

RAP publication: 2003/09

A handbook for training of disabled on rural enterprise development



A handbook for training of disabled on rural enterprise development

Johanne Hanko

In collaboration with

Wim Polman

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
Bangkok, 2003

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this information product do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

All rights reserved. Reproduction and dissemination of material in this information product for educational or other non-commercial purposes are authorized without any prior written permission from the copyright holders provided the source is fully acknowledged. Reproduction of material in this information product for resale or other commercial purposes is prohibited without written permission of the copyright holders. Applications for such permission, with a statement of the purpose and extent of the reproduction, should be addressed to the Rural Development Officer, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, 39 Phra Atit Road, Bangkok 10200, Thailand.

For copies write to:
Wim Polman
Rural Development Officer
Food and Agriculture Organization of the
United Nations, Regional Office for Asia
and the Pacific, 39 Phra Atit Road,
Bangkok 10200, Thailand

© FAO 2003

Table of contents

Foreword	v
Acknowledgements	vii
Abstract	ix
PART I. INTRODUCTION	3
Self-reliance through micro-enterprise development	4
PART II. TRAINING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES	9
Considerations for training of rural disabled persons	10
Selecting trainees	14
PART III. SMALL-SCALE ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT	23
A. Before setting up a small-scale enterprise	23
B. Preparing to start the business	43
C. Managing the business	48
PART IV. SUCCESS CASE REPLICATION	57
Introduction	57
A traditional learning method	59
Strengths of the methodology	62
Limitations of the methodology	64
The nine steps of the Success Case Replication methodology	66
Summary of lessons learned	94
ANNEX	97

Foreword

There are an estimated 400 million persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific. Physically and/or mentally impaired persons constitute a major group of the most vulnerable poor in this region. A vast majority of persons with disabilities live in rural areas and many of them are small farmers who depend on the agricultural sector for food and livelihood security. A major cause of disability in rural areas is malnutrition caused by extreme poverty and food insecurity. In addition, more and more farmers are disabled by road or machine accidents due to mechanization and commercialization in the agricultural sector. Violence and armed conflict are another major cause of disability among rural people in the region. Rural people with disabilities must confront major barriers to achieve food security and sustainable livelihoods. Dominant social and cultural biases make it doubly difficult for them to overcome these hurdles.

A large majority of country-level rehabilitation programmes for disabled persons do not give due attention to the specific needs of small farmers. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has taken up the challenge of increasing awareness among policy decision-makers and the general public about the plight of rural persons with disabilities.

Pilot activities have been initiated to empower farmers with disabilities, including women, and make them economically self-reliant by developing their self-confidence and skills to become independent, small-scale entrepreneurs.

The FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific provided regional and country-level support for the implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons that ended in 2002. As part of these efforts, the FAO regional office provided technical assistance and coordination in FAO pilot project activities aimed at small-scale enterprise development by disabled farmers, based upon mushroom production, processing and marketing. FAO's technical assistance included provision of agro-processing technologies adapted to the needs of physically and mentally-disabled small farmers to help them become rural small-scale entrepreneurs.

FAO promotes enterprise development by disabled persons in the region, in collaboration with national governments, international non-governmental organizations and self-help groups of persons with

disabilities. In 2002, governments from the Asia and Pacific region adopted a new Action Plan for a Second Decade for Persons with Disabilities, called the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action 2003 - 2012. This framework describes the commitments of the Asian and Pacific countries towards the goal of an inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based society for persons with disabilities. FAO endorsed the aims and activities of the Biwako Framework. A major task now lies ahead for all stakeholders in achieving these goals, which, among others, requires enactment and enforcement of the proposed legislation. This, in turn, requires mobilization of the necessary political will for effective implementation of all the instruments already established in the first action plan 1993-2002, covering health, education, information/communication, training, employment and social services for disabled persons.

'A handbook for training of disabled on rural enterprise development' was developed to assist FAO member countries and support organizations in the training of disabled persons on small-scale enterprise development. It applies the lessons learned from the above-mentioned FAO technical cooperation project *Mushroom production training for disabled people* in northeast Thailand, as well as from the *Poverty alleviation through market generated rural employment* project that was jointly implemented with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). Better known as Success Case Replication (SCR), the latter project tested a methodology to replicate successful experiences in village-level, micro-enterprise development by small farmers in eight Asian countries. This handbook has adapted the SCR methodology to the needs of farmers and other rural persons with disabilities.

This handbook is a practical tool for pilot activities, by FAO and other interested UN agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to empower rural people with disabilities as part of the implementation of the Biwako Framework commitments. It provides an adapted SCR methodology, references and check-lists, and identifies resources for use by specialized training centres, village development workers and other trainers on self-employment of disabled persons as small-scale rural entrepreneurs.

He Changchui
Assistant Director-General and
FAO Regional Representative for
Asia and the Pacific

Acknowledgements

'A handbook for training of disabled on rural enterprise development' is the outcome of the on-going collaboration between Wim Polman, Rural Development Officer of the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, and specialized training institutions and other interested agencies within the region, aimed at improving livelihoods of small farmers and other rural persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific.

We would like to thank all those people who contributed directly and indirectly in the preparation of this handbook and express special appreciation to Sunee Saisupatpon, Head of the Vocational Development and Employment Subdivision from the Office of the Committee on Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons, Thailand, who provided case studies of mentally and physically disabled successful entrepreneurs; Kannika Saruasuan, Head of Education and Rehabilitation for the Blind at the Education and Rehabilitation Centre for the Blind in Roi-et, Thailand, who provided case studies and pictures of visually-impaired successful entrepreneurs; and Johanne Hanko who, since 1997, has been working as a technical specialist with the FAO regional office in the fields of rural development, disabled persons in agriculture and agro-industry and disadvantaged social groups. Over the same period, Ms Hanko has been associated with RAP in activities of the UN Thematic Working Group on Disability-related Concerns, which brings together UN agencies, NGOs and others. Working in Thailand for over 13 years, she is also an entrepreneur and specialist in environmental engineering and management.

Abstract

This handbook is designed as a guide for setting up a small-scale business. Although meant for persons with disabilities, it offers basic knowledge for successful business management and self-employment for all small farmers to help them in generating income and improving their quality of life. The handbook is divided into four parts.

The **first part** outlines the structure of the handbook. It explains the need for economic self-reliance for rural people with disabilities and how self-employment as a small-scale entrepreneur offers them a good alternative to being hired by another person. It evaluates the difficulties and advantages of this form of self-employment for a disabled person when compared to working for an employer.

The **second part** deals with the crucial aspect of the methodology used in training persons with disabilities. It outlines the importance of the attitude and orientation of the trainers as well as the steps in the process of training, from selecting, motivating and building the self-confidence of the trainees, to equipping them with the skills for starting and operating a small-scale rural enterprise. Disabilities differ in kind and degree and two persons with the same disability may have dissimilar abilities. This section stipulates ways of dealing with specific issues that can arise when training persons with disabilities and the need for follow-up action.

The **third part** reviews basic steps in the preparation and setting up of a micro-enterprise. It looks at the various challenges encountered by new micro-entrepreneurs and those that are specific to persons with disabilities starting a small-scale enterprise. It informs potential micro-entrepreneurs about selecting the right business, reviewing market demand and competition, choosing the size of their planned enterprise and the importance of location. It gives some direction on where to seek funding, resource organizations, where and how to select raw materials, and offers a checklist to verify feasibility.

Furthermore, it reviews the various components of marketing and guides potential micro-entrepreneurs through the various steps involved in running the business, including basic accounting, cash-flow and strategic timing for expanding the enterprise. Finally, it addresses

the advantages of training and explains how the *success case replication* methodology can and has been used as a tool for training persons with disabilities. Overall, it reviews the major steps in decision making and the need for technical know-how, marketing strategy development, access to credit and funding, accounting and management skills, and informed selection of raw materials.

This part does not claim to answer all questions related to micro-enterprise development for persons with disabilities in rural areas. However, the suggestions and ideas presented should help in avoiding problems that are commonly encountered.

The **fourth part** on the *success case replication* methodology uses examples of successful micro-entrepreneurs as models and trainers for people who wish to start their own micro-enterprise. It examines the methodology, which has been tested in Asian countries, and the strengths and weaknesses of each of its nine steps. It also examines how the methodology can be used to train persons with disabilities in rural areas and explains the role of the field worker or organizer.

The handbook is illustrated with **case studies** of farmers with disabilities who have become successful micro-entrepreneurs. The examples highlight the initial steps in their becoming entrepreneurs, some of the specific problems they encountered and how they overcame their disabilities. The case studies also show how some persons with disabilities who became successful micro-entrepreneurs decided to share their knowledge by training others.

I

Introduction

Introduction

Although many programmes are available for the rural poor, more needs to be done to help the poorest of the poor – rural people with physical or/and mental disabilities. Many rural persons with disabilities are forced to go to the city for rehabilitation or livelihood training. More rehabilitation programmes for the disabled are needed in the rural areas. Poor farmers with disabilities, with or without land, need to generate income or supplementary income to become active participants in their family and community, thus reducing the burden of their disability on both family and society. More opportunities must be provided to enable disabled persons in rural areas to generate income and become self-reliant.

This guide is designed for government and non-governmental organizations working for the social integration, rehabilitation, training and empowerment of persons with disabilities in rural areas. Its main objective is to give direction on how to prepare persons with disabilities to become active members of society and generate income through micro-enterprise development.

Jobs are not readily available for persons with disabilities. Even with special government incentives, many employers refuse to hire persons with disabilities because they think that the disabled person cannot do as good a job as a worker without disabilities. However, it is also not easy for a disabled person to be self-employed. Not all people, disabled or otherwise, are born entrepreneurs. While some can set up a successful micro-enterprise on their own, many, if not the majority of people, need basic training on starting a new enterprise and some advice on its overall management. Moreover, careful consideration is needed before choosing the type of micro-enterprise and its eventual expansion.

The aim of this guide is to reduce the risks involved in setting up a new project through careful preparation. People in the field should be able to use this guide as a tool to establish a micro-enterprise for supplementary or main income generation. The guide takes the user through every step to be considered when a disabled person decides to start a small-scale enterprise. Although many of the items may appear logical and simple, the guide should serve as a checklist and

be adapted to the trainer's entrepreneurial skills and those of the potential rural micro-entrepreneur with a disability. It reviews how a small-scale enterprise can and should be started with minimum capital investment, where this investment can be found and how to use and manage readily available resources.

It further reviews the *success case replication* methodology and how it can be used with disabled persons. This methodology has proven effective for non-disabled persons and offers the same advantages for persons with disabilities.

The final part illustrates how disabled farmers overcome their disabilities, become successful micro-entrepreneurs and active members within their families and communities.

Self-reliance through micro-enterprise development

Most persons with disabilities live in rural areas and, as such, it has become necessary to identify income-generating opportunities for them so they can become self-reliant while remaining within their community. Disabled persons have long been treated as social outcasts and were offered little support in becoming self-sufficient and capable of taking care of themselves and their families. However, things are changing and persons with disabilities are now being recognized as individuals capable of **doing**.

Initially, all help and support programmes could only be found in the cities, forcing rural persons with disabilities to travel to urban training centres. New approaches are now being implemented with the inclusion of disabled children and adults in schools and the workplace respectively. Nevertheless, employment remains difficult for a person with disabilities although several government programmes offer incentives for companies and industries to hire them. The incentives include subsidies for making workplaces accessible to persons with disabilities, special on-the-job training, payment by the government of part of the disabled employee's salary and tax rebates for companies hiring disabled persons.

However, many business owners are reluctant to hire persons with disabilities. Most often because of ignorance, employers tend to see only the disability and cannot recognize the capabilities of a disabled

person. Consequently, self-employment offers an interesting alternative. However, not all persons with disabilities are capable of becoming entrepreneurs, being no different from non-disabled persons in this respect.

Several factors have to be considered before starting a micro-enterprise. The various aspects of a business must be taken into account. Management and administrative skills must be developed. Many people in rural and remote areas, whether with or without disabilities, have already devised strategies and projects that generate sufficient income to sustain their families. These micro-enterprises vary according to country and culture, and can be found in various sectors such as agriculture, aquaculture, sericulture, animal husbandry, fishing, tool repair, and much more. Cooperatives have been organized in some sectors and areas.

Case study: *With determination, a low-income paddy farmer with amputated leg becomes a millionaire entrepreneur in aquaculture*

His right leg had to be amputated below the knee after a farm accident in 1992. Yet, 54-year-old Samang Rooplaikha, a former low-income paddy farmer in Thailand's Nakhom Pathom province about 100 km from Bangkok, is now recognized as an active and successful member of his community. A prosperous and well-known entrepreneur, he is an inspiration both within the community and beyond.

With only a primary education, Mr. Samang was growing rice and breeding chickens to support his family with six children. Seeking to boost his meagre income and observing other successful farmers, he decided to cultivate black tiger prawns. He learnt about the aquaculture business by himself from books, a successful neighbour and visiting other tiger prawn farms.

He started his own black tiger prawn farm with an interest-free credit of 20 000 baht given by the Disability Fund of the Department of Public Welfare. He was able to expand his business after only one year. Determination, hard work and a sound business investment have enabled him to increase his annual income from 40 000 to one million baht in just five years. He is now a prominent aquaculture entrepreneur whose success has been publicised by newspapers and other mass media. Many aspiring aquaculture entrepreneurs from various provinces of Thailand visit his farm regularly to study and learn from

his example. Mr Samang owns land, a car and a mobile phone. He attributes his success to hard work and willingness to learn constantly. "The key to success is to be diligent and to regularly improve one's knowledge," says Mr Samang.

These small-scale entrepreneurs have often encountered several problems, which they managed to solve using existing facilities, resources and understanding. They often know what works and what is needed for their enterprise to be successful. Persons with disabilities need to develop new ways and approaches to accomplish certain tasks and to surmount problems that they would face because of their disability. Small-scale entrepreneurs and especially those with a disability are in a perfect position not only to share their experience but also to teach others like them what to do and what not to do, and how it can and should be done.

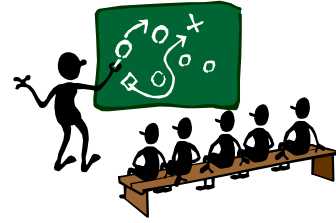
Training rural persons with disabilities in their own community has the advantage of allowing the trainees to remain with their families and to learn a trade that is accepted by the community. Training within their village or a nearby habitation also allows the trainees to exchange experiences with neighbours and make new friends. Since all people come from the same background, have the same culture and traditions, they are better able to understand the needs of each other.

Persons with disabilities have tremendous capabilities and courage, and must be given a chance to prove themselves. Capacitating persons with disabilities to become micro-entrepreneurs improves their livelihoods and has beneficial effects on the quality of their life and health. It helps reduce rural poverty and food insecurity and leads to the better integration of disabled persons into their community. Disabled farmers **can** become self-reliant, capable of generating regular income and thus be proud and active members of their families and communities.

