



Policy brief



International
Labour
Organization

Making TVET and skills systems inclusive of persons with disabilities

This policy brief focuses on how mainstream Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and skills development systems can contribute to improving the labour market situation of persons with disabilities. By becoming more inclusive of trainees with disabilities in their programmes, TVET systems can enhance the productivity and earnings of disabled workers. Thereby TVET programmes become more effective in meeting their overall goal of connecting technical training to labour market needs. This brief outlines the steps involved in making these programmes accessible to persons with disabilities, thus enabling them to acquire skills and qualifications required in the labour market and improve their employment prospects. It examines different barriers to inclusion and how these can be overcome, building on good practice examples from around the world. It looks at how mainstream systems can benefit from alliances with workers' and employers' organizations, specialist agencies catering to persons with disabilities and organizations of persons with disabilities.

Untapped potential, limited opportunities

People with disabilities comprise 15 per cent of the global population and an estimated 785 million persons of working age. They represent a marginalized group in the labour market in all countries around the world, being far more likely than persons without disabilities to be unemployed, underemployed or economically inactive. Where they have participated in vocational training, it is often in segregated settings where courses are frequently not linked to labour market requirements or at a standard lower than that required by employers. And where they are employed, workers with disabilities are more likely to be in low-paid jobs with poor promotional prospects

and working conditions. Their labour market situation entails social and economic losses which have been estimated by the ILO to be between 3 and 7 per cent of GDP¹. Linked to this, in countries where disability benefit systems are in place, more and more people of working age rely on sickness and disability benefits as their main source of income, and public spending on these benefits has increased significantly. In countries where such benefits are not available or are sparse, those out of work often rely on the support of their families.

There is thus an urgent need to address the marginalization of people with disabilities in the labour market, and to take steps to reduce the significant social and economic cost this represents to individuals, communities, economies and society at large. Providing greater opportunities to develop skills and qualifications relevant to the local, regional and national labour markets by making TVET and skills systems disability-inclusive is an important part of this process.

Framework for Action

Skills development systems have dual objectives of supporting economic growth, and contributing to broader social objectives in the interests of society as a whole. These social objectives include expanding access to TVET and skills development opportunities for marginalized groups, such as persons with disabilities.

The growing international interest in TVET and skills systems has led to a wave of reform and investment in both the developed and developing world. The inclusion of vocational education and training as explicit outcomes in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) gives TVET and skills systems an unprecedented profile

¹ Backup, ILO 2009

on the international stage. The SDGs include a target of ensuring equal access to vocational training at all levels for persons with disabilities along with other vulnerable groups (Target 4.5).

The focus on disability-inclusive vocational training has been heightened by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), 2006. States are required to ensure that persons with disabilities can access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on equal basis with others (Art. 24), and to enable them to have effective access to technical and vocational guidance programmes, placement services and vocational and continuing training (Art. 27). The CRPD highlights the multiple discrimination faced by women and girls with disabilities and requires States to take all appropriate measures so that they can enjoy the rights and fundamental freedoms that it sets out, including the right to vocational training (Art. 6). The CRPD gives further impetus to the ILO's long-standing call for persons with disabilities to be included in general training and employment-related services.

These trends combine to present a unique opportunity for government, TVET decision-makers and social partners including organizations of persons with disabilities to address the barriers that people with disabilities face as steps are taken to reform TVET and skills systems.

To effectively promote the inclusion of men and women with disabilities in mainstream TVET and skills development programmes:

- an enabling policy or strategy should be put in place;
- mistaken assumptions about the abilities and capabilities of persons with disabilities should be challenged;
- buildings and transport should be made accessible;
- entry criteria, teaching methods, materials and evaluation methods should be reviewed and adapted;
- TVET workforce capacity to teach trainees with disabilities alongside non-disabled trainees should be strengthened;
- operational alliances should be formed with key partners;
- a system of on-going support to inclusion, including reasonable accommodation, should be developed;
- the effectiveness of the policy or strategy should be regularly monitored and reviewed; and
- resources should be allocated to make these changes possible.

The ILO has for many years called for people with disabilities to have access to training alongside non-disabled people. This is reflected in the ILO Vocational Rehabilitation (Disabled) Recommendation, 1955 (No. 99), and in the ILO Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159) that require competent authorities to provide for vocational training for persons with disabilities, using general services wherever possible and appropriate, with necessary adaptations. In 2008, the ILO Governing Body highlighted the importance of developing the skills of persons with disabilities to promote their access to the labour market, and placed a special emphasis on promoting their inclusion in mainstream training and employment promotion programmes.

