



DISABILITY RESEARCH AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Newsletter

November 2014

INTRODUCTION

Established on 03/12/2013, DRD is a non-governmental organization, non-profit and operated by people with disabilities (PWDs), for the rights of PWDs.

DRD and the community are building a support model based on the rights of PWDs in an effort to promote equal opportunities for PWDs, encourage and create favorable conditions for PWDs to participate fully in all activities like other members in society.

Until now, the DRD has been supported over 3,500 PWDs in HCM City and a network of over 30 disability groups in the southern of Vietnam. With many diverse activities such as introducing internships, employment, skills training, advocacy campaign, moving assistance, scholarships, computers devices, assistive devices, information consultation, peer counseling, propagations, seminars and events raising awareness on disability issues, ... DRD is rated as one of 20 non-governmental organizations efficiently operated in Vietnam and is the leading one in supporting the PWDs to integrate into the community.

DRD would like to send to all sponsors, partners, friends and PWDs community the Newsletter as a channel of information sharing.

Kind Regards



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31 people with visual impairment were offered travelling-support glasses

The ceremony took place at Đồi Rất Đẹp clubhouse on November 11. This was the event that the Ho Chi Minh City youth's social work center held in cooperation with Disability Research and Capacity Development Centre (DRD) and Binh Minh Glasses company in honor of 32th anniversary of the Vietnamese Teacher's Day 20/11.

Travelling-support glasses was invented by Dr. Đỗ Bá Hải – the prominent citizen of the City 2012, Vice-president of the Vietnamese Youth Federation in Ho Chi Minh city, Lecturer at Ho Chi Minh City University of Technical Education- and his co-workers. The glasses called the “magical eyes” had a suitable design for people having limited sight. It was attached with the sensor at the front to help the blind easily to identify an object in around 1.2m distance and 1m high above waist. When the blind tilt their heads to both sides a 15-degree corner, the glasses will help identifying obstructions on those sides. The glasses will vibrate stronger when an object gets nearer and stop when getting farther from that thing.

Mr. Nguyễn Quốc Phong, a teacher from Thiên Ân shelter which for the blind, was the person presented with these special glasses this time. He said: “Travelling is the hardest difficulty for the people who are sightless. The eye stick only helps them to find the way and identify the objects on the ground so it can be dangerous for them if there is high objects like eaves, a limb of tree, etc. This device makes us feel more safe and more ease. I'm glad that the society more and more pay its attention and create more opportunities for the blind.”

Nguyễn Quang Nhị, senior of Social Work at University of Social Sciences and Humanities also a intern at DRD shared his experiences: "I have been using it for almost 3 months. This glasses is really convenient and easy to use for the blind. Before using it, I only used the eye stick and usually get hit by the objects on a level with my head. However, since using this glasses, those situations have decreased. The glasses was slightly improved which became much more lighter than it used to be. I believe that it will be useful and easy-to-use."

It was the 3rd time the Ho Chi Minh City youth's social work center has conducted the event to give more chances for people with visual impairment to become more accommodating in studying, working, participating in social activities and enhancing intergration with the society.

CTV

Hoa Sen University's students getting familiar with skills assisting people with disabilities

On 13 November 2014, Disability Research and Capacity Development (DRD) organized a training on how to assist people with disabilities for students from Hoa Sen University.

On this occasion, Mr. Truong Huy Vu – Coordinator of Personal Assistants - introduced students to the structure of a common wheelchair as well as showed them how to help a person on a wheelchair moving through staircases, slopes; safety rules such as always keeping your back straight when moving the disabled to another position, not kidding and minding the objects that might cause inconvenience on the way while helping PWD.

Phuong Hieu – a second year student of the Human Resources Management said: “I tried sitting on a wheelchair before but have never been pushed. I didn't know how to push a wheelchair correctly. Today, I had hands-on experience and was able to practise together with my friends. The experience was really helpful. I have learnt new things and I think I can help the disabled when coming across them on the street...”

Ms. Do Thi Thanh Thuy – a teacher at Hoa Sen University said : “I did not dare to help the disabled as I did not know what they need and so it was quiet worrumsome. I saw people on the wheelchair many times. Although I wanted to help them but I was afraid because I didn't know how to do, which made me feel I was so careless. The school also have some students using wheelchairs, so this training is very useful, helping not only the students but even me to know how to support safely, correctly people using wheelchairs. Despite time constraint, now I feel that I know more about how to help the disabled...”

Before, a similar training was held for 20 students from Department of Social work of Ho Chi Minh City Open University on 2 November 2014.

