



# TAKING THE 'DIS' OUT OF DISABILITY IN EMPLOYMENT AND ENTERPRISE

Are you missing out on disability inclusion?

Are you disability confident?

APT Action on Poverty (APT) is offering consultancy services to help businesses recruit and retain people with disabilities, removing the myths that surround the employment of people with disabilities and accessing the opportunities they present.

# THE BUSINESS CASE

There are four major reasons why disability inclusion makes good business sense: reaching new customers and market segments, competitive advantage, improved corporate image and stronger workforce.

**“IT IS NOT JUST A ‘GOOD’ THING TO DO – IT IS ALSO GOOD FOR BUSINESS. AT 1.1 BILLION STRONG WORLDWIDE, PWD REPRESENT AN UNTAPPED MARKET THAT RIVALS CHINA IN SCALE. THE DISABILITY SPACE IS THE HIDDEN ‘D’ IN DIVERSITY, ANOTHER COHORT WAITING TO BE DISCOVERED AND ENGAGED AS A CONSUMER.”**

Massimo d’Amore, CEO, PepsiCo Beverages America

## Key myths

There are some key myths surrounding the employment of people with disabilities (PWD) in the workplace, not least ‘it’s too difficult’ and it ‘costs too much’. Yet hiring and accommodating PWD is not as difficult or costly as you may think; there are many examples of good practices of disability inclusion in the workplace, and the benefits that PWD bring.

There are four major reasons why disability inclusion makes good business sense: reaching new customers and market segments, competitive advantage, stronger workforce and improved corporate image.

## 1. Reaching new customers and market segments

More than 10% of the world’s population lives with a disability. In some countries following conflict, this is much higher. A company that reflects the communities it serves is likely to provide a better service to customers with disabilities and appeal to new market segments, thus consolidating and expanding its customer base.

### Example. Standard Bank South Africa

Employing over 27,000 people, Standard Bank South Africa (SBSA) published a Disability Policy in 2014 and a Guide to Managing Disability in the Workplace to eradicate discrimination and fulfil its commitment to mainstreaming PWD in their workforce. SBSA has also developed Disability Guidelines focusing on the needs and rights of customers with disabilities.

SBSA views diversity as critical to the success of its business strategy, driving innovation and enabling them to remain socially relevant in a fast-changing world. SBSA aims to employ a diverse workforce, able to understand and serve their equally diverse customer base. SBSA’s inclusive culture aims to help employees feel empowered and motivated.

### Example. Safaricom, Kenya

Safaricom, one of Kenya’s biggest telecommunications companies, has made a conscious effort to boost its employment of PWD. PWD comprised 1.4% of its workforce in 2017. It has adjusted the way it does business to attract more PWD; including longer call limits and extra breaks for call centre staff with visual impairments and distributing special computers throughout the office to avoid marginalising PWD in one area. The adjustments have been guided by input from the Kenya Union for the Blind.

## 2. Competitive advantage

International frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) present opportunities as well as challenges for businesses:

- The Sustainable Development Goals drive towards better equality; with a call to ‘Leave No One Behind’, with SDG 8 promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
- The UNCRPD, passed in 2006 and ratified by over 150 countries, requires routine mainstreaming of disability issues across society, including in the labour market.

These international demands have long-term implications. Employers will need to comply with working directives that governments introduce to implement CRPD obligations, such as recruitment quotas for PWD or accessibility in the workplace. More importantly, public authorities are increasingly looking to do business with companies that act in accordance with the CRPD and can meet accessibility standards. Such companies – and companies in their supply chain – will have an edge on their competitors and thrive in a global economy that increasingly values social responsibility.

Forward-looking companies are already engaging proactively with this agenda, for example by signing up to the UN Global Compact or the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Global Business and Disability Network.

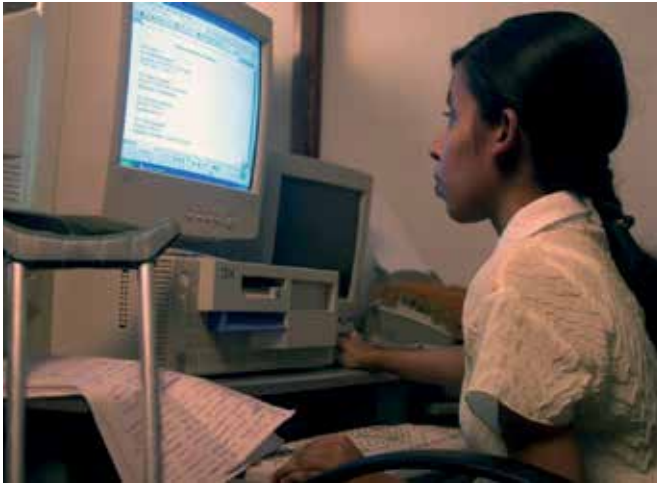
International commitments on disability inclusion have also driven governments to introduce tax credits and other financial incentives for employing PWD.



### **ILO Global Business and Disability Network**

The ILO Global Business and Disability Network, is a partnership of nearly 40 multinational enterprises, employers’ organisations, business networks and disabled persons’ organisations who share the conviction that including people with disabilities makes good business sense. Participants include Accenture, AXA, Accor, Carrefour, Standard Bank in South Africa and networks such as Employers’ Federation of Ceylon and the Qaderoon Business Disability Network, Saudi Arabia.





### 3. Improved corporate image

Many people prefer to buy from or do business with ethical companies that are committed to corporate social responsibility and have fair hiring practices, both nationally and internationally. Tapping into the aforementioned global trends towards disability inclusion and private sector accountability will significantly improve corporate image.

### 4. Stronger workforce

According to research in Uganda by Community Action Research on Disability, employers reported workers with disabilities as having positive attributes such as: reliable and stable; easy to motivate; efficient and committed.

