

ANNUAL REPORT

2023



Open Letter

Action to Community Development Institute (ACDC), has consistently participated actively in the Vietnamese network of organizations for persons with disabilities in Vietnam over the years. With the desire to be one of the pioneering organizations in Vietnam regarding advocacy policies for persons with disabilities, ACDC has made continuous efforts to improve the quality of programs, projects, and activities to support persons with disabilities.



In 2023, we made significant progress, with more than 5,500 people whose awareness about persons with disabilities was raised through policy advocacy activities, media events, etc. Nearly 1,500 persons with disabilities and their families received support services provided by ACDC in such areas as legal counsel; 10 models were implemented to support persons with disabilities in rehabilitation, medical care, education, livelihoods, etc. The network of persons with disabilities across the country was also enhanced, and forums were conducted regularly for discussing and sharing experiences.

Another year has passed, and ACDC continues the journey of “Sharing vision, bringing empowerment” for the Vietnamese persons with disabilities community. ACDC is proud to have left our “footprint” in various areas of their life. All are aimed at an inclusive and equitable life for persons with disabilities. We hope this annual report will provide you with a better overview and understanding of what ACDC accomplished in 2023.

On behalf of ACDC, I would like to express my deep gratitude to all of our partners, sponsors, colleagues, and friends who have always accompanied and supported us. Hopefully, in the coming period, we will continue to be supported and accompanied to build up more quality programs, activities, and products for the inclusion, independent living, and more confident contributions of Vietnamese persons with disabilities in the upcoming development journey.

Yours sincerely,

Nguyen Thi Lan Anh - Director

Action to Community Development Institute (ACDC)



ABOUT ACDC

Action to Community Development Institute (ACDC), formerly known as **Action to Community Development Center (ACDC)**, is a local non-governmental organization established in 2011. ACCD works for and belongs to persons with disabilities in Vietnam and supports persons with disabilities as well as other disadvantaged groups in the community in many aspects of life.

ACDC is also an organization of persons with disabilities and for persons with disabilities, promoting and supporting the activities of all partners who provide services to support persons with disabilities, improve life quality, aim for their equal status, ability to live independently, integrate into the community, ability to contribute more and more effectively to the society under the motto “leaving no one behind”.

ACDC’s headquarters is situated in Hanoi and 3 project offices are in provinces namely Quang Tri, Thua Thien Hue, and Quang Nam.

VISION 2030



ACDC is a reputable organization in improving life quality and promoting the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities and disadvantaged groups.

MISSION



ACDC is committed to contributing to the inclusion and equity of persons with disabilities and disadvantaged groups through activities that ensure rights and promote supporting models.





KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

OBJECTIVE 1: CONTRIBUTE TO CHANGING THE SOCIETY'S AWARENESS OF DISABILITY

In 2023, ACDC organized **100 training courses; 06 workshops; 18 media events for 5.511 people** from state management agencies, service-providing units, units supporting persons with disabilities, persons with disabilities and their families in provinces and cities nationwide through projects, in which:



4.607 people were persons with disabilities and their family members;



765 people were from legal establishment and enforcement agencies;



139 people were from businesses and press agencies.

FEATURED ACTIVITIES

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Training care teams for persons with disabilities in the community

To help persons with disabilities perform their daily activities well, based on the human resources formed since the 2022 project, ACDC continued to support building and developing a network of inter-line care teams for persons with disabilities from the provincial and district levels to commune level and at persons with disabilities families. Aiming for the sustainable design of care activities for persons with disabilities, ACDC organized training courses for the provincial and district-level training of trainers (TOT) in the project provinces. The TOT team consisted of **46 provincial and district-level health workers** related to persons with disabilities such as Doctors, Bachelors of Rehabilitation/Physiotherapy/Therapeutic Activities, nurses from 10 District Medical Centers and Provincial Rehabilitation Hospitals in 03 provinces namely Quang Nam – Thua Thien Hue – Quang Tri. This was the core team to support persons with disabilities family members. The training program focused on topics related to knowledge and techniques of caring for persons with disabilities, teaching skills, methods of goal setting and planning. After that, this core team continued to share what they learned with the home-based care team of **343 commune-level health workers**, as well as providing training on 4 groups of aforementioned care skills. Following that, thanks to this home-based care team, **1.225 family members of persons with disabilities** could improve their understanding and practice skills to care for and support persons with disabilities to perform daily activities.

