

University of the West Indies

Disability Conference, 23rd - 24th April 2015

RIGHTS, ROLES, RECOGNITION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

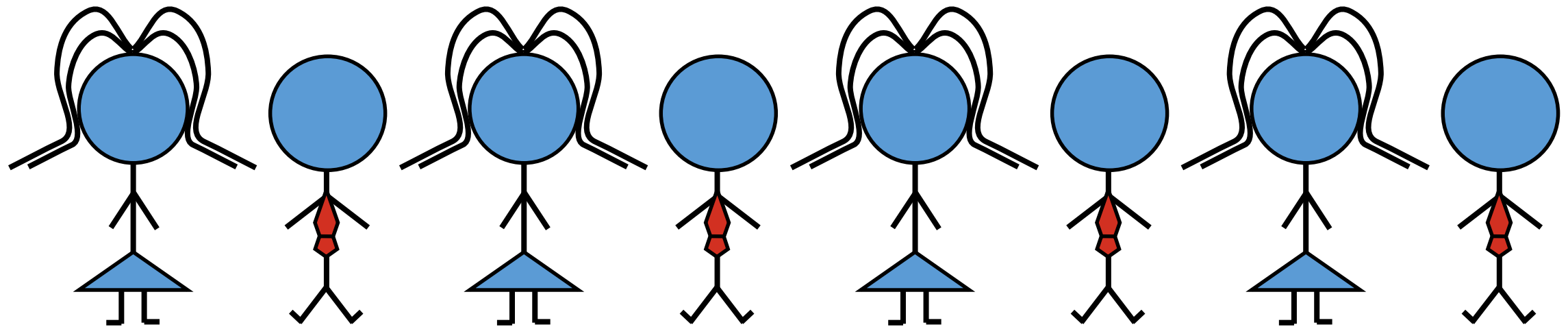
EMPLOYMENT and ACCESS

Creating meaningful and sustainable employment for persons with
special needs

An Organization Perspective

The Recruitment Process

“The gateway to access”



Vignettes & Oppression against those with disabilities

I join with my fellow presenters on the subject of vignettes and oppression, however in the spirit of the message of the UN to the world, in the spirit of the hope it offers, that we together can dialogue and be guided by its principles towards fair and humane treatment of people with disabilities across the world.



The Objective

- To SENSITIZE:

Educators

Recruitment personnel

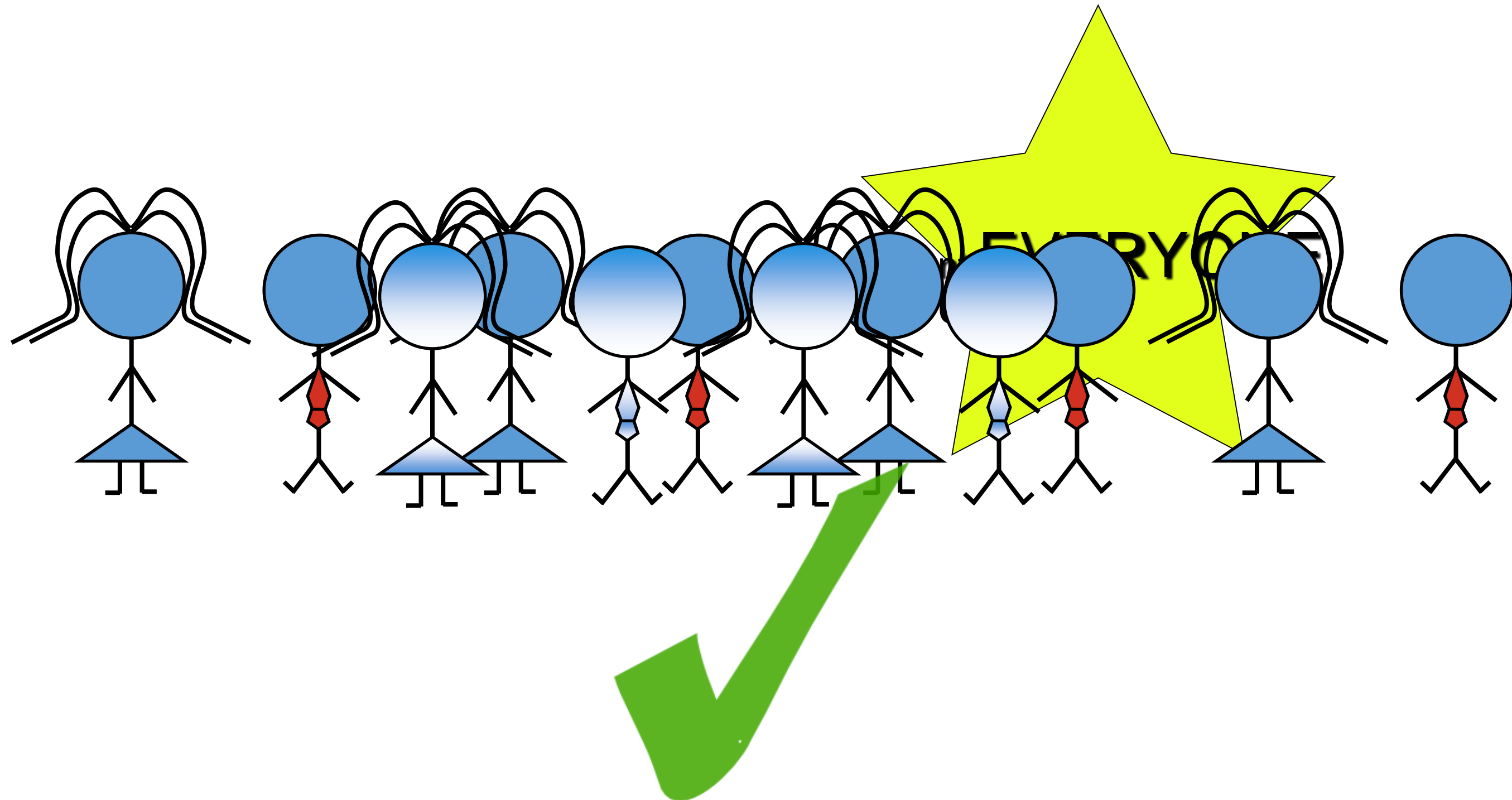
Stake holders

- of the Complexities of NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, that one, may one day appear before them seeking employment. This person may be one who is attempting to forge a future ahead, a future of independence and dignity in spite and against all odds.

Equal opportunities

for those with disabilities.

Employment, the Autism Advantage



Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General- UN

- “People with autism have enormous potential. That is why it is so important for companies to understand their unique and often exceptional skills, and to enable work environments where they can excel. This requires appropriate vocational training and adequate support alongside a recruitment process that can allow people to successfully integrate into workforces around the world.”



