

ICEVI Higher Education Network

Creating inclusive and welcoming university environments
for students with disabilities



Annual Report 2019

With the support from



Submitted by



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

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The year 2019 was marked by the implementation of several unique initiatives as our project partners strengthened inclusive higher education activities both quantitatively and qualitatively. However, before we deal with country specific achievements let us share a short summary of six (6) regional initiatives underway during the 2019 project year.

A new publication highlighting impact

A joint Overbrook-ICEVI publication team commenced work on a book that will highlight the impact created by the individual and collaborative work of the Overbrook International Program and ICEVI in Southeast Asia. This book, entitled **PARTNERSHIPS FOR CHANGE** follows the evolution of a small US-based leadership and technology program for blind youth as it transformed itself into regionally based technology initiatives; first in East Central Europe and the Baltics and then into a much larger regional initiative in Southeast Asia. It looks at the critical role The Nippon Foundation played throughout the process through their priority for empowering persons with disabilities through the appropriate use of technology in expanding access to education and employment.

The book will be divided into five sections and will include more than sixty (60) imbedded video clips allowing the reader to meet many of the young blind leaders who have been involved with this work from the outset.

It describes the many regional partnerships that have been formed through collaboration between Overbrook, ICEVI and The Nippon Foundation as work was advanced in Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos and Mongolia. Most importantly the book shares the many positive changes these partnerships have created and the development principles that have guided this work.

We expect hard copy and electronic versions of **PARTNERSHIPS FOR CHANGE**, to be released during the 2nd or 3rd quarter of 2020.

Mathematics Instructional Videos

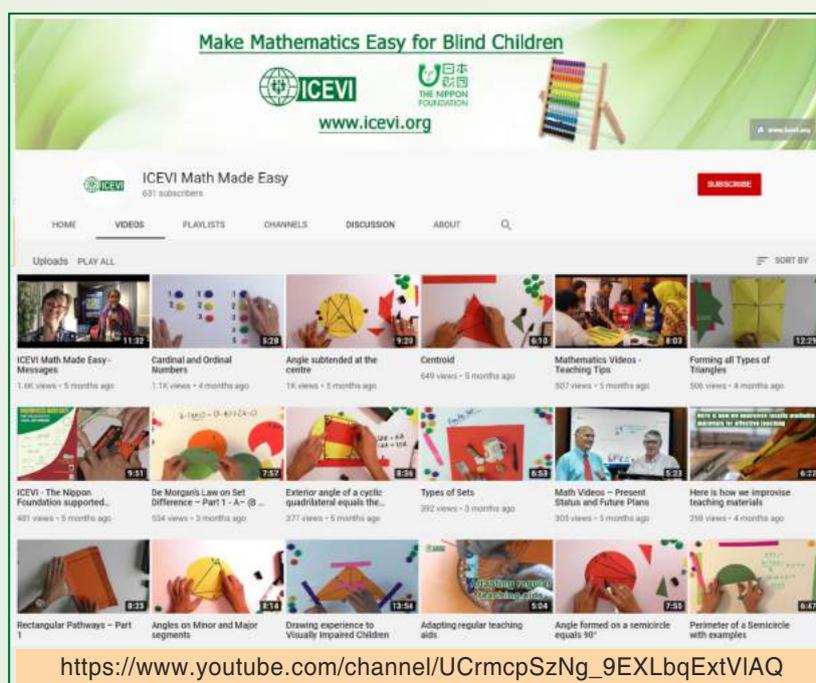
What was conceived of as a small intervention to the education of children with visual impairment in 2003 has turned out to address one of the weakest links in the education of persons with visual impairment; appropriate instruction in mathematics. The starting point of the partnership between Overbrook and ICEVI in Southeast Asia was the 2005 publication **Mathematics Made Easy for Children with Visual Impairment**.

While this publication was very popular with teachers and parents it was difficult in the print version to successfully convey the many creative and low cost ways of adapting instruction of math concepts for persons with visual impairment. With support from The Nippon Foundation the higher education project in 2019 began preparing short instructional videos that explain the tactual adaptations teachers and parents could make in presenting math concepts to a child with a visual impairment. Initially we hoped to complete 150 such videos by the end of 2020. However, that work has moved forward ahead of schedule and currently there are 175 videos on a dedicated YouTube channel titled ICEVI Maths Made Easy.

The viewer subscription to this channel is growing steadily and the ICEVI regions are creating awareness among teachers of visually impaired children about this resource so that they can start teaching mathematics to visually impaired children and support their mainstreaming in school and in the community.

Some teachers and countries have also requested “master training” with a view to organizing structured programmes to train teachers at the country level using these videos.

