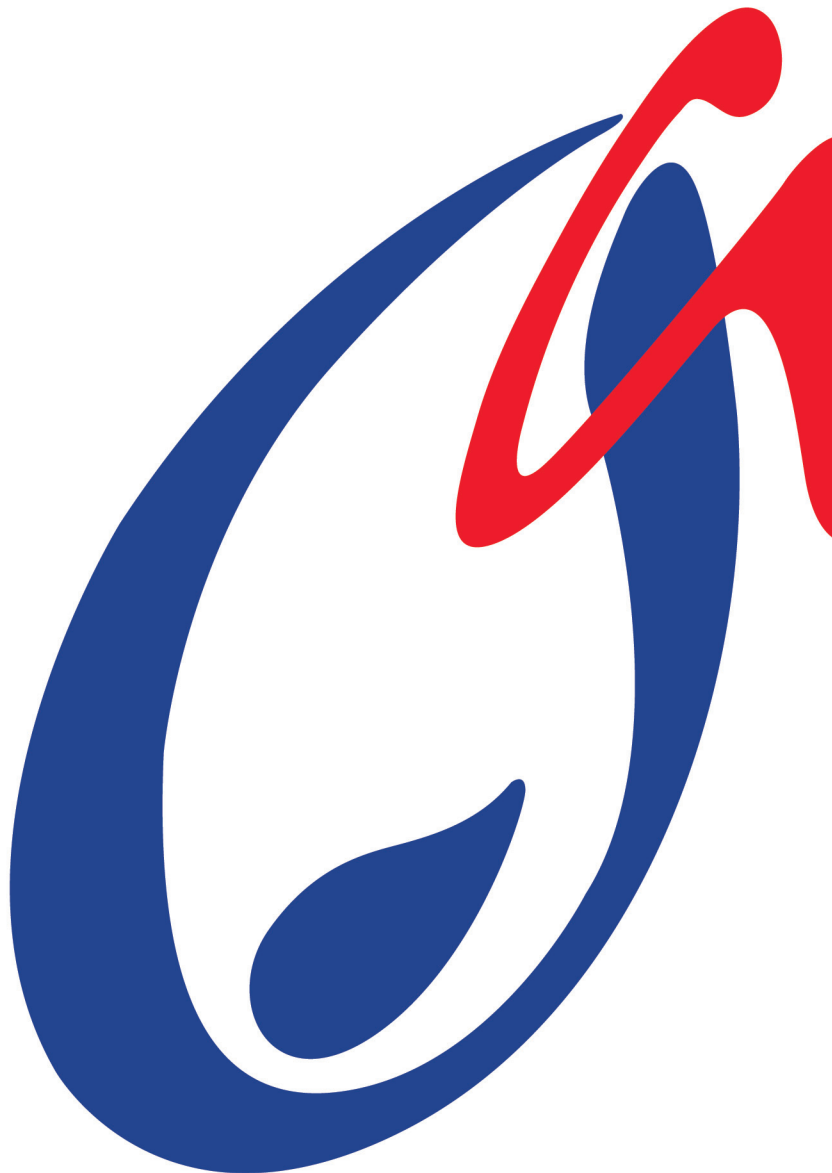


INCLUSION AT WORK MANUAL

A Resource Guide for **Recruiting** and
Integrating People with Disabilities

Lebanon Employment Assistance to People
with Disabilities



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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this manual is to inform different employers on people with disabilities and inclusion in the workplace. It provides a basic principle on how to start accessing this untapped labor pool, raise awareness about disability, provide tools for recruitment and ways of integration. PWDs are still marginalized from the Lebanese job market while they can be a real added value for businesses. People with disabilities can however bring a fresh perspective and innovation to the workplace. Just like their able-bodied peers, they see a need and have the right to work by contributing to create better world for all. Often many businesses are reluctant to employ them because they are not aware, not well informed or just not prepared.

The manual does not provide ready-made solutions, but must rather be seen as a helpful tool to initiate a positive approach on disability in the workplace.

In the hope that it creates a more inclusive environment in Lebanon.

WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF A PERSON WITH DISABILITY?

