

# THE NCBM OUTREACH



Issue No. 65

October – December 2011

---

Permit no. PP 7594/08/2012(030560)

**President**

Dato' S. Kulasegaran

**Editor**

Godfrey Ooi Goat See  
B.A. (Hons.), Dip Ed.

**Produced by**

THE NATIONAL  
COUNCIL FOR THE BLIND, MALAYSIA

94B Jalan Tun Sambanthan, Brickfields  
50470 KUALA LUMPUR

Tel : 03-22724959

Fax : 03-22724960

**E-Mail**

[ncftb@po.jaring.my](mailto:ncftb@po.jaring.my)

---

---

**A quarterly  
publication of NCBM**

---

---

*Printed by: Sylog Print Systems Sdn. Bhd. (166439-T)  
19 & 20, Block C, Lot 757, Jalan Subang 3, Persiaran Subang, 47610 Subang Jaya, Selangor  
Tel : 603 - 5632 1302 / 1307 Fax : 603 - 5632 4190 / 5637 3703 Email : [sylogprint@gmail.com](mailto:sylogprint@gmail.com)*

# CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| My Memories Of Philippa Kelly<br><i>By Nicholas Lam Yew Khay</i>                                 | 3  |
| Developments In NCBM And Work For The Blind 2010 Part II<br><i>By Ivan Ho Tuck Choy</i>          | 7  |
| The GTC Brain-Storm<br><i>By Sumitha Ramasamy</i>  | 13 |
| News From The National Council For The Blind, Malaysia   | 18 |
| News From The Malaysian Association For The Blind  | 22 |
| Technology Update: A Technology Bill Of Rights For The Blind<br><i>By Moses Choõ Siew Cheong</i> | 27 |
| Makmor Tumin – A Blind University Lecturer<br><i>By Dr. Tan Tok Shiong</i>                       | 32 |
| Some Thoughts On Enterprise<br><i>By Godfrey Ooi Goat See</i>                                    | 35 |
| A Point To Ponder: When You Are On The Phone<br><i>By Wong Kow</i>                               | 38 |
| Sayings From Religion  | 41 |
| What Is Yoga?  | 42 |
| Principal Office-Bearers And Council Members Of NCBM From 2010 - 2012                            | 43 |
| Chairpersons Of Committees Of NCBM From 2010 - 2012  | 44 |
| Representatives Of NCBM To Other Organisations, 2010 - 2012                                      | 45 |
| Editorial Board  | 45 |
| Support Our Cause  | 46 |
| Special Announcement   | 47 |
| Earn Some Extra Cash   | 48 |

# MY MEMORIES OF PHILIPPA KELLY

*By Nicholas Lam Yew Khay*

***Editor's Note: Nicholas Lam, totally blind, was a student at St. Nicholas School for the Blind in the 1960s. After completing his form six education in the integrated programme at the St. John's Institution in Kuala Lumpur in 1971, he worked at the St. Nicholas library as braillist and was promoted to the position of librarian in the 1990s. Then, in 2007, he joined the MAB library as Audio Technician.***

***In the following article, he shares his experiences and memories of Philippa Kelly, the Christian missionary who was in charge of St. Nicholas in the 1950s and 1960s. Here it is:***

After my failed eye operation in early 1959, Dr. Wong Poh Lum, the eye specialist, recommended to my mother to have me admitted to a blind school so that I would have the opportunity to receive an education. Thus, in May 1959, my mother brought me to St. Nicholas Home and then we met Miss Kelly and Audrey Lam, who acted as the interpreter. After talking for some time, Miss Kelly said that I was overage and, therefore, I could not be admitted.

My mother was determined, however, and she got me registered with the Welfare Office in Kampar. She wanted to bring me back to St. Nicholas for another interview and sought advice from the Welfare Officer. Fortunately, the officer was very kind and helpful and, within a month, he gave my mother a recommendation letter for St. Nicholas to have me admitted.

So off again we went to Penang towards the end of June. We met Miss Kelly once more on 1st July and I told her I had been to standard one in a sighted school. She tested my English by asking me to count in the language the number of rungs on the ladder of a toy fire-engine. She was impressed and said that I would be given a trial period of one month. Thus, I was admitted to the kindergarten programme at the age of ten.

I was fascinated with the place – there were so many toys to play with and there was a big garden. Actually, I could not really speak English at the

time and so I spoke in Cantonese to everyone I met, especially to the three children who were there – Muniandy, Yoke Lin and Ah Guan.

I could still see a little in those days. I remember seeing the boys dressed up in the scout uniform and I asked them what they were doing. “Oh, we’re the police,” they replied, and I believed them.

One day I played with the merry-go-round and I was happily paddling away when, suddenly, I heard Miss Kelly’s firm voice saying, “Hey, you boy! You’re too big to play with that! Get off that and play with other toys!” I did not understand all that she said but I got the gist of it.

On another occasion, I was sitting on a cane sofa and there was a hole in the middle of one of the seats. I did not know what made me do it but I just simply decided to put my foot in the hole. Miss Kelly saw me and she scolded, “you naughty boy! You’re making the hole bigger.”

When the month was up, I was allowed to stay on and I was promoted to standard one with Miss Moon as my first teacher. I was very lucky to have such a patient and dedicated teacher. She even gave me additional classes in Braille and English during the afternoons.

I will always remember the early morning jogging exercise. Once or twice a week Miss Kelly would blow the whistle outside our window to wake us up. We would quickly change into our T-shirts and shorts and then assemble at the sports field under the jambu tree.

“All of you, follow me!” Miss Kelly cried out and blew the whistle.

The pack of boys and girls would jog along behind her, following the sound of the whistle. First we went towards the Boys’ Cottage, then along the fence towards the Girls’ Cottage, then back to the jambu tree. We went round quite a big circle and we had to jog about four or five times round the field.

Most of the time I jogged barefooted – it was no problem for me because it was a grassy field. The grass was usually damp with the morning dew and it was wonderful listening to the early dawn bird chorus. There were so many

types of birds chirping and singing. Nowadays, when I pay a visit to St. Nicholas, I no longer can hear the lovely bird chorus – I really do miss those beautiful sounds when I am on my visits there.

Nearing the end of 1960, Miss Kelly started the catechism class for a small group of us in preparation for baptism. We were given a small booklet in Braille entitled “Catechism”. We learned about the four gospels, listened to Bible stories and had to memorise The Lord’s Prayer and the Nicene Creed. Finally, we were given our Christian names. I was given the name of “Nicholas” and Miss Kelly was to be my godmother. I was baptised in 1961 together with two or three other children. Benjamin and Joanna – I remember well. After the church service, Miss Kelly took us to the Cold Storage for ice-cream and cake in celebration of our baptism.

I was not aware then, that Miss Kelly would soon be leaving for England for good. Suddenly, I found myself in a farewell party in the hall.

“Farewell for whom?” I asked.

“For Miss Kelly and Jane!” I heard many voices saying.

So Jane Chwee was also leaving – I did not understand why at the time.

Anyway, the party was a memorable one – truly out of the ordinary! At about 8 something, we suddenly heard the pao-man shouting, “Pao! Pao!” I could not believe it; the sound was coming nearer and nearer to the hall. Normally, we would only hear the sound of the hawkers outside the gate of St. Nicholas. Can it be true that this pao-man is really coming to the hall?

At last, the secret came out. One of the housemothers told us that Miss Kelly had, in fact, invited the pao-man to come to St. Nicholas.

All the children lined up to get one pao each from the pao-man – wow! It was hot and delicious! Miss Kelly then asked the pao-man to make his call once more.

“Pao! Cha Siew Pao!” The pao-man called out as he made his way out of the hall, onto the driveway, and out of the gate of St. Nicholas.

