

DISABILITY AT A GLANCE 2023

Catalysts of Change: Disability Inclusion in Business in Asia and the Pacific

Disability inclusive business

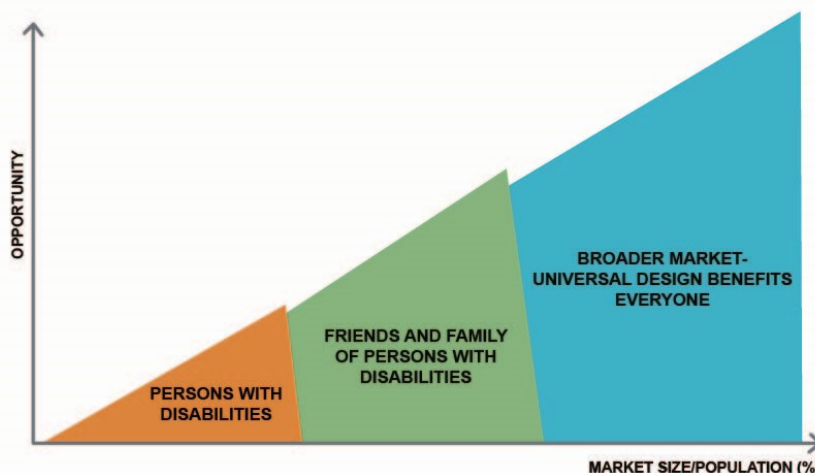
A disability-inclusive business assesses and capitalizes on opportunities to promote and mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities into **all phases of a business value chain** and ensures the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in all their diversity as leaders, employees, customers, suppliers/distributors, entrepreneurs, substantive experts and valued stakeholders.



Benefits and opportunities

Disability-inclusive businesses contribute towards the advancement of disability rights by addressing the diverse needs of disability groups, providing solutions to disability-related problems and engaging persons with disabilities in various aspects of their business operations. Potential benefits of disability inclusion in business include increased access to an untapped talent pool; improved productivity and retention, workplace accessibility, innovation and profitability; strengthened supplier diversity; enhanced delivery of goods and services; closer contact with a vast consumer market; and boosted business reputation.

The broader market related to persons with disabilities and their families and friends



Source: ESCAP rendering of a Return on Disability Group figure. Rich Donovan, *2020 Annual Report: The Global Economics of Disability – Design Delight from Disability*, Return on Disability Group (Toronto, 2020).

Megatrends, including the following, are influencing the private sector and make now the perfect time to invest in disability-inclusion:

- Population ageing
- Increasing urban population
- Climate change
- Pandemics
- Advanced technologies and new types of assistive technology
- Governments and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) inclusion policies



Putting disability-inclusive business into practice

Leadership

- Executive-level managers and leadership boards promote an inclusive culture at all levels of a company by setting a vision of disability inclusion as part of the core business strategy and establishing policies, budgets and operational systems for disability inclusion.
- Executive leaders also set the tone for disability disclosure and inclusion in their organizations by communicating their commitment to disability inclusion and appreciation of the value it creates in the workplace.
- Business leaders adopt environment, social and governance (ESG) and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) guidelines that offer an opportunity to promote disability inclusion within corporate governance and other aspects of business.
- Policymakers also adopt disability-inclusive ESG and DEI policies and guidelines and encourage businesses to implement them.
- Policymakers with disabilities provide a critical lived experience perspective to policy design, implementation and monitoring.
- Global networks support and promote theories and practices of disability-inclusive business through facilitating global networking of like-minded disability-inclusive business owners, sharing good practices and the development and utilization of disability-inclusive business indexes.

Products and services

- Businesses, Governments and other stakeholders promote disability inclusion in logistics, marketing and sales, and after-sales services.
- Integrating universal design principles to create accessible products and services as core business products is critical for companies to maximize their value chains.
- Accessible design is applicable across all sectors. In the Asia-Pacific region, the tourism, financial services and apparel sectors are taking concrete actions to make their products and services accessible.
- Governments can mandate businesses to produce universal design based products and services.

Human resources

- It is important to support the inclusion of persons with disabilities across all phases of the employment life cycle, from attracting talent to

ensuring inclusive recruitment practices, retention and engagement programming.