Other benefits of disability inclusion in the workforce are diversification of skills and increased potential for innovation.

#### **Example. Bakery Café, Nepal**

Nanglo International manages the Bakery Café chain with seven outlets in Katmandu. 43 of its employees are deaf. They work mainly as waiters/waitresses, although two are bartenders and four have been promoted to shift captain. Nanglo began hiring its deaf staff after approaching the Nepal Deaf Organization to find qualified applicants. Nanglo's hiring criteria and standards are the same for all applicants. Nanglo happily discovered that its customers were very accepting of the new staff.

#### **Example. CEI Plastics, Sri Lanka**

Within Sri Lanka's Employers' Network on Disability, CEI Plastics is a role model. It has demonstrated that workers with disabilities are as – or more – productive than their non-disabled peers. According to CEI factory director Anver Dole, 'Disabled workers are eager to learn, easy to teach and generally more conscientious than their non-disabled peers. Their production is often way above the average, and they interact very well with other employees.' CEI Plastics' disabled employees are fully integrated into its range of assembly and manufacturing lines. CEI Plastics has also placed disabled workers in every area of its business, including its storefronts, repair shops and accounting office.

# HOW WE CAN HELP

APT can help by providing training and advice to build capacity across a company to include people with disabilities, and/or providing direct services to facilitate this. The following are examples of how we can help; they can be adapted and are not an exhaustive list.

## RECRUITING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

- Sources
- Processes
- Mobilisation
- Collective Consultations

## RETENTION AND SUPPORT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

- Engaging families
- Working with role models
- Mentoring and support

## SKILLING POTENTIAL OR EXISTING EMPLOYEES

- Pre-training for the world of work and employment
- Apprenticeships and work placements
- Vocational training centres and providers

## MAINSTREAMING DISABILITY AND EQUALITY TRAINING

- Unpacking disability
- Barriers and social exclusion
- Mainstreaming tools

## DEVELOPING A SUPPORTIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

- Preparation for trainers, employers, colleagues
- Partnerships and linkages (e.g. with DPOs, training providers, employers groups)
- Exchanges and secondments

## WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATION

- Adaptations for men and women with different impairments
- Reasonable accommodation

# ABOUT US

**APT is a UK based NGO with many years' experience in Sub Saharan Africa and South Asia, including helping people with disabilities to access employment. We can provide practical and tailored advisory services for inclusion of PWD in decent work.**

According to ILO research from 2014, global past experience shows that the business case for hiring PWD is definitely viable if companies approach it in the right way. APT can provide practical and tailored advisory services to companies on how best to do this. We can work with small, medium, national businesses or branches of international companies.

APT and our partners act to remove barriers to quality productive employment for PWD. Through practical experience, and working in partnership, APT has learnt how to overcome some of the key challenges that PWD face: discrimination; internalised oppression (limited ambition); social and physical isolation. To help businesses secure the benefits of PWD inclusion, we have taken proactive action at different levels:

- Enabling service providers and private sector employers to become more inclusive of PWD, through appropriate analysis, skills and awareness.
- Reaching, mobilising and mentoring PWD in a variety of ways.
- Undertaking market-based assessments of employment opportunities for PWD.
- Developing and enhancing disability appropriate vocational training to meet market opportunities and address skills deficits.
- Assisting businesses to lead the way in inclusive practice by disseminating role models and approaches more widely.

We have not focused exclusively on one form of disability, but have extended our support to marginalised people of all abilities, women and men.



## About APT

Established in 1984 and with 30 years' experience, APT is focussed on providing economic solutions to address hunger, injustice and barriers to safe and lasting work for marginalised groups in Sub Saharan Africa and South Asia.

## Over 15 years' experience

In facilitating access by PWD to employment (in enterprise or employed by others)

## Practical, hands-on tool kit

To facilitate the inclusion of people living with a wide range of disabilities in employment throughout analysis, development, implementation, monitoring and learning. As well as a process of mainstreaming the inclusion of PWD in business operations this includes specific training modules in delivering disability inclusion in accessing employment, which can be tailored to the requirements of staff.

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### **A wide range of partnerships**

With others to ensure on-going employment of PWD, including national and local Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs), individuals, businesses, service providers in vocational training, and if appropriate local/regional governments. Through these connections and partnerships we can help to establish mechanisms for ongoing inclusion.

### **Expertise in the implementation and monitoring of projects**

Many years' experience in the implementation and monitoring of projects to meet institutional requirements e.g. Department for International Development, European Commission, World Bank, United Nations. This can help businesses meet compliance requirements for national and international tenders.

### **Focus countries**

APT has established partnerships in Kenya, Uganda, Sierra Leone, and Sri Lanka. We are also available to work elsewhere.

### **A database of experts and partners**

We have a database of experts and partners, including links with national and district disabled persons' organisations.

### **An example of APT's work with the textile industry in Sri Lanka**

Under a larger programme preparing PWD for formal and informal employment, APT worked with Community Business and Technology Developers to facilitate a relationship between Thelambuyaya Vocational Training Centre (VTC) and the garment factory RME Apparels. The technical training and support provided by RME Apparels and the willingness of the VTC to accommodate a short course enabled a high number of PWD (mostly deaf) to secure employment in several garment factories in the area. The collaboration has had a lasting influence on the way that students are supported into employment. The VTC now considers finding employment for their graduates as part of their responsibility, even without a mandate from the Department of Social Services. The centre also conducted a business awareness seminar for a group of 20 past students with the assistance of the Hambantota Chamber of Commerce and Industry.



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MAKING A BIG IMPACT**

**CONTACT US TO DISCUSS YOUR  
REQUIREMENTS AND HOW WE  
CAN WORK TOGETHER**

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