

## Non-discrimination legislation

In addition, comprehensive disability non-discrimination legislation that is increasingly present in many countries (see Box 1) as well as disability-related non-discrimination provisions in mainstream legislation, including labour laws, can play an important role in promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace.

While disability non-discrimination legislation has a more indirect impact on the employment of people with disabilities, especially when compared to quota legislation, it has a potentially very relevant systemic impact. For enterprises, complying with national disability non-discrimination legislation often results in the need to revise their internal practices to ensure that none of these directly or indirectly discriminate against people with disabilities. While this does not automatically lead to the employment of people with disabilities, experience has shown that it can make an important contribution.

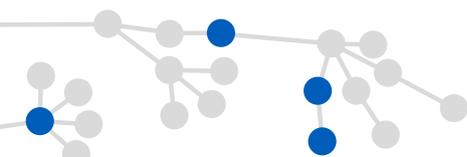
Furthermore, non-discrimination legislation leads companies to ensure that their current employees with disabilities and those that got disabled at a later point are given the same opportunities as other employees and are provided with reasonable accommodation, if required. Disability non-discrimination legislation also has a positive impact on the environmental barriers – attitudinal and physical amongst others – that often prevent people with disabilities from accessing education and training.

### Box 2 Disability-inclusive business environments

In order for disability inclusion in workplaces to be successful, it is also essential that companies can operate in a policy environment that is conducive and enabling. One frequent issue raised by companies is that they cannot find people with disabilities that have the skills the companies require. To address this issue, government policies on vocational education and training inclusive of students and trainees with disabilities, are required.

Furthermore, to ensure adequate matching of job vacancies with the skills and ambitions of jobseekers with disabilities, effective employment and placement agencies as well as NGOs providing services to people with disabilities are instrumental. Further, DPOs and NGOs can assist companies in increasing awareness about disability issues among staff and thereby transforming mind-sets and attitudes of both employees and managers.

2. ILO and Irish Aid: Achieving equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities through legislation. Guidelines, revised edition (Geneva, 2007).



## Public procurement legislation

Other legislative measures promoting the employment of people with disabilities include public procurement procedures that give private companies better chances to sell their products or services to the public sector if these companies are inclusive of people with disabilities. For instance, under the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework of South Africa enterprises are awarded contracts based on a preferential points system which features disability inclusion as one of the areas that positively impact the company's overall rating vis-à-vis the public sector. Another good practice can be found in the United States Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) which governs the procurement process of the United States government. The FAR stipulates affirmative action by the contractor to employ and advance in employment qualified people with disabilities and applies this requirement also to subcontracting companies.

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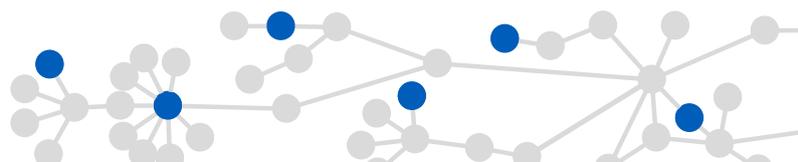
## 2.3 Positive impact on companies

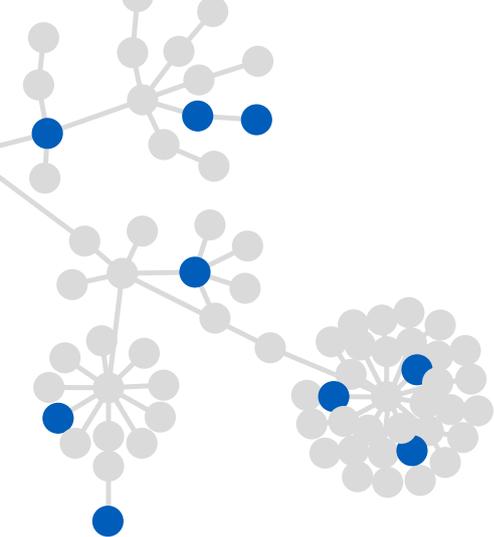
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In the discussions held with the members of the GBDN and other enterprises, a number of positive impacts have been identified by companies resulting from the employment of people with disabilities. These impacts taken together provide the business case for employing people with disabilities. They are the following:

- Positive impact on workforce morale;
- Benefits of a diverse workforce, including people with disabilities;
- Improved service for disabled consumers;
- Good levels of productivity linked to low levels of absenteeism and low levels of rotation;
- Improvement in business practices to accommodate people with disabilities resulting in practices benefitting all employees.

However, there is one key message based on the experience from enterprises hiring people with disabilities: the business case is viable if the companies approach the employment of people with disabilities in the right way. The main and last section of this publication will deal with company practices that have proven to be effective.





# 3. Good practices of disability inclusion in the workplace

This section will present practices of some of the GBDN member companies as well as initiatives of employers' organizations and business networks working specifically on providing support to their members on disability inclusion. The company practices – with companies at different stages of disability inclusion work – will present different ways to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities, develop internal policies, or implement innovative solutions and initiatives to engage their staff and management in working on disability inclusion.

Each enterprise presents how they work on a specific initiative or programme on disability inclusion. These include for example:

- Effective governance structures to respond effectively to stakeholder pressure, e.g. the strong support of Dow Chemical's Global Management Team for disability issues;
- The development and implementation of advocacy strategies, e.g. Groupe Casino's campaign featuring the fictional character 'Handino', or Adecco's Athlete Career Programme;
- Disability policies endorsed by senior management, e.g. Standard Bank's disability inclusion policy, Accor's International Diversity Charter, or the obligation of Sodexo's office of diversity to report directly to its CEO;
- Reasonable accommodation procedures, e.g. IBM's online equipment request system;
- Employee networks that support and help employees with disabilities with various questions and company procedures, e.g. Accenture's Global Persons with Disabilities Champions Network, Dow Chemical's Disability Employee Network or Novartis' employee resource group on disability issues;
- Engagement in training through partnership with DPOs, NGOs and training providers, e.g. Carrefour's partnership with the Disabled for the Environment – EKON Association in Poland.

Good practices of companies creating workplaces that are more inclusive of employees with disabilities need to be shared widely with other companies and employers' organizations, so they can benefit as much as possible from already existing experience and lessons learned. An effective way to do so is becoming part of national business and disability networks, where employers can support each other, learn from each other, and undertake common activities towards moving the disability inclusion agenda forward. These national networks follow the same logic as the GBDN which can also assist with its unique disability inclusion expertise and knowledge in setting up business and disability networks in countries where they are not yet in place.

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## 3.1 Accenture – Global management consultancy

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Accenture respects each person's abilities and the value they bring to the organization. Taking a wide view of inclusion and diversity – going beyond abilities, age, ethnicity, gender, religion and sexual orientation and gender identity and expression – Accenture strives to create an environment that welcomes all forms of differences. In 2010, the company decided to build on the successful efforts that various Accenture locations had in place by introducing a global focus on persons with disabilities.

This global focus supports people with disabilities initiatives across the globe, and includes employee resource groups and a Global Persons with Disabilities Champions Network that today has more than 2,000 participants. The network brings together disabled employees, supporters and friends for skills development, networking, collaboration and mentoring. Coordinated globally and run locally, employee resource groups organize programs and events that educate and raise awareness about persons with disabilities at Accenture and beyond. For example, Accenture in Argentina, one of the first locations to establish a disability focus, is both progressive and pioneering in terms of implementing programs to include people with disabilities. Its Sin Barreras (Without Barriers) program focuses on workplace inclusion and job creation for persons with disabilities. And in France, Accent sur le Handicap sponsors an anonymous toll-free helpline for employees to call for information and advice on disability-related topics.