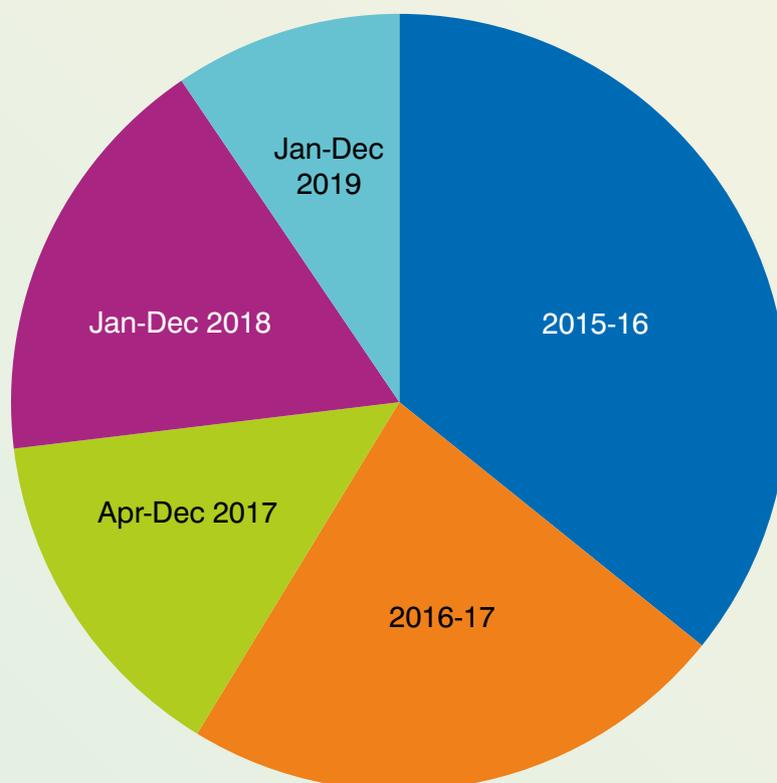
The success of this initiative has motivated the team to plan for regionally based trainer of trainer (TOT) programs that will have a ripple effect in improving mathematics instruction around the world. The blindness sector will ever be grateful to the Nippon Foundation for this specific initiative, which is addressing a major gap in the education of the blind and preparing children and youth with visual impairment for higher education and the job market of the future. More updates and developments on this math initiative will be reported in the months ahead.



Shift to Employment

Since 2015-16, the higher education projects have been shifting their focus to organising more soft skills for visually impaired graduates to improve their employment opportunities. Our partners have been organising many soft skill programs and employment fairs linking visually impaired people and employers that are yielding positive results. The number of visually impaired people securing gainful employment is growing steadily as employment opportunities emerge in both conventional and non-conventional sectors. The consolidated employment data is provided in the table below:

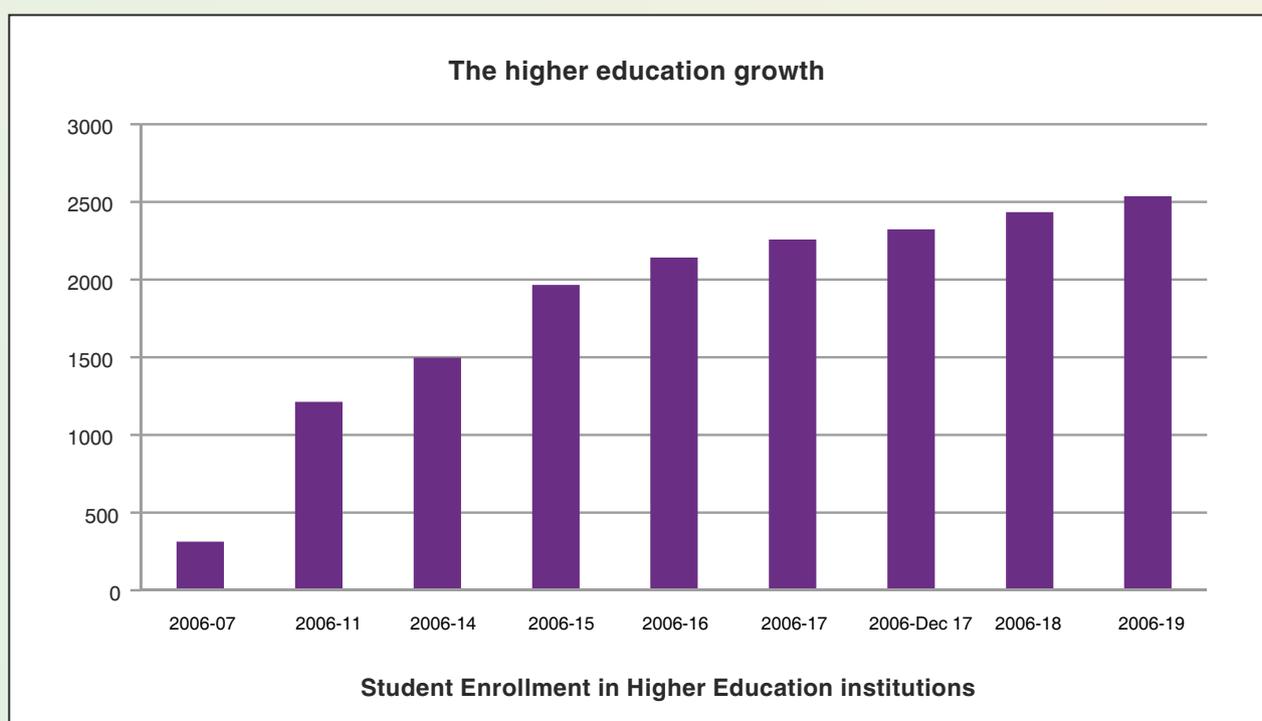
Country	2015-16	2016-17	Apr-Dec 2017	Jan-Dec 2018	Jan-Dec 2019	Employment Till Date
Indonesia	39	-	-	09	-	48
Vietnam	27	27	24	13	10	101
Philippines	13	12	11	18	17	71
Cambodia	38	36	02	14	04	94
Myanmar	-	-	10	01	-	11
Mongolia	-	-	-	02	-	02
TOTAL	117	75	47	57	31	327



