

EMPOWERMENT

through

EMPLOYMENT

of Persons with Visual Impairment

RESEARCH REPORT
2024



Status of Employment and Strategies for Improvement

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Strategies for Improvement*

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Glossary

Employers

An employer is the authority which employs and pays employees for their labour. It may be an individual person, or it may be a company representing many people. Within the relationship between employers and their employees, the employer is the party which will typically define the terms of employment and write the contract. They are then obligated to provide the agreed-upon compensation to workers for any labour they perform that is contained within the terms of their contract.

An employer is also the party legally liable for work conditions, maintaining labour laws and handling any legal action an employee may pursue.

Mighty Recruiter (2024). Retrieved from:

<https://www.mightyrecruiter.com/recruiter-guide/hiring-glossary-a-to-z/employer/>

Employee

An employee is someone that another person or company hires to perform a service. Business owners compensate employees for their work to grow and maintain their business.

Employees typically have a specified pay rate and a written or implied employment contract with the party they work for.

Indeed for Employers (2024). Retrieved from:

<https://www.indeed.com/perusahaan/c/info/employee-definition>

Employment

It is termed as a paid mutual work arrangement between a recruiter and an employee. This term applies to an individual who is hired for a salary or compensation to initiate work or tasks for an organization. Although the employees can negotiate certain items in an employment agreement, the terms and conditions that are included and are mostly determined by the employer. This agreement could also be ended by the recruiter or the employee.

People Hum (2024). Retrieved from:

<https://www.peoplehum.com/glossary/employment#:~:text=Employment%20definition%20is%20termed%20as,or%20tasks%20for%20an%20organization.>

Internal Factor

In terms of soft skill, internal factors or factors that come from oneself (individuals) such as talent, work motivation, soft skills, intelligence, interests, attitudes, knowledge of the world of work, achievements, work experience, outward appearance.

Marpaung Oktavia, Binton Siburian, Syifa Afifah, Parlin Tumpal Sinaga (2018), International Journal of Informatics, Economics, Management and Science (IJIEMS), The Effect of Soft Skill And Hard Skill On Work Readiness Of The 2018, STIE Jayakarta, Indonesia). Retrieved from:

<http://journal.stmikjayakarta.ac.id/index.php/ijiems>

External Factor

In terms of softskill, external factors or factors originating from outside oneself (environment) such as the role and guidance of parents, the state of the surrounding community, the state of peers.

Marpaung Oktavia, Binton Siburian, Syifa Afifah, Parlin Tumpal Sinaga (2018), International Journal of Informatics, Economics, Management and Science (IJIEMS), The Effect Of Soft Skill And Hard Skill On Work Readiness Of The 2018, STIE Jayakarta, Indonesia). Retrieved from:

<http://journal.stmikjayakarta.ac.id/index.php/ijiems>

Persons with Visual Impairment

Persons who have any kind of vision loss, whether it's someone who cannot see at all or someone who has partial vision loss.

Kids Health (2024). Retrieved from:

<https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/visual-impairment.html#:~:text=Visual%20impairment%20is%20a%20term,have%20what's%20called%20legal%20blindness>

Soft skill

A soft skill is a personal attribute that supports situational awareness and enhances an individual's ability to get a job done. The term soft skills are often used as a synonym for people skills or emotional intelligence. Unlike hard skills, which describe a person's technical ability to perform a specifically defined task, soft skills are broadly applicable across job titles and industries. It's often said that while hard skills might get someone an interview, soft skills will help that person get and keep the job.

Mery K. Pratt (2024). Retrieved from:

<https://www.techtarget.com/searchcio/definition/soft-skills>

Unemployment A situation where a person actively searches for employment but is unable to find work. Unemployment is a key measure of the health of the economy.

Adam Hayes (2024). Retrieved from:

<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/u/unemployment.asp#:~:text=Unemployment%20refers%20to%20a%20situation,unemployment%20is%20the%20unemployment%20rate.>

Unemployed An individual who is without a job and who wants and is available for work, including an individual who may have occasional employment that does not result in a constant source of income.

Legal Information Institute (LII) (2024). Retrieved from:

https://www.law.cornell.edu/definitions/uscode.php?width=840&height=800&iframe=true&def_id=42-USC-1575269306-1377059234&term_occur=999&term_src=title:42:chapter:35:subchapter:IX:section:3056

Visually Impaired A loss of vision that can reasonably be expected to lead to blindness or a loss of vision that represents a barrier to employment or other major life activities.

Law Insider (2024). Retrieved from:

<https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/visually-impaired>



CHAPTER 1

Setting of the Research

Prelude

The purpose of the research is to find out various factors that contribute to the success of persons with visual impairment in the employment sector. The project partners Mitra Netra in Indonesia, Resources for the Blind in the Philippines and Sao Mai Centre in Vietnam have been involved in the promotion of higher education for persons with visual impairment and also in the promotion of employment for them in the last decade with the support of The Nippon Foundation and the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI).

During this time, a publication on **“Transition to Employment: Lessons from the Philippines, Indonesia & Vietnam”** was brought out by the project which highlighted some key factors that were mentioned by different stakeholders as vital for the employment of persons with visual impairment. However, the findings were not fully backed up by empirical research studies.

The current project, which commenced in January 2024 ventured into a systematic research study to document evidences in this area and also list out factors that need to be looked into in order to augment employment opportunities for persons with visual impairment. In the process, the project wanted to involve key stakeholders in the employment sector who contribute directly or indirectly to the employment issues connected with visually impaired persons.

In addition to the identification of factors contributing to the success in the employment sector, the project also wanted to find out factors that serve as impediments to success in the employment sector. The project also recognized that in both the success and impediments in the employment sector, some factors may be internal and some may be external and therefore the project, after thorough deliberations, decided to involve seven categories of stakeholders who are listed as follows:

1. Employed persons with visual impairment
2. Employers of persons with visual impairment
3. Non-government organizations
4. Government bodies in promoting employment opportunities
5. Unemployed persons with visual impairment
6. Parents of children with visual impairment who are still in higher education
7. University/Higher Education

In order to gather useful information from the stakeholders for the research, the project developed different data gathering tools which will be narrated later in this section.

Setting of the Research

Having defined the overall domain of the research, the project recruited a key researcher for the project in Indonesia supported by country level research coordinators from Philippines and Vietnam. The researchers went through a detailed induction program offered by the three partner organizations headed by the Project Director with the assistance of the Research Consultant. This orientation program took place in January 2024 which involved in the defining of the broad domain and key dimensions of the research.



Research Orientation Meeting - 30-31 January - Jakarta, Indonesia



Discussion at Research Orientation Meeting held on 30-31 January, Jakarta, Indonesia.

Based on these parameters, the research team developed appropriate tools to get reliable data. The process of the development of research tools involved interactive as well as introspective sessions whereby each participant was asked to list out key aspects that would be of importance for each research tool. After reaching consensus on the key areas to be included in each research tool, the actual research questions were written and validated by the team with the help of sample stakeholders. Therefore, the development of the tools for the research ensured built-in validity. The detailed tools are given in the annexure of this report.

However, the following table highlights the key areas that were included in each of the research tool adopted for data collection.

| No. | Title of the Tool | Audience | Key areas covered |
|-----|-------------------|--|--|
| 1. | Survey | <p>Persons with Visual Impairment who are employees</p> <p>Persons with visual impairment currently unemployed</p> <p>Persons with visual impairment who were employed in the past</p> | <p>Soft skill assessment</p> <p>Oral Communication skill</p> <p>Written Communication skill</p> <p>Non-verbal communication skill</p> <p>Resume preparation skill</p> <p>Face to face interview technique skill</p> <p>Career planning</p> <p>Questioning skill</p> <p>Diplomacy skill</p> <p>Personal grooming</p> <p>Goal setting</p> <p>Decision making</p> <p>Understanding own potential</p> <p>Knowledge on legislation related to employment</p> <p>Developing proper behaviour</p> <p>Self esteem</p> <p>Learning to optimize productivity in work</p> <p>Work ethics</p> <p>Professional enrichment goals</p> <p>Coping with visual impairment in the workplace</p> <p>Coping with situation when jobs obtained are not commensurate with qualification</p> <p>Learning to work together</p> <p>Coping with external criticism</p> <p>Peer group interaction</p> <p>Initiative to become unique</p> <p>Coping with work environment</p> <p>Dealing with challenges in mobility and transportation</p> |

| No. | Title of the Tool | Audience | Key areas covered |
|-----|--------------------|--|---|
| 4. | In-depth Interview | Persons with Visual Impairment who are employees, those who failed to get jobs, and students in university | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment process to get job Education background Soft skill ability Support system Mobility Family background Experience working in the institution Factors relating to failure to get jobs Experience getting training in university |
| | | Parents of persons with visual impairment (who have jobs) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Types of support to children with visual impairment Parenting and obstacles Families background Social, economic, and cultural background Motivation to encourage persons with disability to get jobs The contribution of persons with visual impairment who have a job for family |
| | | Employers (private and public institution) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment process/system and orientation Knowledge of disability & regulation Experience having persons with visual impairment workers Motivation having persons with visual impairment workers |
| | | Government bodies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of disability regulation and programs Budget for disability issues Employee recruitment process and regulations Monitoring of employers (private and public institutions) |

| No. | Title of the Tool | Audience | Key areas covered |
|-----|-------------------------------|--|--|
| | | Heads of Universities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statistics on enrolment of persons with visual impairment Accessibility and reasonable accommodation in university Student recruitment process and orientation Challenges in handling students with visual impairment Disability services unit Scholarship program Support system in the university (friends, lecturers, assistants) |
| | | NGO/CSO/DPO | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statistics on persons with visual impairment who have jobs Government perspective on disability Government role in the employment sector for persons with visual impairment Advocacy in employment sector for visual impairment Programs for persons with visual impairment in terms of employment sector |
| 3. | Focus Group Discussion | Persons with visual impairment who have jobs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment process to get jobs Education background Soft skill ability Support system Mobility Family background Experience working in the institution Factors related to failure to get jobs Experience getting training in university |

| No. | Title of the Tool | Audience | Key areas covered |
|-----|-------------------|---|---|
| | | Parents of persons with visual impairment who have jobs | Forms of support to children with visual impairment Parenting and its obstacles Family's background Social, economic, and cultural background Motivation to encourage persons with disability to get jobs The contribution of persons with visual impairment who have a job for family |
| | | Employers (private and public sectors) | Recruitment process and orientation Knowledge of disability and government role Vision and mission of institution Motivation hiring persons with visual impairment to become their workers Experience having persons with visual impairment workers |

Methodology

1. Research Design

This study uses a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. The goal of using this mixed method is to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of empowerment through the employment of visually impaired individuals by exploring factors contributing to success and barriers in the employment sector. The study also acknowledges that both success and obstacles in the employment sector may involve internal factors related to the skill levels of visually impaired individuals (soft skills) and external factors.

2. Research Location and Time

This research is conducted in three countries: Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. These locations were chosen based on previous studies related to the

role of higher education to persons with visually impaired. The research is carried out from January to June 2024.

3. Population and Sample

The population for the survey research consists of visually impaired individuals, including:

- Those currently employed
- Those not employed or still in higher education preparing for employment
- Those who were previously employed but are currently seeking work

Purposive sampling was chosen because this method allows researchers to intentionally select individuals or groups that are considered most relevant and knowledgeable about the research topic. In this study, the research respondents are visually impaired individuals who are the most relevant samples and possess accurate information regarding factors contributing to the success and barriers faced by visually impaired individuals in the employment sector. Additionally, the limited availability of visually impaired individuals willing to participate as respondents necessitated the use of purposive sampling.

1. **Quantitative Sample:** The quantitative sample consists of 195 visually impaired respondents selected based on specific criteria, including those who are employed, unemployed, or still in higher education preparing for employment, and those who were previously employed but are no longer working.
2. **Qualitative:** For the qualitative approach, 349 key informants were purposively selected based on their relevance to the employment issues of visually impaired individuals. These informants include employed and unemployed visually impaired individuals, parents, employers, government officials, higher education institutions, and NGOs/DPOs/CSOs.

4. Data Collection Techniques

4.1. Quantitative data was collected through structured questionnaires filled out by respondents. The questionnaire, in the form of a Google form, is accessible online. It consists of closed-ended questions using a Likert scale (Excellent, Good, Average, Poor, and Very Poor) to measure the skill levels (soft skills) of visually impaired individuals. See the key areas covered of soft skill below:

- Soft skill assessment
- Oral Communication skill
- Written Communication skill
- Non-verbal communication skill
- Resume preparation skill
- Face to face interview technique skill
- Career planning
- Questioning skill
- Diplomacy skill
- Personal grooming
- Goal setting
- Decision making
- Understanding own potential
- Knowledge on legislation related to employment
- Developing proper behavior
- Self esteem
- Learning to optimize productivity in work
- Work ethics
- Professional enrichment goals
- Coping with visual impairment in the workplace
- Coping with situation when jobs obtained are not commensurate with qualification
- Learning to work together
- Coping with external criticism
- Peer group interaction
- Initiative to become unique
- Coping with work environment
- Dealing with challenges in mobility and transportation

4.2. Qualitative data was collected through:

- 1. In-Depth Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with relevant stakeholders related to employment issues for visually impaired individuals, focusing on factors contributing to success and barriers. This includes exploring internal factors related to soft skills, the skills possessed, how and where these skills were acquired, their application, and areas for improvement.

2. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Focus group discussions were conducted with three groups: visually impaired individuals (both employed and unemployed or still in higher education), parents, and employers. The FGDs aimed to gather in-depth information about the success and barriers faced by visually impaired individuals in employment from diverse perspectives: visually impaired individuals, employers, and parents. From the FGDs, various pieces of information were obtained about external factors contributing to success and barriers in the employment sector, such as the role of parents in encouraging their disabled children to work, government policies regarding job opportunities for visually impaired individuals, employers' perspectives on visually impaired individuals who are seeking or already employed, and the availability or lack of accessibility and accommodation in recruitment processes at companies or institutions.

5. Research Instruments

5.1 Questionnaire: The questionnaire is based on a Self-Assessment model focusing on five dimensions of skill levels/soft skills (Excellent, Good, Average, Poor, and Very Poor). The questionnaire was pre-tested to assess its validity and reliability.

5.2 Interview and FGD Guides: Interview and FGD guides were developed to delve deeper into factors contributing to success and barriers for visually impaired individuals in the employment sector. This includes strengthening and deepening data related to self-assessment of soft skills and their use by visually impaired individuals, as well as external factors such as stakeholders' perspectives and employment policies.

6. Data Analysis Techniques

6.1 Quantitative Analysis: Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics to describe the skill levels (soft skills) of respondents.

This study did not use regression analysis because regression analysis requires several assumptions, such as linearity, residual normality, and homoscedasticity. If data does not meet these assumptions, using regression analysis may produce inaccurate or misleading results.

Additionally, the data obtained in this study did not meet parametric statistical requirements because the data did not follow a normal distribution. This means that the primary assumption of parametric methods, that data should be normally distributed, was not met. Therefore, using parametric statistical methods such as t-tests, ANOVA, or linear regression might not be appropriate.

The data did not follow a normal distribution because the data was not homogeneous. In this study, the survey respondents were visually impaired individuals selected purposively, including those employed, unemployed, or still in higher education preparing for employment, and those who were previously employed but are no longer working. Testing data that combines several groups with different characteristics can result in a combined distribution that is not normal.

6.2 Qualitative Analysis: Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. This process involves identifying key patterns or themes from the interview results. The analysis steps include:

***Transcription:** All interview results were transcribed verbatim.*

***Coding:** Relevant data was coded and organized into specific categories.*

***Presentation:** Emerging themes were presented narratively to provide a detailed explanation of the participants' experiences.*

The results of this analysis produced several recommendations related to the research topic concerning the contributions to success and barriers faced by visually impaired individuals in the employment sector. Specifically:

1. Survey Data Analysis Results: Contributions from internal factors of visually impaired individuals, namely soft skills (self-assessment), particularly focusing on low-rated skill areas possessed by visually impaired employees, where improvements are needed in these skill types.
2. Qualitative Data Analysis Results: Strengthening quantitative data related to the acquisition and benefits of soft skills by visually impaired individuals and external factors, such as the role of employers, parents,

higher education institutions, NGOs/CSOs, and government policymakers.

7. Ethics

This study considers ethical aspects by obtaining consent from respondents before participation. Respondents were provided with a full explanation of the study's objectives and their right to withdraw at any time. Anonymity and confidentiality of personal information were maintained throughout and after the study.

8. Research Limitations

There are several limitations in this study, including:

1. Purposive sampling may reduce the generalizability of the research findings due to the subjective selection of respondents.
2. The team decided not to use parametric statistics in the analysis due to the vast differences in sampling and therefore opted for percentage and qualitative comparison of responses. Controlled samples should have been used from the beginning of the study if parametric statistics were to be applied. This aspect can be addressed in future research when a well-defined cohort is initiated.

