

THE HIGHER EDUCATION NETWORK

Creating inclusive and welcoming university environments and open market employment opportunities for students with disabilities

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

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

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After two difficult years of 2020 and 2021 which were affected by the COVID-19, things bounced back to near normal working conditions from early 2022 which enabled the partners of higher education project to organise face-to-face activities. Though the COVID-19 had an impact on traditional employment opportunities, it opened up fresh avenues in the digital sector through which many persons with visual impairment secured jobs. The COVID-19 also provided plenty of opportunities for visually impaired individuals to improve their skills in using technology which the higher education project has been emphasising since its inception as a vehicle for their success in both education and employment sectors. In short, the Covid 19 brought some limitations and in some other cases the project partners took advantage of that to strengthen the usage of technology to the optimum extent.

Since the meeting of the higher education coordinators held in Laos in September 2019, no in-person meeting was possible and all the meetings were conducted only in the online mode. The year 2022 gave an opportunity for a face-to-face meeting of the coordinators that was held in Jakarta on 3 – 4 August 2022.

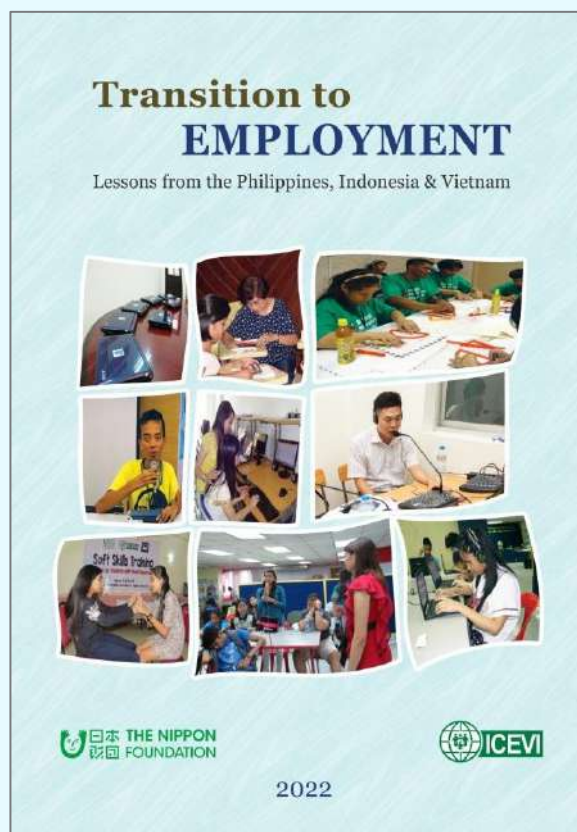
This report enumerates the overall activities conducted by the higher education project during the year 2022 followed by country specific reports.



Release of the Book on Employment

The higher Education project has been documenting good practises on employment for persons with visual impairment in Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia. The ICEVI and The Nippon Foundation proposed in late 2021 to bring out a publication entitled **Transition to Employment: Lessons from Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam.**

The publication, which was released on 3rd August 2022 highlights the key ingredients that should be in place to expand employment avenues for persons with visual impairments. A series of deliberations arranged with the project partners, visually impaired individuals, employers, etc., helped the publication team to focus on three areas namely STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) curriculum as a foundation for employment, soft skill development, accessible materials and influencing proactive policies for employment.



The book was released by Ms. Amanda Yulina Putri, Senior Expertise on Job Placement, Directorate of Domestic Job Placement, Ministry of Employment, representing the Government of Indonesia in the presence of Yousuke Ishikawa from the Nippon Foundation. This is the second publication in subsequent years released by the higher education project the first being the “Partnerships for Change” that was released at the virtual General Assembly of ICEVI in June 2021.

These publications are available for free download on the website of ICEVI <https://icevi.org/higher-education-programme-publications/>

Regional Youth Summit



A Regional Youth Summit on ***“Catalysing a Sustainable Future for People with Visual Disability”*** was jointly organised by The Nippon Foundation, ICEVI and the Resources for the Blind, Philippines in Manila on 3–4 December 2022 in conjunction with the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD).