In Lebanon, a person with disability is defined as each person with reduced capacity or inability to perform one or several daily activities, to ensure one's daily needs, to participate in social activities in an equal manner or to have a normal personal and social life regarding the standards of the society in which he/she lives due to total or partial loss of his/her physical, mental or psychological capacities, which could be permanent or temporary, natural, induced or due to an illness.*

* Law 220/2000 Lebanon

A person with disability is described as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Substantially limits means unable to perform a major life activity, when compared to most people in the general population. It is not based merely on the existence of a condition (a physical or mental impairment), but on the impact of that impairment on an individual's ability to perform major life activities.

THERE ARE FOUR MAIN TYPES OF DISABILITY:

- ***The physical disability***

It covers all the disorders that can cause partial or total impairment of motor skills, including the upper and/ or lower limbs (difficulties in moving, maintaining or changing a position, holding and manipulating, performing certain actions).

- ***The visual impairment***

It concerns people who are blind and in most cases, visually impaired.

- ***The hearing impairment***

Total loss of hearing is usually rare. Most people with hearing impairment have "residual hearing" where hearing aids provide real amplification. Depending on the circumstances, this impairment usually comes with a speech disorder.

- ***The Intellectual disability***

It induces a difficulty in understanding and limiting the speed of mental functions in terms of understanding, knowledge and cognition.

Disability is based on a situation



WHY HIRE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES?

People with disabilities have the skills, capabilities and potential to work; they are under-utilized group who want to join/rejoin the labor force and are eager to work.

The four main reasons for hiring PWD:

- **Diversify my workforce**
Numerous studies suggest that diverse teams promote creativity, innovation and better decision-making. Also, a diverse workforce can help an organization be better equipped to understand their customers and meet their needs.
- **Reduce the turn-over of my staff**
Studies show that employees with disabilities are often more productive, dependable and loyal than their co-workers and that staff retention is significantly higher among persons with disabilities. That adds up to savings in hiring and training costs.
- **Develop my Corporate Social Responsibility**
The employment of people with disabilities improves staff morale, customer loyalty and enhances the brand reputation of an organization. It is part of the company's Corporate Social Responsibility strategy that can benefit the organization, the employee and the wider community.
- **Comply with Law 220/2000**
In order to comply with the law, companies with more than 30 employees are imposed by a 3% quota of employing people with disabilities.

IN WHAT JOB POSITIONS CAN I RECRUIT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES?

Businesses think that PWDs can only perform small unskilled tasks. But disability is a diversity of different situations, meaning that with only few exceptions, all jobs can be occupied by PWD.

Moreover, some people with disabilities have technical or university degree, so they can have access to high skilled positions and managerial responsibilities.

Examples:

- A person with a physical disability may not perform a job which requires a lot of physical mobility, but may exercise large types of administrative work.
- Someone with intellectual disabilities may not perform multi-task and complex tasks but may perform mono-tasks activities.

Advice:

An analysis of the company values, the types of available jobs along with the working environment is essential before recruiting people with disabilities.

HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY RECRUIT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES?

Recruiting people with disabilities is often seen as something hard and laborious. "Hiring a person with disabilities is difficult", "My premises are not adapted," "I fear the reaction of my customers or other employees", "They can't perform the job task "are common concerns shared by the majority of businesses.

In fact, the recruitment of people with disabilities is not a difficult process as it seems. As in the traditional recruitment process, it follows a particular methodology. In this prospect, businesses will look into the process of recruitment through keeping two points in mind:

- **Non-discrimination:** In a recruitment process, no one can be discriminated solely on the ground of his/her disability;
- **The skills-based approach:** Work assessment has to be based on competencies and qualifying skills. A person should never be recruited just because he has a disability.

As an employer, what are my options?

- **The Traditional Method:** the person with the disability takes on an established position in your organization.
- **Job carving:** the person with the disability has a job that was specifically designed for him or her. It can be highly effective as the tasks are specific and can be tailored to the company's need. But the utmost care must be taken not to create jobs that further devalue people with disabilities by physically separating them from other workers or by having them perform tasks that are considered bothersome or unpleasant.

- **Work from Home:** can be a great option for both the employer and the employee for specific types of jobs like data entry tasks or manual work.

There are two basic approaches to recruitment of persons with disabilities:

- **The first approach:** is to recruit persons with disabilities as part of your overall recruitment process. This will happen naturally as your recruitment process becomes increasingly inclusive and open to all.
- **The second approach:** is to conduct affirmative action and specific outreach activities with organizations to recruit people with disabilities.

