

## Monitoring visit report

### Part X: The Prithvi Narayan Campus support centre, Pokhara 2.9.2022.

The monitoring visit of the Pokhara support centre at Prithvi Narayan Campus, Bagar Pokhara started and Mr. Sudesh Pandit, the coordinator of the support centre introduced the campus to the team, Tuulia Kiilavuori, Helena Vadurova, Elena Pacetti and Lorenza Malucelli, who also had a chance to discuss with lecturers and students. The support centre structure was presented. It was informed that the creation of a support centre committee, which would involve the campus chief, the support centre coordinator and three faculty members, is in progress.



Figure: Mr Sudesh Pandit leads the tour around the campus.

The team was invited to meet campus chief Prof. Dr. Saroj Koirala, Campus Chief of Tribhuvan University, Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara, and his colleagues including the Rector of TU. The team learns that the campus offers more than 60 full scholarships to students with disabilities, about the challenges faced by students with disabilities in their studies and that support centre development is progressing.

The structure of the support centre and the main goals of the EATHEN project were discussed by the campus chief. The monitoring team enquired about the current and future needs for support, and they were informed that such needs will be discussed and the necessities and needs of students will be reported.





Figure: Meeting with Campus Chief Prof. Dr. Saroj Koirala, Tribhuvan University, Prithvi Narayan Campus Pokhara.

### **The library services and the support centre**

On the visit to the library the services available for blind students were presented. Students can request the library to transform learning resource that are in the text format to the audio format. English material is scanned and then transformed to an audio format. Nepali material is recorded in a special studio by a narrator. The library has a long experience producing the service. The demand for the service has been increasing during recent years.





Figures: The national audio library, room for scanning learning material and the audio recording studio.



The support centre and its services were also presented. The centre has a central location at the campus, and it is close to the library where the audio material is currently produced. An accessible toilet is being built next to the centre. It is well designed for the purpose, interior has already a toilet seat, and urinal and wash basin, and it has tiling on walls and floor.



Figure: The Prithvi Narayan Campus support centre from the outside.



Figures: The accessible toilet.



## Information for students and training for staff

The support centre coordinator Mr. Sudesh Pandit has informed students with disabilities and their families of the services and enrolment to the study programmes and the support available at the campus. According to him, students have not been aware of the possibilities of assistive technology and have therefore not been able to ask for such services. Students have also been informed about the services during the visit of Professor Arbinda Bhomi and the Dean of faculty of Education, Dr. Chitra Bahadur Budhathoki.

The awareness of lecturers and teachers of the support centre services were going to be done by inviting them to the training that is held by the Teiresias Centre of the Masaryk University at the beginning of September 2022.



Figure: The coordinator of the support centre discusses the support centre services and development with the monitoring team at the Prithvi Narayan Campus support centre.

## Equipment and development work in progress in autumn 2022

The support centre had no Internet connection, and it was still waiting for the technical equipment and assistive software that will be provided by the project to arrive. Internet connection will be established and the equipment, including e.g. Braille embossers, will be available in the support centre so that students can come to the support centre to study and get support for using the equipment. The new equipment will also help to improve the services provided by the support centre staff. It seemed that the campus has a lot of experience and expertise in offering service for transforming textual learning references into audio format for blind students. This serves as a strong basis for introducing services enabled by assistive technology. Training on such technology was given by the Teiresias centre at the beginning of September and it will support the campus to introduce new services for the students. The



idea of letting students to convert learning resources into the format that they prefer with the help of support centre staff instead of the staff converting them was also discussed.

The challenges discussed include understanding what kind of support students need and how to organize the work of campus staff so that they can also serve the students who come to the support centre. It has been noted that the support received from the campus chief helps to develop the support centre services further. Overall the attitude towards the support centre seems to be very positive at the campus.

The starting points and needs of the students to whom the support centre services were being planned are discussed to give information to the trainees of the training given to the support centre staff at the beginning of September so that they could better prepare for the training. The trainees were encouraged to share such information and in which technologies they need training with the trainers.

Tuulia Kiilavuori, Jamk University of Applied Sciences

More information: [www.jamk.fi/eathen](http://www.jamk.fi/eathen)

