

# Good for Business

Promoting Partnerships to  
Employ People with Disabilities





Mrs. Naw Koh, 41, lost her right foot after a landmine explosion. In addition to raising pigs, she now attends a hairdressing course.

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## Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We get it. Most of the time, when businesses think about NGOs like Handicap International and Leonard Cheshire Disability, they normally recognize us for development or humanitarian response work. Our points of overlap seem few.

However, this has shifted in recent years, as our work to economically empower people with disabilities began to collide regularly with multinational businesses. They're looking to diversify their workforce, but don't always know where and how to begin.

Handicap International and Leonard Cheshire Disability are long-term collaborators; and today, our work around inclusive employment tells a similar story. In preparation for the 2017 Harkin Summit on Global Disability Employment, our teams came together to examine how our non-profit organizations are increasingly merging the independence we aim to imbue in our beneficiaries, with the goals of multinationals looking for talented jobseekers.

Between us, working in dozens of countries, we hear a common tale: highly skilled people with disabilities who are being overlooked for no other reason than stigma or misunderstanding. And at the same time, we see multinationals demanding those very skills they harbor, but not tapping this pool of talent effectively.

In partnership with a number of private sector organizations, we are working to change this. We want to share some of the easy ways companies and NGOs can collaborate and businesses can hire and retain employees with disabilities. This paper is a mere start to illustrate some of the simple ways we've helped companies diversify their workforces abroad, while bolstering their bottom lines. We hope you enjoy it and we look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

**Hervé Bernard**

Head of the Inclusion Unit  
Handicap International

**Tiziana Oliva**

International Director  
Leonard Cheshire Disability

Many thanks to Ruby Holmes, Kate Turner, Ola Abu Alghaib, Angela Kohama, Mica Bevington, Michele Lunsford and all contributing HI and LCD global staff for their work on this paper.

**COVER IMAGE:** Boubacar, 33, works as a legal adviser at the Ministry for African Integration, NEPAD and Good Governance. He has a motor disability, caused by polio, and cannot walk without crutches. © E. Fitte-Duval / Handicap International

**In a global business environment, can multinational corporations with a commitment to diversity truly claim inclusivity until they begin employing people with disabilities and diverse populations across offices, manufacturing plants and supply chains globally?**

Businesses that include people with disabilities on staff enjoy competitive advantages, an increased number of available workers, increased workplace diversity, and make strong contributions to their national GDP. However, the private sector has yet to fully recognize and capitalize on the benefits of employing people with disabilities across the globe — leaving talent by the wayside and limiting inclusive growth and profitability. There are many reasons why hiring people with disabilities is good for business:

- **Return on investment:** Employees with disabilities have better retention and low absenteeism rates and are loyal, reliable and highly motivated.<sup>1</sup>
- **Marketing and innovation:** Many companies find that employing people with disabilities increases their understanding and ability to serve their customers with disabilities.
- **Untapped customer base:** In the United States, customers with disabilities represent \$1 trillion in annual aggregate consumer spending.
- **Workplace diversity and culture:** People with disabilities contribute to an organization's success by bringing unique perspectives and experiences to the workplace; the Institute for Corporate Productivity found that "twice as many high-performing organizations address diversity and inclusion (D&I) at the highest levels of overall business strategy."<sup>2</sup>
- **Social responsibility:** Companies that demonstrate social responsibility are more

**How can your business access a huge untapped workforce?**

- Partner with disability experts such as NGOs like Handicap International and Leonard Cheshire Disability, Disabled Persons Organizations (DPOs), and other organizations that include and work with people with disabilities
- Know where you're starting: run an internal assessment to find out how many staff self-identify as having a disability, and gauge the staff's understanding of disability and inclusion. Review written policies to establish and ensure that the organization is non-discriminatory, and open to employing and respecting the rights of workers with a disability
- Make all job postings accessible to people with disabilities
- Ensure your offices and buildings are physically accessible
- Ask people with disabilities what types of accommodation (if any) they need for interviews and upon hiring
- Set aside a centralized budget for reasonable accommodation
- Educate leadership, human resources, and employees about disability
- If you're a multinational corporation, find professionals with disabilities wherever you operate, or target disability owned or disability inclusive businesses within your supply chain. There are job seekers with disabilities all over the globe

competitive, and they attract a larger number of employees and customers.

