

# NCBM OUTREACH



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## **SUPPORT OUR CAUSE**

The National Council for the Blind, Malaysia (NCBM) provides a Vital link between the organisations serving the blind in this Country by acting as the national coordinating body. Through NCBM, the organisations for and of the blind have a channel to Discuss and formulate national policies and plans and to pioneer new programmes for the benefit of the blind.

Your financial support will, therefore, go a long way in helping to bring about new developments and progress for the blind. All contributions are deeply appreciated.

Donations should be made in the name of the National Council for the Blind, Malaysia. Address:

94-B Jalan Tun Sambanthan  
Brickfields  
50470 KUALA LUMPUR.

Tel: 03-22735508/22724959  
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## **SPECIAL ANNOUNCE- MENT**

Readers are reminded that their contribution of articles, suggestions and jokes are most welcome for inclusion in "The NCBM Outreach". However, please note that it would be very helpful to the Editor if such contributions could be submitted either on diskette or on single-sided Braille pages to facilitate editing.

For details of payments, please see the last page.

We believe in  
working together  
for common  
good

IF YOU KNOW  
OF ANY BLIND  
PERSON NEEDING  
REGISTRATION  
FOR  
EDUCATION OR  
REHABILITATION,  
PLEASE CONTACT  
US IMMEDIATELY

NCBM

Tel: 03-2272 4959

03-2272 1442

MAB

Tel: 03-2272 2673

03-2272 2677

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## 1. ICEVI CONFERENCE

The International Conference on Education for the Visually Impaired will be held from July 16 to 21, 2006 at the Putra World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur. The Malaysian Association for the Blind is the host organiser and the conference is being co-sponsored by MAB and the National Council for the Blind, Malaysia.

A cordial invitation is extended to all NGOs and agencies serving the blind as well as concerned individuals.

For more information, please contact Yon Swee Chee or Liza Umi at MAB, tel. 22722677 ext. 27 and ext. 30 respectively.

## 2. DEAF-BLIND SERVICE

MAB is looking for a suitable candidate to be sent to Indonesia for training in deaf-blind work. This is in line with the plan to develop a service for deaf-blind people.

In due course, this trained person may be considered for full-time or part-time employment with MAB.

Interested persons should register with Norfarah Jori at tel. 22722677 extension 21.

## 3. I.T. TRAINING CALENDAR

The 2006 information technology training calendar of MAB is available in the following formats – plain text, word, PowerPoint, Braille and audio. The courses are open to blind individuals and to organisations serving the blind.

If you are interested in the i.t. calendar and registration, please contact Silatulrahim at tel. 22722677 ext. 44 or 45.

A summary of the schedule is as follows:

### May 8 – 12, Monday to Friday

First series on the MS Internet Explorer, Outlook Express, MSN Messenger, Yahoo Messenger, Skype and Jaws screen reader.

### May 15 – 19, Monday to Friday

Second series on MS Internet Explorer, etc.

### May 22 – 26, Monday to Friday

Text to Braille for Bahasa Malaysia and English.

### June:

Specialised training on adaptive equipment such as Brailnote, Pacmate, mobile phones, PDAs, etc.

### October:

Special requests.

### December:

Training for persons with special needs such as the deaf-blind, parents, care-givers, etc.

## 4. SPEECH SOFTWARE FOR MOBILE PHONE

The I.T. Department of MAB is offering a free service on the demonstration and installation of mobile phone softwares, namely Talx, MobileSpeak and Adnota. These softwares are suitable for Nokia handsets of the 60 series.

If you are interested, please contact the I.T. Department for an appointment.

## 5. REPAIR AND SERVICING OF PC'S

The I.T. Department is also prepared to do repairs and servicing for pc's owned by the blind. However, there will be a concessionary service charge of RM25.00 plus any other costs that might be incurred such as the cost for components replaced.

Those interested should contact En. Rahim or Cik Farah Izura at tel. 22722677 ext. 44 or 45 respectively.

## 6. THIRD NATIONAL ABILYMPICS 2006

Ten skills have been selected for the Third National Abilympics beginning in April at the Bangi Industrial and Rehabilitation Training Centre and culminating in the finale programme scheduled for July 22 – 24, 2006 at the MAK-PEN building in Sentul, Kuala Lumpur.

The targeted months, events and venues are as follows:

**April**

Dress-making-Bangi Centre

**May**

Wood-carving – PPOC, Kelantan

**May**

Pottery – Sunway School,  
Subang Jaya

**June**

Basket-making – Taman Harapan  
in Temerloh, Pahang

**July 22**

English text processing and  
creating web pages – MAKPEN  
building, Sentul, K.L.

**July 23**

Poster designing and PC  
assembly – MAKPEN building

**July 24**

Water-colour painting and floral  
arrangement.

Cash prizes of RM500, RM300 and RM100 will be awarded to the three best performers of each event. Only the first champion for each of the ten events will be chosen to represent Malaysia at the coming international abilympics in Tokyo, Japan in 2007.

Disabled persons who are interested to join should contact their respective organisations. They could also contact the MCR secretariat at tel. 79553510 (Norhafishah, Executive Officer).

**7. FIRST VERY SPECIAL  
ARTS 2007**

Four talents have been selected for the First VSA competition 2007, i.e. singing, playing musical instruments, dancing and drama.

The target groups will be disabled persons from two age groups – those 18 years and below and those who are 19 years old and above.

For singing and musical instruments, cash prizes to be offered are RM3,000, RM2,000 and RM1,000.

For dancing and drama, the prizes are RM5,000, RM4,000 and RM3,000.

We shall keep you informed of further developments.

**8. FIRST MALAYSIAN  
CONFERENCE ON  
REHABILITATION OF  
THE DISABLED**

MCR will be organising the First Malaysian Conference on Rehabilitation for the Disabled from September 5 – 7, 2006. The venue will be the Bangi Industrial Training and Rehabilitation Centre. Registration fees for the disabled will be RM60 only while the fee for the non-disabled will be RM120.

We shall keep you informed of further developments.

The attempt to  
silent a man is  
the greatest hon-  
our you can be-  
stow on him. It  
means that you  
recognise his su-  
periority to your-  
self.

(Joseph Sobran,  
Universal Press  
Sydicate)

# SPECIAL ANOUNCEMENT FROM THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT

*Realising that many were confused over the eligibility and the procedures for the application of white canes and brailers, NCBM wrote to the Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat on 24th Jan, 2006 and received the following guidelines on 9th February, 2006.*

## Garis Panduan Pemberian Bantuan Tingkat Putih dan Mesin Braille

### 1. Syarat Kelayakan Bantuan

#### 1.1. Tingkat Putih

Orang kurang upaya penglihatan yang berdaftar dengan Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat Malaysia layak menerima bantuan ini.

#### 1.2. Mesin Braille

a). Pelajar kurang upaya penglihatan yang sedang menuntut di sekolah rendah dan sekolah menengah, pusat pengajian tinggi sama ada yang dikendalikan oleh pihak kerajaan atau swasta dan pelatih yang sedang menjalankan latihan yang dikendalikan oleh pertubuhan sukarela kebajikan dengan syarat mereka mestilah berdaftar dengan Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat.

b). Orang kurang upaya penglihatan yang sedang

bekerja dan yang benar-benar memerlukan sebuah mesin braille untuk memudahkan mereka menjalankan kerja mereka dengan syarat :-

i) berdaftar dengan Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat sebagai orang kurang upaya.

ii) Pendapatan bulanan tidak melebihi RM750.00 sebulan dan berumur 16 tahun ke atas.

iii) Pihak majikan tidak menyediakan kemudahan mesin braille. Permohonan mestilah menyertakan slip gaji/surat pengesahan pendapatan daripada majikan/surat akuan pendapatan bagi yang bekerja sendiri. Pemohon yang bersekolah, menuntut di Institusi Pengajian Tinggi atau mengikut latihan di mana-mana institusi atau pertubuhan mestilah menyertakan surat perakuan dari pihak berkenaan.

### 2. Cara-cara memohon

2.1. Permohonan Bantuan Tingkat Putih dan Mesin Braille hendaklah melalui Pegawai Kebajikan Masyarakat Daerah dengan menggunakan Borang

Permohonan Bantuan Tingkat Putih/Mesin Braille (BPT/MB 2005). Kuasa meluluskan bantuan adalah Pengarah Kebajikan Masyarakat Negeri.

Some are born  
great, some  
achieve greatness and some  
hire  
public relations  
writers.

(Daniel J.  
Boorstin)

## IN MEMORIAM

We would like to remember and pay our respects to the late Datuk Lau Hui Kang and the late Major D. R. Bridges, two important figures in the work for the blind of Malaysia. Both of them passed away in the early part of 2006.

Datuk Lau Hui Kang passed away in Singapore on January 19, 2006 at the age of 83. He had been the president of the National Council for the Blind, Malaysia (NCBM) for a period of four years from 1996 to 2000.

Even though his presidency had been brief, Datuk Lau had played a significant role in helping NCBM to achieve some of its important goals. In particular, he was instrumental in enabling NCBM to secure its own building in Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur at the cost of RM1.1 million. This was no mean feat in the face of doubts that NCBM would be able to settle this great financial debt. With his guidance and support, the project met with success in the end and this has enabled NCBM to play a more effective role as a coordinating body for the main organisations serving the blind in this country.

Datuk Lau was also keenly aware of the problem being faced by blind school students concerning the lack of Braille textbooks. Thus, he threw his full weight behind the idea of establishing the Malaysian Braille Press and the goal was realised in 1997. Since then, MBP has been able to play an

important role not only in bringing about greater awareness of the need but also in the production of Braille textbooks for the blind.

We remember Datuk Lau Hui Kang for the sacrifices he had made through NCBM in spite of the heavy schedules and commitments he had to keep to ensure the survival of his own business agencies in Sarawak.

