

3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015

#### FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK



I am very much privileged to have posted in Muenselling Institute, Khaling on March 10, 2014 after completing my master degree course at RIM, Thimphu. The very blessing was having direct management practices with ECCD&SEN Division, MoE Thimphu for almost about one and a half year that gave me a wider experience in managerial skills and other outlook until 25 July 2015 when Muensellinig Institute, Khaling is decentralized to Trashigang Dzongkhag. On the other hand there is a sense of feelings in me as if I was placed in the newer world because shifting my experience from the general school management setting to a SEN school made me mixed. Nevertheless, I am never left alone; the superannuating principal Mr. Tshongpon Wangdi gave me good gist of approaches to manage this very institute and my senior colleagues are always supportive that make a good drive. Albeit, we have just a handful of visually impaired and low vision students from across Bhutan, even then it is a great opportunity in the small family that our students develop a sense of good bond with diverse background. The most challenging thing that I face is 'assessing the student's work' at the end of the classes. This is

because students write in Braille which is new and hard for me to learn. Upon that the experienced teachers too have a big challenge for learners have various serious problems.

The thing that worries me the most is when students question me; "what shall we do if we are unable to secure government job?" If not as they say, then most of them are likely to lag behind in the society. With this I am urged to think that the parents, community, stake holders and relevant agencies at large still have time and greater space to think and act beyond GNH values that we cherish as a functionalist approach. May every effort made by the teachers, relevant agencies and government benefit our SEN students and relieve them from the tension they have at the back of their mind.

Winter Greetings and Tashi delek!

Dorji Wangdrup Principal

# \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* In This Newsletter:

- \*Principal's forward
- \*Braille Writing contest
- \*Temporary classrooms
- \* Computer classes
- \*Braille classes
- \*Glimpse of my life
- \* Sharing experience
- \* Life of Mirror
- \* Special
- Education
- \* Muenselling Brief News
- \* White Cane (dzongkha)
- \* Labja
- \*\*\*\*\*\*

# **Braille Writing Contest**

I Observing the World Sight day, on Thursday, 8th of October, 2015, MI conducted Braille writing contest for the first time since the establishment of the institute in 1973 on the theme: "I can write Braille with good speed and accuracy"



The winners of the writing contests were:

Mr. Kuenzang of Class VIII took the first position with 91.5 points out of 100 winning cash prize of 500 Ngultrums.

Second position was won by Mr. Karma Wangchuk of Class VII with 89 points winning cash prize of 400 Ngultrums.

Ms. Sonam Lhamo of Class VIII winning the third position with half a point behind with 88.5 points winning 300 Ngultrums.

Mr. Kuenga Chhoegyel

Literary In charge

The Braille contestants were visually impaired children ranging from Class V to VIII. There were 10 contestants who took part in the writing contest.

"DISABILITY IS BLESSING IN DISGUISE. IT IS THE GRACE OF GOD AND NOT BY ACCIDENT"

By: Kiat Motor Proprietor (disabled), Indonesia, July 2010

The candidates were tested on the following:

- •Part I. speed test.
- •Part II. Accuracy test, and.
- •Part III, Speed and accuracy test.

Some of the guidelines followed were:

- •Contestants were not allowed to use a Perkins Brailler, but only the slate and stylus.
- •Contestants were not allowed to use English Braille Grade II to complete writing the exercise.

The competition lasted for about half an hour.

The result was announced on Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> of October, 2015 corresponding to "International White Cane Safety Day"

# Temporary classrooms: Act of Migitation!

The Institute constructed temporary classrooms for the students since the old academic structure which was built in 1973 sustained major cracks due to 2009 earthquake. The structure could collapse at any time which would be a great threat to the students as well as the staff of the institute. Hence, with recommendations from the higher authorities, the institute administration decided to construct temporary shelters to be used as classrooms in June 2015. The institute started to occupy those temporary classrooms with the start of second term.



We, the members of the institute are very grateful to the Royal Government of Bhutan for being supportive as always. The children of the institute feel that they are being cared when they could learn happily in the new classrooms. Yet, come 2016 the institute is hoping to occupy the newly completed academic building. The institute's history is witnessing major development testimony with this achievement.

Wangchuk

Disaster Management In-Charge

### **COMPUTER CLASSES**

In 2007, a computer center for the visually impaired at MI was established. The project



was financed by NORAD (Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation). Training of the IT teachers was conducted by Media LT.