The summit was attended by 30 participants, who are the former graduates of the higher education project and currently serving as employees in various organisations and industries. The participants were drawn from Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Mongolia.

The Summit covered the following broad presentations:

- Empowering Youth with Disabilities: National and International perspectives
- Overcoming barriers in education
- Technology for empowerment
- Factors contributing to successful employment
- How do we promote employment opportunities – Perspectives of employees and employers
- barriers – Programmatic, Physical, Attitudinal, Communication and Social
- How the countries may strengthen Youth Movement among persons with visual impairment
- How Youth Movement can be used as a vehicle to increase employment opportunities for persons with visual impairment

The presenters included officials from The Nippon Foundation, ICEVI, government departments, employers, voluntary organisations, parents, persons with visual impairment and human resource development personnel.

Besides formal presentations, there were panel discussions, thematic group deliberations, etc., that provided ample opportunities for the participants to interact and share experiences. The entire program was moderated by persons with visual impairment themselves.

Taking positive lessons from this Youth Summit, the higher education project will hold a Regional Youth Summit consisting of about 70–80 employees and graduates with visual impairment drawn from these member countries in December 2023 in conjunction with the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD).

The objective of the summit in 2023, which is fully supported by The Nippon Foundation, is to form a strong Youth Network in the East Asia region who will advocate for the employment and empowerment of persons with visual impairment in the region and beyond.



Regional Mathematics Workshop and future plans



A regional workshop on Mathematics was organised in Jakarta in November 2022 that was attended by 9 mathematics professionals from the respective countries who may take up the task of adaptation of mathematics learning materials and prepare instructional videos on teaching mathematics.

The trained professionals from the respective countries are expected to prepare teachers locally in 2023 to adapt mathematics textbooks for the effective inclusion of children with visual impairment. The training also focussed on how effectively the videos on mathematics concepts prepared



by ICEVI with the support of The Nippon Foundation can be used to popularise STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) related studies at the secondary level.

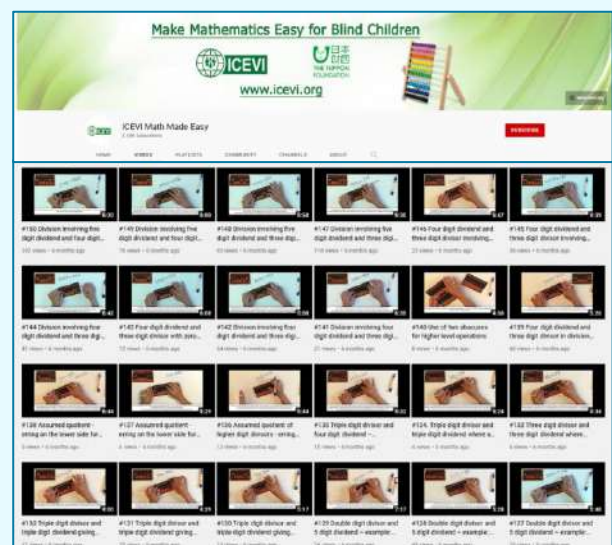
As a follow-up of the Math workshop, Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam resource persons will prepare video lessons for a number of selected mathematics concepts pertaining to primary, secondary and senior secondary levels in 2023. These materials will be prepared through national level workshops of these experts under the guidance of the project director, higher education and the country coordinators.



The videos prepared by the resource persons will be further edited by the project to ensure uniformity and VoiceOver will be provided wherever necessary. The finalised videos will be uploaded on the ICEVI Math Made Easy Youtube Channel for wider usage. Till 2022, the maths videos were basically prepared by the project director of higher education and his team at the ICEVI Secretariat. The videos of 2023 will be the contributions of mathematics professionals from Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia that will provide a variety to the resources of the YouTube channel.

Though the videos prepared by the country levels cover all ranges of schooling, some of the topics may have repetition that will also provide opportunities for the learners to know how two teachers approach the same topic in teaching mathematics to children with visual impairment.

