



Annual Report

NLR Mekong is localized as a Vietnamese NGO in 2018,
which is known as Research Center for Inclusion (RCI)

2017

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I. OUR ORGANIZATION

Netherlands Leprosy Relief (NLR), established in 1967, is a Dutch non-governmental organization (NGO) for the control of the disease leprosy and the rehabilitation of persons with disability. Netherlands Leprosy Relief has supported projects in Vietnam and Southeast Asian region since 1981; initially leprosy disease control projects, later shifting towards leprosy disability projects and more recently towards projects that comprehensively serve the needs of persons with disability regardless of the cause of disability. Central to NLR's support is the link between disability and poverty. Its work has brought tremendous change in the lives of thousands of people.

The NLR Mekong office in Hanoi manages the NLR support for projects in the Mekong Region countries. In the field of child disability, NLR works in the Mekong Region with funding of and in close collaboration with the Liliane Foundation (LF). NLR and LF consider Community Based Rehabilitation as a main approach to empower persons with disability and their families as well as to improve their access to existing resources and services. NLR Mekong works presently with 16 Partner Organizations (POs) in Cambodia, Myanmar and Vietnam to support children with disability.

- **Vision**

A world free of leprosy and exclusion due to disabilities

- **Mission**

NLR promotes and supports health, ability and full inclusion in society for people affected by leprosy or living with disabilities

- **Strategy (how we work)**

NLR works with governments, NGOs, research institutions and Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs) promoting access and quality of services through training, expert advice, research and innovation.

II. KEY PROGRAMS

NLR Mekong's strengths lie in its Community Base Rehabilitation projects in Mekong region that informed our implementation and strategy. In 2017, NLR Mekong and partners worked together towards achieving the following key results for persons and children with disabilities at national and regional level:

- 509 children with disabilities in Cambodia, 1050 children in Myanmar and 712 children in Vietnam have been provided direct supports through education – health – livelihood – social programs
- 2,673 parents and caregivers were involved in disability care planning for their children and had access to number of training and counseling sessions on disability and rehabilitation.
- In total, 5528 community members in Cambodia, Myanmar and Vietnam have actively joint community activities to promote social inclusion and reduce stigma toward disability
- Our programs in the three countries have worked with 227 policy makers in order to advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities and to promote the implementation of disability-related policies.

This year, NLR Mekong works across the fields of leprosy and disability with the following key programs:

1. INTEGRATED REHABILITATION OF PEOPLE WITH LEPROSY-RELATED DISABILITY IN KON TUM AND GIA LAI, VIETNAM

The project has brought tremendous impacts on the lives of persons with disabilities and persons with leprosy-related disability in Kontum and Gia Lai provinces. They had participated in various consultation meetings, socio-cultural activities and had accessed to rehabilitation and services and clean water. Main activities and results of the third year of the four- year project in Kon Tum and Gia Lai province are reported as follows:

PROJECT IN KON TUM PROVINCE

In Kon Tum, the project aimed to reduce stigma toward leprosy affected persons in the community by organizing a number of village and commune meetings to distribute information on legislation with regards to disability. At the meetings, persons with disability addressed common issues in their daily lives such as lack of clean water, standard hygiene and safe food. In so doing, persons with disabilities were empowered to raise their voice about their hygiene concerns and call for the support from local authorities.



A village meetings to distribute information on legislation with regards to disabilities

In order to promote family-owned business models were introduced the families of persons with disability in Kon Tum to increase their income. Particularly,

- In Doan Ket commune, 10 families with persons affected by leprosy were provided silurus (fish) to raise at their home and jackfruit trees to grow in their gardens. One family was equipped with a sugar cane juice press machine that allowed them to open a small shop at home to sell sugar cane juice.

- In Dak Tram commune, prior to supporting the low-income families with persons with disability on raising piglets and rabbits, a training was delivered to 25 persons with disability due to leprosy and other causes, and their family members on how to raise pigs and chicken. Feedback from the stakeholders and community members indicated that involving in training and husbandry activities enabled persons affected by leprosy to sense themselves as part of community members and become more active and less dependent on external support.



a man of family with person with disability on raising rabbits

Moreover, persons with disability due to leprosy and due to other causes and their family members in Doan Ket and Dak Tram communes participated in training workshops and socio-economic events organized by community based organizations and the local government (such as meetings with the State's Bank for Social Policy to help families of persons with disability to have access to loan schemes with low interesting rate; Social event for celebration of National Women's Day; Workshop on promoting education for children with disability and orphans).