The project focused on:

- 1. Building up a resource group through training of teachers.
- 2. Procurement and provision of equipment for setting up the computer center.
- 3. Assistance in setting up the computer center, The project financed:
- 1. Expenditure required for training the teachers.
- 2. Refurnishing the room for the computer center.
- 3. Procurement of the equipment and software for the computer center.

Five teachers were selected for computer training for blind and low vision students. In April 2007, they were sent for a period of six months to Media LT, Norway. Three teachers were nominated from MI, one from JSHSS secondary school and another from Drukgyel, Paro. On completing the course, the five IT teachers framed appropriate guidelines for teaching

children, and for in service courses for adults employed in various parts of the country. The computer teachers at MI are focusing on day to day teaching at MI and visually impaired adults working in the nearby Khaling area. The extension computer teacher is providing technical support and advice to visually impaired adults working in the Western part of the country. The five teachers were mandatory to organize and facilitate the in service programme for visually impaired adults employed in various sectors in different parts of the country. They were also responsible for setting up a Computer Users Group - a network that discusses the use of computers by the blind and assistive technology.

On April 10, 2008, a computer center for the blind with twelve computers was set up at MI. The first in-service course was held in January 2009 followed by the 2nd in 2010, the third course in 2011 as followed in 2012 too. The Project was to terminate in 2013.

Through the computer literacy programme, today the visually impaired children studying in the mainstream schools are able to type their own homework and project work and able to directly submit to their respective subject teachers except in the subjects of Dzongkha, Mathematics and Science.

With the setting up of the computer center, the visually impaired children now have access to information and technology from the first grade. While the younger children are taught to develop typing skills, the seniors learn to use the office package, browsing internet etc. A prescribed syllabus guides the ICT teachers in providing an appropriate computer literacy programme for the visually impaired children.

With the ICT project launched back in 2007, the visually impaired people of Bhutan have marched down the road quite a long way off. We

now have computer literacy programme with standardized curriculum from the first grade to the 8th grade. More than 48 visually impaired were trained and provided a laptop to each candidate. Today they are able to fully compete with the rest of the contemporaries be it in job or in studies, correspondence and almost all the works that once were preposterous in the absence of the knowledge of computer skills. While the low vision is able to access through MAGIC or other magnifying software, the totally blind make the best use of JAWS and some even on NVDA.

Kuenga Chhoegyel ICT In charge

#### BRAILLE CLASSES



who have lost their sight recently is another mandatory of the institute. This class is especially meant for those who join the institute after losing their sight either through accidents or diseases and natural calamities. This course is sort of rehabilitation in studies, life skills and adequate skills required for continuing job employed before losing sight. Besides learning Braille, they also learn in activities of daily living, computer skills orientation and mobility. Most commonly, the candidates come from schools, institutes and other organizations when unable to access print.

People believe that loss of eye sight can lead to major setback, be it in studies or employment. Provision of Braille skills to children and adult The candidates are taught English Braille both grade 1 and 2 respectively. In Dzongkha, they learn to read and write Braille perfectly so as to enable to cope with other peers in the class. In Mathematics and Science, they are taught how to represent various symbols and numerals in Braille. They also learn to use abacus and Taylor frame to enable to perform numeric calculations and algebra. After attending Braille class,

#### 3<sup>RD</sup> December 2015

depending on their abilities, the candidates are provided opportunities to continue their studies. In case of employees, the candidates are rehabilitated to the previous employment. MI provides two types of Braille classes,

- 1. Braille classes for the persons who have lost vision
- 2. Parents, teachers and rehabs who wish to learn Braille to teach or support visually impaired.

English Grade 2 Braille Literacy Programme MI conducts Braille Literacy programme both in English and Dzongkha.

Who should take this course?

- If you are recently blinded, this course is for you.
- If you are a spouse and wish to assist your husband or wife, this course is for you.
- If you are a parent and wish to support your blind child, this is for you to learn.
- If you are a rehab or a teacher or someone who wish to help a blind child to learn efficiently, this course is for you.

Types of Braille courses

- 1. English Grade 2 certificate Braille Literacy programme.
- 2. Advance Mathematics and Science Braille course.
- 3. Braille course in Dzongkha.

If a candidate wishes to take the Second course, he/she must complete the first course. However, Dzongkha as a different language and has different settings whereby, it is not necessary for a candidate to take English course, if he/she wish to learn Dzongkha Braille only.

Criteria for enrollment
For the effective teaching/learning, the
enrollment for the course shall be not more than
6 candidates in each course.

To achieve the certificate, candidates are required to demonstrate their skills through appearing test which is to be taken at the end of the course. All the candidates must move with same pace. To obtain this, the slow learners would require working maximum to complete the given task.

