

## Report on RICD Visit

1. Destination Rajanagarindra Institute of Child Development in Thailand (RICD)
2. Visit Period 2024.2.14~2024.2.17
3. Purpose ①Courtesy visit to RICD, with whom we began a partnership in July 2021, to exchange information and views on how to strengthen the relationship in the future.  
②Home visit to children who received wheelchairs.
4. Outline

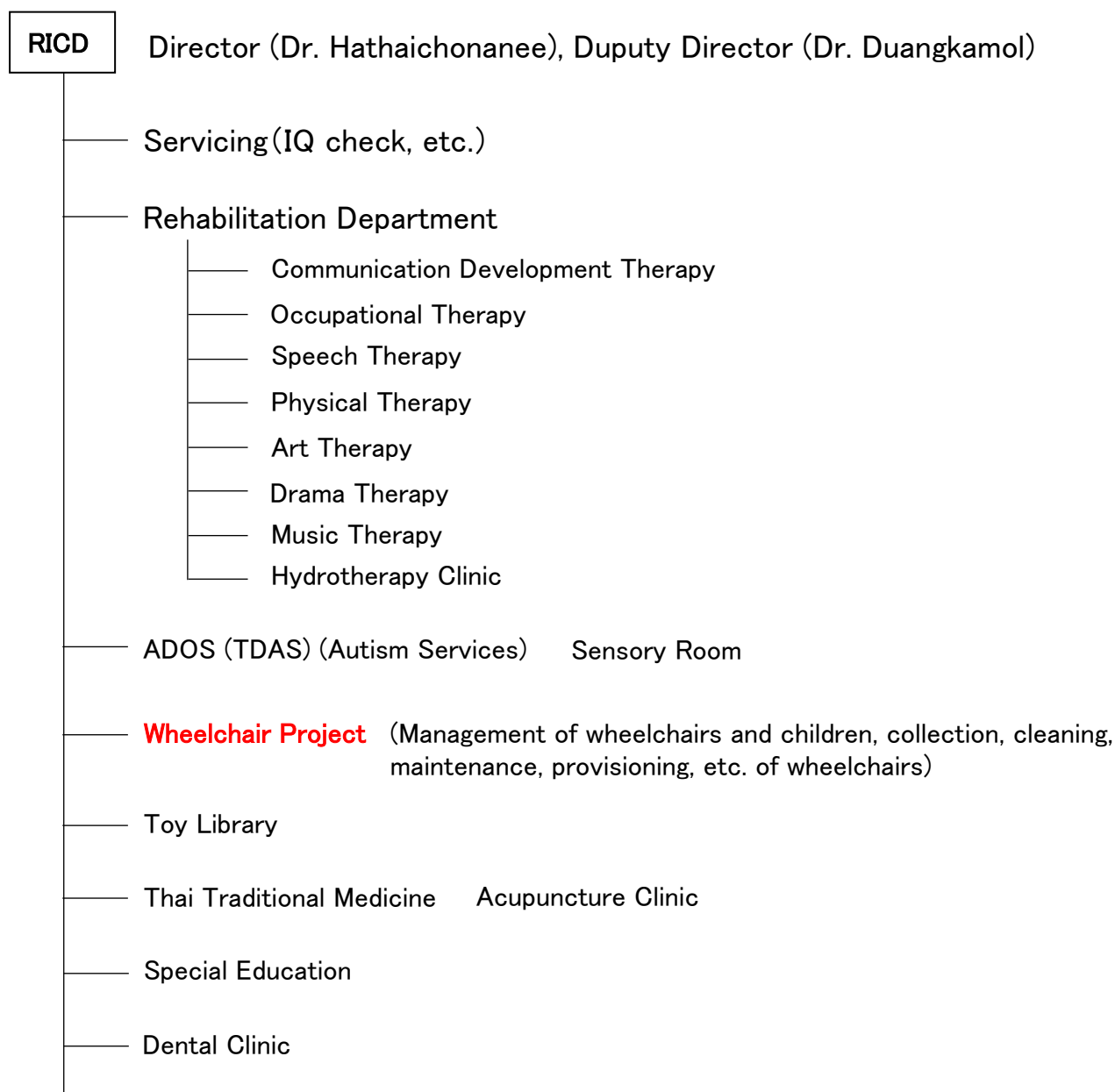
Rajanagarindra Institute of Child Development (RICD) of Thailand, located in Chiang Mai, northern Thailand, is a welfare institution supported by the Royal Family that provides various types of support (medical care, education, rehabilitation, and various assistances such as lending equipment) to children with disabilities. These supports provided by RICD are not limited to Thailand, but also extend to neighboring Asian countries. Wheelchair Project in the RICD has been developing activities to provide wheelchairs to children.

