ICEVI Higher Education Network

Creating inclusive and welcoming university environments for students with disabilities



Annual Report

April - December 2017

With the support from

THE NIPPON FOUNDATION
JAPAN

Submitted by:

International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment

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The previous annual report of the Higher Education project of the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) was for the period 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017. In early 2017, the financial year of the project was changed to 1st January to 31st December and therefore, this report is for the period 1st April to 31st December 2017.

During this period, as enrolment numbers have continued to grow steadily in all participating countries we have begun to focus greater attention to preparing visually impaired graduates for employment through soft-skills development and mastery in technology. Partner organizations are striving to ensure long-term sustainability of the projects accomplishment by working with key stakeholders to improve university and public policies that are foundational to creating and maintaining inclusive communities.

Improved networking is another highlight of the project in 2017. The higher education project has worked more closely with the Overbrook-Nippon Network on Educational Technology (ON-NET) by organizing joint meetings of our project partners in order to exchange expertise, complement each-others efforts and assure the most economically efficient use of project resources. We have utilized the talents of visually impaired graduates to change public opinion through "Country Champions" programs that are creating pressure groups of visually impaired persons working together to influence change in policies and practices of mainstream organizations.

The Mathematics project, which was incorporated into the higher education initiative is progressing on schedule and sample videos of mathematics concepts have been prepared and assessed. The first set of videos will be made available in early 2019 and it is believed that this initiative is likely to make a considerable impact on the teaching of mathematics to visually impaired children worldwide. ICEVI is grateful to The Nippon Foundation for their continued support to these key initiatives.

This report presents the broad outcomes of the project in terms of: -technology training, -preparation of accessible materials, -enrolment in higher education, pre-employment and employment preparation and -improved mathematics instruction and is followed by country specific reports.

Overall Key Activities:

- Training in technology has been one of our key focus areas since the inception of the project. The partners were assisted in setting up model resource centres in satellite higher education institutions to enable visually impaired students enrolled to have access to the technologies needed to support their studies.

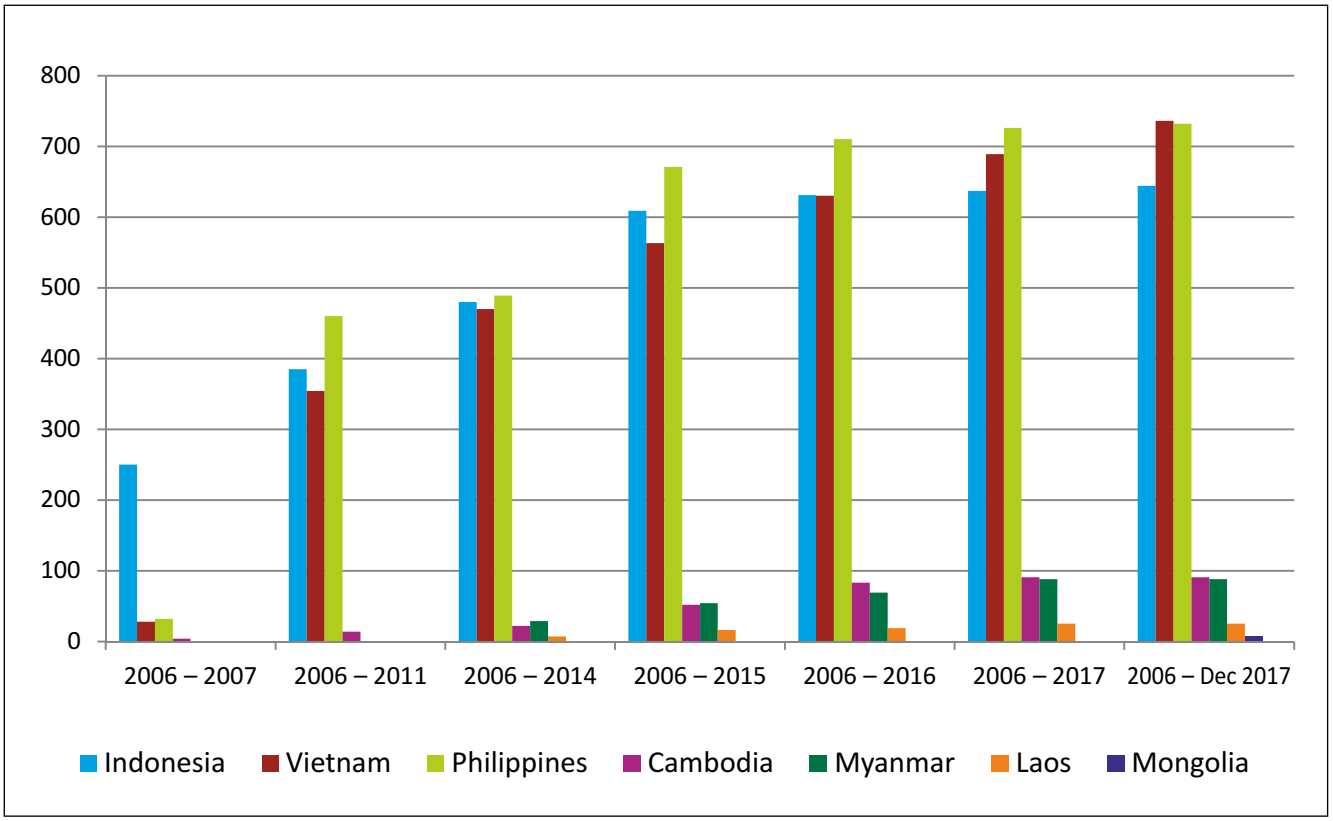
- Lending accessible laptops was also one of the features of the project and this is put into best use by developing the expertise of visually impaired students in information and communication technology.
- Our partners have organised computer training programs in Indonesia, Myanmar and Vietnam which benefitted 68 students with visual impairment during this reporting period.
- Training programs on the development of accessible learning materials were organised by the partners and the training included preparation of audio materials in DAISY format, preparation of braille books, low vision materials, NVDA, etc. Two such training activities were conducted during the project period, which benefitted 20 (Cambodia – 4, Vietnam – 16) participants.
- One of the factors contributing to the success of the higher education project is because our project partners used their resources and networks to prepare accessible braille materials, audio books, learning devices, etc., and in this context, a series of training activities were organised.
- Training activities were organised for university level faculty members, administrators to create awareness about education of persons with visual impairment which were attended by 281 persons in Indonesia, Myanmar and Philippines.