Advice:

As a proactive and affirmative action in recruiting a person with disability we suggest you reserve a specific position. After interviewing several candidates with disabilities and if you don't find a qualified one, you can then open the recruitment to everybody.

WHERE CAN I CONTACT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES?

There are many organizations and programs at the local and national level that work with people with disabilities.

The following kinds of organizations may be appropriate for your recruitment efforts:

- **Job placement offices as arcenciel**
- **Disability associations and NGOs**
- **Specialized schools**
- **Rehabilitation centers**
- **Other private or public employment offices**

HOW DO I ADVERTISE FOR EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES?

To be successful in hiring a person with a disability, an accurate job description is extremely helpful as it provides a template for comparing the skills and abilities of each applicant.

In addition to your normal methods of advertising such as company's website, Job hunter websites and advertising in local newspapers you can submit your job offers to specialized Job placement centers such as arcenciel that supports you in job matching.

Make sure that:

1. Your advertisement indicates "equal opportunity employer" or "People with disabilities are welcome to apply" and similar wording;
2. You offer alternative ways to submit resumes like online applications.

Remember to always advertise for the skills you are looking for.

Advice:

When reviewing resumes you may realize that people with disabilities did not have the same opportunity to develop skills and gain experience. Give them a chance to be interviewed. This opportunity will enable persons with disabilities to prove themselves and for you as an employer to get insight to their abilities and potential.

THE INTERVIEW PROCESS: PRE-INTERVIEW

Prior to the interview, the job applicant may request an accommodation during the interview. An accommodation can be anything from a wheelchair accessible interview venue to requesting an oral exam instead of written or an oral exam for people with visual impairment or intellectual disability; they may even request a certain time for the interview, or even a telephone interview etc.

Ensure that your interview space is disability friendly by:

- Asking the applicant you are interviewing if they will require any accommodations for the interview;
- Ensuring your interview room is wheelchair accessible;
- Ensuring you have an accessible washroom;
- Being aware that the individual may need to arrange transportation and/or support staff;
- Ensuring that the applicant knows the duration of the interview.

Advice:

If you think your premises are not accessible, you can ask for the support of specialized organization for conducting the interview.

THE INTERVIEW

Remember to focus on the person's skills and abilities.

Use a quiet environment for your interviews. Noisy environments can be especially distracting if the interviewee has a sensory disability. Base your job requirements on a valid job description that outlines the job's specific tasks.

- **Evaluate competencies:** Always ask similar questions to all interviewees regardless of whether they have a disability or not. You may ask relevant questions about his background, previous experiences, strengths and weaknesses..... An inclusive interview and selection process focuses on what an individual can contribute to the organization. The existence of a disability is a secondary consideration. Save the discussion regarding specific accommodations until the end of the interview when you have ascertained if the applicant has all the skills required for the job.
- **Speak about disability:** Disability should never be a taboo. You can address the issue directly but you should never ask personal questions which are not related to the job (for example, how did you become disabled? Are you on certain medications?) that might make the interviewee feel uncomfortable. If the person does not want to talk about it, it is a personal choice. Often the person will address the topic himself and precise what he cannot do.
- **Verify the good matching position-candidate:** Check if the person has restrictions that prevent him from performing one of the tasks, you can discuss potential solutions or adaptation. If the person is unable to perform the job at all because of a lack of skills or disability (ex: he has to drive and is unable to do so), you should explain why he was not been selected. Maybe then you can offer another vacancy that suits his profile once it arises

Advice:

In case the person has been referred through a Job Placement or an NGO, you can always ask advice or further information from the organization.

Remember that some disabilities may affect how a person speaks or appears, but may not have any impact on their ability to do the job. Even if you are not comfortable with the person's situation, never show pity/sympathy and try to avoid any negative reaction.

HOW TO ADAPT THE WORKPLACE?

In most cases, a work adaptation is not always a necessity. If needed, the solution is often simple and does not require major changes. You should always involve the person in the adaptation of his workplace. Ask for the intervention of an occupational therapist to conduct analysis on the job (tasks and duties) and working environment and provide specific recommendation. Additionally, you can ask

for the expertise of a technician on accessibility measures necessary for adaptation of work premises. It is designed to be a convenient source for identifying architectural and communication barriers encountered by people with disabilities in private and public facilities. We differentiate two types of adaptations:

Organizational Design:

- Changing an office location or disposition (Ex: the office will be closer to the elevator or the bathrooms);
- Modifying the work process that is the performance an employee should do : the sequence changing in the performance of job tasks, or dividing the job task duties into several parts and redesigning them (Ex: someone one in the team will perform the task that a PWD cannot do);
- Adjusting the working time (Ex: working part time job or taking breaks on different interval);
- Adjusting the physical position that a person needs to work (standing, sitting...);
- Redesigning or modifying of the used equipments necessary in performing job duties;
- Reassigning to a vacant position.

