



**ADD International Cambodia and CARE International Cambodia**

**Rapid Assessment on Inclusion Environment of  
Persons with Disabilities in Selected Garment  
Factories in Cambodia  
March-May 2022**

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Phnom Penh, Cambodia  
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We hope the report and findings within will contribute to an increased understanding and commitment to continue to improve the working environment in the garment industry for persons with disabilities so they may truly be viewed for their abilities and contributions as valuable members of society.

Sincerely,

Ms. Carol Strickler and Dr. Pou Sovann  
Consultant Team  
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## Acronyms/Abbreviation

BFC	Better Factories Cambodia
CDPO	Cambodia Disabled People's Organisation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Disability Action Council
DRA	Disability Rights Administration
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion
GMAC	Garment Manufactures Association of Cambodia
ILO	International Labour Organisation
KII	Key Informant Interview
MoLVT	Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training
MoSVY	Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation
NSSF	National Social Security Fund
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OPD	Organisations of Persons with Disabilities
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
WG-SS	Washington Group Short Set on Functioning

## Executive Summary

Persons with disabilities are among the most vulnerable in Cambodia and have been particularly disadvantaged by the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 and the response to the pandemic. As part of the GIZ funded project “Strengthening the Economic Resilience of Garment Workers with disabilities during COVID19 and beyond”, implemented by CARE International in Cambodia in partnership with ADD International Cambodia, a rapid assessment was conducted from March to May 2022. The purpose of the assessment was to assess garment factories’ current practice related to Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion and to identify supportive aspects as well as access and inclusion issues related to employment situation of garment factory workers with disabilities.

The assessment used participatory multi-stakeholder rights-based approaches to gather qualitative information from 30 different stakeholders, including 16 garment workers with disabilities, 5 garment factory human resource managers as well as 9 representatives from government institutions, NGOs/CSOs, UN agencies and the private sector, supplemented by a literature review and dissemination workshop.

### Key Findings

Only one of the five participating garment factories met the government criteria of employing at least one percent of workers with disabilities for businesses with over 100 employees. About two-thirds of the workers with disabilities interviewed self-identified as having at least some difficulty walking or climbing stairs (69 percent) or some difficulty in remembering or concentrating (63 percent), with half of the workers with disabilities indicating they had some difficulty in two or more functioning areas.

**Factory Guidelines and Non-Discrimination:** None of the five garment factories had official separate written disability inclusion policies for the workplace though three factory human resource managers indicated they had statements that addressed the inclusion of workers with disabilities at the workplace. Almost all (over 90 percent) the workers with disabilities interviewed felt that they were treated fairly and equally by factory management, staff and co-workers just as other workers without disabilities. This includes equal pay for work of equal value, same benefits and entitlements, equal access to grievance processes, leisure and team building activities as well as career development opportunities.

**Recruitment and Return to Work:** The vast majority of both factory human resource managers and workers with disabilities agreed their company takes measures and ensures a fair process when recruiting candidates with disabilities. However only 40 percent of the workers with disabilities felt they were given the opportunity to communicate any specific needs during the recruitment process. Furthermore, less than half of the factory human resource managers and workers with disabilities said that disability inclusion awareness sessions were provided to employees and management.

The vast majority of workers with disabilities and all factory human resource managers agreed that the factory either makes an intervention or refers employees to appropriate services should they acquire a disability so they can return to work and provides opportunities to retrain or obtain experience in a

different job. However, only half of the workers with disabilities felt their company consults on adjustments needed so they can return to work and less than one-quarter said their company allows for a gradual return to duties if they acquired a disability. In contrast, four out of five factory human resource managers stated they both consulted with employees and allowed for a gradual return to work as needed.

**Reasonable Workplace Adjustments:** Most workers with disabilities said they did not ask for or did not require any special adjustments at their workplace to perform their tasks. While the majority (4 of 5) of factory human resource managers felt their company took measures or consulted on adjustments needed for employees with disabilities, only workers with disabilities from one factory (30 percent) agreed. The vast majority of workers with disabilities said they were assigned a supervisor, but only half of workers with disabilities said the factory made adaptations to tools and equipment, reviewed job tasks or adapted job performance requirements. Just over one-third of workers with disabilities said the factory adjusted work schedules as necessary. The responses by the factory human resource managers varied significantly across the different factories and types of adaptations, with only one human resource manager indicating their factory made all necessary reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities.

For infrastructure, only two factory human resource managers stated that their factory was equipped with some doors, ramps or pathways as well as toilets and washrooms accessible to persons with disabilities. No factory had safety precautions or emergency plans for assisting persons with disabilities.

**Peer Group of workers with disabilities:** While all workers with disabilities agreed they had the right to join a trade union, only about 60 percent were members. Almost all workers with disabilities said they would be interested to join a special worker or friendship group of workers with disabilities.

**Barriers to disability inclusive environment:** The vast majority of workers with disabilities said they did not have any significant challenges in their work at the garment factory however other stakeholders including factory managers, government, NGOs and private sector representatives did raise several obstacles faced by persons with disabilities. These include but are not limited to a) inaccessible infrastructure and physical environment for workers with disabilities at the factories, including travel, transportation and road safety issues, b) lack of in-depth understanding of disability inclusion rights among factory staff, communities, and society at large, c) no clear system to identify or recruit persons with disabilities to work in the garment industry, and d) the limited or mismatched skills sets and few applicants of persons with disabilities interested to work in garment factories. Furthermore, the low self-confidence of some persons with disabilities as well as the lack of collective voice of workers with disabilities is viewed as contributing to a lack of empowerment among some persons with disabilities.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The majority of garment factory human resource managers and garment workers with disabilities interviewed felt workers with disabilities were treated equal as others and there was little discrimination at the workplace. Many stakeholders interviewed however observed that factories were not fully complying with non-discrimination standards or government regulations. The lack of written disability

inclusion policies is contributing to inconsistent workplace regulations and different perceptions by factory staff and workers with disabilities on implementing work regulations and reasonable accommodations to enable workers to perform their tasks. Furthermore, most factories lack accessible infrastructure as well as an effective outreach system to recruit skilled and unskilled persons with disabilities for the workforce.

The following are summary key suggestions from the assessment findings for consideration:

#### **Garment Factories**

- Develop comprehensive disability inclusion policies, that are in line with local laws and international standards, and develop a simple action plan to implement the disability inclusion policy.
- Provide regular training and awareness raising on disability inclusion to all employees, especially factory management, and ensure that concepts of reasonable accommodation and workplace adjustments are actioned and part of the garment factory recruitment and orientation processes.
- Invest in infrastructure that is accessible to persons with disabilities, and ensure safety and emergency regulations meet the needs of persons with disabilities, in line with government standard regulations.
- Utilize the UNDP and CDPO publication: *Employing persons with disabilities in Cambodia: How to Create an Inclusive Workplace Culture, Practical Tips for Employers 2019*.

#### **Government and Garment Factories**

- The government (DAC and DRA/MoSVY) with GMAC, should provide regular training sessions to garment factories and worker representatives on the government's Technical Standards on Physical Accessibility Infrastructure for Persons with Disability (2018), and monitor compliance.
- Conduct outreach and establish links with networks of persons with disabilities for recruitment and hiring purposes, in collaboration with government, GMAC and NGOs.
- Invest in job and skills training for persons with disabilities that match the labour market of the garment industry, and establish links with skills training centers and/or on-the-job skills training at garment factories for persons with disabilities.
- Continue projects to increase safe transportation for factory workers and focus on road safety prevention as part of public health, employment conditions and disability inclusion programs.
- GMAC, in coordination with DAC and/or DRA of MoSVY, should continue to facilitate workshops / awareness-raising for their members on disability rights and disability inclusion at garment factories.
- Utilize the tripartite mechanism with support from BFC to further promote awareness of disability inclusion and government regulations to reach more garment factories and buyers/companies.

