



## Laos Disability Legislation Workshop: Initial Discussion on a Draft for National Law for the Rights of People with Disabilities 24 - 26 January 2006

The APCD held the "Laos Disability Legislation Workshop: Initial Discussion on a Draft for National Law for the Rights of People with Disabilities" at Lane-Xang Hotel in Vientiane. It was held in collaboration with the National Commission on Disabled Persons, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, and JICA Laos PDR; it was supported by the Lao Disabled Peoples' Association (LDPA) and Handicap International (HI).

Patibatsarakich, Former Honorary Advisor of the Commission of Social Welfare, House of Representatives of Thailand. Mr. Narong Patibatsarakich gave a lecture on "Background, Framework and Contents of the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act" (Thailand); Prof. Wiriya Namsiripongpun gave a lecture on "Highlights of the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act (Thailand)". He also introduced the new Rehabilitation Law, which is in the process of being adopted by the Royal Thai Government.

The opening was chaired by H.E. Dr. Bounkouang Phichit, Vice-Minister of Health, along with Ms. Kanitta Kamolwat, APCD Director and Mr. Senya Mori, Resident Representative, JICA-Lao PDR Office.

Two group discussions were held: 1) Expected Table of Contents of a Draft National Law for the Rights of People with Disabilities in Laos and 2) Development Plan of a Draft National Law for the Rights of People with Disabilities in Laos.



Participants of Laos Disability Legislation Workshop

Approximately 60 delegates representing the Ministries of Labor and Social Welfare, Public Health, Education, Communication, Transportation and Post and Construction; Lao Trade Union, Laos National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, JICA-Laos, Handicap International (France and Belgium), Christoffel-Blindenmission (CBM) and Power UK participated in the workshop, including more than 15 persons with disabilities from LDPA and one Human Rights Specialist from the UK, who were working on Disability Equality Training (DET) in Lao PDR.

In June 2005, the Chief Cabinet Minister of the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare of Lao PDR requested APCD help to support the formation of the Laos Disability Law.

To assist in making a draft of the Laos Disability Legislation APCD recruited resource persons with disabilities from Thailand, who had drafted the Rehabilitation Law in 1989 which had been adopted by the Royal Thai Government in 1992.

Resource persons recruited by APCD were Prof. Wiriya Namsiripongpun, Faculty of Law, Thammasat University and Mr. Narong



Group Discussion at the Workshop

Since one of the seven priorities of the UNESCAP Biwako Millennium Framework for Action (BMF) is "Self-help organizations of persons with disabilities and related family and parent associations", the participation and initiative of Lao persons with disabilities related harmoniously with the BMF action plan. UNESCAP encouraged each member country to form a Disability Law and has furthermore drafted the Comprehensive and Integral International Convention to Promote and Protect the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

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Ministry of Social Development  
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# Independent Living and Peer-Counseling for People with Disabilities

## 28 February - 17 March 2006

APCD organized the Training for Managerial Personnel for Independent Living Centers (ILC) and Peer-counselors for People with Disabilities (PWD) in Bangkok. This training consisted of 2 courses; among 17 participants from self-help organizations (SHO) of PWD in Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines and Thailand, 9 persons continued to take a 10-day course on Peer-Counseling (P/C) from 9 March after completing a course on Independent Living (ILC) until 7 March. All participants had severe physical disabilities with most accompanied by personal attendants since APCD fully respects the "IL of PWD", so PWD can enjoy their lives in the community, make decisions and take responsibility for their daily activities with necessary external assistance. APCD also provided accessible accommodation and other necessary logistic support to facilitate optimum participation and comfort.

Ms. Hiroko Akiyama, from the Human Care Association, Japan. Also, participants could brush up on their attentive listening skills and respond appropriately according to a client's situation. The course culminated with "Commitment Statements" by each participant and resource person; how to realize an effective implementation of P/C in their countries in the Asia-Pacific region to empower many PWD.

### Thai ILC and Resource Persons from Developing Countries

Thanks to a 3-year pilot project supported by the JICA Thailand Office prior to the establishment of APCD, there are now 3 ILC in Thailand; Nonthaburi, Nakhonprathom and Chonburi. Many former participants of the pilot project have become resource persons with rich experiences in managing ILC and conducting P/C through challenges. For this training, Mr. Topong Kulkhanchit and Mr. Theerayut Sukolthan from Nonthaburi, Ms. Nanta Sampeenong and Mr. Santi Rungnasuan from Nakhomprathom, and Mr. Udomchok Choorat and Mr. Ong-art Khanthong engaged in preparation as taskforce members and provided lectures as resource persons. In addition, APCD invited 2 former participants as resource persons: Mr. Muhammad Shafiq-UR Rehman from Pakistan and Mr. Abner Manlapaz from the Philippines. In Pakistan, Mr. Shafiq has initiated the first ILC, the LIFE Independent Living Center, and now collaborates with other SHO to start IL activities in order to support PWD due to the earthquake in October 2005.

### ILC Course



**Mr. Santi Rungnasuan**  
Thai Resource Person of ILC

The participants gained necessary knowledge and skills for initiating and strengthening ILC. Since the IL concept was first developed in the USA in the 1970's and currently exists primarily in developed countries, the participants needed to consider their socio-economic situation and available resources for feasible and sustainable implementation of ILC in their locality and respect the fundamental philosophy of IL which is equally significant for PWD in developing countries. In conclusion, 11 groups of the participants according to their respective developed SHO, presented their Action Plans on how to initiate and strengthen ILC.

