

# ICEVI Higher Education Network

Creating inclusive and welcoming university environments  
for students with disabilities



## Annual Report 2018

With the support from



Submitted by



**International Council for Education of  
People with Visual Impairment**

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&

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## Launch of the Myanmar Text To Speech (TTS) Engine

***“You have brought light through technology to the visually impaired people of Myanmar”***

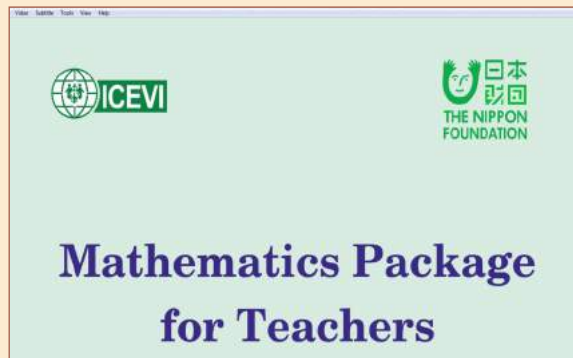
– that was the welcome note sent by our visually impaired colleagues in Myanmar prior to the launch of the **Myanmar Text To Speech (TTS) Engine** in Yangon in January 2019. The statement indicates how deeply visually impaired people were thinking of the Burmese TTS that was developed with the support of The Nippon Foundation.

The year 2018 had many highlights in the Higher Education project and development of the TTS was definitely a significant one. Though the work was initiated jointly by the ICEVI and the Overbrook Nippon Network on Educational Technology (ONNET) in 2017, most of the tasks were completed in 2018 with the solid collaboration between the colleagues of Myanmar and Mr. Dang Hoai Phuc who provided all the technical support for the development of the software through his team in Vietnam. ICEVI and ONNET also thank those from the Dagon and Myanmar Central Universities for their technical assistance in this endeavour. The TTS is an open source software that is now available to all visually impaired people in Myanmar. The official launch took place on 17 January 2019 and responses to the TTS development were tremendous. Many visually impaired individuals who were interviewed were very excited about its development as they know it will open for them many new education and employment opportunities in the years ahead. Further development of the TTS will be undertaken after it is put into full use by visually impaired people in Myanmar. Both ICEVI and ONNET are grateful to The Nippon Foundation and our colleagues in Vietnam and Myanmar for their full support in developing this breakthrough software which truly has brought light to people with visual impairment in Myanmar.



## Projects related to Mathematics

Another important development of 2018 was the focus on **Mathematics**. Mathematics is one of the most neglected areas in the education of children with visual impairment. This weakness results in two profound impacts on children with visual impairment. Initially it makes their inclusion in regular classrooms more difficult and later limits career opportunities; particularly in the fast growing sectors of the job market which require skill and advanced level education in computer technology.



The Higher Education Project is addressing this challenge by developing a series of mathematics videos designed to help teachers and parents to improve methods for teaching math to children with visual impairment. To date 40 sample videos have been prepared and field tested with teachers in South Africa in March 2018. Feedback was obtained from experts from other regions and the inputs are being taken into account as we revise the first set of videos, which we expect to release in mid-2019. These instructional videos are expected to be a great resource for teachers and parents everywhere in teaching mathematics concepts in a simpler way and by using locally available materials.

This initiative is a significant contribution of The Nippon Foundation to the growth of mathematics education in general and the learning of mathematics in inclusive settings in particular.

Further videos will be released in stages in 2019 and 2020 and ICEVI believes this initiative with the support of The Nippon Foundation is going to have a very big impact on improving education quality within Southeast Asia and in other regions of the world.

ICEVI and the ON-NET are jointly supporting a **Mathematics initiative in Indonesia** where Mathematics teachers and University faculty members have prepared adapted instructional



materials for classes 1 to 12. These materials are based on the Mathematics textbooks prescribed by the Government for schools in Indonesia. The team has taken up various concepts in each grade and suggested methods of adaptation and developed complete manuals for each standard that will be available for the general classroom teachers and also for teachers of visually impaired children. These adapted instructional materials

will enable the teacher training programs to learn new approaches to teaching Mathematics effectively to visually impaired children. This will have a secondary benefit of facilitating more effective inclusion. Based on the feedback that is expected by the end of 2019, the adapted instructional manuals will be revised. The manuals will initially be available in Bahasa Indonesian but will later be translated into English and other languages as needed. These materials will also be shared with other countries through the ICEVI and Overbrook websites so that they can be adapted for use in any country that wishes to improve this long neglected area of education for children with visual impairment.

In addition to the development of adapted instructional materials, the technical team in Indonesia, particularly those from Mitra Netra and Universities, have also developed software for transcribing mathematics textbooks. This mathematics transcription software will allow the use of sighted volunteers with a good background in Mathematics to prepare Mathematics textbooks in a specified format that can be converted into Braille. With this initiative, mathematics books can be prepared and made available to visually impaired children and Braille presses for wide distribution.

These are very significant developments of Higher Education program in 2018 and ICEVI is grateful to The Nippon Foundation for accommodating Mathematics video development and also other initiatives on mathematics under the overall umbrella of the Higher Education project.

