

**COMMUNITY
PROJECTS
FOR
HAPPINESS**
Academic Community Engagement

OSWALD TIMOTHY EDWARD
Editor



CAWANGAN JOHOR KAMPUS SEGAMAT

UNIVERSITI
TEKNOLOGI
MARA

Faculty of
Business &
Management

**COMMUNITY
PROJECTS
FOR
HAPPINESS**
Academic Community Engagement

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Preface

Community Projects for Happiness provides personal reflection of academic service based on academics-students experience in reviewing and contributing to community engagements and services.

The articles were written based on approved projects under *Projects for Happiness*, a community initiative sponsored by the non-profit organization Khind Starfish Foundation, to assist marginalised communities and the underprivileged.

The foundation has allocated some grants as a sponsorship for "*Projects for Happiness*" to assist underprivileged communities, through planning and implementation of innovative community activities by university and college students in Malaysia. The nature of these activities focuses on six themes: education, helping underprivileged communities, cultural & arts, environmental protection, animal welfare and racial harmony.

Community Projects for Happiness provides an overview and guidance for designing and implementing community-academics programs through the active involvement of students and communities. The principles, steps, and indicators are primarily meant to guide program designs, including the development of requests for proposals, the implementation of program activities, and the development of performance management plans and evaluations.

Community Projects for Happiness also provides basic information for those who are interested to know more about key considerations when engaging communities in educational projects.

Oswald Timothy Edward
Tay Bee Hoong
Editors

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ENGAGING AND INTERACTIVE EDUCATION OF THE ORANG ASLI MARAN, PAHANG

BY:
HUSNIZAM HOSIN

INTRODUCTION

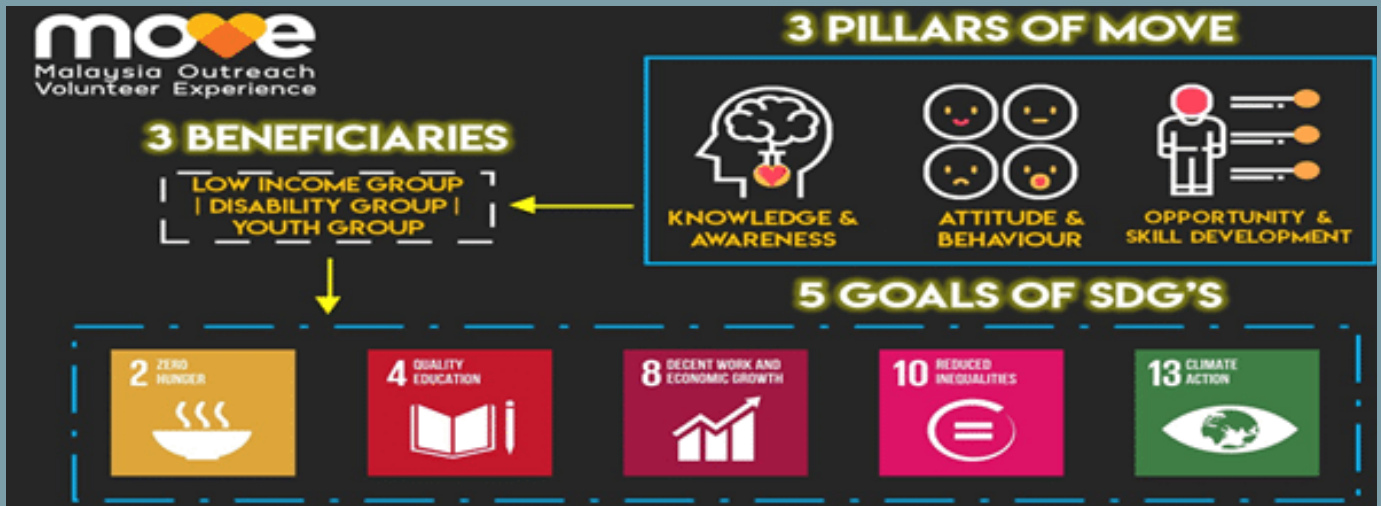
In 2009, the National Key Results Areas (NKRA) was launched and has outlined education as one of the key areas. With regard to the NKRA, the Malaysian government targeted that by 2012, all students would acquire the basic reading and writing skills after three years of schooling. In addition, by 2015, the Malaysian Government is targeting all children in this country to have at least primary education.

The Orang Asli children are not to be left behind in the focus of national educational development. Enormous efforts have been made since independence in 1957 up to now which aimed to improve the standard of formal education to those who live largely in rural areas.

This program is a collaboration with a non-profit organization; Malaysia Outreach Volunteer Experience (MOVE), the aim is to empower young people to get involved in volunteerism and humanitarian work; this is also to strengthen the domestic economy by supporting the vulnerable groups in the B40 (Low Income) community.

There are three 3 pillars of MOVE which are knowledge & awareness, attitude & behaviour and opportunity & skills development. This is in alignment with the national aspiration in committing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

"Competitiveness, productivity, innovativeness and capability in management of new technologies in Malaysia will be determined by the quality of its human resources. [...] In view of the challenges ahead, Malaysians should be well equipped with a strong base in education and training. (Government of Malaysia, 2012)".



One of MOVE segmentation programs is MOVE Edu; inaugurally, MOVE works together with Human Resource Development Fund (HRDF) to provide engaging and interactive education for the Orang Asli kids in Maran, Pahang.

HRDF has sponsored a mobile library cabin that also can serve as a classroom for the participants. In addition, monetary allowance was also provided by the organization for the volunteers. The project timeline started from August 2018 until November 2018. There were about 30 indigenous kids aged from 10 - 12 years old. It is believed that these special gems need to be nurtured and in order to attract them, interactive contrasting educational approach from conventional school teaching would be employed.

Although the Orang Asli education level now has changed with some of them hold a doctorate degree, it is still a demanding process to measure their academic achievement as most of them only attained lowest grade of A, B and C. In addition, they are not resilient toward hard work, thus, creative ways of teaching are required, together with some guidance and motivation to be good and to do good, not just in academic aspect but also in ethical area that involves attitude and behaviour.





According to the Annual Report of the Department of Orang Asli Development or JAKOA (formerly known as the Department of Orang Asli Affairs or JHEOA), in 2006, there were about 147,412 Orang Asli living mostly in Pahang and Perak (Department of Orang Asli Affairs, 2006). However, 76.9% of the Orang Asli population remains below the poverty line. 35.2% is classified as living in hard-core poverty, compared to 1.4% nationally (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2010). The national infant mortality rate is at 8.9 out of 1,000 live births, yet Orang Asli infant mortality rate is at a high of 51.7. The average life expectancy for Orang Asli is 53 years, compared to the national average of 73 years (Rusaslina, 2010).

