FINAL PROJECT REPORT

INCLUSIVE HOSPITALITY PATHWAYS

Advancing Gender Equality for Young Women with Disabilities in Sri Lanka's Hotel Industry

Hospitality Skills Development and Employment Support Programme







IMPLEMENTING ORGANISATION

Nation Forum of Women with Disabilities (NFWD)

SUPPORTING ORGANISATION

Korea Disabled People's Development Institute (KODDI)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CREATING PATHWAYS TO SKILLS, CONFIDENCE AND EMPLOYMENT

The project strengthened the vocational skills, workplace readiness, confidence and employment pathways of persons with disabilities through structured training, life-skills development, employer engagement and practical exposure.

SKILLS → CONFIDENCE → OPPORTUNITY → EMPLOYMENT



A diverse group of participants and trainers during the life-skills and vocational readiness program.

60
TARGET PARTICIPANTS

5 MONTHS
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

USD 20,000
PROJECT BUDGET

PROJECT BACKGROUND & RATIONALE

FROM BARRIERS TO OPPORTUNITIES

Persons with disabilities continue to face barriers to skills development, employment and meaningful participation in the labour market.

This project was designed to strengthen practical skills, confidence and employment readiness while creating stronger connections between participants, training institutions and employers.

OUR APPROACH

- REMOVE BARRIERS
- BUILD SKILLS
- STRENGTHEN CONFIDENCE
- CONNECT TO OPPORTUNITY





Hands-on vocational training in housekeeping, and bakery and pastry at a hotel partner facility.

GOAL, OBJECTIVES & RESULTS FRAMEWORK

GOAL

To strengthen the employability, confidence and participation of persons with disabilities through skills development and inclusive employment pathways.

KEY OBJECTIVES

01. Strengthen vocational and practical skills.



02. Improve life skills and workplace readiness.



03. Increase engagement with employers.



04. Create pathways to internships and employment.



RESULTS CHAIN

INPUTS → ACTIVITIES → OUTPUTS → OUTCOMES → IMPACT



Resources, materials & staff	Skills & life-skills training	Capable, work-ready graduates	Internships & partnerships	Inclusive & sustainable employment

RECRUITMENT & ORIENTATION

STARTING WITH PARTICIPATION

The recruitment and orientation process introduced participants to the **project objectives,** training expectations, available support and pathways toward employment.





Participants and facilitators during an inclusive project orientation session.

KEY PRINCIPLES

- INCLUSIVE OUTREACH
- ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION
- PARTICIPANT CHOICE
- EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
- INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

BUILDING PRACTICAL SKILLS FOR THE WORKPLACE

Training focused on practical, employment-oriented skills designed to strengthen participants' confidence and readiness for work.







TRAINING AREAS

HOUSEKEEPING
- Practical hotel and workplace procedures

BAKERY & PASTRY
- Practical food preparation and production skills

Building competence and dignity through interactive hand-on experience

LEARNING BY DOING

DEMONSTRATION → PRACTICE → FEEDBACK → IMPROVEMENT

PASTRY & BAKERY TRAINING

BUILDING PRACTICAL SKILLS FOR THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

The Pastry and Bakery Training Programme provided participants with practical, hands-on experience in food production while strengthening the technical and workplace skills required in professional hospitality environments.

Food Preparation & Production
Practical skills in pastry, bakery and food production.

Food Hygiene & Safety
Cleanliness, sanitation and safe food-handling practices.

Workplace Skills
Time management, discipline, responsibility and following procedures.

Teamwork & Collaboration
Working effectively with others in a professional environment.



A diverse group of participants and trainers during the practical hands-on Pastry and Bakery Training Programme.

16
TRAINING DAYS
Weekend-based practical training designed to support consistent participation.

20
PARTICIPANTS
19 Deaf or hard of hearing participants and 1 woman with a physical disability.

19
PARTICIPANTS COMPLETED
Participants demonstrated strong motivation, engagement and commitment throughout the programme.

LEARNING BY DOING

DEMONSTRATION → PRACTICE → FEEDBACK → IMPROVEMENT

The training emphasised practical demonstrations, hands-on exercises and repeated practice, helping participants build confidence and develop skills relevant to employment in hotels and other hospitality establishments.

