



PERSPECTIVES OF

DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE BUSINESS

IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC



WHY

“DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE BUSINESS” IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC?

15% of the total population is persons with disabilities in the world according to the World Report on Disability, 2011. When it comes to Asia and the Pacific, 40% of the total population is persons with disabilities and their family members. Moreover, 60% of the total population in the world is in the Asia-Pacific region where agriculture is the major industry. A charity-based approach from the business sector (e.g. donation) is not always applicable, given that the background of the Asia-Pacific region is according to family and community linkage.

As a matter of fact, information is still less available regarding business with the background of the Asia-Pacific region: diverse language, food, religion and other cultural aspects. It is often said that persons with disabilities participate in a variety of income generating activities; however, there is no overall information and documents which clarify key factors when it comes to business.

By understanding how to engage persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, enterprises can maximize the opportunity to expand their markets and utilize available human resources. The concept of “disability-inclusive business” has been brainstormed through the roundtable talks organized by the Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD) in collaboration with The Nippon Foundation and other partners from the perspective of persons with disabilities as customers, employees, employers and entrepreneurs.

With more than 50 businesses including some of the biggest business enterprises such as the Charoen Pokphand Group of Thailand, Standard Chartered Bank of Thailand and the SM Supermalls of the Philippines, a series of roundtable talk has been organized by APCD through the “Inclusive Business Project” funded by The Nippon Foundation. Such roundtable talks have identified the concept of disability-inclusive business as one of the potential business strategies in Asia and the Pacific; given that majority of persons with disabilities live in Asia and the Pacific. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has also shared its prospect in disability-inclusive business, and participated in the roundtable talk positively.



WHAT IS “DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE BUSINESS”?

“Disability-Inclusive Business” is an enterprise that has a positive impact on disability-friendly environment, communication, attitude, policy and regulation.

It is an emerging business trend that strives to address disability, work and employment from the perspective of persons with disabilities as customers, employees, employers, and entrepreneurs. In general, an enterprise is described as a disability-inclusive business if it matches the following criteria:

- 1) It incorporates the principles of accessibility into each of its business aspects.
- 2) It offers disability-friendly products, communication and services that replace those which are non disability-friendly.
- 3) It has made a commitment to disability principles according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in its business policies.

Unanimously adopted at the Inclusive Business Roundtable Talk on Rating System
at the Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability,
Bangkok, Thailand, 1 February, 2012.



STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

There is no clear consensus as to what the term Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) means, in spite of the growing significance of CSR. Many different names for the similar concept have been identified, such as Corporate Social Responsibility, Corporate Citizenship, Business Sustainability and Corporate Responsibility.

This lack of consistency to define CSR has made it difficult to evaluate and compare the new findings from different studies, since different dimensions of CSR are referred. In this sense, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 26000 can be one guideline to manage any type of organizations, in both public and private sectors, in developed and developing countries, to be socially responsible.

KNOWLEDGE OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

New knowledge always begins with individuals in our life. Innovation may illustrate a movement between two very different types of knowledge: tacit and explicit knowledge. A starting point of innovation is one kind of knowledge that is not so easily expressible: tacit knowledge which is highly personal, hard to formalize and therefore, difficult to communicate to others. Tacit knowledge has been described in a variety of ways: rooted in action, experience and involvement in a specific context. For creating and managing knowledge in any organization, the distinction between tacit and explicit knowledge suggests four basic patterns: socialization, externalization, combination and internalization (SECI model), according to Prof. Ikujiro Nonaka, a famous scholar known as the author of “The Knowledge-Creating Company”.



Knowledge management is defined somewhat differently by different organizations, and by different individuals within those organizations. There are some organizations which perceive knowledge management as a form of document management; a system that lets knowledge workers share design data, field staff share best practices, and so on. For persons with disabilities, knowledge management may be more understandable since they have unique experiences as tacit knowledge originally. Generally, there is a broader view of knowledge management that is defined as a set of practices that maximizes the business value of knowledge by gathering, structuring, and delivering it at critical points of business development.