All the activities are interlinked to not only address the needs of persons with disabilities but also to ensure that persons with disabilities, caused by leprosy and other diseases, can fully and actively participate in society on an equal basis.

PROJECT IN GIA LAI PROVINCE

Gia Lai is among the geographically most difficult and poorest provinces in the Central Highlands of Vietnam with large proportions of ethnic, indigenous groups. Gia Lai has 17 districts, 222 communes and a total population of 1,359,900.

There are 8,593 people with disability including 550 people with leprosy related disability and 3,316 children with disability. And there are 13,000 people affected by Agent Orange (Dioxin) including 116 children (under 16 years old) in Gia Lai province.

In 2016, NLR Mekong conducted a baseline study on living conditions and status of people with disability, including people affected by leprosy in Gia Lai province. The survey report concluded that many persons with disability are living in very difficult living conditions, especially the persons affected by leprosy who belong to the ethnic minorities who are generally very poor and illiterate. Although the government has policies for providing health insurance cards and social allowances for persons with disability, there are still approximately 20% of persons with severe disability and 40 % of persons with leprosy related disability who have not yet received health insurance cards and social allowances provided by the government. These findings are evidences that helped NLR Mekong to build the three years project in Gia lai which addressed the most urgent needs of the community. The project aims to enhance the socio-economic status of leprosy affected persons by focusing on knowledge sharing, skill development and inclusion. Additionally, disability action plan has been activated to plan for long-term and comprehensive intervention to achieve the aims.

The project organized two meetings with the government officials, persons with disability and their family members to set up a project management board at provincial level and two disability task forces at commune level. Upon the successful establishment of the Project Management Board and the disability taskforces, they started to work with local authorities, service providers (schools, health stations, microfinance services, Commune Women's Unions and Farmers' Unions) to provide information on available disability services and to enable persons with disability and their family members to access available services in their communities in Dak Doa and lake communes. Once persons with disabilities are equipped with knowledge and skills with regards to their rights, they become more active in the project implementation process, which contribute to the sustainability of the project.

2. PROSTHESES CARE FOR LEPROSY AFFECTED PERSONS

The project Prosthetic Care is funded by PDS which aims at enabling and supporting the elderly patients who are affected by leprosy to have better integration in society. Through years, the positive improvements were observed remarkably in patients who received prosthetic treatment. Particularly, from being inactive and independent, now, leprosy affected persons have mobility enhancement and hence, can engage in daily life and social life more easily. It is not only about physical transformation, but it is also about living a life with quality and ability.



In 2017, prosthetic care project provided 247 new prostheses for leprosy patients and 218 leprosy patients received new prostheses (some of them received 2 prostheses as they have double amputee). Even though the number of new leprosy cases is reducing gradually, there is still a need to repair and to renew every 3 to 5 years for leprosy affected persons who had prosthetic products. Therefore, the number of repaired prosthetics is still remarkable. There are 244 patients received prosthetic repair, 733 strap changes and 23 prosthetic repairs.

Figure: Total beneficiaries of Prosthetic Care Project

	Female	Male	Total
Number of beneficiaries	84	134	218
Number of prostheses	94	153	247

3. SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN FROM LEPROSY AFFECTED FAMILIES

The School Support Program plays an important role in achieving the goal “Education for All” in Vietnam, especially for the children from leprosy affected families, who are among the most vulnerable groups in society. The School Support Program aims to ensure that no child is left behind and children have equal opportunities to fulfill their rights to education. Especially, as UNICEF emphasized that education transformed lives and broke the cycle of poverty trap that many children are struggling with. Thus, it is essential to sustain the School Support Program in order to enable children to go to school, as one of the ways to practice children’s rights to education.

In 2017, School Support Program reached 97 children mainly from Leprosaria in the South of Vietnam (Ben San, Di Linh, Soc Trang) and children from poor leprosy affected families in Ca Mau, Dong Lenh and Quang Ninh. Among these children, there are 54 children at primary school, 26 children at lower secondary school, 12 children at secondary school and 4 students pursuing higher education.