Conclusions on Skills for Improved Productivity, Employment Growth and Development, International Labour Conference, 2008 Paras 66 and 71(c)

Developing an enabling national policy or strategy

Where it is not already in place, a national policy or strategy on disability inclusive skills development should be drawn up, based on the principles of equal opportunity and non-discrimination, and equality between men and women. This could take the form of a general policy or strategy that aims to cater to all individuals in the population (such as in Bangladesh), or a policy or strategy that seeks to promote access of all disadvantaged groups in the population (such as in South Africa), or a policy or strategy that focuses solely on including persons with disabilities (such as in Costa Rica).

The policy or strategy should be developed by the relevant government ministry in consultation with key stakeholders – other government ministries (including those responsible for education, employment, buildings and public transport), social partners and civil society, including representatives of persons with disabilities. It should acknowledge that disability is a cross-cutting theme, requiring collaborative action across different government portfolios to make disability inclusion a reality. It should provide for a range of different training options, including centre-based training as well as workplace learning, such as apprenticeships or other forms of on-the-job training.

The policy or strategy should focus on the key building blocks of skills systems². In doing so it should carry out an assessment of how the inclusion of men and women with disabilities can be supported in relation to the main operational areas which are considered below.

² ILO, 2010 G20 Training Strategy: A skilled workforce for strong, sustainable and balanced growth

Disability inclusion: what does it mean?

Broadly speaking, disability inclusion refers to promoting and ensuring the participation of people with disabilities in education, training and employment and all aspects of society and providing the necessary support and reasonable accommodations so that they can fully participate.

ILO Governing Body Paper on Disability Inclusion, GB.316/POL/2, 2012.

People with disabilities have varying needs when it comes to entering and successfully completing training courses, depending on the type of their disability and the educational opportunities they have had in mainstream or segregated schools. They often have low levels of education, with implications for the literacy and numeracy requirements of many skills programmes.

It is important that everyone working in a TVET centre - from managers and administrators to trainers to other staff - understands what is required for disability inclusion to work in practice for people with different types of disability and educational background.

General policy, mentioning persons with disabilities

In Bangladesh, the National Skills Development Policy (NSDP) of 2011 makes recommendations on disability inclusion. The NSDP was formulated by the national government with ILO advice as part of the Technical Vocational Education and Training Reform Project supported by the European Union. A National Strategy for Mainstreaming Disability in TVET institutes was developed by the National Skills Development Council (NSDC) with ILO support to give practical effect to the policy under this project, providing strategic direction and setting out an action plan and targets.

Bangladesh Skills for Employment and Productivity (B-SEP)

http://www.ilo.org/dhaka/Whatwedo/Projects/WCMS_243174/lang-en/index.htm

Anticipating skill needs

The process of identifying future skills requirements primarily involves gathering information through labour market research, consultation with employment services and social dialogue. When it comes to catering for trainees with disabilities, it is important to avoid the pitfall of stereotyped, low expectations of people with disabilities in general. While automation has in many cases eliminated their jobs, technological change offers new employment prospects for people with disabilities

- particularly developments in information technology, and also advances in assistive devices which enable them to live and work more independently than in the past. Account should be taken of opportunities which have emerged in the world of work, in consultation with private and public employers, trade unions, as well as employment services.

Policy for disadvantaged groups, including persons with disabilities

In South Africa, people with disabilities along with other historically disadvantaged groups are beneficiaries of the Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998, the Skills Development Levies Act of 1999 and the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act No. 4 of 2000, as well as the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, of 2015. The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) developed by the Department of Labour identifies the main areas to which income from the Skills Development Levy will be allocated. The NSDS is intended to transform education and training by improving the quality and quantity of training provided, ensure increased access to training and skills development opportunities and transform inequities linked to class, race, gender, age and disability.

ILO 2007 Strategies for Skills Acquisition and Work for People with Disabilities in Southern Africa.

Disability-specific policy

In Costa Rica, the National Plan for Vocational Integration of People with Disabilities adopted in 2012, aims to enable the acceleration of labour market inclusion of persons with disabilities by eliminating the most serious bottlenecks identified. One of its five main objectives is boosting the employability profile of people with disabilities. The Plan also aims to increase workplace opportunities for people with disabilities through the involvement of employers and strengthening job placement services.