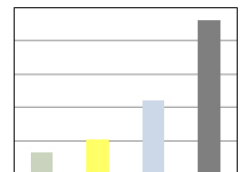


Knowledge management is not by nature “married” to any particular channel of disability and development in the business context. In fact, to be fully effective over the long term, “disability-inclusive business” should involve the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) from the perspective of persons with disabilities as customers, employees, employers and entrepreneurs, or by any combination of the above. In other words, knowledge should be a multi-channel resource.

HINTS OF DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE BUSINESS



Explicit knowledge



Nowadays, Report, Newspaper, Data, Academic research, Figures etc are available...



Tacit knowledge



Persons with Disabilities have unique experiences, unwritten secrets and tricks.

BRAINSTORMING “DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE BUSINESS”

Initially, the term “disability-inclusive business” was raised through the Senior Officials’ Meeting on South-to-South Cooperation on Disability organized by the United Nations ESCAP and APCD at the United Nations Convention Centre in Bangkok, Thailand in August 2010. As a follow-up, APCD, The Nippon Foundation and some key partners have got together in occasions of roundtable talk to brainstorm a new concept “disability-inclusive business” to maximize the potential of persons with disabilities as business opportunities and assets.

KICK-OFF MEETING ON DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE BUSINESS

With more than 20 participants from the disability and business sector, the “Brainstorming Meeting on Inclusive Business” was organized by APCD at APCD Training Building from 28 to 29 June 2011. Through the meeting, the “disability-inclusive business” concept was thoroughly discussed, particularly from the rural point of view such as agriculture.



Brainstorming key factors of Disability-Inclusive Rural Business and Agriculture



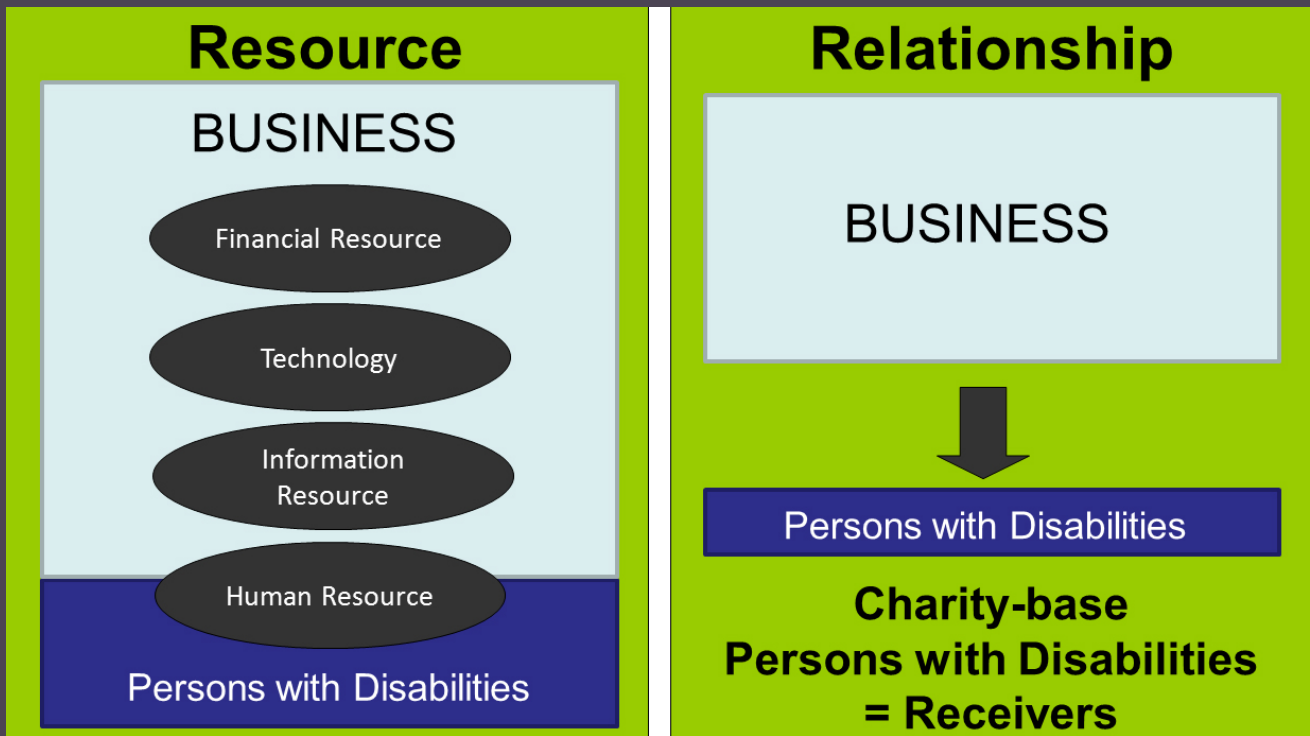
The participants included customers with disabilities, employees with disabilities, and entrepreneurs with disabilities. Key points of successful inclusive business, challenges and progresses were highlighted.