Promoting inclusive enrolment

The projects continue to expand educational opportunities for visually impaired students and enrolment is growing steadily in the seven (7) implementing countries. Although project funds were used in early years to create resource centre facilities within higher education institutions, the current reality is that the partners are increasingly tapping into local resources and influencing stakeholders, including Governments, at the country level to create the required facilities for increasing the admission of students with visual impairment in higher education institutions, insuring sustainability. The consolidated enrolment data of the project through 2019 is as follows:

Country	2006-07	2006-11	2006-14	2006-15	2006-16	2006-17	2006 - Dec. 17	2006-18	2006-19
Indonesia	250	385	480	609	631	637	644	660	678
Vietnam	28	354	470	563	630	689	736	757	799
Philippines	32	460	489	671	710	726	732	751	769
Cambodia	4	14	22	52	83	91	91	105	127
Myanmar	-	-	29	54	69	88	88	114	114
Laos	-	-	7	16	19	25	25	33	33
Mongolia	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	14	16
Students enrolled	314	1213	1497	1965	2142	2256	2324	2434	2536



Joint meeting of country coordinators



The higher education and ON-NET project coordinators met in Vientiane, Laos in August 2019 which provided an opportunity to review the progress of the project activities in the current project cycle 2018-20 and also to plan for a new cycle 2021-23.

The project partners were fully aware that the next project cycle, if funded, will be the phase-out cycle of the Higher Education Project in its current form. The coordinators

are working hard on sustainability and to assure that all components will be fully sustainable by the end of the next cycle.

Project partners had an opportunity to meet with Madam Dala Khiemthammakhoue, Deputy Director, Inclusive Resource Center at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to discuss policies of the Lao PDR government regarding inclusion of persons with disabilities. They also had the opportunity to visit staff of Asian Development with Disabled Persons (ADDP) that is doing significant work for persons with disabilities in Lao PDR.

At this meeting of the country coordinators we were pleased to have with us Mr. Yasunobu Ishii and Ms. Eriko Uchiyama representing The Nippon Foundation and Ms. Yuki Nakamura from the ADDP.

Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO-SEN)

The coordinators meeting in Vientiane also provided the opportunity for the ICEVI and ON-NET Country Coordinators to meet with Madam Salmah, Director and other officials of SEAMEO-SEN and discuss ways of strengthening education and advocacy efforts at the country level, using linkages with SEAMEO-SEN.

SEAMEO-SEN officials appreciated the work being done by The Nippon foundation through ICEVI, ON-NET and our project

partners in seven countries. They pledged to connect wherever possible to influence policy changes and good practices that would contribute to the empowerment of persons with disabilities in general and persons with visual impairments in particular.

Having described these regional highlights, the following pages provide summaries of the country level activities that took place in the 2019 project year calendar year 2019.

Philippines

In 2019, the ICEVI projects in the Philippines focused on the needs of students with visual impairment who are in the higher level of education.

These projects include technical and soft skills training which we believe develops independence and instills competencies to improve academic performance, enhancing opportunities to attain better employment in the future. There were eighteen (18) new enrollees in the higher education. The majority of these students are pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in Education in anticipation of finding employment as teachers, especially in public schools.

The Department of Education is providing opportunities to the blind and visually impaired graduates based upon the success of seventeen (17) past graduates.

The following programs were implemented by the RBI from January to December 2019:

The Marrakesh Treaty



A one-day forum that was organized on 29 January 2019 was attended by key officials in the community – librarians from different public libraries, schools and universities, officers from Disabled People's Organizations, teachers, school administrators, parents and students with

The Philippine government acceded to the Marrakesh Treaty after the Philippine President signed the treaty on 12 November 2018. A month after the country's accession to the Marrakesh Treaty, several activities were organized to maintain momentum.

disabilities. The discussions included the basic information and background of the Marrakesh treaty and its benefits for those Filipinos with print disabilities. Participants were also made aware of their role and responsibility in the implementation of the treaty in their respective organizations and communities.

Making it Work! Career Orientation for Students with Visual Impairment

The RBI conducted two events under this activity in April 2019: one in Cebu City and another event in Davao City. The partners for this event were the Department of Education, Department of Manpower and Development of Cebu City and United Church of Christ of the Philippines in Davao



City. Parents of participating blind students were also included where they learned that they can be part of the career plans of their child including which courses they will take and the schools they can consider from.

Employment Summit “A Path to Success for People with Visual Impairment”



RBI organized an employment summit on 23-24 May 2019 in Manila that was attended by officials from the National Council on Disability Affairs, Department of Labor and Employment, Sutherland Philippines and other partner stakeholders. The event resulted in a strong and good

partnership with employers who have employees with visual impairment. Ms. Eriko Uchiyama from The Nippon Foundation attended the summit

Ms. Hannah Mae ADESA, a Customer Service Representative of Sutherland Philippines, Inc., delivered the keynote address. The initiative of International and Local Policies on Disability Employment and about Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) on employing persons with disabilities was discussed and this session made way for the participants to ask questions about their employment issues that they have experienced.

Included in the programs was a session on Career Assessment and Career Coaching where representative from participating companies did a practice interview with the blind participants.

The employment summit was an avenue to enlighten, encourage and demonstrate to the employers how they can adapt and include persons with disability in their workforce.