National plan for vocational integration of people with disabilities in Costa Rica http://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?dn=FM11G_009212

Enabling the participation of social partners, including disabled people's organisations

A successful skills policy or strategy forms an important bridge to the world of work. Involving employer and worker representatives in developing this policy or strategy and in planning its implementation will help ensure that the training provided is of the type and

standard required in the labour market. It will also lead to opportunities for on-the-job training and work experience for trainees with disabilities as well as jobs on completion of training. Involving representatives of persons with disabilities will ensure that key disability issues are taken into account and that the policy or strategy reflects the steps required to bring about a realistic improvement in available opportunities.

Sectoral approaches

By taking a sectoral approach, focusing on the specific skill requirements of individual sectors of the economy and involving stakeholders at the sectoral level in addressing these requirements, a skills policy can effectively improve the quality and relevance of training and better respond to changing market conditions.

When it comes to training and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, certain sectors have been more open to receiving trainees with disabilities for workplace training opportunities and recruiting disabled graduates. The policy should be informed by a review of the national experience at sectoral level in this regard, paying particular attention to the situation of women with disabilities.

Labour market information and employment services

Information about current and future skills requirements is generated and disseminated by labour market information systems, which typically include a major role for Employment Services (ES). When it comes to training and employment of persons with disabilities, ES staff can play an important role prior to entry into a training programme, in carrying out vocational assessment of individual candidates to identify their capacities and potential, as well as their educational and career aspirations; identifying skills programmes and job opportunities suited to each individual's profile; and developing individualized plans for training. During and on completion of training, they can also play a central role in negotiating on-the-job training and work experience placements for disabled trainees, as well as job placements for graduates with disabilities. Employment statistics disaggregated by disability should be compiled, to provide an invaluable backdrop to the work carried out and make it possible to track progress in improving the employment outcomes of training programmes.

Ensuring the quality and relevance of training

The quality of TVET and skills development systems and the extent to which they respond to the requirements of the labour market depend on the number and qualifications of the teachers, trainers and managers; the content,

methods, facilities and materials of training; and the skills standards set. The national policy or strategy should provide for staff training and the regular upgrading of skills, including adequate training for trainers, instructors and teaching assistants to enable them to effectively train persons with disabilities alongside non-disabled persons. Financing should be available to ensure that the training institutions are in a position to review regularly and upgrade their curricula, materials and equipment to reflect new technologies and learning methods, which facilitate participation by people with different types of disabilities.

Increasing access to training

Equal opportunity for everyone to access vocational training and workplace learning is a key principle underlying modern skills development policies and strategies. Affirmative action measures are needed for some groups in the population to encourage them to benefit from available opportunities. In the case of persons with disabilities, reasonable accommodation and training allowances are the minimum requirements to enable them to take up and complete training courses, along with accessible TVET infrastructure. In the case of women with disabilities, further measures may be required to encourage them to attend training, particularly in countries where their opportunities to train for employment are limited for social and cultural reasons.

Gender equality

Skills development is central to the overall goal of promoting equal opportunity for women in employment. Skilled women are more likely to get decent jobs where they are treated equally. In the case of women with disabilities, who face multiple discrimination due to their gender and disability, the challenges are compounded by the fact that they are often poor. Thus, specific measures should be included in the national policy or strategy to encourage and support their participation in and successful completion of training courses such as by setting targets for increasing the number of women with disabilities enrolled in TVET and skills development programmes; raising awareness of parents, community groups, and others about the importance of vocational training for women with disabilities; and encouraging enrolment by providing facilities to meet their accommodation and other support requirements.

Financing training

Whilst governments often pay for the bulk of training costs, in some cases, employers pay for training directly through grants to training centres or indirectly through training levies; and frequently, individuals pay fees to

attend courses. Most TVET and skills systems draw on funding from each of these sources recognizing that benefits are entailed for individuals, enterprises and society. National training funds could be used to target the participation of disadvantaged groups, including people with disabilities, such as in Australia and Malaysia. Alternatively, disability-specific schemes can be introduced, as in Canada, India and New Zealand.

In Australia, the Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Programme provides a range of assistance to support apprentices with disabilities, including Disabled Australian Apprentice Wage Support which is paid to employers, and assistance for tutorial, interpreter and mentor services for apprentices.

