

# THE NCBM OUTREACH



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## **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)

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# **VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT OF NCBM**

To ensure blind people will receive appropriate training and enjoy quality services regardless of where they live in the country.

## **EDITORIAL BOARD**

Godfrey Ooi Goat See

Ivan Ho Tuck Choy

Moses Choo Siew Cheong

Wong Kwee Heong

Inungkiran Mongijal

# **HEAR THE CALL OF THE BLIND WITH ADDITIONAL DISABILITIES – CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS PART I**

*By Choo Kim Yoon*

***Editor’s Note: Choo Kim Yoon made his presentation at the NCBM Convention which was held at the Midah Hotel, Jalan Kampong Atap, Kuala Lumpur from 5 – 7 December 2011. Here is what he said:***

It is on record that there are about 330,000 disabled persons in Malaysia. This figure includes a small number of blind persons with additional disabilities (BPWAD). Some of the additional disabilities that go along with blindness could be hearing impairment, mental impairment, and physical or motor impairment. As a BPWAD myself, I am not only blind but I am also hearing impaired. I can honestly testify that as a BPWAD, I have experienced and I am still going through a very painful struggle in my life.

I hope that some concrete steps can be taken to help us overcome the real challenges that we are facing. Indeed, we have been waiting for solutions for a long, long time.

In fact, we had been gratefully gathering together under the sponsorship of MAB to see how we could realise our dream of having a deaf-blind club. At least twelve meetings were held for this purpose. Unfortunately, we ended up with nothing at all after the same issues were discussed over and over again in the past few years. When asked as to why no progress had been made after so many meetings, the convenor simply answered, “the matters have not been resolved yet.”

So, you can imagine our disappointment. After having spent so much time and so many discussions on the same issues, we have seen no profitable results. Other than some efforts at organising shopping visits and excursion trips, the club has not been formed and our great expectations lie buried at the bottom of our saddened hearts! Now we are left alone to deal with all our life-long challenges by ourselves.

The bitter struggles that afflict the BPWAD community can be illustrated with this simple story: Adam's Life-mate.

God wished to bring Adam a companion. So he brought a little creature to him.

God said to Adam, "This is your companion. He will stay with you all your lifetime. Would you like to call him your life-mate?"

Adam replied humbly, "Thanks God, but I cannot call him my life-mate yet. Let me see what he looks like."

The next day God met Adam to find out how he liked his companion.

"He is wonderful," Adam replied. "He has entertained me a lot and he has a musical whistle. It was fantastic to watch him fly from tree to tree as he sang melodiously from morning till sun-down."

"Do you like him?" God asked. "Would you like to call him your life-mate?"

"I like him," Adam answered softly. "But he is a bird. He cannot be my life-mate."

So God brought a larger creature to Adam. After a few days, God saw Adam and asked how he liked his second companion.

"He is wonderful," Adam replied. "He shared plenty of delightful green plants with me; we played hide-and-seek, we raced together and even had a jumping contest."

"Do you like him?" God asked. "Can he be your life-mate?"

"Certainly, I like him," Adam said. "But he cannot be my life-mate. He is a rabbit."

So God brought another larger creature. The creature carried Adam on his back to all the favourite fruit trees and they spent many exciting hours in the garden.

“Do you like him?” God asked. “Would you like to call him your life-mate.

“Yes, I like him very much,” Adam replied. “But he cannot be my life-mate. He is a horse and I am a man,” Adam said sadly.

At last God realised what was the real desire in Adam’s heart. A true life-mate must be someone who is equal to him. So God caused Adam to dream in a deep sleep. He took one of the man’s ribs and formed a woman. God breathed life into her nostrils and put the woman beside Adam.

When Adam woke up, he discovered the woman.

“Aha!” He exclaimed joyfully. “Certainly, this is my bone and my flesh.”

He thanked God for his loving grace. Both Adam and the woman lived happily together, taking care of the garden.

Well, brothers and sisters, as in the story, we too cannot accept anything less than equality. We are thankful for the shopping visits and the excursion trips. However, recreational trips alone can never help us to overcome our life-long challenges. The birds and rabbits can only amuse us for a short while but we want real solutions.

Although there are one or two horses which may stand ready in the field to offer assistance, their services can only reach a handful of people. Greater effort is needed to provide life-long solutions that will benefit the entire BPWAD community.

We do appreciate the current work being carried out to equip young BPWAD’s with daily living skills - feeding themselves, dressing, doing their own laundry, even communication with other people. Needless to say, all these basic skills will help the young BPWAD’s to function as independent individuals within their family and surrounding community. This will

undoubtedly help to ensure the acceptance of the young BPWAD's in society. However, the real challenge arises when the young BPWAD's become adults. One of the major challenges facing the adult BPWAD's is the difficulty in gaining employment and financial independence. This is not because the BPWAD's are incapable of being productive in their jobs but rather it is due to the lack of understanding and misconception prevalent among the general public – they think that the BPWAD's are less productive and so are better left in the care of their families for their lifetime.

This negative misconception must be changed. Never treat us as inferior simply because we have multi-disabilities. Give us a chance to prove that we are as productive as anybody else.

(Currently, Choo Kim Yoon is doing part-time work with the Appeal Mails Section of the Malaysian Association for the Blind. He is able to earn about RM15.00 to RM20.00 per working day. He is also provided with a small meal allowance and a small transport allowance to help him with the taxi fare.)

## **THE BLIND TISSUE-PAPER SELLER**

*Editor's Note: Dr Tan Tok Shiong is a low-vision person and he was an economics lecturer at the University of Malaya from the 1990s to 2009. After retirement, he has been spending much of his time travelling around and mixing with blind people in order to gain more intimate knowledge of how they are coping with their lives.*

*Here is his article about the blind tissue-paper seller:*

George Wong was born blind and was abandoned by his parents when he was still a baby. At the age of four, he was sent to St. Nicholas Home in Penang by an English lady doctor. The doctor went back to the Home once in order to see how George was doing.

The teacher instructed George to read a passage for the doctor. He did so and she was very impressed. Before leaving, she gave George a five-dollar note, which was a substantive amount of money in those days.

In 1941, when he was five years old, the Japanese came and conquered Malaya (as it was known then). The Japanese soldiers went to St. Nicholas Home and took away all the things that were valuable, including the two cars. Later on, the Japanese administration gave instructions to the Home to put a sticker with some Japanese words onto the piano and other articles of importance to prevent the soldiers from taking them away.

