



Promoting the Employability and Employment of People with Disabilities through Effective Legislation (PEPDEL)

Historically, people with disabilities have been among the most economically impoverished, politically marginalized, and least visible members of their societies globally. Yet this group represents approximately 10 per cent of the world's population, or more than 650 million people, of whom 470 million are of working age. This includes people with physical, sensory, intellectual and psycho-social disabilities. According to UN statistics, 82 per cent of disabled people in developing countries live below the poverty line, and are among the most vulnerable and marginalized in these countries; an estimated 20 per cent of all people living on less than US\$ 1 worldwide are people with disabilities. Their opportunities to emerge from poverty are limited in many cases by the lack of enabling legislation to promote their access to skills development (including life skills, technical skills and entrepreneurship skills) and employment opportunities; and, the weak implementation and enforcement measures, where such legislation is in place. Women with disabilities face greater difficulties than their male counterparts or than non-disabled women in earning a living,¹ and people with disabilities living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) are frequently overlooked in policy and programme measures.²

The PEPDEL Project – from a Medical Model to a Rights-based Approach

The ILO Project “*Promoting the Employability and Employment of People with Disabilities through Effective Legislation*” furthers the review and reform of disability-related training and employment laws and policies, and their effective implementation in selected countries of East and Southern Africa, Asia and the Pacific. It involves governments, social partners and organizations of persons with disabilities in activities and events linked to the review or development of disability-related legislation and policies. In addition, the Project seeks to collaborate with national training agencies, employment services and university law faculties to ensure a commitment to catering to persons with disabilities and to including a disability perspective in their programmes and services and curricula.

¹ O'Reilly, A. (2007): *The right to decent work of persons with disabilities* (ILO, Geneva).

² World Bank (2004): *HIV/AIDS & disability: Capturing hidden voices*. The World Bank/Yale University Global Survey on HIV/AIDS and Disability.

PEPDEL is funded by the Irish Government under the framework of the ILO/Irish Aid Partnership Programme. To date, participating regions and countries have included:

- **East and Southern Africa:** Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Seychelles, South Africa, Sudan, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, and Zambia;
- **Asia and the Pacific:** Australia, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Japan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor l' Este and Viet Nam.

The Project is now entering its third three-year period, Phase 3, which will operate from 2008 to 2011, and will focus on China, Ethiopia, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Thailand, Viet Nam and Zambia.

Project Background

The main elements of the Project under Phase 1 (from 2002 to 2004) and Phase 2 (from 2005 to 2007) were:

- building a knowledge base on laws, policies and implementation measures concerning the training and employment of persons with disabilities in East Africa and Asia;
- developing practical tools on the development of laws and policies, and resource manuals on good practice in training and employment of disabled persons;
- building capacity at national level to promote equal opportunities and treatment in laws, policies and programmes concerning the training and employment of disabled persons through sub-regional and national meetings and workshops;
- promoting positive images of persons with disabilities and tackling mistaken assumptions and negative stereotypes through promotional materials and activities involving the media;
- supporting the review, revision or development of disability-related legislation, policies or implementation measures to countries on request through the provision of technical advice and support to national consultations;
- developing and pilot-testing of a third-level curriculum on employment-related legislation concerning persons with disabilities, in collaboration with universities in participating countries;
- training of key stakeholders (including government officials, employers', workers' and disabled persons' representatives, and judges) on disability-related employment and training laws and policies;
- involving of the social partners, disabled persons' organizations and civil society groups in the planning and implementation of project activities, including initiatives to promote employment and training opportunities for disabled persons.

PEPDEL tools and promotional materials include the following:

- Guidelines for drafters of legislation '*Achieving Equal Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities through Legislation*', developed and made available in several language versions: Amharic, Chinese, English, Khmer, Kiswahili, Laotian, Mongolian, Thai and Vietnamese, as well as French and Spanish.
- A generic training curriculum on disability legislation, policies and their implementation developed in collaboration with Cornell University, finalized following customization and pilot testing in six Programme countries.
- A compendium of methodologies used in collecting statistical data on persons with disabilities in the labour force.
- Guidelines on the collection of labour force statistics concerning persons with disabilities, developed in collaboration with the ILO Bureau of Statistics.
- Video featuring the business case for the employment of persons with disabilities, available in several language versions: Chinese, English, Khmer, Mongolian, Romanian and Vietnamese; country-based videos developed in China, Thailand and Viet Nam.
- An ILO Employers' Resource Manual for Asia and the Pacific Region was finalized with support from the project. The manual includes case studies of employers hiring people with disabilities, a section on the proper use of language when referring to disabled persons and contact details for relevant in-country services and information centres for employers.
- Video featuring trade union action to promote opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- Photo exhibitions.
- A publication on Disability and HIV/AIDS was translated into Amharic, printed and distributed in 2006.

The Strategy

Phase 3 of the PEPDEL Project continues to promote the further review and revision of relevant legislation, regulations and their improved implementation and enforcement to enhance the employability and employment of persons with disabilities. To achieve these aims, collaboration will take place with the following ILO partners: the International Training Centre in Turin; the ILO Branch on Social Dialogue, Labour Law and Labour Administration; the ILO International Labour Standards Department; the ILO Bureau for GENDER Equality; ILO Programme on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work (ILO/AIDS); and, the ILO Bureau of Statistics.

Project Aims

- Increased capacity of national government participant countries to collaborate with employers', workers', and disabled persons' organizations in planning the implementation of effective legislation, policy and programmes addressing the employability and employment of persons with disabilities, with particular attention to women with disabilities and disabled persons living with HIV/AIDS;
- Strengthened implementation and enforcement of employment-related laws and policies; and
- Sustained attention to disability perspectives in laws and policies through greater involvement of universities in sensitizing existing and future generations of lawyers.

Key Elements of PEPDEL

- Development of national action plans to improve the implementation of laws and policies concerning the employability and employment of persons with disabilities, in collaboration with government and key stakeholders, including employers', workers' and disabled persons' representatives.
- Strengthening the impact of legislation and policies on the employability of persons with disabilities through promotion of an inclusive approach to mainstream training and improved labour market relevance of courses offered by National Vocational Training agencies.
- Involvement of employers' organizations in pilot-testing and promoting innovative forms of employment of disabled persons.
- Involvement of workers' organizations in promoting equality of opportunity and job retention for workers and jobseekers with disabilities.
- Strengthening the capacity of disability advocates to effectively advocate for sustained attention to disability issues in training and employment.
- Training in disability equality legislation made available to key stakeholders through national training institutions.
- Strengthening the capacity of governments, social partners and disability advocates to draft and implement disability legislation in line with international standards.

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For additional information:
www.ilo.org/employment/disability

