

# SDG Solution Projects:

## Best Practices Impacting The Grassroots



Edited by James Ryan Raj and Paniirselvam Jayaraman



SOCIETY FOR PROMOTION OF  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS  
PPM-023-14-07012020



**APPGM-SDG**  
APPROVED BY THE 15TH MALAYSIAN PARLIAMENT

# **SDG**

## **SOLUTION PROJECTS:**

Best Practices  
Impacting The Grassroots

Published by

**Persatuan Promosi Matlamat Pembangunan Lestari**  
**(Society for Promotion of Sustainable Development Goals)**

A-1-10, 8 Avenue, Jalan Sungai Jernih 8/1  
46050 Petaling Jaya, Selangor

© Persatuan Promosi Matlamat Pembangunan Lestari  
(Society for Promotion of Sustainable Development Goals) 2023

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher.

The views and opinions expressed in this book are those of the author(s) and may not necessarily reflect those of the publisher. Maps obtained from Wikipedia unless noted otherwise.

ISBN: 978-629-97554-2-5

# CONTENT PAGE

	Page
<hr/>	
<b>FORWARD</b>	
<b>Professor Datuk Dr. Denison Jayasooria</b> Head of Secretariat, APPGM-SDG President, Society for Promotion of SDGs	1 - 3
<hr/>	
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	
<b>Mr. James Ryan Raj</b> Director, Constituency Coordination Unit, APPGM-SDG Secretariat	4 - 6
<hr/>	
<b>PART 1 : OVERVIEW OF SDG SOLUTION PROJECTS</b>	
1. Overview of SDG Solution Projects	7 - 17
2. SDG Solution Providers Empowerment Model	18 - 20
3. Impact Measurement	21 - 23
4. Lessons Learnt	24 - 28
<hr/>	
<b>PART 2 : CASE STUDIES SDG SOLUTION PROJECTS</b>	
<b>Economy</b>	
1. PJ Soup Kitchen: Reviving Hope for the B40 Communities in Desa Mentari	29 - 32
2. Women Entrepreneurs: Get up to Speed with Digital Marketing Workshops in Selayang	33 - 37
3. Orang Asli in Kelantan: Generating Income by Cultivating Mushrooms	38 - 42
4. Women in Selayang Baru: Breaking out of Poverty through Baking and Business	43 - 48
<hr/>	

---

5. Social Enterprise: The Story of Bites n' Beans Cafe	49 - 53
6. Emerging Women Leaders in Kg. Song-Song: Transforming the Community	54 - 59
7. Economic Centre in Taman Fajar, Libaran: Initiatives to Curb Unemployment amongst Sabahan Youths	60 - 64
8. Sharpening Iron to Forge a Better Future	65 - 68
9. Upskilling Paddy Farmers with Aquaponics-Hydroponics Skills for Better Income	69 - 72
10. Sewing Skills Training: A Gateway to Alleviate Poverty among Baling's Poor Communities	73 - 77
11. Residents in Sik: Working the Fertile Land for Better Income and Food Security	78 - 82
12. Rural Micro-Entrepreneurs in Pendang: Making a Mark through Business Mentorship Programmes	83 - 88
13. Chili Fertigation Project in Long Beyak, Selangau: New Crops and New Hopes	89 - 93
14. Upskilling Women in Temerloh through Baking, Sewing, and Agriculture for a Better Tomorrow	94 - 99
15. Equipping Women Artisans in Simunjan with Financial Literacy Workshops	100 - 105
16. Giving Youth a Reason to Stay: The Tubau Mobile Phone Repairing Programme	106 - 109

---

---

17. Shaping the Community in Simpang Renggam: Financial Independence through Micro-Enterprises	110 - 113
18. Community Livelihood Program to Alleviate Poverty among PPR Families in Lembah Pantai	114 - 119
19. Prosperity: A Prosperous Malaysia means Everyone gets to Experience Shared Prosperity	120 - 125

---

## **Social**

20. Good Practices in Community Development Starts with Open Dialogue: The Case of Pendang	126 - 131
21. English can be Fun! For Educators in Batang Sadong	132 - 136
22. Workshop on Gender-Based Violence: An Eye-opener for Villagers in Pensiangan, Sabah	137 - 141
23. Helping Students in PPR Lembah Subang Escape Poverty: One Book at a Time	142 - 147
24. Refugee Women Breaking Barriers by Learning Bahasa Malaysia	148 - 151
25. A Vigil against Drugs in Kubang Pasu	152 - 156
26. Understanding the Long-standing Predicaments of Communities in Ipoh Barat	157 - 162
27. New Innovative Gardening to Boost Income and Mental Health for Micro-Entrepreneurs in Kuala Selangor	163 - 167

---

---

28. “The Room”: Creating a Safe Space for Creativity to Blossom among Youth in Muar	168 - 172
29. Creating Awareness of Breast Cancer Among Rural Women in Tawau	173 - 177
30. People: Positioning People First when Implementing Solutions in Different Constituencies	178 - 182

---

**Environment**

31. Regenerating the Earth and Uplifting Orang Asli Communities through Organic Farming	183 - 187
32. Preserving the Tanjung Piai Biodiversity by Managing the Rampant Waste Problem	188 - 191
33. Kampung Kuala Fishermen: Cultivating Sustainable Skills through the Aqua Project	192 - 196
34. Youths in Pulau Teluk Renjuna: Reaping the Benefits of the Multipurpose Tree	197 - 201
35. Planet: There is No Better Time than Now to Safeguard Our Natural Assets	202 - 205

---

**PART 3 : DIRECTORY OF SOLUTION PROVIDERS** 206 - 210

---

**BEST PRACTICES IMPACTING THE GRASSROOTS**



# **FORWARD & INTRODUCTION**



## **LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND**

A gathered of the best recipes from the neighbours to build an inclusive community.



# FORWARD BY

**Head of Secretariat,  
APPGM-SDG**

**Professor Datuk  
Dr. Denison Jayasooria**



The All Party Parliamentary Group on Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) established in late October 2019 by the 14th Parliament has come a long way over the past three years between 2020 and 2022.

During this period a total of 294 SDG solution projects were approved by the APPGM-SDG committee. All these were undertaken in partnership with local partners in finding local solutions to issues and concerns identified during the field visits. The global goals has found a place through localising SDGs in Malaysia via a multi stakeholder engagement model of parliamentarians and government agencies with the active and dynamic support of grassroots communities, civil society and the academic community. Businesses with social and environment objectives are also partners in this process.

James Raj and Paniirselvam Jayaraman has attempted to capture the comprehensive nature of interventions as well as highlight the specific case studies that are divided thematically under the headings of *economic*, *social* and *environmental* micro projects at the grassroots level.

There is a clear illustration that local communities are able not only to identify what the local priorities are based on needs, issues and concerns, but also how best to address them.

It is amazing to read of the number of organisations playing a complementary role with the State in addressing local concerns. This is indeed the power of grassroots movements and their resilience to provide services for very small sums of grants channelled by the Ministry of Finance through the APPGM-SDG network.

The APPGM-SDG allocates small sums of grants such as RM20,000 to RM40,000 to undertake a micro SDG project over 3 to 5 months in the parliamentary constituency locations. The solutions team at the secretariat undertakes due diligence in the selection of micro projects. It also undertakes monthly monitoring and direct contact with the solution providers and at the end of the project, assigns an external evaluator to provide an independent evaluation and impact assessment report.

We do not just provide micro grants but we are building a movement of grassroots organisations and communities in undertaking an active role in localising SDGs. For global goals, it is the delivery and implementation that are most impactful. It is in making a direct difference in the lives of ordinary people.

This book is divided into two parts. Part One is an overview of all the SDG solution projects undertaken from 2020 to 2022 with an analysis, lessons learnt and impact measurement, including a description of the empowerment model.

In Part Two of this book, there are 35 stories of grassroots SDG projects divided under the three headings of *economic*, *social* and *environment*. Of these stories, 32 are individual stories of specific projects, 3 are thematic stories (prosperity, people and planet) and these are undertaken by 31 organisations.

The real stories describe the innovative approaches, for example, in income generation whether it is a bakery, community kitchen, or chili fertigation projects. These are grassroots prosperity initiatives. They are also cross-cutting among the 17 SDGs. It also impacts different target groups such as women, youths, and rural communities, including farmers and fishermen, ethnic minorities, and refugees.

This documentation is a tribute to the leaders of these community based micro-SDGs projects. They are the true champions of the localising of SDGs at the grassroots level. It is now our role to support these initiatives, expand their outreach, provide capacity building and ensure long-term sustainability and transformation for the communities.

I take this opportunity on behalf of the APPGM-SDG Secretariat to thank all those responsible for this publication. Thank you to all the 31 solution providers, and our deepest appreciation to Deborah Chan and Terence Ooi of Wiki Impact who were commissioned to write these 35 stories.

A special word of thanks to Zoel Ng and the communications team at the APPGM-SDG Secretariat for designing and publishing this work, and not forgetting James Ryan Raj and Paniirselvam Jayaraman as the editors for their desire to share these grassroots stories to a wider audience.



# INTRODUCTION BY

**Director,  
Constituency Coordination  
Unit, APPGM-SDG**

**James Ryan Raj**

Greetings to all readers. I am delighted to pen down the introduction for this inaugural publication on the impact stories of solution projects that the All Party Parliamentary Group on Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) implemented at the grassroots along with our solution providers.

This publication has two parts. Part One provides an overview of the solutions component that encompasses four sub-topics namely the SDG solution projects, the SDG solution partners empowerment model, the impact measurement, and the lessons learnt.

Part Two provides a description of amazing lives of individuals who have impacted individuals who lost hope but are now living their dreams! It will give readers a detailed understanding of the impact stories from the different regions in Malaysia. These exemplify the deserving communities who needed the support system to start all over again with new hopes and opportunities to build back better.

APPGM-SDG in the last 3 years undertook 294 solution projects with 132 solution providers in 57 parliamentary constituencies. The grassroots solution providers are very diversified, consisting of societies, universities, social enterprises, youth organisations, foundations, companies with limited profits, and cooperatives. They have one common agenda: to make a difference in the lives of disadvantaged communities.

This publication has captured 32 individual stories and 3 thematic stories that highlight namely *People*, *Planet*, and *Prosperity*. The impact and transformation of lives are not possible without the support of 31 solution partners who have joined hands with the APPGM-SDG, making a difference and impacting the lives of more than 875 beneficiaries.

The stories are divided into 3 SDG themes, which are *Economy* with 19 stories, *Social* with 11 stories, and *Environment* with 5 stories. These stories showcase women's empowerment, youths in action for change, farmers and fishermen who participate in alternative and modern farming as an alternative source of income, and innovative solutions for climate change.

The impact stories in this publication have documented many valuable lessons that can be replicated. The key lesson often repeated is *empowerment*. When people seek ways to empower others, they build caring and equitable relationships. This benefits everyone. It also creates a greater sense of belonging within a community and helps individuals discover their unique gifts and talents. This gives everyone a better chance to realize their potential.

Our dedicated solution providers are the core reason for the success of the projects implemented and they are also the mentors and coaches for these individuals that have attained social mobility.

It is our desire to impact many more lives that are not in the mainstream development. They need to be identified, trained and empowered to break free from the cycle of poverty. APPGM-SDG is committed to fulfil the global agenda along with Members of Parliament to localise the SDGs and ensure *no one is left behind*.

From the impact evaluation exercises conducted by the *Persatuan Sains Sosial Malaysia* (PSSM) headed by Professor Dato' Dr. Rashila Ramli and Professor Dr. Sity Daud, we have learnt good lessons from the projects drawn as impact stories and it has helped to further shape our methodology and strengthen the partnership and capacity of the solution providers.

Lastly, my sincere appreciation to Wiki Impact, the solution team, our grassroots champions, the APPGM-SDG Committee and above all Professor Datuk Dr. Denison who inspired the solution team to document and edit this book. Thank you all, happy reading and may this serve as a source of profound inspiration.

BEST PRACTICES IMPACTING THE GRASSROOTS



# PART 1:

## OVERVIEW OF SDG SOLUTION PROJECTS



### LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

A gathered of the best recipes from the neighbours to build an inclusive community.

# OVERVIEW: SDG SOLUTION PROJECT (2020-2022)

APPGM-SDG solution projects focuses on the inclusive development of vulnerable communities through monitoring, handholding and a special focus on sustainability. The duration of the projects range from 3 to 4 months and in that period, we commit the solution providers to adopt a strong delivery mechanism that drives the project deliverables towards sustainability, in line with SDGs.

The sustainable commitment to empower the target group is instilled among solution providers (SPs) in our very first project application briefing session. In preparing proposals for the SDG solution projects, SPs are required to indicate their sustainability plan with a specific focus on the commitment and engagement with participants, especially after the completion of the project. This mechanism is a vital element that ultimately contributes to our project success rate, which is at 100% for the past three years.

It is a mammoth task to curate, manage and complete the SDG solution projects that directly impact the issues mapped via our issue mapping process.

The process starts with the issues prioritisation with the Member of Parliament of a constituency. The selection of local solution providers is then done and an application briefing session will be conducted before the submission of project proposals. The submitted proposals will then be reviewed at four levels, starting with reviews by the research and solution staff, followed by reviews from two external field expert resource persons.



The proposals will also be further evaluated by the Directors in charge of the Constituency Coordination Unit as well as Finance. The final review and approval will be at the APPGM-SDG Committee. Upon approval, SPs will be required to include all concerns in their initial proposal and APPGM-SDG only accepts revised proposals incorporating all improvements from the reviews, for project implementation. This process ensures a sustainable solution is delivered by SPs to the targetted community.

From 2020-2022, we undertook a total of 294 projects from three categories, and targeted various communities and their needs. APPGM-SDG works in partnership with solution providers in managing all the projects. The following sections present the solution projects analyses based on various criteria.

### Project Categories

Our project can be categorized into three major categories as indicated in Table 1. A total of 199 projects (68%) are economic and related to income generation. 80 projects (27%) are social development projects and 5% or 15 projects are environmentally related. While this is a general classification of 294 projects, many of these projects are cross-cutting in nature and go beyond one category. Some of the projects are related to social and economic development, while others are income-generating based on environmental preservation.

**Table 1: Solution Projects Category**

Project Category	2020	2021	2022	Total	%
Economy	18	59	122	199	68
Social	14	23	43	80	27
Environment	2	5	8	15	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>100</b>

Source : APPGM-SDG (4 April 2023)

## Project Types

Out of these three categories, the solution projects can be divided into 11 project types serving communities from all walks of life, in line with the SDG theme “leaving no one behind”. These project types indicated the specialisation of each project that serves the special needs of each community and addresses the local issues.

Table 2 below, illustrates the list of project types based from the years 2020-2022 and the percentages. The highest percentage is economy or income generation based with 144 projects (49%). These involve the digitalisation of the income stream via digital marketing and a better financial ecosystem for entrepreneurs. Another important element is the capacity building of home-based women's businesses that empowers housewives to be certified home-based business owners.

Following income generation, is the skills development projects, with a total of 38 projects (12.9%). Skills-related projects are projects that impart knowledge such as handphone repair skills, air-cond repair, TVET, keris making, bakery, sewing and other industry skills that open opportunities for income creation or increase of existing income.

Education projects under the social category is also given importance with 28 projects that pursue children's empowerment. Education focuses on improving Bahasa Malaysia and English literacy among refugee children, teachers in rural schools, education programs in children's homes and the setup of community learning centres in rural localities. Youth skills are also covered under education projects.

Freshwater management is a project we have undertaken to help rural communities lead a better and healthy life. About 27 projects focus on freshwater supply and most of them are on gravity based water supply to rural villages through infrastructure to supply water and support retention ponds.

Digitalisation projects focus on empowering communities to be computer and digital App savvy, especially to use apps and social media in business for profit-making. 18 projects were undertaken to impart digitalisation knowledge among target participants.

Following digitalisation projects is the inter-agency dialogue, another unique project of APPGM-SDG, to solve community issues requiring the attention of government departments. Inter-agency dialogues are effective tools to tackle issues related to land rights, squatters, pollution and also settlements.

Apart from that, we have community learning centres that serve as local one-stop empowerment centres that conduct continuous activities in their neighbourhoods. In total, we have 10 successful community learning centres.

Other social development projects such as heritage, drug prevention, mindfulness and basic infrastructure development make up 18 projects in total and were undertaken based on local needs.

**Table 2: Solution Projects by Project Type**

Classification	2020	2021	2022	Total	%
Income Generation	15	48	81	144	49
Skills Development	5	6	27	38	12.9
Education	6	8	14	28	9.6
Fresh water, waste management & health	2	8	17	27	9.2
Digitalization	1	6	11	18	6.1
Inter-agency	3	6	2	11	3.8
Community Learning Center	0	2	8	10	3.4
Heritage	1	1	5	7	2.3
Drug Prevention	0	1	4	5	1.7
Mindfulness	0	0	3	3	1.0
Basic infra & amenities	1	1	1	3	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>100</b>

Source : APPGM-SDG (4 April 2023)

### Target Groups

The eleven types of solution project above was targeted to 13 target groups among the needy community. These target groups are diverse from urban and rural settings, various low-income levels and access to social inclusion. Table 3 below lists down the specific target group identified through solution projects from 2020-2022. Orang Asal Sabah and Sarawak, women and youth are the most empowered groups with each making up respectively 83 (28.3%), 67 (22.9%) and 46 (15.7%) projects covering more than 66% of the total target group. Villages and flat dwellers, especially the PPR community, are also given importance with 46 projects involving them.

Vulnerable farmers and fisherman communities with issues related to fisheries and farming industries have been targeted with a total of 22 projects. Not to forget also, the small traders who are onboarded onto platforms of digitalised business and also helping to create “tamu” or business centres in their localities with 9 projects working towards this initiative.

Apart from the groups above, Orang Asli is our distinct target group with 8 projects working towards improving their livelihood and to enable the creation of new and modern income. Refugees are also another “left out community” with long-lost hope and APPGM-SDG has 5 projects targeting their development in terms of literacy and communication among women and children.

As a way forward, we have also mapped issues related to people with disabilities (PWDs), ex- drug abusers and ex-prisoners and offered them a new sustainable life through 8 SDG solution projects.

**Table 3: Categories by Target Group**

Target Group	2020	2021	2022	Total	%
Orang Asal Sabah & Sarawak	4	15	64	83	28.3
Women	7	20	40	67	22.9
Youth	5	17	24	46	15.7
Villagers	5	11	8	24	7.8
PPR / Flat Dwellers	5	5	12	22	7.5
Fisherman	2	5	6	13	4.4
Farmers	1	5	3	9	3.1
Small traders	1	6	2	9	3.1
Orang Asli	3	1	4	8	2.7
Refugees	1	2	2	5	1.7
PWDs	0	0	4	4	1.4
AADK Clients	0	0	3	3	1
Ex-prisoners	0	0	1	1	0.4
Total	34	87	173	294	100

Source : APPGM-SDG (4 April 2023)

These project analyses highlight our commitment to empowering diverse communities with serious long term impacts and sustainability. Although the dynamic shows the immense role of managing and also monitoring the projects, both APPGM-SDG and our 132 solution providers are ready to share the load and face all the challenges to complete the uphill task. These 132 partners come from various neighbourhoods, registration categories and also localities. But all of them share one common value: the empowerment of local communities around them.

## Solution Providers

Table 4 below shows our solution partners by year and registration types. Organisations registered under the Registrar of Societies are the highest with 65 total partners, followed by 42 organisations registered under SSM and Social Enterprises. These SSM registered companies have very strong social empowerment motives in their operations and are committed towards community uplifting rather than profits.

Others are 7 universities that are working with us in transferring knowledge to the community through the projects. This is followed by six cooperatives and five youth organisations.

We are proud to have three JKKK rumah panjang and KRTs as our solution providers. This is followed by two foundations and MP/ADUN offices that have committed to delivering SDG-based inclusive solutions.

**Table 4:**  
**Solution Partners Numbers by Year and Registration Types**

Solution Partners	2020	2021	2022
ROS	12	41	65
SSM / Social Enterprises	2	19	42
Universities / UNU RCE	6	8	7
Cooperatives	0	4	6
ROY (Youth)	1	3	5
JKKK Rh / KRT	0	0	3
Foundations	4	1	2
MP / ADUN Office	0	2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>132</b>

Source : APPGM-SDG (4 April 2023)

These 132 solution providers (SPs) have delivered a total of 294 successful SDG solution projects and have created a lasting impact in the livelihood of the communities they have worked in. These community-based local organisations are the real catalyst of change in our empowerment work and APPGM-SDG, and thereby responsible for the elevation of their knowledge, skills and capacity.

The process of empowering the solution providers starts with our project monitoring mechanism in which the SPs are required to make slide presentations in monthly online monitoring meetings. This increases their communication, presentation skills and self-confidence. APPGM-SDG also conducts capacity building programs for solution providers from time to time to share knowledge on topics such as project management, SDGs, sustainability, project impact evaluation, gender perspectives and others.

These embody our commitment to empowering the solution providers and our aim is to create a butterfly effect that will enable them to use the acquired knowledge to empower more local communities.

### **Movements of the Solution Providers from 2020-2022**

Tracing back the years 2020-2022, in the effort to localise the SDGs, some key solution providers joined the APPGM-SDG in pursuing tirelessly to serve the marginalized communities. Table 5 illustrates the movements of the solution providers during the project period.



**Table 5: Movement of Solution Providers**

<b>Status / Year</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>		<b>2022</b>	
<b>New SP</b>	25	68		88	
<b>Continuation</b>	-	<i>Continue</i>	<i>Didnt Continue</i>	<i>Continue</i>	<i>Didnt Continue</i>
		10	15	44	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>74</b>		<b>132</b>	

Source : APPGM-SDG (4 April 2023)

In the first year of the 2020 cohort, 25 solution providers (SPs) began work with APPGM-SDG to undertake micro SDG projects in 10 parliamentary constituencies. The following year, APPGM-SDG had 68 new SPs and from the first year (2020), 10 SPs (40%) continued the projects to phase 2 while 15 SPs (60%) decided to discontinue. Solutions providers that had decided to not continue are due to the organizations' decision to fund the projects and monitor the developments independently. This is encouraged as the projects extended even after the SPs discontinued their journey with APPGM-SDG. The effort of localizing SDG hence persists.

In 2021, due to increased publicity, more SPs joined the mission to address local issues. Hence, we acquired 68 new solution providers with 10 SPs from 2020, and a total of 78 SPs undertook 87 micro SDG projects. The movement is amazing as APPGM-SDG gained the support and created partnerships with the local champions to make a difference in the lives of marginalized communities.

In 2022, a new scenario emerged. 44 SPs (56%) from 2021 continued in 2022, which was higher compared to 2020. But 34 SPs (44%) discontinued.

The reason for discontinuation is the same as described for the preceding year, where the projects continued with local organization funding and other sources of funding such as from foundations and Members of Parliament.

However, in 2022, APPGM-SDG had 88 new SPs, which is high compared to the number of 68 new SPs in 2021. Similarly, the number of SPs that continued in 2022 was high, with 44 SPs, and in total for 2022, 132 solution providers undertook 173 solution projects.

The movements of SPs from 2020 to 2022 have built the capacity of the SPs to understand the framework of SDGs to localize these goals.

They are committed to SDGs and have become the core of the grassroots movement in initiating change at the local level through continuous monitoring and handholding, and have created a network of active peoples movement on the ground to address local issues.

For the organizations that did not continue, APPGM-SDG aims to engage with these organizations to identify how best to involve them in SDG-related work, become resource persons and to mobilize the local neighbourhoods to steer the local communities towards social change.

# SDG SOLUTION PROVIDERS EMPOWERMENT MODEL

APPGM-SDG adopts a three tier solution provider empowerment model. These three tiers have been identified as the most sustainable method to develop organisations towards reaching sustainability and self-reliance. The solution provider enters this empowerment ecosystem as grant recipient, slowly moving to the second stage as solution partner and the third to SDG project owner. The pathway is listed in *Diagram 1*.

**Diagram 1: Three-Tier Diagram**



## Grant Recipients

APPGM-SDG identifies the solution provider at the locality of each parliamentary constituency and recruits them for project implementation. In this stage, solution providers will undergo conditioning in terms of briefing sessions, proposal preparation and proper project development that involves internal reviews and external expert evaluations. The conditioning that works as empowerment continues to the project monitoring stage where solution providers will present the activities and impacts of their projects. They will also be exposed to various capacity building activities throughout this process including SDG knowledge, impact measurement, gender mainstreaming, knowledge sharing among solution providers and many more. After the successful implementation of the project,

they will undergo an impact evaluation period that measures their full project effort. From the first to the last process, the solution provider gains the four tier impacts of confidence, skills, networks and systems.

## **Solution Partners**

Organisations will progress from being grant recipients to become solution partners with involvement in co-funding projects and sharing of expertise and resources. Many solution providers take years, at least a minimum of 2 years to reach this stage. This shift requires mindset change among them to pursue greater empowerment and engagement.

In APPGM-SDG, our solution providers that undergo phase one project will proceed to phase two of the project the following year with additional sharing of expertise and co-funding ability . With our continuous capacity building efforts and networking with external funders, foundations and government agencies, these organisations have greater ability to position themselves as future project owners.

## **SDG Project Owners**

SDG Project owners are organisations that have undertaken independent projects with external funders, worked together with government and corporate organisations and drive sustainable development independently to the next level. They are self-reliant organisations that conduct projects with greater sustainability and impact creation. They also elevate themselves as social enterprises or cooperatives, and become financially self-sustaining organisations.

Advancing solution providers that start from grant receipts to SDG project owners is the core business of APPGM-SDG in the agenda of localising SDGs. Sustainability among the community can be achieved when local organisations are able to elevate

position to be a national partner for community development programs with government and corporate organisations, and also to generate income for their sustainability via social enterprising.

**Solution providers movement**

Table one below describes the movement of solution providers from grant recipients to project owners. Out of 132 solution providers, 107 organisations are grant recipients and capacity building is ongoing to elevate their capabilities to further stages. 20 solution providers have become project partners by carrying out co-funding projects with APPGM-SDG, and other roles and responsibilities related to APPGM-SDG work such as participating as resource persons in our issue mapping visits to parliamentary constituencies and external resource persons for the review of solution project proposals. 5 partners have become project owners and receive funds for their projects from national organisations such as *Yayasan Hasanah* and bank foundations. They become independent in managing their projects with support from external organisations.

**Table 6: Solution Providers Movement**

Type	Grant Recipients	Project Partners	Project Owners
Solution Providers	107	20	5

Source: APPGM-SDG 2023

# IMPACT MEASUREMENT

Our projects, reaching 294 in the span of three years, has created high impacts. These impacts are measured through a tedious impact monitoring and evaluation process. The whole analysis of impact and evaluation is undertaken by an external team of researchers led by Professor Dato' Dr. Rashila Ramli from *Persatuan Sains Sosial Malaysia* (PSSM) and Professor Sity Daud from the *Institute of Malaysian and International Studies* (IKMAS, UKM).

