



# Changemakers in the Community

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Editors: Kevin Ramsden & Aaron P. Campbell



Young  
Global  
Researchers  
Project

Supported by the Community Engagement Center, KUFS



# **The Young Global Researchers Project**

## **Foreword**

The main aim of the Young Global Researchers Project is to build an online platform for facilitating research, writing and discussion forums linking universities and communities in Japan with their counterparts in other Asian countries and beyond. It is an authentic community engagement initiative that encourages students and educators to collaborate in learning more about key societal issues, and the actions needed to address them, through interactions with individuals and organizations in their local areas. This is achieved through solid research, primary source engagement, and the voicing of the participants' individual experiences, and those of others, through the written word and other forms of media. Furthermore, the lead researchers on the project focus on identifying the different styles of research employed in the various cultural settings the project is active in, with analysis of the data collected hopefully leading to insights on how to prepare a more effective and universal approach to research for under-graduate level university students in particular.

Kevin Ramsden & Aaron P. Campbell  
Kyoto University of Foreign Studies

# **YGRP Faculty Advisors**

## **Kyoto University of Foreign Studies**

Professor Kevin Ramsden

Assoc. Professor Aaron P. Campbell

## **Chiang Mai University**

Assoc. Professor Dr. Avorn Opatpatanakit

Asst. Professor Dr. Alichia Treerotchananon

Asst. Professor Dr. Pattavara Pathomrungsiyonggul

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Dr. Boo Harn Shian

## **University of Surabaya**

Asst. Professor Dr. Delta Ardy Prima

Dr. Hazrul Iswadi

Mr. Muhammad Insan Tarigan (Lecturer)

## **San Pedro College**

Dr. Jasmen S. Pasia

Mr. Remark Z Mortalla (Director of CEES)

## **Proofreaders**

Mr. Duncan Flett

Ms. Audrey Flett



# YGRP Student Participants

## **Kyoto University of Foreign Studies – Japan**

Yusuke Sakai  
Yuwa Kan  
Masahiro Iwamoto  
Shizuki Sogawa  
Ena Kambashi  
Narumi Shimamoto  
Mao Kemmotsu  
Mizuki Kobata  
Haruka Miki  
Prateep Na Thalang Thanavut

## **Universiti Sains Malaysia – Malaysia**

Muhamad Firdaus Mohd Nazri  
Alissa Anne Alexander  
Andrian Lopez Matius  
Audrey Kor Yong Jing  
Balqis Maesara Jamail  
Muhammad Danieal A Razak  
Muhammad Ikhmal Hafiz Mohammad Ismail  
Nur Athirah Khairul Ferdaus  
Ahmad Syukri Mohammad  
Nur Ain Adlina Mahamad Asri

## **University of Surabaya – Indonesia**

Nicole Tiffany Gloria Setiono Thenoch  
Jessica Angelina Ahad  
Irene Santoso  
Patrick Anderson Sunaryo  
Jovanka Rya Ivana  
Precella Silvia Samsumin  
Camila  
Gerald Natanael Suteja  
Joshua Tanujaya  
Sarah Amanda Pondung

### **San Pedro College – The Philippines**

Ai-jay Cortez

Mariane Bea Bauzon

Jacob De Cilis

Flormarie L. Tuado

Hanna Mae R. Baloyo

Eishi Iannah Andreille C. Mutia

Bella Cleodette U. Pacana

Juvin Chlayne Gloryne L. Elid

Hyacinthe L. Te

Aiyana Jul A. Decena

### **Chiang Mai University – Thailand**

Atcharaphon Kanjai

Pawich Wongkamhang

Voravit Osathananda

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# **Family and Child Issues**



# **Kodomo Shokudo: Children's Cafeteria**

Researchers: Masahiro Iwamoto & Shizuki Sogawa

Kyoto University of Foreign Studies

We have to eat nutritiously to live healthy lives and avoid the risk of a lack of proper nutrition (World Health Organization, 2019). Also, by eating correctly we can prevent the effects of some illnesses and diseases such as diarrhea, coronary heart disease, lower respiratory infections and HIV/AIDS (Rasmussen, 2020). However, according to UNICEF (n.d.), approximately 356 million children worldwide are starving or close to starvation. Closely connected to this, is the issue of global poverty. The country with the highest poverty rate at present is Syria at 82.5%, but incidentally, Japan, a top-ranking developed nation, also has poverty at the rate of 15.7 percent (index mundi, 2022). Recently, there are people regardless of age who have been feeling the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. For children, especially, it seems to be getting harder to develop communication skills due to a lack of face-to-face contact and opportunities to make friends in their school, among other things. Moreover, there are children whose parents have lost their jobs because of the pandemic, and are suffering financially. For these children, there is a special kind of cafeteria where they can visit to meet others and get a much needed and nutritious meal. This place is originally known as Kodomo Shokudo in Japanese. To try and discover what is being done to help people in our community through these tough times, we decided to interview the people who are involved in the Arashiyama Kodomo Shokudo in Arashiyama, Kyoto, Japan, a place very close to our university.

The Kodomo Shokudo was co-founded in 2015 in Kyoto Prefecture by Takatsugu Takahata (Arashiyama Kodomo Shokudo, (n.d.)). This was because he wanted to support local children who often had to eat their meals alone at home, as they have parents who both need to work or are single parents. The organization really started after Mr. Takahata had been discussing with his school dad friends about not only their family and children, but also the overall issue of child poverty. After sharing their thoughts, they decided to try and start the Kodomo Shokudo to support local children and people in need, initially, at least, on a casual basis. Thanks to their decision, it has been a place where people have found great comfort and helped each other, despite the problems and difficulties that COVID-19 has brought. One of the things they do to build good relationships with the community is to receive donated food from shops and make good use of that food by making lunch boxes. This is food that cannot officially be sold due to store policies, but can be quickly reinvented into healthy eating options for those most in need. The organization has also used this to create a convenient environment to support local people, and has seen the numbers of local people attending the cafeteria increase greatly.



**Mr. Takahata Takatsugu (in the center of this picture)**



**The atmosphere at Arashiyama Kodomo Shokudo**



Therefore, there are several big positives for people in the community. First of all, they can enjoy time freely with others and eat an extremely cheap meal, and they can also relax in a comfortable environment with comfort food. As we all know, food prices are continually rising right now, so this facility has become a very useful place for those who are suffering from poverty.