Employee resource groups are particularly valuable to Accenture as they offer employees at offices around the world opportunities not only to collaborate with colleagues who have similar interests or backgrounds, but also to participate in career development workshops, mentoring, local recruiting and community service activities. Globally, Accenture supports these networks with a regular newsletter and its intranet provides an online collection of disability-focused tools, resources and materials to help provide consistent messaging and information.

Accenture strives to provide a barrier-free work environment that is accessible for persons with disabilities, offering reasonable accommodations for employees including assistive technology. Additionally, Accenture adheres to strict non-discrimination, harassment and meritocracy policies and commits to providing a clear, open line of communication between employees and management.

Throughout the year, Accenture celebrates the value its employees with disabilities bring to the company, culminating in the December celebration of the United Nations commemorated International Day of Persons with Disabilities. These activities showcase the contributions of Accenture people while educating employees about the importance of fostering an inclusive workplace and raising awareness about ways to work more effectively with persons with disabilities.

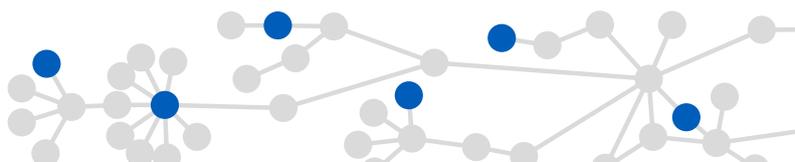
Ultimately, the goal of all initiatives is to ensure that an inclusive and accessible workplace is provided and that all reasonable accommodations are in place so that people with disabilities will be effective and successful. The result reinforces and recognizes the value of their contribution to their team and to Accenture.

**“At Accenture, every employee is an equal member of our team and is welcomed and treated with dignity. We are committed to supporting persons with disabilities and providing an inclusive and accessible environment for all our people.”**

Nellie Borrero, Managing Director, Global Inclusion & Diversity

**“...We are committed to supporting persons with disabilities and providing an inclusive and accessible environment for all our people.”**

Nellie Borrero, Managing Director, Global Inclusion and Diversity



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## 3.2 The Accor Group – Leading hotel operator

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Accor is the world's leading hotel operator, with 470,000 rooms in 3,600 hotels in 92 countries across 14 trusted brands such as Sofitel, Pullman, Novotel, Mercure and Ibis. Accor is a place that welcomes, integrates and respects individuals from diverse backgrounds and knows how to appeal to them.

The Group's internal efforts to encourage diversity are based on four pillars: diversity of origin; gender equality; the inclusion of people with disabilities; and diversity of age. These pillars were formalised within the Group in 2011 by way of an International Diversity Charter, released in 15 languages. With regard to people with disabilities, the Charter states clearly that the Group is "committed to an active policy for the inclusion and retention of each legislation locally."

**“A human approach to disability is key”**

Frédérique Poggi, VP Group Diversity

The Group's commitment to people with disabilities can be seen through efforts at international and national levels. In addition to a diversity charter, Accor raises awareness and, importantly, increases contact between hiring managers and people with disabilities through annual celebrations of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. In 2013, for example, meetings between business managers (including Operations Managers and Department Heads), team members with disabilities and guests from the Brazilian *Rede Empresarial de Inclusão Social* (Corporate Network for Social Inclusion) were organized to learn about and discuss the recruitment and inclusion needs of people with disabilities. In France, discussion groups and training sessions on hiring and skills enhancement were also delivered. The emphasis on 'increasing contact' stems from management's awareness that effort to include people with disabilities must also expel myths and preconceptions about what working with disabled people is like.

At the national level, Accor first established in 1992 a dedicated team facilitating the inclusion and accommodation for people with disabilities in France. The team's mandate also included the acceleration of recruitment of people with disabilities as well as the training, communication and sensitisation actions for the recruiters themselves.

**“It is important to include people with disabilities as much as possible during the implementation process of inclusion and accommodation activities.”**

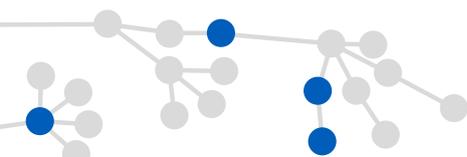
Frédérique Poggi, Vice President Group Diversity

These practices are numerous but, much like the celebrations of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities described above, all try to involve disabled persons as much as possible. At the Novotel Saclay in Paris, for example, members of kitchen staff regularly participate in training programmes organised in collaboration with a specialised training centre. These programmes are especially helpful, as people with visual impairments are often hired to be part of the kitchen staff. During the training, participants experience the disability for themselves, thanks to special glasses that reproduce the effects of visual impairment. Then they are able to understand disabled people's experience and the circumstances under which they work. When the course participants return to Saclay, they share their lessons and experience with the Hotel Manager, Heads of Department and the rest of the team.

This training has led to a significant culture change in the kitchen team as well as layout adaptation in the kitchen taking into account visual impairments, e.g. different coloured chopping boards and adjusting neon lighting.

A number of hotels adapted their kitchen following Novotel Saclay's example. Pullman Paris Montparnasse is the only hotel that requires more than 50 trolleys to restock in-room minibars. To reduce the strain involved in pushing and pulling the trolleys along carpeted corridors, motorised trolleys have been introduced. This was a major investment for the hotel and made possible by additional financing contributed by the Disability Team on behalf of the Group. This adjustment helps reducing the risk of musculoskeletal disorders and other types of disabilities related to handling heavy objects and using repetitive gestures.

The primary lesson for the Accor Group in addressing people with disabilities, particularly at the national level, has been the importance of top management support. No changes would have been possible without their long-term support. It is also important not to focus solely on the actions and attitudes of non-disabled employees, but rather to include persons with disabilities as much as possible during the implementation process of inclusion and accommodation activities. This ensures that the outcomes of activities respond to the original need. Other important lessons include the good practice of being sensitive to the attitude of *all* staff (not only of disabled people) towards activities addressing disability in the workplace. Staff members often have experience with people with disabilities outside of the workplace, some of which can be negative. It is therefore important for management and Disability and Inclusion teams to recognise that disability can be a sensitive subject for many.



### 3.3 Adecco Group – Leading human resources solutions provider

Adecco's journey in diversity and inclusion (D&I) began in 1986 in its French operations on the local level. Since then, Groupe Adecco France has made it a point to help people with disabilities find jobs, placing more than 5,600 persons with disabilities in its client companies in 2013. In 1999, Adecco Spain and Adecco Italy created foundations that enable people with difficulties getting into the labour market to be empowered in their professional lives. With innovative programmes such as 'Plan Familia' introduced by the Adecco Foundation in Spain (which extends to client companies' family members with disabilities to get career counselling) and dedicated actions towards targeted groups, such as people with disabilities, Adecco has explored new ways of understanding the full potential of its beneficiaries and has convinced many companies to become more inclusive.

Awareness raising and training are key to workplace inclusion as well as accessibility. Therefore, Adecco has developed tools such as specific guidelines and e-learning modules to help its employees better understand the issues faced by those with impairments among the company's employees and clients. For example, in 2010 Groupe Adecco France introduced a centre called '*Espace Emploi Handicap & Compétences*', which provides solutions such as professional training to increase the skills of people with disabilities, especially for positions that require skills in high demand.

Adecco fully supports the principle of an inclusive workforce, thereby making frequent efforts to promote the connection between its client companies and employees with disabilities. Adecco provides companies with its expertise regarding the sourcing, recruitment and training of candidates in order to create a good match between employees and employers. In addition, many events have been organised in various locations in France to facilitate the contact between candidates with disabilities and employers. In 2012, a guide called 'Handicap' on recruitment practices, integration and continuous employment was published as a resource on disability inclusion for Adecco Groupe France. In 2014, Adecco Groupe France launched an initiative called 'Employ & Handicap' with a dedicated branch network leading in disability inclusion to serve as resources on the employment of people with disabilities. These leading branches hold that an inclusive workforce is essential for companies' ability to increase innovation, creativity, and ultimately productivity. As the leading human resources solutions provider, Adecco's engagement with D&I has an important influence on many private sector organisations and their recruitment practices. Adecco's efforts to encourage and support its client companies to recruit people with different abilities led to a variety of initiatives and collaborations in many countries.

