



Disability-Inclusive Drum Performance in ASEAN and Japan



Believe in
The Power of Change



Disability-Inclusive Drum Performance in ASEAN And Japan

Organized by

Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD)
The Nippon Foundation



In Commemoration of 50th Anniversary of ASEAN in 2017
& 130th Anniversary of Thailand-Japan Diplomatic Relations in 2017



In collaboration with

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Royal Thai Government

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Thai Yamazaki

ASEAN Secretariat



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INTRODUCTION

11 countries. More than 150 performers with disabilities. Over 1,500 people in attendance. For two days, persons with and without disability gathered in solidarity to witness a historic, first-of-its-kind musical extravaganza that highlighted an inclusive and accessible community for all.

On 2-3 June 2017, the Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD) and The Nippon Foundation presented the 'Disability-Inclusive Drum Performance in ASEAN and Japan' in Bangkok, Thailand with the theme 'Believe in the Power of Change'.

Ten ASEAN countries - Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam - and Japan took part in the pioneering event, which brought together talented drummers with diverse disabilities, including the blind, deaf, persons with autism and intellectual disability, as well as physical and psychosocial disabilities.

The two-day event was held in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the 130th Anniversary of Thailand-Japan Diplomatic Relations in 2017. The event was generously supported by partners including the Government of Thailand (through the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Government of Japan (through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), ASEAN Secretariat, Thai Yamazaki, and other supporters.

Distinguished guests who graced the event included H.E. Dr. Tej Bunnag (APCD Executive Board Chairperson), Mr. Hironobu Shibuya (The Nippon Foundation Special Adviser), H.E. Mr. Shiro Sadoshima (Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Kingdom of Thailand, Embassy of Japan in Thailand), Mr. Vitavas Srivihok (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand Deputy Permanent Secretary), Mr. Somchai Charoen-umnaisuke (Thailand's Ministry of Social Development and Human Security's Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Director General), Mr. Kitsayapong Siri (Ministry of Culture of Thailand Permanent Secretary), and H.E. Mrs. Kobkarn Wattanavrangkul (Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand Minister). The keynote speech was delivered by H.E. Mr. Vongthep Arthakaivalvatee (ASEAN Secretariat's ASEAN for ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Deputy Secretary-General).

The event aimed to promote the musical talents and skills of persons with disabilities and increase awareness for a barrier-free, inclusive and rights-based society for all.

CHANGING LIVES

The 'Disability-Inclusive Drum Performance in ASEAN and Japan' created a positive impact not only for the performers themselves but also for those who watched the event. Listening to the rhythmic sounds of the drums onstage and seeing the heartfelt performance of the drummers with diverse disabilities struck a chord among the audience and made them realize how music can bridge gaps and create a better understanding - and acceptance - among one another. The interviews done with the performers highlighted one common theme - that music, drum playing in particular, gave them an opportunity to showcase their talents, make new friends, better their lives, and make them confident and happy. From the audience's perspective, meanwhile, seeing the musical talents of the performers onstage also made them appreciate those with disabilities as individuals who deserved equal treatment and rights as that of any other. The appreciation the audience showed during and after the event is a great leap forward in furthering inclusivity for all. In the succeeding pages, we will give you a glimpse of the drum performers' sentiments and experiences, as well as their joys and hopes. All of them went back to their respective countries beaming with pride for a job well done and with hearts brimming with a renewed hope for a bright future.

MEET OUR DRUM



PERFORMERS



OUR

STORIES





UNIQU BAND

Brunei Darussalam



Perfect Harmony

Mr. Muhammad Ezan Safree bin Radat, 26 years old, has visual disability. A second generation member of Brunei Darussalam's Uniq Band, he only had two years of experience playing the kulintangan. A popular percussion instrument in Brunei, as well as other countries in Southeast Asia, the kulintangan is a set of horizontal set of brass gongs based on the pentatonic scale.

"At first, it was difficult for me to learn how to play the instrument as it was my first time playing any kind of musical instrument," says Muhammad, smiling at the memory.

With the encouragement of other members, he persisted and, with confidence and passion for the music, he did learn after a short while. "I learned to be patient and started 'listening' to the music playing in my heart until I learned to love playing the instrument," he adds.



The Uniq Band was formed in 2007 as a rehabilitation program meant to introduce some creativity to bored students with disabilities and empower them to be more confident. It was started by the Bahagia (Rehabilitation and Skills Center for Prisons with Disabilities) under the Department of Community Development. It was also one of the social enterprise efforts for musicians with disabilities.

It was originally created like any regular band with lead guitar, bass, keyboards and modern drums. In its early days, the band played in clubs and other private functions. From only four members, the band grew to 10 and more as years passed. In 2015, the band began experimenting with traditional musical instruments.



“We didn’t have people playing traditional instruments like the kulintang, bato and hadra in Brunei. So we introduced it to the members,” says Mr. Awg Md Nasrullah El-Hakim bin Hj Awg Mohammed, the head of Bahagia center. “We saw that the general public easily accepted and liked the band. We also noted that band members with disabilities became more confident and more joyful when they played.”



Seeing that there was a sense of camaraderie, common interests, and appreciation between persons with and without disabilities, the band decided to integrate members. Thus, the Uniq Band now has both members with and without disabilities, including Mr. Halid bin Daud, a first generation keyboards player with visual disability. Currently, there are members with visual, physical and intellectual disabilities.

“Halid can play three keyboards at the same time. He’s really amazing!” exclaimed Nasrullah, adding that each member learns from each other’s flaws and strengths. The Uniq Band, over the years, has been invited to perform in formal functions such as the birthday and other private functions of His Majesty Kebawah Duli Yang Maha Mulia Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Dan Yang Di-Pertuan Negara Brunei Darussalam.

The Uniq Band’s participation in the ‘Disability-Inclusive Drum Performance in ASEAN and Japan’ in Bangkok, Thailand further encouraged and empowered members into becoming the best versions of themselves. In preparation for this particular ‘musical journey’, they even composed new musical arrangements with the help of many sectors (both private and public). Professional musicians also shared their expertise resulting in a richer musical experience for members.



“I hope our stories and experiences will inspire others with or without disabilities,” says Safree. “That if they like or want to achieve something, they will learn more about it and make it fun, too.”

“All members complement and learn from each other. We saw that the integration was there, that we are playing a perfect harmony. Above all, we are all family. That’s how unique Uniq Band is and it is truly an honor to be sharing our music with you.” says Nasrullah.

If there’s one good example of inclusivity in music, it would have to be Brunei Darussalam’s Uniq Band. As heard from their performance, they make beautiful music together — with or without disability — in perfect harmony.







Participants

- 1 Mr. Md Noor Hafizam bin Ropian
- 2 Mr. Md Alimi bin Mahli
- 3 Mr. Muhammad Jamary bin Danggat
- 4 Mr. Md Ezan Safree bin Radat
- 5 Mr. Halid bin Daud
- 6 Mr. Md Radzi bin Md Rapi
- 7 Mr. Abdul Azim bin Hj Abu Bakar
- 8 Mr. Hirdan bin Hj Abd Kadir
- 9 Mr. Awg Md Nasrullah El-Hakiem bin Hj Awg Mohammed
- 10 Mr. Md Aidil bin Jahali

SKOR CHHAIYAM

Cambodia





A Way to Promote Cambodia's Rich Drum Culture

It was the first time that the young drum performers with autism and intellectual disability traveled out of Cambodia but it was a journey that they would not miss for the world. The children's excitement was evident in the shy but happy faces they wore upon arrival in Bangkok.