Furthermore, Mr. Takahata aims to make this a more beneficial and community-based place for local people, not only by providing very affordable meals for those in difficulties, but also by encouraging and accepting anyone who is interested in helping, such as regular volunteers. By doing so, he hopes that people will become more aware of people who need support regardless of their appearance, make stronger community relations and help decrease the number of people in poverty. Secondly, you can meet a wide range of generations there. In the Kodomo Shokudo, there are not only children but also adults, because anyone can go there and buy a lunch box that the Kodomo Shokudo staff makes and join as a volunteer. Plus, for those children who, due to poverty and other factors, cannot go to school and have few friends, this is a place to interact with a variety of people and gain confidence.



**The process of making tomato sauce and potato salad for this day's menu**

In order to spread the word about this wonderful facility, we interviewed some of the participants, including Mr. Takahata, Ms. Kawahara, Ms. Nakanishi, Ms. Shimohara, and Mr. Uchikawa, and joined in by volunteering for the day. Once we got started, we could see some of them have been volunteering since junior high school and have many years of experience, while others are new to volunteering. Some of them are used to working with others and were able to complete tasks quickly, while others were unsure of what to do at the beginning. However, since all had different roles they could play, and were of different ages, they had different ways of thinking, and we felt that we could learn a lot from them. In the facility, each person had a well-defined role to play, and there was real

cooperation between the students and adult staff, from young children to the elderly. Those who were about the age of mothers were mainly responsible for cooking and washing dishes when making the lunch boxes. Among the students, each of us had some defined roles. For example, we were mainly responsible for stirring stuff in pots, carrying the many ingredients in the large containers, and cooking rice and counting the number of lunch boxes. Additionally, some students were tasked with arranging the ingredients into a single bento (lunch box) container after they had been cooked. The wonderful thing was that everyone was able to work cooperatively with people they had never met before, which is a truly special aspect of the organization. The process of supporting one another is the reason why the atmosphere of the Arashiyama Kodomo-shokudo is so warm and friendly. Through talking with each interviewee, we could learn new ways of thinking that we had both never considered or realized.



The process of making Japanese hamburger steak for this day's menu

## Interview

### Interviewees:

Mr. Takatsugu Takahata (co-founder)

Ms. Rina Shimohara (volunteer)

Mr. Taiki Uchikawa (volunteer)

Ms. Eimi Kawahara (volunteer)

Ms. Rieko Nakanishi (volunteer)

***Q: What do you feel is special about the activities of Arashiyama Kodomo Shokudo?***

Takatsugu: I feel a great sense of fulfillment when both the people who come here and the volunteers learn something new from each other, and also I can get positive comments or appreciative words from people who have engaged with this community. So, whoever wants to come to this Kodomo Shokudo will be welcomed.

***Q: What is your main goal concerning this Kodomo Shokudo?***

Takatsugu: My goal regarding it is to make it a place that everyone can easily rely on, because there are people who actually need support, even if we can't notice that from their outward appearance. In addition, there are children who lose weight due to an unbalanced diet and a lack of nutrition, or become in poor health during a long vacation. Therefore, I want to continue the Kodomo Shokudo to help these people.

***Q: What made you decide to volunteer at the Kodomo Shokudo?***

Taiki: I was actually volunteering elsewhere, but then found this children's cafeteria and started volunteering here, too. I also decided to get involved because I like children.

Rina: I learned about it while being active in a circle called 'Habitat' at my university.

Eimi: I have always loved volunteering. However, as I could not really help people when I was an elementary school student, I started thinking about helping people in need more seriously after I entered junior high school. To try and be a better person, I bring my used clothes to a shop for recycling and reuse, and I have joined a volunteer club. Thanks to this club, I learned about this Kodomo Shokudo and started volunteering here.

Rieko: Before I started volunteering in this Kodomo Shokudo, I heard there were only a few volunteers. Therefore, I decided to volunteer to help this community.

***Q: What kind of image did you have of the Kodomo Shokudo before volunteering here?***

Taiki: I thought that the majority were children.

Rina: I didn't really know much about it.

Eimi: I could not imagine Kodomo Shokudo because I had never heard of it before, so I was pleasantly surprised when I got here. It makes me happy that I could find one of the ways that I can be helpful to others.

Rieko: I thought that it has the power to connect people thanks to Mr. Takahata. Therefore, I became interested in it.

***Q: How do you feel about volunteering at the Kodomo Shokudo?***

Taiki: When it came time to join, I could not feel the poverty. However, I enjoy talking with the people who participate every month. I felt it was a place where I could learn a lot.

Rina: As a student, I feel that experiencing work as a volunteer and not for money is something I can only experience now, as I don't have to survive in mainstream society.

Eimi: I really enjoy volunteering here, especially when the people who come here say thank you



Shizuki (left) and Ms. Eimi Kawahara (right)

for the lunch boxes we make for them.

Rieko: It is very rewarding because I am able to see what visibly works for someone. I think that this Kodomo Shokudo makes both the volunteers and the people in need feel comfortable thanks to the fairness of the system. The people who come here can get a homemade meal for a very reasonable price. Plus, I enjoy feeling a kind of connection with this community through the donations of vegetables, snacks, toys and other items that are collected for them.

***Q: What do you get out of the experience?***

Taiki: I have become strongly interested in working in a job where I can address the issue of child poverty.

Rina: I had never even heard of families in financial need, but once again, volunteering made me aware of many things such as this.

Eimi: I have come to believe that I want to spread a better image of volunteering and the rewarding feeling you get from doing it, so that others might get interested in it, too. Also, I think that it is particularly important for young people to turn their attention toward helping people and build a warm connection with others in their community.

Rieko: I focus on being a blessing to other people without it feeling like a burden for them, but I also try to avoid giving myself too much pressure when volunteering. In my opinion, it is



better for everyone who comes to the Kodomo Shokudo to not only complement each other but also to pay attention to the people around them, and then do what is necessary. Through my volunteering experiences, I have become more flexible and able to accept my failures.