Enrolment

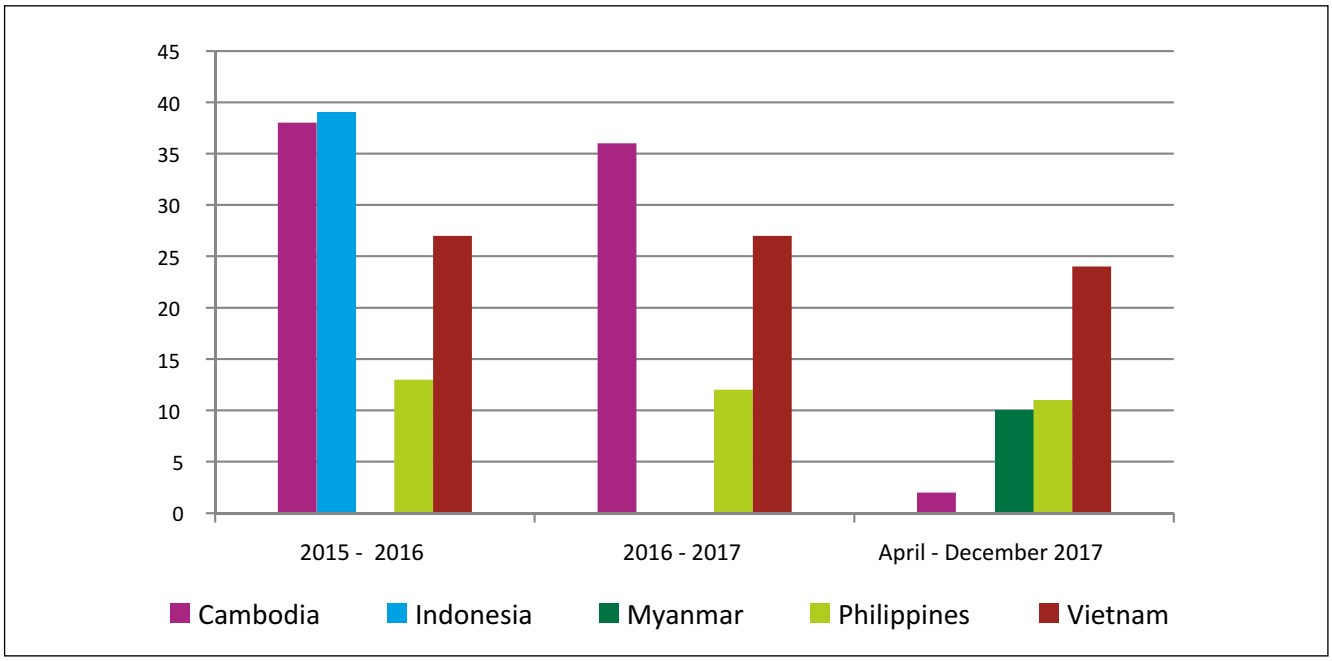
- The following table provides enrolment data on new and cumulative numbers of student beneficiaries in the higher education institutions. Sixty-eight additional students were enrolled during the project during the period 1st April to 31st December. Full enrolment data of the academic year 2017-18 will be reflected in the Annual Report of 2018.

