

Handbook for Parents: Preparing Children with a Visual Impairment to Work in the Formal Sector



By



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Introduction

Job opportunities in the formal sector for individuals with a visual impairment remain extremely limited. This situation certainly deserves attention, given that such opportunities are a basic human right. There are three handbooks in this series that are designed to promote formal sector employment for people with visual disabilities.

The first handbook is for visually impaired individuals who want to work in the formal sector; the second is a guidebook for employers hiring visually impaired individuals; and the third is a handbook for parents as part of the support system preparing their visually impaired children for formal employment.

The third publication in this series of handbooks will help parents by offering information on various aspects of visual impairment, including rights, accessibility, and available assistive technologies. This handbook also provides guidance for parents in helping their children develop essential skills for daily life and the workplace, raising parents' awareness of their children's potential and the importance of inclusive education and training, promoting the independence of children. Parents can obtain tips on how to encourage their children to be self-sufficient in various aspects of life and encourage parents to connect with support groups, organizations, and communities that can provide assistance and share experiences.

Through this handbook, parents are encouraged to find strategies for supporting their children both emotionally and practically, as well as ways to address potential challenges. Moreover, they can benefit from stories and testimonies from persons with visual impairments who have achieved success to inspire both parents and children.

The compilation of this series of guidebooks is inseparable from the results of a collaborative study titled **“The Keys to Success for Persons with Visual Impairments Working in the Formal Sector”** conducted in 2024 in three countries (Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam) by the Mitra Netra Foundation, Resource for the Blind Inc. (RBI), and Sao Mai for the Blind. This study was fully supported by the Nippon Foundation.

We hope that this handbook will not only benefit the three target groups (visually impaired individuals, employers, and parents), but also all other stakeholders, including disability rights experts and academics who are interested in the issue of formal sector employment for visually impaired individuals. This is expected to be only the first series of handbooks we develop to serve as inspiration for visually impaired individuals to strengthen their resolve to work in the formal sector. This concludes our introduction, and we wish you all the best in using this handbook as a reference. Enjoy the book and happy reading.

Chapter 1:

Recognizing the Potential and interest of Children with Visual Impairments and Providing Motivation

1.1. Recognizing the Potential of Children Visual Impairments

Parents of children with visual impairments can play a crucial role in detecting their children's talents and interests from school age. Here are some strategies for identifying and nurturing these abilities:

1. Observation and Engagement

- Observe how children engage in different activities at home and school. Note what excites them or catches their attention.
- Encourage exploration through play. Different toys, games, and sensory activities can reveal interests.

2. Encouraging Variety

- Introduce a range of activities such as music, art, sports, and technology. This helps children discover what they enjoy and excel at.
- Enroll them in community programs or workshops designed for children with visual impairments.

3. Listening and Communication

- Create a safe space for children to express their feelings about various activities. Ask open-ended questions about what they enjoy and why.
- Encourage children to share their thoughts on new experiences, helping parents understand their preferences.

4. Collaboration with Educators

- Communicate regularly with teachers and special educators who can provide insights into the child's strengths and interests observed in the classroom.
- Utilize Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings to discuss goals that align with your child's interests.

5. Skill Development

- Support children in areas where they show natural talent, whether in academics, arts, or sports.

- Encourage participation in skill-building activities that match their interests, helping them gain confidence.

6. Encouraging Social Interaction

- Facilitate interactions with peers to help children discover shared interests and talents in group settings.
- Connect them with mentors or role models who can inspire and guide them in areas of interest.

7. Documenting Progress

- Maintain a journal to document experiences, interests, and progress. This record can help track evolving interests over time.
- Acknowledge and celebrate small accomplishments to motivate children to pursue their interests further.

1.2. Exploring the Interests of Children with Visual Impairments

Exploring the interests of children with visual impairments is geared toward gauging their readiness for the workforce and can be approached through structured and focused steps. Here are several strategies to consider:

1. Identify Talents and Interests

- Introduce children to a variety of activities related to the workplace, such as artistic projects, technical skills, or social skills.
- Observe which activities they enjoy the most and excel at, as well as how they interact in those situations.

2. Education and Training

- Enroll children in training programs that teach skills relevant to careers, such as computer skills, crafts, or time management.
- Consider courses that offer certification in specific fields that align with their interests.

3. Practical Work Experience

- Look for internship or volunteer opportunities that allow children to gain hands-on experience in a work environment.
- Take children to visit various workplaces to see different job types and professional settings.