**Volunteers in action**

## **Reflections**

In conclusion, we listened to a variety of opinions in the interviews, such as positive comments about the community and the importance of thinking of people who are suffering from poverty. Thanks to this really enjoyable experience, we could learn a lot of things and share opinions about the kind of community we need, what we should do for people who are in need of help, and the importance of volunteering. We also learned a lot from the staff working at the Kodomo shokudo: compassion for those in need; the fact that being able to eat is not something to be taken for granted; and that there are many problems around us that we are not even aware of. However, we think we have grown a lot just by realizing these things through our participation in this activity. Additionally, we think that Kodomo Shokudo is a place that has the magical and happy power to connect people, regardless of age, gender and nationality.

We strongly hope that the number of such facilities will increase in the future, and at the same time, we hope that we can spread the word about such a wonderful place like the children's cafeteria, through word of mouth, SNS and other means. We believe that we students have the power to spread the word, and by doing so, we hope that more people will learn about the current state of poverty in Kyoto and become interested in helping those in need. Also, this time we visited the children's cafeteria in Arashiyama, Kyoto, but if we have the opportunity, we would like to visit other children's cafeterias in different locations in Kyoto to have different experiences and learn more. We hope that this interview and volunteer work, as well as the report that will be published, will be the first steps toward this goal.



This day's lunch box

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## Researchers



Hi! I'm **Masahiro Iwamoto**. I am a student at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies in Kyoto, Japan. I was born in Brazil and raised in Japan. I really like to study English and listen to western songs. Additionally, I like to watch dramas. I would like to be an interpreter, so now I'm studying English very hard to improve my English skills. I'm studying English, listening to some English songs and watching some dramas or movies. By doing so, my English skills are becoming better little by little. I also like to play sports very much. I have played volleyball for approximately six years.



Hello! My name is **Shizuki Sogawa** and I am a student at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies in Kyoto, Japan. I study English and I am interested in various things such as social issues, learning languages, translating, volunteering and so on. I grew up in the countryside in Wakayama so I like the beautiful scenery of mountains and sea. My important values are to actively challenge something new and to be myself to broaden my horizons. In my free time, I like watching movies, listening to music, enjoying fashion through which I can freely express myself, gardening and hanging out with my friends.





# The Kyoto City Youth Service Foundation

Researchers: Ena Kambashi & Narumi Shimamoto

Kyoto University of Foreign Studies

Kyoto City Youth Service Foundation has long been supporting local youth, and has seven bases for its activities in Kyoto. Their aim is to provide opportunities for young people to broaden their outlooks and interests, and to get advice, information and access to a diverse selection of human/material resources through participation in family, school, local community, workplace and voluntary activities. Participants can gain real satisfaction through the activities they join, and by challenging themselves to develop both mentally and physically. The foundation's various means of support allows children to grow up to be responsible adults.

Kyoto City Youth Service Foundation was established in 1988 with the goal of encouraging voluntary activities among young people. In order to develop future generations to lead the world, the foundation has been working with organizations, youth groups, people related to youth training and, of course, young people themselves based on four key principles:

1. To assist the young in improving their potential and abilities naturally, without spoiling them, by, for example;
  - helping them realise that the various kinds of information they receive can have different effects on them personally and on their thoughts and behaviour.
  - encouraging them to become kind and thoughtful people by providing space and time for them to think about themselves and others.
  - providing them with opportunities to discover and build on their individual interests and abilities.
2. To give support to the young so that they can overcome/solve their difficulties when they face challenges and feel anxiety by, for example;
  - encouraging them to support each other so that they can improve their abilities in mutual learning and thereby lessen their personal concerns.
  - teaching them the various skills necessary for utilizing social resources and information
  - supporting those who might require special help to get the care they need.
3. To provide opportunities for the young to participate in, and take on, roles in society by, for example;
  - offering ways for them to learn and think about what their interests might be and

how to pursue them.

- creating opportunities for participating in activities that allow them to work together and improve their community engagement and communication skills through interaction with people of all generations.
- allowing disabled young people to engage in activities in the same ways and environment as their peers and other non-disabled citizens.

4. To expand on recognition of the foundation's activities to the greater society by, for example;

- promoting how Kyoto City Youth Service Foundation has been engaging in a range of activities such as volunteering, internships, publishing, student support and so on.

## **Volunteering**

So far, between 800~900 young people have been actively working on volunteer activities created by the Kyoto City Youth Service Foundation, including clean-ups, projects to engender a more multicultural society, support for people with disabilities, and so on. The foundation believes volunteering can go a long way in supporting the personal development of local youth, and allow them to become vital partners in activities that will see them ultimately value their participation in society more. The foundation has been accepting a lot of volunteer workers, and through the active volunteerism they engage in, provides them with learning opportunities and new knowledge. It is also its belief that youth volunteer workers can often do something that perhaps adults can't, for example, create a good atmosphere when working with small children and building good relationships with them. Volunteer workers are not considered to be an alternative to regular staff members, but essential personnel who can cooperate and work together with them.

## **Internships**

The Kyoto City Youth Service Foundation provides both paid and unpaid internships to young people, and aims for them to develop a deeper understanding of the policy and goals of the foundation through these internships. Students on these internships are required to participate in the program with a clear purpose, and are expected to learn a lot from their activities. The foundation provides youths with time to talk to staff about their interests and what they want to do as a future career, so that they can finally decide whether this internship is really for them or not. Participants can get a clearer idea of their goals by talking with staff, and even if they decide not to do an internship at the foundation, they will still have gained some valuable information.

## **Publishing**

The foundation publishes a magazine named "YOUTH SERVICE" to let the local youth and general population know what the Kyoto City Youth Service Foundation has been, and is, doing. Mainly high school students work on making the magazine, and they focus on various topics related to their own interests, current trends, etc. Any high school student who is interested in project planning, doing interviews and/or writing/photography can join.

## **Student Support**

These days, there are many junior high school students who are struggling with their home studying environment. Volunteers support students' homework, and preparation for exams and entrance exams. The volunteers and students gather once a week and make time for study. In these activities, members aim to create a good atmosphere for students to study in, and by building strong bonds between themselves and the students, let them know there are people who care about them. This activity attracts the greatest number of volunteer workers, and the effects on the high school students is very significant.