A couple of days later, I was among the children who were privileged enough to bid farewell to Miss Kelly and Jane Chwee as they sailed off in the ship called Chu San.

Sixteen years later, in 1976, Miss Kelly paid a visit to St. Nicholas in November and December to join in the 50th anniversary or Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Home. She presented to each of us a little sachet of fragrant lavender flowers. I kept my sachet for many years until the lavender flowers had all crumbled into powder and dust.

Sadly, Philippa Kelly passed away in England on a day in December 2001 at the age of eighty-six. Miss Kelly really understood how blind children should be educated and trained. I believe that is why she made sure that we had a lot of activities and experiences and exposed us to all kinds of sounds, smells and even people.

# **DEVELOPMENTS IN NCBM AND WORK FOR THE BLIND 2010 PART II**

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

*Editor's Note: The first part of this article appeared in the July – September 2011 issue of "The NCBM Outreach". Here is the second part*

## **2. WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE PROGRESS ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL**

The following activities and projects were either jointly organised by member organisations, government bodies or with other stakeholders. They were:

### ***(a) Web Accessibility Initiatives***

In pursuing the recommendations adopted at the conference on Accessibility – Bridging the Digital Divide 2008, three workshops involving web developers, including those from the Government sector, had been organised.

The first one was held in October 2009 jointly with St. Nicholas Home, Universiti Sains Malaysia and the Software Consortium of Penang.

The second one was jointly organised by the Sabah Society for the Blind and Jabatan Perkhidmatan Kerajaan Negeri Sabah (JPKN) in Kota Kinabalu from 19 – 21 January 2010. It was also attended by web developers from Government departments, including the Tourism Department.

The third one was held in Kuching from 9 - 13 October 2010 in which representatives from 26 Government departments attended. It was jointly organised by the Sarawak Society for the Blind and the Sarawak Information System (SAINS). The budget for the three events amounted to over RM40,000.00.

### ***(b) Study Visit to Vision Australia***

At least one representative from each Member Organisation was fully sponsored on the 15-member delegation to Australia from 8 – 12 March 2010. The study visit was aimed at broadening the horizons of policy-makers and to motivate personnel working for the blind to improve or introduce new services for the blind.

A comprehensive four-day itinerary was arranged by Vision Australia to see many of their services which included education support programme, rehabilitation and employment, guide dog training and radio broadcasting. As a result of the visit, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between NCBM and Vision Australia on collaboration in projects beneficial to the blind.

### ***(c) Distribution of Braille and Audio Books***

NCBM completed sixteen book titles by October 2010 for the CSR programme of StanChart to provide free Braille and audio story-books to libraries and schools with blind students. The CSR programme included the giving away of digital players (E-readers) to the libraries involved. StanChart handed over these items on 13 October 2010 worth around RM200,000.00.

### ***(d) Celebrating World Sight Day & International White Cane Day***

The combined events were held on 14 October in Kuching, hosted by SKSB and funded by NCBM. The occasion was graced by the Minister of Social Development and Urbanisation, Dato' Sri William Mawan Ikom. Activities for the day included vision screening, band performance by the blind, orientation and mobility demonstration, massage demonstration and basket weaving.

### ***(e) The Blindness-Specific Skills Upgrading Workshop***

The two-week workshop was held from 30 November to 14 December 2010 in collaboration with Universiti Sains Malaysia and Vision Australia. 35 participants from Member Organisations, USM and the Ministry of Education were involved.

Successful blind persons and newly-blinded adults were invited to share their experiences on the mastering of skills for daily living, socialising and communication, counseling, and so on. Speakers from SOCSO, Jabatan OKU of JKMM, MOE and Jobstreet were invited to speak on topics related to the workshop.

It was agreed at the evaluation meeting that a Memorandum of Understanding be signed with USM to undertake more of such workshops, and that these workshops be opened to participants from the ASEAN countries.

### ***3. INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES***

As an affiliate of the World Blind Union – Asia Pacific (WBUAP), NCBM has several representatives serving on the Board and holding positions on some of the committees. For example, Mr Moses Choo Siew Cheong, the Assistant Executive Director of NCBM, is the representative to the Committee on Employment and Economic Empowerment for the blind. Dr Wong Huey Siew, Chairman of the SBM Entrepreneurship Fund, is the representative to the Youth Network, and Mdm Jasmine Khoo is the representative to the Women's Network. With the President of NCBM holding the post of Vice-President and the Executive Director holding the post of Secretary-general, they have involved themselves in some of the following activities:

#### ***(a) Visit to Myanmar***

The President and ED of NCBM, in their respective positions in WBUAP – South-east Asia Subregional Committee, visited the country at the end of 2009. Long discussions were held with the officers from the Education Centre for Blind Affairs (ECBA) and the Myanmar National Association of the Blind (MNAB). The two organisations agreed to sink their differences and to work together on national issues under the umbrella of MNAB.

Myanmar has since then started massage training, set up massage centres and formed an ICT committee with the aim of teaching computer skills to both blind users and the teachers of the blind. They have also drawn up an Action Plan to impart the teaching of blindness-specific skills to people

having connections with the blind, organising public awareness activities, and promoting employment opportunities. At present, the most popular occupations for the blind are massage and music.

***(b) Hosting the 11th WBUAP Massage Seminar***

At the close of the 10th WBUAP Massage Seminar held in Seoul, South Korea from 3 – 6 May 2010, it was suggested that Malaysia take the challenge in organising the next seminar. Thus, NCBM accepted the invitation to be the host of the 2012 event. About 400 participants from across the region are expected to attend.

***(c) WBUAP Mid-term Assembly***

This was held from 29 October to 1 November 2010 hosted by the National Committee for the Welfare of the Blind, the Japan Federation of the Blind and affiliated organisations. It was attended by over 250 delegates and participants; Malaysia sent five participants – two from SBM and three from NCBM.

A youth forum was held on the 29th morning and the women’s forum in the afternoon. Symposiums on employment and ICT were also held. Finally, the Chiba Statement was adopted which in part says,

“We the participants at the WBUAP Mid-term General Assembly in Chiba, Japan, October 31st, 2010,

- i) Call upon all countries within the Asia Pacific region to take timely steps towards signing, ratifying, implementing and monitoring the CRPD (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities).
- ii) Recognising that unemployment and economic inactivity is a major source of social exclusion across the world for people who are blind or have low vision, urge countries to take proactive steps to identify and assist people in gaining access to meaningful employment on an equal basis with others.

- iii) Affirm the outcome of the youth forum by agreeing to promote activities to strengthen leadership, capacity and networks of young people who are blind or have low vision, e.g. the establishment of an email discussion list for and about youth issues in the region.
- iv) Being moved by the enthusiasm and strong determination expressed by blind women through the Women's Forum, therefore urge all concerned parties, especially member countries, in the Asia Pacific region to prepare a statement about strategies being undertaken, or being planned, by member countries empower blind women within the blindness community and society at large. And further recognise the need to advocate for integrating the mandate of CRPD concerning women with disabilities with mainstream human rights instruments like CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women).

#### ***(d) The WBUAP-DAB-DANIDA Project***

The Danish International Development Agency had approved the application submitted by WBUAP and the Danish Association of the Blind for conducting Capacity Building of Organisations of the Blind in Laos and Mongolia amounting to \$1.7 million. At the meeting held in Japan on 2 November 2010, the steering group agreed to convene a conference in Laos from 26 – 30 January 2011 to plan the strategies for the next three years.

As part of the project, DANIDA has agreed for WBUAP to engage a part-time Regional Coordinator and a Regional Communications Coordinator to implement and monitor the progress in the two countries, and also help strengthen the structure of WBUAP.