In particular, Adecco's work with the Paralympic Movement and its athletes had a significant impact. In 2005, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Adecco signed an agreement to provide career counselling and job placement support for elite athletes during and after their sport careers through the IOC Athlete Career Programme. Adecco entered into a similar agreement in 2007 with the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) to support para-athletes with a professional career next to their athletic goals. The Athlete Career Programme (ACP) is endorsed by senior leadership and is currently being delivered in over 30 countries and is also introduced to athletes during Olympic/Paralympic and Youth Olympic Games as well as Outreach training in countries beyond Adecco's footprint or where no local agreement is in place. The programme is driven by a global team and led locally by ACP managers composed of National Olympic Committee (NOC) and National Paralympic Committee (NPC) representatives and Adecco employees. In order to increase awareness on the topic of inclusion and accessibility, Adecco has been working with para-athletes and the IPC Athletes' Council to carry out advocacy programmes with client companies in order to change attitudes and address institutional prejudice against the employment of people with disabilities. The ACP intends to make Olympic and Paralympic athletes aware of their transferrable skills and their unique set of traits which make them world class performers and top employees.

To date, the ACP has been delivered to over 19,000 elite Olympic and Paralympic athletes in over 180 countries. Adecco's involvement with the Paralympic movement has

**“Adecco is focusing on the skills and potentials of all candidates – including people with disabilities.”**

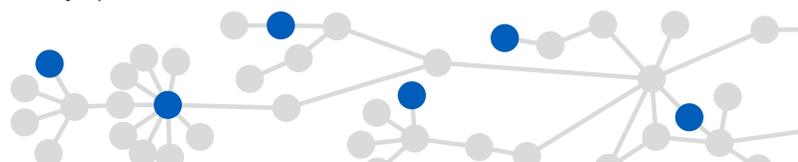
Bruce Roch, CSR & Solidarity Manager

**“We joined Adecco Foundation Spain for its focus and commitment to the integration of people with disabilities. All our employees provided very positive feedback on their engagement in the voluntary work that we developed and organised in cooperation with Adecco Foundation Spain.”**

Marisol Hernández, Director CSR, Galp Energia

**“...to be an attractive employer for new talents and an HR services provider to customers, it is crucial to understand how to focus on people's skills, abilities and experience rather than on an impairment you may consider an obstacle at first sight.”**

Lilian Furrer, Director CSR and Communications for the IOC and IPC Athlete Career Programme



made it possible for the Group to engage in disability inclusion efforts in many countries with Paralympic Committees, as well as with sponsor and client companies. As Paralympic athletes are powerful ambassadors for all people with different abilities, the ACP has served to raise companies' awareness of an untapped group of people with skills that are both relevant and useful for businesses.

In turn, para-athletes must be willing to focus on their education, engage early and look for opportunities through internships or part-time positions in order to gain valuable work experience next to their sporting achievements and to get ready to engage passionately with a new phase of their lives.

In conclusion, Adecco provides the message that advancing the disability inclusion agenda in the workplace will take time. The small, incremental changes that are made on a daily basis will have the long-term effect of changing mentalities about people with disabilities. Adecco believes that people with an impairment will eventually be perceived only on the basis of their skills and abilities, as long as including everybody into the workplace is demonstrated not to be a CSR project but an imperative for any company that strives for success.

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## 3.4 AXA – A global leader in financial protection

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### “Opportunity, not charity”

A viewpoint embraced by Krungthai-AXA regarding disability inclusion

The AXA Group's commitment to being a responsible employer is a significant component of its corporate responsibility strategy. Accordingly, AXA believes that achieving employee engagement will drive its business goals. In order to achieve employee engagement, AXA strives to create a workforce that fosters diversity and equal opportunities for all, including people with disabilities.

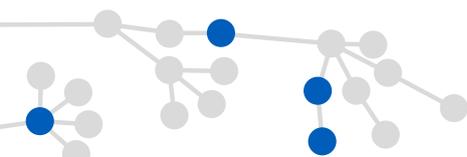
AXA across the world has programmes and policies dedicated to supporting a culture that is inclusive of people with disabilities. Programmes centre around NGO and university partnerships, awareness initiatives, employee resource groups and several other talent engagement and retention initiatives.

Several AXA entities have implemented a plan to hire and retain people with disabilities. In the last two years alone, AXA has been awarded in Japan and Thailand for its exemplary work in disability inclusion.

Krungthai-AXA Life Insurance (KAL) has operated in Thailand since 1997 as a joint investment by Krung Thai Bank and the AXA Group. In that time, the company has grown to become the life insurance provider of choice for over 1.3 million people. With regard to disability inclusion, the company commits to being a “responsible employer...that fosters diversity and equal opportunities for all,” which is exemplified by the contribution that people with disabilities have already made to its business. Currently, 15 of KAL's 826 employees have a disability (up from 8 employees in 2011) and the company's Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Programme is set to attract an increasing number of the 1.8 million people with disabilities in Thailand to apply for a job at the Bangkok-based firm.

KAL firmly believes that disability inclusion is not a matter of charity but is instead an opportunity for people with disabilities to demonstrate their valued talents. With this in mind, the Diversity and Inclusion programme arose as an initiative to promote a workplace inclusive of people with disabilities. Formed in 2009 as a response to AXA Group's Diversity and Inclusion policy, the D&I project commenced with extensive research on laws and issues faced by people with disabilities. After internalising Thailand's disability policies, KAL began recruiting persons with disabilities into its various business functions. Eight people with disabilities were recruited in 2011 and have been retained to date as a result of the D&I project. Additionally, a robust corporate social responsibility strategy has been created by KAL focusing on both internal and external stakeholders. A system for inspecting and renovating work sites based on the disability inclusion standards of KAL has also been formed.

Though the D&I programme is in its early stages, its impact on its employees and the nation as a whole has been made evident. The employees with disabilities who have successfully joined KAL have become champions of disability inclusion. Employment at KAL for one employee who uses a wheel chair has been a life-changing experience. Working with KAL has enabled this employee to support her parents, earn a university degree, and begin a family of her own. The individual stories of employees with disabilities have raised awareness within KAL about disability. These small steps in advancing the opportunities of employees with disabilities in Thailand can serve as the foundation for further progression in the disability agenda.



The impact of the D&I programme has not gone unnoticed in Thailand. After its successful recruitment of eight people with disabilities in 2011, KAL was honoured by the nation's Ministry of Social Development and Human Security for its social contribution to people with disabilities. Additionally, the Redemptorist Foundation, an NGO dedicated to disability inclusion, recognized KAL for its leading practices in the recruitment of persons with disabilities in Thailand. The national success of the D&I project has solidified KAL as an authority in disability inclusion throughout Thailand, which has opened many doors for the company. KAL now, for example, implements knowledge sharing and legal consultation regarding disability inclusion to various organisations in Thailand as part of the D&I project.

From its initiative to provide equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities, KAL has learned a great deal. Firstly, KAL has learned that an inclusive workplace cannot be created without the motivation of *all* employees. Whether one is an administrative assistant, a middle manager, or a top level executive, managing disability in the workplace is a comprehensive issue. In addition, KAL has realised that talent can reveal itself in a vast number of ways. Realising this has enabled the company to successfully employ 15 people with a variety of disabilities since the D&I project started.

Finally, KAL would like to impart the message that people with disabilities meet and overcome massive challenges on a daily basis, which says a lot about the challenges they can overcome in the workplace.

