

## **Technical Report on the Philippine Normal University's Project ALIGN Celebratory Event**

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### **Celebrating Inclusivity in the Workplace**

#### **Summary**

The Philippine Normal University, in collaboration with Coventry University of the United Kingdom, hosted "*Celebrating Inclusivity in the Workplace*" at the ballroom of Hotel Lucky Chinatown in Binondo, Manila on July 23, 2022. The hybrid event, which was translated by the Philippine Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. in both settings, was one of the activities of Project ASEAN Interdisciplinary Network on the Promotion of Access and Inclusion of Disabled Students in Higher Education (ALIGN). An interdisciplinary mix of partner universities from the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Viet Nam comprise the members of Project ALIGN. The local celebratory event was attended by a total of 72 on-site participants, 848 Zoom online participants, and 3,800 FB live viewers as of this writing. All the participants were actively involved in the whole duration of the program that promoted empowerment of persons with disabilities by advocating an inclusive workplace. Dr. Zhanina U. Custodio and Dr. Shirley N. Cerbo, both members of Project ALIGN, organized and managed the event together with volunteer Master of Arts in Special Education students of the PNU MAED SPED Program. The university's Vice President for Academics, Dr. Jennie V. Jocson, delivered the opening remarks.

Dr. Zenaida Q. Reyes, former PNU Vice President for University Relations and Advancements, and the original PNU lead person in the forging of the Project ALIGN partnership, graced the occasion.

### **Introduction**

The Philippine Normal University, through Dr. Zenaida Q. Reyes, has forged a partnership with Coventry University through Dr. Lynn Clouder, Director of Coventry University's Research Centre for Global Learning (GLEA), to initiate the project, *"ASEAN Interdisciplinary Network on the Promotion of Access and Inclusion of Disabled Students in Higher Education"* in February 2019. The project, which was funded by the Academy of Medical Sciences, aims to develop a network of partners that advocate for the empowerment of students with disabilities in Higher Education. Invited researchers from four universities from Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines comprise the members of the interdisciplinary network. Together with Dr. Zenaida Q. Reyes, Dr. Shirley N. Cerbo and Dr. Zhanina U. Custodio comprises the team from the Philippines. Project ALIGN has completed a number of activities in the given time frame. However, accomplishment of the other outputs was affected by the pandemic and thus, the grant was extended up to 2022. Two of the activities that need to be accomplished by the member universities are the interview of two currently enrolled students with disabilities and two alumni with disabilities, to form part of the podcast to be developed and posted in the ALIGN network website to inspire and to encourage support and advocacy for empowering persons with disabilities particularly those in higher education; and the holding of a local event that will celebrate the empowerment of persons with disabilities.

## **Body**

Prior to the holding of the local celebratory event, a PNU alumna and two students with disabilities who are enrolled in the university were interviewed, not only to accomplish Project ALIGN target, but also to form part of the celebration of the National Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation Week on July 23, 2022. The other university alumna was interviewed after the event. The interviews, together with the holding of a local celebratory event, aimed to provide inspiration and empowerment to persons with disabilities. The event, which was held in the first and the oldest Chinatown in the world, had two parts. The first part was a formal program where Dr. Shirley N. Cerbo gave an introduction about Project ALIGN. The University's Vice President for Academics, Dr. Jennie V. Jocson, delivered the Opening Remarks. Partner institutions which include Project Inclusion Network, De La Salle College of St. Benilde's Center for Partnership and Development School of Deaf Education and Applied Studies, Philippine Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Schools Division Office of Quezon City, Resources for the Blind, Personal Collection, a direct selling company that provides livelihood opportunities to both typical and atypical individuals, the Philippine School for the Deaf, and Hands and Hearts Social Enterprise, a disability services and support organization, were recognized by Dr. Zhanina U. Custodio, and they were given certificates and tokens of appreciation. Each group representative gave a short talk about the group's advocacy and support for persons with disabilities. Highlight of the program was the inspirational speech delivered by a PNU alumna, Ms. Lench Ann Perilla. She shared about the joys of completing an Education degree from PNU, and her difficulties in applying for a job because she is blind. Her disability and the lack of accessible services made it difficult for her to be employed. However, after many attempts, she

was finally accepted as a Special Education teacher in San Vicente Elementary School. She inspired everyone to support and embrace inclusivity in the workplace.