Family of Toan (the boy in Navy T-shirt) living in Ben San Leprosaria -received scholarship from NLR



Family of Tram (the girl in blue T-shirt) living in Ben San Leprosaria - received scholarship from NLR

Figure: Total beneficiaries of School Support Project

	Primary School	Secondary School	High School	College/University	Total
Female	27	10	4	5	46
Male	27	16	8	0	51
Total	54	26	12	5	97

4. COMMUNITY BASE REHABILITATION PROGRAMS IN VIETNAM

The Community Base Rehabilitation Projects aimed to increase social participation and improve health and economic outcomes for persons with disabilities by implementing various activities in the field of Health – Education – Livelihood – Social – Empowerment.

NLR Mekong currently has nine Partners across the country in implementing CBR Projects which are:

<i>North Vietnam</i>	<i>Central Vietnam</i>	<i>South Vietnam</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microfinance & Community Development Insitute (MACD) - Hoa Binh Cao Bang Women Union – Cao Bang 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of Genetic Counseling & Disable Children (OGCDC) – Hue • Nguyet Bieu Social Protection Centre – Hue • Quang Tri Charity Association (QCA) – Quang Tri • Cua Tung Hospital – Quang Tri • Children of Vietnam (COV) – Da Nang 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kon Tum Center of Disease Control – Kon Tum • Mai Anh Kindergarten for Children with Special Needs – Da Lat

Project Outcomes:

In 2017, nine POs in Vietnam continued with our regular activities on providing school support and learning kits to help children with disability to enable their education. At the same time, health care and rehabilitation including examinations and treatment at hospitals and institutions and rehabilitation consultation for caregivers of children with disability, have been continued during the reporting period. In addition, social inclusion of children with disability was enhanced thanks to their participation in social events on international children day, international day of persons with disability and during the 'We Ring the Bell' campaign.

Rehabilitation is essential to children with disabilities to be able to participate in education, employment and civic life. As such, MADCI conducted a training on community-based rehabilitation for 50 health workers, teachers and parents to define rehabilitation goals as well as planning and implementation measures. Through the training, participants learnt about skills for self-help care, physiotherapy and case management. Similarly, Nguyet Bieu social protection centre and OG CDC in Hue organize regular physiotherapy sessions that helped improving the physical functions of children with disabilities as well as increase the knowledge and skills of teachers and staff at the centre.

With regards to livelihood activities, Children of Vietnam (COV) initiated the 'microloan and revolving fund' for caregivers of children with disability for livestock breeding. This revolving fund model can be accessed by existing members as well as by other caregivers in the future. With support from NLR Mekong, COV worked with 4 schools in Hoa Vang district to carry out project activities for promoting inclusive education.

Especially, the five POs in Vietnam (COV, FGDC, MACDI, COV and QCA) advocated and followed government's instructions on supporting children with disabilities to ensure that they are well taken care and referred to appropriate health, educational and social services. These POs have applied the case-management guidance and community-based approaches (approved by the Ministry of Labor, Invalid and Social Affairs, Circular No. 01/2015) to mobilize resources to realize an inclusive environment for children with disability.

In 2017, some POs have effectively mobilized involvement of various stakeholders in the community in their lobby and advocacy activities such as the We Ring the Bell campaign, social events on International Day of Persons with Disability, Mid-autumn festivals and consultation meetings with policy makers about school physical accessibility for children with disability.



We Ring the Bell campaign at Trieu Thanh Primary School, Trieu Phong commune, Quang Tri Province - where 10 children with disabilities attended.

III. THE MEKONG REGION

NLR Mekong conducted its mission in the two countries Cambodia and Myanmar in the field of Community Base Rehabilitation (CBR). The projects are implemented in partnership with local organizations in respective countries. Throughout the year, NLR Mekong provided strategic leadership by actively offering technical advices to the Partners as well as providing efficient source of funding to the seven Partners in Cambodia and Myanmar. Specific project outcomes are presented as below:

1. WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED IN CAMBODIA?

In Cambodia, education, rehabilitation and healthcare services for children with disability are the core pillars of their annual program which aim to provide child development and enabling environment interventions.

VIC, CABDICO and Rabbit School have supported children with disability living in health care centers in Phnom Penh and Seam Reap to return to their families and rely on local community-based rehabilitation services. Their activities include providing school support, assistive devices and physiotherapy sessions. In so doing, children were given opportunities to rehabilitate and to go to school with their peers. Especially, the Pos also organize community activities gathering local people, children with and without disabilities in some special occasions such as Children's Day, Persons with Disabilities' Day.

