



The Duskin AINOWA Foundation

3-26-13 Esaka-cho, Suita-shi, OSAKA 564-0063 JAPAN
Telephone: 06-6821-5270 Facsimile: 06-6821-5271

<https://www.ainowa.jp/>



Duskin Leadership Training Program in Japan

The **22**nd year

April 2022 - December 2022

TRAINEE REPORT



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 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 2022, a total of 146 people from 29 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 22nd-year trainees. Due to the spread of the new coronavirus infection, the visit has been postponed by one year and eight months, during which the five trainees learned Japanese language/sign language online. In this report, five trainees write about what they learned and how they felt throughout their experiences in Japan, including learning Japanese language/sign language lessons, individual training programs designed to meet their specific goals in various institutions, 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.

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Executive Committee for the Duskin Leadership Training Program in Japan

Naoko Ibaraki	Professor, Department of Social Work, Meiji Gakuin University
Syunji Kadota	President, Non-profit organization Mainstream Association
Kiyoshi Kawaguchi	Visiting Researcher, National Museum of Ethnology
Hiroshi Kawamura	Vice Chairman, NPO Assistive Technology Development Organization
Yasunori Shimamoto	Director, Japanese Federation of the Deaf
Akira Terashima	Vice Chairman, Japanese Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (JSRPD)
Misako Nomura	Chief of The Secretariat, NPO Assistive Technology Development Organization
Kazuhiko Yamaguchi	Executive Director, Approved Specified Nonprofit Corporation (TOMO)

(Terms of members: Apr. 1, 2023 to Mar. 31, 2025)

Training Schedule

Nov. 2, 2020 to Apr. 16, 2022	Language training online and joint training
2022	
Apr. 23 and May 7	Arriving Japan
June 1	Opening ceremony, presentation of Japanese language skills
Apr. 28 to June 3	Language training (face to face)
June 6 to July 8	Group training 1
July 11 to Nov. 11	Individual training
Jan. 14 to Dec. 14	Group training 2
Dec. 4	Presentation of training achievements (online)
Dec. 16	Commencement ceremony (on/offline)
Dec. 20 to 23	Ski training
Dec. 27	Leaving Japan

Naw San Htar Wai

The time shared through sign language is a treasure for a lifetime.

Hello, my name is Naw San Htar Wai. I am one of the trainees of the 22nd Duskin Leadership Training Program. People call me Wai because my name is so long. I am from Myanmar. I teach Burmese Sign Language at a deaf school in Yangon. There are four people in my family: my parents, sister and myself. My family are all hearing but me. I am the only deaf person in my family.

Deaf people in Myanmar face issues arising from communication problems.

My parents and my sister can use sign language a little bit. But

sign language is hardly used for communication in our family. I have never heard of a deaf person with hearing parents using sign language to communicate. It means the deaf person in the family almost gets no communication or information in the family. Furthermore, as most deaf people do not thoroughly learn written Burmese, they usually do not understand even when others try to communicate with them using written Burmese. This becomes a big barrier when deaf people in Myanmar step into society, and when they try looking for jobs. In Japan, I saw families with deaf children smoothly communicating in Japanese Sign Language. Children at deaf schools were also learning how to read and write Japanese extremely smoothly. This means that, even when

they leave school, join society and find jobs, they will be able to communicate with hearing people using written Japanese. Also, in Japan, if a deaf person needs to communicate with a hearing person without resorting to written language, a sign language interpreter can be arranged. I would like to introduce these good practices of Japan to deaf communities in Myanmar.

The reason I wanted to come to Japan

I had always felt that there was less vocabulary in Burmese Sign Language than in spoken Burmese. I have wanted to expand Burmese sign language vocabulary to enable deaf people to express themselves in sign language just as fully as in speech, and to write a book on the extended vocabulary. I also wanted to learn how to teach Japanese Sign Language in Japan so that I could teach Burmese sign language more effectively to deaf children in Myanmar. I also wanted to learn how deaf adults could learn written language in Japan and help deaf adults in Myanmar learn written Burmese. These three points are extremely important to me, and that's why I applied to Duskin Training program. And then, I came to Japan.



Naw San Htar Wai

Myanmar, 26 years old, hearing impairment

Fields of interest

- ① How to create new sign language words
- ② How to teach sign language
- ③ Methods for deaf individuals to acquire written languages



What I learned in individual training

At Deaf Net. KAGOSHIMA, I learned about three projects. The first one was an afterschool day service project called Deaf Kids. The idea was to create a space for deaf children to spend time after school, until their parents come home to prevent the children from being alone. I saw Deaf Kids provided information to children in ways the children could understand, and the space was also serving as a place for the children to learn public rules and manners through various activities. There are deaf children in Myanmar in similar situations, but Myanmar has no place for them to get information and learn public rules or manners, etc. I would like to report to deaf communities in Myanmar how important such places are. The second project was conducted at Budo-no-Ki (meaning: Tree of Grapes), an employment project for elderly deaf people and for deaf people with intellectual disabilities. Budo-no-Ki provided a place for deaf people to work in and get paid, making and selling handicrafts and assembling boxes, instead of just being in care by their family members. What I liked about this place was the people working and also actively communicating with each other. In Myanmar, elderly deaf people tend to

stay home. There is no place for them to work like this. I would like to create a place like this in Myanmar. The third place I visited was Satsuma Waffle, where hearing and deaf people were making and selling waffles together. How to make the waffle was shown in pictures so that anyone could understand. A light blinked to alert deaf staff to attend customers when visitors walked in. The deaf members of the staff were taking customers' order by pointing to items on the menu. I saw how it was possible for deaf people to work and live independently with such considerations. I would like to create such job opportunities in Myanmar. At the Japanese ASL Signers Society, I learned about presentation skills in sign language. Learning how I could talk and make others understand and learning communication techniques proved extremely useful later when I had chances to talk to other people and introduce myself at my various training destinations. In Myanmar, there is no place like this to learn these sign language presentations. However, I feel that deaf people need to develop this type of ability to present their views and thoughts confidently. I would like to hone my skills, so that when I have a chance, I will be able to properly present