## Evaluation Activities

Impact evaluation is done via 3 major activities:- project documents review (proposal & reports), ground visits to project sites, and the interview of participants.

## Project Review

The document analysis is the first step. It involves reading the project related documents such as proposals, monthly reports and final report. This will give a greater overview and insights to the researchers or evaluators of the project progress, details of target groups, methods of delivery, achieved outputs and outcomes and the desired impact.

## Project Visit

Project visit is the second level validation of the impact measured through desk research. This on-site visit provides greater understanding on the project delivery and provide opportunities for more questions and responses from the solution providers. At this stage, the evaluators are able to compare the deliverables promised in the proposal to the actual delivery on the ground, and the variables and possible alterations, if any.

## **Validation Process**

The third method serves as the ultimate validation of the whole project in the form of interview of participants. Project participants share their journey throughout the project implementation, their learning experiences, the empowerment attained, and outputs and outcomes gained.

## **Six domain evaluation model**

The impact evaluation model is adopted from MetaIntegral Group and has four domains of measurement. These four domains are deep (personal), clear (skills), wide (network) and high (system). These domains are combined with Gender & SDG goals, targets and indicators to measure SDG-based impact. The 4 domains are:-

- Deep (personal) impact measures behavioral change, knowledge gained, self awareness and satisfaction towards the program.
- Clear (skills) is straightforward and highlights the skills gained that have increased their performance.
- Wide (networks) measures the extent of relationship and networking engaged by the participants after the project implementation. Wide refers also to the support structure that the participants build for themselves that serve as psychosocial support mechanisms.
- High (system) refer to systems that participants engaged with such as registration of company, accounting systems, social media pages and more.

In addition to these four domains, project impact is also measured using the gender lens and in comparing to SDG Goals, targets and indicators. Gender and SDG domains are crucial for evaluation as most of our projects are gender sensitive, including the budgeting. SDG awareness is also a key measuring factor to identify the impact of the localising SDGs agenda.

These six domains of impact measurement methods provide us an in-depth view of the project impact on participants and the communities that they engaged. Impact evaluation conducted in 2020 and 2021 involving 121 projects will be published, to serve as a benchmark for all the community empowerment works in order to highlight the forms of best impact and values that can be measured.



# LESSONS FROM SDG SOLUTIONS PROJECTS AND GRASSROOTS MOBILISATION

## Lesson ①

### Organizing Local Communities to be Local Champions - The Bottom-up Approach

The APPGM-SDG takes an innovative and grounded approach to understand the heartbeat and needs of grassroots communities. It is the bottom-up approach that enables the APPGM-SDG along with the solution providers to identify the issues of communities. The outcome of the issues discussed with the communities will in turn move on to the following phase where localized solution projects will be implemented. This becomes the co-designed solutions, and the local communities with the solution providers will then manage the projects. It is a community-driven project.

To quote an example, in 2020, PPR Desa Mentari was one of the flats where many white flags were raised during the height of the pandemic. Many lost jobs, and loss of income due to the prolonged lockdown. MYPJ, the locally based solution provider with a group of women from the flats created an idea to help the affected families. They set up a soup kitchen program and started providing free meals to families in dire need.

Local women were hired to cook the meals, and the efforts became an initiative of the local women.

Meals were sponsored and the salaries of these women were also paid. This initiative has grown into a community kitchen where 10 women established a consortium of entrepreneurs, and started producing bakery and pastry products. Through this bottom-up approach, communities can be strategically assisted with some training, and handholding. Building confidence and self-worth and esteem helps produce local champions and other grassroots centered community leaders.

## Lesson **2**

### **Capacity Building of Local Champions to Address Local Issues**

To produce effective local champions, APPGM-SDG members have provided fund allocations to solution providers to carry out projects that can benefit the local community, including for them to participate in programs organized by solution providers. Solution partners will carry out several programs for the community after the issues obtained by APPGM-SDG researchers at the grassroots are highlighted. The program implemented by the solution providers will help the community to improve its resilience and skills. To quote another example of a local solution provider, the Gombak District Community Development Social Service Organization (PSPK) provided marketing skills workshops for women entrepreneurs from the B40 community. This workshop aimed at empowering digital marketing among B40 women, to help improve their skills in marketing their products. Therefore, in building the ability of these local champions, providing the community with training to develop their skills and confidence is important.

# Lesson **3**

## **Mobilising Women and Youth for Poverty Alleviation (Living in Dignity & Becoming Local Champions)**

Empowering women and youth requires teaching them skills they are keen to learn and explore. The experiences of APPGM-SDG shows that many women are keen to learn skills such as cake making, agriculture, or sewing businesses.

These skills have enabled the women and youth to generate better income, and to complement the household income. It not only increases the confidence, but also improves their lifestyle and livelihood. Through the 35 stories at the grassroots level in 2020 and 2021, we can see a clear example where 10 women and men from Selayang Baru participated in the bakery program sponsored by the All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG). Extremely noticeable is the setting up of a social enterprise called Bites and Beans Café, which is run by the 10 members in Selayang.

For the youth, in addition to empowering their economy through skills, the quality of education is vital for them to increase their knowledge and grow. This empowerment approach has better prepared women and the youth to face challenges during difficult times, and to give back to the community. This, in turn, has also positively impacted their lives because they have the opportunity to improve their economy and also their surrounding community members, and to ensure *no one is left behind*.

# Lesson **4**

## **Community Solutions - Long-Term Relationships & Trust Building Processes**

Building a strong partnership needs the building of a close working relationship with our partners. Trust building is another important value that has to be established to strengthen the cordial working relationship with our partners and with the local community.

From 2020 to 2022, we have established 132 strong local champions that are undertaking Micro SDG projects actively on the ground. To date, we have 145 projects ongoing actively and we have achieved 100% success on all our projects. This is simply because we have built trust among the partners and in turn, our partners have established the same strong bonding with the local communities.

It is a process and it takes time to build trust. It has to be genuine, trustworthy, and involve the willingness to immediately respond positively to challenges and shortfalls, together with painstaking handholding throughout the project's journey. This is a continuous journey to see our partners and the communities working together hand in hand to build a resilient community and nurturing the freedom to decide what is best for them. And this is done with dignity and respect.

# Lesson **5**

## **Role of Solution Partners as Catalysts and Enablers of Localising Sustainable Development**

Our Solution Partners are our local champions in localizing Sustainable Development Goals at the community level. They are the catalysts and enablers that bring change to the lives of marginalized communities. At APPGM-SDG, our providers are not only grant recipients but are the changemakers. We introduce capacity-building programs and connect them to both international and national organizations for continuous learning and to ensure they are efficient in the delivery of tasks in the field.

We are building a mass of community mobilizers that will propagate the aspiration of the global agenda, which is to ensure all human beings are treated with dignity and equality; be inclusive to ensure no community is left behind; respect women and give the rightful space and freedom to voice their concerns; to ensure the indigenous people are safeguarded without shutting their voices; to provide platforms for persons with disabilities to earn a decent income; and existence of job opportunities and skills development work for the marginalized youths both in the urban and rural areas.

All these initiatives are possible by empowering our solution partners and the local community leaders to take up the challenges and make a difference in the community that will, in turn, impact the nation through the whole-of-society approach in addressing the local issues and fulfilling the SDG theme of *leaving no one behind*.

BEST PRACTICES IMPACTING THE GRASSROOTS



# PART 2:

## CASE STUDIES OF SDG SOLUTION PROJECTS



### LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

A gathering of the best recipes from the neighbours to build an inclusive community.

**BEST PRACTICES IMPACTING THE GRASSROOTS**



# **ECONOMY**



## **LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND**

A gathering of the best recipes from the neighbours to build an inclusive community.

# 1

## **PJ Soup Kitchen: Reviving Hope for the B40 Community in Desa Mentari**

In the midst of the global pandemic, Malaysian women faced negative employment impacts. As lockdown restrictions were extended, many low-income households in Malaysia were forced to eat sparsely and some even had to go on empty stomachs as a result of job losses, pay cuts and the inability to work.

As a result of this dire situation, a solution to provide employment opportunities while supporting a soup kitchen for hungry stomachs was formulated.



Persatuan Penduduk Petaling Jaya 2017 (MYPJ) is an organisation that designs and runs programmes to help B40 communities in Petaling Jaya survive and thrive. Since 2017, MYPJ has extended their efforts to the Desa Mentari community; a low-cost housing area where many underprivileged families live. Some of their efforts to help poor communities include *gotong-royong*, painting projects, food aid distribution and a soup kitchen.



In 2020, MYPJ was selected by the All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) to simultaneously run a project with two components - a soup kitchen to feed the community's poor and an entrepreneurship programme for 10 women from Desa Mentari.

In addition to baking and selling cookies, their entrepreneurship programme serves as a social enterprise to ensure that their soup kitchens remain financially viable. The projects came at an opportune time as the nation struggled economically during the pandemic, and so did the poor. Malaysia recorded an increase in the poverty rate from 5.6% in 2019 to 8.4% in 2020.

*The residents (at Desa Mentari) prioritise their spending and try to live by what they have on a daily basis. They have no capacity to deal with economic shocks.*

- Jeffry Cheah, MYPJ Chairman



The team at APPGM-SDG and Jeffry Cheah, MYPJ's Chairman, formulated the entrepreneurship programme with the aim of providing economic opportunities for the B40 community - namely women and single mothers who could not work outside their household duties.

With a budget of RM20,000 given to MYPJ, the entrepreneurship programme ran for a period of 30 days. Throughout the programme, the team at APPGM-SDG provided support and consultation to MYPJ to ensure that the program and soup kitchen ran successfully.

The course was formulated to deliver wholesome content that could help women gain additional skills and knowledge that are income-generating.

### **Long-Term Solutions Required to Lift People from Poverty**

By providing avenues for an entrepreneurship program, the women of Desa Mentari now have practical steps to break free from the poverty cycle.

10 women from Desa Mentari were selected to participate in the entrepreneurship programme that included baking and selling cookies, an intensive food preparation training course, kitchen renovation, menu designing, preparation of an e-commerce platform and sales promotion to start the business.

*We've been baking for two years, and the income has helped the B40 women here.*



*- Jeddah, a participant in the entrepreneurship programme and soup kitchen chef*

### **Paving the Way to Climb the Social Mobility Ladder**

Every day, the women would work around the clock. Profits gained from cookie sales are divided fairly among the bakers, contributed toward the soup kitchen, and a portion of it is reinvested into the business.

Tity, a mother of three and participant of the programme who operates a roadside stall with her husband, found it hard to survive during the pandemic. The additional knowledge and skills gained from the programme helped her tide through the tough times. Today, some women have success stories to tell.

*This project has been beneficial for my family and the community. During the pandemic, we cooked and served over 500 meals for the community for two months. During Hari Raya, we (the participants) worked hard to bake and sell cookies, generating profits for our families.*

- Tity, a participant in the entrepreneurship programme and soup kitchen chef

For the past 5 years, MYPJ has gone above and beyond, successfully juggling the needs of the impoverished and paving a better way for B40 communities.

Efforts such as these have altered the future of B40 women. With the additional support of other organisations akin to APPGM-SDG and volunteers, more women from low-income families have the means to thrive and create long-term, financially stable income streams.



#### **SOURCES:**

- 1.JCI Malaysia. (2020). Persatuan Penduduk Petaling Jaya. Link.
- 2.Free Malaysia Today. (2021). Poverty rate shoots up to 8.4% in 2020. Link.

# 2

## Women Entrepreneurs: Get up to Speed with Digital Marketing Workshops in Selayang

Having a small business is one of the most effective ways for a household to rise out of socioeconomic poverty. It is possible for entrepreneurs to improve their incomes while also creating new employment opportunities for other low-income households.

In fostering entrepreneurship and providing the community with the right tools to ensure more sustainable income for the community, a strategy that looks beyond one-off aids is needed.



*There should be increased support for individuals in marginalized communities to upskill and find new opportunities in order to make a living. The focus should be on building sustainable income for the marginalized and making communities self-reliant.*

- Raymond Dinesh Gabriel is the Co-founder and Executive Director of People Systems Consultancy

The recent pandemic posed a challenge as many struggled to stay afloat in the midst of multiple lockdowns. This accelerated the need for entrepreneurs to ride the wave and adapt to new methods of running businesses.

The incidence of absolute poverty rate in Gombak, the federal constituency of Selayang is at 0.4%. A considerably low rate compared to other districts in Selangor but being a semi-urban area, there are pockets of community that have been overlooked.

These are the women entrepreneurs who face great limitations in growing their businesses due to their lack of knowledge and skills. Women business owners in Selayang still rely on conventional ways of running their businesses; selling at the wholesale market, *Pasar Malam* or even through door-to-door sales.

With the boom of e-commerce marketing and the pandemic that has insinuated social distancing, it is time for SMEs in Selayang to transition into new methods of promoting their products.

*During the first MCO, 30% of those in business (SMEs) survived but with the introduction of digital marketing, we found the number of businesses grew.*

- Datin Goh Suet Lan, President of Women of Will (WoW)



## Finding a Solution to the Problem

But efforts are needed to dig deeper into the issue that persists and what is required to remedy it. The All Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) committee, along with the chosen solution provider, Pertubuhan Perkhidmatan Sosial dan Pembangunan Komuniti Daerah Gombak, Selangor (PSPK), sat down

with the beneficiaries; women entrepreneurs from the B40 community in Selayang to design an upskilling programme.

PSPK has served as the pulse of the Selayang community providing empowerment programmes. With the involvement of APPGM-SDG, the digital marketing workshops were tailored to the needs of the women entrepreneurs.

The entrepreneurs include home cooks and bakers, some are already selling their products online but require a boost in marketing. Some are also tailors who need help in illustration and design.





## The Unflinching Determination to Learn

The programme attracted 10 interested women entrepreneurs who were eager learners. However, the programme faced a few hiccups due to the participants' educational backgrounds.

Most of them hold a high school certificate and have a limited grasp of the English language. Some struggled to understand the concept of digital marketing and the terminologies used.

But, this is where the determination of the participants shone. Throughout the eight sessions across two months, the participants diligently studied the related terminologies and those who were quick to learn helped their friends too.

The women carry the same dream - that is their need to improve themselves and their family's socioeconomic status.

## Success is on the Horizon

What is more valuable than the increased profit generated is the changes observed in the 10 participants.

*Digital marketing has empowered women to rise above all odds during the pandemic and has been able to market their local products. Through the workshops, our participants have generated good income.*

- APPGM-SDG team



They have grown from strength to strength and have better confidence in transforming their small enterprises, taking them to the next level.

*They are women who want to forget their past, have the desire to wake up to improve their self-image, rise from life's hardships, dream of their own business empire and a career and want to lead a more independent life.*

- Dr Indriaty Ismail, lecturer at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

*In order to achieve success for themselves and their families, they need to become stronger, develop themselves, and overcome their fears.*

- Dr Indriaty Ismail, lecturer at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Only after being equipped with relevant skills can the 10 women step out of their comfort zone and improve their businesses. Empowering women who are mothers in the community is one step closer to ensuring a better younger generation.

*We must remember that as mothers, we are teachers to the younger generation. We cannot do this if we do not have skills, knowledge and experience.*

- Saliya Samidi, participants of a Mothers Day event organised by PSPK

#### **SOURCES:**

- 1.Astro Awani. (2021). RMK-12: Look beyond temporary financial relief for B40 communities. [Link](#)
- 2.Department of Statistics Malaysia. (2020). Household Income And Basic Amenities Survey Report By State And Administrative District : Selangor. [Link](#)
- 3.R.Loheswar. (2021). As MCO continues, B40 women entrepreneurs struggle to maintain online businesses. Malay Mail. [Link](#)
- 4.G.Chen. (2022). Mums want the best for children. The Star. [Link](#)



# 3

## Orang Asli in Kelantan Generating Income by Cultivating Mushrooms

Mushrooms are a popular delicious, nutritious and medicinal vegetable, used widely in many cuisines. From stir fry to pizza toppings, mushrooms have also become the go-to alternative to meat for plant-based eaters.



Extensive research and trials have proven that mushroom cultivation is highly favoured. These edible fungi grow at an exceptional rate in comparison to other crops. It is proven in several countries including China, Tibet, Bangladesh and Rwanda that harvesting mushrooms have helped with poverty alleviation, providing additional income for impoverished and low-income families.

Similarly, the Orang Asli community in Malaysia are in need of an income generation programme. Many of them live in poverty and a mushroom program could improve their quality of life through income generation.

Additionally, rampant deforestation and issues of land grabbing are indeed the Orang Asli's biggest worry as their livelihoods will be affected.

In November 2020, the All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) saw a need to provide a long-term solution for the Orang Asli community.

APPGM-SDG collaborated with Jabatan Kemajuan Orang Asli (JAKOA), Majlis Pengurusan Komuniti Orang Asli Kampung Sunga Rual, Jeli in Kelantan in collaboration with Institut Penyelidikan dan Pengurusan Kemiskinan (InsPek), Universiti Malaysia Kelantan on a mushroom cultivation project, which showed success.

The aim was to educate and empower five Orang Asli with the skills and knowledge needed to set up a space to cultivate oyster mushrooms, harvest, pack and eventually sell them to generate alternative income. The total project budget was RM30,000 for a period of 6 months.



### **Making Money from Mushrooms**

In 2019, Kelantan recorded a 12.4% poverty rate, coming in second to Sabah. Implementing the mushroom project in Kelantan is a means to improve the poverty rate at hand.

According to research, mushrooms can be cultivated and harvested within two weeks. The fast-growing crop is also incredibly versatile as it can be grown all year round in a controlled environment.

Dr Noorhafizoh Saidan, a senior lecturer from UMK oversaw the project and played an integral role in the research, planning and execution of the project.

*Mushrooms have been selected for this project because they have a shorter time to get results, hence generating income quicker for the participants. Mushrooms are also easy to monitor.*

- Dr Noorhafizoh Saidan

If done well, this ‘miracle’ crop has the potential to provide income-generating opportunities for farmers. The success of the fungi harvest is determined by two major factors; a controlled temperature of below 30 degrees Celsius and a sufficiently damp and moist environment.

With Kelantan’s tropical climate throughout the year, the mushroom project had a high chance of success. Like most crops, compost is essential for healthy growth. For mushrooms, wheat straw and straw-bedded horse manure are the most used and least expensive materials required. This makes for very low capital investment for the Orang Asli.

Aside from gaining an alternative income from the harvest, mushrooms are a healthy addition to their household meals as it is packed with iron and calcium. Potentially, these fringe benefits from one single crop can improve the livelihood and health of Orang Asli.

## Multiplier Effect from Mushroom Planting

Once the mushrooms are ready for harvest, farmers pack them and sell them at the local pasar tani (farmer's market). The five Orang Asli were able to earn between RM300 to RM500 per month, per person. This is a two-fold increase from their original earnings.

The mushrooms were sold for RM10 to RM12 per kilogram and it only takes the farmers half a day of work, while the rest of the day can be spent working in the field or at sea. Most of the five Orang Asli men had families to care for and any additional income is an added bonus.

*This project increased my skill and knowledge. It's a very good project that can be continued in future.*



- Supian bin Langsat, an Orang Asli participant

According to Dr Noorhafizoh, this initiative has the potential to provide the skill and knowledge for those willing to learn. She also emphasized the importance of hard work to ensure the Orang Asli communities reap what they sow. She is confident that the project can be replicated in more Orang Asli communities.

## Empowering Orang Asli to Thrive

The success of this project should welcome more organisations to get involved in aiding the Orang Asli community.

*The mushroom project has cultivated much interest in the young people from the Orang Asli community though they were skeptical and not keen at first. With the persistence of the solution provider, InsPek, and with APPGM-SDG's continuous support and monitoring, we now see the project has galvanised more support now in young people.*

- APPGM-SDG team

Although the Orang Asli may be cash-poor, they are very much self-sufficient. Their ability to live off the forest and survive minimally is a testament to their resilience.

However, times are changing and the next generation of Orang Asli need to be empowered to not only survive but thrive. Rampant deforestation and issues of land grabbing are indeed one of their biggest worry as it affects their livelihoods.

As Malaysia continues to progress into a developed nation, we must not forget the first peoples' of the land. No Orang Asli should be left behind.



#### **SOURCES:**

1. Borgen Project. (2020). *Mushroom Farming Combats Global Poverty*. [Link](#).
2. The International Work Group For Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA). (2020). *Indigenous World 2020: Malaysia*. [Link](#).
3. Facts and Details. (2019). *Semang(Negritos), Senoi, Temiar, and Orang Asli of Malaysia*. [Link](#).
4. S.L.Wong. (2020). *Orang Asli And Poverty*. [Link](#).
5. V.Tan. (2019). *Malaysia's indigenous tribes fight for ancestral land and rights in a modern world*. [Channel News Asia](#). [Link](#).
6. MalaysiaKini. (2020). *Sabah and Kelantan record the highest poverty rates*. [Link](#).
7. The Vibes. (2020). *Year after year, the budget overlooks Orang Asli*. [Link](#).



# 4

## **Women in Selayang Baru: Breaking out of Poverty through Baking and Business**

The smell of buttery pastries, decadent cakes and aromatic coffee is what draws you to a good bakery. In Malaysia - there is no shortage of bakeries because they are the perfect stopover for a quick bite or for food on the go. Since bread and pastries are eaten all year round and are a staple for many families, there is always a demand for one more bakery in any township or community.



With their profit-making opportunities, bakeries are also a good incubator to train new bakers and give them skill sets to earn a living.

## Capacity Building and Training for Success

In 2020, 10 women from low-income families living in Selayang Baru families needed an avenue to break out of poverty. As they were from the Bottom 40%(B40) of the Malaysian household income category, a platform with invested capital was needed.

Realising their needs, the All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SGD) together with the Association of Social Services and Community Development of Gombak (PSPK) organised an income generation programme.

The women committed to a 12-day programme where they were taught baking and coffee-making skills, self-development essentials and entrepreneurship principles. Knowledge experts from organisations such as Coffee For Good, Global Entrepreneurship Movement Association (GEMA) and HRDF collaborated on this kick-starter module to introduce these women to the world of baking and business.

The selected participants were aged 18 to 29 years old and two of them are survivors of domestic violence. Being selected for this program was a golden opportunity in hopes of a better life.

*I was one of 10 youths selected for skills training funded by the All Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG). I learnt business, marketing, promotions and customer service relations. When the training was over, we set up this cafe with help from the association (PSPK).*

*- Madhura Rajenderan, 25, participant*



## Why are such Initiatives needed?

In 2019, the country's poverty rate rose to 8.4% while 580,000 households that were previously in the M40 category moved down to the B40 category. Alongside the socio-demographic decline is the rise of unemployment where 649,000 Malaysians remained unemployed in the fourth quarter of 2021.

The urgency and need to alleviate poverty in our developing nation is still a pressing issue. Urban poverty in places such as Selayang Baru is unhidden and sustainable solutions such as employment could be the break.

On 16 September 2021, Bites n' Beans Cafe in Jalan Besar, Selayang Baru welcomed its first customers. The cosy cafe is open daily, serving an assortment of fresh baked goods including bread, cakes, tarts and their famous Penang Roti Bengali. The cafe also serves hot meals and coffee for those looking for a sit-down meal.



## Business opens at Bites n' Beans Cafe

After the women completed the training, PSPK fundraised to set up a community cafe as a physical avenue for these women to put into practice the knowledge and skills learned.

*We realised that many underprivileged folks were given training but had no avenue to practice their newly learnt skills. Hence, Bite n Beans cafe was set up. Our objective is that we want to have a sustainable income generation for women and youngsters from B40 families who are living in urban poverty.*

- R. Keerthana, Assistant Executive Director at PSPK



## Slow and Steady Success

Aruna, a programme participant and fellow baker at Bites n' Beans, recalls her darkest days while being financially strapped.

*I come from a poor family and my life was filled with a lot of hardships. My husband was unemployed and I have four children. During those difficult days, we did not have anything to eat or a place to stay. I had no money. I found happiness after finding this PSPK centre. I have food, a place to stay, and a job at the bakery. I feel at ease.*

- I. Aruna, Participant and Baker



As confident bakers, the women spend a lot of time at the cafe rolling out dough and serving customers. They earn a steady income based on the cafe's profits and the number of work hours.

These women have developed a professional and personal bond from working together and from their similar shared experiences. Coming from low-income backgrounds, these women have an undeterred motivation to see success and better days.

*The women who come here benefit in so many ways. We don't see each other as people of different races. We work as a group.*

- S.Sawithiri, Baker

## **Uplift Families by Employing Women**

The women of Bites n' Beans Cafe have reshaped the identities of single mothers and women from disadvantaged backgrounds through their newfound success.

But the reality is that we live in a country where single mothers are on the rise with data pointing to approximately 235,240 single mothers (1.7% of the total population) in Malaysia. At the height of the pandemic, low-income female-led households experienced great economic vulnerability with an unemployment rate of 32%.

The challenges faced by low-income women with children to support are plenty, hence the need to provide sustainable, long term solutions is necessary to ensure that they not only survive but thrive.

Flexibility and innovative solutions are also necessary because these women often do not fit the mould of nine-to-five office work as they need to tend to their children and they may not have the required educational qualifications.

The success of this program should encourage and inspire more organisations to think long term, think creatively and think emphatically to uplift people from poverty and change the course of their future.

Bites n' Beans Cafe is open from 9am to 9pm everyday of the week except for Tuesdays. Drop by for a hot meal or grab some pastries, bread or cake on the go if you're around the Selayang Baru Area.



#### **SOURCES:**

1. Malay Mail. (2021). 580,000 M40 households fall into B40 category, absolute poverty rises to 8.4 pc, says PM. [Link](#).
2. Department Of Statistics Malaysia. (2020). Principal Statistics of Labour Force, Malaysia, Second Quarter (Q2) 2021. [Link](#).
3. New Straits Times (2021). Rising Number Of Single Mothers A Big Concern. [Link](#).
4. UNICEF. (2020). Families on the Edge: Low-income families need continued support to recover from the effects of COVID-19. [Link](#).

# 5

## Social Enterprise: The Story of Bites n' Beans Cafe

In Malaysia, a bakery is found in almost every nook and cranny of every city. The demand for baked goods tells us that bakeries are profit-making avenues and potential outlets for budding entrepreneurs. Understanding the market demand, Pertubuhan Perkhidmatan Sosial Dan Pembangunan Komuniti Daerah Gombak Selangor (PSPK), a local NGO, established “Bites n’ Beans Cafe” in 2021. The cafe provides job opportunities to underprivileged communities from Selayang Baru.