In fact, exclusion of people with disabilities negatively affects economic growth:

- In 2009, the ILO cited the global annual GDP loss due to disability to be between US \$1.37 and US \$1.94 trillion<sup>3</sup>

1 International Labour Organization, "The Business and human rights case for hiring people with disabilities," <http://www.businessanddisability.org/index.php/en/boxes/114-the-business-and-human-rights-case-for-hiring-people-with-disabilities>

2 Institute for Corporate Productivity, "Employing People with Intellectual and Development Disabilities," <http://www.imintohire.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Employing-People-with-Intellectual-and-Developmental-Disabilities-i4cp-2014.pdf>

3 Buckup, Sebastian, (2009), The Price of Exclusion the Economic Consequences of Excluding People with Disabilities from the World of Work., International Labour Office, and Skills and Employability Department, Geneva, p.1

- In Asia, economic costs from exclusion of people with disabilities range from 3% of 2006 GDP in Vietnam (U.S. \$1.8 billion) to 4.6% of 2007 GDP in Thailand (US \$9.6 billion)<sup>4</sup>
- In Bangladesh, labor market exclusion of people with disabilities results in a total loss of U.S. \$891 million each year<sup>5</sup>
- Macroeconomic losses are between 3.1% of GDP in Malawi (U.S. \$99 million) and 7% of 2006 GDP in South Africa (U.S \$17.8 billion)<sup>6</sup>
- In Morocco, lost income due to workforce exclusion is estimated to result in national losses of 9.2 billion dirhams (approximately U.S. \$1.1 billion)



Ramatoulaye Dramé participates in a sewing seminar in Senegal. © J-J. Bernard / Handicap International

Countries are starting to recognize the problem of exclusion. International and domestic legal frameworks are changing to drive inclusive employment environments. To date, 174 countries have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which requires that countries ensure that the private sector provides fair and equal opportunities for job seekers to find employment. More and more countries now have anti-discrimination and other disability-specific laws to promote the employment of people with disabilities within the state and private sector. Some domestic laws require medium and large corporations to use quota systems to ensure a percentage of their workforce is made up of people with disabilities.

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**“The inclusion of people with disabilities is not a barrier to the advancement and development of corporations.”**

— RACHIDA EL JAAFARI, DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES, TRAGEM, MOROCCO

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Despite this progress, many people with disabilities are still unable to access meaningful livelihoods that allow them to meet their needs and those of their families. The lack of income not only affects their economic situation, but also their psychosocial status, their social situation, and inclusion in the community. People with disabilities disproportionately live below the poverty line in comparison with the rest of the global population. Eighty-two percent of people with disabilities live beneath the poverty line, on less than one dollar a day<sup>7</sup> and 80% of the global population of people with disabilities live in developing countries.<sup>8</sup> They must be meaningfully included in waged employment to break the cycle of poverty and contribute to the economic growth of their country.

Recognizing the immense benefits of employing people with disabilities for companies and job seekers alike, businesses are increasingly turning to organizations such as Leonard Cheshire Disability and Handicap International, tapping the organizations' expertise in reaching people with disabilities.

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4 Backup, Sebastian, (2009), The Price of Exclusion the Economic Consequences of Excluding People with Disabilities from the World of Work., International Labour Office, and Skills and Employability Department, Geneva, p.15.

5 Banks, Lena Morgon, and Sarah Polack. (2014) “The Economic Costs of Exclusion and Gains of Inclusion of People with Disabilities.” CBM, International Centre for Evidence in Disability and London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, p. 39.

6 Backup, Sebastian, (2009), The Price of Exclusion the Economic Consequences of Excluding People with Disabilities from the World of Work., International Labour Office, and Skills and Employability Department, Geneva, p. 39.

7 International Labour Organization, “Moving Towards Disability Inclusion,” [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---ifp\\_skills/documents/publication/wcms\\_160776.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_160776.pdf)

8 World Health Organization, “Disability and Rehabilitation,” [http://www.who.int/nmh/donorinfo/vip\\_promoting\\_access\\_healthcare\\_rehabilitation\\_update.pdf](http://www.who.int/nmh/donorinfo/vip_promoting_access_healthcare_rehabilitation_update.pdf).

## Who are Handicap International and Leonard Cheshire Disability?

Founded in 1982, Handicap International runs nearly 337 projects in 56 low- and middle-income countries annually. This includes dozens of projects that provide support to companies of all sizes to become disability inclusive, prepare people with disabilities to enter the workforce, and support entrepreneurs with disabilities to start or improve their own ventures and to increase their access to markets. This is often done in partnership with DPOs, which play a significant role in accessing a talented workforce of people with disabilities in each country.

Leonard Cheshire Disability (LCD) has nearly 70 year of experience working successfully both in the UK and overseas, with/for people with all types of disabilities. LCD works alongside a wide range of partners including DPOs and the private sector and through its Global Alliance partners, which are operational in 54 countries. LCD has extensive experience working with the private sector to deliver inclusive livelihoods programs for people with disabilities. Its programs such as its flagship Accenture program in South and East Asia ensure that persons with disabilities can access job opportunities and waged employment. LCD's Inclusive Development Centre (LCDIDC), which is based at the world renowned University College London, undertakes applied research in the field of disability and international development and is recognized as one of the leading centres globally. LCDIDC currently is a key partner of the Global Disability Innovation hub, which provides an extensive network of knowledge and collaboration on wider inclusive employment work including developing and using technology.

