

**School of Occupational Therapy, Social Work and Speech Pathology**

**School to Work Transition for Young People with Disability  
in Vietnam**

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**This thesis is presented for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
of  
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## **Declaration**

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) – updated March 2014. The proposed research study received human research ethics approval from the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (EC00262), Approval Number # HRE2016-0356.

Signature:

Date: 2 February 2020

## **ABSTRACT**

Vietnam has demonstrated its commitment to the rights of people with disability, and to social inclusion via access to education and employment. School to work transition programs are reportedly key to obtaining and sustaining employment for young people with disability. One school to work transition program has been operating in Dong Nai for 23 years, but there is no information about the experience of young Vietnamese people with disability participating in that program. Using a mixed methods case study approach, information was collected from young people with disability, their families, policy makers and service providers. Questionnaires collected data from 57 students and graduates with hearing and vision impairment and 23 key stakeholders. Qualitative information was collected through in-depth interviews and focus groups from the same students and graduates at three different time points. Twenty-three stakeholders were interviewed, and five focus groups were conducted with parents, teachers, students and graduates.

This thesis examines this unique program and its operations. It explores the facilitators and barriers to its success, and examines the effects of current policies and services on the program. It analyses the lived experience of students and graduates, and the perspectives of policy makers and other stakeholders, such as parents, teachers and employers. The discussion highlights the value of a transition program, demonstrates the need for improved services (communication, family involvement, soft skills training, student-focused planning), and a need for agencies to enable skills development for true social and economic participation. Finally, it makes recommendations for improving school to work transition programs for young people with disability across Vietnam. Enforcement of an inclusive approach for school to work transition in Vietnam is suggested to ensure the rights of young people with disability towards inclusive employment.

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to several important people in my life: first, to my mother, Nguyen Thi Minh who left this earth as I finished secondary school, and as I was just beginning to think about what I would do with my life. Her presence has never left me and has always guided me through my life, my work and my studies. My mother was my mentor and worked hard to buy books for me to learn English. She knew that learning English was the first and most important means for someone like me from a poor, non-English speaking background to look to the outside world, and be awarded scholarships to study at Brandeis University in the US and now Curtin University in Australia. Her encouragement has got me this far. She continues to be my mentor in spirit, and will always help me overcome my challenges. Second, my daughter Gia Linh and my son Gia Nghia: they are my angels and have been my motivation to become someone they can be proud of. Every day they make me laugh - I love you Gia Linh and Gia Nghia.

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## Prologue

In the tradition of qualitative interpretive research, I am using this Prologue to introduce my motivations and interests, as the researcher, in the research topic. My ambition to pursue research in this area was to be able to influence national, provincial and local policy in order to improve access to and the quality of employment and vocational training systems for young people with disability in Vietnam. My motivation and ideas for this particular research design were based in my work experience, my own values and hopes that young people with disability are well-prepared during their schooling for work.

My work experience first in community development, and then in the development of disability legislation, policy development and advocacy in Vietnam for 10 years provides a sound basis for this research. Working as a researcher at the National University of Education, I was involved with a range of internationally-funded projects focussed on disability policy-making including the Dong Nai school to work transition program. With this work, I had the chance to meet many key people: policy-makers at the national level, policy-implementers at the local level, and also young people with disability from different backgrounds.

For the young people I met, I observed that they shared concerns about whether they would get a job. In essence, they were wondering whether their rights to social and economic development and social inclusion through employment could be achieved (my words). I also noted, that while employment was considered and often on the legislative agenda, the focus of discussions was generally more about how to support adults with disability in the community, rather than paying attention to young people with disability at school. Students with disability appeared to receive little support to prepare them for work. For me, a lack of focus on their plight was part of the reason they faced difficulties in obtaining paid work after graduation. I could also see that their troubles were complicated by the fact that schooling for students with disability usually stopped at Year 9 and they were often not able to continue to higher education levels, or even into senior secondary school.

With these observations, it was clear to me that support must be given to this group for them to both stay longer at school as well as be able to access skills and knowledge to acquire suitable employment during their schooling. It seemed to me that there was a gap in policy regarding employment and vocational training for young people with disability of high school age. As a researcher and policy-maker, I also knew that, in order to effectively develop and advocate for

new and realistic policies, it was important to listen to young people with disability to get their perspectives about the services currently provided as well as what they thought they needed. I felt their voices should be reflected in the policy-drafting process. To me, this meant listening to them speak about their experiences and then ensuring their perspectives were included in policy.

While I was working with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded disability programs and projects across Vietnam, I became aware of the Dong Nai school to work transition program. I was interested in this program because Dong Nai was the only school in the country which provided a formal school to work transition program with formal support and partnership coordination between the school, employers and other relevant stakeholders in the formal employment setting.

The Dong Nai school was established in 1997 as a special school for those with a hearing impairment and/or vision impairment and was later expanded to cater for other forms of disability, such as cognitive impairment. The school was designed to meet the needs of primary and secondary students. The school had a first enrolment of only 30 students in 1998 with five staff including management and teachers. The enrolment of students increased through the years and it now has an enrolment of approximately 230 students, of which 35 students are at the secondary level. The school has 17 primary classes for 195 students with hearing impairment, vision impairment and mild intellectual disabilities. Each class has eight to 12 students. The secondary level has four classes from grade six to grade nine and students with different types of disability are learning in the same class. Secondary students receive schooling from grade six through to grade nine though there are some students on the campus in these grades who are as old as 23 (Quirk, 2013). Each year, around seven to nine students graduated from school.

I therefore focussed my research on the students and graduates of this school who had participated in the school to work transition program (mostly the hearing-impaired), as well as other stakeholders involved in the program, such as their families, teachers, employers and other government officials.

I was fortunate to be able to carry out data collection at Dong Nai in three rounds. This helped me capture the changes in people's understanding over time and gather rich data about the depth and complexity of young people's lives, as well as the points of view of other key stakeholders. A research group was created on Facebook while I was writing the thesis so I

could maintain contacts and ongoing conversations with research participants and get updates about their situations in regards to job-seeking.

As the majority of research participants with disability were those with hearing impairment, they also had limited Vietnamese proficiency. This made information collection challenging. I used a sign language interpreter throughout the data collection process. As the researcher, I felt like I became a person with a hearing and a speaking impairment. This made me understand more the challenges of living with a hearing impairment and reminded me of my previous work to assist Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) and the National University of Education (NUE) to develop universal sign language for all three regions of Vietnam. The Government is still seeking to ratify a national sign-language and expand the training of teachers of the NUE in sign-language interpretation. While the training of teachers in sign-language use is not the focus of the study, without a national sign-language and sufficient teacher training in sign-language interpretation, I still see there are challenges in ensuring effective communication for people with a hearing impairment. These need to be overcome if we are to facilitate two-way communication between people with and without hearing and speaking impairments in a range of environments, including schools, workplaces, and their local communities.

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## **Glossary of Acronyms**

AARE	Australian Association for Research in Education
AFDS	Australian Federation of Disability Societies
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASbAT	Australian School-based Apprenticeship and Traineeship
AUSAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BMF	Biwako Millennium Framework
BREC	Blue Ribbon Employers' Council
DOET	Department of Education and Training
DOF	Department of Finance
DOH	Department of Health
DOLISA	Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
DOT	Department of Transportation
DPO	Disabled Persons' Organisation
EFA	Education for All
EISC	Employment Introduction Service Centre
ESC	Employment Service Centre
GDVT	General Department of Vocational Training
GSO	General Statistics Office
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GVN	Government of Vietnam
HDI	Human Development Index
HNU	Hanoi National University
HR	Human Resources
HREC	Human Research Ethics Committee
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
IDA	International Disability Alliance

IEC	Information Employment Centre
IEP	Individualised Education Plan
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IRIS	Research and Development on Inclusion and Society
IS	Incheon Strategy
IT	Information Technology
NAP	National Action Plan on Disability
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NISD	National Institute for Social Development
NLTS	National Longitudinal Transition Study
LISA	Labour and Social Affairs
LSAY	Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth
MCIE	Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
NCCD	National Coordinating Council on Disability
NHMRC	National Statement on the Ethical Conduct
NISD	National Institute for Social Development
NIES	National Institute of Education and Sciences
NLTS	National Longitudinal Transition Study in the USA
NTP	National Target Program
PA	Parents' Association
PAP	Provincial Action Plan on Disability
PCCD	Provincial Coordinating Council on Disability
PM	Prime Minister

PPC	Provincial People’s Committee
RCSE	Research Centre for Special Education
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
STW	School to Work
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SRV	Social Roles Valorisation
TOT	Training of Trainers
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention of the Rights of People with Disability
UNDESA	United Nations - Department of Economics and Social Affairs
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNDP	United National Development Program
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VT	Vocational Training
VNA	Vietnam National Assembly
VNAH	Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped
VTA	Vocational Training Agency
WB	The World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization

# CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis focuses on what impacts on the success of the only school to work transition program for young people with disability in Vietnam, and draws out the broader implications for the processes of school to work transition for young people with disability across the country. School to work transition programs are known to be an effective way to prepare young people with disability for both independent life and meaningful employment, thereby facilitating their social and economic inclusion in society.

As Vietnam is a signatory to key international agreements for disability, the government has been developing policies to meet the rights and needs of people with disability. Much of this work has been done at legislative and policy levels. This research was designed to learn from the experience of the young people with disability and key stakeholders who were directly involved with the only school to work transition program in Vietnam at Dong Nai School. The goal was to contribute this information directly from the young people themselves to the national effort to achieve equality for people with disability in Vietnam. Specifically, the research aimed to understand Dong Nai's successes and areas for improvement, as well as what this particular program could mean for the rest of Vietnam as it progresses its disability-rights and social inclusion agenda.

### 1.1 Research Aim and Objectives

The study aimed to explore the facilitators and barriers that young people with disability have experienced in the school to work transition phase and to examine to what degree these were being addressed at Dong Nai. The findings are also linked to the context of current international and national disability policy, Vietnam's service delivery systems, and the broader socio-political environment of Vietnam.

The Dong Nai Special School was selected for this study because it was the first and only comprehensive school to work transition program in Vietnam utilising an inter-agency approach in service delivery within the school to work transition program. This school to work transition program was designed by US experts, and was followed up with training conducted for teachers and related stakeholders, including local government agencies. Hence, much of the

design of Dong Nai's school to work transition was informed by US school to work transition best practices (Quirk, 2013).

Thus, the research objectives were, to:

- a) Explore facilitators and barriers that impact on the school to work transition for young people with disability.
- b) Examine how current policies and services may facilitate or hinder school to work transition for young people with disability.
- c) Analyse the experience of students and graduates who have participated in a school to work program.
- d) Identify recommendations to improve school to work transition services for young people with disability in Vietnam.

Theories that underpinned the research included Van Manen's (2014) phenomenological approach and Bronfenbrenner's (1978, p. 18) framework as well as the broader theories and frameworks of social inclusion and human rights. Van Manen's phenomenological approach was applied to argue a focus on lived experience and then was subsequently used to guide the analysis and interpretation of experience shared by participants (Van Manen, 2016, p. 34). In adopting Van Manen's (2016) values and approach, the researcher used descriptions shared by participants in in-depth interviews and focus groups to understand and make sense of the facilitators and barriers impacting the success of the school to work transition program in Dong Nai school.

Bronfenbrenner's "ecological theory of human development" (Bronfenbrenner, 2005, pp. 80-81) emphasises the interaction between the broader macro environment and the individual at the meso-, exo- and microsystem levels. Bronfenbrenner's (2005) ecological framework was employed as an organising framework. This framework was used to organise and report the study's findings about young people with disability and their interactions with their environments, including family, home, friendship and work, and social skills, and networking. This framework allowed the researcher to conceptualise barriers and facilitators from participants' experience at four different levels, each level represents one aspect of the person's environment as an interactive system. The macrosystem denotes the policy environment/context, including relevant disability and education policy, and multi-disciplinary coordination mechanisms that enforce policies and allocate resources. The exosystem represents the institutional coordination of resources and the necessary services for school to

work transition, such as transition planning, vocational training and employment services. In addition, it focusses on school factors including staffing and capacity, and the local environment for work and study. The mesosystem looks at the linkage of different systems in young people's lives. This mesosystem "is a system of microsystems and encompass interactions among family and school, peer groups, workplace, and community" which directly impacts students and graduates (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 515). The microsystem explores the personal factors relating to the individual and his/her environment and how these influence the participation in and engagement with the school to work transition program and subsequent employment.

The purpose of the research was to learn from those involved in the school to work transition program about what was working well and what could be improved. It is hoped that the findings of the research will provide information to disability service providers, inform policy-makers, and help create the foundation for strengthening school to work transition systems and services across Vietnam.

## 1.2 Background Information for the Study

Vietnam has a population of approximately 97.5 million (General Statistic Office of Vietnam [GSO], 2019). It is a Buddhist country with 54 ethnic groups. Vietnam is ranked 116 out of 187 countries on the 2015 United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI) and is considered to be a country of medium human development with a life expectancy at birth of 80 years for females and 71 years for males, a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of US\$ 4,912, and a literacy rate of 93.5 % (UNDP, 2015).

The country has a young population, with only 6% of the population over the age of 65 and 32% under the age of 15. Vietnam has around one million young workers entering the labour market each year (UNDP, 2015; United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA], 2011). These new labour force entrants face difficulties in obtaining employment, as employers are looking for qualified candidates with technical skills, while the majority of the new entrants have low levels of education and professional skills (Nguyen, Nguyen, Nguyen, Trinh, & Nguyen, 2015). Hence, young people with disability are facing substantial challenges in obtaining a job due to their lower levels of education and training (International Labour Organisation [ILO], 2013a).

According to Vietnam's National Law on Disability, disability type is broken down into the following classifications: mobility, hearing and speaking, vision, mental illness, intellectual disability, and other types. The Ministry of Labour Invalids and Social Affairs [MOLISA] (2011) reports that disability related to mobility accounts for 31.5%, mental illness 16%, vision 11.9%, speaking and hearing 10.5%, intellectual disability 9.6%, and other types 20.5%. The identification of hearing impairment is based on the WHO question (Census, 2009).

Only 40% of working age people with disability have jobs, and these are mainly in the private sector or self-employment (MOLISA, 2012b). Thus, very few people with disability have stable jobs and regular incomes (ILO, 2013a). According to the UNFPA (2011, p. 33), the rate of people with hearing and speaking impairment with jobs accounted for nearly 90% of the total population of hearing impairment, and people with vision impairment accounted for 94%. This was quite a high rate compared to that of the overall population of people with disability in Vietnam provided by MOLISA (2015). However, as pointed out by Yoder (2003) in her report on training and employment of people with disability in Vietnam, a small minority of people with hearing and vision impairment have jobs in a formal setting, and people with disability tend to be self-employed or relying on their family for support.

The 2009 Vietnam National Census identified that less than 30% of children with disability complete lower secondary school, and less than 15% complete senior secondary school. This compares to a completion rate of more than 90% for the general population (UNFPA, 2011). This low level of educational attainment has led to limited employment opportunities for people with disability (Filmer, 2008), also contributes to a higher rate of poverty (Abidi & Sharma, 2014), and creates social exclusion (Mitra, 2011). There is a strong interrelationship between poverty and disability in Vietnam, with 23% percent of the families of people with disability living in poverty (Palmer, Mont, Nguyen & Mitra, 2015) compared to 13.5% for families of people without a disability (The World Bank, 2014).

According to the National Law on Disability (2010), the classification of disability in Vietnam is regulated by Provision 1 of Article 15 and is categorised by the Council on Disability Classification via the direct observation of people with disability, and the use of health questionnaires. The GSO's Census Report uses both the disability identification tool of the Washington Group on Disability Statistics (WG-ES) and the Washington - UNICEF tool to identify disabilities for children aged of two to 17 years in Vietnam (CFM) (GSO, 2019).

Circular 01 of MOLISA dated 2019 guides the classification of disability and uses the two Washington Group’s disability identification tools to designate the level of disability at the commune level for all types of disability. Hence, as everywhere, there are different approaches to identifying and measuring disability. This goes for deafness or hearing impairment also where techniques such as self-identification, observation, diagnosing conditions, and assessing activities of daily living and functioning for independent living using a set of questionnaires are used at commune level. The disability of deafness is classified at one of three levels: severe disability, moderate disability, or minor disability (Article 3, National Law on Disability). As guided by the Circular 01/2019, those who have either hearing or/and speaking impairment are considered as having a moderate disability. Sections 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 describe specific and relevant background information about Vietnam’s education system and the vocational training and employment for people with disability in Vietnam.

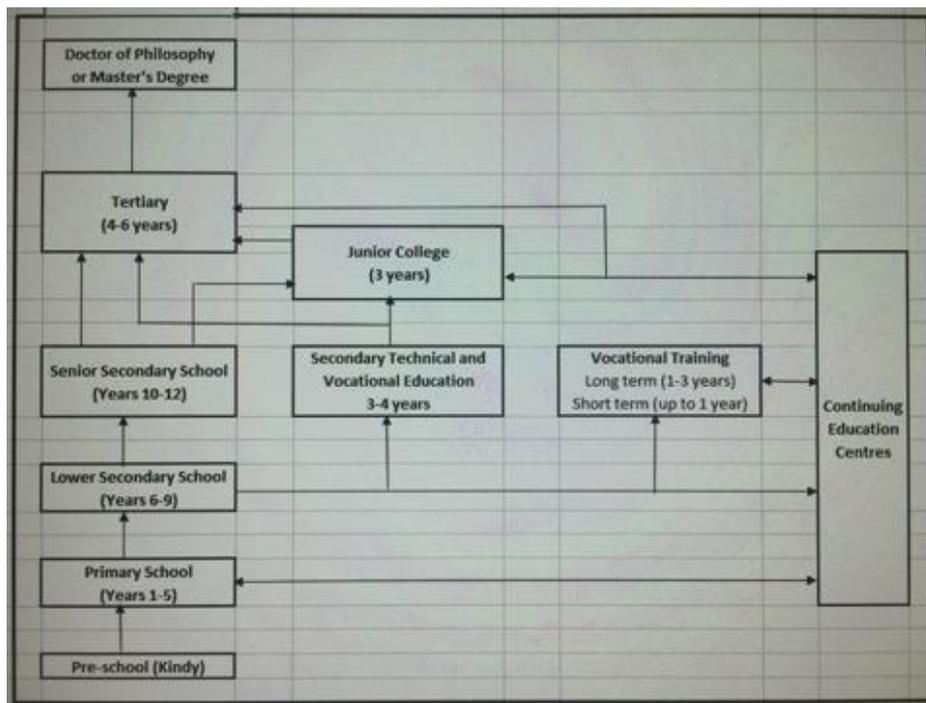
### 1.2.1 Vietnam’s Education System

The National Law on Education, enacted in 2005, and the National law on Disability, enacted in 2010, regulate three systems, which operate at the same time. This section provides contextual information as a backdrop for the research, and covers (i) General Education in Vietnam, (ii) Special Education, and (iii) Education for All (EFA).

#### *General Education in Vietnam*

Vietnam’s National Education System has five components: “early childhood education, general education, vocational training, tertiary education, and continuing education. Early childhood education includes nursery school (from three months to three years of age) and kindergarten (from three to five years of age). General education includes primary education (Year 1 to 5), lower secondary education (Year 6 to 9), and upper secondary education (Year 10 to 12), and there are also entrance and final exams for upper secondary education. Vocational or technical training is available as an alternative option to upper secondary education” (MOET, 2018). Figure 1 below demonstrates the Vietnam’s education system for all levels.

Figure 1: Vietnam's Education System



The picture is adapted from the website ([www.moet.gov.vn](http://www.moet.gov.vn))

Primary education is provided through both inclusive and special schools. Vietnam has made impressive achievements in both enrollment in primary education and the quality of education. This led to improved numeracy literacy and skills for children of primary education level compared to those in other countries of similar economic conditions (MOET et al. 2015). This may be explained by the government's implementation of the policy of free public schooling consisting of the equality of opportunities to learn for every child (Rolleston & Krutikova, 2014).

It normally takes four years to complete lower secondary school (Year 6 to 9). Having completed Year 9, young people must pass an entrance exam to get into senior secondary school (Years 10-12). Those who fail the entrance exam to senior secondary education can take the exam again in a later year or they can choose secondary technical and vocational education and training as another option for short or regular programs. Others can follow a non-formal education which is on offer at Continuing Education Centres, which provide opportunities for people who are not able to take full-time and regular courses (see Figure 1). Young people also have to pass an entrance exam to get into tertiary education, which is very competitive (Tam, 2013).

The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) is responsible for education policy, curricula for general education, identifying learning outcomes for higher education, setting standards for textbooks and teaching materials, budget planning and quality assurance. The education management is decentralised to the district level from kindergarten to lower secondary education, while senior secondary education is managed at the provincial level. The state budget covers tuition fees from Year 1 to Year 5. Most of the schools in Vietnam are public schools although a private education sector is increasingly developing (Ministry of Education and Training [MOET], 2018).

After ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990, from 1991 Vietnam has had a universal approach to primary education. Educational activities are covered by the Government budget, with tuition fees collected from families in the secondary education sector. Students with disability, those from an ethnic minority group, or come from “certified poor households”, and children who are on a boarding school’s campus, or from remote areas, are exempted or have reduced secondary tuition fees (MOET, 2019b). The new law on Education approved by the National Assembly in June 2019 proposes that inclusive education is the only approach for Vietnam, and students with disability should be entitled to inclusive education, with support policies to assist such as sign-language interpretation, braille for students with vision impairment, and other support, proposes universalisation of education from Year 1 to Year 9. The final approval was made in June 2019 and will take in effect in early 2020 (MOET, 2019a).

### *Special Education*

The French colonial government established the first school for Vietnamese students who were deaf in 1866 in Hanoi (London, 2011). In 1975, Vietnam initiated the establishment of a special separate school system for young people with disability. By 1991, Vietnam had established 36 special schools throughout the country that served 6,000 students with disability at an expense of USD400 per child, as compared with USD20 per year per child without disability for those who attend regular schools (Villa et al., 2003). By 2007, about 9,000 students with disability were attending 106 special schools (MOLISA-National Coordinating Council on Disability [NCCD], 2010). However, by 2015, according to the National Baseline Survey conducted by MOET, NCCD/MOLISA and Ministry of Health, the number of children with disability attending a special school was only 2,880, and this was because more children with disability were enrolled in inclusive schools (MOLISA, MOET, & MOH, 2015).

In 2010, the National Law on Disability identified special education as part of the national formal education system, and the right of people with disability to education in accordance with their needs and capacity was well-recognised. As such, people with disability can currently either enrol in special schools, integrated (semi-inclusive) schools or inclusive schools. Although the State encourages the inclusive education approach for children with disability, their parents and people with disability can decide which educational approach is most appropriate for the person with disability's individual development. In addition, people with disability can start schooling at a later age than the regulated start-age (Vietnam National Assembly [VNA], 2010, Article 27).

Following the enactment of the National Law on Disability, MOET also developed a National Action Plan on Education (MOET, 2012) for disadvantaged children and for people with disability. A National Committee supporting the education of disadvantaged children and people with disability was established in 2001 within MOET. According to MOET's (2012) National Action Plan on Education for disadvantaged and disabled children, special education is to be available for all children with disadvantage related to gender, ethnicity, poverty, learning difficulties, or disability.

However, due to the lack of data on children with disability from the age of zero to 18, no sustainable and measurable strategic plan for the education of children with disability has been developed. This has made it difficult for MOET to effectively plan the education support services required for people with disability (Hanoi National University [HNU], 2019), especially given that students with disability are often excluded from traditional statistics (Villa et al., 2003).

In Vietnam, there are very few schools which can deliver teaching programs for children with hearing impairment. It has been the experience of the researcher that these schools are mainly located in big cities, such as Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh. As a result, many children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing have to move to one of these two cities to study. Furthermore, anecdotally, there appears to be an understanding that these schools do not have enough qualified teachers for the available special education programs. In Vietnam, although some universities provide a teaching qualification in special education, most special education graduates do not have adequate knowledge and professional skills for teaching children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing (Nelson, 2015). Furthermore, there is no university in Vietnam offering a Master

course to train professionals or practitioners working with these children (Global Foundation for Children with Hearing Loss, 2013, as cited in Nelson, 2015). Although sign language is widely recognised internationally as a specific community language, there is no standard test in Vietnam to examine the qualifications of sign-language learners. Furthermore, most teaching students have limited opportunities to practice sign language and have few chances to communicate with people with hearing impairment. The 2007 report prepared by PEN-International on the training of sign-language interpreters indicated that there are at least three major sign languages in Viet Nam: Ho Chi Minh City Sign Language (HCMCSL), Ha Noi Sign Language (HNSL), and Hai Phong Sign Language (HPSL). These three languages share 54% to 58% of their basic vocabulary with each other. This project focused on HCMCSL, the Vietnamese sign language with the largest number of users (PEN-International, 2007).

#### *Inclusive Education and Education for ALL (EFA)*

Inclusive education began to be promoted in Vietnam from 1990 and was formally implemented by the Research Centre for Special Education (RCSE) of the Vietnam National Institute of Education Sciences (NIES) under MOET (UNICEF, 2010). A National Law on Education, subsequently promulgated in 2005, provided a general legal framework that guarantees all young people, including people with disability, the right to access education services (The World Bank, 2017). The adoption of the Dakar Framework for Action in 1991 indicated Vietnam had a strong commitment to ensuring equal opportunities for education for all young people (Brief, 2005). In June 1992, the National Committee on Education for All was established (Hamano, 2008).

Vietnam's National EFA Action Plan, 2003-2015 (MOET, 2003) was approved by the Government of Vietnam in 2003 and set out the pathway for advancing key components of the education system by 2015 including "early childhood care and pre-school, primary, lower-secondary and non-formal education" (MOET, 2003, p. 5). Vietnam had recognised the need to improve both the access to and quality of education for all and this was one of the country's key education objectives alongside universal education up to lower secondary level (MOET & UNESCO, 2009). Together, these aspirations are aligned with the international commitment to ensuring that every child and adult receives basic education of good quality, and they are based both on a human rights agenda as well as on the belief that education is central to individual well-being and national development (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2012).

According to UNESCO (2005), Education for All means all children have equal access to quality education. The EFA document sets out principles to ensure an accessible environment for all children in which to study. The environment enables children to participate and learn, to ensure all children are included in all activities at school, interacting with each other and building a positive friendship. EFA facilitates the effort made by every country's government to ensure an inclusive environment for quality education for all (UNESCO, 2005, p. 10, para 03). The third Goal of the EFA strategy, is to "ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programs" (UNESCO, 1990, p.109), was initially ignored in the National Action Plan on EFA for Vietnam (Villa et al., 2003). However, efforts are now being made by the Government of Vietnam to promote the integration and mainstreaming of non-academic skills subjects into education and to improve labour market skills for youth. Labour market skills for youth are favoured by the policy to promote streamlining in post-lower and -upper secondary education, aiming to create favourable conditions for young people who cannot afford to attend higher education. This policy assists youth to continue learning and to gain skills, including social skills that they need so as to enter the labour market successfully. The policy contributes to efforts to train high-quality employees, which is a major component of the country's socio-economic development strategies for the periods 2001-2010 and 2011-2020 (UNICEF, MOET, & AusAID, 2015). This leads into vocational training, and section 1.2 outlines a situational analysis of the vocational training and employment opportunities for people with disability in Vietnam.

In addition to the Education for All strategy, Vietnam enacted the Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) in 2015 for 15 years, which "includes disability throughout, in keeping with the UNCRPD, both explicitly in the call to 'leave no one behind' and explicitly by including people with disability in the services of specific target and indicators" (Groce, 2018, p.1). In these SDGs, disability is mainstreamed in all targets and indicators, as measurements for inclusive education, and to prepare students for readiness to work after school completion (UNESCO, 1990)

More recently, the Prime Minister (PM) also approved the National Action Plan to Support Persons with Disabilities under the PM Decision 1019 that promotes the enforcement of the disability law and policies for period 2012 to 2020. This Decision set a target that, by the year 2015, "60% of children with disabilities will have access to education and will be capable of learning" (MOLISA, 2012b, p. 6). To achieve this target, there are plans to boost efforts to

improve access to good quality education for children with disabilities. It is clear that the Government recognises that the education of disabled children is a significant challenge that needs more attention from the State, local authorities, departments, organisations and society (MOLISA & NCCD, 2018).

Although access to education for children with disability in Vietnam has made strides over the past two decades, access to inclusive educational and appropriate services from well-trained personnel for children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing continues to be challenging. It is estimated that there are over 180,000 children under 18 years of age with hearing loss in Vietnam. Sign language is the predominant mode of communication for children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. However, many families wish for their child to also develop as much listening and spoken language as possible (Nelson, 2015).

Consistent with the inclusive education policy, government officials and educational professionals support the integration of children with hearing loss into mainstream classrooms. However, successful implementation of this policy requires that children with hearing loss or who are hard-of-hearing have access to assistive devices for communication and other appropriate hearing technology. As well, they need teachers with the knowledge and support to be able to provide educational best practice to children with hearing impairment (McPherson & Brouillette, 2011). Although university training programs in Vietnam have undergraduate curricula that provide training in special education services, most teachers who work specifically with children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing have had little to no formal education specific to effective teaching practice in deaf education. Currently, none of the universities in Vietnam offer Master degrees in audiology or deaf education (Global Foundation for Children with Hearing Loss, 2013).

### 1.2.2. Vocational Training and Employment for People with Disability

#### *General Vocational Training System*

According to the International Labour Organisation [ILO] (2013b), Vietnam has a comprehensive system of training institutions comprising 164 vocational training schools; 137 colleges and technical secondary schools engaged in vocational training; 148 vocational centres; and 150 employment services centres. According to the National Vocational Training

Law (2014), there are three levels of vocational education and training (VET) qualifications: college, secondary and primary levels. A summary of the vocational training levels, the institutions providing vocational education and training services, and required training periods for each qualification is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Vocational Education and Training Qualifications in Vietnam

Level	Vocational Training Institutions	Other Education and Training Institutions	Required Training Period	Prerequisites	Award
College	Vocational Colleges	University, Colleges	1-2 years	Vocational Secondary graduates	College Diploma
			2-3 years	Senior Secondary school graduates	
Secondary	Vocational Colleges, vocational secondary schools	University, Colleges, and professional secondary schools	1-2 years	Senior Secondary school graduates	Professional or Vocational Secondary Education Diploma or Intermediate Certificate
			3-4 years	Lower Secondary school graduates	
Primary	Vocational Training College, schools, and vocational training centres	Universities, Colleges, professional schools, Employment Service Centres	3 months – 1 year	Youth, unskilled workers	Elementary Certificate

Source: Vocational Training Law 2014

An extensive system of 150 Employment Introduction Service Centres (EISCs) operate throughout the country. They are run by Department of Labour and Social Affairs (DOLISA), and its line departments at provincial levels. All EISCs are required to report quarterly to MOLISA. These centres collect information about the labour market, register job seekers, provide counselling and training options, operate vocational centres with short-term training courses, and operate small production facilities bridging vocational training and the labour market. Some also operate skills-training centres for people with disability, though no data is kept on people with disability who have gone through this mainstream system (MOLISA, 2015b). According to MOLISA (2015a), Dong Nai province has 16 vocational training institutions, including four vocational colleges, nine vocational intermediate schools, three vocational training centres and 10 institutions with vocational training courses.

In Vietnam, people with disability face barriers in accessing the labour market including access to inclusive vocational education and training; low expectations from the community and their parents about their capacity to work; inaccessible infrastructure, transport and information; the

existence of stigma in education and employment or family fears and resistance to children with disability working (ILO, 2013b). At school, characteristics of poor quality school to work transition services include lack of professional staff to work with students with disability; school staff not having appropriate training or skills to provide quality transition planning services; no counselling to students and parents; and limited access to providers and businesses for vocational training and job placement for students (Joder, 2003). According to annual reports prepared by MOLISA and NCCD (2018) and USAID and Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH) (2015), most students were unprepared for adult life or post-school activities when they left school; there was no continuing education, nor vocational training, or jobs; independent living and community participation were limited; and most stayed at home and continued to rely on their family for support.

#### *Vocational Education and Training for People with Disability*

The first Vocational Training Law (Vietnam National Assembly [VNA], 2006) document included a chapter on the training of people with disability. This chapter provides regulations on subsidies, special equipment and specific trainers for people with disability. Article 70 of Chapter VII regulates the establishment of the centres as well as encouraging mainstream vocational training centres to accept trainees with disability (VNA, 2006). However, the Law did not make it mandatory on making inclusive vocational training mandatory (MOLISA, 2015a).

The Vocational Training Law (VNA, 2014) has since been revised and renamed Vocational Education and Training Law. This was approved by Vietnam's National Assembly in 2014. The new Law regulates inclusive vocational education for people with disability. Article 17 of this Law also regulates policies to support vocational education institutions for people with disability. Article 27 of the Law indicates that the Government of Vietnam will encourage vocational education institutions to enrol people with disability in inclusive vocational education programs, and encourage the individuals and organisations to establish vocational education and training institutions for people with disability. These institutions are entitled to financial support, such as funds with low interest loans to improve and develop infrastructure, training facilities, land allocation and leases. Article 51 of this Law regulates that people with disability enrolled in vocational education and training are exempt from or can have reduced fees (VNA, 2014).

The inclusion of people with disability in the Vocational Training Targeted Program is the first action plan that facilitates the enforcement of the Vocational Training Law. The action plan presents opportunities to increase training and employment opportunities for people with disability (ILO, 2013b). The targeted program has a dedicated budget from the central level that can be leveraged to improve the training offered to people with disability to better meet their abilities and needs and thus improve their chances of accessing meaningful employment. Attention to the use of these funds can improve training, which has been criticised in the past for not meeting the needs of the market place and not leading to employment of graduates (MOLISA, 2015a).

#### *School to Work Transition for Young People with Disability*

The recent ratification of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 159 on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment for Disabled Persons indicated the Vietnam Government's commitment to ensuring equal opportunities for employment of people with disability in Vietnam (ILO, 1983). Although not much has been done to develop school to work transition services for young people with disability in Vietnam, efforts to promote employment for people with disability have been made through vocational rehabilitation and employment programs initiated by various donors including ILO, the United States Agency on International Development (USAID), and a number of Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) working in the disability field.

The ILO implemented a program "promoting the rights and opportunities for people with disability in employment through legislation" from 2012 to 2016 (ILO, 2013a), but there was no formal report on its achievements or any data to show the number of people with disability who had benefitted from this program. From 2006 to 2012, another USAID-funded project was implemented by VNAH and shown to be an effective program for promoting employment for people with disability. This project aimed to raise awareness for businesses at job fairs and events and offered awards to recognise the contribution of socially-responsible employers in promoting employment for people with disability (USAID, 2015).

Next, the USAID funded a project during 2012-2014 promoting school to work transition services at Dong Nai Special School, which is the focus of this study. This was the first project of its kind in Vietnam, and it provided technical assistance to Dong Nai Special School and related government stakeholders to enable vocational training for young people with disability.

In addition to directly supporting students with disability, the program trained teachers and caregivers to help prepare children with disability for their working lives. As part of the model, training was also provided to teachers, students and parents on school to work transition services, including needs assessment, counselling and networking with community service providers, and students with disabilities received support to pursue vocational programs (USAID, 2015).

### *Dong Nai Province*

Dong Nai is situated in South-Eastern Vietnam and is one of Vietnam's most populous provinces (see Figure 2). Its population of nearly three million is made up of 48% males and 52% females. Thirty-four percent live in urban areas, which is a higher proportion than the national average (25.4%; GSO, 2019). Dong Nai is one of Vietnam's main manufacturing centres and one of the most developed provinces

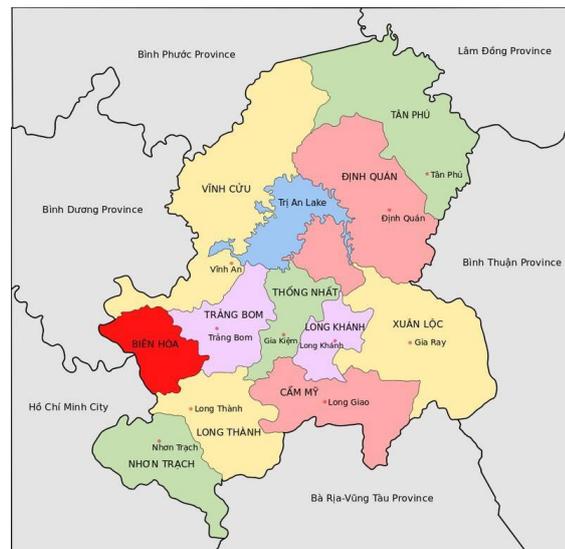


Figure 2. Map of Dong Nai Province

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/DongNaiMap>

According to the Vietnam National Assembly (2010), DOLISA is the leading agency responsible for coordinating relevant government agencies to implement disability programs in Dong Nai province. Following the Prime Minister's Directive Nr. 1100, Dong Nai People's Committee was established 21 June 2016. A Provincial Disability Coordination Committee (PDCC), with the Chair of the Committee also the Vice-Chairperson of the Provincial People's Committee, was established. This PDCC includes representatives from the Provincial People's Committee of Dong Nai, Department of Labour and Social Affairs (DOLISA), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Education and Training (DOET), Department of Transportation (DOT), Department of Construction (DOC), and the Department of Finance. Some key partners were members of the school to work transition program at Dong Nai school. The roles and responsibilities of participating partners are described in the next section.

In Dong Nai, there are 16 vocational training institutions including four vocational colleges, nine vocational intermediate schools, three vocational training centres and 10 institutions with vocational training courses (DOLISA, 2012). However, problems have existed because of the heavy competition to maintain enrolment numbers at vocational institutions, inadequate condition of facilities for training needs, the poor condition and insufficient availability of training equipment compared to the General Department of Vocational Training requirement, and the necessity to strengthen lecturers' training ability including English abilities (MOLISA, 2015a). Among these vocational training institutions, Rosa is an active private agency providing vocational training for people with disability and also a member of the school to work transition program being implemented by Dong Nai Special School. The following section provides a detailed description of the program which focuses on the Dong Nai Special School and its school to work transition program.

#### *The Case of Dong Nai School for the Disabled Youth and School to Work Transition*

The Dong Nai School for Disabled Youth in Bien Hoa was established in 1997 for school-aged youth with hearing impairment, vision impairment, and later with mild intellectual disabilities. The school is designed to meet the needs of primary and secondary students. The school had an initial enrolment of only 30 students in 1998, with five staff, including management and teachers. The enrolment of students increased through the years and it has a current enrolment of approximately 230 students, of which 35 students are at the secondary level. Secondary students receive schooling from Year 6 through to Year 9 though there are some students on the campus in these Years who are as old as 23. Each year, the school has an average of seven to nine students graduating from the school (Quirk, 2013). More information can be seen at Chapter 4, section 4.1 which outlines more of the context of Dong Nai.

#### *Key Players in the School to Work Transition Program for Dong Nai*

MOLISA is the key Ministry responsible for people with disability at the national level, and implements policies and oversees services related to vocational training. MOET is also a Ministry partner working with MOLISA to coordinate the effort of vocational training for people with disability. Similarly, DOLISA is the leading agency on disability at the provincial level and works with DOET for the effort of vocational training and employment for people with disability (VNA, 2010).

Within the Dong Nai school to work transition program, Dong Nai school management reports there are eight key partners who are members of the school to work transition program committee. These include DOET, DOLISA, USAID/VNAH, the Vocational Training Agency, Employment Information Services Centre (EISC), employers, Parents' Association and the Dong Nai school itself (VNA, 2010). The roles and responsibilities of these players are described in Appendix 1.

### 1.3 Research Design

This section briefly introduces the conceptual frameworks selected to support the exploration of facilitators and barriers impacting the success of school to work transition in Dong Nai school. It also briefly describes the chosen research design. The principles of social inclusion, inclusive employment, and education are also key to understanding the broader implications of this program for Vietnam into the future.

A social constructivism framework was selected that support the investigation of the lived experiences young people with disability and perspectives of the stakeholders involved in the policy development process, and how the transition services system functions within the policy framework. Van Manen's phenomenological research approach was chosen to describe and interpret the experience of young people with disability, which they shared in the interviews and focus groups, and to draw on the observations of the researcher (Van Manen, 2014, p. 132).

Social inclusion promotes participation and equal access in all aspects of society (Taket, 2013). Inclusion has been conceptualised as a process of social reform and re-structure that improves accessibility and facilitates social participation (Booth & Ainscow, 1998). Social inclusion theory also supports recognition of human rights and highlights how the needs and rights of individuals can be included in service design and domestic policy (Taket, 2013). Given work is fundamental to being respected and valued within society, social inclusion for people with disability can be achieved through improved access to work opportunities and participation in the labour force (Evans & Repper, 2000). The findings were analysed in the context of the International Classification on Functioning Disability and Health (ICF), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD) and social inclusion.

The International Classification on Functioning Disability and Health (ICF) is the conceptual framework and classification system of the World Health Organization (WHO). The ICF recognises that functioning and disability is a result of the interactions between the components of body functions, body structures, activities and participation, environmental factors and personal factors (WHO, 2013). The study therefore uses the ICF framework to link the findings about school to work transition to the best-fitting ICF categories. This allows for understanding the school and work environments as well as other contextual factors impacting the functioning of young people with disability in order to identify factors that hinder or facilitate their participation in the school to work transition process.

This research was designed as a mixed methods case study. Methods included: (i) questionnaires for all secondary students of the school, graduates and stakeholders and (ii) individual interviews and focus group interviews with students, graduates, family members, employers, disability advocates and disabled persons' organisations (DPOs) and other key stakeholders from different sectors. The case study method enabled the exploration of the complex phenomenon of a school to work transition program and how research participants understood its successes and the interaction between the roles of different stakeholders (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Dong Nai Special School was selected for the case study - the only school to work transition program that exists in Vietnam. In the first phase, a quantitative approach was used to collect descriptive statistical information via a questionnaire. Questions focussed on the context, and demographic information pertaining to both the young people with disability and the stakeholders involved in school to work transition services in Dong Nai, as well as their ratings of satisfaction with various aspects of the policy and the program. A qualitative approach was employed to gather in-depth information from selected participants based on their knowledge, experience and points of view. It emphasised description and discovery, with an ultimate goal of obtaining and interpreting meaningful experience from research participants. The data collection was carried out in three rounds over 12 months.

## 1.4 Research Significance

Living with disability is one of the biggest predictors of poverty (Palmer et al., 2015; Taket, 2013). With one million new entrants to the workforce each year (United Nations Population Fund[UNFPA], 2011), young people with disability face substantial challenges obtaining a job

in Vietnam. Yet, there is little research into school to work transition for young people with disability in Vietnam and other developing countries.

This research examines the school to work transition services provided for students with disability in Dong Nai Special School. This is the first comprehensive school to work transition model to be operational in Vietnam, and the research provides an overall picture of the school to work transition program being provided for young people with disability, drawing attention to barriers and facilitators to vocational pathways, higher skill jobs, sustainability, and career trajectories. The findings provide insights as to how satisfied transition students were with the services they have received.

Importantly, this study provided an opportunity for young people with disability, education administrators, teachers, disability activists and disability stakeholders to contribute their experience, barriers and facilitators to the regional and international discourse of the issue, and improve future school to work transition services and programs for young people with disability in Vietnam

Ultimately, this research provides recommendations about how best to deliver school to work transition programs and inform policy-makers. This is of use to future school to work transition programs, education managers, stakeholders, disability activists, young people with disability and their families in advocating for improved school to work transition support, and thus will contribute to the improvement of wellbeing, the elimination of stigma, and ensuring the rights of people with disability in society.

## 1.5 Thesis Outline

This section presents the purpose and a summary of the content of the following eight chapters that follow this introduction.

**Chapter 2.** The Literature Review provides an overview of the relevant existing research and publications that are related to the research question. This chapter covers key international and regional frameworks related to education, vocational training and employment; historical constructions of disability; social exclusion and social inclusion, disability rights and school to work transition; successful school to work transition programs and evidence-based best

practices for school to work transition. The findings of the review demonstrate the gaps between what was found in existing research and the findings of this study.

**Chapter 3.** The Research Design and Methodology provides an explanation of the research design, the philosophical assumptions that underpin its epistemology, theoretical frameworks, and research methodology and methods. Further discussed are the research aims and objectives, recruitment and sampling, data analysis framework and processes, ethical considerations, and the strengths and limitations of the research. Other elements also include, the researcher position and roles, and the trustworthiness tests to ensure the rigour in the research.

**Chapter 4.** The Context of Dong Nai school and Demographic Information of Participants. The chapter describes the historical context and background of the Dong Nai school as a case study and also provides a comprehensive picture of the social demographic factors of the 35 students, 22 graduates and 23 stakeholders who participated in the school to work transition program. Information and data in this chapter provides an important backdrop to the study and links the perceived facilitators and barriers to the success of the school to work transition program analysed in Chapters 5 and 6.

**Chapter 5.** Participation of Young People with Disability and Stakeholders in the School to work Transition Program describes the participation of students, graduates and stakeholders in school to work transition processes, including needs assessment, planning, decision making, and vocational training program. The chapter also describes the perceptions and attitudes of students, graduates and stakeholders towards the school and work environments that impact on the success of the school to work transition.

**Chapter 6.** Facilitators and Barriers to the Success of the School to work transition program for young people with disability. This chapter describes the lived experience of the students and graduates, perceptions of stakeholders, and represents these using Bronfenbrenner's ecological model as a framework outlining the data collected from in-depth interviews, focus groups, and open-ended questions from the questionnaires into the macro-system, exosystem, mesosystem and microsystem.

**Chapter 7.** Policies and Services on School to Work Transition. This chapter outlines existing policies and available services that impact the school to work transition program in Vietnam.

In particular, it examines factors that either facilitate or hinder the enforcement of policies that are in place to ensure the quality of service delivery for school to work transition program for young people with disability.

**Chapter 8.** The Discussion focuses on examining how the Dong Nai school to work transition program compares with the school to work transition policies, service delivery mechanisms and the services delivered to young people with disability as identified in the literature. The chapter also analyses what is needed to ensure the effective school to work transition for young people with disability in the context of Vietnam in general and in Dong Nai in particular.

**Chapter 9.** The Conclusion and Implications draws together the previous chapters to answer the research question; as to how young people with disability can be supported to ensure their success in school to work transition, to remove the barriers that young people with disability have been facing. It discusses the limitations of the research and makes recommendations for future research.

## SUMMARY

The introductory chapter provides background to the research, its aims and objectives, some relevant context about education, vocational training and employment in Vietnam as well as the chosen design and site selected for the research. This chapter also explains the significance of the research.

In the next chapter, the literature review provides a more comprehensive understanding of the issues relevant to school to work transition for young people with disability in Vietnam. This chapter also reveals the gaps in the previous research relevant to the lived experience and needs of young people with disability in Vietnam with regards to vocational training and employment.

To set a foundation for this study, the search strategy and findings of the literature review are presented and discussed in Chapter 2.

## **CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter is a review of literature related to school to work transition for young people with disability. The review focuses on the identification and evaluation of relevant existing international disability policies, legislation, and practice frameworks, as well as literature discussing factors that are considered facilitators and barriers to the success of school to work transition for young people with disability. The focus of this chapter is to critically evaluate what is already known about school to work transition policy and practice frameworks internationally and regionally.

The findings of the literature review are then used to understand the academic context, to identify knowledge gaps, and discuss how this research can add to the knowledge around school to work transition. This provides “a framework for relating new findings to previous findings in the discussion chapter” (Randolph, 2009, p. 2), which can be used to consider future practices of school to work transition programs based on the best models of practice identified in the literature.

To provide a foundation for the research, this literature review addressed the following topics (i) key international and regional frameworks related to education, vocational training and employment; (ii) historical constructions of disability, social exclusion and social inclusion, (iii) disability rights and school to work transition, (iv) successful school to work transition programs (v) theoretical perspectives on social inclusion and human rights (vi) evidence-based best practices for school to work transition. Finally, the important points of the literature review have been synthesised to form a summary.

### **INTRODUCTION**

This section includes two sections. The first section outlines the national context on education, employment and disability, and the second section discusses the Government of Vietnam’s (GVN) response to international legal frameworks relating education, employment, and related school to work transition.

## National Context: Education, Employment and Disability

The General Statistic Office of Vietnam [GSO] (2019) reports that there are 6.2 million people with disability in Vietnam (6.4% of the population), of which there are approximately 94,000 children with disability of primary school age (accounting for 24% of the total children of primary school age) and 15,000 children of lower secondary school age from Year 6 to Year 9 (accounting for 14% of total children at lower secondary level). However, of those school-aged children with disability, only 67% attend primary school and only 40% attend lower secondary school. This is in contrast to 96% of children without disability attending school at primary level and 83% at the secondary level (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 2011). The number of children with disability reported to be in lower-secondary education also varies across different sources, for example, the 2015 UNESCO country review in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) reported “around one quarter (24.33%) of all disabled children are enrolled in lower secondary education” (UNESCO & MOET, 2015, p. 29). According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA, 2011), it was estimated that 96.8 per cent of children without disabilities between the age of 6 and 10 years were enrolled in primary school. However, the proportion of children with all disabilities enrolled was only 66.5 per cent. In relation to children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, there were no data reported about their enrolment in school. Furthermore, the literacy rate reported among people with disabilities was much lower than for people without disabilities, 76.3 per cent and 95.2 per cent, respectively (UNFPA, 2011). The literacy rate among youth with hearing impairment (from 15 to 24 years old) was reported to be about 42 per cent (UNFPA, 2011).

Children, including children with hearing impairment, have right to education (World Federation for the Deaf). Education plays an important role in the successful development of a society (Venkatraja & Indira, 2011). Education also increases employment opportunities that lead to social inclusion (Grigal, Hart, & Migliore, 2011; O'Higgins & Ivanov, 2006). Finding the right job is important, as this has positive impacts on one's personal life, including building confidence, independence and overcoming stigma (Benz, Lindstrom, & Yovanoff, 2000; Bonaccio, Connelly, Gellatly, Jetha, & Martin Ginis, 2019; Rusch, Hughes, Agran, Martin, & Johnson, 2009). Therefore preparing students for the workforce is an important role for schools, especially for youth and adolescents, since it is an important time of transition in life when decisions and choices are to be made (Levinson & Palmer, 2005; Nguyen, 2010). Thus,

preparation for the workforce provides opportunities for young people with disability to access inclusive employment, leading to their inclusion into society (Evans & Repper, 2000; Taket, 2013; Yeung, 2015).

Young people in Vietnam, especially those with disability, continue to face barriers and challenges in finding the right job (ILO, 2013a). Poor prospects for education and employment among people with disability, as well as the intense stigma attached to disability, contribute to their higher poverty rates (Braithwaite & Mont, 2009; Palmer, et al., 2015). Research has indicated that vocational education and training in schools may improve school retention and completion rates, and reduce the number of young people who leave school without any qualifications (Lamb, 2008). Vocational training can help increase the essential work and education skills of young people with disability (Lamb, 2008). Polidano and Mavromaras (2011) posit that vocational education and training for young people with disability should increase their chances of gaining employment and both short- and long-term retention in paid work. Lindstrom, Abidi, and Sharma (2014) argue that meaningful employment leading to financial independence is a way out of poverty and is important in reducing social exclusion due to stigma faced by people with disability. To date, the quality and standards of school to work transition services remain an open question, as these services have not been standardised internationally and vary depending on different local contexts (Winn & Hay, 2009). The services being provided to young people with disability also often vary from country to country and with the types of disability (Geenen, Powers, Vasquez, & Bersani, H., 2003). An assumption underlying this research is that identifying key factors for successful school to work transition, drawn from successful models being implemented and evaluated in different locations, could be of value in improving the employability of young people with disability in Vietnam.

The recent ratification of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment for People with Disability (ILO, 1983) in 2019 by the GVN outlines the country's commitment to ensure no discrimination in the employment of people with disability and, instead, ensuring that people with disability have access to training and necessary services to facilitate inclusive employment (ILO, 2019)

Following the ratification of the "Education for All" policy in 2005, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRDP) and the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, a series of domestic laws and policies were developed to promote the enforcement of the international legal framework in Vietnam, and these are described below.

## Government of Vietnam's response to International Legal Frameworks

The ratification of UNCRPD, Biwako Millennium Framework (BMF), Incheon Strategy (IS) and SDGs implies that Vietnam strives “to make the rights real” (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2012b, p.1) by developing “an inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based society that does not marginalize people with disability” (UNESCO, 2002, p.1). One of the efforts has been to improve domestic legislation by improving the existing domestic framework to ensure its compliance to the rights-based approach and inclusion principles as set in each of the documents. The key national legislation which ensures people with disability have access to education, vocational training and employment includes the National Law on Education and the National Law on Disability, as well as the subsequent National Action Plans on Disability.

This section provides an overview of the Government of Vietnam's response to the international frameworks of the UNCRDP and Education for All policy and the impact of its local policies. This brief review sets the scene for the more detailed literature review later in this chapter encompassing an extended search of the relevant international and regional literature pertaining to school to work transition for young people with disability.

### *National Law on Education*

The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) has affirmed, via the National Law on Education (2005), its commitment to inclusive education for all children of Vietnam, regardless of gender, ethnicity, socio-economic, or any other factors that may lead to exclusion (Le, 2013; Nguyen et al., 2016; Rosenthal, 2009). In 2007, MOET developed a specific plan to support education for children with disability, the Education for Children with Disability Strategy and Action Plan 2007-2010 with a view to 2015 (MOET, 2006). As evidenced in the National Education for All (EFA) Action Plan 2003-2015 (MOET, 2003), MOET has consistently pursued development approaches that ensure rights and access to education for all children, including people with disability (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2008; UNESCO & MOET, 2015).

Vietnam established the National Action Plan for Education for All (2003-2015) (MOET, 2003) which was approved by the Prime Minister on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2003 (MOET & UNESCO, 2009). However, the EFA Action Plan (2003-2015) did not target education for children with disability, indicating the disability issue was not well recognised at the policy level at the time the plan was released (Le, 2013). In fact, it was concluded that the lack of educational opportunities available for children with disability may lead to their social exclusion (Kabeer, 2005; Klasen, 1998; Ngo, Shin, Nhan, & Yang, 2012; Nguyen, Roemmele, & Robert, 2013) and create stigma for children with disability (Ngo et al., 2012).

The 2005 National Law on Education was revised and re-approved in June 2019, stating that “learning is the right and obligation of every citizen” (MOET, 2019, Article 81). The Law regulates inclusive education as the only approach and states that reasonable accommodation shall be provided to ensure the inclusion of children with disability in education (MOET, 2019, Article 15). This can be achieved through the development of plans for universal education, ensuring the conditions to implement the universalisation of education throughout the country. The Law stipulates that “the State shall establish and encourage organisations and individuals to establish schools and classes for disabled and handicapped people to enable them to restore their function, to receive education and vocational training, and to integrate into the community” (MOET, 2019, Article 63). However, this contradicts Article 15 of the Law that regulates inclusive education as the only approach in the country. In addition, MOET has released Decision 23/2006/QĐ - BGD&ĐT on inclusive education for people with disability, and later a Circular 03/2018/TT- BGD&ĐT on Inclusive Education for people with disability that regulates policies and support for young people with disability to study in an inclusive education setting and requires individual planning at school.

### *National Law on Disability*

In 2010, the GVN promulgated the National Law on Disability. The National Law was developed in compliance with the UNCRDP’s principles of a rights-based society and served as an umbrella national framework that has stimulated additional mobilisation of resources and participation of government agencies, non-government organisations (NGOs), related stakeholders, and people with disability and their families (MOLISA et al., 2015; USAID, 2015). These have contributed to removing barriers and building a more rights-based society

in Vietnam including ensuring the right of children with disability to inclusive education and transition from education to employment.

Following the enactment of the National Law on Disability, efforts have been made to promote the integration and mainstreaming of non-academic skill subjects into education through the approval and implementation of the two National Action Plans on Disability so as to improve labour market skills for youth (GVN, 2005, 2012). This promotes the enforcement of inclusive education, vocational training and inclusive employment (MOLISA et al., 2015), with the aim of ensuring every person is able to freely choose an occupation and a place in which to be trained according to his/her interests and capacities (ILO, 2013b). This policy assists youth to continue learning to gain the skills they need to enter the labour market, including social skills.

Apart from these two National Actions Plan on Disability (GVN, 2005, 2012), vocational training and employment for young people with disability was promoted through the enforcement of the National Target Program on Vocational Training for Vietnamese Youths (GVN, 2016) through the promulgation of Circular 48/2013 by the Ministry of Finance (MOF) and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLISA). These regulate the management and spending of funding for vocational training and employment for people with disability (MOF and MOLISA, 2013).

#### *Impact of local policies*

Although the Government of Vietnam has promulgated an inclusive legal and policy framework relating to inclusive education and employment, young people with disability in Vietnam still face barriers in accessing the labour market. Research has indicated that young people experience barriers to accessing labour markets in industrialised, urbanised countries including Vietnam and that 45% of the unemployed population in Vietnam are young people (Francis, Gross, Turnbull, & Parent-Johnson, 2013). The findings from a study conducted by the ILO in March 2015 on school to work transition for young men and women in Vietnam highlighted that the youths' education failed to match job requirements, as organisations are looking for candidates with high education levels or qualifications with technical skills. Three-fifths (61%) of youth in the study completed their education at the lower secondary level or below, and school to work transition services were not available to prepare these early school leavers with skills to access career opportunities. The graduating students often did not have

the skills that employers expected, therefore, it became necessary to create a partnership between the educational institutions and employers in technical and scientific areas, as this would help the youth with opportunities for internships and other short-term work experience (Nguyen et al., 2015). While the transition to work is always challenging for young people (Tran, 2018), young people with disability face even greater challenges. Therefore, transition programs and services need to recognise and be based on their specific needs (Wehman et al., 2019).

As mentioned in chapter 1, between 2012 and 2014, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded a project on Inclusion of Vietnamese People with Disability in Dong Nai with Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH) as the implementing partner. The project received technical support from international consultants working for the United States Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education (MCIE) from the consultative design stage to implementation, including aspects such as the training of teachers, parents, students, and service providers. The project promoted inclusive school to work services for students with disability at Dong Nai Special School, and was the first model of its kind in Vietnam (USAID, 2015). Over three years, the project provided vocational training courses to the students at Dong Nai school and capacity building for teachers, parents, Disabled Persons' Organisations (DPOs) and managers of service provider agencies, such as vocational training centres, Department of Labour and Social Affairs (DOLISA), Department of Education and Training (DOET), and employers in the school to work transition process (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF] et al., 2015).

## 2.1 Methods and Search Strategy

Snyder (2019) proposes there are three main approaches for literature reviews including “systematic, semi-systematic and integrative approaches” (Snyder, 2019, p. 334). This literature review used an integrative approach which assessed, critiqued and synthesised literature on the topic of school to work transition for young people with disability. To add to the theoretical and empirical literature in this area, this research aimed to explore facilitators and barriers affecting school to work transitions for young people with disability and to examine how the current policy framework and service systems facilitate and hinder this in Vietnam. To answer the research question: “What does success look like for young people with disability who are participating in a school to work transition program?”, the study explored

what is already known in the literature in relation to international and regional contexts, as well as literature relevant to school to work transition for young people with disability in the context of Vietnam.

The process for conducting this review followed four main steps: (i) formulating research topic areas (ii) conducting the review (iii) evaluating and analysing the information collected from the different sources and (iv) writing findings of the review (Cooper, 1989; Snyder, 2019).

### Step 1. Formulating the research area

The first three research objectives address: (i) the facilitators and barriers of school to work transition, (ii) the policy and services in school to work transition, and (iii) participation of young people with disability in the school to work transition process. Thus, the search focused on three key concepts to provide context for the research question and these objectives, including

- Concept one: young people with disability
- Concept two: school to work transition
- Concept three: geographical regions

The diagram of key research concepts is demonstrated in the Figure 3 below.

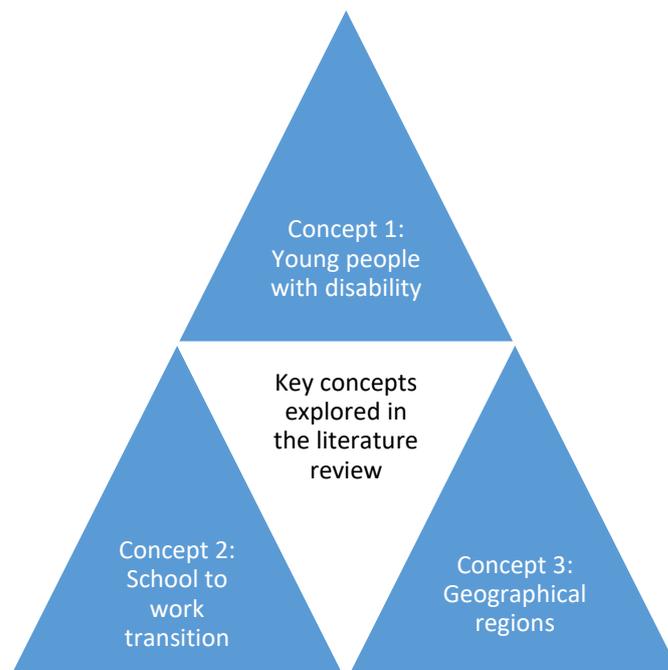


Figure 3: Diagram of Key Research Concepts

The concepts were defined in order to cover most of the important information relating to the research question. Key search terms were then identified corresponding to each key concept. Table 2 summarises the search terms for each concept:

Table 2: List of Key Concepts and Search Terms

Key Concept	Young people with disability	School to work transition	Geographical Regions
Search Terms	Disability	Employment Vocational Training Special Education Inclusive Education Vocational Rehabilitation Vocational Education	ASEAN Mekong South East Asia International

Following these key terms and concepts, step two describes the process for conducting the review.

## Step 2. Conducting the review

As suggested by Snyder (2019), the review targeted all previous research studies with findings relating to this research, and the reviewed studies provided a framework for analysis of the Dong Nai school to work transition program that is relevant to this research.

Both online and hard copies of original documents were reviewed. Journals, textbooks, reviewed articles, reports (both published and unpublished) were searched using the key concepts search terms. Databases were searched including (i) Google Scholar (ii) Medline, (iii) PsychInfo, and (iv) Science Direct. As the terms used for searching were different in each database, Table 3 summarises the key terms, concepts, and data sources for the search for each database.

Table 3: Key Terms, Concepts and Data Sources

Key Term/Words	GoogleScholar	Science Direct	Medline	Psycinfo
<b>Concept 1 – Young people with Disability</b>				
Disability	Disability	Disability	Disabili*, Intellectual Disability Physical Disability Hard of hearing/Hearing Impaired/Deaf Blindness/Visual Impaired	Developmental Disability Disability Learning Disability Multi-Disability Physical Disability Hard of hearing/Hearing Impaired/Deaf Blindness/Visual Impaired
<b>Concept 2 – School to work transition</b>				
Employment	Employment	Employment/ Employ*	Employ*, Employment, Supported/or employ*	Employment
Vocational Training	Vocational Training	Vocational/Vocat* Training/Train*	Vocat*, Vocational Train*/or training	Vocational Training
Special Education	Special Education	Education/Educat*	Education, Special/ed, mt, og [Education, Methods, Organisation & Administration]	Special Education
Inclusive Education	Inclusive Education	Inclusive Education/Educat*	Education/ or "Education of "Mainstreaming (Education)"/ or "Education of Hearing Disabled"/ or "Education of Visually Disabled"/ or Vocational Education/ or Education, Special/	exp Special Education/ or exp Special Needs/ or exp Disability/ or exp Special Education Students/ or exp Special Education Teachers/ or exp Teacher Attitudes/ or exp Policy Making/
Vocational Rehabilitation/Educati on	Vocational Rehabilitation/Educ ation	Vocational Rehabilitation/ Edu* or Education	Rehabilitation, Vocational/ed, [Education, History, Methods, Organisation & Administration, Trends.	Vocational Rehabilitation
<b>Concept 3 – Geographical Regions</b>				
ASEAN or Mekong South East Asia International	ASEAN or Mekong South East Asia International	ASEAN or Mekong International	ASEAN or MEKONG International	Vietnam ASEAN South East Asia International

Note: (\*) is a truncation symbol that is used to cut the words to the root words as provided in the “help” option in each particular database.

With the terms identified and used for each database, the search was carried out considering the following inclusion criteria:

- Existing literature reviews on the same area of the school to work transition
- Research studies relevant to the topic. The search covered peer reviewed articles in both English and Vietnamese, books, and reports (both published and unpublished) on the topic
- Documents included history of disability construction, social inclusion and exclusion
- Documents included indicators, elements of successful model or best practices of school to work transition

- School to work transition for young people with disability, and for the hearing and vision impaired in particular
- Publications in ASEAN or Mekong regions
- Timeframe was not date-limited.

Firstly, the search identified key terms or words based on the research objectives, including young people with disability, school to work transition and the geographical regions. Disability was used as a term for young people with disability. The key topic of school to work transition was explored using the following search terms: employment, special education, inclusive education, vocational rehabilitation, and vocational education. These were the main concepts used for searching. Synonyms or alternative terms for the keywords were identified through searching some key articles from each database (as described in the above table).

Secondly, the search results were refined by adding more keywords linked by AND in order to focus the search, for example, the research used more specific key words that covered areas identified in the main concepts/themes, such as: legislation, history of education (from special education to inclusive education), the service system, barriers and facilitators, success, failure, participation, social inclusion, etc., and when there were few relevant results, more alternative terms were added and linked by OR.

Thirdly, for each identified document, the abstract was read first, then it was included for full text screening if relevant. If selected, the full text of the document was read before a final decision was made to include the article or document into the literature review.

Finally, after the search, the documents (articles, books, reports) extracted from search databases were filed in a citation management software program, Endnote 9X Library in a separate folder for each database, then relevant files were transferred to folders related to each theme for analysis and interpretation.

### **Step 3. Analysing and interpreting the information**

After reviewing all related articles and documents, the final selection of documents was extracted into a separate folder in the Endnote library. As recommended by Snyder (2019), information from the selected documents was extracted and described in relation to the topic,

type of study, and year of publication, and were presented in the form of findings in the Endnote library and then categorised in relation to the research question and objectives.

#### **Step 4. Writing up the findings of the review**

Key findings identified, analysed and interpreted in steps two and three were synthesised and generalised. The key findings covered the topics relating to the research objective areas as follows:

- The history of disability policies and legislation at international and regional levels regarding school to work transition, education, vocational training and employment for people with disability
- The factors facilitating and hindering the success of school to work transition for young people with disability
- Best practices and models of school to work transition that support the effective participation of young people with disability

Section 2.2 presents more detail about each of the key findings.

## **2.2 Key findings from the Literature Review**

The following topics are addressed in this section: (i) introduction, (ii) constructions of disability, social exclusion and social inclusion, (iii) international and regional legislation frameworks, (iv) disability rights movement, (v) social inclusion and human rights, (vi) frameworks for practising school to work transition for young people with disability, (vii) evidence-based best practices, and (viii) elements for successful school to work transition programs identified in the literature.

### **2.2.1 Introduction**

An estimate of 386 million people with disability are at working age globally, and around 80% of people with disability who are of working age are unemployed (United Nations - Department of Economics and Social Affairs [UNDESA], 2019). Generally around the world, young people with disability are poorly prepared for work, and therefore face greater unemployment, underemployment, and are more likely to work in low paid jobs (Stewart et al., 2010; Winn & Hay, 2009). Many students with disability drop out of school before graduation because they realise employment options are unclear (Phillips, Blustein, Jobin-Davis, & White, 2002).

School systems can better engage and support these students by helping them to plan for their post-school life by identifying their strengths, their interests, and by providing them with the skills they need to be successful in the workplace. It is also recognised that schools play an important role in preparing students for the workforce (Levinson & Palmer, 2009) and it is proposed that this preparation should be done during lower secondary school, especially for young people with disability (Cocks, Thoresen, & Lee, 2015). Levinson and Palmer (2005) suggest that most young people with disability leaving high school do not have the required knowledge or skills to obtain suitable employment and most of them are not prepared for entry-level jobs. Watts (1997) proposed that career guidance should be an integral part of the education system, as it is important to guide students to develop their goals and make career decisions in response to labour market needs. The lack of opportunity to continue into secondary school presents limitations for these students. Therefore, providing workforce preparation in lower secondary school is a necessary intervention until at least the secondary schools can provide ongoing education for students with hearing impairment.

According to the National Longitudinal Transition Study in the USA (NLTS) (Wagner & Blackorby, 1996), students who participated in work experience programs missed significantly less school than students who did not, and were less likely to fail a course or to drop out of high school. Community-based work experiences had generally more positive impacts than school-based programs, suggesting the importance of giving students real work experiences in community settings. The number of individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing (three to five years out of high school) taking part in the current study were competitively employed 43.5% and 42.3% respectively (Wagner & Blackorby, 1996).

Although employment is the ultimate outcome for students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, how they prepare themselves to make the transition to the world of work varies from student to student. The federal transition initiative clearly states that transition programs are to be based in secondary educational programs (Bull & Bullis, 1991). Students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing experience similar outcomes for post-secondary schooling and employment as other students with other disabilities (Wagner & Blackorby, 1996). When compared to other high school students with disabilities, the majority intend to enter the workforce upon leaving high school.

Prior paid work history was an important factor in successfully gaining employment for individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. Bullis, Davis, Bull and Johnson (1995) state that students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing attending a residential school had fewer paid work experiences than their counterparts who were mainstreamed in public schools. One factor which may contribute to this phenomenon appears to be that students in a residential program may find living on a residential campus more restrictive in terms of being able to leave campus to work while attending school. Bullis, Reiman, Davis, and Reid (1997) identified that persons who are deaf and persons who are hearing have similar achievements on entering the work force but that, over time, the two groups diverge with adults who are deaf generally earning less and not exhibiting career advancement in a manner similar to their hearing peers. Bullis, Bull, Sendelbaugh, and Freeburg (1987) also point out that, compared to their hearing peers, students who are deaf are less successful in finding appropriate employment and adjusting to independent living.

The ability to communicate efficiently and effectively plays an important role in cognitive and social development of children, and building social relationships (Decker, Vallotton, & Johnson, 2012). However, hearing impairment significantly impacts children's developing communication skills, causing delay in the development of expressive and receptive communication (WHO, 2017). The most difficult challenge between hearing parents and their children with hearing impairment is communication (Kobel, 2009). In most cases, a priority of early intervention for those children focuses on improving the acquisition of language and communication skills (Karchmer, Mitchell, Marschark & Spencer, 2003).

### 2.2.2 Constructions of Disability, Social Exclusion and Social Inclusion

Throughout history, disability has been viewed or constructed in many ways. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, disability was typically viewed as a biological deficiency (Longmore, 1987; Stiker, 1999) or “personal trouble” (Borsay, 2005, p.5). This biological approach viewed disability as a defect that needed to be cured in order for people to return to ‘normal’ as much as possible (Borsay, 2005; Longmore, 1987; Stiker, 1999), or as an impairment, due to damage or to a disease process that needed medical treatment (Llewellyn & Hogan, 2000). These perceptions have led to an assumption that people with disability are as abnormal (Llewellyn & Hogan, 2000) and, as a result, cannot live independently and instead need others for assistance and support (Longmore, 1987).

Since the 1960s, this deficit view of disability has been recognised as leading to discrimination and stigma (Nicholson & Cooper, 2013; Shakespeare, 2006). This stigmatisation has created conditions that have isolated people with disability and kept them institutionalised and unemployed (Fleischer, Doris, & Frieda, 2011). Such popular social perceptions of deficits or inabilities among people with disability have denied them full participation in society (Borsay, 2005). During this period, medical rehabilitation was the main approach to addressing disability (Fleischer et al., 2011). It was also evident that education for people with disability during this time did not prepare individuals well for vocations and was more about satisfying social expectations (Hurst, 2002; Stiker, 1999).

The deinstitutionalisation movement in the 1970s started promoting improved accessibility in the physical environment focusing on ensuring the needs of people with disability were met without discrimination and ensuring services were adapted to their needs. Ultimately, this was about people with disability leading independent and self-directed lives (Fleischer et al., 2011). Concurrently, awareness was growing that people with intellectual disability can live, learn and work as members of the community, thus having a place in society and making a contribution to social development (Culham, 2003).

The deinstitutionalisation movement adopted the principles of normalisation that promote social integration and ensure accessibility of community services. The goal here was to work towards conditions of everyday living for people with disability being as close as possible to regular circumstances and ways of life in society (Nirje, 1980). This movement proposed that people with intellectual disability who had been living in institutions needed to be moved out to live in the community to enjoy the same services as other members of society (Wolfensberger, 1972). Later, Davis (1995) emphasised normalisation for people with hearing impairment through integration into the community and ensuring their engagement in social activities through communication. Intellectual disability and deafness were both used to describe and highlight general social attitudes towards people with disability during that time (Culham, 2003; Davis, 1995, 2014).

Normalisation principles were subsequently extended into an approach which emphasised valued social roles and was re-badged Social Role Valorisation (SRV) in the early 1980s (Osburn, 2006). This formed the foundation for students with intellectual disability to enter the workplace as a form of social integration (Tyree, Kendrick, & Block, 2011). SRV became the

basis for evaluation of social service practices to ensure people with disability were included and able to exercise their valued social roles (Blakely & Dziadosz, 2014) as part of mainstream society (Davys & Tickle, 2008). Since the 1980s, Wolfensberger (2000) has argued that SRV can greatly increase service quality and effectiveness and thus address the needs of those being served. Most importantly, the emphasis of Social Role Valorisation was to focus on how society values the roles of people with disability, their knowledge and identity (Wolfensberger, 1983), and on disability as a social construct (Borsay, 2005).

SRV was then extended into an approach looking at a new way of exploring the experience of disability by considering various environmental barriers that people with disability encounter. Economic, political and cultural barriers were considered as major causes of disadvantage for people with disability (Borsay, 2005). It was proposed that these barriers should be addressed by creating opportunities for people with disability in social interaction and full participation in education and vocational training and employment in order to help people with disability overcome stigma and eliminate discrimination (Fine & Asch, 1988; Hughes & Paterson, 2006; Shakespeare, 2006). According to Oliver (2013), breaking down these barriers would lead to an inclusive society in which special education should be replaced with an inclusive approach, as the foundation for promoting inclusive employment for people with disability. However, the weakness of this social model of disability was that “the concept of a world in which people with disability were free of environmental barriers is hard to operationalise” (Shakespeare, 2006, p. 200).