The RICD Wheelchair Project and our NGO began a partnership in July 2021 through the introduction of Mr. Tani, the president of the NPO Wheelchairs of Hope. We delivered 375 wheelchairs for children to RICD by the end of December 2023.



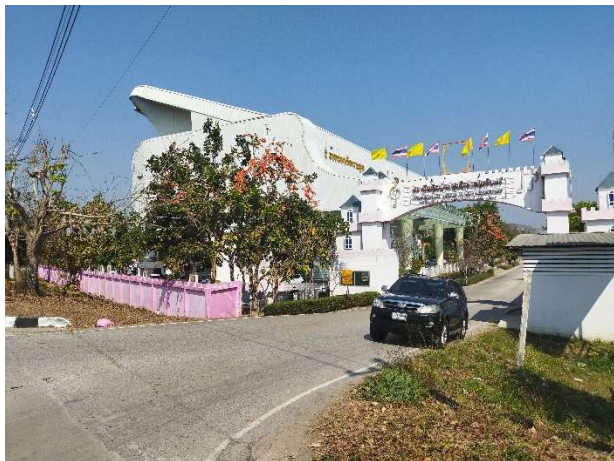
This is the exterior of the RICD. It is a distinctive piano-shaped building. You cannot see it in front of the building, but from a distance you will notice that it is a “piano.” The building shows a desire to be close to children. (Photo from RICD website)

## 5. Organization and functional overview of RICD



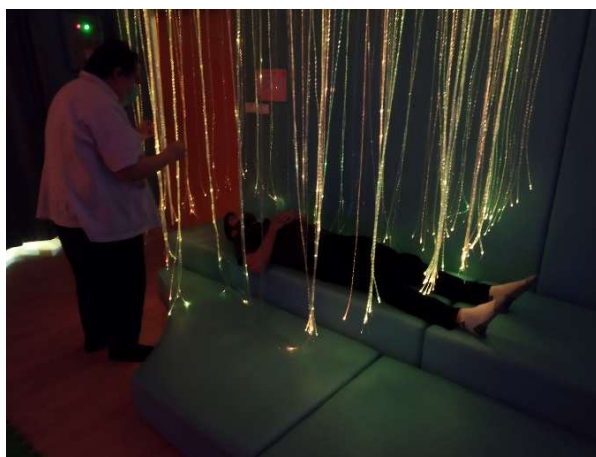
- Servicing provides the initial screening and diagnosis of the child (checking the degree of disability, type, and IQ, etc.).
- Rehabilitation department has a variety of facilities and function.
- For children with autism, there are a relaxation room with light and an active room next to it.
- The toy library is used for diagnostics as well as lending.

## 6. RICD Tour (Thursday, February 15, 2024, 13:00-14:00)



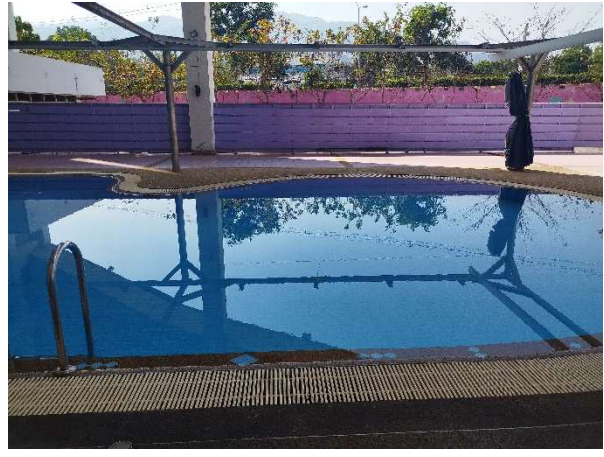
(Left) A general view of the RICD in Chiang Mai, northern Thailand. The shape of the piano cannot be seen from below. We were guided through the building with careful explanation. In a word, it has everything for children with disabilities.

