

What problems do people with disabilities encounter in the workplace?

Just getting a job is the first barrier. And for people who become disabled while working, keeping their job or continuing to work can be a problem. Too often people with disabilities have not had a proper education, lack skills training and therefore cannot compete. When they do get training or are working, they may have to deal with negative attitudes and stereotypes, discrimination or lack of accessibility, both in terms of physical and digital environments. People who want to start their own businesses may face discrimination in accessing credit and business development services. We are, however, starting to see this situation turn around with more people with disabilities succeeding in the job market and the marketplace.

What motivated you to put together the resource manual?

The ILO has a great deal of information about disability available in various online locations. The Disability Inclusion Toolkit and Resource Manual puts together basic information and resources in hardcopy and online manuals – right at people's fingertips. We wanted to help staff get the right information at the right time in one easily accessible volume.

What exactly does the manual include?

The manual includes resources from a variety of sources, for example, internal ILO policies and international standards related to disability rights, guidance notes, checklists and case studies with practical advice about how to include disabled people in projects, development frameworks and technical areas. It also includes newly developed information sheets that answer frequently asked questions about accessibility and disability inclusion and resources to tap to learn more. The online version of the manual can be accessed by ILO staff on the Skills and Employability's or the Employment Sector's intranet sites. Hard copies will be sent to Sector staff in 2012.

How might collaborative action make a difference in the workplace?

The only way for the ILO to achieve disability inclusion in our work and the workplace is for staff to work together. Disability inclusion is everybody's work. Disabled people represent the largest minority group in the world, composing 15 per cent of the population. Disability is a cross-cutting dimension of every issue and target group. Effective inclusion does require specific technical information and staff need some basic understanding of inclusion to have the confidence to go forward. We can only reach the vision of decent work for all through collaboration, with those who have experience helping those who are new to this effort.

What are the next steps?

We are currently developing a short interactive online course that will be available also on CD-ROM to supplement the resource manual and build capacity. In addition, we have set up the Disability Inclusion Knowledge Sharing Platform which contains lots of disability-related information on a variety of topics. The Disability Hotline (disabilityhotline@ilo.org) is a direct service for staff who have specific questions or need help. Others can contact the ILO at disability@ilo.org. Over the years, the ILO Disability Team has taken many steps to foster disability inclusion. By updating an evaluation conducted in 2010, the Disability Team will further gauge progress and support needs concerning disability inclusion among Employment Sector personnel. We will keep you posted.

Note: To learn more about disability inclusion, please sign on to the ILO Disability Inclusion Knowledge Sharing Platform: <https://papyrus.ilo.org/disability/DISABILITY>.