At present the ICEVI YouTube channel has 475 instructional videos on teaching mathematics that cover a wide range of topics in mathematics including that of teaching abacus. Out of these videos 150 were prepared in 2022 as per the target of the higher education project. With the addition of at least 100–120 instructional videos by the project countries in 2023, ICEVI believes that the ICEVI Math Made Easy YouTube channel, which already has a subscription of nearly 3800, will become a key resource for teaching mathematics to visually impaired children worldwide.



Cumulative Data on Enrolment

The higher education project has so far assisted 2896 students with visual impairment to pursue higher education in the partner countries. In the year 2021–2022 alone, 130 fresh students commenced their higher education studies. The detailed enrolment data since the inception of the project in 2006 is given in the table below:

Country	2006 – 2007	2006 – 2011	2006 – 2014	2006 – 2015	2006 – 2016	2006 – 2017	2006 – Dec 2017	2006 – 2018	2006 – 2019	2006 – 2020	2006 – 2021	Additions in 2022	2006 – 2022
Indonesia	250	385	480	609	631	637	644	660	678	678	729	25	754
Vietnam	28	354	470	563	630	689	736	757	799	841	871	41	912
Philippines	32	460	489	671	710	726	732	751	769	793	828	22	850
Cambodia	04	14	22	52	83	91	91	105	127	135	157	39	196
Myanmar	-	-	29	54	69	88	88	114	114	122	122	-	122
Laos	-	-	07	16	19	25	25	33	33	33	36	-	36
Mongolia	-	-	-	-	-	-	08	14	16	20	23	3	26
Students Enrolled	314	1213	1497	1965	2142	2256	2324	2434	2536	2622	2766	130	2896

Cumulative Data on Employment

The recent years have seen the focus of the projects shifting towards soft skill development and employment creation for the graduates of the higher education programs. During the year 2021–2022, the higher education project partners, particularly those from Philippines, Indonesia and Cambodia, facilitated the employment for 49 additional graduates. The cumulative data on employment since 2016 is presented in the table below.

Country	2015 – 2016	2015 – 2017	2015 – Apr-Dec 2017	2015 – 2018	2015 – 2019	2015 – 2020	2015 – 2021	Additions in 2022	2015 – 2022
Indonesia	39	39	39	48	49	48	59	14	73
Vietnam	27	54	78	91	101	109	128	15	143
Philippines	13	25	36	54	71	83	94	15	109
Cambodia	38	74	76	90	94	95	110	-	110
Myanmar	-	-	10	11	11	11	11	-	11
Laos	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	3
Mongolia	-	-	-	2	-	-	7	5	12
Persons Employed	117	192	239	296	326	346	412	49	461

With the focus on employment gaining momentum, it is believed that the higher education project partners will gradually create more opportunities for persons with visual impairment to secure employment in the years ahead.

Country specific highlights

Though detailed country reports are provided in the later sections of this report, this part of the annual report provides a bird's-eye view of what has been achieved by the project partners in 2022. The projects across the implementing countries made effective use of technology. The support of the Nippon foundation to over 400 persons with visual impairment from the project countries to attend the Virtual World Blind Summit in June 2021 provided opportunities for the visually impaired individuals to learn more about their education, employment and empowerment which also resulted in initiatives to create networks among themselves. The shift towards the employment made all project partners to incorporate life skills as a part of the project activities thereby visually impaired individuals sharpened their communication skills, team building approaches, event management skills, etc.



Philippines established strong collaboration with organisations of persons with disabilities, parents and government departments in raising awareness about education and employment. This integrated approach resulted in the formation of special interest groups among the employers and visually impaired employees in furthering the cause of employment.

Vietnam focused more on accessible materials and software as well that enable visually impaired individuals to access materials for learning at ease. The support rendered by the team of Vietnam to other projects in promoting technology has also improved inter-country exchange of resources.



Indonesia came up with a series of publications covering the topics employment guidance, adaptation of mathematics concepts, soft skills development, etc., that motivated other project countries to emulate those good experiences.



