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#5 Inclusion in the workforce



Disability-Inclusive Green Jobs: Opportunities and Challenges

A case study prepared under the Disability Support Service (DSS) for the Transforming Energy Access (TEA) platform.

Mikaela Patrick,
Head of Research and Delivery, Global Disability Innovation Hub.

Pollyanna Wardrop,
Senior Researcher, Financial Inclusion, Global Disability Innovation Hub.

Bala Nagendran Marimuthu,
Senior Researcher, Climate and Cities, Global Disability Innovation Hub.

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Case Study Summary

Shortlist is an executive search agency and a workforce innovation lab, headquartered in Africa and building teams in over 20 countries. Through a TEA-funded programme, Shortlist connects African graduates with energy sector companies and to date has worked with over 70 employers and recruited 1,026 candidates. **‘Disability-Inclusive Green Jobs: Opportunities and Challenges’** presents a training and action planning project delivered by Shortlist through the TEA Disability Support Service (DSS) led by Global Disability Innovation (GDI) Hub. The project was designed to understand the barriers and entry points for disability-inclusive employment in the clean energy sector across Shortlist's partner geography and advance the disability-inclusive employment capacity of Shortlist and select partners.

Featuring:



Disability Support Service (DSS)

Transforming Energy Access (TEA) platform, supported through UK aid from the UK government and led by the Carbon Trust, developed the Disability Support Service (DSS) in partnership with the Global Disability Innovation Hub (GDI Hub) to co-design and deliver disability-inclusive, accessible, and affordable clean energy solutions for equal socio-economic participation of people with disabilities. DSS is a cross-platform delivery service that offers training, innovation support, and technical assistance (TA) and produces practical knowledge outputs for the TEA network by blending expertise in disability inclusion, innovation, assistive and accessible technology (AAT), and inclusive design. The DSS seeks to maximise access and impact for people with disabilities by sharing knowledge and alignment between the TEA platform and GDI Hub's flagship AT2030 programme, also funded by UK aid.

Key Lessons Learned

1. **Becoming a disability-inclusive employer requires sustained commitments of time, people, and financial resources**, as well as access to specialist expertise. While organisations showed a strong willingness to learn and be open about gaps in their knowledge and practice, engagement beyond initial training was limited.
2. **Positioning disability inclusion as a process** and setting targets and expectations from the outset are key to driving meaningful progress.
3. **Disability-inclusive employment practices differ from gender inclusion practices**, including in the critical importance of accessible built and digital environments, the identification and delivery of reasonable accommodations, and addressing disability stigma so that individuals feel safe to disclose their disability or accessibility requirements.



“It’s one thing to write a policy; it’s another thing to say we’re open to everyone, but you need experts to guide actions. A lot of organisations need disability inclusion expertise to operationalise their goals and policies for inclusive employment.”

Dwayne Asembo-Godfrey, Project Manager, Shortlist

Challenge

Globally, people with disabilities remain significantly under-represented in the labour market, with **unemployment rates reaching 70-80 per cent**.^{1,2} At the same time, the clean energy sector is projected to generate 8-18 million jobs worldwide by 2030^{3,4,5} including up to 4 million new jobs in sub Saharan Africa across solar, bioenergy, wind, and hydropower^{6,7} sectors. These emerging “good, green jobs” present a major opportunity for disability inclusion. As low carbon “sunrise industries” expand, they offer pathways to inclusive and accessible employment; however, **realising this potential requires intentional action from both companies and employment services ecosystems**.^{8,9,10}

Shortlist seeks to **support its partners in applying disability-inclusive employment principles and practices**, recognising that many organisations are small and still developing their understanding of disability inclusion, including disability confidence and the basics of good practice.

Approach

The project began with developing an understanding of the challenges and opportunities for disability-inclusive employment across Shortlist’s partner energy-sector organisations. This included identifying what support these organisations need to effectively attract, hire, and retain people with disabilities.

Building on these insights, the next phase focused on delivering targeted training and facilitating action-planning sessions to catalyse partner-led initiatives and deepen Shortlist’s growing evidence base on the practices required to advance disability-inclusive employment.

