



WORKABILITY Newsletter ISSUE 3 / Jul-Sep 2020 ASIA

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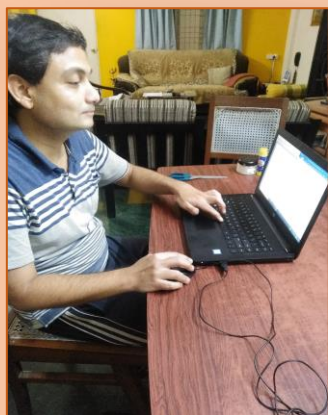
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**The efforts on
countering COVID-19
from Mr. Patrick YEH,
Board Director of Eden**



THE STRATEGY TO HANDLE THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK



Disability Employment in a DIGITAL WORLD

NDS DISABILITY AT WORK

Incorporating the Workability International Conference

13 OCT 2020
Virtual Conference

More info : <https://nds.eventsair.com/disability-at-work-incorporating-the-workability-international-conference/>

EDEN'S EFFORTS ON COUNTERING COVID-19



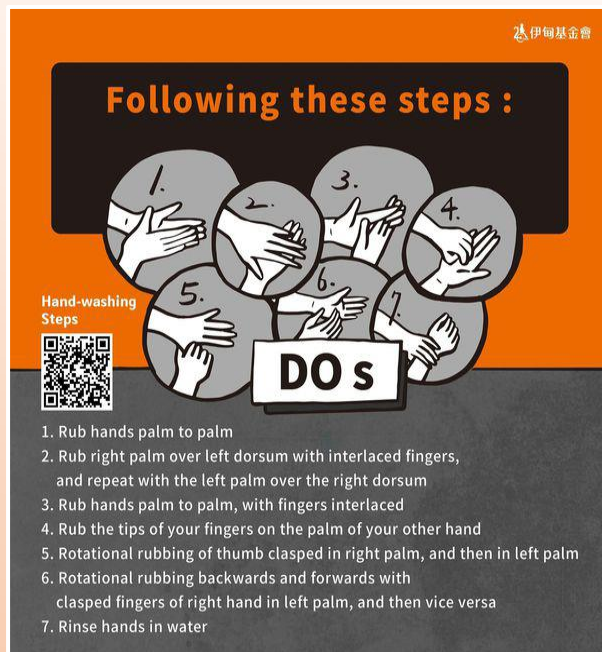
Message from Mr. Patrick YEH,
Board Director
Eden Social Welfare Foundation

When 2019 was coming to an end, a new type of world-changing coronavirus was spreading. It was later confirmed and named in January 2020 as COVID-19. Learned from the past experience of SARS in 2003, Taiwan had planned in advance for the pandemic prevention prior to COVID-19 outbreak. This strategy prevents Taiwan from having the major pandemic.

The coronavirus is being transmitted via short distance contact with the virus, more specifically, respiratory contact. Eden Social Welfare Foundation has many direct service centers in Taiwan and in Southeastern Asia, which means service users may be under the high risk of infection due to the physical contacts. Thus, Eden has set an action plan in advance to prevent COVID-19 spreading.

Firstly, Eden did provide a series of accessible information sessions to its staff and service users, such as promoting the proper way to wash hands by making a fun hand-washing dance video; making informative graphics which show the proper way to sanitize working environments and to use ethyl alcohol; and set an instruction on the proper way to sanitize assistive devices, etc.. Secondly, Eden tracks and monitors the travel history and health condition not only on the staff and service users but also on their family's members. All the staffs had to measure their body temperature twice a day, in the morning and in the afternoon via a program created by Eden's own technical department. As for the working environment, Eden has launched remote office. By relocating and redesigning working space, it reduces the possibility of virus transmission. Furthermore, Eden changes all in-person meetings and activities to online meetings. Eden also makes sure that all the technical devices are capable for the potential work-from-home condition in case COVID-19 gets worse and the city might be locked down. Lastly, Eden set the higher sanitation standard for the environment, facilities, and assistive devices in all service centers. Also, all visitors were banned at all service centers to reduce the chance of the virus transmission to the service users.

