Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability
EMPOWERMENT
APCD

Self-Help Organizations/Self-help Groups of Persons with Disabilities (SHO/SHG)

One of the 7 priority areas in the Biwako Millennium Framework is SHO of persons with disabilities and, their related families and parental associations. In order to develop the rights of persons with disabilities, increase capacity-building and engage rural persons with disabilities, SHO /SHG of persons with disabilities can be empowered to gain their rights and collective power for a better quality of life in any sector of society. It is clearly stated that SHOs should develop programs for capacity-building to empower themselves, including youth and women with disabilities, to take consultative and leadership roles in the community at large as well as in their own organizations, to enable them to serve as trainers in the development of leadership and management skills of members of self-help organizations.

Definition

■ Concept of SHO and SHG ■

According to *Mr. Yutaka Takamine*, JICA short-term expert, the word "self-help" means:

*"**SHO** of persons with disabilities" is an organization run by self-motivated disabled people to enable disabled peers in their community to become similarly self-motivated, and self-reliant. The organization may engage in efforts to provide community-based support services through mutual support mechanisms and advocacy for disabled persons to achieve their maximum potential, and assume responsibility for their own lives. In the Asia-Pacific Region, SHO represent Cross-disability organizations and Single-disability organizations.*

(Reference: UNESCAP Publication on "Self-help Organizations of Disabled Persons")

Mr. Balakrishana Venkatesh, APCD Resource Person on SHG from India,expressed his point of view on the definition of self-help groups as follows:

*"**SHG** of persons with disabilities" is a kind of social group with cross-disabilities in a small-scale, at the local level. It is usually not feasible to establish a group of persons with a single disability in a village or small town. SHG not only educate, empower and encourage persons with disabilities in the community to develop and be aware of their rights but also build a network among other social groups like women's groups, youth groups, group of elderly persons, and so on, to solve their problems and work for sustainable development in the community.*

■ APCD and SHO/SHG ■

SHO/SHG of persons with disabilities are one of the most effective agents to empower persons with disabilities through activities, bringing their entire community rights-based and sustainable development toward a society for all. In order to achieve that objective, APCD effectively and efficiently implemented SHO and SHG training courses along with related expertise. Since 2002, APCD's SHO and SHG trainings focused on:

■ **Capacity Building for SHO of Persons with Disabilities**: to strengthen the foundation of SHO through philosophy/concepts of self-help and the cross-disability movement, managerial theories and skill techniques of social resource mobilization, as well as network and collaborative techniques.

■ **Initiators for SHG of Persons with Disabilities towards Rights-based and Sustainable Community Development**: managerial or/and concerned personnel of organizations which have a plan/practice to help initiate/strengthen **SHG of persons with disabilities** at the grass-root level.

■ **Regional Training Seminar on Capacity Building of SHO of Persons with Disabilities (CBSHOD)**: to share up-to-date information among national cross-disability SHO or relevant organizations in their national disability movement.

■ **Refresher Training on SHG of Persons with Disabilities**: to develop/strengthen the grass-root SHG of persons with disabilities of ex-participants and their facilitator skills.

APCD promoted SHO and SHG training to develop the capacity of SHO and SHG of persons with disabilities and relevant NGOs, especially related to cross-disability at the national and grass-root levels for self-advocacy and sustainable development of persons with disabilities.

Refresher Training on SHG of Persons with Disabilities towards Rights-based and Sustainable Community Development
18 July - 3 August, 2006

APCD organized a Refresher Training on SHG of Persons with Disabilities towards Rights-based and Sustainable Community Development. Nineteen ex-participants of SHG/SHO of Persons with Disabilities or Community based Rehabilitation (CBR) Courses organized by APCD from 2003 – 2005 participated. Persons who came from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Viet Nam and Thailand were engaged in directly developing SHG of Persons with Disabilities at the grass-root level or supporting SHG of Persons with Disabilities under their CBR projects. Mr.Balakrishana Venkatesh from India was the main resource person; others included Mr. Suporntum Mongkolsawadi, Mr. Terayudth Sukolthavit and Mr. Tammawit Suwanapruk.

The objective was for participants to be able to 1) nurture their insights and attitudes to be effective facilitators for SHG of Persons with Disabilities; 2) equip themselves with practical facilitation skills; and 3) formulate strategies and action plans to ensure sustainability of their related SHG of Persons with Disabilities.

The contents of the training were divided into the following:

1. Reviewing main concept ideas about Disability and Development.

2. Practicing Facilitation Skills in 2 sections; one, participants practiced amongst themselves training; the other was in the villages with the SHG members of Persons with Disabilities in Chainat Province.

3.Learning about production of facilitation materials, how to produce simple and attractive materials for their facilitation activities.

4. Formulating and presenting an Action Plan.

An effective facilitator equipped with advanced knowledge and skills, is a development worker who works with the community to bring about change in the situation of people/ issues in the community.