II

Training persons with disabilities

Training persons with disabilities



Before entering into a new venture, even if it is to be a small-scale enterprise, a person needs to have sufficient knowledge of the work involved in order to make the business successful. In several cases, training is needed in order to learn more about the technical aspects and procedures that will ensure success. This training is often not readily available to persons with disabilities. Several vocational training centres will not accept a person with a disability because they assume that such a person will “slow down” the learning process of other participants. Financing the necessary training is therefore another issue that cannot be ignored. How much does it cost? Who will finance it?

Governments and non-governmental organizations around the world are developing special programmes for persons with disabilities. Because such persons did not always have the opportunity to go to school, or could study for only a few years, many disabled persons can barely read or write, or are totally illiterate. Training programmes must be especially developed to take this into account and use hands-on training techniques to teach new skills to persons with disabilities.

Creating the opportunity for disabled persons to become self-reliant

Trainers must realize their responsibility towards trainees with disabilities because they will play a major role in the future of the trainees; their work will offer disabled persons a chance for a better life with self-reliance, food security and an improved quality of life.

The main objective is to enable rural persons with disabilities to become economically self-reliant through income generation as small-scale entrepreneurs. The trainer must keep this in mind at all times during the training. All trainees participate in the training by choice and because they believe that the training course will give them the tools necessary for improving their livelihood. It is the responsibility of the trainer to convince trainees that they **can do** anything and everything they set their minds to.

Considerations for training of rural disabled persons

Training must take into consideration the activities of trainees within their community. In Asia, rice sowing and harvesting are the busiest times of the year for farmers and, therefore, it is very difficult to organize training during these periods.

Trainees may also have received different levels of education and, therefore, they must be encouraged to work as a team, helping one another. Both trainees and trainers must learn to work together towards a common goal, which is to succeed in starting a small-scale enterprise. If the trainees help each other, they can all learn from one another and will feel happier during the training.

Trainees must be well prepared for training in farming and rural activities. They must understand that it is not possible to close the enterprise during the weekend. Rural poor people often work seven days a week since some activities cannot be stopped. For example, animals need to be fed and crops need to be watered every day of the week. Trainers must arrange their schedule according to rural daily realities.

The use of a small-scale entrepreneur's experience can be very helpful and highly encouraging for trainees with disabilities. Trainers should include specialists in enterprise development, disability matters, and agriculture and rural affairs. The training can be provided either by one person with all these specializations or by a strategically selected training team.

Trainers may work on a rotating schedule. Communication between trainers, trainees, consultants and all parties involved is necessary for an effective outcome.

Motivation and capacity-building

Trainers will have to prepare trainees for basic learning and for unexpected events that will certainly occur during and following the training.

Four main learning steps

The objectives and priorities in training rural people with disabilities for enterprise development are:

1. To improve daily living skills
2. To impart technical capabilities and capacities
3. To develop entrepreneurial skills
4. To establish a network and strategic partnerships

1. To improve daily living skills

Trainers should focus on the daily realities of the trainees' community life by direct discussion with the trainees and offering appropriate advice:

- ***Accept who you are and learn to love yourself as you are***
- ***Think positively, and be convinced that you CAN DO***
- ***Be an active member of your family and community***
- ***Be responsible for your life by ensuring food security and quality, and practice good eating habits for yourself and your family***
- ***Be aware of your needs***
- ***Participate in your family and community activities as an equal member***
- ***Confront and surmount problems through open-minded interactions among themselves and in addition, through personal prayers, meditation, reflection and physical exercises.***

Trainees must be made aware of their personal limitations and potentials; they must never allow other people to determine what they can and cannot do. Training sessions should create the atmosphere of a large family reunion in order to encourage exchange, sharing, discussion, compassion and emotional

strengthening. Trainees must learn to listen to the experiences of others in order to learn how to overcome some of the problems and be successful in improving their quality of life.

Finally, enterprise development will offer trainees the chance to become self-reliant once they are convinced that they are **capable of doing**, even if they do it differently. Surmounting new challenges is never easy but always brings a feeling of achievement and success.

Case study: Teenager with Down's syndrome earns income and confidence from chicken, duck breeding

Fifteen-year-old Darum Bunkum, a resident of Lao Khwan district in Thailand's Kanchanaburi province, suffers from Down's syndrome. The right side of his body was severely weakened and he could study only till grade four. Eight years after he began rehabilitation training, he has recovered much of his strength and became economically self-reliant and confident about the future.

When he was seven, he joined the rehabilitation project run by the Foundation for the Welfare of the Mentally Retarded of Thailand under the Royal Patronage of Her Majesty the Queen. The community-based rehabilitation project (CBR) arranged physiotherapy for physically disabled rural children by giving them small cows. Taking the cows out to graze enables the disabled children to exercise their limbs. It helped make Darum's arms and legs stronger.

Noting that Darum really enjoyed taking care of the animals, the Foundation gave him funds to buy and raise chickens and Bavary ducks. Workers from the Foundation first trained his parents how to raise the chickens and ducks and manage the income. The Foundation actively followed up on his progress every three months. He also learnt how to inject the birds with vaccine and to prepare their feed according to prescribed formula. Darum could earn enough by selling chicken and duck eggs, ducklings and young chickens to expand his small farm.

He now has 50 chickens, 10 pairs of Bavary ducks and five meat cows and earns between 70 to 100 baht per day. He now earns his own income from his enterprise for the first time in his life. A portion

of the income is used for expanding his enterprise, another part helps meet necessary family expenses and the remainder is put in Darum's bank account. Darum learnt about money management from his parents and is now proud to manage his bank account by himself. He is confident he can become physically stronger and also develop his intellectual capabilities to be successful in life. He wants to make chicken and duck breeding his permanent livelihood.

2. To impart technical capabilities and capacities

Trainers must concentrate on the skills required for the successful accomplishment of all tasks associated with the chosen small-scale enterprise that is to be established in a rural area. These skills and tasks will vary from one business to another.

For persons with physical disabilities, certain techniques may be needed to replace the "conventional way" of doing things. For example, using the feet or mouth instead of hands has proven very efficient. Certain tools and devices can also be adapted to a person's physical disability.

Because training has to be conducted over a limited period of time, the quality of trainers becomes extremely important. Several programmes developed by government and non-governmental organizations use specialized trainers. Nevertheless, trainees prefer trainers who are successful entrepreneurs themselves and can explain from experience the "do's" and "don'ts" of establishing and running a small-scale enterprise.

3. To develop entrepreneurial skills

All aspects of a sustainable rural enterprise must be reviewed and well understood. For details see Part III.

4. To establish a network and strategic partnerships

Regular communication with trainers and all parties involved will provide trainees with timely information about existing training programmes. Trainees should fully exploit opportunities for collaboration with various agencies and organizations. This will also facilitate their acceptance as full members of their community.

The following are examples of organizations and institutions that can be contacted for future collaboration or partnership.

1. Agriculture extension offices
2. Local disability training centres
3. Technical colleges
4. Universities
5. Private companies
6. Local community small enterprises
7. Organizations for persons with disabilities (local, national and international levels)
8. Non-government organizations (local, national and international levels)
9. Central government agencies (e.g. Ministry of Invalids, Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Health)
10. Local government agencies
11. UN agencies such as FAO, ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNIDO, WHO.
12. Others

Finally, because of the importance of marketing in any business venture, strategic partners and associations may support trainees in advising on market opportunities and become potential partners and clients.

Selecting trainees

The selection of trainees should be based on well-defined criteria. Although many persons with disabilities can perform all required tasks, their motivation is crucial for success. Careful selection of the trainees is, therefore, vital for the successful replication of the enterprise and its future sustainability.

Persons with disabilities are capable of accomplishing most of the tasks involved in enterprise development. Nevertheless, certain activities may need to be adapted and strategies developed to compensate for the disability. Moreover, two persons with the same disability do not necessarily have the same capabilities and, consequently, it becomes necessary to understand their abilities while developing the strategy. Every person is different and therefore should

be allowed to test his or her capabilities and limitations. Trainees must be allowed to develop their own personal way of accomplishing the tasks required in the enterprise. Trainers must be able to give advice, support and direction.

Trainee selection procedure

1. **Identification of the candidates:** In most countries, the names and addresses of persons with disabilities are registered with a government office responsible for their welfare, such as the Ministry of Invalids, the Ministry of Social Welfare or the Ministry of Health. Provincial or municipal governments may also have information on persons with disabilities. Radio or television announcements can be used to invite candidates for training on enterprise development. Information on training should be provided to disabled persons located in the remotest rural areas.
2. **Pre-selection:** The disabled person's age and type of disability should be verified. Ideally, the age should be between 20 and 35 years. Nevertheless, it has been demonstrated in some cases that the selection of younger or older candidates was fully justified and highly rewarding for both trainees and trainers with the success of the trainee's new enterprise. Persons with multiple disabilities may have difficulties following a training course because of limited mobility and their capability for active participation must be verified. Candidates with basic literacy will also, generally speaking, find the training course more enjoyable and easier to understand; they are also more likely to succeed and, therefore, may be given priority.
3. **Diversity of location:** Care must be taken to avoid market saturation. A diversity of locations for training in the same type of enterprise is necessary. Moreover, if trainees are selected from different locations, they will have the opportunity to replicate their enterprise and become trainers in their community.
4. **Each candidate visited at home:** Trainers must meet each candidate at his or her home. This will allow trainers to verify if the candidate has family and community support, as well as the financial and other material resources for establishing the new enterprise.

5. **Verification of commitment:** Trainers must check the will and commitment of the trainees and their families to attend the training course. This is especially true when the trainee has to leave home to attend the training which may last for several months.
6. **Verification of motivation:** Trainers must make sure that the candidates are highly motivated to learn about enterprise development and new skills.
7. **Verification of availability:** Trainers must make sure that the candidate is capable, committed and ready to leave home to learn. In case of a person with multiple disabilities, a family member may have to accompany the trainee.
8. **Final selection:** Trainers must sit together and evaluate each candidate, decide whether or not a candidate should be selected, and justify their decision. This will ensure impartial and objective selection. Trainers must always keep in mind that the training is not only for enterprise development but should also serve as a re-education of the disabled towards their full integration as active and self-reliant participants in society.

Note: Although all selection criteria have been followed, it is still possible that some trainees return home before the end of training due to unexpected events in their family. However, meeting the selection criteria increases the chances of completion of training courses. A questionnaire for initial review of the candidates is given in Annex 1.

Size of the training group

The number of trainees will depend on the number of trainers. A ratio of five to one or six to one has been shown to be successful. With only five or six interns, it is possible for a trainer to better understand the physical, psychological and emotional needs of the trainees. The trainer should always keep in mind that the training programme is not only for enterprise development but also for self-motivation and confidence-building to ensure that the disabled person-turned-entrepreneur can be an active and self-reliant participant in community development.

Gender issues

Training in enterprise development offers a good opportunity for women with disabilities. Small-scale enterprise development allows both women and men with disabilities to earn a living close to home. A small-scale enterprise can be set up near the house allowing the woman to take care of home and children while generating supplementary income. It can also offer single women, single parents or widows an opportunity to establish a sustainable business that will enable them to become financially self-sufficient. Experience has shown that women can learn just as well as men, the skills needed for successful enterprise development. Attention must be given to the safety and security of women when training in mixed groups.

Case study: *Visually impaired village women demonstrate how the disabled can be successful in enterprise development and become community leaders*

Visually impaired, 49-year-old Nuan Sarachan belongs to a family of low-income rice farmers in Roi-et province in Thailand's poorest north-eastern region. She has demonstrated how rehabilitation training and sound business sense can enable persons with disabilities to become economically independent.



She was trained in awareness-building and mobility by a rehabilitation course for the visually impaired in 1991. A year later, after spending some time with others like her to learn from their experience, Ms Nuan decided to make joss sticks, which was the main

economic activity in her village. She started her business with a loan of 5 000 baht from the Roi-et Education and Rehabilitation Center for the Blind, but had barely managed to repay the money when she had to give up because of the high market competition.

After making a living for some time by packing joss sticks and earning 20 baht per 100 packs, she borrowed 4 000 baht to start a pig farm and buy a small rice mill in 1993. Making her first profit, she followed a neighbour's advice to start fish breeding with technical support provided by the village agriculture officer. Continuing success enabled her to diversify further into cultivation of straw mushrooms, which she

had learnt at the Rehabilitation Center. Having ensured a regular income for herself and her family from her enterprises, she went back to the Roi-et Center in 1997 to learn about cloth and water hyacinth weaving, mushroom farming and Braille reading and writing. On returning home a year later, she also began selling her products to the Roi-et Center.

Seeking to improve her work, she asked her neighbour to teach her how to make big joss sticks as it was difficult for her to make the small ones because of her disability. It was while learning this that she met Noopien Sitiwan, who was about the same age as her and also visually impaired.

Both women became close friends and after two weeks of training, decided to start making big joss sticks. They also sought advice from the government extension worker so they could sell directly in the market instead of through a middleman. They now make about 200 to 300 pieces every day and sell at a higher price to shops in the province, assuring themselves a regular monthly income ranging from 3 000 to 5 000 baht.

No longer dependent on their families, the two women also train the visually impaired and persons with other disabilities at the Roi-et Education and Rehabilitation Center for the Blind. They have taught joss stick making and cloth weaving to more than 100 persons with disabilities. The two are active members of the committee for the rehabilitation of small children in the village and take care of the children at the Center one day every week. They are constantly trying to arrange funding or donations to support the Center.

Issues and considerations to be addressed prior to training

1. To ensure that trainees do not abandon the course before its completion, it should be ascertained if they have left their home in the past, whether for re-education, training or work. This will show how they cope with living away from home.
2. Trainees who have never left their family should be allowed to train closer to home rather than be sent to a distant training centre.
3. Trainees who have never undergone re-education are often incapable of taking care of themselves. This must always be

considered when planning a training programme especially during budget preparation because offering re-education with skills training will take more time. Ideally, the trainees should have undergone re-education. Trainees with multiple disabilities may need continuous assistance.