<https://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/programs/support-australian-apprentices-disability>

In Malaysia, under the OKU Talent Enhancement Programme (OTEP Scheme) for Persons with Disabilities, of the National Human Resource Development Fund, employers may obtain 100% financial assistance to send employees with disabilities for training in selected training programmes.

<http://www.hrdf.com.my>

The Government of Canada provides financial assistance in the form of grants to students with permanent disabilities to help cover the costs of accommodation, tuition, books, and of exceptional education-related costs such as tutors, oral or sign interpreters, attendant care for studies, note takers, readers and braille. The Canada Student Loans Program offers loan forgiveness for qualifying borrowers who have a severe permanent disability. The Disability Supports Deduction provides tax relief for the cost of disability supports incurred for the purposes of education, such as sign language interpretation and talking textbooks.

Report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2014, para 78.

In India, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, Art 19, states that the Government shall formulate schemes and programmes including the provision of loans at concessional rates to facilitate and support employment of persons with disabilities, including for vocational training; and that these shall provide for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all mainstream formal and non-formal vocational and skill training schemes and programmes.

<http://www.disabilityaffairs.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/RPWD%20ACT%202016.pdf>

In the case of people with disabilities who often have limited disposable income and live in poverty, the national policy or strategy should provide for subsidies, scholarships or other measures, including complete exemption from fee payment to ensure that financial barriers do not prevent persons with disabilities from attending training courses. Financing provisions should also be made for capacity building in the TVET system, for physical improvements to buildings, transport and accommodation facilities, subsidies for high cost reasonable accommodation and other measures to promote accessibility and inclusion of which allowances and subsidies for disabled people are only one part.

Monitoring and assessing policy performance

Provision should be made for monitoring, periodic review and revision of the policy or strategy, to inform adjustments to programmes and planning and to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness. Disability inclusion should be introduced as a performance criterion for regular performance appraisal of TVET staff, including administrators and instructors. The focus should centre on the participation of people with disabilities in the training programmes and on the outcomes achieved.

Planning for implementation

An implementation plan, roadmap or action plan will be required to ensure the national policy or strategy actually makes the TVET and skills development system disability inclusive. At the level of institutions, this should include steps to address the main barriers to inclusion that may be in place. These may be physical barriers preventing persons with disabilities from getting to and entering the centre, moving around once inside and using the training equipment. They may comprise procedural barriers embedded in rules and regulations. They may include communication and information barriers such as forms of training, training materials and approaches that are not accessible to people with different kinds of disabilities. They may be attitudinal barriers linked to the negative attitudes and stereotypes amongst staff and other students that often abound.

A national implementation plan should also encourage the development of action plans at the level of institutions to give effect to the national policy or strategy. These plans should be drawn up by training institutions in consultation with their key stakeholders.

In Ethiopia, the Federal TVET agency prepared national guidelines for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in TVET, with support from the ILO and the Ethiopian Centre for Disability and Development (ECDD.) Trainees with disabilities are now admitted to 35 skills training centres in all regions in Ethiopia. The ECDD has supported the capacity building of 5 selected TVET institutions in Amhara and Tigray regions, with ILO/Irish Aid support. ECDD is also collaborating with other partners to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in TVET and foster stronger links between TVET agencies and the labour market.

Irish Aid – ILO Partnership Programme 2012 – 15. Progress report 2014. ILO 2015.

<http://www.ecdd-ethiopia.org/our-work.html>

In Costa Rica, the inclusive employment programme *Empléate Inclusivo* assists persons with disabilities who are seeking employment through job counselling services, training options and job placement support. The programme has been incorporated into the government's National Employment and Production Strategy and its 2015–2018 National Development Plan. It includes people with disabilities in technical training courses in skills areas that are in high demand on the labour market. A coordination protocol was also developed between the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the National Training Institute (INA) and the Ministry of Public Education on the labour inclusion of persons with disabilities, aiming to enable greater access to inclusive education and training as well as a smoother transition to work for persons with disabilities throughout the country

Connections. Building Partnerships for Disability Rights, An overview of results from the first UNPRPD Funding Round. UNDP 2016

<http://global-health.tcd.ie/assets/doc/UNPRPD%20REPORT-CONNECTIONS%202016.pdf>

Raising disability awareness

Awareness raising is an important step on the path to disability inclusive TVET and skills development, since negative attitudes, stereotypes and mistaken assumptions often form the most significant – and least apparent – barriers that people with disabilities face. Low expectations about their capacities contribute to the barriers they face in accessing mainstream skills development programmes. In many developing countries, for example, it is widely assumed that people with disabilities will earn a livelihood, if at all, in the informal economy. Consequently, TVET and skills development institutions either do not admit trainees with disabilities at all or admit them only to

courses involving low-level skills. Such low expectations and mistaken assumptions can also have a negative impact on the self-esteem and work aspirations of people with disabilities themselves.

