

July 2014

## Network Activities

### The Ability Factor online campaign

On March 12, the Network launched an online campaign to raise awareness of employers and promote the business case for hiring people with disabilities worldwide.

Produced in collaboration with Better Work, a partnership between the ILO and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the short animation entitled "The Ability Factor" highlights that people with disabilities represent an untapped pool of skills that can enhance any business, but frequently face many barriers to work. These include physical, information and attitudinal barriers.

The video was featured on the ILO's main website and social media channels. Tata Consultancy Services, Novartis, Carrefour, Delta Holding, IBM, Fundacion Adecco, Sodexo, Ernst & Young and many other companies, as well as employers' organizations and DPOs, supported the campaign by featuring it on their websites,

intranets, blogs and social media channels. The campaign was also supported by the Screen Actor's Guild via Twitter and Facebook.

The Ability Factor can be viewed on YouTube at <http://bit.ly/abilityfactor>, with subtitles in Arabic, French, Indonesian, Japanese, Spanish and Vietnamese. It is also available on Youku with Chinese subtitles. An audio description version for the visually impaired is also available at <http://bit.ly/abilityfactorAD>.

As a part of the campaign, Yves Veulliet, Global Disability & Inclusion Manager at IBM, along with Sreela Das Gupta, Global Diversity & Inclusion manager at Tata Consultancy Services and Sean Callaghan, General Manager at Sodexo in Toronto, Canada shared their stories and views in an article featured at the ILO's main website.

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### Employing people with disabilities: It's right and smart

Article featured on [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org) on March 31, 2014.

Yves Veulliet, who had an accident that deprived him of the use of his legs when he was 21, knows all about the barriers people with disabilities face in finding a job, which often result from misconceptions about what they can and cannot do.

And when they do get a job, negative attitudes from co-workers and supervisors often affect their careers, even in companies committed to hiring disabled persons.

"The reality is that we are all afraid of the unknown. Most people are uncomfortable at first around people with disabilities, it is natural," says Veulliet, who had to knock on quite a few doors, before he found a job 25 years ago with IBM, where he is now Global Disability & Inclusion Manager.

Evidence suggests that once employers overcome their fear of the unknown, hiring and working with people with disabilities becomes natural.

"How do you speak about someone's 'disability' when it is hidden by their 'ability'?" says Sean Callaghan, a General Manager at Sodexo, in Toronto, Canada. He says his team of 36 includes four people with different disabilities, "but most importantly, they have different abilities."

### Enabling, not disabling

The environment is also important – not just the physical aspects, but also the work culture and an inclusive atmosphere.

"At the end of the day, an employer's mission is to provide me with an enabling environment so I can manage my disability, and my mission as an employee is to manage my disability and my work. Roles must be clear for both," says Veulliet.

He says that when he joined IBM, he felt his disability had vanished because the premises were highly accessible.

### Why hire?

Consumers are likely to look favorably upon companies that employ people with disabilities. And, the world's 1.3 billion people with disabilities together



*Mr. Yves Veulliet.*

with their 2.2 billion family and friends control more than USD 8 trillion in global disposable income per year, according to disability and corporate profitability expert Rich Donovan.

Employers are gradually realizing that hiring people with disabilities is not just charity and that employees with disabilities have a lot to contribute. "It's not just the right thing to do, but the smart thing to do," says Sreela Das Gupta, Global Diversity & Inclusion manager at Tata Consultancy Services.

In the many presentations he gives about disability inclusion, Veulliet asks managers to ask themselves why they should hire a person with a disability when they can hire a non-disabled one. "The answer is companies do not have to hire a person with a disability. They have to hire someone with the appropriate skills to perform a given job. If that person happens to have a disability, so be it, but disability is not the point."

## Network regional meeting in Bangalore – Understanding disability inclusion in the workplace and moving forward in India

On April 28, the Network held a meeting in Bangalore, India, focused on providing participants with a better understanding of what disability inclusion in the workplace really means and on concrete steps to move forward within the national context. Private companies are taking individual initiatives to encourage the employment of disabled persons, but these remain few.

“Over 26 million people in India have a disability. How come we don’t ‘see’, acknowledge or try to accommodate them?”, Aruna Newton, Associate Vice President and Senior Lead Principal of Diversity & Inclusion and Sustainability at Infosys limited [link], rightly pointed out during her presentation. And this segment of the Indian population has increased of 22 per cent from 2001 to 2011, according to the 2011 population census.

