

18th
year

Trainee Report

The 18th Duskin Leadership Training Program in Japan
2016 - 2017



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Duskin Leadership Training Program in Japan

In 1999, the halfway mark of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons adopted by the United Nation's Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Duskin AINOWA foundation launched its Leadership Training Program in Japan. This program invites young disabled people with leadership qualities to Japan to learn about disability welfare as well as Japanese culture for 10 months. After completing the training program, the participants are expected to be active leaders for the disabled in their countries.

By 2017, a total of 127 people from 27 countries and regions have studied in Japan, and, upon their return, taken part in various activities as leaders in the field of disability welfare in their home countries.

This is a compilation of the reports of the 18th-year trainees. In this report, six trainees write about what they learned and how they felt throughout their experiences, including learning Japanese language/sign language lessons, individual training programs designed to meet their specific goals in various institutions, unforgettable New Year home-stays with volunteer families, and learning how to ski. We hope you will enjoy reading their stories. The Duskin AINOWA Foundation extends sincere appreciation to all members at the Japanese Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities for taking charge of training, to all the institutions and organizations that kindly provided training opportunities, and to the AINOWA members. We look forward to your continued support of the Duskin Leadership Training Program in Japan.

Executive Committee for the Duskin Leadership Training in Japan

Akira Terashima	Consultant Japanese Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (JSRPD)
Kazuhiko Yamaguchi	Executive Director Approved Specified Nonprofit Corporation (TOMO)
Hiroshi Kawamura	Vice Chairman NPO Assistive Technology Development Organization
Yutaka Takamine	Chairman Non-Profit Organization Empowerment Okinawa
Yasunori Shimamoto	Director Japanese Federation of the Deaf (WFD Regional Secretariat in Asia)
Misako Nomura	Consultant Japanese Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (JSRPD)
Michio Murase	Social Welfare Juridical Person KOYUKAI
Syunji Kadota	President NPO Mainstream Association
Kiyoshi Kawaguchi	Technical Officer Sign Language Research Center, Kwansei Gakuin University

(Terms of Members: Apr. 1 2017 - Mar. 31 2019)

Training Schedule

2016	
Sept. 10 and 11	Arrival in Japan
Sept. 12	Opening ceremony
Sept. 13 to 20	Orientation
Sept. 14 to Dec. 9	Japanese and sign language training
Dec. 4	Japanese Language Proficiency Test
Dec. 7	Presentation of Japanese and sign language skills
Dec. 12 to 27	Group training 1
Dec. 28 to Jan. 4 2017	Home stay
2017	
Jan. 10 to May 12	Individual training
Jan. 27 to 30	Ski training
Jan. 5 and 6, Jan. 31 to Feb. 3	Group training 2
Feb. 3	Networking party
Apr. 24	Exchange program with Duskin newly hired employees
Apr. 25	Group training 3
May 15 to June 14	Group training 4
June 4	Presentation of training achievements
June 16	Commencement ceremony
June 17	Departure for home

Christopher AMOMONPON

To create an inclusive society for both deaf and hearing people

The Philippines, 30 years of age
Hard of hearing

Fields of interest

- ① Sustainable organization management
- ② Education for deaf people
- ③ How Japan supports deaf people's communication
- ④ The life of deaf people in Japan



Introduction

The Philippines is a nation made up of 7,107 islands of all sizes. My hometown of Lapu-Lapu is a tourism city in Cebu, boasting beautiful beaches. It is also a place where Lapu-Lapu, our national hero, was born.

I had hearing impairment from birth. Of my five siblings, my elder and younger sisters are deaf. My parents have a good understanding of deaf people and they also advocate for the rights of the deaf. My father,

being self-employed, employs two deaf people. My mother is a volunteer sign language interpreter. Because of my parents' influence, I developed an interest in volunteer work for people with disabilities. It did not take long before it turned into a passion to support deaf people.

Being hard of hearing, I usually use a hearing aid. As I was going to a regular local school instead of a deaf school, I always had communication problems. When I was 26, I started to get involved in deaf activities, learned sign language and about deaf culture. How wonderful it was to be able to communicate with others! It was so fun to spend time with deaf people, but at the same time, I began to understand deaf people were living a very hard life. They told me there was no sign language interpreter system, nor employment opportunities, and they also faced a lot of discriminations. There are both hearing and deaf members in my family, but we are living very happily together. I am sure that deaf people and hearing people can live together in society too. I began to feel that I wanted to be someone to bridge that gap.

The government of Lapu-Lapu cites inclusive society as their goal, and they are providing support to people with disabilities as part of their social welfare services. However,

support for deaf people was behind that for people with other disabilities, because Lapu-Lapu did not have any support organizations of deaf people. Because of this, in 2013, 15 volunteers got together and established Deaf Association of Lapu-Lapu City. We launched activities, with the vision to strengthen the connection between the members of the association and the local community. However, as we were new, we faced many challenges. How can we remove communication barriers? How could we enlighten the society? To acquire knowledge and experience needed to solve these issues, I decided to take part in Duskin training. Reflecting on the needs of deaf people from my local community, I visited Japan with four goals in my mind.

1. To learn about sustainable organization management
2. To learn about education for deaf people
3. To learn about how Japan supports deaf people's communication, and
4. To learn about the life of deaf people in Japan

Learning Japanese and Japanese sign language

For the first three months, I studied Japanese and Japanese sign language. It was fun to





study hiragana and katakana, and easy, but as the class progressed, it got harder as more kanji and grammar got introduced. However, thanks to my teachers' efforts and encouragement, I managed to continue my learning without giving up, to the point where I could even write weekly reports in Japanese. Japanese was very useful in establishing good relationships with Japanese people. It was the first time I had learned sign language from deaf teachers, which made the sign language class very interesting.

Homestay

I stayed at the home of the Kubozaki Family in Mie Prefecture from the end of the year to the New Year. The mother was hard of hearing like me, and we communicated a lot in sign language. I really enjoyed the culture of the Japanese New year, visiting the shrine as soon as the New Year started, admiring the first sunrise of the year, and enjoying specially prepared Japanese New Year home-made dishes known as "osechi." The family also took me to a hot spring and a ninja village. I would like to express my gratitude to the Kubozaki Family who treated me like family. Thank you very much.

Individual training

1. Sustainable organization management

I studied how to run an organization at Asahikawa Deaf Association, Sapporo Association of the Deaf and Hyogo Association of the Deaf. The common thing about these three organizations was their wonderful organizational structure. It also left a strong impression on me to see deaf and hearing people working together. They were also working in cooperation with the government, local communities and stakeholders. Notably, there was a lot of cooperation with the government, for example, getting support from the government when offices were established, or

the government assigning them contracts for sign language interpreter development or outsourcing. I also witnessed some cooperative efforts with the government in daytime workshop management. I would like to make this kind of partnership happen in the Philippines, too.

2. Ensuring information accessibility for deaf people

In the Diploma Course for Sign Interpreters, National Rehabilitation Center for Persons with Disabilities and National Center of Sign Language Education, I learned about how to develop and outsource sign language interpreters. The knowledge I gained can be



applied to develop a sign language class and a sign language interpreter course in Lapu-Lapu. At Sapporo Association of the Deaf, I learned about how to edit movies, and insert subtitles and sign language interpreter images in the corner of the video. I also learned about how to plan and conduct interviews, so I understood how to create interview movies while ensuring information access for deaf people.

3. Deaf education in Japan

I had the opportunity to visit Asahikawa School for the Deaf, Hokkaido High School for the Deaf and Tsukuba University of Technology. I was very impressed to see most of the teachers were fluent in sign language. Through sign language, deaf students can get complete information from the teachers. Complete information makes deeper understanding possible. Education eventually leads to employment. I strongly realized that, for deaf students, it is extremely important that instruction using sign language is guaranteed at educational institutions.

4. Current situation surrounding deaf people in Japan

In the Philippines, there are many deaf people who cannot get any job even though they are willing to work. Social Cafe Sign with Me is a café established and managed by deaf people. I learned how to help with cooking and wait on customers at the café. In Japan, more politeness and courtesy are expected in customer service than in the Philippines, so I was confused at first. I gradually got used to it though, and began to enjoy interacting with customers. The official language within the café is sign language, but people who cannot do sign language can point at the menu photo to place orders. I would like to open and run a café in the future, where I can hire deaf people, where everyone can come and enjoy their meals whether they are deaf or not.

At Totto Cultural Institute, I did some light work with deaf people with multiple disabilities. It was fun to work and chat together.

I also visited two elderly homes for elderly deaf people. I did not just observe how things were done there, but also learned how to help them. It was very nice to have the opportunity to interact with the residents. They told me many stories about



how deaf people of Japan used to live. They said deaf people frequently faced discriminations and had a hard life, but things gradually got better, thanks to the efforts of deaf associations. It was very touching to hear these stories.

My goals after returning home

There are many things I want to do after I return home. First, I would like to transmit the knowledge and experience I gained in Japan, regarding my initial four goals, to the staff of Deaf Association of Lapu-Lapu. If I can communicate this information properly, we will be able to work efficiently. In future, I would like to cooperate with other disability organizations, the government, and organizations of the hearing, to make Lapu-Lapu an inclusive society. But that will not be the end of our mission. We need to transmit our expertise

to other islands and expand the inclusive society. If the deaf organization of each island becomes strong and sustainable, we will be able to support our mother organization Philippine Federation of the Deaf by ourselves. By making their activities more active, I would like to eventually improve the welfare for people with disabilities across the Philippines.

