

AFFIRMATIONS OF HOPE

APCD/JAIF PROJECT GOOD PRACTICES
ON RURAL ACCESSIBILITY IN
CAMBODIA, LAO PDR, MYANMAR & VIETNAM



■ PROJECT IMPLEMENTORS



■ Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability

The Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD) is a regional center on disability and development. APCD was established in Bangkok, Thailand as a legacy of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002, with the joint collaboration of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS), Royal Thai Government, and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Government of Japan. In cooperation with more than 30 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, APCD is currently managed by the APCD Foundation under the Royal Patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific identified APCD as the regional center on disability for the Incheon Strategy to Make the Right Real 2013-2022.



Japan-ASEAN Cooperation

■ Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund

The Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF) was officially established in March 2006, based on the pledge from then Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi at the Ninth ASEAN-Japan Summit held in December 2005 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to assist the integrations of ASEAN through the ASEAN-Japan cooperation funds. JAIF has been established to support ASEAN's integration efforts to create the ASEAN Community, narrow development gaps among ASEAN Member States, and promote greater cooperation between ASEAN and Japan.

This report is available in a text format for persons with visual impairments and blind persons.
Please contact info@apcdfoundation.org for further details.

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INTRODUCTION

The Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability/Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (APCD/JAIF) Project was set up in October 2012 to contribute to poverty reduction and improve the quality of life and well-being of persons with disabilities in the ASEAN region by creating barrier-free rural communities where they could fully participate in the economic and social life of their communities.

To achieve these goals, the Project is guided by three strategies:

- 1) Strengthening relations between ASEAN member countries;
- 2) Capacity-building of persons with disabilities and local stakeholders, especially those in vulnerable and disadvantaged situations; and
- 3) Community-based Inclusive Development (CBID) activities that included Non-Handicapping Environment (NHE) approaches

These three strategies are integral to mainstreaming disability into development enabling persons with disabilities to be empowered and included as valued members of society with equal access to basic human rights.

In a world where 15 percent of the population consists of persons with disabilities, 40 percent of which are in the Asia-Pacific region along with their families, having an accessible environment continues to be a challenge in many parts. Among the common barriers experienced by persons with disabilities are physical environment, information and communication, regulations and systems, and prejudices and attitudes.

The APCD/JAIF Project began with the first phase with the identification of the target areas in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam from October to December 2012. The target areas were selected using a set of predefined criteria and identified in consultation with the concerned government ministries in CLMV. Local partners, including local government authorities and disabled people's organizations (DPOs) were also consulted.

These results were launched at the JAIF Regional ASEAN Meeting on 6 to 7 December 2012 in Pattaya, Thailand. With participants from 10 ASEAN countries attending, the Meeting aimed at giving local stakeholders an overview of the Project, introduce the selected target communities in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam, and promote consensus and cooperation for the successful implementation of the Project.

The next step came in the form of the establishment of Steering Committees in CLMV, tasked to oversee the activities on the ground, consult with local stakeholders and partners, and spread awareness about the Project. The Steering Committee members also led the Baseline Survey conducted from February to May 2013 that sought to update information on persons with disabilities in villages, communes and districts in CLMV; to analyze the situation of persons with disabilities and serve as the basis for the planning of APCD/JAIF Project activities; and to create a 'baseline' that will be the basis for measuring impacts of project activities after the implementation of the Project. In all, more than 800 survey respondents took part in the activity.

Based on the results of the survey, the Project was able to develop action plans to implement rural accessibility, including intensive trainings on the creation of non-handicapping environments and Disability Equality Training activities for leaders with disabilities and local government officials. On 27 to 28 August 2013, the results of the first phase were presented at the Second ASEAN Regional Meeting in Hanoi, Vietnam, with over 120 participants from ASEAN and Japan attending.

Now on its second phase, the APCD/JAIF Project is being implemented in selected target communities in Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV). The target communities in each country are as follows:

- Kien Svay District, Kandal Province, Cambodia
- Naxaithong District, Vientiane, Lao PDR
- Pyapon Township, Ayeyarwady Region, Myanmar
- Ba Vi District, Hanoi, Vietnam

One of the main approaches of the Project includes creating non-handicapping environments particularly in making rural markets accessible to everyone. Rural markets are the center of trade and the backbone of the local economy. These markets, however, are often inaccessible to persons with disabilities and other people.

Making rural markets accessible will not only increase opportunities for persons with disabilities to access products and services in the market, but also give them a chance to provide their own products or services as a means to fight poverty.

To date, 16 rural markets across CLMV have been modified through close cooperation and collaboration between local government officials with support from the national governments, persons with disabilities, rural market stakeholders (including market owners who are also members of the Project Steering Committee), and the community.

RURAL MARKET MODIFICATION: APCD/JAIF PROJECT AREAS

New Naxaithong:

- 1 - ramp at entrance with grab bars
- toilet
- pathway to toilet with grab bars
- parking space for persons with disabilities
- market space for persons with disabilities

Chong Pheay:

- 1 - toilet
- parking space for persons with disabilities
- market space for persons with disabilities

- 3 - ramps going to the toilet

- 6 - ramps at market entrance

- 9 - ramps in the market

Nong Sa:

- 1 - ramp from main road to market
- ramp at the back of the market
- pathway to the toilet
- toilet

- 2 - market spaces for persons with disabilities

- 3 - ramps at market entrance

- 4 - ramps in the market

Nakhounnoy:

- 1 - ramp from main road
- ramp to toilet with grab bars
- toilet
- market space for persons with disabilities

Houa Khoua:

- 1 - modified market entrance
- pathway to toilet
- toilet

- 2 - ramps in the market

MYANMAR

Pyapon Township, Ayeyarwaddy Region

Myo Ma Zay Gyi:

- 1 - ramp at back entrance

- 3 - ramps at side entrance

- 5 - ramps at front entrance
- mini ramps in the market

Myauk Pine:

- 1 - pathway from entrance to interior
- pathway to toilet
- toilet

- 2 - ramps from road to market entrance

- 4 - ramps at market entrance

- 16 - mini-ramps in the market

Sadanar Mon:

- 2 - modified market entrance

- 3 - pathways in the market

Tay Dang:

- 1** - pathway to toilet
- toilet
- market space for persons with disabilities
- 7** - ramps in the market

Nhong:

- 1** - toilet
- garbage disposal area
- 2** - ramps at entrance of wet market
- market spaces for persons with disabilities

Mo (Dream):

- 1** - toilet
- pathway to toilet
- market space for persons with disabilities
- 4** - ramps inside the market

Doc Tan Hong:

- 1** - toilet platform
- toilet
- market space for persons with disabilities
- 3** - ramps in the market

Thuan My:

- 6** - ramps in the market
- 1** - toilet

Phlou Thmey:

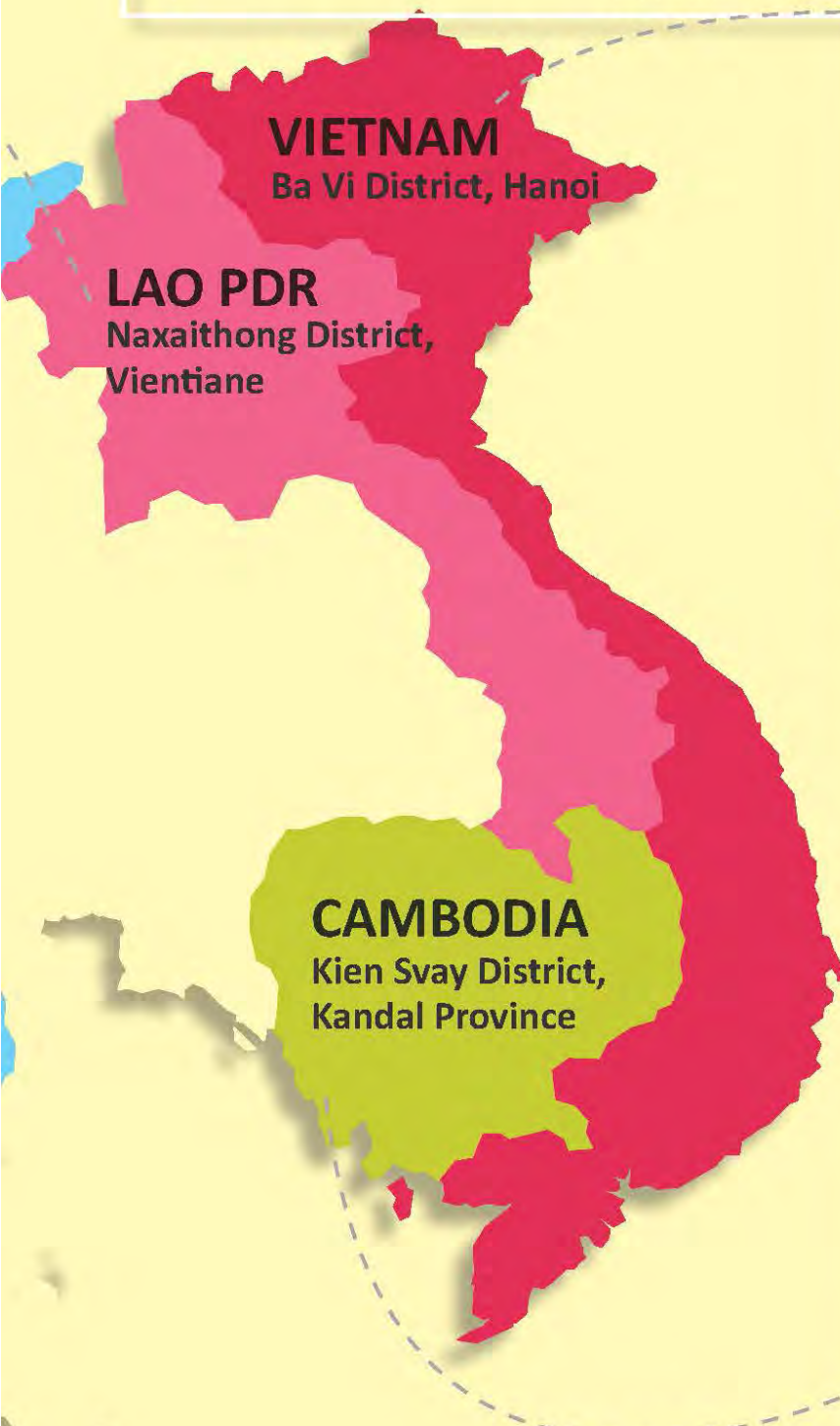
- 1** - toilet
- parking space for persons with disabilities
- 2** - market spaces for persons with disabilities
- 3** - ramps at the entrance
- pathways