4. Social Skills Development

- Provide training on communication, collaboration, and other social skills essential for the workplace.

- Conduct mock job interviews or practice workplace scenarios to build confidence and communication skills.

5. Encourage Independence and Responsibility

- Involve children in everyday tasks that teach independence and responsibility, such as planning activities or managing time.
- Help children create a simple career plan outlining the steps needed to achieve their goals.

6. Mentoring and Support

- Connect children with mentors working in their fields of interest. Mentors can provide valuable insights and guidance.
- Involve parents and educators in the process to provide constructive support and feedback.

7. Evaluation and Reflection

- Offer positive and constructive feedback about children's progress. Discuss what they have learned and interests that have emerged.
- Encourage children to reflect on their experiences and discuss what they enjoyed and what they want to explore further.

1.3 Providing Motivation for Children with Visual Impairment

Parents can motivate children with visual impairments through various supportive strategies as they prepare to enter the job market. Here are some effective ways:

1. Encourage Independence

- Support children in developing skills that foster independence, such as using assistive technology, traveling independently, and managing daily tasks.
- Help children set realistic and attainable goals for their career aspirations, breaking larger goals into smaller, manageable steps.

2. Provide Resources and Support

- Help children explore various career options, resources, and opportunities available for individuals with visual impairments.
- Introduce children to role models or mentors who have successfully navigated a job with visual impairments. Hearing about others' experiences can be inspiring.

3. Foster a Positive Mindset

- Teach children the importance of positive self-talk and affirmations to build confidence and resilience.
- Talk about potential challenges they might face in the workplace, emphasizing that overcoming obstacles is part of the journey.

4. Promote Skill Development

- Support their participation in workshops, training programs, or online courses that enhance their skills and employability.
- Help children practice essential job skills, such as interview techniques, communication skills, and teamwork through role-playing.

5. Create a Supportive Environment

- Encourage open discussions about their career goals and aspirations, ensuring they feel heard and supported.
- Show interest in their job search process, helping them with applications, mock interviews, or networking opportunities.

6. Inspire Through Exposure

- Take children to career fairs, workshops, or events where they can learn about different professions and meet professionals in those fields.
- Suggest volunteering opportunities that align with their interests, helping them gain experience and confidence.

7. Reinforce Resilience

- Equip children with coping strategies to handle rejection or setbacks during their job search.
- Remind children that persistence is key in the job search process and that every experience is a learning opportunity.

8. Celebrate Achievements

- Acknowledge their hard work and celebrate achievements, no matter how small. This reinforces a sense of accomplishment and encourages continued effort.
- Encourage them to keep a journal of their achievements, skills acquired, and positive experiences. This can serve as a source of motivation and reflection.

Chapter 2: Educating and Promoting Independence

Educating and promoting independence for persons with visual impairments, involves several key strategies:

1. Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)

- Develop IEPs that focus on the child's unique strengths, needs, and aspirations. Involve children in setting their own educational goals.
- Continuously assess and update the IEP to reflect changes in children's skills and interests.

2. Accessible Learning Materials

- Provide materials in accessible formats such as large print, audio, or digital formats that are compatible with screen readers, braille.
- Utilize assistive technology tools like speech recognition software and apps designed for visually impaired users.

3. Adaptive Teaching Strategies

- Employ teaching methods that engage multiple senses, using tactile, auditory, and visual elements as appropriate.
- Encourage group activities that foster peer interaction, allowing students to learn from one another.

4. Orientation and Mobility Training

- Provide training to help children navigate their environment confidently and safely, including the use of public transportation, adaptive stick, and other mobility aids.

5. Life Skills Education

- Teach essential life skills such as personal care, cooking, and financial literacy to foster independence.
- Encourage critical thinking and problem-solving through real-life scenarios and hands-on activities.

6. Encouraging Self-Advocacy

- Teach children to express their needs and preferences, helping them to understand their rights and advocate for themselves.

7. Inclusive Environment

- Educate peers and staff about visual impairments to foster an inclusive and supportive school culture.
- Design classrooms to accommodate mobility and accessibility, ensuring safe movement and participation.

8. Extracurricular Activities

- Encourage participation in clubs, sports, and other extracurricular activities that align with children's interests and promote social interaction.
- Facilitating opportunities for involvement in community service or local organizations that support independence.