Lastly

For ten months, many people in Japan supported me. I am truly grateful. I would like to express my gratitude to the Duskin family, the Duskin AINOWA Foundation, Japanese Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, my Japanese and sign language teachers, my teachers at the workshops and lectures, my host family, and everyone else who walked into my path. Thank you so much.

Individual Training Schedule

Sept. 2016 to June 2017	
Jan. 10, Jan. 17 to 25, Feb. 13 to 17	Totto Foundation
Jan. 11 and 13	Japanese Federation of the Deaf
Jan. 16	Diploma Course for Sign Interpreters, National Rehabilitation Center for Persons with Disabilities
Feb. 6 to 10	Arigato No Tane (A general incorporated association)
Feb. 20	General Partners Inc.
Feb 21 to Mar. 11	NPO Japanese ASL Signers Society
Mar. 14 to 26	Asahikawa Deaf Association
Mar. 27 to Apr. 20	Sapporo Association of the Deaf
Apr. 21 and 22	PLUSVoice Co., LTD
Apr. 27 to May 3	Hyogo Association of the Deaf
May 11	Tsukuba University of Technology
May 12	Japan College of Social Work
May 17	Japanese language teaching for deaf and hard-of-hearing children (Ms. Keiko Saito)

Message to Trainee

You were working hard on your training.

Dear Kit,
I think, having spent one good month, you learned a wide range of subjects, from the sign language class for the hearing in Sapporo, to the sign language interpreter service, sign language interpreter course, employment support for deaf people, elderly care support and more. You were working hard on your training, using all the time you had, because you want to create an organized system and launch projects at Lapu-Lapu City's deaf association. We look forward to seeing you in Cebu someday.

Masahiro Takashima, Manager
Administrative Department
Sapporo Association of the Deaf

Message to Trainee

Your memorable words

We enjoyed every day of your stay so much, because you always talked to us with a smile. I remember what you said when we parted.
"You gave us many things. I cannot really give anything back. But when I go home, I will work hard for deaf people, building on what I have learnt in Sapporo. Please wait and see how I will do."
It was as if you had Japanese feelings.

Members of Staff
Administrative Department
Sapporo Association of the Deaf

Message to Trainee

Wonderful personality

You kindly talked to anyone you met, you waited on customers very politely with a smile, and you helped your friends with severe disabilities with such attention. I thought you were wonderful.
You said you would like to launch a service in your country

like Hohoemi Café to create a place of work for deaf people. You can do it. I look forward to the good news.

Rie Akii
Store Manager
Hohoemi Café

Message to Trainee

Start your business with "paying it forward" in mind

Do you remember we went to a public bath and exchanged many ideas about the meaning of work while bathing in sweat? I remember you had a big, toned back.
There is not much work for people with disabilities even in Japan. Still, people with disabilities are gradually beginning to engage in economic activities.
What they have in common is the idea of "paying it forward" as well as returning a favor to people who have helped them grow so far. They are of the strong opinion that they want to pay it forward, which sounds similar in meaning to returning a favor but has a different meaning. Returning a favor means directly returning the favor or kindness to the person who has done something good for you; paying it forward means passing on the kindness to someone else who needs it. And the person who receives the kindness again passes it on to someone else. A circle of kindness brings about a positive chain reaction to society.

This is how I define "work."
Returning someone's favor is not actually easy. To return the favor for Duskin and related parties who have supported us, there will be nothing better than showing them how you have developed yourself, but it takes a long time. To pay it forward, you can start with small things and can do it quickly.
"Demanding gratitude" can often mean a kind action in anticipation of a return. If the world functions without anyone expecting a return, what a wonderful world it would be. Starting business in the Philippines and creating jobs is no doubt an act of paying it forward. I hope you will work hard and succeed.
With all our heart, we are looking forward to seeing your high-spirited activities from Japan. See you again!

Masahiro Yanagi
Chairman
Arigato No Tane (A general incorporated association)

Yi-Shan LEE

To be a bridge to connect the three worlds — hearing, hard-of-hearing, and deaf people



Taiwan, 27 years of age
Hard of hearing

Fields of interest

- ① Deaf people's rights and equal opportunities
- ② Employment of people with hearing impairment
- ③ How to communicate with people with disabilities other than hearing impairment, and how to promote activities together

Introduction

I am Yi-Shan from Taiwan. I am from New Taipei City. When I was born, I was a normal child, but I lost my hearing when I was eight, with a major illness. I tried a hearing aid but did not wear it because I did not see any results. As a result, for 10 years from age 8 and 18, I was living as a deaf person in a world of silence. I was educated at a local school, which was not a deaf school. I taught myself using textbooks because I could not hear my teacher's voice during class. It was a hard period of my life. I could not even communicate with my classmates.

I started my own research for ways to supplement my hearing and eventually found out about cochlear implant technology. At 18, I graduated from high school and decided to go for a cochlear implant surgery. By wearing the implant, I could hear a little, and my life as a hard-of-hearing person started.
After graduating from university, I joined a deaf association, where I started to learn sign language. When I turned 27, I was selected as one of the trainees for the 18th Duskin Leadership Program, where I studied Japanese sign language.

I had three goals for my training in Japan,

to learn about:

- 1. Deaf people's rights and equal opportunities**
- 2. Employment of people with hearing impairment**
- 3. How to communicate with people with disabilities other than hearing impairment, and how to promote activities together**

To achieve these goals, I went to many training destinations.

Individual training

The major destinations for my individual training were Kagoshima and Kobe. DeafNet. KAGOSHIMA had many deaf staff members and DeafNet users, who communicated in sign language. I learned many things, the most memorable of which were their community workshop Budo No Ki and their Japanese sign language class. At Budo No Ki, deaf users were making many hand-crafted products, using





individual skills. I liked making baskets with paper bands. The person in charge of the basket-making was quietly concentrating on the job. To master the craft, I observed how it was being done, imitated it, and asked questions when I did not understand. After three days, I understood the basic structure of the baskets. One day, a staff member of Budo No Ki brought me a magazine, and asked me to make an exact copy of the basket from a photo in the magazine. There was no design diagram, or a real thing to copy from, so I invented a design myself.



All I had was one photograph. After much trial and error, I created a basket that looked something like the basket in the picture. Though it was a tough challenge for me, the staff member was very happy. It was also a great experience for me. DeafNet. KAGOSHIMA had two sign language classes. One was to learn basic Japanese sign language conversations. The students were studying Japanese sign language so that they could communicate with deaf people. The other one was a class for people who aspired to become sign language interpreters. This class also trained students to acquire advanced skills required of sign language interpreters. I observed both classes, seeing how the instructors trained each class to help the students achieve their goals. As a result, I saw how the classes deployed different instruction methods, and it also helped myself in improving my own sign language skills. In Kobe, I trained at Center for Independent Living RingRing. RingRing had a hard-of-hearing employee. She was communicating with other staff in sign language or written text. RingRing also had a sign language class, but all of the students were the staff of the center because the

purpose of the class was to promote internal communication. The center had staff with and without disabilities. In one case, there was a person who was not able to communicate in sign language because of hand paralysis. Another member of staff was doing the sign language on behalf of this person. There were many people at the center with other (not hearing) disabilities. Not everyone was good at sign language, and I was not so good at speaking or listening to Japanese. Under these circumstances, the challenge of somehow achieving communication was fun and practical. Through the conversations, I was also able to learn what kind of issues people with disabilities other than hearing impairment had, and what kind of activities they were involved in. The best experience at RingRing was peer counseling. During the long, one-and-a-half month-training, I was fortunate to attend intensive peer counselling lectures for a total of seven days: three days in March, and four days in May. Peer counseling is a program that encourages you to express and discuss your emotions many times with your peers, to eventually have some reflections on yourself. I had a wonderful experience of

developing each other and growing through many interactions with my friends.

Unique experiences

No matter how far you look in the world, there are probably no other training programs but this Duskin program, which includes home-stay and ski training opportunities. I feel these two programs deepened my learnings in Japan. For the home-stay program from the end of the year to the New Year, I visited Kagawa and Utsunomiya. In Kagawa, the family let me experience udon (Japanese wheat noodle) -making, and in Utsunomiya, I was given an opportunity to wear a kimono. It was an invaluable experience to stay at the homes of Japanese families and have a hands-on experience of Japanese culture. I will never forget the ski training. On the last day of the ski training, there was an exchange dinner party for all the trainees and the staff of the Duskin AINOWA Foundation and the Japanese Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (JSRPD) over drinks. With my poor English,



Individual Training Schedule

Sept. 2016 to June 2017	
Jan. 10, Feb. 13 to 17	Totto Foundation
Jan. 11 and 13	Japanese Federation of the Deaf
Jan. 14 to Feb. 7	NPO Japanese ASL Signers Society
Jan. 16	Diploma Course for Sign Interpreters, National Rehabilitation Center for Persons with Disabilities
Feb. 8 to 10	Kagayaki Pasokon School
Feb. 20	General Partners Inc.
Feb 22 to Mar. 26	Non-profit Organization DeafNet. KAGOSHIMA
Mar. 27 to May 12	Center for Independent Living RingRing

it had been hard to communicate with other trainees so until then, I had not talked to them very much. But that evening, in a relaxed atmosphere, we talked about many things, helped by the shared experience of skiing. From that day onward, I no longer felt the wall between me and other trainees and now I feel they are my best friends. After my thinking changed, my perception about communication, and even life itself, changed significantly.

