

2ND MCR MALAYSIAN CONFERENCE ON REHABILITATION

BACKGROUND

The theme for the conference was “Towards an Inclusive, Barrier Free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities (PWD) in Malaysia”. It was chosen to match the UNESCAP’s BIWAKO Plus Five framework which was endorsed at a high level intergovernmental meeting (which was attended by Malaysian representatives), on the Mid-point Review of the Asia-Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons 2003 – 2012, held in Bangkok on September 19 – 21, 2007.

OBJECTIVES

1. To update participants on issues related to equalisation of opportunities for PWD.
2. To empower PWD using information gathered and deliberations at the conference, as they face various challenges in their life in a rapidly developing country, in keeping with Biwako Plus Five Millennium framework.
3. To assist our government in the implementation of action plans for PWD to ensure a truly rights-based, barrier-free inclusive Malaysian society, particularly through the Disability Act (D.R 52/2007 Rang Undang-undang Orang Kurang Upaya 2007).

PARTICIPANTS

The total number of participants who attended the conference was 267 and **16.84% of them were PWD**. Most participants i.e. 46.4 % came from the health sector, 35.6 % from the Department of Social Welfare (including CBR workers), others from non-governmental organisations, universities and other government agencies.

PRESENTATIONS AND DELIBERATIONS

77 papers on a wide spectrum of topics based on the theme of the conference were presented by 72 speakers, **23.61% of whom were PWD**.

Topics discussed in the respective sessions were as follows:

Keynote Address:

1. An Inclusive, Barrier-Free and Rights-Based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Malaysia: Implementers’ perspective
2. An Inclusive, Barrier-Free and Rights-Based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Malaysia: PWD’s perspective

Legislation and Policies

3. Persons with Disabilities Act 2008 (PWD Act) (D.R 52/2007 Rang Undang-undang Orang Kurang Upaya 2007), Malaysia: An Introduction and Its Implications
4. Implementation of PWD Act 2008 (D.R 52/2007 Rang Undang-undang Orang Kurang Upaya 2007), Malaysia

Good Practices

5. Barrier-Free Built-Environment and Universal Design : The Singapore Experience

6. Auditing for Access in the Malaysian Built -Environment
7. Rehabilitation Physicians : Medical Specialist for Persons with Disabilities
8. How to Provide Sheltered Employment in a Worsening Economic Environment

Coping with Medical Illness and Disability

9. Coping with Chronic Illness, Pain and Disability
10. How Successful is Advocacy Work on Persons with Down's Syndrome in Malaysia?
11. A Study to Determine Parent's Satisfaction with Family Centred Services (FCS) in Physiotherapy Management of Children with Neurodevelopmental Disabilities at Hospital Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
12. Through the Apple of My Eyes – An Occupational Therapist's Perspective on Home Environmental Changes Faced by Children with Low Vision
13. Home-Based Pulmonary Rehabilitation Programme Leads to a Better Way of Life in Patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
14. Self-Efficacy of Balance and Balance Performance in Mobile Post-Stroke Patients
15. Quality of Life in Patients with Diabetic Foot Problems
16. O & G Practice in Managing PWD

Evidence-based Rehabilitative Care

17. Hubungan Antara Tempoh Sindrom Kanal Carpal (CTS) dan Indeks Jisim Tubuh (BMI) ke Atas Kepekaan Saraf Sensori Media
18. Effects of Developmental Age in Lower Limb Kinematics and Performance Among National Youth Sepak-Takraw Players
19. Load of Backpacks in Boys and Girls and Its Association with Back Pain
20. Survey of Malaysian Occupational Therapists' Perception Towards Evidence-based Practice
21. Effectiveness of Early Intervention Programme in a Down's Syndrome Child

ICT in Education for PWD

22. Penggunaan ICT Dalam Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Pelajar Bermasalah Penglihatan
23. The Use of ICT in Education for Persons with Physical Disabilities
24. Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) as an Educational Tool for Children With Disabilities
25. Seeing without Eyes

Strategic Planning of Educational Services for PWD Towards 2020

26. Pelaksanaan Pendidikan Khas di Malaysia: Isu dan Cabaran
27. Pre-School and Special Educational Needs for Early Readiness in Learning and Holistic Development of Young PWD
28. Pendidikan Untuk OKU di Malaysia
29. e-PKhas: A Multimedia Learning Objects Repository for Special Education
30. Essential Tools for Lifelong Learning for PWD in Malaysia

Barrier-Free Built-Environment and Universal Design

31. The Construction Industry's Role in Facilitating Social Inclusion
32. Towards Barrier-free City : Petaling Jaya
33. Towards Barrier-Free City : Kuala Lumpur
34. Do We Need Legislative Changes Before We Care?