Major David Ronald Bridges passed away peacefully in Hawaii on January 13, 2006 at the age of 90. He was instrumental in the formation of the Malaysian Association for the Blind (MAB) in 1951 when he was an officer of the Social Welfare Department of Malaysia. He was the first secretary-general of MAB from 1951 to 1957. During his tenure of service, he helped to establish many services for the blind, including the Gurney Training Centre, the Taman Harapan Agricultural Training Centre, the Kinta Valley Workshop for the blind, the job placement service and the Braille library.

Later, he became the director of the American Foundation for the Overseas Blind (AFOB) with its East Asia office based in Kuala Lumpur until 1969. During this period, he helped to set up the evaluation and adjustment programme and the light engineering section at the Gurney Training Centre in Kuala Lumpur.

Indeed, we deeply appreciate the services and sacrifices that had

been made by Major D. R. Bridges and we will always remember him for the legacy he had left behind for the blind in Malaysia.

He leaves behind three sons and grandchildren. His funeral was in Hawaii on January 23, 2006 at 11.00 a.m. We all remember him with heartfelt thanks and fondest memories.

It's time for the  
blind to  
help the  
blind

# **MESSAGE FROM THE NCBM PRESIDENT, S. KULASEGARAN, FOR THE FIRST ASEAN BRAILLE DAY CARNIVAL, JANUARY 4, 2006**



In Paris stands a statue of Louis Braille erected by the French blind to pay tribute to him for inventing the system of raised dots called Braille. They have inscribed on the statue, “To Braille from the Grateful Blind”.

The blind throughout the world share the same sentiments. They are truly grateful to Louis Braille for the wonderful system of Braille that has helped to open up the doors of opportunity to them.

And so as we commemorate the 197th birthday of Louis Braille, the inventor of this beautiful system of reading and writing by touch for the blind and visually impaired, let us pause for a moment to ponder and appreciate the contributions of Louis Braille and to reflect upon the power of Braille – the tremendous and significant power of the six inconspicuous dots which have impacted upon and revolutionised the lives of blind people all over the world for the past two centu-

ries or so. Indeed, the blind and visually impaired persons living today owe much to Louis Braille for the successes and achievements in their lives. Braille has enabled the blind and visually impaired to experience a drastic change in their lives – from dependence and charity to economic independence, from the forsaken corners of inactivity to participation in the family and community life, from the dumps of society to respectable positions in all areas of living.

Since its invention about 200 years ago, Braille has thus continued to play a pivotal role in the lives of the blind in the family, in the community, in education, employment and all the various aspects of living. Even in our modern ICT age, the impact of Braille on the blind is still beyond measure. Braille remains as their key to learning and knowledge leading to self-empowerment and self-reliance.

The World Blind Union recognises this fact and has thus proclaimed Louis Braille’s birthday, January 4, as Louis Braille Day.

We in Malaysia and ASEAN also recognise this fact. It is because of this that NCBM and MAB have come together as joint partners to organise the First ASEAN Braille Day Carnival on the day when Louis Braille was born.

Nevertheless, in spite of our efforts, we realise there has not been adequate recognition with regards to the contributions of Louis Braille and his Braille System in the development of rehabilitation, education and employment opportunities for the blind and visually impaired. All these programmes are made possible through reading and writing in Braille. Because of Braille which enabled the blind to gain literacy through informal and formal education, they have been able subsequently to profit from vocational training and to take up employment, pursue professional careers, or develop talents and hobbies that have enabled them to aspire to greater heights, especially in music and writing.

In this modern ICT age of ours with information and transactions being mostly done through the internet and the mobile phone, one would have expected Braille to become a thing of the past. But this is not so and, on the contrary, modern technological advancements have, in fact, strengthened the position of Braille although they may have changed some of the ways and methods in which Braille is used by the blind today. For example, the manufacturers of assistive equipment have come up with embossers, refreshable Braille displays and computer software that can convert digitised information into Braille with just a few keystroke commands.



Thus, it is very important that educators and organisations serving the blind should continue to give due attention to the teaching of Braille. However, it is of paramount importance that the blind themselves understand the need to master the skills of reading and writing in Braille so that they will be able to harness their potential and develop their talents to the fullest.

In short, Braille is the key to success for any blind or visually impaired person.

Thus, in organising the first ASEAN Braille Day Carnival through the joint effort and collaboration of NCBM and MAB, it is our fervent desire to give Louis Braille the due recognition that he so richly deserves. At the same time, the carnival is being celebrated with keen awareness on our part concerning the need and urgency to promote Braille as a tool of learning for the blind and to develop programmes that will help to raise functional literacy among the blind and visually impaired to a much higher level.

In closing, I must congratulate and compliment MAB for having successfully organised the First ASEAN Braille Day Carnival in joint cooperation with NCBM. I am delighted with the new format that has enriched the carnival and has attracted much more participation both from within and outside Malaysia.

Thank you and have a successful Braille carnival.

## LOUIS, THE FATHER OF BRAILLE DOTS

*By Aimee Koh*

***Editor's Note: Aimee Koh is a volunteer at the MAB Library and Resource Centre and she is an enthusiastic supporter of Braille. She wrote the following article for the souvenir programme of the First ASEAN Braille Day Carnival. Here is what she says:***

Louis Braille was an active, intelligent and inquisitive child born on January 4, 1809, in Coupvray, France. Tragedy struck early, when at the age of three he strayed into his father's workshop and an awl slipped from his young hand into his eye. Although the doctor came quickly, infection set in and spread to his other eye. Louis became totally blind. The accident thrust him into a dark, colourless world, forecasting a miserable future devoid of hope.

His father, a master craftsman of great insight, taught him the alphabet by hammering nails in the shape of letters into wood, and also guided his hand to write. He was trained in many living skills at home by his loving parents, and Louis emerged positive in attitude and with a tremendous thirst to learn.

The village priest, Father Pal-luy, also believed in Louis, and taught him what he could about the Bible and the world around him. Next, he arranged for Louis to be accepted into the village school and finally into The Royal Institute for Blind Youth in Paris.

In 1819, at the age of ten, Louis went by stagecoach to Paris to further his education and to widen his world. Here, he was excited by the many subjects he could learn by listening and memorising. He learnt arithmetic, grammar, geography, history, science, music and a trade as well. However, he longed to explore knowledge by himself, but there was only a cumbersome and inefficient system of raised letters. Books were expensive and extremely bulky; moreover, they were few and difficult to read.

One day, in 1821, an army captain, Captain Barbier, came to the school to demonstrate his "Night-Writing" of sending silent messages to his troops. This consisted of raised dots punched into thick paper by a stylus. It was based on sounds but it had many limitations. They couldn't write numbers, capital or punctuations and the innumerable patterns were complicated and difficult to do and feel. It was fine for short messages but quite inadequate for general use.

Yet, Louis liked the idea of dots and he set about improving the Night-Writing. Captain Barbier decided to find out more about the improvement to his system. When confronted by a twelve year old boy, he became curt to the point of contempt which left Louis crushed and confused. As Louis could expect no support from the Captain, he decided to



work on his own.

The next three years he laboured, skipping meals and sacrificing sleep, but it was a blind alley that led nowhere!

Suddenly, inspiration came, why not use a system based on the alphabet instead? Things fell into place!

He put six dots on paper and numbered them as below:

**Dot 1 a    Dot 4 @**

**Dot 2 1    Dot 5 “**

**Dot 3 ‘    Dot 6 ,**

Raised dot number 1 – that stands for a

Raised dots numbers 1 & 2 – that is b

Raised dots 1 & 4 mean c

Finally, his system contained three blocks:

A b c d e f g h I j

K l m n o p q r s t

U v w x y z

Success was literally at his fingertips. It was simple and efficient; easy to use and understand. Just six dots in different arrangements!

Excitement spread through the school. Students could now communicate with each other, take notes and keep diaries. It was a gift from heaven!

Dr. Pignier, the Director of the Institute, approved and believed

in it, giving his blessing! However, the sighted world was skeptical and callous, so funds much needed to publish books were not released and the new system of dots could not be advertised outside of the Institute or to the rest of the world.

Louis was undaunted by the rejection his system received. He continued to spend long hours manually punching out books for the Institute. Alas, his health suffered, and while on medical leave, a new director of the Institute, Dr. Dufau, outlawed the system, confiscated all tools and burnt all the books. It was a blow to the ailing Louis.

Fortunately, Dr. Dufau soon realised he could not stop this system from flourishing, he had only driven it underground. He then began to encourage and promote it, although for the wrong reasons of ambition and self glorification.

In 1847, the first Braille printing press came into being and Braille writing spread within France. Louis was frail in his last years, he was often bedridden, but continued to teach piano in the Institute whenever he found strength. Finally, on January 6, 1852, he succumbed to tuberculosis – loved by his friends, cheerful till the end, at peace with God and himself, he passed away.

Multitudes missed him, but he was yet unknown to the world. He was laid to rest in Coupvray, his hometown.

Braille had been in use in the Institute for eight years when Louis died, but it continued to spread nationally, then internationally. By 1949, the United Nations

had adapted it to more than two hundred languages and dialects throughout the world. Braille achieved the status of a universal language.

A hundred years after his death, Louis’ body was moved from his village grave to the Pantheon, to lie with other great men and women of France. He was honoured for opening the doors of knowledge to all those who cannot see.

What if Louis Braille’s parents did not give him a good environment conducive to learning? What if the village priest did not step out and go the extra mile for Louis? What if Louis himself allowed self doubt to overcome him? What if he could not maintain his passion for the raised dots system in the face of opposition and chose to be a musician instead? We would never know the exact outcome, but one thing is certain, the lives of the visually handicapped would definitely be poorer.

# JASA BRAILLE

Oleh Choo Kim Yoon



**Editor's Note:** The following lyrics were composed by Choo Kim Yoon, who is both blind and deaf. His composition won the first prize of RM1,500 in the Lyrics-writing Contest for the First ASEAN Braille Day Carnival 2006. It appeared in the Braille Carnival souvenir programme.