Dr. Le Duc Khien - A medical staff in the Health Station in Hien Thanh commune, Vinh Linh district, Quang Tri province shared: “By taking part in this training session, I gained more knowledge about regular activities performed by those with disabilities, like using a wheelchair, crutches, and canes, etc. The training course gave me the opportunity to enhance my profession and my understanding of persons with disabilities, and I also learned how to care for these individuals when they visit the Station for medical examinations and treatment. I'll continue discussing and sharing this information with my coworkers in meetings at the Station so they can apply for their jobs too.”

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OBJECTIVE 2: IMPROVE LAWS AND POLICIES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

- ✓ **02** Documents with support from ACDC in the development process were issued.
- ✓ **07** Policy issues
- ✓ **06** Policy-related monitoring reports
- ✓ **01** Research on the policy to protect children with disabilities
- ✓ **01** Dataset on the needs of using assistive devices
- ✓ **01** Report on the need for assistive devices



FEATURED ACTIVITIES

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Local representatives of persons with disabilities actively contributed to the review/evaluation of legislation and policies on persons with disabilities

In the last 04 months of 2023, through the projects, ACDC promoted the active participation of persons with disabilities in 02 provinces including Kon Tum and Binh Dinh in reviewing and commenting on 01 Report on the Implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in Vietnam chaired by the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs and 01 Draft Revised Law on Health Insurance - Seminar on Assistive Devices.

“Assistive devices are essential for persons with disabilities. However, most persons with disabilities face some barriers that limit their access to these devices, for instance, they are not able to afford the equipment due to low income, or the devices are not covered by health insurance. Therefore, from the perspective of persons with disabilities in the localities, I propose that the Law on Health Insurance should provide financial support to pay for assistive devices for persons with disabilities. In addition, the Ministry of Health should recommend expanding sources of payment for these devices, including the state budget and social protection budget during the discussion of amendments and supplements to the Law on persons with disabilities in the coming period.” – said Mr. Nguyen Trong Vuong – a representative of persons with disabilities in Phu My district, Binh Dinh province.

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OBJECTIVE 3: PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION OF SUPPORTING SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



Number of deployed models: **10 models**, including:

- ✓ **02** Accessible models (installation for increased accessibility of buses and design of accessible bus station model)
- ✓ **01** Transition house model
- ✓ **01** Independent living model
- ✓ **01** Legal counseling model
- ✓ **01** Shelter model
- ✓ **01** Therapeutic spa model
- ✓ **01** Rehabilitation model at home and health station
- ✓ **01** Home-based care model
- ✓ **01** Loan for livelihood improvement model



FEATURED ACTIVITIES

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Improving independent living and community inclusion skills for persons with disabilities

With the experience of implementing the independent living model of persons with disabilities gained from other projects, in 2023, ACDC continued to conduct activities to enhance independent living and community integration skills for persons with disabilities in the Inclusion 1 project. **200** persons with disabilities and their families were visited and exchanged information/assessed the level of independent living at home by the peer counselors and staff of the Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs).

What is worthy of pride and distinct from other models is that ACDC built and developed **a team of counselors who are also persons with disabilities** with knowledge and skills on Independent Living/Disability Inclusion/Prevention of Gender-based Violence as well as some persons with disabilities-related policies. Therefore, this team could understand, empathize, share, inspire, and build trust when advising persons with disabilities.

“Previously, my family thought that Huy had arm and leg disabilities, so he was unable to work and had difficulty accessing transportation; and we just let him stay at home. I was impressed by the stories of other persons with disabilities that the counselors had told as well as their own stories. With their advice and support, my family asked for a wheelchair. Now he can go out and socialize with friends and others. I hope that he will be happier and more independent. Thank you very much to the counselors who are also persons with disabilities!” – Said mother of Mr. Nguyen Van Huy, a person with mobility disability in Vinh Lam Commune, Vinh Linh District, Quang Tri Province.

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OBJECTIVE 4: SUPPORT BUILDING, DEVELOPING, AND SUSTAINING NETWORKS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, AND BRING THEIR VOICES TO THE WORLD



25 turns of OPDs and groups of persons with disabilities receiving technical assistance and capacity-building support.