One of the major outcomes of the Meeting was to gain further insight on how to include persons with disabilities in the business context, particularly in comparison with CSR concept. The following chart illustrated the viewpoint of conventional CSR and disability-inclusive business. As is in the below chart, one clear consensus in the roundtable talk was to emphasize the need of paradigm shift from the vertical way to the horizontal way.

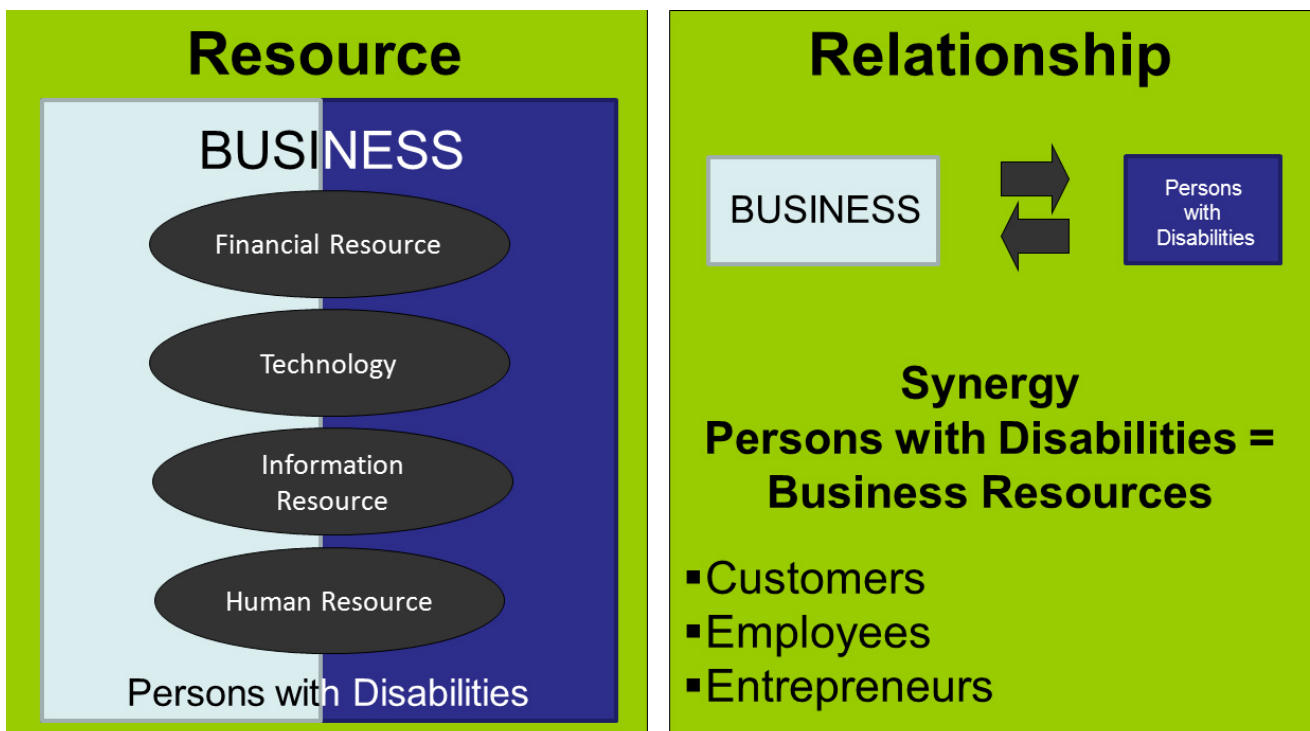


Participants of the Meeting

PERCEPTION OF CONVENTIONAL CSR



BASIS OF DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE BUSINESS



DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE ON ICT

With more than 20 business practitioners as well as leaders with disabilities, the “Inclusive Business Roundtable Talk on ICT (Information and Communication Technologies)” was jointly organized by the SM Supermalls, APCD and TNF at SMX Convention Center in Manila, the Philippines, on 29 September 2011.