In 2020, the All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) funded an upskilling programme for 10 women from low-income households to be trained in baking and entrepreneurial skills. Shortly after the training, some of them started working at the cafe and earning an income.

*We realised that many underprivileged folks were given training but had no avenue to practice their newly learnt skills. Hence, Bites n' Beans cafe was set up. Our objective is that we want to have a sustainable income generation for women and youngsters from B40 families who are living in urban poverty.*

- R. Keerthana, Assistant Executive Director at PSPK



Riding on the previous success, PSPK and APPGM-SDG once again collaborated to ensure sustained changes were evident in the Selayang community.

### **Spurring More Changes in Selayang Baru**

The B40 community struggled to secure high-paying jobs and many settled for low-skill jobs providing meagre income for their households. One of the solutions for uplifting the community is to provide skills training that could elevate their household income.

*The only way for social mobility to take place is through education, skills training and better job placements.*

- Prof Datuk Dr Denison Jayasooria, Head of APPGM-SDG Secretariat



Understanding the crucial role of skills training and motivated by the success of previous skills training programmes, skills for self-employment programmes were launched with baking at the forefront.

Baking is best suited to this programme as it is a skill that inexperienced participants can forge and perfect over time. With a budget of RM21,200 provided by APPGM-SDG, the skills for self-employment programme ran for four months. The selected participants were 8 women and 2 men from Selayang Baru, all within the age range of 18 to 59 years old.

The goal of the programme was to foster productive employment and sustainable livelihood. To achieve those goals, the programme sought to motivate participants to earn a dignified living for themselves and their households.

The self-employment programme was designed as a hands-on training allowing participants to dive right into the skills of baking and learning on the go.

Furthermore, the simulated work environment prepared participants for their prospective baking careers, giving them a glimpse of the entrepreneurship realm. Aside from baking, participants were also taught how to serve customers, cafe setup as well as management and operation.

Learning additional skills not only improved their self-esteem but also helped in identifying their talent.



*Participants are able to practice the learned skills. It is important to experience the real work and identify the entrepreneurial challenges while gaining insight that enables them to grow their self-esteem, instils hard work and makes them responsible in decision making.*

- R.Keerthana, PSPK Executive Director





## Removing the Training Wheels

Equipped with the necessary skills, the participants were directed to the Bites n' Beans Cafe, for real-world experience. Every day, the participants-turned-bakers will bake various bread, cakes, tarts and Penang Roti Bengali. Aside from baked goods, their menu also consists of appetizing hot meals.

To date, three participants are furthering their tertiary education after gaining entrepreneurial experience at the café. The job opportunities at Bites n' Beans Cafe allowed them to save up to continue their education into tertiary studies.

As for 27-year-old Muhammad Khairi Bin Jamaludin, the skills he learned from the self-employment programme have led him to better opportunities in the hospitality industry. Currently, Khairi is working at the EQ Kuala Lumpur Hotel located a few metres away from KLCC.

As for the other participants, they remain at Bites n' Beans Cafe in the production and management sectors.

*I come from a poor family and my life was filled with a lot of hardships. My husband was unemployed and I have four children. During those difficult days, we did not have anything to eat or a place to stay. I had no money. I found happiness after finding this PSPK centre. I have food, a place to stay, and a job at the bakery. I feel at ease.*

- I. Aruna, Participant and Baker



## Breaking Free from Poverty Together

With financial security, families living in poverty are able to break free from the dire situations that once engulfed them. From affording a simple meal to paying for their education, lives are being impacted within the Selayang Baru community.

The B40 community of Selayang Baru were united in work, determined to improve their lives and the lives of their neighbours.

*The main highlight of this project is being able to foster a more cohesive team. Through this project, we were able to engage different people from various backgrounds.*

- R.Keerthana, PSPK Executive Director

For two consecutive years, the skills for self-employment programme have transformed lives and families through skills and knowledge development.

To better serve low-income communities, APPGM-SDG continues to develop strong partnerships with on-ground solution providers who can provide the right and effective long-term solution in helping households break the poverty cycle.





# 6

## Emerging Women Leaders in Kg. Song-Song: Transforming the Community

The village of Song-Song lies in the constituency of Kota Belud and continues to be trapped in generational poverty. Due to its remoteness, downtrodden roads and lack of proper infrastructure, Kg. Song-Song continues to lag behind.



There are 460 villagers in Kg. Song-Song and the main source of income come from fisheries and farming activities. Some breadwinners have migrated to cities and nearby towns to get better income to sustain their families - leaving women to care for the children. Many of the women who are left behind rely solely on their spouse's income and in the long run, this can be risky as they do not have any financial safety nets such as savings or emergency funds.

It is known that women in rural areas have a lower workforce participation rate than those in urban areas, similar to the villagers in Kg. Song-Song. Barriers to women in rural areas achieving economic freedom include low educational attainment and the traditional emphasis on men as breadwinners.

The women in Kg Song-Song also face a lack of opportunities to uplift themselves in the village as the majority of capacity-building opportunities are often conducted in larger towns such as Kota Belud, Kota Marudu and Kota Kinabalu.

### **Maximising the Potential of Women**

The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) conducted a community dialogue with the villagers at Kg. Song-Song. Findings from the dialogue revealed that the women desired to do more aside from managing the home.

The women expressed interest in learning new skills for additional income and personal development. They also wanted a physical space to congregate and get together as a community.

Seeing the untapped potential in the women, Reef Check Malaysia, a local NGO that had existing projects in Kota Belud was selected to form a working committee to train the women at Kg. Song-Song.

In addition, a Community Learning Centre (CLC) was built, and it became the hub where women gathered, and training and meetings were held.

## Emerging Women Leaders

The first step was to form 'Pertubuhan Wanita Kampung Song-Song, Kota Belud' abbreviated as 'WANIS', a working group to facilitate discussions and improve cooperation and cohesion among the women in the village.

In order to establish a strong foundation, leaders needed to be selected and trained. 10 women were handpicked to be part of the committee. They attended six leadership courses and were expected to serve as leaders to spearhead future activities and programmes for women in their village.

*As a committee member of WANIS, I am honoured to share my knowledge with the womenfolk in Kg. Song-Song.*

- Puan Jailan Binti Preeh,  
committee member of WANIS

## Skills Development and Entrepreneurship

A majority of women and girls in Kg. Song-Song did not complete their schooling due to their families' low-income status. One way to empower them is to provide them with skills they can use to start their own home or community-based businesses.

With this in mind, three different workshops were conducted to harness their skills.

The first workshop conducted was making different types of handicrafts using daun serdang. The workshop was requested by 20 participants and daun serdang is a resource easily found in Kg. Song-Song.

The 6-day workshop was conducted by one of the committee members of WANIS, Puan Jailan Binti Preeh, allowing her to gain experience in training the local community.

The handicrafts made out of daun serdang have opened up a new horizon and income stream for the community.

*Five women who joined the handicraft course have been receiving bulk orders of their product, Kotak Serdang. So far, they have sold more than 200 pieces of Kotak Serdang.* ✨

- Nadhirah Mohd Rifai, programme coordinator from Reef Check Malaysia

Following the first workshop, the other two workshops conducted were gardening and food handling. Women in the community were briefed on the necessary qualifications and conditions required to handle food in the food handling workshop. Participants received food handling certificates in hope that they'll be able to venture into the food industry in the future.

### **Women Role Models for the Next Generation**

*There were many things that I have learnt from the workshops that I have attended; from sewing to organisational and management skills. We have also managed to build a place where we can learn for the use of the village community.* ✨

- Puan Salinah Binti Bakri, Chairman of WANIS

The programmes run by Reef Check Malaysia have spurred the women in Kg. Song-Song to lead and initiate new economic activities such as the Kotak Serdang project which opened up new employment opportunities.

*Women's involvement in leadership can be seen clearly in the community when women actively participate in the community's economic activities.* ✨

- Datuk Joniston Bangkuai, Sabah Assistant Tourism, Culture, and Environment Minister



Empowering women also means providing strong women role models to the younger generation in Kg. Song-Song. Their sons and daughters are falling behind in education due to the distance they have to travel to attend school. Women who were part of the online workshops struggled to participate fully due to limited Internet access. But with women banding together in Kg. Song-Song, their collective efforts may provide a better future for their children and the surrounding community.

*APPGM-SDG in all its approach encourages active women's participation in decision-making and become key agents as changemakers. If women are empowered the immediate domino effect is their families, community and consequently, the nation will be transformed.*

- APPGM-SDG team



The existing infrastructural issues however may require the involvement of local authorities and cannot be solved overnight. But the programmes in Kg Song-Song are the start of something bigger to come. And it requires all hands on deck by different stakeholders.



#### **SOURCES:**

1. Khazanah Research Institute. (2018). *The Malaysian Workforce: A Changing Landscape*. [Link](#)
2. N. R. N. M. Masdek. (2015). *Empowering of Rural Women in the Agriculture Community through Women Development*. [Link](#)
3. M. Vanar. (2022). *NGOs should come up with programmes to empower rural women, says Bangkuai*. *The Star*. [Link](#)





## **Economic Centre in Taman Fajar, Libaran**

### **Initiatives to Curb Unemployment Amongst Sabahan Youths**

Pasar Tamu is a traditional weekly open market commonly found in East Malaysia, where hawkers and farmers sell their goods. The weekly market consists of small businesses run by the community, such as single mothers looking for flexible work time and youth who are looking for side income. In the federal constituency of Libaran, farmers and fishermen see the marketplace as an avenue to sell their produce.



In Libaran, businesses from clustered towns have limited designated spaces for small businesses to sell. During the pandemic, their conventional method of running businesses by selling to their friends and families has been affected.

Many in their position may have shifted to online mediums but most residents in Libaran are far removed from the entrepreneurship workshops that could enhance their digital marketing skills or upgrade their commerce.

### **Young Adults in Libaran have No Career Options**

Although the constituency of Libaran, Sandakan is 35 times bigger than the capital of Sabah, Kota Kinabalu, its population is much smaller at a size of more than 50,941. The district of Sandakan has grown over the years. But the villages and satellite towns have struggled to catch up, relying on their catch-of-the-day or monthly harvests.

Upon the consultation of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) with Libaran's Member of Parliament, Datuk Hj Zakaria bin Mohd Edris, along with the NGOs who have engaged closely with the residents in Libaran, a quick mapping of the issue took place. The discussion highlights the need for solid support required by single mothers and unemployed youths in the area.

The youth in Libaran faced retrenchment during the pandemic as many have been part of the hospitality sector. Sabah recorded a spike in unemployment during the two-year pandemic from 5.8% in 2018 to 9% in 2021.

Some have also been persuaded by their parents to take over the family farm and are thus heavily involved in unpaid family work.

***It is either they stay here with me and work under the sun as a fisherman, or go to the city to get an office job. I want them to have a comfortable job.***

*- Hazik Abdullah, a fisherman in Libaran*



Amongst the youth are also young single mothers feeling the brunt of the pandemic double-fold. Single mothers in Libaran have often relied on the help provided by local NGOs, an unsustainable solution.

At the same time, villagers in Kg. Jaya Bakti, Kg. Sungai Manila, Sungai Kapor, Kitagas and Kg. Ulu Dusun has lamented the need for new economic opportunities and the establishment of a marketplace or Pasar Tamu nearer to their settlements for their businesses.

Taking into consideration the issues persisting in the area, the APPGM-SDG and the chosen local NGO, Mimbar Permuafakatan Ibubapa Malaysia (MAPIM), decided to provide entrepreneurship training and open-air space for youth in Libaran to start or continue their existing business.

### **Developing Microentrepreneurs with New Income Streams**

With a focus on uplifting the youth community in Libaran, the Taman Fajar Small Economic Centre or the Pusat Ekonomi Kecil Taman Fajar came to fruition.



The 20 participants (four of whom were single mothers) attended a course for improving entrepreneurship skills via video calls.

This course includes launching e-commerce sites, providing tips and tricks on running a business and teaching them to create business plans to ease the application process for business loans and available financial assistance for SMEs.

The next step in the plan was to set up stalls at Taman Fajar's parking lot. However, the process of securing the site took longer than expected following uncertainties stemming from the pandemic. Ten participants dropped out of the programme due to the long wait.

Eventually, in April 2022, 10 participants set up their stalls at the Taman Fajar parking area, selling assortments of products from food and beverages to handicrafts. The remaining 10 participants have decided to settle their businesses on online platforms.

*The four single mothers participants we had aged between 30-40 years old are more committed to the programme. Those who are younger, from 18-29 years old, are keener on running an online business.*

*- Fringsco Wayne, programme coordinator*

The market currently runs on Friday, Saturday and Sunday every week, and has been a helping hand to vendors who prefer traditional methods of running their business even though the income has been unsteady.

*The income vendors earn is unsteady for now. Sometimes they get more than enough. Some days, it's low.*

*- Helestina John Wayne, 31 years old, participant*

Despite the unsteady gain, Helestina John Wayne, a participant currently running her stall at the economic centre, has expressed her gratitude for the increased knowledge and increased income.

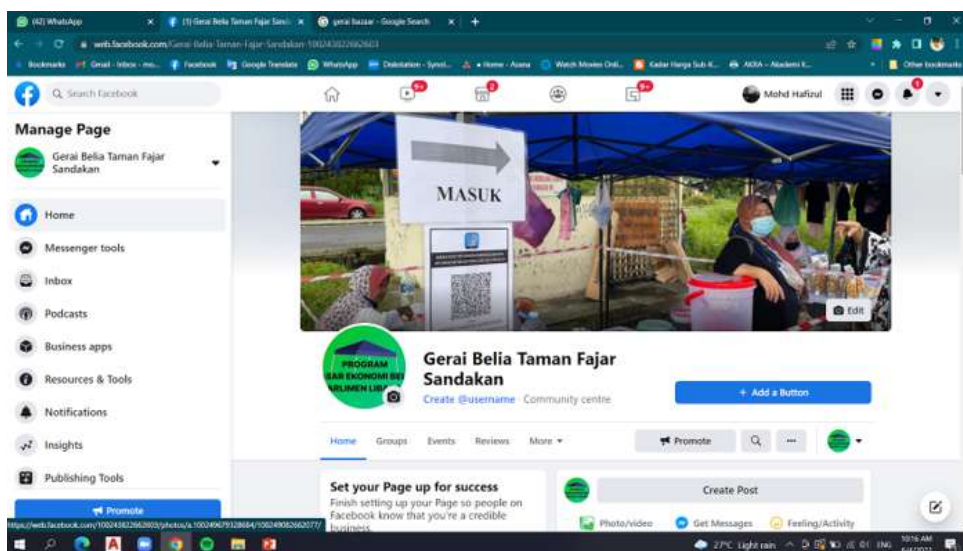
*Since joining this programme, my customers have increased through the media advertisements shared by MAPIM. At the same time, the market has been helpful to vendors like me - it has helped me to sell my products.*

- Helestina John Wayne, 31 years old, participant

The solution provider, Mimbar Permuafakatan Ibu bapa Malaysia (MAPIM), sees that with budding entrepreneurs such as the youth, the emphasis should be on fortifying digital marketing and utilising online platforms in the future.

The entrepreneurship and economic centre at Taman Fajar run by APGGM-SDG and MAPIM is just the start. There have to be more economic opportunities for Libaran residents.

Youth in the programme have also expressed the need for more training and opportunities to empower them. However, with the youth's thirst for knowledge and to improve their family livelihoods, Libaran is in safe hands.



#### SOURCES:

- 1.R.Chong. (2022). Libaran's malaise: cry for infrastructure, employment amid spectre of racial politics. *The Vibes*. Link
- 2.The Borneo Post. (2022). Unemployment rate worrying in Sabah. Link

# 8

## Sharpening Iron to Forge A Better Future

Over the last few years, Kelantan has frequently been on the list of Malaysia's poorest states. In 2019, the state came in as the second poorest with a poverty rate of 12.4%. Additionally, a World Bank report listed Kelantan as one of four Malaysian states with the lowest average income in 2020.

Among Kelantan's poorest districts is Pasir Mas due to its limited infrastructure.



***Basically, infrastructure problems including the lack of clean water supply and roads are the main factors in rural areas.***

***- R. Sivarasa, former Deputy Rural Development Minister***

Unfortunately, poverty has been a driving factor of crime among poor communities. These communities resort to crime as an initial saving grace. For instance, selling drug supplies to earn extra cash.

### **Iron Works Mentor-Mentee Project Takes Off**

However, all hope is not lost as there are local organisations that continue to uplift and improve the lives of poor communities.

In 2021, The All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) collaborated with the Pusat Khidmat Ahli Parlimen Pasir Mas to launch an Iron Works Mentor-Mentee Project.

Optimistic that the people of Pasir Mas can lead better lives, the APPGM-SDG supported the project with a funding of RM 25,000. The Iron Works project took place at Kg. Jejulok, Pasir Mas that ran from September to December 2021.

The organisers and trainers focused on transforming 15 participants from being engulfed by poverty into confident and skilled blacksmiths.

The Iron Works project encourages and shapes young talent to pursue a career in the industry and keeps its legacy alive.

Over the months of learning, participants were involved in hands-on learning, the most effective method to forge a blacksmith's talent.

During the initial stages of the project, participants were introduced to an assortment of iron types and metal materials. They were also taught ways to forge such materials into a keris - the iconic dagger synonymous with Malay culture, and knives.

Other crucial lessons included maintaining heat levels, identifying materials that could be forged into weapons, operating a grinder machine, and learning how to use a steel hammer and how to sheathe.



### Forging Lifelong Skills

A blacksmith forges metal such as iron or steel to create different objects and in Malaysia, the blacksmith industry is an artisanal craft that holds tremendous potential for allowing one to make a living off of it.

This long-lasting craft industry has seen generations of blacksmiths for at least 30 years or so. Unfortunately, these crafts are slowly dying out as the interest to pursue other career routes increases.

### Intense Learning Bears Fruit

Aside from developing new skills, participants received daily remunerations. Those who committed their time and effort during the project received an allowance of RM50 per day.

Their garnered skill sets were also put into use as they forged their own products. They were equally inspired to become blacksmiths when they saw how a single keris was easily sold for a profit of RM700.

What further impacted the participants was learning the history of the crafts made - the keris, badik, golok and pedang. These allowed them to appreciate their crafts and instilled a sense of curiosity along the way.



*This project opened my mind about blacksmiths and how they were able to make a living through their skills.*

*- Participant in the Iron Works Mentor-Mentee Project*



## **Reviving the Craftsmanship of Artisanal Blacksmiths**

The Iron Works Mentor-Mentee Project is a perfect example of how a dying industry has been revived to help the poor community of Pasir Mas.

Additionally, the participants are passionate about in-depth learning of the industry. To make their hopes a reality, they are hoping that government bodies will realise their passion and talent, and will provide learning opportunities in other countries.

This is also a call for more organisations to support budding blacksmiths and similar programs to alleviate poverty among local communities.



### **SOURCES:**

1. Geraldine, A. (2020). Sabah ranks as Malaysia's poorest state, again. [Link](#).
2. Sanghi, A., & Sharifuddin, S. (2022). Malaysia Economic Monitor. [Link](#).
3. Salleh, H. (2022). The slippery slope from poverty to drugs in Kelantan. [Link](#).

# 9

## Upskilling Paddy Farmers with Aquaponics-Hydroponics Skills for Better Income

Rice is the staple food of many Malaysian households. Malaysians consume rice-based food on a daily basis in the form of cooked rice or indirectly in the form of rice flour. We are able to enjoy the simple pleasures of rice because of our local paddy farmers who work tirelessly in the field to plant and harvest paddy. Their hard work leaves us with the convenience of simply purchasing and cooking raw rice.



Unfortunately, these farmers and their work are prone to several problems, often facing the risk of low yields and periodic harvests. Other challenges, include weather uncertainty and increases in the costs of fertilisers and agrochemicals for crops.



The challenges they face often result in a loss of income, making it especially hard for paddy farmers who have families to look after.

As such, paddy farmers are in need of different avenues to generate a steady and consistent income.

### **Paddy Farmers Setting Up for Success**

In an effort to increase the income of paddy farmers and improve their livelihoods, The All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) joined forces with Think City Sdn Bhd.

Together, they created a programme for the Permatang Pauh paddy farmers to potentially increase their income. With funding of RM40,000, the programme introduced the aquaponics-hydroponics system of agriculture to enhance income generation.

*The objective of the programme was to deliver knowledge and skills related to aquaponics-hydroponics farming. The farmers underwent hands-on training on these technologies.*

- Karthigayan Gunasegaran, Project Manager

An aquaponics-hydroponics system is a form of modern agricultural farming that converts wastes from fish to produce cash crops. At the same time, it also converts the toxic compounds in the water into nontoxic compounds before recirculating the water back into fish culture tanks.

For three months from 20 September 2021 to 20 December 2021, the programme reached out to 20 local paddy farmers, along with 20 local youths who could potentially leverage the new system of farming. It was held at the Edu-Green Centre, Padang Cempedak in Penang.

## Success Requires Sacrifice

Bringing a program to life and ensuring its effectiveness requires prior learning. To maximise the income generation programme, core lessons were divided into five modules, where they spent an hour minimum per module.

The five modules consisted of an introduction to aquaponics-hydroponics and its environment- economic/business advantage and a vertical approach to building an aquaponics-hydroponics structure.

Afterwards, practical hands-on lessons included the setup of vertical aquaponics-hydroponics with a double income stream, as well as the operation and maintenance of aquaponics-hydroponic systems. There was also an assessment at the end of the program where participants were questioned about theories learnt in previous lessons.

## Yielding a Bright Future for Local Paddy Farmers

Post-programme, the participants were inspired to implement several methods and learnings that were introduced. Based on a survey conducted by the organisers, 100% of the participants felt that the programme could help them increase their income.



*I learnt new ideas and am very keen to try them. - Participant*

After implementing the aquaponics-hydroponics system, they also noticed a few improvements including an increase in crop yield which in return increased the farmers' income.

The paddy farmers were also able to conserve water and spend less time managing crops that were also less prone to disease and pest attacks.

### Ensuring Our Local Farmers are Equipped

Rice production in Malaysia is viable, economical and sustainable. With that being said, local paddy farmers have to be properly equipped in order to produce quality grains.

Aside from producing quality rice, it is crucial to improve their quality of life. This can be done by providing avenues for an increase in income generation.

In order for this to become a reality, local organizations and government bodies must step up and act on the concerns of local paddy farmers.



#### SOURCES:

- 1.Khazanah Research Institute. (2019). *The Status Of Paddy And Rice Industry In Malaysia*.Link.
- 2.Mok, O. Penang CM announces RM500 aid for 5,262 paddy farmers. Link.

# 10

## Sewing Skills Training: A Gateway to Alleviate Poverty among Baling's Poor Communities

By the year 2025, Malaysia aims to be a high-income nation. States like Kedah have yet to reach economic success. In 2019, Baling, a district in Kedah recorded an absolute poverty rate of 17.9%.



*Despite our mission to enable each part of Malaysia to be equally developed and as wealthy as the Klang Valley, the reality is that we have a long way to go.*

*- Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Economy)*

Weak human capital development, lower economic growth rates, and limited structural change are just some factors hindering such states from growth. The population in Baling, including women, rely on agricultural means to earn a living. A majority of them are rubber tappers and farmers who earn small and inconsistent incomes depending on the yield and harvest. Some

women work in factories to supplement their households' income. The rest are homemakers, in need of skills to fill their time, or help their families.

### **Tapping into Time and Talent**

Eager to help uplift the local community in Baling, the All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) collaborated with Ana CB Enterprise to formulate a sewing skills training programme.

Although regarded as a simple skill, APPGM-SDG realised how impactful such a skill truly is. Other than acquiring a new skill, sewing is also a platform for income generation, where participants can successfully grow their sewing business.

Globally and locally, a surprising number of low-income communities turn to sewing to improve their livelihood. It's a chosen skill because sewing is easy to learn, does not require expensive equipment and can be done from home.

The training programme was held at Ana CB Enterprise's sewing centre where the participants learned many sewing techniques including types of stitches, measurement techniques and drawing patterns. The aim was to provide participants with adequate skills to offer sewing services to customers looking for a tailor or seamstress.

Previously, the first phase of the programme saw a number of 70 participants. However, only 10 women were selected to proceed to the second phase. The 10 participants varied in their expertise, some were amateurs eager to learn and others joined to improve their existing sewing skills.



In 2021, the same programme was repeated and 30 participants were recruited. They were eager to learn, especially after good reviews from the first batch of women. Most if not all of the participants shared similar views that the depth of training provided was extensive and bountiful.

*After attending the first class, the training was quick to teach me a solid foundation about sewing, which most definitely expanded my knowledge about this skill.*

- Siti Sarah Binti Hashim, participant

Additionally, age was no barrier to those wishing to learn a new skill.



*Despite my old age, I still wanted to learn. Now, I'm able to sew and make my own clothes.* - Zai Man, participant

But the sewing skills training did more than teach them the ins and outs of sewing. It also boosted their confidence and gave participants a possible avenue to begin earning some extra income.

### **Stitching and Striving for Better Income**

To Zuriati Binti Dan, a housewife, sewing was an existing skill. But as poverty crept in and turned her life upside down, she limited herself to only sewing for her family members despite having the skills to do more.

*Before, I didn't have the courage to sew clothes [for] other customers aside from my family. But since attending Ana CB Enterprise's training, I had the courage to sew the clothes [for] my friends and neighbours. As a result, I am able to generate a steady income which helps my family.*

- Zuriati Binti Dan, participant

For others, sewing was a completely new venture. 36-year-old housewife and mother of two Nurul Akmaniza Bt Mohd Kamal admits that she had no prior knowledge about sewing. Today, however, she attributes the tailoring success to the training provided by ANA CB Enterprise.

*The skills taught were easy to grasp and understand, allowing me to practice those skills one month after I attended the training.* - Nurul Akmaniza Binti Mohd Kamal, Baling sewing skills training participant

Each day, the 30 participants would sew a minimum of two garments. From those garments, participants were able to sell them and make between RM25-RM45 daily.

*The passion for empowering local women in entrepreneurship is visible in the solution provider, Ana CB. The phenomenal commitment has enabled local women to unleash their talents in sewing and that has changed their lives and alleviated their income.*

- APPGM-SDG team

As they progressed, participants were challenged to take on more. One particular week, the participants received an unusual order for 2000 pieces of palazzo pants. The sale of the pants increased their income by 200%.



## Harmonious Patchworks Alleviating Poverty

Going a step further, Ana CB Enterprise identified participants who showed promising talent and interest in sewing. The handpicked participants were sent to join free weekly sewing courses at the Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER) community college to further improve their skills. Some even received grants to set up their own sewing businesses.