The second part of the event enabled both online and onsite participants to be provided with initial assessments by the personnel from the Project Inclusion Network to match their present skills with appropriate employment. Those whose skills need upscaling were listed and were given opportunities for further skills development to enable them to gain success in employment. Other onsite participants were interviewed for possible employment.

### **Conclusion**

The successful holding of the first hybrid event that highlighted the opportunity for career readiness assessment and hiring of PWDs, was made possible with the funding provided to the Project ALIGN Network by the Academy of Medical Sciences, and the support of PNU's partner institutions and organizations. Collaborations for future endeavors to promote access and inclusion of persons with disabilities and empowering them, by encouraging more disability-friendly companies, were forged by the groups who share the same vision.

The program was a very fitting way to observe this year's 44th National Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation Week' theme: Empowering Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) through Responsive Policies, Programs, and Services.

### **Event Evaluation**

All participants of the hybrid event were given certificates of participation upon submission of the evaluation form that used both English and Filipino. A total of 994 onsite and

online participants responded to the evaluation. Participants were asked to answer a survey questionnaire where they have to tick the appropriate response using the given scale:

0 - Not applicable (Hindi angkop)

1 - Needs Improvement (Kailangang pagbutihin)

2 - Not satisfactory (Hindi sapat)

3 - Satisfactory (Sapat)

4 - Excellent (Mahusay)

Figure 1

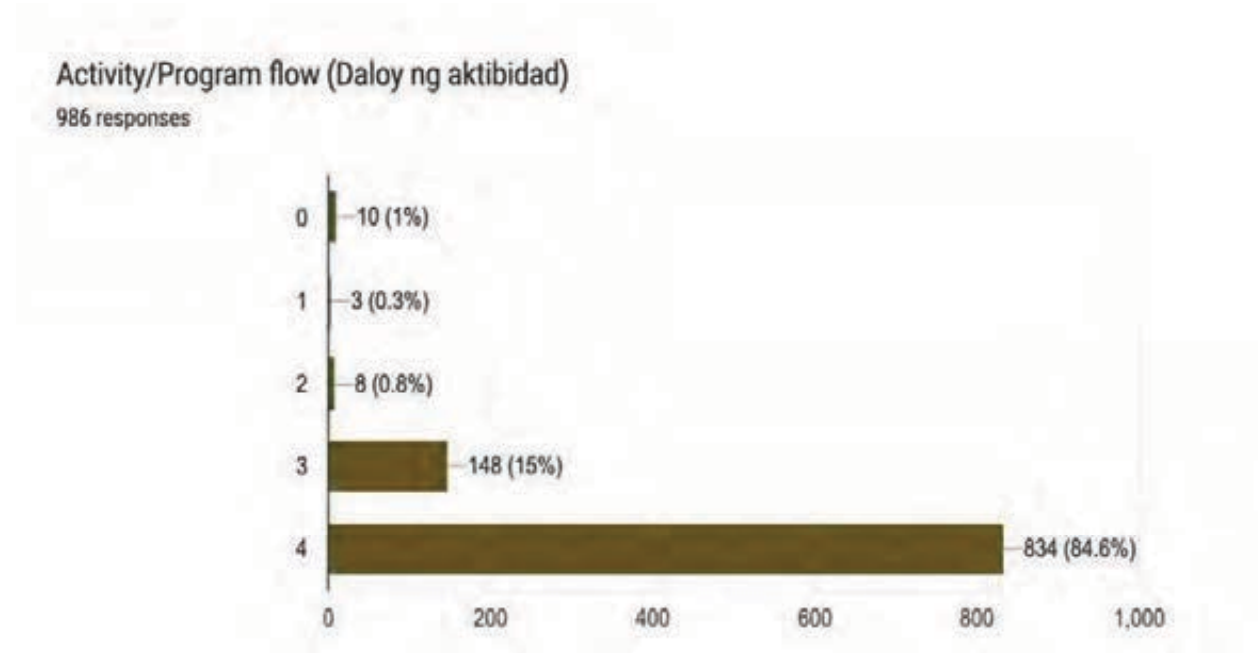
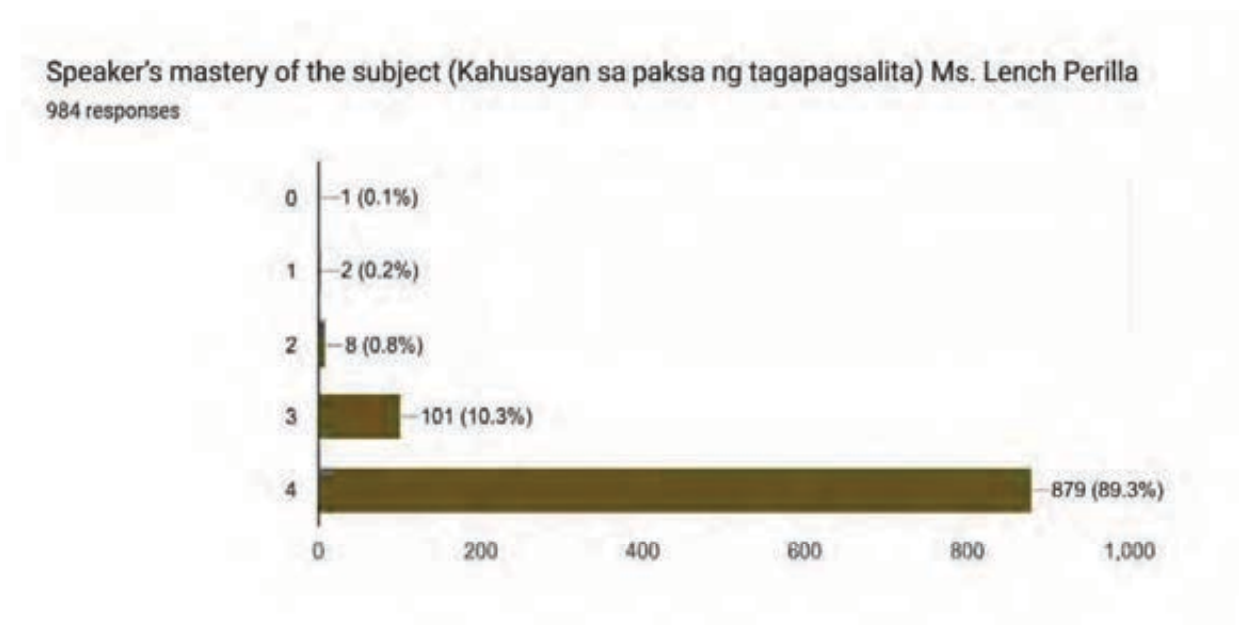


