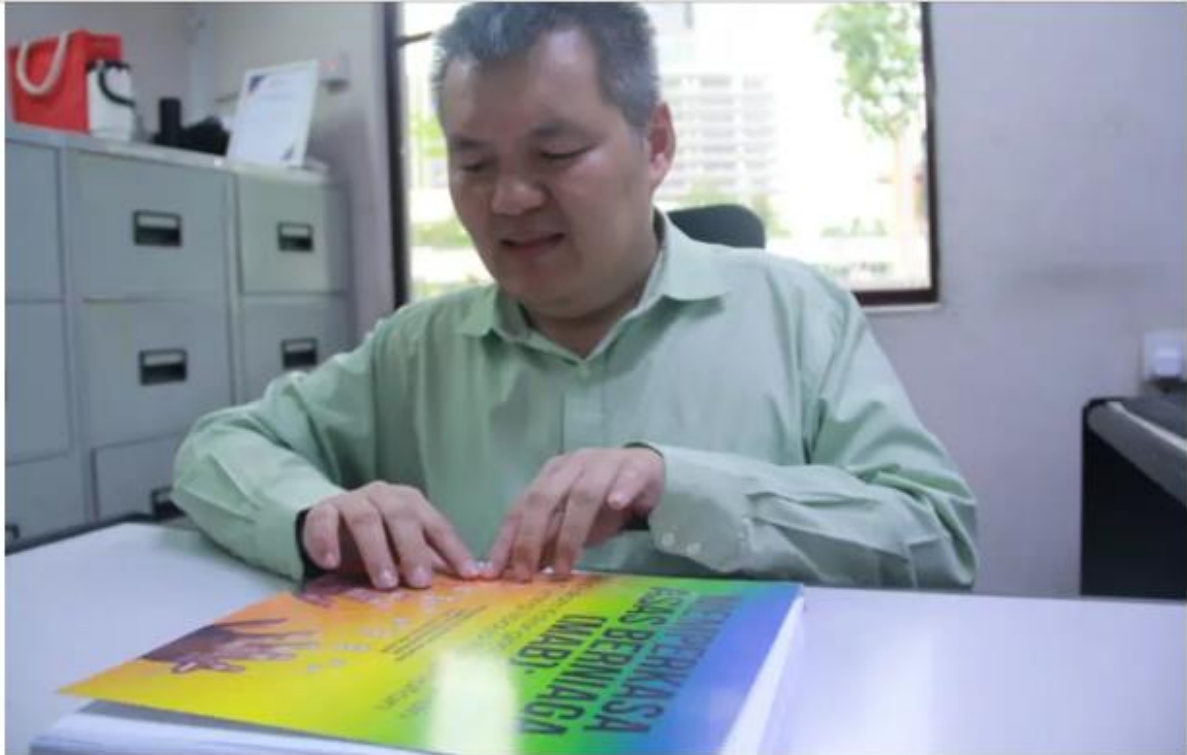


Malaysia launches first Braille entrepreneurship guide



With this entrepreneurial book in Braille, Malaysian Association for the Blind's strategy and placement unit manager Dr Lim Thein Hong is able to access the knowledge he needs to pursue his dreams. Photos: Kanithra Naidu

The Malaysian Association for the Blind (MAB) and Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) in Tanjung Malim, Perak have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) aimed at empowering the visually impaired community through inclusive education and entrepreneurship.

The event, held on May 8 at MAB's headquarters in Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur, also marked the official launch of *Memperkasa Asas Berniaga: Dalam Kalangan Usahawan Kurang Upaya Penglihatan* (*Empowering Business Fundamentals: Among Visually Impaired Entrepreneurs*), the first-ever entrepreneurship guide book in Malaysia published in both Braille and e-book formats.

The main authors of the 2024 book are UPSI Faculty of Management and Economics' lecturer Dr Mohamad Rohieszan Ramdan, MAB senior manager (research and development) Sumitha Thavanendran, and Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah (UMPSA) Faculty of Industrial Management senior lecturer Dr Nurul Ashykin Abd Aziz.

"This collaboration advances comprehensive support for the visually impaired through training, entrepreneurship, and strategic partnerships, with the book serving as both a practical guide and a symbol of economic empowerment," said MAB president Tan Sri Tengku Azlan Sultan Abu Bakar after the MoU signing ceremony.