As a development worker, s/he should facilitate the development of SHG of people with different disabilities to carry on the work started by him/her. This requires building a healthy working relationship with everyone in the community, having a good understanding of the situation of people/issues in the community, identifying the problems faced by poor people in the community, and working with disabled people and their families, etc.

From this, we could see great hope that many of new effective facilitators who were more confident and ready to facilitate SHGs' members in areas of leadership, team working through learning process in their own countries. APCD believes that the participants will bring good outcomes and impact their society and the Asia-Pacific region.

Participants of SHG Training Course

Interview Corner

1) Mr. Yutaka Takamine, JICA Short-term Expert on SHO/SHG from Japan

Mr. Yutaka Takamine

"SHO and SHG of persons with disabilities are run by persons with disabilities not non-disabled persons. SHG consist of many types of disabilities and include family members in the community. They can form SHG together to become a federation and many federations joining together can fundraise from other organizations. However, the key point here is that SHG are from the grass-root level. A SHO seems like a national organization of persons with disabilities, larger than SHG with either a specific disability and/or cross disability organizations. Factors to strengthen SHO and SHG are commitment, building a working environment, and attitude. These are the main factors to empower persons with disabilities."

2) Mr. Balakrishana Venkatesh, APCD Resource Person on SHG from India

Mr. Balakrishana Venkatesh

"The concept of SHG is based on freedom of choice and participation. SHG initiates when people gather together to understand each other and share ideas and experiences, when they begin to have their identity and to learn leadership life skills. SHG provide the opportunity for persons with disabilities to gain self-confidence, self-worth, help each other, take action to change their situation, and also include cross-disabilities since persons with disabilities have two major problems in the community; one is poverty and the other is social discrimination. Forming a cross-disability group can ensure acceptance in society and by family members. They can sing, work, play jokes, and feel free. This shows that SHG can bring about very wonderful things."

Interview Corner

1) Participants from Myanmar

"Before attending this training, we didn't understand how to become an effective facilitator in our group, but from this training we learnt how to use codes, pictures, and other methods. When we return to our country, we will use simple pictures and a different type of media to teach SHG in Myanmar."

2) Ms. Phengmany Phengphomkong, participant from Lao PDR

"I used knowledge from the previous training to form SHG in Vientiane, where there are 18 SHGs. From this year's course, I have learned how to communicate and coordinate with other sectors such as governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). I will apply these skills and knowledge in developing my group. Apart from vocational training, I would like to motivate other sectors, for instance, the medical sector, schools, and NGOs to develop accessibility for persons with disabilities."

3) Mr. Suchin Samphosri, participant from Thailand

"From the previous course, I used my knowledge to motivate persons with disabilities in the community about raising awareness and advocating for persons with disabilities. I have learned techniques to be a facilitator from Mr. Venkatesh on how to present and analyze problems. The new things I have learned are techniques of facilitating, decision-making, and group members' participation. I gained lots of new knowledge and will share them with my group here in Thailand. Along with this, I will coordinate with other related organizations to provide education for persons with disabilities."

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General joined the enjoyment of the agreement on a new treaty on the rights of persons with disabilities, reached by the General Assembly on 25 August 2006 at the 8th Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, as a historic achievement for the 650 million people with disabilities around the world. He notes that people with disabilities have hitherto lacked adequate protection, and hopes that this long overdue Convention will mark the beginning of a new era in which they will have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. He urges all member states to ratify the Convention and ensure its rapid implementation after adoption in the 61st General Assembly, 2006.

Background

In resolution 56/168 of 19 December 2001, the General Assembly decided to establish the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, based on the holistic approach in the work done in the fields of social development, human rights and non-discrimination and taking into account the recommendations of the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission for Social Development after a proposal of a drafting convention in 2001 by Mexico's President Vicente Fox. The first Ad Hoc met in July, 2002. The uniqueness of the Ad Hoc is the openness for accredited disability non-governmental organizations to attend the meeting, making statements and presentations, and providing materials to delegations. This shows a high relation between the work of the government and disability-experts. The negotiations on the drafting on the convention have come to an end at the 8th Ad Hoc meeting held in August, 2006.

Substantial of the Convention

This Convention makes persons with disabilities "rights holders" and "subjects of law" with **full participation** in formulating and carrying out plans and policies affecting them.

The newly treaty will consist of the main body context and the optional protocol. The main body treaty will comprises of the Preamble and 50 Articles covering all aspects of the human rights issues of persons with disabilities and the structure of the Convention. Issues in the Optional Protocol will cover monitoring and reports of the Convention comprising of 18 articles. (For details of the Draft Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Draft Optional Protocol, please click to http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/)

After the adoption of the Convention by the 61st General Assembly, the Convention will be opened for signature and ratification. Governments that ratify it will be legally bound to treat persons with disabilities not just as a minority, but as subjects of the law with clearly defined rights.