Sample of the Study

The research proposal aimed at gathering data from 100 persons with visual impairment to address various research questions formulated by the team. The conservative number was fixed with an assumption that reaching out to visually impaired persons who are employed might be difficult involving the brief time that was set out for the research study. However, the experiences exceeded the expectations. The research team could actually gather data from 195 visually impaired persons in the stipulated time and this included 144 persons with visual impairment who currently have a job and 51 who are yet to get a job and those who discontinued their job.

The responses from the parents were overwhelming that the project could reach out to a total of 59 parents to get their views on the factors contributing to success

of visually impaired persons in the employment sector. Among the stakeholders, the more enthusiastic group that took active role in the research was that of employers constituting 64 in number. Their insights into employment issues are really helpful for designing programs for visually impaired persons in the future to ensure success in employment. Such details will be discussed later in the analysis of the respective areas. The following table lists the various categories of stakeholders who participated in the research and the actual number against each category.

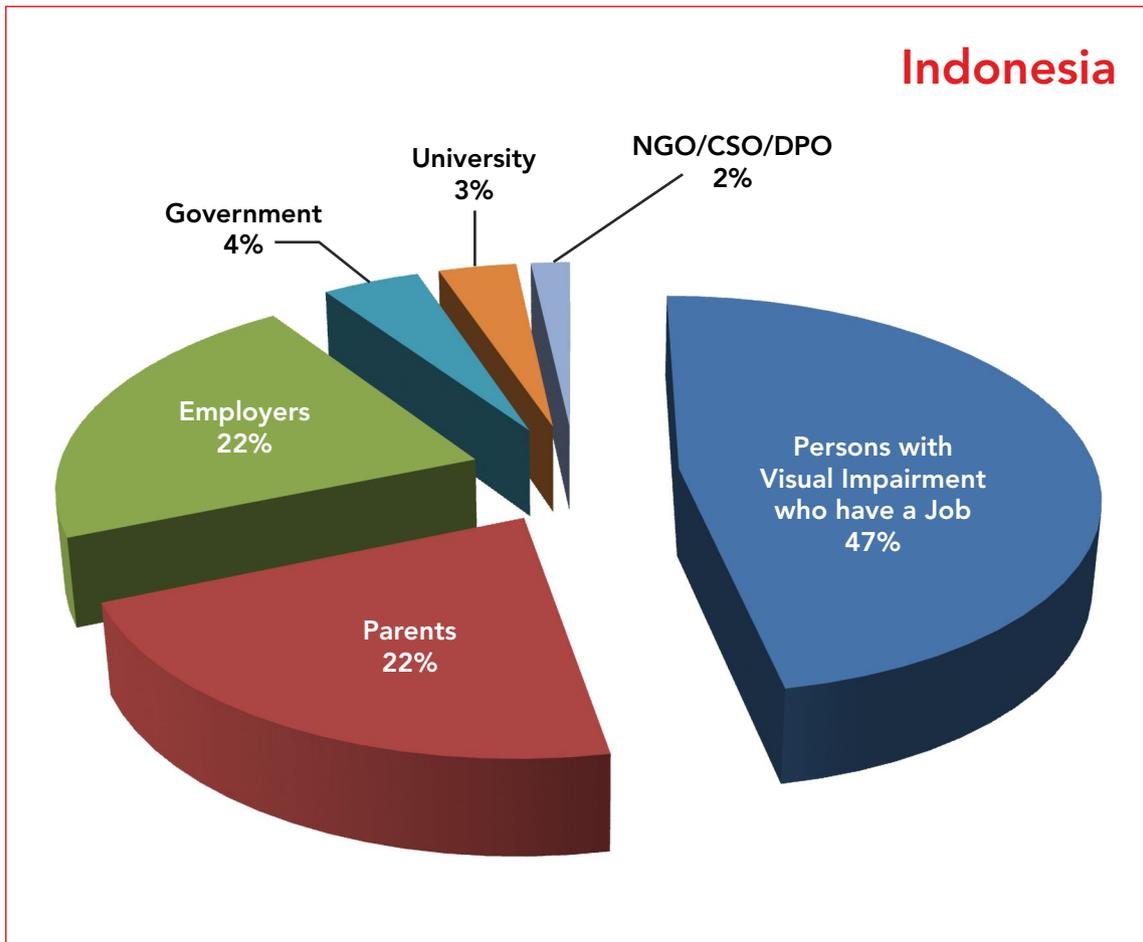
| No. | Audience | Indonesia | Philippines | Vietnam | TOTAL |
|--------------|--|------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| 1 | Persons with Visual Impairment who have a Job | 54 | 40 | 49 | 143 |
| 2 | Persons with Visual Impairment without a Job | 00 | 26 | 26 | 52 |
| 3 | Parents | 25 | 24 | 10 | 59 |
| 4 | Employer (Private / Government Institution Sector) | 25 | 30 | 09 | 64 |
| 5 | Government | 5 | 3 | 0 | 8 |
| 6 | University | 4 | 2 | 2 | 8 |
| 7 | NGO/CSO/DPO | 2 | 8 | 5 | 15 |
| TOTAL | | 115 | 133 | 101 | 349 |

A brief analysis of the data presented above may also be helpful. In Philippines and Vietnam, visually impaired persons who are yet to be employed constitute sizable numbers as this included students who are just completing their graduation and those who are awaiting jobs. They were included in the research to get their perspective also. In total, about 27% of visually impaired persons involved in the study are those who are yet to be employed whereas 73% of them are individuals who have secured successful employment.

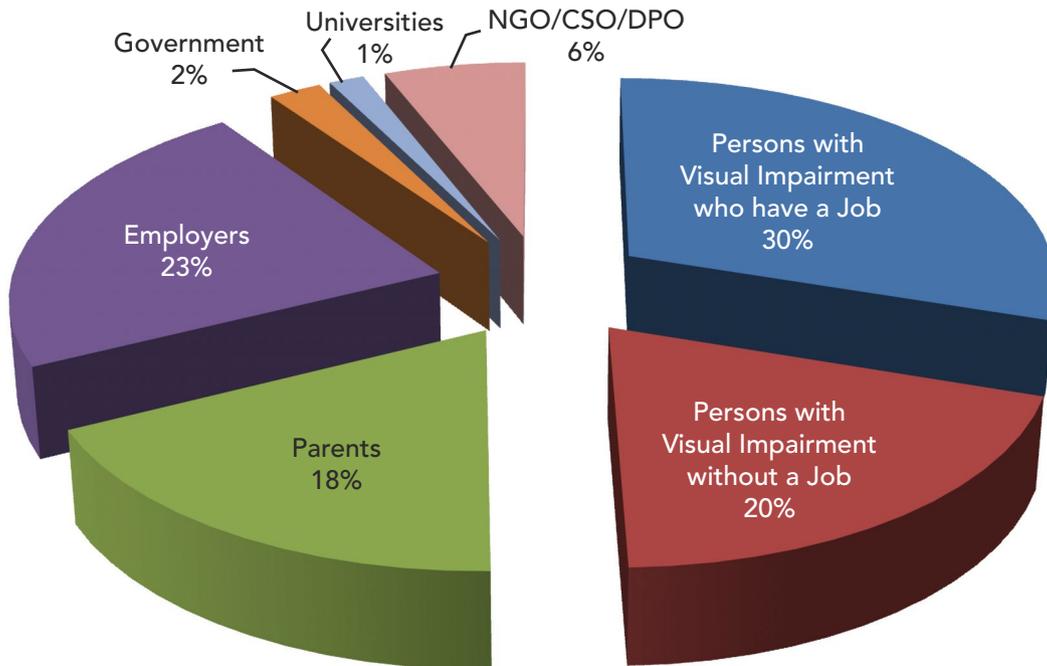
In the case of Vietnam, the employer participation was only 9 and that is due to the reason that many officials involved in the employment arena could not be contacted due to their schedule conflicts during the research data collection. In the case of

government officials, University personnel, NGOs, etc., the sample proposed itself was minimal as they were not considered to be the primary sample of the study and the data from them were used to substantiate the results of the overall research study, which emerged from the responses of visually impaired persons, employers and parents. Despite slight variations between the partner countries, the overall data of the research reflects the views of different stakeholders of the study.

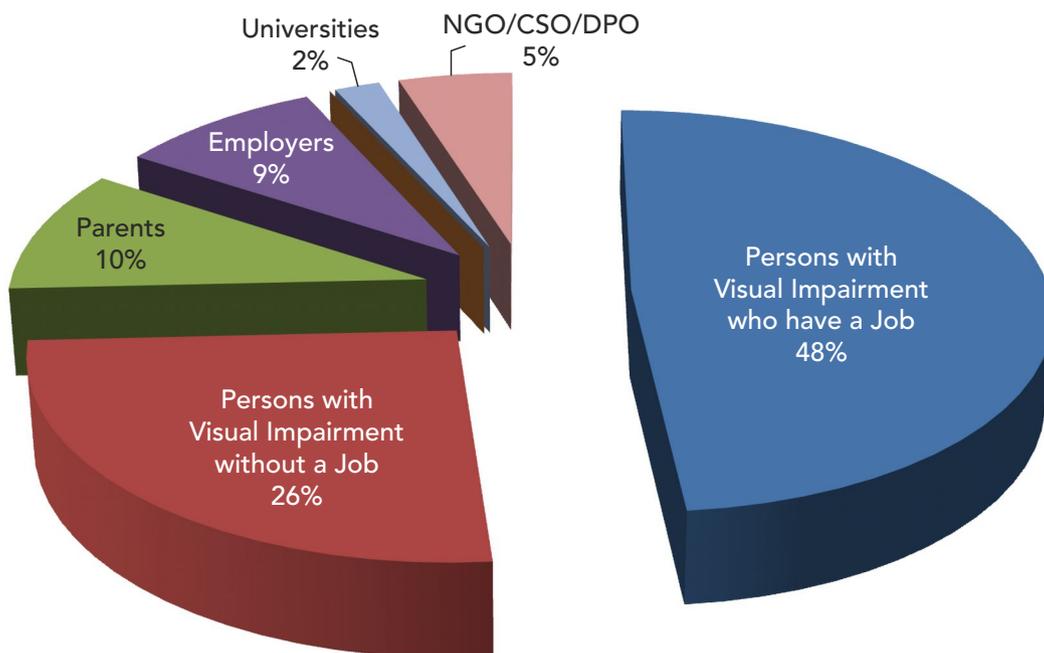
Having described the sample of the study, the following section presents the micro analysis of profiles of visually impaired persons who were involved in the study.



Philippines



Vietnam





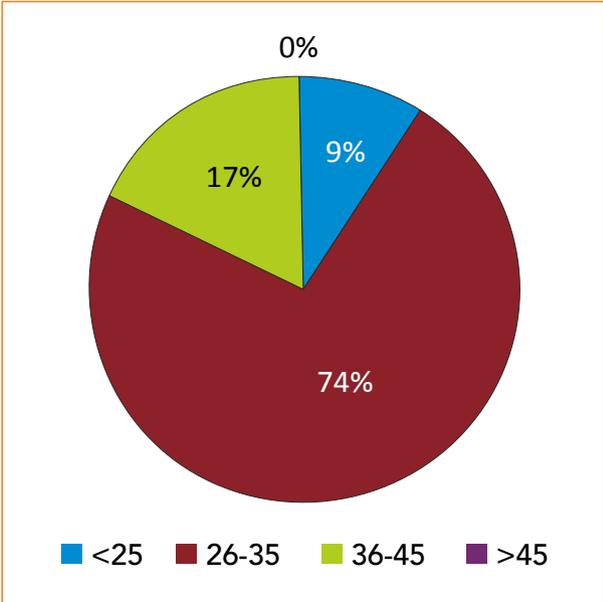
Syifa Syifa Urrahman, Teacher of High School in Indonesia

Age classification of the Respondents

In this section, data of the main group of research under the title 'Respondents' is analysed.

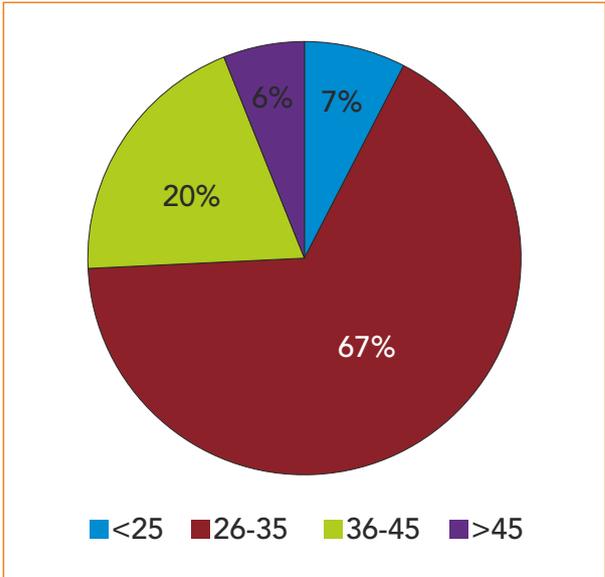
For the purpose of research, the age group of persons with the visual impairment who participated in the study was classified into four groups - those below 25 years, 26 - 35 years, 36 - 45 years and those who belong to the category of more than 45 years. The classification of the sample is given in the following table:

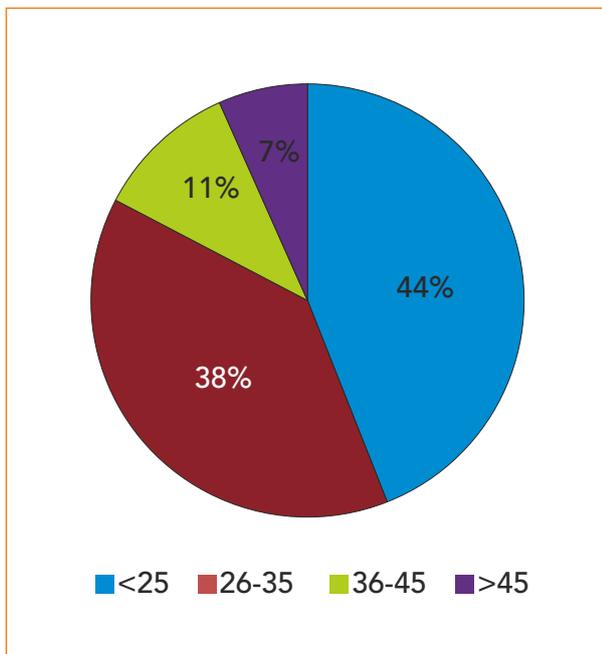
| Age | Indonesia | Philippines | Vietnam | Total |
|--------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|------------|
| <25 | 5 | 5 | 33 | 43 |
| 26-35 | 40 | 44 | 29 | 113 |
| 36-45 | 9 | 13 | 8 | 30 |
| >45 | - | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| Total | 54 | 66 | 75 | 195 |



← Age Classification - INDONESIA

Age Classification - PHILIPPINES →





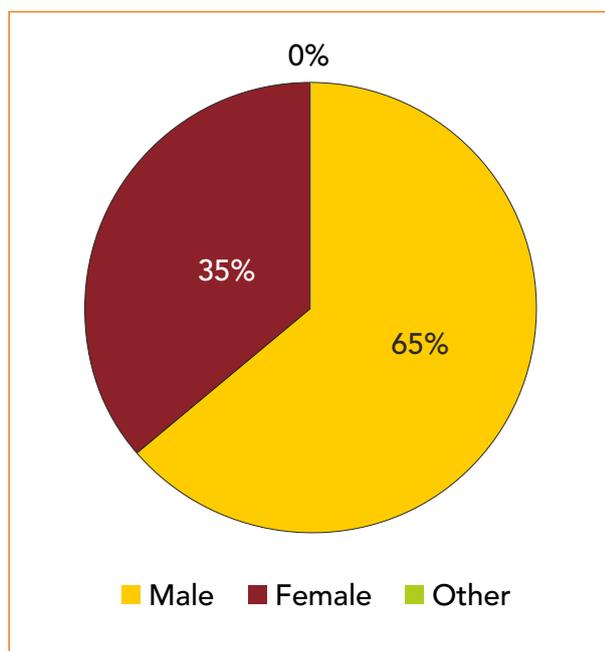
← Age Classification - VIETNAM

The data clearly shows that hardly even 5% could not be located among persons with visual impairment from the age group 45 years plus among those who are employed at present. More than 50% of those who are employed belong to the age group 26 – 35 years. With the higher education project commencing in mid to late 2000 in the partner countries, many of these employees who are working in various sectors were beneficiaries of the higher education projects supported by The Nippon Foundation. As more than 90% of the workforce among visually impaired individuals at the moment belongs to age below 45 years, their involvement to motivate other visually impaired youngsters to acquire employment skills will definitely have a profound impact. Therefore, the research data clearly indicates the presence of strong youth force among visually impaired persons in the employment sector that can certainly be converted to an impact group.

