

NEWSLETTER

TOWARDS THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL OF DISABILITY INCLUSIVE GROWTH



EDITORIAL

Empowering Inclusion: Reflections on a Milestone Year

At the Bangladesh Business & Disability Network (BBDN), we firmly believe that participation in economic activity is key to enabling persons with disabilities to live independently and fully participate in all aspects of life. Since our inception, we have been dedicated to improving employment opportunities for women and men with disabilities in the private sector. The year 2024 marks a particularly significant chapter in our journey, filled with innovative initiatives and noteworthy achievements. As we reach the midpoint of this year, we are proud to reflect on the progress we've made in collaboration with our valued members, partners, and stakeholders. One of the highlights of our year till now, has been the national job fair, which was a resounding success. This event was more than a job fair; it was a celebration of talent, ambition, and opportunity, bringing together skilled individuals with disabilities and potential employers under one roof. Looking ahead, we remain committed to our mission of creating a more inclusive workforce. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all who have been part of this journey, and we invite you to continue working with us to build a world where every individual can thrive in the workplace, regardless of their abilities. Thank you for your ongoing support and partnership.

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Bangladesh Business & Disability Network Hosts National Job Fair for Persons with Disabilities



■ National Job Fair -2024

The Bangladesh Business and Disability Network (BBDN) hosted a pioneering National Job Fair for Persons with Disabilities at the Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB Centre) in Dhaka on February 19, 2024. This significant event funded by The United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Multi-Partner Trust Fund (UNPRPD MPTF) and led by the International Labour Organization under the UNPRPD project. Under the theme "Leave No One Behind the UN Habitat also partnered with BBDN for this initiative.

Key Highlights:

Overwhelming Response from the Business: More than 30 distinguished employers, representing both local and multinational sectors (including RMG, IT, paint industries, NGOs, and inclusive organizations), came forward to connect with the talent pool of participants.

Registration Numbers: A total of 1,026 candidates registered for the job fair, with 81.9% being male and 17.9% female. Around 250 candidates attended the event in person.

Distinguished Guests: The closing event was attended by key figures, including Mr. Peter Bellen, Mr. Saad Gilani Chief Technical Advisors from International Labour Organization, Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan (Chairman Advisory Council, BBDN), and Mr. Murteza Rafi Khan (CEO, BBDN). Dr. Dipu Moni, former MP and Minister of the Ministry of Social Welfare, also joined as the Chief Guest. Representatives from various businesses, NGOs, and organizations of persons with disabilities were present, making the fair a successful event.

Successful Appointments: A total of 55 candidates with disabilities received appointment letters—40 through a pre-matching procedure, 06 candidates during the fair and 07 candidates through post job matching activities.

Certificates of Participation: All employers received certificates of participation, recognizing their valuable contribution to this inclusive initiative.

This National Job Fair for Persons with Disabilities marks a significant milestone in making inclusive employment practices in Bangladesh. It underscores the commitment to ensuring no one is left behind in the workforce.

Partnership Between Save the Children and Bangladesh Business & Disability Network (BBDN) for Disability Inclusion



■ The Memorable moment of the MOU signing with the distinguished Guest

Save the Children Bangladesh and the Bangladesh Business & Disability Network (BBDN) have formed a strategic partnership to address the diverse needs of youth in Bangladesh, particularly those with disabilities. By aligning with national laws and international standards like the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), the collaboration seeks to overcome barriers to education, employment of young people with disabilities. Save the Children, with its decade-long commitment to improving the lives of children, will work with BBDN to

enhance disability inclusion in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and the broader skills system

A significant milestone in this collaboration was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in February 2024 at the Save

the Children Bangladesh office. The MOU was signed by Shumon Sengupta, Country Director of Save the Children in Bangladesh, and Mr. Murteza Rafi Khan, Chief Executive Officer of BBDN. Senior colleagues from both organizations attended the event.

Through this partnership, Save the Children and BBDN seek to create a more inclusive environment where young people with disabilities can access education and employment opportunities, ultimately leading to improved livelihoods and greater social inclusion.

■ Sensitization Training with Save the Children Bangladesh

In alignment with the MOU, the Bangladesh Business & Disability Network and Save the Children Bangladesh hosted a pioneering disability awareness program on April 28, 2024, at the Save the Children Bangladesh office in Gulshan. The enlightening session aimed to raise awareness and equip participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to embrace diversity within their activities nationwide. The session proved to be a remarkable success with the enthusiastic participation of over 30 employees, including management from various departments and strategic partners at field level. The event was marked by engaging



discussions, insightful presentations, and interactive activities geared toward

breaking down barriers and biases related to disability.