APCD & Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

In this special occasion, APCD would like to join this gracious moment to express our pride to this human rights treaty for persons with disabilities and will hand-in-hand promote the ratification of the Convention and the implementations of the Convention for the utmost of persons with disabilities!

Training of Information and Communication Technology for Visually Impaired Persons
16 August - 8 September 2006

APCD organized the Training of Information and Communication Technology for Visually Impaired Persons (ICT for VIPs). The objectives were to train computer teachers/ICT training staff from organizations of/for VIPs to be able to 1) teach computer operation to VIPs with assistive

ICT for VIPs Training

devices/software, 2) design appropriate computer training for VIPs, and 3) understand the concept of information accessibility for persons with disabilities based on universal design principles.

The fourteen participants from governmental and non-governmental organizations of/for VIPs in 7 developing countries in the Asia-Pacific Region, namely Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam participated in the training. Eleven of the 14 participants were blind and 1 had a physical disability.

The course was mainly led by blind resource persons from Japan, Malaysia and Thailand who are professional in technologies for VIPs. Mr. Wiraman Niyomphol, from Ratchasuda College, Thailand, was the course leader. Mr. Silatul Rahim Dahman from Malaysian Association for the Blind, a former ICT for All participant co-lectured with

Mr. Wiraman teaching the operation of JAWS, Microsoft Office Application, Internet, E-mails, and other teaching methods. Altair for Windows, a self-voicing software with 3 main functions of editing, e-mailing and browsing, was taught by Mr. Toshiaki Aomatsu, JICA Expert on ICT and a teacher at the National School for the Blind in Japan. APCD also invited Mr. Monthian Bhuntan, the President of Thailand Association of the Blind to give a lecture on information accessibility for persons with disabilities.

A field visit was made to the Bangkok School for the Blind and Ratchasuda College to practice conducting classes and provide support for visually impaired students and other disabled persons.

Participants were so enthusiastic to learn and raised a number of remarkable questions. They helped each other and supported resource persons to have the training move on smoothly.

Every week, participants were required to role play as a teacher to their classmates which they found very useful.

APCD is confident that we have developed numbers of future trainers of ICT for VIPs in this course and believes that the utmost objective of this course is fully met through their performance during the course and from their action plans. APCD strongly hopes to witness their implementation through APCD various follow-up activities.

Interview of Resource Persons

Q1: In your opinion, what were the obstacles to approach ICT for VIP?

Mr. Wiraman Niyomphol

Mr. Wiraman Niyomphol

"Having worked in the region for several years, there are two obstacles as we move toward ICT for the blind; local language access and web accessibility. We need to continue to work on computer access solutions for many other local languages in the region. Web accessibility is a more general issue. Although many websites are now accessible, we still need to raise awareness and encourage more web developers to comply with accessible guidelines."

Mr. Toshiaki Aomatsu, JICA Expert on ICT

Mr. Toshiaki Aomatsu

"1) The special software and other related-special devices for the blind and special devices are still expensive, 2) sighted people with computer knowledge may not always be a good computer teacher for the blind since they may not know how the blind use computers, and 3) blind

people lack job opportunity causing the lack of access to computers."

Q2: Do you think ICT could empower persons with disabilities?

Mr. Wiraman Niyomphol

"ICT would definitely empower disabled people. Having skills to search and exchange information through the Internet and to be able to operate computers independently, will make it faster for persons with disabilities in the region to communicate globally."

Mr. Silatul Rahim Dahman

"ICT is a tool that can develop and empower persons with disabilities, enabling them to become more able persons promoting and upgrading the potential of persons with disabilities."

Mr. Silatul Rahim Dahman

Mr. Toshiaki Aomatsu

"If VIPs can use ICT, they will be able to work in the ICT-related field as sighted people. If we could develop a good job opportunity model, we will be able to empower them. If they can create their websites, they can establish a network among blind people."

Q3: What are your impressions of this year's training?

Mr. Wiraman Niyomphol

"All blind participants had previous knowledge of the Screen Reader and basic computer. Sighted participants enthusiastically learned how to work with computers from the blindness perspective. As the course leader, I personally feel that we have put together a quality workshop with knowledgeable trainers in the region. I hope APCD will continue trainings for the blind and visually impaired in the future."

Mr. Silatul Rahim Dahman

"The training was smooth and productive as it was well-prepared and organized."

Mr. Toshiaki Aomatsu

"All participants were very active asking lots of questions along with suggestions to improve the Altair software. They have a good attitude about learning new things and are positive about using their skills to promote ICT in their country. They would become good trainers. With most of them being blind, they will play an important role to promote and empower blind people in their country.

APCD Project Technical Cooperation Terminal Evaluation
5 September - 4 October 2006

After four years of joint technical collaboration between the Governments of Thailand and Japan for the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability Project (APCD), the technical cooperation (JICA) is about to reach its finale. From this, a joint terminal evaluation between the Japanese Terminal Evaluation Team organized by the Japan International Cooperation Agency and the Government of Thailand was sent to monitor the implementations of the Project.