What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

Social/communication deficits

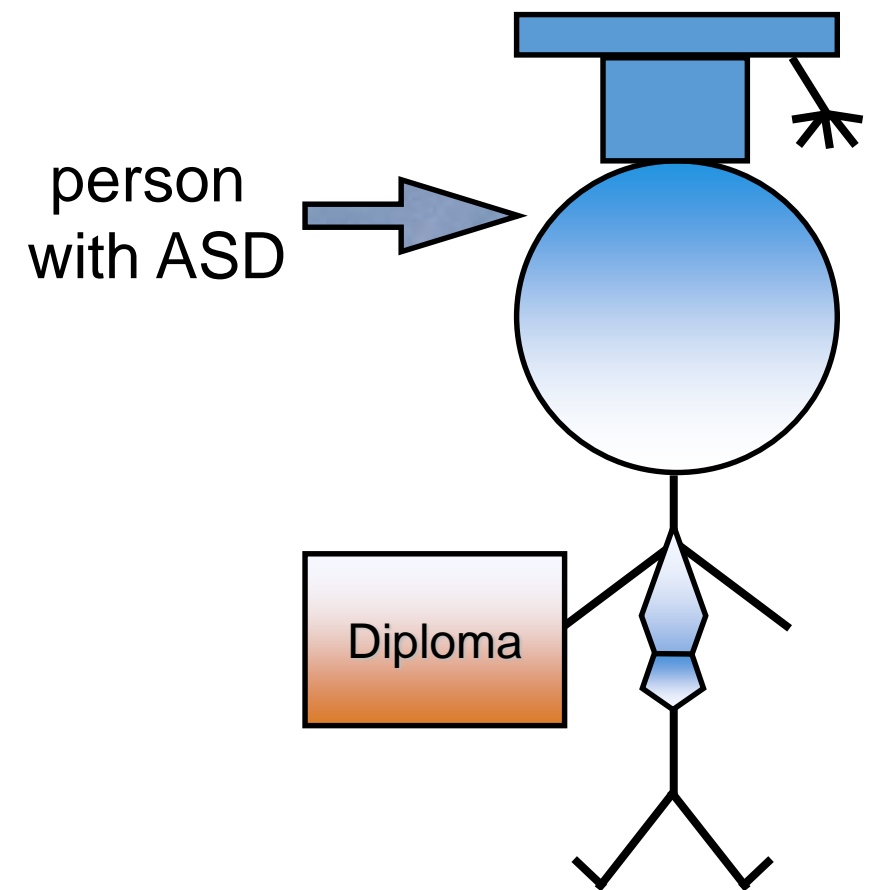
Repetitive/restrictive behaviors

- Behaviors are sensory-based. Persons with ASD have 8 sensory systems. Neuro typicals have 5.



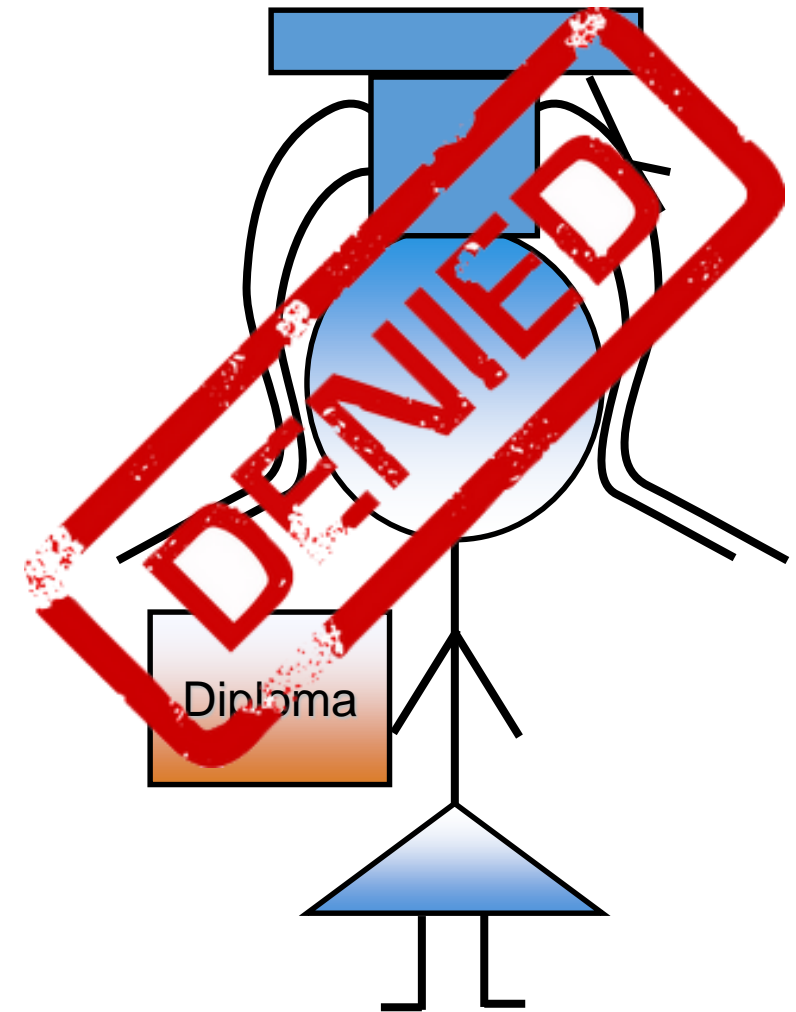
Implications for Inclusion

- The person with ASD wants desperately to be part of society. He/she has worked exceedingly hard with the support of family and community to get to where he/she is, in search of meaningful employment.