The rights movement—from deinstitutionalisation, normalisation, to social role valorisation—highlights the necessity of addressing needs with a rights-based approach. This supports the rights of people with disability with the aim of ensuring that individuals can make informed choices about services and treatment in their community, especially in educational and vocational programs (Stroman, 2003). Longmore (1987) highlights that human services for people with disability were expanded as a result of increased education and civil rights laws during 1970s and 1980s, and independent living was promoted during that time as an outcome of advancing this deinstitutionalisation agenda (Fleischer et al., 2011).

Social inclusion theory began to develop during late 1980s and 1990s (Culham & Nind, 2003). The concept of inclusion for people with disability considers the interaction between people living with impairment and the environment. The social model of disability highlights that

environmental factors, such as physical, attitudinal, communication, and social factors, may be inclusionary or exclusionary (Oliver, 2013). Access is influenced by a process that facilitates participation and overcomes the barriers that compromise participation. It implies that if people living with impairment can rely on an enabling environment, they can participate and enjoy equal rights with their peers (Bampi, Guilhem, & Alves, 2010). An important element of disability theory is that the participation of people with disability means taking on roles that are part of mainstream society such as having a job (Davys & Tickle, 2008). However, participation is dependent on the availability of resources, as well as barriers and facilitators within the environment (Taket, 2013). According to Taket (2013), thinking about disability in terms of social inclusion/exclusion has helped to identify dimensions to consider for access and participation of people with disability including: intent, practices, context and accessibility, economic and personal. This approach has been applied in this research which explores how young people with disability are provided services as well as the factors that facilitate and hinder the school to work transition process in Dong Nai school. Borsay (2005) argues that people with disability can only be fully included with full rights of citizenship if they are not marginal to the labour market, because the labour market is about knowledge and identity of an individual within a society (Linton, 1998).

### 2.2.3 International and Regional Frameworks

This section presents the analysis and findings from the literature about the legal frameworks on disability and school to work transition for young people with disability at both international and regional levels. It outlines the relevant sections of legislative frameworks that are foundational to the rights of people with disability to disability services, including vocational training, employment and education, and links between the legislative frameworks and the social construct of disability.

#### **United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disability (UNCRPD)**

The European Union and over 180 countries around the world have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Right of People with Disability (UNCRPD; International Disability Alliance [IDA], 2020). This is “a binding legal instrument with a specific provision on the right to education and freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse for persons with disability” (United Nations [UN], 2006, Article 16). Article 24 of the UNCRPD recognises:

*The right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realising this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels. It also requires all educators to make reasonable accommodations, and provide the right support and individual programmes of study so that all children with disability can be educated to achieve their academic, creative and social potential*

(United Nations [UN], 2006, Article 24)

In addition, the Convention requires all schools to foster an attitude of respect for the rights of persons with disability at all levels of the education system, including in all children from an early age; and governments to develop full accessibility to environment, transportation, communication and information which includes their education systems (UN, 2006, Article 8 and 9). Vietnam signed the UNCRPD in 2008 and ratified it in 2014.

### **The Biwako Millennium Framework (2003-2012)**

In response to the UNCRPD as a human rights framework to address inclusive education for people with disability, the Biwako Millennium Framework (BMF) for 2003-2012 (UNESCAP, 2002) was adopted at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) high-level meeting during the first regional decade on disability. Education became an important issue in disability advocacy and was the third priority area in the BMF for the Southeast Asia Region (Biwako Millennium Framework (BMF), 2002). The BMF was “developed in response to the evaluation of the achievements of governments in the region to the Agenda for Action of the first Decade (1993-2002) (UNESCAP, 1993, p. 1). It sets out “a regional framework for action by Governments to achieve an inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based society for persons with disability”. It also “establishes principles and policy directions necessary for the achievement of this goal and identifies seven priority areas for action” (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific [UNESCAP], 2011). Priority Area 3 is “early detection, early intervention and education” (UNESCAP, 2003, p. 9).

### **The Incheon Strategy (2013-2022)**

The UNESCAP’s Incheon Strategy (IS; UNESCAP, 2012a) ensured the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of its action plan for a decade with a commitment to “make the rights real”—setting goals to address the gaps and challenges in meeting the needs of young people with disability in inclusive education after the evaluation of BMF (UNESCAP,

2012). The IS set goal five: “expand early intervention and education of children with disability” and stated that “it is essential for governments to ensure that children with disability have access, on an equitable basis with others in the communities in which they live, to quality primary and secondary education. This process includes engaging families as partners in providing more effective support for children with disability.” (UNESCAP, 2013, p. 27). The mid-term review of the IS implementation was unable to draw on the results of inclusive education policies for children at secondary school due to a lack of data (UNESCO, 2017).

### **Education for All**

Education for All (EFA) (United Nations Educational - Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 2000) represents an international commitment to ensure that every child and adult receives basic education of good quality. It is based both on a human rights perspective and on the generally held belief that education is central to individual well-being and national development (UNICEF, 2015). A review on Vietnam’s readiness to inclusive education for children with disability conducted by UNICEF and MOET (2015) indicated that a growing focus has been placed on inclusion as a key strategy for promoting the right to education, including for children with disability. While EFA offers the goal of universal entitlement, inclusion can be understood not merely as a vehicle for ending segregation, but rather as a commitment to creating schools which respect and value diversity, and it aims to promote democratic principles and “a set of values and beliefs relating to equality and social justice so that all children, including children with disability, can participate in teaching and learning” (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2012, p. 8). In so doing, it ensures the rights of children with disability to be legally recognised in the international human right agenda (UNESCO & MOET, 2015).

Education became a critical issue in disability advocacy and was the third priority area in the BMF for the Southeast Asia Region (BMF, 2002) and later Incheon Strategy 2013-2022, in goal five on education (UNESCAP, 2013, p. 27). The BMF (2003-2012) was developed in response to the evaluation of the achievements of governments in the region to the Agenda for Action of the first decade (1993-2002) and IS was developed based on the findings of the evaluation of the BMF and the action plan for the decade (2013-2022). Both “BMF and IS have established principles and policy directions necessary for the achievement of this goal and identify seven priority areas for action” (UNESCAP, 2012, p. 19). Priority three of the BMF

focuses on “early detection, early intervention and inclusive education” (UNESCAP, 2003, p. 9), and goal five of IS is to “expand early intervention and education of children with disability” in order to ensure the rights of people with disability in inclusive education” (UNESCAP, 2013, p. 27). Both the BMF of UNESCAP (2003) and the IS of UNESCAP (2013) set time-bound targets with a list of actions required to achieve the targets. The targets and policy directions for action have been incorporated into the relevant sections of this document.

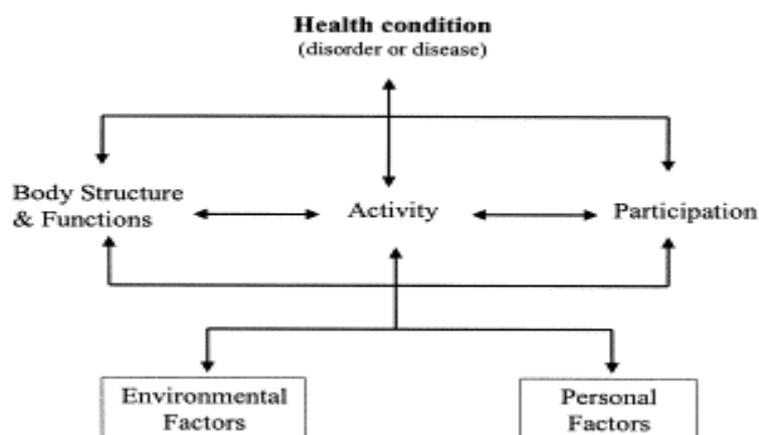
## **Sustainable Development**

In the spirit of the UNCRPD, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) that Vietnam enacted to 2030, replaced the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and set targets for quality education (target four) and decent work and economic growth (target eight). Work is “both a health issue and a major determinant of social inclusion, and diverse work opportunities act as a vehicle by which social inclusion can be achieved” (Evans & Repper, 2000, p. 21), thus ensuring freedom, equality, security and human dignity (ILO, 2008). Disability is mainstreamed in these targets, and “is a foundation for all countries to promote inclusion of children with disability into mainstream schools and also to ensure students with disability are equipped and prepared for the world of work in their post school lives (UNESCO, 1990, p. 10).

## **The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health**

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) looks beyond the medical model and takes into account the impact of the environment and other contextual factors (World Health Organization [WHO], 2013). The ICF illustrates the inter-relationship “between a health condition (disease or injury) and its impact on an individual’s body (body functions and body structure) and on the individual’s participation in the society (activities and participation)” (Escorpizo, 2015, p. 13). The WHO model of the ICF, which illustrates the interaction between body functions and body structure, activities and participation, and the contextual factors (Escorpizo, 2015), is presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4: International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health



Source: World Health Organization (2013, p. 9)

It is proposed that these three components (health condition, body structure and functions, activity and participation) interact with environmental factors and personal factors, which can influence the level of disability of an individual (Wang & Lin, 2013). The WHO's ICF is an instrument used for improving social awareness of disability, reinforcing the provisions of the UNCPRD (Escorpizo, 2015) and classifying environmental factors of disability (Verdonschot, Witte, Reichrath, Buntinx, & Curfs, 2009). Mercer and MacDonald (2007) emphasise that the ICF and the UNCPRD see disability as the outcome of complex interactions between health conditions and environmental factors that facilitate or hinder full and effective participation in society.

#### 2.2.4 Disability Rights Movement

Over the last decade, disability advocacy and disability rights activists have advocated a change from the social model to a rights-based approach to address disability. The disability rights movement seeks change in how disability is viewed in society (Stroman, 2003), and how the needs and rights of people with disability are addressed through appropriate allocation of resources, and participation of people with disability (Race, 2012). This approach recognises equal opportunities and the rights of people with disability to social inclusion and the need to make changes within their environment at an interpersonal level (Stroman, 2003). Under a disability rights approach, service users are given opportunities to discuss their strengths, their needs and difficulties, and then to decide what services (if any) they will use or what assistance, support or resources they need to fully participate in social activities (Taket, 2013). The UNCPRD is the latest international legal framework that recognises the fundamental human

rights of people with disability and promotes the full inclusion of people with disability in society (UN, 2006).

Human rights instruments, legislation, and policies are key drivers that have led to global changes in intent and influence, awareness and attitudes (Taket, 2013). Intent includes the attitudes and purposes that are influenced by knowledge and awareness (Wilson, 2004). The enjoyment of human rights and social justice is recognised as a significant issue for people with disability and, regardless of the entitlement to human rights, inaccessibility is seen as a result of the attitudes and lack of awareness of policy-makers and stakeholders, as people with disability continue to be excluded from the social mainstream, including employment services (Barrett, 2003). With changes in the social movement addressing marginalisation and discrimination in the workplace, a legislative framework was developed to facilitate access to employment for people with disability. The ILO Convention 159 ([ILO], 1983) promotes actions to ensure equal opportunities and reasonable accommodations for people with disability in the workplace. The UNCRPD is the highest international legal disability framework. The UNCRPD does not have specific provisions with regards to school to work transition for young people with disability; however, it ensures the rights of people with disability to equal employment opportunities and decent jobs, and with reasonable accommodations and other services, including vocational training and vocational rehabilitation programs, job counselling and placement services. The third priority of the 1990 Education for All (EFA) Declaration, to ensure that “the basic learning needs of youth and adults are diverse and should be met through a variety of delivery systems” (UNESCO, 1990, p. 10), is a foundation for all countries to promote inclusion of children with disability into mainstream schools and also to ensure students with disability are equipped and prepared for the world of work in their post school lives.

In addition, school to work transition policies have been promulgated in a number of developed countries, for example, the often cited US legislation, the 1994 United States School to Work Opportunities Act (STWOA; Congress & ACT, 1994). The legislative movement for the promotion of disability rights began in the US in the 1960s (Fleischer et al., 2011). Legislation on disability included the Rehabilitation Act and United States Congress (1973), the Americans with Disability Act (United States Congress, 1990). These Acts have created conditions to enforce the inclusion of people with disability in society and have increased awareness of school to work transition, thus creating awareness to promote transition services for people

with disability in other countries. Australia implemented the Vocational Training Education (VET) in school that provides students with opportunities to work part-time while they are in Year 12 (Winn & Hay, 2009). A “Ticket-to-Work” program was piloted for 28 students with disability in 2012 through a network of Australian School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (ASbAT). It provides opportunities for young people with disability to enrol in apprenticeships and traineeships. The program started small and expanded nationwide in 2014 (Wakeford & Waugh, 2014).

### 2.2.5 Disability Rights and School to Work Transition

International studies, particularly in the US, suggest that young people with disability are poorly prepared for work, and therefore face greater unemployment, underemployment and are more likely to work in lower paid jobs (Winn & Hay, 2009). Many students with disability drop out of school before graduation as their employment options are limited or unclear (Levinson & Palmer, 2005). As a result, they have fewer educational qualifications, are excluded from the labour force, are socially marginalised and face an increased risk of social exclusion (Phillips, Blustein, Jobin-Davis, & White, 2002). Barnes and Mercer (2005) argued that people with disability should have opportunities to work in a mainstream setting for their full inclusion and that early career planning would increase job opportunities for young people with disability. Beyer (2012) conducted a review on the development of relevant legislation, policies and programs targeting inclusive employment of people with disability in general, and learning difficulties in particular, along with data from the UK. The findings of this study suggested that inclusion is only achieved if the availability of jobs, flexibility for people with disability, and inclusiveness among employers is improved through appropriate provision of reasonable accommodation and necessary equipment and assistive devices.

### 2.2.6 Social Inclusion and Human Rights

This research was designed to move beyond what had been done previously in Vietnam, and seek a deeper understanding of the lived experience of the students and graduates in the country’s only school to work transition program. In order to analyse this information in the context of the policy environment, it was important to review the literature on approaches and methods of gathering and analysing the research information. The research applied the principles articulated in the international rights-based frameworks, including UNCRPD and EFA, and the WHO ICF framework, and the advocacy call from social inclusion theories to

“Make the Rights Real” (UNESCAP, 2013, p. 1). The facilitators and barriers to the success of the school to work transition program were identified through listening to what the young people with disability had to say. This was important in order to understand their experience (Roberts, 2017). It provided a chance for young people with disability to share their views, perspectives and concerns (Helm, 2010), and the opportunity to participate in decision-making about their future (Clarke, Feeny, & McDonald, 2016). Van Manen’s (2014, 2016) phenomenological approach and Bronfenbrenner’s (1977) Ecological Framework offered useful approaches/frameworks for the researcher to explore social inclusion and human rights via observing the interaction of different elements that impact the views of students and graduates on the success of school to work transition.

### **Van Manen’s (2014) Phenomenological Approach**

Phenomenological research is the study of the structure of human intentionality or lived experience (Van Manen, 1990). In this research, it was deemed important to highlight the lived experience of young people with disability. Van Manen’s (2014) phenomenological approach was employed to assist the researcher to understand the ways people see the lifeworld, to guide analysis and interpretation of their lived experience. The interpretative process assisted with the formation of themes and sub-themes that moved through the different levels of personal experience as well as students/graduate experience of the school to work transition process. More details of how Van Manen’s approach was applied are described in Chapter 3.

### **Bronfenbrenner’s (1977) ecological framework**

Bronfenbrenner’s (1977) ecological framework aims to acknowledge human development is the interaction between an individual and their environment. Within this framework, the relationships between different factors identified as facilitators and barriers were examined in four layers of “macrosystem, exosystem, mesosystem and microsystem”, as outlined by Bronfenbrenner’s (1977) model (pp. 514-515). The information about each factor within each level of the framework for this research was developed through analysis of both the qualitative and quantitative data shared by young people with disability and stakeholders, thus the framework provided a useful method to explore social inclusion and human rights. Within each system, factors are interrelated, and also presented in Figure 4 below. A more detailed discussion is in Chapter 3.

Figure 5: Framework of Ecological System Theory

<b>Macrosystem</b>	Policy (resource allocation & coordination and application of right-based approach)
<b>Exosystem</b>	Institutional coordination of resources and services (vocational training, employment services, staff capacity, etc...)
<b>Mesosystem</b>	An environment in which different micro systems interacts (home/parents, school, peers)
<b>Microsystem</b>	Individual factors (stigma, confidence, self-determination, networking/social skills)

### 2.2.7 Frameworks for School to Work Transition for Young People with Disability

The review of literature indicated that school to work transition programs have existed for many years but that their implementation has varied from country to country. However, there is little research that documents their effectiveness, types of practices, the perspectives of consumers of such programs, or the outcomes of these transition services (Neubert & Redd, 2008). Two main frameworks were identified by other researchers to be the most comprehensive models of school to work transition. These are Wehman’s (1992) predictors of successful transition from school to employment for young people with disability, and Kohler (1996) taxonomy of transition programming.

#### **Wehman’s (1992) predictors of successful school to work transition**

Wehman (1992) originally promoted individualised support for young people with disability, starting with supported employment. He has also continued to refine his original approach, including the provision of comprehensive information to facilitate school to work transition for young people with mild, moderate, and severe disabilities (Targett, Wehman, West, Cifu, & Dillard, 2013). Wehman et al. (2015) suggests that “two critical aspects of transition process include employment training and work experience” (Wehman et al., 2015, p. 232). Wehman and his colleagues also emphasises that “greater follow-up of handicapped students into adulthood by school systems is mandatory if we are to assess how effective our programs are in reducing the extraordinarily high unemployment rate of disabled persons in this country” (Wehman, Kregel, & Barcus, 1985, p. 1). Wehman (2011) suggests that transition practice can be categorised into “five key areas: (i) self-determination and student-centred planning (ii) community integrated job outcomes (iii) relationship with business and interagency collaboration (iv) mission driven system change/policy change, and (v) budget allocation” (pp.

148-150). This approach strongly suggests that the focus of transition programs and services should be on the needs of the students.

### **Kohler's (1996) taxonomy of transition programming**

Kohler's (1996) taxonomy of transition programming is a framework that addresses the quality of the transition for young people with disability. To ensure the school to work transition program that Kohler (1996) suggests, the framework (i) promotes and facilitates partnerships between schools and community businesses and agencies to assist students with disability to obtain internships and work experience, jobs and supported services they need; (ii) facilitates the involvement of family and students in the planning process, and (iii) promotes policies and legislative frameworks for resource allocation. These are identified as key elements for a successful transition (Kohler & Chapman, 1999). The taxonomy is widely accepted as a framework for comprehensive secondary transition education and services because it not only focuses on students' needs and interests, but also incorporates family participation and environmental factors. Xu, Dempsey, and Foreman (2016) conducted a study in China to validate Kohler's (1996) taxonomy, and their findings confirmed that this is the only research-based transition model and is applicable to evaluate quality of school to work transition programs. The Kohler (1996) framework covers "five areas: (a) student-focused planning (for example, students participating in individual education plan [IEP] development), (b) student development (for example, teaching employment skills, teaching life skills), (c) interagency collaboration (for example, creating frameworks for delivering services collaboratively), (d) family involvement (for example, training families in self-determination), and (e) program structures (for example, allocating resources to provide transition services)" (p. 3). In addition, employment, independent living, and social relationships are goals of the framework (Kohler & Field, 2003; Murray, 2003). Figure 6 outlines the factors included in Kohler's (1996) Taxonomy of Transition Programming:

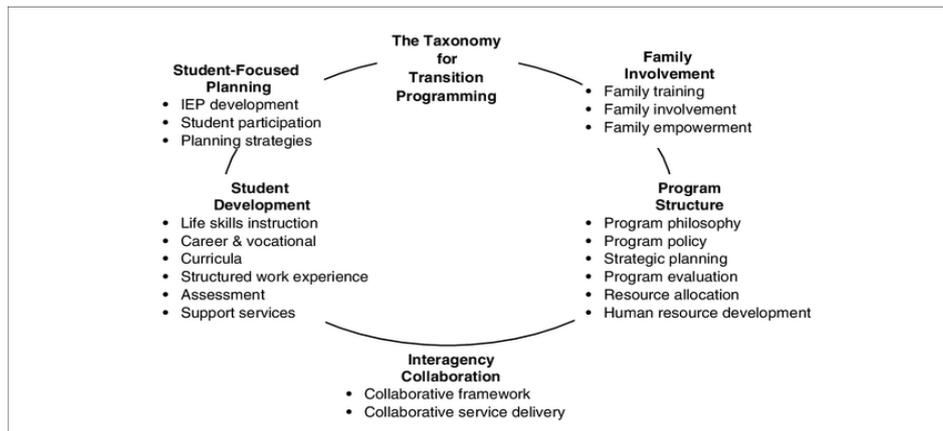


Figure 6: The Taxonomy for Transition Programming  
(P. D. Kohler, 1996a, p. 3).

### Other school to work transition related studies

Information about best practices in school to work transition was gathered from various publications such as journal articles, textbooks on transition, education and disability policies, and reports. Although the literature revealed numerous recommendations from successful programs, none of the reviewed articles presented a comprehensive picture that included all factors or elements for success of school to work transition program. The research by Xu (2016) indicated that Kohler’s (1996) taxonomy “was used by many researchers as the most comprehensive and widely accepted framework of quality transition practices in China” (Xu et al., 2016, p. 249) as well as in many countries and regions such as the United States and later in Australia in 2010 to identify best practices in many literature reviews (Beamish, Meadows, & Davies, 2012; Kohler & Chapman, 1999).

Cocks et al. (2015) suggests that policies and the service delivery system should facilitate the school to work transition process, and service providers, including school administrators, should help transitioning students reach their goals by accommodating individual students’ choices. Cocks et al. (2015) also emphasises students with disability should begin the transition planning early, at the age of 14. This model emphasises how to address the transition needs of young people with disability and how these needs ought to be reflected in legislation and policies at the organisational level. The model also outlines a transition strategy, which highlights the importance of interagency planning and cooperation, individualised transition plans, the role of community as a focal point for coordinating transition services, and the availability of resources for supporting and facilitating the transition. The resources include

interagency cooperation, the family, teaching techniques, job placement, and career development (Cocks et al., 2015). The end goal of the model is to increase the employment rate of young people with disability.

Table 4 outlines the findings of the literature review identifying key factors contributing to the success of school to work transition for young people with disability. The names of the key authors proposing elements for success are listed in the table.

Table 4: List of Key Authors and Elements of Success for School to Work Transition

Names of Key Authors	Wehman (2013,1992)	Kohler (1996)	Wagner (1993)	Win and Hay (2009)	Palmer (2005)	Lamb (2008)	Cobb & Alwell (2013)	Stewarts (2006)	Wilson (2004)	Wright (1991)	Greene (2003)	Neubert (2008)	Benz (2000)	Blackorby and Wagner (1996)	Test (2009)
<b>Elements of Success</b>															
<b>Program Policy/Structure</b>															
Policy		x		x		x	x	x					x		x
Resources Allocation	x	x		x				x							
Human Resources	x	x						x					x		
Monitoring and Evaluation															
<b>Inter-agency Collaboration</b>															
Collaborative Framework	x	x		x	x	x	x				x	x		x	x
Service Delivery Mechanism	x	x		x	x	x	x				x	x		x	x
<b>Students' focused Planning</b>															
Need-based Planning			x		x		x					x		x	
Self- Determination	x		x		x		x					x		x	
Decision-making					x		x				x			x	
<b>Family Involvement</b>															
Family training	x	x					x		x		x		x	x	
Family involvement	x	x					x		x		x		x	x	x
Family empowerment	x	x													
<b>Students' Skill Development</b>															
Internship	x	x	x	x		x	x			x	x	x		x	x
Supported Services	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x
Communication							x	x		x					
Independent Living			x				x				x			x	
Interpersonal Skills	x		x				x				x			x	

### 2.2.8 Evidence-Based Best Practices

In reviewing the literature on transition program best practices, many literature-derived recommendations were identified. These best practices offered different elements for success of the school to work transition program and are discussed in the section 2.2.9.

Mazzotti et al. (2016) conducted a literature review to identify evidence-based practices in secondary transition. Practices were categorised into five areas, using Kohler's (1996) taxonomy for transition programming, including student-focused planning, student development, family involvement, program/policy structure and interagency collaboration. Overall, 32 secondary transition evidence-based practices were identified. Two practices had a strong level of evidence, 28 had a moderate level of evidence, and two had a potential level of evidence. The majority of practices were related to instruction skills within the category of student development. No evidence-based practices were identified in the category of interagency collaboration" (Mazzotti et al., 2016).

In the US state of Oregon, the school to work transition program for youth with disability operated by the Oregon Department of Education, the Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Division, and the University of Oregon, in collaboration with various school districts, highlighted various successes (Benz et al., 2000). According to Benz et al. (2000), the major success of the program was that 82% of the young adults with disability who participated in the transition program were successfully placed in a competitive job placement or paid work experience after completion of the program. The transition program began with seven schools in 1990 funded by a federal grant, and extended its operation to 80% of all high schools over the country, when annual funding was received through a matching fund from states and local service providers such as education agencies or rehabilitation agencies. The services covered by this transition program included (a) direct support provided to students with special needs who study in the inclusive classes; (b) for ensuring students can participate in paid work experience that they are interested in; (c) vocational education, and (d) identification of student-identified transition goals.

By the 1990s in Australia, vocational education and training (VET) had become an accepted feature of the upper secondary years of schooling. A comprehensive program called "Tickets to Work" was implemented by the National Ticket to Work Network. This program was supported by the Australian Government and assists young people with disability to participate in internships and apprenticeships and gain employment (Wakeford & Waugh, 2014). A report prepared by Wakeford and Waugh (2015) presented outstanding achievements of the students with disability participating in the program, indicating that 64% were in continuing employment post-school (Wakeford & Waugh, 2015, p. 12). VET was seen an important

mechanism for increasing job opportunities for people with disability via apprentices and traineeship for young people with disability in Australia (Lewis, Thoresen, & Cocks, 2011). The VET program was considered as an alternative pathway accessible to young people with disability from different backgrounds. Lamb (2008) suggests that the VET system tends to have high rates of participation and has promoted higher rates of school completion, leading to higher employability for young people with disability.

An evaluation of a school to work transition program conducted in Australia in 2009 by Winn and Hay (2009) identified a number of key elements for successful transition including: (i) opportunities for real work experience and work placements, (ii) a job is designed to suit the individual, (iii) an awareness and accommodation of employee needs, (iv) a service perspective in regards to meeting the needs of employers; (v) individualised programs, planning and services, (vi) instruction in life skills to support work skills, and (vii) integrated support from a number of organisations and/or sectors (Winn & Hay, 2009, p. 109).

Lewis et al. (2011) conducted a study on a three-phase project carried out by EDGE Employment Solutions regarding supporting young people with disability to be placed in apprenticeships and traineeships in Australia. The study was conducted by Group Training Organisations who helped young people with disabilities with apprenticeships and traineeships. The findings of the study suggested that the key factors needed for success in placing young people with disability in traineeships and apprenticeships included “a combination of a good job match, accommodating workplace, and intensive post-placement support, and cross-organisational training and knowledge-sharing involving local schools, partners and professional networks, and an information-sharing mechanism among these service providers” (Lewis et al., 2011, p.3).

Yusof, Yasin, Hashim, and Itam (2012) conducted a study on a transition program focusing on employment skills to support young people with hearing impairment to enter the community and work in Malaysia. Barriers were identified in school to work transition for young people with hearing impairment and barriers were indirectly identified among 85 employers. The study showed that communication was the main barrier that hindered hearing-impaired workers to participate in the employment sector. Another study conducted by the Australian Federation of Disability Societies (AFDS) reported that lack of sign language interpretation caused constraints and barriers for young people with disability to participate fully in economic

development (AFDS, 2004). Findings from the US National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) also indicated that the limited interaction with peers at school caused a barrier for young people with disability in the transition process (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996).

A report from the Institute for Research and Development on Inclusion and Society (IRIS) prepared by Crawford (2013) indicated that young people with disability faced difficulty in obtaining work experience in the US. In the UK, a lack of work experience caused difficulty for young people with disability in obtaining jobs after graduation. Winn and Hay (2009) noted that vocational training and work experience arrangement were only optional, as a result, the needs of students were not addressed properly, and nor focused on building skills for students after they leave school. Lamb and McKenzie (2001), reporting on “the patterns of success and failure in the transition from school to work in Australia” (p. 1), in the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth, also indicated that young people with disability faced substantial challenges in obtaining full-time jobs after graduation and suggested that a range of services for pathways to employment should be matched to the different interests of young people, including those with disability.

### 2.2.9 Elements of Successful School to Work Transition Programs

So what makes a school to work transition program successful? In addition to adopting best practices identified in the literature, the elements or factors identified for successful school to work transition programs include: (i) relevant legislative framework and policies (ii) interagency coordination and collaboration (iii) communication, (iv) service provision, (v) student-focused planning, (vi) roles of school in transition processes, (vii) career guidance and internship (viii) engagement of parents in school to work transition, and (ix) factors related to individual development and school to work transition.

#### *Legislative frameworks and policies*

Human rights instruments, legislation, and policies are key drivers that facilitate intent (Taket, 2013). The intent of policies and legislation includes their reference to attitudes and purpose that are influenced by knowledge and awareness (Wilson, 2004). Social justice and the enjoyment of human rights are recognised as significant issues for people with disability, and, regardless of their entitlement to human rights and equal access to opportunities, the attitudes and lack of awareness of policy-makers and service providers continues to exclude people with

disability from social mainstreaming including employment services (Barrett, 2003). The compliance of legislative frameworks with international and local legislative frameworks and their subsequent enforcement policies have created the conditions that encourage and even enforce inclusion of people with disability in society. They have also increased the awareness of the importance of school to work transition and created a movement for promoting transition services for people with disability thereby ensuring young people with disability with full inclusion into employment (Blustein, Phillips, Jobin-Davis, Finkelberg, & Roarke, 1997; Ryan, 2009; Cocks et al., 2015).

The importance of legislative frameworks was also identified in a study conducted in Malaysia by Abdullah, Mey, Eng, Othman, and Omar (2012). Participants in the study were those who worked for the government agencies providing services for people with disability and educational organisations. The findings of the study indicated the importance of transition planning and transition services for people with disability and these were key resources in reducing the high rate of unemployment of people with disability in Malaysia. However, these services can only be secured if they are developed within legislative frameworks (Lee, Abdullah, & Mey, 2011). The study concluded that policies and legislation are key facilitators to ensure the access of people with disability to services and also in ensuring people with disability can develop skills and obtain needed support to gain employment (Abdullah et al., 2012).

Another study conducted in Hong Kong in 2013 on post-school transition of students with specific learning difficulties included policy-makers, parents and members of advocacy groups as participants (Poon-McBrayer, 2013). The study identified that policies, legislative frameworks, and monitoring mechanisms were very important for ensuring disability rights and the rights of people with disability to employment to be able to access employment services after graduation from school. The study proposed that monitoring systems should be functioning in ways that ensure timely service delivery to individuals with disability in need (Poon-McBrayer, 2013). It was also argued that policy-practice frameworks needed to be mandated by government and should comply with the human rights standards outlined in the UNCRPD focused on ensuring full participation and access to services for people with disability (Poon-McBrayer, 2013)

### *Inter-agency coordination and collaboration*

Meadows (2012) suggests that a key factor for good collaboration is a high level of multi-disciplinary coordination, connectivity, sharing of information, sharing of resources and capacity of staff. This can then lead to effective service delivery that best meets the needs, interests and motivation of an individual. Successful school to work transition requires interagency collaboration in enforcing policies and facilitating the service delivery system (Benz, Johnson, Mikkelsen, & Lindstrom, 1995; Hay, 2009; Kohler, 1993; Lamb, 2008; Plotner, Mazzotti, Test, & Mustian, 2014; Stavness, King, Antle, & Law, 2006).

Wright (1991) conducted an analysis of successful school to work transition program models regarded as “intervention success” in the US, and found that the following factors contributed to the success of the programs: involvement of different stakeholders with formal written agreements, the cooperation of the school staff, and the capacity of staff to provide labour market information. This is similar to the findings of a McFarlane (2014) qualitative study conducted in 16 European countries which focused on transition services for youth with disability between the ages of 14 and 20 and their families. The research recognised formal collaboration amongst service-providing agencies and close attention to the individual needs of young people with disability as key to successful school to work transitions.

Haber et al. (2016) conducted a meta-analytic review of predictors of post-secondary success for students with disability and identified positive relationships between predictors of success, including positive effects for studied interventions such as paid work experience or internships on outcomes of post-school outcomes of post-school employment in almost all cases. The review explicitly found that an important factor to success is the professional interaction among different key players involved in delivering services and support to young people with disability, including school, homes, and government sectors. This requires strong partnership connection in different contexts to ensure the quality service in school to work transition such as vocational rehabilitation (or mesosystems of Bronfenbrenner [1977]). According to Haber et al. (2016), interagency collaboration was a significant mediator among Kohler’s (1996) taxonomy categories. The study particularly focused on identifying the factors that impact on the partnership collaboration among school and families in providing vocational rehabilitation and mental health services. Haber et al. (2016) proposed that actions should be carried out to promote inter-agency partnership among service providers and families in different contexts.

## *Communication*

Along with the difficulties facing other young people with disability in school to work transition, students with hearing impairment have communication and language concerns as fundamental barriers to employment and transition (Borders, Daczewitz, & Probst, 2019; Garay, 2003). In order to make a successful school to work transition, young people with disability in general, and especially those with hearing impairment, need to interact within their community and with the public (Punch, Hyde, & Creed, 2004; Schildroth, Rawlings, & Allen, 1991). A lack in communication skills for students with hearing impairment may result in limited opportunities in vocational training and employment (Luft, 2000; Schildroth et al., 1991; Yusof et al., 2012). Young people with hearing impairment often face difficulties in communicating with the hearing public using the public language of hearing people (Eriks-Brophy, Durieux-Smith, Olds, & Fitzpatrick, 2006; Garay, 2003).

The WHO (2017) emphasised the importance of assistive technologies and products to enable people with disability to live an independent life and participate into the labour market and social life. UNICEF's Global Survey found that only 5% of the world's 40 million amputees have access to prosthetics, hearing aids production meets only 10% of the global need and only 3% of the need in low-income countries, and 200 million people with low vision do not have access to spectacles or other low vision devices. In Vietnam, the latest National Survey on Disabilities carried out by the GSO in 2016 revealed access to assistive devices is also limited. The GSO survey showed that the provision of and access to assistive devices varies in different groups of the population. Palmer et al. (2015) reported that there is a large unmet need for assistive devices, particularly prostheses, wheelchairs and hearing devices.

## *School to work transition services*

Morgan (2012) and Polidano and Mavromaras (2010) highlight that priority should be given to assist young people with inclusion in society after they leave school, via obtaining decent jobs or continue with studying. To do this, young people, and particularly those with any disability, need support, assistance, guidance and information that influences their transition process and its outcomes. All these services should be identified during the school to work transition planning stage (Cobb & Alwell, 2009; Wright, 1991). This is similar to the recommendations of Kohler's (1996) taxonomy of categories for transition programming, including student-focused planning, student development, and support services.

Abdullah et al.'s (2012) study investigated transition services being provided to students with disability by schools, the relevance of supported employment services, and job coaches for people with disability as employees and suggested that school to work transition planning and support services are key resources to reduce the high unemployment rate among persons with disability in Malaysia. Winn and Hay (2009) conducted a study in Australia and found that quality disability services should be provided in response to the needs of people with disability and suggested that these need to be mandated by legal requirements. Stewart, Stavness, King, Antle, and Law (2006) emphasised that successful elements included the importance of services addressing the needs of the person with disability with an individualised approach to services that recognises the person's unique strengths, needs, and their relationship with family, peers and community.

Policies on school to work transition are usually developed to obligate the related functioning agencies to exercise their tasks to support adolescents in obtaining work experience opportunities during their school time, preparing them with skills and knowledge about the work after graduation (Noe, 1999). This supports the findings Cobb, Lipscomb, Wolgemuth, and Schulte (2013) in their evidence review on "how practitioners might develop successful school to work transition program for students with disability in the United States" (p. 8). This review demonstrated that those students with disability who were provided with opportunity to obtain work experience or internship would gain better employment outcomes after they finish school. Levinson and Palmer (2005) suggest that most young people with disability who have not participated in a school to work transition program before leaving high school do not have the required knowledge or skills to obtain suitable employment and most of them are not prepared for entry level employment. Nel and Van Der Westhuyzen (2015) posit that transition support strategies need to provide different programs, interventions and services that prepare young people with disability to enter an inclusive labour market and to be able to live independently.

The literature review identified several studies conducted with participants with hearing impairment or deafness. The findings of these studies indicated that students with hearing impairment face additional obstacles to a successful school to work transition process (Bull & Bullis, 1991; Eriks-Brophy, Durieux-Smith, Olds, & Fitzpatrick (2006); Luft, 2000; Winn, 2007; Yusof et al., 2012). Wagner and Blackorby (1996) suggested that real work experience

in community and inclusive settings does impact on employment opportunities post-school. Borders et al., 2019 suggested appropriate employment and training experience based on the student's interests and abilities should be provided to students with hearing impairment. The ideal for achieving successful transition from school to work for students with hearing impairment is that stakeholders including students, teachers, parents, community and service providers, work collaboratively and regularly to provide skills and knowledge for students to be able to make informed choices and decisions about their work futures (Eriks-Brophy et al., 2006; Sloper, 2004; Zainol, Rahim, Salmi, Johari, & Bahari, 2016).

According to Han et al. (2019), the prevalence of infants born in Vietnam with moderate to severe bilateral hearing impairment is one in 1000, and the prevalence of infants with profound hearing loss causing severe speech impairment requiring cochlear implantation, is four in 10,000. It has been shown that understanding the genetic aetiology of hearing loss can aid practitioners to get a better understanding of the progression and risk of hearing loss in children, ultimately leading to the development of optimal intervention strategies. Most children with hearing loss are born to parents with normal hearing.

In addition, according to website [livebetterhearing.com](http://livebetterhearing.com) "hearing loss affects a person's personality, cognition, and hearing acuity. Hearing loss can cause daily frustration, irritability, and stress in a person's life, when senses are altered, the brain reorganises and adjusts" (Live Better Hearing + Balance, 2012). Therefore, social and workforce inclusion of people with hearing impairment requires the use of assistive devices, support and/or sign-language to effect communication.. All units remained functional during the study period (12 months), and the results indicated that the hearing aids were well tolerated for use during regular school hours. Teachers noted increased student awareness and responsiveness to surrounding sounds in children who used them, but the degree of response to amplification varied between children. Nelson (2014) conducted a survey in 2014 to explore teacher perceptions regarding services for children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing in southern regions of Vietnam, including educational successes and challenges, the availability and use of hearing technology, and teacher recommendations for improving child outcomes. Findings from the survey demonstrated that lack of access to hearing aids and hearing aid repairs are substantial barriers for many families. Survey respondents expressed a desire for more training in hearing technology and effective teaching strategies. Twenty-six per cent of children with hearing loss in preschool and kindergarten used listening and spoken language as their primary mode of

communication compared with 7 per cent of children in first to fourth grade who used listening and spoken language. The findings of the survey also suggest increased access to hearing technology and early intervention services from highly trained professionals is necessary to optimise listening and spoken language outcomes of children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.

### *Student-focused planning*

Along with research recommendations about what is needed for successful school to work transition planning, student-focused planning continues to be highlighted in the literature. The principles of student-focused planning may be seen as highly individualised and person-first. The transition planning process is ongoing and requires time to identify students' strengths and areas for improvement. Their own personal and social skills will be key to their educational goals; their need for self-advocacy and self-determination; and their desired occupational skills and employment goals (Kohler, 1993; Stewart et al., 2006; Wagner, 1993; Wehman et al., 2015)

Other studies also identified principles of student-focused planning in transition. Mazzotti et al. (2016) conducted a comprehensive literature review to identify evidence-based practices using Kohler's (1996) taxonomy model for transition programming. The study findings provided practitioners with a set of evidence-based practices for improving transition services that highlighted student-focused planning (promoting student participation), student development (life skills, employment skills), and family involvement (participation in training and planning). The assumption is that career planning will increase job opportunities. They indicated that student-focused planning should include the voices of students with disability in identifying and proposing their needs and, from there, set up and provide reasonable supports (Barnes & Mercer, 2005). This follows the principles of self-determination, in that the students with disability should be encouraged and empowered to participate actively in transition planning services and setting their goals during their time at school (Eisenman, 2001; Young, 2007). Student input into transition planning can help develop their self-determination and their skills to articulate what it is they want and need (Blalock & Patton, 1996; Garay, 2002; Greene & Kochhar, 2003).

### *The role of school in the transition process*

Schools, regardless of whether they are special, mainstream, or inclusive, are key in the school to work transition because they play a role in ensuring education needs are met, employment is planned for, career development is offered, and students are referred to workplaces (Wakeford & Waugh, 2015). School systems can better engage and support students with disability by helping them to plan for their post-school life, and by providing them with the skills needed to be successful in the workplace (Wehman et al., 2015). They can also coordinate the resources needed for enforcing transition services (Kohler & Field, 2003; Xu et al., 2016). It is recognised that schools play an important role in preparing students for the workforce (Levinson & Palmer, 2005), and that this preparation should be done at lower secondary level, especially for young people with disability (Wehman, 2013a). Schools are also important in coordinating and establishing relationships with parents and families in transition planning and follow-up (Cobb & Alwell, 2009; Wakeford & Waugh, 2014; Winn & Hay, 2009), as well as coordinating government agencies to allocate resources and technical support (Cobb & Alwell, 2009; Winn & Hay, 2009).

### *Career guidance and internship or paid work experiences*

Students need opportunities to develop capacity to be able to set career goals and implement them. This means that they need support and accessible services in career guidance (Wright, 1991). In Australia, a study conducted by Beavis (2006) highlighted the need for transition programs and plans for individuals with a disability for their life post-school. According to Watts (1997), career guidance should be an integral part of the education system, as it is important to guide students to develop their goals and make career decisions in response to labour market needs. This is critical because career guidance “helps students to clarify their aims and aspirations, in ensuring that their decisions are informed in relation to the needs of the labour market; and in empowering individuals in their negotiations with employers and other purchasers of their services” (Rogers et al, 2000, p.3)

In the US National Longitudinal Transitional Study (NLTS), Wagner (1993) identified that the students who participated in transition programs which had an emphasis on work experience and vocational education or vocational training showed better employment outcomes than those who did not. Blackorby and Wagner (1996) also noted that transition programs which

taught independent life skills, and other work-related skills, also contributed to helping transition students reach independence. However, the factors that best achieved employment outcomes were work placement/experience and vocational job training/education, such as resumé writing and interview skills.

A review of the evidence for school to work transition programs from the previous two decades conducted by Cobb et al. (2013) ascertained how practitioners could best develop successful school to work transition programs. The review identified a range of programs to help students with disability make successful transitions to employment, post-secondary education, and training, or independent living. The findings across several different programs suggested that job experience can contribute to the preparedness of students to work (Schuh, Sundar, & Hagner, 2014). As Lewis et al. (2011) suggests, vocational education programs should be designed to meet the needs and interests of the students with disability and these should be mainstreamed in the general education program of the school. This is mainstreaming which is an important factor in ensuring post-school outcomes with regard to employment.

Internship and paid employment/work experience continue to show a moderate level of evidence for predicting education and employment outcomes. Students with disability often leave high school without the skills, experiences and supports that lead to meaningful employment. The majority of students with hearing impairment have poorer educational performance, and less academic achievement leading to less employment opportunities if they are not trained or provided with internship or work experiences (Carter, Austin, & Trainor, 2012; Wehman et al., 1985, 2014, 2018; Leucking & Leucking, 2015). Such opportunities are crucial in allowing these students to make a successful transition from school to work after their graduation.

#### *Engagement of parents in the school to work transition process*

Parents and families play critical roles in the success of the school to work transition for young people with disability (Kohler & Field, 2003; Meadows et al., 2006), with parental involvement known to be a very important factor (Crawshaw, 2002; Levinson & Palmer, 2005; Wehman, 2011). High parental expectations in respect of employment goals for their children's futures were also noted as a good indicator for success (Wehman et al., 2015). Kohler (1996) and Wehman (2013) suggest that family involvement can influence students' school to work

transition outcomes if they are aware of their roles in the transition process and can be active in helping their children after graduation. Additionally, Kohler (1996) proposed two levels of family involvement in school transition services: (a) “participation” and (b) “empowerment” (Kohler, 1996a, p. 10)

Parents can be involved as participants in all transition activities. Kohler (1996) and Wehman (2013) suggest that family involvement, based on their knowledge of their children, can be helpful in planning and service design to meet the needs and interests of their children. Similarly, Boone (1992) and Defur (1992) emphasised the importance of family involvement practices that increase the ability of family members to work effectively with educators and service providers in planning and delivering education and transition services. This, they say, promotes the social inclusion of young people with disability, especially in the workplace.

Parents can be empowered by their participation in the school to work transition program. Polidano and Mavromaras (2010) suggest the engagement of parents in the transition process may build the capacity for parents to propose more reasonable services for effective practices. Kohler (1996) and Wehman (2013) suggest that family involvement can include monitoring the delivery of education and transition services, as well as practices that facilitate student involvement. This is similar to what Whitney-Thomas & Hanley-Maxwell (1996) proposed, that is, if parents can be trained in what should be done for their children, they may be more active in monitoring the service program offered to their children. Boone (1992) posits the importance of training being provided to parents and family relating to their active participation in the transition process; doing so would help them contribute to the post-school effort in looking for employment options and opportunities; because parents are those who have continuous and stable contact throughout the entire process. McNair and Rusch (1990) suggest involving parents in school to work transition training which provides them with information and contacts for networking.

According to Wehman (2013) and Lindstrom, Doren, Metheny, Johnson, and Zane (2007), parents’ involvement in school to work transition influences transition outcomes for students. Parental involvement means parents can play a major role when they are knowledgeable about what school and employment options are available. Involvement means parents knowing their rights, knowing the options, facilitating decisions and advocating for their children’s rights. Levinson and Palmer (2005) also emphasised that parents should be encouraged to actively

participate in the planning meetings with school administrators and teachers, as they are well-placed to provide input to the school planning team regarding their child's interests, potential, strengths, and weaknesses. They can then later follow-up with enforcement of their child's plan. Crawshaw (2002) highlighted the importance of the participation of people with disability and their families in service design and delivery as the key elements for inclusion of young people with disability in the workplace. However, Greene and Kochhar (2003) point out that too much parental involvement may hinder some students' decision-making and, as a result, affect their independence. However, support and involvement of parents is important in any transition program (Ankeny, Wilkins, & Spain, 2009; Sitlington, Clark, & Kolstoe, 2000).

### *Factors related to individual development and school to work transition*

Individual development requires a process to allow a person to participate in all activities that build their confidence, self-determination, and knowledge (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This is so they can make informed choices and overcome stigma (Dovidio, Major, & Crocker, 2000). Kohler and Field (2003) and Wakeford and Waugh (2015) emphasise that the participation of young people with disability in the school to work transition process can assist them to increase knowledge and understanding of the world of work, increase confidence and self-determination, as well as foster their ability to live independently in the society. But what is needed to ensure their meaningful participation? The literature review identified the needs to (i) combat stigma (ii) encourage self-determination, (iii) grow confidence, and (iv) and recognise the importance of peer relationships.

### *Stigma*

Stigma is constructed in different ways, with different dimensions and meanings (Crocker & Major, 1989; Dovidio, Major, & Crocker, 2000). According to Goffman (2009, p. 63), stigma "is socially and culturally constructed and rather than as universally stigmatised physical features". The concept of social stigma has been developed and is called "the ecological approach to social perception" (Goffman, 2009, p. 63). Stigma means that people look at the appearance, body movement, or information about an individual's personality to define an identity (Goffman, 2009; Link & Phelan, 2001). Link and Phelan (2001, p. 338) conceptualise stigma in relation to disability as "a person having disability is synonymous with needing help and social support". Social stigma has a negative impact on the lives of those who have been stigmatised (Dovidio et al., 2000; Link & Phelan, 2001).

Studies have shown that public stigma causes discrimination for people with disability and lowers self-esteem (Susman, 1994). Social stigma becomes self-stigma when social stigma is internalised by an individual and an individual suffers a loss of self-esteem and discrimination (Watson, 2006). Disability is associated with “spoiled identity” (Goffman, 1963, p.1) and may impact negatively on people through discrimination within employment (Watson, 2006), leading to social isolation (Crocker & Major, 1989; Goffman, 2009; Susman, 1994). This discrimination leads to a loss of opportunities in social participation for young people with disability (Ngo, Brolan, Fitzgerald, Pham, & Phan, 2013; Watson, 2006)

### *Self-determination*

Following self-determination principles, as outlined by Wehmeyer and Shogren (2016), the greater the individual’s involvement in planning, the more effective and positive school and adult outcomes for youth with disability. According to Bremer, Kachgal and Schoeller (2003), students with disability should be provided with opportunities to participate directly in transition planning services and setting goals during their time at school (Eisenman, 2001; Field, Martin, Miller, Ward, & Wehmeyer, 1998b; Young, 2007). Having input into transition planning can help develop their self-determination skills and assist them to articulate what they want and need (Blalock & Patton, 1996; Field, Martin, Miller, Ward & Wehmeyer, 1998a; Greene & Kochhar, 2003), and also provide choice in training and job options, increasing job opportunities after graduation (Barnes & Mercer, 2005). Stewart (2006) suggested factors that impact the success of transition include (i) skills development of young people with disability in order for them to be able to make decisions for their future, to advocate for themselves, and overcome any difficulties they face in life; and in order to ensure these skills are enhanced; and (ii) it is important to make sure young people with disability are able to interact and communicate with hearing people and that their skills need are included in individualised support plans incorporating their needs.

Blackorby and Wagner (1996) provide strong evidence that students who participated in transition programs with an emphasis on work experience and vocational education had improved outcomes. Their research indicates that transition program curriculum, which facilitate successful transitions from school to work, focus on work placement/experience and vocational training, (resumé writing, job interview skills, and so on). McFarlane (2014) posited that soft skills help youth transition from school to adult life. These soft skills include: study

skills enabling academic and vocational educational achievement, identifying employment opportunities, interview skills, resumé development, and demonstrating appropriate behaviours while working. Another study conducted by Chi-Kim & Lewis (1998) focused on what recruiting employers expected from workers with disability. The findings suggest a need for workers with disability to have knowledge of work and a positive working attitude.

One of the important factors that contributes to ensuring young people with disability (especially the hearing-impaired) are able to advocate for themselves during transition planning is knowledge and ability to voice their need for assistance (Garay, 2003) and to make informed choices (Kohler & Field, 2003; Wehman, 2013a). Students with disability should be empowered and trained so that they can have meaningful communication and engagement in decision-making about their job and life choices. This is with the assistance and involvement of their families. As well, they need available information networks with accessible information and opportunities to gain experiential knowledge (Martinis, 2015; Mitchell, 2015).

### *Peer relationships*

Friendship is an important factor in the healthy development of any individual including an individual with disability as it helps people with disability to be socially-connected, feel included and be able to achieve their goals (Schuh et al., 2014). Frequent contacts with friends can help students with disability share their thoughts, experience, improve their social skills and thus strengthen their independence life and social contacts (Carter, Asmus, & Moss, 2013; Mazzotti et al., 2016). Friendship creates a social life in which to share work experience and make informed decisions, and thus enables support during the transition process (Kohler, 1993; Schuh et al., 2014; Wagner, 1991; Winn & Hay, 2009). Strong peer connections influence the sense of social connection, peers can motivate them to look for a job (Lindsay, McDougall, Menna-Dack, Sanford, & Adams, 2015), and networking for job or work experience assists young people be more socially-integrated (Haring & Breen, 1992).

## **SUMMARY**

The literature has demonstrated that school to work transition increases the opportunities for young people with disability to obtain employment post-school, facilitating their inclusion in

society. There is no doubt that legislative frameworks, together with inclusive and rights-based school to work transition services with clear mechanisms of delivery, are needed to ensure positive outcomes for individuals with disability in inclusive employment. People with disability wish and desire the same things as their peers without disability, including opportunities to participate in vocational training in their areas of interest, access to work, and especially, being included in the community.

The literature review also identified that young people with disability do not always have the same opportunities as others in society. In addition, different types of disability require different and appropriate support and accommodations. Networking and communication were found to be important factors for participation of young people with disability, especially for the hearing-impaired. Several studies outlined elements needed for success of the school to work transition based on identified best practices including: (i) legislative frameworks and policies, (ii) interagency coordination and collaboration, (iii) communication, (iv) service provision, (v) student-focused planning, (vi) role of the school in school to work transition, (vii) career guidance and internship, (viii) engagement of parents in school to work transition, and (ix) factors related to individual development including stigma, self-determination, and peer relationships.

The current model of Dong Nai school to work transition started within special education. The findings of the literature review, which address the identified gaps in the current school to work system, provide a good starting place for the design of this research to explore the experience, needs and ambitions of the young people in the Dong Nai school to work transition program. This then enables recognition of the broader and future implications for young people with disability across all of Vietnam.

# **CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This research was designed to explore perceptions and experience of students and graduates with vision and hearing impairment, and other stakeholders involved in the school to work transition program at Dong Nai Special School. Data were collected about their perceived facilitators and barriers to the success of school to work transition program within this context. The research also gathered specific information about the broader policy and service context for not only the Dong Nai school program but also in relation to the social and economic inclusion of young people with disability across Vietnam. This chapter outlines the research epistemology, theoretical frameworks, and research methodology. Further discussed are the research aims and objectives, recruitment and sampling, data analysis framework and process, ethical considerations, and the strengths and limitations of the research.

### **3.1 Research Aims and Objectives**

The study aimed to explore the following research question: “What does success look like for young people with disability who are participating in a school to work transition program?”

This was achieved by focussing on four key research objectives, to:

- a) Explore facilitators and barriers that impact on the school to work transition for young people with disability.
- b) Examine how current policies and services may facilitate or hinder school to work transition for young people with disability.
- c) Analyse the experience of students and graduates who have participated in school to work program
- d) Identify recommendations to improve school to work transition services for young people with disability in Vietnam.

The study aimed to provide insight into how satisfied the students and graduates of Dong Nai school to work transition program were with the services and support they received. As well,

the research sought to provide an opportunity for young people with disability, education administrators, teachers, disability activists and disability stakeholders to contribute their experience of barriers and facilitators at Dong Nai to regional and international discourse on the issue. Thus, it is hoped that the findings will contribute to improving the current and future school to work transition services and programs for young people with disability across Vietnam. Additionally, the findings may promote policy reform, and contribute to the overall improvement in wellbeing for young people with disability by reducing stigma and ensuring their rights to social and economic inclusion are upheld.

### 3.2 Research Epistemology/Paradigm

The epistemological assumptions of social constructivism explain the ways people obtain knowledge and experience things (Liamputtong, 2009). Constructivist theory argues that meaning is not discovered but constructed (Gray, 2013) and that knowledge and realities are socially constructed (Gallagher, 2004). Social constructivism promotes research which facilitates hearing and understanding the voices of participants from different backgrounds (Crotty, 1998). A constructivist perspective highlights the meanings and interpretations influenced by the personal/lived experience of a person. The constructivist worldview encompasses a theoretical orientation which grounds the views and perspectives of individuals as fundamental to understanding (Creswell, 1998). A researcher's personal view influences choice of epistemology which is based in their values and experience (Bryman, 2016; Gray, 2013). I explain more about my interests and position in wanting to know how young people and other stakeholders perceive and describe their own experience and construct meanings and understandings of the world of school to work transition in Section 3.3.

Social constructivism guides the collection of evidence about knowledge and truths from different sources and this epistemological framework is a good fit for the research design (Gray, 2013; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This framework enables young people and other stakeholders to share their stories and daily life experience (Cupchik, 2001) on the assumption that the complexities of reality and meaning are also constructed by interactions between the researcher and different individuals (Creswell, 2018).

Social constructivism enables knowledge and attitudes of daily life to be shared (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). Ontological assumptions of social constructivism emphasise that

realities are constructed by different perspectives and experience (Cupchik, 2001) and multiple sources of data and information are needed to represent diverse realities (Creswell, 2003; Lindseth & Norberg, 2004). The epistemological framework of social constructivism was also chosen to provide young people with disability, who have experienced school to work transition, the opportunity to express their needs and views. The collective sharing of groups such as theirs is often not given a voice to inform and be reflected in policy agenda processes.

Constructivist theory argues that meaning is not discovered but constructed (Gray, 2013) and that knowledge is socially constructed (Gallagher, 2004). Therefore, as Liamputtong (2009) suggests, data about the personal experience of young people and other stakeholders were collected so as to understand, interpret and make sense of their shared experiences. With data collected from interviews, focus groups and observations, a constructivist perspective was applied to interpret the personal/lived experience of young people with disability. Further, the perspectives of other stakeholders involved in the policy development process were also sought to explore how the school to work transition service system functions within the broader policy framework. This helped the researcher to understand the facilitators and barriers from multiple points of view; those of young people with disability involved directly in the school to work transition program and activities, as well as those of other key stakeholders.

Van Manen (2016, pp. 62-63) emphasises that understandings of the human experience are enriched through gathering information about the everyday lived experience of others in ways that both researcher and participants can then understand. For those who seek to understand the perspectives or the world views of others, Xiang-Ming (2009) suggests that it is necessary to identify the nature of the relationship between the researcher's and the participant's understandings of their own experience, that is, by searching for the relationship between the knower and the known (Tirri, Husu, & Kansanen, 1999). Kim (2001) highlights that knowledge develops through both interpersonal interactions as well as interactions with the environment. This research demonstrates this by exploring the facilitators and barriers constructed within the lived experience of young people with disability and combined with the perspectives of stakeholders who were involved in the school to work transition program. Van Manen (2014) suggests that utilising listening deeply to participants means using a caring, generous approach to enable participants to share their perspectives, knowledge and attitudes. Thus, the research approach was informed by Van Manen's (2014) phenomenological approach so as to foreground the lived experience of young people with disability in terms of barriers and

facilitators to the success of school to work transition. In particular, the researcher sought to learn about the lived experience of students and graduates with hearing and vision impairment, to listen to their concerns and needs as well as the difficulties that hindered their success in the school to work transition process. Young people with disability shared their experience in a range of ways; a questionnaire with some open questions, interviews, and focus groups, and the researcher also recorded her own observations. This approach gave young people with disability and stakeholders the best opportunity to “give voice” to their experience.

Bronfenbrenner’s (1977) ecological system of human development theory examines multi-person systems of interactions that take into account aspects of the environment in which an individual lives. This framework was used to organise the facilitators and barriers identified by students, graduates and other stakeholders. The aim in this research was to utilise the ecological framework to understand how the environmental factors including the school to work transition program, impacted on an individual with disability and how the interaction of these factors facilitated and/or hindered their lives. For young people, their family, neighbourhood, and school environments are fundamental to informing their development. In this ecological model, although an individual may be aware of and be responsible for factors within their individual lives, the challenges an individual experience may be primarily explained by the interaction between the individual and his/her own environment, including socio-economic factors and access to resources. The ecological framework provides the researcher with an understanding of the impact of interacting factors operating at different levels within the environment. Applying this framework to the research allowed exploration of the barriers to social and economic participation faced by young people with disability in school to work transition within school, at workplaces, and within the community. This ecological framework also assisted in analysing the impact of relationships between people with disability, their families, school, workplaces, community supports, and social policies.

Bronfenbrenner (2005) uses terms such as microsystem to explain the personal factors that are directly influenced by the immediate environment such as family/parents, or school and workplaces. This system allows for analysis of the factors related to the individual and his/her own environment that lead him/her to success in employment goal. The micro system examines the interaction between students and graduates and the environment at work and schools relating to the services they have received at their locations. The micro system encompasses the first and fourth objectives of the research.

The mesosystem focuses on the interaction of different microsystems in which young people with disability participate or the factors within the immediate environment that directly impact an individual's participation and access to services. In this research, it looks at the relationship of young people with disability in the environment they live in, which include schools and workplaces. It is, in essence, a system of microsystems, and as such, involves linkages between home and school, between peer group and family, and between family and community, and these coalesce to directly impact a young person. This system relates to the second, third and last objectives.

The exosystem represents institutional coordination of resources and necessary services in relation to school to work transition (vocational training (VT), employment and other related services): transition planning, VT and employment services, school factors including school staff and capacity, and other environments at work and school relating to work and study conditions. The exosystem links to objectives two, three and four.

Finally, the macrosystem includes patterns of the three smaller systems together, that indicate a policy environment/context including resource allocation and multi-disciplinary coordination mechanisms to enforce policies and allocate resources. The more indirect interaction with the national policies and the service providers are represented in the macro system. In addition, factors of social-economic factors and the context of the research site of Dong Nai were also considered, including policy, resource allocation mechanisms and multi-disciplinary coordination of the school to work transition program were included within the macrosystem. This cover objectives three and four of the research.

With this in mind, the position and roles of the researcher are now outlined.

### **3.3 Researcher Position and Roles**

When conducting research, it is always important for the researcher to determine how her positioning and roles influence and contribute to the research. As Marshall and Rossman (2014) emphasise, this is about how the researcher's experiences contribute to the study and impact the research outcomes.

As a researcher, I have over 10 years of experience working in the area of disability and development, and disability services and legislation in Vietnam. Throughout these years, I have implemented complex disability programs in partnership with ministerial level government agencies, which has included the development of disability legislation. I have also engaged in disability service provision with a focus on promoting employment and vocational rehabilitation for people with disability. Due to these first-hand experiences, I had some understanding of how school to work transition programs can be implemented.

During my work as a policy researcher and policy advocate for people with disability in different fields, I became aware that school to work transition for young people with disability received little to no attention, especially from policy-makers or service providers. I realised that the voices of young people with disability were not included in either program development or the policy implementation process. Yet, I was aware that listening to the voices and perspectives of young people with disability, especially during the policy drafting process, was important to ensure their needs and concerns were reflected and addressed in policy. This research aims to address this gap by including young people with disability as well as other stakeholders representing different social positions to understand their perspectives and experience of the school to work transition.

I also realised that it was important for me to keep my personal understandings and experiences in check when conducting this research. This was so I could minimise the potential impact of personal biases and/or preconceived notions during the research process. My role in this research was mainly facilitating the sharing of information and perspectives of the research participants, and then gathering information through observation, interviews, and focus groups, to allow young people with disability and stakeholders to speak for themselves. I used my experience to facilitate the discussions to get more in-depth information about the concerns and issues on school to work transition. During data collection, I shared how I became interested in the research, in order to reduce the power difference between myself and the participants. I needed to ensure that my focus more on the participants' own descriptions of their lived experience and less on my experiences (Grbich, 2007, 2013). With my experience in the areas of employment and disability for many years, I was able to contribute to the data analysis process and the interpretation of meanings, though throughout I used the original ideas and words of young people with disability and other stakeholders (Walsham, 2006). The theoretical framework for the study is discussed in the next section.

### 3.4 Theoretical Frameworks

The phrase theoretical frameworks is used here to encompass the range of disability and human rights frameworks and social theories, which this research has drawn upon. The theoretical frameworks for conceptualising facilitators and barriers to the success of school to work transition for young people with disability relate to social inclusion theory and human rights conceptual frameworks such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disability (UNCRPD), and the International Classification of Functioning and Disability (ICF). Van Manen's (2014) phenomenological approach and Bronfenbrenner's (1978) framework were used to guide and organise the analysis of the data and the interpretation of experience shared by young people with disability and other stakeholders.

Taket (2013) suggests that social inclusion theory requires the recognition of human rights via promoting participation and equal access in all aspects of society. Inclusion has been conceptualised as a process of social reform and re-structuring which focuses on increasing accessibility, and facilitating social participation (Booth & Ainscow, 1998). Social inclusion theory also requires recognition of human rights and highlights how the needs and rights of individuals must be included in service design and local policy (Taket, 2013). Access to work opportunities and participation in the labour force is part of being respected and valued within society and is therefore an important means of social inclusion for people with disability (Evans & Repper, 2000).

Practising social inclusion requires recognising needs and ensuring people feel valued and able to contribute to the community. This in turn reduces the stigma that can be associated with disability. The needs of people with disability may be addressed through an inclusive approach to policy that requires working together, the coordination of services through linking different organisations and departments at the local level (Ham, Hill, & Pollock, 1988), and relevant staff committing to improvement (Taket, 2013). Practising social inclusion also requires policies that ensure inclusion in service design and resource allocation (Ham et al., 1988; Taket, 2013).

Human rights instruments, legislation, and policies are key drivers that influence and lead to intent, as well as changes in awareness and attitude (Taket, 2013). The effective enforcement

of relevant policies requires a mechanism that defines the roles and tasks of those who are involved in the policy enforcement process (Askonas, 2000; Davys & Tickle, 2008; Taket, 2013), such as the UNCRPD.

Practising social inclusion of disability also requires recognition of environmental and social factors associated with disability (Wasserman, Asch, Blustein, & Putnam, 2016). The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) looks beyond the idea of biological and medical constructions of disability and highlights important factors relating to environment and the contexts in which an individual interacts and that have impact on the functioning capacity of an individual (WHO, 2013). In the ICF, the term “functioning refers to activities and participation, while disability is similarly a broad term for impairment, activity limitations and restrictions on participation” (WHO, 2013, p. 8). The ICF considers a strong interrelationship among environmental factors with those components. Therefore, the ICF framework provides a way of analysing barriers and facilitators to inclusion. In this research, the ICF is used to explore the connection and interactions between an individual with disability and environmental factors which impact school to work transition for young people with disability. ICF principles were drawn upon to design the research instruments and to frame the questions in this study.

### **3.5 Research Methodology**

The research methodology was informed by social constructivism and Van Manen’s (2014) phenomenological approach, as well as the principles of the UNCRPD and the ICF which were used to design research instruments and frame the questions. Social inclusion theory was used to inform the analysis. People with lived experience of disability and stakeholders who were engaged in key aspects of policy development, technical expertise and community practices in the school to work transition program were recruited to describe facilitators and barriers that impact the school to work transition for young people with disability (Objective 1); policy and services from the perspective of the stakeholders (Objective 2); and lived experience and perspectives of key stakeholders on school to work transition issues (Objective 3).

This research utilised a mixed methods approach, using both quantitative and qualitative methods to gather data and information. Creswell (2009) views “mixed methods research as an approach of collecting both qualitative and quantitative data and the connection between the

two trends of data that draw on various philosophical assumptions” (p. 101). Creswell and Piano Clark (2011) explain that qualitative and quantitative data are collected alongside each other to increase the overall strength of the study on different topics. Mixed methods can also support the development of policy directions for vulnerable groups by explaining the context of the issues being researched and by drawing on knowledge about individuals’ experience (Bryman, 2012; Liamputtong, 2009). Using this approach, information and data were collected from multiple sources over time, which ensured greater richness, depth, breadth, complexity and rigour (Liamputtong, 2009). This approach also allowed stakeholders in a range of very different roles to participate in the research in order to fully develop a complex understanding the issue.

Mostly quantitative data were collected first, using two researcher-designed questionnaires for young people and stakeholders, which also contained open-ended questions. Demographic information about research participants, as well as their ratings of satisfaction with the program, were collected through the questionnaires before the perspectives and experience of young people with disability and other stakeholders were explored through in-depth interviews and focus groups. Information collected from young people with disability, their parents, education administrators, disability policy-makers, advocates, and employers was used to compare and contrast experience and expectations of the school to work transition program, which helped to build a comprehensive picture of what success looked like for the school to work transition program, as recommended by Bryman (2006), Creswell (2003) and Evans, Coon, & Ume (2011).

Descriptive statistical information about Vietnam in relation to disability, inclusive education, inclusive employment and the Dong Nai Province itself was also collected to provide important context. The quantitative data provided demographic information about the young people with disability and stakeholders in relation to their education, vocational training, and employment. This quantitative data helped to supplement and confirm findings derived from other sources, and hence enhanced the validity of the overall findings, as recommended by Creswell and Piano Clark (2011).

The approach to the collection of qualitative data emphasised description and discovery, with the ultimate goal of obtaining and interpreting meaningful experience from participants to gain an understanding of their perceptions and experience, as suggested by Patton (2001) and

Merriam and Tisdell (2009). As Grbich (2013) and Liamputtong (2009) suggest, from participants' personal stories, a comprehensive picture of the school to work transition for people with disability in this context could be developed, and experience were highlighted and emphasised. As suggested by Bryman (2012), the qualitative data, collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, provided thick descriptions and more detailed views of the situation in relation to identified barriers and facilitators to school to work transition, as well as information about the behaviours, attitudes, and beliefs of research participants.

In addition, the research used a case study approach, since the main objective of the study was to explore and analyse the Dong Nai school to work transition program following the approach suggested by Creswell and Piano Clark(2011). Bryman (2016) and Stake (1995) support such an approach in this situation because the Dong Nai school to work transition program was the only program of its kind in Vietnam. As Stake (1995) would say, this was an appropriate method of inquiry since the study sought to understand the “unique and common features” (p.1) of the Dong Nai program and there were no other programs to compare it with.

Stake's approach to case study was chosen to examine the 'case' from the inside, to find out what was really happening, and to explore the experience of students, graduates and related stakeholders about barriers and facilitators for the program. It was also acknowledged that the Dong Nai school to work transition program had unique qualities in terms of its own socio-economic characteristics, culture, and types of disability (students and graduates with predominantly hearing and vision impairment). Therefore, the findings of this research are not representative of the wider experiences of students, graduates and stakeholders in disability-focused school to work transition programs in other countries, nor do they accurately reflect the whole school to work transition system in Vietnam. Even so, the research was able to uncover broader perceptions, attitudes, and knowledge of people with and without disability through drawing on a range of stakeholders, including policy-makers and service providers, to provide information about disability, inclusive work and education, and the policy and service delivery mechanisms at the national and local levels for transition from school to work. This lent context to the current vocational training and employment system of the country, as well as providing some reflections on international trends on inclusive education and employment.

## 3.6 Research Methods

The research took place over three stages with a questionnaire for students and graduates and then one for stakeholders, followed by up to three in-depth interviews with each of the students and graduates, and one interview with stakeholders. The interviews with young people gave a longitudinal perspective to the research and enabled the analysis of changes over time for students and graduates. As well, there were five focus groups with students, graduates, parents, and teachers. Data were collected at three points, with six months between each point, across two school years. The questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and focus groups targeted different research objectives and the research instruments were intended to collect data which complemented each other and thus enhanced insights into issues relating to school to work transition. A qualitative approach was used to explore perceptions and attitudes towards the school to work transition program as well as the facilitators and barriers to its success (Objective 1), to analyse the experience of students and graduates who participated in the program (Objective 3), and to identify implications and recommendations as discussed by the different participant groups (Objective 4). A quantitative approach was also used to gather statistical information about young people with disability participating into the school to work transition program (Objective 1) as well as program stakeholders (Objective 2). The research instruments investigated different objectives, and assisted in triangulation of data to increase the depth and richness of information, as recommended by Berg (2004), and Creswell and Piano Clark (2011). Sign-language interpreter was using HCM sign-language to assist with transition during the individual interviews and focus group discussions.

### 3.6.1 Questionnaires

Two questionnaires were developed, one for one for stakeholders (see Appendix 3), and the other students and graduates (see Appendix 6). Questions were developed based on social inclusion principles and best practices for school to work transition, as identified in the literature. The questionnaires were not piloted. However, the first round of data collection for all participants was the opportunity for the researcher to paraphrase the question guide and some language vocabularies to make the sentences easier for interviewees to understand.

The questionnaire for students and graduates consisted of a mix of 53 multiple choice, rating scales, and open-ended questions, that covered (i) background demographic information,

including socio-economic status and parents' educational qualification, (ii) participant knowledge of and levels of satisfaction with the policies and services related to school to work transition, (iii) participation and access to the school to work transition services, as well as their evaluation of the services provided, and (iv) work experience and internships that they have participated in. The students and graduates were asked if they were working at the time they completed the questionnaire, and other questions were asked relating to their work such as salary, total working hours, or reasons for working. The questionnaire also contained three open-ended questions asking about perceptions of facilitators and barriers to the success of the school to work transition program, as well as their suggestions for improvement.

The stakeholder questionnaire consisted of a mix of 54 multiple choice, rating scales, and open-ended questions that covered (i) background demographic information, (ii) knowledge of participants about policies and services relating to school to work transition, and their evaluation of the policies, as well as levels of satisfaction, and identification of gaps and strengths, (iii) stakeholder participation in transition services, and their perceptions and attitudes towards these services, and (iv) the nature of their involvement in service coordination and delivery and how such mechanisms worked. The stakeholder questionnaire also included open-ended questions, where participants were asked to list the factors that they considered supported or hindered the success of school to work transition, as well as suggestions for improvement.

Once Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) approval was granted (HRE 2016-0356), the questionnaire, consent forms and information sheets were translated into Vietnamese by the researcher who is Vietnamese and bilingual in English and Vietnamese (for further details about ethical considerations, see section 3.9). A summary of the research proposal was translated into Vietnamese and sent to Dong Nai school management for approval before the researcher commenced data collection. Dong Nai school then approved the research and confirmed this with a letter (see Appendix 2).

During the first visit for the initial round of data collection, the researcher discussed the research with teachers and school administrators in order to identify young people with disability to be included in the study. All current secondary level students of the school were invited to participate and complete the questionnaire, and a comprehensive list of graduates dating back to 2012 were identified and invited to complete the questionnaire. In all, a total of

35 students and 22 graduates completed the questionnaire. Five students with vision impairment completed the questionnaire. The researcher and schoolteachers assisted by reading the questionnaire to them and asked them to choose an answer. The researcher and teachers helped to write down the answer for them.