#### **CARE, ADD and NGOs**

- Further explore the possibility of establishing an informal peer group of workers with disabilities to ensure their collective voice is represented to the factory management and by the trade union.
- CARE and ADD, as international NGOs, should lobby international and local buyers and brands to influence factory owners on compliance with labour standards on disability inclusion and rights.
- CARE and ADD, with DAC, DRA/MoSVY and GMAC, should consider developing a follow-up action plan based on the assessment findings to promote disability inclusion in garment factories.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background and Cambodia context

According to The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), persons with disabilities include those who have long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.<sup>1</sup> The UNCRPD recognizes that disability is an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction of persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. Cambodia ratified the UNCRPD in December 2012.

The 2009 Cambodian Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities aims to a) protect the rights and freedoms of persons with disabilities, b) protect the interests of persons with disabilities, c) prevent, reduce and eliminate discrimination against persons with disabilities and d) rehabilitate physically, mentally and vocationally in order to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to participate fully and equally in activities within society. The Law refers to persons with disabilities as any persons who lack, lose or damage any physical or mental functions which results in a disturbance to their daily life or activities, such as physical, visual, hearing, intellectual impairments, mental disorders, and any other types of disabilities towards the insurmountable end of scale.

The Law is implemented through various national policies and plans including National Strategic Disability Plans 2018-2023, National Social Protection Policies 2018-2025, and Guidelines on Physical Accessibility 2019 to name a few, by various institutions including the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY), Disability Action Council (DAC), and the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MoLVT) in coordination with the private sector, International NGOs, UN Agencies and civil society organisations (CSOs). Despite solid political commitment and a strong legal framework to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, weak enforcement, inadequate implementation and general lack of understanding of disability concepts and inclusiveness continue to hinder progress towards ensuring that persons with disabilities enjoy their full and equal rights in Cambodian society.

## 1.2 Project context and description

Persons with disabilities have been particularly disadvantaged by the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 and the response to the pandemic. They are at higher risk of losing their jobs and have greater difficulty returning to work during the recovery period. Persons with disabilities are among the most vulnerable in Cambodia and experience challenges accessing basic services and employment. Disruptions to services, challenges to accessing assistance, higher poverty rates and vulnerability to economic shock predispose persons with disabilities in Cambodia to being further left behind.

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<sup>1</sup> UNCRPD 2006

Estimates of persons with disabilities in Cambodia vary significantly. The General Population Census of the Kingdom of Cambodia 2019 shows that nearly 5 percent of the population are persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities often lack equal access to education, employment and clean water and face increased vulnerability to gender discrimination, economic and social exclusion, conflict and emergencies. While many workers with disabilities have considerable skills, many have not had the opportunity to develop their potential. The majority of persons with disabilities have difficulty participating as equals in their communities and are often excluded. Women and girls living with disabilities are more likely to face discrimination than men living with disabilities.<sup>2</sup>

The project “Strengthening the Economic Resilience of Garment Workers with disabilities during COVID19 and beyond” will prioritise working with garment workers with disabilities who are socially and economically marginalised during the pandemic. In Cambodia, 50 factory management staff from 5 factories and 300 garment workers with disabilities who have been suspended, laid-off or are working reduced hours in the factories will participate in awareness raising sessions in the community, in Phnom Penh, Kandal and Kampong Speu provinces. Representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, Disability Action Council (DAC), Garment Manufacturers Association Cambodia (GMAC), several international Brands/Buyers, trade unions, and like-minded CSOs and Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) will also participate. This includes both online as well as offline activities.

The objective of the project is to strengthen the economic resilience of workers with disabilities in the garment industry to cope with the negative impacts of COVID-19 and build an inclusive working environment for garment workers with disabilities in combination with sensitizing factories on inclusion and combating discrimination. Under Outcome 2: Persons with disabilities have equal access and opportunities through creating an inclusive working environment in garment factories, and key activities include an Orientation Workshop, Assessment on the inclusion environment for persons with disabilities at garment factory and a Dissemination Workshop of the assessment findings.

CARE International in Cambodia is partnering with ADD International Cambodia - a specialist organization on disability inclusion – to support activities. ADD International works with organisations of activists with disabilities to influence governments, international development actors and the private sector to design policies and services at local and global levels which take into account the needs of persons with disabilities.

### 1.3 Purpose / Objectives of Assessment

The purpose of the assessment was to a) to assess garment factories’ current practice related to Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) in order to analyze their capacity, opportunities and challenges. The assessment reviewed selected factories’ policy and regulations, especially those that

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<sup>2</sup> CARE International Cambodia Disability Action Plan 2019-2023

relate to gender, disability and inclusion, level of adequate support in terms of infrastructure and design, and provision of workplace adjustments and flexibility to pay attention to marginalized groups, and b) to identify supportive aspects (policies, attitudes, behaviors) as well as access and inclusion issues (challenges and barriers) related to employment situation of garment (current and ex) factory workers with disabilities in order to identify solutions to improve access to inclusive garment factory workplaces.

The report will be used by ADD International Cambodia and Care International in Cambodia to 1) learn about accessibility and reasonable accommodation issues in selected factories, 2) develop and conduct awareness raising sessions and measures on GEDSI to enhance access of persons with disabilities to inclusive garment factory workplaces, 3) sensitize on disability inclusion, and 4) foster an inclusive working environment in the selected factories.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Assessment design and approach

The assessment focused on five key areas: a) Barrier free environment in the factory, b) Reasonable workplace adjustments, c) Recruitment of and return to work possibilities for persons with disabilities d) Due consideration of persons with disabilities in the factory guidelines and e) Introduce a buddy system (friendship or self-help group) for employees with disabilities.

The assessment used a combination of methodologies with an emphasis on gathering qualitative information from different stakeholders, using participatory rights-based approaches, supplemented by a literature review. Given the unpredictability of the COVID-19 pandemic and situation, the majority of the interviews were planned and conducted virtually. This included a desk review of relevant documents and available secondary data, participation in a consultative orientation workshop (virtual), individual interviews with selected garment workers with disabilities (telephone) and key informant interviews with selected garment factory management staff, relevant government ministry officials and other key stakeholders (telephone/virtual). Please see list of interview guides in the Annex.

### 2.2 Key Stakeholders and Sample size

#### 2.2.1 Documentation review

A desk review of relevant documents such as the UNCRPD, the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2009), the National Strategic Disability Plan 2018-2023, Technical Standards on Physical Accessibility Infrastructure for Persons with Disabilities (DAC 2018), Sub-decree 108 on Determining the Rate and Formality of Recruitment of Disabled Persons (8 August 2010), Inter-ministerial Prakas on Determination of Criteria for Types and Levels of Disability (Prakas No. 2492, 22 November 2011), ILO Standard Operating Procedures on Better Factories, selected garment factory internal disability inclusion policies as well as other reports and guidelines was conducted. A full list of documents reviewed is attached in the Annex.

### **2.2.2 Individual Interviews**

Selected female and male garment workers with disabilities (including those suspended, laid off and working with reduced hours) were interviewed on the situation and barriers to inclusive employment environment and opportunities, using a prepared check list of questions and an in-depth discussion guide. A list of pre-selected garment factory workers with disabilities to interview was compiled by the participating garment factories.