Cambodia worked closely with the National Institute for Special Education (NISE) that helps the project to sensitise the government departments on many proactive measures that should be in place for empowering persons with visual impairment.

The creation of a separate faculty on Inclusive Education by the National University of **Laos** made the enrolment of visually impaired students in various faculties of the university feasible that also raised awareness among the faculty and students about the capabilities of persons with visual impairment.

The higher education project in **Mongolia** organised many programs for university personnel, government departments, employees, etc., and the impacts are evident from the fact that the enrolment rate as well as employment opportunities for persons with visual impairment are steadily growing in the country.



In summary, the higher education project partners have strived hard for excellence in the year 2022 that can be understood in detail by going through the country specific reports in the later part of this annual report. The year 2022 has been yet another productive year for the higher education project.



With the above summary of the project for the year 2022, the following sections present detailed reports of the country level activities.



COUNTRY REPORTS

VIETNAM

1. Produced 938 book titles in accessible formats and continue to join the Accessible Books Consortium/WIPO global books service for cross-border book exchange program.
2. Vietnam has ratified and joined the Marrakesh Treaty from November 2022. The higher education program has played one of a key roles to promote the ratification of the treaty together with other stakeholders such as Vietnam UNDP and Vietnam Blind Association.
3. Released the Sao Mai Braille software version 22.12, fully supported editing Math, speaking expressions out loud with screen reading software and converting into Braille in both Nemeth and UEB math codes.
4. Conducted a webinar for about 60 international participants to introduce the Sao Mai Braille translation software.
5. Partnered with the HCM General Science Library to exchange and distribute accessible books to its national library network, firstly in 24 provinces based in the South and central of Vietnam.
6. Conducted 5 online training workshops for 67 staffs at resource centers and university faculties to better provide support services for visually impaired students.
7. Conducted 6 online technology trainings for 62 students, focusing on knowledge and skills to effectively apply into studying.
8. Hosted 42 webinars about soft skills development. This online webinar program is implemented in collaboration with Uy Linh consultation center and the Van Lang University.
9. Conducted 48 job orientation training webinars relating to different job areas, including: tele sales/customer care service, online marketing, finance/accounting, opening and running online shop, language translation, software development and music production.
10. Successfully introduced and arranged job placement for 15 blind graduated students. There are 3 working at OneFix company as tele sales, 3 working at VN Digi Talk as content writing and advertisement campaign running, 5 working at Prudential Vietnam



as tele-customer care service, and 4 working at Anh Truc company as online marketing/web content management staffs. The project collaborated with these four employers to conduct job trainings for employees.

11. Hosted 3 job exhibit and orientation workshops for employers and blind employees, in partnership with the Nhat Hong Center for the Blind. The project had secured jobs for 4 blind graduates at Anh Truc Company through the event.
12. Published a free online commercial platform for 100 businesses of visually impaired people around the country at blindsupply.org.

13. Conducted two job trainings for 39 participants at the Vietnam Vocational Training and Rehab Center for the Blind in Hanoi. The first training was about web development essentials for visually impaired developers and the second one was about online marketing, content writing and public communication.



14. Collaborated with Vietnam UNDP to conduct a web accessibility training to promote public websites to make their contents accessible for all.
15. Collaborated with Vietnam Blind Association to host an annual national technology competition and workshop for visually impaired students in Hanoi, with 32 students selected to participate for the final round.
16. Producing a series of episodes named “Seeing by Eyes” on Sao Mai YouTube channel. This awareness raising program is to create 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/@smcenter>
17. 20 different articles were written and published by the Higher education project team to raise awareness and promote the ratification of Marrakesh Treaty. Covered topics were on accessibility, especially focusing on accessible information such as web content and books. These Vietnamese articles and presentations are also posted on Sao Mai’s blog at: <https://saomaicenter.org/vi/assistive-technology>
18. The book “Partnership for Change” is translated completely into Vietnamese. It’s expected to send to ICEVI in February 2023, and will be published on Sao Mai website after that.