Awakenings

I was born with no hearing problems, became deaf at 8, and hard of hearing at 18. The hearing me died when I was 8. I could never go back in time and become a hearing person again. Now, I live in two worlds. One of deafness, and one of hard of hearing. Usually I am a deaf person. I live in a world without any sound whatsoever. And when I communicate with hearing people, I want to listen to their voice, so I become a hard of hearing. I realized I spoke my mind openly when I was with deaf people. There was no discrimination there, and I could be myself. When I am with hearing people, I unconsciously adjust myself to their level. But I never reveal such struggle, so hearing people often tell me I am strong, or I look fine. They do not see that I am trying very hard inside, stretching myself. I realized that I was never really enjoying myself when I was with hearing people. Does it mean that hearing people, the hard of hearing, and deaf, cannot understand each other? No. I feel it is possible to connect these three worlds. I feel there are four things that are essential for these three worlds to connect: sign language, words, eyes, and the heart. The most important of all is the heart. The desire to connect to others and develop each other comes from our heart.

What I would like to do after returning to Taiwan

I have four goals after my return to Taiwan. First, I want to launch an activity to promote information access. I would like to get involved in activities such as developing sign language interpreters and introducing

welfare equipment that is useful for the hard of hearing. I would also like to plan an event which deaf people and hearing people can enjoy together, to promote understanding toward people who cannot hear, or have a difficulty in hearing.

I also want to establish a sign language training center. In Taiwan, research for sign language has not progressed. I also want to create a dictionary for Taiwanese sign language.

Third, support for people who became deaf sometime in their life. From my own experience, I feel there is little support in Taiwan for such people. Meanwhile, there are many forms of support for people with hearing impairment since birth. I would like

to provide equal services to all these people, irrespective of when they became deaf. Finally, I would like to establish a center for independent living for people with disabilities. At this center, I would like to proactively transmit information and make it a core center for people with hearing problems.

Thank you

People welcomed me warmly at many destinations during my training. Thank you everyone, from the Duskin AINOWA Foundation, all my training destinations, and the Japanese Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, for your tremendous support.



Message to Trainee

We support you with all our heart.

You were at our Center for Independent Living RingRing for about a month and a half for your training.

At first, one and a half month seemed very long, but it passed very quickly. Well done on your hard work.

Visiting many places with you, cooking and eating together and talking until late at night—they are great memories for us.

During the peer counseling course and events, you met many people with various disabilities and spent time with them, trying to figure out how to communicate with them as they had different disabilities. I think you felt some dilemma or difficulties because sometimes communication was difficult,

but you said the most important thing was the will to communicate.

Even though you had a full schedule, you seemed to get more energized every day. I felt great energy from you.

When you are back in Taiwan, please build on what you learned in Japan to develop your activities. I am sure you will face many walls and difficulties. But you have already overcome so many hurdles so you will be able to overcome them in future. I want you to move forward confidently with your friends. We support you with all our heart. Next time, we will visit you in Taiwan!

Members of staff
Center for Independent Living RingRing

Message to Trainee

Significant personal development can be achieved only through suffering.

When I saw the materials about you, sent to us before your training, I actually thought “she kind of looks inapproachable... I wonder if the training goes well,” but when we actually met up, you were quite different from how you looked in the profile, you had a cute smile. But I also sensed you had something that was churning inside you.

In Kagoshima, you worked with deaf people and deaf people with other disabilities. You also played with deaf children, and in private, you went hot-spring-hopping with our staff and people who became your friends.

You were enjoying your life in Kagoshima, going out for drinks with the members of the youth division and taking part in an event by Kagoshima Association of the Deaf.

In the latter half of your training, you began to look more relaxed.

I think your heart loosened up, by meeting a lot of people and having stress-free conversations and experiences with them. I think you will face a lot of dilemma and trials in Taiwan, but I am certain you can fully build on your experience from Japan. “Significant personal development can be achieved only through suffering.”

Money cannot buy suffering or struggle. Crisis can turn into opportunity. I feel you can learn the most important things in life from your suffering and struggle, more than anyone else.

We support you from Kagoshima, Yi-Shan, hoping that you can build a life that will make you happy, and a path that leads to Taiwan’s future welfare.

Rie Sawada, Chairperson
Non-profit Organization DeafNet. KAGOSHIMA

My commitment to activities for people with disabilities



India, 23 years of age
Totally blind

Fields of interest

- ① Inclusion of persons with disabilities in the society
- ② Issues and its measures related to persons with disabilities in Japan
- ③ Welfare policies for people with visual disabilities in Japan
- ④ Independent living of people with disabilities

Introduction

Duskin leadership program is designed for persons with disabilities, and as I intended to make an effective intervention and improve the lives and dignity of persons with disabilities, especially the visually challenged, I was interested in participating in this unique program. I was sure it would strengthen my capacity to provide a better leadership to protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

Japanese language classes

Before arriving in Japan, I had never had a chance to learn the Japanese language and was not able to speak a word of Japanese. It is believed that Japanese is one of the most difficult languages in the world. Learning it as my third language was not easy. Initially it was very difficult to communicate with Japanese people, but gradually my Japanese got better. I also learned Japanese Braille which was not just scientific but very easy to learn for beginners. I already knew all the signs/ dimensions of the dots used in Hindi and English Braille. Braille is based on six dots and with these six dots, sixty-three

characters can be formed. With these six dots and sixty-three characters one can read and write any language in the world. Of course, while learning Japanese Braille I saw some signs commonly used in Hindi, English and Japanese Braille. Therefore, gradually I became comfortable with Japanese Braille too. I was very impressed with the teachers’ excellent teaching methods.

What I learned from individual training

After the intensive Japanese language lessons, all of us trainees were separated, according to our learning interest. Individual training was a very important part of the program which allowed us to pursue interests in which we wanted to excel. As for me, I visited a wide range of public institutions, rehabilitation centers, special schools, inclusive schools, student support centers in universities and libraries, national and regional institutions of the government, and NGOs and NPOs across Japan working for the amelioration of the plight of persons with disabilities in Japan. Of course, the program also facilitated my specific interest which

was to study the functioning of public institutions in Japan. In the beginning, it was really a big challenge for me because my Japanese was still not quite good for communication and absorbing knowledge but gradually I began to see great improvements. I would like to mention some places where I learned a lot about persons with disabilities.

Nippon Lighthouse-Osaka, Japan

I had an opportunity to join the Nippon Lighthouse for about one month to study different kinds of activities and understand Japanese culture, its approach/social attitude/practice towards disabilities, and inclusion of the disabled people in the mainstream Japanese society. I was also interested in visiting places provided under Japanese laws and in its legal framework with specific focus on persons with visual disabilities. The Nippon Lighthouse, established in 1922, is a pioneer agency in Japan, which has been continuously striving to improve the lives of the persons with visual disabilities. They offer many services including information accessibility, rehabilitation of visually impaired persons,



training and assistive services for independent living, special needs and inclusive education, vocational training and sheltered workshop, electronic and Braille library along with Technical Center of the Tactual Information. I tried my best to participate actively in all these activities and received both theoretical knowledge and practical experiences of these services.

At Nippon Lighthouse, I received theoretical knowledge and practical experiences related to welfare policies and its implementation. In addition to the list above, this included disability movement, volunteer system and employment, leisure and recreational activities for persons with disabilities. I visited rehabilitation centers and student support centers in universities, libraries in Osaka and Kyoto. I also had an opportunity to meet experts and had very healthy and fruitful academic discussions about these issues. I also visited some universities and got a chance to learn about social welfare systems, national laws and legislations for persons with disabilities. I also tried to understand their implementations and practice in different prefectures. Japan has 47 prefectures and every prefecture has their own social welfare policy and its implementation.

Independent Living

India is the seventh largest country and one of the fastest growing economies of the

world. India also has the second largest population, most of which is youth. According to the 2011 census, India has around 27 million disabled people but according to other non-governmental agencies the numbers are much higher, more than 40 million and most of them live in the countryside/villages or neglected districts. They mostly come from very poor financial backgrounds, deprived of good education. Although the number of persons with disabilities going to higher education is very low, certain laws such as Rights for Persons with Disability Act 1995 and a recently passed legislation called Rights for Persons with Disabilities (RPD bill) made education viable for persons with disabilities. People with disabilities subsequently go for jobs in private and public sectors thus securing their social status and acceptance. On the other hand, disability is a marginalized sector and is understood as poorest of the poor in the country. Given these circumstances, the idea of independent living still has a long way to go.

