

Editorial



DO
YOU WANT
5% REBATE
ON TAX
FOR YOUR
ORGANIZATION?



BBDN is currently working on four programmes: Inclusion Works (IW), Innovation to Inclusion (i2i), Skills21 and Return to Work and Rehabilitation. BBDN aims at facilitating the accessibility of people with disabilities in the labour market. We are pleased to share that an encouraging policy has been undertaken by the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) to further incentivize employment of people with disabilities. In the gazette of the GOB published on 30th June 2020 titled Finance Act 2020, in section 52 (6), it is stated that “Any taxpayer, as a recruiting authority, that recruits at least ten percent (10%) of the organization’s total workforce as persons with disabilities, shall receive a 5% tax rebate on the payable tax”.



Innovation to Inclusion (i2i)

Online Job Fair for People with Disabilities

As part of the Innovation to Inclusion (i2i) program supported by UK Government Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), Bangladesh Business & Disability Network (BBDN) in collaboration with Leonard Cheshire, Centre for Services & Information on Disability and media partner Prothom Alo, have hosted a 3 days Online Job Fair for Persons with Disabilities from 27th to 29th April 2021 through a digital platform.



At the inauguration, Chief Guest Mr. K.M. Abdus Salam, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment (MOLE) expressed his appreciation and support to the organizers on the initiative to facilitate employment for persons with disabilities. In the closing ceremony, Mr. Salahuddin Khan, BBDN Chairman, highlighted the large potential for online job fairs and called on all in the private sector to come forward to support the initiative. Honourable representatives from the employers’ side, Ms. Rupali Chowdhury, Mr. Hamimur Rahman, Ms. Shwapna Bhowmick and many others shared their insights on inclusive employment in the country.



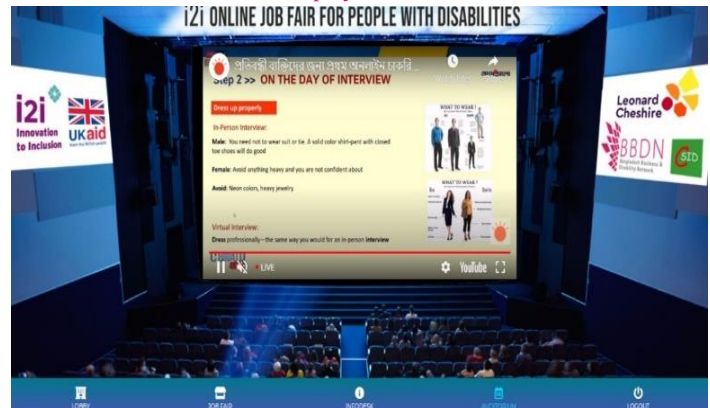
Online Job Fair Lobby



Employer Stalls



Individual Employer Stall



Learnings Sessions in the Virtual Auditorium

In the job fair, total 1481 candidates registered among whom 1208 were males and 272 females. There were 19,538 total visits at the stalls. Total 23 employers participated in the job fair including Elite Garments, Berger Paints Bangladesh Ltd, bKash Limited, Coats Bangladesh Limited, Elite Paints & Chemical Industries Ltd, FIFO Tech, KDS Garments In. Ltd, Service Engine BPO (SEBPO), SuperTel, Envoy Textiles, Digicon Technology Ltd, Shwapno, Genex Infosys, Nestlé Bangladesh Limited, BRAC, Brain Station 23, My Outsourcing Limited, SQUARE Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Nagad, Urmi Group, Akhtar Furnishers, TOS Technology Ltd and Dream Door Soft Ltd. The employers offered total 764 jobs to the candidates and received 3963 job applications.

After the closing of the job fair, employers have some time to extract all the applications and CVs from the platform, following which they are expected to proceed with short-listing, interviewing and appointing candidates. BBDN is following up with the employers to offer any support they require in an effort to facilitate job placements. If there are any positions for which employers request more applicants, candidates will be sourced accordingly.

Roundtable on the 8th Five Year Plan with Prothom Alo

In collaboration with Prothom Alo, an online roundtable meeting was organized on May 11, 2021 with the theme: Eighth Five-Year Plan, Disability-Friendly Employment and Progress on Inclusion. Mr. Shamsul Alam, the Senior Secretary of the General Economics Division of the Bangladesh Planning Commission was the chief guest of the event. The discussion was attended by Shafiqul Islam, Country Director, ADD International Bangladesh; Ashrafun Nahar Misti, Executive Director, Women with Disabilities Development Foundation; Muhammad Mushfiqul Wara; Country Director, CBM (Moderator); Murteza Rafi Khan, CEO, BBDN; Dr. Mokhlesur Rahman, Senior Operations Officer, Education Global Practice, The World Bank; Tuomo Poutiainen, Country Director, ILO, Bangladesh and Amrita Regina Rozario, Country Director, Sightsavers.

