



## **ICEVI-PERTUNI**

### **Higher Education Project for Persons with Visual Impairment in INDONESIA**



**(A Project supported by The NIPPON Foundation)**

## **Annexure**

**Statements of Students and Staff**

## Bandung



The students who attended the interview in Bandung shared their views on the programme, pointed out the strengths and limitations and also made suggestions for further development of the services in the university area and in other places of Indonesia. The feeling in general was that the technology enabled them to become independent and it has helped them in expanding their knowledge too as they could access information to a large extent. It is nice to observe that the University is allowing students from neighbouring institutions to use the facility available.

***Some of the specific observations made by the students are as follows:***



**Zulfikar** says that he got very good scores in his examinations after he started accessing information through the centre. The scanners sometimes go out of order and therefore, there is a need to provide maintenance services periodically.

**Ujang** says that the computer centre is useful for writing his thesis without the help of others. He is wondering what would happen to the higher education facilities of students when the involvement of ICEVI and Pertuni is withdrawn at the end. His apprehension is that once the project involvement is withdrawn, there is a possibility that sighted students will use the computer centre for entertainment purposes. He says that only 9 out of 38 beneficiaries of the project have been given flash disks.





**Ende Laran** says that the part-time instructors were helpful only to a limited extent and he says most of the learning he had was with the help of fellow students with visual impairment of the university.

**Yahu Nurbayanti** is a person with low vision. She did not have any idea of how computers are used for educational purposes. The centre has given her opportunity to access information through computers. She is happy that the programme is helping her academically and also improves confidence. She received computer training in Mitra Netra two years ago. She wants this higher education project to expand so that it will be of help for other fellow students. She is also confident that the centre can be managed by the students themselves. The students who know better may help the weaker students. The interaction with the computer in English in fact helps her improving her knowledge in English which contributed to her better academic records too.



**Zulaiha** says more students want to make use of the scanners to access materials and therefore, they normally wait for more time to get their turn. Having more scanners may help the students to access information at ease.

**Heri Mujianto** comes from Bandung University. The software available in the technology laboratory is useful for accessing information. He says that small groups among the learners may be formed and the centre be managed independently. He says he is the only one in the family of five children who knows how to operate the computer.





**Triana** is happy that the examinations are presented in Braille. The Braille script is helping her to understand the questions well. She is expecting her grades in the final examinations but optimistic that the knowledge in technology would contribute to her success.

**Eka Laila Wati** is thankful to the project which is enabling her to access information through internet. She started learning four months ago and she is getting more help in her studies. She suggests that the centre should provide training to beginners too who do not have any exposure to computers. She says that the sighted students too use the centre and therefore, they sometimes have to wait for their turn to use computers for their learning. She



wants the project to continue. She is optimistic that learning from peers will be more effective and therefore, the students may be able to manage the centres effectively. Her parents are proud that she is able to perform like other sighted students. The friends who saw her submitting her assignment in typed script which she typed herself appreciated her independence. She is not sure the skill is contributing to better grades but it is certainly helping them to be on time in submitting assignments.



**Siti Rahayu** is writing her thesis and hopes to complete in time. She is wondering what would have happened if there had been no technology facility for her education at the university. She feels that orientation and mobility will be important as the university is coming with more buildings. She admits that more students are drawn into higher education as a result of the technology assistance provided by the university.

If the centre is to continue, the students themselves should be able to take care of the functioning of the centre and maintenance of the devices. **Sakiri**, who is also a visually impaired student and working as a part-time staff of the project is capable of taking responsibility for running the centre. He says that most students are able to submit assignments on time and they can also send the assignments by e-mail.



Though there is a general consensus about the quality of the project, there seems to be some administrative issues which are yet to be resolved.

The students are in general agreement that they can form a small committee to manage the administrative issues of the centre. Pertuni may initiate formation of such a committee of students. The students feel that the centre belongs to them and they will make use of that effectively in the future. The students ask the teachers to provide them soft copies of their lectures in advance in order to convert them in Braille for their learning.



