



Current Status and Issues of Healthcare Policies for Persons with Developmental Disorders in Southeast Asia

— Overview and Progress Report —

Satomi Suzuki Researcher at Nozominosono

— **Ryuhei Sano** Professor at Hosei University, Visiting Researcher at Nozominosono (Research Project Leader) —

Masafumi Hidzume Research Director at Nozominosono

This article introduces the research background and current progress of the project funded by the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), titled "Current Status and Issues of Healthcare Policies for Persons with Developmental Disorders in Southeast Asia." which started in December 2021.

I. Background

This research was started after a member of the Vietnam Autism Network expressed a desire to create a "Diet Member Caucus of Support for Developmental Disorders." in their own country during the Japan Symposium for World Autism Awareness Day in 2016. They shared, "We would be happy if we could establish a law system in our country involving bipartisan legislators just like in Japan. I want to learn from Japan's experience".

II. Overview of Policies for Persons with Developmental Disorders in Japan

In Japan, the Act on Support for Persons with Development Disabilities was submitted in a bipartisan manner in 2004 and was enacted in the same year. As a result, autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD), and learning disorders (LD), which were previously overlooked in disability-related policies, were officially defined as "developmental disorders". Since then, it has been included in various legal systems related to people with disabilities, and societal awareness has gradually increased.

III. Research Outline

In Southeast Asia, many efforts are being made to improve the rights and well-being of people with disabilities, aiming to help them participate in local communities without facing discrimination.

In connection with these, this research will work on initiatives that benefit children with developmental disorders in Southeast Asia.

Specifically, this research will organize basic information on healthcare-related policies for persons with developmental disorders in the 10 ASEAN member countries (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam). We also consider implementing a guidebook for families of persons with developmental disorders (deliverable by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare's program on promoting comprehensive welfare for people with disabilities) in Southeast Asian region. Through these activities, we propose practical action plans aimed at supporting and strengthening future support measures for people with developmental disorders.

The secretariat for this research will be Nozominosono for Japan side and LSPR Communication & Business Institute (LSPR) in Jakarta, Indonesia for Southeast Asia side.

IV. Starting On-site Surveys

In this research, we emphasize both utilizing the internet for gathering information and conducting discussions, as well as directly visiting the Southeast Asian region to engage in information exchange with groups of persons with developmental disorders, researchers, and government agencies.

So far, members of the research team, Mr. Sano and Mr. Hizume, have visited the Philippines (March 2022) and Indonesia (April 2022), and achieve certain result. After that, the visit to Vietnam (July 2022) has also been planned.

In the Philippines, we visited and received cooperation for this research from the Director of the National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA), Acting Chairpersons of the Committee on Disabled Children of the Child Welfare Council, Honorary Chairman and Secretary General of the Autism Society Philippines (ASP), and an Associate Professor specialized in Special Education, Department of Education, the University of the Philippines.

In May 2022, we conducted online interviews with the NCDA and ASP regarding case studies related to supports for persons with developmental disorders.

In Indonesia, we visited important agencies such as the Disability Social Rehabilitation Division of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Aide Assistant Presidential Special Staffs, the Chairman of the National Disability Commission, Secretary General and Chairman of the Autism Society, and researchers from the University of Indonesia.

They agreed to cooperate with this research. We received highly positive responses regarding policymaking and improving relations among lawmakers.

Throughout this research, we hope to help advancing support for persons with developmental disorders and their families by collaborating and working in solidarity with stakeholders in the Southeast Asian region.



At the Philippine Government/National Council on Disability Affairs
With the Head of the Disability Affairs Division and



With key members of the Autism Society Philippines
Exchange of opinions with Indonesian Presidential Staffs and



staffs of the Indonesian Ministry of Social Affairs



Key members of Indonesian Autism Society with LSPR team



Chairman of the National Disability Commission