## Country Champions Program (CCP)

Yet another development in 2018 was the strengthening of the **Country Champions Program (CCP)**. The first program was initiated in Philippines in 2017 and the graduates of the higher education project were brought together to discuss various issues such as academic challenges, barriers, social changes, self-advocacy, influencing legislation etc. The CCP model P was replicated in Cambodia where the



Country Champions Program was conducted in 2018. The concept has become so popular that it is now being adopted by countries outside of the project area. A CCP was undertaken in Kathmandu, Nepal in 2018. We are pleased that this program which was developed through the Higher Education Project is now becoming an important strategy being adopted by a number of ICEVI's regional committees including Latin America, Africa and West Asia.



The Higher Education Project organised a special session on the Country Champion Program as a part of the ICEVI East Asia regional conference held in Manila, Philippines in October 2018. Young Filipino beneficiaries of the Higher Education Project were invited to conduct two sessions - one on the general issues confronting education of visually impaired students from the primary level to higher secondary level and the other one highlighting how similar movements can be initiated in other parts of the world as this conference was regional with participants from more than thirty (30) countries.



## Enrolment in the Higher Education Program

In addition to these highlights the regular features of the Higher Education program continued in 2018. The higher education institutes and Universities in all the implementing countries namely Indonesia, Cambodia, Philippines, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Mongolia continued to admit students with visual impairment for higher education courses. When the program was started in 2006-07 and subsequently in other countries from 2010 to 2014 the initial resistance was there for visually

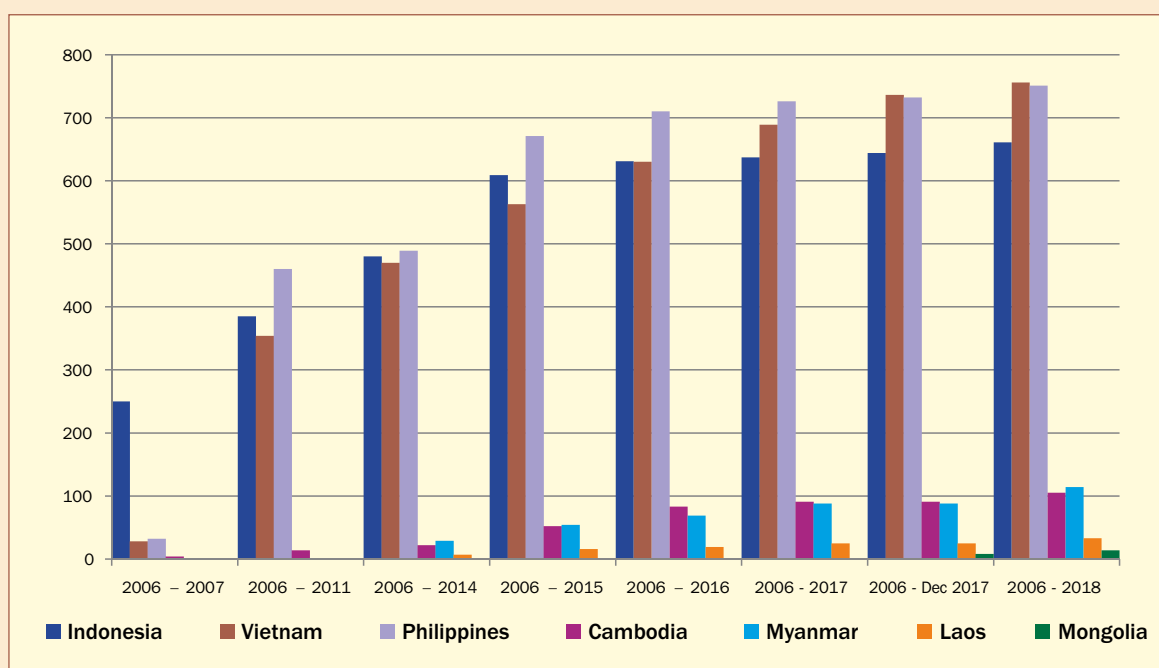


impaired students and teachers and even parents to send children to higher education courses. This situation has completely changed after nearly a decade. The admission of more students into higher education institutions and also with the demonstration of their skills in various walks of lives including academic areas, employment etc., the societal attitude has changed and the universities



are becoming welcoming institutions for inclusion. Therefore, there is a steady growth of enrolment among visually impaired children in higher education institutes in all the seven countries. The total enrolment of Higher Education students helped through The Nippon Foundation supported program stands at 2400 plus and the country-wise details are given below:

Country	2006-07	2006-11	2006-14	2006-15	2006-16	2006-17	2006 - Dec 2017	Jan-Dec 2018	2006-2018
Indonesia	250	385	480	609	631	637	644	16	660
Vietnam	28	354	470	563	630	689	736	21	757
Philippines	32	460	489	671	710	726	732	19	751
Cambodia	4	14	22	52	83	91	91	14	105
Myanmar	-	-	29	54	69	88	88	26	114
Laos	-	-	7	16	19	25	25	8	33
Mongolia	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	6	14
<b>Students enrolled</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>1213</b>	<b>1497</b>	<b>1965</b>	<b>2142</b>	<b>2256</b>	<b>2324</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>2434</b>



In addition to enrolment, the real outcome of the higher education is the quality of education the students have received, the confidence they have attained, and the skills they have acquired to make them independent. The other highlight of the Higher Education program particularly in the countries like Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia where the program started between 2006 and 2010, is that the visually impaired students are given options to select a wide range of courses such as Accounting, Statistics, Technology, IT, Banking, Education and some are majoring in Computer Science and Mathematics at the higher education level.

