Query title	**Addressing barriers to employment for people with disabilities: evidence and lessons learned**
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Query	"What is the evidence available on interventions that effectively address the barriers to people with disabilities accessing and maintaining employment (decent work) in the agriculture and manufacturing sectors in low and middle income countries?"
Enquirer	**DFID Growth and Resilience Team**

Contents

1. Summary

This paper provides an overview of findings from evaluations, research, and case studies on programmes that seek to address barriers to employment for people with disabilities in low and middle income countries (LMICs). **There is extremely limited evidence available on this subject, particularly from mainstream agriculture, livelihoods and employment programmes.** Almost all of the evidence available is from programmes with a specific focus on disability inclusion. This is important to note because the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) recognises the right of persons with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others, and the CRPD committee and many organisations have emphasised the importance of mainstreaming disability inclusion in employment rather than segregating the labour market (UNDP, 2017; Mont, 2014). Several systematic evidence reviews, disability inclusion researchers and international development institutions have highlighted this significant evidence gap and the need for more research, evaluations, and sharing of lessons learned.[1] There has also been some recognition that international development institutions have not prioritised or adequately resourced disability inclusion mainstreaming in agriculture, livelihoods and employment programming. This suggests that there may have been both a lack of disability inclusion mainstreaming practices in employment programmes funded or implemented by aid agencies, as well as limited capturing and sharing of evidence and lessons learned from programmes that have sought to include people with disabilities. This report therefore recommends that current and new mainstream employment and livelihoods programmes explicitly focus on and practice disability inclusion mainstreaming, and that they capture and share the evidence of outcomes and lessons learned on disability inclusion more widely.

Due to the lack of evidence available from interventions specifically focused on employment in the agriculture and manufacturing sectors, the scope of this query was expanded to include evidence from employment programmes that are not specific to one sector. The query focused on interventions addressing barriers to formal employment rather than informal work,[2] which is sometimes also referred to as 'vulnerable work' due to the lack of rights and protections it confers to workers. In LMICs, people with disabilities are more likely to be employed in informal work

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[1] See for example: Wickenden, 2020; GIZ, 2020; UNDESA, 2019; Mont, 2014; Tripney et al., 2017; Cheng et al., 2018; Foley et al., 2012; Kuipers et al., 2008; Corden and Thornton, 2002.

[2] ILO defines informal work as work that is not subject to national labour legislation, income taxation, social protection or entitlement to certain employment benefits; casual or temporary work; work with hours or wages below a specified threshold; work for unincorporated enterprises or household members; or work for which labour regulations are not applied, enforced or complied with for any other reason (Hussmanns, 2004).

(UNDESA, 2019), however this can put them at greater risk of losing work and income, and having no access social protection, particularly during economic shocks such as those caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Meaney-Davis, 2020). Programme interventions therefore tend to aim for people with disabilities to secure formal employment rather than informal work, or they commonly aim for economic empowerment through entrepreneurship. The request was for this query to focus on interventions aiming for disability inclusion in decent work, which under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Labour Organisation's definition emphasises the right to work that is productive, delivers fair income with security and social protection, safeguards basic rights, or offers equality of opportunity and treatment, prospects for personal development, and the chance for recognition.

People with disabilities commonly experience a range of different barriers to employment. The most commonly cited barriers include **environmental barriers** such as inaccessible workplace facilities and equipment, inaccessible communications by employers and employment service providers, and inaccessible transport systems; **institutional barriers** such as a lack of inclusive education and training opportunities[3], a lack of or ineffective anti-discrimination legislation and/or quota systems, limited knowledge and confidence of employers and service providers on disability-inclusive employment practices, and a lack of access to healthcare; and **attitudinal barriers** such as discrimination against people with disabilities; unconscious bias and assumptions about the cost of reasonable accommodations or people with disabilities' capabilities; stigma; abuse; low self-esteem and limited social networks.

This rapid evidence review identified three common programme approaches that seek to address different combinations of these barriers by working with different stakeholder groups. **Single intervention approaches** tend to work with one or two main stakeholder groups to address a single barrier, for example many programmes solely focus on providing skills training for people with disabilities. Antidiscrimination legislation and quota systems are also single intervention approaches in that they seek to address one key barrier to employment: discrimination. **Supply and demand approaches** seek to address barriers in both the supply and demand sides of the labour market. They tend to combine engaging with people with disabilities and service providers (including disabled peoples' organisations and employment services) to provide skills training, and engaging with employers to address discrimination, negative attitudes and a lack of understanding of disability-inclusive employment practices. Many of these programmes originate as corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives led by employers. **Systems approaches** seek to address barriers to employment at the structural, organisational and individual levels. They commonly work with governments to improve implementation of policies and regulations across the employment system in coordination with employers, service providers and people with disabilities.

The evidence available from single intervention approaches is limited, however documented lessons learned include:
- While anti-discrimination legislation is recognised as critical in upholding the rights of people with disabilities, some case studies suggest it has had limited effect on employment in LMICs due to the limited capacity of legal systems to implement it, and the inability to apply it to the informal sector.
- Limited research on quota systems suggests that they are not fully complied with, as many employers prefer to pay the penalty for not meeting quota thresholds or over-report the number of people with disabilities they employ.
- Sheltered workshops that provide segregated training and employment for people with disabilities are highly discouraged by the CRPD Committee because they exclude people with disabilities from the mainstream labour market.
- Programmes with a single focus on providing skills training have shown some results at a small scale, but the evidence is inconclusive. They have sometimes been criticised for being inefficient and unsustainable because they do not address other critical barriers such as discrimination by and negative attitudes of employers.