#### ***APPRECIATION***

We wish to express our deep appreciation and heartfelt thanks to all who have contributed in one way or another, thereby helping NCBM to move forward in achieving its objectives. Due to limited space in the Annual Report, the contributions of donors and supporters have been acknowledged through letters sent to them individually. However, we would like to mention a few contributors as follows:

- Trustees of the estate of Goh Lum Eng for RM100,000.00
- Lee Foundation for RM50,000.00 for the Blindness-specific Skills Workshop
- USM for RM10,000.00 for the Blindness-specific Skills Workshop and for their collaboration in successfully running the Workshop
- Yayasan Bursa Malaysia for RM87,600.00 collected through the Rat Race project
- The CSR programme of StanChart for RM200,000.00
- GJC Enterprise for RM10,000.00
- Selangor Turf Club, under the Sultan of Selangor Gold Cup, for RM5,000.00
- Our heartiest congratulations to Mah Hassan bin Haji Omar on being conferred the Datohship by the Sultan of Terengganu, and our deep gratitude to him for having served as vice-president from 2006 – 2010
- Our deep gratitude to Mr. John Wong Siong Cheng who served NCBM right from the founding days. We shall miss his contributions and friendship.

# THE GTC BRAIN-STORM

*By Sumitha Ramasamy*

***Editor's Note: Sumitha Ramasamy is totally blind and she is serving as the Senior Assistant at the Gurney Training Centre, a vocational institution of the Malaysian Association for the Blind. She was one of the organisers of the GTC Brain-storm which was held at the Swiss Garden Hotel in Kuala Lumpur on Saturday, 2 July 2011. There were 29 participants in the event, including MAB Council Members, heads of department, GTC instructors and representatives from relevant organisations.***

***Here is the report.***

The objective of the brain-storm was to reflect on the effectiveness of the present courses at the GTC and to look at the possibility of introducing new courses.

En Liew Yoon Loy, Chairman of the GTC Committee, urged all participants to contribute towards the enhancement of the quality of training and performance of the Gurney Training Centre for the betterment of the blind and visually impaired in the country.

Papers presented at the brain-storm were as follows:

1. Current rehabilitation courses at GTC by Mohd. Nor bin Don
2. Current vocational training courses at GTC by Sumitha Ramasamy
3. Future trends by Airin bt. Jalani, Jabatan Pembangunan Kemahiran certified vocational training
4. PLPP vocational training programme by Khatijah bt. Ibrahim, Bangi Industrial Training and Rehabilitation Centre
5. Current and future certified training in ICT by Dr Bryan Sidhu, Malaysian External Trade Cooperation Development

6. Job trends among the blind in Malaysia by Dr Wong Huey Siew, Society of the Blind in Malaysia
7. Challenges in preparing the blind for the job market by Moses Choo, National Council for the Blind, Malaysia.

In the first two presentations, the speakers gave a general overview of the structure of the GTC and the evolution of the training programme. Today, the GTC has obtained accreditation status from the Jabatan Pembangunan Kemahiran (JPK) in order to conduct skill-based courses which will enable trainees to qualify for the Sijil Kemahiran Malaysia (SKM or Malaysian Skills Certificate). Under the system, JPK provides the National Occupational Skills Standard (NOSS), i.e. the guidelines for instructors to construct the Written Instruction Materials (WIM), consisting of the course of study, information sheets, worksheets and assignment sheets necessary for the training process. The trainers are required to document the abilities of the trainees which will be audited by the JPK officers. Ultimately, this record should be provided to employers so that they will be able to assess the abilities of the prospective employees. So far this has been applied to a number of courses in the GTC such as massage and the Office Administrative Assistants' Course.

Concerning the trends in vocational training and the government's intention to provide training through the industrial corporations under the National Dual Training System (NDTS) in order to bring about a highly skilled nation, Airin Jalani said that preference was being given to ten sectors under the National Key Economic Areas – oil, gas and energy; palm oil; financial services; tourism; business services; electrical equipment and electronics; health care; communications and infrastructure; wholesaler and retailer trade; and agriculture.

As provided for in the National Skills Development Act (2006), the National Vocational Training Council (MLVK) originally established in 1989, was relaunched as the Development of Skills Department (JPK) in order to deal with the needs of economic and technological advancements. These objectives are achieved through NOSS which was initiated in 2005 with the first batch of 500 trainees from the community at large.

The National Dual Training System (NDTS) has been designed to tap the best training potential through close cooperation between the government and private industry. The prerequisites for a successful NDTS are that the training institutions have appropriate facilities, state-of-the-art curricula, and, most important of all, competent instructors and teachers. The companies, on the other hand, must provide adequate facilities, equipment, sufficiently wide-ranging operations and qualified trainers.

Besides the dual training scheme, the vocational institutions are encouraged to collaborate with the industries in order to enhance the effectiveness of their training programmes. This approach requires the combination of work-based training and the attendance of part-time vocational training. For this purpose, many vocational and technical institutes are offering part-time programmes for technical employees with relevant working experience. The focus of this system is on hands-on training at the work-place while the vocational institution provides the theoretical foundations. By acquiring work-related experience, a school leaver with the SPM certificate can immediately be trained to be a certified skilled worker to meet the needs of the industries.

The speaker, Dr Bryan Sidhu, shared his views on the challenges and trends in the ICT industry. He then touched on four areas of focus:

- Showcasing the achievements made in recent ICT Trainer of Trainees' Programme
- Strategies to enhance the access of the blind to information and computer skills that would improve their independence in education and in the workplace
- Identifying of resources that would help the blind gain access to electronic and print information
- Expansion and sustainability of existing ICT structures for the benefit of the blind.

Dr Wong and Moses Choo then looked at the employment trends and the challenges faced in preparing the blind for employment. Through the five decades from the 1960s to 2010, the blind have been involved in a wide range of jobs through self-employment, in the public sector, in the private sector and in the NGO's. Jobs held by the blind include handicraft workers and instructors, telephone operators, mobile sellers, musicians, farmers, teachers, masseurs, clerks, supervisors, managers and administrators.

In order for a blind person to be successful in the world of work, he needs to be equipped through education and vocational training. He must have self-confidence with various kinds of skills, in mobility and travel, inter-personal relationships, language proficiency, information technology and leadership. He should be able to write and make presentations, to analyse and solve problems, work independently and yet be a good team player.

Thus, the GTC as a training centre should be able to meet these requirements, thereby helping the blind to develop a knowledgeable, skilful and holistic personality. Some of the suggestions given include the following:

### **1. Highly Skilled Training Personnel**

These personnel must have the appropriate qualities and certified qualifications.

### **2. Conducive Training Environment**

The equipment and solutions used in training must be similar to that of the current market. For example, computers and software should be updated on a regular basis. The trainees should be exposed to the latest technology such as soft phones, soft faxes, email and social networking. In fact, they should be exposed to the digital lifestyle. This will make them more adaptable when they enter the world of work.

### **3. Certification**

In order to gain respect from the public, the examinations at the GTC should be certified by a recognised body. This will assure employers that the training standards at the GTC are as competitive as those in other institutions.

#### **4. Individualised Training Plan**

For the blind in particular, the individualised training plan will allow them the extra time needed to stay on in the training programme in order to complete the course. The focus of the Centre should be on providing quality training rather than dividing the blind into the trainable and the untrainable.

#### **5. Job Coach and Transition Plan**

The idea of having a “job coach” to help the disabled prepare for employment is very fashionable today. However, it must be realised that for the blind, job coaching has its own needs and considerations to be looked into. They include looking into the general office operations, blindness-related issues, mobility and cane travel skills, assistive technology, adaptations in equipment and work environment, as well as the Employment Act and other guidelines.