The stakeholder questionnaire was distributed to a combination of key informants selected via convenience sampling and snowballing techniques. Participants for the research were identified through the researcher's contacts at Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH) and also the Training and Development Centre on Special Education of the Hanoi National University of Education. These organisations have been key players in the disability field in Vietnam since the 1980s, and VNAH was USAID's partner organisation, working with Dong Nai school during the implementation of the school to work transition model under the USAID-funded project.

All participants invited to complete a questionnaire were provided with the relevant information sheet (see Appendices 4 and 7), a consent form (see Appendices 5 and 8), and the questionnaire (see Appendices 3 and 6). As for young people with vision impairment, the information and survey questions were read out for them to understand and answer. The consent form allowed participants to indicate their interest in also participating in the in-depth interviews and focus groups in the subsequent rounds of data collection. The participants were asked to provide their contact details, including phone number and Face-book address so the researcher could contact them to invite them to participate in in-depth interviews and focus groups. The selection of different stakeholders and young people with disability allowed for a diversity of responses and perspectives, as recommended by Holloway and Wheeler (2010). All participated in the research on a voluntary basis and no incentives were offered to participants.

### 3.6.2 In-depth Interviews

As indicated by Liamputtong (2013), in-depth interviews are used to collect information from consenting participants based on their lived experience, knowledge and points of view. Creswell and Piano Clark (2011) and Grbich (2013) describe in-depth interviews as an effective method for collecting information, particularly for a phenomenological study, and suggest it is important to select individuals with direct experience relevant to the research topic in order to

capture their understandings and interpretations of events and experience. The social constructivist perspective emphasises the value of in-depth interviews to hear and understand multiple voices in order to gain such information from different sources. As Patton (2001) suggests, in-depth interviews are helpful in sensitive research with vulnerable groups including young people with disability. Therefore, in this research, information was collected from interviews with young people with disability, parents and stakeholders, including service providers and policy-makers as recommended by Grbich (2013) and Liamputtong (2009).

Two set of interview question guides, one for stakeholders (see Appendix 9) and the other for young people with disability (see Appendix 12) were designed for the in-depth interviews to explore participation in the program, access to services and opportunities, and perceptions of school and work environment factors over time. The question guides also focussed on experience, knowledge and points of view about the facilitators and barriers of success for the school to work transition program. The interview guides contained open question areas which allowed participants to share areas of concern, creating opportunities for new topics to be added as suggested by Gray (2013) and Liamputtong (2013). The questions in the interview guides sought to follow the principles of social inclusion emphasising the rights of young people with disability to participate in activities and access appropriate services. During the interviews, additional prompts were added when participants introduced new topics. This is consistent with Bryman (2006) and Gray's (2013) proposition that in-depth interviews consist of guiding questions that are not fixed or rigid structures. Based on some preliminary analysis of questionnaire data in the first round of data collection, the question guides were refined for both young people with disability and stakeholders for subsequent rounds.

In translating the interview question guides, information sheets, and consent forms into Vietnamese, the researcher took the age of participants, and their limited experience with bureaucratic language and Vietnamese sign language into account. This led to the use of simplified, and more acceptable local language. For example, terms like "facilitators and barriers" needed to be translated to make more sense to participants, and the researcher used words in Vietnamese for "strengths" instead of "facilitators" and "difficulty or gaps" instead of "barriers". Interviews were conducted in Vietnamese and participants were provided all the documents in Vietnamese. The researcher first read out the information sheet and consent form which explained the purpose of the research to the participants. For participants with hearing impairment, a sign language interpreter was present throughout the interviews to interpret.

Seventeen students (13 with hearing impairment and four with vision impairment) participated in the in-depth interviews. Young people with disability were invited to participate in an interview during each of the three rounds of data collection. Each interview took about one hour. Before the first interview, the researcher explained that those who participated in the first round of interviews (November 2016) would also be invited to participate in second and third interviews. The second interviews with students and graduates were held in May 2017 and the third took place in December 2017 and January 2018. In total, 10 graduates with hearing impairment participated in in-depth interviews, with nine of them participating in three interviews. Only one graduate was available for just one interview. The interviews were recorded in Vietnamese. It was also noted that the sign-language interpreters were qualified with sign-language proficiency in Vietnamese that certified as a sign-language interpreter by the Dong Nai College for the Deaf. All were transcribed, and then translated into English. The researcher had a professional translator checked the quality of the translation. A total of 23 stakeholders also participated in one in-depth interview each, of which 10 were in the first round, 10 in the second round, and three in the last round. The in-depth interviews were conducted after stakeholders had completed the questionnaire. Each interview with stakeholder took about one hour and a half and in their offices.

### 3.6.3 Focus Groups

After conducting the in-depth interviews, the researcher sought assistance from the school administrators to contact participants for invitation to the focus groups. Participants from a diverse range of backgrounds, views and experience were selected. Focus groups with research participants from different backgrounds allows the researcher to examine different perceptions and attitudes of a group on the same issues (Patton, 2001). According to Liamputtong (2009) and Creswell (2014), such a practice can strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings and assist the researcher to theorise. Importantly, it also provides an opportunity for participants to respond to others' views and experience (Maltby, Williams, & Day, 2014, Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014). Through the interactions between participants in the group, issues are examined in greater detail, and points of view explored and clarified, which helps the researcher to collect more in-depth and diverse information about the research question (Liamputtong, 2013; Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013). Focus groups discussion guides were developed (see Appendix 12) with similar topic areas to those explored in the in-depth interviews. However, issues were explored in more detail and differently in group

discussions (Powell & Single, 1996; Ritchie et al., 2013; Silverman, 2016; Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014). The researcher found the focus groups were helpful because the issues under investigation were sharpened through interaction and discussion among the participants in the group, and this helped the researcher to identify and confirm common issues of concern. As indicated by Liamputtong (2013) and Powell and Single (1996), the researcher facilitated the focus groups, so playing a key role in guiding conversations via introducing the topic for discussion, and assisting participants to discuss with each other.

Focus groups were held at the school. The researcher had informal conversations with participants whenever possible before the official focus group started to create a relaxed environment for participants to interact and feel comfortable in the formal focus group. Participants sat at a round table (also encouraging comfort) for their discussions in either one of the classrooms or a school meeting room. Each focus group lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. At the start of each focus group, the researcher introduced herself, and then let participants introduce themselves. After that, the researcher introduced the topic and purpose of the research and offered to answer any questions the participants had. They were then asked to sign the consent form. The researcher also made clear to participants that information shared by participants during the focus groups would be kept confidential. Permission from participants was obtained for note-taking and recording the discussions. All focus group discussions were recorded using a small recorder to enable proceedings to be transcribed for later analysis. Permission to use the tape recorder was obtained at the commencement of each meeting. The first focus group discussion was conducted for students with hearing impairment at the Dong Nai school, and a second focus group was also conducted for students with vision impairment of the Dong Nai school. Third focus group was conducted with a group of graduates with hearing impairment. One focus group was conducted with teachers of Dong Nai school and one group was conducted with parents. All participant contributions to discussions were valued and the facilitator sought to encourage all to speak. Supplementary questions were prepared after the in-depth interviews to further clarify information which had emerged from the in-depth interviews.

### 3.6.4 Desk Review of Documents and Observation

As Punch (2006) suggests, a review of the relevant materials and reports from government and non-government organisations provides useful contextual information for the case study and consideration of policy. A desk review of documents, as well as photographs, field notes, researcher observations and reflections, were also additional methods of data collection. Diary notes made of observations and at interviews were hand-written and recorded at the end of each interview. This included the researcher's reflections and thoughts, as well as some preliminary analytical thinking.

After the interviews with employers and vocational training agencies, the researcher asked to visit vocational training places and workplaces where the students and graduates had been or were training and working. Visits were conducted to Rosa vocational training agency, Hanh Phuc Bakery, and Changshin company. The purpose of the visits was first discussed with employers and the vocational training agency and was explained as wishing to observe arrangements, including accessibility, for people with disability working in these locations. After employers and the vocational training agency agreed to the visits, an appropriate timeframe was set. Photos were taken at the workplace and vocational training agency with permission from the employers and the young people. Observations were also conducted at Dong Nai school.

## 3.7 Research Participants

### 3.7.1 Sampling and Access

Teddlie and Yu (2007, pp. 78-79) define three main approaches to sampling in mixed methods research that includes “non-probability sampling, purposive sampling, and convenience sampling”. For qualitative research, Berg (2004, p. 92) suggests four approaches including “convenience”, “purposive”, “snowball” and “quota sampling”. This study used three types of non-probability sampling: convenience, purposive and snowball for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data and, as such, the research findings in no way reflect attitudes, perceptions or knowledge of young people with disability or the policy-makers and service providers not associated with Dong Nai.

The questionnaires were administered to the population of 35 students with disability at secondary level in Dong Nai school, 22 graduates with disability who had graduated from Dong Nai school one to three years earlier, and 23 stakeholders from national to local levels who were involved in the Dong Nai school to work transition program. Because the school only enrolls students with three types of disabilities, that is, mainly hearing impairment with a smaller number of children with vision impairment, the even smaller number of children with delayed or cognitive development were excluded because of the ethical challenges. More information about the research participants can be seen in the Chapter 5. Quantitative methods were used to supplement the qualitative approach via data triangulation so as to enhance the validity of the qualitative findings.

The sampling for qualitative data collection was purposive, selecting students and graduates with disability who had participated in school to work transition program. People with disability who had graduated were able to articulate their lived experience of, not only the program, but also the workplace, and thus provide valuable detailed information for the study, as suggested by Creswell (1998). Selected stakeholders with diverse backgrounds, from national to local level who had completed the questionnaire or were known to other stakeholders, were also invited to participate in an in-depth interview and/or focus group. As proposed by Bryman (2016), this data provided a more thorough understanding of the perceptions of stakeholders on the topic of school to work transition

Seidman (2006) and Bryman (2016) advise that purposive sampling is an acceptable method to select participants who will facilitate connections to others. The researcher compiled a list of potential participants based on (a) their willingness to be interviewed as noted in their questionnaire responses, (b) being school administrators or stakeholders in the program, and (c) young people with disability who were participating in the school to work transition program, or had graduated from the program. From the list of potential participants, the researcher extended invitations and the school administrators assisted the researcher with logistical arrangements for the interviews. This method of purposeful sampling was used because of the “researcher’s knowledge of the population and a judgement was made about which subjects should be selected to provide the best information to address the purpose of the research” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 126). Purposive sampling for the focus group discussions followed the same form, with consideration given to size for each discussion and composition of the groups (Ritchie et al., 2013, p. 138).

A snowball sampling technique was successfully employed with a group of graduates and stakeholders. According to Goodman (1961) and Browne (2005), the snowball technique can assist the researcher to identify and access participants living in the community, or when the researcher does not have contact or know the participants directly. In this research, a snowball technique was mainly applied to stakeholders who were difficult to reach and the researcher had to use the contacts of others to approach the stakeholder to participate, such as the Disabled Persons' Organisations (DPOs). For some service providers such as employers, the researcher found challenges with using purposive sampling at the beginning, and had to use the DPO network to reach them.

### 3.7.2 Research Sites and Recruitment of Participants

#### *3.7.2.1 Selection of Dong Nai Special School*

Vietnam has a total of 33 special school (MOET, 2015). In 2015, Dong Nai Special School was the first and only comprehensive school to work transition program in Vietnam utilising an inter-agency approach in service delivery, and thus was selected for this study. Training for this approach had been provided by US experts, so much of the design of Dong Nai's school to work transition was in keeping with contemporary US research on school to work transition programs. To provide some contextual information about the research site, further information about Dong Nai Province, Dong Nai school and the Dong Nai school to work transition program is provided.

The Dong Nai school to work transition program was piloted in Dong Nai Special School in 2012, with funding support from United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education (MCIE) entered into an Agreement to develop a school to work transition support model to be piloted in Bien Hoa, Dong Nai province, Vietnam. MCIE provided two consultants to develop the model by providing training for teachers, parents, students, service providers, and employers; obtaining input from key stakeholders including government officials on the applicability of the model; and assisting with the implementation of the school to work transition model in Bien Hoa.

The goal of the school to work transition was to prepare students with disabilities for adult life, especially for gainful employment after leaving school. Implementation of the model planned to link the school with employers in the Blue Ribbon Employer Council (BREC) in Dong Nai

and other service providers. BREC was established by the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry and represents employers who recruit people with disability all over Vietnam. By introducing best school to work practices from the US, the goal was to assist students with disability aged 16 years and above to obtain life and vocational skills during their school years, and facilitate their movement from school to post-school activities. The project required systemic collaboration in a public-private partnership among schools, families, social and employment service providers, the Provincial Departments related to vocational training, employment, and labour (Department of Education and Training, and Department of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs), and especially employers/businesses. While transition supports for students with disability have proven effective in many developed countries, this was a pilot for Dong Nai and indeed Vietnam. The hope was that a successful pilot would mean a model for replication in other schools in this city as well as other parts of Vietnam.

The school has 17 primary classes for 195 students with hearing and visual impairments, and mild intellectual disabilities. Each class has between eight and 12 students, and each includes students with different types of disability. According to the enrolment policy of the Dong Nai school, priority is given to children with hearing impairments, then visual impairments, and finally mild intellectual disability. Sign language is the main communication approach for students with hearing impairment at school, and most who live on campus use sign language. Interviews with parents and students indicated that parents hardly use sign language to communicate with their children, and instead often communicate by writing messages on paper.

### *3.7.2.2 Selection of participants for the questionnaires and interviews*

#### *Students and graduates*

The questionnaire for young people with disability was completed by 35 current students and 22 graduates who had finished their study at Dong Nai. Of the 35 current students, 23 were male and 12 were female. More details about participants are described in Chapter five. Table 5 provides information about the age group and Year in secondary school of the student participants.

Table 5 The Age Groups and Year of School for Students

Age groups	Questionnaire	Interviews
12 years old	1	0
13-15 years old	15	6
16-17 years old	12	8
18-25 years old	7	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>17</b>
Year of school	Questionnaire	Interviews
Year 6	13	5
Year 7	10	3
Year 8	5	4
Year 9	7	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>17</b>

It is important to note that most of the students were older than expected, likely because they had started school late. According to the National Law on Education, students without disability can start their schooling at six years of age, while those with disability can delay their enrolment into school for one to two years. For example, some students at Year 6 were in the group of 16 to 17 year-olds and participated in vocational training. Other students under 16 years of age were in Years 7 to 8.

The researcher worked with the school principal, the vice-principal and a school to work transition staff member to explain the detailed study plan, objectives, the target participants and the research approach. The researcher was assisted by two staff to arrange the dissemination of the questionnaire. Training was also conducted for the students with disability and graduates with disability to explain the details of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was then provided to all students, and they brought home to fill out, with assistance from their parents, or filled out in class with assistance from their teachers. A training session for secondary teachers who would assist students to fill out the questionnaire was also conducted. Teachers only helped those who brought the questionnaire to class. Completed questionnaires were gathered after two days. The researcher then worked with the school staff to help some students more fully complete their questionnaires. The bias that this presents is discussed in more detail on page 109.

A similar process was conducted for the graduates with disability. Forty graduates were contacted and 22 attended. A brief training was provided to the graduates, and the researcher briefly went through the study objectives, explained the questionnaire and what to expect from

participation. The 22 graduates (11 male and 11 female) stayed for more than one hour to fill out the questionnaire. Of the 22 graduates who completed the questionnaire, six had graduated four to seven years earlier (these were not selected for the in-depth interviews), and 16 had graduated one to three years previously. Ten of those who had graduated one to three years earlier were invited and agreed to be interviewed. All 22 graduates were young people with hearing impairment and all but one was working. The researcher also looked for the graduates with vision impairment for interview but they were either (i) living far away with their families or (ii) continued to study.

Based on the consent forms completed by the participants, young people with disability were invited for in-depth interviews. The selection criteria for the in-depth interviews were approved by the University Human Research Ethics Committee and discussed with the school staff and managers who selected students at Dong Nai school and made contacts with the graduates.

Specific criteria were as follows. For students, the first criterion was the age of the participants. Students from 13 years old or from Year 7 to 9 at the school whose consent form indicated they agreed to participate in the interview were selected for the in-depth interviews after completing the questionnaire. The selection of students across different years and ages allowed for diversity in responses and captured the changes in their perspectives over the year.

The second criterion for selecting students for interview was the level of their participation in the school to work transition services. With these students, some had not yet participated in the school to work program in the first interview but had done so by the second and the last interview. This revealed the change in their perceptions about the facilitators and barriers of the program and attitudes towards employment and vocational training.

Seventeen students were selected for three rounds of in-depth interviews. Ten graduates were selected for in-depth interviews, of which nine participated in three rounds, and one participated only in round two. The selection of 17 students and 10 graduates over three rounds allowed for the natural attrition of study participants over the course of study as the phenomenological research approach recommending recruiting between six to 10 participants (Creswell, 1998) ensuring a diversity of responses and perspectives (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010). Selection criteria were used for first round and those who participated in the first round were also invited to participate in the second and the last round.

Graduates from Dong Nai school from one to three years earlier were also selected for in-depth interviews. This timeframe of between one and three years allowed for graduates to recall their recent experience in the school to work transition program, thus to share perceptions, attitudes and knowledge that they gained through participating in the program. The selection of graduates included both those who had experienced success and failure in looking for jobs after graduation. This provided information for the researcher to analyse important factors contributing to the success of the school to work transition program, and what would be needed to ensure inclusive employment for young people with disability in general and for the hearing and vision-impaired in particular. At the second round of data collection, one new graduate without a job was invited for an in-depth interview. This person had graduated from Dong Nai school two years earlier but had not found a job. He also had not had follow-up support from the school to work transition program after graduation. In the third interview, he withdrew his participation, as he had expected the researcher to help him find a job. The researcher explained to him that she was unfortunately unable to do this.

The main purpose of the additional rounds of data collection for students and graduates was to explore new information and confirm and follow up earlier information. Minor adjustments were made to information sheets and consent forms and the interview guides themselves, based on the preliminary findings from the first data collection, including field notes, researcher observation and reflections.

In addition, the USAID funding for the school to work transition program had stopped early 2016 (one year before the data collection started), so questions were added to understand the impact of the cessation of this external funding. Another reason was that some students who had been at school in May 2017 had graduated by December 2017. The questions were revised to gather further information from these recent graduates about their experience after leaving school.

The main purpose of the last round of data collection was to explore the new information and confirm and follow up information. The information collected from this last data collection round involved more participation from the stakeholders such as the DPO of the hearing-impaired, and from the students who had just graduated from Dong Nai school five months earlier.

As suggested by Bryman (2012), by this time, relationships with participants can become more established, and trust was deeper. Thematic summaries were developed based on the findings from the interviews in rounds one and two and were discussed in subsequent rounds. As recommended by Holloway and Wheeler (2006), participants had the opportunity to respond to ideas presented earlier, which confirmed or added to the findings and ensured engagement of participants in the topic.

The participants were more willing to share and participate in the research at these later stages. This helped the researcher with interpretation, to minimise misrepresentation and misunderstanding and better confirm the accuracy of the findings, as emphasised by Stake (1995). Also according to Creswell (1998), the findings of the third round of data collection added depth to the description of their thoughts and experience, and suggestions as to how the transition to work programs and services could be improved for future participants. This final visit incorporated discussions to explore participants' understandings of how they constructed success and failure from their experience of participation, and the environmental and personal factors that impacted them.

Details of the students and graduates participating in three rounds of interviews are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Graduates and Students Participating in the In-Depth Interviews

Case Code Graduates	Pseudonym	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Age	Years since Graduation
1	Xanh	x	x	x	21	3
2	Do	x	x	x	19	2
3	Tim	x	x	x	19	1
4	Vang	x	x	x	22	3
5	Luc	x	x	x	22	2
6	Nam	x	x	x	18	1
7	Tram	x	x	x	20	2
8	Trang	x	x	x	18	1
9	Nau	x	x	x	21	1
10	Den		x		18	2
Case Code Students	Pseudonym	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Age	School Year
11	Nhat	x	x	x	16	6
12	Nhi	x	x	x	13	7
13	Tam	x	x	x	16	9
14	Tu	x	x	x	16	6
15	Ngu	x	x	x	15	7
16	Sau Em	x	x	x	14	6
17	That	x	x	x	22	9
18	Bat	x	x	x	24	9
19	Cuu	x	x	x	14	8
20	Thap	x	x	x	17	6
21	Thap Nhat	x	x	x	15	6
22	Thap Nhi	x	x	x	16	8
23	Thap Tam	x	x	x	20	9
24	Thap Tu	x	x	x	14	7
25	Thap Ngu	x	x	x	16	8
26	Thap Luc	x	x	x	17	8
27	Thap That	x	x	x	17	9

### Stakeholders

The researcher used her contacts from her former work with VNAH and assistance from Dong Nai school managers to set up the questionnaire and interviews for stakeholders. She worked with the school administrator and the staff member in charge of the school to work transition program to make a list of 23 stakeholders who were invited to fill out the questionnaire. Stakeholders at the provincial level were mainly suggested by the school managers and staff, as they worked directly with them during the project implementation and knew their roles in the government system relating to education and employment for young people with disability. For stakeholders at the national level, the researcher made direct contact with Ministry of

Education and Training (MOET), Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLISA) and National Coordinating Council on Disability (NCCD).

The researcher contacted stakeholders to discuss a time for meeting and completing the questionnaire at the stakeholder's convenience. Of the 23 stakeholders, two from Dong Nai Department of Labour and Social Affairs (DOLISA) and the DPO for the hearing impaired were emailed questionnaires before the researcher could meet in person for an in-depth interview. Before the questionnaires were provided to stakeholders, they were provided with the information sheet to read and asked to sign the informed consent forms indicating they agreed to participate.

All 23 stakeholders completed the questionnaire across the three rounds of data collection, with 10 completed during the first round, 10 in the second, and three in the last round. The stakeholders were from diverse backgrounds, including policy makers (MOLISA, MOET, and NCCD), education administrators (Department of Education and Training (DOET), Employment and Vocational Training administrator), DOLISA, school administrator, teachers, parents, employers, DPOs, and Employment Information Centre (EIC) and other Disability activists. In the consent form, the stakeholder participants were also asked to leave contact details for the researcher to contact them again if they were willing to participate in an in-depth interview. All 23 stakeholders then agreed to participate in an in-depth interview.

Table 7 summarises the data about the diversity of these 23 stakeholders regarding their area of work and qualifications.

Table 7: Stakeholders' Area of Work and Qualification

<b>Area of work</b>	<b>Completing Questionnaire</b>
Policy	4
Special Education	7
DPO	2
Employers	5
Employment Services	1
Disability Advocacy	1
Parent of child with disability	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Questionnaire</b>
MA	3
BA	16
Diploma	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>

Stakeholder participants also held different positions in their organisations, and a major proportion (65%) held management roles. The participation of those in managing roles in the research informed not only the perceptions, attitudes and knowledge about the employment and education for young people with disability, but also understandings of the strategic direction of management towards the sustainability of the school to work transition program within the inclusive education and employment agenda of the localities. Of note, three parents of children with disability also participated. Table 8 indicates the positions of the participants in their organisations:

Table 8: Stakeholders' Positions

<b>Position</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Staff member	5
Manager	15
Parent of a child with disability	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>

Details of stakeholders who participated in an interview are presented in Table 9:

Table 9: List of Stakeholders Participating in the In-Depth Interviews

CaseCode Stakeholders	Pseudonym	Position	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
R1-STA01	Mot	Manager of Dong Nai School	x		
R1-STA02	Hai	Staff of Dong Nai School	x		
R1-STA03	Ba	Leader of DPO	x		
R1-STA04	Bon	Manager of Dong Nai School	x		
R1-STA05	Nam	Head of Parent Association	x		
R1-STA06	Sau	Employer/Manager Changsin	x		
R1-STA07	Bay	Manager of DOET	x		
R1-STA08	Tam	Employer/Manager - Nike	x		
R1-STA09	Chin	Manager - MOLISA	x		
R1-STA10	Muoi	Manager - USAID partner	x		
R2-STA11	Muoi Mot	Manager - ROSA/Vocational Training		x	
R2-STA12	Muoi Hai	Senior staff - IEC		x	
R2-STA13	Muoi Ba	Representative of DOLISA		x	
R2-STA14	Muoi Bon	Employer/Manager		x	
R2-STA15	Muoi Nam	Representative of Bakery Factory		x	
R2-STA16	Muoi Sau	Parent		x	
R2-STA17	Muoi Bay	Parent		x	
R2-STA18	Muoi Tam	Teacher		x	
R2-STA19	Muoi Chin	Teacher		x	
R2-STA20	Hai Muoi	Representative of MOET		x	
R3-STA21	Hai Mot	Teacher			x
R3-STA22	Hai Hai	Manager of Dong Nai School			x
R3-STA23	Hai Ba	DPO leader			x

#### 3.6.2.4 Selection of participants for focus groups

Five focus groups were conducted with (i) students with hearing impairment, (ii) students with vision impairment, (iii) graduates, (iv) parents, and (v) teachers. The size for each group is reported in Table 10.

Table 10. Focus Groups and Number of Participants

Name of focus group	Total number
Students with hearing impairment	5
Students with vision impairment	5
Graduates with hearing impairment	6
Teachers	5
Parents	6

The focus groups were the chance for the researcher to get deeper information from both those who had already participated in the in-depth interviews and from those who had not had the chance to do so.

The focus group of graduates consisted of six graduates including four with hearing impairment and two with vision impairment. The two vision impaired graduates graduated in May 2017 and continued with study and the other four graduates had already worked for two to three years.

The focus group for parents consisted of six parents of both students with vision impairment and hearing impairment. The school recommended this focus group with parents of Year 9 students, as their children had graduated in May 2017, and they would have more thoughts and experience in terms of their children's future and employment than parents of students yet to graduate. The invitations for the group interview were delivered by the school teacher with details of time, location, date and purpose.

As parents generally lived far away from their children, the parent focus group was arranged for the day that they were to come to school for their children's final assembly of the school year, and the focus group was conducted after this event.

The final focus group consisted of five teachers who were teaching Year 8 and 9 students with both hearing and vision impairment. These teachers were recommended by the school management because of their lengthy experience.

### **3.8 Data Processing and Analysis**

Quantitative and qualitative data collection, transcription and analysis were conducted throughout the project, although the quantitative data collected via the questionnaires was reviewed earlier. Quantitative data were analysed for overall descriptive information about the context, demographic information, perceptions, attitudes and knowledge of young people with disability and stakeholders in relation to education, vocational training, and employment, as Creswell and Piano Clark (2011) suggest. From the description of personal stories, a comprehensive picture of the school to work transition for people with disability in this context.

Sections 3.8.1 and 3.8.2 describe how the quantitative and qualitative data were processed and analysed.

### 3.8.1 Data Processing

The large volume of data collected for this study was derived from 80 questionnaires, 102 in-depth interviews, and five focus groups. Of the 80 questionnaires completed, 35 were from students with hearing and vision impairment, 22 from graduates with hearing impairment, and 23 from stakeholders. Qualitative information was collected through 102 in-depth interviews, of which 51 were with 17 students in three rounds, 28 with 10 graduates (nine in three rounds, and one in the second round), 23 with stakeholders, and five focus groups with students, graduates, parents, and teachers. Data processing is described in the sections 3.8.1.1 and 3.8.1.2 below.

#### 3.8.1.1 Quantitative

Methods of data processing were guided by Bryman (2006), Cramer (2004) and Pallant (2016), and IBM's SPSS software version 23.0 (2015) was used to support the analysis of the questionnaire data.

A codebook was developed with defined variables. Numbers were assigned to each of the possible responses and each response was coded. For the open-ended questions, the researcher carefully scanned all completed questionnaires to search for common answers and themes were developed, so that major groups of responses under certain variable or thematic names were listed. Numbers were assigned to each of the response groups.

After the codebook was developed, data were then entered into IBM SPSS software version 23.0 (2015). Data were screened and corrected for errors. The software assisted with displaying the variations between the variables within each topic and data about the variables introduced by participants. Data were explored using descriptive statistics and graphs for data analysis and presenting the results.

#### 3.8.1.2. Qualitative

Information was collected from in-depth interviews and focus groups in the forms of voice-recordings and/or written notes. For hearing-impaired interviewees, the researcher conducted

all interviews with assistance from a sign-language interpreter. She used Vietnamese sign-language and was from the South and living in Dong Nai. Interview transcription and translation were solely done by the researcher. This was an important methodological step and rigorous because the researcher was very familiar with the information, and could reflect on meanings contained in transcripts, interpretation of the findings, and then relate these to the research objectives. The researcher kept a reflective journal, and diary notes of observations were handwritten and recorded at the conclusion of each interview. This included the researcher's reflections and thoughts, as well as the preliminary analysis from the data collected. Qualitative data analysis was guided by Liamputtong (2009), and the process included transcribing, coding, and thematic analysis, as outlined below.

### Transcribing

The researcher transcribed all data from the in-depth interviews and focus groups in the field at the end of each day of data collection. This helped the researcher review the existing data in a timely manner for confirmation of her thinking and to generate a strategy for collecting new or more in-depth information (Liamputtong, 2009, p. 278). Transcripts were translated by the researcher from Vietnamese into English and the translations were double-checked by two professional translators. Given the researcher had taken two courses/workshops relating to the utilisation of NVivo 10, all translated transcripts and field notes in English were imported into NVivo (QSR International, 2012). NVivo software was used to store the data, to code the data collected into themes pertaining to the research objectives and questions (Bazeley, 2013a). The researcher also consulted with a university doctoral professor who was an experienced NVivo 10 user for advice to ensure her accurate and effective organisation and analysis of the interview data.

### Coding

Coding is the important process of getting to the meaning of the data (Liamputtong, 2009) and identifying the segments that relate to the research question (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). As suggested by Bazeley (2013b) and Merriam (2009), the coding was done in two main stages. The first stage was referred to as open coding, as the researcher familiarised herself with the data and was open to any meanings possible at this point. The researcher read the transcribed

texts carefully, the meaningful sections of text were highlighted based on the researcher's theoretical understanding and the research objectives, and then marked with key terms and moved to the relevant nodes. Initial concepts were based on the ideas considered significant and being repeated by different participants through noting any patterns occurring in transcribed interviews. The repetition of ideas and patterns observed were the basis for creating nodes. Nodes were added with descriptors as a reminder of what each node was about. The descriptions of the nodes were kept in the codebook. At this stage, the node names were not fixed and could evolve later when nodes were merged or if the researcher found the names no longer fitted well with the selected text.

The second stage focused on refining or developing more analytical categories or clusters while searching for themes. The researcher developed overarching themes by merging or combining the codes. The researcher then reviewed the codes and coded data, re-reading all coded text in each node, then merged the nodes if they were considered to be about the same thing; un-coding or recoding when the data did not fit the code. Thus, developing meaning was given to data and related to research objectives.

### *Thematic Analysis*

As the research sought the voices of young people with disability who participate in the school to work transition program, the thematic analysis focused on their experience, perspectives, attitudes, needs, what success in school to work transition meant to them, and the challenges and difficulties they faced to secure inclusive employment.

Van Manen (2016) suggests that there are many means of data gathering and reflection to explore and interpret lived experience. Van Manen's (2016) approach was used to make sense of the collected data, as well as to identify the significance attached to themes with essential meanings and a thoughtful understanding of young people's lived experience. Thematic analysis was accomplished through interpretation of the experience shared and described by participants, to make sense of the facilitators and barriers that impact on the success of the school to work transition program at Dong Nai school. The interpretation of the facilitators and barriers was conducted with reference to the theories of social inclusion and human rights frameworks such as the ICF, UNCRDP, and EFA.

According to Liamputtong (2013), thematic analysis requires identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes). A thematic map was developed from the analysis by customising and listing nodes, reading through the coded texts and then writing a description for each node. As suggested by Liamputtong (2009) and Merriam & Tisdell (2015), this stage continued with reviewing the themes, and identifying data to support the themes and the overarching theoretical position. This was done through reviewing and checking the reliability of the coding by identifying evidence, coding the data again in some cases to ensure its consistency as well as the trustworthiness of the coding process.

After the qualitative data were coded, the researcher continued to analyse and revise by reading and making sense of the coded data in order to identify themes related to facilitators and barriers. This analysis also involved searching across the data set to understand and interpret the interrelationships between the school to work transition services, the policies that impact the services, and mechanisms of service delivery. Themes were created and summarised in detailed, and then shared with supervisors during supervision meetings. In addition, the researcher also cross-checked with participants when needing to confirm information and clarify what was unclear. This interpretation process assisted with the formation of themes and sub-themes that moved through different levels of experience to the overall experience of the school to work transition process. This effectively created an interpreting circle which enabled a deep understanding and engagement with the information shared by the participants.

### *Interpreting the connected results*

Based on the data collected, findings of quantitative and qualitative strands were summarised, and linkages were drawn between the results of both. The themes that were identified from the qualitative data were connected to significant results in the quantitative strands. Quantitative findings were used to explain and complement the qualitative results. Both of these results are linked and respond to the research question and objectives (Creswell & Piano Clark, 2011). The purpose was that “themes which emerged from the interviews would explain the quantitative results and provide specific insightful meaning” (Creswell, 2009, p. 101) that were interpreted from the lived experience shared by participants, influencing a participant’s ability

to access services in order to participate in vocational training in an inclusive education setting, to successfully get a job in an inclusive employment setting.

### 3.9 Ethical Considerations

The research complied with the ethical principles of the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE; AARE, 2015) Code of Ethics and the National Statement on the Ethical Conduct (NHMRC) in Research Involving Humans (NHMRC, 2007) incorporating all updates of May 2015 (NHMRC, 2015). Before the research commenced, written permission from Dong Nai school manager was obtained. A non-low risk ethics application was completed and submitted to the Curtin Human Research Ethics Committee for review. The research was approved (HREC number HRE2016-0356). Please see appendices for the information sheets for stakeholders (see Appendices 4 and 10), young people (Appendices 7 and 13), and informed consent forms for young people (see Appendices 8 and 14) and for stakeholders (see Appendices 5 and 11).

Participants who took part in the study were given the information sheet and an informed consent form to review and complete before participating. The information sheets contained information about the research objectives, and advised the participants that findings from the research may be presented at conferences, and/or published in professional journals and the PhD thesis, and that they would not be individually identified in reporting the results of the study. Participants also understood that their participation in the interview was voluntary and they could decide to stop the interview at any time without consequences. For those students who were under 18 years old, either their parents or teachers signed their consent forms in discussion with them.

People with disability are considered a vulnerable group under section 4.3 of the National Statement (NHMRC, 2015). The researcher acknowledged potential psychological harm to participants such as feeling upset or discomfort due to experience of exclusion, discrimination and stigma about disability that they may recount during interviewing. The researcher commenced the interview by sharing how she became interested in the research. The researcher also sought to create a relaxed atmosphere and let the participants ask any questions of their choosing. In addition, all interviews with students with disability were organised at school as they lived on campus. As for the interviews with graduates, the researcher let the interviewees

decide on the location of their choosing and convenience. Some interviews with graduates were organised at school and some were organised outside of school at coffee shops.

In addition, being Vietnamese, the researcher was familiar with the culture and speaks Vietnamese as her mother tongue. Further, she sought to be sensitive and mindful of the situation and provided appropriate responses if participants became uncomfortable or upset. At the beginning of the in-depth interviews, some students were reticent to answer questions, the researcher was sensitive to this, and stopped asking questions from the question-guide instead asking more conversational questions, such as where was home, or how many siblings they had, etc. This early shyness disappeared by the second and third interview.

### 3.10 Trustworthiness

Shenton (2004) and Guba (1981) posit that trustworthiness is important to ensure the rigour in research. Guba (1981) also suggest four criteria to ensure trustworthiness have been identified, including “truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality” (pp. 79-80). These are relevant to both quantitative and qualitative studies (Krefting, 1991). This research sought to pay deliberate attention to these four criteria to ensure rigour for the research findings.

First, the researcher sought to ensure “truth value” by establishing confidence in the findings. “Truth value” refers to credibility and/or validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The research was designed to provide opportunities for participants, particularly people with disability, to voice their experience, concerns, and needs in regard to their rights to access inclusive employment via the school to work transition program. The researcher played a role by sharing information back to participants, to ensure the credibility of her own understandings and participants’ understandings within the study setting. After each data collection round, the researcher presented a brief report to the school management for their information and to also ensure the accuracy of the information. The report also outlined the emerging findings. A similar process was followed for the students and graduates with disability. During the transcribing of the data, unclear points shared by the students and graduates were noted and then clarified in subsequent rounds.

Validation of the data was, in part, achieved through data triangulation. Information was gathered from a diverse range of participants from different backgrounds, which allowed for this triangulation. Triangulation refers to the use of multiple sources of data through the

diversity of participants (Liamputtong, 2009; Merriam & Tisdell, 2009) as well as information collected via different instruments, such as questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and focus groups, field notes, observations, and desk reviews of documents. This enabled comparisons, re-checking and cross-checking data, thus achieving greater trustworthiness of the findings as suggested by Bryman (2016), Lincoln & Guba (1985), and Shenton (2004).

Credibility and/or validity was also improved through the researcher debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Debriefing with peer-researchers in the field helped the researcher become aware of her own biases, perspectives and assumptions and, as well, it provided the researcher with an opportunity to be mindful of her ways of thinking. In addition, the researcher had regular conversation with her research supervisors and Dong Nai school managers to discuss the findings during analysis with the goal of minimising the influence of personal judgement or bias in the study. The researcher conducted debriefing with her supervisors every two weeks and more so when in the field and during data analysis. In addition, the researcher debriefed every day with school staff during data collection, discussing and checking information with teachers and managers, during analysis as well as after the researcher returned to Australia.

Second, “applicability” for this research refers to “transferability” (Krefting, 1991). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Shenton (2004), “transferability” is achieved when the research findings fit other contexts beyond the study location or the study can be replicated in other locations. In this research, “applicability” began to develop through the research process. Policy-makers at the national level were involved in completing the questionnaire and in in-depth interviews, which informed them about the model being implemented for Dong Nai. At the same time, the researcher advocated for what should be done in term of legislating the model based on the recommendations from the research. The research also provided contextual information about the general situation of education and employment for people with disability in Vietnam, including policy frameworks and consideration of the findings extending to other parts of the country. Rich in-depth information and thick descriptions of the lived experience of participants were gathered in three rounds of data collection, and have provided a means for comparing progression, changes in attitude and decisions of young people with disability for all school to work transition interventions. In addition, the researcher was invited to participate and share research findings at a national conference organised by MOLISA for reviewing national employment policies and their enforcement in September 2019. This suggests the

applicability of the research findings and their implications for the country has begun to gain traction.

Third, “consistency” of the research means learning from informants across a range of experience in different roles and situations (Krefting, 1991; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Information on the same topics was collected through the questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and focus groups as these overlapping methods sought to address the research objectives in diverse ways as suggested by Shenton (2004) and Guba (1981). Facilitators and barriers were identified by participants using all research instruments. The researcher also used her notes from observations and in-depth interviews and focus groups or daily journals to record what was done in the field and these later helped with data analysis and writing up the methodology.

The fourth criterion of trustworthiness is “neutrality”, which means “confirmability” and the establishment of the reliability and validity (Krefting, 1991). “Confirmability” was achieved through establishing “truth value” and “applicability”. This means that the research findings were consistent, and information about the same topics were repeated in different data collection settings, such as in-depth interviews and focus groups, as well as the observation and field notes written by the researcher (Krefting, 1991; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004).

The information provided by different participants from diverse backgrounds captured rich and thick description of the situation and the context of the research topic. In addition, the use of mixed method approaches collected data and information by providing opportunities for young people with hearing and vision impairment to voice their needs and concerns, their perspectives and attitudes about the school to work transition, education system and inclusive employment. This helped increase the authenticity of the research, making certain that all research objectives were answered comprehensively and consistently.

### **3.11 Reflections on the Strengths and Limitations of the Research**

This section provides an overview of the strengths and limitations of the research. The strengths of this research were related to its research design and methods, and the approach which ensured the voices of young people with disability were heard. The mixed method case study approach used interpretive phenomenological methods, large sample sizes, and diversity in

representation, as well as data collected from different participant groups over time. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data sets, bringing together descriptive statistics with personal stories, experience and perspectives, paints a comprehensive picture of the complexity of the school to work transition (Creswell, 2018). The research was designed for three rounds of data collection from the same cohort of the students and graduates so as triangulate data from multiple sources across a period of time. The goal here was to enable a deeper understanding of the complexity of school to work transition experience both during schooling and after graduation and into employment and further education.

The use of Van Manen's (2014) phenomenological approach enabled the description and exploration of the experience of young people with hearing and vision impairment to be forefront in this study. This approach provided the opportunity for the researcher to value and listen to an individual with disability to reveal his/her experience and thoughts, perspectives, and attitudes (Sorrell & Redmond, 1995). A large amount of data was collected with participation of the same students and graduates in three rounds. This was also a real strength. It overcame early shyness and reluctance and lent itself to stronger validation of the researcher's understanding and interpretation of what the students and graduates shared (Dowling, 2007; Sorrell & Redmond, 1995).

There were of course a number of limitations to the study. One related to the site of Dong Nai school being the only site with a school to work transition program for young people with disability in Vietnam. This meant that the research findings are particular to the Dong Nai program and that care is needed in describing how they may be transferable to elsewhere in the country. It also meant that not all types of disability were included, but rather a focus on mostly hearing impairment and, to a lesser extent, vision impairment. While Dong Nai had a small number of students with cognitive impairment, these students were in lower years at the school and were not included in this study. This meant that only young people with hearing impairment and vision impairment participated in the study. This prevented any comparative analysis of the needs, barriers and facilitators in the school to work transition program for other forms of disability. Nevertheless, the focus on hearing and vision loss means much has been learned in terms of facilitators and barriers in the school to work transition process for students with these types of impairment.

Secondly, the study commenced one year after the completion of the USAID-funded project “Inclusion of the Vietnamese with disability” (2012-2014). Thus, this school to work transition program was piloted for three years as the first model in the country, with technical and financial support from an international organisation. The funding had ceased one year prior to the start of this study, and this meant the participants for interviews included both those who had received USAID-funded support and intervention, and those who had not. That allowed for some comparison of services and supports both before and after the USAID component of the project had finished. While it was an advantage for the researcher to collect information from recent graduates, it meant that participants had experienced different levels of service and it was also hard to assess the future sustainability of a program which had lost its funding.

Interviews with students and graduates with vision impairment were reasonably straightforward with them needing help from their parents or others to complete the questionnaire. However, gathering information from students and graduates with hearing impairment was more challenging. Although the researcher used the services of a sign-language interpreter for those with hearing impairment, students and graduates with hearing impairment often have limited Vietnamese proficiency which made conversations more challenging. Because of this, the initial responses from participants were sometimes brief and lacked in-depth description. However, the collection of data across three rounds went some way to addressing this shortcoming, since it allowed graduates to add to their responses and thus provide more comprehensive and in-depth information than had they been interviewed once only.

Due to the limited budget for this study, sign-language interpretation was provided by a volunteer teacher when she was available. A friend of the researcher who was able to use sign language also helped with sign-language interpretation when the volunteer teacher was absent. Both the teacher and colleague interpreters had Bachelor of Arts in Sign Language from the Hanoi National University of Education. When using the teacher as a sign-language interpreter, it was thought that the power relationship between the volunteer teacher-interpreter and the student might have made it difficult for students to openly express their opinions of the school to work transition program. In addition, some students with hearing impairment had difficulty expressing their ideas because of their low level of Vietnamese proficiency. The researcher was aware of this issue. However, the relaxed atmosphere, the students’ excitement when

talking with the researcher, and the friendly interaction between the teacher-interpreter and the students seemed to bolster communication with the researcher.

## SUMMARY

This research utilised a mixed methods approach, which included questionnaires, in-depth interviews, focus groups, and researcher observation. The research participants were students and graduates with hearing and vision impairment who had participated in the Dong Nai school to work transition program. As well, other stakeholders from diverse backgrounds were also included.

Including a diverse range of participants allowed for triangulation of data, in that data were collected from a variety of different perspectives. The characteristics of the participants with disability, and the use of three rounds of data collection, enabled in-depth, rich and thick description to emerge of lived experience of the school to work transition program. The data collected by the questionnaire included basic demographics, and other topics identified in the literature about school to work transition for young people with disability, and these were also linked to the topics covered in the interview and focus group question-guides. This allowed the qualitative and quantitative data to be linked.

The following four chapters present the findings of the analysis of the data and information from the questionnaires, interviews and focus groups. Chapter 4 outlines the history, context, and background of Dong Nai school case study, as well as the socio-demographic factors of the study participants in order to frame the qualitative data addressing research objectives one, two and three. Chapter 5 further addresses objective three and explicitly reviews the perceptions, attitudes and levels of satisfaction of participants with the school to work transition services and policies. Chapter 6 explores the facilitators and barriers to the success of the school to work transition program at Dong Nai school (objective one) while Chapter 7 addresses objective two and explores the dynamics between the rights and obligations of young people with disability and related stakeholders including parents, teachers, and service providers. It also looks at the policies and service delivery mechanisms which facilitate the effective participation of young people with disability, and specifically those with hearing and vision impairment, into the school to work transition program. This chapter also advocates for rights-

based and social inclusion approaches for the education and employment of young people with disability.

# **CHAPTER 4 CONTEXT OF DONG NAI SCHOOL AND PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides a comprehensive picture of the Dong Nai school, its history, context and background, as well as the sociodemographic profiles of all research participants: the 57 young people with disability involved in Dong Nai's school to work transition program, and another 23 stakeholders representing relevant sectors, roles and positions. Of the 57 young people with disability who participated in the study, 35 were current students of Dong Nai school (the total population of secondary students from Year 6 to Year 9) and 22 were graduates of Dong Nai (22 of 39 or 59% of all school graduates from 2010 to 2016). All of students with hearing impairment use sign-language and need a sign-language interpreter to communicate with speaking population. The nature of their participation in vocational training, work experience and employment is also described.

As outlined in Chapter 3, several methods of data collection were employed for this mixed methods study. Two questionnaires, one for the young people with disability and the other for stakeholders, were followed by three rounds of in-depth interviews and focus groups with subsets of young people (17 students and 10 graduates) and stakeholders (10 stakeholders in round one, 10 in round two and three in round three). Analysis of secondary data sources was also employed to understand the complex disability legal and policy scenarios in Vietnam.

Given the socio-demographic backgrounds of young people with disability were likely to influence their experience and perspectives of the school to work transition program, it was deemed important to articulate their sociodemographic profiles and other relevant contextual information. Indeed, sociodemographic data may contribute to understanding their perceptions of the facilitators and barriers to success of the program (see Chapter 6). The sociodemographic data also provides a backdrop to the analysis of the qualitative data.

### **4.1 Dong Nai School as a Case Study**

This section provides contextual information about Dong Nai school collected via several sources as recommended for a case study of this kind (Stake, 2005). In this instance, these

sources of data included the stakeholder questionnaire, in-depth interviews with schoolteachers and managers, and secondary data sources on the school to work transition program, including school reports, program training reports, and published documents.

According to Quirk (2013), the Dong Nai school for Disabled Youth in Bien Hoa was established in 1997 for school-aged youth with hearing impairment, vision impairment, and a small number of mild intellectual disabilities. The school is designed to meet the needs of primary and secondary students. According to Ms Bon, the vice-principal of Dong Nai school, the school began with only 30 enrolled students in 1998 and five staff, including management and teachers. The enrolment of students has steadily increased and, at the start of this research, the School had an enrolment of approximately 230 students, with 35 students at secondary school level. Secondary students receive schooling in four classes from Year Six, through to Year Nine though there are students on the campus as old as 23 years of age (Quirk, 2013). The school has 17 primary classes for 195 students with hearing and visual impairment, and mild intellectual disabilities. Each class has between eight and 12 students. Each class includes students with different types of disability. According to the enrolment policy of the Dong Nai school, priority is given to children with hearing impairment, then visual impairment next, and then mild intellectual disability. Each year, the school advertises for new admissions, and a school review board reviews the applications. There are no exams or tests for admission. Criteria for review of applications are based on the following:

- Applicants who come from poor families, and/or from families with more than one child with disability or Agent Orange-affected families
- Applicants who live in Dong Nai Province
- Those who live more than 15 km away from the school who are eligible to live on-campus

After the students are shortlisted, the school submits the short list to the provincial Department of Education and Training (DOET) for final approval. Figure 7 shows picture of the school during assembly.



Figure 7: The School Assembly on Every Monday by Dong Nai School (2015)

An interview with the vice-principal of the school indicated that, at the time of the research, the school had 48 staff, including 22 primary teachers, eight secondary teachers, three management staff, three administrative staff, and 12 support staff working to assist on-campus students. All primary teachers held a special education qualification, of which 17 primary teachers had a Bachelor Degree and five had Diplomas in special education. The data from the questionnaire indicated that eight secondary schoolteachers had no training in disability or special education, but six had a Bachelor degree and two a Diploma. As shared by the principal, all teachers often have refresher professional development training organised by the Department of Education and Training (DOET) during the two-month summer break. Stakeholders also reported that a majority of them (16 stakeholders or about 70%) had Bachelor qualifications followed by four (17%) with a Diploma and three (13%) with a Master qualification.

The school has 21 classrooms for both primary and secondary levels, three computer/information technology rooms, three vocational training rooms for handicrafts, sewing and painting, a library, and a canteen for students residing on campus. In addition, the school has seven boarding houses. Approximately 40% of the students reside on the school's campus. The remaining 60% travel to and from school daily on their own or with assistance from their families (Quirk, 2013). Figure 8 shows the vocational training room used for sewing training program conducted at Dong Nai school.



Figure 8: Dong Nai school vocational training room by Dong Nai School (2014)

Dong Nai school has an average of seven to nine students graduating each year. According to Quirk (2013, p. 3), since 2008, 82 students have attended vocational training and graduated from the school”. Of these 82 students, 11 (10%) have “continued to higher levels of education or continued training. Responses from the questionnaire for the graduates with disability indicated that all but one (n=22; 95%) were currently working. Employment for these students after graduation was mainly related to seamstress work or shoemaking (80%). Fifteen per cent were employed in baking, massage, or as musicians or goldsmiths. The unemployed graduate was a person with a hearing impairment and also poor proficiency in speaking Vietnamese. Quirk (2013) also explained that the majority of graduates without employment were those with vision impairment who often continued on to higher levels of study.

In 2012, Dong Nai school received technical and financial support from a United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded project for three years. The main goal of this USAID project was to implement a school to work transition program in Bien Hoa/Dong Nai to support students with disability to prepare for adult life and, in particular, gain employment after graduation. Partnerships were promoted between schools, families, social and employment service providers, and especially employers/businesses through an interactive process of systematic collaboration (USAID-VNAH, 2015) so that the program could offer activities like vocational training, job orientation, and placement support to help young people with disability to find and retain jobs. According to VNAH management, the USAID/VNAH project had an office based in Dong Nai with five full-time staff working to promote social

inclusion for people with disability of all types. For technical assistance during the project implementation, the project recruited consultants who worked at Hanoi National University, Special Education Department and the US experts to conduct necessary training for school staff and students.

Information from the USAID (2015) report and from interviews with the Dong Nai school managers indicated that, with support from the project, “25 teachers, students and parents received extra training about school-to-work transition services, including needs assessment, counselling, and networking with community service providers. Fifty youth with disability also received support to pursue vocational programs as part of this model” (USAID, 2015, p. 17). By 2015, 39 young people with disability had been referred to employers and employed as part of the project. The project also provided financial assistance and technical support to Dong Nai school to enable follow-up with 52 former students (graduates) to build a network between the current students and graduates.

## **4.2 Participant Demographic Information: Young People with Disability**

The questionnaire for young people with disability (Appendix 6) was completed by 57 young people, of which 35 were secondary students and 22 were graduates of Dong Nai. Of the 22 graduate participants, 21 were working at the time of the study, having graduated from the school from 2014 onwards. Table 11 below shows their self-reported demographic information.

Table 11: Demographic Characteristics of Student and Graduate Participants and Combined Group

Characteristics	Students n = 35 (%)	Graduates n = 22 (%)	Combined Group n = 57 (%)
<b>Gender</b>			
Males	23 (65.7%)	11 (50%)	34 (59.6%)
Females	12 (34.4%)	11 (50%)	23 (40.4%)
<b>Disability Type</b>			
Hearing	30 (85.7%)	22 (100%)	52 (91.2%)
Vision	5 (14.3%)	0 (0%)	5 (8.8%)
<b>Disability Level</b>			
Severe	3 (8.6%)	7 (31.8%)	10 (17.5%)
Moderate	25 (71.4%)	12 (54.5%)	37 (64.9%)
Mild	5 (14.3%)	3 (13.6%)	8 (14%)
No response	2 (5.7%)	0 (0%)	2 (3.5%)
<b>Family Wealth Ranking</b>			
Poor	5 (14.3%)	2 (9.1%)	7 (12.3%)
Close to Poor	5 (14.3%)	1 (4.5%)	6 (10.5%)
Average	25 (71.4%)	19 (86.4%)	44 (77.2%)
<b>Living Location When attending School</b>			
On campus	26 (74.3%)	20 (90.9%)	46 (80.7%)
Off campus	9 (25.7%)	2 (9.1%)	11 (19.3%)
<b>Home Town Location</b>			
Urban	15 (43%)	0 (0%)	15 (26.3%)
Rural	20 (57%)	17 (77.3%)	37 (64.9%)
No response	0 (0%)	5 (22.7%)	5 (8.8%)

#### 4.2.1 Gender, Disability Type, and Level of Disability

For the 35 students with disability, two-thirds were male. The male to female ratio was different for the graduate group, with equal proportions of males to females (50%).

Overall, the majority of young people with disability had a hearing impairment, which accounted for 91% (n=52). Of those, 100% had to use sign language. Only nine per cent (n=5) had a vision impairment; one of these also had albinism. Hearing and/or speaking impairment was the main disability for the student group, and accounted for 86% (n=30). In contrast, all of the 22 graduates were hearing-impaired.

The young people also reported their own level of disability level as severe, moderate or mild. A brief summary sheet explaining this disability classification as per the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLISA)'s Decree 28/2012/ND-CP (MOLISA, 2012a) and Inter-Circular 37/2012/TTLT-BLĐT BXH-BYT-BTC-BGDĐT (MOLISA-MOET-MOH) (MOLISA-

MOET-MOH., 2012) which guides Disability Determination and Classification, was provided to young people to assist them with answering this question. According to this Decree and Inter-Circular, persons with severe disability are those with complete loss of functioning, meaning the inability to control or perform daily life activities including walking, putting on clothes, and conducting personal daily needs without comprehensive assistance from others. Persons with moderate disability are those with decreased functioning, manifesting in being unable to control and perform some daily life activities. Finally, persons with minor disability are those able to control and perform most daily activities without assistance. With regards to the levels of disability, the results indicated that most, or 65% (n=37), defined their disability as moderate. These included 25 students (n=35, 71%) and 12 graduates (n=22, 55%). Two students did not respond to the question regarding level of disability. This might be because they were not aware of their own disability level, or they may have chosen to skip the question. Only three students (8.6%) reported a severe disability level, and five (14.3%) reported they had a mild disability. In comparison, 31.8% (n=7) of graduates reported a severe disability, and only three (13.6%) reported a mild disability.

These reported levels of disability for students and graduates of Dong Nai were not reflective of proportions reported in the Government's local and national data. According to MOLISA's National Annual Report on Disability (MOLISA-NCD, 2017), there were more than 900,000 people with severe and moderate disability in Vietnam, accounting for around 13% of the total population with disability (6.7 million people). According to the 2017 statistics report extracted from the database of Dong Nai province<sup>1</sup>, Dong Nai has 28,990 people with disability. Sixty-six per cent were identified as having severe or moderate disability (21% severe, and 45% moderate) and 34% considered to have mild disability. Of the total population of people with disability in Dong Nai, 3,013 people had vision impairment (11.5%) and 2,832 (10%) were deemed to be hearing and speaking-impaired. However, at Dong Nai school, the proportion of those with hearing impairment was higher (92%) than in the general disability population and there was a lower proportion of young people reporting severe disability than in the disability population of Dong Nai. Instead, the majority (65%) of both Dong Nai students and graduates reported themselves to have a moderate disability with only 17.5% reporting their disability as severe. This might reflect young people's perceptions about the nature and impact of hearing

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<sup>1</sup> National Disability Information System is administered by MOLISA and DOLISA.

and vision impairments or it may be that young people with severe disability are less likely to attend school.

#### 4.2.2 Wealth Ranking

The Prime Minister’s Decision 59/2015/QD-TTg on Wealth Ranking promulgated on 19 November 2015 for the period 2016-2020, categorised household wealth ranking in Vietnam as poor, close to poor, and mid-income. The criteria for each category is described in Appendix 21 (Government of Vietnam (GVN), 2015). The researcher used these criteria as a guideline to assist participants to determine their family’s wealth ranking to answer the related question. The questionnaire data showed that the majority of students and graduates were in the mid-income category, accounting for 71% of students and 86 per cent of graduates. A very low number (seven of 57 young people reported their families were ranked as poor or close to poor. These figures are in contrast to the figures in the recent MOLISA (MOLISA, 2017) National Report on Poverty, which used these same categories and found as many as 40% of families of people with disability are poor. In Dong Nai, according to the DOLISA database, only 19% of people with disability are poor, 14% are close to poor, and 54% are in the mid-income group. It is unclear if these differences between the percentages of poor families with disability mean that people with disability in Dong Nai province are better off than those in the general disability population, or if the self-reported data in the questionnaire are less accurate.

#### 4.2.3 Age Groups, Years at School and Years Since Graduation

The questionnaire asked students and graduates with disability their age and the number of years they had been at the school. Data about their age is broken down by gender and presented in Table 12 below.

Table 12: Age and Gender of Students with Disability

Age	Number of Students n=35 (%)	Male	Female
12 years old	1 (3%)	0	1
13-15 years old	15 (43%)	9	6
16-17 years old	12 (34%)	9	3
18 -25 years old	7 (20%)	5	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>35 (100%)</b>	<b>23 (66%)</b>	<b>12 (34%)</b>

Students with disability ranged in age from 12 to 25 years. The majority of these (n=15, 43%) were 13-15 years old. Thirty-four per cent (n=12) of students were 16-17 years old. At the two

extremes, 20% (n=7) were aged 18-25 years old and there was one student who was only 12 years old. Although overall 66% (n=23) were male and 34% (n=12) were female, the females were younger than their male counterparts. According to the Labour Code of Vietnam (2015), 16 is the age at which students are eligible to participate in vocational training program. Hence, with 16 of the students under 16 years of age, 46% were ineligible to participate in a vocational training program.

Year 6 to Year 9 are considered secondary years. The study invited all students to complete the questionnaire and those who were 13 years old and above were selected for the interviews and focus group discussions. Table 13 shows data about students with disability stratified by age and year of secondary school at the time of completing the questionnaire.

Table 13: Age and Year of Secondary School

Age group	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Total
12	1	0	0	0	1 (2.8%)
13-15	7	7	1	0	15 (42.8%)
16-17	4	3	3	2	12 (34.2%)
18-25	1	0	1	5	7 (20%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>13 (37.1%)</b>	<b>10 (28.6%)</b>	<b>5 (14.3%)</b>	<b>7 (20.0%)</b>	<b>35 (100%)</b>

The data indicated a wide range of ages across the secondary classes. There were four groups of age across Year 6 to Year 9. A slightly larger proportion (37%) of the students was in Year 6 than in subsequent school years, with the proportions progressively decreasing to Year 9. Students selected for the interviews mainly came from Year 6 and Year 7 and one of them came from Year 8. More than 34% of students were 16 to 17 years old. There was a small group of seven students in Year 9, who participated in the study. All the students in Year 9 were of working age.

According to Education Law (Vietnam National Assembly [VNA], 2005), ages for students without disability at secondary level range from 12 to 15 years old. However, the National Law on Disability (VNA, 2010) allows young people with disability to start school at a later age. Most of students in Dong Nai school were enrolled late, so just half of them (54%) were eligible for vocational training.

Twenty-two graduates with disability were invited to complete the questionnaire. Their data indicated that their ages ranged from 19 to 30 years of age. These young people with disability

had graduated from Dong Nai school anywhere from one to seven years earlier (between 2010 and 2016). Of these 22 graduates, over half 12 (54.5%) had graduated within the last three years, and 10 had graduated more than three years previously.

#### 4.2.4 Living Locations and Home Towns

More than 80% of all students and graduates lived on campus during their studies at Dong Nai school. This figure is similar to that reported by the Dong Nai management staff, although the data from the questionnaire indicated that a higher proportion of graduates (91%) than current students (74%) had lived on campus. The data also indicated that 57% of students came from a rural area, while 77% of graduates reported coming from rural areas when they were at school. Overall, the rate for the combined group of students and graduates who came from rural areas was 65%, and higher than those who were from urban areas (26%).

According to the policy of Dong Nai school, students with disability do not have to pay school fees. However, students must pay approximately 6 million dong (around AUD\$340) each year if they live on campus, and half this fee if they live off campus. Fees cover the cost for accommodation, food, and other activities incurred during the school years.

### 4.3 Young People's Participation in Vocational Training, Work Experience and employment

Questionnaire data provided information about vocational training (VT) and employment experience, and associated income for the 35 students and 22 graduates of Dong Nai school. Table 14 below shows their participation in work experience, vocational training, and paid employment, as well as their current employment situation, job characteristics, and income.

Table 14: Participation in Vocational Training, Employment Job Characteristics, and Income

Characteristics	Students with Disability n = 35 (%)	Graduate with Disability n = 22 (%)
<b>Participation</b>		
Work experience/vocational training	5 (14.3%)	19 (86.4%)
Working with paid job	0 (0%)	21 (95.5%)
<b>Type of Job</b>		
Garment/seamstress or shoe-making	3 (8.5%)	19 (86.4%)
Car washing	1 (3.5%)	0 (0%)
Baking	1 (3.5%)	0 (0%)
Cleaning	0 (0%)	1 (4.5%)
Others (massage, musician and goldsmith)	0 (0%)	2 (9.1%)
<b>Income per month AUD</b>		
\$100 - \$200	0 (0%)	4 (18.2%)
\$200 - \$300	0 (0%)	13 (59.1%)
\$300 - \$450	0 (0%)	3 (13.6%)
No response	0 (0%)	2 (9.1%)

### 4.3.1 Young People’s Participation in VT, Work Experience, and Employment

The questionnaire data indicated that only a small proportion (14.3%) of the 35 students with disability had participated in work experience activity. Given that most students were under 16 years old and therefore ineligible for vocational training or internship programs organised by the school or vocational training agencies, this work experience was mainly arranged by parents during the summer break. Further, cessation of the project’s USAID financial support in 2014 and the school’s dependence on the government budget since then, meant that accessing vocational training became more limited.

Nineteen of the 22 graduates (86%) had participated in vocational training as part of work experience during their time at school and all but one were in paid work in formal settings after graduation. Most of the graduates reported that they got support with the school referring them to their subsequent employers. Only one male graduate with a hearing impairment was not working, and this was likely due to his poor Vietnamese proficiency. This graduate explained that the company he sought employment with gave him a list of interview questions on a piece of paper which he had to read and answer, and he thus failed the interview. Other Dong Nai students mentioned in in-depth interviews that their poor Vietnamese literacy hindered their job-seeking after graduation.

### 4.3.2 Type of Job and Income

According to the National Institute for Social Development ([NISD], 2013): “Dong Nai is situated in the economic hub of South Vietnam. Thanks to its strategic location and the open policy of the local government, the Province has experienced heavy investment from foreign investors in the shipping, food products, and manufacturing industries” (p. 22). Data from the questionnaire indicated that the majority of graduates were working in the garment industry, while a smaller number were working in other sectors, such as car washing, cleaning, baking, massage, music and gold-smithing. Most of these graduates worked for the garment industry as seamstresses or shoemakers (86.4%, n=19) and had previously attended vocational training in this sector. Of the current students with disability, some of them (8.5%, n=3) had started to work in the garment industry as part of the vocational training organised by their parents. One student washed cars and another did baking. All of this work for students was unpaid and they worked during their summer holidays.

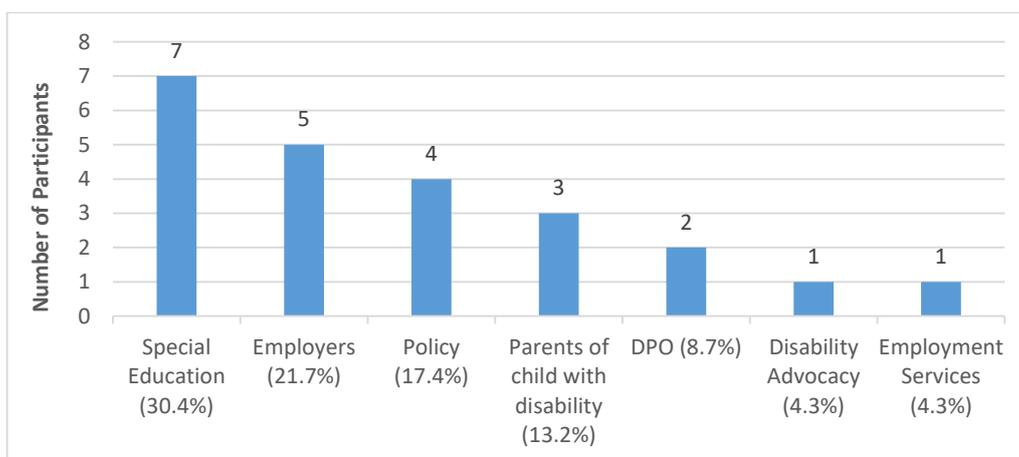
Results from the questionnaire indicated that the incomes of the graduates ranged from AUD\$100 to AUD\$500 per month, with the majority (59.1%) earning AUD\$200-300 per month from the garment industry. Three graduates had an income of more than AUD\$300 per month, and the graduate earning the highest salary worked in the garment industry as a seamstress was on AUD\$450 per month.

A report on living cost of the people with disability in Vietnam conducted by National Institute for Social Development (NISD, 2013) indicated that people who have disability are usually on lower salaries than those without disability, such as more than 50 per cent of the young people with disability had a salary of VND1250 (AUD\$70) per month, while those without disability have salaries of VND2000 (AUD\$115) per month. People with hearing impairment often have lower salaries than those with other types of disability, which was around 950 thousand dong (AUD\$55) (NISD, 2013). Apparently, those with hearing impairment in Dong Nai had much higher salaries (AUD\$200-300 per month) than the average salary rate that people with disability in the other provinces are receiving.

## 4.4 Stakeholder Demographic Information

Twenty-three stakeholders involved in the school to work transition program completed the stakeholder questionnaire across three rounds of data collection. Questionnaires were provided to stakeholders for completion before in-depth interviews took place. The stakeholders included: national policy makers (MOLISA, MOET), representatives from policy enforcement agencies (DOLISA, DOET), vocational training agencies and the IEC, school management, teachers and parents, Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs) representatives, employers, and the donor who managed the USAID funding for the school to work transition program (VNAH). The questionnaire collected information from these stakeholders about their experience and knowledge of policies and services that impacted the school to work transition program and processes for young people with disability, as well as their recommendations for improving existing services and policies for school to work transition in Vietnam.

Figure 9: Stakeholder Involvement in School to Work Transition <sup>2</sup>



The data in Figure 9 indicates that stakeholders from across seven sectors completed the questionnaire and an interview, with stakeholders from the education sector accounting for the highest proportion of participants (30%). These included school managers and teachers, as well as related staff working in the school to work transition program.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Data collected from Survey questionnaire, 2017

Figure 10: Stakeholder Designation in the Organisations <sup>3</sup>



As shown Figure 10, 65% of the stakeholders completing the questionnaire and interview were managers, 22% were staff members, and 13% were parents of a child with disability participating in the study. Those in management positions held decision-making roles in their organisations and also influenced strategic planning related to school to work transition for young people with disability. Staff members were those who directly worked on the disability programs or school to work transition program. The researcher interviewed them after they completed the survey questionnaire to understand their commitment, current supports, resources and limitations when contributing to the school to work transition program. After the parents of a child with disability completed the questionnaire, interviews with these parents provided a deeper understanding of their needs and difficulties in supporting their children in school to work transition, and also explored what could be done to improve the program for families, parents and the children with disability.

## SUMMARY

Information on the Dong Nai context as well as data about socio-economic conditions provided by the students, graduates and stakeholders were important background to the study. In summary, it is notable that the majority (52 of 57) of young people with disability in the study had a hearing and/or speaking impairment, with a smaller proportion (five or 8.8%) having some vision impairment. Only graduates were in paid work during the study. The majority of young people in the study categorised their disability as moderate. Most reported their families

<sup>3</sup> Source: Data collected from Survey questionnaire, 2017

as average in terms of wealth ranking. Including stakeholders from different backgrounds and qualifications added to the depth and richness of the data as well as different perspectives about the barriers and facilitators in school to work transition program. This chapter provides helpful background to frame the qualitative data which may contribute to understanding perceptions and attitudes of participants in the school to work transition, to be discussed in Chapter 5.

# **CHAPTER 5 PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The results presented in this chapter focus on the nature of and perceptions about participation in the Dong Nai school to work transition program and its various components. The findings reflect the analysis of a range of quantitative data collected via the two questionnaires: the first questionnaire for students and graduates, and the second questionnaire for stakeholders. In all, quantitative data were collected from 35 secondary students with disability, 22 graduates of Dong Nai (graduating one to seven years ago), and 23 stakeholders involved in the Dong Nai school to work transition program.

The quantitative data from students, graduates and stakeholders reflects their degrees of satisfaction, levels of participation, and ratings of helpfulness about various components of the Dong Nai school to work transition program. The data also allowed reporting on the nature of the employment status of students and graduates as well as their satisfaction ratings with the school/local environment and their participation and involvement in society. These data provide a comprehensive backdrop to the mix of qualitative data about the lived experience of disability and the impacts of the program presented in Chapter 6.

The first five sections of this chapter (sections 5.1 to 5.5) focus on participants' perceptions of particular school to work transition components such as needs assessment, transition planning, decision-making processes, and vocational training; as well as the employment/salary status for students and graduates. The next section (section 5.6) explores attitudes and perceptions of students, graduates and stakeholders on the work and school environmental factors that impact on the school to work transition, participants' awareness of the coordination mechanisms for the school to work transition program, and evaluation of the effectiveness of the communication arrangements for the school to work transition program. The last section (5.7) presents findings about students', graduates' and stakeholders' levels of agreement as to which factors impact participation and involvement in the school to work transition program.

## 5.1 Needs Assessment

According to the Education Law promulgated in 2005 and revised in 2019, all students with disability in both inclusive and special schools should have needs assessment and planning for their transition to employment. Therefore, both questionnaires included a question about participation in needs assessment activities. Table 15 indicates whether students, graduates and stakeholders participated in this service.

Table 15: Participation in the Needs Assessment Component

	<b>Participated</b>	<b>Not Participated</b>	<b>Did not know</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Students</b>	29 (83%)	1 (3%)	5 (14%)	35 (100%)
<b>Graduates</b>	12 (55%)	4 (18%)	6 (27%)	22 (100%)
<b>Stakeholders</b>	15 (65%)	8 (35%)	0 (0%)	23 (100%)

A high proportion (83% or n=29) of the 35 students with disability reported having participated in the needs assessment component of the school to work transition program. However, 17% (n=6) reported that they either did not know about this aspect of the program or did not recall participating in it. The situation with the graduates, aged from 19 to 30 years old, was different. Of the 22 who completed the questionnaire, only 55% of them (n=12) reported having participated in the needs assessment. The remaining 45% indicated that they had either not participated in needs assessment, or had no knowledge of the needs assessment component, and it is possible that some may not have recalled or understood needs assessment as a core service of the program.

While the 23 stakeholders were not the direct beneficiaries of the school to work transition program, the questionnaire asked them about their involvement in transition services and their evaluation of the effectiveness of the program. Stakeholders included parents of young people with disability, schoolteachers and managers, employers, vocational training agencies, and Disabled Persons' Organisations (DPOs), policy makers. Sixty five percent (n=15) were aware of or involved in the needs assessment component, and most were teachers, school managers, school to work transition staff, and vocational training staff. The remaining 35% of stakeholders who were not aware of the needs assessment service were mostly policy-makers and parents.

Table 16 indicates the high proportion of participants who found the needs assessment service helpful. Given needs assessment services are a legal requirement; it was heartening that the vast majority of all participants found the program’s needs assessment to be helpful.

Table 16: Degree of Helpfulness of the Needs Assessment Service

	Helpful	Unhelpful	No response	Total
<b>Students</b>	34 (96%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	<b>35 (100%)</b>
<b>Graduates</b>	18 (84%)	2 (8%)	2 (8%)	<b>22 (100%)</b>
<b>Stakeholders</b>	21 (93%)	0	2 (7%)	<b>23 (100%)</b>

Only a very small number of graduates and other stakeholders did not respond to this question or labelled the needs assessment service as unhelpful. While the needs assessment service was considered helpful in preparing students to transition from school to work, the levels of agreement as to just how helpful varied a little. These are presented in Table 17 and show a higher proportion of graduates and stakeholders than current students strongly agreeing that the service was helpful.

Table 17: Agreement as to Helpfulness of Needs Assessment

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No response	Total
<b>Students</b>	3 (12%)	31 (84%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	<b>35 (100%)</b>
<b>Graduates</b>	7 (33%)	13 (59%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	<b>22 (100%)</b>
<b>Stakeholders</b>	9 (37%)	12 (56%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (7%)	<b>23 (100%)</b>

Two graduates viewed the needs assessment service as unhelpful, with one explaining that this was because he had not found a job since graduation.

Only stakeholders were asked to rate their levels of agreement as to whether policies, programs and/or services were developed as a result of needs assessments (Table 18). While the vast majority of stakeholders either agreed or strongly agreed that there was a link between the development of policies and programs to needs assessment services, six (20%) were of the view that this was not the case for the actual design of the services themselves.

Table 18: Agreement as to the Role of Needs Assessment Activities in Policy Development and Service Design (n=23)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
School to work related policies and programs are developed based on the need assessment results	6 (20%)	15 (63%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (7%)
School to work related services are developed based on the need assessment results	6 (20%)	9 (53%)	6 (20%)	0 (0%)	2 (7%)

## 5.2 School to Work Transition Planning

Both questionnaires asked whether students, graduates and stakeholders had participated in transition planning as part of the Dong Nai school to work transition program. Results in Table 19 indicate modest proportions of participation in the transition planning aspect for students, graduates and stakeholders.