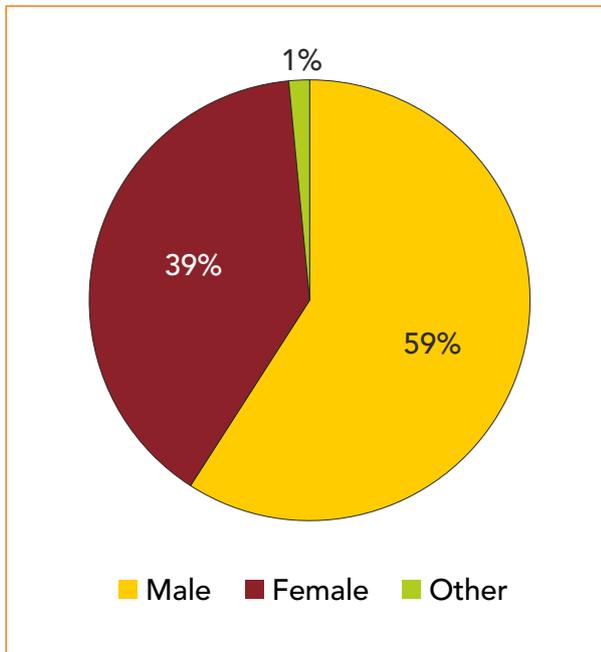
Data based on Gender

There is a general view that visually impaired girls are not given equal access in all sectors including that of education. Many research studies in inclusive as well as special school settings indicate presence of more boys than girls in the school system (UNGEI, 2017). There are past research studies that also indicate girls becoming lesser and lesser in enrolment in the secondary and senior secondary schools compared to that of visually impaired boys (Le Fary, Guy, Elena Schmidt, Bhasisha Virendrakumar, 2022) Globally too, employment among visually impaired women is considered to be significantly low compared to that of men (Gupta, S., Sukhai, M., & Wittich, W., 2021). However, the research data of the employment project presents encouraging results. The table of sample according to the countries is given below:

| Gender | Indonesia | Philippines | Vietnam | Total |
|--------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|------------|
| Male | 35 | 39 | 45 | 119 |
| Female | 19 | 26 | 29 | 74 |
| Other | - | 01 | 01 | 02 |
| Total | 54 | 66 | 75 | 195 |

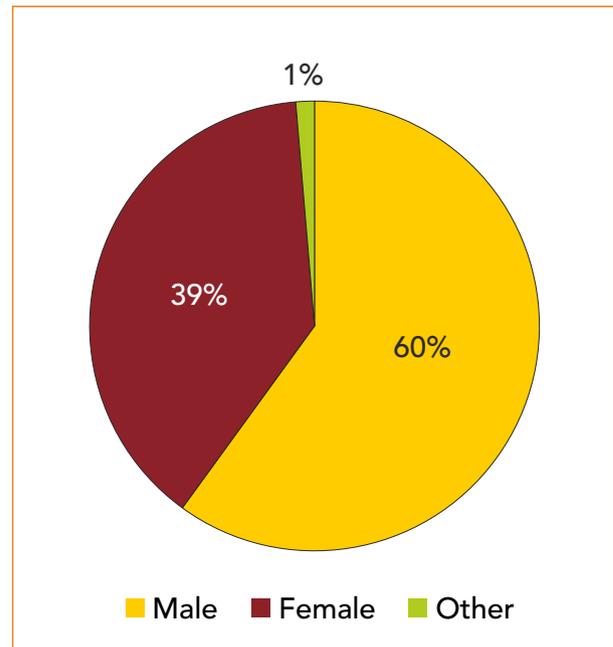


← Gender - INDONESIA



← Gender - PHILIPPINES

Gender - VIETNAM →



It is encouraging to note that 39% of those employed and waiting for employment among visually impaired participants are female compared to 61% who are male. Though the number is not on par at the moment, the trend is really positive. The research team could notice that more and more visually impaired women are getting into the employment sector and this awareness will bring that percentage on par with that of visually impaired men in the near future. Discussion with employers indicate that the retention rate of employment among visually impaired girls is also higher and they vouch for their commitments to jobs (Widyasari, selly D, 2020).

Mearlin, women with visual impairment has been working in private sector, PT Toyoya Astra Finance



This higher rate of employment among visually impaired girls maybe a result of the participation of them in higher education programs too. In summary, the growing trend of employment among visually impaired girls is really an encouraging factor in this research.

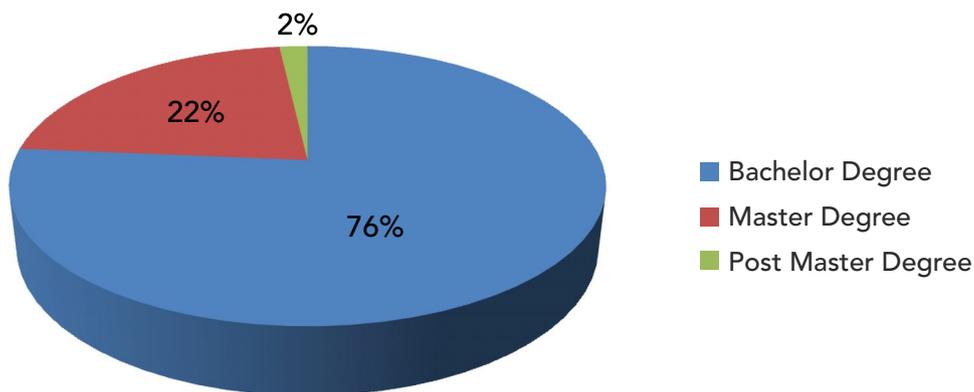
Educational Qualifications

The table below explains the data based on education qualification of visually impaired individuals who participated in the study.

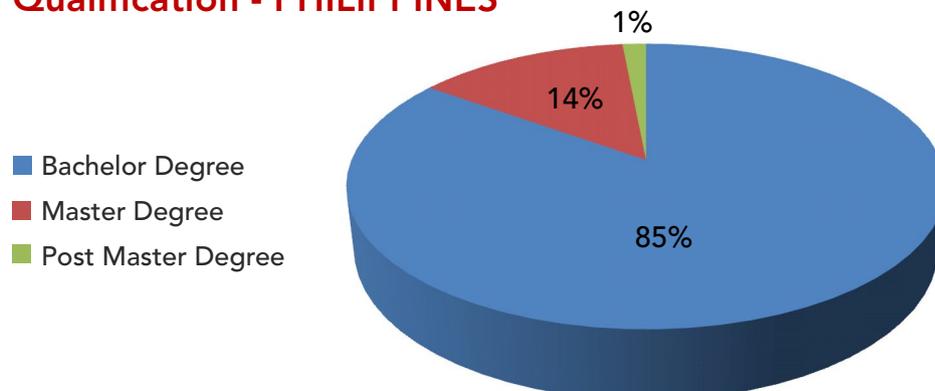
In terms of Education qualification, most of them are graduates. About 13% of the 195 persons with visual impairment possess master's degree. The data clearly indicates that the higher education project which enabled most of the visually impaired students to pursue higher education served as a motivational factor to seek employment too and therefore the higher education avenue and the employment sector seem to be interlinked.

| Education Degree | Indonesia | Philippines | Vietnam | Total |
|--------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|------------|
| Bachelor Degree | 41 | 56 | 70 | 167 |
| Master Degree | 12 | 9 | 5 | 26 |
| Post Master Degree | 1 | 1 | - | 2 |
| Total | 54 | 66 | 75 | 195 |

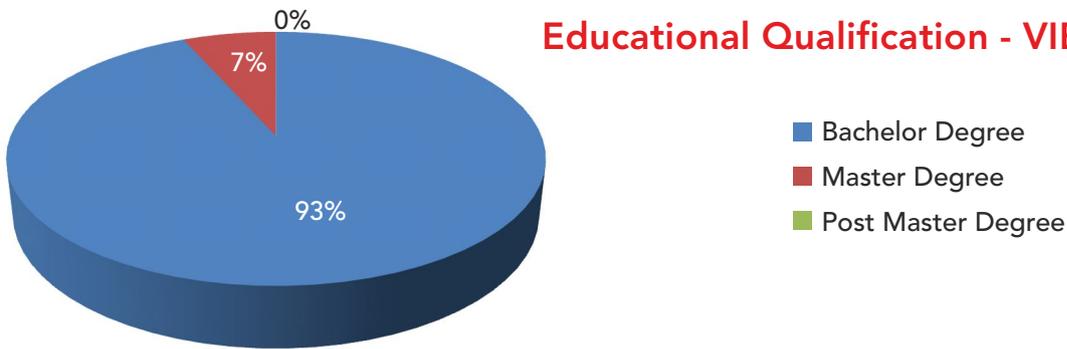
Educational Qualification - INDONESIA



Educational Qualification - PHILIPPINES



Educational Qualification - VIETNAM



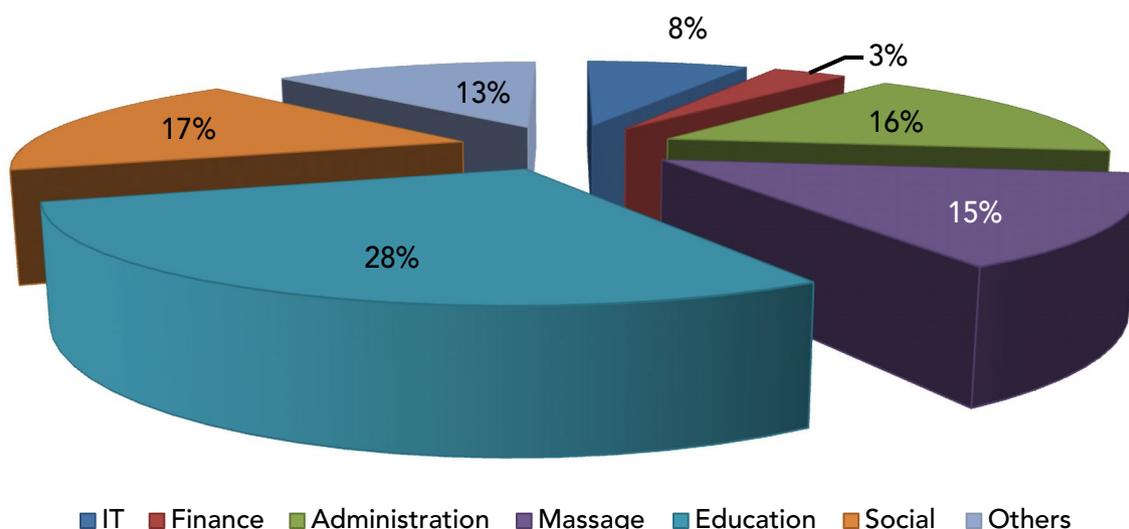
Employment Sectors

Employment avenue becomes a vital ingredient for the empowerment of persons with visual impairment. The sectors in which they seek or get employment should also be carefully examined. Research studies in the past often times mention that visually impaired individuals get into traditional types of jobs (Oberes, Franchette. et.all, 2023). The purpose of higher education project aimed at breaking this taboo and opened up multiple avenues in the employment sector. The objective of the project is indeed to develop proper skills in visually impaired individuals so that they could have a great range of opportunities to select in securing employment. The visually impaired individuals who participated in the study had over 60 types of jobs in various sectors.

For the purpose of analysis, the types of jobs were analysed by the research team and they were grouped under seven broad categories and the following table presents the data on the employment sectors of the 144 persons who were employed.

| No. | Sector | Total |
|--------------------|----------------|------------|
| 1 | IT | 11 |
| 2 | Finance | 5 |
| 3 | Administration | 23 |
| 4 | Massage | 21 |
| 5 | Education | 41 |
| 6 | Social | 25 |
| 7 | Others | 18 |
| Total | | 144 |
| Unemployment | | 51 |
| Grand Total | | 195 |

Educational background of employed persons



About 28% of them are doing teaching related jobs. In the partner countries, one has to compete for teaching job in the open market along with non-disabled graduates and therefore the high percentage of visually impaired graduates entering into teaching jobs indicate their aptitude for teaching and also their success rate. There are stellar examples also of visually impaired individuals who have excelled in the open job markets.



For example, Abdul Dapelin from Philippines who is a beneficiary of the higher education project qualified in the top 10 ranks of the national talent examination for teaching. There are many such candidates who stood in the higher level rankings that clearly indicates that teaching is indeed emerging as a preferred profession for many visually impaired graduates. Informal interaction with the students who are taught by these teachers also indicate that the teachers who are visually impaired have a higher rating of performance from the perspective of students.

Three sectors more or less present the same percentage of preference and they are employment in administrative fields which accounts for 16%, employment in the social sector including that of NGOs that accounts for about 17% and employment in the message and Physiotherapy that has a percentage of 15%. It should be noted that the preference for teaching profession is far ahead of other professions as

there is a gap of more than 10% from other preferred jobs. A noteworthy factor is that the traditional job of Massage is performed by only 15% among the employed graduates against the highest percentage of employment in the past. Closer analysis also reveals that given preference, those employed in the massage centres also prefer other types of jobs but lack of Industries in specific areas limit varieties of jobs and hence the preference of some in the massage sector.

Another noteworthy observation is about visually impaired individuals getting into the IT sector. There is wide acknowledgment that IT sector is most appropriate for visually impaired individuals as there are a lot of possibilities in this sector and devices used by visually impaired persons are also accessible to perform well in those IT related jobs. However, visually impaired individuals actually performing IT related jobs is only a small percentage. The reasons maybe either they are not proficient in IT skills or jobs are limited in this sector. However, interviews with the employers in the IT sector reveal that there are plenty of jobs in the sector and the employers expect specific skills from visually impaired individuals besides their education qualification.

This finding is more relevant for future planning to augment employment opportunities for visually impaired individuals through this project. Maybe structured training on IT becomes vital that may be mapped to the job skills expected by the industries. Closer collaboration of the project and the IT Industries may lead into the organization of joint programs leading into more jobs in the IT sector.



Statements of Employers

“

One of our employees, Rafin, is visually impaired. He is one of our best employees and was hired because he has excellent logical thinking skills, which are essential for a programmer ”

Mr. Agung

CEO, Imametek Company (Indonesia)

“

It is not looking at them any differently but making sure that we can provide equal opportunity to everybody. It is not because the owner wants to hire them because it's for publicity, but we want to make sure to provide opportunities for everyone. Of course, we recognize that there is still looked upon differently for those with impaired vision. But I think the organization is more mature now, recognizing that they can perform at the same level as people without impairment. If I may say, they might be more dedicated to those with vision impairment not because the organization is putting that pressure on that individual, but maybe that persons want to prove himself or herself. But we in the organization truly understand that the folks with visual impairment are just another talent pool to tap—an equally qualified, competent, and dedicated set of folks who can deliver the same value to employers as anybody else. ”

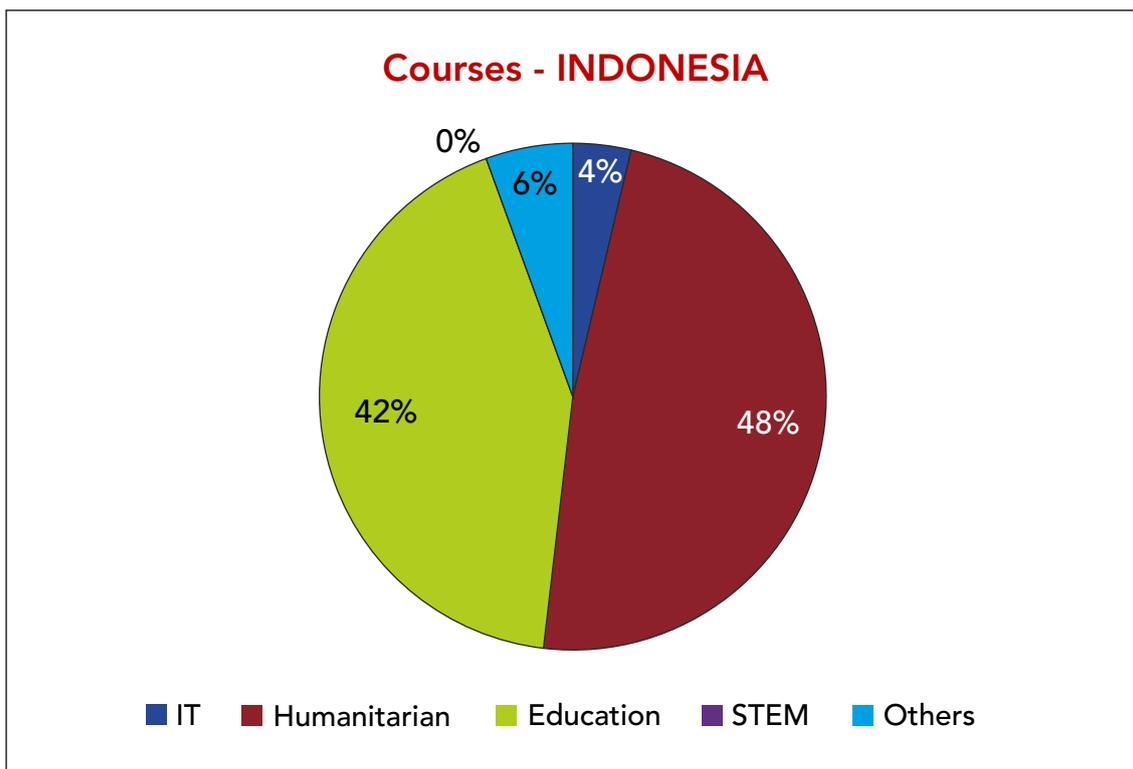
Sagility, Philippines

Another gratifying observation is that visually impaired individuals are also getting into the finance sector. In the past, these sectors were considered very difficult for visually impaired individuals but the fact that at least 3% of the employees have preferred finance sector indicates the growing opportunities that may be tapped in the future to assist more visually impaired individuals to get jobs.