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## 3.5 The Carrefour Group – Leading multinational retailer

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From humble beginnings as a small discount retailer in 1959 in Annecy, France, the Carrefour Group has grown to include over 10,000 stores around the world, providing employment for nearly 365,000 people in 34 countries worldwide. The company reports, with specific regard to disability, global employment of 9,709 people (2.8 per cent) recognised as having a disability at the end of 2013. Providing decent employment for people with disabilities is one of the central pillars of Carrefour's diversity policy. Carrefour was one of the first companies to join and contribute to the GBDN in 2011.

The Group engages in a wide variety of initiatives at country level, including the *Mission Handicap* programme in France that was first launched in hypermarkets in 1999. At the end of 2013, Carrefour's hypermarkets in France reported that 8.02 per cent of their employees were registered as people with disabilities. In Poland, partnerships to recruit disabled persons were established with the Association Disabled for the Environment (EKON). Carrefour Poland was awarded the 'Ice breaker' in 2013: a competition commending individuals and employers who commit to solving the problems faced by people with disabilities. In 2013, 854 people with disabilities (6.5 per cent) worked at Carrefour Poland.

The example of Carrefour in Brazil is one of the best examples of the Group's efforts to include and accommodate for persons with disabilities. In 1991, Brazilian national legislation provided a quota dependent on business size for the employment of people with disabilities. For Carrefour, this corresponded to 5 per cent of employees. Though the company had already recruited disabled people, the legislation provided the necessary impetus to centralise the activity and increase the focus on the inclusion of people with disabilities.

Whilst the national legislation represents a minimum for the whole business in Brazil, Carrefour decided to build on the new requirement and implement the quota in each of its 142 stores throughout the country. Carrefour has also deployed a specific programme, *Eu pratico a inclusão* (I practise inclusion), which has notably led to twice as many people with disabilities being recruited in 2013 in comparison with 2012, complemented by the *Meu Amigo é Especial* (My friend is special) campaign to encourage the internal integration of persons with disabilities.

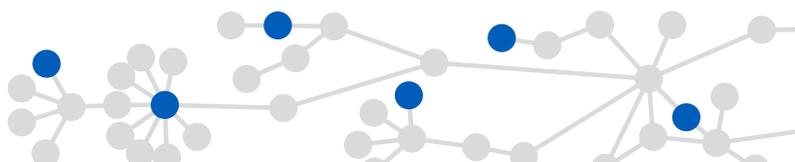
Of course, the company faces obstacles, particularly in terms of high levels of staff turnover and attracting people with disabilities to apply for open positions. Principally, obstacles revolve around the ignorance of hiring managers who are generally not prepared to hire an individual with disabilities. Some managers lack education and awareness about how to accommodate for disabilities.

**“A positive attitude towards people with disabilities needs to be integrated into organisational culture”**

Roberta Rivaldo de Almeida Sousa, Attraction and Retention Director at Carrefour Brazil

**“Managers must believe in the contribution that people with disabilities can make to their business.”**

Roberta Rivaldo de Almeida Sousa, Attraction and Retention Director



This difficulty has led to two initiatives to support hiring managers. Firstly, a series of orientation manuals was created to guide hiring managers in including and accommodating for persons with disabilities. Secondly, the company has made a significant financial investment by creating Human Resources Assistant roles within each of Carrefour's stores throughout Brazil. The purpose of this role is, among others, to assist hiring managers with all aspects of hiring, training and retaining people with disabilities at the store level, as well as facilitating the link between Carrefour headquarters and operational teams. Moreover, Carrefour Brazil launched a corporate diversity programme in 2012 with the aim of promoting mutual respect between all employees. Every director and manager receives training on diversity management, in order to progressively change the organisational culture. They are taught how to create an inclusive, respectful and accessible atmosphere in the workplace and are given guidance on dealing with day-to-day working life with people with disabilities. Since the implementation of these initiatives, every store affiliated with the Carrefour in Brazil currently employs people with disabilities.

For Carrefour, the key message for businesses starting out on this journey is twofold. Firstly, managers must believe in the contribution that persons with disabilities can make to the business. Without this belief and by concentrating solely on fulfilling quotas, organisational culture will not have the opportunity to change. The business environment will thus not be conducive to the integration and retention of people with disabilities as a part of the workforce. Secondly, solutions must be developed and implemented in collaboration with the people they target, i.e. people with disabilities. Trusting disabled people to communicate their limitations and understanding the skills of an individual can highlight her or his potential contribution and best fit with the business.

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## 3.6 Dow Chemical Co. – Multinational Chemicals Corporation

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Operating in 180 markets around the world and employer of some 53,000 people, Dow provides chemical and technological solutions in a variety of markets, including agricultural sciences; performance plastics; and electronic and functional materials. Dow's global approach to disability as well as all activities undertaken to accommodate for and include people with disabilities are underpinned by the company's position statement. The focus is on recruiting top talent and on the individual's core profile, i.e. their abilities and what they can contribute rather than on what they cannot.

**“People with disabilities are a ‘unique source of talent’”**  
Gerard van de Ven, Customer Service Director

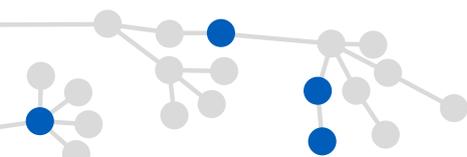
The core attribute of Dow's approach to disability inclusion is the strong support from the company's Global Management Team. In Dow's experience, a governance support structure starting with top management not only fosters internal buy-in but also ensures the effective dissemination of information, roll-out of initiatives and allocation of resources. Global management does not, however, drive initiatives. They are driven primarily by employees, passionate and committed to improving the working conditions of employees living with disabilities.

These efforts are carried out as part of Dow's Disability Employee Network (DEN), one of seven business networks raising awareness of the different facets of diversity and inclusion. To raise awareness internally most effectively, the DEN established regional chapters that implement initiatives and serve as champions of disability and inclusion at a more local level. In 2002, the DEN introduced annual awards for 'Champions of Inclusion' to recognise employees for their efforts, to break down barriers and foster a workplace that supports diversity and to create a culture where everyone feels valued.

**“Diversity and Inclusion is the responsibility of every leader and employee in the company and must be integrated into all areas of the operational side of the business.”**  
Gerard van de Ven, Customer Service Director

To support the improvement of Dow's diversity and inclusion strategy, the DEN has also facilitated Dow's collaboration with external organisations. For example, Dow has worked with the International Paralympic Committee both to support the Paralympic Games in Vancouver (2010), London (2012) and Sochi (2014) and to recognise the abilities of people with disabilities. In the same vein, the DEN's regional chapters have worked to raise awareness about people with disabilities worldwide by organising local sporting events for employees inspired by the Paralympic Games.

In another strand of the DEN's awareness-raising strategy, Dow works with the Rochester Institute of Technology National Technical Institute of the Deaf (RIT/NTID), an



organisation offering specialised educational resources to students who are hard-of-hearing. Students at the Institute deliver presentations to participants of Dow's Future Leader Academy demonstrating the talent, energy and enthusiasm that people with disabilities can bring to the workplace. Some employees have also been recruited from the NTID through an inclusive internship programme.

Developing and implementing these efforts to include people with disabilities have highlighted that an effective strategy needs support, governance and facilitation from the top. Actions need, however, to be embedded in the organization, and culture change needs to be led by passionate individuals throughout the business. Practically, this means that Diversity and Inclusion must not be put into siloes of the Human Resources or CSR department. It is not only their responsibility (they can only provide expertise), but it is also the responsibility of every leader and employee in the company and must be integrated into all areas of the operational side of the business, too.

