



## Best Practice on Collaboration with APCD

### *Review of South-to-South Seminar*

#### Introduction

APCD has been promoting empowerment of persons with disabilities and a barrier-free society since August 2002, in collaboration with 32 focal points and more than 140 associate organizations in 32 developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

In the last 4 years, APCD focal points and associate organizations, especially former APCD training participants have made great achievements in society in order to bring about "Full Participation and Equality of Persons with Disabilities". Such achievements were shared at the Seminar on South-to-South Cooperation on Disability, 22 September 2006, Bangkok, Thailand, as "The Best Practice on Collaboration with APCD". Reviewing these case studies, we can see the development of the disability movement in the Asia-Pacific region in collaboration with APCD.

#### The Philippines

The National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons (NCWDP) in collaboration with NGOs, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and APCD, conducted the Training of Trainers on the Promotion of Non-handicapping Environment for Persons with Disabilities from 1-4 March 2005, with 32 representatives participating from the 17 regions of the country. This was a follow-up program of the actions of seven former APCD training participants.

NCWDP in collaboration with the United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs (UN-DESA) and APCD, organized a series of ICT trainings such as the National Webmaster's Interface on Accessible ICT for Persons with Disabilities, May 2006, and Cebu Workshop on Accessible ICT for Persons with Disabilities, October 2005. Through these workshops, more than 75 webmasters were trained and a Manifesto of Commitment to advocate Accessible ICT for All, based on the Manila ICT Design Recommendations, was adopted.

One of the associate organizations said that the involvement of APCD as a technical support provider has been a great support to the country's campaign towards full implementation of existing laws to open the general system of Philippine society. In addition, APCD through its training programs provided the opportunity to upgrade the

skills and knowledge of people who are involved in the empowerment of Filipinos with disabilities.

NCWDP has envisaged a five-year pilot project entitled "Towards a Barrier-Free and Rights-Based Philippines: Creation of Non-Handicapping Environment for Filipinos with Disabilities in the Rural Areas." This project will bridge the gap between persons with disabilities in urbanized centers and rural areas in terms of access to services.

#### Pakistan

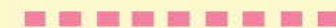
Regional Training Seminar on Capacity Building of Self-Help Organizations of Disabled (CBSHOD) was held in Islamabad, 22-26 September 2005, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education, Special Talent Exchange Program (STEP) and APCD, in which more than 70 representatives participated from 15 countries in the region. Furthermore, an Accessible Environment Seminar, December 2005, was also held to promote a barrier-free society in the earthquake affected areas.

In total, more than 30 Pakistani people participated in APCD's training such as CBSHOD, Independent Living and Web-based Information Networking. Due to the tireless efforts of former participants, the Special Session on Independent Living in Islamabad in collaboration with STEP, and an Assistive Devices and ICT Accessibility Seminar were held in July 2006 in Karachi in collaboration with the Pakistan Association of the Deaf with more than 60 representatives from all over Pakistan participating.

Through these activities, network and collaboration among NGOs and the government became much stronger with a large number of self-help group/organizations of persons with disabilities in Pakistan being empowered.

For future development, the Government in collaboration with NGOs is implementing a National Plan of Action for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, and the Islamabad Declaration of CBSHOD. Further, accessibility to the built environment as well as ICT will be widely promoted, and Independent Living Centers are being established in Islamabad and Lahore.

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Ministry of Social Development  
and Human Security



Japan International  
Cooperation Agency

## **Thailand**

There were two best practices presented from Thailand; 1) The Christian Foundation for the Blind in Thailand (CFBT) and 2) Thailand Council for Independent Living (IL).

CFBT established collaboration with APCD in 2004 mainly through sending trainees and resource persons for various ICT trainings. Through this collaboration there have been positive outcomes in various aspects. For example, CFBT personnel who received training have gained wider knowledge in the field of ICT accessibility, and expanded it to other colleagues and students of CFBT through its training program. The fruitful experience of instructing in a workshop at an international level resulted in more expertise and confidence. CFBT will extend its objective in working side by side with other related organizations especially APCD in promoting ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities.

The Thailand Council for Independent Living was established in 2006 after several trainings on IL and Peer Counseling since 2002. The Council of IL dispatched trainees and resource persons to the trainings to develop their skills and knowledge to establish a standard for a Thai IL Center. Through the training of APCD and the establishment of a Council, a number of persons with disabilities who have been home bound have come out in society and been empowered by living a more independent life.

## **Fiji**

Fiji Disabled Peoples Association (FDPA) dispatched participants to various APCD trainings such as the Non-handicapping Environment (NHE), ICT for Visually Impaired Persons (VIPs) and Web-Based Information Networking. The participants have made great achievements in Fiji society. For example, they organized a workshop on NHE in the Pacific region and started an access audit to evaluate building accessibility for persons with disabilities; computer training for VIPs has been conducted and an accessible website of FDPA was also developed. Also, FDPA produced a 4 page information paper and 7 brochures of the Biwako Millennium Framework according to each of the 7 priority areas for the Government and other stakeholders.