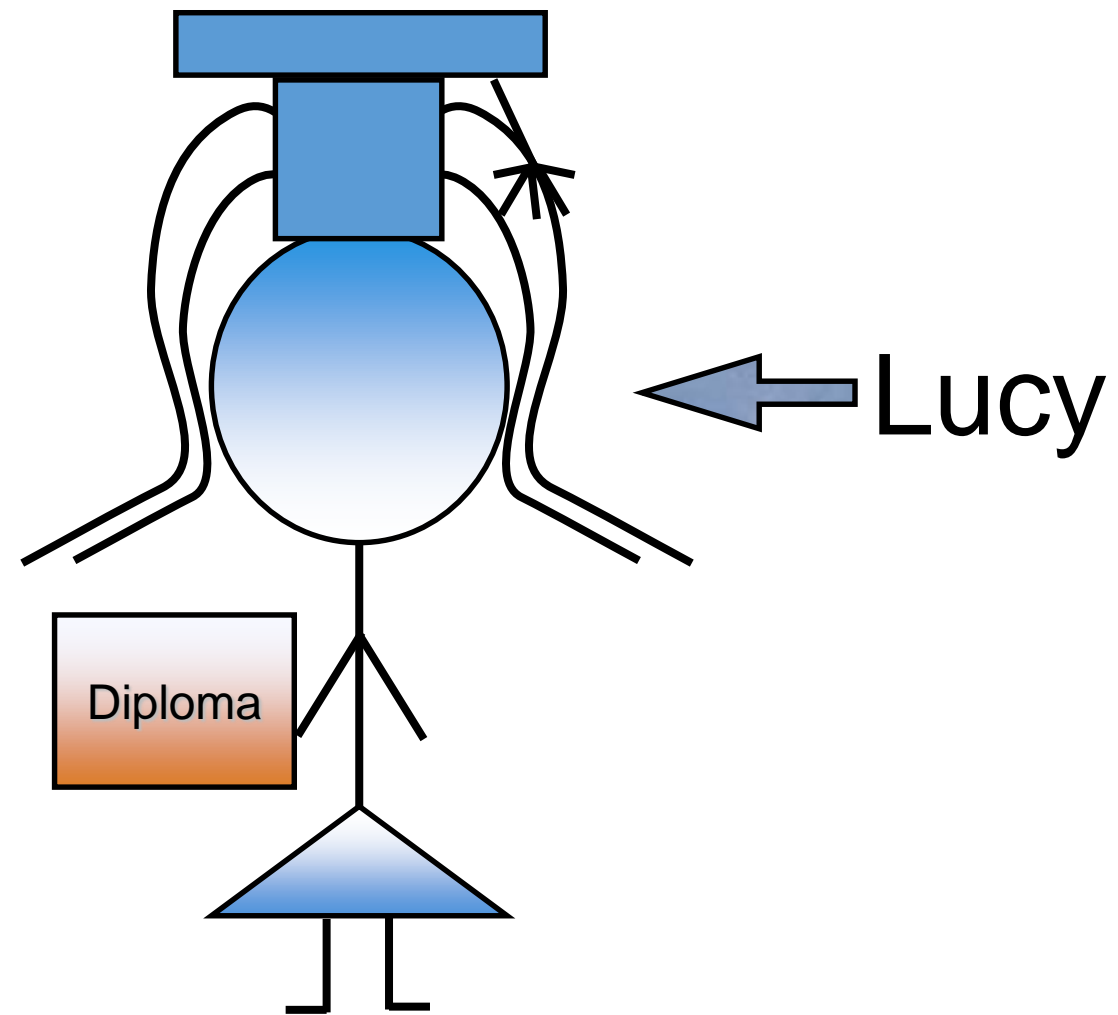
A Case in Point

- An individual (named Lucy) with ASD was interviewed for a position and was denied employment.
- Recruitment imposed on her a requirement of a bachelor's degree in education for the work she has done in main stream which they alleged to be "Teaching".