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### 3.7 Groupe Casino – Global Retail Company: Committed to making the disability issue a non-issue

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For the past twenty years, the French-based company has been engaged with issues concerning people with disabilities. Altogether, more than 11 per cent of employees in Casino's associated stores in France are people with disabilities. In Thailand, Groupe Casino's 'BIG C' subsidiary was recognized by the Ministry of Labour for exceeding the legislated quota by 26 per cent. In 2012, a meeting of the GBDN provided the impetus needed to build a global awareness-raising campaign about people with disabilities at the workplace. The result was the group's first global campaign raising awareness within the company of people with disabilities: "Handino", who is the central character of the campaign.

**“Raise awareness across all business units with respect for different cultures”**

Sandra Chartoire, Sustainable Development Manager

The campaign's materials have been translated into English, French, Spanish and Portuguese to maximise its impact throughout the business. The campaign centres upon Handino's 'travels to different business locations' to 'speak' with managers and report on employees' experiences.

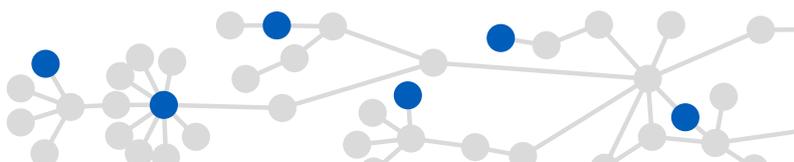
These anecdotes and short interviews are the basis of material demonstrating the importance of including and accommodating for people with disabilities, particularly in the operational side of the business. Raising awareness on the operational side of the business is a question of process development. It must be developed taking cultural context and the business's local needs into account.

Handino and the global awareness-raising campaign are part of a general, group-wide communications strategy that will positively impact the number of employees with disabilities in the company. Handino serves to affect attitudes and increase the buy-in of managers and employees into future disability and inclusion activities.

**“...organisations have the opportunity to integrate people with disabilities into all operational areas and posts.”**

Sandra Chartoire, Sustainable Development Manager

With operations in locations as diverse as Argentina, Brazil, Columbia, France, Thailand and Viet Nam, it is important to take into consideration local culture and attitudes. Groupe Casino defines group-level guidelines and supports initiatives, while devolving responsibility and trusting local offices to achieve the group goal of integrating even more disabled people into its activities. Choosing a playful way to promote the issue of disability and recalling employees' stories contribute to a message that acting for disability is accessible and not too complex a subject. It also highlights that organisations have the opportunity to integrate people with disabilities into all operational areas.



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## 3.8 IBM – International Business Machines Corporation

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**“For IBM, ‘disability is not the point’”**

Yves Veulliet, Global Disability & Inclusion Program Manager

In its former incarnation as the Computing Tabulating Recording Company (CTR), IBM hired its first employee with a disability in 1914. Since then, IBM has been through a number of changes in its engagement with disability and inclusion. IBM saw people with disabilities as an untapped source of talent in the 1940s that could replace members of staff who were conscripted by the armed forces in the Second World War. IBM also worked to accommodate the reintegration of returning employees, who had sustained a disability during wartime.

Seventy years later, IBM has developed a strategy that addresses different aspects of the business’ approach to people with disabilities. There are three core aspects: Attitude, Accessibility and Accommodation, or the 3 A’s. IBM accommodates for an employee’s disability primarily through the Accessible Workplace Connection. This is the business’ online equipment request system, where employees are able to request devices, furniture and other goods and services that will help them to be as productive as anybody else in the organization. IBM makes the business and its premises more accessible by implementing global initiatives based on a corporate requirement to make all buildings accessible. Examples of these initiatives include the accessibility checklist and the Building Accommodation Assessment Team, tasked to address accessibility issues when they arise. Virtual accessibility including all software and internal applications is also a main priority detailed in IBM’s corporate instructions.

IBM’s most recent strategy focuses on the third ‘A’: Attitudes. Now that the company has developed policies and tools, the focus is on maximizing their efficiency by engaging employees and managers to tackle any prejudice against people with disabilities, expelling myths and improving attitudes toward the recruitment and retention of employees with disabilities.

**“Companies do not have to hire a person with a disability. They have to hire someone with the appropriate skills to perform a given job. If that person happens to live with a disability, so be it, but disability is not the point.”**

Yves Veulliet, Global Disability & Inclusion Programme Manager

The message often heard in IBM is that people with disabilities are ‘a reservoir of untapped talent’, whose inclusion can only increase profits. Reports on the recruitment of people with disabilities, however, do not reflect this message. For IBM, the reason for this mismatch between policy and practice lies in unconscious bias and the inertia of attitudes towards people with disabilities.

As part of the company’s global disability awareness program, IBM plans to launch in 2015 a workshop aimed at addressing the attitudes and unconscious bias of its staff. Still in development stages, the workshop will focus its efforts on, first, the company’s recruitment function and, second, direct line managers who recruit and manage people with disabilities. This workshop was created and run for the first time at an international conference in Barcelona in February 2014 and, to date, has been piloted with external organisations and at sessions of Disability & Inclusion conferences. One high-profile example is with the US Business Leadership Network (USBLN), a non-profit organisation that helps business’ drive performance by leveraging disability inclusion in the workplace.

IBM’s key message to other employers is that the focus needs to be on the individual’s ability – forget the word ‘disability’. “Companies do not have to hire a person with a disability. They have to hire someone with the appropriate skills to perform a given job. If that person happens to live with a disability, so be it, but disability is not the point”, says Yves Veulliet, IBM’s Global Disability & Inclusion Programme Manager.

## 3.9 L'Oréal Group – World leader in beauty

Based in France but with subsidiaries around the world, the L'Oréal Group is highly devoted to the promotion of diversity and inclusion in all the aspects of its business. The world's largest cosmetics company is constantly thinking about ways to improve its diversity strategy, which has largely been shaped in the past decade. The Group's diversity strategy is implemented within three areas: human resources, marketing, and procurement. With regard to human resources, L'Oréal aims to make diversities in the workplace a reality through combating all forms of discrimination on the basis of 'visible and invisible differences'. Among other diversity agendas, L'Oréal has become passionate about disability inclusion, which its leadership deems as one of the top priorities moving forward.

In order to reveal the value of disability inclusion, Chairman and CEO, Jean-Paul Agon, has stated the need for L'Oréal to "push the limits in this domain." Accordingly, the Group has implemented a number of initiatives endorsed by senior management to support the inclusion of disability in its global workforce. One such initiative was launched in 2008 and branded as the Disability Initiatives Trophies. Held every two years, the internal competition started as a local event and quickly evolved into a global initiative. The event hosts the Group's various subsidiaries from over 60 countries under one roof to share success stories about local disability inclusion projects. In this way, the many subsidiaries are recognised for their efforts while at the same time having the ability to share best practices and learn from one another.

The most recent Trophies event was a large success, as all of the Group's subsidiaries participated in some way. The event had a particular emphasis on the theme of consumer consideration, which was expressed through the various initiatives undertaken by L'Oréal's many countries. Some examples of consumer-centric initiatives for people with disabilities include the launching of beauty workshops by the Venezuelan and other American subsidiaries. These workshops helped attendees learn how to use beauty products with the intention of improving their self-esteem. In countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines, disability sensitivity training was provided to beauty advisors to help them better interact with consumers who have disabilities. In the African countries of Nigeria and South Africa, local initiatives were held that provided consumers with disabilities the necessary training for becoming hairdressers and retailers of L'Oréal products. Additionally, subsidiaries in the United Kingdom have made progress in making the Group's brands, websites, and communication channels more accessible to consumers with disabilities. L'Oréal Italy is also beginning to promote the disability agenda – as the subsidiary sees disability as an added value for businesses due to the ability of resilience that these employees bring to the workforce. The sharing of these initiatives among the Group's subsidiaries at the Trophies event served to mobilize the various L'Oréal regions around the issues relevant to people with disabilities.