10. Parental Involvement

- Involve parents in the education process, providing them with resources and training on how to support their child's aspirations and independence at home.

Chapter 3: Being Proactive in Obtaining Information and Providing Maximum Support

3.1 Proactive in Obtaining Information and Providing Maximum Support For Children with Visual Impairment to Get Jobs in Employment sector

Being proactive in obtaining information and providing maximum support involves several strategies that can help kids with visual impairments. Here are some effective approaches that parents should pay attention to:

1. Stay Informed

- Regularly seek out and familiarize yourself with local and national resources available for individuals with visual impairments, such as support organizations, educational programs, and assistive technologies.
- Build relationships with professionals in the field, including educators, therapists, and advocates, to stay updated on best practices and new resources.

2. Engage with Families and Stakeholders

- Establish clear lines of communication with families to understand their needs and concerns. Regular check-ins can help foster a supportive relationship.
- Create a system for gathering feedback from individuals and families regarding the support they receive, allowing for adjustments based on their input.

3. Utilize Technology

- Stay updated on the latest assistive technologies that can enhance learning and daily living for individuals with visual impairments.
- Use online forums, webinars, and social media groups to share information and resources, and to connect with others in the community.

4. Training and Workshops

- Participate in training sessions and workshops to improve your knowledge about visual impairments and effective support strategies.
- Organize or attend workshops that educate families and caregivers on how to support individuals with visual impairments.

5. Community Involvement

- Get involved in community events focused on disability awareness and inclusion, which can provide valuable networking opportunities and resources.
- Attend or organize resource fairs that connect individuals with various support services, tools, and organizations.

3.2 Being Active on Social-Media

How can parents be active on social media to prepare their children for employment?

1. Join Relevant Groups

- Participate in online groups and forums focused on career development, job searching, and specific industries. These can be great for sharing experiences and gathering advice.
- Find groups for parents of children with disabilities or specific needs that discuss employment challenges and strategies.

2. Share Resources

- Regularly share articles, videos, and resources related to job skills, internships, and employment trends.
- Share stories of individuals who have successfully entered the workforce, providing inspiration and practical insights.

4. Promote Skill Development

- Inform others about workshops, webinars, and online courses that focus on job readiness skills, resume writing, and interview preparation.
- Highlight platforms that offer courses on essential skills like communication, teamwork, and technical competencies.

5. Engage in Discussions

- Actively participate in discussions by commenting on posts, asking questions, and sharing personal experiences.
- Encourage engagement by creating polls or asking questions related to career readiness topics.

6. Use Social Media for Networking

- Follow local businesses and organizations that may offer job opportunities or internships for young people, such as Yayasan Mitra Netra (Indonesia), Resources for Blind Inc. (RBI) (the Philippines), and Sao Mai Centre (Vietnam).

- Look for online networking events or job fairs that connect job seekers with employers.

7. Stay Updated on Trends

- Keep up with changes in the job market, emerging fields, and skills that are becoming important in various industries.
- Post articles about job market trends and evolving employment practices that could benefit your network.

9. Foster a Positive Environment

- Foster a sense of community among parents by supporting one another through shared experiences and encouragement.

3.3 Parents Role when Children with Visual Impairment Obtain 'Job Calls'

How parents can help their children with visual impairments obtain 'job calls'? Parents can assist their children with visual impairments in obtaining job calls through several strategic steps. Here are some key actions they can take:

1. Emotional Support

- Provide positive encouragement and reassure children of their abilities. Strong emotional support can enhance their confidence when job searching.
- Discuss potential challenges they may encounter and ways to overcome them, so children feel more prepared.

2. Skills Preparation

- Help children develop the necessary skills for employment, such as communication skills, time management, and relevant technical skills. Parents can contact institutions /organizations that conduct some soft-skill training for children with visual impairment who will work in the employment sector, such as Yayasan Mitra Netra (Indonesia), Resources for Blind Inc. (RBI) (the Philippines), and Sao Mai Centre (Vietnam)
- Conduct practice interviews to help children feel comfortable answering questions and explaining their skills.

3. Use of Assistive Technology

- Ensure children comfortable using assistive technology, such as screen readers and voice recognition software, which will aid them in the job search process.

- Parents can assist children in drafting and updating an accessible resume, and ensure they know how to share it electronically.

4. Finding Job Opportunities

- Leverage the parent's network, friends, or organizations that support individuals with disabilities to discover job opportunities.
- Help children research companies that may have job openings, especially those with inclusion programs for workers with disabilities.