### Peer-counselor Course

The "future peer-counselors" for the ILC were trained to equip themselves with adequate knowledge, skills and attitudes to conduct peer-counseling (P/C). P/C can be a very powerful driving force for empowerment by discharging PWD's emotions, enabling them to regain self-esteem and self-reliance. To have it realized, peer-counselors must develop their expertise through their own experiences to take and conduct P/C. Participants had individual consultation in which they received P/C from an experienced short-term JICA expert, Ms. Emiko Nakahara and resource person,



**Peer-Counselor Course**

### Participant Interview Corner

1) Malaysian participants shared that "IL is very important for severely disabled persons, who have been marginalized and discriminated against because it can empower them to stand up. The philosophy and concept are liberating. Although in Asian culture, beliefs and perception of disabilities are always negative and disabling, we believe that IL will provide a long-term solution and solve the problem."

2) Participants from the Philippines stated that "If we look up to Japan, which has become a modern developed, and rich country, we might think that IL is difficult for developing countries. However, I think IL can be simple like the Nakhonprathom or Nonthaburi cases. I hope that an IL program can be started in the Asia and Pacific region. This is substantial and worth while for the whole world."

3) Participants from Pakistan shared that "First of all, I am very impressed with this course. I have already worked on it but didn't know its importance until I joined this course. This training helps me to move forward to help PWDs in my area (Kashmir). There have been many people who have become disabled after the earthquake."



## Special Interview on Independent Living



Mr. Shoji Nakanishi

Mr. Shoji Nakanishi, is a short-term JICA expert with expertise in the area of Independent Living (IL) in the Asia and Pacific region. APCD promotes the importance of the IL concept to empower persons with disabilities in the region. From this perspective and relevant to the IL course that has just been completed,

APCD would like to share valuable knowledge from an interview with Mr. Shoji Nakanishi to develop IL.

### 1) Talking of the IL Concept, does the concept differ in various countries?

Mr. Shoji N.: The concept is the same, “the IL movement changes each person and their way of thinking”. Then, empowered PWD can form IL groups which promote the disability movement in order to change the social system. The aim is for society to provide support and good service for persons with severe disabilities who have multiple needs and the community. This means that severely disabled people living in the community need personal assistant services, accessible housing, pension for the disabled, assistive devices like electronic wheelchairs, and a lift to transfer them from the wheelchair to their bed. In the community, transportation, accessible buildings, and other kinds of needs arise if one severely disabled person lives in the community. Most of these PWDs are found in their parents’ homes or institutions. No disabled persons can live in the community because their multiple needs are not known. The IL movement can change society in other countries in Asia if the “needs” can be fully known and met for persons with severe disabilities no matter where they live, be it in Japan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, etc.

### 2) How many approaches are there in the IL concept?

Mr. Shoji N.: IL Center Management and Peer-Counseling. The IL concept changes the charity-based approach to a rights-based approach. A charity-based approach does not really think about PWDs needs but rather what people think their needs are, which does not consider the real needs of PWDs themselves. Non-disabled persons think building institutions will best meet their needs which is not true. This approach is highly dependent on community-based services to organize these services, which is difficult and requires costly human resources. A charity-based approach consumes “money and time”. On the other hand, a rights-based approach respects the rights and real needs of the PWDs themselves.

IL also changes the medical model to a social model. The government sector must help community-

based services; poor countries especially, should start with a community-based model not institutions. One should find a person with a severe disability and provide services needed and then expand as needed. With this approach, persons with disabilities themselves are the specialists, not like in institutions where non-disabled professionals are employed.

### 3) How can Governmental sectors support IL?

Mr. Shoji N.: From the IL perspective, the aim of society is “to protect the poorest of the poor and the most severely disabled”; if society has the same aim but progress is different, no country should neglect the rights of persons with severe disabilities because PWD are considered part of the population. The “survival system” of the IL concept is the need for human resources more than money. One PWD needs 1 PA; from this you can see that this requires one person’s salary only (depending on the employment rate in each country.). No matter where you are, Japan or Pakistan, the labor cost differs but the IL needs are the same, “only human resources, no facilities” are needed. If the government wants to build institutions they require much funding. But as I mentioned, IL needs only human resources, so IL can be effective even in the poorest country.

### 4) From APCD’s training course, would you like to share anything with our friends in the region?

Mr. Shoji N.: This course makes leaders for each country and a commitment to establish independent living centers in two years. APCD leadership training courses have fortunately made new IL leaders in each country and/or organization. Trainees can already teach techniques and transfer them to other leaders in the country so the “future is promising.”

APCD would like to thank Mr. Shoji Nakanishi for a very comprehensive interview providing more understanding of the IL concept to be implemented effectively and efficiently in this region.



Participants of IL Training Course

## ICT for All: Training of Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY) for Persons with Print Disability 31 January - 17 February 2006

Thirteen participants from Bhutan, Indonesia, the Philippines, Viet Nam and Thailand, including 3 visually impaired persons (VIPs) participated in the training.

The objective of the training was for participants to be able to 1) produce a Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY) **ICT for All Training Course** multimedia talking book, and 2) understand the concept of information accessibility for persons with disabilities (PWDs) based on universal design principles. The training was to be considered successful in terms of DAISY production as well as understanding information accessibility. All participants made a final DAISY product which contained full audio and text including images. Participants produced a school book, religious book and even an APCD newsletter.

