Session 2 “Efforts to Strengthen the Capacity of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and their Achievement.”

**Goibuchi/** I am the chair of anonprofit organization CR Factory. Our vision is to create a society where all people can fulfill their rich lives with their own places and companions. For that, our mission is to create a passionate community in every corner of the world, in which people can bond with their own places and companions. I give training and consultations tononprofit organizations, such as club activities regarding organizational management, management support, and communication. Once a year, in Duskin Programs, I take charge of one of the training programs for young leaders from Asia and the Pacific countries/region countries. Duskin trainees have a very good attitude, and they are very enthusiastic to learn, and so I always feel encouraged by them.　Session 2’s title is: “Efforts to Strengthen the Capacity of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and their Achievement.” (Slide 1-4)

In many cases, the relationship between people and an organization, its internal organizational processes, and how the organization is managed, are not exposed to outsiders. Also, the outcomes of such aspects are difficult to see in numerical indicators, such as figures and money. In many organizations, building a better relationship itself is often left behind. The book, “The Little Prince”, says: “What is essential is invisible to the eye.” Things other than numbers and visible outcomes and also what has been done behind those numbers and outcomes, actually are very big themes for an organization to develop sustainably. In CR Factory, we call it “muscle training of the mind”. Unless we train our minds, we cannot depend on them when we really need it. I think it is an important factor to work for in the long term. And I think I can share with you our awareness in this regard.

The organizations of Mr. Samith and Ms. Lin, with a help of an external expert Ms. Hara, from thenonprofit organization “Murano Mirai”, are making efforts to tackle this aspect. If you can feel that they really are the leaders of organizations and that they actually are trying constantly toward achievements, in order to make their organizations better, then your relationship with them may expand in the future. That is the purpose of this session. We will have presentations first, and then a panel discussion will follow. I now invite Mr. Samith, Founder and Secretary General of Phnom Penh Center for Independent Living (PPCIL), to make his presentation.

**Samith/** Hello. I am going to speak in Japanese. My name is Samith and I come from Cambodia. I was born in 1979. My disability is polio. I was born after the war and my country was poor. I went to normal schools. In 2006, there was a great opportunity for me to come to Japan as a Duskin trainee. What surprised me then was how beautiful and livable place Japan was. When the training was finished, I went back to my country and opened the Phnom Penh Center for Independent Living. (Slide 2)

As you can see in a photograph (on the Slide 3), we have many members, as the picture was taken together with our volunteers and other people. This center is the only one in Cambodia. In September this year, we will commemorate our 10th anniversary. Our activities strongly reflect the concepts of persons with disabilities and independent living centers. In order to promote inclusion of persons with disabilities, we provide peer-counseling, independent living programs, and personal assistant service. In Cambodia, PPCIL is the most hardworking organization. We hold many events to create opportunities for persons with disabilities to come and get together. As background to our center’s activities is Cambodia’s specific situation that because we had a war, we have many persons with disabilities. Although the war is over, many people now become disabled due to traffic accidents.

We want to overcome our disabilities. This is the right way to think of persons with disabilities. Our way of thinking is that a disability is not an individual problem, but rather it is society’s and environment’s challenges and problems. The environment needs to be improved for a society to be a more livable place. Persons with disabilities currently are more interested in overcoming their own disabilities, rather than changing society, and this situation is a little bit problematic. PPCIL receives support from Japanese organizations, and through our activities we are making efforts so that even persons with severe disabilities can live a normal life. (Slide 3-6)

In PPCIL, no member yet has graduated from university. So, nobody really knows how to communicate within a group or how to work effectively. Without support from the Japanese Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (JSRPD) or the Nippon Foundation, we could not have developed the capacities of our staff members. In 2016 and 2017, I had opportunities to receive training in Japan. Before the training, I was unable to make project plans. Previously, I and other management staff were the only ones to make action plans, but now we are able to make more detailed action plans, working together with other staff members. Currently, all our staff members are able to create project plans, and they have also improved their assessment and evaluation skills. We also have become able to write and submit grant proposals. (Slide 7-8)