my views and thoughts. I visited two deaf associations, one in Saitama and the other in Fukuoka. Both associations offer classes on sign language and sign language certification exams to working adults, students, housewives, etc. Then they will sign up as sign language interpreters and work as interpreters at various places including hospitals. In Myanmar there are no such classes or systems to sign up as sign language interpreters. At hospitals, deaf people often have a hard time understanding what their doctors are saying. At the deaf associations, I saw many elderly deaf people participating in various activities. These activities by deaf associations across Japan are such inspirations for me to think about activities for elderly deaf people in Myanmar. At Meisei Gakuen, I saw students receiving bilingual education, with Japanese sign language as the primary language for deaf children, and written Japanese as the second language. There is very little chance for sign language to be used in the schools for the deaf in Myanmar and the proficiency of deaf children in sign language is very low, which is one of the issues. At Meisei Gakuen, I observed that once children properly learn Japanese sign language, which will be their primary



language, they can smoothly transition to learning written Japanese and other subjects. I found this educational direction is highly effective and extremely inspirational to deaf children. Another wonderful thing about Meisei Gakuen is that they provide opportunities for parents of deaf children to learn Japanese sign language. Once parents learn Japanese sign language, they will be able to communicate using sign language at home and provide information. I want to implement such initiatives in Myanmar for learning sign language as there is none at the moment. Tsukuba University of Technology is a university for deaf people. There are deaf students from across Japan, studying various subjects. I was intrigued by research on how to learn sign language. The research was about how hearing individuals could master sign language, and the findings were applied to develop sign language interpreters. In Myanmar, there is no university specialized for deaf people, nor any place for deaf students to spend time together. There is no place for deaf people to have discussions about sign language, and that makes any surveys or research about sign language difficult. By getting wide-ranging knowledge in Japan, it became clear to me what the issues are for Myanmar's deaf education. In Japan, information assurance is normal in TV news etc., but in Myanmar, there is no information

assurance for deaf people. In Myanmar, deaf people are not accompanied by sign language interpreters when they go to hospital. At schools, being unable to communicate with teachers is a common problem for deaf people. Sign language interpretation is also not allowed in legal situations. As you can see, there are overwhelming numbers of issues and problems that deaf people in Myanmar have to overcome. Furthermore, in Myanmar, there was hardly any collaboration or cooperation between organizations for people with disabilities. In Japan, I saw a great partnership between various disability organizations working together across any type of disabilities, whenever and wherever needed. This is another area in which Japan will be a role model for Myanmar.

Lastly

In Japan, I obtained plethora of knowledge at various training destinations. But not only that. I also had so many memorable experiences. In Myanmar, I hardly ever went on holiday with deaf friends. Travelling with my own family was fun of course, but it was often accompanied with a lonely feeling because I could not communicate with them at all well. In Japan however, I went sightseeing with my deaf friends, saw many things together and shared our thoughts in sign language. It was such fun, and it was something that has become a treasure of life for me. I saw so many beautiful things like flowers and ginkgo promenades and enjoyed many tasty foods. I am sure many of you think of sushi when you think of Japanese food, but for me, it was the eel cuisine. The eel I had was absolutely amazing. Once I return to Myanmar, I would like to brush up my skills, teach Burmese sign language and instruct deaf children in ways that suit them. I would also like to expand Burmese sign language vocabulary and put together a book, so that Burmese sign language will be regarded on the same level as Burmese. Last but not least, I would like to convey my gratitude to everyone at the Duskin AINOWA Foundation, the Japanese Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, Toyama Sunrise, and my training destinations, for kindly taking me under your wings while I was training in Japan. Thank you so much.

Individual Training Schedule

July to Nov. 2022	
July 11 to 22	Kagayaki Pasokon School
July 27 and 29	Japanese Federation of the Deaf
July 30 to Aug. 26 *waiting time included	Deaf Net. KAGOSHIMA
Aug. 30 to Sept. 12	NPO Japanese ASL Signers Society
Sept. 13 to 28	Saitama Association of the Deaf
Oct. 4 to 14	Fukuoka Association of the Deaf
Oct. 17 to 28	Meisei Gakuen School for the Deaf
Nov.1 to 11	Tsukuba University of Technology

Message to Trainee

After spending eight long months in Japan, Wai may have sensed differences between Myanmar and Japan. I am sure she had a fulfilling training period. I met her for the first time on September 23, at the Saitama Social Activities Center for the Disabled, Saitama, a prefecture adjacent to Tokyo. In the beginning I saw cultural differences from her. This is probably a Japanese way of thinking, but at the beginning of her training she did not greet us, which we felt odd. She would also leave her desk without informing us, so we would often worry about where she was. Eventually she seemed to have got used to the Japanese culture; she no longer acted in the way she had done before and was able to make conversation properly. During the training period, she was enjoying travelling around Japan. I recall she went sightseeing in Saitama too, with one of our staff members Ms. Ogasawara. Wai seemed drawn to religious buildings when she was abroad. I am sure she had a wonderful time in Japan as it has great natural diversity as well as many places to visit, including museums. Japan is one of the safest countries in the world as well. The same level of safety is seldom seen in other countries. If she is going to travel in other countries it is best that she checks

local safety situations before she goes. There is something I cannot forget about Wai. When I asked her to make a photocopy during her training program, she said she had never printed anything, which came as a great shock to me. According to her, hearing teachers would usually print out documents in Myanmar and distribute them to children. Now she knows that she can print out documents even if she is deaf. I would like to see her take on her future activities, maintaining good relationships with hearing people. I know she works as an assistant teacher at a deaf school in Myanmar, so that I strongly hope that she will strive to make sign language the primary language for children there. I would also like to see her work with her hearing colleagues to help children learn Burmese. Good work with the two-week training, Wai. Take good care of yourself.

Shinichi Ouchi
Secretary General
Saitama Association of the Deaf

Message to Trainee

Wai's first individual training destination was Kagoshima. For her training, and as she teaches at a deaf school in Myanmar, we had her mostly learn about our organization's afterschool day services for deaf children and hard-of-hearing children. We also asked her to support our work at our type-B continuous employment support office. As her training period coincided with the deaf school's summer holiday, our day services including for afterschool was packed from the morning with full-time activities. It was the time of the year when the children were busiest with activities, as well as being the hottest season of the year, so we were carefully watching over the children to make sure they would not fall ill. However apparently it would be much hotter in Myanmar, so the temperatures that we found too high here were normal for her. She helped out with our various activities with incredible energy. At first there was little conversation between her and the

children. Most likely because the children were not used to her, but she and the children gradually got closer, especially as she made active efforts to talk to them. In the summer camp, we saw her enjoying doing things that she had not done or seen in Myanmar, such as BBQ and swimming in the ocean. I am sure she learned more words through these experiences and experienced much from the interactions with the children. With the discoveries from the training in Japan and memories from her time in Japan, I hope Wai will advance her activities in Myanmar with her natural vitality for the development of children in Myanmar.