(Right) There is even a school inside. It seems to offer a variety of educational opportunities.



This is the “Relaxation Room” with devices to calm the children by stimulating them with various sounds and lights. Next to it was an “active room.” They say it is the doctors who devise these devices.





The importance of water-based training and treatment was also explained. There are two pools, one indoor and one outdoor.

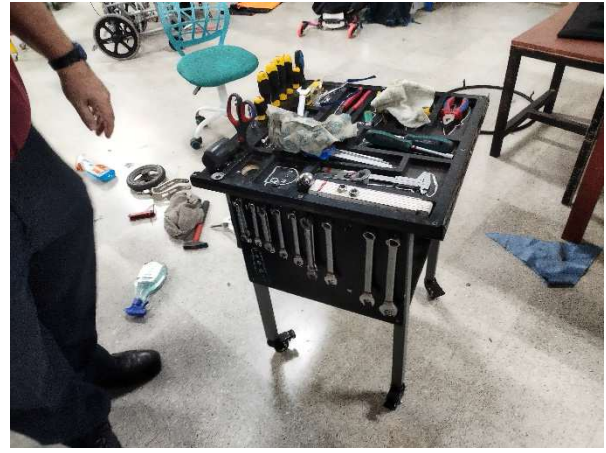


This equipment is designed to clean two or three wheelchairs by placing them inside. The disinfectant could be used at the same time, and the concentration of the disinfectant could be selected. It takes about 15 minutes to clean and dry. Cleaning is the biggest current problem of our NGO. I believe that such a device would provide a good and highly efficient cleaning of wheelchairs.



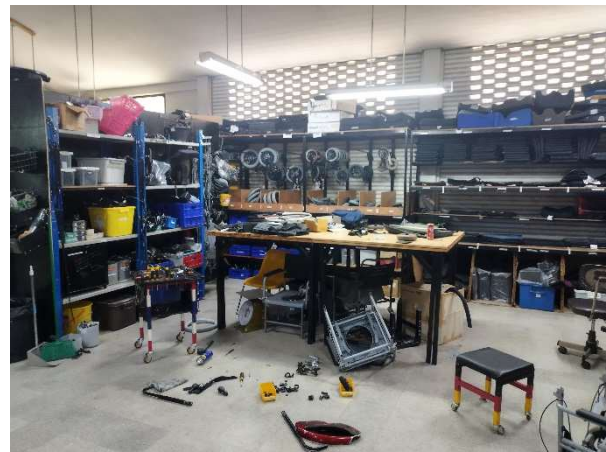
This is a wheelchair storage unit. The shelves are arranged in three tiers and seem to be able to store a considerable number of wheelchairs.





(Left) Wheelchair repair room. All kinds of tools and necessary parts are available.

(Right) A work tool box. Before the Covid-19, tools were kept in one place for common use by all workers. After that, they changed to this box so that all the necessary tools are available. It is easy to imagine that this environmental improvement has greatly reduced the distance traveled during work.

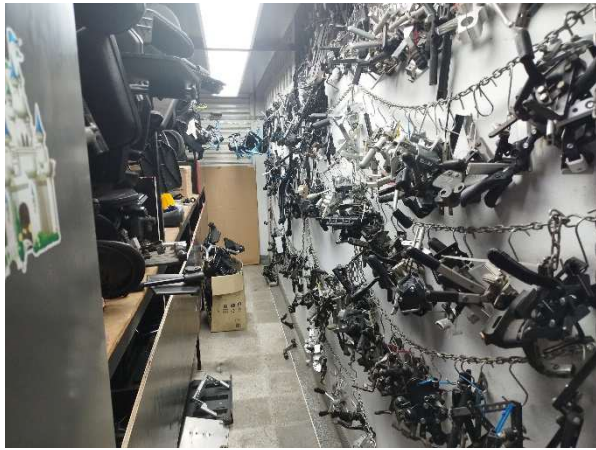


Many parts are stored on shelves. The work efficiency would be good, I thought. On the left are footrests, and on the right are front casters and a complete set of cushions.