Awareness training should be provided for policymakers and managers, administrators, teachers, instructors and other staff of training centres. Measures should also be undertaken to raise the awareness among all trainees to what is involved in effective inclusion, so that misunderstandings about perceived special treatment and unfairness are avoided.

In Zambia, under an ILO project that aimed to foster TVET learning environments inclusive of persons with disabilities, disability awareness training was organized for managers, instructors, teachers and other training and support staff of selected training colleges. The approach used gave participants the opportunity to explore how people are disabled by society's barriers and attitudes and to identify ways in which these barriers can be overcome and attitudes can be positively influenced by the organization or group. By building on their existing knowledge and skills, the ILO enabled participants to identify action which they could take on their own initiative to make the colleges more inclusive.

Irish Aid – ILO Partnership Programme 2012 – 15. Progress report 2014. ILO 2015.

Buildings and transport

To identify physical barriers that make it difficult for people with disabilities to take part in mainstream vocational training courses, an accessibility audit of the building/s and grounds needs to be undertaken, based on international standards. Where accommodation and transport are provided to trainees, these should also be audited. Action to remove the barriers may involve structural work or other adaptations requiring building renovation. Other steps may be simpler to take, for example by reorganizing layouts and furniture or by installing ramps. Some changes may involve significant costs while many can be introduced at minimal cost and could be undertaken internally, depending on what is involved.

Review of rules, materials and methodologies from a disability perspective

Entry criteria

The criteria for admitting training candidates should be reviewed to ensure that these do not inadvertently discriminate against candidates with disabilities, due to the

educational requirements laid down or other requirements such as work experience. Exceptions to these requirements may be granted, such as in cases where a quota obligation has been introduced concerning the percentage of trainees with disabilities that skills development institutions are required to have. For example, the candidates' ability to meet the functional literacy and numeracy requirements of training programmes could be assessed, in place of educational level criteria. Where candidates are required to pass an entry test, the tests should be reviewed and if necessary adapted, to ensure that people with certain types of disability are not at a disadvantage and that their disability-related needs are met. For example, blind persons could be permitted to answer test questions orally, rather than in written form, if needed.

In Costa Rica, with regard to accessibility of physical spaces, efforts have been concentrated on building ramps, adapting sanitary facilities and expanding entryways, and introducing auditory and visual alert systems to respond to emergencies. Lifts to provide access to the National Distance University (UNED) and the Costa Rican Technical Institute (ITCR) were also installed.

Costa Rica's first State report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2011, para 22.

In Bangladesh A pilot project to implement the recommendations of the National Strategy for mainstreaming disability in TVET institutes was carried out by the Department of Technical Education (DTE), including a five per cent admission quota for persons with disabilities and the reflection of disability inclusion in its annual plan, budget and procurement process, as well as in its performance appraisal and monitoring system. DTE also developed guidelines for disability inclusion in TVET Institutes and provided support in training 140 vice principals.

TVET Reform: Design an inclusive skills development programme ILO Country Office for Bangladesh. – Dhaka, 2012; ILO and disability inclusion, GED / PARDEV September 2015

Similar entry quotas or equity targets are in place in countries such as Brazil and South Africa.

Plano Nacional dos Direitos da Pessoa com Deficiência – Viver sem Limite <http://www.pessoacomdeficiencia.gov.br/app/viver-sem-limite>

South Africa report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2014 Para 308

Training courses and materials

A review of the training courses and related materials from a disability perspective should be undertaken or commissioned. This will enable decision-makers to become aware of the curriculum changes required, and adaptations needed to training materials, tools and equipment to enable trainees with disabilities to use them.

Assessment

The methods of assessing and evaluating the performance of learners should be examined from a disability perspective and adapted to ensure that trainees with disabilities are not inadvertently prevented from demonstrating their capacity through the approaches used.