Rie Sawada
Director
Non-Profit Organization Deaf Net. KAGOSHIMA

Bastian Koralalage Delshan Kavinda Rodrigo

Everything becomes possible: The deaf community.

Introduction: The reason I applied for the training in Japan

My name is Bastian Koralalage Delshan Kavinda Rodrigo. I am deaf from birth, but I got to know about the deaf community during my higher education. I noticed many differences between how people communicate in the deaf community and how other people communicate to each other. In a developing country like Sri Lanka, the rights of the deaf community are not advanced. Thus, the deaf community in Sri Lanka

faces many barriers in terms of communication, employment rights, higher education and living conditions. Therefore, as I am also a deaf person, I have been contributing to the development of the deaf community. In 2013, I started supporting the Gampaha District Deaf Association as an active member. In 2014, the members of the association decided to appoint me the secretary of the Gampaha District Deaf Association because I had knowledge of the Sri Lankan language, Sinhala. Ever since, I have held in the position. From 2015, I applied to the Japan Duskin Leadership Trainee Program four times to gain more knowledge and experience in Japan for the development of the deaf community in Sri Lanka, and



luckily in 2019, I was chosen as one of the 22nd Duskin Leadership Program trainees. Taking this opportunity, I wanted



Bastian Koralalage Delshan Kavinda Rodrigo

Sri Lanka, 31years old, hearing impairment

Fields of interest

- ① Elevating the status of deaf individuals and creating employment opportunities
- ② Educational support for deaf children
- ③ Strategies to enhance the activities of the Deaf Association
- ④ Advocacy for the rights of deaf individuals

to gain experience and to knowledge on four issues: employment of the deaf, deaf education, functioning of deaf organizations, and human rights for the deaf.

Long wait till starting training in Japan

Although I was chosen for the 22nd Duskin Leadership Training in 2020, the training was delayed due to the COVID pandemic for a year. From 2021, basic Japanese and Japanese sign language lessons were provided via Zoom. They were useful for me for communicating in Japan. On April 23, 2022, I finally arrived in Japan under strict COVID restrictions and rules. After arriving in Japan and completing the quarantine period, I participated in Japanese language and Japanese sign language training and group training, face to face with other trainees and instructors. In the group training, I gained knowledge and experience on subjects such as unity, positive thinking, and how to face challenges as a disabled person.

The experience and knowledge I gained through the training program

I was able to assist the care for elderly deaf people in a facility I visited during my training. Elderly deaf people in Sri Lanka have no choice but to stay at home. We are definitely in need of such facilities in Sri Lanka. Similarly, I was keenly aware of the need for facilities for people with multiple disabilities, both intellectual and hearing, to provide daily living assistance and care. I also learned about places to provide information to the deaf and how to train sign language interpreters. I learned that a number of deaf people in Japan are self-employed. I want to share the self-employment methods I saw in Japan with deaf people in Sri Lanka. There are universities for the deaf and hard of hearing in Japan. There, I was able to see appropriate and adequate ways for providing information to students. I met children at a Japanese school for the deaf and in the after-school day service to support their learning and saw teaching methods and teaching plans full of visual



information, which I had not seen in Sri Lanka. I learned and realized many things in Japan, and I would like to start and manage some of them as projects in Sri Lanka.

What I felt about Japan's environment

When I came to Japan, I saw how many facilities there are for people with disabilities. And Japanese people were all kind and friendly. I found Japanese people, by their national character, meticulous and precise. They were taught the strict time management. This was most likely the reason the students were so well-behaved. The clean roads and public transport also show people's focus on the importance of maintaining the beauty of the environment and thoroughly ensuring the rules.

My future goals and vision after returning to Sri Lanka

I am convinced that employment opportunities for deaf people should not be limited to working in companies but include other choices such as self-employment. Education of deaf children in deaf schools needs to be changed in order to fill the gap between deaf and hearing people, and I would like to support this movement. The deaf community itself needs to be revitalized and awareness raised, including through advocacy



movements for the deaf. As a member of Gampaha Deaf Association in Sri Lanka, I would like to work on what I learned during my training in Japan. The most interesting experience I had in Japan is the one at a tea cafe which was started in Hyogo by a self-taught deaf person with the aim of providing sign language knowledge to the society. When I return to Sri Lanka, I plan to start a tea cafe called "You with Deaf Us." I hope this plan will help improve employment opportunities for the hearing-impaired in Sri Lanka. Based on how the plan works out, I would like to start a care center for deaf adults in 10 years.

Final words

After applying to the Duskin program four times, I was fortunate enough to be selected as one of the 22nd Duskin trainees, representing Sri Lanka, before reaching my age limit. I believe that the success I have seen in Japan through my efforts can be achieved in the future as I work for the welfare of the deaf community. I learned from people's lives in Japan that dedication and effort conquer all.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Duskin AINOWA Foundation for having granted me the most valuable opportunity in my life to come to Japan, to the teachers and deaf activist leaders who guided me in Japan, to Ms. Nasu and all the staff of the Japanese Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, and to all the staff of Toyama Sunrise. May you all be blessed to be the strength of the next Duskin trainee generation.



