

## THE 2-TRIPLE-E FRAMEWORK OF INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN SINGAPORE

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### ABSTRACT

*The two authors of this paper, with their combined wealth of experiences and number of years working closely with people with disabilities (PWDs) in Singapore, have come together to propose their 2-Triple-E Framework of Inclusive Employment for people with disabilities. Their comprehensive framework consists of two parts: the Triple-E Model of Readiness (i.e., Ready Employee, Ready Employer and Ready Environment) to prepare PWDs for employment and the process-based Triple-E Model of Enablement (i.e., Empowerment, Emplacement and Employment) to prepare PWDs for gainful employment. The authors believe that good collaboration between employers and employees with disabilities takes effort, requiring both parties to respect each other and share their common workplace beliefs. Given time, perseverance and continual planning, the 2-Triple-E framework for inclusive employment is a concept that can turn into reality benefiting all PWDs in Singapore.*

**Keywords:** Enablement, Inclusive Employment, People with Disabilities, Workplace

### INTRODUCTION

The global economic outlook is not very good with recession in Europe, anemic growth in the United States and a sharp slowdown in China. For instance, the economic side effects as a result of the European sovereign debt crisis include austerity, high levels of household debt, trade imbalances, limited prospects for global growth in the next few years and high unemployment (United Nations News Centre, 2012). Fortunately, Singapore's economy continues to pick up at a modest pace and grow steadily for the rest of the year 2013 after a shaky first quarter (Yahya, 2013). However, it does not necessarily translate into a better employment prospect for all, especially for people with disabilities (PWDs), who are often being marginalized and socio-economically excluded.

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2013), some one billion people or one out of six people has a disability in the world. An estimation of between 785 and 975 million of these people are of working age but most of them are not employed or do not work. Although many PWDs have been successfully employed and fully integrated into society, they continue to encounter disproportionate poverty and unemployment (ILO, 2013).

As a result, over more than 50 years, the ILO has been actively promoting equality of opportunity and fair treatment for PWDs to be mainstreamed into vocational rehabilitation, employment services programs and community project involvement, as reflected in the ILO Convention No.159 concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons, 1983, and the ILO Code of Practice on Managing Disability in the Workplace adopted in 2001 (visit ILO website at [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org) for more detail). The ILO has introduced the work of decent quality as its primary goal for everyone, including people with disabilities. This can be achieved through a variety of policy measures, regulations, programs and

services. It is currently the most effective means for PWDs to escape from the vicious circle of marginalization, poverty and socio-economic exclusion (ILO, 2013).

### WHAT IS DISABILITY?

Although the term *disability* is a complex phenomenon and difficult to define and measure, it is still important to know and understand what disability is and what constitutes a disability. Current literature on the definition and measurement of disability emphasizes that “not even the most harmonized formal definitions and questionnaires guarantee comparable international data” (Zaidi, 2011, p.5). However, without a clear understanding and agreement about the term *disability* among the professionals and policy makers, the issue of disability continues to remain a big challenge in two ways. Firstly, how should we decide if a person is *really* disabled or not? This question leads us to the next challenge: if the person is *really* disabled, how certain are we that he or she would benefit from the help given? Would it become a case of induced self-helplessness in a long run? What if the person is *not* really disabled but has been mistakenly categorized as one and help is being rendered to him or her over a period of time? Would the person, who otherwise would have been normal, become *disabled* and become over-dependent on help? Some kind of an acceptable assessment or evaluation protocol is needed to determine if a person is disabled.

As mentioned earlier, it is difficult to define disability. There are three perspectives on disability: intrinsic, extrinsic and interactive. According to the intrinsic perspective, the disability is of biogenic, neurogenic or a mix of both causation and comes within the person. Such PWDs include those with autism, bipolar personality disorder, dyslexia and schizophrenia.

The extrinsic perspective emphasizes factors outside, not within, a person as possible determinants of disability (Spear-Swerling & Sternberg, 1998). In other words, this perspective sees disability as a result of exogenic, ecogenic and/or sociogenic causation. An example of a disability due to exogenic causation is the result of a road accident and the victim suffers brain damage or becomes paralyzed from the waist downward and has to be wheelchair-bound for life. This is certainly considered as a real PWD. For a disability of ecogenic nature, it is a result of environmental barriers such as a book is placed too high up on the bookshelf for an adult with dwarfism to reach. Such disability can be addressed easily if the design of the environment embraces the principles of universal design. In a strict sense, this adult with dwarfism cannot be regarded as a PWD. Lastly, a disability of sociogenic origin can be a result of socio-cultural differences that add stress to an immigrant, who has yet to learn how to adapt to the new environment or assimilate into the community. Given time and assistance, this person should be able to cope with the new place or socialize with others in the community. This cannot be classified as a PWD.

