THE FINAL REPORT

The title of project: "Disability Access Route to Education" (DARE)

DRD has cooperated with Ho Chi Minh University of Social Sciences and Humanities and Ho Chi Minh University of Education implemented "Disability Access Route to Education" (DARE) for SWDs sponsored by Irish Aid from January 1st, 2016 to December 31st, 2017.

Abbreviations:

DRD: Disability Research and Capacity Development center

DARE: Disability Access Route to Education

SWDs: Students with disabilities

PWDs: People with disabilities

Contents

I. Background

The overall objective of the two-year project was to promote equal opportunities and the chance to encourage the full participation of SWDs in social activities, just as the other members of the society through setting up the model of the disability support service. The model has provided essential conditions, instructional aids, and learning tools for youth with disabilities. Moreover, the project has helped the community to recognize the core value of youth with disabilities through applying the disability right-based model, enhancing the capacity for social work practice and mobilizing community resources.

The key objectives of the project are:

- SWDs identified their reasonable accommodation needs and enabled to be effective learners.
- Capacity of University staff and lectures built with better understanding about disability issues and developed strategies to provide supports that are currently insufficient for SWDs.
- The model of disability support service expected to be applied within two partner universities who are public universities and replicated to other universities in the area.

Expected results:

1.   At least 80% of the SWDs will achieve educational goals, as indicated in their study plan.
2.   At least 80% of the SWDs who are provided the training courses of social skills and disability equality have strong confidence in their capability and can actively participate in all social activities that affect their life.
3.   Successful stories of the SWDs will inspire others with disabilities to continue their higher education.
4.   Successful stories of the SWDs will enhance the understanding of the Convention on the Rights of PWD's spirit and concepts, and help change social prejudices against PWDs in general.
5.   University staff and lecturers have understood more about disability issues and been able to develop the annual work-plan to support SWDs.
6.   Disability Support service model is expected to apply by two universities are partners of DRD, and shared with other universities.

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After two years, the project has reached 57/60 SWDs at two universities, with following features:

- Gender: male was 34.8%, and female was 65.2%.

- Majors of learning: psychology was 39.1% (the largest group of SWDs), and special education was 26.1%.

Table 1: Distribution majors of SWDs

Majors	Percentage
Psychology	39,1
Special Education	26,1
Language	10,8
Media	2,2
Information Technology	2,2
Sociology/ Social Work	4,4
The other branches of social sciences	15,2

- At least 8.7% of SWDs are economical class, 54.3% are average class, 23.9% are nearly poor and 13% are poor.

- The types of disabilities: most SWDs who have participated in the project are persons with visual impairment (44 students), accounted 78.3% *(Find more details in table 2: the results of the project final evaluation).*

Table 2: the types of disabilities at two universities

Types	Percentage
People with visual impairment	78.3
People with physical disability	10.9
People with hearing impairment	4.3
Multiple disabilities	2.2
Others	4.4

II. The results of the project implementation during two years (2016-2017)

1. *Goal 1: SWDs identified their reasonable accommodation needs and enabled to be effective learners.*

   1.1. Needs assessment:

The needs of 100% of SWDs who have participated in the project had been assessed.

The results of need assessment of 57 SWDs at two universities showed that their basic needs were quite similar. Most of them, those who were interviewed, expected *to have a good academic graduation; foreign language and computer certificate; and job placement/ employment before graduation, transportation support, learning tools and soft skills, etc*. Over 33.3% of SWDs suggested "support for learning and living expenses such as learning tools, transportation…" A few SWDs set up the goals to be higher than their ability, such as obtaining a certificate of English with high grade or expecting to study abroad but how to achieve these expectations were unclear.

Table 3: the support needs of SWDs

The support needs of SWDs	Percentage
Transportations/ learning tools	33,3
Soft skills	35,5
English and computer skills	15,1
Scholarship	7,5
Materials	3,2
Job placement/ employment	2,2
Social activities	2,2
Others	1,1

   1.2. Individual development plan

57 SWDs were supported to make their individual development plans by mentors. Their learning and living goals in each school year were identified clearly under the supports from

mentors. From individual development plans, mentors suggested suitable supports for SWDs to achieve their objectives and future orientation as well.