The objectives of the evaluation were: 1) to grasp the inputs of the Thai and Japanese sides and summarize the achievements of the Activities of the Project, 2) to execute a comprehensive evaluation of the achievements of the Project from the viewpoint of the five evaluation criteria, and 3) to make recommendations for the activities in the remaining period of the Project and after its completion as well as note the lessons learned from the Project.

On this occasion, APCD would like to share some points highlighted as stated in the conclusion of the evaluation.

"The overall results of the Project are outstanding from the viewpoint of empowering persons with disabilities and promoting a barrier-free society. In one potential area there has always been a shared notion among the stakeholders of the Project that it is imperative to put persons with disabilities in the center of the activities and networks created through the Project while the Center plays the role of a facilitator. It is commonly recognized that the networks created and strengthened through the activities of the Project, are so useful and widely recognized by 32 countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Various actors, such as organizations or persons with disabilities, local communities, governments in the region and some related international organizations, express their interest in further collaboration with the Center. It should also be noted that in addition to the above, the expectations of the various actors resonate a variety of impacts in Thailand such as, the promotion of a barrier-free environment, ICT accessibility and the establishing/ strengthening of Independent Living Centers. The synergetic effects on both the region and Thailand have resulted in further enhancing the reputation of APCD."

From all these wonderful outputs, APCD would like to give due credit to all our stakeholders. As stated above, APCD would never have been so successful without good collaboration and support from all our focal and associate partners. Even if the technical cooperation may end, APCD still promises high commitment to further empowerment and to promote a barrier-free environment for persons with disabilities.

Evaluation Team

Japan Invitation Youth Programme 2006
14 June - 6 July 2006, Japan

Twenty-four Thai youths, who work in the disability-related field, were selected as the participants of the Japan Invitation Youth Programme 2006 and went to Japan to study the social welfare for people with disabilities in Osaka, Tokyo and other neighboring prefectures.

This program was initiated and has been supported by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) with the objectives to impart useful knowledge necessary for development of developing countries in various subjects ranging from natural resources to high technology.

To be continued in next volume...

Report on
UNESCAP/APCD Seminar on South-to-South Cooperation
on Disability: Development of APCD Network
22 September 2006, Bangkok

The objectives of the seminar were to: (1) share outcomes of national focal points and associate organizations; (2) expand the network of stakeholders of APCD activities; and (3) consider the future direction of APCD.

An opening statement was delivered by **Mr. Shigeru Mochida**, Deputy Executive Secretary and Officer-in-Charge, a.i., of the Secretariat, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific **(UNESCAP)**. He shared that UNESCAP was preparing for the mid-point review of the second Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012, and that the seminar's inputs would be valuable for such review. The opening remarks were delivered by **Mr. Jiro Usui**, Counselor and Deputy Permanent Representative to UNESCAP, **Embassy of Japan**. Mr. Usui informed the participants that APCD was the legacy of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002, and that the BMF identified APCD as a regional organization to promote empowerment of persons with disabilities and a barrier-free society. **Mr. Chanyut Kosirinond**, Deputy Permanent Secretary, **Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Thailand**, gave the inauguration speech. On behalf of the Ministry, he expressed continuous support for the operation and management of APCD in close collaboration with all the seminar participants and other concerned parties to achieve empowerment of persons with disabilities and promote a barrier-free society in the region.

Seminar on South-to-South Cooperation

The Seminar was attended by the representatives of APCD national focal points and associate organizations from the following countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, Vanuatu and Viet Nam. Participants from organizations of persons with disabilities from Southern African countries also attended the Seminar to deliberate on the achievements and good practices.

Mr. Tanin Kraivixien, Chairperson of the **APCD Foundation**, gave a presentation on the APCD Foundation's fund-raising activities and support for APCD. Professor Wiriya Namsiripongpun, APCD Executive Board Member, gave a presentation on APCD's organizational development.

Ms. Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo, Disability Advisor for East Asia and the Pacific, **the World Bank**, presented a paper titled "Toward Inclusive Development: the Experience of the East Asia and the Pacific Region of the World Bank." In her presentation, Ms. McClain-Nhlapo stressed that the Bank's advantage to support disability mainstreaming included its high quality analytical work, assistance in building capacity, demonstrating and testing innovative approaches. She explained extensive efforts that the World Bank had taken to include disability issues into its activities. The Bank had established regional working groups within itself and published a handbook on how to include disability into a country's poverty reduction strategy paper. In conclusion, she mentioned that mainstreaming disability issues was a key to reduce poverty and would contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Ms. Aiko Akiyama, Project Expert on Disability, UNESCAP gave a presentation on recent progress in the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action as well as the draft on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Mr. Mompati Basman Ngakanitsi, Assistant Director of the Office of the Status of Disabled Persons, **South Africa**, gave a presentation on "Achievement of the Decade of Disabled Persons in Africa". He expressed African's desire to learn more from the Asian and Pacific region and to promote an exchange between the two regions to achieve full participation and equality of persons with disabilities in the two regions.