## **Interview**

### **Interviewee:**

Mr. Teruaki Takehisa - Operations Manager, The Kyoto City Youth Service Foundation

### ***Q: When and why was the Kyoto City Youth Service Foundation established?***

Teruaki: The Foundation was established in 1988 based on the main principle of "Youth Service", and with the aim of building and supporting opportunities for local young people. Its first activities were conducted with the Kyoto YMCA, the Kyoto Youth Hostel Association for the Welfare of Handicapped Children, and thereafter, the members gradually moved into positions with each organization as permanent staff.

### ***Q: When did you personally join the Foundation, and why?***

Teruaki: I started working at the foundation in 2002. The Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake happened when I was a high school student and I really wanted to do something to help but didn't know how to go about it. This left me with the feeling of needing to deal with unfinished business, so I volunteered at the Kyoto Youth Hostel Association during my university life and did an internship at the Kyoto City Youth Service Foundation when I was in my 3rd year. Through this, I grew to understand the importance of having a place where people, including myself, could personally develop.

### ***Q: What do you consider to be the main aims or goals of the Foundation?***

Teruaki: There are four main aims or goals really. Assist in allowing young people to realize their full potential. Help the youth overcome various challenges with or without help from others. Ensure that the voices of the youth reach into society, and support their involvement in the community when they wish to do so. Finally, help young people navigate the various stages on the path to fulfilling their goals, but let them know it is important for them to make their own choices since, ultimately, it is they who must finally decide what it is they want to do.

***Q: What do you consider to be some of the main achievements of the Foundation over the past few years?***

Teruaki: The foundation carries out about 150~200 youth-led activities a year, which are fairly wide-ranging; from training local supporters to working on the publications. Some of the main ones have been:

**Project to create a place to spend time**

This is a project for all of the Kyoto City Youth Activity Center. The goal is to create places and opportunities where the youth can use centers freely, interact with people, and proactively try to figure out what they want to do.

**Youth Symposium**

This is an annually held symposium based on a theme connected to a current trend. Participants listen to guest speakers and then enter into discussions for a deeper understanding of the topic.

**Activities for Children/Young Carers**

These activities have been providing support for children and young people for the past five years, and involve meetings to think about how a caring family can affect their future plans. Furthermore, a group called “Iroha’s Friends” was created where youths can talk to someone about their thoughts and feelings, or simply spend some time and meet people in the same situation, even if they don’t feel the need to talk to each other.

**Study Support**

This activity draws the largest number of volunteers and provides study support once a week, mainly to junior high school students who have difficulty studying in their home environment. Volunteers and students are encouraged to build a relationship and spend time together, discuss their feelings, and basically have fun.

**Night Youth Center Model Project**

Based on the situations of people who didn’t have a place to hang out after 9 p.m, this project created a place where people could spend their evenings. A cafe space was rented to provide food and other services, and it became somewhere for both youths and adults to spend time. Eventually, there were more than 50 youths who just turned up simply to spend time with others.

***Q: What are some of the difficulties the Foundation has faced since it was started?***

Teruaki: Interaction can be a problem, as due to time constraints staff can’t spend the same amount of time with all the young people who attend. Moreover, each person has a different level of

needs, so it is always difficult to know how best to deal with this. Another one of the main difficulties related to the projects is whether it is best to focus on youth-led activities or aim for the overall success of projects. Even if the focus is youth-led, this may not be possible due to deadlines and other factors. There's also the question of whether or not the government and the community understand and accept the situation. The thing is that while it is easy to get money for targeted activities, it is difficult to see and understand what the result will be for universal experience activities.

***Q: Who are the main supporters of the Foundation?***

Teruaki: In terms of funding, facilities and projects which were requested by the “Youth Action Center” are commissioned by the government. The main operations are funded by subsidies from Kyoto City or schools where the foundation operates activities. Some will also fund operations using their own resources. The most important supporters, however, are the young people themselves, so the foundation and youth basically support each other.

***Q: As an NPO, you must rely a lot on volunteers. In general, what age and background would you say the typical volunteer is?***

Teruaki: Almost all the volunteers who engage in the activities are university students, accounting for 80 to 90% of the total. Other volunteers include high school students and adults. All of them started volunteering for different reasons, but the reason why they continue to volunteer is more important than the reason why they started.

***Q: What kind of activities or events do you engage in with local people, and the local community?***

Teruaki: In addition to volunteer activities, the foundation also organizes various events, such as live events, city tours to explore Kyoto, and so on. Also, the foundation helps with local festivals. The foundation involves all of the local people and the volunteers who engage in these activities.

***Q: You offer a service to students who need support in their school lives and studies. What do you think are the most common problems or issues among the young people you help?***

Teruaki: The difficulty is relationships. Before the foundation supports a young person, it is important to consider what kind of relationship exists between the youth and society, and where the root of a problem lies, rather than just trying to lay blame on the youth's side for any discord. These days, many in our society regard today's youth as lacking in the ability to think, but it may be that they simply have not been presented with the opportunity to experience such things.

***Q: What kind of internships do you offer, and how do you help the youths who join these internships to grow both mentally and physically?***

Teruaki: The foundation receives a number of requests from universities and other organizations for internship and practical training. These include assistance for those who are considering working in human services, or as social educators, social workers, licensed psychologists, etc. Also, the foundation conducts its own internship programs while consulting with young people. The foundation does not prescribe too much as to “what the foundation wants the youth to become”, but tries to come to some mutual agreement and set goals together. In addition, the foundation considers whether the foundation is intervening too much or depriving the youth concerned of opportunities.

***Q: How do you usually publicize your activities to the general public, other than through your website?***

Teruaki: Kyoto City Youth Service Foundation shares information with its supporters and stakeholders through fliers, its own PR magazine, and Facebook. For the young people, the foundation provides the information through Instagram, Twitter, or its official LINE account. In addition, the foundation utilizes a public portal site called “Activo” to spread information about volunteer activities.