35. Inclusive Environment in Malaysia: Wheelchair User's Perspective
36. Collaborating with the Local Authority in Achieving Barrier-free City, Singapore

Strategic Planning of Health-care Services for PWD Towards 2020

37. Rehabilitation Medicine Services in the Ministry of Health, Malaysia
38. Strategic Plans for PWD Health Services by 2020

Strategic Planning of Employment Services for PWD Towards 2020

39. Role of the Department of Social Welfare
40. Role of Cheshire Homes and Services
41. Sheltered Employment: The Bizlink's way

Life-long Education

42. Dyslexia – Challenges and Hopes
43. Life-Long Education Opportunities at Beautiful Gate
44. What is Deaf-Blind?
45. Pre-School Program for the Blind
46. Education Program for Children with Learning Difficulties at Kiwanis Centre
47. Schooling Among Children With Disability Attending University Malaya Medical Centre
48. Program Pendidikan Untuk Kanak-Kanak Autisme Di NASOM

Keeping Fit

49. Exercise Benefits/Barriers Scale
50. Why Few Persons with Disabilities Exercise?
51. Zineng Qigong for Persons with Disability
52. Exercise and Its Barriers in Spinal Cord Injured Paraplegics
53. Physical Activities and Exercises for Individuals with Disabilities

Social Advocacy on Disability Issues

54. The Need for 'Bottom-up' Approach in the Implementation of Policies Related to Persons with Disabilities in Malaysia
55. Rights-Based Advocacy on Disability In Malaysia: An Overview and The Way Forward
56. Empowering People With Intellectual Disabilities
57. Media – Friend or Foe?
58. JICA Project on Support for Persons with Disabilities in Malaysia
59. Self-Advocacy: Towards an Interdependent and Inclusive Community
60. Promoting Accessible Public Transport - Meeting The Needs of Persons with Disabilities and All
61. Challenges and Success Stories of Advocacy in Diverse Communities in Sarawak

Employment

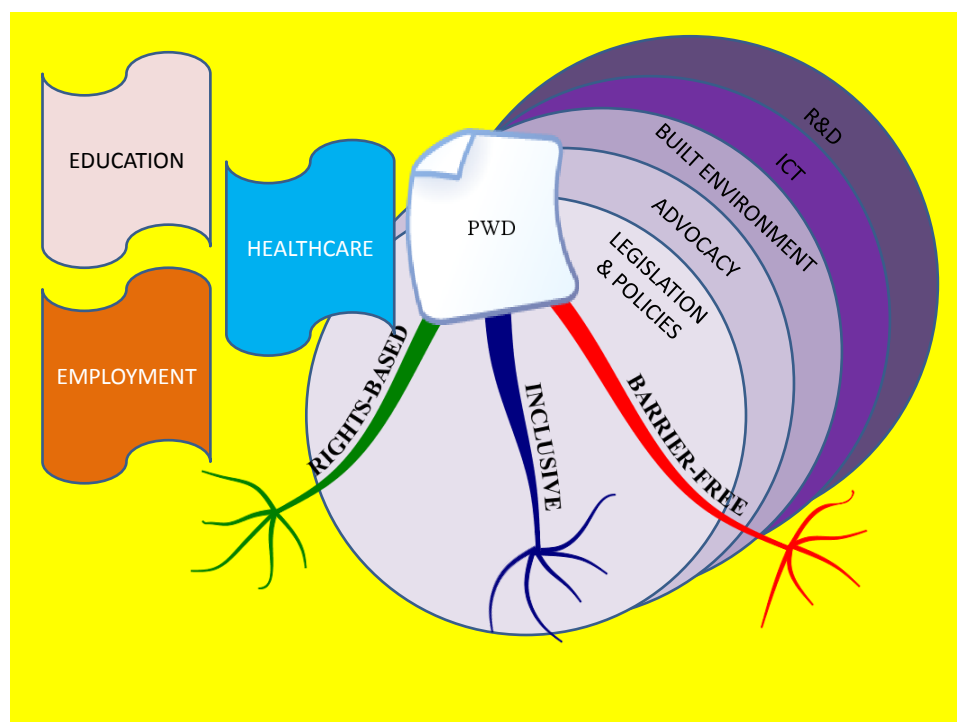
62. Living and working with Spina Bifida
63. Beyond Sheltered Workshops: What Next?
64. Return to Work After Major Upper Limb Amputation
65. Towards Jobs for All

