



[Home](#) / [2023](#) / [October](#) / SMILE 3.0 Programme: Promoting Dental Inclusivity and Universal Health Coverage for Marginalized Communities

## GRU2025

04/10/2023 /

Dr Azri Aliah Mohd Yani, Associate Professor Dr Budi Aslinie Md Sabri, Dr Nawwal Alwani Md Radzi, Associate Professor Dr Norashikin Yusof, Dr Nor Faezah Md Bohari, Associate Professor Dr Nik Mohd Mazuan, Associate Professor Dr Eddy Hasrul Hasan



On the 26 and 27th of May 2023, the Faculty of Dentistry, University Teknologi Mara held an outreach programme at Kampung Pengkalan Tereh, Kluang, Johor. This programme was organised by the first year postgraduate students of the Doctor in Dental Public Health Degree, Faculty of Dentistry, Universiti Teknologi Mara. The SMILE 3.0 Programme was a continuation of the previous SMILE 2.0 and SMILE 1.0 Programme that was held in the year 2021 and 2020 respectively. However, this was the first time that the programme involved physical interaction as Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted most physical activities for the past 2 years.

The SMILE 3.0 programme was designed to align to Sustainable Development Goals 3, 4 and 17 in support of creating a more sustainable, equitable, and prosperous world by 2030. The SMILE 3.0 programme aimed to promote ‘Dental Inclusivity’ by implementing the ‘Universal Health Coverage’ policy to improve the health and well-being of marginalised populations in Malaysia. The theme for the SMILE 3.0 Community Outreach Programme was “Oral Health Inclusivity: Every Smile Counts” which means everyone, including the marginalised population, deserves a healthy smile. Oral healthcare services constitute an essential part of healthcare services that is covered under Universal Health Coverage in Malaysia. Promoting equitable access to oral healthcare in Malaysia is significant as it ensures that all citizens, regardless of their socio-economic background, can maintain good oral health. This not only improves overall well-being but also reduces the economic burden on the healthcare system by preventing the progression of dental issues to more severe and costly conditions.



The Orang Asli community in Malaysia is considered a marginalised community as they often reside in rural areas where access to healthcare facilities is limited or difficult. The socioeconomic disparity between the Orang Asli community and the broader population is also apparent. The SMILE 3.0 Programme was meticulously planned and involved site visits to selected Orang Asli settlements to observe the living conditions, healthcare accessibility and interaction with the villagers. Interviews were conducted with the head of villages, village committees, and residents to understand their struggles, especially in accessing health and dental treatment, and assess their overall socio-economic status. Recent visits from volunteers, NGOs, or Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities were taken into account to ensure no duplication of efforts. After meticulous evaluation and deliberation, The SMILE 3.0 programme was held at Kampung Orang Asli Pengkalan Tereh, Paloh which had a population size of 428. The nearest healthcare facility is situated at least 20 Kilometres away from the location. The community at this location particularly has had difficulty accessing healthcare services as most of them had no means of transportation for long distance traveling. The majority of the villagers were self-employed or did odd jobs to make ends meet, which made it even more challenging for them to seek dental treatment independently.

The primary objective of the SMILE 3.0 Community Outreach programme was to increase awareness and acknowledge the progress towards Universal Health Coverage among Malaysian citizens. The objectives of the outreach programme were to (i) increase the community's oral health knowledge and promote the adoption of self-care concepts (ii) introduce access to high-quality healthcare services to marginalised groups and (iii) develop and provide health and oral health promotional materials that are evidence-based and suitable for the community of the targeted location and age group.



The SMILE 3.0 community programme was divided into pre-event on the 7th of May 2023 and the main event on the 26th and 27th of May 2023. The pre-event programme aimed to build rapport with the villagers and promote the main event. The post-graduate students supervised by two advisor lecturers (Associate Professor Dr Budi Aslinie Md Sabri and Associate Professor Dr Nik Mohd Mazuan) visited 10 houses in Kampung Pengkalan Tereh especially those with existing medical illnesses which may make it difficult for them to attend the main event. The team conducted dental check-ups and dental education for the community members particularly about the importance of Oral Cancer Mouth Self Examination (MSE) as they were considered as a high-risk population for Oral Cancer. The team also distributed an innovative product called 'MSE Mirror' to the communities to encourage Oral Cancer MSE on their own. The home-visits were facilitated by the teachers of Sekolah Kebangsaan Pengkalan Tereh and village committees. The organisers were warmly welcomed by the residents.

