

Dec.22/2018

A Workshop on Job Searching Skills for Graduating Students with Disabilities

College of Education and Behavioral Studies, Addis Ababa
University

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



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Details of the workshop

Date of the workshop: Dec 22/2018

Venue: Addis Ababa University, Mandela hall

Participants:

90 students with disabilities from the whole campus, who will graduate mid 2019 participated. This participants were students with visual impairment, hearing impairment and students with mobility challenges.

Activities of the workshop:

Presentation 1:

By Ms. Helina Legesse, a country director of Ethio-jobs, she was a volunteer Trainer.

Content: Job searching skills, competencies, meeting the requirements, and how to get a job, how to develop a CV, making one self ready for the job interview, attracting attention of the employers

Presentation 2:

The presenter was Dr. Abebe Yehuwalawork who was the former manager of Hope for Persons with Disabilities, and recently became academic staff of the Department of Special Needs Education. Dr. Abebe, as a person with visual impairment can help the students with disabilities on issues of employability and related international and national laws on employability of persons with disabilities.

Background

The attitude towards persons with disabilities in the larger community and particularly from the side of employers on misperceiving persons with disabilities as incapable of handling career has a long tradition globally. Such trends happen to be more challenging in low income countries such as Ethiopia. Employers seem to have low awareness about disabilities and the potential of persons with disabilities. This is because, the traditional larger community members in Ethiopia still believe that disability makes the individuals dependent on family. Although there are few good models on how persons with disabilities are successful and productive, there is a limitation on promoting such good experiences.

Persons with disabilities who join universities are assumed to be equipped with necessary skills that help them to be competent on the job market. However, the survey conducted during the RESPOND-HER project in Ethiopia shows that the students are not getting skills required in job hunting, winning jobs and staying competent during their career. University graduates with disabilities are expected to be integrated and find jobs in such communities. This is the tough task they are going through. Hence, empowering graduating students with disabilities by providing training, sensitize them on their job choice and on preparing them to be competent employees was found to be vital as it reduces barriers on their livelihood. Therefore, the purpose of this training workshop was to fill the identified gap on empowering graduating students with disabilities. The training included both the skills required that help them to prepare themselves for employment or finding out their own interests, skills they have and involve on personal small-scale business. In addition, many of the persons with disabilities have little awareness on international and national law that support the right on training and employment of persons with disabilities. Hence, in this workshop the

international documents that Ethiopia ratified become part of the law of the land and national law on employability of persons with disabilities. These need to be introduced so the students with disabilities can realize the law that supports them.



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Some of the participants during the workshop

Workshop opening event

Dr. Yirgashewa Bekele who is the team leader of the INEDIS project of Addis Ababa University and the facilitator of the workshop, warmly welcomed the participants and acknowledged their availability. She also introduced the INEDIS project, its purpose and activities undertaken so far in the University. She also mentioned that the workshop is organized by the team members of INEDIS where she also acknowledged that the activities of the project are supported by APPEAR (Austrian Partnership Program in Higher Education and Research for Development). Dr. Yirgashewa presented the activities of the workshop and expectations from the participants.



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Dr. Yirgashewa Bekele

Dr. Yirgashewa then invited Professor Tirussew Teferra, the head of the Department of Special Needs Education, to welcome the participants and the volunteer trainer Ms. Helina Legessa. He acknowledged Ms. Helina for her willingness to provide a capacity building training for graduating students with disabilities. Professor Tirussew then officially opened the workshop. Following the opening speech of Professor Tirussew, Dr. Yirgashewa invited Ms. Helina to provide the training.



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Professor Tirussew Teferra (opening speech)

Training part 1: Job searching and job winning skills

By Ms. Helina Legesse

Ms. Helina initially introduced herself and briefed what she is going to focus on and her need to see active participation of the participants and she allowed to be stopped during her presentation if questions, comments or further explanation was needed. Ms. Helina started by asking some questions as icebreaker such as what do we need to get a job? The participants started responding what they believe is appropriate. She summarized the responses of the participants by: describing, skills, knowledge, interest and documented evidence and physical and mental readiness is needed to attract employers and win competition for job.

More specifically, Ms. Helina moved on her interactive way of transferring her experience and knowledge. She started asking about what a curriculum vitae (CV) is? And why a CV is needed? After the participants finished the reflection about what a CV is, Ms. Helina described CVs in depth. She said, that a CV has to show someone's skill, experience, education and others. However, the individual needs to be selective what to include in his/her CV based on the nature of the vacancy announcement. Hence, it was concluded that a CV has to be very close to the vacancy expectations. Those irrelevant contents in CVs which are not of interest to the employer need to be substituted by the relevant skills that the employer is looking for. Hence, the CV has to be revised for different vacancy announcement. Ms. Helina, presented many examples for discussion on whether some skills attract the employers or not, where the participants were active participants by answering and asking.



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Ms. Helina during providing training

During the training session the following points were the focus of the presentation and discussion:

- How to develop a CV and what basic contents to be included.
- How to hunt for a vacancy and ways of getting information about vacancies.
- Making oneself ready for the interview and things to know for the interview.
- How to attract attention of employers
- The importance of knowing for which vacancy to apply and for which not to apply.
- Mental readiness to describe or demonstrate ability, skill and or talent.
- Describing the contribution as employee for the organization.
- Describing career goals that attract employers.
- Talking about disability with confidence and how you can be successful in the work place.
- Collaborative work with staff in the work place.
- Don't start complaining for convenience at the start of your employment, rather show your strength and give them a chance to look for possible accommodation so they won't lose you.



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Ms. Helina during the training

Finally, there was a discussion session in which the participants were asking some questions for more explanation. The participants acknowledged the importance of the training for their future career life and suggested that graduating students with disabilities need to get similar trainings every year to empower them on job hunting skills.



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Participants asking questions.

Presentation 2: by Dr. Abebe Yehuwalawork

Dr. Abebe started his presentation by asking the students on the awareness they have on employability laws in Ethiopia. Some of the students mentioned the international law such as conventions and no one mentioned the Ethiopian law on employability of persons with disabilities. Dr. Abebe stated that in Ethiopia there are international laws that the country has

ratified and to consider it as the law of the homeland and there are also local laws on employability of persons with disabilities. He started presenting the international law and conventions that Ethiopia ratified and how each article supports the employability of persons with disabilities. The following were the major focus themes of the presentation and discussion. His presentation focused on the role of governmental organizations on how to monitor the implementation of the employability law by employers and described it to let the students understand the laws.



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Dr. Abebe during his presentation

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

The students raised questions and asked for some detailed explanations about some of the articles. They also showed their concern on challenges of implementing the laws in the job market environment.

The students mentioned that they had no information on the availability of such supportive law. The students also described their concern that the concerned government organizations are not working properly on protecting persons with disabilities from discrimination by employers.

Suggestions of the participants

The summary of such an important law should be prepared in a bruser form and has to be distributed to all students with disabilities in the University.

An empowering training on job searching and job wining skills should be given every year for graduating students with disabilities in the University.



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Ms. Helina and the participants during lunch time pic.



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Participants of the workshop