There was a teacher in the Home called Mr Ma Kho and he was blind. He was instructed to teach the inmates in Japanese; although he did not know the language, he could learn it very easily as he was a very talented person. In fact, he already knew five other languages – Mandarin, English, German, Latin and Esperanto.

The Japanese flag had to be raised every morning and they had to bow and sing the Japanese National Anthem. Then they had to do some drilling exercises by following the music on the radio. The drilling was a kind of physical exercise commonly practised in Japanese society.

The Japanese were very kind to the inmates at St. Nicholas. They donated a goat to the Home which the inmates were very happy to look after. The Japanese also donated a female cow to the Spastic Centre which was nearby to St. Nicholas. Some of the milk produced at the Spastic Centre was shared with St. Nicholas. As a result, the blind children at the Home had milk to drink every morning. Some of the Japanese families even took the blind children to the beach.

The Japanese converted five empty rooms into warehouses in order to store their stockpile of sugar and salt. The stocks were left there for so long that the Japanese must have forgotten about them. One day the inmates discovered that the sugar had become soaked with water and it was leaking down through the wooden floor. The inmates caught the water in some buckets which they then boiled for use when needed.

There was an Anglican priest by the name of Padre Scott who was trying to hide in the Home in order to escape from the Japanese. However, he was discovered one day and the Japanese came at about 1.00 a.m. to take him away to Changi prison in Singapore. Fortunately, he survived the war and came back to visit St. Nicholas after his release from the prison.



At the age of seventeen, George and some of the other blind boys were sent to an old folks' home in Seremban, Negeri Sembilan. At the old folks' home, the inmates (including the blind and the old folks) made cane handicrafts. The rattan was regularly supplied by the Seremban Welfare Department. The wages were paid on a piecemeal basis, i.e. based on the number of baskets made.

George Wong did not feel very happy at the old folks' home where the bucket toilet system was still being used in contrast with the flush toilet system at St. Nicholas. Moreover, the blind and the old folks had to share the same dormitories. Thus, when the old folks were about to die, they could be heard to be breathing heavily and groaning loudly for many hours.

In 1954, George Wong was glad to be transferred to the Gurney Training Centre in Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur. This Centre for the Blind had been set up by Major Bridges, a British soldier who had been blinded in Burma during a shoot-out with the Japanese in the Second World War. It was Major Bridges who founded the Malayan Association for the Blind in 1951 (which later became known as the Malaysian Association for the Blind).

Major Bridges then set up a number of services for the blind, among which was the Gurney Training Centre in 1953. It was named after the British High Commissioner, Sir Henry Gurney, who had been assassinated by the communists. The Centre was officially opened by the wife of Sir Henry Gurney.

At the GTC, George learned how to make laundry baskets from cane. He also learned how to repair bicycles, sew mattresses and weave carpets using coconut husk ropes. However, he found the skills to be impractical.

In his fifth year at the GTC, George heard that the MAB would be setting up the Kinta Valley Workshop in Ipoh, Perak. In fact, the workshop was established in 1958 and George was transferred there. Unfortunately, the workshop was poorly run so that after two years, the basketry workers left one by one, including George himself.

George returned to the old folks' home in Seremban to make baskets. Later, the Welfare Department decided to put up the blind residents in rented houses. George shared a house with a blind Malay basket-worker.

After saving up to RM1,000.00, George paid for a house to be built on an empty piece of land near to the rented house. During the dry season, the seeds from the rubber trees in a nearby estate would burst open and rain down on the zinc roof of his house with such a great noise. George stayed in this house all alone for five years.

One day, after he had started applying for a land title to the house, a lady came knocking at his door. She said she was interested in the land and would be willing to pay him the RM1,000.00 which he had spent to acquire the land. Having felt very lonely during the five-year period, George decided to accept the deal and then he moved to Kuala Lumpur.

Renting a room in Brickfields, George started selling tidbits from door to door. Being totally blind, he found the work to be a tough struggle. Fortunately, he did not have to struggle for too long before he met up with a very clever person whom the blind called Ah Hwa. He started the van sales service which proved to be very successful. He would pair off each blind person with a sighted person who would then go selling shampoo from door to door. This system of selling tidbits was particularly beneficial to the blind who had little education and who were thought to be unemployable. In fact, it was possible for a blind person to earn a handsome income just by tagging along with a sighted guide – it was not necessary for the blind person to do anything else. According to Ah Hwa, the shampoo could be sold off much more quickly when the salesgirls brought along a blind person as they sold the product from house to house.

George stayed in the van sales business for more than ten years. During that period, he had seen many blind persons becoming financially well off, getting married and setting up their own families. Unfortunately, the van business gradually lost its economic viability and finally disappeared in the late 1980s when Malaysia was hit with recession.

Later, however, the business gained new life when the clever son of a coffee-shop owner in Brickfields decided to export the van sales service to Singapore. The blind knew him simply as William. He would bring along several blind persons together with their guides in his van and drop them off at some hawker centres in Singapore to do the sales. They started off by selling tidbits but later they just sold tissue-paper in order to keep down their load. After some months, nonetheless, this business in Singapore also collapsed as the operators were being arrested by the authorities there.

Despite this setback, selling tissue-paper in Singapore continues to be the most lucrative business for many blind Malaysians who go there on their own with their sighted guides. The business still goes on even though quite a number of them have been caught and have been barred from entering the republic. In fact, George knew of one blind person together with his guide who were detained for two weeks in a prison-like old folks' home. George himself had been very lucky for a long time as he was only questioned several times by the authorities but no action had been taken against him.

About one year ago, however, he experienced a drastic turn of events all because of the obstinacy of his sighted guide. She had been warned by the owners in a particular hawker centre not to sell there but she took their warnings lightly and went on selling. If she had moved on to some other hawker centre where the owners were not so particular, things would have been all right. As they continued selling in that place, the owners alerted the police and both George and his guide were arrested. Each of them were put in separate rooms for the night. George found that even going to the toilet was a nightmare because the policeman would follow him everywhere he went. When he took a long time easing himself because of prostate enlargement due to old age, the policeman kept knocking on his door and was suspicious that George was trying to find a way to escape. However, his guide suffered a worse fate as she was in handcuffs for the whole night so that she could not sleep a wink. Next day both of them were released and asked to return to Malaysia. Their passports were marked with a chop that would prevent them from entering Singapore for at least one year.

Fortunately for George Wong, he has been very thrifty in spending throughout his life. Being unmarried as he had been too busy selling over a period of many years, he had managed to accumulate sufficient savings to purchase a single-storey terrace corner house in Semenyih, Selangor. When he has nothing to do, he would enjoy planting flowers, vegetables and even some fruit trees in his garden.