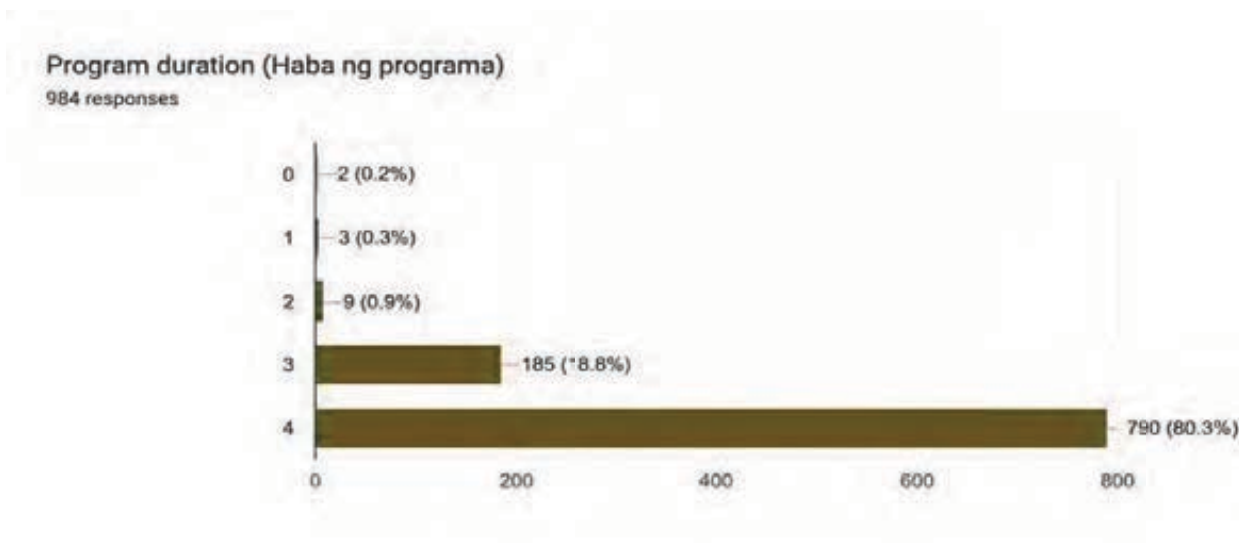
Figure 1 shows that of the 986 respondents, 834 or 84.6% that all the parts of the program contributed to the success of the event, and thus rated it as excellent.