Kien Svay Krao:

- 1** - ramp to market
- pathway to toilet
- toilet

Sdao Kanleng:

- 1** - modified entrance
- pathway to toilet
- toilet
- 2** - market spaces for persons with disabilities
- 4** - pathways in the market



VIETNAM

Ba Vi District, Hanoi

LAO PDR

Naxaithong District,
Vientiane

CAMBODIA

Kien Svay District,
Kandal Province

PROJECT PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

Cambodia



Ministry of Social Affairs Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MOSVY)

ក្រសួងសង្គមការពិការភ្នែក និងយុវជន
Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation



Disability Action Council (DAC)

Kien Svay District Government

National Centre of Disabled Persons (NCDP)

Lao PDR



Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (MLSW)



Lao Disabled People's Association (LDPA)

Naxaithong District Government

Lao Midori Safety Shoes Co. Ltd.

Myanmar



Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement

MSWRR

Department of Social Welfare



Pyapon Township Government

Myanmar Physically Handicapped Association – Pyapon Township

ActionAid Myanmar – Pyapon Branch

Vietnam



Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA)



Ba Vi District People's Committee

Ba Vi Disabled People's Organization

■ BASIC GUIDELINES

The APCD/JAIF Project is guided by the following precepts:

■ Relevance

The Project is highly relevant in that there is a link between rural market accessibility and poverty reduction. Rural markets are hubs where local producers sell their products and services and consumers buy their daily necessities. Without access to this hub, it will be difficult for producers and consumers — including persons with disabilities — to raise their quality of life and meet their daily needs.

■ Effectiveness

The Project's effectiveness can be seen from an increase in the number of accessible facilities in rural markets in target areas which, in turn, results in more persons with disabilities having access to products and services in the market. One important element in the Project is the allocation of free market space for persons with disabilities that allow them to engage in livelihood activities resulting to better quality of life.

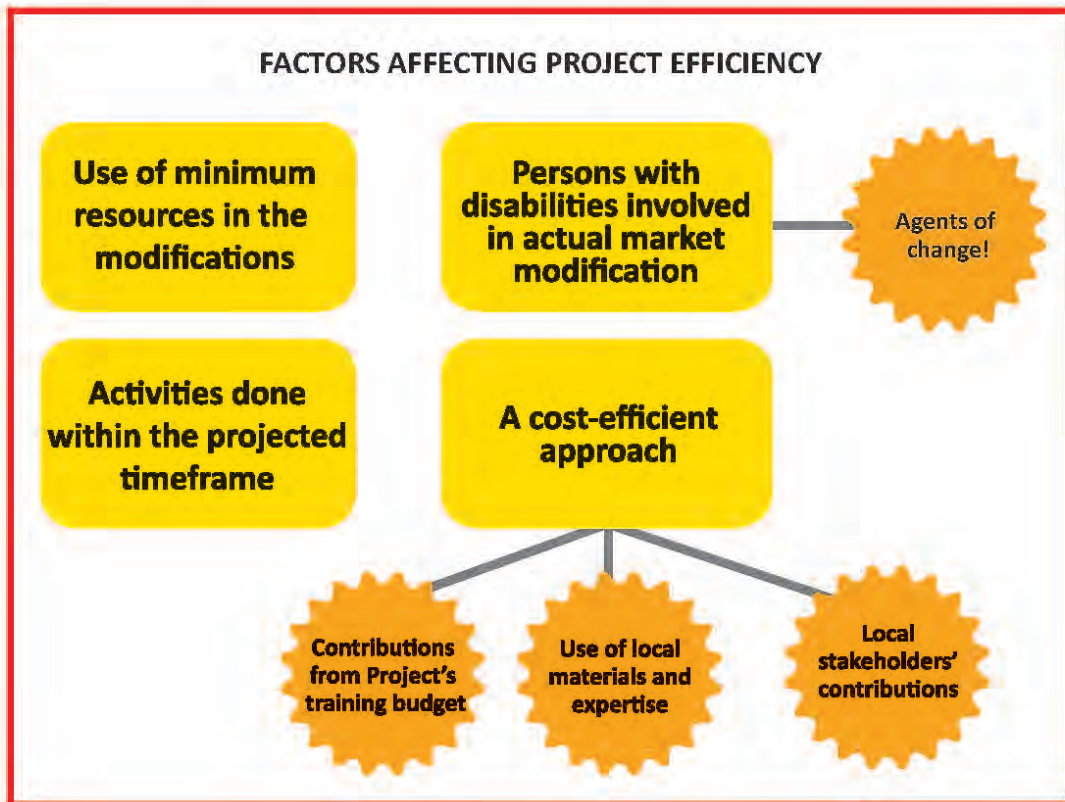
The major factors that influence such achievements are:

- the strong collaboration among stakeholders (i.e. government, persons with disabilities, Disabled People's Organizations, business sector, and other market stakeholders);
- an easy-to-understand concept of rural market accessibility for everyone;
- the linkage of disability initiatives between the local level and national level, especially in matters of national policies for persons with disabilities.

Examples of these national policies include Cambodia's National Disability Strategic Plan 2014-2018, Lao PDR's National Disability Decree; and Vietnam's Ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

Efficiency

The Project's efficiency was made possible by the following factors:



Impact

The modifications gave way to the following developments:

- Persons with disabilities, as well as the elderly, pregnant women and the general public getting more access to market services and products
- More opportunities to engage in livelihood activities in the market, enabling them to fight poverty and contribute in their respective communities
- Closer cooperation among stakeholders in terms of local development plans
- Increased market traffic, which leads to increased market economy
- Better local economy

Sustainability

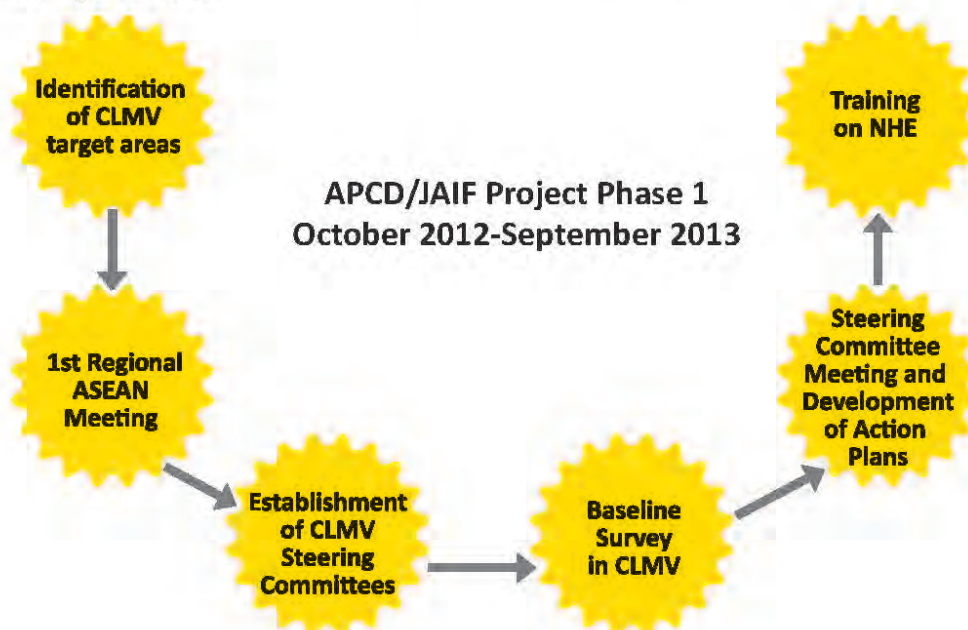
It is expected that the Project will continue through the collaboration and active participation of local government officials, rural market owners/sellers/buyers, and persons with disabilities. With the development and implementation of local policies on disability, allocation of annual budget, and continued support and cooperation by relevant project stakeholders based on formal agreements with the Project, sustainability for these activities is assured.

