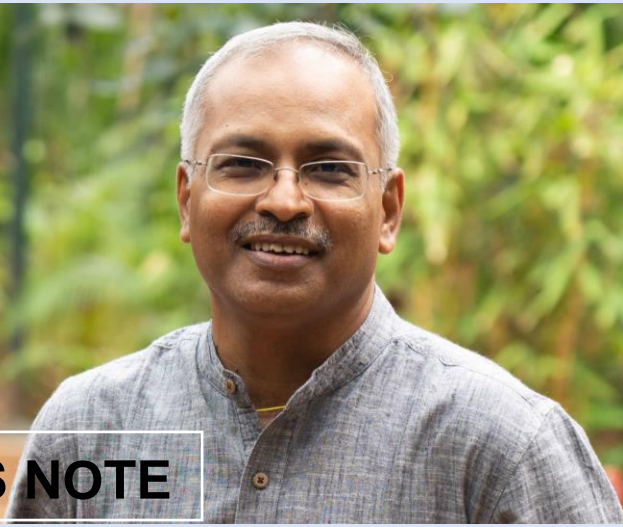


WORKABILITY ASIA



Collaborate to create jobs for PwDs





CHAIRPERSON'S NOTE

Dear Members of WorkAbility Asia,

I am delighted to welcome you to our latest newsletter. As we begin the new year, I hope this message finds you all in good health and spirits.

I am incredibly proud of the hard work and dedication showed by our members, and it is an honor to now serve as your Chairman. My focus for the future of WorkAbility Asia will be to increase membership by at least double and for this, I request all of your support. I aim for WorkAbility Asia to maintain regional balance and have members from across Asia. As we look ahead to the coming year, I would like to encourage all of our members to remain engaged and active within this collective.

My hearty congratulations to Dr. Sherlo Reyes, the new Vice Chairman of WorkAbility Asia. I look forward to working with him toward our shared vision. I would also like to extend my sincerest thanks to all of our members for their continued support and involvement. Your commitment to WorkAbility Asia's mission and values is truly inspiring, and I am constantly amazed by the energy and enthusiasm we bring to everything we do.

In closing, I wish us all the very best for the year ahead. May we continue to make positive impacts on the livelihood of persons with disability and work in solidarity with the disability community.

Warmest regards,
Dipesh Sutariya- Chairperson
WorkAbility Asia

The Employment and Work of Persons with Disabilities in Taiwan under COVID-19 Epidemic

In early 2020, when the outbreak first began, the Taiwan government responded quickly with full cooperation of all Taiwanese citizens. The virus was successfully contained at the border and did not spread rampantly into the community.

The overall employment took a direct hit and industries such as transportation, tourism, and service sector were impacted negatively. Manufacturing sector was also hit by the decrease in demand but after the reopening of economies in July 2020, the number of people whose working hours were cut gradually decreased.

Overall, the new epidemic not only affected Taiwan's job market and economic activities, but also changed the way of life of all people. If we look at one of the core provisions of Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Article 5 states that principles and equality and non-discrimination must be applied to examine the rights of persons with disabilities (PwDs), including equality before the law, prohibition of discrimination, and reasonable adjustments. During the epidemic, the seemingly fair and universally applicable epidemic prevention regulations failed to recognize the differences between PwDs, resulting in hidden exclusion and

The government's employment promotion measures must consider how to enable people with locomotor disabilities to enhance their skills to meet the demands of growing industries.

inequality, and negatively impacting on the rights of PWDs in community living, employment, health, and access to information. The epidemic also highlights the issues of the employment of PWDs that need to be addressed in Taiwan.

First, the government must strengthen the implementation of CRPD and the recognition of disability differences. Although the Taiwanese government has already passed the CRPD, the exclusion, and neglect of PwDs in the epidemic prevention measures show that the government has not really taken the impairment factor into consideration in its policies. In the future, we should strengthen the policy of "making barriers a priority to consider" and implement the mechanism of "assessment of the impact on PWD" to prevent the rights of PWDs from being neglected again.

Second, there is still a lack of long-term development perspective in the planning of relief and social recovery. The pandemic's impact on society and industry is long-term and permanent. In Australia, studies have pointed out the negative impact of the epidemic on youth employment, and further strengthened investment in the relevant population. In Taiwan, although surveys have found that the labor market and industrial development are polarized, there are still no long-term measures to address the impacted employment groups.