APCD collaborating entities ranged from small self-help groups of persons with disabilities, national and subnational self-help organizations of persons with disabilities, local and international non-governmental organizations, to government agencies as national focal points. This wide range of collaboration is one of the most significant characteristics of APCD.

This session on good practices was evidence of the extensive and wide-range of achievements of APCD activities and collaboration with its stakeholders. These achievements might have strong correlation with: (i) APCD's wide-range and different levels of interactions with its stakeholder organizations, (ii) various types of methods to interact with its stakeholders, (iii) identification of young and new leaders of disability movements, and (iv) prompt response to emerging needs of stakeholders.

A plenary discussion was held on future development and collaboration with APCD, including issues of APCD's future program development, its future organizational status and management system, and contribution of national focal points and associate organizations toward APCD activities and regional cooperation.

Mr. Tanin Kraivixien with APCD Stakeholders

APCD Mission Reports

Mission to Pakistan
5-12 July 2006

The APCD Mission to Pakistan was to 1) survey Sesar District, Bagh, the earthquake affected area, and 2) join the Seminar on Independent Living.

APCD mission at IL workshop

The mission visited the Sesar District, Bagh AJK (Kashmir) located in the Himalaya Mountains partially covering Jammu & Kashmir, where Ms. Nazreen Aziz, an ex-participant of APCD and school teacher, discovered approximately 1,200 persons with disabilities and organized a DPO, Charagh-e-Manzil. After the earthquake, she met with other leaders with disabilities to assist her with a project on a barrier-free environment to support many people who became disabled due to the earthquake. Moreover, she plans to formulate fundraising activities to reconstruct a school that was damaged by the earthquake in the Bagh AJK area in 2005. The assessment by the Earthquake Reconstruction Rehabilitation Authority, noted that this school should be rebuilt.

The mission visited Bagh City to join a Workshop on Persons with Disabilities and Reconstruction of Earthquake-affected areas. At the workshop, Mr. Topong Kulkhanchit,

APCD Resource Person and Executive Board Member, and DPI/Asia-Pacific Regional Development Officer, emphasized that accessible school models to be built should be promoted as well as inclusive education. Ms. Nasreen Aziz stated the importance of peer-counseling and an Independent Living Center.

The mission attended a Special Session Seminar on Independent Living organized by the Special Talent Exchange Program (STEP) in Islamabad on 9 July 2006. Mr. Atif Sheikh, STEP President, opened the session for 40 participants from across Pakistan. The aim of the seminar was to contribute to the efforts of the Independent Living Centers who were actively involved in reconstrucion and rehabilitation of the Communities, especially after the earthquake in 2005. A wide range of issues pertaining to persons with severe disabilities, independent living centers, and problems related to their implementation were discussed. Substantive sessions were organized with the participation of APCD resource persons and organizations of representatives of disabled peoples' organizations. The sessions consisted of topics a "STEP towards Independent Living" and a "Presentation on Case Studies of Severely Disabled Persons".

APCD will further collaborate to empower and strengthen a barrier-free society for persons with disabilities in Pakistan.

Mission to Papua New Guinea
18-27 July 2006

The APCD Mission visited the Ministry of Community Development and met with **H.E. Ms. Dame Carol Kidu, Minister of Community Development**, who agreed to be the honorable chairperson of the Regional Training Seminar on Capacity Building for Self-help Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (CBSHOD) 2007. H.E. Ms. Kidu set up a press conference at the Parliament Building on 27 July 2006 and announced that the Ministry of Community Development will collaborate with APCD and the DPI/Asia-Pacific Regional Office hosting the CBSHOD 2007 in Port Moresby. The mission also visited 1) the Department of Health 2) the Ministry of Education 3) the Ministry of Labor and 4) the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), stating full support towards the upcoming CBSHOD. The Mission also met many persons with disabilities from different provinces and provincial representatives of the Ministry of Health, Labor, Education, and Community Development.

The Mission participated in the **1st National Leadership Training Seminar for Women with Disabilities** and the 5th NBDP Conference in Lae. On 19 July 2006, **Mr. Topong Kulkhanchit**, APCD Resource Person and Executive Board

Member, and DPI/Asia-Pacific Regional Development Officer, shared about the new human rights convention and human rights issues of women with disabilities.

The Mission visited Pari village and met with small disabled peoples' organizations in the community to get information about persons with disabilities and accessibility. Additional projects concerning disability such as, Morobe Special Education Resource Center, Associate for Disabled Houses, PNG Rehabilitation Center, Cheshire Home, St. John's Association for the Blind, and the Red Cross Special Education Resource Center were also visited.

Mission team with H.E. Ms. Dame Carol Kidu (Top middle) and disability-stakeholders.