The children was accompanied by supporters led by Mr. Chan Sarin, founder and director of Hands of Hope Community, an organization mandated to provide day-care facilities, home-based care, disability awareness, parents support group, toy library and inclusive education to children with disabilities. Mr. Sarin is a staunch advocate of the rights of persons with disabilities, particularly children and youth with moderate and severe intellectual disability.

Mr. Sarin expressed his happiness in being able to participate in the pioneering 'Disability-Inclusive Drum Performance in ASEAN and Japan' because it gave



the children an opportunity to showcase and share their musical talents at such a prestigious event and at such a young age at that.

“I see that there are many persons with disabilities belonging to so many drum groups in this event and I am impressed by what I see,” says Mr. Sarin. “I like the fact that this event is inclusive in that I see persons with and without disabilities playing drums together. That is inclusive development through and through.”

He wants to teach the children that they can be empowered through music and that they need to feel that they belong to an inclusive community, which is something that the one-of-a-kind drum event strove for when it was first conceptualized.

Calling their group Skor Chhaiyam, the members are from age 17 to 25 years old. ‘Skor’ is the Khmer word for drum, while ‘Chhaiyam’ is the multi-colored cloth wrapped around the drum. Popular in the countryside, the drum is one of the



many traditional Khmer drums that is considered the longest as it needs a string that enables the drummer to carry it around the shoulder.

This drum, which has four to five types, is used mainly for celebrating happy events. For the people, the sound of the Skor Chhaiyam is akin to thunder and/or thunderbolts and signifies an important connection to the natural world.

In a way, the sound of the Skor Chhaiyam effectively awakens the passion and love for music in the hearts of these young children. In fact, 14-year-old Thy Sreyheanh, a Grade 7 student, says it makes her very happy to be playing the drum. “I was scared the first time I performed but after a few minutes of beating and hearing the loud drum sounds, I became more confident. I love very much the rhythm of the drums, and music in general,” she says with a shy smile.





Grade 4 student Udam Chheng, meanwhile, finds so much excitement in playing this traditional drum. “It gives me so much happiness just playing the drums out on the stage in front of the people. I hope we get to No. 1,” says the 14-year-old with intellectual disability.

Mr. Sarin realizes the value of being a member of this drum group, saying that it’s a really good way “to promote our culture and our Skor Chhaiyam drums”.

At the end of the day, “it’s not about the competition or who is better. All they really need to do is do their best on that stage and just be happy,” he says.





Believe in
The Power of Change



**Disability-Inclusive Drum Performance
In ASEAN and Japan**

In Commemoration of 50th Anniversary of ASEAN in 2017
& 130th Anniversary of Thailand-Japan Diplomatic Relations in 2017







Participants

- 1 Mr. Udam Chheng
- 2 Mr. Chan Sarin
- 3 Ms. Sreyheanh Thy
- 4 Ms. Chhunnai Koch
- 5 Ms. Khim Malis
- 6 Mr. Hung Thy
- 7 Mr. Soritthy Van
- 8 Mr. Huot Puthy
- 9 Mr. Veth Chan
- 10 Mr. Buntong Som
- 11 Mr. Meng Sokleng

PUSER BUMI

INDONESIA 



A Paean to Nature

People marvel at the natural-sounding music they make. One moment, you will hear a heartbeat-like, rhythmical sound of drumming, another moment all you hear are the whistling of a bird.





The Puser Bumi drum group takes people to nature’s most peaceful places with the power of their music. The all-blind group have successfully turned inwards and brought out a sound that resonates with everyone — with or without disability.

“Puser’ means ‘center’ and ‘Bumi’ means the world we live in. Our goal is to prove that the group will be the ‘center of the natural world,’” explains Mr. Haris Munandar, Puser Bumi’s coordinator.

“One very important goal of Puser Bumi is to make people understand and accept that persons with disabilities like them are also very creative people who can perform various art forms, such as music,” he adds.

Puser Bumi need not fear that they are not getting that message across. At their performance in the ‘Disability-Inclusive Drum Performance in ASEAN and Japan’, they had the audience transfixed with their unique sounds.

“The music was quite meditative and I like it very much because it made me feel so relaxed and happy,” says a viewer without disability.

Certainly, it's not only the audience who felt good listening to their music. Even Puser Bumi members experience a therapeutic effect just playing their own brand of music.

"I've been playing the djembe drums and other musical instruments, including wind instruments like the flute, since I was 15 years old," says Mr. Tri Umaryadi from Jogjakarta. The 24-year-old musician has been a member of the group for only several months.



"I can play the flute to make it sound like a bird," he smiles when told that the audience said they liked the bird sound very much in their music.

"I always feel so happy when I play music. It is very important to me because it helps me manage my feelings. I don't feel sad or lonely when I have my music with me," he adds.



Music therapy has been proven by research and this is what Puser Bumi members are experiencing. Giving so much value to this fact is that they are playing traditional music at that. Playing music from their own culture and tradition makes the therapeutic effect all the more powerful because they get to learn more about who they are culturally and gives them a sense of pride in their identities, whether with disability or without. And this is what they impart with their countrymen as well. This, too,

is what makes foreign listeners be more curious about what they have to offer to the rest of the world.

For 29-year-old Abdullah Fikri, introducing their music to the outside world is something he is very proud of, both as a Puser Bumi member and as an Indonesian.



“Playing Indonesian traditional music proves that persons with disabilities like us can bring the best of Indonesian music to others and make other people appreciate our local sound,” says the gamelan and djembe drums.

“I play the bonang, too, which is a part of the gamelan traditional music in Java. I also play the sitar and another traditional instrument called the ‘otok-otok,’” says Fikri, referring to a traditional toy musical instrument completely made of bamboo.

For Pumer Bumi members, being a part of the ‘Disability-Inclusive Drum Performance in ASEAN and Japan’ is a privilege, as it helped them strengthen their



belief that persons with disabilities are capable of doing what they have set their minds to. It also became an important platform for them to showcase the best of Indonesian traditional music.

“I like it very much because we were able to bring the best of Indonesia’s musicians with disabilities and the best of Indonesian traditional music,” says Fikri.









Participants

- 1 Ms. Hasna Penta Kurnia
- 2 Mr. Tri Umaryadi
- 3 Mr. Abdullah Fikri
- 4 Mr. Robi Agus Widodo
- 5 Mr. Ristanto Darmawan
- 6 Mr. Arif Prasertyo
- 7 Mr. Ridwan Akbar
- 8 Mr. Jumarwan
- 9 Mr. Mohammad Ismail
- 10 Mr. Haris Munandar

PHONESAVANH GROUP

LAO PDR



Passionate Advocates for Empowerment

The Phonesavanh Group members with intellectual disability did not have an easy start learning to play their country's traditional long drums. But it was through sheer dedication and love for music that they were able to push through whatever barriers they encountered to be performance-ready when the 'Disability-Inclusive Drum Performance in ASEAN and Japan', of which they represented Lao PDR, came around.

"Most of the youth performing here never played the drum before. They didn't even know or understand how to play rhythm. Only a few could really play properly," relates Mr. Bounlay Chanthavong, the founder of the drum group.





For the next two months, they religiously practiced and ironed out any kinks in their repertoire. “With a lot of effort and patience, we started playing the ‘ta-tum-ta, ta-tum-ta’ rhythm in the ‘Sreng’ style consistent with the Boun Bang Fai (Rocket Festival) held mid-year, which is a ceremony believed to bring rains in time for the rice-planting season.

“Our economy is not really good and I know very well that it was a bit difficult for students with intellectual disability to play drums. But we persevered and now I can honestly say that I am so proud of what we have to offer in this event,” beams Chanthavong.