Indeed, as expressed by the Chairman, En Liew Yoon Loy, and by the participants of the brain-storm workshop, it was hoped that the questions, ideas and suggestions made will bear fruit. Everyone would like to see the GTC raised to a new level of proficiency with adequate facilities and expertise in order to prepare the blind of future generations for employment.

# **NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE BLIND, MALAYSIA**

## ***STUDY TOUR TO CAMBODIA***

This study tour was organised by the National Welfare Council of Malaysia (MAKPEM) from 23 – 26 February 2011. The main objective was to enable the NGOs in Malaysia to see the social developments that had taken place in Cambodia after the war of the 1960s and 1970s.

After visiting the Ministry of Social Affairs, veteran and youth rehabilitation, they went to see the work being done by the newly formed Association of the Blind in Cambodia, the Youth Disabilities Council for Education and Employment, and the Lavalla School for Young Adults with physical and intellectual disabilities. With the sharing of experiences and expertise, some of the NGOs in Malaysia were able to establish ties with the social development bodies in Cambodia through networking channels.

## ***SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT***

In order to focus attention on four target groups – the deaf-blind students of St. Nicholas Home, the blind youth of the Sabah Society for the Blind, the blind women of the Society of the Blind in Malaysia, and the blind senior citizens of the Malaysian Association for the blind, RM10,000.00 had been allocated for each of the four organisations.

At least three activities had been identified to be carried out among the four target groups. They included conducting survey on their needs, holding brain-storm sessions to obtain feedback from the clients, and organising study visits to similar groups to share knowledge and expertise.

The NCBM Committee on Social and Community Development chaired by Clarice Irine Moiji has adopted some terms of reference. They include providing a platform for the target groups to present their needs and

concerns on issues affecting them, developing programmes and services for these groups, encouraging the participation of these groups in seminars and activities for their benefit, and advocating for their rights (with reference to the Persons with Disabilities Act, Part IV).

## ***WELLNESS AND PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS***

Soon after being appointed as Chairman of the NCBM Wellness and Prevention of Blindness Committee in September 2010, Dr Dennis Kong convened two meetings of the Committee in order to formulate new terms of reference.

They include promoting screening programmes for early detection of eye problems in children and adults, promoting health education and health care, increasing awareness of eye safety at home and in school, supporting research on eye diseases, and collaborating with the Ministry of Health and NGO's in health and blindness prevention activities.

For the World Sight Day and the White Cane Day celebrated on 13 & 15 October respectively, the Member Organisations of NCBM have been encouraged to highlight their own priorities or focus on an area they feel need special attention. For the celebrations, a new logo has been developed which has the Braille letters of WSD included in the design.

## ***SPORTS AND RECREATION***

After a very long lapse, the NCBM Committee for the Promotion of Sports and Recreation met on 26 March 2011 to review its terms of reference. Among these terms was the need to work with the government in promoting equal access to sporting and recreational activities (as provided for in the Persons with Disabilities Act, Clause 32).

Two activities that have been targeted for implementation are the NCBM carnival and the NCBM chess tournament.

## ***THE BLINDNESS-SPECIFIC SKILLS WORKSHOP***

The workshop was held from 30 November to 14 December 2010 at the Universiti Sains Malaysia in Penang. 35 participants from Member Organisations of NCBM, the USM and the Ministry of Education attended the workshop.

Vision Australia, which had signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with NCBM, sent two Orientation and Mobility specialists to assist in the workshop without charging professional fees.

Resulting from the workshop, a diploma course in O & M will be developed by USM in partnership with Vision Australia.

## ***ESTABLISHING THE BRAILLE AUTHORITY OF MALAYSIA***

On 18 March 2011, NCBM signed an MOU with USM. At the same ceremony, USM launched the “E-Kod Braille Tutorial System”. This system is designed to enable sighted people to learn Braille by themselves. It is a step-by-step Tutorial; it will not allow the learner to advance to the next stage if he/she has not completed certain tests online.

Meanwhile, work is in progress with USM in establishing the Braille Authority of Malaysia that will undertake such actions as promoting Braille literacy, issuing certificates for the Braille test, developing and promoting standards in the production of Braille materials, and working with the Special Education Division (BPK) on the Braille code.

## ***EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF THE BLIND***

The WBUAP Medical Massage Instructors’ Course was held in China in April 2011. Two persons from Malaysia who attended the course were the massage instructor, Tiong Yong Wei from the Sarawak Society for the Blind

and the masseuse from the Sabah Society for the Blind, Lima Bolintok. NCBM paid for their airfares amounting to more than RM8,000.00 while their Chinese host covered their local expenses.

### ***AUDIO DESCRIPTIVE FILMS***

A seminar on audio description was held on 25 February 2011. More than 60 persons were in attendance, representing 17 Government departments, media-related companies and NGOs. As a result of the seminar, USM has expressed interest in doing more on this subject.

Meanwhile, the NCBM Braille Carnival is being planned for 2- 3 March 2012. It will include a Braille reading event for the sighted to take part.

### ***INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGIES***

During the closing ceremony of the Web Accessibility Workshop held in Kuching, the Sarawak Information System (SAINS) had agreed to collaborate with the Sarawak Society for the Blind and the National Council for the Blind on another Web Accessibility programme geared towards the public companies. In the meantime, university students will be another group being targeted to ensure that when they joined the workforce, they will be able to understand the plight of the blind. Consequently, it is hoped to collaborate with the Multi Media University in organising a workshop on Meeting the Standards of Web Accessibility.

In promoting ICT among the blind, NCBM collaborated with The Chartered Bank in giving away 40 computers:- the beneficiaries being; St. Nicholas Home and the Sarawak Society for the Blind. Based on this experience, however, it was felt that rather than giving away used computers, a more useful project might be to provide computer notebooks. Efforts will be made to work with Microsoft in making available the operating system and the common applications at a very low price. The Chartered Bank will also be involved in this project.

# **NEWS FROM THE MALAYSIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND**

## ***DONATION OF AUDIO BOOKS***

Seven audio books have been donated to the MAB Library and Resource Centre by Julie Shaw in the U.S.A. The audio books were sent through the post and received by our avid volunteer reader and audio recorder, Amanda Coffin. The MAB expresses deep appreciation and gratitude to Julie Shaw for the audio books.

The book titles are as follows:

The Elegance of the Hedgehog by Muriel Barbery

The Snow Flower and the Secret Fan by Lisa See

I Am Charlotte Simmons by Tom Wolfe

The Other Boleyn Girl by Philippa Gregory

The Devil's Queen by Jeanne Kalogridis

Crime Busters and Crossed Wires (an American life radio show)

Eleven Essays from the Best American Life Radio Show.

## ***OUTREACH CARE TRIP TO BUKIT MERAH LAKETOWN, PERAK***

The MAB Outreach Care group organised a trip to Bukit Merah from 20 – 21 August 2011. The programme was coordinated by members of the Outreach Care group – Eddy Chong Ted Hin, K.K.Goh and Patricia Lee Foong Yee. The objective of the trip was to promote integration and understanding between the blind and sighted participants and, at the same time, to provide the opportunity for education and exposure to the things

around us, especially for the blind.

On Saturday, the first day of the trip, the group visited the Perak Caves, the Sam Poh Tong and the Ser Lok Tong. Some of these caves have been discovered by Buddhist monks from China more than one hundred years ago. Other caves were either discovered or they were opened up by man about fifty years ago. Those who are adventurous enough to climb up from the cave steps will be able to experience the strong and refreshing gusts of wind blowing through the caves and eventually see the panoramic view of Ipoh city at the top of the stairs.