Country	2006-07	2006-11	2006-14	2006-15	2006-16	2006-17	April-Dec 2017	2006-Dec 2017
Indonesia	250	385	480	609	631	637	7	644
Vietnam	28	354	470	563	630	689	47	736
Philippines	32	460	489	671	710	726	6	732
Cambodia	4	14	22	52	83	91	0	91
Myanmar	0	0	29	54	69	88	0	88
Laos	0	0	7	16	19	25	0	25
Mongolia	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	8
Students enrolled	**314**	**1213**	**1497**	**1965**	**2142**	**2256**	**68**	**2324**



- **Employment** has been a growing thrust of our project work since 2015. The project has been focusing on the creation of employment avenues in addition to facilitating higher education opportunities. During this reporting period a total of 47 persons were assisted in securing successful employment in the private and public sectors as outlined in the table below:

Country	2015-16	2016-17	April-December 2017	Total Since 2015
Cambodia	38	36	2	76
Indonesia	39	0	0	39
Myanmar	0	0	10	10
Philippines	13	12	11	36
Vietnam	27	27	24	78
TOTAL	**117**	**75**	**47**	**239**



- Besides conducting soft-skill training activities, the project has been working with Government mechanisms and employers to create awareness about employment of persons with visual impairment.
- Soft Skills training constituted an integral part of the employment creation initiatives. The projects organised several soft skills training activities which were participated in by 59 students with visual impairment.
- Apart from meeting with University students, the project partners also organised several individual and group counselling activities with visually impaired persons

that enabled them to choose the correct academic streams for their higher education studies.

The above summary provides a snapshot of the higher education activities being implemented by our project partners. However, it is the demonstrated capabilities of blind students on university campuses and in the open-market work-place that is having the greatest impact in changing attitudes of the community. Visually impaired graduates continue to emerge as positive role models not only for persons with visual impairment but for the sighted youth as well.

COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

In addition to the above key activities covering all countries, following are the specific activities organised by the countries implementing the higher education project.

CAMBODIA

1. Meeting with University students

- On 2nd of May 2017, the Krousar Thmey conducted a group meeting with 13 high school students from Phnom Penh Thmey Special School (PPT). The meeting was to share information about the available vocational training opportunities in Siem Reap and scholarship facilities.
- On 10th of May 2017, the Krousar Thmey welcomed the visit of ICEVI president, Dr. Frances Gentle, at PPT School for the Deaf and Blind. There were 9 university students from different universities in Phnom Penh who participated in the discussion meeting.
- From 19th to 22nd of May 2017, the Academic and Career Counselling (ACC) team of Krousar Thmey conducted Needs Assessment training for 13 students from Kampong Cham and 5 from Battambang.

2. Distribution of Learning Materials

- During the reporting period, the Krousar Thmey distributed 11 computers to visually impaired students who passed high school final examination this year and commenced their first year of study in higher education institutions.
- 7 computers were procured using the project budget and another 4 computers were bought with the funds provided by the UNICEF and Lycée Français of Singapore.

3. Collaboration with Universities

- **University visit**

  During the reporting period, the ACC team of Krousar Thmey visited Universities in Siem Reap and Battambang to discuss scholarships for blind students in the next academic year. The visit was also to follow up about the studies of blind students studying in those regions. These orientation meetings are expected to increase the enrolment of visually impaired students in higher education institutions in the years to come.

- **University exhibition**

  In December 2017, a two day exhibition was held at Vanda Institute in Siem Reap province. The first half-day was dedicated to presenting information on education of visually impaired students, distributing leaflets and sharing success stories. Krousar Thmey's Advocacy Officer, accompanied by students with visual impairment, set up stands to display learning materials and other awareness tools and answered questions from participants. A total of around 100 people attended the workshop on the first day and around 200 people visited the exhibition.

- **Setting up of Resources Center**

  After the visit to Myanmar in January 2017, the Krousar Thmey started the resource center project in UBB University in Battambang. With the co-funding from UNICEF and Lycée Français of Singapore, the resource center was successfully commissioned in mid of July 2017. Two studio rooms were setup in the resource room to record audio books. Four more computers and two scanners were also installed for blind students to listen to audio books, search internet and scan documents. As agreed with the Rector of the university, the resource center will be managed and run by the university with technical support from the Krousar Thmey.

4. Former student's testimony

- In mid-July 2017, Mr. Sarith, the former blind student of Krousar Thmey, who owns a Radio station in Svay Rieng visited Kampong Cham and Battambang Schools for Deaf and Blind to share his experiences related to job finding and how to overcome obstacles while studying in higher education institutions. Eleven blind students from Kampong Cham and seven students from Battambang attended the meeting.