However, he would feel restless and unhappy if he remained idle for too long without doing any sales and with no source of income coming in. He was happy for a while doing a part-time job folding appeal letters at the society of the blind in Kuala Lumpur for about RM20.00 a day. He even joined a couple of blind friends doing an eighteen-kilometre exhaustive walk from Genting Sempah all the way up to the peak in the Genting Highlands. He also went with a blind friend for a round-the-island walk in Samosir of Indonesia at least twice.

But, in the end, however, he had to go back to the work that he knew so well – selling tissue-paper from door to door with the help of a sighted guide. And he is still doing this today in the streets of Kuala Lumpur at the age of seventy-five.

## **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.

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

## **STAFF ESTABLISHMENT RESTRUCTURING AND PROMOTIONS**

January 2012 ushered in new and apparently very drastic changes in the management structure of MAB. However, for most of the staff who were being transferred, the exercise proved to be quite rewarding rather than disastrous. Not only did they see themselves being promoted to new positions but they also saw a rise in their salaries. The lower-income staff too were filled with new year joy because they learned that their monthly salaries had been raised to at least RM1,000.00. At the start of the year, Dato' Ganesan took over the reins as the new Acting Executive Director.

Liza Umi, formerly Human Resource Manager, was promoted to be the Assistant Director of Revenue-generating Services while Silatul Rahim was promoted to the post of ICT Manager.

At the Gurney Training Centre, Sumitha Ramasamy, formerly Senior Assistant, took over the Principal's post from Raja Norsadah, who was herself promoted to the position of GTC Assistant Director.

Haji Zainuddin Jasmi, formerly Job Placement Officer, left with great reluctance and a heavy heart to become the Assistant Manager of the Braille Publishing Unit and Library Resource Centre. Now he has taken the unfamiliar challenge with new vigour and energy. Jacqueline Emmanuel, formerly Assistant Placement Officer, has been promoted as Assistant Manager to take charge not only of job placement but also the education and welfare services.

Haemalatha has been transferred from the GTC where she was Computer Instructor to the Braille Publishing Unit as the Production Assistant. Initially leaving the GTC with tearful regret, she now relishes her new task to produce Braille texts and tactile materials for the blind.

The bold and visionary move to restructure MAB was made by Dr. Chandra Sekaran, Chairman of the Staff Establishment Committee. With the restructuring, he hopes to increase productivity not only in the non-profit client services but also to bring in an income of at least RM10 million for the Association.

## **GURNEY TRAINING CENTRE**

The intake of trainees for the first half of 2012 is 73. In order to meet the needs of the trainees, almost all the staff of the GTC will be given the opportunity to attend certain courses. They include the teaching methodology course for instructors, food preparation for the cafeteria management and domestic staff, and the self-motivation and counselling course for all the staff of the GTC.

So far three instructors have been registered with the Department of Skills Development (DSD) in order to obtain the SKM certificate (or Sijil Kemahiran Malaysia). To enable the instructors to obtain the certificate at Level 2 and 3 for the information system and reflexology courses, the instructors will be required to compile their portfolios by 23rd March. The three instructors are Abdul Latif bin Abdul Malik, Noramiza Amran and Isak Ngau.

In line with the upgrading project for the GTC, new initiatives include introducing the new entry pass system for easy identification of the trainees and for the purpose of their security, forming the curricular development panels to construct new syllabi and modules, and new assessment guidelines in accordance with the CGPA method.

## **MEMBERS RECOGNISED FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO MAB**

At the 60th anniversary dinner of MAB on 13th December 2011, six members of MAB were recognised for their contributions to The Association. They were:

### **The late Rev. Dr. K. Sri Dhammananda Nayaka Thera**

He served on the board of the Gurney Training Centre from the early 1960s to 2007 when he passed away. He was also an active member on the Eye Donation Committee of the Tun Hussein Onn National Eye Hospital (THONEH) from 1977 to 1997. In addition, he had initiated eye donation projects as a service to the community at large and he initiated community sharing programmes for the benefit of the blind, the disabled and senior citizens.

### **Tunku Sheilah bt. Almarhum Tuanku Abdul Rahman**

She first joined MAB in 1968 as a volunteer in the MAB library where she assisted in the Braille book lending service for blind users. She then served as chairwoman of the Fund-raising Committee from 1979 to 2000 and served as Vice President from 1992 to 1999. She solicited support from many major donors for MAB and organised the most number of fund-raising activities, including the First Charity Gala Dinner in 1979 and other annual dinners, walkathons, fun fair projects, charity musicals, and the Australian Dance Theatre.

### **Datin Zabrina Zulkifli**

She served as Chairwoman of the Rotary Hostel for the Blind Committee from 1975 to 1987 and as Chairwoman of the Fund-raising Committee from 2001 to 2003. She organised a number of charity projects which included golf, treasure hunt, coffee morning, high tea and musical shows.

### **Tun Dr. Hj. Siti Hasmah**

She served as Vice President of MAB from 1979 to 1987 and was a fervent supporter of MAB's programmes for the blind and the fund-raising campaigns. She was the chairwoman for a number of charity dinners which



raised substantive amounts of money for MAB, including the 1978 charity banquet, the 25th anniversary banquet of 1981 and the 1980 charity banquet. She also contributed to the vocational programme of the GTC by giving talks on public health and she officiated at the Hepatitis B Immunisation Campaign for the blind.

### **Toh Puan Aishah Ong**

She served as Chairwoman of the Low-vision Committee from 1985 to 1986 and she was responsible for organising the First Asia-Pacific Low-vision Conference in Malaysia in 1987. This led to the establishment of the Community Services Department in THONEH and eventually the setting up of the Low-vision Services Programme in MAB in 1989. She also served as Chairwoman of the Public Relations Committee from 1992 to 1994.

### **Dalip Singh**

He served as Chairman of the Employment Committee which later became the Promotion and Sales Marketing Committee from 1980 to 1993. In fact, he was responsible for renovating the premises at Jalan Berhala, Brickfields in order to accommodate the Job Placement Unit and the Handicrafts Centre. He also drew up plans for the sales showroom.

### **MAB STAFF SOCIAL CLUB FOSTERS FRIENDLY LINKS WITH SABAH SOCIETY FOR THE BLIND**

The MAB Staff Social Club organised a trip to Sabah from 9th to 11th March 2012 (Friday to Sunday). Among the interesting places visited were the Manokan Island (or island of chickens), the Mari-mari Cultural Village, the base of Mount Kinabalu, the Porim hot springs with the canopy rope-walk, and the Filipino market.