Hosted by Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), the event gathered 50 participants from multinationals operating in India, national enterprises and employers’ organizations from India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. The one-day event was structured around four discussion panels during which participants learned more about the essential aspects of successful company disability inclusion

policies and actively debated the private sector’s role in the matter.

And for the ILO, this role is crucial when it comes to achieving inclusion of people with disabilities in the labour market. “Who is going to employ people with disabilities? It is mainly the private sector.”, said Stefan Trömel, Senior Specialist in Disability Inclusion at the ILO, “It is the private sector that drives innovation and this also applies to disability inclusion.”

Rajiv Noronha, Human Resources Head at TCS, pointed out during his presentation that in a country where people with disabilities lack basic qualifications, companies can and should provide skills training or encourage it by partnering with other organizations as a part of TCS’s approach of “going from the right thing to the smart thing to do”.

Amit Gulati, Purchasing Resource leader at Dow[link]’s Asia-Pacific region and Disability Employee Network Management liaison for Asia-Pacific, highlighted that “people with disabilities represent a tremendous amount of talent available, bringing comparative advantage to a company”.



## Network Activities

### Changing minds: Back-to-back Disability Equality Training

Along with major obstacles in access to education, general infrastructural inaccessibility and the absence of effective placement services, attitudinal barriers often compounded by a long-standing stigma that associates disability with karma and divine punishment still place disabled people at the bottom of society in India.

In an effort to raise awareness and change mindsets, the Network organized a Disability Equality Training (DET) on April 27 as a back-to-back event with the Bangalore meeting. The ILO's DET methodological approach is based on dynamic and highly participative groupwork that aims at stimulating actual and meaningful change in participants' day-to-day work and lives.

Using simple exercises, the training proves to be an eye-opener for many, even for those who are already exposed to disability issues. "I hadn't realized quite how

much "disabled person" occupied a different space in our minds.", Peter Fremlin, disability consultant for ILO Bangladesh office, shared some insights following the training on his blog <http://desibility.org/2014/05/disability-equality-training/#more-229>. "People with disabilities are segregated in social, economic, emotional and philosophical ways. This exercise showed how these segregations run through our understandings of what "disability" means, and how much they have been formed before we got into the training room."

Fremlin reached a conclusion that gives material for thought: "We insist on categorizing "disabled people" and giving recommendations on what to do with "them". We do this because we believe it to be useful and necessary, and maybe it is. But it surely also contributes to the other-ing and distancing of this imagined group of people."

### Qaderoon Network launch: companies partner in Saudi Arabia for disability inclusion in the workplace

On March 9, 2014 the newly born [Qaderoon Business Disability Network](#) was launched during an event in Riyadh. The local network is an important initiative for employers committed to disability inclusion in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and for the ILO Global Business and Disability Network.

Qaderoon – which can be translated as "capable people", aims to raise the awareness of employers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia about the benefits of including persons with disability as equal and effective members of the workforce. It offers scientific and practical guidance to employers drawing on the best local and global practices on disability inclusion in the workplace.

During the event, Mr. Fahad Abualnasr, Qaderoon's General Manager, emphasized his confidence in the achievement of Qaderoon's objectives and urged the Saudi society to foster social solidarity, highlighting the need to change the local stereotypical perception that people with disabilities deserve charity by actively promoting their ability to be as productive as any other member of the workforce.

Opening remarks were given by the Minister of Labour, HE Eng. Adel Fakieh, followed by a brief account on Qaderoon's establishment process given by Dr. Mervat Tashkandi, Advisor to the Minister of Labour. Presentations were delivered by the ILO, Marriot Foundation for People with Disabilities, Qaderoon's Chairman, Mr. Amr Mohammed Kashoggi, and General Manager, Mr. Fahad A. Abualnasr.



## Member news

### Carrefour: reinforcing internal awareness in Brazil and discovering talents in China

Carrefour Brazil continues with its massive internal campaign “Diversity is so us” (Diversidade é a nossa cara). An awareness raising video is under production and already contains several testimonials from employees with disabilities. The campaign aims to raise awareness among employees about the importance of valuing diversity, respect for all and the role of each person in creating and maintaining an inclusive work environment.