5. Capacity building for blind/low vision students

- **Self-Awareness and goal setting workshop**
  The workshop was organized by Mr. KONG Vichetra, the local trainer who has a lot of experience working with disabled persons. It was held in April 2017 at Kampong Cham School for the Blind and Deaf. 35 High School students participated in the workshop. The main objective of the workshop was to facilitate students to formulate effective plans to achieve their goals in life

- **University orientation workshop**
  In December 2017, university orientation workshop was held at Kampong Cham School for Blind and Deaf. The workshop was organized for 8 students with visual impairment who newly passed high school final examination and were starting their first year of study at the university. The aim of the workshop was to share information about university and what students should achieve during their 4 years of study.

INDONESIA

1. Meeting with Pamulang University

Since September 2017, the Pamulang University, a private university which is located near Jakarta has been accepting blind students to study in the computer technology department. It happened after the Pertuni (Indonesian Association of the Blind) and its partners conducted a meeting with the authorities of the university followed by the visit of the ICT team of Pamulang University to Mitra Netra office to see how blind students learn basic computer programming and how a blind person trains his peers. Pertuni signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the University with an objective to provide assistance to make it more inclusive.

2. Establishment of Disability Service Center at the Pamulang University

A Disability Service Center was established at Pamulang University and the Rector of the University has assigned a person from the university secretariat to manage the center. The Pertuni team also provided training for the University staff on how to operate assistive technology devices. The launching of the disability service center was arranged on 27th November 2017 in conjunction with a half day seminar about entrepreneurship for university students. Mr. M. Hasan, Chair of Pertuni's Advisory Board launched the disability service center and delivered the inaugural address.

3. Visit to Hindu Dharma State Institute in Bali

On 12th December 2017, Pertuni's Higher Education Project Coordinator visited the Hindu Dharma State Institute in Bali and met with the First and Second Vice-Rectors. The outcomes of the meeting were as follows:

1. Hindu Dharma State Institute agreed to collaborate with the Pertuni to create inclusive learning environment for persons with disabilities at the Institute.
2. MOU would be signed in 2018 along with the training on the usage of e-books for the blind persons in Bali;
3. Pertuni would assist the Institute to establish disability service center as well as the conduct of sensitizing event on inclusive higher education;
4. Pertuni would provide the Institute with human resources, which would be able to inspire the lecturers as well as the students on how blind people are performing well in their higher education studies.

4. Prepared 2 University Blind Students to participate in WBU-AP Leadership Training

In mid-December 2017, The World Blind Union Asia Pacific Region (WBU-AP) conducted leadership training for members of the National Blind Association who are the members of WBU-AP. Pertuni sent two university blind students for this program which had the following objectives.

- To provide the students with experience in participating in regional level training events;
- To introduce the World Blind Union to the students, as a global and regional blind organization that plays an important role in doing advocacy for blind people around the world;
- To introduce to the students on particular trends in the disability sector;
- To develop the students' sense of leadership;
- To convince the students the importance of leadership regeneration so that they could prepare themselves to become future leaders of Pertuni;
- To teach them how to develop network regionally as well as globally.

As the higher education project of the TNF-ICEVI also conducts country champion program for visually impaired students, this linkage with the World Blind Union provided wider visibility to the project and also helped visually impaired graduates in showcasing their abilities among the leaders of the blindness sector in the Asia Pacific region.

5. Award to Pamulang University

Pertuni presented an award of recognition to the Pamulang University on the opening ceremony of Pertuni's national workshop which was funded by Disability Right Fund (DRF). This award was presented by Mr. Sjafrie Sjamsuddin – a retired Army General who is also a member of Pertuni's advisory board. Mr. Sjamsuddin is one of key public figures in Indonesia who has huge concerns for the empowerment of people with visual impairment in Indonesia. Officials from the Ministry of Human Resources & Culture were also present at the Award ceremony.

6. Math Project in Indonesia

The Pertuni has commenced a project to promote mathematics education for blind students in Indonesia with the support of ICEVI, ON-NET and University departments in Indonesia. A planning meeting of representatives of these organisations was held in December 2017 where it was resolved to develop Braille transcription software and techniques to prepare Mathematics books for visually impaired students. The progress of the project will be reported in mid- 2018 and the outcomes are expected to encourage blind students at the school level to pursue math related courses.

LAOS

The National University of Laos (NUOL) is the higher education project partner in Laos. The partnership of this leading University with ICEVI has enabled most of the higher education institutes in the country to know about the objective of the project that is to admit qualified visually impaired students for higher education courses. The enrolment is steadily increasing and more Faculties are demonstrating interest in the project.

1. Seminar, Trainings and Study Tour

- The project team presented the National Report on the situation of persons with visual impairment in Laos at the ASEAN Community Blind Forum 2017.
- The Christian Foundation for the Blind in Thailand (CFBT) which is also providing technical support to the NUOL higher education project at the request of ICEVI organised training to the faculty of the resource centre of the university and teachers in using Nemeth Mathematical Code. It also assisted the NUOL in conducting Orientation and Mobility training.
- The faculty attended a workshop on the disability/DPOs movement organized by Handicapped International of Laos.

