

A day with physically challenged sailors

→ On Sunday 19 March 2023, The Nautical Institute Branch of Hong Kong organised a charity activity with Sailability, a charity organisation which engages with underrepresented section of society by giving them the chance to learn sailing and participate in world-class events.

This was a great way to combine a fun filled family sailing activity with charitable work. Our one day experience involved learning sailing with expert/professional para-sailors (sailors with disabilities) who have represented Hong Kong in sailing competitions around the world. All Branch members had the chance to join the event for free, as the Branch took care of all Sailability fees and charges. This was a very generous offer, allowing all of us to participate and be part of something special.

Enthusiastic members and their families woke up early on a usually lazy Sunday and headed to Hebe Yacht club in Sai Kung. There, we met with Sailability CEO Ms. Kate Rawbone and her team of volunteers, including boat operators, sailors, expert trainers and para-sailors.

We started with a half-day training session with para-sailors. Everyone got their own boat and trainer, and we learnt the skill of sailing, and got a chance to interact with para-sailors one on one. We could see the excitement of para-sailors and their sense

of achievement. In addition to learning to sail, we were able to learn from the para-sailors' experiences of under representation in society and facing daily difficulties. We also discussed what we could do to make things better for them and society as whole. The session ended with a great lunch in the yacht club.

The second half of the day was time to put the skills to test in competition! Laden with a heavy lunch, all participants headed to the race zone for a last minute briefing and strategy talk. In this race, even experienced Masters used to



Boat rigging

handling large merchant vessels were left behind by the youngsters. They won the race fair and square – a proud moment for their parents, we think! In the end, all participants not only enjoyed the sailing activity but also learnt about people with difficulties, becoming more aware of the problems they face, which we hope will enable us to be more helpful to others instead of avoiding them.

This activity also gave The Nautical Institute the chance to contribute to the Sailability charity for the upkeep of their vessels and other operating expenses. We hope they continue the good work with underrepresented persons in society.

All in all, a fun filled win-win day for the members and families of The Nautical Institute Hong Kong and Sailability.
Captain Vijendra Dogra



Together with instructors