



Short Interview with Nguyen Thi Van (Winner Her Abilities Award 2019 /category of Health and Education)

What is your response to winning Her Abilities?

This question is extremely difficult for me because I started this job voluntarily, I realized that I was really happy and proud of it while doing it. Supporting other disabled persons to succeed is like helping myself. I have been doing this with passion and certainly in the future too. Receiving this award is a great motivation for me, it gives me more inspiration to work. I also believe that: my reward certainly inspires others and spreads meaningful things to more people.

What is your vision for an inclusive society?

In Vietnam, there are nearly 8 million people with disabilities, 15% of them live in poverty and few of them have stable jobs. With low social benefits (\$ 18-50 / month), the disabled face many difficulties in life. Discrimination, unfair treatment, poverty, unemployment, limited information and relationships make the disabled victims of violence and sexual abuse. The family of people with disabilities lost an employee due to having to stay home to look after the disabled. A lot of pressure and psychological problems happen.

Creating opportunities for learning and working for people with disabilities is that we are helping to promote social economy and reduce social evils. We always believe that every disabled person with working capacity will still be able to create value for society if they are given the opportunity to develop. Up to now, we have always focused on vocational training and employment for people with disabilities in IT, and it is expected that next year I am going to create more new occupations so that many types of disabled persons can participate in learning and working: for example, English class. Besides, I am pursuing the dream of a university for the disabled. Only 0.01% of disabled persons in Vietnam currently have a university degree, I have to find a way to make this number increase.

What's your message to women with disabilities?

Lots of people have told me that: I will not be able to do anything except begging, just hang around in my small village and die in solitude because no one will be willing to marry a disabled woman. But you know, now I am a businesswoman, I have a decent income and I am helping many other people. I often go around Vietnam and all over the world to travel



and share my experiences with everyone. Of course, I am living happily with my husband now. You can do everything, as long as you have a dream, you believe in yourself and you actually endeavor every day and every hour to do it.

What barriers have you faced in life and how did you overcome them?

I have not remembered what difficulties I experienced because it was innumerable. When you live with obstacles and barriers every day, you accept them gradually and get stronger. My only experience is considering all the difficulties way to challenge yourself: without it you don't know how strong you are, you don't know you could be brave, creative, sophisticated and loved by the others.