

Dec 14/2018

## **A Workshop on Employability of University Graduates with Disabilities**

**College of Education and Behavioral Studies, Addis Ababa  
University**

**Supported by APPEAR Program of the Austrian Development  
Cooperation**



(Copyright: Addis Ababa University Communication Office)

Some of the workshop participants

## Details of the workshop

**Date of the workshop:** Dec 14/2018

**Venue:** Addis Ababa University, Mandela hall

**Participants:** 61 participants from six sub-cities of Addis Ababa

**Organizations Represented:** Civil Service, Labor and Social Affairs, Lone and credit association, Associations of Persons with Disabilities, Net-work of persons with disabilities

### Activities of the workshop:

**Presentation 1:** Employability experience of graduates with disabilities

Presentation: International and national laws on employability of persons with disabilities.

Sharing good practices among sub-cities

Discussion and way forwards



(Copyright: Addis Ababa University Communication Office)

Conference hall presentation with sign language interpretation service

## Background

Challenges on employability of persons with disabilities are an issue of concern across the world. Particularly in low income countries, where there is limited opportunity to access schooling for persons with disabilities, those few who get the chance of reaching higher educational institutions and graduated face a hard time getting employment regardless of being qualified for the requirement of the vacancy positions. Various factors seem to lead to exclusion of university graduates with disabilities for being unemployed such as lack of awareness and attitude of the employers, and misperception on productivity of persons with disabilities. It is highlighted that well competent and qualified people with disabilities are not welcomed by employers due to having an impairment (ILO,2004, 2009).

A survey study conducted in 2013 on employability of graduates with disabilities in Ethiopia, which was supported by the RESPOND-HER project shows that there are many graduates with disabilities who face challenges to get employment both at government and private institutions. Female graduates with disabilities are among the most vulnerable and are excluded from employment opportunities due to double discrimination they are facing by the employers. Although there are legal supports in Ethiopia for equal employment opportunities, little has been done from the side of the government offices such as Civil Service and Labor and Social Affairs on monitoring whether justice is served or not during selection for the employment and related decisions. The Ethiopian proclamation article (No.568/2008) states about the protection of persons with disabilities from marginalization, discrimination, and injustice during competition for employment and the right for employment, which also cancelled pervious laws with prejudices on employment of persons with disabilities. However, the concerned government office seems to show less commitment on supervising the implementation of the proclamations

by the employers. Therefore, sharing the research finding on employability of graduates with disabilities, discussion on legal protection of persons with disabilities from discrimination and marginalization during employment and sensitizing the staff of the selected organizations which have direct responsibility on employment of persons with disabilities was found to be vital.

### **Workshop opening event**

Dr. Yirgashewa Bekele who is the team leader of the INEDIS project of Addis Ababa University and the coordinator of the workshop, warmly welcomed the participants and addressed that the workshop is organized by the INEDIS project team members where she also acknowledged that the activities of the project are supported by APPEAR (Austrian Partnership Program in Higher Education and Research for Development). She also introduced the activities of the workshop and expectations from the participants on being active participants on sharing their experience and challenges they are facing regarding the employability of persons with disabilities. Finally, Dr. Yirgashewa invited Dr. Deme Abera, delegate of the Dean of College Education, to deliver his opening speech.



(Copyright: Addis Ababa University Communication Office)

Dr. Yirgashewa (introducing the activities of the workshop)

Dr. Deme warmly welcomed the participants and emphasized that measures have to be taken on reducing the marginalization of persons with disabilities from employment and that there is a need to work on attitudinal changes in the government and non-governmental institutions. He also highlighted that graduates with disabilities need to get opportunities for employment and become

productive citizens. In this regard all stakeholders should work together to reduce discrimination from employment on the basis of disabilities.



(Copyright: Addis Ababa University Communication Office)

Dr. Deme (Opening speech)

Following the welcome speech of Dr. Deme, Dr. Yirgashewa invited Professor Tirussew Teferra, head of the Department of Special Needs Education, to address employability issues of graduates with disabilities. Accordingly, Professor Tirussew acknowledged the contribution of APPEAR on building the capacity of institutions earlier by a project named RESPOND-HER and currently by the INEDIS project. In addition, he also mentioned the challenges and barriers on employment of graduates with disabilities in Ethiopia. He finally suggested the importance of establishing a national council of persons with disabilities, which will take the responsibility on discussing and negotiating with the government on the right of persons with disabilities.



(Copyright: Addis Ababa University Communication Office)

Professor Tirussew Teferra (welcoming speech)



## **Presentation 1.**



(Copyright: Addis Ababa University Communication Office)

**Dr Alemayehu Tekelemariam (presenter)**

**Title:** Employability of graduates with disabilities: experience, challenges and ways forward

On his presentation, Dr. Alemayehu started by introducing the finding of a survey conducted by RESPOND-HER project team members. Initially, the presentation highlighted the experience of university students with disabilities on the access to employment related skills during their campus stay. Specifically, he put an emphasis on the response of the participants on whether they get skill trainings on job hunting skills from universities or not. On his presentation, he stated that universities across the country have given less attention on building the capacity of university students with disabilities. There are of course few universities which are providing skills such as how to prepare curriculum vitae, job hunting skills, how to write applications, making oneself ready for job interviews, establishing good contact with employers during apprenticeship and how to get the positive attention of the employer. On the other hand it is also presented that students with disabilities who missed the skills training during their university stay, face tough times being competent to win a job.

