

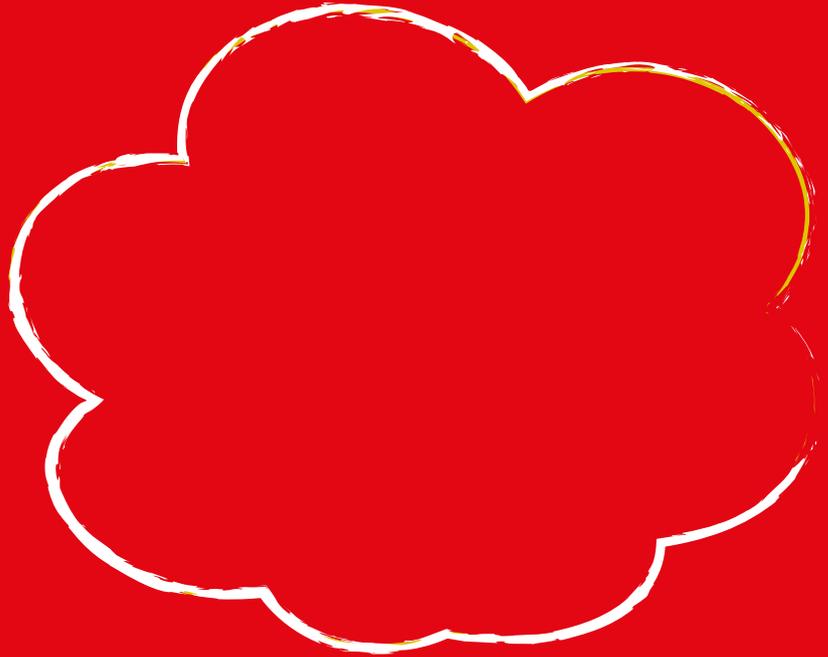


**Malteser  
International**

Order of Malta Worldwide Relief

**Me**

**yesterday  
and  
today**







## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. At first, the name of the project seemed rather strange... I was suspicious ...  
.....
2. I realized that deep inside their disabled bodies was a strong desire for life, as with normal people  
.....
3. Losing my temper will lead to losing respect  
.....
4. I have changed a lot!  
.....
5. My story is not exceptional, but I believe that after reading it no one will continue viewing disabled people in the way I used to  
.....
6. The fact that I am a person with disabilities no longer bothers me  
.....
7. My heart at that time was filled with joy, even though I knew the tasks and questions offered to her were among the simple ones  
.....
8. No, they will take care of the lives of people with disabilities like me, so I have to participate  
.....
9. Before the project, all I worried about was my home, and I was scared of going out and giving a hand to my neighbors  
.....
10. All human beings deserve to live  
.....
11. When the rescue team came to encourage the residents to evacuate, many people cried because they were touched by emotion. I have never seen such a thing  
.....
12. I feel confident, very confident with myself. Will you marry me?  
.....
13. I am now able to pick up the phone to call a leader in order to discuss our work with him  
.....
14. I could not imagine that I, a person with impairments in both legs who had to use crutches to walk, was able to go swimming at the beach  
.....
15. I was only familiar with “The hotel with the thousand stars in the sky”  
.....
16. It turned out that I and my Red Cross staff did not go to teach anyone - instead we went to learn  
.....
17. Despite its end, we will keep on going  
.....



*Me* yesterday  
and today

June, 2014

# Preface

After two and a half years taking new responsibility in the project, Disability Inclusive Community based Disaster Risk Management project (DiCBDRM), there have been many changes within me. I heard a lot about inclusion and have also worked for so-called ‘inclusion’. However, until I run this project, I can say I did not understand what inclusion really was. This project helped me to realize that I missed an important marginalized group in the community where I worked with. Those are people with disabilities (especially people with mental and intellectual impairment). Through this project, now I have better understanding of the diversity in the society. People with disabilities, due to their impairment, might be somewhat “different” in the society. Even among themselves, they are also different in the own unique way. But aren’t we all unique in our own way anyway?

Same as inclusion, now I can say I understand the concept of disability better. Two and a half years ago, whenever looking at people of disabilities, I only saw their visible impairments and I thought those are the key factors for their struggle, ineffective participation in the society. Now, I know how strong the social barriers are and without removal of the barriers, their meaningful participation is unlikely to happen. The more I work with people with different disabilities, the more I realized about their strengths and creativity that many of us might not have. This finding confirms to me that giving opportunity to people with disabilities to contribute and finding suitable ways for them to work with will lead to a real inclusive society which benefit us all.

I felt so happy when I noticed increasing confidence and shines within their eyes day by day. ‘Witnessing positive change within them’, this was an ultimate motivation for me to work harder for and with the people with disabilities. After two and a half years, I have many personal friends as well as professional partners who are people with different disabilities. The relationship with them made my life more nurtured personally and professionally beyond my imagination.

Within this small book, we selected 17 representative stories of ‘Most Significant Change’ of people who are part of the change in their villages through the Disability Inclusive CBDRM project. 17 stories were chosen from 137 stories collected throughout the villages we worked in. I cannot thank them enough for their openness and braveness towards the new challenges they had to face throughout their project and their honest and sincere testimonies which the readers can appreciate in each of every page of this book.

This is the true end result of “Disability inclusive CBDRM”. If you have not started to implement disability inclusion in your work, it’s time to begin!