FROM SKILLS TO EMPLOYMENT

The programme strengthened participants' technical competencies, confidence and workplace readiness, contributing to greater employability and creating pathways towards economic independence and meaningful employment.

HOUSEKEEPING TRAINING

BUILDING PRACTICAL SKILLS FOR THE HOSPITALITY WORKPLACE

The Housekeeping Training Programme focused on developing practical skills, workplace confidence and professional behaviours required for effective participation in hotel housekeeping operations.

LEARNING BY DOING

DEMONSTRATION → PRACTICE → FEEDBACK → IMPROVEMENT

TRAINING FOCUS

HOUSEKEEPING OPERATIONS
Practical hotel housekeeping procedures, room preparation and workplace routines.

CLEANING & HYGIENE
Cleaning standards, sanitation, hygiene practices and attention to detail.

WORKPLACE READINESS
Time management, teamwork, communication, discipline and safe working practices.



Trainees practicing floor maintenance, mopping, and housekeeping procedures during the hands-on training sessions.

PARTICIPANT HIGHLIGHTS

26 PARTICIPANTS

25 SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED

9 TRAINING DAYS

100% PARTICIPANTS WERE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

RESPONSIVE & PARTICIPANT-CENTRED TRAINING

Following participant feedback, an additional practical training day was provided on 6 September 2026. The additional session enabled participants to strengthen their practical competencies, clarify areas of difficulty and gain further hands-on experience.

SKILLS FOR WORK • CONFIDENCE FOR THE FUTURE • OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCLUSION

LIFE SKILLS & EMPLOYMENT READINESS

CONFIDENCE BEYOND TECHNICAL SKILLS

Participants developed essential skills for effective participation in training, employment and everyday life.





CORE SKILLS DEVELOPED

- COMMUNICATION
- SELF-CONFIDENCE
- TEAMWORK
- PROBLEM-SOLVING
- WORKPLACE BEHAVIOUR
- TIME MANAGEMENT

SKILLS FOR WORK. SKILLS FOR LIFE.

DISABILITY INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY

INCLUSION MEANS REMOVING BARRIERS

The project promoted meaningful participation by considering accessibility, communication, reasonable accommodation and individual support throughout implementation.



An inclusive and accessible training environment where all participants interact and learn together.

ACCESS

Information • Training • Communication • Environment

PARTICIPATION

Voice • Choice • Contribution • Decision-making

EQUALITY

Rights • Dignity Opportunity • Respect

UNDERSTANDING RIGHTS. STRENGTHENING VOICE. ADVANCING INCLUSION.

The project integrated disability-rights education and awareness-raising as an important component of its capacity-development approach. The training was informed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and focused on strengthening participants' **knowledge, confidence, self-advocacy** and **meaningful participation**.

KEY CRPD AREAS

ARTICLE 6 – WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

Strengthening confidence, participation, empowerment and access to employment opportunities for women with disabilities.

ARTICLE 27 – WORK AND EMPLOYMENT

Promoting the right to work on an equal basis with others and strengthening access to inclusive employment opportunities.

KEY LEARNING AREAS

- Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Equal Opportunities
- Non-Discrimination
- Reasonable Accommodation
- Inclusive Workplaces
- Employment Rights
- Workplace Participation
- Self-Advocacy & Empowerment

FROM AWARENESS TO EMPOWERMENT

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS → BUILD CONFIDENCE → SPEAK UP → PARTICIPATE → ACCESS OPPORTUNITIES



Participants and trainers actively engaging during a disability-rights education and advocacy workshop.

This rights-based approach recognised that inclusive employment is not only an economic opportunity but also a matter of equality, dignity, participation, empowerment and human rights. By combining disability-rights education with life skills and employment readiness, the project supported participants to enter and participate in the workplace with greater confidence and awareness of their rights.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

BUILDING BRIDGES TO INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES

Engagement with employers helped create stronger links between vocational training and real employment opportunities.





Hospitality employers, trainers, and program participants with disabilities during an inclusive workplace engagement and mock interview session.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT INCLUDED:

- Workplace awareness
- Inclusive recruitment
- Understanding reasonable accommodation
- Skills matching
- Internship pathways
- Employment opportunities

TRAINING + EMPLOYERS = OPPORTUNITY

BASIC SIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING FOR HOTEL STAFF

BREAKING COMMUNICATION BARRIERS IN THE WORKPLACE

Because almost all participants trained under the project were Deaf or hard of hearing, communication was identified as a key barrier to their effective participation in hotel workplaces. To address this challenge, NFWD organised a basic sign language training programme for hotel staff on 7 and 9 October 2026.