Case in Point

Here's Lucy's Story



Case in Point

Lucy's Training & Experience

- Lucy:

- ✓ Had **in-service remedial training** of 2 years and stayed on to do **voluntary service**, to date 4 years.

- ✓ Was **accommodated** to ensure that the **job gets done**.



Case in Point

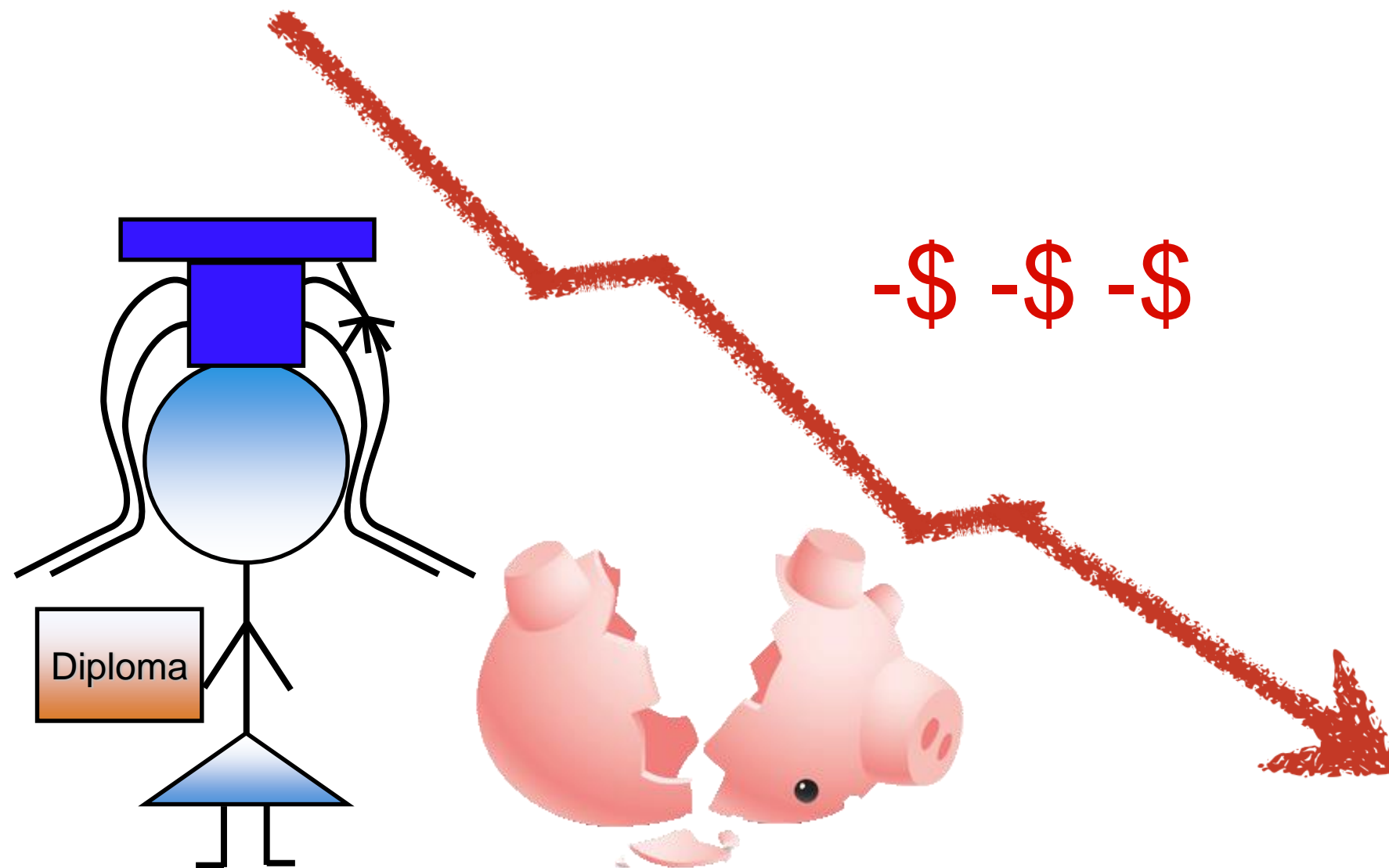
Lucy's students

- ✓ Have **diverse learning needs** (not special needs)
- ✓ **User-friendly Learning strategies** in collaboration with the classroom teachers were developed to address her students' needs
- ✓ Her Supervisors attested to the **tremendous outcomes**