The planned target number was 30 garment workers with disabilities (six persons per each of the five factories, including five in-depth interviews), with at least 60-70 percent women interviewed. The final number of garment workers with disabilities reached was 16, including 14 women, from five participating garment factories. All interviews were conducted by phone, except for four in-person interviews conducted at one garment factory at the factory premises.

### **2.2.3 Key Informant Interviews**

Interviews were conducted by telephone or an online platform with 5 garment factory human resource (HR) managers (4 women) from 5 participating garment factories, as well as representatives from the government including the MoLVT, DAC, and Disability Rights Administration (DRA) of MoSVY, GMAC, ILO Better Factory Cambodia (BFC), Cambodia Disabled Persons Organisation (CDPO), The Asia Foundation, Advocacy and Policy Institute and an international brand/buyer on disability rights and inclusive employment environment. A total of 14 persons were interviewed including 7 women and one person who identified as having a disability.

### **2.2.4 Dissemination Workshop**

The findings of the assessment were presented and discussed with over 25 stakeholders from 15 different institutions, including government, garment factories, workers with disabilities, NGOs/CSOs, UN Agencies and development partners at a dissemination workshop in Phnom Penh on 18 May 2022. Feedback was reviewed and incorporated into the final report.

## **2.3 Ethics and Safeguarding**

Fundamental principles of ethical research were adhered to, including transparency, cost-effectiveness, accountability and collaboration with beneficiaries. Ethical practices, safeguards and protocols to protect the safety and to prevent harm to respondents included a) protecting the rights of respondents, including privacy and confidentiality, b) informed consent for participation, c) safeguarding and respectful communication, d) training in collecting sensitive information, f) culturally appropriate data collection tools, g) appropriate timing of interviews, and h) available referral/support information.

## **2.4 Limitations**

This rapid assessment is not intended to represent the views of all garment factories or garment workers with disabilities in Cambodia, but is limited to five participating garment factories and a few pre-selected garment factory workers with disabilities.

On-site visits to garment factories were not part of this rapid assessment so information on physical infrastructure is based on interviews with garment factory staff and workers with disabilities.

Fewer garment factory workers with disabilities were reached than originally planned due limited numbers of workers of disabilities identified by factories, delays in providing lists of workers to be interviewed, inactive or incorrect phone numbers and some unanswered phone calls.

Lists of suspended, part time or laid off garment workers with disabilities were not provided to the consultant team so the information collected is limited to currently employed garment factory workers with disabilities. As such, important information related to the situation of laid off or suspended workers, and return to work possibilities, is limited.

### 3. Key Findings

#### 3.1 Overview of Garment Factories and Garment Workers with Disabilities

According to the garment factory human resource managers, the number of employees at the five factories ranged from 1,000 persons to over 6,000 persons. The estimated number of workers with disabilities at each factory ranged from 6 to 30 persons or from 0.1 percent to 1 percent of all employees. Only one participating factory met the government criteria of employing at least one percent of workers with disabilities for businesses with over 100 employees.

The majority of workers with disabilities interviewed were married (83 percent) and half (50 percent) were between the ages of 26 and 35 and over 40 percent were between the ages of 36 and 45.

Using the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS)<sup>3</sup>, about two-thirds of the workers with disabilities interviewed self-identified as having at least some difficulty walking or climbing stairs (69 percent) or some difficulty in remembering or concentrating (63 percent), while 34 percent mentioned at least some difficulty seeing. One in four workers with disabilities said they had some difficulty with communication. Furthermore, half (50 percent) of the workers with disabilities indicated they had some difficulty in two or more functioning areas.

Table 1: Type of Impairment (WG-SS)

Vision	Hearing	Mobility	Cognition	Self-care	Communication
44% (7)	19% (3)	69% (11)	63% (10)	6% (1)	25% (4)

It is not surprising that the majority of garment workers with disabilities identified for this assessment had some sort of physical impairment. What is interesting to note is the fairly high percentage of workers with

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/>

disabilities interviewed that mentioned having some concentration or memory difficulties. One female garment worker described how she suffered a leg injury from a traffic accident while traveling to work to a different garment factory many years ago. After she returned to work, she noticed she was short-tempered and forgetful, and her performance at work declined. Soon after, she left that job.

*“I accepted that the quality of my work was lower due to my accident but I was disappointed that my supervisor blamed me for the mistakes. So I decided to resign.” (Interview with female garment worker with disability, age 40, Factory B)*

This demonstrates the importance of fostering a better understanding amongst factory management and employees around the mental health challenges that workers with disabilities may face, especially when they have been injured in the course of their work, including travel to and from the factory site. According to knowledgeable sources, research on the mental health impact of COVID-19 is being conducted by the Ministry of Health as well as in other countries.

## 3.2 Due consideration of workers with disabilities in factory guidelines

### 3.2.1 Disability Inclusion Policy and/or Strategy

None of the five garment factories had official separate written disability inclusion policies for the workplace. However three of the five human resource managers interviewed stated that their company does have a policy statement that addresses the inclusion of workers with disabilities at the workplace. All three human resource managers agreed that non-discrimination in employment was the basis of the policy statement while two out of three human resource managers confirmed that equal opportunity, the right to be provided with reasonable accommodation, recognition of diverse approaches, as well as commitment to promote gender equality and use of affirmative action were part of the policy.

A review of a sample draft garment factory disability inclusion policy template provided by CARE International in Cambodia includes reference to the 2009 Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Disabled Persons as well as Sub-Decree 108 on the Determination of Rates and Forms of Recruitment for Persons with Disabilities. The standard template includes the following sections: 1) rationale, 2) purpose, 3) general policies and regulations which includes definition of disability, disability types, company commitment and target of the policy as well as 4) procedures for implementation, which includes discrimination as a serious offense, equitable recruitment process, benefits, working conditions, penalties and conflict resolution mechanism. The policy template is quite comprehensive and is an excellent starting point for developing a standard workplace disability inclusion policy.

Only three (19 percent) of the workers with disabilities interviewed said their company had a disability inclusion policy and no-one was aware of any disability inclusion strategy or action plan to implement the policy.

*“I do not know if the company has a policy as they have never mentioned, explained or shared the policy with us.” (Interviews with female garment workers with disabilities, ages 32, 41, Factory C, D)*

The government and private sector representatives including GMAC interviewed mentioned several recent dissemination activities conducted on the Law on Disability, Sub-decree 108 and other government regulations related to rights of persons with disabilities, including employment quotas. They all recognized the need for more dissemination of disability rights and government regulations, as well as improved monitoring and enforcement.

*“We need to continue dissemination of the law and regulations and we need measurements to ensure compliance, as well as policies and internal rules to hold factories accountable.” (KII with several stakeholders)*

### **3.2.1 Non-discrimination and equal treatment**

Over 90 percent of the workers with disabilities interviewed felt they were treated fairly and equally by factory management, staff and co-workers just as other workers without disabilities. This includes equal pay for work of equal value, same benefits and entitlements, equal access to grievance processes, leisure and team building activities as well as career development opportunities.

*“We have equal rights to services such as filing a complaint, and we can file a complaint directly to our supervisor or union leader.” (Interviews with female workers with disability, ages 35-46, Factory D, E)*

Furthermore, many stated they did not feel they were discriminated against in any way. They also mentioned they were never teased or made fun of and had never heard anyone say disparaging comments about them or their disability.