5. Preparation for Job Calls

- Ensure children have a quiet and comfortable place to take job calls, free from distractions.
- Assist children in preparing answers to common questions that employers may ask and help them formulate questions to ask the employers.

6. Follow-Up

- Teach children to send thank-you notes after interviews or job calls as a way to express interest and appreciation.
- Discuss the experience after the job interview to identify what went well and what could be improved in the future.

Chapter 4: Utilizing Available Resources

4.1. Maximize Financial Support

Parents can maximize financial support for preparing their children with visual impairments for the employment sector through several strategic approaches:

1. Utilize Scholarships and Grants

- Look for scholarships specifically for students with disabilities that can help cover tuition, books, and other educational expenses.
- Research grants aimed at supporting individuals with disabilities in vocational training or skill development.

2. Leverage Nonprofit Organizations

- Many nonprofit organizations offer resources, funding, and training programs for individuals with visual impairments. Connect with these organizations for assistance.
- Participate in workshops or training programs provided by nonprofits, often at little to no cost.

3. Budget for Essential Tools

- Allocate funds for assistive technologies that can aid in education and employment, such as screen readers or specialized software.
- Invest in resources for resume building, interview preparation, and other job readiness skills.

4. Encourage Job Shadowing and Internships

- Seek out unpaid internships or job shadowing opportunities that provide practical experience without the financial burden of tuition or fees.
- Utilize personal and professional networks to discover internships that may offer stipends or other financial incentives.

5. Seek Employer Support

- Discuss potential workplace accommodations with employers that may include financial support for necessary tools or training.
- Some companies offer mentorship programs that may include financial support or scholarships for skill development.

6. Plan for Long-Term Financial Security

- Set up special savings accounts or trusts specifically for the child's future education or employment-related expenses.
- Teach financial literacy skills to children to help them manage their finances effectively as they enter the workforce.

7. Engage in Community Resources

- Join community groups or forums focused on disabilities that can provide information about available financial resources.
- Attend community workshops that educate families about financial aid options for individuals with disabilities.

8. Explore Government Assistance Programs

- Investigate local and national disability benefits that provide financial support for individuals with visual impairments.
- Access vocational rehabilitation programs that offer financial aid for training, education, and job placement services.

4.2 Educating Other Family Members to Provide Full Support

Educating other family members to provide full support for children with visual impairments is essential for creating a nurturing and inclusive environment. Here are some effective strategies:

1. Raise Awareness and Understanding

- Provide books, articles, or videos that explain visual impairments and highlight successful stories of individuals with disabilities.
- Organize workshops or informational sessions about visual impairments, covering the challenges and needs of children with these disabilities.

2. Encourage Empathy

- Share personal experiences and anecdotes that illustrate the challenges and triumphs of the child, fostering empathy among family members.
- Engage family members in role-playing exercises to help them understand the child's perspective and daily experiences.

3. Promote Inclusive Activities

- Encourage family members to participate in activities that include children with visual impairments, ensuring they feel included and valued.
- Help family members learn how to adapt games and family activities to accommodate the child's needs, making sure everyone can participate.

4. Teach Practical Skills

- Educate family members on how to assist children with visual impairments effectively, such as guiding them safely in unfamiliar environments or providing verbal descriptions of their surroundings.
- Introduce family members to assistive technologies that such children use, so they can better understand and support their use.

5. Encourage Open Communication

- Hold regular family meetings to discuss children's needs, progress, and any concerns. This fosters a supportive environment where everyone can contribute.
- Encourage family members to listen to children and respect their feelings and preferences, promoting an open dialogue.

6. Foster a Supportive Environment

- Encourage family members to celebrate the child's achievements, no matter how small, reinforcing a positive and supportive atmosphere.
- Educate family members about the importance of patience and understanding, especially during challenging moments.

7. Involve Extended Family

- Provide information and resources to extended family members, helping them understand how they can support the child.
- Organize family gatherings that include activities specifically designed to be accessible and enjoyable for the child.

8. Model Positive Behavior

- Demonstrate inclusive behavior and positive interactions with the child, encouraging other family members to follow suit.
- Highlight moments when family members successfully support the child, reinforcing those behaviors.

9. Provide Ongoing Education

- Encourage family members to seek ongoing education about visual impairments and best practices for supporting the child.
- Share updates on new resources, technologies, and strategies that can enhance support for the child.