In China, Carrefour stores in the country’s eastern region are discovering excellence in the work of their

disabled employees. Managers from stores located in Shanghai and in Jiangsu province collected stories and anecdotes about 13 employees with disabilities currently working in Carrefour and have discovered they all share many positive qualities: They are never late for work, accomplish their tasks during regular working time, are always diligent in accomplishing, rectifying or checking their work, are independent, have a strong sense of responsibility, actively participate in company activities and maintain a good relationship with colleagues.

### A manager’s story: Guylaine Quinton, Carrefour France

Guylaine Quinton has been assisting people with disabilities to find a job or continue working for the past 10 years. Quinton is now the Disability Inclusion Leader at Carrefour Market Cesson-Sévigné regional headquarters, in Brittany, northwestern France and has shared with us her views and experiences:

“I have been working to allow people with disabilities to find a job or continue working for the past 10 years. In the beginning, when I first assumed this role I had no knowledge about the issue and based my actions on my common sense and personal convictions. If you are not convinced that everybody can work, that you must keep in mind that human beings have countless resources and talents and that countless are also the solutions one can find to keep somebody at a job if they want to work, then there is no use in engaging in this work. It is a true commitment.

For many years, when problems arise about retaining an employee, I convey meetings with the occupational physician, the manager and the employee. These meetings become a rich encounter, allowing us to play down certain situations and find the necessary accommodations to hire or maintain an employee.

As time passed, however, I realized how hard it is to keep close track of and maintain frequent contact with all our employees working for our multiple sites. Therefore, since 2012, I go meet our Carrefour Market or headquarters employees in person. I organize “disability breakfasts”.

Around a cup of coffee and pastries, I start our breakfasts by speaking in Russian. At first, people are very surprised and quite confused. Then, they realize that I put them in a “disability situation”. It’s a way I found to help people understand that we all have a disability at a certain moment in life. And so I tell them anecdotes about how, for instance, we accommodated the post for one of our employees at our store in Mans, Johnny, a wheelchair user who works as a cashier, so that he can be autonomous in his work. I tell them about Nadine, an employee at our store in Mortain, for whom we arranged a cheese cutting machine so that she could keep working at “her cheese section”. I also tell them about Janine, cashier at Orléans, who had to frequently stop her work because of back pains. With the occupational physician’s guidance, we accommodated her post by simply replacing her chair and nowadays she is doing just fine. These are only a few of the many stories I tell them.

Through these breakfasts I want our employees to know that if they ever acquire a disability, we will do everything possible to accommodate their needs and allow them to keep working. Very often, following these breakfasts, employees reach out to me. They tell me their stories, which they often keep to themselves, and after these exchanges we take all actions needed to accommodate their needs. I would like to highlight that in this field of work, top management support is fundamental.

### Disability inclusion agenda brings out the best of Accenture

Accenture’s disability inclusion agenda continues to evolve with the recent launch of a Global Disability Mentoring Programme, which gives employees the opportunity to

be disability champions as guides and coaches of people with disabilities. The programme also includes access to a support system to help build networks and skills.

## Member news

In addition, the company has launched an internal webinar series on the topic. The “Accenture Disability Inclusion Learning Series” covers topics such as Hidden Disabilities in the Workplace and Web Accessibility and Assistive Technology for Persons with Disabilities. Two new awareness raising videos, including guidance on how to support colleagues with disabilities, add to the variety of resources available for all managers and employees.

Another highlight is Accenture’s Disability Champions Network, which has grown to more than 2,000 employees over the past year. The network brings together

employees with disabilities and their colleagues for skill development, networking, collaboration and mentoring. Local employee networks organize programs and events that engage, celebrate and raise awareness at Accenture and beyond.

These initiatives are a part of the company’s commitment to ensuring an inclusive environment in the workplace. Accenture’s inclusion strategy includes fostering of a barrier-free working environment while providing reasonable accommodation, including assistive technology and other workplace adjustments to perform essential job functions.

### Mphasis’ pioneers accessible transport solutions in the city of Bangalore

Kickstart Cabs is an Mphasis Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) supported entrepreneurial venture that aims to showcase accessible transport solution and also advocate for accessibility in public transport, in partnership with Vidhya Ramasubban.