There is an increasing attention to supporting PWD in the right way, especially among young people. DRD is willing to coordinate with organizations to carry out similar activities to give PWD more opportunities to integrate into the society

Kim Phụng

The disabled enterprise clubs experienced a study tour

In order to extend the opportunities to exchange, to learn and to share the knowledge of actual business at some crafting enterprises in the Middle Area, from 5th to 8th November, Disability Research And Capacity Development Centre held a tour for the members of the Disabled Enterprise Club in Ho Chi Minh and Lam Dong to investigate and meet some of the creafing businesses in Da Nang, Hoi An and Hue. The destinations that the Team went to including Đoàn đã có chuyến tham quan lần lượt các cơ sở gồm: Ngọc Minh Hand Embroidery company and Thanh Tam Technical Shool (Da Nang); Hoa Nhap company (Hoi An); Hope Center and Trang Tien (Hue). The trip was sponsored by Irish Aid foundation

The trip was really a chance for the members to learn things, from how to do the business to how to manage human resources and how to organize works so that from what they leant, they can have new directions for their own activities in the future.

CTV



DRD participated in APDF conference 2014

M.S.W Luu Thi Anh Loan, Acting Director of the Disability Research and Capacity Development (DRD) and delegations were presented in Hanoi to attend the Asia - Pacific Disability Forum (APDF), held on 26-28/11 at Melia Hotel Hanoi with the participation of 500 delegates with disabilities, including 200 international delegates from 42 countries in the region.

APDF 2014 focused on a number of essential topics such as assess the situation of hunger eradication and poverty reduction related to vocational training, employment for people with disabilities (PWDs); the participation of PWDs in decision-making processes, the process of policy advocacy; accessible environment to PWDs; inclusive education, early intervention and rehabilitation for PWDs. Also, APDF 2014 also discussed the issue enhance operational efficiency, the impact of PWDs in the Asia - Pacific region and in each country, the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, and the development goals of the United Nations towards 2015, the participation of youth with disabilities (YWDs) on the rights of PWDs.

The delegation including 14 members came from DRD, youth with disabilities (YWDs) in Breakthrough group (formed from the project Capacity Building for YWDs - DRD), the PWDs in Bao Loc, Dien Khanh and Duc Trong. In the plenary session of the APDF 2014, M.S.W. Luu Thi Anh LOAN - Acting Director of DRD and M.B.A Nguyen Van Cu – Vice Director of DRD had presentations related to raising public awareness on environmental barriers for PWDs and advocacy for in Ho Chi Minh City. In particular, in the dialogue sessions on topics YWDs and authority of the youth for making decision in the afternoon 28/11, Phan Thi Rat- leader of Breakthrough group gave opening speech for dialogue session with the content "YWDs: Strengths and challenges" from the operational experience of the group in Ho Chi Minh City.

In the morning 26/11, DRD delegations visited to the Embassy of Ireland in Vietnam (Hoang Mai District, Hanoi). Mr. Phan Dang Cuong, Social Development and Management Consultant of Irish Aids welcomed the delegations, shared ideas about DRD's activities and related organizations/groups, as well as introduced the country of Ireland. Irish Aids is a sponsor of DRD's projects, especially in the employment field of PWDs.



The closing workshop of project “Empowerment for youth with disabilities”

In the morning 11.21.2014, at Ramana Hotel (323 Le Van Sy Street, District 3, Ho Chi Minh City), Disabilities Research and Capacity Development (DRD) (91 / 8E Hoa Hung, Ward 12, District 10, HCMC) organized a conference to summarize the project Capacity Building for Youth with Disabilities and activities to assist people with disabilities (PWDs) in 2014 with the participation of more than 120 youths with disabilities (YWDs), mentors, organizations, representatives of universities, businesses and sponsors.

Starting from 6/2011 to 11/2014, Capacity Building for Youth with Disabilities (hereinafter referred to as Project) recruited nearly 300 YWDs to form a nuclear youth groups called Breakthrough. Most of these are students who are studying at colleges and universities in HCM City. They do not have stable jobs and they have low self-esteem as well as lack of communication skills. The objectives of the project is to improve the capacity for YWDs so that they confidently participate in the process of building an inclusive community, changing community perceptions about disability issues and opening media campaign to mobilize resources. At the same time, the project also aims to develop DRD as a sustainable organization.

