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Disability Initiative Grant Pilot

Advancing opportunities for people with disabilities through the Australian Volunteers for International Development program

Progress and achievements of the Disability Initiative Grant Pilot open to volunteers of the Australian Volunteers for International Development (AVID) program, an Australian Government initiative. This pilot was delivered by Scope Global, a delivery partner for the AVID program.

February 2016 – December 2016

AVID Disability Initiative Grant Overview

Australian Volunteers for International Development (AVID) Disability Initiative Grants

The AVID Disability Initiative Grants support activities implemented by Australian volunteers that positively impact and improve the human rights of people with disabilities.

The grants are designed to encourage and support volunteer initiatives that promote collaboration, capacity development and equal opportunities for people with disabilities in developing countries. Between February and May 2016, two funding rounds were provided to Australian volunteers who could apply for up to \$1,000 AUD to implement a disability initiative during their volunteer assignment.

Why a grant scheme?

The Australian Government is committed to playing an international leadership role in disability inclusive development to enable people with disabilities to find pathways out of poverty and realise their full potential.

The AVID program's approach to disability is based on the following principles:

- Disability is a human rights and a development issue
- Disability in development is primarily about promoting inclusive development

The AVID Disability Initiative Grants are an additional means of supporting volunteers who are not necessarily working in a disability-related role to address the cross-cutting theme of disability. Grants support volunteers to develop initiatives and activities that provide opportunities for capacity development and equal opportunity among people with disabilities.

The grants align with the AVID Disability-Inclusive Volunteering Program Policy and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) *Development for All 2015-2020: Strategy for strengthening disability-inclusive development in Australia's aid program*. The grants support the twin track approach and ensure that persons with disability themselves are involved as both beneficiaries and agents of development. Volunteers proposing disability-specific and/or disability-mainstreaming approaches within their initiatives are eligible to apply. The sustainability of impact of the proposed initiatives is a key consideration in awarding the grants.

The AVID Disability Initiative Grants are improving the lives of people with disabilities in the local context



Increased awareness of rights of people with disabilities through the delivery of workshops co-facilitated by people with disabilities



Increased participation of people with disabilities in decisions that relate to them by inviting members of disabled people's organisations to be a part of consultations relating to the outcomes of the initiatives



Reduced barriers to enable better participation of people with disabilities in their local community by the production of DVDs and films in accessible formats and through the creation of more accessible and inclusive community spaces.



“The initiatives have shown how Australian volunteers can be the catalyst for change in mindset and attitudes toward people with disabilities in the local context.”

Alexandra Kay, Disability Development Officer
Scope Global

Progress

The investment



The AVID Disability Initiative Grants were designed following the principle of **'nothing about us without us'** which acknowledges that people with disabilities benefit more from initiatives where they are full collaborators and active participants.

The initiatives demonstrate the power of including people with disabilities both as participants and beneficiaries.

Stakeholders reached by the 10 completed initiatives



Disability Initiative Grants

Grants awarded during the pilot phase

February - December 2016



10 Completed assignments

8 In progress

Bhutan | Rachel Brindal
Deaf Education Teacher Trainer |
Wangsel Institute | \$1,000

Produced a DVD to share basic sign language and communication strategies for families with young Deaf children.

Cambodia | Patricia Wake
Restructuring and Sustainability Consultant | Legal Aid of Cambodia | \$924

Making teacher accommodation accessible to people with a disability so that the education centre has the ability to hire staff with disability as teachers.

Cambodia | Wayne Slattery
Stakeholder Engagement Officer
Cambodian Disabled People's Organisation | \$1,000

Purchased a video camera that will be used to film sign language lessons that can be shared online to help people to improve their ability to communicate with Deaf people.

Fiji | Grace James
Allied Health Officer |
Ministry of Education | \$1,000

Working with the Ministry of Education and the Reproductive and Family Health Association of Fiji to make information on sexual health and sexual assault accessible for all students.

Fiji | Kelly Rowe
Strategic Communications Officer
Save the Children Fiji \$991

Four half-day disability awareness workshops across four locations that promoted awareness around disability and disability inclusion in each of the communities.

Fiji | Phoebe McColl
Allied Health Officer |
Ministry of Education | \$1,000

Creation of a number of short films about people with disability and their families to promote understanding, awareness and inclusion in the wider community.

Indonesia | Emily Rowe
Program Management Officer |
Kerti Praja Foundation | \$1,000

Explored and documented the needs of people with disabilities in Denpasar and disseminated the findings to increase awareness about the inclusion of people with disabilities in sexual and reproductive health services.