*“The people at the company are kind hearted and treat us fairly.” (Interview with female worker with disability, age 36-45, Factory C)*

*“I am welcomed and loved by my co-workers, and they often invite me to celebrations and ceremonies outside of work.” (Interview with female garment worker with disability, age 28, Factory A)*

The vast majority of workers with disabilities interviewed felt that they had equal opportunities at work to learn new skills at the factory and were often assigned someone to teach them new tasks and skills. Some mentioned that the factory provide them with opportunities to rotate and change to new jobs they were capable of performing.

*“The company cares for us and helps the workers all the time. They will first check to see if we are fit for a certain position, and if not they will find another more suitable position for us.” (Interview with female garment worker with disability, age 32, Factory D)*

Another female worker with a disability interviewed mentioned that all workers, including herself, were given the opportunity to learn new skills and techniques on Saturdays, as part of job enhancement and skills trainings.

However only about half of the workers with disabilities interviewed agreed they had the same access as employees without disabilities to flexible work schedules or arrangements, while about one-third did not know. All of the workers who said they had access to flexible work schedules were employed at two factories, while the workers at the other three factories either did not know or did not feel they have equal access. It appears that some companies do not have regulations on flexible work arrangements or the information is not clearly communicated to workers.

Better Factory Cambodia regularly monitors garment factory compliance with local labor laws and ILO compliance standards. Disability is included under the non-discrimination core standard. One buyer/company interviewed mentioned they had a company Code of Conduct based on local and international regulations, which includes non-discrimination, and they work closely with Better Factory Cambodia to promote the rights of workers and equal opportunity, as well as compliance. Most of the stakeholders interviewed including government, private sector and NGOs/CSOs thought that the majority of garment factories were not complying with various non-discrimination standards and that workers with disabilities still faced various levels of discrimination, whether it was employer or co-worker negative attitudes, inaccessible infrastructure or lack of equal education or skills training opportunities. Many attributed this to a low understanding or awareness of disability rights and disability inclusion by factory management and workers as well as the general population.

*“I feel there is less discrimination against workers with disability after conducting trainings on disability rights and government guidelines. But many garment factories are still not complying with all non-discrimination standards. There is low understanding by factory management of disability rights and at times an unwillingness to find solutions to comply with regulations.” (KII with several stakeholders)*

### 3.3 Recruitment and return to work possibilities

#### 3.3.1 Recruitment and orientation

Almost all the workers with disabilities interviewed mentioned they learned of or found their jobs through family members, friends or by direct contact themselves with the factory. One worker did mention that the company encouraged employees to share recruitment announcements with friends and relatives, including persons with disabilities, and to apply for available jobs. No-one interviewed mentioned finding their job from outreach by the factory, government agencies, NGOs or OPD networks. This may be a missed opportunity for more outreach and active recruitment of workers with disabilities.

The majority of factory human resource managers and workers with disabilities interviewed agreed that the company they work for takes measures to recruit qualified persons with disabilities and ensures a fair process when recruiting candidates with disabilities. However only 40 percent of the workers with disabilities interviewed felt they were given the opportunity to communicate any specific needs during

the recruitment process which is fewer than the three human resource managers interviewed who felt they did provide this opportunity. This could be addressed by adding a few standard questions to the recruitment questions to ensure equal opportunity, therefore taking the responsibility off of the applicants to inquire about possible adjustments at work.

About half of the workers with disabilities interviewed felt that the company took measures to ensure an inclusive orientation for new employees with disabilities, which is similar to the positive responses from three of the factory human resource managers interviewed. Only two factory human resource managers said their company provides disability inclusion awareness sessions to employees and management. Less than 50 percent of workers with disabilities agreed that disability inclusion awareness sessions were provided to workers and less than 40 percent said these types of sessions were provided to factory management.

*Table 2: Recruitment*

<b>Statement: The Company/Factory ...</b>	<b>GF HR</b>	<b>GFW</b>
1. Takes measures to recruit qualified persons with disabilities	80%	69%
2. Ensures a fair process when recruiting persons with disabilities	60%	77%
3. Provides an opportunity to communicate specific needs during the recruitment process	60%	40%
4. Provides disability inclusion awareness training/sessions to employees	40%	50%
5. Provides disability inclusion awareness training/sessions to management	40%	40%

When probed further, many of the workers with disabilities interviewed stated that their orientation was quite short and not very detailed but included some brief information on factory rules, equal opportunities and non-discrimination against persons with disabilities. Others noted that their factory has recently provided more information on disability rights and inclusiveness to new and current employees and have taken action to remind all the workers to not discriminate against persons with disabilities, especially when new workers with disabilities have been hired.

***“Recently the factory has provided trainings to new employees on non-discrimination against workers with disabilities.” (Interview with female garment worker with disability, age 26-35, Factory D)***

This was supported by interviews with several stakeholders who acknowledged that some garment factories have increased hiring of persons with disabilities after a study was conducted on promoting inclusive job opportunities for persons with disabilities.

***“After the training on disability inclusion with company staff, we noticed an increase in hiring of persons with disabilities, an improved work environment with better team work, and more attention to job coaching to support employees with disabilities.” (KII with stakeholder)***

There appears to be some recent efforts by some factories interviewed to incorporate disability rights into factory guidelines, orientation procedures and worker information sessions, with the assistance of NGOs.

***“I was never given a proper orientation on disability rights. But I have learned that new employees have received an orientation on disability inclusion.” (Interviews with female garment workers with disability, ages 28,32,41, Factory A,C,E)***

In-depth interviews with a few workers with disabilities also revealed some factories have held information sessions on disability rights, non-discrimination, including the National Social Security Fund (NSSF). This is an important step in ensuring that relevant and necessary information, such as laws, regulations and work conditions is provided by the factory management and is accessible to all workers.

### **3.3.2 Return to work opportunities**

The vast majority of workers with disabilities interviewed agreed that the factory either makes an intervention or refers employees to appropriate services should they acquire a disability so they can return to work (85 percent) and provides opportunities to retrain or obtain experience in a different job (77 percent), while the remaining few did not know. This indicates both adherence to Cambodia’s labour law and working conditions as well as corporate responsibility towards workers.

***“There was a time when one worker got her hand stuck in the sewing machine. After receiving medical treatment and rehabilitation for six months, she came back to work and was able to work in the same position.” (Interview with female garment worker with disability, age 32, Factory E)***

Similarly, all five (100 percent) garment factory human resource managers said they refer employees to appropriate services should they require a disability and provide opportunities to retrain or obtain experience in a different job.

About half of the workers with disabilities interviewed said their company consults with workers with disabilities on any adjustments needed so they can return to work, with all workers in one factory agreeing and mixed results for workers in the other four companies.

***“If employees have an accident or need health care treatment, the company allows us to take six months off from work, and they also reserve our position when we return to work.” (Interview with female garment worker with disability, age 36-45, Factory C)***

However only about one-quarter responded their company allows for a gradual return to duties if they acquired a disability, while many did not know. In contrast, four out of five factory human resource managers stated they both consulted with employees on adjustments needed so they could return to work after an injury and they allowed for a gradual return to work as needed. The differences could be attributed to the lack of a written regulations as well as experiences. One key informant mentioned that

while many companies provided appropriate referrals to services when workers had an accident at work in accordance with the law, to their knowledge, 90 percent of the workers did not actually return to work.