Individual Training Schedule	
July 2022 to Nov. 2022	
July 7, and 14 to 25	NPO Japanese ASL Signers Association
July 11 to 13	Kagayaki Pasokon School
July 27 and 29	Japanese Federation of the Deaf
Aug. 17 to 31	Saitama Association of the Deaf
Sept. 5 to 16	Artn Juku
Sept. 20 to Oct. 28	Hyogo Association of the Deaf
Nov.1 to 11	Tsukuba University of Technology

Message to Trainee

Thinking back, I met you for the first time for an interview in January 2020, in the lobby of a hotel in Colombo. You were there with your mother and sister. You looked shy and quiet. Immediately afterward, the world was thrown into the COVID pandemic. It was a shame, because if things had gone according to plan, you could have arrived in Japan by September 2020, and undergone training until around June 2021. It was impressive to see you studying Japanese and Japanese sign language online while waiting to come to Japan, working hard and mastering them! Eventually you managed to come over to Japan and I was looking forward to seeing you again in person when, the first words that came out of your mouth were “Who are you?” ... It was saddening. But I snapped back saying “I was the one interviewing you!” and eventually it jogged your memory. You were in Hyogo for about a month and a half for the

training. I was not able to spend much time teaching you directly because of my frequent business trips and so forth, which I regretted very much, but many friends of ours in Hyogo were kind to you and looked after you, which I am sure made your time in Hyogo extremely enjoyable. It seems it was inspiring to you to have training at special care homes and workshops. You were saying that once you returned to Sri Lanka, you would like to develop similar social resources and facilities. The world is not an easy place for deaf people to live in and the road ahead is not easy either, but I wish you all the best. May your dreams come true!

Yasunori Shimamoto
Director
Hyogo Association of the Deaf

Message to Trainee

Be a leader with the power of spreading information!

The main purpose of training at our association is to acquire skills of giving presentations. The goal of training for deaf trainees is that they become able to give presentations in Japanese sign language, mainly to deaf audiences. The training started off with the slogan “The powers of communication.” Apparently, Kavinda had mastered Sri Lankan sign language after becoming an adult, and perhaps that was why he had not learned usual sign language grammar such as how he should position his hands and understand space and flow of time. Also, hand movements in his sign language were small for his build, which resulted in trainers chastising him for failure in making larger hand movements and to not shake his body. His presentation finally went ahead after about 10 days of training, with the “Kavinda-style sign language” finally taking root. Kavinda would never get angry or falter. Rather, he was an extremely kind soul, a wonderful young man with

attentiveness, for example frequently bringing food for others. These are essential qualities for people aspiring to become leaders, and Kavinda was most likely born to be a leader. Whether he will really blossom as a leader, depends on how he can apply the fruit of the Duskin leadership training to his future. It takes thinking about what the deaf society in Sri Lanka needs to develop, as well as collaborations with like-minded people, and disseminating news. All the necessary techniques were provided in the training. I believe that Kavinda will one day be releasing news (giving presentations) as the leader of Sri Lanka’s deaf society. I look forward to the day.

Kumiko Takakusa
Office Manager
NPO Japanese ASL Signers Society

Jasmin Centeno Ambiong

I want to bring about change for people with disabilities in the Philippines.

Growth and self-discovery, are the two most valuable things that Duskin Leadership training in Japan has provided me. This training has been filled of new experiences and learnings that I will never forget and shaped me to be a better leader for the community of persons with disabilities. Due to the spread of the COVID-19, our training was delayed for almost two years. That’s why, we were the first batch of trainees who got the chance to study Japanese online before coming to Japan. It was fun learning from our teachers and getting to know them. However, I was so afraid that the training will be totally canceled because of the

pandemic. So, it was such a relief when we finally got in Japan last April, 2022. The first thing that I’ve noticed when I got out of the airport was, there were braille blocks everywhere. It made me so happy because it makes it easier for me as a blind person to travel independently. Traffic lights also make sounds and almost all of the elevators announce the floor stops and have braille writings on them. The system put in place in every train station to support people with vision impairment and wheelchair users is also impressive. The staff are always ready to assist people with disabilities in every station. My first month in Tokyo was spent in learning the Japanese language, Japanese braille and doing orientation and mobility. I felt so liberating when I was finally able to go to the train

station on my own. After that, we had our group training. In our group training, we learned more about the UNCRPD, the different movements for persons with disabilities that were done in Japan and the social welfare support for persons with disabilities. We also learned about the past and current situations of different disabilities here in Japan, the actions that are being done to support them, and how the problems are being addressed. We also studied about employment, education and different laws for persons with disabilities in Japan. We visited and observed different barrier-free places in Tokyo such as the Japan National Stadium. It was fascinating to learn about the different supports that the government provides such as the medical and financial supports.



Jasmin Centeno Ambiong

The Philippines, 31 years old, visual impairment

Fields of interest

- ① Employment for People with Disabilities
- ② Public speaking skills in formal settings
- ③ Accessibility
- ④ Writing skills for creating business proposals



Persons with disabilities also have access to a free helper guide or support for several hours every month. These things enable persons with disabilities to live independently. The group training was a good experience because I was able to gain more knowledge about disabilities, other than vision impairment. It also made me realize how much I want to make a change for the PWD community in the Philippines. It would be great if PWDs in my country can also get to experience this kind of support from the government and from the people. During our group training, I was also able to make friends and connect with people in Tokyo outside the training. I joined running clubs such as Achilles International Japan and Banban club. I attended their walking and running activities almost every weekend, where you get to partner with a sighted person to run or walk with you. I also tried doing blind Yoga for the first time. We don't have these activities for people with vision impairment in the Philippines so I'm happy to get to experience them. When my individual training started in July, I was given the chance to visit different organizations and go to different places in Japan. The focus of my training plan was around employment for persons with disabilities, accessibility and

disability inclusion. So, my first individual training was with Assistive Technology Development Organization (ATDO) where I learned about the importance of accessible books and how to create my own DAISY book. I also attended Disability Equality Training where I learned about effective facilitation techniques with regards to disability inclusion. It was a very useful skill to learn especially because I want to do disability awareness raising in the Philippines. After that, I visited organizations that are providing employment support for people with vision impairment around Tokyo. I also got the chance to visit NHK and talk to a blind journalist and to some of their human resource staff about the disability inclusion efforts particularly around employment and accessibility that are being done by NHK. Japan has a good disability support in place, but I have found out on my individual training that finding and retaining employment is still a big problem for persons with disabilities. That is why learning about the inclusion efforts that are being done in NHK was refreshing for me. The first organization outside Tokyo that I went to was Nippon Lighthouse Welfare Center for The Blind in Osaka. I have learned a lot there about braille and audio book