According to the results of needs assessment, at least 49.4% of SWDs agreed that this activity helped them understand more about the importance of future orientation and plan making. Others (38%) reported that they knew how to achieve their own goals/future orientation. Many SWDs shared that individual development plans helped them orient what to do, how to implement and manage time better. Another one said *"setting up goal to help to be more responsible for myself."*

Besides, SWDs at two two universities also confirmed that the individual development plan helped them know their current strengths, weaknesses and difficulties, and find out the way that motivated them.

Table 4: the benefits of individual development plan

The benefits of individual development plan	Percentage
Understand their own goals/ future orientation	49,4
Understand what they need to do to achieve their own goals/ future orientation	38,0
The project has supported closely their needs	5,1
Teachers has understood more about their needs	3,8
Others	3,8

1.3.   Support packages

SWDs' basic needs at two universities are quite similar. According to SWDs' individual development plans and mentors' suggestions, the project has already provided the suitable support packages for each SWD including material supports and soft skills:

1.3.1 . Material supports:

Based on SWDs' needs, the project has already provided material supports such as laptop, scanner, hearing aids, motorbike with three wheels, materials, learning tools and scholarship, etc. SWDs reported that the importance of scholarships. They also said that the support packages were necessary. One student said *"The laptop which I was awarded is a tool that help me to study and open a new world of knowledge. My family is so poor that I cannot buy*

one." Another one said *"because I cannot write lessons in time, so when I have recorder, I can listen to lecture*s more effectively."

1.3.2. Soft skills:

The project organized 7 training courses:

- One (01) Leadership and Teamwork
- One (01) Event organizing skills
- Two (02) Interview and write CV
- One (01) Communication and public speaking
- One (01) Mobility orientation skill
- One (01) Law and policy
- Nine (9) exchanges/sharing programs between students and other organizations, with 478 turns of their participations

SWDs highly appreciated the necessity of the soft skills training courses. Some of them identified *"I love the CV writing and interviewing skill because it helps me get better at applying for a job."; "I met new friends and gained a lot of knowledge about how to work in team or leadership when I participated in the training courses."*

"I am more confidenct when participating in the last training. The activity was not only a training but also created a good environment for me to practice and apply the knowledge that I have learnt in school".

"I feel more confident to join the event. Two-day training was a rewarding experience, learning many things that books did not teach."

1.3.3. Mentors:

57 SWDs participated in the project were provided mentors during the project. At least 10,9% of them identified that mentors were extremely necessary; very necessary

(32,6%); giving useful advices (32%); being encourage them (22,6%) and listening and sharing with them (20,2%). One student shared *"Previously, I always cried myself. Now, DRD and mentors share anything with me, I feel so warm."* Another one said *"mentor is very kind. As I have problems, I find her to tell anything. She is a good teacher and a good friend as well. I am comfortable when meeting with her."* The other one expressed that *"Giving me money is not always good. I mean the support of mentors and soft skill training courses are more important. We can learn a lot of things and change ourselves from these training."*

Table 5: the necessary degree of mentors

Necessary degree	Percantage
Extremely necessary	10,9
Very necessary	32,6
Necessary	32,6
A bit necessary	17,4
Unnecessary	6,5
Total	100,0

1.3.4. Business connections/ Internships and Employment support:

To help SWDs have opportunity to experience in internship/employment in related fields, the project also hold an exchange trip between them and businesses who have training fields suitable with professional as well as types of disability of SWD group. This activity included a tour of 10 students with visual impairment and 2 mentors at NOIR restaurant where has applied an employment model for workers with visual impaiment. In particular, the sharing session also helped them understand more about disability, as well as related jobs/ areas at business.

In addition, the project organized many programs to connect them and other businesses such as Lantalk, Truong Minh, Minh Phuc, Dicentral company in order to learn experience in the working environment as well as applying some potential positions in the companies.

After the visit, the project has created opportunities for them to practice and work, in which one (1) SWD works as receptionist at NOIR restaurant, another one works as data analysis officer at Dicentral Software Company, and three (3) others were internship as customer care staff at the company. One SWD shared: *"I was particularly impressed as I went to the exchange trip that helped me know the employers' requirements. And then I recognized that I need to learn and practice more if I want to have a stable job later."*

1.4. The support initiative for SWDs

In 2016, the project launched a series of initiatives to support SWDs' learning at two universities. There are 12 initiatives in which 7 initiative were funded by the project:

- Building a Braille map for students with visual impairment by Ho Chi Minh University of Education.