Third, employment policies for people with locomotor disabilities need to keep up with the times to meet the transformation of industries and work patterns in the post-epidemic era. The epidemic has led companies to adopt online working and working from home and the application and popularity of remote technology have greatly enhanced the impact on people's working patterns and economic activities in this epidemic. In addition, the information and electronics industry in Taiwan's manufacturing sector is not only growing in employment, but also in salary levels. The government's employment promotion measures must consider how to enable people with locomotor disabilities to enhance their skills to meet the demands of growing

industries, cultivate relevant employment capacities, and encourage and expand support make reasonable adjustment in remote work. This is so that PwDs can continue to have equal employment opportunities and increase their income.

We look forward to a future with equality and fairness for persons with disability. In the era of Post-COVID 19, we, the member organizations of WAsia have to take the initiative to make service adjustments, fill the gaps in government support, and launch initiatives to reduce the hardships faced by persons with disabilities.

Eden Social Welfare Foundation

Ms. Eileen Lu,

Communication Coordinator

Fueled by the power of the collective

"It is literally true that you can succeed best and quickest by helping others to succeed." – Napoleon Hill

We have experienced the truth in this quote. Through Collaboration and Collective learning/sharing Diya Foundation has grown and is helping others grow. Learning from our experience with the Mission 1000 collective, Diya Foundation's team of trainers learned to innovate and work as a team with other NGO trainers and learn/ share best practices and experiences where all benefitted. Other stakeholders like the parents of our beneficiaries learned how parent involvement is key to the success of their child when it comes to employment.

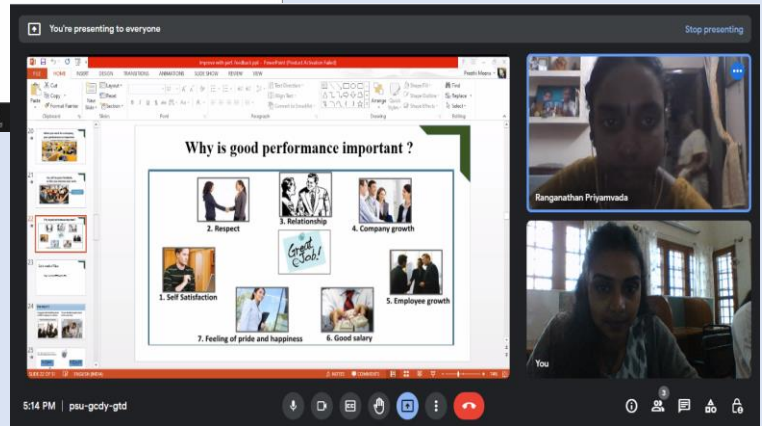
Corporate employers/employees discovered a whole new way of sharing job tasks and training people with disabilities to be part of a team. Last but not least is our people with intellectual disabilities learned to be self-advocates and showcase their potential to be part of a workforce in a domain that was never on their horizon in their employment journey. This collaboration also helped NGO leaders look at initiating projects from a different perspective of impacting stakeholders across the board.

Diya Foundation piloted short-term courses in cooking and worked with 4 NGOs other than Diya Foundation to build the capacity of trainers, parents, and adults with intellectual disabilities to learn 26 dishes consisting of sandwiches, soups, salads, gravies, rice dishes, and desserts. This learning not only built and enhanced personal skills but also built self-confidence and independence.

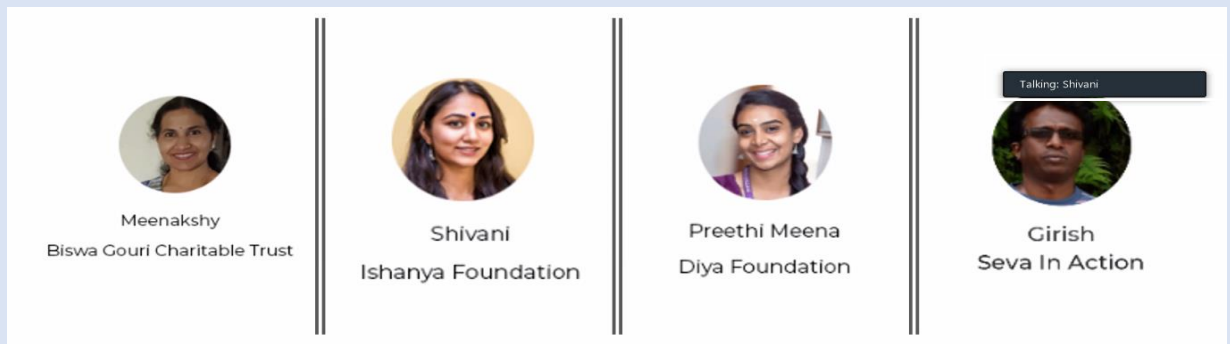
***Teamwork
begins by
building
trust.***



REIMAGING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION



In order to build the pool of people with intellectual disabilities in the workplace, be it IT, retail, housekeeping, or hospitality, Diya Foundation is looking to work with NGOs through a 4 monthly Digitization course to build skills of adults with intellectual disabilities along with trainers and parents in the IT sector. We have also partnered with corporates to pilot and provide on-site internships for housekeeping, retail, and hospitality.