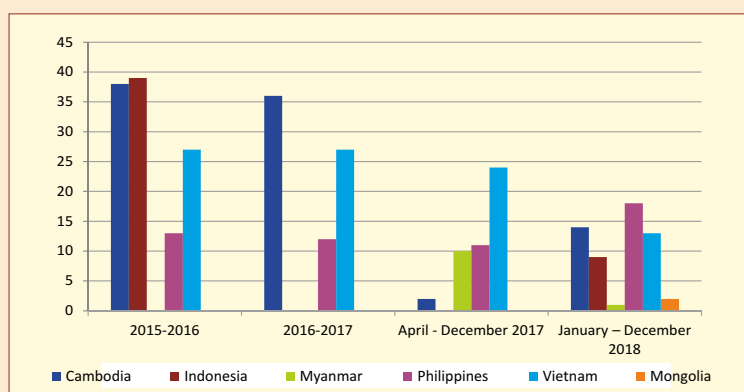


## Employment

Since 2015 the projects have been focusing on employment area too because the students who graduated through the Higher Education program were assisted to venture into employment avenues and therefore, the project organised many awareness activities for the general public and employers to instil confidence in them that visually impaired persons could secure employment on the basis of their employability skills. Their employment also developed confidence in parents to send their visually impaired children to schools. Employment generation activities included the organisation of job fairs, orientation of the employers' interaction with visually impaired Graduates, organising ability EXPOs by mingled persons with visual impairment with non-disabled children etc., to demonstrate their skills. The academic qualifications are important for getting employment in organised sectors but the soft skill development is also very vital area for visually impaired persons to secure successful employment. The skills of interviewing, personal hygiene, skills of communication, skills of working as a team member, leadership qualities, etc., are vital ingredients to attain employment and keeping this in view the project partners organised a number of soft skill development programs.

The table below provides details of the employment generated through the projects in 2018 and also of the recent past.

Country	2015-16	2016-17	April-December 2017	January-December 2018	Total Till Date
Cambodia	38	36	2	14	90
Indonesia	39	-	-	9	48
Myanmar	-	-	10	1	11
Philippines	13	12	11	18	54
Vietnam	27	27	24	13	91
Mongolia	-	-	-	2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>296</b>



Therefore, the project has so far facilitated employment for 296 persons with visual impairment and the work will continue to assist more in the years to come.



In addition to the focus on education, employment, soft skill development, text to speech engine etc., 2018 was used by many projects to document good practices on higher education. As ICEVI and ON-NET have initiated the process of developing a **Publication highlighting the impact The Nippon Foundation has created on the lives of persons with visual impairment** in the East Asia region, several meetings were conducted amongst the publication team which is consisting of Larry Campbell, President Emeritus ICEVI; Todd Reeves, CEO, Overbrook School for the Blind; Wenru Niu, the International Program Director of ON-NET and Mani, CEO, ICEVI.

After developing a complete outline of the publication that was shared with the coordinators of the Higher Education program through email, the same was discussed at the Coordinators meeting held in Manila in October 2018 and based on the suggestions the team and the Coordinators have come out with four broad headings of the publication.

The first section highlights the history of the program and the general preamble covering The Nippon Foundation's contribution and the initial days of the program. The section 2 will focus on the specific aspects of the ICEVI Higher Education program and the ON-NET Technology program. The third section consists of the documentation of good practices of various countries under themes highlighting the enrollment, employment, collaboration, policy development, DPO involvement, parents' involvement, government interaction and self-advocacy. In addition to the country level documentation the project, the Publication team headed by Larry Campbell has already started interviewing many students of the Overbrook Leadership Program and also those who graduated from ICEVI Higher Education program in countries like Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam.

The publication team hopes to complete the documentation of the experiences by mid-2019 so that the higher education coordinators can be brought together sometimes in late 2019 for the preliminary review of the publication and also to discuss other activities of the higher education and ON-NET projects. The draft publication is likely to be ready by July 2019 and ICEVI & ON-NET are planning for the release of the publication at the most significant Joint General Assembly of the World Blind Union and ICEVI in June 2020 in Madrid, Spain.



## Other Salient Activities conducted in 2018

*In addition to the broad highlights of the project summarised in the preceding sections, this report includes key activities conducted by the projects under various thematic areas such as Capacity building, establishment of resource centres, materials production, policy and legislative changes, etc., and the activities under these thematic sections are also classified as per the implementing countries and following are the details:*

### CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Capacity building is one of the key activities of the higher education project as this is vital for strengthening developments in education, employment and other policy changes. The countries generally organise capacity building programs on the basis of specific needs and the country-wise details are given below:

#### CAMBODIA

The following capacity building programs were organised by Krousar Thmey, our Project partner in Cambodia.

- Awareness exhibition on services for persons with visual impairment and their capabilities was organised at Putikak Preaseyhaureach University on 24–25 January 2018. A total of 430 participants were benefitted through the workshop and exhibition. Another exhibition was arranged at Western University on 21–22 January 2018, which was participated by 380 participants from colleges and higher education institutions.
- A program on communication, leadership, business planning and entrepreneurship was conducted on 20–21 February 2018. A total of 29 blind and low vision students participated in the event.
- A university orientation program on education of students with visual impairment was conducted on 25–26 February 2018. 29 participants attended the program.
- A country champions program was conducted in February 2018 at Krousar Thmey’s Special School in Phnom Penh. More than 30 students drawn from different parts of Cambodia attended the program, which was also addressed by the ICEVI higher education project coordinators.