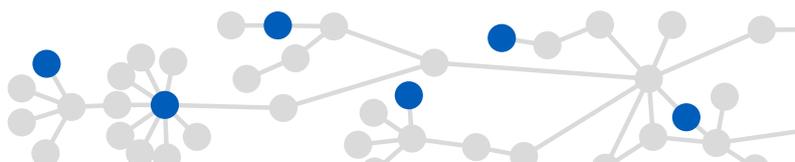
The Trophies event is one that can be deemed successful as a result of several factors. First and foremost, the event is led directly by the company's CEO and is conducted in the presence of senior management. The involvement of senior leadership is important for creating a sense of urgency within the global organisation around the issue of disability. When organisational leaders dedicate enough time and energy to important issues, more and more people throughout the organisation will buy-in. Secondly, the event is structured in a way that engages its participants. The internal competitiveness that is stimulated through the contest is healthy. It incentivises the various L'Oréal entities to perform concrete actions that support employees and consumers with disabilities. The provision of an award shows that L'Oréal will reward those within the company that aim to advance its diversity and inclusion strategy.

Additionally, the Disability Initiatives Trophies helps to strengthen the unique link between the L'Oréal headquarters – where the International Diversity Team resides – and its subsidiaries that serve as diversity correspondents. Due to the frequent exchange of information between the various subsidiaries and the headquarters in order to facilitate the biannual initiative, the event serves as a way of connecting the geographically dispersed organisation. This connection is crucial for L'Oréal to implement its diversity and inclusion strategy globally. In summation, L'Oréal is able to progress its disability agenda by engaging its various subsidiaries to unite concerning an issue that is believed by senior management to be correlated with business success.

“L'Oréal rewards concrete actions in favour of persons with disabilities”

“A diversified workforce in every function and on all levels strengthens our creativity and our understanding of consumers and it enables us to develop and market products that are relevant.”

Jean-Paul Agon, Chairman and CEO of L'Oréal



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## 3.10 Novartis International AG – Swiss multinational pharmaceutical company

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A global leader in healthcare, Novartis provides an array of medical products and solutions to patients around the world. The Swiss pharmaceutical company employs worldwide a workforce of over 135,000 people and is committed to care for its employees in the same way it cares for its customers. As it operates globally in more than 140 countries, Novartis makes diversity and inclusion a business priority. This includes creating a workplace that respects, values and integrates people with special needs and diverse abilities. Branded internally as ‘Diversability’, the disability inclusion strategy of Novartis is driven by the principle that employees should be recognized on the basis of contributions, not limitations.

**“I think that all global organisations need to make diversity and inclusion a priority not only because it’s the right thing to do, but also because it makes good business sense.”**

CEO Joseph Jimenez on Diversity and Inclusion

In 2011, an employee resource group was formed within Novartis – called the Diversability Support Network – to advocate for issues concerning people with disabilities. The network’s tagline demonstrates its disability philosophy: ‘Diversability. It’s not about disability, it’s about abilities’. Based in Switzerland and led by an employee with a disability, the Diversability Support Network members and supporters are associates from different businesses and backgrounds. Anyone who has an interest in supporting the cause of disability inclusion can contribute to the employee resource group in some way, regardless of where they sit in the organization. The core team of about ten employees meets on a monthly basis to discuss and prepare for various events and activities. Throughout the year, the employee resource group arranges ‘lunch and learn’ sessions on the Novartis Basel Campus, as well as awareness training for staff regarding disability management. A variety of internal and external communication channels are used by the employee resource group to share news and information about what is going on with key stakeholders.

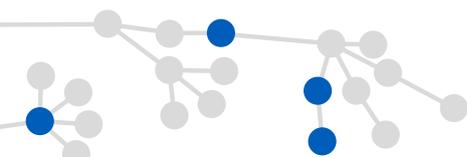
Since the Diversability Support Network was formed, the group has organised annual events on 3 December in honour of the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities. At the first annual event in 2012, the Head of the Pharma Division – who was using a wheelchair at the time – spoke to the audience about his experience being temporarily disabled and the importance for all associates to be able to access any support they needed to be effective in the workplace and outside. His support showed a high-level commitment to the group’s initiatives, which further strengthened the employee resource group credibility. At that same event, members of the Diversability Support Network organised a dance performance with mobility impaired colleagues – reinforcing the key message that it is not about disabilities but abilities. The following year, the group held a large panel of senior leaders and employee resource group members who talked about their personal experiences and opportunities regarding disability inclusion. This year, the employee resource group is excited to host a ‘diversability challenge’ worldwide, inviting all Novartis associates to nominate a particular project which is driving better inclusion of people with disabilities in their country. This contest provides the Novartis subsidiaries the opportunity to showcase innovative success stories regarding disability inclusion.

**“The European Diversity Award represents a great motivation for the future to continue to work hard towards our goal to fully integrate people with disabilities in the workplace.”**

Renata Lazarova, Sponsor of the Novartis Diversability Support Network

In addition to these events, the group’s impact expands into the realm of employee support. For instance, the Diversability Support Network was instrumental in the formation of a diversability resource centre that functions as a virtual database for disability-related information. Offering information on where to find specific equipment right up to interview preparation materials and more, this database serves as an important tool for employees with concerns about disability. In dedicating time beyond the scope of their regular work responsibilities to the activities of the ERG, the Diversability Support Network members have learned a great deal about employees with disabilities. One common impression was that employees with disabilities often just want to work without stirring up too much attention about their individual situations. While the diversability resource centre helps these employees find relevant information, they may also require additional support from colleagues in their work context. If line-managers and other team mates provide ample support for employees with disabilities to feel comfortable in their roles, then they will be enabled and even more motivated to provide valuable contributions and innovative ideas.

In October 2014, the Diversability Support Network was honoured by the European Diversity Awards as the ‘Outstanding Employee Network Group of the Year’ for its work on the integration of people with disabilities in the workplace. The award truly speaks to the



success of Novartis' employee resource group, and was mainly thanks to its structure. The group is made up of a network of individuals who are intrinsically motivated to support disability inclusion. The initiative is directed from the bottom-up, with associates having the freedom to shape the agenda as long as it is aligned with the company's diversity and inclusion strategy. Because the associates are passionate and engaged in their work, they have no trouble attaining support and visibility from senior leaders. The key message from Novartis to other organisations is that with the right leader, motivated team members and the provision of autonomy, employee resource groups can make a strong impact on promoting diversity in the workplace.

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### 3.11 Standard Bank – Africa's leading financial services group

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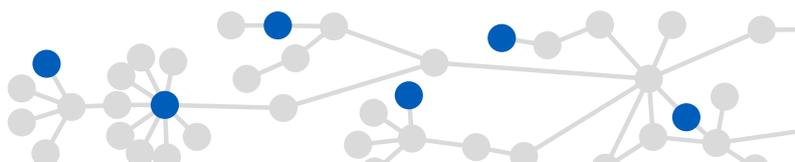
Standard Bank has a large footprint on the African continent, operating in 18 countries throughout Africa. It also maintains a small global presence outside of Africa in order to give Africa access to global markets. Employing close to 48,000 people, Standard Bank offers financial services that include investment banking and wealth management, business banking as well as personal financial services for individual customers. The South African operations (SBSA) are the largest and oldest part of the business, and employ just over 27,000 people. While the value of diversity in SBSA has been understood for many years, the promulgation of the Employment Equity Act in 1998 served as a catalyst for developing plans and setting targets for the employment of people from under-represented groups, including people with disabilities. The legislation requires companies to internally audit their current diversity practices and make necessary changes for improvement.

**“We believe that diversity is at the heart of our business, making it a fundamental element of everything we do.”**

Admittedly for Standard Bank and other companies within the new South African democracy, disability issues have tended to take a backseat to the promotion of racial equality. While the employment of people with disabilities has always been part of the equity agenda in SBSA, it was only in 2013 that the principles and approach underlying this endeavour were codified into a finalised policy on disability. The formation of its Disability Policy has enabled Standard Bank to drive its diversity and inclusion strategy forward. The ability of managers and employees alike to refer to a standardized set of principles and guidelines regarding disability have fostered both workplace efficiency and fairness.