4.3 Providing Psychological Support: Sharing and Being Open with Each Other, Especially about Their Children' Careers and Future

Providing psychological support for children with visual impairments, especially regarding their careers and future, involves creating an environment where they feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and concerns. Here are some effective strategies:

1. Encourage Open Communication

- Schedule regular times to talk, allowing them to express their feelings about their career aspirations and any worries they may have.
- Practice active listening by giving them your full attention, validating their feelings, and responding thoughtfully.

2. Create a Safe Space

- Foster a supportive atmosphere where they feel safe to share their thoughts without fear of judgment or criticism.
- Assure them that what they share will be kept confidential, encouraging them to be more open.

3. Discuss Career Options

- Help them explore various career options based on their interests and strengths, discussing the skills and education needed for each.
- Introduce them to stories of individuals with visual impairments who have successfully navigated their careers, inspiring them to pursue their goals.

4. Address Concerns and Fears

- Talk about potential challenges they may face in the workforce, and discuss strategies to overcome these obstacles.
- Help them brainstorm solutions to specific concerns, empowering them to take an active role in planning their future.

5. Promote Self-Advocacy

- Encourage them to express their needs and preferences in various situations, fostering a sense of control over their lives and careers.
- Role-play scenarios where they might need to advocate for themselves, such as during job interviews or workplace accommodations.

6. Set Goals Together

- Engage in goal-setting activities to help them articulate their career aspirations and the steps needed to achieve them.

- Recognize and celebrate their achievements, no matter how small, reinforcing their sense of progress.

7. Involve Other Family Members

- Encourage family discussions about careers, allowing them to hear different perspectives and experiences from relatives.
- Help them connect with other family members or friends who can offer guidance and encouragement.

8. Promote Resilience and Coping Skills

- Equip them with coping strategies for handling setbacks and disappointments in their career journey.
- Share your own experiences with challenges and how you overcame them, demonstrating resilience in the face of adversity.

9. Encourage Exploration and Experience

- Support them in seeking out volunteer work or internships that align with their interests, helping them gain experience and confidence.
- Encourage participation in workshops or training programs to build skills relevant to their career interests.

Chapter 5:

Challenges for Parents in Preparing Children with Visual Impairment to Get Jobs

Parents preparing children or youth with visual impairments to enter the workforce face various challenges across multiple aspects. Here are some key challenges:

1. Economic Challenges

- Limited financial resources can restrict access to assistive technologies, training programs, and transportation necessary for job searching and commuting.
- The availability of job opportunities that are accessible and accommodating to individuals with visual impairments can be limited, making it difficult for parents to find suitable roles for their children.

2. Social Challenges

- Parents may encounter societal stigma and discrimination against their children, affecting their confidence and willingness to pursue employment.
- A shortage of supportive networks, such as mentorship programs or peer groups, can hinder both parents and children in navigating the job market.

3. Cultural Challenges

- Cultural perceptions regarding disability can influence how families approach education and employment for children with visual impairments, sometimes leading to low expectations.
- Parents may struggle with balancing traditional family expectations and their child's aspirations, especially in cultures that prioritize certain career paths.

4. Psychological Challenges

- Parents may experience anxiety about their child's future, fearing they won't be able to succeed or that they'll face significant barriers in the workforce.
- Both parents and children may lack confidence in navigating the job market, particularly if previous experiences have been negative or discouraging.

5. Educational Challenges

- Inadequate educational resources and training specific to career readiness for students with visual impairments can leave them underprepared for the workforce.

- Limited access to career counseling and guidance specifically tailored to the needs of visually impaired youth can impede their job search efforts.

6. Accessibility Challenges

- Parents often worry about whether potential employers will provide the necessary accommodations for their children, such as accessible technology and environments.
- Accessibility of transportation to and from workplaces can be a significant barrier, affecting job opportunities.

7. Skill Development Challenges

- Parents may find it difficult to locate training programs that are specifically designed for individuals with visual impairments, which can limit skill development.
- Parents may struggle to align their child's skills and aspirations with available job opportunities, leading to frustration and uncertainty.

8. Legal and Policy Challenges

- Parents may lack knowledge about the legal rights of their children regarding employment and the resources available to support them.
- Insufficient policies that promote the hiring of individuals with disabilities can create additional hurdles for parents trying to secure jobs for their children.