There is limited evidence and analysis available from programmes that take a supply and demand approach, however lessons learned include:
- Many programmes that combine skills training for people with disabilities and engagement with employers to address their negative attitudes and lack of capacity in disability inclusion have secured employment for people with disabilities at a small scale in a selection of (usually large-scale) companies.
- Many of these programmes begin as corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes that aim to meet quotas. There has been some concern that this sometimes amounts to a charity approach rather than a rights-based approach, where people with disabilities are hired because of their disabilities rather than because they have the right to employment on an equal basis, and the skills and capabilities required for the job.

Much of the theoretical literature on employment for people with disabilities argues that to be effective, employment programmes need to address multiple barriers through a range of interventions, and through engagement and coordination with multiple stakeholders (GIZ, 2020; Saleh and Bruyère (2018); Khayatzadeh-Mahani et al., 2019; Wickenden et al., 2020; Heymann et al., 2014; Abidi and Sharma, 2014). This rapid evidence review found one

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[3] This is commonly cited as one of the most significant barriers (ILO and OECD, 2018).

evaluation from a programme taking this approach, and several case studies, all of which point to the importance of implementing interventions in coordination with government stakeholders to build disability inclusion capacity across the entire employment system. The lack of publicly available research and evidence from this approach makes it difficult to draw conclusions on its effectiveness. The [Inclusion Works](#) programme funded by DFID is however currently testing different models of inclusive employment using systems approaches, and it seeks to generate robust evidence and data that can be used to improve employment practices at national, regional and international levels. DFID and FCO staff working on mainstream employment and livelihoods programmes would benefit from continuing to engage with this programme and other programmes and donors that focus on disability inclusion in employment and livelihoods (eg. Irish Aid, DFAT) to learn from the evidence they generate.

Mainstream employment and livelihoods programmes can also put principles of disability inclusion mainstreaming in to practice such as:
- Meaningfully engaging with people with disabilities in all of their diversity and their representative organisations to analyse the barriers they experience in employment and livelihoods, address these barriers, and monitor and evaluate disability inclusion throughout the programme cycle.
- Building in accessibility and reasonable accommodations in programme activities from the outset, planning together with people with disabilities and Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs)
- Taking a twin track approach to disability inclusion: ensuring that people with disabilities are included in all mainstream activities while also implementing specific measures to address barriers to disability inclusion.
- Collecting and monitoring disability-disaggregated data using the Washington Group Questions; monitoring and evaluating disability inclusion in all programmes; using the OECD DAC disability marker to assess disability inclusion across programmes; and sharing the evidence of outcomes and lessons learned on disability inclusion more widely.
- Encouraging communication and coordination between programme implementation partners, DPOs and people with disabilities, as well as with other external actors working on disability inclusion in employment and livelihoods.

There is currently substantial evidence showing that during the COVID-19 pandemic significant numbers of people with disabilities in LMICs are losing work and income, experiencing extreme financial hardship, and do not have access to sufficient social protection (Meaney-Davis, 2020). People with disabilities may also experience greater difficulty in returning to employment during the global economic downturn due to the exacerbation of pre-existing barriers to employment. Considering this harsh context, it is particularly important for current and new mainstream employment and livelihood programmes to include an explicit focus on disability inclusion, and to capture and share the evidence and lessons more widely.

Box 1: Key definitions and concepts

Persons with disabilities are:

"…*those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others*."
(Article 1, UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities)

Reasonable accommodation means:

"*necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms*"

(Article 2, UN CRPD)

Decent work is:

Employment that "*respects the fundamental rights of the human person as well as the rights of workers in terms of conditions of work safety and remuneration*"
(Article 6, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights)

Key frameworks relating to decent work for people with disabilities include:

UN CRPD Article 27 recognises the right of persons with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others and prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability with regard to all matters concerning all forms of employment.

Sustainable Development Goal 8 calls on Member States to "*achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value*."

2. Methodology

This rapid research query has been conducted as systematically as possible within 11 days of researcher and expert time. The methodology is described below.

Search strategy: Studies were identified through a variety of search strategies;

- **The review prioritised existing syntheses, evidence reviews, and systematic reviews** where possible in order to draw on the fullest range of evidence possible (Tripney et al, 2017; Corden and Thornton, 2002; Kuipers et al., 2008; Heymann et al., 2014).

- **DFID Disability Inclusive Development Programme consortium partners[4] and relevant experts were contacted** for evidence recommendations (see Section 8 for experts who responded).

- **Google and relevant electronic databases** (PubMed, Science Direct, and Google Scholar) for priority sources using a selection of key search terms[5] used in other systematic reviews to identify more recent materials. The review also considered programmes which may have useful lessons but were excluded from systematic reviews, due to less rigorous evaluation methodologies.

- **Review of key disability portals and resource centres**, including the Leonard Cheshire Disability and Inclusive Development Centre, Disability Data Portal, Source, International Centre for Evidence in Disability, the Impact Initiative, and Sightsavers Research Centre.

- **Disability-focused journals**, such as Disability & Society, and the Asia-Pacific Disability Rehabilitation Journal.

Criteria for inclusion: To be eligible for inclusion in this rapid review of the literature, studies had to fulfil the following criteria:

- **Focus**: Programmes that address the barriers to employment for people with disabilities in low and middle income countries.

- **Time period**: 2008[6] – 2020.

- **Language**: English.

- **Publication status**: publicly available – in almost all cases published online.

- **Geographical focus**: low and middle-income countries.