Figure 2



The line graph in Figure 2 shows that 897 or 89.3% of the respondents found the speaker to have excellently given very appropriate and relevant ideas in her talk.

Figure 3



Of the 984 responses, a total of 790 or 80.3% shows that the program duration is just right to achieve its purpose.

Figure 4

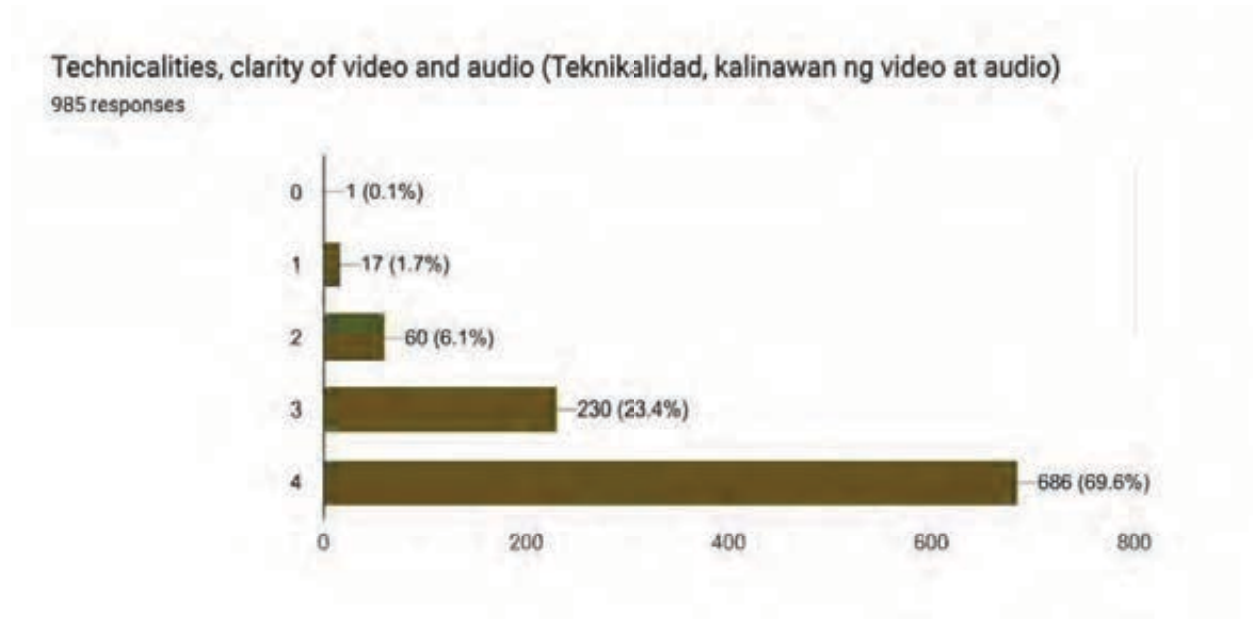
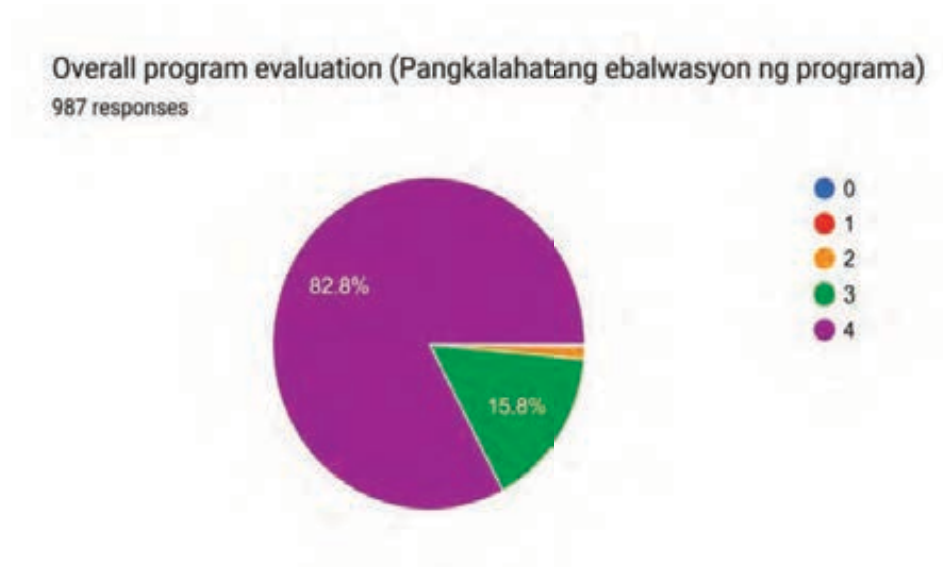