The interactive perspective sees disability as an interaction between the person and the environment. This can be quite tricky because such a person may or may not be a PWD. For instance, a person diagnosed to have attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder is perceived by his colleagues as disruptive in his workplace, such as an office, may be regarded as a PWD and needs medical attention. However, if he is placed in a different environment, say a farm, where his energy is spent on feeding chickens and ducks, clearing wastes, raking hay, watering vegetables, he is no longer seen as a PWD.

The International Classification of Functioning and Health (known as ICF for short, endorsed by the 54<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly in May 2001) provides a framework that forms the basis of a credible measurement of disability, whose definition refers to human functioning and restrictions in this functioning arising due to contextual factors of environment as well as

personal factors. Disability is seen as a result of an interaction between a person (with health-related problems such as seeing, hearing, speaking and mental functions) and that person's restricting contextual factors (e.g., lacking access to social support and services and restrictions in social interactions due to, say, negative attitudes). The definition is designed to be relevant across cultures as well as age groups and genders, making it appropriate for a comparison across heterogeneous populations.

### **Employment of People with Disabilities (PWDs) around the World**

According to the United Nations Enable (2013) based in New York, an estimated between 50% and 70% of PWDs are jobless or not gainfully employed in industrialized or developed countries. In fact, the unemployment rate for PWDs of working age is at least two times that for those without disabilities. However, the percentage of unemployed PWDs rises up to between 80% and 90% in developing countries.

In the West, especially the United States, according to a 2004 survey, only about 35% of PWDs of working age were employed as compare to an employment rate of 78% in the rest of the population. The employment rate for college graduates without disabilities is 89.9% but 50.6% for those with disabilities (United Nations Enable, n.d.). However, according to the Trends in Disability Employment National Update (a new monthly analysis jointly issued by Kessler Foundation and the Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire), people with disabilities are more engaged in the labor force than before based on the recent data released by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics and highlighted by three key indicators: The first indicator is the employment-to-population ratio, which has increased from 25.1% in 2012 to 27.6% in 2013 for working-age people with disabilities (Kessler Foundation, 2013). The second indicator is the rate of labor force participation by people with disabilities and it has also increased from 30.4% in 2012 to 31.8% in 2013, suggesting that more people with disabilities are working or actively looking for work. The third and last indicator is the unemployment rate of people with disabilities of working age that has shown a decrease from 17.3% in 2012 down to 13.4% in 2013 (down by 22.5%).

According to EU-SILC (European Commission, 2011), an average employment rate among PWDs and those without disabilities, for working age people, across European Union countries, by gender, is 48.1% for male PWDs (74.5% for male without disability) and 40.8% for female PWDs (61.2% for female without disability). Luxembourg has the highest rate of employment for male PWDs (61.0%) while Estonia has the highest rate of employment for female PWDs (52.8%). Ireland has the lowest rate of employment for male PWDs (30.3%) while Malta has the lowest rate of employment for female PWDs (21.8%).

In the Asian-Pacific region, there are an estimated 370 million PWDs and 238 millions of them are of working age. According to Perry (2002), their unemployment rate is double that of the general population and often as high as 80% or more.

It is difficult to obtain and verify prevalence rates of PWDs as such data are difficult to come by in almost every country throughout the world. It is even more difficult to obtain data on the employment situation of PWDs. However, reports, interviews and snippets of information from mass media (e.g., newspapers, radio and television) as well as social media (e.g., weblogs, wikis, podcasts and social networks) can provide an anecdotal illustration of the current employment situation of PWDs.

### **Defining Disability and PWDs in Singapore**

According to Ho (2013), disability is regarded as a social issue in Singapore that has to be treated with care, but Chia (2013a) argued that it is more than just a social issue. Disability is

multi-faceted, depending from which angle people choose to see. It includes impairment, activity irritation, participation restriction and neglected potential. It may be cognitive, developmental, mental, physical, sensory, socio-emotional or some combination of these. It can happen at birth or anytime during one's lifespan.