3. Common barriers and approaches to disability inclusion in employment

There is a large body of literature that identifies the multiple barriers to employment that people with disabilities commonly experience (see for example, Morgon et al., 2014; Mizunoya and Mitra, 2013; WHO and World Bank, 2011; Heymann et al., 2014; UNESCAP, 2015). Barriers to employment can vary in different contexts, but the most commonly referenced barriers include:

- **Environmental barriers** such as inaccessible workplace facilities and equipment, inaccessible communications by employers and employment service providers, and inaccessible transport systems.[7]

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[4] The Disability Inclusion Helpdesk is funded under the DID programme. The DID consortium partners are ADD International, BBC Media Action, BRAC, Institute of Development Studies (IDS), International Disability Alliance (IDA), Humanity & Inclusion, Leonard Cheshire Disability, Light for the World, Sense, Sightsavers and Social Development Direct.

[5] Key search terms included: Disabled/disability/disabilities, impairment, deaf, blind, mental health conditions, psychosocial, intellectual, AND employment, work AND agriculture, manufacturing AND women AND effectiveness, impact AND interventions, programmes, evaluations, legislation, reviews, research, study, evidence AND low and middle income countries, developing countries.

[6] Note: The Disability Inclusion Helpdesk reviews evidence from 2008 onwards as this is the year that the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol came into force.

[7] Inaccessible infrastructure and transport is one of the most commonly cited barriers across the literature, however this rapid evidence review did not find any employment or livelihood programmes that have aimed to address inaccessible infrastructure with the aim of enabling people with disabilities to access employment. It is much easier and less expensive to address accessibility during infrastructure planning rather than retrofitting existing infrastructure, which may explain why employment interventions have not commonly tried to address this barrier. Social Development Direct also provides technical guidance on disability inclusion for infrastructure programmes, see for example: http://icedfacility.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ICED-Disability-Inclusion-Briefing-Note_Final-Mar_18.pdf

- **Institutional barriers** such as a lack of inclusive education and training opportunities, commonly recognised as one of the most significant barriers (ILO and OECD, 2018); a lack of or ineffective anti-discrimination legislation and/or quota systems, limited knowledge and confidence of employers and service providers on disability-inclusive employment practices, and a lack of access to healthcare. Social protection schemes also have the potential to either facilitate or inhibit access to employment.[8]
- **Attitudinal barriers** such as discrimination or negative attitudes towards people with disabilities, which people with disabilities commonly cite as the most persistent barrier to employment (Wickenden et al., 2020). This can include unconscious bias and assumptions about the cost of reasonable accommodations or people with disabilities' capabilities, stigma, and abuse from employers, other employees, service providers and the public. Some people with disabilities also experience low self-esteem and limited social networks as barriers to employment.
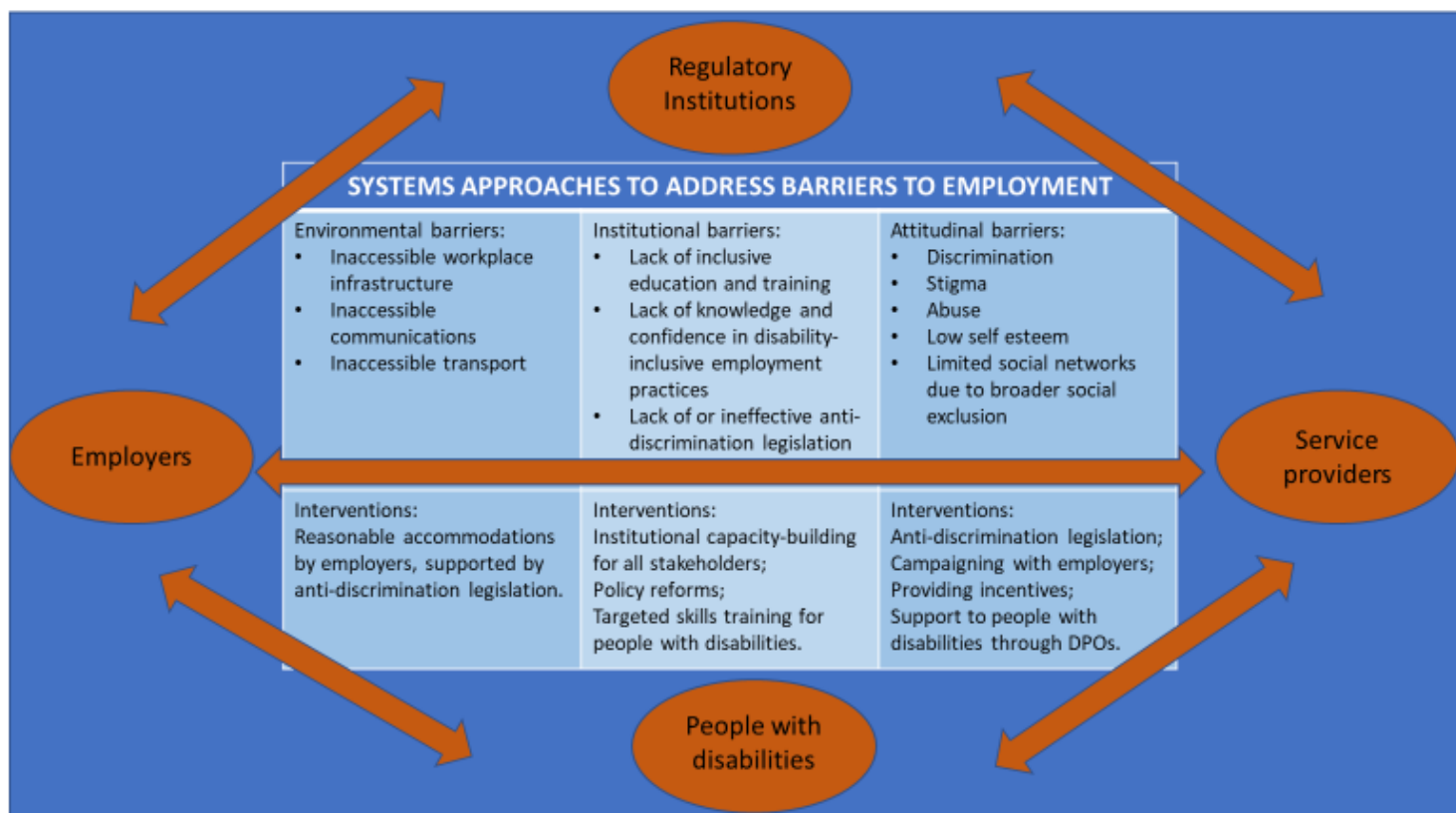
This rapid evidence review has identified a typology of three common programme approaches that seek to address these barriers and engage stakeholders in different variations. These range from single intervention approaches that address a single barrier; to supply and demand approaches that address multiple barriers within the supply and demand sides of the labour market; to more complex, systems approaches that address multiple barriers at the structural, organisational and individual levels. From the literature available, these approaches appear to have evolved over time as organisations have identified additional barriers and sought to engage with more stakeholders to address them.

