

YEAR IN **20** **REVIEW** **25**

Towards The Sustainable Development
Goals Of Disability Inclusive Growth





YEAR IN REVIEW 2025



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Message from **CHAIRMAN**



ARDASHIR KABIR

Chairman
BBDN Board of Trustees

Looking back at 2025, I reflect with great pride on the strides Bangladesh Business and Disability Network (BBDN) has made in advancing an inclusive labour market for persons with disabilities. This was a year of anticipation for Bangladesh, with national attention turning toward the elections scheduled for early 2026, yet BBDN's work proceeded with steady purpose, building on the trust and partnerships cultivated over the past decade.

From the vantage point of the Board, what stood out most this year was the deepening commitment of the private sector, not merely as participants in disability inclusion, but increasingly as champions and co-investors in the cause. The signing of MOUs between BBDN and both BGMEA and BKMEA, in the presence of senior government officials, signalled that two of the country's largest employers' associations are prepared to embed inclusion within their sectors at scale. This is precisely the kind of institutional commitment the Board has long sought to encourage, and it gives us confidence that the foundations being laid today will outlast any single project cycle.

The regulatory landscape also shifted meaningfully this year, with Bangladesh's ratification of several ILO conventions concerning occupational safety, health, and workers' rights. For the Board, this represents more than compliance; it is an invitation for employers to move beyond minimum standards and build genuinely safe, dignified workplaces. BBDN's role in supporting this transition, through training, advocacy, and technical guidance, remains central to our mandate.

I am also encouraged by the continued growth of our membership and partner base, which now spans banking, manufacturing, hospitality, and civil society. This breadth strengthens our voice in national policy conversations and reflects the Network's evolution from a sector-specific initiative into a genuinely cross-industry movement.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I extend our sincere appreciation to our funding partners, ILO, GIZ, BRAC Bank PLC, Eastern Bank PLC, and Global Affairs Canada, for their sustained confidence in our work. I am equally grateful to my fellow Trustees and the Advisory Council for their guidance, and to the management team and staff at BBDN, whose dedication continues to translate our strategic priorities into tangible outcomes.

As BBDN enters its second decade, the Board remains committed to ensuring that the Network's governance keeps pace with its growing ambitions, so that the momentum built in 2025 carries forward into lasting, systemic change for persons with disabilities across Bangladesh.



Message from CEO



MURTEZA RAFI KHAN

Chief Executive Officer
Bangladesh Business and Disability Network

In many ways, 2025 was a forward-looking year in Bangladesh, as all eyes were on the national elections scheduled for early 2026 and the great expectations for the country's future direction. Against this backdrop, BBDN made appreciable progress, achieving several key milestones that provide a strong foundation for future work while continuing to deliver on existing initiatives.

One of the key highlights was the flagship event EmpowerAbility: Powering Every Ability, sponsored by BRAC Bank & GIZ. This event featured the signing of Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between BBDN and the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BGMEA), as well as between BBDN and the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BKMEA), two of the country's largest employers' associations. Importantly these MOUs were signed in the presence of both the Honorable Adviser (Minister equivalent) and the Secretary of the Ministry of Labour & Employment. These developments attest to employers' growing awareness of the need to adopt inclusion practices more widely, with commitments made at the highest levels of the respective associations.

The regulatory environment has also evolved with the ratification of ILO conventions 155 & 188. These conventions provide a framework for promoting Occupational Safety and Health and emphasize the shared responsibility of governments, employers, and workers on preventing work-related accidents and diseases and actively promoting a safety culture at the workplace. The purpose is to organically promote a safer workplace instead of relying only on the regulatory measures. The primary responsibility for ensuring safe working conditions and systems rests with the employers,

as stipulated in these two conventions. Therefore, this is an opportune moment for employers to further build their capacity in anticipation of more thorough implementation of these conventions, which BBDN has been actioning with GIZ's support.

BBDN continued its close collaboration with the ILO through the ProGRESS project which is upskilling persons with disabilities in 10 districts across the country. BBDN also worked closely with local Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and other stakeholders as part of the project. BBDN also ventured into new territory by collaborating with EBL to upskill women with disabilities in digital skills, with a longer-term view to support entrepreneurship development.

Against the backdrop of economic uncertainty and shifting development funding flows, it has been encouraging to observe the emergence of the private sector not only as adopters of disability inclusion but also allies that are directly resourcing initiatives to advance the rights of persons with disabilities. This is an important moment for the private sector to come forward and take a leadership position in this regard to ensure that promising initiatives can be sustained and scaled in the long run.

I would like to thank all BBDN members, BBDN funding partners - GIZ, ILO, BRAC Bank & EBL - strategic partners, the Board of Trustees, the Advisory Council and the management team, who have contributed collectively to take the mission forward from strength to strength. We are deeply grateful for this fruitful collaboration and we hope to deepen and widen our joint impact in the years ahead.



Message from **DIRECTOR, URMI GROUP**



SHAMARUKH FAKHRUDDIN

Director,
Urmi Group

At Urmi Group, disability inclusion has been a priority long before the global focus on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Since the MDG era, we have believed that inclusive employment is not only a social responsibility but also a cornerstone of sustainable business growth. Over the years, we have deepened this commitment through partnerships with Bangladesh Business & Disability Network (BBDN), Marks & Spencer's Marks & Start program (since 2010), the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP) and Access Foundation. Today, I am proud to serve on BBDN's Board of Trustees, working collaboratively to advance disability-inclusive employment practices across Bangladesh.

As a founder member, Urmi Group's partnership with BBDN has played a pivotal role in strengthening our inclusion journey - helping us build awareness, improve hiring practices, and create meaningful employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Currently, Urmi Group has 115 persons with disabilities working across our operations through collaborations with CRP, BBDN, and local communities surrounding our factories. We focus on identifying individual strengths and providing tailored training to ensure employees can confidently perform roles suited to their capabilities.

Our commitment extends well beyond recruitment. To create a genuinely supportive workplace, employees with disabilities benefit from flexible entry and exit schedules to avoid crowding, Priority Badges for easier lift access for those with mobility challenges, and dedicated peer support colleagues to help them settle comfortably into the work environment.

Last year, I had the privilege of speaking as a panelist at the 14th United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights 2025 in Geneva, representing BBDN as a Trustee Board Member, where I highlighted both the progress and ongoing challenges of disability inclusion in Bangladesh. Equally enriching was listening to fellow panelists - including experts from the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights, international legal scholars, and disability rights advocates from across the globe - whose collective insights on embedding DEI within the UN Guiding Principles framework I am committed to implementing, both within Urmi Group and at the national policy level.

Inclusive policies and awareness are gradually improving, yet persons with disabilities remain among the most excluded groups in the workforce - particularly within SMEs where operational limitations create added barriers - underscoring exactly why organizations like BBDN are indispensable in bridging the gap between employers and persons with disabilities.

Looking ahead, Urmi Group remains firmly committed to advancing workplace inclusion and accessibility. As part of our long-term sustainability strategy, we aim to ensure that persons with disabilities represent at least 1% of our total workforce by 2027. We also believe that industries across Bangladesh must collectively come forward to create meaningful employment opportunities and build a more inclusive society where every individual can contribute with dignity and pride.



Message from **MD, ACI LOGISTICS LIMITED (SHWAPNO)**



SABBIR HASAN NASIR

Managing Director,
ACI Logistics Limited (Shwapno)

At ACI Logistics Limited (Shwapno), we believe that true business success is measured not only by market leadership but by the positive impact we create in the communities we serve. Our partnership with the Bangladesh Business & Disability Network (BBDN) since 2018 has been transformative, opening our eyes to the immense talent pool of persons with disabilities and demonstrating that inclusion is both the right thing to do and smart business strategy.

Over the years, our collaboration with BBDN has deepened and expanded. We have conducted targeted recruitment drives across multiple locations, participated actively in BBDN's job fairs, and worked closely with the Network to refine our inclusive hiring practices. Today, we are proud to have 96 persons with disabilities working across our retail operations nationwide. In 2025 alone, our recruitment drives with BBDN across seven locations - Khulna, Dinajpur, Rajshahi, Barishal, Mymensingh, Chattogram, and Sylhet - resulted in 60 job offers for persons with disabilities. Our experience has consistently shown that employees with disabilities demonstrate exceptional retention rates, strong work ethics, and commitment that enhances our entire workforce.

What began as a commitment to corporate social responsibility has evolved into a core business practice embedded in Shwapno's operations. We have witnessed firsthand how persons with disabilities excel when given equal opportunities and reasonable support. Their presence in our stores has not only enriched our workplace culture but also resonated positively with our customers, who appreciate shopping at establishments that reflect the diversity of our society.

As a General Member of BBDN, Shwapno is proud to be part of a network that is driving systemic change in Bangladesh's employment landscape. The technical support, sensitization programs, and candidate mobilization provided by BBDN have been instrumental in making our recruitment initiatives successful. Their expertise has helped us navigate the practical aspects of inclusive hiring and create work environments where all employees can thrive.

Looking ahead, Shwapno remains committed to expanding employment opportunities for persons with disabilities across our growing retail network. We encourage other businesses to recognize that disability inclusion is an opportunity to access talented employees, strengthen corporate culture, and contribute to building a more equitable Bangladesh.

Together we can demonstrate that businesses have a crucial role to play in creating a society where every person with disabilities has the opportunity to earn a dignified livelihood and contribute meaningfully to our nation's economic development.



ABOUT BBDN



The Bangladesh Business and Disability Network (BBDN) was established as a non-profit trust by the Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF) in 2016, with support from the International Labour Organization (ILO). In 2023, it was registered as an NGO under the NGO Affairs Bureau of Bangladesh. BBDN is committed to creating a more disability-inclusive labor market in the country. It is a member-based network comprising employers and employers' associations, in partnership with disability-focused organizations, NGOs, organizations of people with disabilities

(OPDs), civil society organizations (CSOs), and development partners.

Through collaborative efforts, BBDN aims to promote disability-inclusive practices in the world of work and skills development, ensuring equal opportunities and economic empowerment for individuals with disabilities. BBDN seeks to drive positive social change and create a transformative impact on Bangladesh's labor market bringing together key stakeholders.



OUR CURRENT PROJECTS

April 2025 - Ongoing

Empowering Entrepreneurs with Disabilities

Funded by Eastern Bank PLC (EBL)



Eastern Bank PLC.

- Entrepreneurship training to persons with disabilities.

BRAC Bank-BBDN Aporajeyo Ami Initiative

Funded by BRAC Bank PLC and jointly led by BRAC Bank PLC and BBDN



- Initiatives focus on promoting disability inclusion, skills development, and entrepreneurship for persons with disabilities.
- Conducted disability sensitization sessions for BRAC Bank PLC employees.
- Provided digital skills training to persons with disabilities.
- Organized the national conference “EmpowerAbility: Powering Every Ability” in 2024 and 2025.

September 2024 - Ongoing

November 2023 - Ongoing

Promoting Gender Responsive Enterprise Development and TVET System (ProGRESS)

Funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, the Government of Canada and led by ILO Country Office, Bangladesh



International
Labour
Organization



Canada

- Initiative focuses on skills development, waged employment, and entrepreneurship development.
- Aim to ensure training and employment for 500 persons with disabilities across ten locations including Chattogram, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, and other major cities.