Resource persons included Ms. Miki Azuma, JICA short-term expert; Mr. Monthian Buntan, President of Thailand Association of the Blind, who gave an interactive lectures on information accessibility for PWDs.

In the final day of the training, participants presented their action plan on how many DAISY books they will produce and how to advocate/promote DAISY in their home countries, etc. The Philippines' participants made a national action plan on DAISY in collaboration with 4 organizations: National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons (NCWDP), Adaptive Technology for Rehabilitation, Integration and Empowerment of the Visually Impaired (ATRIV), Philippines Printing House for the Blind and Resource for the Blind. They have already started implementation of this plan right after the training and discussing with relevant organizations about possibility of a seminar/training of DAISY.

Bhutanese participants also made a collaborative action plan with the Braille Production Unit and National Institute for the Disabled (NID). Both have services for blind and deaf students and provide Braille and talking books for blind persons.

Viet Nam has good collaboration on DAISY production among the Training and Rehabilitation Center for the Blind (Hanoi), Sao Mai Computer Center for the Blind (Ho Chi Minh) and Nhuyen Dinh Chieu School for the Blind (Da Nang). Each organization has made an excellent plan of DAISY production and plan to collaborate with each other.

Two universities from Thailand, Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University and Mahasarakham University, participated in the training. Both have a unit for service with disabled students. They plan to produce text books and lecture notes in DAISY books for disabled and non-disabled students as a reference service.



**Ms. Miki Azuma with participants of the course**

APCD hopes that information accessibility for PWDs through DAISY production will be further developed and strengthened in the participants' countries, and through the effort of all the participants and resource persons, the information barriers in their society can be broken.

### Interview

#### Mr. Kishore Kumar Chhetri and Mr. Shriman Gurung, Bhutan

"We would like to produce digital talking books for blind people as we have never had such books. For the people in our organizations, of course, we will inform them what we have learned from this course and convince them to have a digital talking book library. Also, we would like to conduct a school-based in-service program for teachers and non-teaching staff, so that they can have ideas about producing digital talking books."

#### Mr. Lauro De Leon Purpic JR., Mr. Dandy Colico Victa, Mr. Noel Jomadio Laririt, Mr. Julius Charles Serrano, the Philippines

"We are impressed with everything in APCD such as the contents of the course, facilities, staff, friends and resource persons. We have learned about different cultures (beauty of difference). The course is very comprehensive. However, we need more time to practice. The building is very disability-friendly. Resource persons always open the floor for questions and answers."

#### Ms. Viet Anh Dinh, Ms. Giang Minh Nghiem and Mr. Le Van Nam, Viet Nam

"The participants were very friendly. The resource persons and staff were very enthusiastic because they worked so hard. The course was well-organized. For the first time, the content was a bit confusing and too general. In the end, I found that I could adjust myself as our resource persons were so helpful and pleased to answer our questions. On the weekend, we had great and lovely times going on trips to various places in Thailand and the volunteers were very nice and helpful."



# APCD Mission Reports

## Follow-up Mission to the Philippines 1-4 March 2006

### 1) Networking and Collaboration for NHE among the APCD's Government Focal Point, Former Participants and the JICA Philippines Office

A year prior to this Mission, the Training of Trainers on the Promotion of a NHE for Persons with Disabilities (PWD) was successfully organized in Manila from 1-4 March 2005 by the National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons (NCWDP) in cooperation with the JICA Philippines Office. This training involved local government units from 17 regions of the Philippines with each region sending officials from the Building and Transportation Authorities and representatives of persons with disabilities. Ex-trainees of APCD's NHE, Mr. Jaime G. Silva known as a blind architect and Mr. Armand Michael R. Eustaquio were core persons for the preparation and implementation of this training. The Mission facilitated further cooperation among NCWDP, ex-trainees and the JICA Philippines Office to organize a domestic workshop for active participants. Through the workshop, they were motivated and planned a project to promote further development NHE in rural areas.

### 2) Post-training Monitoring and Recruitment for the IL Training

The 2005 APCD IL Training was attended by 6 Filipino participants from 2 Associate Organizations; 2 persons from Spinal Cord Injury Foundation, Inc. (SCIF) in Manila and 4 persons from Handicapped's Anchor is Christ, Inc. (HACI) in Cebu.

#### 2.1) SCIF, Manila

One of the ex-trainees, Mr. Abner Manlapaz, had an opportunity to take advanced Peer-counseling Training in Japan after the APCD IL Training and served as a leader for several Peer-counseling workshops in Manila. Thanks to his developed expertise, he was an Assistant Resource Person for APCD's international training on Peer-counseling in March 2006. Another ex-trainee, Ms. Sheryl, has been working hard to share the IL concept with the SCIF members and other

relevant persons in Manila, and collaborates with NCWDP for including IL in the government policy on disability.

#### 2.2) HACI, Cebu

After the APCD IL Training, 4 participants from HACI organized a project-taskforce for IL and held internal meetings to review their learning and ensure a common understanding of the IL concept in order to develop a feasible plan to establish the IL Center. They already submitted a project proposal on IL to the Redemptorist Church for financial support. They hosted a domestic IL Training in August 2005 with technical support from the Human Care Association Japan and involved more members with severe disabilities. Former HACI participants have strong teamwork and are trying to develop human resources to work for IL activities. The Mission for the 2006 APCD IL Training interviewed 2 potential candidates for the IL Center's manager and peer-counselor's positions.