43 Number of persons with disabilities participating in national policy forums and initiatives:

FEATURED ACTIVITIES

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Establishing Clubs of Women with Disabilities

In 2023, through projects, ACDC supported the establishment of **03 new Clubs of Women with Disabilities (WWDs' Clubs)** including WWDs' Club in Thang Binh District, Quang Nam Province in July 2023; WWDs' Club in Hue City, Thua Thien Hue Province in August 2023; WWDs' Club in Trieu Phong District, Quang Tri Province in August 2023, with a total membership of **104 women with disabilities**.

By December 2023, 06 WWDs' Clubs in Quang Nam Province, Thua Thien Hue Province and Quang Tri Province had organized **37 regular seminars**, attracting **1.289** turns of member participation.

Ms. Ha Thi Tuyet – Chairwoman of WWDs' Club in Vinh Linh District, Quang Tri Province said: *“Although our club has only been established for more than 01 year, with the active support from ACDC project and District-level Women's Union, we have made many positive changes, for instance, monthly activities with diverse topics such as prevention of gender-based violence, independent living of persons with disabilities, confidence and decision-making, raising healthy/well-behaved children, learning to make flowers for extra income, etc..*

We have come together to share sweetness and bitterness, learn from each other, and take the opportunity to connect with women inside and outside the district. As a result, women in our club have become more confident to promote their abilities in work, family life as well as the society. This change has impacted other women with disabilities and led to the increase in the number of participants of the club...”



OBJECTIVE 5: DEVELOP ACDC'S CAPACITY

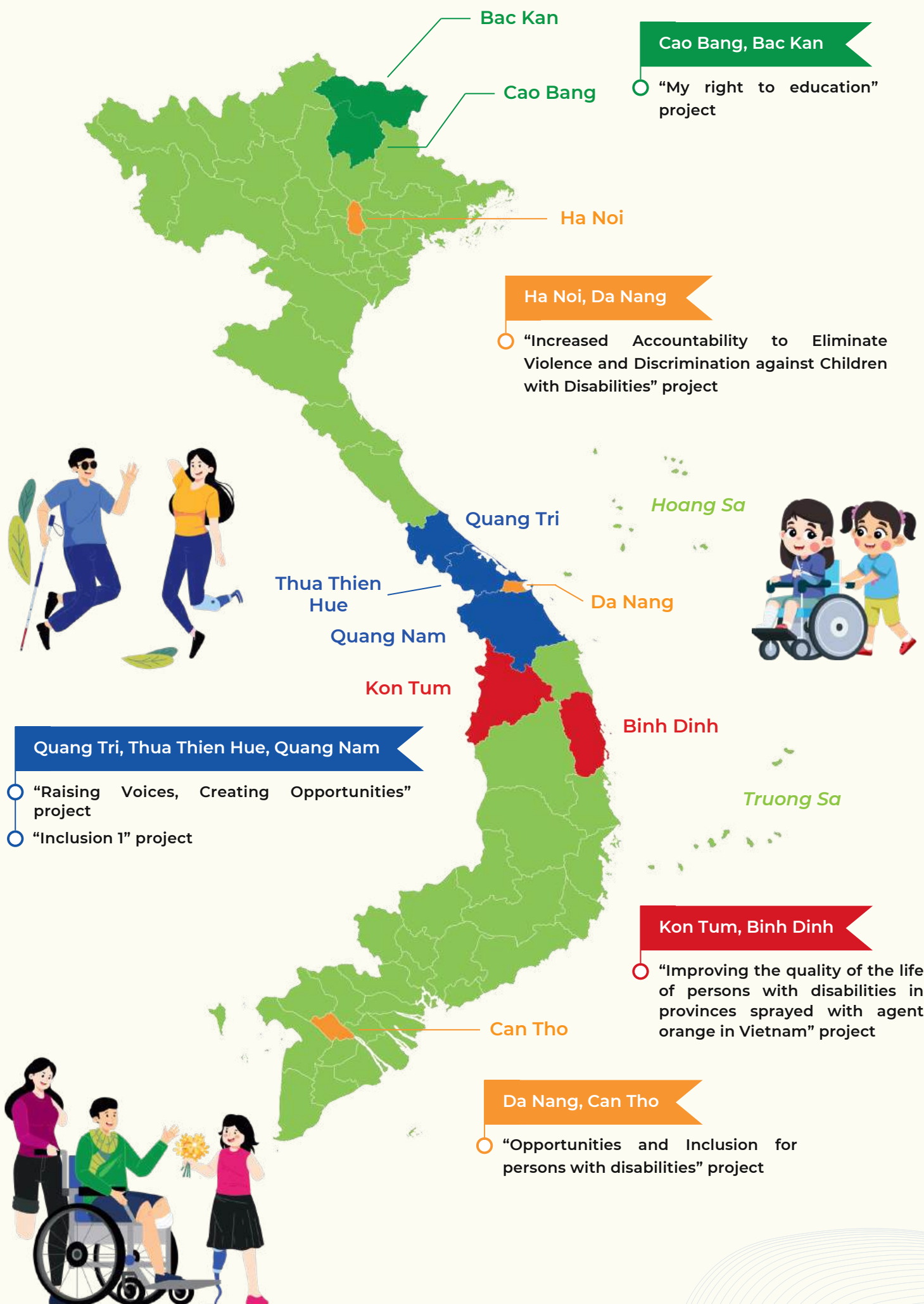
- **45 employees** are working full-time, of which **20% are persons with disabilities** with full knowledge and skills in supporting persons with disabilities. **More than 90% of ACDC staff received training in social work and disability inclusion.** In addition, there are **17 field staff in provinces comprising** Thua Thien Hue, Quang Tri, Quang Nam, Binh Dinh and Kon Tum.
- **620 turns of experts** from central to local levels accompanied the project.
- **02 volunteers/interns.**