Technical Adaptation:

- Reserving accessible parking spaces close to the accessible entrances;
- Adapting the entrance with a ramp;
- Making restrooms accessible;
- Replacing door knobs with handles;
- Widening aisles, rearranging furniture, raising a desk, or rearranging files chair or shelves for accessibility to employees with mobility impairments such as those using a wheel chair;
- Installing a phone with speakers for person with hearing impairment;
- Placing Braille labels or tactile cues on doors and shelves for employees with sight impairments;
- Installing specialized software for people with visual impairment.

Advice:

If it's impossible for you to welcome a person on a wheel chair because your premises cannot be adapted, you can decide to recruit a person with another disability that can access your company (a person with a visual impairment for example).

WHAT IS AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT?

An inclusive environment is more than ensuring an accessible building, providing a sign language interpreter or creating large print documents.

It welcomes all people, regardless of their disability or particularity. It recognizes and uses their skills and strengthens their abilities, it is respectful, supportive, and equalizing. Creating an inclusive environment is challenging, though provoking, and rewarding. It is a continuous process, one that evolves and responds to changes in the environment or in policies. It benefits individuals with disabilities and those without.

Advice:

Ideally all workplaces should be inclusive. But it's always important to make a first step, this usually makes the difference.

In case PWDs are recruited, the employer does not have to make the entire workplace accessible - only those areas used by employees with disabilities.

HOW TO FACILITATE THE INTEGRATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES?

Sometimes, the integration of a person with disability will not require any specific action. But it is always better to support the person during this phase, as well as the welcoming team.

It is recommended to prepare the PWD's arrival by informing the manager and colleagues. This has to be done simply and naturally. Of course, you always need to remind the team that the person is recruited on the basis of skills and not disability. Moreover, you need to break taboo so the others will be more comfortable and prepared when they will see a PWD for the first time. It also helps educate other employees and make them understand the business initiative. Always be honest with the manager about the special condition of the person in order to avoid misunderstandings or difficulties.

During the integration process, training is an essential part in helping the new employee perform the job effectively and efficiently. Most employers have a standard "training" practice or process for new hires. In some cases, this process will work for the individual with disabilities, depending on what the disability is and how it affects the new employee's learning.

A person in the company can be designated as a tutor or mentor to support and coach the person during his integration process. If the employee with a disability requires accommodations for learning the tasks,

the standard training process can still be used as a general guide with adaptations added as required. In other cases, the employee with a disability may require a longer training period or they may need to learn only one task at a time and once that task is mastered, they can move onto another task.

Advice:

You can always ask the support of specialized association to help the integration process, on the training part but also on ways to interact with the manager and the colleagues.

When you succeed in their recruitment do not hesitate to share it with your partners and colleagues in other organization.

HOW TO DO DEAL WITH A PWD ONCE RECRUITED?

Once recruited deal with the person as any other employee. You should not give him a special treatment based on a specific need and don't have to accept attitudes that are not related to the disability (for example you can accept that the person will leave 1h early every Friday to do physiotherapy but will not accept that he arrives everyday late with no explanation).

A PWD's salary compensation will be just like any other employee who is performing the same job. The compensation will vary however if the employee is working part-time or performing smaller tasks. In addition, you should provide the same opportunities for career growth and development in term of remuneration, promotion, and training.

Always stay tuned to difficulties that the person can encounter; it will be better to prevent any problem. It could be done by the direct manager, the HR manager or any other person within the company.

Advice:

You can always contact a special institution and ask for the intervention of an occupational therapist if needed.

Fear is one of the main reasons why we are reluctant to interact with people with disabilities – do not let fear of making a mistake, fear of saying the wrong thing, or fear of the unknown make you reluctant to interact with people with disabilities. The greatest mistake we can make is to exclude people with disabilities because of those fears. If you make a mistake, acknowledge it, apologize, and move on. Overcoming fear and being aware of persons with disabilities will make your organization an inclusive environment-a place for better opportunities to benefit all sectors in the society by helping us create a fairer environment.