Currently, there are more than 120 independent living centers (CIL) in Japan. I was motivated to work hard to experience and learn about independent living (IL) in Japan. The important concept of IL is to make people with disabilities strong enough to make their own choices and decisions, and take responsibility for the choices made. However, in most developing countries around the world, it is still believed people with disabilities need to live with their families even if they get older. On top of that, they are facing several kinds of discrimination in day to day life. In society people still have many superstitions, negative beliefs regarding disability and related issues. Generally, developing countries do not have any government pensions, barrier-free infrastructure, helper system or personal assistant services. Despite all this, I believe people with disabilities in India will be able to live independently in near future. I visited

several CILs in Japan. They shared the same goals, but activities were different from center to center. It made me hopeful realizing that we could establish our own CIL in India, suited to needs of people with disabilities.

Peer Counseling

Before coming to Japan, I had never heard of counseling and the idea of peer counseling was totally new to me. I learnt about it at CIL 'Human care Association' and 'Step Edogawa', tailored to each person with different disabilities, such as intellectual or severe disabilities. I think peer counseling is very important for empowering people with disabilities. There are three main objectives: recovering self-trust, reconstructing relationships and changing society. During peer counseling sessions, we are supposed to focus strongly on some important points that constitute our sense of well-being. For instance, we want to love, and be loved, we are very creative, very intelligent, full of joy, strong and powerful, etc.

The peer counseling specialist told me about social model of disability at the CIL. In medical models, people with disabilities are told by specialists to work hard on rehabilitation and strive to become healthy like people without disabilities. But this is not so easy, so people with disabilities begin to lose confidence. In peer counseling, we do not need these medical models. We share our experience which helps us understand each other's feelings, and give and be given support. It is the first step towards a social model.

Sign Language

As far as I know there are very few sign language interpreters in India, which not only makes it difficult for persons with hearing impairment but almost next to impossible for people with different disabilities to gather and work together. Therefore, I was encouraged to learn the basics of sign language in this program. I



believe it will help me a lot to have a better understanding about disabilities and related issues. Probably, it would also be helpful to establish a cross-disability forum and make it easier to organize activities or provide a shared platform for all.

Inclusive society

Discussion of barrier-free/inclusive society is very difficult and complicated. Now we are living in the 21st century in the era of science and technology. At the end of the 20th century it was recognized that persons with disabilities are also entitled to equal rights and participation in mainstream society. During this period, there were several international activities and initiatives which were helpful to cast spotlight on persons with disabilities. Various domestic laws enacted by different countries opened the door to start discussion about the equal rights, opportunities, and participation of persons with disabilities in mainstream society. It also included discussion of barrier-free environment and inclusive society.

Right now most countries still fall far behind barrier-free or inclusive society but having never seen a completely barrier-free environment, it is not easy for anyone to get a clear picture or barrier-free environment for all. We assume barrier-free environment for all may be this and that but it is merely an image inspired by someone else. It doesn't mean that we should not go beyond the

current perception and work hard to achieve more.

We have barrier-free transport, buildings, infrastructure, public places, and movement of the people with disabilities and so on. We know they are accessible by the present world standard, but who knows if they will remain the same going forward? Nothing is permanent. Most of places in Japan are highly accessible for persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities can go anywhere, using barrier-free transportation. For instance, accessible pathways, gratings and tactile markings on the road, curbs, ramps, power-operated doors, announcements in trains and stations, and assistant services in trains. Most places have accessibility features as per the guidelines.

Although Japan is one of the most accessible countries in the world for people with disabilities, Japanese society is still very far from ideal inclusiveness. There are enough examples of exclusions or segregations which can be seen everywhere. Especially in employment, persons with disabilities are far from equal treatment. There are few persons with disabilities who are really working in mainstream public or private organizations. This difference is clearly visible. For instance, persons with visual disabilities are still basically engaged in their traditional occupations such as, acupuncture, massage, moxibustion etc. Employers do not wish to recruit visually

challenged people. In Japanese law there are no guidelines or rules about employing a certain percentage of people with specific disabilities.

Future goals

In India, awareness is growing in society on disability issues, but much needs to be done to make society truly inclusive and caring. I have learnt much through my own experience, as a child from a backward rural area, getting the benefits of education and working my way up to find a respectable place in mainstream society, working as a manager in a reputed bank. In my student days, I was conscious of the limitations posed by society's ignorance, including the lack of progressive legislative frameworks and affirmative actions to make society more inclusive, respecting the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. Everything I gained from Duskin Leadership Training will empower me further to work more effectively not only among persons with disabilities but equally in general society towards ensuring dignity and equal rights for persons with disabilities. I have been actively associated with both advocacy and service organizations of and for persons with disabilities, particularly, the visually challenged. I shall strive to contribute with greater vigor and commitment to the cause of persons with disability through these organizations. In addition, I would also like to work to promote closer interactions between India and Japan in the disability sector.

Gratitude

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Duskin Ainowa Foundation and all the staff of JSRPD who were always thinking about our needs, and all other concerned organizations, for their great efforts to make my learnings in Japan a successful and meaningful experience. By the end of this program I have not only gained and learnt so many things but also understood the Japanese culture and its approaches/social

attitudes/practices towards disabilities and inclusion of disabled people in mainstream Japanese society.

Japanese people are very sincere, disciplined about their work and duties, punctual, caring, hard-working, peaceful, and kind. The knowledge and the experience I got here made me confident, energetic and more committed to work for disability movement.

The Duskin program is a good opportunity to understand cross disability issues. The ten months I spent in Japan are an unforgettable time for me. Duskin provided me with a good opportunity to see a real life.

Last but not the least I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to those who indirectly helped to make this program successful.

Individual Training Schedule

Sept. 2016 to June 2017	
Jan. 10	Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (Dr. Mohamed Omer Abdin)
Jan. 12	Nationwide Support Center for Students with Disabilities
Jan. 13 and 17	Tokyo Independent Living Support Center for the Visually Impaired
Jan. 18	Tokyo HIKARINO Ie
Jan. 19	Japan Braille Library
Jan. 20	Amedia Corporation
Jan. 23 to 25	At Ease Inc.
Feb. 6 to 10, Apr. 3 to 7	Assistive Technology Development Organization (ATDO)
Feb. 13 to 17	Center for Independent Living STEP-Edogawa
Feb 20 to 24	Japan National Assembly of Disabled Peoples' International (DPI-Japan)
Feb. 28 to Mar. 15, Mar.22 to Apr. 1	Nippon Lighthouse, Welfare Center for the Blind
Apr. 9 to 23	Kitakyushu Association For Promoting Independence For Persons with Visual Impairment AIZU
Apr. 26 to May 11	NPO. Co. Rokuseikai Hamamatsu Workshop with the Disabled-WITH
May 12	Japan Blind Football Association

Message to Trainee

To Ramdas

In Japan, more visually impaired people can now use PCs not just at work but at home too. It would be ideal if such things became possible in India too.

Kiyohide Ko

Your dreams will surely come true.

Kaoru Ito

Your inexhaustible curiosity and ability to put your ideas into action is something I would like to emulate.

Megumi Shimizu

Thank you for taking part in the massaging experience. I look forward to your future activities. I wish you good luck.

Yoshimi Mizukami

The future of visually impaired people lies in IT equipment usage. I wish you well for creating a social infrastructure, using IT to great effects.

Toshiteru Kawakami

Going to Fukuoka City Museum and Mt. Sarakura are our fond memories. I was impressed by your care and attention to others. Wait on your customers with your beautiful heart and become a wonderful banker.

Naoko Yasuki

I am very happy you enjoyed your training in Kitakyushu. We also learned a lot from you. In Japan, you see children playing baseball everywhere, but I did not know baseball was not prevalent in India. Please make it a popular sport in India.

Terukatsu Sudo

From the staff of Kitakyushu Association For Promoting Independence For Persons with Visual Impairment AIZU

Message to Trainee

Dream big, Ramdas!

Every year, I am touched to see young people with disabilities coming to Japan from the Asia and Pacific region with the support of the Duskin AINOWA Foundation, studying welfare in many domains, committed to their training with the ambition of becoming leaders in their own country to improve their welfare.

As Ramdas was from India, a leading ICT country, and from a mega city that had better education and employment for people with disabilities than other areas, we also learned a lot from him.

Ramdas, do not be satisfied with just getting higher education in a good environment and working for a major company. Start

activities to expand welfare to all regions. Don't forget that people before you made appeals to society and got themselves involved in activities to bring the social benefits you enjoy now, and use that knowledge to drive your future activities. To diffuse your activities, practice what you have learned at WITH; "If you work hard and enjoy it, people and money will follow."

Make lots of friends using the blind tennis equipment given to you by the people you met in Hamamatsu, and come to Japan again to play tennis in near future, bringing your team. See you again!

Chiaki Shiba
Representative
NPO. Co. Rokuseikai Hamamatsu Workshop with the Disabled-WITH

Sankha HASINTHA

The invaluable experiences molded my future beyond the horizon.

Sri Lanka, 30 years of age
Low vision

Fields of interest

- ① Management and administration of educational institutions
- ② Inclusive education
- ③ Independent living skills of persons with disabilities
- ④ Project proposal
- ⑤ Peer counseling



Sri Lanka and Japan have enjoyed a very close relationship since ancient times. Most of the Sri Lankans believe that Japan is a country of very honest and skillful people. So before I came to Japan, I had a positive impression towards Japan.