Among innumerable barriers faced by people with disability on a daily basis, lack of accessible transportation is a major one. Kickstart is a first of its kind service that promotes equitable transportation for individuals with any kind of mobility restrictions. Its cabs have been fully remodeled with rotating seats and enough room for smooth entry and exit of wheelchairs and other assistive devices. Additionally, passengers are also given assistance by trained drivers who escort them to their destination.

This cab service has been successfully running in Bangalore since its launch in November 2013. Kickstart Cabs was launched by chief guest Rajanna K.S., Commissioner for Persons Disability, Karnataka and Ganesh Ayyar, CEO of Mphasis in the presence of media.

<http://www.kickstartcabs.com/>

<http://www.ciol.com/ciol/news/202292/mphasis-launches-kickstart-wheels-change>

### The IPC Athlete Career Programme in cooperation with Adecco – developing lifelong excellence

For Adecco, transferrable skills and traits like team spirit, the ability to inspire, the drive for success, time management, a strong mind set and the will to overcome adversity is what Olympic and Paralympic athletes bring to the workforce.

Role models and higher retention rates, inspiration and bringing corporate values to live in the community is what companies get by engaging in the Athlete Career Programme (ACP).

Since 2007, this programme in partnership with the International Paralympic Committee has been coaching and training athletes to succeed in the difficult transition from a sport career into a new one. It aims to match their unique skills and talents with the needs of companies looking for the best qualified candidates.

For more information on the programme, visit the [Adecco ACP](#) pages.



## Genashtim: A shot at equality for persons with disabilities in the corporate world

Excerpts from an article published by the Malaysian newspaper The Star Online on May 11, 2014.

### One entrepreneur shares how he has opened up more employment and business opportunities for persons with disabilities.

*By Kenneth Chaw*

Established in 2009 by Malaysian entrepreneur Thomas Ng, Genashtim has recruited 40 persons with disabilities out of its 50 permanent staff from Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, China, Vietnam, Cambodia and Jamaica.

Ng, who is the founder and managing director of Genashtim hires persons with disabilities because he realizes there is a place for them in the corporate world.

He was inspired after a visit to a computer school for the blind in the Philippines where the visually impaired are taught to use the computer. "The school had trained 500 blind people to use the computer over five years but unfortunately, hardly anyone was gainfully employed," shares the Penang native who has 25 years experience as an international executive with leading multinational enterprises in Europe, Asia and Australia.

### Managing mobility

The 57-year-old entrepreneur feels that with some adjustments, people with disabilities can easily be put to work.

"One of the main problems people with disabilities face is commuting, especially in less developed countries. If you take that problem away, they can function just as well as the able-bodied. So, we have a work from home model at Genashtim."

The job is ideal for people with disabilities as they need only switch on their computers and coach students from the comfort of their own homes. Though the company is registered in Singapore, Genashtim has no physical office.

### Fitting the puzzle pieces

"In any organization, everybody has some form of disability or another. If you start a company, you wouldn't hire a workforce of only accountants because you'd need people to bring in business too. In that way, accountants are disabled because they may not have good interpersonal

skills. Likewise, you wouldn't have a company full of salespeople either as you need people to look after the books," he explains.

Ng says that he extends this "management concept" to physical disabilities too. By understanding what his employees can and cannot do and combining that with what technology has to offer, Ng has created a functioning, efficient work environment for all.

### Equal opportunities

There is no glass ceiling at Genashtim. In fact, half of its management positions are taken up by people with disabilities like Rajkumar Selvaraj, 34, who is a process manager there. "I was a section manager for an established telecommunications equipment company in Penang. I was at a picnic at a waterfall one day when I fell and became paralysed from the neck down," recalls Rajkumar, who holds a Masters in Telecommunication Engineering.

The unfortunate accident happened four years ago. He was first interviewed in mid 2011 for a position as an English language coach but Ng recognised his potential and felt Rajkumar could oversee and ensure the smooth running of Genashtim instead. Since then, Rajkumar has also taken on the role as an account manager, acting as a liaison between clients and the company.

Ng doesn't discriminate against his employees with disabilities but he is quick to point out that he has no qualms about terminating them should they, like his other employees, underperform.

For the full article, please visit <http://www.thestar.com.my/Lifestyle/People/2014/05/11/A-shot-at-equality-for-persons-with-disabilities-in-the-corporate-world/>





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