Table 3: Return to Work

Statement: The Company/Factory ...	GF HR	GFW
1. Makes an intervention or refers employees to appropriate services should they acquire a disability so they can return to work	100%	85%
2. Provides opportunities to retrain or obtain experience in a different job if cannot return to same job	100%	77%
3. Consults and supports with employees with disability on any adjustments needed so they can return to work	80%	54%
4. Allows for a gradual return to duties if they acquired a disability	80%	23%

### 3.4 Reasonable Workplace Adjustments

#### 3.4.1 Workplace Adjustments

Many of the workers with disabilities interviewed felt that the factory had very good working conditions and treated persons with disabilities equally as other workers. Many also felt that the factory management and staff had a fairly good understanding about persons with disabilities, and were responsive to their requests, based on their own personal experience.

*“I requested a special chair to support me while working, and they provided me with one as per my request.” (Interview with female garment worker with disability, age 26-35, Factory A)*

Most of workers with disabilities interviewed said they did not ask for and/or did not require any special adjustments or assistance at their work place or station to perform their tasks.

The responses from workers with disabilities interviewed regarding the factory providing reasonable accommodations so employees with disabilities could perform their work showed mixed results across different categories. Overall only 30 percent of workers with disabilities interviewed thought their company took measures or consulted workers on necessary adjustments or accommodations at the workplace, and the workers were all from the one same company. In other words, all workers with disabilities interviewed in four of five factories did not think their company took measures or consulted them on adjustments needed. In contrast, four out of the five garment factory human resource managers felt their company took measures or consulted on adjustments needed for employees with disabilities.

On a positive note, all workers with disabilities agreed that the factory made necessary adjustments for their work stations, such as lighting, furniture and location, and the vast majority (77 percent) said they were assigned a job coach or supervisor if necessary.

***“I observed that one worker has some difficulty seeing and the company added lights to make sure that she could work better at her workstation.” (Interview with female garment worker with disability, age 32, Factory E)***

About half of the workers with disabilities agreed that the factory made adaptations to tools and equipment (54 percent), reviewed job descriptions and tasks (46 percent) or reviewed and adapted job performance requirements (46 percent) as necessary.

***“While I do not have any special needs, I do know that the factory assigned some simple appropriate tasks such as handling clothes to workers with arm impairments.” (Interview with female garment worker with disability, age 28, Factory A)***

However, just over one-third of worker with disabilities said the factory adapted work schedules as necessary while even fewer said the factory adapted work schedules for workers with disabled family members, though most (54 percent) did not actually know if this was possible.

The responses by the factory human resource managers on whether they provided various types of adjustments for workers with disabilities varied across the different factories and types of adaptations, with only one human resource manager indicating their factory made all necessary reasonable accommodations as described above. For example four factory human resource managers said they did not adapt the workstations and three human resource managers said they did not adapt tools or equipment, work schedules or performance requirements while three human resource managers said they did review job descriptions and assign a supervisor as needed. It is likely that without clear written regulations, the factory staff is not aware of what type of adjustments workers with disabilities may require and how best to manage and accommodate these.

***“I do not honestly know much about requirements for persons with disabilities, but I do know that what we have provided is not disability inclusive.” (KII with Factory HR managers, Factory A,C,E)***

With regards transportation, none of the factory human resource managers said they provided transportation if necessary yet four (30 percent) workers with disabilities said the factory provided transportation when necessary. One female worker with a disability said the company covered 50 percent of the cost of her travel by Tuk Tuk<sup>4</sup> to and from the factory, as it was easier and safer for her to ride in a Tuk Tuk than a motorcycle or truck. This is an important recognition that transportation for persons with disabilities, especially physical, to and from the garment factories is often a significant challenge and may in fact deter persons with disabilities from even considering applying to work at a garment factory where travel is involved.

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<sup>4</sup> A Tuk Tuk is a 3 wheeled motor vehicle

Table 4: Reasonable workplace adjustments

Statement: The Company/Factory ...	GF HR	GFW
1. Took measures or consulted with workers with disabilities on any adjustments needed at the workplace	80%	30%
2. Makes adaptations to workstations	20%	70%
3. Makes adaptations to tools and equipment	40%	50%
4. Assigns a supervisor or job coach if necessary	60%	70%
5. Reviews job descriptions as necessary	60%	50%
6. Makes adaptations to job performance requirements as necessary	40%	50%
7. Makes adaptations to work schedules as necessary	40%	30%
8. Provides transportation as necessary	0%	30%

### 3.4.2 Accessibility

#### Built Environment

Two out of five garment factory human resource managers stated that their factory had some doors, ramps or pathways that were accessible to persons with disabilities. More workers with disabilities (two-thirds) interviewed agreed that their factory had some doors, ramps or pathway curbs that were accessible to persons with disabilities, with all workers from one factory agreeing while workers from the other four factories had varying responses.

*“We know we need to invest in infrastructure improvements to comply with the regulations, but the company needs more time and money to achieve this.” (KII with Factory HR manager, Factory D)*

Only two of the garment factory human resource managers said the factory toilets and washrooms were accessible to persons with disabilities. About half of the workers with disabilities interviewed noted that their factory had either lifts or staircases and toilets or washrooms as well as signage for people with visual or intellectual impairments that were accessible to persons with disabilities, with all workers from two factories agreeing and all workers from two other factories disagreeing. Some of the workers interviewed who had leg impairments stated that were able to get around without using a crutch or wheelchair and as they worked on the ground floor, they did not need to use stairs or lifts. One worker interviewed noted that spare wheelchairs and crutches were available for use at the factory site. It is of concern that toilets in three garment factories are not accessible to persons with disabilities which should be a priority.

The majority of other key stakeholders interviewed also stated that most garment factory sites did not comply with physical accessibility standards for persons with disabilities and companies would need to invest in improvements to conform with the government technical standards. With limited enforcement and penalties, there has been little incentive for companies to spend the additional resources.

***“Infrastructure is a big challenge. Some companies do not want to spend additional money to modify buildings or infrastructure to accommodate persons with physical disabilities.” (KII with several stakeholders)***

For safety and emergency precautions, all five garment factory human resource managers acknowledged their factory did not have alternative warning devices for the hearing impaired or emergency plans for assisting persons with disabilities to safely evacuate. In contrast, almost all workers with disabilities interviewed agreed that the factory had both sounds such as alarms and bells as well as other devices for the hearing impaired as well as an emergency plan that considered the safety of persons with disabilities. It is not entirely clear whether these safety measures are specific for persons with disabilities or more general in nature, as health messages and safety precautions are often required on the factory production line and premises. For example, one respondent explained that there were lights to guide them to walk on the line and bells everywhere in the factory. Another worker with disability explained that the factory has signs in English and Khmer on health, hygiene and safety at the workplace, which are for all workers.

*Table 5: Accessibility*

<b>Statement: The Company/Factory ...</b>	<b>GF HR</b>	<b>GFW</b>
1. Has some doors, ramps or pathways accessible to persons with disabilities	40%	66%
2. Has some toilets and washrooms accessible for persons with disabilities	40%	40%
3. Has sounds (bells, alarms, etc.) complimented with alternative devices for people with hearing impairments	0%	92%
4. Has emergency plans fit for safely evacuating persons with disabilities	0%	92%

### **Information/Communication**

All garment factory human resource managers interviewed acknowledged that they did not have documents available in alternative formats that were accessible to persons with different types of disabilities, though two agreed that some documents were available electronically. In contrast, about half of the workers with disabilities interviewed agreed that some documents were available in alternative formats, such a larger fonts, audio tapes and braille, for persons with disabilities and some electronic information was fully accessible, though many did not know. A few of the workers from different factories mentioned that the factory library had various documents related to health, gender domestic violence, labour law and working conditions, referral information and one person said she heard there were also documents available in braille.