Dung Mai  
Project Manager - Disability Inclusive CBDRM Projects  
Malteser International



Tan An village, Dai Lanh commune, Dai Loc district, Quang Nam province, Vietnam  
© G.Alandry/Malteser International



# At first, the name of the project seemed rather strange... I was suspicious ...

At first, the name of the project seemed rather strange.

The communication method is slow, and takes more time on a familiar topic.

During the training courses for people with disabilities and their family members, many questions were aimed at testing the capacity of the government to prevent disasters.

Disaster risk management activities are guided by a non-governmental organization instead of the government.

I was suspicious...

However, after attending the training course for the Disaster Risk Management Committee, drawing the hazard maps, and attending the meetings to make plans and organize evacuation drills, I completely agree with the project's methodology. From my own experience, I have to say that this method is very effective. I was a soldier back from the battlefield and I have spent many years working as a consultant. I had no difficulty identifying the planning methods of the project which are clear on assigning tasks. The detailed maps are as good as the military plans which I had studied and practiced in my younger days.

After that, my uncomfortable feelings about the project gradually disappeared. I came to believe in it instead of being suspicious. I became enthusiastic instead of suspicious. I took my knowledge, that seemed to be no longer useful, to contribute voluntarily to the project. I actively encouraged my brothers in the Disaster Risk Management Committee to focus on studying to complete the programme without falling behind schedule even once. On the evaluation day of the drill evacuating the entire village, I was half-serious, half-joking when I said: “The project does not bring in any money, but it can do more than that.”

I have shared this with you honestly. Sometimes, due to the fear of wasting time, people may have narrow vision or excessive vigilance, leading to unfriendliness. Alternatively, maybe people still want to continue in their familiar ways with fewer obstacles. I feel sorry that I used to act like that.



Vinh Nguyen  
Head of Disaster Risk Management Committee,  
Lap Thuan village, Dai Hong commune,  
Dai Loc district, Quang Nam province.

Training people with disabilities to make their hazard map  
Tan An village, Dai Lanh commune, Dai Loc district, Quang Nam province, Vietnam  
© G.Alandry/Malteser International

**ĐẢNG CỘNG SẢN VIỆT NAM QUANG VINH MUÔN NĂM**



## I realized that deep inside their disabled bodies was a strong desire for life, as with normal people

I am a member of the Women's Union of Dien Tho Commune, and I also work for the Commune Steering Committee for Flood and Storm Control. However, it was not clear to me exactly what I was responsible for. I also never thought of suggesting that women from the village should become members of the village's Disaster Risk Management Committee. Involving people with disabilities in the Committee was even more elusive.

The 6 months of collaborating with the project's staff brought me new ideas. First of all, I started to think about the people with disabilities. I understood their complexity and the difficulties they experience in their daily lives and in society. During my work, I came across Ms Tran Thi Luu who had never been to any meetings or gatherings for over 10 years. Nguyen Thi Lieu, the second woman I met, had neither been out nor visited relatives and friends for more than 40 years. Now, with the project's encouragement, they take part in the training sessions and the evacuation drills. I fully understand the necessity of stepping up the task of encouraging women to share, lending a helping hand to the people with disabilities so that they can lead a happy life.

As an older female commune official, I feel extremely happy working with girls<sup>(1)</sup> who are just the same age

---

(1) *Malteser International staff*

as my youngest daughter because I have learnt many things from them, such as training methods, speaking skills, illustrating skills, and the use of visual aids. In general, they are all very scientific. What impresses me most is the vivacity of those girls. During a training session in Da Nang, I had the chance to go to the sea along with colleagues from the Project Management Board, representatives from other commune People's Committees, members of the Disabled People's Organization, and the Malteser International staff. I was touched by the radiant faces and bright smiles of Ms Linh, Ms Be, and Mr Quang<sup>(2)</sup>. I realized that deep inside their disabled bodies was a strong desire for life, as with normal people. In the joyful atmosphere, they forgot the misfortunes they were suffering. I think that I have to try to do something to help them live a better life, and I totally believe that they will contribute their best to our society.

*(2) Members of Disabled People's Organization*



Tinh Vo Thi  
Member of the Commune Disaster Risk  
Management Committee, Dien Tho commune,  
Dien Ban district, Quang Nam province.



PHÒNG, CHỐNG THIÊN TAI CẤP XÃ  
Điện Minh - 20/06/2013



Representatives of people with disabilities draw commune hazard map  
Điện Minh commune, Điện Bàn district, Quang Nam province, Vietnam  
© Malteser International



The persons with intellectual impairment are encouraged to write their names on the hazard map  
Tan An village, Dai Lanh commune, Dai Loc district, Quang Nam province, Vietnam  
© G.Alandry/Malteser International

## Losing my temper will lead to losing respect

I am a member of the village stakeholders and the head of the village's Disaster Risk Management Committee, so my responsibilities are enormous. Since the project was implemented, my working method has become extremely logical and scientific. For example, in the past when making any plans for community-based disaster risk management, I usually did it myself and then reluctantly submitted it to the committee as a form of coping. Since the project was launched, before planning, I invite all the members of the village stakeholders to listen to the representatives of the people with disabilities and assess their essential needs and find solutions to their problems.

