



**Report on the
Second Multistakeholder Forum on**

**Promoting Employment for
Persons with Disabilities**

**6th and 7th March 2019
Rose Garden Hotel, Yangon**

About the Organisers

The **Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business (MCRB)** is a Yangon-based initiative funded by the UK, Norway, Switzerland, Netherlands and Ireland, based on collaboration between the UK-based Institute of Human Rights and Business, and the Danish Institute for Human Rights. The Centre aims to provide a trusted and impartial platform for the creation of knowledge, building of capacity, undertaking of advocacy and promotion of dialogue amongst businesses, civil society, governments, experts and other stakeholders with the objective of encouraging responsible business conduct throughout Myanmar.

The **International Labour Organization (ILO)** is a specialized U.N. agency devoted to promoting social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights, pursuing its founding mission that social justice is essential to universal and lasting peace. Since 1919, the ILO has brought together governments, employers and workers of 187 member States, to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men. ILO has had an office and program in Myanmar since 2002.

Association for Aid and Relief, Japan (AAR Japan) is an international NGO that reaches out to the most vulnerable populations around the globe, guided by the principles of neutrality and impartiality. Founded in 1979, it conducts activities for Emergency Response, Disability Assistance, Mine Action, Health and Awareness Raising. In Yangon, AAR Japan has been running a Vocational Training Centre (VTC) for Persons with Disabilities since 2000 aiming to enhance their social and economic independence.

Presentations from the workshop are available at: www.myanmar-responsiblebusiness.org/news/second-multi-stakeholder-workshop-people-with-disabilities.html

For more information, please contact info@myanmar-responsiblebusiness.org



Background : Disability and Employment in Myanmar

In December 2011 Myanmar ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) that makes explicit the rights of persons with disabilities not to be discriminated against in all areas of life, as well as in employment and work. The Rights of Persons with Disability Law was enacted in June 2015, and Rules under the Law were adopted in December 2017. The Law/Rules set out obligations for employers, including non-discrimination, and to make necessary adjustments and adaptations to “reasonably accommodate” persons with disabilities at workplaces. Chapter 8 of the Rules provides specific provisions on promotion of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Additionally, the Law/Rules provide for the possibility of a ‘quota’ to be defined by the National Committee (which was established under the Law in September 2017) i.e. a requirement for employers to employ persons with disabilities as a certain percentage of their workforce. However the National Committee has not yet set a quota, Many requirements for an effective quota system are lacking, including a registration system for persons with disabilities, as well as wider enabling factors such as non-discrimination in the education system, public transport etc.

The Law also include the potential for incentives and penalties to be adopted in relation to the quota system. These might include tax exemptions for employers that employ more persons with disabilities than the quota; and a requirement for employers not meeting the quota to contribute a designated amount to a fund for protection of rights of persons with disabilities.

Compulsory quotas are not a prerequisite for promoting better inclusion of persons with disabilities in Myanmar workplace. Globally, the approach of businesses to disability has shifted from charitable approaches and mere compliance, towards opportunity, innovation and alignment with business interests. The “business case” for disability inclusion is now increasingly understood. Employees with disabilities can be as productive as their peers, or even more so, providing they are appropriately matched to jobs, and their needs accommodated to enable them to work effectively. Independent studies show that adopting an inclusive approach at workplaces bring advantages to business in various ways such as higher retention rate and higher attendance rates of staff. Persons with disabilities often have a positive work attitude and work ethos. Employing persons with disabilities can strengthen the reputation of the company and brand with their own staff, customers and the community.

While employing persons with disabilities makes good business sense, many businesses rarely know where and how to start. Companies can learn best by drawing on global experience, learning from their peers and receiving the support of experts. The ILO-supported Global Business Disability Network (GBDN) brings together multinational businesses, employer federations, civil society and other stakeholders. with over 20 national level networks in developed and developing countries (although not yet in Myanmar)¹. The ILO has directly supported strengthening of existing networks and creating new networks.

The ILO and MCRB held a first multistakeholder forum on Promoting Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities (PWDs) on 21 November 2017 in Yangon. This was an opportunity for

¹ www.businessanddisability.org

companies, experts and Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) can learn from each other and find ways to cooperate in promoting employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Additionally, in December 2018, MCRB and Association for Aid and Relief, Japan (AAR Japan) with the support of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (MSWRR) and Myanmar Federation of Persons with Disabilities (MFPD) published a bilingual handbook to support employers taking their first steps on this journey, or wanting to improve their performance.

Furthermore, to build skills, AAR Japan in Yangon has been running a Vocational Training Centre (VTC) for persons with disabilities since 2000 under the cooperation of Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement. The VTC has provided training in haircut/beauty, tailoring and computer, and supported employment of more than 1,750 persons with disabilities across Myanmar, including through establishing relationships with both international and local businesses.

The Second Multistakeholder Forum on Promoting Employment for People with Disabilities



110 Myanmar stakeholders attended from business, disability organizations and government, as well as international experts.

Building on the success of the first Multistakeholder Forum in November 2017, the ILO and MCRB, joined by AAR Japan, decided to hold a second Forum in March 2019 to bring new companies and organisations into the discussion, and also provide inputs into the debate at the National Committee level, and its Employment Sub-committee, one of eight sub committees created in early 2019, the

others addressing education; health; research; monitoring and evaluation; women and children with disability; information technology; and disaster risk reduction and emergency response.

It was also envisaged that this Forum could lead to the establishment of a **Myanmar Business and Disability Network** in 2019, as part of the GBDN, working closely with employer organisations such as the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI), as well as with DPOs and the government. This would create a more sustained platform for learning and dialogue to encourage businesses to employ and be inclusive of persons with disabilities as customers.

The objectives of the Second Forum in March 2019 were therefore to:

- Raise awareness among a wider group of businesses, and in particular human resources managers, of the handbook: “Employing Persons with Disabilities” and discuss the issues it raises with international and local experts
- Build awareness of what initiatives government, DPOs and other employers in the private sector have taken, and intend to take, to promote employment and social inclusion of persons with disabilities, including the work of the National Committee and Employment Sub-Committee
- Establish networks between businesses, DPOs and individual Persons with Disabilities to promote disability inclusion by businesses, and explore the opportunity to create a Myanmar Business Disability Network, and any challenges.