The Standard Bank Disability Policy is intended to “provide guidance in managing disability in the workplace, and to enable Standard Bank to fulfil its responsibilities in respect of incorporating people with disabilities into mainstream employment.” The policy is robust; it discusses, in detail, various topics such as: a definition for disability, who is covered under the policy, how to declare a disability, and the process for acquiring reasonable accommodations. The Disability Policy, especially with regard to reasonable accommodation, has informed a much clearer understanding within the organisation of the process to be followed and actions that need to be taken if an employee wishes to apply for reasonable accommodation. Previously, the provision of reasonable accommodation was ad-hoc and depended on the willingness of line managers to fund such accommodations. People with disabilities were expected to raise the issue of reasonable accommodation with line managers and engage in negotiations about how to create a more disability-friendly work environment. Now that there is a standardised policy, as well as a centralised budget, the noise has been taken out of the process and people with disabilities do not feel as if they are a burden or imposition on their workplace.

In addition to the Disability Policy, Standard Bank has formalised guidelines on managing employees with disabilities as well as on customers and clients with disabilities. The *Guide to Managing Disability in the Workplace* serves as a tool to help managers and human resources business partners to become more knowledgeable about disability inclusion. The guide is comparable to a training module – providing information on different theories, terminology, and best practices related to disability in the workplace. A section on how disability should be considered in the context of various Human Resources processes helps in the prevention of discrimination in recruiting, onboarding, performance management, and training. Regarding customers and clients, Standard Bank has also produced guidelines for conducting business with people who have disabilities. The guideline includes sections on disability etiquette and interactions with customers, while serving as reinforcement for the organisation's desire to accommodate those with disabilities.



The formation of policies and guidelines regarding disability has provided valuable lessons to Standard Bank about disability inclusion. The creation of a standardised policy targeting disability issues was deemed important by Standard Bank for several reasons. Firstly, the policy serves as a foundation for legitimisation and endorsement from senior structures. In other words, without a formalised policy senior leadership cannot effectively convey the importance of disability inclusion throughout the enterprise. Managers need to take the management of disability seriously in order for an inclusive culture to become possible. Additionally, Standard Bank realised that the formalisation of disability policies and guidelines provides employees with a best practice basis to work with. Instead of merely doing ‘something’ to respond to disability issues, managers and employees are provided with the ‘right’ actions to take when managing disability in the workplace.

A final lesson learned by Standard Bank is that dealing with disability in the workplace involves much more than simply buying new equipment. The right amount of time and energy must be put into looking at how the work is structured and having necessary discussions with line managers. An example provided by Standard Bank was its dealing with an employee who had uncontrolled epilepsy and a job that involved climbing ladders frequently. Due to the obvious danger in the employee’s situation, Standard Bank conducted negotiations with the manager to help change the nature of the role, which proved to be more complicated than anticipated.

In order to deal with situations like these, Standard Bank recommends that organisations benchmark their current practices for managing disability in order to help understand the issues at hand. In the early stages of managing disability, organisations should codify disability policies and develop centres of expertise to focus on disability issues. While in the beginning it helps to have centralised units focusing on disability, proper management of people with disabilities should, in due course, become part of the ‘normal’ HR processes.

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## 3.12 Sodexo – Leader in quality of life services

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**“All layers of an organisation should engage in diversity. Diverse teams are more innovative, engaged, bring better responses to client needs and are a strong driver for performance”**

Annie Vandrotte, Diversity Project Manager

With nearly 428,000 employees worldwide, Sodexo is the worldwide leader in Quality of Life services. The Group delivers more than 100 different services in 80 countries – from catering and food services to facilities management; from employee incentive schemes to Personal & Home Services. In brief, Sodexo delivers all the services that make it possible to live and work together in a collective space, be it a company, a school, a hospital or a prison.

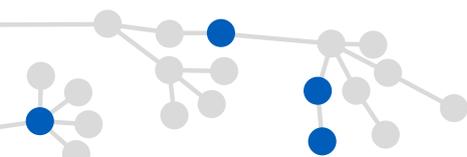
Sodexo’s belief that diversity and inclusion make it stronger, more innovative and better serving its 75 million consumers worldwide is shown in the Group’s diversity policy based on five pillars:

- gender, particularly expanding the role of women in operations and leadership positions;
- generations, combating discrimination based on age;
- cultures and origins;
- people with disabilities;
- sexual orientation.

The company’s journey into diversity and inclusion began in the United States in 2002 and in Europe in 2006, where the Group’s Diversity and Inclusion team was established. At all levels of the organization, Sodexo’s diversity and inclusion team (comprised of 60 members throughout the world) provides opportunities for dialogue, support, training, tools and sharing best practices.

With specific regard to people with disabilities, Sodexo’s DisAbility Voice is active in 20 countries and aims to expand to 80 countries where Sodexo operates before 2025. Members of the taskforce hold a webinar every two months that serves as a forum for discussion and exchange. Through these webinars, the issues encountered by people with disabilities at the company’s local workplaces are brought to light. For local sites experiencing similar issues, the forum serves as a way for knowledge and good practices to be shared. These knowledge-sharing opportunities between varying regions and countries are essential for disability inclusion at Sodexo to progress at the global level.

The ‘Sodexo DisAbility Voice’ was formed in 2011 with the goal of creating a culture that embraces and values the inclusion of people with disabilities. The Voice operates virtually through webinars in order to manage communication between the various locations that



are interested in disability inclusion. In order to accommodate those regions that are unable to participate as a result of unfavourable time differences, each session is recorded and made easily accessible. The implementation of these webinar proceedings has revealed to Sodexo the importance of providing local teams with the autonomy to develop their own disability strategies. This method is deemed preferable to enforcing a single way of going about workplace diversity because of the differences that are experienced within local contexts.

Sodexo identifies a number of elements that can help elicit a successful disability inclusion strategy. Firstly, Sodexo recognizes the importance of maintaining a comprehensive strategy in which action plans, results, and measurements are accounted for locally. These measurements are key for inducing progress and should consider both quantitative (Hiring, Promotion, Retention) and qualitative (Employee engagement, Diversity programs, HR initiatives) elements. If the CEO and other top level executives are engaged and committed to the overall strategy, it will allow for disability initiatives to be taken more seriously. Sodexo has its office of Diversity reporting directly to its CEO and recommends that other companies do the same. Although commitment from the top is valuable, Sodexo makes sure to engage employees at varying levels through the initiatives pursued by its global taskforce.

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### 3.13 Employers' Federation of Ceylon, Sri Lanka: Promoting social harmony through productive employment

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Since being formed in 1929, the Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC) has supported labour-relations for employers throughout Sri Lanka. Today, the federation comprises a membership of 600 companies and represents a workforce that is close to half a million employees. After founding its own Disability Network in 2001, the EFC has made important strides in promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities in Sri Lanka's labour market. The Network's vision is to end the marginalization of disabled persons through mainstream employment. As of 2012, the EFC has been collaborating with the ILO on the Local Empowerment through Economic Development (LEED) project focusing specifically on disability inclusion in the workplace.

Since the LEED project started, the EFC has organized a number of initiatives for people with disabilities to connect with potential employers. A series of workshops were hosted in northern Sri Lanka to engage employers in the disability inclusion agenda. A number of companies across manufacturing and retail industries have pledged support to the cause after participating in these workshops. Another initiative set up by the EFC is an online magazine that was launched in order to promote transparency in the communication of work opportunities among those supportive of people with disabilities. Additionally, a weekly newspaper column entitled *Diary of a Disabled Job Seeker* was formed to reveal the conflicts encountered by jobseekers with disabilities. The column has reportedly generated much discussion amongst disability organizations and employers regarding disability inclusion.