Washers, nuts, and screws were available in a variety of sizes.





(Left) Storage walls for various types of brakes. Brakes are the most important component. We can choose the best one from such a large stock so that repairs can be done smoothly.

(Right) This device takes apart the frame and removes rust. It is also repainted so it is like new.

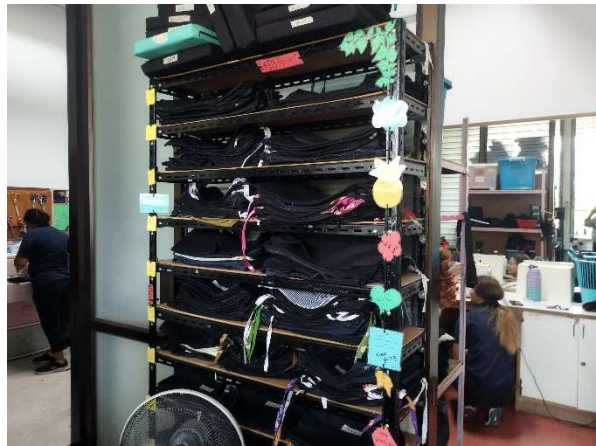


This is a “toy library” where toys are loaned out. In addition to simply lending toys, the toy library is also used to diagnose children who come here for the first time by giving them toys and watching their reactions. I did not know that toys could be used to diagnose a child’s disability. The practice of such things gives us an image of what kind of support RICD aims to provide for children.

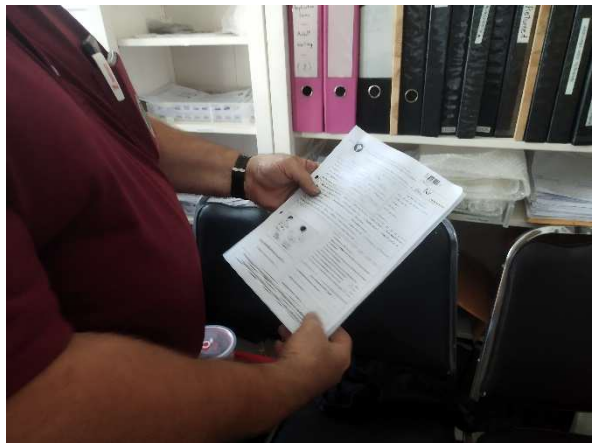
There are eight facilities similar to RICD in Thailand, all of which were created based on RICD. I am not familiar with the actual situation in Japan, but I thought that such facilities would promote the development of children with disabilities and bring joy to their families.



This room is used to adjust the child's body when providing a wheelchair to the child. It is equipped with tools for fine-tuning, belts, buckles, and other items necessary for seating. (Seating is the adjustment of a wheelchair or chair to ensure a good sitting posture, taking into account the physical and mental functions and living conditions of the person who remains seated for long periods of time. (Citation: WAMNET)



Sewing machines are a necessity for wheelchair maintenance. Cushions and belts produced using sewing machines were stacked on shelves. From here, fabric products are used for each wheelchair and child.





(Left) Some children urinate while in their wheelchairs. Urine is stored in a special bag, which used to be hung on the outside of the wheelchair. This had a negative impact on the operation of the wheelchair, so they devised a supplemental bag like the one shown in this photo. Placing the bag between their legs and placed the urine bag inside the bag stabilized their wheelchair and allowed them to move very smoothly.

(Right) A management sheet regarding children and wheelchairs. All these data are digitized and stored on a server.