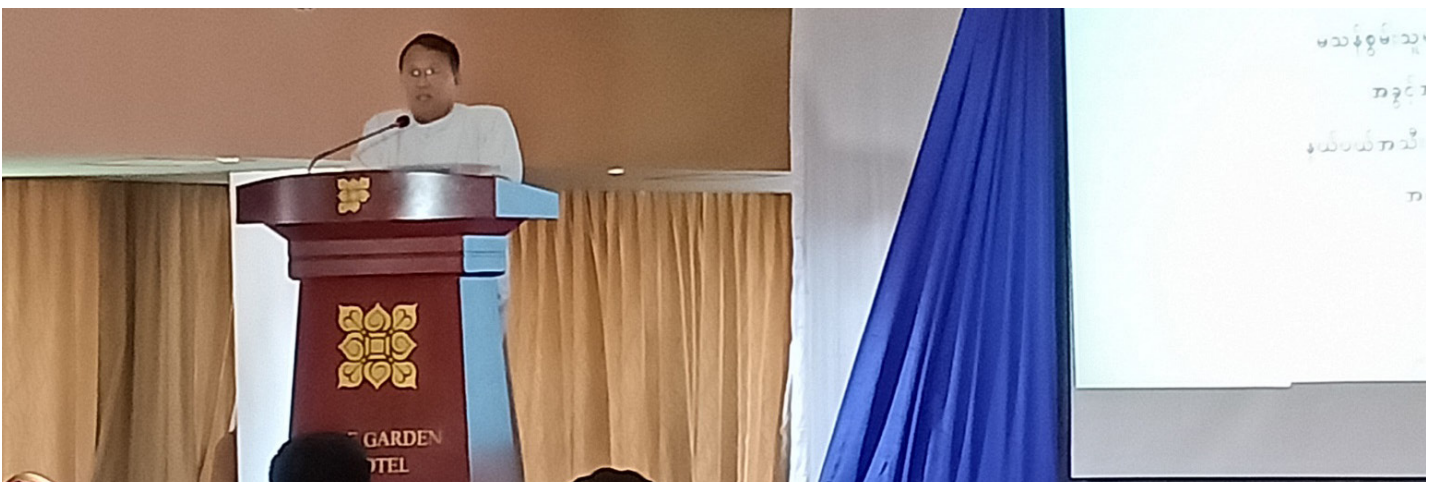
In his opening speech, **Permanent Secretary of the [Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population](#), U Myo Aung** outlined government activities since the first Forum, including the adoption in December 2017 of the Rules to implement the 2015 Law Protecting the Rights of People with Disabilities. He also mentioned that the Disability Rights Working Committee has been drafting a national strategic plan to implement the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025 to support the rights of persons with disabilities in the ASEAN region adopted at the ASEAN Summit held in Singapore on 15 November 2018. The Master Plan encourages promotion of equitable and inclusive opportunity to employment and entrepreneurship and economic integration for Persons with Disabilities.



U Myo Aung, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labor, Immigration and Population

He explained that eight sub-committees had recently been formed to support the work of the National Committee, including one dedicated to Employment, for which the input of employers was essential, including through the participation of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI). He said the Ministry had opened 83 employment agencies in 15 States and Regions and issues labour registration cards for young people and connects employers and registered candidates. He encouraged the National Committee, employers and relevant organisations to discuss the question of setting of a quota for employment of persons with disabilities, and highlighted the need for disability registration based on the type of disability. He noted that if the Ministry of Labour has details about persons registered with a disability having the desire and ability, the Ministry can help connect them to employers. He also stressed that the government needs to incentivise employers who employ persons with disabilities and encourage a network between employers and organisations working on the rights of persons with disabilities to promotion of disability inclusion at the workplace.

The **Director-General of the Department of Rehabilitation in the [Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement](#), U Win Naing Tun** explained that the Rehabilitation Department was created on 30 January 2018 to enable an inclusive society by promoting social and economic security, development and dignity of vulnerable population including women, children, internal displaced people and persons with disabilities. He welcomed the relevance of the Forum and the support it could provide to the work of the Employment Subcommittee.



U Win Naing Tun, Director-General of the Department of Rehabilitation, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement

He highlighted that one of seven commitments made by the Union Minister at the Global Disability Forum in London in July 2018 had been to promote employment and economic opportunities for persons with disabilities. He explained that the Ministry was coordinating across the government so that Myanmar could fulfil its commitment in London to disability-inclusive development and also implement the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025 on Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

U Thein Lwin, Acting Chairman of [Myanmar Federation of Persons with Disabilities](#) underlined that persons with disabilities needed jobs, to ensure that they could make use of their hard-won



U Thein Lwin, Acting Chairman, Myanmar Federation of Persons with Disabilities



U Win Naing, Deputy Chair, Myanmar Industries Association, (representing UMFCCI)

education. He called on the government to accelerate the implementation of the 2015 Law by establishing a registration process for persons with disabilities. He also encouraged the Sub-Committee on Employment to provide advice to the National Committee on setting a quota for employment of Persons with Disabilities, as is provided for in the law.

U Win Naing, Deputy Chair of the [Myanmar Industries Association](#), and representing UMFCCI, highlighted that disability inclusion was a new concept for most Myanmar companies. However, UMFCCI recognised the national importance and was committed to ensuring that the country, made the most of the ability of persons with disabilities. Businesses were looking for guidance and support on how to do this, as well as clarity from government on issues such as registration.

Yoshio NAKAGAWA, Representative at [AAR Japan Yangon Office](#) mentioned that the Forum was held as part of the JICA Partnership Program. Yoshio highlighted the current situation on employment of persons with disabilities: according to the 2014 Myanmar Census, 2.3 million people have some form of disability out of a total population of 50.3 million, and many of them have little or no access to a job. For example, “only 29% of males and 15% of females with moderate/severe walking disabilities are in the labour force”. To provide persons with disabilities with vocational skill, AAR Japan has been running a vocational training centre for persons with disabilities since 2000, with 140 graduates in 2018. The employment rate of the AAR graduates is 92%.

Yoshio also explained the objectives of the workshop and encouraged it to focus on **ability NOT disability**.



Yoshio NAKAGAWA, Representative, AAR Japan Yangon Office

Keynote Speech by Jane Cordell

Jane Cordell, Deaf Public Speaker and Coach, [Result CIC](#), a UK social enterprise which coaches and trains persons with disabilities, as well as the organisations which employ them gave a key note speech on 'Employment that works for everyone: Experience from elsewhere'.

Jane shared her personal experience. As a professional musician she had become deaf in her mid-20s, but had since pursued a career as a language teacher, diplomat and business coach. Jane shared her observations on what it takes to change discriminatory attitudes in society, at home and in the workplace: *"Positive change occurs in society because rules requiring non-discrimination are adopted. These rules influence behaviour. Behaviour influences societal attitudes. Eventually, inclusion becomes 'the new normal'.*

She explained that the UK's 2010 Equality Act legally protects Persons with Disabilities from being discriminated against in the workplace and in wider society. She also outlined the incentives



Jane Cordell, Deaf Public Speaker and Coach, Result CIC

available, such as the Access to Work, a UK government fund which gives discretionary grants to disabled people in paid work, for example to help them with assistive technology. She noted that this is 'net positive' for government finances: studies show that \$1 of grant leads to Persons with Disabilities paying \$1.50 more income tax due to increased earnings.

Session 1: Overview on Legal Framework and the Government Initiatives for promotion of employment of Persons with Disabilities in Myanmar

U Swan Yi Ya, Director of the Rehabilitation Department from the [Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement](#) explained about the Law/Rules and the National Committee, Working Committee and eight Sub-committees. The Employment subcommittee is chaired by Director General of the Labour Department and the Deputy Chair is the Deputy Director-General of the Department of Technical, Vocational Education and Training, Ministry of Education. The committee includes other government departments and non-governmental organisations including MCRB and AAR Japan. He explained the Employment Sub-committee responsibilities. He also said that a draft 10-year strategic plan will be drafted to promote employment opportunities for persons with disabilities with coordinated support from stakeholders including UMFCCI, MCRB and AAR Japan.