The Mission also visited the National Federation of Cooperatives of Persons with Disabilities (NFCPWD), which serves as the marketing and public relations arm of its many member cooperatives, in order to promote and guarantee a steady flow of business. The Mission appreciated their self-help endeavor and found that they also shared the same values as APCD; empowered PWD empowering others.



Former Filipino IL Participants with APCD Officers

## Mission Report to Uzbekistan 3-8 March 2006

APCD sent a mission to Uzbekistan and identified the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population as APCD's focal point in the government sector. On 6 March 2006, Mr. Inakov Alisher Kazakouich, Head of Social Protection and Support Department and Ms. Kanitta Kamolwat, Director of APCD signed the Minutes of Meeting, agreeing to collaborate on disability matters. The Mission had opportunities to visit some non-governmental organizations,

and learn about them as well as briefly present the APCD Project. Organizations included the MILLENNIUM Youth Social Legal and Rehabilitation Center, Uzbek Association of the Blind, Uzbekistan Blind Society's Training Centre, Blind Society's Department of Tashkent, Uzbek Society of Deaf, and Uzbek Society of Disabled People. Associations primarily organize production programs for their members, some of which currently have difficulties in terms of finances



and availability of raw materials. They are supported by the government in terms of tax.



APCD Mission team with PWDs in Uzbekistan

The mission met with ex-participants of APCD's CBSHOD Seminars (Viet Nam in 2004 and Pakistan in 2005), Ms. Mahmadvulova Guljahon, Chairperson of MILLENNIUM and Ms Nodira Yuldasheva, Secretary of MILLENNIUM. After their return to Uzbekistan, they organized a seminar among local non-governmental organizations with 14 deciding to form the National Federation of Non-Governmental Organizations for Disabled Persons. The Mission exchanged the possibility of future collaboration on promoting self-help organizations of persons with disabilities, as APCD could mobilize resources to support the activity initiated by the ex-participant of APCD. The chairperson of MILLENNIUM expressed her wish that MILLENNIUM be developed and collaborate with international organizations through membership of the Disabled Peoples' International (DPI).

## Mission to Kyrgyz Republic 4-6 March 2006

An APCD member undertook a mission to the Kyrgyz Republic, which has a population of over 5 million people.

The Prime Minister's Office, Department of Social and Culture Development, is responsible for Organizations of People with Disabilities. The Director-General, Mr. Sarybaev Asnbek Mukashevich, and the Officer-in-Charge of Disability, Mr. Asakeev Stalvlk Amanturovich, met with the APCD mission member and promised to collaborate with APCD and support Disabled Peoples' International to form a National Assembly; furthermore, they are willing to support the Central Asia Sub-Regional Assembly in the future.

After the Kyrgyz Republic's independence from the Russian Federation, the social infrastructure has been deteriorating, including disability and social security.

The current Labour Law (1999) states that a minimum of 4 percent (quota) of a company's employees should be persons with disabilities.

According to APCD ex-trainee, Mr. Shamyrbek Ydyrysov, 30 percent of persons with disabilities do not have adequate housing, and only 1 percent of students with disabilities are attending regular schools.

Approximately 300 Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) are concerned with disability, of which 100 are run by people with disabilities.

There are basically two main groups of Disabled Peoples' Organizations in the Kyrgyz Republic. One is the Independent Association of Women with Disabilities of the Kyrgyz Republic, led by Ms. Asipa Musaeva (President) who is also the National Coordinator and Council Member under the Ministry of Social and Culture Development. This Group

is collaborating with the Union of Young Disabled People, led by Mr. Shamyrbek Ydyrysov, an APCD ex-trainee (CBSHOD 2005).

The other group is the Public Movement of the Disabled Young People of Kyrgyz Republic, led by Mr. Mirbek Asangariyev, also an APCD ex-trainee (CBSHOD 2004). This organization has two supporting organizations; one is the National Organization Workers Association and the other is Bishkek University, which provides office space and student volunteers. The Public Movement of the Disabled Young People of Kyrgyz Republic is aiming to form a political party with people with disabilities participating in policy making and raising a voice of their own. Presently, there are 270 members. APCD mission had a meeting with both groups to encourage them to establish a National Assembly to unify the voices of persons with disabilities and collaborate with each other.

According to the Director-General of the Department of Social and Culture Development, there is the National Coordination Council under the Prime Minister. The members include several Ministries such as the Ministries of Education, Public Health, Transportation and Construction. There are also three NGO Representatives; Presidents of the Blind Association, Women Independent Association of Disabled of Kyrgyz Republic and Parent Association of Disabled Children. The Vice-Prime Minister is the Chairman and Vice-Ministers are members. They are seeking barrier-free accessibility for the built environment for transportation, job placements and promoting the sales of goods produced by people with disabilities.