Participants of the Roundtable Talk

In the Roundtable Talk, participants clarified the roles of persons with disabilities in business as customers, employees and entrepreneurs. Advanced Contact Center, Web Courses Bangkok, the United Architects of the Philippines and Genashtim Innovative Learning of Singapore presented their success stories on disability. Participants assumed the viewpoints of customers, employees and entrepreneurs to brainstorm the business opportunities, challenges and strategies for disability-inclusive business.

In the context of knowledge management, the participants agreed that “disability-inclusive business” is typically deployed to achieve specific, measurable indicators in the areas of Environment, Communication, Attitude, and Policy and Regulation. “Green Business” which concerns environment issues is one model.



Participants with disabilities from the Business Sector Sharing the Business Viewpoint

DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE TALK ON RATING SYSTEM

In line with the findings of the previous meetings, the “Inclusive Business Roundtable Talk on Rating System” was jointly organized by APCD and TNF at APCD Training Building in Bangkok, Thailand, on 31 January and 1 February 2012. Participants included the United Nations ESCAP, Charoen Pokphand Group of Thailand and other business entities.



Participants of the Roundtable Talk



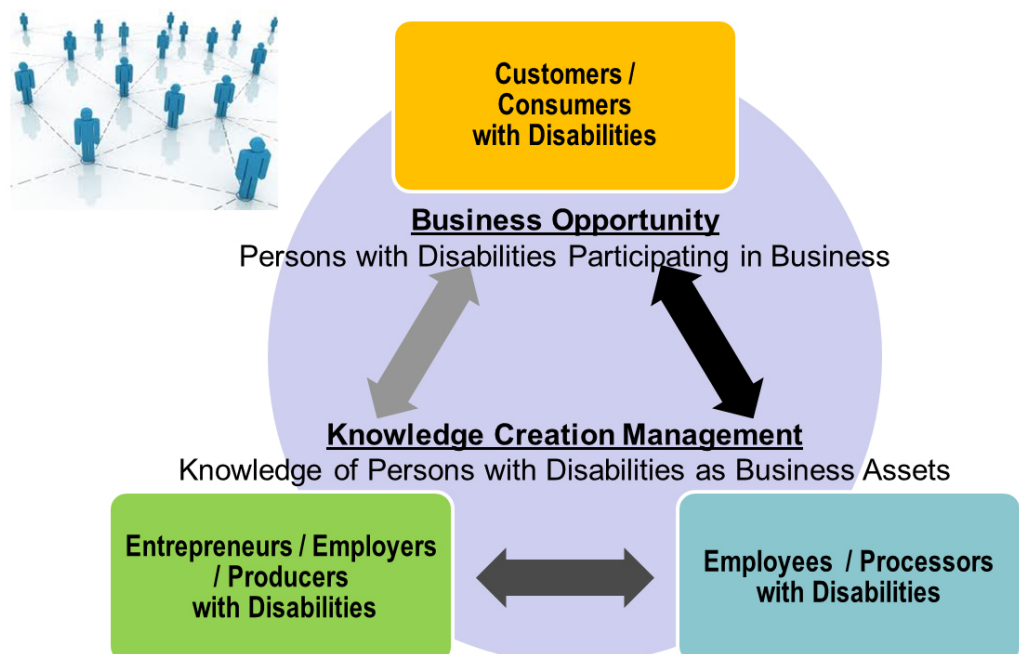
Participants Elaborating the Future Direction

Two major outcomes were identified in this session.

1) Definition of “Disability-Inclusive Business: One of the outcomes was to define “disability-inclusive business” officially. Participants came to conclude that it is an emerging business trend that strives to utilize tacit knowledge that persons with disabilities uniquely acquire/develop due to their disability from the perspective of entrepreneur, employee and customer.

