



## **Approaches to disability inclusive employment**

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CBM Australia is an international Christian development organisation, committed to improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities in the poorest countries of the world. We partner with local organisations with the aim of building and promoting an inclusive world in which all persons with disabilities enjoy their human rights and achieve their full potential. CBM Australia is a key member of the CBM global network and has in its remit strong field programming and advocacy work as well as fundraising.

### **Strategy and Values**

One of CBM Australia's six core values is 'Inclusion'.<sup>1</sup> CBM is committed to leading in inclusiveness and strives to promote a disability inclusive workplace. We recognise that the success of CBM depends upon its people, with their diverse abilities, skills, languages, cultures and backgrounds. We acknowledge the value that people with lived experience of disability bring to CBM's work, advancing the rights of people with disability and increasing the voice of people with disability in development. We are uniquely placed to take major steps forward to significantly improve the lives of more people with a disability in the poorest countries.<sup>2</sup>

CBM Australia's approach to recruitment of people with disability originates from its many strategic frameworks over the 30 plus years we have been operating. With each strategic framework developed, we have continued to grow and strengthen our understanding of inclusiveness not only within our programs but also to practice it within our workplace. Our 2014-2018 strategic frameworks committed us to ensuring we recruit the right people in the right place within our organisation.

### **Disability inclusive recruitment in practice**

Our approach to Inclusiveness within recruitment begins at the 'Advertising' phase where we clearly state our commitment to workplace equity and diversity and encourage applications from Australian Residents with diverse cultural backgrounds and from people with a disability. We place our advertising on

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cbm.org.au/content/our-work/values#.VGihu024bIU>

<sup>2</sup> CBM Australia Strategic Framework 2014-2018

several online mediums including advertising within mainstream fora and also Disability Employment Networks (DEN).

Our approach to inclusiveness continues in the 'Selection process' phase. The People and Culture department identify any disclosures of disability within applications selected for pre screening. We then prepare any questions around accessibility requirements that will need to be asked of the potential candidate to ensure they have full access to the interview stage and information on offer.

It is important to note that not all people with disability wish to disclose within a job application and that it is their right to choose whether they disclose. We simply make it comfortable for people to disclose and ask for reasonable accommodation during the application process as part of encouraging applications from people with disability.

To ensure that all candidates have the opportunity to be supported in the interview process, CBM has developed a pre screen question to open communication to discuss what supports can be put in place to ensure an accessible interview. The information provided is used to ensure accessibility to the building, information, materials and communication needed for the interview. Recruiting managers are briefed on any accessibility requirements and how best to accommodate.

The approach to pre-screening can be tailored to the candidate. For example a pre screen is traditionally conducted via phone, however for an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing, pre-screening via email or with an interpreter via the telephone/ video relay service would be more effective.

In collaboration with the potential candidate, we then make adjustments for the 'Interview' stage. For example ensuring the physical access of our building and that accessible visitor car parks are vacant and all ramps and pathways are accessible. In the past, aids and supports have been identified such as interpreters, speech aids, and interview rooms are wheelchair accessible.

Our interview process is rigorous and at times requires the candidate to carry out practical activities. The activity if necessary will be modified in collaboration with the potential candidate. For example for a candidate with vision impairment we may provide large print or audio materials.

CBM Australia has identified that having adequately equipped and skilled people greatly enhances our ability to meet the growing needs and complexities of the expertise required for disability Inclusive development. Taking measures, such as not only creating inclusive recruitment practices, but by genuinely practicing inclusive development we will be able to attract, develop and retain people with disabilities who have the required capabilities to achieve our organisation's core objectives.

In order to retain and attract candidates with disabilities we continue to strive for inclusiveness within the workplace by developing disability inclusive policy, standards and processes internally and which apply across our programs. We take measures to address attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder the full and

effective participation of our employees with disabilities. We continue to implement disability awareness training to all board, staff, volunteers and CBM representatives.

Importantly we also work with individual staff members with disability to provide appropriate specific support to ensure they can participate on an equal basis with others. This has included, for example, providing sign language interpreters, assistive devices and software and Braille machines. We access government schemes such as JobAccess to help with these costs and also include specific budget lines in departmental budgets for this purpose. We also ensure training and development providers are aware of access needs of our staff.

People with disability are involved at all levels of CBM Australia; on its board, in its management, as front-line staff, as volunteers and as CBM representatives. For a story on workplace inclusion at CBM by one of CBM's international projects officers who is Deaf, see our blog entry by Philip Waters, 23 September, 2014.<sup>3</sup>

### **Learning from our experience**

We have worked hard to create a culture where employees with disability can disclose their disability and ask for supports and workplace modifications, and where we continually improve the awareness and confidence of our staff and managers. Some of the things that CBM Australia has learned are useful are:

- Creating and implementing inclusive recruitment standards, managers' guidelines and processes
- Establishing strong employment networks to attract people with disability
- Formatting advertising in a more accessible format, and ensuring advertisements explicitly welcome applications from people with disability
- Placing and advertising roles on the best mediums to reach out to the right candidate and reach more people with disability
- Educating and training managers in recruiting people with disability and supporting employees with disability
- Ensuring HR accesses available government funding schemes for workplace modifications and supports, such as Job Access and Auslan for Employment
- Ensuring that our premises, processes and systems are as accessible as possible so as not to create barriers to employment; and
- Working closely with individuals with disability to ensure that appropriate supports are provided and they are included in all workplace activities.

### **Moving Forward**

CBM is committed to continuous improvement focussing on workforce planning with targeted recruitment as well as professional development, retention and regaining of

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<sup>3</sup> "International Week of the Deaf – Strengthening Human Diversity", 23 September, 2014 - Philip Waters for International Week of the Deaf 2014, <http://theblog.cbm.org.au/#sthash.THd61CtG.dpuf>

appropriately skilled and experience employees. To do this we will continue to develop orientation and induction program modules, job design and exit processes with inclusiveness embedded into our review, implementation and monitoring. We are looking forward to implementing our 2014-2018 strategic plans and making sure that our people, processes and systems are aligned to achieving the objectives of our strategy and to achieving the vision of CBM.