Research and Development (R&D)

66. R & D in Rehabilitation Medicine
67. Prevalence, Intensity and Interference of Chronic Pain Amongst Lower Limb Amputees
68. Extent of Use of Prostheses and Level of Satisfaction Among Unilateral Trans-tibial and Trans-femoral Amputees
69. Health Problems and Barriers in the Use of Medication Among the Visually Impaired Community in Brickfields
70. R & D in Rehabilitation Engineering Towards Enabling the Disabled
71. Characteristics of Children with Cerebral Palsy in UMMC
72. Pengalaman dan Kejayaan Klinik Kanak-kanak Khas, Pejabat Kesihatan Tampin, Negeri Sembilan
73. Inter-rater Reliability of Knee Muscle Strength Obtained by Pressure Sensor in Anterior Cruciate Ligament Reconstruction Subjects
74. Accessibility for Wheelchair Users versus Environmental Barriers
75. Chronic Pain After Spinal Cord Injury
76. Use of Gallium citrate⁶⁷ Scintigraphy to Measure Colonic Transit Time in Spinal Cord Injured Patients with Neurogenic Bowel

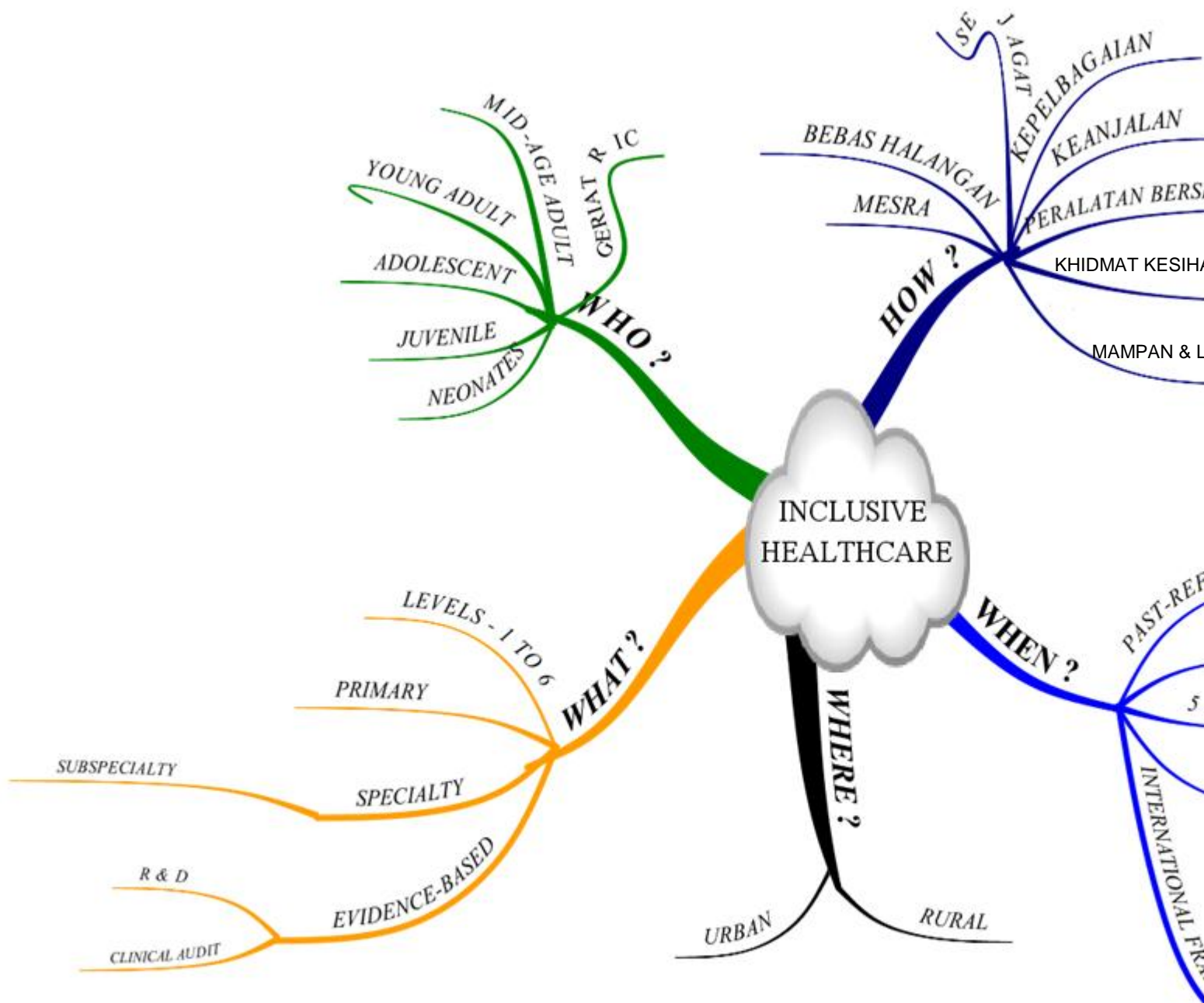
DISCUSSIONS AND DELIBERATIONS

The papers presented were very well received by the floor. They stimulated much discussion and deliberation, all of which were recorded by our rapporteurs at respective sessions. Information gathered from presentations and the deliberations can be summarised through the illustration below:



The infrastructure that has to be in place to ascertain an inclusive and barrier-free services for PWD based on their rights to healthcare, education and employment includes legislation, policies for its implementation, advocacy work, accessible built-environment, information and communication technology, and research and development.

Factors to be considered in ensuring an **inclusive healthcare** service for persons with disabilities are summarised in the illustration below:

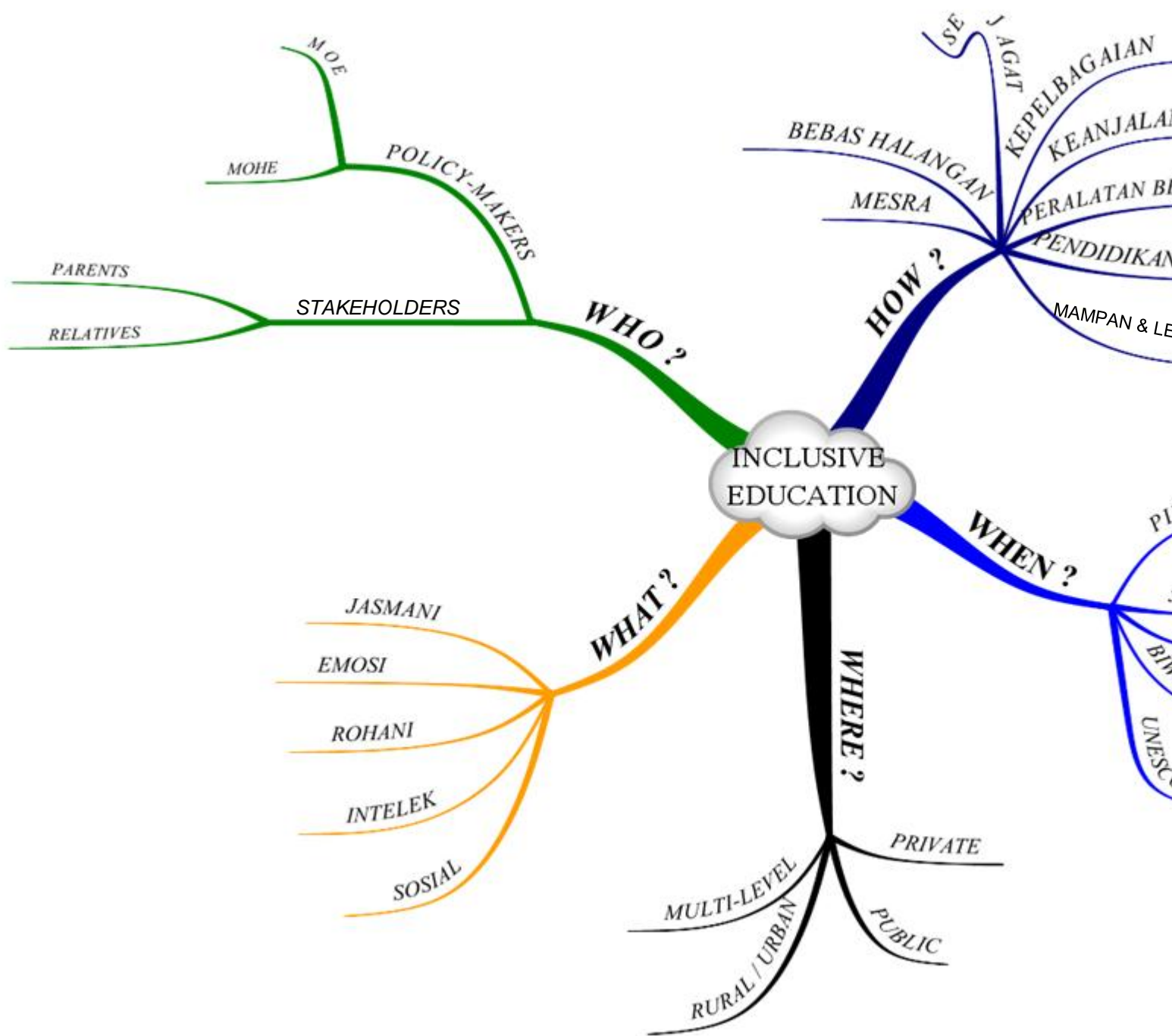


Ministry of Health Malaysia has implemented a large proportion of the delineated plans to ensure barrier-free access to healthcare for PWD. Examples are Primary Care services for early detection and intervention of childhood disabilities, specialised rehabilitative care, etc. Rehabilitation Physicians have been identified as medical specialists for PWD. A multidisciplinary composition of rehabilitation teams using an interdisciplinary approach is being enforced in places where rehabilitation physicians are available. They ought to be

upgraded and be more widely available as standard health-care for PWD, in view of the complexity of presentation of functional and clinical issues.

Multi-disciplines that must be continually developed to serve PWD include Rehabilitation Medicine, Sports Medicine, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech pathology, speech therapy, clinical psychology, orthotics, prosthetics, rehabilitation nursing, medical social work as well as supportive and extended care from all other conventional disciplines in medicine and healthcare in general. Improvement of services through re-organisation and strengthening of multidisciplinary services and facilities, human capital building, inter-agency networking, PWD-centered educational means of changing mindset and community development strategies through the new Laws of Malaysia, Persons with Disabilities Act 685, which was gazetted in July 2008 were called for.

For **education** to be inclusive much still need to be done and the new Laws of Malaysia, Persons with Disabilities Act 685, 2008 can be a perfect tool. This is illustrated in the mind-map below:

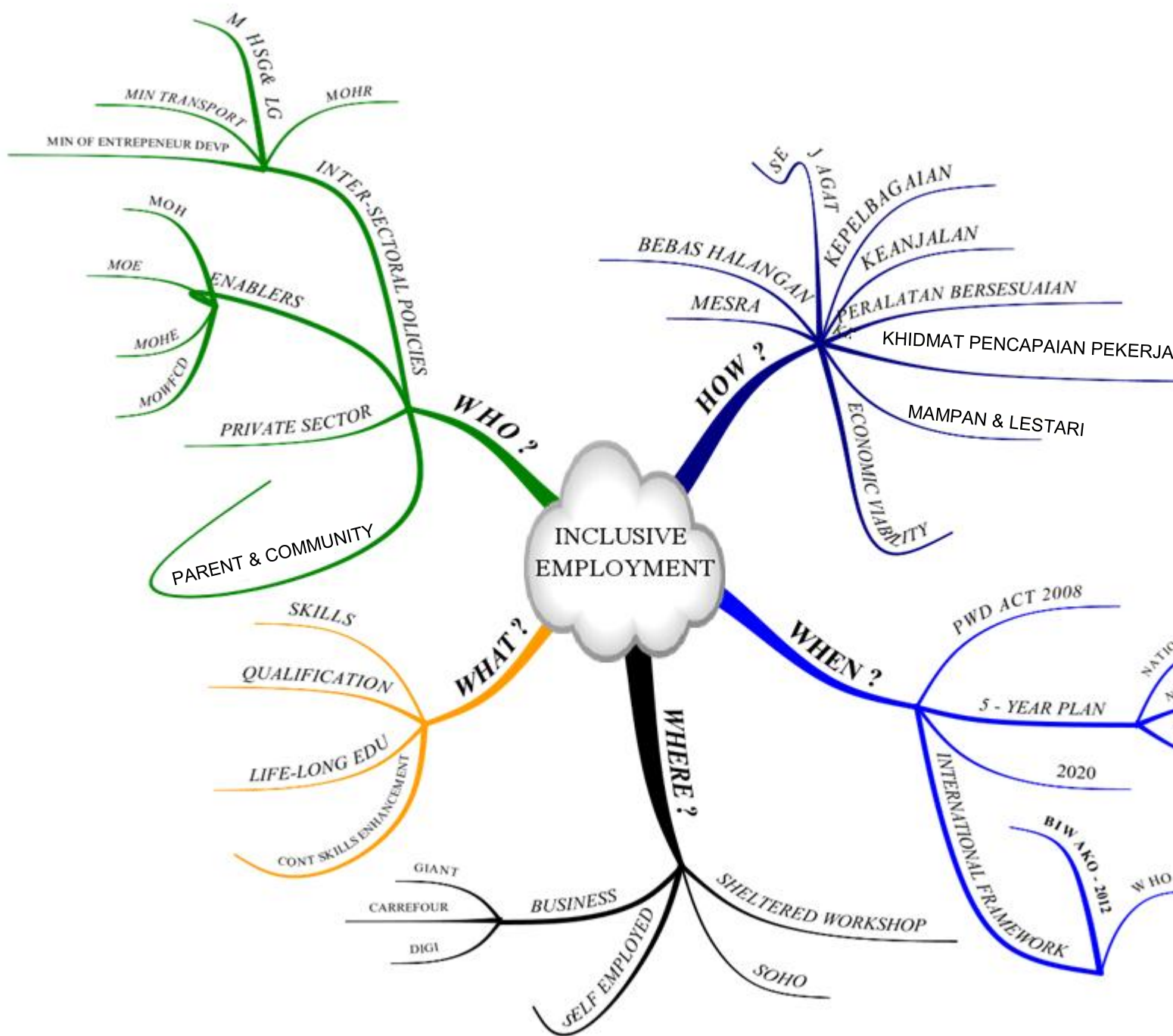


Research and development on state-of-the-art pedagogy incorporating ICT have been initiated by dedicated individuals and organisations as presented amicably by educationists and rehabilitation professionals at this conference. Examples include Alternative and Augmentative Communication, ICT-based curriculum for the blind and E-pKhas for children with physical, sensory and learning disabilities. Features of inclusive, barrier-free and universal education for PWD must include diversity, flexibility, appropriate technology and quality education which are sustainable. Development of quality education suited to individualised needs of PWD through holistic development of curriculum, human capital and

physical infrastructure which is adequately financed and governed must be enforced by the Malaysian Government.

Inclusive Employment requires close collaboration at inter-ministerial and inter-sectoral (e.g. Industries of Tourisms, Businesses, etc.) levels, alongside concomitant regular training of Social Welfare Officers who can take on the role of enforcing implementation and monitoring standards of practice. Skill enhancement programmes through sheltered workshops and collaborative training programmes with corporations and businesses must be encouraged. Barrier-free, universal design and assistive technology provision in the workplace must be ensured.

A summary of the issues surrounding inclusive, barrier-free employment is provided by the mind-map below:



Exemplary inter-sectoral collaborative work done in this area was demonstrated by Bizlink Singapore. Their decade long experience and success in this field can be emulated by relevant agencies in this field. In fact, Bizlink has offered to work closely with Malaysia on this platform.

Barrier-free access to built-environment requires sustainable implementation of policies, awareness training including architectural and technical curriculum for undergraduates, setting up of barrier free pilot projects, development of best practice by relevant agencies, PWD-participatory access surveys / audits, inter-sectoral collaboration and research by

relevant industries including construction, tourism, heritage etc. Enablers of change in this area including professionals, government officials of relevant departments and NGOs must be active in influencing and implementing change towards universal design.

Advocacy is a powerful tool for change towards a more inclusive, barrier-free, and rights-based society to ensure sustainability of quality of life for PWD and their families. Knowing what one wants, one's rights, privileges and entitlements may need advocating. Unity amongst PWD, organisations and movements can promote strength of advocacy work. Formulation of coordinated strategies (rather than in an ad-hoc manner) as well as networking and communication can ensure the smooth success of promoting rights-based, barrier-free and inclusive society. Self-advocacy is much encouraged as it has proved its worth in many countries. Including it in curricula for education and training for persons with learning disabilities has been researched and found effective.