Social Protection for Workers in the Textile and Leather Sector (SOSI)

Funded by the German Government and led by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH



Implemented by
giz
Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

- Return to Work and Occupational Disease & Occupational Medicine training for 150 RMG factories.
- Developed manuals on Return to Work and Occupational Disease & Occupational Medicine training.
- Comprehensive factory visits and policy advocacy initiatives.

July 2023 - Ongoing



OUR COMPLETED PROJECTS

JAN - SEP 2025

Digital Inclusion for Women with Disabilities

Funded by Eastern Bank PLC (EBL)



- 15 women with disabilities completed digital marketing training.

Research on Enhancing Productivity Among Persons with Disabilities

Funded by Asian Productivity Organization (APO)



Asian
Productivity
Organization

- Assessed the status of persons with disabilities in Bangladesh, identifying employment barriers and examining policies to improve productivity and workforce inclusion.

JUN 2024 - FEB 2025

JUN 2023 - NOV 2024

United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD)

Funded by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund which includes the Governments of Australia, Canada, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom, and the EU



International
Labour
Organization



UNPRPD
Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

- 2 job fairs were held in Dhaka and Chattogram.
- Capacity development initiatives were undertaken for Organizations of Persons with Disabilities.

Mainstreaming Leave No One Behind in National Urban Policies and Programs (SDG 6 & 11) in South Asia

Funded by UN-Habitat



- The CEO Forum: Build the Nation through Accessible & Inclusive Employment Opportunities.
- Capacity Building Workshop: Design for All: Disability- Inclusive Urban Planning and Infrastructure Design.
- The Skills Match Initiatives.
- The Accessibility Assessment at the National Housing Authority.

NOV 2023 - DEC 2023

JUL 2022 - DEC 2023

Futuremakers Bangladesh- "Promoting Youth Employability"

Funded by Standard Chartered Bank Foundation



FUNDED BY
STANDARD
CHARTERED
FOUNDATION



Sightsavers

- 300+ officials from private sectors and 30 business representatives from the Chamber of Commerce and Industries was sensitized.
- 5 spot interviews and job placements for 80 candidates with disabilities.



JUN 2020 - FEB 2023

ILO Skill-21

Funded by The European Union (EU)



- A strategy on disability inclusion has been developed for seven TVET institutions.
- A dedicated focus on disability inclusion appointed for each institution.
- TVET instructors have been capacitated with a basic level of training in Sign language, NVDA, inclusive classroom management.
- Enrollment of students with disabilities has started at the institute level.
- MoU with OPD made functional.

Inclusion Works

Funded by Foreign Commonwealth & Development (FCDO)



- 36 companies being disability confident under private sector engagement activity.
- 20+ job placements, 1 internship opportunity and one entrepreneur with disability participated in SME Fair.
- Signed MOUs with the Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS) and the Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FICCI).

APR 2020 - JUN 2022

NOV 2019 - DEC 2021

Employment Injury Protection Scheme for Workers in the Textile and Leather Industries

Funded by GIZ



- RTW national strategy.
- Training to 40 enterprises and around their 100 representatives.
- Produced research paper on identifying common Occupational Diseases (OD) in RMGs.
- Produced OD training curriculum.
- Law amendment proposal in favor of RTW accepted by the review committee.

Innovation to Inclusion (i2i)

Funded by Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)



- 50+ job placements.
- 100 new private companies were made disability confident under employer engagement activity.

AUG 2018 - MAR 2022

OCT 2017 - NOV 2018

ILO-BSEP

Funded by Government of Canada



- 300+ job placements for persons with disabilities through 4 job fairs.
- 18 founder members were on board at BBDN Network.

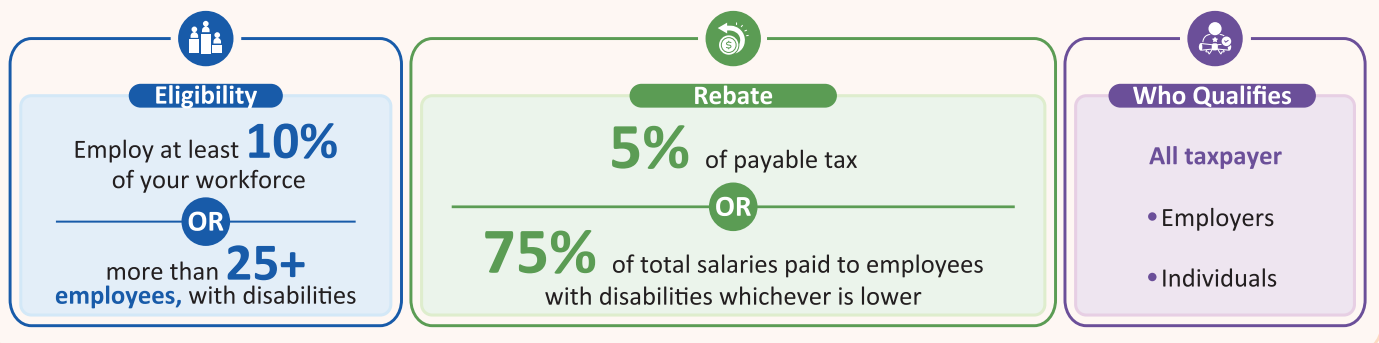


OUR IMPACT



DID YOU KNOW?

Hiring Persons With Disabilities Could Lower Your Company's Tax Bill!





OUR MEMBERS & PARTNERS

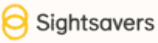
FOUNDER AND PREMIER MEMBERS: 22

				
		 Standard Bank PLC. Shariah Based Islamic Bank		
				
				
				

GENERAL MEMBERS: 7

			
		 SheRAA Women's Climate Resilience & Adaptation Alliance	

RESOURCE MEMBERS: 14

STRATEGIC PARTNERS: 12

		 International Labour Organization	
			
			



2025 AT A GLANCE



121

Job & Internship Offers Facilitated



106

Persons with Disabilities Trained in Digital Skills & Entrepreneurship



2

Job Fairs for Persons with Disabilities Organized



36

Employers Engaged through Job Fairs



7

Recruitment Drives Organized



346

Professionals Sensitized on Disability Inclusion



294

Persons Engaged in Advocacy Workshops



66

OPD Representatives' Capacity Enhanced



184

Community Courtyard Meetings Conducted



12

TVET-OPD MoUs Signed



82

HR & Compliance Professionals Trained on Return to Work (RTW)



64

Factory Medical Professionals Trained on Occupational Disease & Occupational Medicine



81

RMG Factories Engaged through Capacity building



2

National Training Manuals Developed / Updated



2

National Conferences Organized



1

Research Paper Got Published



GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Advisory Council Leadership

The BBDN Advisory Council brings together business leaders, industry experts, and disability inclusion advocates to guide the Network's strategic direction. In 2025, the Advisory Council met twice to review progress, address challenges, and chart the path forward.



■ Group photo featuring trustees, member representatives, and the management team.

Advisory Council Meeting - January

On January 11, 2025, BBDN held this year's first Advisory Council Meeting at the BEF Office, Police Plaza Concord, Tower-2, Gulshan-1, Dhaka. Trustee Board members, representatives of founder members, premier members, general members, and management team attended the meeting to review BBDN's progress and plan future strategies for disability inclusion in the workplace.

The meeting addressed key challenges for employment of persons with disabilities including, mismatch between training programs and private sector demand, high turnover with the first two years being particularly critical for retention and persistent accessibility gaps in infrastructure and transportation.

Advisory Council Meeting - November

On November 3, 2025, BBDN convened its second Advisory Council Meeting virtually, bringing together Trustee Board members, representatives of founder members, premier members, general members, and the management team to review progress and explore new opportunities for disability-inclusive employment.



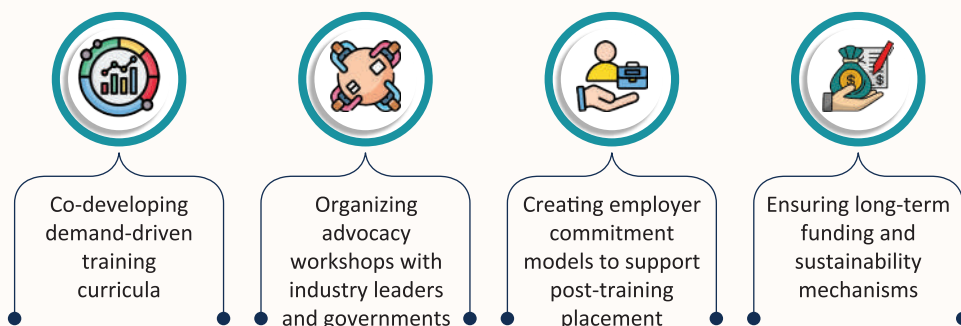
■ AC meeting going on.

The meeting focused on accountability for commitments made earlier in the year, with BBDN reporting 105 successful recruitments and highlighting the success of the digital marketing and graphics design training program supported by BRAC Bank PLC and Eastern Bank PLC, which trained 90 individuals with disabilities.

Key discussions centered on:

- Bangladesh's ratification of ILO Conventions 155 and 187 for workplace safety and Return to Work processes
- Scaling the successful digital skills training model to other sectors including RMG and hospitality
- Preparing for the EmpowerAbility 2025 National Conference to engage policymakers and secure commitments from the private sector
- Strengthening collaboration with BRAC Skills Development Program's Career Hub network

To address these challenges, the Council proposed:





STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

In 2025, BBDN expanded its create stronger pathways from skills persons with disabilities. The network of strategic partnerships to development to employment for partnerships are as follows:



With Eastern Bank PLC (EBL):

To empower women with disabilities through digital skills training.



With Skill Jobs (Daffodil Group) & Creative IT Institute:

To deliver market-oriented ICT training to youth with disabilities.



With Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA):

To embed disability inclusion within Bangladesh's ready-made garment sector.



With Marriott Worldwide Business Council Bangladesh:

To advance inclusive hiring and workplace accessibility across the hospitality sector.



With Centre for Disability in Development (CDD):

To strengthen collaboration on skills development and employment opportunities for youth with disabilities.