Previously, when floods and storms occurred, I had to run up and down from one end of the village to the other, from the commune to the village, but now all that has changed. When I receive information from the Commune People's Committee, I inform the leaders of the sub-villages so that they can instruct their members to organize the evacuation of their villagers. Afterwards, the leaders report the results to me so that I can report it to the Commune People's Committee and propose solutions to any problems.

In the past, I thought people with disabilities were unable to participate in the Disaster Risk Management Committee because they were disabled and unable to travel, so they could not be involved in the development of the Disaster Risk Management Plan. If people with disabilities were included on the Disaster Risk Management Committee, it was just for form's sake rather than any use. During floods,

people with disabilities couldn't do anything, but healthy people could. Later on, I realized that the participation of representatives of the people with disabilities in the project is a very meaningful thing. Although people with disabilities are not physically whole, mentally they are normal so they need to be involved to speak about their reasonable needs for help during floods. It is also useful for me because I do not need to think as much about them or make wrong assumptions.

I am a hot-tempered person by nature, so when I'm not satisfied about something, I speak up. However, through observing the project staff's methods of communicating during the village training courses, my personality has changed a lot. Despite their busy lives, people are still fully engaged because the project trainers impart knowledge in a happy and sociable manner, which keeps the attention of the participants throughout the course. I have drawn the conclusion that losing my temper will lead to losing respect, so to be successful I must keep calm when doing anything. Now, when contacting others, I always keep calm and sober and listen to people in order to solve tasks. Work will not be done by losing my temper. Being the Chairman of the Disaster Risk Management Committee, I have to collaborate with all the members in my work. If I speak with an authoritative voice or scold them, they will not perform well. However, when I speak gently and happily, they are willing to do common tasks. Without the project I wouldn't have changed. Controlling my temper has been really useful to me because people love me when I work with them in fun, and success will come more easily.

Minh Vo Van  
Head of Disaster Risk Management Committee  
Ngoc Kinh Tay village, Dai Hong commune,  
Dai Loc district, Quang Nam province.



ĐẢNG CỘNG SẢN VIỆT NAM QUANG VINH MUÔN NĂM



Community-based Disaster Risks Management training  
Dai Loc district, Quang Nam province  
© G.Alandry/Malteser International

## I have changed a lot!

The Disability Inclusive Community-based Disaster Risk Management Project was implemented in Duy Thu Commune from December 2013 to May 2014. I participated in the training courses and the other activities such as project implementation planning, training for people with disabilities and their families, and the training of the Disaster Risk Management Committee and the Rescue Team. I also joined in meetings to plan the village's disaster risk management and meetings with all the villagers to collect ideas for the plan, as well as the organization of evacuation drills at villages in Duy Thu Commune and the evaluation of the project.

I used to be a school teacher, but then I moved to work at the Duy Thu Commune People's Committee. This was an opportunity for me to gain the knowledge, skills and methods for training different groups of adults, including commune and village-level government officials, local residents, and especially people with disabilities.

I can summarize my participation in the project by saying: "I have changed a lot!"

In my perception, I have changed my thinking and knowing that disaster risk management is not just the responsibility of government agencies but of all people in all nations worldwide, including people with disabilities. I have also changed my viewpoint and assessment of participatory and speaking skills of people with disabilities in disaster management activities. "People with disabilities can do many things like

normal people, providing we know how to be close to them, encourage them, and warm up and inspire the “fire” of self-confidence in each of them.”

At the beginning, I felt that it would be quite difficult to apply the new methods and skills taught by the project’s trainers. However, the more I attended the “train the trainers” courses and carried out training directly in the villages, the more I changed my thinking and tried to make use of my trained skills. Finally, I could apply experience-based teaching processes and flexibly apply related skills such as coordination, questioning, listening, explanation and utilization of visual aids, etc. Therefore, it is easier for learners who are people with disabilities and members of the Disaster Risk Management Committee and the Rescue Team, to master my instructions. When I was a school teacher, I used to apply the group discussion method but it is not very effective because nobody helped me to learn from my experience. When I participated in the project’s training courses, I could recognize the advantages of this method. If the group discussion method is applied in combination with other skills to encourage the participation of learners, the training objectives will be successfully attained.

During my training course I also learned how to be gentle, calm, and more flexible when dealing with difficult enquiries from the villagers (I could tell one secret that I learnt from officers of Malteser International). The way those officers worked has influenced me in the past and will in the future. I have worked seriously and enthusiastically, paying attention to the trainees and learning from the villagers to achieve better results.



Ke Nguyen Van  
Officer of Duy Thu Commune People's Committee  
Duy Xuyen district, Quang Nam province.

Monitoring evacuation of villagers before flood coming  
Dong Phuoc village, Dai Hong commune, Dai Loc district, Quang Nam province, Vietnam  
© G.Alandry/Malteser International



# My story is not exceptional, but I believe that after reading it no one will continue viewing disabled people in the way I used to

I was born healthy and grew up to be a handsome young man. With my attractive appearance, I used to be able to court some of the most beautiful girls in the village. Even after returning home from military service, I was still a good-looking person. However, under peer pressure and in an impetuous moment, I lost an arm and a leg. In the wink of an eye, I became a handicapped person.

Time passed by till the day I got married. I worked with my wife to build up our family and took part in social work to prove myself useful to society. Back then, I still regarded other disabled people with apathy, believing that only I was able to accomplish meaningful work. I shunned and despised people with disabilities, even though I was handicapped like them.

