Event Report

Enabling the Disabled
The role of ICTs in the lives of persons with disabilities in Myanmar

21st August 2018
Park Royal Hotel
Yangon, Myanmar

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Introduction

Ten percent of the world's population (nearly one billion people) lived with at least one form of disability in 2011. Moreover, 80 percent of these persons with disabilities (PWDs) lived in developing countries (World Health Organization, 2011). 4.6 percent of Myanmar's population lived with some form of disability in 2014, with more than a quarter of this population with disabilities having multiple disabilities (Department of Population, 2015).

LIRNE*asia*, in partnership with Myanmar Independent Living Initiative (MILI) and Myanmar ICT Development Organization (MIDO) studied qualitative research to scope out how ICTs were being used by different PWDs, and understand their challenges to more analog components of their lives.

The research questions were as follows:

• What are PWDs' understanding of, expectations for, and experience of, using ICTs?
• How were PWDs using ICTs as assistive technologies, if at all?
• What are the barriers to use for PWDs?

Findings of qualitative and Quantitative research conducted in India were disseminated on 22nd August, 2018 at the Park Royal Hotel, Yangon.

LIRNE*asia*

LIRNE*asia* conducts in-depth, policy-relevant research on infrastructure industries including ICT sectors. Their work extends to other sectors such as agriculture and health which can benefit the poorest citizens of the Asia Pacific. Through their work, LIRNEasia documents regional good practices and then disseminates independent, actionable knowledge, to policy makers, regulators, service providers and the media. They have, on many occasions, contributed towards the removal of barriers to access to ICTs for the people of Asia.

MILI

Myanmar Independent Living Initiative (MILI) was established to support the independent living movement of persons with disabilities in Myanmar together with peer groups. Their goal is to build an inclusive and rights-based, barrier-free society where persons with disabilities can live as independently as others, to their full potential.

MIDO

Myanmar ICT for Development Organization (MIDO) aims to narrow the digital gap in Myanmar, use ICTs as a tool to facilitate development and uplift human rights, and encourage the emergence of good Internet policies for ICT users. Its focus is to help people deploy ICTs as a tool to meet core development goals. As such, the core activities are based on providing seminars and capacity building initiatives on ICT awareness, mainly in rural and suburban areas and on relevant development research around Myanmar's ICT sector.

Event participants

More than 60 participants representing Government, Technical Community, Researchers, DPOs, Media and LIRNE*asia* attended the event.

Table 1: List of Participants

Name	Designation	Organization
Anelia Kruwals	Associate	Kantar Public
Aung Htoo Naing	Reporter	The Standard Tips
Aung Ko Ko		MILI
Aung Myat Htun	Freelance Interpreter	
Aung Myo Min		MAGIC Event Management
Aung Lwin Oo	Developer	School for the Blind
Aung Soe Win	Vice Principle	School for the Blind
Bobbys		Phandegar (IT)
Daw Aye Aye Win	Assistant Director	DSW
Daw Khin Khin Soe	Principal	DSW
Daw Naw Lay Saw Htoo	Vice Principal	DSW
Daw Than Than Aye		Hlague DPO
Daw That Mar Soe Swe	Sign Language Interpreter	DSW
Gayani Hurulle	Research Manager	LIRNEasia
Han Min Oo	Junior Associate	Phandegar
Henry	Freelance Interpreter	
Hnin Thidar Thein	SI Supporter	