INDONESIA

1. The higher education project conducted meetings with The Directorate of Domestic Job Placement of the Ministry of Employment.
2. Conducted focussed group discussions in cooperation with the Directorate of Domestic Job Placement of the Ministry of Employment.



3. Continued dialog with the Indonesian business association and started developing dialog with the Association of Young Business People.
4. Commenced network with the Association of City Government of Indonesia, which had the concern on developing inclusive job market in 98 cities of Indonesia.
5. Conducted second batch of virtual computer training as part of university preparation activity for students who came from out of Java Island where such training was not available.
6. Conducted Virtual computer training for students who are willing to continue studying in universities. The training included 14 trainees for the first semester and 12 trainees for the second semester.
7. Pertuni Edu Smart Talk is a “group counselling” for grade 12 and high school graduates who were willing to continue studying in universities. This program was conducted for 30 participants. The objective of the program was to provide students with broader information, knowledge and develop skills and insight into subjects that they may take in universities.
8. The project networked with the Ministry of Manpower of the Government that has the mandate on employment sector, private sector employers; and State employee body that is responsible for recruiting and managing civil servants. In the second quarter of 2022, there were progress related with employment for persons with disabilities, which

was effectively used by the higher education project to secure employment for persons with visual impairment.

9. The project conducted creative writing training for 10 participants, as part of “employment skill training for university students & university graduates”.
10. Activities related with orientation to employers in Indonesia had been one of the challenging areas and the experiences of employers such as Think.Web and the Indonesian Young Business Association will be shared with larger group of employers in the years ahead.
11. One day entrepreneurship training”, which was conducted on December 22nd that was attended by 21 participants and the topics included business idea and how to form / start a business; business incubation facility and how to join; soft skill to be nurtured and how to develop network and cooperation for sustainable and successful business.



12. The project also hosted the meeting of the higher education coordinators in August 2022 in conjunction with the release of the employment publication developed by ICEVI in collaboration with the project partners of Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam.
13. The project organised a regional mathematics workshop in November 2022 by inviting professionals from Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia who are expected to prepare mathematics video instructional materials in 2023.
14. The higher education project coordinator, by virtue of her being the chairperson of the ICEVI East Asia region initiated the conduct of a regional conference in 2023 where the work of ICEVI higher education project will have a strong presence.

PHILIPPINES

1. From December 22, 2021 to January 17, 2022, a training program was conducted in partnership with Amazing Grace Technical Training Institute, Inc., a TESDA accredited school. The training was entitled “Contact Center Services National Certificate II” which was participated by 19 adults with visual impairment who wish to enter employment with a BPO industry.

2. Comprehensive Review and Coaching to Aspiring Public School Teachers was conducted for 24 trainees and the training lasted for 160 hours which started on June 27, 2022 and culminated on September 24, 2022, a few weeks before the examination date on October 2, 2022. Out of the 24 reviewers from different parts of the country who signed up, 9 successfully passed with high ratings.



3. The project is privileged to conduct another batch for the Career Coaching on July 16, 2022, together with our partner BPO in Cebu City. There were at least 50 employees from the JP Morgan Chase & Co. who joined us and 14 job seekers with visual impairment participated in this Career Coaching. It was also an opportunity to give awareness to the JP Morgan employees to understand the issues related to employing persons with visual impairment and the importance of accommodating persons with disability in the workplace.



4. English Camp for College Students and Graduates with visual Impairment was conducted for 40 trainees on November 25–27, 2022. In our desire to further equip persons with



visual impairment so they become more competent as they seek for employment, we developed and facilitated other programs and one of these is the English Camp which was participated by students and higher education graduates with visual impairment. The training was divided into two batches. Each batch was given 120 hours to accomplish all the required assignments.

5. RBI, together with a local vocational Training Center, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) Catanduanes Chapter conducted a 5-day hybrid training entitled “Multi and Social Media Training using NVDA”. The first 2 days of the training



(September 29–30, 2022) was conducted online while the last 3 days (October 4–6, 2022) was conducted in a hybrid session. Participants consisted of 20 senior high school and college students as well as college graduates with visual impairment from different regions of the country. This training aimed to equip the participants with skills in audio and video editing using accessible editing software.