## Mission to Papua New Guinea 16-20 March 2006

During the Mission to Papua New Guinea (PNG), the APCD mission visited and learned much concerning disability-issues in the country. The APCD mission visited and exchanged points of view with Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations. They made a courtesy call and

met with Honorable Anderson Vele, Member of Parliament for Rio, who is a physically disabled person affected by diabetes; a number of PWDs from various organizations also joined the meeting. Then the Mission visited the Departments of Health, Education, Labour, and the National

Training Council. The Mission learned that the PNG Government sector is emphasizing implementation for persons with disability. The Department of Community Development is the PNG focal point organization for APCD, which is also an affiliate to the National Board for Disabled Persons (NBDP) and is the host to propose the Draft on the National Disability Policy to the Government and Cabinet for approval. APCD also visited the Child Protection Division of the United Nations Children's Fund. UNICEF-PNG gave support to disability issues by providing support for the survey for the drafting of the PNG National Policy on Disability 2005. The Mission joined the PNG NBDP Board Meeting; NBDP currently is the only National Coordination Committee on Disability. The Mission made a community visit to the Pari Village Community, which has more than 30 PWDs. Cheshire Homes for the Disabled provide residential and physical therapy services for PWDs, especially with



**APCD Mission to Papua New Guinea**

severe disabilities. The PNG Rehabilitation Center is a residential home for PWDs consisting of the Rotary Club and Leathercraft Project for PWDs. This rehabilitation center is the only one in the Port Moresby area. Through this mission, APCD can see the strength and high commitment to disability issues.

## Mission to Myanmar 23-27 March 2006

APCD mission visited the Myanmar office of World Vision (WV), an international NGO for development. As an associate organization, APCD collaborated with WV in their HRD by providing SHG and CBR training to the Area Development Program (ADP) staff (2 persons from APCD's SHG course and another 2 persons from APCD's CBR course in 2005). Some of these ADPs have accommodated support for people with disabilities (PWD) as part of the Health Activity under ADP. WV used to have more specific disability projects, which now tend to be merged into the ADPs for sustainability.

The Mission had an exchange of information concerning deaf persons with Dr. Kyi Minn, the new Operations Team Leader for Health. Mr. Ko Kyaw Yu, President of Yangon Association of the Deaf (YAD) and a former participant of APCD's 2003 SHO and 2004 SHG training, was invited for this meeting, since he joins WV's specific disability project for deaf persons in Yangon. As WV and APCD recognize that further development of YAD is very important, YAD was encouraged to review regular activities so they can organize themselves, prioritize necessary external supports required, and contact WV and APCD for consultation regarding additional necessary support and how it can contribute.

The Mission organized a monitoring meeting with former participants at JICA's NGO Room in Yangon and individual interviews with others who were unable to attend

the meeting. Through this plenary meeting at JICA in Yangon, both CBR and SHG participants could get to know each other and establish a foundation for networking. Most former participants joined the meeting/interview and shared their post-training activities and plan to further their activities.

Among 8 townships in Mandalay, WV has been organizing ADPs in 4 townships. All 4 ADPs in Mandalay strategically focus on supporting PWD. "Chan Mya Thar Zi", the township where a CBR project had been conducted by WV from 1996-1999, has merged with ADP since 2000. Ms. Khaing Khaing Htun, Resource Person (RP) Assistant for the APCD's CBR 2005 Training, is engaged in the CBR project, and continues to work as the Community Development Facilitator under the ADP in the township. It is near the center of Mandalay with an approximate population of 20,000 persons including many factory and construction workers. The ADP has dealt with issues such as HIV/AIDS, Mother-Child Health, Mental Health, and Disability under "Health Activity". They also cooperate with various international organizations such as UNIFEM, UNDP, CARE and local groups including SHG of Women, etc. A SHG of PWD has developed as an outcome of the CBR project. The Mission had an opportunity to meet and learn about the SHG from executive members of SHG; who are role models for other PWD; persons such as one on the community's loan committee, a swimmer with a gold medal from the SEA Games in the Philippines, university students, and a popular tailor in the community. The SHG has approximately 100 members with half of them actively participating in SHG activities regularly. They have monthly meetings to exchange information and organize a common fund for micro-financing, from which the members can take a loan for their small businesses, etc. They are basically from poor families with an average monthly income of US\$20-40. Through discussion with the executive members of the Chan Mya Thar Zi SHG, the Mission was convinced that they are fostering a strong self-help, and independent spirit, empowering each other.



**APCD Mission to Myanmar**





# APCD Project Activities

## APCD Activities in Brief ( January - March )

The year 2006 began with APCD implementing several networking and collaboration missions and follow-up missions. APCD also has the great honor to be involved in the “Laos Disability Legislation Workshop: Initial Discussion on a Draft for the National Law for the Rights of People with Disabilities” by providing preliminary information to draft the national law in Lao PDR. APCD continues to carefully monitor the situation in Pakistan since the earthquake regarding long-term support, especially in consultation of accessibility issues.

Two training courses were hosted by APCD; ICT for All: Training of Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY) for Persons with Print Disability and the Training of Managerial Personnel of Independent Living Centers for Persons with Disabilities/Refresher Training Course in Peer-Counseling for Persons with Disabilities.

APCD Information Support formulated a Taskforce consisting of professionals in the field of information network, specifically in cross-disability areas. The taskforce will work along with APCD to improve and expand the disability-related information network and information exchange within the Asia and Pacific region.