At the Mari-mari Cultural Village, the lifestyle of the different communities were on display. The Dusun constituted the largest community, the Murut formed the second largest community, while the Bajaus were the third largest but also the richest community in Sabah.

There were sea Bajaus and land Bajaus, the latter of which were also known to be very skilled horse-riders. The Bajaus guard their daughters jealously. At night the unmarried girls have to climb up a narrow ladder to sleep in the room near the rooftop. Once they have entered the room, the ladder will be pulled away so that prowlers or robbers will not be able to find them.

If the girls need to come down perhaps to ease themselves, then they have to knock on the floor-board and the father will raise the ladder for them to climb down.

The highlight of the trip was the dinner and social evening with the Sabah Society for the Blind which sponsored the meal at Palace Hotel. Activities included games like arm wrestling, spot dance and finding treasures, a lucky draw, and music by a blind band from Sabah with singers from MAB and SHSB. The event has helped to foster friendly links and warm relations between the two organisations.

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

### **MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF THE NEW COINS**

NCBM sent a delegation to negotiate with Bank Negara with regards to the new coins that will be in circulation fairly soon in the Malaysian community. The team included En. Moses Choo, En. Yam Tong Woo, En. Shamsuri and En. Godfrey Ooi.

At the meeting with En. Azman Mat Ali on 6th March 2012, En. Yam told Bank Negara that while their efforts to meet the needs of the community at large were much appreciated, he hoped that they had also taken into consideration the needs of the blind. Although the coins were lighter and therefore less bulky to be carried around by the public, it was very easy to confuse them with the old coins. For example, the new fifty-cent coin felt like the old twenty-cent coin.

En. Azman explained that to help the blind differentiate the coins, they should feel the edges of the coins. The five-cent coin was smooth all round the edge, the ten-cent coin had a slightly rough edge while the twenty-cent coin had a rougher edge all round the coin. As for the fifty-cent coin, it can be easily identified by the nine grooves all round the edge of the coin.

Bank Negara had also taken into consideration the differentiation in terms of the weight of the coins. Thus, the coins can be easily identified by weight and thickness. At present, there may be some confusion with the old coins which are being withdrawn gradually but this would take a number of years. This is because at least twelve billion coins have been released into the community over the past fifty years since independence in 1957.

Bank Negara then presented the delegation with twenty sets of the new coins. This was to enable NCBM and its member-organisations to organise awareness sessions during which they would help to educate the blind community on how to recognise the coins.

## **REPORT FROM NCBM**

*By Ivan Ho Tuck Choy  
Executive Director*

*National Council for the Blind, Malaysia*

Here is a brief report of the most recent happenings in NCBM.

### ***1. THE NCBM NATIONAL CONVENTION***

The Convention was held from 5th – 7th December 2011. It was attended by 100 participants, 50 of whom stayed at the venue while the rest were daily commuters. The participants comprised representatives from the member-organisations of NCBM, Bahagian Pendidikan Khas, the Jabatan OKU of the National Welfare Department, the Examination Board, and lecturers from three universities which have special education programmes. There were four plenary sessions and five forums involving 24 presenters, nine moderators and eight rapporteurs.

At the conclusion of the Convention, the participants adopted a declaration which called for actions to be taken by NCBM, member-organisations and the government. (The Declaration is appended at the end of this report)

## ***2. THE 11TH WBUAP MASSAGE SEMINAR***

Since the launch of the WBUAP Massage Registration Website in mid-December 2011, wbuap2012.org, NCBM has been sending out notices and invitations, and approaching potential people for speakers. The seminar will be held from 3rd – 5th May 2012 at the Istana Hotel.

Prior to the seminar, the NCBM President, Datuk S. Kulasegaran, and the Seminar Organising Chairman, Dato' Dr. Hsiung Kwo Yeun, made a visit to China, Japan, Korea and other prospective countries in this region to drum up support for the event.

## ***3. THE CONTRA LANE IN BRICKFIELDS***

As from 3rd December 2011, Dewan Bandaraya, Kuala Lumpur created a contra lane for buses and taxis in front of NCBM. This meant that no vehicles could go into this lane except buses and taxis. Consequently, all the shops along this area (including NCBM) could not load or unload their goods, or even permit customers or donors to stop just for a while to carry out their business. This move by DBKL badly affected the income of these shops and, of course, the donations coming to NCBM. Thus, NCBM joined up with the business community to make representations to DBKL and to the Minister of Federal Territory and Urban Well-being.

Happily, the authorities relented and rescinded the contra lane plan on 6th February 2012. It is hoped that the authorities will eventually return the roads in Brickfields to a two-way traffic flow.

## ***4. NEW ACTION PLAN OF NCBM***

The NCBM Action Plan for 2006–2011 has run its course and steps are under way to draft a new action plan. Basically, NCBM will follow the former plan which is to work on three levels – working with member-organisations,

working together to achieve national goals, and working to achieve progress on the international level. However, the new plan will be strongly dictated by the Convention Declaration.

## ***5. PROMOTING THE WBUAP-ICEVI GENERAL ASSEMBLIES***

Dato' S. Kulasegaran, as President of the WBUAP, was invited to serve on the International Organising Committee of the WBUAP-ICEVI and the local Organising Committee of the WBU-ICEVI and the local Organising Committee of the Thailand Association of the Blind. Dato' Kulasegaran attended both the meetings which took place on 27th December 2011 and 7th January 2012.

The WBU-ICEVI general assemblies will be held in Bangkok from 10th – 18th November 2012. It will start with the WBU Diversity Forum from the 10th – 11th; then the WBU General Assembly from the 12th – 14th followed by the joint assemblies from 15th - 16th, with the remaining days for the business of ICEVI. The WBUAP Quadrennial Regional Assembly will be held on the afternoon of 13th November 2012.

While on their trips to the countries mentioned above, Dato' Kulasegaran has been promoting these events in order to attract greater participation from within this region. It is almost once in a lifetime occurrence that such assemblies are held at our doorstep.

# **DECLARATION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE BLIND, MALAYSIA**

*December 2011*

This Declaration was adopted by NCBM at its Silver Jubilee Convention held in Kuala Lumpur, 5th – 7th 2011.

*(Note: For clarity, the word “NCBM” in this Declaration refers to NCBM and its five member-organisations.)*

We, the participants of the NCBM Silver Jubilee Convention, themed “Towards Effective Participation and Equal Rights for the Blind in the 1Malaysia Mainstream Development” and held in Kuala Lumpur from 5th to 7th December 2011, comprising representatives from the five member-organisations of NCBM, Government departments, BVI persons from throughout Malaysia and individuals interested in and supportive of the work of BVI persons, do hereby declare :

## ***1. GENERAL***

1.1 Services for BVI persons provided by the Government, the private sector and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO’s), including organisations serving BVI persons, must be given in accordance with the United Nations, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and The Malaysian Disabilities Act.