In addition, this project sought to enhance Shortlist’s understanding of disability-inclusive employment practices to build confidence in approaching disability inclusion across its delivery and in conversation with partners.

Intervention

Here is an overview of DSS activities jointly led by GDI Hub and Shortlist:



Current state assessment: GDI Hub designed and rolled out a Disability Inclusive Employment Survey across 30 Shortlist partner companies, to understand inclusive practices, and received **14 responses** from organisations operating in 5 countries. Consolidating the insights, a ‘Current State Assessment Report’ was prepared with Shortlist.



Disability-inclusive employment training: GDI Hub hosted a training on the basics of disability inclusion, opportunities for engaging people with disabilities through the energy sector, and inclusive employment practices drawing from Survey insights. **11 energy sector companies** attended the training.



Bespoke consultation: GDI Hub provided focused expert consultation for **three companies** with bespoke recommendations reports to inform their future actions on disability-inclusive employment.



Participating in our first disability inclusion training was, in itself an enabling experience for our organisation. We now have a dynamic understanding with which to identify and address accessibility needs. We are equipped to be proactive, with practical steps that are appropriate to our environment, rather than overwhelmed by an undefined need.”

Sarah Bamber, CFO, GanzAfrica

A summary of recommendations offered for partners:

Enhance policies for compliance and reasonable accommodation

- Update Human Resources (HR) and Diversity & Inclusion policies to reference disability in line with national legislation and best practices.
- Define processes for requesting and delivering reasonable accommodations, drawing on the [ILO guide](#), and embed them across the employment cycle - such as through employee channels already used for health and wellbeing initiatives.

Prioritise and action accessibility enhancements:

- Develop standard guidance for all employees covering planning and delivering accessible documents, workflows, meetings, and events.
- Conduct an initial audit of your main office with employees with disabilities to identify barriers and budget for priority changes.
- Raise awareness among website and intranet designers on [WCAG accessibility standards](#).

These recommendations recognise that physical accessibility of offices and office commutes remains a costly and systemic challenge to overcome. Partners are advised to **prioritise the most short-term achievable actions**, especially with procuring or renting goods and services, while pursuing accessibility auditing and physical infrastructure in the future, alongside the proactive offering of reasonable accommodations such as accessible transport, accessible meeting spaces, and assistive technology.

Impact

Shortlist has a unique position and role to enable people with disabilities to be part of the clean energy value chain as leaders and employees. Through the DSS engagement, Shortlist has laid the foundation for pursuing that journey.

- The survey responses from 14 clean energy sector companies have generated **baseline insights for disability inclusion in green jobs** for Shortlist and its partners' knowledge.
- Through training and bespoke consultation, **3 potential early-adopter companies** for disability inclusion practices have been identified, who could be engaged in the future for piloting inclusive recruitment interventions.



The disability inclusion training broadened my understanding of inclusion by highlighting that true accessibility goes beyond physical infrastructure and must be intentionally integrated into policies, communication, and workplace systems. It challenged me to think more critically about the barriers that individuals with disabilities may face, and the role organizations play in removing them.”

Goretti Akombe, People Operations & Administrative Lead,
SokoFreshTM

Way forward

Shortlist recognises that disability inclusion is not a one-off training activity but an ongoing process requiring leadership commitment, practical implementation support, and continuous learning. Their three-year vision is to work with clean energy employers to design and promote roles that are accessible to and inclusive for people with disabilities. In doing so, Shortlist sees value in an intentional and targeted approach to disability inclusion, recognising that this extends beyond training to include implementation, partnerships, dedicated organisational resources, and sustained action.

Key opportunities for Shortlist:

1. **Define Shortlist's commitment and metrics** on disability-inclusive employment, as aligned with organisation's core values and strategic goals, and communicate this to current and prospective energy sector partners.
2. **Review and update Shortlist's recruitment workflows** to identify and include job applicants with disabilities for fair and equitable hiring process.
3. **Raise awareness among partner companies** on the importance of disability-inclusive employment practices in collaboration with regional and local organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs).

Note

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All self-identifying data or testimonials in this case study were included with explicit permission of concerned individuals or institutions.

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