The drum group is the first ever self-advocacy group of persons with intellectual disability in Lao PDR. It was formally established in 2013 at the “Workshop for the Establishment of a Group of Self-Advocates with Intellectual Disabilities in Lao PDR”. Organized by the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare of Lao PDR and the



Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD), in collaboration with the Lao PEople’s Association (LDPA), the group now has 30 members with intellectual disability, their families and supporters. The group also aims to promote awareness about intellectual disability and forming this drummers’ group is one very effective way of doing so.

“I am so proud and so glad for the young drummers to be able to join the drum event. We didn’t have any musical instrument at first but with the support of various sectors, we were able to purchase the drums and to prepare the children in learning the rhythms. Now our performance has been enhanced quite well at that,” says Mr. Phonthip Phoummavong, a teacher who has been taking care of the members for the last seven years.



Phonesavanh Group Lao PDR



For 22-year-old Mr. Sourivong Thongsavarn, playing the drums has enabled him to share funny stories and laughter with fellow drummer friends. “I feel so happy being with friends. I now know what rhythm and harmony is and I intend to practice drum playing each day,” he says.

“I would like to encourage other persons with disabilities to not give up just because they have disabilities. Be proud of who you are. Cheer up and improve yourselves even further. I will do my best so I could have the chance to perform in other countries too,” he adds.

Meanwhile, 24-year-old Mr. Thanousone Oudompadith reveals that he feels more alive with friends and teachers, and that he feels very happy to be able to go to Thailand to perform. Like Thongsavarn, he has this message to those with disabilities: “You need to be strong and to keep fighting anyway no matter what. Fight! Fight!” he says.











Participants

- 1 Mr. Thippakone Thongphanthalath
- 2 Mr. Khamphone Phaxayavong
- 3 Mr. Inthaphone Duangphachanh
- 4 Mr. Anousone Phetphongsan
- 5 Mr. Soulivong Thongsavanh
- 6 Mr. Thavathsay Vongseng
- 7 Mr. Thanousone Oudompadith
- 8 Mr. Natsouksanh Khammanivong
- 9 Mr. Bounlay Chanthavong
- 10 Mrs. Fonthip Phoummavong

MALAYSIAN FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND (MFB) KOMPANG

MALAYSIA 







Past and Present in One Sacred Drum

The blind members of Malaysian Foundation for the Blind's Kompang drum group are bestowed a very important role: to introduce to the world the beauty and the sacredness of their country's traditional percussion instrument. Called 'kompang', the handheld drums falls under the 'gendang' (small drum) category. Often made from parchment, the drum's history either dates back to ancient times when Muslim Indian traders went to Malaysia at the height of the Malacca Sultanate, or by Arab traders going by way of Java Island in the 13th century.



"Being able to play the kompang is such a privilege and honor. I am proud of the fact that I am able to showcase my culture's tradition through this sacred drum," says Ms. Nur Azwa Izzati Binti Abd Aziz.

Aziz has a good reason to be proud. The kompong was originally used in ancient Persia as a fixture in the Prophet Muhammad’s welcoming party. It was also used to boost the morale of Muslim soldiers before being sent to war.

Treating the drum with respect is a must for the drum group members that they observe strict rules in handling the kompong, one of which was to avoid stepping over it, among others. This is why Aziz and other drum group members are fully committed to spreading the word about their traditional music and culture.

“Being a part of Kompang has changed me into a better person. I have learned how to be myself and give my best performance confidently,” adds Aziz, who shares that being a part of the drum group also exposed her to a bigger circle beyond family and close friends.

Forty-seven-year old Mr. Anuar bin Ngatnan has been a Kompang



member since 1998. The first time he joined Kompang was also the first time he ever learned to play drums.

“I remember being very excited and happy when I first joined the group and I still have the same feeling even today,” he says.

According to Anuar, he enjoyed every new experience he had as a Kompang member. “I have learned many new artistic skills by learning them properly and with dedication.”

One important realization he has is that he has “learned how to be an effective contributor to the community and to the nation”.

Mr. Syed Rahmad, Kompang coach, couldn’t agree more. “It helped everyone become better at their skills and become better persons.”

Everybody in the group agrees that playing drums has so many benefits for persons with disabilities. “It offers a lot of benefit for the blind like me. It helps us make new friends not only from our country but from other countries as well. And it is helping us to be a part of a bigger society, which in turn, supports the ‘yayasan’ (blind association) of which we are a member,” shares Aziz.



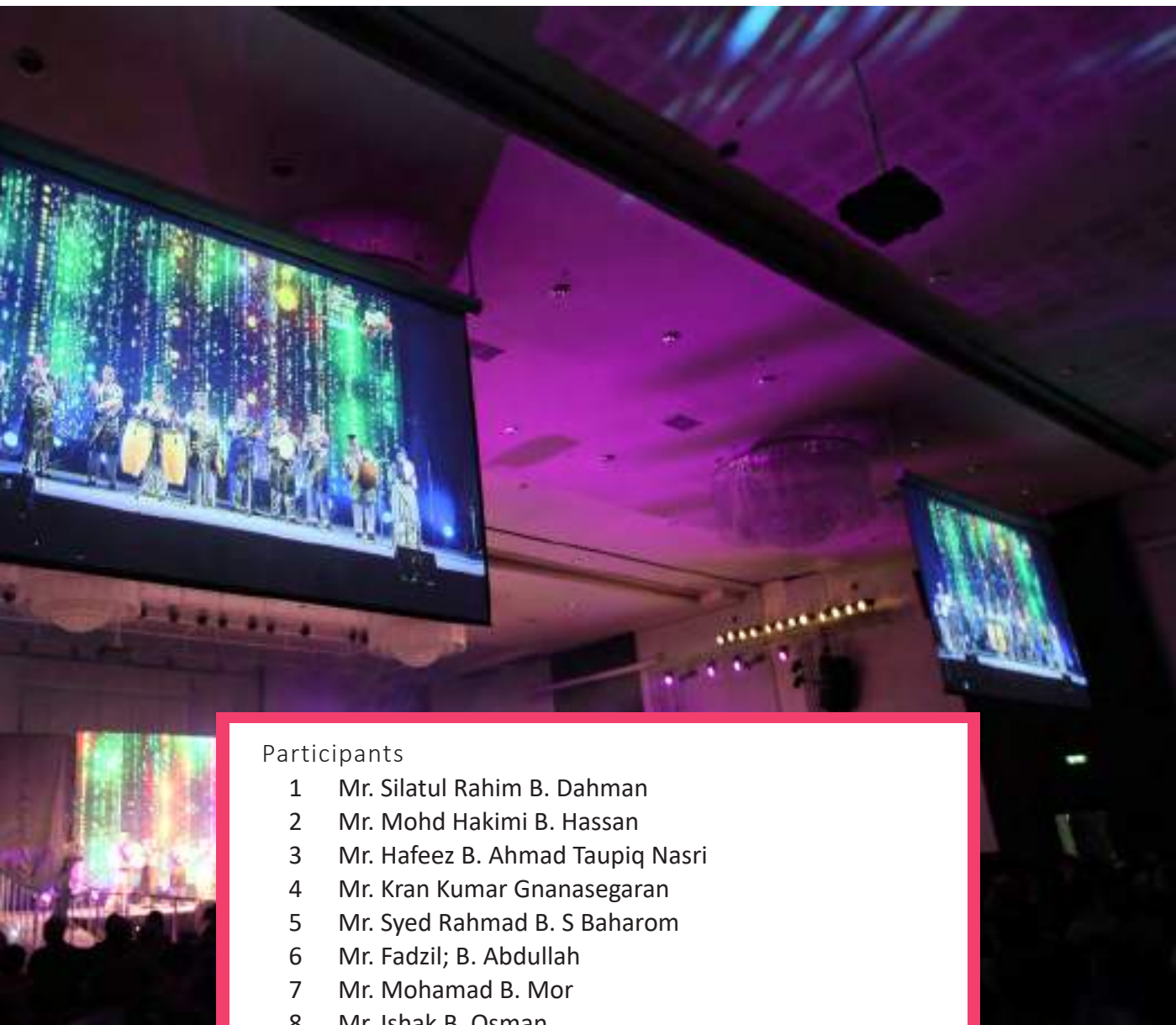
Played with so much earnestness and respect for a sacred traditional musical instrument has in itself a power that resonates with the 'Power of Change' theme and the overall goals of the 'Disability-Inclusive Drum Performance in ASEAN and Japan' that is quite empowering, indeed.