6. Soft Skills Training for Students and Graduates with Visual Impairment was organised for 17 trainees on October 7–9, 2022. The training geared towards helping the visually impaired participants to understand the different habit formation that contribute to the reshaping of their attitude.



7. Through the assistance of IHelp Coaching, the project conducted a Training of Trainers entitled “Speakers Bureau” on November 19 and 20, 2022. The eighteen (18) participants, who came from different regions of the country,



have been identified in our previous trainings as potential public speakers and trainers of RBI. The training was replicated in Davao City and Cebu City for the Mindanao and Visayan participants respectively. The trainer for this event was Mr. Abdulaziz Dapilin, a SPED teacher for the blind. Seventeen (17) participants took part in this training in Davao City held on December 10–11, 2022. The training in Cebu City was held on December 17-18, 2022 and was participated by 14 visually impaired adults.

8. Another highlight of this year’s Higher Education project was the Forum on Audio Description that was well attended by 70 representatives from academe, government and non-government organizations, partner business institutions and blind and visually

impaired individuals and parents. The forum that was conducted on December 1, 2022 was spearheaded by the RBI in partnership with the ICEVI, The Nippon Foundation, CBM Global Inclusion, Bookshare, DeafBlind Support Philippines, Philippine



Chamber of Massage Industry of Visually Impaired (PCMIVI) and Philippine Blind Union. The group created a name for this project and they named it as Project ADAM which stands for Audio Description Advocacy Movement. The Forum is part of a 5-year plan which includes the promotion of audio description in all movies, performances and any visual art presentations in the Philippines, proposal for a bill in congress on audio description, as well as support the implementation of audio description in the country.

9. **Network with Partner Agencies for the Employment of Blind and Visually Impaired:**

There is a saying that, “It takes a village to make a true transformation”. Indeed, we have a village of employers, skills platforms, government agencies and employed visually impaired during the Employment Summit held at the



Business Inn, Bacolod City on December 14 and 15, 2022. This was simultaneously accessed via Zoom Meeting. Participants in this event were college graduates who are blind or visually impaired from the nearby towns and cities who are looking for a job.

10. The project also posted a regional Youth Summit consisting of 30 visually impaired graduates and employees from Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Mongolia. This highly successful program will lead to the formation of youth movement in the respective countries. A larger regional Summit of youth with visual impairment will be held in Philippines in December 2023.



MONGOLIA

1. Under internship program of the project, 10 blind persons who have been involved in the employment skills program did intern in public institutions and private companies including Ministry of Culture, E-Mongolia Academia of the Ministry of Digital Development and Communication, General Department for the Development of Persons with Disabilities of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, Local department of Family, children and youth, General office of Archive, Call center of the Social Insurance Agency of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, and “Ard” Financial Company and Unitel/telephone operating company.
 
2. Under the orientation program for employers, workshops on the possibility to hire visually impaired person and how to create reasonable accommodation for visually impaired employees at work places was organised three times from 30 October to 15 November 2022. A total of 40 persons attended.
3. Website development highlighting sources about blindness and how to create an accessible job places with reasonable accommodation for the blind was initiated. Under this work, an expert team developed resources relating to employment opportunity of visually impaired persons, current situation of their work, how to create accessible work places with reasonable accommodation, list of assistive devices which blind persons use for their work places. The project hopes that the resources developed will be toolkits for employers to gain understanding on how to employ blind persons and create inclusive work places.
4. **Employment skills training for persons who are visually impaired:** Under this activity, a total of 6 visually impaired job seekers with age between 22 and 42, have been selected among 21 visually impaired persons. Based on the assessment, they have been receiving different trainings including computer, orientation and mobility as well as
 

some job preparedness training such as communication skills, team management, time management, how to prepare CVs and job interview, characteristics of highly productive employees, etc.

