



Inclusion – Improving Employment Perspectives for Persons with Disabilities



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Abbreviations	
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
BMZ	Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung)
CRP	Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed
ELMA	Employment and Labour Market Analysis
DC	Development Cooperation
ILO	International Labour Organization
LN0B	Leave No One Behind
n.d	no date
NEET	Not in Employment, Education and Training
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NTA	Namibia Training Authority
OPD	Organisations of Persons with Disabilities
PwD	Persons with Disabilities
RtW	Return-to-Work
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPP	Social Protection Programme
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
VN	United Nations
WG	Washington Group
VTC	Vocational Training Centres

Inclusion – Improving Employment Perspectives for Persons with Disabilities

- Persons with disabilities make up an estimated one billion or 15 % of the world's population. Of these, about 80 % are of working age. Employment rates for persons with disabilities are significantly lower than for persons without disabilities: 36 % compared to 60 % for persons without disabilities.
- When working, persons with disabilities may disproportionately face precarious situations and earn lower incomes. This may be reinforced by additional barriers to labour market integration due to age, gender, migrant or refugee status, etc., putting women and other disadvantaged groups with disabilities at the highest risk of marginalisation.
- Challenges to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market and in education and training exist at several levels. These commonly include (i) macro-level barriers such as discrimination and disincentives to work; (ii) barriers in the direct environment, such as physical and communication barriers as well as negative attitudes; and (iii) individual level challenges such as limited skills and low self-esteem.
- The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Article 27) explicitly addresses the right to work and employment. Similarly, the Sustainable Development Goals and their „Leave No One Behind“ principle prioritise the inclusion of persons with disabilities in education and working life. German development efforts are committed to systematically embedding the issue of inclusion of persons with disabilities.
- The integrated approach to employment promotion in German development cooperation, with its key components (policy framework, supply-side, demand and matching), can guide an appropriate mix of interventions to create an open, inclusive labour market as well as skills and training development. Such interventions should be guided by proper diagnosis of the main barriers in the local context and be complemented by institutional capacity building on disability inclusion.
- However, inclusion of persons with disabilities does not happen automatically but requires conscious efforts. Successful design, implementation, and monitoring of integrated employment promotion requires involvement at all levels by self-representative organisations of persons with disabilities, experts with disabilities, and civil society organisations that promote the interests of people with disabilities. At the same time necessary financial and personal resources have to be made available in order to do so.

Persons with disabilities and the labour market

Some facts about disability and work

Persons with disabilities make up an estimated one billion or 15 % of the world's population. About 80 % are of working age (cf. ILO 2020). They **face a wide variety of barriers** in accessing decent work, including physical and structural barriers in the workplace and a high level of discrimination in regard to their ability to work, discouraging them from being economically active. Correspondingly, **employment rates for persons with disabilities**

aged 15 years and older **are significantly lower** than for persons without disabilities (an average of 36 % compared to 60 % for persons without disabilities) (cf. UN, 2018a).¹ Employment rates are even lower for women. The gap between women and men with disabilities varies between 6 percentage points in Europe and 26 percentage points in Central and Southern Asia (ibid). Correspondingly, the share of youth not in employment, education, and training (NEET) and unemployment is high. Persons with disabilities are overrepresented in the NEET-group, e.g. in India the NEET rate for young persons with disabilities is an average of 23 %, 24.7 % for young men and 21.1 % for young women.

¹ In the developing world this ranges from 25 % in the Middle East and North Africa, 28 % in Central and Southern Asia, 34 % in sub-Saharan Africa, 31 % in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 36 % in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (cf. UN 2018a).

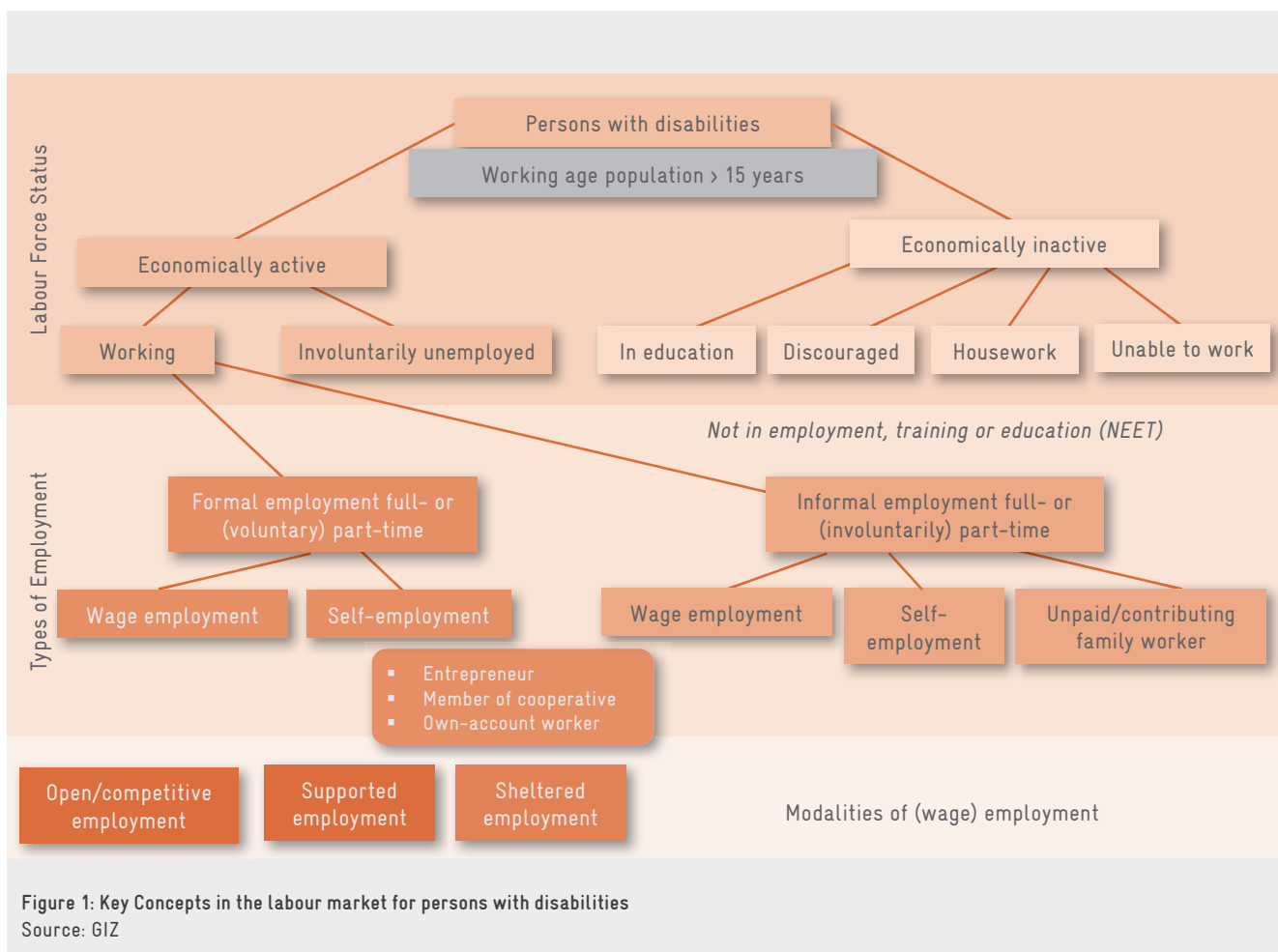


Figure 1: Key Concepts in the labour market for persons with disabilities
Source: GIZ

Persons with disabilities actively participating in the labour market may work as an employee for a wage or salary for an employer (cf. Figure 1). Or, they may be self-employed, run their own business, be a member of a cooperative or an own-account worker. This can take place in the formal or informal sector of the economy.² Due to the fact that formal employment is scarce in most developing countries, it is not astonishing that many persons with disabilities are working in **the informal economy**. This includes small-scale agriculture, petty trading, home-based enterprises or small businesses employing a few workers. Often, persons with disabilities are limited to **part-time employment** because the full-time employment does not give them the proper time to prepare for work or to travel to and from work due to the lack of accessible transportation.