Case in Point

But all this was done in voluntary service



Case in Point

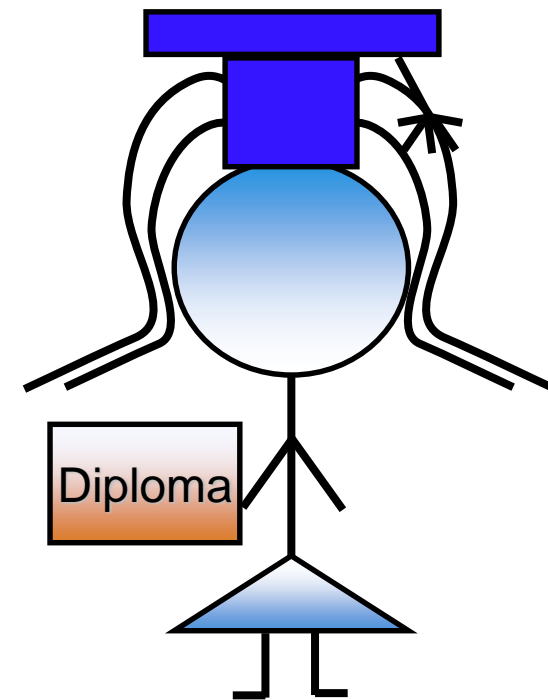
Lucy's Employment Opportunity

Job requirements

- Minimum of 3 "O" Levels

Lucy's Qualifications

6 "O" Levels,
Certification in Literacy
Development (UWI)
Software application for use
in the assistive technologies



A Case in Point

Outcome of the interview

- Despite ample preparation, Recruitment **denied** Lucy the position.
- On enquiry, a senior officer in the department concurred with the decision and expressed Lucy to be **unqualified**, **unsuitable** and **unemployable**.