During the two months of observation, it was found that some of them could not even solve simple mathematical measurement problems, although they were supposed to be prepared for the UPSR examination. As such, it is not surprising that many of them fail to catch up with the national school syllabus and surely it is critical to cease them from becoming school dropouts. Out of 30 kids, five of them were acknowledged as fast learners and excel in Bahasa Malaysia, English and Mathematics.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this project are as below:

1. To provide opportunities for the university students to be involved in the social responsibilities programme to the community especially to the Orang Asli.
2. To create awareness among the Orang Asli students about the importance of education.
3. To help reduce the number of illiterates among the Orang Asli community.
4. To increase the level of confidence and decrease the level of dropouts among the Orang Asli students.

Both the academic modules and activities were strategically structured as they are interactive in nature. This educational approach will cover experimental science, environmental, food ethics and most importantly, educate them on giving back to the society by involving them in volunteerism and many more.

The academic module was carefully designed by UiTM Cawangan Johor, Kampus Segamat, Human Resource Development (HRDF) and Malaysia Outreach Volunteer Experience (MOVE) under the assistance of the Ministry of Education Malaysia. Classes that consist of a two-hour academic and two-hour interactive activities were held every Saturday, from 9:00 am until 1:00 pm. Some of the interactive activities were Entry & Exit Ticket, Interactive demonstration, Jigsaw, Role Play and Beauty & The Beast.

The project beneficiaries are as follows:

	Impact to Orang Asli Student	Impact to the students & Lecturer	Impact to the University	Impact to Key Partners
Skills & Knowledge	Improve their knowledge and soft skills	Enhance their leadership and positive qualities values	Develop students' awareness about the social community service	Ameliorate benevolence qualities of organizations
Social context	Enhance their communication with outsiders and create deep contentment the module	Build up their humanity awareness and learn many things	Establish social context with the community	Exhibit Corporate Social responsibility and provide expertise to the target community
Values of Human Governance	Increase and enhance their values of human governance	Create awareness and know their responsibility towards others	Create good and positive human values	Encourage community to be involved in community works





HOBICOS (HOME BASED COSMETOLOGY SYSTEM) HERBS TRADITIONAL INCUBATOR SPA & SAUNA SERVICES "FROM CINDER TO CINDERELLA"

By: Jannah Munirah Binti Mohd Noor, Nurulashikin Binti Romli, Che Faridah Binti Che Mahmood, Isma Bin Ishak, Rabiatal Adawiyah Kamarulzaman dan Safura Adeela Sukiman

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The role of a single parent is a challenging one especially when the family is headed by a woman. Problems of single mothers are linked with the upbringing of children, their future and setting down in life. A study conducted on 50 single mothers revealed that financial problems were the main stressor for the majority of the single mothers. For a single mother, it becomes difficult in meeting the basic needs of children such as food, clothing, school fees, maintaining the previous standard of living and meeting personal expenses without the aid of their male counterpart. Furthermore, lack of education and qualified skills make it difficult for the single mothers to meet the current job expectation that requires certain requirements. The emotional aspect of a single mother was also affected by their single status. Majority of the single mothers reported that they felt lonely, helpless, hopeless, lacked of own identity and self-confidence. In the social sphere, the majority of single mothers tried to avoid attending social gatherings and had changed their dressing style due to depression. They also developed poor dietary habits.

In view of the scenario above, HobCoS is designed to help the single mothers to lessen their single parent family struggles. HobCoS is the acronym for Home-based Cosmetology Specialist System, designed to reach out to the single mother's community in Johor. In 2016, the statistics of registered single mothers in Johor was recorded for a total of 12546. Segamat district alone had 1703 single mothers, which is among the highest in Johor. HobCoS aims to train these single mothers with Professional Beauty Skills until they are qualified as Cosmetology Specialists.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Improving the single mothers' comprehension in Experiential Learning Skill (ELS) via Home Based Cosmetology Project to be certified as a professional beautician
- Improving self-confidence with beauty to improve the circulation of positive aura in the single mothers' working and living environment.
- Improving the single mothers' knowledge on the procurement of income with the skill to become a full-time professional beautician at home, working in spa and salon with the professional certificate, and become micro entrepreneurs' mobility in spa and salon
- Assisting the single mothers in marketing strategies, operation management and financial book-keeping which are crucial in running a spa and salon business.



Customer will get full satisfaction with the aromatherapy herbs and pampered zone without noisy and disturbance.

PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

	IMPACT TO THE SINGLE MOTHERS	IMPACT TO THE STUDENTS & LECTURERS	IMPACT TO THE UNIVERSITIES	IMPACT TO KEY PARTNERS KHIND STARFISH FOUNDATION
Skill & confidence	Improve self-confidence, boost the spirit of optimism	Improve leadership qualities in conducting community services	Encourage more participation in community programs	Improve the quality of goodwill of an organization
Social context	Give them happiness with the skills	Improve sense of human governance	Have a social context with the community	Give attention to the single mother to improve the quality of life
Economic context	Increase the income	Increase the quality of volunteer work	Increase the quality of university in community work	Increase the quality of company in community work
Values of Human Governance	Increase the values of Human Governance	Increase the values of Human Governance	Increase the values of Human Governance	Increase the values of Human Governance

NOVELTY

1. New knowledge to practice traditional herbs professionally

An innovation is present as a new knowledge for society in a social system that previously did not compile a traditional spa using herbs as something new. This new knowledge is an important determinant of social change occurring in society.

Recognizing Innovation where people in studying traditional spa techniques use herbs in a professional and more systematic manner, for example intensive training at the Incubator Spa and Sauna in UiTM Johor.

2. A new way of solving problems among the traditional herbs practice through Professional Certified in Herbs Traditional Spa & Sauna. Traditional herbs that are not professionally trained before this. This innovation through effective and efficient training innovation can also be a new way for individuals or groups of people to meet their needs or to answer certain issues. This is a substitute for the old way that was previously valid and the impact and the satisfaction it gives to society is high.

3. New discovery of intensive training methods (3 practical days and 3 months of regular monitoring). Almost all innovations are a result of new discoveries but the methods used in the traditional spa incubator in HobCoS are very effective and get many people to undergo training including industry that gives lucrative income to the participants, get jobs and practical offers and gain trust from the Ministry of Higher Education on offer Grant training to students.

CHALLENGES

The project began a bit later than the expected timing. However, it did not stop the HobCoS's team spirit from proceeding with the project. Searching for the participants among the single mothers was a tough process because the community has not yet seen the opportunities lied in the Cosmetology field. Another challenge that we faced was convincing the single mothers that the project was meant for them. We were much aware and understood the situation, the struggles and pessimism that they have gone through for quite some time in their life. To overcome the challenge, our team had decided to open the participation to the UiTM students and the public. The purpose of this was because we want to create a surrounding whereby single mothers can reminisce back to their youth and beautiful days and feel good about themselves.