Mission to the Philippines
29 August - 2 September 2006

Former Filipino IL Participants

The Mission objectives were to collaborate in a 3-day domestic workshop on Non-handicapping Environment (NHE) which was organized by former APCD participants, the National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons (NCWDP) and the JICA-Philippines Office, to monitor and follow up on APCD ex-participants as well as to seek more information on participants for future training courses, and to strengthen a collaborative relationship with APCD's focal point organizations.

The National Consultative Workshop on the Promotion of a Non-Handicapping Environment for Persons with Disabilities was conducted at the Pearl Manila Hotel, Ermita, Manila from 30 August to 1 September 2006. **Honorable Dr. Esperanza Cabral, Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development** was the Chairperson for the Workshop. Thirty-two persons participated in this workshop covering a Best Practices presentation, small group discussion, action plan implementation, and lectures by guest speakers from different sectors. Management Corporation talked about promoting NHE from business sector perspectives SM Supermalls, where an accessibility survey was conducted in the Mall of Asia. In addtition, the University of the Philippines lectured about the Universal Design.

Three highlights of the mission were:

1. The extension of the action plan formulated by each participant in this workshop will promote and sustain the NHE campaign in the Philippines.

2. The greater collaboration among sectors such as the SM SuperMalls Corporation, and the University of the Philippines. They sincerely work and support NHE in the Philippines. This is a good model to share with other countries in this region, on the participation of civil society in social development.

3. Former APCD participants collaborating with the NCWDP, will develop a project up-scaling NHE to expand in other areas of the Philippines by submitting the project proposal to the JICA-Philippines. This shows a good practice of working together between civil societies and international organizations for the development of NHE in this region.

Apart from the involvement of the NHE aspect, we had a good opportunity to meet and interview some former APCD participants who attended the Independent Living training in 2005 & 2006 and the Human Rights of Persons with a Psychiatric Disability in 2004.

APCD Counterpart Training in Japan
20 - 27 August 2006

Mr. Kitti Samanthai, Director – General of **the Office of Welfare Promotion, Protection and Empowerment of Vulnerable Groups (OPP)** together with **Prof. Wiriya Namsiripongpun, APCD Executive Board Member** and **Mrs. Kanitta Kamolwat**, APCD Director attended the Counterpart Training on Policy Making for Empowerment for Persons with Disabilites and Accessible Information in Japan. During the training, APCD counterparts visited different disabled people's organizations. They learned about Japan's Legislation and Policy on Disability, Collaboration with NGOs, Management of International Training, Management of Information Center and Activities of Information Support at **the Japanese Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities** and **TOYAMA Sunrise**. They were exposed to the Independent Living empowerment concept, and the support of independent living for persons with an intellectual disability at **the Human Care Association**. The group had the opportunity to visit one person with an intellectual disability who lives independently with 2 personal assistants supported by the Human Care Association.

In Kyoto, the counterparts visited and learned about activities of the **Japanese Foundation of the Deaf**, which also organized the Community SAGANO Center. This Center provides sign-language training for volunteers and personnel of/ for the deaf people. In Nagoya, all participants visited the **AJU** organization and learned about the activities for persons with disabilities managed by persons with disabilities; for example, the WADACHI Computer House and the Winery Project.

The counterpart training provided knowledge and skills that can benefit Thai policy making and provided further insight on disability-related issues. It is important to empower persons with disabilities through organizations of persons with disabilities. Real life experience and information sharing applied in the training greatly impacts the counterparts in learning and raising awareness that will benefit APCD project administration.

Counterparts in Kyoto

APCD Project Activities

APCD Activities in Brief (July-September)

This summer, APCD was very busy organizing regional trainings, seminars, workshops, and networking and collaborating. APCD also joined the celebration of the historical upcoming Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol.

The third trimester of the year 2006 began with a Refresher Training on Self-help Groups (SHG) of Persons with Disabilities towards Rights-based and Sustainable Community Development. Ex-participants of previous APCD training courses on SHG and Community-based Rehabilitation learned new dimensions on the topic of SHG. APCD Human Resources Development organized the 3rd Training of Information and Communication Technology for Visually Impaired Persons for 14 participants from 7 countries aimed at training of computer trainers for visually impaired persons.

In this quarter, APCD held a networking and collaborative event in collaboration with the UNESCAP, entitled the UNESCAP/APCD Seminar on South-to-South Cooperation on Disability: Development of APCD Network. In spite of the political instability in Thailand, 17 participants from 10 countries joined the seminar along with participants from the South African region. Through this seminar, APCD and stakeholders could exchange points of view and best practices resulting from the ex-participants implementation during the past 4 years.

APCD continuously networked and collaborated with focal points and associate organizations especially in the information sharing areas.

APCD was pleased to welcome guests especially H.E. Jiro Kawasaki, Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japanese Government representative, in August. APCD also welcomed both the public sectors and private sectors like the SM Supermalls from the Philippines, which did an excellent job in promoting public awareness on physical accessibility issues for persons with disabilities.