WHY MODIFY RURAL MARKETS?

- Markets are of prime importance in terms of the livelihood of most rural households, rich and poor alike.
- It is where producers buy and sell products.
- It is where consumers spend their income to buy food and other goods.
- Rural people in many parts of the world often express that one reason they cannot improve their standard of living is the difficulties they face accessing markets.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The Project's first phase began in October 2012 until September 2013 with the following activities:



The second phase commenced in March 2014 and consists of several activities. In a nutshell, Project expectations during this period include:

- More persons with disabilities participating in the economic and social activities in their communities
- Creation of more non-handicapping environments via the strong partnerships among local governments, service providers, Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs)
- Increased community awareness on the rights of persons with disabilities

■ RURAL MARKET MODIFICATION PROCESS

Conducted in collaboration with local stakeholders, the rural market modification process begins with the identification of target rural markets based on location, size, feasibility, and willingness of market owners to support the Project and to allocate free market space for persons with disabilities.

Once everything is in place, Project visits and accessibility audits are done, followed by a series of meetings and discussions with market owners and local government officials.

The third step is the formal signing of a Memorandum of Agreement between the local government representative, the market owner and Project representatives. Following this is actual modifications for accessibility of identified markets using local resources and with the active participation of persons with disabilities.

Last but certainly not the least is monitoring — an ongoing process that assures consistency and sustainability of the modifications made.

■ CHALLENGES

Despite best efforts, challenges still abound. Among these are the unwillingness of some market owners to provide free space for persons with disabilities or contribute to the modifications, the difficulty of modifying markets due to lack of space, and persons with disabilities' lack of resources to even start a small business in the market, to name a few.

■ MOVING FORWARD

The APCD/JAIF Project does not end in the monitoring of modified rural markets. Important steps need to be taken, such as the following:

- Development of accessibility directory and guidelines for rural market modification
- Inclusion of accessibility in designing rural markets prior to construction
- Pushing for the passage of local policies that require establishments to install accessibility features according to existing disability laws
- Sustaining capacity-building training of local stakeholders and persons with disabilities in the creation of non-handicapping environments

■ DOCUMENTATION OF GOOD PRACTICES

Based on the recommendations indicated in its midterm evaluation of all rural markets that have undergone modifications, the APCD/JAIF Project identified certain markets that have observed good practices in the implementation of the Project.

The rural markets were selected based on the fulfillment of basic Project goals, including the construction of accessible ramps and pathways, accessible toilets, accessible parking space, and provision of free market space for persons with disabilities. Follow-ups are being made to ensure the consistency of modification procedures and maintenance. In addition, the impact of market modifications to the lives of persons with disabilities and other people in the community were examined.

Among the activities done in the documentation process were accessibility audits as well as interviews with persons with disabilities, local government officials, market and market stall owners, Steering Committee members, and other local stakeholders.

The insights provided by interviewees in this report about how the modifications have changed their lives in terms of ease of access and improved quality of life are tangible manifestations of the good practice concept. Moreover, the personal stories and experiences featured here all share the following factors that translate to good Project implementation:

- Strong collaboration among local stakeholders, such as government, persons with disabilities, non-government organizations, the business sector, among others
- Easy-to-understand accessibility model
- Benefits everyone in the market and/or community
- Contributes towards rural community development and local economy
- Persons with disabilities at the forefront of project implementation

Equally important are glimpses of other modified markets that also have stories to share, as indicated in some mini features in these pages.

Beyond the statistics, the personal narratives featured in this report are testaments to the necessity of giving persons with disabilities their right to live fully and equally in the society. They have a very important story to tell and it is their time to be heard.

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■ COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION WITH PROJECT PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS: A BRIEF GLIMPSE

■ CAMBODIA



Formal launch of the modified Sdao Kanleng Market in Kien Svay District

■ LAO PDR



Memorandum of agreement signing in Naxaithong District

■ MYANMAR



Steering Committee members in Pyapon Township

■ VIETNAM



Memorandum of agreement signing in Ba Vi District

CAMBODIA

Phlou Thmey Market

Kien Svay District, Kandal Province





Free market space
at Phlou Thmey Market
for wheelchair user
Sok Vath and his family



A Keen Sense of Community and Affinity

**“The market modification is good for everyone here — persons with and without disabilities, children, pregnant women and the elderly.”
— Mao Phal, market stall owner, Phlou Thmey**

Life is challenging enough under normal circumstances. But if you're a former soldier who is now paralyzed due to a stroke and couldn't support your family the way you want to, the demands of day-to-day living can be so frustrating — especially if your physical environment is not empowering you at all. This is what 57-year-old Sok Vath, father of five and grandfather of three, had to face every so often since 2008 whenever he would visit the family's small stall at Phlou Thmey Market. With an unpaved path reminiscent of moon craters, and often muddy and slippery, the wheelchair user didn't have enough reason to go to the market every day.



Husband-and-wife Sok Vath and Mao Phal



Accessible toilet at Phlou Thmey Market

These days, however, Sok Vath can look forward to a brighter future, thanks to the APCD/JAIF Project's rural market modifications and the free market space that his family was given at Phlou Thmey. His wife, 57-year-old Mao Phal happily says that the Project has had a positive impact on her husband. "He would now come to the market for four to five days a week and he can take his wheelchair inside. Although he can't speak, he smiles more often now and gets a lot of encouragement from our fellow market owners. His health is also a lot better," she says.

Thanks, too, to the rent-free market space, the parents of five are able to save enough money to send one of their sons back to school. "We used to earn only 50,000 riel a day from the vegetable stall. Now it's usually 100,000 riel (24 USD) per day. Sundays are usually busy so we earn more," says Mao Phal. "My husband and I take care of the banana stall while my daughter operates the vegetable stall inside," she adds.



Sok Vath at the family's second market stall

At first glance, Phlou Thmey is like your typical rural market. But stay around long enough and you will note the presence of persons with disabilities, plus a lot of small children and the elderly either selling or doing menial work. Seventy-seven-year-old Kong Nan has a very modest stall selling a couple of vegetables, and some herbs and spices. "Thank you very much for what you did here with the ramps and



Market seller Kong Nan and grandson

the accessible toilets. I wish to give you my most sincere blessings and gratitude," she says profusely and sincerely, bowing very low and putting her palms together in the traditional Khmer greeting.

"I had accidents here as the pathway was very slippery then. My slippers would get stuck in the mud many times and it was difficult to get my vegetables into the market," says the elderly woman, whose years of hard toil and labor can clearly be seen in her hunched back and weary steps. She only knows too well the plight of persons with disabilities as she has a 50-year-old son who has intellectual disability. Though it's not much, she is thankful for her daily earnings of 15,000 riel (4 USD), a welcome increase from the 6,000 riel (1.50 USD) prior to modifications. With only enough income to buy daily rations of rice and food, Kong Nan is helped by her 10-year-old grandson who earns a small income carrying buckets of water to market owners.



Phlou Thmey Market owner Pich Phon

"I understand the difficulties faced by persons with disabilities, which is why I really wanted the market to have all these modifications," says Phlou Thmey Market owner Pich Phon. The 54-year-old former soldier has partial disability in the left leg, blurry vision on the left eye and suffered wounds on his left torso. "There are at least five persons with disabilities most of whom have physical disabilities and a few blind persons who come to the market regularly. I see a wheelchair user and one who uses crutches. Plus, we get so many elderly and young children here too."

Pich Phon has observed that prior to the modifications, persons with disabilities would visit the first time but never come back due to poor market conditions. "Their crutches, or the artificial leg or shoe of an amputee, would get stuck in the mud. The main road often gets flooded," he says, referring to the road entrance which is now paved, thanks to the efforts of the Kien Svay District Government who offered to modify the 400-meter long road leading to the market as its contribution to the Project.



Children doing menial jobs

According to Pich Chon, people usually use the toilet first before doing their shopping. "They read the Project signage and even leave some donation at a bucket hanging near the toilet entrance to help in its maintenance. "I often clean the toilet myself," he says.



Accessible toilet for all

Steering Committee member Lek Sarin, a 48-year-old farmer who does construction work and motorcycle repairs on the side, is one of three persons with disabilities who helped construct the Project's accessible toilets in the District. With his artificial leg, using the old squat toilets was a great source



New paved road in front of Phlou Thmey Market

of discomfort. "Before these modifications, I would even bring a bottle and do it in a corner or behind trees out of desperation," Lek Sarin laughs in good humor, recalling his toilet misadventures.