**Drs. Ahmed Nawawi**, the staff incharge of the programme says that the students who are not undergoing orientation and mobility are not effective in their skills. This part of the project is not fully implemented. He also says that high school students are preparing themselves for higher education by undergoing computer education. He hopes that more lecturers will make use of this centre to print question papers in Braille. Though sighted students use the centre, the number has come down since the mid-term evaluation. They use only when blind students do not use the computers. The mouses of the computers are kept separately and therefore, sighted students who are comfortable with keyboard operation alone use this. There is a general feeling among the students that they have rights to use the computer facility in the university campus and hence they come to the centre but this trend is gradually changing. He wants the blind students to use the computers for most of the time so that the frequency of sighted students coming the centres can come down.



The Dean is happy about the impact of the programme and the University is committed to its continuation. The Rector will be approached to discuss the modus operandi of the continuation of the programme. He informed that one of the students from the

Department of Instruction is doing a research study on the impact of the technology services for the academic improvement of students with visual impairment. He admitted that the awareness of the community and academic community about persons with visual impairment is not adequate and therefore, this type of mainstreaming programme is of vital importance. It was pointed out that the University of Higher Education in Bandung is dealing with disability services for more than 40 years and therefore, working as a trend setter for other universities in the country. He told that the University is trying to become a University of Excellence as it is focusing on disability and equal access. The Dean was asked to persuade the Government to provide one of the unused Braille Printers to the University for improving its Braille printing capacity.



addressed.

A meeting with the office bearers of the Pertuni was also organized on the 21<sup>st</sup>. They were asked to address the issue of qualitative and quantitative improvement of the programme. The issues concerning introduction of the programme in Surabaya and Makasa should be dealt with. The following specific issues were

1. The general impression of the programme in Bandung is that the services are utilized well by the students but some management issues are yet to be addressed.
2. The feedback of the students should be obtained to find out the ways in which the programme may be made independent.
3. A policy on who and who should not use the technology resources needs to be developed by Pertuni in consultation with the authorities concerned of the university.
4. The possibility of integrating the services as a part of the library may also be explored as a long-term strategy.
5. The University may be asked to take over the project for all administrative purposes and asked to provide direct responsibility to students with visual impairment to manage the laboratory.
6. A small handbook providing guidelines for implementation of future programmes may be developed by making use of the experiences gained from the project in Bandung.
7. The new students of the Surabaya and Makasa may be provided training for a period of two weeks by Mitra Netra.
8. The existing surplus funds may be used to do preparatory work in Surabaya from September to December 2007 in order to prepare a project proposal for implementation of the project from 2008.

## Project in Jakarta



The evaluation team met with the students and staff of the project in Jakarta at the Library@Senayan. The purpose of the project to assist visually impaired learners to become independent in their studies was explained and the students were asked to share their experiences in learning and problems if any in the delivery of services. They were asked to provide suggestions on how the programme could continue with their own initiatives.

**Vina** says that the project helped her to transform her dreams into reality. The lecturer feels that Vina is just like any other student since she is able to finish assignments in time and also make it effective with the use of technology. The sighted friends treat her as an equal partner and always think what they could do with Vina instead of asking what they could do for Vina. She wants the programme to expand to help more students from different parts of Indonesia to get the benefit. She says her success in education is helping her improve the social life too.



**Ismail** is majoring history subject, which involves collecting a lot of information for learning and the technology project is helping him to become independent. He is using the satellite centre of the Mitra Netra and finishes the assignments in time. The satellite centre has just one computer and four students are using it in turn.



**Melissa** says she is able to access books from the library independently using technology. She uses Open Book software to read the textbooks and other literature. She says that satellite centres sometimes are not able to lend laptops when needed. Moreover

some laptops do not have screen reader and therefore, students at times are put to hardship. There are some difficulties to get Braille versions of the materials too as Braille presses usually give preference to the books of secondary schools. It is suggested that at least one Braille printer may be made available in each satellite centre. Ibu Melissa, mother of Melissa says that she encouraged education of Melissa in mainstream environment in order to provide her more exposure. When members of the family were not comfortable with visually impaired children learning education, Ibu Melissa defied their views and started promoting education for her child. She is happy now that Melissa has become independent now and learning effectively.