Table 19: Participation of Students, Graduates and Stakeholders in Transition Planning

	Participated	Not Participated	Do not know	No response	Total
Students	25 (72%)	5 (14%)	5 (14%)	0 (0%)	35 (100%)
Graduates	15 (65%)	4 (20%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)	22 (100%)
Stakeholder:	13 (57%)	9 (39%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	23 (100%)

Students accounted for the highest proportion with 72% (n=25) of them recalling their participation, and slightly smaller proportions of graduates (65%; n=13) and stakeholders (57%; n=13) saying they participated in transition planning. Of the 35 students, four had participated in the needs assessment phase but then not in the next step of transition planning. Data also indicated that five current students (14%) did not know about transition planning, and a further five indicated that they had not participated in the activity. Of the 22 graduates with disability, only 65% (n=15) reported they had participated in the transition planning, and a further 10% (n=2) claimed to have not known whether they participated in transition planning.

Similar to the needs assessment component, stakeholders were asked about their involvement in transition planning services and their attitudes towards them. More than 57% (n=13) said

they were involved in the transition planning, while only 35% indicated involvement in needs assessment activities. Most of these were teachers, school managers, and staff from school to work transition, and vocational training. Policy-makers and parents were among the nine stakeholders who said they did not participate in transition planning.

As regulated by Decree 88 and the subsequent Circular 03/2018/TT-BGDĐT which guide the implementation of the National Law on Disability, all students with disability must have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for each semester. This includes their needs assessment and transition planning. However, the questionnaire data indicated that small proportions of students and graduates either did not know about or did not participate in either the needs assessments or school to work transition planning activities conducted at Dong Nai.

Both questionnaires then asked participants to rate their levels of agreement with how much young people with disability should be invited to attend transition planning meetings. Their responses are presented in the Table 20.

Table 20: Levels of Agreement with Young People's Attending Transition Planning Meetings

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>No response</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Students</b>	4 (12%)	28 (76%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	1 (4%)	<b>35 (100%)</b>
<b>Graduates</b>	2 (7%)	18 (86%)	2 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	<b>22 (100%)</b>
<b>Stakeholder:</b>	12 (52%)	11 (48%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	<b>23 (100%)</b>

Data indicated that the vast majority of students, graduates and stakeholders either agreed or strongly agreed that young people should be invited to attend their transition planning meetings. One hundred per cent of stakeholders agreed that young people should be involved but, unexpectedly, two students and two graduates disagreed.

Both questionnaires also asked to what degree participants were satisfied with their involvement in the transition planning activity. Table 21 presents the levels of agreement as to their satisfaction for the three groups:

Table 21: Degree of Satisfaction with Transition Planning

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>No response</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Students</b>	4 (12%)	31 (88%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	<b>35 (100%)</b>
<b>Graduates</b>	7 (33%)	11 (53%)	4 (14%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	<b>22 (100%)</b>
<b>Stakeholder:</b>	3 (13%)	20 (87%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	<b>23 (100%)</b>

While all students and stakeholders agreed or strongly agreed they were satisfied with the transition planning, four graduates disagreed. In addition, participants were asked to rate their agreement as to whether young people with disability had been invited to voice their needs, motivation, interests and goals at transition meetings and whether their views were reflected in transition plans. Table 22 illustrates their levels of engagement in these aspects.

Table 22: Levels of Agreement with Participants' Engagement in Transition Planning

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>No response</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Students</b>	8 (24%)	25 (72%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (7%)	<b>35 (100%)</b>
<b>Graduates</b>	5 (22%)	13 (62%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	2 (8%)	<b>22 (100%)</b>
<b>Stakeholder:</b>	7 (31%)	16 (69%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	<b>23 (100%)</b>

### 5.3 Participation in Decision-making

It was of interest to review the attitudes and perceptions of students, graduates and stakeholders regarding their involvement in decision-making in school to work transition. Both questionnaires asked participants to rate their levels of agreement with the principle that young people should be encouraged to participate in making decisions about their program. Table 23 summarises the responses.

Table 23: Levels of Agreement with Participation in Decision Making

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>No response</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Students</b>	4 (12%)	27 (76%)	3 (8%)	0 (0%)	1 (4%)	<b>35 (100%)</b>
<b>Graduates</b>	2 (8%)	14 (68%)	2 (8%)	2 (8%)	2 (8%)	<b>22 (100%)</b>
<b>Stakeholder:</b>	9 (38%)	14 (62%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	<b>23 (100%)</b>

The vast majority of students, graduates and stakeholders either agreed or strongly agreed that young people should be involved in decision-making about their transition to work. Stakeholders were more inclined than the young people to strongly agree with this principle.

Of note, three students and two graduates disagreed with this notion and there was no response from one student and two graduates.

## 5.4 Experience Through Vocational Training Programs

The questionnaire for students and graduates asked about their participation in different types of training commonly offered via the school to work transition program. These included any opportunities for work experience, mentoring, unpaid work, paid work, school-based enterprises, on-the-job training, internship, job-shadowing, and employer presentations at school. Table 24 indicates whether they participated in any of these options.

Table 24: Participation in Types of Training During the Program

	Yes		No		No Responses	
	Students	Graduates	Students	Graduates	Students	Graduates
	(n=35)	(n=22)	(n=35)	(n=22)	(n=35)	(n=22)
<b>Work Experience</b>	4 (12%)	15 (64%)	29 (83%)	6 (27%)	2 (5%)	2 (9%)
<b>Mentoring</b>	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	33 (94%)	19 (86%)	2 (5%)	2 (9%)
<b>Unpaid Work</b>	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	32 (92%)	20 (91%)	2 (5%)	2 (9%)
<b>Paid Work</b>	2 (6%)	8 (36%)	31 (89%)	12 (55%)	2 (5%)	2 (9%)
<b>School Based Enterprise</b>	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	33 (94%)	20 (91%)	2 (5%)	2 (9%)
<b>On the job training</b>	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	32 (91%)	20 (91%)	2 (5%)	2 (9%)
<b>Internship</b>	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	32 (91%)	20 (91%)	2 (5%)	2 (9%)
<b>Job Shadowing</b>	2 (6%)	1 (5%)	31 (89%)	19 (86%)	2 (5%)	2 (9%)
<b>Employers at School</b>	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	33 (94%)	19 (86%)	2 (5%)	2 (9%)

For the 35 students who completed the questionnaire, participation in training activities was low. The highest proportion of students (only 12%) indicated that they had participated in actual work with the second highest proportion (6%) engaged in paid work or job-shadowing. No students engaged in the activities of mentoring, school-based enterprises or employer presentations at school. However, much larger proportions of graduates than students had engaged in work experience (64%) and/or paid work (36%) during their time at school.

The questionnaire for stakeholders asked them which types of training activities they organised in their efforts to generate job opportunities for young people with disability. Table 25 shows that stakeholders were most likely to arrange field trips (76%), internships (76%) or job-shadowing from three to six weeks (71%).

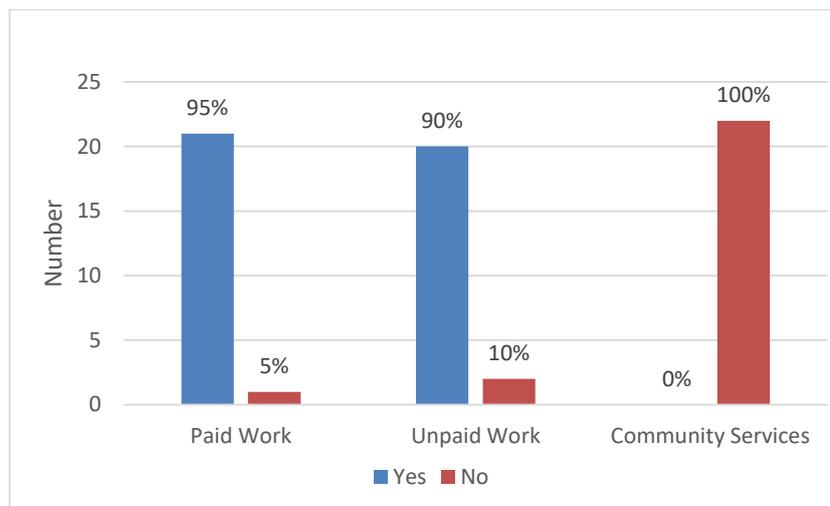
Table 25: Proportions of Stakeholders Organised Activities to Generate Job Opportunities

Job Opportunities	Yes	No
Field trips to job sites for general observation	76%	24%
Internships for students who have developed specific vocational skills	76%	24%
Job shadowing for 3 – 6 weeks	71%	29%
Employer presentations at the school	59%	41%
On-the-job training for 6 – 9 weeks	47%	53%

## 5.5 Employment Status of Young People with Disability

The questionnaire understandably identified that no students were in paid or unpaid work while 21 of the 22 graduates (95%) were either employed or had been in unpaid work, as presented in Figure 11. These graduates also provided information about the type of work they were doing, its salary level, and work hours.

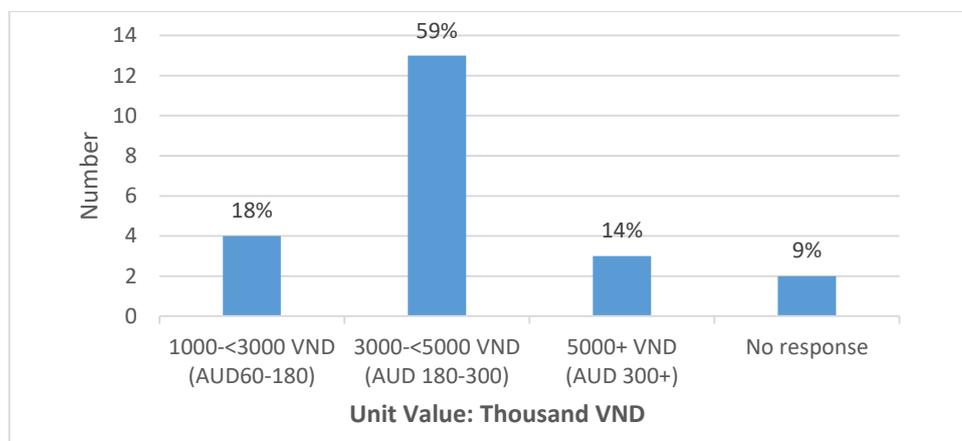
Figure 11: Type of Work Graduates Engaged In



While a high proportion of graduates were in paid jobs, 90% of them had also engaged in unpaid work during their study. The proportion of those who did unpaid work and those who did work experience was the same because they had opportunities to do internships during their study. The internships they did were mostly unpaid work experience. None of the graduates were working for the community services. It is of note that among the high rate of graduates who were in paid work, 85% of them worked for the garment industry while only one worked as a cleaner. Two graduates who were working did not respond to the question about their type of work.

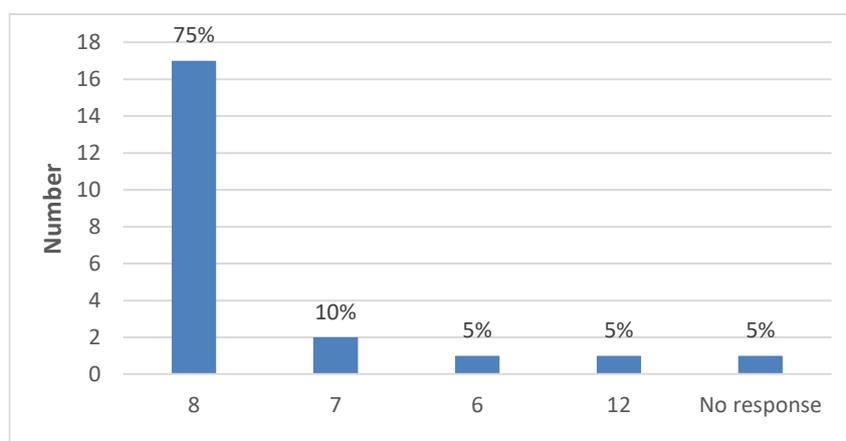
Opportunities for people with a disability for work in the garment industry were more extensive than opportunities available in other industries. The questionnaire asked about salary level, and Figure 12 indicates the salary level of the graduates in paid work. The largest proportion of graduates (59%) earned three to five million VND or AUD\$180-300 per month with only 14% earning more than AUD\$300 per month. Again, two graduates did not provide a response to the question asking about their salary.

Figure 12: Salary Level of Graduates in Paid Work per Month



Graduates were also asked about the number of hours they worked each day. Figure 13 shows that the majority (75%) worked eight hours a day with only four differing from this.

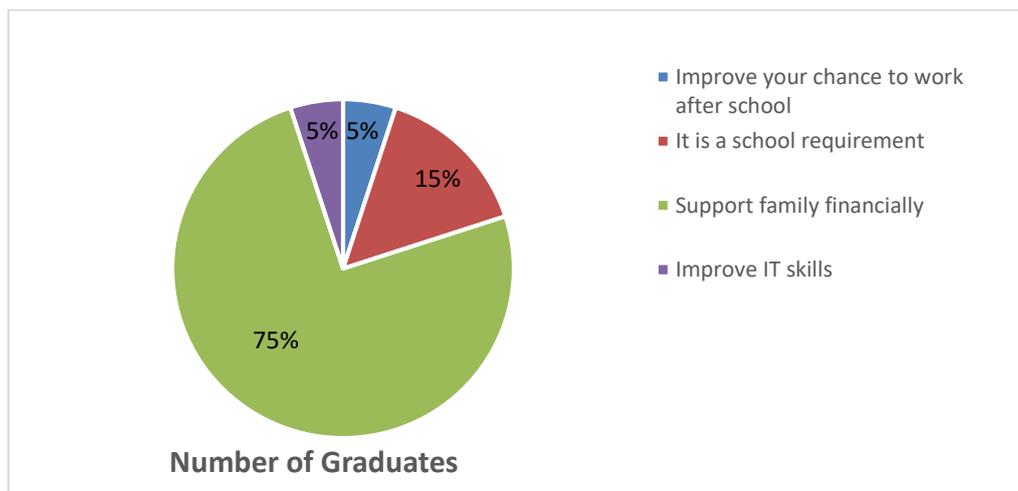
Figure 13: Number of Hours Graduates Work in a Day



According to the Labour Code of Vietnam (VNA, 2019), people with disability are able to work a maximum of eight hours a day. Two graduates worked seven hours a day, one worked 12 hours a day and another for six hours. The majority of graduates (75% or n=17) worked six

days a week while four worked seven days a week. The questionnaire also gave graduates four options to prioritise as to their reasons for work. Figure 13 shows that three-quarters of them worked to support their families financially. Three graduates mentioned that they did internships when they were at school because it was a school requirement, one said he/she worked because they wanted to improve their chances of work after school and one was keen to improve his/her Information Technology (IT) skills.

Figure 14: Graduate Reasons for Working



Graduates were also asked about the degree of confidence they felt about certain aspects of their lives including their work as a result of the school to work transition program (see Table 26)

Table 26: Degree of Confidence in Aspects of Graduate Lives

	Very Confident	Confident	Uncertain	Very Uncertain	No response
<b>You will live independently</b>	0 (0%)	20 (90%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)
<b>You will have work/employment</b>	4 (18%)	15 (68%)	2 (9%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)
<b>You will participate in community activities</b>	0 (0%)	17 (77%)	2 (9%)	1 (5%)	2 (9%)

More than 90% of graduates (n=20) felt confident that they could live independently after completing the program. However, one remained uncertain about whether his/her level of confidence had improved. Only 68% were confident they would have work while 77% felt confident about participating in community activities.

## 5.6 School and Environment Context

Both questionnaires sought to ascertain the attitudes and perception of students, graduates and stakeholders to the important role played by the school and environment. This also included their views on the usefulness of employment networks, coordination between key players and the nature of communication required for the program to be effective.

### 5.6.1 Young People Attitudes Towards the School Environment

The questionnaire to students and graduates sought to investigate whether they agreed that the school had systems to address their various social, emotional, health, academic and communication needs. Table 27 indicates the students' levels of agreement that the school had systems to meet their needs. While the vast majority (80% and more across four of these domains) agreed or strongly agreed the school had systems which met their range of needs, a small number disagreed. Eight (23%) felt the environment did not address their communication needs (this likely reflected that those with hearing impairment were not provided interpretation support). Seven (20%) felt the school environment fell short of addressing social and emotional needs and five were concerned their health needs could not be met. Of note, only one student felt the system did not cater for his/her academic needs.

Table 27: Students Levels of Agreement that the School Environment Met Their Needs

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
<b>The school has a system to address social needs of young people with disability</b>	20 (57%)	8 (23%)	7 (20%)	0 (0%)
<b>The school has a system to address emotional needs of young people with disability.</b>	12 (34%)	16 (46%)	7 (20%)	0 (0%)
<b>The school has a system to address health needs of young people with disability</b>	7 (20%)	23 (66%)	5 (14%)	0 (0%)
<b>The school has a system to address academic needs of young people with disability.</b>	14 (40%)	20 (57%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)
<b>The school has a system to address communication needs of young people with disability</b>	12 (34%)	15 (43%)	8 (23%)	0 (0%)

The findings for graduates in regard to these same domains revealed some different results. Table 28 indicates the graduates' levels of agreement that the school environment met their needs.

Table 28: Graduate Levels of Agreement that the School Environment Met Their Needs

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
<b>The school has a system to address social needs of young people with disability</b>	5 (23%)	17 (77%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>The school has a system to address emotional needs of young people with disability.</b>	6 (27%)	14 (64%)	2 (9%)	0 (0%)
<b>The school has a system to address health needs of young people with disability</b>	6 (27%)	15 (68%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)
<b>The school has a system to address academic needs of young people with disability.</b>	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	20 (91%)	0 (0%)
<b>The school has a system to address communication needs of young people with disability</b>	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	20 (91%)	0 (0%)

In general, the proportions of graduates agreeing or strongly agreeing that school had a system which addressed their social, emotional and health needs were higher than those for current students (100%, 91% and 95% respectively). However, their levels of disagreement around the school having systems to meet their academic and communication needs were much higher than for students with 91% of graduates disagreeing that the school had arrangements in place to meet these two needs.

### 5.6.2 Attitudes of Stakeholders Towards the School Environment

The stakeholder questionnaire sought to investigate attitudes towards other aspects of the performance of the school to work transition program, such as employers providing the skills training, service providers' allocation of resources to assist with employment, and the existence of programs to enable young people to interact with employers for job training and employment opportunities. Table 29 shows the stakeholders' levels of agreement with these aspects and highlights that 77% of them either strongly agreed or agreed that skills training and programs enabling interaction were available. However, there was a higher proportion of disagreement (23%) that sufficient resources were being allocated by service providers.

Table 29: Stakeholder Levels of Agreement with Aspects of Program Performance (n=23)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
<b>Employers conduct training for young people with disability to acquire skills for being an employee</b>	5 (23%)	12 (54%)	2 (8%)	4 (15%)
<b>Resources are allocated by service providers to assist post school students with employment, professional training.</b>	4 (15%)	9 (39%)	5 (23%)	5 (23%)
<b>The school has a program for young people with disability to interact with employers for job training and employment opportunities</b>	9 (38%)	9 (38%)	2 (9%)	3 (15%)

Stakeholder attitudes towards the sufficiency of resources including the adequacy of the budget, whether the system involved young people in all aspects of the school to work transition program, and whether staff had high-enough quality training and professional development were also investigated via the questionnaire. Table 30 shows that 47% disagreed that the budget and resources were sufficient. However, higher proportions agreed or strongly agreed that the system involved young people at each step of the way (71%) and also provides high-quality professional development and training (74%). It was members of the disabled people's organisations (DPOs) and those organisations who worked to support the school to work transition program such as Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH) who disagreed that high-quality professional development was in place.

Table 30: Stakeholder Levels of Agreement as to Sufficiency of Program Resources (n=23)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	No response
<b>Your organisation has sufficient budget and adequate resources to promote positive transition for young people with disability</b>	2 (7%)	8 (39%)	11 (47%)	2 (7%)
<b>Your organisation has a system to involve young people with disability in all related activities of school to work transition</b>	3 (13%)	13 (58%)	5 (22%)	2 (7%)
<b>Do you believe high-quality, job-embedded professional development is provided for staff supporting school to work transition program</b>	7 (32%)	10 (42%)	5 (22%)	1 (4%)

The study also investigated stakeholder perceptions as to whether young people with disability having “on the job work experience” assisted their prospects. Table 31 shows that 96% of stakeholders agreed or strongly agreed that working as part of the school to work transition program assisted with getting a job.

Table 31: Stakeholder Levels of Agreement that Working While Studying

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Working while studying improves chances of getting a job for young people with disability after school	9 (39%)	13 (57%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)
Working while studying helps young people with disability to meet vocational expectations	8 (35%)	15 (65%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Working while studying increase confidence for young people with disability	9 (39%)	14 (61%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

All stakeholders strongly agreed or agreed that working while studying assisted young people to meet vocational expectations and increase their confidence. Table 32 outlines stakeholders' levels of agreement as to the five benefits for young people working during their school to work transition program. The questionnaire listed five benefits for stakeholders to rate with the vast majority agreeing or strongly agreeing that working leads to feeling valued and grown up, having an independent life, reduces burden for parents and because it's a fundamental right.

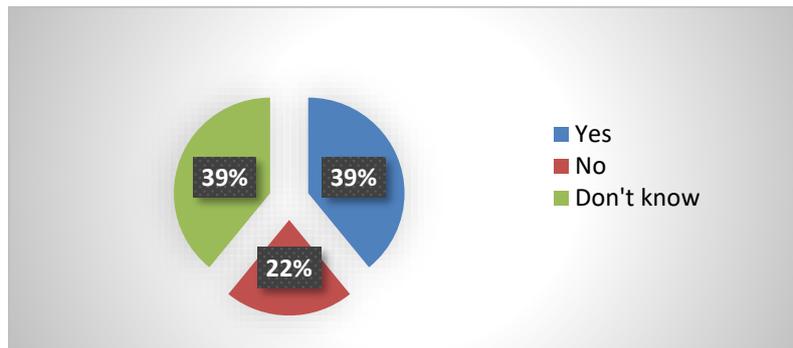
Table 32: Stakeholder Levels of Agreement as to the Specific Benefits Derived from Working

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Young people with disability who are working feel valued in society	13 (57%)	10 (44%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Young people with disability who are working have an independent life	11 (48%)	11 (48%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Young people with disability who are working help reduce the burden for their parents	13 (57%)	9 (39%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Young people with disability who are working are able to exercise their fundamental right to work in society	12 (52%)	11 (48%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Young people with disability who are working feel grown up when they work	13 (57%)	10 (44%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

### 5.6.3 Network/Coordination with Employers and Stakeholders

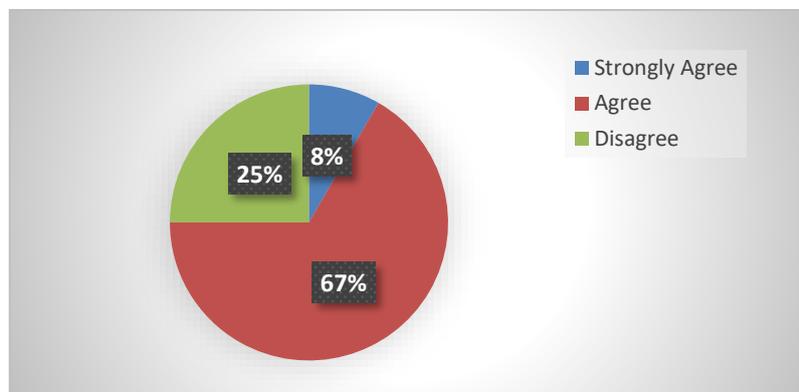
The questionnaire also asked about stakeholder awareness as to whether employer networks and partnerships were established among relevant stakeholders. The Figure 15 indicates that a surprising 39% were unaware of any employer networks and partnerships with a further 22% indicating they did not exist.

Figure 15: Stakeholder Awareness About Employer Networks and Partnerships



Qualitative data provided by stakeholders in their questionnaire revealed that nine knew about the establishment of employer networks and/or partnerships, and eight said that partnerships were formed via a School to Work Transition Coordination Committee with eight members representing different service providers including the DOLISA, DOET, Employment Service Centre, Vocational Training Centre, the Dong Nai school and its Parents Association. Members of the Committee were said to organise partnership meetings on a monthly basis and if they have any issues came up, members were called to meet. Other stakeholders who were members of the Committee only joined the meetings when the school organised training workshops or events with the support from the project. The questionnaire also asked stakeholders about the effectiveness of the coordination/partnerships for the school to work transition program. Figure 16 indicates that a quarter of the stakeholders (n=6) did not agree that this aspect was effective.

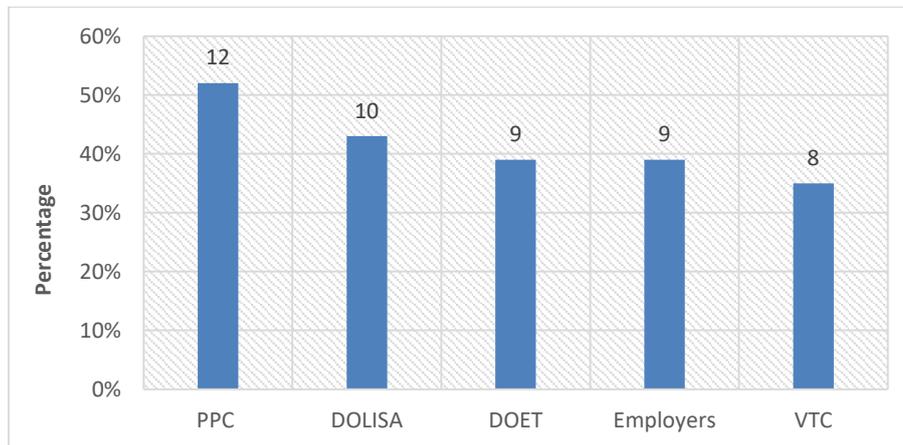
Figure 16: Stakeholder Degrees of Agreement as to Effectiveness of the Coordination/Partnership



The questionnaire also sought advice from stakeholders as to who should be members of the School to Work Transition Coordination Committee for the school to work transition program.

Figure 17 indicates that members of the Provincial People’s Committee (PPC) were the most recommended with more than half the stakeholders listing them to be members. This is likely to be because the PPC has an important role in coordinating all sectors at the provincial level and can decide budget allocations for the program.

Figure 17: Proportions of Stakeholders Recommending Member Types for the Coordination/Partnership Committee



More than 40% of stakeholders recommended that a representative from the Department of Labour and Social Affairs (DOLISA) should also be a member. This is the case likely because DOLISA is in charge of vocational training and employment, and also responsible for supervising employers in the province. Nearly 40% recommended a representative from DOET and other employer representatives in the committee.

#### 5.6.4 Communication

The stakeholder questionnaire also asked stakeholders about the effectiveness of communication arrangements for the school to work transition program. Table 33 shows some level of disagreement with the effectiveness of these arrangements particularly in relation to a mechanism for sharing information across stakeholders about the school to work transition effort. While thirty-one percent disagreed that there was such a mechanism and a further 38% did not know if there was such a mechanism.

Table 33: Stakeholder Degree of Agreement re Effectiveness of Communication about the School to Work Transition Program

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
<b>A mechanism is set up for information sharing and service provision amongst stakeholders in school to work transition effort.</b>	2 (8%)	5 (23%)	7 (31%)	9 (38%)
<b>Information about the community services (community activities and events, health care, mentoring, job availability, assistive devices etc) is available to young people with disability and their families.</b>	7 (31%)	7 (31%)	5 (22%)	3 (16%)

However, views on information-sharing about community services (community activities and events, health care, mentoring, job availability, assistive devices, etc) were more positive with only 22% disagreeing that information-sharing existed and 16% who said they did not know.

## 5.7 Participation and Involvement of Young People with Disability

This last section presents findings about students', graduates' and stakeholders' levels of agreement as to which factors impact participation and involvement of young people in the school to work transition program. Both questionnaires covered factors related to disability, accessibility and to the school environment itself. Table 34 indicates the degree of agreement with key statements about these factors for students, Table 35 for graduates and Table 36 for stakeholders who were asked to consider a different set of factors in their questionnaire.

Table 34: Students' Degree of Agreement with Factors Impacting Participation and Involvement in School to Work Transition Activities

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>No response</b>
<b>Disability</b>						
Being a person with disability limits your participation in school activities	2 (6%)	17 (48%)	15 (43%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)
Being a person with disability limits your participation in employment activities	3 (9%)	19 (54%)	11 (31%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)
<b>Accessibility</b>						
The transportation system works for you	3 (9%)	25 (71%)	7 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>School Environment</b>						
The teachers are fair and just.	6 (17%)	23 (66%)	4 (11%)	0 (0%)	2 (6%)	0 (0%)
You are able to do the school tasks well at school with assistance from school teachers and staff.	9 (26%)	26 (74%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
The teachers listen to what you say.	12 (34%)	18 (51%)	3 (9%)	0 (0%)	2 (6%)	0 (0%)
The school and classroom are accessible for you.	16 (46%)	14 (40%)	4 (11%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)
You have access to the assistive devices you need during your study	11 (31%)	14 (40%)	9 (26%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)

In regards to their disability, more than 50% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that their disability limited their participation in both school and employment activities. However, 43 percent did not see their disability as a limiting factor for participation and less still (31%) did not agree it hindered participation in employment activities. With regard to accessibility, in particular to transport, a high proportion of students (71%) agreed that this impacted participation. However, those who saw no impediment with accessibility were students with a hearing impairment.

Students were asked to rate their agreement with five positive factors about the school environment. Most agreed or strongly agreed that their teachers were fair and just (83%), and all said they agreed or strongly agreed that they were able to do their tasks well with assistance from teachers and staff. The levels of agreement regarding teachers listening to what students say were also high with 86% strongly agreeing or agreeing that this was the case. However, four agreed that the school and classroom were not accessible and worse still, nine or 26% said that they did not have access to the assistive devices they needed during your study.

The situation for graduates and their levels of agreement with the listed factors is reflected in Table 35. In general, graduates had lower levels of disagreement with all the same factors than

did the students. In particular, the graduates were happier than the students with the transportation system and their access to assistive devices during their schooling.

Table 35: Degree of Agreement for Graduates about Factors Impacting Participation and Involvement in School to Work Transition Activities

	No response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
<b>Disability</b>						
Being a person with disability limits your participation in school activities	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	13 (59%)	9 (41%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Being a person with disability limits your participation in employment activities	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	17 (77%)	5 (23%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>Accessibility</b>						
The transportation system works for you	0 (0%)	2 (9%)	18 (82%)	2 (9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>School Environment Context</b>						
The teachers are fair and just.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	19 (86%)	2 (9%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)
You are able to do the school tasks well at school with assistance from school teachers and staff.	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	18 (82%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	2 (9%)
The teachers listen to what you say.	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	18 (82%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	2 (9%)
The school and classroom are accessible for you.	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	20 (91%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)
You have access to the assistive devices you need during your study	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	20 (91%)	2 (9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The stakeholders' questionnaire provided the same set of factors to consider. Interestingly, a far higher number of stakeholders disagreed about the limits that having a disability placed on capacity to participate in both school and employment activities. However, they were more concerned about accessibility with 57% suggesting that access via the transportation system did not work well for young people with disability. They also saw more barriers in the school environment, with 26% saying that teachers did not listen to what they were told by young people with a disability and 17% were concerned that young people could not access classrooms nor had access to the necessary assistive devices.

Table 36: Stakeholder Degree of Agreement with Factors Impacting Participation and Involvement in School to Work Transition Activities

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
<b>Disability</b>					
Disability limits young people with disability's participation in social activities.	2 (9%)	15 (65%)	5 (22%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)
Disability limits young people with disability's participation in employment activities	2 (9%)	18 (78%)	2 (9%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)
<b>Accessibility</b>					
The transportation system works for young people with disability	1 (4%)	6 (26%)	13 (57%)	1 (4%)	2 (9%)
<b>School Environment Context</b>					
Teachers are fair and just	4 (17%)	13 (57%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	5 (22%)
Young people with disability are able to do the school tasks well at school with assistance from school teachers and staff.	5 (22%)	14 (61%)	4 (17%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Teachers listen to what young people with disability say at school	4 (17%)	13 (57%)	6 (26%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
The school and classroom are accessible for young people with disability	2 (9%)	12 (52%)	4 (17%)	0 (0%)	5 (22%)
Young people with disability have access to the assistive devices they need during their study	3 (13%)	11 (48%)	4 (17%)	0 (0%)	5 (22%)

## SUMMARY

Data from this chapter has helped to understand the challenges faced by young people in successfully participating in the school to work transition program. The study also gained the views of professionals and service providers who work in school to work transition for young people with disability, and looked at what services and policies were available to facilitate the school to work transition program.

The findings of this chapter account for perspectives and attitudes among research participants involved in the Dong Nai school to work transition program. In particular, the degree of involvement and satisfaction of participants in different school to work transition activities and processes have been investigated, revealing that the majority of the participants were aware of what had been happening for the students and graduates with disability in the Dong Nai school to work transition program. A high level of agreement with the importance of conducting needs assessments and other activities relating to the school to work transition process is a condition for ensuring the needs and interests of students are well reflected in their transition plans.

This chapter also demonstrates the challenges and opportunities for policy and enforcement systems to ensure a systematic approach to service provision. This includes ensuring that there is a sufficient budget and adequate resources to promote positive transition activities for young people with disability, as well as ensuring their quality participation in the school to work transition process.

More importantly, with regards to a sustainable school to work transition system with services such as vocational training, on the job experience, internships, and communication services to be provided long-term, good policy and a network of coordination is needed. This will only further increase and strengthen the effectiveness of the existing limited services, to better meet the expectations of parents and the community, and to expand school to work transition programs and services for the country.

# **CHAPTER 6. FACILITATORS AND BARRIERS TO THE SUCCESS OF DONG NAI SCHOOL TO WORK TRANSITION PROGRAM**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter examines the experience of students, graduates, and stakeholders in order to identify the factors which act as facilitators and barriers to the success of the program. Facilitators are defined as elements which participants deemed necessary for the school to work transition program to operate effectively, and barriers are described as those elements impeding or acting as obstacles to the positive progression of the program.

Qualitative data were collected across the following areas via 50 in-depth interviews (17 students, 10 graduates, and 23 stakeholders); five focus groups (two with students, one with graduates, one with teachers, and one with parents); and open-ended responses in the 80 questionnaires (35 students, 22 graduates, and 23 stakeholders):

- What works well (facilitators/significance/support/success) in the school to work transition program?
- What should be improved (barriers, weaknesses, difficulties, shortcomings) in relation to the school to work transition program?
- What areas for improvement can be identified/expectations for the program in the future?

These data were coded and the coding analysed to identify and understand how facilitators and barriers operate at various levels to encourage or hinder the school to work transition experience for young people. Bronfenbrenner's (1978) framework was used to conceptualise and organise the facilitators and barriers for presentation. Therefore, for this chapter, the notions about what works well and what should be improved have been organised around the four levels of Bronfenbrenner's (1978) ecological model: the macro system, exosystem, meso system and micro system. The relevant policy and enforcement mechanisms around financing, legislation, communication as well as key partnership and coordination mechanisms are presented as the macro system. The processes taking place to facilitate the provision of school to work transition services in the school environment, for example, needs assessment, transition

planning, vocational training, employment are presented as the exosystem level. Third, the role of family and social networks are represented by the mesosystem level and, finally, factors related to an individual with disability within the environment such as stigma, self-confidence levels are represented by the microsystem. The assumption is that each of these levels interact to influence an individual with disability and that Bronfenbrenner's ecological approach lends itself to understanding barriers and facilitators at these levels of interaction.

Given the qualitative data were gathered from different groups of participants, this enabled triangulation and thus the development of a comprehensive understanding of facilitators and barriers. As Liamputtong (2009) says, the triangulation of data permits the identification of similarities and differences in ideas of participants about the same issue. Triangulation of data was used as a means to ensure the research rigour through the employment of multiple methods, theories and measures (Creswell, 2014).

## **6.1 Macrosystem: systemic facilitators and barriers**

The major systemic factors identified by informants were related to financial, legislative, organisational and communication issues, and are summarised in Table 37.

Table 37: Macrosystem Factors: Facilitators and Barriers

Macrosystem Factors	
Facilitators	Barriers
<b>6.1.1 Financing the STW transition program</b>	
<b>Government Budget</b>	
Budget availability	Rigid budget policy
Disability budget allocation	No budget for soft skills training
	No support cost
	Insufficient budget for VT courses
<b>USAID</b>	
Support cost for networking event	Short term, once-off
Funds to train teachers, parents and stakeholders	No transition funding (sudden stop to funding)
Support cost for internship	
<b>Fundraising</b>	
Availability of charity funding sources	Unpredictable. Not always available
<b>6.1.2 Communication</b>	
Teachers use sign language interpretation	No interpretation at work or at vocational training
	Difficulty in communication with co-workers
<b>6.1.3 Partnership and Coordination Mechanism in School to Work Transition</b>	
Establishment of multi-agency network for partners	Informal ad-hoc partnership mechanism

## 6.1.1 Financing the Program

Information revealed that the financing arrangements of the school to work transition were complex. Three different sources of funding were identified as facilitating implementation of the program. According to a Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLISA) report (MOLISA-NCD, 2017), as well as interviews with Dong Nai school managers, the program was primarily financed from two main sources: Government Budget through the National Target Program for promoting vocational training and employment for rural youth, and a one-off USAID-funded project for the period 2012-2014. A third source was minor ad-hoc fundraising activity organised by the school, which contributed some funds to the school budget. Analysis of the data revealed that participants identified that the funding sources and legislation around them created their own specific facilitators and barriers. These are outlined below.

### 6.1.1.1 The Government Budget

The National Target Program on Vocational Training for Rural Youth (Government of Vietnam [GVN], 2016) was approved by the Prime Minister on 16 August 2016, followed with the promulgation of Circular 45 of MOLISA 45/2015/TT-BLDTBXH that guides the

enforcement of the National Fund for Employment of people with disability following the Decree 61/2015/NĐ-CP of the government for funding to support people with disability in vocational training and employment. To ensure budget availability for vocational training of young people with disability using the national budget from the National Target Program, MOLISA issued a Directive 3920 on 21 October 2014. This Directive regulates that at least 20 per cent of the national budget for the training of rural youth is spent for vocational training for people with disability. Based on the National Target Program and the MOLISA Directive, each province has its own Action Plan for implementation. The provincial budget is managed by DOLISA and, according to Ms Chin, head of Social Protection Unit from DOLISA, a province can allocate funding in addition to the budget allocated by the National Target Program.

#### *Budget allocation*

Twenty of the 23 stakeholders made specific mention of budget availability and disability budget allocation as key facilitators of success for the Dong Nai school to work transition program. The MOLISA Directive 3920 ensuring 20% of the total budget from the National Target Program for the rural youth was considered a key factor to the success of the Dong Nai school program. Two policy-makers from DOLISA and MOLISA (Ms Muoi Ba and Ms Chin respectively) stated that Directive 3920 had secured budget availability for vocational training of people with disability and thus ensured budget stability of the Dong Nai school to work transition program. However, barriers were also found to be associated with the government budget and were identified as: rigid criteria; no budget for soft skills training; and no support costs.

#### *Rigid criteria*

According to Decision 46/2015/QĐ-TTg on 28 September 2015 (GVN, 2015), each person with disability is provided with funding for a vocational training course once only and with a maximum fee of AUD\$350 per course for a duration of three months. Also included is the meal cost of AUD\$1.70 per day, and AUD\$17 for travel costs if the person lives more than five kilometres from the training venue. This budget is managed by DOLISA and the school has to send a budget request to DOLISA to organise vocational training courses. Alternatively, DOLISA may approach the school to offer any budget available for training of people with disability. In order to obtain these government funds, there are set criteria: the school is required

to have 15 to 20 students for each training course, and students have to be aged 16 years and over to be eligible to enrol into a vocational training program.

Most management level stakeholders stated that the criteria for accessing the budget were too rigid. With insufficient student numbers to run a vocational training course, this made it impossible for the school to access the allocated government budget. Ms Hai, the vice-principal of Dong Nai school in charge of the school to work transition program explained the challenges:

*Students start schooling at different ages and the number of the students at school was small so that it is hard for the school to organise the course. Because of this, the Government policy on vocational training program caused difficulty for the school to help with students in school to work transition, because the school many times did not have enough students to organise a vocational training course.*

Because of the application of rigid criteria, some parents and schoolteachers identified that this made it difficult for the program to be responsive to students' interests. Mr Muoi Chin, a retired teacher who worked with students on the vocational training programs and school to work transition process during the USAID-funded project, indicated "there were many topics of the vocational training but the training topics offered to students of the school were not always of interest to them, because the school had to wait for enough students to open a training class".

Interviews with stakeholders indicated that vocational training conducted for young people with disability often required longer amounts of time than for people without disability. This extra time was needed for practising their learning, as well as extra time for personal assistance such as interpretation, or other support. However, under the National Target Program on Employment and Vocational Training for Rural Youth, which also covers rural youth without disability, no extra allowance of time is made for young people with disability. As stated by Ms Muoi Ba from DOLISA: "The length of the vocational training course is only for three months and this is not long enough for students with disability . . ."

Another staff member in the Dong Nai school to work transition program, Ms Hai, also shared her thoughts relating to the difficulties in organising and ensuring the effectiveness of the vocational training courses using the budget provided by the Government: "The DOLISA budget only covers the training fee and housing and food to students who attend vocational training programs and this is not enough."

### No cost for Soft skills training

Rusch (1991) indicated that social skills have been identified as important and valued in employment settings and should be taught to youth during school time. The lack of these ‘soft’ or social skills, or inappropriate display of them, may result in job termination. Interviews with young people with disability as well as other stakeholders, especially parents, schoolteachers, and managers, identified the need for training around social skills or interpersonal skills. However, none of the budget could be allocated for training courses to equip young people with social or interpersonal skills. The principal of Dong Nai school, Ms Mot stated: “the students here need a lot of training on soft skills, or social skills that can help them a lot for work and life after graduation. However, we do not have a budget to conduct such training programs” A member of the Parents’ Association, with a son in Year 9, spoke in a focus group about his son’s ability to find a job after graduation being impacted by him not having friends or social interaction with other students in class. He suggested the school needed to organise more training or socialising activities for students, and emphasised the lack of budget allocated for these activities:

*The DOLISA is only providing budget for vocational training, particularly on sewing, hairdressing, etc. but not for soft skills training. It is important to have skills to work on specific jobs, but how to solve problems, or how to interact and communicate with the boss or colleagues. These are not covered by the budget.*

Teachers at Dong Nai school also raised similar concerns relating to an absence of budget for students’ social activities. While social skills can be obtained through school social activities, school teachers indicated that only a very limited number of these activities were ever organised. Ms Hai Mot, a long-time teacher of literature at the school who was also involved in the school to work transition program, also confirmed:

*The team building and extracurricular activities relating to employment and social skills training were done so well a few years ago with technical and financial support from the USAID-funded project. Now, these activities are no longer happening because there are no staff or budget.*

### No support costs

The majority of participants identified that a lack of support costs, particularly in relation to interpreters for students with hearing impairment, was a serious deficit. At the policy level, the National Coordinating Council on Disability (NCCD) is in charge of monitoring of disability

enforcement, particularly for vocational training programs. However, Ms Chin, NCCD Director, also emphasised this short-coming:

*The Decision 46/2015/QD-Ttg of the government provides a budget for people with disability to attend vocational training courses, but the budget does not include items for hiring personal assistants or sign language interpreters for people with disability.*

As well, a former teacher of Dong Nai Province involved in the needs assessment aspect, Mr Muoi Chin, reiterated this point:

*Actually, the students or people with disability need assistance at work and vocational training in the areas of work skills and interpretation. However, the Government budget does not cover these costs, and therefore, it causes difficulty for the vocational training agency, the school and employers to accommodate their students and workers in this regard.*

According to Ms Hai, neither did graduates have interpretation assistance in their workplaces:

*Graduates with a hearing impairment worked in the garment sector after graduation because these jobs do not require much communication and they mainly learn from watching others doing the job, and there was no interpretation services at work for them.*

#### **6.1.1.2 USAID Budget**

It is clear that the USAID project's budget from 2012 to 2014 has been an important financial component of the Dong Nai school to work transition program. In addition to the government budget provided of vocational training, the USAID-funded project provided extra funds for the school to work transition program which matched the Government/DOLISA funding, as well as additional funding for the school to conduct separate vocational training courses for the students and graduates. When unemployed graduates came to the school asking for help, the school was able to request funding from the USAID-funded project to conduct specific courses. Teachers at Dong Nai school stated that the flexibility of the USAID-funded project contributed to improving vocational training offerings to meet the needs and interests of young people with disability. As shared by Ms Mot, the principal of Dong Nai school, with this extra funding, gaps were filled. The school was able to organise vocational training courses for periods longer than three months, for smaller numbers of both students and graduates, across more diverse interests and even provide for support costs. As identified by the majority of stakeholders, additional support costs funded networking events like job fairs; the training of teachers and

stakeholders; internship arrangements as well as interpretation support for young people with hearing impairment.

### *Networking events*

Ms Muoi Ba, the DOLISA representative in charge of vocational training and employment, acknowledged in an interview how the USAID project's funding enabled networking events to build partnerships with stakeholders for the program:

*In addition to the existing government budget that was only spent for conducting vocational training course, the USAID project also provided additional budget to the training and could cover the costs to invite stakeholders to the training and this was helpful with networking.*

Stakeholders indicated how these networking activities meant that employers and vocational training agencies became more integral to the school to work transition network. Their involvement created the opportunities for students and graduates with disability to access vocational training and employment opportunities. Teachers and managers at Dong Nai school expressed their views on the importance of the USAID project for funding support costs that promote internship and employment opportunities.

### *Training stakeholders*

The importance of teachers, parents and other stakeholders knowing how to work effectively with young people with disability was mentioned by a number of people. According to teachers, parents, employers, and vocational training agency staff members, the USAID project covered the cost of training which provided them with skills to better understand how to work with young people with disability. Ms Muoi Tam, a teacher actively involved in the school to work transition program, described the benefits she experienced from such training:

*Thanks to the project, there were a couple of training workshops conducted and I understand what skills are most effective in teaching, what skills my students need to learn to be employed, and what they would like to know to provide vocational instruction and transition support.*

Information from the teachers' focus group indicated that teachers were trained in skills for undertaking needs assessment in the school to work transition process and a manual or guideline was developed for the school to follow. Ms Hai Mot, a teacher who had worked at

Dong Nai school for more than 11 years, indicated the importance of having skills training specifically relevant to the school to work transition program:

*We were trained in the TOT [Training of Trainer] classes and we were aware of the information and skills needed to facilitate the school to work transition. The TOT can train resource persons to work on this area and can ensure the sustainability of the program.*

Employers and vocational training agencies were also impressed with workshops that were organised for both stakeholders that they had chances to attend, and other training workshops on skills development provided to young people with disability by the USAID project that they occasionally participated. Ms Sau, Human Resource Manager of Changshin company which had recruited 360 people with disability, stated: “The training provided by the school also provided us with skills and knowledge about how to work with people with disability and we understand more about their needs”. Another stakeholder, Ms Muoi Mot, a Director from Rosa vocational training agency said that:

*From the training conducted by the school to work transition program, I get better understanding of my role as a vocational training agency in supporting people with disability, understanding better the barriers to the employment of youth with disabilities, and what we as the vocational training agency should know to provide vocational instruction and transition support to students with disability.*

Training courses funded by the USAID project also provided opportunities for parents and young people with disability to come and share their hopes and concerns about employment and the future. This helped them to prepare better for their working life after graduation. One of the parents shared their thoughts in the parents’ focus group:

*I had opportunities to attend a couple of the training courses conducted by Dong Nai school and I found that training conducted by the school was helpful to understand the needs of our children, the support we need to offer to our children so that they can be well prepared for their employment.*

#### *Support cost for internships*

While the Government’s vocational training program did not provide funding for the school to arrange internships and interpretation for young people with hearing impairment, funding support from the USAID-funded project in this area provided a good model of support services

for an effective school to work transition program at Dong Nai school. Interviews with young people with disability and stakeholders highlighted how support from the USAID project provided opportunities for internships and interpretation. Ms Mot, the principal of Dong Nai school stated: “the financial support from the project help the school to organise internships for young people with disability to get to know about the jobs, to learn about what skills are needed in order to work after graduation.”

### *Shortcomings*

While most of the stakeholders indicated that the USAID-funded project provided additional resources and demonstrated a good model for school to work transition at Dong Nai school, a few shortcomings were mentioned by employers in interviews and teachers and parents in focus groups. These included the absence of funding to transition after the USAID-funded project ended. A few stakeholders mentioned that, after the USAID project ended, there was no funding to organise or maintain the regular activities which had been effective such as the events and the training workshops for young people with disability and young people with disability. With no further funding available to organise events to strengthen the partnerships among stakeholders, this then limited networking activities. The ending of the USAID-funded project also discontinued the skills support to staff working for the school to work transition program. Ms Hai Ba, a representative of a Disabled Persons’ Organisation (DPO) stated that:

*Most of the project activities stopped when the project is closed down. The project often provided allowances for those who were involved in the school to work transition process to do the project activities. When the project ended, they did not have any allowance and they of course did not continue.*

Mr Muoi, a representative of the Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH), an implementing partner of USAID-funded project, indicated that there was no follow-up transition activity after the USAID project ended. VNAH had expected to have another one or two years working with the province and Dong Nai school to maintain the project activities by providing the necessary technical support for a smooth transition and advocating for enhanced legalisation to better support the existing school to work transition program. However, the total cessation of funding meant VNAH did not have the chance to work on this transition when the funding ended and this impacted the sustainability of the Dong Nai program.

### 6.1.1.3 Fundraising

In addition to the Government's main budget and the budget from the fixed term three-year USAID project, teachers and the school manager explained that the school sometimes raised funds for the school to work transition activities from individuals and charity organisations in the province as well as from other neighbouring provinces. Ms Muoi Tam, a teacher who had worked for Dong Nai school for 13 years, argued there were other ways to address budget shortages:

*I think we can mobilise and have received financial resources in-kind and in cash from the charity organisations, we can use a part of this funding to continue school to work transition activities when USAID project ends.*

However, there were said to be barriers with charity funding. According to the school manager, Ms Mot, while funding mobilised from charitable funders was available to the Dong Nai school community, it was sometimes only for specific initiatives or events on a one-time basis and not to plug existing gaps in the program. Another teacher at the school, Ms Hai Mot, also indicated that the funding from charity was for a short period of time, and often did not provide for the ongoing support required to run school to work transition program. Instead, donations of rice, note books, school bags, and gifts were provided in-kind.

### 6.1.2 Communication

As with other young people with disability facing difficulties in school to work transition, students with hearing impairment have specific communication and language concerns as barriers to their transition and employment (Borders et al., 2019; Garay, 2003). According to Luft (2000), challenges in interaction and communication continue to be primary issues contributing to the lack of advancement and/or maintaining a job, leading to limited employment opportunities for young people with hearing impairment. Wagner (1991) found that long-term services are needed to assist young people with hearing impairment in the work environment. McPherson (2014) found that poor and developing countries face challenges with adequately-trained personnel and the high cost of devices provided to people with hearing and vision impairment. This leads to limitations in access to needed services and participation in community activities. A year later, Nelson explored teacher perceptions regarding services for children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing in southern regions of Vietnam, including educational

successes and challenges, and identified similar concerns for Vietnam (Nelson, 2015). Vo and colleagues later conducted a pilot study in Vietnam to determine the feasibility, durability and social impact of ComCare GLW solar-powered hearing aids provided for Vietnamese children with hearing impairment (Vo et al., 2018). Their results emphasised the need for the provision of assistive devices to people with hearing loss to improve quality of life. Findings of this survey supported the view that access to assistive devices impacts the outcome of interventions for people with hearing and vision impairments. Indeed, a lack of access to assistive devices including hearing aids and hearing aid repair are the key barriers for people with disability and their families, especially in poor countries with people with hearing impairment expressing desire for more training in hearing technology and effective teaching strategies.

Information from most of the students, graduates, and stakeholders, especially teachers and parents, highlighted that sign language interpretation was critically important to supporting communication for the hearing-impaired in vocational training courses, in accessing information and getting employment, and in the work environment. The following section presents the facilitators and barriers to communication for young people with hearing impairment in the school to work transition effort. Sometimes there were teachers available in school to help with sign language interpretation, but outside school there was an absence of sign language interpretation. This was noted to lead to major difficulties in communication with vocational trainers, with employers for getting and retaining jobs as well as problems communicating with co-workers and managers on the job.

#### *6.1.2.1 Sign language in school*

Students and graduates identified the best communication facilitator was the support provided by teachers and managers of Dong Nai school with translation and interpretation during their in-school vocational training and job application processes. Most students, graduates and parents mentioned school support as the first in assisting with communication. For example, Ms Muoi Bay, a mother of a Year 9 student with hearing impairment, stated “School plays an important role in assisting my daughter in communication at the training and hopefully during the job-seeking process after graduation.” Another graduate expressed her appreciation to the school in helping her with the job application process:

*While my parents could not use sign language and understand much of what needed to be filled in the application form, my form teacher always went out with*

*me to the company to do interpretation during the interview and filling out the application form for me.*

However, once outside of school, difficulty in communication was deemed the greatest barrier of all and posed challenges to accessing appropriate external vocational training courses, employment opportunities, and ensuring job retention for all young people with hearing impairment. As well, other stakeholders indicated that communication was a barrier to accessing information and interacting with friends and work colleagues and limited literacy in Vietnamese was also a key issue.

Regarding external vocational training courses, Ms Muoi Mot, from Rosa, made the point that: “We offer free vocational training courses on different topics for people with disability who come to us, but people with hearing impairment do not often come because they do not have an interpreter”. Graduates also shared that they missed out on vocational training opportunities they were interested in because sign language interpretation was not available. Ms Trang, a graduate, reiterated this: “Although I participated in the training conducted by Dong Nai school, I still like other training in hairdressing outside of school, but since there is no help with money and interpretation there, I did not participate.”

Graduates and parents also shared the communication challenges they experienced in the job application process, especially during job interviews. The majority of graduates with hearing impairment explained that they were often shy and lacked confidence when going to job interviews because they were not able to communicate effectively or understand Vietnamese sufficiently. One of the graduates with hearing impairment explained in her focus group that: “they asked so many questions during the interviews but we did not understand, although they wrote down the questions for us to answer. If we do not have teachers or parents to go with us, we could not get through the interviews.”

According to the Dong Nai school management, their teachers used the sign language of the South to teach all their students with hearing impairment. However, as noted, parents were often unable to use sign language, but did not see this as a problem since their children were often living away from home or at school most of the time.

### 6.1.2.2 Communication difficulties at work

Difficulty in communication with co-workers was spoken about by the majority of employed graduates. Some used phrases such as: “limited communication”, “stuck with communication”, or “difficult interaction” at work and said that no access to interpretation at work made them feel stressed. Many graduates shared their experience of challenges in communicating with their normally-hearing co-worker counterparts when there was no qualified sign language interpreter available on a regular basis. At the focus group, graduates shared that, because of a lack of communication with their co-workers, they had difficulties ensuring their work quality: “We could not hear what people were saying at work, we just watched them work and followed. Sometimes we did not understand what we were supposed to do”.

Communication in the workplace is paramount for young people with hearing impairment in socialisation. While some graduates could lip read, and sometimes sign language interpreters were organised by the workplace, sign language interpreters were not provided for the socialising activities of daily life among co-workers that could make the workplace more pleasant. Most graduates reported that they did not go to meetings organised at work because there was no interpretation available. Some of them said they felt bored at meetings if there was no interpretation. Although most of them got a briefing in writing or notes after each meeting, this made them feel they were not part of the working team: “. . . of course, we felt that we were not part of the organisation” (Ms Tram, a graduate). As Ms Do, a graduate, said:

*I came to the meeting but nobody was interpreting, but after the meeting, the manager gave me a note of the meeting for us to follow. If I did not understand, I asked colleagues so they helped explain to us by writing down on a piece of paper but I did not feel included at the workplace.*

Limited literacy in Vietnamese and poor sign language vocabulary were also issues. Interviews with students, graduates and parents found that the ability of young people with hearing impairment to read Vietnamese was limited, leading to difficulty in understanding the interview questions or job application for them. Information provided at a stakeholder focus group indicated:

*The sign language that the students use now is not rich, and they cannot express their feelings and thoughts. When they came for the interview at the company, sometimes they could not understand all the questions, although the company gave them the questionnaire in writing for them to answer.*

### 6.1.3. Partnerships and Coordination Mechanisms

Coordination and networking between school, trainers, and employers are key elements for effective partnership (Taylor, 2006). However, at the same time, developing an effective network among different agencies can be challenging when they have different agendas and priorities (Keep et al., 2002).

With regards to partnerships and coordination mechanisms, the Provincial People's Committee promulgated a Decision 1013 in 2016 enforcing disability programs to support people with disability and guiding the coordination amongst different stakeholders. According to Ms Mot from Dong Nai school, "this new promulgated regulation was to help the involved functioning agencies work together to help people with disability in a disability program". However, according to Mr Bay, DOET representative:

*The regulation is still general, and not regulating specific roles and responsibilities in the school to work transition effort, especially with transition service referrals. Service referral is a key for success of the disability programs*

Interviews with young people with disability and other stakeholders also indicated the importance of having functional coordination and partnerships among stakeholders in the school to work transition effort. Established networks of stakeholders working towards the school to work transition effort was a key facilitator while a noted barrier was the lack of formalised multi-agency partnership.

#### 6.1.3.1 Partnership as a facilitator

The school to work transition program at Dong Nai involved different key agencies including school management, employers, vocational training agencies, policy-makers (DOLISA and DOET), parents, and DPOs. Mr Bay, a DOET representative, noted: "school to work transition requires multi-disciplinary approach of service delivery and requires involvement of different sectors. The school to work transition program is a model for us to bring everyone working together for promoting employment of young people with disability." Interviews with stakeholders indicated their appreciation of the efforts of VNAH/USAID to set up linkages and partnerships among the stakeholders. Twenty-one of 23 stakeholders mentioned that the USAID project provided support to make arrangements for meetings with government officials

and employment sites for internships and job placement.

Other stakeholders, including parents and DPOs, mentioned that networking was created through training workshops and job fairs, and enabled the development of vocational training and job opportunities for people with disability. DPO representative, Ms Ba, stated: “I often go to the workshops and get to know people from companies. This is a great way because I found a job with my previous company.” A parent from the Parents Association, Mr Nam, shared: “the school often invited us for the training or networking events. From these events, the employers can share the human resource plan and we get to know which employers receive students for internships”.

In addition, interviews with employers indicated that the development of partnerships via networking events brought employers and the school closer. As a result, the Dong Nai school has been more active in approaching employers to ask for employment opportunities for their students and graduates. Ms Tam, a Human Resource manager from Nike company that has hired more than 300 employees with disability, shared: “Since I know the Dong Nai school, I often contact them if we need to recruit people with disability and sometimes the school also contacted us to see if we want to hire”. Ms Sau from Changsin company also shared:

*We have recruited a high rate of people with disability. When we have a big need of people with disability, we work through Dong Nai employment introduction centre or DOLISA, and DOLISA also introduced the Dong Nai School to us. Sometimes, people with disability come to us or DOLISA also contacted us to introduce their potential candidates.*

Networking among stakeholders, especially with employers, also made employers aware of the needs of people with disability, so that they could provide reasonable accommodation in the workplace. This issue was mentioned by one employer, Ms Muoi Nam from Hanh Phuc Bakery: “I went to the training provided by Dong Nai school for a couple of times, and the training helped me to understand better how to take care of employees with disability at work.”

#### *6.1.3.2 Informal partnerships*

Keep and Payne (2002) have indicated that effective partnership and cooperation mechanisms require clear roles and responsibilities. As said, the current Dong Nai school to work transition mechanism was established with support from the USAID-funded project. However, the majority of stakeholders raised concerns that, due to the lack of a formally recognised

mechanism, stakeholder involvement in the school to work transition program was mostly based on the willingness and personal commitment of the management of each institution. This left the mechanism vulnerable. One teacher shared in the focus group: “connection and coordination between the school and employers or DOLISA is limited after the [USAID] project ended because none of the institutions has the obligation to continue the effort of the school to work transition program”. Another employer representative from Hanh Phuc Bakery identified that having a formal partnership leads to a more stable strategy for the employment of people with disability: “The change in staffing, especially at the management level really impacts the willingness or not to employ people with disability - because the government no longer set quotas” Mr Nam, from the Parent’s Association, also expressed a similar concern: “Since this coordination and partnership is not under any policy, it is hard to maintain when the management is changed”.

Due to the lack of a formal partnership mechanism, staffing in the school to work transition program was insufficiently resourced and this took time away from working directly with the students. Ms Mot, the principal of Dong Nai school shared: “Dong Nai school to work transition staff wear four or five titles including accountant, vocational training staff, Information Technology staff, trade union staff, as well as undertaking the training program for teaching students with disability”.

#### *6.1.3.3 Teachers’ skills in sign-language and qualification*

Since the school to work transition program had developed as a result of the USAID-funded program, its recognition and legalisation by the Government of Vietnam has taken time. At the time of this research, it was still not legally recognised and therefore the program was not specifically funded. The current staff working for the school were recruited following the Government recruiting procedure and most had special education background. Five had been trained in sign language during the three-month summer holiday.

It was also very challenging for the managers and schoolteachers to allocate staffing for the school to work transition program given there was no specific resourcing including no funding for overtime. The current MOET regulations precluded staff members from working more than 200 hours overtime per year (in addition to 400 hours of teaching per year) and this created a difficulty for the school to assign staff members to follow up with school to work transition

activities. As Mr Muoi Chin, a former teacher at Dong Nai school, indicated in his interview: “The current regulation relating to the staff time allocation for teaching made schoolteachers not be able to participate in school to work transition program although they have a lot of free time”.

## 6.2. Exosystem – School to Work Program Factors

Factors related to the school to work program which facilitated or hindered the provision of school to work transition services in the school environment include practices from within three systems: the school system, education system, and vocational training/employment systems.

Sections 6.2.1 to 6.2.5 present the specific factors that facilitated and hindered the school to work transition program and are related to disability support services, transition planning and vocational training program, capacity of staff and teachers in school to work transition program, and factors relating to actual school and work environments.

An overview of factors within each theme is presented in Table 38:

Table 38: School to Work Transition Program Factors

Exosystem – School to Work Transition Program Factors	
Facilitators	Barriers
<b>6.2.1. Disability Support Services for School to Work Transition Program</b>	
<b>Socialising activity</b>	
<b>Government support</b>	
Social activities - team building activities at school	Social activities - irregular. No stakeholder attendance
<b>USAID-funded Project</b>	
Additional funds for regular social activities	Activities discontinued after USAID funding ceased
<b>6.2.2. Transition Planning and Vocational Training</b>	
<b>Transition planning</b>	
<b>Government support</b>	
Counselling, but limited practical assistance	No regular needs assessment or outreach
<b>USAID-funded Project</b>	
Transition assessment	Mismatch of students and parents' participation
Soft skills training through flexibility at school	Short term support. Training through events only
Assistance with job applications	Assistance stopped when USAID funding ended
<b>Vocational training</b>	
<b>Government support</b>	
Support in job-seeking and internships	No internships, limited Career Counselling
Availability of the vocational training agencies	Rigid criteria. No support for interpretation
<b>USAID-funded project</b>	
Additional funding to supplement Government.	Limited Internships. Informally assistance to students
Financial support for additional vocational training	Narrow options for vocational training
Work Experience, and Internships	Young people need more time for practice
Career counselling and guidance	Limited career counselling after funding ceased
<b>6.2.3. Capacity Building for Staff and Teachers in School to Work Transition</b>	
<b>GVN support</b>	
Dong Nai staff all qualified in special education	No staff trained in career counselling or guidance
Staff allocated to work on USAID-funded program	No staffing policy for this program
<b>USAID-funded Project</b>	
Improved capacity of staff and stakeholders	Staff allocated to work part-time on program
<b>6.2.4. School and Work Environment</b>	
<b>Environment factors at school</b>	
<b>Government support</b>	
Support from management and teachers	Change in management led to change of support
Social activities in the school	No team building or networking
<b>USAID-funded Project</b>	
Friendships built up through events and activities	Distrust among students led to wishes to quit school
Networking at school and outreach to clubs	Limited community activities. Students felt bored
<b>Environment Factors at Work</b>	
<b>Government support</b>	
Support from co-workers and managers	Stress without support from school or job coach
Events to establish the relationship among workers	Limited participation when no interpretation
<b>USAID-funded Project</b>	
Established relationships among graduates	Networking events short term
Networking among graduates	Limited participation when no interpretation
<b>Working and Learning Conditions</b>	
<b>Government support</b>	
Adjustments for workers with disability	No interpretation. No Job Coach
Accessibility in transportation and at school	The school is not accessible for the vision impaired
Housing was provided to students	Rooms are overcrowded
<b>USAID-funded Project</b>	
No intervention	No intervention

### 6.2.1. Disability Support Services

The findings from interviews and focus group with students, graduates, teachers, and parents indicated that they recognised the importance of students and graduates being equipped with social skills so that they were able to interact with friends and colleagues at work. Socialising is linked with the emotional wellbeing of young people with disability, and can either hinder or support their participation and engagement in the school to work transition process. Social activities were one of the factors that contributed to the success of the school to work transition especially during the era of the USAID project when particular event days were on offer. After the project's funding finished, these social activities were organised with charity funds from individuals and organisations in the localities.

According to Dong Nai teachers, social activities were organised for students and graduates, especially on the international and national disability days (18 April and 3 December), Teachers' Day (20 November) and Children's Day (1 June). In addition, as shared by teachers and managers of the school, the students were also able to participate in some competitions outside and inside school for students. As teacher Mr Hai Mot, stated:

*Dong Nai school often organises social activities for students such as food fairs and students love it. From the fairs, students learn how to cook, how to do business and students can join the competitions among different classes and groups. This was great, especially team building.*

Parents thought that some of the training organised by teachers for each class also fulfilled the role of social activities. Mr Nam, Chair of the Parents' Association, said that: "On every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon, students with hearing impairment can participate in the sewing classes, and the students with vision impairment can play music. Other afternoons they can do cleaning of the classrooms and their hostels."

Interviews with students and graduates demonstrated they had different expectations about social activities. These expectations are discussed in more detail in section 6.4, but it is important to note them here since issues relating to social activities are interlinked with these exosystem factors impacting school to work transition.

The majority of students and graduates of Dong Nai school were of the strong view that more regular social activities were needed for the students on campus. Mr Thap Luc, a Year 9

student, expressed a desire for social activities: “Most of the time, we have to be at school and we want to go out to meet with friends because there are not many activities here at school and we find it so boring”. Another Year 9 student, Ms Bat, also expressed she felt there was a lack of interaction with friends outside of campus: “we have a lot of free time at school and we do not know what to do and we want to go out to meet with friends outside of school”.

## 6.2.2. Transition Planning and Vocational Training

Information from interviews and focus groups showed that transition planning and vocational training had important roles to play in the school to work transition. Sections 6.2.2.1 and 6.2.2.2 present the views shared by informants as to which factors facilitated and hindered this transition planning process and impacted vocational training programs within the school to work transition program.

### 6.2.2.1. Transition planning

Transition planning is an important process to facilitate the movement of young people with disability from school to work (Cobb & Alwell, 2009). In the view of the informants, transition planning at Dong Nai school was described as (i) transition assessment, (ii) provision of soft skills training, (iii) assistance in seeking employment and internship opportunities.

#### *Transition assessment*

Transition assessment was identified as important because it helped stakeholders understand the needs of young people with disability with regards to vocational training and employment, and to understand their job passions. From that they were able to assist them to identify jobs that were appropriate for their capacities and interests.

#### *Understanding the needs of young people with disability:*

The majority of informants said that understanding the needs of young people with disability in vocational training and employment was critical to success of the program. Words and phrases such as “understanding the student’s employment and vocational training “goals”, “needs”, “strengths”, preferences”, and “interests” were commonly used by informants.

All students and graduates indicated that the school to work transition program was preparing them with skills and knowledge about what needed to prepare for success in the workplace. The majority of students, graduates, and teachers mentioned the support from schoolteachers and managers after graduation. Mr Vang, a graduate, said he appreciated the support from school: “Teachers and school managers were always the first persons I came to, shared concerns and asked for advice on the training courses and job selection”. Another student expressed her thoughts about how the school helped with transition planning: “the school really guided me on what I should do after graduation and my form teacher often took me to music concerts for me to play so that I can experience the job” (Mr Tam, a Year 9 student with vision impairment).

Information from the graduates’ focus group indicated that the transition planning also helped with identifying appropriate vocational training for young people with disability. Mr Vang is currently working for Nike company, and said:

*We participated in the vocational training on sewing when we were students and the vocational training course conducted by the school guided us what to do and ideas about the job requirements. From the training, teachers often advised us on what we should do.*

Parents expressed their appreciation to the school staff who they said cared deeply about their children and were always committed to helping them find employment during and after school. Ms Muoi Bay, mother of a graduate said in her interview:

*The teachers and the school managers were so helpful to prepare my daughter for getting a job. When my daughter needed help to contact with employer, her form teacher helped to call employers and discuss with them, then my daughter got a job.*

In addition, the focus group with parents indicated that the majority of them relied on schoolteachers and managers to assist their children with employment and vocational training.

As parent, Mr Dao said:

*The school has information about the vocational training courses and can provide to parents and students lists of training agencies and the courses so we can consider which ones are the best for our kids.*

Another parent, Mr Man, expressed his trust in the school’s capacity to help his child to identify appropriate training courses and with job seeking:

*The teachers and the school staff at school are the best to help students in identifying with jobs and vocational training. My daughter often talks to the teacher and asks for their help because the teachers understand the strengths and weaknesses of my daughter.*

Another parent, Mr Mai, stated he relied on the school to provide his daughter with opportunities to try out a job and they could help her to make a right decision:

*Because the school has more contacts regarding the jobs, and teachers can give her opportunities to practise what she wants to do, then she informed parents, because parents have less information in order to give good advice.*

#### Job passions

Findings from interviews with both students and graduates indicated the transition planning process was useful in helping the school managers, teachers, and parents to better understand their expectations and passions. Information provided in the graduates' focus group indicated that they found transition planning helpful in developing understanding about job requirements and selecting a job that they liked: "From talking with teachers about my interests relating to the job and doing an internship, I noticed what job I liked most and I selected them".

Another graduate, Ms Thuy Linh, also appreciated that the transition planning process really helped her recognise her interests and talent in baking. She started to work for the Hanh Phuc Bakery after she took part in the vocational training course that Dong Nai school introduced to her to. Thuy Linh said "I have been working for Hanh Phuc Bakery Company for a long time because I enjoy doing the job".

Another graduate, Ms Tran Nhat Thao, shared that, with support from Dong Nai school, she started to work for the garment company after graduation. She indicated that she learned what needed to be done for the job that she took; she found it hard, but she still got the job done and done well. In her interview she reported: "The school prepared me with the job requirements and that's why I was not shocked when I started working. The important thing was that I was positive about the job".

Other graduates reported they were aware of a difficult job market. Therefore, they put in more effort in to maintain their employment. Mr To Van, who was working as a carer said he did not

like the job, but still continued with it because: “I know there are not many jobs available out there for us, and so I have been trying to keep the job although I do not like it very much”.

#### Identifying appropriate jobs

The importance of identifying appropriate jobs through the transition planning process was also mentioned by most of the informants. Data from the interviews indicated that young people with disability could identify which jobs were appropriate for them through experiencing the internships and vocational training courses conducted by the school. Students and graduates understood that an appropriate job was one that they had been trained to do, one that could accommodate their impairment and also allowed for them to work close to home. Mr Loc who is vision-impaired, considered an appropriate job for him was one that he was suited to. According to him, massage work was a high risk job for people with vision impairment since he was vulnerable to sexual abuse. No interviewed vision-impaired student expressed any interest in massage work. Up until a few years ago, Dong Nai school had provided training for massage work for students with vision impairment.

#### Jobs for young people with vision impairment

Interviews with four students with vision impairment and stakeholders indicated that students with vision impairment were more likely to get jobs in massage, playing musical instruments, or as post office operators. Two students with vision impairment (Mr Manh and Mr Trung) mentioned their interest in information technology (IT) and how this was an appropriate job area for them. However, all agreed that massage was assumed to be a suitable job for a young person with vision impairment.

As mentioned, Dong Nai school has a massage training room for students with vision impairment to learn massage out of school hours as part of their vocational training program. However, the teachers from the school also reported that the room had been used very little over the last two or three years because there were not enough students to open a training course for massage. Other students, parents, and even teachers said they did not want students with vision impairment learning to do massage because they considered that this job is unsafe since vision-impaired masseurs and masseuses were often abused. Ms Nhat said: “we do not want to learn massage skills anymore because we heard that massage job is very risky and not safe for

female workers like us”. In contrast, the manager of the vocational training agency Rosa, Ms Muoi Mot stated:

*Massage seems to be an appropriate job for the vision-impaired at the moment. I also trained the blind on how to do massage, and after the training, they opened the massage shops and make very good income.*

Another DPO leader of the vision-impaired, Ms Hai Ba, shared her thoughts:

*There are not many options for students with vision impairment; they can only learn how to do massage or music. Most of the vision impaired go home after their graduation and we do not have follow up after that, and there are some of them if they have talent, they can play music as their career. The options for the vision impaired are quite limited. Many of them choose to continue with schooling at Year 10.*

#### Jobs for young people with hearing impairment

Ten graduates with hearing impairment participated in the in-depth interviews, and five students participated in the focus group. These young people all indicated that the garment industry was the most common work sector for graduates with hearing impairment. Because of this, vocational training courses offered by the school focused on sewing. However, a few students were interested in other skills such as baking, cooking, hairdressing, and car washing. With no courses available at the school, they either attended courses outside the school or just learned how to do the job by watching how other people do the jobs.

