



*‘Not all disabilities are visible’*

*International Day of People with Disabilities (IDPD) – 2020*



## S4IG IS HELPING THOSE WITH DISABILITIES BUILD BACK BETTER

Skills for Inclusive growth program mainly focuses Disability Inclusion throughout the program intervention by developing successful skills development models such as Generate Role Models and Disability Champions, Challenge Stereotypes about type of jobs that can do by Person with disabilities through reasonable adjustment and introduce flexible training models.

This program has succeeded ensuring representation of 115 wide range of disabilities such as Physical, Visual, Hearing and Intellectual disabilities. S4IG maintains a focus on removing barriers inherent in traditional systems and approaches that prevent access to skills development and employment opportunities such as Chef, Travel Agent, Cook, Receptionist, Beautician, Content developers, Photography to destination development, Tuk Tuk tour guide and Room attendant especially for people with disabilities.

S4IG has implemented a range of strategies across each district that directly target improved employment outcomes and commensurate improvement in participant income levels .

facilitates flexible workplace delivery of accredited qualifications and Enhancing Employability Skills in Tourism and Hospitality Industry for Disadvantaged Young People recruits young people (mostly from rural or remote communities) who are looking for employment opportunities available in the tourism sector.

S4IG has supported 590 new entrants to gain employment out of which 217 are female and 373 are male, including 35 people with disabilities. In terms of workforce development, S4IG has improved employment and income for participants of skills development.

To make sure the disability inclusion nationally in skill development S4IG succeeded Policy Improvement. A government circular is issued on **“Provide Reasonable Adjustment for Person with disability during their examination within the Tertiary Vocation Education Training”**

Also working for Attitudinal & Practice Change through Showcasing S4IG disability champions and role models.



## NO ONE IS LEFT OUT



For the hearing and speech impaired, learning a trade could be a daunting task, so much so, that their employment opportunities range from being limited to non-existent.

But, with Skills for Inclusive Growth, (S4IG) designing programmes that do not exclude anyone, employment opportunities are opening up for the differently abled. S4IG's goal is to introduce innovative skills development models that would add value to the tourism industry and create sustainable and gainful employment outcomes for people.

One beneficiary of the S4IG programme is 17 year old Mohamed Ilhas, who is hearing and speech impaired. He hails from a farming family in Arugambay. Four of his five member family are afflicted by the same impairment as Ilhas, and are challenged in completing their education and obtaining employment. The family has so far existed on their father's meagre earnings as a farmer.

Ilhas has had an abiding interest in tourism, as it is the main livelihood for most residents of Arugambay. His passion, however, is cooking. On learning about the international cookery course being offered, through S4IG, he was excited but also anxious that his disabilities would pose problems in a formal learning environment. He was pleasantly surprised, however, to find out that the course could be adapted to be taught through video, and by visually following the instructions he was able to successfully complete the course in three months.

With the training under his belt, Ilhas sought and found employment at the Green Ocean Bay resort. The owner had misgivings about Ilhas's ability to



interact with guests, but he realized that Ilhas was very eager to work, and decided to give him a chance. Ilhas was hired as an assistant cook and a housekeeper for Rs. 15,000 a month. The owners gamble has paid off. Ilhas has proved his worth. He is diligent in completing the work assigned to him and also interacts with staff and guests well. Not only is Ilhas a conscientious employee, he is not shy to share his ideas for development with the owner. Wanting to make his workplace as welcoming as possible for Ilhas, Green Ocean Bay's owner has started learning sign language. Ilhas has proved that despite a disability he could do his job as well as any other. For his part, the owner has decided to hire more differently abled persons, now that he knows that a disability is not an impediment in getting a job done.

## AN INSPIRATION TO ALL



Hailing from Hinkurangoda in the Polonnaruwa District, Sanjana learnt early in life to adjust to her circumstances: whether it was being moved from home to home or using her left hand in the absence of the right. Medical negligence cost her, her right hand as a child. She grew up with various relatives, having been orphaned at a young age. Yet 21 year old Sanjana displays spirit and determination that most of us lack!