APCD has also been honored to receive many visitors. Ms. Sue Rickell from the Allies in Change UK Ltd. was welcomed to exchange knowledge about “Disability Equality Training (DET)” and Ms. Izabel de Loureiro Maior, General Coordinator of the Presidency of the Republic of Brazil Special Secretariat for Human Rights National Coordination for Integration of Persons with Disabilities. In addition to this, APCD welcomed Mr. John Lancaster, Executive Director of National Council on Independent Living, who formerly worked with disability issues in Viet Nam. Last but not least, APCD was pleased to join the wheelchair donation ceremony by Japan where H.E. Mr. Tanin Kraivixien, Chairperson of the Foundation for the APCD served as Chairman.

APCD activities in the next 6 months consist of the following:

### April

- Newsletter Volume 15

### May

9-12  
middle  
16-19  
23-27  
31 May -  
3 June

- Follow-up Mission to Cambodia
- Follow-up for Thai Ex-trainees
- Follow-up Mission to the Philippines
- Follow-up Mission to Viet Nam
- Follow-up Mission to Malaysia

### June

5-9  
14-18  
21-24

- Follow-up Mission to Fiji
- Follow-up Mission to Myanmar
- Follow-up Mission to the Philippines

### July

23-26  
13 July -  
4 August

- Newsletter Volume 16
- Follow-up Mission to Pakistan
- Follow-up Mission to Bangladesh
- Training of Initiators for Self-help Groups of Persons with Disabilities towards Rights-based and Sustainable Community Development

### August

16 August -  
7 September

- Information and Communication Technology for Visually Impaired Persons Training

### September

21-22

- APCD Seminar for South-to-South Cooperation



Activities	April	May	June
Newsletter Volume 15			
Follow-up Mission to Cambodia		9-12	
Follow-up Mission to the Philippines (ICT)		16 - 19	
Follow-up for Thai Ex-trainees			
Follow-up Mission to Viet Nam		23-27	
Follow-up Mission to Malaysia		31 May - 3 Jun	
Follow-up Mission to Fiji			5-9
Follow-up Mission to Myanmar			14-18
Follow-up Mission to the Philippines (NHE, IL)			21 - 24
Activities	July	August	September
Newsletter Volume 16			
Follow-up Mission to Pakistan			
Training of Initiators for Self-help Groups of PWDs towards Rights-based and Sustainable Community Development	13 Jul-4 Aug		
Follow-up Mission to Bangladesh	23-26		
Information and Communication Technology for Visually Impaired Persons Training		16 Aug-7 Sep	
APCD Seminar for South-to-South Cooperation			21-22





## Regional News January - March 2006

### 1. Can Tho Club of Disabled People Viet Nam January 2006

One hundred persons participated in the Suoi Tien (Spring Fairy) campaign trip supported by Eden Social Welfare Foundation (Taiwan). In November, the Club sent members to attend a workshop on "Gender and Women with Disabilities" in Hanoi and received six scholarships for disabled students and pupils sponsored by the Canadian Foundation. In December, the Club took part in ASEAN Trade Villages I organized in Tao Dan Park, Ho Chi Minh City and Can Tho International Market Fair on agriculture.

(Source: Disability Forum)

### 2. Braille Notebook Enables Blind Persons to Use Computers Thailand 9 January 2006

The National Electronics and Computer Technology Centre (NECTEC), aided by a research team at Prince of Songkla University, has developed a Braille notebook – a special notebook computer for blind persons.

(Source: The Nation)

### 3. Hearing Impaired Persons Learn to Blog Beijing, China 14 January 2006

The Hongkou District government paid for Deaf and Mute people to learn computer skills necessary to set up and maintain their own online diaries, or blogs, to promote and improve understanding between disabled persons and the outside world.

The blogging course, is part of regular vocational training courses organized by the Hongkou District Deaf and Mute Association.

Teachers used sign language to teach students how to set up their own blog site, either on a commercial or special site for the deaf and mute, and how to add new entries and publish online.

"We are trying to help the hearing and speaking disabled breakdown communication barriers and catch up with information in the modern world outside," Fei Feng, Chairman of the Association, also a deaf-and-mute person, told Shanghai Daily.

"By reading our blog, people learned that deaf and mute people have an equally complete and complicated inside world, the same as normal healthy people," Fei said. Blog.cndeaf.com is one of the most popular blog Websites for deaf and mute persons.

(Source: Beijing Times)

### 4. Employment and the Disabled: Inclusion, Incentives, Involvement Thailand 25 January 2006

The issue of the rights and participation of persons with disabilities in regard to employment has poignantly come to the fore in recent years, as the international community gears itself towards finalizing and adopting a comprehensive international agreement on the rights of persons with disabilities.

(Source: [www.bangkokpost.com/250106\\_News/25Jan2006\\_news17.php](http://www.bangkokpost.com/250106_News/25Jan2006_news17.php))

### 5. PWDs Longest Marathon Lahore, Pakistan 29 January 2006

Lahore Marathon 2006 hosted 23,000 athletes from around the world. This annual event included athletes in 3 different categories; professional, amateur and persons with disabilities. Participants came from Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Kenya and Nepal as well as 60 disabled athletes from Sindh (Southern Pakistan), creating history as they traveled more than 1800 km by road from Karachi to Lahore to participate in this sports festival. It was the longest trip by road in the history of the Pakistani disability movement.

(Source: DPI-Asia Pacific)

### 6. Delegates at UN Meeting on Disability Rights see it as a Major Step Forward United Nations Headquarters, New York, USA 31 January 2006

Persons with disabilities who gathered at United Nations Headquarters from around the world to negotiate the first-ever convention on their rights, expressed confidence that the session paved the way for a full agreement guaranteeing protection and preventing discrimination; but they said, it was just the beginning of their battle for equality.