Even when working, persons with disabilities disproportionately face **precarious situations** and earn lower incomes. Women and girls with disabilities experience more significant challenges to access education, training, employment and economic opportunities, as well as social interaction (cf. UN 2018, UN CRPD 2016). Compared to their male peers, women are more likely to end up in vulnerable employment, such as in unpaid care, domestic work or as a contributing family worker. The **intersection of gender, age, migrant status**, etc. with disabilities is putting women and other disadvantaged groups with disability at the highest risk of marginalisation.

Disability is both a cause and **a consequence of poverty**. Poor people are more likely to acquire a disability because they often lack access to good nutrition, health care and sanitation as well as to safe living and working conditions (cf. Handicap International 2016). Whereas persons with disabilities face high poverty rates even when they are employed (cf. CBM 2016), they are also more likely to stay trapped in poverty due to limited opportunities for education and employment.

Definition and models of disability

The word “disability” is complex and contested. And the notion has changed and evolved over the past decades and differs between countries, cultures and social groups. The definition of **disability directly influences the strategies and interventions** created to promote employment of people with disabilities. Hence, it is critical to understand and to differentiate between the most common definitions and models. There are three dominant models³ :

- The **traditional model** is the historically dominant model in the formulation and operationalizing of disability policy, and it is still used within some contexts. There are two sub-groups that together comprise the traditional model:
 - The **charity model** is a compassion-based approach in which people with disabilities are perceived as “victims”, dependent, and socially inferior.
 - The **medical model** defines disability as an individual health problem, illness, or impairment. Through this paradigm, social exclusion is seen as the result of limitations imposed by the impairments rather than as a result of barriers in the environment, and can limit inclusion of people with disabilities into society.
- The **social model** defines disability as a consequence of environmental, social, economic, and attitudinal barriers that prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in society. The social model differs from the medical model because people are viewed as being disabled by society rather than by their bodies..
- The **interactive social** model benefits from the development of both the medical and social models. Disability is not considered a characteristic of the person, but rather the result of interaction between the person and his/her environment.

2 In the developing world this ranges from 25 % in the Middle East and North Africa, 28 % in Central and Southern Asia, 34 % in sub-Saharan Africa, 31 % in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 36 % in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (cf. UN 2018a).

3 Cf. Handicap International 2016, CBM 2017)

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) stresses the interactive social model of disability. It underlines that persons with disabilities have rights and that government institutions and public service providers must support their empowerment to fulfil these rights (cf. UN 2010). Accordingly, the definition is: *“Persons with disabilities include those who have longterm physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”* (Art. 1, UN CRPD, UN 2016).

Key concepts in the labour market for persons with disabilities

The labour market is usually considered to be open and competitive. However, this does not really apply to persons with disabilities. Again, there are three different concepts⁴:

- An **exclusionary labour market** denies persons with disabilities the right to work. The formal mainstream labour market solely grants access to those who are deemed able to work. There is no provision of a special sheltered labour market.
- A **segregated labour market** describes the coexistence of two separate labour markets within an economy. Persons who are labelled ‘fit for work’ are participating in the open labour market. All other persons labelled ‘unfit’ – mainly persons with disabilities – are sent to a special sheltered labour market which is of no or little relevance for the economy. These labour markets are usually not interlinked and transmissible/permeable.
- An **inclusive labour market** embraces diversity and accommodates all persons by reducing and removing barriers to access, participation, and achievement in the labour market and social life. Employers and service providers recognise that human beings are diverse and that they need different forms of instructions and support to perform well. Instead of requiring persons with disabilities to adapt, employers and service providers are the ones who adapt (receiving assistance as needed) by providing specific support and mainstreaming disabilityinclusive attitudes and practices within their organisations.

Persons with disabilities should enjoy equality of opportunity and treatment with respect to access to, retention of and advancement in employment which, wherever possible, corresponds to their own choice and takes account of their individual suitability for such work (cf. UN 2006, ILO Recommendation 168). Such employment includes jobs in the competitive labour market which, again subject to individual suitability, are open to persons without disabilities (cf. above). For persons with disabilities for whom, for reasons of choice and/or suitability, open employment may not be appropriate, alternative forms of employment of a supported or sheltered nature could be provided (cf. ILO 2015, p. 63 ff.):

- **Supported employment:** Supported employment can be an alternative to traditional rehabilitation programmes for persons with severe disabilities. Paid work in integrated work settings is possible with temporary or ongoing support services such as job coaching or personal and work assistance combined with reasonable accommodation of the workplace.⁵
- **Sheltered employment:** While the objective should always be the employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market, for some such a form of employment may not be a practical option, either temporarily or in the long term. If regular employment is not possible due to the disability and despite support services, a sheltered employment form can be considered. This approach is closely linked to the abovementioned charity model. Nevertheless, the ultimate goal of integration into the general labour market remains.

There are numerous variations of these options across countries, depending on factors such as tradition and culture, economic, social and labour market conditions, social welfare benefits systems and the availability of trained personnel. Also, the choice of options is influenced by stakeholders, including Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPD).

⁵ An example of a new mechanism of supported employment can be watched in more detail in a video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=RFSZukNn2WE>) by the GIZ project „Economic Policy Advice to the Moldovan Government“. This project is funded by the Governments of Germany and Switzerland, provides support to the Government in implementing various mechanisms to facilitate the employment of people with disabilities.

Rationale for the inclusion of persons with disability in the labour market

Incomegenerating activities for people with disabilities, whether of an entrepreneurial nature or formal wage employment, are the best ways to graduate out of poverty and meet basic needs. The inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market is important from an economic standpoint. Several studies have shown that the exclusion of persons with disabilities from the workforce can reduce economic growth by 3-7 % of gross domestic product (GDP) (cf. Backup 2009). While initial government investments are needed (e.g. for inclusive education, vocational training, skills development, rehabilitation measures), not working towards inclusion carries far higher costs, for example related to healthcare expenditures and social assistance (cf. Banks & Polack 2014). Similarly, firms can also benefit from accommodating persons with disabilities and having a diverse workforce, for instance through greater job retention rates (ibid).

Besides this obvious economic function, it has also a social function: Work gives a person a sense of standing in relation to society, community and family by improving social status. Work also has a psychological function that is related to self-esteem and capacity to socialise with other people (cf. Handicap International 2016). All of which it is closely related to human dignity and rights.