Disability-Inclusive Training in Science and Mathematics Education



This event was conducted on 28-30 May 2019 with the major local partner being the Science Education Institute (SEI) under the Department of Science and Technology (DOST). DOST-SEI provided the major outlays to the event in partnership with the ICEVI. DOST-SEI has been the partner of RBI for six years now in equipping teachers

in the Department of Education with the skills on how to best present their lessons in Math and Science to their students with visual impairment in a format that they can use and understand. The plan is to conduct the same training for teachers handling learners with visual impairment in the Visayan region in summer 2020.



Learning Math Everywhere



ICEVI mathematics instructional videos were launched in Manila on 18 July 2019 and that event was attended by the Chief of the Science Education and Innovations (SEI) Division of DOST which has been supportive to RBI in equipping teachers in teaching Science and Math to blind students. Sixty (60) other guests were present during the launch including



teachers, blind students and parents of students with visual impairment. Dr. MNG Mani, CEO, ICEVI explained that the videos are practical, inexpensive and useful for the

teachers in resolving problems and explaining Math lessons to their students with visual impairment. He also demonstrated examples on how to solve Math problems with the help of the blind participants. Not only are the blind able to make use of the materials; sighted classmates are also responding positively to these materials. If Math was difficult to learn, now it can be made easy through the examples in these videos that can be downloaded from the ICEVI website (www.icevi.org).

Making It Work: Higher Education for Students with Visual Impairment



Over the past decade, RBI, in partnership with the ICEVI and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), has regularly conducted orientation sessions for university and college administrators and other key persons. These sessions provide appropriate information and equip participants with skills on how to make accommodations for blind and visually impaired students in their institutions. An

orientation program was conducted at the Negros Oriental State University on 5 November 2019 that drew together 130 participants composed of administrators, instructors / professors, non-teaching staff and special education undergraduate

students. This session provided a venue to discuss and address issues related to accepting and including students with visual impairment. In addition, it also featured the sharing of good practices on the inclusion of students with visual impairment in higher education institutions. Negros Oriental University is making institutional preparations as they will soon accept blind and visually impaired students in their academic courses.

Soft Skills Training for Students with Visual Impairment



Soft Skills is a personality and character development training intended for students and graduates in higher education with visual impairment. Topics included in this training help to develop self-confidence, social skills, work ethics, assertiveness and goal setting. A three day event on this topic

was held in Cubao, Quezon City on 8-10 November 2019. This training reminded blind and visually impaired participants to prioritize their goals and set long and short term plans to achieve better outcomes. The training was attended by twenty three (23) students and graduates with visual impairment from Metro Manila. Invited resource speakers included persons with visual impairment who are already employed and are active advocates on the rights of persons with disabilities. The participants felt that this training gave them the self-confidence necessary to work together with sighted peers in school and in the community.

Youth as Advocates Philippines



This activity seeks to encourage successful young men and women who have visual impairment to become self-advocates for their rights and privileges as well as understanding their responsibilities to the future youth of the country. YAP strives to

keep the participants aware of what has been achieved by those who went before them and what still needs to be achieved. They learn which strategies are applicable in their respective situations along with facts and policies on disability that will help the government understand what youth with disabilities can be an effective ally.

A YAP training program was conducted at Mandaluyong City on 4-5 December 2019. The program began with opening remarks by Marlo Lucas, RBI Higher Education Program Coordinator. Sharing of experiences was a central part of the event and the participants were grouped into

different advocacy areas as follows: education, employment, family and community and accessible technology. The discussions focused on how the

program could change positively the attitude of the general public, and in turn lead to better life outcomes for persons who are visually impaired.

STEM Access for Blind and Visually Impaired



Over the past few years, many initiatives have been implemented to increase the access and participation of blind and visually impaired students to the STEM area of the curriculum. However, the recent adoption of the K–12 curricula presents new challenges relating to the STEM subjects. Students in senior high school must tackle two additional years of ICT or STEM track subjects. This means additional struggles in their Math subjects which poses challenges to both instructors and students.

To address this new challenge, RBI, in partnership with the Department of Education designed and implemented a two-day training for senior high school

Math instructors and college/university instructors on 9-10 December 2019. This activity aimed to equip Math receiving and resource teachers on the strategies, technologies, instructional materials and other resources vital in making the curriculum accessible for students with visual impairment.

The training featured the sharing of resource persons on the effective and good practices in accommodating blind and visually impaired in their Math class. Some of the key points discussed revolved around inclusive strategies, use of adaptive learning materials and assistive technologies. Aside from these, the trainees were also exposed to some of the important skills like sighted guide and basic Braille. With this training, the participants expressed readiness to accommodate blind students in their class. In addition, they also signified willingness to provide a meaningful learning experience through modified learning materials and activities.

The above are examples of the activities organized by the Resources for the Blind during the 2019 project year. Further details of the activities can be found in prior annual reports at www.icevi.org.

Indonesia

Indonesia was the first country to implement the higher education project in 2007. The country has carried out many pioneering activities related to higher education. The key activities that were organised during the 2019 project year included:

Muhamadiyah University of Jakarta

The Indonesia Blind Union (PERTUNI), our higher education project partner held a meeting with the Vice Rector of Muhammadiyah University of Jakarta on 4 February 2019 with the objective of establishing partnership with the University to help it become inclusive University accepting qualified students with visual Impairment. An agreement was reached at the meeting that the university would allocate required space and equipment to be used in a resource Centre with PERTUNI providing technical assistance and training

for the staff and providing guidance to assure the effective functioning of the Centre.