4. Some trainees may also have been over-protected by their families and not used to accomplishing certain tasks on their own. As a result, it may be quite difficult for them to overcome certain physical challenges and trying to do so may cause serious emotional confusion. Trainees must initially understand that enterprise development may require specific tasks that can be difficult. They must have decided to attend the training because they truly want to learn new skills and not because family members have decided that it would be a good idea for the disabled person to learn new skills.
5. Many persons above 60 years of age have never had the opportunity to learn new skills or to undergo professional re-education or formal education. Learning enterprise development skills may be difficult for them and this is why it is recommended that trainees be between 20 and 35 years of age. Homogeneity within the group is also important. When trainees are both men and women, care must be taken that all women are not very young and men older. Different types of disabilities can also create different problems. For example, the needs of the visually impaired are different from those of the hearing impaired and the physically disabled.
6. Some trainees with multiple disabilities or with specific physical or mental disabilities may be incapable of systematic learning. For example, mentally-disabled persons may need additional attention. Although they may be capable of accomplishing specific tasks, especially repetitive actions, they may not necessarily be capable of analysis and decision-making. Other members of the group must understand the mental capabilities of their peers and can help during training by giving additional explanations and training.
7. Safety and security must be ensured for women attending mixed training courses. Appropriate facilities must be available for women trainees with disabilities to ensure their safety and privacy.

8. Following up on the trainee's progress after the establishment of his or her enterprise is crucial for its continuation. Like any other new entrepreneur, the disabled person will face problems, expected or not, usually shortly after set-up or during installation. A resource person, ideally the trainer, should be available for follow-up action and troubleshooting. This will protect trainees-turned-entrepreneurs from being overwhelmed with problems, which can often be solved easily. Failure must be avoided to ensure that the new entrepreneur becomes more self-confident and, therefore, self-reliant.

III

Small-scale enterprise development

Small-scale enterprise development

A. Before setting up a small-scale enterprise

Small-scale enterprise development is not for everyone, whether disabled or not, and needs a high level of discipline, dedication, persistence and creativity as well as a lot of work. The micro-entrepreneur must be capable of decision-making and have the ability to manage employees (if any) and accounts. Furthermore, small-scale enterprise development for persons with disabilities involves a multitude of additional challenges, which require specific attention and strategies. Before setting up a small-scale enterprise, it is necessary to:

1. Deal with specific challenges

In any business venture, specific challenges need to be addressed. These include:

- **seed money**
- **physical location of the business venture**
- **construction or other physically demanding work**
- **management skills**
- **accounting skills**
- **marketing skills**
- **maintenance of equipment, machinery and premises.**



In the case of persons with disabilities, their physical and mental capabilities have to be reviewed for suitability to the enterprise.

Ask these questions:

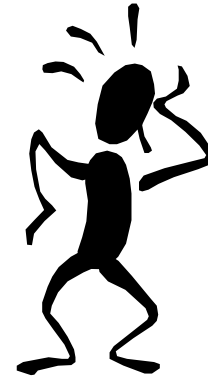


1. **What are my strengths?**
2. **What are my weaknesses?**
3. **How can I compensate for my weaknesses?**
4. **What are my current personal needs?**
5. **Who will be working with me?**



2. Choose the right business

The right business certainly varies from one person to another. Personal preferences, along with physical and mental capabilities are the main deciding factors. Nevertheless, the focus should be on market demand and its limitations to determine if the business can be successful.



A planned small-scale enterprise should be able to produce sufficient income to justify the time and energy invested in the venture. Family support also plays a major role in the selection of the business since a disabled person needs help in accomplishing certain tasks, especially during the start-up of the enterprise.

- 1. Make a list of what you would like to do.**
- 2. Also make a list of what you are good at doing.**

Go through the following steps to guide the choice of business:

- **Start with what you like** → **Remain realistic**
- **Investigate the market and its needs** → **Try to be objective**
- **Review the competition** → **Competition means a market**
- **Avoid saturated markets** → **Look for opportunity**
- **Make sure you can do it yourself** → **Hiring means spending money**
- **Consult with others** → **Discretely, not to divulge ideas**
- **Discuss with your family** → **Check impact on family**

Keep in mind that if there is competition, it means there is a market. Discreet investigation is therefore advisable.

Write down your ideas so you will not forget



Case study: Deaf and mute villager with no schooling becomes a successful farmer

Deaf and mute and with no education, Somboon Oysin was turned down by employers. Yet, the 25-year-old villager of Kampaengsaeng District in Thailand's Nakhom Pathom province, is now a successfully self-employed farmer with a regular annual income of 40 000 baht. His strong determination to break out of his world of silence and reach out to others enabled him to make full use of all his human faculties to radically transform his life.

As a child, he could not attend school because of his disability. He never learnt sign language. For his living, he could only find irregular work. He dreamt every day about having his own enterprise which would let him stay close to his family. Looking for business opportunities, he decided to follow his neighbour's successful example in cultivating corn and galingale (locally known as kachai). He obtained hands-on experience at his neighbour's farm and learned a lot by himself.




When he felt he had enough experience, he requested a loan from the Disability Fund of the Department of Public Welfare to set up his own enterprise for which he was given an interest-free credit of 20 000 baht. Within one year, he was earning enough to expand his farm enterprise. After just two years, he began earning a regular annual income which is more than twice his previous yearly earnings as daily worker of no more than 18 000 baht.

He has been able to repay the family's debt of 40 000 baht. Today, Mr. Somboon is free of all debt, has ample income, owns a motorcycle and is a self-employed entrepreneur. He is able to take care of himself and his family, which makes him very proud. He is widely accepted within the community as a successful farmer and entrepreneur.

Examples of activities appropriate for rural areas

The right business also means what is readily available and required in terms of raw materials and local demand.

Activities found in rural areas can be divided into three broad categories.

<p>ON THE FARM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Rice & other cropsFruitsVegetablesMushroomFlowersAnimal rearing (chicken, pigs, sheep...)Rearing silk wormBee keepingBreeding turtles, frogsAquacultureOthers	
<p>HANDICRAFT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Basket weavingSilk & cotton weavingCarpet weavingPotteryPaintingMetal worksOthers	
<p>SERVICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Motorcycle repairRadio/television repairBarber shopBeauty salonMassageFood processingSales of various productsOthers	

3. Review market demand and the competition

Review of the competition is necessary. Competition means there is a market, but how big is the market?



It is important not to saturate the market and to supply the right type of product or service; something that is in demand.

Ask these questions:



1. **Who are my competitors?**
2. **Who are my customers?**
3. **How much can the market absorb before saturation?**
4. **Is there a shortage or surplus?**

Location of the market is also important for micro-entrepreneurs with physical disabilities. Agricultural produce, for example, has to be sold at the fresh market, which must be accessible to the disabled person micro-entrepreneur. If it is too far, proper transportation arrangements will be necessary or else the product will have to be sent by a hired delivery person or sold to a middle person. Hiring people increases production costs. Marketing is easier for a farm-based enterprise located within a small community where the production can be sold directly to the villagers.

Case study: Overcoming his disability to become a leading mushroom entrepreneur



Over a decade ago, Suban Inthanam was unable to get a bank loan to start mushroom farming to support his wife and two children. A resident of northeast Thailand's Yasothon province, he suffers from a disability which has made his right leg shorter than his left by 15 cm. Banks were unwilling to lend to a disabled person and the family was supported

by community members. Today, in his forties, Mr Suban is a well-known and prosperous mushroom entrepreneur with annual profits of about half a million baht, helps the poor and readily shares his business expertise with others.

Borrowing a small amount of money from friends he was able to set up a small mushroom farm in 1990. He succeeded in producing as much as the big farmers due to very high yields. With his wife, he gave special attention to the farm, paid back the loan from his earnings as a successful entrepreneur, bought land and built his own house made of concrete.

His wife harvests the ripe mushrooms four to five times a day. The plants are not watered by an automated device on fixed days and times but manually to ensure the exact amount needed at the exact time. Mr. Suban buys the spores in Bangkok, prepares and inoculates substrate bags and supplies these to other mushroom cultivators in his village.



In 1994, he started training people in the community who were keen to follow his outstanding example. He has so far trained more than 25 persons in mushroom cultivation. The training he gives is free because he believes in mushroom cultivation as a good and honourable way of earning a living. Now more than 25 rai (about four hectares) of land within the village is used for mushroom farming.

Mr. Suban goes around the village on his motorized tricycle. He helps others with advice on mushroom cultivation, despite risk of increased local competition and reduced profitability of his own production. Instead, he diversified into the production and sale of inoculated substrate bags which largely compensates for any income loss from increased competition. He now makes monthly profits between 40 000 and 50 000 baht. He is one of the most highly appreciated disabled guest trainers at the mushroom cultivation training centre in Ubon Ratchathani, more than 100 km from his home in Yasothon.

4. Check seasonability

Agriculture and farming produce are often seasonal. The following questions must be considered:

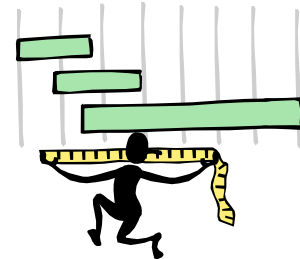


- 1. Is the crop or product available only during certain seasons?**
- 2. Are raw materials available all year round?**
- 3. Can the product be kept in storage?**
- 4. Is the service or product only required during certain periods of the year?**
- 5. Can there be off-season production?**

Some products can be grown off-season generating substantial profits since there are few competitors during that period. Such products, although requiring more time and attention, can offer a niche market opportunity for micro-entrepreneurs with disabilities.

5. Decide on business size

Care must be taken in deciding the size of the business.



- ***If too small, the business may not be feasible.***
- ***If too big, it becomes too difficult to manage properly and may require extra help, which adds to costs.***
- ***If too big, the market may not be capable of absorbing the produce.***

It is usually better to start small and expand the business slowly once the market has been tested and income starts coming in. Initially, self-sufficiency and the capability of handling the business by oneself is the best indicator of the right size of the enterprise.

Several questions need to be answered before determining the size of the enterprise:



1. **Who are the clients?**
2. **Where are the clients?**
3. **How many clients are there?**
4. **How much produce or services can each client use?**
5. **Are there seasons or days of the week when the produce or service is more in demand?**
6. **Who else is offering the same service or produce?**
7. **What percentage of the business share can I expect to take?**
8. **How much money do I have to start the business?**
9. **How much can I manage by myself?**
10. **How can I ensure quality?**

Write down your ideas so you will not forget



6. Identify the location



Location plays a crucial role in starting a small-scale enterprise. While a farming or farm-related enterprise need not be accessible to the buyers, the micro-entrepreneur will have to travel to the market to sell the produce. When the business involves fresh produce, timely sale is crucial. For example, fruits, vegetables and flowers are highly perishable and have to

be sold quickly. Easy access to markets is important. It is necessary for a micro-entrepreneur with a disability to be able to reach the market or to have easy contact with potential buyers. In some cases, it may be necessary to hire someone to help in the delivery of the produce.

In the case of services, micro-enterprise location should encourage people from the village to come to the entrepreneur's workplace, which must be easily accessible to clients, and be somewhat attractive. Low-cost decorations can be used to attract clients while good service will ensure their return.

Land and premises

Land and premises are needed for the establishment of any enterprise. In case these have to be acquired, the start-up costs will increase. If the new micro-entrepreneur already owns these, he or she may have to spend on renovation. The following questions should serve as guidelines:



- 1. How much space do I need?**
- 2. Do I have a piece of land or building I can use?**
- 3. What will be the cost of the land?**
- 4. Do I need to rent the premises?**
- 5. Does a new building need to be built?**
- 6. Can the existing building (s) be renovated?**
- 7. Do I need decoration? (Decoration may be needed to attract customers.)**

Write down your project ideas so you will not forget



7. Check availability of raw material

Raw material for making the produce should be readily available. Import of the material should be avoided because this will make it difficult to ensure a steady supply.

A number of suppliers should be identified.

It is important to avoid reliance on a single supplier as this will give the supplier a monopoly and is most likely to lead to an increase in prices over time. Because the profit margin in a micro-enterprise is generally small, it is necessary to keep production costs under close control. It is important to ensure constant quality.

Alternative sources of raw material may also be considered such as forest products that are readily available and free of charge. Recycling and re-use is another way of reducing costs.

The steady availability of water is another important consideration while selecting the enterprise and identifying the raw material. This is especially important for farming activities.



Case study: *Farmers with physical disabilities find income and confidence with silk yarn spinning*

An FAO Technical Cooperation Project (TCP) to train small farmers in southern Thailand to produce silk yarn has demonstrated how rural persons with disabilities can earn an income and confidence in their ability to be economically active.

There are many silkworm farms in southern Thailand where the raw material is readily available. The income from silk yarn depends on the amount of time spent in spinning the yarn and its quality. It takes 7 kg of silkworm cocoons to produce 1 kg of yarn. As cocoons can only be kept for a period of three to four days, intensive work has to be done during these few days.

The trainees for the FAO TCP included a group of eight farmers with physical disabilities from the province of Chumporn. Some were in wheelchairs and one of them had only one hand. The group received five days of intensive training. The training programme was the same for all trainees. The trainees with disabilities learned that they could do just about everything required to make silk yarn – how to select and buy cocoons from local farmers and how to spin and sell yarn in the market.

The silkworm cocoons then cost an average of 80 baht per kg, while the yarn was sold for between 800 and 1 000 baht per kg depending on the quality. Some of the trainees with disabilities were able to buy 20 to 30 kg of silkworm cocoons, which could be spun to yield between 3 to 5 kg of silk yarn. It was estimated that each silkworm crop generated a gross income ranging from 3 000 to 5 000 baht and a profit of 1 400 to 2 600 baht.

The training saw the modification of techniques to meet the special needs of persons with disabilities. For e.g., the trainee with just one hand would not have been able to use the conventional method to spin yarn, which requires holding the thread with one hand and using the other to turn the reel. A motorized reel was provided to solve this problem. But this was not a feasible solution since most trainees are not in a position to buy a motorized reel or pay the additional production cost for electricity. A practical alternative was to train the disabled person to use both his feet with the thread twisted around the toes. Another problem was ensuring the easy supply of silkworm cocoons. Since these are available only three to six times a year, trainees must have other sources of income when cocoons are not available. One trainee was compelled to give up silkworm production as he lived too far to be able to buy the silkworm cocoons in time. In both cases, the issue was tackled by assisting the trainees to make a living from selling processed food to earn an average income of 200 to 300 baht per day.

The FAO project has been relatively successful with four of the eight trainees with disabilities still active in producing silk yarn.

8. Identify funding

A disabled person wanting to start a micro-enterprise may obtain a loan for this from family or community members. However, the start-up funds often have to be sought externally. It must be kept in mind that loans have to be repaid and, therefore, one must borrow the minimum amount needed for start-up and running expenses until the venture starts generating income.



In some countries, government loans or institutional micro-credit are offered to small-scale entrepreneurs – whether disabled or not – who have a viable business proposal. Rural persons with disabilities often lack the education and skills needed for preparing a formal proposal and may need the help of family or community members.

Several countries also have disability funds offering loans at low or no interest rates to individuals with disabilities who are registered with the responsible government authority. The loan can be repaid over a period of several years. The loan sometimes requires endorsement by a family or community member in case of non-repayment.