### ***Prevalence of PWDs in Singapore***

An undated Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS) paper notes the current lack of reliable statistics on the prevalence of disability in Singapore, as the Central Registry of Disabled Persons was closed in 1987, and was, in any case, only a register of persons with disabilities (MCYS, n.d.). There are currently only estimates based on extrapolations from disability prevalence rates of other countries as proxies or surveys of selected age groups, especially those below six years of age. However, the prevalence rates of other countries do not provide a reliable benchmark for Singapore. According to a feedback report on an inclusive budget prepared by the Association of Women for Action and Research (AWARE) (2012), PWDs are estimated as comprising about four per cent of the population, including those with physical disabilities, visual and hearing impairments and intellectual challenges.

Moreover, as the general population in Singapore is ageing over time, we are beginning to see two groups of senior PWDs: the elderly disabled and the disabled elderly. The former group refers to those disabled who have grown old now and many of them have never been gainfully employed throughout their lives. The latter group refers to those elderly who have grown old and are experiencing old age-related problems such as hard of hearing, failing eyesight, slow in responding and declining memories.

### ***Multiple Types of Inclusivity needed for PWDs***

Chia (2013a) has suggested that there is a need to educate both professionals and general public about disabilities and to treat people with disabilities as fellow human beings like everyone else. This means to treat all with or without disabilities as individuals with different potentials, perspectives, aspirations and needs. This is to recognize diversity and to embrace inclusivity if everyone with or without disability is to be accepted as he or she is. Chia (2013a) has identified several types of inclusivity as discussed briefly below.

If disability is seen as a social issue as what Ho (2013) has mentioned earlier, people with disabilities should be treated fairly and be given equal opportunity, say, in terms of education and employment. Sociogenic inclusivity, as Chia (2013a) has termed it, needs to be adopted. As a society, everyone needs to embrace social complexity and optimize the contributions of its diverse members. For instance, "in class, a teacher has to adopt pedagogic inclusivity to meet all her students with different learning styles in order to maximize their diverse learning potentials" (Chia, 2013a, p.A34).

When disability is seen as a psychological or physiological problem that rests on an individual, the challenge is addressed by referring the individual with disability to a psychiatrist for some prescribed medication or psychotherapy to help the individual assimilate into the society. People with psychological or physiological challenges are often ostracized or stigmatized by the society, but such a societal attitude has to change over time if psychogenic inclusivity is to be embraced (Chia, 2013a).

Moreover, the environment has to be as accessible as possible so that everyone regardless of age, ability or status in life can move about freely. This is ecogenic inclusivity that provides a barrier-free environment to allow mobility for people with physical or sensory impairment (Chia, 2013a).

Finally, there are certain products and services that are challenging to people with disabilities. Their designs and procedures have to be made more tenable and functional. Hence, product designers and service providers need to embrace technogenic inclusivity (Chia, 2013a).

According to Chia (2013a), “[I]f we want to address the multi-faceted issue of disability and to promote inclusivity, it is time we should embrace the principles of universal design and apply them to the design of instruction, services, technology as well as other products and environments” (p.A34).

### **Employment Opportunities and Challenges for PWDs in Singapore**

In his May Day speech (see *The Straits Times*, 2013, May 3), the Singapore Prime Minister, Mr Lee Hsien Loong, stressed that “[T]here is no one-size-fix-all approach to re-employment is quite true because no two employees – young or old – are alike in every aspect” (p.A28). Everyone is a unique individual and employers are urged to embrace it.

Chia (2013d) argued that “such a policy should be also practiced during the initial employment of new staff regardless of their gender, race and educational level as well as deployment of older or access staff for the benefits of all who have been working diligently for an employer” (p.17). Retrenchment should be the very last resort whether an organization is undergoing restructuring to stay competitive or downsizing during the times of economic downturn to cut losses. “Better still if the policy of no one-size-fix-all approach to re-employment of older workers could be extended to cover other vulnerable groups such as low-income or less educated workers, people of disabilities and women, especially housewives who have decided to return to workforce” (Chia, 2013d, p.17).