Kiribati | Heather Black
Teacher Trainer – Teachers of the Deaf | Kiribati School and Centre for Children with Special Needs \$1,000

Hosted the inaugural Kiribati Sign Language Week to promote the Kiribati Deaf community as active, capable people who are strong contributors to society and launched Kiribati's first sign language dictionary.

Laos | Margaret Froude
Academic Training and Development Officer |
Souphanouvong University \$1,000

Supported the roll out of 'Let's Include All' – a newly established inclusive education network for educators and communities in Northern Laos.

Philippines | Emily Boyd
Community Garden Development Officer | Welcome Home Foundation Inc | \$1,000

Harnessing the natural storytelling methods of Deaf communities for educational purposes incorporating the community-building techniques of Participatory Video into a larger framework of sustainable agriculture.

Philippines | Jenelle Horsford
Program Development Officer |
Christian Foundation for People with Disabilities | \$1,000

Hosted a three day conference – 'Negros for All' – which brought together people from a diverse range of sectors primarily to strengthen the community-based rehabilitation strategy that underpins disability work within the Negros region.

Vanuatu | Damian Farrell
Disability Program Support Advisor | Ministry of Justice and Community Services | \$996

Teaching people with disabilities how to share their story and visions and learn about multimedia equipment whilst increasing the knowledge and accessibility of a locally based arts organisation through filming people with disabilities.

Vanuatu | Cathy Nunn
Information Policy Support Officer
Government of the Republic of Vanuatu | \$1,000

Made government websites more accessible to people with disability by piloting a simple process to add accessibility features to government documents and websites and set some accessibility standards that all government websites and digital information repositories will follow.

Vanuatu | Jade Brockley
Marketing Officer | Malampa Provincial Council of Women \$1,000

Supporting 15 women with disabilities to be able to attend a public celebration and awareness raising event to promote mainstreaming of disability.

Vanuatu | Larissa Burke
Disability Inclusion Officer |
TVET Sector Strengthening Program | \$996

Establishment of a disability network in Sanma Province that has enabled greater coordination of activities run by and for people with disability.

Vanuatu | Madeleine Beart
Urban Landscape Planning Advisor | Department of Tourism \$1,000

Consultations with people with disabilities to gain information to feed into the design of Vanuatu's first ever All Abilities Playground & Green Spaces for All guide.

Vietnam | Averil Ivery
Speech Therapist | Training and Development Centre for Special Education | \$1,000

Initiative Training the first generation of Vietnamese speech therapists in augmentative and alternative communication devices and development of a communication app incorporating the Vietnamese language.

Vietnam | Isabell Evans
Project Management Officer |
Hearts for Hue | \$1,000

Developing and delivering an animal husbandry training package encompassing techniques and modifications to make raising animals easier for people with disabilities.

Case Studies

Right to Information for people with disabilities in Vanuatu

The Vanuatu Universal Access Policy aims to achieve 98% broadband internet coverage for the people of Vanuatu by 2018. As people with disabilities are estimated to comprise up to 12% of Vanuatu's population, it is clear that the target of 98% coverage will not be achieved if people with disabilities are left behind.

With an AVID Disability Initiative Grant of \$1,000, Australian volunteer Cathy Nunn, along with her colleagues in the Government of Vanuatu, were able to pilot a simple initiative aimed at making digitised government information more accessible to people with disabilities.

The project involved:

- Purchasing software to make scanned documents machine readable by screen readers for people with vision impairment or low literacy.
- Working with a variety of stakeholders across the Government of Vanuatu to develop *Web Accessibility Guidelines for Web Developers and Content Managers*, in consultation with disability networks.

The initiative was able to increase participation of people with disabilities, increase awareness about disability inclusion and remove barriers for people with disabilities in several ways:

Increasing awareness

The initiative created greater awareness among government officials about the specific challenges and needs of people with disabilities in accessing government held information and information and communication technology (ICT) more generally. The Accessibility guidelines serve as a reminder of the process, and there will be ongoing work to promote and encourage their use. An unexpected benefit is that a key partner of the initiative, the Vanuatu Civil Society Disability Network (VCSDN), has a better understanding of the right to information and knowledge, and ways their members can make ICT more accessible using tools they already possess. VCSDN is now promoting right to information as part of their outreach work in Port Vila communities.

Increasing participation

People with disabilities and disability organisations were directly involved with the planning, development and implementation of this project and in the production of the *Web Accessibility Guidelines for Web Developers and Content Managers*.