**Mr. Bambang**, Chief of the Library@Senayan wants the project to continue. The Library@Senayan will be extended in the years to come and therefore, the access to visually impaired persons may be expanded in different parts of Jakarta and other provinces as well. He says he is happy with the services and delighted to see the empowerment of persons with visual impairment using technology.



**Vishnu** is happy that the technology is helping him to complete his assignments. As the laptops are available free of cost, he need not have to pay for similar services from commercial outlets. The only concern is that sometimes, he can't get the laptop when needed as others also need them simultaneously. The suggestion is that more laptops be made available so that the students can use them when needed to complete their assignments.

**Ana** is majoring in counselling and the technology project is very helpful for making her studies effective. She says the scanners are not able to scan photocopied books. She is able to take her examinations independently. She suggests that laptop may be made available for each student so as to enhance their learning experiences.



**Adi** works as the Coordinator at the Library@Senayan. Students do not get laptops to be carried home for completing their assignment. Adi discusses with other coordinators to find out the procedures adopted by them to help more students when they have limited laptops. Adi's father says that he had to read most of the literature for Adi before he was exposed to technology. As Adi is able to access materials

independently now, he is relieved of many direct responsibilities he had with Adi before and therefore, he encourages expansion of services for the benefit of more children. He hopes other parents to feel the same way that visually impaired persons need not be dependent and the technology can help them to become independent in life. He is willing to play a lead role in motivating other parents to recognize the talents of children with visual impairment.



**Asep** feels that the programme has really contributed to his independence. Visually impaired persons from regions other than Jakarta and Bandung are jealous that they are not having such facilities in their regions to access information. The staffs of his class and the university are happy that Asep is able to do his work independently. For examination purposes, questions are given in soft copies as the teachers are confident that blind persons can use computers independently to take examinations. This is big departure from the earlier experience of using a scribe for taking examinations. This is a clear indication of how visually impaired students can become independent when they learn technology for their learning purposes.





As the satellite centre is very close to her residence, **Lucia** is making effective use of its services for her learning. The Library@Senyan is also helpful to a large extent in accessing books from the library. The laptop is helpful when she is expected to go to other public libraries to access materials. The teachers and students have

developed positive attitudes towards the learning abilities of students with visual impairment as a result of this project.



**Rini** who is in charge of the programme says that one laptop is assigned for three students assigned to various universities and five laptops are kept at the Mitra Netra to help 12 students. There are student coordinators assigned for using the laptop in each learning centre. Some students have their own laptops and the project provides only technical assistance. As more students write thesis in

the second semester, the need for laptop increased. Whenever the laptops go out of order, the Mitra Netra technical staffs provide maintenance services. Seven students have their own laptops and students who are able to afford come forward to invest on personal computers as they feel that the investment is worthy to make their life independent.

Larry mentioned to the students about screen reading software that come on a memory stick, which will enable to student to access any computer with ease. Exploration is on to find out competitive software that are affordable for persons with visual impairment. He mentioned that most of the problems of accessibility can be addressed when such software is available for wider use.

**Mr. Wien** says that the experiences of the Library@Senayan may be emulated in other regions of Indonesia to provide services to students with visual impairment. The Library in collaboration with the Mitra Netra is willing to help setting up such services in other regions as the library is expected to expand in the near future. The provision of special services to persons with visual impairment in the Library@Senayan was recognized

by the Government and a special award was given to the library for its social cause. This provided a wide publicity to the library and the awareness of the public about the learning capabilities of persons with visual impairment increased. The library also has audio-cassettes for visually impaired students to use. Mr. Wien is promoting setting up of similar services in new libraries that are coming up in Indonesia.



The card cataloguing system at the Library@Senayan with the use of assistive technology is unique and visually impaired students are proud that they are becoming independent and self-confident in accessing books from the library. The card cataloguing system when established in other libraries of the world will influence real empowerment of persons with visual impairment.

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