In 2023, ACDC maintained and recruited knowledgeable, dedicated, and experienced personnel in the fields of disability, project management and implementation, legal issues, policies, monitoring – and evaluation, etc. The project staff also worked closely with experienced experts in legal issues, health – rehabilitation, accessibility, gender-based violence, etc., to perform such tasks as research, document development, policy feedback, legal document development, training courses, etc. for persons with disabilities, their families and related agencies.





MAJOR PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS





HIGHLIGHTS

mm 2023



1. Legal counseling and policy advocacy

► **Legal counseling:** In 2023, ACDC counseled nearly **1.500** turns of persons with disabilities and their families in different forms. The counseled cases were related to many fields, of which the most concerning one was social protection, followed by such fields as loans, land, education – vocational training, health insurance – social insurance, labor – employment, etc.



► **Policy advocacy:** In 2023, ACDC participated in researching, developing legal documents, commenting on as well as recommending amendments and supplements to complete persons with disabilities-related policies in different fields, and achieved remarkable results as follows:

◆ **02 documents with support from ACDC in the development process were issued:**

- 01 Guidance on Rehabilitation in Transition Zones issued by the Minister of Health (MOH) pursuant to Decision No. 2762/QĐ-BYT dated July 04, 2023. This document was widely disseminated and shared by MOH to medical facilities in 63 provinces and cities through related workshops and trainings.
- 01 Guideline on universal design criteria for road sector was adopted by the Ministry of Transport and issued on November 07, 2023 under Decision No. 12622/BGTĐT-VT.

◆ **06 monitoring reports** on policy topics which ACDC participated in implementing (including 05 provincial level reports and 01 central level report on the following topics: access to public construction; study to propose assessing the impact of policies that suggested developing the *Law on amending and supplementing several articles of the Law on Persons with Disabilities*).

◆ **01 research** on policies to protect children with disabilities.

◆ **44 technical processes on rehabilitation** by orthopedic rehabilitation instruments were unanimously promulgated by the acceptance council.

◆ **01 data set** on the needs for assistive devices of **741** persons with disabilities in Da Nang city and **867** persons with disabilities in Quang Ngai province.

- ◆ **01 report** on the need for assistive devices for persons with disabilities and recommendations for Law on Health Insurance and Law on Persons with Disabilities.
- ◆ **07 policy issues** proposed by ACDC **were accepted for amendment**, including 05 proposals recognized by the Department of Legal Affairs and Ministry of Health in Law on Medical Examination and Treatment and 02 proposals recorded in the Draft Decree guiding Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in medical examination and treatment; and the right to access information and facilities in medical facilities.
- ◆ **In particular**, from 2019 to the end of 2022, ACDC continuously participated in and accompanied relevant units to propose and comment to amend and supplement several provisions in Law on Medical Examination and Treatment 2009 (focusing on persons with disabilities-related policies). Accordingly, several comments of ACDC related to ensuring persons with disabilities' legitimate rights and interests were considered by the agency in charge of drafting in completing the contents of the Law on Medical Examination and Treatment (amended) which was approved by the National Assembly on January 09, 2023, effective from January 01, 2024, notably the following contents: (i) Adding persons with extremely significant disabilities to the priority list for medical examination and treatment (Clause 2, Article 3); (ii) Supplementing into the state's general policy: Affirming that persons with disabilities are among the prioritized groups in allocating the state budget for medical examination and treatment (Point b, Clause 2, Article 4); (iii) Acknowledging and assigning the government to detail conditions for ensuring the use of language for patients with language disabilities in medical examination and treatment (Clause 4, Article 21).