U Swan Yi Ya also mentioned the Government's commitments under the ASEAN Enabling Master Plan 2025 on Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities including the process of categorization and registration of persons with disabilities based on the type of disability. UNICEF Myanmar, Myanmar Federation of Persons with Disabilities (MFPD) and National Committee and relevant Sub-committees are cooperating to implement the registration process. In June 2019 pilot projects will be launched in townships including Hpa-an in Kayin State, Hlaing Tharyar in Yangon Region, and Nyaunglebin in Bago Region. At the end of 2019, these pilot will be extended to other townships.

He also highlighted the importance of cooperation between employers, government and persons with disabilities, and emphasized the need for 'reasonable accommodation' to enable persons with



U Swan Yi Ya, Director of Rehabilitation Department, Ministry of Social Welfare Relief and Resettlement

disabilities to work effectively without facing discrimination and the contribution disability inclusion makes to increased GDP. The government's focus on disability inclusion under the leadership of the National Committee will contribute to Myanmar attaining the Sustainable Development Goals.

Hnin Wut Yee, Research and Outreach Manager from MCRB then presented the contents of the Handbook for employers in Myanmar: “**Employing Persons with Disabilities**” prepared by MCRB and AAR Japan with the support of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (MSWRR) and Myanmar Federation of Persons with Disabilities (MFPD) and launched in December 2018.

Session 2: Creating a Myanmar Business and Disability Network

This panel session was moderated by Rory Mungoven, Liaison Officer from **ILO Myanmar** and included Peter Fremlin, an **external consultant** to ILO and Murteza Khan, CEO of the **Bangladesh Business and Disability Network** (BBDN). Panelists shared experience of the **Global Business and Disability Network** (GBDN) and National Networks and explained how they are working to promote employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, highlighting opportunities, challenges and progress, including in Bangladesh.

Rory Mungoven, Liaison Officer of ILO in Myanmar, said disability is a high priority for ILO Myanmar and the four year Country Programmed signed in 2018 included job creation for disadvantaged groups including Persons with Disabilities by operationalizing employment aspects of the 2015 Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law. The ILO hoped to develop systems, both to prepare more employment opportunities and place persons with disabilities in decent jobs. He believed a Myanmar Business Disability Network growing out of the Forum would be valuable, and the ILO would support it as they have elsewhere. He encouraged the private sector to promote responsible business conduct, diverse and inclusive workplaces, human rights, and abide by the ILO's Tripartite declaration of principles concerning multinational enterprises and social policy (MNE Declaration)



adopted March 2017².

Peter Torres Fremlin, an [external consultant](#) to ILO, presented on “National Business and Disability Networks (NBDNs) and explained the disability inclusion business case relating to talent retention, fostering innovation and improved reputation. He stressed the importance of business leadership: “Companies aren’t going to be convinced by hearing a consultant like me saying that it’s good for business to employ people with disabilities or develop services for them as customers. They need to see their competitors do it, and hear about it from their peers”. For global level partnership with companies, ILO acts as a secretariat and promotes engagement with and between national networks. A Global Business and Disability Network event is held annually by the ILO in Geneva. Accor Hotels, Accenture, and Telenor are some of the business members of the global network.



Peter Torres Fremlin, external consultant

Peter explained that the purposes of forming National Business and Disability Networks are to promote disability inclusion, create a safe place and a platform for peer exchange and coordinate international businesses and companies to join forces with disability sector. He said that National Business and Disability Networks develop technical ability, create links with disability organizations, create a platform for business advocacy on disability issues. The first national network was founded in the UK in 1991. The latest networks launched included China (2018), India (2019) and with The Philippines coming soon. One was also under consideration in Indonesia, facilitated by the ILO.

Common challenges in forming and sustaining a national BDN included finding business leaders, finding ways to overcome employment problems, tackling gender equality, strengthening supply of persons with disabilities through training and job-placement and sustaining facilitation. Some of the factors that contribute to sustainability are having host organizations with strong facilitation, and different sources of funding, e.g. project funding from development partners. In some countries, companies pay membership fees to get extra services from the network.

² https://www.ilo.org/empent/areas/mne-declaration/WCMS_570332/lang--en/index.htm

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We expect that a Myanmar Business and Disability Network can be established, drawing on lessons from Bangladesh. We expect that the network will enable to share good practices among businesses and also with DPOs

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- PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Murteza Khan said that policy framework in Bangladesh is supportive of employing persons with disabilities; the government is well sensitized and has a political will to make disability inclusion happen, working with NGOs, DPOs, and employers. The Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed Bangladesh (CRP) has been instrumental in implementing an initiative to employ persons with disabilities supported by Marks and Spencer and their 70 partner factories in Bangladesh. This showed the importance of the global supply chain in taking an initiative in promoting disability inclusion. He provided some other examples including Akhthar Furniture Academy, which sets a 5% quota for persons with disabilities in their training programs, in line with inclusion of persons with disabilities in technical and vocational training in Bangladesh. Shwapno, a retail chain in Bangladesh, has 10% quota for inclusion of persons with disabilities in their workforce.

The aim of the Bangladesh Business and Disability Network was to adopt a multi-stakeholder approach in a structured and strategic manner to facilitate inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workforce. It was launched by H.E. Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh Prime Minister, in December 2016. With close support of ILO, the network operates under the Bangladesh Employers Federation. There are currently 43 business members in the network, mostly from the garment sector, and resource partners such as CRP. Some of the activities of the network include knowledge sharing, capacity development, advocacy for further inclusion of persons with disabilities, holding job fairs for persons with disabilities and training through managers and recruitment support.

Key challenges and difficulties that persons with disabilities have to face are transportation barriers, distance of work from home, salaries offered, soft skills development, and finding the



Murteza Khan, CEO, BBDN Network

right skills match. The sustainability of Bangladesh Business and Disability Network is through two main funding streams: membership fees and developing partner funding, including funding from

DFID and Government of Canada. Other possible revenue sources like charging for training and workshops are being considered as a longer-term plan.

Questions raised with the panellists included whether Bangladesh has a quota requirement and what incentives there were for businesses to participate in the network, as well as questions about equal pay for equal work, retention rate of persons with disabilities and cultural attitudes including over-protective parents, and overcoming discrimination at recruitment stage.

Murteza said a quota had existed in the public sector jobs but was removed last year, and the government was currently reforming policy. Disability inclusion had started in ready-made garment industry ten years ago and the most inclusive sector in Bangladesh. BBDN is currently conducting a study on the placements BBDN has done. Challenges remain if inclusion is not properly done in the company. In some cases, even if top management is supportive, drop-out can occur if colleagues are not sensitized.

He noted that in both demand and supply sides, there remain challenges. The Bangladesh government gives stipends to persons with disabilities under a social protection scheme and some are supported by relatives. If persons with disabilities do not calculate that the remuneration on offer makes economic sense, they might not be interested in applying for a particular job.