## Reflections

The importance of participation by the youth in local communities has been increasing recently, since it is this generation, including us, who are going to be shaping the future. Through the interview, we were able to feel a strong connection between the organization and all of the people who engage in the activities. In addition, we realized that even though the main purpose is to support young people, the volunteers who participate in the activities, and staff from the organization itself, are also helping each other to grow. As students, we can be pretty flexible with our time and challenge ourselves with new things to do. We can find opportunities everywhere if we want to do something for our community, and visiting a place like the Kyoto City Youth Service Association and looking for activities that meet what you want to do can be a first step in achieving this. If you are interested in doing something for your community but you don’t know what you need to do first, we recommend you find associations or organizations like this to guide you. We would be very happy if our research can assist you, even in a small way, to find your role in your community.

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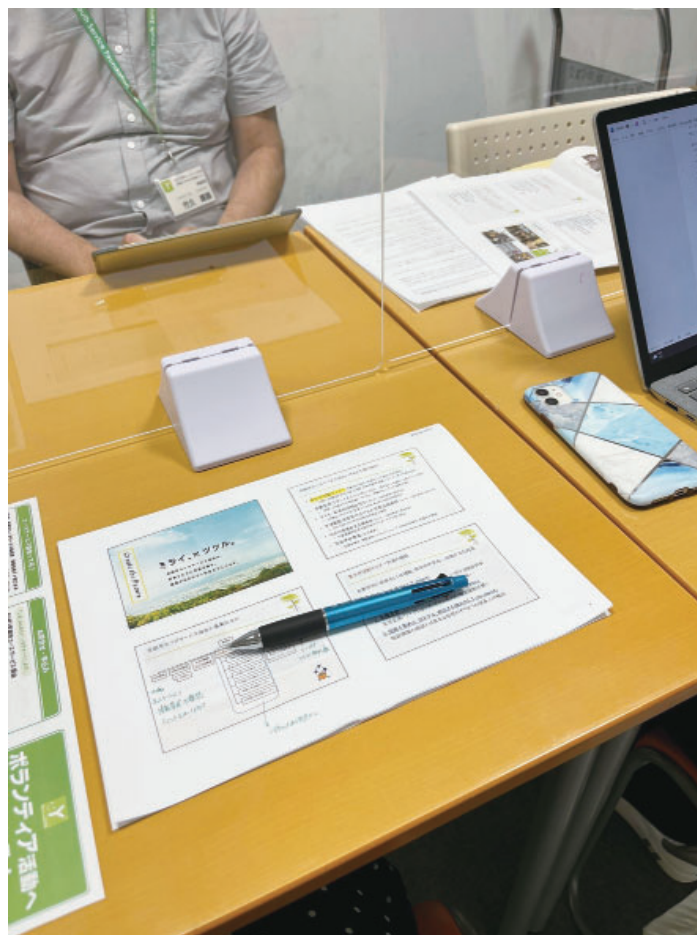












## Researchers



Hello everyone! My name is **Ena Kambashi**, a 3rd year student at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies. I major in International Issues and global/community engagement in the university, and I'm really interested in this. I'm from Hyogo, Japan, which is close to Kyoto, and there's a lot of nature in my hometown. I really like communicating with people who have different backgrounds, so I've joined in some volunteering activities while at the university. I've been learning English since I was three years old, so it's been an 18-year journey for me. I'm really fascinated with English, and I can't imagine my life without it.



Hello, everyone!!! I'm **Narumi Shimamoto**, a 3rd year student at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies. I have lived in Kyoto city for the past three years, but before I came to Kyoto I lived in Fukui prefecture, which is located to the north of Kyoto. It is famous for seafood, dinosaur fossils, and the manufacturing of spectacle frames. I like to communicate with various people, so I often facilitate events or participate in local events as a volunteer. I'm also very interested in aspects of Korean culture, such as K-pop, fashion, cosmetics, food, and so on.



# SOS Children's Village Davao

Researchers: Ai-jay V. Cortez & Aiyana Jul A. Decena

San Pedro College, Philippines

As proposed by Abraham Maslow in 1943, the hierarchy of human needs indicates that the family plays an indispensable role in providing some of our fundamental requirements: physiological (i.e. food and clothing), safety, love and belonging. So children with complete, healthy and intact families have a better opportunity to live a secure and fulfilling life. In contrast, those with no family or coming from broken homes are more likely to be abandoned, lost and misguided. SOS Children's Village seeks to meet this societal challenge by providing a loving home for every child.



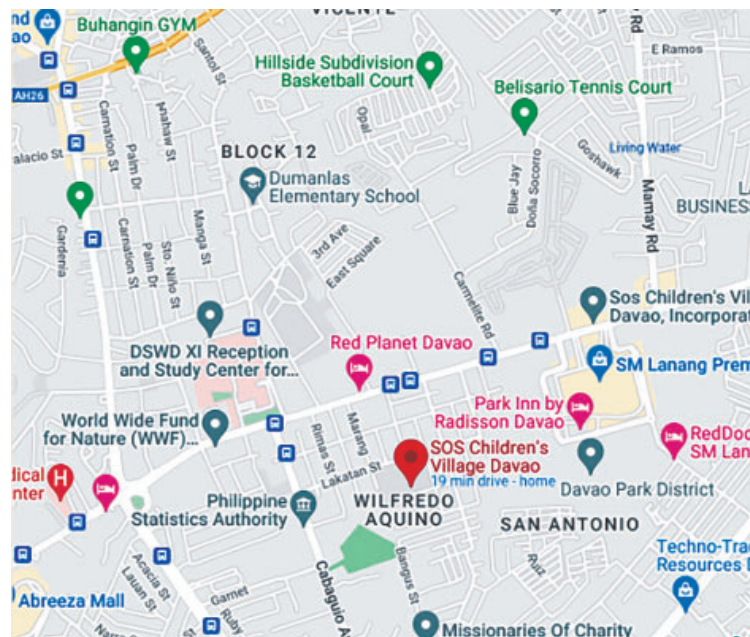
SOS Children's Village is one of the largest international non-governmental organizations, serving the needs of children since 1949. The organization primarily aims to provide for the needs and protect the rights of abandoned and parentless children, ultimately guiding them on the right path to achieving their fullest potential as independent and functioning adults in the community. In the village, each household is headed by a "mother" who will take care of the children and exemplify a mother's role in the family. The children learn to be each other's brothers and sisters. The village becomes a neighborhood of these families, forming a healthy community of values, happiness and love. Each family is provided with finances for their basic requirements, including, but not limited to, food, clothing, toys and educational needs. The children are educated from pre-school up until their chosen college degree, when they can start living their adult lives, become self-reliant and be completely independent. The village exists to ensure that needs are provided for, health is prioritized, rights are protected, and education is secured for each child.