When the Malteser International's project arrived at our local community, I was invited to participate in the programme. I attended the training as change agents, people with disabilities and their relatives, the Disaster Risk Management Committee, and the Rescue Team. I was fully engaged and enthusiastic. I no longer felt the disdain for others like I used to, but in its place was a new sense of friendship. I tried to find every possible way to help those in less fortunate circumstances than myself. I collaborated with others to help people with disabilities to be included on the priority list for evacuation assistance, and quickly

informed those who had not received information in the normal way. I also mobilized people to join in other local movements. Recently, I have been successful in persuading Tran Dien Trung, a young child with disabilities, and his family to participate in the contest “Perfect Family” organized by the Women’s Union and the Commune Farmers’ Union. I believe that after participating in the contest and being in touch with a large number of people from the community, Trung will become a more confident person.

Although the project has finished, I promised myself to be enthusiastic in this work. The Committee and Rescue Team organize evacuation drills and modify the village’s plan annually in accordance with each year’s situation.

My story is not exceptional, but I believe that after reading it no one will continue viewing disabled people in the way I used to. Sincerely.



Ba Le Trung  
Change Agent, Thi Thai village,  
Duy Thanh commune,  
Duy Xuyen district, Quang Nam province.



Happy participation in the CBDRM training  
Tan An village, Dai Lanh commune, Dai Loc district, Quang Nam province, Vietnam  
© G.Alandry/Malteser Internationalc

# The fact that I am a person with disabilities no longer bothers me

People with disabilities are one of the groups most restricted in all areas of society, and they are the most vulnerable group in natural disasters. As a person with disabilities, I expect support from the government and society in natural disaster risk management. To reduce the burden on society, I hope to broaden my knowledge and engage myself in the activities of the disaster risk management programme. It seems like, in understanding my concerns and worries, the Duy Xuyen Disabled People's Organization has made my wish come true.

At the beginning, Mr Dinh and Ms Be, who are both disabled, came to my house. Although it was the first time that we had met, they were very friendly and asked about my financial situation and my daily life. They shared with me sincere stories about the lives of various people with disabilities in society. I also comfortably talked about my own life. Through their sincerity and openness, they gave me a feeling of sympathy.

Thanks to their encouragement, I was invited to Duy Thanh Commune to attend information sharing sessions and a training course with other people with disabilities. Then, I was elected as the facilitator of Phu Da 1 Village. They guided me as I visited other villages, communes, and even Da Nang to learn how to assist people with disabilities in Duy Thu.

Duy Thu is a very low-lying and disaster-prone area. Floods damage crops, livestock and even the lives of many people every year. How could people with disabilities have a normal life when they have impairment in their bodies and live in tough financial situations with the risk of annual natural disasters? That's the reason why, having been given the necessary care and support, I feel more secure, confident, and optimistic about life. What makes me very proud is that I am myself able to contribute to the disaster risk management the community, including people with disabilities like me. Regarding my own difficulty in walking, the fact that I am a person with disabilities no longer bothers me.

Thanh Dinh Thi  
Change Agent, Phu Da 1 village, Duy Thu commune,  
Duy Xuyen district, Quang Nam province.





Enjoyment in the CBDRM training  
Tan An village, Dai Lanh commune, Dai Loc district, Quang Nam province, Vietnam  
© G. Alandry/Malteser International

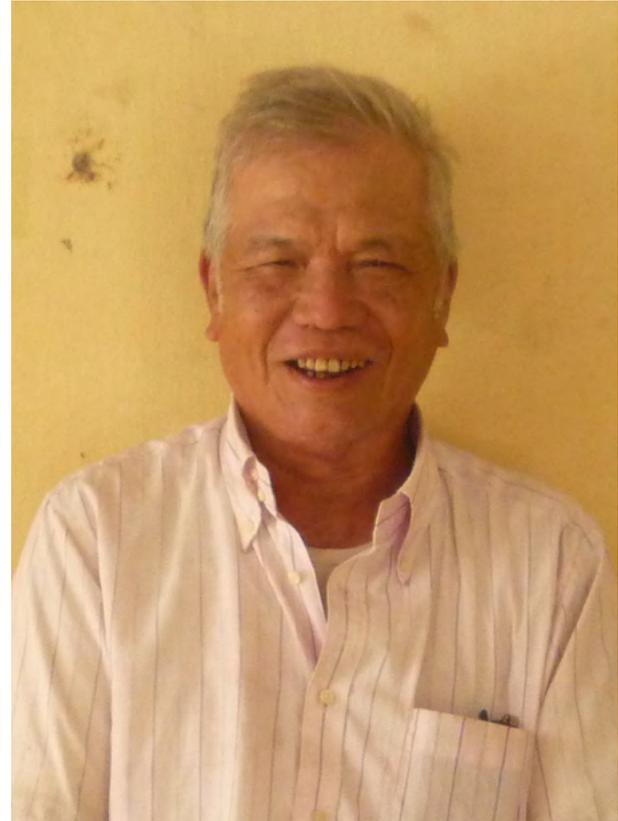
## My heart at that time was filled with joy, even though I knew the tasks and questions offered to her were among the simple ones

I was very upset when I found out that my daughter had a mental illness. She usually wandered around in a daze and, if no one was watching her, she readily ran far away. Sometimes when she was not at home for lunch, I had to run to the rice field looking for her, with the fear that she could have reached for something and fallen into the river. On being told to do anything, she constantly argued in an aggressive manner. I have been taking care of her life, day and night, in good times and bad. No one gave me a hand.