■ ProGRESS Project: Sensitization Workshop on Disability Awareness for Employers: Building a Disability Inclusive Workforce



■ Part of the Distinguished Guest at Sensitization Workshop with Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI)

Under the project 'Building a Gender-Responsive and Inclusive TVET System in Bangladesh for Creating Employment Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (ProGRESS)', BBDN conducted two sensitization

workshops with four chambers of commerce and industry in the Chittagong district. These workshops aimed to enlighten employers about disability awareness and promote workplace inclusivity with practical

strategies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

The first workshop, in collaboration with the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI), took place on April 24, 2024, at the CCCI office in Chattogram. Attendees included representatives from various business sectors, associations, development organizations, skills-building entities, and organizations of persons with disabilities. Mr. Omar Hazzaz, President of the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. The workshop had a total of 26 participants, comprising 22 male and 4 female attendees.

The second workshop, in collaboration with the Rangamati Chamber of Commerce & Industry (RCCI), was held on June 3, 2024, at the



■ Part of the distinguished Guest at Sensitization Workshop with Rangamati Chamber of Commerce & Industry (RCCI)

Rangamati Chamber Bhaban, Rangamati. Representatives from the the Rangamati District Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Women

Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Bandarban Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry, and the Khagrachari Chamber of Commerce

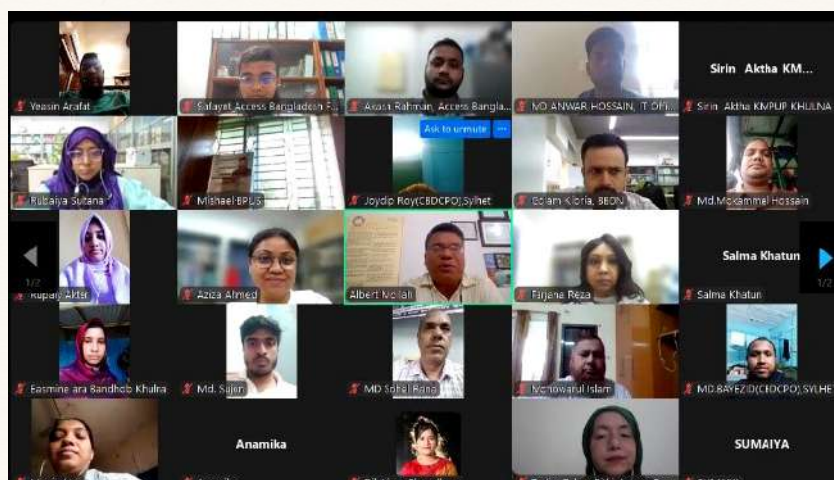
& Industry attended the workshop. Mr. Md. Abdul Wadud, President of the Rangamati Chamber of Commerce and Industry, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. This workshop had a total of 37 participants, with 21 male and 16 female attendees.

Both workshops featured engaging discussions, insightful presentations, and interactive activities aimed at breaking down common myths and misconceptions about disabilities. Employers were encouraged to implement inclusive hiring practices and support systems for employees with disabilities.

Empowering OPDs through Inclusive Skills and Employment Training

Bangladesh Business and Disability Network (BBDN) has organized two batches of the online "Capacity Building Training of Selected OPDs on Inclusive Skills and Employment" under the project UNPRPD funded by The United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Multi-Partner Trust Fund (UNPRPD MPTF) and led by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The training aimed to empower Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) with the essential knowledge, skills, and strategies to advocate effectively for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in skills training and employment. The training sessions were expertly facilitated by a team of experienced trainers from the Access Bangladesh Foundation (ABF).

The training was conducted online via Zoom and comprised two batches from May 8-9 and May 15-16, 2024, each consisting of selected OPD members from 10 selected districts (Chattogram, Bandarban, Rangamati, Khagrachari, Mymensingh, Dinajpur, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet). A total of 46 participants (28 male and 18 female), including a diverse group of persons with different types of disabilities.



■ Part of Capacity Building Training

Participants were provided with a comprehensive understanding of disability rights, relevant legislation, and practical strategies for creating inclusive employment opportunities. A key focus of the training was on building the capacity of OPDs to engage with stakeholders—including skills training providers, employers, and policymakers—to promote disability-inclusive practices within the labor market. The training was meticulously

tailored based on a thorough Training Needs Assessment (TNA), ensuring that the modules and materials were aligned with the specific needs of the participants.

This initiative underscores BBDN's commitment to building a more inclusive workforce in Bangladesh by strengthening the capacities of OPDs to drive change and advocate for the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities.



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