In **single intervention approaches,** programmes commonly engage with two main stakeholder groups to address a single barrier. For example, it is common for programmes to focus on the barrier of a lack of inclusive education and training opportunities by providing **targeted training for people with disabilities** through DPOs and/or employment services. In high income countries, another common single intervention approach has been **sheltered workshops,** in which DPOs provide training and employment for people with disabilities separately from the mainstream labour market. **Anti-discrimination legislation and quota systems** are also single intervention approaches because they seek to address one specific barrier of discrimination against people with disabilities through enforcing anti-discrimination legislation with employers.

In **supply and demand approaches**, programmes commonly engage with people with disabilities, employers, and service providers (such as DPOs and employment services) to address barriers in both the supply side and the demand side of the labour market. For example, recognising that two of the most significant barriers to employment of people with disabilities are a lack of inclusive training opportunities and employers' negative attitudes towards hiring people with disabilities, many programmes **combine vocational skills training for people with disabilities with capacity-building for employers** to change their attitudes and build their understanding of disability-inclusive practices such as reasonable accommodations.

In systems approaches, programmes coordinate with government and multiple stakeholders in the labour market to address barriers across the structural, organisational and individual levels. For example, some programmes engage with government to strengthen implementation of anti-discrimination legislation, improve vocational training curricula or build disability inclusion capacity across vocational training providers, while also strengthening government coordination with employer federations, employers, DPOs and people with disabilities to address multiple barriers systematically. This approach has only emerged in the past ten years in programmes specifically focused on disability-inclusive employment. **There is extremely limited evidence available on disability inclusion in mainstream livelihoods or employment programmes**, however the systems approach can be understood as a disability inclusion mainstreaming approach that could be applied to mainstream employment programmes. The diagram below outlines the multiple barriers that systems approaches seek to address by engaging with multiple stakeholders across the employment system.

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[8] For example, the expansion of disability benefits in South Africa was linked to a decline in employment among people with disabilities (Mitra, 2008). UNDESA (2019) recommends designing social protection systems in a way that ensures people with disabilities have income security, their disability-related extra costs are met, and that they have effective access to health-care services to promote their inclusion in employment and society.

SYSTEMS APPROACHES TO ADDRESS BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

Regulatory Institutions

Employers

Service providers

People with disabilities

Environmental barriers:
- Inaccessible workplace infrastructure
- Inaccessible communications
- Inaccessible transport

Institutional barriers:
- Lack of inclusive education and training
- Lack of knowledge and confidence in disability-inclusive employment practices
- Lack of or ineffective anti-discrimination legislation

Attitudinal barriers:
- Discrimination
- Stigma
- Abuse
- Low self esteem
- Limited social networks due to broader social exclusion

Interventions:
Reasonable accommodations by employers, supported by anti-discrimination legislation.

Interventions:
Institutional capacity-building for all stakeholders;
Policy reforms;
Targeted skills training for people with disabilities.

Interventions:
Anti-discrimination legislation;
Campaigning with employers;
Providing incentives;
Support to people with disabilities through DPOs.

4. Availability of evidence

There is extremely limited evidence available on the effectiveness of programmes for employment of people with disabilities in LMICs. This rapid evidence review found 6 programme evaluations and 16 programme case studies from programmes addressing employment of people with disabilities. Similarly, two systematic reviews of evaluations of employment programmes for people with disabilities found that there were very few evaluations from LMICs (Tripney et al., 2017; Corden and Thornton, 2002). The Tripney et al. (2017) systematic review only found 4 evaluations of the effectiveness of projects in LMICs implemented after 2008.[9] The evidence from these evaluations could not be compared to draw conclusions on effectiveness because of the variety of approaches in different programmes (Tripney et al. 2017). Another systematic review of community-based rehabilitation project evaluations found that evaluations often concluded with recommendations for more research on approaches to employment, training, and access to finance (Kuipers et al., 2008). Many researchers and international development institutions have also noted the significant gap in research and impact evaluations from LMICs, and the need to commission and share more research and evaluations (GIZ, 2020; UNDESA, 2019; Wickenden, 2020; Mont, 2014; Tripney et al., 2017; Cheng et al., 2018; Foley et al., 2012).