(Source: [www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=17353&Cr=disab&Cr1](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=17353&Cr=disab&Cr1))

### 7. Organizing Activities to Develop the Movement Skills of Autistic and Children with Learning Disabilities Thai Autism Vocational Center, Thailand 3 February 2006

The Thai Autism Vocational Center held training for parents and teachers of autistic children on "Organizing Activities to Develop the Movement Skills of Autistic and Children with Learning Disabilities".

(Source: Thai Autism Vocational Center)

### 8. DISABILITY: Valuable Resource in the Work Place Aga Khan University Auditorium, Pakistan 12 February 2006

On 12 February 2006, British Council Pakistan and Aga Khan Social Welfare Board for Pakistan arranged a program "DISABILITY: a Valuable Resource in the Work Place", an interactive dialogue with civil society at Aga Khan University



Auditorium. This provided exposure of the deaf community's problem, especially in the education field, and interpreters; they requested the kind consideration of the Minister for Social Welfare and Special Education. A meeting with the Director of the British Council followed with discussion on problems faced by the deaf community since Pakistani deaf students have no opportunity for higher education.

(Source: Pakistan Association of the Deaf)

### **9. National Action Plan for the Disabled in the Pipeline Malaysia** **14 February 2006**

The government developed a National Action Plan to ensure smooth implementation and coordination of programmes, services and facilities for disabled persons. It is to ensure the rights and, full and fair participation of the disabled in all aspects of life, to realize the objectives of national development and create the concept of a "society for all".

(Source: [www.bernama.com.my/bernama/v3/news.php?id=180218](http://www.bernama.com.my/bernama/v3/news.php?id=180218))

### **10. Disability Survey Aims to Help Form Policies China** **15 February 2006**

Authorities announced that a nationwide survey starting from April helped determine government strategies and policies to help the disabled persons. The China Disabled Persons' Federation and a number of State agencies conducted the survey, involving 2.6 million people in 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, until the end of May. The survey provided greater input regarding the cause of disabilities and reliable data and analysis for prevention. It provides information such as the regional distribution of disabled people, the causes of their disabilities and the type of medical treatment they receive.

(Source: [www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2006-02/15/content\\_520502.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2006-02/15/content_520502.htm))

### **11. Disabled People Learn of Rights Fiji** **24 February 2006**

The Fiji Disabled Peoples Association read a copy of People with Disabilities and the Bill of Rights for People with a Disability to learn more about their rights. A full-colour booklet printed in Braille and a documentary filmed on VHS tape, DVD and VCD were launched. The resources focused on two main areas; certain sections of Chapter four of the Constitution and its relevance to people with a disability and provides information about what they can do if their rights are violated.

(Source: [www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=37612](http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=37612))

### **12. Central Ministries Advised to Implement Reservation Policy for Disabled in NGOs New Delhi, India** **9 March 2006**

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment advised all Central Government Ministries/Departments that voluntary organizations working under them must follow the rules which provide for reservations for persons with disabilities. The Ministry has advised all Central Government Ministries to follow the reservation for persons with disabilities on the lines indicated by the Government of India while sanctioning grant-in-aid to various voluntary organizations working under them.

(Source: [www.newkerala.com/news2.php?action=fullnews&aid=23213](http://www.newkerala.com/news2.php?action=fullnews&aid=23213))

### **13. A Symposium on the Development of Law and Legislation for Persons with Disabilities in Thailand Nonthaburi, Thailand** **11 March 2006**

Disabled Peoples' International Asia-Pacific Region (DPI-AP) organized the 2<sup>nd</sup> Symposium on the Development of Law and Legislation for Persons with Disabilities at the Office of DPI-AP Regional Office. The objective of the Symposium was to create more understanding and knowledge on working in the disability field with a focus on sharing experiences and observations.

(Source: DPI-AP Regional Office)

### **14. Accessibility for the Disabled India** **12 March 2006**

Net Systems Informatics India, a company specializing in "accessibility," intends to make the world of business accessible for persons with disabilities. The company conducts workshops in order to create awareness and impart knowledge about accessibility. Some of the accessibility designing courses it offers are: websites, software, e-Learning in Flash, accessible Window applications using Visual Basic.NET, etc. In addition, Net Systems offers "access audit," a usability survey by disabled persons, services like Braille labels plus printing of visiting cards, menu cards, books in Braille, etc. The company provides training for its personnel on how to work effectively with disabled persons in different situations.

(Source: Techtree News)

### **15. Software for Disabled Mobile Phone Users Launched Chennai, India** **16 March 2006**

Snowwood, a Chennai-based mobile enabling software company, has made 'Software for the Handicapped'; customized according to the user's disability and it can be loaded on a mobile phone. A person who is mute or hearing impaired can adjust the software to become voice-enabled or visual, as necessary.

(Source: [www.hindu.com/2006/03/16/stories/2006031617350300.htm](http://www.hindu.com/2006/03/16/stories/2006031617350300.htm))

*\* Any disability-related news is welcome to be included in our newsletter. Please submit your news to us!!*





### **16. National Seminar on Poverty and Disability India 20 March 2006**

Parivaar, National Federation of Parents' Associations for Persons with a Mental Handicap, Autism, Cerebral Palsy and Multiple Disabilities, organized a National Seminar in collaboration with Inclusion International to facilitate discussion on links between poverty and disability, and address the issue in a holistic manner.