Chapter 6:

Lessons learned from Parents Who Have Children with a Visual Impairment and are Preparing to Get Jobs

Asep Darmadi (Indonesia):



Gugun is determined to succeed and achieve his goals. As his parents, we support and facilitate his aspirations. From elementary school through college, if Gugun wanted to take courses, so we provided the finances for him. For example, he once took a computer course, where he learned to use a screen reader. His mother and older siblings also accompanied him to school and college at first. Although this was only for one semester, Gugun then continued his studies independently.

In terms of education, as parents, we always support his desire to pursue further schooling. During job entrance exams, such as the civil service exam, we requested assistance from the exam committee to ensure that an assistant was available to read the questions aloud for

Gugun. This support helped accommodate his needs.

As his parents, we wish for a better life for Gugun. We do have concerns given Gugun's visual impairment, but we work hard to accompany and monitor his development. After he graduated from college, we actively searched for job openings, particularly for civil service roles, on social media and through Gugun's network. He eventually found a teaching position after receiving information from his friends who were also visually impaired.

Raising a child with a visual impairment hasn't posed any major challenges. When Gugun was young, he experienced some stigma from his

"I personally engage with Gugun's friends and always remind them to help Gugun if he faces any difficulties."

environment, but as his parents, we worked hard to explain and support him through open communication. When enrolling in mainstream junior high and high school, the schools initially asked whether Gugun would be able to keep up with his studies given his visual impairment. However, the schools were understanding and simply asked that we help support Gugun if he encountered any difficulties.

Since junior high school, Gugun has been independent, using public transportation to get around. We were introduced to the Mitra Netra Foundation through Gugun's school at the special needs school in Lebak Bulus. Mitra Netra provided accessible textbooks for Gugun, which greatly supported his learning.

In higher education, Gugun was accompanied only during his first semester, and began using public transportation (such as minivans) to commute afterwards. In his work life, Gugun hasn't faced any negative treatment, stigma, or discrimination. His colleagues are supportive and always ready to help him.

Since starting his teaching career and earning a salary, Gugun has contributed to our family finances, regularly sending money to his parents even after getting married. He continues to support his family financially.

Finally, we would like to emphasize that, as parents, we encourage society to provide ample opportunities for children with disabilities to interact with their environment, especially with their friends. I personally engage with Gugun's friends and always remind them to help Gugun if he faces any difficulties.

Mr. Binh (Vietnam):

My name is Binh and I'm a 71-year-old working as a lawyer and a CEO for a real estate company. My second daughter, Ha, has a retinal degeneration. She completed eighth grade, but then she had to go to Nguyen Dinh Chieu School, repeat ninth grade there, and went to study with sighted people at Chu Van An Continuing Education Center. She finished her studies

"My family fully supports her principle of independence, so we do not interfere."

for three years and entered the University of Education, graduating from the Pedagogical University. She currently works in a shadow restaurant in District 1, near Hai Ba Trung Street.

Ha is 29 years old. She studied psychology so she didn't need anyone. She is completely independent and self-sufficient. I don't prepare her for her study. She chose it on her own. I only assisted her with transportation in the beginning, but she later forced herself to book Grab (online motorbike taxi) to go, and he booked her own motorbike to work. She is completely proactive in using voice software. She is completely independent; I do not have to assist.

I wanted to let her work at a certain library, for example the audiobook library or the Morning Star Center. However, she didn't like it, and she said it was sad working at the library. She went looking jobs for herself. One group of her friends worked at the restaurant which worked with visually impaired people. She's been doing it for over a year now.

I gave Ha almost no support for her job because visually impaired people were recruited and they how to manage that. As a result, family members hardly have to provide any support. Even at the time of opening an account, I did not understand what the banks were like, but ACB bank allows opening accounts for the visually impaired. Ha practically always handles her own affairs. Sometimes she asks for our help just for transportation to work.

I know that we, as her family, have provided Ha with our care and love from the day her mother gave birth to her, but I never want her to pay us back. Our family relation is not transactional. She keeps all the money she earns for herself. We don't keep her money at all.

The family has extra support and does not take anything back. Her sister works, so she also provides financial support. I also gave earn money, so I didn't care about her contributing to the family finances. She takes care of herself, saves by herself, spends by herself, and basically does everything herself.

She even found a job and applied for it by herself. When she finished graduating, I asked whether she needed my help to prepare her for job, but

she didn't need me at all. I recommended some places for employment, but she told me she wanted to find her own job. I guess she didn't like my recommendations. She went on her own.