2. Coordination and Collaboration

- The project staff assisted the NOUL in designing curriculum for teaching Computer related courses to students with visual impairment.
- The Inclusive education resource centre of the NUOL coordinated with the Lao-Australian Institute for financial support to the visually impaired students studying at the University. Volunteers from Australia are helping visually impaired students enrolled at the University to learn English language.



- The team coordinated with a German donor to receive one Brailler to be used at the NUOL. These collaborations not only help the higher education project but also create awareness among other donors the opportunities to help visually impaired students in Laos to pursue higher education.
- The faculty facilitated monthly meetings with the visually impaired students to discuss the challenges they face at the NUOL and strategies on how to overcome them.
- The team is coordinating with the CFBT to train visually impaired students in the area of radio broadcasting which has potential to create job opportunities for them.

3. Providing Technical Support on Assistive Technology

- Initiated a WhatsApp group for teachers and visually impaired students studying at the University.
- Facilitated Braille book and Daisy books production services at the Resource Centre.

Going forward, the Inclusive Education Resource Centre, which is functioning as a part of the TNF-ICEVI project will organise orientation programs for all faculties with the aim of widening course options for visually impaired students in higher education. The NUOL is also exploring the possibilities of collaborating with the ON-NET to improve technology skills of students in school levels.

MONGOLIA

In 2017, a total of 8 visually impaired students got enrolled in higher education courses and the Mongolian National Federation of the Blind (MNFB) conducted the following programs to strengthen their studies and also to create inclusive environments at the higher education institutions.

- The MNFB conducted a computer and social skills training for 9 high school graduates and students who are currently studying at universities. Tests were conducted before as well as after the training with the purpose of studying the effectiveness of the training and the areas of the survey included the following:

    1. assessment of the individual's interpersonal communication skills
    2. assessment of necessary study skills

- A meeting with the administration of Universities where the 8 visually impaired students are enrolled was organized on 5th September 2017 in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. During the meeting, the activities of the project were introduced and discussion made about current learning conditions of visually impaired students and the accessible environment for them.

- The MNFB organized a program at the University of Science and Technology on 11th July 2017 on the topic "Improving the education environment of visually impaired students". Over 50 people who participated in the training were actively engaged in the proceedings.

- A training event was organized by MNFB at the University of Culture and Arts on 10th November 2017 with participation of over 40 teachers and sighted students. Training was also organised at the Ulaanbaatar University on 14th November 2017 with a participation of over 60 teachers and students. A team consisting of 4 visually impaired youth who are currently studying or had recently graduated from University along with two MNFB staff is providing these orientation programs to the University faculty and students to increase their awareness about the learning abilities of visually impaired persons.

- Brochures were prepared and disseminated for creating accessible education environment for visually impaired students. The contents of the brochure included the things to be aware of when communicating with blind students, how to give information in an accessible way, the importance of mobility and orientation, the need to provide blind students with lessons and learning materials ahead of time

when power point presentations are to be used, providing accessible textbooks and audio books, etc.

- The project established a Learning Resource Centre at the Mongolian National Federation of the Blind. The Centre is equipped with computers, scanners and other assistive devices which can be used by visually impaired students to improve their academic and technology skills.

- The MNFB has also established the Student Support Center at the MNFB campus. Although students come to the center, they don't come on a regular basis since the center is far from their schools. Therefore, MNFB is discussing with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science to move the center into the University of Education. The Ministry is supportive and has agreed to provide a place in 2018. The Centre is staffed with one full time worker, who assists in using of equipment, formatting assignments, etc.

Mongolia is the latest addition to the countries implementing the TNF-ICEVI higher education project and the progress is steady and more activities have been planned for 2018 and also during the rest of the Quadrennium.

MYANMAR

Development of the Text-To-Speech (TTS) Engine in collaboration with the Sao Mai Centre is progressing well and it is expected to be launched in 2018. This TTS represents a major contribution to the blind persons of Myanmar from their fellow blind colleagues in Vietnam. ON-NET and ICEVI are jointly supporting this initiative. In addition to this key activity, other programs related to the project are enumerated as follows:

1. The Western University librarian handles the resource centre to support visually impaired students. Volunteers from the University are helping the centre to prepare learning materials in Burmese. The Dagon University has assigned two staff from its faculty to take care of the Resource centre to support visually impaired students.

2. **Conducting awareness and Braille training at Dagon resource room:** This training was provided by Ms. Eunice Mukome, volunteer of MNAB. 35 participants including resource room staff, lecturers and interested students attended the 5 days training. After this training, blind students experienced help coming from sighted classmates and lecturers in preparing class notes and learning materials.

3. **NVDA Module translation:** The MNAB ICT team has translated the NVDA module into Burmese language and this module includes five chapters covering User guide, Release Changes, Interface, Microsoft word with NVDA, and Microsoft Excel with NVDA.