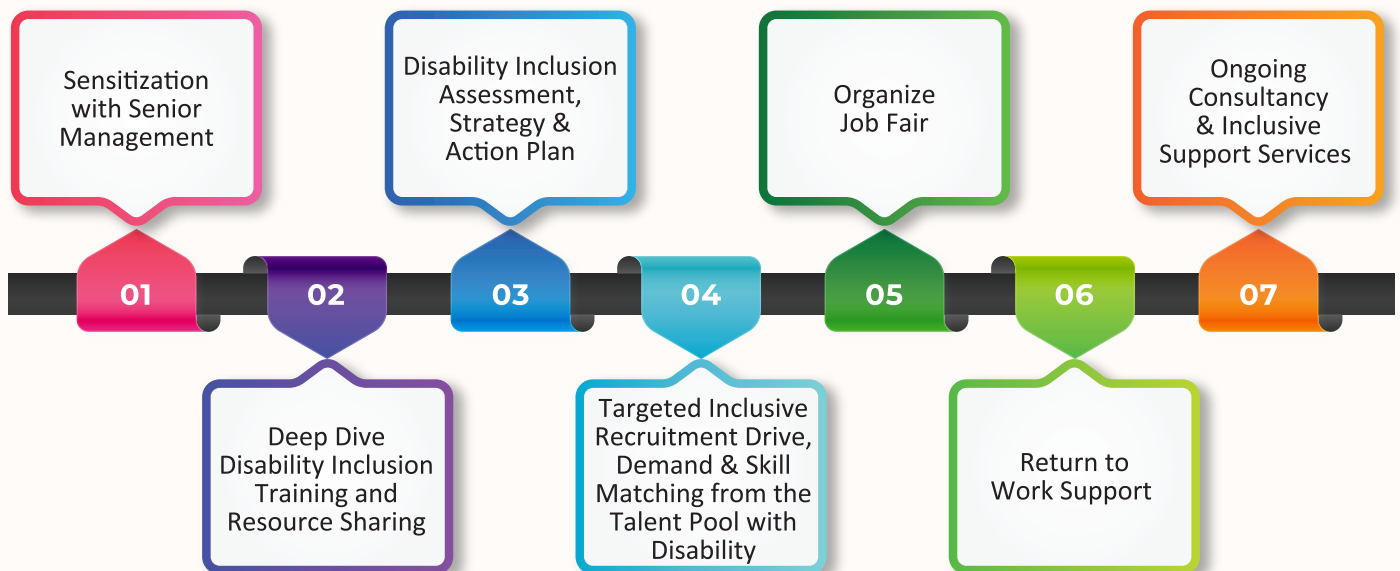
PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

APORAJEYO AMI

Aporajeyo Ami, the flagship CSR initiative of BRAC Bank PLC in collaboration with BBDN, represents a groundbreaking partnership between the banking sector and the disability inclusion movement in Bangladesh. BBDN and BRAC Bank have embarked on a 3 year collaboration both as a member and a strategic partner. As part of this partnership, BRAC Bank has embarked on a structured 7-step disability inclusion journey:



■ Group photo of sensitization session participants, trainers and organizers.



Sensitization Sessions with BRAC Bank PLC

BBDN has been conducting a comprehensive sensitization programme with BRAC Bank PLC to promote disability awareness and create an inclusive workplace culture across the organization. By 2025, four batches of sensitization sessions have been completed. The first batch was conducted in 2024, while the subsequent three batches were held in 2025 at BRAC Bank's Sepal Platinum Tower in Tejgaon, engaging employees from various departments. Batch 02 was held on February 26, 2025, with 30 participants. The session featured opening remarks from Ekram Kabir, Chief Communications Officer at BRAC Bank PLC, and included interactive activities and discussions led by BBDN team members. Nazma Ara Begum Popy, National Project Support Officer at UN Women, shared her personal insights on leadership and workplace experiences as a person with disability.

Batch 03 took place on April 21, 2025, with 16 participants. A key highlight was an engaging talk by Sajjad Hossain, HR Manager at ACI Logistics Limited (Shwapno), who shared powerful stories of hiring persons with disabilities at various Shwapno outlets and the positive impact on team morale and business performance. He reinforced that inclusion is a smart business strategy. Batch 04 was held on May 18, 2025, with 19 participants. The session featured Emamul Haque, Director of Human Resources at Le Méridien Dhaka, who shared the hotel's journey of overcoming initial challenges in hiring persons with disabilities. He highlighted that, with BBDN's support, Le Méridien hired three persons with disabilities and, through on-the-job training and sensitization, built a more inclusive work environment. The demonstrated loyalty and productivity of these employees encouraged other departments to proactively seek to onboard more persons with disabilities.



■ Shafiq R. Bhuiyan Head of Internal Communication and CSR, BRAC Bank PLC sharing comments during Privilege Walk activity.

All sessions were facilitated by Aziza Ahmed (Director Operations), Md Tareq Mahmud (Deputy Program Manager), and Nayem Molla (Communication and Admin Officer) from BBDN, with opening/closing remarks by Nafisa Shadaf (AVP & Senior Manager – CSR Resource Mobilization, BRAC Bank PLC) and Shafiq R. Bhuiyan (Vice President & Head of Internal Communication and CSR, BRAC Bank PLC).

Sensitization Sessions with TVET Institutes

To ensure inclusive learning environments, BBDN conducted sensitization sessions with training partners Creative IT Institute and Skill Jobs (Daffodil Group). On March 23, 2025, a session was held with Creative IT Institute at their office in Dhanmondi, engaging 12 participants. On April 10, 2025, a similar session was conducted with Skill Jobs at Daffodil Tower, with 8 participants. In both sessions, participants included instructors, mentors, admin, and other staff members.

These sessions were led by Aziza Ahmed, Director Operations; Arup Ratan Chowdhury, Program Manager; and Nayem Molla, Communication and Admin Officer of BBDN and covered types of disabilities, barriers in digital skills training, inclusive communication practices, and strategies for creating accessible classrooms. Through interactive discussions, participants explored various aspects of disability inclusion and gained practical tools to support learners with diverse disabilities. By building capacity among trainers and other staff, both institutions strengthened their capacity to deliver quality, inclusive education.



■ Nafisa Shadaf (AVP & Senior Manager – CSR Resource Mobilization, BRAC Bank PLC) delivering remarks.



■ Nayem Molla (Communication and Admin Officer, BBDN) conducting 'privilege walk' activity.



■ Arup Ratan Chowdhury (Program Manager, BBDN) conducting a session.



■ Tareq Mahmud (Deputy Program Manager, BBDN) conducting a session.

Skills Training: Digital Marketing And Graphics Design

Following the sensitization sessions, BBDN in partnership with Creative IT Institute and Skill Jobs delivered digital marketing and graphics design training to youth with disabilities throughout 2025. Under this initiative, interested persons with disabilities were carefully assessed, and selected candidates were provided with reasonable accommodations to ensure equitable participation. These accommodations included NVDA (Non-Visual Desktop Access) software access, sign language interpreters in all classes, and transportation and logistics allowances which enabled the lowest numbers of dropout learners. Trainees were engaged fully and without barriers throughout the programme. A total of 75 youth with disabilities successfully completed the training across multiple batches, gaining industry-relevant skills in digital marketing, graphics design, and related ICT competencies. The provision of tailored support played a

direct role in ensuring the successful completion of training by all participants.

Upon completion, the graduates have taken the following pathways:



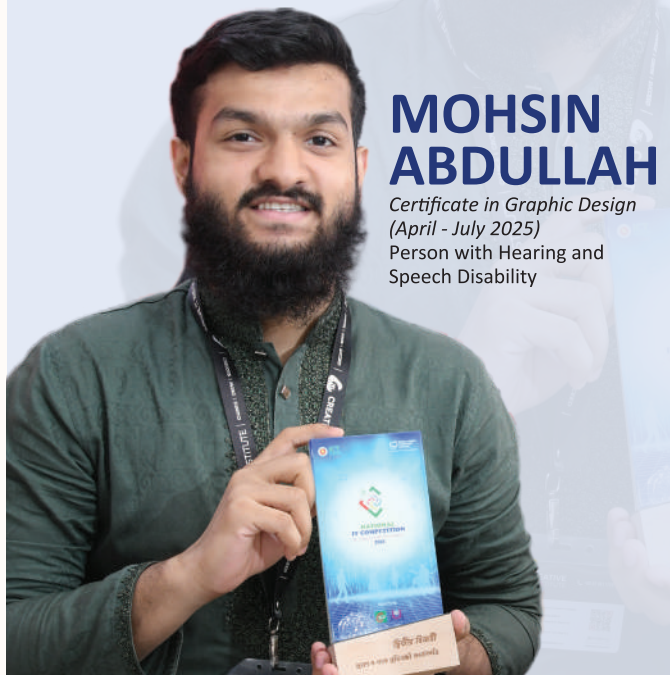
The trained graduates are well-positioned to pursue careers in Bangladesh's growing digital economy, equipped with both technical skills and the confidence to contribute meaningfully to the workforce.

“

The provision of a sign language interpreter made the training fully accessible and helped me build my skills and confidence. This support enabled me to secure second place in the National IT Competition for Youth with Disabilities, and I now feel prepared to enter the workforce.

MOHSIN ABDULLAH

*Certificate in Graphic Design
(April - July 2025)
Person with Hearing and Speech Disability*

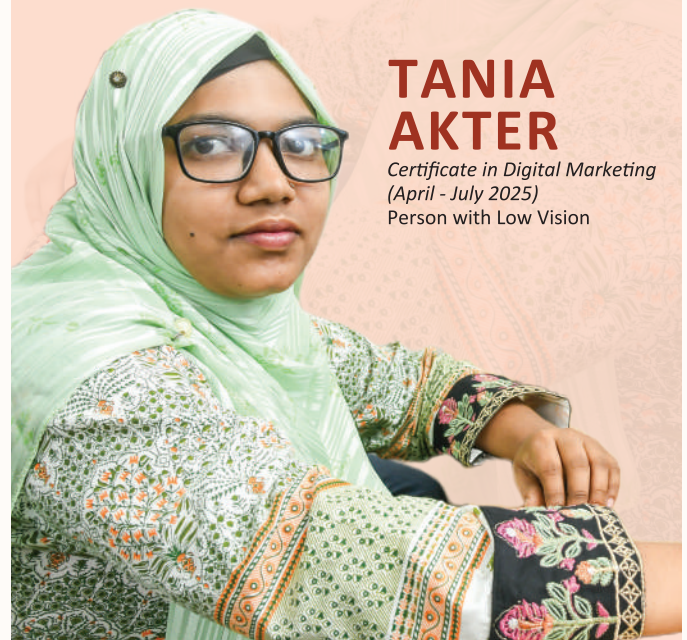


“

I wanted to build my skills, but many training were not accessible for people with low vision like me. This digital marketing training was designed to be inclusive and allowed me to learn effectively and gain confidence. With these skills, I now manage my own online business and earn independently.

TANIA AKTER

*Certificate in Digital Marketing
(April - July 2025)
Person with Low Vision*





Job Fair for Persons with Disabilities in Dhaka

On September 4, 2025, BBDN and BRAC Bank PLC organized the Job Fair for Persons with Disabilities at the Krishibid Institution Bangladesh in Dhaka under the Aporajeyo Ami initiative. The fair represented a comprehensive approach to inclusive employment, bringing together diverse stakeholders including employers, Organizations of Persons with Disabilities, development partners, and government agencies.

Job Fair Impact at a Glance

Job & Internship Offers Secured

52

Online Pre-Event Registrations

620

Total On-the-Day Participants

510

Persons with Disabilities Participated

355

Employers Participated

22

Participating Employers

The fair attracted employers spanning local and multinational companies, NGOs, and inclusive organizations across banking, ICT, RMG, retail, and development sectors. Participating employers included:

BRAC Bank PLC	M. M. Ispahani Ltd.
Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited	TEAM Group
URMI Group	BRAC Skills Development Programme
Envoy Textiles Ltd.	SHIN SHIN Group
ACI Logistics Limited (Shwapno)	Access Bangladesh Foundation
SAJIDA Foundation	B-SCAN
Locusbd	Skills Jobs (Daffodil Group)
bKash Limited	eShikhon.com
Otto International	RiseUp Labs
Multi-Line Industries Limited	Metro Knitting & Dyeing Mills Ltd.
Bizz Solutions PLC	Shomvob Jobs

Twenty companies set up stalls at the fair, while bKash and BRAC SDP recruited candidates through the pre-matching process.



■ Group photo of guests, candidates, digital marketing graduates, employers, and organizing team.