She's self-seeking and completely independent in life. That means the family won't intervene in her work schedule, when she's going to work, when she takes time off to go out, even going to live near her workplace, the company that organizes the trip, or where she goes in groups. In general, my family fully supports her principle of independence, so we do not interfere. She has been independent since childhood, so I only advise you to be careful in life, because life won't go easy on you.

Ms. Hariana (Indonesia):



Syifa Urrahman was a bright child who excelled after she started attending a special needs school (SLB). She has consistently ranked first in her class and possesses a strong determination to succeed. From a young age, Syifa has achieved various accolades, including winning first place in the Aceh Provincial Social Studies Quiz and first place in the Tilawatil Qur'an competition for visually impaired girls representing Aceh at the National MTQ. She also won the national student arts competition and received a scholarship for outstanding achievement from the Aceh Provincial Government for her undergraduate studies.

"Since early on, we knew that Syifa aspired to become a counselor at a senior high school, Therefore, I haven't needed to search for employment information for Syifa."

As her parents, we are very proud and continuously make every effort to support her. Syifa was a child who wanted to show what she could achieve, and we have always been dedicated to backing her. For instance, we assisted with her mobility, helped her

find schools, and encouraged her participation in competitions (such as MTQ) to boost her self-confidence. We never restrict Syifa from going out of the house; instead, we encourage her to be active and provide full financial support.

Syifa's visual impairment does present certain challenges, particularly in terms of mobility. Fortunately, we own a car that allows us to take Syifa wherever she needs to go, which helps overcome this limitation. We are committed to supporting Syifa's mobility by driving her wherever necessary.

We have faced several challenges in raising Syifa. One significant challenge occurred when Syifa was in middle school; we had to convince the school principal that Syifa could succeed in a public school. After lengthy efforts and with assurances to the principal regarding Syifa's abilities, she was eventually allowed to attend a regular school. Overall, we strive to understand and support Syifa's development closely.

We, as her parents, are inspired by the accomplishments of other individuals with disabilities outside Aceh. Honestly, we consider ourselves fortunate to have a stable job, which allows us to find good schools for Syifa and, when needed, hire additional tutors if she encountered difficulties with her studies.

From early on, we knew that Syifa aspired to become a counselor at a senior high school and had even identified where she wanted to work after college graduation. Therefore, we don't need to search for employment information for Syifa.

Currently, in addition to teaching as an SLB instructor and private tutor at her home, Syifa is active in disability organizations. She engages in community advocacy, working with government institutions to raise awareness about disability rights and issues, as she is passionate about promoting equality for people with disabilities in Aceh. Syifa also helps her siblings, especially her younger brother, Anas, who is also visually impaired, by teaching him how to use computer reading tools.

Ms. Marcelina Salvador Adriano (The Philippines):



As a parent, I have been preparing my daughter for the workforce since she was a child. This preparation included teaching her how to get along with others, instilling discipline and responsibility, and helping her develop decision-making and problem-solving skills. I also made a concerted effort to maintain open communication, so she feels comfortable sharing her thoughts with me, her mother. As a result, she openly discusses whatever she's trying to figure

"I always allow her to make the final decisions."

out, whether it's choosing her college program or deciding on job applications. Moreover, I always allow her to make the final decision.

She actively seeks more information and takes advantage of learning opportunities if they align with her career interests and professional development needs. This proactive approach demonstrates her commitment to continuous learning and growth.

My child is independent enough to manage her time, transportation, and personal needs related to work. She is highly organized and has developed strong time-management skills, ensuring that she meets deadlines and completes tasks efficiently. In terms of transportation, she always plans ahead to make sure her travel arrangements are in place.

I would support my child by providing emotional support, actively listening to her concerns, and offering reassurance during challenging times. I would encourage her to talk through any difficulties and help her reflect on possible solutions. While I trust her ability to handle situations independently, I would offer guidance when needed. I also make it a point to check in regularly, asking how she is doing and how her work is going,

which creates an open line of communication for her to share any concerns. This helps ensure that she knows I'm always here to support her.