Participants

- 1 Mr. Silatul Rahim B. Dahman
- 2 Mr. Mohd Hakimi B. Hassan
- 3 Mr. Hafeez B. Ahmad Taupiq Nasri
- 4 Mr. Kran Kumar Gnanasegaran
- 5 Mr. Syed Rahmad B. S Baharom
- 6 Mr. Fadzil; B. Abdullah
- 7 Mr. Mohamad B. Mor
- 8 Mr. Ishak B. Osman
- 9 Mr. Sulaiman B. Shamsudin
- 10 Mr. Abian B. Jambot
- 11 Mr. Anuar B. Ngatnan
- 12 Mr. Chong Wai Sum
- 13 Mr. Ezaruddean B. Zainalabidin
- 14 Mr. Jamaludin B. Rashid
- 15 Ms. Fadzilah Bt. Aziz
- 16 Ms. Nur Azwa Izzati Bt. Abd Aziz
- 17 Ms. Siti Nursyahirah Bt. Mat Rodzi
- 18 Ms. Husna Bt. Dzurkpli
- 19 Ms. Sakinah Bt. Hassan
- 20 Mr. Dzurkpli B. Jaafar





SHAE SAUNG MUSIC BAND

MYANMAR





Music in Their Hearts

For a country and culture that is said to trace its musical traditions to at least 1,500 years ago (courtesy of a Chinese chronicler who described Burmese musical instruments as ‘highly perfected’ in 802 A.D.), playing music is such an important part in Burmese culture and tradition.

This has never been true when blind drum performers from Myanmar, who performed at the ‘Disability-Inclusive Drum Performance in ASEAN and Japan’, expressed their love and respect for the art and how it changed their lives for the better.

“My fear disappears whenever I play music and I start to just feel happiness in my heart,” says Mr. Kyaw Min Tun, referring to times when he’s performing onstage in front of a foreign audience. Like most of the drummers the performed in the ‘Disability-Inclusive Drum Performance in ASEAN and Japan’.

The 23-year-old is the main player of Shae Saung Band assigned to play the big drum and other drums. “I play several musical instruments. Music and arts are my hobbies,” he says.



There was never a question that Kyaw Min Tun would choose music early on. When he had to decide which studies to pursue — music or education — he readily chose the former. “I knew I had to choose music over education because I need to hear and listen to music only. I’d get distracted if I had chosen education,” he shares.

Twenty-seven-year-old Mr. Khin Maung Thet shares the same sentiments. As the band’s piano player, he says he too feels joyful when playing music. “It doesn’t only make me happy, playing music also makes me healthy and wealthy because I am able to earn extra income,” says Khin Maung Thet, who also plays the guitar for the band.

According to Mr. Ye Min Aung, the head of the Shae Saung School for the Blind in Meikhtila Township in Mandalay, they teach students modern and traditional music technique, including all kinds of musical instruments such as guitar, piano, and percussion including traditional and contemporary drums.

“I have visual disability and it was my dream to build a school for the blind. So I finished my education and built the Shae Saung School for the blind, which has been in operation for the last 18 years now,” he says.

Mr. Chan Myae Aung, who is helping facilitate the band, says that Myanmar has so many blind and persons with visual disabilities, especially in Maytillah Township where the band members are from. Thus, there was a need for a school for the blind. “The headmaster, who also has a visual disability, completed his education so he could build the Shae Saung School for the Blind and teach blind students. At the same time, the school also introduced musical playing and techniques to its students.

One of the great things about the band is that they are helping raise funds for the school with their performances. Says Chan Myae Aung: “We perform in different



functions in our country to raise some money for the school. Having the opportunity to perform in another country to an international audience is a big step for us to be more known to others. Everyone is so excited and highly motivated.”

He adds that the ‘Power of Change’ did happen in their team, as all of this furthers their “belief in themselves and makes them want to be more successful in what they do”.







Participants

- 1 Ms. Wai Phoo Thant Zin
- 2 Ms. Ever Green
- 3 Mr. Pyae Phyo Paing
- 4 Mr. Chan Myae Aung
- 5 Mr. Min Thiha
- 6 Mr. Ye Aung
- 7 Mr. Aung Naing Tun
- 8 Mr. Yaw Han
- 9 Mr. Khin Maung Thet
- 10 Mr. Kyaw Min Tun
- 11 Mr. Min Min Soe
- 12 Mr. Than Soe Oo



MANDALUYONG CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES DRUM & LYRE BAND



PHILIPPINES



“Performing for this really huge international event will be beneficial for the kids because it would boost their morale and would inspire other persons with disabilities in our community back home to take all the necessary steps to be included in all our related programs in the municipality,” explains Ms. Wennah Marquez, coordinator for the Disabled Persons Affairs Division of the City Government of Mandaluyong City in Manila, Philippines.



The Mandaluyong Children with Disabilities Drum & Lyre Band members love the kind of music they do. In fact, they have performed in several events in the Philippines, including advocacy activities related to raising awareness about the rights of persons with disabilities. They are regular participants of the yearly ‘Angels Walk for Autism’ organized by the Autism Society Philippines held in collaboration with SM Cares of the SM Group of Companies in the Philippines.



The children, although very shy, couldn't help but hide their joy and excitement at the thought of performing before an international audience of around 1,500. "I'm very happy but I am also feeling very shy," says 9-year-old Austin Ricamata. "I really like playing in the band because I have friends there and I get to play with them."

For 14-year-old Jelbert Baron, quadro drums player, the band is like his second family. "I feel happy when we are together whether it's playing music or just playing. I feel like I have so many brothers and sisters and I am a part of a big family," he says, adding that he always feels light when he plays the drums.

According to Marquez, the musical group composed mainly of grade school students, was formed in 2012. "It was during the time we wanted to come up with a group where we will be giving alternative and augmentative therapy for



children with autism and those with intellectual and learning disabilities,” she says.

Knowing the therapeutic effects of music on persons with disabilities, her group thought of creating a children’s music band. “We wanted for this band to be a therapy and recreation program for the children,” she adds.

The children further got noticed when they gave the city mayor



a surprise birthday performance, which enabled them to be more appreciated by the public. “We are very happy that the city government is very supportive of the children and the band, and of persons with disabilities in general,” says Marquez.

The children’s supporters and chaperones during the ‘Disability-Inclusive Drum Performance in ASEAN and Japan’ couldn’t help but beam with pride and joy when they saw their beloved children on the international stage. The Philippines delegates are one of the youngest performers in the drum event and, with big hearts for music (and deeply motivated at that), they were able to hold their own amid more experienced drummers. And looking at their smiling faces onstage, one could see how music has changed their lives in a very empowering way... yes, even for children like them.