- A visit was made to ABC Massage Training Centre on 12 March 2018. 26 students were benefited from the visit.
- A visit was made to Epic Art on 13 March 2018 and 26 students took part in this activity.
- A visit was made to University of Battambang (UBB) on 2 April 2018. 18 students were benefited from the visit.
- University visit (Putika Sihanukreak) was organised on 2 April 2018 and 18 students participated in this.
- A company visit was arranged to Kredit Micro Finance Bank on 19 June 2018 and 15 students were oriented to the Banking related jobs.
- A company visit was made to Le Meridian Angkor Hotel on 19 June 2018 and 15 students were given exposure to employment opportunities in hospitality sector.
- 2 staff from Krousar Thmey attended a 2-days training in July 2018 in Indonesia. This training was conducted by the Faculty of Psychology of the University of YARSI and focused on enhancing their counseling skills.
- Job focus training was organised on 19–20 August 2018 and a total of 17 blind and low vision students participated in this program.
- A youth empowerment program was organised on 23–24 August 2018 and 34 blind and low vision youth attended.
- Job focus training was conducted on 30–31 October 2018 in Krousar Thmey's School in Kampong Cham with an objective to help students to prepare themselves to apply for a job, how to write application documents or prepare a job interview, and how to develop a positive attitude and to set career goals. 13 students attended this training.
- Inclusive Education training for staff of Vocational Training Centre was conducted during the month of November 2018. The training was conducted by Mr. VORN Vy, Deputy Coordinator of education for blind children program, in four centers as per the following details:





Vocational Center	Participants	Date
Cambodian Japan Friendship Technical Education Center	11	5 Nov
Kal Yan Mith	10	5 Nov
NhamNham restaurant	9	6 Nov
Cambodian Japan Friendship Technical Education Center	1	16 Nov

- Throughout the year, Krousar Thmey's Academic and Career Counselling (ACC) Officers conducted orientation and personal counselling sessions for students from Grades 10 to 12 in Krousar Thmey's special schools. The purpose of these sessions was to present them with diverse academic opportunities. This activity was also an opportunity for students to prepare themselves to join higher education institutions. During the reporting period, 30 students (8 girls) in Krousar Thmey's schools benefited from these counselling sessions.
- In December 2018, Krousar Thmey participated in the 7th edition of the National Forum on Inclusive Education (NFIE). The event gathers all the stakeholders working to improve inclusion in the education system: NGO, local authorities, etc. In 2018, visually impaired students from Krousar Thmey were invited to participate in the discussion.

In summary the higher education project of Cambodia organised more than 20 capacity building programs during 2018 which benefitted higher education teachers, persons with visual impairment, non-disabled students, employers, general public and parents.

## INDONESIA

Indonesia started the higher education program in 2006 and has conducted many capacity building programs over the years. The key programs conducted in 2018 are listed below:

- A study visit was organised for 7 key people from Pamulang University and the Mitra Netra Foundation to visit the School of information technology of Saint Benilde-De La Salle and Resources for the Blind in Manila on 22–26 April 2018 to study more about the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) curriculum implemented in higher education institutions in the Philippines.
- Assistive technology training was conducted on 11 April 2018. 9 students with visual impairment and 3 disability service center staff of Hindu Dharma State institute of Denpasar attended.
- A seminar to promote inclusive higher education was organised on 15 August 2018. Faculty of Hindu Dharma Institute of Denpasar; Education authorities of provincial government of Denpasar; Director General of The Ministry of Religion; Lecturers, Students with visual impairment, Members of the Executive board of university students, Journalists and Pertuni

board members in Bali and Denpasar attended the program. A total of 150 participated in this event.

- A study visit was conducted for a team of officials from the Hindu Dharma State Institute of Denpasar to “Disability Service Center” of Jogjakarta State Islamic University, one of Pertuni's University partner on 1 October 2018.
- In Mid November 2018, Pertuni Higher Education Project conducted Country Champions Program, which was participated in by 37 blind students. The participants represented 21 provinces and 27 universities from throughout Indonesia.
- On 15 November 2018, Pertuni Higher Education Project conducted a seminar as a part networking with the government and the topic of the seminar was: “Students with Visual Impairment Can Study Computer Technology in University; No one left behind”. There were 150 participants representing the Ministry of Education; government offices of education in provincial level; teachers from regular schools in Jakarta that had students with visual impairment; universities in Jakarta that had department of computer technology/computer science; high school students with visual impairment in metro-Jakarta and journalists.
- On 21 November 2018, Pertuni was invited by “Disabled Care Community (DCC)” of Muhamadiyah University of Jakarta to support a seminar on “Inclusive Higher Education” and Pertuni's Higher Education Project Coordinator was invited to serve as a resource person at the seminar. There were 150 people in attendance, including university faculty and administrators, sighted students, students with disabilities and parents of students with visual impairment. At the concluding session a joint agreement of commitment was made between Pertuni and Muhamadiyah University of Jakarta to collaborate in making the university more inclusive university.
- On 15 December 2018, ICEVI’s CEO visited Pamulang University, the first university in Indonesia that accepted blind students to study computer science, and also the first university in Indonesia that provided full scholarships for students with disabilities. The ICEVI CEO, also met sighted students and visually impaired students in inclusive classrooms.
- The Jogjakarta State Islamic University (JSIU), one of Pertuni's higher education project partners is now becoming a “mentor” to other universities that are willing to become inclusive universities. On 17 October 2018, JSIU conducted a national seminar to promote inclusive universities in Lambung Mangkurat University, Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, one of Pertuni’s university partners. At the conclusion of the seminar, they formed “Inclusive University Network”.