I became a low vision person at a very young age of 16. At that time, I was a high school student and faced a lot of difficulties due to this poor eye condition. But I had enough courage and strength to face these challenges and managed to enter the best university in Sri Lanka, the University of Colombo. Today I work as an English teacher at a junior high school where both students with and without disabilities study together. Because of my own experience I always feel the need to assist students for their education and I always wish to become a leader in the field of education.

Meanwhile I came to know about the Duskin leadership program and last year, I was granted an opportunity to visit Japan as one of the 18th Duskin leadership trainees.

Japanese classes

The first and main challenge for all trainees is learning the Japanese language. We started Japanese classes with the support of extraordinary instructors. We were all amazed that, within a short period of three months, we could improve Japanese skills. I give my sincere thanks to all the language instructors.

Main training program

Our individual training is the longest and the main part of this training program. It was structured and planned according to our personal interests and future goals. My main theme was to study Japanese educational system, inclusive education and education for people with visual impairment in Japan. I visited a wide range of public institutions, rehabilitation centers, special schools, inclusive schools, student support centers in universities and libraries, national and regional institutions of the government, and NGOs and NPOs across Japan working for the amelioration of the plight of persons with disabilities in the country.

I treasured the opportunity of getting

theoretical knowledge and practical experiences related to different aspects of disabilities in Japan. My main themes were education, DAISY, Braille libraries, sports and barrier-free environment for people with disabilities.

1. Education

I visited the first blind school in Japan, Kyoto Prefectural School for the Visually Impaired, and Tsukuba School for the Visually Impaired where Japanese Braille was invented for the first time in history. One of the unique features of Japanese education system is the good management of physical environment and physical resources. Second, when students move up from one educational stage to an upper stage there is no time gap or waiting time. For example, when students graduate from high school in March, they start universities right away in April of the same year. The third unique feature is that apart from their academic curriculum, students engage in extracurricular activities enthusiastically. Unfortunately, in Japanese special schools there are less numbers of students. I observed

there were only one or two students in classrooms. So, it strongly affects students' peer interactions and extracurricular activities. However, thanks to skillful and talented teachers, the students actively interact with them. I also participated in chemistry, science, mathematics and geography lessons for classroom observation and enjoyed a great opportunity of engaging in a chemistry experiment lesson. I was amazed by how creatively teachers and educational authorities design teaching materials, learning aids and textbooks that are suitable and accessible for students with visual impairment.

As illustrated above, I gathered priceless experiences related to the Japanese educational system and I strongly believe I can generate new creative ideas and apply the benefits to Sri Lankan students, teachers, educators and society.

2. DAISY and Braille libraries

To ensure the rights of information accessibility, many responsible organizations conduct many activities. I attended a course of technical training for creating DAISY books at ATDO. DAISY books are not only beneficial for visually impaired persons, but also for many of those with disabilities related to printed materials.

I also visited several Braille libraries to observe their resource facilities and



management. I found two services which are suitable for Sri Lankan context.

1) Book loan service

When users with visual impairments want to lend books, they make a call to a Braille library. For them, Braille books and talking books are loaned out by post free of charge.

2) Reading service (face-to-face service)

The reading service is provided by volunteers. People who want the reading service are to contact the library. This way, people with visual disabilities can read the books they want, and volunteers gain new knowledge by reading out the books. It is a win-win activity for both service users and providers.

I would like to introduce and lay out these two services in Sri Lanka.

3. Sports

Experiences related to sports also gave me an insight to think about disability issues from a new point of view. In the very first days after I came to Japan I tried riding a tandem bicycle. It was an inclusive sport, both disabled and non-disabled person participated. Once I rode the tandem bicycle I was very happy and thought about it again and again afterwards. I understood how we could gain big results with a small effort or changes we make. The same concept can be

applied to education, transportation, employment etc., to make our environment barrier-free and give equal opportunities to everyone including disabled people. So, I believe sport is the bridge to connect disabled and non-disabled people to create an inclusive society. I engaged in several sport activities such as running, swimming, skiing, table tennis, volleyball etc. I need to introduce them to my country as soon as possible.

4. Barrier-free environment

As an outsider, I salute to Japanese people including disabled people for having created such an amazing barrier-free environment in Japan. Most of the buildings, transportations and products are accessible and barrier-free for persons with disabilities. Now Japan applies universal design to every construction and product. The Japanese disability movement to create a barrier-free environment started decades back. It is ongoing and getting stronger day by day. I need to make contributions myself to construct a barrier-free environment in Sri Lanka.

As mentioned, I studied a wide range of disability-related elements in Japan. In the Japanese disability field, there are many positive aspects and it is getting better by the

day. But we still cannot say Japanese society is inclusive, because in some areas there is still a long way to go. Especially employment, and education are still in a special mode. Also, Japan has specific issues unique to the country's situation which other countries do not experience. The increasing elderly population and decreasing young population are the most critical social problems, affecting every aspect of Japanese society. We can observe it directly affecting people with disabilities too.

Another important fact is that the Japanese health and medical care is very well-developed. As a result, even babies born with very severe disabilities can survive. In the past, these children could not live very long. Today, with intensive medical care, they can live. On the other hand, people are living longer in Japan. So disabled people's population in Japan is increasing, meaning more elderly disabled people, as well as children with severe multiple disabilities. So, these are current challenges Japanese society is facing.

Home stay and cultural experiences

I had a lot of experience related to distinctive Japanese culture. I had a very pleasant time spending the New Year vacation with two families. Both families gave me full



affection, warmth and protection during my stay with them. I became their own family member and this bond will last for the rest of my life. I had a very nice time in Kumamoto with Yasuda-san's family celebrating the Japanese New Year together. I will especially never forget the experience of visiting hot springs in Kumamoto and other areas of Japan.

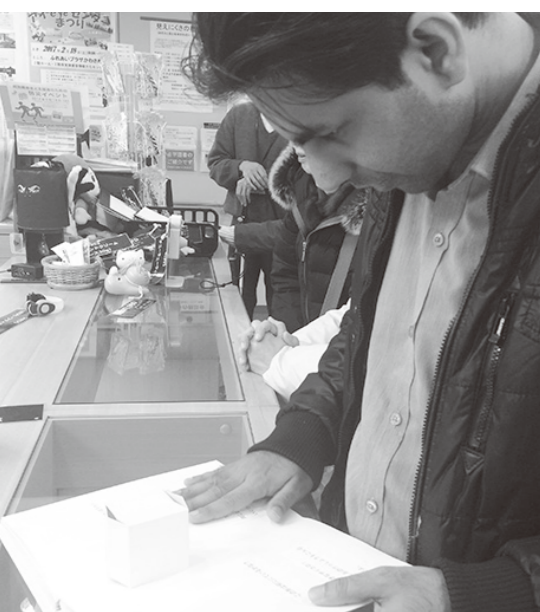
In Kyoto, I also had a very pleasant time with Takeshita-san's family. I had an opportunity

to wear a beautiful Japanese Kimono. Also, I visited a lot of beautiful temples and shrines in Kyoto, the Shinkansen Museum and I was lucky to see the amazing creation "the first Shinkansen" at this Museum.

Both families treated me to delicious traditional Japanese food. We also had very fruitful discussions, which put my thinking beyond my usual frame of thoughts. I give my heartfelt warm thanks for these two families for giving their sincere affection to me.

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Jan. 12	Nationwide Support Center for Students with Disabilities
Jan. 11, 13, and 17	Tokyo Independent Living Support Center for the Visually Impaired
Jan. 18	Tokyo Hikarino Ie
Jan. 19	Japan Braille Library
Jan. 20	Amedia Corporation
Jan. 23 to 25, Feb. 13, 16, and 17	At Ease Inc.
Feb. 6 to 10, Apr. 3 to 7	Assistive Technology Development Organization (ATDO)
Feb. 14	Educational materials library
Feb. 15	Shizuoka Prefectural Numazu Johoku High School
Feb. 17	Asian Development with Disabled Persons
Feb. 20 to 24	Japan National Assembly of Disabled Peoples' International (DPI-Japan)
Feb. 28 to Apr. 1	Nippon Lighthouse, Welfare Center for the Blind
Apr. 10 to 12, Apr. 15 to 21	Social Welfare Juridical Person KOYUKAI
Apr. 26 to 28	CIL Kobe Biscuit
May 1	Tsukuba University of Technology
May 2	Japan Organization for Employment of the Elderly, Persons with Disabilities and Job Seekers
May 8 to 11	Special Needs Education School for the Visually Impaired, University of Tsukuba
Apr. 13 and 14, May 12 and 13	Nationwide Support Center for Students with Disabilities



My dream

I wish to see my country turning into an inclusive society where everyone can enjoy equal rights and opportunities including persons with disabilities. To make this dream come true I wish to make contributions by doing the following.

Before I came to Japan, I was giving computer training to visually impaired soldiers in Sri Lanka. I wish to continue onto the next stage of this program, giving training to the rest of the soldiers. Also, I need to develop quality education for

visually impaired children. For this purpose, I plan to create learning materials, specially for subjects like geography, mathematics and science. Then I need to provide more sport opportunities for people with disabilities. I would like to introduce inclusive sports. I will also increase accessible information by creating DAISY books. I also wish to introduce loaning and one-on-one reading services to Sri Lankan libraries. I will actively get involved in disability movement to create a barrier-free environment. Finally, I wish to continue my higher studies with the

hope of becoming a university lecturer. Last but not least, I would like to give my heartfelt, warm thanks, to all the members of staff at the Duskin AINOWA Foundation, Japanese Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities and Toyama Sunrise, all the teachers of the Japanese language classes, all the instructors of swimming and ski training, everyone who welcomed me kindly at various training locations, volunteers, and all my Japanese friends who made my stay a happy and fruitful one in Japan. Thank you so much.