Disabled persons seeking a loan must contact either local government authorities or government ministries that are most likely to offer loans, such as the Ministries of Labour, Social Welfare, Health or Invalids; the ministry may differ from one country to another. Disabled persons may also obtain loans from cooperatives, agricultural organizations, women's groups or farmers' organizations, although such loan facilities are not specifically available for persons with disabilities.

9. Review the market



Marketing is very important since competition can be fierce. The following factors must be taken into consideration:

1. **Packaging:** Packaging may or may not be required depending on the product. For the sale of fresh fruits, vegetables or other agricultural produce, there is generally no need for packaging. A simple plastic or paper bag is sufficient.
2. **Presentation:** Presentation can play a role even in the sale of fresh food products. Neatness, cleanliness and organization make the sales outlet attractive and appealing to customers.
3. **Market test:** It is sometimes interesting to test different types of presentation or packaging to find the one that appeals most to customers.
4. **Competition:** Competitors offering the same or similar product must never be ignored as they already have clients and may be more experienced. Check their presentation, price and sales technique. As a new micro-entrepreneur, you can learn from the experience of others and adapt it to your personality.

A lot can be learned by looking at the competition. The following are some of the things that need to be checked against.



9.1 The competition

1. **Who are my customers?**
2. **Is there growing demand for my product?**
3. **Who are my competitors?**

4. **How are other businesses doing: are they growing? Steady? Decreasing?**
5. **What are their strengths? Their weaknesses?**
6. **How does their product differ from mine?**
7. **If it is the same, why do I think I can take a share of the market?**

9.2 What is the right sales price for the product or service?

Sales price, quality and service ensure that new customers become regular clients.



1. **What are the current sales prices?**
2. **What is the quality of the product sold by the competition?**
3. **How does the quality of my product compare to that of others?**
4. **What is my estimated cost price?**

If the sales price is too high, customers will go to the competition even if the entrepreneur is a person with disabilities. Clients may buy once to encourage the micro-entrepreneur who is a disabled person but will buy the lower priced product if it is of equal quality. If the price is too low, customers will think that the product quality is also low and continue buying from their regular supplier. The right price should be similar to that of the competition while offering better service and same or better quality.

10. Check feasibility before starting the enterprise



Too many people start a new small-scale business, blinded by the attractiveness of the product or by what seems to be an attractive market. However, many micro-enterprises close down after a few months or years of operation, shattering the small-scale entrepreneur's dreams of what appeared to be the perfect way of making a decent living. In order to avoid this, a pre-feasibility study should be conducted. Although this may be based on estimates, it helps to prepare for the future and, in some cases, shows that another activity may be better.

Start-up expenses generally include:

- **Legal professional fees**
- **Licenses / permits**
- **Rent and/or construction**
- **Equipment and tools**
- **Assistive devices (when required)**
- **Raw material**
- **Salaries / wages**
- **Utilities**

11. Check profit and loss (feasibility checklist)

DESCRIPTION	TOTAL COST	
	Total	Per month
A. ONE TIME INVESTMENT (divide by number of months to know approximate cost per month)		
1. Legal and professional fees		
2. Operating licenses / permits (12 months)		
3. Building (36 months)*		
4. Land use (36 months)*		
5. Equipment / tools (36 months)*		
6. Transportation / delivery equipment (if required) (60 months)		
7. Assistive devices: Hearing aid, visual aid, tricycle, wheelchair, prosthesis, orthotics... (36 months)*		
8. Salaries / wages for start-up		
9. Utilities (elect., water for start-up)		
A. TOTAL COSTS		

(Cont) B. OPERATING EXPENSES	Per month
1. Raw Material	
2. Utilities	
1. Water	
2. Electricity	
3. Telephone	
4. Others	
3. Labour costs (if any)	
1. Micro-entrepreneur	
2. Family members	
3. Hired workers	
4. Delivery expenses	
5. Rent payment	
6. Loan repayment	
7. Taxes	
8. Repairs and maintenance	
9. Other costs (not above)	
B. TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	
TOTAL MONTHLY COSTS: A + B =	

* *Calculating depreciation costs of tools and equipment:* Purchased tools and equipment can be used for a period of several months or years. Their cost must be divided over the period of expected life (use of such tools and equipment is further divided into the number of items produced or services rendered).

<i>EXAMPLE OF CALCULATION</i>	
<i>Purchase of tools</i>	<i>6 000 baht</i>
<i>Number of usage years</i>	<i>3 years or 36 months</i>
<i>Cost per month</i>	<i>6 000 baht / 36 months = 167 baht per month</i>
<i>Quantity of items produced per month</i>	<i>200 units</i>
<i>Cost of tools per unit</i>	<i>167 baht / 200 units = 0.84 baht per unit</i>

CALCULATING SALES PRICE:

	Total monthly cost
<i>Divided by</i>	÷
	Quantity of items produced
<i>Plus</i>	+
	20% Profit margin
<i>Equals</i>	=
SALES PRICE PER UNIT	

CALCULATING MONTHLY INCOME:

	Estimated sales price of product
<i>Multiplied by</i>	x
	Estimated quantity sold per month
<i>Equals</i>	=
TOTAL MONTHLY INCOME	

CALCULATE THE MONTHLY GROSS PROFIT

	Total income
<i>Minus</i>	-
	Total costs
<i>Equals</i>	=
GROSS PROFIT	

- ***If the estimated profit margin appears good, then it is time to go ahead with the investment.***
- ***If the profit margin is low, all numbers should be reviewed carefully before investing.***
- ***If the profit margin is negative, the micro-entrepreneur should consider another activity.***

Case study: Disabled farmer recovers physical and economic strength with mushroom enterprise

Several years ago, Suphol Noi Wong, 34, left his family and country to go and work in a refrigeration factory in Taiwan where he was sent by a labour recruitment agency. But his dreams of a good income were shattered when he became severely injured in a work accident. He lost all strength in both his legs after what appeared to be a gas leak in the factory.

Sent back to Thailand as a disabled, unemployed worker without compensation and burdened with a 50 000 baht debt with a 2 percent monthly interest, he could find work only as a daily farm hand.



His income was far too short to support his family, his wife and seven year-old son, and to repay his debt.

Looking for additional income he came to know about the innovative FAO pilot project on mushroom enterprise development for farmers with

disabilities. He was chosen for the training after satisfying most selection criteria. The only exception was that he had such a big debt. Yet, Mr. Suphol's impressive courage and determination led to his selection. Through his strong determination he recovered some of the strength in his legs, while he worked hard to learn everything about mushroom cultivation.

Within a year after completing the 60-day intensive training, he was able to build his second mushroom house. He now earns an average of 500 baht per day and is paying off his debt, making mushroom cultivation his main livelihood. The training programme restored his self-confidence and enabled him to realize his entrepreneurial ambition. He also trained his family members in mushroom cultivation and they help him in developing his enterprise. As a successful micro-entrepreneur, he has gained economic self-reliance along with physical, mental and emotional strength.

12. Avoid common mistakes

Numerous factors may jeopardize the success of an enterprise.



The following are some common mistakes:

<p>☹ Insufficient know-how</p>	<p>The micro-entrepreneur does not sufficiently understand the process and therefore cannot easily find alternatives or solutions to problems encountered (e.g. Pest control, disease, mechanical problems...)</p>
<p>☹ Lack of marketing strategies</p>	<p>Competition may be healthy but too much competition may destroy the market unless creative marketing strategies are developed. Although a person with a disability may receive special consideration, it is necessary to compete with sometimes powerful and wealthy groups. The issue of disability is not a marketing strategy.</p>
<p>☹ Insufficient cash flow</p>	<p>Cash flow is often what destroys most companies. Careful forecasting of start-up and running expenses is necessary.</p>
<p>☹ Too large start-up</p>	<p>It is always better to start small with a minimum investment and to grow slowly with the market.</p>
<p>☹ Poor record-keeping</p>	<p>Income, profits and losses need to be closely monitored. This helps decide whether the market is good, whether the new small-scale enterprise should be expanded, reduced or halted because of losses.</p>
<p>☹ Giving samples and presents</p>	<p>Generosity needs to be controlled. A certain amount of gratuities should be established but it is always dangerous in a personal business to give small amounts of the product or free service to members of the family and neighbours. This could equal or surpass the profit margin.</p>
<p>☹ Management</p>	<p>Management of the business is, and will always be the key to success. Not all people are good managers and therefore management skills may need to be developed or acquired through training.</p>
<p>☹ Maintenance</p>	<p>Maintaining the equipment and the keeping the business premises clean and in good running condition certainly contributes to reducing operating expenses.</p>



B. Preparing to start the business

Basic and unavoidable steps

➤ **There are ELEVEN basic and unavoidable steps in preparing to start a business.**

1. Secure funding
2. Open bank account
3. Identify precise location for the enterprise
4. Build or renovate the structure or building required
5. Arrange necessary infrastructure (water, electricity, communication and others)
6. Request permits (if necessary)
7. Purchase and adapt necessary tools, equipment and assistive devices (when required)
8. Identify suppliers of raw materials and consumables
9. Start production
10. Control quality
11. Devise marketing and sales strategies

1. Secure funding

Various sources of funding may be considered when starting a small-scale enterprise for a person with disabilities. The major source, obviously, is the family. However, many countries have special programmes to help micro-entrepreneurs with disabilities. For example, a Disability Fund set up by the Government of Thailand offers interest-free loans to persons with disabilities who can make a feasible business proposal. Some international organizations and NGOs also provide financing facilities for different projects and target groups. Documents to confirm the loan or grant must be processed at this stage.

2. Open bank account

Once funding has been identified and confirmed, the money must be deposited in a bank account. To ensure clear accounting, a special bank account should be opened for the business. The loan money can then be deposited in that bank account and withdrawn for the purchase of equipment and raw material. The income from

sales is also deposited in this bank account. All transactions should be done through the bank and not directly in cash. This ensures clear understanding and follow-up of money movement for both income and expenses.

3. Identify precise location for the enterprise

It is then time to choose the precise location for the construction of the facilities. If using an existing building, renovation or modification may be necessary. It may also be necessary to arrange for landfill, excavation, irrigation or other modification. This can often be done manually with the help of family and friends.

4. Build or renovate the needed structure or building

Renovation and building may require substantial investments. Nevertheless, these can be greatly reduced by using readily available forest produce, grass, tree leaves and rice straw or used construction material. For example, tree branches can be used as poles; roofing can be made of corrugated steel, rice straw or grass; and walls can be made of dried leaves. The weather is also decisive for the type of material to be used. Decoration should be kept to a minimum, at least in the beginning. However, if the structure is also to serve as a retail outlet, it may be necessary to be creative and use simple yet attractive decorations.

5. Arrange necessary infrastructure

A steady supply of water is vital for an agriculture-based enterprise and a well may be dug or water may have to be transported or channelled to the site. In some cases, electricity may also be needed. Roads must be accessible for smooth delivery of raw material and transport of the produce to the market.

6. Request permits (if necessary)

It is very important to confirm if a permit is needed to operate the business. It is costly to set up a business and then learn that it will take a few months to get the required operating permit. Verification should be done at the very beginning so that permits can be processed during preparation for starting the enterprise.

7. Purchase and adapt necessary tools, equipment and assistive devices

Purchase of equipment should be kept to the absolute minimum. Instruments that are not needed regularly may be borrowed or rented. It is important to verify if a person with a disability can use the equipment. Certain adaptations or modifications may be necessary. The use of prosthesis and orthotics by physically disabled persons would surely help in any type of enterprise. The manual *Adaptive tools for persons with disabilities*, published by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) offers some ideas and suggestions on what is readily available. Although electrical equipment may facilitate certain tasks for persons with disabilities, electricity charges add to production costs and consequently, the sales price. Any equipment or machinery should be purchased after careful consideration.

8. Identify suppliers of raw material and consumables

The quality of raw material and reliability of suppliers are crucial, especially in the case of consumer products. Delivery must be punctual to ensure continuous production. Suppliers should be carefully selected by requesting quotations and terms of delivery from several parties. It is better to select a supplier situated close to the enterprise even if the price is slightly higher because it is easier to keep check on a nearby supplier. Prices should always be negotiated and in case of regular purchase, better prices, terms and conditions should be sought.

9. Start production

It is time to verify the actual costs of production. Some things may have been forgotten or put aside under the impression that these are not important. The micro-entrepreneur with a disability must start the production and apply his or her know-how to the best of his or her ability. However, some problems may need to be solved such as pests, diseases, breakdown of machinery and shortage of clients. A resource person should be available to support and guide the new disabled person micro-entrepreneur in solving these problems. The total amount of production must be closely monitored. Provincial and district offices sometimes have specialists in various agricultural sectors who can be useful as

resource persons. Cooperatives also offer advice to their members.

10. Control quality

Quality and reliability of supply are crucial for ensuring steady sales and a good price. Raw material quality must be controlled for good product quality and must be done on a continuous basis to reduce loss and damage. The new micro-entrepreneur's clients will find him or her reliable if the quality is maintained constantly.

11. Devise marketing and sales strategies

Although competition may make market penetration more difficult, it also proves that there is a market. A new micro-entrepreneur, whether disabled or not, needs creativity and sales strategies to establish his or her product or service in the market. Politeness, friendliness and a neat personal appearance help in selling a product. Developing a relationship with the buyers by providing a regular supply of quality products will convert clients into regular customers. This will also establish a good reputation for his or her product or service and bring more customers

A successful micro-entrepreneur must also be flexible and capable of reducing or increasing prices according to demand and shortages. For products or services sold from his or her home, an accessible location will encourage villagers to go to the micro-entrepreneur. In the case of agricultural produce, the disabled person micro-entrepreneur can sell from home or may send someone to the market with the produce.

The entrepreneur must always check and review the market for the following:



- 1. Who are the buyers?**
- 2. What quantity of production can the market absorb?**
- 3. Where are the selling points?**
- 4. What is the distance that needs to be travelled to sell the product?**
- 5. What means of transportation are available?**
- 6. How much time is needed to sell the product, including travel?**

Packaging may be needed for some products. This adds to the cost and must be carefully selected since it may increase the price of the product to a level that is no longer competitive. Same or similar products must be carefully reviewed for how and whether they should be packaged. Innovative packaging or presentation, however, may allow a new micro-entrepreneur to corner part of a market.

C. Managing the business

A profit-making business

Running a small-scale business is not only buying, producing and selling. It also means:



- ***Keeping clear records***
- ***Verifying profit and loss***
- ***Managing cash flow***
- ***Maintaining tools, equipment and buildings***
- ***Reviewing the market regularly***
- ***Expanding the business wisely***

Although setting up the micro-enterprise may have its difficulties, making it a profitable venture is the biggest challenge. It is therefore necessary to closely monitor each investment and purchase cost to know the exact profit.

1. ***Keep clear records***

Small-scale entrepreneurs should always keep clear records of their purchase and sales. The records must be simple.