production, library system and guide dogs. I got to interview people about their employment experiences as a person with disability in Japan. I also visited the Rehabilitation Center for the Visually Impaired of Nippon Lighthouse and learned about their ICT trainings and employment support. I was also able to visit the National Museum of Ethnology where people with vision impairment can touch the art exhibits to have a full immersive experience. Lastly, I was welcomed to a homestay in Kyoto during the Bon Holiday where I did handweaving and pottery. It was in Osaka that I first experienced going to the hotel restaurant and have breakfast on my own. Going to a convenience store, buying my own food and visiting the training location, Nippon Lighthouse, by myself, were all first experiences of mine. Going out with the club members and doing tandem biking were also for the first time. For many, these are just simple things that they do on their day-to-day lives, but for me, they were not. They gave me the feeling of freedom. The happiness that I felt on those simple achievements was something I will never forget. I was glad to realize that I have the courage to do all those things. At Uni, in Kyoto, I learned about services for the deaf and hard of hearing people particularly



captioning. I have also visited universities and observed their disability support activities. In the following month, I went back to Osaka to visit Muchu Center. I learned a lot about independent living and got the chance to spend time with people with different physical disabilities. They helped me to understand that asking help for the things you can't do does not mean that you are not independent. Asking help is not shameful and people will not judge you for it. You don't always have to be perfect for the society to be accepted. In Muchu Center, everyone can be just themselves and live a happy and fulfilled life even with their disabilities. This is one thing I want to bring home. The last part of my individual training was done in Shizuoka Prefecture. I spent two weeks in WITH learning about how they give job support to people with multiple disabilities. They use different devices, so people with disabilities can do their jobs effectively. I got to experience doing those jobs such as packing souvenirs, counting electric parts, making braille name cards, etc. It was a very good program and I wish the Philippines has that too. After finishing my individual training in November, I went back in Tokyo for another group training. We have learned about action plan development which I think is very



useful to keep track of our goals. We were also given a class about how to create an effective project proposal. This one is very important to learn especially when most of us are planning to start a project after returning to our own countries. We also got the chance to visit the Nippon Foundation and learned about their amazing programs. Lastly, we had our final presentation for Tokyo. It made me so nervous because it was a 15-minute presentation in Japanese,

and I couldn't read fast in Japanese braille. I had to memorize all my lines. It was a good feeling when I was able to do the presentation. The places that I went to, the trainings I have attended and the people that I've met along the way will forever be in my heart. The word "thank you" is not enough to express my gratitude to the Duskin AINOWA Foundation, JSRPD and all the organizations who took care of me during the period of this training.

Individual Training Schedule

July 2022 to Nov. 2022	
July 11 to 27 (10 days during this period)	NPO Assistive Technology Development Organization
Aug. 1 to 20	Nippon Lighthouse Information and Culture Center for the Blind
Aug. 22 to Sept. 3	Uni
July 28 to Sep. 29 (Held five times in total)	DET Forum
Oct. 3 to 14	Independent Living 'MUCHU' Center
Oct. 19	Election Project Office, NHK News Department
Oct. 25	Rabbit Co., Ltd.
Oct. 28	Social Welfare Corporation Japan Braille Library
Oct. 31 to Nov. 11	NPO. Co. Rokuseikai Hamamatsu Workshop with the Disabled -WITH-

Message to Trainee

We look forward your contribution, Jasmin.

Jasmin, when you visited WITH Hamamatsu, you met Yasumin who had moved from Peru, working with a guide dog. The training at WITH kicked off with the encounter between the two Jasmins; and you went to teach class together at an elementary school. For Yasumin from WITH, her important work was to help many children learn about disability, welfare, and how guide dogs work, etc.

Jasmin, as you think about employment for people with disabilities, which is one of the themes of your training, I would like you to first think about what it means for people to work in society, and what it means that people with disabilities work.

You should take credit for your perseverance, for not breaking down and standing up again and again to make a challenge despite countless unfair treatment you faced while job-hunting in the Philippines. I am sure that applying for the

Duskin Leadership Training, getting selected as a trainee, and studying in Japan, were all epoch-making events in your life. Take home all the knowledge you gained in Japan and apply the learnings to improving and developing the welfare for people with disabilities in your country. We at WITH are all rooting for you.

Lastly, we are still seeing so many wars and civil wars going on in many countries around the world.

Get started with an activity, starting with something near you, with your eyes on the world, never forgetting that peace is the best welfare.

Chiaki Shiba
Director
Hamamatsu WorkShop with The Disabled -WITH

Message to Trainee

Hop, step, and jump further

Congratulations Jasmin for having completed your training amid such hard times. After waiting for a long time which was one and a half years, you continued to learn without giving up despite odds such as loads of restrictions even after arriving in Japan. You should take credit for all your efforts. The ski training was organized at the end of your training. It gave you a chance to enjoy snow and skiing for the first time, which was a reward for all your effort. Jasmin, you are an intellectual person, yet so adorable and spontaneous, probably because you come from such a loving family in the Philippines. That is probably why you are also sometimes childlike. Yet after coming to Japan, you demonstrated how you were willing to challenge yourself with those things you had never done before, such as walking from the hotel to the station and back by yourself with a white cane, visiting museums enjoying exhibited items by touching them, walking

with a guide dog, making clay pots, and weaving a textile. It was impressive how you would actively offer to help with the housework during your home-stay program.

That said, you are only at the starting point of your challenges, Jasmin. In the Philippines you studied ICT and “hopped” by engaging in digital work. In Japan, you “stepped” up by learning about issues of inclusive society. Next, please aim to “jump” by learning business administration, employment, and becoming an entrepreneur. We are rooting for you.

Wataru Takeshita
Director
Information and Culture Center
Nippon Lighthouse

Wen Rouet

A turning point in my life

My name is Rouet Wen. I was born and raised in the province of Battambang, northwest of Cambodia. I was accepted as an official trainee of the Duskin Training Leadership Program in Japan. I could hardly verbalize my true feelings at the time. It was more than just contentment. My training period was scheduled to begin in early September 2020 and end in mid-June of 2021. Just at the same time, the world was struck by the coronavirus pandemic; as a result, I was unable to fly to Japan as planned.