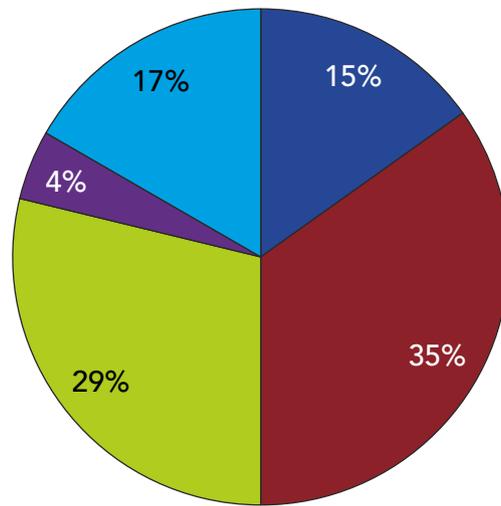
Courses Completed

The purpose of including a question on courses preferred is to find out whether visually impaired individuals prefer traditional types of courses or branch out to courses such as mathematics, science, information technology, etc. The table below indicates the courses preferred by the 196 participants who responded to this particular question.

| Courses | Indonesia | Philippines | Vietnam | Total |
|--------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|------------|
| IT | 2 | 10 | 3 | 15 |
| Humanitarian | 26 | 23 | 34 | 83 |
| Education | 23 | 19 | 12 | 54 |
| STEM | - | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| Others | 3 | 11 | 23 | 37 |
| Total | 54 | 66 | 75 | 195 |

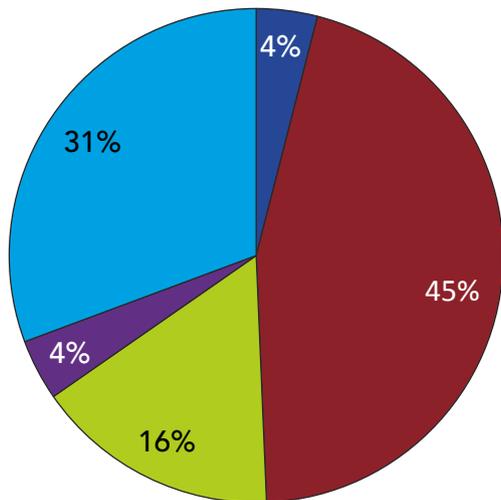


Courses - PHILIPPINES



■ IT ■ Humanitarian ■ Education ■ STEM ■ Others

Courses - VIETNAM



■ IT ■ Humanitarian ■ Education ■ STEM ■ Others

About 42% of the respondents preferred humanities courses that included psychology, sociology, history, languages, etc. The next option was that of Education, which was preferred by about 28%. A close comparison of this with that of those who get employment reveals very interesting information. Among those who got successful employment, the highest percentage was in the field of Education. When we correlate between the preferred choice of courses and the jobs they get, there is a higher possibility of getting jobs when the individuals prefer education related courses.

In the IT sector there are two dimensions which are important. One is to what extent visually impaired individuals are proficient in using technology. The second dimension is how many of them really preferred IT related courses. Observations in the universities indicate that some amount of accommodation is required in offering IT related courses too. Only about 8% of the students underwent exclusive courses on information technology. A noteworthy factor is that about 3% of the students have specialized in STEM related courses, which was not a preferred choice at all in the past. In the recent past, visually impaired students preferring STEM courses was not a reality but the scenario is changing with the application of technology. Visually impaired students getting into the STEM related courses has gradually increased over the years and this throws up wider opportunities in the future in the course selection by visually impaired students.



Statements from Students (Philippines)

The number of visually impaired students getting into IT and STEM-related courses has gradually increased over the years and this throws up wider opportunities in the future in the course selection by visually impaired students.

JAY



What drives my passion for a career in the IT industry is the profound and far-reaching impact of technological advancement on every facet of our lives.

Technology has the power to make the impossible possible, revolutionizing travel, communication, and employment. For individuals with visual impairments, these advancements are particularly transformative. Screen readers grant us the ability to use computers and mobile phones, while smart canes enhance our travel safety and accuracy. I am proud to have achieved the internationally recognized Certification for Accessibility, attaining the highest score among my colleagues and in the Philippines with a score of 752 out of 800 (94%). This certification has endowed me with the expertise to pursue my passion. I dream of one day contributing to the development of software or technological advancements that will profoundly change the world for visually impaired individuals. My ultimate goal is to champion accessibility within the tech industry, empowering visually impaired people to fully utilize and benefit from the incredible advancements technology has to offer.

JUNEL



One of my motivations for pursuing an IT course is to be a successful programmer

someday. Also, since the world is getting more on a technology basis every day, I want to rapidly adapt to it easily. I want to share my technical knowledge with others so that people who are not educated in the said field of study or information, could happily assist them. My desire to feed my curiosity when it comes to programming, how the website was created, the games made, how applications formed, and what's the feeling of making programs rather than using the outcome are so satisfying, and so glad when I met the users' wants/needs.

ALDRIN



I am motivated to pursue a course in Information Technology due to the wide range of career opportunities it offers, particularly for visually impaired individuals. The IT field is inclusive and adaptable, providing numerous roles that can be suited to my abilities and strengths. Additionally, I am driven by the desire to challenge myself and push beyond my limits in this fast-changing field. I am also inspired by the potential to positively impact society through technology.

TRISTAN



As a visually impaired IT professional, my motivation to pursue a course in IT stemmed from a profound desire to break barriers and demonstrate that disability does not define one's potential. Technology has always fascinated me, not only for its innovative capabilities but also for its transformative power to bridge gaps and create inclusive environments. The challenge of solving complex problems, coupled with the opportunity to contribute to an evolving field that significantly impacts people's lives, fueled my determination. By mastering IT, I aimed to advocate for accessibility and inspire others with disabilities to embrace their passions, proving that with perseverance and the right tools, one can excel in any field.

RACHELLE MAE



Advocating for accessibility and having a job that generates income to support our basic needs motivates me to pursue my career. My goal is to be living proof that persons with disabilities like me can be productive members of society. Individuals with disabilities can maximize their fullest potential in an accessible environment. Accessibility creates more opportunities allowing differently abled individuals to perform efficiently and independently.

Self-Assessment of Skills by Visually Impaired Persons

One of the main objectives of the study is to find out from visually impaired individuals, the internal skills and the external skills that contribute to success in employment. Though it is ideal to assess the skills of every individual on one-to-one basis to ascertain their skills, it was not possible due to time as well as budgetary constraints. As a result, the research team adopted the method of self appraisal by the participants that could be verified on random basis.

In order to get the skill areas for self-assessment, the research team sought the assistance of visually impaired employees who were already on the job and also those individuals who were struggling to get jobs. In addition to their preference for the areas to be covered for self-appraisal, the research team also did a thorough review of literature to justify various areas of skills for inclusion in the self-assessment tool. Expert opinions were also elicited to confirm the skill areas that should be included in such a self-assessment tool.

The following 27 areas emerged as the ones that should become the skills areas for self-appraisal by the visually impaired persons and also for random checking:

1. Oral Communication skill
2. Written Communication skill
3. Non-verbal communication skill
4. Resume preparation skill
5. Face to face interview technique skill
6. Career planning
7. Questioning skill
8. Diplomacy skill
9. Personal grooming
10. Goal setting
11. Decision making
12. Understanding own potential
13. Knowledge on legislation pertaining to employment
14. Developing proper behaviour
15. Self esteem
16. Learning to optimize productivity in work
17. Work ethics

18. Professional enrichment goals
19. Coping with visual impairment in the workplace
20. Coping with situation when jobs obtained are not commensurate with the qualifications
21. Learning to work together
22. Coping with external criticism
23. Peer group interaction
24. Initiative to become unique
25. Coping with work environment
26. Challenges in mobility and transportation
27. Coping with challenges in mobility and transportation

The visually impaired participants were asked to rate each skill area on a five-point scale with a score of 1 indicating very poor, 2 representing poor, 3 for average, 4 for good and 5 representing very good. The research team developed guidelines for the purpose of classification of responses. Those areas which get "good" and "very good" responses from the participants are those where visually impaired employees are comfortable and consequently the areas which are not receiving "good" and "very good" rating from the participants are those that should be considered for additional training as well as follow-up.

For the purpose of analysis, the number of respondents under "good" and "very good" were combined and the analysis reveals interesting results. Out of the 195 participants who took part in the study, 177 of employed and unemployed representing three partner countries mentioned that their "work ethics" are either good or very good. This reveals the self-esteem of the visually impaired employees and their confidence, which are vital for their career growth.

On the other hand, only 59 employed persons who took the self-appraisal indicated that their non-verbal communication skills are either good or very good. Meanwhile, 20 of unemployed persons who took self-appraisal indicated that resume preparation skills are either good or very good.

The data analysis reveals that non-verbal skill and resume preparation skill, which are classified as two of the soft skills are found to be insufficient among visually impaired individuals that demands for organized training to increase their employability.



Agtha, women with visual impairment who works in the Library of Jakarta Province, Indonesia

Top rated Skill areas possessed by Visually Impaired Employees

The following table lists the skill areas where most of the visually impaired individuals rated them having adequate skills.

| Item | Categories | Indonesia | Philippines | Vietnam | Total | % |
|------|--|-----------|-------------|---------|-------|-----|
| 17 | Work Ethic | 48 | 37 | 45 | 130 | 90% |
| 18 | Professional Enrichment Goals | 47 | 35 | 39 | 121 | 84% |
| 23 | Peer Group Interaction | 45 | 29 | 41 | 115 | 79% |
| 9 | Personal Grooming | 40 | 35 | 37 | 112 | 78% |
| 21 | Learning to work together | 49 | 25 | 38 | 112 | 78% |
| 22 | Coping with external criticism | 46 | 34 | 31 | 111 | 77% |
| 12 | Understanding your own potential | 40 | 35 | 35 | 110 | 76% |
| 26 | Dealing with challenges in mobility and transportation | 41 | 28 | 40 | 109 | 75% |
| 15 | Self Esteem | 46 | 29 | 34 | 109 | 75% |
| 10 | Goal setting | 39 | 33 | 33 | 105 | 72% |

| Item | Categories | Philippines | Vietnam | Total | % |
|------|--|-------------|---------|-------|-----|
| 17 | Work Ethic | 23 | 24 | 47 | 90% |
| 14 | Developing Proper Behavior | 21 | 24 | 45 | 86% |
| 21 | Learning to work together | 24 | 20 | 44 | 85% |
| 9 | Personal Grooming | 24 | 19 | 43 | 83% |
| 18 | Professional Enrichment Goals | 20 | 22 | 42 | 80% |
| 6 | Coping with visual impairment in the workplace | 18 | 22 | 40 | 77% |
| 12 | Understanding your own potential | 20 | 17 | 37 | 71% |
| 23 | Peer group interaction | 19 | 18 | 37 | 71% |
| 22 | Coping with external criticism | 18 | 18 | 36 | 69% |
| 11 | Decision Making | 20 | 15 | 35 | 67% |

From the tables, those are evident that “work ethics” comes as the top skill level that is present in visually impaired respondents. This is vital for the sustenance in the employment sector and therefore it is heartening that the participants consider them adequately equipped as far as the work ethics is concerned. 90% of the respondents either employed or unemployed persons are confident that their work ethics is good.

Learning to work together and professional enrichment goals, which are vital in a work environment, and this is listed as the second skill area possessed by most of the employed and unemployed participants. Personal grooming, peer group interaction, professional enrichment goals, etc. are top rated items that means visually impaired individuals who are in the employment sector have higher self-esteem

The top 10 skill areas relate to the individual as a whole. Their coping with external criticism, understanding your own potential, dealing with challenges in mobility and transportation, self-esteem, and goal setting, etc. also become part of the personality skills of employed individual and therefore the rating of this at the higher level indicates that inculcation of positive attitude and right type of personality skills contribute to success in employment. Otherwise, coping visual impairment in the workplace, understanding your own potential, coping with external criticism, and decision making are personality skills of unemployed persons. Therefore, future programs should focus on strengthening the soft skills, which have a vital role in the employment of persons with visual impairment.

Low rated Skill areas possessed by Visually Impaired Participants

The following table lists the skill areas where most of the visually impaired individuals rated them low either employed or unemployed participants.

| Item | Categories | Indonesia | Philippines | Vietnam | Total | % |
|------|---|-----------|-------------|---------|-------|-----|
| 8 | Diplomacy Skills | 29 | 36 | 31 | 96 | 66% |
| 14 | Developing Proper Behavior | 32 | 26 | 35 | 93 | 64% |
| 7 | Questioning skills | 34 | 32 | 27 | 93 | 64% |
| 20 | Coping with situation when jobs obtained are not commensurate with the qualifications | 34 | 26 | 28 | 88 | 61% |
| 24 | Initiative to become unique | 35 | 27 | 23 | 85 | 59% |
| 5 | Face-to-face Interview Techniques | 37 | 24 | 23 | 84 | 58% |
| 2 | Written Communication Skills (or writing skills) | 33 | 26 | 22 | 81 | 56% |
| 4 | Resume Preparation Skills | 29 | 28 | 18 | 75 | 52% |
| 13 | Knowledge of Legislations on Employment | 31 | 23 | 21 | 75 | 52% |
| 3 | Non-Verbal Communication | 21 | 12 | 26 | 59 | 33% |

In the analysis of low rated employed table, the rating should be reviewed from the bottom. Most of the visually impaired individuals admitted that their non-verbal communication skills are not adequate. As a result of visual impairment, non-verbal communications such as hand movement, facial expression, etc., are naturally restricted but use of these skills in situations would augment the conversation as well as participation of them in a work environment. It indicates the need for the inclusion of non-verbal communications too in addition to verbal communications in the soft-skills training programs in the future.

It seems most of the visually impaired employees are not fully aware of the legislation pertaining to employment rights, opportunities, etc., and therefore this area too needs strengthening in the future.

Other areas where they expressed inadequate skills include interviewing skills, preparation of proper resume, written communication skills, etc. As is evident, these skill areas certainly become part of the soft skills development programs, and the inadequacy highlights that frequent soft skills programs have to be conducted. In addition, these skill areas should also become part of the school curriculum itself so that these skills evolve from a very young age.

Another area that needs attention is the coping skills of visually impaired individuals, especially when their jobs do not commensurate with the qualifications they possess. At the same time everyone is aware of the fact that it is not a problem unique to the blindness sector alone and it is an issue in the general employment field too. People with higher qualifications tend to go for low paid jobs due to lack of adequate employment avenues. Though this is considered to be a universal problem, visually impaired individuals mention that they have to be given training in coping skills when such a situation arises.

| Item | Categories | Philippines | Vietnam | Total | % |
|------|---|-------------|---------|-------|-----|
| 27 | Coping with challenges in mobility and transportation | 11 | 18 | 29 | 56% |
| 24 | Initiative to become unique | 18 | 11 | 29 | 56% |
| 26 | Dealing with challenges in mobility and transportation | 11 | 16 | 27 | 52% |
| 7 | Questioning Skills | 19 | 6 | 25 | 48% |
| 20 | Coping with situation when jobs obtained are not commensurate with the qualifications | 14 | 9 | 23 | 44% |

| Item | Categories | Philippines | Vietnam | Total | % |
|------|---|-------------|---------|-------|-----|
| 3 | Non-Verbal Communication | 10 | 13 | 23 | 44% |
| 6 | Career Planning Skills | 11 | 11 | 22 | 42% |
| 5 | Face-to-face Interview Techniques | 15 | 6 | 21 | 40% |
| 13 | Knowledge of Legislations on Employment | 9 | 11 | 20 | 38% |
| 4 | Resume Preparation Skills | 12 | 8 | 20 | 38% |

Regarding the table of unemployed above, resume preparation skills became the lowest rated of participants. They may have challenges to make personal information, work experience, education skills, training or certification, achievements, references, matching CV to job application, and design and layout of CV. It indicates that in the future, the capacity building of persons with visual impairment should be concerned to resume preparation skills.

Based on the two low rated tables above, both employed and unemployed, there is a similarity in skills which are at the lowest level, namely knowledge of labor law, even though in the list of categories knowledge of labor law is ranked second lowest.