Prothom Alo published a report on the roundtable meeting which touched on issues ranging from employment, skills development, social protection, accessibility, SMEs and inclusion of women with disabilities.



Roundtable on the 8th Five Year Plan with Prothom Alo



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All three five-year plans had inclusive development as core objectives. Inclusive development has not only been a phrase for us, it had massive impact on the lives of people. In the 7th five-year plan, we have been able to develop the social safety strategy paper. 8th five-year plan has several objectives on disability inclusion. We will be incorporate more and more activities with time, to ensure inclusion in all sectors.

- Mr. Shamsul Alam, Member, Senior Secretary, General Economics Department, Planning Commission

Webinar on Disability Inclusive Skills & Employment Opportunities in the Private Sector

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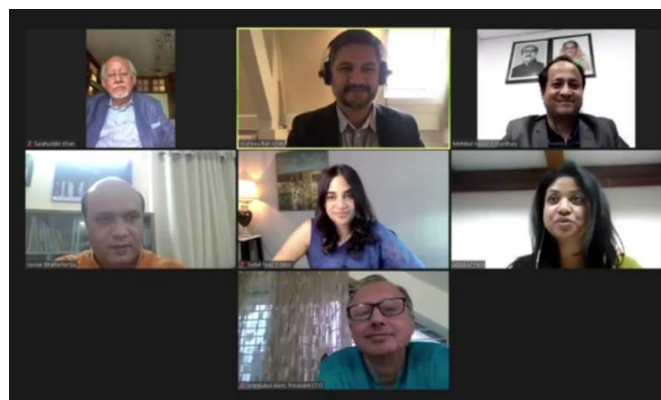
Equality and inclusion have always been a vision for Bangladesh since her independence. Together, we all must prepare ourselves to have the spiritual and cultural values to develop disability inclusion. Our employers need to hold the same perceptions. We want to work together for this prominent cause.

- Barrister Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury, Deputy Minister of Education, Bangladesh

BBDN and the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) jointly organized a webinar on Tuesday, March 18th, 2021, entitled as: "Disability Inclusive Skills & Employment Opportunities in the Private Sector". Barrister Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury, Deputy Minister of Education was the chief guest at the webinar. Industrial owners and business leaders of CCCI took part in it. The webinar was organized as part of the Innovation to Inclusion (i2i) programme.

Mahbubul Alam, President, CCCI; Salahuddin Kasem Khan, Chairman, BBDN; Bhaskar Bhattacharya, National Consultant, Access to Information (a2i); Murteza Khan, CEO, BBDN and Sadaf Saj Siddiqui, Executive Committee Trustee and Chair, BBDN were spokespersons in the webinar. The webinar was hosted by Aziza Ahmed, Head of Operations, BBDN.

The session highlighted the need for bridging the supply side and demand side of the labour market through the active engagement and support of all relevant stakeholders while emphasizing the need for government policies to be effectively implemented and budgeted in order to ensure long term sustainability of disability inclusion initiatives in skills development and employment.



Workshop and Social Dialogue on Disability Inclusion

BBDN signed an agreement with ILO Bangladesh Country office for implementing a project on providing Technical Assistance to Promote Social Inclusion Strategy in Seven (7) Model Institutes and Two (02) Centre for Skills Excellence under the European Union-funded skills 21 – Empowering Citizens for Inclusive Sustainable Growth Project.

Under this project, BBDN conducted workshops on disability inclusion at 9 TVET institutions with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPD).



Disability Inclusion Workshop and MoA Signing in Jamalpur Technical School and College.

Khulna Mohila Polytechnic Institute, Bagerhat Institute of Marine Technology, Dhaka Technical Teachers Training Centre, Gaibandha Technical Training Center, Bogura Vocational and Technical Training Institute, Jamalpur Technical School and College, Kaptai Bangladesh Sweden Polytechnic Institute, Sylhet Technical School and College and Feni Polytechnic Institute are the 9 TVET institutions that took part in the initiative of BBDN and ILO.

The speakers, in their speech, put emphasis on bringing persons with disabilities into the mainstream through creating TVET Friendly Environment in society.



Disability Inclusion Workshop and MoA Signing at Gaibandha Technical Training Center



Disability Inclusion Workshop and MoA Signing in Khulna Mohila Polytechnic Institute.

The speakers shared their insights while addressing a special dialogue on Disability Inclusion in TVET system with Institutional Management Advisory Board (IMAB), local enterprises, parents of students with disability and civil society stakeholders in the conference. The workshops and social dialogues aimed at strengthening the quality of TVET/ Skill development system, creating model TVET institutions which are inclusive, environmentally conscious, high quality and labour market responsive.

Speakers at the functions underscored the need for bringing the persons with disability under the technical vocational educational training (TVET) system for their betterment.