## Harnessing NGO-private sector partnerships

Companies often struggle to identify partners with the technical expertise necessary to transform the workplace to become disability inclusive. NGOs like Handicap International and Leonard Cheshire Disability partner with the private sector to provide advice on employment practices to successfully

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**“I want a career in a company, to help my mom with the money I will earn.”**

— MOURAD MAAROUFI, IN TRAINING  
AT THE OFFICE FOR PROFESSIONAL TRAINING  
AND PROMOTION OF WORK (OPFPT), MOROCCO

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transform the workplace and workforce to be disability inclusive.

Working with international NGOs ensures that best practices in one region can be adapted to the local context in a nearby country. NGOs are also often connected with DPOs, which helps link employers to people with disabilities, allowing people with disabilities to share their experiences and develop best practices for employers.

Furthermore, NGOs are usually well connected with local authorities, service providers, employers, and people with disabilities themselves, and often work with governments to help frame policies that create an enabling business environment to hire and retain diverse talent and drive innovative practices.

NGO-private sector partnerships can lead to



Chanta SO, 34, repairs electronic material in Cambodia.

© A. Massolin-Toussaint / Handicap International



In Senegal, Maty Diop (center) founded a small company called Economic Group of Disabled Women of Ouakma (Dakar), which makes paper bags. The group is comprised of women with disabilities (mainly from polio). © J-J. Bernard / Handicap International

genuine, sustained change for workers with disabilities while meeting the core interests of both NGOs and business organizations. The partnerships can also boost the credibility and credentials of both sectors. Organizations like HI and LCD can support businesses in a number of ways. They can:

### 1. Provide a tailored approach, starting with an assessment

NGOs recognize that each business has different needs. An assessment allows a NGO to understand the state of services and the level of inclusion in the workplace and to tailor trainings and coaching to the company's needs.

### 2. Support inclusive recruitment processes

NGOs can advise on ethical labor practices and diversity policies, which create an enabling environment to recruit people with disabilities, and ensure fair compensation. They can also identify hard-to-reach candidates with disabilities for suitable employment opportunities. NGOs provide advice on inclusive labor market interventions to ensure recruitment processes are accessible to people with disabilities. They can also identify local agencies who understand the resourcing requirements of businesses.

### 3. Provide skills development for candidates

NGOs can help train and equip candidates with disabilities with the skills needed by many businesses. NGOs also have the technical expertise to provide training and support for employers to help them confidently meet the needs and accommodation requirements for employing people with disabilities. By working with both job seekers and employers, corporations have access to qualified, committed, reliable employees who contribute to the success and effectiveness of the private sector globally.

### 4. Provide assessment and referral to support services

Uniquely, HI and LCD provide or support access to rehabilitation and support services. This includes functional and skills assessments, individual level rehabilitation and external referrals to support services. By working with job seekers with disabilities, NGOs like LCD and HI empower and equip people with disabilities with additional rehabilitation, assistive devices, financial support, occupational and adaptive equipment that increases access and functional autonomy within the workplace.

## 5. Advise on constructing an accessible work environment

Partner NGOs will use experience and expertise to train employers and employees on how to provide an inclusive work environment that benefits all employees. They will analyze the work environment, communication channels and daily tasks, and provide advice on how to adapt the current environment to ensure it is inclusive of people with disabilities. This includes creation or adjustment of procedures, processes and support mechanisms to provide reasonable accommodations.

## 6. Provide mentoring support

NGOs ensure workplace preparedness for jobseekers through confidence building, skills training, mock-interviewing experience and other types of preparatory programs. Depending on the project, NGOs can provide day-to-day mentoring and support in the workplace for the person with a disability and ensure that families

and social networks are fully engaged in the provision of support to employed people with disabilities. By preparing people with disabilities for jobs and supporting them throughout a transition into a new role, employee retention increases while people with disabilities are supported to reach their full potential and maximize productivity.

Private sector and NGO partnerships are mutually beneficial. Sharing skills, knowledge and experiences between stakeholders can bring new innovation and improved technological solutions for increased disability inclusion whilst contributing to business effectiveness and success; these advances can increase organizational reputation as leaders in diversity and inclusion. As the demand for disability inclusive employment grows, the shared experience is increasingly showcased as a best practice for corporations, creating invaluable models to transform the workplace to become disability inclusive.



Moussa Diamanka, Handicap International Project Manager, in the packaging department of a cashew processing facility.

© J.-J. Bernard / Handicap International

## Case Studies

LCD and HI have long and successful track records of developing and implementing inclusive employment strategies and programs with the private sector, and provide tailored advice and expertise to the private sector on employment best practices. Their programs demonstrate how employers can make their recruitment and hiring processes more inclusive; how people with disabilities can be prepared to land decent, waged jobs; and how companies can retain employees with disabilities in the long-term. Examples of HI and LCD's programs in Morocco, Senegal, India, Bangladesh and the Philippines are highlighted below.