PERTUNI and ICEVI are encouraged that more Universities and higher education institutes are coming forward to create required facilities to encourage students with visual impairment to pursue higher education. These proactive initiatives taken by the universities ensure long-term sustainability for the higher education activities in Indonesia.

Pre-Employment Soft Skill Training programs

As the higher education project shifts its focus to create more employment opportunities for persons with visual impairment, the PERTUNI is organizing pre-employment soft skill training programmes on regular basis for most higher education institutes where visually impaired students are enrolled.

In 2019 soft skill training programs were organised in Makassar and Denpasar. The Makassar programme, 22-25 April, 2019 was attended by 20 students and the

Denpasar program in October was attended by 20 students. In both programmes the importance of communication skills, teamwork, goal setting, resume writing etc., were focused on and role playing exercises were organized to provide practical experience to the trainees.

Employees and those visually impaired graduates who had already secured employment were invited to address students. These programs were warmly

welcomed by the participants as it allowed them to acquire skills that are generally not covered in a formal academic environment. These soft skill training programmes also

provided the opportunity for students to organize network groups that allow them to continue to share useful tips related to seeking gainful employment.

Orientation for Employers

The project organised orientation programmes for employers to showcase the skills of visually impaired graduates who are potential job seekers. The event was organised with the following objectives:

1. To address issues such as fear, misconceptions and misunderstandings in the mind of employers regarding the potentials and capabilities of people with visual impairment as productive members of the work-force.
2. To gather information from people with visual impairment who have been working in government as well as in the private sector about required job skills.
3. To develop guidelines on job recruitment and job placement for people with visual impairment based on the information gathered from the employers and employees.

Resource persons invited to speak during the session included -Ramya Prajna, Co-Founder of Think.Web, a company which had recruited two employees with visual impairment, -Hadiyanti Ramadhani, a person with visual impairment graduated from Padjadjaran University, who is now working with Think.Web as a digital content writer and -Aria Indrawati, PERTUNI Higher Education Project Coordinator.

The discussions helped the participants to understand the challenges they are likely to encounter in the work environment and also strategies to address these issues. Simulation experiences, mock interviews, interaction with the employers, networking, etc., helped the young graduates to get more insights into the world of work. PERTUNI will continue to strengthen the area of employment by organising job fairs to showcase the abilities of persons with visual impairment.

Participation in the International Conference on Inclusive Higher Education

On December 3rd 2019, Disability Service Center of Jogjakarta State Islamic University conducted an international conference on inclusive higher education. Recognizing PERTUNI's role in developing inclusive higher education in Indonesia, the organizing committee invited PERTUNI's President to make a presentation at the conference.

In this presentation, PERTUNI shared the status of higher education before the project commenced, present status covering hundreds of students with visual impairment and strategies for the future

mostly aimed at empowerment through employment.

During the conference, the Disability Service Center of Jogjakarta State University reported to the public the result of a "mentoring scheme" that they have been practicing for the last five years to motivate several state universities in Indonesia to create inclusive environments for the higher education of persons with disabilities in general and persons with visual impairment in particular. The Center also reported that this model enabled them to secure grant funding from the European Union.

In addition to the above activities, the Mitra Netra has also prepared adapted instructional materials for school mathematics and also developed a software entitled MBC Math (Mitra Netra Braille Converter for Mathematics), which is expected to make preparation of mathematics braille textbooks more easily. This initiative was jointly supported by the ICEVI and the ON-NET.

The project will continue to strive to bring out the best results in education, employment as well as in formulating policies conducive to the disability sector that is fully included in all aspects of community life.

Vietnam

Our project partner the Sao Mai Centre for the Blind carried out the following activities during 2019.

Awareness Raising through Social Media

The Sao Mai Centre is producing a series of episodes named “Seeing by Eyes” on Sao Mai YouTube channel. This awareness raising program includes clips telling stories about daily activities of visually impaired people, which are done on their own. The channel can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/saomaifortheblind>.

In September, the project collaborated with the RMIT University for Well Being to organize an event to raise the public awareness about the blindness, especially in the higher education and employment fields.

Training to use of assistive devices

From March to November, the project provided equipment including tablets, DAISY book readers and Braille note takers for 32 visually impaired students and also provided six short trainings on how to effectively use the devices for their studies.

Establishing resource support centres

In March, the project established one support center at the Nghe An General Science Library with 7 desktops, scanners and printer. In addition, the project also conducted computer skills training for a group of students as well as local resource trainers. In July, one computer resource center was established in Hue province in collaboration with the Hue Blind Peoples’ Association.

Publication of accessible learning materials

- From January to December, the project published 674 accessible academic book titles and teaching handouts. Books were produced in DAISY and Epub3 formats.
- Between April and May, two trainings were provided for 22 colleagues from partner organizations on how to produce accessible Epub3 materials, one in Hanoi and one in HCM. The Sao Mai Center conducted two trainings; in Hanoi in July and in Ho Chi Minh City in October. These training sessions served 24 individuals from

schools/organizations of and for the blind to enhance their capacity in providing soft skills trainings and job placement related activities for the blind students.