In the Philippines, one village that has significantly impacted its locality is the SOS Children's Village Davao. This village has been running for 40 years now, since its founding in 1982. Consisting of 14 family homes, the village director's residence, an administration and service area and a communal house, it is one of the largest SOS Children's Villages in the country and is currently home to 165 children. The village runs two programs: Family Life Care (FLC) Services and Family Strengthening (FS) Services. The FLC program accepts children into the village, providing them with

basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing and the like, as well as providing support for their educational needs and chosen career path. FLC molds them to achieve their full potential to become self-reliant and functioning citizens when they come of age.

The FS program extends to outside communities by helping children from parents who are less privileged yet willing to take full responsibility for their children. The organization visits these homes and offers counseling for both parents and children, shares information about benefits and eligibility for government aid, informs them of financial strategies and possible sources of income, as well as providing the necessary assistance to establish a family foundation and help them to become self-sustaining. The organization significantly contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals as adopted by United Nations Member States. SOS Children's Village utilizes early childhood development as a foundation for universal development. SDG1 4 mentions ECD: "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote opportunities for lifelong learning for all."

Furthermore, we had a chance to interview the director of the village, Mr. Leonilo Rivero, who has worked for the organization for 16 years and is himself a former SOS child.



Location of SOS Children's Village Davao

## Interview

### Interviewee:

Mr. Leonilo Rivero - Village Director, SOS Children's Village Davao

**Q:** *How long have you worked at, or been associated with, SOS, and what is your main job/role in the organization?*

Mr. Rivero: I am the village director at SOS Children's Village Davao, and I have held this post for 16 years now. I have been associated with SOS all my life, because I am a former SOS child.



I was brought into SOS when I was just six months old and I grew up in the SOS village in Tacloban. Thanks to SOS, I went to college, even studied in Manila, and eventually moved out from the care of the village and became independent. Now, I am married and have my own children. I worked in several organizations before I was invited to work with SOS Children's Village. I found I could not say no despite the big salary disparity because I felt like my family was calling me home. That said, I did not accept the post of director just because I am a former SOS child. Of course I want to give back, but this is also part of my career path. I really wanted to work with children, and I have studied psychology, plus an MBA in Human Resources as well as graduating from law school, so I think I am well-qualified for the position. This is really a job that I want.

***Q: What are some of your duties or activities in the organization?***

Mr. Rivero: As director, I am overall in charge. I am responsible for running the day-to-day operations of the village. I deal with finance, social workers, psychologists, educators and psychiatrists, and I reach out to the community to form our programs. I reside in the village. So I need to act as the father of these children; someone who protects, provides, and when necessary disciplines. I also accommodate children coming to SOS who still have their parents but those parents struggle to fulfill their obligations. During the pandemic, we brought in more than 20 children. Sadly, some of these children were abused. In our FS program we oversee two communities composed of 115 families. We help them to access social benefits such as the 4P (Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program) conditional cash transfer initiative. We also provide them with a budget for basic education and healthcare for a limited period. The end goal is self-reliance.



**Mr. Leonilo Rivero (middle) with the authors standing in the monument of Dr. Hermann Gmeiner, the founder of SOS villages**

***Q: What role does the organization play in the life of the local community?***

Mr. Rivero: These children come to our care because of a very bad beginning, and now they have rights. Changing the life of one child can impact society. Children are a form of investment that will eventually drive social change. We help them shape their future by teaching them skills and knowledge to develop self-reliance. An independent social impact assessment study of the SOS Village Davao City by Ayo and Villafuerte was conducted in 2020 and was presented to SOS Village International. The study substantiates the social changes made by SOS Village programs in individual, community and Social Return of Investment (SROI) levels by measuring different indicators. Generally, the results showed that the majority of indicators scored highly, with a few showing room for improvement (Ayo & Villafuerte, 2020).

***Q: In what ways can the organization play a larger role in the community in the future?***

Mr. Rivero: With the help of our programs, neglected and less-privileged children will be protected from harmful influences such as drugs, committing and being victims of crime, early pregnancy and poverty. Instead, these children will be given a home, resources, support, opportunities and provided with all their needs to realize their fullest potential and be independent adults capable of raising their own families. This is how we can break the chain of generational poverty in our community.



**Mr. Rivero elaborating on the results of the social impact study by Ayo and Villafuerte in 2020**

## **Reflections**

The interview with Mr. Rivero was enlightening and heartwarming. His story as a former SOS child, the stories of the children that they have taken care of, and seeing the happy faces of the children in the village gave us hope that these children may still live a fulfilling life. The SOS Children's Village provides these children with a home, resources and support so that they might realize their fullest potential and be independent adults capable of raising their own families. The organization's role in the local community and the fulfilling lives led by the children in its care is undeniably significant.

SOS Children's Village Davao is known as "a loving home for every child". The future of our nation is in the hands of our children. All children should be protected, given care and loved.

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## Researchers



Hello! My name is **Aiyana Jul A. Decena**, and I am a third year Pharmacy student at San Pedro College in Davao, Philippines. I aspire to be a medical doctor. I'm from a family of five, and I am the eldest daughter. I enjoy watching TV, journaling and reading self-help and poetry books. I am a firm believer in the words of Sigmund Freud: *One day, in retrospect, the years of struggle will strike you as the most beautiful*. Hence, to you who are reading this, your struggles are driving you towards growth. So hang in there!



Hi everyone! I am **Ai-jay V. Cortez**, a 21-year-old student of San Pedro College, Davao City, Philippines. Currently, I am a fourth year intern in the program of Medical Laboratory Science of San Pedro College. I am also an active leader in the Student Congress. We initiate school events, projects and community extension programs. I usually spend my free time painting and making digital art. I also love to read novels and watch documentaries.





# Literation Buddy

Researchers: Jessica Ahad & Nicole Thenoch

University of Surabaya (UBAYA), Indonesia



Indonesia is a developing country and literacy is one of the most important challenges facing our society. As literacy rates increase, people are able to get more out of education. In the words of Lynn Butler, “reading is a window to the world”. As of 2021, Indonesia ranks 62 out of 70 for literacy rate by PISA, the OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment<sup>[1]</sup>. Some individuals in Indonesia are determined to make a difference.