1.2 NCBM shall work together with the Government and the private sector in ensuring access to public transport, the built environment, information and relevant services to enable BVI persons to actively participate in society in improving their quality of life and contributing to the 1Malaysia concept.

## **2. THE ROLE OF NCBM**

- 2.1 All organisations serving BVI persons shall facilitate more BVI persons to take up decision-making positions on their Management Boards in line with the UNESCAP Biwako Millennium Framework for Action and the Constitution of the World Blind Union motto: “Nothing about us without us”.
- 2.2 The Constitution of NCBM shall be reviewed, amended and strengthened to incorporate the rights-based approach in line with the UNESCAP’s Campaign for the 3rd Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities: “Make the Right Real”.
- 2.3 Initially, the NCBM Convention shall be held once a year to ensure that its Constitutional aim to provide a forum for consultation and discussion on matters pertaining to BVI persons is accelerated.
- 2.4 NCBM shall also play an active role in advocating for the education, rehabilitation, training and employment of BVI persons with Additional Disabilities.
- 2.5 NCBM shall promote the employment of BVI persons through Disability Equality Training to enable them to be Agents of Change. For this purpose, an Advocacy Unit shall be established at NCBM.
- 2.6 Realising that only 173 BVI persons have been employed by the Government as at June 2011 through its Policy of 1% Employment of Persons with Disabilities in the Public Sector, NCBM calls upon its member-organisations to set up effective, efficient and well-equipped Placement Units to accelerate the implementation of this Policy. In addition, the Placement Units shall provide support services to BVI persons working in the private sector and those who are self-employed.
- 2.7 Bearing in mind that blindness knows no borders, NCBM, which has benefited from international and regional cooperation in the past, shall continue to play a more active role in support of WBU, and in helping to strengthen the capacity of less-developed organisations serving BVI persons in the WBU-Asia Pacific (WBUAP) region.

- 2.8 NCBM, together with other organisations serving persons with disabilities, as well as civil societies, shall lobby the Government to amend Article 8 (2) of the Federal Constitution to include persons with disabilities, to withdraw reservations to the CRPD and to sign its Optional Protocol. Likewise, similar strong joint representation shall be made to the Government to amend The Malaysian Disabilities Act so that it is in compliance with the CRPD, and can be effectively enforced.
- 2.9 NCBM shall set up a task force to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the National Plan of Action for persons with disabilities, especially with regards to BVI persons, and shall submit the report to the National Council for Persons with Disabilities by December 2012.
- 2.10 NCBM shall continue to advocate for the improvement of services for BVI children, youth, adults and senior citizens, all categories of which shall include BVI Persons with Additional Disabilities.

### **3. *THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT***

- 3.1 NCBM compliments the Ministry of Education for the transformation in the Malaysian Education Programme to benefit BVI children in gaining access to quality education through the Special Education Division. However, special education for BVI students shall be decided and facilitated through the joint efforts of the children with disabilities, their parents, the schools concerned, the government and the community.
- 3.2 In line with the Government's aspiration to become a developed nation by 2020, NCBM calls upon the Government to introduce the National Key Results Area (NKRA) to track the progress of services for persons with disabilities so that they will not be left out in the development of our country.

(Approved for circulation by the 1/2012 NCBM Executive Committee Meeting held on 14th January 2012).



# WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MCR?

*By Godfrey Ooi Goat See*

***Editor's Note: Godfrey Ooi is the representative of MAB to the Malaysian Council for Rehabilitation. Here is his report on the main activities that took place in MCR for the year 2011.***

***The Malaysian Council for Rehabilitation (MCR) had undertaken a number of projects in 2011 as follows:***

## ***1. ABILYMPICS***

The Fourth National Abilympics had been organised by MCR over a two-year period from 2010 to 2011. The purpose was to select the champions for about ten events in order to compete in the International Abilympics in Seoul, South Korea in 2011.

The events that MCR had chosen for Malaysia were:

- (a) Floral arrangement;
- (b) Basic tailoring;
- (c) Advanced tailoring;
- (d) Basket-making;
- (e) Wood-carving;
- (f) Silk painting;
- (g) Photography;
- (h) PC assembly;
- (i) Webpage designing;
- (j) English-text processing.

However, PC assembly ultimately had to be dropped from the list because of the heavy expense involved.

MAB took part in two of the events – basket-making and English text-processing. Abdullah Nawang (totally blind) was Malaysian champion for basket-making while Sumitha Ramasamy (also totally blind) was champion

for English text-processing. Being the national champions, both of them had the opportunity to be part of the Malaysian team that went to South Korea to participate in the International Abilympics. Our congratulations go to Sumitha who was given the special award for gaining fourth place in the English text-processing event.

After returning from Seoul, MCR received good news from the Ministry of Human Resources indicating that they would be willing to collaborate with The Council in developing and promoting the abilympics. Better still, the Ministry has agreed to allocate some financial resources for the programme. In view of this, MCR intends to mobilise and train the disabled to prepare for participation in the forthcoming national and international abilympics in four years' time, i.e. 2015.

## **2. *VERY SPECIAL ARTS***

MCR had adopted the VSA programme a few years ago for the purpose of developing and promoting the arts among the disabled. In 2011 a number of events were organised among which were the harmonica workshop as well as the song & dance talent time.

### **2.1 Harmonica Workshop**

The Harmonica Workshop was organised as a collaborative project with MAB and it was held on 13th November 2011 at the MAB Hall, Kompleks MAB, Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur. The workshop was conducted by the volunteer instructor for MAB, Mr. Tan Keng Seng, from the Suzuki Resource Centre. At least ten disabled persons (including the blind) took part in the workshop.

### **2.2 Song & Dance Talent time**

The talent time was held in collaboration with an organisation of the disabled known as Beautiful Gate. The venue of the event was the Sunway Pyramid and the talent time took place on 24th November 2011. At least ten blind persons were among the fifty over disabled participants who registered for the contest.

Three of the prizes for the talent time went to the blind contestants – the first prize was won by Yew Peng Sam, the third prize by Anuar Ngatiman, and the fourth prize went to Lim Ah Pen.

The line dancing group from MAB also took part in the dance talent time. They came in fourth place, which was not bad at all for a blind dancing group. Credit, of course, should go not only to the blind dancers but also to the instructor, Jenny Chan, and her volunteers.