Participants

- 1 Ms. Wennah G. Marquez
- 2 Ms. Josephine M. Limbo
- 3 Ms. Myrna V. Orayan
- 4 Mr. Jelbert D. Baron
- 5 Mr. Jericho V. Pedro
- 6 Mr. Larwin P. Medenilla
- 7 Mr. John Larenz P. Medenilla
- 8 Mr. Austin R. Ricamata
- 9 Mr. Francis Fernandez
- 10 Mr. Angelito V. Orayan



MINDS PERFORM

SINGAPORE





A Nod to Life's Vibrant Rhythms

The MINDS Perform taiko drum troupe is one very lively bunch of drummers. When performing onstage, there's no doubt in the audiences' minds that they are having the time of their lives and their contagious smiles never fail to rub off on the listeners.

The performing arts group from Singapore is well-known for their rousing performances. It was formed with the aim to train clients professionally for public performances. Its drum group, for instance, is known among the corporate circle with performances in various shows and programs, as well as national events. The group has a dynamic energy that oozes out every time they bang on the drums and each time they shout out cheers and encouragement, which the audience respond to quite well. Inclusivity and interaction are two things that are never lacking in the group's performances.



MINDS Perform is also the first disability group to take the centerstage at Singapore's National Day Parade 2014's Military Tattoo, a yearly event that has soldiers marching in artistic formations while playing music.

The group's musical calibre was once more highlighted when they were chosen to perform at the 'Disability-Inclusive Drum Performance in ASEAN and Japan' in Bangkok, Thailand, along with 12 other drummers with diverse disabilities from the Asia-Pacific region.



"This is the second time that we have performed overseas; the first time was in South Korea. We are very happy to be given yet another opportunity to showcase our talents," says Mr. Muhammad bin Abdul Rahim Shah, of the training officers of MINDS Perform.

According to Mr. Ramlan bin Rasidi, another training officer, the group was formed way back in 2003 as "part of the behavioral modifications and extra-curricular activities within the curriculum".

“Apart from drummers, we have dancers and singers too. It’s a complete team,” he adds.

MINDS Perform drummers with intellectual disability are just happy to perform. Although they are not as articulate as others with disabilities, the joy shines on their faces nonetheless.

“Hi, my name is Khairul and I play the kompang and taiko drums. I’m happy playing [the] kompang. I make new friends. Enjoy! Enjoy!” says Mr. Khairullizam bin Omar, flashing his toothless bright smile at the camera while giving the two-thumbs-up sign.

Khairul is the more animated of drummers when onstage. As soon as he hits that drum in a performance, he will almost always break into a wide grin and shout out a cheer or two all throughout the performance, his voice reverberating above the din of drumming sounds.

Mr. Mohammad Erwan bin Aman, on the other hand, is a bit shy but like Khairul, his face lights up when he smiles, this time giving people a toothy grin. “I am happy to represent Singapore MINDS Perform,” he said haltingly.



Although they couldn't express themselves well verbally, these two drummers along with the rest of the group members, are quite effective sharing a part of themselves and who they are when playing the drums. Like the loud throbbing of heartbeats, they too feel all of life's rhythms once they start hitting those drums. When that happens, no words can ever compare to the synergy that happens between them and the welcoming public they are performing for.









Participants

- 1 Mr. Khairullizam Bin Omar
- 2 Mr. Mohammad Erwan Bin Aman
- 3 Mr. Mohammad Farhan Bin Mohamed Noor
- 4 Mr. Mohammad Rozlan Bin Sohani
- 5 Mohammad Rozlan Bin Hamid
- 6 Mr. Samad Bin Abdul Majid
- 7 Mr. Yao Yaohua
- 8 Mr. Muhammad Bin Abdul Rahim Shah
- 9 Mr. Adnan Bin Said Mohamed
- 10 Mr. Ramlan Bin Rasidi





Arun-Chandra Band

THAILAND
BANGKOK





Overcoming Challenges Through Drum Playing

The Arun-Chandra Band of persons with autism from Bangkok, Thailand has a very good grasp of their drum playing. Their performance onstage at the 'Disability-Inclusive Drum Performance in ASEAN and Japan' was quite remarkable and got the attention of the music-loving crowd. But behind the finesse and well-played music, the hard work and perseverance to master their craft were what fueled their exceptional performance.



“One of the most challenging part of the whole process was the drum playing,” says Ajarn Rungrueng Rakungthong, the trainer for the band, which is under the guidance and support of Autism Thailand. “First of all, it depends on the degree of autism a person has and how well he or she would be able to play the musical instrument. Then, when we started playing most of them didn’t know about rhythm so the first few attempts were quite interesting in that they played with no direction. Some of them were bothered by the loud, thumping sound of the drums while others were so shy they were so hesitant to join the band,” he says.



One other challenge, adds Rungrueng, is that persons with autism don’t really respond well to strong, stern voices and manner of teaching and will tend to shut off when faced with such situation. “If something of that sort happens, then they wouldn’t be able to control themselves. The better way is to

turn up the drum sounds gradually. This was how we practiced for the drum event,” he says.

For 21-year-old Mr. Sunsakorn Chartphanich, playing his favorite drum, the Klong Yao (Long Drum), makes him relax as he enjoys listening to the drum’s sound and rhythm. “ I can focus on the playing and it gives me a lot of fun when I do it with friends,” he says.

Sunsakorn admits that he didn’t enjoy drum playing much at first. But with the regular rehearsals and bonding with friends, he had grown a fondness for the drums. He says he is very excited being with the band to perform at the drum event. “ I am glad to be here at this event. I can see new things and listen to music from other countries.”

Although taciturn in his ways, 30-year-old Mr. Phakaphol Chanthayanont’s (or ‘Kawee’ as friends call him) face lightens up when asked about the drums. He says he is “happy to be part of the drum event and to be playing drums” for everyone.



According to Rungrueng, persons with autism have varying behavioral patterns too. “Some of them don’t like to go out to socialize. Some don’t have habits similar to those without disabilities. You have to keep practicing and let them familiarize themselves with the sound and rhythm, as well as the loudness, until they become familiar with it and become all right with it.”



For Mr. Anusorn Rattanakut, dancing to the tune of the drums gives him joy. “I like the Thai folk dance called Run Therd Theng with Klong Yao. It is a beautiful Thai dance,” he says with a wide smile.

Mr. Supaka Srivivat is quite happy and grateful for the opportunity that the Arun-Chandra Band has been given in terms of performing onstage. “I wish our band will be successful. I would like to say thank you to our teacher, Ajarn Rungrueng, and APCD for conducting this event. I hope that everybody in our band will be happy when we play Thai musical instruments,” he says.







Participants

- 1 Mr. Rungreung Rakangthong
- 2 Mr. Thepkasem Klongwarakarn
- 3 Mr. Panumas Juulasri
- 4 Mr. Suphakaj Sri-U-Wat
- 5 Mr. Anawin Pleum-A-Rom
- 6 Mr. Danusorn Rattanako
- 7 Mr. Santhakorn Chatipanich
- 8 Mr. Watcharapong Boonyathikarnsophon
- 9 Mr. Nattakit Thanatkullapat
- 10 Mr. Angkoon Jongsatapornsuk
- 11 Mr. Kan-anek Sribangplinoi
- 12 Mr. Panuttapon Chantayanont
- 13 Mr. Anuson Jailom

NORTH FOLK PERFORMANCES: 'KLONG SABATCHAI'



THAILAND
CHIANGMAI





Hearing with the Rhythm of the Heart

Challenges are never easy and for those who are deaf and hard of hearing, trying to play the drums in a synchronized manner takes a lot of effort and hard work. For the Klong Sabatchai group from Chiang Mai, teamwork and dedication to their craft are two very important ingredients in giving a good performance.