Braille, Braille, Braille,  
ilmu yang sungguh berharga,  
Tulisan Braille bagaikan  
sinar pelita,  
Memberikan kita harapan  
yang cerah,  
Menuju masa depan yang  
gemilang.

Di mana jua, di serata dunia,  
Tulisan Braille ternyata san-  
gat berguna,  
Sebagai sumber ilmu penge-  
tahuan,  
Membantu kita mencapai  
kemajuan.

Jasa Braille dikenang zaman  
berzaman,  
Tulisan Braille ciptaan insan  
budiman,  
Louis Braille namanya,  
sungguh mulia budinya,  
Setinggi nilai emas permata.

Ke gunung tinggi kita  
mendaki,  
Lautan luas pun kita renangi,  
Tulisan Braille tetap setia  
menemani,  
Sehingga kita di puncak  
kejayaan!  
Sehingga kita di puncak  
kejayaan!  
Sehingga kita di puncak  
kejayaan!

# THANKS TO LOUIS BRAILLE

By Somiin Sualin

**Editor's Note:** Somiin Sualin won the first prize for her poem which was submitted for the First ASEAN Braille Day Carnival 2006 and it appeared in the Braille Carnival souvenir programme. The verse is simple but it reveals how much Braille means to the writer.

For the purpose of clarity, the poem has been edited for this magazine. Here it is:

In a world without sight,  
I need never to have a fright,  
For with just six dots I can  
read and write,  
So my world is always gay  
and bright.

You read print boks with your  
sight  
But I read special books with  
finger tips,  
It's true, you may think it's  
unreal  
But, I tell you, this is called  
Braille.

With help from this tool many  
blind have succeeded  
In life – it's true and it's real,  
Thanks to the wonderful,  
inspiring inventor,  
The great and courageous  
Louis Braille.

# DIALOGUE BETWEEN NCBM AND THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

*By Ivan Ho Tuck Choy,  
Executive Director,  
National Council for the Blind, Malaysia*



The dialogue between NCBM and the Education Ministry took place on 14th June, 2005 from 2.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. The venue of the meeting was at the Special Education Department of the Ministry located at Paras 2, Block E2, Kompleks Kerajaan Parcel E, Pusat Pentadbiran Kerajaan Persekutuan, Putrajaya.

Puan Siti Zaharah, the Timbalan Ketua Pengarah of JPK and Chairperson, welcomed us warmly. She was very supportive of the recommendations that had been submitted by NCBM (which had been formulated at the seminar on educational issues held at the Allson Klana Hotel in Seremban in 2004).

En. Tun Faisal, Special Officer to the Minister of Education, apologised that he could not fix an appointment for the President of NCBM with Datuk Sri Hishamuddin due to the Minister's busy schedule. Nevertheless, he assured En. Kulasegaran that everything would be done to resolve the issues. Those that could not

be dealt with satisfactorily, they would be referred to the Minister.

En. Kulasegaran then expressed appreciation for the presence of the representatives from the Ministry and requested En. Tun Faisal to convey to the Minister his special thanks.

The recommendations were then deliberated upon as follows:

## 1. BRAILLE TEXTBOOKS

As the national coordinating body, NCBM would give its commitment to fulfilling the tasks given to it. It would distribute the work among its member organisations once the contracts are awarded to it and be responsible for its completion.

Thus, the meeting recognised NCBM to be the national body that the Ministry of Education should be dealing with in the production of Braille textbooks. It would be up to NCBM to deal with the distribution of work internally.

## 2. COMMISSIONING FOR PRODUCTION BY 2015

As to the question of commissioning NCBM and its member organisations to produce at least 80% of the Braille textbooks by 2015, concerns were expressed regarding the question of monopoly

by one organisation and concerning some provisions in the regulations of the Ministry of Finance requiring companies which bid for government contracts to have Bumiputra status.

En. Kulasegaran explained that NCBM is a non-profit organisation whose main objective is to serve the blind, regardless of race or creed. Therefore, the issue of "Bumiputra status" should not be applied to NCBM.

Referring to the question of monopoly, he said that NCBM was only asking for incremental contracts, gradually rising to 80% by 2015. Besides, the work will be shared out among its member organisations.

Thus, BBT agreed to award more contracts to NCBM which will be committed to improving its Braille production facilities. However, this would not prevent BBT from awarding contracts to other companies if it would serve the interest of the blind. On the question of "Bumiputra status", NCBM could apply to the Ministry of Finance for the requirement to be waived.

## 3. STANDARDISING OF BRAILLE PRODUCTION

It was agreed that JPK and NCBM would jointly organise a work-

shop to draw up a strategic plan for standardising the production of Braille materials. When completed, JPK would be the body to ensure that all stake-holders use the Braille Transcribers' Manual. To ensure acceptance of the manual, representatives from BBT, the Examination Board, and other interested parties (including RNIB) will be invited to take part.

#### **4. SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS**

JPK will consider purchasing such items (for the use of blind students) from organisations which can offer competitive prices plus technical support.

#### **5. CAREER COUNSELLORS**

Currently, counsellors are posted to schools with a certain number of students but the special schools and programmes for disabled children are not covered.

It was agreed that NCBM should use its good connections to explore for such special training courses. One of the channels would be RNIB and the matter will be discussed with Mr. Colin Low.

#### **6. POSTING OF TEACHERS WITH THE NECESSARY SKILLS**

JPK admitted that this was a problem which required long-term solutions. There was a shortage of such teachers and not too many people were interested in this specialised field.

It was agreed that JPK and NCBM will explore further for solutions.

#### **7. VISION SCREENING IN TEACHER-TRAINING CURRICULUM**

JPK felt that rather than overload the teachers, this matter would be better dealt with by the Ministry of Health.

However, JPK would be willing to cooperate with those bodies dealing with blindness prevention.

#### **8. TRANSFER OF HEADS AND SENIOR ASSISTANTS**

JPK explained that this was sometimes unavoidable but remedial action will be considered in the future.

#### **9. PRE-SCHOOL INTEGRATED PROGRAMMES**

This matter may be considered in the future. At present, the numbers do not justify starting such classes.

#### **10. BLIND CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL DISABILITIES**

It was recognised that there was a shortage of trained staff to deal with this matter. The challenges and solutions will be explored further.

#### **11. MONITORING TO ENSURE HIGH STANDARDS**

JPK assured that the process of monitoring and evaluation was on-going in order to ensure high

quality and standards in the education programmes. In fact, there is an advisory committee which meets regularly for the exchange of views between JPK and the NGOs.

Concerning research projects, this would be in the purview of the Ministry of Higher Education and the institutions of higher learning.

#### **12. LEARNING OF BRAILLE BY LOW-VISIONED STUDENTS**

The Chairperson confirmed that it was the policy of JPK to encourage the learning of Braille by low-visioned children. However, parental counselling may be necessary to overcome this problem.

#### **13. TERMINOLOGY ON DISABILITY**

The Chairperson assured that unacceptable terms will no longer be used in legislative documents such as the Education Act as we moved towards a rights-based society.

#### **14. MUSIC AS A PROSPECTIVE CAREER OPPORTUNITY**

It was agreed to support the project paper submitted by the University College Sedaya International.

#### **15. REVISED MALAY BRAILLE CODE**

JPK has accepted the code and will consider launching the book in due course.

## CONCLUSION

We are most grateful to the Ministry of Education for the dialogue and appreciate very much their willingness to work with NCBM and other organisations serving the blind. Such positive understanding and cooperation augurs well for the blind in the long term.

Some are born

great, some

achieve great-

ness and some

hire

public relations

writers.

(Daniel J.

Boorstin)

# **SURVEY ON THE BLIND IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION**

*By Moses Choo,  
Assistant Executive Director,  
National Council for the Blind, Malaysia*



This survey was carried out by the Blind Professionals Assistance Service (BPAS) in mid-2005. The objective of the survey was to ascertain the level of confidence existing among the blind teachers as well as to gauge their work performance and relationship with their fellow co-workers. Below are the list of questions and the responses received.

1. Are you proud to be a teacher in your school? (Positive – 100%)
2. Are you happy to be teaching in your school? (Positive – 85%)
3. Is your school environment conducive for a blind teacher to move around? (Positive – 86%)
4. Do you have a very cordial relationship with your sighted colleagues? (Positive – 78%)
5. Does the school head have a positive attitude regarding your participation? (Positive – 70%)

6. Are you included in the activities and programmes of your school? (Positive – 62%)
7. Do you feel that there is no discrimination against blind teachers? (Positive – 62%)
8. Do you feel that you are well accepted by your students? (Positive – 68%)
9. Do you feel that you have done well as a teacher? (Positive – 32%)
10. You do not face any problems in preparing for your classes? (Positive – 55%)
11. You face no problems during classes? (Positive – 27%)
12. You have no problems in marking exercises? (Positive – 40%)
13. Would you use the assistance of students to write on the board? (Positive – 27%)
14. You are able to maintain discipline in your classes? (Positive – 47%)
15. Do you assume equal responsibilities as your sighted colleagues? (Positive – 77%)
16. Are you given responsibilities as the advisor of any society or co-curricular activity? (Positive – 71%)

17. Are you involved in more than one committee of the school? (Positive – 38%)
18. Are you given the opportunity to head a project or programme in your school? (Positive – 18%)
19. Do you have knowledge in the use of computers? (Positive – 100%)
20. Do you need reading services? (Positive – 81%)
21. Do you have opportunities to attend courses organised by the Ministry of Education? (Positive – 27%)

**FINDINGS**

Generally, the blind and visually impaired teachers have indicated that they lack confidence in actual classroom presentations. Thus, it is felt that the holding of workshops may be useful in helping the teachers build up self-confidence.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The member organisations of NCBM should assist the blind teachers in obtaining reading services.
2. Courses for blind teachers should go beyond ICT training and include such subjects as resource management and presentation skills.
3. Blind teachers should be encouraged to take part in courses organised by the Ministry

of Education so that they can stay abreast of new policies and teaching techniques.