## 7. Information exchange with RICD (February 15, 2024, 14:00-16:00)

### (1) Greeting with Dr. Dung, RICD No.2

I exchanged greetings with Dr. Dung, a doctor and Deputy Director. She thanked us for the wheelchairs we have provided RICD with and commented that we were very welcome to visit the RICD, despite her busy schedule. We thanked her for accepting our visit.



Dr. Dung (Deputy Director) agreed to be photographed before leaving.

### (2) Introduction of RICD activities

Using a projector, the activities of RICD were introduced. The contents were wide-ranging, including hospital functions, medical treatment functions, and equipment provision and repair functions.

### (3) Introduction of our activities

Using a PowerPoint presentation, we showed our activities. In addition to wheelchair collection, cleaning, maintenance, packing, and container loading, we introduced the slogan "Free the children to move and free their minds!" that expresses the concept of our NGO.



#### (4) Exchange of information and opinions

- How does RICD collect wheelchairs?

→We receive donations from all over the world. We receive donations from all over the world.

- Are you able to get the necessary parts for the wheelchairs?

→We can make some parts and these days we can buy more than we used to.

Still, it can be quite difficult to get replacement parts for many different wheelchairs, and we need to find new solutions for obtaining parts.

- What kind of people are the members of the wheelchair project?

→Some are Thai, but most are volunteers from overseas. Some are American, German, and Japanese. Few members receive income from RICD. They make a living from support groups in their home countries.

→RICD physicians, for example, are paid by RICD, but they work for a lower income than the level of ordinary physicians. This is because they feel that working here is more meaningful than the income.

→Joey Tell, the director of the wheelchair project, is also a volunteer from the United States. He is a second-generation volunteer, as his father was also a wheelchair project leader.

→Similarly, a female visitor from Germany came to RICD to see if she too should work here, since her sister worked here as a volunteer for several years.

- How do you educate employees on knowledge and skills related to wheelchairs?

→Basically, repair skills are provided through on-the-job training. On the other hand, people who have received training in Los Angeles teach how to adjust the wheelchair to the child's body (seating).

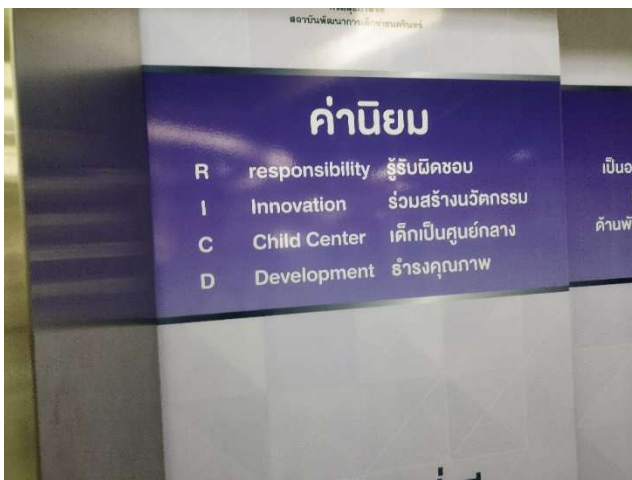


(Left) RICD's activities in a video presentation.

(Right) PowerPoint presentation of our activities



At the end, the mother expressed her gratitude. (The woman on the far right.)



This is the mission of RICD written on the elevator door.

R: Responsibility

I: Innovation

C: Child Center

D: Development of the child



We took a commemorative photo in front of the huge panda statue installed in the entrance hall.

This statue was originally planned to be Doraemon, but when it became clear that it would incur an expensive licensing fee, it was decided to go with a panda statue that could be done for free.

The installation of these statues also showed RICD's strong commitment to being close to children.

The third person from the left is the mother from Toyama, and on the far right is Joey, the wheelchair project director.



## 8. Home Visits (February 15, 2024 9:00 -12:00)

One of the purposes of this visit to RICD was to meet the children who received the wheelchairs donated by the Japanese mother who provided them. 2 wheelchairs were delivered by a mother living in Toyama Prefecture, who loaded them into her car and drove them herself to our president's house in Fussa City.