5. In addition to the employment skills training program, a training on possibility to work in mainstream job places and how to prepare to work was conducted on 20 May 2022 for visually impaired youth who have graduated from the vocational training center of the MNFB and who are studying in universities.

6. Meetings and round-table discussions took place 4 times between the MNFB leaders and representatives from the Ministry of Education and Science as well as the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection



including relevant ministers. Round-table discussions included topics such as allocating grant to publish braille text books, grants to implement provision of reasonable accommodations to visually impaired children, grant to create specific work places for blind persons such as call center under the MNFB, etc.

7. Under the Country Champions Program, MNFB conducted 2-days workshop for visually impaired youth on 14–15 December 2022 in the MPM event hall in Ulaanbaatar. The main theme was no one left behind and sub theme was “Are you ready for change”.



A total of 46 youth with blind and low vision with age between 17 and 36 participated. After the workshop, representatives from the participants formed a working group to make plan on activities needed to be carried out in 2023 and submitted the plan to the MNFB and Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labor and Social Protection.

8. **Workshop/Training on Teaching Mathematics:** During the school years 2021 and 2022, there were 22 children with visual impairment studying in mainstream schools. In 2022 and 2023 the number was 31. To strengthen the mainstreaming of these children in academic studies, a Workshop in Teaching Mathematics was conducted on 20 June 2022 in Ulaanbaatar. A total of 62 participants including representatives from the ministry of

education, department of education from the Ulaanbaatar government, teachers and parents of 14 visually impaired children attended the workshop.



9. A short video about blind persons who have successfully passed public service inference examination was prepared. The project shared the video through social medias including MNFB Facebook.

LAOS

1. **Learning Materials Production:** Braille materials were prepared for 3 faculties as per the details given below:

S. No.	Faculties	No. of Textbooks	Total Pages
1	Faculty of Letters	7	582
2	Faculty of Education	7	230
3	Faculty of Social Sciences	7	500
TOTAL PAGES		21	1,312

2. **Internship Activity:** Internship activity is one of the most important activities for students with visual impairment who just completed their studies at NUoL and they will be ready for job application. This activity was conducted in a 3-month period (1st September to 31st November 2022). In 2021–2022, there were 9 students with visual impairment who graduated from NUoL.



The internship institutes included Asian Development with the Disabled Persons (ADDP) and Association of Rural Mobilization and Improvement (ARMI).

3. Before internship activity began, the project organized one-day soft skills training for students with visual impairment. This soft skill training was aimed to help graduated

students to understand the social working skills of persons with disabilities (human interaction and communication skills in workplaces and use IT skills for job application.

4. A video titled '**Access to employment for the visually impaired person**' was prepared.
5. **Laptops for new students with visual impairment:** In the Academic Year 2022–2023, NUoL accepted two students with visual impairment to study in two faculties: The Faculty of Letters - Department of Mass Communication and the Faculty of Education - Department of History. Both of them are totally blind and they need assistive devices for their learning. The project loaned two laptops to them.
6. **Orientation Session:** An orientation activity was organized on 30 November 2022. This activity was necessary to introduce and disseminate activities of inclusive education at NUoL for non-blind first year students. Therefore, the project organized this activity and invited all non-blind first year students and teachers from two faculties to participate in as indicated in table below:

Faculties	Participants in Orientation Activity	
	Teachers	Students
Faculty of Education	10	100
Faculty of Letters	10	100
TOTAL	20	200

7. **Computer Training:** Computer Training is organized when new enrollment of students with visual impairment takes place. In the Academic Year 2022–2023, two newly enrolled students with visual impairment were trained from 5 to 9 December 2022. The training's objective was to help students with visual impairment to skillfully use their computer with keyboard shortcut key in order to cope with their learning materials.

CAMBODIA

1. In 2022, the project benefited 152 students with visual impairment. Support has been provided to those who are studying at universities, at vocational training, at work, and also those from secondary special school that tend to involve in higher education, vocational skill or job later.

2. **Soft skills training:** The training took place in March 2022, in Battambang province. The goal was to teach students how to stay positive, set their goals and plan accordingly. There were 23 students (7 girls) attending the training.