We are learning through these experiences that teamwork begins by building trust. Working as a collective helps us create a supportive environment for our adults with intellectual disabilities, teaches us to communicate expectations clearly, recognize and work with each others' strengths, and encourage innovation and creativity to find workplace solutions.

Diya Foundation
Maria Santamaria
Founder

Purple Fest- The festival of festivals of and for PwDs

Purple Fest was India's first-of-its-kind inclusive festival that was organized in Panjim, Goa from 6th – 8th January 2023. This fest was led by the office of the State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities and the Director of Social Welfare.

Some major initiatives by the Goa government for and during the Purple Fest were:

- Administration at the doorstep to assist people with disabilities to apply for their Unique Disability ID (UDID) card: To help persons with disabilities with registration, the social welfare department appointed field workers and field assistants.
- Updating the inclusive education policies to permit elementary schools to open resource rooms for the admission of children with disabilities.
- Accessible transport via e-rickshaw for persons with disabilities/wheelchair users to travel across the city
- Miramar beach is now one of the first accessible beach's in Goa where the entire pathway is accessible and floating wheelchairs were stationed to ensure accessibility and inclusion of persons with disabilities which is a great initiative by the Goa government.



The Purple Fest created a unique opportunity for the disability sector. 75 Purple Think Tank speakers, 90 innovation and start-up exhibitors, 170 events, 250 performers with disability, 500 disability professionals, 1000 volunteers,

1500 government officials, 5000 registered delegates! The three days event saw footfall of 10,000 every day.

Purple Fest 2023 aimed to offer an accessible experience to all delegates and visitors through built environment accessibility, information accessibility and transportation accessibility. The various initiatives undertaken are built environment accessibility of the venue (ESG Complex) –

- Provision of portable ramps to all buildings
- Tactile and braille signages, handrails
- Tactile maps for persons with visual impairment
- Provision and improvement in accessible toilet facilities
- Wheelchair parking spaces in auditoriums
- Provision of temporary ramps to make the stage in auditoriums accessible
- Staircase climbing wheelchairs to make the first floor accessible to wheelchair users and reserved accessible parking spaces.

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 recognises 21 disabilities and for the first time in the country, 21 ambassadors from across the country gathered at the Purple Fest with their communities to create visibility and spread awareness. At the inaugural



ceremony, the Purple Ambassadors shared their vision statement by expressing their goal to empower their community.

Purple Fest is bringing many changes in the state of Goa already and the kind of initiatives will ensure that Goa will be the preferred destination for persons with disabilities.

EnAble India

Kaavyasri DA

Manager (Outreach and Volunteering)

From the Secretariat Team

- The Board Meeting was held via Zoom application on November 22nd, 2022 with the attendance of the Chairperson, 1 Advisor, 6 Board Members, and 1 Secretary General.
- Mr. Dulal Abus Sattar updated his proposal made to the 1921 Jakarta Intergovernmental meeting which was included in the Declaration released at the meeting which speaks about ending the 3rd decade of disabled persons in Asia Pacific regions in the next decade. The Chairperson suggested adding the discussion on the Jakarta declaration to the agenda of the next board meeting.
- Ms. Nayantara Janardhan presented the Workability Asia financial report for the period January 01, 2022, to November 15, 2022.
- The Chairperson put forth the proposal of appointing Mr. Sherlo Reyes as the Vice Chairperson of Workability Asia. All the board members consented to the same and wished Mr. Sherlo the best.
- Ms. Eileen, due to her other work commitments had stepped down from her responsibilities as a Secretariat staff. The Board expressed gratitude for all the contributions rendered to Workability Asia during her tenure
- Ms. Nayantara Janardhan, Secretary General, informed of the onboarding of Disability NGO Alliance (DNA), India whose membership was approved in the previous Annual General Meeting and Board meeting. The member directory was displayed for the information of the members.
- Chairperson Mr. Dipesh apprised all the members on the need to expand the horizon of Workability Asia into various geographies of the continent and ensure there is a balanced involvement of all the nations in Asia.

Get featured in the next newsletter!

Workability Asia Newsletter would like to invite you to :

- Share your relevant information, knowledge, or experiences with WorkAbility Asia members and our network.
- Send your articles (1-2 pages) with some photos.
- Send your stories to WorkAbility Asia Secretariat Team at secretarygeneral@workabilityasia.org to be part of the next newsletter

The deadline for the next submission date is 15.05.2023 so hurry up!