



Becoming a disability-inclusive employer in the IT sector in Ghana

AmaliTech's experiences of sourcing and recruiting
young talents with disabilities

Background

An estimated 15% of the world's population or more than one billion people live with some or several form(s) of disability. About 80% of them are of working age and live in low- and middle-income countries. However, a wide range of barriers often hamper their access to training and employment. As a result, they are more likely to be underemployed, unemployed or economically inactive. The effects of gender inequalities put women with disabilities at an even further disadvantage.

In recent years, there is growing recognition that including persons with disabilities in the labor market brings significant economic and social benefits, including increased opportunities to strengthen businesses and the economy, increasing innovation and productivity, and creating a better work environment¹.

Furthermore, positive impacts of disability-inclusion include: increased diversity and self-esteem, improved services for consumers with and without disabilities and high levels of motivation linked to low levels of absenteeism and rotation².

The private sector plays a vital role regarding the employment of persons with disabilities, for example through removing attitudinal barriers, promoting technical and vocational training for persons with disabilities and making workplaces accessible. In doing so, the private sector contributes to:

- Fulfilling the obligations of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, including the guiding principle of "Leave No One Behind".
- A society, where women and men with disabilities can participate in work life and enjoy increased independence.



Employment situation of persons with disabilities worldwide

- In developing countries, 80% to 90% of persons with disabilities of working age are unemployed. In industrialized countries the figure is between 50% and 70%³.
- In many industrialized countries the official unemployment rate for persons with disabilities of working age is at least twice that for those who have no disability³.
- The exclusion of people with disabilities costs up to 7% of a country's GDP, annually⁴.

¹ Accenture (2018): Getting to equal: the disability inclusion advantage.

Available from: https://www.accenture.com/_acnmedia/pdf-89/accenture-disability-inclusion-research-report.pdf

² International Labour Organization (2014). Business as unusual: Making workplaces inclusive of people with disabilities.

Available from: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_316815.pdf

³ United Nations Enabled (2014). Disability and Employment.

Available from <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/resources/factsheet-on-persons-with-disabilities/disability-and-employment.html>

⁴ International Labour Organization (2010). The prize of excluding people with disabilities from the workforce.

Available from: https://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_149529/lang--en/index.htm



Who is AmaliTech?

AmaliTech gGmbH is a social enterprise in Germany that reinvests its surplus in further training, network growth and local community support on the ground. The Global Project of the Special Initiative on Training and Job Creation, implemented by the GIZ on behalf of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), supports AmaliTech gGmbH during the initial setting up phase in Takoradi Western Region. The Ghanaian subsidiary AmaliTech Training Academy, active in Takoradi Western Region, is supported by the country programme Ghana of the Special Initiative on Training and Job Creation. AmaliTech Services is a start-up business that provides IT services to local and multinational customers.

The AmaliTech Training Academy in Takoradi provides free IT training courses to teach local youth the necessary skills for IT and digital employment, empowering them to become technology leaders in sub-Saharan Africa. The academy's training programme provides both general and specialized curricula, combining theoretical and practical aspects.



AmaliTech offers employment pathways into the digital sector, accompanying young talents from recruitment to employment. The training content also includes the required soft skills to start a business by themselves.

01. AMALITECH

AmaliTech ist a global talent accelerator and a social business. Funding is invested in network growth, local community support and the AmaliTech Training Academy.



02. AMALITECH TRAINING ACADEMY

Local youth is provided with technical and digital skills needed for a further employment pathway in the digital sector.

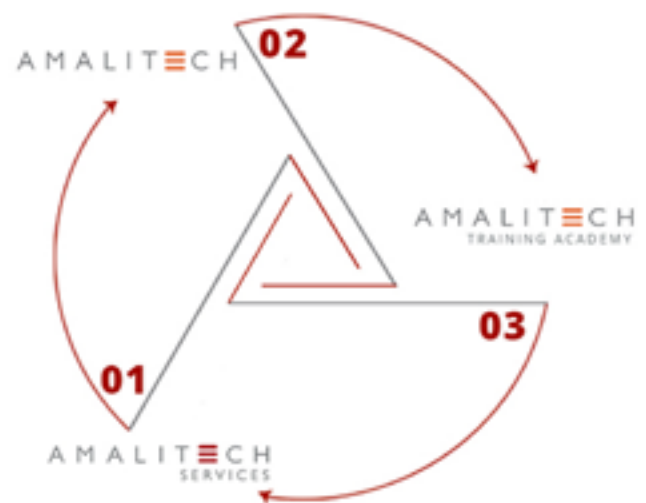


03. AMALITECH SERVICES

Employment opportunities for graduates at AmaliTech Services and collaboration with multinational clients, providing top tier IT and digital solutions.