As is evident, the Pertuni's higher education program is focusing more on policy change at the Universities that facilitate inclusive environment for students with visual impairment

## LAOS

The National University of Laos (NUOL) is our implementing partner for higher education in Laos. Being the lead University in the country, it has excellent relations with many the Government departments which allows it to be proactive in promoting policies on higher education for persons with disabilities. In 2018, the following key capacity building programs were conducted by the Inclusive Resource Centre of the University.

- An orientation program for the newly admitted students with visual impairment was conducted during the month of April 2018.
- A talent show for students with visual impairment was organised on 25 May 2018. Students from 4 faculties within NUOL and more than 200 participants attended the event.
- A workshop on “Inclusive Development” for the University faculty members was organised on 6–8 July 2018.
- The CEO, ICEVI organised an interaction session on higher education for students with visual impairment with the members of the Committee on Inclusive Education of the NUOL on 13 July 2018, which was attended by 15 members.
- Training on computer literacy for students with visual impairment was organised on 23 July–7 August 2018. 7 students with visual impairment attended the course.
- A meeting on Inclusion was organised by the Inclusive Education Committee at NUOL on 5 September 2018 which was attended by 17 participants.
- A training course for teachers, who are responsible for inclusive education and DAISY audio book production was organised on 17–28 September 2018. 5 teachers participated in this course.
- The Coordinator of the higher education program for the Inclusive Resource Centre of NUOL attended the ASEAN Disability Forum in Thailand with 5 blind students that were supported by the Disability Service Center (DSC).
- One day workshop on social inclusion, supported by Lao Australia Institute, was conducted at the NUOL in December 2018. 35 teachers attended this workshop.







- The Christian Foundation for the Blind in Thailand (CFBT) representatives provided awareness on technology at the NUOL collaborative meetings.
- The project coordinated with the Lao-Australia Institute (LAI) and created a Facebook Group to connect the staff of LAI with blind students of the University who are applying for scholarship from LAI.
- Conducted training to 25 visually impaired scholars of Lao-Australia Institute and their teachers.
- Provided technical support on assistive technology to blind students at NOUL which includes installing computer and smart phone operating system software and providing advice for IT solution.

Being the lead University in Lao PDR, the higher education project has drawn the attention of the Government and various stakeholders and this will facilitate admission of more students with disabilities to higher education going forward.

## MONGOLIA

Mongolia joined the higher education project in 2016 and the work done till date aimed at making higher education institutions inclusive. The activities organised in 2018 are as follows:

- University visits were organised and career counselling programs were arranged for visually impaired students on 14–18 May 2018 to enroll in universities in the academic year 2018.
- A computer and soft skill training was conducted on 6–31 August 2018 for visually impaired students who had enrolled in Universities in 2018 and also those who had completed the first year of study. 8 visually impaired students attended the training.
- Orientation training for employers was organised on 20 May 2018. A total of 45 representatives from the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, local government and companies attended the training.

## PHILIPPINES

Higher education institutions in the Philippines have been enrolling students with visual impairment for a wide range of courses and focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Technology and Mathematics) curriculum is unique to the country. Our project partner, Resources for the Blind (RBI) has also helped other partner countries of the higher education project to introduce STEM curriculum in higher education. The capacity building and training activities conducted by our partners in 2018 are enumerated below:

- A program on Teaching Math Made Easy for Learners with Visual Impairment was organised on 19–21 April 2018 at RBI, Manila. 17 public school teachers of students with visual impairment in grades 11 and 12 attended the program.
- Soft skill training for students with visual impairment was conducted on 3–5 May 2018 at Cagayan de Oro City. A total of 21 college students, senior high and alternative learning system students with visual impairment attended the training.
- Employer orientation program – “Career Connect” was organised at Cebu city on 20 July 2018. 20 representatives from Government agencies and private employers (Managers and Human Resource Personnel) attended the program.
- Employer orientation program “Career Connect” was organised at Davao city on 31 August 2018. 23 representatives from Government agencies and private employers (Managers and Human Resource Personnel) attended the program.
- Employment Career Advancement program “Climbing the Corporate Ladder” was organised at Cebu city on 21 July 2018. 22 currently working persons with visual impairment attended the program.
- A program on Higher Education for Students with Visual Impairment: “Making it Work!” was organised at Pampanga on 31 January 2018. 7 Universities / Colleges Faculties and Administrators attended the program.
- A program on Higher Education for Students with Visual Impairment: “Making it Work!” was organised at Manila on 7 February 2018. 50 Universities/Colleges Faculties and Administrators attended the program.



- A program on Higher Education for Students with Visual Impairment: “Making it Work!” was organised at Pampanga on 17 August 2018. 40 Universities / Colleges Faculties and Administrators attended the program.
- A program on Development of Accessible Learning Resources for Visually Impaired Learners in DAISY format was conducted at Pasig city on 22–25 May 2018. A total of 155 DepEd (Department of Education) Special Education Teachers and book illustrators attended the program.
- RBI hosted the 4th ICEVI East Asia Regional Conference in October 2018 which was attended by more than 250 participants from 30 countries.