4. **Sample video clip of mathematic instruction:** A short video clip was produced on teaching mathematics demonstrated by a teacher at Kyimyindaing government blind school instructing primary level students. The Math project of the TNF-ICEVI is exploring the possibilities to include teachers from the higher education partner countries in production of the math instruction videos and the Myanmar contribution will be assessed for future participation in the math project.

5. **Video documenting of collaborating with universities:** A documentary on the higher education activities of visually impaired students in the Universities including interviews with staff and students was prepared. This video documentary is being used for advocacy training being organised by the MNAB.

The MNAB activities in 2017 could not be implemented in full as there were problems making direct transfer of funds to the project. The MNAB and ICEVI are working at their respective levels to sort out this challenge.

PHILIPPINES

At present the higher education project implemented by the Resources for the Blind is serving 165 students of whom 6 were newly admitted during the year. 15 graduates also secured successful employment in the reporting period. The key activities implemented during the year are enumerated as follows:

a. **Training on Inclusive Education and STEM Practices:** For 2017 the RBI focused their orientation for Colleges and Universities in the Visayas region and organised activities in 10 colleges benefitting 67 faculty participants. One of the former students of the project Mr. Mr. Knuehlvirn Hautea encouraged and challenged the participants in his keynote speech, "*What makes us disabled is not our disability. It is the people around us." The* RBI invited Dr. Carlo Ben Lozande, a partner ophthalmologist in the region to discuss and shed some light on what visual impairment is in the medical context in relation to education. In addition to these deliberations, the program also focused on accessing the STEM curriculum with Mr. Ryan Operario as the speaker whose low vision did not hinder him from becoming a professional and a STEM trainer.

b. **Country Champions Program:** The ICEVI did a strategy review of the organization in February 2017 and one of the goals for the quadrennium is to organize country champions programs involving persons with visual impairment to talk about the rights and also create a demand for education. The first program of this kind was organized in the Philippines with the initiative of the Resources for the Blind which is one of the partner organisations of the ICEVI implementing higher education program. The two day program was conducted on 9th - 10th June 2017 in Manila. The program started with Doxology and introduction of participants which was followed by a welcome by Amy Mojica, the Executive Director of the Resources for the Blind. Marlo Lucas, the coordinator of this program gave a thorough overview of the 2 days country champions program and he also thanked the ICEVI and the Nippon Foundation for supporting the first program to happen in the Philippines.





c. **Awareness Forum on WIPO Treaty:** The Marrakesh Treaty Forum was conducted at the Golden Prince Hotel, Cebu City on 27th September 2017. There were 68 teachers, administrators of public schools, NGOs, government agencies and other stakeholders who participated in the forum.

d. The RBI also partnered with the National Library of the Philippines and the Polytechnic University of the Philippines to provide training and orientation to their staff on using Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY) program. The training also included basic tips on interacting with students/persons with visual impairment. The training was conducted in Polytechnic University of the Philippines and also in some regions around the country. In this training, 160 librarians and key persons from various colleges and universities were given orientation.

e. **Soft Skills Training for students who have Visual Impairment:** RBI conducted soft skills training to two batches of higher education students and new graduates. The first batch of 20 students was in Ilo-ilo City and training was held on 26th - 28th October 2017. The second batch was scheduled in Manila on 18th – 20th December 2017 with 19 participants. Overall, the training benefitted a total of 39 students and newly

graduates who attended the soft skills training. The activity was designed to be a 3-day intensive training focusing on building the students' soft skills like self-confidence, assertive communication, social skills, goal setting and professionalism. RBI graduates served as the resource speakers of the 3-day event.

f. **Mentoring program for students interested in pursuing STEM higher education courses:** In the third and last quarters of 2017, the Mentoring Program for visually impaired students who will be pursuing STEM programs was organised in the Mindanao region which benefitted 7 students from 3 different schools. The program included face-to-face tutorial and phone counselling. In addition, their Math teachers also received mentoring assistance and most of them were able to attend the STEM Training for receiving Math teachers under ONNET project held on 19th-21st October 2017in Davao City. The Mentoring Program did not just provide remedial classes and motivation for students to seriously pursue STEM in college, but also promoted collaboration and partnership among special education teachers.

g. Production of braille and audio books continue to form a key component of the project and over 190 titles were produced in accessible formats for the benefit of visually impaired children during the project period.

h. Employment promotion became an integral part of the higher education project in Philippines and in this context employers and visually impaired graduates are brought together for orientation and also for showcasing the job skills of visually impaired persons.

The East Asia regional conference of ICEVI will be held in Manila in October 2018 which will be used as an opportunity to highlight the achievements of the TNF-ICEVI higher education project not only in the Philippines but in the entire East Asia region.

VIETNAM

Below are the activities that the higher education project in Vietnam carried out during the reporting period 1st April to 31st December 2017.

- The project conducted two materials production trainings for 16 volunteers to help the Saomai Centre to produce accessible books. In the process, the project prepared 597 accessible book titles and handouts for the blind students.
- Upgraded library to be compatible and more responsive on Mobile platforms.