2) Consensus of “Disability-Inclusive Business” Development at the United Nations level: The other outcome was that participants supported the idea of “disability-inclusive business” according to collaboration by the United Nations ESCAP, APCD and The Nippon Foundation. From the economic perspective, participants emphasized the need of rating system since it can refer to reasonable access to goods and services, to ensure, wherever possible, persons with disabilities are represented in their companies as customers, employees, employers and entrepreneurs. From the viewpoint of employment focus, it was agreed among participants that the award system needs to be developed to guarantee same terms and conditions regarding disability, awareness training for staff, and to ensure accessibility and reasonable accommodations according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

FUTURE BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE



MEASURING DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE BUSINESS

During up a series of “disability-inclusive business” roundtable talk, one of the key topics on “disability-inclusive business” has been a rating system in order to develop such perspective further in line with disability principles. In particular, the following four components need to be elaborated:

1) ENVIRONMENT COMPONENT:

Disability-inclusive business helps companies lowering the cost of service with accessibility principles, reducing complaints and staff training, and by maximizing the potential of customers with disabilities to avail services. Improving the performance of employees not only enhances the net efficiency of the disability-inclusive business enterprises, but also gives the enterprises access to a bigger labor pool, because there is an increased need to find individuals with disabilities who have both interpersonal skills and domain knowledge. Finally, disability-inclusive business can enable the enterprises to divert a significant amount of traffic to products and services.

2) COMMUNICATION COMPONENT:

Disability-inclusive business also leads to better quality of communication. Customers / Consumers with disabilities and their family members are more likely to receive the right answers faster, with no need to be put on hold or transferred to another staff or agent. And, the value of superior communication support is enormous. According to the roundtable talk, participants emphasized that customers/consumers with disabilities who buy a product or service with communication support while having a problem are likely to repurchase from the same enterprise more than those offering a perfect product and service without communication support.

3) ATTITUDE COMPONENT:

Without a viewpoint of disability-inclusive business, it is very difficult for an enterprise to know the responses that customers/consumers with disabilities receive, much less control them. With knowledge management principles, customers/consumers with disabilities who have the same questions receive the same response with appropriate attitude, regardless of product and service. Once consistency of attitude in the disability-inclusive business enterprise is achieved, it is then possible to fine-tune responses without any prejudice and discrimination, and thereby boost efficiency and quality of product and service even further.

4) Policy and Regulation Component:

Disability-inclusive product and service often produces results in other operational areas. For example, a prominent shopping mall: SM Supermalls in the Philippines has changed a policy to persons with disabilities and their family members as customers by inviting them to staff training who may mistakenly think persons with disabilities are not able to shop, when in fact they don't know how to offer service properly.

FINDINGS: BUSINESS STRATEGY

green
BUSINESS



disability
INCLUSIVE
BUSINESS

Environmental Issues/Concern

Disability Issues/Concern

DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE BUSINESS PRACTICES AND DEPLOYMENT

It is evident that knowledge that persons with disabilities and their families have can help enterprises as disability-inclusive business. In addition, there are other business solutions such as below in which unique knowledge and experiences of persons with disabilities can play a critical role:

1) OUTSOURCING:

When a company decides to outsource service, it is not a simple matter for persons with disabilities since it may reduce the barriers such as inaccessible transportation and communication system in the familiar product line. Knowledge that persons with disabilities and their families have can make the transition of outsourcing virtually painless, while significantly lowering the cost of servicing. For enterprises which may seek for the identity of disability-inclusive business, this factor can be used as a negotiating point to lower the price of outsourcing contracts.

2) CUSTOMERS WITH DISABILITIES SERVICE:

This challenge is in many ways similar to outsourcing, in that a large number of enterprises often need to be trained in areas that are completely unfamiliar to persons with disabilities. Unique knowledge can enable the creation of a central repository for all knowledge required for both business and disability groups, ensuring a consistent approach to problem solution.

3) SERVICE FORCE BY PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES:

Those who know the best about disability are persons with disabilities and their families. With such workforce, disability-inclusive business can suggest specific business opportunities for complementary offerings and provide enterprises the scripts and information needed to present those offerings to customers. In this case, knowledge management principles not only provide “the right answer”, but actually help the enterprises increase the market value and sales.

4) ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION:

As the website becomes an increasingly important point for customers, enterprises must understand the important role that knowledge of persons with disabilities and their families can play in web-based interactions. Though the most popular channel of interaction is still actual communication for customers, internet users in Asia already account for 25 % and are growing in importance.