Business has picked up as well for the market. According to its owner, market income has increased by 70 percent since modification. From 50, the number of stalls has increased to 75. "It's good to see more people coming, at times with family members. There's a sense of hope in the market community. The great thing about it is the community's willingness to donate money for further improvement of the market as part of the Project. "We plan to build a new roof and get the stalls and selling spaces more organized," he says proudly.

Mal Phao and her husband agree wholeheartedly. "It's all very good because we can see that the market environment has changed. We see a good partnership here. Everyone — whether with or without disabilities — is satisfied with these positive changes," she says, as her husband nods and smiles widely.

Q&A

Som Sim, Deputy District Governor, Kien Svay District, Kandal Province, Cambodia



Q How does the Project reflect the district government's commitment and plans for the disability community?

A We are very grateful to APCD and JAIF for providing us with necessary support and technical assistance. We coordinate closely with Steering Committee members and other partners and have monthly meetings so we can keep track of problems

and can do quick repair work and maintenance. We hope to do more modifications not only in markets, but also in schools, pagodas, and even commune offices.

Q What are the challenges that you encounter with regard to accessibility projects and programs?

A When I proposed this modification project to the government, they said they could only give a small amount and we try to make the best of what is available for us. But we make it a point to collaborate closely with the government and other stakeholders.

Q How did the road improvement in Phlou Thmey come about?

A Each year, the District can submit proposals to the central government. Since there was a modification project in Phlou Thmey, I thought it would be great if the road leading to the market would also be paved. The road in front of Phlou Thmey Market is only about 400 meters so we thought of making it a priority project.

Q Why is this Project important to you?

A I feel I understand well the challenges faced by persons with disabilities. Every day, I see people begging and selling on the streets and I can't help but feel for them. I see people saying no to them. If I say no, who will help them?

■ Sdao Kanleng: An Outpouring of Support



Sdao Kanleng Head Monk Kong Punlou

If it weren't for a huge flood, Sdao Kanleng Market, one of three markets modified in Kien Svay District, won't even exist today. About 10 years ago, some parts of Cambodia were hit by serious flooding that drove people from slum areas to seek refuge from the temple in the Sdao Kanleng commune. The flood lasted for three months, the refugees didn't have a place to go, and the temple's head monk didn't have the heart to send them away. Eventually, he allowed them to stay.

Days went by and some people began selling produce as a means of survival. They were squatting on property owned by the temple and, after several rounds of discussions among community members, the people agreed to pay minimal rent to the temple. With the help of an intermediary, a doctor who volunteered his services, the refugee community began paying 3 million riel (1,000 USD) per year as rent, an income that would go to repairs in the pagoda. From about 50 stalls, the morning market now has about a hundred. Located right along the riverside, the market is open daily selling fresh vegetables and fish from 6 to 11 a.m.

"Persons with disabilities having difficulties going to the market. The pathway was slimy, dirty and smelly. People were urinating on the river, behind trees, or on corners," says Sdao Kanleng's Venerable Head Monk Kong Punlou.

As their contribution to the Project, the community also donated money to widen the market pathways. They also agreed to pay the owner of the water tank so the accessible toilet will always have running water.

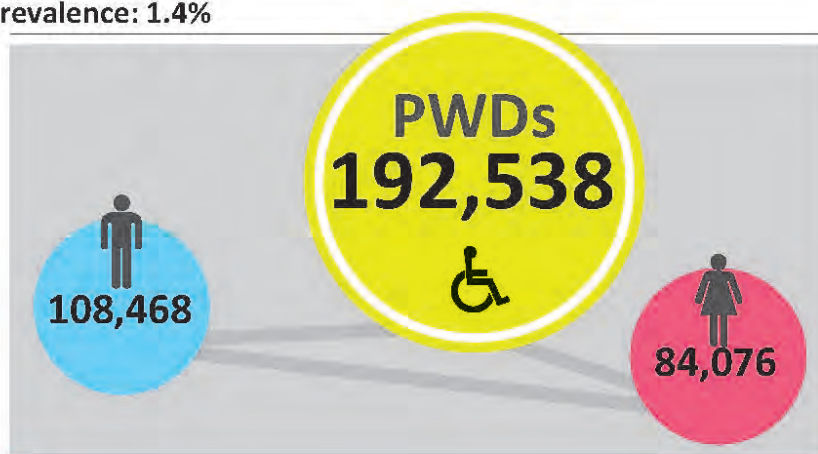


Launch of Sdao Kanleng Market's accessible facilities

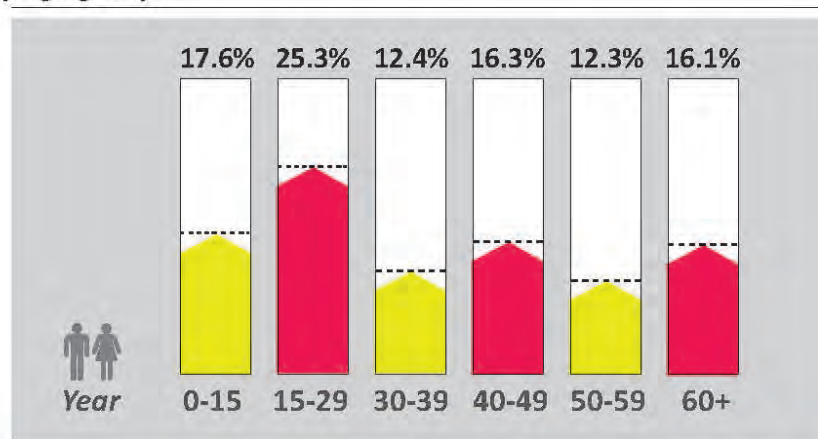
"I'm happy to see the modifications were done well. There's an increase in the number of persons with disabilities, including those with mobility disabilities and the blind, visiting the market. We have two free spaces available for persons with disabilities. The toilet benefits everyone, too," says Kong Punlou.

Fast Facts

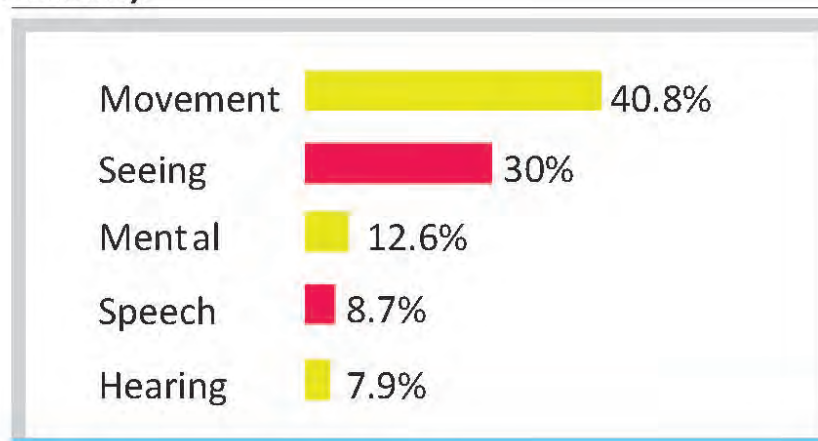
Disability prevalence: 1.4%



Disability by age group:



Disability of Disability:



SOURCE: Disability at a Glance 2012, Strengthening the Evidence Base in Asia and the Pacific, UNESCAP; 2008 Census

LAO PDR

Nong Sa Market

Naxaithong District, Vientiane





Srisupun Audonsawan manning
her small stall at Nong Sa Market



Rising Above Limitations

“I like to live independently and I don’t want to be a burden [to anyone]...”

— Srisupun Audonsawan, market stall owner, Nong Sa Market

Srisupun Audonsawan has a shy, childlike smile that belies her age. In fact, she looks more like a teenager than a young woman of 26. Self-effacing and soft-spoken, she sells dried vegetables and noodles in a small stall at Nong Sa Market. Amid the chaos of the public market, her stall is a small oasis of calm where you will see neatly stacked onions and garlic, macaroni packs, noodles, dried mushrooms, and spring rolls wrapper packs. As a beneficiary of APCD/JAIF Project’s free market space, Srisupun is taking a big step for herself and is setting an example for other persons with disabilities.

"She had an accident when she was a year old and nine months," volunteers Srisupun's mother, Thongwan Audonsawan. "She fell and she injured her back. She stopped growing."

Her physical growth may have been curtailed but not her spirit and determination to be independent. For several years, the third child of six siblings contented herself



Srisupun with her mother Thongwan



Store owner Buonthong Phameuang



Fruit seller Kaewtui Inthawongsa

to helping her mother sell vegetables in the same market. Until one day, when she became the recipient of APCD/JAIF's free market space for persons with disabilities, her 'growth' took on a more symbolic form and signaled her substantial growth as an individual.