### Working with multinational corporations in North and West Africa to employ people with disabilities

Handicap International works with small, medium, and multinational corporations to increase employment of people with disabilities. This report specifically highlights HI's inclusive employment work in Morocco and Senegal. Programs in both countries share the common goal to improve access to livelihoods and adequate income through formal paid employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Businesses achieve better standards of inclusion and job seekers with disabilities enjoy access to work when two key things happen. First, job-seekers with disabilities must have opportunities to develop their skills and core competencies. Second, prospective employers and their existing staff must learn about the benefits of employing people with disabilities, and commit to transforming the workplace to become inclusive.

HI's three-year project to improve access to employment for young people with disabilities in Morocco's Greater Casablanca region ended in January 2017. In that time, teams raised awareness and supported companies working to employ staff with disabilities, improve their living conditions, and reduce inequalities in Morocco.

The project focused on four areas: 1) improving the capacity of vocational inclusion services to support young people with disabilities, 2) improving



Students learn sewing skills at the Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children in Morocco.

© A. Vincens de Tapol / Handicap International

employability of young people with disabilities, 3) mobilizing and supporting companies to recruit, integrate and retain young people with disabilities, and 4) strengthening business networks to improve their cooperation, their mutual understanding, and their mutual aid. Operational partners were the Moroccan Association of the Disabled Persons (AMH) and the National Association for the Inclusion of Persons in Situ of Mental Disability (ANAIS).

The project was built on the basis of a network of actors representing private and public professional inclusion organizations, DPOs, the Collective for the Promotion of Rights and Citizenship of Persons with Disabilities for the Casablanca-Settat Region, and Moroccan companies represented in particular by the General Confederation of Moroccan Enterprises



(CGEM), a trade union. Many individuals and businesses directly benefited, including:

- ✓ **32 employers** trained on disability inclusive employment
- ✓ **55 young people with disabilities** signed long-term contracts in Moroccan companies
- ✓ **136 young people with disabilities** received individual support in building and advancing their careers
- ✓ **25 service providers** improved their skills in the field of vocational inclusion for people with disabilities
- ✓ **14 social workers** learned to provide personalized support focused on professional inclusion of people with disabilities

The project ensured that social workers and employment counsellors were ready to help job seekers with a disability to find employment. In addition, the project yielded a new jobs database and ensured that coaching was provided to both the employee and the employer as needed. As a result, businesses, inclusion organizations, and DPOs now enjoy a stronger network. Going forward, they develop a unified vision of inclusive employment of individuals with disabilities in Morocco. Each month, working groups meet to share information and references and drive forward the shared vision of the network.

Complementary to HI's work in Morocco, The Employment of Persons with Disabilities in Senegal (EMPHAS) program, started in January 2014, emphasizes the inclusion of young people and women with disabilities in private sector employment in the Dakar region. Replicating similar practices to

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**“Give people with disabilities an opportunity to work and they will show you what they can do. 100% of employers are satisfied with recruitment.”**

— ABELD ILAH RABJJ, SOCIAL WORKER AND HEAD OF THE INCLUSION SERVICE AT AMH GROUP, MOROCCO

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HI's work in Morocco, HI simultaneously seeks to improve the skills of job seekers with disabilities, ensuring that newly inclusive corporations interested in hiring people with disabilities can access the workplace. Since there is a high corporate social responsibility (CSR) culture in Senegal, this program operates under a CSR umbrella, which is a unique approach utilized for the Senegalese context.

HI's work in Senegal empowers job seekers with disabilities through market aligned technical training, soft skills training, and internship placements. Simultaneously, the program focuses on preparing the work environment for job seekers with disabilities, by addressing environmental and social barriers within the work environment and by training staff. This ensures that the workplace is physically ready for a diverse workforce, but also that staff are trained and ready to employ job seekers with disabilities.

Two key corporate partners within HI's Senegal program are BICIS (BNP Paribas) and Zena Exotic Fruits. In addition, HI works with a diverse range of stakeholders in Senegal, including: CSR



Mamadou Lamine Coly of Senegal works as a maintenance technician at the state computer agency.

© A. Vincens de Tapol / Handicap International

Initiative of Senegal, Senegal's Ministry of Youth, Employment and Promotion of Civic Values, Ministry of Vocational Training, Learning and Crafts, Employment Directorate, Ministry of Employment, Ministry of Vocational Training, National Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment (ANEJ), Youth Employment Agency of the Banlieues (AJEB), National Office for Professional Training (ONFP), Fund for the Development of Technical Education and Vocational Training (FONDEF), Ministry of Youth, Employment and Promotion of Civic Values, Ministry of Vocational Training, Learning and Development Crafts, and multiple DPOs in the Dakar region.