The main event was held three weeks later at Sekolah Kebangsaan Pengkalan Tereh on the 26th and 27th of May 2023 and it involved all the lecturers of the Center of Population Oral Health and Clinical Prevention Studies and all postgraduate students of the Doctor in Dental Public Health Degree. Mosquito fogging services were carried out in collaboration with the Kluang Health Department on the 25th May 2023 which was a day before the main event to ensure a safe and conducive environment for all attendees during the event. The event boasted an impressive 80% turnover rate with 278 participants attending the event. Numerous engaging activities were organised to increase participants' knowledge and awareness about their oral health and well-being in general which were (i) medical check-up and exhibition (ii) dental check-up (iii) oral health exhibition and education and (iv) tooth-brushing simulation. Two other main activities particularly received enormous support from the participants which were 'Gigi Vaganza Karaoke Competition' and 'Healthy Cooking Contest'. The villagers also requested a special activity called the 'Belulang Weaving' competition which brought together organisers and villagers to celebrate the village's rich culture by weaving leaves into 'Belulang', a beautiful and intricate pattern that forms a signature of the Orang Asli community at Kampung Pengkalan Tereh. Meanwhile, the children participated in 'Mini Sports Games' which was designed to promote physical fitness and togetherness as a community.



The success of SMILE 3.0 Programme was astounding owing to the support of numerous collaborators and sponsorships. The collaborators for the SMILE 3.0 project included the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE), Department of Orang Asli Development (JAKOA), International College of Dentists ICD (Section XV), NOAH Foundation, Kluang Health Department, Malaysian Association of Dental Public Health Specialists (MADPHS), Malaysian Dental Association (MDA), Malaysian Dental Therapist Association, and

Dental Student Association (DENSA) of UiTM. The collaborators had helped in facilitating and promoting the programme. The SMILE 3.0 Programme also received sponsorship from several organizations and companies, demonstrating their commitment to societal well-being especially among the underserved community. These sponsors include the International College of Dentists (ICD) – Section XV, NOAH Foundation, FGV Holdings Berhad, CelcomDigi SDN BHD, MDC Asia Link Berhad, Adabi Consumer Industries SDN BHD, and Syarikat Faiza SDN BHD.

The SMILE 3.0 Programme underscores the dedication and commitment of Universiti Teknologi Mara in advancing societal well-being and played an essential role in complementing the government’s mission of providing more comprehensive and accessible healthcare services. Through SMILE 3.0 Programme, smart partnerships were formed between the collaborators, sponsors, committee members and the residents of Kampung Orang Asli Pengkalan Tereh. This event has successfully fostered health awareness, empowered the community, and left an indelible impact on the residents of Kampung Orang Asli Pengkalan Tereh. This collaborative effort demonstrates the role of academic institutions like UiTM as influential agents of positive change, ultimately elevating the health and well-being of the society as a whole. The sustainability of this the SMILE 3.0 Programme was strengthened by the adoption of Kampung Pengkalan Tereh as UiTM’s “Kampung Angkat” or adopted village where the residents will continue to receive the benefits of annual dental check-ups and essential dental treatments through the Faculty of Dentistry Mobile Dental Clinic Programme. Regular program evaluations will be done to ensure ongoing improvements and alignment with the community’s evolving needs. The success of SMILE 3.0 reminds us that through collective action, we can bridge disparities and ensure that every smile truly counts.



Tags: [Dental promotion](#), [SMILE 3.0](#), [universal health](#), [universiti teknologi mara \(uitm\)](#)

← Journey To Songkhla: Menjejak Wilayah Melayu Yang Hilang Anjuran UiTM Cawangan Selangor, Kampus Sungai Buloh, Selayang & Teluk Intan

Karnival Kepimpinan, Keusahawanan, Kerjaya dan Inovasi (Alumni & Komuniti) >

## QUICK LINKS

Ministry of Higher Education  
Academic Calendar  
Intake Calendar  
Graduate Quick Search  
Library  
UiTM Holdings  
WiFi UiTM  
E-Complaint

## HUBUNGI KAMI

Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)  
40450 Shah Alam, Selangor Darul Ehsan  
Malaysia

Tel: +603-5544 2051 / 2000