- ***Make a list of all items bought every week.***

Purchased item	Quantity	Price per unit	Total price

➤ **Make a similar chart of all items sold**

Sold item	Quantity	Price per unit	Total price

2. Verify profit and loss

Finding out whether the enterprise is making money or not is crucial for the venture. Sometimes it seems that there is a lot of money coming in but when compared to the costs, there is little profit left. This is called **feasibility**.

It is necessary to review the feasibility by asking the following questions:



- 1. Am I making money?**
- 2. Is it worth continuing?**
- 3. What can be changed to increase profit?**

It is especially important to verify the profit margin. More production does not necessarily generate more income. It depends on the profit margin, which is calculated by subtracting the production cost from the income as follows:

$\text{Income} - (\text{Minus}) \text{ Production costs} = (\text{Equals}) \text{ Profit margin}$

Case study: Down's syndrome did not keep her from gaining economic independence with a poultry enterprise

Although afflicted with Down's syndrome, Yupin Kerdam no longer feels she is a burden for her family. She is proud to be able to contribute to the family income. For the first time in her life, the 30-year-old woman living in a province near Bangkok has a regular income, which she manages carefully, keeping the records herself.

She started chicken and duck breeding with a loan from the Foundation for the Welfare of the Mentally Retarded of Thailand under the Royal Patronage of Her Majesty the Queen and the Department of Public Welfare. She was trained to do this by her parents who



were given initial training by the District Office Extension Officer. The Foundation actively followed up on the training every three months. Successful from the start, Ms Yupin has been enthusiastically involved in her business for several years and has increased the number of birds to 150 chickens and 20 pairs of Bavary breeding ducks. She is knowledgeable about their exact feeding and veterinary needs, injecting them with vaccine and preparing their feed according to prescribed formula. In addition, she grows vegetables and flowers, earning an average of 100 baht a day from the sale of eggs, small chick and ducklings, as well as vegetables and flowers.

The business is independent from the family enterprise although her



parents monitor her business operations. As advised by the Extension Office, they tell Ms Yupin how to manage her income. A portion of the money is to be used for expanding her business, another to meet her personal needs and the rest is to be saved in her bank account. Other family members

even seek loans from her and have to tell Ms Yupin why they need the money, for how long and with what interest they will repay it. Ms Yupin is happy to help her family and feels a valued member of the community.

3. Manage cash flow

Cash flow is the money moving **in** and **out** of the enterprise. It is the total amount of money coming in and going out of the business. If all the money received is put in the bank and all expenses are paid from the money in the bank, the cash flow is the total amount of money moving in the bankbook. However, care must be taken not to spend what appears to be profit before reviewing future investment needs. These needs can include:

- **Purchase of raw material**
- **Payment for utilities (electricity, water, etc)**
- **Repair of broken equipment**
- **Payment for extra labour**
- **Repayment of the loan**
- **Replacement of tools and material.**

Note: An emergency fund should be set up for the replacement of broken equipment and tools and for purchasing other necessary inputs.

4. Maintain tools, equipment and buildings

Tools and equipment

The life of tools and equipment can be extended by proper maintenance. Metal tools should be protected from rust while wooden tools have to be protected from termites and decay. Mechanical tools must be lubricated regularly.

Building(s), structure, environment

The type of structure used for the business determines the maintenance required. In Asian rural areas, many buildings are made of thatch, bamboo, rice straw, grass, dried leaves and other material. These must be checked for pests, especially in cases

where production is food-related or stored inside this structure. The building or premises must be kept clean and tidy at all times, whether used as a sales outlet or not. Cleanliness not only makes the place more attractive, it also reduces the threat from rodents and other pests. It further makes the place more enjoyable to work in and thus encourages the micro-entrepreneur to spend more time on the premises.

5. Review the market regularly

A micro-entrepreneur must always review developments in the market if he or she is to remain successful.



- 1. Am I selling more or less than before?**
- 2. Do I have regular customers?**
- 3. Did I lose customers lately?**
- 4. Are there new competitors?**
- 5. What is the quality of the product on the market?**
- 6. What is the cost?**
- 7. How does my product compare with the competition in terms of quality? Price?**
- 8. How is the competition presenting its product?**
- 9. Should I improve my packaging? My presentation? My production?**

These and other questions need to be addressed regularly since a market is constantly changing with new people, new products, new technologies and new competition.

6. Expand the business wisely

- **The business must be expanded at the right time**

Expansion is always a sign that the business is doing well. However, this should be based not only on current sales but also on future sales.

When expansion is considered, decisions need to be made on the type of expansion:



1. ***Produce more of the same product in the same location?***
2. ***Produce more of the same product in another location?***
3. ***Join with others to open outlets or branches?***
4. ***Produce a similar product that would be complementary and help me corner the market?***
5. ***What are the costs involved?***
6. ***Do I have enough money or do I need to ask for a loan?***

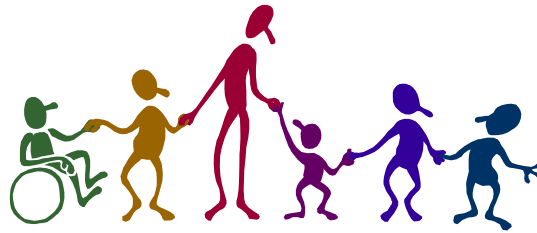
It is recommended that expansion should only be done when the micro-entrepreneur has accumulated enough money to pay for the expansion. *Borrowing money to expand a business is always dangerous and often results in failure.*

Plans for expansion of a micro-enterprise should be made in the same way as for its start-up.

IV

Success case replication

Success case replication



Introduction

The success case replication (SCR) methodology evolved from FAO's work with small rubber farmers in southern Thailand in the late 1960s and early 1970s and was based on a study by Poor Siri of the Rubber Division of the Thai Government's Department of Agriculture in cooperation with Jan B. Orsini, working for the FAO Regional Office and then for ESCAP. It showed that successful rural micro-entrepreneurs sharing their expertise with others in the village was not only a highly effective extension method, but also reduced reliance on outside experts who often had little practical experience and even lesser knowledge of local needs, customs and traditions.

During 1994-99, FAO and ESCAP initiated a pilot project 'Poverty Alleviation through Market Generated Rural Employment' to thoroughly field test the SCR methodology in eight Asian countries – Bhutan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam. This led to the publication of *Success case replication, a manual for increasing farmer household income*, authored by Mr Orsini with the assistance of FAO Rural Development Officer Wim Polman. The SCR methodology can also be used for persons with disabilities, especially those who have surmounted the psychological trauma of their disability and wish to become successful micro-entrepreneurs.

The following section reviews the SCR methodology and its application in situations involving persons with disabilities. All direct quotes or paraphrases from the SCR manual are in *italics*.

Case study: Pioneering mushroom enterprise training for disabled farmers

A small-scale enterprise development project for farmers with disabilities initiated by FAO in Thailand's Ubon Ratchathani province in the country's poorest northeast region, has helped provide economic self-reliance, self-confidence and social respect for disabled farmers and has become a model for developing countries within the region and across the world.

Started by the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific jointly with the Thai Government's Department of Public Welfare, an innovative pilot project successfully trained farmers with physical and mental disabilities to make a living by producing and marketing mushrooms. A full commercial mushroom farm was set up on the premises of the Northeastern Training Center for People with Disabilities in Ubon Ratchathani as a training centre. A first group of 28 people and a second batch of 19 people with a range of physical and mental disabilities successfully participated in this FAO pilot project on mushroom enterprise development training.



The training included all stages of a mushroom enterprise, starting from the purchase of raw material, spawning, bagging, pasteurization, inoculation of bags, fruiting, and marketing and management. Each group was trained for only two months, while traditional

vocational training activities have a duration ranging from six months to two years. Seventy percent of the trainees were able to set up profitable mushroom farms. Many of them on returning home also shared their know-how with their family members. Five trainees of the first group and two from the second group became trainers themselves on mushroom production at the centre. They managed to establish a unique self-sufficient mushroom farm enterprise within the centre itself.

Although the main income for most trainees came from rice farming, several have now made mushroom cultivation their main livelihood.

Mushroom production is easier and can provide a regular and improved income to the disabled farmers who mainly depend on a single annual harvest of rice in this poorest part of Thailand. With proper planning, mushroom cultivation can provide income throughout the year with slight fluctuations in prices depending on the season.

Some of the ex-trainees are now planning to train other disabled farmers outside the centre. A small group of 20 ex-trainees have developed a joint mushroom enterprise on land donated by the mother of one of the ex-trainees. With this, a promising group-based, community-level private enterprise development has taken place.

A traditional learning method

The SCR methodology uses traditional learning methods. It follows a simple and direct approach, using the imitation of peers as the basis for understanding.

Traditionally, people learned from “hands-on” experience, by working with individuals to develop special skills in specific areas. Girls would learn to sew and cook with their mothers while boys learnt bread making, blacksmithing or carpentry from their fathers, uncles or neighbours. Through trial and error, trades were learnt and transmitted from one generation to another. These methods have been replaced by schools that offer broader knowledge.

However, a trainer sent from the city and sometimes from another country, cannot always communicate easily with the local people because of language and cultural differences. The SCR methodology identifies and mobilizes successful local micro-entrepreneurs who are ready to share their experience and know-how by training their peers.

Apprenticeship is still the easiest and most common way of learning, whether for cooking, shoe-making or television repair. The International Labour Organization of the United Nations (ILO) has been promoting on-the-job training for several years and is encouraging the hiring of persons with disabilities for such training.

Because of traditional beliefs and ignorance, persons with disabilities have often been considered incapable of learning. Yet, over the years,

when given the opportunity, they have successfully imitated their peers. Nevertheless, strategies for accomplishing the same task must often be developed according to individual capabilities. Persons with disabilities are now encouraged to use their own personal ways of doing what they need and want to do.

The methodology follows nine distinct steps:

1. *Locate success cases*
2. *Assess replicability (profit and marketability)*
3. *Assess successful farmer's willingness to become a trainer*
4. *Establish a practical, hands-on training programme*
5. *Carefully select trainees*
6. *Supervise the training*
7. *Arrange follow-up support services for trainees*
8. *Achieve secondary multiplication after first level successes*
9. *Monitor cost-effectiveness of the methodology*

Strengths of the methodology

By following the nine steps in terms of their content and implications, the methodology provides a simple and efficient way of training large numbers of persons with disabilities even in the most remote areas.



Some of the advantages of using the SCR methodology include the following:

1. Trainees can relate to the successful entrepreneur

The SCR methodology uses locally successful entrepreneurs as trainers. It can use persons who have overcome a disability to become successful micro-entrepreneurs. Trainees can relate to such persons since they come from the same background and the same culture. These micro-entrepreneurs have already found ways of overcoming their disabilities by using new or different ways to accomplish certain tasks. For example, persons who have lost the use of their arms have learned to use their feet instead.

The use of SCR methodology ensures that the trainers, being persons with disabilities who have achieved success in their respective fields, have a better understanding of local needs and customs. Alternatively, non-disabled successful entrepreneurs can train persons with disabilities earn income in order to improve their quality of life and take full part in community life.

While considering market demand, a grassroots survey of what is socially acceptable will ensure that the project caters to local needs and does not become just a 'theoretical project'.

2. All participants come from the same background

Outside experts are usually seen as privileged people who had an easy life because of high income, and education facilities inaccessible to local poor community members. Local populations often consider that the new technology or project is only efficient for wealthy people and will not personally relate to it. They cannot consider replication because their background cannot be compared.

With the SCR methodology, trainers start from the same level as the trainees: they are farmers training farmers. They can therefore show their success, and explain how they managed to achieve their goal. Trainees can relate to the fact that if they understand the theory well and have the courage and perseverance to pursue the project, they can also be successful. Persons with disabilities can further evaluate their potential and see how they can emulate the successful micro-entrepreneur.

3. Follow-up readily available

Foreign trainers need to return to their home base or work on another project, sometimes in another country, following training. Follow-up and support is often not available for the trainees. It is when the trainees are beginning to set up their own enterprise that specific local problems arise, be they technical or financial. By using local people as trainers, SCR methodology ensures that ex-trainees have continuous support. Disabled and non-disabled trainers remain and continue to work within the community, which should be a short distance from the ex-trainee's new enterprise. Moreover, trainees with disabilities are almost certain to encounter unexpected problems requiring specific attention and advice.

4. Regaining self-reliance

The main objective of employment generation for rural persons with disabilities is to make them self-reliant. Dependence on peers or government funding has to be phased out as the majority of persons with disabilities are capable of becoming self-dependent. Persons with disabilities are **able** to do many things. They should not feel inferior or less capable, must be convinced of their capabilities and be active members of their community.

The SCR methodology promotes self-reliance by making the successful person a trainer and by involving the local community. It is not only the trainees who have disabilities but a number of successful micro-entrepreneurs have disabilities. By proving that a person with a disability can become economically self-reliant, the SCR approach not only benefits the disabled person but also has a positive impact on the community. The community should offer full

support and encouragement. This will promote self-esteem among the trainees.

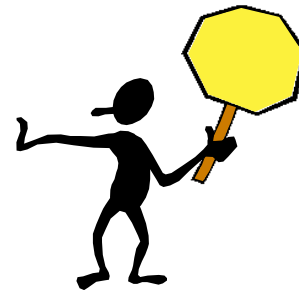
5. Rapid replication rate

With SCR methodology, replication can be exponential thus creating several levels of successful enterprises, provided there are no market limitations, whether from private enterprise or from institutions. The SCR methodology can offer cost-efficient, appropriate training for feasible and sustainable enterprise development and replication.

Although the methodology offers a wide range of advantages, certain limitations should not be ignored.

Limitations of the methodology

This methodology is not expected to replace the methodologies already used by various agencies. It should be used as a complementary methodology. SCR has been used successfully in several countries allowing increased income generation for rural poor people. It can also be used with persons with disabilities as trainers and trainees.



1. Few cases of successful entrepreneur with a disability

It is quite difficult to find successful micro-entrepreneurs with disabilities within the community. Several studies have shown that data regarding disabled persons is scarce. Indeed, many persons with disabilities who are successful entrepreneurs are considered as “successful people” rather than “successful disabled persons”. It may therefore be necessary to *seek successful micro-entrepreneurs outside the community, which implies outside interference* and trainers from a different background. Moreover, the criteria for success for persons with disabilities may not always be seen as equal to that used for persons without a disability. It is necessary to be careful in verifying successful cases. Some may be considered successful because they are making a lot of money

while others may be viewed as successful simply because they are making a decent living for themselves and their families.

2. Replication in other communities or countries

The SCR methodology needs to use already tested and proven successful cases. These success cases should preferably be selected from within the local or a nearby community. Know-how can be transferred from a non-disabled successful person to other non-disabled persons as was demonstrated during the field testing of the SCR methodology. However, it can also be transferred from a non-disabled person to a person with a disability, and from a person with a disability to others with disabilities and even to those without a disability. Nevertheless, the successful farmer needs to be accepted by the trainees and by the field worker. If either of them does not accept this farmer as an expert in his own field, the SCR methodology cannot be successful.