Initial project impact includes:

- ✓ **151 people with disabilities** benefited from personalized support given by social workers, employment advisers, and group soft skills training to improve attitudinal and communication skills
- ✓ **62 people with disabilities** benefited from vocational trainings: 37 have earned diplomas, 19 have completed an internship, and 25 are currently being trained
- ✓ **53 people with disabilities** are currently employed and 31 are in the process of starting their own businesses
- ✓ **24 corporates** have recognized diversity as part of their CSR: Zena Exotic Fruits, BICIS, Dakar Dem Dikk, Sonatel, Eiffage, Pcci, Bollore, Fumao/Cofisag, Aibd, Ams/Ville de Guediawaye, DP World, Semicoa, Group Accor, Bio 24, Banque Atlantique, Adie/Chat, Ville de Pikine, Fonction Publique, Neurotech, Gfm, Cbao, Bnde, Iam Gold, Helios/Fritsen, and Aftu
- ✓ **11 corporations** have signed the diversity charter: Accor Hotels, Bicis Laboratoire, IO

**"When I get up in the morning I look at my face in the mirror, I do not see a man with a disability, I see a man who is going to work."**

— ANOUAR GHATEBI, ACCOUNTANT  
AT PRESFICO, MOROCCO

24, Cfao, Eiffage, Laiterie du Berger, Sodefitex Sonatel, Total, Wartsila, and DP World Dakar

- ✓ **11 employers** have hired workers with disabilities: Zena Exotic Fruits, Pcci, Ddd, Bicis, Banque Atlantique, Adie/Chat, Ville de Pikine, Fonction Publique, and Aftu
- ✓ **5 employers** have interns with disabilities: Eiffage, Bolloré, DP World, Simecoa, and BICIS

*Thank you to the following  
HI partners whose dedication  
to disability inclusive  
employment has made  
our work possible:*



## Leonard Cheshire Disability working in partnership with Accenture in South Asia, East Asia, and South Africa

Leonard Cheshire Disability works in partnership with small, medium and global corporations and foundations to influence the inclusive development agenda, including Accenture, Anglo American and Vitol Foundation.

Accenture and LCD's partnership arose out of shared values of inclusion, diversity, innovation and global responsibility. The partnership is part of Accenture's corporate citizenship initiative, Skills to Succeed, which aimed to equip 700,000 people around the world by 2015 with the skills to get a job or build a business. Accenture decided to partner with LCD to bring to life Accenture's commitment to equipping people with the skills to get a job or build a business.

The partnership started in 2008, launching the 'Access to Livelihoods' (A2L) program supporting people with disabilities to gain the skills they need to

**“There is a huge talent pool which has been unnoticed. What LCD Livelihood's Resource Centre is doing is they prepare people, so they come with the knowledge of the industry. The Livelihoods Resource Centre...they are doing a great job.”**

— R. HARI, GENERAL MANAGER, HUMAN RESOURCES, LEMON TREE HOTELS GROUP

enter employment or start their own business. Over this period the program has expanded from four countries in South Asia; India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan to 28 locations in six countries including the Philippines and South Africa.

A significant component of the program is supporting access to waged employment. Over 25,000 people with disabilities have received

### Leonard Cheshire Disability's livelihoods model:

The model has evolved into a multi-sector approach that identifies and creates links with key local players, including training institutes, employers, financial institutions and local governments mostly through "Livelihood Resource Centers (LRCs)." These are unique spaces; a 'one-stop shop' for people with disabilities who are seeking employment. LRCs provide a wide range of services under one roof, designed to open up opportunities for disabled people to develop marketable skills, including social and life skills, as well as linking them to waged (and self-employment) opportunities.



© Leonard Cheshire Disability

skills training and about 18,000 are employed or have started their own business since 2008, covering over 70 sectors. In the last three years of the partnership, 6,168 people with disabilities have accessed waged employment in 1,987 businesses such as Accenture, Vodafone, Aegis, Intercontinental Hotels, Standard Chartered, Infosys, IBM, Concentrix, Aegis, EMC2, Shell, Costa Coffee, Barclays and Lemon Tree Hotels.

Within the A2L project, the actual cost per person reached is USD 264 which is inclusive of all management costs; proving to be a cost effective approach to meeting individual needs associated with employment and disability inclusivity.

Through the A2L program, LCD builds relationships with training institutes, local employers, banks and microfinance providers, other disability organizations, community stakeholders and policy makers.

