

Innovative practice 2017 on employment, work, and vocational education and training: 2097

TITLE

Persuading employers that inclusive employment can support their business case

Canada/India/Nepal/Bangladesh: York University, Disability Rights Promotion International – Asian Workplace Approach that Respects Equality (DRPI-AWARE)

PROJECT SUMMARY

DRPI AWARE is a collaborative five-year project of York University in Canada that is altering the perspective on employment of persons with disabilities in India, Nepal, and Bangladesh. DRPI AWARE cooperates with organizations of disabled persons (DPOs) that work with employers to recognize the skills of disabled workers, instead of focusing on their disabilities and limitations. During the period 2013 to 2016, DRPI AWARE has successfully placed 163 people with disabilities in jobs in the open labour market.

FACTS & FIGURES

During the period 2013 to 2016:

- 437 employers have been connected to the project
- 47 per cent of persons with disabilities who have found jobs in the open labour market are women
- 52 persons with disabilities have received human rights monitoring training

PROBLEMS TARGETED

Many of the existing disability employment practices in India, Nepal, and Bangladesh focus on the need to rehabilitate and train individuals to better fit into the labour market, instead of looking at societal norms and practices that could be modified to better accommodate and include people with disabilities.

SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

DRPI AWARE introduces employers to the benefits of inclusive employment policies by collaborating with DPOs that work with them to understand specific job skills and business and employment needs. DRPI AWARE has organized seminars for employers in which the business case for having a diverse workforce is highlighted. Employers are supported throughout the process of hiring and welcoming new employees. Additionally, persons with disabilities are sustained in identifying jobs that support their

interests and build on their skills and knowledge. In this way, people with disabilities have found an array of jobs, such as accounting assistants, production workers, quality assurance personnel, teachers, call centre agents, telephone operators, and waiters, to name just a few.

OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

For the five-year period 2013–2018, DRPI AWARE has received funding of CAD\$2,800,000 (approximately US\$2,125,000), provided by York University and Global Affairs Canada.

During the period 2013 to 2016, the number of persons with disabilities who have found jobs through the project has risen from 50 to 163 annually. Going forward, the DRPI AWARE team is seeking opportunities to implement a similar employment model on other continents. As the AWARE project is connected to the international community through the larger DRPI project, there are many opportunities to connect with global allies.

QUOTE

"I always wanted to mainstream disability. Teaching these children has allowed me to do so."

— Ms. Nirmal Bista, Head Teacher, Shree Kabir English Boarding School

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REFERENCES

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