4. There should be more effective coordination in the provision of support services for blind and visually impaired teachers.

Treat a person as  
he is, and he will remain as he is. Treat  
him as he could be,  
and he will become  
what he should be.  
  
(Jimmy)

IF YOU KNOW  
OF ANY BLIND  
PERSON NEEDING  
REGISTRATION FOR  
EDUCATION OR  
REHABILITATION,  
PLEASE CONTACT  
US IMMEDIATELY

NCBM  
Tel: 03-2272 4959  
03-2272 1442

MAB  
Tel: 03-2272 2673  
03-2272 2677



# THE CHALLENGES I FACED IN THE MAB INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

*By Colin Ng Soon Beng*



***Editor's Note: In 2003 Colin Ng graduated from the University College Sedaya International (UCSI) with a diploma in contemporary music. In recognition, he received from MAB the Best Blind Student's Award on the diploma level for that year together with a sum of RM1,000. He then went on to pursue his bachelor of music (Hons.) degree at the same institution which will be completed on April 30, 2006.***

One of the assignments of his degree course was to undergo an internship programme with a related industry. As Colin was unable to gain access to such an industry, MAB agreed to provide the opportunity for him to gain exposure and training at the Audio Unit of the MAB Library and Resource Centre. Colin was with the MAB internship programme from September to December 2005.

In spite of his multiple disabilities (including blindness), Colin has done well in the internship programme and he would

like to share his experience with readers.

Here is what Colin says:

I started work at the MAB library on September 6, 2005. I met the librarian, Miss Christine Ng Lai, and she gave me most of the assignments. They included transferring materials from cassette-tape to MP3 and CD format, preparing work instructions for volunteers, etc.

My first assignment was to produce an audio book on MP3 format. To do this, I had to use a programme called Sound Forge to do the transfer from cassette-tape. I had some difficulty in using the marker to highlight the unwanted parts that had been previously recorded at the end of each chapter in order to have them erased. I had to press the I key to mark "in" and the O key to mark "out".

So I was shown another method which I found to be much easier, i.e. to highlight the unwanted parts by using the shift key plus right arrow, listening for the unwanted part and finally pressing the delete key to have it cancelled.

Another challenge I encountered was in using the voice to label each track recorded into the computer. I tried using my own voice to announce each track number; however, whenever I played back, the voice could not be heard clearly due to the prob-

lem of my hypernasality. A solution was suggested to help me overcome this deficiency, i.e. by using a label file. This would only announce the track numbers, e.g. track 1, track 2, etc.

The final step was to burn the MP3 file on to the CD. I also had some problem in dealing with this process but the audio technician, Abian, gave me some assistance where appropriate to ensure that the process was carried out smoothly.

My second assignment was to transfer CD material on to MP3 format. I believe I could have done this easily by using the Audio Catalyst but, unfortunately, the existing programme did not have the ability to do this. Abian again came to my rescue by installing a software called CD-Ex. This enabled me to extract all the tracks from the CD and to transfer them on to the MP3 format without much problem. As a result, I had produced a set of four CDs containing Mandarin stories read by Chinese volunteers.

Preparing work instructions for volunteers was not a major problem as all I had to do was to type them out. Initially, however, my instructions were too elaborate and Miss Christine Ng advised me to make them simpler.

Another small problem was the lack of consistency in typing the key name. In spite of this, nonetheless, I did manage to pro-

vide some instructions for the staff and volunteers.

I also helped out with the Braille book production. Volunteers would read to me and I would key in the material on to the computer. The books I have typed include “Tupai Family Adventures”, “The Lake Classic Short Stories”, and “The Great British and Irish Short Stories” by James Joyce. Altogether I have keyed in at least nine books for Braille book production.

Then I faced a major hitch when it came to using the DAISY programme. While I was able to access DAISY by using the MyStudio-PC, I could not get the recording to work for the following reasons:

Firstly, I was not able to record the book with my own voice because of my hypernasality problem.

Secondly, although DAISY was supposed to have easier shortcuts (as was told to me by Miss Ng), I found that they were more complicated than Sound Forge. Also, the recording capacity for an MP3 file using DAISY was only 32 kb mono. Thus, I had to give up on this assignment.

For the music album, there were no major problems in preparing the songs and instrumentals. After office hours, I was able to work at home by connecting my Roland XP80 to Sound Forge, which then recorded directly into the computer. The music was then saved on a Wave File to be transferred on to CD later on. Altogether there were 11 items on the album which I named as “internship mix”.

I had no problems at all when it came to work ethics such as punctuality. I started work at half past nine in the morning and finished work at four in the afternoon. I made sure that I kept to this work schedule despite the traffic jams as I travelled from my home in Puchong and back.

Then I was given a brief exposure period with the Society of the Blind in Malaysia (SBM) from 18th to 20th November. My work was supervised by Mr. Alex Lee Guan Hock.

My assignments included using the answering machine to record announcements, the mass duplication of cassette-tapes, arranging the tapes to be ready for posting, erasing of old tapes for recycling, and to package the finished products for customers.

I must say that I had a very tough time trying to learn so much within three days. I had difficulty in coping with most of the assignments but I did manage to duplicate at least 172 out of 250 tapes (more than 50% of the assignment) given on the first day.

On the whole, it was a good experience for me to know something about the mass duplication of cassette-tapes and I had a good insight into the work carried out at SBM.

In spite of all the challenges and problems faced during my internship programme, I am happy to know that I had done my best in my assignments. I wish to thank the staff at the MAB library for their constant support and assistance.

This period of training has been an eye-opener to me and it has helped to prepare me for future employment opportunities after I have obtained my degree.

Some are born  
great, some  
achieve great-  
ness and some  
hire  
public relations  
writers.  
  
(Daniel J.  
Boorstin)

# A MIND-MAP OF THE K.L. SENTRAL STATION

*By Inungkiran bt. Mongijal*

***Editor's Note: In "The NCBM Outreach" of January – March 2006, Inungkiran gave an account of the survey of the K.L. Sentral area as a follow-up to the Brickfields barrier-free project. She would now like to present readers with a mind-map of the K.L. Sentral station and its facilities.***

As I had mentioned in my report on the survey of the K.L. Sentral area, I would attempt to provide readers with a more detailed description of the place. So I hope you will be able to follow me by reading this mind-map.

Well, our starting point could be the Monorail station. We must locate the ramp or slope along the edge of the pavement and then cross the Tun Sambanthan main road to the K.L. Sentral station.

There is a bus-stop right in front of the route leading to the station. The bus is on its way to Kuala Lumpur from the Puchong and Old Klang Road areas. So you can get down here and join the others in locating the steps in front of the route to the K.L. Sentral. During the day and evening time, this route is usually lined with hawker stalls selling all kinds of things, particularly Indian goods, food and titbits.

You will then cross over the divider perpendicular to the route you are walking. When you reach the pavement opposite the divider,

you can turn left and walk along the pavement on your right. You will pass the Genting Highlands bus station and eventually the lift, escalator and staircase, all leading to the first floor of the building. From the top of the escalator, a slope leads you gently downwards to the main door.

Then as you walk along the right-hand side of the building, you will come to the following:

Three ticket machines for KLIA;

Alternatively, you could buy your tickets from the counter next to the machines;

Then comes the entrance to the KLIA Express for Bandar Tasik, Putrajaya, Salak Tinggi and the KLIA airport;

Walk on (if you are not going to KLIA) and you will pass two telephone booths, famous Amus Cookies, and the entrance to Putra LRT;

Move on and you come to the shop for handphones, the machines and counter for KTM tickets, and the entrance to KTM station;

Move along again and you come to the ATM machines for Bank Islam, Bank Rakyat and Bumiputra Commerce;

Then you may enter the passage leading to the Transnasional

bus counter;

Walking along the right-hand side of the passage, you will pass the entrance to McDonald's and then the cocotrees chocolate shop;

At the bus counter, you turn back to walk along the opposite side of the passage which is now on your right – you will pass the RHB bank and AM bank and the money changers;

Coming out of the passage, continue along the right-hand side of the building and you will pass the Galore Holiday Tours, the Prima Deli cake shop, Café Shida, and a fruit stall.

On the right-hand corner at the back are the toilets and on the left-hand corner is the surau.

As you walk back on the opposite side of the building (which is now on your right), you will pass the escalators going up or down to the taxi-stand; however, if you go upstairs, you could also relax yourself and go for a sumptuous bite at the Kentucky Fried Chicken there.

If you are not taking the taxi or having KFC, then you can move on instead and you will pass some more shops and restaurants and additional ticketing facilities and entrances for LRT and KTM.

In the centre of the building are a line of clothing stalls.

When you come back to the main door, you can refresh yourself with some lovely ice-cream at the McDonald's stall for only RM1.05.

Finally, you can make your way out of the building by taking the lift or walking down the staircase. At the bottom of the stairs, you should turn left and you will also find the escalator and lift. Follow the pavement (now on your left) and you will come once more to the Genting Highlands bus station.

Cross the road and divider back to the route leading to the Kuala Lumpur bus-stop on the main road; or else cross the main road and head for Monorail on the opposite side.

So there you are – I hope you can understand my mind-map. Just like you, I never knew there were so many facilities at the K.L. Sentral. One could really spend quite a few pleasant hours there for shopping, tasting of the delicious food, or just simply looking around.

It's time for the  
blind to  
help the  
blind

# UPGRADING OF THE GURNEY TRAINING CENTRE

*By George Thomas,  
Executive Director, Malaysian Association for the Blind*

*And Wong Yoon Loong,  
Principal, Gurney Training Centre*

The Gurney Training Centre (GTC) was established in 1953 by the Social Welfare Department. Its administration was handed to the Malaysian Association for the Blind (MAB) in 1957 but the government continued providing grants to support its services. Thanks to the government grants and public donations, the services are provided free of charge to the blind, which include training, lodgings, food and pocket money (RM50 per month since March 2005).