Furthermore, FDPA in collaboration with UNESCO and APCD organized the first ever ICT workshop in the Pacific region to which representatives from 7 island countries participated. They learned about information accessibility and assistive technologies for persons with disabilities and developed an action plan to promote ICT accessibility based on the situation of each country.

The collaboration between APCD and FDPA has been very productive. FDPA gained much information and knowledge from the APCD training and information support. FDPA hopes to continue working on ICT accessibility, a barrier-free environment, and Human Rights for persons with disabilities for Fiji as well as the Pacific.

## **Viet Nam**

Forty-five persons with disabilities among 66 government and NGOs representatives from Viet Nam have taken APCD training courses. They have been promoting empowerment of persons with disabilities and a barrier-free society in Viet Nam.

The National Coordinating Committee on Disability (NCCD) in collaboration with NGOs and APCD organized a Training Seminar on Capacity Building for Self-help Organizations of Persons with Disabilities, in Hanoi, 13 - 17 December 2004, to which more than 60 participants from 21 countries participated.

APCD also contributed in the drafting of a law on persons with disabilities in Viet Nam, which will be submitted to the National Assembly in 2008. Information provided by APCD through newsletters and their website is circulated to many NGOs; some useful information such as training materials have been translated into Vietnamese by the Disability Forum.

As the result of these activities, the leadership skills of a number of young persons with disabilities have been strengthened; 100 self-help groups have been established; a CBR network has widely expanded and an e-network of persons with disabilities has rapidly increased. A National Association of Disabled Persons is expected to be established in 2007.

For future development, Vietnamese focal points and associate organizations expect more effective network and collaboration with APCD, especially on training and information sharing. NCCD is planning to organize a national seminar/workshop on ICT accessibility, with the Disability Forum willing to share information in Vietnamese and then expand information network; Danang Rehabilitation and Sanatorium Hospital is hoping to train more persons with disabilities and strengthen its CBR network.

## **Conclusion**

We can see that APCD's focal points and associate organizations have been actively motivated to empower persons with disabilities and promote a barrier-free society. Pakistan Association of the Deaf, one of the APCD associate organizations, said "The major change was mobilizing/activating NGOs and the government. Now the disability movement is much more active due to APCD". APCD is honored to hear this and at the same time, proud of the achievements and efforts being made by APCD's focal points and associate organizations. APCD is particularly happy to see a young and new leaders' disability movement emerging in the Asia-Pacific region which will enrich the future of disabled persons. We wish you all the success and happiness for a bright future of persons with disabilities in the near future.



## Refresher Training on Accessible Web-based Information Networking 31 October - 10 November 2006

A Refresher Training on Accessible Web-based Information Networking (WBIN) was held from 31 October to 10 November 2006, at the APCD Training Building, Bangkok, Thailand with 9 participants from 8 countries namely Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines and Thailand.

Objectives of the training were to strengthen national and regional information networking on disability and establish more active information network in an accessible way, especially through accessible websites. Nine participants spent 11 days to learn how to establish and strengthen active information networking at rural, national and regional levels.

Ms. Kamolpun Punpuing, Mahidol University and APCD resource person for information networking, presented refreshing ideas on information networking. Ms. Lan Anh, Disability Forum Communication Officer, Viet Nam, and assistant resource person, presented case studies of Vietnam information networking.

Ms. Kamolpun and Ms. Lan Anh facilitated group discussions concerning rural, national and regional information networking. If the level of network is different, methods, targets, languages and contents would be different based on the nature of the network.

Participants learned about grass-roots networking from 2 Thai resource persons; Ms. Pongkeo Kichtham, Thai Disabled Development Foundation (<http://www.tddf.or.th/>) and Mr. Sombat Boongamanong, Mirror Art Group ([www.bannok.com](http://www.bannok.com)). Both presented knowledge and experience of how to expand/activate information network at the grass-roots level, and emphasized the potential of ICT for the network.

Regarding regional/international network, APCD invited Ms. Debra Perry, Senior Specialist, ILO - EASMAT and Ms. Aiko Akiyama, Disability Expert, UNESCAP. ILO has an accessible website, entitled "Ability Asia", which provides much information on employment and vocational training for persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific region. UNESCAP has just published the "Disability at a Glance", which provides an overall picture of the disability situation in 28 countries in Asia and the Pacific. Both are eager to know the progress of the disability movement at the grass-roots level.

Ms. Wantanee Panthachat, National Electronic and Computer Technology Center, Thailand, prepared a lecture on her activities of assistive devices for persons with disabilities. Mr. Monthian Buntan, President of Thailand Association of the Blind and Member of APCD Executive Board, shared the current progress of information accessibility for persons with disabilities in the frame of the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

For the second week, participants reviewed the web accessibility through the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI). They first checked accessibility of their website, and APCD

resource person, Mr. Raksak Chairanjuansakun, the Bangkok School for the Blind, instructed them how to make an even more accessible website. Participants tried to develop the website as accessible as possible during the 3 days hands-on session.