Our community and home environment have been crucial in supporting her preparations to work. At home, we've always made sure to keep her motivated and encouraged in all that she does, fostering habits that promote independence and self-worth, which are qualities essential for her career readiness. Throughout her schooling, she was given leadership roles and consistently ranked among the top students, which helped her feel respected and valued for her abilities. Additionally, various NGOs, particularly Resources for the Blind, provided her with valuable learning experiences that directly relate to her current job and advocacy work. Her mentors and role models have also played a significant role in shaping her future outlook, encouraging her to aim higher and continuously challenge herself.

I haven't reached out to any organizations or agencies to help her find a job. She was the one who made it happen. She got her first job when she was hired by the non-profit where she completed her internship during her fourth year of college. Furthermore, I expect the most suitable job for my daughter to align with her degree and major, as well as her skills and interests. I hope she finds a role that offers a healthy work-life balance, allowing her to manage her well-being without added stress from her work responsibilities.

I don't have specific hopes regarding the type of job or industry that would be suitable for her. My main wish is for her to find a role that allows her to practice and develop her skills while aligning with her interests. In addition, I hope she achieves financial stability, allowing her to share her blessings and support others in her community. Ultimately, I see her making a meaningful impact while continuing to grow both personally and professionally.

Ms. Nguyen Thi Ngoc Vien (Vietnam):

My name is Nguyen Thi Ngoc Vien. I was born in 1960. I am currently working as a janitor at the Land Office Branch in District 11 Commission. I have been taking care of my visually impaired child since he was a kid, I am both a mother, a father, and also a friend to accompany him.

I prepared him personally. He is mentally and socially prepared to face life in the workplace. I usually help him with personal matters such as clothes, food, and transportation. I have to iron his clothes for him, then I always prepare lunch for him to carry in his backpack, and finally drive him to work every morning and pick him up after work. It's a mother's task to help prepare him every day.

"When he is making an application, I go and support him, help him manage his CVs and applications"

I also taught him manners by instructing him to accomplish his tasks in the workplace, and to work hard to accomplish it. I taught him to communicate to others, about what to do and what not to do. Basically, he is a very cheerful and sociable with people. Last year he worked in Prudential. He worked with some visually impaired people, so he's also very happy, more immersed, and relaxed. He's receptive, very active and integrates quickly.

An usually finds a job by himself. When he is making an application, I go and support him, and help him manage his CVs and applications. I am just like his secretary, make an application for him, fill the application form, and then let him sign it. I also manage his documents, such as health insurance and social security.

Sometimes at work, his manager is not satisfied. My son handles it and also accepts it. He listens to criticism and asks the manager for more support if he needs it. When he worked at Prudential, customers sometimes argued. It made him very frustrated, but his manager told him to try to manage the customers. When he meets difficult clients and they speak with him harshly, he has to listen and focus on customer care.

When it comes to issues like this, he shares his complaints with me. Then I would tell him, because you're in customer service, you have to endure and accept and listen so you can get the job done. Every day you have to take care of nearly a hundred customers as assigned by the company. He listened to my advice.

He familiarized himself with his workplace environment through some help from his co-workers, but only for two days. When he worked at Prudential,

he worked on the fourth floor and had an access card, which he used by himself. Each room has a card scanner, and he always did it independently because people have already instructed him on how to do it. He's a very receptive person. His experiences in college helped him to be a receptive visually impaired person. I can say now that people with visual impairments can navigate very well through what is called movement orientation.

I feel sorry for visually impaired people who don't go to college due to many factors but especially because their family don't care much for them to get higher education. I don't blame them, because it's their lives and they just want to survive. I understand their circumstances. I was a maid and from the time I was giving birth to An, it seemed like I was living in hell. I had to quit my job and focused only on An. It was exhausting but totally worth it.

I know that An wants to repay me by giving me his entire salary. I take care of two blind people, An, and also my brother who is blind and mentally ill. I usually use the money for An's needs rather than for the household, but I always tell him if I buy things. If An wants to hang out, I give him cash. It's not easy to manage money for daily meals; you have to be clever and luckily my family is more vegetarian, so it's much cheaper.

My hope is for An to have the opportunity to attain a master's degree, but he refused. He found it too difficult to study for a master's degree. He now works at Limart every day, including Sunday, though it's temporary. He is an online seller for the Limart Store selling cosmetics and household items.

An is very concerned about the environment. The products he sells are green products and environmentally friendly. Those products are part of the green economy, a circular economy. An only spent a week learning about the products. It means that before entering the job, he was provided training on product knowledge and the sales process of the business before being given the product to sell. He loves going to work every day, and I'm happy for him. I hope he will be happy forever.

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