Sauna Room using traditional herbs such as lemongrass, ginger, lemon for body freshness.

The module used in this project was derived from a few researches which later was arranged by the project advisor, Jannah Munirah who was a certified Beautician herself. The techniques and steps implied in the module were very simple and it could be seen how fast the participants memorized the steps. We made a change on the module framework by adding makeup classes as one of completion skills to obtain Facial Beautician Certificate. As a freelance beautician, we believe in the ability of good makeup skill to boost women's confidence level. The addition of this slot is important for the participants to make themselves presentable as a beautician.

In HobCoS 1.0, the main weakness we wanted to focus on was on the facilities. The facilities were not convenient enough to conduct the Cosmetology Workshop. We received negative feedback from the participants when they were having difficulties during the practical test as the hot water source was far from the testing room. Despite the weakness, we found strength when we had won an award in MUSE 2016 that could secure us a fund to establish the first Cosmetics and Spa Room in UiTM.

We totally respect the commitment shown by the single mothers throughout the development process in the HobCoS project. However, there were days when they wanted to quit HobCoS because they have the perception that engaging in business is difficult and risky. Gladly, the team had already expected this kind of situation. We took advantage of modern technology by creating a group in WhatsApp application made for daily enquiries and also a medium for the mentor for the follow-up. Sometimes, we had a motivational session in the group with the purpose to constantly remind the single mothers on the real purpose of joining HobCoS.

Little by little, our team had observed a significant change in the attitude of the single mothers. In four months' time, HobCoS had created a strong bond among the participants. We, the HobCoS team feel happy and proud to be part of the transformation in each and every single mothers. Overall, HobCoS received positive feedback from the single mothers and wished to participate more.



Equipment and supplies available for training and practical purposes.

CONCLUSION

HobCoS is a pilot project of the spa mobilization project resulting from the innovation idea in 2013, then it was expanded to training sessions to improve the standard of living of the community of single mothers by conducting a training using a 3-stage training module. The first stage was on the basic skills training of spa services, the second on entrepreneurship training and the third phase was on expanding the business. This model had a positive impact on the society when it succeeded in establishing a Social Canvas Model, where a total of 20 single mothers succeeded in becoming Spa entrepreneurs. Among further HobCoS innovation was the formation of UiTM Cawangan Johor Spa & Sauna Incubator Center and the Spa and Sauna Service Incubator System which were accomplished via a KPT Grant of RM94 000.

And again, the HobCoS team would like to express our gratitude to Kind Starfish Foundation, MUSE and Kementerian Pendidikan for believing in us to make changes in the society. "From Cinder to Cinderella"- HobCoS 2016.

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS: ROSES FOR A PINK LADY

BY: RUDZA HANIM MOHAMED ANUAR, KHAIRUNNISA RAHMAN
AND MUHARRATUL SHARIFAH SHIEKH ALLAUDIN

SECTION 1

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women worldwide. In Malaysia alone, 1 in 20 women will develop breast cancer in their lifetime (Source: Malaysia National Cancer Registry). 'Roses for a Pink Lady' is a voluntary project with a mission to provide an avenue of information, dissemination of news and facts about breast cancer; as well as to address the dire need for peer support to women diagnosed with breast cancer. This project is carried out in collaboration with Breast Cancer Support Society (BCSS) Segamat, a self-help group which consists of breast cancer survivors, their family members and volunteers.

Some of the efforts that we have made in increasing additional funds for this project were selling food and products made by the cancer survivors such as patchworks, clutches, bed sheets and aprons. In addition, we also received some donations from generous donors while the campaign was being held.

HOW OUR PROJECT IS EXECUTED

Our project was segmented into two major sessions:

Project 1 : PINK OCTOBER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Date : 13 October 2018
Venue : Dewan Serbaguna Pekan Jabi, Segamat Johor
Time : 7.30 am - 11.00 pm
Theme : 'Wellness and Fitness'

In conjunction with the Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October, we were involved in running an awareness campaign by writing informative articles about breast cancer, displaying creative and innovative posters, designing and distributing flyers and brochures to promote awareness and education to the local community.

Since early morning, we worked closely with Segamat Breast Cancer Support Society to organise activities such as general health screening, spreading vital information on mammogram health services, treatment and group support. This project also reinforced the message of early detection and the importance of practising good breast health. The first session of the awareness campaign ended at 1 pm.

The second session of the awareness campaign started at 7.30 pm. Most of the programs were fitness-based such as aerobics, zumba, line dance and Tai Chi performed by various clubs and societies from Segamat. Our group members also participated in this event by performing the Malay traditional dance: zapin and joget. The program ended at 11 pm.

Project 2 : OUTDOOR ECOTHERAPY

Date :15 -16 October 2018
Venue :KeCabin In A Village, Melaka
Theme :‘What A Wonderful World’

The outdoor activities were designed specially for 20 selected underprivileged survivors who came from low-income family background and had completed active treatment such as surgery, chemotherapy or taking hormonal medication. A 2 hours talk on breast health care was given by Dr. Suraya, a radiography specialist from Melaka General Hospital. Other activities conducted by our team for all beloved survivors include aerobics, treasure hunt, games and photography competition.

We also organised a special Ladies’ Night and the survivors were required to perform as a group under the theme of ‘Saloma Night’. The survivor with the best dress was crowned as ‘Queen of the Night’.

Undeniably, there are two barriers encountered when dealing with the community such as language and culture diversity. Many difficulties in collecting and distributing the information came from multiracial factors and the level of education background, especially when we ran the awareness campaign for the local community.





HOW MANY PEOPLE BENEFITED / WILL BENEFIT FROM THE PROJECT?

1. Breast cancer survivors: 234

- Assistance in procuring non-medical aids for the patient such as psychological support.
- Improved the quality of their life by helping them regain their pride and self-confidence.
- Providing a platform to educate them on related areas of women's health.
- Helps the survivor celebrate their life, including increasing their self-esteem, sense of inner beauty and worth.

2. BCSS Segamat: 12

- Helping them to increase individual and public awareness on cancer and health-related issues especially the local community.

3. Students: 14

- Enhance the students' creative potential, leadership skills and self-confidence.
- Develop their personality and professionalism to make them more aware of their responsibility towards the community.
- This empowerment will later give an effect where more powerful impact can be made in the long term.

4. Local Community: 79,000

- Getting accurate information about breast cancer disease from diagnosis, treatment and giving support to the patients and survivors.

We strongly believe that 'Roses for a Pink Lady' will enhance the promotion of compassionate integrated society among three parties: Breast cancer survivors, students and the community.