Participants began each day by giving a summary of the day before to review what they had learned the previous day. Mr. Akram Muhammad, Pakistan, gave sign language training every morning which proved to be valuable to our training and communication among participants.

In conclusion, all participants presented their action plan at 3 levels on how to strengthen a more active information network in their countries; grass-roots, national and regional information networking through a variety of methods such as a website, email, newsletter, radio, annual report, workshop, training and seminar. They emphasized workshops and trainings at the grass-roots level, where access to ICT is limited.



**Participants of Refresher Training  
on Accessible WBIN Course**

### Participants' Interview Corner

#### Mr. Maheshwar Ghimire – Nepal

Nepal Disabled Human Rights Center (DHRC) focuses mostly on information networking in Nepal to promote a rights-based approach. We have a strong dissemination networking within the country like a weekly radio and monthly journal. But, DHRC is looking forward to develop a strong information collection system within the country and out to the rest of the world. Shortly, we will start an English newsletter to disseminate information at the regional level and more. Our webpage will be more accessible, with more information.



## Participants' Interview Corner

**Ms. Nelia Regala de Jesus – The Philippines**



“Strong Information Networking is the tool for information accessibility for empowering persons with a disability. A network is only effective when its focus is on leveling all playing fields for persons with disabilities, who, in this day and age, are barred from their basic rights such as enjoyment of the right to life, health, work, be educated and all that are open to the next non-disabled person.

The bottom line is knowing which information is useful and appropriate in empowering and creating a rights-based society for persons with disabilities, and with them. Since empowerment is not doing anything for a person with disability, but breaking down barriers so he/she could empower himself.

Strong Information Networking and Information Accessibility are powerful tools, which are meaningful if they are used to empower and create people with disabilities from social/physical barriers towards self worth and dignity.”



## Refresher Training on Independent Living (IL) of Persons with Disabilities in the Community 13 - 21 December 2006

The objectives of this training were to strengthen the IL movement and Center in target countries by enabling them to develop relevant insights through sharing experiences and good practices on IL, to formulate action plans for strengthening the IL movement and Centers, and to initiate a network of the IL movement among former participants' organizations. Twelve former trainees of the APCD Training of Managerial Personnel of Independent Living Centers for Persons with Disabilities from Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Thailand participated. The training contents covered the following issues:

### **Sharing Experiences on Managing an Independent Living Center**

- IL Movement from a Global View
- Overview of the Situation of the IL Movement in Target Countries
- IL Center Management in Thailand
- Persons with Disabilities Rights' Protection
- Sharing Experiences on Peer Counseling
- Sharing Experiences on the Management of Personal Assistants
- Public Relations and Effective Networking
- Resource Mobilization
- Further Participation of Persons with Various Disabilities e.g. persons with a hearing impairment, intellectual disabilities
  - Understanding more on other approaches to support persons with disabilities in the community: Community-based Rehabilitation/ Self-help Organizations/ Inclusive Development Activities, etc.
  - Networking among Participants
  - Balancing Advocacy and Services for Persons with Disabilities

Field Visits were organized to the Nonthaburi (a province bordering Bangkok) IL Center, the Bangrukpattana

and Bangkrang sub-district administrative organizations located in Nonthaburi province. Participants visited two cases at the Nonthaburi IL Center, which build good opportunities for the participants to study the real situation in the community. They also learned the dynamics of the community after becoming involved in the IL program, which participants could apply and adapt in their country. Utilizing newly acquired skills and experiences, participants developed their country action plans in the IL area as follows;

**Malaysia** plans to expand the IL concept in collaboration with the Beautiful Gate Foundation by holding a workshop to share IL skills and knowledge.

**The Philippines** plan to fund raise to establish an IL Center for Persons with Disabilities implementing related-activities, such as organizing a fashion show, selling charity lottery, etc.

**Pakistan** plans to establish three IL Centers and collaborate with the public sector to support a Peer Counseling Seminar.

**Thailand** plans to establish IL Centers in Chainart, Pratumthani, Chantaburi, and Trad Provinces as well as advocate for a public welfare policy for persons with disabilities.



**IL Refresher Trainees**

## Participants' Interview Corner

### Mr. Muhammad Imran – Pakistan



From this course we had the opportunity to meet people from other countries and share our experiences. So it has given me more knowledge about IL and various cultures. It has broadened my concepts as well. I feel more confident to implement this knowledge in my country's dynamic cultural environment.

### Mr. Abner Nguyen Manlapaz – The Philippines



The Independent Living (IL) Movement and an IL Center are not like any other group or organization. They focus on supporting the life of persons with disabilities who wanted to live independently. The IL movement wants to change society to become a barrier-free and rights-based society. The significance of the IL movement has been demonstrated already and that I believe is a living example/model.