The international normative framework to inclusive employment

The guiding principles of “leaving no one behind” (LNOB) of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** (SDGs) is committed to reaching the furthest behind first. Some of the goals explicitly address inclusion: SDG 4 concerns inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities and SDG target 8.5 aims to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value (cf. UN 2015).



Mahfuzur Rahman is blind and needs a screen reader software for his work in the administration of a textile factory in Bangladesh.

The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** (UN CRPD): It has been ratified by 181 out of 190 countries and territories by 2020 (cf. UN, 2006). Article 27 concerning work and employment stipulates that persons with disabilities have the right to equal pay, safe and healthy working conditions, access to technical and vocational education and training (TVET), career advancement opportunities, reasonable accommodation at the workplace and access to the formal labour market (cf. UN 2006).

Since many years, equality of opportunity and equality between men and women with disabilities are principles that are also present in **ILO Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of (Disabled persons) Convention** (No. 159, 1983). This convention, accompanied by the ILO Employment Policy (Supplementary Provisions) Recommendation (No. 168, 1984), requires that Member States formulate, implement and periodically review a national policy on vocational rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities.

The German approach to inclusion of persons with disabilities

The **German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development** (cf. BMZ 2019) published a **strategy paper** taking a human rightsbased approach to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in German development cooperation (German DC). UNCRD and the 2030 Agenda including the LNOB principle serve as an international frame of reference for BMZ. The document establishes disability inclusion as a binding, universal and cross-sectoral concept for all policy areas and policy instruments. The Ministry has developed a quality criterion „Human Rights, Gender Equality and Inclusion“ to be

used as a guiding principle for a value based, sustainable and forward-looking development cooperation. There is a focus on intersectionality and discrimination particularly of women and girls with disability.

BMZ development policy and GIZ interventions follow an interactive social model, promoting the participation of persons with disabilities in TVET and in an inclusive labour market (cf. BMZ 2019; GIZ 2018a). German DC applies a **twin-track approach**:⁶

- **Track 1** focuses on **disability mainstreaming** by changing policies, practices and attitudes to reduce barriers to participation. “*Mainstreaming*” of disability refers to systematically including disability related issues in an organisation and general policies or programmes, such as poverty reduction strategies, education and training, and employment interventions.
- **Track 2** provides **specific measures to empower persons** with disabilities and to address their specific needs and disadvantages. For instance, this can include reasonable schooling/training and workplace accommodation, assistive devices, flexibility in work schedules, etc.

Both approaches are interlinked and complementary. Against the background of the interactive social model of disability and the twin-track approach, Germany’s **integrated approach to employment promotion**⁷ provides the basis for mainstreaming disability across its portfolio and addressing the barriers to labour market inclusion at the macro-, meso-, and micro-level (cf. GIZ 2018a). It also provides guidance for tailor-made disability-sensitive interventions. The integrated employment approach features four components: a conducive policy framework, the supply-side component, the demand-side component, and matching (Figure 2).

⁶ Cf. also UN 2010, CMB 2017, ILO 2020b.

⁷ The German Integrated Approach to Employment Promotion (IAEP) (cf. Handbook module “Achieving More Effective Employment Promotion through the Integrated Approach”) is not to be confused with the concept of “integrating persons with disabilities into the mainstream labour market”. The integrated employment approach seeks to develop an inclusive labour market. The work ‘integrated’ in this context refers to a bundle of interventions to reach this goal.

Promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in employment

Inclusion of persons with disabilities does not happen automatically but **requires conscious efforts**. According to the guiding principle “*Nothing about us, without us!*” coined by the international movement of persons with disabilities experts with disabilities should increasingly be employed in bilateral and multilateral development cooperation (cf. BMZ 2019).

Given the diversity of persons with disabilities (depending on the type of impairment and socio-demographic characteristics), as well as potential barriers at various levels, a good understanding of the needs and the local environment is key. Indeed, there is no one-size-fits-all approach for labour market inclusion of persons with disabilities and development cooperation interventions must be grounded in the local context.

Challenges to labour market inclusion for persons with disabilities

With a view to **framework conditions** (macro level) there are distinct barriers to labour market inclusion, such as (i) discriminatory policies, (ii) lack of disability-disaggregated data and (iii) disincentives to work (cf. Shenoy 2011).

The **intermediate environment** (meso-level) of persons with disabilities also presents a range of barriers (cf. CBM 2016; GIZ 2018a; GIZ 2019a), such as (i) physical and communication barriers, (ii) attitudinal barriers (cf. Rohwerder 2019) and (iii) a lack of participation by OPDs.

Finally, at an **individual level** (micro-level) challenges include such as lack of skills and low self-esteem.