It was lucky that the project arrived. I took my daughter to the training course where we joined in the project's activities together. During the course, she was encouraged to participate in several activities as many of her other classmates did, including drawing a danger chart and giving answers to questions. She was extremely happy when her work or her answer was accepted. My heart at that time was filled with joy, even though I knew the tasks and questions offered to her were among the simple ones.

After the course my daughter appeared to be more obedient and was able to take on some housework tasks. It has now come to the second year of the project and I can see how much my daughter has progressed. She can work to earn a living because she is no longer absent-minded. She refrains from quarrelling with me,

and instead she listens to everything I say. She can do several jobs that she never did before like hoeing the ground and trimming the corn if instructed. I am deeply grateful to the project for helping my daughter to develop into the normal person she is today. This has relieved a little burden from me, as her father. In a recent meeting at our hamlet, when the Malteser International trainer asked her where she had been during the last flood, my daughter could remember the incident well and answered her thoroughly. This could not have made me happier.



Lai Nguyen Duc  
Family of Person with disabilities,  
Hoa Huu Dong village, Dai Hong commune,  
Dai Loc district, Quang Nam province.



On the way to evacuation shelter  
Dong Phuoc village, Dai Hong commune, Dai Loc district, Quang Nam province, Vietnam  
© G. Alandry/Malteser International

## No, they will take care of the lives of people with disabilities like me, so I have to participate

Previously, because of my complex, I did not communicate with other people. I believed that people with disabilities like me could not do anything for their families and communities, so I was usually absent from community activities or meetings. After the project, I changed to become more included in society and now I speak up about the difficulties faced by people with disabilities.

Since the project was implemented, because of my excitement and confidence, I was elected to be a member of the Disaster Risk Management Committee to raise the issues of people with disabilities to the community and to society. Due to my health problems, instead of working in the field, I only work at home. My wife and children complained about my neglect of the housework when I took part in the project's training courses. "No, they will take care of the lives of people with disabilities like me, so I have to participate", I responded. My wife and children understood my words and let me fully participate in the project.

In the past, the local authorities gave early warnings of floods and storms on the village's loudspeaker rather than directly informing each person with disabilities. Later, I volunteered to issue the early warnings or early evacuation directives directly to the people with disabilities after receiving orders from the Head of the Disaster Risk Management Committee. With a strong sense of responsibility, I mobilized 13 neighboring households to evacuate to safe places during the latest flood. I can do it, so I undertook the duty to help people.

Nhung Nguyen Duc  
Representative of persons with disabilities in the  
Disaster Risk Management Committee,  
Dong Phuoc village, Dai Hong commune,  
Dai Loc district, Quang Nam province.



## Before the project, all I worried about was my home, and I was scared of going out and giving a hand to my neighbors

I am the representative of people with disabilities, and a member of the Disaster Risk Management Committee in Trung Phu 2 Village. I have found the project's activities very beneficial for myself and for my neighbors. Recently, when there was a storm, I stayed at home to follow up information about early warnings and always kept the phone with me. As a member of the Disaster Risk Management Committee, I was responsible for giving early warning to three people with disabilities in my neighborhood. As soon as I received the order from my sub-village leader, I went straight to their homes and announced "The storm will hit our village soon, so you must take your three brothers with disabilities to the safe place immediately. You cannot stay here." After my warning, the family evacuated with their three brothers. Even now they still remind me "If Ms Chin (my nickname) had not urged us to evacuate early, then with three brothers with intellectual impairments at home when the floods came, we could have done nothing". As is evident from this story, I have found this project to be very beneficial. In the old days, before the project, all I worried about was my home, and I was scared of going out and giving a hand to my neighbors.

Nua Le Thi  
Representative of persons with disabilities,  
Trung Phu 2 village, Dien Minh commune,  
Dien Ban district, Quang Nam province.



Rescue team in evacuation drill

Vu Gia river, Ha Vy village, Dai Hong commune, Dai Loc district, Quang Nam province, Viet Nam

© G.Alandry/Malteser International



## All human beings deserve to live

Because I live in a flood-prone area, I get used to, and underestimate, the impact of floods. My child has mental disabilities, so he knows nothing. He is like a sack of rice that we can carry and put anywhere. Honestly speaking, I used to look down on people with disabilities like my child because I thought they were useless, so it didn't matter if they unfortunately died. Annually, when being warned of floods, I did not go anywhere because I did not want to bother my neighbors who were living in their beautiful houses. When I was advised of an upcoming flood on the radio, I prepared timbers and placed them on the roof. If the water level was high, all of my family members would climb up to the rooftop to escape. If the floodwaters continued to rise and overwhelmed the rooftop, we would shout for help. It would be like being dropped in the sea - you will be alive if someone saves you, otherwise you will die. My child was excited when he saw the floodwaters, and I had to keep him in place with a rope to prevent him from playing in the water and falling. Previously nobody had mentioned ways to assist people with disabilities, so I was very worried once the floods came. I also wondered about who my child would be able to rely on once I grow old.