“The first time I tried playing drums was not successful because it was difficult for me to get the rhythm,” says Songyos Nataple. “We try very hard to practice even though we couldn’t hear anything. We also use gestures to help us with the rehearsals.”

Nguao finds it a bit easy than the others because he can still hear a bit but it doesn't mean he's letting up on the regular practice. "I spend a lot of time practicing in my free time. Even though I have partial hearing, I still need to learn about rhythms because I need to be consistent too," he says. "It happens at times that we make mistakes but we do it again and again until we get the rhythm smoothly."



Klong Sabatchai trainer Ms. Areerak Ruenkham is very aware of the challenges the members face when practicing drums. But the lack of 'listening skills', he says, is not a hindrance to the students as they really make an effort to perfect their craft because they want to preserve the traditional drum culture of the country's northern region. "We want to prove that even though band members are with disabilities, this will not prevent them from spreading the word about traditional Thai music and instruments," he says.

Echoing the sentiments of the students, Areerak said that the main challenge is in the fact that each deaf student follow their own inner rhythm, leading to unsynchronized rhythms during rehearsals. "But we found a way to harmonize properly and consistently and this is what we are bringing to the drum performance."

The students have been playing drums for a few years now, have found so much joy in making music among friends. “I started playing three years ago and I want to keep this up. I am so glad I am able to join this drum event,” says Nguao.

Eighteen-year-old Nutthida, who was performing in public for the very first time, being deaf only means she can’t hear with her ears. “But our hearts can hear and with hard practice and with the help of hearing aids, for example, we are able to catch the proper rhythm in unison.”



For 14-year-old drum member Cholticha, her skill at observation is what helps her keep to the rhythm. She is very alert and observes everyone in the group. “I really like this atmosphere. It feels so good and I feel very happy when we play the drums together.”

Klong Sabatchai members wholeheartedly agree that playing together brings everyone closer. It is a tightly-knit group that treat each other like family members. All agree that drum playing has a therapeutic effect and brings them so much joy. The empowerment drum playing has given them is such that they gained more confidence and realized the value of constant practice and dedication to what they do. And the result is there for everyone to see... and to hear.









Participants

- 1 Mrs. Yupin Khampan
- 2 Mrs. Areerak Reunkham
- 3 Ms. Chanram Kaewkhamnoi
- 4 Ms. Chonthicha Larmon
- 5 Mr. Ngoaw
- 5 Mr. Phuripong Saenjaimak
- 6 Mr. Songyod Nathapearn
- 7 Mr. Chabanant Khamsat
- 8 Mr. Verayuth Chaichana
- 9 Mr. Radapong Kaveyoung
- 10 Mr. Patharapong Nuankam
- 11 Mr. Pitipat Susinthu
- 12 Ms. Natharida Khala
- 13 Ms. Rungprairin Phalaenhorhae

The Power of Change



Disability-Inclusive Drum Performance in ASEAN and Japan

In Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2017 & 130th Anniversary of Thailand-Japan Friendship in 2017

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RAJANAGARINDRA PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL LONG DRUM GROUP

THAILAND

NAKHON RATCHASIMA





They Learned How to Smile Again

The therapeutic benefits of music, and drum playing in particular, has not been lost on the organizers of the Rajanagarindra Psychiatric Hospital Long Drum Group in Nakhon Ratchasima. Under the guidance of Phrakhu Prachotsangkakit Nakkasem (Abbot of the Huai Phrom Temple in Wang Nam Keaw) and coordinated by Phrakhu Visuthsanawat Manub Thaengsungnoen (Head Monk of the Wang Nam Keaw Temple), a group of persons with psychosocial disabilities have been empowered by learning how to play traditional drums in Nakhon Ratchasima.





“It used to be that persons with psychosocial disabilities were just given medicines by doctors to treat their conditions and that was pretty much it. But we are now trying to supplement that with therapeutic drum practice after we saw positive changes in the people’s disposition and condition,” says the Abbot, who is leading the rehabilitation of those with psychosocial disabilities ranging from depression, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia.

He related how, when music came upon the group, everyone had smiles on their faces. “They felt good about it,” says the Abbot, adding that while drum playing is not a direct cure, it certainly taught members to go out more and socialize more. Whereas before when the



members just kept to themselves and hid at home doing nothing, the drum group drew them out of their lonely shells and also enabled the community to be more aware of them and their talents.



“Playing the drums and dancing is a good chance for them to interact and participate in the community. I want to see them smiling and being accepted by people, which will lead to less stigma for them,” adds the Abbot.

Mr. Komkrit Phadungviang, a 45-year-old village head, was the one who introduced the idea for a music therapy and drum group. “At first, they didn’t want to participate so I continued to persuade them and ask who can sing and dance and count 1 to 6. They said they couldn’t so I tried to sing for them and taught them how to count to the beat. In the end, they finally relented,” said Mr. Komkrit with a smile.



When asked about the positive effects of the drum playing, the members shared similar feedback. “Since I joined the group, I found myself smiling and laughing many times. My friends also started smiling more as we started getting to know each other and becoming familiar with the playing,” says 54-year-old Add Pimkane, who has depression. “I’m quite proud of being able to make my friends smile. From then on, we could go to work as usual and we felt better than before. I feel good now.”

For Mr. Sanguan Onsamrong, 52, playing the drums doesn’t make him depressed and he feels he has become part of society again. “I feel fine. I still take medicine but the drum activity makes me feel better too.”

Fifty-year-old Mr. Vinyu Ruengkij, who has schizophrenia, noted that his happiness level increased since he started playing drums. “It was difficult at first but it became easier as we continued to practice. Now we can play smoothly and it feels good to share these activities with friends. I know everyone is busy but they are happy when they gather together to practice or perform,” he says.



The Abbot is glad to note these positive changes and urges the whole community to support and appreciate the efforts of the drum group. “We are a non-profit group and it would be great if the community will continue to support our members with psychosocial disabilities as we would like them to continue with their therapy. We will continue playing traditional drum music.”











Participants

- 1 Phrakhru Prachotsangkhakit Nakkasem
- 2 Phrakhruvisuthsanawat Manup Thaengsungnoen
- 3 Ms. Kittimaporn Puedpean
- 4 Mrs. Pathumthip Naunyanas
- 5 Mrs. Toi Ankratok
- 6 Mrs. Aet Phimkhen
- 7 Mrs. Phimwilai Chuenphakawisithakun
- 8 Mr. Arun Chansanoi
- 9 Mr. Bunmak Songsin
- 10 Mr. Bunmi Ladgratok
- 11 Mr. Chueai Ninking
- 12 Mr. Kawin Pintong
- 13 Mr. Khomkrit Padungwiang
- 14 Mr. Samat Khongking
- 15 Mr. Sanguan Phinsamrong
- 16 Mr. Winyu Rianking
- 17 Ms. Yen Chatdon
- 18 Khanueng Jansongnoen
- 19 Mrs. Somjit Yomsranoi
- 20 Mrs. Veawta Krachongklang

VIET NAM DEAF ASSOCIATION DEAF DRUMMERS GROUP



VIETNAM





They've Got Rhythm

The Viet Nam Deaf Association Deaf Drummers Group onstage crackles with electricity as they start hitting those huge drums in unison. With colorful costumes, impressive choreography and remarkable drumming skills, these young artists and musicians easily became the darling of the crowd at the 'Disability-Inclusive Drum Performance in ASEAN and Japan'.

The polish with which they performed for the appreciative audience didn't come easy though. Admittedly, they had a difficult time following the beat and rhythm in the first couple of months of practice. But with the help of their hearing drum teacher and their enthusiasm to perfect their performance, the group was able to pull it through in the end.