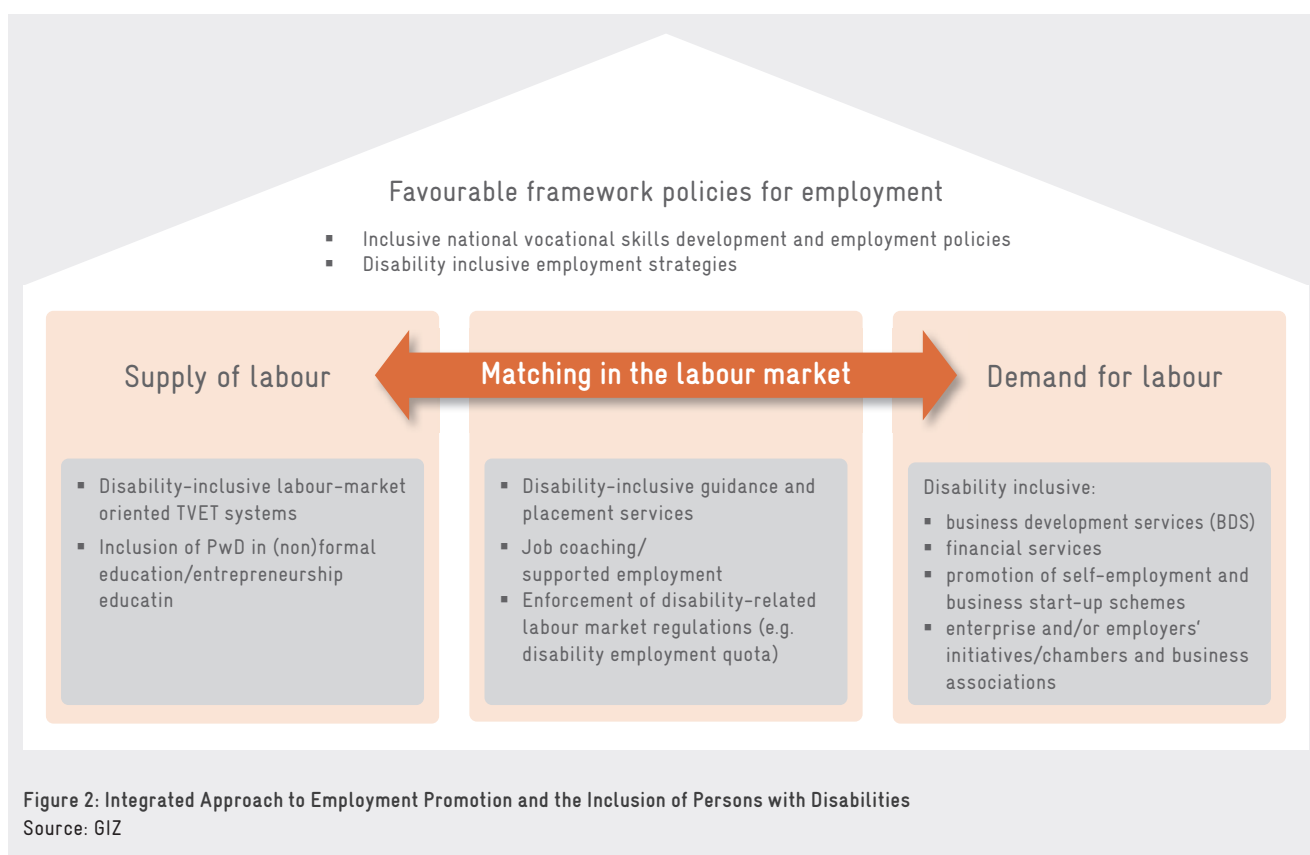


Figure 2: Integrated Approach to Employment Promotion and the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities
Source: GIZ

Diagnostics & planning

Inclusive labour market assessments: To have a good understanding of existing employment and training barriers and opportunities, labour market assessments are key. These can include a wide range of tools, including integrated labour market analysis, skills assessments and sector studies (cf. GIZ and Prospera Consulting 2020). For instance, GIZ's Employment and Labour Market Analysis (ELMA) provides insights into general labour market dynamics and constraints related to labour demand, supply and matching.⁸

Consultations with development partners: Development partners including other bilateral donors, multilateral agencies, civil society organisations (CSOs), and government institutions must be consulted to gain a better understanding about who is doing what related to disability

⁸ Cf. Handbook module "Employment and Labour Market Analysis (ELMA)" and GIZ 2016.

inclusion. This provides insights into existing practices and provides contacts for reliable OPDs and disability-related service providers. In some countries, development partners have initiated informal disability working groups that meet on a regular basis.

Consultations with OPDs: A stakeholder analysis can provide insights about OPDs and their capacities (cf. Humboldt University Berlin 2016). Consultations with organisations representing persons with disabilities are the best way to get an overview of the working and living conditions of persons with disabilities. OPDs can inform programme developers, programme managers and field staff to identify entry points for inclusion (cf. GIZ 2018a; BMZ 2019; UN 2006). There must be systematic and active involvement of OPDs in planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the perspectives of persons with disabilities are captured. OPDs must become equal partners and should be assigned an active role in project planning, implementation, and monitoring & evaluation,

BOX 1

INTEGRATED APPROACH TO PROMOTING EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE READY-MADE GARMENT SECTOR, BANGLADESH

The GIZ project "Promotion of Social and Environmental Standards in the Industry" supports Bangladesh's garment, textile and leather sectors to increase compliance with national and international labour and environmental laws and standards. While applying an integrated approach, the Inclusive Skills Development component focuses on the garment industry as a potential working sector for persons with disabilities. Given the high number of women in this industry, this component pays particular attention to women with disabilities. In close cooperation (multi-stakeholder approach) with the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, private garment companies, associations within the garment sector and OPDs, an Inclusive **Job Centre** (IJC) has been developed. All levels of an integrated approach are addressed:

- **Framework conditions:** Sensitisation of government agencies to international standards with regard to disability-inclusive policies and awareness raising at community level;

- **Supply side:** Capacity development of TVET providers on how to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in training courses;
- **Matching:** Linking of persons with disabilities to employment-related information and rehabilitation support services, follow-up and retention support for persons placed in employment;
- **Demand side:** Supporting factories and enterprises to implement minimum standards of a disability-inclusive work environment, e.g. regarding recruitment and a barrier-free factory.

More than 2400 persons with disabilities working in garment factories have profited so far from the project.

Source: GIZ 2020a, GIZ 2019a, GIZ 2017

for example by being part of a project steering committee (cf. UN 2019).

Participatory physical barrier assessment: Physical barriers prevent persons with disabilities from receiving information about employment and training, getting to job interviews or school, having the necessary workplace equipment, or participating in social events with colleagues. A suitable activity to kick-off cooperation with OPDs is a participatory physical barrier assessment of GIZ and implementing partner office spaces. Physical barriers are, compared to attitudinal and policy barriers, relatively easy to remove. Physical barrier assessments should be conducted during planning phases or early in the implementation phase.

BOX 2 PHYSICAL BARRIER ASSESSMENT, INDONESIA

The GIZ “Social Protection Project” (SPP), in consultation with four OPDs and its implementing partners (the National Development and Planning Agency of Indonesia, BAPPENAS, and the Social Security Administration Organisation, BPJS), developed a tool to assess the physical accessibility of designated inclusive job centres. The tool is based on stipulations in a national regulation concerning requirements for accessible buildings and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Checklist for Existing Facilities. The consultation adapted the ADA checklist to Indonesian standards and removed all indicators that are not relevant. Implementing partners, OPDs and GIZ jointly implemented the assessments in several branches of BPJS.

Source: GIZ SPP 2020



A wheelchair rally in Lomé, Togo: In cooperation with GIZ, the Togolese umbrella organisation of self-advocacy organisations for people with disabilities is developing inclusive strategies for career guidance.

Inclusive project design: A study on the inclusiveness of development projects found that ‘... when social groups are only included or defined with the phrases “vulnerable groups” or “marginalised groups” in solicitations, most reports from the resulting programs either make no reference to vulnerable groups or provide no specific information on how the programs addressed these groups’ unique needs’ (cf. Hayes/Caria 2019, p.2). Project proposals therefore must explain how specific needs of persons with disabilities will be addressed and contain indicators and budgets for that purpose. Proposals should also foresee differentiated interventions for persons with different types of impairments (cf. VENRO 2019).

Capacity Development

“Capacity Development” is a cross-cutting task in German Development Cooperation. It supports enhancing the capacities at four levels, such as (i) people, (ii) organisations, (iii) cooperation system and (iv) policy fields.⁹

⁹ For GIZ approach to Capacity Development cf. GIZ 2018c

BOX 3

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FOR AN INCLUSIVE LABOUR MARKET, KOSOVO

Although, employment of persons with disabilities is guaranteed and protected by legal frame-work existing in Kosovo, labour market integration continues to be a challenge. The GIZ project “Youth, Employment, and Skills” in Kosovo, in collaboration with various stakeholders, has implemented activities that targeted specifically the employment of persons with disabilities. The main focus was on capacity development of the key actors:

- Persons with disabilities themselves: Considering that needs, interests and competences differ among persons with disabilities, the competencies of participants were initially individually assessed (‘profiling’). This served for making the right match between the candidates (considering their needs, interests and competences) and the VTC profiles. The trained participants were placed in companies for a 1-month internship program to gain some hands-on experience. In preparation for a career fair, the candidates received soft skills training, in which they learned good practices and techniques for successful job interviews.
- Instructors of Vocational Training Centres (VTC) and employment councillors of Public Employment Offices: Since staff in public institutions had very little knowledge and experience in working with persons with disabilities, they received specific trainings. VTC instructors were trained on creative pedagogical methods when including persons with disabilities in their courses, whereas employment councillors could

improve their competencies in offering job-search assistance, and career guidance and counselling to persons with disabilities at the employment offices.