To overcome barriers at workforce, close collaboration with resource members like disability NGOs are important such as that between Marks and Spencer and the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP). Another good example is the work of Centre for Disability Development with funding from GIZ in 200 factories. Disability policies have been implemented by HR management and facilities for reasonable accommodation and flexible working hours have been provided.

Peter said job matching and support is also needed. Overprotection of persons with disabilities is a barrier preventing them from taking the next step in their lives. Another challenge is that in Bangladesh, much of the labour market involves internal migration: this is an obvious barrier for persons with disabilities to get access to job market. Various types of businesses have various incentives for disability inclusion. For example, the BDN in Chile helps their members to achieve the quota requirement set by the government.

The TOTAL representative noted that TOTAL signed a GBDN Charter last year and Total Myanmar is considering to offer some contracted position to persons with disabilities. It would therefore be useful for a Myanmar BDN to promote the competency and skills of persons with disabilities to enable them to take up skilled employment. TOTAL's recruitment policy requires fair treatment to all candidates, so they would need to consider whether to give priority to persons with disabilities over other candidates with the same qualification.

Murteza noted that how a company approaches recruitment depends on their targets to meet their diversity policy and whether they saw reputational advantage in positioning themselves as an inclusive company. He noted that BBDN members seek out candidates actively with the support of resource members including disability NGOs, through job fairs and signing Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs). Peter raised the distinction between easily identifiable 'direct' discrimination e.g. wording in job advertisements and 'hidden' or 'indirect' discrimination which was more challenging to tackle and would only be overcome when business realise the business case for employing persons with disabilities.

Jane Cordell highlighted how businesses could be proactive about recruitment: *"Some leading companies have adopted a voluntary initiative called 'Positive about Disabled People'. These companies guarantee an interview to any job applicant with a disability who meets the minimum requirements for the job. It helps to get disabled people through the door, and that helps to change attitudes. If they have a chance to be interviewed, they can demonstrate the innovation and problem-solving skills that all disabled people, including me, have had to develop to overcome the challenges that each day brings. And innovation and problem-solving are exactly the skills most employers say they need"*.

A **representative from Sule Shangri-La**, which currently employed 10 persons with different types of disabilities, asked whether the Bangladesh BDN had developed e-learning for fire and safety for persons with disabilities. **Murteza** replied that their network is still young, and focussed on developing basic training modules to equip candidates with disabilities with the basic skillsets they need before entering a job market. Other more established networks might have developed more specialised modules.

Daw Khin Myo Su, Myanmar Federation of Persons with Disabilities, MFPD said that there are currently 54 DPOs in Myanmar. She raised the challenges for job coaching in Myanmar including gaining company acceptance of the idea. She also highlighted challenges such as access of persons with disabilities to vocational schools, and delays in the registration process. She mentioned that persons with intellectual disability face more challenges compared with other types of disabilities, and highlighted that support for persons with disabilities to become entrepreneurs was an option in addition to promoting employment. **Peter** agreed that different choices should be on offer based on their preference and skillset; those without an entrepreneurial flair needed access to the mainstream labour market, and vocational training. **Murteza** reminded participants of the need not to remember persons with disabilities in rural areas. He agreed that in Bangladesh, neurodevelopmental disabilities are still misunderstood and there is a gap between inclusion of persons with physical and those with mental disabilities.

Rory concluded the session by reflecting that Business and Disability Networks should be business-led with connection to national employers' organizations or industry associations. They, required leadership by business champions and individual personnel who can commit to facilitating and sustaining a network. He highlighted the diversity of funding that was needed including project funding from development partners and contributions of network members in the form of fees. He also noted the opportunity of strategic linkage to other business equality networks tackling issues such as gender. He stressed the need for a BDN in Myanmar to identify the valued added resources and services it could offer businesses, DPOs, other member organisations and partner networks. He encouraged participants to consider how to translate lessons learned from other networks into the Myanmar environment.

Session 3: Panel discussion/consultation on ways forward to promote employment of persons with disabilities

Vicky Bowman, Director of the [MCRB](#) moderated this panel with Daw Ma Ma Naing, Director of Human Resources, [Sule Shangri-La Yangon](#), Daw Yu Ya Thu, member of the [Myanmar Independent Living Initiative](#), MILI and member of the National Committee, U Kyaw Myo Thant, Director of the

Department of Social Welfare, Dr Zaw Moe Aung, Country Director of the **Leprosy Mission Myanmar** and Dr Lu Mon, Joint general secretary, **Union of Myanmar Travel Association**. Panellists discussed the challenges they faced when promoting employment of persons with disabilities and how they had overcome them. They also discussed how companies and persons with disabilities could work together successfully in Myanmar and whether and how a Business and Disability Network could be established.



Session 3 (l-r): Vicky Bowman, Yu Ya Thu, Dr Lu Mon, Dr Zaw Moe Aung, Daw Ma Ma Naing, U Kyaw Myo Thant

U Kyaw Myo Thant, Director from Department of Social Welfare (DSW) explained the respective roles of DSW and the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), created January 2018. DSW manage Day Care Centres and Vocational Training Centres while DOR works on rehabilitation activities and rights of persons with disabilities. He noted that the economic situation meant inadequate job opportunities for persons with disabilities. DSW planned to lead the registration process and to provide cash assistance to persons with disabilities after registration. In his view, the government would need funding to support employers in implementing a quota for example by creating barrier access and 'reasonable accommodations'. He cited the example of implementing quotas in Thailand.

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We are all facing similar challenges in promoting employment for persons with disabilities and more effective collaboration and coordination is needed so that we can collectively do advocacy and make effort to overcome challenges.

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- PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Daw Ma Ma Naing from Sule Shangri-la Hotel, described the strengths and challenges of their 10 employees with disabilities. She noted that the six with speech and hearing difficulty paid more attention to their work and were also more motivated and creative about accomplishing their tasks, compared with others. They communicated with these employees via phone and had

used a translator from the Mary Chapman School for the Deaf during training. However, an online training course (with sound) took them three hours compared to an hour for others, as someone needed to sit beside them and do the translation. She noted that employees with disabilities were quite emotional; she had an 'open door' policy so that they could come to her office any time to discuss issues. One of their employees with disability now works at Sule Shangri-La in Dubai. She encouraged employers to have commitment, patience and provide support to enable employees with disabilities to achieve success like other employees.

Dr Zaw Moe Aung, [The Leprosy Mission Myanmar](#) said that there is no adequate care and medical services for persons with disabilities in Myanmar, but that disability inclusion is important for everyone as anyone could become a person with disability anytime for various reasons such as accident or illness. One challenge for disability inclusive employment is access to reliable data; another is access to education. According to 2014 census, only 20 per cent of children with disabilities have access to school. It is also important to provide support if persons with disabilities want to establish their own business.

Dr Lu Mon, Joint general secretary, [Union of Myanmar Travel Association](#), explained about the [accessible tourism](#) in Myanmar initiative that Mira Travel launched in 2017 so that persons with disabilities from around the world could visit. The initiative contributed the Myanmar language version to Lonely Planet's "[Multi-language Accessible Travel Phrasebook](#)" that assists tourists to explain their particular needs while they are travelling. Together with Mekong Tourist Coordination Office, they were currently forming an "Accessible Travel Mekong Expat Group".