2. Scaling up the Transition House model for persons with disabilities

Following the success of the Transition House model that was deployed in Quang Nam, Quang Tri, and Thua Thien Hue, on September 25, 2023, the inauguration and handover ceremony for the Transition House at Hanoi University of Public Health (HUPH) was held. This is **the first construction in Hanoi** and the **seventh Transition House** established by ACDC with funding from USAID. The House is equipped with small items for patients to take care of themselves and practice daily activities like kitchen utensils (tableware, toiletries, fabrics), mobility aids (wheelchairs), navigation tools (shower chairs), etc.



Hanoi is home to first-level hospitals as well as medical examination and treatment facilities, while there is a high demand for rehabilitation. The Transition House at HUPH has been expected to have a greater impact at the national level since HUPH is a leading university for public health research and

training, including rehabilitation training. The university also has a polyclinic that provides a wide range of medical examination and treatment services with a strategy to develop rehabilitation services as the clinic's core service for the community, while remaining an educational institution for lecturers, researchers, and students nationwide.

3. Organizing the nationwide children's art contest called "Our Voices"

The "Our Voices" art contest ran from June 24 to August 30, 2023. It attracted many children aged 06 to 17 who shared a passion for painting and diverse creative ideas. This activity was organized within the framework of the "Increased Accountability to Eliminate Violence and Discrimination against Children with Disabilities" (AVAC) project implemented by ACDC funded by Save the Children Hong Kong and coordinated by Save the Children Vietnam.

For more than 03 months, the Organizing Committee constantly strived to spread the contest to the community, from social media to live events. At the end of the contest, the committee received **186 submissions**. The paintings were filled with rich and emotional



colors, along with diverse and creative ideas. **58%** of participants belonged to the Green Bamboo category (11-17 years old), **42%** fit into the Bamboo shoots category (6-10 years old). In terms of topics, **20%** of the works depicted acts of physical and mental violence against children; **4%** focused on measures to prevent physical, mental violence and discrimination against children; **49%** demonstrated good images

and stories about families, schools, online environment which is safe and does not contain violence against children; **28%** delivered messages to the community about protecting children, especially children with disabilities, girls, disadvantaged children and LGBT children so that they could live in a safe and equal environment. Particularly, the Organizing Committee received **65** recommendations from the participants through the paintings' messages.

As the final result, the Organizing Committee awarded **02** first prizes, **04** second prizes, **07** third prizes, **16** consolation prizes and **01** online voting prize in both categories for the best artworks.

The contest has left unforgettable impressions, deep emotions, joy and happiness for children's parents, teachers, and representatives of organizations through the paintings that are rich in vitality and human values, expressing children's messages about raising their voices and protecting their rights.

4. Running with persons with disabilities “No distance – No limitation 2023” event



On the morning of September 23, 2023, ACDC collaborated with the authority of Tam Ky city, Quang Nam to organize the running with persons with disabilities event with the theme “No distance – No limitation” in this province. This activity aimed to raise public awareness about persons with

disabilities and disability issues; enhance opportunities, empower persons with disabilities, remove barriers, promote the equal inclusion of persons with disabilities in society, and raise funds for activities to support persons with disabilities in the province.

The event was attended by more than **600 people**, including **322 persons with disabilities** from Thua Thien Hue, Quang Tri, and Quang Nam, while accompanied by departments, organizations, units and localities of Quang Nam province such as the Department of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs; Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism; Department of Health; Department of Foreign Affairs; Provincial Police; Provincial Union; Tam Ky City People's Committee, etc. In particular, the event also attracted the participation of many officials from agencies

and units, as well as residents. At the end of the event, the Organizing Committee mobilized about 50 million VND and 20 wheelchairs to support the construction of accessible works in Quang Nam province, including ramps and accessible toilets for persons with disabilities.