Since its founding in 2003, the Workforce Development Agency (WDA) has played an active role in supporting and ensuring Singaporean as well as workers in Singapore to remain competitive to meet the demands of Singapore’s dynamic economy, which is very much affected by the global economic conditions. Its relevance to the well-being of the Singapore workforce depends very much on how closely it works in tandem with employers and other industrial partners, unions, professional associations, accredited training and service providers. The WDA has also helped to promote the no one-size-fits-all approach to employment among the employers so as to encourage hiring of PWDs.

Moreover, voluntary welfare organizations such as the Association of Women for Action and Research, the Employability and Employment Centre and Bizlink Centre have also contributed in their own ways to advocate for an inclusive workforce. More recently, the Centre for Enabled Living has been repositioned as a new agency called SG Enable to serve and support the needs of people with disabilities. This is a bold step taken by the Singapore Government to create a more inclusive workforce and thus, help to make Singapore a more inclusive society for all in the long run.

Chia (2013d) has argued that “[T]o ensure a successful implementation of the policy of no one-size-fit-all approach to employment, re-employment and/or deployment of workers, it is time for the key players or decision-makers involving various government ministries, the WDA, employers, voluntary welfare organizations and other interested parties to meet for tripartite consultation to deliberate on the best employment framework for all groups of workers” (p.17).

### **THE 2-TRIPLE-E FRAMEWORK FOR INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT**

In this paper, we have designed two Triple-E models that we strongly believe can benefit all PWDs in Singapore if it is properly implemented. They are the Triple-E Model of Readiness



to prepare PWDs for Employment and the Triple-E Model of Enablement of PWDs for Employment. The former model consists of three key components: Ready Employee, Ready Employer and Ready Environment. The latter model consists of three key phases: Empowerment, Emplacement and Employment coupled with Evaluation that occurs throughout the process of enablement. How successful the 2-Triple-E framework for inclusive employment works for PWDs will depend on the tripartite collaboration among the three main parties, i.e., the employees with disabilities, their families and the employers, based on trust that there will be fair employment and treatment practices.

### **The Triple-E Model of Readiness to prepare PWDs for Employment**

Steps have been taken by the Singapore Ministry of Social and Family Development to address the issue of poor job opportunities for PWDs (Chan, 2012). More importantly, by renaming the Centre for Enabled Living (CEL) as SG Enable, the Singapore Government shows that it is serious about providing support to PWDs. For a long time, many employers have sidelined this group of people when many of them can perform and contribute to the society in their own ways. Perhaps the main challenge PWDs in Singapore encounter is that employers still hold a misconception that such people are more of economic liabilities than assets. Chia (2013b) argued that “[T]his negative mindset needs to be changed” (p.A22).

According to Chia (2013b), “[T]o prepare people with disabilities to become gainfully employed, three essential factors must be taken into consideration to promote workplace inclusivity for these people: Ready Employee, Ready Employer and Ready Environment” (p.A22). The triangulation of these three components of readiness forms what is termed as the Triple-E Model of Readiness to prepare PWDs for employment. Chia (2013b) has described briefly each of the three components of readiness as follows:

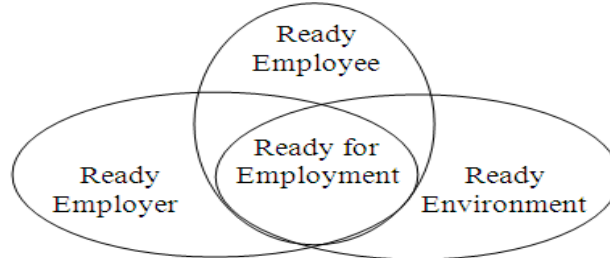


Figure 1. The Triple-E Model of Readiness for Employment

#### ***Ready Employee***

According to Chia (2013b), for PWDs to be ready employees, the various voluntary welfare organizations such as Bizlink Centre and the Employability and Employment Centre (E2C), which are running current structured job training programs, have to prepare them with right work aptitude and work attitude in order to be ready for employment. Work aptitude is defined as one’s temperament to do the work. Work attitude refers to one’s behavior at work. If a PWD’s work aptitude is positive towards performing an assigned job at the workplace, his/her work attitude will certainly be positive and enthusiastic. The reverse can also be true, too.

To know and understand if a PWD is a ready employee to be employed in a workplace that best meets his occupational profile, it is important to have a standard assessment/evaluation protocol. It needs to be established as a proper or formal system to determine the PWD’s readiness in terms of his/her occupational capacity or functional employability for workplace emplacement. There are five different levels of vocational/occupational readiness for

workplace training (also known as empowerment of content knowledge and skills), job emplacement and possible employment (see Table 1).