Figure 4 shows that 686 or 69.6% of the participants observed that the technical aspect of the hybrid event which includes the video and the audio is Excellent. A small percentage of 6.1% or 60 of the respondents found the technical aspect Satisfactory. A very small percentage of 1.7% or 17 of the respondents shows the need to improve on the technical aspect of the program.

Figure 5



Overall, 82.8% of the respondents rated the event as Excellent, while 15.8% of the respondents rated the event as Satisfactory as shown in Figure 5. There is a very small percentage who were not satisfied with the event.

Two additional questions were asked in the survey questionnaire, first, to find out how well the participants' appreciation of promoting the rights to employment of the PWDs were enhanced by the hybrid event, and second, to gauge if the participants will recommend the activity/event to others.



Figure 6

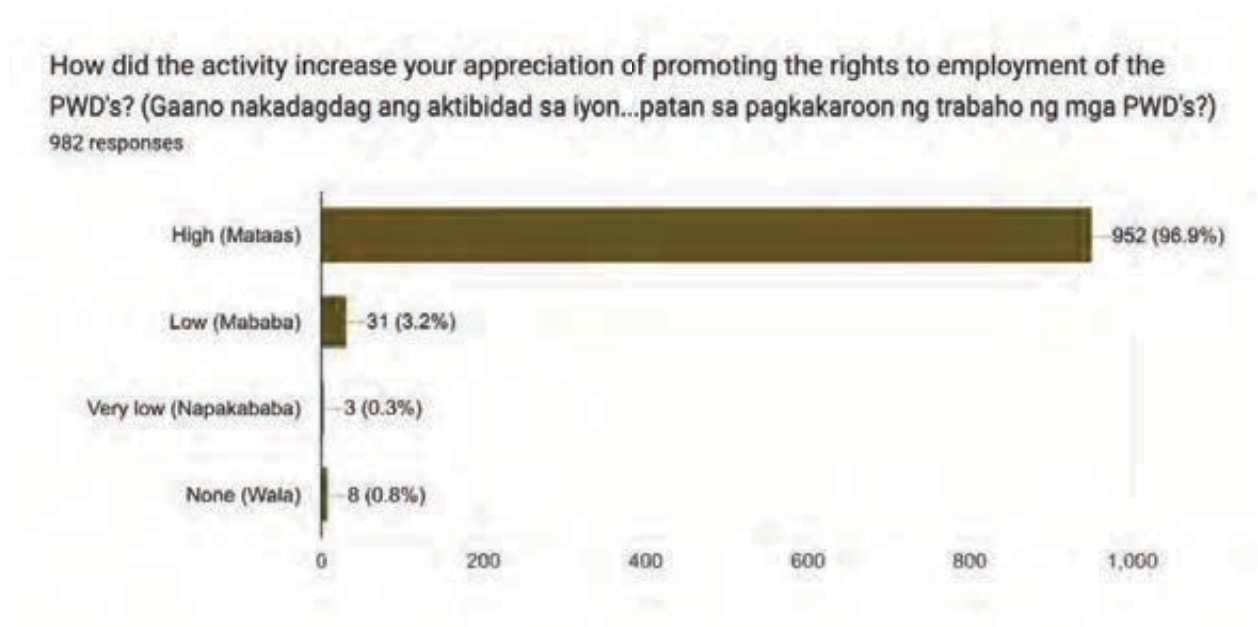
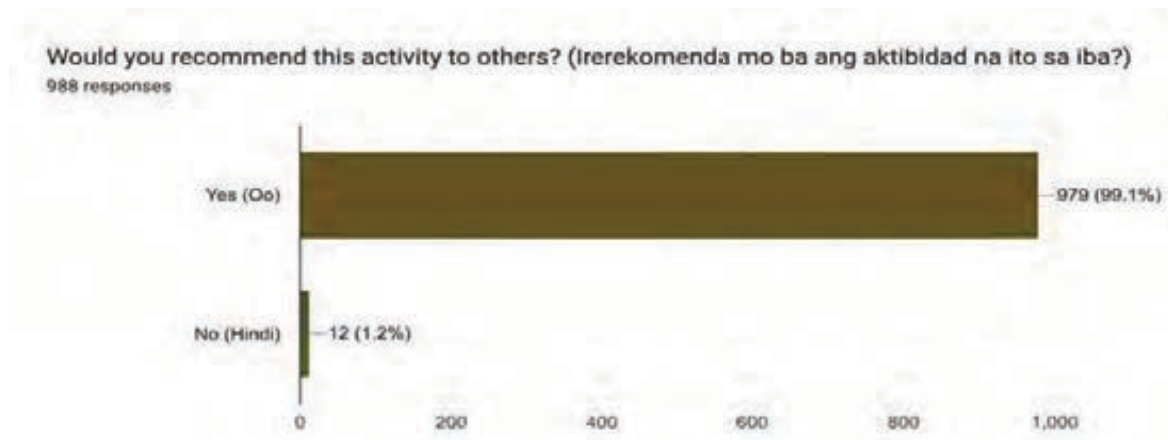