As a result, the first activity of the training was to learn Japanese online in Zoom classes. We were not able to understand the culture, food and people of Japan through online activities, though we were learning the language. This report is a brief account of how my experience in Japan has changed me. We were a group of five trainees from different countries: Kavinda, Wai, Zo, Jasmin and me. My training began with a one-month Japanese class. The Japanese class led me onto a journey not just about a new culture but also about new communication methods. We also had many group training sessions on Japanese social service systems for people with

disabilities (PWDs), as well as on soft skills required of a leader. I learned a lot and was able to compare Japan’s situation to that of Cambodia. Another group training that I wanted to learn and understand was Non-Profit Organization (NPO) Management and Project Proposal Writing. These two courses are the main keys to starting and leading an organization successfully and sustainably. So far, by learning presentation skills, I learned how to confidently present and deliver important information to a group of people. I began learning about independent living programs at



Wen Rouet

Cambodia, 28 years old, physical impairment

Fields of interest

- 1 Barrier-free
- 2 Methods to support people with disabilities living in the community
- 3 Organizational operation and management
- 4 Advocacy for the rights of people with disabilities

Human Care Association. First, I had no idea what independent living entailed. My primary training at the association included counseling and independent living programs. It was at the association that I began learning about and comprehending the concepts of ILP (independent living programs).

After Human Care Association, I visited AJU for a short two-week training, but it seemed like I made a lot of friends and learned a lot from these people. They accompanied me to check out wheelchair-accessible locations. I spent two months at Mainstream Association and had a chance to visit Independent Living “MUCHU” Center and Center for Independent Living “Partner.” I learned a lot more than I had expected at these IL centers. As an ILP learner, simply learning and understanding how the system works was not enough; I had a firsthand experience at Mainstream Association and “Partner” with a personal assistant helping me take a bath. I did a lot of interesting and fun things with the staff of Mainstream Association, which are all unforgettable. We visited popular tourist spots in Kansai. Mamoru and I traveled to Kobe. And with Mr. Hirata, my individual training coordinator at MSA, we visited an aquarium,



where we saw many different sea creatures. We went to some natural areas in Kyoto. In bamboo groves and Arashiyama, it was very relaxing to stop and listen to the sound of the bamboo moving in the wind. I was not the only Cambodian at Mainstream; there are other four Cambodian members who are learning and working there. They always supported unconditionally. Since my Japanese was still limited, they were the people who helped me communicate more easily with our Japanese friends. It was extremely difficult to find Cambodian food in Japan, and these people made it possible. We ate Cambodian food as if we were back home. Even though I was at Muchu and Partner Independent Living Center only for a short time, I visited many new places. I went to the Tsutenkaku Tower with Muchu members and ate Osaka’s Kushikatsu (the skewers with meats and vegetables). Also, I have fun memories with Partner CIL going to great places and enjoying the moments we shared. We went to the Nara Deer Park — it was my first time playing with and feeding the deer. But when I was surrounded by so many deer, I was terrified. Next, I had the opportunity to travel with the members of



Partner CIL to “Lifequality Casa,” the hotel run by Ms. Morigami’s family in Kiyosato. We went to a cable car and rode it with them, and it was my first-time riding on an accessible cable car as a wheelchair user. The scenery on the way to the mountain was breathtaking. In Cambodia, I was never able to take public transport accessible to wheelchair users, as it is in Japan. Most of the transport available here are designed to make it easier for people with disabilities to get around and go wherever they want. In Japan, I experienced almost every mode of transportation, including a truck with an accessible lift device, a taxi with a sloped entrance, a bus, a train, and a Shinkansen with a wheelchair space. Most places are wheelchair-accessible and very easy to find your way about. For example, there are elevators and slopes in most buildings and public spaces, which make these places accessible. Furthermore, accessible toilets are available in all buildings for PWDs to use. One of the most important aspects of the independent living concept is that people with disabilities can make their own decisions and take responsibility for the decisions. In Japan, I mastered plenty of



skills and methods on how to provide special assistance to disabled people so that they would be able to fully participate in society. Supporting people with disabilities involves more than just physical issues; the independent living program holds peer-counseling seminars to allow disabled people to discuss and share their fears and thoughts with their peers — developing confidence and accepting themselves to improve their lives. People with disabilities in Japan work hard to change society’s perception of them. Their voice is truly powerful and precious, fighting for their own rights. I made many friends at Mainstream Association and had the opportunity to stay with them at their homes. They cooked me food and welcomed me as a member of their families. Because I stayed in their homes, I had the opportunity to learn and observe how disabled people were living in Japan. Cerebral palsy, spinal cord injury, and muscular dystrophy are among the disabilities these people lived with yet surviving with no fears. Some of them always required oxygen to breathe, while others could not eat by mouth and had to ingest medical nutrition through a

special tube. After returning to Cambodia, I am hopeful that soon I will be able to apply all the skills and experiences I gained in Japan for good use by launching an Independent Living Program and implementing these activities to improve the lives of people with disabilities in my community. Lastly, I want to thank the Duskin Leadership Training Program in Japan, Duskin AINOWA Foundation and Japanese Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (JSRPD) for developing a fantastic program that has allowed me to learn and live in Japan and for teaching me how to start an independent living program in my home country. I would also like to thank every independent living center that welcomed me and treated me as one of their own members. All relevant skills were demonstrated and taught. Thank you for giving

me the chance to try new things, travel to interesting places and eat delicious food. Many thanks to all our Japanese teachers who were always patient with us and used the best teaching methods. Because of the teachers, I was able to communicate in Japanese, which made my life in Japan easier. Thank you to the JSRPD staff for always looking after the trainees, providing accurate training schedules in advance and always providing unconditional assistance. To my 22nd Trainee friends, we share many unforgettable memories and time we spent together during our training. We are from countries of different cultures and norms, but we always got along through our training and fun moments. Best wishes and take all your skills and experience to your community to support and assist people with disabilities.

Individual Training Schedule	
July 2022 to Nov. 2022	
July 11 to Aug. 5	Human Care Association
Aug. 17 to 31	AJU Center for Independent Living
Sept. 14 to Nov. 10	Mainstream Association

Message to Trainee

Good work, Wen (Wen Rouet), completing your training as a 22nd Duskin Leadership Training trainee, despite the difficult times of the COVID pandemic! Here I am, your Big Boss! Wen arrived at Mainstream Association, looking shy and quiet. I was really worried about whether you would be able to interact with others and talk enough about yourself and blend in at our association where interactions come before everything else.