- Developing an app "Mentor" - Ho Chi Minh University of Education

- "Building and organizing the exploitation of information products serving the learning and research for students with visual impairment" at Ho Chi Minh University of Social Sciences and Humanities

- "Support Service for SWD and volunteers" at Ho Chi Minh University of Social Sciences and Humanities

- Dong Hanh Souvenir shop - Ho Chi Minh University of Social Sciences and Humanities

- "English learning material for students with visual impairment" - Ho Chi Minh University of Education

- Counseling and learning support for SWDs

Many staff/lecturers shared that they had opportunities to seek new information and knowledge about disability as well as to understand more PWDs in general and SWDs in particular:

+ At the library of the Ho Chi Minh University of Social Sciences and Humanities, the initiative "Building and organizing the exploitation of information products serving the learning and research for students with visual impairment" has achieved many significant results following:
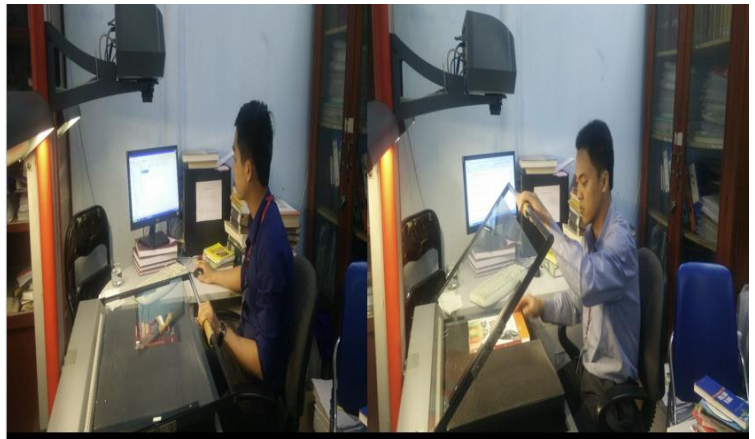
- Recorded and processed 4/6 audiobooks, including 4 Vietnamese books and 2 English books;

- Received and downloaded 135 audiobooks from Sao Mai Center and 166 e-books from free resources;

- Purchased 202/249 audiobooks and 05 books/13 audiobooks as references (reaching 100% of the plan);

- Cataloged 2,336 titles in the Department of Psychology (reaching 100% of the plan);

- Installed the Jaws software for computers using Windows operation system at Data Access 2 (Thu Duc unit), and set up the headset in the room to serve students with visual impairment;

- Trained skills on using software and equipment supporting SWDs for librarians…

+ At Ho Chi Minh University of Education, the initiative "Building a Braille map for students with visual impairment by Ho Chi Minh University of Education" has received the attention of many teachers and students, especially students

with visual impairment. Some significant results mentioned below:

- The Braille Map guides students with visual impairment who are studying at Ho Chi Minh University of Education to determine the location where they need to come from different locations in the wards or districts of the city or the right function room and roads in school.

- Besides, the initiative trained 6 students with visual impairment who were the third or fourth year students at Ho Chi Minh University of Education know how to make the Braille Map for people with visual impairment.

2. **Goal 2: Capacity of University staff and lecturers built with better understanding about disability issues and developed strategies to provide supports that are currently insufficient for SWDs.**

*T*he project organized 8 events to raise awareness about disability issuses at two universities, with the partcipation of over 130 lecturers/staff.

The events as following:

2.1. Raising awareness about disability issues:

The event have attracted 50 lecturers/ staff at two universities and helped them understand more about disability issues. Moreover, the support service model for SWDs is the basis for developing solutions and support strategies for SWDs. Some teachers shared:

"Before attending the training, I knew about this content, but after that I have not only more knowledge about disability but also understand my previous knowledge which is wrong or right, and I adjust it in the best way."

"I understood about the support service model for PWD/ psychology of disability in general/ how to use right words/ how to support PWD suitably, and recognize the characteristics of disability types."

2.2. Studying the English teaching model for PWDs at the Britsh Council, and the model of support service for SWDs at RMIT University.

The study tour was one of activities for lecturers and mentors to help them understand more about disability issues as well as know how to support them effectively. In particular, the support model at the RMIT University was impressed with most lectures and mentors. They shared that they would pay attention on how to apply the most basic things in the teaching for SWDs, especially persons with visual impairment to get easy such as changing the color of textbooks, background, font, and size, etc.

