

# A company employing 90 per cent persons with disabilities in online services

## SINGAPORE: GENASHTIM INNOVATIVE LEARNING

Founded in 2008, Genashtim is a for-profit social enterprise from Singapore that has created a virtual work environment and online delivery of learning and services. The company has developed the ability to structure work processes in a way that people with various disabilities can work from home.

### Problems targeted

Even with the necessary skills and qualifications, people with disabilities are often unable to work due to lack of accessible transportation or an accommodating work environment.

### Solution & Methodology

Genashtim Innovative Learning has created a virtual employment eco-system whereby persons with disabilities can work efficiently from their homes. For example:

- The Quality Assurance department for the company's English language coaching service is performed mainly by blind people.
- For the company's remote IT support service, most of the technicians have a mobility impairment.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- 90 per cent of the company's 60 permanent staff are people with disabilities, all working from their homes in more than ten countries on four continents.
- Of the company's seven managers, six are people with disabilities.

- Abled Online – started as Genashtim's IT department, hiring 100 per cent people with disabilities, it has evolved into a remote IT support business

“This has given me an opportunity to work again, and from the comfort of my home, without troubling anyone. It has brought back my self-confidence and independence.”

Gunavathy Muthu, accountant, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Clients of Genashtim's services include academic institutions, such as the Kaplan Institute in Singapore, and Taylor's College and Taylor's University in Malaysia; as well as such multinational companies as McDonalds in Thailand and Asea Brown Boveri in China

### Outlook & Transferability

Apart from seed capital from its founder, the company's cash flow funds this project entirely. The Abled Online service won first prize at the Universal Ventures Business Plan Contest in Tokyo in November 2010. The Genashtim model has been studied by other employers and has been recognized by various non-government organizations, which have strengthened their collaboration.

The company has also created a number of businesses:

- eCornell – the eLearning programme of Cornell University, Ithaca, New York
- Epic Online – a live, one-on-one, face-to-face English language coaching service
- Mandarin eSpeak – a similar service to Epic Online for Mandarin Chinese. These language coaches are currently 100 per cent people with disabilities in China.
- eyRead – training and support for screen readers, the software used by the blind to access computers and the Internet. This work is done 100 per cent by people with disabilities



In the IT support service, most of the technicians have a mobility impairment.

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