Many of these women long to ease the financial burdens often placed upon the shoulders of their spouses. For single mothers, it's the perfect way to be self-reliant. Most of all, these participants seek financial independence as a tailor, a housewife, and as a woman.

Although sewing is often regarded as a domestic skill, it can also be a beacon of hope and a source of income for many households. Being inclusive and empowering low-income communities in smaller districts is one of the ways Malaysia can develop into a high-income nation that is not plagued with inequality.



### SOURCES:

1. The Malaysian Reserve. (2022). East Malaysian states, Kedah, Perlis still have higher poverty level. [Link](#).
2. Department of Statistics Malaysia. (2019). Household Income And Basic Amenities Survey Report. [Link](#).



# 11

## Residents in Sik: Working the Fertile Land for Better Income and Food Security

The federal constituency of Sik is one of the poorest areas in Malaysia. The district recorded a 7.6% absolute poverty rate in 2019. The population constitutes a majority of generational rubber tappers struggling to stay afloat due to the plunging rubber market price and the increasing threat of climate change. Some rubber tappers have to resort to other means of income, such as foraging for bamboo and banana leaves to supplement their income.



*Besides selling bamboo for lemang, I also look for lerek leaves and banana leaves that are also among the necessary ingredients for making lemang if there is a customer's request. - Mohd Ridzuan Mad Jab, 52, a rubber tapper in Sik, Kedah* ✨

At the same time, the youth of Sik suffer from unemployment, and the district sees an outward migration of capable youngsters to their neighbouring cities and states, such as Pulau Pinang. However, those who stayed behind fell into the poverty trap by continuing their parents' work as rubber tappers.

## Turning Fertile Land into Gold

Many villagers in Sik own land but do not have the financial resources to prepare the land for planting crops. The area is also known for sustainable paddy farming, and one of its trailblazers is Sri Lovely Organic Farm. Evidently, since rice is a staple in Malaysia, the harvest is always in demand.

Realising the economic opportunity, the committee of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) and Ahmad Tarmizi Sulaiman, Sik's Member of Parliament came together to discuss the potential for agriculture and community empowerment. Accounting for the pioneering work done by Sri Lovely Organic Farm, a plan was put in place to create income-generating avenues through organic paddy planting.

*We see that (organic paddy) farming gives lucrative returns, with low water usage and minimal use of paddy seeds compared with conventional agriculture methods.*

*- Dato' Haji Che Abdullah bin Mat Nawir, former Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Food Industries*

Only 8% of the nation's fertile land is used for food production. At the same time, the residents of Sik who hold ownership of their lands are yet to witness the transformational power of sowing the seeds.

## Farming for the Future

The district of Sik has faced water shortages in the past, making traditional agriculture methods impossible. Recent years have also seen droughts, heavy rainfall and flash floods. The effects of these turbulences have been damaging - both on the crops and the livelihoods of rubber tappers.

*Long rainy seasons affect rubber tappers' income, making it difficult for them to earn a living.*

*- Ahmad Tarmizi Sulaiman, Sik Member Of Parliament*

With foreknowledge of unpredictable weather that affects rubber tapping activities, the committee at APPGM-SDG advised Sri Lovely Organic Farm to explore alternative income streams; one such method is by showcasing the potential paddy farms have among the participants.

A series of workshops on sustainable organic farming was conducted for 15 youths between the age of 18-30 years old. The workshops, include planting vegetables for residents' daily consumption and reframing agriculture as a possible income stream for youths living in Sik.



*It taught us how to live healthily and independently, especially with the rising cost of living.*

*- Workshop participant*

Even though participants may not fully devote their time to planting paddy, the knowledge to grow vegetables at home would also provide better food security for the residents.

*I know how to select and improve soil and also how to make compost and plant boosters. At the same time, we learnt how to identify pests and ways to ensure our crops won't be eaten by them.*

- Workshop participant

Starting with just 15 youths, a new passion for planting unfolded. Many of them were excited to put their green fingers to practice. Some even promised to pass the knowledge forward.

*I will do my best to practise organic farming methods and promote sustainable integrated agriculture to the public so that organic farming methods can continue to be expanded. I'll try to teach others in my neighbourhood about organic farming too!*

- Workshop participant



## The Grass is Greener in Sik

The MP of Sik, Ahmad Tarmizi Sulaiman, who is also the chairman of Lembaga Kemajuan Pertanian Muda (MADA), has bigger plans in mind for Sik and Kedah's agricultural landscape.

*We have a target to achieve 75% productivity of rice, maybe in the future, we can reduce rice imports to the country.* ✨

- Ahmad Tarmizi Sulaiman, Sik Member Of Parliament

Malaysia currently produces enough rice for only 70% of the population. Malaysia is still reliant on imported rice at 30% and the state of Kedah is looking to boost rice production in Malaysia to 75%.

But, with the active role of different agencies such as MADA and the solution provider, it is possible that Kedah will helm organic paddy and vegetable farming soon. Not only would it secure food production in Malaysia but most importantly allow one of the poorest districts in Malaysia to put healthy food on their table.

### SOURCES:

1. Department of Statistics Malaysia (2019). Household Income and Basic Amenities Survey Report By State And Administrative District: Kedah. [Link](#)
2. N.Abdul Rahman. (2022). Buluh lejang rezeki alternatif penoreh getah menjelang Aidilfitri. Berita Harian. [Link](#)
3. New Straits Times. (2020). Call for grads to venture into organic padi farming. [Link](#)
4. P.Subramaniam. (2021). Cover Story: Fintech for farmers. The Edge Markets. [Link](#)
5. M.R.Abdul Hamid. (2022). Naikkan harga getah, kawal getah sintetik. Kosmo. [Link](#)
6. N.Abdul Rahman. (2020). Ahmad Tarmizi Pengerusi MADA yang baharu. My Metro. [Link](#)
7. A.M. Zulkifli (2021) Farmers struggle in the 'rice bowl of Malaysia'. Malaysia Now. [Link](#)
8. T. Nair (2022) A Closer Look: Food Security. FMT. [Link](#)



# 12

## Rural Micro-Entrepreneurs in Pendang: Making a Mark through Business Mentorship Programmes

In 2021, there were 1,226,494 micro-small-medium enterprises (MSMEs) accounting for 97.4% of the total business establishments in Malaysia. Out of all these, microenterprises are facing the largest boom and in 2021, 78.6% are microenterprises - businesses with five or fewer employees and a sales turnover of no more than RM300,000 annually.



Especially in rural areas, micro-enterprises need additional government support and external opportunities for upskilling in order to succeed. Rural micro-entrepreneurs in Pendang, Kedah. rural micro-entrepreneurs in Pendang, Kedah are no exception.

With the increasing competition in the market and lower barriers to enter digital marketing, micro-enterprises have new opportunities of increasing their revenue.

*Entrepreneurs are encouraged to attend training and digital skills improvement programs to ensure that the products they market attract attention. In fact, switching to digital marketing is now the new norm in business.*



- Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid, *Rural Development Minister*

## **Understanding Pendang**

In 2018, the poverty rate in Pendang was recorded at 8.1% of the absolute poverty incidence. The constituency is roughly 20km away from the capital city of Kedah, Alor Setar, yet it has trailed behind in the state's development plan.

Despite this, there is a potential for Pendang to triumph in entrepreneurship as neighbouring districts develop. Recognising the potential, the All Party Parliamentary Group for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) consulted the micro-entrepreneurs in Kampung Linchan, Pendang and identified the skills that are required to be honed amongst the community.

Through the solution provider, Muliabudi Consulting, 10 microentrepreneurs from different industries including services and livestock were selected. Over three months, the micro-entrepreneurs sharpened their skills and knowledge in running a business, either conventionally or on digital platforms.

## The Depth of the Problems for Rural Micro-Entrepreneurs

Being a rural micro-entrepreneur, the businesses in Kampung Lincan operate with limited resources, market accessibility, management and understanding of marketing. Thus, these limitations led to low productivity and performance. Some of the problems observed by the solution

provider, include a shallow understanding of bookkeeping best practices.



*There are participants who do not want to record their sales because they do not want their profit and loss and their purchases to be known.*

- Fadzil Hussin, Kampung Lincan Community Business programme coordinator

Some enterprises lack the marketing knowledge to give their products an online presence.

*There is also a lack of knowledge of marketing among micro-entrepreneurs. Without it, it is difficult for them to find new customers.*

- Fadzil Hussin, Kampung Lincan Community Business programme coordinator



Some of the micro-entrepreneurs also lacked confidence with their products.

*Some lack confidence in their products. Some products are too niche for the market.* ✨

- Fadzil Hussin, Kampung Lincan Community Business programme coordinator

But with the patience and guiding hands of mentors, the 10 micro-entrepreneurs are slowly learning how to manage their small businesses. At the same time, the solution provider emphasised the importance of managing their finances to ensure their businesses take off.

*If entrepreneurs manage money wisely, their dream to expand their businesses will only be brighter.* ✨

- Fadzil Hussin, Kampung Lincan Community Business programme coordinator

## **A Story of Growth**

One of the stellar achievers of the community business program is 27 year old, Siti Fairus Binti Mad Noor, who is also the youngest participant. Siti Fairus started by selling traditional apam balik in front of her house. But after the training and coaching provided, she courageously opened up a kiosk in Pendang town.

*After I joined the community business programme run by APPGM-SDG and MuliaBudi Consulting, I gained more knowledge and innovated new flavours for my product.* ✨

- Siti Fairus Binti Mad Noor, 27, participant

Fairus is now selling different flavours of her apam balik, including Red Velvet and Pandan. Within a few months of selling, Siti Fairus gained an increase in profits.

*Back then, when I was selling apam balik in front of my house, I earned RM700 per month. But after the training and coaching, I applied the knowledge and my monthly income has increased to over RM3,000 per month.*

- Siti Fairus Binti Mad Noor, 27, participant



### **Mentoring to Build Business Momentum**

*The whole mentoring experience is positive, even though there were times when the coach has to prepare the micro-entrepreneur to be challenged. We want them to create change, to commit and for their businesses to move forward.*

- Fadzil Hussin, Kampung Lincan Community Business programme coordinator

Managing a business and taking it to the next level is no easy feat for budding micro-entrepreneurs such as Fairus and other participants of the Kampung Lincan Community Business programme. However, the guidance of a mentor who continually challenges and steadies the micro-entrepreneur helps to prepare them to chart new success in the business.

For rural micro-entrepreneurs, the change in mindset is just as important to inject confidence and motivation. Workshops such as the one in Pendang not only improved Fairus' monthly income but it has given her a glimpse of her potential to continue to develop as an entrepreneur. For rural micro-entrepreneurs, opportunities for upskilling, reskilling and having a mentor are limited, and more are needed to guide them.



#### **SOURCES:**

1. SME Corp Malaysia. (2021). *Profile of MSMEs in 2016-2021*. [Link](#)
2. Hassan, F., Ramli, A., & Desa, N.M. (2014). Rural women entrepreneurs: What drives their success? *International Journal of Business and Management*. 9(4), (10).
3. Berita Harian. (2022). *Usahawan luar bandar perlu kuasai kemahiran digital - Mahdzir*. [Link](#)
4. Department of Statistics. (2019). *Household income & Basic Amenities Survey Report: Kedah*. [Link](#)

# 13

## Chilli Fertigation Project in Long Beyak, Selangau: New Crops and New Hopes

Located in the district of Sibul, Selangau is marked by development with the progressing Pan-Borneo highway. The constituency recorded a 14.3% absolute poverty rate, higher than the state-wide level of 9%. The alarming findings necessitate changes to catapult the lives of rural dwellers.



As the neighbouring Sibul city thrives as one of the economic contributors in Sarawak, the constituency of Selangau has trailed behind, relying on agricultural means for survival. Furthermore, the lack of proper infrastructures such as adequate schools and good roads has slowed the growth in this rural area.

*Due to the geographical position of Selangau which is too far inland, it is still difficult to get electricity supply (rural electricity supply) and roads.*

- Baru Bian, Selangau Member of Parliament

With only a sizable population attending secondary education, the largely Iban community devotes their time to toiling in the field. The promising career forward would be to follow the traditional trait through enhancing their farming techniques to reap profitable crops.

### **Harnessing The Rural Dwellers Existing Skills**

The journey to the Long Beyak settlement in Selangau requires travelling on unpaved oil palm plantations and logging roads. But, that did not deter the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) committee from going to the ground.

Many from Long Beyak are skilled farmers utilising the land for their crops. With the threats of climate change affecting the livelihood of the farmers, a new solution is necessary to safeguard the yield and income of farmers.

In response to a discussion between the APPGM-SDG committee and key stakeholders, it was identified that the key to alleviating poverty is to help farmers move towards modern farming techniques.

The chilli fertigation project run by Syarikat Naga Selangau and the local Jawatankuasa Keselamatan dan Kemajuan Kampung (JKKK) was brought in. In fertigation, the chilli plants are grown in polybags, and water and fertiliser are injected into the bags at specific intervals during the growing process. The results include - better quality crops, higher yield and pesticide-free crops as the plants do not come in contact with the ground soil.

## The Fruits of the Community's Labour

The community in Long Beyak, Selangau, should be commended for their active involvement and enthusiastic show of interest. The project's initial target of 30 participants was exceeded with 41 participants completing the project from start to finish.

Over three months, the participants learnt how to cultivate chilli on the cleared site and to tackle issues that arose while planting.

Thony Ekam, a 38-year-old participant, shared that he only relied on one crop per harvest and had to hunt to earn more money previously.

*In the past, we only depended on one agricultural product, that is, rice planting in a nomadic way. Sometimes we collect forest produce or hunt. With this old method, our income is uncertain. This modern chilli planting program allowed us to generate continuous income.*

- Thony Ekam, 38, participant



As a whole, the enterprise made notable profits from the increase in the chilli harvest. These profits were shared accordingly.

*From the first day of harvesting chilli until today, they have produced as much as 80kgs of chilli. They make RM20 per kilo and have earned as much as RM1,600 over the duration of three months.*

- Simon Anak Joseph, Special Officer of Selangau MP

To Thony Ekam, his venture into the chilli fertigation programme has done wonders for his household income. Now, he can allocate some money for savings and start planning for a better future.



*We no longer need to grow crops on a random basis anymore. With a constant income stream, it is easier for us to plan our daily and monthly expenses and save money if there is a surplus.*

- Thony Ekam, 38, participant

*To ensure the delivery and channelling of accurate information and knowledge to the participants, we used the services of an interpreter that we hired especially for this project.*

- Simon Anak Joseph, Special Officer of Selangau MP

But, the chilli fertigation project had its hiccups. The Long Beyak settlement had some issues with the electricity and water supply needed to cultivate the chilli crops. Syarikat Naga Selangau installed solar panels and brought water pumps to solve the problem.

There were also language and education barriers shrouding participants' understanding. To overcome this problem, the team at Syarikat Naga Selangau solicited the help of an Iban-language interpreter.

The project's success lies in the adaptive and creative solution provided by both APPGM-SDG and Syarikat Naga Selangau resulting in participants showing their interest in harvesting chillies in the long run. Some even hope for capital in the form of “loans” or grants to launch their chill fertigation projects.





## Selangau Moving from Surviving to Thriving

The chilli fertigation project in Long Beyak, Selangau is a move to impactful changes for rural dwellers. Farmers such as Thorny managed to upskill and transitioned to modern farming techniques for better income and yield. The project in Selangau is a testament that understanding the needs and strengths of the community is key to spurring changes.

*The project is historic as it has reached the furthest community in Sarawak and truly lives to the ethos of leaving no one behind.*

- APPGM-SDG team



### SOURCES:

1. Department Of Statistics Malaysia (2020). Household Income And Basic Amenities Survey Report By State And Administrative District: Sarawak 2019. [Link](#)
2. Bernama. (2018). 'Terus maju ke depan, jangan ada benci dan dengki'. Malaysiakini. [Link](#)

# 14

## Upskilling Women in Temerloh through Baking, Sewing, and Agriculture for a Better Tomorrow

The federal constituency of Temerloh, Pahang, is known as the mid-point of Peninsular Malaysia. Over the years, it has evolved with rapid development through the establishment of the Pantai Timur highway, connecting the residents of Temerloh to other states in Malaysia.



However, the true mark of progress is when no residents are left behind. Women empowerment entails women in society gaining more power and autonomy in various sectors. In rural areas and developing districts, women often hold lesser decision-making power/control due to their perceived status in a traditional patriarchal community.

One of the goal's targets involves uplifting women and endowing them with a stronger presence not just in their households but also in the community, providing them with stronger income generation. In 2020, the gender equality index in Malaysia was 71.4%, an improvement from the previous year's 70.9%. Even so, it leaves room for improvement in certain facets, including labour force participation.

Among the womenfolk trailing behind are rural dwellers such as the ones in Temerloh, Pahang. Most lack the opportunities and access to knowledge to develop relevant skills and further build their micro or small enterprises.

### **Empowering Women from Ground Up**

Despite the necessity for women's empowerment, the participation of women in the labour force has remained stagnant. Based on the Department of Statistics data in 2021, Malaysian women's labour force participation rate is still considerably low at 55.3% compared to neighbouring countries such as Singapore (69.7%) and Thailand (66.8%).

Malaysian women are untapped resources, and their empowerment would improve their families' socio-economic standings.

Rising to the task, the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) teamed up with the residents of Temerloh and the existing organisation, Pertubuhan Kejayaan Wanita India (PKWI), creating opportunities that would best fit women in the constituency.

The solution was an empowerment programme with three different workshops in agriculture, baking and sewing. With new skills, homemakers can open their own businesses and, since they can do it from home, they will have to spend less capital.

## Growing a Green Thumb

The agriculture workshops conducted by PKWI provided basic knowledge on how to plant edible crops that could supplement their household dietary intake.

At the same time, the 28 participants were taught to turn household food waste into compost. The compost, chock-full of nutrients, is in turn used as fertiliser for crops. It is part of our combined responsibility to combat the threat of climate change and the 4,080 tonnes of edible food thrown into our landfills.

Through knowledge sharing, participants expressed their intention for the next phase of the programme to include resources such as poly bags to improve their small-scale homegrown gardens.





## **Making Domestic Chores an Income Source**

Domestic activities such as baking, cooking and sewing are often confined to the home, however over the years, these domestic activities have evolved into opportunities for homemakers to earn an income.

A total of 23 women from low-income households participated in the baking course run by the solution provider. The two-month course covered topics like baking skills, cake decoration and food hygiene and safety practices.

As soon as the course ended, participants started receiving orders from friends and family. One of the participants, Mathavi Poduval a/p Balagopal, for example, earned an order for 25 trays of brownies.

***My home-baking business has been receiving steady strings of orders. In a month, I have received an estimated earning of RM300 - RM500.***

- Mathavi Poduval a/p Balagopal, participant

On the other hand, Velayamma a/p Paraman, who participated in the sewing course sees higher demand for her hand-sewn traditional wear.

***During the festive season, I'm getting additional orders for saree blouses. As a housewife, the income from sewing is welcomed for [me] and my family.***

- Velayamma a/p Paraman, participant

But the growth of the participants also extends to their individual development, women who attended the courses are more confident in their trades and thus, are thriving.

*I'm more confident after getting more skills from the sewing courses I attended. I'm stepping out of my comfort zone to sell my products to generate income for myself and my family.*

- Velayamma a/p Paraman, participant



### **Women Empowering each other**

Mathavi and Velayamma's success stories are notable impacts of the empowerment programmes run by PKWI through their personal and economic growth. But, the empowerment programmes also provided women in Temerloh a support system that continues to uplift one another.

Through a Whatsapp group, the participants share their products, and their peers would spread the advertisement to their separate circles in order to increase each other's sales. The facilitators who were part of the empowerment programme kept in touch with the participants and continued to help when necessary.

*At the same time, participants from our bakery and sewing courses are running small businesses from home. Together, they help increase each other's sales [by] sharing each other's advertisements [in] the group and forwarding their connections.*

- Sarala a/p Poongavanam, programme coordinator



Through the empowerment programme run by PKWI in Temerloh, the womenfolk were able to sharpen their skills and gained the confidence needed to set up their small businesses and provide for their families. Given the autonomy to earn a living, the women in Temerloh are stepping out and standing strong as a community. The participants would now serve as role models to other homemakers in Temerloh, that women can be part of the workforce despite being full-time homemakers.



#### **SOURCES:**

1. Department Of Statistics Malaysia. (2021). Statistics on Women Empowerment in Selected Domains, Malaysia, 2021. [Link](#)
2. F.Zainal. (2021). Daily food waste is staggering. The Star. [Link](#)



## Equipping Women Artisans In Simunjan with Financial Literacy Workshops

The handicraft industry in Sarawak unlocks the potential for providing income revenues and also continues to preserve the culture of over 27 ethnic groups in Sarawak. There were at least 1,040 artisans in Sarawak in 2020, skilled in textiles, copperwork, and woodwork with accumulated sales of RM 11.8 million.



*Women in longhouses in rural and interior Sarawak produce all kinds of handicrafts which are made from cloth, rattan, beads, wood, metal and so on, woven into mats, baskets, bags, traditional and modern fashion accessories, clothing, fabric, carvings and many more.*

- Senator Susan Chemarai Anding, Dewan Negara senator

Dato' Sri Nancy Shukri, the former Member of Parliament for Batang Sadong and the former Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture of Malaysia (MOTAC), has been working seamlessly to promote and expand the reach of Sarawakian handicrafts both locally and internationally, recognizing the opportunities that remain untapped among Sarawakian artisans, mainly in rural areas.

With the rising demands, it is vital for local artisans to upskill and reskill in order to stay relevant and produce quality work. This is especially true for rural artisans. Moreover, artisans are often homemakers with little education, preventing them from stepping out and improving their businesses.

The federal constituency of Batang Sadong collaborated once more with the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) to empower the women artisans in the area.

### **Money Matters**

Through discussions with APPGM-SDG and understanding the needs that arose from the women artisans in Batang Sadong, Yayasan Salam, a non-profit organisation was engaged to run financial literacy workshops for interested women in seven different villages.

Some of the participating villages in Simunjan, Batang Sadong, include Kampung Simunjan Jaya, Kampung Melanjok, Kampung Batu Mumong, Kampung Temiang, Kampung Pentik, Kampung Sungai Lingkau and Kampung Sekendu.

The artistic handiwork the women have inherited from their ancestors has become a contributing source of income, having diversified their weaving products to include coasters, placemats, fruit baskets, handbags and mats.

*The handicrafts produced are partly to supplement the family's income and although it's not much, it's an important source of income.*

- Senator Susan Chemarai Anding, Dewan Negara senator



But, taking a leaf from a Malay proverb, ‘bukit ditarah setiap hari pasti akan rata’, which means without proper management of finance, even if the accumulated income is as high as the hills, they would eventually be reduced to dust.

Without educated financial management, households and businesses are at risk of living paycheck to paycheck or would not be able to withstand any economic shocks. It was reported that one in three Malaysians perceived that they have low financial knowledge, a situation that is more common in low-income Malaysian households.

In rural areas, financial planning is a responsibility often saddled by the traditional breadwinner. However, in running businesses, the women entrepreneurs in Batang Sadong are expected to learn how to budget and understand basic accounting while managing their enterprises.

Thus, financial literacy that includes financial planning not just in their enterprises but in managing monthly budgets for their households will allow more sustainable livelihoods for the womenfolk.

## Making Financial Literacy Applicable for Rural Women

Working with village heads, 22 keen women artisans participated in the financial literacy workshops run by the solution provider Yayasan Salam. Special attention was given to the community's specific needs, especially with many participants being illiterate, thus, more creative presentations of workshops were utilised.

*As most of our participants are illiterate, we have to incorporate financial concepts in a way that they would best understand.* ✦

- Dr Thelaha Bin Haji Masri,  
programme coordinator

Real-life applications are part and parcel of the workshops to help participants grasp financial concepts. Some of the knowledge sharing includes participants balancing their business accounts and also how to price their products to ensure they won't be selling at a loss. Further, the programme also adapted a mentor-mentee concept to allow participants to learn from an expert and openly share any concerns they have.

*The participants were satisfied and excited because it was their first time exposed to comprehensive guidance from a handicraft expert. The modules include how to price their products according to quality and products can be improved in their value.* ✦

- Dr Thelaha Bin Haji Masri,  
programme coordinator



However, with most of the participants aged 40 and above, another loophole that should be considered to improve their businesses includes digital literacy. It is common for handicrafts to be sold within the village or nearby markets - however, with digital literacy, their products can reach a wider audience.

### **Paving the way when Tourism Returns**

Dato' Sri Nancy Shukri sees the Batang Sadong constituency area as a possible location for community-based experiences soon. Despite the strengthening demand for handicrafts from Sarawak, the products have yet to penetrate wider networks and markets.

***This is aimed at encouraging the village community to generate income and give financial value to the handicraft products produced by the residents themselves.***

*- Dato' Sri Nancy Shukri, former Member of Parliament of Batang Sadong and former Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture of Malaysia (MOTAC)*

In due time, Batang Sadong may be the destination of choice for travellers and the artisan products may gain recognition.

Even so, we have seen how tourism was strongly hit by the pandemic and consequently affected local trades, with the state of the economy becoming more uncertain.

Rest assured, the 22 participants that took part in financial literacy workshops would set a precedent in managing their income and would be able to protect their households during unforeseen circumstances.



#### **SOURCES:**

1. Berita RTM. (2020). Kraftangan Malaysia bantu usahawan kraf berniaga dalam talian. [Link](#)
2. Dayak Daily. (2020). Handicraft body urged to play more effective role in helping rural artisans, craftswomen. [Link](#)
3. A. Munisamy., S. Sahid. & M. Husin. (2022). A Financial Literacy Model of Malaysian B40 Households: The Case of Financial Well-Being, Education Level and Socioeconomic Status. *Proceedings*. [Link](#)
4. Utusan Sarawak. (2020). Batang Sadong berpotensi sebagai ekopelancongan. [Link](#)



# 16

## Giving Youth a Reason to Stay: The Tubau Mobile Phone Repairing Programme

Once upon a time, the town of Tubau in the Hulu Rajang, Sarawak constituency thrived on timber logging. However, as timber demand subsided over the years, wooden shops lining the old town closed down and moved their enterprises to the district of Bintulu, two hours from Tubau. With the development of the Bakun dam in the early 2000s, Tubau once again saw a surge in economic activity and more people stopped over.



Part of a thriving small town is having the necessary amenities such as repair shops for the convenience of residents. The town also lacked basic infrastructure and was facing frequent electricity and water cuts.

However, Tubau did not keep up the pace of development and missed the opportunity to retain its residents. Despite the Bakun dam marking a new height of development in rural Sarawak, the ripple effect did not extend to Tubau as businesses continued to set up shops in Bintulu.