Building the capacity of the TVET workforce

Training courses for trainers and assessors should contain a module relating to disability. The focus should be on inclusive delivery and assessment methodologies, the use of an individualised approach as well as disability etiquette and disability-sensitive communication. This should be provided to existing trainers and instructors as part of continuing/refresher training and included in the initial training programme for new trainers and instructors.

In Brazil, the National Service for Industrial Training (SENAI) has a Programme of Inclusive Action that facilitates access for people with disabilities to SENAI courses. It provides reference materials on inclusive professional education; dictionaries of Brazilian sign language with specific terms in Electronic and other industrial areas as well as E-learning courses about inclusion for teachers.

www.businessanddisability.org

In India, the Skills Council for Persons with Disability (SCPwD) carries out accreditation of training centres throughout the country, including those run by non-governmental organizations and organizes training for trainers. The SCPwD has prepared a manual for trainers on the training needs of persons with different disabilities, which is aligned with UK standards. <http://www.scpwd.in>

In Zambia, a course on inclusive training for teachers of technical vocational colleges was developed to be used at the national level for teachers' continued education, and a unit on inclusive skills training was developed and inserted in the revised national teachers training curriculum for vocational skills teachers.

Irish Aid – ILO Partnership Programme 2012 – 15. Progress report 2014. ILO 2015.

Building alliances with key stakeholders

TVET and skills development systems can benefit from collaboration with other services, organizations and agencies whose mandates and roles are linked to promoting the employability and employment of persons with disabilities. Schools catering to persons with disabilities can play an active role in encouraging students with disabilities to apply for vocational training courses, and provide career guidance to enable them to identify the courses which suit their interests and abilities. Dedicated training centres for people with disabilities can be requested to provide advice on good practices and support as needed, serving as knowledge hubs for TVET centres. Employment services also play a significant role in career guidance and referral of applicants with disabilities to training agencies. Organizations of persons with disabilities can also play a role in encouraging candidates with disabilities to apply and can advise on disability inclusion.

Alliances with public and private sector employers and employers' organizations as well as with employment services can make TVET agencies more effective in offering courses which are linked to labour market requirements, in arranging on-the-job training, apprenticeships, work experience and jobs for graduates.

In India, the Skills Council for Persons with Disability which involves the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), focuses on setting standards and arranging industry relevant skill training for persons with disabilities and provides employers of persons with disabilities with direct influence on training policy.

<http://www.scpwd.in>

In Sri Lanka, the Employers' Network on Disability, set up in 2000 by the Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC), aims to increase training and employment opportunities for people with disabilities within the Sri Lankan business community. The EFC works with the Ministry of Labour Relations and Manpower to provide advice and facilitate educational development of persons with disabilities, so that job-seekers with disabilities acquire skills that match the needs of employers.

Disability in the Workplace: Employers' Organizations and Business Networks ILO 2011

In Zambia, two pilot colleges have strengthened capacity in reaching out to special schools for students with disabilities for the purpose of encouraging enrolment in mainstream vocational skills training. The ILO provided initial technical support and guidance for the two colleges in approaching special schools through jointly arranging for sensitization and information sessions at special schools.

Irish Aid – ILO Partnership Programme 2012 – 15. Progress report 2014. ILO 2015.

On-going support to inclusion

Ensuring that people with disabilities complete training effectively and obtain recognised qualifications will be a key challenge. This is where the support services come into play, to resolve problems which may arise on entering, undertaking and completing a skills development course. For example, people with disabilities may feel excluded or harassed, or they may require some adaptation or adjustment that would make the difference between completing the course and dropping out. Such problems can be solved in a timely way if a disability support service is available in the TVET centre or locally, or if a mentoring system is in place. These support services can also be availed of by trainers and instructors.

In Costa Rica, the National Training Institute (INA) has a general inclusion policy which provides for specific support for trainees with disabilities by the INA's Disability Coordination Service (Servicio de Coordinación sobre Discapacidad (SECODI)).

<http://www.ina.ac.cr/>

In New South Wales, Australia, itinerant support teachers, with specialist expertise in areas such as hearing and/or vision impairment, early intervention, autism and behavioural disorders, can be provided to assist students with disabilities and their class teachers. While this approach focuses mainly on schools, it could serve as a useful model for TVET and skills development colleges.