Several months passed, some of the above-mentioned rules have been eased yet the habit of proper sanitation remains. Through all these prompt actions, Eden was able to keep its 120 centers and 3,000 staffs safe from the virus. Eden makes all efforts to protect our service-givers and service users. In this difficult time, the best thing to do is to believe in God and pray for each other. Eden prays for everyone and knows that God will lead us through it. Please join our prayer to put all of the healing and recovery of the whole world.



Eden Social Welfare Foundation

In 1982, Ms. Liu Hsia (Pen Name: Hsing Lin Tsu), a well-known Chinese writer who is living with severe disability, founded Eden Social Welfare Foundation with a group of friends who share her vision. Eden provides financial, educational, therapeutical, caring supports as well as living aid and emergency relief to persons with disabilities and persons from disadvantaged background. On average, more than 60,000 families benefit from Eden's services each year. For more information, please refer to the website : <http://eden.international/>

Mr. Patrick YEH
Board Director
Eden Social Welfare Foundation

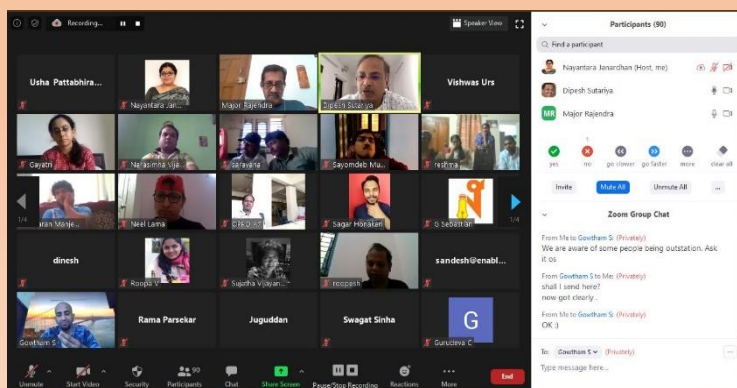
COVID-19 and PERSONS WITH DISABILITY : The response

Governments around the world have been working overtime to establish COVID response protocols, but certain sections of the society, including over 1 billion persons with disability (PWD), were inadvertently overlooked. COVID responses have not been effective in factoring in the inabilities present e.g. Social distancing or isolation is impossible to maintain when a caregiver is required for basic needs like feeding, bathing etc.

The response in India include The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPWD) recognising that PWDs are more vulnerable to the virus because of their physical, sensory, and cognitive limitations. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has also mandated that under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, departments in the states and union territories should disseminate information on Covid-19 in audio formats and Braille, while also ensuring that the government websites are accessible. While these guidelines are very necessary, the inclusion of persons with disability in the COVID response remains the responsibility of each and every one of us.

Our strategy to handle this crisis needed to be dual pronged with contingency plans for our staff and our beneficiaries.

Our staff at EnAble includes persons with sensory, locomotor & multiple disabilities and neuro diversity and as a result we faced the same outcomes. Fully cognizant of this reality we supported our staff with disability in adapting to the responses mandated to combat the ongoing pandemic;



1. **Work from Home:** As work from home was advised and a few days prior to the country going into a national lockdown, EnAble India decided to enforce work from home by shutting down access to its premises on 19th of March 2020. It has been a long 5 months since but work has not suffered or lagged. Support for software, hardware, virtual forums etc. have been available remotely.



2. Managing Daily Living: Many employees live away from families in apartments, as paying guests or in hostels. Persons with visual impairment depend on tactile inputs for mobility, persons with severe disabilities require caregivers or handlers. Specific counselling and orientation on how to manage this without risk was taken. Mental wellness was also taken care of.

3. Information on Guidelines: EnAble India's virtual IVR based platform EnAble Vaani started a COVID-19 helpline for persons with disability across many states of India. This provides information on the virus, medical help, and government schemes etc. to those who lack access to this information.

4. Emergency Response: Whatsapp Group and email communication has been setup to enable all employees, trainees and persons with disability in the community to reach out to a response team. Information of private hospitals and government health care centers have been shared.