LEARNING BY PRACTISING → DEMONSTRATION → PRACTICE → INTERACTION → FEEDBACK



Hotel staff and Deaf participants during the basic sign language training, facilitated by Interpreter Ms. Chammi Dias.

EVERYDAY COMMUNICATION

Greetings, simple instructions and common workplace expressions

SAFETY & WORK ROUTINES

Basic safety signs, workplace instructions and daily tasks

INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION

Respectful ways of communicating with Deaf colleagues through appropriate attention-getting, communication, gestures and written communication

SUPPORTING INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT: The training strengthened hotel staff's practical ability to communicate with and support Deaf employees, particularly supervisors responsible for day-to-day workplace coordination. It also contributed to creating more inclusive workplace environments and strengthening the readiness of hotels to provide internship and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

MONITORING & FOLLOW-UP PLAN

MAINTAINING IMPACT BEYOND THE PROJECT

NFWD will implement a structured post-project follow-up mechanism to monitor participants' transition from training to internships and employment, identify workplace barriers, and provide appropriate support to sustain their progress.

ONE-MONTH FOLLOW-UP

Assessing the transition to the workplace

- Employment and internship status
- Workplace adjustment
- Accessibility and reasonable accommodation
- Supervisor support
- Transportation and practical barriers
- Challenges during workplace transition

THREE-MONTH FOLLOW-UP

Monitoring retention and workplace integration

- Employment retention
- Employer and participant satisfaction
- Workplace integration and performance
- Reasonable accommodation
- Additional training needs
- Support required to sustain employment

SIX-MONTH FOLLOW-UP

Assessing longer-term employment outcomes

- Employment retention
- Career development and progression
- Workplace accessibility
- Reasonable accommodation
- Employer engagement
- Longer-term employment outcomes
- Additional livelihood and skills-development opportunities

LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABLE IMPACT

MONITOR → SUPPORT → LEARN → IMPROVE → SUSTAIN

Follow-up findings will be used to identify good practices, address workplace barriers, strengthen employer support, improve job matching, and inform future disability-inclusive employment and skills-development programmes.

INCLUSIVE MONITORING

Follow-up information will be collected in an accessible, voluntary, confidential and ethical manner, with appropriate safeguards for participants' privacy, dignity and informed participation. Where appropriate, data will be disaggregated by sex/gender and disability status.

RISK MANAGEMENT

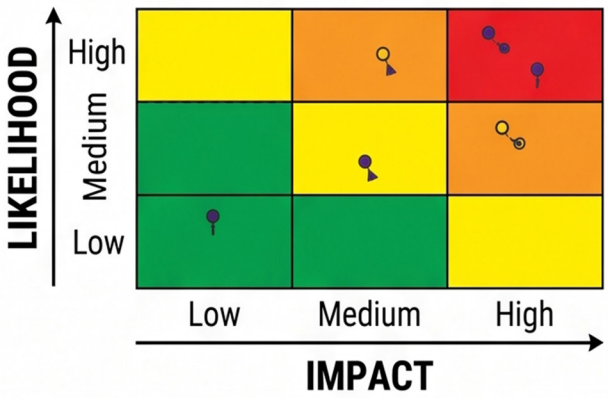
ANTICIPATING CHALLENGES. STRENGTHENING IMPLEMENTATION.

To ensure sustainable and inclusive pathways to employment, the project proactively identified, assessed, and addressed potential challenges through a robust risk management framework.

KEY RISK AREAS

- PARTICIPANT ATTENDANCE
- ACCESSIBILITY BARRIERS
- TRAINING ADAPTATION
- EMPLOYER PARTICIPATION
- TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS
- TRANSITION TO EMPLOYMENT

RISK MATRIX





Continuous monitoring and proactive engagement ensured smooth operations.