- Private companies: In the attempt to raise awareness among companies that persons with disabilities are actually skilled and capable of working, a career fair was organised, and interviews could directly be made for job vacancies. In addition, the human resource departments of companies were trained in recognizing the importance of a diverse workforce and in re-cruiting and accommodating people with disabilities. A respective training manual was developed.
- NGOs working with persons with disabilities: The project offered trainings to social workers and psychologists of organizations in order to increase the capacities when offering career guidance and employment support to people with disabilities. The NGO staff was mainly trained on the specific techniques to use when supporting people with disabilities on writing a CV or a motivation letter, preparing for an interview or developing a career plan.

In addition, different manuals and programs were produced to share knowledge and best practices with public and private actors and to multiply the effects of the interventions.

Source: Information provided by project staff

In this particular context, **capacity building for project staff** must ensure that they are aware of inclusive practices and that they have the necessary soft skills (such as appropriate attitude) to interact with persons with disabilities. Potential training topics include local beliefs and prejudices, inclusive language, the rights of persons with disabilities, and identification of persons with disabilities in the project (cf. Brujin et al. 2012).

Awareness-raising and capacity building for implementing partners should cover an introduction to the rights of persons with disabilities, the principles of inclusive education and labour markets and a positive attitude towards persons with disabilities. For instance, general education, TVET and employment service providers should embrace inclusive practices. Similarly, public and private employers must be open to hiring persons with disabilities (cf. GIZ 2018a). Workshops about disability in cooperation with OPDs and champions of disability inclusion (local leaders, public figures, or staff of implementing partners) are suitable tools to increase awareness and develop capacities.

For OPDs **capacity development at the level of the organisation, the individual**¹⁰ and with regard to cooperation systems is particularly relevant with a view to effectively advocate for and support persons with disabilities. This may cover (cf. ADD International n.d.):

- General organisational development, e.g. to develop a clear mission and objectives and to have an adequate financial and human management system. This also includes the ability to reach out to persons with disabilities regardless of gender, age, location, and type of impairment.
- Development of skills to achieve their objectives, e.g. to tackle negative attitudes, represent its members and engage with stakeholders on all levels.
- Ability to seek cooperation with development partners nationally and internationally.

Framework conditions

Support the implementation and enforcement of international frameworks and conventions: Non-inclusive legislation can have a profound impact on equal access to education, training and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Even when legal frameworks (e.g. with regard to non-discrimination) exist, they are often not adequately implemented and enforced. GIZ interventions can help translate international commitments, such as those related to the UN CRPD, SDGs and ILO conventions, into changes on the ground by improving legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks that affect both the supply, matching, and demand side of the labour market (e.g. related to reasonable accommodation and accessibility provisions, hiring discrimination, etc.). Potential entry points to facilitate the employment of persons with disabilities include:

- **Strengthening the disability lens in national employment strategies and action plans**, and/or the employment lens in national disability strategies.
- **Anti-discrimination legislation** to ensure equal treatment of persons with disabilities: This covers policies that regulate different aspects of education and training as well as employment such as accessibility, hiring, career development, job promotion and dismissal procedures as demanded by the UNCRPD. These policies usually also feature reasonable accommodation and mainstreaming issues (cf. ILO & OECD 2018).
- **Fiscal policy** should consider the needs of persons with disabilities, for instance in relation to public investments in accessible infrastructure, social insurance.

¹⁰ An essential aspect of the CRPD is the empowerment approach. Empowerment means enabling persons with disabilities to get the right set of skills and become qualified players in the sector in which they choose to engage (cf. UN 2006).

BOX 4 HIRING INCENTIVES, KAZAKHSTAN

Providing incentives are a common way to make employers more likely to hire persons with disabilities. The government of Kazakhstan provides two types of incentives for employers who hire persons with disabilities:

- Compensation for reasonable accommodation provisions at the workplace. Reasonable accommodation provisions are useful primarily for retaining workers, and they include removal of physical barriers as well as awareness raising for co-workers and managers to remove attitudinal barriers.
- Wage subsidies for employing individuals with disabilities are a tool to stimulate the creation of new jobs. This is a flexible tool. The amount of the subsidies can be adjusted depending on the severity of the disability. In other cases, the subsidies can be reduced if the employee develops greater capacity or increased efficiency.

Source: OECD 2017

- **Quota schemes** for the employment of persons with disabilities. Slightly over 100 countries around the world currently provide for employment quotas in their national legislation (cf. ILO 2019). The prescribed quotas range from 1 % to 10 % of the total workforce in both the public and private sector.¹¹ Three different models for employment quota systems are practised: (i) Legislative recommendations; (ii) Legislative obligation, without effective sanctions; and (iii) Legislative obligation backed by sanctions. Sanctions typically consist of employers paying a compensatory levy in the event that they do not fulfil the prescribed percentage of employees with disabilities (cf. ILO 2019). Quota systems apply to the formal sector; hence they are not relevant for countries with a large informal economy.
- **Affirmative action** refers to other positive action measures to promote the right to work of persons with disabilities. Such measures could be statutory employment targets for public sector agencies and private enterprises. E.g. in Ethiopia, the civil service proclamation includes a disability-specific clause to provide for a preferential right of persons with disabilities and special preference is given to qualified candidates with disabilities in recruitment, promotion and deployment (cf. ILO 2019).
- **Public procurement rules** that include stipulations to favour certain types of businesses as suppliers (e.g. by size, ownership, etc.), including businesses led by or employing persons with disabilities.
- **Tax and monetary incentives** to enterprises hiring persons with disabilities. For example, employers can be compensated for a reasonable adaptation of the workplace and for the provision of assistive devices. A hiring incentive could be initial and/or continued wage subsidies (cf. Box 5).
- **Adequate social protection regulation** as well as **laws on job retention**, providing adequate benefits to compensate for lost income (e.g. in case of work accidents) and additional disability-related expenses, while minimising disincentives to work (e.g. when benefits are contingent on not working).



People with and without disabilities are participating in a cash-for-work program in Mosul, Iraq.

¹¹ Cf. ILO 2019, GIZ 2018b, Eichhorst, et al., 2010; ILO & OECD, 2018

Strengthen labour market information on persons with disabilities: To improve employment information on persons with disabilities, programmes can support efforts to assess existing data and the mechanisms for collection and analysis as well as the capacities and needs of relevant ministries and other national actors (cf. i2i, 2020). Based on those, interventions can also support the integration of relevant questions and modules into existing surveys and administrative data collection (see sample questions developed by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics).¹²

Labour supply side

Many persons with disabilities do not have sufficient skills (e.g. literacy, soft skills, technical skills) to compete in the labour market. This is because children with disabilities have limited access to inclusive, quality education and training, including technical and vocational education and training (TVET) (cf. CBM 2016). Even if a disabled young

person completes basic education, TVET schools or higher education institutions might still not grant him/her access due to a variety of physical and/or attitudinal challenges. Promoting inclusive TVET as well as higher university education¹³ implies the provision of better **quality and relevant learning opportunities to students with disabilities** within the regular education and training system. In practice, this may involve strengthening training authorities and training institutions to adopt disability-inclusive practices, such as accessibility of training facilities, appropriate assistive and mobility devices, suitable curricula, and other support measures (cf. GIZ 2018a).