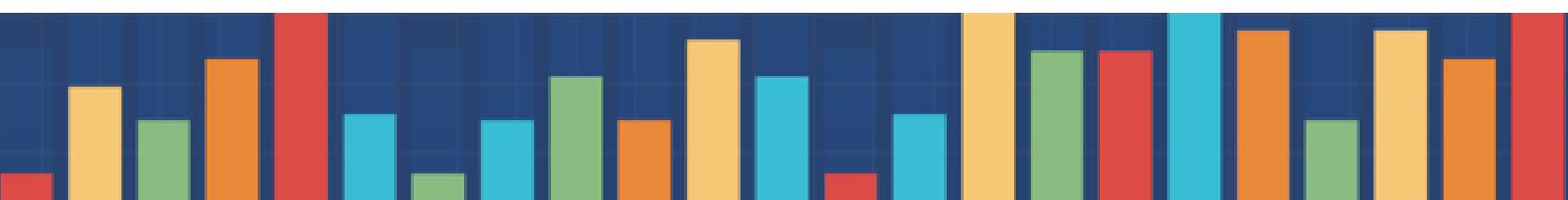
- Asia-Pacific Governments support the employment of persons with disabilities by setting legal and policy frameworks, providing services designed to support employees with disabilities and developing inclusive education and skills training to prepare persons with disabilities for the labour market.
- International organizations, development finance institutions and civil society organizations support disability-inclusive employment by bringing together networks to share good practices and promote inclusive employment and providing technical and vocational skills training.

Procurement

- Businesses can support other disability-inclusive businesses, especially those owned by persons with disabilities, by developing an inclusive supply chain and influencing their supply chain to have an increased focus on disability inclusion and accessibility.
- Two critical tools to help governments advance disability-inclusive businesses through public procurements are: (a) requiring the production of accessible goods and services, and (b) preferential contracting.
- International organizations, including the United Nations and business networks, are also using procurement procedures as a means to support disability-inclusive businesses.

Entrepreneurship

- Entrepreneurs with disabilities face unique challenges because of ableist attitudes and low expectations stemming from negative stereotypes, discrimination and misconceptions about their skills and potential.
- Governments support entrepreneurs with disabilities through programmes targeted at providing funding for starting or expanding businesses.
- CSOs, including organizations of persons with disabilities, are raising capital and providing networks of support and talent development for entrepreneurs with disabilities.
- Impact capital is starting to invest in companies that support entrepreneurs with disabilities, including making direct investments in start-ups that have the potential to scale into market-leading businesses.



Stakeholders

For a disability-inclusive business to develop fully, it needs to be better supported by the ecosystem interplay of governments, development finance institutions, business investors and CSOs and, critically, involve persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in the process.



Recommendations

Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initiation and commitment of disability inclusion from executive-level managers• Implement a disability inclusion strategy as a core business strategy with indicators and timelines• Devote sufficient human and financial resources• Share good practices and learn from other businesses on disability-inclusive business efforts
Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply a whole-of-society approach to disability inclusion• Support the implementation of disability-inclusive business by encouraging multiple ministries and local governments to develop and implement laws and regulations that ensure non-discrimination and the rights of persons with disabilities in all relevant sectors• Utilize public procurement to promote the employment and entrepreneurship of persons with disabilities and to promote the availability of accessible goods and services
All stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Persons with disabilities and their representative organizations should be consulted and involved in the development and implementation of disability inclusion strategies set by businesses and government policymaking• Jointly develop and implement cross-sector disability equality training for themselves on a regular basis• International organizations, industry organizations and development finance institutions should contribute towards the advancement of disability-inclusive business by working with governments, businesses and organizations representing persons with disabilities

Information presented in this infographic is extracted from

DISABILITY AT A GLANCE 2023

Catalysts of Change: Disability Inclusion Business in Asia and the Pacific

Available at www.unescap.org/kp/2023/disability-glance-2023-catalysts-change-disability-inclusion-business-asia-and-pacific

Contact: Social Development Division, ESCAP | email: ESCAP-SDD@un.org