## APCD Mission

### Mission to Singapore: 1 November 2006

#### “Assistive and Rehabilitative Technology Symposium (ARTS) Seminar”

Singapore Therapeutic, Assistive & Rehabilitative Technologies (START) held the Assistive and Rehabilitative Technology Symposium (ARTS) on 1 November 2006 in Suntec City, Singapore. Approximately 80 persons working in the government and private sectors from Singapore and Thailand participated as well as Mr. Sawang Srisom, APCD Information Support Officer.

The seminar was to promote research, development, study and the rights to Assistive and Rehabilitative (AR) technology of disabled and elderly persons in order to enhance their quality of life. Experts, engineers and the industrial sector were urged to develop, promote and industrially produce AR devices in Singapore. The seminar started with a report of the overall situation of accessibility in Singapore. Singaporeans with disabilities now enjoy the wheelchair accessible bus, subway and sky train, which have become more and more accessible. The Land Transport Authority has had several plans to improve accessibility such as footpaths, bus stops, etc. Also, laws to protect their accessibility rights do exist, for example, starting from 2006, all new buses must be accessible.



**Panel Discussion on  
“Policy or Technology”**

Several new related issues were introduced such as the Universal Design for an Inclusive Home, Computer for Caring for Ageing People and Occupational Therapy. Interestingly, some of these issues are already being addressed in Singapore now. Panelists in a discussion on “Policy or Technology” agreed that we first need to articulate policy to address the needs of users, affordability, accessibility and other requirements that facilitate technology development. AR technology must suit the impairment, work and goal of an individual.

Mr. Zen Koh, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of START Center, said that the commercialization of AR devices needs a collective collaboration from several sectors such as research institutes, universities, private companies, etc., in order to promote AR technology to commercialization.

### Mission to Macau: 2 - 5 December 2006

#### “World Federation of the Deaf Regional Meeting”

The Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD) sent a mission to participate in the 18<sup>th</sup> World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) Regional Secretariat in the Asia-Pacific (RSA/P) Representative Meeting held from 3-5 December 2006 in Macau. The theme was “Sign Language Interpretation System to Realize the Full Participation and Equality of Deaf Persons in Society”. The objectives were to look into issues regarding the protection and improvement of the rights of the deaf, to facilitate regional cooperation and interaction, and to explore future prospects of

rehabilitation services for the deaf. The meeting was officially opened by a Representative of Macau SAR Government, Mr. Takeo Ogura of WFD RSA/P, and Ms. Clarissa U Ka Weng, President of the Macau Deaf Association. Twenty-six participants from the following 13 countries attended: China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Macau, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. Mr. Yasunori Shinamoto, Chairman of the 3<sup>rd</sup> WFD RSA/P Deaf Youth Camp, Youth Section of the Japanese



**WFD RSA/P in Macau**

for One” moving towards establishing a Youth Section in RSA/P region in the future. The next Deaf Youth Camp is scheduled for Indonesia in 2008. Ms. Liza Clews, Sign Language Interpreter/ Trainer from Cambodia reported on the Survey on Sign Language Interpreting in the Asia-Pacific Region. The result shows developing countries of the Asia and Pacific region have a limited number of Sign Language Interpreters compared to developed countries in the same region. Each participating country reported the situation of the deaf in each country. Mr. Marku Jokinen, President of the

Federation of the Deaf, gave a report on the 3<sup>rd</sup> WFD RSA/P Deaf Youth Camp held from 31 October – 5 November 2006 in Miyazaki Prefecture, Japan with 41 participants from 14 countries. The camp’s theme was “One for All, All

World Federation of the Deaf, shared the contents and process of the UN Human Rights Convention on Persons with Disabilities. Mr. Marku clearly stated that “This is the 1<sup>st</sup> ever international treaty mentioning sign language and the deaf culture. This Convention is a powerful tool for all human rights”. The 1<sup>st</sup> Asia-Pacific Sign Language Interpreters’ (SLI) Conference organized parallel was attended by 17 participants from Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Macau, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, and Thailand. Country reports on the situation of the sign language interpreters identified Repetitive Strain Injury or Occupational Overuse Syndrome as a major problem of sign language interpreters due to overload work. Mrs. Kanitta Kamolwat, APCD Director, and Mr. Akiie Ninomiya, APCD Chief Advisor presented APCD activities to the Meeting. APCD will further collaborate with the deaf community and the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters to develop activities for the deaf and sign language interpreters.