3. Full commitment of trainees

Careful selection of trainees is crucial for the success of the training. Unless people are fully committed, the training will only be a temporary exercise with no continuation. Family and community certainly contribute to the micro-entrepreneur's success. When the micro-entrepreneur's physical or mental capabilities are affected, he or she needs some help or support in accomplishing certain tasks. This is especially true if construction work is needed to start the enterprise. Talking to family and community members is the best way of verifying how the potential micro-entrepreneur trainee with a disability is perceived in his or her own family and community. It also shows what kind of support can be expected, where the trainee with a disability expects to replicate the enterprise as well as the source of financing. All aspects of the micro-enterprise must be fully understood by participants so that they are fully aware of present and future commitments in order to ensure replication and its successful continuation.

4. The importance of the field worker

This methodology can be implemented in any country. However, the importance of a good field worker cannot be emphasized

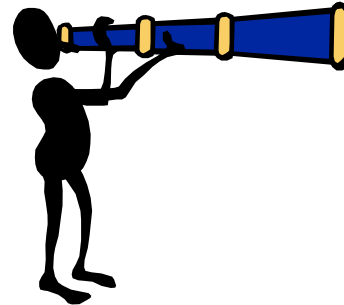
enough. One person needs to locate the success case, make a careful evaluation and see how this case can be replicated with persons with disabilities. Furthermore, restrictions and contingencies have to be identified to prepare an adapted training programme for the transfer of know-how to targeted participants. If the field worker is totally convinced that the group of participants with disabilities is capable, the group then feels obligated to succeed and generally achieves everything that is required, sometimes to the trainees' own surprise.

5. Market constraints

Although replication appears to be totally positive, market constraints must be carefully considered. A market can easily become saturated when the number of people manufacturing the same product increases within a small community. *This could also lead to trainers withholding precious information especially in their marketing strategies.* Once persons with disabilities show they can earn substantial income, other people, whether disabled or not, will want to enter into the same business thus lowering market prices. Marketing strategies and the opening of new markets become essential to protect the new micro-entrepreneurs

The nine steps of the SCR methodology

Each step is explained and the problems that may be encountered are discussed.



1. Locate success cases

1. Consult those who should know

A successful entrepreneur is relatively easy to locate in small communities since everybody knows the successful members of their community. Identifying a person with a disability in a village is also quite easy. Everybody knows the “disabled person”. Identifying successful persons with disabilities is certainly much more difficult. In some cases, therefore, it may be necessary to select a successful micro-entrepreneur who is willing to train disabled persons. Extra effort is

needed to identify successful, disabled person micro-entrepreneurs. However, they are there, they can be found, even if they are lesser in number. Depending on the country, the Public Welfare Department and non-governmental organizations may know of persons with disabilities who are successful micro-entrepreneurs. Family and community members are usually fully aware of the struggle and difficulties faced by the successful micro-entrepreneur with a disability and are proud to introduce such a person among them.

The successful micro-entrepreneur trainers may be chosen from different fields. Nevertheless, different groups of people may have different views on who is or is not successful. Making a living by repairing television sets may be seen as successful for some while for others, growing speciality fruit would seem better because it makes good use of the land. The number of persons with disabilities who are successful micro-entrepreneurs may be so limited that any pre-conceived ideas may hinder their involvement as trainers. It is necessary to keep an open mind, see what is being done by the disabled person and whether it is an answer to the needs of many in an identified community.

2. Socially acceptable models

The success case trainer should be selected according to the group of people to be trained within the same social, religious or ethnic group. If the successful micro-entrepreneur selected as trainer is too young and has to train older people, or is a man/woman and has to train women/men, the trainees may not accept him or her because of age or sex.

The fact that the selected trainer has a disability may be an advantage or a disadvantage. Depending on the way he or she is introduced, this person may not be accepted as a trainer by people who are not disabled. However, the fact that such a person has surmounted the additional difficulty associated with the disability and become successful, can be emphasized as showing strength, perseverance and often ingenuity in accomplishing certain tasks.

Social differences sometimes create awkwardness in a relationship, whether purposely or not. A non-disabled person feels awkward when meeting a person with a disability, often not knowing how to

behave with the other. It is necessary to reduce difference factors such as a wide age gap, sex and social strata in order to create the best learning environment.

3. Extension worker age and status

In some cases, age or youth may be a problem for the extension worker. When a very young extension worker tries to teach older people who have been working in this field or a selected field for more than 20 years, he or she needs to gain their respect. In addition, because of cultural influences and language barriers, it takes time to create a relationship and generate trust, if at all. It may be easier to convince one person rather than a whole group and therefore, using the leader of a group to teach others may help convince other farmers of the benefits of the new approach.

4. Review successful organizations

When an organization is selected as a success case, it is important to understand the dynamics of the group and to assess the whole organization. Who is the leader? How much are other participants involved in the organization? One powerful individual can sometimes make a major difference in the working of a group whereas without this person, the organization would certainly fail. It is also important to see how the leader interacts with other members of the group and the reasons, both technical and social, for the success of the organization. It is necessary to take into account the administration and decision-making process of the organization. Within a group, the person actually doing things may not necessarily be the real entrepreneur. The whole organization with its strengths and weaknesses needs to be assessed.

Although a person may have a physical disability, his or her mind remains clear and alert. In some cases, a disabled person may be more creative or have other abilities that are more developed in compensation for the disability, such as increased sensory awareness.

5. Duration of the success

It is important to evaluate the stability of the success case. An overnight success may be due to temporary shortage of a product.

On the contrary, if there is over supply, prices drop and production costs may become higher than the sales price. This has been the case with mushroom cultivation in Thailand where high sales prices encouraged many people to cultivate mushrooms. However, mushrooms tend to bloom all at the same time. With the over supply, prices plummeted, and many farms had to shut down.

A good success case should already know or have undergone the “ups and downs” of the market, and should well understand the stability of this market. The person with a disability should not count on the fact that he or she is disabled as a guarantee for sale. Proper marketing strategies are part of the success and remain of key importance.

6. Variety of success cases

Because of market limitations, of physical and mental capabilities, and of personal interest, a variety of success cases is preferable. The market can only absorb a certain quantity of a certain product. Furthermore, persons with disabilities have certain physical or mental limitations. It might be better to rely on activities that, while using the disabled person’s fullest potential, are less competitive and, therefore, more gratifying and rewarding, both emotionally and financially.

A small community, especially in a remote area, is engaged in a wide range of activities in order to be self-sustainable; one or a few specialists in each activity are necessary for meeting daily needs. *Existing successes in the locality will ensure interest and replicability.*

Case study: Polio-stricken farmer becomes a successful entrepreneur and trainer of asparagus cultivation

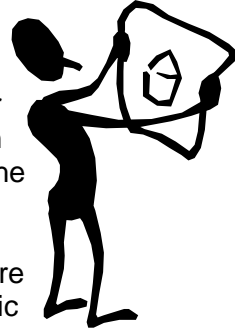
His right leg afflicted by polio since childhood, 43-year-old Charai Thanyarakdechow barely earned 15 000 baht a year from his small farm in Nakhon Pathon province near Bangkok. His income has now grown to more than ten times as much and he is a recognized business leader in the village.

Seeking to increase his income to support a wife and four children and inspired by the success of his neighbour, he decided to take up asparagus farming. Mr Charai had experience in growing vegetables but had never cultivated asparagus. He learnt about growing and marketing asparagus from his neighbour and started his enterprise in 1996 with an interest-free loan from the Disability Fund of the Thai Government's Department of Public Welfare. The market was ready to absorb a larger production and his venture was profitable from the beginning, enabling him to expand his farm during the second year itself. He now earns 200 000 baht a year, has repaid the loan as well as a 300 000-baht debt. He was able to provide a good education to his children and buy a motorcycle.

He now offers training and advice to other villagers on asparagus farming and marketing and continuously exchanges business ideas with his neighbour. Mr Charai has set up the Kaset Pattana Group made up of neighbours in the same business in his village. The Group now has 250 members and two among them are persons with disabilities. By coming together, the farmers can save money on their purchase of raw material and have easier access to loans. Collective bargaining also ensures them better prices for their produce, including from a Japanese buyer. The Group offers advice to members and encourages diligence and continuous improvement by all its members.

2. Assess if success can be replicated (profit and marketability)

Many persons with disabilities who have become successful are willing to help others who are disabled and need to earn a regular income for their survival. Nevertheless, care must be taken not to saturate the market, thus destroying both the successful entrepreneur and the new trainee.



Assessment of replicability does not require extensive training. It can be conducted by specific verifications. *Because the selected success cases are income-generating enterprises, the following elements need to be evaluated:*

1. Overcoming the successful person's fear

Most villagers are reluctant to discuss financial matters. Persons with disabilities often have an additional inhibition; many are still unsure of themselves even once they are successful. The idea of training others is both challenging and frightening.

Then there is concern about the competition, which needs to be addressed. Assurances must be given that this will not create competition since it will serve other communities, or that the market has plenty of room to absorb additional production. *The market must be carefully assessed.*

2. Assessing market capacity

Marketing is the main issue in business. Although it is often considered in the last stage of setting up a micro-enterprise, it should be part of the initial stage, before even thinking of entering a business.

When starting a new micro-enterprise, the disabled person must take time to observe people who are selling the same or equivalent product and see how they are doing it. Careful study of market demand and capacity are necessary for successful replication.

Good understanding of the targeted market is necessary. The following questions must be answered:

- ***Is there market demand for the product?***
- ***Is the product seasonal?***
- ***Is there a lot of competition (present and future)?***
- ***Who are the competitors?***
- ***How do they handle the competition?***
- ***What are some of the marketing strategies?***
- ***Where is the market?***
- ***How far is it?***
- ***Is the market readily accessible?***
- ***Can a person with a physical disability access the market easily?***
- ***Is the profit margin satisfactory?***
- ***How long has the successful micro-enterprise been in operation?***

Market access is also crucial, especially for perishable agricultural produce such as fruit and vegetables. The distance to the market and the quality of roads will determine the time taken to reach there as well as the damage that can be caused to the produce during transportation.

Processing and packaging are other important factors in marketing since buyers are unlikely to buy a product that they will have to process themselves. There is generally very little packaging in the fresh food market. Yet, in some cases, the product needs to be packed in bags or baskets. The potential of the market should be checked, first with the successful micro-entrepreneur and independently by the field worker.

Successful micro-entrepreneurs should already know everything about the market. Since they have been successful for a certain period of time, they have learned about the market. The successful micro-entrepreneur must fully understand that training others will create increased competition in the market.

If the successful micro-entrepreneur is willing to train others and is not worried about market saturation, it should mean that there is still room in the market. Trainees must fully understand the implications of future replication. Flooding the market with the same or similar

product will result in falling prices and failed businesses. The importance of marketing can never be stressed enough since it is the basis of any successful business.

3. Assessing net income

An economic assessment of the micro-enterprise must then be conducted. Profitability and sustainability of a micro-enterprise are directly related to the basic elements involved in the business. These elements can be summarized as follows:

1. *Cost of raw material and equipment*
2. *Production and associated costs*
3. *Marketing and sales price*

As explained in section II 'Check Profit and Loss' (Feasibility checklist), the net income can be calculated by adding all incomes from the sale of the product and subtracting all cash costs (raw material, labour, etc.) for the production.

Gross income – (Minus) Total cost = (Equals) Net income

4. Appropriate net income

Is this a reasonable income? The appropriate net income varies from one country to another. Unfortunately, a person with a disability is often paid a lower salary than a non-disabled person for the same work. It is necessary to determine the local minimum survival income and to use this figure to evaluate whether it is appropriate or not.

5. Incorporating depreciation

For a more accurate yet complex economic analysis, depreciation of equipment should be calculated. This can be done by dividing the cost of purchase of a new tool or equipment by the number of days, months or years it can be used as shown in Section II 'Check Profit and Loss'. This is called depreciation. Depreciation costs should be considered although these may be very low. Profit margins are sometimes very low and therefore depreciation can make a difference.

6. Deductions for family labour

Personal and family members' participation is generally not counted when calculating labour costs. Because micro-entrepreneurs receive money that can then be spent, they consider this as their profit, which is partially true. Persons with disabilities often have few opportunities to work for other people and therefore their income is their salary. They often do not have the choice of going to work for others. Family members are also happy to help disabled kin become successful in their new venture and therefore, may not request any remuneration. Profits are often shared at the end of the day. *Unless cash has been paid to family members for wages, unpaid labour need not be included in the costs.*

7. Raw material supply

Although an enterprise appears feasible, problems of raw material may occur because of seasonability or distant market purchases. A good understanding and review of raw material supplies is necessary. The following questions arise:

- ***Is raw material readily available in the community?***
- ***Is it seasonal?***
- ***Are prices stable?***
- ***Is quality equivalent to success case being replicated?***
- ***Is there a monopoly?***
- ***Can it be easily handled by persons with disabilities taking into account size, weight, health hazard, specific skills required...?***

It is important to know if the raw material used can be found locally. Dependence on out-sourced material may create problems in future. Furthermore, accessibility to the raw material is important for persons with disabilities. Transportation, especially in remote areas is sometimes very difficult and even more so for persons with disabilities.

Supply of raw material is crucial for village micro-enterprises. When training persons with disabilities, it is necessary to know if the trainees are capable of handling the raw material, the finished

product and finally, to sell it at a profit. The objective is not just to keep the disabled person occupied but also to generate income. Therefore, selection of the venue of a new micro-enterprise must take into account the availability and proximity of the raw material.

Certain products used as raw material may be seasonal. For many countries, water is also seasonal because of heavy flooding and drought during the year. These factors must be considered when selecting the type of micro-enterprise.

Supply of raw material is crucial for the operation of any enterprise. It is necessary to have proper knowledge of purchasing and to identify more than one supplier. Several suppliers should be contacted to ensure steady availability of the raw material and prevent a single supplier from monopolizing the supply. A supplier close to the micro-enterprise is easier to contact. It is very difficult, especially for persons with physical disabilities, to directly contact a supplier located far from the micro-enterprise.

Before starting a new small-scale venture, it is necessary to fully review initial costs for set-up, production, availability and price of raw material, as explained in Section III 'Enterprise Development'.

8. Evaluating production

After an overall review of the production process, the specific requirements must be revised to ensure that the trainees are capable of performing the tasks.

The following questions need to be addressed:

- ***Can the production be easily explained?***
- ***Is any special education or skills required?***
- ***Can the success case micro-entrepreneur easily train other people?***
- ***How many follow-ups after training should be foreseen?***
- ***What are the physical requirements?***
- ***What are the psychological requirements?***
- ***Are there any social or cultural beliefs that could keep a person with a disability from***

accomplishing a certain task or making a specific product?