- Three books were produced on the subjects of Braille music, Unified English Braille Math and Tactile Graphics production and are available at no cost at the Sao Mai blog: <https://www.saomaicenter.org/en/blog>
- In June, the Centre collaborated with WIPO and the Vietnam Division of Copyright to organize a workshop entitled “Right to Read” in Hanoi. In September, the Sao Mai Center joined with the Vietnam Blind Association to organize a workshop to promote the ratification of Marrakesh Treaty in Vietnam.
- The project is creating a new sheet music library for the blind students who are majoring in music and has almost 2,000 music scores available.

Soft skills and employment training

- In June, the Sao Mai Centre organized one-week soft-skill training for 8 students in HCM focusing on communication skills and choosing the best clothing for interviews and workplace. In August, a training program on preparation for employment was conducted for 12 third and fourth year students in Hanoi in collaboration with the Vietnam Blind Association and hosted at the Vietnam Vocational and Rehabilitation Training Center for the Blind.
- From January to December, Sao Mai Centre arranged for three-month internships for 15 visually impaired graduates to work at 7 different companies and schools. They have been assigned different projects. After finishing the internship program, seven of them have been employed by the host companies and three of them have continued on to studies at the Master Degrees level in Psychology and Educational Administration.
- The Sao Mai Centre is supporting the self-help blind student groups (Skills for Life, SM Independent Living Support and Viet Tech for the Blind) to carry out 13 related activities to empower blind students. The main activity themes include: communication, public attention, daily tech skills for independence and on-campus and public location orientation and mobility.
- The project has also hosted one job opportunity workshop at Sao Mai for nine blind graduates and three employers. After the event, the project facilitated employment for three blind students to work as temporary employees with contractual obligations for one year. Two of them are working at the “1fix Company” as online marketing staff and one at the Vina Cacao Company as the sales staff.

Several universities are discussing strategies to ensure the long-term sustainability of project activities. The percentage rate of students securing decent employment based upon their major area of study still requires improvement. The labor market is still not widely and equally open for students with disabilities. However, more areas of study are being opened to blind university students and we anticipate that this will, in time, open more employment opportunities and improve outcomes.

Cambodia

The project partner Krousar Thmey organised the following key events during 2019.

Equipment for blind students

In August, 9 students with visual impairment successfully passed their final examination. Among these, 8 students wished to study at the university level and applied for scholarship assistance from the government. In December, official registration at university for all of them was confirmed. Krousar Thmey purchased computers for each of them which they will use over the course of their studies; generally 4 years.

Support to Resource Center at Chea Sim University of Kamchaymear (CUSK)



The Resource Center in CUSK at Kampong Cham province opened its door in 2018. The first month was dedicated to the installation of the recording studio and

other materials, as well as the training of relevant staff to manage the facilities and oversee the recording of audiobooks by student volunteers. The center is designed to be fully accessible for visually impaired students. Two student volunteers responded and are recording textbooks mostly the subject of management.

In April 2019, Dr. Mani, CEO of ICEVI conducted a field visit to Kamchaymear University for project follow-up. He visited the resources center, met with blind students and exchanged ideas with the Director of the University on how to successfully include blind students.

Mr. AEP Chanveasna, former ACC coordinator and Mr. KEO Sambath, former audiobook officer at Krousar Thmey are now on the staff at the National Institute for Special Education (NISE). They are

conducting follow-up missions to the resources center to monitor the installation of the equipment and to support the volunteer team at the university who are recording needed textbooks.

Organization of soft skills trainings



In order to develop a soft skills training curriculum for the blind, Ms. Sreyrov Sok, Academic and Career Counselling (ACC) officer, developed a questionnaire and conducted a needs assessment for the soft skills curriculum with core trainers and NISE students (pre-teachers) from the 4 special schools in Battambang, Siem Reap, Phnom Penh Thmey and Kampong Cham. Both core trainers and students wanted to include the soft skill curriculum for students with disabilities in special high schools.

In April 2019, three soft skills trainings were organized by the ACC officer for the students between grades 9 to 12 schooled in the five special schools and for university

students. The objective of these trainings was to prepare the students for university studies and job seeking.

1. Two days training in Battambang on *Self-confident and Goal setting* with 28 students (17 male and 11 female) with visual impairment in grades 9 to 12 from the five special schools was conducted.
2. Two days training in Battambang on *Time Management and Critical Thinking* was organized with 34 students (20 male and 14 female) with visual impairment between grades 9 to 12 from the five special schools.
3. Two days training in Battambang on *Pre-employment & Communication* with 12 university students (10 male and 2 female) with visual impairment was also conducted. Topics discussed included Verbal and non-verbal communication in a professional environment, Preparing your CV and cover letter, Seeking to understand the skill, knowledge, and attitude (SKA), Being ready for job interview, and being ready to secure a job and future career.

Awareness raising in Universities

Throughout the year, 4 awareness raising workshops at different universities were also conducted in Kampong Cham and Battambang province. Table below showed summary information related to events.

Province	University / Venue for Event	Date of Event	Number of Participants
Battambang	Panhasastra University	February 20 and 21, 2019	315
Kampong Cham	Cambodian University for Specialities	March 20, 2019	180
Kampong cham	University of Kampong cham	December 12, 2019	180
Battambang	International DUVEY university	December 19, 2019	450



In total, 4 sessions of awareness raising were organized. The audience, approximately 1100 people is composed of 95% of students, and other 5% being university professors or representatives.