## **Mission to Pakistan: 16 - 21 December 2006**

### **“Independent Living of Women with Disabilities”**

**APCD mission at IL workshop**

This mission was to collaborate in a Seminar on Independent Living (IL) of Women with Disabilities in Islamabad, organized by the Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education, and in a Peer-counseling Domestic Training organized by the Special Talent Exchange

Program (STEP) in cooperation with Milestone from 18-20 December 2006; also to facilitate a planned school project in Sesar, Bagh in cooperation with relevant organizations in Pakistan. The Seminar on IL on 18 December 2006 opened with remarks by Mrs. Kanitta Kamolwat, APCD Director, Mr. Kaibara, JICA Resident Representative, and Mr. Aftar, Director of Special Education. The objectives were to promote positive understanding and support for IL of persons with disabilities by relevant senior government officials, professionals, and leaders with disabilities in Pakistan, especially in the earthquake affected areas. Approximately, 60 persons including officials, leaders with disabilities, and professionals participated. Ex-participants of the APCD training in Bangkok shared their reports on

their post-training activities and emphasized that they and their Pakistani peers with disabilities could gain self-confidence and start IL in the community. Mr. Topong Kulkhanchit, APCD resource person, explained about the social model of disability, the IL concept stemming from the model, and the current global movement of IL. Ms. Akiyama, JICA Short-term Expert, shared her own experience of being “disabled” and empowered through the participation of IL activities. For her, IL leaders provided support and peer-counseling which brought hope and changed her life from a passive life in an institution to live independently in the community.

The Training Course on Peer-Counseling Basics was conducted by STEP. A short-term JICA Expert and former APCD participants, who were women with severe disabilities, have empowered participants with disabilities through peer-counseling; they were excellent role models and mentors for 17 women with disabilities throughout the training. The objective was to equip women with disabilities with basic knowledge and skills on peer-counseling in order for them to be future peer-counselors for persons with disabilities, especially for women with disabilities, specifically in the earthquake affected areas. At the end of the training, participants regained self-confidence and internal strength to live positively in their communities. Also, a small but new movement and network among women with disabilities has seemingly begun in Pakistan.

## **Mission to Sri Lanka: 16 - 20 December 2006**

### **“Creating a Non-handicapping Built Environment”**

The APCD Mission Team visited the Ministry of Social Services and Social Welfare (originally Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and Social Welfare) on 19 December 2006 and met with Ms. Viji Jegarasasingam, Secretary of the Ministry, and Mr. W. H. W. Soysa, Additional Secretary. The Secretary promised continuous

support to APCD particularly in information support, especially the country profile.

The Mission Team visited the Disability Organizations Joint Front (DOJF) on 17 December 2006. DOJF has been distributing APCD information such as newsletters, videos, regional news etc. to the 21 member

organizations through its newsletter, emailing list and resource room. DOJF also requested APCD to provide more copies of their newsletter and videos for circulation among the member organizations.

On 19 December 2006, at the University of Colombo, the mission met with representatives (mostly APCD's former training participants) of the associate organizations such as DAISY Lanka Foundation, Sri Lanka Council for the Blind and Sri Lanka Federation of the Visually Handicapped. The representatives said that they were particularly interested in APCD's training report, regional news and especially country profiles, which they noted is highly valuable information and would like to help develop it.

The Mission Team participated in the International Seminar on "Creating a Non-Handicapped Built Environment" organized by the Ministry of Urban Development and Water Supply in collaboration with John Groom Overseas on 18 December 2006 at B.M.I.C.H, Colombo. There were approximately 200 participants primarily from local and

central governments. Four out of the six international resource persons were APCD's former training participants, namely 1) Ms. Anjee Agarwal, India 2) Mr. Sanjeev Sachdeva, India 3) Mr. Jaime Silva, the Philippines and 4) Dr. Asiah Abdul Rahim, Malaysia. They presented their knowledge and experience gained from APCD to promote and implement the Non-Handicapping Environment (NHE) for persons with disabilities in their own countries.



Group photo at the Disability Organizations Joint Front



## CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

by United Nations Department of Public Information

The 61<sup>st</sup> United Nations General Assembly adopted the first new human rights treaty of the twenty-first century in December, 2006, marking the culmination of nearly two decades of work on protecting and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities and a major shift in the way the world treats its 650 million disabled people.

In opening remarks, Sheikh Haya Rashed Al Khalifa ( Bahrain), President of the General Assembly, said all Member States had now committed to promoting and protecting the human rights, freedoms and dignity of all persons with disabilities. The Convention was an "opportunity to reaffirm the universal commitment to the rights and dignity of all people without discrimination" that could likewise provide the much-needed impetus for wider cultural changes in the world's perception of disabled people.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in a message delivered by Deputy Secretary-General Mark Malloch Brown, said today was the dawn of a new era for people with disabilities, who, for far too long, had been relegated to the

margins of society and denied the rights that others took for granted. The Convention was the most rapidly elaborated instrument ever, accomplished in just three years because of the dedication of its supporters, including a large segment of civil society who had lobbied heavily both in person and over the Internet, including with Governments.

Don MacKay ( New Zealand), Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, said that, theoretically there was no need for a new Convention as existing human rights instruments already applied to persons with disabilities in the same way they applied to everyone else. Unfortunately, however, that was not the reality. The Convention was a "benchmark for future standards and action".