Figure 6 shows that 952 (96.9%) of the 982 participants found the activity/event helpful in enhancing their appreciation of promoting the rights to employment of PWDs. Thirty one or 3.2% of the participants did not find the event helpful in increasing their appreciation of promoting PWDs' rights.

Figure 7



Of the 988 respondents, a total of 979 participants or 99.1% responded affirmatively to the question. Reasons given by the respondents are the following:

- It is very informative
- It promotes inclusivity.
- It promotes awareness about disability inclusivity for them to see new and inspiring perspectives.
- It opens doors of opportunities for them and it also opens the minds of everyone about persons with disabilities.
- It is helpful to motivate people with special needs.
- To give awareness to people from different companies that persons with disabilities are able to perform tasks.
- It promotes the acceptance of persons with disabilities in the workplace.
- It opens doors of opportunities to them and it also opens the mind of everyone about people with disabilities.
- It is helpful to motivate people with special needs.
- Because we must promote inclusivity and to promote fairness
- This promotes inclusivity that enables everyone to have equal access to all.
- The activity has been extremely beneficial in educating job seekers and students about inclusivity.
- It emphasized the importance of inclusivity in the community.
- Yes, because this is a very inspiring and educational event where people can learn from.
- It was a good seminar and I learned a lot.
- It can help people to understand the hardships of persons with disability

- Marami pa ring tao ang hindi bukas sa kaisipan na kaya ring gawin ng PWDs ang mga kaya nating gawin, with the right accommodations. Mas lumawak ang aking perspective dahil sa programa.
- I would recommend this event to other because it promotes knowledge and appreciation of persons with special needs.
- Because it empowers PWD workers.
- Dahil ito ay makatutulong upang mas lalo pang maunawaan ng iba ang pagkakaroon ng pantay na oportunidad sa may kapansanan at wala.
- Because this will uplift those people who are thinking that they cannot have a job because of their disability
- Because it promotes equity and it aims to expand inclusivity and diversity among workplaces.
- We need a more inclusive world. This is a way to do it.
- It can serve as guide for program advocacy
- The experiences and information shared by the speakers would surely make us knowledgeable enough about the rights of PWD's on employment.
- Because, it will allow us to gain more knowledge on how we can accomodate people with special needs and make them feel inclusive in the workplace and appreciate their skills and their efforts to contribute to the workplace.
- The event just empowers all workers and job seekers about the diversity of persons or the applicants. I really like the presentation on how inclusivity was promoted in this event. The speakers, presenters, and committee's behind this successful event are just excellently commendable.