After more than three years of implementation, the project obtained encouraging results. In a survey conducted in May 10/2014 DRD with the participant of YWDs, the result showed that before participating in the project, communication skill and confidence of YWDs scored over 4 (out of 10). The current scale was nearly 8 (out of 10). Similarly, the ability to participate in social activities and community integration of YWDs also significantly increased from 4-5 to 6-7 (out of 10). Through the project, YWDs also actively participate in the playground as large as the contest of VTV4, VTV6, Vnexpress, ... Nguyen Thi Ai Thanh, YWD in Breakthrough group said that from the project, her independent living skills were enhanced, she was able to choose - to decide – to take responsible for her own lives. Instead of closing her heart with everyone, Thanh proactively ask her friends and co-workers to support her when needed. Her life becomes comfortable, cheerful and much lighter. And from receivers, YWDs actively become givers when they organized fundraising activities to raise fund for exchange program activities and giving gifts for other PWDs.

The project also raised community awareness about disability issues. The message through the media strategy is "One world for all", breaking down barriers for PWDs to facilitate and promote the value and capabilities of PWDs. The project organized campaign "Accessible Map" which researched 1800 public works in Ho Chi Minh City, offered a paper map and an online map of the locations which are suitable for PWDs. There were 857 PWDs and people without disabilities agreed to become ambassadors to speak out the issue of accessibility. The exhibition "Yes, disabilities" welcomed more than 300 participants who came to see the images of 15 YWDs and the story about the need to participate in social activities. The project established a task force group which specialized in accessibility survey and included of 5 members representing five different forms of disability. The task force group has been examined and made recommendations for specific works includes 21 universities and businesses.

According to Mr. Nguyen Van Cu - Vice Director of DRD, insightful lessons drawn from the project are focused on assisting the YWDs with strong determination, comprehensive support - not only in some aspects, such as scholarships and vocational training. Along with the support packages, the project should motivate youth to participate in community activities, creating relationships with local authorities and media to help PWDs understand their rights. Ms. Duong Hoang Quyen- Representative of the Atlantic Philanthropies emphasized, "The active participation of YWDs has contributed greatly to the success of the project. Social work profession in Vietnam are underdeveloped, social workers are disadvantaged, and DRD project should contribute more to the development of social work in Vietnam."

Thương Thương



The closing ceremony for APDF conference 2014

In the afternoon 28/11, Asia Pacific Disability Forum (APDF) 2014 closed the formal sessions. Delegation of Disability Research and Capacity Development (DRD) has several notable presentations at the conference.

In the report of two years of implementation strategies Inchoen in Vietnam (2012-2014) by Ministry of Labour - Invalids and Social Affairs, Vietnam has over 7 million people with disabilities (about 7.8% of the population) in which 3.6 million people with disabilities are woman and 1.2 million are children. Approximately 40% of these disabilities from aged 6 and above are illiterate, 20% have not completed primary education. Up to 80% of them participate in economic activities in the form of self-employed workers or families are not entitled to salary or wages. So far, according to the Ministry of Construction, there is only 22.6% of public health works, 20.8% of public education works, 13.2% of exhibitors centers, ... ensure accessibility for people with disabilities. The figures in report show that people with disabilities are still facing too many barriers and losing the opportunity to study, work, entertainment since the environment is not accessible.

In the discussion related to Raising community awareness of a world without barriers, M.S.W Luu Thi Anh Loan, Acting Director of DRD shared that DRD has held several surveys of public works in 8 districts of HCMC, trained supportive skills for personal assistance (PA) in particular, and the majority of students, students in general. At the same time, DRD also has promoted media campaigns in large scale such as Reaching dreams, Magical moments, the exhibition "Yes, disabilities!" with 15 stories represented the typical 15 people with disabilities who have attempted to overcome barriers. Survey results from DRD shows that only 78/1,800 works of the central districts of HCMC are accessible to people with disabilities. This is a sad figure. DRD has released a paper map, online maps for people with disabilities to search and lessen the difficulties when using the public works. Ms. Anh Loan also suggested that with the cooperation between authorized departments and other related agencies, an accessible environment for people with disabilities could be created and should have the participation of the beneficiaries to reach the best efficiency.