Key Highlights

The day commenced with a kick-off session and soft skills orientation for candidates facilitated by Aziza Ahmed, Director Operations at BBDN, followed by interview sessions conducted across employer booths.

The closing session featured speeches, the handover of certificates to 20 graduates of the digital marketing program, certificates of appreciation to participating employers, and the distribution of appointment letters to candidates who secured jobs through the fair. Mr. Ardashir Kabir, Chairman of BBDN Board of Trustees, delivered the welcome address, followed by job fair updates from Salma Mahbub, member of the Working Committee and General Secretary of B-SCAN. The session included experience sharing by employees, remarks from employers, and distinguished guest addresses.



■ Job seekers engaging with employers at their booths.

Special addresses were delivered by Tareq Refat Ullah Khan, MD & CEO of BRAC Bank PLC; Max Tuñón, Country Director (Designated) at ILO; Fazlee Shamim Ehsan, Member of BBDN Trustee Board and President of BEF; Mohammad Mohi Uddin Khan, Chief Human Resource Officer at TEAM Group; and Shamarukh Fakhruddin, Director of URMI Group. The event was honored by Bijoy Krishna Debnath, Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Social Welfare, as Chief Guest. The program concluded with a vote of thanks by Shafiq R. Bhuiyan, Vice President & Head of Internal Communication and CSR, BRAC Bank PLC.



■ Part of digital marketing graduates receiving certificates.



■ Part of job seekers with disabilities receiving appointment letters from guests.



■ Part of employers receiving certificates of participation.

Outcomes and Impact

The Job Fair resulted in job and internship offers for 52 candidates with disabilities through pre-matching, on-spot recruitment, and post-matching processes. Participation of 22 employers demonstrates a strong commitment to inclusive hiring across banking, ICT, RMG, retail, and development sectors.



■ Part of job seekers registration at the fair.

PHOTO GALLERY



■ Bijoy Krishna Debnath, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare, delivering his speech as Chief Guest.



■ Syed Abdul Momen, Additional Managing Director and Head of SME Banking, BRAC Bank PLC, delivering his speech as Special Guest.



■ Ardashir Kabir, Chairman, BBDN Board of Trustees delivering his speech.



■ Max Tuñón, Country Director of ILO, delivering his speech as Special Guest.



■ Fazlee Shamim Ehsan, President of Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF), delivering his speech as Special Guest.



■ Shafiq R. Bhuyian (Vice President & Head of Internal Communication and CSR, BRAC Bank PLC) delivering his speech as Special Guest.

EmpowerAbility 2025 National Conference

On November 11, 2025, BBDN, in collaboration with BRAC Bank PLC, GIZ Bangladesh, and hospitality partner Le Méridien Dhaka, convened the national conference "EmpowerAbility: Powering Every Ability 2025" at Le Méridien Dhaka. The conference brought together over 250 stakeholders from government, private sector, development partners, and disability rights organizations to advance the agenda of disability-inclusive employment and economic empowerment in Bangladesh.

Aziza Ahmed, Director Operations at BBDN, opened the conference by emphasizing the importance of moving beyond discussion to concrete action. The conference began with a theatrical performance by Sundaram, a group of artists with disabilities.



■ Part of theatrical performance by Sundaram, a group of artists with disabilities.

Panel 1: Inclusive Workplaces Without Barriers



■ Group photo of panelists and moderator of Panel 1.

Moderator	Panelist				
Salma Mahbud General Secretary B-SCAN	Rupali Chowdhury Managing Director Berger Paints Bangladesh Ltd.	Constantinos S.Gavriel General Manager Le Méridien Dhaka	Peter Bellen Chief Technical Advisor International Labour Organization	Mohammad Hamidul Islam Chowdhury Head of Project, Climate Change and Sustainable Urban Development Cluster GIZ Bangladesh	



Key Takeaway

1

Leadership commitment is essential for advancing disability inclusion, supported by organization-wide mindset change.

4

Inclusive work environments significantly enhance confidence, participation, and professional growth of employees with disabilities.

2

Building an inclusive workplace is a long-term process and it requires sustained effort, policy alignment, and cultural transformation.

5

Inclusion must be embedded as a foundation for effective skills development and employment outcomes.

3

Strategic partnerships between employers and disability inclusion-focused organizations can create and expand employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

6

Existing education, training, and skills development systems need to be critically assessed to ensure they are accessible and inclusive by design.

Keynote Presentation: From Exclusion to Empowerment



Key Takeaway

- Inclusion requires systems to adapt to people not people to adapt to systems.
- Shifting from integration to inclusion strengthens organizational flexibility, competitiveness, and innovation.
- Inclusion should not require additional justification for marginalized groups already facing systemic disadvantage.

Panel 2: Inclusive Growth in Action - RMG Sector



■ Panelists and moderator of Panel 2 are engaged in discussion.

Moderator	Panelist			
Murteza Rafi Khan CEO, BBDN	Fahima Akhter Director, MASCO Industries Limited	Rumana Rashid Director, BGMEA	Mohammed Rashed Vice President, BKMEA	Inamul Haq Khan Senior Vice President, BGMEA

Key Takeaway

- 1 Equal opportunity is central to meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities in RMG.
- 2 Sector-wide data shows that persons with disabilities demonstrate a 72% retention rate and 86% average or above-average attendance which is significantly better than industry norms.
- 3 Adaptive work environments with lowered tables, modified machine pedals, wheelchair ramps, and priority lift access contribute to improved productivity and sustained workforce participation of persons with disabilities.



Closing Panel: Charting the Way Forward



■ Group photo of chief guest and special guests.

Moderator	Panelist		
Monsur A. Chowdhury Trustee, BBDN	Ardashir Kabir Chairman, BBDN Board of Trustees	Fazle Shamim Ehsan President, Bangladesh Employers' Federation	Tareq Refat Ullah Khan MD and CEO, BRAC Bank PLC
	Dr. Md. Sanwar Jahan Bhuiyan Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment		Brigadier General (Retd.) Dr. M. Sakhawat Hossain Honorable Adviser Ministry of Labour and Employment

Speaker	Key Points
Ardashir Kabir	Called on private sector leaders to commit to inclusive skills development pathways, accessible and respectful workplaces, and structured collaboration through BBDN for data sharing and inclusive business pilots.
Fazle Shamim Ehsan	Highlighted the economic cost of exclusion (3–7% of GDP) and stressed inclusive hiring, accessible workplaces and digital platforms, training and mentorship, and building empathy through team sensitization.
Tareq Refat Ullah Khan	Described BRAC Bank's inclusion approach based on trust, innovation, and inclusion, and emphasized the need to extend inclusion beyond urban areas to all districts, unions, and upazilas.
Dr. Md. Sanwar Jahan Bhuiyan	Emphasized the need for customized training, workplace accommodations, and strong empathy and inclusive mindset to effectively support person with disabilities.
Brigadier General (Retd.) Dr. M. Sakhawat Hossain	Highlighted key national progress, including amendments to the Bangladesh Labor Act and ratification of ILO Conventions 155, 187, and 190, positioning Bangladesh among leading countries in labor rights commitments.

Creating Sustainable Pathways to Economic Empowerment

The Aporajeyo Ami initiative shows that sustained private sector investment can drive meaningful disability inclusion in Bangladesh by shifting from isolated interventions to systemic change. By linking skills training, workplace sensitization, employment, and advocacy, it creates a complete inclusion pathway. The program highlights the importance of collective action among training providers, employers, and industry associations in embedding inclusion across the ecosystem. The EmpowerAbility 2025 National Conference reinforced these collaborations through long-term commitments. With a strong business case, established training partnerships, and supportive policy frameworks, the priority now is scaling these models across sectors. The initiative demonstrates that removing barriers and ensuring sustained investment enables persons with disabilities to contribute effectively to the economy while strengthening workforce diversity and productivity.



■ Part of IT skills training under 'Aporajeyo Ami' initiative.



■ Part of IT skills training under 'Aporajeyo Ami' initiative.



■ Part of IT skills training under 'Aporajeyo Ami' initiative.



■ A glimpse of the it skills training class, interpreted by a sign language interpreter to ensure inclusivity.

SOSI PROJECT

The Social Protection for Workers in the Textile and Leather Sector (SOSI) project, implemented by BBDN in collaboration with GIZ, supports the development of Employment Injury Scheme (EIS) to provide long-term protection for workers experiencing occupational accidents and illnesses, while building capacity of factory medical professionals and HR personnel on workplace hazards, disease prevention, and worker reintegration.



■ Dr. Silvia Popp, Project Manager, SOSI, GIZ, delivering her speech at a RTW workshop.

In 2025, Bangladesh ratified ILO Conventions 155 (Occupational Safety and Health) and 187 (Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health) which marked a major step toward aligning national labour law with international standards. These ratifications raise the bar for workplace safety and worker protection across all sectors and they significantly increase the relevance of the SOSI project's capacity-building work. By equipping factory-level coordinators with Return to Work skills and training medical professionals in Occupational Disease and Occupational Medicine, BBDN and GIZ are helping build the practical, factory-floor systems Bangladesh now needs to turn these international commitments into real improvements for workers.

Key Activities in 2025

Return To Work (RTW) Training

BBDN organized three batches of Return to Work training in 2025 to develop factory and industry-level experts capable of coordinating the successful reintegration of employees into the workplace after injury or illness. The training sessions were led by Dr. Rushan Afroze, Health Advisor, GIZ Bangladesh;

Md Tareq Mahmud, Deputy Program Manager, BBDN along with RTW Master Trainers. A total of 82 HR and compliance professionals from 44 RMG factories participated across the three batches and received certificates upon successful completion. These trained professionals are now leading Return to Work initiatives within their respective factories.



■ Dr. Rushan Afroze, Health Advisor, SOSI, GIZ, conducting a session.

Occupational Diseases and Occupational Medicine Training

BBDN conducted three batches of training on Occupational Diseases and Occupational Medicine in 2025 to build the capacity of factory medical professionals on workplace hazards, prevention methods, and early detection of occupational diseases. The training aligned with international labour standards of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and was facilitated by OD Master Trainers. A total of 64 medical professionals from 37 factories participated across the three batches and gained insights to reduce work-related illnesses and ensure better workplace safety and health outcomes.



■ Part of group work / activities conducted at the training.

Quarterly Coordination Meeting with OD ToT Alumni



■ Group photo of TOT alumni and GIZ, ILO, BBDN and partners' representatives.

In 2024, BBDN in collaboration with GIZ Bangladesh developed a pool of 18 Master Trainers in Occupational Diseases and Occupational Medicine through a Training of Trainers (TOT) program. To strengthen professional networking, align field-level practices, and explore collaborative pathways for advancing occupational health, prevention of work-related diseases, and disability-inclusive workplace practices, BBDN hosted its first quarterly coordination meeting with those TOT alumni on March 16, 2025, at the BEF Motijheel Office. The meeting also brought together key stakeholders in this sector including representatives from the EIS Pilot Special Unit, the ILO Project to Support Employment Injury Scheme, GIZ Bangladesh, and BBDN. Participants exchanged their experiences and insights on charting future collaborations and initiatives to deepen the impact of occupational health programs across the sector.



■ Syed Saad Hussain Gilani, Chief Technical Advisor, project to support employment injury scheme (ILO), delivering remarks.

Training Manual Development and Handover



■ Guests stand together holding the OD and RTW training manuals.

