

Now even the visually impaired can “watch” movies

Maybank and Malaysian Association for the Blind join forces in creating the first ever movie theatre for the visually impaired in SEA

Maybank today launched the first ever movie theatre in South East Asia for the visually challenged in Kuala Lumpur in collaboration with Malaysian Association for the Blind (MAB), known as the Maybank - MAB Cinema.

Situated in Kompleks MAB Brickfields, the movie theatre is capable of accommodating up to 180 persons per screening. In contrast to common movie cinemas, it offers a slightly different movie experience to audiences as it is the only theatre in the region to screen Audio Described (AD) movies.

Unlike conventional movies, AD movies provide visual images for the visually impaired through a free narration service throughout the film with concise, objective description of new scenes, settings, costumes and body language in between portions of dialogues or songs, at no additional charge to patrons.

Speaking at the launch of the Maybank-MAB Cinema, Maybank Group Head for Global Banking, Amirul Feisal Wan Zahir said that this initiative was part of the Maybank Global Banking (GB) employee volunteerism programme, in line with the Group’s mission of humanising financial services.

“Our Global Banking employees began working closely with MAB since July 2013 when a small team volunteered to produce tactile diagrams for the visually impaired here in MAB Complex,” he explained. “As the friendship between Maybankers and the blind community grew, Maybankers lent their hand in typing materials for the blind, recorded voices for audio learning, celebrated Hari Raya as well as read current news and shared interesting topics with Gurney Training Centre trainees who are visually impaired.”

He added that in early 2014, MAB shared with Maybank Global Banking about its vision to set-up an audio described movie theatre in MAB Complex to provide a genuine movie experience to the community.

“Moved by this vision to provide for the visually impaired what we the sighted take for granted, our Maybankers then set in motion a series of fundraising activities. In April 2014, a mini carnival was organised in Maybank premises to raise funds,” he said.

“Later in September 2014, in conjunction with the Maybank Global Corporate Responsibility Day, a Fun Day with the Visually Impaired was held and with the amount raised coupled with a contribution from Maybank, an AD movie theatre was set up in the MAB multipurpose hall for the visually impaired,” he explained.

Amirul Feisal added that through many different Corporate Responsibility initiatives, Maybank Group has always been at the forefront of helping the needy. “Through various channels such as the Cahaya Kasih employee volunteerism programme, Global Corporate Responsibility Day, and Maybank Foundation, we have long championed the less fortunate within the communities we operate and improved the quality of thousands of lives not only in Malaysia but also throughout the world.”

Meanwhile, MAB CEO, Dato' Ganesan Supayah echoed the sentiment expressed by Amirul Feisal about how programmes which are beneficial for minority groups are always important to ensure that their needs are met.

Blindness does not hinder the visually-impaired from enjoying movies with the audio descriptive feature. With this, they are able to 'visualise' the movie with by hearing with heart and mind.

Established in 1951, MAB is a non-profit Organisation focused on providing vocational training, job placements, sports and recreational activities to empower the visually impaired to sustain themselves and be independent.