On the other focus of the presentation of Dr. Alemayehu, the employers' negative attitude towards graduates with disabilities is found to be the pronouncing challenge on their employment. He further stated that numbers of employers cancel employment announcements when they realize that there is potential applicant with disabilities. The finding shows that the employers fear that employing persons with disabilities is demanding and requires adjustment in the office or they may need assistance which they perceive as extra burden to the organization. It was presented that avoiding females with disabilities from employment opportunities seems quite common as compared to males with disabilities. There are challenges of employment that were underlines during the presentation as follows;

- Employers are not happy, to employ graduates with disabilities especially NGOs and private institutions
- Scarcity of finance to start one's own work for graduates with disabilities
- Limitation of knowledge of how to compete for jobs, job searching, creating jobs
- Lack of knowledge about places where notices and vacancies are posted
- ***Suggestions to improve the situation***
- Developing quotas for graduate students in the labor market
- Provision of employment related course/ orientation on CV and self-esteem development
- There should be necessary regulations for good job opportunities
- Panel discussions on work and disability issues
- Due to plenty number of competitors
- Disability related attitudes and misunderstandings
- Lack of university-based job-related training
- Unable to listen to radio or cannot read ink print and braille print announcement

## Discussion

Based on the presentation on the experience of graduates with disabilities, the participants were invited by Dr. Yirgashewa to raise questions or comments. The following were the major points raised by the participants and a discussion was made on it.

- There are graduates with disabilities who don't get an employment but can get involved in a personal business, however, they need a capital for small-scale business.
- Lack of awareness from the side of the employers on implementing international and national law.
- Inaccessibility of office buildings is a barrier to employment and hence building codes should be enacted.
- Association of persons with disabilities are not actively working on influencing the government.
- Medias are giving less emphasis to the employment of persons with disabilities.



(Copyright: Addis Ababa University Communication Office)

Participants involvement during discussion



## Good practice

Only a few good practices were raised on the success of graduates with disabilities. One of the good practice that was stated was about two deaf students' employment in the beer production industry after a lot of reluctance of the employer to hire the deaf individuals. However, after they started working the employer asked more deaf people to join the employment and currently about 15 deaf persons are working in the industry. There are also good practices of those who did not get employment but were able to manage opening a small-scale business and became popular due to their high quality products.

## Ways forward

- Create awareness raising programs and equal job opportunities,
- Establishing an organization or counsel which will work for the rights of persons with disabilities.
- Awareness and advocacy work change programs through government and private media. Media have to work to change the attitude of the society and employers.
- Promotion of rights of persons with disabilities and implementation of conventions, policies, proclamation should be done.
- Employers should know legislations related to the employment of person with disabilities.
- Legislations and proclamations should be distributed to every employer.
- Providing training, supportive manuals need to be distributed to the employers.
- Formulate a more feasible policy.
- A more practical policy should be developed.
- Besides the existing legislation more focused policies are needed .
- Special employment policy must be designed with full protocols for follow-up.
- Re-shape policy and procedures and raise the awareness of the employers and PwDs themselves.

## **Presentation 2.**

Presenter Dr. Abebe Yehualawork

**Title: International and Domestic Policy and Legal Frameworks which have Relevance to  
Employment and Disability**



(Copyright: Addis Ababa University Communication Office)

**Dr. Abebe Yehualawork (Presenter)**

Dr. Abebe has presented and well narrated international laws on employment of persons with disabilities which Ethiopia has ratified are considered as Law of the homeland. In addition, he also presented the national law that supports the employment right of persons with disabilities. The following were the major focus themes of the presentation and discussion.

### **International Law ratified by Ethiopia**

- The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights under Article 23
- The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)

- The UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals
- United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (UN, 1993).
- **ILO Convention 159**

## **National Instruments**

- A proclamation No 568/2008 to provide for the right to employment
- Federal Civil Servant Proclamation No.1064/2017
- Labor Proclamation No. 377/2003

## **Discussion**

During the discussion session, the participants disclosed that they don't have information or awareness about the availability of such detailed employability laws. They further mentioned that they are not sure even their bosses know such laws. Because, it was not an issue of talk in their office although the offices are responsible on taking care of the implementation of the laws.

## **Suggestion**

Such things need to get attention of the higher officials of their government and hence, a discussion needs to be arranged to fill the gap on implementation of the law.

It is also suggested that a disability counsel should be established so as to discuss with the government and non-governmental organizations.



(Copyright: Addis Ababa University Communication Office)

Participants from the disability associations network