Now, after being trained, I understand the consequences of natural disasters. We worked out maps to record exactly which people with disabilities in which places would need evacuating. I have also changed my thinking. All human beings deserve to live. I feel quite relieved because there is now a team and responsible people who will take care of people with disabilities like my child. After being guided by the project, we know how to respond to storms and floods. For example, we should wave a flag so that the deaf people

can see, and use loudspeakers to warn those who can hear. When it is announced on the radio that a flood will possibly occur, people with disabilities should be evacuated early before the floodwaters come into their houses. I find it very logical. The local government has assigned specific tasks and established teams of healthy people to help the more disadvantaged. Thanks to their participation in the project's activities, the local residents have gained a better understanding and consolidated their solidarity. Government officers have already talked to the people who have agreed to accept evacuees. Therefore, they have become more sympathetic and are willing to shelter people with disabilities. In the coming years, if floods occur, I will evacuate my child early to a high place. I do thank the project for assisting the disadvantaged people in flood-prone areas.



Bay Le Trung  
Relative of a person with disabilities  
Thi Thai village, Duy Thanh commune,  
Duy Xuyen district, Quang Nam province.



Rescue team members are preparing for an evacuation drill  
Hà Vy village, Đại Hồng commune, Đại Lộc district, Quảng Nam province, Viet Nam  
© G.Alandry/Malteser International

## When the rescue team came to encourage the residents to evacuate, many people cried because they were touched by emotion. I have never seen such a thing

Thirteen villages in our commune are frequently hit by storms and floods. It was only when a natural disaster had occurred that the commune or village-level authorities requested us to evacuate. Therefore, we did not have enough time to prepare, and there were casualties. Since I and other people in the village participated in the project, we are now aware of natural disaster risk management. An evacuation drill has been organized recently in our village. When the rescue team came to encourage the residents to evacuate, many people cried because they were touched by emotion. I have never seen such a thing. We, the residents of Dong Hoa village, have never been part of an evacuation drill, so we found it very interesting and useful. It has helped the people understand better the things we have discussed. The project is aimed at saving our lives.

Recently I forgot to invite a disabled person to a village meeting. Later, the guy came and complained: “Why did you not invite me?”. People with disabilities in our village didn’t used to be interested in village meetings, but now the situation has changed.

Soi Tran Van  
Member of the Rescue Team,  
Dong Hoa village, Dien Tho commune,  
Dien Ban district, Quang Nam province.



# I feel confident, very confident with myself. Will you marry me?

Previously, I hardly communicated with other people because I didn't have much confidence. Now that I am a change agent, I feel more confident. I can express all my feelings and thoughts not only to other people with disabilities, but also to people without disabilities, and I feel very comfortable. Therefore, I took the initiative to meet more friends than before, and I was lucky to meet the person I love. When I decided to ask her to marry me, I boldly said to her: "I feel confident, very confident with myself. Will you marry me?" and she said "Yes". In my experience, once you have confidence, you can directly ask your boyfriend/girlfriend. Surely they will trust you and accept your imperfections?

My wedding took place two days ago. The courage to say what was true about myself, so that my soulmate could understand and accept me, was an effort for a person with disabilities. Thank you to the project for giving me this belief and helping me to find my wife.

Tin Nguyen Tan  
Change Agent, Dai An village, Dai Lanh commune,  
Dai Loc district, Quang Nam province.





Help together to make a hazard map  
Tan An village, Dai Lanh commune, Dai Loc district, Quang Nam province, Vietnam  
© G.Alandry/Malteser International

## I am now able to pick up the phone to call a leader in order to discuss our work with him

I am a person with disabilities and I work for the Quang Nam Disabled People's Organisation. I had the opportunity to participate in the "Disability Inclusive Community-based Disaster Risk Management Project" initiated by Malteser International and the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs from the beginning to the end. It was a beautiful experience and brought significant changes in me.

Before joining the programme, I knew nothing about community-based disaster risk management. I used to think this was the business of the local authorities or the committee for flood and storm control. I thought it was nothing to do with me.

During the first few days of the training, terms such as "early warning", "hazard map", "prioritised evacuation", "disaster risk management planning" and "evacuation drill" were totally unfamiliar to me. However, after joining the project I am proud to say that my knowledge about disaster risk management has improved considerably, a jump from 0 to 10 points. From a person who was very afraid of speaking in public or proposing any ideas to the local authorities, I have now become the key trainer of training courses for people with disabilities and the village disaster risk management committee. I was grateful to the Malteser International for having given me a precious opportunity to be truly mature even in my 50s. If I have another chance to work with Malteser International, or any other organisations in the area of

disaster risk management, I am confident enough to take the role of a trainer who will work with the local community in drawing up hazard maps and developing community-based disaster risk management plans in the most comprehensive and reasonable manner.

The knowledge provided by Malteser International was so valuable that it has changed many aspects of my life. These include life skills towards humanism and effective working methodology. As a person with disabilities, and working for people with the same conditions, I have also learned various skills from the Malteser's project. These include more effective communication skills with people with disabilities, the skill to persuade them to join the Disabled People's Organisation, community inclusive skills, and policy lobbying skills. These previously vague things are now more obvious to me, and have allowed me to carry out my job confidently and proactively. From a person who used to be very fearful while working with local government agencies and leaders, I am now able to pick up the phone to call a leader in order to discuss our work with him. From a person who had never stepped outside my home province of Quang Nam, I am now confident to take up business trips which are thousands of kilometres away. Now, I also have all the confidence to present a topic in public. At any event, writing a report and making an action plan is no longer a difficult task for me.