On completion of her ordinary level studies, Sanjana decided to look for employment, preferably as a baker of cakes. Colourful baked items had always fascinated her. So there was no turning back, when she heard about the S4IG-led bakery training. Nothing could dampen her excitement of becoming a proficient cake baker, not her disability or the 12 kilometers she had to travel to get to the training venue.

The training opened her up to the many methods of preparing baked goods such as cakes, buns, and pastries. On completion of her six months training, she was recruited by Jayantha Bake House in the city of Polonnaruwa.

With just a left-hand to work in the kitchen, it's not an easy job. There are times when she is challenged from carrying heavy trays to the oven or balancing the ingredients. But Sanjana has a great group of colleagues who help her get through the work.



Sanjana is a determined dreamer; that someday she would be owning her own bakery. She sees herself providing quality cakes and baked goods to local residents and visitors.

With her energetic drive, Sanjana has dispelled the myth that a disability is an excuse or barrier to gainful employment and has demonstrated that one can always reach one's full potential.



## DOING WHAT YOU LOVE AND GETTING PAID FOR IT



Kuddoos had been affected by polio since birth. He managed to finish his primary education with the support of his mother, who physically carried him to school every day but the pair were not able to continue this as he grew and Kuddoos unfortunately had to drop out of school at the age of 13.

He did various odd jobs and to be able to earn an income over the years. He got married and was blessed with three children but as his responsibilities increased, he started to think about better employment and a higher income to support his family.

Through his friend, he learned to drive a three-wheeler despite his physical disability. He enjoyed this so much that he bought a second-hand vehicle. Though he tried in various ways, he was not able to obtain an official license to drive a three-wheeler. His physical disability was listed as the reason for declining his request.

At this time S4IG was planning to implement a project in Arugambay named TukTuk Drivers Pathway to Tour Guiding. S4IG works to promote inclusion and incorporate access for all into all the projects it supports. S4IG met Kuddoos and explained the project and the possibilities to become a tour guide in Arugambay and gain his driving license for the Tuk Tuk. Kuddoos was understandably very skeptical at first and repeatedly mentioned that he wouldn't be seen as suitable for this role. His confidence had been impacted by his past experiences; he was wouldn't succeed and that the negative impact of this would further keep him from moving forward. He enrolled in the S4IG project but wasn't in full attendance during the initial parts of the training, still having doubts about his suitability. However, over time he developed a keen interest on the aspects of tour guiding and he started to actively collaborate with everyone in the project.

He enthusiastically participated in project activities and started to develop himself as an accredited tour guide, despite his disability.

He started to build a network in the local area and



started creating contacts that could assist his business as a tour guide. With support, he modified his three-wheeler and the fundamental barrier of obtaining a medical certificate for getting a license was resolved. By making reasonable adjustments to his vehicle and showing he was medically fit to the vehicle he passed his medical exam and was able to complete requirements to obtain his license.

Kuddoos is now on his way to doing something he loves, driving his threewheeler and providing local tour services. His income is improving, enabling him to provide more for his family. With a lot of courage and some new skills, Kuddoos has developed a pathway to improve his life through the tourism industry.



## I SEE HER SKILLS...

The value addition she brings in, not her Disability



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## EVERYONE CAN COMPETE



Mahesh, 28, hails from Polonnaruwa, where he lives with his father, a farmer, and mother, a teacher, as well as his two brothers.

His mother is also his role model as she helped him develop an interest in the culinary arts and constantly encouraged him to cook.

Mahesh's favourite dishes include ambul thiyal, gotukola sambol, polos and Mexican shrimp pasta. ultimate goal is to be a professional chef and he hopes to secure a spot amongst the top three finalists of Supreme Chef Season 2. Despite his hearing impairment, Mahesh says he will make extra effort, to realise his goal and work around this obstacle.





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