SECTION 2

HOW DOES / WILL YOUR PROJECT CONTRIBUTE TO HAPPINESS?

Much concern have been raised about the breast cancer campaign and its effects. Literally, it shows insufficient information had been distributed to this target group. Many of the survivors simply thought that cancer would end their life. This assumption derives partly from the fact that breast cancer is a silent killer for women. Throughout the project, several important measures have been taken to rebuild the robust image of the survivors through the right guidance and explanation such as 'early detection can save lives' and show them the statistics of cancer survivors (short term).

In order to seek happiness, a great value of positive emotions is needed. In this sense, this project has led us to grab the opportunity to help the survivors celebrate their lives and increase their self-esteem. We will never be able to imagine what it feels like to be in their shoes as breast cancer patients. Thus, this programme is designed to help them avoid isolation and feel that they are still part of the community. In the long run, we believe that positive emotion or moral support given is crucial to embed a higher locus of control over the course of their disease as well as regain their confidence (long term).

HAS THE PROJECT CHANGED THE WAY WE THINK?

Absolutely. The campaign profoundly changed our way of thinking regarding breast cancer. We realised that many assumptions are highly misleading, for example: breast cancer only happens to women as it can also happen to men.

Lastly, the bold outcome of this project is: we do not have to engage in grand heroic actions to make other people feel good. We could actually save someone's life through our keen support.

"SMALL ACTION, DONE BY A CARING HEART, CAN CHANGE THE WORLD"

AUTISTIC COMMUNITY OUTREACH

By: Tay Bee Hoong, Muhammad Adib Arsyad bin Zawawi, Toh Ling Ling, Dr Tan Yan Ling, Nur Adilah Saud and Oswald Timothy Edward

INTRODUCTION

The Autistic Community Outreach (ACO) is a project that aims to bring happiness to the autistic community around the Segamat District. Autistic community is a group of children and adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) who have lifelong developmental disabilities that can cause significant social, communication and behavioural challenges. ACO carried out a series of activities that aimed to bring happiness to the autistic community and at the same time helped build their motor and social skills. More importantly, this program aimed to create awareness of autism to the society.

ACO is carried out in the Resource and Education for Autistic Children (REACH) Segamat by a group of 11 students and 5 lecturers from the Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Cawangan Johor Kampus Segamat. The project was led by Muhammad Adib Arsyad bin Zawawi and was conducted from September to November 2019. The REACH Segamat was established in October 2008 as a Non-Profit Organization providing free services for autistic children and their families. The centre has 30 autistic students aged between 5 to 20 years during the time the project was conducted in 2019. The centre provides one to one teaching or coaching, art and craft, music, pre-vocational training and helps the children in their motor, mental, social and academic development. With the recent move to the new location, additional programmes are added which include neuro-feedbacks, hydrotherapy and sensory integration.

The ACO programme included a series of activities, namely planting, dancing, painting and gaming. The main activity of this programme was planting, where the members of the projects started with stretching to build up the planting area around the REACH Segamat. Throughout the planting activities, the autistic students in the centre experience themselves on the ways to plant the vegetables by putting the seeds into the soil, weeding, watering and harvesting the vegetables. From here, they understand the process of growing the vegetables by touching and feeling the seeds and soil. Through this experience, the project hopes to help promote the sensory integration of the autistic students. Besides, this project may help to generate income to the centre with the crop harvested from the planting. Therefore, ACO hopes to provide long-lasting impacts to the autistic children, their parents, the REACH Centre, and the environment.



ACTIVITIES

The programme started off with building the plantation base followed by the plantation activity that provided the autistic children with hands-on experience in planting. Throughout the plantation activities, the students were closely guided by the project team members as well as the teachers from REACH. The children managed to experience a very detailed plantation process as they were very much involved in most of the plantation processes right from seeding until harvesting.

In between the planting activities, a variety of other activities were carried out with the children such as painting, dancing and interactive games. There were positive changes on the children throughout the 6 meetings at REACH Segamat. The children were able to interact more, engaged in activities, and were also more comfortable doing the planting activities.

Most of the children were very excited for the planting activity during each of the meeting. The plants have grown successfully, and the project members managed to harvest most of the crops with the children. Everything worked really well. The project is able to fulfil the objectives to nurture interest in planting to the autistic children in order to help build their motor and social skills, thus promoting their sensory integration. Now, REACH is incorporating this plantation project as one of their weekly activities in the centre.





In a long-term view, it is hoped that this project may pave the way to generate some income to the centre in the long run with the crop harvested from the planting as well as cultivating the interest in planting in the autistic children.

Throughout the project, there were not many unanticipated difficulties except for language barriers. Majority of the autistic kids in REACH Segamat are Chinese and they have little or no knowledge at all in English nor Malay. It made it harder for the project members to communicate with those kids as they were not able to understand them well. However, the teachers, parents and volunteers in REACH Segamat have been very helpful as they were always helping as well as guiding the project members to deliver their messages to the children.



CONTRIBUTION TO HAPPINESS

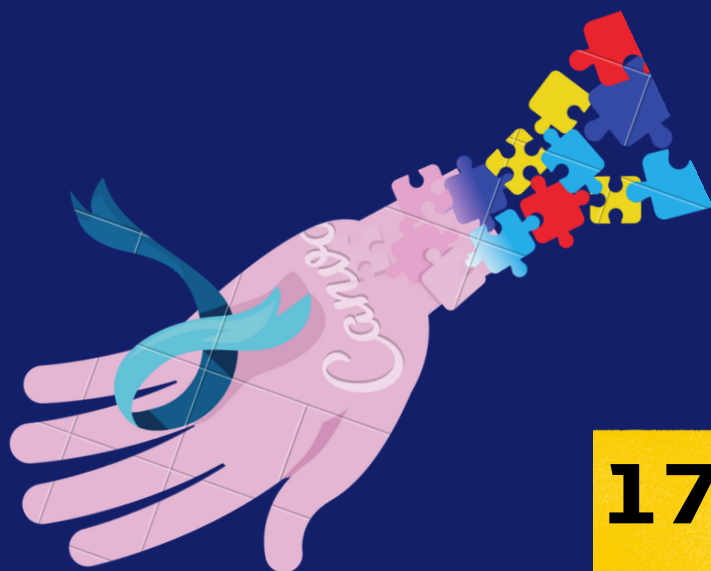
Before this project ended, with the help of the parents and the teachers, the members of the project managed to teach the autistic children on how to take care of the plants by teaching them how to water, how to put seeds into the soil, how to weed, and also how to pick and harvest the vegetables. It was observed that the parents gave full support and encouragement to the autistic kids to try on something new, something they might have never experienced before, until they want to do it without being asked which signifies that the kids can adapt and love to do all those activities.