Immediately after the start of the training, Wen got COVID. I am sure there were many hurdles for you not being familiar with your surroundings at the association.

But Wen, through the training and the home-stay program, you discovered the joy of independent living and learned the history of independent living movement, getting used to the office atmosphere quite quickly.

It was a bit of a relief to see you make friends with people with

disabilities at Mainstream, telling jokes and talking to each other.

The training schedule was a bit demanding, but Wen was working hard on it.

Wen is quiet and shy, but I, the BIG BOSS, think that you are a person who can leverage all your powers when you need to. It is my hope that you will not just apply the knowledge and experience of independent living movement, but everything else you learned in Japan to Cambodia and be a powerful presence. We will come and see you in Cambodia someday!

From Big Boss,

Masayuki Hirata
Mainstream Association

Message to Trainee

Be a leader and create an inclusive society!

Wen, well done with your training in Japan. What have you been doing recently? Did you tell people in Cambodia what you had studied and experienced in Japan? Including you, all the 22nd Duskin Leadership Training trainees had to wait for a long time to come to Japan due to the COVID-19 pandemic, learning Japanese online and meeting online also for a long time. The first time I talked to Wen was online as well, and my first impression of Wen was someone serious and talkative. But when I met you in Japan, I got a totally different impression, of someone shy who did not like to talk very much.

Wen, when you came here for your training, I told you to ask others for support whenever you get stuck. But you would always say "I will be fine." It is important to

keep going by yourself but, in my view, good leaders are those who can get a lot of support and also offer others the support that they have experienced and appreciated. Wen, work together with good supporters (team members) and create an inclusive society in Cambodia for people with disabilities. You have all my support!

Yoshihiro Mitsuoka
Deputy Secretary General
Human Care Association

Maudita Zobritania

To make the "impossible" our usual achievement

Letters of acceptance for me from the Duskin Leadership Training arrived in the middle of 2020. I am very keen to learn about issues of PWDs employment, welfare system for PWDs, barrier-free design support tool, perspectives of women with disabilities, as well as principles and implementations of universal design. Hopefully, I would be able to learn from Japan and implement the knowledge I earn for myself and my own

community. However, due to the pandemic, I had to start the program by learning Japanese online for a year. As a Japanese Literature student, it was a wonderful opportunity for me to improve my Japanese language skills. I also took part in a Shuwa (sign language) class since I had a huge interest in sign language. I also participated in Japanese classes for deaf foreign people living in Japan. My sensei (teachers), other participants and I were separated by thousands of kilometers and still, I learned a lot about

Japanese culture, expressions, as well as new methods and approaches of teaching. I truly could not imagine how much I would learn once I actually visit Japan and experience the whole life directly now that I could learn so much even online. The day came in the middle of April 2022 at last. Shortly after my arrival, I was introduced to four other training participants named Jasmin (Philippines), Kavinda (Sri Lanka), Wen (Cambodia) and Wai (Myanmar). Thanks to them and their unique personalities, I was able to enjoy the time we shared



Maudita Zobritania

Indonesia, 25 years old, physical impairment

Fields of interest

- ① Barrier-free for people with disabilities
- ② Services for people with disabilities
- ③ Communication methods such as sign language
- ④ Employment of people with disabilities
- ⑤ Empowerment of women with disabilities

during our group trainings. I still vividly remember how they surprised me on my birthday with cakes and flowers. Together, we participated in some group trainings with experts of disability issues in Japan, in which they introduced their activities and program to us. The Duskin Leadership Training also provided individual training for me to learn many things that might help me achieve my goals. First, I learned how to provide accessible books for visually impaired people at ATDO. I also participated in Disability Equality Training, in which I learned about facilitation skills. I have needed to sharpen my presentation and facilitation skills to promote communication, so that I can encourage, facilitate and help people. Furthermore, perhaps what I had not experienced at all was the concept of independent living of PWDs. In my life, I needed to be self-reliant. I could, by no means, rely on others since I regarded reliance as a form of weakness. I thought that relying on people would give them chance to pity me.

People at Muchu Center, with



their knowledge, interactions and principles, taught me that self-reliance does not mean that we always need to do everything alone. They helped me realize that it is okay to have others support me to make my decisions and dreams come true. To this day, I have continued to internalize that belief. They also help me realize how important it is to have peers and share pain and struggles in our life.

The next journey was to participate in NPO UNI, they provide an extensible support program for students with

disabilities. I learned how to do captioning in meetings and classes, which really helps PWDs with hearing impairment and/or unable to do sign language. Even a practical step like captioning makes such a difference to students' learning experience. It helped me understand the framework for supporting PWDs in their education programs. At Step Edogawa, I was taught disaster drills for PWDs. I learned that disaster prevention was a comprehensive system rather than brief instructions on "what we should do to reduce the risks of disasters." This prevention principle could be introduced in my country, especially for PWDs so we could do necessary tasks during disasters. This is important considering that Indonesia's geographical location is prone to disasters due to its multiple volcanoes and tectonic plates. Society in Indonesia treats people with severe disabilities as 'sick' people needing to stay in bed or inside home all the time. Step Edogawa gave examples on how to help people with severe disabilities get out of their homes, breathe fresh air and enjoy life. This has made me think about how to support severely disabled people in Indonesia. To enhance my knowledge on barrier-free technologies, I visited the Kanagawa Institute of Technology for two days and was amazed how they could implement



their technological knowledge to provide tools to make life easier for PWDs. The university introduced me to students who are responsible for researching assistive tools for elderly and PWDs, and they explained to me how they produced such helpful inventions. It was an amazing visit. They were making such a significant effort to establish a barrier-free learning environment for the students.

I remember, during our conversation with a student, the student said, "You have a disability, but you speak normally." It surprised me because most PWDs have no barriers in communication and actually speak just like I do on a daily basis. I learned that although the students researched to develop tools for PWDs, they barely interacted with PWDs on a daily basis.

I was glad that I came up against this issue. I realized that, even in Japan, PWDs are not visible in larger society and that there are not so many opportunities for non-PWDs to interact with PWDs. Back in Indonesia, I always attended public schools that normally did not provide comprehensive assistance for me as a PWD. Yet, I learned how to make myself visible and take part in society designed for able people, although there were times when lack of accommodation hindered my progress to learn more in my school days. Eventually, I often observed that PWDs who spent most of their



time in 'controlled environment' often found it hard to cope with larger social setting. This phenomenon might indicate that although barrier-free and accessibility innovations are well-advancing, we also need to understand how to integrate PWDs and non-PWDs to live in harmony.

