



Myth-Busting Toolkit

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Hiring Blind and Low-Vision Talent in Sri Lanka

A Practical Guide for Employers and HR Leaders

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Project V.I.E.W – Vision-Impaired Employment and Workplace Readiness

Supported by the Australian Government through Australia Awards – Sri Lanka

Sinhala edition – සිංහල සංස්කරණය

Sample file. This is a sample of the Sinhala edition of the Myth-Busting Toolkit. It contains the introduction, the contents and Module 2 (the seven myths and the facts). The complete Sinhala edition will be published at <https://projectview.lk/> under this same file name.

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Introduction

For many blind and low-vision people in Sri Lanka, one of the biggest barriers to employment is not lack of skill, but the assumptions and doubts of others.

This Myth-Busting Toolkit is part of Project V.I.E.W (Vision-Impaired Employment and Workplace Readiness), supported by the Australian Government through Australia Awards – Sri Lanka (as part of Australia Awards South Asia and Mongolia). It was developed through a practical co-design process that brought together the lived experience of blind and low-vision people with the real questions and concerns of employers and HR professionals.

The toolkit provides simple, clear, practical answers to common myths about hiring blind and low-vision employees. Its purpose is to help employers move from uncertainty to confidence, and from good intentions to inclusive action.

This is not about charity. It is about recognising skills, removing unnecessary barriers, and creating fair access to employment opportunities. Blind and low-vision people are diverse. They have different skills, experiences, support needs and career goals.

Note on language used in this toolkit

Vision-impaired people include people who are blind and people who have low vision. For this reason, we use the term “blind and low-vision” throughout this document.

Contents

A practical toolkit for employers and HR leaders who want to understand, recruit and support blind and low-vision talent with confidence. It helps employers build genuinely inclusive workplaces.

- Module 1: The Business Case and Sri Lankan Reality – Why blind and low-vision inclusion matters for employers in Sri Lanka.
- Module 2: Core Myths vs. Facts – Clear answers to common employer concerns about productivity, cost, safety, technology, independence and reliability.
- Module 3: The 3-Step Inclusive Talent Pipeline – Simple, practical steps for accessible job advertisements, fair interviews and respectful candidate support.
- Module 4: Digital, Physical and Reasonable Accommodation Toolkit – Low-cost, actionable guidance on assistive technology, accessible documents, workplace adjustments and reasonable accommodation.
- Module 5: Legal Framework and Local Ecosystem – Key legal responsibilities under Sri Lankan and international frameworks, plus useful local organisations and support services.
- Module 6: Fast-Track Checklists – Ready-to-use tools for recruitment and selection, digital and IT access, workplace and facilities, and onboarding and management.

- Module 7: Monitoring and Learning – Simple ways to know whether inclusion efforts are working.
- Sources and Further Reading

Module 2: Core Myths vs. Facts

Employers may have practical concerns about productivity, technology, safety, cost, independence and reliability. These are practical concerns. They should not be ignored, but they should also not be answered through assumptions. This module addresses seven common myths and provides clear, practical facts for Sri Lankan employers.

1. Myth: Blind and low-vision people cannot be productive in a wide range of jobs

Fact: Productivity depends on the person, the role, the tools, the training, and the workplace system, not on whether someone can see.

Blind and low-vision people work successfully in administration, customer service, teaching, training, technology, law, finance, counselling, advocacy, communications, and accessibility roles. Some roles may require adjustments, while others do not. The key question is not whether a blind person can do this job exactly like a sighted person. The better question is whether this person can perform the essential tasks of the role using the right methods, tools, and support.

Different ways of working do not automatically mean lower productivity. Output, quality, and reliability should be the measures, not whether the work is done visually.

2. Myth: Blind and low-vision people cannot use computers or digital systems

Fact: Many blind and low-vision people use computers, smartphones, and digital tools effectively every day.

Blind users commonly work with screen readers, while low-vision users use magnification, high contrast, larger text, or built-in accessibility features. These tools allow them to read emails, write documents, use spreadsheets, attend online meetings, and manage most workplace tasks.