On October 16, 2025, BBDN organized the "Handover of Return to Work and Occupational Diseases & Occupational Medicine Training Manuals and Dialogue on the Way Forward for Scale-up" at the Chamber Building in Motijheel, Dhaka. The event brought together representatives from DIFE, NOSHTRI, ILO, and GIZ, along with medical and HR professionals, industry leaders, and development partners. The program featured a presentation on the structure and key elements of the manuals and included a symbolic handover to NOSHTRI and DIFE. Discussions focused on how the newly developed training manuals can be replicated and integrated into existing government systems which marked an important step toward institutionalizing occupational health and return to work in Bangladesh.



■ Dialogue session going on.

Advancing Decent Work and Social Protection

The SOSI project has strengthened decent work and social protection for workers in Bangladesh's textile and leather sectors, supporting Bangladesh Government establishing Employment Injury Scheme (EIS) to provide long-term protection against work-related accidents and occupational diseases. RMG factories now have trained RTW coordinators who facilitate the reintegration of injured or ill workers, reducing long-term workforce loss, while OD/OM-trained medical professionals can detect and prevent occupational hazards before they escalate.



■ Syed Saad Hussain Gilani, Chief Technical Advisor, project to support employment injury scheme (ILO), delivering remarks at an OD and OM training.

With Bangladesh's ratification of ILO Conventions on Occupational Safety and Health Convention (C-155) and Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention (C-187), these factory-level systems and nationally endorsed training manuals position BBDN and its partners to translate the country's strengthened occupational safety and health framework into real outcomes for workers.



■ Part of participants receiving certificate after completion of Training.



■ Part of group work / activities conducted at the training.



■ Dr. Rushan Afroze, Health Advisor, SOSI, GIZ, conducting a session.



■ Sharlin Akther, Assistant Program Manager, BBDN, conducting a session.



ProGRESS PROJECT

The Promoting Gender Responsive Enterprise Development and TVET Systems (ProGRESS) project is a joint initiative of Government of Bangladesh and International Labour Organization (ILO), funded by the Government of Canada. BBDN is leading the disability inclusion component as an implementing partner. The ProGRESS project advances economic empowerment of the youth through policy reforms, enterprise development, and skills training while prioritizing the women and inclusion of persons with disabilities across all interventions.



■ Guests stand together holding an awareness poster of ProGRESS project at a workshop in Khulna.

ProGRESS Activities at A Glance

- 1 **Employer sensitization workshops**
6 districts · 164 participants
- 2 **Citizen rights advocacy workshops**
8 districts · 294 participants
- 3 **OPD capacity building training**
3 batches · 66 representatives · 6 OPDs
- 4 **MoU Signings: TVET and OPDs**
10 districts · 10 MoUs signed
- 5 **Recruitment drives with Shwapno**
7 locations · 243 job seekers · 60 job offers
- 6 **Job Fair for Persons with Disabilities - Sylhet**
200+ job seekers · 14 employers · 12 job placement
- 7 **Entrepreneurship development workshop**
30 participants · 16 OPD representatives



■ ProGRESS project working areas highlighted on Bangladesh map.

Employer Sensitization Workshops: Building Disability-Inclusive Workforce

Across six districts, BBDN conducted employer sensitization workshops bringing together 164 participants - 57 male and 107 female - from a cross-section of the local business ecosystem. Attendees included representatives from Chambers of Commerce and Industry, business associations, NGOs, development partners, small entrepreneurs, and local Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs). A defining feature of these workshops was the active participation of 10

persons with disabilities, who shared their lived experiences directly with employers. Discussions covered the rights-based and social models of disability, practical guidance on reasonable accommodations, and an exploration of local employment opportunities across sectors. Employers left with a clearer understanding of the talent pool they had been overlooking and concrete tools to begin making their workplaces more inclusive.



Multi-Stakeholder Advocacy: Citizen Rights Advocacy Workshops

Across eight districts, BBDN convened citizen rights advocacy workshops that brought together 294 participants (212 males and 82 females) representing government agencies, NGOs, TVET professionals, local employers, persons with disabilities, their caregivers, and local OPDs. Among them, 80 participants were persons with disabilities (44 males and 36 females).

- 01 Design and implement long-term awareness campaigns at community, institutional, and national levels
- 02 Enforce accessibility standards in all public and private training centers and workplaces
- 03 Train instructors in inclusive teaching methods and provide financial support for learners with disabilities
- 04 Promote government tax rebates and incentives to encourage inclusive recruitment
- 05 Establish job linkage platforms connecting trained person with disabilities to employers
- 06 Advocate for flexible loan schemes and provide targeted entrepreneurship training and mentorship

OPD Capacity Building Training

Recognising the crucial role of OPDs in promoting inclusive skills development and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, BBDN invested in a structured capacity-building programme in 2025. Three batches of three-day training were delivered, bringing together 66 representatives from six OPDs across diverse disability groups and regions.



■ Aziza Ahmed, Director Operations, BBDN, conducting a session.



■ Mashreka Khan, National Program Officer (Gender and Skills Policy) at ILO, delivering remarks.



■ Part of Citizen Rights Advocacy Workshops.

Participants built practical skills in disability identification using the Washington Group Short Set (WG-SS), explored gender dynamics within disability, mapped stakeholders in their local ecosystems, and developed organisation-specific action plans. Sessions also covered national and international policy frameworks, engagement strategies with TVET institutions and employers, and the concrete role OPDs can play in job placement and recruitment. Equipped with new tools and confidence, participating OPDs went on to conduct 184 community courtyard meetings and actively facilitated the enrollment of persons with disabilities into TVET institutions.



■ Arup Ratan Chowdhury, Program Manager, BBDN, conducting a session.



■ Rubaiya Sultana, Senior Program Officer, BBDN, conducting a session.



Recruitment Drives with Shwapno

BBDN conducted targeted recruitment drives with ACI Logistics Limited (Shwapno) across seven locations in 2025 to create employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. The recruitment drives were held in Khulna, Dinajpur, Rajshahi, Barishal, Mymensingh, Chattogram, and Sylhet.

A total of 243 job seekers with disabilities (165 males and 78 females), representing diverse disability groups, participated in these recruitment drives. Job seekers were mobilized through local Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) in each region. The recruitment drives included employer orientation on disability inclusion and reasonable accommodation, on-site interviews and candidate assessments, and direct interaction between job seekers and recruitment teams.

Through these targeted recruitment drives, 60 persons with disabilities received job offers. This demonstrates the effectiveness of employer-led, inclusive recruitment models in expanding employment opportunities.



■ Part of interviews at Recruitment Drives.

Job Fair for Persons with Disabilities – Sylhet

On October 21, 2025, BBDN, in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and under the ProGRESS project, organized a Job Fair for Persons with Disabilities. The fair was held at Hotel Star Pacific in Sylhet, with the goal of creating employment opportunities for skilled persons with disabilities in the Sylhet division. More than 200 job seekers with disabilities participated in the fair, representing a wide range of educational and professional backgrounds. A total of 14 employers from Sylhet's business, manufacturing, and service sectors conducted interviews and offered both immediate and long-term job opportunities. The fair provided a platform where job seekers could engage directly with employers, showcase their skills, and explore career pathways. A total of 12 job offers were extended to candidates with disabilities through this job fair.

The event was graced by distinguished guests including Md. Masud Rana, Additional Deputy Commissioner of

Sylhet, as Chief Guest. Special guests included Md. Abdur Rafiq, Deputy Director of the Department of Social Services in Sylhet; Lubna Yasmin Shampa, President of the Sylhet Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Mashreka Khan, Senior Programme Officer for Gender and Skills Policy at ILO; and Mohammad Jasim Uddin, DGM of Fulkoly.

The job fair offered persons with disabilities from Sylhet and nearby districts a platform where their skills, aspirations, and potential were acknowledged and valued. For employers, it served as an opportunity to strengthen their commitment to diversity and inclusion and reinforce their role in building an inclusive workforce. Beyond providing employment opportunities, the job fair helped shift community perceptions and played a key role in promoting equal access to employment as a pathway to economic independence and social inclusion.



■ Group photo of guests, job seekers, employers, and organizers at the job fair.

PHOTO GALLERY



■ Mashreka Khan, Senior Programme Officer (Gender and Skills Policy), delivering her speech.



■ Part of candidates' interactions at employers' booths, supported by sign language interpreter.



■ Part of the interview sessions conducted by employers at the fair.



■ Part of employers receiving certificates of participation from guests.



■ Part of candidates receiving appointment letters from guests.

Entrepreneurship Development Workshop

On July 3, 2025, BBDN organized a workshop titled "Exploring Potential for Empowering Persons with Disabilities through Entrepreneurial Development in Selected Districts of the ProGRESS Project" at the SME Foundation Conference Room in Agargaon, Dhaka. The workshop brought together 30 participants, including 16 representatives with disabilities from Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs). Participants also included representatives of BBDN, ILO, and SME Foundation. The objective was to identify and map existing entrepreneurial activities of persons with disabilities, particularly women, across the project's target locations, assess key challenges, and explore opportunities for entrepreneurship and skills development, including digital integration.

Key outcomes included:

Development of a preliminary inventory of entrepreneurial activities and products led by persons with disabilities, showcasing sectoral diversity and innovation

Identification of major challenges related to entrepreneurship training, access to finance, digital skills, social stigma, and availability of assistive technologies

Recognition of significant potential in assistive technology-based entrepreneurship

Strong demand for tailored digital literacy and e-commerce training programs

Identification of financial inclusion gaps, highlighting the need for accessible and innovative financing solutions

Prioritization of divisions for targeted capacity-building and program implementation



■ Discussion going on at entrepreneurship development workshop.

Strengthening the Ecosystem for Inclusive Economic Participation

The ProGRESS project has shown that sustainable disability-inclusive employment is possible when skills development, accessible institutions, employer engagement, government accountability, and OPD leadership work together. By strengthening these interconnected systems simultaneously, the project has created a foundation where the economic participation of persons with disabilities can move from isolated efforts to a more sustainable and inclusive standard practice.



■ Part of OPD Capacity Building Training sessions.



■ Part of MoU signing between TVET Institutes and OPDs.



EMPOWERING WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

In partnership with Eastern Bank PLC, BBDN launched an initiative to enhance the employability and economic participation of women with disabilities through digital skills development. Recognizing that women with disabilities face compounded marginalization, the project equipped participants with digital marketing competencies for employment and entrepreneurship, delivered through accessible and inclusive learning environments.



■ Part of female trainees with disabilities in IT skills training class.

Digital Skills Training for Women with Disabilities

BBDN in collaboration with B-SACN implemented a digital marketing training program at Skill Jobs (Daffodil Group). B-SACN supported trainee mobilization and continuous monitoring. Prior to training, Skill Jobs management and instructors were sensitized on inclusive facilitation and accessibility. A total of 15 women with disabilities completed the three-month program across 26 sessions.

Accessibility measures included a portable ramp, sign language interpretation, NVDA screen-reader software and headphones for visually impaired trainees, and transport allowances. The curriculum covered social media marketing, content creation, SEO, Facebook ads, e-commerce, freelancing, and AI tools including ChatGPT, Canva, and Gamma.



■ Group photo of guests and trainees with disabilities at the certificate giving ceremony.