SURPLUS GENERATED BY AMALITECH SERVICES IS REINVESTED IN AMALITECH.



Source: AmaliTech 2020 (<https://amalitech.com/about-us/>)

AmaliTech and disability inclusion

AmaliTech recognises that labour force diversity is a key driver for profitability, value creation and other business benefits. Therefore, the company is actively promoting disability inclusion, gender equality and diversity as core values.

AmaliTech has adopted a disability-inclusive and gender-sensitive approach since its setting-up phase, which offers valuable opportunities to promote diversity and to bring about equal opportunities for all, independent of categories of social difference.

The Global Project Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities joint hands with the Global Project of the Special Initiatives on Training and Job Creation to advise AmaliTech on disability mainstreaming and Inclusion. Both projects providing technical assistance for the following activities:

- 1) Sensitisation of all AmaliTech staff, trainees and trainers on disability inclusion
- 2) Identifying disability-specific and disability-related sourcing channels
- 3) Advising on the recruitment and selection processes in a gender and disability-inclusion sensitive way

The following pages outline the activities and provide recommendations in order to inform other companies that have an interest and/or want to include young women and men with disabilities in the IT sector.



AmaliTech's contribution to disability-inclusion

- Challenging widely held misconceptions about the abilities of young women and men with disabilities.
- Ensuring young women and men with disabilities have equal access to training and employment opportunities.
- Promoting diversity in the IT sector nationally and internationally, especially with regards to gender equity and disability inclusion.
- Promoting further to employment creation of a widely untapped resource pool of talents.
- Creating innovation in the IT sector.



Sensitisation and awareness creation

In order to give all members of staff practical advice on how to be confident, encouraging and supportive of both employees and trainees with disabilities, as well as to enable them to be successful and valued members of the workforce, AmaliTech organised several disability awareness trainings. The trainings covered a wide range of topics: definitions of disability, international and national legal frameworks regarding disability-inclusive employment, disability-sensitive language, disability myths and facts, best practices of disability-inclusive jobs and the business case of disability.

AmaliTech also organised disability awareness sessions during a job fair, which provided potential trainees with and without disabilities the opportunity to learn about disability inclusion and business commitment. These sessions provided a platform for discussions, where potential trainees could ask questions around disability inclusion.

Sensitisation and awareness creation about disability inclusion are also relevant for the work with different sourcing channels, which include universities, national employment programmes and civil society organisations. AmaliTech holds specific meetings to inform these institutions about the company's endeavours regarding the recruitment of young women and men with disabilities in the IT sector.

All sensitisation activities were supported and/or facilitated by the Global Project Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities and local disability experts with different impairments. Including experts with disabilities is an invaluable opportunity to learn first-hand from role models, to help challenge misconceptions about disability and may even disclose one's own disability.



Recommendations: Sensitisation

- Conduct regular sensitisation workshops for all staff.
- Create awareness on disability inclusion among all sourcing channels.
- Include local experts/staff with disabilities in sensitisation activities.
- Employ designated staff for disability inclusion e.g. in the Human Resource Team.
- Ensure non-discrimination (e.g. disability-sensitive language) and accessibility (e.g. accessible physical infrastructure of venues and information) in all sensitisation activities.

Disability-specific and disability-related sourcing channels

Persons with disabilities predominantly have lower levels of education and limited experience in the IT sector compared to their non-disabled peers. This constitutes a major challenge for AmaliTech's disability-inclusive sourcing process. It requires a targeted and flexible approach, involving different stakeholders.

Therefore, AmaliTech Training Academy works with disability-specific and disability-related sourcing channels. The former are organisations/institutions/programmes that work with and for persons with disabilities, including: Organisations of People with Disabilities, persons with disabilities themselves and role models. TechEra, a social enterprise that creates affordable assistive technology, provides digital skill training and runs capacity and intervention programmes for persons with different abilities.

The disability-related sourcing channels include institutions, where disability-inclusion is a component of their work, including: Ghana National Service Secretariat, Ghana Youth Employment Agency, and a number of universities. Most of these institutions either have a special needs office, or disability focal persons as main point of contact for businesses like AmaliTech.