One can see a big contrast between the top-rated items and low rated items by visually impaired employees. It is essential to note that the self-esteem and personality skills are not at all rated low by visually impaired individuals meaning that they have the right mindset to take up jobs in all the sectors. However, they insist on more preparation and skill development in the soft skill areas so that they can sustain the jobs they have acquired.

Statements by visually impaired individuals

Some of the statements made by visually impaired individuals regarding skill areas are enumerated below:

Syifa Urrahman, S.Pd
Teacher of High School

Soft skills training is very important to me, especially training on how to speak in public.

Alfian Andhika Yudhistira
Ministry of Village

From experience, I feel that the most beneficial training for me is how I can interact with fellow coworkers and how to solve problems that arise at work.

Ririn Diah Sartika
PT Asuransi Kredit Indonesia

Before working, I had never known about labour regulations. After a few months of working, I had to read labour regulations so that I would know my rights and obligations as a worker, such as when to take leave, the importance of training to enhance worker capacity, and so on.

Putri Rokhmayati
PT. Bhumi Varta Technology

Soft skills training helped me in the job recruitment process, such as creating a CV, interviewing, and so on. Additionally, communication skills in the work environment also become very important when entering the workforce. In this case, communication skills, especially self-advocacy, are essential so that the company can understand the contributions we can make to the company. Fortunately, I have participated in pre-employment soft skills training organized by Yayasan Mitra Netra.

Time management has become very relevant to me. I realized this after I started working at D'Impact Indonesia because there are quite a lot of tasks that I have to handle, so they need to be organized to avoid neglect.

Melissa Chandra
D'Impact Indonesia



Region 9-Zamboanga Western Mindanao

1. I commit to provide quality vocational skills training to my PWD clients, so that they will become competent and competitive workers in the massage industry and facilitate their employment towards...

Santo Tomas. We commit to improve programs & services for PWDs, and provide support, create opportunities especially to visually impaired PWDs. *Janice*

LGU-Taqum
I commit to advocate inclusive employment with people with visual impairment through our job recruitment activities and livelihood program. We will acknowledge and celebrate the capabilities of every VI applicant in our way. *Janice*

Decent and sustainable livelihood.
2. I will commit to advocate for inclusive recruitment in the LGUs and NGAs.

JEMD
LGU GENSAN - To enhance the PWD inclusion with VI through the adoption of employment, skills training, & livelihood assistance as consideration w/ CSWD, PDAO, DOCE of PESO.

Helping one another, the PDAO, CSWD, PESO and other agencies for the betterment & materializing especially the inclusive employment of Visually Impaired. *@gugugun PESO*

PDAO GENSAN -
I commit to create a group/assoc. for VIs to serve as a consultative body for the formulation of programs & budget for VIs. *Juanito*

LGU-Tacurong:

I commit to continue in promoting the welfare of every person with visual impairment by linking them to the programs, services, and agencies.
JEROLD jomatan

LGU - Santo Tomas
+ total commitment for PWDs to continue to support and seek some livelihood or employment for their welfare & their own advices as their co-PWD.

As LGU/PDAO DAVAO CITY, COMMITTED to support the employment of PWD/visually impaired.

Commitment to support the PWD especially equal opportunity for persons with Disability. Alliance - empowered especially visual impairment
Char

LGU Kidapawanan city, as while, we are committed to more inclusive employment for VI + All PWDs on our side. *Louie/Shera PDAO*

As PESO Manager I commit that in every endeavors and activities in our LGU I make it sure that our beloved PWDs are part of it. No judgment and discrimination in terms of employment availment. But assured that I could extend my help and love for them. *Maggie*

out to promote & support policies and programs for inclusion of persons of visual impairments and all!

PDAO CDO
Committed to support programs for the BLIND PWD-Mati

CHAPTER 2

Analysis of the Responses of Stakeholders in the Employment Sector

The first section of the report provided a quantitative analysis of the data obtained from visually impaired individuals, most of whom were employed and also from visually impaired students who are about to enter the job arena. The quantitative analysis clearly provided the perspectives of visually impaired individuals from various dimensions such as the types of visual impairment, education qualification, support from the family, courses preferred by them, jobs attained, self-assessment of their own personality, job skills, etc. These factors were considered most important for planning training activities, intervention strategies, etc., to augment employment opportunities for persons with visual impairments in the years ahead.

The research project also proposed to gather data from key stakeholders who are associated with the employment of persons with the visual impairment. The main purpose of this analysis is to basically compare the factors contributing to success in the employment from the perspective of visually impaired individuals and the environment surrounding them. The results obtained from the stakeholders were considered essential from the dimensions of consensus and also from the perspective of differences.

The research team, after clear deliberations, opined that in the case of visually impaired individuals and the stakeholders considering the same factors as important for the success in the job arena would reassure the service providers in organizing key activities in training, advocacy, etc., to expand the recruitment of more persons with visual impairment in jobs. In the case of opposite views, if identified between the stakeholders and visually impaired persons, that would also provide clear pointers to identify the missing links that would help service providers to identify the right type of training programs in the future and advocacy activities to augment employment opportunities for them.

Having described the rationale for collecting data from the stakeholders, the research team proposed to organize in-depth interviews with the some sections of the stakeholders and focused group discussions with specific groups who are also part of the in-depth interviews.

In-depth interviews were conducted with the following stakeholders:

- Employed persons with visual impairment
- Employers of persons with visual impairment
- Non-government organizations
- Government bodies in promoting employment opportunities
- Unemployed persons with visual impairment
- Parents of children with visual impairment who are still in higher education.

The research team also attempted to gather data through focus group discussions that included employers and employed persons with visual impairment.

The second part of the report provides summary responses of in-depth interviews and different focused group discussions.





Summary of Responses of In-depth Interviews and Focused Group Discussions

Employed Persons with Visual Impairment

The research team contacted a number of persons with visual impairment who are currently employed for in-depth interview and asked a series of questions relating to employment. The number of persons interviewed included 5 from Philippines, 2 from Vietnam, and 4 from Indonesia.

The interview questions comprised of specific statements related to their job satisfaction, motivation to enter the workforce, preparation to get into the job sector, key factors that contribute to success and failures in jobs, challenges faced by visually impaired persons in getting jobs, interview process, education qualification commensurating with the remuneration, requirement of additional financial resources on account of visual impairment, attitude of non-disabled persons, reasonable accommodation in the work environment, presence of conducive work system, career growth opportunities, upgradation of job skills, support from the family, helping other visually impaired persons to get jobs, etc.

The responses obtained from the three partner countries reflect similar views to a large extent for most of these parameters. However, there are concerns on specific issues pertaining to a particular country. The differences are only minimal and consensus in responses is evident from the data gathered from this group. In presenting the analysis, summary observations are made for the research as a whole and specific anecdotes and statements are highlighted, wherever necessary, for specific countries.

Following is the summary of the responses obtained from the focused group that is: persons with visual impairment who are currently employed:

1. Most of the visually impaired people interviewed indicated that the **professional satisfaction** is relatively an individual phenomenon. Those who are working in the field of teaching had a higher professional satisfaction than those with other professions. Many of them indicated that it is also depending on the choice of them in selecting a course while undergoing higher education. Those who do not have a higher job satisfaction indicated that they had to take a course which was not of their choice but out of compulsion.

In the case of those who do not have a job which commensurate with qualification also indicated that their satisfaction was not noteworthy. However,



FGD with persons with visual disability who have a Job on April 5, 2024, Indonesia



FGD with Parents who have persons with visual disability who have job and without job/still in Universities, Indonesia

there are some unique responses from individuals who said that they have to be satisfied with the job to make their life meaningful. They said that they have to make their job satisfactory because they consider themselves privileged when comparing with other people with visual impairment who do not have jobs. As there are large numbers of people who do not have jobs even though they have qualifications, the persons with visual impairment who are having jobs say that they have a better professional satisfaction.

In summary, most of the people who are in jobs say that they are professionally satisfied and in many cases they are making their jobs satisfactory for them though it may not be of their real preference.

2. Regarding **motivation**, people interviewed indicated that the fact that they have a job compared to many people with disabilities and non-disabled people who do not have jobs after completing their education itself is motivating them to stick on to the jobs. They say that employers always look at the motivation level of the employees in performing their jobs and therefore, they are forced to perform well, which is a source of motivation also. The other fact that job is making them economically independent is also a big motivation factor for those who have got employment as they are considered to be independent in the

society and as a result, the perspectives of the society towards them changes significantly. Therefore, this attitude change towards persons with visual impairment when they have a job itself is a big motivational factor and therefore those people who have been employed insist that getting a reasonable job should be the ultimate objective of persons with visual impairment by improving their qualifications in education as well as in skills.

3. Regarding **preparation to get into the job sectors**, most of the people interviewed indicated that they have to mentally prepare themselves for a hard task. Those who are expecting some kind of concessions in the job sector may not be able to get the job satisfaction and therefore the visually impaired persons who make up their mind that they are into a tough environment are better prepared for jobs than those who always seek some kind of accommodation and concession in the job environment. Many of them indicated that mental preparation for jobs should be treated as one of the requisite areas in the soft skills training program.
4. Regarding **factors contributing to success and failure of visually impaired persons in the job arena**, most of the persons interviewed indicated that the success in the job mostly depends on the individual's temperament. They say that the education qualification alone is not going to get them good employment and the interpersonal skills, communication skills, etc, which are mostly covered under the soft skills training activities are motivating them and helping them to get jobs. Therefore, they indicate that the development of soft skills, which primarily play a vital role in getting jobs should be promoted in visually impaired individuals right from their school levels. People who were interviewed also indicate that the readiness of the fellow employees when they enter the job was not the same when they put in some experience along with the same colleagues in the same industry. They mentioned that as days gone by, there were competitions involved in the work environment and slowly criticism also erupts irrespective of whether a person is visually impairment or not.

The success of employment depends on how best the individual visually impaired person is able to cope with the criticism and at the same time using that as steps for development. People who quit jobs after they were employed mostly are those who are not able to face the challenges and criticisms. Some



Participants of FGD from Vietnam

people indicated that the health is also important and in many cases, the individuals who quit jobs lack fitness too. Transport problem is also another important factor for individuals to quit jobs as the salary that they get may not be adequate to meet additional expenses such as travel, paying the sighted guide., etc., which are expenses specific to the condition of being a visually impaired person.

In summary, the success and failures in the job arena involve mostly internal factors than the external factors and therefore a person with visual impairment who is fully prepared to face the internal factors is better equipped to make the job successful than a person who is not fully prepared to face the challenges and criticism raised in the work environment.

5. In terms of **education qualifications** commensurating with the jobs they have, there is a very interesting observation. Those who are in the field of teaching say that their job is commensurating with the education qualifications. Many of the individuals who are in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) indicated that their skills are taking them to higher levels of employment and in many cases, qualification may be lower to what they are performing in the job environment. For people with other jobs in the industries, there is a general impression that the job is not commensurating with the qualifications.

For example, a person with a Masters degree may be performing as an assistant or a helper in an administrative system whereas a person with good communication skills may be doing a better job in call centres and earning more than what the qualification really demands. In many cases, visually impaired individuals are also aware of the fact that the education qualification commensurating with the employment is not only a problem with visual impairment, and it is a problem in the general employment sector including that of non-disabled persons too.

6. In terms of **accommodation of the environment**, most of the visually impaired people who are employed indicated that asking the industry to have reasonable accommodation for visually impaired individuals prior to their recruitment may delay their employment and therefore, they are prepared to adjust themselves in the work environment. In IT industries, unlike the yester years when industries had to install specific software in the computers of companies where visually impaired persons were employed, the use of open source software at present is helping the individual to experience independence in the working environment to easily access materials without paying for those services. Considering the difficulty in getting jobs, most of the visually impaired individuals expressed that they are not making any complaints about the accessibility issues in the work environment. A few indicated that they also



Participants of FGD from Philippines

provide guidance to the employers in making the environment user friendly for persons with low vision in terms of colour, contrast, brightness, etc., and therefore they indicated that the employer should be oriented on what type of accommodations are necessary for visually impaired individuals to make their work performance better. In general, there is no major complaint expressed by individuals about reasonable accommodations in the work environment.

7. In most cases, those who are employed indicated that the **families** are highly supportive of them. In some cases they expressed that their getting married is also linked to their success in getting jobs and therefore they mentioned that their status in the society is also elevated because of their jobs. Many of the people who are currently employed are connected with social networks of other persons with visual impairment and they mentioned that they are encouraging their employers to recruit more visually impaired persons whenever job opportunities are available. Therefore, the networks and the social media are playing an important role among visually impaired individuals to spread the news on the availability of jobs.
8. Regarding the **upgradation of skills**, many visually impaired individuals indicated that they are doing their routine jobs and there is no big scope for the upgradation of skills. They often indicate their communication skills and soft skills have to be improved and therefore training from time to time may be of help. However, they indicated that long duration training may be difficult for them to attend due to their work pressure. Many of the individuals who were employed indicated that though they want to upgrade their job skills, the scope is limited.
9. In most cases, visually impaired individuals expressed that the **attitude of non disabled people** towards them is helpful in order to perform their jobs better. They also indicate that the attitude of the society towards them is also becoming positive as they are mingling with the society while they travel. A few also commented that visually impaired persons become subjects of jealousy in the work environment when they get recognition for the good job done. They acknowledge the fact that these are issues that can be seen in the general employment field too and not specific to blindness alone.

In summary, the focused group discussions with people with visual impairment who have jobs reveals that visually impaired persons in general are satisfied with the jobs on hand though they also realize that some of them are not on par with the qualifications they possess. They feel that the economic independence that they get through jobs is creating a positive impact on their lives from the family perspective and also from the perspective of the community. Many opine that such a social status is helping them to assist other visually impaired individuals too.



Employers of Persons with Visual Impairment



FGD with Indonesian Employers on April 18, 2024

The most important group that was involved in the in-depth interview and focus group discussion was that of employers. Unless employers welcome people with visual impairment to the job environment, expanding opportunities for them may not be possible and therefore, the partners of the employment project have been working with employers to a large extent in motivating them to recruit visually impaired persons in the employment sectors by showcasing their skills through job fairs, media, interviews etc. As this research is pertaining to promotion of employment, the employers constitute the key stakeholders in the entire research and they were put a number of questions related to the types of employment, regulations, benefits, etc. The specific questions asked in the interviews included statements like the understanding of the business organizations regarding people with disabilities entering the workforce, the drive of the companies and public institutions to employ people with disabilities, expectations the employers have in terms of preparation of persons with visual impairment for employment, what challenges are faced by them when they recruit persons with visual impairment for their workforce, availability of employer forums where people with visual impairment can come and speak, awareness of employers about the technologies used by persons with visual impairment and the adaptations required in the

industry, what kind of reasonable accommodations are made by the industries to encourage more people with visual impairment to get employment, supporting the formulation of any decrees promoting employment of persons with visual impairment and finally the general attitude of the business houses about the employment potential of persons with visual impairment. The responses received from the three countries are summarised below:

- * **Understanding of the business organizations regarding people with disabilities entering the workforce:** Many industries opined that the awareness among them about the employment of persons with visual impairment is gradually growing. They attribute this mostly to the awareness created by civil societies, organizations working in the disability sector and also the international legislations promoting equal access. They indicate that regular notifications are received from governments and other organizations seeking industries to explore possibilities of recruiting people with disabilities in order to promote inclusive development as envisaged by the UNCRPD. Many government authorities also say that as a result of the ratification of the UNCRPD, Governments are in a position to report progress in this sector particularly by reserving opportunities for persons with disabilities. They feel that the awareness about the need to employ people with disabilities is very much there but in practice there are so many practical difficulties in recruiting persons with disabilities not because of disability and basically due to non-availability of suitable jobs. In some government and private sectors, employment of persons with disabilities is promoted but in reality it is opened more for other categories of disabilities and only few persons with visual impairment are given access to employment. There is a strong sense that this scenario should change. However, most of them are optimistic that with the growing trend of technology and industrial development, opportunities for persons with visual impairment will grow in the future.
- * **The drive of the companies and public institutions to employ people with disabilities:** The corporate social responsibility has become one of the key principles of industries thereby companies are expected to spend a significant portion of their resources for the benefit of the marginalized sections of the society. Therefore, companies and human resource departments are motivated to look into opportunities to bring people belonging to the marginalized categories under the ambit of employment and in the process people with

disabilities are encouraged to apply for jobs. The human resource departments also try to identify jobs which people with disabilities in general and people with visual impairment in particular can perform. Specific case can be cited about Philippines where the industries indicate there are thousands of jobs in the IT industries that can be performed by persons with visual impairment provided they have the right skills and in order to take advantage of this opportunity, training is going to be of vital importance.

