

First facilities, now attitudes: the latest challenge for

Pusat Rehabilitasi Yakkum "PRY" *By Duncan Graham*



He aha te mea nui o te ao?

What is the most important thing in the world?

He tangata, he tangata, he tangata.

It is the people, it is the people, it is the people.

This Maori proverb is also reflected in a popular saying of

Indonesia's fourth president, the late Abdurrahman (Gus Dur) Wahid: Yang lebih penting dari politik adalah kemanusiaan - More important than politics is humanity.

The Pusat Rehabilitasi Yakkum, the Yakkum Rehabilitation Centre, was established by the late Colin McLennan.

But how did it come about? In Colin's own words, this is how he saw it.....



Colin McLennan at the entrance to PRY

I worked and lived in Jakarta for almost 4 years in the 1970s. Soon after my arrival I became interested in street children - some of whom were disabled and some were beggars. Being involved in youth activities I was curious to know who these children were, why they lived on the streets and how they survived.

Most of the youngsters were from rural areas who had come to the capital city to improve their situations. In all cases their families were very poor, the children had insufficient to eat and were not attending school because the parents could not afford to pay the costs involved. Most were boys from about 8 years of age but there were also a few girls - usually they accompanied an older brother. In Indonesia there is a very strong belief that the responsibility of the male members of the family is to work and earn money for the entire family. So, when the boys realised, they would not be able to find work in their own villages, they departed for the big city where they believed the streets were paved with gold and would easily be able to earn money to send back to their parents and thereby receive acceptance as useful contributors to the family's income.

Those who survived by begging were those who were unsuccessful in finding other means of earning money. No one wished to become a beggar, but if they often felt hunger pains it was their only option to get a square meal. Favourite places for the beggars to operate are markets, at traffic lights where vehicles are delayed for several minutes, aboard trains and buses (being careful to avoid the ticket collectors) and outside mosques on Fridays when the main weekly services are held.

I became particularly interested in the children with physical disabilities and began to assist some in various ways. Some required medical attention or operations to correct deformities. I took some to a limb centre where they could get artificial limbs and a few I arranged to have admitted to school. My house became a kind of drop-in centre - particularly on Sundays when the youngsters took a break from their various jobs or from begging.

It was not until after I had returned to New Zealand that I decided I wanted to return to Indonesia to establish an organisation which could assist many more children and young people with physical disabilities and to continue the rehabilitation activities I had commenced as a short-term expatriate working in Jakarta. But this did not eventuate until 1982 when I established a rehabilitation centre near the provincial city of Yogyakarta.

Pusat Rehabilitasi Yakkum "PRY "continued

This rehabilitation centre is known as Pusat Rehabilitasi Yakkum and has been built on Jalan Kaliurang on the road to Mt Merapi. PRY was formed in a partnership with the Indonesian medical organisation, known by the acronym YAKKUM, *Yayasan Kristen untuk Kesehatan Umum* (Christian Foundation for Public Health), one of the largest health service foundations in Indonesia.

(Although the organisation has a Christian base, it follows a non-discriminatory policy, employing and training disabled people of all faiths.)

Stout encouragements and cheques are essential, but more important are the people and the energy and dedication they bring to a task.

McLennan had the will but couldn't do the job himself. He needed a local fixit person and offered the job to Ibu Dra Mundarsi, not just because she could speak English but had other qualities - confidence and competency.



Ibu Dra Mundarsi

'At first I was unsure about working with Colin because he was into control, detail and discipline,' she said.



Ibu Retno Embarinio

'His culture and behaviour was so different from the more relaxed way we do things in Java. But I soon realised he was genuine and really wanted to help disabled people who were then largely neglected. It was always about the people. So I took the job.'

Now retired, the 77-year old spent the rest of her working life with PRY as Deputy Director. She visited NZ once in 1998 to help raise funds and visit NZ rehabilitation centres. By then PRY was being supported by major sponsors in Indonesia, Europe and the US.

Also recently retired from PRY is Ibu Retno Embarini who shows that disabled people can be mobile given the chance - and smart technology.

Her late husband adapted her Daihatsu Ayla so she can drive without foot pedals, instead using a hand throttle and brake.

She occasionally needs help getting her wheelchair in and out of the car's small boot. But once underway she can go shopping and get to PRY where she works part-time in the design centre teaching sewing and encouraging students to take up batik, and she assists the Rehabilim Trust in monitoring the scholarship students who got a study grant from the fund that Colin established.

An issue continuing to bedevil NGOs working with the handicapped in Indonesia is public ignorance. This is curious, because President Wahid was near blind while leading (1999-2001) the world's most populous Muslim nation back to democracy.

'A survey we ran at PRY showed companies in Yogyakarta know there's a legal one per-cent quota for disabled workers,' said Retno. 'But many admitted that they were confused about recruitment and placement, which often creates negative stigmas.'

'Taufik Abdurahman, the owner of Batik Sogan, has employed people with disabilities for the past six years. He hasn't encountered any significant problems with work quality and providing special facilities. Twenty per cent of the company's workforce has disabilities.'

The need for better understanding doesn't stop with commerce. Rita Triharyani from PRY's service and training centre has found tertiary education staff unaware of the quota law, and unsure how to manage disabled students.



Rita Triharyani

'That leads to students too shy to explain their needs, and that affects their ability to study,' Rita said. She's now planning an education campaign targeting campus administrators and academics.

Forty years after McLennan's conscience was jerked by beggars at a stop sign, PRY has become a major NGO. It has a large campus of training rooms, workshops and therapy equipment, including a swimming pool.