### **3. *MCR CONSTITUTION***

The MCR Constitution has undergone major revision for the third time since MCR was established in the 1970s. The revised Constitution has been approved by the Registrar of Societies. Some of the important amendments include:

#### **3.1 MCR Programmes**

Three programmes, in particular, have been adopted as being the special programmes of focus for MCR. They are the Abilympics, Very Special Arts, and the Rehabilitation Conference. In fact, the three programmes have been enshrined in the constitution as being the specific objectives of MCR with regards to the development and promotion of rehabilitation programmes for and of the disabled in the country.

#### **3.2 Trust Fund**

MCR intends to initiate a trust fund or foundation – another specific objective of The Council. The fund will be set up as an instrument for MCR to build up a financial reserve with support from a team of philanthropists. The team could also include even just well-intentioned persons in society who may not have too much to part with but they are interested in ensuring that MCR has and maintains a proper direction. In actual fact, the purpose of the fund or foundation is to help create a permanent source of income that can be used to support the rehabilitation work in the country through MCR.

## CONCLUSION

It is hoped that MCR will continue to go from strength to strength in its efforts to support rehabilitation programmes in the country. MCR is leading the way through collaboration with other organisations and even by initiating and running specific programmes for the benefit of all disabled persons in Malaysia.

## **SHARING THE VISION AND BUILDING THE FUTURE - PART II**

*By Chok Siew Lee*

***Editor's note: The first part of this article appeared in the January-March 2012 issue of "The NCBM Outreach". Here is the second part.***

### **THE SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY**

Perhaps some of you may have heard or might have even attended the Disability Equality Training workshop. The ultimate goal of DET is to change societal attitudes, thereby bringing about a just, equal and inclusive society in which full participation and equality for the disabled are assured. To realise this aim, DET has two core objectives and components in mind – firstly, it seeks to facilitate the participants in developing an alternative view of disability and in examining it as a social issue, i.e. looking at disability from the perspective of the social model. An equally important component is in facilitating the participants to develop their own concrete action plans in order to break down the barriers which hinder the participation of disabled people in relation to their work and their daily lives.

Thus, DET aims to challenge one's sense of values concerning disability and to facilitate the development of proactive actions to be taken by individual participants to break down social barriers, i.e. assisting the participants to become agents of social change. Indeed, the social model has the power to empower disabled people. In addition, it provides the methods of using the theory of the social model in a practical way. Therefore, this model becomes

a tool not only to explain disability as a social issue but it can also be used to empower disabled people as the educators and the agents of change with regards to disability.

Indeed, the social model of disability is actually a reaction to the dominant medical model of disability which in itself is a Cartesian functional analysis of the body as a machine that needs to be fixed in order to conform with normative values. The social model, on the other hand, identifies the systematic barriers, negative attitudes and exclusionary factors in society (purposely or inadvertently). This means that society is, in fact, the main contributory factor in disabling people. While physical, sensory, intellectual or psychological variations may cause individual functional limitations or impairments, these do not have to lead to disability unless society fails to take into account of or to include people regardless of their individual differences. The origins of the approach can be traced to the 1960s and the specific term emerged from the United Kingdom in the 1980s.

## **COMPONENTS AND USAGE**

A fundamental aspect of the social model concerns equality. The struggle for equality is often compared to the struggles of other socially marginalised groups. Equal rights are said to give empowerment, the ability to make decisions and the opportunity to live life to the fullest. In fact, a very relevant phrase frequently used by the disability rights campaigners and other social activists is “nothing about us without us”.

Thus, the social model of disability focuses on changes required in society. These may be in terms of the following:

Attitudes such as the need for a more positive outlook with regards to certain mental traits or behaviour or the importance of not underestimating the potential qualities of people with impairments.

Social support, e.g. providing help in dealing with barriers.

Resources, aids and positive discrimination to deal with the challenges of disability; e.g. providing a buddy to explain the work culture of an employee with autism.

Information; e.g. using suitable formats such as Braille, levels such as the simplicity of language, or coverage such as helping to explain issues that others may take for granted.

Physical structures; e.g. buildings with proper access and elevators, or flexible work hours for those with circadian rhythm sleep disorders or for people who experience anxiety or panic attacks in the rush hour traffic.

The social model of disability, therefore, implies that attempting to “change”, “fix” or “cure” individuals, especially when it is against inherent characteristics of the patient, can be discriminatory and smacking of prejudice. This attitude may be seen as stemming from the medical model with its subjective value system. This attitude can harm the self-esteem and affect the social inclusion of those constantly subjected to this negative attitude. For example, what is said to these people has the tendency of making them perceive that they are not as good or as valuable as others.

Some communities, in fact, actively resist “treatment”. In the deaf community, for instance, sign language is valued even though most people do not know or understand it. Some parents even argue against providing cochlear implants for their deaf infants who are not yet capable of consent or dissent.

People diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder may argue against efforts to change them in order to make them more like other people. Instead, they argue for the acceptance of neuro-diversity and for the need to accommodate different aspirations and goals. In fact, some people diagnosed with a mental disorder simply argue that they are just different and do not necessarily need to conform.

Thus, the bio psycho-social model of disease or disability is actually a holistic attempt on the part of the practitioners to address these issues. Indeed, the social model could imply that certain practices are founded on social values as in the case of eugenics – the science of producing healthy offspring for the future human race – which was implemented by Hitler during World War II. Of course, we now know that Hitler had a prejudiced understanding of the

potential and value of those who had been labelled as “handicapped” which was the term used at the time. Consequently, “Over 20,000 disabled people were the first victims of the holocaust”.

In the light of what had occurred, an article in 1986 stated that, “it is important that we do not allow ourselves to be dismissed as if we all come under this one great metaphysical category of the disabled. The effect of this is a depersonalisation, a sweeping dismissal of our individuality, and a denial of our right to be seen as people with our own uniqueness rather than as the anonymous constituents of a category or group. These words that lump us all together – the disabled, spina bifida, tetraplegic, muscular dystrophy – are nothing more than terminological rubbish bins into which all the important things about us as people get thrown away”.

In actual fact, the social model of disability is based on the distinction between the terms “impairment” and “disability”. “Impairment” refers to the actual attributes (or left of attributes) and the abnormality of a person whether in terms of limbs, organs or mechanisms, including psycho-social limitations. “Disability” refers to the restrictions caused by society when it does not give equivalent attention or accommodation to the needs of individuals with impairments.