Ms. Hara from Mura no Mirai came to Cambodia in February last year, and we received training on Meta-Facilitation. When interviewing persons with disabilities in a local community, if we use Fact Questions which is base of Meta-Facilitation, they can understand our questions more clearly. Instead of using “WHY” questions, our staffs have started using simple Fact Questions in order to make dialogue with local people smooth. To have good communication within PPCIL is also becoming more and more important. We did not have the Japanese way of so-called “HORENSO” (which is Japanese acronym composed of” HO” which comes from “Houkoku” meaning report, “REN” which comes from “Renraku” meaning contacting and “SO” which comes from “Soudan” meaning consultation, and it is commonly used partially because it sounds also same to spinach in Japanese), and we even could not share our vision among us. But now all our staff members are united as one, and we are making good results. (Slide 9-11)

**Goibuchi/** Thank you very much, Mr. Samith. We fully understand that you truly have utilized the training opportunities. Capacity-building enhances individual capabilities, but even more important, the staff members now are able to share the same vision, so they can participate and contribute to the organization more deeply. They now are able to engage in the organization as active members, and this is a very big organizational change. Now I would like to invite the next speaker, Ms. Lin, Secretary General of New Vitality Independent Living Association Taipei.

**Lin/** Hello, everybody. My name is Lin Chun Chieh. I would like to talk about our activities in Taiwan and also about many changes that happened with great support that we received from many people. I was born in Taipei City in Taiwan. My disability is Osteogenesis Imperfecta. When I was seven years old, I was rejected from entering a school, and at the age of eight, I enrolled in a regular elementary school. I was sent to a hospital in Japan in order to receive a medical treatment that was expected to make me able to walk. But my bones were too fragile, and without receiving any treatment or operation I came back to Taiwan. But at that time I had a chance to learn a little bit of Japanese. When I graduated from university, I was shocked to realize that the environment outside is not barrier-free, and I had no place to go or to be. At the age of 23 years, I participated in Duskin training, and there I encountered the independent living movement. With great support from many Japanese friends, when I was 27 years old, I established the first independent living center in Taiwan. (Slide 2)

Currently in Taiwan the ratio of persons with disabilities is 4.9 percent of its population. In Japan, most of persons with disabilities live at home and few are institutionalized. Taiwan left the United Nations in 1971, and for this reason we fell behind in matters relating to persons with disabilities, compared to other countries. However, the private sector made efforts, and in 2014, Taiwan passed a domestic law to implement the CRPD (UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities). There are different movements of persons with disabilities in Taiwan, but our center has focused especially on personal assistant service. (Slide 3)

Now, I will give you some disability-related information on Taiwan. In major cities like Taipei and Takao, we have barrier-free subway systems. We can use any carriage of train so freely that we even do not feel that we have disabilities. But when we visit other areas of Taiwan, transport is not convenient. On the bottom-right corner of this slide 5, you can see a bullet train. It has 998 seats but only four spaces for wheelchair users. We are starting a movement to increase spaces for wheelchairs and strollers. Universal design taxis have started, but unfortunately the fare is very expensive. (Slide 4-5)

My independent living center was established in 2007, and we have been engaged in many activities, such as personal assistant service, protection of rights, policy proposals, and peer support. We are organized and managed by persons with disabilities as main actors, and what we try to achieve is to create a society in which persons with all kinds of disabilities can live in their own community. In 2009, we collected funds from the private sector and implemented a model project to train personal assistants. This became the official system of Taiwan. Now there are five independent living centers in Taiwan, but only two have their own office. We are trying to change the awareness of persons with disabilities themselves by repeatedly sending the message that it is the environment that has disabilities. Now Taiwan has an official system of personal assistants, and there is a pilot project that the government has budgeted for. We receive subsidies from the government, in order to operate independent living centers, but the actual situation concerning persons with disabilities has not reached the guideline standard yet, and much still remains to be done. Persons with disabilities should unite their efforts even more strongly and increase our influence on the government.

