

# The Return to Work Programme in Malaysia - investing in people

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The impression that work can be good for a worker's health is a powerful one especially when it is combined with the idea that returning people to work may also have positive benefits for employers and government, physical and vocational rehabilitation and reintegration assumes even greater significance. The Social Security Organization of Malaysia (SOCSO) is a statutory body governing the Employment Accident Insurance Scheme and the Invalidity Pension Scheme. SOCSO covers over 6 million workers and processes over 70,000 new claims annually. SOCSO introduced the RTW Program in 2007 which is a comprehensive multidisciplinary biopsychosocial rehabilitation program for its Insured Persons who are experiencing disability due to accidents in the workplace or those claiming for invalidity. This rehabilitation program is unique as it involves the concept of "disability management" in which each Insured Person who is referred to the program, is assigned to a Disability Case Manager who is actively involved throughout the return to work process. This presentation discusses the justification of introducing the RTW programme in Malaysia, with reference to the underlying rationale, association between work and rehabilitation, evidence to establish a positive relationship between health and work, and the benefits of RTW for employees, employers and SOCSO. Up to date (December 2013), 11,090 workers were motivated to participate in the SOCSO RTW Programme and 7,881 (71%) have returned to gainful employment. This clearly shows the success of the RTW Programme in not only returning a disabled worker to work but to give them their lives back. Due to this success, SOCSO has started to build its National Rehabilitation Centre for the purpose of RTW which will be ready in mid-2014. However, there is still room for improvements which establish the way forward for SOCSO in creating a more disability-management-centric system.