Hnin Eo Lwing	Research Consultant	Kantar Public
Htaike Htaike Aung	CEO	MIDO (EP)
Htee Wo Wah	Executive Director	MILI
Htet Myat Soe		Magic Event Management
Htet Su Su Hlaing	Senior Project Assistant	MIDO
Jason Copland	General Manager	Kantar Public
Jonn Honnel	Consultant	
Kary Myat Kyaw	Programe Assistant	MIDO
Kattie Bartholomew		Kantar Public
Kaung Htet Naing		Future Stars
Kay Khine Soe	Admin, HR and Finance Director	MILI
Khin Khin Soe	Aduld Disahled	
Khine Lun	MNAB	
Ko Aung Lwin Oo	School for the Blind	
La Ring	Country Representative	Freedom Hague
Lwin Myo Htun	Chief Instructor	AAR
Ma Ei Ei Naung	Assistant Editor	
Ma Gamani		MIDO
Ma Hini Wai		MIDO
Ma Su Myat Thander		MIDO
Ma Thazin Thiri Khit	Member	
Myo Min Aung	Program Coordinator	MIDO
Naing Thein Kim	Senior Research Executive	Kantar Public
Namali Premawardhana	Communication Specialist	LIRNE*asia*
Naw Sae Sae Aye		DSW
Naw Htun		Mary Chapman School for Deaf
Nay Lin Soe	Executive Director	MILI
Nelinkerg	Researcher	Kantar Public
Niang Theih Kim	Senior Research Executive	Kantar Public
Ngwa Tar	Teacher	LLDD
Nwar Kay	Teacher	LLDD
Nyi Nyi Maung	Project Assistant	Myanmar Deaf Community Development Association (MDCDA)
Rory Mungoven	Director	ILO
Sai Kyi Zaw Soe	Researcher	
Samali Perera	Junior Researcher	LIRNEasia
Saw Manine Paung	Audio - Engineer	MILI
Saw O Zar Gay		LLDD
Su Myat New	Associate	Myanmar Christian Fellow of the Blind (MCFB)
Tha Uke	Eanaging Director	ECDC
Thandar Aung	Senior Research Executive	Kantar Public
Than Win Aung	Freelance Interpreter	

Thazin Thiri Khitt	Member	Future Band
Thet Thet Mar Soe Shew	Principal	School for the Deaf
Thin Thin Htun	Staff	Redhill
Yu Htun Ko Ko	Student	ICT TC
U Maung Myint	MICI	
U Myint Sein	ICT TC (Assistant Manager)	
Yadanar	Program Director	MIDO
Yatanar Htun	Co-Founder	MIDO
Yu Ya Thu	CEO	MILI
Zar Chi Hlaing	Finance Manager	MILI

Table 2: Attendees from Government

Name	Designation
U Kyaw Min Han	MP
U Nanda Kyaw Aung	MP
U Zaw Win Khing	MP

Table 3: Attendees from Media outlets

Medium	Institution	Name
Print Media	Health Digest Journal	Ei Ei Naung
	The Myanmar Times Daily	Hmue Angel
	The Standard Time	Aung Htoo Naing
	Pyi Myanmar/Ar Yawr Gan Magazine	Min Aike
	Snap Shot News Journal	Min Htut
Broadcast	MRTV-4	Kyaw Khaung Htay
Online Media / Facebook Page	The Ladies News	Hla Myo Maung
	Health Care	Htet Eindra
	Tomorrow	Saw Yati Naing
	Unity Journal TV	Htay Ma Ma
	The Standard Time Digital	Phyo Wai
	Stun Online	Ko Saline
	I see Media	
	Democracy Today	Thu Thu Sett Lwin
	Freedom House	Henny
	Myanmar Cele Channel	Phyo Wai

Event proceedings

The event was organized to disseminate the findings of the research, "ICTs and Disability", conducted by LIRNEasia in collaboration with Myanmar Independent Living Initiative (MILI) and Myanmar ICT for Development Organization (MIDO).

Mrs Yu Yu Swe , former Director of Department of Social Welfare and Coordinator of MILI briefed the event .

Nay Lin Soe , Executive Direcor , (MILI) explained the status of the disabled people in Myanmar according to the census reports and also spoke on the help of mobile phones for the disabled.

Gayani Hurulle, Research Manager of LIRNEasia presented the research findings and recommendations. The Panel discussion was significant element of the event as it brought the light to the disabled to broaden their lifestyle.