Course content

The course includes:

- •All aspects of standard English literary Braille Grade II.
- Basic number, money, time fractions and decimals.

It does not cover the following:

- Skills for teaching Braille to Blind individuals.
- Advance notation in specialist subject areas (mathematics, Science or Music)
  Mathematics and Science Braille course may be designed by the concern subject tutors of the institute.

#### **Course Duration**

The Course is three months of duration, (12 weeks) with two periods in a week of 1 hour in each period. The candidate is to cover 22 exercises with an exercise in each period. There are two start dates for the course each year, In March and August. The two annual dates for taking tests shall be in beginning of June and November.

Having served the blind and visually impaired for the last four decades, institute believes that given the opportunity, blind person can achieve good result and compete in the job market. There are quite a lot of successful stories.

Kuenga Chhoegyel Braille Committee

#### GLIMPSEOF MY LIFE STORY



The first and the only blind businessman About my day-to-day business life The blind businessman Gembo Tenzin in his shop

I normally wake up at 6:00 am, do some meditation before taking breakfast at 8am. Then open the shop until 7 pm to close down. Whenever there are customers turning up with their requirements, I remain ever ready to offer my prompt service. I politely question them what their needs are and think over in mind whether I got their demand in stock.. I then walk into my shop to find out the particular item merely by feeling over or touching them since each and every spare part have its own different shapes, sizes, part numbers and descriptions to differentiate. It is also common that the customers bring along the samples of their old items they are looking for. I use to give the cost prices and then receive the payment on cash except very few on credits I fully trust so. Although identifying a paper money is not that easy for a blind person, I normally judge it by their length and breath. The Braille imprint on paper money is also not strong, so it is hard for me to indentify the amount accurately, especially if the notes are old. Nevertheless, my wife often helps me with the business whenever she has time to share, as well from the children when on their school break. I issue receipts by typewriting on an ordinary typewriter and maintain a cash record in Braille with a help of a Braille machine. Besides, I also use to keep daily record of outgoing and incoming goods in Braille for my personal reference. To cope up with the accounts and other related financial matters, I handle a talking system calculator. I also keep a Dictaphone to record the orders of my customers on the spot. When time permits in between, I prepare the order lists if necessary or physically go through the verification of stock available inside or if any new items needed to be placed orders. Currently I use to manage around less than 2000 different items of spare parts for various heavy and light vehicles, majority of these goods are brought in from few of my reliable dealers in Jaigoan and Phuentsholing I travel personally to meet my dealers there when it becomes really necessary. Since the communication links have nowadays improved so much, I can easily either send my orders through emails, faxes, phone calls or by SMS. Transaction of payments between businessmen via banks seems to be no problem at all. Then for transporting the goods from Phuentsholing to Bumthang I look out myself or my dealers find for me. When I get free time, I go online and browse news websites on my laptop or listen to the radio for both the national and international world affairs. Finally, my day is off by 7:00pm to close down, but if any urgency arises, even late at night or early morning, I remain ever ready for a helping-hand.

I'm determined to send out a message to those of my visually impaired colleagues that there is always something for us to do. Although we face many problems in lifetime, it's important that we stand up for ourselves and never give up.

By: Gembo Tenzin

#### SHARING EXPERIENCE



The only and the first blind physiotherapist of the nation

Mr. Sanga Dorji is the first physiotherapist of the nation and the only blind physiotherapist.

I like to thank my friends in Muenselling Institute Khaling for giving me the opportunity to write a few lines for the Magazine. Since leaving from Khaling in 1987, I have visited many places and met many people in different parts of the world but my friends and teachers at Muenselling remained close in my heart and in my prayers. Where ever I may be and whenever it is, I keep the information of Muenselling Institute up dated.

In this article, I will share my brief experience of living and working in the sighted world. Being the first Bhutanese National physiotherapist, it has given me a lot of opportunities as well as challenges. To build the infrastructure and also develop the human resources to provide effective and adequate rehabilitation services in the country, it requires a lot of support from colleagues and authorities. In that I had been very fortunate to have bosses and colleagues who were supportive and dedicated.

Now the physiotherapy and rehabilitation services in Bhutan have been established and adequate numbers of staff both physiotherapists and physio. Technicians have joined the team; I enjoy spending most of my time in treating the patients and advocating and supporting the disability issues and programmes. In the future, I hope to focus my time in building a firm and effective system to support the disabled persons in Bhutan. These will include advocating the ratification of the UNCRPD (United Nations Conventional Rights on Persons with Disabilities) and also supporting the development of appropriate policies and strategies by different ministries and agencies. With that I hope the disabled persons in Bhutan will be able to contribute in the socio-economic development and live independent and productive lives.