Sahabat Literasi, which translates into English as Literation Buddy, is a volunteer organization created by a 21 year-old student called Nidia and her teacher. Their idea was to establish Sahabat Literasi as a place for young children to develop an interest in literacy from a young age. The target age is children aged 2 - 10 who are unable to get proper education due to poor literacy, which is often connected to the economic challenges faced by the parents. Examples are children of street vendors, families that work in the cleaning services, and many more.

Literation Buddy also helps young children with numeracy and assists with school subjects such as science or social studies as well as English. Literation Buddy aims to become a safe space for children to go to when they need help in their studies or to spend leisure time with books.



(left to right) Nicole, Ms. Nidia (Founder, Literation Buddy) and Jessica

Literation Buddy was born in a village in East Java called Dolanan Village, inspired by traditional games in the area. The children are motivated to study by the chance to play after learning, which is also a way to introduce the children to traditional modes of play. A small city garden acts as the studying corner for the children, where they gather between 3pm to 5pm every Saturday. The Literation Buddy team provides different topics, and one person would teach math, one would teach biology or how to count and so forth. Children can come or leave anytime they want and learn any subject that interests them. Some children ask for help with their homework. Literation Buddy also provides books to interested parents or any adult who drops by.

Due to the pandemic, the teaching garden was closed and Literation Buddy had to stop offline teaching. The organization transitioned to podcasts on trending topics with experts on the particular field. During this time, Literation Buddy was even able to author a book that channeled the content of online discussions called *Belajar Millennial Bergerak* or *Learning Millennials on the Move*. Book donations also helped orphanages and small communities dedicated to literacy. Literation Buddy was able to implement these programs through the support of the regional government and through donations from the public. Outside of education, the organization is engaged in social programs, such as distributing food and snacks during fasting season.

Literation Buddy is made up of university students that cover key roles on the committee as well as serving as volunteers. In the future, the plan is to open up the volunteer program to high school students. They believe that this way their programs could run more smoothly because high school students tend to have more free time compared to their varsity counterparts. The goal is to have a Literation Buddy in every city in Indonesia, which will result in improving literacy rates across the country.

## Interview

### Interviewee:

Ms. Nidia - Founder, Literation Buddy

***Q: How long have you been involved with the Literation Buddy?***

Nidia: It's been 5 years since we founded the program in 2018.

***Q: What motivated you to establish Literation Buddy?***

Nidia: The literacy rate in Indonesia is very low - in fact we have some of the lowest literacy rates in the developing world. We also believe that children are more focused on the digital world and that they forget about physical books and the learning potential there. Lastly, there are children out there unable to have proper education, therefore we want to be there to help them learn and educate them all. So our main goal is to improve child literacy from a young age.



***Q: What do you do on a daily basis at Literation Buddy?***

Nidia: Basically I teach the children English, help them to do their homework, and try to build interest in education, especially literacy. Besides helping children offline, since the pandemic my team and I also have a podcast on our instagram account for students in high school and university. The podcast focuses on education and literacy.





***Q: Literation Buddy focuses on teaching reading skills using physical books. Is this a challenge with the increasing popularity of digital books?***

Nidia: At Literation Buddy we aim to strike a balance between physical and digital literacy, therefore we focus on both physical and digital sources. We cannot ignore the era we are living in.

***Q: What is the most important thing a person should know or understand when volunteering at Literation Buddy?***

Nidia: We welcome students from any school and university to join as a volunteer, regardless of their economic background, age, etc. The most important thing is to have a strong desire to improve the lives of children and never give up until you see some progress.

***Q: What has been the most difficult thing you have had to deal with?***

Nidia: Different family cultures and challenging moods. I must try to make the environment happy and conducive to study, to reading and learning in English, etc.

***Q: What do you find most rewarding about your work?***

Nidia: When we succeed in teaching children and being of service to them. When the children ask us to help with their homework and the next day they come back to tell us that they got a perfect score. It is a proud moment for us as educators. It means that what we are doing is helping them, which makes them keep coming back for more. This shows they are comfortable with us too.



***Q: Dealing with children especially when it comes to literacy is a big challenge. How do you and your team deal with this?***

Nidia: We try different strategies. At first we tried to approach them like a salesman would, which was a big mistake because they did not know or trust us yet. Then we tried snacks as an incentive, but we didn't continue because we were afraid that they would just do it for the

snacks. So in the end our strategy was a collaboration with Dolanan Village and the traditional games that they could play after they study. We try to be approachable and give answers to their questions so that they feel comfortable, because as we all know children have creative minds that have lots of questions. That has also been one of our challenges as educators.

***Q: How many children attend?***

Nidia: Up to 15 children. We cannot state a definitive number, because on some days only a small number of children come. There was this one time during the fasting season when only 1 - 3 children were present. But we understand that it was fasting season so most of them are at rest while waiting to break their fast.



***Q: What projects has Literation Buddy been involved in?***

Nidia: Our projects are the reading garden, social work, online discussions with experts about juvenile delinquency which we used to produce our book, and a podcast about Literation Buddy itself.