Research and development programmes on issues on PWD have captured the interest of scholars and PWD themselves especially in the fields of medicine, allied health, education, sociology, rehabilitation engineering, etc. An impressive range was presented at this conference. Priority areas include quality-of-life, functional aspects, prevention of disabilities, technological intervention, pedagogy, advocacy, coping mechanisms and evidence-based care. Continuous support in terms of funding for research on disability and rehabilitation, prioritising development work on rehabilitation of disabilities, promotion of research on prevention of disabilities, early intervention programmes and promotion of quality-of-life measures must be enforced.

RECOMMENDATIONS: RESOLUTIONS BASED ON THE ABOVE PRESENTATIONS AND DELIBERATIONS

1. The PWD Act 685, 2008 (D.R. 52/2007 Rang Undang-undang Orang Kurang Upaya 2007) is a useful tool and must be used to enforce policies that are already drawn up that can bring about positive changes towards inclusive and barrier-free services in the healthcare, education and employment sectors.
2. Policies mentioned above that are already in place ought to be reviewed, analysed and, if need be, improved to facilitate ease of implementation. Action plans can then be drawn up and must emphasise adequate and appropriately skilled human capital to enforce them.
3. Advocacy work which can enhance pre-existing activities that support work towards inclusive and barrier-free services especially in the education and employment sectors must be acknowledged and can be incorporated into such activities particularly in the relevant government departments. Parties which are familiar with the PWD Act as well as the UN Convention of Rights of Disabled Persons can help promote the implementation of PWD Laws of Malaysia, Persons with Disabilities Act 685, 2008 in a constructive manner.
4. Assistive technology for Children with disabilities in schools and community-based-rehabilitation facilities ought to be promoted as a key step towards barrier-free education. Evidence as in presentations on computerised technology for the blind and Alternative and Augmentative Communication as well as development of E-pKhas must not be ignored. Such information must be made a reality when planning for facilities for education of children with disabilities. Funding for such items and

training of teachers and CBR workers must be part and parcel of facilities that are to be continually developed.

5. Barrier-free built-environment access must be enforced. Examples set by MBPJ can be emulated by other local governments. Inclusion of PWD, experts in rehabilitation practice and in universal design must be an integral part of an ACCESS committee whose involvement must be part and parcel of the process of implementing policies and legislation on barrier-free liveable cities and local government.
6. Research and Development on Disability and Rehabilitation must be enlisted as priority R&D area and recommendation be put forth to relevant agencies including Ministry of Science and Technology, the custodian of funding for Intensive Research Priority Areas, Institutions of higher learning etc.. Inclusion of grass-root community-based research relevant to needs of PWD to ensure attainment of dignity, quality of life and productive membership of society at large should be made possible.
7. Biz-link Singapore has a Good Practice model on employment for PWD that has been in place for at least a decade. Collaborative work has been offered by representatives from the group. Such a golden opportunity be should not given a miss.
8. Honourable Minister Datuk Seri Ng Yen Yen had graced the occasion of conference dinner and officially launched the conference during which the use of assistive technology in promoting independence for our keynote speaker who is completely paralysed below the neck was illustrated. She had recommended that a concerted effort be put in to develop such assistive technology namely wheelchair in PLPP Bangi such that cost is contained and made affordable to PWD. This recommendation ought to be pursued immediately by Yayasan Kebajikan Negara as mentioned by Honourable Minister.
9. Recommendations made during this conference represent those of a collective group particularly passionate about PWD and have experience in living around them. Therefore, they should be regarded as expert opinion and can be considered evidence-based, thus can be used to work towards a barrier-free, inclusive, rights-based Malaysian society.
10. Resolutions from this conference should be presented to the Malaysian Disability Council where the honourable Minister of Women, Family and Community Development is the chairman. Honourable Minister is also patron of this conference, hence, the continuity of good work done at this conference can be put to good use to improve quality of life of PWD in our country, under her leadership.

Please note that parts of the mind-map illustrated are written in Bahasa Malaysia as this was done in the spirit of dual language at the conference as a response to request from participants who were more well-verse in that language.