These sourcing channels offer different levels of support, ranging from outreach to the potential candidates and sensitising

about AmaliTech's work, providing lists of potential trainees and trainers, to distributing postings via a range of accessible communication channels (WhatsApp, Facebook, radio, print media, phone calls).



Recommendations: Sourcing

- Targeted screening of potential candidates through mapping and analysing institutions' member databases.
- Diversify sourcing channels (e.g. include special & inclusive schools, Impact Hubs, Civil Society Organisations).
- Encourage potential candidates to mobilise their own networks.
- Encourage reapplication of shortlisted candidates, who were not successful the first time.
- Regular active engagement with all sourcing channels to discuss ways how talents with disabilities can be included in the IT sector.
- Regularly sensitise staff & students at universities/schools about the possibilities persons with disabilities have in the IT sector (e.g. through using role models).

Selection of female and male candidates with disabilities

In order to encourage young female and male talents with disabilities to apply for the training programme, AmaliTech highlights its commitment to disability inclusion already in the job and trainee programme. AmaliTech learned that it is crucial to provide detailed information on the selection process in the job and trainee programme description to inform applicants with disabilities about the support options available to them during all stages of the selection process.

Regarding the screening of online applications, AmaliTech learned that it is essential to ensure that all Human Resource staff receives unconscious bias training. They shall be sensitive to the fact that the CVs of applicants with disabilities can look differently compared to non-disabled candidates, as they may have lower levels of education, work experience and IT knowledge.

For the assessment centre stage, AmaliTech works closely together with Organisations of People with Disabilities and local disability experts to ensure reasonable accommodation for specific needs. This includes accessibility of the assessment centre's venue, the software used, as well as the provision of sign language interpretation. Applicants with disabilities are given additional time to complete the assessment. AmaliTech will continue to conduct test runs for different impairment types in order to improve this stage of the selection process and to address potential difficulties for each impairment type.

At the interview stage, AmaliTech ensures full accessibility of the venue and a high level of disability awareness among the interview panel members.



AmaliTech endeavours to offer alternative positions for promising candidates with disabilities, who narrowly failed the assessment stage. An example for such an alternative position

is the option to work as a “disability consultant” to advise on disability-inclusion during the training process and disability mainstreaming more generally.



Recommendations: Selection

- Qualified applicants, who voluntarily disclosed their disability status, should be contacted by the company's disability focal point to discuss specific requirements during assessment center stage.
- Conduct thorough accessibility checks for online assessment test with disability experts/ Organisations of People with Disabilities for different impairment types.
- Interview panel should include disability-inclusion and gender expertise.
- Collect feedback from candidates with different impairments about all stages of the selection process in order to improve it.

AmaliTech as member of the Digital Skills Accelerator Africa e. V.

AmaliTech will continue its efforts regarding disability inclusion and diversity more generally also as member of the Digital Skills Accelerator Africa e. V. (DSAA).

DSAA e. V. is an independent organisation supported by the Special Initiative on Training and Job Creation of the BMZ. It is an association of digital leaders with pilot projects in Ghana and Morocco. DSAA e. V. aims at:

- Training highly skilled digital workforce and talent in Africa. This creates business opportunities for companies and job opportunities for individuals, particularly for groups who are often disadvantaged by certain social categories, including persons with disabilities and women. It also creates awareness in the education of young professionals for the international digital market.
- Recognising that Africa has a huge potential to offer excellent digital services for the international market.
- Promoting the association to encourage international companies to join DSAA e. V. to accelerate and strengthen the growth of the digital sector in Africa.

In order to promote disability inclusion and gender equality across its activities, the DSAA e. V. is supported by the Global Project Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities and the Sector Programme Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Rights. Both projects, implemented by the GIZ on behalf of the BMZ, currently support the following activities:

- Setting up of the DSAA e. V. regarding disability-inclusion and gender equality.
- Development and implementation of disability-inclusive and gender-responsive sourcing, outreach and recruitment activities within the DSAA e. V.
- Training activities of the DSAA e. V. to strengthen the employability of persons with disabilities and women in the IT sector.





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Registered offices
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Address
Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 32 + 36
53113 Bonn

Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1 - 5
65760 Eschborn

E info@giz.de
I www.giz.de

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Coordination: Christina Betting

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