Women with Disabilities Breaking Barriers, Building Futures

The initiative has demonstrated that targeted support addressing the intersectional barriers faced by women with disabilities can yield significant employment and entrepreneurship outcomes. The real-world impact has been substantial. Upon completion, the graduates have taken the following pathways:

- 01 9 Trainees Are Currently Engaged In Jobs Or Projects
- 02 4 Trainees Are Planning Or Running Small Businesses
- 03 2 Are Preparing For Advanced Training And Freelancing Opportunities

As Ziaul Karim, Head of Communications and External Affairs at EBL, stated: "If we want to prosper as a society, we must prosper together. Excluding persons with disabilities is not an option. This initiative is a small but meaningful step, and we are committed to doing much more." The initiative has proven that when barriers are removed through accessible training environments, assistive technology, continuous support, and committed partnerships, women with disabilities can excel in the digital economy and chart their own paths to economic independence.

NATIONAL POLICY INFLUENCE AND ADVOCACY

Building Better Futures: Celebrating Resilience and Change for Workplace Inclusion

On the occasion of International Labour Day 2025, the International Labour Organization (ILO), Bangladesh Business and Disability Network (BBDN), and Bonhishikha jointly organized a high-level event titled “Building Better Futures: Celebrating Voices of Resilience and Change for Workplace Inclusion” on 5 May 2025 at BCFCC, Agargaon, Dhaka. The event aimed to advance dialogue on inclusion, labour rights, and equal opportunities for marginalized communities by convening policymakers, employers, development partners, and voices from the ground.

The event was graced by distinguished guests, including Brigadier General (Retd.) Dr. M Sakhawat Hussain, Honourable Adviser to the Ministry of Labour and Employment; Sharmeen S. Murshid, Honourable Adviser to the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs; Tuomo Poutiainen, Country Director of ILO; A H M Shafiquzzaman, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment; Badal Khan, Chairman, National Coordination Committee for Workers’ Education (NCCWE); Tahmid Ahmed, Vice President, Bangladesh Employers’ Federation (BEF); and Syed Nasim Manzur, Managing Director, Apex Footwear Ltd. Their remarks reinforced the urgency of embedding inclusion and fundamental labour rights into national and corporate practices.



■ Aziza Ahmed, Director Operations at BBDN, delivering remarks during closing ceremony.



■ Sadaf Saaz Siddiqi, Trustee of BBDN, delivering her remarks as a panelist.

The Event’s Highlights Included:

- 1 A moving story from Rokibul Islam, a youth with a physical disability who secured a job at Le Méridien Dhaka through ILO ProGRESS Project and BBDN, which illustrated the impact of inclusive hiring practices.
- 2 A dialogue session where BBDN’s Nayem Molla spoke about the barriers youth with disabilities face after completing their education, calling for greater employer responsibility and improved access to digital opportunities.
- 3 A panel discussion on workplace rights, where BBDN Trustee Sadaf Saaz Siddiqi emphasized the need for stronger protections and fair treatment for all workers.
- 4 Entrepreneurship booths showcased innovation and resilience, with stalls led by entrepreneurs with disabilities and representatives from OPDs.
- 5 A closing workshop focused on career development for marginalized groups, particularly youth with disabilities, highlighting tools and guidance for building meaningful employment paths.



The event marked an important milestone in reinforcing collective efforts to build fairer and more inclusive and equitable workplaces in Bangladesh. Through policy-level discussions, employer engagement, lived experiences, and demonstrations of inclusive entrepreneurship, the dialogue emphasized the shared responsibility of government, private sector, and civil society in reducing systemic barriers within the labour market.

For BBDN, this convening reaffirmed its role as a catalyst for employer engagement and cross-sector partnerships that translate commitments into measurable action. The momentum generated through this event will continue to inform BBDN's advocacy, capacity-building initiatives, and employer-led solutions aimed at expanding decent work opportunities and promoting equity across Bangladesh's labour market.



■ Nayem Molla, Communication and Admin Officer at BBDN, delivering remarks as a panelist.

Research on Enhancing Disability-Inclusive Employment Policies in Asia: Challenges, Good Practices, and Policy Recommendations

In May 2025, the Asian Productivity Organization (APO) published a regional study report titled “Enhancing Disability-Inclusive Employment Policies in Asia: Challenges, Good Practices, and Policy Recommendations.” The report highlighted policy challenges, practices, and recommendations for advancing inclusive employment across seven Asian countries including Bangladesh.

BBDN conducted the Bangladesh case study, with CEO Murteza Khan as Lead National Expert, supported by Arup Ratan Chowdhury and Sharlin Akther. The chapter reviews Bangladesh's policies, laws, and workplace practices, and suggests steps to improve employment for persons with disabilities.



■ Part of guests visiting the stalls of persons with disabilities.



■ Rakibul Islam, a youth with a physical disability who secured a job at Le Méridien Dhaka through ILO ProGRESS Project and BBDN, sharing his journey.

To Read The Full Report

Scan The QR code Below Or Visit





MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

New Members in 2025

BBDN continued to expand its membership base during 2025, welcoming three distinguished organizations that strengthened the Network's capacity across banking, climate justice, and development sectors.



The Network welcomed Prime Bank PLC as a premier member. As one of Bangladesh's leading banks, Prime Bank's membership demonstrated the continued momentum of disability inclusion in the banking industry and reinforced the financial sector's commitment to promoting inclusive employment practices. Their addition builds on the growing recognition among financial institutions that disability inclusion is both a business imperative and a social responsibility.



The addition of SheRAA as a general member brought valuable expertise in feminist climate action and gender justice to the Network. As an alliance working at the intersection of women's rights and climate resilience, SheRAA's membership enhanced BBDN's capacity to address the intersectional barriers faced by women with disabilities in climate-vulnerable communities.



Bonhishikha Limited joined as a resource member and its membership strengthened the Network's technical capacity to support members in developing disability-inclusive policies and practices. Their addition reflects the growing collaboration between disability rights organizations and gender equality advocates in building intersectional approaches to inclusion.

These additions brought diverse perspectives and expertise to the Network, expanding BBDN's reach and strengthening its capacity to support disability-inclusive employment across multiple sectors of Bangladesh's economy.



MEMBER BENEFITS

Companies in Bangladesh are increasingly recognizing that diverse and inclusive workforce, especially those including employees with disabilities, drive better business results. Organizations that embrace disability inclusion excel in innovation, problem-solving, and talent attraction, making them more competitive in today's evolving labor market. By joining BBDN, your organization/company will gain access to valuable services that support the recruitment and inclusion of persons with disabilities. These services can help your business not only create a more inclusive workforce but also take advantage of a tax rebate. Taxpayers who hire at least 10% of their workforce or more than 25 employees with disabilities are eligible for a tax rebate of 5% or 75% of the total salary paid to employees with disabilities - whichever is less.

Join BBDN and become a leading business on disability inclusion and unlock the full potential of your workforce

Membership Categories

1. Premier member (Tk. 1,00,000/year)

- Eligibility for board of trustees and advisory council positions.
- Priority exposure in BBDN publications and events.
- Full access to all BBDN inclusion services.
- Four free sessions of sensitization sessions Dedicated support for implementing inclusion initiatives.
- Recognition as a disability inclusion champion.

2. Corporate member (TK. 50,000/year)

- Eligibility for advisory council membership.
- Featured presence in BBDN publications and events.
- Participation in specialized training programs.
- Two free sensitization sessions.
- Comprehensive inclusion support services.

3. General member (TK. 25,000/year)

- Eligibility for working committee participation in advisory council.
- Access to BBDN interventions and events.
- One free sensitization session.
- Networking opportunities with members.
- Participation in sub-committees.

4. Resource member (TK. 10,000/year)

- Open to NGOs, OPDs, universities, and service providers.
- One free capacity building / private sector expectation session.
- Collaboration opportunities and access to the business network.
- Platform to share resources and knowledge.

What We Offer

As a BBDN Member, Your Organization Will Benefit From:

Knowledge sharing and support

- Access to best practices and resources for disability inclusion.
- Guidance on creating and implementing inclusive workplace policies.
- Strategies to combat stigma and stereotypes associated with disabilities.
- Support for developing accessibility initiatives and solutions.
- Networking opportunities with thought leaders, disability organizations, and like-minded businesses.

Practical assistance

- Recruitment support for candidates with disabilities.
- Tailored training and development programs to build an inclusive workforce.
- Advisory services for workplace modifications and reasonable accommodations.
- Guidance on legal compliance and leveraging available incentives.
- Access to success stories, case studies, and real-world examples of inclusive practices

Recognition and visibility

- Opportunities to showcase your organization's commitment to inclusion through BBDN events, publications and awards.
- Positioning as a leader in disability inclusion within Bangladesh's business community.
- This comprehensive support ensures your organization is well-equipped to lead in building an inclusive and productive workforce.



Application Process

- Express interest: Contact BBDN via email at info@bbdn.com.bd to express your intention to join.
- Submit application: Complete the membership form and indicate your membership type.
- Pay membership fee: Submit payment via cheque or pay order to “Bangladesh Business and Disability Network (BBDN)”.
- Onboarding: Receive confirmation and resources to start your inclusion journey.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name of Organization: _____

Industry: _____ Number of Employees: _____

Address: _____

Primary Contact Name: _____ Designation: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone Number: _____

Second Contact Name: _____ Designation: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone Number: _____

Please ✓ The Type Of Membership For Your Organization

✓ ☐ Premier Member	TK. 1,00,000 per year
✓ ☐ Corporate Member	TK. 50,000 per year
✓ ☐ General Member	TK. 25,000 per year
✓ ☐ Resource Member	TK. 10,000 per year

Membership fees (by cheque or pay order) are to be made payable to **Bangladesh Business and Disability Network (BBDN)**.

Membership shall be automatically renewed on an annual basis. The member agrees to pay the applicable

annual membership fee each year unless the membership is cancelled by providing written notice to BBDN.

Signature of Chairman / Managing Director / Equivalent

Date



Scan the QR code for
**Membership
Form**



INCLUSION SERVICES TO MEMBERS AND PARTNERS

BBDN provides specialized support services to member organizations and partners across sectors to strengthen their disability-inclusive practices. In 2025, BBDN collaborated with members and partners on sensitization programs, accessibility assessments, policy guideline development, and specialized workshops, demonstrating the Network's role as a technical resource for advancing disability inclusion.

Sensitization Session at Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited

On February 12, 2025, BBDN conducted a sensitization session for employees of Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited, a Founder Member of BBDN, at its corporate office in Uttara. The session engaged 30 participants from various departments and deepened employee understanding of workplace accessibility and inclusive practices. The session featured interactive group activities and discussions covering disability inclusion, workplace accessibility, and inclusive etiquette facilitated by BBDN team members Aziza Ahmed, Director Operations; Md Tareq Mahmud, Deputy Program Manager; Nayem Molla, Communication and Admin Officer. Nishat Afroz, a Sales Support Officer at Berger with low vision, shared her personal experiences and the reasonable accommodations that have positively impacted her work life. Rupali Chowdhury, Managing Director of Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited, joined the session and reaffirmed the company's commitment to creating more opportunities for persons with disabilities.



■ Group photo of partners, trainers, and organizers.



■ Arup Ratan Chowdhury, Program Manager, BBDN, conducting a session.