The social model also relates to economics. It proposes that people can be disabled by a lack of resources to meet their needs. It addresses such issues as the under-estimation of the potential of people to contribute to society and add economic value to the community if given equal rights, equally suitable facilities and the same opportunities as others.

In Autumn 2001, the UK Office for National Statistics identified approximately one-fifth of the working age population as disabled, i.e. 7.1 million disabled people, as opposed to 29.8 million abled-bodied people. This analysis provided some insights as to why the disabled were unwilling to enter the labour market. For example, the reduction in disability benefits would not make it worthwhile to go into employment.

Thus, a three-pronged approach was suggested: incentives to work via the tax and benefits system, e.g. through the Disabled Person's Tax Credit; helping people back into work, e.g. via the New Deal for Disabled People; and tackling discrimination in the workplace, e.g. via the Anti-Discrimination Policy. Underpinning this approach are the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 and the Disability Rights Commission.

The social model, therefore, is an attempt to explain disability from the social and economic perspectives rather than regarding it merely as a medical condition. Through Disability Equality Training (DET), the practitioners put into practice the theories of the social model of disability.

(to be continued)

## **TECHNOLOGY UPDATE: THE IPHONE - A USEFUL TOOL FOR THE DEAF-BLIND**

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

Reflecting back, my experience with technologies take me to a long gone past – and yet, the last twenty-four years seem to have just flown by in the blink of an eye. Indeed, technological developments never seem to take a rest and, once you get into the kick of things, you just want to keep on going!

Truly, there will be many challenges along the way; there will be certain things that we will regard as inaccessible. For those of you who frequently turn to the web, you will have experienced the frustration of sometimes being able to read the information easily but when something new is introduced, it just becomes inaccessible! Well, I have faced this similar experience when using the Iphone.

I must admit that I first looked upon the Iphone as just a toy, particularly for someone who may be willing to part with a large sum of money. Only after long consideration did I finally decide to join the ranks of Iphone users



(which numbered only about fifteen persons in those days in Malaysia). Initially, it took me quite a while to get the hang of things, especially in grasping the finger gestures. Nevertheless, with the support of this small community, I actually managed to master the use of the Iphone within a couple of days. Thus, if anyone of you is still hesitating, hesitate no longer – just jump in and I can assure you that the experience will be quite pleasant and rewarding! The people who have joined before you are warm and friendly and will be willing to give a helping hand.

One of the reasons for my joining the Iphone community was because I wanted to test out how convenient it would be to pair the Iphone with certain Braille devices. With the growing number of blind people also experiencing hearing loss, there is the need for a Braille device that can be connected to a small and handy communication system. Well, I have discovered that the Iphone is, in fact, the answer.

Having been a user of the Human ware BrailleNote for some time, it just came naturally to me to do some searching on the net – and then it dawned on me that there was no need at all to download any driver; and so, without wasting much more time, I just simply sat down and did the pairing.

At first I faced some difficulties in entering the pairing code. The time allocated for me to key in the pairing code was too short. After several attempts, however, I was successful in my efforts. This meant that I could now send my SMS messages with a Braille keyboard as well as read my SMS in Braille.

Realising that the BrailleNote was rather expensive, I searched the internet for a cheaper Braille device and I discovered the Braille40. I found the pairing to be much easier and I was able to accomplish the task at a quicker pace.

If you are thinking of wanting to communicate using Braille for your SMS, here are some devices that you may like to consider:

The Alva BC680

The Alva EasyLink 12

The APH Refreshabraille 18

The Baum VarioConnect 12 (Conny)

Freedom Scientific Focus 40 Blue

GW Micro BrailleSense Plus

HumanWare BrailleConnect 24

HumanWare BrailleConnect 32

HumanWare BrailleConnect 40

HumanWare BrailleConnect 18

HumanWare Braillenote Apex 32

HumanWare Brailliant 24

HumanWare Brailliant 32

HumanWare Brailliant 40

HumanWare Brailliant 64

HumanWare Brailliant 80.

For further information and pricing, kindly refer to the different representatives.

## **WHAT IS THE NFB BLIND DRIVER CHALLENGE?**

The NFB Jernigan Institute challenges universities, technology developers and other interested innovators to establish NFB blind driver challenge teams to build interface technologies that will empower blind people to drive a car independently. The challenge is not the development of a car that drives a blind person around. The challenge is a car that has enough innovative technology to convey real-time information about the driving conditions to the blind so that people who possess capacity, an ability to think and react, and a spirit of adventure, in addition to having the characteristic of blindness, can interpret these data and manoeuvre a car safely.

The purpose of this challenge is to stimulate innovative non-visual technological innovation and the goals of this initiative are:

1. To establish a path of technological advancement for non-visual access technology and close the gap between access technology and general technology.
2. To increase awareness within the university scientific community about the real problems facing the blind by providing expertise from the perspective of the blind for a difficult engineering challenge.
3. To demonstrate that vision is not a requirement for success and that the application of innovative non-visual solutions to difficult problems can create new opportunities for hundreds of thousands of people – blind and sighted.
4. To change the public perceptions about the blind by creating opportunities for the public to view the blind as individuals with capacity, ambition, and a drive for greater independence.

The NFB-BDC is not an attempt to duplicate existing autonomous vehicle projects. While a blind-drivable vehicle will likely take advantage of systems used in autonomous vehicles, the goal is to have powerful interface

systems that allow the blind person to make driving decisions independent of computer technology in the vehicle.

The NFB-BDC is the path of technological innovation created by the effort to meet the end goal of independently driving a vehicle. This is not unlike the race to the moon of the 1960s. The technologies created to get the United States to the moon have had profound impact on society. Likewise, the innovations of the NFB-BDC will forever change the way we view technologies for the blind as well as the capacity for excellence possessed by the blind themselves.

Additionally, the NFB-BDC does not replace the unwavering support of the organised blind for systems of public transportation. The goal is not to eliminate the blind from the “vanishing race” of pedestrians. The blind, like the rest of society, will continue to need a variety of options for independent movement throughout our communities.

Nevertheless, despite access to systems of public transportation in many cities, many blind people have not learned the techniques of independent travel and they have not been empowered with the understanding that blindness need not limit their freedom of movement within the community. The NFB-BDC will be one more significant blow in shattering the low expectations for the blind and expanding the horizons of public opinion about the capacity of the blind to participate fully in society. Furthermore, the NFB-BDC may innovate technologies that improve systems of public transportation in ways we have not yet imagined. In fact, it may be that soon the blind themselves, those needlessly encouraged to sit in the bus seats reserved for the handicapped, will soon be in the very front seat driving the bus.