LCD has many examples of employment opportunities secured through the Access to Livelihoods program:

### Henkel in the Philippines

In the Philippines the development of positive relationships with partner employers is the key



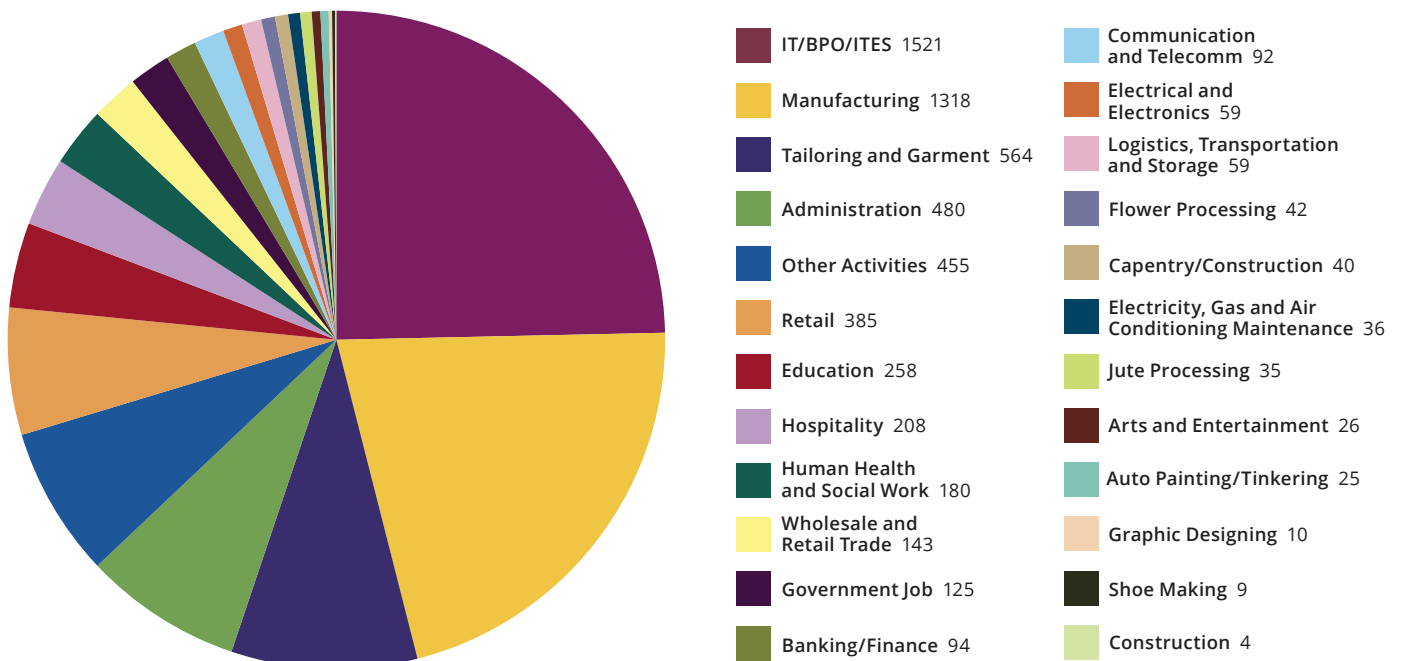
Michelle Musngi is one of the Deaf employees at Henkel. "My hope for the future is to work with other people with disabilities and train them. I want to learn many things and raise awareness that deaf people can work."

© Leonard Cheshire Disability

to successfully placing people with disabilities in meaningful work situations.

Henkel is a multinational corporation based in Manila and are a partner employer of LCD. Two female high school graduates with hearing difficulties have been placed with Henkel through the Talent Pathway project. Not only has this supported each of the people with disabilities to earn a high income that is sustainable through

### Waged employment in Asia and Africa through the Access to Livelihoods program since 2014



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**“We want to make Unilever/Henkel as inclusive to people with disabilities as we possibly can, and LCD have been instrumental here in the Philippines in doing so. We need them to help us globally to achieve our goals.”**

— EMPLOYEE FROM HENKEL, PHILIPPINES

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full-time employment, but the program has also raised awareness in the company about the quality of the work that people with disabilities are capable of completing. As the employer’s representative explained, “We were not expecting that a person with a disability would work so quickly or to such a high quality. Now we have had our eyes opened we are extending our collaboration with LCD.”

### **Partnership between Leonard Cheshire Disability Bangladesh (LCDB) and AnonTex in Bangladesh**

The long-term collaboration between LCDB and AnonTex was initiated through a shared understanding of the need to develop inclusive workplaces and provide support for people with disabilities in Bangladesh. As a result, AnonTex now employs 60 people with disabilities. AnonTex knows that through working with LCDB and



© Leonard Cheshire Disability

investing in people with disabilities, they can extend their potential pool of employees, access talent and expertise, and extend their reputation as an inclusive employer.

When AnonTex initially started recruiting people with disabilities, LCDB were consulted to assess six sister companies for accessibility in the workplace and provide recommendations to ensure that the workspaces were supportive and that reasonable adjustments were made for people with disabilities. AnonTex now provides specific induction training for each of the units within the company before people with disabilities start working in the company.