Each event is divided into two parts: a conference open to all on the first morning, animated by Krousar Thmey's Advocacy Officer to inform the audience about the situation of visually impaired students in Cambodia and provide information on special education for students with visual impairments. The visually impaired students accompanying the advocacy officer shared their own experience with the public.

The conference was followed usually by a one and a half day of exhibition, where the Advocacy officer and his team set up a display of adapted learning and teaching materials used in the special education program, such as the use of the abacus and Braille writing. Students and professors participated in the introduction sessions to discover more about these tools. More than 1000 leaflets that included information regarding education for blind and deaf were distributed at these events.

The objective of these events was to encourage higher education institutions to welcome students with disabilities and to promote among classmates and the education community a more welcoming and inclusive environment for students with disabilities at the university. Interestingly, representatives from those universities expressed their motivation towards welcoming new students with visual impairment; they were open to discussion on scholarship support for disabled students with financial need.

8th National forum on Inclusive Education

As a member of Working Group on Education for Disabilities (WGED), Krousar Thmey took part in the 8th National forum on Inclusive Education held in December, 2019. This forum was organized by Special Education Department (SED) with co-financing by several members of WGED group. This forum theme was *“Increasing Investment in Building Capacities of Teachers and School Management Regarding Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities”* with the aim at identifying support mechanism for implementation of

Inclusive Education (IE) policy and advocacy with relevant ministries and development partners to increase the budget to build the capacity of teachers and school managers.

During the forum, issues concerning IE policy implementation were raised, and proposed solution to deal with challenges at the practical level discussed by relevant stakeholders and development partners. Results from forum will urge the MoEYS to enforce the implementation of IE policy.

National Career and Productivity Fair

Krousar Thmey in November, 2019 participated in the event called “National Career and Productivity Fair” in order to promote to public about Cambodian Braille for blind and Cambodian sign language for deaf. This event gave Krousar Thmey a

chance to present to audience their activities regarding education for blind and deaf individuals. This event was open to the public in an effort to help them learn more about “Education for Persons with Disabilities”.

Counselling

Throughout the year, ACC officer conducted several sessions of individual and group counselling and follow up to target students at universities and at special high schools. During the project year eleven (11) such sessions were provided to students both at universities and special schools. Twenty-four (24) students from special schools benefited

from counselling sessions. Sessions focused on facilitation for registration, assessing the progress of learning, and pre-employment preparation. These sessions helped the students to be well prepared before moving to higher education as well as to be ready for employment after graduating from university.

Transfer of special schools to the Government

In July 2019, the programs of Krousar Thmey for blind and deaf students were successfully transferred to the Government of Cambodia assuring long-term sustainability of these programs. In the future they will be run and supported financially by MoEYS and its line departments. Schools must comply strictly with administrative procedures and this resulted in some time-consuming delays.

Many of the staff of the Krousar Thmey are currently serving at the National Institute for Special Education. This opens new avenues for collaboration especially in the area of training and policy formulation for Cambodia.

Laos

The National University of Laos (NUOL) has reconstituted its committee on inclusive education keeping in mind the sustainability of the program. The CEO, ICEVI visited the program in February 2019 and had a discussion with the key persons of the Inclusive Education Resource Center and drew-up a plan of action for the rest of 2019.

A note on the higher education program development in Laos was sent to Yuki Nakamura, Asian Development with the Disabled Persons (ADDP) who shared the same with the Government and also attended the higher education coordinators meeting held in Vientiane in August 2019 and arranged a visit of the coordinators to meet with high ranking officials of the Government.

Documentary Video on Inclusive Education

A short documentary video on Inclusive Education was prepared during the period from 5 June to 5 July, 2019. This video has two parts - one is about Inclusive Education policy and other is about the Academic Affairs section. The videos were prepared with the aim to promote and give opportunities for people with disabilities to access higher education and to create awareness on inclusive education among teachers, people with disabilities, including students, staff and educational administrators.

Installation of Multi-Function Printer

A Multi – Function Printer was installed at the Resource Centre which is being used to provide services to students with visual impairment, faculties and teachers for producing teaching materials.

Training on using TN Editor for Lao Braille Production and Soft Skills

TETCHAN-NET (TN) is a training center where Japanese and computer courses are provided. During school vacation students in Vientiane are provided training on Japanese and computer courses. Mr. Tetsuo YOSHIDA, Director of the Center has developed Lao Braille scripts and is interested in working as an unpaid volunteer at NUoL, IERC Center. Training on using TN Editor for Lao Braille Production and Soft Skills was conducted on 25–26 September 2019. Around 45 teachers and staff attended the training. The training was aimed to upgrade technical knowledge of staff and teachers of NUoL who are involved in inclusive activities and in providing learning materials to assist teachers and IERC staff in preparing good learning materials. Understanding how to offer the right assistance for visual impaired students, train person to use the TN Editor Software and training on Orientation and Mobility was also covered.

Teaching and Learning Materials Production for VI Students

IERC is regularly involved in collecting learning materials from faculties and is converting them into soft copies in Braille and audio format. During 2019 the following materials were produced:

S.No.	Name of Materials	No. of Pages
1	International Law for Public Sector (Lao Version)	142
2	Listening Skill (English Version)	191
3	French Textbook	192
4	International Organization (Lao Version)	104
5	International Law for Private Sector (Lao Version)	132
6	Side by Side Students' book	167
7	Side by Side Works' book	142
8	Computer hand-out for training	300
9	Environmental Studies	199
10	English Language (2 subjects)	495
11	Environmental law	245
12	Pronunciation Year 1	100
Total		2,409

Establishment of Resource Center

IERC purchased some necessary equipment including a desktop computer, printer (DCP-T700W), microphone and 2 headphones to offer the Faculty of Education where it is in need for students with visual impairment.