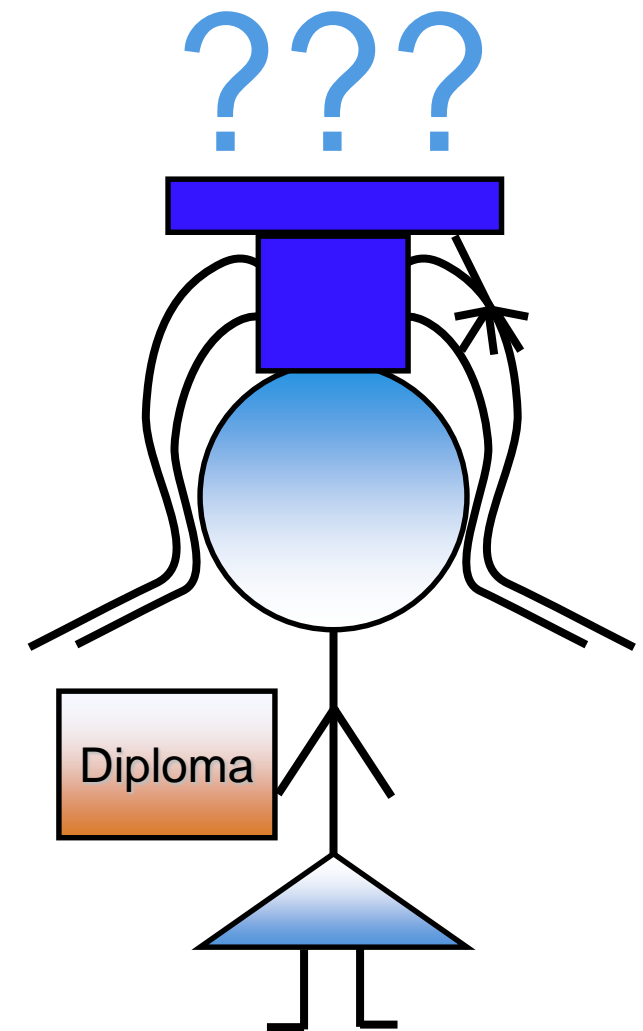
A Case in Point

What Went Wrong?

An organization Perspective

Was Lucy ever intended to be included in the wider system?

Will there ever be job offers that are sustainable to employee and employer?



Reflections

From Lucy's interview

- The position carried both Remedial and Caregiving functions.
1. Lucy's work in Remedial was **misconstrued** to be **"teaching"** for which she **was not "qualified"**, they said.
 2. **Care giving.** Lucy was then questioned on her ability to carry out the toileting needs of a wheelchair bound student.
 3. Lucy was held out to be unqualified, unsuitable and unemployable.
 4. She was told to pursue her beauty culture when asked about her personal interest.
- Lucy was diminished since she didn't understand the innuendoes that sought to diminish herself esteem.

Our Appeal for Lucy

Recruitment must give consideration to Diagnostic/medical reports

Caregiving was inappropriate because of her proprioception/bilateral coordination difficulties

Persons with ASD must find meaning in their job

Training, experience and potential to be matched with the job

They need predictability and stability

They excel at research and they pay attention to details.

They are mission filled.

INTERIM STATICAL REPORT

High school to Tertiary – Status to Date

Number of persons who entered high school 12; Current age - between ages of 15 and 32 years.

.Type	No.	reason	Current status	Comments
High school :				
• Drop out	4	bullying	Unemployed	at home
• Expulsion	1	Condition misdiagnosed	Unemployed	
• <i>On target*</i>	1	At school	Studies	Psychological support provided
Entered university (6)				
- Withdrawal	1	pressure	Unemployed	Moved on to career of choice now seeking gainful employment
- On indefinite leave	2.	No support at university	On indefinite leave	
- graduate	1		Unemployed	
<i>On target*</i>	2		Studies	At US university
- TOTAL	12			See note

Note: Out of 12, 7 are unemployed, 4 exited because of bullying, 1 was expelled due to misdiagnosis. Out of the 6 who entered university 1 withdrew because she was different, 2 have taken indefinite leave of absence, 2 on target.

April 23rd 2015

Creating Meaningful and Sustainable Employment

- In the spirit of Autism Advantage, consideration be given to:

1. Organization structures

- Jobs must be streamlined along lines of reporting. The mix of remedial and care-giving functions is inconsistent.
- Jobs must be specific and must have flexible frameworks within defined parameters.

2. Policy and information environments

- There must be clear lines of communication
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Recruitment sees itself at cross purposes between their role as providers of special needs services as opposed to the role of mainstream as delivering remedial.
- The team of specialists who concurred with the decision of recruitment acted beyond the scope of their responsibilities.

Creating Meaningful and Sustainable Employment

3. The recruitment process

- A new direction based on the principles of Inclusion.
- Inclusion points...
 - In the direction of dialogue for policy and legislative changes
 - It highlights the role of recruitment as transformative in the way forward for the mutual respect of the rights and interests of all parties

Conclusion

- In the immediate term, a significant and authentic change in the mindset is required in the halls of governance and places of employment that will reverberate throughout society at all levels to open the doors to change.
- Finally, the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child must be ratified.

Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General- UN



Thank you

- I thank you for your valued participation, and I now invite you to your further suggestions, questions, and comments.