One successful initiative in 2013 was a workshop with participants from employers, DPOs and NGOs. The event started with knowledge-sharing sessions and continued with the employers conducting training sessions in job-seeking skills for people with disabilities. Techniques for resume-writing, interview preparation and the job application process were presented to attendees. The workshop was a success largely due to the participation of 'Employee Champions', employees with disabilities already working for the employers. Several of these Employee Champions shared authentic stories that proved there truly is a place for people with disabilities in the workplace.

Through this project, the EFC was able to learn about the barriers facing Sri Lankans with disabilities. For example, the EFC found that those with disabilities in Sri Lanka often hold the misconceived belief that they cannot contribute in the workplace. The effect of this misconception is twofold: not only does it deter many Sri Lankans with disabilities from entering the job market, but it also reinforces a negative mind-set that emphasizes 'disability' over 'ability'. The workshops conducted by the EFC and its various media platforms have been instrumental in the effort to

**“Being physically challenged should not mean being disqualified from mainstream society.”**

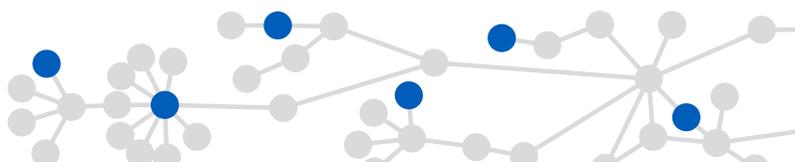
Mr. Shiham Ghouse, HR Executive, John Keells' Cinnamon & Chaaya Resorts

**“The workshops enable us to connect better with organizations and disabled individuals to be gainfully employed in the private sector.”**

G. Samuel Neshakumar, Cargills Group's Business Development Manager Northern R

**“I am really happy, because I thought others don't know that people with disabilities are facing problems when they try to find a job, but now I realize that EFC supports so many people. This workshop increased my confidence in finding a permanent job.”**

Mr. Puspakaran, physically impaired workshop participant



dispel this “disabled mindset”. An additional finding of the EFC was that jobseekers with disabilities tended to be unaware that they were eligible for jobs that were not advertised as disability-specific. This finding was substantiated in a study conducted by the EFC that found equal opportunity employers to have vacant positions for people with disabilities who were not applying.

With a better understanding of the forces preventing people with disabilities from becoming part of the labour market, the EFC is now better suited to help employers more effectively brand their status as companies that wish to be inclusive of people with disabilities. A key message expressed by the federation is the importance of scrapping traditional perceptions of disability through creative media platforms and advocacy through the testimonies of Employee Champions. It is these strategies that helped the EFC engage stakeholders in Sri Lanka to make impactful changes regarding disability inclusion in the workplace.

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### 3.14 SOFOFA, Chile: Encouraging responsible business practices

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SOFOFA (Federation of Chilean Industry) promotes social inclusion through labour inclusion. Founded in 1992, SOFOFA’s disability commission seeks to identify job opportunities for disabled people, and assist enterprises in the process of hiring people with disabilities.

**“It is important that the company explicitly states its intention to become an inclusive company in order to transcend the message to the entire organization.”**

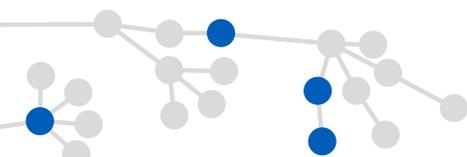
Anita Briones, Chairperson of SOFOFA’s Disability Commission

In 2012, SOFOFA put in place a “Business Strategy for labour inclusion of people with disabilities”. The desired outcome of the Strategy is the development of new and improved services offered by SOFOFA to its membership in the area of disabilities. To start the process, a survey was conducted to identify the main barriers faced by enterprises when hiring people with disabilities and to have concrete elements to design policies that would promote labour inclusion of people with disabilities.

The result of the survey also constituted a baseline analysis against which progress can be measured in the future. The main identified barriers were taken into account to develop the following five tools, in the form of publications, designed to support employers:

- (1) Making the business case for hiring people with disabilities. The results of the survey offered a compelling business case to hire people with disabilities and identifies the benefits for the company that decides to give a chance to diversity policies.
- (2) Step by step protocol for enterprises wishing to incorporate people with disabilities in their workforce. This protocol provides a roadmap on motivating employers in hiring and maintaining an employee with disabilities and promoting his or her personal growth. The protocol contains practical examples and success cases of employers in hiring persons with disabilities.
- (3) Employers’ Guide for an inclusive approach to prevention of occupational risks. This guide promotes the adoption of health and safety policies within enterprises, taking into account a diverse workforce, with a particular emphasis on labour inclusion of people with disabilities.
- (4) Employers’ Guide to legal incentives and government programs to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities. Too often small and medium enterprises are not aware of the legal advantages, grants, and benefits offered by the government to those companies willing to hire people with disabilities. In very simple terms, this guide takes the reader through the main incentives offered by the Chilean government and provides a step by step explanation as to how to access these benefits.
- (5) A Guide for people with disabilities looking for a job. This Guide was inspired by an ILO Guide produced in its regional office in Asia, and has been adapted to Chile. The Guide aims to encourage people with disabilities to seek productive and remunerated work.

These publications highlight the importance of developing skills of workers with disabilities to foster productivity and competitiveness of enterprises. They also highlight the many benefits of implementing a policy of diversity in the field of human resources. “SOFOFA has identified five simple steps to achieve a successful labour inclusion of people with disabilities, and we in SOFOFA are happy to support companies in this process. It is important



that the company explicitly states its intention to become an inclusive company in order to transcend the message to the entire organization”, says Anita Briones, Chairperson of SOFOFA’s Disability Commission

The guides also address the many myths and fears of companies related to the work performance of people with disabilities. The study showed that people with disabilities who were hired by the companies participating in the survey are as productive as any other person. There are many benefits to open up to diversity, such as attracting talent and innovation into the company operations.

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### 3.15 Qaderoon Business Disability Network, Saudi Arabia: Catalysing employers to be disability-inclusive

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The newly formed Qaderoon Business Disability Network launched earlier this year in March has already impacted the agenda on disability in the Saudi Arabian workplace. Partnering with the Kingdom’s Ministry of Labour, the Network has supported the development of an index to measure the ‘Disability Confidence’ of an organization. The term refers to an organization’s ability to effectively include people with disabilities into its workforce. An effective inclusion is dependent on several aspects affecting the organization and its people. In particular, the index created in collaboration with the Qaderoon Network considers eight elements: Commitment, Know-How, Recruitment, HR Systems, Products & Services, Communication, Premises, and Information Technology. This certification system is intended to strengthen employers’ decision-making in regard to disability issues and help them formulate action plans to improve their ‘confidence’ in employing people with disabilities.

“Together we are able”

Qaderoon’s Motto

Over the last couple of months, Qaderoon has conducted Phase 1 of the certification system with seven of its members. The Network is now planning to further pilot it with 11 new members before year end. While the certification system is in its pilot phase, it is the hope of Qaderoon’s members that it will ultimately become part of national legislation and mainstream disability inclusion in the Saudi Arabian labour market. Among the key lessons learned by the Qaderoon Network are the following:

- Support from senior leadership is crucial for disability inclusion to work. The Qaderoon Network realized that senior sponsorship for disability inclusion is needed before an organization’s employees can truly commit to a culture inclusive of people with disabilities.
- Every aspect of the business should be re-evaluated through the lens of a people with disabilities. In order to truly become disability confident, an organization should consider the specific barriers that may affect people with disabilities across varying business units, work groups, and local environments.
- Impacting the disability agenda requires private and public sector collaboration. The Qaderoon Network realized that communication between employers, governmental departments, and public institutions can make or break whether or not disability inclusion is taken seriously.

