

Myanmar Down Syndrome Association



Annual Country Report of MDSA

December ,2022



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Look at glance the lives of PWDs in Myanmar

Myanmar is a country which is famous for its culture and naturally beautiful landmarks. On the other hand, the concept and mindset of some people are overwhelmed by its conservative norms and stereotype customs. Until the last few years ago, the knowledge about PWDs was not widely spread and social acceptance was not highly appreciated for Myanmar PWDs. In addition, the inclusiveness of PWDs in the environment was neglected. The access to education, job opportunities and other services for PWDs were very limited. Furthermore, the family of Down syndrome felt a burden and had to live with an inferior mind in the environment. To show the situation of PWDs, their roles were faded.

What about 2022, the current moment?

Based on the above facts, we founded Myanmar Down Syndrome Association (MDSA) in 2015 with the cooperation and collaboration of family members of

people with Down syndrome, principals and teachers of Special Education Schools, and technical experts from various fields. We try to do the actions with the objective of helping people with Down syndrome to have a meaningful life and to be able to participate in the life of the community around them. At first, we had to struggle a lot to get social acceptance and cooperation.

After the 2019 election of MDSA, we are able to perform several activities which are raising the roles of PWDs and the empowerment programs to stand as meaningful persons in the society.

Activities of MDSA

We (MDSA) do the activities for PWDs with the aim of making sure that all individuals with Down syndrome and their families receive the support necessary to participate in, contribute to and achieve fulfillment of life in their community. Under our mission and core values, we prioritize mental and physical development, capacity building for job readiness, health care services, educational development and social inclusion for PWDs.

Physical Health and Mental Health Care Activities

For the first step, we arrange to provide Covid-vaccination with the support of donors. After the vaccination, we implemented the Mental Health Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) project. In that project, we performed stress reduction activities in different ways such as water therapy, art therapy (color talks), cooking, dancing and emotional management. When they participate in the MHPSS project, our children and youth with Down Syndrome get motivation again. They got the sense of “we are not alone” and they have known that they have to stand with resilience

by holding hands together. As a result, they can adapt and resist the current situation by sharing and caring for each other in the Down syndrome community.



Photo Title: Making smile with water therapy
Description: Our PWDs children participated in Water Therapy Activity. As a result, they feel relaxed and reduce stress



Photo Title: I love making food.
Description: MDSA organiaed PWDs Talent Show activity and some of them show their food talent.



Photo Title: Believe us, we can do it.
Description: MDSA organized PWDs Talent Show activity and some of them show their food talent.



Photo Title : Let's dance with us.
Description: MDSA gathers on Saturdays and dance together which make them happy and improve social skill.

MDSA is enhancing the mental support programs. We connected with other organizations and provide FOC programs for the Yoga Club and conducted the emotional wellbeing workshops for Down Syndrome families. We are providing dental health care services for PWDs with the cooperation of CSR activities from local clinics and MDSA association.

Educational Support for sustainable learning

As all known, the post-pandemic phase in Myanmar is not changing quickly because we still have political turmoil. Because of the crisis, the education programs are delayed. To fill that gap and to provide sustainable learning for students with intellectual disabilities who are difficult for the schooling, we are involved in home based learning programs for our PWDs by using the Home based learning kits from Save the children.



Photo Title : Learning never stops!
Description: Sharing home-based learning kits for PWDs during pandemic time in order to enhance the sustainable learning of PWDs

Development & Empowerment Program

After seeing the results, we are also motivated to continue the empowerment programs for the people with Down syndrome. Therefore, MDSA is extending the networks with other organizations, and enhancing the capacity of EC members by arranging empowerment programs, training and discussions. At the same time, we are organizing Volunteering Workshop with Leadership skills for youth volunteers, Parental Awareness Workshop for the guardians, Personal, Social, Health and Education (PSHE) training for PWDs and Community Engagement Activities together with teenager PWDs, EC and Youth Volunteers, Physiotherapist Training and so on. In addition, we implemented the mural painting with the hands of our PWDs which makes their creation increased.

We performed all the activities to raise the capacity and personal development of PWDs, to train them to be able to communicate with the society, to build mutual trust, resilience and team building among the guardians, to build the bridge between the community and the PWDs and to reduce the burden of Down Syndrome families.

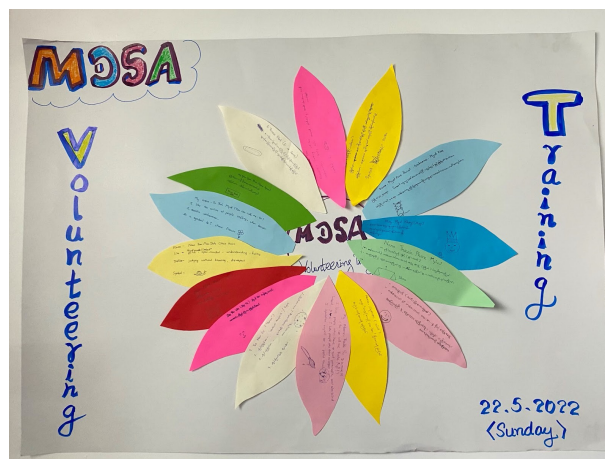


Photo Title: Growing flowers for better world!
Description: This paper art flower is from MDSA Volunteering Training and it is made with their creation.



Photo Title : We love our friends; we value our life.
Description : The picture from PSHE training and they are playing team building game.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Although we are going step by steps, the journey was not quite smooth. We have to overcome many challenges. But we have to be aware that we can overcome those by building our never-say-die spirit. The more challenges we face, the more unity we build.

From real experiences, we have seen that our PWDs are the precious ones who just need the support such as effective training, teaching methodology and teaching aids, and the recognition of the right attitude environment not only from the local but also from the international community. The more we can train and empower them, the more valuable human resources will be able to contribute to our beautiful world.