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NMA Newsletter 2013/01

Dear members! The new board for 2013/2014 has just been elected (and volunteered!) and we're trying to keep up with the tradition of issuing a couple of newsletters every year. It will be a challenge, since most of us have full time jobs or are engaged in our own projects and interests, but we will try our best. So here's hoping that you will enjoy reading our very first issue for 2013 and that you will not hesitate to give us your feedback or ideas should you have any!

For those of you who are new to Norway or NMA, the association was started in 1990 as a non-commercial, nonprofit organization that was interested in promoting cultural and commercial contacts between Norway and Malaysia. Knowledge about Malaysia in Norway and vice versa was limited at that time, but this has of course progressed over the years and today, Malaysia has become a popular tourist and business destination for many Norwegians. Similarly, more and more Malaysians are finding themselves in this land of the midnight sun either for job, education or family reunification purposes. A point to note is that NMA is also represented by

Singaporeans and Indonesians due to our geographical and socio-economic ties!

NMA's activities in the recent past few years have been limited due to restricted funds and lack of members. The new board believes that this will change since the numbers of Malaysians in Norway have grown tremendously over recent years, and many have shown interest in NMA to provide a platform for socializing and get-togethers. Check out our list of events planned for 2013 and join us whenever you can. If you have any creative ideas on how we should meet or organize events, get in touch with any of the board members that we will be featuring in this issue!

NMA has also received many questions about securing jobs in Norway – both by those living in Malaysia and those already here in Norway who find it tough to get into the job market. Under the "Land that Job" article, we have put together some tips since we're represented by many members who have successfully ended up with jobs here.

Enjoy reading & Have a lovely



Events planned for 2013

Sunday, 9th June (Done – check out photos on the last page!)

Visit to the Aker Solutions' Engineerium

Did you know that Aker Solutions employs many Malaysians? Being a leading Norwegian Oil and Gas company, we thought it would be good to get a guided tour of their Engineerium and later having a nice "kopitiam" style session at Wayne's Coffee for some "cake and coffee".

Saturday 3rd August

Summer outing at Nestangen, Kvelde.

This is a beautiful location beside river Lågen. We'll be grilling, swimming & rowing (you have to bring your own boat).

Saturday 14th Sept

Merdeka Day celebration at Asker tun in Asker

This has been our yearly tradition where there'll be lots of good Malaysian food, karaoke sessions, lucky draws and just good socializing and mingling around.

Potlucks and Outings in town

No, it doesn't have to be only formal get-togethers. If you are craving some delicious home-cooked Chicken Curry or Hainanese Chicken Rice or a yummy Rendang Kampung-style, plan a potluck! Use our Facebook site to organize events! All members are welcome and encouraged to plan various events! When it's dark and cold and we're in need of warm company & a good laugh – organize a potluck, a pub-night or a meet-up at a restaurant and we all can "go-dutch"!



Get to know the board members 2013/2014

(Photos on our website)

- Uma** Our President lives in Oslo and has lived in Norway for over 6 years. Works in Fred Olsen and has Finance background. Loves throwing potlucks and knows quite a lot about German football because her husband drags her into it! Give her a call if you have ideas for NMA!
- Mary** Our secretary lives in Larvik & has lived in Norway for more than 28 years. Is a retiree originally from Singapore and remains faithful to NMA by being in the board very often. A new grandmother but this lady is energetic and enthusiastic!
- Jaya** Our tough Treasurer lives in Kolbotn and has lived in Norway for over 6 years. Works in Hydro Aluminium and has Finance background. An excellent cook (*you didn't hear this from us!*) and is an avid tennis fan!
- Hussein** One of our loyal pioneer members who lives in Hønefoss and has lived in Norway for over 39 years! A music enthusiast who is also our karaoke supplier for NMA events! Get in touch with Hussein if you feel like karaoke-ing!
- Swee Kian** This mother of two lives in Oslo and has lived in Norway for over 15 years. Works in IOM and has IT background. If you see a Malaysian lady, her English husband and two mixed kids cycling around in Oslo, there's a 99.99% chance that it's this energetic lady! An excellent cook!
- Fadhilah** Hussein's creative wife who is also the usual "supplier" of most "makan" in all NMA events! Did you know that her "kuih-muih" is highly sought after by NMA members? Get in touch with her if you miss Malaysian snacks!
- Hari** Hari has lived in Oslo for more than 6 years now. This music enthusiast plays the flute and is a member of the band Opus82. Hari has Engineering background and works in Aker Solutions. Get in touch with him if you are new to Oslo and need some tips on the happening places in town!
- Hamidah** Our loyal veteran Hamidah lives in Horten and has lived in Norway for over 40 years! Also one of our suppliers of "makan" for NMA events. Full of energy and enthusiasm, you must catch a glimpse of her cool sports car!