There is acknowledgment that international development institutions have not prioritised disability inclusion mainstreaming in employment and livelihoods programmes, which may partially explain the lack of evaluations and evidence available on this topic.
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is launching a programme focused on disability inclusion in agriculture in 2020, but it has acknowledged that it has lacked a systematic and continuous approach to mainstreaming disability in its operations (expert contribution, Simon Brown).
- The evaluation of disability-inclusive development in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2017) found that there was little evidence that disability inclusion is mainstreamed in UNDP's livelihood programming.
- The evaluation of strengthening disability inclusion in Australian Aid recommended increasing efforts to support disability inclusion in agriculture, livelihoods, water and infrastructure interventions, which it found to be less inclusive (Ovington, 2018).
- The evaluation of the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Disability Inclusion Strategy (2017) found that while ILO had achieved some institutional milestones towards disability inclusion mainstreaming, progress was significantly limited due to a lack of resources for disability inclusion technical expertise and programming.

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[9] Projects from prior to 2008 are considered outdated due to the establishment of the CRPD in 2008, which is the guiding global framework on disability rights.

A key question is therefore whether the evidence gap is mainly as a result of limited existence of programming that includes people with disabilities, or if it is a result of a lack of captured learning and evaluations. It is likely to be a combination of both, therefore it is important that current and new mainstream employment and livelihoods programmes improve disability inclusion mainstreaming in programme implementation, and capture and share the evidence of outcomes and lessons learned on disability inclusion more widely.

Particular evidence gaps are outlined in the table below:

Subject	Availability of evidence from programmes in LMICs	
	Non-existent	Limited
Effectiveness of approaches for people with mental health conditions or psychosocial disabilities	No research found from LMICs. Some studies from high income countries.	
Effectiveness of interventions for people with intellectual disabilities	No research found from LMICs. Some studies from high income countries.	
Effectiveness of interventions for women with disabilities or gender analysis of interventions	A limited number of studies show differences in employment outcomes for women with disabilities, but without any analysis.	
Effectiveness of interventions to maintain employment of people with disabilities	Some theoretical literature briefly mentions that ongoing training and career development support may be effective for maintaining employment, without any evidence.	
Effectiveness of interventions in the agriculture sector		A few case studies but no rigorous evaluations.
Effectiveness of interventions in the manufacturing sector		A limited number of case studies are available from projects mainly in Bangladesh and Vietnam.
Effectiveness of disability inclusion in mainstream livelihoods programmes		This review only found one evaluation and case study from a mainstream livelihoods programme that provided evidence on disability inclusion in Afghanistan (Coffey, 2017; expert contribution from Angela Kohama), and one case study from Bangladesh (GIZ, 2020).

There is not enough research and evidence available to make robust conclusions about effectiveness of different approaches or specific interventions. However there are lessons learned available from the three common programme approaches, as outlined in the sections below.

5. Evidence and lessons learned from single intervention approaches

Sheltered workshops, which provide segregated training and employment for people with disabilities, have been strongly discouraged. The CRPD recognises that people with disabilities have the "right to the opportunity to gain a living by working freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities", and the CRPD committee have raised concerns about segregating the labour market, emphasising that all sheltered employment programmes must transition to open employment (UNDP, 2017). Studies conducted in Northern Ireland, Spain and the US have shown that people working in sheltered workshops would like the opportunity to work in open employment (McConkey and Mezza, 2001; Migliore et al., 2007; Verdugo et al., 2009), while research from the USA has found that the rate of successful transition of people with disabilities from sheltered workshops to the open labour market is minimal, ranging from under one per cent to about five per cent (Beyer et al., 2002; US Government Accountability Office, 2001). Much of the theoretical literature also argues strongly in favour of a disability inclusion mainstreaming approach rather than separate training and employment programmes for people with disabilities.

There is limited research available on the effectiveness of anti-discrimination legislation, however case studies point to some of its limitations in LMICs. Anti-discrimination legislation involves the use of civil litigation to

prove that employers have discriminated against a potential or actual employee on the basis of disability. Some of the theoretical literature suggests that while anti-discrimination legislation in high income countries is seen as the most effective approach to inclusion, its effectiveness in LMICs may be limited due to the large size of informal economies and limited legal capacity in many countries (Heymann et al., 2014; Bauwens et al., 2019; UNDESA, 2019). Bruyère and Van Looy (2014) also note that there has been little research[10] on the prevalence of workplace discrimination against people with disabilities and how it might change over time. In line with these research findings, this rapid evidence review did not find any examples of people with disabilities pursuing legal action against employers in LMICs under anti-discrimination legislation, nor any research on the prevalence of workplace discrimination against people with disabilities in LMICs. By itself anti-discrimination does not necessarily promote employers to hire people with disabilities, nor does it address other barriers to employment such as a lack of inclusive education and training (Bauwens et al., 2019). A few case studies also point to these limitations:

- Kenya: a qualitative study suggested that ineffective anti-discrimination legislation remained a key barrier to employment for people with disabilities (Opoku et al., 2017), and a second study suggested this was due to inadequate enforcement mechanisms, failure of engagement by employers, and inadequate budgeting for implementation (Khaemba et al. 2017).
- Cambodia: a study using data from the Cambodian Socio-Economic Survey estimated that employment amongst people with disabilities reduced by 9 percentage points in the four years after Cambodia's anti-discrimination law (which includes a quota system) was introduced. The study suggests that the legislated requirement for employers to pay for reasonable accommodation in the workplace may have discouraged employers from hiring people with disabilities because there is no financial penalty for failing to comply with quotas, whereas there are perceived potential costs for workplace accommodations (Palmer and Williams, 2017).
- Uganda: similarly, Nyombi and Kibandama (2014) suggest that few employers are willing to comply with the requirement under the Disability Act to ensure that their premises are accessible for people with disabilities and instead prefer to screen out people with disabilities. However no evidence is provided to support this suggestion. Other case studies from Uganda (Griffiths et al., 2018; Bekoreire et al., 2012) have also noted the legislation has not led to practical outcomes in employment.
- Global: a recent ILO report discusses the potential merits of combining anti-discrimination legislation with quota systems, and providing incentives for implementing reasonable accommodations rather than enforcing penalties for non-compliance with quotas (ILO, 2020).