Rashna Sharmin CAMEY

What matters is how I can improve myself.



Bangladesh, 28 years of age
Physical impairment (Cerebral palsy)

Fields of interest

- ① Empowerment of persons with disabilities
- ② How to improve leadership skills of persons with disabilities
- ③ Activities of women with disabilities

Message to Trainee

Be a wonderful teacher and researcher, and set out for inclusive education in Sri Lanka!

Sankha, a primary and junior high school teacher of English, was a very serious and polite “gentleman.” It is probably owing to his long struggle; after he graduated from high school, his vision declined and after spending a few years in distress, he entered University of Colombo, graduated top of the class and became a teacher, but he has since been teaching many students at a regular school without any support whatsoever. For his training, we provided programs with a focus on information and education, not just at our center, but at a class of visually impaired children at a primary school and a class of a completely blind teacher teaching English at a regular school. We also sent him to an NPO supporting students with disabilities. He studied very diligently at all these locations, asked questions, and often sent me questions by email. When

I answered his email, he always wrote back so politely, saying thank you. That was surprising enough. What stunned me even more was that on the last day of the training in Osaka, he crouched down on the floor, put his forehead on the tip of my shoes and thanked me. At the same time, he also had a charming side. At the Railway Museum, he went over to a Shinkansen (bullet train) which he had adored since childhood and hugged it, and posed in the driver’s seat. When we had a walk in a forest, he suddenly said “I used to climb trees a lot,” climbed up a tree and looked incredibly happy. When he goes back to his country, he will marry his girlfriend who supported throughout his time in Japan. He will also go to a postgraduate school to study education and wants to introduce volunteering activities in universities. Sankha, I sincerely hope you will become a wonderful teacher and researcher, and promote inclusive education in Sri Lanka.

Wataru Takeshita
Information & Culture Center
Nippon Lighthouse

Message to Trainee

Dear Sankha

You said, “You were at the opening ceremony,” when we met for your training about half a year after meeting each other at the opening ceremony of the 18th leadership program. I still remember how it stunned me.

During the training, you studied DAISY so hard. Sometimes your e-mails came in early in the morning, sometimes late at night. You went over your studies many times until you fully understood. You were very hard-working and dedicated. Walking from the nearest station to our office, we exchanged many ideas and you absorbed so much.

Outside of the training, all of us went out together on our days off to an art museum and a bike shop. I probably enjoyed the art museum more than you did... We also went to enjoy cherry

blossoms. We were very happy to see you enjoying yourself. When we talked about DAISY usage examples, you were keenly interested not just about how DAISY is used by people with visual impairment, but also for dyslexia and autism. We had extensive discussions.

I am sure you have many educational goals in Sri Lanka, including promoting DAISY. I believe you will be able to do it, you being you, with your great curiosity and ability to put your ideas into action.

Work hard on your goals! We are sending you our support!

Members of the staff
Assistive Technology Development Organization (ATDO)

Beginning of my training

From the beginning of this training, we had to learn the Japanese language for 3 months. It was so challenging for us but our teachers helped us adapt to the language. Every day we were given a lot of hard tasks, however the teachers were very compassionate and loving. I really loved them for their great communication with us. Sometimes we made a lot of pronunciation mistakes which made us laugh.

It became an excellent memory for us and we improved our Japanese skills at the same time as swimming lessons once every week.

Individual training in Tokyo

I went to SAITO KOBO, a wheelchair company. From them, I learned there were different types of wheelchairs. People choose the most effective wheelchairs in accordance with their physical condition. Japan is much more accessible than other countries. There are many wheelchair designs.

One month later I went to Center for Independent Living Higashiyamato. There I met Ebihara-san who taught me about independent living centers and I participated in a meeting and events. From Ebihara-san I learned about severe disabilities. She is an incredible leader who fights for the change for inclusive society, working with severely disabled persons. Her dream is to give inclusive education to all children in Japan. It was so inspiring, because I saw how difficult it was for her to get through each day, but she is not worried. She was running around very energetically to support severely disabled persons and their

families.

After that I met Dr. Mami Kanazawa. We discussed about women with disabilities in Bangladesh. We also talked about accessibility, women’s disability, intellectual disability, human rights, different disabilities and international communication.

Skiing

Every part of the training in Japan had important meanings. For example, the ski training was not just two days of having fun. Through skiing, we learned how people with disabilities could enjoy adventures just like others with a lot of challenges. It was not too easy for us because everyone had several difficulties, coming from different countries. I spent every day worrying about their physical condition. For all of us, having an adventure was out of the question, let alone skiing. Before I came to Japan, I never even imagined I would be able to ski. Because my disability is





cerebral palsy, the lower portion of my body is too weak. I have little balance in the lower part of the body and my hand power is not so good, so it was very challenging for me to balance my body and hands. However, I tried because I wanted to try the adventure. It felt great to wheelchair-ski! It made me very happy!

Home stay

To celebrate Happy New Year 2017, we went to stay at the homes of Japanese families. I stayed at Yamada-san's house for one week. It was an incredible New Year. Every day we went to different beautiful places, ate Japanese food, wore nice dresses, went outside with the entire family and some of their friends. They were very kind. We had a good time and celebrated the New Year together.

Independent living

I had always wished strongly to live independently. During university and when I worked afterward, I lived alone in

Dhaka, but after coming to Japan I found a new definition of independent living, which motivated me to work hard with willpower despite difficulties. In independent living movement, the important concepts are to make decisions by oneself, taking responsibility for family and others, strive financially for oneself, and know that we have the rights to do anything we wish.

However, in most developing countries, it is still believed people with disabilities should live with their family even if they



get older. It is unfounded. Usually developing countries have no government facilities, no barrier-free infrastructure, or helper system. No group home facilities. No employment facilities. Despite all this, I believe that in future people with disabilities in Bangladesh will also be able to live independently.

I visited several centers for independent living in Japan, including Center for Independent Living Navi, Independent Living MUCHU Center, Center for Independent Living Higashiyamato and A.J.U.Center for Independent Living. They had a united goal of independent living with equal human rights, living a happy life with a lot of friends and doing as they wish! But the activities were different from center to center. The main motto I found was that for all of us life is a journey, is not so easy, but the important thing is to keep going.

I felt hopeful and happy, realizing how wonderful it is to live independently, and with my dearest friends! We can promote

independent living in our country and making resources available, to fit the needs of people with disabilities in Bangladesh.

Barrier-free environment

In developing countries, the biggest challenge is to create a barrier-free society. Bangladesh has no barrier free environment which is the main obstacle for persons with disabilities. I had never seen a completely barrier-free environment in my country, but when I came here, from day one, I was surprised to see how barrier free Japan was, throughout the next 10 months. We went out every day checking if various sites were barrier-free and they all were! This experience puzzled me. I could not understand where we stood in our home countries. We have thousands of barriers starting from home. Physically challenged persons are unable to even think about going outside as we wish, and, having no accessibility consequently slows down or hinders disabled people from developing themselves. Our future goal is a barrier-free society.

After school day care service for children with disabilities

I visited an organization for children with disabilities and met some cute children. At this place, I learned about after school day care service for children with disabilities, various disabilities, their barriers, teachers' approach, and how they gradually develop their brain functions. What interests them and makes them play? In my country, thousands of children have autism, and intellectual or severe disabilities. We have only a few organizations working with children with disabilities. We have no trained teachers, no assistive or independent living systems. It was very informative training.



**Changes that happened to myself
Confidence**

Before coming to Japan, I was not very confident. I always thought I have disabilities so I must work harder than others and I should establish myself as a strong woman. So I was just working very hard but after coming here I found a new version of me, I could make people happy, I can motivate people! I found my disability partly gives me my willpower to face more challenges. I feel so proud that I have this disability because despite the disability I am one of the capable women in my country. I am the luckiest girl who got the opportunity to fight against society, against discrimination. What matters is how I can improve myself by my work, because I believe ability comes from our heart. I want to contribute myself to my family and my country.

Discrimination is one of the biggest obstacles all over the world. I learned to change society full of discrimination

rather than always seeking help from specialists and others who offer help. I learned we should strive to create the ideal society with our own hands.

Good feelings and good hearts

I felt so happy and was always smiley making a lot of friends in Japan. They never censured me nor harassed me or talked to me impertinently. They made me happy and I also tried to make them happy! As a pharmacist, I know one medical treatment without medicines. Laughing and being happy protects the heart and keeps mental stress down. Disabilities happen, some are disease-related and very progressive, some are stable, most of them are incurable but despite our disabilities it is possible to remain happy and smile. After going back to my country I want to rise up with people.