Happiness is not just created through happening and fun activities, but it can be created by temporary moments too. For example, every time we went to the centre, we would provide them with weekly activities such as colouring pictures of vegetables, painting using sub-materials such as sponge, vegetables etc. The children were always happy and excited to be waiting for the project members' arrival as they wanted to participate and do the activities together with them in each meeting.

These children knew where the vegetables that they ate came from as they were given the opportunity to witness them. From these activities, it created bonds between the project members and the children. The members could see obvious differences from their first visit and after a few weeks of the project, as some of the autistic kids could recognise them and wanted to engage with them after meeting a few times. This indicated a good sign that these autistic kids were very comfortable with the project members. Thus, through this project, mutual happiness and bonding were created between the project members and the children.

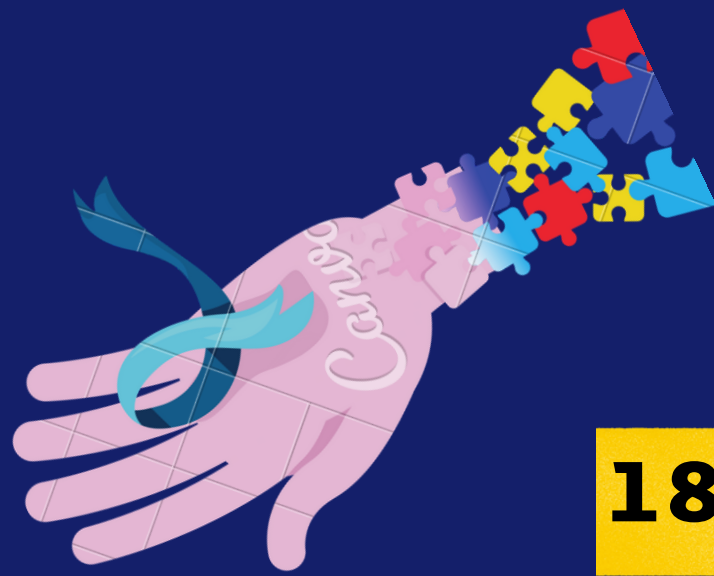
From a long-term observation, we had seen some tremendous changes from some of the children's behaviour towards the project members; as well as the people surrounding them. The positive changes in a way made the people around them (including their parents) happy as it was really pleasing to see a special child making huge improvements.

In addition, the planting project is now being continued by the volunteers at REACH. The plantation would enable the children to have a continuous connection and impact from the project. The children love doing the gardening activities hence REACH is able to retain the planting/gardening activities into one of their weekly activities with the children. Even though the project was completed, the impact towards happiness for the children is still there and alive.



LEARNING BY GIVING

This project has opened the project members' eyes that they have a more understanding and deeper view on autism. They can see that people with autism have so much to offer albeit their disability. They learnt that autistic children have many talents, some are in fact better than most of us. It has made the project members realise that these children have so much potential and future, but they need the right approach. Many people in the world still do not realise this as the awareness about autism is still low. Hence, this project has provided a life-changing experience that many have not been able to experience or realise yet. Moreover, this project has motivated the project members to spread the awareness of autism even more as they believe that it is important for everyone to be socially aware of autistic individuals.



This project gave us life lessons that one cannot always assume that everyone is normal and can learn or adapt to something in one click. There are people who need extra encouragement and more than the usual support even in doing a simple thing and it has shaped us to be more grateful and mindful of others. The planting activity gave a very big impact to the project team and also to the centre. Majority of the project team members do not have any prior experience or knowledge on planting. However, through this project, it has helped them to learn and gain something very valuable. The project has broadened their views on how the children are perceived in the society while learning more deeply on autism through social interaction with the children and the teachers.

"Autistic children have taught me the meaning of gratitude and what true love is. I'm happy that this project would have a lasting impact and benefit to the children" - Amira Bakri (Project member).

"This project has taught me a lot in terms of how to plant, how to communicate with the autistic children and how to manage our plans. I gained a lot of valuable experience through this program." - Nurul Suraya (Project member).





SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: ORGANIC SOLUTION FOR A BETTER WORLD

By: Oswald Timothy Edward

OVERVIEW OF ISSUE/PROBLEM

We noticed that in some instances, the waste management system is in a dire state. Piles of organic leftovers are thrown into the dustbin and end up at the landfills. The Orang Asli settlement and plantation workers at the estate settlement are of no exception. As rubbish accumulates, hygiene is compromised as it invites unwanted rodents to breed. This could be hazardous to health. The fastest and easiest solution currently being practiced at the settlement is by burning them. However, the emission of carbon monoxide is not only hazardous to health but also can cause forest fires. Therefore, we plan to introduce an organic solution for proper waste management for organic matters. In this social entrepreneurship project, waste management is done through a proper system of composting. We plan to teach the community to produce compost from the organic waste into agricultural products which can give them extra income.



PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The main goal of this project is to bring the art and science of composting to the community through a series of hands-on seminars promoting awareness about the importance of how composting can sustain our Earth. Further, the project aims at assisting the community in the organic waste management and social entrepreneurship which means income can be generated from the sale of compost soil and compost tea (and in some cases BSF larvae).

Specifically, the objectives of this project are as follows:

1. To teach how the art and science of composting
2. To reduce waste / garbage within the settlement
3. To produce compost from organic waste
4. To use the produced compost as fertilizer
5. To sell the compost for income generation
6. To create entrepreneurship among the community

ACTIVITIES AND TASKS

The project involved a group of UiTM students as student leaders, empowering them and journeying with them to embark in this social entrepreneurship project.

The main task of this social entrepreneurship project is called Composting Management. This is an intervention in the composting process targeted at the Orang Asli settlement and estate settlement.

Grounded on 3E (Educating, Empowering, and Entrepreneurship) our project embarked on, Educating – we are educating all the people out there especially our main target beneficiaries which is the community from Orang Asli settlement, Estate settlement, students from secondary and primary schools - focusing to teach and make them understand what is the art of composting about and how we can generate income and reducing costs through the art. Empowering – coaching (and later on) becoming a coach in action/practice to find solutions on how organic waste management can sustain our Mother Earth. Entrepreneurship – the end product of this project which is compost soil, compost tea and BSF larvae benefited the community as it can be generating additional income.

In composting management, it requires compost bin and compost booster. Basically,

- Composting is a natural method which will convert organic residues into fertile humus.
- Compost is created from the remains of fruits, vegetables, tea, coffee, and other organic waste.
- Putting the remains of fruits and vegetables in a compost bin made of fallen leaves and branches will accelerate the composting process, and nutritious compost will be produced.
- This will not only dispose of organic waste in the most acceptable way, but will also recycle nutrients.
- Remnants of food will enhance the quality of the soil.
- The soil will become more resistant to pests and diseases.
- Compost not only feeds the plants, but it is also a method for solving the problem of waste management.