The limited evidence available does not suggest that anti-discrimination legislation cannot be effective, rather that it may require strengthening through further interventions.

The literature on quota systems for employment of people with disabilities is inconclusive on their effectiveness. There have been no thorough evaluations of disability quota systems (UNDESA, 2019). However one United Nations study analysed the differences in employment to population ratios between people with disabilities and people without disabilities and found that in countries with quotas between 1% and 4% the differences were significant, in countries with quotas between 5% and 9% the differences were the lowest, and in the few countries with quotas above 10% the differences were very significant (UNDESA, 2019). Research by ILO notes that from the limited information available on quotas' effectiveness, it is evident that quota obligations are not fully complied with, and many employers prefer to pay the levy or over-report the number of people with disabilities employed rather than employing people with disabilities to the extent to which they are required, or at all (ILO, 2020). Studies from China, Egypt and Tunisia have similarly pointed to quota systems being perceived by employers as an additional tax rather than an incentive for inclusive practices within companies (Wuellrich, 2010; Vornholt et al., 2018; WHO and World Bank 2011). Brazil's system has been noted as a potentially effective approach, in which quotas are monitored by the labour inspectorate in each state and some authorities have received training on how to encourage employers to implement disability-inclusive practices (Bauwens et al., 2019). The government of Japan also provides guidance to companies that have not achieved the minimum quota, including support to develop plans and recommendations to assist with their implementation (ILO, 2020).

The evidence from programmes that focus on vocational training for people with disabilities suggests that they have small but positive impacts on securing employment, but the evidence is inconclusive. A recent Disability Inclusion Helpdesk rapid review of the evidence from training programmes for people with disabilities (Fraser and Abu Al Ghaib, 2019) found the following in regard to their effectiveness:

- India: a study of two community-based rehabilitation (CBR) programmes found that people with disabilities in CBR areas had higher rates of paid work in the four-year period, with a small but statistically significant increase in the proportion of participants in paid work from 32% to 36%, while the proportion in the control group in paid work overall declined from 27% to 24% (Biggeri et al, 2012).
- Egypt: a programme focusing on building skills[11] for young adults aged 18-30 with mental disabilities found that 50% of participants were successfully employed and maintained their job, 20% were able to

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[10] The limited studies available have been based on small samples or conducted on student samples in laboratories.
[11] A mixed-methods evaluation with 500 participants of the UNICEF-funded 'Right for an Equal Life' aimed to provide skills in communication, soft (social skills), and work environment skills and job-related knowledge.

work sporadically (UNICEF MENARO, 2015).
- Lebanon: the Economic and Social Inclusion (ESI) programme[12] found employment for 25% of its participants (young people with disabilities, aged 18-24) in the formal sector, of whom 50% were young women (UNICEF MENARO, 2015).
- Bangladesh: a study evaluating a vocational training programme by Madhab Memorial Vocational Training Institute found that 60% of participants[13] secured employment after training (35% in self-employment and 25% in the formal labour market). The most effective vocational training was garment-operator training, with all participants finding full-time employment, while computer training was the least effective in securing employment (Nuri et al, 2012).

Programmes that solely focus on training for people with disabilities have sometimes been criticised for being insufficient and unsustainable because they are often focused on a limited range of occupations, leading to segregation and stereotyping of people with disabilities (Wickenden et al., 2020; Mont, 2014); they are not always well matched to labour demand (Wickenden et al., 2020; UNESCAP, 2015; Gartrell et al., 2016), and they do not engage with employers to address discrimination, negative attitudes and a lack of understanding of disability-inclusive practices (UNDESA, 2019; Gartrell et al., 2016).
- Bangladesh: a study evaluating Madhab Memorial Vocational Training Institute's programme pointed to the fact that 40% of participants did not find employment after the training programme, and that there was a need for the programme to address discrimination (Nuri et al, 2012).
- Cambodia: A review of employment programmes for people with disabilities in Cambodia found that many programmes had focused too much on training for people with disabilities, with little attention to employer attitudes, experiences and needs (Gartrell et al., 2016).
- Philippines: An analysis of the Philippines' implementation of the CRPD suggested that most of the government's efforts to include people with disabilities in the labour market are focused on skills trainings in low-income-generating service skills such as massage therapy (Cruz, 2017).
- Cambodia: Qualitative research by Light for the World (2019) found that employers in Cambodia felt that without support from an NGO it would be difficult for the needs and goals of inclusive employment to be met.
- Fiji and Vanuatu: Qualitative research by ILO (Lamotte et al. 2012) found that people with disabilities in Fiji and Vanuatu who had secured and maintained employment emphasised that people with disabilities require access to education and vocational training, but awareness-raising with employers, employees, service providers and community members is also essential to address attitudinal barriers and ensure reasonable accommodation is made.