## VIETNAM

Our project partner the Sao Mai Centre has specialization in technology and also helped other project partners with this expertise. Development of the Text-To-Speech Engine in Burmese language is one of the collaborative outcomes of the Sao Mai Centre, particularly with the leadership of Mr. Dang Hoai Phuc and the Myanmar National Association of the Blind. Following were the key activities organised by Vietnam in 2018.

- Two material production trainings were conducted during the month of April 2018 at Hue and Hai Phong. 12 material production staff attended the training.
- Upgrading the online library system to be compatible with that of Accessible Book Consortium (ABC) was completed during the month of July 2018. This will help in exchange of books with the ABC library.
- Prepared 390 accessible book titles and handouts in Epub, DAISY, Word, CHM and audio format during January to December 2018.
- Provided 35 tablets installed with accessible apps to be used in accessing materials, taking notes and understanding public transportation options.
- A three week computer training was conducted for new students during March 2018. 8 students attended the training.
- A three week computer training was conducted for new students during June 2018. 8 students attended the training.
- A three week computer training was conducted for fresh college and high school students during August 2018. 10 students attended the training.
- Two four week trainings were conducted for students in Hai Phong and Hue in July and November 2018. 14 students attended the training.



- A one-week advanced training on producing technical documents such as Math / Chemistry in Epub3 format was organised during July 2018. 9 staff from Sao Mai, MATA, Nhat Hong, and General Science Library attended the training.
- 13 students who graduated in 2017 were provided with job placement in different sectors during 2018.
- A one-week soft skills training for visually impaired students was organised in May 2018. 12 students attended this training.
- Mentoring sessions on the topic of creating inclusive higher education environments for all was organised from April to August 2018 and again from September to December 2018. A total of 13 students were beneficiaries.
- An agreement was signed with the Accessible Book Consortium global book exchange program as the authorized entity in June 2018.
- The public beta testing version of Burmese text to speech software was released in June 2018.
- The Burmese TTS with multiple-syllable public beta version was released in August 2018.
- The candidate version of the Burmese TTS was released in September 2018.
- The Sao Mai Braille software which supports editing and can translate into more than 60 languages into Braille was released in June 2018.
- The Braille translation software with math equation editor and Math Braille translation features for the Sao Mai Braille software was released in September 2018.
- A computer support center was established in Hai Phong for high school and college visually impaired students in May 2018.

## MYANMAR

The Myanmar National Association of the Blind is the project partner for higher education in Myanmar and it has organised the following key activities in 2018:

- Two day capacity building training on technology was conducted on 25 – 26 July 2018. 20 participants attended the training.



- Project cycle management training was conducted for MNAB staff, committee members and participants from DPOs on 25–26 September 2018. 12 participants attended the training.
- Three day soft skills TOT training was conducted by the Christian Foundation for the Blind (CFBT) on 8–10 October 2018. 9 staff, committee members and students attended the training.
- Two day soft skills training for University students was organised on 28–29 November 2018. 10 participants attended the training.
- Three day pre-university training for students who passed matriculation examinations from Yangon Education center was organised on 12–14 December 2018. 9 students attended the training.
- Training on “Producing teaching-learning materials” was organised from 1 July to 14 December 2018. 22 university students were involved.
- Scholarships for three students from Shae Saung Blind School were provided for audio editing training in the month of August and September 2018.



In summary, the higher education project partners have conducted more than 100 capacity building programs and training activities in 2018 which benefitted more than 500 visually impaired students, hundreds of sighted students and the general public. The training activities will continue in 2019 on the basis of specific needs of the countries in order to make the programs self-sustainable.

## **ASSISTANCE TO ESTABLISH LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRES**

Since the commencement of the higher education project, the partners have been assisting universities and key higher education institutes to set up learning Resource Centres with technology and internet facilities that would enable visually impaired students to acquire skills in accessing materials for their better learning. Such Resource centres were useful for a cluster of higher education institutions where students with visual impairment were enrolled. The Universities and higher education institutes which were considered potential resource centres were expected to provide required modest infrastructure, furniture, electricity facilities and also assign one of their faculty members to look after the Learning Resource Centre whereas the project provided a few computers depending on the need, recording devices for preparing audio materials, scanner and a braille printer where absolutely necessary. The project partners helped

many such institutes to establish resource centres and also trained their key staff members in acquiring skills in using technology applicable to persons with visual impairment.

Most of the institutes which commenced higher education programs for students with visual impairment are making resource centres part of their commitment and therefore only technical support provided by the higher education project partners. The extent of direct assistance in terms of equipment for establishing such Learning Resource Centres has been reduced significantly over the years. However, the project provides direct support only to a handful of such centres at present and during 2018, eight resource centres have been established with the equipment and technical assistance provided by the project partners and the details are given below:

S. No.	Name of the institute where Resource Centre has been established	Devices/materials provided or produced in the Resource Centre	Users
<b>Cambodia</b>			
1	Kamchay Mea University	1 Studio room	7
2	Battambang university	1 studio room	3
<b>Indonesia</b>			
1	Hindu Dharma State Institute of Denpasar	3 talking computer; 3 scanners; 3 KNFB readers software; Supporting electrical appliances	15
<b>Laos</b>			
1	Faculty of Education	Braille books	6
2	Faculty of Law and Political Sciences	Braille books & audio books were produced from IERC	1
<b>Philippines</b>			
1	Tarlac Elem. School	NVDA, open source screen reader software; provided training	4
2	Area Vocational Rehabilitation Center, Dagupan City	Provided training on the use of the equipment and the software	10
<b>Vietnam</b>			
1	Hai Phong Blind School	Desktop computers, tablets, scanner and printer	26
2	Hue Blind Association	Desktop computers, tablets, scanner and printer	9

Going forward, the higher education project funds will be used only for providing technical assistance to the Learning Resource Centres and establishment of such centres will be initiated through the resources of the higher education institutes, Governments and other local bodies.