Having the Higher Education Project on the university campus is a significant advantage as it provides a lot of visibility to the activities. The exposure of national and international visitors to the Inclusive Education Resource Centre has developed positive awareness about persons with visual impairment. There are more collaborative activities and one such collaboration is with the Lao-Australian initiative that has assisted the visually impaired graduates of the University to secure individual laptops for their study. The project will continue to make use of similar collaborative efforts for bringing synergy into the higher education project.

Myanmar

The year 2019 started with the release of the Text To Speech engine for the Burmese language developed by the colleagues in Myanmar and the Sao Mai Centre for the Blind in Vietnam. The MNAB used the software with visually impaired individuals and provided feedback to the development team. It also arranged the release of this software on 17 January 2019 which was attended by government officials, Representatives from the Nippon Foundation, ICEVI and the Overbrook school for the Blind. As mentioned by many individuals at the launch event, the TTS certainly is a major breakthrough in making education more accessible for persons with visual impairment in Myanmar.

Technology training

During the 2019 project year the Myanmar National Association of the Blind also documented good practices, particularly in the area of information and communication technology by securing successful employment for persons with visual impairment. The MNAB also worked with the higher education institutions and universities to assist more visually impaired students to gain admission to higher education.

University as the Nodal Agency for Higher Education

As the universities in Myanmar are already taking a proactive role in expanding higher education for persons with visual impairment, ICEVI deems it prudent to work with one of

the leading universities in Yangon to be the nodal centre for implementing the project. This will encourage other universities and higher education institutions in Myanmar to include more visually impaired students in their student enrolment. The MNAB, being an organisation of persons with visual impairment will be able to play a key role in motivating parents to admit their children with visual impairment to schools, thereby creating a demand for education.

The university-based higher education approach in Myanmar will be in place from 2020 and more details of this collaboration will be reported soon.

Mongolia

The Mongolian National Federation of the Blind (MNFB) is the partner of the ICEVI in the implementation of the higher education project in Mongolia. The MNFB has created the required network with the government and universities to initiate policies promoting inclusion of persons with visual impairments in higher education. The following are the key activities organised by the MNFB in 2019.

Workshop on reasonable accommodation



Workshops on the possibility to hire visually impaired persons and how to create reasonable accommodation for visually impaired employees at work places was conducted on June 21 and June 26 in Ulaanbaatar and MEG Insurance Company respectively. The

workshops were attended by 28 public officials from the department for development of persons with disabilities, hospitals, the department of health insurance (Ministry of Health) and human resource managers of hospitals, insurance companies, transportation services and banks.

Development of learning materials

During 2019, based on the student request MNFB produced books on history, social science, communication, self-development, music and university state exam materials in braille and DAISY format.

Employment opportunities

MNFB has been cooperating with the company Tumen Job since 2018 which hopes to hire 20 visually impaired persons as telemarketers. Follow-up work is underway for interviews as well as post-interview follow-up. MNFB also organized interaction of persons with visual impairment who are seeking jobs with potential employers which facilitated the selection of 15 persons for jobs during the first phase.

Capacity building activities for teachers



The MNFB organised a capacity building programme for teachers of higher education institutions and schools during the visit of Ms. Eriko Uchiyama from The Nippon Foundation and Dr Mani, CEO, ICEVI in August 2019. Forty-two (42) teachers from schools and universities

attended this event where the mathematics instructional videos were shared. The teachers evinced a lot of interest in preparing similar learning materials for other subjects in order to enable effective inclusion of visually impaired students in the mainstream education.

Mongolia is the latest addition to the TNF-ICEVI higher education project. The project partner MNFB is establishing relationships with other partners in the East Asia region in order to emulate good practises particularly in the area of STEM curriculum, employment, soft skill development, etc.

Long-term Impact of the TNF-ICEVI project

The higher education project has played its role in the empowerment of thousands of persons with visual impairment in the East Asia region and the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment is grateful to The Nippon Foundation for making this possible.

The low enrolment of persons with visual impairment world-wide is making the goal of “education for all” elusive. One of the important factors in low enrolment is the lack of visually impaired role models that parents and the community at large can look to for inspiration. The East Asia region has changed this scenario and it will continue to do so in the future.

The products of the TNF-ICEVI higher education projects have not only empowered themselves. Through their self-advocacy they are empowering others including peers with visual impairments, parents, educational authorities and employers.

“Youth Power” among the visually impaired in Southeast Asia is on the rise and leading toward a silent revolution that is every day turning the slogan “leave no one behind” into a new reality.

Partner Organisations



Krousar Thmey
Cambodia
www.krousar-thmey.org



Resources for the Blind, Inc., (RBI)
Philippines
www.blind.org.ph



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



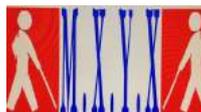
**Sao Mai Vocational & Assistive
Technology Center for the Blind**
Vietnam
www.saomaicenter.org



**Myanmar National Association
of the Blind (MNAB)**
Myanmar
www.mnab-myanmar.org



National University of Laos (NUOL)
Lao PDR
www.nuol.edu.la



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

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