The blind driver challenge has served as a call to action for engineers and other bright minds to work on innovative technologies. Additionally, the challenge has helped to create a perceptual shift among technology developers about the type of technology the blind wish to have and how they intend to participate in society. A number of discussions have been held with engineers at prestigious universities and dozens have expressed interest in the challenge.

However, to date only one university has acted on the challenge. While progress over the first five years has been slow, we find great encouragement in the perceptual shift that many of our engineering partners have made.

It has been said that Henry Ford's success was not as much the creation of the assembly line as it was the creation of an atmosphere in which innovation was the real product. We have been successful in in changing perceptions, raising expectations, and winning the support of many bright minds. If, in the next five years, we are to achieve a blind-drivable vehicle that can cruise on the roads of America, we need to make a dramatic commitment to that end.

(Taken from "The Braille Monitor", December 2009, Driving Independence and Innovation through Imagination – the NFB Blind Driver Challenge by Mark A. Riccobono)

## **A POINT TO PONDER: THE RIGHT WORDS AT THE RIGHT TIME**

*By Wong Kow*

I believe we never fail to be amazed when we hear a parrot greeting us with a nice "good morning", "good evening", "happy birthday", and so on. However, when the bird greets us with some ill-chosen words it has picked up from here and there, we feel so embarrassed, especially when the words are uttered in front of visitors.

Of course, the bird can be excused because it does not have the brain of a human being. It does not realise what it is saying and so it does not feel embarrassed or complimented by whatever words that may be uttered. As for us who are human beings, words matter a lot; we need to know how or where to say the right words at the right time. From my own experiences in life, I have observed this to be true.

I am certainly a few years older than my wife. Moreover, I appear to look around five to ten years older than my actual age. My wife, on the other hand, appears to be much younger than her age. Thus, it is not uncommon

for an acquaintance to ask whether the young lady walking beside me is my daughter; another acquaintance would be likely to ask her if I am her father. For example, I have heard people say to my wife, “Please tell your father to sit here.”

I know, of course, that I should not take such words to heart. However, I would have been spared the embarrassment if people would make the effort to be more tactful when they are not sure how to address someone else.

My 17-year old niece, Catherine, was a little upset the other day when she bought some toys for her younger brother as birthday presents. On seeing her, the shopkeeper immediately asked if she was buying the toys for her son.

She experienced another unhappy moment while travelling with her mother. Somebody approached her and asked if the lady accompanying her was her elder sister.

In the following circumstances, our assumptions may often be incorrect.

When we see a gentleman and a lady walking or travelling closely together, we immediately presume that they are husband and wife. This may not be the case, however, and so we should not jump to conclusions.

When you are at the home of a friend for the first time, you may immediately assume that the elderly person staying there is the parent of your friend. Or if you see a toddler there, you may immediately presume that the child belongs to your friend.

We are likely to assume that a sweet voice means that the words are being uttered by a young lady. Remember that a young person’s voice could sometimes sound like that of an elderly person.

Bearing the above in mind, I think it would be preferable to approach a new acquaintance by saying, “Excuse me, how would you like me to address you?” Or you could say, “How is he or she related to you?”

Here are a few other important points that should be noted.

1. As best as possible, do not ask about someone's age, marital status, salary or income.
2. When visiting the sick or attending a funeral, it is usually better to lend your ears rather than talking or asking too many questions. In such circumstances, it is best to observe the rule of "silence is golden".
3. When purchasing an expensive item such as a house, a car, some furniture, electrical goods and so on, it would be wise only to ask relevant questions. For example, if you disclose that you love that item very much, you will probably not be able to get a good bargain.
4. When consulting a doctor or lawyer, I would go straight to business even if he happens to be an old familiar acquaintance. If I were to start with irrelevant daily conversation, I might forget some other important points for which I need clarification. Furthermore, I could side-track the doctor or lawyer if I talk too much.

Obviously, it is always essential to tell the truth. Nonetheless, it may not be necessary to tell everything to just anybody. I think the ability to choose the right words at the right moment can be considered as a beautiful art.

Finally, I would like to convey a brief message to my dear sighted readers and friends – if you happen to accompany a blind or disabled person to see the doctor or for some other business, try as far as possible not to speak or answer questions on behalf of that person. It is best for the blind or disabled person to speak or answer for himself because he would know best what he wants or what his needs are.

## QUOTATIONS FOR REFLECTION

**Eugene Kenedy in “The Reader’s Digest”, October 1987:**

Can you literally do nothing with the other person and enjoy together those moments of life that are utterly simple? That’s the real test of friendship.

**William D. Montalbano in “The Los Angeles Times”:**

Democracy never pleases everybody. But nobody has yet come up with a better recipe for governing free men.

**Dr. Kenneth Jernigan in “The Braille Monitor”, April 1991:**

We are changing the world. We are doing it by individual actions collectively focussed, by walking alone and marching together.

**Dr. Kenneth Jernigan in “The Braille Monitor”, February 1992:**

The system has traditionally been custodial in nature and high-handed in dealing with meaningful input from the blind.

**Helen Keller:**

The disabled have the hidden eye which can see what the full cannot see.

**Helen Keller:**

It is not enough to give life to the disabled but they should be given a life that is worth living.



## **Benjamin E. Mays:**

The tragedy of life doesn't lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy lies in having no goal to reach.

It isn't a calamity to die with dreams unfulfilled, but it is a calamity not to dream.

It is not a disgrace not to reach the stars, but it is a disgrace to have no stars to reach for.

Not failure, but low aim is sin.

## **Anonymous – “Reader’s Digest” December 1983**

Money will buy a bed but not sleep; books but not brains; food but not appetite; finery but not beauty; a house but not a home; medicine but not health; luxuries but not culture; amusements but not happiness; religion but not salvation; a passport to everywhere but heaven.

## **Elizabeth Drew in “The Washington Journal” – the events of 1973-1974:**

Democracy, like any non-coercive relationship, rests on a shared understanding of limits.

## **Dr. Chandra Muzaffar:**

The most important aspect of development is compassion which takes into account the values, the ethics and the participation of human beings in society.

**PRINCIPAL OFFICE-BEARERS AND COUNCIL  
MEMBERS OF NCBM AS OF  
30<sup>th</sup> APRIL, 2012**

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

Bishop Andrew Phang See Yin, Vice - President  
St. Nicholas Home

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

Dato' Dr Hsiung Kwo Yeun  
Sarawak Society for the Blind

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

# **AUDITOR 2012 - 2013**

Inpana & Associates,  
Kuala Lumpur

## **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

## **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.)