At the same time, all delegations agreed that the Convention's adoption ushered in an important paradigm shift towards recognizing disabled persons as rights holders and active members of society rather than objects of charity



### Convention Highlights

Under the Convention, States parties guarantee that persons with disabilities enjoy their inherent right to life on an equal basis with others ([article 10](#)). They are to ensure the equal rights and advancement of women and girls with disabilities ([article 6](#)) and protect children with disabilities ([article 7](#)). Children with disabilities will have equal rights, will not be separated from their parents against their will, except in their best interests, and would in no case be separated from their parents on the basis of a disability of either the child or the parents ([article 23](#)).

States parties ensure the equal right to own and inherit property, to control financial affairs and to have equal

access to bank loans, credit and mortgages ([article 12](#)). They ensure access to justice on an equal basis with others ([article 13](#)), make sure that persons with disabilities enjoy the right to liberty and security, and were not deprived of their liberty, unlawfully or arbitrarily ([article 14](#)).

According to the Convention, countries must guarantee freedom from torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and prohibit medical or scientific experiments without the consent of the person concerned ([article 15](#)); and protect the physical and mental integrity of persons with disabilities. In case of abuse, States promote the physical and psychological recovery,

rehabilitation and reintegration of the victim and investigate the abuse ([article 16](#)).

By other provisions of the treaty, persons with disabilities would not be subjected to arbitrary or illegal interference with their privacy, family, home, correspondence or communication. The privacy of their personal, health and rehabilitation information was to be protected on an equal basis with others ([article 22](#)).

On the fundamental issue of accessibility ([article 9](#)), the Convention requires States parties to identify and eliminate obstacles and barriers, and ensure that persons with disabilities could access their environment, transportation, public facilities and services, and information and communications.

Countries are required to promote the right to an adequate standard of living and social protection, including public housing, services and assistance for disability-related needs, and assistance with disability-related expenses in the case of poverty ([article 28](#)).

Also by the Convention, discrimination relating to marriage, family and personal relations would be eliminated. Persons with disabilities would have equal opportunity to

experience parenthood, marry and establish a family, decide on the number and spacing of children, have access to reproductive and family planning education and means, and to enjoy equal rights and responsibilities regarding guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children ([article 23](#)).

States ensure equal access to education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning. Under article 25, persons with disabilities have the right to the highest attainable standard of health without discrimination on the basis of disability. They receive the same range, quality and standard of free or affordable health services as provided other persons and not be subjected to discrimination in the provision of health insurance.

The 18-article Optional Protocol on Communications allows petitioning by individuals and groups to the Ad Hoc Committee, once all national recourse procedures have been exhausted.

**Source: Edoardo Bellando, United Nations Department of Public Information.**

**For further information please check <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/about.shtml>**



## First Deaf Students Graduate from High School in Viet-Nam History

**by Eriko Takahashi, Manager,  
Department of International Affairs, The Nippon Foundation**

In Fall, 2006, four deaf students graduated from high school for the first time in Viet Nam history. One of the graduates, Ms. Nguyen T. Tran Tien, even succeeded in entering the Lac Hong University as the first deaf student to enter higher education in Viet Nam.

Almost all deaf schools in Viet Nam teach at only the elementary level; there is only one deaf school that provides formal junior and senior high school level education. This school was established by Professor James Woodward, an American Sign Language Linguist, with the collaboration and understanding of the Dong Nai Provincial Department of Education. Before this school was established, there was no means for deaf people to receive secondary education. Professor Woodward wanted to change this situation to provide educational opportunities up to the university level for young deaf people.

This project started in 2000, currently has about 40 deaf students. It is located at the Dong Nai Provincial Teachers College, a one-hour drive from Ho Chi Minh City. All students are committed to become either teachers in deaf schools or sign language instructors; both are highly important for deaf education and empowerment. Until now, the students have achieved high scores on the Vietnamese National Examinations. In 2003, 2004 and 2005, 100% of the deaf students who took the Junior High School National Exam passed while the passing rate for hearing students in Dong Nai were respectively, 76%, 77%, and 81%.

One important feature that makes this school distinct is its emphasis on using local sign language to teach its curriculum. It is atypical because most deaf schools in Viet Nam use oral education. Another important feature is that the school teaches the same subject materials as the standard schools, while most deaf schools leave out certain subjects or content. They are able to cover one full year of the school curriculum in one academic year. This is rather uncommon for a deaf school since most in Viet Nam require 2 years to cover 1 year of the school curriculum.

The Nippon Foundation has been fully supporting this project for 7 years. This project made an immense impact as a model to empower deaf persons in developing countries, due to its high performance and cost effectiveness.

We believe this school has already proven many great advantages of using sign language for deaf education. It is our hope that schools for the deaf in Viet Nam and Asia will realize the importance and effectiveness of education through sign language and hopefully adopt the teaching methods of this school.

**For more details on this project, please read Prof. Woodward's article on the following website. <http://nippon.zaidan.info/seikabutsu/2005/00001/pdf/DeafWorldsPaper.pdf>**

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



APCD is pleased that both APCD buildings accessible for persons with disabilities have been welcomed as models by various sectors, disabled peoples' organizations and academic institutions alike that have come in to study the accessibility design.