Table 4 : Event Proceedings

Date	Session Details
1000 - 1030	Registration
1040 - 1040	Welcome and Opening Remarks – Nay Lin Soe , MILI
1040 - 1115	Presentation of Findings and launch of event report– Gayani Hurulle , LIRNE*asia*

1115 - 1200	Panel Discussion
	Moderated by Htaike Htaike Aung , MIDO
	   - Gayani Hurulle – LIRNE*asia*
	   - Yu Ya Thu - MILI
	   - Yatanar Htun – MIDO
	   - Sai Kyi Zin Soe -
	   - Zaw Win Naing – MP of Yangon Parliment

1200 onwards	Refreshments

Annex 1: Media Coverage

Table 5 : Media Coverage

Date	Name of Publication	Title	Type of Publication
24/08/2018	Tomorrow	MILI Director : I would like to see opportunities for disables to be able to do what everyone does through technology	Facebook
22/08/2018	iSee Media	ICT report launch for disabled persons in Myanmar	Facebook
22/08/2018	Standard Media	LIRNE*asia* launched ICT report for disabled persons in Myanmar	Facebook
21/08/2018	The Ladies	LIRNE*asia* reports disables are solving daily problem using mobile phones and the internet. But we need to make them easier.	Facebook
25/08/2018	Health Care Journal	MILI Director : I would like to see opportunities for disables to be able to do what everyone does through technology	Facebook
25/08/2018	Unity	ICT report launch for disabled persons in Myanmar	Facebook
25/08/2018	Myanmar Times	Report shows ICT products and tools are not accessible yet for disables	Print
29/08/2018	Health Digest	ICT usage report launch for disabled persons in Myanmar	Print
03/09/2018	Snap Shot	Conference held on ICT sector development for disables in Myanmar	Print
	MRTV-4		TV

Annex 2: Discussion points from panel discussion

Panelist Name	Discussion Points
Yu Ya Thu	• She spoke about the current situation with the data from Department of Social Affairs - 85% of the disabled community is not working as they do not have much job opportunities in Myanmar - 53% of the disabled community could not attend

to the primary education
- Only 2% of the disabled community would be fortunate to attend to a degree level.
- Even though the government imposed a policy in 2005, still disabled children are acing so many difficulties in education system.
  - Applications rejected for schools
  - No much facilities in practical education same as for the other children
  - Teachers are not fully provided with all the equipment
- She also mentioned the status is better than the past, but still the government (Ministry of social welfare) has to take initiatives to provide facilities and the civil society should be aware of whether all the initiatives are really functioning.
  - ICT facilities to schools
  - Vocational schools for the disabled

- She also invited the business community to allow the PWDs to work, as they are ready to work.
  - Requested to incorporate the disabled access to the buildings, and a fair quota should be allocated for the PWDs.
  - Highlighted that the policy laws are not much supportive for PWDs to work in the business world. The laws should be re-addressed to make firm policies.
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Gayani Hurulle	• This is the first research, which was ever carried out in Myanmar.
	• With limited resources PWDs were dropped unfortunately from the corporate world
	• Policy implementation is very low.
	• ICTs use varied by the type of disability, but common mode is mobile phones.
	• Some respondents were not able to buy a smart phone even.
	• Data packages are not affordable to persons with hearing disability.
	• Facebook is most popular social media, and should have paid more attention on FB
	• Text to speech accessibility is not available in Myanmar language and lack of Unicode compatible font hindering use by PWDs
	   - Zawgyi is the commonly used font in Myanmar. But it is not Unicode compatible, hence not readable by screen readers.
	   - Local language text to speech function is not fully workable
	• The price for 1GB is low in Myanmar when compared with the other countries in the region. By the meantime GNI is also less, So PWDs cannot affordable Regulators have to fill the gap.
	• PWDs are not aware about their rights too.

Zaw Win Naing	• There is a gap between the available policies and the initiatives. • Government has to take actions to fill the gap together with the community. • 2.3 million of the population is disabled and it is a huge amount for a country. • There is no any national committee at the moment. • Telecom Regulators should provide the best packages instead of the more internet packages for PWDs
Sai Kyi Zin Soe	• Role of telecom regulators and operators are critical in these matters. • USF targeted solutions will do a better service. • Telecom regulators consider and target on economical benefits only. • They do not work for charity. • But fair quota should be given to the PWDs with better incentives. • All the systems should be changed to inclusive systems.

	- The Current education system to a inclusive education system • Technical experts should come to the scenario and they should be also encouraged by proper involvement of the government.
Yatanar Htun	• Technical experts have work for civil people to give better connectivity. • ICT sector should be inclusive in all aspects. • The job opportunities should be created for the PWDs too • The new laws should be enabled immediately. • The current laws should be re-addressed moreover. • Need to activate all the recommendations into the reality by working together.