Sarawak is one of the three states with the highest percentage of within-state migration at 60.8% in 2020. In small towns such as Tubau, many youths migrate to larger cities and West Malaysia in search of rewarding jobs and personal growth, leaving only a handful behind leading to a brain drain in rural communities.

*Migration from rural to urban could be indirectly attributed to development and urbanisation. Inclusive urbanisation encompassing economic and recreational activities centres drive the population to migrate to the urban areas.* ✦

*- Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin, Chief Statistician at the Department of Statistics Malaysia*

### **More than just Providing Repair Services**

In Tubau, the population primarily earn their living from agriculture. However, the young generation are not inclined to be farmers. With the rise of technology and the necessity of mobile phones - many young people are attracted to different jobs outside of this rural town.

Through a series of discussions and a needs assessment by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) and the elected solution provider, Right Track Education - mobile phone repairing workshops were identified as a solution.

There is an ongoing need and demand for mobile phone repair services as they become necessary gadgets for communication and education. To meet that demand, more people had to be trained.

In the 4-day workshop, youths were given hands-on and theoretical training on how to fix common hardware and software problems in phones. The workshop was held at Rh. Lichong, a local community hall in March 2022. Further to the training, the youths were also taught how to kick start their own phone repairing business at home.

### Positive Responses and Outlook

Majorie Anak Megong was one of the 29 participants in the workshop. Her favourite aspect of the workshop was the hands-on nature of the course, which required participants to bring a mobile phone that needed to be repaired.

*The practical classes are exciting because we carry out hands-on activities. I was afraid at first because I never 'operated' on a mobile phone before.*

- Majorie Anak Megong Tubau, participant



Using the new knowledge she learned from the workshop, Majorie now fixes mobile phones part-time and works as a teacher at the local Tabika. She advertised her small business through social media and has been receiving a steady stream of requests.

*Now, I'm able to generate an income of RM1,970 in the past four months by fixing mobile phones. There are still six more mobile phones waiting to be repaired.*

- Majorie Anak Megong Tubau, participant



As her small business blossomed, so has her outlook on the future. Majorie hopes to open her own phone repair shop in town so fewer people have to travel to Bintulu for phone repairs.

*I dream of opening a mobile phone repair kiosk here. In Tubau, we don't have a shop providing these services. It's not just about profit but also I want to help the locals. Everyone is aware that to go down to Bintulu, distance and time are indeed a constraint for residents in the interior parts of Tubau.*

- Majorie Anak Megong Tubau, participant



## **Investing in Youth is Never a Waste**

Youth like Majorie are among the few that stayed to contribute to the local communities. Majorie hopes that the phone repair programme will also be available to other rural youths.

*Most of the participants of the project want to start a business in the field of mobile phone repair. We hope we'll get help in terms of equipment as well as guidance and continuous training to be able to generate more income.*

- Majorie Anak Megong Tubau, participant



Majorie is keen to learn more and be better at what she does. This newfound skill has reignited her desire to develop herself. The ripple effect of empowering youths such as Majorie is also revitalising rural towns such as Tubau. It is giving youth a reason to stay.

*From being trained in attaining a new skill of handphone repair to imparting their knowledge, the community of youth in Tubau have reaped the benefit of learning and rising economically.*

- APPGM-SDG team



## **SOURCES:**

1. Bernama. (2021). Migration rate drops to 1.5 % in 2020. New Sarawak Tribune. Link

# 17

## Shaping The Community in Simpang Renggam: Financial Independence through Micro-enterprises

Growing up in a quaint kampung brings about the beauty of a simple lifestyle. Although some would prefer it compared to the buzz in the city, there are a few downsides that come with living in rural areas. Access to basic amenities and facilities is one of them. It includes access to better healthcare, education and economic opportunities.



With limited access, it becomes difficult to break out of poverty. This is the reality for residents living at Kampung Ulu Benut, Simpang Renggam, Johor. In Malaysia, there are 195,664 hardcore poor families and the government intends to completely eradicate poverty by 2025. To accomplish this goal, we have to make sure those living in poverty are provided with ways to be self-sufficient, as one-off government aid will eventually deplete and it even more challenging to break out of poverty.

*Generally, the hardcore poor are those getting a small income, just enough for them to survive, and we want to eliminate hardcore poverty by the end of 2025, which means at the beginning of 2026 we want to declare that there are no more hardcore poor families in Malaysia.*

- Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed, former Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Economy)

## **Building a Self-Sustaining Community**

In an effort to eradicate poverty among the Kampung Ulu Benut residents, the All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) joined forces with Koperasi Keluarga Montamah Paiman Johor Berhad and Koperasi Komuniti Kampung Ulu Benut Berhad. Together, the organisations came up with a skills development and entrepreneurship business hub, where practical entrepreneurial skills were taught.



Entrepreneurship was the avenue chosen to alleviate poverty as it has the potential to empower and transform those stuck in vicious cycles of poverty.

The programme was awarded RM40,000 and ran for a total of five months, with 15 beneficiaries (five housewives, five men who were heads of their households, and five teenagers).

To develop business knowledge among community members, the participants learnt a few basic skills. Among them were soup or soto making, learning to make traditional kuih, and handling the operation of bicycles and kayak rentals.

Prior to the programme, participants earned daily wages through different means. The housewives worked at home, earning income by sewing, baking, and embroidering crafts. While the heads of households toiled in farms, palm oil plantations and odd jobs. The teenagers and youth would run roadside businesses and work in factories.

Today, the programme has proven fruitful, with participants earning a steady and higher income via food sales with the operation of three shop units. Additional space was also built during the program. It was originally intended to run as a barber shop but is now an extra income avenue with the sale of finger food and snacks. It is definitely a step up compared to the participants' previous ways of making a living.

### Repurposing Coconut Husks

The commitment and change over the course of five months tell us that this is a programme worth pursuing. Other communities in Johor deserve such opportunities to improve their livelihood as our nation strives to be rid of hardcore poverty in the coming years.

*This project has gone above and beyond to create a chain of local businesses involving the local community and has set a classic example as the best poverty eradication program for other neighbouring communities to emulate.*

- APPGM-SDG team





**SOURCES:**

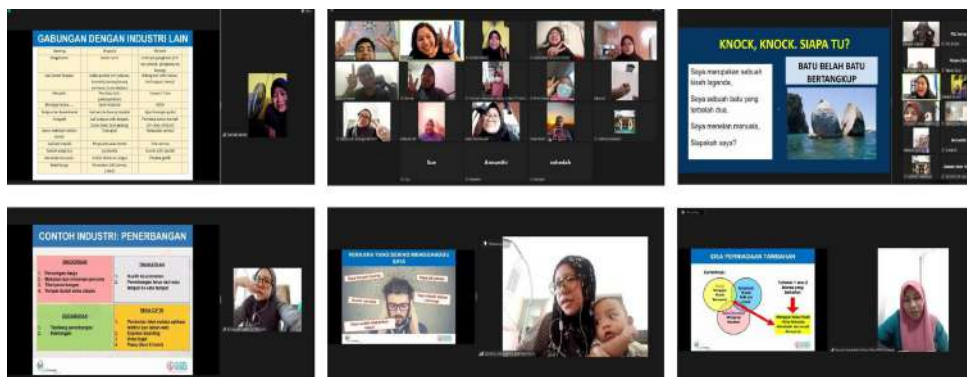
1. MalayMail. (2022). Minister: Govt wants to eradicate hardcore poverty in Malaysia by end of 2025. [Link](#).
2. Forbes. (2017). The Role Of Entrepreneurship In Ending Poverty And Homelessness. [Link](#).



# 18

## Community Livelihood Programme To Alleviate Poverty among PPR Families in Lembah Pantai

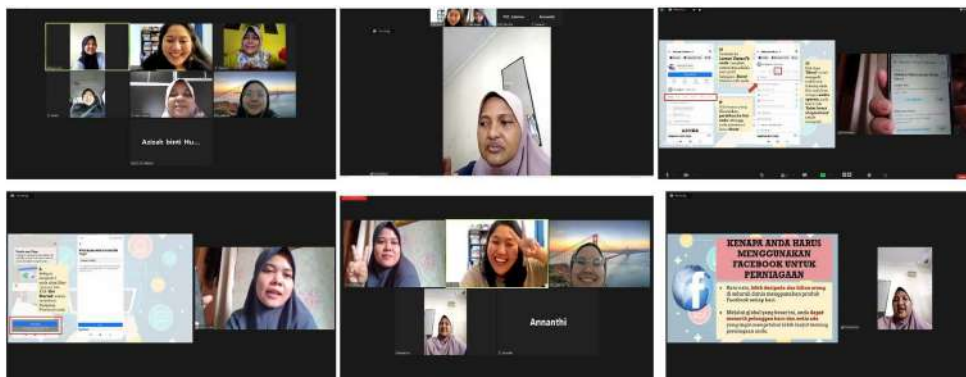
Lembah Pantai is a sub-district located in Kuala Lumpur, where the divide between two different classes of society - the wealthy and the working class, is apparent. The working class are residents of the People's Housing Project (PPR), an affordable housing initiative by the Malaysian government for those with an income of RM2,500 or less. However, the realities of these folks are often tougher than we can ever imagine.



Ever since the pandemic, many of these residents have been left high and dry as they were laid off from jobs that provided financial security. Lembah Pantai's PPR folks have lived sparingly, in fear of losing the little savings they have left.

*The head of the PPR in KL told us that of the 1,800 residents, almost 1,000 families had lost their sources of income. Everyone's daily salary is on hold at the moment. They have no money and no food. How do they survive?*

- Hamira Izzatie Sabarin, WeListenMY co-founder



## Making a Change

When we know of others suffering, an immediate instinct of wanting to help them arises within us. Putting their thinking caps on, the All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) in a joint effort with People Systems Consultancy Sdn Bhd launched a community livelihood program for PPR families from Kerinchi Lembah Pantai, Kg Limau and Pantai Ria.

The programme prioritised profit-making businesses, where families living in poverty could earn an additional income. What's unfortunate is that some of the participants were existing business owners whose lives were turned upside down when the pandemic restrictions set in.

***The participants were depending on the sale of their business even when there were no customers and [relied] on the government's aid.***

- Muhammad Syaiful Imran, Project Coordinator Specialist at People Systems Consultancy

Nevertheless, this program was a gateway for those who sought to improve their livelihoods. The community livelihood program ran for a total of five months in 2021 - August to December, with a total funding of RM26,000 from APPGM-SDG.

## KNOCK, KNOCK. SIAPA TU?

Saya merupakan sebuah kisah legenda,

Saya sebuah batu yang terbelah dua,

Saya menelan manusia,

Siapaakah saya?

**BATU BELAH BATU BERTANGKUP**





Fitri Nurul  
21/02/2021



Nikmah Saadah  
21/02/2021



Amalia Nur Hafidza  
21/02/2021



Amalia Nur Hafidza  
21/02/2021



Karandika  
21/02/2021



Adhika Nur Hafidza  
21/02/2021



Adhika Nur Hafidza  
21/02/2021



Adhika Nur Hafidza  
21/02/2021

Industri	Produk	Alasan
Industri Pengolahan	Minyak sayur	Untuk pengolahan (goreng, masak, dll) dan pengalihan ke industri lain
Industri Tekstil	Produk tekstil (kain, pakaian, benang, benang rajut, pakaian, kain busana, dll)	Untuk industri lain (pakaian, benang, dll)
Industri Pertambangan	Batu bara	Untuk industri lain (pembangkit tenaga listrik, dll)
Industri Perikanan	Produk perikanan (ikan, udang, kepiting, dll)	Untuk industri lain (makanan, obat-obatan, dll)
Industri Pertanian	Produk pertanian (gandum, jagung, padi, dll)	Untuk industri lain (makanan, obat-obatan, dll)
Industri Kehutanan	Produk kehutanan (kayu, bambu, dll)	Untuk industri lain (konstruksi, furnitur, dll)
Industri Energi	Produk energi (listrik, gas, dll)	Untuk industri lain (pembangkit tenaga listrik, dll)
Industri Kimia	Produk kimia (plastik, karet, dll)	Untuk industri lain (konstruksi, furnitur, dll)
Industri Farmasi	Produk farmasi (obat-obatan, dll)	Untuk industri lain (konstruksi, furnitur, dll)
Industri Makanan	Produk makanan (makanan, minuman, dll)	Untuk industri lain (konstruksi, furnitur, dll)
Industri Jasa	Produk jasa (jasa, dll)	Untuk industri lain (konstruksi, furnitur, dll)

Before participants took a step to pursue their online business, they were taught to formulate a business plan and attended individual and group sharing sessions. During these sessions, mentors would guide participants and impart wisdom on how to generate income more constantly.

116

With such lessons, the participants were able to turn their knowledge into action. Along the way, they crafted new and improved business plans and they could also identify their key customers. As finance is one of the key foundations of any business, participants were introduced to a Customer Analysis & Financial Management module. This gave them a leg-up into the financial aspects of the business world.

*The participants were depending on the sale of their business even when there were no customers and [relied] on the government's aid.*

- Muhammad Syaiful Imran, Project Coordinator Specialist at People Systems Consultancy

### **Hard Work and Dedication Inspire Change among PPR Families**

In an effort to better themselves and their families' financial situation, the participants went all out to learn the lessons.

The willingness and dedication of their mentors every step of the way further contributed to their success. This illuminated the participants' passion and confidence to pursue their business ventures.

*The mentors spent a massive quality time with the participants, helping them with technical issues and providing emotional support to push the participants to use relevant digital platforms such as social media. This was to ensure participants could apply the knowledge learned [to] action.*

- Muhammad Syaiful Imran, Project Coordinator Specialist at People Systems Consultancy

Before the community livelihood program, the hopes of the participants were dim. But today, they're able to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Not only did the programme change their perspectives of the business realm, but it also equipped them with personal growth.

*Before the programme, I did not know how to market my business, struggled to target the right customers and was poor at managing my finances. The programme has helped me to gain a lot of new business knowledge. It's practical and easy to apply right after the training. Flip Technology taught me to be more positive toward my circumstances. Through the Customer Analysis & Financial Management Module, I learned to target the right customer and manage my finances better. The training method is very practical and easy to understand and the trainers are flexible to meet our needs.*

- Azura Binti Mohamad, Resident of PPR Pantai Ria and Frozen Puff Seller

Additionally, the participants also increased their average income by 238.49%. For PPR Kerinchi resident and nasi kerabu seller Masri Binti Mohammad Husin, the program challenged her to think differently as a business owner. She realised that joint business ventures can provide better opportunities and improve the success rate of a business owner.

*The Blue Ocean module helps me a lot by not only focusing on my business but also [joining] ventures with other businesses as well. Moreover, I am clearer on the way and strategy forward for my business. Overall, the program was very practical and easy to understand. Personally, I learned a lot throughout the whole program.*

- Masri Binti Mohammad Husin

## PPR Families in need of Life-Saving Programmes

The magnitude of change resulting from the community livelihood program is a wake-up call for more organisations and government bodies to reach out to other PPR families living in poverty.

We often fail to realise that providing affordable housing for poor communities does not put an end to poverty. In reality, there must be continuous efforts to change their lives through increased job opportunities and skillset training.

It is evident that such transformative efforts are capable of change and are crucial to alleviating poverty.

### SOURCES:

1. Latif, YA. (2021). *More than half of PPR residents have no money or food*. Link.

# 19

## PROSPERITY:

### A Prosperous Malaysia means Everyone gets to Experience Shared Prosperity

The perception of ‘prosperity’ is no longer just about wealth but the mutual determination for shared prosperity. In 2019, the Shared Prosperity Vision (SPV) was announced under the 12th Malaysian Plan. The SPV sought to ensure all in Malaysia are given a level playing field; economically, socially and through technological progress.



We have made great strides since 1957 as our GDP continues to grow following the long pandemic. But, some communities have fallen through the cracks and do not enjoy a prosperous life as advocated by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) recognises communities from all parts of Malaysia and in various walks of life require a



helping hand to prosper. These include, empowering different communities of women in urban areas of Selangor, providing quality education to youth in Sarawak and Petaling Jaya, Selangor and securing the financial stability of rural and Orang Asli folks.

### **Ensuring Economic Empowerment of Women from Low-Income Households**

Despite the releasing of financial assistance from the government, 68% of low-income households have no remaining savings at the height of the pandemic. For women-led households, the situation is dire as many rely on daily wages through baking, sewing and laundry services. With multiple cycles of lockdowns, 49 per cent of single mothers have lost their source of income.

Stepping into the scene, APPGM-SDG sought to understand the needs required to improve the livelihoods of single mothers and collaborated with grassroots organisations in delivering the appropriate solution to the beneficiaries.

The women and single mothers in Selayang who have been running their small businesses were affected severely by the pandemic. Before, they relied on door-to-door business or selling at the *pasar malam* and marketing their products to their friends and families.

Through the help of the Association of Social Services and Community Development of Gombak (PSPK) and Universiti Kuala Lumpur (UniKL), 10 women micro-entrepreneurs were helped to bring their businesses to the next level by implementing digital marketing. Their eagerness to learn despite difficulties in learning different terminologies owes to their need to improve the lives of their families.

*They are women who want to forget their past, have the desire to wake up to improve their self-image, rise from life's hardships, dream of their own business empire and a career and they want to lead a more independent life.*

- Dr Indriaty Ismail, lecturer at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

But, sometimes improving the livelihood of the women involved can also be done by harnessing their existing skills. Ten women in Selayang with PSPK help were given a 101 in baking and coffee-making skills; their efforts culminated in running the Bites n Beans Bakery Cafe.

*I was one of 10 youths selected for skills training funded by the All Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia on SDGs (APPGM-SDG). I learnt business, marketing, promotions and customer service relations. When the training was over, we set up this cafe with help from the association (PSPK).*

- Madhura Rajenderan, 25, participant of Bites N Beans Bakery Cafe Project

Ten women in *Program Perumahan Rakyat Desa Mentari* were part of the Persatuan Penduduk Petaling Jaya 2017 (MYPJ) soup kitchen initiative; the participants earned profits from baking cookies. However, at the same time, they contributed to a soup kitchen run by MYPJ to help community members in need.

*We've been baking for two years, and the income has helped the B40 women here.*

- Jeddah, a participant of MYPJ and APPGM-SDG entrepreneurship programme


## A Good Education Resides in it's Quality

Part of the SDGs commitment is providing quality education to the future generation. In Malaysia, however, there is a discrepancy between the achievements of rural and urban schools.

In Batang Sadong, Sarawak, the English proficiency of the schoolgoers did not reach the required level resulting in limited tertiary education and employment opportunities. Through consultation with district education offices, 28 English teachers from 17 schools were selected to enhance their teaching skills in an area where English is a second or third language to the students through workshops run by MyReaders.

*Representing the voice of the children of Sarawak, my job at the federal level is to continue to remind the government through the Ministry of Education (Malaysia) to accelerate projects that involve the needs of education and learning in Batang Sadong.*

*- Dato' Sri Nancy Binti Shukri, former Member of Parliament of Batang Sadong*




At the same time, children from low-income households do not have the same access to learning resources such as toys and books, hampering their development.

In light of the pandemic, many are struggling with learning loss due to extended school closures. Yayasan Generasi Gemilang is geared to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of the selected 215 participants. The programme spurred changes in 11-year-old Aina who could converse in English confidently.

*We have students who were able to jump from level 2 to level 6.*

*- Felicia Wee, Programme Lead at Yayasan Generasi Gemilang*



## Better Return On Hours Spent Toiling

As massive progress is being made in urban areas, rural communities are still a few steps behind in living fulfilling lives. Some are “living from hand to mouth” and struggle to save or put their children in school. These growing pains are familiar to the fishermen in Papar, Sabah and the Orang Asli communities in Kelantan and Pahang.

In 2017, there was an estimated 51,608 fishermen in the country. Despite the high price of seafood at our local market, the fishermen's wages fail to reflect this.

*Today's traditional fishermen (coastal fishermen ) are mostly in the poor category, which means their source of income is only enough to live their life. Most of their income is spent and they do not save the income.*

*- Fisherman, Quality of Life for Fisherman focus group respondent*

Through the help of the Research Institute of Marine Biology, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) and the Fisherman Community Organisation, 11 fishermen from Kampung Kuala, Papar, Sabah attended workshops that provided them with a foundation to kickstart a barramundi (siakap) farming project.

*What I have learnt from the workshops has opened my eyes to new opportunities.*

*- Hermy Bin Ahmad, 30, fisherman and aqua project participant in Kuala Papar, Sabah*

Another community that has been trying hard to progress is the Orang Asli community. Some might have been involved in farming in the past, but the income has been meagre.

Through the innovative solution provided by the team at Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, the Negrito and Senoi composed community in Jeli, Kelantan is now earning more income.

The Orang Asli households in Sungai Olak, Bentong, Pahang, worked together with OA Organik to reap the benefits of organic farming. The five families that completed the workshops are inspirations to other Orang Asli households.

**SOURCES:**

1. *Utusan Borneo*. (2021). Nancy mahu penduduk Parlimen Batang Sadong mendapat pendidikan sempurna. [Link](#)
2. *The Malaysian Reserve*. (2017). *Work in Malaysia - an uneven future?*. [Link](#).

## BEST PRACTICES IMPACTING THE GRASSROOTS



### LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

A gathering of the best recipes from the neighbours to build an inclusive community.

The constituency of Pendang is sandwiched between two developing districts: Kota Setar and Kuala Muda. Unlike the rapid development experienced by the two, Pendang has not been mainstreamed in the state's development plan. This geographical factor has caused multiple issues highlighting the inequalities in Pendang, such as the lack of economic opportunities for the dwellers, their living conditions and access to decent infrastructure.



Newspaper headlines have highlighted these jarring inequalities through the story of a single mother travelling 10km with her son to ensure he could attend his online classes. Villagers in Pendang have lamented over the state of their houses after a flash flooding and the low vaccination rate in Pendang.



These incidents point to an issue of accessibility and a caution that the residents of Pendang will continue to fall behind as their neighbours achieve greater heights. The district of Pendang also recorded one of the highest rates of absolute poverty in the state of Kedah at 8.1% in 2019.

The existing inequalities prompted the need to understand and learn the specific problems faced by the communities in Pendang.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) committee and the Economic and Financial Policy Institute of Universiti Utara Malaysia visited villages in the district namely: Kampung Rambai, Sungai Tiang, Kampung Nangka Siam and Kelang Besar.

Twenty women and six men from all villages participated in the dialogue despite their initial hesitancy. One of the community members shared that they had voiced their concerns to the authorities, but there has not been any concrete solution. Dialogue between the affected communities is essential to identify problems and work together to solve the issues.

### **Land Issues Dating back Generations**

The demographic living in the selected villages has a unique history and distinctive issues specific to their lineage.

The villagers of Kampung Nangka Siam are of Kedah-Siamese descent. In 2007, 30,000 naturalised Siamese were living in the state of Kedah. Sungai Tiang houses the largest Siamese settlement in Kedah.

The community has relied on the Kedah-Siam language to communicate. Most have attained only a low level of education due to language barriers. Due to this, the dialogue between the

APPGM-SDG committee and the villagers utilised informal language to understand their concerns at the same eye level.

For generations, the Siamese-Kedah villagers have worked on the lands, turning them into orchards, paddy fields and rubber holdings. But without titles to their land, the Siamese would not be able to purchase Malay reserve land even if it belonged to them.

*Some Siamese sold their land to a Malay developer and the land was classed as a Malay reserve. When the development was completed, we couldn't purchase the property because they said it was Malay reserve land even though Malay-Siamese are categorised as Bumiputera.*

- Prida Chuan, a Siamese-descent villager in Kampung Titi Akar, Pendang

The lack of clear communication between involved parties and the local authorities is also an issue highlighted by the FELDA dwellers (peneroka FELDA) in Sungai Tiang. The dwellers are currently at odds with FELDA authorities when it comes to replantation.



## Better Welfare and Compensation for those Toiling in the Field

In Kampung Sungai Rambai, the paddy farmers who have worked hard to ensure rice is available across Malaysia are struggling to put a plate of rice on their own dining table.

The farmers lamented that they are earning less than RM2,000 due to middlemen deriving profit from their hard-earned labour. To the farmers, there's no guarantee of a comfortable retirement after toiling in the paddy fields.

*We found that the poorest in the country is the paddy farmers, even when the government subsidizes about 60% of paddy farming.*



*- Prof. Jomo Kwame Sundaram, economist*

The paddy farmers of Kampung Sungai Rambai despite being registered with a government-linked agency, Lembaga Peladang Kawasan (LPK), remained unprotected in the case of workplace injuries.

On the other hand, the land in Kampung Baru Kongsu was sold to a local businessman in 1975 and has been home to displaced Indian plantation workers. But the housing conditions left much to be desired.

The Indian community from Kampung Baru Kongsu were represented by the loud voices of the female breadwinners. The women working as rubber tappers expressed concerns about their living conditions.

The women from Kampung Baru Kongs, Kelang Besar are among the vulnerable in Pendang. The women have been saddled with the responsibilities of becoming breadwinners of their families. Their husbands have remained unemployed or brought home an unsteady source of income requiring the women to keep their families afloat.

*There is also a temple on the land. The new landowner has given them (former workers) permission to stay, but no renovations have been carried out. Some of the houses are in bad condition.*

- Prof Datuk Denison Jayasooria, Head of APPGM-SDG Secretariat ✦

Despite the differences in their issues and backgrounds, all four communities are trapped in a poverty cycle as they rely on informal work for income.



## Addressing Grievances through Open Dialogue

An open dialogue between the villagers of Kampung Rambai, Kampung Nangka Siam, Kampung Sungai Tiang and Kampung Baru Kongs found issues that had to be addressed by the movers of Pendang's economy, local authorities, parliamentary representatives and state government agencies.

*There are many unresolved land and housing issues involving former plantation workers, who are impacted by development in the areas they live.*

- Awang Solahudin, Pendang Member of Parliament ✦

The rubber planters, paddy farmers, Siamese farmers and Indian rubber tappers played a crucial role in boosting Kedah's economy.

However, they have struggled to secure a sustainable livelihood. As the neighbouring districts, Kota Setar and Kuala Muda are accelerating in their development, the villagers are no longer content with their current state.

A community dialogue such as the one conducted in Pendang is an avenue for villagers to air their concerns. Two-way communication between the committee and the community is the building block to initiating positive changes in the constituency.

The villagers have bestowed hope in the hands of APPGM-SDG, where by seeing the life they led and hearing their voices, long-awaited positive changes can take place in the district of Pendang - for the benefit of the people living there.