Bright smiles, hot sweats, and warm hand-holding, etc., of all participants have become an inspiration to arouse the sports and physical health training movement in the community, especially for persons with disabilities. Above all, these moments have spread the message about persons with disabilities' capacity and abilities, joining hands to build an inclusive and accessible society for all. A world with "No distance, no limitation".

5. Guideline on universal design criteria for road sector

After many advocacy efforts, on November 07, 2023, the Ministry of Transport issued **Decision No. 12622/BGTVT-VT promulgating a Guideline on universal design criteria for road sector**. The guidance has helped localities not only assess the current availability of the transport system but also effectively implement the Program of Supporting persons with disabilities in accordance with Decision No. 365/QĐ-BGTVT dated March 11, 2021 of the Ministry of Transport, thereby promoting the development of accessible transport in Vietnam.

Following the research results in the period of 2019 – 2020, ACDC cooperated with the Transport Development and Strategy Institute (TDSI) – Ministry of Transport in developing the Guideline on universal design criteria for road sector. The main activities carried out in 2022 – 2023 included: field trips to assess the current accessibility of transport and the suitability of applying the set of criteria in Vietnam; review and standardization of the Guideline on universal design criteria for road sector; consultation with specialized, management and implementation units in localities through technical group meetings, consultation workshops, etc.

In addition, thanks to surveying the current situation of accessible transport in localities as a contribution to standardizing the criteria for universal accessible transport and assessing the suitability when applied, localities successfully selected and implemented universal accessible transport models: accessible bus stations and accessible buses.



In 2023, **04 bus stations** were installed with accessible features including 01 new accessible station in Quang Nam Province and 03 renovated stations in Thua Thien Hue Province. Installed accessible items consist of ramps, handrails, priority seats for persons with disabilities, waiting seats, painted logos/signs as identifications of priority seats for wheelchair users, etc.

ACDC also collaborated with local partners in Thua Thien Hue province to install station announcement systems to ensure accessibility to persons with disabilities, including LED screen systems, Bluetooth audio devices, and speakers for **10 buses** of Phuong Trang Bus Lines Joint Stock Company (FUTA), and ramps for **02 double-decker buses** operated by Vietnamtourism Joint Stock Company.

This activity has not only helped persons with disabilities, especially those with hearing and speech disabilities and those with mobility disabilities using wheelchairs to use public transport more conveniently, but also raised awareness of the community, businesses, and state agencies about the implementation of policies related to accessible transport for persons with disabilities.

Simultaneously, localities have also recognized the necessity of developing and promulgating Guideline on universal design criteria for road sector in Vietnam. Some localities, after actual participation, have had ideas of integrating content related to universally accessible transport into their local development plans/strategies.

6. Launching Sunrise House – a safe and friendly place for women and girls with disabilities experiencing violence in Quang Nam Province

On the morning of December 28, 2023, ACDC handed over Sunrise House, a reliable and friendly place for women and girls with disabilities experiencing violence in Quang Nam Province. The house was completed with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) as part of the Inclusion 1 project.



Sunrise House represents a model of providing essential services to support those experiencing gender-based violence, with 1 counseling room and 2 safe rooms. This model was piloted to support the improvement of accessibility to

women and girls with disabilities who were victims of gender-based violence. It was adapted to be fully accessible to persons with disabilities, from walkways, household items to toilets.

The construction of the Sunrise House model began in July 2023 with surveys to assess the accessibility of services to women with disabilities, training, capacity building on gender equality, strengthening knowledge and skills in detection and handling, shift management, the introduction of the shelter model to support persons with disabilities who are at risk and victims of gender-based violence. In addition, for a clearer understanding of the model, the project staff conducted a visit to learn about successful models in providing services to support people suffering from gender-based violence in Vietnam.