The bottom line is that knowledge management approach in collaboration with persons with disabilities is also a strategy for a set of business practices. It is not merely a technology. Deployments of disability-inclusive business may fail due to a lack of commitment to disability than for any other cause.



STORIES FROM THE FIELD



SM CARES CUSTOMERS **SM SUPERMALLS, PHILIPPINES**



A typical implementation of disability-inclusive business by SM Supermalls started from one hardship. As an actual fact, one person with autism was missing in one of the SM shopping mall branches, and on the following day he was found. Mass media criticized SM Supermalls as a non disability-friendly shopping retailer.

In response, SM Supermalls invited persons with disabilities and their family members as resource persons of staff training. Knowledge and experiences on disability have been utilized as the engine for business development.

Eventually, SM Supermalls has been able to achieve significant number of customers while reducing a business cost.



DISABILITY EQUALITY TRAINING AND DISABILITY RELATED SERVICE TRAINING

AIR ASIA, MALAYSIA



Air Asia collaborates with Barrier-free Environment and Accessible Transport (BEAT, Malaysian group of organizations of persons with disabilities), Indonesia NGOs and APCD to further improve the quality of service to passengers with disabilities through training, particularly appropriate attitude to customers. The training covers many topics including practices from the perspective of passengers with various disabilities. Air Asia staff learn about different needs of passengers with disabilities in airline services such as ticket booking, checking-in process and boarding, and how to behave professionally towards such passengers.



DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE CALL CENTER

STANDARD CHARTERED BANK, THAILAND



Through the disability-inclusive call center where persons with disabilities serve, the Bank interacts with the customers. It is for the purpose of not only receiving and transmitting a volume of requests, but also mobilizing human resources with disabilities in the positions where their unique experiences: tacit knowledge are utilized fully.

DOING & LEARNING TOGETHER



CHAROEN POKPHAND GROUP (CP GROUP),
THAILAND



To promote self-employment of persons with disabilities, the “Agriculture for Lunch” project was initiated by Mr. Supree Baosingsauy (Assistant Vice-President, Rural Lives’ Development Foundation, Charoen Pokphand Group, Thailand) and his colleagues. After participating in the business roundtable discussion at the ESCAP-APCD Meeting in August 2010, he gained further



insight on how to include persons with disabilities in the business sector. During the Brainstorming Meeting on Inclusive Business at APCD on 28-29 June 2011, the progress of some rural initiatives was shared with other business stakeholders in a very dynamic way.

The “Agriculture for Lunch” project provides lunch with eggs since they have protein. Students with disabilities learn how to raise chickens and sell eggs in the school cooperative shop. As of 2011, some practices are demonstrated in Saijaitai Veteran Village for veterans with disabilities to learn about agriculture e.g. raising chickens and fish, and growing vegetables and rice.



TRADING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT IN A COMMUNITY



RAYONG DISABLED'S AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT TRADE ASSOCIATION, THAILAND



Established in 2003, 50 families of persons with disabilities in Rayong province began clearing land and constructing animal shelters. Through farming, the families of persons with disabilities have expanded their animal husbandry to raise cows, turkeys, chickens, boars and fish.



MODEL FARM INITIATIVE

CENTRE FOR DISABILITY IN DEVELOPMENT, MYANMAR

Since 2010, the Model Farm was implemented by persons with disabilities who had practical knowledge concerning agriculture and animal husbandry. By providing opportunities to develop livelihood systems, the Model Farm has been practicing awareness-raising as well.





CONSULTANT SERVICE BY THE BLIND FARMER **RASHID FARM, MALAYSIA**

The farm was started by a blind farmer with RM5,000 as its business capital. By utilizing the business loan scheme from the government agency, the business now includes goats, cows, chickens as well as the sale of fresh milk and chicken eggs. At the same time, the farm provides consultant services for new entrepreneurs.



A SHRIMP AND PIG FARM **KULARB FARM, THAILAND**

One female entrepreneur learned about agriculture with her family since she grew up on the farm. Her own business of a shrimp farm in Thailand has been successful. Nowadays, a pig farm and paddy field are also available in Supanburi Province.



ENTERPRISES AND ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATING IN ROUNDTABLE



Accessible for Persons with Disabilities



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