Since its inception, more than 1,700 blind persons have completed their training. Most of them are gainfully employed as stenographers, telephone operators, masseurs and factory workers. Some of them manage to gain admission to local or foreign institutions of higher learning, thereby improving their career opportunities.

In view of the rapidly changing job market with the current emphasis on knowledge-based workers, MAB is striving to upgrade its facilities, review the training curriculum and retrain its staff so that the trainees will be able to obtain better-quality training. Thus, the redevelopment of the GTC site commenced in 1994 and was completed in 1997.

The new upgraded GTC will

strive to be a centre of excellence in the provision of comprehensive and up-to-date rehabilitation and vocational training programmes for the blind not only in Malaysia but in the Asia-Pacific region as well. It will work in partnership with local organisations and, if necessary, adapt programmes from overseas organisations in order to give our trainees the highest-quality training. The centre will also apply for accreditation from the Majlis Latihan Vokasional Kebangsaan (MLVK). With the completion of the new hostel in 2006, the capacity will be increased to 90 trainees at any one time, thus making more training opportunities available to the blind.

In the upgrading process, existing programmes will be improved and new programmes introduced to equip the trainees with higher level skills and abilities.

The courses will include rehabilitation, information administrative assistants (formerly telephonists), massage, reflexology, woodwork, ICT, adapted technology, web designing, computer programming, entrepreneurship, job preparation, and practical training.

The objectives of the upgraded GTC are as follows:

# NEWS FROM THE MALAYSIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND

1. To assist newly identified persons with visual impairment to readjust to their new condition of blindness through individualised rehabilitation training.
2. To equip blind persons with the necessary prerequisites and so prepare them for further education in an institution of higher learning.
3. To prepare the blind for gainful employment through vocational training suitable to their needs and abilities.
4. To provide blind workers with retraining opportunities to improve their skills so that they could remain in the competitive job market.
5. To help the blind build up self-confidence and self-esteem so that they will be better prepared to be integrated into society.

(To be continued)

## SPORTS AND RECREATION

MAB upgraded its gymnasium facilities at the cost of RM15,000 and has employed a part-time trainer-cum-coordinator to assist the 72 members registered with the gym at a yearly fee of RM10 only per year.

Working in cooperation with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, MAB selected a national team for lawn ball and had a 12-member team participate in the World Lawn Ball Championships held in Capetown, South Africa from April 2 – 18, 2005. The team won two bronze medals (one for singles and one for doubles). RM141,000 was spent on this project.

MAB and the Selangor Judo Association organised a judo championship on September 25, 2005 at the MAB judo hall. 32 blind persons took part under six categories for the competition.

The winners received trophies and cash prizes ranging from RM250 to RM500.

MAB in collaboration with the National Paralympic Council organised the Second National Goalball Open Championships from November 18 – 21, 2005 at the Titiwangsa Indoor Stadium, K.L. Five regional teams took part and the Sabah team emerged as the champion, carrying away the challenge trophy and RM2,000

cash prize.

MAB was honoured by the International Paralympic Council when its president, Sir Philip Craven, declared Kompleks MAB as the national centre of sports excellence for the blind on June 30, 2005. Following this auspicious occasion, MAB was actively involved in preparing national coaches and athletes for the ASEAN para games for Manila from December 15 – 20, 2005 and the FESPIC games to be held in K.L. from November 26 to December 2, 2006.

The ultimate goal is to upgrade the present Sports and Recreation Committee to a department of the Association by January 2006.

## GURNEY TRAINING CENTRE

Two of GTC's massage instructors, En. Mat Rodzi Hanapi and En. Vasu Manikam, received their Sijil Kemahiran Malaysia (SKM Level 2 Certification) for massage from the Majlis Latihan Vokasional Kebangsaan (MLVK). They are the first two blind individuals to receive this certification and this will enable the GTC to award MLVK's SKM certificates to its trainees from July 2006.

In order to make the GTC the centre of excellence in rehabilitation and vocational training for



the blind, existing courses will be upgraded and new courses introduced.

### **THE FIRST ASEAN BRAILLE DAY CARNIVAL**

MAB and NCBM jointly organised the First ASEAN Braille Day Carnival on January 4, 2006 which was the 197th birthday of Louis Braille, the inventor of the six-dot Braille system for the blind. The event was held in order to honour Louis Braille for his revolutionary invention.

The objective of the carnival was to promote the wider and more proficient use of Braille not only in Malaysia but in the whole ASEAN region. The celebration was held at the MAB hall in Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur.

There was a wide range of pre-carnival contests and competitions since the middle of 2005, including an item which was open to the sighted who had an interest in Braille. Blind individuals of all age groups and throughout the ASEAN region were invited to take part. All entries had to be submitted in Grade 2 Braille and contestants were allowed to take part in as many contests as they wished but only one entry per person for each contest was permitted. All entries had to be original unpublished work.

Altogether there were seven contests which included Malay pantun-writing, Malay sajak-writing, English poem-writing, lyrics writing, experience sharing, script writing and the braille-cum-reading contest in English and Malay.

The main results of the contests are as follows:

For experience sharing in English the winners were Colin Ng Soon Beng, Tan Yu Jin, Amanda Kong, Siti Jineh Taimun, and Mok Kam Yin. For the Malay experience-sharing essay the five winners were Mohd. Zaini Ismail, Romainun Zakaria, Saifuddin Mohamad, Zamzuri Ghani, and Zainah Awang.

The three winners for pantun writing were Abu Hassan Ashaari, Romainun Zakaria and Yong Chwan Fwu respectively.

The first three winners for the sajak competition were Romainun Zakaria, Mohd. Ghazali Tocheh and Zahari Hashim.

In the poem-writing competition, the winners were Somiin Sualin, Mok Kam Yin and Aw Soo Kwan.

The winner for the sketch-writing competition was Yong Chwan Fwu.

For the lyrics contest the winner was Choo Kim Yoon, who is both blind and deaf.

For the braille-cum-reading contest, the winners for the Bahasa Malaysia section were Abu Hassan Ashaari, Inungkiran Mongijal and Romainun Zakaria while for the English section the winners were Chan Sau Yin, Ben Ong and Mohd. Harun.

NCBM and MAB put up a sum of RM40,000 on a 50 – 50 basis in support of the project.

### **EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE BLIND**

During the MAB Open House for the blind on January 14, 2006, educational awards and scholarships were presented to the blind by the MAB President, Prof. Datuk Dr. Ismail bin Md. Salleh.

The best blind students of 2004 and awards given were as follows:

1. Yavathan a/l Aruldas (low-visioned) – RM200; Standard Six, UPSR; he scored four As, three Bs; Sekolah Kebangsaan Tamil, Ladang Meiha, Perak.
2. Mohd. Nazhif bin Mohd. Sapie – RM300; Form Three, PMR; six As, two Bs; Sekolah Agama Menengah Muhammadiyah, Sabak Bernam, Selangor.
3. Christine Tan Lee Ling (low-visioned) – RM400; Form Five, SPM; six A1s, one A2; Sekolah Menengah (P) Temenggong Ibrahim, Batu Pahat, Johor.
4. Yeoh Kok Soon – RM500; Form Six, STPM; four As, one B plus; St. John's Institution, Kuala Lumpur.
5. Norhuda bt. Abdul Samad (low-visioned) – RM1,000; diploma in business management; Cybernetics College, Taman Maluri, K.L.
6. Rosni Saini – RM2,000; degree in administration and social justice; Universiti Malaya, K.L.

MAB also gave scholarship loans to blind undergraduates as follows:



1. Yeoh Kok Soon – RM6,000 per year for three years; business studies; Universiti Malaya.
2. Md. Syaal Hakim bin Awang (low-visioned) – RM6,000 per year for four years; cognitive science and human development; Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Tanjong Malim, Perak.
3. Shalini a/p Gunarajan – RM6,000 per year for four years; psychology; University of Southern Queensland, Brisbane, Australia.
4. Mageswari a/p Rajasegaran – RM6,000 per year for two years plus RM3,000 for half year; diploma in early childhood education; Segi College (formerly Prime College), Subang Jaya, Selangor.

Certificates were also presented to the following:

1. Mohd. Nor bin Don – graduate of Universiti Malaya; six months training in the MAB Executive Trainee Scheme – May to October 2003.
2. Khoo Che Tiong – graduate from Universiti Malaya; six months training in MAB Executive Trainee Scheme and six months training at UC MAS in Setapak, K.L. – July 2004 to July 2005.
3. Colin Ng Soon Beng – Pursuing degree in contemporary music at University College Sedaya International; did his internship or practical training with the MAB library (Audio Section) – September to December 2005.

## MY LIFE S A BLIND PERSON

*By William Wong*

***Editor's Note: William Wong and his wife were in Kuala Lumpur for the 2005 Christmas holidays. When I met him and heard about his life as a blind person way back in the 1940s, I thought it would be good for him to share his experience with other blind people in Malaysia.***

Here is what he says:

I remember very little of my childhood except what was told to me. I believe I was born in 1940 and was deserted by my parents because I was blind. Someone found me staying at the Singapore hospital when I was two years old.

I was then brought to the St. Nicholas Home for orphans in Penang and I was looked after by two of my blind seniors, Mary Poon and Elizabeth Hoe. At that time there was not very much to do but we had some basic classes in Braille and there were singing sessions.

We had a lot of free time and the boys in particular would spend their time climbing up the trees to explore for rambutans, water jambus and coconuts. There were no radios for us in those days but someone discovered that we could buy what was called a crystal set. It was actually a simple transistor with a big earphone and you had to attach a long aerial to it. Our seniors told us that if we could hang the aerial high up in a

tree, we would be able to receive even the BBC. We found that the coconut trees were the best for hanging up our aerials as the radio waves would not be blocked by the branches and leaves.