(Slide 6-10)

Persons with disabilities in each independent living center are inclined to face the difficulties of unity as a group due to such difference of areas or locations and personal background. For example, some went to school but some did not. For these reasons, communication sometimes does not go well, and we end up in quarrels. The reality is that we did not have enough communication skill and planning skills. To improve this situation, in March 2018, for the first time, the five centers gathered in one place and had a collective discussion. Before this time, what we usually said was: “We can’t do anything” or “We are helpless.” But Murano Mirai helped us to organize many workshops. We could visualize our activities by drawing posters and check what we did in the past year, who did what, and how much money was spent, etc. By this process, we realized that, even under hard conditions, gradually our activities were influencing our communities and gradually changes were happening. By visualizing the results of our activities by using posters, we could see the balance of overall work, and because of this, we have become able to divide our workload better than before. We can make plans more actively and we have better communication among ourselves. The five centers were able to share the challenges and to exchange opinions, and as a result, we now have a stronger relationship.

Before, our organization focused only on persons with disabilities, especially physical disabilities. But now we work with different groups of people, such as lawyers, scholars, reporters, and journalists. Now we are connected to different types of people, and so our circle has become bigger. We also are connected to human rights organizations and LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) organizations. It is important that we talk to people in different fields and work towards the same goals. I hope that we can share more information with you all and gain even more support. Thank you very much. (Slide 11-15)

**Goibuchi /** Thank you very much, Ms. Lin. I can see clearly that you very intentionally are engaging in the improvement of communication. Our challenges in a society are not an individual’s responsibilities or problems. Recognizing that the systems and frameworks in a society cause the challenges, we know that they should be tackled from mutual perspectives as a so-called network or ecosystem. Ms. Hara of Murano Mirai visited those two organizations and supported the implementation of training and workshops and also the development of their project plans. We would like Ms. Hara to share with us what you think of their achievements.

**Hara**/ I am so impressed to hear your presentation. Two of you, without any road ahead, have started to create a new road and worked very hard. I feel so honored to have opportunities to work with you two.

Now I put my emotions aside. Let me introduce Mura no Mirai, then I am going to share how we worked together with Mr.Samith and Ms.Lin. At Mura no Mirai, I am in charge of training. The headquarters is in Nishinomiya City, Hyogo Prefecture. Established in 1993, it celebrated its 25th anniversary last year (in 2018). Our philosophy is to realize a society in which human beings can live in harmony with community, economy and environment.

We have been working both in Japan and abroad. Our major activities are community development and training to realize the above said philosophy. In our activities, we use a method called Meta-Facilitation that we have developed by ourselves. This method is introduced in the book titled “Reaching Out to Field Reality.” This method is being applied not only community development but also various fields including child rearing. I had been living in India and Nepal for 16 years and have been working in the field of international cooperation. But there had been few opportunities to work with person with disabilities, so Mr.Samith and Ms.Lin are my mentors of independent living of person with disabilities. I am still learning from them. As you must have noticed that Mr. Samith and Ms. Lin had used the word “Fact Questions” several times during their presentation, now let me allow to explain about the method of Meta-Facilitation. (Slide 2-3)

If a Japanese person like me goes to a project site of international cooperation in a developing country and asks, “What are the problems you face in your community?”, then nobody gives a real answer. They may say “Thank you very much for building a school for us”, “Thank you very much for making a road for us”, or “So what is the next support that you are going to give us?” It will continue like this. If we go on this way, we never will be able to give the necessary support, and so through trial-and-error, we created this method. For example, if we are told, “We need capacity building for our staff.” Then, we ask back, “When was it? What were you doing then? Have you consulted somebody about it?” If they have not consulted with anyone, it is possible that this may not be a big issue. So, first of all, we have to ask whether or not some kind of action has been taken.