## January

- 16 – 2 February
- Newsletter Volume 18
  - Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for All: Training of ICT for Persons with Print Disability

12 – 16	● Regional Training Seminar on Capacity-building of Self-help Organizations of Persons with Disabilities
27 February - 15 March	● Refresher Training Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR) through a Participatory Comprehensive Approach

- Newsletter Volume 19
- Seminar on Networking for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities
- Workshop on Women with Disabilities
- Training on Educational Material Production

## 16–24 ● Seminar on Peer-Counseling

- Training on Non-handicapping Environment
- South – to – South Seminar
- Disability Equality Training

[illegible]

## Regional News

### October - December 2006

#### 1. National Action Plan on Disability Approved by the Government Viet Nam October 2006

The National Action Plan on Disability for the period 2006-2010 has been approved by the Government of Vietnam. The Plan has been prepared with contribution and participation of relevant ministries and agencies of the government, self-help groups, NGOs, and other organizations.

Please check <http://vnah-hev.org> for more details.

**Source: Report from Pham Thi Cam Ly, Senior Program Officer of Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH)**

#### 2. Seminar on Assistive Technology for Hearing Impairment Thailand 12 - 13 October 2006

Assistive Technology Center (ASTEC) and National Association of the Deaf in Thailand (NADT) organized a Seminar on Assistive Technology for Hearing Impairment: Development for a Better Life; to gather information as well as analyze a guideline for development of assistive technology in Thailand towards the implementation and research suited to the needs of hearing impaired persons.

Please check [http://astec.nectec.or.th/event\\_detail.php?id=27](http://astec.nectec.or.th/event_detail.php?id=27) for more details.

**Source: Assistive Technology Center**

#### 3. Asia Pacific Disability Forum Second General Assembly – Bangkok Statement Thailand 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 organized in Bangkok. The theme was "Achieving Rights-based Development through Joint Efforts". For the Bangkok Statement from the conference.

Please check <http://v1.dpi.org/lang-en/resources/details.php?page=734> for more details.

**Source: Disabled Peoples' International (DPI)**

#### 4. First National Computer Camp for the Blind Indonesia 23 - 24 November 2006

With the theme "New Understanding, New Hope toward ICT for All in Indonesia", 100 blind and visually impaired persons gathered at the Agency for the Assessment and Application of Technology Building, for a computer camp for the blind held by Mitra Netra Foundation, the first of its kind in the country. The two-day gathering challenged all to the common misconception that the blind are unable to compete in terms of equality with the sighted.

Please check [www.mitraneutra.or.id](http://www.mitraneutra.or.id) for more details.

**Source: Report from Nur Ichsan, Head of Research and Development, Mitra Netra Foundation**

## International Day of Disabled Persons 2006

### Pakistan

1. On 1 December 2006, Sindh Disability Forum (SDF) addressed a press conference at Karachi Press Club, Karachi. Through this there were demands for inclusion in the decision-making process in legislative assemblies, accessible transport and environment, and implementation of the 2% quota in government jobs. On 2 December 2006, all member organizations celebrated the day in their respective cities and towns. Most staged rallies and other organizations organized seminars on E-Accessibility. This year the electronic media of Pakistan gave special coverage to IDDP. In this regard SDF collaborated with TV channels for special features on the problems of persons with disabilities. SDF staged a rally from Karachi Press Club to Governor House on 3 December 2006.

2. Special Talent Exchange Program in collaboration with Handicap International organized a national level forum to recognize the UN Convention, particularly its clauses on "E-Accessibility" in accordance with the theme of IDDP 2006.

More than 200 people attended. The outcomes were advocacy and understanding about the UN Convention on a large scale among disability stakeholders. Moreover, they are learning about the new dimensions and trends in Accessible Information and Communication Technology as well as awareness on a large scale about the rights of persons with disabilities due to their involvement with Mass Electronic and Print media.

3. Various activities carried out across the country by organizations of Persons with Disabilities were under the flag of DPI-Pakistan; on 25 of November 2006 JICA overseas volunteers in collaboration with the National Training Center for Disabled Persons and DPOs conducted an open forum along with an exhibition of disability stakeholders in Islamabad.

4. On 3 December 2006, the Prime Minister of Pakistan inaugurated the Blind Cricket World Cup in Islamabad and more than 200 persons with disabilities held a march in Islamabad.

## Nepal

National Federation of the Disabled-Nepal (DPI-Nepal) celebrated with a week long activities from the national to the district levels with active participation of its member SHOs, NGOs and relevant stakeholders. The following remarkable achievements observed in the course of IDDP celebration this year include:

1. The Government has officially declared a public holiday for employed persons with disabilities in public and private services on the IDDP from this year on.

2. The Honorable Minister Urmila Aryal and representatives of seven major political parties have expressed commitments to take necessary action for the ratification of the "International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities".

3. The Ministry of Local Development has decided to allocate NPR. 30,000/- for each Village Development Committee for the Disabilities sector.