Workshop: Rights and Protection of Persons Injured in the July Uprising with BLAST

On April 13, 2025, BBDN collaborated with the Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) to host a workshop titled "Rights and Protection of Persons Injured in the July Uprising" at BBDN Office in the Chamber Building, Motijheel, Dhaka. The workshop addressed the challenges faced by individuals who acquired disabilities during the July uprising, bringing together expertise from psychosocial support, disability inclusion, and legal empowerment. Aziza Ahmed, Director Operations at BBDN, led the opening session. Mahmuda Muhsina Bushra, Psychotherapist at Moner Bondhu, conducted a session on mental health and coping with life changes. Md Tareq Mahmud, Deputy Program Manager at BBDN, clarified disability concepts and discussed challenges in accessing services. Khondokar Shahriar Shakir, Advocate at the Supreme Court and panel lawyer at BLAST, guided participants through legal protections available. Nayem Molla, Communication and Admin Officer at BBDN, emphasized empowerment and inclusive communication etiquette for guardians. The workshop demonstrated BBDN's agility in responding to emerging needs through cross-sector partnerships. A total of 27 persons injured in the July uprising attended the workshop.



■ Group photo of partners, trainers, and organizers.

SheRAA Alliance Disability-Inclusion Guideline Development

BBDN provided technical advisory support to the SheRAA: Women's Climate Resilience and Adaptation Alliance in developing a comprehensive disability inclusion guideline. The guideline was developed by SheRAA Secretariat, Bonhishikha Limited with support from Project Green Voices and in partnership with BBDN and Suborno Nagorik Unnoyon Sangstha.

The guideline is grounded in disability justice principles, particularly "Nothing About Us Without Us," ensuring persons with disabilities are central to shaping policies and programs. It covers understanding disability and intersectionality, common accessibility challenges in feminist and climate spaces, standards for accessibility, monitoring and evaluation, and institutional commitments. The guideline applies to all aspects of SheRAA's work including programs and training, events, communications, partnerships, and policies.

Workshop on Disability-Inclusion Guideline for SheRAA Members

On December 15, 2025, BBDN facilitated sessions during the launch of SheRAA's Disability Inclusion Guideline at Hotel Lake Castle, Gulshan. The workshop brought together over 40 representatives of SheRAA Alliance member organizations from across Bangladesh. Nayem Molla, Communication and Admin Officer at BBDN, facilitated sessions on the guidebook's content and practical implications for implementation within member organizations. The sessions focused on helping participants understand how to apply the guideline's principles across their programs, events, communications, and partnerships.



■ Group photo of partners, trainers, and organizers.

Sajida Foundation Mental Health Initiative Guideline Review

BBDN provided technical support to the Sajida Foundation's PROSHANTI Mental Health Program to review and refine their Livelihood Guideline. The collaboration focused on ensuring the guidelines were practical, user-friendly, and appropriately tailored for clients with mental health conditions. BBDN reviewed the draft guideline and provided inputs, covering needs assessment processes including psycho-social profiling, structured guidelines for transitioning clients from therapeutic support to income-generating activities, and recommendations for supported employment models. The collaboration demonstrates the intersection of mental health and disability inclusion in advancing holistic approaches to wellbeing and economic participation.

Bonhishikha Limited Accessibility Assessment

On September 14, 2025, BBDN conducted a comprehensive accessibility assessment at Bonhishikha's office premises in Baridhara, Dhaka. The assessment was conducted by Arup Ratan Chowdhury, Program Manager and Md Tareq Mahmud, Deputy Program Manager. They evaluated the facility against Universal Design Principles and the Bangladesh Building Code 2020.

The audit identified accessibility barriers and provided detailed recommendations across multiple areas including outside pathways (tactile ground surface indicators, color-contrasted signage, designated accessible parking), lift systems (voice announcement and visual display), entrance stairs (handrails, tactile warning strips, portable ramp), corridors (improved lighting, directional signs), and toilets (widening doors, relocating wash basins, installing grab rails, alarm system). The audit supports Bonhishikha in implementing concrete accessibility improvements as part of their commitment to disability inclusion.



INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Regional Disability Inclusion Events, 2025 - Singapore



- A glimpse of a panel discussion at the GBDN conference in Singapore. Murteza Rafi Khan of BBDN and Shafiq R. Bhuiyan of BRAC Bank PLC served as panelists.

Murteza Rafi Khan, CEO of BBDN, and Shafiq R. Bhuiyan, Vice President & Head of Internal Communication and CSR at BRAC Bank PLC, represented the Network at two regional events held at the Enabling Village in Singapore in September 2025: the ILO Global Business and Disability Network's 2nd Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific on September 17, and the Zero Project Asia Pacific Symposium 2025 on September 18. As a partner and member of BBDN, BRAC Bank's participation was facilitated by the Network.

ILO GBDN Conference, September 17 — "Leadership on Ensuring Disability-Inclusive Talent Pipelines"

This session explored how partnerships between employers, training providers, and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities, facilitated through National Business and Disability Networks, can build consistent, demand-led talent pipelines for persons with disabilities.

Zero Project Asia Pacific Symposium, September 18 — Panel 2: "Collaborations Across Borders"



- Group photo of participants and organizers.

This panel brought together organizations from across the region to share their work and explore cross-border partnerships for disability inclusion.

Key Highlights

- Murteza Rafi Khan spoke on BBDN's role in building "disability confidence" within partner businesses, working with organizations like BRAC Bank to deepen internal understanding of accessibility and inclusion
- He highlighted BBDN's upskilling programs in digital marketing and graphics design, designed to align the skills of persons with disabilities with high-demand roles in the IT and services sectors
- He also spoke about BBDN's job fairs, which have connected talent pools directly with employer needs
- Shafiq R. Bhuiyan represented BRAC Bank's experience as an early mover in disability inclusion within Bangladesh's private sector, having been among the first banks in the country to hire persons with disabilities
- He shared how this commitment, embedded as part of BRAC Bank's CSR strategy since 2022, has expanded to include scholarships for women with disabilities, support for employees with children with disabilities, and accessibility improvements to digital platforms
- He pointed to BRAC Bank's advocacy partnership with BBDN as a channel for creating public conversation and momentum around disability inclusion in Bangladesh
- He emphasized that inclusion extends beyond hiring to enriching organizational culture, and that BRAC Bank's continued partnership with BBDN reflects a shared, long-term commitment to advancing meaningful discussion and action on disability inclusion in Bangladesh

Together, the two events gave BBDN and BRAC Bank a platform to share Bangladesh's progress with regional counterparts, while gaining insight into models from across the Asia-Pacific Business and Disability Network ecosystem that could inform future BBDN programming



Global Disability Summit 2025, Berlin

Aziza Ahmed, Director Operations, BBDN, represented the Network at the Global Disability Summit 2025 in Berlin, Germany, held from April 2–3, 2025. Co-hosted by Germany, Jordan, and the International Disability Alliance, the summit brought together governments, development partners, private sector leaders, and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities.

Key Insights:

The summit marked a shift from broad commitments to systems-level integration and measurable outcomes. The Amman-Berlin Declaration introduced the "15% for the 15%" target, calling for at least 15% of international development efforts to actively address disability inclusion. The private sector is increasingly positioned as a driver of inclusive growth, integrating accessibility into product design, workforces, and supply chains. Organizations of Persons with Disabilities are now recognized as decision-makers, shaping policy and practice rather than being consulted peripherally.

For Bangladesh, the absence of formal representation at GDS 2025 highlights a missed opportunity for structured engagement with global disability inclusion frameworks, including potential partnerships and agenda-setting influence. At the same time, it underscores the importance of more deliberate engagement in such platforms going forward. The key priority ahead is to support the translation of global commitments into practical, scalable systems within national contexts, in collaboration with government, private sector actors, and OPDs.



■ Aziza Ahmed, Director Operations, BBDN, at the summit.

Assistive Technology Symposium, Nepal

Nayem Molla, Communication and Admin Officer, BBDN, participated in the AT2030 Frontiers Symposium 2025 in Kathmandu, Nepal, from October 8–10, 2025. Organized by the Royal Academy of Engineering, the Global Disability Innovation Hub, and Kathmandu University, the symposium brought together global experts, innovators, and activists to explore Inclusive Innovation in Action: Community-Led Assistive Technology Solutions in Local Contexts.

Key Insights:

- Community-led innovation produces more sustainable and contextually appropriate assistive technology solutions
- Active participation and leadership of persons with disabilities is essential for effective assistive technology delivery
- Regional collaboration and South-South exchange can accelerate access to affordable, locally manufactured assistive devices
- Integration of assistive technology into employment and skills development programs enhances workplace inclusion



■ Nayem Molla, Communication And Admin Officer, BBDN and other participants at the symposium.

SUCCESS STORIES

SONGITA GHOSH

(Person with Speech Disability)

Dance Content Creator

Digital Marketing Training – Digital Inclusion for Women with Disabilities (Eastern Bank PLC & BBDN)

Songita Ghosh, a young woman with hearing and speech impairment, long expressed herself through dance but lacked the digital skills to reach wider audiences. After completing BBDN's digital marketing training, she learned to create content and grow her presence online.

Today, she shares dance performances and tutorials on YouTube and Facebook Reels, building a growing audience and preparing to launch online classes.



This training helped me transform my passion for dance into a digital platform. I have gained the confidence and skills to create content, connect with audiences online, and take steps toward building my own career through social media.



MD. AMIRUL ISLAM

(Person with Physical Disability)

Solar Technician

Skills Training & Assistive Support – ProGRESS Project (ILO and BBDN)

Md. Amirul Islam, a young man with a physical disability, faced financial hardship and mobility barriers that disrupted his education and limited his opportunities. Through the ProGRESS Project, he enrolled in solar electrical system training but struggled when his mobility device became unusable.

With project support, Amirul received a new KAFO, enabling him to complete his training and gain practical skills. Today, he is working as a solar technician at a local shop, earning an income and supporting his family.



Receiving the KAFO support and technical training gave me a new opportunity to stand on my own feet. Today, I am able to work, earn an income, and support my family with confidence and dignity.



SUCCESS STORIES

MD YASIR ARAFAT

(Person with Cerebral Palsy)

Digital Marketing Training – Aporajeyo Ami
(BRAC Bank PLC & BBDN)

Intern - AML & CFT Department, bKash Limited

Md. Yasir Arafat, a young person with cerebral palsy affecting the right side of his body, has always been determined to build a professional career despite the barriers created by physical disability. Through the Aporajeyo Ami initiative supported by BRAC Bank PLC and BBDN, he received digital marketing training that helped him strengthen his communication, technical, and professional skills.

He also secured an internship at bKash Limited in the AML & CFT Department. In this role, he successfully adapted to a corporate work environment, gained practical experience in financial compliance operations, and demonstrated his ability to perform professionally in a leading corporate institution. Today, Yasir continues to move forward with confidence, building a career through hard work, resilience, and determination.

“

This internship has helped me enhance my employability skills, gain confidence in a professional environment, and better prepare myself for future career opportunities.



SUMAIYA ZAMAN MIM

(Person with Visual Disability)

Employment through Job Fair for Persons with Disabilities (BRAC Bank PLC & BBDN)

Officer, Virtual Banking, BRAC Bank PLC

Sumaiya Zaman Mim, a young woman with a visual impairment, always dreamed of building a career in the corporate sector. However, like many persons with disabilities, she faced numerous barriers while pursuing employment opportunities and proving her capabilities in a competitive job market.