“The company realises its responsibility towards the community, and the management is especially compassionate about people with disabilities,” said Faisal Reza, the company’s HR Manager. “The welfare of people with disabilities has been integrated into the company’s corporate social responsibility projects as well.”

AnonTex are now actively seeking the recruitment of people with disabilities from Dhaka University. They have provided the university with a braille printer to support visually impaired post-graduate students and have made a commitment to provide potential job placements and on-the-job training for people with disabilities in its various branches for the next decade, thus ensuring the sustainability of the program and a sustainable source of qualified, quality potential employees.

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**“The company realises its responsibility towards the community, and the management is especially compassionate about people with disabilities. The welfare of people with disabilities has been integrated into the company’s corporate social responsibility projects as well.”**

— FAISAL REZA, HR MANAGER, ANONTEX

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© Leonard Cheshire Disability

## SUN ITES Consulting Private Ltd, Bangalore

Sun ITES Consulting Private Limited is a technology and management service firm which encourages employment of people with disabilities.

The Livelihood Resource Centre at Cheshire Homes India, Bengaluru has been placing its candidates with a disability in Sun ITes Consulting Private Limited since 2012. Ms. Anuradha, LRC manager says, “recently the Human Resource unit of Sun ITes contacted us for candidates who are good at typing and MS office software. To meet Sun ITES requirements, we organized a special recruitment drive at JSS Polytechnic in July 2017 after providing foundation and aptitude training. 40 diploma candidates attended the typing test and personal interviews. We were able to select 20 potential candidates for the role of Trainee Process Executive. The position offered a salary of Rs.8000 per month, which would be revised after a period of 6 months.”



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## Jyothi Ganapathi, Accenture

“We are proud that the Access to Livelihoods program, funded by Accenture, now supports about 50,000 people with disabilities worldwide to access skills training, work placements and opportunities to run their own businesses.

Our team in India helped create LCD’s Jobability portal through the ‘Access to Livelihoods’ project for enabling employment for people with disabilities.

In addition we also provide opportunities for people with disabilities to build their careers at Accenture in India. Today, our employees with disabilities operate in a variety of roles and levels, including at leadership levels, across the organization. To best equip people with disabilities and to support their specific needs in our workspace, we continue to introduce new and customized programs and these have helped in building an ecosystem that enables them to fully participate and perform to the best of their abilities.”

## Reaching beyond your borders: Practices to take back to your company

Excited about transforming your global workforce, but don't know where to start? Here are our top tips for global disability-inclusive employment:

### 1. Recruit qualified job seekers

People with disabilities are often hard to reach as many are unable to access information about job opportunities. Businesses should work with NGOs to:

- Create partnerships between vocational training centers and/or universities and employers for training placements, apprenticeships, and jobs.
- Establish dialogue with representatives of people with disabilities such as DPOs to effectively identify, recruit, and support potential job seekers with disabilities.
- Utilize Livelihood Resource Centers and similar community spaces, which are able to share information about upcoming job opportunities with qualified candidates

**In Bangladesh**, LCDB offered support to people with disabilities employed in garment factories, which improved productivity and retention levels of employees with disabilities.

**In Sri Lanka**, a 'Buddy System' which was used at Courtaulds Clothing for increasing successful employment of people with disabilities. The HR manager reported that the buddy system was "very useful in facilitating the inclusion of people with disabilities in the work environment."

and work with employers to identify roles within their organization that are suitable for candidates with disabilities.

- Allow NGOs to prepare job seekers to enter the formal workplace by providing soft skills training and practical introductions to waged employment. This is especially important for young people with disabilities and/or individuals who may face potential challenges in the workplace.

### 2. Adopt a tailored, holistic approach

When hiring employees with disabilities, businesses should shift from a one-size-fits-all



© Leonard Cheshire Disability

to a tailor-made approach, remembering that people with disabilities have various professional needs, capacities and interests. To support this, businesses should:

- Understand that talented job seekers from diverse backgrounds may not have equal access to opportunities due to lifelong marginalization. Teaching human resource personnel to review resumes and cover letters taking into consideration diverse backgrounds will help increase the level of diversity in a corporation's talent pool.
- Ask employees with disabilities to help define what reasonable accommodations are needed, preventing unnecessary and costly alterations.
- In some cases, provide transportation to trainings and/or the workplace.
- Work with partners, whether NGOs or medical service providers, to ensure all health and medical needs of employees are met.

### 3. Match skills to jobs

Companies usually have a wide range of positions which can be filled by a range of job seekers with disabilities. If companies identify diverse candidates with disabilities whose skills and qualifications do not entirely match the role they applied for, human resources should consider them for other roles. When sourcing talent, companies can work with NGOs to:

- Support job seekers with disabilities with low levels of education in finding jobs that require no or few qualifications, and job seekers with disabilities with high levels of education or training in finding work where they can utilize their skills and education.
- Recognize that certain types of disability should not be pigeon-holed into certain professions or roles, e.g. people with autism working in IT or people with physical disabilities being suited for non-physical, office based work.



