

## Championing a diverse workplace: Airtel partners with EFC to train persons with disabilities

- First Telco in Sri Lanka to partner with EFC to provide workplace training for people with disabilities

**October 15, 2019:** As a brand that resonates with empowering the youth of Sri Lanka, Airtel Lanka signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC), to open up on-the-job training opportunities for people with disabilities.

The initiative began as a pilot project when Airtel recruited a partially, visually impaired individual on a six months training period through EFC's Employers' Network on Disability.

"The advancement of technology has empowered people with disabilities as individuals capable of contributing to society on a much greater scale by achieving their fullest potential. The diversity of thought and experience that such individuals bring to a workplace is invaluable".

"The onus is therefore on each of us as employers to understand the obstacles which people with disabilities face, and work to find solutions that will enable these individuals to enter the workforce, understand corporate and business dynamics, and be given the same chance as everyone else to deploy and develop their talents in a professional setting. Airtel Lanka is therefore proud and honoured to be the first telco to partner with the EFC on this vital initiative," said Jinesh Hegde, Airtel Lanka Chief Executive Officer.

With the agreement finalised, Airtel will now commence a half-yearly training programme that will offer more participants a chance to gain practical experience and insights into the different aspects of the Airtel business model and consumer lifecycle, while the company continues to maintain a holistic and comprehensive policy of inclusion and diversity in the workplace.

"It is indeed a privilege to partner with Airtel Lanka, which is a leading internationally renowned telco within our membership. Their involvement in the Employers Network on Disability by systematically creating opportunities for on-the-job training for people with disabilities has to be lauded. Whilst many initiatives have been taken by employers in this country to offer such opportunities, there still exists much apprehension surrounding people with disabilities that often hinder their ability to enter the workforce and enhance their financial independence. That is why we consider the network's partnership with Airtel as a shining example to other organisations to implement disability-inclusive strategies at their workplaces." The Employers' Federation of Ceylon, Director General/ CEO, Kanishka Weerasinghe said.

The scope of training will include an in-depth focus on key aspects of the dynamic telco working environment, including exposure to sales and customer interaction. Airtel will also seek to actively recruit participants of the programme upon completion based on company requirements.

Operating on the core values of 'Alive, Inclusive and Respectful,' this partnership is a reflection of how the organisation champions diversity and promotes equal opportunity for all.

Ranked among the top 25 Best Workplaces and a Top 10 Best Workplace for Women by Great Places to Work in Sri Lanka, the mobile service provider recently was also crowned the Best Employer Brand by the World HRD Congress in recognition of Airtel's efforts to recruit, retain and hone the best talent in the industry while promoting an enabling work environment and an enriching work experience.

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Photo caption - The signing of the agreement between Airtel Lanka Managing Director and CEO, Jinesh Hegde and EFC Director, Kanishka Weerasinghe .

### **About Bharti Airtel Lanka**

Bharti Airtel Lanka (Airtel Lanka) commenced commercial operations of services in Sri Lanka on January 12th, 2009, and was the fastest operator to reach 1 million customers in the country. With its network footprint panned out across the nation and capturing strategic ranking positions in various areas in less than three years of operations, Airtel has emerged as Sri Lanka's fastest expanding network, thus ensuring coverage across the whole island. Registered under the Board of Investment in Sri Lanka, Airtel provides digital mobile services which include voice and data services. To learn more, visit [www.airtel.lk](http://www.airtel.lk).