Individual Training Schedule

Sept. 2016 to June 2017	
Jan. 10 and 11, Feb. 16	SAITO KOBO
Jan. 12	Nationwide Support Center for Students with Disabilities
Jan. 13 to 20	Center for Independent Living Higashiyamato
Jan. 23	WeCAN SETAGAYA Do-Will
Feb. 6 to 10	Ooyata Employment Support Center
Feb. 13	Tokyo Metropolitan Vocational Skills Development Center
Feb. 14	Shapla Neer
Feb. 15	World Vision Japan
Feb. 17	Asian Development with Disabled Persons
Feb. 20 to 24	Japan National Assembly of Disabled Peoples' International (DPI-Japan)
Feb. 27 to Mar. 10	House of Hack
Mar. 14 to 28	NPO Corporation Chubu (Center for Independent Living NAVI)
Mar. 29 to Apr. 23	Independent Living MUCHU Center
May 1, May 3 to 5	The Asia Christian Education Fund
May 2	Japan Overseas Christian Medical Cooperative Service
May 11	Kusuri Museum
May 12	Nationwide Support Center for Students with Disabilities

young people become leaders and they are doing very well in this field in their countries.

I would also like to give thanks to Japanese Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, Toyama Sunrise and all respective leaders, members of organizations, teachers, and all my dear friends. Thank you everyone for your kind patience.

My goal

Every year many people apply for the Duskin Program. I was the lucky one selected for the program. It means I have responsibilities to empower girls and women in Bangladesh, who did not get opportunities for education, who suffer unhygienic, unhealthy life, without financial support or family support, always discriminated by society, facing a lot of violence but remain voiceless because of disabilities, or because they are women or girls! Women and girls want to go outside and to find them stalwart courage.

I want to empower women with disabilities in Bangladesh. I want to give support to the children with disabilities who live under the tough circumstances. I want to work for inclusive education for all. Education is one key to success because all discriminations, prejudices and stereotypes against people with disabilities come from ignorance. If we share the same education from childhood, people's superstitious thinking will vanish.

Bangladesh is a developing country where accessibility is one of the issues that make persons with disabilities vulnerable. I want to negotiate with public and private sectors about accessibility. In our country, there are disability laws and welfare services but the most critical law or welfare services are not properly in place so I would like to implement them.

My Dreams

Participation in this training was a great opportunity for me. It was my dream to visit Japan. I am a Bangladeshi woman, who has a good educational background for achieving my higher education but it was so challenging. I had to fight from childhood my disability with a lot of pain but I couldn't stop! I could not talk back to people because at the time I thought I had no right because I was a girl! It is not so easy in our country. There is no inclusiveness. When I went outside I felt so embarrassed, people did not treat me the same way as others. I was

discriminated. That is why I felt very secure staying home.

In those days, when I could not express my feelings to others, I had to fight every single moment, working hard. My dream is to see girls and women being empowered, to create inclusive education and see inclusive Bangladesh.

Because of the situation in Bangladesh it will not be easy to work towards these dreams but I will try my best. I am not going to stop.

Words of Gratitude

These ten months were so amazing, so wonderful. It was like a dream. I thank everyone very sincerely for giving me this opportunity, for thinking I am an eligible, capable participant.

I would like to give my sincere thanks to the Duskin AINOWA Foundation for their great contributions to arrange such a lovely and warm program.

When I heard Duskin had been doing this study program for many years, I was surprised! With this program, a lot of

Message to Trainee

“You are very good!”

You were our first overseas trainee, visiting us for two weeks, starting March 14. My first impression of you was your large sparkling eyes, and your positive and friendly attitude. You found the Osakan dialect difficult to understand, and you asked us to speak easier-to-understand Japanese. Do you remember “meccha,” the Osakan dialect for “very” ? As a staff member without disabilities, I have worked here for as long as 40 years. I gave you a lecture about the history of disability movement and traffic issues for people with disabilities. I did not know what I should tell you and how, but I somehow tried to communicate my thoughts using Japanese and broken English using a whiteboard. “Let me explain to you about care facilities in the mountainous areas and independent living in urban areas ...” But wait a minute. Maybe there are no care facilities or mountains in Bangladesh? Umm. To this day I do not know

what you learned from my lecture and how, but you listened very intently. What I remember is your story about Bangladesh. At your school, there was not even a handrail, and even though you were working as a pharmacist, you did not get paid properly, and so on. Several times, I saw tears streaming down your face, as you told us about severe circumstances surrounding people with severe disabilities in your country. You also powerfully emphasized that, because of all that, you wanted to learn so much in Japan and take the experiences back home. Empathy for people with more severe, or different, disabilities than our own, is very important. If we can meet again, let's have a “meccha” long talk over a dish of biryani!

Yoshinori Ishida, Manager
Administrative Department
NPO Corporation Chubu (Center for Independent Living NAVI)

Message to Trainee

The time we spent with you was very precious.

Your training period at Independent Living MUCHU Center was from March 29 to April 21, 2017.

During that time, I remember there were many happenings, Rashna. In the independent living experience room where you stayed (a room in a rental-property building), the door lock did not work, the Internet did not work, and you had to figure out how to use the washroom and air conditioner. The lifestyle was totally different for you.

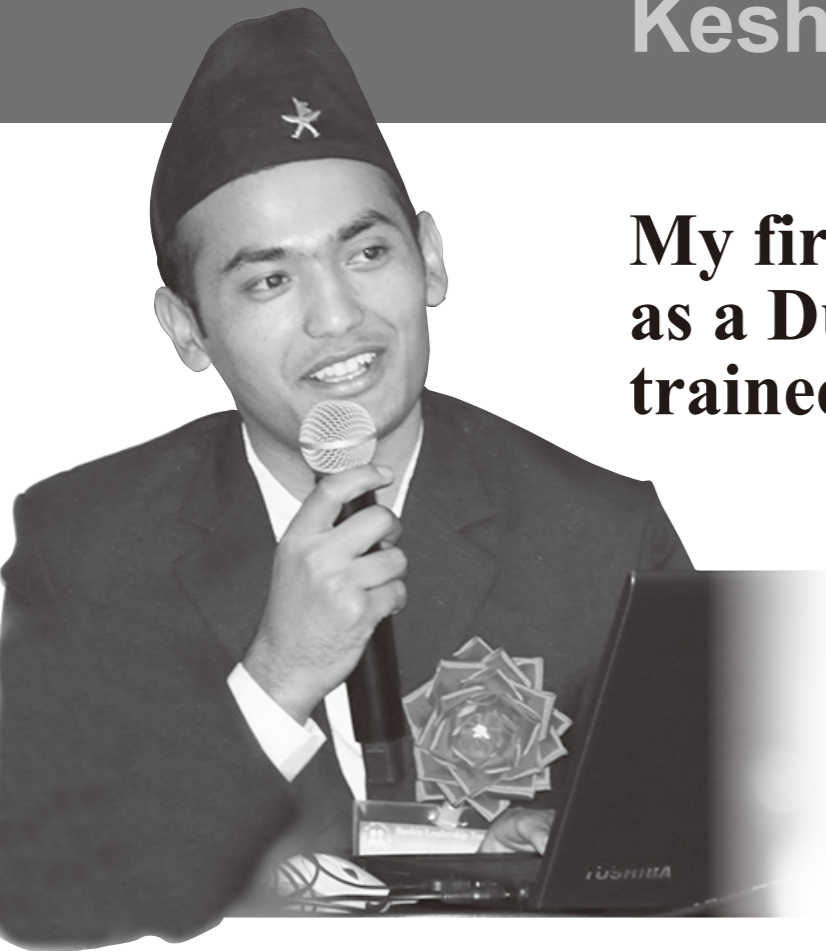
Through outings and play, I think you came to understand the local barrier-free situation and living conditions of people with disabilities, and why people with disabilities needed support.

For us, the time we spent with you was very precious, because we had a glimpse of how your culture was different from Japanese culture and because we got to talk about many things. Thank you. You told us that, when you go back to Bangladesh, your home country, you would like to support children and women with disabilities. You will meet new people to work with you, and you will advance your activities toward your dreams with others. We look forward to seeing a new you, empowered even more and enjoying your activities.

Masayo Nozaki
Independent Living MUCHU Center

Keshav THAPA

My first trip to Japan as a Duskin leadership trainee



Nepal, 26 years of age
Physical impairment (Spinal cord injury)

Fields of interest

- ① History of disability movement
- ② Transportation accessibility
- ③ PC (Web design & PPT)
- ④ How to write proposals & reports
- ⑤ Rehabilitation of people with spinal code injuries

On September 11, 2016, I arrived at the Kansai International Airport as an 18th Duskin leadership program trainee. It was a great moment to meet the staff from the Duskin AINOWA Foundation and Japanese Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (JSRPD). Then followed another great moment of meeting other trainees from different countries. At the beginning, there were many things that surprised me in Japan. The environment was so different from that of Nepal. For example, buildings, wide roads, traffic, and all people seemed to rush.

Japanese classes

Before coming to Japan, I could understand only some Japanese greetings. Therefore, learning the Japanese language and its letters was really exciting for me. I could understand hiragana and I was able to write my name in Japanese katakana. Hiragana were the only letters I could understand but the words were unknown for me. For the first few days Japanese

tones sounded too strange, and I found it very difficult to pronounce them as well as remembering them. After nearly three months, I could communicate in simple Japanese and write simple sentences. I was so impressed with the teachers' teaching methods. Because of their good guidance and my own hard work, my Japanese gradually got better. Japanese classes were always so fun because our different pronunciations and the teaching method never bored me. I made some Japanese friends and had good correspondence with ex-trainees so they helped me practice speaking Japanese. I was happy when I learned that I had passed the N5 examination in a very short time.