➤ **Is there any family and/or community support?**

The process itself must be clearly understood for evaluating the physical tasks involved. For example, how physically demanding are the actions involved in the production process? Does a person need two hands or two legs? Are there alternatives? Is there a lot of walking and handling? Are visual assessments necessary when accomplishing certain steps of the production?

Problems during production may lower product quality, making it impossible to sell them. Product quality encourages clients to return again and again.

9. Review of the evaluation process

The evaluation process will become easier after reviewing several cases. In the case of small-scale enterprise development, one can easily assume that a certain amount of intelligence is required.

Persons with mental disabilities may be able to work and to accomplish some tasks very well. However, to develop a work plan and marketing strategies is often beyond their intellectual capabilities. Family or community support may be needed. The problems have to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for persons with physical disabilities.

The degree of the disability must always be taken into account. Personal capabilities must also be assessed since some people are more capable and resourceful than others. It is not possible to generalize about the capabilities of individuals by knowing about their disability. Each person is different and must be allowed to show his or her capabilities.

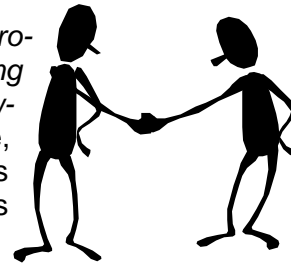
After evaluating several types of micro-enterprises, it is easier to understand the constant need for review of marketing and other types of problems that may arise during the start-up of the new business.

Evaluation review can be summarized as follows:

- **Interview with successful micro-entrepreneur**
- **Review of daily operation and schedule**
- **Supply and availability of raw material**
- **Required steps in the process**
- **Costs of raw material for each stage of the process**
- **Costs of labour for each stage of the process**
- **Necessary equipment including assistive devices**
- **Critical issues to be considered (seasonability, reliability...)**
- **Product quality**
- **Capacity of market to absorb full production**
- **Marketing (review of strategies)**
- **Alternatives if market cannot absorb all (i.e. Storage, processing...)**
- **Stability in prices**
- **Net profit to be expected**

3. Assess successful farmer's willingness to become a trainer

It is imperative for the successful micro-entrepreneur to be fully committed to training other people and transferring his or her know-how acquired over the years. Helping people, especially disabled persons, has always been praised in all societies. However, it is important that successful micro-entrepreneurs realize the extent of their responsibility in transferring their know-how. Certain secrets or "tricks of the trade" may be the reason for their success. Are they ready to divulge these? Because they will become the highlight of a



project, they may be inclined to accept their position as trainer, but they must be aware of all that it implies.

1. Three types of success case persons

Experience shows that successful micro-entrepreneurs generally fall into three categories:

- *Those that know that competition is fierce and therefore are unwilling to share personal experiences.*
- *Those who are proud (of their achievement) and generous with information and strategies to help guarantee replication of success cases because the trainees will sell their product in another market and, therefore, will not have any detrimental effect on their market.*
- *There is a third category, which is the most difficult one to identify. Successful micro-entrepreneurs who appear to be generous but are, in fact quite selfish and not ready to really help.*

Persons with disabilities are no different and can fall into any of the above three categories. There are good and not-so-good people. The same care must be taken in selecting trainers if they are to be chosen from among successful disabled person micro-entrepreneurs. A good way to find out about a successful disabled person micro-entrepreneur is to meet family and community members. They should be able to tell what kind of help and support he or she has already given to the community.

Marketing and sales remain the main components in a successful micro-enterprise. Marketing strategies are often necessary. Successful micro-entrepreneurs must be made aware of both the positive and negative aspects of training other people, especially in highly competitive markets.

Case study: Visually impaired, yet earning and teaching livelihood to other disabled

Visually impaired and 49 years old, Kampan Homrat is the eldest of six brothers and sisters who live with their ageing parents as a low-income paddy farming household in Thailand's northeast Roi-et



province. Her parents and siblings once thought that she could not learn anything useful. Today, Ms Kampan has a regular monthly income and is giving livelihood training to other persons with disabilities.

Her first exposure to vocational training was during a family workshop on cloth weaving in 1990. Her sister was certain Ms Kampan could not learn by herself. But when the sister noticed that Ms Kampan was trying really hard to learn by herself, she decided to teach her.



After two years, Ms Kampan was able to weave cloth and then learnt water hyacinth weaving. She also learned how to sell the woven products and began to earn for the first time in her life. She then joined a special community-based rehabilitation project to teach visually impaired people how to use natural dyes instead of chemicals in order to reduce production costs and obtain a higher market price.

Ms Kampan has been weaving native cloth and water hyacinths for over a decade now, selling most of her production within the community and the remainder to the Roi-et Education and Rehabilitation Center for the Blind. Eight years after starting her business, she had a regular income of 1 500 baht per month. Ms Kampan is now a trainer at the Rehabilitation Center where she teaches a variety of weaving techniques. She is an inspiration for other people with disabilities who are learning a livelihood at the Center.

2. Compensation for trainers

Many successful micro-entrepreneurs started their business because of the necessity to feed their family. Now that they are

successful, these individuals are often more than willing to help other people in need. This may be especially true when it comes to helping persons with disabilities. This is probably the main reason why some people would be ready to help and train others, without expecting anything other than the personal satisfaction of having done so. Enhanced respect within the community will be a further reward for a micro-entrepreneur who shares his expertise with a person in need.

Nevertheless, there should be limits to using one specific successful micro-entrepreneur for training others. This entrepreneur needs time to take care of his or her enterprise. It is therefore important to use several trainers and not to focus on only one. The idea of replication through training by trainees ensures that all individuals train a certain number of people who in turn train another certain number.

Some successful micro-entrepreneurs may also consider that it is perfectly normal for them to receive financial compensation for their training other people; they can also make good trainers and should not be ruled out.

4. Establish a practical hands-on training programme

A good training system is one that has been tailor made for a specific activity and a specific target group. The duration of training must also be carefully established according to the level of skill needed, the preparedness of the future micro-entrepreneur to receive the training and the type and extent of the trainees' disabilities.



Training must check the availability of raw material and market opportunity. It must also take into consideration, the seasonability of the raw material and availability of people to take part in the training. In rural areas, farmers work hard during the rice planting and harvesting periods. Many rural people with disabilities also join in the planting and harvesting activity and therefore cannot participate in training sessions during that period.

Agriculture is seasonal; a lot of work is required during some periods of the year, such as in the preparation of soil, sowing, applying fertilizer and so on. The amount of work is less during maturation. Application of fertilizer, weeding, pest and disease control, and watering are needed until the harvesting period.

Training in mushroom cultivation is one example. First, there is intensive training in tasks such as the multiplication of sorghum seeds, production of substrate bags, pasteurization and inoculation of bags with sorghum seeds. Then, during incubation and maturation, maintenance is needed to control humidity, temperature, light, pests and diseases. Mushrooms, like any other agricultural produce, need time to grow. Special training is needed for coping with diseases and pest infestation such as mites and termites. Precautions must be taken because no chemicals can be used during the cultivation of mushrooms. Marketing strategies are needed and can be acquired through special training. Post-training follow-up is always required in case of specific problems.

1. Training schedules

The training schedule must take into consideration those moments of waiting, in-depth or technical training and harvesting. The trainees must be instructed how to spend productively the period of waiting for the completion of a business activity.

Furthermore, a complete training programme must include all aspects of the needed skill, including all tricks and strategies especially developed for marketing purposes. Special strategies, techniques and secrets of the trade may mean the difference between being capable of accomplishing a task and marketing a product with profitable income and not being able to do so. A training schedule and outline is best developed by an expert in a specific field. The successful micro-entrepreneur is certainly to be considered as an expert although he or she may not have a formal degree.

The training programme must provide flexibility for courses that include persons with disabilities. Specific disabilities may need special solutions. This means more time may be needed to learn and accomplish certain tasks, depending on the type of disability.

Except for persons with mental disabilities, training schedules can be almost identical for both non-disabled and trainees with disabilities. Being physically disabled does not make a person a slow learner. Nevertheless, special strategies may need to be developed according to the type and extent of the disability.

Moreover, when training persons with disabilities, more time may or may not be required, depending not only on the type of disability but also on their experience in the field of study. Shorter training periods may be possible in cases where trainees already have experience in a specific area.

The level of skills needed for persons, even with the same disabilities, may vary substantially from one person to another. The combination of skills, physical capabilities and their assessment can only be done on a case-by-case basis in the same way as for non-disabled persons.

No generalization of the ability of a disabled person to do a task should ever be based on a specific disability.

Successful entrepreneurs sometimes underestimate their own knowledge and know-how, which has been slowly perfected over the years. They will generally assume that the skills they have acquired over several years of trial and error can easily be learned during training. This is not always the case. Additional training may be required when quality is not acceptable or when production know-how has not been fully acquired.

Example of a training programme for persons with disabilities

Activity	Description
Motivational sessions	Trainees must be convinced they can do it . <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Successful micro-entrepreneurs share their difficulties and personal experience.• Trainees and invited guests discuss daily difficulties and ways to surmount these.• Persons with disabilities must learn to recognize their disability and accept their differences from others.
Hands-on experience for tasks and manipulation	Full and specific description of tasks involved in the production process (this is especially important to determine the physical capabilities required to accomplish a specific task, and to evaluate whether a person with a certain disability is capable or not of accomplishing the required task) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basic explanation of the task• Hands-on experience• Repetition of tasks• Close supervision by trainer• Trainees with previous experience can help others with greater difficulties and those who are slower to learn.
Feasibility	How to estimate sufficient amount manageable by the person. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount is different for each person• The amount must be determined by each person himself or herself• Close observation is crucial for success.
Basic knowledge	Overview of basic theory <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Origin of product• Developments over the years• Potential for development
Business management	Existing methods and tactics in management. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learning about various techniques• Running a business• Managing personnel• Time management• Quality control

Problems and remedies	Troubleshooting advice and procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pest control• Diseases• Special care• Alternative products• Maintenance tips
Selection of raw material	Choosing the right material at the right price <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where to buy• When to buy• How to select the appropriate raw material• What price is acceptable• How to negotiate the price• Verify reliability
Waste management	How to manage waste produced <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recycle• Reuse• Dispose of generated waste properly
Marketing	Strategies for marketing in remote communities. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where to sell• When to sell• How to sell• How to negotiate the price• At what price to sell• How to deal with the competition
Accounting	How to keep accounting books and monitor profitability <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bookkeeping• Basic accounting• Verifying profitability
Storage and preservation	Methods of storing and preserving products <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Warehousing• Protecting against natural elements• Processing methods and techniques• Higher value production

Hands-on experience is the only way to i) ensure that each step of the process is well understood and ii) verify that all participants are capable of every needed step. Some persons with disabilities may not be able to accomplish a certain task because of a specific disability; this does not mean that the person cannot be successful in setting up his or her own business after training. It simply means that support is needed either from family or community members, or through a partnership.

Checking the raw material for quality by actually touching and choosing cannot be replaced by a theoretical explanation of the "where and how" to buy this material. Many factors such as packaging can influence purchase by making some products more attractive. This is why it is highly recommended to visit the raw material suppliers and go to markets or buyers to sell the product.

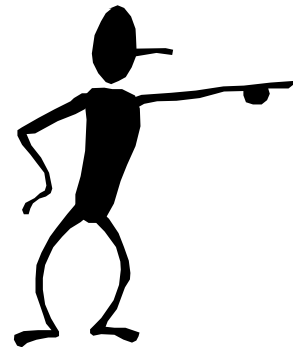
Troubleshooting advice can also help foresee and avoid future problems. Every new enterprise, whether large or small, will encounter some problem at some stage, whether it was set up by a person with a disability or not. The successful micro-entrepreneur can certainly try to minimize these problems by reviewing his or her experience and by explaining what went wrong, why, and how the problem could be solved.

Problems will be different for different persons and will certainly be different depending on the person's specific disability. Training must prepare for unforeseen problems, whether during production, purchase of raw material or sales of finished products.

5. Select the trainees carefully

Well-established training guidelines increase the percentage of successful trainees. Motivation is the most difficult part to determine.

It is important that the target group be interested in replicating the project. Motivation is necessary for trainees to pursue the training and to establish a micro-enterprise after the training. Difficulties during training can usually be controlled by peer support and help from the trainer.



However, once training has been completed and the trainees return home to apply what they have learnt, unexpected problems may and probably will occur. Unless trainees are fully motivated and interested in the work, they will simply quit. Motivation and interest further ensures that the target group continues to learn for the duration of the training and supports trainees once they have set up their own business. It is necessary for the field worker to feel the commitment and dedication of the participants.

A visit to the successful entrepreneur's location is probably the best way of showing what can be expected after training. It allows disabled person trainees to evaluate and select activities that are more relevant to the needs of their own community and to determine whether they will be able to accomplish the required tasks.

If a visit is not possible, the successful micro-entrepreneur should present his or her personal case history as an illustration of all developmental stages and the trials and errors associated with the project. It is then possible for future micro-entrepreneurs to evaluate their own interest and capability for accomplishing the required tasks. It also gives a good idea of the trainer's generosity with his or her information and of his or her willingness to give specific advice.

If all parties involved seem keen and capable, then the micro-enterprise is worth pursuing. If the future micro-entrepreneur does not feel capable or fully committed, then the enterprise will surely fail before it is even set up.

Choosing the proper success case is crucial for successful replication. *However, location and target populations must be carefully studied to allow the target population to choose the type of activities rather than letting outside people decide on the new venture.*

Personal preference is also a key factor in the success of a micro-enterprise. When people truly enjoy what they are doing, they increase their chances of success. Trainees who become especially interested in their work and its purpose have greater chances of becoming successful micro-entrepreneurs.

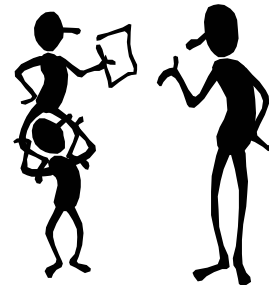
The selection criteria must be clearly established before meeting with potential trainees. It is extremely difficult to tell a disabled person that he or she cannot participate in the project when the person looks at the field officer with hopeful eyes. Selection criteria should include the following:

- Age group should be homogenous
- Trainees should come from various locations to protect the market
- Support from family and community
- Commitment from family and trainees to setting up the enterprise following training
- Land or space must be available to set up the new business
- The disabled person should have a minimum level of self-reliance. In special cases, a family member must accompany the disabled person to the training and assist in setting up the enterprise after the training
- Trainees must be ready to leave the family for the duration of the training.
- Access to fund for start-up.

