

INCLUDING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE WORKPLACE AND IN ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES



“ The mining and minerals sector must re-think the way it looks at the issue of including people with disabilities ”

Chapter 10

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10.1 The suitability of people with disabilities in the mining and minerals sector



**Disability is
not a choice -
your attitude is**

The process and purpose of recruiting people with disabilities should not be about meeting the legislative targets, but to begin to transform the sector and create an environment and resource pool of people with disabilities who are qualified, professional and with expertise.

Most people with disabilities neither require nor seek safety systems beyond those in place for the workforce generally. In practice, the duty of care extends to ensuring that people with disabilities are not exposed to workplace environments that are hazardous as a consequence of their disability. An employer must also give particular attention to the integration of a people with disabilities within the overall workforce. Although employing people with disabilities never compromises health and safety standards, there may be a requirement to provide information or instigate training for other staff to ensure that both routine and emergency practices work effectively for people with hearing disabilities, information is of the utmost importance because maybe they do not understand what they have to do. Training, sensitisation and awareness in the workplace is essential when employing people with hearing disabilities.

10.1.1 Matching individual skills to suitable careers

The mining sector must begin a hectic process of identifying careers and skills development programmes in the mining sector suitable for people with disabilities. This will require a bottom up approach and hands on exposure to the disability sector and people with disabilities where proactive involvement, consultation and capacity building and awareness will ensure input specific to their career advancement.

All stakeholders must be part of this exercise so that they in turn get practical exposure to the strenuous challenges of designing programmes and recruiting people with disabilities into such programmes. A strategic plan and systems must be put in place so that basic training does not compromise advanced occupational training of skilled employees who are essential in improving productivity.

The MQA should facilitate the establishment of a Disability Strategy with an action framework that will set the trend and put systems in place to comply with the targets set. This will require engagement with understanding of the socio-economic and educational status and needs of people with disabilities. This strategy must reflect the pillars of engagement, development of training programmes, retraining of employees, including the recognition of prior learning (RPL), and the recruitment of people with disabilities. For some disabilities a workplace coach facilitates achievement of one's goals.



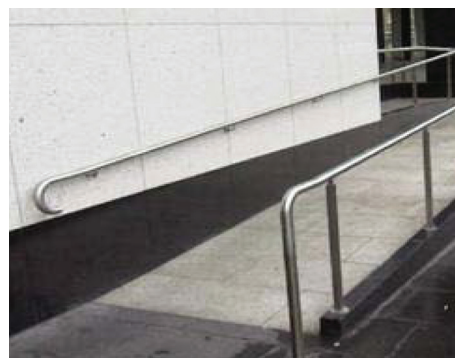
The sector should create an environment where education, skills training, development and career advancement and permanent work placement for people with disabilities in the sector is practical and sustainable.

10.1.2 Disability capacity building

The Mining Charter with its' Broad-Based Social-Economic Empowerment Charter for the South African Mining Sector and the Black Economic Empowerment Charter are socio-economic transformation tools aimed at increasing the number of HDSAs (historically disadvantaged South Africans) participating in the economy.

These tools have ensured that black entrepreneurs increasingly enter the board rooms of mining and minerals companies, that black owned companies get business deals within the sector and that more and more women are beneficiaries of these economic empowerment initiatives.

Given the historical educational background of people with disabilities and the mining conditions that contribute to their increasing numbers, their empowerment should centre around capacity building, information dissemination through awareness campaigns, workshops and mentorship programmes, prioritised procurement systems, mobility provision, employment and assertiveness training.



Provide appropriate access for people with disabilities

10.2 The role the sector can play

- The sector can implement clear and specific regulatory and monitoring criterion that defines HDSAs (historically disadvantaged South Africans) in the sector and how this criterion should be measured.
- The creation and monitoring of score cards for economic empowerment of people with disabilities in the sector should be established.
- The sector must implement the Mining Charter and BBBEE in a way that benefits people with disabilities as suppliers and contractors in the sector.
- The sector procurement strategies must encourage and support the integration of people with disabilities:

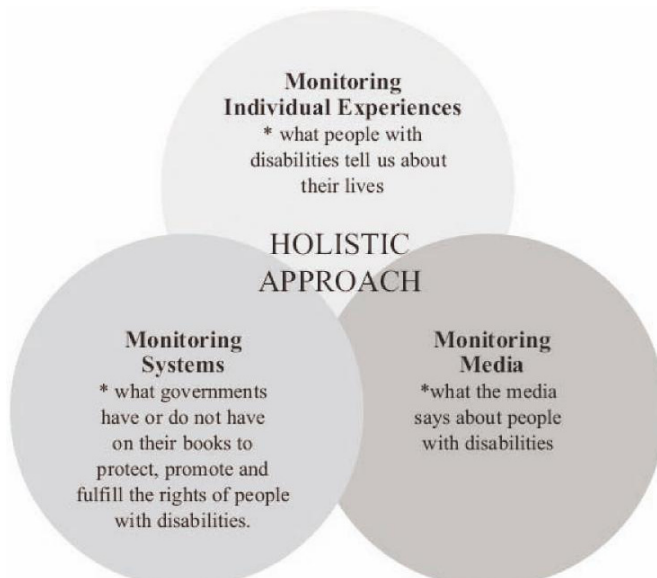
10.2.1 Systems

The sector can develop systems that can be put in place to meet best standard and good disability management practice, meaning:

- The mining sector including the MQA should have a vision and a mission to meet the human rights standards and inclusion of people with disabilities
- The MQA should put in place monitoring systems for the sector as licensing criterion and standard grading for mining business
- Establish a solid system of rules and regulations to manage disability

10.2.2 Monitoring and regulatory issues

- The MQA should set up or upgrade benchmark standards of excellence for the mining sector on disability management, including training and career planning.
- A national grading could be published and made available to the public as a way of encouraging the sector to improve their standards.
- Yearly reporting and accounting systems must have clear and specific indicators on monitoring the extent to which companies are meeting or not meeting these standards and results of this should be published in the national grading report.



Monitor the mainstreaming of disability

10.2.3 Compliance

The sector could:

- Provide disability regulatory and monitoring systems that deals with meriting or de-meriting indicators for the licensing and business operations of the sector
- Strictly enforce rules and policing standards on OHS and the Mining Act
- Put in place clear and specific guidelines and systems that are integrated and central to strategic operations of the mining business to address health and safety preventative measures, fatalities, injuries and seismic risks; promoting health and safety and addressing the impact of fatalities, injuries and health risks

10.2.4 Investigations

The current system of inspection by the Department of Labour, the internal supervision of miners, consultation with the miners, the routine medical surveillance by contracted companies, the Safety, Health and Environmental (SHE) representatives and first aid personnel need to be re-evaluated and a better system that is more risk based and linked to executive and strategic operations needs to be put in place. Other hazard investigation and risk analysis are needed, bearing in mind that the majority of mine labour is unskilled, illiterate or semi-skilled.

10.2.5 Compensation

An empowerment, socio-economic system than the current compensatory system should be developed taking into consideration the immediate family members of victims and their communities.

10.2.6 Support strategies

10.2.6.1 Support Small, Medium and Micro-Enterprises (SMMEs) of people with disabilities

The creation of work opportunities for people with disabilities through the development and maintenance of small, medium and micro-enterprises should form a key component in a comprehensive employment strategy for people with disabilities. Despite the mushrooming of numerous self-help projects and business development initiatives by people with disabilities and their organisations, this sector has had virtually no access to financial assistance or technical support from the state, the NGO community or the private SMME sector.

The lack of trainers skilled in training people with specific needs together with physically inaccessible training facilities and public transport, have led to further exclusion of people with disabilities from training opportunities.

The SMME White Paper identifies disabled entrepreneurs as a target group for positive action.

Vocational education and training (VET), adult basic education and training (ABET), and vocational rehabilitation are key elements in the successful engagement of people with disabilities in the SMME sector.

10.2.6.2 Sheltered Employment (Non-exploitive)

Protective/sheltered employment includes: sheltered/protective workshops that do not exploit, and protected work environments within ordinary places of work.

A distinction should be drawn between vocational training centres and sheltered employment. Sheltered employment should always aim to prepare workers, as far as possible, for work in the open labour market.

Subsidies should be linked to mechanisms that will ensure:

- Appropriate placement,
- The legal status of workers, types of work, working hours and wages,
- The availability of medical, social and psychological assistance to workers,
- Special training and checks on workers' progress with a view to their possible settlement in an ordinary working environment.

Employment opportunities within a sheltered environment should be available to people who, because of their disability, are unable to obtain or keep an ordinary job, whether supported or not.

Disability
does not **stop**
me from **being an**
entrepreneur