PROJECT FUNDING

We received two grants from Khind Starfish Foundation totaling RM9,600. However, fundraising was greatly needed since the expenses were too high. We have had a series of fundraising activities jointly organized by the student leaders, team members and UiTM volunteers. It was such a fun and meaningful fundraising activity where we sold breakfast and lunch packs at Blok Karyawan, UiTM Johor, sold preloved items at U-Sentral, Segamat and many more. The participating students were able to experience how difficult it is to make money.

From the grant, the expected result & outcome of this project are as follows:

1. Eliminating the problem of waste deficiency
2. Preventing open burning
3. Reduction of emission of carbon monoxide
4. Healthier and safer living environment
5. Increase household income as it can be sold to organic farmers

CHALLENGES

High level of difficulty was faced in conducting our project as we have a limited amount of grant. Expectations from the society were too high when they knew that we were having grants. It was not wise for us to tell how small our grant is as it will give a bad image to our sponsor. Therefore, we have to cope with these difficulties by fundraising and to successfully implement our project at a lower cost but impactful result at the same time. We have to reduce the number of team members too (to cut costs).

There were not many cultural barriers that we faced in conducting our project. Only a minor one when we encountered typical people who think composting is a dirty thing to do. Language barrier is not a big problem because we have translators along the way, after all, we conversed in bilingual and national language to reach out to our audience.

Unfortunately, all our members were tied up with the study that caused some of us to become victims of circumstances.



PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

The communities that have benefited from our project directly, are categorized into three categories. Secondary school students, UiTM and the Orang Asli community. Indirectly, our project will benefit Mother Earth, the organic farmers and the family members of our direct audiences when they share the art of composting among them.

The by-products of composting enhance nutrients in our food supply chains. In addition, excellent microbes and bacteria work wonders on our side. Local micro-organism including BFS (black flies soldiers) greatly assisted our composting activities. Amazingly, we managed to harvest our compost in a very short period of time.



PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

Composting of biodegradable household waste can turn into something useful. Compost is the best material available to enliven the soil no matter where we live. Growers around the world will testify that healthier soil grows healthier plants that naturally resist disease, insects, and other environmental pressures. Adding compost to soil or plants is a long-term investment – it becomes a permanent part of the soil structure, helping to feed future plantings in years to come. Apart from reducing unwanted organic waste garbage, composting can also provide extra income from its sales.

Our project will be a continuous one as there are demands from other schools who want us to share about the art and science of composting to their students. Since composting is in the syllabus, school teachers wanted us to come over to their schools to give hands-on activity to the students. However, because of our limited resources, currently, we were not able to meet their demands. We believe that we should teach children from a young age to learn about how to manage organic waste properly as it is easier to make it a habit at a young age.

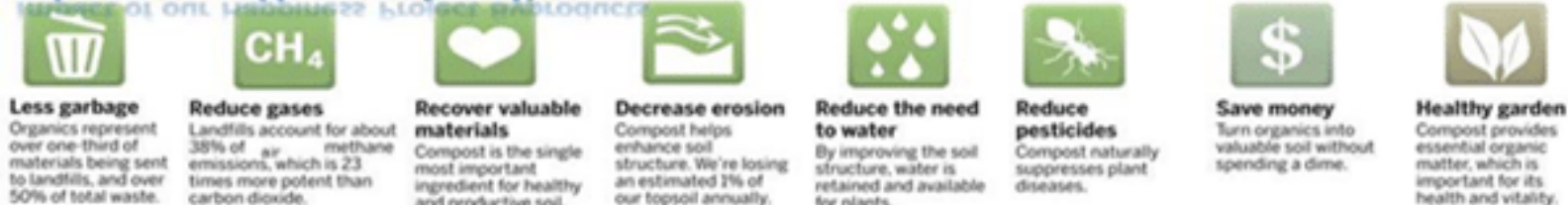
As for the Orang Asli community, we are teaching them to learn how to manage their waste and how to generate income from the compost to be sold as organic compost soil. Since the Orang Asli community has difficulties managing their waste in their compound, we are teaching them the art and science of composting as a start to learn to manage their waste and at the same time to generate income for themselves. They are also growing vegetables for domestic consumption and our project is an added value to them. This has to be a continuous effort.

REFLECTION

Upon reflection, this project has changed us in a lot of ways. We have seen how children, students and the Orang Asli community were so grateful for our effort to help them and to show them the art and science of composting in the right way. It just shows how valuable knowledge is and some people do not have the opportunity to gain knowledge. We have this knowledge plus the ability to bring happiness to people. We are glad that we did it and experiencing how big the impact it has towards the communities. We are also happy to see the result where some community from the orang Asli settlement started doing organic composting in a big way. Based on the result of the compost that they have done, they have seen the changes of their plants in terms of its growth. They believe that organic compost may help them to reduce their cost of buying fertilizer.



Impact of our Happiness Project Byproducts



Frankly, before we embarked into this project, we were quite sceptical if this is going to make people happy. It seems to be just a tiny effort, but it turned out that the impact was so great. Thus, we hope to see participative actions on environment care through our project on Social Entrepreneurship: Organic Solution for a better World especially at the Orang Asli settlement in the next years to come.

CONCLUSION

We strongly believe that our project has contributed towards happiness. Firstly, we were helping to make the community or the place that we live in, a better place by managing our organic waste in the right way. Our project does not only impart knowledge on the art and science of composting but it also indirectly builds awareness on the fact that we can turn organic waste into something useful such as taking better care of our mother earth and providing an extra income to a community. Some of them were not aware that we can do something about orange and apple peels before, as most of us would throw it away. Through this project, we are showing them that we can turn something that most people know as garbage into an organic compost soil as well as compost tea to help crops to grow a lot healthier as it provides nutrients to the soil. Organic farmers too can widely smile as our project provides them with Black Gold such as compost. Thus, we hope to see participative actions on environment care through our project on Social Entrepreneurship: Organic Solution for a better World especially at Orang Asli settlement in the next years to come.



LEARNING THROUGH STORIES: CHILDREN'S THEATER



By: Associate Professor Dr Soo Kum Yoke, Jafri Jawahil, Siti Zarikh Sofiah Binti Abu Bakar, Dia Widyawati Binti Amat and Rafiaah Binti Abu

THE STORY OF THE PROJECT

The aim of this project is to enhance learning English in a fun way. Furthermore, the intention is to help students to feel happy to learn English by using folklore stories in the learning process.