According to parents of the students at Dong Nai school, the sewing training was a way for students to decide if they liked the job. Ms Muoi Bay, mother of a Year 8 student, talked about her daughter, who was participating in the training on sewing, and then she decided to go and learn cooking with her friends during the summer break: “vocational training courses were chances for them to try out and see what was appropriate for them. Especially they learned about the skills they need to perform the job”.

#### Soft skills training

Soft skills are skills needed to properly and successfully interact and communicate with others within the school, community, and workplaces (Alwell & Cobb, 2007). Interviews with students, graduates, parents, teachers and other stakeholders provided information about views on the effectiveness of the vocational training and transition planning process on the soft or

social skills of young people with disability. More information about how important these soft skills are for young people with disability is revisited in the microsystem/individual factor level section 6.4.

As mentioned by parents, soft skills for young people with disability were improved through events and activities organised by the school via the school to work transition program funded by the USAID project. These activities included vocational training courses, job fairs, and other social activities such as food fairs, sporting competitions, and music competitions. As shared by Mr Bay, a DOET representative, the school to work transition program builds students' communication abilities and confidence at work:

*The most important skills that students should be trained during school time are the life skills and communication or interaction skills, because these skills will help the students to develop when they work after graduation. This would also provide opportunities for students to be confident when they go for an interview.*

Soft skills were obtained through attending the vocational courses conducted by Dong Nai school. As mentioned by most students and graduates, the vocational training courses conducted by the school also provided training in how to write job applications, and prepare for job interviews. Mr Thap Luc, a Year 9 student, who participated in three vocational training courses said in his interview:

*We were taught on how to prepare application or interview with employers and during the internship, we found confidence with the job and know what we need to do.*

The friendships among students at school were also a factor that could facilitate the development of social skills for young people with disability. Ms Thap Tu, a Year 8 student, said in her interview that:

*I like this school as I have many friends with same type of disability – my friends can share with me their interest and discuss with me about the future, the job and how to search for the job.*

Although students and graduates appreciated friendships at the school and other social skills they obtained through the vocational training courses, interviews with teachers and employers indicated in adequate skills arose as a problem after the USAID-funded project ended. According to some teachers, after the USAID funding ended, social activities were organised in the forms of events only, and were no longer offered on a regular basis for all school students

to participate in. In her interview, teacher Ms Hai Mot shared her thoughts about this lack of regular social activities:

*Students need to be trained in interpersonal skills and social skills through more regular activities conducted within school. I find that the school did not consider this as a priority. Students have a lot of free time in the afternoon or on the weekend, but it seems there is nothing happening for students that makes the lives of students on campus more fun and socialised. They find it boring being on campus.*

Another teacher Ms Muoi Tam, offered her perspective on the school management's view of social activities:

*The social activities organised at school are poor because the school managers thought that students should focus on academic study only. Students do not have chance to go out for networking outside such as club, or even inside school.*

Because of a lack of social skills, young people with disability often became isolated in their workplaces. A manager of a hairdressing shop that employed a Dong Nai graduate, Ms Muoi Bon, indicated how limited communication and misunderstanding with the co-workers can affect a person with disability:

*Actually, these students can get stressed very easily because they cannot express their ideas and expectations, and most of the time, they are misunderstood. Therefore, they need a lot of sharing, communication, and training on soft skills, such as problem solving, communication and Mr Long that I am employing does not have these skills.*

### *Practical assistance*

The practical support schoolteachers and staff provided to students and graduates with preparing job applications was highly appreciated by young people and their parents. Most of the graduates (9/10) who were interviewed received support from schoolteachers during the job application process, including filling out the application form, or providing interpretation during the job interview. Most of them needed this assistance as the company had nobody available who could use sign language.

Ms Tram, a graduate, had worked for a garment company for three years after attending the vocational training course conducted by the school under the USAID-funded project. Like other friends with hearing impairment at the school, she received support from the school with her job application. She shared during her in-depth interview that she was not able to

understand all questions on the job application form when she applied for a job. The first person she thought of for help was her form teacher to assist her to understand and complete the form before submission.

Also due to their limited information and qualifications, parents often could not help their children with job applications. All students and graduates who were there during the USAID-funded project had support from schoolteachers in this process. However, Mr Den who had graduated from Dong Nai school just one year before, could not get a job until he came back to the school to ask for help in filling out the job application. The school completed the form with him and accompanied him to the job interview. Mr Den shared that:

*After the graduation, I could not read and write well enough to understand the Vietnamese language on the forms and Employers thought that I was illiterate and refused to employ me. When I had my former teacher help me with the interview and the application, I got a job after the third interview with assistance from schoolteacher.*

It was the same for job application assistance as it was for social activities. All were more difficult after the USAID-funded project ended. The school could no longer regularly reach out to its graduates or be pro-active in assisting them with job applications. As Ms Hai stated during her interview: “we are busy with our academic teaching at the moment, and we can only help students or graduates with job seeking or application if they come to us and ask for help. This is because these are not our official jobs”.

#### *6.2.2.2. Vocational training*

Vocational training was the major component of the school to work transition program that was managed by Dong Nai school. The purpose of the school to work transition was to assist students with disability 16 years of age and above to obtain life and vocational skills during their school years and facilitate their movement from school to work activities through the vocational training program. While Dong Nai school was overseeing the school to work transition program, the other stakeholders were involved in the school to work transition process. The roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder in the school to work transition process were previously outlined in Chapter 1.

“Learning how to sew” or “vocational training courses” were the phrases commonly used by young people with disability when they were asked about the school to work transition program. Positive responses were provided by stakeholders and young people with disability including factors that impacted on the progress of the school to work transition program. The factors related to vocational training included: (i) the availability of vocational training agencies in the locality, (ii) work experience and employment obtained through internship and (iii) career guidance.

### *Vocational preparation*

Vocational training courses conducted by the school were part of vocational preparation for young people with disability. Interviews with 23 stakeholders, 17 students, and 10 graduates indicated that the vocational training helped most young people with disability better prepare for job-seeking and employment.

Informants identified that factors which facilitated the success of school to work transition were the vocational training program, support from school staff and managers looking for jobs, and vocational training during and after the USAID-funded project. In contrast, when the school no longer had responsibility to support the young people in these areas, this was a hindrance to the success of the program.

Government regulation 46/2015 created on 28 September 2015 requires vocational training agencies to make sure that at least 70% of vocational training graduates are employed after completing the training. According to Ms Chin from NCCD: “This created opportunities for the vocational training agencies to work with schools or the community to identify people with disability for the training and to work with companies to make sure they are employed after the training”. According to this regulation, the vocational training agency must make sure that vocational training graduates secure jobs soon after the training is completed. In order to avoid the waste of resources invested in vocational training and ensure that realistic employment goals were set for young people with disability, vocational training agencies signed an agreement with employers to train a certain number of people with disability to work on specific areas.

Support provided by school managers and teachers to students and graduates in their efforts to look for jobs, complete job applications, and in organising internship opportunities was mentioned by the majority of the stakeholders and young people with disability. The majority of informants appreciated that the school was the first source of information regarding the vocational training program and employment opportunities. Ms Xanh had been working for Hanh Phuc bakery for more than two years. She said she got the job right after graduation, and shared her experience about the school's assistance and support:

*The school introduced us to the employer and vocational training agency. At that time, I wanted to learn baking and Dong Nai school sent me to Rosa to learn. After that, Dong Nai school introduced me to Hanh Phuc Bakery for the job after my graduation and I got a job from then until now.*

Graduate Mr Vang, who started work right after graduation in 2013 at Nike, appreciated the support and assistance provided by teachers and school managers with the job application and introducing students to employers:

*The school support is important. When I was at school, I also went to the vocational training conducted by Dong Nai school. After the training, teacher made a list of names who wanted to work, and then the teacher submitted the list to the company.*

Information from graduates and students indicated that, if they were 15 years of age or older, they had participated in a vocational training course at least once during their time at school. All indicated that the internship organised by the school through the vocational training program was helpful for work after graduation, as they had the opportunity to learn how to do the work at the companies and felt more confident when they started to work. Like other graduates, Ms Trang, who started work in 2014 with a shoe company, enjoyed her work. She shared: “we got jobs because we had opportunities to do internship and assistance from teachers in job application and interview”.

While the majority of students and graduates appreciated the support from school in job-seeking and their internships during vocational training, once the school no longer had formalised roles and responsibilities to provide support to students in these areas, it continued at a personal, more ad-hoc level only. Ms Hai Hai, the vice-principal of Dong Nai school, shared in her interview:

*We just work on it based on our own personal relationship and it is not really the regular activities. Each year, there are more or less 10 students graduating and it*

*is not a big number for coaching and following up with employment and job seeking at the moment but will be an issue if the school does not support this effort.*

### *vocational training programs*

Dong Nai has 45 different vocational training agencies operating in Dong Nai province (Dong Nai Employment Service Centre [ESC], 2016). Ms Muoi Ba, DOLISA staff member reported that young people with disability can participate in any of the vocational training conducted by any of these vocational training agencies.

Rosa was a partner member of the school to work transition program at Dong Nai school, both during and after the USAID-funded project. Rosa offered diversified vocational training options for thousands of people each year, including demobilised soldiers, the unemployed, the poor, orphans, and people with disability. According to Ms Muoi Mot, the Director of Rosa, people with disability can participate free of charge in any training program they are interested in, and learn alongside those without disability. However, young people with disability are responsible for any assistance costs they require, such as sign language interpretation, or Braille translations. Very few students are able to cover these costs, and therefore the training courses conducted by Rosa were mainly relevant for those with other challenges such as mobility rather than sensory impairment.

With assistance from the USAID-funded project and DOLISA, students and graduates with disability from Dong Nai school had opportunities to participate in vocational training courses, mainly on sewing. According to Ms Bon, Dong Nai school vice-principal, sometimes, with assistance from the USAID-funded project, students were sent to Rosa to complete the vocational training courses that they were interested in. Although there were many vocational training options offered at Rosa, interviews with stakeholders and young people indicated that the vocational training had shortcomings, such as: (i) limited choices for vocational training, and (ii) skills that students learned at the training workshop were not always useful for them when they work.

As mentioned earlier, sewing was the most common options for young people with disability. However, information provided by young people with disability indicated that five of 17 students and four of 10 graduates did not want to learn sewing. They had wanted to participate

in other training courses such as shoemaking, but these were unavailable. Ms Tu, a Year 8 student, shared that:

*The vocational training program is a bit difficult for me from the beginning and I wanted to work on shoemaking, but since sewing was the only program offered by school so I had to participate.*

Another student, Mr Ngu, did not want to learn sewing and he declined to participate when the school staff and manager asked him. Due to the lack of the training options available, he decided to continue with study in Year 10. Mr Thap Luc at Year 9 and Ms Thap Tu at Year 8 also had the same interest in shoemaking or hairdressing, but these were unavailable also.

Students with vision impairment did not participate in any vocational training courses conducted by the school or the USAID-funded project. Mr Tam, a vision-impaired student from Year 9, mentioned during his interview that his friends with hearing impairment had more options for vocational training courses, and said the visually-impaired students had less vocational training options at school. Ms Luc, a graduate, also shared “I participated in the sewing training but I realised I was not good at this – however, there was no other option at that time”.

### *Work experience and internships*

Every student, graduate and parent noted that work experience training via internships was conducted as part of the vocational training program offered by Dong Nai school during the USAID-funded project. Interviews with young people with disability and stakeholders highlighted internships as “first-hand work experience, or working experience”. The school worked with DOLISA and employers to set up internships for young people with disability after completion of the vocational training, and these provided opportunities for young people with disability to practise skills in a real work setting.

#### *Work experience after Internship:*

Ms Do, a graduate, indicated her internship helped her to have an idea about the job requirements: “I came to the company and observed people working there – I saw people doing sewing and I liked it”.

Students and graduates indicated that they had learned skills for work and were more aware of

the work expectations from employers after the internship. Mr Luc, a student, shared:

*I got to know the sewing skills from the internship and vocational training, which were good. I think making shoes requires skills in sewing. It is also okay. I got some basic skills in sewing and I can develop later when I really start to work.*

Three other students and four graduates indicated that their internships increased their confidence at work after completing the training. As Ms That shared at her interview: “the training was fun. From the training and observing people working at the company, I got to know a bit about the work and it made me confident later on when I start to work”.

Another student, Ms Thap Tu, shared: “I did internship one time at the company and I find it important because I can realise if I like it or not. Internship helped me gain practical experience”.

Parents also indicated that internships organised by Dong Nai school provided their children with practical experience at work. Ms Muoi Bay, mother of a Year 9 student, shared at the focus group with parents that the internship had improved her child’s skills in interaction and provided her with ideas and knowledge about the job. She said:

*My daughter participated in the internship conducted by Dong Nai school and I often sent her out to other employers for internship during summer time, such as cooking. From the internship, she seemed to be more active interacting with other people and she could find fun from the jobs.*

Although most young people with disability appreciated the importance of doing internships, interviews with employers such as Ms Tam, Human Resources manager from Nike, indicated that young people with disability did not necessarily need internship experience before they were employed. This was because:

*There are many companies, including Nike, recruiting people with disability who do not require experienced or skilled workers but have good health conditions. The workers can be trained right after they are employed until they can work. This often takes 2-3 weeks.*

Similarly, Ms Sau, from Changsin company, said:

*I think it is not necessary because the company usually allows them to try on the work for few weeks before officially starting, and they still get paid. This is more effective because they can learn by doing the work and many people with*

*disability can do the work well after two weeks of practice. We often train workers after they were employed for 2-3 weeks before they started.*

When the USAID-funded project stopped, so did the school-arranged internships. Ms Mot, the principal of Dong Nai school, stated: “it is hard to sign an agreement with the employers for the internship because they did not want to have interns working for their company”. The reason Ms Tam from Nike gave was: “the workers here are working in chain and have to keep up with the work speed. Having an intern with disability in the chain can delay the work”. While young people with disability saw the need for internships, not all employers did.

#### Employment opportunity after internship

In-depth interviews revealed that young people with disability, graduates, and stakeholders thought that internships were a great opportunity for them to obtain employment. According to the principal of Dong Nai school, Ms Mot: “During the [USAID] support of the project, 100% of school students got employment after their graduation”. Teachers of Dong Nai school indicated in their focus group that the USAID-funded project demonstrated great success in helping students with school to work transition. One of the teachers, Mr Nam, a teacher from Dong Nai school, stated:

*I used to participate in the training courses conducted by VNAH and the school. After the training, where relevant, I also went with the students to companies for internship. The strength of the program was that the students were able to get a job after graduation and they were very confident.*

Graduates also expressed the effectiveness of internships organised by the school. Mr Vang said: “After the internship, if anyone was doing a good job, the company made a promise that they would recruit after graduation and all of my friends were recruited.” Another graduate, Ms Luc, also appreciated that the internship experience, along with a network of employers and the employment service centre, helped to get a job: “I participated in the school to work transition program at Dong Nai school. During that time, I was introduced to an employer by an employment service centre (ESC) through a job fair event and I got an internship and got a job after that”.

## *Career counselling/guidance*

Rogers, Creed, and Creed (2000) proposed that career guidance is a critical and integral part of the education system. Career guidance helps students to clarify and articulate their career goals and expectations, and they make decisions based on this information relating to the labour market. From career counselling, students have the chance to develop skills and knowledge to make decisions about and follow up their employment goals. Career counselling involves a school fostering the motivation and confidence of students in making career decisions (Dawkins, 1988).

Both students and graduates were asked about their experience of support in making decisions about vocational training options and careers. Young people with disability spoke of participating in the vocational training courses conducted by Dong Nai school, participating in internships as part of the vocational training program, and getting support from their teachers and school managers during the job-seeking process through the provision of information relating to available career and vocational training courses.

Information provided by students and graduates indicated that Dong Nai schoolteachers consistently provided support to students and graduates relating to vocational training programs and job availability. As most lived on campus, they often communicated with their teachers and shared their expectations about vocational training and jobs. Ms Trang, a graduate working for Busung company, spoke about such communication with her teachers:

*Teachers at school often asked me about what I wanted to do after graduation. Then, I shared my expectation and asked teachers to help. After that, teacher advised me on what training courses available that suitable to my capacity.*

The job skills training and internships were found to be useful in terms of the career guidance they provided young people with disability. Most students and graduates shared their interest in doing internships so as to find out if they were capable of doing a job. As stated by Ms Luc, a graduate also working for Busung company, her career interest became her career goal after an opportunity to try the job:

*Although I participated in the sewing training and internship organised by Dong Nai school. But I realised that I was not good at this. Then, I decided to learn shoe making, with the help from my teacher, and work on this industry until now because I liked it.*

Most young people with disability were of the view that career guidance changed their attitude towards looking for a job. Interviews indicated that young people learned from what they saw during the internships, gained work experience, and when they understood the work, they started to enjoy the job. Mr Luc, a Year 8 student, shared his thoughts:

*I have had opportunities to practise the sewing. This would make me more confident. And from practising it and knowing more about sewing skills, I start to like it. So practice will help me understand that I can do sewing and I will do it after graduation.*

### 6.2.3 Capacity Building for School Staff

While young people with disability and their parents expected the schoolteachers and managers to provide a range of support services to students, this requires teachers and staff working in the school to work transition process to be adequately qualified and trained. Interviews with teachers and employers acknowledged the support of the USAID-funded project in organising training workshops and training courses for teachers and employers involved in the school to work transition. Three teachers and two employers from the Nike and Changsin companies indicated that their capacity to work with young people with disability and knowledge about disability had been improved through this training. Ms Hai Mot, a teacher at the school, stated:

*I got opportunities to participate in the training workshops conducted by the project. I learned a lot from the training such as how to develop transition plans for students, how to provide counselling/consultation to students in an effective way or how to motivate students in vocational training and job seeking.*

Ms Muoi Tam, another teacher, said: “One of the most important things we learned from the program was the networking. The program put us in contact with different stakeholders, and this helped us provide assistance to the students and graduates more effectively”.

Similarly, an employer representative, Ms Tam indicated in her interview:

*Sometimes I was invited to participate in the training conducted by the school, this was also an opportunity for us to understand better the challenges that students with disability face when they work, and also the needs that students have when they are working. Based on this, we can arrange reasonable accommodation for them at work.*

In the teachers’ focus groups, they indicated that Training of Trainers (TOT) courses conducted by the project improved their knowledge about reasonable accommodation and the services necessary for successful school to work transition. Mr Thang, a teacher at Dong Nai school,

stated: “TOT courses trained us as resource staff working on school to work transition. From this training, we were aware of the information about what works well for students at the workplace and the services’ accessibility”.

Although all teachers at the school were trained in school to work transition services and equipped with the necessary skills, one of the challenges identified by Mr Muoi (VNAH representative) was that there was no full time staff working on the school to work transition program, especially vocational training and job exploration. Information provided by the teachers’ focus group also highlighted the roles and responsibilities of teachers and staff at the school. Teachers mentioned that full-time staff were needed to create relationships with employers, and identify different job possibilities in response to the needs of different people with disability. Without this, Mr Thang strongly stated:

*Nobody wants to give up their current work to work for the school to work transition program because there is no legal framework allocating staffing for this effort. The current school to work transition limits its implementation within the school only, and is maintained by the willingness or personal motivation of school managers and teachers.*

As suggested by Mr Muoi Chin, a former teacher at Dong Nai school: “the USAID-funded project provided short term assistance to formalise the school to work transition program being implemented by Dong Nai school and it now requires a legal framework to ensure the sustainability of the program”.

#### 6.2.4. School and Work Environment

Informants shared in interviews and focus groups which environmental factors at the school and in work they thought influenced the outcomes of the school to work transition program. Themes derived from participants’ views are presented in sections 6.2.4.1 and 6.2.4.2.

According to Ms Mot, the principal of Dong Nai school: “The environment and support required by different types of disability are different. Just some examples, the hearing-impaired need sign language interpretation, the blind need special support technology, and the mobility-impaired need physical accessibility”.

Information provided by informants was coded to highlight the frequency of words or phrases relating to environmental factors in the school and at work. Here, environment refers to the support network or relationships, including friends, family, co-workers and managers, teachers, working conditions, learning conditions, and resource availability.

Coded information was then grouped into themes which included: (i) environment factors at school, which include support from schoolteachers and managers, friendships and networking, (ii) environment factors at work, which include support from co-workers and managers, collegiality among workers, and networking, and (iii) working and learning conditions as resources available for young people with disability.

#### *6.2.4.1. Environmental factors at school*

The majority of the young people with disability cited support from schoolteachers and managers as an important facilitator of success of the program. Students and graduates expressed their appreciation to their teachers and school managers who created an environment that was both caring and comfortable, and supported them in vocational training and employment during the school to work transition process. Graduate, Mr Vang, said:

*The teachers were all very caring and supportive. They helped me with study, with job-seeking and with vocational training. We were receiving the same care and support.*

Another graduate, Ms Do, found school to be home-like, with its support from friends and teachers in daily life:

*I was happy with school and friends there. The school was like my second home because I lived there and got friends, got support and help from my teachers and my friends. Teachers were always there to help.*

The school to work transition program provided an opportunity for students to share their expectations. Ms Nhat, a student, shared in her interview: “I love my teacher because she always encouraged me to share what I want to do and she also talked to my parents about my interests so I could participate in the concerts and events”.

In the interviews with the stakeholders, the commitment and cooperation of school management was highlighted as a contributor to the success of the school to work transition program. According to stakeholders, the school to work transition process requires close

cooperation and partnership between school managers and different stakeholders, especially DOLISA, employers, vocational training agencies, Dong Nai school managers and teachers. The school staff were always willing to help students and graduates with job-seeking. As Ms Muoi Tam stated:

*The current school management was successful in collaboration with employers, vocational training agencies, and DOLISA for the effort to find jobs for students of the school. This required willingness and strong support from school managers.*

Through the program, students improved their awareness and skills to work and interact with other workers in the company and within the community, and built the confidence to acquire jobs. Management decisions and a commitment to focus on the school to work transition program that helped young people with disability to find jobs were identified as important by the majority of stakeholders during the interviews and focus groups. As stated by Mr Muoi Sau, chair of the Parents' Association: "The school management are very committed to assist students and graduates to choose appropriate vocational programs, and assist them with job seeking as well".

Friendships between young people with disability during their school years were mentioned by most students and graduates with disability as an important factor impacting their transition from school to work. According to young people with disability, friends at school were those with whom they had fun, and discussed their academic study, and future job plans. Ms Nhat, a student, said she appreciated an environment in which there were friends with the same disability. However, not everyone had friends and there was a group of three students who mentioned that relationships among students at the school were complicated. As shared by Ms Thap Tu, a student in Year 8:

*The relationship among students here is very complicated. I do not have friends here at school. Students here often fight. Money was stolen and other friends lost a lot of things.*

Graduates found friendships assisted with job-seeking after graduation. Ten graduates mentioned that they helped each other during job-seeking, informed each other about job vacancies and especially activities they could join in outside school. As Ms Do, a graduate, shared at the interview: "I wanted to change my job and I talked with my friends and they introduced me to two companies, one making hats and another on sewing. So I have more

options to choose”.

Mr Vang, a graduate, shared how friends supported each other with job-seeking and employment:

*We learned a lot from failing to fill out the job application forms and later we can help our friends to fill out the forms very well and never fail. We also discussed on what interview questions the company often asks at the interview and then our friends can prepare and they are more confident at the interviews.*

As many graduates got stressed at work, friends were those with whom they could share their stress and information about how to overcome their stressors. As Ms Tram, an employed graduate shared: “my friends also shared with us the work experience and what we should do to overcome difficulties or even how to interact with co-workers”.

Others graduates (Ms Trang and Ms Nau) also pointed out that, when they have friends working for certain companies, their friends can be a good source of information about vacancies and they can then get jobs from there. Ms Trang said: “friends are helping a lot, if they are working, because their boss often asks around and they can introduce us to their boss”. Networking or associating with friends were phrases often mentioned by students and graduates. The information provided by young people with disability in the interviews and focus groups expressed the importance of networking for young people with disability, as it helped to advise them of job opportunities, and hanging out with friends helped them feel better, when they felt bored on campus or were stressed about study. Most students indicated that they wanted to hang out with friends outside school in order to have more information and participate in a bigger range of social activities. However, in the focus group with hearing -impaired students, Mr Do Y indicated: “it is so boring to be at school all the time and I feel like we are in the prison”. Clearly, such a statement of isolation may reflect broader concerns which need to be attended to.

For graduates, they experienced networking to be stronger and more frequent than did students at the school since they were living in rented houses and more free to hang out as they wished, without the control of teachers or parents. Most of the time, graduates were able to be with each other and were happy with their friendships. As shared by Ms Tram, a graduate: “I usually meet my friends after working hours if I have time or when I have an issue”. Other graduates such as Mr Vang, Luc, Xanh and Do shared that they often went to the club meeting for the

hearing-impaired organised every month for socialisation. Mr Vang, a graduate, even had an idea about coming back to school after graduation to share his experience about work, to help students at the school overcome feelings of boredom at school, and to help students to get ready for work and avoid the stresses at work. Mr Vang said in his interview:

*We are graduates and we always wanted to come back to school to share with the students and help them with the experience we have. The school can organize the event and invite us to come back. We can also share the experience at work, so to prepare them with what they need to be ready and the experience they will have. Doing this will avoid the situation that many of us felt bored or stressed when we started working.*

#### *6.2.4.2. Environment factors at work*

Graduates and three employers mentioned that support from co-workers and managers in the workplace was important. According to the employers, employees with disability were always given the best support to work alongside those without disability in an inclusive setting. As shared by Ms Sau, the Human Resource manager of Changsin company: “the support we often provided to workers with disability was the arrangement of seating for workers with disability close to those without disability. Doing so helped workers with disability to get assistance and help when they needed”. Also, according to Ms Tam from Nike, the companies always arranged the seating to help young people with disability enter and exit their workspace in the most convenient way.

Another employer, Ms Muoi Nam, the Manager of Hanh Phuc Bakery, expressed a different view that there was a lack of support from management for workers with disability due to limited communication between managers and the hearing-impaired. She said: “The communication among workers with hearing impairment is limited while there are so many workers at the same time that need help so the workers with disability seem to be ignored”.

According to most of the interviewed graduates (seven of 10), their co-workers were positive and supportive of them in the workplace. They often guided and supported the graduates with disability. According to Ms Tram, a graduate: “a worker with hearing impairment is arranged to work with those without disability in a team so that we can support each other”. Another graduate shared: “as a person with disability, I often work a bit slower from the beginning, but I had my colleague without disability in a team to help, although we had to write down what we expected on a piece of paper”.

The relationship between workers with disability and managers was mentioned more frequently by the employed graduates. Stress and work overload were commonly mentioned. Six graduates mentioned being shy and feeling stressed at work. As Ms Tim stated in her interview: “I was very shy and stressed at the beginning because the manager pushed me to work and nobody helped me and guided me. I had to observe and follow the co-workers next to me” Another graduate Ms Trang said she was stressed because her position and work changed too much. She explained: “I was trained to do sewing, and after few months I was changed to be an assistant to everyone here at the company, and it is hard to keep up with the work”. Some graduates complained about their managers. Frequent changes in management positions at the company meant difficulty adapting. Ms Trang explained: “my manager was changed quite often and each time I had to adjust with a new approach of management, sometimes I did not understand what the manager requested me to do. It was quite hard for me”. She was not happy with her manager:

*I am happy with the job I am doing, but not happy with my manager, because the manager was complaining a lot, she was pushing everyone to work fast and I felt stressed. We are always working in a hurry. I am working also a bit slow compared to other friends and colleagues so I have even to work harder.*

Employed graduates with hearing impairment spoke of issues with collegiality and networking. Seven graduates with hearing impairment provided information at interviews that the communication and interaction between workers with disability and the workers without disability was limited. The main reason for this they said was that there was no sign language interpretation available. As stated by one graduate Ms Tram: “The company often organised events for all workers in the company but the hearing-impaired like us hardly joined because there was no interpretation”. While Ms Trang shared that, although she did not hear or understand much, she sometimes went to company events. She said that it was worth going to see other people. Another graduate, Ms Luc, also shared that, at work, she often talked only to her peers with hearing impairment during lunch time.

It was interesting to hear Ms Xanh, who worked for the Hanh Phuc Bakery, share her thoughts: “At the beginning, I felt bored and isolated to work there because nobody could talk to me. After a while, I started to teach my co-workers sign language so now they can communicate with me with some basic sign language”

#### 6.2.4.3. Working and learning conditions

Stakeholders and young people with disability were asked about their working and learning conditions both at the school and workplace. Stakeholders from the school and DOET, as well as mainly graduates, mentioned accessibility and transportation.

According to Ms Mot, the Principal: “the conditions for learning and teaching at Dong Nai school are quite good because the special school has been receiving a lot of support from the Government. In addition, all teachers of the school have special education background so it is an advantage for the school”.

Since more than 80% of students at Dong Nai school live on campus, accessibility in relation to transportation was not seen as an issue by teachers and managers. For those students who did not live on campus, managers Ms Mot and Ms Bon reported that parents often picked their children up in the afternoon. However, according to teacher Ms Muoi Tam, accessibility was an issue for the students with vision impairment, all of whom lived on campus.

Employed graduates indicated that they often had to travel for work, but found no problems with getting there and home. Ms Luc, a graduate working for Busung company, explained that “my mother often gives a ride from home to work and I catch bus from work to home. We got free bus tickets so travelling is quite convenient for me”.

DOET representative, Mr Bay, had concern about the overall accessibility for people with disability. According to him:

*Very little has been done in this province to assist young people with disability in transportation and mobility. Accessibility in the school was a barrier, especially for the blind and people with mobility impairment. The school grounds were not well organised and were in poor condition.*

Only six students spoke about their learning conditions at the school. Maybe this was because they did not understand the question or these were not considered an issue. Only one student, Mr Thap Luc in Year 9, complained about his accommodation on campus: “the room we are living in is too small for many students living together. We often have 12 students in one room. It is hard for us to study at night”.

Adjusting to work were mentioned by both employers and graduates revealing that they sought to achieve integration into the work environment. According to the representatives of two companies, Changsin and Nike, their companies have provided good working conditions for young people with disability. According to the Changsin Human Resource manager, good working conditions were when: “People with disability, such as people with hearing impairment can ride bikes to the worksite while others without disability have to walk for around one kilometre. If they do not have their bikes, the company arranges the shuttle bus to pick them up”. In addition, reasonable arrangements in regards to the seating also served the purpose of helping workers with disability to keep up with the work-speed:

*Seatings are arranged for workers with disability to ensure that there is always a skilled worker ready to help them if they need to during the working hours.*

Young people with disability liked the idea of a job coach, to provide assistance in obtaining a job or for when they needed instruction on the job. The job coach is someone who conducts an evaluation to match the job with the students’ needs and interests, and also provides workers with necessary assistance when working at the company (Quirk, 2013). Some graduates reported no job coach and no interpretation for hearing-impaired workers, as previously mentioned in the section 6.1.2.

According to Ms Ba, DPO representative in Dong Nai: “Disability support is a challenge for people with disability because they usually do not have a job coach at the workplace. The job coach is an important position that could assist them in daily work”. Ten graduates, including nine who were working, also mentioned this same difficulty. As Ms Do indicated: “We often watch other friends doing the job and then we follow. When we have problems at work, we do not know who to talk with”.

Section 6.1 reported on the research informants’ perspectives and understandings of the macro system of this school to work transition program, including their understandings of policy and enforcement mechanisms related to financing, legislation, communication as well as key partnership and coordination mechanisms. Section 6.2 reported on these insider understandings of the exosystem, the processes which facilitate the provision of school to work transition services in the school environment, for example, needs assessment, transition planning, vocational training, employment. The next two sections 6.3 and 6.4 explore the relationships with family and friends and individual factors, and these constitute the two inner circles of

Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework. Here, students, graduates, families, and stakeholders provide insight into their lived experience of the school to work program.

### **6.3. Mesosystem – Care/Parenting and Social Network Factors**

The mesosystem in school to work transition encompasses the interaction of different microsystems in which young people with disability are located. It is a system of microsystems and, as such, involves linkages between home and school, between peer groups and family, and between family and community. This section covers (i) support from families and parents, and (ii) social network factors among young people with disability and their colleagues.

Support from families and parents in the school to work transition is important in helping develop students' educational and vocational planning goals (Boone, 1992). According to Kohler (1996), family involvement can consist of parents or care providers' engagement in school to work transition activities including transition planning/needs assessment meetings, extracurricular/networking activities, transportation to and from school and the workplace, job-seeking and job applications. Relevant social network factors include multiple professionals collaborating in the development and delivery of such services as transition planning, vocational training, guidance and counselling, participation in school to work related events, or the clubs or network of DPOs or self-help groups.

Themes about working with and involving parents, families, professionals from different sectors, and collaboration in the school to work transition program can be represented in the mesosystem of Bronfenbrenner's (1978) framework. Two themes, which emerged from interviews with young people with disability, care/parenting factors and social network factor/multi-professional collaboration, are presented in section 6.3.1 and 6.3.2. A summary of these labelled as either facilitators or barriers is presented in Table 39.

Table 39: Mesosystem - Care/Parenting and Social Networking Factors

<b>Mesosystem - Care/parenting and Social Networking Factors</b>	
<b>Facilitators</b>	<b>Barriers</b>
<b>6.3.1. Care/parenting Factors</b>	
<b>Parents' engagement</b>	
<b>Government support</b>	
Parents active in Parents' Association	Limited parental engagement in transition planning
Parents interested in their children's future	Parents have limited capacity or information
<b>USAID-funded project</b>	
Parents' Association and some training courses	Parents' involvement in transition planning limited
Vocational options and job-seeking	Parents' capacity is limited
Transportation	Challenges for students with vision impairment
<b>Family relationship before, during and after USAID-funded project</b>	
Influence of parents on their children's decisions	Parents' capacity and availability is limited
School and Parents' Association well connected	Meetings do not discuss how to help students
Support from family and parents for children	Dependency on parents, low expectations of children
On campus, students have access to school support	Miscommunication between parents and children
Young people trust their parents' decisions	Mixed expectations of parents
<b>6.3.2. Social network factors/multi-professional collaboration</b>	
<b>Government support</b>	
Official roles and responsibilities are clear	No formal mechanism for networking
<b>USAID-funded project</b>	
An active network of stakeholders	A professional partnership not formalised
Stakeholders understand young people's needs	Mixed responsiveness to young people's needs

### 6.3.1 Care/parenting Factors

Students, graduates, and stakeholders revealed that young people with disability and stakeholders considered the involvement of parents and family with the school to work transition process as important to success. They identified specific factors such as parents' active engagement, the education levels of parents, and the nature and strength of the family relationships between young people, parents and families as relevant.

#### 6.3.1.1 Parents' engagement

Interviews conducted with young people with disability and other stakeholders including parents revealed contrasting views about the roles of parents in the school to work transition process.

### Parents and their roles

Ms Bon, the vice-principal identified that students spend more time with teachers and carers than they do with parents (USAID-VNAH, 2015). In view of this, the school is known for its organisation of two parents' meetings each semester. In interviews, Ms Mot, the principal, and teachers Ms Hai Mot and Ms Muoi Tam, reported that the focus of these meetings was on discussing academic plans for the school and the students, as well as advising families of the financial contributions/fees that they were required to pay to the school. They also reported that there is also a space for the parents and teachers to discuss individual students' plans and goals for study as well as their career expectations.

Interviews with three parents and the focus group with six parents showed that parents relied a lot on the school because they thought that the schoolteachers understood their children's employment needs better than they did, and that the school was well-placed to help their children with employment after graduation.

Limited parental engagement with students' transition planning was reported by most parents and teachers. According to Mr Muoi Sau, the representative of Parents' Association, one of the main reasons for this was due to parents' limited access to relevant job information. In addition, parents and families also had limited contact with employers. Ms Mai and Mr Hong said in their focus group that they were passive about helping their kids seek employment opportunities. As Ms Muoi Bay, a mother of a Year 9 student, said:

*Most of students here are away from their parents, so that their parents are not very active in helping their kids in searching for jobs, including me. Sometimes we wanted to help our kids, but it is hard because we lack information.*

Ms Hai Hai, a Dong Nai school staff member said: "A lot of parents do not know what is going on with their kids at school. We sometimes invited them to come and discuss about their kids' vocational training options but they said they were busy and did not come". Teacher Ms Hai Mot pointed out that, while: "parents play the most important roles to their kids' success, most of them are living far from the city and this is a disadvantage for the students".

Parents' qualifications and level of education also seemed to influence parents' views about their roles and their engagement or participation in this process. Parent Ms Mai shared in her

focus group: “I agree parents play important roles in the kids’ transition planning and their kids’ employment, but only if we have education qualifications and we can feel confident to interact and contact the employers”. Stakeholder and DPO leader, Ms Hai Ba, shared that: “due to the low level of education, parents do not have ability to advise their kids to work or they do not understand the skills and capacity that their kids have”.

While many students and graduates felt more confident to work after participating in the vocational training and internship program, parents and teachers from the school were not as confident about their children’s or students’ ability to work. DPO leader, Ms Hai Ba who was experienced in assisting young people with job-seeking, shared her view about the role of parental attitudes: “99% of parents I worked with did not want their kids going to work because they had no trust in their kids’ ability to work and even the teachers of the school also thought that it is hard for young students with disability to find a job in a competitive environment”. The reality is that jobs are limited for people with disability.

### *Young people on their roles*

There were distinct differences between the views of young people and the views of their parents about each of their roles in the school to work transition process. While parents perceived their roles and engagement in the school to work transition process as limited due to a lack of information, access to employers, and limited educational qualifications, students and graduates expected their parents to assist them with identifying vocational options, job-seeking, and transportation from school to work.

### *Vocational options and job seeking*

All young people with disability considered their parents played a role in the school to work transition process, in job-seeking and/or identifying vocational training options. One said: “they helped us with filling out the application form”, and another stated: “my parents guided me on what job I should do”. Some students have planned to rely heavily on their parents. For example, one student Mr Thap Luc stated: “my mother will find a job for me at her company”.

As previously mentioned, parents were not confident in their abilities to assist their children with locating employment, but the children felt they needed and/or received help from their

parents with job-seeking and advice about vocational training options. Mr Muoi Sau, the Chair of the Parents' Association who actively participated in the school to work transition program and training, raised his concern that young people with disability relied on their parents to find paid work. He stated that:

*The students now depend a lot on parents and teachers or school, while parents have limited access to information or not much relationship with employers, the roles of school in this effort to provide direction and advice to students are important. Because of that, the school can set up the communication channel with parents to discuss the possibility and how we can work together to assist our kids.*

Ms Tram, another graduate, explained that she had her mother's support, because her mother worked in the sewing sector and had experience: "My mother works for the company so she also helped me to find a job. Since she is also working on the same job, she shared with me the experience that she had and I learned from there, therefore I work without stress". Another student, Ms Xanh, shared: "I often talked with my father because he is able to use sign language. My father was the one who advised me on what I should do, and I got a job following his advice".

Although all of them expected their parents' roles to include help with job-seeking and vocational options, four students and three graduates realised that their parents did not have the capacity to help them with this, although they may have wanted to. Mr Thap, a Year 9 student, shared in his interview: "Sometimes I asked my parents for help in looking for vocational training courses, but they said they did not know anyone or any contacts". Mr Thap That, a visually-impaired Year 9 student, said: "My parents did not go to school and they have no information and ability to help with job-seeking. It really depends on me". Ms Tim another graduate said: "my sister and I both had hearing impairment, however, my parents cannot use sign language. They could not help us with job-seeking, even the job application form".

### *Transportation*

Assistance provided by parents with transportation was commonly mentioned (seven of 10 graduates). Most of them mentioned that their parents gave them a lift to job interviews or to work during the first few months. According to graduate Mr Vang:

*Parents are close to us, understand us best, and who can live and assist us daily. After graduation, they are the main ones who give us a ride back and forth from school so that they need to arrange the job that is convenient for them as well.*

### *6.3.1.2 Family relationships*

The relationship between young people with disability and their families was mentioned by students, graduates and stakeholders, especially teachers, DPOs and employers. Analysis of the information provided by informants revealed themes relating to family relationships, including the degree of parental influence on the decisions of young people with disability, and the quality of the relationship between parents and children with disability such as degrees of supportiveness, trust, and fairness, or lack thereof.

#### *Parents' influence on decisions*

The majority of students and graduates indicated that, although parents were not always able to help young people with disability in job-seeking or vocational training, they appreciated their parents' views and advice about what they should learn or what work they should do after graduation. Ms Nhat, a student, said: "I should listen to my parents' decision and advice, although sometimes I did not agree, it is just because they are my parents, they look after us". Four other students mentioned that they thought they should listen to their parents because parents are those who were close to them.

A strong connection between parents and the school was established through the Parents' Association. The Association consisted of three parent members, including the Chair. The Chair of this Association, Mr Muoi Sau, spoke about presenting the voice of parents in the school as a vehicle to communicate with the school managers about issues relating to their children. It also worked together with the school to plan and organise any public events or program. However, the Association did not meet to discuss how to help students in regards to job-seeking and vocational training, but more discussed things like the fees required of parents for their children's activities during the year.

The negative mindsets of parents with respect to the abilities of their children sometimes presented difficulties that hindered the success of the school to work transition. Parents' expectations about employment were low, in that having a job was not a must for their children.

In their view, it was acceptable for children to stay at home after graduation. These low expectations from some parents did not motivate children to seek vocational training or investigate job options. For example, Mr Dao, father of a Year 9 student said in his focus group: “I don’t expect my son to work, it is okay for him to finish Year 9, then he can get married to a girl without disability, then his life is ok”. A mother of a Year 9 female student, Ms Cuc, also supported Mr Dao’s idea: “I think it is hard for our child with a hearing impairment to get a job, and we are prepared for her to stay at home to help us with housework”. Even the Chair of the Parents’ Association, Mr Muoi Sau, accepted the idea that his daughter with hearing impairment was too young to think about a secondary education level or vocational training and employment, and he was unable to say what her future would look like.

Living a distance from their parents was also a challenge for young people. Living apart from their parents sometimes contributed to a poor relationship between themselves and their parents. With students spending most of their time on campus, the communication and interaction between students and their parents became less and less. According to the information provided by teachers at the focus group, parents often left their children with teachers and left the school to help their children with everything. As Ms Trinh said in a focus group: “The problem is that parents do not pay enough attention to their kids. They send their kids to school and think that job-seeking is the responsibility of the school”. A teacher Mr Thang, also mentioned in his focus group: “Parents play the most important roles in their kids’ success at work and study but most of the students are living on campus and parents do not often contact the school and their kids to discuss their children’s development and progress”. Some students also observed that their parents had a lack of trust in their ability to make decisions. Ms Thap Tu, a Year 9 student, shared in her interview: “Because I am a hearing and speaking-impaired person, my mother thinks that I cannot make a right decision and I have to listen to her but she usually does not care about what I need”.

Feeling unsupported by parents was also shared by one Year 8 student, Ms Tu: “My parents do not care about me. I feel sad as I do not have anyone from my family to share my thoughts with. I live on campus most of the time ... I feel abandoned by my parents”. Another Year 9 student, Mr Thap Luc, also shared in his interview that his parents were not supportive or caring about his future: “I talked with my parents but everything was unclear as my parents said that it is not time yet. I can work anywhere on any jobs as soon as there are jobs for me”.

### 6.3.2. Social Network Factors/Multi-Professional Collaboration

Information provided by stakeholders and young people revealed that a network of community support played an important role in assisting them with job-seeking and selecting vocational training. Young people found it was especially important to share information about work experience and job vacancies with each other.

#### 6.3.2.1 *Self-help group for the hearing-impaired*

Dong Nai province has one self-help group for the hearing-impaired. In addition, one provincial self-help group for all types of disability is under review by the Provincial People's Committee before it becomes a legally recognised DPO. Students and graduates of Dong Nai school were interested in going to the regular monthly meetings of the self-help group. Graduates Ms Tram, Ms Trang, and Ms Luc shared that they came to the meetings for fun and for sharing information about jobs, the difficulties they faced at work and how to overcome the difficulties. Students such as Mr Ngu, Mr Luc, Ms Thap Tu and Ms Ba shared that they came to the self-help group to learn more sign language and also to look for information about job vacancies or to learn from graduates. In addition, according to graduate Mr Thanh, he said in his interview that he appreciated the self-help group: "The club for the hearing-impaired helped us to fill out the form if needed. We often chat when we meet at the regular meetings to ask about how and what to say at the job interviews". Ms That, a current student of Dong Nai, also shared her thoughts about the self-help group in her interview: "when we came and talked with graduates at the self-help group, the graduates often told us about vacancies and also were helpful in advising us on what we can do after graduation".

#### 6.3.2.2 *The network of stakeholders*

One of the successful factors of the school to work transition was the network of stakeholders established during the USAID-funded project. All stakeholders interviewed indicated that this network of vocational training agencies and employers had been effectively assisting students and graduates to get jobs after graduation. According to Ms Bon, the vice-principal of Dong Nai school, this network of professionals provided a range of different services such as: internships, vocational training, job opportunities, capacity-building and also raised awareness among different stakeholders involved in the school to work transition process. As mentioned,

the USAID-funded project resulted in a signed agreement among the school, employers and vocational training providers regarding the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder.

Information provided at the teacher's focus group showed that the teachers also appreciated the efforts of the USAID-funded project in training teachers in the school to work transition process via a series of workshops and courses. At the training, teachers had opportunities to meet and talk with employers and the vocational training agencies, and they could also introduce their students, who were looking for work after their graduation, to employers.

#### **6.4. Microsystem – Individual Factors of Young People with Disability**

Students, graduates and stakeholders provided information through interviews and focus group discussions that revealed the personal factors which impacted on the participation and engagement of young people with disability in the school to work transition process. It is important to acknowledge that not all young people with disability have problems with successful transition from school to work, but some do. Informants identified five key factors which mediated their success in school to work transition. These included: (i) stigma related to disability, (ii) confidence, (iii) hope and aspirations, (iv) motivation to engage, and (v) peer relationships/friendships network. Table 40 presents these factors as microlevel facilitators and barriers.

Table 40: Microlevel Facilitators and Barriers

<b>Microsystem - Individual Factors of Young People with Disability</b>	
<b>Facilitators</b>	<b>Barriers</b>
<b>6.4.1. Stigma related to disability</b>	
<b>Self-Stigma</b>	
<b>Government support and USAID-funded project</b>	
Hearing impairment no problem if interpretation	With no interpretation, miscommunication and stigma Vision impaired students felt dependent on others
<b>Social stigma</b>	
<b>Government support and USAID-funded project</b>	
Strong school support mediates stigma	Teachers and school managers had low expectations
Most families supported their kids to work	Parents' low expectations of kids led to low investment
Employers made adjustments at work	No interpretation at work results in disengagement
No feeling of discrimination at work	Teachers' low expectations of their students Employers' lower expectations
Young people appreciated employer's support	Exclusion from meetings and socialisation at work
<b>6.4.2. Confidence</b>	
<b>6.4.2.1. Knowledge, attitude and awareness of young people with disability about vocational training and employment</b>	
<b>Government support</b>	
Young people learned vocational skills	Without internships, students had no work experience
<b>USAID-funded project</b>	
Better understanding of work and opportunities	None reported
<b>6.4.2.2. Social/interpersonal skills</b>	
<b>Government support</b>	
Peer interaction with and without disability	No additional support, such as interpretation
<b>USAID-funded project</b>	
Range of social skills and work training	Limited interaction with peers without disability
<b>Preparedness for work USAID-funded project</b>	
Learned work skills	Short-term training for communication and work skills
Networking and friendships established	Fear to start working among students
Independent living	
<b>6.4.3 Hope and aspirations for the future</b>	
<b>Government support and USAID-funded project</b>	
Most students focused on jobs after graduation	No more job-seeking support after graduation
Some students hoped to continue with study	Range of support needed even if participating in VT
<b>6.4.4 Motivation to engage</b>	
<b>Government support and USAID-funded project</b>	
Internships increased confidence and motivation	Stress due to low level work skills and unstable jobs
<b>6.4.5. Peer relationships and friendship</b>	
<b>Government support and USAID-funded project</b>	
Friends helped in applying for training and jobs	Few social activities for networks among young people
Information-sharing networks for jobs and stress	

### 6.4.1. Stigma Related to Disability

Analysis of information provided by informants identified themes related to stigma and their disability. These included: (i) the experience and challenges faced by young people with disability and (ii) how the attitudes or beliefs of families/stakeholders of young people are perceived to facilitate or hinder the success of the school to work transition program.

The majority of the students and graduates believed that sign language was crucial for hearing-impaired people. Information provided by young people with disability indicated perceptions and beliefs that students and graduates had about themselves and how the construction of disability hindered their success. Mr Vang, a graduate, working for a company that hired 60 people with hearing impairment, commented: “with sign language, we can do anything we want. But without it, it was frustrating to observe and guess what people were doing and follow them at work without interpretation”. Another graduate Ms Luc also said in her interview: “Many times, the hearing-impaired are usually misunderstood and have no opportunities to explain or express their concern”.

On the other hand, students with hearing impairment found no problem with their hearing impairment when they lived on campus and could communicate among themselves. As one of the students Ms Tu shared: “I am okay to be here and have no problems with communicating with my friends here at school. But when I went on an internship or went outside school, I started to have problems with those who could talk”. The issue of self-stigma was more evident in students with vision impairment. Interviews with three students at the school found that they were shy or accepted the fact that they were dependent on others and could not work because of their impairment. Ms Nhat, a Year 7 student, shared: ‘It has been hard for me to think about employment opportunities because I do not see my future – what can I do without being able to see anything?’” Mr Tam seemed to be more confident in his interview when he was thinking about work after graduation but still did not expect much for his future work: “As a person with disability, I should not ask for much help, and should not think of any big thing. I just want to have a simple and easy job and earn some monies”.

Stakeholders also shared and reflected on actual experience of discrimination against students and graduates. According to Crocker and Major (1989), career outcomes are influenced by both environmental and attitudinal barriers for people with disability, including those with a hearing

impairment when they are denied access to support and services. According to the principal of Dong Nai school, Ms Mot: “disability was considered as a key barrier for the students here at the school and impacts on the school to work transition program”.

Interviews with schoolteachers and managers revealed the reality of limited job opportunities and the consequences for young people with disability; this led the school to have low expectations in getting jobs for students after graduation. Mr Thin said in his focus group: “We have to accept the fact that the students here have disability and cannot compete with others without disability. We will try our best to assist them in seeking jobs, but it is okay if they cannot find anything”. Another teacher, Mr Thang, said in his focus group: “many students who finished a university degree cannot get a job, therefore it is hard for the students with disability who finished Year 9 to get a job”.

In the community setting, there was a mix of different family expectations and attitudes towards children with disability. Information from interviews and focus groups with parents is represented by Ms Trinh’s comment in her focus group: “children with disability have no ability to work. Because of this, sometimes very little investment is made to support children in job-seeking” Another parent, Mr Dao, expressed his view at the focus group: “I don’t expect much from my son, because of his disability. It is okay for him not to work”. One former teacher, Mr Muoi Chin, said it was as though parents sent their kids to Dong Nai school, because it was a place that would take care of their children: “the school is like a kindergarten for their kids”.

No student complained about discrimination or negative attitudes from co-workers or managers towards the workers with disability. Employers provided support, such as seating arrangements, or a concession to arrive at work half an hour later and to leave earlier.

#### 6.4.2. Confidence

When young people with disability were asked about the impact of the school to work transition program on their lives, their answers provided insight into their experience. They all concurred that the school to work transition program had better prepared them for employment and helped them to be more confident and live independently. They categorised their benefits as: (i)

improved knowledge and awareness about work and vocational training programs, (ii) improved social and interpersonal skills, (iii) motivation and engagement in the program, (iv) improved work skills through internships, and (v) preparedness for work. The challenges they expressed in each of these areas are presented in sections 6.4.2.1. to 6.4.2.5.

#### *6.4.2.1. Knowledge and attitudes*

Students and graduates indicated that most had a better understanding about the work they wanted and needed to do because they had chances to do internship and vocational training provided via the school to work transition program. Most of the graduates also indicated that they had gained knowledge and skills about the work they needed to do when they were employed. Graduates, such as Ms Luc and Ms Xanh, appreciated the chance to learn through internships how people interacted at work and what employers expected them to do at work.

Similar to the graduates, seven of 17 students participated in the internship program organised by the school with financial support from USAID. They all indicated that both internship and vocational training program were helpful, especially in making decisions about what types of job they should do after graduation. Thap Tam, a Year 9 student, shared: “I went to the company to do internship on sewing organised by the school, and I realised I did not like it. After graduation, I am going to do haircutting”.

Internships or work experience also helped build positive attitudes of students and graduates with disability at work. Many graduates and students realised they needed to work to achieve an independent life. For example, Ms Luc, a graduate, was very positive: “I think I need to work because I should not depend on my parents for long time. They are getting older and I should help my parents too”. Other students changed their mind over the period of the three rounds of data collection from: “I do not want to work” to “I will think about work”, and then “I want to start to look for job when I am done with Year 9”.

Ms Nhat was a Year 8 student when she first participated in an interview. At this interview, she did not have any view about work after graduation, but wanted to continue with study. She had not participated in vocational training and, at her first interview, said: “I want to continue with study”. By the second interview, even though she had participated in the vocational training organised by the school, she was still not very sure about her plans for work or whether

to continue to study. However, by her third interview, she started expressing the need to look for jobs after graduation. She said: “I think it is better for me to look for jobs and work after graduation because I do not think I can continue with study”.

#### *6.4.2.2. Hope and aspirations*

Career aspirations can be defined as striving for opportunities for training, furthering one’s education, looking for self-fulfilling jobs such as leadership and managing others (Pinquart, Juang, & Silbereisen, 2003). In order to understand the hopes and aspirations of young people with disability, students were asked questions about their goals after graduation. Their hopes and aspirations varied, with most students focusing on future careers, others on continuing study, some not knowing about their future, while others were waiting for their parents to assist with their employment. Some students had no idea about what they wanted to do after graduation.

Six students indicated their wish to be independent of their parents. As Ms Nhat, a student from Dong Nai, said at her interview: “I think we need to work after graduation in order to earn for our daily living. We cannot depend on our parents”. Similar to the students, graduates also shared their positive hopes for their employment: “we have grown up and should not financially depend on our parents. Therefore, trying to do a good job is one way to be independent” (Mr Vang, focus group with graduates).

The expectation of having a job was one way that both hope and worry were expressed by some students. However, sometimes this was a worry. One student, Ms Bat, expressed in her focus group: “I am going to graduate this May and am very worried about what I am going to do after graduation. I hope I can find a job after vocational training course”.

The five students with vision impairment indicated they wished to continue with study at a higher level because job opportunities were limited. Mr Tam said in his interview: “I want to continue with study after Year 9, because I am not sure what I am going to do”. Another visually-impaired student, Mr Manh, gave his impairment as an explanation: “Since we cannot see anything and it is hard for us to find a job, perhaps continuing with study is the best option”. Alongside wanting to work, feelings of being unsure about their futures were commonly expressed in interviews and focus groups. Uncertainty was expressed by Mr Bac, a Year 8

student: “I am not sure what should be done”, and a Year 9 student, Mr Thap That, said: “I do not know what to share because I have no plan for future yet”. Other students wanted to do specific jobs but were not sure how to go about getting them. Ms That, a Year 9 student said: “I wanted to do ironing job at the company but I am not sure how I can get that job”.

#### *6.4.2.3. Social/interpersonal skills*

According to Flexer, Baer, Luft, and Simmons (2013), both social and functional skills are necessary to help young people with disability better prepare for inclusion in society. Social skills, as mentioned by Greene and Kochhar (2003), are skills needed to properly and successfully communicate and interact with others in community and work settings.

Information shared by the students and graduates highlighted that social skills development was a benefit of participating in the school to work transition program through internships and vocational training. The majority of students and graduates emphasised the benefits of vocational training and internship as opportunities. Ms Tu said she benefitted from an: “exchange of ideas and experience”, as well as “I remembered that I learned how to make friends ...how to talk with people, and how to express what I want...”. Graduate Mr Vang spoke of the importance of: “relationship development and communication”.

Ms Bat, a Year 9 student explained in her focus group that: “From the vocational training program, I can discuss with friends about the work experience”. This referred to sharing information about the jobs with each other. This was highlighted by most students who participated in the vocational training. Other students and graduates mentioned that they had fun in their vocational training because they built close friendships. Ms Luc said: “I was shy at the beginning to share information about anything but now I feel comfortable because they are my friends”.

Although students and graduates expressed their appreciation for the social and interpersonal skills they gained through the internship and vocational training programs, the barriers to communication still remained given their hearing impairment were not accommodated. All graduates complained about the limited interaction among co-workers at the workplace.

#### 6.4.2.4 Confidence and motivation

Most students and graduates indicated that, after the internship or vocational training, they were “more confident” or “motivated” or “ready” to go to work. Graduates expressed their appreciation for the training and experience and the confidence they had engendered. One graduate, Ms Luc, shared in her interview: “When I was a Year 9 student, I was often scared before entering the workforce. The school provided information and prepared me with skills to cope with different situations at work and I felt confident when I started”.

One Year 8 student, Ms Thap Nhi, shared her belief in herself after her vocational training at Dong Nai school:

*The internship was important as I could get experience and get used to the work before I start so I am excited to start the work after graduation. I believe, after graduation, I can find a job more easily or even I get job with the employer that I did internship with.*

Another graduate, Ms Xanh, with a hearing impairment shared her appreciation of the school for supporting her with an internship with Rosa: “The training at Rosa was quite good, I felt confident working with people and skills to bake cakes”.

Knowing the work environment and getting to know people who they would be working with was also a factor that motivated young people with disability at work. Ms Tu explained: “I went on the internship last year. I liked going to see people working at the company. I worked with some people there during the internship and hope that I can work with them again”. Mr Mau, a Year 9 student, mentioned that practical work experience were important: “Learning directly from what and how people were working is faster and saves time and I can do the job right away after graduation”.

The majority of students and graduates found the internship and vocational training were helpful in motivating them to work after graduation. However, the practical experience of the training at school was sometimes different to the work requirements of the companies when they started to work. Three of the ten graduates (Ms Do, Ms Tram and Ms Trang) identified that the school training did not always match with what was required in the workplace.

Stress at work was also a factor that discouraged young people at work. They shared this stress and how it sometimes resulted in disappointment at work and a feeling of wanting to quit the

job. Graduate Ms Tim was working at Changsin and said: “I was moved to different jobs all the time (different parts of the production chain), and it is very difficult to catch up with a new job. In addition, the job requires new skills and training, but nobody guided me in a new job”.

#### *6.4.2.5. Preparedness for work*

A sense of preparedness for work is an indicator of how well a school to work transition program has assisted young people with disability to prepare for future work. According to Dong Nai students and graduates, work preparation is carried out through the school to work transition program including vocational training, internship, and events/networking activities such as job fairs. The final step or outcome is the ability of young people to seek, obtain and retain employment.

When discussing the perceived benefits for participating in school to work transition services, the majority of students and graduates noted that they were learning skills and tools that they would need to survive at work. Findings from the interviews has formed themes relating to work preparedness pertaining to: (i) the transition program’s work skills training, such as job application, and job searching, (ii) networking skills, and leisure or recreation, and (iii) other life skills such as independent living or how to overcome stress at work.

Work skills were mentioned by 20 of the 27 students and graduates and included sewing skills, and skills for job searching, job interviews, and filling out the application form. As Mr Vang said in his interview: “The training courses conducted by Dong Nai school trained us how to answer questions at our job interviews”. Another graduate Mr Nam mentioned: “I learned to work at the company ... It was good as the internship prepared us with ideas about the work, work expectations, and requirements”. Mr Long emphasised: “The employers are always interested in someone who knows the job and we are more confident to work when we know about the job. The training conducted by Dong Nai was very helpful”.

In the focus group with graduates, they indicated their appreciation of the skills they acquired through the vocational training program and even being able to pass them onto others. Ms Xanh, who had worked at a bakery for almost two years, stated: “I am fluent in my work now and I am able to train another friend with hearing impairment who just started to work for the Bakery a few weeks ago”.

Young people with disability also referenced how the school to work transition program prepared them with skills to overcome the stress and skills to live independently. Ms Tim, an employed graduate, said:

*What I learned from school would help me and other students to cope with the difficulties during the work or to help employers to understand better the need for people with disability to work in a less stressful environment. I had opportunities to participate in the training by the school and I also learned some skills.*

Ms Luc explained that the school to work transition activities also prepared her to live independently and to make decisions about her life and her work. She shared:

*The school provided information and prepared me with skills to cope with different situations at work and I felt confident when I started.*

Although there was appreciation from both graduates and students about the benefits they gained during the school to work transition program, they also mentioned where the program could have done better. Persistent fear at work still existed among students a few months after graduation. As Ms Trang, a graduate, shared: “We fear to see the manager for the first few months as we did not know what to start with”.

Another difficulty mentioned by students at the interviews was that the availability of internships was sometimes scant. With no internships there was no learning on the job and they were stressed when they started any job without that lead-in. Some wanted to quit the job within the first few months.

In addition, many students and graduates with disability still found that they needed more skills practice to fill out job application forms and interviewing skills. As Ms Tram proposed in her interview: “we need to know more about the work situations, so that we are prepared for it when we work”.

Uncertainty about the future was also shared by students. The majority of students expressed “not being sure” about what to do after graduation. According to Ms Hai from the school staff, there was a lack of preparedness for work “due to the lack of support from the [USAID] project [once it stopped].

### 6.4.3 Peer Relationships and Friendships

Peer relationships appeared to be important sources of support for young people with disability in the school to work transition process, including when choosing vocational training options, seeking jobs after graduation, job application forms and supporting each other during the stress and difficulties of work. The majority of students and graduates spoke about relationships with their friends and colleagues at school and at work being important. However, like all adolescents and young adults, some relationships were harmonious and others less so.

Both students and graduates appreciated the positive relationships amongst themselves resulting in positive support for their school to work transition activities. They indicated that they discussed available vocational training courses amongst themselves and their interest in the programs Mr Thap That, a student, mentioned: “When I have any questions regarding job seeking, vocational training and any issues relating to life, I often communicate with my friends for their advice”. Another graduate Mr Nau also shared a common view regarding the importance of friendship in assisting each other in job-seeking, especially from those who have been working: “My friend was a graduate working for a company. Sometimes, I talked with her and she shared her experience about her jobs. She was helpful to provide us with real experience in the working environment and I learned from her”.

Both graduates and students alike indicated that friendship had helped them at work, especially when they felt bored or did not know how to do their work. Ms Tim said: “Friends who know me can advise me on what to do. I have friends working for the companies so that I also want to go to the company because I like to work in a place where my friends are working”. Many other graduates also indicated that they often met to assist each other with filling out the application for Ms Xanh said:

*We often talk about social issues, and sometimes people also talked about jobs, what people are doing and how to find a job. Sometimes students here asked us about how to find a job on face-book. I also helped my friends to fill out the application forms*

Another graduate knew that that her friend helped her change her mind about a problem. Ms Do explained: “I was also very stressed at the beginning and I sometimes wanted to quit the job and I was able to overcome it after I shared with my friend and she advised me on what to do”.

A small pocket of students spoke of relationship problems at the school. Students Ms Thap Nhi and Ms Thap Tu mentioned conflict and feeling isolated. A lack of trust due to the loss of personal belongings resulted in wanting to leave the school because they felt friendless. As shared by Ms Thap Tu: “the relationship among students here is very complicated. I do not have friends. Students here at school often fight. They steal money and other stuff from each other”.

Young people with disability often turned to their peers more than parents or other adults when they needed support for job seeking or a job application or when they faced difficulties or stress at work. As Mr Thap That, a student, shared in the interview: “I often communicate with my friends through the phone, and when I have any questions, I often talk to them for their advice regarding job-seeking, vocational training, and any issues relating to life. They even know more information than my parents do”.

Limited social activities on offer reduced the opportunities to build friendships and networks. After the USAID-funded project ended, the soft skills training was rarely organised and as a result, the students and new graduates spoke more about being bored at school. Most wanted to have more social activities and communication opportunities organised at school. Ms Nhat said: “I want to have more social activities organised by the school so that we can communicate with friends and help each other during and after school”. Participation of graduates in social events at work was also limited due to a lack of sign language interpretation. As Ms Xanh said: “We want to have more fun activities at work and this will help us to get to know each other and support each other at work. But the companies just organise one or two events occasionally and we hardly participate as we did not have anyone communicating with us”.

## SUMMARY

The application of Bronfenbrenner’s (1978) framework not only helped to organise the findings but also enhanced the understanding of factors that facilitate and hinder the school to work transition process for young people with disability. The findings revealed gaps in support services and policies, needed to prepare young people with disability to gain employment and be included in workplaces and society.

Barriers to school to work transition were encountered at each of the four levels. Analysis of the information gathered from participants illustrated that, for students with disability to successfully transition to employment, it is not just about getting a job. It also involves the attitudes of policy-makers, service providers and the community towards disability and the abilities of people with disability, the capacity of the society and the environment to accommodate the needs of young people with disability.

While there are many successes in this program, not the least of which is employment of the vast majority of graduates, the findings also reveal the lack of attention and support for young people with hearing impairment so that they can effectively communicate and interact with their peers at work and in vocational training programs. These participants asked for sign language interpretation at work and at vocational training. Without it they feel and are excluded. They also wanted their parents to be involved more in their transition planning, and almost without exception, these young people wanted their parents to have higher expectations for them in respect of work.

Inaccessible services and an environment which does not always accommodate the needs of young people with disability can lead to increased discrimination, stigma and isolation at work and school. This of course impacts the goals of inclusive education and work environments for young people with disability.

# **CHAPTER 7 POLICY, LEGISLATION AND SERVICES**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter outlines policies and available services that impact the school to work transition program in Dong Nai school. In particular, it examines factors that either facilitate or hinder the enforcement of policies that are in place to ensure the quality of service delivery for the school to work transition program for young people with disability.

First, with the goal of identifying all policies, laws and enforcement mechanisms relevant to young people with disability in Vietnam, secondary sources of data such as government legislation and reports, school reports and other disability assessment reports were reviewed and analysed. A list of 26 disability-related policies and legislation on school to work transition programs were identified and the documents were reviewed. Second, a range of quantitative and qualitative data about policies and services were collected and analysed from the 35 students with disability, 22 graduates and 23 stakeholders via the two questionnaires as well as the in-depth interviews, focus groups.

This chapter consists of six sections. Sections 7.1 and 7.2 provide a comprehensive review of what is known of the existing policies and programs for Vietnam in general and its impact on the existing school to work transition. This includes the roles and responsibilities of the functioning agencies within the school to work transition program carried out in Dong Nai school. Sections 7.3 and 7.4 provide analyses of informants' knowledge and awareness of the laws, policies and entitlements related to school to work transition, as well as their own identified priorities and ratings of satisfaction in regard to policies and services. Section 7.5 provides an analysis of the strengths and gaps in relation to school to work transition policies and programs, and finally, section 7.6 presents the findings from different perspectives regarding factors that impact the quality of services for the school to work transition program.

### **7.1 Policy and Legislation on Disability for School to Work Transition**

Information about the policies and legislation for school to work transition was collected from secondary sources of data. Four international and regional legal instruments were identified as

well as four national laws, five decrees, six circulars and inter-circulars, and seven decisions, directives and pieces of correspondence. These all have a role in guiding the enforcement of policies, legislation and services directly relevant to school to work transition programs for young people with disability in Vietnam.

The development of law and policies in Vietnam follow a civil law system resulting in numerous relevant legal documents issued by a range of agencies as described by the Law on Promulgation of Legal Normative Documents (2015; Phan, 2014). Article 4 of the Law on Promulgation of Legal Normative Documents (2015, p.72) provides the hierarchy of the legal documents with respect to functioning agencies responsible for promulgation:

- “Constitution, Laws and resolutions of the National Assembly
- Ordinances and resolutions of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly
- Orders and Decisions of the State President
- Decrees of the Government
- Decisions of the Prime Minister
- Circulars of the Ministers or Heads of Ministry-equivalent agencies
- Inter-circulars between Ministers and Heads of Ministerial Agencies
- Decisions of the People’s Committee of the Province
- Decision of the People’s Committee of the Districts
- Decision of the People’s Committee of the Communes
- The Action Plan is approved by a Decision of Prime Minister at National level or a decision of People’s Committee of the Province”.

The Constitution is the highest legal framework at the national level. The legal documents are developed within the legal framework of the constitution (Phan, 2014). The implementation of the legislation is then translated into specific measures following the hierarchy of the legal documents (Vietnam National Assembly [VNA], 2015).

Therefore, legal documents presented in this section are presented in this hierarchical order of legal documents from law, decree, circular, inter-circular, decisions or correspondence and Action Plans. Then, within each level of legal document, the relevant documents are reported in chronological order from the oldest to the newest.

Results of the desk review indicate a comprehensive policy and legislation framework of disability-related employment and vocational training was developed to ensure the rights of people with disability to access to education, employment and vocational training.

While section 2.3.3 of the Chapter 2 Literature Review presents a comprehensive elaboration of how the international frameworks on disability were adopted and translated into practice in Vietnam, results of the desk review presented in this section indicate that the government of Vietnam has issued many under-Law policies that guide the implementation of the international disability legal framework. Details about these policies and legislation at different levels are elaborated in Appendix 23, including international and regional instruments, the national laws, decrees, inter-circulars, and circular, directives, decisions and correspondence from national level to provincial level.

## 7.2 Policy Enforcement and Service Provision Mechanisms

Under Vietnam's domestic legislation, several government agencies are responsible for disability, including enforcement and monitoring of the disability Laws and programs. These include:

**The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLISA)** is the lead ministry involved in implementing policies and overseeing all services for people with disability including vocational training and employment for people with disability. MOLISA's General Department of Vocational Training oversees the two major vocational training schools for people with disability in Vietnam: Employment and Introduction Service Centres, and also the vocational training system for the general population.

**The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET)** oversees special education, inclusive education, integrated education and teacher training. The Centre for Special Education at the National Institute of Educational Sciences (NIES) plays a significant role in addressing the development of a special education program in Vietnam. The NIES partners with a variety of international non-government organisations (INGOs) in developing teacher training materials and a curriculum for special education.

**The National Coordinating Council on Disability (NCCD)**, officially established in February 2001, is housed at MOLISA and is involved in developing national coordination and plans for programs and policies related to people with disability. One of the main functions of NCCD is to promote employment and training for people with disability. The NCCD is in charge of overseeing the implementation of the National Action Plan on Disability and the National Target Program on Vocational Training for People with disability. At the national level, the Prime Minister's Directive 1100 issued 21 June 2016 requested all provinces to establish a Disability Coordination Committee, in which the Chair of the Disability Coordination Committee should be the Vice-Chair of the Provincial People's Committee. This Provincial Committee is established in Dong Nai and housed at the office of the Provincial People's Committee. However, there is no representation of people with disability. Since 2012, the province has been working to form a Disabled People's Organisation (DPO). The Dong Nai Provincial People's Committee has approved the formation of the DPO but since the Chair of the Committee resigned her position and left the province, the Provincial People's Committee has cancelled its approval. Hence, as of 2019, a DPO in Dong Nai is still to be legalised.

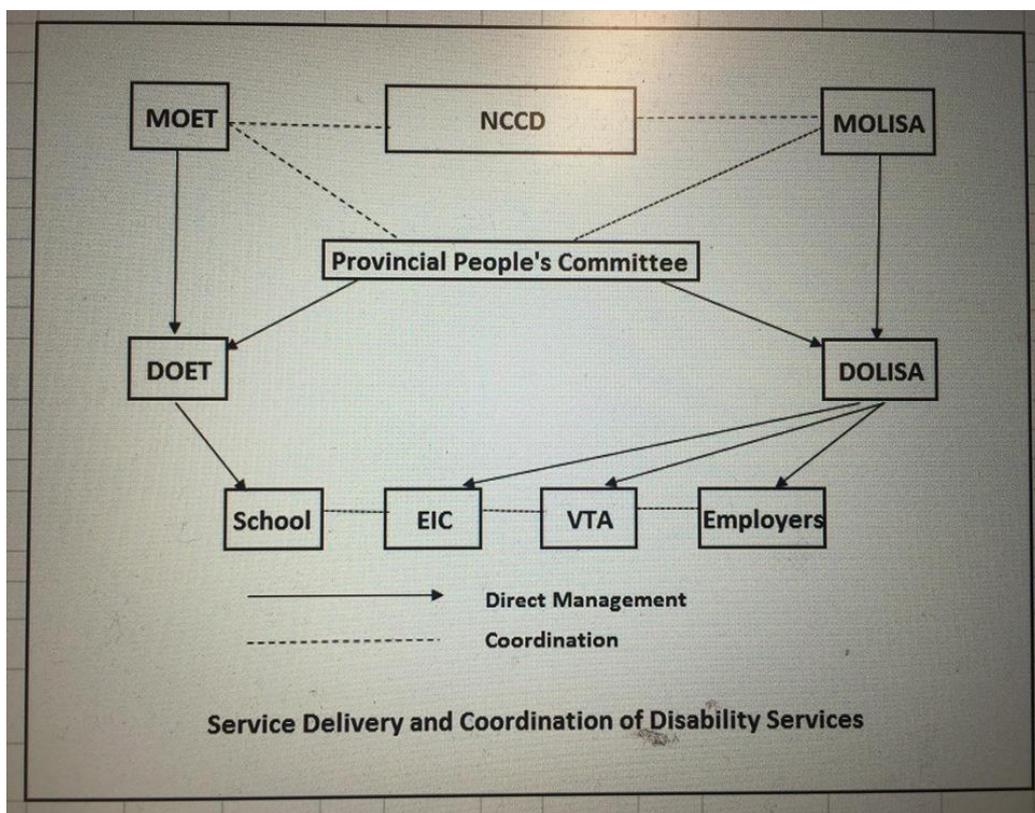
**Employment Introduction Service Centres (EICs):** According to MOLISA (2015b), Vietnam has an extensive system of 150 Employment Introduction Service Centres (EICs) run by MOLISA, and its line department at the provincial level. All are required to report quarterly to MOLISA. These Centres collect information about the labour market, register job seekers, provide counselling and training options, operate vocational centres with short-term training courses, and operate small production facilities bridging vocational training and the labour market. Some have also operated skill-training centres for people with disability, although no data has been kept on people with disability who have gone through these mainstream centres.