Her journey took a turning point when she attended the Job Fair for Persons with Disabilities in Dhaka. The platform gave her the opportunity to showcase her skills, confidence, and determination to potential employers. Following the recruitment process, she was selected for a position at BRAC Bank PLC and began her professional journey with the Virtual Banking Team.

“

Sometimes, all a person needs is one opportunity to change their life. Participating in the BBDN Job Fair gave me that opportunity to demonstrate my potential and pursue my dream career in the corporate sector.





RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYERS

Company Self-Assessment Tool for Disability Inclusion

The ILO Global Business and Disability Network (GBDN) Self-Assessment Tool enables businesses to evaluate their current level of disability inclusion and identify areas for improvement. The tool provides a comprehensive assessment of workplace accessibility, recruitment procedures, employee retention strategies, and other critical aspects of disability inclusion.

Aligned with the Ten Principles of the ILO GBDN Charter and guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the self-assessment empowers businesses of all sizes to establish actionable priorities and implement best practices that benefit both the organization and persons with disabilities.

The tool enables business leaders to:

- Champion equality, accessibility, and inclusion for colleagues, customers, and stakeholders with disabilities
- Cultivate a corporate culture that confidently addresses disability-related matters
- Act as advocates for systemic reforms that foster broader economic and societal inclusion

By engaging with the self-assessment tool, businesses can proactively drive positive change, enhance diversity, and create environments that embrace the full potential of persons with disabilities.

Access the Tool:

Self-Assessment Tool	Guideline
	

The Competitive Advantage of Hiring Persons with Disabilities

The Competitive Advantage of Hiring Persons with Disabilities: An Employer's Guide to Disability Inclusion at the Workplace is a comprehensive resource developed to support employers in building disability-inclusive workplaces. Originally created by the Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF) and ILO, the guideline was comprehensively revised in 2026 by BBDN with support from the Promoting Gender Responsive Enterprise Development and TVET Systems (ProGRESS) project, ILO, funded by the Government of Canada.

The revised edition reflects updated data, global standards, and current best practices with a stronger disability lens, emphasizing rights-based inclusion, universal accessibility, and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities throughout employment processes. The guideline covers the business and human rights case for hiring persons with disabilities, understanding disability and removing barriers, workplace accessibility, reasonable accommodations, disability etiquette, recruitment and retention strategies, and health and safety considerations.

Access the Guideline





Tax Incentives for Persons with Disability: Individual and Employer Provisions Under Paripatra 2025-2026

Bangladesh's Income Tax Paripatra 2025-2026, issued by the National Board of Revenue (NBR), introduces a range of significant provisions aimed at promoting an inclusive economy. Among the most impactful are measures relating to Tax Rebates and special benefits for Persons with Disabilities. These provisions cover both individual taxpayers and companies, aiming to reduce the tax burden on vulnerable groups while incentivising employers to create inclusive workplaces.

This article provides a detailed analysis of tax rebate provisions and disability-related tax benefits under the Paripatra 2025-2026, covering the assessment years 2025-2026 and 2026-2027.

Part I: Persons with Disabilities — Individual Taxpayers

1.1 Enhanced Tax-Free Income Threshold

One of the most significant benefits for individuals with disabilities is the higher tax-free income threshold. Under both the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 assessment years, different categories of individual taxpayers enjoy different tax-exempt income ceilings.

Tax-Free Income Thresholds — AY 2025-2026

Assessment Year	Category of Taxpayer	Tax-Free Income Limit (BDT)
AY 2025-2026	Persons with Disability	4,75,000
AY 2026-2027	Persons with Disability	5,00,000

1.2 Additional Benefit for Parents/Guardians of Disabled Children

A parent or legal guardian of a person with disability receives an additional BDT 50,000 tax-free income allowance per disabled child or ward. This benefit is available to only one parent (father or mother) when both are taxpayers.

1.3 Minimum Tax for Persons with Disability

Even though a person with disability enjoys a higher tax-free ceiling, if their total income exceeds the tax-free limit, a minimum tax is still payable. The minimum tax depends on location:

Tax-Free Income Thresholds — AY 2025-2026

Location of Taxpayer	Minimum Tax (BDT)
Dhaka North/South City Corporation & Chattogram City Corporation	5,000
Other City Corporations	4,000
Areas outside City Corporations	3,000
New taxpayers (all areas) — AY 2026-2027	1,000

Importantly, even if a taxpayer with disability's calculated tax (after investment rebate) falls below zero or the minimum amount, they are still required to pay the applicable minimum tax.

1.4 Accessibility Surcharge on Educational Institutions

The Paripatra introduces a strong enforcement measure for disability accessibility. Any school, college, or university that fails to provide appropriate accessibility facilities for persons with disabilities (as required by applicable law) will be subject to a surcharge of 2.5% on their earned income.

Part II: Tax Rebate for Employing Persons with Disabilities — Employers (Individual & Companies)

2.1 Rebate for Employing Persons with Disability

Section 1.6 of the Paripatra (corresponding to the relevant provision in the Income Tax Act, 2023) introduces an incentivising tax rebate for any taxpayer-employer who employs persons with disabilities. This applies equally to individual employers and companies. The conditions and rebate amounts are as follows:



Qualifying Condition: A taxpayer-employer must employ either:

- At least 10% of the total workforce from among persons with disability, OR
- More than 25 persons who are persons with disability

Rebate Amount: The rebate will be the LOWER of:

- 5% of the tax payable by the employer, OR
- 75% of the total salaries paid to employees with disabilities

Part III: Summary — Disability-Related Tax Benefits at a Glance

Tax-Free Income Thresholds — AY 2025-2026

Benefit	Details
Higher Tax-Free Income Ceiling	BDT 4,75,000 (AY 2025-26) / BDT 5,00,000 (AY 2026-27)
Additional ceiling for parents of Persons with Disability	+ BDT 50,000 per disabled child/ward
Applicable from	AY 2025-2026

3.2 For Employers (Individuals & Companies) Employing Persons with Disabilities

Benefit	Details
Employment Threshold	Min 10% of workforce OR > 25 employees with disabilities
Rebate Amount	5% of payable tax OR 75% of total salaries to persons with disabilities - whichever is lower
Applies to	All taxpayer-employers — individuals and companies alike

3.3 Penalty: Accessibility Non-Compliance

Institution Type	Surcharge for Non-Compliance
Schools, Colleges, Universities	2.5% surcharge on earned income if disability accessibility not maintained

The Income Tax Paripatra 2025-2026 reflects Bangladesh's growing commitment to an inclusive fiscal policy. The provisions for persons with disabilities - both as individual taxpayers and as a protected group in the workforce - are thoughtfully designed to ease financial burdens and incentivise inclusive employment. These provisions position Bangladesh's tax code as an active instrument for social inclusion, rewarding responsible employers while protecting and empowering persons with disabilities.



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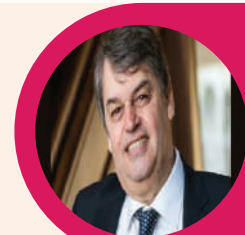
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BBDN MANAGEMENT TEAM



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Chief Executive Officer



Aziza Ahmed
Director Operations

Zameare Rahman
Senior Accounts & Admin
Manager



Arup Ratan Chowdhury
Program Manager



Md. Tareq Mahmud
Deputy Program Manager



Sharlin Akter
Assistant Program Manager

Rubaiya Sultana
Senior Program Officer



Nayem Molla
Communication and
Admin Officer





BBDN 2026 STRATEGIC ROADMAP



2026 Vision: Scaling impact through collaboration, innovation, and sustained commitment to disability-inclusive employment



CALL TO ACTION

The progress achieved in 2025 demonstrates what becomes possible when businesses, government, development partners, and disability organizations work together toward shared goals. Yet the journey toward full economic inclusion for persons with disabilities in Bangladesh requires sustained commitment and collective action from all stakeholders.

To Employers and Business Leaders:

Join BBDN as a member and champion disability inclusion within your organization. Implement inclusive hiring practices, make workplaces accessible, and demonstrate that diversity strengthens business performance. Your leadership can inspire others and create opportunities for persons with disabilities to contribute their talents.

To Development Partners:

Continue supporting programmatic initiatives that create complete pathways from skills training to employment. Invest in research, capacity building, and advocacy that drives systemic change beyond individual projects

To Training Institutions:

Partner with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities to ensure your programs are accessible and inclusive. Train instructors in universal design for learning and commit to enrolling persons with disabilities. Quality skills development is the foundation for successful employment.

To Organizations of Persons with Disabilities:

Strengthen your capacity to advocate for members, connect them with training and employment opportunities, and hold institutions accountable. Your voice and leadership are essential to ensuring inclusion efforts reflect the needs and aspirations of persons with disabilities.

To Government and Policymakers:

Strengthen enforcement of disability inclusion laws and incentives. Invest in accessible infrastructure, support the development of Employment Injury Insurance schemes, and ensure persons with disabilities are meaningfully consulted in policy decisions that affect their lives.

To Persons with Disabilities:

Know your rights, pursue your ambitions, and demand equal opportunities. Your talents, skills, and perspectives are valuable contributions to Bangladesh's economy and society.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BBDN's achievements in 2025 were made possible through the commitment, collaboration, and support of numerous partners and stakeholders. We extend our sincere gratitude to:

Our Funding Partners:

BRAC Bank PLC, Eastern Bank PLC, GIZ Bangladesh, ILO Bangladesh, and Global Affairs Canada for their programmatic investments and sustained support that enable our work.

Government Institutions:

Ministry of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Social Welfare, Department of Social Services, NOSHTRI, DIFE, BGMEA, BKMEA, and Bangladesh Employers' Federation for their collaboration and commitment to advancing disability-inclusive policies and practices.

Our Member Organizations:

Founder Members, Premier Members, General Members, and Resource Members whose financial contributions and commitment to disability inclusion drives the Network's impact and demonstrates that inclusive employment is both achievable and beneficial.

Development Partners:

ILO, GIZ, and all organizations who provide technical support, expertise, and collaboration that strengthen our initiatives.

Individual Donors:

Generous individuals whose personal contributions support BBDN's mission and enable us to respond to emerging needs with flexibility and compassion. Your belief in our work makes a tangible difference in the lives of persons with disabilities.

Training Partners:

Creative IT Institute, Skill Jobs (Daffodil Family), BRAC Skills Development Programme, and TVET institutions across Bangladesh for creating accessible learning environments and equipping persons with disabilities with market-relevant skills.

Organizations of Persons with Disabilities:

B-SCAN, Access Bangladesh Foundation, and all OPDs who mobilize candidates, advocate for rights, and ensure the voices of persons with disabilities remain central to our work.

BBDN Team:

The dedicated staff whose expertise, passion, and tireless efforts translate vision into action and ensure the Network delivers quality support to members and partners.

Persons with Disabilities:

Who strengthen our work, challenge us to do better, and demonstrate daily that when barriers are removed and opportunities are provided, talent thrives.

BBDN is entering its second decade, and we remain grateful for the partnerships, commitment, and shared belief that an inclusive Bangladesh is essential for sustainable development. Together, we continue the journey toward economic inclusion for all.



BANGLADESH BUSINESS & DISABILITY NETWORK / BANGLADESH EMPLOYERS' FEDERATION

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