There were a total of 24 students and 5 lecturers involved in the project. The 24 students were trained and guided by the 5 lecturers before the project was executed. Some of the preparations included preparation of the Children's Theater Module and Lesson Plans. Six classes of 149 pupils in Primary 1, 2 and 3 from SK Labis, Johor were selected to participate in the project. For each of the six classes, 2 facilitators (University Students) would teach the pupils during their co-curriculum time once a week. The pupils learnt 4 different folklore stories such as *The Hare and The Tortoise*, *Mousedeer and The Tiger*, *Mousedeer and The Crocodile* and *Bawang Merah and Bawang Putih*. The facilitators would tell the stories and give exercises for the students to do.

The climax of the project is a Children's Theater performance at the end of the project from selected folklore stories. Tickets were sold to parents to raise funds for the school at RM1 each. The tickets were sold to parents through the school PIBG. Funds received from the ticket sales was RM268. This was given to the school to help improve students' English skills.



Teaching session with the pupils of SK Labis, Johor



Picture with the PIBG, District Officer, Headmaster, Lecturers, Facilitators and pupils

CHALLENGES AND REWARDS

Although the project was interesting, it was not without challenges. The level of English in the school in general, was poor. A number of students could not read or write in English. This made the process of engaging with the pupils and managing the project difficult. This was a memorable experience to go the extra mile to build the pupils confidence to speak in English and express themselves in English. The pupils were very eager to learn and managed to remember the script for the theater performance well. This means that with a lot of patience and love, the pupils can be motivated to speak in English. It also helped the facilitators to adapt and learn how to manage a classroom of young children. More activities like this can encourage the pupils and the school and headmaster were very impressed by the pupils.

WHAT THE PROJECT MEANT

This project was funded by Khind Grant for Happiness. The facilitators who applied for the grant were very happy to have been awarded RM4800 for the project. Overall, it was a memorable experience to reach out to the rural schools with lack of English teachers. The pupils were eager to learn and very friendly. The Children's Theater through the stories they learnt was so fun to watch and the parents and teachers were very happy. In fact, they cooked in the school field and distributed the food to the children, teachers and parents. Happiness is when all the hard work was made to good use in teaching the pupils and having fun with them and the school and parents and district office giving their support to make this project a success. It has been a great experience for everyone.

EDUCATION HUB TO THE COMMUNITY

By: Assoc Prof Dr Noriah Ismail, Assoc Prof Dr Carolyn Soo Kum Yoke, Haryati Ahmad, Wan Nor Hafidzah Wan Mohd , Deepak Singh a/i Ratan Singh, Dr Norazam Arbin and Suhaidi Elias @ Alias



ABOUT THE PROJECT

The purpose of this project was to help the village school pupils of SK Kg Tengah to be motivated to learn and to use technology. There were four types of modules prepared to ensure that the process of learning is conducted in a well-arranged manner. The four types of modules are Bahasa Malaysia module, English Language module, Mathematics module and Science module. The modules were prepared for pupils in standard 4 and 5 of the school.

DIARY OF THE PROJECT

The first day of the project, the volunteers encountered transportation problems. The university transport was not available so the volunteers had to think on their feet and solve the problem by using the funds they received. During the sessions, the facilitators encountered other problems. The students and facilitators had so much fun but there was limited time to complete the session with so many activities prepared to enhance their learning with thinking skills.

In the end, all the activities and modules were able to be completed with a lot of cooperation from the schools, the volunteers and the guidance of the lecturers. It was all a new experience for the volunteers who have never done anything like that before. This project reached out to more than 150 underprivileged children, and proved an invaluable learning experience for the student volunteers of UiTM Segamat, lecturers and school teachers involved. In the long run, it provided lessons outside the classroom routine for the pupils of the school that could help them in Bahasa Malaysia skills, English Language skills, Mathematics and Science for their daily life.

Education Hub to the Community was selected to receive a RM4000 grant from the Project for Happiness Kind Starfish Foundation. This was a great opportunity to use the grant to volunteer to help the underprivileged children. It contributed to spreading a lot of happiness to the children in the village as they had university students to coach and tutor them.

INVALUABLE EXPERIENCE

Thanks to Kind Starfish Foundation and to everyone involved who volunteered their time in spending time with the underprivileged children, spending their effort in preparing the modules and executing the project and sharing their knowledge to help the children to be better and more knowledgeable. It was all worthwhile and will be an invaluable experience to reach out a helping hand to the needy.

IT'S FUN TO LEARN MANDARIN

By: Chong Peng Hwa, Siti Nur Faezah
Binti Samberi, Toh Ling Ling, Chu
Hong Heng and Ainol Hasanah
Jalaluddin

SUMMARY OF PROJECT GOALS

IT'S FUN TO LEARN MANDARIN is organized to build interest in learning Mandarin for the non-Chinese students to improve the young generations' education level. This project is to help the non-Chinese students in Primary Chinese Schools to be aware that learning Mandarin is not as hard as they think it is and also to help them view it as an opportunity and not a burden. We understand that the students may feel intimidated by the Chinese students who are already good in the language. Our project is not just guiding the students in learning Mandarin, but also to motivate and spark the learning and positive spirit in them, in hope that they will never give up on challenges but face them with perseverance.

WHAT IS THE PROJECT ABOUT AND HOW THIS PROJECT WORK?

IT'S FUN TO LEARN MANDARIN is a six weeks session programme. It involved 140 beneficiaries which included students and parents. Activities and classes were carried out with the students every fortnight. These students have been guided on proper pronunciations, effective writing skills, and accurate grammar in a fun and interesting way.

These skills are very crucial for their future and it is hoped that the students will appreciate Mandarin much more.

The project turned out to be successful. The success factors came from the students' great grit to learn, the school's unlimited support, the caring parents who believed in their children and also our super energetic advisor, Ms. Chong Peng Hwa.

Even so, it was quite a challenge for us to handle the children who by nature are very active and very inquisitive. They were very loud and it was really tough to just make them sit.



Given such a situation, we were wondering how best to teach and reach everyone who was actively talking at once. Raising our voices all the time would not be appropriate. Not wanting to quit, we asked the teachers how they calmed down the kids. The key was to keep teaching the children in a different tone and expression and it did work well.


At that moment, we just had a whole new level of respect for all teachers across the world, for their patience and love towards what they are doing. The teachers there helped us along in each session and helped build the passion in the kids. We knew they were tired, but they were very satisfied with the achievement. The proud smile on their tired faces showed it all.

RESULTS AND FUTURE PLANS

IT'S FUN TO LEARN MANDARIN has successfully groomed the students to be braver in class and viewed Mandarin from a whole new perspective.

Our project has benefited the parents too. It gives them a whole new overview in their children's education especially in guiding them to perform brilliantly. These students have a bright future and opportunity that every child deserves to have. We then carried out a motivation session where we invited the parents to join along this session and surprisingly, we received a tremendous positive feedback from them. The parents were in awe when they witnessed their children were great at reading Chinese poems and answering questions in Mandarin.