Those students were happy to participate and do group activities.

3. In 2022, several awareness-raising activities with various stakeholders across cities and provinces of Cambodia have been organised. One awareness-raising activity was conducted in Phnom Penh, directed towards inclusivity at university or higher education. Two former students presided the event and a total of 18 representatives (8 women) from 10 different universities and 1 Special School attended.



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4. Another awareness-raising activity with National Vocational Institute of Battambang (NVIB) was conducted in October 2022 with the involvement from 50 participants (36 women) including lecturers, staff and students of NVIB and other universities.



5. **Awareness activity with employers:** Three different awareness-raising meetings were organized with representatives of companies. The goal of the meetings was to show the potential of youth with disabilities on the job market and to build a network that could be useful for them to find opportunities. During the meetings, the project team presented the progress of their activities and a success story to show examples of a

youth who find a job and a company who accepted to hire them. Materials such as prints, leaflets and shirts, were also used in these meetings.



6. **Follow-up support and meeting with students and others:** As always, the project team organized several sessions of follow-up support and meetings with students at special school, at higher education, vocational places, and the ones already in employment. Through these activities, the project team could discuss with students about their study, prospective need for soft skill training, as well as about difficulties encountered in employment
7. A case study video was produced in 2022. The case showed the successful experience as well as the challenges of one student with visual impairment who used to receive soft skill training and other supports from Krousar Thmey. He is now in his second year of university and doing an internship in an NGO. This could be a good inspiring story for other youth in the same situation. The full video can be found here: <https://youtu.be/JIHxeXec-DA>
8. **Networking activities with relevant stakeholders:** This year, Academic and Career Counselling (ACC) officer involved in several meetings with National Employment Agency (NEA), Disability Action Council (DAC), and Welfare of Persons with Disabilities department (WPD) of Ministry of Social Affairs. The meetings/discussions generally focused on how to increase access to information regarding employment for youth with disabilities.
9. **National Forum on Inclusive Employment for People with Disabilities:** In December 2022, Krousar Thmey and the National Institute for Special Education (NISE) together with relevant stakeholders including representatives from the National Employment Agency, the Disability Action Council, the Welfare of Persons with disabilities Department and development partners, cooperated to organize one national forum on inclusive employment for people with disabilities. The forum aimed at giving opportunities to people with disabilities (visual impairment, intellectual disability, hearing impairment, physical impairment, etc.) and for the representatives of employers to share good practices with each other. Totally, there were 152 participants (79 women) at this event.

OPTIMISTIC WAY FORWARD

As is evident from the country reports and the overall progress of the higher education project, the project partners have been using every available opportunity to ensure that visually impaired students get the best learning experience in higher education institutions.

What was started as an ambitious initiative in 2006-2007 in Indonesia to enable access to visually impaired students for higher education avenues not only proved to be successful in Indonesia but in all project countries too of the higher education project. At present education of students with visual impairment in higher education institutes has become an acceptable and integral part of the mainstream system that was the hope in 2007 but a reality in 2023. The partner countries have put in place sustainable mechanisms for this initiative to expand further so that more and more visually impaired students will proceed to higher education in the years to come.

The higher education today has become a welcoming environment and fully recognises the learning capabilities of visually impaired students. All the partner countries have enabled reasonable accommodation processes that help visually impaired students to learn on par with their sighted counterparts.

2023 is the final year of the current project cycle of the ICEVI with The Nippon Foundation. ICEVI places on record its gratitude to The Nippon Foundation for its faith instilled in the ICEVI for carrying out this important initiative in higher education. The partner countries, with their hard work and commitment have demonstrated that higher education for visually impaired persons is possible in competitive areas such as mathematics, business management, technology, science, etc., too.

We believe that the partner countries will venture into the employment arena on a larger scale going forward to enable smooth transitions of the higher education graduates to become successful employees. It is our conviction that one day the nature of success achieved in higher education may be repeated in the employment sector too that will be the real epitome of empowerment for persons with visual impairment.

Partner Organisations



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