Disability Inclusion Workshop and MoA Signing in Kaptai Upazila



Disability Inclusion Workshop and MoA Signing at Dhaka Technical Teachers Training Centre

Validation Workshop of RTW & Rehabilitation Strategy

BBDN with the support of BEF and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH has completed the drafting of "Return to Work and Rehabilitation Strategy" for the people who confront injuries or disabilities due to industrial accidents or occupational hazards in the workplace. BBDN arranged the final validation workshop on 7th January 2021. The workshop intended to gather further insights on the draft Strategy paper and action plan to finalize and validate the process with tripartite consultation and propose recommendations on the implementation process of the strategy in the national strategy paper. Mr. K.M. Abdus Salam, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment (MOLE) was present as chief guest in addition to representatives from Directorate of Inspection of Factory and Establishment, BEF, BGMEA, BKMEA, NCCWE, other workers' representatives, ILO and other relevant stakeholders.



Tripartite Consultative Workshop on Inclusion of RTW Provisions on Bangladesh Labour Law



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Decent work for people with disabilities and rehabilitation is a vital issue with respect to human rights. The group of people is often deprived of the benefits of national development. The government of Bangladesh has recognized the problem and is working for disability inclusion in social and economic sectors.

- Mr. K.M. Abdus Salam, Secretary,
Ministry of Labour and Employment

In order to make the labour market disability friendly and to get an inclusive labour law for the state, BBDN has taken initiatives to propose some favourable law structures to the Ministry. In collaboration with the GIZ and Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF), BBDN has taken forward the task of finalising the strategy of "Return to Work and Rehabilitation". At a tripartite workshop on 7 January 2021, representatives of the government, employers and labour parties realized that certain sections of the Bangladesh Labour Act need to be modified and added to implement the strategic method of bringing injured workers and workers with disabilities, back to work through appropriate treatment and re-rehabilitation process.

Following the validation workshop, a high level tripartite consultative workshop was organized at Gulshan office of Bangladesh Employers' Federation on 10th March 2021 to compile valuable stakeholders' recommendations for proposing amendments to the rules and regulations of Bangladesh labour law in favour of the RTW process.



Two Candidates with Disabilities, Rummanur Rahman and Rezahan Sharkar were recruited by two of our employers. The employers shared their experiences with the newly recruited candidates with us.

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Rezahan's adaptive and quick learning attitude are really admirable. He is also very keen to learn new skills.

We are very happy with his performance and really hope to create more learning opportunities for him.

We are really looking forward to creating more opportunities for people with disabilities in future leveraging the network and available talent pool.

- Nestle Team



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Rummanur has been a valuable addition to our team. He is very dedicated and hard working.

His efforts made us realize the importance of a diverse workforce. There is a lot to learn from him.

CGS has always been eager to recruit people with disabilities.

In future, we want to be more inclusive and have many more employees with disabilities among us.

- Chittagong Grammar School Team



Rummanur's Journey with BBDN

Chittagong Grammar School (CGS) is one of the reputed schools in Bangladesh. It is a founder member of BBDN as well as an enlisted employer under the Inclusion Works (IW) consortium programme. The school expressed its interest to recruit persons with disabilities for several positions throughout its engagement with BBDN.



Mr. Rummanur Rahman, a person with congenital disability joined CGS as an Admin in March, 2021. He was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy since his birth and faces difficulties in speech coordination. Due to his disability, he was rejected in many job interviews, but he never gave up on his hopes.

He first approached BBDN in its 2018 Dhaka job fair where he participated as a candidate. There, he met the Chairman of BBDN, Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan. Although Rummanur faced failure several times, he didn't lose his hope. And finally in March of 2021, Rummanur applied for the Admin position in CGS through the IW consortia and got successfully recruited.

Rummanur says that he has always been able to overcome the challenges when he got the opportunities. Unfortunately, people with disabilities are deprived of such prospects. He believes that every person with disability can learn to work through their obstacles if they are given a chance.

Rezahan's Empowering Story

Nestle is the world's largest food and beverage company, with over 2000 brands that include worldwide icons as well as regional favourites. Nestle has a global presence in 191 countries. The organization has been an active employer of different programs in BBDN and always had the aspiration for inclusive employment.

Nestle Bangladesh recently shared internship opportunities with BBDN where Rezahan Sharkar was one of the referred candidates. Rezahan Sharkar was born in 1996 and grew up as a person without disability. In 2006, he lost his left hand in an unfortunate road accident. Becoming a person with disability never demotivated him in this career path. He completed BBA and MBA from Jahangirnagar University and started looking for job opportunities. Rezahan faced discrimination in the interviews and always felt that the people with disabilities are deprioritized in the recruitment processes. BBDN reached Rezahan through Access Bangladesh Foundation (ABF) and the IW consortia supported him in the selection processes for internship at Nestle Bangladesh. He received support from the consortia in preparing himself for the interview. On 2nd May, 2021, Rezahan joined Nestle as an intern.



He is trying to learn through his experiences and enjoying his internship days. The Nestle team has been very helpful towards him. In future, Rezahan wants to work in the private sectors of Bangladesh or become an entrepreneur.