

## **Journey to University for Deaf and Hard of hearing students**

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Recently, we often hear the message of "An inclusive society for all", which shows a very profound benevolence, especially for people with disabilities. Disability Rights Laws enacted by The Congress in 2010 and the signing of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2014 prove that the Party and the Vietnamese Government have seriously considered and supported people with disabilities in general, and the Deaf and Hard of hearing in particular. However, in the progress of social inclusion, there is no denying that people with disabilities face a lot of obstacles.

According to the Central Population and Housing Census Steering Committee, in 2009, Vietnam had around 2.5 million of the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late-Deafened. The process of inclusive education for the hard of hearing people, from kindergartens to universities, is the same as which for people without hearing disabilities. Special schools for the Deaf end up to secondary level and there are no high schools for deaf students to continue their education. It is true that university is not the only way; however, if qualified deaf students have no places to learn against their will, it will be an enormous disadvantage and great inequity in opportunities for them.

In the last three years, The Center for Research and Education of The Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CED) has successfully supported one deaf student in his secondary education at the special school and integrated education at the Centre for Continuing Education. This year, he got accepted into Nguyen Tat Thanh University. This successful case is very promising, though it doesn't commonly speak for the whole progress of the transition from secondary special education to inclusive high school education. In addition to that, to help all deaf students with their way to universities, we need more supporting sources rather than CED alone. Therefore, the Seminar: "Journey to University for Deaf and Hard of hearing students" was organized by CED for 130 guests on October 30<sup>th</sup> 2016 at General Science Library of Ho Chi Minh City, for the purpose of sharing information, experiences and calling for the cooperation of related parties to support deaf students with their opportunities in universities. The workshop is highly accessible with captioning Vietnamese and sign language interpretation.

The seminar received the attention and participation of honored delegates as:

- Dr. Huynh Cong Minh - Former Director of Education and Training Department in HCM city;
- Ms. Nguyen Tu Du - Deputy Manager of Kindergartens, Deputy Director of Standing Committee, Steering Committee on Education for Children with

Disabilities and Disadvantaged Children, Education and Training Department in HCM city;

- Mr. Le Chu Giang - Representing the Department of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs;
- Mr. Vinh Quoc Bao - Deputy Director of General Science Library of Ho Chi Minh City;
- Mr. Lam Ke Chi – Principal of Centre for Continuing Education in District 1;
- Tran Thi Ngoi – Principal of Hy Vong school in District 1;
- Nguyen Thi Xuan Mai - Principal of Hy Vong school in District 6;
- Mr. Tran Van Le - Director of the Supportive Center for Development of Inclusive Education in Tien Giang;

and representatives of schools and centers; companies; Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation hospital; Non-governmental organizations; Parents, teachers; Social work club, students, representatives of the HCM Deaf club, Tien Giang Deaf club,...

The Press, the broadcast and Television station: HTV, VTV in HCM City, Voice of Vietnam, Vietnam News Agency in HCM City, Tuoi Tre Newspaper, Dan Tri Newspapers, Laws Newspapers,....

The seminar concluded the following key issues:

**The first is:** the success of students with hearing loss in their inclusive education, first of all, depends on themselves. They must have strong will, continuous inquisition in studying, the habit of questioning when not understanding something, and bravely asking for help when needed. Deaf and hard of hearing people themselves are the most important factor to success. In addition, people with hearing loss should also equip with skills such as lips reading, independent-living skills and more ... to be easy to integrate.

**The second is the role of the family:** Parents should detect their children's condition early and equip them with hearing aids at the young ages. Family also has to accept the situation no matter what, and puts efforts to raise deaf children. Throughout the development of children, the proper attention and support are a must, which means parents should accompany with their children in learning, doing, playing and always got their back. It's important to encourage children to be independent rather than help them in everything. Moreover, parents have to search for information and knowledge to teach children, and seek supports from the community. When the children are taking the inclusive education, family should support and care for the children to keep up with the programs at schools.

**Thirdly, the role of schools and teachers:** Representatives of High Schools emphasized the greater difficulties of the programs and encouraged deaf and hard of hearing students who pursue inclusive education to study with double efforts, compared to the students with normal hearing, to obtain real knowledge. Besides, teachers of inclusive schools and

supportive centers for development of inclusive education should work together to come up with proper educational plans for children with hearing loss.

**Fourthly, the role of the society and community:** Society should recognize the efforts of deaf students and help them in possible abilities.

**Fifthly:** Although the Government has a policy of exemption of high-school graduate examination for deaf and hard of hearing students with fair grades, we still need supporting policies to establish special high school for deaf students.

The collaboration in education among the three environments: family, school and society is extremely necessary to help students with disabilities access inclusive education in general, and students with hearing loss pursue high education in particular.

The spirit of the seminar can be summarized as follows: Ho Chi Minh City has the largest number of special schools for the Deaf, supportive centers for development of inclusive education, and students with disabilities who participate in inclusive education in Viet Nam. In accordance with such favorable conditions, deaf and hard of hearing students must pay great efforts to gain accessibility to University. /.