**Vocational Training Agencies (VTAs):** Vocational Training Agencies are under the management of MOLISA, and responsible to grant diplomas and certificates to people with disability upon successful completion of their regulated training. Based on the request from Dong Nai school, and DOLISA. The VTAs are responsible for introducing people with disability to relevant employers after providing counselling and vocational training to people with disability.

**Provincial People’s Committee (PPC):** The PPC, with its responsibility and authority at the provincial level, coordinates mainstream disability activities across all relevant sectors, and coordinates the budget allocation to disability with the Department of Finance for the province.

Figure 17 below was created by the researcher to present information about which government agencies and groups are responsible for managing and coordinating the Dong Nai school to work transition program. It shows the roles and responsibilities of these related agencies in Dong Nai as regulated under the National Law on Disability.

Figure 18: Disability Service Delivery Process and School to Work Transition



### 7.3 Knowledge and Awareness of Relevant Laws, Policies and Entitlements

Young people with disability and stakeholders were asked about their knowledge and awareness of the laws, policies and entitlements in relation to school to work transition via several methods: the questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and focus groups.

Responses were assessed by asking informants to list policies and entitlements they were aware of. The data was categorised into two groups: one about relevant policies and programs that

related to school to work transition, and the other about specific entitlements afforded by each policy and program. These data were then matched to the 26 legal documents identified by the researcher in her review of secondary data sources (section 7.1).

Participants' knowledge of policies and entitlements was scant. Only one Dong Nai School staff member mentioned the existence of the Dong Nai school to work transition guideline (Dong Nai School, 2013) and only two Circulars/Inter-Circulars were identified: (i) Inter-circular 58/2012/TTLT-BGDDT-BLDTBXH (specifying policies and entitlements for employment and vocational training for people with disability); and (ii) Circular 03/2018/TT-BGDDT on Inclusive Education for People with Disability. While the actual names of the Circular/Inter-Circular were not recalled by the students and graduates, all informants spoke of specific entitlements or policy content.

In their questionnaire responses, 26 students (74%) and 100% of graduates mentioned four main entitlements: (i) school fees exemption, (ii) provision of hearing assistive devices, (iii) health insurance cards and (iv) vocational training support costs for travelling, training fees, and meal costs. In the stakeholder questionnaire, representatives from school management, DOLISA and NCCD also mentioned the entitlement related to vocational training support costs for travelling, training fees, and meal costs. The policy on tax for employers who hire people with disability were also mentioned by stakeholders, especially employers.

These above two Circulars/inter-Circulars were formally named by some stakeholders: the MOET and NCCD participants mentioned the Inter-circular 58/2012/TTLT-BGDDT-BLDTBXH on policies and entitlements for employment and vocational training, and the DOET representative mentioned Circular 03/2018/TT- BGDDT on Inclusive Education for People with Disability.

For Circular 03/2018/TT-BGDDT on Inclusive Education for People with Disability, specific policy and entitlements were mentioned by the school principal, school to work transition staff, and a teacher at the Dong Nai school. The policy issues identified included obligations for individual education planning, a curriculum for orientation to vocational training for students with disability at school, and students' entitlement to housing and food during their time at school.

Overall, the level of understanding and awareness about existing policies was relatively poor. Only three of 23 stakeholders were able to correctly name the two key policies, although additional stakeholders were able to describe specific entitlements for people with disability. For the two main government policies identified by the stakeholders, only eight stakeholders (35%) were able to describe the policy and entitlement content of Inter-circular 58/2012/TTLT-BGDDT-BLDTBXH (specifies the policies and entitlements for employment and vocational training for people with disability), and four of 23 (17%) stakeholders were able to describe the content of the Circular 03/2018/TT- BGDDT on Inclusive Education for People with Disability. Only one stakeholder referred to guidance on the establishment of inclusive education service centres referred to in Inter-Circular 58/2012.

While the data provided by the students and graduates via the in-depth interviews and focus groups revealed limited knowledge about concrete policies and laws on disability, analysis of data from in-depth interviews with stakeholders showed that the majority were aware of the policy contents. Fifteen out of 23 interviewed stakeholders (65%) mentioned the policy to support people with disability on vocational training and employment. Seven (30%) mentioned that the school also provided support and counselling for graduates on employment and vocational training, especially referring students and graduates to employers who are looking for employees with disability. Four of the 23 stakeholders (17%), who were school staff and managers, mentioned that Dong Nai school also organised internships for students of the vocational training program to companies in Dong Nai Province.

The questionnaires also asked students, graduates and stakeholders to rate their degrees of satisfaction for the policies relevant to school to work transition services they were aware of. They were also asked to rank their priorities for policies across sectors relating to the school to work transition program.

#### **7.4 Satisfaction Ratings and Priorities for Policy**

Both questionnaires asked students, graduates and stakeholders to rate their satisfaction with policies as well as indicate how they prioritised relevant education, health, vocational training and employment, and social welfare policies in terms of their importance. Table 41 shows how students, graduates and stakeholders rated their satisfaction with policies relating to school to work transition:

Table 41: Degree of Satisfaction of Students, Graduates and Stakeholders

<b>Policy Satisfaction</b>	<b>Students (n=35)</b>	<b>Graduates (n=22)</b>	<b>Stakeholders (n=23)</b>
Very satisfied	6%	23%	22%
Satisfied	69%	32%	61%
Dissatisfied	0 (0%)	5%	17%
Don't know	25%	35%	0 (0%)
No response	0 (0%)	5%	0 (0%)

The majority in each group of students (75%), graduates (55%) and stakeholders (83%) were either satisfied or very satisfied with policies relating to the school to work transition. However, with respect to being very satisfied, higher proportions of graduates (23%) and stakeholders (22%) reported feeling this level while only 6% of students were very satisfied.

In regard to dissatisfaction, while no student was dissatisfied, a small proportion of graduates (5%) and a higher proportion of stakeholders (17%) claimed to be dissatisfied with policies for the school to work transition. Further, a number of students (n=9) and graduates (n=8) responded that they did not know their levels of satisfaction. Given that students and graduates tended to know about their entitlements, this may reflect either a poorly-worded question or a poorly-understood question.

In regard to prioritising relevant education, health, vocational training and employment, and social welfare policies, Table 42 shows that there was variation across the three groups.

Table 42: Ranking of Policy Priorities from Across Sectors

<b>Importance of Policies</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Health</b>	<b>Employment and VT</b>	<b>Social Welfare</b>	<b>No responses</b>
<b>Most important</b>					
Students (n=35)	9 (26%)	1 (3%)	19 (54%)	3 (9%)	3 (9%)
Graduates (n=22)	9 (41%)	2 (9%)	2 (9%)	0 (0%)	9 (41%)
Stakeholders (n=23)	16 (70%)	3 (13%)	4 (17%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>Least important</b>					
Students (n=35)	7 (20%)	5 (14%)	2 (6%)	18 (51%)	3 (9%)
Graduates (n=22)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (18%)	9 (41%)	9 (41%)
Stakeholders (n=23)	0 (0%)	5 (21%)	2 (9%)	16 (70%)	0 (0%)

Aside from a notable proportion of graduates not responding to this request to rank priorities (41%), high proportions of both graduates (41%) and stakeholders (70%) saw education as the most important priority area while 54% of students saw vocational training and employment as the most important priority area. Only two graduates (9%) considered employment and vocational training as the most important. These quite different perceptions perhaps reflect the different priorities depending on whether they were preparing for work or were graduates who are already employed. The least important policy area for all three groups was social welfare with stakeholders being the highest proportion (70%) viewing it as least important.

## 7.5 The Strengths and Gaps in Policy

Both the questionnaires asked open-ended questions of students, graduates, and stakeholders to identify strengths and gaps in policies relevant to school to work transition. Identified strengths and gaps was also a question area for the in-depth interviews and focus groups with informants asked about what they were aware of, what they viewed as significant and what they felt could be improved.

While all 23 stakeholders responded to interview questions about policy strengths and gaps, only six students and two graduates shared their opinions. This small number identified gaps in policies which they said meant it was difficult to access the services they needed. Two strengths in policies were identified by both young people with disability and stakeholders. These included: (i) policies on employment for people with disability, and (ii) an established coordination partnership. However, more gaps than strengths were identified. These included: (i) the lack of an official institutional referral framework to ensure quality of service delivery for school to work transition (ii) the budget for vocational training is available but not accessible (cannot be spent), (iii) the policy for effective enforcement is not realistic, (iv) a long-term plan for school to work transition is missing, and (v) there is no mechanism for monitoring and reporting on indicators for success of the school to work transition program.

While no students or graduates responded to the open-ended questions in the questionnaire about strengths and gaps in policies, only seven stakeholders provided responses to this question. The seven included representatives from NCCD/MOLISA, DOET, DOLISA, a program manager, school staff and parents. The strengths they identified included: (i) the existence of policies for school to work transition, (ii) funding available for vocational training,

(iii) the existence of school commitment and support, and (iv) established partnerships among stakeholders. The gaps they identified included: (i) impractical or inappropriate policy and entitlements, (ii) no actual budget line for vocational training, (iii) a lack of technical expertise to operate the school to work transition program, and (iv) no referral mechanism for the delivery of quality services.

Clearly, the strengths and gaps identified through the open-ended questions and the in-depth interviews and focus groups overlap. Responses to the open-ended questions revealed lists of strengths and gaps and these were complemented by more detailed information collected via in-depth interviews and focus groups. Sections 7.5.1 and 7.5.2 present this more detailed information about strengths and gaps in school to work transition related policies.

### 7.5.1 Strengths of the Policies and Programs on School to Work Transition

The information on the strengths of policies and programs was grouped in themes using the phrases of participants. Participants identified two main strengths in school to work transition related policies and programs. As mentioned, these included: the policy to promote employment and vocational training for people with disability and an established coordination partnership to facilitate the enforcement of school to work transition policies and programs.

#### *7.5.1.1 Policy promoting employment and vocational training*

The reference to the existence of school to work transition policies was common in the questionnaire responses of representatives of MOLISA, DOLISA, DOET and school staff. The strengths they identified related to: (i) policies promoting employment and vocational training for people with disability having been promulgated by Government, (ii) vocational training agencies having policy and regulatory obligations to refer the trainees to employers, (iii) the skills and talents of people with disability dictate the required support and vocational training, (iv) training policy is there to facilitate the response to students' needs and to improve their job-seeking and job-application skills, as well as communication skills with employers and colleagues.

In addition, 14 stakeholders and four graduates revealed strengths in policies through their in-depth interviews and focus groups. Although there is no actual policy focussed only on school

to work transition programs, the majority of stakeholders indicated that other related policy entitlements for vocational training and employment were regulated to support young people with disability accessing vocational training. According to a representative of the NCCD and Mr Tam, a former teacher of Dong Nai school, the policy on vocational training for people with disability (Circular 48) sets out the obligation for vocational training agencies to refer trainees with disability to employers after their training concludes.

Another policy entitlement mentioned by stakeholders was the provision of funding/support costs for vocational training for people with disability. This was described as the budget for vocational training for people with disability and was said to come from the National Vocational Training Program for the Rural Youth. Twenty percent of this National Program budget needs to be spent on training for people with disability, but according to interviews with NCCD and MOET representatives, the amount received by each province is dependent on how much each Provincial People's Committee (PPC) submits for or request in their budget plans. According to DOLISA and DOET representatives, Circular 48/2013 from the Ministry of Finance (MOF) also regulates the process for budget disbursement and sets out cost norms for vocational training programs for rural youth including young people with disability.

Policies providing tax reduction to companies with at least 30% of their workforce being people with disability were said to act as an incentive and assist growth in job opportunities. Employers such as Ms Tam from Nike shared that they also needed to reciprocate and reach out to vocational training agencies, schools and information introduction centres so as to identify qualified people with disability to work for them. In addition, interviews with Ms Tam of Nike, DOET's Mr Bay, and graduate Ms Do, reported that companies employing young people with disability tended to provide reasonable work conditions, such as working seven hours a day and paying overtime for longer hours. A DOLISA representative also mentioned the funding available for vocational training from both Government and the USAID-funded project at Dong Nai. Policy entitlements for vocational training fees and other supports were also mentioned by two school managers and parents.

#### *7.5.1.2 An established coordination partnership for enforcement*

A DOET representative reported that strong partnerships had been developed within the school to work transition program. This meant that the school to work transition program established

strong coordination links within the school, with vocational training agencies and employers to build training opportunities and internships for the school to work transition program. In essence, this created contacts and a network for promoting employment for people with disability.

Interviews and focus groups with stakeholders provided further information about the strong coordination partnership among key players. According to DOLISA's Ms Muoi Ba, it is challenging to promulgate a stand-alone policy on school to work transition. This is because the school to work transition model needs time to develop. It takes time to establish the coordination and partnership amongst stakeholders so as to facilitate the delivery of quality service for school to work transition. It needs to be enforced for at least five years and then be evaluated before policy is proposed and approved. This view was shared by another five stakeholders who were schoolteachers, school managers, and representatives of MOLISA and DOLISA. The Inter-Circular 48/2013/MOF-MOLISA enforces the establishment of inclusive education support centres and they agreed that this will increase the effort of school to work transition in the future. According to the MOET representative, Inter-Circular 48/2013/MOF-MOLISA obliges special schools or inclusive education centres to enforce vocational training and job orientation for students with disability.

According to school teacher, Ms Muoi Tam, the school to work transition program has sought to create regular contact between employers and vocational training agencies. This she said helped the school to more actively support its students to identify appropriate vocational training options and job-seeking opportunities. According to Ms Chin from MOLISA, a Coordination Committee run by the Provincial People's Committee will be established at a higher level in the future, and this will more effectively enforce the implementation of disability policies and programs, including school to work transition activities.

The Dong Nai school's commitment and support to school to work transition was a favourable factor promoting effective partnerships among stakeholders and networks. This was mentioned by school managers, staff, teachers, DOET, and also parents. This meant that the Dong Nai school was committed to running and sustaining its current school to work transition model. Because of the school's commitment and leadership, the schoolteachers and staff see their responsibilities and tasks to assist students with disability to search for vocational training opportunities and work.

Despite participants reporting the existence of strong legal and policy frameworks on disability and school to work transition, as well as high proportions of students, graduates and stakeholders saying they were satisfied with the policies and programs, significant gaps and challenges in the laws and policies were still identified. These were perceived to impact the quality of school to work transition services for people with disability, and section 7.5.2 now provides more detail about these.

### 7.5.2. Gaps in the Policies and Programs

Information about perceived gaps in policies was provided by young people with disability and stakeholders via open-ended questions in the questionnaires, as well as in-depth interviews and focus groups. Some of these challenges were mentioned as strengths in Section 7.5. As identified gaps, they include: (i) the lack of an institutional framework that ensures the delivery of quality services for the school to work transition phase (ii) that a budget is available but not accessible for vocational training (cannot be spent), and (iii) the content of policy is not realistic enough to enable effective enforcement of the program.

#### 7.5.2.1 *Lack of an institutional framework*

In their in-depth interviews and focus groups, 11 stakeholders reported that there was the lack of a formal institutional framework. These participants explained that an official institutional framework was a key to successfully facilitating the development and delivery of school to work transition services among service providers. According to DOLISA and MOLISA representatives, the DOLISA is a state managing agency and therefore responsible for policy enforcement and coordination of the partnership among different stakeholders. DOLISA is understood to be the main facilitator of these partnerships between the vocational training agency, the school and employers.

Related to the absence of an institutional framework, MOLISA, DOLISA, the school manager and staff also explained that there was no referral mechanism for the delivery of services. According to these participants, the impact of the lack of a framework or referral mechanism was described as: (i) limited partnerships among stakeholders such as the school, DOLISA, DOET, employers, vocational training agencies, (ii) limited connection between people with

disability, employers and vocational training staff, and (iii) no referral mechanism between the school and the employers.

One identified challenge was that, after the USAID-funded project ceased, the main focus at the Dong Nai school was on academic teaching and vocational training which meant that the school to work transition program was now dependent on the willingness of school management. This was thought to impact negatively on the program's capacity to effectively coordinate tasks. Mr Muoi, a representative of Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH), went further and said that this reliance on goodwill: "impacted sustainability and effectiveness of the program." A MOET participant also mentioned that the tasks assigned by the law were unclear, and that this sometimes meant that job counselling, student orientation, needs assessment and employment planning services in the school to work transition program were not fully implemented or were even considered optional. The MOLISA and Information and Employment Centre (IEC) representatives also noted that a lack of technical expertise also created difficulty with enforcing the school to work transition program.

Normally, a framework would have reporting and monitoring indicators to enable enforcement of the school to work transition program but without a framework, this leaves a significant gap impacting enforcement at both the national and local levels. According to some representatives from VNAH and DOLISA, neither do the education nor social sectors have monitoring indicators for the school to work transition service activities:

*The most difficult task for the locality now is the management of the training program. We currently do not have the monitoring and reporting system so that we cannot track who has been trained and who is not. This can be very hard and disadvantages for people with disability.*

Another participant also mentioned that the project can only be sustained if the successful model is adopted by a policy with reporting indicators to ensure the sustainability of the school to work transition program (interview with MOLISA representative). In order to have the reporting indicators, as suggested by a former teacher of Dong Nai school, the government need a long-term strategic plan which is missing at the moment (interview with Mr Muoi Chin). In addition, the school also needs to have a long-term plan for the vocational training and employment opportunities for their students. The need for follow up with the graduates on their employment was also viewed as important to maintain the relationship and partnership with

the employers and parents. Doing so, the school will have better ideas for their planning on what training are needed for their students (interview with representative of VNAH).

#### *7.5.2.2 Budget is available but not accessible*

Nine participants provided information about budget issues. This indicated that the school to work transition program relied on the USAID/VNAH donor support and also some budget allocated from the National Target Program on Vocational training for the rural youth. However, this latter component of the budget was not stable and dependent on DOLISA's decision, although Dong Nai school was not under DOLISA management. As mentioned by Ms Bon, the vice-principal of Dong Nai school:

*Our school depends on DOLISA because DOLISA is managing the vocational training's budget. Therefore, we were quite passive in planning for vocational training and school to work transition related services. What we can do is to talk with DOLISA for budget allocation and submit the list of students who are entitled to vocational training to DOLISA for budget request. As for the special school, we need special attention from DOLISA on vocational training and job orientation.*

Ms Hai, a staff member in charge of the school to work transition program also indicated that the current budget allocated for vocational training for students at school was not enough. She identified that this funding deficit and lack of resources had a major impact on the quality, sustainability, and vocational training options for students with disability at school. According to the Labour Code, which was revised in 2014, those who are 16 years of age and above are eligible for vocational training in courses with at least 15 students. However, the challenge is that the school never had enough students to meet this quota and could not open a full vocational training course due to this funding requirement. Ms Hai Hai, vice-principal of the school, and Mr Muoi Chin, former teacher of the school, indicated that, although the budget on vocational training was available, it was always difficult to spend, leaving the school in need of funds. Stakeholder questionnaire responses regarding the budget also indicated that no budget line for vocational training led to instability of the budget, and consequently the program.

Another stakeholder also explained that no effective coordination mechanism meant it was difficult for the school to submit budget requests to DOLISA for training. Interviews with the vice-principal of the school and a teacher also revealed their views that with no agency obligated to coordinate this effort, there was effectively no policy.

### 7.5.2.3 Ineffective policy and enforcement

Participants in interviews and focus groups provided information relating to perceived gaps in policy for the school to work transition program. Identified gaps included (i) unrealistic requirements for the number of participants for training classes, (ii) vocational training courses were too short, and (iii) vocational training courses were not tailored to the specific needs of people with disability.

#### *Unrealistic requirements or inappropriate policy*

In open-ended questionnaire responses, seven stakeholders out of nine including DPO members, school managers and staff, and representatives from MOLISA, DOLISA, DOET, and the IEC mentioned impractical policy leading to ineffective provision of employment and vocational training services to young people with disability. The challenges they explained were: (i) it is difficult to get a job after graduation, (ii) each person is allowed to participate in the training only once each year, (iii) vocational training options are not diversified enough to meet the needs of young people with disability, and (iv) the training offered was too short.

Phrases like “not realistic requirements” or “inappropriate policies” were mentioned by 18 stakeholders in the in-depth interviews. Participants explained that although there had been a clear policy promoting vocational training and employment for people with disability, the policy and its entitlements were not enforced. According to the NCCD representative, MOLISA’s Directive 3930 requests each province allocate 20% of its total vocational training budget for people with disability. However, according to Ms Thuy, that 20% is never spent. The reasons given for this were again about not meeting a minimum of 15 participants especially difficult given the school had a smaller number of students with variable needs. As the school principal, Ms Mot, said:

*Forming a group of at least 20 people with disability for a training course is very difficult if not impossible. That’s why the budget is available but we cannot spend for vocational training for people with disability*

According to three DOLISA representatives, as well as schoolteachers, and DPO representatives, Circular 48/2013 MOF provides for one short term (three months) vocational training course which costs six million VND (AUD\$340) per person. The cost for the accommodation and travel is 30 thousand VND (AUD\$1.7) per day but this is only available

for those who live more than five kilometres from the training location. With these strict entitlements, Ms Muoi Ba from DOLISA said: “the cost norm is too low to cover all necessary costs for training of people with disability.”

A vocational training agency representative from Rosa shared that people with hearing impairment also need personal assistants to ensure their rights are well respected and protected. For example, when they work, if they cannot talk or hear their managers and their colleagues, their needs can be misunderstood making them vulnerable. According to Ms Muoi Mot, from Vocational Training Agency, people do take advantage of people with disability in this situation.

Interviews with school managers and staff and a DPO representative, Ms Hai Ba, indicated that people with disability can participate in more diverse vocational training courses outside of school. However, in this instance, they have to provide their own sign language interpretation. This is not always possible. Hence, while training agencies provide vocational training for young people with disability, the lack of support entitlements around communication hinder their access to a variety of vocational training options. According to the vice-principal of the school, Ms Hai Hai, students who cannot access courses outside of the Dong Nai school are left to participate in more limited training courses organised by the school. This is a direct result of MOLISA’s Directive 3930. Thus, the level of support offered by this Directive often does not meet the vocational training needs and interests of young people with disability.

School managers, the MOLISA representative and representatives from the Parents’ Association suggested vocational training courses of three months were too short. As indicated by the school principal, Ms Mot: “while people with disability need time for interpretation and practice, the length of time for the current training course is not enough for people with disability to effectively practice what they have learned.” Teachers in the school said that the work skills for students with disability were often under-developed and that, as a result, they faced challenges when starting to work after their graduation.

#### *Specific needs and vocational training*

According to the Circular 48/2013/MOF-MOLISA, people with disability can attend the vocational training course on a ‘one trainer – one trainee’ basis with entitlements in the Circular policy indicating the cost can be covered. However, the trainer has to be an artisan. With very

few artisans available to provide this training, it was difficult for young people with disability to access it. According to Ms Muoi Ba who is DOLISA representative, neither do they have the finances to pay for this individualised approach. The school principal recognised that this meant: “many students are left to attend a course they do not like.”

Ms Muoi Hai, another stakeholder from IEC, and Ms Muoi Mot from Rosa, both indicated that vocational training courses for people with disability need to be longer and that more technical assistance is required. According to another school staff member: “people with disability often cannot go to the training by themselves and depend on the school’s arrangements - the training program now is only focusing on sewing.” She said this type of training was not of interest to all students with disability, but they still had to participate because this is the only option.

According to a DOET representative, students did not have personal and specific plans for vocational training or skills training. While policy suggests that this should happen, in reality there is no enforcement to ensure that the necessary individualised planning for vocational and skill training, is carried out. According to Mr Bay, from DOET, this means the needs of each student in vocational training are not being properly addressed.

While section 7.5 identified strengths and gaps in policy and their impact on school to work transition services, section 7.6 now describes how policy factors facilitate or hinder success of the services

## **7.6. Policy Factors Facilitating and/or Hindering Success**

Information provided by the majority of stakeholders highlighted the importance of coordination and partnerships as key factors that ensure the positive impact of policies on service delivery. Eighteen of 23 stakeholders identified facilitators and barriers on a range of issues relating to the coordination of the service delivery system for the school to work transition program. As observed by Mr Muoi, a VNAH representative in an in-depth interview: “we need a mechanism to translate the policies into practice for quality service delivery.”

Facilitator and barrier themes were identified in stakeholder interview transcripts by examining the frequency of words/phrases used. Repeated themes for the facilitators for school to work transition services included: (i) procedures for coordination, (ii) established school, vocational

training and employer partnerships and networks, and (iii) regulated roles for DOLISA in regard to its vocational training and employment responsibilities. Named barriers included: (i) unclear mechanisms for enacting responsibilities and partnerships around providing vocational training and employment services (ii) the existence of an informal network of stakeholders rather than an official and regulated network (iii) no network for sharing information among students and graduates, and (iv) no follow-up by the school with its graduates in regard to job vacancies. Sections 7.6.1 and 7.6.2 presents the facilitators and barriers to effective coordination in more detail.

## 7.6.1 Facilitators

Participants identified three key facilitators for the effective coordination of school to work transition services for young people with disability. The importance of procedures for coordination of vocational training and employment for students with disability, partnership and networking, and the importance of regulated roles and responsibilities for the key functioning agencies including DOLISA, employers, and vocational training agencies.

### *7.6.1.1 Procedures for coordination*

MOLISA issued Directive Nr. 1100 which requested all provinces establish a Provincial Disability Coordination Committee (PDCC) with the chair of this Committee being the Vice-Chair of the Provincial People Committee. In-depth interviews with a representative from VNAH and a school manager indicated that the Committee was established in Dong Nai in 2013 and also had representatives from DOET and DOLISA as members of the Committee.

Following Directive 1100, the National Coordinating Council on Disability (NCCD) then issued Regulation 1717 guiding the establishment of the Provincial Disability Coordinating Council PDCC. In addition, the MOF also issued a Circular under Decree 46 guiding the cost norm for vocational training programs, especially for people with disability. Based on this Decree, the PDCC developed a provincial action plan for disability programs with progress on action to be reported to the NCCD. The roles and responsibilities of the PDCC members were to facilitate the coordination of disability activities and efforts including school to work transition program activities. At the national level, an in-depth interview with Thuy from the NCCD revealed that the NCCD was still working to set up the Provincial Coordinating Council

on Disability (PCCD) to coordinate the disability effort including vocational training and employment for people with disability.

According to representatives from DOLISA, all stakeholders work under an institutional mechanism from which they coordinate the services, the employers, vocational training agencies, and the information employment centre for school to work transition. This coordination consists of establishing relationships and partnerships among stakeholders to help people with disability find jobs. According to Ms Muoi Ba from DOLISA, the roles and responsibilities of each agency were clear and based on the coordination of relevant services.

#### *7.6.1.2 Established school, vocational training and employer partnerships and networks*

Given current government policies including the MOLISA's Directive and its guidelines for enforcement of disability service coordination, Ms Thuy from the NCCD viewed partnerships and networks as important outcomes of the coordination procedures. Interviews with stakeholders indicated that partnerships enabled the connection between Dong Nai school and employers so as to provide opportunities for the students of the school to have work orientation, undertake internships and link to job opportunities. As teacher Mr Thang said in a focus group:

*Through partnership, visits to the workplaces, internships and jobs were arranged for students after the vocational training program.*

For at least seven stakeholders, the USAID funding for the project provided the necessary assistance to establish partnerships between the school, employers, and vocational training agencies. These partnerships then provided opportunities for students to access these vocational training agencies and employment opportunities. In effect, this established a new model for government to consider adopting as policy and later expand across the country.

Interviews with Ms Bon from Dong Nai school management and Mr Muoi from VNAH revealed that as a result of networking and partnerships, employers had become aware of how best to locate people with disability to fill their vacancies. This effort was also highlighted by a DOET official in an in-depth interview:

*The current program has done a great job in connecting all stakeholders. This effort was not done before. Since disability is a multi-sectoral issue, it needs multi-disciplinary coordination of services. The currently established partnership and networks have helped the school to assist their students in job orientation, vocational training and jobs.*

According to Ms Tam from Nike, employers do not have legal obligations to employ or provide internships for people with disability. Thus, the relationships the school has with employers and other stakeholders as a result of the school to work transition program are crucial as a starting point. As indicated by Ms Tam, an HR manager from Nike company: “Thanks to the networking with the school to work transition program, employers get to know more about the people with disability.” According to Ms Muoi Ba from DOLISA, these partnerships have resulted in positive outcomes for students after graduation and vocational training:

*Sometimes the company came to work with the school to identify qualified students and they were recruited immediately after graduation. But the students with disability have great difficulty in obtaining internships if their school has no partnership with the company.*

According to Ms Hai, a school staff member, employer stakeholders are now not only aware of the need to recruit people with disability, but they also find this brings additional human resources. Several stakeholders said that now that the local authorities recognise their responsibilities and roles in the effort to employ people with a disability, students and graduates get jobs more easily than they did before the school to work transition program existed. Ms Thuy from the NCCD spoke of the policy benchmark that: “vocational training centres are obligated to make sure at least 70% of trainees get jobs after the training.” The impact of this is that vocational training centres have to work hard with schools or communities to identify people with disability for the training and to work with companies to make sure they are employed after the training.

Mr Muoi Hai from the IEC also offered that, as a positive outcome of the partnership effort, another way of securing employment for young people with disability after the vocational training is with signed partnership agreements between the companies and the vocational training centres. These agreements set specific targets for people with disability to work for the companies/enterprises in specific areas.

#### *7.6.1.3 Regulated roles for DOLISA*

According to Article 50, Clause 1 of the National Law on Disability, Labour and Social Affairs sector (LISA) is the lead disability agency (Vietnam National Assembly [VNA], 2010). Stakeholders such as representatives from employers, schools, and vocational training

agencies, indicated that they were aware that DOLISA was the lead agency with important roles to assist people with disability to participate in vocational training and employment. As stated by Mr Muoi Chin, a former staff member of Dong Nai school: “school to work transition requires strong multi-sectoral coordination, and it is good that DOLISA is holding this role and responsibility.” Another stakeholder, a DPO mobilising committee leader, was particular about the roles of DOLISA: “DOLISA is managing enterprises, so when the school works with DOLISA to arrange apprenticeships or vocational training or employment for people with disability, it is more effective to work with DOLISA and it is great that DOLISA usually comes to school to ask for vocational training to be conducted for people with disability.” Ms Bon from the Dong Nai school said that because of these clear roles and responsibilities, the school management is more confident to approach the functioning agencies: “The local authorities recognise their responsibilities and roles in this effort of school to work transition, we are now aware of who we should talk with to support our students with vocational training and employment.”

While several important facilitators of success were identified in respect of effective coordination of the school to work transition services, barriers were also identified during the interviews with stakeholders. Section 7.6.2 presents the barriers to effective coordination.

### 7.6.2. Barriers

This section presents information pertaining to the four themes which were identified as barriers to successful coordination within the school to work transition program. Information was provided by both stakeholders and young people with disability. However, the findings revealed that majority of the stakeholders (15 people) provided information about the barriers relating to policies and service mechanism, while some students and graduates provided information about the networking among students and graduates. These barriers included: (i) unclear mechanisms for enacting responsibilities and partnerships to provide vocational training and employment services ii) informal networking among stakeholders which is not official and regular (ii) limited network of students and graduates (iv) no follow up from school with the graduates.

### 7.6.2.1 Unclear mechanisms of responsibilities and partnership

Twelve of 23 stakeholders mentioned unclear mechanisms for partnerships and coordination of school to work transition services as a barrier to effective coordination. Although policies and laws regulate the responsibilities and roles of each key stakeholder, over half the stakeholders felt the mechanism for coordination of services remains unclear. As indicated by Mr Thin in the focus group with teachers: “there is no agency at the same level that is powerful enough to coordinate and manage more than two GVN agencies”. In addition, Mr Thang said in the focus group with teachers: “Dong Nai school is under direct management of DOET yet DOLISA is managing the vocational training program, employment and budget.” This is also a challenge for the school when it proposes a vocational training course and budget allocation for the training. As Ms Mot stated:

*Since DOLISA is not managing us, it is really a challenge for us to get approval when the school proposes a budget and a vocational training program to DOLISA.*

According to Ms Mot, the school principal, although a school to work transition committee was established to facilitate the school to work transition activities, “the school has no right and power to include other agencies in school management due to the government management system. The agencies are only invited for meetings about any related school to work transition activities, and their participation is not compulsory.” In addition, Ms Muoi Mot from Rosa said: “the school has no leading role in setting up a partnership with all relevant stakeholders, and a very limited role in making sure the students have jobs after graduation. This would limit the efforts for promoting the school to work transition program under the current policy.” Ms Hai Hai, the vice-principal, explained that the school uses its personal contacts and informal relationships to maintain and continue its school to work transition activities.

The lack of available full-time staff and loss of USAID funding to implement the school to work transition program created difficulties for effective coordination of the school to work transition service. Information from the teachers’ focus group revealed the view that adequate staffing for school to work transition program is essential to ensure sustainability and good coordination of the program. According to school management, the loss of staffing after the USAID project funding ended led to loss of coordination and connection between the school and employers. School staff such as Ms Nga and Ms Ba said that this made it increasingly difficult for young people with disability to participate in vocational training and to find a job

in a company. As a result, internship opportunities were not organised, and the school had limited capacity to approach employers for that purpose given the USAID funding paid for staff working on this effort.

#### *7.6.2.2 An informal network of stakeholders*

According to Mr Muoi, representative of VNAH, networking amongst stakeholders was deemed to be important since it helped to facilitate the transition process from school to employment for students with disability. However, according to Ms Hai Mot, teacher at the school, effective networking was dependent on financial resources required for organising networking activities and thus these activities were not organised regularly. The outcome of this reduced networking meant that there was (i) no regular networking among stakeholders, (ii) no networking among students and graduates, and (iii) no follow up from school with graduates for job vacancies.

Ms Mot, the principal explained that stakeholders were invited to come and get to know each other at networking events via the training workshops, and job fairs conducted by the school. Mr Muoi Hai, representative of IEC, reported that this type of networking was done on an activity basis and stakeholders sometimes did not come or assigned staff without decision-making authority attended. Because of this, Mr Muoi said that the networking was not formally organised, and stakeholders could not plan or discuss any difficulties with the school to work transition. As Ms Muoi Mot, a representative of the vocational training agency, stated:

*The provincial people's committee has not played their role in coordinating networking effort. They should organise regular meetings for the vocational training agency, DOLISA, school, and employers so they could work together to assist people with disability to obtain a job*

Without regular meetings with key stakeholders, maintaining contact was difficult. Instead, networking was ad-hoc. As the principal of the school, Ms Mot, and Mr Muoi from VNAH, both said: “the committee meets only once a year and focuses on an annual review and planning. This makes it hard for maintaining relationships with the stakeholders, especially the employers for job vacancies.”

According to a representative from the IEC, the school manager, DOLISA and the IEC can help students and graduates with disability to look for jobs, but it mainly uses personal contacts and relationships. In addition, Mr Muoi reported that the absence of a formal coordination committee run by the government authorities has led to difficulties in ensuring the school to work transition program performs as it should.

Good leadership is also important for the enforcement of policy and programs related to school to work transition. Frequent changes in staffing and leadership within stakeholder agencies also caused inconsistency in support and networking for the transition program. This issue was identified by representatives from VNAH, school staff, and employers. For school staff such as Ms Hai and Ms Hai Mot, changes in school management also affected continuation and effectiveness of the school to work transition program. Another staff member, Ms Muoi Tam, described inconsistency in support from management:

*Management of the school was changed twice. The first principal was a founder of the school and worked from 1997 to 2007 and the second principal was from 2007 to 2017. The first principal paid good attention to vocational training for the students and vocational training was mainly focusing on handicraft, painting, sewing, electrical and so on, and many other skills' training. During that time, students were going through experience of doing these different job options and even could earn money from selling their products. Doing so helped students make decisions on what job they were going to do after leaving the school basing on the students' capacity. The second principal was in charge of the school to work transition program with assistance from USAID-funded project, but she was focusing on academic study for students, and therefore the networking and contacts with employers and vocational training agencies were not maintained after the project ended.*

Ms Hai, from the school, said that locating jobs after graduation was the most difficult aspect for students especially if the school did not reach out to employers sufficiently and students lacked information about job vacancies.

#### *7.6.2.3 No network for students and graduates*

While networking among stakeholders was deemed to play an important role in connecting students with disability to job opportunities, interviews with stakeholders, students and graduates also indicated a need for networking amongst students and graduates in order for them to share experience about job-seeking and vocational training. Information from an

interview with Ms Ba, DPO representative, and from the focus group with teachers revealed there was no formal networking for students and graduates with disability that helped facilitate the school to work transition effectively.

Most students and graduates expressed a strong need for networking and to be able to build relationships among their own group. According to them, the limited connection students had with their friends and graduates outside of the school contributed to their boredom at school. As stated by a student, Ms Tu:

*We feel bored at school as there were no activities connecting us with other graduates and friends outside. Our teachers did not allow us to go out from school to make contacts with friends because they are afraid that we have bad friends.*

A lack of networking among students and graduates was also mentioned by stakeholders including representatives from DOLISA, a DPO and Dong Nai teachers. As Mr Nam, the Dong Nai teacher indicated:

*Students need networking with the graduates or their friends outside of school. This is a good way for them to help each other in job-seeking. In addition, graduates with disability should be provided opportunities to come back to school to share their experience at work with the students at school. This would help them to prepare for job or to look for jobs after graduation.*

#### *7.6.2.4 No follow-up from school with the graduates*

According to the Education Law, schools have no responsibility to follow up with job seeking or employment for both graduates, either with and without with disability. Concern was also raised by the school manager and teachers at the school regarding the need to follow up with graduates about job vacancies. The information from the focus group with teachers indicated that after graduation, graduates with disability often came back to the school to ask for help with job-seeking. Ms Hai Mot indicated that while the schoolteachers wanted to assist their former students, most of the time they only assisted students by using their personal contacts. Moreover, Mr Muoi Chin, a former school-teacher and Mr Muoi Sau, a parent, explained that graduates were unable to approach DOLISA themselves for information regarding vocational training and employment. Thus, they needed assistance from school management and teachers in looking for jobs after graduation. Although Ms Muoi Tam, a teacher, said that follow up

from school in assisting students to find jobs after graduation was important, school management did not consider it so.

## **SUMMARY**

Given the varied service practices relating to school to work transition for young people with disability, this chapter has demonstrated the tenuous relationship between the policy framework and the enforcement of those policies relating to school to work transition for young people with disability. While young people with disability demonstrated their limited knowledge about the overall policy framework, and only awareness specific entitlements, these findings have provided rich information about stakeholders' views, perspectives and knowledge about the policies and their enforcement mechanism. Although it has been recognised by stakeholders that the legal and policy framework on disability is quite comprehensive, the framework for school to work transition for young people with disability and related services needs be implemented. This is necessary if we are to ensure the effective enforcement and coordination of the services, and thus opportunities for young people with disability to be included in inclusive employment settings. Unfortunately, USAID's school to work transition services were operating in a policy vacuum, which has left the school overreaching its role, obligation and requirements in the transition from school to work.

# CHAPTER 8 DISCUSSION

## INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disability (UNCRPD) calls on the world to: “recognise the right of people with disability to work, on an equal basis with others, this includes the rights to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible for people with disability” (UN General Assembly, 2006, p. 17). Not upholding these rights leads to social exclusion and poverty for young people with disability (Morris, 2001), thus their access to employment opportunities is critical (Bates & Davis, 2004; Boardman, Grove, Perkins, & Shepherd, 2003; Lindsay, 2011b; Roulstone & Barnes, 2005).

The literature review in Chapter 2 identified that there is no known singular list of factors and elements deemed essential for a successful school to work transition program. Nevertheless, a range of key principles and factors were identified from various studies, and drawn on in this study to examine the success of the school to work transition for young people with disability in Dong Nai school to work transition program. This research was able to identify key elements of best practice working well in the unique Dong Nai model of school to work transition, as well as gaps in its service delivery and areas which could be further developed.

This research project started with the assumption that paid work is integral to adult lives. This is not only because of time spent in paid work, but also because work often defines the identity of a person (Levinson & Palmer, 2005; Wehman, 2011; Winn & Hay, 2009). A job builds self-confidence, self-esteem, fulfils a sense of accomplishment and pride (Parmenter & Knox, 1991), and facilitates greater inclusion into all other aspects of society. It does this by promoting increased economic independence, self-reliance and purchasing power to enjoy an enriched life (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Nel & Van Der Westhuyzen, 2015). Ensuring the rights of young people with disability to paid work is an important facilitator to social inclusion and overcoming poverty for people with disability (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Lindsay, 2011b). As well, having a job promotes social interaction and community participation (Honey, 2004). Work can also reduce the financial burden on parents of people with disability (Nguyen, 2010), and ensure equality for people with disability, which is contingent on economic equality and financial independence (Ball, Morris, Hartnette, & Blanck, 2006). Work also ensures the

social security of the nation (Nadel, Wamhoff, & Wiseman, 2003; Bynner & Parsons, 2002; Savickas, 1999).

Compared to their non-disabled peers, students with disability are far less prepared for the world of work, and therefore face greater unemployment, underemployment and lower pay jobs (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Stewart et al., 2010; Winn & Hay, 2009). Even worse, many drop out of school before graduation because they realise employment options are at best dim (Tam, 2013). Previous research suggests that school systems can enable better engagement and support for students by helping them to identify their strengths, their interests, and by providing them with the skills needed to be successful in the workplace (Pinquart et al., 2003; Plotner et al., 2014; Roksa & Velez, 2010; Wagner, 1991; Wehman. et al., 2014).

According to the NTLs, students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing experience similar outcomes for post-secondary schooling and employment as students with other forms of disability (Wagner & Blackorby, 1996). As previously mentioned in chapter 2, compared to other high school students with disability, the majority of deaf or hard-of-hearing students intend to enter the workforce upon leaving high school. However, only 43.5% of deaf students who are out of high school three to five years are competitively employed (Wagner & Blackorby, 1996).

Although this study pertains to youth who received schooling for the deaf and who were largely signing, the problem of limited expectations affects hard-of-hearing youth. In a Canadian study of hard-of-hearing youth, 20% of respondents reported that their parents' suggested career options were limited by their concern about their child's hearing loss (Warick, 1994). A Swedish study investigating the school to work transition of hard-of-hearing young adults five years after completing secondary school considered that parents were so supportive of whatever choices of upper-secondary education their children made that they had – in the researchers' words – their responsibility in helping their children towards optimal outcomes. Here, the researchers speculated that this was likely because of their low expectations for their children's futures, lower than those held by parents of normally hearing children (Danermark, Antonson, & Lundstrom, 2001).

In countries with similar social-economic conditions to Vietnam such as the Republic of North Korea, a survey revealed that most employers and managers were having difficulties in communicating with workers with hearing impairment, and workers with hearing impairment

had difficulties in adjusting to work environments and developing work relationships with colleagues due to their limited communication. When enterprises do not have sign language interpreters, mis-communication and mis-understandings happen in the workplace (Pen-International, 2006). In Thailand, there are primary and secondary schools catering for these deaf and students with hearing impairment (Yiengprugsawan et al., 2012). In August 1999, Thai Sign Language was acknowledged as “the national language of deaf people”. As with many sign languages, children learn sign language within their families with signing deaf parents and/or in schools for the deaf.

Societal stigma towards people with disability often results in discrimination in the workplace and vocational training services. This can result in the exclusion or marginalisation of people with disability and deprives them of their rights, such as access to opportunities for employment, education, vocational training and full participation in society (Crocker & Major, 1989; Heatherton, 2003; Link & Phelan, 2001). Discrimination also includes a failure to provide reasonable accommodations for people with disability, which may include the provision of technical and human assistance and support, changes to physical aspects of the working environment, rebuilding employment obligations, and modifying arrangements/policies (Bat-Chava, 2000; Khoo, Tiun, & Lee, 2013; Punch et al., 2004). External/social stigma can also be internalised (and become self-stigma), and this also can lower self-esteem and confidence in people with disability<sup>4</sup> (Susman, 1994).

“School to work transition is a dynamic process” (Wehman, 1992, p. 64) which includes a set of coordinated services that promote the shift from school to work or post-school activities (Lamb, 2008; Ryan, 2009; Wagner, 1991; Wehman et al., 2015; Wright, 1991). Coordinated services address students’ needs, preferences, and abilities via vocational counselling, as well as direct exposure to the labour market to learn about jobs, job requirements and appropriate employment choices (Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Garza, & Levine, 2005; Wright, 1991). Wehman (2011) and Cobb and Alwell (2009) concluded that successful school to work transition services can be categorised in key areas which include: (i) student-focused/need-based planning (ii) student development (iii) family involvement.

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<sup>4</sup> Definitions of Stigma and Discrimination. Disability Rights California (DRC).  
<https://www.disabilityrightscalifornia.org/system/files/file-attachments/CM0401.pdf>

Given this knowledge, the study focused on the question of: “what does success look like for young people with disability who are participating in a school to work transition program?” As mentioned, Dong Nai Special School was selected for the research as this is the first and only school to implement a model of school to work transition in the country. Elements of success and failure identified in the literature were compared with the facilitators and barriers to successful school to work transition identified by students, graduates and other stakeholders of Dong Nai.

Research has shown that school plays an important role in preparing students with disability for the workforce (Coleman, 1974; Conley, 2010; Levinson & Palmer, 2005; Phillips et al., 2002; Wagner et al., 2005). While high school employment experience can help students with disability to prepare for work after graduation (Wagner & Blackorby, 1996; Wehman. et al., 2014), most schools emphasise college or university preparation and can overlook attention to workforce readiness (Mazzotti et al., 2016; Wehman, 2013a). Although higher education, such as college degree, offers a very favourable position for work opportunities, post-secondary studies can be constrained for some students, particularly those with disability (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; USAID-VNAH, 2015). Unfortunately, the majority of students with disability leaving high school in Vietnam do not have the knowledge and skills to find a job or indeed to maintain suitable employment. Most are not prepared for entry level employment (MOLISA, 2015a).

This chapter pulls together the findings of this research and examines how qualities of the Dong Nai school to work transition program relate to the existing literature, international frameworks, and the national legislation. It examines the gaps between what is said in the literature and the research findings, in particular, in relation to social inclusion and the right to access the school to work transition services. As the literature review has shown, previous studies have focused on one or two elements of success in school to work transitions and nowhere is there an ideal comprehensive model of school to work transition. Instead, the elements and factors for success were drawn from numerous studies.

In particular, the chapter examines the perceived successes of the Dong Nai school to work transition program and compares them to the recommended school to work transition policy, service delivery mechanisms and the key services identified in the literature. The chapter also discusses gaps in policy and services that hinder the success of school to work transition for

young people with disability at the school. Bronfenbrenner's (1978) framework is used to organise the discussion and follows the themes identified in previous chapters using the four layers: macrosystem, exosystem/school to work-related factors, mesosystem/carer-parenting and social networking, and microsystem/individual factors. Bronfenbrenner's (1978) framework is also used to examine the interactions between these layers in order to understand what facilitates success for young people with disability in school to work transition. The chapter analyses what is needed to ensure the effective school to work transition for young people with disability in the context of Vietnam in general and in Dong Nai in particular.

This chapter therefore discusses the following key points:

- Application of a rights-based approach: this includes the: (i) right to access vocational training and employment, (ii) right to make informed choices, (iii) right to access needed services, and (iv) right to social involvement and participation
- Multi-disciplinary coordination
- School to work program factors that include (i) transition planning, (ii) services for skills development, (iii) paid work experience and internships, and (iv) availability of resources
- Family involvement
- Individual perspectives on employment and social inclusion. This includes (i) awareness of the right to work and needed services, (ii) self-determination and (iii) making informed choices

## 8.1 Macrosystem Level

Empirical reviews of school to work transition programs in the literature identified key factors which facilitate success at the systemic level. These include: rights-based legislation and policies, and inter-agency coordination and collaboration. This study analysed how the local/Vietnam policy framework has developed in compliance with the international and regional human rights instruments, and highlighted what needs to be in place for the effective enforcement of the policies and programs. At the systemic level, relevant policies and multi-agency coordination of services were identified as key by all stakeholders.

### 8.1.1 Application of a Rights-Based Approach

Social inclusion requires the recognition of human rights and highlights how the needs and rights of individuals are included in service design and national and local policy (Evans & Repper, 2000; Taket, 2013). Participation of young people with disability in the labour market via access to vocational training options and employment opportunities promotes social inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 1998; Taket, 2013). Disability theorists highlight that an important role for living in mainstream society is having a job (Davys & Tickle, 2008) and argue that the participation of people with disability is dependent on the availability of resources and services within the environment (Taket, 2013). The participation of young people with disability and their families in service design and delivery are also key elements for inclusion of young people with disability in the workplace (Crawshaw, 2002). Finally, paid work remains a key building block of a just society and that means people with disability require better, more focused and evidence-based policies (Roulstone & Barnes, 2005).

Vietnam is progressing to improve policies to ensure the inclusion of people with disability into the society. There has been a solid shift away from treating people with disability as objects of charity requiring medical services and welfare, to a growing general acceptance of people with disability as citizens with legal rights. A rights-based approach is reflected in the 2010 National Law on Disability of Vietnam and increasingly reflected in the under-law documents (MOLISA-NCCD, 2018; MOLISA et al., 2015). This Law is an official order to ensure young people with disability are equally provided with opportunities to participate in society through access to education and employment, vocational training and other social services. This Law is also the first legal document in the country with application of rights-based principles to people with disability. In addition to the legal document, there are formal mechanisms in place to promote the enforcement of the Law such as the establishment of the NCCD and the National Action Plan (NAP) on Disability. However, detailed descriptions of tasks and responsibilities for each stakeholder in the mechanism for effective implementation of the Law remain unresolved. The NAP provided set targets. However, regulations for funding allocation and disbursement for particular activities relating to school to work transition are unclear (USAID, 2015).

This section discusses the right to access services and the understanding of the stakeholders, students and graduates about their rights, and how that understanding impacts on school to

work transition. These are factors enabling the current Vietnam legislation on school to work transition for young people with disability.

#### *8.1.1.1 Right to access vocational training and employment*

Sustainable employment is only achievable through recognising the fundamental human right to vocational training and appropriate services (Sachs, 2012). For students with disability, school to work transition is a process including services relating to vocational preparation, which students with disability can access so they can successfully gain decent jobs after graduation (Mazzotti et al., 2016; McMillan & Marks, 2003; Phelps & Hanley-Maxwell, 1997; Ryan, 2009; Wagner et al., 2005; Wehman et al., 2015).

Blustein (1997) and Wehman (2006) indicate that an effective transition from school to work for young people with disability requires formal legislation that complies with international and local policy frameworks and strategies in which a rights-based approach is applied to address the needs of people with disability. It was important first to examine if the current policies and legislation are in keeping with the UNCRPD. Vietnam has shown a commitment to ensure the rights of people with disability through an enabling policy environment by adopting international and regional legal frameworks on the rights of people with disability. As described in Chapter 2, section 2.1 and Chapter 7, section 7.1, it is recognised that the legislation, policies and legislative system are in place to address the rights of people with disability to vocational training and employment, although there is no specific policy for school to work transition services for people with disability. Second, it was important to examine the understandings and perspectives of young people with disability and stakeholders about the right to vocational training and employment of people with disability.

#### *8.1.1.2 Understanding these rights*

The right to employment and vocational training for people with disability is understood as the right to make informed choices relating to vocational training courses and jobs (Finn, 2003; Martinis, 2015), the right to access needed services and support (Lindsay, 2011a; Stewart et al., 2006), and the right to be able to communicate with peers and people in the community (Haber et al., 2016). As indicated by Abdullah (2012), policies and legislation are key facilitators for ensuring the right of people with disability to access needed support services and to develop skills to gain employment.

### *Right to make informed choices*

The literature indicates that being able to exercise the right to make informed choices about vocational training and employment depends on the availability of information provided to young people with disability, such as information about vocational training services and job opportunities and other social policy entitlements (Savickas, 1999; Wilson, 2004). Information provided to young people with disability through different programs and activities can build their knowledge and awareness about their rights regarding school to work transition activities and related policies and program. However, the level of knowledge for young people with disability at Dong Nai revealed a potential challenge for effectively implementing policies, as they had a low level of understanding of their right to access the information they needed. This was the same for stakeholders whose level of knowledge about young people's right to access information was also low.

Despite the existence of comprehensive legislation and policies about disability, both young people with disability and other Dong Nai stakeholders had very limited knowledge about the nature of policies relating to school to work transition. While 26 relevant legal documents were identified by the researcher, participants could only identify two circulars and one school staff member mentioned the school to work transition guideline. Dong Nai students, graduates and stakeholders mostly identified only specific policy content or entitlements rather than recognising the comprehensive policies in place and had little knowledge of the rights-based legal frameworks such as the UNCRPD and the National Law on Disability.

Even though young people with disability did not know of the existence of the broader policies, when asked about their satisfaction with the policies, they still ranked them favourably. The interviews revealed that most young people with disability in Dong Nai were aware of the entitlements they were receiving, such as health insurance, and the monthly allowance. Hence, they may have been satisfied with what they had received. Results from the quantitative findings indicated that 26 students (74%) and all 22 graduates (100%) knew of four main entitlements: (i) school fee exemption, (ii) provision of hearing assistive devices, (iii) health insurance cards, and (iv) vocational training support costs for travelling, training fees, and meal costs.

The questionnaire also indicated that all stakeholders knew about the existence of the disability legislation and related policies on school to work transition and more than 80% were satisfied

with the policies. Ms Mot, the Principal, recognised that students were not aware of the rights afforded by these policies:

*Students here used to work for the garment industry so the vocational training program is mainly on sewing because Dong Nai has many garment companies and this job fits well with the students with hearing and speaking impairment. These school students do not know information about other types of jobs and they depend on us to seek the jobs and vocational training for them.*

In addition, it was commonly believed that young people with disability should be content with whatever jobs are available for them. As Ms Muoi Ba, a DOLISA staff member said: “it is not easy to get a job for students with disability because they have disability. They are always happy with whatever jobs we found for them. However, interviews with students and graduates and even school to work transition program staff indicated that young people with disability had expectations of different options for vocational training due to their diversified needs and interests in employment. As Ms Hue, school staff said: “when the students are 15 years old, teachers will ask what they want to do...but the difficult part is that sometimes we have to send students to the training that they do not like.” As Ms Hai, a school staff member said, because of that: “most of the time, young people with disability depend on their parents and teacher’s choices”.

#### *Right to access needed services and support*

According to the UNCRPD, “everyone is entitled to all the rights” (UNCRPD, Article 3), including the right to access needed services. Within the rights-based approach, services should respond to the needs of people with disability and this should be mandated in the legislation (Stewart et al., 2006; Winn & Hay, 2009). Inclusive services are a means of ensuring the rights of people with disability to be able to access decent jobs and vocational training options based on their needs (Kohler, 1993; Ryan, 2009; Wehman, 2013b).

The findings from this study indicate the current approach to school to work transition that the Labour and Social Affairs (LISA) sector adopts seems narrowly focussed on social protection and basic requirements only. As Mr Muoi Chin, former staff of Dong Nai school says, the current approach is: “far too focused on social protection which responds to basic needs as per their remit and does not seem to have services that facilitate independent living to ensure the social inclusion for people with disability”. This issue was raised by other Dong Nai schoolteachers in different ways. Ms Muoi Tam spoke of the limited offerings for vocational

training: “the school has only one option for vocational training on sewing” while Ms Hai Mot said “other students wanted to learn music or baking cakes or make up but the school cannot organise because DOLISA only offers budget to train groups of at least 15 students”. Ms Chin from the NCCD saw it differently and spoke of reluctance in young people with disability to work because of the existence of social entitlements: “it is not easy to organise vocational training or finding jobs for people with disability because they have social protection entitlements and they do not need or want to work”.

Although the existing social services network in the social, employment and vocational training sectors has broad coverage, it tends to hone in on social protection payments for people with disability who are living in the social protection centres (MOLISA, 2015b, p. 77). Besides social protection services, DOLISA is also in charge of vocational training, day care, counselling, and social work. At the provincial level, DOLISA usually approaches schools for vocational training support only when funding is available. DOLISA also manages the vocational training agencies and ensures that when the training agencies conduct training for people with disability, they have to ensure that people with disability will be employed.

For people with disability, inclusive services are a means of ensuring their right to access decent jobs and vocational training options based on need. Personal assistance and disability support are always important, especially at work, in order to be fully included in the work setting (Hay, 2009; Kohler, 1993). However, interviews with young people with disability and other stakeholders indicated that current vocational training and employment services provided by LISA were not adequate. For example, the absence of sign language interpretation and socialisation activities were the most common concerns for both young people with disability and stakeholders. The absence of sign language was also identified in the literature as a major communication barrier for young people with hearing impairment.

With sign language interpretation only provided at school and not at any workplace or the vocational training courses external to the Dong Nai school, this hindered inclusion for young people with hearing impairment in jobs and vocational training program. Ms Thu, the Director of Rosa Vocational Training Agency, said that while the agency provided free-of-charge vocational training for people with disability, there was no interpretation for those with a hearing impairment on offer. Mr Muoi Chin, a former school staff member, pointed out. This seems: “a charity way of supporting people with disability, because a person with hearing

impairment needs sign-language interpretation for communicating and interacting with those who have no hearing impairment as the services are there but people with hearing impairment cannot access”.

Getting along with others and possessing aptitude are basic relational aspects necessary for a successful life and work. The importance of socialisation and networking concerned all students and graduates with disability in the study. As indicated by Ms Hai Mot, a school staff member: “the school has a poor socialisation program for students, within and outside school, that can limit their interaction with other networks and hinder their information about the vocational training program and job opportunities”. However, Ms Hai Hai, principal of the school, said the opposite: “we need to manage students and try to limit them communicating with others outside school because students can become bad people after that”. Employers had different views again about the need for networking for students. Ms Muoi Bon, owner of the hairdressing shop, said: “students with disability need to be trained and interact with others outside school as it will make them more confident and they will help each other to find job after that”.

#### *Right to social involvement/participation*

All young people with disability ought to have the chance to participate in their networks, their schools, and in the public arena (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Wehman, 2013a). This study identified factors that enable active involvement in community activities or networking and the need for young people with disability to be trained in communication skills and interpersonal skills. Two reports prepared by Wagner (2005) and Newman (2011) on factors that impact social involvement and participation for young people with disability and the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) research report by McMillan and Marks (2003) indicated that the social involvement of people with disability should include: (i) the use of leisure time, (ii) friendship interaction and (iii) participation in community activities. However, at Dong Nai, the use of leisure time by students with disability was not diversified and instead dependent on inflexible arrangements of school activities. According to Ms Hai Hai, the school vice-principal, students often had classes in the morning and they can do homework in the afternoon on campus. The school only organises events for students infrequently when they need to celebrate children’s day, disability day, etc. However, Ms Hai Mot, school staff member said, “the school should have events for students on the weekend, or perhaps they can

watch TV in the evening – the social life here for students is so poor”. One student raised his lack of social involvement in the focus group, saying: “being in the school is like being in prison”. Students with hearing impairment suggested sports as important social programs which could address their social needs. Some with vision impairment, such as Ms Nhi and Ms Mot, said they often chatted with friends on the radio or on the phone. This raised an important question for the project regarding how leisure time could be better spent on campus for students with vision impairment so as to promote social connection and avoid the boredom.

Research findings revealed that students living on campus at Dong Nai school tended to only have friends within the school. They had few opportunities to meet their friends outside of school since they were under teacher management and were not allowed to go out by themselves to meet friends except when they went home with their parents. However, opportunities for friendship among graduates became greater when they were active and engaged in a social life with their friends outside of work. Students also reported that they sometimes had conflicts among themselves on campus, especially for students with hearing impairment. According to Alwell and Cobb (2009), students with disability need social and communication skills as critical development skills. Social competence is important for navigating the vocational pursuits and friendship relationships with others that later assist them to develop networks for jobs and vocational training.

Participation of young people with disability in community activities is critical to achieving good post-school outcomes, as it helps students and graduates develop meaningful social contacts, feel a sense of belonging, grow feelings of being influential, build a social network for jobs after school, and be engaged in social interaction with non-disabled community members. This enables more integration into society (Jivanjee, Kruzich, & Gordon, 2008; Morris, 2001; Verdonschot, Witte, Reichrath, Buntinx, & Curfs, 2009). Sadly, this study indicated that community involvement and activities for Dong Nai students and graduates were limited, except for dancing and singing competitions or cooking contests organised by the school or Department of Education and Training. Outside of school, the students and graduates indicated they actively participated in community activities organised by the club for the hearing-impaired. However, it is hard to define what the club meant by community activities since it seems the club tended to focus on a monthly meeting which was administrative rather than members helping each other to find jobs or create a social and community network. As such, this perhaps represented a missed opportunity.

### 8.1.2 Interagency Coordination

Vietnam's administrative governmental structure consists of four levels: (i) the central, (ii) provincial, (iii) district or city, and (iv) commune or ward. The Provincial People's Committee is authorised to manage and enforce Law and policies including budget allocation and coordination of resources, including disability area ("Current local administration system in Vietnam," 2017).

The establishment of the National Coordinating Council on Disability (NCCD) in 2001 marked a significant stride for the Vietnamese government in its response to disability issues, especially ensuring enforcement and coordination of disability services among different sectors. The NCCD plays a critical role in facilitating involvement of civil society such as Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), and Disabled Persons' Organisations (DPOs) for young people with disability to contribute to enforcement and monitoring of the disability programs towards greater inclusion.

However, stakeholders indicated that, while coordination and collaboration among agencies for the school to work transition effort was established during the USAID-funded project, it was not especially strong due to the lack of a legally-recognised mechanism for coordinating services and maintaining the network. Disability and school to work transition requires "multi-disciplinary coordination" and, without this, the school to work transition programs do not function effectively (Landmark, Ju, & Zhang, 2010; Taylor, 2006).

Findings from the National Baseline Survey of the Disability Service System carried out by MOH, MOLISA and MOET in 2015 revealed that multi-sectoral coordination among staff and agencies providing services in education, vocational training, and employment remains an issue. The NCCD's status in the Government is not sufficiently powerful enough to coordinate tasks at the decision-making levels of various ministries to reach MOLISA's national target for the vocational training program. Full implementation of the National Law on Disability requires meticulous and thorough coordination and collaboration among key ministries at the national level and among departments at the provincial level (MOLISA et al., 2015)

### *8.1.2.1 Multidisciplinary coordination*

The literature suggests that school to work transition programs help guide schools to provide adequate coordinated services to assist with the transition of their students with disability to getting a job. Successful school to work transition requires interagency collaboration enforcing policies and facilitating the service delivery system (Benz et al., 1995; Hay, 2009; Kohler, 1993; Lamb, 2008; Plotner et al., 2014; Stavness et al., 2006). Previous research found that agencies including employers, vocational training agencies, and school administrators also play important roles in helping transition students reach their goal by accommodating the individual student choices at work and at vocational training programs (Greene, 2003; Luft & Huff, 2011).

The literature defines multi-disciplinary coordination as a structure of critical partnerships including the partnerships between the school and government agencies for budget and strategic planning, the business community and agencies for the purpose of organising and arranging work experience or internships for students as well as for delivering supportive services for students at school and at work (Haber et al., 2016; Kohler & Chapman, 1999; Mazzotti et al., 2016; Wehman et al., 2015).

Various researchers have investigated the facilitators for effective school to work transition programs and identified that collaboration is key. Kohler (1996) identified that one of the best and most frequently cited practices that facilitate the school to work transition is interagency cooperation and collaboration. Blalock and Patton's (1996) work synthesising descriptions of the collaboration model from different countries, suggested five levels of collaboration. These include: individualised transition planning, school-based committees, community-based teams, regional-transition teams that extends the geographical referral, and state-level transition. Aspel, Bettis, Quinn, Test, and Wood (1999) conducted a study with a group of students with disability in the school to work transition stage in North Carolina. They suggested that inter-agency collaboration is required to ensure effective transition planning, and that collaboration involves three key levels: (i) a state inter-agency task force at the top level whose purpose is to study transition and evaluate the state interagency agreement and provide fiscal and legislative guidance; and (ii) local-level interagency core team at the second level with different sectors including education, employment, vocational training, and employers participating. This is key to assessing, planning, and implementing changes in existing systems and to developing local guidelines and interagency agreements for transition. Finally, (iii) a third level is the individual

team which is needed to develop and implement the transition plans with students. Test et al. (2009a, 2009b) also conducted a systematic review of secondary transition for students with disability and found that the collaboration between schools, community and vocational training and employment services providers was a facilitator for a successful school to work transition. Taylor, Morgan and Callow-Heusser (2016) reported findings of a survey of vocational rehabilitation counsellors and special education teachers on collaboration in transition planning proved a need for strong collaboration among different sectors involving complex tasks of coordinating various multiple agencies, programs, community resources, and personnel to help transition students in their educational process. Flowers et al. (2018) also confirmed that interagency collaboration is a predictor of post school success in the areas of employment and education, and that effective interagency collaboration means increased student involvement in their own planning and enhanced self-determination, both of which have also been associated with the positive post school outcomes. It is clear that all personnel from multiple agencies need to work together and collaborate when planning and implementing transition services for a person with disability.

The findings from these empirical studies highlight the importance of strong collaboration. This is also important for the school to work transition in Vietnam in general and for the Dong Nai school's program in particular. This study also confirms clear roles and responsibilities are necessary conditions for multi-disciplinary coordination, an important element of success in a school to work transition program. This was also identified and discussed by the majority of Dong Nai stakeholders in coordinating the resources and services for the school to work transition program. According to VNAH representatives and the school principal, loose coordination among different agencies was identified as a major problem, partly due to the lack of a legalised framework for roles and responsibilities which would enforce service delivery for school to work transition. On the other hand, strong multi-disciplinary coordination of stakeholders in the transition process could provide comprehensive services and support to people with disability with regards to their vocational training and employment. Mr Muoi from VNAH and NCCD's Ms Chin indicated that this is because sound coordination can ensure that reasonable resources and expertise are allocated for employment, vocational training, networking and advocacy for policy change. In addition, during the data collection process, there was discussion that of plans to establish an Inclusive Education Centre as a hub for comprehensive services for education and employment for people with disability. If this does occur, the role and activities of this Centre could ensure coordination of the resources and

expertise needed for the employment and vocational training services for people with disability at all schools. The multi-disciplinary coordination would help young people with disability know when and where to get the services they need.

There is growing recognition that sharing responsibilities for school to work transition means collaboration and a referral system between schools, vocational training agencies, employers, and government, with formalised roles and relationships to achieve agreement on the transition program goals, and to also gain commitments from employers (Taylor, 2006). However, according to the school principal and other staff in this study, the school had successfully established partnerships based on their personal contacts to help students to find jobs. According to Sloper (2004), a comprehensive evaluation report on the disability service system carried out by MOLISA (2015a) and Luft and Rubin (1999), it is hard to ensure the effectiveness of multi-disciplinary coordination if individual organisation missions, aims, roles and responsibilities are not established and agreed to by agencies. There is agreement between key points made in the literature as well as made by participants that multi-agency commitments at all levels could facilitate an effective system of communication and information-sharing among agencies which provide vocational training and employment services to people with disability.

Table 43 compares macro elements for success identified in the literature with those identified by participants

Table 43: Macro Factors of Success - Literature and Participants

	Elements for success identified in the literature	Facilitators and barriers as perceived by participants
<b>1</b>	<b>Program policy and legislation</b>	
	Rights-based legal framework and a specific policy on school to work transition	<p><i>Facilitators</i></p> <p>General disability framework for Vietnam incorporating vocational training, employment and inclusive education</p> <p><i>Barriers</i></p> <p>No specific school to work transition policy</p>
	Resource allocation Provision of reasonable services to young people with disability, although no research mentioned budget necessity.	<p><i>Facilitators</i></p> <p>GVN: mainstream disability budget USAID-funded: budget for training of teachers and students, internship and networking events.</p> <p><i>Barriers</i></p> <p>GVN budget: rigid disbursement policy and insufficient for vocational training courses. Cessation of short term USAID-funded budget with no transition funding.</p>
	Human resources Expertise and skilled staffing for service delivery at school and workplaces.	<p><i>Facilitators</i></p> <p>Dong Nai school's teachers are trained in school to work transition process during USAID-funded project and can use sign language to assist with interpretation at training courses.</p> <p><i>Barriers</i></p> <p>No full-time staff working on school to work transition</p>
	Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) Indicators to ensure enforcement of the program.	<p><i>Barriers</i></p> <p>No particular policies and no M &amp; E indicators</p>
<b>2</b>	<b>Inter-agency collaboration and coordination</b>	
	A service delivery mechanism with a formal collaborative framework among stakeholders	<p><i>Facilitators</i></p> <p>A multi-agency partnership is established thanks to USAID-project support.</p> <p><i>Barriers</i></p> <p>Since then, informal ad-hoc partnership mechanism</p>
<b>3</b>	<b>Communication and networking</b>	
	Support in sign language for young people with hearing impairment Opportunity to interact with community and public Networking events	<p><i>Facilitators</i></p> <p>Sign-language available only at school.</p> <p><i>Barriers</i></p> <p>No sign language interpretation at workplace or at mainstream VT courses outside school. Reduction of networking events since USAID funding finished</p>

## 8.2 Exosystem – School to Work Program Factors

One key factor facilitating the success of school to work transition programs as identified in the literature is the existence of a coordinated set of activities and services that promote the shift from school to work or post-school activities (Kohler, 1992; Lamb & McKenzie, 2001).

It is recommended that these coordinated services should be based on needs, preferences, and abilities, and should focus on vocational counselling, and exposure to the labour market. These individualised services should be identified during the school to work transition planning stage (Cobb & Alwell, 2009; Wright, 1991).

The literature provides evidence that students have more chance of success after they graduate if they: (1) participate in an individualised transition planning process with interagency collaboration; (2) are provided with instruction in vocational training programs such as social skills, job search skills and employment skills; (3) obtain work experience or internships in high school (Benz & Halpern, 1993; Cobb & Alwell, 2009; Greene & Kochhar, 2003; Kohler, 1992; Mazzotti et al., 2016; Newman et al., 2011) and, (4) are provided with resources such as skilled staff and specialist services including effective transition services (Bonds, 2003; Defur & Taymans, 1995; Levinson & Palmer, 2005; Stewart et al., 2006).

### 8.2.1 Transition Planning

The literature highlights that transition planning should be provided to each student. Ideally, the coordination of Dong Nai stakeholders starts from the student's transition planning at school and continues until students graduate and achieve employment (Cobb & Alwell, 2009; Levinson & Palmer, 2005). The transition planning process is ongoing, requires time and identifies students' strengths and areas for improvement relating to personal and social skills such as accomplishing educational goals, self-advocacy, self-determination; and occupational skills, for example finding out about and investigating job openings; seeking and maintaining job (Kohler, 1993; Stewart et al., 2006; Wagner, 1993; Wehman et al., 2015). The transition planning process also requires the involvement of parents who can help to identify the strengths and different needs of their children with disability, as well as to identify important connections between young people with disability and family, peers and community (Levinson & Palmer, 2005; Wehman, 2013a)

Findings from this study revealed that both needs assessments and transition planning activities were carried out at the school. Students, graduates and stakeholders in Dong Nai indicated these activities were important and they rated high levels of satisfaction with them, for example, 96% of students, 84% of graduates and 94% of stakeholders considered their needs assessment and transition planning had been helpful. However, what does it mean if the results

of the needs assessment were not reflected in the vocational training program offered to students? The interviews with students and graduates indicated that they often had to participate in a sewing class when they were interested in other vocational training programs, such as hair dressing and car repair. The majority of students and graduates indicated that the school often offered only one option for vocational training, and they participated in it because there were no other choices. As one student, Mr Hoc, mentioned: “each year the school organised vocational training on sewing for us and teachers asked us to participate”.

While Dong Nai students and graduates had complaints about the lack of diverse training options, interviews with other stakeholders such as DOLISA, DOET and school staff revealed that the socio-economic and industry characteristics of the locality of Dong Nai dictated training options since the majority of jobs offered to people with disability in the locality were sewing or garment-related jobs. This finding supports Quirk’s (2013) report about the design of the school to work transition program for Dong Nai, given Dong Nai is an industrial area with the highest rate of jobs offered by the garment companies (60%), 10% of graduates continuing with college and 30% unemployed at home. While the literature suggests that needs and interests of students should be reflected in the transition planning and the interventions (Cobb & Alwell, 2009; Lindsay, 2011b; Wehman, 2013a), the work structure and availability in the localities where the students live needs to be taken into account to ensure there will be jobs for graduates.

### 8.2.2 Skills Development for Students and Graduates

Supportive services are important to ensure effective employment preparation and work skill development in preparation for work. Students need to develop skills and qualities such as self-determination, and social and self-advocacy skills for inclusion in school and community. These services need to be designed to meet the needs of people with disability (Morris, 2001; Trainor, 2005; Wehman, 2013a; Winn & Hay, 2009). Sign language interpretation and language skills are a key factor for inclusion in society for young people with communication challenges such as hearing and speaking impairment (Eriks-Brophy et al., 2006; Jivanjee et al., 2008; Lewis, Stone, Shipley, & Madzar, 1998; Luft, 2000; Wagner, 1991).

