

An Operational Model of Managing Vocational Training for Persons with Visual Impairment and Blindness

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Vocational training is a key means of strengthening employability of all including those with visual impairment and blindness. Although Sri Lanka too invests significantly on providing vocational training for people with disabilities there is a serious gap in finding productive employment for persons with visual impairment and blindness. This research is aimed at developing and validating a plausible model for strengthening the vocational training provision to visually impaired and blind community in Sri Lanka. Using case study method, three purposely selected leading vocational training centres representing the main forms in existence were examined to analyse their strengths and weaknesses, and the challenges encountered by the trained persons in finding jobs. A model aiming at strengthening the management, efficiency and overall quality of vocational training provision was developed first. This was revised by a number of management experts and stakeholders, both local and international, to arrive at the final model. This model portrays the key determinants and associated processes that could be adopted by the centres for making necessary improvements. Furthermore, an integrated approach linking the government, training centres and the industry responsible for providing employment is incorporated into the model implementation process. The proposed model would broaden the perspectives of policymakers, governmental institutions, and respective stakeholders aiming to empower persons with visual impairment and blindness.

Keywords: *vocational training, employment, persons with visual impairment and blindness*