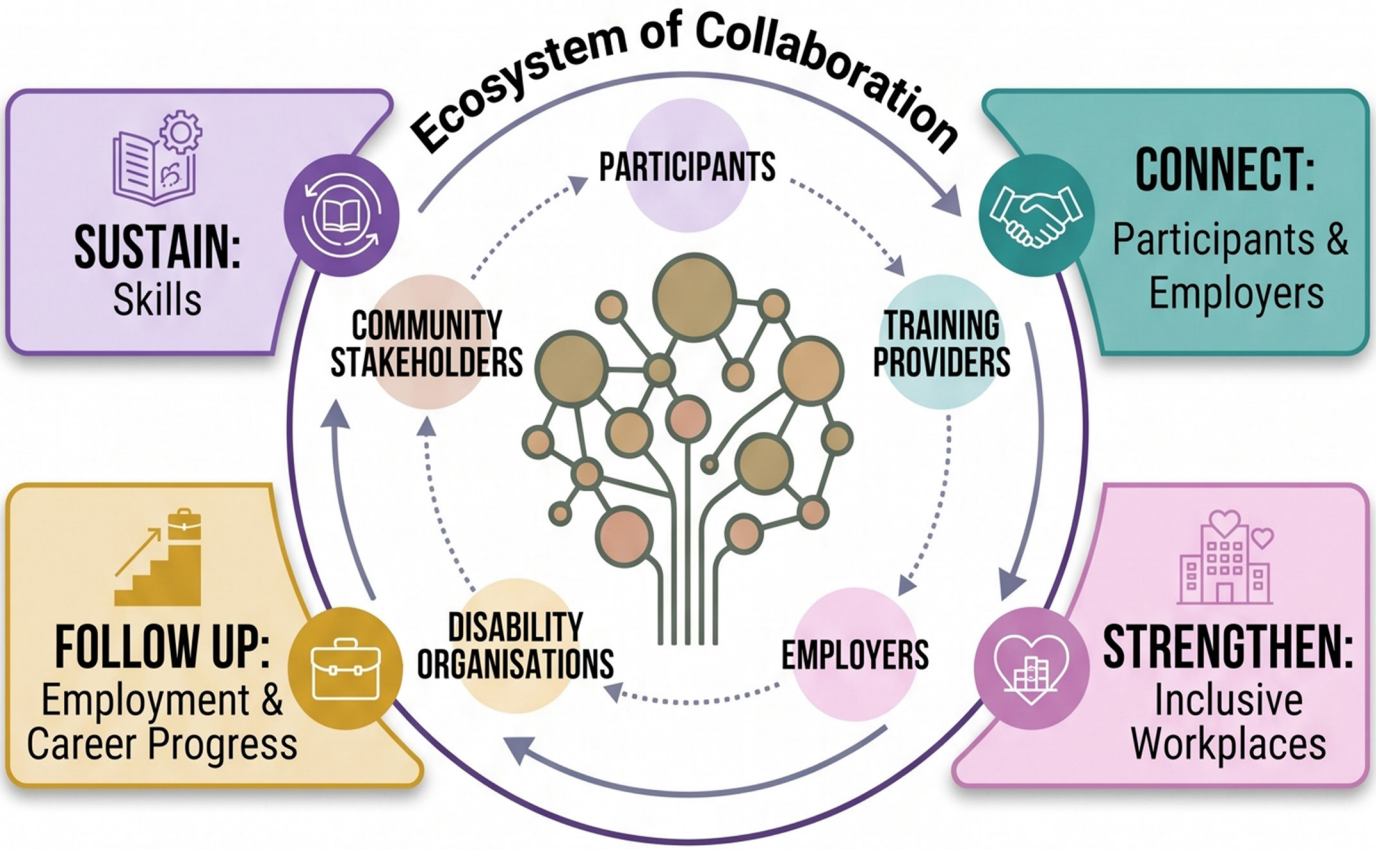
OUR RESPONSE:

IDENTIFY → ASSESS → MITIGATE → MONITOR → LEARN

SUSTAINABILITY & FOLLOW-UP

BUILDING BEYOND THE PROJECT PERIOD

Sustainability depends on continued collaboration between participants, training providers, employers, disability organisations and other stakeholo





Continuous partnership and ongoing career mentorship ensure long-term inclusive employment.

CHALLENGES AND RISK MANAGEMENT

ADDRESSING BARRIERS AND STRENGTHENING IMPLEMENTATION

The project encountered, or anticipated, a range of challenges associated with implementing disability-inclusive skills development and employment activities. The project responded through proactive planning, accessible approaches, participant support and continued engagement with employers and stakeholders.