## MATERIALS FOR LEARNING AND ADVOCACY

*Several materials like leaflets, posters, braille books, e-books, brochures, 3D materials, materials for teaching STEM, large print materials and videos have been produced by respective country project partners for the purpose of creating awareness, teaching students with visual impairment, etc. Key materials produced during the year 2018 are listed as follows:*

### CAMBODIA

- Produced Advocacy Banners (15), Leaflets (300 sheets) and Posters
- Produced university braille books: Khmer literature : 85 books; E literature: 30 books

### LAOS

Produced the following books for visually impaired students studying at the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences:

- Constitutional law
- Fundamental knowledge of law (audio book and soft copies)
- Introduction to logic (audio book and soft copies)
- Logic (audio book and soft copies)
- Philosophy of law (audio book and soft copies)
- Exercise books of law (audio book and soft copies)
- Fundamentals of justice (audio book and soft copies)
- English for Business VII
- Translation and Interpretation IV
- Thesis Writing
- Western and Asian Cultures
- Comparative Literature
- Critical Reading
- Final Project Books
- Pronunciation Practice
- Public Speaking
- Writing Paragraph
- Additional Materials
- Other Textbooks



## MONGOLIA

- Prepared a brochure on how to make work places accessible for blind persons and distributed to employers and the general public.

## PHILIPPINES

- 3D Materials, STEM Video - Teaching Strategies in Mathematics & Science (CD), and a Brochure enumerating “How can I help person with visual impairment”.
- Brochure on “Blind Excluded Included in higher education”.
- STEM Video.
- Employment brochures and Video.
- Stylus and slate, braille and large print copy materials.
- Soft copy of training materials with USB.

## VIETNAM

*The following video clips were created to raise awareness:*

- Beading work by the blind.
- Maintaining the computer by the blind.
- The journey to light talk show by Dang Hoai Phuc.

The project partners have started producing video clips and narratives for various components of higher education that will be used in the ICEVI -ON-NET publication highlighting the impact made by The Nippon Foundation on the lives of persons with visual impairment. The videos on education and employment produced by the project partners have also been posted on ICEVI website [www.icevi.org](http://www.icevi.org).

## POLICY CHANGE INITIATIVES AND NETWORKING

One of the goals of higher education project is to demonstrate feasible models and advocate for expansion of such services through Government level legislation. The project partners continue to work with the Government in bringing out legislative measures pertaining to accessible learning materials, examination procedures, scholarship schemes to visually impaired students, employment, etc. ICEVI’s project partner in Indonesia played a key role in bringing out a National Decree on Higher Education.

ICEVI’s partner in the Philippines was instrumental in popularizing the STEM curriculum for students with visual impairment in higher education and Laos made higher education for students with visual impairment affordable and these initiatives have increased their enrollment in higher

education institutions. The involvement of Government officials in the higher education project activities is emphasised to make potential changes through them. In 2018, many such activities were carried out in all the projects and following are some examples:

- The involvement of the Director General of Hindu in The Ministry of Religious Affairs at a seminar to promote inclusive higher education that was conducted on 15 August 2018 by the Pertuni is seen as a positive step as Ministry supports many educational institutions, including universities that we are working to make more inclusive.
- Pertuni has worked with the Department of Information and Communication Technology (DICT) and the National Council on Disability Affairs on the Joint Memorandum Circular on Accessible Website Design Guidelines.
- RBI, Philippines has been lobbying for the past three years for ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty. On 12 November 2018, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte signed the accession of the Philippines to the Marrakesh Treaty to facilitate access to published works for persons who are blind, visually impaired, or otherwise print disabled.
- RBI is actively partnering with the College of Saint Benilde-De La Salle in terms of higher education events, as well as employment activities.
- RBI is an active member in the National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA's) sub-committees on Education, Information Communication on Technology, Auxiliary Services and Health.
- RBI is active in partnering with the National Library on "Disability Awareness Training for City Librarians".
- Krousar Thmey is a member of Disability Network in Cambodia. Every month, Krousar Thmey is represented and presents the network with the challenges of people with disability in education and other related services. Updated information about job placement for people with disabilities is also shared with this network.
- Social Worker Network: This network holds meeting every month to help people with disability to have access to vocational training. Krousar Thmey representatives attend the meeting.
- SR-NGO Network: This is a big NGO Networking in Siem Reap province that shares new ideas on disability. Krousar Thmey is a member of this network.
- National Employment Agency (NEA): This agency organizes 1 or 2 job fairs every year which could give a chance for job seekers to match with the employers. Krousar Thmey plays an active role in organising these Job Fairs. NEA also helps Krousar Thmey to find jobs for students with disabilities since they have partnership with many companies in Cambodia.