I can conclude my story with two words - "Got" and "Achieved". These are what the project has brought, not only for me but also for the community of people with disabilities during its two years of implementation. I would like to once again extend my deep gratitude to Malteser International and the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs for bringing about several positive changes in me. I strongly trust in the project's

sustainability because of the humanity and the feasibility that it has proved in supporting and protecting people with disabilities in Viet Nam. I also would like more opportunities to work with Malteser International because my time with the project was actually a lovely experience which I will never forget. It was filled with close relationships and shared responsibilities among the staff and management team. Changes happen once you try your best.

Quang Nguyen Van  
Vice Chairman of Disabled People's  
Organisation of Quang Nam province.





A person with disabilities can become CBRM trainer  
Phu Da 2 village, Duy Thu commune, Duy Xuyen district, Quang Nam province, Vietnam  
© Malteser International

# I could not imagine that I, a person with impairments in both legs who had to use crutches to walk, was able to go swimming at the beach

I was born as normal as any other child. When I turned 11, an accident with bombs left over from the war put me in a lifetime of disability. I was very embarrassed about my impairments. I did not want anybody to see me manage to walk on crutches with difficulty. Therefore I seldom went out and refused to join in any social activities.

I still recall my first participation in the training course taken far away in Da Nang City. At that time I was still very shy. I really loved the lectures given by Ms Dung<sup>(1)</sup>. However, when she stopped to ask us questions I was really startled. Some questions I could answer, but some I couldn't. Being afraid that I might give a wrong answer, I chose to be silent. I shared my worries and sadness with my friends at the provincial-level Disabled People's Organisation. "I am afraid that I can't cope with the job after this training." I said. However, I still completed the 15-day training course.

You can now see how much I have changed. I am no longer fearful like before. The evidence for this is that, one year after the course, I became one of the project's key trainers.

---

*(1) Project Manager of Malteser International, Disability Inclusive CBDRM trainer (editing team)*

I still remember when Phuong<sup>(2)</sup> guided me to act as a trainer, and the many times I failed miserably. Now I am confident to deliver a training course, giving training about early warning and evacuation, drawing hazard maps, planning and evacuation drills. In the past, when I knew nothing about community-based disaster risk management, I had thought people with disabilities were not able to do anything during disasters except wait for the community's support. It turned out to be different. When giving training for them, I realised that these people were as active as many others. If they were given a chance, they would likely be able to contribute excellent ideas to the committee about reducing the risks to them and the community.

Disasters affect everyone, and people with disabilities are among the most vulnerable groups. This thought inspired me to travel the long distance (around 40 kilometres) in all weathers to attend every training session. Thanks to this, I have become more and more confident.

Besides attending the training course, I also participated enthusiastically in many charitable activities organised by the district-level Disabled People's Organisation, including raising funds to organise the celebration of the international and Viet Nam Days of People with Disabilities, art shows, and even knocking on the doors of various organisations to lobby for policies for the sake of people with disabilities.

---

*(2) Name of Malteser staff, Disability Inclusive CBDRM trainer (editing team)*

Be Nguyen Thi  
Vice President of Disabled People's Organisation,  
Duy Xuyen district, Quang Nam province.





Persons with disabilities are assisted to draw their hazard map  
Tan An village, Dai Lanh commune, Dai Loc district, Quang Nam province, Vietnam  
© G.Alandry/Malteser International

# I was only familiar with “the hotel with the thousand stars in the sky”

Disability is never desirable. It is a cruel twist of fate.

I have been living with disability for over 30 years. The disability made me feel unworthy and therefore I did not want to say anything, even the right things. Whenever my village held meetings or social gatherings, I was always self-conscious and timid, and I did not dare to assert myself. In my mind, I thought that such physical disability as limb loss may be concealed beneath layers of clothing, but could a handicapped person’s face be hidden?

However, when the project was launched here, I was invited to participate in a 5-day training course at commune level. After the training, I became more confident and came out of my shell. I was also invited to a workshop entitled “Workshop on Experience Sharing about Disability Inclusive Community-based Disaster Risk Management” held at the Luxury Hotel, 205 Tran Phu Street, Da Nang City. Upon receiving the invitation, I was left with conflicting feelings. Honestly, I was happy to enjoy the once-in-a-lifetime stay in a luxury hotel in the city centre, but still worried about staying in a 3 or 4-star hotel. This would be the first time in my 70-year-long life. In my home town, I was only familiar with “the hotel with the thousand stars in the sky”.

As the workshop ended, I felt like I was getting younger. Back at my village, I continued to attend other training sessions for people with disabilities, the village's Disaster Risk Management Committee, and the Rescue Team. Being assigned as a change agent, I was probably the one receiving the most training in my village.

Now that the project has ended and Malteser has left, we still perform our functions despite a nagging feeling of sadness and emptiness. Personally I hope that there will be another project similar to Malteser that will come to my small village and help develop it more in the future.



Dinh Nguyen Dinh  
Change Agent, Ky Long village, Dien Tho commune,  
Dien Ban district, Quang Nam province.