KEY CHALLENGES AND RISK MITIGATION

01 | RECRUITMENT & PARTICIPATION

Challenge: Reaching sufficient numbers of young persons with disabilities, particularly women, due to limited access to information, transportation barriers and family-related constraints.

Mitigation: Community outreach, engagement with disability organisations, social media and direct communication.

02 | ACCESSIBILITY & REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

Challenge: Participants had diverse communication and accessibility requirements.

Mitigation: Sign language interpretation, accessible materials, practical demonstrations and individualised support.

03 | PARTICIPANT RETENTION

Challenge: Transportation, family-related and personal barriers could affect participants' continued engagement.

Mitigation: Counselling, family communication, accessible venues and transportation assistance.

04 | EMPLOYER ATTITUDES & AWARENESS

Challenge: Limited awareness of disability inclusion and reasonable accommodation could affect employers' willingness to recruit.

Mitigation: Employer engagement and disability-awareness activities to promote inclusion.

05 | EMPLOYER COMMITMENT

Challenge: There was a potential risk that hotels might be hesitant or unable to provide internship or employment opportunities.

Mitigation: Early engagement focused on inclusive recruitment, workplace accessibility and reasonable accommodation.

06 | TRANSPORTATION & PARTICIPATION COSTS

Challenge: Transportation was identified as a significant barrier, particularly for participants facing mobility, accessibility, financial or family-related constraints.

Mitigation: The approved project budget included participant transportation support and refreshments.

07 | TRANSITION FROM TRAINING TO EMPLOYMENT

Challenge: Completion of vocational training does not automatically lead to employment; barriers remain in recruitment, accessibility and job matching.

Mitigation: Continued employer engagement, internships, job matching, placement support and post-training follow-up.

RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH

IDENTIFY → ASSESS → MITIGATE → MONITOR → LEARN

KEY PRINCIPLE: *Anticipating barriers, responding early and strengthening support systems helps create more inclusive and sustainable pathways from training to employment.*

LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHENING FUTURE DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMES

The project generated important lessons that can guide the design and implementation of future disability-inclusive vocational training and employment initiatives.

Early Employer Engagement

Engage employers from the beginning to ensure training reflects workplace needs and creates internship and employment pathways.

Accessibility from the Start

Plan and budget for sign language interpretation, communication support, accessible materials, transportation, and reasonable accommodation from the initial project design stage.

Technical Skills + Life Skills

Combine vocational competencies with communication, teamwork, confidence, problem-solving, time management, workplace behaviour, leadership, and self-advocacy.

Meaningful Gender Inclusion

Look beyond participation numbers and monitor women with disabilities throughout training, internships, employment, workplace experiences, and retention.

Strong Data, Strong Reporting

Maintain accurate participant records from recruitment through follow-up, using unique identifiers and regular data-quality checks.

Documenting Project Changes

Record changes from approved activities, including the reasons, implications, consultations, and required approvals to strengthen transparency and accountability.

KEY LEARNING

PLAN INCLUSIVELY • ENGAGE EARLY

BUILD SKILLS • TRACK RESULTS • LEARN & ADAPT

CONCLUSION

ADVANCING PATHWAYS FROM SKILLS TO OPPORTUNITY

The project strengthened vocational skills, confidence, workplace readiness and awareness of employment opportunities among young persons with disabilities, with a particular focus on young women with disabilities.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
Practical training in Bakery & Pastry and Housekeeping

WORKPLACE READINESS
Communication, confidence, life skills and employment preparation

INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT
Employer engagement and pathways towards workplace exposure and internships

GENDER & DISABILITY INCLUSION
Promoting equal opportunity, participation, dignity and economic empowerment



A participant gaining practical skills in hospitality and pastry making during the program.

MOVING FORWARD

SKILLS → CONFIDENCE → INCLUSION → OPPORTUNITY → EMPLOYMENT

The project provides a foundation for strengthening disability-inclusive employment pathways within Sri Lanka's hospitality sector. Continued employer engagement, accessible workplaces, reliable monitoring and post-training follow-up will be essential to support sustainable employment outcomes.

BUILDING SKILLS. CREATING OPPORTUNITIES. ADVANCING INCLUSION.



Nation Forum of Women with Disabilities (NFWD) Sri Lanka

Working together for equality, dignity, participation and opportunity.