All the assessment/evaluation (A/E) tools used in measuring the vocational/occupational readiness of PWDs are mainly published in the West as well as trialed and validated using the American populations. The different assessment tools that we have given as examples here are not the only ones or definitive as there are also many others that are catering to specific disabilities.

Briefly, A/E Level #1 covers on the general cognitive skills & abilities. One example of such assessment tool is the General Ability Measure for Adults. This foundational level is essential and must be done before anyone can proceed to the next A/E level and so on. If a PWD has a profound cognitive impairment, it is rather difficult to emplace him/her anywhere for suitable employment. Any PWD with severe cognitive impairment has restrictive employment and needs close supervision and assistance. A/E Level #2 covers the sensory perceptual-motor skills & abilities. One popular instrument widely used by the occupational therapists in Singapore is the Adolescent/Adult Sensory Profile. This second level will provide a good understanding of a PWD's sensory perceptual-motor strengths and needs. Its results can be used to set certain parameters to satisfy the Universal Design principle of less physical/mental effort needed, for instance. A/E Level #3 touches on the adaptive behavioral skills & abilities. One widely used measure is the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales-II that can be administered by an occupational therapist. The results can provide a better view in terms of a PWD's constructive or disruptive behavior so as to understand how he/she is able to cope or assimilate into a workplace. A/E Level #4 examines the functional capacity of a PWD for training & employment. One checklist that is commonly used to evaluate this level is the DSM-IT-TR Global Assessment of Functioning (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). It can provide important information on the functional capacity of a PWD to learn certain workplace skills that are needed for a specific workplace employment. Finally, A/E Level #5 is concerned about a PWD's vocational/occupational interest and preference. In other words, it is to determine the vocational/occupational interest and preference for the kind of job that best suits the PWD concerned. One standardized measure that we are most familiar is the Reading-free Vocational Interest Inventory-II, which can be used with those who are non-verbal or without speech.

**Table 1. The 5 Levels of Vocational/Occupational Assessment/Evaluation**

Levels	Assessment/Evaluation	Assessment/Evaluation Tools
1	General cognitive skills & abilities	General Ability Measure for Adults
2	Sensory perceptual-motor skills & abilities	Adolescent/Adult Sensory Profile
3	Adaptive behavioural skills & abilities	Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales-II
4	Functional capacity for training & employment	Global Assessment of Functioning
5	Vocational/Occupational interest and preference	Reading-free Vocational Interest Inventory-II

### ***Ready Employer***

Chia (2013b) has argued that it is important for employment services organizations to conduct short courses or talks on how to be ready employer for prospective employers and

their current employees (especially those in the management and supervisory roles) to have a clearer understanding of PWDs. In addition, Chia (2013c) has listed two reasons why employers should consider employing or re-employing PWDs. Firstly, PWDs are not necessarily impaired and hence, employers should distinguish between disability and impairment. For example, an accountant who is wheelchair-bound can be physically impaired but has no disability when doing his job. In another example, a teacher suffering severe chronic fatigue has no obvious physical impairment but may struggle to cope with her teaching load. Secondly, people are Singapore's only natural assets and they include the disabled. Like any other employees, a PWD also possesses the following three factors (Chia, 2013c):

- a. Work aptitude: This refers to how much one can contribute to one's employer in terms of competence and proficiency.
- b. Work attitude: It concerns the approach one takes towards work.
- c. Work altitude: It refers to how much one can achieve when entrusted with more responsibility.

The combination of work aptitude, work attitude and work altitude contributes to the PWD's employability (Chia, 2013c) (see Figure 2 below).

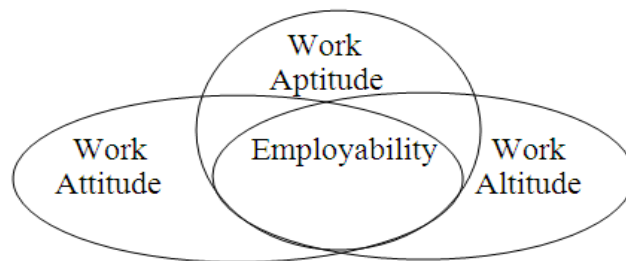


Figure 2. Combination of Work Aptitude, Work Attitude and Work Altitude

As PWDs are also a diverse group of people, their different disabilities (e.g., autism, ADHD, Down syndrome and dyslexia) have different needs and challenges. These should be made known to and be understood by the prospective employers who are deciding whether or not to employ them. Job coaches can come into the picture at this point to play the role of a mediator for people with disabilities. They can help smoothening transition for PWDs from the special training centre to the workplace. The employers, on the other side, need to trust these PWDs that they can work and contribute in their own ways like any of their peers without disabilities (see Chia, 2013e, for detail).