#### **SOURCES:**

- 1.O.Yahaya. (2021). *Gara-gara internet lemah, ibu tunggang motosikal 10km ambil modul PdPR*. Utusan Malaysia. [Link](#)
- 2.A.S.Zulkifli & N.Abdul Rahman. (2021). *Endless worry for Pendang families hit by floods*. New Straits Times. [Link](#)
- 3.A.S. Zulkifli. (2021). *From fear to confidence in vaccines*. New Straits Times. [Link](#)
- 4.Department Of Statistics Malaysia. (2021). *Household Income And Basic Amenities Survey Report By State And Administrative District: Kedah*. [Link](#)
- 5.J.N.Thalang. (2015). *Thai by blood, not by birth*. The Bangkok Post. [Link](#)
- 6.A.Annuar. (2018). *For Pendang folk, familiar faces and local needs could sway their GE14 vote*. Malay Mail. [Link](#)
- 7.R.Razak. (2019). *Jomo: Revamp agricultural practices to help poor farmers, not rich plantations*. Malay Mail. [Link](#)
- 8.C.Loo. (2020). *UN roundtable shines spotlight on extreme poverty in Malaysia*. The Vibes. [Link](#)

# 21

## English can be Fun! For Educators in Batang Sadong

English proficiency remains a requirement to unlock opportunities not just globally but locally. In 2021, Malaysia was ranked 28th out of 112 countries on the English Proficiency Index (EPI).



Despite a secure placement on the EPI, the Malaysia Education Blueprint's recent scorecard recorded a stagnant trend. In 2020, 80.1% of SPM students earned a Credit in SPM English as compared to 80.7% in 2013.

The schools in East Malaysia have been grappling with issues of infrastructure ranging from Internet connectivity and most significantly, a shortage of capable teachers. Thus far, we lack data on how far behind English language proficiency in East Malaysia is compared to West Malaysia, but experts have given a glimpse of the issue.

*Many of our English teachers in rural areas of Sarawak are actually not trained to teach English... but we don't have enough teachers, so some (trained in other subjects) have been assigned to teach English as well.*

- Adam Prakash Abdullah, president of Sarawak Teachers Union

This issue has long been identified and raised by Dato' Sri Nancy Binti Shukri, the former Member of Parliament in Batang Sadong, Samarahan, Sarawak. She is also a former member of the All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) and has been vocal and shown her continuous commitment to ensuring no children should be left behind in education.

*The cooperation with the All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia (APPGM) through the Sustainable Development Socio-Economic Solutions Project for the B40 group, regardless of the political background of a Member of Parliament is a testament that we are working in the interest of children in respective areas.*

- Dato' Sri Nancy Binti Shukri, former Member of Parliament for Batang Sadong

### **A need to Improve English Literacy in Batang Sadong**

The Batang Sadong constituency is composed of multi-ethnicity households such as Malay, Bugis, Java and Iban. Geographically, being farther away from the city of Kuching, the residents are setback by the limited facilities, infrastructures and lack of digital connectivity leading to low economic activity.

A prevailing issue among the youth is the lack of English language proficiency, which hampers their opportunities to find jobs elsewhere. Raised in a multi-ethnic community, the students would be more familiar with their mother tongue or the language spoken in the area.



English is less spoken in Batang Sadong and to many families, it is their third or fourth language.

The exposure to the English language in areas such as Batang Sadong would often be from schools. But, English teachers in the area lack the necessary skills and mastery of the language.

### **‘Turun Padang’ to Understand the Issue**

But to understand the heads and tails of the issue, it is necessary to engage and work together with the school administration. The role played by the former Member of Parliament, Dato' Sri Nancy and APPGM-SDG, were instrumental in kick-starting the conversation.

Through joint introduction and consultation with Simunjan and Sadong Jaya District Education Offices, the relevant schools in Sadong Jaya and Simunjan were identified and the active engagement of Persatuan Literasi Anak Malaysia (MyReaders) was enlisted.

MyReaders has been empowering communities through remedial literacy programmes and embarked on this programme to facilitate a Professional Learning Community (PLC) aimed at improving students' literacy. The MyReaders team sat with different school heads. Through their discussion, relevant teachers were immediately encouraged to participate in the programme.

## All Systems Go Despite the Pandemic

28 teachers (19 female and 9 male) from 17 different schools: 15 primary and 2 secondary schools were part of the programme. Initially, MyReaders heeded the advice of the local district education office (PPD) to set up physical workshops to allow teachers to learn in a new environment. However, because of the pandemic lockdowns, only one physical workshop took place in Penview Hotel, Kuching. The remaining workshops were conducted online.

The workshops sparked conversations between the educators and the MyReaders team as they explored new methods and strategies to boost English literacy in their schools. Some of the participants shared their main take-aways from the session:

*“Always look for opportunities within your problems”*

*“How to apply more interactive activities in the classroom”*

*“Don’t be afraid to fail”*

*“Be creative. English is fun!”*

*- Key takeaways from the involved teachers*



## Learning Goes On


The nation faced another lockdown at the end of 2020, but the learning did not stop for the teachers. The workshops shifted online, and teachers' engagement remained active through Telegram chat.

But some of the teachers were struggling to be involved due to the existing connectivity barrier in Batang Sadong. This pressing issue highlights the need for the involvement of other stakeholders to ensure better digital access for educators and the community in Batang Sadong.

A good digital infrastructure is necessary for the youth and educators to ensure the students in Batang Sadong are not left behind. With better facilities, students would reap the benefits of an improved learning environment.

*Representing the voice of the children of Sarawak, my job at the federal level is to continue to remind the government through the Ministry of Education (Malaysia) to accelerate projects that involve the needs of education and learning in Batang Sadong.*


*- Dato' Sri Nancy Binti Shukri, former Member of Parliament for Batang Sadong*



With 28 teachers gaining more confidence in the classroom, the outcome can only be positive. Capable and proficient English teachers would mean that more students in Batang Sadong have the opportunity to learn the language well.

*Equipping rural teachers to learn and teach English in a creative and fun way has provided a keen interest in rural children to learn the language with much enthusiasm.*

*- APPGM-SDG team*



With a greater grasp of the language, students' futures are brighter - both in terms of tertiary education and employment opportunities.

#### **SOURCES:**

- 1.J.X.Liew. (2022). Address declining English proficiency among Malaysians, says Syed Saddiq. The Star. [Link](#)
- 2.Ministry of Education. (2021). The journey. Highlights Of Wave 1 and Wave 2 Malaysian Education Blueprint. [Link](#)
- 3.P.P.Goh. (2022). Sarawak needs more English teachers in rural schools. Sarawak Tribune News. [Link](#)
- 4.Utusan Borneo. (2021).Nancy mahu penduduk Parlimen Batang Sadong mendapat pendidikan sempurna.[Link](#)
- 5.sMy Readers Facebook Post. (2020). [Link](#)

# 22

## Workshops on Gender-based Violence: An Eye-opener for Villagers in Pensiangan, Sabah

In June 2021, the state of Sabah reported 406 cases related to violence against women and children. Numbers have intensified from 374 cases in 2021. Statistics, however, do not reflect the silent victims of abuse.



*Often family members keep silent about domestic violence and sexual assault, because they are made to believe that they are at fault, are threatened or feel that these are shameful family incidents.*

- Kapayan assembly person Jannie Lasimbang

According to UNICEF findings in 2017, more domestic violence cases had originated in rural areas. An issue that has remained underreported as gender inequality is omnipresent in the communities.

## The Existing 'Adat' in Pensiangan

Pensiangan in Sabah is a constituency with approximately 32,000 population with the main ethnic groups of Murut and Lundayeh. The semi-rural area remains underdeveloped and isolated from the development taking place in the rest of the state.



Rural women are seen as disadvantaged both socially and economically. In addition to the lack of autonomy, they are also susceptible to incidences of violence. In Malaysia, many rural communities are ruled by adat (local customary practices and traditions) that permit underage, child marriages as well as lesser rights for women.

***Early marriages especially those involving young girls below the age of 16 are considered statutory rape but nobody would speak about it in the kampungs as it is part of the 'adat'.***

- Winnie Yee, Sabah Action Women Organisation (SAWO) President

## Empowering the Rural Homemakers

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM - SDG) enlisted the help of the Sabah Women Action Group (SAWO), a non-governmental organisation with at least 30 years of experience promoting gender equality among the different marginalised communities in Sabah.



The villagers from Kg. Salung, Kg. Babalitan, Kg. Sibua, Kg. Balaron and Kg. Salarom Taka in Pensiangan was selected due to the availability of infrastructure and SAWO's previous work with the community.

The community dialogue sessions were necessary to gain greater insight into the community's patriarchal values. As the aim of the programme is to empower women in the Murut and Lundayeh communities, the ketua kampung's (village head) buy-in was imperative. With the approval of the village heads, the next hurdle was to get the approval of the husbands in order for the women to attend the workshops.

Day in and day out, women in Pensiangan are responsible for domestic duties such as cooking, cleaning and caretaking. Therefore, attending workshops such as the one organised would take them away from their household responsibilities.

*When you talk about gender and freeing women from the burden of cooking and caring, how do you get women to participate if you don't think of these things?*

*- Winnie Yee, Sabah Action Women Organisation President*

Taking these factors into account, the participants were provided two meals a day and they were also encouraged to bring home leftover food from the workshop to feed their families. SAWO's ethical budgeting also benefited the villages as the food was cooked and prepared by the local community.

As part of their steps in empowering the women, mothers were encouraged to trust their husbands to mind their children during the workshop, teaching them to share the heavyweight of child-minding duties.

Men were encouraged to join as gender equality is not just the responsibility of women, but most misinterpreted SAWO as a women's group, detracting them from participation.

## Accepted with Open Arms

The villagers welcomed the SAWO team with open arms as they returned to the areas where there were local contacts. The familiarity between the team and the villagers were one of the keys to the success of SAWO's awareness campaign; the workshops utilised the Murut and Malay language. In order to ensure that information is passed smoothly to the community, it is important to speak in the language they are most comfortable with.

The five awareness workshops attracted 177 participants (119 females, 58 males) from the villages. Through sharing sessions, the team observed that the youth are prepared to change their adat. However, the older generations are comfortable with the status quo.



In sessions where notable figures such as village or community leaders are absent in the workshop, the participants express their thoughts more freely. Even though the workshop was a short-term project, the result was satisfactory as participants shared that they are receptive to more similar workshops.



In a community where the voices of women and the youth have often been superseded in policymaking and development, the workshops have provided them with an avenue.

For the time being, providing the rural community with awareness of gender-based violence and child abuse was accomplished. But, the conclusion of the project recognised that a shift in the community's gender inequalities requires "all hands on deck."

The indigenous community such as the ones in Pensiangan abide by native laws and there has been a lack of awareness amongst the older generation on gender-based violence.

*The Native Court...they are not even sure how to handle such problems and worst, some are not aware of the Domestic Violence Act. Therefore, they all require training.*

- Winnie Yee, Sabah Action Women Organisation President

With the encouraging voices of the youth and the reception of the village heads in the community, the awareness workshops such as the ones conducted could spark changes in rural Pensiangan. The move to uphold gender equality in rural Sabah may take time but the first step that has been taken by APPGM-SDG and SAWO could give way to long-term change.

#### **SOURCES:**

- 1.O.Miwli. (2021). Domestic violence and child abuses cases in Sabah increasing. New Straits Times. [Link](#)
- 2.S.Lee. (2021). Govt urged to work strategically to protect victims of domestic violence, sexual assault. The Star. [Link](#)
- 3.UNICEF. (2020). Situation Analysis of Women and Children in Malaysia. [Link](#).
- 4.Daily Express. (2015). Domestic violence: Most victims career women. [Link](#)

# 23

## Helping Students in PPR Lembah Subang Escape Poverty: One Book at a Time

Education plays a pivotal role in promoting social mobility. Access to quality education from primary to tertiary level will lead to more employment opportunities and higher income. For those from low-income households, education is the passport to exit poverty.

However, coming from low-income housing also poses a threat to education. It was found that homeless children and those from poorer households had higher rates of absenteeism, resulting in lower passing rates.



Globally, government organisations and NGOs are working hard to improve and provide access to education for those without financial means. When equal access to quality education is given to all - regardless of social status, citizenship, race or culture - we level the playing field and empower everyone to craft their own bright futures.

In Malaysia, quality education remains a privilege for some, especially those who are marginalised and financially strapped. In 2020, it was reported that over one million Malaysian-born children are not in school with poverty being the main factor contributing to this number.

*When all of us are worried about the economic slowdown that has fallen to a deficit, this is also when the education of our children is compromised, intentionally or otherwise. We all know and realise that education is the pillar of nation-building. Ruin education, ruin the future, ruin the country.*

*- Dr Maszlee Malik, Former Education Minister and Independent Member of Parliament (MP)*

### Encouraging English Literacy through KidzREAD

All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SGD) addressed the issue at hand and sought to identify a suitable solution provider in the education sector.

Yayasan Generasi Gemilang with a long-standing record of grassroots education initiatives for the marginalised was chosen.

Since 2008, Yayasan Generasi Gemilang (GG) has been operating with the mission to educate and serve vulnerable communities by providing basic needs, increasing access to education and equipping them with life skills, all to improve their livelihood.



In 2020, Yayasan Generasi Gemilang collaborated with Yayasan Amal ASAS and Stop For The One to launch 'KidzREAD', an English reading program aimed at improving English literacy through reading.

A grant of RM40,000 was awarded by the team at APPGM-SDG to run KidzREAD for 5 months from September 2020 to February 2021. A total of 215 primary school-going children from PPR Lembah Subang 1, a low-cost housing community in Petaling Jaya participated in the program.

Throughout the program, APPGM-SDG held regular meetings with Yayasan Generasi Gemilang to address challenges and limitations - and together they brainstormed ways to improve the efficacy of the program.

Recognising the educational setbacks and limitations faced by these students, Yayasan Gemilang took on the responsibility to improve literacy and numeracy skills among them. Math was added to the program in an effort to simultaneously improve numeracy skills and improve overall basic education among the students.

Despite the program starting in the midst of the pandemic, the students were able to meet for onsite classes several times and subsequently transitioned to online classes when lockdowns were imposed.

### **Overcoming the Lack of Resources to keep Learning**

While nationwide lockdowns were imposed and many sectors were affected during the pandemic, the education field faced bigger giants.

With the implementation of online classes, the students required devices and a good internet connection to access these classes. Coming from low-income households, students do not have devices of their own and have to use their parents' phones or share them with siblings.

*One of our biggest challenges, when classes were conducted online, was the lack of resources which we were able to resolve. We also had volunteers who had to readjust to online teaching, which involved months of practice and brainstorming ways to capture attention online.*

- Felicia Wee, Program Lead at Yayasan Generasi Gemilang

Among other challenges, these students had to adjust to learning from a computer screen instead of via face-to-face learning.

*Keeping pace with the students and their interest in studies during the pandemic when the classes are conducted online can be very challenging, Yayasan Gemilang proved outstanding by holding the interest of the students through online classes with all 215 primary school-going students till the completion of the program.*

- APPGM-SDG team

### **KidzREAD helps Children Read and Count**

As time went on, adjustments were made and success stories slowly emerged. Students who had difficulty grasping basic components of the English language made a remarkable turnaround in reading and comprehending English words.

Fellow participant, 11-year-old Aina, who would often be at a loss for words when it comes to conversing in English now speaks with confidence.

*We have students who were able to jump from level 2 to level 6. They could read and speak better over a short period of time.*

*- Felicia Wee, Program Lead at Yayasan Generasi Gemilang* ✨

The program saw a 90% completion rate, an outcome that exceeded their expectations. Apart from the educational goals, the Yayasan Generasi Gemilang also sought to achieve the 3A's among the students - Attendance, Attainment and Attitude. These were observed by the program mentors and volunteers to ensure a holistic teaching and learning experience.

*It is a great joy to see underprivileged children growing in their knowledge of the English language. Their eagerness and enthusiasm to learn encouraged me to carry on volunteering. I've seen how the KidzREAD program has helped the children improve their grades, are able to speak English well and are better behaved.*

*- Cheong, KidzREAD Volunteer* ✨

### **Overcoming the Lack of Resources to keep Learning**

Since 2014, Yayasan Generasi Gemilang has been serving children from B40 communities through KidzREAD, by providing them with the education they deserve.

Slowly but surely, it is through these efforts that slivers of hope are seen in the next generation.

Although The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that every child has a right to education, there are still children living in Malaysia who fall between the cracks. APPGM-SDG together with solution providers such as Yayasan Generasi Gemilang believes that education secures a promising future for the next generation, hence these efforts to ensure that no child living in Malaysia is left behind.



#### **SOURCES:**

1. *The Rakyat Post*. (2020). Over 1 Million Malaysian Children Are Not In School & Other Problems With The Education System, Says Former Minister. [Link](#).
2. *The Sun Daily*. (2019). Reinvesting in urban poor communities. [Link](#).
3. *Generasi Gemilang*. (2021). KidzREAD. [Link](#).
4. *UNHCR*. (2022). Education. [Link](#).



# 24

## Refugee Women Breaking Barriers By Learning Bahasa Malaysia

After a turbulent trip, usually by boat, the refugees find themselves landing on the shores of a foreign country with the promise of safety. But they find themselves in a new predicament.



*When I first arrived in Malaysia, I did not know how to speak English or Bahasa at all. So, I didn't know how to travel or how to use the bus, train, taxi and all kinds of things.*

*- Tasmida, a Myanmarese refugee living in Malaysia*

In 2022, the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reported a total of 182,960 registered refugees and asylum seekers living in Malaysia. Of the total, 33% are women.

Refugee women like Tasmida often remain in the shadows and the confines of their homes toiling day in and day out, caring for their families. Without being able to speak the local language, refugee women find themselves trapped in their homes, dependent on their male counterparts for shopping and going around.

The language barrier hinders them from upskilling. Further, the limitation in language pushes female refugees to isolate themselves and consequently most develop low self-esteem. But this dependency on their husbands or fathers is detrimental when presented with obstacles. On occasions of emergencies or cases of abuse, refugee women would be tongue-tied and speaking to the authorities is a matter of survival.

### **Understanding the Community's Vulnerability**

The state of Selangor houses the largest community of refugees and asylum-seekers at 70,101 people and an unknown number of refugees have settled in Selayang, Selangor.

The Selayang constituency, a semi-urban area, has been on the news with ongoing disputes between the refugee community and their Malaysian neighbours in the area.

The plights of the marginalised community are often overshadowed by persisting xenophobia. But as with the mantra of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), no one should be left behind, and the Selayang constituency has placed this at the very core of its social projects.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) brought in the Association of Social Service and Community Development (PSPK) owing to their extensive work with different demographics in Selayang.

Through talks between members of APPGM-SDG, the Selayang Member of Parliament (MP) Tuan William Leong and the founder of PSPK Rev. Henry Sandanam, women from the refugee community were chosen as beneficiaries to upskill their language abilities.

The women in the community are vulnerable and in need of empowerment. They lack interaction with the surrounding society due to the language barrier.

But the refugee women live in a male-dominated community where husbands have the final say in the household. Male family members were approached to allow the women's participation in the workshops. In some cases, daily subsistence such as groceries were provided to exemplify support.



### Language Ties us Together

The 15 selected Rohingya refugee women who are UNHCR card holders unanimously wanted to learn Bahasa Malaysia rather than English. The participants believed proficiency in Bahasa would assist them in integrating better into Malaysian society.

*Learning the [local] language is essential to end loneliness, and enable refugees to rebuild their lives through work, volunteering and socialising with their neighbours.*

- Stephen Hale, the chief executive of UK- based NGO, Refugee Action

A ten-session program was tailored for the Rohingya women to meet their everyday needs. A greater emphasis was given to spoken Bahasa Malaysia to help them assimilate and converse with locals better.

Before the programme began, participants were assessed by a UniKL trainer and a facilitator from the refugee community who is proficient in Bahasa Malaysia was selected to make learning easier to grasp.

At the end of the programme, a speaking test conducted by a UniKL trainer found that the participants could confidently converse in Bahasa Malaysia.

But, what's more important, was the participants' improved relationship with the neighbourhood. Previously, communication was difficult due to language barriers. After the programme, the women could connect with their neighbours better and Bahasa Malaysia was the bridge.

As daughters, mothers and wives of the refugee community practise their newly-found language skills, more opportunities are on the horizon for them.

*Women in the refugee community need support catered to their needs and their stories. That's how you elevate them and this creates a ripple effect that ensures equality and prevents women from continuing to be dependent on their male counterparts.*

– Davina Devarajan, president and executive director of Women For Refugees

This project is an example of parties that get involved by understanding the community's needs. The refugee women who have mastered the language are well-prepared to step out of their comfort zone to care for their families, provide for their needs and be a catalyst for change in their communities.

---

#### **SOURCES:**

1. International Catholic Migration Commission. Empowering Rohingya Women Through English Language Learning. [Link](#)
2. UNHCR Malaysia. (2022). Figures at a glance. [Link](#)
3. Refugee Action. (2017). New Research: English Language Provision 'Not Fit For Purpose' As Refugees Wait Up To Three Years To Start Lessons. [Link](#)
4. Wiki Impact. (2022). Spotlight On: Davina Devarajan & Arissa Jemaima Ikram, Co-Founders Of Women For Refugees. [Link](#)

## A Vigil against Drugs in Kubang Pasu

One of the most controversial farming enterprises on the rise in Kedah is ketum (kratom) cultivation. The state government has been seeking approval to legalise the plant for export. The plant has already been widely grown in the state, and some have even been smuggled out of the state. There are plenty of arguments for and against its legislation for medicinal purposes. But, the villagers in Kubang Pasu can vouch that daun ketum has been a constant in the community.



Kubang Pasu, and many other towns in Kedah, have been struggling with drug addiction and the crimes that ensue from its abuse such as robbery. In 2020, 2,372 were caught due to their involvement in drugs.

The foray of Kedahan youth into drug abuse is *ketum*, easily found in Kubang Pasu. Their involvement was often fuelled by its medicinal purpose, but soon, it grew into attempting other illegal substances. But, there is also an unspoken normalised sentiment watching youth entering and leaving rehabilitation centres there.

### **The Lure of being Close to the Thai Border**

Geographically, Kubang Pasu is located close to the border of Thailand, making smuggling illegal substances easier in the district. The native ketum plant is cheap and widely available in the district, thus, it is commonly consumed by labourers in paddy fields and rubber plantations. However, there are long-term health and social consequences of drug abuse that have gone unnoticed in the community.

Stepping into the scene, the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) sought to understand the causes and possible factors of rampant drug addiction in the district. It involved discussions with stakeholders and understanding the depth of the drug abuse issue in Kubang Pasu. The solution provider, Jawatankuasa Pemulihan Dadah Daerah Kubang Pasu (JKPD), proposed a comprehensive solution to tackle the issue in all aspects.

*Prevention is better than cure has been the motivation of the solution provider to create awareness of the danger of the use of drugs. The project has made inroads into the minds of the students to avoid falling into the trap of a serious addiction.*

- APPGM-SDG team





## Early Intervention through Communicating with Schools

The solution provider, JKPD, ran nine extensive programmes targeted at every layer of society in Kubang Pasu. One of the programmes involved students in 83 identified at-risk primary and secondary schools in the area. Two schools in the district were selected to exhibit drug-related information. Meanwhile, 374 students took part in drug abuse awareness competitions.

The competition included creating anti-drug posters and producing a short video promoting anti-drug abuse messages. The competitions were an attempt to ensure students understood the core of the campaigns conducted by JKPD.

*The hallway provides information about various types of drugs and a reminder that our children are exposed to various types of drugs. As parents, we'll be more aware of the possible substance our children can potentially be addicted to.*

- Nurun Ehsan Abdullah, 41, Headmaster in Kubang Pasu





The awareness campaign also extends to households in Kubang Pasu through the “Program Keluarga Bahagia Tanpa Dadah”, a forum that addresses the importance of parenting, how to detect drug usage in youths and how parents can tackle the issue at home.

*The forum showed us the dangers of drugs and the consequences of drug dealing. It highlights the importance of protecting our family members and being vigilant.*

- Nurun Ehsan Abdullah, 41, Headmaster in Kubang Pasu

### **Learning from Rehabilitating Addicts**

Drug awareness, however, should also include drug addicts who are recovering.

*All layers of society should be tackled from small children with families to educational institutions, the workplace, recovering addicts, also society’s stigma. The issue of drug usage, abuse and addiction should be taken seriously.*

- Datuk Seri Zulkifli Abdullah, Director General of the National Anti-Drug Agency (AADK)

Recovering drug addicts sometimes fall into relapse due to cold treatment from the community, breaking their spirits and preventing them from turning over a new leaf. Because of this, JKPD included recovering drug addicts as part of their outreach programme, including food aid provided to 30 drug addicts and their families. By building a bond with the recovering addicts and providing them with information on the dangers of continuing their habits, relapse is less likely to reoccur.

*Outreach programmes for former addicts like me should be conducted often. Through the programme, I learned how to maintain my recovery and not fall back on drugs.*

- Muhamad Amirul Faez Bin Zainal Abidin, 31, a former drug addict in Kubang Pasu



### Small Steps for a Bigger Leap

Solving the drug addiction issue in Kubang Pasu requires the involvement of all responsible authorities to cut the illegal supply passing through the border and into the district. At the same time, ketum planting in the villages requires stricter regulations. However, the mentioned solutions would necessitate more time and effort from multiple stakeholders.

But the first step taken by APPGM-SDG and the solution provider, JKPD, has planted seeds of awareness, opening the eyes of the local communities to how drug addictions could harm the familial institution and the community as a whole. The commendable thinking of including all layers of society is necessary to tackle the issue. It emphasises the responsibility each one of us has in combating rampant drug addiction, not just in Kubang Pasu but nationwide.

# 26

## Understanding the Long-standing Predicaments of Communities in Ipoh Barat

The city of Ipoh is teeming with colonial charm. Over the years, Ipoh has attracted tourists to wander its cityscape. But the increasing modernity of the city is paradoxical to the existing inequalities in parts of Ipoh, namely in the federal constituency of Ipoh Barat.



Years of unresolved problems with land ownership had bred bigger issues involving poverty of the marginalised communities, mushrooming squatters and recently, an increasing rate of unemployment.

The leadership seats have changed their owners in different political terms. But the brunt faced by the affected residents in Spooner Road, Kampung Tai Lee and Sungai Pari flat has not been resolved.

All Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia- Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) and Ipoh Barat's Member Of Parliament, M. Kulasegaran, went down to the ground to see and hear for themselves the longstanding concerns of the communities.

*I was fortunate to have an organisation such as APPGM-SDG visit my constituency in Ipoh Barat to survey and identify the needs of the urban poor which was in line with sustainable development goals of poverty eradication.*

- M. Kulasegaran, Ipoh Barat's Member of Parliament

Putting words into actions, a solution provider, Persatuan Kebajikan Komuniti dan Dialog, who are familiar with the issues plaguing the communities were brought in. The solution provider's responsibility includes pushing the agenda of addressing the community's concerns to the local council.