(Source: [www.dnis.org/news.php?issue\\_id=4&volume\\_id=4&news\\_id=653](http://www.dnis.org/news.php?issue_id=4&volume_id=4&news_id=653))

### **17. National Conference on Accessible Transportation Delhi, India**

International experts, disabled user groups, advocacy organizations, government bodies and academicians met to discuss the issue of accessible transport and issues related to it materializing in India.

The Conference was organized by Samarthya, National Centre for Promotion of Barrier-free Environment for Disabled Persons, and organizations advocating a barrier-free environment, in collaboration with the Transportation Research and Injury Prevention Programme (T.R.I.P.P.) of the Indian Institute of Technology.

T.R.I.P.P. coordinator, Dinesh Mohan said that mobility for all means mobility for all, not for a few. He said Delhi was progressing in the field of a barrier-free environment. He drew attention to the first disabled-friendly bus shelter, but added that much still needed to be done.

As part of the Conference, some participants became the first sizeable group of wheelchair users to simultaneously board the disabled-friendly high capacity bus at Delhi's first disabled-friendly bus terminal dedicated to the public by Delhi Transport Minister Haroon Yusuf.

(Source: DNIS)

### **18. Computer Trainers' Training for Deaf and Hearing Impaired Persons Uzbekistan-Japan Center Uzbekistan 10 March 2006**

Computer courses for deaf and hearing impaired persons were conducted at the Uzbekistan-Japan Center (UJC) since January, 2005. Since then 8 courses at 4 levels (for beginners and more advanced users) have been completed by more than 60 participants.

Since 12 participants have completed all levels during a 1-year period and a decision has been made to organize a trainers' preparation course.

At the end of February, 2006 the 3 best graduates were selected to be independent trainers for the next beginners' course which started on 1 March 2006. They are now regular UJC employees.

Another positive aspect is that the deaf trainers naturally realize the comprehension limitations of the students and can often give an easy-to-understand explanation by implementing their own specific methods which are unlikely to be used by trainers with normal

hearing. For deaf participants taking a course conducted by deaf persons like themselves, there are a number of advantages such as easy direct contact with their trainers, elimination of a communication barrier as well as giving a feeling of confidence, that it is really possible for deaf people to reach such a high level of computer knowledge.

(Source: UJC Computer Courses Coordinator)

### **19. Protecting the Rights of Children with Disabilities 12-16 March 2006 Bayview Park Hotel, the Philippines**

The Liliane Foundation Philippines held a 5-day National Convention on the Rights of Children and Youth with Disabilities in line with the 25<sup>th</sup> founding anniversary of the Liliane Foundation – Netherlands in cooperation with the National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons (NCWDP). With the theme "*Karapatan Namin Pangalaganaan Handog sa Kinabukasan ng Bayan*" (*Caring our Rights for the Future*), the convention focused on the rights of children on survival, protection, development and participation in governance.

The convention's theme devoted to the rights of children with disabilities represents a powerful opportunity to challenge this invisibility. It can provide a high-profile focus on the rights of children with disabilities to social inclusions; the right not to be discriminated against on the grounds of their handicap. It may contribute to national awareness of the huge gulf between the principles and standards in the national policies as well as international mandates and the day-to-day realities of so many children's lives.

(Source: NCWDP)

## **Regional News: Upcoming Events April - June 2006**

### **1. International Summit on Intellectual Disabilities Montreal, Canada 2 – 6 May 2006**

(Source: [www.aamr.org/Events/index.shtml](http://www.aamr.org/Events/index.shtml))

### **2. First Session of Biwako Millennium Framework (BMF) Stakeholders Coordinating Meeting Bangkok, Thailand June 2006**

(Source: [www.unescap.org/calendar/2006/2006.pdf](http://www.unescap.org/calendar/2006/2006.pdf))

### **3. ESCAP/WHO Meeting on Community-based Rehabilitation Bangkok, Thailand June 2006**

(Source: [www.unescap.org/calendar/2006/2006.pdf](http://www.unescap.org/calendar/2006/2006.pdf))

**4. International Conference on Development Disabilities**  
 Tel Aviv, Israel  
 4 – 6 June 2006

(Source: [www.ortra.com/beitissie](http://www.ortra.com/beitissie))

**5. Society for Disabilities Study 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**  
 Washington D.C., United States of America  
 14 – 17 June 2006

(Source: [www.uic.edu/org/sds/annualmeetings.html](http://www.uic.edu/org/sds/annualmeetings.html))

**6. Conference on Accessibility of the Built Environment**  
 Budapest, Hungary  
 29 – 30 June 2006

(Source: [www.meoszinfo.hu](http://www.meoszinfo.hu))

## Editorial Message

Warm, warm greetings to all readers from the shiny and bright Bangkok, Thailand! What has APCD been doing in this quarter? All of you would like to know! As you can see in this newsletter, APCD continues to implement activities for persons with disabilities in the region, improving our performance to the best of our ability in the region. In this quarter, APCD expanded its network and followed-up with our focal points and associate organizations, which show that experiences and skills gained from APCD have spread to the wider community. APCD is not walking alone but along side with other stakeholders in the region. Without your collaboration, APCD could never have gone this far to empower persons with disabilities in the Asia and Pacific region!

APCD Empowerment Newsletter  
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