During last 21 years of my life working as a physiotherapist and that too being visually impaired person had been both challenging and exciting. Besides a few obstacles, I felt my professional life had been both rewarding and enjoyable. With the dedicated support and motivation from my bosses and colleagues, I was not only able to do what I wanted but also carry out effectively and productively. Some of the constraints that I experienced are mostly in operating the latest equipments and also supervision of my juniors when teaching practical teachings. However that does not stop me implementing the activities that needed to be done. I have to use different strategies and methods, as saying goes, (where there is a will, there is a way). It is difficult for me to say what are my successes but definitely I enjoyed everything I did. So, my advice to my young friends at Muenselling Institute and also to those who are in the job is that we should do what we can and not to regret what we could not achieve. (Hope for the best and prepare for the worst).

I hope this short article of mine will give a rough idea of my work and views. I will try to contribute a better article in next year's magazine. I wrote this in sort of haste and could not focus properly the points I wanted to

reflect in this article.

I wish all the readers good luck and hope other articles in the magazine provide you with good information regarding Muenselling and its activities.

Sanga Dorji JDWNR Hospital Thimphu

#### LIFE OF MIRROR



I cannot imagine situation of my life if I had not been admitted to the Khaling National Institute for the Disabled in 1994. I am certain that my life would be in miseries both physically and mentally in darkness just living back in village. I feel liberated from the world of ignorance after free education has been provided by the Royal Government of Bhutan under the benevolent leadership of our Monarchs and continued hard work and support rendered by the teachers of the institute.

I completed smoothly my school education with constant assistance delivered by teachers of the NIV in terms of textbooks in Braille version. Nevertheless, when I initially joined Sherabtse College in July 2007, the studying environment was unexpectedly different. Unlike life at school, all class lessons were student oriented.

Nonetheless, when I reached in the second year, a man of technology stepped into my life then. He is no other than Mr. Kuenga Chhoegyel, a teacher of NIV, Khaling, who is expert in computer applications. He is a man of technology who cleared my darkness of ICT world by organizing one month basic ICT training in January 2009. I consider the ICT workshop offered to me as my blessing in disguise as he appeared on time when I was in the world of academic suffering facing extreme challenges to cope up with my friends while pursuing studies.

Since then, I was profoundly felt with joy because I could type and submit my assignments on time and carry out other necessary academic research works through browsing internet after the ICT workshop. He also gifted me and my friends with a brand new laptop each from his goodwill project initiative.

Before that it was extremely challenging for me in particular to get resources while pursuing degree course because all materials available for the course were in hard copies which I could not read. Moreover, I was most of the time left with tensed mood as there were only limited friends who can genuinely help me in reading notes and other academic tasks. After attending the workshop, my life completely transformed unlike previous years.

Had ICT workshop not been conducted by Mr. Kuenga Chhoegyel and his team, I would not have completed my degree course successfully. As a result of his benevolent contribution made to me, I have been able to work independently at present in my office with his skills provided to me.

Now I do not feel that I am disabled person because at this cybernetic age, I have been winged with his basic

#### 3<sup>RD</sup> December 2015

ICT skills and now every disabled person graduating from the institute can operate the system and browse through websites like other sighted people because of his regular basic ICT teachings at school and conducting workshops for the other in-service visually impaired persons.

Thus, I feel that having a physical disability is not a great concern anymore.

Therefore, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Mr. Kuenga Chhoegyel and his team for helping me to clear my academic obstacles with ICT knowledge and reach at this level. His tremendous hard work, noble thought, and significant contributions shall be kept in memory throughout my life.

Ugyen Wangdi, Assistant HRO, Supreme Court of Bhutan, Royal Court of Justice.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION/IDEA COORDINATION PROGRAMS

Special Education team of the institute is formed mainly to provide necessary support services to the integrated students of Khaling LSS and Jigme Sherubling Higher Secondary School. The institute integrates all students from classes 7 to 12 to the mainstream schools. Since, children face some problems while studying with other sighted peers, the SEN team helps the mainstream school teachers to understand the learning culture of the visually impaired students.