The other and equally important response is required for persons with disability who have lost livelihoods due to the pandemic. Much of this has been seen in the unorganized sector and in the rural eco-system. PwDs with the help of EnAble India's Livelihood centers have taken on entrepreneurship to help with COVID-19 relief like making of masks that are being supplied to mainstream distributors. Thereby enabling PwDs to become active citizens by not only earning a dignified living but also alleviating the COVID risk.



Meet Radhamma, a 37 year old woman with locomotor disability. She lives with and supports her husband and sister in law – both persons with intellectual disability. After completing her entrepreneurship training she started to make cloth bags and masks. Supported by the GarvSe (With Dignity) Center, she has been able to sell her merchandise and is able to earn a monthly income of INR 1000 (~ \$13)

In the urban space, job aspirants are facing the lack of job opportunities across different levels of qualifications and across disabilities. EI has leveraged the current environment of 'gig' economy to facilitate employment opportunities for persons with disability with a leading manufacturer of masks. Budding entrepreneurs with disability have set up kiosks across the metropolis of Bangalore with plans to scale to other geographies.

Meet Soundarya, final year BCOM student. She is a person with low vision engaged in this project. She says, "I did not have any experience before this. I motivated myself and visited shops and marketed the same. I did not hesitate to sit and sell. In one week I made Rs.2,500 (~ \$ 33) and I was able to start online classes. This elevated my confidence level and I am grateful to Enable India and Wildcraft"

Another initiative to ensure aspirants with disability remain connected to the job market is to conduct Virtual Hiring drives. Job seekers will connect via virtual platforms with employers in a facilitated environment to interview for jobs available. This is a bid to enable hiring in these uncertain times.



We have a long and arduous journey ahead of us and we have to continually work to evolve our responses. In a letter to the Prime Minister, Mr Arman Ali, Executive Director, National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) demanded uniformity of pensions, increase in ex-gratia payments, announcement of an adequate economic package, information in accessible formats, and the enforcement of comprehensive, strict guidelines for the protection and safety of PwDs. Till such time we see implementation on the ground it really is up to us to remain mindful and ensure no one is left behind! And keep celebrating the human spirit!

Nayantara Janardhan,
Head, Business Development
Enable India.



EnAble India
 Celebration of Human Spirit

Enable India Welcomes You to
Be Part of Future Reality,
our Virtual Recruitment Campaign,
on 12th August and 19th August 2020

Hire for roles in
 Finance, HR, BPO,
 Operations, Back office;
 from among our
40+ Aspirants with
disability,
 from freshers up to 3
 years experience.

For more details contact employment@enableindia.org

DIGITALIZATION PROGRAM

Pragati towards Livelihood (a unit of Biswa Gouri Charitable Trust) is a training unit for individuals (16 years and above) with Autism and Intellectual Disabilities in Bengaluru, Karnataka. We began in 2017 with a focus to make each individual independent in daily living and train them on skills which have scope to develop into livelihood options.

We are presently providing training in three specific units: Digital Literacy, Hospitality and Creative Arts.

In our Digital Literacy unit, we are part of an initiative Mission1000 by Enable India which aims at providing employment opportunities to the individuals with any disability. Under Mission1000, during this COVID19 pandemic, we got a wonderful opportunity for our young adults to work as proofreader/editor to generate audio books for an organization called the Saksham Trust (they empower visually challenged individuals).



Arvind Shekhar



Gokun Prakash

We have spent two months into this project with 5 trainees from our unit, here are the highlights:

1. Our trainees get an opportunity to learn a new skill for a specific job description
2. It encourages our trainees to support their peers who are visually challenged hence a strong move towards inclusion and positive partnership
3. The books shared with our trainees for proofreading and editing has encouraged our young adults to indulge into reading and adds to their skill building as well
4. During COVID19, and since we are under lockdown since March 2020, parent empowerment has been a pivotal point to run our programs. In this project, we are training the parents to become the validators of the work done by our trainees, which gives the family to bond and work together

We are presently into training process which included functional learning and activities on regular sessions. We have started our work on our second book. Our trainees are interested with this new endeavor which gives them new knowledge and an opportunity to pave the way towards a successful livelihood.

We have empowered our trainees to maintain self-assessment sheets on a weekly basis and allotted work hours to provide them the work environment and train them on the required areas important to be a part of any workspace.