Moreover, trainers, teachers and instructors have to be prepared to accommodate persons with disabilities. Measures may also include strengthening the quality and labour-market orientation of disability-specific education and training providers, e.g. through improved links to firm needs, internships for students with disabilities, as well as accreditation and certification.

¹² The Washington Group (WG) is a UN Statistical Commission City Group whose purpose is to develop survey tools that allow for the collection of internationally comparable data concerning persons with disabilities (cf. Washington Group on Disability Statistics 2020).

¹³ Cf. Handbook module “Designing TVET for job creation” and module “Universities as Key Partners for Employment”

BOX 5

IMPROVING DATA ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN BANGLADESH AND KENYA

As part of the “Innovation to Inclusion” (i2i) project, the ILO analysed existing data systems on employment and social protection relevant for persons with disabilities in Kenya and Bangladesh, highlighting limitations in the collection and analysis of disability-disaggregated data in national censuses and household surveys. Bangladesh relies on a self-reporting scheme for persons with disabilities, which is not in line with international disability definitions. In Kenya, overlapping responsibilities by several government institutions complicate the systematic collection of data on persons with disabilities. To improve the availability of quality data, the ILO advises both countries to include standardised questions by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics (WG) in censuses and surveys. The WG developed a module of six questions that shed light on a person’s physical limitation. The six questions are:

- (i) Do you have difficulty seeing, even if wearing glasses?
- (ii) Do you have difficulty hearing, even if using a hearing aid?
- (iii) Do you have difficulty walking or climbing steps?
- (iv) Do you have difficulty remembering or concentrating?
- (v) Do you have difficulty (with self-care such as) washing all over or dressing?
- (vi) Using your usual (customary) language, do you have difficulty communicating, for example understanding or being understood?

Source: i2i 2020, Washington Group on Disability Statistics 2020, Hauschild 2017

Life-long exclusion from education, training and other opportunities often leads to low self-confidence and self-esteem (cf. Brujin et al. 2012). An overprotective family that does not offer opportunity for independent action can add to this (cf. Handicap International 2016). To facilitate

young people's access to education and training, additional **support measures** may often be needed, including sensitisation of families and individualised counselling. Moreover, the challenge is to create an inclusive environment both in the school and in the workplace, through the provision of accessible infrastructure and assistive equipment.



In Ulaanbaatar in Mongolia, a wheelchair user is practicing welding under the supervision of TVET teacher on accessibility day.

Matching of labour demand and labour supply side

Improving links between the supply of persons with disabilities and the demand of employers is often key to facilitating transitions to employment. This typically requires a two-pronged approach:

- **Services targeted at jobseekers with disabilities**, such as information about suitable job opportunities, job search assistance and placement services, as well as other targeted support services (e.g. short-term training, including on-the-job training). Given the specific challenges many disabled jobseekers face, a case-management approach is often needed. In supported employment, job coaches may act as an intermediary between the employed persons with disabilities and the supervisors/employers.
- **Services targeted at employers**, by raising awareness about the rights of persons with disabilities to employ-

BOX 6 PROMOTION OF INCLUSIVE TVET, NAMIBIA

The GIZ project in Namibia implemented a vocational education system that meets the demands of the public and private sector and ensures accessibility for persons with disabilities. In cooperation with the Namibia Training Authority (NTA) and OPDs, the project worked with all levels of the TVET system to increase its accessibility and responsiveness for persons with disabilities.

- **Advice:** The project and NTA jointly developed training standards, inclusive training certificate courses, assessment materials, and quality standards.
- • NTA established a disability focal person at the management level to strengthen cooperation with the project and to systematically mainstream disability and persons with disabilities across all NTA programmes.

- **Inclusive vocational training:** The project supported a six-month inclusive National Vocational Certificate-Training in the clothing production for twenty male and female trainees, including five women with hearing disabilities, which were identified by the Namibian Association of the Deaf. The training was supported by a sign language interpreter who was financed by the project.
- The project further supported a sign-language training for TVET instructors and awareness raising for all staff at NTA.
- A training hub comprising three TVET centers to improve training in the Northern region, made their training workshops accessible for persons with disabilities.

Source: GIZ 2019a

ment according to local legislation and the potential benefits to hiring workers with disabilities (e.g. low staff turnover, access to skills, reputation, etc.). Specifically, in cooperation with OPDs, this may include addressing potential misconceptions as well as helping employers attract, recruit, and retain employees with disabilities.¹⁴

In practice, these services may be pursued by (i) supporting traditional employment agencies and private service providers to become more accessible and responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities; and/or (ii) strengthening disability-specific services such as case managers, job coach-es or inclusive job centres (cf. GIZ 2018a).

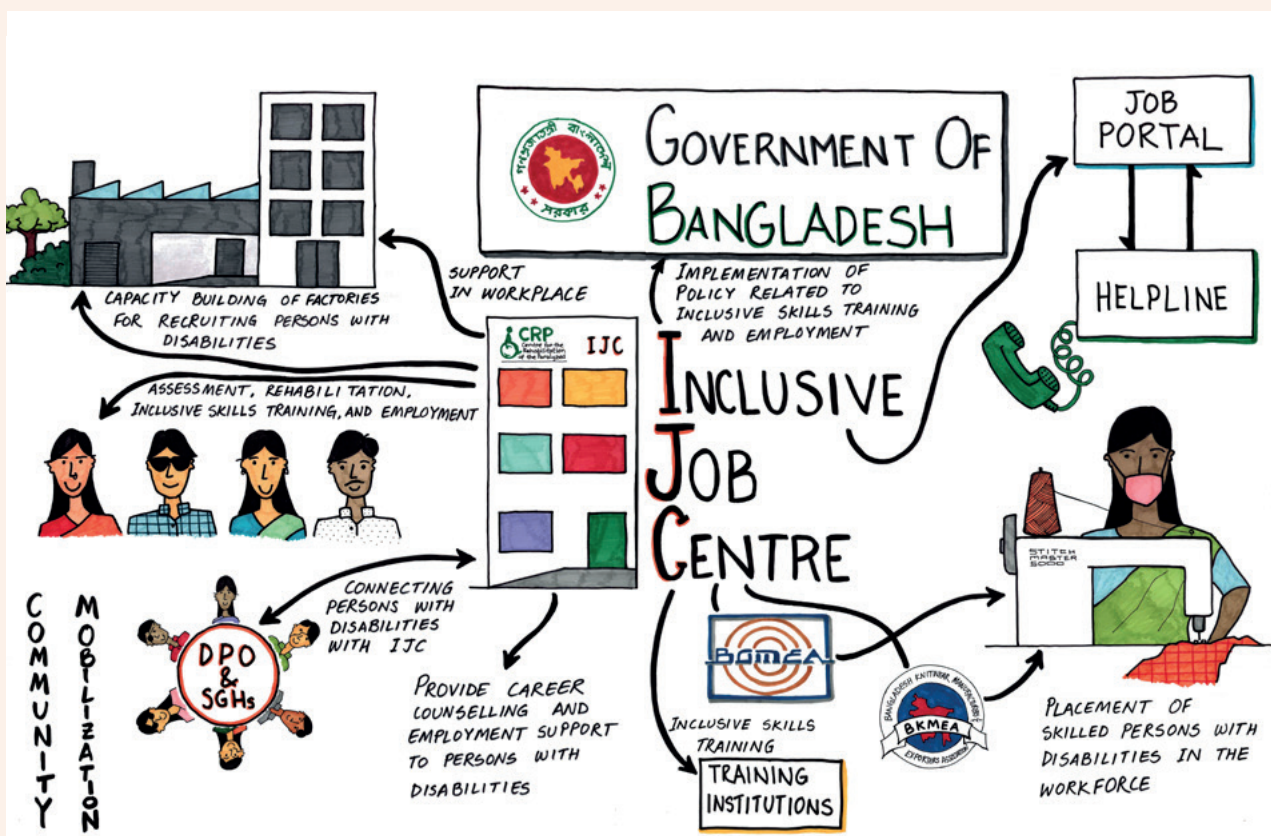
¹⁴ See for example guideline documents developed for employers cf. ILO/IFC 2013, ILO 2016, GIZ PSES/CDD 2016.