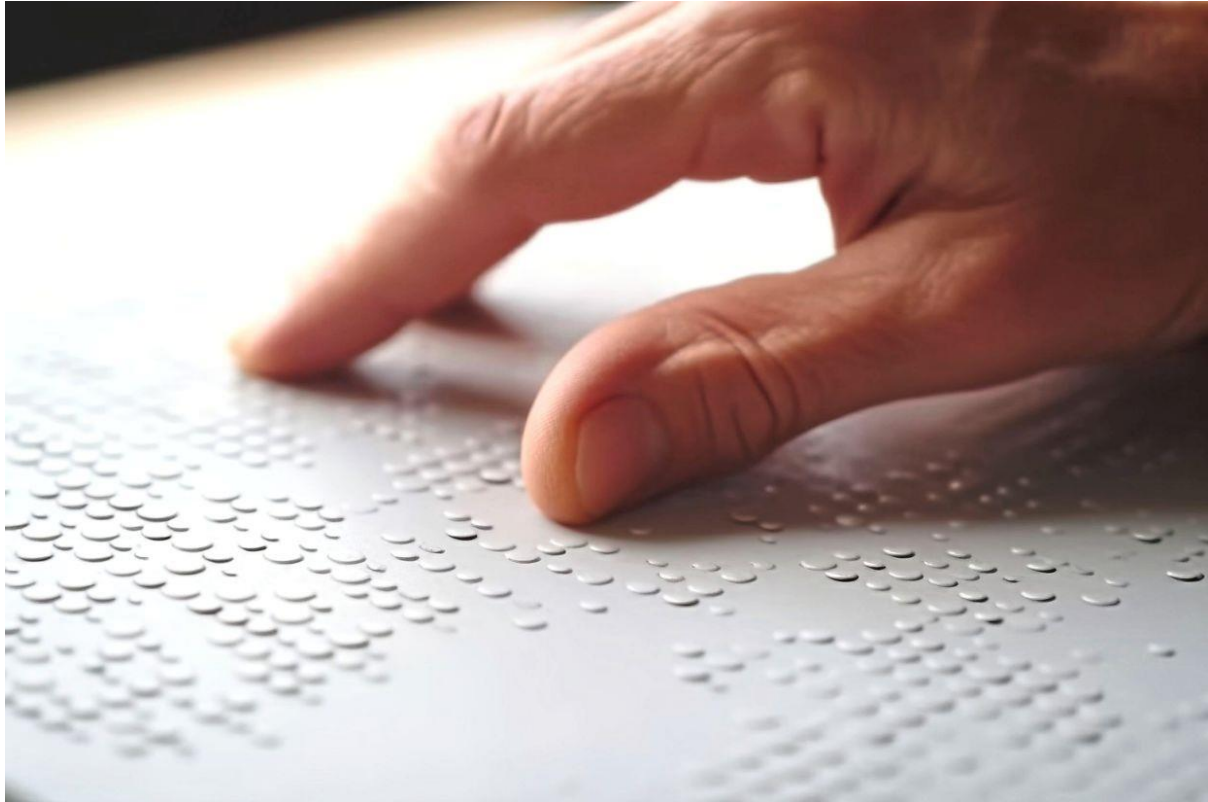


The collaboration with UPSI is part of a broader initiative involving other universities, including UMPSA in Pekan; Universiti Utara Malaysia in Sintok, Kedah; Universiti Teknologi Malaysia in Skudai, Johor; Universiti Malaysia Sabah in Kota Kinabalu; and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak in Kuching.

Since its founding in 1951, MAB has offered a wide range of services including vocational training, rehabilitation, job placement, low vision services, Braille printing, and an audio library - benefitting over 3,000 visually impaired individuals annually.

According to the Social Welfare Department, there are over 64,000 visually impaired individuals in Malaysia, highlighting the urgent need for initiatives such as this.

MAB chief executive officer Datuk George Thomas said empowering the blind to become entrepreneurs is not just about providing income opportunities - it is about restoring dignity and promoting independence.



It is important to build entrepreneurial skills among the blind to empower them with independence.
Photo: 123rf

"With the employment rate for persons with disabilities (PWD) falling below 0.5% – far short of the 1% target – it is clear that traditional job market solutions are not enough.

"We must now prioritise inclusive wealth creation strategies to ensure that PWDs, especially blind individuals who fall far below in open employment, can enjoy the same quality of life and economic dignity as everyone else."

Through the collaboration with universities, Thomas hopes to not only strengthen local support systems but also involve university students as active volunteers - nurturing empathy, civic responsibility, and deeper connections between academia and the community.

"We hope this MoU will open the door to broader, more sustainable partnerships - ones that empower the visually impaired and move us closer to a more inclusive and equitable Malaysia."