It has seeded branches in other parts of Indonesia concentrating on rehabilitating disabled young people from poor families to the point where they could earn a living to sustain themselves.

The criteria are that under-24 year olds have to come from the poorest of the poor families, be physically disabled, capable of being rehabilitated to become self sufficient, and not getting assistance from another source. So far more than 4,000 people have been helped.

McLennan was awarded an MBE for his work and died on 28 June 2007. His will stipulated that money be left to the Rehabilim Trust Inc for 'young disabled entrepreneurial Indonesian persons'. That work continues with scholarships which are being monitored by Ibu Retno and Ibu Lenny Setiawan Hadiprabowo in Bali.

But the need to change the attitude towards disabled persons continues, not only in Indonesia, but also in most other countries worldwide.

Pusat Rehabilitasi Yakkum "PRY "continued



This article was written by Duncan Graham, a prominent journalist now living in Indonesia, often contributing to "The Jakarta Post". An Australian by birth, Duncan lived for a number of years in Wellington, New Zealand, before moving to Malang in Eastern Java with his Indonesian wife Erlinawati.

We asked Duncan to write the article while he was on a recent visit to Pusat Rehabilitasi Yakkum in Yogyakarta. We publish it with additions from Colin McLennan's writings

Duncan has his own current affairs blog at www.pearlsandirritations

Fahmi Husaen Battling the Odds

We often hear more about our scholars' successes than their hardships. This says more about their positive approach to life than dwelling on their disability. Fahmi Husaen has provided us with a very honest report about what he has had to contend with in the last couple of years.

Fahmi is one of our most successful scholars. You may remember he received a prestigious International award for his orthotic ankle support. Here's his report:

I report that I am a bit not feeling well for the last few days. Sorry, I am just responding to your email because I'm still not in good condition. I experienced a decrease in oxygen saturation due to Tuberculosis disease to a level of 80-70 percent so I had to wear an oxygen mask until I recover. However, Tuberculosis has been declared cured.

Since I graduated in 2019 I have experienced many ups and downs in life until now, my decision to become an entrepreneur presented its own risks, and experienced many obstacles. In 2019 I started trying to start a business in the field of 3D Design and Prototyping and we started working on an electric car project. I am also grateful that the remaining scholarship money can be submitted as additional capital at that time.

I experienced 2 times my team broke up in a short period of time that is in 2020 and 2021 which were always in the same pattern and related to my condition as a person with a disability. My lack of supervision due to limited mobility always seems to be used by other members of my team to cheat on projects. Right now my last 2 attempts are practically gone (except for a few assets including a 3D printer from rehablim) and I have to start all over again. But I have learned a lot in recent times.

Entrepreneurship is quite difficult, especially as a person with a disability who handles a fairly large project, especially when physical activity is required. Then I did an evaluation by currently switching to the Digital field which is indeed my background that I can master from upstream to downstream and requires a little physical activity.

Then at the end of 2021, I received news that I had passed a startup development grant from the Badan Riset dan Inovasi Nasional Ministry of Education and Culture which I submitted in early 2020 but was delayed due to the pandemic. The grant starts in the period from December 2021 to June 2022.

I don't waste this momentum to get back up again. Grant funding with net receipts of IDR 188,000,000. Our startup idea is an app to make it easier for people with disabilities to visit a place. We provide information on the level of accessibility of a place so that it can be known whether the place is accessible or not.

The idea for a startup comes from my personal experience which has become a common problem for people with disabilities. Our startup still has problems because our idea is actually a social idea that has the goal of helping people with disabilities. Therefore, we have prepared a more sustainable business model as a source of income is website and mobile application development services.

Our startup already has legality in the form of a PT, namely PT Access Teknologi Indonesia, whose office is located in Mantriijeron, the center of Yogyakarta City, so we are ready to collaborate widely.



From The Chair



Once in a while, businesses have a rethink about the best way to do their business and ask themselves - "am I doing things the most effectively?" Is there a better way ?

They then develop new strategies, and the passing of time will tell them if their new policy has been successful.

The Rehabilim Trust is at a stage where some of the old ways of doing things must give way to newer and more efficient and economical ways of running the scholarship program.

We are a voluntary organisation and we work with other volunteers and by and large that works very well.

However there is always room for improvement in most organisations be they large or small.

Communication is a key part of our work if we are to be efficient, and with email and other forms of electronic communication including Zoom meetings, things are vastly different from when we first started the scholarship program years ago.

We have the capacity to sponsor up to 10 students at once, and that is a big responsibility to fund them through to graduation.

It takes time behind the scenes to set things up and again here we are reliant on volunteers to carry out these requirements.

We recently set minimum standards for the student's selection to the program, and we are insisting on maintaining those standards for the duration of their scholarship.

It gives us great satisfaction to see our students graduate knowing that they have accepted the challenge to compete with able bodied

people and succeeded.

The Rehabilim Trust Board get great pleasure seeing our graduates in their Robes and Caps beaming with pride on graduation day.

Satu-satunya jalan untuk mencapai keberhasilan adalah dengan kerja keras, bukan sebaliknya

"The only time success comes before work is in the dictionary."

A new semester is starting now so, on behalf of the Rehabilim Trust Board, I wish all our students the very best, may you work hard and earn your success.

Bill Russell
Chairman



Late News

Last weekend Ni Nengah Widiasih won gold at ASEAN Para Games in Solo, Central Java.

In the process she broke her previous Games record in the 45kg class - lifting 97kg.

Rehabilim Donation Form

I wish to support young physically disabled Indonesians.

Enclosed is my cheque, made out to "The Rehabilim Trust", for \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

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PO Box 51 212 Tawa
WELLINGTON 5249

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