BOX 7
INCLUSIVE JOB CENTRE, INDONESIA

The GIZ “Social Protection Programme” (SPP) originally introduced a Return-to-Work (RtW) programme at the national social security provider BP Jamsostek. RtW provided BP Jamsostek with a tool that allows the reintegration of workers who experienced an accident that led to an impairment to receive rehabilitation interventions and return to the same or similar job at the same employer. Based on the success of this effort, and building on its long-lasting working relationship with employers in Indonesia, BP Jamsostek with the support of the National Planning Ministry and SPP, has expanded the RtW programme, developing it into an Inclusive Job

Centre that offers services not only to persons with newly acquired impairments but also to persons that have had a lifelong disability. Services include functional assessment of impairment, facilitation of rehabilitation interventions, and provision of assistive devices for persons with disabilities. Employers have access to physical assessment of work environments, disability awareness training for management and staff and practical support related to provision of reasonable accommodation.

Source: GIZ, 2019b



Labour demand side

Demand-side interventions mainly refer to mainstream disability-sensitive measures in the public and private sector and financial system development efforts to foster job creation and better employment conditions for persons with disabilities.

Large formal enterprises can be guided to comply with the legal framework such as the quota schemes, affirmative action measures, social security requirements and to incentives for retaining and hiring persons with disabilities. Moreover, in introducing the position of an **inclusion focal point** who monitors inclusive workplace practices and advises employees and managers in case of conflict.

In principle, employers are often reluctant to recruit persons with disabilities mainly because of misconception such as that they are unable to meet performance standards or do not have the necessary skills to do the job and require costly workplace adjustments, etc. (cf. Rohwerder 2019).

Sensitization, awareness creation and hands on advice on inclusive human resource policy for employers can either be provided by inclusive job centres, OPDs, business chambers, employers' federation and/or trade unions.¹⁵ For instance, the goal of the ILO **Global Business and Disability Network** is to make sure that employment policies and practices in companies of all types are inclusive. Through their work the members demonstrate the clear business benefit of employing persons with disabilities and highlight the valuable contributions they bring to workplaces of all kind.

¹⁵ Op cit.

In the absence of social transfer schemes, the scarcity of formal employment opportunities and the prevalence of the informal economy in most low-income countries, **self-employment** is a valid option for persons with disabilities. Accordingly, **entrepreneurship promotion** measures have to be adapted (e.g. entrepreneurship training, business incubators, etc.) to their special needs. This would also apply to the provision of **business development services** (BDS).

Besides the public sector and formal enterprises, **social enterprises** can be considered as a viable option of employment.¹⁶ Social entrepreneurship is part of the wider context of the social economy. The social economy is based on the values of economic activities with social goals, sustainable development, equal opportunities, inclusion of disadvantaged people, and civil society. It can be described as the economic and social fields represented by cooperatives, mutual companies, associations, along with all local job creation initiatives intended to respond, through the provision of goods and services, to needs for which neither the market nor the public sector currently appear able to make adequate provision. Social enterprises can be created and run by persons with disabilities and/or they can offer decent work for persons with disabilities. Typically, they are not for profit, so they may also get public subsidies or sponsoring from companies.

Financial services should be made **more inclusive** to entrepreneurs with disabilities (cf. Leymant 2011, Raja

¹⁶ Cf. BMZ 2020, ILO 2015; Shrestha 2019

BOX 8

SUPPORTING SELF-EMPLOYED PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, ECUADOR

In 2013, Ecuador initiated the “Productive Inclusion for Persons with Disabilities Programme”, implemented by the Ministry of Industries and Productivity (MIPRO). Key features of the pro-gramme included:

- Local MIPRO offices provided advice to prospective entrepreneurs on the development of business ideas in priority sectors such as manufacturing, agribusiness, trade and tourism; it helped them to prepare business plans and to attain funding and supervised the implementation of their business plans;
- Prospective entrepreneurs were given privileged access to finance through a specific credit lines with preferential interest rates by the public bank BanEcuador;
- Entrepreneurs with disabilities were able to promote their businesses during exhibitions and business roundtables;
- the National Service of Government Procurement incorporated enterprises with persons with disabilities among the state suppliers.

2016). On the one hand, this would include the removal of physical barriers to make financial institutions accessible; on the other hand, attitudinal barriers of staff towards clients with disabilities would have to be removed. The design of financial products and services should consider the special needs of persons with disabilities, possibly by providing special credit lines. Accessibility would include the use of assistive technologies, such as e-banking via mobile phones.

BOX 9 INCLUSIVE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE PROMOTION, SERBIA

The GIZ “Youth Employment Promotion Project” in cooperation with the Serbian Ministry of Youth (07/2015-12/2019) supported social enterprises. Support programmes based on individual needs analyses were developed and implemented for 21 social enterprises. Activities consisted of business consultancies provided to the individual social enterprises, joint activities and networking and awareness creation events. 16 (78 %) of the selected 21 social enterprises directly addressed labour market integration of vulnerable population groups such as persons with disabilities, disadvantaged minority groups and unemployed youth in rural areas not being in training or education (so called NEET group); 90 % of the supported Social Enterprises actively utilised the consultancy offers to improve their business. 81 young people were employed, of whom 42 were from different vulnerable groups. In two of the supported social enterprises young persons with disabilities were beneficiaries. One social enterprise was even founded and led by young persons with disabilities.

Source: Shrestha 2019, GIZ-YEP Factsheet and Presentation.



A man with physical disabilities works in a leather factory near Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Further challenges to development policy

With a view to the project management cycle

While there is increasing consensus on the comprehensive and participatory approach needed to support labour market transitions for persons with disabilities, robust evidence on the effectiveness of different employment promotion measures for this target group remains extremely scarce (cf. Saran et al. 2020). Demonstrating the impacts of disability-inclusive interventions will require **better monitoring and evaluation** in the future, including rigorous impact assessments.