At CABDICO, this PO equipped knowledge and skills of community facilitators (Commune Council for Women and Children - CCWC and Village Health Support Group - VHSG) by providing training on disability detection and intervention to mothers and fathers in the villages. The training was organized in the heart of the village, where local people can easily have access to and share information with others.

Rabbit School has successfully conducted the consultation workshops on “Teaching children with intellectual disability manual” in collaboration with other organizations including Save the Children International (SCI), Aid et Action (AeA) and Ministry of Education, Youth and sport (MoEYS). The manual is finalized and approved by MoEYS to guide teachers and parents in teaching children with intellectual disability in Cambodia

With regards to the promotion of the rights to education of children with disabilities, the 5 POs in Cambodia have successfully organized the “We Ring the Bell” campaign drawing attention of local governments, schools, parents and news media on the right of children with disability to education. To illustrate the impact of the campaign, DDSP describes in their mid-year narrative report that *“The participants have demonstrated more understanding about the importance of education for children with disability and other disability issues and has resulted in decreased discriminatory behavior as well as more open-mindedness about the integration of all persons with disability in living in the community.”*

2. STORY FROM THE FIELD

Som Leakna, 7 years old girl with Cerebral Palsy since she was born. She lives at Krasang Krou village, Boeung Khna commune, Bakan district, Pursat province with her parents who are farmers. Leakna have two brothers and sisters; she is the last daughter.



Before Leakna admitted to special education class she faced many challenges as her parents unable to send her to school and they do not believe that she can learn at all. Moreover; Leakna cannot sit and stand and difficulties in speaking and frequency got sick, her family discriminated from the people in community because of her disability.

Luckily, Leakna was admitted to DDSP program. In the integrated class, Leakna received special education, physiotherapy, well taking care, life skill training, got nutrition and attend many social activities such as children rehabilitation retreat, International Day for People with Disabilities and lots of social interactions. Especially she had more friends and got experienced love, close relationship from her family and other people in her community and she forgot all the negative feelings that he had before. The project also provided her family with basic counseling and awareness raising to people in community to decrease discrimination toward her family.

Now, Leakna has much improvement and she now can sit by her own with special chair/table and start to learn standing. She has quite a good health now and she lives happily in her family where she received love and care every day.

3. WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED IN MYANMAR?

In Myanmar, NLR Mekong has two Partner Organizations who are leaders in the field of disability in this country: The Leprosy Mission Myanmar (TLMM) and Eden Centre for Disable Children (ECDC)

In Myanmar, access of children with disability to inclusive education and special education has improved thanks to appropriate school support, such as school uniforms, stationaries, facilitation of transport from LF funding.

At TLMM, referrals of children with disability to hospitals for treatment and rehabilitation improved thanks to better collaboration of the PO and government hospitals. Furthermore, advocacy work for inclusive education has been initiated by the PO through communication with schoolteachers before the school enrolment along with encouraging parents of children with disability to send their child to school. ECDC provided training courses about new techniques to physiotherapists and provided physiotherapy to children with disability from low income families. ECDC also works with other donors to support children with disability to go to school.

4. GOOD PRACTICE: DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTRE IN MYANMAR

Strategically located Disability Resource Centres (DRC) are focal points for rehabilitation for all kinds of disability and give TLMM a presence in all the regions with highest prevalence of leprosy, helping to ensure new cases are detected and treated in a timely manner.

DRC aims to support and empower persons with disabilities, including people affected by leprosy. The 14 Disability Resource Centers are organizing many community-based rehabilitation services to promote educational and socio-economic services and rehabilitation for persons with disabilities in rural villages in Myanmar. Specifically, DRC provided disability screening, home-based intervention and physiotherapy sessions for persons with disabilities in 134 communities.

IV. SCHOOL PHYSICAL ACCESSIBLE ASSESSMENT IN VIETNAM

In collaboration with three POs (COV, MACDI and QCA), NLR Mekong conducted school physical accessibility audits in 12 primary and secondary schools to promote inclusive education in Vietnam. Key findings were, among others, that the conditions in most public schools do not encourage pupils with a disability to go to school. Accessibility is limited and there are many barriers for wheelchair users. There are many children with disability, including children with physical and hearing impairment who lack assistive devices to support their daily activities at home and at schools. To attend these schools, pupils with disabilities depend too much on the help of parents, teachers and classmates.

