

AKTIVITI ACS

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July 2006

Issues of PwIDs in Adulthood

After a year of hard work, the survey report on the situation of people with intellectual disabilities (PwIDs) in Penang is finally completed.

The research is significant as very little has previously been done to gain such knowledge. The main findings revealed that while a good majority (94%) of these young adults with intellectual disabilities had received some form of education or services, about 50% of them are currently staying at home with no access to suitable training or work opportunities.

The aspiration of PwIDs and their families to improve their situation through more training and skills is expressed clearly in the fact that the three most sought after services were for vocational training, sheltered workshops and living skills training. Equally significant is the fact that more than half of the PwIDs currently staying at home would be interested in work opportunities either in a sheltered workshop or out in the wider community.

It was disheartening to note that only less than 5% of the 1,431 companies in Penang responded to our survey questionnaire on the "Demands of Employers Regarding PwIDs". This in itself is an indication of the low level of interest or concern.

The outcome of the survey has brought more questions than answers:- Have people with intellectual disabilities been marginalised in the workforce? Do they have enough opportunity for job experience? Have they been provided with the right type of training? When should parents hold on and when should they let go? What about societal obligation?

Fundamental questions about life and living must also not be ignored. What is life all about for the PwID? Do they have friends? What is their role in the community? How can they experience independent living? How can we improve their quality of life?

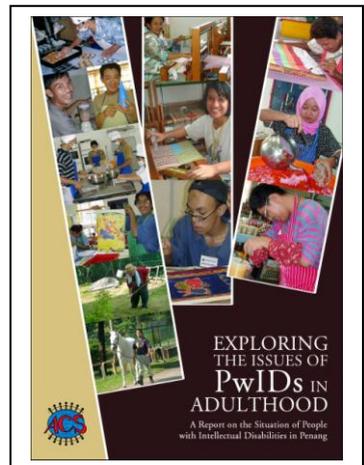
According to Robert Schalock (1996) the eight core dimensions contributing to a person's quality of life (QOL) are:

1. Physical well-being (health, nutrition, recreation, etc.);
2. Emotional well-being (safety, security, positive experiences, happiness, etc.);
3. Material well-being (ownership, financial security, possessions, etc.);
4. Interpersonal relations (friendships, intimacy, affection, family, etc.);
5. Personal development (education, skills, personal competence, etc.);
6. Self-determination (autonomy, choices, decisions, control, etc.);
7. Social inclusion (acceptance, status, roles in community, etc.); and,
8. Rights (privacy, respectful treatment, equal opportunities etc.).

How do you think PwIDs in Penang and Malaysia are faring in all the above areas? If we have not already, we now need to make a serious and conscious effort to ensure that the QOL principles be the basis for all service delivery policies.

The publication "Exploring the Issues of PwIDs in Adulthood – A Report on the Situation of People with Intellectual Disabilities in Penang" will be launched on July 15th 2006 by Puan Sri Chui Kah Peng, wife of Tan Sri Koh Tsu Koon, Chief Minister of Penang.

The Executive Summary is available upon request. Please indicate in the response form if you would like to have a copy in English, Malay or Chinese.



They used to call him a Mongoloid;
Now we call him Down Syndrome;
BuT his friends call him "David".

ACTIVITIES & UPDATES

Play and Toy Library

We are also pleased to announce the completion of the study on “Comparison of Play Styles for People with Disabilities in Malaysia and Japan: Its’ Effect on the Development of Social Interaction”. The research, made possible with a grant from the Sumitomo Foundation, studied the similarities and differences of play between Japan and Malaysia. It also covered the benefits play has on social interaction.

One of the main findings worth noting is that the only purpose of toys for Japanese toy libraries was ‘to have fun and leisure’. This was *one* of the purposes in Malaysia noted along with ‘therapy’ and ‘education’. This confirms that the Malaysian society views academic as being more important over a more wholistic development of the child.



We need to promote the importance of play in our society. One way is to establish more toy libraries throughout Malaysia and to include all persons regardless of abilities, age or gender.

Play and toy libraries must foster more choices in playmates, playtime and playthings so as to build up self-esteem, self-confidence and simply to promote fun and leisure.

OTHER UPDATES

Training Workshops

With financial assistance from the New Zealand High Commission, we were able to organise a series of training workshops conducted by speakers from Christchurch.

Solomon John covered *“Understanding & Managing Difficult Behaviours”* and his speech-language pathologist wife, Kay Solomon facilitated *“Strategies for Enhancing Communication”*.



The training workshops, held in Kuala Lumpur, Teluk Intan and Penang in the early part of this year, saw active participation from staff and parents from various welfare agencies.

Placement of Students

We had a student from the College of Atlantic, Maine (US) in Feb-March and two final year speech therapy students from the UKM (Kuala Lumpur) on placement with us in May.