“The first two months of rehearsals were very difficult for us. It was hard for us to follow





the rhythm,” says Ms. Ngan Truong Thi Kim, drum performer and president of the Da Nang Deaf Club.

Club Vice President and fellow drummer Mr. Quang Hoa Trinh agrees. “It was hard for us to follow the rhythm... 1-2-3-1-2-3... We had to practice again and again until we could play properly and all together.”

Mr. Trung Le Minh, drum group teacher, had to do his research before starting the training. “I had to follow different patterns so I selected all the movement and patterns that I thought would fit the deaf. Although I have 10 years of experience teaching, it was a challenge for me to teach the deaf because I’m not fluent in sign language. So what we did was to use gestures during rehearsals,” he explains. But like any good teacher, he did learn basic sign language if only to communicate his instructions well.

For Mr. Thang Phan Anh Toan, it wasn't a joke shifting from the small drum to playing the biggest drum in the set. "I was quite happy practicing the small drum but then the team looked at me one day and said that I needed to play the big drum," he says matter of factly. Always wanting to try out and learn new things, Mr. Thang said yes without second thoughts. He says he is still learning and the group's Thailand stint is a great way to learn new skills and techniques.



Regular practice and dedication paid off in the end, however. The group received good feedback and engaged the audience as well. "We are very happy to have been a participant in this international event because that gives us more opportunities to learn and develop more skills," says Ms. Ngan.

The deaf drum group's artistic skills will not be difficult as most of the members are budding artists as well. Apart from drumming and dancing, members are also into painting, calligraphy and photography, to name some. One of their goals is to be recognized and appreciated for the talent that they offer on the national level.

"We are a strong group," says Ms. Ngan. "There are challenges, yes, such as thinking of ways to raise funds for our drum group's performances but there are ways on how to achieve our goals," she says.







FUGAKU TAIKO

JAPAN





Drum Therapy at Its Best



Disability is never a barrier for Japan's Fugaku Taiko drummers with intellectual disability. When audiences see them on stage, they will only witness the fruits of hard work, discipline and utter dedication for their craft.

There is a mesmerizing quality to the thunderous, reverberating sounds of taiko drums and couple that with the electrifying synchronized movement of the drummers, you get an exceptional performance that audiences will continue talking about for days on end. For Fugaku Taiko drummers, it's all about the will

and determination to be the best they can be.

“I practice very hard before coming to Thailand. It was a long road for me to being here. I started practicing at 6:30 am. daily. As I am not a morning person, it didn’t feel good waking up early but I wanted to do my best,” says 47-year-old Mr. Hajime Otake, who has been a taiko drummer for 20 years now.



Otake shares that he likes taiko because even though he hits the drum so hard, it never breaks and is very steady. “It’s only the drumsticks that get broken at times,” he smiles. “I do get very tired if I practice harder but I enjoy performing and I feel very fulfilled.”

Taiko drumming is very therapeutic for persons with disability and improves behavior. This is certainly true with Ms. Maki Kubota, 41 years old, who has been





with the drum group for 22 years. Whenever she is onstage, she has this very confident and strong persona that takes command of the stage. She is in performance level, so to speak. Offstage, however, she is back to her very soft-spoken, almost shy ways.

“I like it a lot when I hear the loud applause of an appreciative audience. This is why I like playing the taiko very much for it makes me very happy,” says Kubota, who makes sure that she practices her

stretching and muscle-building training before regularly.

Mr. Hitoshi Hayano, the supervisor of Fugaku Taiko and who is taking care of persons with disabilities in their social facility, reveals that they usually practice taiko once



a week. When they have a performance, however, rehearsals are conducted every day usually at 6 a.m. and which lasts an hour and a half.

“We do stretches, exercises, and push-ups to make our muscle stronger,” he says.

Hayano says it is important to not only focus on the technique but also to strive to improve the drummers’ social life. “It is interesting to see that once they started drumming, they learned how to become more independent. They are able to do a lot of things by themselves. They also became more grateful for and respectful of others, including those who support them.”

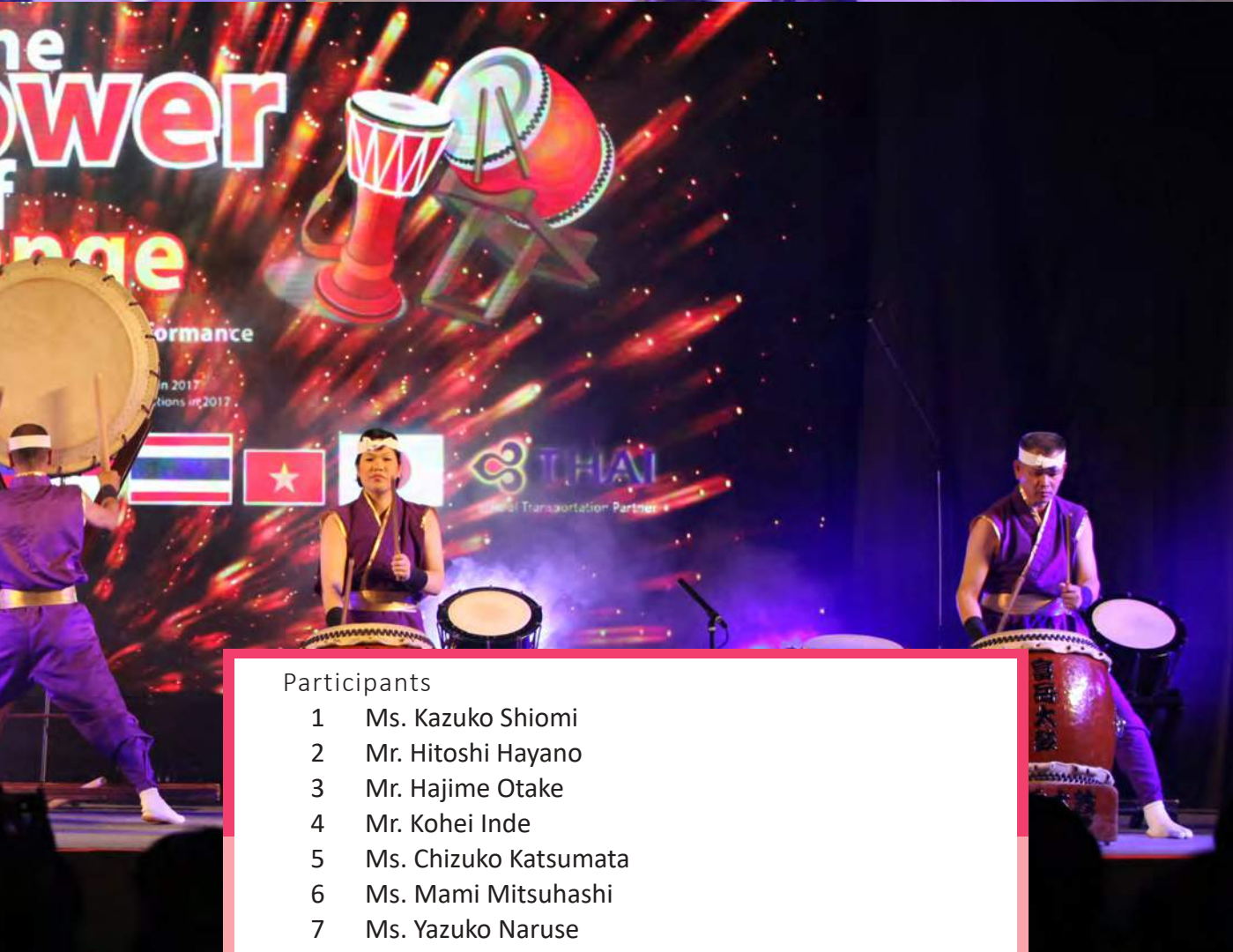
This newly-found skills and awareness of their own value as individuals are quite evident in how Otake takes his work seriously. “I always do my best. Like when we first rehearsed for the drum performance, I felt I didn’t do well but I will push hard in the next practice and really do my best for the whole eight minutes of our performance,” he says, his smiling face eager to go onstage and hit those drums again.