Initially, she just wanted to sell rice because it is easier for her to remember the price of only one product. "I have difficulty remembering the prices of various vegetables in my mother's stall so selling rice would have been perfect for me," she explains. Srisupun may look fragile on the outside but she is not one to run away from challenges. She accepted an offer of help from her aunt who provided her with several products to sell — a much-needed boost to her new path towards independence.

Now, she is quite adept at remembering the prices of each items she sells — 10 baht a kilo each for onions and garlic; 20 baht (.60 US D) a pack for the dried mushrooms; and 20 baht for the spring roll wrapper pack. She earns an average of 600 to 700 baht (18 to 20 USD) per day — not bad for someone who didn't have enough confidence to be on her own before.

A regular day for Srisupun has her going to the market by 5 a.m. up to closing time at 8 p.m. daily. When her mother gets sick and couldn't mind her vegetable stall, Srisupun takes care of it for her in the morning, and goes to her own stall in the afternoon.

"I'd like my daughter to be independent and to be able to save enough funds for her small business," says her mother. "She doesn't want to be a burden to anyone and the government."



The APCD/JAIF Project signage displayed prominently at Nong Sa Market

According to District Social Welfare Office head Sengkeo Thoummavong, the biggest challenge in Lao PDR when it comes to disability is changing the mindset of the families into allowing family members with disabilities to go out and grab the opportunities available to them. "They are very protective of their kins with disabilities and would rather see them safe in their homes, away from prying eyes," explains Thoummavong. The few who are brave enough to venture out and express their independence are further hindered by the lack of economic and livelihood opportunities.

"I know persons with disabilities who don't feel comfortable visiting the market because they are not confident enough. But I always tell them that the market is now very accessible with the new ramps and toilets," says Buonthong Phameuang, the brother of the Nong Sa Market owner.

This sentiment is echoed by here is a general acknowledgment among the populace that persons with disabilities are discouraged to go out of their homes due to overprotective family members. More often than not, disability is still seen as a burden to the government.

New Naxaithong Market owner Ongerm Sihamaya also tries his best to inform persons with disabilities the advantages of them visiting these modified markets.



Modified pathways in the market



Wheelchair accessible ramps

"While they are aware of the modifications made, it takes time to get them out of their shell. Traditionally, it's not usual for persons with disabilities to go out of the house. I try to draw them out and they are very receptive. The problem is, even if they like to buy, most don't have money to buy what they need," says Sihamaya, who is also APCD/JAIF Project Steering Committee member.

"As members of the Steering Committee, we also give training and suggestions to the District on how to change the mindset of the community about disability in close collaboration with the District Office and DSW. We visit families and explain to them the advantage of having persons with disabilities go out and be independent," says Sengaloun Luangraj, who is also the Deputy Director of Secretariat to the National Committee for Disabled People and Elderly, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare.



Formal launch of Chong Pheay Market's accessibility features



New pathway at the market entrance

Despite the challenges, however, the Nong Sa Market community is seeing positive changes. "Some of the regular customers we have now include amputees and the blind," says Buonthong, a dry goods seller. "In fact, after the modifications, the market is now a neat, clean and more organized place. Everybody uses the accessible facilities," he adds.

For retired military captain Kaewtui Inthawongsa, the modifications benefit even market stall owners like him who can now easily navigate their carts to move produce within the market. "I always encourage my friends and relatives to come and take a look so they know and understand what the Project is all about," says the 61-year-old fruit seller. And just like Buonthong, Kaewtui also makes it a point to tell every person with disability he meets about Nong Sa Market's accessible features.

Based on how things are at present, Srisupun is setting an example for others. She is showing everyone how, with community support and assistance, a person with disability can rise up from society's perceived limitations and be his or her own person.

■ In Step with the Times



It was a meeting that was bound to happen. In one of APCD/JAIF Project's visits to Naxaithong District, APCD representatives got in touch with Lao Midori Safety Shoes Co., Ltd. executives to explore the possibilities of a partnership involving persons with disabilities in the community and lending support in various ways.

Lao Midori Safety Shoes Co., Ltd. factory manager Takashi Endo Known for producing safety and health-related products, such as shoes, helmets, car parts and accessories, the Midori Group from Japan has made its presence felt in the Asia-Pacific region with manufacturing and distribution facilities in countries as India, Japan, Lao PDR, and Thailand, to name a few. Midori's operations in Lao PDR, for instance, have spanned eight years, producing 2,000 pairs of safety shoes every day.

"APCD told us about the APCD/JAIF Project and since the Midori Group in Japan has had similar partnerships dealing with social welfare-related projects, we were willing to support the Project and will continue to do so," says Midori factory manager Takashi Endo, who added that this is the first time that Midori Lao PDR is supporting a project on disability.

Endo noted that in their company, as well as other companies for that matter, all of them work with strong and weak people. To be able to do their part in the development and empowerment of persons with disabilities within the community is an important thing. "We need to help each other and do good things to each other, and Midori is willing to support as much as it can," he says.

■ Insights



"The APCD/JAIF Project has made more people aware about the importance of having accessible public areas, such as rural markets. It supports the Lao government's policies and decrees on disability and we always inform the people about it in workshops and awareness-raising activities."
— **Bounpone Sayasenh, Director General, Pension Invalid and Disability Department, Secretariat for National Committee for Disabled People and Elderly**



"I am very proud and happy about the accessible features of Nakhounnoy Market because this is more than just a market — it's a community center where people get together with friends and be part of a community."
— **Kampong Sisanon, 58, person with disability**



"People are starting to see that the modifications are not merely for persons with disabilities, but also for the elderly, children and pregnant women. The Project opened my eyes to things that I used to take for granted."
— **Maikam Sintala, Nakhounnoy Market owner**

■ Insights



"It's now more convenient for me and I am happy because my right to live properly, safely and freely has been recognized through these modifications." — **Phun Kantawong, person with disability, fish seller, free market stall owner, Nakhounnoy Market**



"People tend to look at us with pity and we are not comfortable with this. The reason we don't go out is we don't want to trouble others. But I always tell my friends with disabilities not to worry and focus on their skills and talents with confidence, and not to mind what other people say." — **Sybone Kiosaetiop, 25, 2nd year IT student, Sikeud Vocational School for the Disabled**



"As a teacher, I tell my students to not be afraid and shy to tell other people about their disabilities. We are only persons with disabilities physically but our mind and spirit are whole." — **San Seuy Lorkhammee, 31, teacher, Sikeud Vocational School for the Disabled**

■ Insights



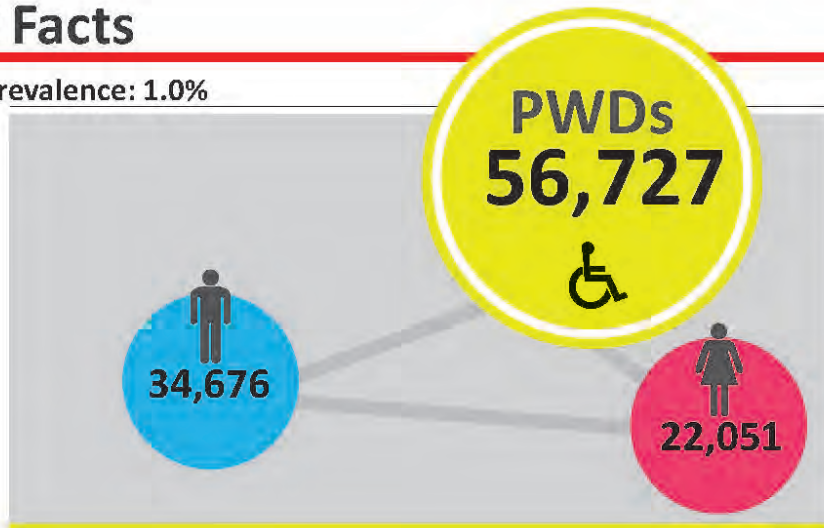
"The free market space is very helpful as it allowed me to save money. Business is better too. I'm really thankful for this Project and I hope that this will continue." — **Med Khunthawong, 38, person with disability, fruit seller, free market space owner, New Naxaithong Market**



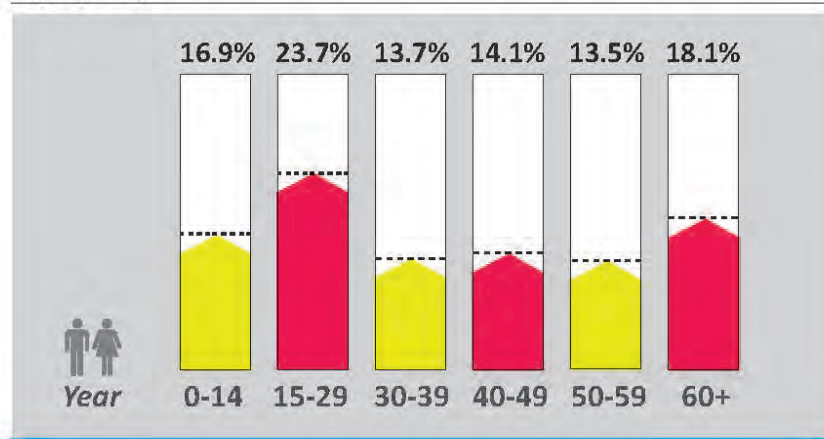
"This Project is enabling persons with disabilities to come to the market instead of them staying cooped up at home. Since the modifications, I see more people coming to the market now, including those using crutches and with visual disabilities." — **Bounthan Inthavong, market owner, Chong Phey Market**