In topic 2 of the workshops, plenary sessions 1 of participation of people with disabilities in decision-making and advocacy attracted the attention of the majority of delegates. In the introduction of advocacy activities for people with disabilities in the city, Nguyen Van Cu, Vice Director of DRD emphasized that advocacy needed to put target audience in the center and create conditions for their direct participation in advocacy process. For example, the City has more than 3,250 buses operating on 200 defensive line. In 2012, Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee approved the proposal to renovate 1,680 buses in 2017. Immediately, DRD staff had to explore issues, plan and gather people with disabilities who directly used the bus in order to research the accessibility of the waiting points and stop stations. Information, images, and feelings of people with disabilities when using the bus were collected and become the proof of the petition sent to authorities in the city. As the results, 2 buses with full accessibility for people with disabilities were put into operation in May 7/2012; a number of other vehicles designed to low down the floor to run city routes in order to serve people with disabilities. In early 2013, the project management board of Metro 1 invited DRD to join their surveys and consultation on the issue of accessibility on the construction preparation. In early 2014, the Ministry of Construction sent a written request for DRD's comment for The new construction standards in accordance with disabilities.

In particular, in the dialogue session on the topic of youth with disabilities (YWDs) and the autonomy of the youth in the afternoon 28/11, Phan Thi Rat-YWD Breakthrough Group leader (founded from Project Capacity Building for YWDs - DRD) gave a speech "YWDs: strengths and challenges" from the operational experience of the group in the city. The speech emphasized that strengthening YWDs participation in activities related to people with disabilities would promote YWDs' capacity, confirms their value, and it was also the way of empowering YWDs. As the result, YWDs would become pioneer group in disability communities to promote sustainable development, contribute to the overall development of society.

In direct dialogue with Mr. Nguyen Trong Dam - Deputy Minister of Labour and Mr. Nguyen Phi Long - Secretary of the Youth Union's Central Executive Committee, Vice President of Central Vietnam Youth Union, M.S.W Luu Thi Anh Loan, Acting Director of DRD emphasized "DRD and the community is very excited when receiving the news that Parliament ratified the Convention on the Rights of PWDs. YWDs gradually become powerful force, and you need to show more of your responsibilities in contributing to the community."

Thương Thương



Mrs. Vũ Thị Thanh Hoa - Program Deputy Director presented at the workshop

Opportunities to study in Australia for people with disabilities

On November 9, Disability Research and Capacity Development – DRD, in coordination with the Australia Awards Scholarships, organized a briefing about the 2016 Australian scholarships program for more than 50 disabled and non-disabled youngsters. Attending the briefing was Mrs. Vu Thi Thanh Hoa – Program Deputy Director.

Australia Awards Scholarships includes Australian Government's scholarships (short term and long term, managed by the Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade - DFAT), Endeavour scholarship (by the Australian Ministry of Education), ACIAR (by the Australian Center for International Agriculture Research). Precursor of the Australia Awards Scholarship was Australia Development Scholarship – ADS. This scholarships program is an important component of the bilateral aid program by Australia in favor of Vietnam and granted on yearly basis in order to meet the priority development and human resources demands in Vietnam, and strengthening the relationship between Vietnam and Australia. Each scholarship is worth A\$ 300,000 (maximum 4 years for PhD. level) and A\$150,000 (maximum 2 years for Master level), including round ticket, tuition, basic medical insurance...

Mrs. Thanh Hoa emphasized that as a part of the development strategy, the government committed to support and create opportunities for the disabled to have more chances to get access equally to the Australia Awards Scholarships. For that reason, in the recent years, this scholarship program has especially cared and prioritized gender equality and the disabilities. Whereas, a requisite of the Australia Awards Scholarships is candidates having to have regular undergraduate degree (for Master and PhD level) and at least two years of working experience in Vietnam (only one year of working experience for people with disabilities).

Since 2011, there have been 19 disabled candidates receiving the scholarship in Vietnam. Some high-profile students who are studying at the universities in Australia are Ms. Vo Thi Hoang Yen (Director and Founder of DRD), Ms. Nguyen Thi Tu An...

At the briefing, many young people with disabilities raised a question: Are candidates with irregular undergraduate degree or desiring to pursue a major which is different from what they studied at local universities qualified? Mrs. Thanh Hoa confirmed that although disabled candidates are prioritized, they must have regular undergraduate degree as a requisite, and the major chosen must be suitable with their working experience and capability. Many other ideas were also raised and discussed at the briefing. Australia Awards Scholarships Representative, Mrs. Thanh Hoa, committed to report some of the important things to adjust the criteria to address the goal of the disabled so that they could get equal access to studying abroad.

The Australian Government's scholarship office will receive applications from February 1 to March 31, 2015. For more information, please access to <http://australiaawardsvietnam.org> or send email to info@australiaawardsvietnam.org and call the hot line (04) 39387375 (8:30am – 4:30pm).

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