### ***Ready Environment***

Finally, for a ready environment, "the workplace for employees with disabilities should embrace the principles of universal design in terms of being barrier-free and user-friendly to all" (Chia, 2013b, p.A22). For example, an employee with Asperger's syndrome should be provided a structured work-schedule in visual format so that he/she knows what and how to do. Supervisors and co-workers can also lend a helping hand as and when needed.

### **The Triple-E Model of Enablement to prepare PWDs for Employment**

According to Chia (2013f), preparing a PWD for gainful employment involves three important phases, i.e., empowerment, emplacement and employment, which are essential to enable PWDs for gainful employment. A continual evaluation, though not a part of the three phases, is still important to monitor the overall progress of the process. Figure 3 shows the three steps to be taken at each phase of the process of enablement. The goal is to establish a



good rapport between PWDs as employees and their employers so that employment can be meaningful and lifelong.

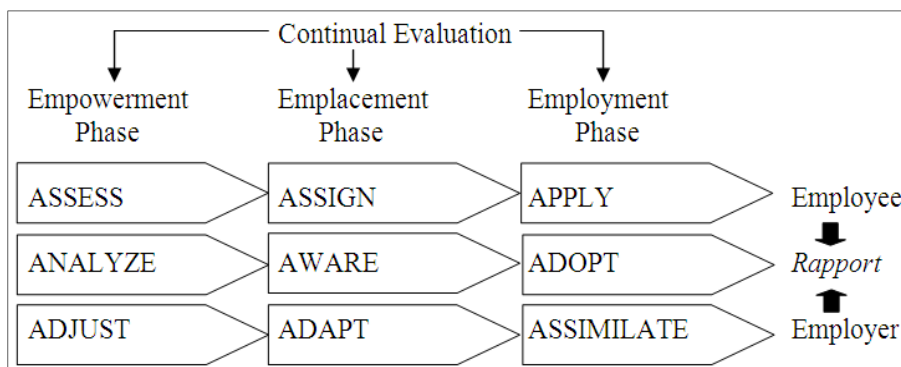


Figure 3. Triple-E Model of Enablement for Employment

These three phases form what we would term as the process of enablement to prepare PWDs for gainful employment. There must be a continual evaluation of each of the three phases as it is essential for the entire process to work and for good rapport to be established between disabled employees (PWDs) and their employers. Below is a brief description of each of the three phases.

**Empowerment Phase**

For every PWD to be well prepared for employment, they need to be empowered in terms of employability. This involves the following three steps (see Figure 4) as suggested by Chia (2013f):

- I. To assess the PWD’s aptitude and attitude in terms of the required content knowledge and the needed essential and employability skills;
- II. To analyse the PWD’s profile for readiness and suitability; and
- III. To adjust the employer expectations within reasonable requirements to match with the PWD’s employability profile.

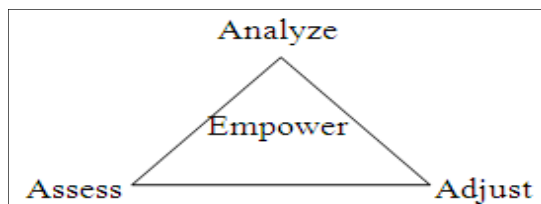


Figure 4. Triple-A Model of Empowerment Phase

Empowerment must be viewed as preparatory training in essential skills (e.g., basic literacy and numeracy skills), employability skills (e.g., workplace safety and teamwork skills) and content knowledge needed for specific kind of workplace employment requirements (Association of Canadian Community Colleges, 2013).