In order to identify children's difficulties and provide solutions to their problems, the institute's SEN team organizes meetings amongst the principals, Vice principals and SEN coordinators of three schools twice a year. Some of the areas which we discuss every year in the meetings are:

- a) Braille text books
- b) Assistive devices such as Perkin Braillers, writing frames, styluses, abacus and talking calculators.
- c) Special Education room for SEN students.
- d) Accessibility of the campus
- e) Ink printing of exam papers, homework and other assignments
- f) Procurement of braille papers.
- g) Awareness programmes for teachers.
- h) Computers and screen reading software.
- i) Library services.
- j) Games and sports.

The SEN team also coordinates in celebrating international occasions such as International White Cane Safety Day on 15<sup>th</sup> October and International Day for the Persons with Disabilities on 3<sup>rd</sup> December. On the occasions we advocate the people around regarding the programmes which we carry out in the institute and also how people with disabilities live around the world. In nut shell, the SEN team helps the sister schools for

better inclusion of visually impaired children for learning.

(Kelzang Dorji) Teacher, Muenselling Institute.

# MUENSELLING BRIEF NEWS

Foundation Day 2015

On Monday, 23rd of February, 2015, MI celebrated 42nd Foundation Day.

The day's programme began with the lighting of Jamchoe followed by prayer, paying tribute to those who have lost their lives for the service of the visually impaired children of Bhutan. It was also a prayer for the students who died and also for the wellbeing of the present and future of the MI family.

To read more follow the link:

http://www.muenselling.edu.bt/News/Document/Foundation2015.htm

Blessing for MI Students

As the institute reopened and started off with a fresh academic year 2015, the visually impaired children could feel a shower of fortune.

To read in detail follow the link:

http://www.muenselling.edu.bt/News/Document/Garment2015.htm



Bhutan dragon makes the lives of the MI VI children better.

Bhutan Dragon Motorbike association blessed the visually impaired children donating toiletries, school bag, and an umbrella for each child. The organization also donated a laptop to the institute. This is the fifth year supporting the VI students of the institute.

International Lions Club supports MI

The Lions Clubs International has assisted the institute since 2007

Donation: As the nation was celebrating the 25th birth anniversary of Her Majesty the Gyaltsuen, the Muenselling Institute for visually impaired students had their own small celebration, yesterday.

To read more, follow the link:

#### 3<sup>RD</sup> December 2015

http://www.kuenselonline.com/lions-donate-computers-to-muenselling-institute/

Better safety than sorry

A temporary seven unit classroom was constructed to accommodate the students from PP-VI and the academic session after the mid-term resumed in the new classrooms.

To read in detail, follow the link:

http://www.muenselling.edu.bt/News/Document/ANewMuenselling.htm

MI Opens a New Chapter

On Saturday, 25th of July, 2015, MI opens a new chapter in her history. The handing/taking of the institute from the Department of School Education to the Dzongkhag administration of Trashigang marked on Saturday, 25th of July, 2015.

http://www.muenselling.edu.bt/News/Document/HandTakingDzongkhag2015.htm

International White Cane Safety Day, October, 15, 2015

On Thursday, 15th of October, 2015, MI joins the rest of the world observing the "International White Cane Safety Day"

For more information, follow the link, http://www.muenselling.edu.bt/News/Document/WhiteCaneDay.htm

Muenselling institute students receives torch for the blind

On Tuesday, 3rd of November, 2015, coinciding with the Lhabab Duechhen, the descending day of Lord Buddha, students of Muenselling Institute receives a torch for the blind, a device that assist a blind to walk independently.

You will obtain more information following the link: <a href="http://www.muenselling.edu.bt/News/Document/MIWhiteCane.htm">http://www.muenselling.edu.bt/News/Document/MIWhiteCane.htm</a>

Muenselling Institute celebrates 60th Birth day of His Majesty, the 4th king

On Monday 9th to Wednesday 11th of November, 2015, (three days) MI joins the rest of the nation celebrating the 60th birth anniversary of the 4th king.

Please follow the link to read in detail, http://www.muenselling.edu.bt/News/Document/4thKing.htm

To read the rest of the news, follow the link, http://www.muenselling.edu.bt/News/news.htm

Contributed by Kuenga Chhoegyel, Webmaster of Muenselling Institute

Web address: <a href="http://www.muenselling.edu.bt/">http://www.muenselling.edu.bt/</a>

#### กลงหรุกงน์

 

#### र्देद 'र्सूय'यर्ग्स 'रें'हे

ជង្គជាវិទ្ធា

# Thank you & Tashi Delek!

#### Contact:

Mr. Dorji Wangdrup Principal Muenselling Institute, Khaling Khaling Mobile#16481105 Fax#00975-04-581125

Website: www.muenselling.edu.bt E-Mail: principalnivi@gmail.com