### **3.5 Barriers to Disability Inclusive Environment**

The vast majority of workers with disabilities interviewed stated they did not have any significant challenges and did not face any major obstacles in their work at the garment factory. However, many other stakeholders did raise various obstacles and problems faced by persons with disabilities, and these should be given due consideration especially given the low numbers of persons with disabilities employed in the garment industry.

### 3.5.1 Inaccessible Infrastructure and Physical Environment

Many stakeholders interviewed stated that most garment factories lack appropriate and accessible infrastructure for persons with disabilities, with the qualifying observation that many factory sites are rented or refurbished warehouses, which have not been built to purpose to accommodate persons with disabilities. As such, many companies would have to modify or redesign facilities at significant cost so they would be accessible to persons with disabilities in line with government regulations. At this point, some companies have determined that it is less expensive to pay the fine levied to the government established Persons with Disabilities Foundation for not meeting the one percent hiring quota than to pay for costly building modifications. Some stakeholders felt that some company management were resistant to making infrastructure changes as it would either be difficult or too expensive, and with low government enforcement of the regulations, it was fairly easy not to comply.

*“Companies know they will face a lot of challenges to comply with the government regulations, so if the law is not enforced and regulations are not mandatory, there tends to be little compliance.” (KII with stakeholder)*

Whilst it is true that sometimes supporting workers with disabilities can cost the employer more money, most adjustments are inexpensive, and a lot of the support that a worker with disability needs is mainly about the attitude of their manager and colleagues.<sup>5</sup>

### 3.5.2 Transportation difficulties and road safety issues

Several stakeholders interviewed mentioned that transportation to and from the factories, including cost and road safety issues, presents a major challenge for many persons with disabilities and is a deterrent for why many persons with disabilities do not apply or want to work at garment factories. Accidents involving motorcycles and crowded trucks transporting workers to and from the factory have been the cause of many serious injuries, resulting in severe disabilities and death of garment factory workers.

One worker with a physical disability interviewed had just decided to leave her job at a garment factory after working more than 15 years in the industry. She described how she injured in leg in a traffic accident while working for another factory more than 10 years ago. Her major challenge has been transportation to and from the factory, as she has had to travel every day to work by boat and then motorcycle.

*“Transportation to work is so very hard for me, as it is slippery and quite difficult with my leg injury. I am so tired and feel hopeless to continue working.” (Interview with female garment worker with disability, age 40, Factory B)*

### 3.5.3 Lack of in-depth understanding of disability inclusion rights

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<sup>5</sup> *Employing Persons with Disabilities in Cambodia, “How to create an inclusive workplace culture, Practical Tips for Employers 2019, UNDP and CDPO 2019*

Some stakeholders interviewed mentioned that there is still limited awareness and low understanding by garment factory management and owners of disability rights and disability inclusion. To date, there have been few trainings, mechanisms or policies put into place to assist the private sector in finding pathways on how to comply with the law and regulations. Employers typically fail to recognize the potential of persons with disabilities and do not offer work opportunities. There is often unconscious bias towards persons with disabilities – some employers believe employees with disabilities have only one skill, cannot move around the workplace and do multiple tasks, are not strong enough, do not have enough energy or will not do the job well.<sup>6</sup>

### **3.5.4 No clear system to recruit or identify persons with disabilities**

The garment factories do not have the capacity, skills or a clear system for recruiting or identifying persons with disabilities, especially given the sensitive personal nature of classifying categories and types of persons with disabilities as well as respect for confidentiality of personal information. As a result, the most common type of disability identified in the factory worker list of persons with disabilities is a physical impairment, such as a leg and arm injury.

*“We have a lot of difficulties in finding and recruiting persons with disabilities with skills to work in our factory and need assistance from the government and NGOs to help us.” (KII with Factory HR managers, Factory A, B, E)*

Several stakeholders interviewed suggested that both Sub-decree 108 and Prakas 2492 require reviews to ensure they align with international standards on disability, and to date there has been no mechanism in place to identify persons with disabilities. According to one stakeholder, in 2020, the government (MoSVY and DAC) started to develop a system for identifying, registering and issuing Disability ID cards to persons with disabilities and it has been rolled out in 12 provinces with 200,000 persons to date.

### **3.5.5 Low self-confidence and not feeling empowered**

In Cambodia, disability is a societal stigma and some persons with disabilities are directly and indirectly discriminated against, even by family members and communities. This is especially true of persons with intellectual disabilities who are more likely to face negative attitudes from people who do not believe they can learn skills or are capable of working and contributing to society.

Some stakeholders interviewed observed that some workers with disabilities felt shy and uncomfortable to join with others at the workplace. They felt that some workers with disabilities lacked confidence in themselves and their own abilities and skills to do the work. One key informant stated that as there were usually only a few workers with disabilities among many workers in the workforce, some persons with disabilities felt ill at ease, isolated from others and suffered indirect discrimination by colleagues.

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<sup>6</sup> Alexandra Gartrell, “Employment Challenges of Young Persons with Disability in Cambodia”, UNDP Cambodia, 2019

*"It is important for persons with disabilities to build confidence in themselves and we must all support them. We need to see their abilities not just their disabilities." (KII with stakeholder)*

Some garment factory human resource managers speculated that because of the large workforce and the emphasis on timely production outputs, many people with disabilities did not want to work in such a busy, crowded and demanding environment as the garment factories. They felt that the combination of the workplace environment and some persons with disabilities' lack of confidence, prevented them from even considering work at garment factories. One key informant interviewed echoed this sentiment stating that the long working hours with limited flexibility at factories are a deterrent for many persons with disabilities as it is physically demanding work.

### **3.5.6 Limited or mismatched skills sets and few applicants**

Many stakeholders interviewed stated that the garment industry in Cambodia has had difficulty in recruiting qualified and skilled persons for their workforce for many years, and many persons with disabilities have not had access to quality equitable education or vocational training, and are therefore at even more of a disadvantage when it comes to finding decent work.

*"We have cooperated with the National Employment Agency to disseminate information on employment opportunities at garment factories, especially for persons with disabilities, but we still cannot find persons with disabilities with skills for the jobs. We have difficulty finding even unskilled persons with disabilities to train." (KII with Stakeholder and Factory HR managers, Factory D, E )*

The 2013 Triple Jeopardy Study found that persons with disabilities, especially women, are more likely to have received a poorer education, which makes it harder to get a job, and so they are more likely than people without disabilities to be in poverty.<sup>7</sup>

### **3.5.7 Lack of collective voice or representation of workers with disabilities**

The vast majority of workers with disabilities interviewed did not feel discriminated against by factory management, human resource staff, supervisors or co-workers. In fact most workers with disabilities interviewed felt supported by their supervisors and befriended by their co-workers.

However because there are so few persons with disabilities employed at each garment factory and they are not organized as a group, means that the burden of raising concerns or issues is placed on the individuals themselves. The collective voice and solidarity to raise issues pertaining to persons with disability is missing, which can lead to feelings of isolation and disempowerment.

*"Regarding working time, I requested to leave early like the pregnant workers do and human resources said they would discuss with their supervisor. I have not yet heard back. Perhaps it was not effective as*

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<sup>7</sup> Jill Astbury and Fareen Walji, January 2013, Triple Jeopardy: Gender-based violence and human rights violations experienced by women with disabilities in Cambodia, AusAID Research Working Paper 1

***I raised this issue alone without others' voices." (Interview with female worker with physical disability, age 36-45, Factory D)***

Another female worker with a disability said she was granted permission by the previous factory owner to leave 15 minutes before her shifted ended, like pregnant women, due to her intense anxiety and fear of being around people and crowds. But when ownership of the factory changed, she was questioned repeatedly as to her reasons for this special treatment.