CONCLUSION

For people with disabilities, the world of employment is often fraught with barriers.

For businesses, the word disability is often linked with fear and misconceptions. They are associated with the high cost of hiring, the attention devoted to hiring people with disabilities and their productivity level. Barriers are often inadvertent and exist out of ignorance, and concern.

Concerning employment of people with disabilities, barriers are removed through training, technical assistance, collaboration, and the development of inclusive practices, teamwork, and respect.

Employers should want to hire the right person for the right job, whether it is someone with a disability or not. Disability does not have to be seen as a barrier, but as an opportunity to create a more inclusive, equalitarian and tolerant work environment which will benefit everyone.

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APPENDIX 1

INTERACTING WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES - SOME BASIC ETIQUETTE

Below is a list of some basic etiquette tips that we should follow when interacting with people with disabilities:

- Always be aware of barriers, both permanent and temporary. In an office, never move an object without putting it back in its place and make sure you do not block the passage. Give priority to people with walking or standing difficulty (elevator, ATM ...);
- When talking to a person with a disability, speak directly to the person. If there is a companion or interpreter present, always direct your comments to the person with the disability;
- Never assume that a person with a disability needs your assistance. It is always polite to offer your assistance, but once you have offered, wait for a reply before acting. If the person accepts your offer, wait to be directed. Do not be offended if your offer of assistance is not accepted; many persons with disabilities would rather do things for themselves whenever possible;
- Do not assume that a person with a physical disability also has a cognitive disability;
- Assistive devices (canes, crutches, wheelchairs, walkers, communication boards, etc.) should be respected as extensions of the person or as personal property. Do not move or play with them without permission from the user. Never lean on a person's wheelchair. A chair is often considered an extension of the body and leaning on it is the same as leaning directly on the person;
- When talking with a person who has a visual impairment, always identify yourself at the beginning of the conversation and remember to inform the person when you are ending the conversation, changing location, or leaving the area. Never hold the person's arm while walking; let them hold your arm. This will allow them to walk slightly behind you and get a sense of what to expect from the motion of your body. Ask if the person would like verbal cues as to what is ahead when you approach steps, curbs, or other barriers;
- When talking with a person with hearing impairment, be in a calm place and make sure your face is illuminated; talk by articulating, without exaggeration or shouting and reformulate rather than repeating if needed. Do not hesitate to use writing.

APPENDIX 2 - DO'S AND DON'TS

DON'T SAY

Differently abled, challenged, handicapped

The disabled

Slow learner

Autistic

Mongoloid

Midget

Burn victim

Handicapped parking

Blind

Mental retardation

Normal, able-bodied

Deaf

Disabled, restricted

Crippled, paralyzed

DO SAY

Disability

People with disabilities

Person with a learning disability

Person with autism

Person with Down syndrome

Person of short stature

Burn survivor

Accessible parking

Visually impaired

Intellectual disability

Nondisabled

Hearing impaired

Person who used the wheelchair

Physically impaired

APPENDIX 3 - OVERCOMING STEREOTYPES

We all have stereotypes about disability as a result of cultural views and the prevalent surrounding environment.

MYTHS

We immediately recognize a person with disability

The disability usually appears at birth

Many people with physical disabilities use a wheelchair

The integration of a person with disabilities requires adaptation in the workplace

It only happens to others

FACTS

About 80% of disabilities are not visible.

Almost 85% of people with disabilities become so after the age of 15.

Less than 5% of people with disabilities use a wheelchair in their everyday life.

The technical improvements intervene in only 15% of the cases.

During an active life, one out of two persons will face disability whether temporarily or permanently. The main causes of disability are chronic diseases, accidents, aging or armed conflict.



Catholic Relief Services
Eshmoun Bldg., 10th Fl.
Bechara El Khoury St.,
Sector 27, Saifi
BEIRUT . LEBANON
T. 00961 1 217 793/4
F. 00961 1 217 795
www.crs.org

arcenciel
Jisr el Wati,
Avenue Emile Lahoud
BEIRUT . LEBANON
T. 00961 1 565655
F. 00961 1 587303
www.arcenciel.org

The LEAP project is technically supported by Catholic Relief Services and financially supported by United States Agency for International Development.

The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development.