- Provided 12 tablets installed with accessible apps to be used in accessing accessible materials, taking notes and transportation.
- The laptop loaning program for students in the central areas continues in collaboration with Danang and Hue branches of the Vietnam Blind Association (VBA).
- Conducted four computer trainings for new students; two in HCM (July and August) and two at the VBA training center (June and August), focusing on internet browsing, Word, PowerPoint and Excel skills. Total participants of four trainings were 38.
- Conducted one-day training for 3 faculty staff of the RMIT university on how to produce accessible materials.
- Opened one-week training on soft skills for 9 visually impaired students at Sao Mai in December 2017.
- Collaborated with the HCM General Science Library to host a dialogue with students with disabilities to talk about the impact of technology and closing the gap through technology.

Focus on employment:

Twenty- four (24) graduates were assisted to gain employment opportunities of whom 7 dropped due to personal and job related reasons. 4 new employers, viz., Cathay Insurance, My Hao Mineral Water, Vinaphone and Daiichi Life Insurance opened job avenues for persons with visual impairment. The following activities were organised by the project to promote job opportunities for visually impaired graduates:

- Finished the installation of a job training site at Hanoi Vocational and Rehabilitation Training Center for the Blind.
- Opened two-day online marketing training with Facebook for 10 participants at Sao Mai on the 24th and 25th June 2017.
- Opened the job training course at the Hanoi Center for the blind from June to August 2017 for 15 participants coming from Hanoi and some nearby provinces.
- On 26th October 2017, Hanoi Rehabilitation Training Center hosted the first job placement event for 12 graduates to meet with three recruiters. We had a total of seven job applications accepted by two employers and three of them are working full-time in the field of computer parts sales and four working part-time as hotel reservation staff via internet and phone calls.

- On the 24th November 2017, the organisation hosted job placement event in HCM for seven blind people who graduated from our job training courses in early this year and last year. We had three job candidates employed to work at the Vina Phone Company as the customer care staff.
- In addition, over the past six months, three additional job candidates referred by Sao Mai were accepted to work at the My Hao Mineral Water company as sales staff and at FTP Telecommunication Company as software developers.
- One of the employers providing strong support for our job opportunity promotion program for the blind is Mr. Lien, the CEO of Vina Cacao Company based in HCM. He has been working with his partners with the hope to open this type of job training to more blind people based in other big cities including Can Tho, Nha Trang and Hai Phong. Sao Mai is working closely with him to provide consultation for his proposal. According to Mr. Lien, there have been two companies that have shown interest in this project but haven't yet come to a final agreement.



Voice of Students

Hundreds of students provide testimony to the effect of higher education program every year and the project partners are documenting them. Some of the testimonials were published in the annual reports of previous years and also some video presentations posted on ICEVI website www.icevi.org Following are some additional testimonials from the beneficiaries of the project.



Nov Sokneang
Provincial Office of Culture and Fine Arts, Cambodia

"Basically, my work is not so difficult. I encountered a few problems but I can always solve them"

*"Greetings! My name is **NOV Sokneang** and I am 24 years old. I am currently working at the Provincial Office of Culture and Fine Arts of Kampong Chambodia. I am an administrative and human resources officer. I have been working here for one year. I am satisfied with my work because arts and culture is my favourite working field. Basically, my work is not so difficult. I encountered a few problems but I can always solve them. When I face problems, my senior colleagues, deputy and head of department give me some advice, telling about the problems that they used to have. They share their experience in order to make our work better. For instance, when I submit request forms containing inadequate details, I can ask support from my colleagues in order to be sure that I make the right decision. The main factor that led me to success was the education I received at Krousar Thmey from primary school to high school until I took exam to enter the Provincial Office of Culture and Fine Arts in 2015."*

Before, Krousar Thmey supported me, but now I can care about myself, earning my own money. Generally speaking, all employers do not discriminate against people with disabilities. If we have good knowledge, we can work as well as the others [sighted]. Please take the chance to hire disabled people! I would like to send the message to all friends, people with disabilities and persons with low vision.

"Please do not feel hopeless, try to study hard as you have the ability to do it"

Ochirrenchin Chuluundolgor
Mongolia

Ochirrenchin Chuluundolgor was born on 26th February 1998. He became visually impaired because of illness. Although he first went to ordinary school for one year, his sight started deteriorating and therefore transferred to special school for blind children where he received his full secondary education. Now he has joined Journalism at the School of Radio, Television and Media Arts of the University of Culture and Arts.