Fast Facts

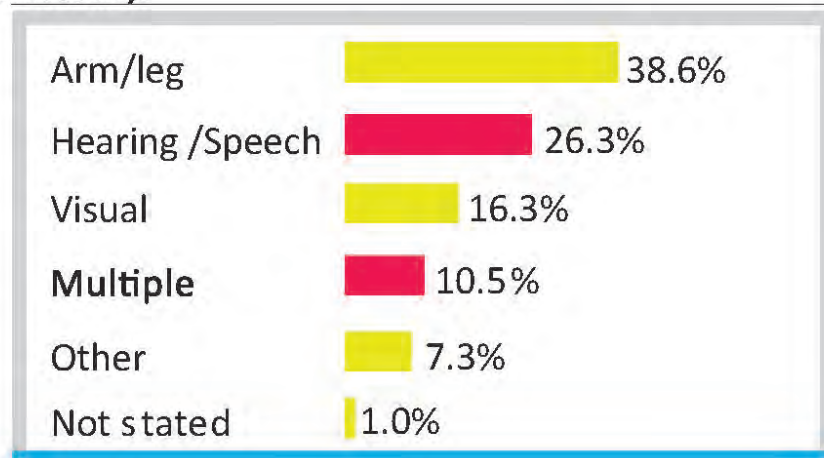
Disability prevalence: 1.0%



Disability by age group:



Disability of Disability:



SOURCE: Disability at a Glance 2012, Strengthening the Evidence Base in Asia and the Pacific, UNESCAP; 2005 Census

MYANMAR

Myauk Pine Market
Pyapon Township,
Ayeyarwaddy Region







Disability Awareness in Action

“I am pleased to see how the market community responds to the needs of persons with disabilities... [and] willingly help them if they need assistance.”

— U Soe Tint, Myauk Pine Market administrator

It's early morning yet the heat and humidity are bearing down on everyone. Dressed in their customary longyi skirts, men and women hurriedly walk past Myauk Pine Market's entrances, eager to get the day's fresh produce. A monk, garbed in saffron robes, softly chants his prayers and blessings to a sweets and rice cakes seller. Nearby, an old man is selling small, colorful balloons, oblivious to the energetic squeals of children, their cheeks and faces covered in thanaka paste.



Market shoppers learning about disability rights



San San Myint and son with speech disability



A woman with hearing disability

Near the front entrance, the APCD/JAIF Project's Steering Committee members are busy setting up for the morning program. The occasion? A disability awareness advocacy activity that aims to inform consumers about Myauk Pine Market's new accessibility features, via speeches, impromptu quizzes, and man-on-the-street interviews. A small crowd of basket-toting shoppers has gathered in front of the speaker, keenly listening and reading the flyers about disability rights and empowerment being handed out. Children shyly answer questions about disability and flashed their toothy smiles when they are given free snacks of biscuits and juices.

"We buy food from the market and I play here with my friends," says eight-year-old Htet Mon Hut. "I've never seen a wheelchair before but I've seen a few people with crutches visiting the market."

Attracted to the sights and sounds of the ongoing awareness campaign activity, 35-year-old mother San San Myint smiles widely when Committee members approach her for a brief chat. "I have heard of the modifications here because I come here every day with my son," she says, referring to seven-year-old Sei Thu sitting on a bicycle at her side. The boy can't speak but can hear.

"I am very glad that the market is more accessible now than before. I used to have a hard time walking through the pathways especially during the rainy season. It's easier now," adds San San Myint.

Near the Steering Committee table set-up, another member is chatting with an older woman wearing a hearing device and garbed in a traditional, brightly-colored headdress. She was nodding her head and smiling widely as she learned about the market's new accessible features.

With a wide smile and curious expression, an elderly woman hobbling on a cane gingerly steps forward to



Children getting impromptu lessons on disability

share her thoughts. "I like the convenience of the cemented pathways. I have a very fragile leg and I use a cane. It was difficult to walk around the market before because there would be parts that are slippery and muddy. But now it's so much better," she says.

Unlike other countries where persons with disabilities are 'hidden' from the public eye, Pyapon Township doesn't seem to have that challenge. According to Daw Khin Mar Aye, assistant district director of the Department of Social Welfare that helps follow up the market modification process and progress, there is "no taboo associated with being a person with disability".

"Apart from the lack of opportunities for employment, one other challenge



Shop owner Ma San San Htay



Modified pathway at Myauk Pine

that persons with disabilities experience here in Pyapon is the lack of mobility aid that will help them go around wherever and whenever they please. In fact, young persons with disabilities can travel around using improvised or modified wheelchairs or trishaws," she says. "Before the modifications, persons with disabilities couldn't go around much and could only wait or buy outside the market because it was difficult getting inside and moving freely."

Ma San San Htay, 56 years old, has been running her dry goods store in Myauk Pine since 1980 and she has seen how the market has changed for the better.



Market administrator U Soe Tint

The pathways used to be so grimy and slippery. At times, only a few people could pass through," she says, pointing to the now cemented footpath in front of her store.

She has noted a spike in market traffic, including of persons with disabilities, after the modifications. "More people come to the market now and business is getting better," says the store owner, who has seen the market destroyed by Typhoon Nargis



Children getting impromptu lessons on disability

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"Apart from the lack of opportunities for employment, one other challenge



Shop owner Ma San San Htay



An elderly woman with mobility disability

the elderly had to be helped because of the poor condition of the market's passageways," says U Soe Tint, who oversees the whole market day in and day out. With five entrances all around, Myauk Pine Market has over 200 stores and 100 stalls.

Besides ensuring the safety of everyone in the market, he is also responsible for the maintenance of the modifications, including the cleanliness and constant water supply of the accessible toilet. "I sometimes see the pathways and ramps being blocked by merchandise so I always remind the sellers not to block these. We make sure that we have water in both the regular and accessible toilets."

U Soe Tint says people are aware about the market's accessibility features and are now benefiting from said modifications. "I am pleased to see how the market community responds to the needs of persons with disabilities though. People are ready to help if needed and that's great."

U Aung Khine Myint, an entrepreneur with disability and Steering Committee member, attests to this, saying that the more people are learning about the modifications, the more people helpful they are. "They will not hesitate to offer their help. That's very good community spirit," he says.

■ Movers and Shakers

The Steering Committee members are the eyes, ears, and arms of the APCD/ JAIF Project. Besides ensuring that the market modifications are proceeding according to plan, they also need to continuously raise awareness about these modifications and to foster close partnerships with local stakeholders. Here are some of their observations:



"There is generally a lack of accessible places in Pyapon so the rural market modifications are a good start to the direction of having non-handicapping environments. Persons with disabilities have skills and can be independent as long as they have accessibility." — **Aung Kyaw Soe, Secretary, Myanmar Physically Handicapped Association**



"Before the Project, I often took for granted the importance of accessibility features, such as ramps and slopes. Now that I know better and share this with others. The biggest challenge is changing the mindsets of persons with disabilities from thinking that they can't do anything to knowing they have the power to make changes." — **Thindar Win, Member, Myanmar Women's Affairs Association**



"The market modifications have been very beneficial for me, too. I am partially independent due to my polio but it's easier going to the market now to buy my sewing materials. This is what we try to tell other people, both with and without disabilities." — **Naing Swe, Steering Committee member**



"Growing up, I used to walk to school in my crutches for half an hour and ride a rickshaw for another half hour. I've been through these challenges and this is why I am committed to raising awareness about the importance of a non-handicapping environment." — **Aung Myint Myat, 2014 Incheon Asian Para Games Gold Medalist (Freestyle Swimming)**



APCD/JAIF Project Steering Committee members in Myanmar

■ Pivotal Partnership

The Department of Social Welfare of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in Pyapon Township plays a key role in the improvement of the lives of persons with disabilities. Besides its ample assistance to the APCD/JAIF Project, the office is tasked to focus on the following programs:



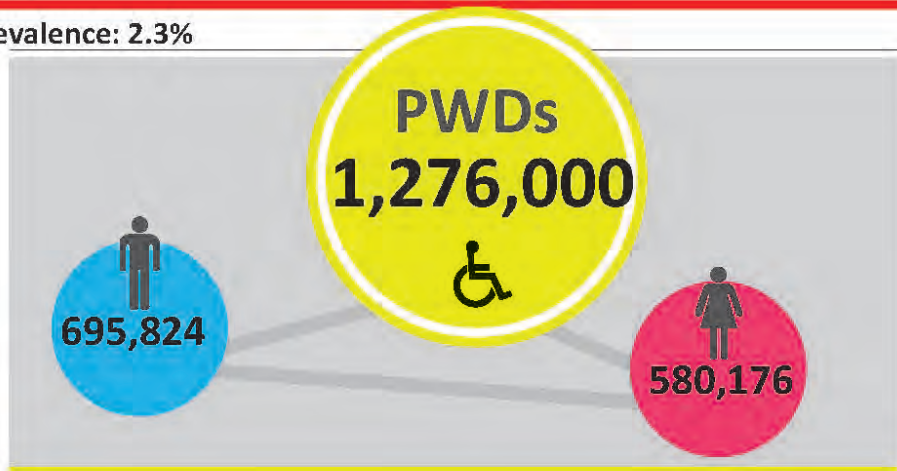
Partnership among local government officials, DPOs and business sector

- Elderly
- Children
- Persons with Disabilities
- Women
- Support of volunteers
- Support of vulnerable sectors
- Drug users
- Health

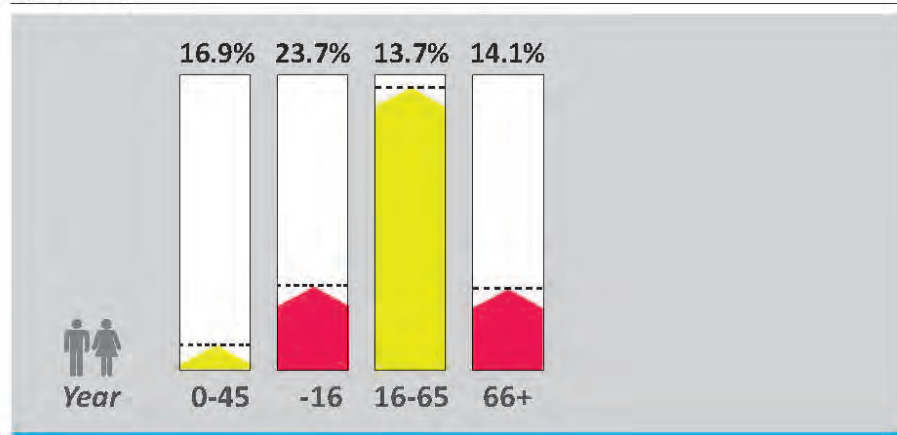
For persons with disabilities, the Department is conducting livelihood trainings to help improve trainees' skills and income. It also does referrals for persons with disabilities who need mobility aids, such as crutches and wheelchairs, to its main office in Yangon. As key partners in the APCD/JAIF Project, DSW officials and staff are highly committed to helping the Steering Committee members in raising awareness about disability rights and non-handicapping environments, as exemplified by the Project's rural market modification projects, among the different communities.

Fast Facts

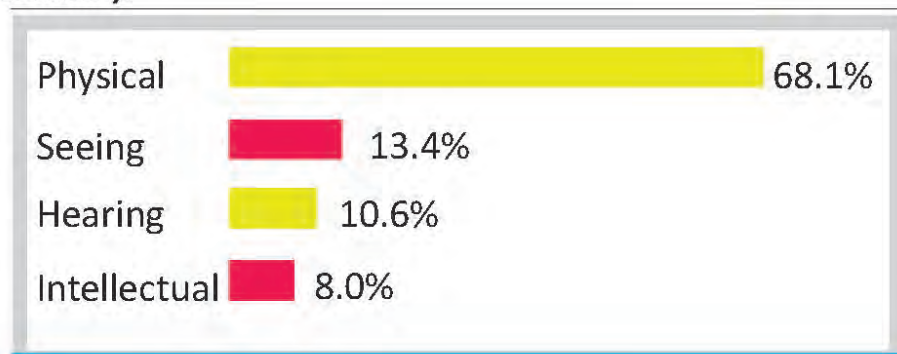
Disability prevalence: 2.3%



Disability by age group:



Disability of Disability:



SOURCE: Disability at a Glance 2012, Strengthening the Evidence Base in Asia and the Pacific, UNESCAP; National Disability Survey (2010)

VIETNAM

Nhong Market

Ba Vi District, Hanoi







Free market space beneficiaries
Phung Thi Hoa and Chu Thi Lan

A Tale of Two Mothers

“We will continue to work and plan for this partnership to support persons with disabilities. It’s good teamwork...”

— Bui Cong Tien, Ba Vi Party Central Committee Deputy Head

Phung Thi Hoa used to bake under the hot sun, get soaked in the rain, or shiver in the cold weather when she was still selling in the exposed part of Nhong Market. Chu Thi Lan, meanwhile, had become used to using the toilet — located 500 meters away — only once per day when she's in her small tailoring and repair shop. Both are mothers who need to be healthy to support their families.

With the physical changes that the APCD/JAIF Project brought about in terms of rural market modifications, both women's day-to-day lives working at the market have become much easier.

"Selling has never been more comfortable and business is good," says a happy Phung Thi Hoa, a 42-year-old mother of two aged 14 and 11.

Business is stepping up for the mother of two children aged 14 and 11. For one who has been selling footwear for the last six years in Nhong Market, she is more determined now than ever to really make her business work.



Accessible toilet at Nhong Market



Chu Thi Lan in her repair shop



Group photo of APCD/JAIF Project's Steering Committee members and local government partners

"I used to sell outside. My stall didn't have a roof and it was smaller. It could get very hot in the summer and very cold in the winter," says Phung, who has mobility disability. With accessible ramps and toilet a few meters away from her store, it's been a breeze for her to go around the market.

A recipient of the APCD/JAIF Project's free market space, she has availed of a small store space in the market's covered area. She used to pay 1 USD each month as rent for a very small space.

"Even before I applied for a free space, I was already aware of the Project through the people in the market. I used to go outside the market to use the toilet. But with the new accessible toilet, it's more comfortable and it saves me a lot of time," she says.

She says her income has increased 15-20 percent since she moved to her new store, now filled with various types of footwear from slippers to flats and sneakers. "I used to only be able to sell plastic slippers. Now I was able to expand and I'm also very happy that I am now able to save a bit," she says proudly.

For 46-year-old Chu Thi Lan, meanwhile, the accessible toilet is one she's very thankful for. "It was quite difficult for me to find someone to mind my store while I go all the way to the football stadium to use the toilet, which takes me about 20-30 minutes back and forth," says Chu Thi Lan, a mother to an eight-year-old boy. Her shop is doing well, she says.

At eight years old, a buffalo hit her and she lost sight of her left eye, now replaced by an artificial eye, which makes it difficult for her to see clearly. She is at the market seven days



Phung Thi Hoa and her footwear store

a week from 7 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and from 1-6 p.m. Her only toilet break comes during lunchtime.

"The new toilet saves me a lot of time. Some friends have been kind enough to watch the shop for me while I'm away for a few minutes," she says. She also sees other persons with disabilities using the new toilet, mostly those using crutches. "I hope people who use the toilet will use it properly and well."

Having been given a free space is a big help for Chu Thi Lan, who used to pay 100 USD per year for rent. Though her store faces some competition with neighboring ready-to-wear clothes, she says her income increased a bit since the modifications. "Business is okay and others have been very supportive," she says.

Both mothers belong to the 10 percent of persons with disabilities in Vietnam's Ba Vi District who have work. According to Ba Vi Disabled People's Organization chairman Dao Van Tuan, there are "over 3,000 persons with disabilities in the District who face limited livelihood opportunities". But with the strong support from the District Office and close coordination with DPOs, Commune heads, and market owners, the gaps in opportunities can be bridged slowly but surely.

"We will continue to work and plan for this partnership to support persons with disabilities. The District Office has been fully supportive of the Project's activities by shouldering costs for repairs, electricity, and water supply. It's good teamwork



Ba Vi Disabled People's Organization office

and we'd like to continue with this," says Ba Vi Party Central Committee Deputy Head Mr. Bui Cong Tien.

The District Office has contributed about 60 percent of funding to help with market modifications repairs and maintenance. Commune heads, who also manage the markets, have been supportive of the Project with one of them even getting inspired by the Project's modifications that he decided to renovate the whole market.

The close partnership with Project partners and stakeholders is what makes Ba Vi District a model for others in the country. According to Action to the Community Development Center Director Nguyen Thi Lan Anh, who is also a member of the Steering Committee, Ba Vi District was chosen for the Project for its strong DPO involvement, support from local government, and the number of persons with disabilities with more than 3,000.

This close cooperation among Project partners is also reflected in the grassroots level. As Phung Thi Hoa can attest, the involvement and support of the local community is of prime importance. "I received a lot of help from other sellers in the market. They help me carry the goods into my new store. I didn't have enough capital then but my relatives and friends, as well as other persons with disabilities, all contributed funds to make all this happen. I'm very grateful for that. It gives me hope," she says.