Essential skills are basic skills the PWDs must acquire during their preparatory training. These skills make it possible for them to learn other skills and help them participate fully in the workplace and in their community, too. There are nearly 200 workplace skill profiles that describe the use of essential skills in different occupations. The job coach working with PWDs may want to use these to help them understand the non-technical skills needed within the occupation of the PWD’s choice. They include oracy (e.g., verbal interaction with others),

literacy (e.g., reading and functional writing), numeracy (e.g., counting), teamwork, and computer use.

Employability skills are those skills that the PWDs need when they enter, stay in, and progress in their workplace, whether they work on their own or as members of a workplace team. These useful skills can be applied and used beyond the workplace in a wide range of daily life activities.

### ***Emplacement Phase***

Next, it is important to emplace a PWD in the job that best matches his/her employability profile. Given ample opportunities and more time, the PWD can show how he/she can contribute in his/her workplace. This involves the following three steps (see Figure 5) as suggested by Chia (2013f):

- I. To be assigned appropriate tasks described within the job scope;
- II. To be aware of the PWD's occupational knowledge and skills to perform the given job; and
- III. To provide sufficient time and supervision for the PWD to adapt to the workplace conditions.

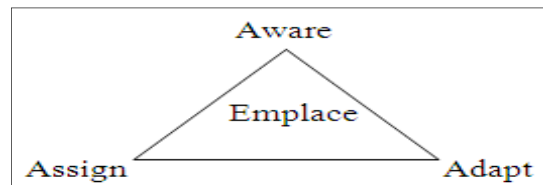


Figure 5. The Triple-A Model of Emplacement

Job emplacement will give the disabled first-hand workplace experiences so that they know what is to be expected and whether the job is meant for them.

### ***Employment Phase***

Next, employment of the PWDs involves the following three steps (see Figure 6) as suggested by Chia (2013f):

- I. To apply what they have been empowered to do and also what they have learnt during the job emplacement to perform their job;
- II. To adopt the best practices as part of their repertoire of essential and employability skills; and
- III. To assimilate into the workplace culture.

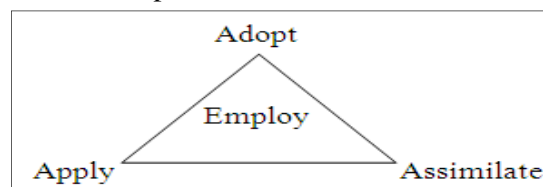


Figure 6. The Triple-A Model of Employment

Long-term employment can only work if the PWDs “are accepted by their peers in the workplace, and this has to begin with the top management” (Chia, 2013f, p.A22).

### ***Evaluation Phase***

Finally, a continual evaluation at each phase of the entire process of enablement for employment as feedback to the employees and employers as well as job coaches, who are

working closely with them, is essential for the process to work and for good rapport to be established between employees with disabilities and their employers (Chia, 2013f).

## CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have discussed about the two Triple-E models and the components that make up each of the models to provide a theoretical framework of inclusive employment. We believe that by integrating the Triple-E Model of Readiness of PWDS for Employment and the Triple-E Model of Enablement of PWDS for Employment, this framework can offer a better chance of successful implementation of inclusive employment for PWDS in Singapore. It will give the PWDS a good opportunity to be gainfully employed.

However, Chia (2013e) has argued that to prevent discrimination of PWDS in their respective employment workplaces, the families of these PWDS “remain their No. 1 allies, especially in providing much-needed support to help them succeed in their working lives” (p.A28). According to Chia (2013e), families and employers often hold different perspectives on workers with disabilities and their needs. For instance, a family may perceive that an employer focuses on a disabled employee’s weakness rather than seeing him/her as an individual with unique strengths. The most important factor is trust that has to be built among the employees with disabilities, their families and the employers to work through their differences, if any. When trust is broken, there are serious consequences for all. PWDS may lose their self-esteem. Their families may end up accusing the employers for being unkind, impatient and discriminatory. The employers will be too afraid to hire PWDS in future. However, if there is indeed an unfair treatment of the PWDS by their employers, these employees with disabilities can seek help and advice from the Tripartite Alliance for Fair Employment Practices and the SG Enable (Goy, 2013) that looks into the needs and welfare of the PWDS in Singapore.

“Good collaboration between employers and employees with disabilities takes effort, requiring both parties to respect each other and share their common workplace beliefs” (Chia, 2013e, p.A28). Given time, perseverance and continual planning, the 2-Triple-E framework for inclusive employment is a concept that can turn into reality benefiting all PWDS in Singapore.

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