A new technology or know-how can never be forced on anyone, even if proven profitable. Trainees must feel secure and reassured that they can be successful in their new venture. Trainees should know about the activity and its benefits for themselves and their community.

6. Supervise the training

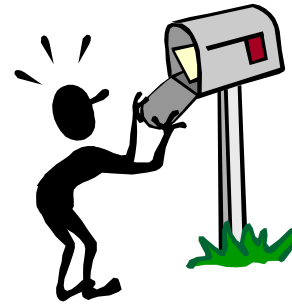
It is necessary to ensure that the three main components of any enterprise are covered during training. These are raw material supply, production process and its problems, and marketing. Good understanding of the market is necessary to know what is expected and what is required to compete in existing markets.



Training must carefully review quality control. Even if a product is made under the label “made by disabled persons”, quality must be ensured in order to secure sales and develop a regular clientele. The objective is to supply a good quality product that happens to have been made by a person with a disability and not a product made by a disabled person but of questionable quality. Persons with disabilities may need to prove their capability by offering a similar if not better quality product. Regular supply brings regular income, thus making the disabled person micro-entrepreneur self-reliant.

7. Arrange follow-up support services for trainees

Follow-up after training will most likely be required, especially in the early stages of the business. Although the process itself is very important and must be well mastered, what often makes the difference between success and failure is the presence or absence of marketing and sales strategies, which have been developed by successful micro-entrepreneurs over the years; they have found ways of entering and taking hold of a share in a competitive market.



Most, if not all of the newly established business ventures will certainly run into some initial problems. Follow-up after training is therefore compulsory and must be well prepared. The best person to do the follow-up is always the successful entrepreneur (trainer). This person must be available to go on site where the problems are and to assist in finding the solution most appropriate for the new entrepreneur on location.

In cases of uncertainty or problems, it is important that trainees call upon the successful entrepreneur to ask for advice before the situation becomes irreversible. Furthermore, facilities and installations should be verified by the successful entrepreneur to make sure that everything is working properly.

The number of visits and follow-up meetings is difficult to predict. It depends on several factors. However, the successful micro-entrepreneur can foresee some regular if not frequent difficulties.

Immediate support must be available from the successful micro-entrepreneur trainer or the project field worker in case of urgent needs. Production would be halted if a required raw material is not available, resulting in major financial losses.

Communication between the trainer and trainee therefore, needs to be available, or a messaging system needs to be set up within the community. In the case of persons with disabilities, additional problems of other types will be encountered. For example, the help of family or community members may be needed during the construction period when physical strength is required. Closer supervision of the installation by the micro-entrepreneur may be required sometimes.

It is especially crucial for disabled persons setting up a micro-enterprise to avoid failure because they have to prove themselves to their family and community. This is why Emergency Response is necessary so that the new micro-entrepreneur is not discouraged and abandons the venture.

Systematic visits should be scheduled during different strategic stages of setting up the micro-enterprise. For example, visits could take place during the construction and during production and sale of the final product. The first sale is always the most difficult and sensitive. This may determine the success of the newly established micro-enterprise.

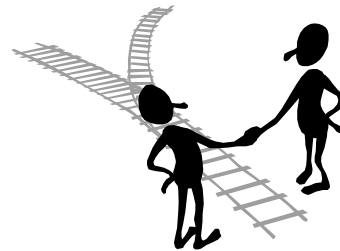
The main stages where special assistance may be required can be summarized as follows:

1. *Construction and set-up of the new micro-enterprise*
2. *Selection of suppliers for raw material*
3. *Sensitive periods when pests or diseases are more likely to attack the product (such as during the rainy season or a drought)*
4. *Storage or processing arrangements*

5. *Final negotiations of sales prices before entering the existing market (review pricing, transportation and special transportation facilities, consideration of other sales points...)*
6. *Quality control at the moment of sale (lower quality products must be separated because prices will take into consideration the lowest quality)*
7. *When a group of people decide to lay out the principles for their new joint operation*

8. Achieve secondary multiplication after first level success

The objective in success replication is not to have one replication but to have successful trainees become successful entrepreneurs, and train other people who will in turn, give training to other people in other locations and for other groups.



Location must be considered carefully so that the market does not become saturated. This is also necessary to ensure that the new micro-enterprise does not compete with the successful micro-entrepreneur's existing market. In most villages, there is limited room for market competition. Therefore, new micro-entrepreneurs *could train some people in other nearby villages. This would multiply the number of similar business, generate income, cater to the needs of the villages, and maximize the positive impact of the training.*

Because persons with disabilities are generally scattered across several villages and often live in remote areas, replication is the most feasible way of enabling disabled persons to improve their livelihoods while remaining in their community.

When well applied, the successful replication programme can be increased ten-fold within a few years. The capability of the market to absorb a product can never be stressed enough. Oversupply may saturate the market and create a disaster rather than a success story. If prices drop, everybody loses. Storage is sometimes a short-term solution, allowing prices to stabilize rather

than flooding the market with the same product. Processing is another option.

Both the successful micro-entrepreneur trainer and the field worker must always consider market saturation. They must set limits and prepare training programmes accordingly. Training persons with disabilities is no exception to the rule. Although people tend to allow special privileges for persons with disabilities, this is not so when the time comes for sustainability and competitive marketing. Family and survival then take priority and competition is fierce for everyone.

Case study: Integrated agriculture gives higher income and confidence to visually impaired farmer



Rehabilitation training, support from the family and community, together with hard work enabled 54-year-old and visually impaired Thongsai Paksainathe to successfully introduce innovative farming practices to his village in Thailand's

Maharakham province. Born blind, the former low-income paddy farmer now has a regular monthly earning of about 3 000 baht and is encouraging others to follow his example.

After attending an orientation and mobility training course in a community-based rehabilitation project in 1992 and learning traditional Thai massage till 1996, he came to know about an integrated agriculture project set up by the agriculture office in the province. He joined the four-day training programme at the project and then visited another integrated agriculture project in the province of Roi-et. Wanting to start integrated farming himself, he borrowed 7 000 baht from the Roi-et Education and Rehabilitation Center for the Blind.



He divided his land into four parts, digging a pond in one portion to raise fish and store water for crop cultivation. On another part of his land, he planted trees of fruit species

maturing at different times such as jack fruit, banana, coconut and guava. The fruit is sold according to the season. The third part of the land is used to grow vegetables that can be sold daily. The remaining land is for cultivating sticky rice for the family's consumption.

Successful within four years, Mr Thongsai attributes this to his diligence, rehabilitation training and encouragement from the family and friends. He is now urging others in his community to follow his success. He says it is important to choose an occupation suitable for one's surroundings and consistent with the needs of one's family.

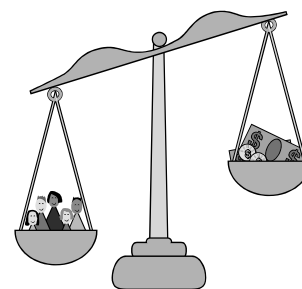
He also gets support from government agencies and NGOs. He is now self-reliant and happy, and feels a valued member of the community.



9. Monitoring cost effectiveness of the methodology

The effectiveness of a replicated project usually includes two aspects.

The first, and probably the most important for the disabled person trainee, is to reach self-reliance and improve their quality of life by generating income. This will increase their self-confidence and contribute to their full participation and integration in society.



The second is important for donor agencies and for reviewing the feasibility of the training project. It is the cost/benefit analysis of increased income generated for rural people with disabilities. Every field worker should collect information to evaluate the cost/benefit of a project. This data can be acquired in three simple steps.

The field worker must:

1. *Keep detailed records of the time spent for every step of the project: locating success cases, evaluating, designing training, selecting trainees, supervising training, follow-up, and collection of data.*

The total number of days multiplied by the daily wage of the field worker gives the field worker's cost.

2. *Record all training costs: costs for trainer, equipment, assistive devices or adaptation of tools and equipment, food, lodging, transportation.*
3. *Collect net income data from each successful trainee for the first year of sales of their new businesses.*

The following is an easy Cost/Benefit calculation. However, it does not take into consideration market saturation and cost competitiveness. It assumes that the market is ready to absorb the product at a pre-determined cost namely the Sale Price of the Finished Product.

Total income of all successful trainees ÷ (Divided by) Total training costs = (Equals) Cost/benefit ratio

Summary of lessons learned

While persons with disabilities **can do** many things, not all can perform the same tasks. It is, therefore, important to identify what the disabled person trainee can and cannot do. Care must be taken not to put limitations or hastily pass judgments on a disabled person's capabilities. It is generally not easy to see how capable disabled persons can be. Some activities may require the use of eyes and automatically exclude the visually impaired. Others require the use of hands, which may sometimes be performed by use of the feet. Persons with disabilities often show outstanding strength and courage and are capable of surprising ingenuity to accomplish tasks. The more physically demanding activities must be carefully evaluated. Specific physical requirements must also be reviewed.

Case study: *Earning income and self-confidence despite blindness and old age*

Wapad Khailee, 72 years of age and blind, no longer feels helpless and a burden on her sister's low-income household in northeast Thailand's Roi-et province. Once, she could help the family only by cooking and cleaning. Now, she is a valued contributor to the family income who has found self-confidence and self-respect.



Rehabilitation and livelihood training for the disabled enabled Ms Wapad to boost the family's meagre annual income of between 20 000 and 30 000 baht from cultivating sticky rice on 20 rai (3.2 ha) of land. After three months at a rehabilitation centre in 1996, the visually impaired old

woman who had never gone out of the house alone was using a cane to walk to the next village. She joined a village women's group where she learnt native cloth weaving for three months. On the advice of the rehabilitation centre staff, the weaving training was modified for visually impaired people. It gave Ms Wapad an income for the first time in her life.

Four years later, Ms Wapad and her sister and brother-in-law restarted a pig farming venture that had failed because of low prices. The Roi-et Education and Rehabilitation Center for the Blind gave her an interest-free loan of 8 000 baht to start pig breeding, which gave her full-time work. The family was able to make a profit and expand the pig breeding business, which ensured Ms Wapad a regular monthly income of between 1 000 to 2 000 baht. The family then bought a small rice mill from the profit. This made it possible for them to mill their neighbour's rice and use the husk to feed their pigs, thus reducing feeding costs.

Not all training programmes require the same amount of time, which can range from a few weeks to several months, depending on the capabilities of the trainees and the difficulty of the training subject. Training schedules need to be adapted to the complexity of the required tasks, to the fundamental understanding of a business and to the physical and mental capabilities of the trainees. The successful micro-entrepreneur should be in a position to determine the required time.

Training courses can be designed by successful micro-entrepreneurs who, from personal experience, know which steps of the training should need more time; some sectors are more demanding or complex than others. It is necessary for the successful micro-entrepreneur to carefully evaluate the required time, which may be underestimated because knowledge was acquired over several years.

Furthermore, persons with disabilities encounter problems specifically related to their disability, in addition to those encountered during the business development itself.

Special attention should be given to problems encountered in the early stages of establishing the enterprise. Trainees need to be prepared for these problems so that the successful entrepreneur trainer does not have to run to each trainee too often trying to help solve their problems.

Seasonal products must be carefully selected since timing may mean success or failure. Off-season production for certain fruits and vegetables can guarantee good profit with less physically demanding work. It may be an opportunity for persons with disabilities to review products in demand during the off-season. This would allow them to

work at a slower pace and make the same amount of profit while avoiding stiff competition.

Relying on success cases may prove to be the best market indicator. If a person has been successful for several years, it means that the market is well understood. The successful entrepreneur should know what to look for in the replication of the project. Marketing often requires ingenuity and creativity. Why do customers choose one product against its competition? Price, quality, reliability of supply, decoration, packaging, presentation and interpersonal skills are only a few of the reasons. Marketing should be part of micro-enterprise development programmes for rural persons with disabilities since it is the perfect preparation for business development.

Market saturation must be avoided and training must, therefore, always give priority to marketing considerations. Moreover, *prior to training, trainees should agree to further train a reasonable number of groups or individuals following the set-up of their enterprise to ensure exponential growth. No training will be given to people who are to set up competitive enterprises within the same community unless there is a need for more of the same product. This will ensure exponential replication of the project, while protecting the livelihood of each and every entrepreneur.*

Finally, follow-up is just as important as the training itself since it can guarantee success or failure for the new micro-entrepreneurs. Nevertheless, the successful micro-entrepreneur may be located far away and difficult to contact. Consequently, although follow-up is best conducted by the successful micro-entrepreneur trainer, it can also be ensured by the project field worker or by a government extension officer. Communication is ensured when the field worker has an office where he or she can be contacted easily.

Annex

Preliminary trainee selection questionnaire

No			Paste picture here
Day	Month	Year	
PERSONAL HISTORY AND EDUCATION			
Name (Mr., Ms, title)		Family name	
Age		Date/month/year of birth	
Nationality		Religion	
Education		Year finished education	
Name of school			
Special ability		Occupation	
Address No. Street		Village	
Sub-district / district		Province	
Marital status		If married, name of spouse	
Spouse age		Spouse occupation	
Income (candidate)		Income (spouse)	
Number of children			
Who takes care of the children?			

A handbook for training of disabled on rural enterprise development

FAMILY HISTORY		
Father's given name	Father's family name	
Age	Alive or deceased	
Occupation	Income (per day/per month/per year)	
Mother's given name	Mothers' family name	
Age	Alive or deceased	
Occupation	Income (per day/per month/per year)	
Status of marriage of parents	New marriage	
How many brothers and sisters (grand father, grand mother on each side of the family, and other relatives)?		
Name of brothers and sisters	Age	Occupation
HISTORY OF DISABILITY		
What is your disability?	Cause?	
Since when?	Where did you receive rehabilitation?	
What is the ability of the body at the moment of the interview?		
How are the eyes used, how does the candidate drink... use his/her hands?		
Left-handed or right-handed?	How much weight can the candidate lift?	
Can he or she stand or not?	For how long?	
Can he or she walk or not? How far?	Use of prosthesis / orthotic/ wheelchair.	
Can he or she sit or not?	If yes, for how long?	
If lower part of the body has no feeling, can he/she control bladder and bowel movements?		

A handbook for training of disabled on rural enterprise development

HISTORY OF WORK	
What was the last occupation?	Position?
Where is location of work?	Salary?
When did candidate give up this occupation?	Reason for leaving?
INFORMATION ON TRAINING	
Where did you learn about training? Why do you want to join the training?	
Where did you apply?	When did you apply?
Do you know when the training will start?	Are you available during that time?
What does your family say about the training?	
What does your community say about training?	
Do you wish to set up a micro-enterprise after the training?	What would be your preferred occupation?
STATUS OF HOUSE AND LAND	
What are your family duties?	
What is your financial situation? Do you have any debts?	
Can you travel by yourself?	
Do you own land?	Size of land?
Can the land be used to start enterprise after training?	Space available for enterprise?
COMMENTS OF INTERVIEWER	