He says: *"Hello I, Ochirrenchin, and my classmates are happy to have been involved in the Student Project that is being implemented this year. The project has been very beneficial for our studies and in many other ways. We are using computers and other items which we were granted through the higher education project in our studies and I am able to study alongside our peer students. We would like to express our sincere thanks to you."*



Misbahun Arifin
Indonesia

His name is **Misbahul Arifin,** usually called Misbah. He is now studying in the fifth semester of special education in UNS University - in Solo, Center Java. Misbah is a young blind person who had protective parents. On the first day of our pre-employment soft skill training in Surabaya, he was very quiet. If trainers asked him to talk, he just answered with very short sentences and according to the facilitator, he was a serious learner. He showed it during the group discussions, group assignments, as well as individual assignments. Uptill the second day of the training, facilitator needed to encourage him more to talk. Surprisingly, on the third day, he started asking or answering questions, or giving comments. On the last day, especially during communication session, he demonstrated maximum changes, especially in his verbal communication. On self-presentation session, again, he showed his verbal communication capacity which changed during the four day training. Considering the changes he made, the facilitator's team finally selected Misbah as the best male trainee.

"I was very delightful when I was selected to participate in this training. I never thought before that there was such training for blind persons. It's surprising to me very much that I am selected as the best male trainee. But I realize that I still need to learn a lot about soft skills. This is only a beginning for me. I really want to be a teacher for blind students, therefore I would develop my communication skill furthermore", Misbah stated this when he accepted the award during the closing session on the training.

Ma. Bless Adriano
Philippines

Independence and Technology

One of the most common problems experienced by individuals like me who were sighted before is how we will adapt to a new system of writing or reading. We not only have to train our remaining senses with the orientation and mobility, but also learn how to use the slate and stylus. But even if you are able to read and write with the braille system, it was difficult to cope and go along in a classroom filled with sighted classmates and teachers. But of course, our disability should not be a reason to be understood and excused. As much as possible, we must prove that our visual limitation is not a hindrance to learn or even to become top of the class.

Thank God that we are already in the world of technology and gadgets like laptops or recorders give us the ability to create our own outputs, take down the necessary notes, and review our lessons thus getting high scores in examinations and even create our own PowerPoint presentation during class reporting. But another problem is that not all of us can afford to purchase such kinds of assistive technology which was supposed to aid our limitations.

That's why we felt so blessed when we knew that all of these expensive gadgets were within our reach through the help of the Resources for the Blind and ICEVI. All we have to do is to maximize the functions of these gadgets and do the best that we can.

I pray and hope that God will continuously bless these organizations so that they will be able to extend their hands more to students like me in reaching our dreams through education.

TNF-ICEVI Mathematics Project

The Math component of the higher education project hopes to unlock the often hidden potentials of blind learners by building upon existing resources and developing a comprehensive package of training modules that will assist classroom teachers in learning how to create appropriate instructional adaptations that will make the learning of mathematical concepts easier and more enjoyable for blind learners, as well as their sighted classmates.

The project is headed by Dr. M.N.G. Mani, CEO ICEVI and Co-Project Director of the Higher Education project. The ON-NET program which is also supported by The Nippon Foundation is very active in soliciting the support of countries in the East Asia region to field test the Math video learning materials for necessary feedback.

Forty (40) sample videos have been prepared on the following topics and field tested in South Africa in March 2018.

1. Frequency tables
2. Central tendencies
3. Expanded form
4. Commutative property
5. Addition of Integers - Opposite signs
6. Comparing fractions
7. Law of Indices - Multiplication of exponents
8. Prime and Composite numbers – Concepts
9. Prime and Composite numbers - Hands on Experience
10. Algebra – solving (a+b) x (a+b)
11. Algebra – solving (a+b+c) x (a+b+c)
12. Angle formed on a semicircle is 90 degrees
13. Centroid
14. Circumcenter
15. Exterior angle of a quadrilateral inscribed in a circle is equivalent to the opposite angle
16. Four angles of a quadrilateral = 360 degrees
17. Functions – Characteristics

18. Incentre
19. Inequality and properties
20. Orthocenter
21. Pythagoras theorem
22. Rectangular pathways
23. Set algebra – Union
24. Set algebra – Intersection
25. Three angles of a triangle = 180 degrees
26. Types of matrices
27. Parallel lines
28. Perpendicular lines
29. Multiplication of polynomials
30. Skew Lines

ICEVI is convinced that visually impaired learners have no problem understanding complicated abstract concepts, when presented effectively. Visually impaired learners are also able to listen to the audio descriptions of the videos and learn concepts. ICEVI is considering the possibility of releasing about 40-50 video lessons in early 2019.

Lessons learned and going forward:

The higher education initiative started as a project in Indonesia and today it has become a movement in seven countries in the East Asia region. Though the implementation strategies vary to some extent based on locally specific situations, the overall goal of empowerment of persons with visual impairment through education and employment is being realised. The ICEVI and the ON-NET with the support of The Nippon Foundation have initiated the task of developing a publication that will follow the evolution of this work, its long-term impact and the systemic change that has been achieved. This publication, which is expected to be ready by 2020 will be a lasting testimonial to the humanitarian impact The Nippon Foundation has created in the lives of persons with visual impairment in the East Asia region.

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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