In the evening the group adjourned to the biggest hawker centre in Ipoh for a taste of the famous and delectable curry maifan, an attraction to many tourists and the film stars. Indeed, this opportunity is not one to be missed.

On Sunday, at early dawn, the group made their way to Bukit Merah (which is slightly beyond Taiping). Before leaving Ipoh, however, the group had to have a look or “a touch” of the single Ipoh tree still left standing amidst the concrete jungle. One of the participants, George Wong, who is more than 70 years old, immediately fell in love with the tree and was willing to pay a price for a sapling to be planted in his garden. However, he had to console himself with just one leaf picked up from the ground for which he voluntarily offered RM1.00; he was willing to pay RM10.00 if necessary.

The Bukit Merah laketown stands on about 7,000 acres of land which includes an orangutan sanctuary spanning about 30 acres in area. The orangutans are very well treated – for example, the babies who have lost their mothers are fed from milk-bottles and they sleep in cots or beds just like human babies. After rehabilitation and training, the orangutans will be released into the jungle in order to rejuvenate the wild population, thereby saving these animals from extinction.

Besides the orangutans, there was a great variety of other animals (including birds and fishes). Among them was the smallest monkey in the world, about the size of a rat. It would gently take the seeds from your hand if you approach it slowly and cautiously.

At the charcoal factory, the owner, Mr Chua, said this sunset industry depended on labour. In fact, this industry had been passed on from father to son and is nearly one hundred years old. However, it may not survive the next generation which is more interested in technology-driven and automated industries.

Contrary to belief, charcoal is not made from ashes. It is actually made by driving out the water from the bakau mangrove trunks (or Hong Shu Ling in Chinese). Mr Chua said the trunks would be cut into equal lengths of five feet and four inches each and carried by hand from the boat to the fire kiln to be dried. The whole process would take about one month to complete before the final product is exported to Japan.

The excursion ended with a sumptuous dinner at a sea-food restaurant standing in the middle of Sepatin Lagoon, which was originally the first tin mine harbour for Taiping. The menu included fried fish, crispy chicken, sizzling prawns and lala (shellfish) soup – all so fresh and gorgeously delicious!

## ***FAREWELL TO GEORGE THOMAS***

En George Thomas resigned from the post of Executive Director at the MAB on 25 June 2011. At the farewell party on Monday, 27 June, many of the staff bade him a sad and tearful goodbye. He had served the Association for a period of 26 years and his services are deeply appreciated.

His citation was read out by Godfrey Ooi, who was appointed as Acting Executive Director until the post is eventually filled.

## ***CITATION FOR GEORGE THOMAS***

En George Thomas has served the Malaysian Association for the Blind (MAB) for a period of 26 years from 1986 to 2011. He first joined MAB as a training officer at the Taman Harapan Agricultural Centre in Temerloh, Pahang in 1986 and was promoted to the post of Director in the 1990s. Subsequently, he became the Executive Director of MAB in the year 2001. During his tenure of service, he has contributed much in bringing about

improvements and development in the services of MAB for the benefit of the blind. In Taman Harapan, he helped to establish the oil-palm nursery and plantation in 1986. Indeed, the oil-palm venture has brought in much revenue for the organisation.

He also helped to initiate and developed the Community-Based Rehabilitation programme (CBR) for the blind in Temerloh, Pahang in 1985. Subsequently, the programme was extended to Negeri Sembilan and Melaka in the 1990s. He further helped to promote CBR as an economic and empowerment programme for the blind in the rural areas by organising three training workshops for trainers held in Temerloh in 1986, 1990 and 1994.

Most important of all, he rescued Taman Harapan from the doldrums of the 1980s by reviving the centre-based programme in the 1990s. Without this intervention, MAB may have lost its highly priced assets of land in Pahang.

In education, En George gained invaluable experience serving as Secretary to the East Asian Regional Committee of ICEVI from 2006 to 2009. Thus, he was one of the organisers for the Third East Asian International Conference on Education of the Visually Impaired (ICEVI) and he was the Director of Operations for the ICEVI in Kuala Lumpur in 2006. In MAB, therefore, he fervently supported developments in education and training for the blind. For example, the best blind students award were introduced in 2002, the School Adoption Programme in 2004, and the Executive Trainee Scheme were revised in 2004. In addition, the Gurney Training Centre programmes were brought to a new level with the introduction of the MLVK certification for such courses as massage, reflexology and front office administration.

He also gained invaluable experience in the field of low vision services. In fact, he led a delegation to the 9th International Low Vision, Rehabilitation and Research Conference in Montreal, Canada in 2008. Subsequently, he served as Conference Director at the 10th Low Vision Conference in Kuala Lumpur in January 2011.

Under the direction of En George, the Low Vision Centre was set up in 2001 followed by introduction of the vision assessment programme in 2002.

En George has also been very passionate in promoting sports, especially goalball, for the blind. He gained wide experience as Technical Officer

in the Sydney Paralympics in the year 2000, as Asian Coordinator to the International Blind Sports Federation of Goalball Committee from 2005 to 2009, Chairman of the Technical Committee for the Far East Asia-Pacific Games for the Disabled in Kuala Lumpur in 2006, as International Technical Officer to the Beijing Paralympics from 2007 to 2008. He was thus instrumental in establishing Kompleks MAB as the Centre of Excellence in sports for the blind and setting up of the gymnasium, to meet the needs of all blind categories, including the GTC trainees, the youth and blind senior citizens.

He also supported the setting up of interest groups and clubs among the blind, thereby empowering them to run their own social, recreational and educational activities with administrative support from MAB. Some of the groups and clubs formed include the Elderly Blind Club in 2001, Sports and Recreation Club, Youth Club, Outreach Care Group, Yoga Group, Blind Women's Club and the latest being the Blind Masseurs' Club in 2011.

Most significantly, it was under his tenure of office that saw the key performance indicators (KPI) being initiated in 2004, thereby enabling MAB to achieve ISO 2001 standard in the year 2010. He backed up the KPI system by organising courses for the staff at all levels, thereby enabling them to carry out their work more effectively.

Last, but not least, in order to promote the team spirit and harmony in MAB, En George gave his whole-hearted support to the formation of the MAB Staff Club. Through this Club, closer rapport and camaraderie have been forged among the staff with social activities such as excursions and tournaments, the latest being the bowling competition on 18 June 2011.

Indeed, En George has helped to bring about a more efficient, effective and harmonious organisation with better quality training and services, all for the purpose of maximising productivity that would ultimately benefit the blind. The efforts of En George in leading MAB as a strong leader, a motivator and a team worker are deeply appreciated and his contributions will long be remembered.

**Thank you, En George. We wish you all the best in your future undertakings**

# **TECHNOLOGY UPDATE: A TECHNOLOGY BILL OF RIGHTS FOR THE BLIND**

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

In the U.S.A., a Technology Bill of Rights is being created that mandates consumer electronics, home appliances and office equipment to provide user interfaces that are accessible through non-visual means.

## ***BACKGROUND***

In recent years rapid advances in microchip and digital technology have led to increasingly complex user interfaces for everyday products like consumer electronics, home appliances and office equipment. Many new devices in these categories require user interaction with visual displays, onscreen menus, touch screens, and other user interfaces that are inaccessible to blind or low-vision persons. No longer are settings on the television, home stereo system or the dishwasher controlled by knobs, switches and buttons that can be readily identified and whose settings can be easily discerned, with or without the addition of tactile markings by the user. Moreover, the use of inaccessible interfaces on office equipment such as copiers and fax machines makes these devices unusable by the blind and therefore a potential threat to a blind person's existing job or a barrier to obtaining new employment.