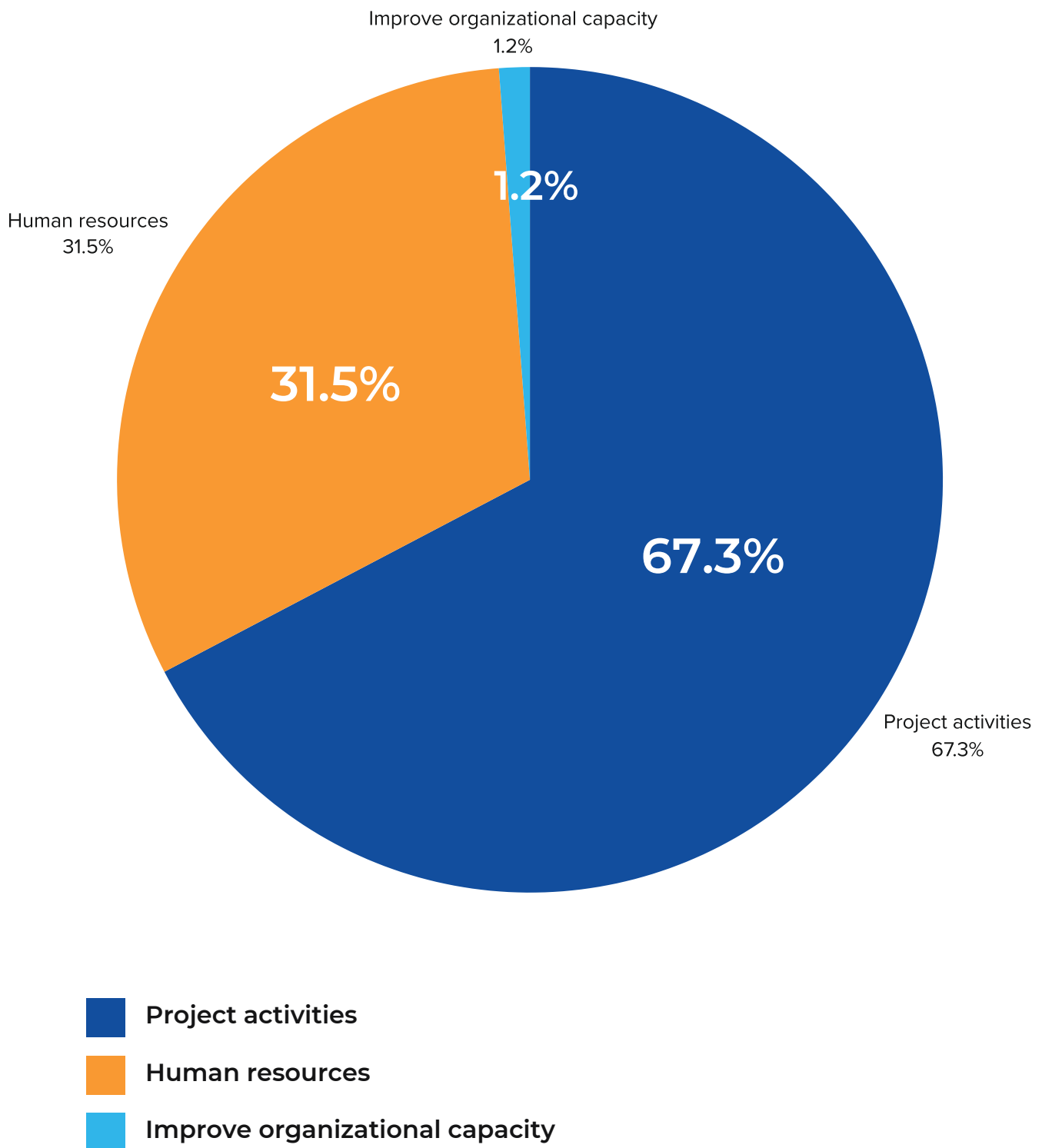
Emphasizing the role of shelters in supporting women and girls with disabilities who experienced gender-based violence, Ms. Nguyen Thi Lan Anh, Director of ACDC said: *“Women or girls with disabilities are always the weakest among the disadvantaged. According to research by ACDC years ago, at least 40% of women and girls with disabilities experienced at least 01 situation of gender-based violence, and they were very confused about where to turn to. Hence, the Sunrise House can act as a safe and friendly shelter for them. Sunrise (Binh Minh in Vietnamese) is the beginning of a new day. We believe that Binh Minh also brings new hope to victims, including women with disabilities. My own belief is that this first Sunrise House will make stakeholders’ cooperation and participation closer, smoother, and more helpful for women and girls with disabilities.”*

The introduction of Sunrise House has demonstrated the Vietnamese government’s implementation of Article 6 in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as part of its commitment to taking action to reduce gender-based violence against women and girls with disabilities, as well as realized Resolution No. 28/NQ-CP dated March 03, 2021 promulgating the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2021 – 2030.



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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Front cover photo: Running with persons with disabilities "No distance – No limitation 2023" event in Tam Ky city, Quang Nam, September 23, 2023.