***"When the factory ownership changed, it became more difficult for myself and even for pregnant workers to leave early and to have flexible schedules." (Interview with female worker with disability, age 26-35, Factory C)***

This situation underscores the importance of having a disability inclusion policy with clearly written rules and regulations which are disseminated to the workforce and enforced by factory management. This should be backed with regular monitoring by a factory human resource committee as well as an external source, such as the Labour Inspection Department (MoLVT) or Better Factory Cambodia program.

### **3.6 Friendship or self-help group of workers with disabilities**

All five garment factory human resource managers interviewed agreed that workers with disabilities have the right to join trade unions or worker networks. Virtually all of the garment workers with disabilities interviewed stated they had the right to join a trade union or employee group and felt that their interests and needs were adequately represented by the trade union, just as for other workers. They mentioned they felt comfortable to raise concerns with trade union representatives on financial issues, unpaid wages, treatment by supervisors and even family problems. They recognized the important role that trade unions have in raising issues with factory management and seeking solutions for workers, such as with unpaid wages. At the same time, one person did raise reservations about the ability of the union to adequately represent workers with disabilities' concerns and problems.

***"Maybe because I have a disability and am different from others, the trade union representatives do not always listen to me or my concerns." (Interview with female garment worker with disability, age 36-45, Factory C)***

However only about 60 percent of the workers with disabilities interviewed were members of a trade union. Those workers who were not members cited they were not asked, not interested or were too busy to join. Yet virtually all workers with disabilities interviewed said they would be interested to join a special worker or friendship group of workers with disabilities. This could be an opportunity to increase the collective voice of workers with disabilities in the trade union, especially given the overall low numbers of persons with disabilities working in each garment factory.

## 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

### 4.1 Conclusions

Despite the lack of comprehensive formal policies and procedures on disability inclusion at garment factories, the vast majority of garment factory human resource managers and garment workers with disabilities interviewed felt workers with disabilities were treated equal as others and there was little discrimination at the workplace.

All garment factory human resource managers interviewed have increased their understanding of disability inclusion and disability rights and welcome formal disability inclusion policies, awareness-raising activities and systems to increase the number of workers with disabilities and provide reasonable accommodation, however all need additional support from factory management and owners, GMAC, NGOs and the government to ensure disability inclusion policies are implemented and they are complying with the government laws and regulations.

The lack of written disability inclusion policies is contributing to varying and inconsistent workplace regulations and/or different perceptions by factory staff and workers with disabilities of work regulations and reasonable accommodations to enable workers to perform their tasks. Furthermore, without formal disability inclusion policies, reasonable workplace adjustments such as flexible schedules or adaptation of workstations, become the sole responsibility of workers to request and are not routinely addressed or initiated by the factory management.

The majority of all stakeholders interviewed acknowledged that most garment factory infrastructure is not fully accessible to persons with disabilities, including both physical such as ramps and toilets as well as information products, and require improvements to ensure they comply with the government's 2018 Technical Standards on Physical Accessibility Infrastructure for Persons with Disability. Monitoring and enforcement of government laws and regulations was cited as important to ensure compliance.

While there is increased awareness of disability rights and the requirements of the law to employ at least one percent of persons with disabilities, the lack of an effective outreach system to encourage and identify persons with disabilities, combined with inaccessible infrastructure at factories, is limiting recruitment and hiring of potential workers. Furthermore, the collective voice of garment workers with disabilities to raise issues is missing, which can lead to feelings of isolation and disempowerment.

### 4.2 Recommendations

The following are a set of suggestions raised by stakeholders interviewed and as a result of the assessment findings on disability inclusive environment in garment factories, for consideration:

#### **Garment Factories**

1. With NGO and/or government support, assist garment factories to develop comprehensive disability inclusion policies, that are in line with local laws and international standards, encompassing concepts

of non-discrimination, equal opportunity and treatment, right to reasonable accommodation and adjustments, etc. and ensure they are disseminated to all employees. The sample template provided by CARE International in Cambodia is an excellent start.

2. Garment factories should develop a simple action plan or strategy to implement the disability inclusion policy, including involving workers with disabilities in the formulation of the action plan and establishing a committee to oversee implementation and monitoring.
3. Garment factories, in collaboration with NGOs and government, should provide regular training on disability inclusion to all employees and workers, especially factory management and supervisors, and collaborate with NGOs on raising awareness on disability inclusion concepts to all employees.
4. Ensure that concepts of reasonable accommodation and workplace adjustments are put into action and are included as part of the garment factory recruitment and orientation processes. A simple questionnaire or checklist would ensure the appropriate questions are asked by factory staff of candidates and new workers with disabilities, so the burden for requesting or raising specific considerations is shifted from the worker to the factory staff as part of their job.
5. Garment factories, with support from NGOs, should utilize the UNDP and CDPO publication “Employing persons with disabilities in Cambodia: How to Create an Inclusive Workplace Culture, Practical Tips for Employers 2019, especially the Chapter II: How to recruit persons with disabilities, with the seven step approach and Chapter III: How to include persons with disability in the workplace, with suggestions on addressing common barriers.
6. Garment factories need to invest in infrastructure that is accessible to persons with disabilities, especially toilets/washrooms and ramps/pathways, and ensure safety and emergency regulations take into account the needs of persons with disabilities, in line with government standard regulations.

### **Government and Garment Factories**

7. The relevant government institutions, including DAC and DRA/MoSVY, in collaboration with GMAC, should provide regular training and/or information sessions to garment factories and worker representatives on the government’s Technical Standards on Physical Accessibility Infrastructure for Persons with Disability (2018), as well as other relevant guidelines and standards, to insure infrastructure is accessible to persons with disabilities. The government should then monitor and publicize compliance or lack thereof.
8. In collaboration with NGOs, MoLVT and the National Employment Agency, GMAC and garment factories should consider conducting outreach and establishing links with networks of persons with disabilities for recruitment and hiring purposes. CDPO has a network of 75 organisations and 11 forums of persons with disabilities throughout the country and could facilitate outreach to persons with disabilities.

9. Invest in job and skills training for persons with disabilities that match the labour market of the garment industry, including establishing links with skills training centers and/or on the job skills training at garment factories for persons with disabilities.
10. As transportation and road safety are key aspects to safe, accessible employment at garment factories, the government should continue projects to increase safe transportation for garment factory workers and focus on road safety prevention as part of public health programs, employment conditions at factories and disability inclusion programs.
11. GMAC, in coordination with DAC and/or DRA of MoSVY, should continue to facilitate and organize workshops / awareness raising for their members on disability rights and disability inclusion at factories. This could include a targeted campaign on Awareness of Disability Inclusion and Disability Rights, with a “CAN DO” approach, combined with information on compliance with the law.
12. Consider utilizing the garment sector tripartite mechanism involving government representatives, employer representatives and worker representatives, with technical support from ILO and Better Factory Cambodia, to further promote awareness of disability inclusion and government regulations in the garment industry to reach more garment factories and buyers/companies. The tripartite mechanism and involvement of Better Factory Cambodia is a very good model.