This growing threat to the independence and productivity of blind people is unnecessary since digital devices can function without inaccessible interfaces. Today text-to-speech technology is inexpensive and is more easily obtainable almost anywhere than it has ever been. It is used in everything from automated telephone systems to the weather forecasting service broadcast.

A few manufacturers have even incorporated this technology into their products in order to create talking menus or to articulate what is on the display. Therefore, there is no reason why other manufacturers cannot do likewise.

## ***NEED FOR LEGISLATION***

Currently, there are no enforceable mandates, whether in the United States or elsewhere, for manufacturers to make their devices accessible; moreover, there are no accessibility standards to provide guidance to manufacturers or how to avoid creating barriers to access by the blind.

Thus, the blind in America are thinking of getting their Congress to enact a Technology Bill of Rights for the Blind. This Bill would clearly establish that manufacturers must create accessible user interfaces for their products, provide a means of enforcement, and set standards that will provide meaningful benchmarks that manufacturers can use to make their products accessible.

However, it is not necessary to mandate a single, one-size-fits-all solution for all consumer technology. Rather any such legislation should mandate regulations that provide for meaningful accessibility standards, while at the same time allowing manufacturers to select from a menu of potential solutions that, singly or in combination, will allow blind users to operate the technology easily and successfully. This will not only give manufacturers the freedom and flexibility they desire, but also encourage innovations that would make consumer technology more usable for everyone.

## ***PROPOSED LEGISLATION***

The Technology Bill of Rights should be enacted to do the following:

1. Mandate that all consumer electronics, home appliances and office equipment be designed so that blind people are able to access the same functions as sighted people by non visual means and with substantially equivalent ease of use.

Create a commission to establish standards for non visual accessibility of electronic devices intended for use in the home or office. Such a commission should represent all stakeholders, including organisations of the blind, manufacturers of consumer electronics, home appliances and office equipment, associations representing such manufacturers, and experts on universal design, electronic engineering, and related fields. This commission should have enforcement powers or be housed within a government agency having such powers (such as the department of commerce) and it should be authorised to examine and rewrite standards periodically; this is in view of the fact that electronic technology continues to evolve.

Well, can we blind in Malaysia do something along these lines? I am sure that we too would like our manufacturers to make their equipment accessible to the blind in this country.

## ***HYBRID AND ELECTRIC VEHICLES***

Independent travel for the blind has been a relatively simple matter once they have been trained in travel techniques and in the use of the white cane. Blind people listen to the sounds of car engines in order to determine the direction, speed and pattern of the traffic. The traffic sounds tell the blind pedestrian how many cars are near them and how fast they are moving; whether the vehicles are accelerating or decelerating; and whether the cars are travelling toward, away from or parallel to them. With this information, the blind can accurately determine when it is safe to advance into an intersection or across a driveway or parking lot. The information obtained from listening to traffic sounds allows blind people to travel with complete confidence and without assistance. Studies have shown that sighted pedestrians also use this information when travelling.

Over the past few years, however, cars that are completely silent in certain modes of operation have come onto the market and many more silent vehicles are expected in the near future. These cars are designed to have many benefits, including improved fuel efficiency and reduced emissions. In actual fact, however, these cars do not need to be silent in order to achieve these intended benefits.

An unintended consequence of these silent cars under the current design is that they will reduce the independence of blind persons. Moreover, they would endanger not only the lives of the blind but also of small children, seniors, cyclists and even runners.

At present the most popular of these cars is the gasoline-electric hybrid, which alternates between running on a gasoline engine and on battery power, however, new all-electric models are being planned to follow suit.

While the blind do not oppose the production of cars intended to reduce damage to the environment, they would like such cars to have a minimum sound standard. This would help to ensure their safety when travelling along the streets.

In the U.S.A., the Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Act was introduced in 2008. This legislation sought to solve the problem of silent vehicles by authorising a two-year study to determine the best method for allowing blind individuals to recognise the presence of silent cars, and by requiring that two years after the study is completed, all new cars sold in the United States must comply with the solution determined by the study.

Recently, car manufacturers in America have acknowledged the problems posed to blind pedestrians by silent vehicle technology and have begun to work with the blind to find solutions. However, the federal regulators have pointed out that nothing can be done unless there are statistics on injuries and deaths caused by silent vehicles. Thus, the U.S. Congress must direct the Department of Transportation to take action.

The National Federation of the Blind (NFB) of America believes that it is crucial that this problem be addressed soon before the inevitable avalanche of tragedies involving blind people, small children, seniors, cyclists, runners, and especially newly blinded persons, shocks the nation.

Thus, based on scientific research and consultation with the blind and other affected groups, the National Motor Vehicle Safety Standard must have the following characteristics:

In all phases of operation (including the times when the car is at a full stop), they shall be required to emit an Omni-directional sound with similar spectral characteristics to those of a modern internal combustion engine.

The sound should vary in a way that is consistent with the sound of vehicles with combustion engines to indicate whether the vehicle is idling, maintaining a constant speed, accelerating, or decelerating.

The standard need not prescribe the apparatus, technology or method to be used by vehicle manufacturers to achieve the required minimum sound level. This approach will encourage manufacturers to use innovative and cost-effective techniques to achieve the minimum sound standard.

The addition of components to emit a minimum sound discernible by blind and other pedestrians will not negatively affect the environmental benefits of electric cars, and the emitted sound need not be loud enough to contribute to noise pollution. On the other hand, cars that operate in complete silence would endanger the safety of everyone; therefore, the silent operation of a car should be viewed as a design flaw comparable to the lack of seatbelts or airbags.

Here in Malaysia, there is news that the authorities are planning to introduce electric cars in Putrajaya for a start. The blind in this country should take cognisance of this fact and begin alerting the authorities to the need for similar action and legislation so that blind pedestrians and other groups will be able to travel in safety along our roads and streets.

# **MAKMOR TUMIN – A BLIND UNIVERSITY LECTURER**

*By Dr Tan Tok Shiong*

Makmor Tumin was born on 6 August 1967 in Ulu Tiram, Johor Bahru and he had ten brothers and sisters. Although both of his parents had normal vision, they were carriers of the recessive gene which caused retinitis pigmentosa. Consequently, he and three of his other siblings inherited the gene and experienced gradual vision loss. Among the siblings who had visual problems, his older brother became a fish-monger while his younger brother and sister became settlers in the FELDA Land Resettlement Scheme.

Makmor had normal vision when he was first born and so he was admitted to a normal primary school at the age of seven. He began experiencing visual problems when he was eleven years old. His father brought him to see an eye specialist and he asked the doctor to prescribe a pair of spectacles for his son. He was very disappointed when the doctor did not provide the prescription and he took Makmor to an optical shop to purchase the spectacles. Makmor was forced to wear the spectacles for two years but it was of no help to him at all.

When he was in Form One, he had lost his central vision and was not able to read the blackboard. In Form Three, he decided to stay at home and did not want to attend school any more. He refused to change his mind even though the teachers tried to persuade him. The school clerk warned him that he should not be expecting his wife to feed him when he grew up. However, he felt that none of them understood the problem he was facing.

After staying at home for a year, one of the teachers came to his house and advised his parents to send him to a blind school. They agreed and got him enrolled in the Sekolah Menengah Khas Setapak in Kuala Lumpur.

He was immediately placed in Form Three and he was able to pick up Braille very quickly. At the end of the year, he sat for the SRP examination using Braille and he passed. Even though he had not done very well in most of the subjects, he was considered to be one of the best students in the school.

In Form Four, he was appointed as the head prefect and he held this position until he was in Lower Six. He felt that he had been chosen because of his good peripheral vision which enabled him to move around quite easily; in addition, he was respected for his piousness in the Islamic faith. However, he was dropped from all posts when he was in Upper Six because the teachers began to have negative perceptions of him.