- So that everyone can know how and what Inclusion really means not just in education but also in work places and other sectors of the community.
- It helps to understand what are the existing and the possible opportunities that people with disabilities need for a more inclusive environment for them not just in school but also in the work field.
- This event is an eye opener for everyone. Sharing this would be beneficial for everyone to understand each other as well as for a more inclusive community.
- This webinar is very very helpful especially to the future teachers like me on how to handle diverse learners in the classroom.
- This event is a good start to ensure that inclusivity is really practiced in the workplace. It also made me realize that stigma among the PWDs are not yet eradicated.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, the event, "*Celebrating Inclusivity in the Workplace*" , has been successful in accomplishing its goal. It has provided a venue where persons who embrace and advocate for the empowerment of persons with disabilities gather to be strengthened, engaged, and to forge collaboration to further their advocacy. Likewise, persons with disabilities who have completed their education were given an opportunity to have an appraisal of their skills and were given corresponding training. Some of the online and onsite PWD attendees have applied for employment. The event has proven that there is a need to strengthen the resolve to advocate for the empowerment of persons with disabilities by seeing to it that they are part of an inclusive

society where they can complete their education and be accepted for employment to apply what they have learned and are able to do. Similarly, ties with other organizations through the hybrid event have shown encouraging realities on the presence of groups that provide support to further capacitate PWDs and make them ready for employment. The use of technology is a plus, as it enables the wider dissemination of advocacy. It is hoped that this will create a rippling effect to further the cause and the empowerment of PWDs.

### Images/Visual Documentation




**CELEBRATING INCLUSIVITY  
IN THE WORKPLACE**  
NATIONAL DISABILITY PREVENTION AND REHABILITATION WEEK  
JULY 23, 2022 | 2 - 5 PM

**PROGRAM**

- 1:30 Registration
- 2:00 AVP National Anthem, Doxology, Quality Policy
- 2:15 Opening Message
  - Jennie V. Jacson, Ph.D. | PNU VPA
- Rationale of the Project
  - Shirley N. Cerbo, Ph.D. | PNU Faculty
- Introduction of the Participants
  - Zharina U. Custodio, Ph.D. | PNU Faculty
- 2:40 Message of Partner Institutions
  - Mr. Sherio Reyes | DLS-CSB
  - Ms. Lorinda D. Ang | RBI
  - Ms. Calit De Sotto | PIN
- 3:10 Inspirational Message
  - Lench Ann Parilla | PNU alumna

**3:30 - 5:00**  
**Career Readiness Assessment (CAR)**

**HOTEL LUCKY CHINATOWN**  
Binondo, Manila  
Escolta Ballroom, 5th floor



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### Venue and location of the event, and the Program of Activities



Dr. Cerbo and Dr. Custodio with the PNU Master of Arts students who were assigned in the Registration.





Registration of deaf participants with Certified Sign Language interpreters from the Philippine  
Registry for Interpreters for the Deaf



Meals were served at the lobby outside the hotel ballroom to maintain health protocols.





Partner organizations were allotted booths at the back on one side of the hall to provide space for engaging the participants on the second part of the program.



Videos/slides from partner organizations and institutions were played as participants entered and waited for the program to start.



The Hotel Lucky Chinatown ballroom was filled with advocates for PWD empowerment and persons with disabilities who are hoping to get employment.





Inclusive Education advocates all! From left to right, Dr. Shirley N. Cerbo, Dr. Jennie V. Jocson, Dr. Zenaida Q. Reyes, and Dr. Zhanina U. Custodio.



The program started on time with the moderators and the sign language interpreters facilitating the flow of the program and ensuring everyone's access to information.



The singing of the Philippine National Anthem signaled the start of the program.





Participants from the deaf community join in singing the National Anthem using sign language.



Facilitators gave reminders and reiterated program flow.





Dr. Jennie V. Jocson, PNU Vice President for Academics delivered the Opening Remarks. She commended the group for organizing an event that advocates for the inclusion and the empowerment of persons with disabilities in the mainstream of society. Certified Sign Language Interpreters provided translation both in the onsite and in the online set-up of the hybrid program.