Influencing legislation is a priority of the higher education project and the project is also collaborating with the Special Education Centre of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO-SEN) for facilitating proactive policy changes on disability affairs wherever necessary.

## **MEDIA COVERAGE**

The Higher Education Project and its impact has been covered by the electronic media regularly for the purpose of highlighting the capabilities of persons with visual impairment and also to create opportunities for them in the employment sectors. With the technological advancement, the project partners and persons with visual impairment are also active on social media for the exchange of information on higher education and also for effective policy changes at all levels. Following are some examples of media attention to the various activities of higher education project in 2018.

### **CAMBODIA**

- Krousar Thmey is very active on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube in creating awareness on education of persons with visual impairment. These social platforms are creating bridges between the organisation and students.
- Krousar Thmey is working with 3 TV stations (TV5, Hang Meas, and CTN) to broadcast 60 second educational TV spots. These spots are being broadcast between 7 PM and 8 PM, on Monday thru Friday.
- The national television came to meet with students with disabilities during their final examinations and televised their story on national news.

### **INDONESIA**

- Pertuni is working with Denpasar TV to promote education of person with visual impairment.

### **MONGOLIA**

- MNFB is in the process of producing a TV program on the Higher Education Project slated for broadcast in December 2019.
- News about 2 blind persons who have been hired by the social insurance agency of the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare has been posted several times in different newspapers and websites.

## COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES WITH ON-NET

The Overbrook Nippon Network on Educational Technology (ON-NET) is also working in most of the countries where higher education project is underway and in the case of Philippines, Vietnam, Myanmar, Indonesia and Cambodia, the higher education project partners serve as the project partners on ON-NET too. ICEVI and ON-NET clearly decided that the primary and secondary education should be the focus of ON-NET and ICEVI would take care of the higher education activities. However, there are some interfacing areas such as Technology, Mathematics, Material production, etc., which span from primary to higher education. Therefore, ICEVI and the ON-NET are working closely together to complement each others work and to maximize outcomes in the most economically feasible manner possible. Collaborative activities that have recently been initiated between the ICEVI and the ON-NET have also been initiated in 2018 include the following:

### CAMBODIA

- Five audio books were produced which includes: Khmer Language: 01, Geography: 01, Moral Studies: 02, Home Economy: 01
- Computer training on Word, Excel and Power point were conducted in collaboration with ON-NET.

### PHILIPPINES

- STEM Training was conducted in partnership with the Department of Science and Technology – Science Institute of Education.
- Computerised Eye check-up camp was conducted in partnership with the Department of Education and IBM Solutions on 22–31 October 2018.
- Training / events concerning employment for persons with visual impairment were also conducted.

### MYANMAR

- The Myanmar TTS software was developed as a joint project of the ICEVI and the ON-NET.

*The Coordinators of the Higher Education and ON-NET project are also meeting together since 2015 to optimize expertise and inputs for the growth of services for persons with visual impairment in the implementing countries.*



## Final Reflections

Each year when the time to prepare this annual report arrives it provides a welcome opportunity to pause and reflect, not only on the accomplishments of the prior twelve months but on the overall impact that this long-term development program has had since its modest beginnings as an experimental pilot program in Indonesia. In some ways these annual reflections are similar but each year they are also different.

Today as we look back, we remember that it was not long ago when admission to higher education for blind students in Southeast Asia was fraught with challenges. Very often those blind students who did successfully navigate around the many barriers placed before them and gained admission were all too frequently dropping out before completing their education.

Of course there were many reasons for this. Limited access to learning materials caused them to become almost totally dependent on family and friends, which is a heavy burden to carry.

The remarkable changes we have had a hand in creating are the greatest reward we could ask for. Changes in access to information, changes in attitudes of sighted students, teachers and administrators and more recently changes in public policy and access to employment have all led to a totally different and thankfully more inclusive environment today.

Above all as we reflect on project impact in 2018 we must recognize that it has, from the outset, been the proactive engagement and leadership of blind individuals themselves and their organizations that have built an unshakeable foundation for a higher education movement in Southeast Asia that truly is “changing what it means to be blind”.

To those young blind leaders who have formed the nucleus of the regional committee that directs and guides this initiative we express our profound thanks for creating a momentum from which there is “no turning back”.

## Partner Organisations



**Krousar Thmey**  
Cambodia  
[www.krousar-thmey.org](http://www.krousar-thmey.org)



**Resources for the Blind, Inc., (RBI)**  
Philippines  
[www.blind.org.ph](http://www.blind.org.ph)



**Pertuni**  
**(Indonesian Blind Union)**  
Indonesia  
<http://pertuni.idp-europe.org>



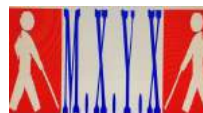
**Sao Mai Vocational & Assistive  
Technology Center for the Blind**  
Vietnam  
[www.saomaicenter.org](http://www.saomaicenter.org)



**Myanmar National Association  
of the Blind (MNAB)**  
Myanmar  
[www.mnab-myanmar.org](http://www.mnab-myanmar.org)



**National University of Laos (NUOL)**  
Lao PDR  
[www.nuol.edu.la](http://www.nuol.edu.la)



**Mongolian National Federation of the Blind (MNFB)**  
Mongolia  
<https://www.facebook.com/BlindMongolia/>

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