Another challenge relates to building bridges across institutions. Education, training and employment are not stand-alone sectors. Persons with disabilities are often dealing with multiple institutions providing health, social and employment services. This can result in uncoordinated service provision that may impede access to training, education and employment. Strengthening the **integration of different services as well as inter-institutional cooperation** between health, social, education and employment service providers can therefore help increase the efficiency and effectiveness of interventions. This also includes facilitating transitions from one setting (e.g. education and training) to another (e.g. employment services), as entering new environments often translates into new barriers for persons with disabilities (e.g. regarding physical accessibility, attitudes, etc.).

With a view to ongoing topics of DC

A look at current interventions to strengthen the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market shows that there is a relative lack of demand-side measures to foster job creation and better employment conditions for persons with disabilities. Hence, more efforts are needed to **mainstream disability-sensitive measures in private sector development**.

In all efforts of analysing and promoting **sectors and value chains, a disability lens** – as it is a common practise for gender – should be applied to the employment situation of persons with disabilities in the respective sector/value chain and to opportunities for inclusion. This is of particular relevance for the promotion of value chains in rural areas.

In interventions to enhance the **productivity and working conditions** in selected firms or industries (as within the IFC-ILO Better Work initiative or the ILO SCORE training), the disability lens should also be integrated. The disability lens also provides entry points to address topics such as safety and health at work and workforce management.

A particular challenge will be to improve **the working conditions of persons with disabilities in the informal sector**. Since a large share of persons with disabilities are working in the informal economy with often precarious working conditions, policies and interventions must not just target facilitating entry into employment but also promote decent work among those already employed. Therefore, development cooperation must also focus on improving working conditions and social protection for workers with disabilities, including in the informal sector.

Prospect of digital inclusion of persons with disabilities

"For most people, technology makes things easier. For people with disabilities, technology makes things possible."¹⁷

There is scope that development of digital technologies will propel the participation of persons with disabilities in

the labour market and offer new professional perspectives. Digital technologies break traditional barriers to communication, interaction, and access to information for persons with disabilities (cf. ICT4Inclusion 2020). Accessible information and communication technology (ICT) can level the playing field for persons with disabilities across life domains including education, employment and financial inclusion (cf. Raja 2016). ICT is changing how people build their skills, how they search for work, how they do their work, how they interact with co-workers and clients. Email, websites, social media, and web-enabled multi-media content and communication are mainstays in the workplace. Work processes are increasingly shifting online with the adoption of cloud-based content management and document sharing, software applications, internet-based audio and video communications, and remote collaboration platforms.

The shift to the use of digital tools accelerated by COVID-19 pandemic is transforming economies and changing the employment and entrepreneurship landscape for youth, resulting in three key opportunity areas: (i) building digital capacity - infrastructure, (ii) enhancing digital skills and training and (iii) creating digital jobs.¹⁸ The COVID-19 pandemic may help accelerate the efforts to include persons with disabilities in the labour market: home-based work can help overcome constraints of workplace accessibility; mobility barriers and stigmatisation. Many disabled people have home environments that are already adapted to their needs, so the shift to home-based work levels the playing field.

With a view to our partner countries, one has to keep in mind, that some basics (literacy, basic skills) as well as access to digital infrastructure has to be right before this potential can be unfolded (cf. Box 11).

It is a particular challenge to overcome the digital gap and to include persons with disabilities into these developments. German DC has to leverage the increasing importance of ICT. Initial efforts by GIZ in this area are already underway, examples are presented in Box 11 and 12 (cf. GIZ 2020b/c).

¹⁷ Quotation from Mary Pat Radabaugh, formerly with the IBM National Support Center for Persons with Disabilities, in Raja 2016, p. 3.

¹⁸ Cf. Solution for Youth Employment Steering Committee Meeting 2020, Nov. 10, S4YE Digital Connections for Jobs: Initial Ideas (Presentation at the Meeting of the Steering Committee Nov. 2020)

BOX 10

APPROACHING INCLUSIVE DIGITAL SKILLS TRAINING, IRAQ

The GIZ project “ICT Perspectives for Modern Youth in Iraq” conducted a 3-day Training and Design Thinking Workshop with persons with disabilities in Erbil, Iraq, in January 2020. There was a brainstorming with the attendees on challenges in their everyday life with a view to create solutions for their problems. Participants were introduced to digital fabrication tools and 3D print-ers. Gadgets like gripping aids for small objects such as cutlery, pens or zippers that can improve motor control for persons with disabilities were adapted to local needs. Prototype tools were produced with 3D printers directly on site. For the GIZ project this training event had the following purposes:

- to expose the implementing partner Makerspace to OPDs and persons with disabilities and gain first experience to work with mobile equipment in different surroundings,
- to get acquainted with organisations for and of persons with disabilities,
- to understand better the level of literacy and skills of persons with disabilities, who have grown up in a conflict situation with little encouragement and access to education,.
- to learn that persons with disabilities are not a homogeneous group, but may have entirely different impairment (mobility, sensory, cognitive or multiple) and therefore, do not share the same abilities, disabilities, and needs.

This experience and information will be used for making ICT-training more inclusive..

Source: cf. ICT4Inclusion 2020 <https://toolkit-digitalisierung.de/design-thinking-und-3d-druck/>

BOX 11

MAKING DIGITAL SKILLS TRAINING MORE INCLUSIVE, GHANA

AmaliTech is a start-up business that provides IT services to local and multinational companies in Africa. The AmaliTech Training Academy, active in Ghana’s Takoradi region, provides free IT training courses to train local youth in the necessary digital and soft skills for employment in the growing IT sector in sub-Saharan Africa. GIZ’s “Global Programme Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities“ was commissioned by the “Global Programme of the Special Initiative on Training and Job Creation” to advise AmaliTech on disability mainstreaming and inclusion, providing technical assistance for the following activities:

- Advising on the recruitment and selection processes for training and employment.
- For instance, AmaliTech organised disability awareness sessions during job fairs, worked with OPDs to identify suitable trainees, provided Human Resource staff with unconscious bias training and worked together with OPDs and local disability experts to ensure accessibility of its assessment centres. After completing the training programme, graduates go on to work at one of AmaliTech’s service centres or pursue other wage- or self-employment opportunities.
- Sensitisation of AmaliTech staff, trainees and trainers on disability inclusion;
 - Identifying disability-specific and disability-related channels to source trainees and

Source: GIZ 2020c

Finally, one has also to address the expected **transformation regarding the future of work** that will offer opportunities but may also entail risks for persons with disabilities (cf. ILO/Fundación ONCE 2019). To mitigate these risks and maximise the opportunities, measures must be urgently put in place, and it is essential that persons with disabilities play an active role in decision-making concerning future employment policies. The following five key objectives for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the future of work have been identified:

- **New forms of employment and employment relations** integrate disability inclusion,
- **Skills development** and lifelong learning designed to include persons with disabilities,
- **Universal Design**¹⁹ embedded in development of infrastructure, products and services, .
- **Assistive technologies**, existing and newly developed, to be made affordable and available,
- Measures to **include persons with disabilities in growing and developing areas of the economy.**

These challenges need to be addressed before they arise in order to ensure “No One is Left Behind”, especially those most vulnerable, including persons with disabilities. .

¹⁹ Universal Design “means the design of products, environments, programs and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design” (CRPD 2006, p.4).

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