Q&A

Dao Van Tuan, Chairman, Ba Vi Disabled People's Organization, Ba Vi District, Hanoi, Vietnam



Dao Van Tuan (left) with Le Hong Phong,
Vice Chairman, Ba Vi District DPO

Q Can you tell us more about persons with disabilities in Ba Vi District?

A There are more than 3,000 persons with disabilities living in Ba Vi, both young and old and with diverse disabilities including physical, visual, intellectual and/or learning disabilities. Of this number only 10 percent have work with most of them engaged in selling, tailoring, and small

businesses like repair shops. More than 500 persons with disabilities are members of the Ba Vi Disabled People's Organization.

Q How do you select your members?

A We have a committee that focuses on awareness raising activities about our DPO. We invite persons with disabilities to join. We have 10 communes in Ba Vi District so we all go to these communes to invite them to participate. If they want to be members, all they have to do is to file the registration form and we will take it from there. There is no set criteria, just a willingness to take part in our activities. We're fortunate that Ba Vi has a strong DPO base and we get lots of support from the government, too.

Q How does the Ba Vi DPO assist persons with disabilities in applying for the free market space?

A First they need to submit a registration form to the commune office and meet with the market owner. We can make recommendations based on the persons with disabilities' health condition, type of disability, and household income level. Since the Project started, we have already made two to three recommendations for each market. If it's a big market, we try to recommend as many as three free spaces for persons with disabilities.

■ Perspectives

Persons with disabilities and the elderly share their thoughts about the rural market modifications done in various markets in Ba Vi District:



On the accessible toilet in Tay Dang Market:

"The old toilet used to be very dirty and smelled bad. Nobody really used it. The entrance was very narrow and it was hard to move around. I'm happy now because the toilet is cleaner. It's actually cleaner than the toilets at home. There is water and electricity too."

— **Vu Ta Thanh, 78 years old**



On the changes at Doc Tan Hong Market:

"I have physical, hearing and speech disabilities and life before the market modification was tough for me. It was difficult to walk around and the uneven pathways were slippery especially when it rained. Now, it's easier for me, plus there's the accessible toilet. My income selling dry goods has also increased by 10-15 percent."

— **Le Thi Thu Ma, 52 years old, store owner**



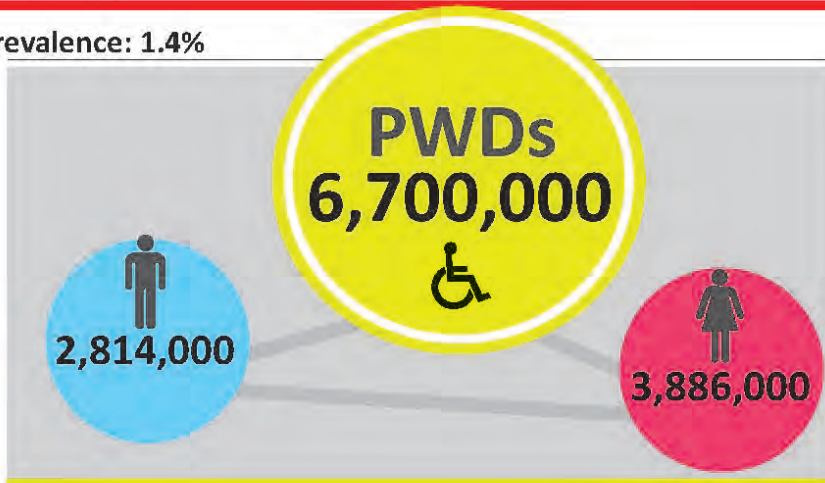
On his impressions about the modification in Mo (Dream) Market:

"I pass by this market every now and then to sell toothpicks and cotton buds. I've seen the changes and it is better to go around the market now in my crutches than before. The pathways are cemented and not muddy anymore."

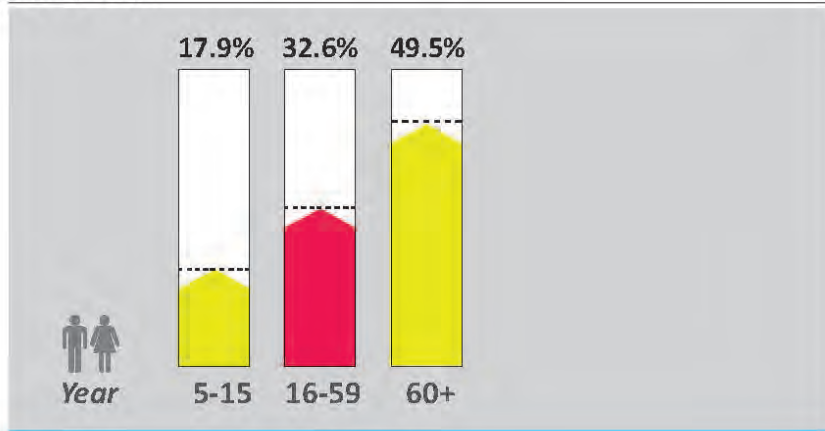
— **Le Lao Thanh, ambulant vendor**

Fast Facts

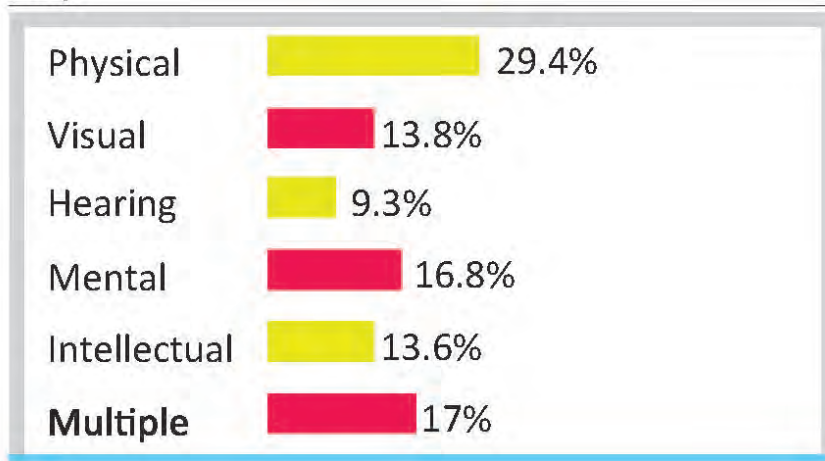
Disability prevalence: 1.4%



Disability by age group:



Type of Disability:

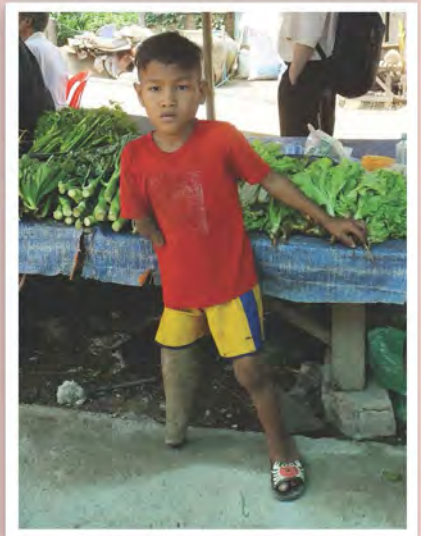


SOURCE: Disability at a Glance 2012, Strengthening the Evidence Base in Asia and the Pacific, UNESCAP; National Disability Survey (2010); Population Census (2009)

FOR THE

Market Life

CAMBODIA



LAO PDR



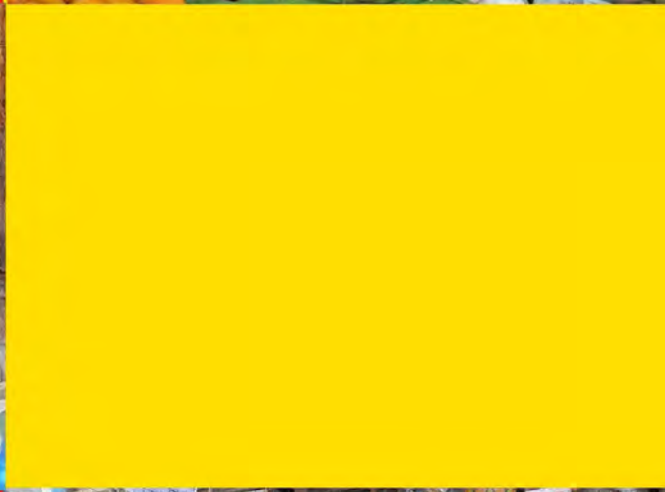
MYANMAR



VIETNAM



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AFFIRMATIONS OF HOPE

APCD/JAIF PROJECT GOOD PRACTICES
ON RURAL ACCESSIBILITY IN
CAMBODIA, LAO PDR, MYANMAR & VIETNAM



Japan-ASEAN Cooperation

Accessible for Persons with **dis**Abilities

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