Sign language was used by the majority of students with hearing impairment at Dong Nai school. According to the management of Dong Nai school, sign language was considered as

important a subject as Vietnamese with students having four lessons per week. As indicated by parents, students and graduates, the lack of sign language interpretation outside the school severely limited the participation of young people with disability in vocational training programs organised by agencies, even if they were free, and could improve their chances of employment in a formal setting. Many participants mentioned that limited communication hindered their progress in looking for jobs or ensuring job stability once employed. As one graduate, Ms Nhi, shared:

*I was stuck with communication with my colleagues because I did not understand when my co-workers talked and I had problem with understanding the guidance to the work. Sometimes managers came and talked with everyone but I could not hear so I just watched and followed what others were doing.*

At what point should students be able to exercise their right to make a decision about vocational training and jobs they are taking? Interviews with parents revealed that they themselves felt they had limited knowledge or contacts to assist their children to find a job or select the right vocational training option. Parent, Ms Mai, shared this view in her focus group, and other parents agreed: “I do not know anything about the jobs and vocational training agencies that are good for my children ... I rely on the schoolteachers”. Teachers at the school, Ms Hai Hai and Ms Muoi Tam, said this meant teachers ended up deciding what students should learn and do, or sometimes DOLISA did. Because of their scope of funding, sewing was the focus. Ms Muoi Ba from DOLISA confirmed: “we can provide sewing class only as there is a big need for staffing in this sector, and garment companies are the major employers recruiting people with hearing impairment”.

Many agreed that social competence, including getting along with others, good interpersonal skills, and job skills were critical to post-school education and successful school to work transition. This was also identified in the literature. Students need to be confident to make informed choices in a manner that is important to him or her (Alwell & Cobb, 2007; Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Kohler, 1993; Phelps & Hanley-Maxwell, 1997; Wagner, 1993). Both young people with disability and stakeholders expressed the need for young people to be provided with skills to improve their job search skills and social skills. Most students identified the need to improve their communication with outsiders, such as employers at interviews and people at the vocational training agencies. They also wished to improve themselves and be able to overcome problems at work and at school. As one student, Ms Nhi, shared: “I talked with my

friends who are working and we often worried about how to communicate with the outsiders, how we can interact with people at work to ensure they understand us as we are too young”. Another graduate, Ms Thap Tu, shared: “my friend felt very stressed at work and wanted to quit her job because her manager blamed her for not being able to do the work right”. In addition, students wanted to be trained in other skills relevant to finding a job. Ms Thap Luc explained: “I wanted to learn how to fill out the application form, how to respond to questions in the job interviews”. Most stakeholders shared similar concerns relating to the need to train students with a range of skills.

### 8.2.3 Work Experience and Internships

According to Article 27 of the UNCRPD, people with disability have the right to work opportunities and the right to be trained to work. Wehman et al. (2015) emphasise that work experience and internship are strong predictors for success in school to work transition. In the National Longitudinal Transitional Study (NLTS) analysed by Blackorby and Wagner (1996), transition students who participated in adult transition programs which had an emphasis on work experience and vocational education showed better employment outcomes than those in programs that did not. Work experience and vocational job training/education were considered the most important area which helped with employment outcomes (for example, resumé writing and job interview skills). Wehman et al. (2015) draws attention to elements that are of crucial importance in the success of school to work transition including vocational training and work experience, especially high expectations from parents lead to better employment outcomes. Luecking and Mooney (2002) indicate that work-based learning, or internship are beneficial to young people with disability as these provide chances to decide the career direction in which young people with disability are moving forward (Ryan, 2009). One important finding from the literature is that vocational education is considered an important factor that facilitates success in obtaining employment (Wagner & Blackorby, 1996)

Participants’ views supported what was identified in the literature. That is, the majority of students and graduates appreciated their work experience or the internship, and clearly stated that these experience provided them with “career guidance – get to know what needs to be done” and the confidence to start work after school.

## 8.2.4 Availability of Resources

A major element contributing to obtaining employment after leaving school is access to vocational assessment and planning which requires the involvement of various functioning agencies delivering services in the locality. To ensure the effectiveness of transition planning, personnel must be qualified to deliver quality services to people with disability (Cobb & Alwell, 2009). According to Levinson and Palmer (2005), the assessment and planning process can only be effective if opportunities are provided to parents, teachers, counsellors, and service agencies to participate actively in the process.

Ms Mot, the principal, and Ms Hai Hai, school manager, both indicated that the majority of personnel responsible for transition planning lacked experience and skills in the school to work transition process. Interviews with teachers at the school suggested that staff should be trained in skills that can assist in the transition process such as needs assessment and planning, or skills which focus on employment preparation for students, based on their personal experience, interests and skills or dreams.

The lack of full-time staff working as job developers and coaches was also an issue for Dong Nai. School staff and other service providers like DOET identified this as an issue, even though the school had assigned one staff member to work on this effort. However, this assigned staff member only worked on a part-time basis in the school to work transition program in addition to her other responsibilities, which included accounting, other administrative tasks, and teaching IT to students. This staff member, Ms Hai, also raised the issue of her high workload as she could not cover all necessary duties and tasks even though she had been trained to do them.

The literature supports the view that, without key staff working on school to work transition linking employers to students, the program does not work so well. Participants like Mr Muoi Chin, a former staff member, clearly agreed:

*It will be impossible to implement the school to work transition for students with disability if there is no one assigned to establish relationships with employers, communicate with employers about individual students at the school, and also to communicate with the school about the job requirements.*

According to Wright (1991) and Test et al. (2009a, 2009b), job developers are important in obtaining jobs. Job developers ensure that students receive instructions at real job sites and are evaluated to identify if a job is suitable to their interests and talents. Job developers also provide labour market information. This job requires time for liaison with employers, families, and for the school administrator and teachers to assist students in planning and transition to work. Thus, if more time is given to this task, skill level competency is more likely assured and more support can be provided to students as needed.

The literature suggests job coaches should be available to assist the students to develop job training plans for students on jobs and to arrange internships for work experience. This position ideally works closely with the school's job developer to develop relationships with employers and place students in real jobs for training during school or employment after school (deFur, 2003; Nuehring & Sitlington, 2003; Rogan & Held, 1999; Rutkowski, Daston, Van Kuiken, & Riehle, 2006). As VNAH and DPO representatives said: "The implementation of the school to work transition cannot be accomplished by the school alone".

Table 44 compares exosystem elements for success identified in the literature with those identified by participants

Table 44: Exosystem Factors of Success - Literature and Participants

	Elements for success identified in the literature	Facilitators and barriers as perceived by the participants
<b>1</b>	<b><i>Disability support service provision</i></b>	
	Socialising activities as part of the networking for young people with disability	<p><i>Facilitators</i></p> <p>Government support: social activities at school food fairs, children’s day, cooking competition</p> <p>USAID-funded project: job fairs, training workshops, and visits to job sites</p> <p><i>Barriers</i></p> <p>Government funding not enough to organise the events regularly, and limited interaction with employers and other peers outside school, heavy focus on social welfare</p> <p>USAID-funded support for a short period of time</p>
<b>2</b>	<b><i>Transition planning</i></b>	
	Student-focused planning: (i) identified students’ strengths and areas for improvement, (ii) voices of students reflected in the intervention plans, and (iii) vocational training courses offered in response to the needs and interests of students	<p><i>Facilitators</i></p> <p>Teachers talked with students about their hopes and futures but only assisted them in employment and vocational training options when specifically requested</p> <p>Soft skills training plans developed</p>
<b>3</b>	<b><i>Work experience/career guidance and internship and vocational training</i></b>	
	<p>Internship or work-based experience</p> <p>Availability of the vocational training agencies in localities with different options</p> <p>Reasonable accommodation</p> <p>Career guidance as integral part of the education system</p> <p>Training of interviews skills and Resumé writing.</p>	<p><i>Facilitators</i></p> <p>USAID-funded project: assistance with job application, and internship or work experience during the vocational training courses.</p> <p>Soft skills trainings (skills in job application and interviews)</p> <p><i>Barriers</i> (USAID-funded project)</p> <p>Limited options for vocational training</p> <p>Short time for internship and work experience</p>
<b>4</b>	<b><i>Context of school environment</i></b>	
	<p>Role of school to ensure the needs are met</p> <p>Engage parents in the planning process</p> <p>Coordinating employers, vocational training agencies to set up job placements with local authorities</p>	<p><i>Facilitators</i></p> <p>USAID-funded project improved skills for staff working on program</p> <p>Improved capacity and skills for school staff and stakeholders through training workshops and on-the-job training</p> <p>Network and relationships among stakeholders established for coordinating vocational training and employment services</p> <p><i>Barriers</i></p> <p>Limited opportunities for interaction with peers</p> <p>Networking amongst stakeholders or for social events dependent on irregular funding</p>

### 8.3 Mesosystem – Family Involvement

The literature revealed that participation of people with disability and their families in service design and delivery are key elements for promoting the inclusion of young people with disability in the workplace (Boone, 1992; Defur et al., 2001; Kohler, 1996). Further, parents' involvement is a known important factor for the success of school to work transition programs (Crawshaw, 2002; Levinson & Palmer, 2005; Wehman, 2011).

Kohler (1996) and Wehman (2013) suggest that family involvement means that parents and family members are provided with opportunities to participate in identifying their children's needs, planning requirements and providing them individualised services. In addition, Kohler (1998) proposed that family involvement should focus on (a) participation and roles, (b) empowerment, and (c) training.

According to Wehman (2013) and Lindstrom (2007), parents' involvement in school to work transition influences transition outcomes for students. Involvement means parents playing a major role and knowing what school and employment options are available. Involvement means parents knowing their rights, knowing the options, facilitating the decisions and advocating for their children. Levinson and Palmer (2005) also emphasise that parents are well-placed to provide inputs to the school planning team regarding their child's interests, talent, strengths, weaknesses and goal. This can be done through empowering parents by involving them in the transition from the planning stage with school administrators and teachers. They can then later follow-up their child's plan.

The findings from this study supported the literature and also indicated the need for parents' involvement during the planning process and in their child's decision about jobs. Parents' assistance was needed to identify needs and training opportunities for their child. However, the teachers commented that with the majority of students living on campus, parents lived away from them and perhaps only saw them during holidays or the summer break. Parents were therefore not often engaged with the school and school to work transition activities, especially with the early planning stage. Parents, Ms Hai Mot, Ms Hai, Ms Bon, Mr Muoi Chin and Ms Hai Hai indicated that most of the time, they let the school decide what their children learned for their careers and that they relied on the school's decision about jobs. While teachers and staff expected parents to be more involved with their children, Ms Mai and Ms Cuc said they

found it was: “hard for them to advise their kids as they did not have information about the vocational training options and job availabilities”.

Parents often had low expectations of their children’s capacity to work or to have a position in a formal work setting due to their disability. As Mr Tam said:

*My son has hearing and speaking impairment, and this is his last year with Dong Nai school. However, I do not expect much from my son regarding employment after graduation, because they cannot communicate with outsiders...or, if they work, they just can do simple work, because complicated work needs analytical skills and good observation.*

Other members in the focus group also shared concerns regarding their child’s disability and their child’s challenges with communication. Mr Man stated: “it is difficult for our children to work because they do not have opportunities to participate in life skills training and work skills, this will add more difficulty for them to work”. Parents said however that they expected the school to communicate with them to discuss their child’s options for jobs and vocational training. Mr Cuc and Ms Mai said: “the school always know different options of jobs and training, and it is best if we can discuss with school about these topics”. Dong Nai parents highlighted a need to be invited to planning meetings with the school about their children’s future employment. Mr Dao and Ms Mai also called for the school to facilitate the more effective involvement of parents in the transition process. At the same time, teachers shared that they often called parents to ask permission for their child to fill a job vacancy and that, most of the time, the parents agreed.

The literature suggests that parents can be more effective in planning, assessment, mentoring or support roles if they are empowered to participate (Geenen, Powers, & Lopez-Vasquez, 2001; Thorkildsen & Stein, 1998). This was strongly supported by a DPO representative in Dong Nai who suggested that parents needed to be trained in skills to advise their children and improve their own capacity to understand their strengths and weaknesses. In addition, Ms Hai Ba said parents needed information about the job market, so as to establish connections with employers for job opportunities. This is especially important because most students expressed their respect and dependency on their parents’ decisions and advice around employment. As children Ms Thap Tu and Mr Thap Luc said: “because I am a child with hearing and speaking

impairment, I cannot make a right decision and I have to listen to parents. I think my parents are right and I depend on them later after graduation”.

Even though the study highlighted the need for parents to actively participate in the school to work transition process, and parents and teachers also indicated they recognised the roles of parents in this process, interviews with school managers and teachers revealed a lack of funding sources to organise the necessary events or activities to make this happen. Ms Hai Hai, the vice-principal said: “parents are invited for school events twice a year to review their children’s academic results for each semester only”. Ms Hai, a staff member said: “our networking events can be organised as a job fair event by DOLISA but parents were not usually invited due to the lack of budget”.

In addition, parents indicated they needed support and training to help them understand their role as mentors to their children for job-seeking or vocational training advice. Doing so, they said would help to motivate them to provide more effective counselling and support to their children. As a mother, Ms Cuc said: “we sometimes want to know what our children need to do in order for them to get a job but we do not know where to start and who we should talk with”. Others like a father Mr Dao shared: “the school can organise more meetings with us to develop the plans of interventions for students and work on plans with parents, focusing on improving the soft-skills and interpersonal skills for our children”.

Table 45 compares mesosystem elements for success identified in the literature with those identified by participants

Table 45: Mesosystem Factors of Success - Literature and Participants

	Elements for success identified in the literature	Facilitators and barriers perceived by the participants
<b>1</b>	<b><i>Parents' Engagement</i></b>	
	<p>Engagement of parents in planning and post-school support after child's graduation</p> <p>High parental expectation for employment determines students' outcomes</p> <p>Parents' participation in events and training</p> <p>Parents' empowerment and improved capacity: knowing their rights, options and advocating for their children's rights</p>	<p><i>Facilitators</i></p> <p>Participation in training courses conducted by USAID-funded project</p> <p>Parents participated in meetings conducted by school twice a year to learn about their children's progress</p> <p><i>Barrier</i></p> <p>Parents' low expectations of employment goals</p> <p>Limited to no participation in the transition planning for students at school</p> <p>Limited capacity and low education making it difficult to support their children after graduation.</p>
<b>2</b>	<b><i>Social Network and Multi-Professional Collaboration</i></b>	
	<p>Networking with peers with and without disability for experience and information about the jobs.</p>	<p><i>Facilitators</i></p> <p>DPO for people with hearing impairment</p> <p>Graduates with disability interact with DPO for hearing impairment</p> <p><i>Barriers</i></p> <p>Students have limited access to the DPO for hearing impairment</p>

## 8.4 Microsystem – Individual Perspectives on Employment and Social Inclusion

The literature recommends that all young people with disability should be provided with equitable opportunity to participate in their communities, in schools and in society (Khoo et al., 2013; Wehman, 2013a). Opportunities for participation and inclusion of young people with disability in employment encourages young people with disability to lead independent lives (Luecking & Mooney, 2002; Savickas, 1999). People with disability should be fully recognised for their ability to equally contribute to the social development of the community, and to access the services they need to enable them to fully exercise their rights to vocational training and employment. This is a movement and progress from charity to right-based approach to ensure

a better quality of life for young people with disability (International Labour Organisation [ILO], 2006).

An ecological perspective supports the position that the individual is at the centre in their social environment and impacted by policies, agencies and organisations as well as their own connections to family, school, workplace, and community (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Using this ecological perspective, interview information was analysed from four individuals (students and graduates). This section highlights how personal, family and environmental factors combine to contribute to the success of the school to work transition program. These four case studies illustrate the complexity of each individual's connections to their world.

The four students' stories were selected from those 17 students and nine graduates who were interviewed during the study. The researcher was able to observe changes in these four students on three occasions as they progressed through the school year. The selection of their stories was based on different outcomes: (i) demonstrating positive changes over time in their decisions for their future regarding jobs, (ii) their insight and understanding about the need for social inclusion and independent living through having a good job, and (iii) the difficulties they experienced as a result of changes in service availability and lack of the services after graduation.

These short case studies show what and when necessary services and resources were available; how the availability of services improved employment opportunities; how services can change attitudes, awareness and decisions about future employment; and the family can encourage young people with disability to believe they can work. By comparing the features of each, it makes it more possible to understand the intra and inter-personal factors that contributed to the success or otherwise of the school to work transition program. Following are the four stories:

### Story 1: Ms Cuu

Ms Cuu was born in 2002, She has a hearing impairment and believed this to mean limited opportunities for work after her graduation. Cuu lived with her grandparents as her parents were divorced. Over the course of the year and three interviews with her, she had changed her mind from “not wanting to work” to “wanting to work”. She received support from Dong Nai's

school to work transition program with vocational training and job counselling as well as advice and encouragement from her family.

Cuu lived on campus but usually went home on the weekend as her grandparents lived in town. Like many other friends at school, she came from a poor family. Cuu received no support from her parents, but her grandparents took care of her by giving her a ride back and forth between home and school on the weekends.

At the first interview in mid-2016, Cuu was 14 years old and in Year 8. She had not participated in the vocational training program. She had no idea what she would be doing at the end of Year 9, but thought she may want to continue with study: “I do not know what I am going to do after Year 9 and I think I will continue with year 10, but there is no school for Year 10 here in Dong Nai. She did not have any ideas about going to work after graduation. When I met her again for a second interview six months later, she had just completed her first vocational training program through the Dong Nai program. She was still not sure about her plan for work or whether to continue with study but had changed to considering the prospect of work. She said: “I am not very sure what I should do after graduation, but maybe I think about work”. She explained that this thinking more about work was because she “found the job she tried was interesting”, but she “was not sure if she could get a job because of the disability”.

In the final interview, when she was at Year 9, she explained that she was now seriously considering a job, and was sure she needed to work: “I think it is better for me to look for jobs and work after graduation because I do not think I can continue with study”. She also indicated that “the vocational training program was fun as students often do not do anything outside class”. Most importantly, given her opportunities and her academic ability, she was now aware of work as an option after graduation: “I know that it is very difficult for me to continue with Year 10 because my academic results are not very outstanding”. She also listened to her grandparents’ advice. She reported them as suggesting: “I should start thinking about work and participate in vocational training and work after graduation”. What is notable in Cuu’s story is that she her change of mind and attitude over time from “not wanting to work” to “wanting to work” after participation in the vocational training program and advice from her family.

## Story 2: Ms Luc

Ms Luc was born in 1994. With support from the Dong Nai USAID-funded school to work transition program, she participated in vocational training and an internship. After graduation in 2014, she started working for the Busung garment company. By then, she had become a model of self-determination and confidence to her friends, illustrating the importance of being independent from family and showing that employment was the way for her to achieve independence and inclusion in society.

Luc also lived on campus during her study and participated in two vocational training programs. Her parents lived in a remote, rural area of Dong Nai and her family was poor, her own mother was working for a garment company. At the beginning, she did not have the support of her parents because this meant she would need to live away from home. She explained at her interview:

*When I started to look for jobs, my parents did not want me to work for a garment company, because I had to live far from parents, and they wanted me to work somewhere near home. They worry about the safety and security for me if I rent a house because I have hearing impairment.*

She learned sewing skills in her internship and was confident to work in this garment industry:

*When I decided to work for the company, I also shared with my friends and most of them shared difficulty in communication with their colleagues and the manager, but I found it not difficult to do the work. I often communicated with them on a piece of paper. When I had free time, I tried to teach them some basic sign language and so they were able to communicate with me as well. I think it is fun and it helped everyone to get close to each other for socialisation.*

Luc always wanted to be considered ‘normal’, and to be able to do the same work as others without disability. She made an effort to communicate with those without hearing impairment in order to understand them. She also appreciated her internship: “Thanks to the internship time, I knew what needed to be done so that I fear less when I started the work”.

According to Luc, it was also very important to know and understand that there were not many jobs for people with disability in the area. Therefore, she felt she needed to try even harder to keep a job. She also understood that that she needed to work in order to live independently from her parents: “Some of my friends are too dependent on their parents and not very keen to look for jobs. We are grown up and we need to work to reduce the burden for our parents as

well". In order to be successful in job-seeking, Luc also appreciated her parents' support, especially her mother, who provided her with motivation to work:

*When I decided to work for the Busung company, my mother was the one who always provides me with a ride back and forth between home and work. Before I got a job, my mother was the one who helped me with job seeking, filling out the application form and went with us for job interviews.... Parents are those who help us after graduation.*

Luc's statements show how she appreciated her parents' support and motivation with job orientation and work. In addition, Luc's positive attitude also showed her determination to overcome her difficulties due to her impairment. She always showed her keenness to be independent in daily life.

### Story 3: Mr Vang

Mr Vang, a hearing-impaired graduate, was born in 1993, and started his employment with Nike after graduation in 2013. Vang was considered a very successful student who, with support from school, had found a job that matched his interest. Vang lived on campus with his peers during his study when Dong Nai was supported by USAID. Vang came from a middle-income family in a rural area and his parents were farmers. He was considered a very successful student who found a job that matched his interest. "I like the work here", he said.

During his time with Dong Nai school, Vang undertook vocational training in sewing twice and, after graduation, got support from school staff to find a job at Nike as part of the school to work transition program. When he participated in vocational training, his parents had no advice for him, since they did not have any contacts or information about the jobs. Although he shared his concerns with his parents, he decided what to do after graduation on his own: "I think I can decide what I am to do after I took part in the internship and the vocational training programs, because if I like the job, I will be successful". This was the difference between before and after his participation in the vocational training and internship. After, he was aware of what jobs he could take and was confident about the job he was doing. In addition to this, Vang was also aware of his need to overcome the communication challenge of being hearing impaired:

*I think it is difficult for the hearing-impaired like me to get a job because very few employers in the area hire us. There are some of my friends with hearing impairment who cannot work under pressure and then quit the job but they could*

*not find one after that. When I was working, I also found very tired and stressed, but since I know it is hard to have a job, I tried my best to keep the job.*

Even with the ability to work and his interest in the work, Vang was still struggling as a hearing-impaired worker at the company. He said: “we do not know the information being shared at the meeting, or any signs of danger – we depend a lot on the colleagues who work with us on the team”. Clearly, it was important that his good interpersonal skills helped him overcome this barrier: “I tried to make friends with them and asked them for help as needed. I know this task is not easy as some of my friends with hearing impairment often hesitate to interact with co-workers without disability”.

The important features of Vang’s success were that he was very determined and confident about the job he was doing and he worked hard to overcome his communication difficulties as a hearing-impaired person. He also tried to interact with his co-workers to get their support at work and to create a supportive environment at work. This confirmed that communication skills are such important factors for young people with disability to get along with colleagues.

#### Story 4: Mr Den

Mr Den, was born in 2000 and graduated in 2015. He was unemployed when he joined for his first and only interview in round two. Den did not have support from either the school or his family after graduation. In addition, Den had poor proficiency in both Vietnamese and sign language.

Den had been without a job for two years post-graduation. He came from a poor family in the countryside and his parents were divorced. During his time at school, he participated in the vocational training program conducted by Dong Nai. However, by the time he graduated, he was only 15 years old and had to wait until he was 16 to apply for a job. After leaving school, he returned home to live with his mother and to wait until he turned 16 years old. He felt sad as he was looking for many jobs but could not find one. He shared:

*I started to look for a job when I turned 16 years old. I applied for the jobs in some companies but I do not have any one to help me during the interviews. During the interviews, they also asked me to write down the answers but sometimes I did not understand the interview questions because vocabulary of Vietnamese was poor so they thought that I am illiterate.*

He was not supported by the school after graduation, and he also mentioned the lack of support and assistance from his parents in looking for work because his parents did not work and had limited understanding. He also expressed the need to have better communication skills:

*I think I need a lot of assistance from teachers and somebody who can understand the sign language and understand the interview questions. I have graduated so I cannot ask for help from teachers now. Therefore, I think it is very important for students to be trained in how to answer the interview questions, how to fill up the application form. After graduation, nobody can help me and especially I am a hearing impaired, I cannot do anything.*

Den's statements indicated that he felt the stigma of disability and needed more help and support from the school and both his parents. These factors all affected his self-determination. He also lacked the necessary skills to succeed in job-seeking. In addition, it was more difficult for Den to get support after his graduation because the USAID-funded project had finished. Because of this, access to resources was limited and less support was available for young people with disability to assist them with employment. Den's story indicates how important support should not stop at the point of graduation.

Similar statements about stigma were raised by graduates who were working. The majority mentioned communication as the main barrier to successful socialising and being included in the work environment. Because of this, graduates like Ms Trang, Ms Tim, and Ms Do, said young people with disability often feel lonely at work as they cannot communicate with their co-workers and managers. As a result, the hearing-impaired workers like Ms Trang, Ms Tim and Ms Nhat teamed up to communicate at work and although some of them wanted to quit their jobs, they still needed and wanted to earn money and not depend on their parents. They talked of making efforts to overcome the stigma related to their inability to communicate by writing down what they wanted on paper and sharing their concerns with their peers. However, young people with disability like Ms Trang found this method of communication inconvenient for both parties, because: "asking a question verbally is easy and quicker than writing down the questions and it is more disturbing for my colleagues to write down the answers".

Ms Trang, another person with disability, was resilient enough to allow herself to make mistakes while she was trying the job, so that she could learn from her mistakes:

*As you know, it is not easy to find a job for a person with disability like me. Even I am facing difficulty in communication and felt stressed, I still think I can do the work, and that's the only way to be myself and I grow up from making a mistake.*

These stories about four young people with disability illustrate how a complex combination of personal, family and environment factors can impact school to work transition. An individual's personal factors contributed to their success and an awareness of the right to work also assists. Qualities such as resilience and self-determination as well as access to needed services, opportunities to make informed choices, proficiency in Vietnamese and sign language interpretation, and interpersonal skills for relating to work colleagues are all important.

#### 8.4.1 Awareness of the Right to Work

An awareness of the right to work and then access to the necessary services to fulfil that right are important in career development for young people with disability (Gangl, 2003; Hodkinson, Hodkinson, & Sparkes, 2013; Phelps & Hanley-Maxwell, 1997). Participation by young people with disability in different programs such as internships, vocational training programs and soft skills support can enrich their awareness of the right to work and assist them to identify needed services. Students Ms Nhat and Ms Sau Em indicated that awareness and access to information about job availability, job requirements gained through internship and training, helped them to make decisions about their work and job preferences.

It might be difficult for students transitioning to work to acknowledge or comprehend the challenges in the school to work transition program, especially if they are unsure or unaware of which services they need or what skills they require for job-seeking or work. In addition, transition students might have had different perspectives if they had known about other vocational services in the region. Awareness and knowledge of vocational training and employment services provided by other programs helped students make decisions regarding appropriate options. As Mr Den shared:

*I did not have information and contacts about job availability and the vocational training programs after graduation, it was hard for me to decide what training I should participate in and who are recruiting so I can approach them.*

It is clear that knowledge and awareness of “employment services, supports, and resources among people with disability who have individualised needs, their families and professionals that support them” are necessary to increase their competitive employment outcomes (Francis et al., 2013, p. 1). Ms Trang indicated in her interview: “It is harder to find a job now if we do not have information about job vacancies and contact persons who we can approach”. When there are more resources, more support is possible, and when young people with disability are

aware of the resources and services available, they can be encouraged to make decisions about the jobs and their lives.

Mr Vang and Ms Luc, although they had difficulty in hearing and understanding their peers at work, talked about how they overcame the challenges of job-seeking and work at the company. Their knowledge and attitudes about their situation and their positive attempts to overcome their difficulties, including managing stigma and discrimination, were key factors to their success in their school to work transition.

#### 8.4.2 Self-determination and Resilience

According to Field et al. (1998b) and McDonnall and Crudden (2009), self-determination is required for positive career development. Enacting self-determination is needed for a person with disability to move away from a charitable activity/perspective to a rights-based/civil rights position. This approach also requires the necessary supports for young people with disability so they can successfully identify a career direction and get a job that interest them.

Self-determination includes being able “to set goals for themselves, make decisions for themselves, speak up for their rights” (Wehmeyer, 1999, p. 55) to overcome their disability and difficulties at work (Soldner, Peter, Sajadi, & Paiewonsky, 2019). Wehman (1992) states: “An understanding of one’s strengths and limitations together with a belief in oneself as a person to engage in goal directed, self-regulated, autonomous behaviour are essential to self-determination” (Wehman, 1992, p. 214). With opportunities to exercise and strengthen these personal skills and attitudes, individuals are empowered to live independently and become successful in employment (American Foundation for the Blind, 2016). As Ms Luc shared, her work experience via internship, provided her with the knowledge and skills to make decisions about a job after graduation and she was able to keep the job. Although this was not easy, she was determined to financially support her family and to be independent in her choices. When a person is aware of their rights and is determined, difficulties, stigma and discrimination can be overcome.

Family participation is important to the development of resilience and this also fosters motivation to achieve career goals. Even though most young people with disability in this study

came from financially poor families, most wanted to be independent and have a better life as the result of working, and also support their families and parents. Therefore, as Ms Luc, Mr Vang and Ms Nhat indicated, they were determined to keep their jobs so always tried hard to understand their colleagues and managers, to keep up with their job requirements and avoid being dependent on others at work.

### 8.4.3 Making Informed Choices

Making informed choices plays: “an important role in a person's quality of life” (Mitchell, 2015, p. 1). However, people with disability can indicate they have limited or no choices to make decisions for themselves, even in regard to social support options (Bond & Hurst, 2010). It is also more challenging for those who have difficulty with communication to make decisions (Murphy & Oliver, 2013). Making informed choices is linked to the issues of rights and empowerment (Lehman, Clark, Bullis, Rinkin, & Castellanos, 2002), and there was surprisingly little in the literature on rights-based decision-making for young people with disability regarding school to work transition (Tarleton & Ward, 2005).

Making informed choices also means young people with disability have to be actively involved in planning processes (Franklin & Sloper, 2005, 2009; Mitchell, Franklin, Greco, & Bell, 2009) and also depends on the levels of awareness and knowledge of young people with disability (Kaehne & Beyer, 2009). However, young people’s views are often underestimated or omitted in transition planning, particularly if they have a disability (Smart, 2004). It is because of this, their needs are not comprehensively addressed (Davis, 2011).

Key issues about making informed choices identified in the literature were also identified by the students and graduates in this study. The majority of young people with disability highlighted the need to make their own choices about vocational training and jobs after graduation, and factors that empowered them included: support from family and friends, positive expectations, and knowledge and experience. Support from friends, parents and school staff was also considered an important factor facilitating informed choices. Ranked as most important was the availability of advice and support from trusted people. Ms Nhat said: “My mother and family are those I can trust and always listen to when I need advice, therefore I always ask them first if I have any issues”. Others relied on peers who had similar challenges and were able to share their experience in regards to jobs and vocational training.

During the planning process, positive expectations from parents, schoolteachers and staff helped young people identify their needs and interests based on their strengths. Hopeful expectations tended to lead to good job outcomes, given that the choices made were based on greater confidence and knowledge of their strengths. Ms Luc explained this for herself:

*I usually got support from my teachers as they often advised me what to do while I was unsure about my decision...they often ask what I want and they shared with me what I can do based on my ability and they expected me to do it as they know I can do it.*

Other people with disability valued the knowledge and experience of their parents and their peers and based their decisions around that. Ms Bat said:

*I used to go to the club of the hearing impaired and my friends there often shared their practical experience about the work that they are doing and what difficulties they are facing. Based on that, I decide what jobs I am going to do after graduation or I can learn how my friends are dealing with each situation at work.*

Parents also knew that their ongoing support and positive expectations were encouraging.

One parent, Ms Muoi Bay, said:

*Since my daughter is still very young, her interest may change over time, therefore I will support her to change couple of topics before she can decide what she is most interested in. The more training options she takes, the more experience and information she will gain and it would help her to better make decision for her future.*

However, young people with disability also shared the challenges they faced with regards to making informed choices. Interviews with young people and their parents revealed barriers that hindered their ability to be informed and make good choices. These included a lack of accessible information, negative societal attitudes, low expectations from some parents, and a lack of services in the area.

The lack of access to information concerned both people with disability and parents. As described in Chapter 6, the majority of young people with disability relied on the school staff to look for vocational training options and jobs. This was a barrier given it narrowed their options and did not always meet their needs. Sewing seemed to be the only option for the hearing-impaired students during the transition process, even though students had expressed interest in other jobs in the areas of baking, hairdressing, and post office operations. Parents also relied solely on the school to assist their children with vocational training options and job-

seeking. Most students expressed their need for broad information so that they were then able to make choices based on their range of needs and interests, and not be narrowly dictated to by the school.

The issue of low expectations held by some parents in regard to their children being able to find a job was a barrier. Students indicated that their parents did not expect them to start looking for jobs as they were too young and had a disability. Some parents seemed to think it was not a problem for their children with a disability to stay at home and not work. This view confirms that some young people with disability are seen for their deficits rather than strengths.

Communication is a major barrier for hearing-impaired students and impacts opportunities for the young people with disability to make informed choices (Martinis, 2015; Mitchell, 2015). This is consistent with the requests from young people with hearing impairment for adequate support and assistance to overcome communication barriers in regard to several issues: to access information regarding vocational training options and employment opportunities. Mr Den said:

*Because we do not have contacts or information about who provides the vocational training and it is hard for us to know what to choose and who provides vocational training that we like.*

Other young people with disability shared concerns about their future relating to jobs when they felt they did not have any other options other than to depend on the school's support. Ms That expressed her concern:

*I am going to graduate this May, and very worried about what I am going to do after graduation. I only participated in the vocational training on sewing conducted by Dong Nai school, and I hope I can find a job after this*

Findings from the literature and this study point out the importance of supporting young people with disability to make choices, and the vital role of family, peers and community networks in helping young people to access information and support. This suggests that trusted friends, families and community networks influence decision-making. Opportunities to be able to communicate effectively are also vital.

Table 46 compares microsystem elements for success identified in the literature with those identified by participants.

Table 46: Microsystem Factors of Success - Literature and Participants

	Elements for success identified in the Literature	Facilitators and barriers perceived by participants
1	<b>Stigma</b>	
	Discrimination Loss of opportunities Social Isolation	<i>Facilitators</i> Strong support from school and parents about their ability to work No feeling by YPWD about their disability or being discriminated at work or with peers  <i>Barriers</i> Parents have low expectations in their employment No interpretation at work and VT courses outside school Teachers believe PWD cannot compete in job market.
2	<b>Confidence and Self-Determination</b>	
	Participation in planning Making informed choices and decisions Involvement in skills training Knowledge of work and working attitudes	<i>Facilitators</i> YPWD trained in vocational skills Understanding about work opportunities after VT and internship with assistance from the project  Interpersonal skills gained through VT and internship Prepared for work after VT and internship or work experience  <i>Barriers</i> Limited interaction with co-workers due to no sign language Fear to start working among YPWD
3	<b>Peer Relationship and Friendship</b>	
	Being socially connected Sharing experience and thoughts Opportunities to get jobs Networking for jobs	<i>Facilitators</i> Support from friends in job seeking and VT Networking to overcome stress Friendship led to independent living  <i>Barriers</i> Limited social activities for building up relationship Students only have friends on campus
4	<b>Hopes and Aspiration</b>	
		<i>Facilitators</i> Most students want to look for jobs after graduation. Some (mostly students with vision impairment) hope to continue with study  <i>Barriers</i> Concerns about no support after graduation Students unsure about their future
5	<b>Motivation and Engagement</b>	
	Internship and work experience motivate the students to work	<i>Facilitators</i> Practical experience from internship make YPWD confident and motivated to work.  <i>Barriers</i> No more internships resulted in lack of work practice. Stress and disappointment at work due to unstable job

## SUMMARY

This chapter demonstrates the contribution of this study to the knowledge base on school to work transition processes for young people with disability. The study revealed that although the school to work program implemented in Dong Nai provided many of the best practice services identified in the literature, including networking among stakeholders; training workshops and events; skills training for teachers, students and graduates; vocational training and internships; the program also failed to provide career planning and assessment, opportunities for diverse career options or to support interagency collaboration. Neither was there a legal framework for school to work transition to ensure what is required was provided. In addition, challenges faced by young people with disability included a lack of soft/functional skills for job-seeking and successful communication within the community and workplace, and limited program support such as interpretation for the hearing-impaired. Most participants indicated that the school to work transition program would have benefitted them if there were more options for vocational training, support in interpretation, and more job-seeking follow-up from the school for graduates. The results from this study revealed that young people with disability want to live independent lives through employment. However, to reach the goal of independence, students and graduates need ongoing support, care, and the active interest of their parents, and long-term commitment from the school administration and government to a human rights approach to the transition from school to work.

The multiple barriers and challenges faced by school to work transition for Dong Nai School are similar to those already identified in the literature. In particular, the short-term nature of the USAID funding for this program was problematic. When funding of this kind ceases and if the program has not been formalised by a policy or legal framework, then the program is unlikely to be sustainable and this can put the community at risk (Lehman et al, 2002)

If Vietnam is to achieve the ambitions of its Disability Law and the UNCPRD, it must ensure the rights of people with disability to be included in all aspects of society. This means people with disability must have access to services that go beyond basic survival to enable rehabilitation, skills development, and economic and social participation via inclusive education, inclusive employment and vocational training.

The final chapter pulls key elements of this research together to address the research objectives and make recommendations for future research and policy initiatives for Vietnam.

# CHAPTER 9 CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

## INTRODUCTION

Vietnam's commitment to the rights of people with disability through the National Law on Disability and the country's ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disability (UNCRPD) indicates a commitment to ensuring access to education and employment. As such, the operationalisation of the policies of inclusive education and inclusive employment are central for young people with disability to attain the best life possible.

This chapter presents the conclusions of this research, followed by a synthesis of implications for successful school to work transition in Vietnam. The research began with the question: "What does success look like for young Vietnamese people with disability who are participating in a school to work transition program?" This was expanded to the four research objectives to (a) explore facilitators and barriers that impact on success of the school to work transition for young people with disability, (b) examine how current policies and services may facilitate or hinder school to work transition for young people with disability, (c) analyse the experience of students who have participated in school to work programs, and (d) identify implications to improve school to work transition services for young people with disability.

As the researcher was interested in the experience of young people with disability who participated in the school to work transition program, phenomenology was selected as the philosophy and methodology that could best guide the researcher to explore and describe the experience of the participants through interviews and focus groups. In particular, Van Manen's (2014) phenomenological approach was employed as framework to guide the analysis. It provided a conceptual framework to seek a deeper understanding of the participants' perspectives and to interpret their lived experience (Van Manen, 2016). This approach provided the researcher with the best opportunity to present the students' and graduates' lived experience in the context of this school to work transition program.

Bronfenbrenner's (1978) framework was used to organise information the participants shared. This framework allowed the researcher to conceptualise the facilitators and barriers from the

participants' experience, to understand the social factors which were part of the context and social environment in which the participants lived. The social environment included the relationships between participants and their families, school, workplaces, community support and social policies as multi-layered factors. Within this framework, the identified facilitators and barriers were presented in four layers, including the macrosystem, exosystem, mesosystem and microsystem, as a means of data organisation. The macrosystem level looked at the policy framework, application of a rights-based approach, and an inter-agency coordination of services. The exosystem focused on school to work related factors, such as how resources were made available to enforce the school to work transition program. The mesosystem addresses family involvement in the school to work transition process. Finally, the microsystem looked at individual perspectives on employment and social inclusion.

The research employed a mixed methods case study design. Dong Nai Special School was selected as a case for this research as it was the only school to work transition program in Vietnam for young people with disability. It was implemented 23 years ago in Dong Nai province. A quantitative approach was used to collect descriptive statistical information about the context, demographic information for young people with disability and the stakeholders involved in school to work transition in Dong Nai. A total of 57 young people with hearing and vision impairment (35 current Dong Nai students, and 22 recent graduates), and 23 key stakeholders completed the survey. A qualitative approach was employed to gather in-depth information from selected participants based on their knowledge, experience and points of view, emphasising description and discovery, with an ultimate goal of obtaining and interpreting meaningful lived experience from research participants. Subsequent to the survey, in-depth interviews and focus groups provided rich and detailed information about the perspectives of young people with disability and stakeholders. In-depth interviews were conducted with 23 stakeholders from national level to local level, and over three rounds with the same students and graduates with disability. The three stages of data collection revealed how views, decisions, plans and understandings can and do change over time and significantly, especially for young people preparing for their futures.

The perspectives and experience of these young people with disability, their families and stakeholders contribute to the existing body of research. These research findings foreshadow the recommendations and implications for successful school to work transition in the context of Vietnam. The implications of the study and its recommendations draw on the literature

review and are linked to the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disability (UNCRPD) and social inclusion theories.

Analysis of the literature identified key factors for effective and successful school to work transition program. Kohler's (1996) taxonomy for Transition has been used to guide recommendations. Kohler's (1996) taxonomy emphasises five categories including (i) program structure/policy, (ii) interagency collaboration, (iii) transition planning (student focused planning), (iv) students' skills development, and (v) family involvement. These categories of practice can enhance the outcomes for the transition services for young people with disability. Kohler's (1996) model is the most comprehensive transition model to serve students with disabilities. This student-focused model also incorporates family and external environmental resources factors. Wehman (2015) suggested five categories for effective transition from school to work transition, similar to those of Kohler's (1996) taxonomy and he highlighted two critical aspects of transition including "employment training and work experience" (Wehman et al., 2015, p. 232). In addition to Kohler (1996) and Wehman (2011), the National Longitudinal Transitional Study (NLTS), analysed by Blackorby and Wagner (1996), highlighted the importance of work experience and vocational education for young people with disability at school, and training in independent life skills.

Both the literature and these research findings suggest that the concept of school to work transition is a key feature in the process to achieve social inclusion for young people with disability. School to work transition provides opportunities for young people with disability to apply vocational training skills and knowledge to real work experience during their time with and after school, and these are key to obtaining and sustaining employment. To attain the goal of social inclusion, the focus is on creating conditions for equal opportunities and access to school to work transition services. Given there is only one school to work transition program in a school for young people with disability in Vietnam, this research focused on understanding how the existing Dong Nai school to work transition program was assisting young people with disability to achieve their career goals after graduation. The research findings draw attention to the gaps, barriers and factors that impact vocational pathways to higher skill jobs, sustainability and career trajectories. Improvement in well-being, elimination of stigma and ensuring the rights of young people with disability to social inclusion requires that the school to work transition consists of more than the program alone. The research findings have been

drawn together to make suggestions for policy decision makers towards improving access to inclusive employment for young people with disability via school to work transition.

The suggestions are not only for young people with vision and hearing impairment, but are also relevant for other young people with different forms of impairment. Previous research suggested some elements for best practice in school to work transition, and many studies had similar or overlapping suggestions. The focus of these recommendations is to provide effective and outcome-oriented best practices that help students with disability successfully transition from school to work.

## 9.1 Summary of Findings

Given Dong Nai school to work transition program is the only one which exists in Vietnam, it was the focus of this research on school to work transition for young people with disability. Experience shared by the participants indicated that this unique program is indeed providing most services described in the literature as best practice. Further, participants perceived the services as helpful in preparing them to attain employment, to live independently, and to be more fully included in society. An overall picture of the school to work transition program for young people with disability in Dong Nai drew attention to barriers and facilitators to vocational pathways, higher skill jobs, sustainability, and career trajectories in the areas of policies, services, and service delivery mechanisms. Individual experience provided insightful perspectives from a range of stakeholders, and the students' and graduates' views of the transition support and services explained gaps, barriers and factors which impacted the success of school to work transition. Together, this information contributes to improving future school to work transition services, the program for Dong Nai in particular, and for Vietnam in general.

The research gathered information from students, graduates with hearing and vision impairment of Dong Nai school, and a range of stakeholders at national policy decision-making level, including, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Education and Training, National Coordinating Council on Disability, through to local policy implementers including employers, vocational training agencies, parents, teachers and school managers, and Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs).

Key findings were synthesised through the multi-layered findings and discussion chapters. First, the research identified the relationship between policy-making considerations and how

policies respond to the needs of students and graduates with disability. Second, the findings demonstrated the importance of clear tasks and responsibilities in the service delivery process. Third, the research identified the reasonable accommodation which is essential for students and graduates to be fully included in the workplace and society. Fourth, the findings also indicated the importance of involving parents or family in the transition process, and the difference between how young people with disability see important roles for their parents in the decision-making process for their futures and how the parents see their roles in this process. Fifth, the findings highlighted the impact of personal characteristic such as determination and self-confidence for the young people with disability when involved in the school to work transition program, and how young people can and do change their minds about their future during the transition process. Finally, the research identified the importance of social attitudes for inclusion of young people with disability in an inclusive education approach, an inclusive school to work transition program, and inclusive employment settings.

### 9.1.1 Policy-making Considerations

The research indicated that listening to students and graduates with disability who participated in the school to work transition program in Dong Nai was important. The lived experience of the students and graduates underpinned their perspectives and informed realistic suggestions for policy-making decisions. Although they did not explicitly articulate it, these young people clearly demonstrated from their own experience the distinction between impairment and disability, as represented in the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) framework on functioning and disability.

The research found that existing national policy promotes a rights-based approach to inclusion of young people with disability, aiming to ensure the inclusive education and employment for people with disability. On the other hand, stakeholders, students and graduates identified the lack of a formal legal framework for school to work transition for young people with disability as a barrier and a gap. While policies on vocational training and employment for people with disability were mainstreamed into the inclusive employment and vocational training policies, such as the National Target Program on Employment and Vocational Training, there are some gaps. In particular, a lack of specific regulations on school to work transition including, but not limited to, technical assistance for people with disability; and not fully implementing an inclusive approach in the provision of services for school to work transition for young people

with disability. For example, as shared by the participants, the limited budget and availability of resources led to restricted or no communication or sign language interpretation during job seeking, vocational training courses, and at work.

### 9.1.2 Formalising Mechanisms in Service Delivery

Under the National Law on Disability, the Labour and Social Affairs (LISA) sector is a leading agency and coordinates the disability services through the National Coordinating Council on Disability (NCCD). Disability services are coordinated from national to provincial level, including employment, vocational training, social welfare and livelihood development to ensure social inclusion. Budget and resources are allocated for all disability activities by the province within the provincial action plan on disability developed under approved National Actions Plan on Disability (Government of Vietnam [GVN], 2005, 2012). While the Ministry level is responsible for policy proposals and monitoring the enforcement, the provincial level LISA, vocational training agencies and employment centres are tasked with conducting vocational training courses and making job referrals for young people with disability. However, there were no formal mechanisms and no reporting indicators for school to work transition, and this limited the on-going support services provided for students and graduates with disability. The National Law on Disability regulates the establishment of a Provincial Inclusive Education Centre in each province, and this Centre will be responsible for school to work transition for young students with disability. Dong Nai Province is currently working on conversion of Dong Nai Special School into an Inclusive Education Centre, but without linking the tasks of the Centre to the NCCD and LISA sector, it will be hard to achieve the goal of social inclusion by implementing an inclusive approach to employment and vocational training.

### 9.1.3 Reasonable Accommodation

The inclusive approach to employment and vocational training is fully operational if ongoing support services are provided to students and graduates relating to job application, work experience, and internships. These research findings indicated that young people with disability and their parents expressed the need to have support services, and the school and relevant stakeholders showed their attempts to help and overcome the barriers. However, provision of these services to young people with disability and their parents was still limited. The gaps they identified included soft skills training, sign language interpretation, job-seeking after

graduation, availability of information about jobs and vocational training courses, and especially networking for both parents and young people with disability.

Limitations on support and assistance, as aforementioned, were given more prominence than comments on social attitudes and social policies or support. Students and graduates thought that they were living in a supportive school and work environment in which friends, teachers, and managers provided them with help when they needed it. The ways young people with disability dealt with difficulties and barriers in school and the workplace developed from self-adaptation and determination. Their goals to overcome their difficulties included to continue with education, or to have vocational training and jobs provided in an inclusive approach.

#### 9.1.4 Parents/Family Involvement

The findings also revealed that, in the views of students (and parents) in school, teachers were very powerful. This is a traditional value in Vietnamese society. The dependency on teachers in all aspects relating to employment and vocational training hindered the involvement of parents in the decision-making process. The students and graduates spoke about the importance of having their parents help them with job-seeking and other supports for a good job, and what they needed during their transition from school into work. However, interviews with parents showed that they relied on the school to help and support their children, as they were not able to do so. Parents explained that they wanted to help their children, but they did not have enough information about vocational training, jobs availabilities, or even contacts. This presents a challenge to address the gap between what students and graduates expect from their parents and what parents said they could do. While most of the young people with disability, both students and graduates, were living on campus, it was even more challenging for parents to be involved and support their children in this process. Moving students with disability out of the special school into mainstream schools may be a good opportunity to live closer to or with their parents so their parents do not lose their roles and responsibilities.

#### 9.1.5 Considering Personal Traits

Four individual cases provided deeper insight into the lives of young people with disability in this school to work transition program, and highlighted the impact of the combination of personal, family, and environmental factors on the success of the school to work transition

program. The four individual case studies illustrated the complexity and interaction of these individual factors. The lived experience shared by the participants revealed the factors that people thought affected their success or failure in obtaining jobs. These factors included (i) awareness of their rights to work and services – it is important for people with disability to know the services available to them with regards to vocational training and employment services, because these help students to make decisions about options that are appropriate for them; (ii) the personal characteristics of determination and resilience – when a person is willing to do something, s/he tries hard to overcome the difficulty caused by disability. A person with disability needs to enact self-determination in order to move from a charity to a rights-based perspective, and (iii) family also plays a critical role in helping young people with disability to develop resilience and create motivation to achieve their career goal. The results from this study revealed that these young people with disability want to live an independent life through having employment. However, to reach the goal of independence, students and graduates with disability need continual care and targeted support, the attention of parents, and commitment from the school administration and government.

Although all participants indicated the school to work transition program provided them with independent living skills, functional skills, personal social communication and work preparation skills – the students, graduates and parents also expressed a lack of confidence that young people with disability were ready to start working after graduation. Results from this study indicated that most transition students were guided by their teachers about what to do for their vocational training, and most of the time, schoolteachers led the decision-making process for students, and their family members were often not engaged in the process.

These students and graduates did not place blame for the difficulties they faced, especially when the difficulty was caused by limitations or inaccessible services, such as sign language interpretation for those with hearing and speaking impairment, and inaccessible buildings for the vision impaired students. They often dealt with these challenges by making adaptations rather than requiring changes from society or service providers. As they were mostly boarding at the school, they did identify as issues of isolation due to a lack of social or creative activities at the school for students, and the lack of networking activities for Dong Nai students to interact with students at other schools or in community activities.

### 9.1.6 Social Attitudes and Social Inclusion

These findings revealed that social awareness of disability and employment are significant factors for the social inclusion of young people with disability in both work settings and the education setting. Teachers, parents, and policy-makers play important roles in the social inclusion processes, which promotes/ensures inclusive vocational training, services in employment and education. They are critical for directing the support and resources in learning, working and making connections between young people with disability and young people without disability.

While both people with disability and stakeholders demonstrated more awareness of disability, it was more focused on impairment. Parents, and to some extent teachers, had low expectations of job success for these young people. Their limited understanding of disability, as defined by the ICF, and what was needed for reasonable accommodation, accessible information, and their capacity to deliver necessary services, created barriers to inclusive employment for people with disability, and that hindered the process of change for social inclusion of people with disability.

### 9.1.7. Work Experiences

Outcomes of this study suggest that there is an ongoing need for post-secondary programs to provide the support services required for these young adults to be successful. Note-takers, interpreters, tutors, counsellors, and other related services earmarked to assist participants achieve positive outcomes while enrolled in such programs would serve to increase the number of deaf and hard-of-hearing youth who complete post-secondary schooling.

Young adults who seek employment must continue to work with agencies providing vocational rehabilitation services so as to receive the necessary supports, to enhance their employment skills and become competitive in the job market. Individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing do not have the same work opportunities as the “hearing public”. Limitations with communication in the workforce necessitate that young adults who are deaf or hard-of-hearing must continue to receive targeted training after leaving high school so they can market themselves well enough to obtain adequate employment.

## 9.2 Implications and Recommendations

Although the research involved the participation of young people with hearing and vision impairment at Dong Nai, the research findings can inform and advocate for changes and improvements in approaches to assist young people with disability to obtain jobs in inclusive employment and education settings, via the school to work transition program for young people with disability in general, and for those with hearing and vision impairment in particular.

Considering all the identified successes and failures of the Dong Nai school to work transition program for young people with disability, participants suggested that school to work transition would be more practical and effective if the following factors could be improved. These necessary factors include: (i) a policy on school to work transition under the existing local law and policies, (ii) a coordination mechanism among stakeholders and service providers, (iii) provision of services for students' skill development including, but not limited to, language literacy, numeracy, and work skills, (iv) family involvement in planning and work experiences.

### 9.2.1 Policy on School to Work Transition

An effective transition from school to work for young people with disability requires formal legislation that complies with international and local policy frameworks and strategies where a rights-based approach is applied to address the needs of people with disability (Blustein et al., 1997; Wehman, 1992). These research findings indicate that the government of Vietnam has enacted many laws and policies that consist of regulations relating to employment and vocational training for people with disability. However, to supplement these policies, it is suggested that formal legislation addressing school to work transition, which complies with international and local policy framework and strategies, should be formed and enacted to ensure the school to work transition of Dong Nai province can be replicated nationwide. The legislation should address specific school to work policies which will sustain the program and ensure: (i) adequate resource allocation, (ii) relevant human resource development, and (iii) reporting indicators and monitoring of the school to work transition activities. In order to ensure the effective enforcement of the school to work transition, as recommended by Kohler (1996), the policies and program structure for vocational training and employment for people with disability should explicitly target people with disability.

The expansion of the Inclusive Education Centres under Article 31 in the National Law on Disability is significant for promoting inclusive education and inclusive employment, because the roles and responsibilities of this Centre are to provide assistance and support to young people with disability in vocational training and employment during their time at school. This can facilitate the replication of the school to work transition to other locations of Vietnam.

#### *9.2.1.1 Resource allocation*

A specific policy about school to work transition is needed to assist with resource allocation for the vocational training program and employment seeking activities for young people with disability. The findings indicate that, due to the rigidity in budget disbursement policies, the Dong Nai school had limited financial resources for school to work transition, although there was budget availability from other vocational training programs, such as the National Target Program on Vocational Training for Rural Youth. However, it was hard for the school to get the funding due to the rigid eligibility requirements of the program. Because of this, the school often depended on project funding from foundations and charity organisations which were willing to provide funding through small grant projects but these funding sources were on fixed terms and not sustainable.

The study found that the school staff, managers and related stakeholders had increased knowledge and capacity to work on school to work transition, but the school was to a certain degree dependent on external funding and development projects to carry out school to work transition, and that affected the adequate implementation of school to work transition for young people with disability. The school to work transition was started with project funds that were time limited. As the representative from United States Agency for International Development (USAID) partner's Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH) mentioned "although it was expected there may be changes in funding allocation in the national legislation during the project period, the school to work transition could be sustained when the funding ends", this had not eventuated. At the time of the research, Ms Mot, the principal emphasised "the school would need to approach these project-based funding sources to sustain the school to work transition activities, in the meantime, advocate for a change in funding policy". Multi-year funding would prevent disruption in rendering the services, allow the school to work program to develop and the transition processes to become normalised.

A budget should be allocated for sign language interpretation as a normal cost of training for people with hearing impairment, and also for other assistive devices for other types of impairment. Similarly, funding for resources and support should be allocated for young people with disability in support services such as soft skills training, internship, follow-up after graduation, networking and other related activities.

The rigid policy on government budget allocation relating to vocational training limits government funding on vocational training. For example, in order to obtain government funds, the school is required to have 15 to 20 students for each training course. Each student can only participate in vocational training once in a year using the budget from DOLISA. In addition, students have to be aged 16 and over to be eligible to enrol into the vocational training program. This policy needs to be considered for more flexibility because it disadvantages young people with disability.

#### *9.2.1.2 Human resource development*

Consistent leadership and management impacts strategic planning and resource allocation for the Dong Nai school to work transition program. This was suggested by the majority of stakeholders. In addition, capacity building should be carried out for teachers and managers through training, coaching, mentoring and consultation with people with disability.

Staff working on school to work transition need additional skills in career development and counselling, as they will be responsible for job development and placement. This is important, and Dong Nai school does not have staff with these skills, although 100% of staff come from special education backgrounds.

In order to implement an effective school to work transition program, two key positions should be established – a Job Developer and a Job Coach (Quirk, 2013). According to Quirk (2013), these two positions were discussed and recommended by the stakeholders who were invited to participate in the training courses on enforcement of the transition program designed for Dong Nai. The Job Developer creates relationships with employers, identifies different job possibilities, looks for opportunities for “customised employment” and acts as a liaison between employers and the school. The Job Coach should be assigned within the school to support the students when they have initial job training experience. The Job Coach would

evaluate the needs of students and identify jobs which are suitable, based on their interests and talents. The Coach would act as the liaison with employers and families, and would work closely with the school administrator and the Job Developer.

Special education teachers are essentially the backbone of the transition program. The study found that teachers at the school had limited skills in job counselling due to their limited information about the job availability and vocational training options. It is recommended that the schoolteachers should be offered support and professional development with regards to school to work transition, especially improved skills in transition assessment and planning using a student- centred approach.

#### *9.2.1.3 Monitoring and Evaluation*

A monitoring and reporting system should be set up and enforced at both the government level and for the process of school to work transition to monitor and assist students after graduation in job seeking and employment status. As recommended by Ms Chin, a representative of National Coordinating Council on Disability (NCCD), Ms Muoi Ba from Department of Labour and Social Affairs (DOLISA) and Mr Bay from Department of Education and Training (DOET) and Ms Ba from Disabled Persons' Organisation (DPO) that there should be monitoring and reporting indicators established in order to measure the progress of the school to work program.

Monitoring visits should be organised by DOET and DOLISA to meet with schoolteachers and managers, parents and students to hear the evaluation reports as to what the school to work transition program is providing and failing to provide. This would help to ensure the budget allocation to vocational training and support services to young people with disability in school to work transition through adjustment of the policies and regulations.

Setting specific times to monitor and evaluate the school to work transition program is important to determine that the laws and policies on school to work transition are being enforced and to identify what needs to be revised in order to best serve the needs of students with disability in their transition from school to work. Doing this would also help schoolteachers to be aware of the services being provided in the region via DOET and DOLISA.

## 9.2.2 A Coordinated Mechanism

Disability and school to work transition requires ‘multi-disciplinary coordination’ and, without this, the school to work transition programs cannot function effectively (Landmark et al., 2010; Taylor, 2006). A transition process means multi-disciplinary collaboration practices focus on facilitating the involvement of different agencies, business community, and service providers in a collaborative framework and service delivery mechanism in school to work transition (Kohler, 1996). Multiple professionals should be involved in the interdisciplinary collaboration of transition planning for people with disability and provision of services (Greene & Kochhar, 2003). A report on disability services relating to employment and vocational training in Vietnam conducted by MOLISA in 2015 (MOLISA, 2015a) also emphasised the need for improved collaboration in the area of vocational training and employment for people with disability.

The literature about school to work transition clearly confirms that a coordinated approach plays an important role in facilitating an effective process for school to work transition. Studies over time have demonstrated the more that students, parents, school personnel and school district staff, adult service providers, and rehabilitative services get involved in the transition process, the better the chance of success once a student leaves high school and seeks employment or enrolls in a post-secondary educational program (Eber, Nelson, & Miles, 1997; Knitzer, 1993; Nelson & Pearson, 1991). This requires a coordinated approach with clear tasks and responsibilities at different levels.

Strengthening the inter-agency coordination of services is needed to enhance services for young people with disability. This means improving the attitude, the working mechanisms and the information channels for people with disability. These would encourage a more supportive network to ensure the needs of young people with disability are identified and adequately supported. A recently promulgated Directive (Nr.39/CT/TW/04/11/2019) of Party Central Committee Secretariat promotes interagency coordination of disability services and outlines roles of DPOs and local government agencies in the implementation of disability programs including vocational training and employment. This provides a great opportunity to identify and clarify roles of DPOs and government agencies with regards to school to work transition. These research findings also suggest that a provincial disability coordination team consisting of DOLISA, DOET, DPOs, school and others should be legally formed, to coordinate

resources, and build capacity for those members so as to improve employers' perception and attitudes towards hiring people with disability, and provide effective support to young people with disability for good employment outcomes. These changes would provide suitable vocational pathways for young people with disability in general, and for the hearing and vision-impaired in particular, opportunities to obtain employment with a more inclusive and rights-based approach to service delivery and employment.

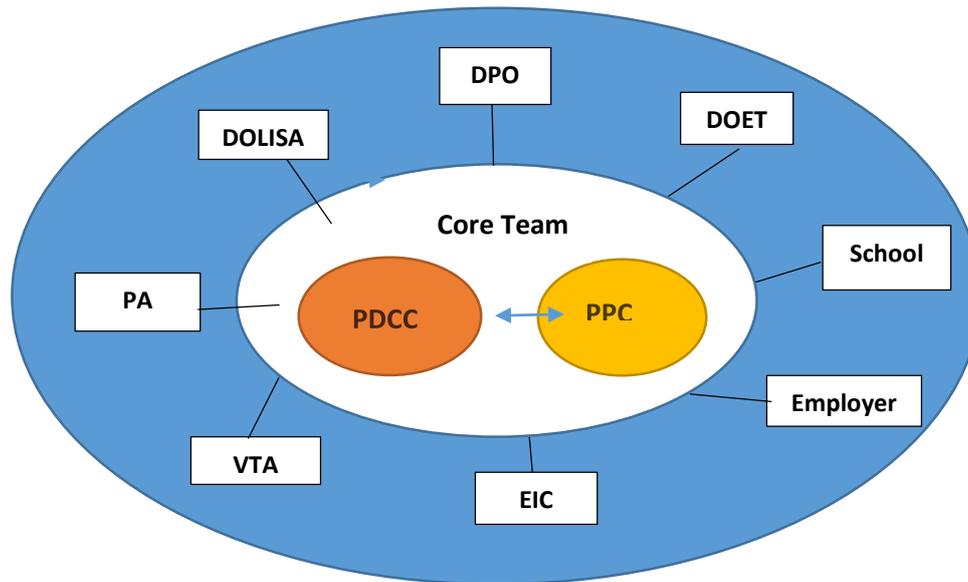
The research findings indicate that the USAID-funded project initiated a primary collaboration among the DOLISA, DOET, Employers and Dong Nai school. This is favourable but in order to be more effective and sustainable, there should be an agency at a higher level to facilitate the networking among stakeholders. The Provincial People's Committee could be the right agency to coordinate such a network. There is a tendency for organisations and groups within organisations to work separately and sometimes a formal group is needed to develop unified conversation, and work in a coordinated manner to improve outcomes. Therefore, as recommended by most of the stakeholders within this research, a Transition Council should be developed for transition planning to employ young people with disability. According to the National Law on Disability, each province shall develop an Inclusive Education Centre and this Centre will serve as a hub for vocational training and employment services for people with disability. Dong Nai Special School was selected by the province to be converted to an Inclusive Education Centre. If a Transition Council can be formed for the purpose of school to work transition, it would connect with different government agencies, but it should be formal and legally recognised in order to sustain the school to work transition program. Responsibilities and tasks of this Council should be to coordinate various agencies, programs, community resources, and personnel to help transition students into work based on their needs, abilities and interests. Personnel from multiple agencies would need to work together and collaborate with transition program staff and the schoolteachers when planning and implementing transition services for these students.

The functions of the Council should be to: (i) carry out strategic planning with the involvement of relevant agencies to ensure employment and vocational training for young people with disability is provided in response to their needs and interests; (ii) connect young people with disability with job placement and vocational training classes after they leave school; (iii) establish connections with employers for job exploration and on-the-job training between the Dong Nai school and individual employers in the Dong Nai Province. As employer connections

are established by the Job Developer, there is also an opportunity for the employer to meet students at the school prior to the job placement. This would result in bringing employers on to campus as well as opportunities for students to observe employment possibilities, ‘shadow’ employees in various jobs, or obtain job-training for short periods of time. In addition, DOLISA and DOET should be the two key members of the Council, because DOLISA’s participation is critically important to implementing the school to work transition program. Apart from allocating financial resources for vocational training, DOLISA should establish a position of Job Developer so this position can work with employers to find jobs when students have completed their training. DOET should be the agency responsible for the Job Coach position and continue to reach out to graduates to help them get jobs following graduation. In addition, DOET could work with DOLISA in allocating the financial and human resources to enforce the school to work transition program, not just for Dong Nai school, but also for the other special schools and inclusive schools in each province.

As proposed by most of the key players involved in disability related work and school to work transition, a Provincial Disability Coordinating Council (PDCC) should be set up for disability service coordination among different agencies. This provincial level council should be managed by the Provincial People’s Committee (PPC) as the PPC has legal authority to enforce the coordination of disability services, including school to work transition services among different agencies such as DOLISA, DOET, Employment Introduction Centres (EIC), Vocational Training Agencies (VTA), school, Parents’ Association, and employers. This would help facilitate the school approaching necessary services to enforce the school to work transition program. More importantly, the DPO should be part of the Council in order for them to introduce their members to the network, and also approach the Transition Council for jobs and appropriate services. The coordination and collaboration can be illustrated in the Figure 19.

Figure 19: Coordination and Collaboration of Disability Services



Based on the results of the monitoring and reporting from the school, DOET and DOLISA should be particularly looking at the vocational training options, job availability with employers and necessary support services for young people with disability and, in partnership with the school, provide funding to the school for effective implementation of the school to work transition program.

These research findings also support the need to establish a linking position at the school which allows for the documentation of the individual job skills of each student, and provides more information to future employers. The school, along with two key government agencies (DOLISA and DOET), need to collaborate to identify how this work can be accomplished. The implementation of the school to work transition cannot be accomplished by the school alone.

### 9.2.3 Students' Skill Development

An effective school to work transition requires provision of necessary services to those who have particular needs. These services should be coordinated and based on students' needs, preferences, and abilities (Cobb & Alwell, 2009; Wright, 1991). Support services are needed for young people with disability who want to work (Morris, 2001; Trainor, 2005; Wehman, 2013a; Winn & Hay, 2009). The findings and suggestions from participants in this study indicate that, in order to be fully included in the workplace and the community, young people with disability need to be provided with assistance in communication, including sign language

interpretation, with training in soft skills, and all this requires transition planning at the early stages.

In addition, a coordinated set of services and support for post-high school are extremely important to facilitate placement success. The roles of the Provincial Disability Coordinating Council (PDCC) should be to ensure young people with disability and their parents are able to access the services and supports in order to assist them to accomplish their employment goals. The services also should focus on discussing an exit strategy that identifies relevant services and supports and connects students and their families to post-high school training and employment agencies (Rusch et al., 2009).

Developing work skills and experiencing work are important in preparing students with disability to transit from school to work. A systematic review of NLTS2 secondary analyses conducted by Mazzotti et al. (2016) indicates that paid employment/work experience provides a moderate level of evidence for predicting education and employment outcomes. Other American research conducted since 1990 (for example, Brewer, 2005; Certo et al., 2003; Wittenburg & Maag, 2002) indicates that youth who have employment experience while at school are more likely to be employed three to five years following school than those who have had no work experience. Barriers to gaining work experience can include the sheer complexity of needs that have to be addressed for some students, for example, those with cognitive disabilities in addition to linguistic, academic, and social challenges (Neubert & Sherril, 2006).

Research by White and Weiner (2004) focused on the nature of the employment experience, and examining the impacts of applying IDEA-based requirements of making training “least restrictive and community-based.” They found that, for transitioning students aged 21-22 years of age, the practice which positively correlated with integrated employment outcomes (that is, a paid job with non-disabled co-workers at graduation) was duration of community-based training, which included on-the-job training, and age-appropriate physical integration with non-disabled peers. Tagayuna, Stoden, Chang, Zelenik and Whelley (2005) showed that only about half of post-secondary institutions provided work experience, work–study opportunities, or internships/externships when the researchers’ surveys were administered. Dowrick, Anderson, Heyer and Acosta (2005) also commented on the need for more internships and other programs that link students with employers. Winn and Hay (2009) suggest that students involved in transition programs that offered work experience and encouraged employment,

were more likely to have positive supportive social relationships. In addition, socialisation activities were deemed important in helping build healthy and appropriate relationships (work/professional and personal relationships) (Clarke, 1991).

As for the literacy and numeracy skills of young people with disability, Levinson and Palmer (2005) emphasise vocational training should provide students with a curriculum that prepares them for the job that they intend to enter. Broad-based knowledge and skills are good, but for students with disability, specific skills are necessary for survival in the workplace and community and need to be explicitly taught, such as academic skills including reading and writing (for example, sight-word vocabulary, spelling, handwriting, typing, etc.) and mathematics (example, basic computation, money, measurement). Garay (2003) identified several variables that impact positive transition outcomes, and one of which is challenges in achieving academic development at the same level as their hearing peers, thus the employment opportunity requires higher level of literacy and mathematics.

#### *9.2.3.1 Communication and sign language interpretation*

In order to make a successful transition, students who are deaf need to interact with the hearing public. Often students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing have difficulty with communication skills. Transacting personal and financial business, communicating with their employer, and even interacting on a social basis requires the student to either read, write, or communicate using Vietnamese. Using sign language as their first language (in most cases) may cause problems for the student who is deaf or hard-of-hearing. The resulting communication problem for deaf or hard-of-hearing workers may be largely in the eyes of the observer (that is, the world of the hearing employers and employees), but it is difficult to deny that it has a profound effect on the employment prospects and other post-secondary opportunities for many adults who are deaf (Schildroth et al., 1991). Communication is a key if deaf or hard-of-hearing students are to be able to learn, compete and work to their highest capacity. Communication must be the cornerstone for all transition preparedness programs.

The majority of the students and graduates who were interviewed were those with hearing impairment (22/26). Most of the students and graduates with hearing impairment wanted to work after finishing school. However, many of them were struggling to find jobs they were interested in, or were not able to find a job by themselves, due to a lack of language proficiency. Both young people with disability and stakeholders in this study expressed the need for sign

language interpretation, therefore, this research strongly suggests that there should be sign language interpretation for all vocational training programs and workplaces. Sign language was used by the majority of students with hearing impairment at Dong Nai school. Without it, students and graduates have no opportunity to participate in the private training courses organised outside the school, and graduates cannot participate in staff meetings or communicate with their co-workers in the workplace. This situation is consistent with the challenge individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing have with written and oral language as documented by Miller (2002). This may be considered a major limitation. While students with vision impairment were fully provided with support in study, such as braille and had no issue with continuing with study in higher education, observation at Dong Nai school suggests it is critical that all staff become proficient in sign language and always use it along with verbal language to create a ‘total communication’ (Quirk, 2013) environment: speaking and signing at the same time. The teachers of the students with hearing impairment at the school signed to them and interpreted to them during the spoken language part of the training. However not all staff members knew or were proficient in signing. Consequently communication with these students was limited; and information available to some students was limited. If the school could expand these skills across all staff members, then the students would have more opportunities to learn to sign and communicate.

#### *9.2.3.2 Soft skills training*

The school to work transition program should not only focus on helping transition students attain employment, but should also incorporate skills such as independent living and functional skills for their full empowerment and inclusion into society. Young people with disability expressed the need to be provided with job skills and social skills, and most students and graduates wanted to improve their communication with outsiders, including employers and colleagues.

Interviews with students and graduates indicated that they enjoyed the school to work transition program, such as the vocational training programs and other networking activities, like job fairs, visits to companies and other events organised within Dong Nai school. However, the needs of all young people with disability, including students and graduates, should be considered and reflected in the transition planning, and students should be trained in how to express their needs and concerns.

In addition, students with disability should be provided with opportunities to participate in events or training workshops where they can practise and learn about independent living skills, interaction skills, and networking with outsiders. As recommended by stakeholders, especially parents of young people with disability, vocational training courses should include work experience or internship. In addition, as Wright (1991) suggests, information about the labour market and job requirements should be accessible to young people with disability and parents, especially emphasising training on job search, Resumé writing and preparing for job interviews, and understanding about the rights of workers and the right to work.

Finally, young people with disability should be trained in how to make decisions based on their needs and their rights. This requires the school, DOLISA, and DOET, to organise talks or events that can provide them with information about what services are available around the area, and who young people with disability should approach when they need services, vocational training options, job availability, and support services such as counselling. This was emphasised by the graduates, parents, teachers and DPOs. All of these would help students to make decisions about their future and improve their ability to choose and act on the basis of their choices, and thus be properly involved in the transition planning stage.

Awareness-raising and skills training should be also be conducted with staff and young people without disability on how to work with and better accommodate young people with disability at work and school. These would facilitate a discrimination-free attitude towards disability.

#### *9.2.3.3 Student-focused planning*

The transition planning process is ongoing. It requires time to identify students' strengths and areas for improvement relating to personal and social skills. It covers educational goals, self-advocacy, self-determination, and students learn occupational skills, such as exploring opportunities, seeking, securing, and maintaining employment (Kohler, 1993; Stewart et al., 2006; Wagner, 1993; Wehman et al., 2015).

Thus, transition planning should concentrate on the individual and be based on the individual's interests. Student participation should encourage self-determination so that students take a more active role in decision-making about services which can facilitate successful transition

from school into work. This would enhance confidence and motivation for young people with disability to work. Transition planning is an opportunity for students to know who they can approach in a time of need, and become more familiarised with the school to work transition staff, and teachers can help both students and staff to develop more in-depth, personalised and successful transition plans.

Following up after school, transition planning also needs to add activities with necessary resources for follow-up to support students in job-seeking after school. The findings from this research illustrated the importance of recognising that students can change their goals as they become aware of more options or overcome barriers. Therefore, it is important to have a transition program over several years which extends after school is finished. This can ensure that timely support is provided to young people with disability after they finish school.

#### *9.2.3.4. Literacy and Numeracy*

The integration of academic and vocational curriculum should pave the way for updating the skills for young people with disability, especially for the hearing impaired. Bonds (2003) and also Levinson and Palmer (2005) emphasise job seekers must have well-developed literacy, communication and technology skills to enter a vocation and maintain their job. Schools that give students meaningful preparation can ease this transition to the world of work. Therefore, the curriculum development strategy needs to be considered to ensure the students with disability, especially for those with hearing impairment and hearing loss to be equipped with very specific skills and knowledge sets.

The workers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing may attempt to avoid careers that involve a lot of writing and speaking because of their limited communication abilities. Thus, curriculum must be influenced by students' needs and be prepared to support students with hearing impairment in improving their reading ability. The curriculum provided during educational experiences should pave the way for attainment of this goal. This is particularly true for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. School-to-work has become an umbrella term for activities, experiences and opportunities that prepare students for the world of work, such as youth apprenticeships, mentoring, internships, job shadowing, career exploration, and integration of academic and vocational curriculum, because workers, especially those with hearing impairment, need to be able to read reports and other advertisement, educational materials or safety guides.