When the motivation session ended, a few parents went to see our facilitators to extend their appreciation. Some even talked personally to our advisors about the positive changes in their children, and they even asked for tuition! At this point, we know that we have done something right.



Two weeks after the completion date, we checked on the students and the teachers told us that they have improved so much. They are more confident and more aware of the need to learn Mandarin.

We strongly believe that this project will have greater success in the future as the feedback that we have received is very positive and encouraging. The concept of learning is fun can be applied to not only Mandarin subject, but also to other foreign language subjects or in common learning. We believe that this project will not just stop here. Future projects should be continued in a wider scope. Perhaps the method of learning Mandarin in a fun way could be carried out on teenagers or adults. One can never stop learning no matter who you are, how old you are or how successful you have become.

This project has led us into winning the Best Project Award 2018 from Khind Starfish Foundation which we very much appreciate the opportunity in allowing us to develop skills and add a little more faith in us to see the world through better eyes.

PROJECT'S CONTRIBUTION TO HAPPINESS

As many have wondered what happiness is, we believe it comes down to millions of definitions. It depends on what one has gone through.



RISK OF OLD AGE: PREPAREDNESS TOWARDS RETIREMENT

By: Oswald Timothy Edward, Carolin Ann Enchas, Aimi Nuraida Ali Hassan and Pressca Negin

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused many to lose their jobs and depleted incomes. This also directly restricts the ability of many individuals to save for retirement and the employee savings group (EPF) is also affected.

In order to ease the burden on the people, the government has proposed the opportunity to take out some of their savings. In the short-term, this proposal will ease the burden and thus accommodate the necessities of life during this pandemic. However, when viewed from a long-term point of view, withdrawal made before actual retirement will reduce the amount of the individual's savings. This may risk the individual's retirement plan.

Retirement is a heated debate due to issues and concerns related to the lack of public awareness on good financial planning needed in facing it. The question that always plays out in the depths of every individual who either serves the government or private sector is whether 'am I ready to go through retirement?'; 'is my savings enough to accommodate the needs and expenses after retirement?'. It is the dream of every individual to live a comfortable life while working until after retirement. However, the journey to retirement is not separated from being exposed to risks.



RETIREMENT PLANNING

Retirement planning is known as a process of planning and taking actions such as having the knowledge on the benefits of financial products and investing in them, with the purpose to ensure that an appropriate income is received at the retirement age based on the goals that are set by the individual. These include estimating expenses, managing assets and identifying sources of income.

However, the modern era of materialism wakes us up to the reality that the definition of retirement seems to have changed from a non-working life to working part-time to support the rest of their life after retirement. This phenomenon occurs because of certain factors such as political, economic, and social instability especially when the wages of an employee is actually not moving in tandem with the rise of the cost of living and inflation.

The minimum retirement age in Malaysia for public sector employees is at 60 years (minimum retirement age Act 2012) and could be even more for private sectors. There are currently two types of retirement schemes offered by the Malaysian government which are Employees Provident Fund (EPF) and Government Pension Scheme. However, the awareness of retirement planning is a serious concern among Malaysians as they depend solely on the government to cater for their retirement needs.

RETIREMENT RISKS

Poverty is one of the unfortunate effects that could happen if a person failed to plan for their retirement which will also adversely affect the economic growth of a country. This is because the allocation of budget that could be used for the development of a country and achieving higher standards of living, instead of distributing them on housing and nursing care. In Malaysia, based on report, even though the poverty rate of the general population has reduced, the poverty amongst the senior citizens is still high and rising. This shows that there is a serious problem among retirees.

In Malaysia, the problems related to the adequacy of savings for retirement among those who are about to retire can be considered alarming. Housing needs for those renting, utilities and medical costs are among some of the basic things that require large cost allocations.

In the current context, financial problems at the golden age can add stress to the elderly because these restraints can cause them to face difficulties in surviving the golden age. A study conducted by the Agency for Credit Management (AKPK), showed more than 50 percent of Malaysians are financially unprepared when they retire. This figure is alarming and shows that half of Malaysians still have a low ability to live a comfortable life after retirement.

The subsequent effect is also felt by those who live together and manage golden citizens who suffer from dementia, which is a disease related to memory deterioration and thinking skills to perform daily routines. Apart from suffering from vision and hearing problems, golden agers also have to deal with the "empty nest" syndrome ; a sense of silence and sadness due to living alone as the children are away from them.

AGEING POPULATION

Ironically, Malaysia is the second most active country to move towards the country of old citizens. Looking at this trend, retirement risk management needs to be looked at in a broader context. Based on data from the Malaysian Ministry of Health, Malaysians aged 65 years and over are expected to exceed 7% of the total population this year. It is estimated that by 2044, which is 23 years from now, 14% of Malaysia's total population will belong to the age group of 65 years and above.

The data also showed that the average life expectancy in Malaysia is 74.5 years. Looking at the figures, it is expected that an individual will live life for another 14.5 years after retirement, considering the age of retirement is 60 years. At that time, the country will face the risk of increased public spending costs. In other words, population ageing will cause the cost of pension expenses as well as medical and care to increase.

MANAGING RETIREMENT RISKS

Adults in the country need to make initial preparations to deal with the situation when Malaysia reaches the status of a gold citizen country or an ageing country. Therefore, retirement risk management needs to be looked at in the context of Malaysia's ageing population.

However, the level of awareness about the importance of managing and planning finances in preparing for the post retirement is still low. There is no denying that so far many efforts have been made by the government and related agencies to channel and enhance public awareness and understanding of financial planning. The EPF (KWSP), for example, established the Retirement Advisory Service (RAS) in 2014 as one of the measures to help improve the well-being of their depositors.

This effort can be further improved if it can penetrate all levels of society. Financial planning and management methods can be done on a faulty basis according to a person's group or income level as well as educational background. Low levels of knowledge will increase exposure to retirement risk. For example, this lack of knowledge in managing finances will cause the individual the potential to make unwise financial decisions.

Many are willing to make loans to meet personal or family needs or both, without thinking about the long-term implications. This is coupled with the high cost of living and unsorted expenses. This financial liability is still a burden even though the individual is no longer actively working. When this happens, these little savings will surely dry quickly and will not be enough to accommodate a comfortable life after retirement.

CONCLUSION

Individuals who are too reliant upon the Governments' plans on their retirement impact their readiness to prepare for the retirement on their own. Nevertheless, ageing is a challenging process. This challenge is not limited to the golden citizens alone, instead it also affects those around. Where will we be after retirement? Sitting relaxed by the beach chatting with loved ones or forced to slam the bones back to work to meet the needs of yourself and your family?

COMMUNITY PROJECTS FOR HAPPINESS

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