Reports to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=AUS&Lang=EN

Providing reasonable accommodation

To enable them to participate in and complete programmes on an equal basis with others, people with disabilities may require reasonable accommodation. Depending on the type of disability, this may take the form of technical aids, information in formats different from standard print ('alternative formats'), adaptations to training and assessment materials and equipment or flexibility in approaches used, such as rearranging space, so persons in wheelchairs may engage in an activity with others, or allocation of more time to complete tasks.

What is reasonable accommodation?

Reasonable accommodation is an individualized adjustment to the environment in response to the specific requirements of a person with a disability. In the case of TVET and skills development programmes, while accessibility entails taking general measures in anticipation of the needs of a range of trainees or instructors with disabilities, reasonable accommodation is an individualized measure, taken in response to an individual requirement that will accompany the individual for the duration of their time in the training centre.

Promoting diversity and inclusion through workplace adjustments: A practical guide. ILO, 2016.

In Australia, monitoring of the effectiveness of plans to promote the mainstreaming of people with disabilities in TVET has led to revisions in the approach taken, from a disability-specific to a more generic approach to tackling disadvantage. The most recent policy document, Equity Blueprint 2011-2016, outlines a series of reforms recommended so that the vocational education and training (VET) sector can support learners who experience disadvantage, including those with disabilities.

Equity Blueprint 2011 – 2016. Creating Futures: Achieving Potential through VET, NVEAC 2011

https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2012/national_disability_strategy_2010_2020.pdf

The requirement to provide reasonable accommodation is found in many non-discrimination laws, and the failure to provide this is considered a form of discrimination, as in the CRPD. TVET and skills development centres should make provision for reasonable accommodation in the implementation plans drawn up and allocate resources in their annual budgets to cover any costs involved. In identifying what reasonable accommodation is required, individuals with disabilities should be directly consulted, as they are often familiar with the adaptations and assistive devices that meet their needs.

Monitoring

Periodic monitoring and evaluation of policy impact will provide valuable information on whether the policy or strategies and the related implementation and action plans are resulting in increased admission of persons with disabilities into training programmes, satisfactory completion rates and good employment outcomes. Tracer studies will provide useful follow up information and general evaluation reports will highlight what is working well in the policy or strategy, and which elements need review. The national policy or strategy should provide for this process of regular review and assessment, and financial resources should be made available for this.

Allocating resources

Drawing on the funding arrangements put in place in the national plan or strategy, training centres will need to allocate funds to cover any additional costs that may be incurred in making the institutions accessible, such as for adaptations to training centre buildings, training costs, and also the cost of transport and accommodation as well as training allowances to compensate for income foregone. These measures can be decisive in motivating people with disabilities, and ensuring their effective, sustained participation in a training programme.

Summary

Women and men with disabilities make a valuable contribution in workplaces and to the national economy if they have the skills required for jobs suited to their interests and capacities. At present, in many countries, they have limited access to mainstream TVET and skills programmes, and if they attend vocational training programmes, it is mainly in segregated centres catering only to persons with disabilities, where the type and level of training available provide poor employment or self-employment prospects.

The trend to increase opportunities in the mainstream TVET and skills systems for persons with disabilities has gained momentum in recent years, with the entry into force of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals 2015 – 2030, which include a target on inclusive vocational training. These international instruments add momentum to the ILO's enduring commitment to the inclusion of men and women with disabilities alongside non-disabled people in general vocational training and employment-related services.

Some countries have introduced general or disability-specific laws and a national policy or strategy to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in mainstream vocational training programmes which have been successful, but key to that success is ongoing effort to implement these policy commitments through implementation plans funded in some cases by national governments and in other cases with international technical cooperation support. The experience of the countries documented in this brief yields valuable examples of what can be done to make a disability-inclusive approach to TVET and skills development work effectively in practice and deliver better employment outcomes for persons with disabilities, to the benefit of society as a whole.

Key ILO resources

- . International Labour Office, 2016. Promoting diversity and inclusion through workplace adjustments: a practical guide. http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/equality-and-discrimination/WCMS_536630/lang--en/index.htm
- . 2015 Decent work for people with disabilities: promoting rights in the global development agenda. http://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_430935/lang--en/index.htm
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For more information on links between education and training and productive and decent work, visit the **Global Public–Private Knowledge Sharing Platform on Skills for Employment**, initiated by the ILO and benefiting from the support and collaboration of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Bank.

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