He had got involved not only because of the business case - this is a significant market - but also because a responsible tourism business should support access to tourism for all. Typical requirements for tourists with disabilities related to sizes of hotel and transport doors and beds. Myanmar still needs to meet such requirements not only in tourist facilities but also in other areas.

Daw Yu Ya Thu, [MILI](#) who is also a member of the **National Committee** explained the three areas of MILI's work: development sector, advocacy and socio-economy. They have 28 offices in 10 States and Regions. Their activities include car rental, printing service and a music band consisted of persons with visual impairment. Yangon HQ provides computer training and English classes for persons with disabilities and helps connect them to potential employers. She believes that a business disability network approach would help increase employment opportunities.

She stressed the importance of access to quality education and access to mainstream vocational training schools which needed to be opened all over the country, and not only include those operated by the Department of Social Welfare and DPOs. Person with Disabilities needed access to job readiness training and orientation training as well as access to job vacancy information. Workplace adjustment, reasonable accommodation, the attitude of co-workers and job coaches are all important to support persons with disabilities in the workplace to promote retention. She noted the problem of overprotective parents, and the need to change the attitude of all relevant stakeholders so that they would see persons with disabilities as forces that can contribute to the country's development, rather than as a burden. Such a change of attitude change would be needed to achieve meaningful inclusion in the workplace, economy and society at large.

Questions covered how Sule Shangri-La could share with other employers their success stories in

employing persons with disabilities, and how the barriers associated with transportation and could be solved?

Daw Ma Ma Naing said she was happy provide suggestions on how to employ persons with disabilities and how to make a business case for their employment. Although their employees with disabilities had joined them with few skills, Shangri-La had been patient and committed to train them and now this was paying off with success employees whose skill level and income had increased. **Dr Lu Mon** said that the hotel industry is a good starting point to introduce employment of persons with disabilities. Hotels like Sule Shangri-La have a global policy and good practices. In Myanmar, there are over 1000 hotels and they have potential to substantially enhance employment opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. He encourage any Business

and Disability Network to connect with hotel associations and other interested associations with many employees. Accessibility to transportation is a big challenge for elderly and disabled people. While a single business can't change this, associations and networks can provide suggestions and recommendations to the government. He saw this as an important role for a Myanmar Business and Disability Network.

Day 2 kicked off with session 4, a panel discussion on **Job Coaching** moderated by Daw Swe Swe Hlaing, Employment Support Officer, AAR Japan. Panellists include Jane Cordell, Result CIC, Deaf Public Speaker and Coach; Daw Khin Myo Su, Executive Committee Member, and Secretary of Job and Employment Committee member of Myanmar Federation of Persons with Disabilities, [MFPD](#); Dr Chit Yee Lai, Regional Officer [Shwe Min Thar](#) Foundation Myanmar; Phillippe Battle, General Manager, [Novotel](#) Yangon Max / Area General Manager, Accor Hotels Myanmar; and Peter Fremlin, an external consultant to ILO.

Dr Chit Yee Lai from [Shwe Min Thar](#) explained how the Job Coach Coalition Myanmar (JCCM)



Representative (Ma Ma Naing), Sule Shangri-La

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We had a chance to network with other stakeholders. These networks and the knowledge we gained will be very useful for us in promoting employment for persons with disabilities.

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- PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK



Session 4 : Daw Swe Swe Hlaing, Daw Khin Myo Su, Dr Shwe Yee Lett, Phillippe Battle, Jane Cordell, Peter Fremlin

was founded in 2013 with four members: Mary Chapman School for the Deaf; Myanmar Autism Association; Needy Blind School and Shwe Minn Thar Foundation (Myanmar). She explained about principles of Supported Employment and role of the Job Coach. Job coaches support employees with disabilities, and the employer and co-workers. A job coach serves as a bridge, and needed to have confidence in the ability of the person with disabilities and have a good rapport with employers.

She said job coaches help persons with disabilities look for jobs that match their skills and abilities and support them in preparing for work. In the workplace, the coach monitors their situation and supports them through negotiation and consultation. Both employers and employees benefit, as it enhances self-confidence, self-reliance and workplace ethics and improves personal interaction with colleagues. It reduces turnover and increases retention and helps attract talent. In 2015, 40 Job Coaches were trained by JCCM; and in 2018, 30 were trained by JCCM and AAR Japan.

Daw Khin Myo Su from [MFPD](#) explained how the Federation, formerly known as the Council of Persons with Disabilities was formed in 2013. There are 8 Working Committees under the Federation. Since the formation of MFPD's Employment Committee, MFPD have supported persons with disabilities and potential employers to recruit and hire them. MFPD assess and negotiate the type of job, required education, and salary with potential employers and train candidates in work readiness and also provide disability awareness training for employers. Companies where they have helped persons with disabilities find jobs at include KBZ, Lu Pyan Taw Badamyar (လူပီတော့ပုတိုမား) (local traditional medicine product), Shwe Min Thar (retail sector) and Moe Yan Shwe La Min (lottery). She noted that in accordance with article 31, Chapter 8 of the Rules, the National Committee is required to arrange necessary training programs for Job Coaching. She also emphasised the need for reasonable accommodation and assistive technology for successful employment of persons with disabilities.

Jane Cordell shared her experience of coaching people who are depressed as a result of the

challenges they have faced, and how she helps them regain confidence, inspiration and achieve success. A coach needs to find out what they want, and their weakness, strength and abilities. Together they should identify barriers hindering progress or promotion and who can help them overcome such barriers. She gave three examples, including of a 49-year-old man born with hearing difficulty who had been working at a factory for 30 years. When the factory closed, he found difficulty finding another job to support his family and became depressed, making it difficult to coach him in the beginning. However, gradually, he realized that what he needed to do was master sign language, so he actively learnt it again and also developed networking skills. Finally, he got a job in Manchester as a sign language guide for museum visitors. This has rebuilt his confidence and made him a role model for others with hearing difficulty.

Phillippe Battle from [Novotel](#) emphasised that management commitment to employ persons with disabilities, and support from allies, are both crucial. Six years ago, it was difficult to convince other colleagues at Novotel to employ persons with disabilities. He had had to order them to do so for 18 vacancies out of the 80 vacancies. But with the support of Shwe Min Thar Foundation, they had been able to employ 15 employees and of which 13 are still with Novotel, with colleagues who are proud to work in an inclusive workplace.

Peter Fremlin echoed the need to support persons with disabilities with job matching and job readiness training. It is also important to train employers and raise their awareness about the ability of persons with disabilities, whose skills need to be recognized so that they could get promotion to more skilled jobs. He hoped that a Myanmar BDN could fill the gap and serve as a bridge between employers and persons with disabilities. He emphasized that job coaching programmes need adequate funding, resources and cooperation among all stakeholders including government, NGOs and individual persons with disabilities.

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We learnt the important role of the job coach and the need to increase support for job placement and coach training in Myanmar.