4. Independent Living Center organized various activities to celebrate the International Day of Disabled Persons 2006 with the financial support of Action Aid Nepal, participated in by DPO's, concerned organizations, human rights workers, civil society, reporters, persons with disabilities and other citizens. The most effective program was the physical barrier-free campaign. The concerned people expressed commitment to making arrangements for a barrier-free path at ground level, constructing barrier-free toilets, making necessary work plans and policies, implementing them and creating an accessible and easy environment for persons with disabilities to receive facilities from the ministries.

5. In Nepal, national celebrations for International Day of Disabled Persons (IDDP), 3 December 2006, provided great opportunities for government, organizations of persons with disabilities and the public at large to focus on the potential of persons with disabilities and to collectively work out strategies on how to break down social and economic barriers. It also supported the theme "E-Accessibility". The celebration created awareness among political parties, government, civil society and policy makers to commit to the participation of persons with disabilities in the constitutional assembly, Substitution Parliament and National Government. The observance of IDDP this year also pushed for the ratification of the "International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" in the forthcoming UN General Assembly.

## Sri Lanka

The DAISY Lanka Foundation (DLF) jointly with the Information and Communication Agency of Sri Lanka (ICTA) organised a seminar on Web Accessibility for web developers and other key ICT persons to celebrate the International Day of Disabled Persons on 3 December 2006. Mr. Samantha Mathara Arachchi of the University of Colombo School of Computing who attended the APCD Accessible Web-based Information Networking (WBN) Workshop in 2005 was a resource person along with Prof. D.P.M. Weerakkody, Vice-Chairman of DLF.

## Vanuatu

Activities were staged in remote islands such as Tomman Island in Malekula, Loh Island in the Banks, Motalava in the Torres Group and by various communities in Santo. In Port Vila, members of the disability community with their families and friends joined the Sunday service at the Patton Memorial Church.

## Thailand

1. On 30 November 2006 at Santichaiprakarn Park in Bangkok, the Minister of Public Health launched a Joint Project on a Barrier-free Society for All with the government and private sectors working in close collaboration with disabled peoples organizations. The highlight was the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that within 6 months accessible toilets and parking spaces will be provided at all gas stations, shopping centers, and private hospitals throughout the country. Some private companies who joined the project are Shell Co., Petronas Co., Bangchak Oil Co., Seri Center Shopping Mall, Robinson Dept Store, Carrefour, etc.

2. On 1 December 2006 Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont presided over the opening ceremony of the International Day of Disabled Persons 2006 organised by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security and presented awards to persons and organisations that have been working to support persons with disabilities. A panel discussion followed on the theme "Access to Social Welfare and Information Communication Technology" which was primarily divided into two forums. One was how to pursue the issue of persons with disabilities having access to information and an accessible environment.

3. On 1 December 2006 at the Tesco-Lotus Department Store in Nonthaburi province, the Nonthaburi Society of Disabled Persons celebrated IDDP 2006. Aside from this outstanding award presented to government offices and private companies who provided best services for people with disabilities, performances from children with disabilities and a public dialogue on E-Accessibility was organized. Significant recommendations will be proposed to the government and agencies in concern, such as, a Public Internet Center at all Sub-districts to be equipped with voice synthesizer software for the blind and webcam for the deaf.

## India

Thousands of disabled people, their families, friends and activists gathered at India Gate in the heart of the capital to mark World Disability Day by participating in the IBM Walk to Freedom. The National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People was instrumental in starting this march ten years ago to highlight the importance of the rights of disabled persons in India.



## Regional News: Upcoming Events January - March 2007

**1. Expert Group Meeting on the Promotion of Social and Economic Participation of Persons with Disabilities towards the Biwako Plus Five**  
27 - 28 February 2007

Please check [www.indiadeafexpo.org](http://www.indiadeafexpo.org) for more details.

Source: **World Federation of the Deaf**

**2. Biwako Millennium Framework Stakeholders' Coordination Meeting, Second Session**  
1 - 2 March 2007

Please Check [www.enablement.nl](http://www.enablement.nl)

Source: [www.enablement.nl](http://www.enablement.nl)

**3. CALL FOR PAPERS: DIRIYA 2007 - Mainstreaming Disability into Development**  
Sri Lanka  
6 - 7 March 2007

Please check [www.nwec.jp/English](http://www.nwec.jp/English) for more details.

Source: **National Women's Education Center**

## Editorial Message

Happy New Year 2007 to all APCD Newsletter Fan Clubs! APCD would like to thank all readers who have kindly welcomed our Newsletter throughout the years. We have been working hard to find the most valuable information for all of you to keep you updated and let you know that you can always depend on us for informative data to be sent to you. APCD has always been very careful with the output of information so that it will be beneficial for all. And as we have always mentioned, APCD will continue to further work studiously to reflect valuable information for you. This will be our BIG New Year gift we would like to hand to you during this special occasion.

**"Empowerment"** APCD Newsletter  
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## Printed Matter

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