#### **CARE, ADD and NGOs**

13. Further explore the possibility with factory human resource managers, workers with disabilities and trade unions in each factory of establishing an informal peer group of workers with disabilities to ensure their collective voice is represented to the factory management and by the trade union. CDPO is a valuable resource and could be approached to provide technical support and guidance. Time availability and interest by the workers with disability are critical to success.
14. CARE and ADD should use their platform as international NGOs to lobby international and local buyers and brands to influence garment factories owners and management on awareness and compliance with labour standards on disability rights and disability inclusion. It was noted that some international companies/buyers already have disability inclusion policies and are actively working with local garment factories on implementation and compliance with local and international laws.
15. CARE and ADD, in collaboration with DAC, DRA/MoSVY and GMAC, should consider developing a follow-up action plan and/or project based on the assessment findings to promote disability inclusion and disability rights in garment factories, including dissemination to a wider range of brands/companies involved in the garment industry in Cambodia.

#### **ALL**

16. To combat stigma and discrimination towards persons with disability in society, demystify the concept of disability at the community and family level, by demonstrating how workers with disabilities can and do contribute to families and communities, and do not only rely on social assistance.

## 5. Annex

### 5.1 Glossary of Key Terms

#### 1. Accessibility

The concept according to which environments, processes, goods, products and services, as well as objects or instruments, tools and devices, including ICT and systems, should be understandable and usable by all people in the safest, most convenient and natural possible way. As a concept originally developed from the needs of people with disabilities, it in fact benefits everyone.

**1.1 Accessibility of the built environment:** examples of a company's interior facilities include flat entrances and wide doors; handles for doors and drawers that do not require gripping or twisting to use; electrical outlets at waist level, eliminating the need to bend or kneel; storage spaces within reach of both short and tall people; pathways and hallways free of obstacles, steps or gaps; etc.

**1.2 Accessibility of communication and information:** examples include providing information and communication in **alternative formats**. This means producing formats that are accessible for people with different types of disability by using simple and easy-to-read language, Braille, large font sizes, audio tapes or CDs, or electronic files that are readable by screen readers, for example. Moreover, formatting, quality of paper, images and text need to be considered.

#### 2. Disability inclusion

A concept that refers to promoting and ensuring the participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of society, including employment.

#### 3. Impairment

Any loss or abnormality of psychological, psychological or anatomical structure or function.

#### 4. Inclusive Work (place)

An inclusive workplace is **one where people with all kinds of differences and disabilities feel welcome and valued for their contributions**. It's a place where people with disabilities — both visible and invisible disabilities — have the same opportunities for advancement as their co-workers.

#### 5. Job retention

Refers to a set of measures that allow an injured employee or an employee having acquired a disability to retain their job. Employees may be able to return to the same job without changes, retain their position with modifications or be assigned to a different job with the same employer.

#### 6. Non-discrimination

Refers to prohibiting discrimination on the ground of disability, as well as other grounds, and to combat the exclusion of people with disabilities.

The ILO Code of Practice on managing disability at the workplace defines **discrimination** as any distinction, exclusion or preference based on certain grounds which nullifies or impairs equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation. Apparently neutral situations, regulations or practices which in fact result in unequal treatment of persons with certain characteristics are considered indirect discrimination.

### **7. Persons with disabilities**

Persons with disabilities include those who have long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. (UNCRPD, 2006)

### **8. Reasonable accommodation**

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

In employment, it may include adjustments or modifications of the tools, machines, workstations, and the work environment to an individual's needs. It may also include adjustment in work organization, work schedules, sequence of work, and in breaking down work tasks to their basic elements. Most people with disabilities don't require big accommodations or even none at all.

### **9. Return to work**

Refers to the process by which a worker is supported in resuming work after an absence due to injury or illness.

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*Note: Terms from ILO Global Business and Disability Network Self-Assessment tool, understood.org and WHO*

## 5.2 List of Documents Reviewed

1. Analytic Guidelines: Creating Disability Identifiers Using The Washington Group Short Set on Functioning, (WG-SS) SPSS Syntax, 12 May 2020, <https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/>
2. CARE International Cambodia, Strengthening the Economic Resilience of Garment Workers with disabilities during COVID19 and beyond, Project Information (undated)
3. Inter-ministerial Prakas No. 2492 on Determination and Criteria for Types and Levels of Disability, Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation and Ministry of Health, Phnom Penh, 22 November 2011
4. ILO Global Business and Disability Network, Self-Assessment Tool (undated)
5. Employing Persons with Disabilities in Cambodia, *How to create an inclusive workplace culture, Practical Tips for Employers 2019*. United Nations Development Program and CDPO, 2019
6. Law on the Protection and the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Royal Government of Cambodia, 2009
7. Prakas on Employment Injury Benefits, No. 109 Lv/PRK, May 19, 2008, Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training
8. Sub-Decree No. 108 on Determining the Rate and Formality of Recruitment of Disabled Persons, Royal Government of Cambodia, 30 August 2010 (CAMFEBA Unofficial Translation)
9. Technical Standards on Physical Accessibility Infrastructure for Persons with Disabilities 2018, Disability Action Council, General Secretariat
10. The Washington Group Short Set on Functioning, The Washington Group on Disability Statistics, 19 March 2020 , <https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/>
11. UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006
12. 2020 Garment Client Assessment Tool, Better Work Cambodia, ILO and IFC, 2017

### 5.3 List of Stakeholders/Institutions Interviewed

Institution	Name	Position	Sex
1. DAC	HE Prak Thaveak Pheary	Deputy Secretary General	F
2. MoLVT	Mr. Pheng Sopheat	Deputy Director, Labour Inspection Department	M
3. MoSVY	Mr. Sem Sophana	Director, Disability Rights Administration	M
4. GMAC	Mr. Kim Pichda	Legal Manager	M
5. CDPO	Ms. Mak Monika	Executive Director	F
6. Advocacy and Policy Institute	Mr. Lam Soheat	Executive Director	M
7. The Asia Foundation	Ms. Meloney Lindberg	Country Representative	F
8. ILO BFC	Mr. Arron Goldman	Assistant Country Director/Programs	M
9. Buyer/Brand	N/A	Audit/Compliance/Monitoring	M

Garment Factory Management	Name	Position	Sex
1. Quantum Apparel (Cambodia) Ltd.	Ms. Sim Sothea	Human Resource Manager	F
2. Quantum Clothing (Cambodia) Co.	Ms. Ly Sievminh	Human Resource Manager	F
3. Top Form (Cambodia) Co. Ltd.	Ms. Chann Vesna	Human Resource Manager	F
4. Bowker Garment Factory (Cambodia) Co. Ltd	Mr. Kang Bunkym	HR Compensation Manager	M
5. Olive Apparel (Cambodia) Co. Ltd	Ms. Pech Sokheng	Human Resource Manager	F

Garment Factory Workers	No.	Sex	Positions
1. Quantum Apparel (Cambodia) Ltd.	3	3 F	Data Entry, Quality Control
2. Quantum Clothing (Cambodia) Co.	5	4 F, 1M	Sewers, Quality Control, Cotton
3. Top Form (Cambodia) Co. Ltd.	3	F	Cleaner, Sewer,
4. Bowker Garment Factory (Cambodia) Co. Ltd	1	F	Technical Teacher
5. Olive Apparel (Cambodia) Co. Ltd	4	3 F, 1 M	Sewers, Cutters, Quality Control

## 5.4 Interview Guides

1. Interview Guide for Garment Worker with Disability	 ADD DI 4.1 KII GWWD_16Mar22.d
2. In-depth Interview Guide for Garment Worker with Disability	 ADD DI 4.2 IDI GWWD_16Mar22.d
3. Interview Guide for Garment Factory Managers	 ADD DI 4.3 KII GF_16Mar22.docx
4. Key Informant Guide for Stakeholders	 ADD DI 4.4 KII with Stakeholders_16Ma