6. Lessons learned from supply and demand approaches

Some case studies suggest that programmes that engage with both people with disabilities and employers have successfully secured employment for people with disabilities, though sometimes at a limited scale. Many of these programmes start as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes led by private companies. There have been some concerns that CSR programmes sometimes take a charity approach, employing people because of their disabilities rather than because of their capabilities and rights to employment (Bauwens et al., 2019). UNDESA (2019) has noted that more private sector engagement is needed to improve disability inclusion in employment, but it should be supported by governments through improvements in legislation, policies and services (as per a systems approach). Lessons learned from supply and demand approaches include:

- Morocco: A programme[14] worked with vocational training providers to improve their capacity to support young people with disabilities; with people with disabilities to develop their skills and competencies; with employers and their existing staff to raise awareness of the benefits of employing people with disabilities and commit to transforming the workplace to become inclusive; and with business networks to improve their cooperation and understanding of disability inclusion. As a result, 55 young people with disabilities signed long-term contracts in Moroccan companies, 136 young people with disabilities received individual support in building and advancing their careers, and 25 service providers improved their skills in the field of vocational inclusion for people with disabilities.
- Senegal: A CSR programme[15] provided market-aligned technical training, soft skills training and internship placements for young people and women with disabilities, and trained staff on how to address attitudinal and environmental barriers in the workplace. Through the programme 53 people with disabilities secured employment, 31 began to start their own businesses, and 37 earned diplomas.

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[12] A qualitative evaluation of a programme providing training and support services to people with disabilities and their families, as well as targeting the state and private companies.
[13] The evaluation used pre-test/post-test, mainly qualitative methods, but quantitative data were also collected with 261 participants with physical and sensory disabilities.
[14] Case study from Leonard Cheshire and Humanity and Inclusion (2018).
[15] Case study from Leonard Cheshire and Humanity and Inclusion (2018) and expert contribution from Angela Kohama.

- India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Philippines ad South Africa: A partnership programme[16] between Accenture and Leonard Cheshire provides employers with assessments and recommendations to ensure reasonable accommodations are made in workplaces, and provides skills training for people with disabilities. Over ten years 18,000 people with disabilities have been employed or started their own business through the programme.
- India, Bangladesh and Nepal: A CSR programme[17] worked with DPOs and employers to understand their business and employment needs, and promote and help navigate accessibility and inclusion. The programme reported that some businesses use their CSR programmes to offer opportunities to people with disabilities under a charitable model or to fill government-mandated quotas, rather than taking a rights-based approach to employment of people with disabilities. Over six years the programme secured employment for at least 660 people with disabilities. There were significant differences in employment outcomes by gender, however no analysis of these differences is available.
- Bangladesh:[18] Marks and Spencer asked one of their supplier factories to employ people with disabilities as part of their CSR programme. The factory management partnered with a local DPO to secure employment for 8 people with disabilities, however reasonable accommodations were not made for people with all types of disabilities.
- Global: A literature review (Murfitt et al., 2018) found that large companies are discussing ways to increase employment of people with disabilities, while small and medium size employers are missing from the discussion.

7. Lessons learned from systems approaches

Much of the theoretical literature on employment for people with disabilities argues that to be effective, employment programmes need to address multiple barriers through a range of interventions, and through engagement and coordination with multiple stakeholders (GIZ, 2020; Saleh and Bruyère, 2018; Khayatzadeh-Mahani et al., 2019; Wickenden et al., 2020; Heymann et al., 2014; Abidi and Sharma, 2014). Programmes that take a systems approach do this by working closely with government to strengthen policy implementation and build disability inclusion capacity across the employment system together with a range of stakeholder groups.

This rapid evidence review only found one evaluation of a programme taking a systems approach. The mid-term evaluation of the Promoting Rights and Opportunities for People with Disabilities in Employment through Legislation (PROPEL) programme assessed it as highly effective in reaching its main objective of creating greater opportunities for people with disabilities to secure decent work and income, with the challenge of scaling up the programme (ILO, 2013). The programme was implemented by ILO from 2012 to 2015 in Azerbaijan, Botswana, China, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Zambia, and worked with governments, service providers such as training institutes, universities, DPOs, media organisations, businesses, employers organisations and people with disabilities to strengthen policy implementation for the rights of people with disabilities and promote their employability, entrepreneurship and access to decent work.[19] Government stakeholders in Zambia noted that the programme had made a very important contribution leading to the assessment of the disability inclusiveness of the vocational training system as a whole (as opposed to providing small-scale targeted training for people with disabilities through selected providers) (ILO, 2016).

The evaluation suggested that the programme was likely to achieve long-term impact due to its success in:
- changing the mindset of government officials and policy-makers on inclusion of people with disabilities, their rights and work capabilities;
- achieving legal system changes in Azerbaijan, Botswana, Ethiopia, Indonesia and Vietnam;
- capacity-building of employers' organisations, DPOs, universities and vocational training colleges in four countries;
- increased and improved media reporting, portraying people with disabilities positively; and
- greater access to skills training for people with disabilities in three countries.

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[16] Case study from Leonard Cheshire and Humanity and Inclusion (2018).
[17] Case study from DPRI (2019).
[18] Case study from Handicap International (now Humanity and Inclusion) (2014).
[19] Each country had a separate objective. **Azerbaijan:** better integration of people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups in the labour market. **Botswana:** employment creation mainstreamed in national development frameworks. **China**: skills development increases employability of workers and enhanced advocacy for non-discrimination through equal employment opportunities policies and practices among enterprises. **Ethiopia:** enhanced capacity of constituents to develop and implement gender sensitive policies and programmes focused on productive employment and poverty reduction. **Indonesia:** barriers to employment and decent work for persons with disabilities are addressed through capacity-building of constituents and other stakeholders. **Vietnam:** effective formulation and implementation of local strategies for pro-poor employment-intensive economic development and sustainable business development. **Zambia:** enhanced employment and self-employment opportunities for people with disabilities through access to skills development.