#### *9.2.3.5. Work skills and work experiences*

Young adults who seek employment, must continue to work with agencies such as vocational rehabilitation to receive the necessary support in obtaining training to enhance their employment skills and further enhance their skills to become competitive in the job market. Individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing do not have the same opportunities for certain jobs as the general “hearing public”.

Participants in this study felt that the most helpful and effective elements in becoming independent were the positive and supportive treatment from teachers and staff, and the work experience component. However, according to Blackorby and Wagner (1996), although it is important for adult transition programs to teach independence and life skills and other various educational curriculum skills, the greatest and most important topics to teach in these programs to encourage employment outcomes are work placement/experiences and functional skills (for example, resume writing and interview job skills). Winn and Hay (2009) also had similar findings, in which the researchers recommended that the best way for students to achieve successful independent living was by helping students move from school setting to vocational training to subsequent employment. The underlying common denominator from all these findings was the emphasis on the work experience component. Winn and Hay (2009) also suggest that students involved in transition programs that offered work experience and encouraged employment, and the social interaction students received from the work experience site may have fostered positive social skills needed to function in life and the real world environment.

#### *9.2.4 Family Involvement*

The transition planning process also requires involvement of parents who can help to identify their children’s unique strengths and needs and support their relationships with family, peers and community (Levinson & Palmer, 2005; Wehman, 2013a). The following section presents the implications for the involvement of the family/parents in the school to work transition activities.

Parents and other family members are important for encouraging young people with disability to achieve their independence through support and care, and for helping them to make decisions

about their jobs, vocational training and life. It is important for all parents to understand how essential they are in the development and growth of their children and that they need to be involved in the school to work transition process (Crawshaw, 2002; Levinson & Palmer, 2005; Wehman, 2011).

The study found that the parents had limited engagement in their children's activities in school to work transition, and instead they were dependent on the school's support and decisions regarding their children's future. While schoolteachers and staff expected parents to be more involved parents found that it was hard for them to advise their children as they did not have information about the vocational training options or job availabilities.

It is also suggested that the parents' involvement is a major ingredient of any comprehensive and transdisciplinary team of teachers, employers, business organisations and state agencies who work together to identify the relevant transition needs and plan appropriate services (Levinson & Palmer, 2005). Training should be conducted for parents by schools through events and workshops. Parents of young people with disability should be provided with information so they can understand their roles, that they are not only to help advocate for their children's rights, but also to teach them how to properly advocate for themselves. While the involvement of parents is important for positive outcomes of the school to work transition, it is complicated and requires more resources. On the one hand, parents may help transition students to achieve independence through support and care. On the other hand, students may depend too heavily on their parents because of their disability, and this may limit their participation in the transition process. Parents need to make sure transition students' voices are heard, while also changing how they view their children and their expectations for them.

Teachers and school managers should encourage and provide opportunities for parents to participate in the extra-curricular activities or networking events, and planning meetings. Creating an open, caring, and welcoming environment will not only help parents become closer and more supportive of the school to work transition program, but it will also foster closeness and increase communication between teachers and staff, parents, and of course, transition students.

In order to achieve greater engagement from parents, participants suggested that parents need more support and financial resources to be meaningfully engaged with the school to work

transition program. Employers should be trained in the rights-based approach in employment of people with disability, making sure equal opportunities are made to applicants and employees with disability at the workplace by providing reasonable accommodation and support to them. Broader society needs improved awareness to learn that people with disability can work, given the proper support.

### 9.2.5 Moving towards Social Inclusion

The findings and discussion have demonstrated the need for inclusive policies for young people with hearing and vision impairment in the school to work transition. Successful advocacy includes action by the services to provide sign language interpretation at the workplace and training, opportunities for improving soft skills for students and graduates in job-seeking, interviews and networking with colleagues.

Parents and families should be provided with opportunities to participate in networking events and decision-making processes for students from the planning stage. Most importantly, the service delivery mechanism should be operated with a more inclusive approach to ensure young people with disability are fully included in society.

These recommendations for further activities to change social attitudes toward disability, specific support structures for young people with disability and school staff are based on the findings of this research, and are stated in order to promote the social inclusion of young people with disability in workplaces and more broadly in the community.

## 9.4 Indications for future research

One of the outcomes of this research is a set of recommendations for further studies that can potentially enhance and assist in school to work transition programs for young people with disability in Vietnam. The following research should be considered:

- During the time this research was carried out, there were only students with hearing and vision impairments at the secondary level. Students with cognitive impairment had started schooling at Dong Nai at primary level and soon they will be emerging to secondary level. Future research should be conducted on other types of impairment to develop a broader picture of school to work transition for young people with

disability in general in Vietnam. This would provide implications for a more comprehensive and inclusive school to work transition for Vietnam.

- Additional research on school to work transition across other regions of Vietnam in the inclusive education settings and in special schools would yield additional insights on the experience of other students. Of particular interest is: what is needed to move school to work transition from the special education setting to an inclusive education setting?
- Within this study, questions arose about parents' perspectives and decisions about young people with disability going out to work. Additional research on cultural issues, disability and parents' decisions would be beneficial for both policy makers and school managers in order to plan and carry out campaigns to improve the knowledge of society about the social model of disability, to reduce stigma and change attitudes in society towards disability, vocational training and employment.
- Within this research, young people with disability expressed a need for a network of people with disability, who could assist them with vocational training, employment and social development services. Research should be conducted to understand the current situation of Disabled People's Organisation (DPOs), their roles in advocacy, and delivery of services with regards to school to work transition.
- While Dong Nai Special School has been selected to be an Inclusive Education Centre under the National Law on Disability, action research should be conducted to answer key questions: (i) how would Dong Nai move forward to an Inclusive Education Centre? (ii) how does family economics and poverty impact on young people with disability?

## SUMMARY

Preparing young people with disability for successful school to work transition is essential for their social inclusion and participation in the work force. This study examined in depth how one school to work transition program was being implemented in Dong Nai Special School as

the first model for Vietnam. Young people with disability, their families, and service providers from national to local level including policy makers were included in the study.

Findings of this study provided insightful perspectives as to how satisfied transition students were with the services they received from this program. The findings, including the reporting of barriers and facilitators identified by the participants, add to the literature for use in future school to work transition programs. Findings also provide recommendations on how to deliver a school to work transition program, and inform policy-makers in order to effectively prepare young people with disability to attain employment after graduation, as well as contribute to the overall improvement of wellbeing and elimination of stigma. Ultimately, this study provided an opportunity for young people with disability, education administrators, teachers, disability activists and disability stakeholders to reflect on their experience, to provide a deeper understanding of the barriers and facilitators associated with school to work transition for young people with disability, to contribute to the regional and international discourse, and improve future school to work transition services and programs for young people with disability in general and for Vietnam in particular.

The school to work transition is marked by complex challenges in communication, availability of resources, and coordination of roles and responsibilities among agencies and families/parents. These findings indicated, that (i) internship and work experience contribute to the preparedness of young people with disability in school to work transition, which suggests increased likelihood that young people with disability achieve employment, (ii) communication and sign language interpretation is a key factor in success of school to work transition for these students with hearing impairment, (iii) levels of school engagement in assisting students and graduates with job-seeking and networking influences employment outcomes, and (iv) qualitative data describes rich diverse experience with multi-points of connection for young people with disability. All school staff, teachers and students credit the experience and skills acquired in the school to work transition program for success in school to work transition. Skills development such as interviews, interpersonal skills, and job skills are needed for the success of the school to work transition program.

At a personal level, this research has also helped me to examine my professional values and guidelines for my own future practice in both policy-making and at service delivery levels. All young people with disability I met were inspiring and very open about the challenges they

faced in life. They also shared their aspirations, ideas, and hopes to overcome barriers to obtaining employment. This is the best chance for social inclusion, when young people with disability can raise their voices and speak about what needs to change in order to achieve social inclusion for people with disability.

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# List of Appendices

## Appendix 1.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders in the Dong Nai school to work transition program**

**Department of Education and Training (DOET)** is the Provincial Government Department responsible for academic administration of Dong Nai school.

**Department of Labour and Social Affairs (DOLISA)** is the Provincial Government Department responsible for vocational training throughout Dong Nai province. DOLISA shares the responsibility for funding the vocational training program for Dong Nai school. When the funding is available, DOLISA contacts Dong Nai school to arrange the training course, or when the school has 15 students in need of the training, they contact DOLISA to request funds. DOLISA manages the Vocational Training Agencies, employers, and the Employment Information Centre, and therefore assists the school to overcome administration barriers, and to approach vocational training agencies and employers for vocational training options and job opportunities.

**Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH)** is an international organisation and USAID partner which provided additional funding and technical assistance through vocational training courses for students and skills training for teachers. Both the funding and technical assistance provided by USAID/VNAH helped establish connections for job exploration between the Dong Nai school and employers through field trips, job fairs, employers' presentations, and internships. In addition, the funding also covered interpretation costs, meal costs, part-time staff allowances and other related costs not covered under the DOLISA budget.

**Vocational Training Agency (VTA):** Dong Nai has a total of 16 vocational training institutions. However, two main agencies were involved in the Dong Nai school to work transition program. These were the Dong Nai Government Provincial Vocational Training Agency and a private Vocational Training Agency named Rosa. While the Government Vocational Training Agency conducted the training following DOLISA budget rules and policies, Rosa policies for vocational training for people with disability were more flexible. Rosa still provides free vocational training course for any people with disability who come to the agency and participate in their training courses. Here, young people with disability learn alongside those without disability which is a good thing except that there is no interpreter for the hearing impaired.

**Employment Information Centre (EIC):** The EIC worked in partnership with the school and served as a point of contact with vocational training agencies connecting people with disability to relevant employers. The EIC often organised job fairs which put employers and job seekers in contact with each other and the school. They also assisted with job applications.

**Employers:** Key staff at the Dong Nai school to work transition program were active in establishing connections with employers and vocational training agencies seeking job placements for their students. Employers such as Nike, and Chanshin, also approached the school when they needed to recruit people with disability to work in their companies.

**Parents' Association (PA):** Some parents sought to work closely with teachers and school managers to help their children make decisions about jobs and vocational training options. Parents were also invited to training conducted by the school.

**Dong Nai school** oversaw the school to work program and served as a link service providers and stakeholders. For the vocational training program, the school was responsible for selecting qualified students for the training, and for working with other service providers in their respective responsibilities for the vocational training program.

## Appendix 2.

### Letter of Confirmation from Dong Nai school management

**SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM**  
**Independence — Freedom — Happiness**

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## **LETTER OF CONFIRMATION**

### **To whom it may concern:**

The Dong Nai Special School for Supporting the Growth and Development of Disabled Youth in Bien Hoa, Dong Nai Province confirms our agreement for Ms. Nguyen Thi Thu Huong, a PhD student, Curtin University, Australia to carry out her research with the school.

**Research title:** School to Work Transition for Young People with Disability in Vietnam.

**Time for Data Collection:** The research will be carried out in an estimated timeframe of 12 months, in three rounds, and 6 months between the rounds. The research will include baseline survey with the students, school teachers, managers and related stakeholders involved in the school work transition program, group discussion and in-depth interviews with school students and related stakeholders.

We wish Ms. Huong all the best with the study.

Sincerely,



**Hoàng Thị Vân Nga**

**Dean of the School**

**12 October 2016**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Stakeholders**

**ID number:** .....

**BACKGROUND**

1. How are you involved in school to work transition?

Policy, please specify:

What sector of policy are you working in?

\_\_\_\_\_

Special Education

Education

DPO

Employer

Employment Services

Disability Advocacy

A parent of child with disability

Other: .....

2. Are you?

A staff member

A manager

A parent of child with disability

Other: .....

3. What is your highest level of education? (BA, MA, Diploma of .....  
.....)

**POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

4. Please describe or list the policies and programs relating to school to work transition for young people with disability you are aware of:

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5. How are you satisfied with these policies? (please tick one)

Very satisfied       Satisfied       Dissatisfied       Very dissatisfied

6. a) What are the gaps of the policies and programs that you are aware of? Please list your ideas here:

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a) What are the strengths of the policies and programs that you are aware of? Please list your ideas here:

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7. In your experience, what is the most important policy area that helps young people with disability in school to work transition? Please rank from 1 (most important) to 4 (least important)

- Education
- Health Care
- Employment and Vocational Training
- Social Welfare/Protection

## TRANSITION SERVICES

### *Needs Assessment*

8. Are you involved in a needs assessment conducted for young people with disability during school to work transition process?

- Yes (continue question below)     No (Skip to Question 13)     Don't know (Skip to Question 13)

9. How did you find the needs assessment?

- Very helpful     Helpful     Unhelpful     Very unhelpful

10. The results of the needs assessment have been helpful in preparing young people with disability to work

- Very helpful     Helpful     Unhelpful     Very unhelpful

11. How school to work related policies and programs for young people with disability are developed based on the results of the needs assessment conducted for young people with disability

- Very helpful     Helpful     Unhelpful     Very unhelpful

12. How school to work related services are developed based on the results of the needs assessment conducted for young people with disability

- Very helpful     Helpful     Unhelpful     Very unhelpful

### *Transition Planning*

13. Young people with disability should be invited to attend transition planning meetings.

- Strongly Agree     Agree     Disagree     Strongly Disagree

14. Are you involved in school to work transition planning?

- Yes (continue question below)     No (Skip to Question 21)     Don't know (Skip to Question 21)

15. How did you find the transition planning?  
 Very helpful       Helpful       Unhelpful       Very unhelpful
16. You are satisfied with your involvement in the transition planning.  
 Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree
17. Transition planning has been very helpful for young people with disability to prepare for work.  
 Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree
18. Young people with disability are asked to voice their needs, motivation, interests and set their goals at the transition meetings and they are reflected in the transition plan.  
 Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree
19. Young people with disability have been encouraged to make decisions on what they want to learn and do in the transition program.  
 Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree
20. What activities have been organized for job opportunities as part of the transition program?  
 (tick all that apply)
- Field trips to job sites for general observation
- Employer presentations at the school
- Internships for students who have developed specific vocational skills
- On-the-job training for 6 – 9 weeks
- Others: .....
- Don't know

### Stakeholder Coordination

21. Is there any formal partnership established between relevant stakeholders for the school to work transition for young people with disability?  
 Yes       No       Don't know
22. Is there any committee or council that coordinates the activities relating to school to work transition?  
 Yes (continue with Question below)       No (skip to Question 25)       Don't know (skip to Question 25)

23. What stakeholder groups are presented in that committee or council? Please list below members of that council or committee.

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24. Are you a member of any coordination committee or council on school to work transition?

- Yes (continue with Question below)       No (skip to Question 32)

25. How often do you attend the coordination/partnership meetings? (tick one that is most appropriate)

- Once a month  
 Every three months  
 Every six months  
 Other/s: .....  
 Don't know

26. The coordination/partnership for school to work transition works well.

- Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree

27. What other groups should be in coordinating school to work transition activities? Please list down who should be included here.

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28. A mechanism is set up for information sharing and service provision amongst stakeholders in school to work transition effort.

- Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree       Don't know

29. Information about the community services (community activities and events, health care, mentoring, job availability, assistive devices, etc) is available to young people with disability and their family.

- Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree       Don't know

30. Employers conduct training for young people with disability to acquire skills for being an employee  
 Strongly Agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree  Don't know
31. Resources are allocated by service providers to assist post school students with employment, professional training.  
 Strongly Agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree  Don't know
32. The school has a program for young people with disability to interact with employers for job training and employment opportunities  
 Strongly Agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree  Don't know

***School and Environment Context***

33. Your organisation has sufficient budget and adequate resources to promote positive transition for young people with disability.  
 Strongly Agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree  Don't applicable
34. Your organisation has a system to involve young people with disability in all related activities of school to work transition.  
 Strongly Agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree  Don't applicable
35. Do you believe high-quality, job-embedded professional development is provided for staff supporting school to work transition program.  
 Strongly Agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree  Not applicable

**PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY**

**Please tick one box to indicate how you agree and disagree with the statements from 34 to 41 below regarding participation and involvement of young people with disability in relation to school to work transition:**

36. Disability limits young people with disability's participation in social activities.  
 Strongly Agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree  Don't know
37. Disability limits young people with disability's participation in employment activities  
 Strongly Agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree  Don't know
38. The transportation system works for young people with disability  
 Strongly Agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree  Don't know
39. Teachers are fair and just  
 Strongly Agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree  Don't know

40. Young people with disability are able to do the school tasks well at school with assistance from schoolteachers and staff.  
 Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree    Don't know
41. Teachers listen to what young people with disability say at school.  
 Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree    Don't know
42. The school and classroom are accessible for young people with disability  
 Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree    Don't know
43. Young people with disability have access to the assistive devices they need during their study  
 Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree    Don't know

### **EXPERIENCE OF WORKING WHILE STUDYING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY**

**What do you think about students having a job while studying? Please tick one box to indicate how you agree or disagree with each statement from 44 to 46 below.**

44. Working while studying improves chances of getting a job for young people with disability after school  
 Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree
45. Working while studying helps young people with disability to meet vocational expectations  
 Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree
46. Working while studying increases confidence for young people with disability  
 Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

**What do you think it is like for young people with disability when they are working? Please tick one box to indicate how you agree or disagree with each statement from 47 to 51 below.**

47. Young people with disability feel valued in society  
 Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree    Don't know
48. Young people with disability have an independent life  
 Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree    Don't know
49. Young people with disability help **reduce the burden for their parents**

Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree    Don't know

50. Young people with disability are able to exercise their fundamental right to work in society  
 Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree    Don't know

51. Young people with disability feel grown up when they work  
 Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree    Don't know

52. In your experience, what factors do you think support young people with disability in school to work transition? Please list your ideas here.

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53. In your experience, what makes it difficult for young people with disability in school to work transition? Please list your ideas here.

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54. What do you think could be done to improve school to work transition for young people with disability? Please list your ideas here.

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**Thank you very much for completing the questionnaire.**

## Appendix 4.



### Participant Information Sheet

#### **Questionnaire for Stakeholders**

##### **Research: School to Work Transition for Young People with disability in Vietnam**

My name is Huong Nguyen and I am a PhD student at Curtin University, Perth, Australia. My research explores school to work transition for young people with disability in Vietnam. This research is important as there is a lack of research in this area in Vietnam and other developing countries. The research aims to provide an overall picture of school to work transition being provided to young people with disability in Vietnam. The study will provide an opportunity for young people with disability and stakeholders to share experience to inform the regional and international discourse of school to work transition and improve future services and programs for young people with disability in Vietnam.

I am interested in your views and experience of school to work transition as a stakeholder who is involved in school to work transition for young people with disability. I would be grateful if you would take time to complete this questionnaire as part of the study. It will take less than one hour to complete the questionnaire, at a time and place convenient to you. The questions focus on school to work transition services. You should answer based on your knowledge of the school to work transition.

This questionnaire is for key stakeholders involving in school to work transition program. The research will gather information and data from stakeholders. You may be invited to participate in an interview at a later date. Interviews are scheduled between approximately November 2016 and February 2018. Please write your contact details on the consent form for us to contact you again.

Your personal information will be kept confidential. The results of this research may be presented at conferences or published in professional journals and the PhD thesis. You will not be identified in any results that are published or presented. All collected data will be stored and archived on Curtin University network drives. Paper copies will be will be filed and stored at Curtin University School of Occupational Therapy and Social Work for at least 2 years and then transferred to central archiving before eventually being destroyed.

Your participation in the survey is voluntary and you can decide to stop the interview at any time without consequences. There are no expected risks involved with your participation in this study. You will be asked to sign the consent form to show you understand and agree to take part in the research. There may not be any immediate benefit to you personally for taking part in the research, but your answers will help improve school to work transition program for young people with disability in the future.

Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has approved this study (HREC number XX/XXXX). Should you wish to discuss the study with someone not directly involved, in particular, any matters concerning the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, or you wish to make a confidential complaint, you may contact the Ethics Officer on +618 9266 9223 or the Manager, Research Integrity on +618 9266 7093 or email [hrec@curtin.edu.au](mailto:hrec@curtin.edu.au).

Should you have any concerns or questions regarding this research, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address below or my supervisor Dr. Angela Fielding with her email: [A.Fielding@curtin.edu.au](mailto:A.Fielding@curtin.edu.au); and telephone: +61 8 9266 7637.

Thank you for your time

**Huong Nguyen**

**PhD student**

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Curtin University  
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Phone: 0912 753 153 (in Vietnam)

## CONSENT FORM

### Questionnaire for Stakeholders

#### Research: School to Work Transition for Young People with Disability in Vietnam

- ✓ I have read the participant information sheet and understand the purpose of the research. I have received a copy of the information sheet.
- ✓ I have had an opportunity to ask questions regarding the research and its objectives and my questions have been answered.
- ✓ I have been informed that personal information that I have provided will be strictly kept confidential and will not be released by the researcher unless I give permission. The storing and final destruction of the research materials will be carried out in accordance with Curtin University's policies and procedures.
- ✓ I understand that identifiable information will not be included in publications, will be kept in a secure place and be only accessed by authorised persons.
- ✓ I understand that participation in this survey research is voluntary and I can fully withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

The research will be undertaken following the Curtin University's ethical guidelines and under approval by the governing HREC and that the research will be conducted in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) updated May 2015.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Organisation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to be contacted for an interview or a focus group discussion?  Yes  No

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Young People with Disability**

**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

2. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Date of Birth? \_\_\_\_\_ (Day) \_\_\_\_\_ (Month) \_\_\_\_\_ (Year)
4. What grade are you currently enrolled in?  7  8  9
5. What is your Family Wealth Ranking according to the attached MOLISA wealth ranking system?
- Poor  Close to poor  Average  Don't know
6. a) Who do you live with when not attending school? (tick all that apply, include natural, step, and half relatives)
- Father  Mother  Brother/s  Sister/s  Grandparent/s  Uncles/s
- Aunt/s  Other relative/s  Other/s, please specify:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b) Is this:  Rural  Urban
7. a) Do you live somewhere else when you attend school?
- No, I live at the same place
- Yes, I live on campus
- Yes, I live with someone else, please specify:  
Whom you live with (relationship):  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b) Is this:  Rural  Urban

8. Please tell me a little about your father:

I do not have contact with my father/my father has passed away (Skip to Question 9)

a) Age: \_\_\_\_\_ years old

b) Highest level of education: \_\_\_\_\_

c) Main activity:

Retired  Govt. staff  Houseman  Agriculture work  Self-employed  Other:

9. Please tell me a little about your mother:

I do not have contact with my mother/my mother has passed away (Skip to Question 10)

a) Age: \_\_\_\_\_ years old

b) Highest level of education: \_\_\_\_\_

c) Main activity:

Retired  Govt. staff  Houseman  Agriculture work  Self-employed  Other:

10. What is your main disability? (tick one)

Vision  Hearing  Speaking  Physical  Intellectual  Mental Illness  Other:

11. Do you have any other disabilities? (tick all that apply)

No  Vision  Hearing  Speaking  Physical  Intellectual  Mental Illness

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Level of disability:  Severe  Moderate  Mild

### **POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

13. Please describe or list all the **education, health and rehabilitation, employment and vocational training, and social welfare or protection policies and programs** relating to school to work transition for young people with disability you are aware of:

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14. How are you satisfied with these policies? (please tick one)
- Very satisfied    Satisfied    Dissatisfied    Very dissatisfied    Don't know
15. In your experience, what is the most important policy area that helps young people with disability in school to work transition? Please rank from 1 (most important) to 4 (least important)
- Education
- Health Care
- Employment and Vocational Training
- Social Welfare/Protection

## TRANSITION SERVICES

### *Needs Assessment*

16. Have you participated in a needs assessment at school?
- Yes (continue question 16)    No (Skip to Question 18)    Don't know (Skip to Question 17)
17. How did you find the needs assessment?
- Very helpful    Helpful    Unhelpful    Very unhelpful
18. The results of the needs assessment have been helpful in preparing me to transition from school to work.
- Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

### *Transition Planning*

19. Have you been involved in school to work transition planning?
- Yes (continue question below)    No (Skip to Question 24)    Don't know (Skip to Question 24)
20. You are satisfied with your involvement in the transition planning.
- Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree
21. Transition planning has been very helpful for you to prepare for work.

Strongly Agree     Agree     Disagree     Strongly Disagree

22. You have been able to voice your needs, motivation, interests and set your goals at the transition meetings and they are reflected in the transition plan.

Strongly Agree     Agree     Disagree     Strongly Disagree

23. You have been encouraged to make decisions on what you want to learn and do in the transition program.

Strongly Agree     Agree     Disagree     Strongly Disagree

24. Young people with disability should be invited to attend transition planning meetings.

Strongly Agree     Agree     Disagree     Strongly Disagree

### WORK EXPERIENCE

25. Please indicate which of the following work activities you have participated in (tick all that apply).

None (Skip to Question 29)     Work experience     Mentoring     Unpaid work

School-based enterprise     On-the-job training     Internship     Paid

work

Job shadowing     Employer presentations at the school

26. Your work activities improve employment options

Strongly Agree     Agree     Disagree     Strongly Disagree

27. You are satisfied with your work activities

Strongly Agree     Agree     Disagree     Strongly Disagree

28. The work is appropriate for your capacity and availability.

Strongly Agree     Agree     Disagree     Strongly Disagree

### SCHOOL AND ENVIRONMENT CONTEXT

**Please tick one box to indicate your agreement related to the following statements:**

29. The school has a system to address social needs of young people with disability.

Strongly Agree     Agree     Disagree     Strongly Disagree

30. The school has a system to address emotional needs of young people with disability.

Strongly Agree     Agree     Disagree     Strongly Disagree

31. The school has a system to address health needs of young people with disability.  
 Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree
32. The school has a system to address academic needs of young people with disability.  
 Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree
33. The school has a system to address communication needs of young people with disability.  
 Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree

### **PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY**

**Please tick one box to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the below statements regarding participation and involvement of young people with disability in school to work transition program.**

34. Being a person with disability limits your participation in school activities.  
 Strongly Agree     Agree     Disagree     Strongly Disagree     Don't know
35. Being a person with disability limits your participation in employment activities  
 Strongly Agree     Agree     Disagree     Strongly Disagree     Don't know
36. The transportation system works for you  
 Strongly Agree     Agree     Disagree     Strongly Disagree     Don't know
37. The teachers are fair and just.  
 Strongly Agree     Agree     Disagree     Strongly Disagree     Don't know
38. You are able to do the school tasks well at school with assistance from schoolteachers and staff.  
 Strongly Agree     Agree     Disagree     Strongly Disagree     Don't know
39. The teachers listen to what you say.  
 Strongly Agree     Agree     Disagree     Strongly Disagree     Don't know
40. The school and classroom are accessible for you.  
 Strongly Agree     Agree     Disagree     Strongly Disagree     Don't know
41. You have access to the assistive devices you need during your study  
 Strongly Agree     Agree     Disagree     Strongly Disagree     Don't know

### **EXPERIENCE OF WORKING WHILE STUDYING**

42. What type of work are you currently doing? (tick all that apply)  
 Not working (skip to Question 48)  Paid work  Unpaid work

Apprenticeship

Community services  Other, please specify:

\_\_\_\_\_

43. In what sector do you work?  
 Health  Education  ICT  Community  Other, please specify:

\_\_\_\_\_

44. What is your salary: \_\_\_\_\_ Dong/hour (write zero if it is unpaid)

45. How many hours do you work in a typical day: \_\_\_\_\_ hour

46. How many days do you work in a typical week: \_\_\_\_\_ days

47. What are your reasons for working?(please tick all that apply)

You want to improve your chance to work after school

It is a school requirement

Support family financially

Other: .....

**Please tick one box for each statement below to indicate how confident are you about the following after you leave school/complete the school to work transition program:**

48. You will live independently  
 Very confident  Confident  Uncertain  Very uncertain

49. You will have work/employment  
 Very confident  Confident  Uncertain  Very uncertain

50. You will participate in community activities  
 Very confident  Confident  Uncertain  Very uncertain

51. In your experience, what factors do you think would support you and other young people with disability in school to work transition? Please list your ideas here.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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52. In your experience, what make you and other young people with disability difficult in school to work transition? Please list your ideas here.

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53. What do you think could be done for improving school to work transition for young people with disability? Please list your ideas here.

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54. Was this questionnaire completed with assistance? Yes No

1. If yes, who assisted you in completing this questionnaire? .....

**Thank you for completing this questionnaire.**

ID number: .....

## **Participant Information Sheet**

### **Questionnaire - Young People with Disability**

#### **Research: School to Work Transition for Young People with Disability in Vietnam**

My name is Huong Nguyen and I am a PhD student at Curtin University, Perth, Australia. My research explores **school to work transition for young people with disability in Vietnam**. This research is important as there is a lack of **research in this area in Vietnam and other developing countries**. The research aims to provide an overall picture of school to work transition being provided to young people with disability in Vietnam. The study will provide an opportunity for young people with disability and stakeholders to share experience of school to work transition and improve future services and programs for young people with disability in Vietnam.

I am interested in your views and experience of school to work transition as a young person with disability. I would be grateful if you would take time to complete this questionnaire as part of the study. It will take less than one hour to complete the questionnaire. Please complete the questionnaire at a time and place convenient to you. The questions focus on school to work transition services. You should answer based on your experience of the school to work transition with your school.

The questionnaire is for all students at the Dong Nai secondary school. The research will gather information and data from young people with disability over 18 months through three waves of data collection. After you complete the questionnaire for each wave, you may be invited to participate in an interview. Those who participate in the first interview are invited to participate in the second and third interviews as well. The first interview is scheduled around November 2016. The second interview will be in June 2017 and the last will take place in February 2018. It will be approximately 6 - 7 months between the interviews. Please write your contact details on the consent form for us to contact you again.

Your personal information will be kept confidential. The results of this research may be presented at conferences or published in professional journals and as a PhD thesis. You will not be identified in any results that are published or presented. All collected data will be stored and archived on Curtin University network drives. Hard copies will be will be filed and stored at Curtin University School of Occupational Therapy and Social Work for at least 2 years and then be transferred to central archiving before eventually being destroyed.

Your participation in the survey is voluntary and you can decide to withdraw from the survey at any time without consequences. There are no expected risks involved with your participation in this study. You will be asked to sign the consent form to show you understand and agree to take part in the research. If you are under 18 years old, a parent or guardian is expected to sign the consent form with you. There

may not be any immediate benefit to you personally but your answers will help other students in the future.

Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has approved this study (HREC number XX/XXXX). Should you wish to discuss the study with someone not directly involved, in particular, any matters concerning the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, or you wish to make a confidential complaint, you may contact the Ethics Officer on +618 9266 9223 or the Manager, Research Integrity on +618 9266 7093 or email [hrec@curtin.edu.au](mailto:hrec@curtin.edu.au).

Should you have any concerns or questions regarding this research, please do not hesitate to contact me using the details below or my supervisor Dr. Angela Fielding by email: [A.Fielding@curtin.edu.au](mailto:A.Fielding@curtin.edu.au); or telephone: +61 8 9266 7637.

Thank you for your time

**Huong Nguyen**

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Tel: 0912 753 153 (in Vietnam)

**CONSENT FORM**  
**Questionnaire for Young People with Disability**

Research: School to Work Transition for Young People with disability in Vietnam

- ✓ I have read the participant information sheet and understand the purpose of the research. I have received a copy of the information sheet.
- ✓ I have had an opportunity to ask questions regarding the research and its objectives and the questions have been answered.
- ✓ I have been informed that personal information that I have provided will be strictly kept confidential and will not be released by the researcher unless I give permission. The storing and final destruction of the research materials will be carried out in accordance with Curtin University’s policies and procedures.
- ✓ I understand that identifiable information will not be included in publications, will be kept in a secure place and be only accessed by authorised persons.
- ✓ I understand that participation in this survey research is voluntary and I can fully withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

The research will be undertaken following the Curtin University’s ethical guidelines and under approval by the governing HREC and that the research will be conducted in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) updated May 2015.

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Parents or Guardian of Participant under 18 years old</b>
<b>Name:</b> _____ <b>Signature:</b> _____ <b>Date:</b> _____ <b>Address:</b> _____ _____ <b>Home Phone:</b> _____ <b>Mobile: :</b> _____ <b>Email:</b> _____  <b>Are you willing to be contacted for participation in interviews?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<b>Name:</b> _____ <b>Signature:</b> _____ <b>Date:</b> _____ <b>Address:</b> _____ _____ <b>Home Phone:</b> _____ <b>Mobile: :</b> _____ <b>Email:</b> _____  <b>Are you willing to be contacted for participation in interviews?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

## **INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDE**

### **Stakeholders**

#### **FACT SHEET**

- Please tell me your name (full name):  
.....
- What are you doing at the moment?  
.....
- How long have you been working for the organisation?  
.....
- How long have you been working in the current position?  
.....

#### **QUESTION GUIDE**

1. Could you please tell me your views as you see as significant for successful school to work transition program at Dong Nai secondary school?
  - What do you think works well?
2. There are many parts to the school to work transition program that you are involved in, can you tell me what you think can be improved about the program?
  - *Policy and Program relating to school to work transition*
  - *Transition Services (transition planning, need assessment)*
  - *Work experience while studying*
  - *School and environment context*
  - *Stakeholder Coordination (roles and responsibilities of each party and a mechanism to function the roles and responsibility)*
3. Can you tell me about the involvement of yourself in school to work transition program?

- *Policy and Program*
- *Transition Services: (transition planning, need assessment)*
- *Work experience while studying*
- *School and environment context*
- *Coordination (the roles and responsibilities of each related stakeholders in the program).*

4. Can you tell me about the involvement of young people with disability in school to work transition program?

- *Policy and Program*
- *Transition Services: (transition planning, need assessment)*
- *Work experience while studying*
- *School and environment context*
- *Coordination (the roles and responsibilities of each related stakeholders in the program).*

5. What do you expect to see in the school to work transition program in the future? And what should be done to make the school to work transition program to be as you expect?

**Thank you very much for your time and contribution to the study!**

## **Participant Information Sheet**

### **Interview with Stakeholders**

#### **Research: School to Work Transition for Young People with disability in Vietnam**

My name is Huong Nguyen and I am a PhD student at Curtin University, Perth, Australia. My research explores **school to work transition for young people with disability in Vietnam**. This research is important as there is a lack of **research in this area in Vietnam and other developing countries**. The research aims to provide an overall picture of school to work transition being provided to young people with disability in Vietnam. The study will provide an opportunity for young people with disability and stakeholders to share experience of school to work transition and improve future services and programs for young people with disability in Vietnam.

I am interested in your views and experience of school to work transition as a stakeholder who is involved in the school to work transition program. I would be grateful if you would take time to participate in an interview as part of this study. The interview will take less than one hour at a time and place convenient to you. The questions focus on school to work transition services. You should answer based on your experience of the school to work transition.

The interview will be conducted for selected stakeholders who involves in school to work transition implemented at Dong Nai secondary school. Please write your contact details on the consent form for us to contact you.

Your personal information will be kept confidential. The results of this research may be presented at conferences or published in professional journals and the PhD thesis. You will not be identified in any results that are published or presented. All collected data will be stored and archived on Curtin University computer hard drives. Paper copies will be will be filed and stored at Curtin University School of Occupational Therapy and Social Work for at least 2 years and then transferred to central archiving before eventually being destroyed.

Your participation in the interview is voluntary and you can decide to stop being interviewed at any time without consequences. There are no expected risks involved with your participation in this study. You will be asked to sign the consent form to show you understand and agree to take part in the research. There may not be any immediate benefit to you personally for taking part in the research but your answers will help improve school to work transition programs for young people with disability in the future.

Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has approved this study (HREC number XX/XXXX). Should you wish to discuss the study with someone not directly involved, in particular,

any matters concerning the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, or you wish to make a confidential complaint, you may contact the Ethics Officer on +618 9266 9223 or the Manager, Research Integrity on +618 9266 7093 or email [hrec@curtin.edu.au](mailto:hrec@curtin.edu.au).

Should you have any concerns or questions regarding this research, please do not hesitate to contact me using the details below or my supervisor Dr. Angela Fielding by email: [A.Fielding@curtin.edu.au](mailto:A.Fielding@curtin.edu.au); or telephone: +61 8 9266 7637.

Thank you for your time

**Huong Nguyen**

**PhD student**

School of Occupational Therapy and Social Work  
Faculty of Health Sciences  
Curtin University  
Email: [huong.t.t.nguyen@postgrad.curtin.edu.au](mailto:huong.t.t.nguyen@postgrad.curtin.edu.au)  
Phone number: 0912 753 153 (in Vietnam)

ID number: .....

## **CONSENT FORM**

### **Interview with Stakeholders**

#### **Research: School to Work Transition for Young People with disability in Vietnam**

- ✓ I have read the participant information sheet and understand the purpose of the research. I have received a copy of the information sheet.
- ✓ I have had an opportunity to ask questions regarding the research and its objectives and my questions have been answered.
- ✓ I have been informed that personal information that I have provided will be strictly kept confidential and will not be released by the researcher unless I give permission. The storing and final destruction of the research materials will be carried out in accordance with Curtin University's policies and procedures.
- ✓ I understand that identifiable information will not be included in publications, will be kept in a secure place and be only accessed by authorised persons.
- ✓ I understand that participation in this survey research is voluntary and I can fully withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

The research will be undertaken following the Curtin University's ethical guidelines and under approval by the governing HREC and that the research will be conducted in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) updated May 2015.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Work Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to take part in the focus group discussion?  Yes  No

ID number: .....

**QUESTION GUIDE FOR INTERVIEW**  
**Young People with Disability**

**FACT SHEET**

- Please tell me your name (full name):  
.....
- Your Date of Birth:  
.....
- What year/level are you in at school?  
.....

**QUESTION GUIDE**

6. Can you tell me about your experience that you see as significant for successful school to work transition program with your school?

- *What work well?*

7. There are many parts to the school to work transition program with your school, what needs to be improved?

- *Transition Services (transition planning, need assessment)*
- *Work experience while studying*
- *School and environment context*

8. Please could you tell me your views about your involvement in school to work transition program at your school?

- *Transition Services: (transition planning, need assessment)*
- *Work experience while studying*
- *School and environment context*

9. How do you think the school to work transition program will affect your life in the future?

- *Transition Services (transition planning, need assessment)*

- *Work experience while studying*
- *School and environment context*
- *Other areas*

**Thank you very much for your time and contribution to the study!**



## **Participant Information Sheet**

### **Interview with young people with disability**

#### **Research: School to Work Transition for Young People with disability in Vietnam**

My name is Huong Nguyen and I am a PhD student at Curtin University, Perth, Australia. My research explores **school to work transition for young people with disability in Vietnam**. This research is important as there is a lack of **research in this area in Vietnam and other developing countries**. The research aims to provide an overall picture of school to work transition being provided to young people with disability in Vietnam. The study will provide an opportunity for young people with disability and stakeholders to share experience of school to work transition and improve future services and programs for young people with disability in Vietnam.

I am interested in your views and experience of school to work transition as a young person with disability. I would be grateful if you would take time to participate in the interview as part of the study. The interview will take less than one hour, at a time and place convenient to you. The questions focus on school to work transition services. You should answer based on your experience of the school to work transition programs within your school.

The interview will be conducted for selected young people with disability at Dong Nai school. Those who participate in the first interview are invited to participate in the second and third interviews as well. The first interview is scheduled around November 2016. The second interview will be in June 2017 and the last will take place in February 2018. It will be approximately 6 - 7 months between the interviews. Please write your contact details on the consent form for us to contact you.

Your personal information will be kept confidential. The results of this research may be presented at conferences or published in professional journals and the PhD thesis. You will not be identified in any results that are published or presented. All collected data will be stored and archived on Curtin University computer hard drives. Paper copies will be filed and stored at Curtin University School of Occupational Therapy and Social Work for at least 2 years and then transferred to central archiving before eventually being destroyed.

Your participation in the interview is voluntary and you can decide to stop interview at any time without consequences. There are no expected risks involved with your participation in this study. You will be asked to sign the consent form to show you understand and agree to take part in the research. If you are under 18 years old, a parent or guardian needs to sign the consent form with you. There may not be any immediate benefit to you personally for taking part in the research, but your answers will help other students in the future.

Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has approved this study (HREC number XX/XXXX). Should you wish to discuss the study with someone not directly involved, in particular, any matters concerning the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, or you wish to make a

confidential complaint, you may contact the Ethics Officer on +618 9266 9223 or the Manager, Research Integrity on +618 9266 7093 or email [hrec@curtin.edu.au](mailto:hrec@curtin.edu.au).

Should you have any concerns or questions regarding this research, please do not hesitate to contact me using the details below or my supervisor Dr. Angela Fielding by email: [A.Fielding@curtin.edu.au](mailto:A.Fielding@curtin.edu.au); or telephone: +61 8 9266 7637.

Thank you for your time

**Huong Nguyen**

**PhD student**

School of Occupational Therapy and Social Work

Faculty of Health Sciences

Curtin University

Email: [huong.t.t.nguyen@postgrad.curtin.edu.au](mailto:huong.t.t.nguyen@postgrad.curtin.edu.au)

Tel: 0912 753 153 (in Vietnam)

**ID number: .....**

## **CONSENT FORM**

### **Interview with Young People with Disability**

**Research: School to Work Transition for Young People with disability in Vietnam**

- ✓ I have read the participant information sheet and understand the purpose of the research. I have received a copy of the information sheet.
- ✓ I have had an opportunity to ask questions regarding the research and its objectives and my questions have been answered.
- ✓ I have been informed that personal information that I have provided will be strictly kept confidential and will not be released by the researcher unless I give permission. The storing and final destruction of the research materials will be carried out in accordance with Curtin University’s policies and procedures.
- ✓ I understand that identifiable information will not be included in publications, will be kept in a secure place and be only accessed by authorised persons.
- ✓ I understand that participation in this survey research is voluntary and I can fully withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

The research will be undertaken following the Curtin University’s ethical guidelines and under approval by the governing HREC and that the research will be conducted in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) updated May 2015.

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Parents or Guardian of Participant under 18 years old</b>
<p><b>Name:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Signature:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Date:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Address:</b> _____ _____</p> <p><b>Home Phone:</b> _____ <b>Mobile: :</b> _____</p> <p><b>Email:</b> _____</p> <p>Are you willing to be contacted for participation in further interviews? <input type="checkbox"/>Yes <input type="checkbox"/>No</p>	<p><b>Name:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Signature:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Date:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Address:</b> _____ _____</p> <p><b>Home Phone:</b> _____ <b>Mobile: :</b> _____</p> <p><b>Email:</b> _____</p> <p>Are you willing to be contacted for participation in an interview in further interviews? <input type="checkbox"/>Yes <input type="checkbox"/>No</p>

ID number: .....

**QUESTION GUIDE FOR GROUP INTERVIEW**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

➤ Please introduce your name (full name):  
.....

➤ Are you a parent of a child with disability?  
.....

➤ If you work for an organisation, what is your position?  
.....

➤ Are you a student?  
  
a. If yes, what grade are you now at school?  
.....

b. If no, what year did you leave school?  
.....

What grade did you finish at school? .....

Are you working? If yes, where do you work? .....

**QUESTION GUIDE**

**10. What has been significant in supporting successful school to work transition program at the school?**

- *Consultation/Guidance during school and follow up of school after graduation*
- *Assistance of teacher and school staff in looking for jobs for students*
- *Internship (Vocational Training vs Practice at Work)*

- *Interaction between students and employers*
- *Roles of Parents in decision making process*
- *Social Activities/Friendship among students*

**11. What do you think should be improved for the school to work transition program with the school?**

- *Transition Services (eg. vocational training options, skill trainings including social skills, application and interview skills, stress/pressure management, etc)*
- *Work Experience Activity (eg. training program availability vs practices vs interest of young people with disability, internship)*
- *School/Work environment context (eg. social activities, communication, learning and teaching equipment, academic requirement)*

**12. How were you involved in decision making for the following areas as part of the school to work transition program at your school?**

- *Vocational Training Program (availability of training courses, interest, regular transition meeting, internship)*
- *Jobs after School (training options, job availability, school follow up, etc)*

**13. What would you like to see the school to work transition program do for you in the future?**

- *How should the consultation process be conducted at school and who should be involved in the process.*
- *How the school can work around the issues of skills training programs*
- *How do you want to overcome the barriers in communication and interaction with employers, friends and colleagues at school and workplace (eg. Sign-language, assistive technology, etc..)*

**Thank you very much for your time and contribution to the study!**

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT**

**FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW**

<b>HREC Project Number:</b>	HRE 2016-0356
<b>Project Title:</b>	School to work transition for young people with disability in Vietnam
<b>Chief Investigator:</b>	A/Professor Angela Fielding
<b>Student researcher:</b>	Huong Thi Thu Nguyen
<b>Version Number:</b>	6
<b>Version Date:</b>	11/4/2017

**What is the Project About?**

My research explores **school to work transition for young people with disability in Vietnam**. The research aims to provide an overall picture of school to work transition being provided. The study will provide an opportunity for young people with disability and stakeholders to share experience of school to work transition and improve future services and programs. This research is important as there is a lack of **research in this area in Vietnam and other developing countries**.

**Who is doing the Research?**

The project is being conducted by a PhD student researcher, Huong Nguyen. This research project is funded by a grant from Australia Award Scholarship and Curtin University. The results will be used by the student researcher Huong Nguyen to obtain a Doctor of Philosophy at Curtin University. There will be no cost for you to take part in this project.

**Why am I being asked to take part and what will I have to do?**

I am interested in your views and experience of school to work transition. This focus group interview focuses on participation of young people with disability into the school to work transition services, work experience and how the environment context facilitates the school to work transition.

I would be grateful if you would take the time to participate in the interview. The interview will take less than one hour at a time and place convenient to you. You should answer based on your experience.

**Are there any benefits to being in the research project?**

There may not be any immediate benefit to you personally but your answers may help young people with disability in the future in more effective transition from school to work.

**Are there any risks, side-effects, discomforts or inconveniences from being in the research project?**

There are no expected risks involved with your participation in this study apart from giving up your time. You will be asked to sign the consent form to show you understand and agree to take part in the

research. If you are under 18 years old, a parent or guardian is expected to sign the consent form with you.

### **Who will have access to my information?**

Your personal information will be kept confidential. You will not be identified in any results that are published or presented. The research team and, in the event of an AUD\$it or investigation, staff from the Curtin University Office of Research and Development will have access to the information we collect in this research.

All collected data will be stored and archived on Curtin University network drives. Hard copies will be filed and stored in secured locations at Curtin University for at least 7 years after the project ends before eventually being destroyed.

### **Will you tell me the results of the research?**

A summary of the project's overall results will be sent to you and I will write to you at the end of the research. The results will not be individual but based on all the information we collect and review as part of the research. The results of this research may be presented at conferences or published in professional and academic journals and as a PhD thesis.

### **Do I have to take part in the research project?**

Your participation in the focus group interview is voluntary and there will be no adverse effects for withdrawal or choosing not to participate. If you choose to leave the study we will use any information collected unless you tell us not to.

### **What happens next and who can I contact about the research?**

Should you have any concerns or questions regarding this research, please do not hesitate to contact me using the details below or my supervisor A/Prof. Angela Fielding by email: [A.Fielding@curtin.edu.au](mailto:A.Fielding@curtin.edu.au); or telephone: +61 8 9266 7637.

If you decide to take part in this research we will ask you to sign the consent form. By signing, it tells us that you understand what you have read and what has been discussed. Signing the consent indicates that you agree to be in the research project. Please take your time and ask any questions before you decide what to do. You will be given a copy of this information to keep.

Thank you for your time

### **Huong Nguyen**

PhD student

School of Occupational Therapy and Social Work

Faculty of Health Sciences

Curtin University

Email: [huong.t.t.nguyen@postgrad.curtin.edu.au](mailto:huong.t.t.nguyen@postgrad.curtin.edu.au)

Tel: 0912 753 153 (while in Vietnam)

Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has approved this study (HRE 2016-0356). Should you wish to discuss the study with someone not directly involved, in particular, any matters concerning the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, or you wish to make a confidential complaint, you may contact the Ethics Officer on +618 9266 9223 or the Manager, Research Integrity on +618 9266 7093 or email [hrec@curtin.edu.au](mailto:hrec@curtin.edu.au) in Australia or the Country Director at 84-4 3 747 3000 at Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH) in Vietnam.

**CONSENT FORM****FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW**

<b>HREC Project Number</b>	<i>HRE 2016-0356</i>
<b>Project Title:</b>	<i>School to work transition for young people with disability in Vietnam</i>
<b>Chief Investigator:</b>	<i>A/Professor Angela Fielding</i>
<b>Student researcher:</b>	<i>Huong Thi Thu Nguyen</i>
<b>Version Number:</b>	<i>6</i>
<b>Version Date:</b>	<i>11/4/2017</i>

- I have read in my first language, the information statement version listed above and I understand its contents. I believe I understand the purpose, extent and possible risks of my involvement in this project.
- I voluntarily consent to take part in this research project.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied with the answers I have received.
- I understand that this project has been approved by Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee and will be carried out in line with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).
- I understand I will receive a copy of this Information Statement and Consent Form.

Participant	Parents or Guardian of Participant under 18 years old
Name: _____	Name: _____
Signature: _____	Signature: _____
Date of Birth: _____	Date: _____
Address: _____	Address: _____
Home Phone: _____ Mobile: : _____	Home Phone: _____ Mobile: : _____
Email: _____	Email: _____
Date: _____	Date: _____

**Declaration by researcher:** I have supplied an Information Sheet to the participant who has signed above, and believe that they understand the purpose, extent and possible risks of their involvement in this project.

Researcher Name	Huong Thi Thu Nguyen
Researcher Signature	
Date	

ID number: .....

**QUESTION GUIDE FOR INTERVIEW  
(Round 2 & 3)  
Young People with Disability**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- Please tell me your name (full name):  
.....
- Your Date of Birth:  
.....
- Are you a student?
  - a. If yes, what grade are you now at school? .....
  - b. If no, what year did you leave school?  
.....  
What grade did you finish at school?  
.....

**QUESTION GUIDE**

**14. Being a person with visual impairment/hearing impairment, what has been significant in supporting successful school to work transition program with your school?**

- *Consultation/Guidance during school and follow up of school after graduation*
- *Assistance of teacher and school staff in looking for jobs for students*
- *Internship (Vocational Training vs Practice at Work)*
- *Interaction between students and employers*
- *Roles of Parents in decision making process*
- *Social Activities/Friendship among students*

**15. What do you think should be improved for the school to work transition program with your school?**

- *Transition Services (eg. vocational training options, skill trainings including social*

*skills, application and interview skills, stress/pressure management, etc)*

- *Work Experience Activity (eg. training program availability vs practices vs interest of young people with disability, internship)*
- *School/Work environment context (eg. social activities, communication, learning and teaching equipment, academic requirement)*

**16. How were you involved in decision making for the following areas as part of the school to work transition program at your school?**

- *Vocational Training Program (availability of training courses, interest, regular transition meeting, internship)*
- *Jobs after School (training options, job availability, school follow up, etc)*

**17. What would you like to see the school to work transition program do for you in the future?**

- *How should the consultation process be conducted at school and who should be involved in the process.*
- *How the school can work around the issues of skills training programs*
- *How do you want to overcome the barriers in communication and interaction with employers, friends and colleagues at school and workplace (eg. Sign-language, assistive technology, etc..)*

**Thank you very much for your time and contribution to the study!**

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT**

**Interview with Young People with Disability**

**(Round 2 & 3)**

<b>HREC Project Number:</b>	HRE 2016-0356
<b>Project Title:</b>	School to work transition for young people with disability in Vietnam
<b>Chief Investigator:</b>	A/Professor Angela Fielding
<b>Student researcher:</b>	Huong Thi Thu Nguyen
<b>Version Number:</b>	6
<b>Version Date:</b>	11/4/2017

**What is the Project About?**

My research explores **school to work transition for young people with disability in Vietnam**. The research aims to provide an overall picture of school to work transition being provided. The study will provide an opportunity for young people with disability and stakeholders to share experience of school to work transition and improve future services and programs. This research is important as there is a lack of **research in this area in Vietnam and other developing countries**. I am now doing the follow up interviews.

**Who is doing the Research?**

The project is being conducted by a PhD student researcher, Huong Nguyen. This research project is funded by a grant from Australia Award Scholarship and Curtin University. The results will be used by the student researcher Huong Nguyen to obtain a Doctor of Philosophy at Curtin University. There will be no cost for you to take part in this project.

**Why am I being asked to take part and what will I have to do?**

As a young person with a disability who attends this school, your experience and opinions are important. This interview focuses on participation of young people with disability in the school to work transition services, work experience and how the environment context facilitates the school to work transition.

I would be grateful if you would take the time to participate in the interview. The interview will take less than one hour, at a time and place convenient to you. You should answer based on your experience.

You may also be invited to participate in another interview which will take place later in 2017. Please write your contact details on the consent form for us to contact you again.

**Are there any benefits' to being in the research project?**

There may not be any immediate benefit to you personally but your answers may help other young people with disability in the future in more effective transition from school to work.

**Are there any risks, side-effects, discomforts or inconveniences from being in the research project?**

There are no expected risks involved with your participation in this study apart from giving up your time. You will be asked to sign the consent form to show you understand and agree to take part in the research. If you are under 18 years old, a parent or guardian is expected to sign the consent form with you.

**Who will have access to my information?**

Your personal information will be kept confidential. You will not be identified in any results that are published or presented. The research team and, in the event of an AUD\$it or investigation, staff from the Curtin University Office of Research and Development will have access to the information we collect in this research.

All collected data will be stored and archived on Curtin University network drives. Hard copies will be filed and stored in secured locations at Curtin University for at least 7 years after the project ends before eventually being destroyed.

**Will you tell me the results of the research?**

A summary of the project's overall results will be sent to you and your families and I will write to you at the end of the research. The results will not be individual but based on all the information we collect and review as part of the research. The results of this research may be presented at conferences or published in professional and academic journals and as a PhD thesis.

**Do I have to take part in the research project?**

Your participation in the interview is voluntary and there will be no adverse effects for withdrawal or choosing not to participate. If you choose to leave the study we will use any information collected unless you tell us not to.

**What happens next and who can I contact about the research?**

Should you have any concerns or questions regarding this research, please do not hesitate to contact me using the details below or my supervisor A/Prof. Angela Fielding by email: [A.Fielding@curtin.edu.au](mailto:A.Fielding@curtin.edu.au); or telephone: +61 8 9266 7637.

If you decide to take part in this research we will ask you to sign the consent form. By signing, it tells us that you understand what you have read and what has been discussed. Signing the consent indicates that you agree to be in the research project. Please take your time and ask any questions before you decide what to do. You will be given a copy of this information to keep.

Thank you for your time

**Huong Nguyen**

PhD student

School of Occupational Therapy and Social Work

Faculty of Health Sciences

Curtin University

Email: [huong.t.t.nguyen@postgrad.curtin.edu.au](mailto:huong.t.t.nguyen@postgrad.curtin.edu.au)

Tel: 0912 753 153 (while in Vietnam)

Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has approved this study (HRE 2016-0356). Should you wish to discuss the study with someone not directly involved, in particular, any matters concerning the conduct

of the study or your rights as a participant, or you wish to make a confidential complaint, you may contact the Ethics Officer on +618 9266 9223 or the Manager, Research Integrity on +618 9266 7093 or email [hrec@curtin.edu.au](mailto:hrec@curtin.edu.au) in Australia or the Country Director at 84-4 3 747 3000 at Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH) in Vietnam.

**CONSENT FORM**  
**Interview with Young People with Disability**  
**(Round 2 & 3)**

<b>HREC Project Number</b>	<i>HRE 2016-0356</i>
<b>Project Title:</b>	<i>School to work transition for young people with disability in Vietnam</i>
<b>Chief Investigator:</b>	<i>A/Professor Angela Fielding</i>
<b>Student researcher:</b>	<i>Huong Thi Thu Nguyen</i>
<b>Version Number:</b>	<i>6</i>
<b>Version Date:</b>	<i>11/4/2017</i>

- I have read in my first language, the information statement version listed above and I understand its contents. I believe I understand the purpose, extent and possible risks of my involvement in this project.
- I voluntarily consent to take part in this research project.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied with the answers I have received.
- I understand that this project has been approved by Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee and will be carried out in line with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).
- I understand I will receive a copy of this Information Statement and Consent Form.

Participant	Parents or Guardian of Participant under 18 years old
Name: _____	Name: _____
Signature: _____	Signature: _____
Date of Birth: _____	Date: _____
Address: _____	Address: _____
Home Phone: _____ Mobile: : _____	Home Phone: _____ Mobile: : _____
Email: _____	Email: _____
Date: _____	Date: _____

**Declaration by researcher:** I have supplied an Information Sheet to the participant who has signed above, and believe that they understand the purpose, extent and possible risks of their involvement in this project.

Researcher Name	Huong Thi Thu Nguyen
Researcher Signature	
Date	

## **Appendix 21.**

### **The Prime Minister's Decision 59/2015/QĐ-TTg on Wealth Ranking promulgated on 19 November 2015 for the period 2016-2020**

The Prime Minister's Decision 59/2015/QĐ-TTg on Wealth Ranking promulgated on 19 November 2015 to be applied for the period 2016-2020, there are three categories of household wealth ranking which include poor, close to poor and middle –income. The criteria for each category

#### **Poor Household**

- ***Rural***
  - Income per capita per month: from VND700,000 under
  - Income per capita per month from VND700,000 to VND1,000,000 and missing of three out of five basic social indicators: health care, education, housing, clean water and hygiene and information access.
- ***Urban***
  - Income per capita per month: from VND 900,000 under
  - Income per capita per month from VND1,000,000 to VND1,300,000 and missing of three out of five basic social indicators: health care, education, housing, clean water and hygiene and information access.

#### **Close to Poor Household**

- **Rural**
  - Income per capita per month: from VND700,000 to VND1,000,000
  - Missing of three out of five basic social indicators: health care, education, housing, clean water and hygiene and information access.
- **Urban**
  - Income per capita per month: from VND 900,000 to VND 1,300,000
  - Missing of three out of five basic social indicators: health care, education, housing, clean water and hygiene and information access.

#### **Middle-income Household**

- **Rural**
  - Income per capita per month: from VND 1,000,000 to VND 1,500,000
- **Urban**
  - Income per capita per month: from VND 1,300,000 to VND 1,950,000

## **Appendix 22.**

### **Copy Right Declaration**

1 December 2019  
Dong Nai Special School  
Number 3, Tan Ban  
Buu Hoa Ward, Bien Hoa city  
Dong Nai province

**Dear Sir/Madam**

It is my understanding that you/your organisation are the copyright holder for the following material:

1. Picture of the School Assembly on every Monday produced by Dong nai school in 2015
2. Picture of Dong nai school vocational training room produced by Dong nai school in 2014

I would like to reproduce an extract of this work in a doctoral/Master's thesis which I am currently undertaking at Curtin University in Perth, Western Australia. The subject of my research is School to Work Transition for Young People with Disability in Vietnam. I am carrying out this research in my own right and have no association with any commercial organisation or sponsor.

The pictures that I would like to use for the purposes of the thesis is to include in them in the Introduction of Dong nai school as a Case Study.

Once completed, the thesis will be made available in online form via Curtin University's Institutional Repository space (<http://espace.curtin.edu.au>). The material will be provided strictly for educational purposes and on a non-commercial basis.

I would be most grateful for your consent to the copying and communication of the work as proposed. If you are willing to grant this consent, please complete and sign the attached approval slip and return it to me at the address shown. Full acknowledgement of the ownership of the copyright and the source of the material will be provided with the material.

If you are not the copyright owner of the material in question, I would be grateful for any information you can provide as to who is likely to hold the copyright.

I look forward to hearing from you and thank you in advance for your consideration of my request.

Yours sincerely

**Huong Thi Thu Nguyen**

**PERMISSION TO USE COPYRIGHT MATERIAL AS SPECIFIED BELOW:**

1. Picture of the School Assembly on every Monday produced by Dong nai school in 2015
2. Picture of Dong nai school vocational training room produced by Dong nai school in 2014

I hereby give permission for [Nguyen Thi Thu Huong] to include the abovementioned material(s) in his/her higher degree thesis for Curtin University, and to communicate this material via the espace institutional repository. This permission is granted on a non-exclusive basis and for an indefinite period.

I confirm that I am a copyright owner of the specified materials.



**Name: Hoang Thi Van Nga**

**Position: Principal of Dong Nai School**

**Date: 2 December 2018**

Please return signed form to [Huong Thi Thu Nguyen — School of Occupational Therapy, Social Work and Speech Pathology, Kent Street, Perth Western Australia 6102. Email: [huong.t.t.nguyen@postgrad.curtin.edu.au](mailto:huong.t.t.nguyen@postgrad.curtin.edu.au).

## **Appendix 23**

### **International and Regional Instruments**

The legal and policy frameworks for people with disability in Vietnam are relatively comprehensive (USAID, 2015). The development of disability legislation and policies in Vietnam have been based on the Law on Promulgation of the Legal Normative Documents 2015. Four international and regional instruments are considered key enablers of policy and legislation support for people with disability in the Asia Pacific region: the UN Convention on Rights of People with disability (UNCRPD) which was ratified in 2014, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs; MOLISA, 2015c) and, the UNESCAP BIWAKO Millennium Framework (BMF) in the Asia-Pacific region and, recently in March 2019, Vietnam ratified the International Labour Organisation’s (ILO) Convention on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment for People with Disability.

**The UN Convention on the Rights of People with disability (UNCRPD):** Vietnam ratified UNCRPD in 2014. The harmonisation of the National Law with the key principles of the UNCRPD indicates that the Government of Vietnam is transitioning from a charity approach of ‘care and protection’ of people with disability to a rights-based approach enshrined in the UNCRPD and accepted internationally as the best practice (Global Disability Right [GDR], 2019). The ratification of the UNCRPD requires that children with disability receive a good quality education in an inclusive environment. This is a foundation for ensuring they are included in mainstream employment and vocational training, that their rights to work on an equal basis with others are upheld, and that they receive the individual support they require (MOLISA, 2015c).

**The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** which superseded the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were signed off by the Government of Vietnam in 2015 for 15 years, and have an even more direct focus on people with disability. Disability is mainstreamed in these targets, and is a foundation for all countries to promote inclusion of children with disability into mainstream schools and also to ensure students with disability are equipped and prepared for the world of work in their post school lives (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 1990, p. 10). Groce (2018, p. 1) highlights the SDGs, “include disability throughout, in keeping with the UNCRPD, both explicitly in the call to “leave no one behind and explicitly by including people with disability in services with specific target and indicators”.

### **Incheon Strategy (IS)**

The Incheon Strategy (IS; UNESCAP, 2012) was enacted by the Government of Vietnam (GVN) with a goal ‘make the right real’ to promote the enforcement of the policies and legislation to ensure the rights of young people with disability to inclusive education and employment (UNESCAP, 2012). This Strategy replaced the UNESCAP Biwako Millennium Framework (BMF) that was adopted by the Government of Vietnam in 2001 with the aim of building an Inclusive, barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disability in Asia and the Pacific (MOLISA, 2015c). Following the adoption of the BMF and IS, two national

action plans were developed to support people with disability for the periods 2005 to 2010, and then 2013-2020. The most recent national action plans expect to provide vocational training and suitable jobs to 250,000 working-age Vietnamese with disabilities. A National Coordinating Council on Disability was established in 2003 to promote the enforcement of the disability programs as result of the BMF's ratification.

**The ILO Convention on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment for People with Disability 159:** The recent ratification of the ILO Convention 159 in January 2019 also demonstrates the country's commitment to ensuring equal rights to employment for persons with disability. Some measures are regulated including the provision of vocational guidance, vocational training and other related services to enable persons with disability to secure and retain employment, ensuring that they have access to training and availability of rehabilitation counsellors. This ratification is a further step to strengthening the country's existing legal frameworks to support people with disabilities. These include the 2010 Law on Persons with Disabilities, the 2012 National Action Plan to Support People with Disabilities, and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2014 (ILO, 1983).

As can be seen, the government of Vietnam has taken commendable initiatives in supporting people with disability via adoption of relevant international and regional legal instruments. This endorses the government pledge to develop its own local laws and policies based on the key principles regulated in the international and legal frameworks. The National Law on Disability is the highest legal document in Vietnam and provides, the framework for all other laws, policies and action plans for people with disability. This law has been translated into specific measures through Decrees, Circulars, Inter-Circulars and Directives at the Ministerial or inter-Ministerial level to guide implementation across sector responsibilities. At the provincial level, Circulars and Directives are translated into local policies and often called provincial action plans, guidelines and correspondence (MOLISA, 2015c).

### **National Laws**

At the level of national law in Vietnam, the search identified four key documents relating to employment and vocational training for people with disability. These laws have been promulgated by the National Assembly and proposed by relevant ministries. A review of these documents as per their chronological of development is as follows:

**The National Law on Education** was approved in 2005. Article 63 of this law stipulates that the State shall establish and encourage organisations and individuals to establish schools and classes for people with disability to enable them to restore their functions, to receive education and vocational training, and to integrate into the community. The Ministry of Education and Training officially declared it would pursue integrated education as its main policy. The Ministry has stated that, "Most children with disability in urban cities and the deltas should be guaranteed school attendance, health care and have vocational training" (National Assembly [NA], 2005).

**The National Law on Disability** was officially enacted in 2010 and effective as of January 1, 2011. This National Law marked a significant advancement in the improvement of a legal framework to enshrine the rights of people with disability. The law is an umbrella national framework that has stimulated additional mobilisation of resources and participation of government agencies, non-government organisations (NGOs), related stakeholders, and people with disability and their families. The goal has been to remove barriers and build a rights-based society for a more complete inclusion of Vietnamese people with disability. According to MOLISA (2015c), the National Law on Disability and its guidelines for implementation lay out the rights of disabled people in Vietnam to equal access to quality social services, including education, vocational training and employment. This law has created good conditions for people with disability to access vocational rehabilitation. Further, the Employment Introduction Centre (EIC) is obligated to provide employment services and job placement services for people with disability (Vietnam National Assembly [VNA], 2010).

In addition to this National Law on Disability, Vietnam has also promulgated a number of important sector policies that promote employment for people with disability. These include:

Following the enactment of National Law on Disability, the Labour Code was revised and approved in 2014. This Code covers a wide variety of issues such as social security, wage laws, vocational training, occupational safety and hazards, and business enterprises for people with disability are all discussed in the Code. Chapter 3 of the Code also contains key pieces of legislation pertaining to vocational training. Article 20 states, “every person has a right to choose freely an occupation and place in which to be trained according to his/her employment requirement” (MOLISA, 2015b, p. 8). Article 21 includes tax provisions for organisations providing training for people with disability: “Training establishments which cater for war invalids, injured military personnel, the disabled and ethnic minorities or are located in areas with high rates of underemployment or unemployment, and provide training in traditional trades through tutoring in factories or at home shall be considered for tax reduction and exemption” (MOLISA, 2015b, p. 8).

**The Vocational Education and Training Law** was also revised and approved by Vietnam’s National Assembly in 2014. It regulates policies to support the vocational education institutions for people with disability. The government of Vietnam encourages vocational education institutions to enrol people with disability in inclusive vocational education programs and encourages the individuals and organisations to establish vocational education and training institutions for people with disability. These institutions are entitled to all preferential policies and financial support for improvements in infrastructure, training facilities, land allocation and leases. As such, any fees for people with disability enrolled in vocational education and training are either exempt or reduced.

However, of relevance to this thesis, the current National Law on Disability has no specific legislation that regulates school to work transition services and planning for young people with disability in Vietnam. In spite of this, a number of under-laws (decrees, circulars, inter-circulars) that guide the implementation of other laws relevant to school to work transition,

vocational training and employment for people with disability in Vietnam have been promulgated.

### **Decrees**

These five Decrees have been approved by the Office of the Government. Each law can have more than one Decree.

**Decree 61/2006/ND-CP of the Government**, developed in July 2006, guides the implementation of the National Law on Education and provides policies for teachers, managers working for the special schools, and in the areas with difficult socio-economic conditions. Teachers and managers working at schools or in classes with children with disability will receive an allowance of 70% current salary (Point 2, Article 5).

**Decree 139/2006/ND-CP of the Government**, dated November 2006, guides the implementation of the Education Law and the Labour Code. Article 24 regulates policies for people involved in vocational training including scholarship, school fee support, tuition fee exemption.

**Decree 43/2008/ND-CP** of the Government developed April 2008 guides the implementation of Article 62 and 72 of the Vocational Education and Training Law. This Decree regulates the entitlements and policies to support teachers who are teaching people with disability with regards to vocational training for people with disability at both special and mainstream or inclusive education settings.

**Decree 49/2010/ND-CP** of the government, dated July 2010, guides the implementation of the National Law on Education which regulates tuition fee exemption/reduction and support of learning costs for school years 2010 to 2015. Children, pupils and students with disability who have financial difficulty are exempted or have reduced tuition fees (Point 3, Article 4) and costs of learning are supported (Point 2, Article 6).

**Decree 28/2012/ND-CP** of the Government, promulgated in April 2012, guides the implementation of the National Law on Disability. Its Articles 8 and 9 regulate entitlements for those who generate employment for people with disability including loans at preferential interest rates, tax exemption, financial support for reasonable accommodation provided to workers with disability at work, and responsibilities of the Provincial People's Committee for coordinating services and agencies promoting the employment of people with disability.

### **Inter- Circulars and Circulars**

Under the level of decree, circulars and inter-circulars are legal documents which have been produced to regulate the implementation of the entitlements referred to in the decrees.

Depending on the involvement of various sectors, the legal document is an inter-circular if promulgated by more than one ministry and a circular if promulgated by one ministry. The search identified six inter-circulars and circulars guiding the implementation of the five decrees. A detailed review of these documents is as follows:

**Inter-Circular 06/2007/TTLT-BGDDT-BNV-BTC of MOET/MOHA/MOF**, dated in July 2006, guides the Government implementation of Decree 61/2006/ND-CP dated 20 June 2006. This Inter-Circular that was developed by Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) and Ministry of Finance (MOF) also guides the implementation of policies for teachers and managers working in special schools, and in areas with challenging socio-economic conditions.

**Inter-circular 112/2010/TTLT-BTC-BLDTBXH** promulgated by MOLISA and MOF in July 2010 specifies the requirements for the management and spending of funding from the “National Target Program on Vocational Training for the Rural Youth until 2020”.

**Inter-circular 58/2012/TTLT-BGDDT-BLDTBXH** developed in 2012 is between MOET and MOLISA and specifies the policies and entitlements for employment and vocational training for people with disability. This Inter-Circular also provides regulation on the conditions and procedures of establishment; operation and suspension of operation; and reorganisation and dissolution of all centres supporting the development of inclusive education for children with disability. MOLISA and MOET are developing functional and effective centres of inclusive education in all 63 provinces.

**Circular 48/2013/MOF-MOLISA**, dated April 2013, regulates the management and spending of funding for vocational training and employment for people with disability. The document regulates the methods for funding disbursement and related requirements.

**Circular 45/2015 on 11/11/2015 of MOLISA** guides the enforcement of the National Fund for Employment of People with Disability. This is regulated in the **Decree 61/2015/ND-CP** of the Government for funding to support people with disability in vocational training and employment.

**Circular 03/2018/TT- BGDDT on Inclusive Education for People with Disability**, dated in January 2018, regulates policies and support for young people with disability to study in an inclusive education setting. This covers individual planning at schools, the provision of orientation on vocational training for students with disability, school fee exemption, provision of hearing assistive devices, and health insurance cards for students.

### **Directives, Decisions and Correspondences**

Within Vietnam’s domestic legislation, Directives, Decisions and Correspondences are issued by Office of the Government. People’s committees at all levels then guide the implementation

of action plans. Following is the list of relevant Directives, Decisions and Correspondence relating to school to vocational training and employment for people with disability.

**Decision 23/2006/QĐ-BGD&ĐT of MOET**, dated 22 May 2006, relates to inclusive education for people with disability. Specific regulations exist on the organisation and activities for inclusive education; teachers, and support staff; people with disability in inclusive education establishments; facilities; equipment and teaching aids for inclusive education.

**Correspondence 9890/BGD&ĐT-GDTH of MOET**, dated 17 September 2007, guides the content and methodology of teaching disadvantaged children. The training content is primarily based on the common education program and curriculum, and adjusted to the ability and learning conditions of students. Students with disability should have individual learning plans and their progress ought be reviewed annually.

**Decision 9547/BGDĐT–GDTH on Inclusive Education for students with disability**, produced in October 2008, requires all schools to develop individualised education plans for students with disability. These plans should include personal information, the development of transition plans for students with disability from school to post-school life including employment and the monitoring students' progress to be reviewed annually.

**Decision 1019 of the Prime Minister on the National Action Plan to Support People with Disability** from May 2012 promotes the enforcement of disability law and policies over the period 2012 to 2020. The program's target is to provide vocational training and suitable jobs to 250,000 working-age people with disability by 2020 (MOLISA, 2012). Under this national policy, each province is required to develop a provincial action plan to support people with disability in all sectors.

**A Guideline on the School to Work Transition process (Dong Nai Manual)** dated August 2013 was developed by US experts for the school to work transition program in Dong Nai school during the period of its USAID-funded project support. It is regulated by Dong Nai school and describes each step with specific tasks for all stakeholders involved in its school to work transition process.

**Directive 3920 of MOLISA on 21/10/2014** is focused on facilitating the enforcement of the vocational training and employment for people with disability. This Directive requests each province allocate at least 20% of the total funding from the National Target Program for Vocational Training of Youth to vocational training for young people with disability.

**Guideline of MOLISA (2015) for provision of Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Services for People with Disability** also includes a coordinated set of activities that promote the shift from school to work or post-school activities (MOLISA, 2015a). This guideline emphasises that, within the vocational rehabilitation model, coordinated activities are based on the student's needs, preferences and abilities. It directs the use of case management techniques,

vocational counselling, and exposure to the labour market for students to learn about jobs, job requirements, and appropriate employment choices (Levinson & Palmer, 2005)