LAND THAT JOB!!

Ok, so you have that highly recognized Bachelors or Master's degree, have about a gazillion years of work experience from back home and still have no luck with landing that job that you have been eyeing for months or years. What could be wrong? Should you "norwegianize" your name? Should you just pack your bags and leave to the US where at least they could use your English skills and there are probably more McDonald's outlets there anyway? The answer is "no". Well at least "not necessary"!

Although recent news in the media has highlighted the lack of opportunity for migrants in Norway, there is still light at the end of the tunnel. At least we believe so. More and more companies are beginning to realize and acknowledge the high level of skills that many Malaysians graduates and experienced workers seem to possess. Many are also aware of the high level of education in Malaysia as well as the high work ethics among us. So here are some tips if you are actively looking:

Application, application, application
We can't emphasize this enough! The key to securing a job is indeed to send out as many applications as you possibly can. Of course we're talking about jobs that are related to your skills or experience.

While we admit that you will probably see a lot of rejection mails in your inbox, we also think that you have a bigger chance of getting an interview if you send more applications. Trust us on this! State in your application that you are an international candidate and that you bring with you international exposure especially from Asia. State also that you are willing to learn and contribute at the same time. List all your skills and your knowledge of languages. We Malaysians always impress Norwegians with our language skills!

Learn Norwegian

Speaking of languages, while many international companies use English as their business language, many still see the need for their employees to know a certain level of Norwegian. Most companies see this as a genuine interest on your part to learn what it takes to secure a good job. Being able to converse in Norwegian is also an added bonus when it comes to being socially engaged.

During the interview

Ok, so let's assume you've secured an interview. What should you say and what should you NOT say?

The rule of thumb is simply this: Be honest. Do not claim to know something you don't – instead, state that you are convinced you

are able to learn and master various skills. Be passionate and engaged, but not desperate. Have only positive things to say about your previous job, employer and work place. Norwegians love people with high work ethics – so state that too. Do not ask about salary unless you're asked. And if you are unsure of salary levels in Norway, state that you believe you will be paid fairly by the company. Always be prepared to provide referrals. State at the end of your interview that you hope the interviewer sees you as an honest and hardworking candidate.

After the interview

We know that the waiting period can be nerve-wrecking! We do not encourage you to call the interviewer/recruiting company but if you haven't heard after the period you were told a decision would be made within, perhaps dropping a mail asking for a status is not a bad idea. If you get the job, congratulations! But if you don't – don't fret! Take with you lessons from the interview(s) – the more interviews you attend, the more exposure you gain and remember: Practice makes Perfect!

Good luck!

NMA's visit to the Aker Solutions Engineerium, 9th June 2013



SzeYen, Erika, Kenny, Hari, Fiona & Uma



Aun Ming, Chean, Nigel, Alexandra, Edward & Swee Kian



The 1st batch that went up to the simulator



Our guide Mats clearly explaining the history of oil & gas in Norway & Aker Solutions.



Not bad coffee eh?



Per, Hari, Fadhilah & Hussein



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