I am impressed and grateful for the chance to live in Japan since it is unarguably the first time I could function better as a human being. I feel everything is designed for everyone's sake, so

that everyone can benefit from it. In Japan, I could commute, do my chores, and shop by myself using wheelchair. I felt at ease knowing that I could easily find toilet anywhere.

I even took trip on ships and watched baseball games. I clearly see how even severely disabled people can go out and have fun with other people, with proper assistance. I can visit many places here. I took trips to museums and art galleries. I visited so many prefectures, and I also had the luck to spot Mt. Fuji from a close distance. I enjoyed the vibes of autumn leaves spread around the parks. Sometimes, I grabbed a nice coffee or foods at nearby cafes and restaurants.

Although the mindset is important, we need to reduce physical barriers in order to make life easier for PWDs and help them function better as human beings – the same feeling I feel living here. Once we feel that we function better as human beings, that feeling gives us power, boosts our confidence, and at the

end of the day, it is indeed liberating. And I believe that once we feel liberated, the sky is the only limit.

After finishing this training program, first, I would like to report my progress and the detail of the training program to a disability center of my university. It is important for both me and the organization to learn together about barrier-free situations. Secondly, I would like to document my journey in Japan in the form of accessible books, to share my experience and knowledge. Hopefully, the book will help non-PWDs understand the dynamics of PWDs' lives and understand us better. Not only that, but I also want to translate a manual book for spina bifida so everyone could have a deeper understanding of the condition and be able to work together to create a better life for people with spina bifida.

I would also like to work on myself for the future and get a decent job. I believe that once I no longer have to worry about my own well-being, I would be able to contribute more for PWDs in my country. However, I want to start with some steps that I could take with my current capabilities. Furthermore, I want to resume my English classes for people with disabilities. I think I could improve the previous program with the knowledge and experience I have right now. I also believe that women with disabilities need a safe space where they can consult with others and exchange information. I will utilize my facilitating and presentation skills to provide the space they need.

At my graduate school, I would like to study disability science, especially the relationship between people with disabilities and people without disabilities. Japan is making progress in developing a physically barrier-free society, but neither Indonesia nor Japan has shown progress in building barrier-free relationships between people.



People who took me on during this training always had faith in me to do something, which was why I could fully believe in myself that I could do something. Having someone believing in my capability, who doesn't doubt and underestimate me, gives me a huge amount of confidence and helps me gain my self-esteem. I learned a lot in Japan. The senior leaders have been doing amazing work to protect PWD rights and make PWDs' lives better. My next homework is to adjust this good implementation and principle and apply them to my country. I will provide and participate in activities or programs that suit my country's situations, barriers, issues and

culture. I would like to thank the Duskin AINOWA Foundation and all of the organizations involved in this life-changing experience. Most of the people I know congratulated me saying I surmounted the 'impossible' to get this amazing opportunity. Maybe I did. But then again, it would not have been so important if the barriers had not been there. And I look forward to playing a part in helping PWDs in Indonesia so that they won't face many barriers, wishing to make the 'impossible' our usual achievement and shape the world in which our disabilities won't matter as much.

Individual Training Schedule

July 2022 to Nov. 2022	
July 11 to 27 (10 days during this period)	Assistive Technology Development Organization
Aug. 4 to Sep.1	Independent Living 'MUCHU' Center
Sep. 2 and 3	Uni
July 28 to Sep. 29 (Held five times in total)	DET Forum
Oct. 17 to 28	STEP Edogawa
Oct. 3 to 7	Uni
Oct 11 to 14	Independent Living 'MUCHU' Center
Nov. 1	Tsukuba University of Technology
Nov. 10 and 11	Center for Regional Cooperation and Contribution, Kanagawa Institute of Technology

Message to Trainee

We look forward to hearing from you and about your future.

It may be after you have returned to your country that you read this. You must have got reunited with your family and friends, enjoying great Indonesian food to your heart's content.

It was our pleasure that Zo attended our facilitator development training, which was part of Disability Equality Training (DET), completing all courses and becoming a DET facilitator.

During the training which went on for two months, I am sure Zo often found it hard, having to submit reports every week, and doing field exercises as a facilitator. But you persevered with your ingrained determination. It was also a pleasure to see your smiling at the schooling every week, which made everyone around you happy.

Zo has a great power of interaction with others. You think

together with others do not deny others' way of thinking or views, make others want to work with her and make them feel motivated. This is a very important power to have if one wants to be a DET facilitator. Facilitation requires techniques, but the important thing is what kind of person the facilitator is.

Right now, DET facilitators are striving to bring an inclusive society in 39 countries around the world. Zo, let's put our strengths together and work for our goals together.

Kenji Kuno
Representative Director
Disability Equality Training Forum

Message to Trainee

Zo stayed with us for three weeks in August 2022, and one week in October, for her training at Independent Living "MUCHU" Center. From Day 1, Zo demonstrated how good she was at Japanese, as well as being very positive, wanting to have lots of communication with her Osaka dialect. In her 20s and being spontaneous, she quickly blended in with the members of MUCHU which was a pleasant surprise. We also valued the time we spent together outside of the training, going to places together and enjoying good food, laughing together in downtown Osaka. Even in the COVID-19 pandemic, we will not give up being ourselves and our joyous independent living! We have told Zo of our spirit over and over again, that we will support each other, we want to continue doing what we want to do, continuing our activities, enjoying them, being connected to and supporting each other

as peers in the true sense of the word, extending thoughts to friends of ours with severe disabilities in difficult situations. We want Zo to know that she is never alone, that she has friends who will share her joy, anger, sadness and fun, that she can turn this strength into a new power and become an even more wonderful leader for people with disabilities! We hope that, just like us, she will continue moving forward with her activities in Indonesia with the "Lead on!" spirit, regardless of whether the activities are fun or take courage. See you again Zo! ♡

Emi Uchimura, Secretary General
Hitomi Uchida, a staff member
Independent Living "MUCHU" Center