

## **MIND – THE ULTIMATE TOOL FOR INTER-SECTORAL COLLABORATION ON DISABILITY MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

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*Malaysian Information Network on Disabilities (MIND), A PROJECT BY BAKTI*

Socialisation process clearly illustrates the need for collaborative work to support sheer humanly existence. The extent of such collaboration depends on complexity of issues surrounding a social being. Persons with disabilities often have to deal with situations which demand a wide range of solution options. Challenges can occur daily as they carry out their daily living activities and can take the form of built environment barriers at work, transportation to regular places etc. Often, they may pose threats when changes in routine or life changes happen e.g. sudden illness, death in the family, sudden loss of income etc. Occasionally, they may present at an untimely moment, which can lead to undesirable consequences, if left unchecked e.g. an accident that occurs the day one receive news about acceptance into university!

**Malaysian Information Network on Disabilities (MIND)**, a project by (Badan Amal Kebajikan Tenaga Isteri (BAKTI), can serve as a tool for inter-sectoral collaborative work for a wide spectrum of issues on disability, their rehabilitation and overall outlook into life to ascertain integration into society at large . Our vision at **MIND** is to enable Malaysians with disabilities and their families to enhance their quality of life through having access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) related to healthcare, rehabilitation, education, employment, adaptive technologies and equipment, transportation, barrier-free environment, governmental and non-governmental assistance, etc. and to contribute to ICT advancement. Our mission is to promote, participate in and monitor the implementation of the state-of-the-art of ICT relevant to people with disabilities (PWD) in Malaysia. Our objectives are:

1. **Availability** - to promote the use of computers amongst PWD for networking within the Malaysian community and beyond
2. **Accessibility** - to facilitate access to health-care, rehabilitation, education, vocational and social services relevant to the needs of PWD and their families
3. **Awareness** - to make society at large aware of the existence of PWD amidst them, who deserve to lead a quality life like everyone else, through ICT
4. **Acceptability** - to change perceptions and attitudes of members of society on PWD towards acceptance that they are potentially useful members of society, given the opportunity to do so, particularly through ICT

5. **Adequacy** - to identify relevant international websites suitable for PWD and "glocalise" them to enhance the quality of life of Malaysians with disabilities and their families.

The process of building up **MIND** clearly illustrates inter-sectoral collaboration as the main element. To date, we have achieved no less than 13 collaborative partners from governmental organizations, 31 from non-governmental organizations as well as more than 50 individual volunteers, more than half of whom are PWD or their close associates, nationally. Our 854 international hyper-linkages through the nine main sections and a range of three to more than 10 multiplicities of sub-sections offer infinite opportunity for inter-sectoral collaboration on disability issues. In fact, the matrix of partnerships that has surfaced has resulted in a rich source of information with enormous potential for enhancement of quality of life for persons with disabilities in general. Our forte at **MIND** is information provision, but its usefulness remains the responsibility, creativity, resourcefulness and innovativeness of its end-users. It is hoped that the increasing number of visitors (6646, at the time of writing) to our website **www.mind.org.my** will determine the success of **MIND** as the ultimate tool for inter-sectoral collaboration on disability issues in our beloved country.

**MIND** is based at our address as stated below:

Level 3, Bangunan BAKTI Siti Hasmah,  
No. 6, Cangkat Abang Haji Openg,  
Taman Tun Dr. Ismail,  
60000 Kuala Lumpur,  
Malaysia.

However, as the work we undertake is web-based, many of our volunteers work from places of their convenience. This is especially advantageous to PWD who face challenges in transportation to our base. Similarly, end-users do not have to come to our base to access us. The information we provide is accessible at one's finger-tips or through any interface one uses to surf the internet, be it the narrator, the magnifier, the speak recognizer etc. In fact, our principal webmaster is paralysed below his neck and has no functional fingers to man the standard keyboard!