The real issue is usually not the person's ability, but whether the organisation's digital systems are accessible. Some systems work well with assistive technology, while others do not. Employers should check whether their tools and platforms can be used with a keyboard and screen reader before assuming a candidate cannot perform the role.

3. Myth: Hiring a blind or low-vision employee is too expensive

Fact: Many workplace adjustments are low-cost or no-cost.

Common low-cost or no-cost adjustments include sharing properly structured Word documents or accessible tagged PDFs instead of image-only scanned files, sending meeting materials in advance, giving clear verbal instructions, keeping walkways clear, adjusting lighting or seating, and allowing the use of built-in accessibility features on existing devices.

Some employees may need specific software or equipment, but the cost should be assessed case by case rather than assumed upfront. International employer research (for example from the Job Accommodation Network) has found that many accommodations cost nothing or involve only modest one-time costs. The bigger cost for many organisations is missing out on capable and committed employees because of unexamined assumptions.

4. Myth: Blind and low-vision employees create safety risks

Fact: Safety depends on good planning, clear communication, and basic housekeeping, not on vision alone.

A safe workplace for blind and low-vision people is usually a safer workplace for everyone. Clear walkways, closed cabinet doors, consistent furniture arrangements, and good emergency procedures benefit all staff.

A blind or low-vision employee may need a proper orientation to the office layout when they join. This is normal for any new employee. The important thing is to avoid making sudden, unannounced changes to the physical environment and to treat safety as an environmental issue rather than a personal one.

5. Myth: A blind or low-vision employee will need constant help

Fact: Pity-based treatment can undermine professional dignity and independence. Most blind and low-vision people need respectful support, especially during the first few weeks, rather than unnecessary supervision.

There is a clear difference between support and over-support. Support means providing the right information, tools, and orientation so the person can work independently. Over-support means assuming the person cannot manage without ongoing interference.

Many blind and low-vision professionals have already developed strong personal systems for organisation, travel, note-taking, and technology use. Many can work independently once necessary access barriers are removed, although support needs differ between individuals.

6. Myth: Blind and low-vision employees will take more sick leave or be less reliable

Fact: Disability should not be confused with poor reliability. Blindness or low vision should not be treated as evidence of unreliability.

Blindness or low vision does not automatically lead to higher absenteeism. Like all employees, blind and low-vision people have individual health, family, and transport situations that should be managed on a case-by-case basis. Reliability should be judged on actual performance and attendance records, not on assumptions about disability.

In Sri Lanka, transport can be a practical challenge, especially in heavy traffic or during the rainy season. This is an environmental barrier, not a personal weakness. Reasonable flexibility around arrival times or hybrid work arrangements, where the role allows it, can help maintain reliability without creating unfair advantage.

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7. Myth: Blind and low-vision people can only do simple or limited jobs

Fact: Blind and low-vision people have different skills, qualifications, and career goals, just like any other group.

Some may be suitable for entry-level roles, while others are well qualified for professional, technical, managerial, or specialist positions. The mistake is to place all blind and low-vision people into one narrow category.

With accessible systems, fair recruitment processes, and reasonable support, the range of roles blind and low-vision people can perform is much wider than many employers assume. Employers should focus on the essential duties of the job and remove requirements that are not genuinely needed to perform the role.

Key message of this module

The seven myths discussed in this module often come from lack of exposure rather than bad intention. However, if left unchallenged, they become real barriers to employment.

For employers and HR professionals, the practical approach is simple:

- Judge productivity by output and quality, not by whether work is done visually.
- Check whether workplace systems are accessible rather than assuming the person cannot use technology.
- Assess actual costs and adjustments case by case instead of making assumptions.
- Manage safety through planning and orientation, not fear.
- Provide proper onboarding and respectful support instead of unnecessary supervision.
- Evaluate reliability through actual performance, not assumptions.
- Assess candidates based on skills and the real requirements of the role.