Mariama Ba, who had polio, works in the production unit at a cashew processing facility. © J-J. Bernard / Handicap International

### 4. Create an accessible work environment

Businesses should ensure they provide an accessible workplace. NGOs can help businesses by assessing individual and environmental accessibility, and providing corresponding disability specific services and environmental adaptations. Businesses should consider the following to improve accessibility:

- Promote reasonable accommodation: NGOs can help businesses create an annual centralized budget line, separate from each team's individual operating budget, for reasonable accommodation and workplace adaptation requests (such as mobility devices or communication devices). Many adaptations are often no-cost adaptations to work hours and tasks; for example, allowing flexible working hours or allowing someone to sit rather than stand to perform a task. For employees whose accommodation does cost money, typically the accommodation



is a one-time, low cost expenditure.<sup>9</sup> (For example, 46% of employers interviewed by the U.S. Department of Labor reported workplace accommodations related to disability cost a median \$500.)<sup>10</sup>

- Ensure tools, messages and trainings at work and within job preparation are available in accessible formats such as large print, pictorial and audio formats, accompanied by sign language interpretation and are held in accessible venues.
- Harness technological innovation to extend reach to, and better support people with disabilities in the workplace.

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**“I work at Accenture, and I have a hearing impairment. The LCD team worked with the placement manager and the company to support me and my team so that they were aware of what I could and couldn’t do. As a result, I feel that the team know how to include me, and treat me well. Thank you LCD.”**

— FEMALE WITH A HEARING IMPAIRMENT, PHILIPPINES

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## 5. Cultivate leaders’ commitment to inclusion

Leadership commitment to disability inclusion is one of the most important factors in creating an inclusive workforce. Top management should initiate and drive changes in a company, starting with the implementation of an inclusion action plan. When working to change the internal inclusion culture, first focus on the recruitment of people with disabilities, then a diversity policy, then broader workforce transformation and CSR. Businesses should:

- Invest in disability sensitization and awareness programs to support the recruitment of persons with disabilities and help to break the myths and unconscious bias towards disability in each workplace.
- Find innovative ways to raise awareness across the company. For example, is there a culture of morning coffee in the office? Have weekly or monthly disability awareness coffee sessions to teach people about disability during a regularly scheduled break during the day. Does everyone in the office come together for lunch? Invite guest speakers (preferably with disabilities) to chat to your company about employment and accommodation.
- Provide specific training for key individuals across departments, such as HR, General Services, and Managers.
- Develop a disability policy with a code of conduct. Publicize this widely with an awareness campaign on diversity and disability.
- Appoint disability ambassadors and utilize employer forums, as these are effective ways to promote and share good practice on disability inclusion internally and between external businesses.
- Support a disability focal point in each unit within the business, to ensure information reaches all areas of the company and to support workers with disabilities.

## 6. Provide post-placement support

Workplace inclusion efforts do not stop when employees with disabilities are hired. Especially for less experienced employees with disabilities, businesses can improve productivity and retention, as well as encourage promotion, by:

- Clearly laying out expectations for the role to each employee through a detailed

9 Job Accommodation Network/Office of Disability Employment Policy Report: “Workplace Accommodations: Low Cost, High Impact”, 2015

10 U.S. Department of Labor, “Making Workplace Accommodations: Reasonable Costs, Big Benefits,” <https://www.dol.gov/odep/documents/reasonableaccommodations.pdf>

orientation, to help them understand both their individual responsibilities and workplace norms.

- Encouraging and facilitating career development for people with disabilities. For example, companies could create an *internal* mentorship program to provide additional support to young employees with disabilities on how to advance their careers.
- Have a go-to resource for support and problem solving (such as an NGO partner or colleagues at another business). Have periodic check-ins on both the business side and with the employee for at least 3-6 months after hiring to ensure a smooth transition into the role and to overcome any challenges.
- Deploy ambassador employees with disabilities: engaging people with disabilities as ambassadors who are successful in working in the business environment demonstrates to current employees that the company values a diverse business

environment, encourages employees with disabilities to self-identify to the company, and increases external applications from job seekers with disabilities.

Companies of all sizes have the resources and ability to set a global example of how to successfully employ people with disabilities within the mainstream workforce. We salute those leaders who are prioritizing disability inclusion in the workplace and we welcome businesses who are ready to step up to make disability inclusion a part of their success.

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**“Although laws and quotas for hiring people with disabilities do not exist for private companies [in Morocco], we must immediately adopt a positive policy and encourage the hiring of people with disabilities.”**

— RAJAE TAZI SIDQUI, CSR CERTIFICATION OFFICER, CGEM, MOROCCO

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## Interested in learning more?

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Mrs. Sow, owner and manager of an embroidery and sewing workshop in Senegal, employs six people.

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