Swimming and ski training

I became physically disabled in 2011. My disability is spinal cord injury at levels T6 and T7. Before my accident, I sometimes went swimming but after becoming disabled, I did not swim until I came to Japan. For the first two days, I drank lots of water and swimming after becoming



physically disabled was like a totally different experience to me. After a few days' training, I learned swimming and by the end of the training I was swimming by myself.

For ski training we went to Niigata. I had only seen skiing on television. I was so excited to get the wonderful opportunity to do two days of skiing. Snow was not new to me but I didn't know how much fun it would be. Words cannot explain how exciting it was. I fell many times but was so glad to be the part of such an adventurous sport.



Individual training

At the beginning of the individual training, I went to Center for Independent Living in Tsukuba, Honyara for one week. It was my first visit to a center for independent living in Japan. During my one-week training at Honyara I got to know a little about CIL activities and the life of persons with disabilities in Japan. That time my Japanese was not so good but all the staff, especially Saito-san, Kawashima-san and Namai-san, helped me a lot. Because of the technology, language was not a big problem, using Google Translate being just one example. My first individual training at Honyara was brilliant. I enjoyed learning many new things. For my one-week individual training I went to Human Care Association and studied the concept of independent living centers and their movements and activities for people with disabilities. Before coming to Japan, I had limited knowledge about independent living centers so everything was important to me. My own thinking also began to change and I gave a lot of thought to my future.

I had a very fruitful and important time at DPI Japan. I got to know about UNCRPD and relationships between international Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs). At DPI, I learned the real struggle of persons with multiple disabilities to get their rights and had a chance to watch a video about a Japanese barrier free project.

At Kanagawa General Rehabilitation Center and Spinal Injuries Japan, I wanted to know about rehabilitation processes of people with spinal cord injuries in Japan and their life and self-care after injury. I found the rehabilitation process of Japan was not so different from Nepal, but Japan had much more equipment. Spinal Injuries Japan is investing huge amounts of money into research of treatment of spinal cord injuries. I had a very good time training at an electric wheelchair company SAITO KOBO. Apart from wheelchair maintenance, I learned from Habib-san and Saito-san about Japanese welfare system to provide wheelchairs to those in need. I also obtained some knowledge about the Sakura Wheelchair Project.

I went to Osaka for two months and a half. For the first three weeks, I stayed at Center for Independent Living Partner, where I learned about various disabilities and more activities about independent living centers. All staff and Partner users were so kind. I got to participate in various meeting and sports including wheelchair basketball, table tennis and bowling. I also had a lot of delicious food and saw amazing sights in Kobe, Nara and Kyoto. I also visited some friends' homes to know how people with disabilities were living an independent life. I want to thank Chimura-san and all the staff and members of Partner for such a wonderful experience. After three weeks at

Partner, I went to Mainstream Association for four days. In such a short time, I learned so many things from such wonderful friends and my mentors Kadota-san and Hirata-san. During my training at Mainstream, I stayed three nights at the home of Furuki-san which was another wonderful experience. Furuki-san gave me a lot of encouragement. Kadota-san's struggle for creating an accessible environment is much to be appreciated. I also learned about Kokorozashi Network and its activities and support to Asia's CIL centers. After that, I spent three weeks at the Center for Independent Living Movement. The three weeks passed so quickly, with wonderful people, visiting not just the wheelchair manufacturing company but special school for students with disabilities, a disability sports center, Independent Living MUCHU Center and many others. I gained a lot of confidence and knowledge. I want to convey my gratitude to all members and staff of Movement, especially Fuchigami-san for the warm hospitality.

My future goal

In Japan, I had many opportunities to learn about important services, welfare systems,



Individual Training Schedule

Sept. 2016 to June 2017	
Jan. 10 to 12	SAITO KOBO
Jan. 16 to 23	Center for Independent Living in Tsukuba, Honyara
Feb. 6 to 10	Ooyata Employment Support Center
Feb. 13	Tokyo Metropolitan Vocational Skills Development Center
Feb. 14	Shapla Neer
Feb. 15 to 17	Kanagawa Rehabilitation Hospital
Feb. 20 to 24	Japan National Assembly of Disabled Peoples' International (DPI-Japan)
Feb. 27 to Mar. 3	Human Care Association
Mar. 7 to Apr. 2	Center for Independent Living Partner
Apr. 3 to 22	Center for Independent Living Movement
Apr. 27 and 28	Spinal Injuries Japan
May 1	Tsukuba University of Technology
May 8 to 12	Japan Sun Industries (Taiyonoie)



disability laws, human rights, and much more. During the ten-month training, I got to meet so many Japanese disability leaders and hear from them how the conditions of Japan was around 1965. In my country, accessibility is a very big problem, so my main target is to negotiate with the government and government agencies about physical infrastructure, education, and separated road lanes accessible for all types of people with disabilities. I also want to work on education, employment and welfare systems for persons with disabilities, personal assistance services for people with severe disabilities, and independent living concepts.

Conclusion

The group training and individual training were very good. Sometimes individual training was very short. I got to meet many people with different disabilities, and hearing stories of real heroes and leaders of disability movement gave me lots of energy. I realized that I had been wrong all the time believing there were many things I could not do because I was disabled. I realized that it was not my fault to be disabled. I met many leaders with very severe disabilities and learned disability itself is not a problem, but rather the problem is societal, and that we need to

change the society's thinking. I also began to understand that, instead of leaving everything to specialists, we can live in the same community, with equal rights, equal participation, and dignity. I understood that making decisions about our own lives and creating a good environment to live in are in fact our own job. The best thing about the individual training was that I made many friends in Japan. Friends are the most important thing. After returning to my country, I am going to utilize the knowledge and experiences I gained in Japan.

Thanks...

Last but not the least, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the people who helped me or supported me during this prestigious international training program. The Duskin AINOWA Foundation has given us such a wonderful platform to learn important things. Thank you to all the staff of JSRPD and Toyama Sunrise. My respect to Nasu-san, Mitsuoka-san, Saito-san, Chimura-san, Fuchigami-san, Nakanishi-san, Kadota-san, Habib-san. And thanks to all the people who directly or indirectly helped me in Japan. Thanks to you all!!



Message to Trainee

“My memory of Keshav and what I expect from him in future”

When it was decided that Keshav was to join us for his training at Movement, I heard people say that he was quiet, did not say much, and maybe not so suited to do training at a center for independent living. Quite unexpectedly, when the training started, Keshav was quite adept at making friends with Movement's members with disabilities. He initiated conversations and tried his best to build relationships. He was also extremely keen to learn. He asked the staff about the systems for people with disabilities in Japan, in his hardly fluent Japanese, and about the lives of people with disabilities and took each learning very seriously. He also went to all-night karaoke Movement planned for him, visited the Iga Ninja Village and also learned what it was like for people with disabilities in Japan to live a normal life. I think he also understood Japanese culture. What I expect of Keshav is to pass on his experience in Japan to his friends in his country. Where did he go and what did he think, and how were

people with disabilities in Japan living? I would like him to tell his friends all these experiences, and build a circle of people who have a sense of mission. I think that will be the first small step that will eventually make a significant difference to the lives of people with disabilities in Nepal. I am sure, having worked with Movement, Keshav can do it. Lastly, it was really good fun to spend nearly a month with Keshav. All of us at Movement are looking forward to the day when we can see you again. Thank you Keshav!!

Kenji Fuchigami
Representative
Center for Independent Living Movement

Message to Trainee

See you again Keshav!!

Keshav, congratulations on completing your training in Japan. You had training in Osaka between March and April 2017, during which you spent the first three weeks with us at Partner. My first impression of you was someone quiet and serious. I thought you were probably someone a bit shy to talk to others, but as days went by, you had more interactions with the staff. In the last half of the training, you remembered everyone's names and often initiated conversations yourself. To tell you the truth, the training at Partner was mostly about interacting with others, centered on play and eating together, so you may have wondered when we were going to give you a chance to study or train seriously. Looking back, we might have told you about Partner's activities and history, and the life of people with disabilities in and regulations of the city of Higashi Osaka only a little in the last half of your training. Apologies. When you first came to Partner and I asked you if there was anything you would like to do, you said table tennis. So we

played table tennis together on our day off. I had heard that in Nepal, you were one of the major wheelchair table tennis players, so we played against you to see how good you were, but none of Partner's staff with disabilities was your match. Next, staff without disabilities who had played table tennis as a student challenged you, but again, was beaten despite best efforts (laughs). You said you were worried about not being able to practice table tennis during your training in Japan, but I have heard that when you go back to Nepal, on top of promoting activities to support people with disabilities and practicing your table tennis, your dream is to come to the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics as a wheelchair table tennis player representing Nepal. If this happens, I hope we can meet again and I look forward to hearing your stories about table tennis and your activities after returning to Nepal.

Takashi Chimura
Representative
Center for Independent Living Partner



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