After passing his STPM examination, he enrolled for the degree course at the Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya. In the second year of his studies, he found himself very much attracted to the lectures being delivered at the Political Science Department, especially by the lecturers, En Ahmad Shabery Cheek (who later became the Minister of Information) and Dr Firdaus Abdullah (who later became the Director of the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka).

With the help of volunteer readers, he used their lecture notes to write articles for publication. He managed to get 50 of his articles published in the leading newspapers and magazines. Many university students enjoyed reading his articles and wished that they could “photostat” his brain. One of the lecturers commented that his articles were above average and a leading newspaper editor mistook him to be a university professor. However, he humbly admitted that he was just an undergraduate student.

In the third year of his studies, he was struck by another illness besides his visual impairment; one day he had to be warded at the University Hospital due to high blood pressure and constant vomiting. Suddenly, he went into a coma, his entire body became numb, and he could only use his throat to make some noises. According to the doctors, both of his kidneys were starting to fail and they warned that he may soon have to go for dialysis treatment. This reminded him of the time when he was in Form Five and a doctor had told him that this problem might occur and there was protein in his urine.

Seven months later, the kidneys became chronic and the University Hospital became his second home for the next two years. He had to go for dialysis twice a week and each treatment would take between five to six hours. He also had to see the doctor once a week to obtain the necessary medicines and to monitor his physical condition.

Thus, during this two-year period, he had to spend three full days at the hospital; only four days were left to him to pursue his second degree at the University of Malaya. He was advised by the doctor to search for a donor so that a kidney transplant could be carried out for him. After examining his family members, the doctor discovered that his younger brother's kidneys were 95% compatible with his failed kidneys.

The most memorable day in his life was when both he and his younger brother were admitted to the surgery ward. The transplant operation took more than six hours. His brother was discharged after three days but he had to stay on for another ten days. To prevent his new kidney from being rejected by his body, he had to take nine types of drugs and three types of food supplements every day. After two years of agonising dialysis, the new kidney enabled him to begin a new page in his life. He was able to complete his master's thesis and was awarded the Master's Degree in public administration by the University of Malaya at the end of the year.

He decided to apply for a tutor's post at the University but he was not successful. So he applied to read for his doctorate degree at the University and was accepted only after resubmitting his research proposal. After starting his Ph.D. programme, he was appointed as lecturer at the University in 1997. Eventually, he completed his doctorate thesis and was awarded the Ph.D. degree in 2004.

Besides lecturing, Makmor is deeply involved in research on various issues concerning civil society, health care and the donation of organs. He has published six papers in journals and has produced a book. He has also supervised ten Master students and four Ph.D. students.

He owes a debt of gratitude to his wife, Aniza, who was his volunteer assistant during his student days. They have produced four boys in their family – Nur Muhammad Amal, Nur Muhammad Fitri, Nur Muhammad Taufiq and Nur Muhammad Afif.

## **SOME THOUGHTS ON ENTERPRISE**

It has been said that Enterprise is not Entrepreneurialism. According to the Oxford dictionary, “enterprise” is an undertaking which needs courage or that is difficult; but an “entrepreneur” is one who organises and manages a commercial undertaking. However, the enterprising approach was started by entrepreneurs either through individual or corporate enterprise. Subsequently, some non-governmental agencies have adopted the enterprising approach by organising community or social enterprises. Government agencies are also realising that they should not manage everything for their clients but rather let them take the initiative in setting up state-supported enterprises or self-help schemes.

Whether you are starting a business or some other undertaking which could be setting up a band, putting together a football team, or organising a visit, the abilities and skills required are the same – you need to be able to communicate, to lead, to compromise, to take advantage of opportunities, to be responsible for your own actions, and so on.

Thus, how should charity organisations care for their clients? These organisations should empower their clients rather than disable them. This is real caring and it applies to all organisations and not only to the charity bodies. The Malaysian Association for the Blind (MAB) is a good case in point – it is empowering its clients to organise and manage their own activities through their own clubs and committees but they are given moral, financial and sometimes even technical support by MAB.

In enterprise development, therefore, the focus is on human development, i.e. empowering the people to make their own decisions through involvement, participation and planning.

Four aspects need to be considered in enterprise development and they are as follows:

## **1. POLITICAL ASPECT**

Leadership must be developed among the people being served. This means that the management must ask itself whether it is serious enough in involving the clients in the decision-making process. In fact, the management and policy-makers should be daring enough to develop leaders among the clients even if it means that they may be capable of taking up the leadership positions and responsibilities.

In other words, the management and the policy-makers must be willing to share power with the clients. The powerful institutions should enable rather than disable the clients.

On the other hand, the clients who have been empowered must be able to take power responsibility; they should not become overbearing in turn and should be willing to share power or work as equal partners with their former masters. While they should demonstrate that they are capable of taking the initiative and that they can be self-reliant, they must be magnanimous enough and show a willingness to work hand in hand with those who have relinquished power.

## **2. ECONOMIC ASPECT**

The objective of enterprise is to enable the clients to survive by providing them with the tools to carry out sustainable development. For example, they want to know how to start up a business, how to build a business network, how to expand an enterprise, how to create more employment opportunities, how to conserve energy by providing services locally, how to create new industries that are appropriate to the area, and so on.

As someone has said, “don’t teach them but enable the people to learn for themselves.” However, the people need support and space to make it happen. Community development is retarded when government or private agencies prevent that power or ability to learn from developing.

Just simply asking the people to do their own thing is not practical; they must

be equipped with the knowledge and skills which would enable or empower them to do their own thing. Once the people are ready, the agencies holding the controlling power need to step back a little bit so that they will not hinder the people from taking their own actions and responsibilities. In other words, the agencies must give the guiding hand without being overbearing or stifling the initiatives, ideas and actions of the clients.

### **3. SOCIAL ASPECT**

This means the need to democratise communication so that the people will be able to communicate at their own level.

For this to happen, information must be made accessible to the people. For example, knowledge, information and concepts may need to be repackaged and presented to the people in a form that they can understand easily. Perhaps speakers who have been able to digest the ideas from various books could be invited to share with the clients and make the information and skills comprehensible and easy to learn.

Ultimately, public awareness must be created by highlighting how the clients are taking the initiative to help themselves.

### **4. CULTURAL ASPECT**

The people could be helped to develop ideas and concepts by making use of the cultural resources available. In the African countries, for example, the message concerning a dangerous disease such as AIDS is brought home to the people through pop theatre.

Tourism is another example whereby the local people are given knowledge and skills training in how to use and tap their own local resources such as the animals and plants in their forests. Through education and awareness programmes, the people are taught how to develop their own cultural activities and economic projects.

The ultimate objective is to enable the people to develop their own knowledge and expertise. In this way, they become self-reliant and can minimise or even do away with the need for outside assistance. While external support may be necessary at times, the people do not want outsiders coming in and steam-rolling over everything.

To conclude, the people or the clients must be shown the way in developing the enterprise approach. They must be given the knowledge and skills and they must be shown how to develop the necessary strategies in order to become successful entrepreneurs or leaders in running their own programmes.

## **A POINT TO PONDER: WHEN YOU ARE ON THE PHONE**

*By Wong Kow*

I suppose many people would agree with me that the telephone is one of our greatest modern inventions. With the introduction of the mobile phone, communications has become even more affordable and accessible to many individuals. In fact, the telephone is now so user-friendly and so convenient to use that we often take it for granted. We just pick up the phone at any place and at any time, press the number we want and we are immediately in contact with the person at the other end.