- * **Expectations the employers have in terms of preparation of persons with visual impairment for employment:** Most employers feel that in the modern working environment, a team player performs well in the job setting and therefore they expect the person with visual impairment also to be a team player in addition to acquisition of proper job skills. In terms of expectations from persons with visual impairment for employment, they feel that their independent travel to the work environment is one of the important requirements as most companies are not able to provide transportation facilities to them. They are also concerned about the travel risks that are involved and this fear should be allayed by organizations working in the field of disability. Most of the employers who are employing persons with visual impairment like to have links with organizations that are supporting people with disabilities in terms of their skills development, follow-up, etc.
- * **Challenges faced by persons with visual impairment when they are recruited as a part of the workforce:** The main challenge as cited by employers relate to the mobility of the person with the visual impairment within the workplace. They also indicate that some persons with visual impairment have inhibition in mingling with fellow employees and it takes quite some time for them to get acquainted with the work environment. They feel that such skills have to be developed in persons with visual impairment prior to their joining jobs. They also feel that some of the mannerisms of people with visual impairment may look odd in a working environment and therefore development of proper mannerism in the work environment is a skill that can be taken care of by organisations that are preparing persons with visual impairment for jobs.
- * **Availability of employer forums where people with visual impairment can come and speak:** Most of the employers feel that there are employer forums but the issues related to disability are seldom discussed there. They indicate

that specific employment forums focusing on the potential of persons with visual impairment for employment purposes may be organized from time to time by inviting people who have employed people with disabilities. Some of them who participated in the youth forum organised by the partner organizations indicate that organising specific employment forums to promote persons with disabilities for employment may be a good step forward to strengthen this. They indicated that they can become advocates for promoting employment of persons with disabilities and they also insisted that media coverage on the potentials of persons with disabilities may also be organized by inviting employers to share the success stories of people with visual impairment who were employed by them.

- * **Awareness of employers about the technologies used by persons with visual impairment and the adaptations required in the industry:** Most employers were baffled by the way visually impaired people use technology when they interacted with them for the first time. Many of them never thought that visually impaired people could use computers. Many people from the human resource development departments indicated that the existing software in the IT industries come with built-in accessibility features that is not only used by visually impaired people but by all employees who have problems. The speech synthesizes are also used frequently by all employees. Therefore, the multi-purpose versatile software that are available today are making employment of persons with visual impairment easy particularly in the IT industries. Most of the employers of the modern days are aware of the adaptive devices used particularly by people with visual impairment as there is wide media coverage too on this subject. At the same time, it is also a fact that not every industry is aware of these developments. Therefore, frequent orientation on the technology available in the blindness sector maybe promoted through media and also through pamphlets, etc. Many of them indicate that the events involving people with visual impairment may be attended by human resource development departments of industries who may be definitely influenced to serve as advocates for the promotion of employment of persons with visual impairment.
- * **What kind of reasonable accommodations are made by the industries to encourage more people with visual impairment to get employment:** Most industries say that the upcoming industries with the specific infrastructure have

to comply with the requirements of accessibility for persons with disabilities in general such as the availability of lifts, ramps, etc. They indicate that the builders are also given the accessibility guidelines such as the colour contrast, use of braille symbols, etc., for the doorways etc. However, small scale industries which operate in existing locations may find it difficult to comply with all aspects of accommodation. However, many small scale industries are prepared to do accommodations in terms of technology. In places where accommodation in terms of infrastructure is difficult, they prepare the visually impaired individual to cope up with that environment as indicated by persons with visual impairment too. Many industries are flexible as far as the time schedule of persons with visual impairment is concerned when such a rule is applied to the entire company. They feel that they have to know very clearly what type of infrastructural and environmental adaptations are necessary so that they can definitely comply with those requirements.

- * **Supporting the formulation of any decrees promoting employment of persons with visual impairment:** Industries are fully supporting the development of proper decrees on employment related to disability as they indicate that such legislations would make their recruitment process easy and in allocating specific jobs for persons with visual impairment. In some cases they say that decrees are available for the employment of persons with visual impairment, but they are not in full force when it comes to implementation. They also state that there should be occasional pressures from civil societies and organizations of persons with disabilities to insist on the proper reservations by governments to promote jobs for persons with visual impairment.
- * **General attitude of the business houses about the employment potential of persons with visual impairment:** The employers strongly feel that the attitude of employers about persons with disabilities, in particular about the potential of the persons with visual impairment is gradually increasing. They indicate that the presence of young role models among persons with disabilities is a determining factor in changing attitudes towards the disability. They also indicate that there is social media awareness about this field that is helping them to develop positive attitudes towards disability related activities.

In summary, employers are positive about the potential of persons with visual impairment and they also encourage recruitment of more persons with visual impairment in the workforce. Though preparedness to employ persons with visual impairment is positive, there is also a strong feeling that should be pressure groups too which should ensure enactment of proper legislations and development of guidelines for the employment of persons with visual impairment. They acknowledge that there is a gap between policies and practices at present though the general attitude to employ persons with visual impairment is positive.





Non-Government Organisations who are Employers too

Another group that was used for the in-depth interviews was that of the non-governmental organizations. They were asked on what made them to have concerns about the employment of persons with visual impairment. They were also asked whether their organizations provide any kind of training to persons with visual impairment and what employment issues are generally faced by the industries when they have opened employment opportunities for persons with visual impairment? They were also put a question on how to increase the number of persons with visual impairment in the employment sector and how these institutions are dealing with the inclusive development. The responses of them are summarised below:

1. For the question on the motivation for these non-governmental organizations to employ people with disabilities, many of them indicated that there is an increased awareness about the need for employing persons with disabilities in the present world than before. They also expressed that by and large, the industries are taking up corporate social responsibility, thereby they are motivated to employ people from the marginalised sections of the society which

has a significant share of disabled persons. They say that the environment has significantly changed since a few decades ago as there is more recognition for the abilities of persons with disabilities as a result of good role models among persons with disabilities and also due to the wide advocacy on proactive legislations, which is happening at the global and regional levels.

2. Regarding training programs offered to persons with visual impairment after they are employed, most companies indicated that they generally organise induction program where visually impaired employees are introduced to the work environment. Besides this, the companies themselves are not offering any particular training, and in most cases, they collaborate with organizations specialized in the field to offer such training whenever there is a need. Many industries also indicate that they do not have the requisite expertise to offer training related to blindness but they have expertise to offer training in the particular area of employment. Therefore, they seek the assistance of organizations working in that area to develop the skills of visually impaired persons and also to orient the staff of the companies about the accommodation they should adapt to in the work environment.
3. Regarding the challenges faced by the industries in promoting employment for persons with disabilities, most of them indicated that transport and accommodation within the industry are major concerns. They indicated that wherever possible they make accommodation in terms of working environment, but the complete change of the environment to accommodate persons with disabilities is not feasible.
4. For the question on how to increase the number of persons with visual impairment to get employment in industries, the employers indicate that the demand is more in IT industries. They say that IT degrees are not insisted on by the companies as long as visually impaired persons demonstrate required IT skills for the jobs for which they are recruited for. Therefore, they feel that irrespective of what specialisations visually impaired persons study, acquiring job oriented IT skills will enable them to get more jobs. By and large, industries are prepared to accommodate more people, and they feel that the visually impaired people who are employed by them also have an equal role to develop awareness among persons with visual impairment about the capabilities of them.

Statements of Non-Government Organisations



Antonio D Lianes, Jr,

Executive Director

Adaptive Technology for Rehabilitation Integration & Empowerment of the Visually Impaired (ATRIEV)

Our programs advocate for both employment and education. We also do self-care or training, values formation, workplace etiquette and social skills. That would equip blind people when they go out to the real world and be part of the community or the the job market.



Dang Hoai Phuc

Director of Sao Mai Center

Job orientation program conducted by Sao Mai helps new persons with visual impairment employees understand job requirements and how to connect with the center more closely.



Bambang Basuki

Head of Mitra Netra

Counseling for visually impaired individuals both before or during school and before entering the workforce is one of the main programs of Mitra Netra. The purpose of counseling is to explore individual potential. Another program related to the employment sector is pre-employment training, we are focusing on soft skills training.

In summary, the industries feel that there is general acceptance of people with visual impairment for jobs than in the past, and they also indicate that IT skills are enabling more persons with visual impairment to get jobs.



Government Bodies in promoting employment opportunities

The third category of key stakeholders included government agencies. The research team wanted to find out from the government agencies about the strategies adopted by the governments in handling the employment issues dealing with disabled persons, the road map for augmenting employment opportunities, allocation of resources for the employment sector to promote employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in general and persons with visual impairment in particular and also the collaborating efforts and networking opportunities with other agencies which are working in this field. The research team made utmost efforts to contact the persons concerned at the government departments to have their views on the employment for persons with visual impairment. In some cases, the research team could succeed, and in some data collection places, the government officials were not able to provide time for such an interview. In such cases, the researchers went through the reports available from the governments and also reviewed the schemes which are in practice to promote employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

The following section provides a summary of responses from the perspectives of the government bodies in promoting employment.

1. In most cases, no specific department is exclusively meant for the promotion of employment of persons with visual impairment. In majority of the cases, the Labor Department is empowered for the promotion of employment of persons with disabilities.
2. The schemes available with the governments and also the responses received from the officials indicate that promotion of employment among persons with disabilities is one of the goals of governments to promote inclusive development.
3. They also indicate that the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD) has developed the awareness about the accessibility to persons with disabilities in education as well as in employment avenues.
4. In most government agencies, there is a provision of certain percentage of jobs for persons with disabilities and in specific cases such as The Philippines, there are short term, medium term and long term plans designed by the government in collaboration with the private sectors and organizations working for persons



Statements of Government Organisations

“ We are formulating the National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities, which will end in 2025. It includes to promote persons with disability in employment sector. ”

Dwi Rahayu Ningsih

The Agency of National Development Planning
Indonesia

“ We make a lot of effort to also partner with different organizations, public and private, so that we can boost the jobnet. And then we also provide information of job fairs, trainings, tesda, and career information. ”

Grace Baldoza

Division Chief,
Bureau of Local Employment Department of Labor and Employment
Philippines

In summary, governments are very much proactive to increase employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in general but the challenges in terms of specific jobs, making reasonable accommodation, promoting jobs for specific kinds of disabilities are the existing challenges it indicated and addressing these challenges is on ongoing process. Despite the challenges, there is more positivity to employ people with disabilities than before.

Unemployed persons with visual impairment

The research team was very particular that in the process of the research, we have to collect information from people who are not employed to find out why employment opportunities are difficult to sustain in the case of some individuals. 2 persons from The Philippines, 6 from Indonesia and 2 from Vietnam were interviewed. These are the persons who once had a job and discontinued or those who were interviewed and selected for jobs but failed to take them. The questions put to them included reasons for not getting jobs, whether they attended soft skills and job skills training programs, was there any initiative or training to improve their skills to make them employable in the employment sector, whether their mobility skills are impediment for the acquisition of employment and to what extent the individual is involved in social media and networking.

The responses of the respondents are summarised below:

1. Among the persons who were interviewed, the reasons for not continuing in the employment pertains mostly to personal factors and the main being health reasons and lack of stamina.
2. In majority of the cases, the individuals reported that they were not able to cope with the physical challenges in the work environment including that of long hours of work due to health reasons.
3. Some of them also indicated transportation as a major issue.
4. To probing questions on whether they experienced any kind of bullying in the work environment, the general response was negative. Though there were occasional instances that resulted in the lack of recognition of skills of visually impaired individuals, majority of those who discontinued jobs indicated that it was their personal reasons for not continuing jobs.
5. Another important factor that was expressed was pertaining to lack of stereotyped jobs in specific industries which expect the visually impaired individual to do multiple tasks like any other person. As offering stereotype

jobs for long hours becomes difficult at times, the individuals who did not have multiple skills in jobs had the high probability of getting relieved not because of the blindness but due to lack of skills in those areas.

6. Visually impaired individuals also informed that large industries generally do not face attrition among employed persons with visual impairment whereas small industries have a higher rate of attrition.
7. Mobility skills are not considered to be impediments for employment. In terms of responses, many individuals expressed that they developed their finer mobility skills after getting jobs.
8. There is a small percentage of persons with visual impairment who were not enthusiastic to get employed basically due to lack of self- motivational skills.
9. No one indicated that their family members were against their getting jobs and they expressed that they were motivating them to stick on to jobs.
10. In the case of those who left jobs, they did use social media to some extent but not connected with networks of visually impaired persons and organizations that used social media for the promotion of employment and awareness activities.

Statements of unemployed persons with visual impairment

Fahri Rosa
Indonesia

I have applied for about ten jobs, but none have called me back. I even went through an interview process and was promised a follow-up, but I never heard back. I think maybe they were disappointed to see that I am visually impaired because the jobs I applied for were not specifically for visually impaired individuals.

I have not yet applied for formal employment because I am still afraid that the workplace might not meet my expectations. As an active computer user with various applications, I worry that the workplace might not have accessible tools. Additionally, I fear experiencing stigma and discrimination in the workplace.

Juwita Maulida
Indonesia

My friends tell me not to mention being blind right away. They say it might be an advantage if they don't know you're blind initially. Because their first impression or judgment might be different if they know you're blind.

Hieu
Vietnam

There were employers who were very interested in his resume, but when they saw that he was blind, they said no.

Danelle
Philippines

In summary, the unemployed persons stated health reasons to a large extent and transportation and lack of motivation as reasons for them not opting for jobs. This is a message to organizations dealing with visually impaired persons to pay attention to development of fitness and also to motivate visually impaired individuals from very young age to become economically independent. Organizations may conduct programmes to create awareness on livelihood besides self help skills in order to ensure sustainability in the jobs secured by visually impaired individuals.



Parents of children with visual impairment who are still in higher education

As parents play a very vital role in the overall rehabilitation of their children with disabilities, in particular those with visual impairment, the parents' group was added as one of the important stakeholders for the research on empowerment through employment. As parents of students with visual impairment who are completing the higher education are so anxious of the employment of them going forward, the research team had focused group discussions and in-depth interviews with them about their awareness about employment opportunities for persons with visual impairment. Therefore, specific questions pertaining to employment were posed to them. The questions included how do they prepare their children with visual impairment before entering the workforce, what type of particular support they are likely to provide when the child enters the workforce, what mechanism they have in place in case there are challenges encountered by the child in getting job, do they see the child as an income generating person for the family and also the question relating to whether they are having any access to information on parents' groups

and employment of persons with visual impairment. The summary responses of the parents interviewed are enumerated as follows.

1. The parents look at the job as an avenue for promoting independence among their children with visual impairment. For them, earning is secondary and the child leading an independent life with confidence is the primary objective. They are prepared to work with organizations and parents' groups that offer all sorts of training and support services that will make their children experience independence in the workforce.

Most parents feel that when the child becomes independent, they will be relieved mentally as well as physically. Therefore, development of skills is more important for them in terms of preparation for workforce.

2. The parents have been stressing that their children should be trained to make proper decisions at the times of challenges and for this, they believe that they have to be exposed to different challenges while they are studying in schools and colleges. They feel that a child grown in a restrictive environment may not be developing independent skills and therefore, they support the child mingling with the society in inclusive setting as that is believed to be serving as a vehicle for independence later in life. They also indicate that visually impaired children having network with other friends in educational institutions as well as in work environment will serve as a motivation for them to explore the outer world. Therefore, they encourage their children to make friends who share similar challenges like them to get confidence to get jobs.
3. In terms of coping with challenges, parents feel that regular counseling would be necessary for their children to cope with the stress and challenges. They feel that their children should not be disheartened when they get the jobs which are not on par with their qualifications. They also feel that the purpose of employment should not aim only at getting jobs in the government sector and therefore, parents suggest that visually impaired children should be motivated to accept the job on hand and using them as stepping stones for progressing further.
4. From the perspectives of parents, they don't consider employment of their children as only a source of income for the family even if they are in financial crisis. They indicate that contribution of visually impaired employee to the

income of the family is desirable but should not be treated as mandatory. They feel that such an expectation will lead to disappointment that will pave ways for further stress in persons with visual impairment. Therefore, they feel that generating income through employment should not become the top criterion for securing employment. Majority of the parents consider employment as a source for independence rather than means for life.

With regard to parent support systems, Philippines has a strong mechanism in the form of a structured parents association of persons with visual impairment whereas in other countries, there is no structured system of parents. Interviews with the parents reveal that there is a strong link between parents networks and their children getting successful jobs because of the motivation and guidance provided by these parent groups about various avenues of employment. They also indicate that occasional get together of parents and their visually impaired children is developing a lot of camaraderie among visually impaired learners as well as employees that becomes a strong base to keep connected for the betterment of information sharing as well as employment opportunities not face attrition among employed persons with visual impairment whereas small industries have a higher rate of attrition.



Statements from Parents

Maybe in terms of finances, she doesn't need help anymore. But we still support her with things like food and cooking because that's she is happy when we cook their favorite food.