It was only when I was nearly 16 that I began learning some handicraft skills which included making baskets, nylon stools and chicks. We also obtained permission to rear chickens.

In 1956 when I was 16 years old, I was sent to the Gurney Training Centre in Kuala Lumpur. I was there for three years and I was given further training in basket-making.

In 1959 I was sent to the Kinta Valley Workshop in Ipoh, Perak to be a basketry and chain-link fence worker. We stayed in a hostel and, besides our piece-rate earnings, we were given an allowance of RM25 per month.

During my first two years there, Mr. Cheah was the workshop manager and he ran the place very effectively. He knew how to entertain guests and visitors and to promote the goods made by us. Those were happy days when we worked hard and could be proud that we were earning our own livelihood.

In the third year Mr. Cheah left and he was succeeded by Mr. Yap. He did not do things in the same way as Mr. Cheah and the business slowed down a lot. When

MAB learned that the workshop was now a loss-making concern, Mr. Yap was called to Kuala Lumpur and we blind workers were sent to different parts of the country. Five of us (myself together with Philip Chew, Abdullah, Zakaria and Amran) were sent to the welfare home in Batu Pahat, Johor in 1962. The welfare officer was committed to his work so that we continued to earn our piece-rates for our basketry and to receive our RM25 monthly allowance.

Then, without warning, we were simply sent to the Tampoi Welfare Home (also in Johor) in 1965. The welfare officer here was not very encouraging; If our piece-rates went above a certain amount, our monthly allowance of RM25 would be cut.

Tampoi was quite near to Singapore and Edward Hon, a low-visioned person from the island in the south, was a frequent and welcome visitor. We heard about his business ventures to help the blind by selling eggs and biscuits.

One day, at the suggestion of Philip Chew, we told the welfare officer that we were going to Kuala Lumpur to get work. Thus, it was in 1967 when we followed Edward Hon to Singapore instead and started selling things. Hong Swee Eng, the sister of Edward Hon, managed the business.

There were about nine of us in the group and we would go selling twice a day – once in the morning and once in the evening. The biscuits would be loaded and tied down on to the frame of the car roof, thus leaving the space inside the car for us passengers. Ah Lim, the driver, would drop

us at different spots and pick us up at the appointed time. Sighted children between 10 to 12 years old helped us as our guides. It was during this time when I met Rose who was later to become my wife.

After about six years, the driver decided to leave because the manager (Edward's sister) refused to increase his pay. So she had to drive the car besides running the business and looking after her own children. Often we had to wait a long time for her to take us to the appointed place for selling. One day she got very angry when she discovered that my wife and I were selling on our own. Thus, the group split up and we continued selling with the help of our own children. When our children were grown up, they felt embarrassed to be our guides and so we stopped selling.

In 1993 when I was already 53 years old, I applied for admission to the training centre of the Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped (SAVH). At first I learned to fix bicycle gears. However, as there was not much business, Mr. Seen who was the rehabilitation officer, decided to introduce massage.

Since then, I have been working as a masseur with the Mid-Point Orchard Massage Enterprise which is run by a blind person.

IF YOU KNOW  
OF ANY BLIND  
PERSON NEEDING  
REGISTRATION FOR  
EDUCATION OR  
REHABILITATION,  
PLEASE CONTACT  
US IMMEDIATELY

NCBM

Tel: 03-2272 4959

03-2272 1442

MAB

Tel: 03-2272 2673

03-2272 2677

# IPC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES FOR MALAYSIA

By S. Radha Krishnan



**Editor's Note:** This paper was presented by S. Radha Krishnan at the 7th General Assembly of the International Blind Sports Association (IBSA) held in Beijing, China in June 2005.

At the Assembly, Mr. Radha was elected as the Asian Continental delegate by virtue of which the post of the IBSA Asian Regional Chairman also falls to him. He has, therefore, taken over from Michael Barredo of the Philippines who, in turn, has become the president of the IBSA Asian Region, the first time that the presidency has been occupied by an Asian country.

## INTRODUCTION

The Malaysian Paralympic Council was established in 1991 and it has played an important role in developing, promoting and coordinating sports and games for the disabled in this country. Though the period has been brief (as we were formed not too many years ago), much knowledge and experiences have been gained

through our involvement in meeting the challenges faced by both the disabled athletes and the organisers alike.

It is now quite timely for the International Paralympic Council (IPC) to have come up with a plan to systematise the development of sports and games for the disabled on the regional, national and local levels. I believe that we in Malaysia are ready to face up to this challenge that has been posed by IPC to look at the five areas of development as follows:-

- Athlete development;
- Leadership development;
- Organisational development;
- Knowledge development; and
- Global paralympic development (awareness).

### 1. ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT

In keeping with the goal of ensuring there is a sustainable path for continual growth in the number and performance level of athletes to compete in the paralympic games, the strategies to be adopted in Malaysia are as follows:

#### 1.1 Promote Awareness of Disability Sports Through CDs and Videotapes

This campaign must be carried out from the school to the university level. This means producing CDs and videotapes featuring the disabled in a variety of sports and games which could be distributed to the schools, colleges and universities. These documentaries could also be made available to the national broadcasting network for programming on radio and television.

#### 1.2 Promoting Sports and Games Among Disabled Students

Providing CDs and videotapes is not enough. We need to popularise games and sports among the disabled students themselves, especially when they are still in primary education. This means providing equipment for practices and competitions and making available expertise to conduct coaching clinics from school to university level. Effort must be made to organise many informal competitions which would lead to major state or national competitions and tournaments where the disabled will be able to win some attractive prizes.

#### 1.3 Sports Excellence Centres

Such excellence centres need to be set up for each of the disabled categories in the country. For example, the Malaysian Association for the Blind could establish an

excellence centre in Temerloh, Pahang where all aspects could be looked into such as facilities, accessibility, etc.

## **2. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

In line with the goal to increase the number and qualifications of leaders (both paid and voluntary manpower) in all aspects of the paralympic movement, strategies to be considered include:

### **2.1 Human Resource Development Through Partnerships**

The National Paralympic Council needs to work closely with other sports bodies for the non-disabled for the training of manpower that will enable the disabled to have proper training and development in sports and games. Technical officials requiring training include the referees, umpires, judges, classifiers, coaches, etc.

Those who aspire to become professional experts should be required to work towards attaining a certain level of professionalism with certification. Volunteers, on the other hand, would be only required to go through short-term coaching clinics but they should be given adequate remunerative allowances. Such distinction in training is essential if we are to deploy paid and voluntary manpower effectively.

### **2.2 Maintaining Quality Leadership Through**

## **Research and Development**

Partnerships could be established with universities with the view to conducting research and development activities. These activities will be aimed at developing scientific applications and approaches in the development of sports experience, equipment, standards and even new games.

### **2.3 Recognition of Sports Expertise for the Disabled**

There is a need to lobby with the government to grant recognition to experts in sports and games for the disabled if they have proper qualifications and certification. This also means that the government must be willing to make available a generous financial budget on a yearly basis in order to meet the expenses for the payment of the experts. If the job prospects are bright, many among the youth will be encouraged to take up training in sports and games for the disabled as their career path for the future.

### **2.4 The Disabled as Leaders and Managers**

It is important to note that the disabled should not be neglected in the development of sports leaders and managers. Scholarships should be provided to encourage the disabled to take up professional training in sports and games for the disabled. They

could then become the future leaders and managers in this field. However, they should be educated to realise that it is important for them to work in partnership with other non-disabled groups and experts rather than trying to go it alone.

On the other hand, disabled sportsmen and sportswomen who have retired from the field could also be encouraged to play certain leadership and management roles in developing and promoting sports and games for the disabled. In this way, their talents and skills will not be wasted after retirement.

Therefore, it will be necessary to organise leadership courses and seminars for all potential leaders and managers, be it on the national, regional or international level.

(To be continued)

We believe in  
working together  
for common  
good

# EFFECTIVE TECHNIQUES FOR VOLUNTEERS IN GUIDING THE BLIND

*By Wong Huey Siew*



**Editor's Note:** *Wong Huey Siew is a regular contributor of articles to "The NCBM Outreach". Currently, he is reading for a doctorate degree in education psychology.*

In fact, being totally blind has not prevented him from venturing into new career fields for the blind after completing his B.A. and Master's degrees at the University of Malaya. His latest venture is the establishment of a company with three other blind persons in order to inspire, impart knowledge and skills, and motivate the young.

In the following article, he provides some tips to the general public on the effective techniques of guiding the blind:

Many members of the public provide a personal service to the blind when they offer a hand to help a blind person on the roadside, or who may be crossing the street, or wandering in a school compound, or shopping for something in a complex or department store. Some of these volunteers find that they do not know how to approach a blind person to of-

fer assistance. Others may feel frustrated and disappointed when their offer of assistance is rejected by a blind person.

To help such volunteers from the general public, I would like to provide some tips on the techniques that could be used when offering assistance to the blind. They are as follows:

## **1. ESTABLISH CONTACT**

When you approach a blind person, begin your conversation with him by letting him know who you are. Do not just keep quiet and suddenly grab him by the arm without warning. Instead, you could ask in a friendly voice, "Do you need help?" or "Would you mind if I help you?"

## **2. OFFER YOUR ARM AND ELBOW**

Many sighted people are inclined to grab the blind person's arm or take hold of his white cane or some other belonging that he may be carrying such as a bag or even tug at his clothing. Of course, this is not the right way to show that you are a friendly volunteer. Rather, what you should do is to ask the blind person to take hold of your arm. Show him where your elbow is by touching his arm with it or by putting his hand on your elbow or shoulder.