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- PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Questions and comments covered how the Employment Sub-committee under the National Committee would relate to the MFPD Employment Committee (MFPD committee members will be part of the Sub Committee); and the need to raise awareness of parents who over-protect their children and restrict their personal development and job opportunities. TLMM said that they have just finished collecting data on employment of persons with disabilities in 12 States and Regions through interviews with businesses and persons with disabilities. Data include knowledge of the existing law and possible quota system, difficulties, challenges, and opportunities. TLMM hopes to use this as baseline data to develop policies and programs for promoting employment for Persons with Disabilities.



Session 5: Discussion of assistive technologies chaired by Nay Lin Soe of Myanmar Independent Living Initiative

Session 5: Panel discussion on Assistive Technology and Reasonable Accommodation

U Nay Lin Soe, Executive Director / Co-Founder, [Myanmar Independent Living Initiative](#), MILI moderated a panel discussion with U Kyaw Kyaw, Founder/Program Director, [Myanmar Deaf Community Development Association](#) (MDCDA), Daw Aye Thinzar Maung, MILI, Daw Win Thu Mon, Vice President, Call Centre and CCTV Team, [Myanmar Apex Bank](#) and U Win Shwe, [Myanmar screen reader software developer](#).

He began by asking how persons with disabilities in Myanmar could benefit from assistive technology in daily life and the workplace, and how they could get access to it, noting that it was less than 10 years since ICT had reached Myanmar, and for many it was still too expensive. How

RECOGNITION OF GOOD PRACTICE BY MYANMAR COMPANIES

Workshop participants on Day 1 were asked to nominate the companies in Myanmar doing most to promote disability inclusion. The company most commonly highlighted by participants was **KBZ Bank** for the job opportunities it provides to persons with disabilities and the 'reasonable accommodation' it offers them to support them in the workplace. Other banks mentioned were **Myanmar Apex Bank (MAB)** and **CB Bank**. Hotels praised for their disabilities policy and employment were **Novotel, Sule Shangri-La, Rose Garden and Melia Yangon**. **Moe Yan Lottery** was also highlighted for its support. Others include **Blue Ocean** call center, **Yangon Bakehouse, Hla Day, OK\$, Home Distribution Company, Lu Pyan Taw Padamyar, Parami Sein Gay Har, FM Bagan, Thazin FM, Shwe FM and Mira Travel**.

A number of these companies are featured in the Handbook, and shared their experience during the Forum.

could government and private sector provide support?

U Win Shwe said that more and more persons with visual impairment in Myanmar are making use of computers for their day to day communication and at the workplace. In other countries they work at tech companies including Google and Microsoft. Adaptation of existing technology to make it assistive is needed in Myanmar to increase employability.

Daw Aye Thinzar Maung said assistive devices are essential for persons with disabilities. Previous those with visual impairment relied on radio for information, but now they could make use of sound on computer and smartphones which increased their exposure to information. However, the high cost of assistive devices reduced access, particular for those in rural areas, and this was an area the National Committee should consider. She encouraged the government, private sector and professionals to cooperate to ensure persons with disabilities got access to new technology and to reduce cost of adjustment and adaptation of that technology at a later stage.

U Kyaw Kyaw explained that the communication devices needed differed according to the type of hearing difficulty. There were three types of hearing difficulty: deafness from birth; deafness onset after acquiring mother tongue and becoming hard of hearing due to age. Some of the devices used internationally were not accessible in Myanmar due to their high cost and lack of a company to service them, and he suggested the government should provide support in this area. In Myanmar, sign language, video calls and caption are all used, but limited resources are a challenge. Since there are only three Deaf Schools in Myanmar, not enough for the whole country. Due to communication barrier, Deaf persons, especially women, face challenges in getting access to justice.

From an employer perspective, **Daw Win Thu Mon** of MAB ([Myanmar Apex Bank](#)) restated that everyone can acquire a disability at any time which underlined the importance of removing barriers to access at the workplace. MAB had employed persons with disabilities with the help of MILI.



Session 5 (l-r): U Nay Lin Soe, U Win Shwe, Daw Aye Thizar Maung, U Kyaw Kyaw, Daw Win Thu Mon

The first barrier they had had to address was policy. Then they send a list of vacancies which could match the skills and interests of persons with disabilities to MILI, AAR Japan and Shwe Min Thar Foundation. When they had interviewed candidates, they had waived the experience and education requirement if they observed that the candidate was willing and motivated to take up the job. But employees with disabilities still had to take the same responsibilities as other employees and in turn they receive get equal benefit and remuneration. MAB had trained their employees with disabilities on their assigned functions.

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Employers and HR managers learned how to work with DPOs, individual persons with disability and expert organisations to adopt an inclusive workplace policy and practices including workplace adjustment, reasonable accommodation and assistive technology.

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- PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

MAB currently employs 36 persons with disabilities. To promote an inclusive and respectful workplace, MAB had raised awareness of by having their employees with disabilities talk about their life and experience, and this had inspired other employees and enhanced mutual respect. At monthly meetings, employees are encouraged to share their feelings and difficulties openly, although employees with disabilities were often reluctant to do so. In accordance with MAB's "Respect, Recognize and Reward" policy, the bank gives awards to the Employee of the Month; those with disabilities have won more awards than the others

MAB has removed physical barriers for wheelchair users and provided adjustable desks at the call centre. Managers have learned sign language to be able to communicate effectively to persons with hearing difficulties. Personal relationships, understanding and motivation among staff have increased. Daw Win Thu Mon encouraged other companies to employ persons with disabilities since they work hard and their turnover rate is lower.

Daw Aye Thinzar Maung said Reasonable Accommodation sounds challenging, but it is quite simple. Even in family life, it exists: a toddler needs a high chair and a spoon that is easy to hold and an unbreakable plate. That's a 'reasonable accommodation'. Similar accommodations are needed at school, and in the public and private sector, including public spaces such as banks, streets, cinemas and parks to make them accessible. Employers can make the workplace, accessible according to the type of disability by modify existing workplace facilities and arranging accessible transportation. They need to adapt policies, for example by allowing guide/service dogs, providing assistive devices, or adjusting working hours and meal breaks.

U Kyaw Kyaw explained how he faced discrimination while working as an engineer from 2001 to 2009. Hearing impairments are invisible and deaf people face more challenges in communication compared to others. What is needed is greater awareness and free sign language training. Deaf persons are employed at hotels including Novotel, Chatrium, Summit Park View, Sule Shangri-La

and Inya Lake Hotel. He encouraged the government to develop strategies and instructions to implement the Law/Rules to promote employment for Persons with Disabilities, and encouraged companies to adopt inclusive human resource/CSR policies, including combatting discrimination and promoting diversity, in consultation with DPOs organizations and experts.

Daw Win Thu Mon concluded by pointing out that employing persons with disabilities brings benefits not only to the individual, but to his/her family, wider society and communities, by reducing poverty and inequality, and enabling access to quality health care, education, and decent work. Hence it will help Myanmar meet the Sustainable Development Goals and achieve peace and development at national level.