At that time, she asked, "Where will these wheelchairs be sent? Wouldn't it be in Thailand? If it is Thailand, I would like to go there and meet the children who use this wheelchair.

When I discussed this with Joey, the wheelchair project manager at RICD, he said, "That's a great idea. I'll help you make it happen."

○ Before shipping to Thailand, we tagged the comment to each wheelchair, "I would love to meet the child who will receive this wheelchair."



○ The case of an 11-year-old boy

The recipient of the first wheelchair is an 11-year-old boy living in a dormitory. He has no immediate family to take care of him on a daily basis and lives in a dormitory. Since the school we visited was a dormitory school, many children gathered around the school and it was lively. When the mother from Japan gave him a gift, he smiled a little shyly.



(Left) The boy riding in a wheelchair provided and the mother from Japan. He was disabled in a motorcycle accident.

(Right) Children in wheelchairs cheerfully surrounded the boy and us.

There were also three children here riding in wheelchairs sent by our NGO. We were happy to confirm that RICD has delivered our wheelchairs to children.

(One of the wheelchairs was from Kamisugeta Special Needs School that we sent in July 2022)

#### ○ The Case of a Six-Year-Old Girl

A six-year-old girl living with her parents and a younger brother in a residential area in Chiang Mai was the recipient of the second unit. She had been brain-damaged since birth, was almost blind, and although she could walk, she could not sustain it and would fall down. For this reason, she needed a wheelchair. However, she was a very energetic child and told us that she wanted to become an English teacher in the future.



(Left) The family of the child who received the wheelchair and the mother from Japan.

(Right) The child immediately started drawing using the crayons and free-form book the mother gave her. Although the child was almost blind, she was able to distinguish the colors of the crayons by holding them close to her eyes. The father took the day off from work and the girl took the day off from school to accommodate our visit.

#### 〈Comment from the mother from Japan〉

I was able to meet the children who received wheelchairs during my visit to RICD. It was worth the long trip to Thailand, thanks to RICD and the Wheelchair Sending NGO. Although it was a short stay, this trip to Thailand was unforgettable, meaningful, and will enrich my life in the future.

On the other hand, it was heartbreaking to hear about how the two children we met this time came to use wheelchairs. On the flight back from Chiang Mai airport, I prayed in my heart for many blessings for the two children.



## 9. Luncheon with the Rehabilitation Center Director

(February 16, 2024, 13:00-14:00)



Ms. K. Oam (second from the right in the photo), head of the “Rehabilitation Center,” which would be the core of RICD, came to our luncheon.

She thanked us for the wheelchairs we have been sending.

We then asked her what kind of wheelchair is needed for RICD. She requested us to send regular wheelchairs, of course, but also walkers or other special equipment. She also commented that they

would appreciate it if they could see pictures of the equipment beforehand if possible.

## 10. Impressions

This visit to RICD began with the wish of a mother living in Toyama. We would like to express our gratitude to RICD for their full cooperation in realizing this wish, and also to the mother in Toyama for giving us the opportunity to visit RICD.

Although we have sent wheelchairs to RICD, representatives from both sides had not been able to meet with each other. We thought this would be a good opportunity to pay a courtesy visit to the RICD, so we prepared a set of arrangements with a courtesy visit and the mother project. Although it would have been preferable for the president of our NGO to make a courtesy visit, it was difficult for him to go abroad, even for a few days, as he is very busy with his own business, so I decided to go as his substitute.

The more I learned about RICD, the better the organization was. Of course, it was not only the organization, but also the members who made it up, who were all full of good will. I felt that every member’s desire to “support children with disabilities” was the sole focus of their work. From our point of view, RICD is a much larger organization. The roles they are expected to play are naturally different. However, we would like to incorporate what we can imitate or learn from them in our future activities for the benefit of children with disabilities overseas. And we would like to deliver as many wheelchairs as possible to children overseas.

In addition, mutual understanding was greatly enhanced during this visit to RICD. We were able to introduce each other’s activities and have a meaningful Q&A session. Based on this mutual understanding, we strongly felt that we would like to continue to be valued partners in the future.