Marcelina
Philippines

As a parent of a visually impaired child, I must proactively support them to ensure their success in education and future employment. I always communicate with and ask teachers and her friends about my child's needs at school

Hariana
Indonesia

In summary, the research reveals that parents bodies regionally, nationally and locally, except Philippines, are not strong enough though parents groups have the power to influence the system. This stakeholder group should necessarily be motivated and assisted to become a structured force in the future for the promotion of employment opportunities for persons with visual impairment.

Chapter 2 has clearly highlighted the views of different stakeholders in the employment process of persons with visual impairment. Empowerment is a two way process and the preparedness of visually impaired individuals as well as the support of various stakeholders should be in proper synchronization for a healthy environment where opportunities for persons with visual impairment can expand. The research outlines that the stakeholder groups, by and large, have to actively involve in the rehabilitation of persons with visual impairment and the need of the hour is to create appropriate opportunities for them to become agents for the promotion of employment in the disability sector.

Having described and interpreted the data obtained from visually impaired individuals and different stakeholders through this research, the key findings and recommendations are enumerated in Chapter 3.



CHAPTER 3

Findings and Recommendations

Findings

Chapter 3 provides a summary of the findings obtained from research data, focused interviews and interaction with different stakeholders who took part in the study. The findings are enumerated as follows:

1. About 29% of the employed persons with visual impairment are doing teaching related jobs. In the partner countries, one has to compete for teaching job in the open market along with non-disabled graduates and therefore the high percentage of visually impaired graduates entering into teaching jobs indicates their aptitude for teaching and also their success rate. Those who are working in the field of teaching had a higher professional satisfaction than those with other professions.
2. Besides the education sector, three sectors more or less present the same percentage of preference and they are employment in administrative fields which accounts for 16%, employment in the social sector including that of NGOs that accounts for about 17% and employment in the massage and Physiotherapy that has a percentage of 15%.
3. There is wide acknowledgment that IT sector is most appropriate for visually impaired individuals as there are a lot of possibilities in this sector and devices used by visually impaired persons are also accessible to perform well in those IT related jobs. However, visually impaired individuals actually performing IT related jobs is only a small percentage. The employers in the IT sector reveal that there are plenty of jobs in the sector and the employers expect specific skills from visually impaired individuals besides their education qualification.
4. Only about 8% of the students underwent exclusive courses on information technology. A noteworthy factor is that about 3% of the students have specialized in STEM related courses, which was not a preferred choice at all in the past.

5. The top 10 skill areas reported as requirements for getting recruited for a reasonable job relate to the individual as a whole. Their confidence level, goal setting, accepting criticism, coping with the workplace, etc., also become part of the personality skills of any individual and therefore the rating of this at the higher level indicates that inculcation of positive attitude and right type of personality skills contribute to success in employment.
6. The study reveals that most of the visually impaired employees are not fully aware of the legislations pertaining to employment rights, opportunities, etc., and therefore this area too needs strengthening in the future.
7. People with higher qualifications tend to go for low paid jobs due to lack of adequate employment avenues. Though this is considered to be a universal problem, visually impaired individuals who participated in the study mention that they have to be given training in coping skills when such a situation arises.
8. The study reveals that self esteem and personality skills are not at all rated low by visually impaired individuals meaning that they have the right mindset to take up jobs in all the sectors. However, they insist on more preparation and skill development in the soft skill areas so that they can sustain the jobs they have acquired.
9. Many respondents mentioned that they have to make their job satisfactory because they consider themselves privileged when comparing with other people with visual impairment who do not have jobs. Many added that having a job itself is a big motivational factor and therefore those people who have been employed insist that getting a reasonable job should be the ultimate objective of persons with visual impairment by improving their qualifications in education as well as in skills.
10. Most of the respondents indicated that mental preparation for jobs should be treated as one of the requisite areas in the soft skills training program.
11. There is consensus among the employed persons with visual impairment that education qualification alone is not going to get them good employment and the interpersonal skills, communication skills, etc, which are mostly covered under the soft skills training activities are motivating them and helping them to get jobs.

12. The success of employment depends on how best the individual visually impaired person is able to cope with the criticism and at the same time using that as steps for development. People who quit jobs after they were employed mostly are those who are not able to face the challenges and criticisms.
13. The success and failures in the job arena involve mostly internal factors than the external factors and therefore a person with visual impairment who is fully prepared to face the internal factors is better equipped to make the job successful than a person who is not fully prepared to face the challenges and criticism raised in the work environment.
14. Those who are in the field of teaching say that their job is commensurating with the education qualifications. Many of the individuals who are in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) indicated that their skills are taking them to higher levels of employment.
15. Considering the difficulty in getting jobs, most of the visually impaired individuals expressed that they are not making any complaints about the accessibility issues in the work environment. A few indicated that they also provide guidance to the employers in making the environment user friendly for persons with low vision in terms of colour, contrast, brightness, etc., and therefore they indicated that the employer should be oriented on what type of accommodations are necessary for visually impaired individuals to make their work performance better.
16. Many industries opined that the awareness among them about the employment of persons with visual impairment is gradually growing. They attribute this mostly to the awareness created by civil societies, organizations working in the disability sector and also the international legislations promoting equal access.
17. In some government and private sectors, employment of persons with disabilities is promoted but in reality it is opened more for other categories of disabilities and only few persons with visual impairment are given access to employment. There is a strong sense that this scenario should change.
18. The corporate social responsibility has become one of the key principles of industries thereby companies are expected to spend a significant portion of their resources for the benefit of the marginalized sections of the society.

Therefore, companies and human resource departments are motivated to look into opportunities to bring people belonging to the marginalized categories under the ambit of employment and in the process people with disabilities are encouraged to apply for jobs.

19. In terms of expectations from persons with visual impairment for employment, they feel that their independent travel to the work environment is one of the important requirements as most companies are not able to provide transportation facilities to them.
20. Most of the employers feel that there are employer forums but the issues related to disability are seldom discussed there. They indicate that specific employment forums focusing on the potential of persons with visual impairment for employment purposes may be organized from time to time by inviting people who have employed people with disabilities.
21. Small scale industries which operate in existing locations may find it difficult to comply with all aspects of accommodation. However, many small scale industries are prepared to do accommodations in terms of technology. In places where accommodation in terms of infrastructure is difficult, they prepare the visually impaired individual to cope up with that environment as indicated by persons with visual impairment too.
22. Decrees are available for the employment of persons with visual impairment, but they are not in full force when it comes to implementation. They also state that there should be occasional pressures from civil societies and organizations of persons with disabilities to insist on the proper reservations by governments to promote jobs for persons with visual impairment.



23. The employers strongly feel that the attitude of employees about persons with disabilities, in particular about the potential of the persons with visual impairment is gradually increasing. They indicate that the presence of young role models among persons with disabilities is a determining factor in changing attitudes towards the disability.
24. Many employers themselves are not offering any particular training, and in most cases, they collaborate with organizations specialized in the field to offer such training whenever there is a need. Many industries also indicate that they do not have the requisite expertise to offer training related to blindness but they have expertise to offer training in the particular area of employment.
25. In most government agencies, there is a provision of certain percentage of jobs for persons with disabilities and in specific cases such as The Philippines, there are short term, medium term and long term plans designed by the government in collaboration with the private sectors and organizations working for persons with disabilities to promote employment.
26. The parents look at the job as an avenue for promoting independence among their children with visual impairment. For them, earning is secondary and the child leading an independent life with confidence is the primary objective.
27. The parents have been stressing that their children should be trained to make proper decisions at the times of challenges and for this, they believe that they have to be exposed to different challenges while they are studying in schools and colleges.
28. Interviews with the parents reveal that there is a strong link between parents' networks and their children getting successful jobs because of the motivation and guidance provided by these parent groups. Except in Philippines, Parents' networks are reported to be weak.

Recommendations

The research study has clearly brought out certain facts and figures that may be addressed going forward in augmenting the employment arena for persons with visual impairments. The key influencers in the promotion of employment, as revealed by the study, are the employers, human resource development personnel, visually impaired persons themselves and parents. Organising activities connecting these stakeholders has potential to create a systemic change in the employment sector thereby proactive measures maybe initiated for increasing employment opportunities for persons with visual impairment. The following key recommendations emerge for implementation in the years ahead.

Creation of a Forum of Employers

The study clearly highlights that the most influential group that can have a ripple effect in the employment sector is that of the Employers who can influence potential employers through their positive statement about the capability of persons with visual impairment for employment. Most of the employers strongly feel the need for a structured Employer Forum wherein issues relating to employment of persons with the disabilities in general and visual impairment in particular maybe discussed. The suggestion is that the employer forum should include employers who have facilitated employment for persons with visual impairment and representatives from those industries which have potential to employ persons with visual impairment.

It is suggested that such an Employment Forum at the regional level as well as at the national levels can discuss various dimensions dealing with employment that may include induction programs, reasonable accommodation, skills upgradation, legislative measures on employment, to name a few. The project may take up this task as a priority activity in the second year of the project implementation subject to the approval by The Nippon Foundation. The modus operandi of such an employment forum can be discussed by the project team and with the representatives of employers.

Organising National Summits on Employment

At present the project is organising Regional Summit of the Youth and also on Employment. These regional events are of great significance for developing network among persons with visual empowerment and the project functionaries. However, the participants who took part in the study reveal that many employment related factors are closely linked to country oriented parameters and therefore suggested that organising employment summits at the national level maybe more beneficial going forward.

An employee summit on annual basis maybe organised by involving persons with visual impairment who have been employed, persons with visual impairment who are seeking employment, potential employees, representatives from government machineries, etc. These forums can include discussion items such as mapping of skills with jobs, accessibility issues, transportation, soft skills, etc., that may have an impact on the augmentation of jobs for persons with visual impairment. As a result the Regional Summit which is currently being proposed maybe dispensed with and national employee summits maybe planned in the successive years.

Development of a Directory of Potential Jobs for persons with visual impairment

Discussions with employers and also the human resource development personnel of companies and industrial houses reveal that there are a number of jobs that can be performed by persons with visual impairments but many employers and even organisations working in employment arena may not be fully aware of those options.

There is a suggestion that a Think-Tank consisting of selected human resource department personnel of a variety of industries, persons with visual impairment who are employed, organisations promoting employment training and representatives from government bodies, if possible, may be formed to observe various jobs that are available in the public and private sector industries and suggest what accommodations maybe necessary for each job for making it accessible for persons with visual impairment.

The team can also suggest appropriate job skills and soft skills that may be necessary for each job. This directory, when fully developed, maybe useful for government employees, persons with visual impairment. etc., in all countries. A detailed proposal for this task highlighting the time required, cost, etc., can be worked out subject to the approval of this proposal by The Nippon Foundation.

Revamping soft skills training program

A detailed discussion with stakeholders and assessment in the research revealed that many visually impaired individuals who are seeking employment are lacking in questioning skills, written communication, career planning, resume preparation, interview facing skills, non-verbal communication, knowledge on legislation of employment, diplomacy skills, etc. In many cases visually impaired persons who dropped out after they got employment certainly lacked skills in these areas.

Therefore, it is proposed to highlight the above skills to a great extent in the soft skills training programs that will be organised in the future. The research team has already collected a lot of data on soft skills and it is proposed to bring out a guide book on the soft skills training by quoting the outcomes of the research evidences so that the document will be of assistance for any organisation which is planning to get involved in promoting employment opportunities for persons with visual impairment.

Organising Skills Training in Technology

One of the key findings of the study is that IT related jobs are becoming popular among visually impaired graduates and also possible to get compared to jobs in other sectors. For the question of whether the education qualifications commensurate with the jobs and also the salary, the level of satisfaction is very positive in the IT sector. In fact, many individuals mentioned that their IT skills are acknowledged by the employers in judging their expertise in work. The study also revealed that only a small percentage of the graduates have specialized in technology related courses but developing technology skills that was one of the primary objectives of the higher education project enabled many to get IT related jobs. Therefore, it is proposed to organise in-depth programs or crash courses only on technology related skills especially for those who are in the final years of their study and looking for transition to employment. Employers are willing to work with the project partners in identifying specific jobs and also map skills required for recruitment. At least two programs in each country may be organised annually to nurture IT skills and see how they are recruited in the industries. This proposal may be initiated from 2025 if this concept is acceptable to The Nippon Foundation.

Strengthening the Network of Parents at the National and Regional levels

One of the silent and unassumed influences of positivity in the employment sector is that of the parents of visually impaired individuals. Those parents who participated

in the study looked at employment of their visually impaired children as a means of self-esteem and path to independence rather than meagerly looking at the jobs as means for fulfilling financial requirements. The research team also observed that visually impaired individuals who had successful employment had a supportive family environment, especially in terms of motivation given by the parents.

Unfortunately the parents network is the weakest link not only in the employment arena but also in the education sector globally. The team has also observed the great influence the Parents Association of Visually Impaired Children (PAVIC), Philippines in securing employment for their children and also in influencing legislations. PAVIC is a structured group and it has contributed significantly into policies and practices of education and rehabilitation of persons with visual impairment in the Philippines.

The research team is of the view that future activities of the project may include formation of formal structures of parents in the member countries. To take advantage of the existing structure of parent bodies, the project may also consider working closely with the PAVIC Philippines to promote parent network in the member countries where the project is implemented and also in the countries of East Asia region which were partners of the higher education project. Detailed proposal to this effect maybe prepared if it is acceptable in principle to The Nippon Foundation.

Parting Observations

The research conducted by the project has given clear indicators for strengthening the employment sector for persons with visual impairment. The environment has certainly changed over the years for welcoming persons with visual impairments to the employment sector but solid preparatory work is necessary to take advantage of the positivity of the external world to assist persons with visual impairment. Some of the recommendations listed in this section, when put into action can definitely influence systemic changes in the overall sector so that every visually impaired person has an equal chance of tapping the options of employment.

The current research is just a beginning and there is a long way to go in addressing the multidimensional challenges in the area of employment of persons with visual impairment.

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Tools used for the Study

GUIDANCE QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

There are four Focus group discussions:

1. Persons with visual disabilities whether having a job/yet to get job (who may still be in higher education/universities).
2. Parents who have persons with visual disabilities whether having a job/yet to get job (who may in higher education/universities).
3. Employers who have persons with visual disability workers and/or who do not have persons with visual disabilities workers.
4. Public institutions who have persons with disability workers.

Note about the numbers of FGDs participants

1. *Each FGD should have minimum 15 participants (more is better).*
2. *For persons with disabilities FGD make sure the combination (75% of persons who have jobs and 25% who do not have jobs).*
3. *For employers FGD make sure the combination of employers (75% who have persons with visual disabilities as workers and 25% who do not have persons with visual disabilities as workers).*

Technical Guidelines

1. *Make sure the location of discussion is safe and comfortable for participants to express their opinions*
2. *The discussion begins with an introduction*
3. *Facilitator explains the aims of discussion*
4. *The facilitator can read the discussion questions one by one*
5. *The facilitator must ensure that all participants are actively involved*
6. *Close the discussion with a wrap up*
7. *Discussion duration is around 1 hour or 1 hour and 30 minutes.*

A. Persons with Visual Disabilities

1. According to participants, what is the current condition of people with visual disabilities regarding employment issues?
2. According to participants, what is the encouragement of companies/public to employ people with visual disabilities?
3. What are the most important things that influence people with visual disabilities to enter the workforce?
4. Conversely, what are the challenges faced by people with visual disabilities in entering the workforce? Then, how to solve this challenge?.

5. What is the role of the government regarding employment issues for people with visual disabilities?.
6. What is the role of NGOs regarding employment issues for people with visual disabilities?
7. What is the role of higher education institutions regarding employment issues for people with visual disabilities?.
8. What is the role of parents regarding the employment issues for people with visual disabilities?.
9. What is the role of persons with visual disabilities/non disabilities peer groups?
10. What is the role of the understanding of technologies by persons with disabilities?

B. Parents

1. What is the general comparison of the conditions of families of children with visual disabilities, those who are working and those who are not yet working? (economic and social).
2. What is the parent's support for children with visual disabilities who want to enter the workforce? (economy, education, mobility, etc.).
3. Based on experience, what are the strong motivations for children with visual disabilities who want to work?.
4. What are the challenges faced by parents who want to prepare children with visual disabilities to enter the workforce? (economic, social, and cultural) Then, how to handle the challenges?.
5. What is the influence of parents' education, economic, social, and cultural background to persons with visual disability in terms of employment opportunity? (firstly, please identify the background of parents on education, economic, social, and cultural)
6. What is the influence of persons with visual disabilities whether who have job/those who are yet to obtains job in formal/informal sectors.
7. What is the influence of information in terms of persons with disability included in the employment sector? How do you access the information of persons with disabilities issues included for employment opportunity?

C. Employers (Private Company and Public Institution)

1. What is the understanding of business owners/public institutions regarding people with visual disabilities entering the workforce? (For example, regulations, quota, and policies)
2. What drives companies/public institutions to employ people with visual disabilities?
3. What must business owners/public institutions prepare to employ people with visual disabilities?