An introduction and background information on the ALIGN Project network was provided by Dr. Shirley N. Cerbo.



Dr. Zhanina U. Custodio acknowledged the partner institutions and organizations.



Partner organization key persons and representatives were provided with a token and a certificate of appreciation as their support and assistance were acknowledged.





Mr. Oscar Sherlo S. Reyes, Director of the College of St. Benilde's Center for Partnership and Development School of deaf education and Applied Studies give a background on their program advocacy.



Ms. Lorinda Ang, representative from Resources for the Blind gave an inspiring talk on how the program has been helping blind graduates gain employment through capacity-building endeavors.



Project Inclusion Network representative, Ms. Cait De Sotto, shared their passion to improve access of persons with disabilities to opportunities for employment through proper assessment, matching skills to job, and capacitating PWDs.



Highlight of the event was the sharing of experiences in applying for a job by a blind person. Our alumna, Ms. Lench Ann Perilla, shared the difficulties she encountered due to a lack of understanding of people about persons with disabilities. She emphasized the importance of support and assistance for persons with disabilities in making a difference in achieving success in employment.

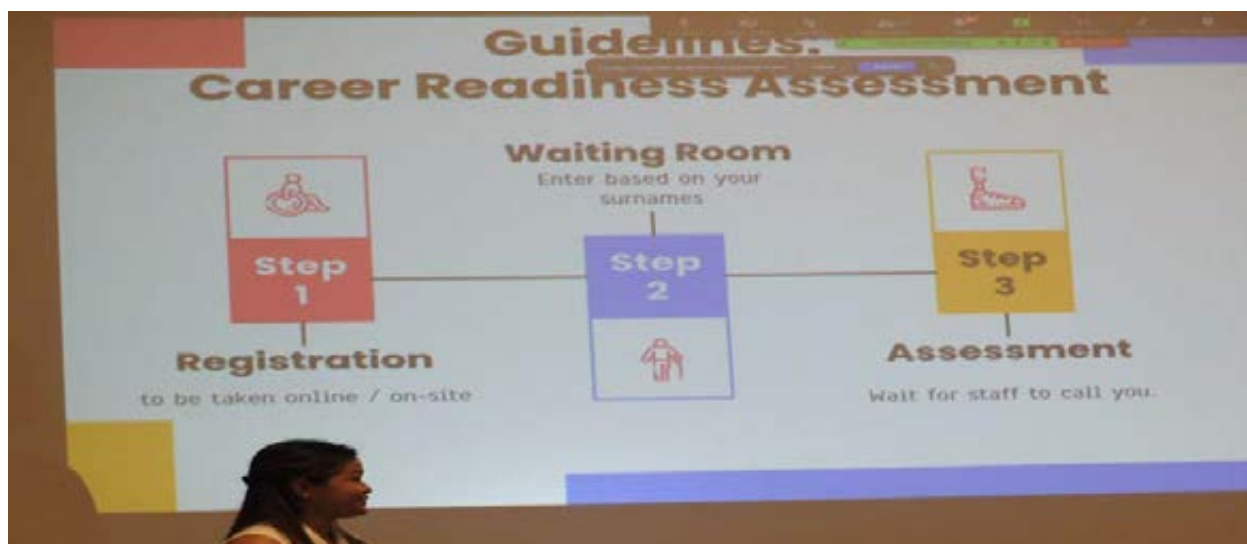




In her speech, Ms. Lench Perilla identified barriers that made it difficult for persons with disabilities, even those who have completed Bachelor's Degree, to find employment.



Ms. Perilla's talk provided inspiration for persons with disabilities who are hoping to gain employment not to lose hope but be strengthened knowing that a lot of persons, groups, organizations, and companies are advocating for their empowerment.



Dr. Custodio gave directions to both onsite and online participants on the activity for the second part of the event.

The second part of the Program focused on ...



Job application,





Assessment,



Interviews,



Job and skills matching.





At the end of the event, what has been achieved?

More collaborations for the empowerment of persons with disabilities.

The event has started the ripple effect and we hope it will be sustained. Looking forward to more activities that promote access for inclusion of persons with disabilities in higher education and in inclusive workplaces.