Participants

- 1 Ms. Kazuko Shiomi
- 2 Mr. Hitoshi Hayano
- 3 Mr. Hajime Otake
- 4 Mr. Kohei Inde
- 5 Ms. Chizuko Katsumata
- 6 Ms. Mami Mitsuhashi
- 7 Ms. Yazuko Naruse
- 8 Ms. Maki Kubota
- 9 Ms. Yuka Miyano



Voices for Change

“Events like this are wonderful because it’s not only one nation but different nations coming together to be able to show to the world that persons with disabilities can also be active and play an important role in the world. The participants can make friends and making friends is important in the world when there are so many struggles, fighting, and riots and unless we start making friends among individuals, we won’t be able to make friends among nations and we won’t be able to make friends globally.”

— Ms. Kazuko Shiomi, Nippon Music Foundation President

“I can’t think of a better way to send a strong message for a very accessible means in entertainment and performance like this. I hope people will learn to recognize the importance of what they see [in the performances] and I hope events like this will also inspire ASEAN people to promote their musical traditions even further... This event really reflects the importance of the people-centered and people-oriented nature of ASEAN. It brings people together, including vulnerable groups like persons with disabilities to show their talents and how they can contribute to society.”

— H.E. Mr. Vongthep Arthakaivavatee, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community

“It’s a wonderful opportunity to be able to participate in this very important event. The theme ‘Believe in the Power of Change’ is very good and an auspicious occasion for ASEAN and Thailand-Japan relations. More importantly, focusing on persons with disabilities is all part of how we can have an inclusive community. To celebrate music together is a good example for other countries to follow. I hope this will continue.”

— Ms. Busadee Santipitaks, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand Department of Information Director General

“This is an extraordinary event featuring the potentials of the youth and their capabilities in music, which is what the ASEAN community is all about. We are looking forward to an ASEAN community that is people-centered and people-oriented where no one is left behind. We look forward to more events of a similar nature that will encourage our governments and our people to come together and help people especially those with disabilities.”

— H.E. Ms. Mary Jo Bernardo-Aragon, Philippine Ambassador to Thailand

"I am proud to be emcee for this event because I believe that it will change Thai society and everybody will be able to see the potential of persons with disabilities. This is not just a musical event, it is also a venue for the self-expression of musical talents of persons with disabilities. Drums are great tools for persons with disabilities to showcase their talent because it has a rhythm that resonates with the beating of their hearts. When we hear drums playing, we will have the motivation and cheer up."

- Ms. Petnamnueng Sriwattana, 'Disability-Inclusive Drum Performance in ASEAN and Japan' Emcee and TV Personality

"I think today is an extremely important event for the many families because there are very few occasions where they can take their families out. Today is one of those days they can enjoy a cultural event and international experience so I'm very thankful that they can come to witness this."

— Mrs. Marcy Ninomiya

"We loved the show very much. My students and I are very glad to be able to have this opportunity in witnessing the drum performances from ASEAN and Japan. We are cheering for the performers with disabilities. Congratulations for a job well done!"

— Nichanun Thongrit, Chonpratansongkhor School teacher

"I'm very happy to be here as a first-time volunteer. It's from my heart. I like the fact that I learned to help people and saw how talented the drummers with disabilities are. I'm so proud of my fellow volunteers too because they did everything they could do to make this a successful event."

— Twinkle, Volunteer

"I really appreciate this event because we are able to see different cultures and musical traditions from other ASEAN countries and Japan. We have never seen such performances before, especially Japan's taiko drummers with disabilities. They are awesome!"

— Patiyakorn Keawpathumthornnm

"This is a great way to help persons with disabilities communicate through music and showcase their talents and further developing themselves."

— Member, Blind Association of Thailand



Believe in



The Power of Change



PROJECT PARTNERS



Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability

The Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD) is a regional center on disability and development. APCD was established in Bangkok, Thailand as a legacy of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002, with the joint collaboration of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Royal Thai Government and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Government of Japan.

APCD was endorsed by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) as a regional cooperative base for its Biwako Millennium Framework for an inclusive society in the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012. ESCAP identified APCD as the regional center on disability for the Incheon Strategy to Make the Right Real, 2013-2022.

In cooperation with more than 40 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, APCD is currently managed by the Foundation of Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD Foundation) under the Patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn.

APCD aims to promote a barrier-free, inclusive and rights-based society for all through the empowerment of persons with disabilities and organizations of persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific. It recognizes persons with disabilities as agents of change and encourages the business sector to become one of the partners of change through various disability-inclusive projects and activities.

More than 2,000 persons from over 40 countries have participated in APCD's various disability-inclusive trainings and workshops. It closely collaborates with more than 30 ministries from various countries on disability matters, as well as more than 240 associate organizations in the region. APCD is also focused on empowering emerging disability groups such as intellectual disability, autism, hard of hearing, and psychosocial disability.

Among APCD's significant projects include the 60 Plus+ Bakery & Café, APCD/ Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF) Project, and its many collaboration with the ASEAN Secretariat, to name a few.



THE NIPPON FOUNDATION

The Nippon Foundation was established by Mr. Ryoichi Sasakawa in 1962 as the Japan Shipbuilding Industry Foundation, to promote the reconstruction of postwar Japan through the development of the shipbuilding and shipping industries. Over the years, the Foundation's activities in Japan expanded to include projects that support health and hygiene, and firefighting and disaster preparedness. It also became active in areas including food security in Africa and the elimination of leprosy, and continue to do so until today.

In December 1995, author and philanthropist Ms. Ayako Sono succeeded Mr. Sasakawa as the Foundation's second chair. Among its primary activities at the time were supporting grassroots volunteer groups and NGOs, as well as working to ensure inclusive communities through improved social welfare services for older persons and activities to empower persons with disabilities.

Projects to maintain navigational safety in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, and fellowship programs to cultivate leaders in ocean-related fields, were also expanded.

In July 2005, following Ms. Sono's retirement at the end of her term, Mr. Yohei Sasakawa, then serving as president, assumed the position of chair.

Continuing its humanitarian and maritime projects, The Nippon Foundation is also taking up new challenges in promoting social innovation, and is working with various stakeholders to formulate the multifaceted approaches required to address increasingly complex global issues.

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DRUM PERFORMERS

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Puser Bumi (Indonesia)

Fugaku Taiko (Japan)

Phonesavanh Group (Lao PDR)

Malaysian Foundation for the Blind (MFB) Kompang (Malaysia)

Shae Saung Music Band (Myanmar)

Mandaluyong Children with Disabilities Drum & Lyre Band (Philippines)

MINDS Perform (Singapore)

Arun-Chandra Band (Bangkok, Thailand)

North Folk Performances: Klong Sabatchai (Chiang Mai, Thailand)

Rajanagarindra Psychiatric Hospital Long Drum Group (Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand)

Viet Nam Deaf Association Deaf Drummers Group (Vietnam)

PARTNERS

ASEAN Secretariat

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Ministry of Culture, Royal Thai Government

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Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Royal Thai Government

Ministry of Tourism and Sports, Royal Thai Government

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Nippon Taiko Foundation

Thai Yamazaki

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Association for Parents of Persons with Autism (AU Thai)

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Thungmahamek School for the Deaf

Trimitwitthayalai Boys' School

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