Several case studies from other programmes also highlight the importance of coordinating with government to improve disability inclusion across employment systems:

- India:[20] A case study explains how the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) began its work sensitising employers in chambers of commerce and industry, but then realised inclusive education was necessary to address employment, and inclusive services were only possible with appropriate laws and policies, which would only be achievable with public support. NCPEDP therefore began working across five areas: employment, education, accessibility, legislation and policies, and public communication. Through experience they recognised that barriers to employment for people with disabilities cannot be considered in isolation, and a multi-pronged, multi-sectoral approach is necessary.
- Costa Rica:[21] the evaluation of disability-inclusive development in UNDP programming highlighted the UNDP-ILO programme "Support to the National Plan for Labour Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities" as having taken a successful approach. Over two years the programme established an Inter-institutional Technical Committee on Employability for People with Disabilities, which oversaw the national plan and coordinated with multiple stakeholders across sectors to improve governance and policy implementation, enhance the employability of people with disabilities, expand the demand for workers with disabilities, improve job facilitation services to be disability-inclusive, and promote entrepreneurship among people with disabilities. The programme has since been replicated in Guatemala.
- Bangladesh:[22] the 'Promotion of Social and Environmental Standards in the Industry (PSS)' programme works with garment textile and leather sectors in Bangladesh to increase compliance with national and international labour and environmental laws and standards. The programme combines different interventions and engages with multiple stakeholders to address barriers to employment of people with disabilities in the textile industry. It cooperates with government to develop guidelines for the inclusion of people with disabilities, provides vocational training and job retention support, and has established an inclusive job centre to promote employment of people with disabilities.
- Tunisia: the evaluation[23] of a project that worked with public authorities, training institutes, employer associations, companies and people with disabilities found that stakeholder coordination through Technical Support Commissions (established through the project) played a critical role in the project. Government stakeholders emphasised the importance of these local governance units for networking, understanding each stakeholder's role and building capacity in disability inclusion.
- Vietnam:[24] qualitative research from the "Decent work and social protection for people with disabilities" programme found that regular monitoring and engagement by government authorities to support employers to implement disability-inclusive employment practices was more effective than the initial approach of DPOs advocating with employers.
- Vietnam:[25] the Blue Ribbon Employer Council (BREC) is a collaboration between the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH) and approximately 100 employers. It provides a platform for employers to share experiences and examples of good practice related to employment and vocational training of people with disabilities. It aims to raise employers' awareness on disability, provide technical assistance to employers on disability inclusion, and assist them in recruiting employees with disabilities. It also supports disabled people's career development by providing skills training, support to job-seeking, and organising job fairs. Through the council approximately 1500 people with disabilities have secured employment.
- Global: coordinating disability-inclusive employment initiatives through employer federations (such as BREC in Vietnam, noted above) or National Business and Disability Networks is commonly referenced as good practice in guidelines, manuals and theoretical literature, however there is very limited research and evidence available on the effectiveness of the approach.

In the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic downturn it is particularly important that people with disabilities are not left behind in employment and livelihoods interventions. While there is not enough evidence available to draw robust conclusions on which interventions are most effective, the theoretical literature emphasises the importance of addressing multiple barriers to employment through engagement with multiple stakeholders, and some lessons are emerging from programmes taking this 'systems approach' that suggest it may prove to be effective. DFID and the FCO can engage with current programmes implementing systems approaches (such as the Inclusion Works programme) and other institutional donors working on disability

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[20] Case study from Abidi and Sharma (2014).
[21] UNDP (2017) and Zero Project (2016)
[22] Case study from Chudel-Linden et al. (2019). This programme was the only mainstream employment programme this rapid evidence review identified that had a documented approach to disability inclusion mainstreaming. All other programmes mentioned in this report were targeted programmes specifically focused on disability inclusion. The programme mapping annex (Annex A) also provides information from the Australia Afghanistan Community Resilience Scheme, a mainstream livelihoods programme that has documented some success in including people with disabilities, but the specific approach is not described in publicly available documents.
[23] From the mixed methods evaluation by Younes and Lescaudron (2019)
[24] Case study from Handicap International (no date)
[25] Case study from ILO (2011)

inclusion in employment and livelihoods to learn from the emerging evidence and use it to inform other programmes. Importantly, DFID and FCO employment and livelihoods programmes need to explicitly focus on and practice disability inclusion mainstreaming, and ensure that they capture and share evidence and lessons on disability inclusion widely.

Key principles of disability inclusion mainstreaming include:

- Meaningfully engaging with people with disabilities in all of their diversity and their representative organisations to analyse the barriers they experience in employment and livelihoods, address these barriers, and monitor and evaluate disability inclusion throughout the programme cycle.
- Building in accessibility and reasonable accommodations in programme activities from the outset, planning together with people with disabilities and Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs)
- Taking a twin track approach to disability inclusion: ensuring that people with disabilities are included in all mainstream activities while also implementing specific measures to address barriers to disability inclusion.
- Collecting and monitoring disability-disaggregated data using the Washington Group Questions; monitoring and evaluating disability inclusion in all programmes; using the OECD DAC disability marker to assess disability inclusion across programmes; and sharing the evidence of outcomes and lessons learned on disability inclusion more widely.
- Encouraging communication and coordination between programme implementation partners, DPOs and people with disabilities, as well as with other external actors working on disability inclusion in employment and livelihoods.

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