Well, I wonder if we do ever give consideration to the following:

1. Is it necessary to call that “somebody” just for this matter?
2. If so, is this the appropriate time to call?
3. By phoning, am I disturbing others near and around me?
4. Is the place too noisy for me to carry on with my telephone conversation?

Undoubtedly, we all love this telephone convenience. With the phone at home or the office or with the cell phone in our pocket, we can be easily contacted anywhere. When answering the phone, however, we should be

alert to protect ourselves. Well telling the truth is an important principle, it is not necessary to tell everything to simply anyone, especially when you are on the phone. A caller could be impersonating someone else in order to obtain information with personal motives in mind. Our children, in particular, should be taught never to divulge information to any caller such as, “My mother has gone to play mahjong and will not be back home until very late” or “my father has gone outstation and won’t be back till Saturday evening”. If it is your boss who may have gone to the bank or he may even be playing golf, you should just say to the caller, “Sorry, my boss is not available at this moment.” Perhaps you could offer to take a message.

If you happen to be in conversation with someone face to face and the phone rings, you should not continue talking and picking up the phone at the same time. You could be overheard by the caller. Likewise, if a friend or someone else is on the phone nearby, you should try your utmost not to talk or give comments. The person on the other end of the line may be able to hear you even if you were ten meters away. The telephone is much more sensitive nowadays!

When narrating an interesting story, the exciting part is usually left to the end in order to keep your listeners in suspense. On the other end, remember that the situation is different when you are relaying an urgent message on the phone; you must be careful not to mislead your listener. For example, if you were involved in a car accident and if you were to ring your family member to tell him you are unhurt, you should say that right at the beginning of your message. Once you have given him the assurance about your safety, then you could go on to relate the exciting part of your story such as how the two cars had collided with one another.

Several years ago when the massive earthquake rocked Kobe in Japan and killed more than six thousand people, my nephew, Johnny, and his family were staying in the city. We were filled with anxiety and worry concerning their safety when we heard the shocking news over the radio.

When Johnny finally managed to establish telephone contact with me, he immediately said, “Uncle, the earthquake here is very, very terrible! Buildings have collapsed and many thousands of people have died!”

“Hello Johnny! Hello Johnny!” I replied. However, there was no response. Then the telephone was cut off and I could hear no more.

You can imagine how I was feeling over that uncompleted telephone conversation. I was thinking Johnny and his family may be going through extreme suffering; I even thought a building may have collapsed on them and they may have been buried alive following the after-shocks and tremors as Johnny was talking on the phone. Thus, I had a sleepless night and waited anxiously till the next afternoon when the telephone lines had been reconnected. Suddenly, the phone rang and I was so glad to hear Johnny’s voice saying, “Uncle, we are safe here but.....”

What relief came over me when I heard those words, “We are safe here.” However, I believe I could have been spared the nightmare if Johnny had first reported about the safety of himself and his family before trying to tell me the exciting news of the earthquake.

Many of us probably have the common habit of unconsciously elaborating on a topic without realising that the other party could be feeling bored but being too polite to interrupt. One should be sensitive enough to the feelings of the person on the other end of the telephone line; for instance, if you detect the dull tone of voice by the other party, be wise not to carry on with the subject of your own interest for too long.

Undoubtedly, the telephone is an excellent device and is so helpful to us in many ways – facilitating close links between family members and friends, enhancing the effectiveness of business contacts, obtaining immediate assistance during emergency, enjoying leisurely conversation, and so on.

Nevertheless, remember always to observe the following “right things” to be done – call the person at the right place and at the right time, make the right approach and use the appropriate words in telephone conversation.

With these tips, the telephone will surely be your best friend at all times.

## SAYINGS FROM RELIGION

### *Prophet Muhammad in Islam*

No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.

### *Jesus Christ in Christianity*

Do to others as you would that they should do unto you.

### *The Talmud of the Jews*

What is hateful for you do not do to your fellow men. That is the entire law; all the rest is commentary.

### *Mahabharata of Brahmanism*

This is the sum of duty: Do not unto others which could cause you pain if done unto you.

### *Buddhism*

Hurt not others in want that you yourself would find hurtful.

### *Confucius*

Do to every man as you would have him do to you and do not unto another what you would not have him do to you.

## WHAT IS YOGA?

Yoga actually means Harmony. In fact, there are various types of Yoga and some of them are as follows:

### ***HATTAYOGA***

This is Harmony through physical exercise.

### ***RAJAYOGA***

This is mental meditation in order to obtain Harmony of the mind. Raja yoga is a way of life and can be practiced by anybody. No mantras need be recited in Raja yoga. (Mantras are words which are said in repetition in the form of a chant)

### ***OM SHANTI YOGA***

This phrase means “I am soul”. In fact, this Yoga helps you to realise that “I am soul” in your body.

The powers obtained from this Yoga include

- the power to tolerate;
- the power to pack up;
- the power to adjust;
- the power to cooperate;
- the power to have courage;
- the power to withdraw.

### ***DEVOTION YOGA***

This Yoga is espoused in the philosophy of Sai Baba. It is a spiritual form of devotion.

**PRINCIPAL OFFICE-BEARERS AND COUNCIL  
MEMBERS OF NCBM  
FROM 2010 - 2012**

Dato' S. Kulasegaran, President, NCBM

Mdm Jasmine Khoo, Vice-President, NCBM  
Society of the Blind in Malaysia

Mr Wong On Fook, Hon. Secretary, NCBM  
Sabah Society for the Blind

Mr (James) Lau Kung Wuong, Hon. Treasurer, NCBM  
Sarawak Society for the Blind

Prof. Datuk (Dr) Abdullah Malim Baginda  
Malaysian Association for the Blind

Mdm Rosalind Chew  
Sabah Society for the Blind

Mr William G Brohier  
St. Nicholas Home

Bishop Andrew Phang See Yin  
St. Nicholas Home

Datuk Dr Hsiung Kwo Yeun  
Sarawak Society for the Blind

Puan Maziah (Jamilah) Abu Bakar  
Society of the Blind in Malaysia

# **CHAIRPERSONS OF COMMITTEES OF NCBM FROM 2010 - 2012**

Committee on Education (COE)  
Mr Kway Eng Hock

Committee on Employment and Economic Empowerment of Blind Persons  
(CEEE)  
Dr Wong Huey Siew

Committee on Social and Community Development (CSCD)  
Mdm Clarice Irine Moiji

Committee on Access to Information, Communication and Technology  
(CAICT)  
Mr Ooi Chee Khoon

Committee on Braille and Library Services (CBLS)  
En. Saifuddin Mohamad

Committee on Wellness and Prevention of Blindness (CWPB)  
Dr Dennis Kong Ket Ming

Committee on Sports and Recreation (CSR)  
En Rosham Sidek

# **REPRESENTATIVES OF NCBM TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS, 2010 - 2012**

National Council of Welfare and Social Development Malaysia  
(NCWSDM)

Ven. Archdeacon Samuel D. John

World Blind Union

Dato' S. Kulasegaran and Mr Ivan Ho Tuck Choy

Auditors 2010 - 2011

Inpana & Associates,

Kuala Lumpur

## **EDITORIAL BOARD**

Godfrey Ooi

Ivan Ho

Moses Choo

Wong Kwee Heong

Inungkiran Mongijal

## **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: 03-2272 4959

Fax: 03-2272 4960

## **SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**

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.

Also please note that if the article is accompanied by at least two relevant photographs and if they are accepted for publication, you will be paid an additional RM25.00 fee.

You should include your address, telephone number and bank account number so that the money can be sent to you easily.

For details of payment, please see the last page.

## **EARN SOME EXTRA CASH**

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.)