Removing barriers

The guidelines will assist in removing barriers for people with disabilities seeking to access civic information by enabling government agencies to develop and upgrade government websites for increased accessibility over time. A major benefit arising from the initiative was the connection forged with VCSDN. The ongoing partnership between the Government of Vanuatu and VCSDN will continue to support participation of people with disability in governance by bringing people with a disability directly in contact with government officials beyond the areas of health, social welfare and education in which issues concerning disability are more often considered.

Grant amount: **\$1,000**

Number of people with disabilities who have participated in and benefited from the initiatives: **9 directly involved in project.**

12% of the Vanuatu population that have a disability (2009 census) are forecasted to benefit from this project in the future.

Number of disabled people's organisations engaged: **3**



“ This simple project has been like a pebble tossed into a still lake. The ripples reaching out from this project are probably its most significant achievement.”

Cathy Nunn, Australian volunteer

Most significant outcome

The guidelines alone were a significant achievement, but there were other benefits associated with the initiative. The process of involving people with disability in consultation and decision-making was an important and beneficial outcome in itself. Furthermore, opening up the project to a broad range of stakeholders has brought ongoing and unexpected partnerships and opportunities for advocacy, awareness raising and policy development.

Removing barriers for Kiribati's Deaf community

Kiribati Sign Language Week and the launch of Kiribati's first ever sign language dictionary

With a \$1000 AVID Disability Initiative Grant, Australian volunteer Heather Black – along with her host organisation and disabled people's organisations in Tarawa – were able to hold the inaugural 'Kiribati Sign Language Week'. This was a nationwide awareness campaign about deafness and the abilities, rather than disabilities, of Deaf I-Kiribati people. The week provided a platform for the Deaf community to confidently demonstrate their value.

Heather Black had been on assignment as a Teacher Trainer with Kiribati School and Centre for Children with Special Needs (KSCCSN) on Kiribati's main island, Tarawa. At present KSCCSN is the only school in the small island nation catering for students with disabilities.

Increasing awareness

Awareness was increased using a range of methods, including a national radio program, a public event and launch of the first Kiribati sign language dictionary, a road show involving performances and distribution of information, and a feature on Kiribati national news.

There was a lot of interest in the initiative. Callers to the talk-back radio program from all over the country were able to correctly answer questions by the end of the week and pamphlets distributed at each of the road show locations ran out with spectators requesting that more be printed. Many people enquired about learning sign language and a short course being offered by the KSCCSN Deaf Education staff at the Kiribati Institute of Technology is expected to have full enrolment.

Increasing participation

One way that the initiative increased participation of people with disabilities was through the formation of the Kiribati Deaf Association (KDA). KDA played a key role in the implementation of the disability initiative grant activities, even deciding on the name 'Kiribati Sign Language Week' rather than the originally proposed 'Deafness Awareness Week.' Upon formation, the group immediately set about electing their executive and making their own decisions.

While Kiribati Sign Language Week was the catalyst for the formation of KDA, their activities are extending well beyond this initiative. They have been organising a number of social and fundraising events and have supported the formation of a Deaf volleyball team to train for participation in the international Deaflympics 2017.

Removing barriers

Comments made by I-Kiribati community members during and after Kiribati Sign Language Week indicate that one of the major barriers, that of ignorance and misinformation about deafness, has reduced.

The full impact in the area of knowledge, attitudes and practice is yet to be determined and will become clearer over time. One positive outcome is that negotiations are underway to explore opportunities for deaf and hearing impaired students from KSCCSN to enrol in courses at the Kiribati Institute of Technology

Grant amount: **\$1000**

Co-funded by: **NZ High Commission (\$2,000), a private donor (\$500) and Rotary (\$120)**

Number of people with disabilities: **79**

Number of disabled people's organisations engaged: **2**

Number of disability service providers engaged: **2**



“The gathering together of the Deaf community of Tarawa, their social networking, motivation, determination, creativity and team work to make their own decisions, plan and execute events has been a credit to them all. Their growth in confidence is clearly evident”

Heather Black, Australian volunteer

Statements from community members

“This is new to Kiribati.”

“I didn't know you could talk with your hands.”

“I want to learn sign language.”

“I didn't know they [deaf people] could read.”

Most significant outcome

While the initiative was originally primarily designed to provide awareness and education in the wider community, the participation of Deaf people in decision making and the formation of KDA have been major positive outcomes of this initiative.

 dfat.gov.au/australianvolunteers

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