### **Squatters in a Limbo**

The federal constituency of Ipoh Barat has a pressing matter that the Perak state government is yet to tackle. In 2011, there were at least 14,900 squatters in the state. One such settlement is Kampung Tai Lee.

The village has been in place since 1914 and houses marginalised communities in Ipoh. Most of the residents are of Indian descent. Their living conditions left much to be desired, with no access to water supply and being prone to flash flooding.

The reality is the squatter was built on privately-owned land and in 1997, 75 families who are the third generation of Kampung Tai Lee residents were faced with the threat of eviction.

There have been empty promises made about relocating the villagers to a new settlement, but none have been fulfilled. If eviction occurs, these villagers would be homeless.

*Most of us are poor and old and we cannot afford to pay RM195,000 for either a flat or a condominium unit.*

*- DJ Thevasigamoney, a resident at Kampung Tai Lee.*

Another similar issue is faced by the residents of Spooner Road, whose settlements have been sold to a private developer. Relocation is imminent but no concrete plans have been given to the residents of Spooner Road.

Alarmingly, there has been news that residents would have to fork out RM180,000 to be able to secure housing. The residents of Spooner Road consist of labourers and those who are on daily wages, paying exorbitant monthly rent or buying a house would be the last of their concerns.



### Limited Job Opportunities for the Youth

The pandemic arguably has caused more retrenchment and a lack of job opportunities for skilled youths. The state of Perak saw a jump in its unemployment rate from 3.4% in 2019 to 4.8% in 2020.

Youth and single mothers in Ipoh Barat have lost their livelihood during the prolonged lockdowns. Those who dabbled in business had to close down due to recorded losses.

Most have turned to the gig economy to make a living, where the gig economy has only seen a boom following the recent pandemic. Despite the proactive measures taken by the unemployed youths and single mothers working as e-hailing drivers or freelance delivery workers, the industry may not be able to cushion their future.

Alternatively, youths have moved to neighbouring cities of Kuala Lumpur and Penang to make a living.

*Perak used to be the largest and richest state in the country before independence. However, it had the highest outward net migration from the 1980s to 1990s, when young people sought better job opportunities in Kuala Lumpur and later, Selangor.*

- Chai Sen Tyng, a researcher at Universiti Putra Malaysia's Malaysian Research Institute on Ageing



The increasing outward migration poses a problem to the state's economy and calls for more job prospects. It is also a necessity to assist the youth in Ipoh and the state itself in boosting entrepreneurship.

*Because of this, states like Perak and Penang need to start creating more specialised jobs and [upgrade their economies] to become less labour-intensive, and to cater to the learned young generation.*

- Chai Sen Tyng, a researcher at Universiti Putra Malaysia's Malaysian Research Institute on Ageing





At the same time, with more youth leaving Ipoh and the state of Perak, a higher proportion of the ageing population is left to fend for themselves.

*The trend has led to the state bleeding out its younger population, hence naturally increasing the percentage of old people.*

- Chai Sen Tyng, a researcher at Universiti Putra Malaysia's Malaysian Research Institute on Ageing

### **When Golden Years are Tarnished**

15.3% of Perak's population is aged 60 or older, the highest in Malaysia in 2020. The state of Perak has branded itself in the past as a haven for retirees due to its pristine surroundings and slower lifestyle. However, the existing senior citizens residing in Harmoni flats, for example, are struggling to survive.

*Another case involved a man staying at the Harmoni flats in Buntong. His wife was disabled and his 26-year-old son had a permanent disability and was bedridden. The family survived on money from the welfare department.*

- Faiz, a former squatter and a volunteer in Ipoh

However, it was also found by Persatuan Kebajikan Komuniti dan Dialog and APPGM-SDG that aids aren't easy to secure. Some senior citizens were hindered by their illiteracy and were unable to travel to welfare offices to claim their benefits.

### **Mapping the Socioeconomic Struggles and Challenges**

Part of the action plan discussed by APPGM-SDG and conducted by the solution provider is to document the socio-economic standing of the residents affected by land housing and insecure income gains. At the same time, the role of Persatuan is to knock on the doors of responsible departments to ensure the ball is rolling.



*The survey and meet-up have highlighted significant documented data on the social economic life of the poor related to ownership of land, housing, income and healthcare. This paved a way for a meaningful dialogue with the authorities.*

*- M. Kulasegaran, Ipoh Barat's Member of Parliament*



There is a sense of fatigue amongst the residents especially the dwelling squatters as their issue has been heard by many yet no solution was set in stone. The dwellers have lived in a state of worry as their houses could be bulldozed at any time over the years.

There is also the concern that the youth of tomorrow are still struggling to make ends meet and senior citizens who are entitled to a comfortable retirement are living in poverty.

But with the upcoming agency dialogue gathering residents and different agencies as a platform, we may see a conclusion to the longstanding problems of dwellers, youth and senior citizens in Ipoh Barat.

#### **SOURCES:**

1. *The Star*. (2011). MP wants squatter issue resolved. [Link](#)
2. *M.Kula Segaran*. (2013). Will Perak squatter issue ever be solved? *Malaysiakini*. [Link](#)
3. *I.Loh*. (2019). 556 Buntong squatters want state to resolve land issues. *The Star*. [Link](#)
4. *Department of Statistics Malaysia*. (2021). Statistics At A Glance: Perak. [Link](#)
5. *D.Pfordten*. (2020). Malaysia's states set to rapidly age as they fail to retain young talent. *The Star*. [Link](#)
6. *M.Mokhtar*. (2021). Malaysia's Angels Of Mercy. *Sinchew*. [Link](#)

## New Innovative Gardening to Boost Income and Mental Health for Micro-Entrepreneurs in Kuala Selangor

Kuala Selangor is known for its nature-based tourism attractions such as firefly watching, mangrove forest trails and boating. However, the pandemic severely affected the tourism industry - stunting economic growth, limiting job opportunities and ultimately the livelihood of Kuala Selangor's community. Additionally, the slow start of the endemic phase has seen many youths migrating out of Kuala Selangor.



With the intention of improving the socio-economic standing of communities living in Kuala Selangor, the All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) collaborated with University Selangor and Pertubuhan Alam Sekitar Sejahtera Malaysia (Grass Malaysia).

This partnership brought forth a community empowerment initiative to equip participants with new methods of gardening that can turn into sellable products and also improve mental well-being.

The program ran from August to December 2021 at Kampung Harmoni, Kuala Selangor. Sustained with a funding of RM32,000, the program benefitted 10 women who are trained in the 'Kokedama' method of gardening, digital marketing skills and eco-therapy (the art of de-tressing through gardening).

### **'Kokedama' Gardening and Eco-Therapy**

Unlike other business avenues, this program is a tad unique; specially designed and crafted to train participants in the art of 'kokedama'. Meaning 'moss ball' in Japanese, kokedama is the style of potting up plants and suspending them into a mud ball, coated with soft green moss.

*The kokedama method is not only simple but beautiful. The production of this kokedama is a gardening activity for anyone who does not know how to care for plants on the ground and in pots.*

- Nurainisyamimi Binti Mohd Bistamim, Secretary, Grass Malaysia

Additionally, kokedama is also a houseplant that is best suited in small spaces as it does not require a lot of room to display. Those living in low-cost housing apartments or flats will benefit from having more greens in their homes.

Participants learned to make the kokedama plants that would be eventually sold through different digital platforms as a form of income.

Additionally, the participants were also taught how to use gardening as a form of relaxing and maintaining good mental health. Eco therapy as it is commonly known is a free therapy that improves low moods while promoting relaxation and even relieves stress.

With eco therapy, communities living in urban poverty can benefit and do not need to break the bank to improve their mental health.

16-year-old Nur Farina Ahmad Farid testifies that eco therapy has indeed been a lifesaver through tough times as a student.

*This program has helped me cope with the stress that I have as a student, encouraging me to be more confident when my thoughts are calm.*

- Nur Farina Ahmad Farid, student



### **Digital Marketing to Enhance the Skills Learned**

A side from kokedama and eco-therapy skills, participants also received upskilling in digital marketing methods. They learned how to market and promote their products and services by employing simple poster designing skills and video-making skills.

The participants also learnt to utilise Shopee, an effective online business tool. For this segment, they were taught how to operate Shopee accounts as sellers, and how to incorporate digital marketing into their micro-enterprises.

### **Ensuring Longevity of the Eco-Therapy Program to shape a Well-Rounded Community**

Today, the participants are well on their way to improving their livelihood. The 10 women who have been equipped and trained, now possessed the necessary knowledge. This has enabled them to stand on their own two feet and has given them the confidence to run their business selling kokedama and teaching others how to apply eco-therapy practices.

*For participants 1.0 who have successfully followed the entire program before, Pertubuhan Alam Sekitar Sejahtera Malaysia (Grass Malaysia) has appointed them to be Trainers for the production of this kokedama. This not only helps them generate income, but it develops their knowledge which helps the community.*

- Nurainisyamimi Binti Mohd Bistamim, Secretary, Grass Malaysia

The continuation of such programs is needed as an avenue for economic growth. More organisations play a vital role in reaching out to communities living in poverty, to improve their livelihoods and eventually pull them out of poverty.

*The more we know, the better the chances of our business succeeding. I really hope this program continues, as it can help other budding entrepreneurs.*

- Suzila Umar, participant





#### SOURCES:

1. Raj, P.S. (2020). Prioritise cost of living in economic planning. [Link](#).
2. Selangor Journal. (2022). Selangor spends RM6 mln to promote local destinations with focus on agro, eco-tourism. [Link](#).

## **‘The Room’: Creating a Safe Space for Creativity to Blossom among Youth in Muar**

The youth today is a reflection of our nation’s future tomorrow. However, for youth living in low-income households, the race to succeed is marked with many challenges, some not within their control. eKasih, a database system set up to help poor households in the country, recorded that 4,726 people were in the hardcore poor category in Johor.



*From the figure, 3,926 are Malays followed by Indians (390), Chinese (305) and other ethnicities (105).*

*- Khairin Nisa Ismail @ Md On, Women, Family, Community Development Committee Chairman*

These numbers only account for a fragment of the poverty-stricken communities in Johor. Among them are youths with tremendous talent and skills, yet to be tapped. Although the youth community in Muar, Johor are abundant with talent, it is unfortunate that limited support has hindered the capabilities of the said talents.



## The Room: Muar Youth Hub

In an effort to provide a safe space for these youth, the All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) collaborated with Pudipang Industries, a Muar-based creative movement, focused on areas of creative art, music, entrepreneurship and educational programmes. The project operated with a budget of RM40,000.

Through the collaboration, a youth hub called 'The Room' was set up as a one-stop community youth centre. The goal was to foster talent and allow these youths to express themselves while teaching them new skills. Additionally, APPGM-SDG sought to create harmonious integration among different races in Malaysia.

In 2021, 115 participants benefited from this initiative through 11 sub-programmes organised such as; Rekan, The Wall, Ikrar Perwira, Satria Berbasikal, Step by Step, Rapat Ripta, Padu Beb, Tanah Kita Tanah Syurga, Mari Bercerita, Budak Printing, Sekolah Kita.

*The project has created a space for young people of MUAR from different ethnicities to come together to utilize their time and talents healthily and productively.*

- APPGM-SDG team



For instance, Rekan explored the history of Muar and the developments that took place in recent years. There was also a space for open dialogue between the organisers and the youth who participated. The healthy interaction opened up opportunities for youth to speak about their appreciation of heritage, culture and strong communities.

Other than historical facts, the youth also learnt Silat - an indigenous martial art during the Ikrar Perwira sub-program.

### **Impacting Youth through Different Means**

Over the course of three months, participants attended workshops that most suited their interests.

*Based on all the research that has been done, we have featured 11 sub-programmes from different fields that we feel need to be implemented. This is intended to provide exposure and education to the teenagers here related to the fields they are involved in or are interested in. This is where all 115 participants are separated organically, where they take part in any program related to their field or interest.*

- Mohd Redwan, Programme Director

From street dance to the fields of writing, publishing and performance, the participants were exposed to a vast range of programmes that mostly took place outdoors. To ensure the programmes served their full purpose, experienced mentors from different fields and backgrounds were invited to speak and showcase their knowledge. More than a teaching experience, they sought to inspire the youth with their stories.

For some, being exposed to such a program was a first-time experience, both memorable and needed. Youths of different races also worked together for the betterment of the community.

*This is the first time a discussion has been held between the Chinese and Malay youth communities. Among the things discussed [are] the sustainability of the Muar River, tourism, community, and art. This is very good for the harmony of the multi-racial community in Muar.*

- Kok Keong Tew, participant



Others found the programmes empowering while helping them discover their identities.



*Programmes like this are very beneficial in cultivating interest and empowering the identities of youth. It also serves to dignify our heritage and culture.*

-Syaheed Norazam, participant



### **Ensuring Continuity to Change More Lives**

Further than skills development, the youth hub is a gateway for young people to cultivate their talents, where the potential for a full-fledged career lies. In the long run, it's actually the opportunity to break away from poverty.

Realising the impact such programmes have on youth, Pudipang Industries has decided to implement a second phase of the youth hub.

*This project will be fully implemented at the hub owned by Pudipang Industries and will give a deeper emphasis on sustainable development goals or SDGs.*

- Mohd Redwan, Programme Director



Poverty-stricken youth must be given avenues for a better life. In doing so, poverty no longer defines them, but rather becomes a tale of their past.



**SOURCES:**

- 1.The Star. (2022). Malays make up over 83% of hardcore poor in Johor, says exco member. Link.

# 29

## Creating Awareness of Breast Cancer Among Rural Women in Tawau

There has been an increase in the prevalence of cancer in Malaysia, and one of the most common cancers is breast cancer. According to the Malaysia National Cancer Registry Report (MNCRR) 2012-2016, roughly 34 women out of 100,000 women were diagnosed with breast cancer as compared to the previous interim of 31 women out of 100,000 women.



Even so, the situation in Sabah is dire as breast cancer is particularly prevalent in the state. Sabah recorded the highest percentage of breast cancer compared to other types of cancers.

***Breast cancer is undoubtedly a life-altering disease. It can have a devastating effect on a woman's life. Not only the person involved, it hampers the family too – the husband and the children will also be affected by this deadly disorder. Not only is it physically challenging, but emotionally too.***

- Dr Gan Kean Siong, Lions District Governor

If detected early, breast cancer can be prevented and treated accordingly. But the barriers to most women in rural areas are the lack of awareness and limited access to knowledge and screening facilities. Some have even left their illness unattended and solicited traditional treatment instead.

### **Tackling the High Breast Cancer Prevalence in Tawau**

Although Tawau has made great strides in development, most households in the district rely on the men being the main breadwinner while women stay back to care for family needs. Gender equality is a far cry in this district as households are mostly traditional. Social security then becomes an issue when the women fall sick.

According to the United Nations, women have fewer resources to cope if they have fallen ill as many are less likely to have access to quality healthcare. Most homemakers willingly provide for their families yet place their health in a precarious position.

Armed with the support of the former Tawau Member of Parliament Datuk Christina Liew, who has been vocal in ensuring gender equality in Sabah and nationwide, the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) team went to the ground to tackle the high breast cancer prevalence in the district.

Kinabalu Pink Ribbon, a local NGO championing breast cancer awareness and supporting breast cancer survivors in Sabah was brought in to spearhead an awareness campaign. The “I Wear Pink” month-long campaign was carried out with village women in mind.



## Taking Care of Selfless Women

Since the formation of the Kinabalu Pink Ribbon in Tawau in 2013, the organisation has worked closely with the medical team to promote breast cancer awareness aggressively.

*We work very closely with other medical teams to promote breast cancer awareness aggressively. The response has been very encouraging but some women are still held back for some reasons.*

- Christy Fe Salazar, Kinabalu Pink Ribbon chairperson

Health awareness programmes in rural areas are a community affair. In order to improve the awareness of breast cancer among rural women, respective husbands' and children also need to be educated.

Over 135 participants showed up for the campaigns and health screening, however, not many men were present. Kinabalu Pink Ribbon did not meet the target of 10 men.



*The involvement of men is still low. More has to be done to get men involved in awareness programs.*

- Christy Fe Salazar, Kinabalu Pink Ribbon chairperson

Spouses and children play a crucial role in ensuring women attend annual health screenings and seek proper medical attention when their health is in question.



*It is therefore important for spouses or children to encourage their wives or mothers to consult their family doctor or any qualified doctor as soon as possible if they suspect that something is amiss. Time is a crucial factor.*

- Datuk Christina Liew, former Tawau MP

Despite the setback, the awareness campaign serves as a platform for women in Tawau to express their concerns and questions related to breast cancer prevention and treatment. The programme debunked myths surrounding the disease and highlighted the importance of routine screenings and getting the right treatment immediately.

*With all these, many women out there feel that they are no longer alone and are more open to sharing about this dreaded disease. We suggested methods in breast cancer prevention such as early detection and routine screenings.*

- Christy Fe Salazar, Kinabalu Pink Ribbon chairperson

Professional screening that took place during the campaign successfully detected two individuals with a lump in the breast and they were immediately referred to credible hospitals for follow-up.



## Prevention is Better than Cure

The chairperson of Kinabalu Pink Ribbon, Christy Fe Salazar, believes that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the lack of rural screening. Most women in rural Tawau are often in critical condition upon presentation, making treatment ineffective.

The odds are stacked against the women in Sabah when seeking medical assistance, especially with limited road access, communication lines, and low literacy rates among rural women.

*Our mission is to raise awareness in our community about the importance of early detection with the right medical treatment. Education and keeping a positive mindset are the key components and powerful weapons in the fight against this deadly disease.*

- Christy Fe Salazar, Kinabalu Pink Ribbon chairperson



But, with the ongoing awareness campaign and support by the local members of parliament and APPGM-SDG, this education and awareness is the first step in reducing the number of fatalities and improving treatment care for breast cancer patients in Sabah.

*Accessibility is definitely something the Health Ministry needs to address. We see progress in urban areas where more women are screened earlier, but in rural areas where you don't have easy accessibility to mammograms and diagnosis, we aren't seeing a real shift.*

- Dr Saunthari Somasundaram, president of National Cancer Society Malaysia (NCSM)



### SOURCES:

1. National Cancer Registry (2019). Malaysia National Cancer Registry Report (MNCRR) 2012-2016. [Link](#)
2. S. Mat Salleh. (2019). Breast cancer most prevalent in Sabah. *The Borneo Post*. [Link](#)
3. UN Women. (2020). Women And Poverty. [Link](#)
4. E. Anjumin. (2021). Breast cancer patients advised to seek early treatment. *New Straits Times*. [Link](#)
5. Stringer. (2022). Tawau Kinabalu Pink Ribbon roadshow targets rural women. *Borneo Daily Bulletin*. [Link](#)
6. S. Indramalar. (2019). 1 in 30 Malaysian women will have breast cancer, so get checked now. *The Star*. [Link](#)

Based on the People pillar of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), all should fulfil their potential equally and with dignity. But to include everyone in Malaysia also necessitates the core question of what communities need to accelerate their progress.



The committee members of the All-Party Parliamentary Groups Malaysia for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM- SDG) and the Members of Parliament engage with solution providers in implementing best-fitting methods to tackle local community issues. No two solutions are the same in participating constituencies; a site visit and community dialogues are often at the heart of the projects.

A prime example is the community dialogue in Pendang, Kedah, conducted by the University Utara Malaysia and the APPGM-SDG committee highlighting the intricacies of the community living in the rural areas of Pendang. The Kedah-Siamese farmers, peneroka Felda (explorer) and Indian female breadwinners working to sustain their families through rubber tapping are part of the diverse demographic of Pendang.

## **Empowering Marginalised Women Nationwide**

According to UNICEF findings in 2017, more domestic violence cases were reported in rural areas. As gender inequality remains prevalent in the community, the incidences of domestic violence are left unaccounted for.

The APPGM-SDG journey takes them to the areas of Pensiangan, Sabah, where women and children are often silent victims of incidences of violence. Through Sabah Action Women Association (SAWO), the Murut and Lundayeh's youth and women are more open to addressing the existing gender inequalities in their communities.

But the women in urban areas of Malaysia aren't exempted from falling behind. Rohingya refugee women in Selayang rely on their male family members on a day-to-day basis. The refugee women were limited by language barriers when travelling or running errands.

## **Lifting Orang Asli Communities from Incidences of Poverty**

As of 2017, at least 13.8% of the Malaysian population of 32 million people are Orang Asli (OA).

With development accelerating, the OA community are trailing behind as many are earning below RM 4,000 a month. At least 54,600 or 99.2% of the OA community have remained in the B40 category.

Through the discussion of APPGM-SDG, grassroots organisations such as Yayasan Kajian dan Pembangunan Masyarakat (YKPM) and academicians; employment and earning income can be done right at their doorstep.

The novel mushroom farming project conducted on five Orang Asli men from Jeli, Kelantan, provided a fast income turnover of between RM300 to RM500 per month per person. A two-fold increase from their original income.

*Learning the [local] language is essential to end loneliness, and enable refugees to rebuild their lives through work, volunteering and socialising with their neighbours.*

- Stephen Hale, the chief executive of UK- based NGO, Refugee Action

Through Bahasa Malaysia workshops conducted by PSPK, the women have more autonomy and are confident to leave their houses for grocery runs or socialise with their neighbours.

*Mushrooms have been selected for this project because they have a shorter time to get results, hence generating income quicker for the participants. Mushrooms are also easy to monitor.*

- Dr Noorhafizoh Saidan

On the other hand, the OA youth in Sungai Olak, Bentong in Pahang are exposed to farming skills and knowledge for the first time. Five OA households successfully attended the capacity-building workshops and planted organic crops. The result was a domino effect of being able to provide new clothes to their families and being able to save up.



*Learning the [local] language is essential to end loneliness, and enable refugees to rebuild their lives through work, volunteering and socialising with their neighbours.*

- Stephen Hale, the chief executive of UK - based NGO, Refugee Action

## **Transforming the Lives of Women Directly from Home**

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, low-income households grappled to stay afloat. Malaysia's poverty rate increased from 5.6% in 2019 to 8.4% in 2020.

Women in Malaysia are an untapped resource, as the female labour participation rate in Malaysia is considerably low at 55.9% in 2020. But in times of crisis, they have risen to the challenge of putting food on the table for their families and communities.

As their partners struggled to provide a stable income during the height of the pandemic, women in the household would have to step in and assist where possible. This is the case for Tity, one of the 10 beneficiaries of the entrepreneurship initiative conducted by Persatuan Penduduk Petaling Jaya 2017 (MYPJ) and APPGM-SDG.





*This project has been beneficial for my family and the community. During the pandemic, we cooked and served over 500 meals for the community for two months. During Hari Raya, we (the participants) worked hard to bake and sell cookies, generating profits for our families.*

- Tity, a participant of MYPJ and APPGM-SDG entrepreneurship programme

In another part of Selangor, survivors of domestic violence and single mothers were transformed through the Association of Social Services and Community Development of Gombak (PSPK)'s income generation programme.

Taking a step further, the programme established Bites n' Beans Cafe, a venture that sought to generate income in the long run for the 10 involved participants.

*I come from a poor family and my life was filled with a lot of hardships. My husband was unemployed and I have four children. During those difficult days, we did not have anything to eat or a place to stay. I had no money. I found happiness after finding this PSPK centre. I have food, a place to stay, and a job at the bakery. I feel at ease.*

- I. Aruna, Participant and Baker



#### SOURCES:

1. Utusan Borneo. (2021). Nancy mahu penduduk Parlimen Batang Sadong mendapat pendidikan sempurna. Link
2. The Malaysian Reserve. (2017). Work in Malaysia - an uneven future?. Link.



**BEST PRACTICES IMPACTING THE GRASSROOTS**



# **ENVIRONMENT**



## **LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND**

A gathering of the best recipes from the neighbours to build an inclusive community.

## Regenerating the Earth and Uplifting Orang Asli Communities through Organic Farming

Organic farming has taken an upward trend with a growing interest in healthier food options and sustainable living. This method of farming involves growing and nurturing crops without the use of synthetic based fertilizers and pesticides. When practised long-term, the eco-friendly method promotes regeneration to the land it is cultivated on and its harvest is packed with health benefits for the people that consume it.



Such was the drive behind the Organic Farming project by Yayasan Kajian & Pembangunan Masyarakat (YKPM), an organisation advocating for rural and urban poor communities.

In 2015, YKPM formed OA Organik, a community enterprise working alongside the Orang Asli (OA) communities to cultivate organic farming. The initiative aims to develop a sustainable livelihood and alleviate poverty among the Orang Asli communities.

*OA Organik is a one-of-a-kind Orang Asli shared prosperity farm. Setting up a collective farm enterprise has helped shape a model of shared wealth. People are put before profit and those left behind share fairly in the enterprise. OA Organik has built fair markets and a bottom-up economy, uplifting the Orang Asli from poverty, unifying and strengthening community action and leadership.*

- Kon Onn Sein, Executive Director of Yayasan Kajian dan Pembangunan Masyarakat (YKPM)

### **Sustainable and Profitable Plans for Sungai Olak Villagers**

The responsibility to uplift marginalised communities in Malaysia involves helping the native people of the land. The All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) felt strongly that YKPM and OA Organik were the right partners in delivering sustainable solutions that are aligned with the culture and traditions of the Orang Asli community, but also forward-thinking in income creation.



To better understand how they could help the Orang Asli community, the team at APPGM-SDG conducted several field visits and interacted and held dialogues with the local Orang Asli community. Doing so allowed them to envision realistic and achievable goals that the community could attain.

Decades ago, farming was a familiar practice among the Orang Asli community dating back to their ancestors - but as time progressed, the younger generation of Orang Asli lost the skills and knowledge of agriculture. Their skill sets diversified to include handicraft making, hunting and hard labour work.

Since farming and agriculture were relatively new skills for the Orang Asli community at Sungai Olak, Bentong, APPGM-SDG and YKPM identified at least 10 Orang Asli families for an organic farming capacity-building workshop.

*Organic farming is the best alternative to conventional farming that uses chemical fertilizers that damage the environment and cause health hazards to consumers. Organic farming contributes to a greener, healthier, and cleaner environment.*

- APPGM-SDG team



The workshop covered modules on organic farming, climate change, and sustainable livelihood. The sessions were designed to be family-friendly and inclusive as women often brought their children to the farm. Hence the workshop saw men, women and children actively participating and gaining new skills in organic farming.

At the end of the program, 5 out of 10 families completed the training from start to finish. This was a reasonable result as the families had to juggle training, household responsibilities and other livelihood activities.

The success of the organic farming training and implementation travelled through the grapevine as the Orang Asli communities in Ulu Gumum and Melai, Pahang caught onto it.

## **Tilling the Land and Earning some Cash**

Since organic crops are priced at a premium, the Orang Asli farmers were able to profit more from their harvest.