In March we hosted several groups of students from Kanagawa University and Fukui University. And in the later part of this year, we will be hosting two final year students (Special Education) from the USM Penang for a whole semester.

Trip to Australia

In Feb-March, together with another colleague in Penang, Ai-Na was able to spend 3 weeks visiting a wide range of children’s services in Melbourne and attended the Early Childhood Intervention of Australia Conference in Adelaide. The trip which was hosted by Noah’s Ark Victoria, was very inspiring. We were challenged by policies of inclusion which makes it vital to provide for different needs in the care and education of young children to enable them and their families to live full lives within the community.

We were impressed by the family-centred practice, which focus on supporting family empowerment through a strength-based rather than deficits approach. We also gained an understanding of the philosophy, values and ideals that drive policies and funding, not just for early childhood intervention but for a related range of disabilities issues.

Musical Instruments

We received several cartons of used musical instruments from the “Music without Borders” group in Japan. Upon arrival of the drums, accordians and many other percussions pieces, the children and adults thoroughly enjoyed banging and making lots of sounds and rhythm. Before the neighbours could complain, we quickly distributed the instruments for equal usage at the various ACS centres!!



Musicians in the making.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NECIC 2006

The 1st National Early Childhood Intervention Conference will be held in Penang from November 18th – 20th 2006 with the theme “*Parents, Practitioners and Policy Makers in Positive Partnership*”. While this is a national conference, we have been much encouraged by overseas speakers from Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, UK, Singapore and Brunei who have willingly agreed to come and participate.

We are expecting about 300 delegates and in order to encourage participation from parents, we are looking for volunteers who are willing to run several sessions for the delegates’ children. Please contact us at 04 – 6585396 if you think you can help out during those dates.

We are also looking for sponsors to help out with the costings to be incurred.

MUTIARA VOICE CLUB - UPDATE

At one of the recent meetings of Mutiara Voice Club (MVC), the members with intellectual disabilities came up with several interesting decisions on their own which I will take the liberty to share with you.

- ☆ *They would like to be known as Orang Kelainan Upaya (OKU) Intelek instead of the customary term Orang Kurang Upaya (OKU).¹*
- ☆ *They agreed to operate under the auspices and umbrella of ACS until they can become a fully independent registered body.*
- ☆ *They have also decided to open up membership to include other interested self-advocates in Penang to join their activities.*

One of their major highlights for this year will be the organising of the year-end Social Dinner and Dance 2006, which will be co-hosted with ACS. Several members visited to check out the Naza Hotel as a possible venue and consulted with the sales manager on the theme, costing and menu.



*"Can u join us on
Dec 15th 2006 for
a night of rock & roll?"*

Negotiating at Naza Hotel.



¹ OKU is the acronym in Malay referring to Orang Kurang Upaya (People with Disabilities) whereas Orang Kelainan Upaya means People with Differing Abilities.

The event will be held on Friday evening, December 15th 2006 at the Naza Hotel, Tanjung Tokong, Penang. We will be extending the invitation to several groups of self-advocate friends from other states as well.

This will be the first major project for MVC and we hope that there will be willing sponsors for the event. If you think you are able to assist in anyway (be a DJ, provide transport, sponsor the sound system, donate prizes and lucky draw items, sponsor a table), please do contact us or fill in the response slip.

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. We sincerely hope to hear from you.

With best wishes from all of us at ACS,

Khor Ai-Na
Director

Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any map of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person: the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere.”

*Eleanor Roosevelt, speaking to the
United Nations Commission on Human Rights
on 27 March 1958*

A Non-Profit Organisation Providing Services To People With Special Needs, In Particular Reference To Those With Disabilities.

RESPONSE SLIP

- I would like more information about ACS and its' activities.
- I would like more information about Mutiara Voice Club.
- I would like to be put on your mailing list.
- I would like to make a general donation of RM _____ towards the activities and running expenses of ACS.
- I would like to donate RM _____ towards the Dinner & Dance 2006.
- I would like to assist and contribute towards the Dinner & Dance 2006.
- I would like to purchase a copy of the publication "Exploring the Issues of PwIDs in Adulthood" at RM 36.00 per copy (inclusive of local postage).
- I would like to receive a copy of the Executive Summary of the "Exploring the Issues of PwIDs in Adulthood" in English / Malay / Chinese.
- I would like to sponsor ___ participants to attend the National Early Childhood Intervention Conference 2006 at RM 360 per participant.

Postal Order/Cheque No : _____ Date : _____

(Please make all cheques payable to Asia Community Service. All cash donations are tax-exempted).

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel No: _____ (H) _____ (O)

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Phone: 04 – 6585396 Fax: 04 – 6597852

Stepping Stone: 53 Jalan Baru, Pulau Betong, Balik Pulau, 11000 Penang.

Phone / Fax: 04 – 8665349

"Jom!" Mobile Toy Library: Mobile Phone 016-4487006