Session 6: Existing initiatives and good practices on employment of Persons with Disabilities

Daw Hnin Wut Yee from [MCRB](#) facilitated the first of two panels on existing initiatives and good practices with Daw Swe Swe Hlaing, Employment Support Officer, [AAR Japan](#), sharing their work on vocational training; Yuta MOMOSE, Managing Director of [Japan Heart](#) talking about Developing Blind Massage; Daw Phoo Pwint Wai, Assistant HR Manager, [Mizzima Media Group](#) sharing their experience of employing persons with disabilities; and U Kyaw Lin Naing, Joint-Secretary, [Myanmar Physical Handicapped Associations](#) (MPHA).

Daw Swe Swe Hlaing explained that [AAR Japan](#) opened their vocational training school in 2000 for persons with disabilities, particularly those with impairments to their limbs and the hearing impaired. They provide hairdressing, sewing and computer training free of charge for 3 1/2 months and also arrange accommodation and meals for trainees. During the training period, trainees also have chance to join general knowledge sharing sessions by experts and former graduates. From



Session 6(a) (l-r): Daw Hnin Wut Yee, Daw Swe Swe Hlaing, Yuta MOMOSE, Daw Ye Mar Tin, Daw Phoo Point Wai, U Kyaw Lin Naing

2000-2018, 1750 Persons with Disabilities have graduated, and AAR Japan also connects them with potential employers. On average, over 90% of graduates are employed; in 2018, 27 companies employed persons with disabilities for the first time. AAR Japan follows up with their graduates who are employed or doing internships. If necessary, AAR Japan provides support to both them and their employers, negotiating between the two parties, and providing supplementary vocational training for work skills.

AAR Japan engages with other organisations including MILI, MPHA, Shwe Min Thar Foundation and MFPD. Daw Swe Swe Hlaing encouraged all vocational training schools to adopt an inclusive approach and give persons with disabilities access to their courses to reduce discrimination and exclusion. She encouraged all stakeholders including the government, business and DPOs to cooperate effectively to increase employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

U Kyaw Lin Naing from [MPHA](#) said 80% of 26 MPHA members are graduates of AAR Japan. MPHA in cooperation with Moeyan Shwe La Min and Myat Su Gaday (local lottery company) have provided ten tricycle carts to persons with disabilities to sell lottery tickets. The sellers' income has increased from 2-300,000 to 6-700,000 kyats per month. MPHA has also opened a Mine Victim Assistance Centres in Kawkareik, Thandaunggyi and Kyaukkyi and collected data on the situation of persons with disabilities and the support they need. Based on poverty level, village location and type of disability, MPHA provide livelihood support including livestock raising. They also connect them to potential employers and help them enter the workplace. Currently they are working with Korea EURA, a factory that produce artificial hair to employ 100 women with disabilities. He encouraged businesses to have confidence in the ability of persons with disabilities.

Yuta MOMOSE from [Japan Heart](#) explained how they have been supporting blind people in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (MSWRR) since 2010. Japan Heart provides medical massage training at Kyimindine Blind School by inviting specialists from Japan. They hold nationwide seminars twice a year where blind masseurs from across the country



Session 6(b) Existing initiatives (l-r): Myint Naing Kyaw, Md_Sazaduzzaman, Ulla Kroeber, Reiza Su Kyi, Katie Riley

can learn medical massage from specialists. In Myanmar, most of the blind have no access to a job, and blind massage, by offering employment opportunities, promotes inclusion, contributes to public health and allows blind people to be financially and socially independent. Since 2016, a Steering Committee for Developing a System of Blind Massage has been working, with the support of MSWRR. It aims to develop an effective system and policy for blind massage to further improve the economic situation and social participation of the blind.

Daw Phoo Pwint Wai, Assistant Human Resources Manager who has an impairment, shared her own experience of how [Mizzima Media](#) had employed her as a junior receptionist in 2012 and how she had been promoted step by step to Assistant HR Manager. Between 2012 and 2019, Mizzima has employed seven persons with disabilities. This has included two AAR graduates who worked as web moderators, as well a Layout Operators and Video Editor. After Phoo Pwint Wai joined the Job Coach training provided by Shwe Min Thar Foundation in 2018, she started to offer internships to persons with disabilities. She finds employees with disabilities are patient, work hard, and are committed to learning, with a quite high retention rate. They inspire their co-workers who start to understand how able colleagues with disabilities actually are. Phoo Pwint Wai also encouraged persons with disabilities to have self-confidence and employers to have confidence in them.

Daw Yi Mar Tin, head of the [School for Children with Disabilities](#) which accepts children with physical or intellectual disability from 6-18 years, including children with Down's Syndrome and Autism explained how they educate children to read, write, calculate and communicate. She encourages parents to train their children to be independent. The school trains them on how to shop, and to be independent by doing household chores including cooking, cleaning dishes and floors, ironing, washing and gardening. She arranges for them to watch movies, go to the playground and take overnight field trips. Some children with disabilities are talented in music and painting. She has sent the older children to vocational schools including AAR. Yangon Bakehouse (YBH) has employed one of their students with Down's Syndrome. Ten children from the school have established a coffee shop, Metta Sanein (မေတ္တာစံအိမ်) at the school, to show that children with intellectual disabilities are able to communicate well and serve customers well.

In the second session on existing initiatives and good practices, **U Myint Naing Kyaw**, Program Associate, MCRB facilitated a panel including Mohamed Sazaduzzaman, General Manager, [BRAC Myanmar](#), Daw Reiza Su Kyi, Apprentice Program Manager, [Yangon Bakehouse](#), Ulla Kroeber, Founder, Lead designer, [Hla Day](#) and Katie Riley of [The Leprosy Mission Myanmar](#).

Mohamed Sazaduzzaman described [BRAC](#) which operates in 11 countries and was established in 1972 in Bangladesh. Worldwide it has reached 110 million people with 115,000 full time staff. In Myanmar, BRAC's core operation focusses on financial inclusion for women. Out of 83,000 clients, 99% are women. 93% of BRAC's 500 staff in Myanmar are also women. Another core part of the operations is inclusion of persons with disabilities in microfinance. With partnership from the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), DaNa Facility, TLMM and Enablement, BRAC directly provides 486 persons with disabilities aged 18-60 with livelihood support. A third of the beneficiaries has no national registration card (NRC). BRAC provides business skills, technical skills training, grants (grant) for assets for business startup and life skill mentoring. They provide loans with reduced interest rate and flexibility in loan repayment. Some of the lessons they have learned is that there needs to be a shift in behavior and attitude of persons with disabilities and their family to achieve sustainability. Assistive devices are required if they are to access and enjoy benefits from

micro-finance support program.

Daw Reiza Su Kyi from [Yangon Bakehouse](#) (YBH) explained that it was set up in 2012 by four women from Myanmar, Canada and the US to provide baking and cooking training to disadvantaged women with no income and education. The training lasts for 7 months and includes an allowance for trainees. It also includes lifeskills, English and computer, awareness-raising about HIV, reproductive health and trafficking by Care Myanmar, Marie Stopes, World Vision and Save the Children. In August 2018, they started to provide training to four women with physical disability. YBH has engaged with organisations such as World Vision and World Education to provide opportunities to most vulnerable women and also engages with Humanity and Inclusion (HI), MILI and MFPD to provide training to women with disabilities. Most of the trainees are from conflict-affected areas including Bago Region, and Kayin and Kachin States. They also provide training on how to prepare CVs and interview skills, and help connect their trainees with potential employers. 89% of their trainees have found jobs. Since 2012, they have trained 110, of which 81% completed the course. They got 60% of funding for their training program from KBZ Bank and the Swiss government and 40% from the profits from YBH Cafe.

