



Short Biography of Nguyen Thi Van

(Winner Her Abilities Award 2019 /category of Health and Education)

Businesswoman and activist – “changemaker” from Vietnam

The winner in Health & Education is Vietnamese businesswoman and pioneer in disability issues, Nguyen Thi Van.

Van is co-founder of the nonprofit organisation, “Nghị Lực Sống” which means “The will to live”; as well as Chairwoman of the successful digital real estate company, Imagtor.

Van was born in the poor rural area of Nghe An in north-central Vietnam, bordering Laos. Along with her brother Nguyen Cong Hung, who sadly passed away in 2012, she has shattered expectations of what was once deemed ‘possible’ from a disabled person in Vietnam.

Van and Hung created the organisation The Will to Live in 2003 with the aim of creating opportunities for an equitable working environment. The organisation provides free IT, English language and vocational training to disadvantaged students in Vietnam. More than 1000 people with disabilities have benefited from this crucial educational and career support.

Van’s private company, Imagtor, employs 82 employees, more than 50% of who have disabilities, working on digital real estate photography. The Board of shareholders has committed to provide 40% of profits from Imagtor to support people with disabilities in Vietnam, as well as contributing to other social causes in the country.

In 2015, Van created the first ever fashion catwalk show for women with disabilities in Vietnam. “I am beautiful. You too!” aims to promote a perception of beauty stemming from diversity and difference.

In 2019, Forbes Vietnam honoured Van as one of the 50 most influential Vietnamese women.