2.3. "One World for All" at two universities:

"One World for All" is a media event organized by DRD for teachers and people with and without disabilities at universities. The activities of the event such as talk show, exchanges, music show… has provided useful information about the current disability issues and social barriers. The event aims to provide the evidences of the efforts and abilities of PWDs to overcome barriers to integrate into social activities as other citizens. During 2016 – 2017, the project organized 4 events - "One World for All", attracted quite a lot of student without disability and lectures at universities.

One teacher shared after the event: *"I respect and admire PWD. I admire them in the resilience spirit because they always have hope and never give up the fate. I think that the infrastructures should be appropriately improved to provide PWD reasonable accommodations in their daily living activities. There should be many programs like this*

event so people can understand more about disability and change their attitudes."

3. **Goal 3: The model of disability support service expected to be applied within two partner universities who are public universities and replicated to other universities in the area.**

Regarding to the sustainable objectives of the project, DRD has planed to work with organizations operated by PWD, especially those with visual impairment such as Thien An, Sao Mai, and Nhat Hong where can get more appropriate advice in the process of building supportive model for SWD. In addition, the RMIT University is known as one of the specialized training centers for SWDs who have the opportunities to participate in equal learning as other students. Then, the project also contacted and cooperated with the consultancy and support of RMIT University staff in charge of advising the establishment of the support service model for SWD at Ho Chi Minh University of Education.

By the end of December 2017, Ho Chi Minh University of Education has basically completed the initial steps for the establishment of model such as room, headsets, software Jaws, Zoomtext, etc.

In January 2018, the model was officially launched and implemented its counseling, supporting function such as individual development plan, providing mentors, supporting dormitories, materials, learning software, and introducing other recsources to support SWDs, etc.

III. SUSTAINABILITY

- The project has trained in life-skills courses for SWDs, especially career and employment skills will assist them in looking for job and adapt to the employment environment that they will face after graduation.

- The project has also contributed to enhancing SWDs'self-confidence and ability to integrate into social activities.

- The knowledge and capacity to support SWDs of school staff and teachers who have participated in the project is a sustainable factor**.**

- The support service model for SWD is being replicated by Ho Chi Minh University of Education because of its relevance.

IV. LESSONS AND LEARNT

- It is necessary to refine SWDs through interviews or based on a number of challenging

criteria to choose student who just come to the project for material support, even they have quite hands on learning facilities.

- It is recommended to recruit mentors who have volunteer spirit to help SWDs and knowledge about disability issues in general. They should be trained on counseling and mentoring skills.

- DRD and partners should reach a clear understanding of the strategies and values that two sides pursue as well as the procedure for conducting the work plan. Therefore, DRD also need to discuss and encourage the partners' participation in activities, especially at the stage of designing strategic plans of the project.

V. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

1. Advantages:

- The project has mobilized the participations of the relevant agents in its implementation process at two universities because it has receieed the support of the management board – namely Department of International Cooperation and Development of University of Social Sciences and Humanities, and the Department of Political Science Students of University of Education;

- SWDs who have participated in the project understood more about how to identify the necessary support of the project for themselves;

- Teachers and mentors who are enthusiastic and experienced in social work effectively carried out their roles in supporting for SWDs to build and implement the individual development plans.

2. Disadvantages:

- The duration of the project is relatively short while some activities need to be implement over a longer period of time to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the project;

- Many activities for teacher and SWDs at two universities have not got the full participation of members due to overlapping time;

- Teachers and mentors who are in charge of the Faculty or different subjects have limited time to support and monitor SWDs' individual development plans;

- Most of students with visual impairment have received much supports. They have psychological expectation without participating in the project actively; so many activities are still limited.

- The implementation of the activities is based on the work-plan of each school managers so DRD is dependent on working with partners.

- Some of the project activities do not work directly with the beneficiaries but must go through the management of the two universities so the project activities are passive and fall behind schedule.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Students with disabilities

- It is very important to provide and update information related to PWD for SWD. Therefore, DRD also needs to maintain the group of SWDs to share information and opportunities even after they graduate. On the other hand, SWDs who graduate should share experiences with new students to encourage them to participate in the related-activities for PWDs.

2. Management and teachers of the two universities:

- Project managers and mentors at two universities need to continue to help SWDs fulfill their learning goals and career orientation from the experience gained. Supportive measures are at the schools'fingertips:

  o It is necessary to help SWDs to develop and implement their individual development plans.

  o It recommends that mentor should provide consultation and evaluate SWDs' dividual development plan.

  o Teachers who have played mentors' role in recent years are accumulating real experiences. These are asset that should be shared to other teachers, whether or not the management board continues to implement the model.