Another example is a question, “Why I am the only one who is busy?” If you use Fact Questions, you are able to ask yourself “What task, when, by whom, how, for how much time and money, and who else knows about this apart from myself?” If you keep asking questions in this way, you or the person who has a problem eventually will realize, “This actually is my own problem!” This is when you or that person should take the initiative to solve the problem. This is one method of providing support, by posing such questions. Both Mr. Samith and Ms. Lin have received training, and they now ask questions that seek the facts. They use this method in their development of a project plan and also in communication among staff members. (Slide 4)

When we visited Cambodia and Taiwan, we found that both of them were vigorously leading the other members. But at that time, they were at the stage of making a road in an unpaved field, so they could not afford to spend time in training their staff members. As a result, they were over-burdened with an excessive workload. This slide shows training that took place in Taiwan in 2017 and 2018. A plan should not be made just for the sake of planning. This training was about how to make an action plan that can be followed by everybody who is concerned. Together with participants from five organizations, we visualized “what we could do” and “what we could not do.” We also visualized the roles played by Ms. Lin.

Until now, I have seen many support activities by international cooperation organizations in various countries. The conventional way of support is likely to be one-way, from a support provider to its recipient. Mura no Mirai does not like this way, and so we created the method of Meta-Facilitation. I sense potentials in Mr. Samith and Ms. Lin, because their activities take a very new style that is not one-way direction. Activities that use the Meta-Facilitation method create a new way that can make everyone get involved as responsible actors, including those who take charge of activities in a local community, donors, and support recipients. Meta-Facilitation has the potential to make activities not just one-way but expanding in all directions. (Slide 5-10)

**Goibuchi/** Now I would like to ask a question of both of you, in order to understand more deeply. In your activities, I imagine there is always some gap in vision, degree of empathy, and awareness, among people you work with. I would like to know more about how you are facing such a gap, what kind of efforts or measures you are taking to overcome that gap, and what kind of changes you have made.

**Samith/** I sense a gap that in our center most of our staff are young people, so their experiences are fewer, and they rather want to do simple tasks. Also, they think little about their own plans and do only tasks assigned by the boss or the managers. They seem not to have thought that this is what I really want to do, or whether or not they are doing their tasks well. Our staff members have dreams, but they do not have enough planning skills to think how to achieve the dreams by themselves. Working together, I suppose, it is necessary to think together about what they really want to achieve.

**Lin/** When I work internally in teamwork with our members, I sometimes find some gaps in our opinions. Rather than keeping your ideas and thoughts in your head, I think it is important to visualize them, to show them clearly to others, and then to discuss them together. Through dialogue, it is important to decide an allotment of responsibilities and to make it into a chart. Another gap that I find is with people outside our organization in their way of thinking. We think independence is definitely a good thing, but others may not agree with us. Not staying just inside my own circle, but going into the community and linking with other people from different fields is very important.

**Hara/** Both of you have a great vision: “This is what we really want.” You work very diligently with your staff members with much patience, in order to realize your goals one by one. Mr. Samith said that he found some gaps with his staff members, but he is patiently tackling this challenge, and he does not give up, even when the first approach of communication does not work with them. Ms. Lin also never pushes her opinions on others. I can see in her the tolerance that is characteristics of leaders. She encourages her staff members to create the same map and to move towards the same destination together.

**Goibuchi/** I have another question. I have the impression that both Mr. Samith and Ms. Lin organize parties and many events with the strong intention of making connections with a lot of people and asking for their participation. I would like to know more of your ideas on how to make people move from being a mere participant to a more deeply-involved volunteer or staff member. This is actually a challenge for Japanese civil activities and nonprofit organizations, and therefore I hope to get some good ideas from you.