## **3. BODY POSITION**

As a guide, the volunteer should be about half a step ahead of the blind person. If you happen to be a wheelchair-user, the blind person should walk directly behind the wheelchair. If it is a motorised wheelchair, be sure to manoeuvre it at a comfortable walking speed. In this way, you will be able to maintain a conversation with the blind person and will be ready to inform him of any obstacles in your path. At the same time, the blind person will be able to feel the movement of your arm or wheelchair or hear your verbal cues and react accordingly.

## **4. PACING**

The volunteer should walk half a pace ahead of the blind person as you are walking on flat land, going up and down steps, or walking in a hazardous place, i.e. where there are many obstacles. After walking with you for some time, the blind person will become familiar with your pace and movement and he may not need your verbal cues all the time. Once you are used to this technique, the blind person not only can walk with you but he could also jog or run along with you or even climb hills and mountains with you as his guide.

## **5. NARROW SPACES**

When you are approaching a narrow space, you should alert the blind person. Then swing your arms gently behind your back, i.e. the arm that is being held on to by the blind person, so that the two of you will be walking in single file.

## **6. BE CAREFUL OF OPPOSITE OBJECTS**

While walking with the blind person, you should be careful not to let him bang into objects that are on the opposite side of you such as door frames, posts, and so on. You should, therefore, pay attention to your environment.

## **7. STAIRS**

Inform the blind person when there are stairs; indicate to him whether they are going up or down and show him the railing if it is there. Let the blind person switch to the side that is closest to the railing.

Inform the blind person whether the stairs are steep, shallow, narrow, broad or curved. The guide should take the first step followed by the blind person one step at a time. Tell him when you have reached the landing which may be at the top or bottom of the flight of stairs.

## **8. DOORS**

When approaching a door, let the blind person know whether it swings away from you or towards you. Indicate to him, if necessary, to catch the door on the left or right. As you approach the door, the side with the hinges is the side

on which to catch the door. Tell the blind person to switch to your side that is closest to the hinged side of the door. This may be quite a complicated skill for some volunteers.

## **9. SEATING**

Bring the blind person into contact with the chair or seat while you describe the part of the chair being touched (such as the back, front or arm of the chair). You must be specific – tell him if it is a sofa, stool, swivel chair, or rocker. Allow the blind person to get seated by himself.

## **10. TURNING AROUND**

When reversing your direction, simply turn around, maintaining the same grip and body position. The blind person will be able to follow the movement of your arm.

## **11. COMMUNICATION**

The guide should always inform the blind person if he is going to leave, even briefly. Never go off without acknowledging the blind person.

You should also avoid leaving the blind person alone in an empty area or wide open space if possible as this could be disorienting for him. Put him in touch with someone or something such as the wall or a piece of furniture. If you should run into any difficulties, do not be afraid to ask the blind person how you should proceed. As always, communication is the key to mutual understanding.

## **12. DIRECT CONVERSATION**

Whenever you wish to give instructions, directions, or begin a conversation with a blind person, speak no more loudly than necessary; however, you should speak distinctly and direct your words to him by calling his name. For example, you could say, “Tan, I have something interesting for you.”

## **CONCLUSION**

These techniques would be useful to all volunteer guides. They are known as the human guide techniques and are widely accepted throughout the world. They are recognised as being the safest and most efficient way for sighted persons when walking with a blind person. By using these techniques consistently, the sighted person would be making a significant contribution in enabling the blind person to live normally in society.

On the other hand, it is important to emphasise that the blind person himself should be taught how to communicate with members of the public when being offered assistance. He should be polite and should be able to give proper instructions so that the volunteer would be able to help him effectively.



# THE QUESTION OF TRUE INTEGRATION OF BLIND PERSONS IN SOCIETY

*Editor's Note: As I was going through some past seminar papers, I came across this interesting article on integration. Unfortunately, the writer's name has not been given. However, as the thoughts and reflections merit serious consideration, I would like to share his ideas with readers.*

The question of integration or equality is more or less similar in nature and scope. Therefore, I would like to discuss integration and equality synonymously.

## INTRODUCTION

Disabled people are an integral part of society. The process of integration is an on-going one though the level of integration may vary from country to country and region to region. We may say that in contemporary societies, inequalities by and large are on the decline. This, however, does not mean that inequality has ceased to exist.

At the same time, it is true that any ideology promoting inequality cannot pass unchallenged today. This also means that societies are conscious of the factors causing inequality. This understanding of human beings about inequality motivates them to take action in order to overthrow discrimination in all its forms.

The enactment of laws is one such method which civilised societies adopt.

The existing laws can be broadly classified into the following four categories:

### 1. WELFARE LEGISLATION

Welfare legislation is based on the perception that people with disabilities

- a. do not have the potential to be productive members of societies.
- b. are primarily recipients of medical, rehabilitation and welfare benefits.

### 2. SERVICE ORIENTED LEGISLATION

Service oriented legislation is based on the recognition that people with disabilities

- a. have the potential to participate in society.
- b. need specialised services to live meaningful lives.

### 3. ENABLEMENT LEGISLATION

Enablement legislation supports the view that people with disabilities

- a. have, like non-disabled persons, the potential to con-

tribute to the development of society.

- b. need affirmative action measures to enable them to achieve equality in various aspects of life.

### 4. RIGHTS-BASED LEGISLATION

Rights-based legislation emerges on the recognition of the civil rights of people with disabilities. In particular, it recognises that

- a. People with disabilities have the same citizenship and rights as non-disabled persons.
- b. The basic rights of people with disabilities to a life with dignity must be protected by the law.

## ATTITUDE OF SOCIETY

The existing laws not only reflect the perception of different societies toward their disabled citizens but also indicate that the integration of disabled people is at a different stage of development in different countries. Some regard disabled people as recipients of welfare benefits requiring custodial care. Others regard them as people having the ability to participate in the social-economic cultural life of the society provided they are enabled to participate.

Others perceive the question of integration as a civil rights question. The values reflected in the law are well established and well articulated ones. Sometimes they are unstated values which are sharply at variance with the ones explicitly stated. One of the most persistently articulated values of many affluent societies is the equality of all human beings; yet, as elsewhere, prejudices of race, colour, religion, etc are evident in their day to day lives. Inequality can be studied not only as a mode but also as a mode of consciousness. Societies differ not only in their divisions into categories and the arrangements of these in a hierarchical system, but also differ in the extent to which these divisions are right, proper and desirable.

### **FREE COMPETITION**

The world today stands united on the principles of free market economy and free competition. The world which has placed so much faith in competition should not expect equality of status for all its citizens. Equality is possible only before the competition, not after it, because competition always results in inequality. In fact, the object of competition, whether in education or in employment, is to secure not equality of results but its opposite. If disabled people perform poorly in competition relatively to the non-disabled as they generally do, it is often because they lack the resources rather than the abilities for successful competition. The same argument holds true, by and large, for unequal performance by members of other minority groups. But often the elite and the privileged,

in their pursuit of acquiring more and controlling more, hold the underprivileged responsible for their lot due to their incompetence, laziness and lack of enterprise.

### **ECONOMIC FACTORS**

Another factor significant in determining public attitude on the question of integration of marginalised groups like the disabled are the economic conditions of a particular society. The idea of equality became socially established at the time when material wealth was expanding rapidly enough to allow if not to encourage a degree of redistribution in the affluent countries in the west. In contrast, in the developing countries with very limited material wealth, particularly in relation to the growth of population, makes the problem of redistribution enormously more complex and difficult. This also impedes the process of integration of marginalised groups. In this scenario, the investment in enhancing freedom of opportunity and full participation of disabled people become the first casualties.

Although the idea of integration of disabled people is vehemently upheld by the developing countries, constraints do not allow these ideals to get translated into practical realities.

### **UNCHECKED HUMAN MISERY AND WASTEFUL PRODUCTION**

Modern economies today are based upon monopolistic and oligopolistic market systems. In order to survive and optimise the

profits, firms in such markets resort to huge selling costs or promotional expenditure which may be gainful to an individual firm but involves colossal investment in socially unproductive sectors. Industries under such a market system often tend to overproduce mostly wasteful commodities resulting in the unnecessary drain of useful but scarce resources. E.g. markets today are flooded with toiletries, jewellery and garments. It is a painful realisation that there is no conscious effort made to expose the irrational practices in industrial production and trade owing to which a large part of budgets is spent on rationalising the legitimacy of a commodity in the market which is not based upon the real demand of consumers. On the contrary, investment in infrastructure and service sectors are propagated as unproductive. International financial institutions like the IMF and World Bank impose conditionality to curtail expenditure on welfare and service sectors and never advocate embargo on investment in wasteful sectors. In this scenario, justice, only in a limited manner, can be expected.

Let us ensure that money is spent sufficiently within the social sector. There are far too many inefficient and inequitable priorities: Urban hospitals for a privileged few rather than primary health care for all; enormous subsidies for the universities while basic education must await their turn in the budgetary queue.

### **WAR**

The end of the cold war has not resulted in the reduction of

expenditure on arms and armaments. The armed forces are still being built up throughout the world. An ever larger part of the state budget is being expanded on military expenditure. Representatives of military circles and their monopolies working for war are exercising a decisive influence over the whole domestic and foreign policy of the state.

It is estimated that if the ASEAN countries were to agree to freeze all military spending rather than cut them by 3% every year as industrial nations are inclined to do, it would release additional resources for human development in this decade. Just by freezing military spending alone would potentially create dividends of around \$150 billion by the turn of the century – sufficient to finance all the essential human goals.

## CONCLUSION

In my analysis of the economic, social and cultural conditions of contemporary society in which disabled people of the world live, I have tried to identify some broad and general factors which determine the position and status of disabled people and other segregated or marginalised groups and minorities.