Rescue team members practice first aid  
Ha Vy village, Dai Hong commune, Dai Loc district, Quang Nam province, Viet Nam  
© G.Alandry/Malteser International

## It turned out that I and my Red Cross staff did not go to teach anyone – instead we went to learn

The Red Cross Society of Quang Nam Province was invited by the Malteser International and the provincial Disabled People's Organization to provide consultancy and training about first aid and rescuing skills for the rescue teams of many of the villages within the project's area. Being the focal point for coordinating the activities of my organization and the project, and also a direct trainer in the villages, I realize that I have been through many meaningful changes. It turned out that I and my Red Cross staff did not go to teach anyone - instead we went to learn. The courses helped us develop the so-called disability inclusive community training skills and methods, which we heard about for the first time. At first, we had the intention of using the same training materials of many other projects. However, after discussing with the project's staff and trying to apply it, we decided to change the materials. "If victims are people with disabilities, things are totally different." I thought.

Modifying the first aid training materials for the disability inclusive community was such a meaningful action. The materials, which used to include only basic first aid steps, have been revised in more detail, allowing people to easily understand, remember and practice. After giving 47 training courses to rescue teams under the project, we have drawn on the experience of working with the community in building community-based disaster risk management plans, providing early warnings and evacuation assistance for the

most vulnerable in a community. Through joining various workshops and conferences organized by Malteser International, my knowledge about community-based disaster risk management has been enriched, which consequently has helped to further build my confidence at work.



Bang Pham  
Quang Nam Red Cross Society.

## Despite its end, we will keep on going

Previously, before the project, I used to be shy and lacking in self-confidence. Since the project was implemented, I have changed a lot. I am not only more self-confident, I am also happy because people with disabilities can now attend many meetings and have the right to select the people who they trust. People with disabilities like me did not think of such a thing in the past. Therefore, whenever there is a disability inclusive event, I participate and encourage others to join in. For instance, during the last storm and flood, I went with others to persuade people to evacuate. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the project for supporting me in changing myself and making me more self-confident to improve my life. I also thank the government for issuing laws for people with disabilities to provide us with rights like normal people. My trust has been consolidated since I participated in the project.

Dam Nguyen Thi  
Change Agent, Ngoc Kinh Tay village, Dai Hong commune,  
Dai Loc district, Quang Nam province.





## Farewell to the Project.

Let's listen to the folk verses  
About the project.  
Three years have passed.  
Now we meet here,  
We shake hands  
And talk about ourselves.  
Since there was the project  
There have been changes.  
I myself could see  
Many many new things

Because previously  
People with disabilities  
Never attended meetings.  
Now they can join  
And vote or raise their voices.  
So we, the local people  
Should implement together.  
Finally, I wish  
The project every success.  
Despite its end,  
We will keep on going.

Dam Nguyen Thi

## Acknowledgements

The Disability Inclusive Community-based Disaster Risk Management project was implemented by Malteser International in co-operation with the Quang Nam Disabled People Organization in 47 villages of the 3 hazard-prone districts of Dai Loc, Dien Ban and Duy Xuyen, Quang Nam Province. The project was implemented from April 2012 to June 2014 and aimed at strengthening disaster risk reduction capacity in flood and typhoon affected communities in Quang Nam province, Central Vietnam with considering the specific needs of people with disability and their families. The project was funded by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

This story book could not be published without our important stakeholders and beneficiaries.

We would like to thank the contribution of:

- People's Committee of Dai Loc, Dien Ban and Duy Xuyen district; Duy Thanh, Duy Thu, Dien Minh, Dien Tho, Dai Lanh and Dai Hong commune for their well-organized meetings to select most significant change stories
- Steering Committee of flood and storm control of Dai Loc, Dien Ban and Duy Xuyen district; Duy Thanh, Duy Thu, Dien Minh, Dien Tho, Dai Lanh and Dai Hong commune for their selection of most significant change stories from their communes

- Disabled People's Organizations at different level of Dai Loc, Dien Ban and Duy Xuyen district; Duy Thanh, Duy Thu, Dien Minh, Dien Tho, Dai Lanh and Dai Hong commune for their co-organizing the MSC meetings and sharing MSC stories
- Disaster Risk Management Committee of 47 villages of Duy Thanh, Duy Thu, Dien Minh, Dien Tho commune for their efforts to encourage and invite different beneficiaries to come and share their most significant change stories
- Villagers in particularly people with disabilities and their family members from 47 villages of Duy Thanh, Duy Thu, Dien Minh, Dien Tho, Dai Lanh and Dai Hong commune for their sharing of the most significant change stories;

Their involvement and inputs have been very valuable in the completion of this most significant change story book.

We would also like to express our special thanks to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their generous financial support for the implementation of this project.

**Published by:**

Malteser International

48 Nguyen Chi Thanh, Danang city, Vietnam

E-Mail: [nga.nguyen@malteser-international.org](mailto:nga.nguyen@malteser-international.org)

Website: [www.malteser-international.org](http://www.malteser-international.org)

**Responsible for content:** Nga Nguyen

**Editorial team:** Sae Kani (IDRR Advisor), Dung Mai, Phuong Phung, Huyen Tran, Nhung Nguyen, Dung Nguyen, Nga Nguyen

**Photos:** Malteser International, Guilhem Alandry

**Date of publication:** June 2014

**License:** 142/QĐ- ĐaN dated June 26, 2014

**Designer:** Son Nguyen





Dai Hong commune, Dai Loc district, Quang Nam province, Viet Nam  
© G.Alandry/Malteser International





**Malteser  
International**

Order of Malta Worldwide Relief



Disability  
inclusive  
**DRR**  
Network