“Making the Right Real!” in the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)

How can we “Make the Right Real!” in our everyday work-environments? ESCAP’s Accessibility Centre and 60 Plus + Bakery & Café are answers to how everyday work-environments can be made accessible and inclusive for persons with disabilities.

State-of-the-art Accessibility Centre unveiled at ESCAP, Bangkok

On May 2015, ESCAP unveiled its state-of-the-art accessibility centre. The Centre has accessibility-enhancing assistive devices such as electric wheelchairs, desktop magnifiers, screen readers, portable DAISY audio players, hearing aids, bone conduction headsets etc. which would be utilised to facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities in United Nations meetings. In line with the spirit of Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, this centre enhances access for all to physical environment and information, communications and technologies (Incheon Strategy goal 3) in the United Nations ESCAP premises, and thereby promotes participation of all in political processes and decision-making (Incheon Strategy goal 2). This further supports achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets to build and upgrade inclusive learning environments (target 4.a) and resilient infrastructure (target 9.1), increase access to information and communications technology (target 9.c), and ensure public access to information and the protection of fundamental freedoms (target 16.10).
The centre became a reality through the generous contribution of the Ministry of Health and Welfare of the Republic of Korea.

60 Plus+ Bakery & Café: Providing employment for persons with disabilities

At the 72nd Commission session of ESCAP in 2016, Ms. Aiko Akiyama, Social Affairs Officer in ESCAP, facilitated the setting up of a stand for 60 Plus+ Bakery & Café. Through their exposure at the Commission, the shopkeepers conducted a number of business meetings with Sodexo, the company handling food and beverages at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) and consequently, a variety of freshly-baked goods from 60 Plus+ Bakery, are available at the Sodexo café’s in the premises.
The 60 Plus+ Bakery & Café is not an ordinary enterprise. It is an initiative of Yamazaki Bakery and Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD) which builds a pathway for persons with disabilities to become professional bakers, shopkeepers and entrepreneurs. Through the vocational training provided by APCD and the product design and service delivery methods already established by Yamakazi, the Bakery showcases a modality through which persons with disabilities could be included in businesses. Currently, corporate social responsibility is the main modality through which persons with disabilities are included in businesses. Additionally, through the sale of baked goods prepared by persons with disabilities, the productive capacities of persons with disabilities are highlighted. By enhancing the employment opportunities of persons with disabilities, the project keeps up with the spirit of Incheon Strategy to reduce
poverty and enhance work and employment prospects (goal 1) and thereby, enabling a purposeful and dignified life.