**Lin/** When we first opened our office and moved in, we surprised the local residents, as there were so many persons in wheelchairs, and they were not comfortable with us. But then in our office we organized many parties with many different themes that were interesting to normal people too, such as a food party this week, movie viewing, BBQ parties, etc. Eating events usually are very popular and everybody wants to come. Not only within my community, but together with the related five centers, we have organized campaigns to travel around regions outside Taipei City over the last 10 years. Persons with disabilities got together, and we did volunteer activities too.

**Samith/** In Cambodia, we have organized half-day events for persons with disabilities called “TRY.” University students, volunteers, and local residents take part. Japanese friends also come to join in this event, which is a good opportunity for us to make new friends. Apart from this, I give lectures at a university. If I make some connections there, I visit the staff in their offices to meet them and to create a new network there. I take these activities as opportunities to let everybody know about persons with disabilities and independent living and also to look for personal assistants. And I do this in collaboration with governmental institutions and local residents.

**Goibuch/** I also would like to ask Ms. Hara to comment about creating opportunities for more participation.

**Hara/** Actually I have had a glimpse of the hard work and difficulties that Ms. Lin and Mr. Samith have faced when organizing and preparing such events. But you two enjoy doing it, and I am sure that surrounding people are watching your ways. It does not matter whether you have disabilities or not, when something looks fun, people naturally come and join in. You enjoy connecting with people, therefore people get involved more and more. I heard that in the Taiwan office new young people are getting involved as personal assistants, and they are working very passionately. They probably get to know each other through such fun events. I think that doing things that are enjoyable for yourself is the key to getting other people involved.

**Goibuchi /** That it is fun is an important factor. I guess through such activities, two of you are creating relationships with other people and creating places for them to fill. Now we would like to receive questions from the audience.

**Questioner C/** Thank you very much. My name is Shafiq, and I’m from Pakistan. In 2001, I came to Japan for training sponsored by Duskin Ainowa Foundation. I have some comments. We come to Japan for the Duskin training, and when the training is over, we go back to our countries, and we can share our experiences in Japan. For example, we can say that Japanese food was tasty, but we cannot share the actual taste of the food. The same can be said about the Japanese independent living centers. This is something you can feel only when you actually see and experience it yourself. Of course, knowledge is important, but experiences are also important. How about providing opportunities to get actual experiences?

**Samith/** Yes, taste is very important. We graduated from the Duskin programs and returned to our home countries. We conveyed the message that “Japan is a wonderful place and a great society to live in” to everybody in Cambodia. But they said, “That is a lie.” I agree that they should have an opportunity to taste it just like I did. From my center, some persons with severe disabilities have had opportunities to attend several times the training in Japan. Then they told me, “You were not lying.” After that training, they worked hard for us. I am looking forward to the future.

**Lin/** Just as Mr. Shafiq said, the experience is most important. From two years ago, we have applied our project to the Community Chest, and we have implemented a short period of training in Japan. For this, we selected three or four people who wanted to learn about the independent living movement in Taiwan and to take part in this movement. We visited many independent living centers in Japan, and we had very good results and impact. Not only did we learn something, but also the training was very useful for our everyday lives.

**Goibuchi/** Thank you very much. Just as Ms. Lin mentioned now, no matter how many times you explain, sometimes there are things that you cannot convey to others. To have the same experiences is very important in order to share the same vision and to narrow the gaps.

I would like to talk about how to make your organization better, as I also am an expert. When we try to achieve some results, we try to change our actions. Change action and change your mindset. You will start to have some ideas that lead to changing your way of thinking. But before action or mindset, there is always a relationship. You feel comfortable enough to have a dialogue and to communicate openly with each other. You can trust each other and you are sharing the same vision. Upon these conditions, you finally can have good and abundant thoughts and ideas and also carry out responsible actions. In other words, before some kind of a structure that can bring quick and good results, you need to pay attention to a dialogue or relationship. To have dialogues in learning and training occasions, as well as in a normal, everyday context, is very important. I hope you can make use for your activities of the case studies that Mr. Samith and Ms. Lin shared with us.

**MC**/ This concludes Session 2. Thank you very much.