If we are to achieve the goal of full participation for disabled people, which is integration in the least instance, we need to reorganise our agenda and alter the course of our actions, thereby enabling us to build a debate around the question of investment in war and military spending, over-production of wasteful commodities, wasteful spending on sales promotions,

and the maximisation of budgets for human development. These issues have to be taken up at the local, national and international levels simultaneously in order to mould public opinion effectively in favour of rational practices in industrial production and trade, which will result in the equitable distribution of the world's resource and lead ultimately to world peace.

Society has already to some extent been sensitised with regards to the unique potential of disabled people and the plight that they face. Indeed, the role played by NGOs such as the organisations serving the blind, government agencies and international organisations such as the UN, ILO, WHO, and so on is a most worthy one. Nevertheless, I feel that the time has come when we must prepare ourselves for the next phase of the struggle, i.e. to build social consciousness around the debate concerning these real issues.

For instance, freezing of military spending should no longer be postponed. This is because war not only adds the number of disabled people to existing populations but also causes inequality in which the large masses are languishing today.

We must expose the culturally constructed norms by certain human beings to suit their own interests. Many people are made to believe that they are inferior and that their abilities are of little value and, therefore, they are only worthy of a lower socio-economic and cultural status in society. A distorted nationalism often relegates the disabled to a quagmire of deprivation and poverty.

The integration of disabled people is not merely an idea but it is a social reality that has come into existence not merely by chance. It is a product of human actions and deeds. This shows that human actions have the potential of transforming existing realities into higher forms of social reality not by chance but by determination and effort.

Thus, the objectives and goals of human action must correspond with the current needs of social life as they have the potential to change the cause of history. In so doing, this will sooner or later achieve the desired results.

Treat a person as  
he is, and he will re-  
main as he is. Treat  
him as he could be,  
and he will become  
what he should be.

(Jimmy)

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NATIONAL DISABILITY BUDGET 2006

By Dato' Dr. Mohinder Singh and Godfrey Ooi Goat See

*Editor's Note: The Malaysian Council for Rehabilitation was represented at the National Budget Consultation 2005 with the Ministry of Finance for consideration in the National Budget of 2006. Below is the memorandum which was presented by MCR at the dialogue.*

We would like to take this opportunity to present some issues on disability for consideration by the Ministry of Finance at the National Budget Consultation 2005. Thank you for your understanding consideration.

The issues are as follows:

## 1. HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

In the current situation, many NGOs are faced with the lack of professional staff and expertise. For example, at the Spastic Centre of Petaling Jaya, there are only two professional staff for 250 clients. In actual fact, the ideal situation should be a ratio of 20 clients to one professional staff.

### REQUEST:

In the government programmes which train professionals such as physiotherapists and radio therapists, at least five places should be reserved for personnel who intend to serve with one of the disability organisations.

Alternatively, the Government could consider providing financial allocations to the NGOs so that they could conduct and manage their own manpower training programmes.

## 2. RESPIRE CARE CENTRES

Currently, some NGOs are faced with the situation in which certain disabled clients are staying on in their programmes right into adulthood and probably till they pass away. For instance, at the Spastic Centre of Petaling Jaya, some of the clients are already 40 years of age but they are reluctant to leave the programme.

Another example is at the pre-school programme of the Malaysian Association for the Blind where blind children with additional disabilities up to 15 years old still need to attend the day centre. These persons are severely disabled or they have multiple disabilities. When they are not at the centres, they need the attention and care of their parents for 24 hours a day and this could be very stressful for them.

### REQUEST:

Respite centres with specialised programmes should be established so that proper attention could be focussed on the severely and multiple disabled. At the same time, places vacated by

them in the training centres could be made available to other disabled persons. Also, this would provide the much needed relief for parents, particularly during the day-time when they could be earning an income.

## 3. SPECIAL ALLOWANCE FOR THE SEVERELY AND MULTIPLE DISABLED

Generally, this group of persons will not be able to obtain proper employment except perhaps in the sheltered workshops. However, either parents or institutions still need to be responsible for these individuals.

### REQUEST:

A special allowance should be provided for them and the amount should be double that given to ordinary disabled persons under the Employment Incentive Scheme.

## 4. ASSISTIVE DEVICES

The disabled require assistive devices to help them function effectively in various aspects of living such as education, employment and social activities. However, such devices are often quite expensive and they are not easily available.

**REQUEST:**

Consideration should be given to the idea of establishing a one-stop centre to help in processing applications, making referrals to appropriate organisations and agencies, carrying out research on equipment, and providing information.

This centre could be run by an NGO such as MCR or jointly with a government agency.

The import tax exemption given to NGOs on special equipment for the disabled should be extended to disabled individuals.

**5. EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT**

While the 1990 Declaration recognises “Education for All” and the ILO convention 159 recognises the right of everyone to employment, many disabled persons are still denied opportunities for education and employment.

**REQUEST:**

All facilities providing education and vocational training as well as work-places should be made accessible to the disabled by providing modified toilets, ramps for wheelchair-users, and adapted equipment. This will enable the disabled to function effectively in education, vocational training and employment.

**6. LOW-COST HOUSING**

The disabled in the low income group face great difficulty in renting or purchasing their own homes. DBKL flats are also de-

nied to the disabled for rental if they are not married.

**REQUEST:**

**6.1 Rental Scheme**

There should be a low-cost house rental scheme which will enable the disabled to rent low-cost houses from the Government at a minimum rate. After a period, they should be given the option of converting the accumulated rental to the purchase price of the house so that they could choose to buy the house.

**6.2 Purchase Scheme**

There should also be a low-cost house purchase scheme whereby interest-free loans could be given to the disabled to purchase their own low-cost houses. No age limit should be imposed on disabled applicants.

**6.3 Special Officer**

A special unit or officer should be provided to take charge of the housing scheme for the disabled and the application procedures should be simplified.

**6.4 Reservation of Houses**

10% of low-cost houses should be reserved not only for the disabled but also for senior citizens and single mothers.

**6.5 Ground Floor for Wheelchair Users**

While priority consid-

eration should be given to wheelchair-users for flats on the ground floor, this stipulation should not be imposed on other disabled persons who may choose to buy their own flat on any of the upper floors.

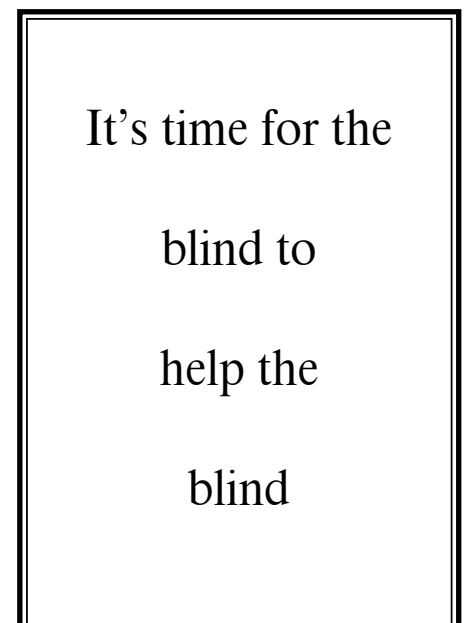
**7. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**

Research and development has been recognised as an essential aspect for the progress of an industry. Likewise, NGOs are beginning to recognise the crucial role of R. & D. in the development of work for the disabled.

**REQUEST:**

Funds should be made available to the NGOs to carry out their own R. & D. activities or to organise joint projects with the universities and government agencies.

It is very encouraging to re-



# A POINT TO PONDER JUST LEND ME YOUR EARS, PLEASE

*By Wong Kow*

alise that a good number of visually impaired persons are able to live quite independently nowadays. Nevertheless, sighted help could be an extra blessing. Lives could be made easier when sighted helpers know exactly when, how and in what way to assist us.

I casually spoke to a few blind friends the other day and came to understand that sometimes a sighted helper may be too keen to offer assistance without hearing clearly what help was actually required.

I would like to cite some incidences in which the assistance offered actually caused more confusion rather than settled the matter in hand. This was because the helper just presumed what was right for the blind person instead of asking or hearing first what help was needed. Here they are:

1. "I wanted my cheque to be banked into Account A but it went to account B."

2. "I typed two letters at the same time and my sighted helper assisted me in proof-reading them, checking the addresses and sending them out; but he had inserted the letters into the wrong envelopes."

3. "My address has been incorrectly written and my telephone number is incomplete in an application form; thus I missed a golden opportunity."

4. "In a buffet lunch or dinner, I am often served with too much food – much more than I could finish comfortably."

5. "A kind-hearted friend gave me a lift in his car, but he failed to bring me to the right destination."

I personally appreciate sighted help very much. My only request is that he or she would be willing to listen to my requirements patiently and, when necessary, to repeat them to me before acting on my request. Going the extra mile would certainly go a very long way in avoiding errors which could lead to negative and sometimes even disastrous results.

We believe in  
working together  
for common  
good

IF YOU KNOW  
OF ANY BLIND  
PERSON NEEDING  
REGISTRATION FOR  
EDUCATION OR  
REHABILITATION,  
PLEASE CONTACT  
US IMMEDIATELY

NCBM

Tel: 03-2272 4959

03-2272 1442

MAB

Tel: 03-2272 2673

03-2272 2677



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| Mr. S. Kulasegaran                | - | World Blind Union  |
| Mr. Ivan Ho Tuck Choy             | - | World Blind Union  |
| Auditors 2004 - 2006              | - | Ernst & Young, Kuala Lumpur.   |

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Readers are invited to write for our publication, "THE NCBM OUTREACH". For articles published, payments are as follows:-

1. Original articles on the achievements of blind people or of an inspirational nature (about 500 words) - RM75.00
2. Articles containing ideas and suggestions for the improvement of NCBM or its member-organisations (about 500 words) - RM75.00
3. Articles on funny or unusual experiences (250 - 500 words) - RM35.00 - RM75.00
4. Interesting articles taken from magazines or documents of limited circulation - RM10.00.

(Note: Articles submitted by officials of NCBM or its member-organisations will not qualify for payment unless these submissions have nothing to do with their daily office duties.)

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