Tentative APCD activities in the next upcoming 6 months (October 2006 – March 2007) are:

October-November

	● Newsletter Volume 17
31 October– 10 November	● Refresher Training on Regional Workshop on Accessible Web-based Information Networking

December

4 - 7	● Mission to Papua New Guinea
13 – 21	● Regional Training on Independent Living for People with Disabilities

January

	● Newsletter Volume 18
16 January – 2 February	● ICT for All: Training of Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY) for Persons with Print Disability

February-March

12 – 16	● Regional Training Seminar on Capacity Building of Self-help Organizations of Persons with Disabilities, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea
27 February - 16 March	● Regional Training on Community-based Rehabilitation

Tentative Activities (2006)	October			November			December		
Newsletter Volume 17									
Refresher Training on Regional Workshop on Accessible Web-based Information Networking				31 Oct - 10 Nov					
Mission to Papua New Guinea							4 - 7		
Regional Training on Independent Living for People with Disabilities								13 - 21	

Tentative Activities (2007)	January			Frebruary			March		
Newsletter Volume 18									
ICT for All: Training of Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY) for Persons with Print Disability		16 Jan - 2 Feb							
Regional Training Seminar on Capacity Building of Self-help Organizations of Persons with Disabilities, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea					12 - 16				
Regional Training on Community-based Rehabilitation							27 Feb - 16 Mar		

Regional News
July - September 2006

1. National Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation Week Centers on Environmental Issues
The Philippines
4 July 2006

The 28th National Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation Week from 17 to 23 July 2006 focused on the theme, "Kalikasan Pangalagaan: Kapansanan Maiiwasan" (Environmental Issues). Activities included Tree Planting, Lecture Forum on Environment and Disability, On the Spot Waste Re-use Competition for Persons with Disabilities, Livelihood and Trade Fair of Products Made by Persons with Disabilities, a Sports Exhibition of Persons with Disabilities, and a Cultural Show featuring talented performers with disabilities.
Please check http://www.pia.gov.ph/news.asp?fi=p060704.htm&no=26 for more details.

(Source: PIA Press Release, 07/04/2006, PIA Information Service)

2. Assistive Devices and Information Management
Karachi, Pakistan
10 - 11 July 2006

Assistive Devices and Information Management Seminar was organized by the Pakistan Association of Deaf (PAD) in Karachi. More than 100 people participated in the two days seminar which showed how persons with disabilities can further develop their lives through Information and Communication Technology.

(Source: Special Talent Exchange Program (STEP))

3. Special Search Engine Offered for the Visually Impaired
22 July 2006

Google now offers a special search engine for the visually impaired. The main difference is the websites are listed by user-friendly extensions. The scientist who developed the software is blind himself. He says a web page with complicated layouts and too much information is least user-friendly for the visually impaired because they usually need a magnifier to read it. For blind people using audio-synthesized software, this kind of webpage is also a waste of time when all the written characters are transformed into voices. The special engine is still available for trial use.
Please check http://labs.google.com/accessible or http://news3.xinhuanet.com/english/2006-07/22/content_4867242.htm for more details.

(Source: China View)

4. Beautiful Gate Peer Counseling Workshop 2006
Malaysia
25 - 27 July 2006

Beautiful Gate organised Peer Counseling Workshop 2006 to provide more practice opportunities to Beautiful Gate Peer Counselors and introduce the concept of Peer Counseling to the staff of Beautiful Gate and its disabled members.
Please check www.beautifulgate.org.my for more details.

(Source: Ms. Sia Siew Chin from Beautiful Gate Foundation for the Disabled)

5. Report of Web Accessibility Training
Sri Lanka
7 - 8 August 2006

The training, held at the University of Peradeniya was conducted by Prof. D.P.M. Weerakkody, co-ordinator of the project, with the assistance of Ms. Lakmini Ariyaratna, ICT instructor of the project. Both Prof. Weerakkody and Ms. Ariyaratna previously received training at the APCD in Bangkok, Thailand. The teaching material was also taken from the APCD's WBN-2005 CD. This training concentrated on accessible mark-up techniques and web content accessibility guidelines.

(Source: Report from D.P.M. Weerakkody, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka and DAISY Lanka Foundation)

6. DiVi Travel Services of Vietnamese Hearing Impairment
Viet Nam
21 August 2006

DiVi Travel Services provides Deaf/Disabled Travel Services that specializes in arranging trips and tours in Vietnam. They have deaf/hearing tour guides in ASL or writing/ speaking in English. They are members of the Hanoi Association of the Deaf/Disability Forum.
Please check http://deafviet.sphosting.com for more de tails.

(Source: Deaf Viet)

7. The Government of Bangladesh has approved the National Action Plan on Disability
Bangladesh
24 September 2006

The National Coordination Committee on Disability (constituted under the Disability Welfare Act 2001) passed the National Action Plan on Disability. This journey began almost five years ago, is indeed a major milestone in the disability movement in Bangladesh!
Please check www.csidnetwork.org for more details.