*Previously, having school clothes to wear was a struggle. We had to wear torn clothes. Since planting the vegetables, my children have had money to get new clothes. We also started savings.*

- Seliah, a participant in the Organic Farming Project

Other members of the Orang Asli community have also reaped the benefits of their organic harvest. When the farming project took off, some families were able to purchase basic necessities for their families. Others had some extra cash to repair their houses and purchase better furniture.

*We could provide equipment for our children like their schooling materials. We don't experience many hardships like we used to. Before, we were quite stressed as we were dependent on our rubber plantation that isn't wide or enough.*

- Haniz, a participant in the Organic Farming Project

## **Ensuring the Longevity of the Organic Farming Project**

This program has shown evident success where the Orang Asli can garner an income to help their families.

As we see that lives are made better through sustainable projects such as these, it is the duty of locals and organisations to serve the Orang Asli communities while leaving a positive impact on the environment.



*It is important to support the Orang Asli to enable them to develop a green economy and combat climate change.* ✦

- Kon Onn Sein, Executive Director of Yayasan Kajian dan Pembangunan Masyarakat (YKPM)



**SOURCES:**

- 1.OA Organik. (2022). OA Organik - Creating a Shared Prosperity for the Orang Asli. Link.
- 2.The Star. Two Malaysian social organisations are improving the lives of Penan and Orang Asli communities.Link.

## Preserving the Tanjung Piai Biodiversity by Managing the Rampant Waste Problem

Tanjung Piai, Johor at the southern tip of the Asian continent is rich in biodiversity. It has been gazetted as a National Park worthy of conservation due to its teeming mangrove swamp. But the struggle to keep it pristine has remained challenging.



Over the years, it has been affected by rapid development. Irresponsible nature trawlers and beach-goers have resulted in a new problem leaving marginalised communities with a problem - that is waste. One village, in particular, is Kampung Melayu Benteng, where residents have been staying on what remains of a mangrove swamp for the last 40 years.



The population consisting of fishermen and coastal villagers who rely on the sea observed their provisions have been affected by various land reclamations or tambak laut projects. What's worse, the community of 45 families and 29 homes have lived with a lack of proper waste disposal and management systems. Adding to the dilemma is the oceanic waste that flows underneath their houses.

### **The Waste Problem**

In addition to fishery, the Tanjung Piai constituency is gearing towards sustainable eco-tourism to unlock further economic opportunities for its residents. But, with trash floating on the ocean water and the emanating stench - the pressing matter of waste management needs to be addressed.

*Apart from rubbish being dumped everywhere in the sea, there is also waste littering the jetty areas and villages. Such a scenario actually spoils the scenery and can affect the image of the area in the eyes of tourists.*

- Shiun Chan Teck, a villager in Kampung Air Masin, Tanjung Piai

In 2019, in light of the small election in Tanjung Piai, residents lamented the dire need for solutions to their problems. Residents have protested and petitioned for changes, and previous remediation programmes have not tackled the issue adequately. Some have even expressed that they are more than happy to work together with relevant parties to ensure their home is clean again.

*The MPs and responsible government agencies must take the initiative to carry out gotong-royong activities and so on to ensure that the tourist hotspots are clean.*

- Ah Wong, Tanjung Piai resident

## Cleaning up Together, for the Future

True to their words, the residents of Kampung Kukup were more than willing to participate in an awareness campaign and clean up their homes together with different agencies.

On World Cleanup Day in 2020, after the All Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia on Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) team had a discussion with the community leader, Impactlution together with at least 50 volunteers from Trash Heroes and Heng Hiap Industries conducted a gotong-royong alongside the villagers. In total, 369.8 kg of waste were cleared with most of the composition being general waste.

The inappropriate waste management in Kampung Melayu Benteng resulted in the community living in sub-par conditions. With the initial gotong-royong, the community is living in a better state.

However, it does not end there. Impactlution is currently conducting a long-term waste audit by segregating the collected rubbish. The team is in the process of finding the main culprit for polluting the area and the origin of waste to formulate a solution that could prevent pollution from reoccurring.

Also, Impactlution's Director, Mohd Faisal Abdul Rani has bigger plans on the horizon. To him, trash when treated right can become a source of income.





***Waste such as glass, beverage cans, wood and plastic waste can provide a source of income if recycled.***

*- Mohd Faisal Abdul Rani, Impactlution's director*

However, considering the villagers of Kampung Melayu Benteng have been staying on mangrove swamps with limited waste management, the involvement of relevant authorities remains desirable.

***We started in Kampung Melayu Benteng and the programme will be expanded to water villages in the Kukup Laut area with the hope that the issue of dumping can be resolved with the cooperation of all parties.***

*- Mohd Faisal Abdul Rani, Impactlution's director*

With the promising changes observed in the pilot project at Kampung Melayu Benteng, Impactlution is keen to expand its programme to neighbouring villages with a final goal of raising the status of Kukup as an eco-tourism site worthy of its National Park status. The small step of cleaning oceanic waste and installing better waste facilities is the first step to uplifting the livelihood of the villagers who rely on their catch of the day.

#### **SOURCES:**

- 1.C.Loo. (2020). *UN roundtable shines spotlight on extreme poverty in Malaysia. The Vibes.* [Link](#)
- 2.K.A.Mohd Amin. (2019). *Penghujung benua Asia kini terancam pencemaran sampah?* Sinar Harian. [Link](#)
- 3.Ministry of Environment and Water. (2020). *World Cleanup Day.* [Link](#)
- 4.Kosmo! (2020). *Sampah jana ekonomi setempat.* [Link](#)

## Kampung Kuala Fishermen: Cultivating Sustainable Skills through the Aqua Project

In 2017, there were an estimated 51,608 fishermen in the country. Our source of fresh fish and mouth-watering seafood owes much to the hours of labour and hard work of our local fishermen. But the sad reality is that most of our local fishermen have compromised their quality of life due to low income.



The Malay proverb “kais pagi makan pagi, kais petang makan petang”, or loosely translated as “living from hand to mouth”, illustrates a fisherman’s struggle of putting food on the table daily - and this has been their struggle for many generations.

Most times, the local fishermen have to work twice as much to earn what others make in a day. A career in the seas is no easy feat and comes with lingering concerns and challenges.

*Today's traditional fishermen (coastal fishermen ) are mostly in the poor category, which means their source of income is only enough to live their life. Most of their income is spent and they do not save the income.*

*- Fisherman, Quality of Life for Fisherman focus group respondent.*

### **The Aqua Project: What it's all about**

Realising this, the All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) forged a collaboration between the Research Institute of Marine Biology, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) and the Fisherman Community Organisation.

APPGM-SDG also saw the need to improve the livelihood of fishermen who were affected by the regulations of fishing areas imposed by the state government.

In 2020, the parties involved launched an Aqua Project for 11 young fishermen aged between 19 to 39 years old in Kampung Kuala, Papar located in Sabah. APPGM-SDG awarded RM70,000 to implement the aqua project that ran for 4 months.

The aqua project sought to improve the economic stability of the fishermen by using modern technology. Another aim was to create alternative income sources through fish tank rearing of the ikan siakap (Barramundi). The ikan siakap was chosen due to its high demand in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah along with its potential sales profits.



## Fishermen Committed to a Better Future

Over the course of six days, the participants attended two workshops on the know-how and management of tank fish rearing and an additional mind and behavioural modification workshop to prepare for the venture. The training was practical and hands-on, allowing the men to learn through experience and not just theory.

*What I have learnt from the workshops has opened my eyes to new opportunities.*

- Hermy Bin Ahmad, 30, fisherman and aqua project participant

According to Aminnudin Ibrahim, the head of the aqua project, the fishermen in Kampung Kuala earned between RM30-50 a day depending on the quality and quantity of the catch. On good days, they can earn up to RM80-100 a day - though those days are not as often.



A fisherman's catch and outcome at sea are also highly dependent on weather patterns. Between October and December, the annual monsoon season snatches up their earnings and they are left high and dry.

The aqua project aims to provide different income streams to improve the financial stability of fishermen through fish farming methods. This includes building a fish hatchery.

*This project helped us see other potential ways of gaining profits instead of going out to sea everyday. I hope that this project will be able to sustain more and more young fishermen and people [young fishermen] will join us.*

- Halim bin Numan, 48, a fisherman and aqua project participant

### **Renewing the Hopes of Fishermen**

In the near future, the aqua project hopes to reach more fishermen.

According to Aminnudin, a hydroponic farming project is in the works. Hydroponic farming is sustainable soilless gardening that requires less water but guarantees yield.

What's fascinating is that hydroponic farming can be cultivated all year long, generating a stable additional income for the fishermen.

*The participants are also planning to start hydroponics farming to generate their side incomes from the fish tank systems.*

- Aminnudin Ibrahim, head of the aqua project

In the meantime, the public can support Kampung Kuala's fishermen by purchasing fresh local fish and seafood.



*I also hope once this project has become successful, more people will know Kampung Kuala and come here not just to go fishing but also to buy fresh fish from us.*

- Hermy Bin Ahmad, 30, a fisherman and aqua project participant



**SOURCES:**

1. The Malaysian Reserve. (2017). Work in Malaysia - an uneven future?. [Link](#).
2. The Star. (2022). RM150mil allocated for transformation of fishermen. [Link](#).
3. UMN. (2022). Small-scale hydroponics. [Link](#).

# 34

## Youths in Pulau Teluk Renjuna Reaping the Benefits of the Multipurpose Tree

Plagued by poverty, environmental pollution and a lack of access to proper infrastructure for the most vulnerable in the community, Kelantan's reputation amongst the mainstream media is rather abysmal. Tumpat, a federal constituency in Kelantan was highlighted as one of the poorest districts in Malaysia, reporting a 12.5% absolute poverty rate in 2019.



On the island of Teluk Renjuna, part of Tumpat, lives a secluded community of about 2,000 villagers who are cut off from major towns and have limited access to basic amenities. As a result of the seclusion, many households in that village live in poverty. The young generation of Pulau Teluk Renjuna lack the employment opportunities needed to pull them out of poverty.

Kelantan's unemployment rate has also been on the incline over the years, from a stagnant rate of 4.0% in 2018 and 2019 to 4.3% in 2020. The increase in the unemployment rate sees that there is a lack of effective measures to provide employment opportunities for the younger generation.

### **The Humble Coconut**

The coconut tree has been described as the “tree with a thousand uses”, or “pokok seribu guna”. Each part of the coconut tree has its use, from the fronds to its husks. However, the villagers of Pulau Teluk Renjuna have overlooked the potential the coconut husks could bring. Many have been burning the coconut husks when the fibrous layer has seen rising demands in the agriculture sector as coco peat.

In recent years, the fibrous layer has been repurposed into coco peat, which has seen growing demand as soil for agriculture.

Working together with the community centre in Tumpat, the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) recognises the potential of the husks that have been disposed of by the villagers in Pulau Teluk Renjuna.

With the right tools, coconut husks can be transformed into revenue-generating products benefitting the unemployed youths on the island.

In the past, the villagers have also burnt the coconut husks, leading to air pollution in the area. As such, the coco peat processing project also aims to combat the improper disposal of coconut husks that have been taking place on the island.

## Repurposing Coconut Husks

The production of coco peat is not new in Pulau Teluk Renjuna; in the past, there was a similar attempt to generate income via the heavily disposed coconut husks. However, the initial coconut husk crushing machine was unable to keep up with the increasing demands.

Through the support of APPGM-SDG, new machinery was brought in and opened job opportunities to ten youths consisting of males and females while also training them on how to utilise the machinery. Today, 400 sacks are produced per day.



*A well-operated machine can normally produce 200 sacks per day. Our daily production target is 400 sacks per day with two coir (coconut husk) crushing machines operating simultaneously.*

*- Che Din Bin Mustafa, programme coordinator*


At a market price of RM8 per sack, the coco peat production earns RM3,200 daily. However, there are hiccups along the way, the previously owned machinery is prone to breaking down and additional costs were used to ensure they would run smoothly. At the same time, there was an issue with transporting the disposed-of coir to the processing centre, requiring a jetty to be built.

## Securing Employment for Youths in Pulau Teluk Renjuna

The villagers of fishermen rely on daily wages with an increasingly uncertain catch. Most youths follow in the footsteps of their parents. But many more are unemployed due to the lack of opportunities in Pulau Teluk Renjuna.

Some of the youths in the past had to travel in a boat to work in the nearby towns.

*I am very grateful because with the job opportunity given to me I am no longer unemployed. I no longer need to go on a boat to become a labourer on the mainland because the income I get on this island is the same as what I earned while working on the mainland.* - Participant



Through establishing a coco peat processing centre, the youths are bringing back income to their families and leading a more independent life.

*I am grateful that I'm able to work in the village. This allows me to take care of my parents.* - Participant



At the same time, the coco peat processing initiative has sparked awareness amongst the younger generation on the harms of burning coconut husks previously practised in the community.

*I am very happy because before I only saw these fibres being burned openly and causing air pollution. Now the coconut coir is successfully processed and could benefit others.* - Participant



Others have seen the economic potential coconut waste has, recognising that when repurposed correctly, the “waste” could bring a steady stream of income.



*This work has opened my eyes to the fact that waste material can actually bring a very high demand in the market.* ✨

- Participant

## **The Start of Something New**

The market demand for coco peat has been high in the past years, and the organiser of the coco peat programme in Tumpat hopes for its continuity. The coco peat processing in Pulau Teluk Renjuna has seen exponential growth in terms of income stream, and the personal development of the participants. And because of this, there are windows of opportunity for it to become a full-fledged industry.

*My hope is that this program continues and more youths can work in this sector. Because the demand for coco peat is very high in the market, hopefully, it opens up more space and opportunities for local residents to build careers and take advantage of natural resources that have been wasted so far.*

- Che Din Bin Mustafa, programme coordinator ✨

The coco peat processing programme is just the beginning of major changes in Pulau Teluk Renjuna. The involvement of APPGM-SDG sees poverty being tackled by utilising the rising market demands to create projects that would provide boundless growth potential and sustainability.

Undeniably, the villagers are still facing a lack of infrastructure, demonstrating that poverty is multidimensional, and eradicating it requires multiple hands to be a part of its solution.



## PLANET: There is No Better Time than Now to Safeguard Our Natural Assets

As we make more room and advance in development as a nation, our natural resources, ecosystem and diversity are often overlooked. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) through its Planet pillar is determined to safeguard our earth from degrading further. As a nation, we are bestowed with incredible natural resources and natural landscapes that are primed for tourism. Malaysia is known to many as a nature-lovers paradise. But at the same time, our jungles and seas are the sources of food and income for coastal, indigenous and rural communities.



The ancestors of Orang Asli and Orang Asal are prime examples of sustainably managing natural resources. Greed was never in their dictionary, and the communities took what was necessary from the jungle. But over the years, these communities have fallen behind, as developments encroached into private and natural spaces.



## The Cost of Development and Marketing Tourism

It was not just footprints left behind by tourists. Some irresponsible trawlers would dispose of waste. The cost of developing resorts is felt more by the environment. But not all pollution derives from travellers and residue of development sometimes; it is also due to limited infrastructure for the marginalised in society. This was the case in Kampung Melayu Benteng, Kukup, Johor.

45 families have been staying on what remains of a mangrove swamp for the last 40 years. The community consisting of fishermen and coastal villagers have been affected by various land reclamations and lived with a lack of proper waste disposal. Through the work of the solution provider, Impactlution and All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG), the community is living in a better condition.

But, that is just the start, as the responsibility of taking care of the environment should be shared by all parties involved.

## When Catch of the Day Depends on the Weather

The delicious seafood feast we have from time to time can be costly. But the local fishermen who catch them often work twice as hard to earn an income.

*Today's traditional fishermen (coastal fishermen) are mostly in the poor category, which means their source of income is only enough to live their life. Most of their income is spent and they do not save the income.*

- Fisherman, Quality of Life for Fisherman focus group respondent

A career at sea is highly dependent on weather patterns. Between October and December, the annual monsoon season snatches up their earnings, and they are left high and dry. Now, there's another denominator that challenges fishermen - climate change.

The increasing temperature leading to warmer seas, the decaying coral reefs, oceanic waste and overfishing are all factors jeopardising the environment and a fisherman's ability to bring home a good catch.

The fishermen of Kuala Papar, Sabah, struggle to make a decent earning as their catch a day would only provide them with RM30 - RM50 and on good days, RM80 - RM100.



The aqua farming project conducted by APPGM-SDG, Research Institute of Marine Biology, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) and the Fisherman Community Organisation provides an alternative method of earning for 11 fishermen through building a barramundi (siakap) fish hatchery. The project led to a fish hatchery built and fish farming using modern technology, reducing the need to fish in the sea. Shortly, the committee members are looking to establish hydroponic farming as an all-year-round income generation for the fishermen in Papar.

*This project helped us see other potential ways of gaining profits instead of going out to sea everyday. I hope that this project will be able to sustain more and more young fishermen and people [young fishermen] will join us.*

- Halim bin Numan, 48, a fisherman and aqua project participant

## **Protecting the Welfare of Our Indigenous Communities**

Decades ago, the community relied on nature for sustenance. Now, the farming skills among the younger generation of Orang Asli (OA) communities have only eroded. The OA youth hone their skills in commercial works such as handicrafts and hard labour work.

APPGM-SDG and grassroots organisations, Yayasan Kajian dan Pembangunan Masyarakat (YKPM) conducted capacity-building workshops for the OA communities.

OA communities in Sungai Olak, Bentong in Pahang are returning to their roots through organic farming. The project has not only provided better income and food security for their families but also regenerated the forest they called home.

*It is also important to support the Orang Asli to enable them to develop a green economy and combat climate change.*

- Kon Onn Sein, Executive Director of Yayasan Kajian dan Pembangunan Masyarakat (YKPM)

**BEST PRACTICES IMPACTING THE GRASSROOTS**



# **PART 3:**

## **DIRECTORY OF SOLUTION PROVIDERS**



### **LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND**

A gathering of the best recipes from the neighbours to build an inclusive community.



## **Persatuan Penduduk Petaling Jaya 2017 (MyPJ)**

### **Petaling Jaya, Selangor**

**Project Title:** Women Economic Empowerment Programme - By Setting up Soup Kitchen in PPR Desa Mentari

**Funding Allocated:** RM20,000

**Email:** jfkphang@gmail.com



## **INSPEK, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Kampus Jeli**

### **Jeli, Kelantan**

**Project Title:** The Sustainable Oyster Mushroom Farming among youth and housewives of indigenous people at Sg. Rual, Jeli.

**Funding Allocated:** RM30,000

**Email:** hafizoh.s@umk.edu.my



## **Right Track Education Sdn Bhd**

### **Hulu Rajang, Sarawak**

**Project Title:** Membaik Pulih Telefon Bimbit (Kawasan Tubau)

**Funding Allocated:** RM40,000

**Email:** ragu.msai@gmail.com



## **Economic & Financial Policy Institute, University Utara Malaysia**

### **Pendang, Kedah**

**Project Title:** SDG Solution Dialogue & Action Plan for Pendang Parliamentary Community

**Funding Allocated:** RM28,800

**Email:** z.zalina@uum.edu.my



## **Pudipang Industries**

### **Muar, Johor**

**Project Title:** The Room (Muar Youth Hub)

**Funding Allocated:** RM40,000

**Email:** fringco9@gmail.com



## **Impact Revolution Enterprise**

### **Tanjung Piai, Johor**

**Project Title:** Litter Clean-Up & Installation of Buy-Back / Recycling Centre to address the Unsustainable Livelihoods & Litter Problem in the Water Settlements

**Funding Allocated:** RM25,000

**Email:** impactlution@gmail.com

7



## People Systems Consultancy

Selayang, Selangor

**Project Title:** Digital Marketing Workshop

**Funding Allocated:** RM15,000

**Email:** info@peoplesystemsconsultancy.com

8



## Yayasan Kajian Pembangunan Masyarakat

Bentong, Pahang

**Project Title:** Modern vegetable farming program

**Funding Allocated:** RM80,000

**Email:** ykpmkon@gmail.com

9



## Think City Sdn Bhd

Permatang Pauh, Penang

**Project Title:** Smart Sustainable Mixed / Polyculture Farming

**Funding Allocated:** RM40,000

**Email:** karthigayan.guna@thinkcity.com.my

10



## Sri Lovely Organic Farm Sdn Bhd

Sik, Kedah

**Project Title:** Sri Lovely organic cultivation training

**Funding Allocated:** RM40,000

**Email:** Srilovelyorganics@gmail.com

11



## Syarikat Permata Umang

Selangau, Sarawak

**Project Title:** Traditional Handicraft Program (Long Beyak)

**Funding Allocated:** RM40,000

**Email:** sedangpaing051191@gmail.com

12



## Ana CB Enterprise

Baling, Kedah

**Project Title:** Memperkasa Jahitan

**Funding Allocated:** RM30,000

**Email:** puteri\_anacb88@yahoo.com

13



### **Pertubuhan Kejayaan Wanita India Pahang**

**Tawau, Sabah**

**Project Title:** Breast Cancer Awareness Month "I wear Pink"

**Funding Allocated:** RM5,000

**Email:** criss\_salazar@yahoo.com

14



### **Muliabudi Consulting PLT**

**Baling, Kedah**

**Project Title:** Kg Lincan Community Business

**Funding Allocated:** RM50,000

**Email:** fadzilhusin99@gmail.com

15



### **Yayasan Salam Malaysia**

**Batang Sadong, Sarawak**

**Project Title:** SIMUNJAN Women Social Entrepreneurship Financial Literacy Program

**Funding Allocated:** RM25,000

**Email:** mthelaha@gmail.com

16



### **Yayasan Generasi Gemilang**

**Petaling Jaya, Selangor**

**Project Title:** Education Project in PPR Lembah Subang 1

**Funding Allocated:** RM40,000

**Email:** caryn@gengemilang.org

17



### **Persatuan Literasi Anak Malaysia**

**Batang Sadong, Sarawak**

**Project Title:** Enhancement of English Language Proficiency

**Funding Allocated:** RM30,000

**Email:** sueyen@myreaders.org.my

18



### **Kumpulan Daya Tindakan Wanita Sabah (SAWO)**

**Pensiangan, Sabah**

**Project Title:** Health and Wellness

**Funding Allocated:** RM26,000

**Email:** sawo.women@yahoo.com



19



### **Pertubuhan Perkhidmatan Sosial Dan Pembangunan Komuniti Daerah Gombak, Selangor (PSPK)**

**Selayang, Selangor**

**Project Title:** Café and Bakery Skills Training – Bakery

**Funding Allocated:** RM21,100

**Email:** pspk.org@gmail.com

20



### **Reef Check Malaysia**

**Kota Belud, Sabah**

**Project Title:** Community Learning Centre (CLC) managed by the women's association of Kg Song-Song.

**Funding Allocated:** RM40,000

**Email:** hello@reefcheck.org.my

21



### **Mimbar Permuafakatan Iubapa Malaysia (MAPIM)**

**Libaran, Sabah**

**Project Title:** Empowering Libaran's Women Entrepreneurs: Single Mothers and Housewives

**Funding Allocated:** RM40,000

**Email:** fringco9@gmail.com

22



### **Pertubuhan Kejayaan Wanita India Pahang**

**Temerloh, Pahang**

**Project Title:** Program Pemerkasaan Wanita dari Kumpulan B40

**Funding Allocated:** RM40,000

**Email:** Pkwindiapahang123@gmail.com  
bamasathya692@gmail.com

23



### **Jawatankuasa Pemulihan Dadah Daerah (JKPD) Kubang Pasu**

**Kubang Pasu, Kedah**

**Project Title:** Drug Prevention / Treatment in Kubang Pasu Parliamentary Constituency of & Kubang Pasu District

**Funding Allocated:** RM40,000

**Email:** ehsan.pdpdp@gmail.com

24



### **Borneo Marine Research Institute, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS)**

**Papar, Sabah**

**Project Title:** Community Siakap Fish Hatchery

**Funding Allocated:** RM50,000

**Email:** aminuddin@ums.edu.my

25



### **Pertubuhan Alam Sekitar Sejahtera Malaysia**

**Kuala Selangor, Selangor**

**Project Title:** Community empowerment through Eco-Therapy Training

**Funding Allocated:** RM32,000

**Email:** malaysiagrass@gmail.com

26



### **Pejabat Khidmat Rakyat Parlimen Tumpat**

**Tumpat, Kelantan**

**Project Title:** Penghasilan Cocopeat / Serbuk Sabut (Pulau Teluk Renjuna)

**Funding Allocated:** RM30,000

**Email:** rosliabdulrazak71@gmail.com

27

### **Pusat Khidmat Rakyat Parlimen Pasir Mas**

**Pasir Mas, Kelantan**

**Project Title:** Ironwork Mentor Mentee

**Funding Allocated:** RM30,000

**Email:** dce682\_dzakir@yahoo.com

28

### **Koperasi Montamah Paiman Johor Berhad**

**Simpang Renggam, Johor**

**Project Title:** Menjana Sosio-Ekonomi Komuniti Penduduk

**Funding Allocated:** RM40,000

**Email:** mdhalizi@yahoo.com  
mdhalizi77@gmail.com

29

### **Persatuan Kebajikan Komuniti & Dialog, Ipoh, Perak**

**Ipoh Barat, Perak**

**Project Title:** Agency Dialogue and Solutions

**Funding Allocated:** RM20,000

**Email:** ronald.benjamin1968@gmail.com

"SDG Solution Projects: Best Practices Impacting the Grassroots" captures 35 stories of community-based SDG solution projects, divided under three headings - economic, social, and environmental - undertaken by 31 solution providers. These 35 stories are best practices where, at the ground level, these organizations are making SDGs visible. APPGM-SDG has provided small grants between RM20,000 and RM40,000 to undertake these micro-projects. These are not one-off projects but run over three to five months.

**This book is divided into two parts.**

- **Part One is an overview of 35 SDG solution projects undertaken between 2020 and 2022. An analysis of this empowering model, including lessons learnt and impact measurement, is described.**
- **Part Two documents the 35 stories, describing their SDG journey and innovative approaches.**

**This publication is a tribute to the leaders at the local community level.**

James Ryan Raj, Paniirselvam, and Zoel Ng are responsible for this publication, with Deborah Chan and Terence Ooi of Wiki Impact serving as the writers.

### **Persatuan Promosi Matlamat Pembangunan Lestari**

📍 **A-1-10, Blok A, 8 Avenue, Jalan Sungai Jernih 8/1,  
Seksyen 8 Petaling Jaya, 46050 Petaling Jaya, Selangor**

✉ **secretariat@appgm-sdg.com**

📘 **<https://www.facebook.com/APPGMSDGMY>**

ISBN 978-629-97554-2-5