On the bright side, school leaders, teachers, parents and students showed their willingness for inclusive education. Parents have invested for their children's education by paying for the extra costs, arranging their time to bring their children to schools daily; and keeping more regular contacts with teachers. However, there are still other parents who are doubtful about the quality of inclusive education; and their children's lack of ability to learn and to integrate well in the classes. Similarly, teachers believe that inclusive education is good for both children with disability and children without disability. According to the teachers, learning at mainstream schools will help children with disability become more confident in their daily lives. For students without disability, the inclusive environment can help them build the spirit of sharing, helping and caring for others. Yet, most of the interviewed teachers have not been trained in inclusive education and they just use their teaching experience to apply in teaching children with disability. For assessment of teaching results, there are guidelines with specific instructions from the ministry of education. In addition, teachers find it difficult to identify students with disability or with special needs; meanwhile, there is a lack of collaboration with the local health sector for disability screening at the schools.

The findings from these audits will support NLR Mekong in developing inclusive education initiatives with the Liliane Foundation. The findings will serve as baseline indicators for NLR Mekong's POs to monitor on-going programs to improve schools' physical accessibility.

V. REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON CBR BEST PRACTICE IN CAMBODIA

In October 2017, 22 staff of 16 POs from Vietnam, Cambodia and Myanmar participated in a three-day workshop on CBR best practice organized by NLR Mekong and facilitated by David Curtis of Light for The World. The workshop equipped the partner organizations with skills and knowledge to document and present best practices in CBR programs and provided a platform for POs to share their CBR best practices for children with disability.

This was a great learning opportunity for technical staff of POs where they could exchange, through presentation of their CBR approach, their best CBR practices, lessons learned, challenges and recommendations to manage and document CBR interventions. The post-training evaluation showed that most participants were satisfied with the content and structure of the training workshop as well as the facilitators. All participants have reported that this training is appropriate for their level of experience.



VI. FINANCIAL REPORT

Netherlands Leprosy Relief – Vietnam Representative Office

Statement of income and expenditure

	Notes	Year ended 31 December 2017 VND	Year ended 31 December 2016 VND
Income			
Contributions from Netherlands Leprosy Relief	3	8,768,818,000	10,557,412,497
Contributions from Peerke Donders Stichting	4	891,482,820	-
Contributions from Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation	5	940,004,317	793,300,653
Contributions from Liliane Foundation	6	3,273,007,662	1,732,615,242
Other income	7	147,285,775	715,000,000
Interest income		5,855,326	5,153,549
Foreign exchange gain/(loss)		135,297,230	(4,667,712)
		14,161,751,130	13,798,814,229
Expenditure			
Expenditures of the NLR Mekong Office (including Office, Control and National Rehabilitation activities)	8	(2,406,838,404)	(5,350,936,950)
Expenditures funded by Peerke Donders Stichting	9	(840,751,254)	-
Expenditures of Rehabilitation in Gia Lai and Kon Tum Project (funded by Sasakawa and co-funded by NLR)	10	(1,226,748,992)	(1,028,396,300)
Expenditures of Disability, Poverty and Education Project (Funded by Eureka Achmea Foundation)	11	(371,869,134)	(486,741,302)
Expenditures of activities as Strategic Partnership with Liliane Foundation	12	(2,723,204,714)	(2,087,483,088)
Expenditures of "These shoes are made for walking" Project		(4,457,240,431)	(5,685,662,270)
		(12,026,652,929)	(14,639,219,910)
Surplus / (Deficit) of income over expenditure		2,135,098,201	(840,405,681)

Hanoi, Vietnam
11 May 2018



Jan Robijn
NLR Mekong Representative

Nguyen Thu Hang
Financial Manager

VII. PLANS FOR 2018

With support from NLR and SMHF, NLR Mekong will continue the project for integrated rehabilitation for person affected by leprosy in Kontum and Gia Lai province, together with the scholarship program for children from leprosy affected families.

NLR Mekong will continue its partnership with 14 Partner Organizations (7 in Vietnam, 5 in Cambodia, 2 in Myanmar) funded by the Liliane Foundation, to carry out the community-based rehabilitation projects for children with disabilities from low-resource families.