(Source: Centre for Services and Information on Disability)

8. Drug Label Written in Braille
Thailand
14 August 2006

Nonthaburi - Pak Kret municipality has created the country's first label for drugs written in Braille. The label was devised by the municipality's 2nd Public Health Office which treats many patients from nearby homes of the disabled and the blind.

Please check www.bangkokpost.com/News/14Aug 2006_news03.php for more details.

(Source: Bangkok Post)

9. DNIS Happy Anniversary!
India
1 September 2006

1 September 2006 is the third anniversary of Disability News and Information Service (D.N.I.S.), India's pioneering fortnightly online news service on disability. It is time to celebrate. Yet, it is a good time to pause and reflect on the journey so far.

Please check www.dnis.org_features.php?issue_id =17&volume_id=4&features_id=125 for more details.

(Source: Disability News and Information Service)

10. Poland Receives FDR Award on Disabilities at UN Ceremony
Poland
18 September 2006

Poland's President, Lech Kaczynski accepted the Franklin Delano Roosevelt International Disability Award for his country's efforts to improve the lives of persons with disabilities at a ceremony held at the United Nations.

Please check www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp? NewsID=19877&Cr=disab&Cr1= for more details.

(Source: UN News Centre)

11. Report on Web Content Accessibility Standards for Thailand Seminar
Century Park Hotel, Bangkok
27 September 2006

The Seminar of Web Content Accessibility Standards for Thailand was organized by the National Electronics and Computer Technology (NECTEC). NECTEC by the Assistive Technology Center (ASTEC) is now planning to adopt the newest version of the **Web Content Accessibility Guideline**s or **WCAG** version 2 to be standards on web accessibility in Thailand. Thus, this seminar was held in order to seek best solutions and best practices among webmasters and web developers from various sectors such as the government sector, private sector and disability-related organizations in Thailand by utilizing WCAG 2.0.

All participants agreed to every guideline in the new proposed version. However, it was proposed that priorities of some guidelines be changed as the participants agreed that they can follow those guidelines quite easily.

12. Asia Pacific Disability Forum Second General Assembly - Bangkok Statement
Thailand
16 – 17 October 2006

The 2nd Asia Pacific Disability Forum (APDF), General Assembly and Conference 2006, with support of UNESCAP, the Council of Disabled People of Thailand and the Royal Thai Government was organised in Bangkok. The theme was "Achieving Rights-based Development through Joint Effort". Check the Bangkok Statement from this conference, at http://v1.dpi.org/lang-en/resources/details. php?page=734

(Source: Disabled Peoples' International (DPI))

Regional News: Upcoming Events October - December 2006

1. Assistive Technology Conference to Benefit Asia-Pacific Rim Region
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China
10 - 12 October 2006

(Source: www.atn-ctcf.org)

2. UNESCAP/APDF Regional Workshop on Biwako plus 5& the 2nd Session of the APDF General Assembly
Bangkok, Thailand
16 - 17 October 2006

(Source: www.unescap.org/esid/psis/disability/decadenew/ newdecade.asp)

3. UNESCAP Workshop on Self-help Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and Related Family and Parents Associations: towards the mid- review of the Decade of Disabled Persons in 2007
Bangkok, Thailand
18 - 20 October 2006

(Source: www.unescap.org/esid/psis/disability/decadenew/ newdecade.asp)

4. The 2nd International Conference for Universal Design in Kyoto 2006
Kyoto, Japan
22 - 26 October 2006

(Source: International Association for Universal Design)

5. World Autism 2006 Conference
Cape Town, South Africa
30 October - 2 November 2006

(Source: www.autismcongress.com)

6. UNESCAP/CDPF Workshop on Accessible Tourism
Hainan, China
October 2006

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

7. Seminar on Universal Web Accessibility
Singapore
1 December 2006

(Source: Disabled People's Association (DPA))

8. E-Accessibility to be Theme for International Day of Disabled Persons 2006
3 December 2006

(Source: United Nations)

9. 18th World Federation of the Deaf Regional Secretariat in Asia/Pacific Representative Meeting
3-5 December 2006
Macau

(Source: www.wfdrsap2006macau.org)

Editorial Message

Happy greetings to all our readers! We would like to invite you all to join in this special occasion to say Happy 4th Year Birthday to APCD! It's amazing that APCD has already spent four years contributing its utmost to/for persons with disabilities in the Asia-Pacific region. From the viewpoint of APCD, we could see that the disability community is eager to join our activities and those joined have been very enthusiastic to develop and improve programs back in their hometown. This is what APCD would like to see, the strengths, empowerment, and efficiencies of these people to perform knowledge of excellence.

As editor of the "Empowerment: APCD Newsletter", I would like to give a zillion thanks to all our readers and all those contributing news and articles for our newsletter!

"Empowerment" APCD Newsletter
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