We are looking forward to see this project flourishing in this year which will open new livelihood avenues for our young adults with Autism and Intellectual Disability.

Pragati Trainees



SESSION ON SHARING THE SITUATION OF PWDs DURING THE COVID-19 IN JAPAN AND HONG KONG

Kyosaren, Japan association of community workshops for persons with disabilities, hosted Zoom session with Hong Kong friends like the followings:

- Title: Session on sharing the situation of PWDs during the COVID-19 pandemic in Japan and Hong Kong
- Date: Sep. 11, 2020
- Time: 2 hours (2-4 pm Japan time / 1-3 pm Hong Kong time)
- Program
 - Dr. Edith Mok, the Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation, talked along with the report “Protecting and Empowering Persons with Disabilities in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic. COVID-19 Responses Must Be *Disability Inclusive*.”
 - Ms. Florence chan, WAsia Director, Assistant Superintendent of TWGHs Jockey Club Rehabilitation Complex, shared a current situation of their staff with disabilities and their social enterprises.
 - Ms. Naoko Saito, Chairperson of Kyosaren, reported about Kyosaren’s activities and Japanese situation of PWDs working in the open labor market.
 - Mr. Takasuke Mathuda, Secretary General of KAGAYAKI KOBE, focused on one woman with physically and mentally sever disabilities.

After having 4 speeches, we had Q&A time and exchanged our opinions. Since we needed the time for Japanese English interpretation, 2 hours was too short. We learned there were the same and different issues between Japan and Hong Kong. Anyway, thanks to all speakers and participants, our first Zoom session was success. We are planning to have one more session with Thailand friends in Nov.



Because of the pandemic, we are not able to visit Hong Kong and other countries. But we would like to try our best to find what we can do for promoting to support employment opportunities for PWDs in Asia region.

Author : Ms.Fuki Sato,
Secretariat Staff of KYOSAREN
and Secretariat Team of WAsia



WORKABILITY

Newsletter

ISSUE 3 / Jul-Sep 2020

ASIA

FROM THE SECRETARIAT

Regarding the COVID-19 crisis that is affecting people around the world, WASia is very concerned about the members under these circumstances. The WASia secretariat office designed a questionnaire to ask for the comments regarding the 'next step' of WASia missions.

We sent the questionnaire to 53 members. Feedback was received from 29 members. We found 50% of WASia members' organizations have had a lower income, 70% of members have to work from home. The most important 80% of people with disabilities are unemployed, they have a shortage of food, they are forced to stay at home and they are in social isolation and it is very hard for them to purchase face masks and hygiene appliances.

WASia members say 97% can access the internet and working from home is available for them and 55% of members suggest to hold the Annual General Meeting on line.

After the discussion of the WASia Board meeting on June 21st, 2020 via Zoom, there were 16 people who attended the meeting, including all 7 board members, 2 advisors, 3 secretariats and a few observers. The conclusion of WASia missions are as follows:

1. WASia would announce a Statement to support and encourage all members.
2. WASia would offer Grants Employment Promotion Project to WASia members that aims to help or support employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in their region or to increase income of the organization in this difficult time. The proposals will be considered and brought up at the next Board meeting.
3. WASia membership fee 2020, BOD has decided that WASia members are allowed to pay 2 years (2020 & 2021 membership fee) at the same time in 2021. If any requests, the Board will consider to exempt or discount the fee 2020 in the next Board meeting.
4. Outstanding membership fee, WASia has had negative financial impact due to several members having not paid their fees and the BOD will discuss this issue at the next Board meeting.

WASia conference 2020 in Bangladesh will be postponed to 2022.

WASia conference 2021 will be held in Thailand. It should be the 3rd quarter of 2021 (Jul-Aug-Sep) and be held in conjunction with WI conference.

WASia Annual General Meeting 2020 will be held on Nov. 26, 2020 via Zoom.

Workability Asia Newsletter would like to invite you to :

- Share your relevant information, knowledge or experiences with WASia members and our network.
- Send your articles (1-2 pages) with some photos.
- Send your stories to WASia Secretariat Team via workabilityasia@gmail.com to be part of the next newsletter **by 15 November, 2020**.

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