Ulla Kroeber said [Hla Day](#) is a small social business, with 16 local staff, running a shop in downtown Yangon. They try to create and sell Myanmar contemporary crafts which give some income to more than 15 different groups consisting of local artisans. One group is Pann Nann Ein that helps people with physical and mental disabilities achieve sustainable livelihoods. The organisation works closely with its member artisan groups to help them produce quality and saleable handmade products that reflect the uniqueness of Myanmar culture. Pann Nann Ein guarantees their employees a fair price for work, helping them to support their families and gain greater access to medical and physical support. Another group is Amazing Grace, founded in 2012 by Naw Eh Wah, as a social enterprise dedicated to creating opportunities for women living with disabilities. It aims to grow the confidence of disabled women in Myanmar and increase the respect they receive in their communities.

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We are encouraged that some reputable foreign and local companies have already employed Persons with Disabilities and by the good initiatives of social enterprises and NGOs to support promotion of employment of Persons with Disabilities.

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- PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Katie Riley said [TLMM](#) provides job placement and coaching persons with disabilities as part of a three year project (October 2017-June 2020) in eight townships across Yangon, Bago, and Mandalay Regions. Based on specific criteria, people with disabilities were selected to join a 10-day training on how to become Job Placement Coaches (JPCs). JPCs serve as a link between Persons with Disabilities in their communities and employers. They also undertake awareness raising about disability, provide CV preparation support, and undertake advocacy towards employers on reasonable accommodations etc. Over a year, 36 Persons with Disabilities have been placed in

employment and community members with disabilities (and the JPCs themselves) have increased in confidence. Challenges include over-protective parents and relatives, lack of basic skills needed for formal employment due to discrimination in education and vocational training, and lack of accessible transport to and from the workplace.

Conclusions

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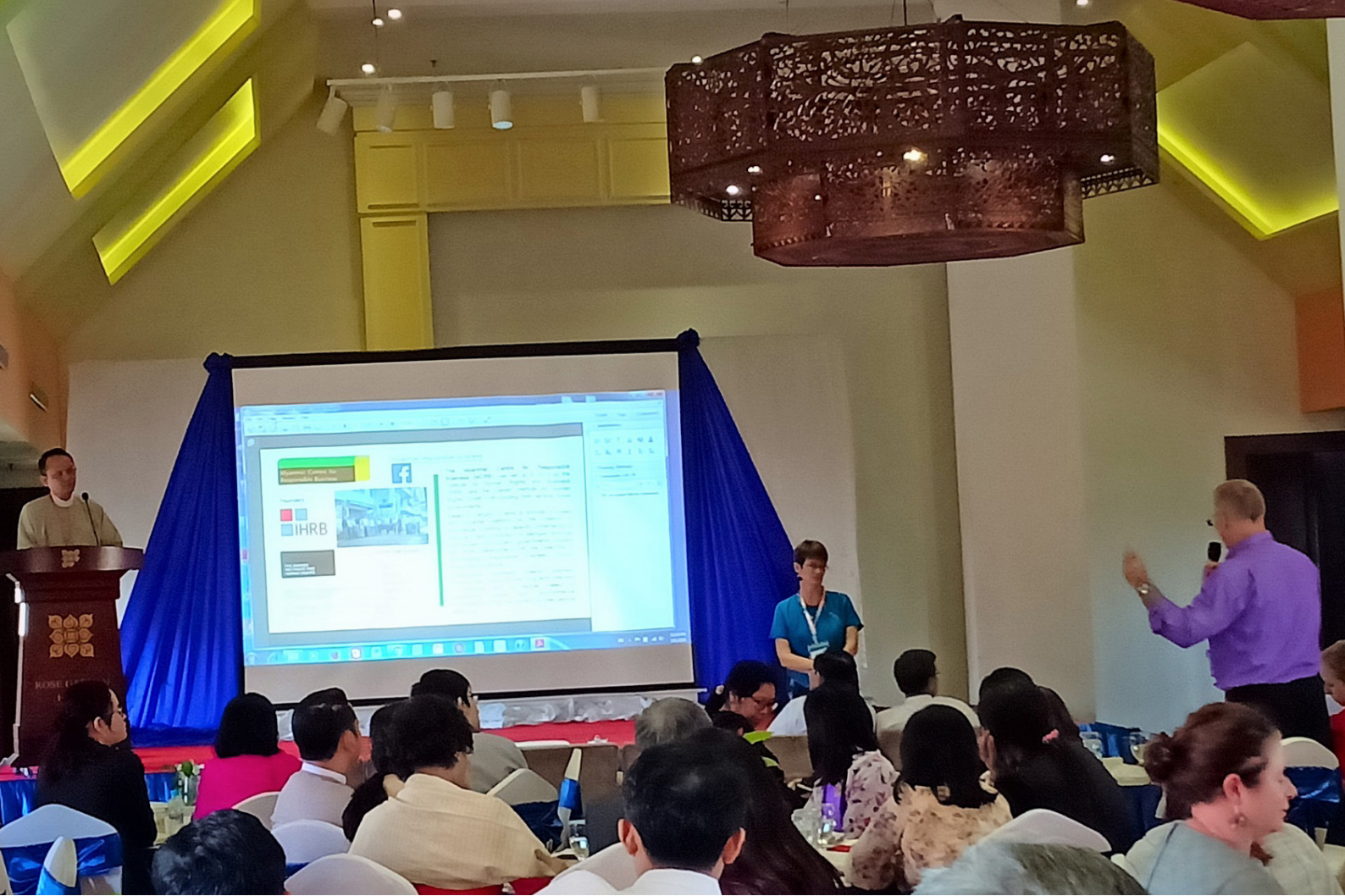
We had a chance to network with other stakeholders. These networks and the knowledge we gained will be very useful for us in promoting employment for persons with disabilities.

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- PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

MCRB and AAR Japan will circulate this report to the Employment Sub-Committee. Recommendations which were raised repeatedly by panelists and in discussion and feedback include the need for:

- **awareness-raising** on the rights of persons with disabilities and existing policies, laws and regulations outlawing discrimination. This should be targetted at government departments, businesses and the general public;
- **implementation** of existing policies, laws and regulations to ensure non-discrimination and in particular:
 - o access to education and vocational training
 - o accessible public transport system
 - o acceleration of the roll-out of a registration process for persons with disabilities
 - o combatting discrimination in recruitment, employment and promotion in all forms of employment (government, private sector and non-government)
- **activities and programmes to increase employability and employment** of persons with disabilities including
 - o databases of persons with disabilities seeking jobs, job fairs and job matching
 - o more training program on skills, job placement, job readiness, and self-confidence
 - o incentives and recognition for companies which are more disability inclusive



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