4. What are the challenges faced by companies/public institutions when they want to recruit workers with visual disabilities? Then, how to solve this challenge?
5. Are there any employer forums specifically discussing the issue of employment opportunities for people with visual disabilities?
6. What is the understanding of business owners/public institutions about persons with disabilities technology?
7. What is the awareness of business owners/public institution about reasonable accommodation/decrees in supporting employment? Please elaborate by detailed explanation on job adaptation, recruitment process, career development, etc.)
8. What is the attitude and perception of business owners/public institutions about the potential of persons with disabilities?

GUIDANCE QUESTIONS FOR IN-DEPT INTERVIEW

There are three categories of informant:

1. Primary groups: persons with visual disabilities, parents, and employers/public institutions;
2. Intermediate groups: Head of Higher Education institutions/Universities, NGO, and CSO;
3. Secondary group: Government.

Technical Guidelines

1. *Make sure the interview location is safe and comfortable without disturbances*
2. *Starting interview with introduction section*
3. *Researcher must explain the aims of interview*
4. *Researchers could read the questions sequentially*
5. *Make sure all questions have been answered by the informant*
6. *Make sure the researcher has the informant's mobile phone number just in case the researcher needs more other information*
7. *Close the interview process by saying 'Thank you'*
8. *Interview duration is at least 1 hour*
9. *Please record the interview process.*

I. PRIMARY INFORMANT

A. Persons with visual disabilities who have a job (Two Informants: 1 woman and 1 men)

Recruitment process

1. Are you happy with your job? If yes, please elaborate what factors make you happy? If not what factors make you not happy? And are you willing to find other jobs?

2. What is your biggest motivation to enter the workforce?
3. Please tell us about your experience when you entered the workforce (from seeing vacancy information to being accepted for work).
 - What should you prepare before entering the workforce?*
 - What are the key factors to become succeeded in entering the job?*
 - What are the key factors of failure in the recruitment process? (lesson learned from your experience)*
 - What are the key factors of the successful process in recruitment?*
 - What are the biggest challenges faced by people with visual disabilities when they want to enter the workforce? Then, how should we solve this challenge?*
4. How many companies that you're applying for the jobs?

Work situation

5. Do you think your education qualification is commensurating with your work?
6. Is your salary commensurates with your qualification?
7. Is your salary equal to persons without disabilities? Or do you think you need extra cost?
8. What additional cost you spend for your performing job? If you don't have additional cost, how to cope with the jobs.
9. Are your fellows/non-disabled employees helpful?
10. Is your company having accessibility/reasonable accommodation?
11. Is your employer improving the work system to be more inclusive?

Career and skills

12. Do you have career growth opportunities?
13. Do you have an opportunity to develop your career?
14. Do you have any chance to upgrade your job skills?
15. Are there any organizations that help you to improve your skills? If yes, please elaborate the organizations.

Family, Contributing, and Sharing Job Information

16. Who and what parties (parents, siblings, friends, others) when supported you wanted to enter the workforce? Please elaborate.
17. Are you contributing to your family?
18. Do you recommend the company that you work for other people with visual disability?
19. Have you helped other people with visual disabilities to get a job?

B. Persons with visual disability who are still in higher education/university (two informants: 1 woman and 1 men)

1. What college/university are you currently studying? And what level/semester are you at?
2. What should be prepared to enter the world of work? Please elaborate.
3. During in higher education, are you receiving information about the working world? For example, information about company names, positions required, challenges in the world of work.
4. Do you get soft skills at your current place of higher education? If yes, please state when and what soft skills were obtained.
5. Are you currently involved or interacting with institutions that are concerned with employment issues for people with visual disabilities? If yes, please elaborate and what is the benefit of interaction/involving with the institution?
6. What is the biggest challenge for students with visual disabilities who want to get a job? Then, how do you resolve that challenge?

C. Persons with visual disabilities who have failed to get a job (two informants: 1 woman and 1 men)

1. What is the reason that you are not getting a job? Why weren't you selected?
2. If you are selected (succeed to get a job), but you are still unemployed, what is the reason? (for example, transportation, reasonable accommodation in working situations, etc.)
3. Have you ever got soft skills and job skills training? (Also explain your motivation to join the training)
4. Do you take any action to improve your skills that can be applied to your job?
5. Are you using social media and part of any network to promote yourself to the job market?
6. How is your mobility/independent living and communication skills?

D. Employers/public institution (Four informants: 1 women employer, 1 men employer, 1 woman from a public institution, and 1 man from a public institution)

1. What is your area/sector that you work?
2. Since when has your company/public institution accepted workers with visual disabilities?
3. What is your company/public institution's motivation to employ people with visual disabilities?
4. How many people with visual disabilities work in your company/public institution?

5. Is there any orientation program for new employees who have visual impairments? If so, please explain the program.
6. How is the process of recruiting new employees generally done at your companies/public institutions? Are there any differences in the recruiting process for employees with visual disabilities? (explanation starting from the need of the position in the company, vacancy information, requirements, selection process, and orientation after being accepted).
7. Does your company/public institution prepare accessibility for everything in the recruitment process for people with visual disabilities?.
8. Do you have any induction programs for all departments? (included environment sensitivity training) If no, please respond to the next questions below.

Do you want organizers like us that are concerned with the employment opportunity to persons with visual disabilities to help you to recruit people with visual disabilities?

9. What area of issues of employment needing assistance to prepare persons with visual disability candidates?
10. What are the key factors of failure in the recruitment process (lesson learned from company)?
11. What are the key factors of successful recruitment process of the company (lesson learned from company)?
12. Do you improve the working system to be more inclusive?
13. What do you expect from employees with visual disabilities who will work in your company/institution?

E. Parents who have kids having a job/still in higher education/university. (four informants: 2 parents who have kids having a job and 2 parents who have kids who are still in higher education/university)

1. How do you prepare your child with visual disabilities before entering the workforce?
2. What particular support is required for your child who will enter the workforce?
3. How do you handle and solve the challenges related to your child with visual impairment in the workforce? Please elaborate and considering internal (individuals with visual disabilities) and external (stigma, environmental attitudes, policies/regulations, etc.) factors.
4. Is your child who works contributing to your family in economy? If yes, please elaborate the impact of his/her contribution to your family.
5. Do you have access to information and sources on persons with visual disability employment issues?

Below is a question for parents who have kids in higher education/university.

6. Is there any future planning in terms of the independent of persons with visual disabilities?

II. INTERMEDIATED INFORMANT

A. Head of Higher Education institutions /Universities (two informants: 1 woman and 1 man)

1. Since when has your institution accepted students with visual disabilities?
2. How many people with visual disabilities are pursuing higher education at your institution?
3. What programs at your institution can help people with visual disabilities pursue education as well as to enter the workforce in the future?
4. Are the facilities at your institution accessible to people with visual disabilities? If yes, please specify.
5. Do lecturers well understand people with visual disabilities including the rights of persons with visual disabilities in employment?
6. Does your institution have a program in improving soft skills for people with visual disabilities before enter to workforce?
7. Are you providing a support center for persons with visual disabilities?
8. Are there any others reservation in terms of admission to persons with visual disabilities?
9. Are you providing financial support for persons with visual disabilities?
10. Do you have an open selection system for all courses for people with visual disabilities?

B. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) (two informants: 1 woman and 1 man)

1. What are the current employment issues for people with visual disabilities?
2. What has the government done to encourage people with visual disabilities to work in the formal sector? (Including local government)
3. What is the main priority of people with visual disabilities in terms of employment in the formal sector?
4. What is the hardest challenge in encouraging people with visual disabilities to enter the workforce (Please elaborate regarding policies/programs, regulations, strategies, budgets, systems, work-ready education curricula, stigma, environmental support, understanding of policymakers, capacity of people with visual disabilities, etc)
5. What have you done regarding promoting employment of persons with visual disabilities?

C. NGO (two informants: 1 woman and 1 man)

1. Since when has your institution been concerned with the issue of employment for people with visual disabilities?.
2. What programs of your institutions have related to employment for people with visual disabilities? particularly, in the preparation of people with visual disabilities to enter the workforce.
3. Do you provide persons with visual disabilities training?
4. What is the reason of your institution to have concern about the employment issue of people with visual disabilities?.
5. Who are the parties who have collaborated with your institution related to the employment issue of people with visual disabilities? In your opinion, what are the motives of the parties in that collaboration?
Are you working with the government?
Are you working with other organizations of disabled people organizations?
Are you working with international organizations?
6. What are the challenges of institution regarding employment issues for people with visual disabilities? And how to overcome those challenges?
7. Due to the lack of people with visual disabilities who work in formal sector, what is your strategies to solve this issue? (Please elaborate on connecting with the role of government and other parties)
8. How does your institution deal with an inclusive development in terms of persons with visual disability issues?
9. Is your institution a Trust? Please elaborate.
10. Do you have cooperation with private sectors/industry?

III. SECONDARY INFORMANT

A. Government officers who are in-charge of employment sector and higher education sector

The Ministry of Higher Education/University (1 informant)

1. What are the policies and regulations of higher education for people with visual disabilities and connected with the preparation of persons with visual disabilities to enter the workforce?
2. What programs and innovations have been provided regarding higher education for people with visual disabilities, especially those related to preparation for the world of work?
3. Is there a special budget related to the higher education budget for people with visual disabilities? If so, how much of the budget is allocated for people

with visual disabilities in higher education (please make a list of the budget allocation).

4. What is the ratio of people with visual disabilities who are covered in higher education programs?
5. Who are the stakeholders concerned with the work on the issues of higher education for people with visual disabilities?
6. How many people with visual disabilities are currently enrolled in higher education (gender and age segregation).
7. How many higher education institutions have disability services for their students?
8. What are the best practices of programs that have been implemented related to higher education for people with visual disabilities, especially those related to the preparation to enter the workforce?
9. What is the understanding of the Ministry about best practices in the developing of persons with disabilities particularly in higher education/university?
10. What is the understanding of Ministry about the supporting of NGO/CSO to students in higher education/university?
11. What are the impacts of higher education programs to persons with visual disabilities currently?

The Ministry of Employment (1 informant)

1. What are the policies and regulations regarding employment issues for people with visual disabilities?
2. What programs have been provided regarding employment for people with visual disabilities?
3. Is there a special budget related to employment issues for people with visual disabilities? If so, how much is the budget and what is the allocation for?
4. Who are the stakeholders (public and private) who are concerned with the work on employment issues for people with visual disabilities?
5. How many people with visual disabilities are registered with employment institutions? Both who are looking for work and who are already working (gender and age segregation).
6. Have you employed people with visual disabilities?
7. Have you involved people with visual disabilities in decision making?
8. How many institutions are concerned with employment training for people with visual disabilities? If there is, please make a list and please elaborate answers for questions given below:

What kinds of training provided to persons with visual disabilities?

Are they (institutions) involved NGOs/CSOs/DPOs in the training? If yes, please explain how they involve NGOs/CSOs/DPOs?

9. Please explain the type and frequency of providing employment training for people with visual disabilities (both vocational and soft skills).
10. What are best practices/programs that have been implemented regarding employment for people with visual disabilities?
11. How many companies employ people with visual disabilities?
12. What are the results of monitoring and evaluation activities regarding employment issues for people with visual disabilities (especially related to quota policies for disabled workers).
13. Regarding the problems of people with visual disabilities who are not able to get jobs in the formal sector, what are the government's strategies and innovations to overcome this problem (currently and in the future).
14. How does the government comply with their own strategies/policies on employment of persons with visual impairment.

B. Government officers drafting national development plan in terms of employment particularly to persons with visual disability (1 informant)

1. What and how is the government planning regarding the issue of employment of people with visual disabilities in the formal sector?
2. What is the road map regarding the issue of employment of people with visual disabilities in the formal sector?
3. How much budget resources are allocated to employment issues for people with visual disabilities?
4. What are the institutions that are concerned with the employment issues of people with visual disabilities?
5. Regarding the problems of people with visual disabilities who are not able to get jobs in the formal sector, what and how are the government's strategies and innovations planned to overcome this issue (now and in the future)?

Questionnaires

| Number | | |
|--------|--|--|
| | | |

Dear Respondent,

In order to collect data for the study "**JOB OPPORTUNITIES OF PERSONS WITH VISUAL DISABILITIES IN THE FORMAL SECTOR IN THREE COUNTRIES (INDONESIA, PHILIPPINES AND VIETNAM)**," we ask you to take some time to fill out this questionnaire.

The aim of this research is to obtain examples of good practices and also list challenges faced by people with visual disabilities regarding employment opportunities in the formal sector.

We sincerely hope that you are willing to respond to the statements in the questionnaire truthfully. The collected data will later be analyzed and presented in overall form (not individually).

The answers given will not be judged to be right or wrong, but rather as very useful information to determine the results of the research. In accordance with research ethics, the answers you provide will be guaranteed confidential and will not be published.

Finally, we would like to express our deepest gratitude for your willingness to fill out this questionnaire.

Thank you

I. PROFILE

1. **Country** : Indonesia (1) Philippines (2) Vietnam (3)
2. **Name** :
3. **Age** :
4. **Gender** : Male (1) Female (2) Other (3)
5. **Education** : Bachelor (1) Master (2) Ph.D. (3)
6. **Working/yet to get work** : Working (1) Yet to get work (2)

a. *If you are a worker, company/institution (name) and sector/area:*

Name Company / Public Institution :

Sector/area :

b. *If you are not working and still a student, university's name where studying (Please mention if the university has a disability service)*

Name of the university :

Faculty/Major :

The Disability Service : Yes (1) / No (2)

II. SOFT SKILLS

A. Personal skills (rate skills that you have it personally)

| No. | Skills | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----|---|-----------|------|---------|------|-----------|
| 1 | Communication skills/spoken skills | | | | | |
| 2 | Communication skills/writing skills | | | | | |
| 3 | Non-verbal communication | | | | | |
| 4 | Resume preparation skills | | | | | |
| 5 | Interview facing techniques | | | | | |
| 6 | Career planning skills | | | | | |
| 7 | Questing skills | | | | | |
| 8 | Diplomacy skills | | | | | |
| 9 | Personal grooming | | | | | |
| 10 | Goal setting | | | | | |
| 11 | Decision making | | | | | |
| 12 | Understanding the potential in self | | | | | |
| 13 | Knowledge of legislations on employment | | | | | |
| 14 | Developing proper gestures/behavior | | | | | |
| 15 | Self-Esteem | | | | | |
| 16 | Learning to optimize productivity in work | | | | | |
| 17 | Work Ethics | | | | | |
| 18 | Professional Enrichment Goals | | | | | |

B. Other skills (rate skills that you have for adjusting to a working situation/environment)

| | | | | | | |
|----|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 19 | Coping with impairment conditions | | | | | |
| 20 | Coping with situation when jobs obtained do not commensurate with the qualifications | | | | | |
| 21 | Learning to work together | | | | | |
| 22 | Coping with external criticism | | | | | |
| 23 | Peer group interaction | | | | | |
| 24 | Initiative to become unique | | | | | |
| 25 | Coping with work environment | | | | | |
| 26 | Dealing with superiors as well as subordinates | | | | | |
| 27 | Coping with challenges in mobility and transportation | | | | | |

III. ACQUIRING SOFT SKILLS

| | | | | | | |
|----|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| 28 | In your opinion, where do you like to get the soft skills training? (This question for persons with visual impairment) | | | | | |
|----|---|--|--|--|--|--|

About the Organisations



The Nippon Foundation

As a hub for “social innovation,” the Foundation aims to create a better society by providing support to children, those with disabilities, and those recovering from natural disasters. Its goal is to connect people and organizations to create a society in which everybody supports everybody else. The projects of the SIIF are implemented with the assistance of subsidies from The Nippon Foundation.

Website : <https://www.nippon-foundation.or.jp/>



Resources for the Blind, Inc.,

RBI was started in the Philippines in 1988 with a goal to develop and implement programs that will remove the hindrances, and to provide services, training, materials, and equipment needed in order for those who have visual impairment to reach their fullest potential in life. The main office is in Cubao, Quezon City, with two regional offices in Cebu City and Davao City, which serve the central and southern Philippines, respectively.

Website: www.blind.org.ph



Yayasan Mitra Netra

The Mitra Netra Foundation is a non-profit organization that focuses its programs on efforts to improve the quality and participation of the blind in the fields of education and employment. Founded in Jakarta on 14 May 1991.

In organizing and developing services for the blind, Mitra Netra always collaborates with other institutions or organizations, both government and private, with the aim of building synergies.

Website: <https://mitranetra.or.id/>



Sao Mai Vocational & Assistive Technology Center for the Blind

Sao Mai Vocational & Assistive Technology Centre for the Blind was established in 2001 with the main goal of promoting the usage of assistive technology in education and employment of persons with visual impairment. The Centre has also offered consultancy to other organisations in assistive technology.

Website: www.saomaicenter.org



Yayasan Mitra Netra
(Mitra Netra Foundation)
Jl. Gn. Balong II No.58 11
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Kota Jakarta Selatan, Daerah Khusus Ibukota
Jakarta 12440
INDONESIA