***Q: Is Literation Buddy open for volunteers to join?***

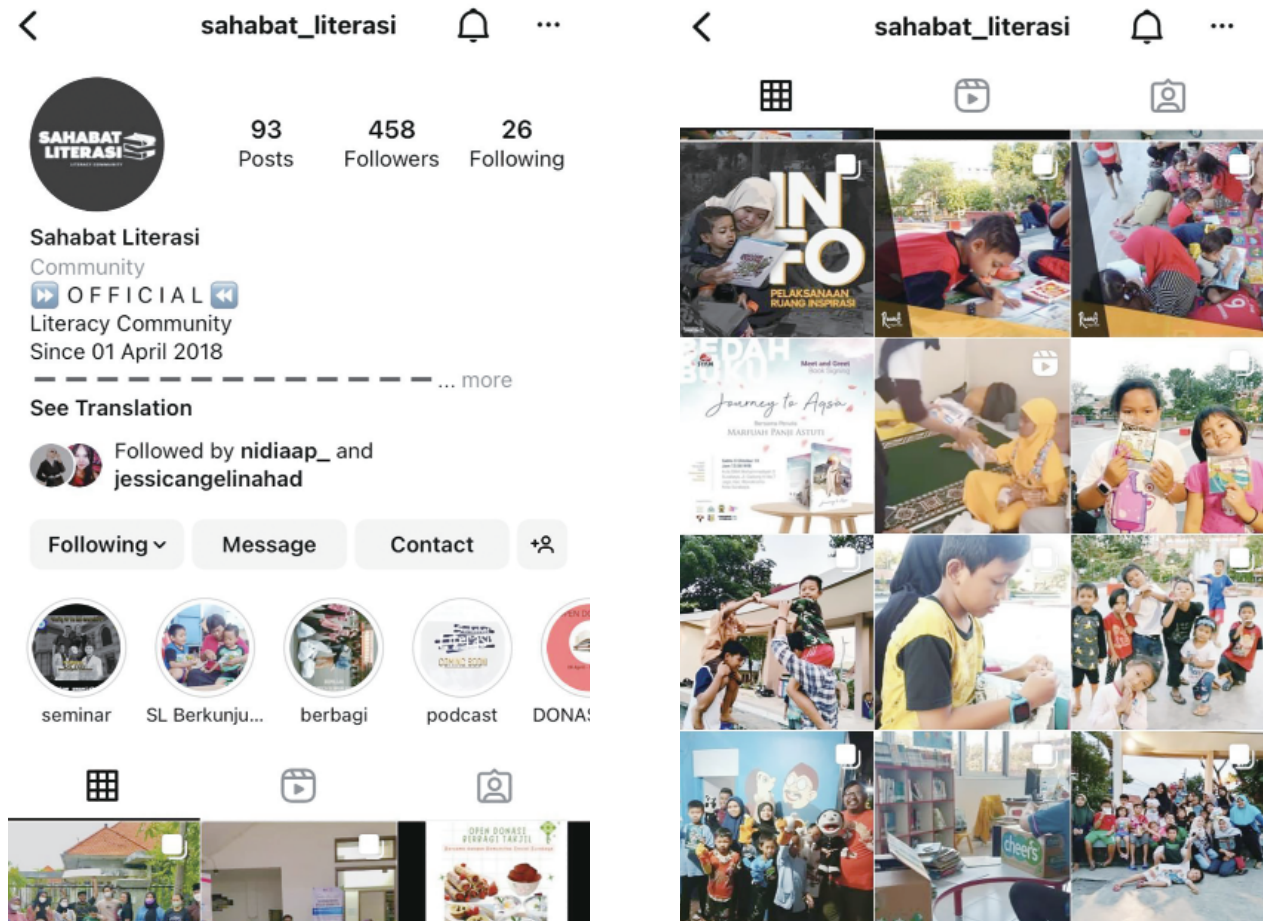
Nidia: Yes! Literacy Buddy is recruiting volunteers from high schools and universities around Surabaya, East Java.

***Q: Where do you get the funds to run Literation Buddy?***

Nidia: We are supported by the regional government, and also by public donations like sponsors and donors who support us by funding us and sending in books. We also sell the books we publish to fund our next projects.

**Q: Does Literation Buddy plan to go back offline?**

Nidia: We have no certain plans yet. We are still adjusting to the new normal of the pandemic. We know that it is quite impossible to tell children to keep their distance, so we may have to wait until the pandemic is over.



Sahabat Literasi (Literation Buddy) Instagram Profile: [sahabat\\_literasi Instagram](#)

## Reflections

Literation Buddy supports young children to help them build their interest in literacy from a young age. Being able to converse with Nidia about this issue was an eye-opening experience because it reminds us how important literacy is for a country. It is also heartwarming to know that there are people out there that care for not just the children unable to receive proper education but also for the future of the country.

Nidia and her team also teach English, numeracy, biology, and more. These children are free to come and learn whichever subject they are interested in. They also publish a podcast which everyone can access for free. Literation Buddy aims to expand to every city in Indonesia. They also plan to include middle school and high school students as volunteers to not just contribute to the organization's goals, but also to improve the interest in child literacy in teenagers.



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## Researchers



Hello everyone! My name is **Jessica Angelina Ahad** and I am 19 years old. I am an undergraduate student at the University of Surabaya, Indonesia. I study Law in the Department of Law and I enjoy doing research and analyzing how people interact. I have also had an interest in volunteering since high school. I was also an exchange student at Northern Illinois University, Chicago. In my leisure time I enjoy reading, singing, watching Korean dramas, and hanging out with my friends.



Hi everyone, I'm **Nicole Tiffany Gloria Setiono Thenoch** but you can call me Nicole for short. I am currently a pharmacy student at the University of Surabaya in Indonesia. I have always been passionate about anything connected to the medical field because I find it very cool to be able to help others in need. When in need of entertainment I mostly read, watch shows or spend time with friends or family. I have also enjoyed participating in debate competitions since high school as they challenge me to think critically and express myself clearly.



# **Better Dads Malaysia: ICAN Fathering Workshop**

Researchers: Balqis Maesara & Muhammad Danieal

Universiti Sains Malaysia

Better Dads Malaysia (hereinafter referred to as BDM) was founded by Mr. Joshua Hong and Mr. Jason Leong in 2019, and is located in Cheras, Kuala Lumpur. BDM is a non-profit organization dedicated to initiating, leading, and coordinating a nationwide movement for Malaysian fathers to improve the quality of life for their families and children. BDM strives to motivate Malaysian fathers and father figures to enhance their positive self-worth, resilience, emotional intelligence, and self-respect.

BDM has a simple vision, whereby they want to see every child in Malaysia growing up with an involved, committed and responsible father. This is because many fathers nowadays are so preoccupied with work that they fail to provide the necessary amount of love for their children, who require more affection and time from their fathers than anything else. Indeed, when a father spends time with his children, it offers memorable moments that he will remember till the end of his life, and will also provide his children with a positive outlook towards spending time together with their own children in the future. Evidence suggests when this cycle is repeated, male children carry forward a positive attitude to parenting because many men grow up in the same way their father did, regardless of them being a biological or adoptive parent.

In Asian societies, fathers are often seen predominantly as the providers of food and shelter. Fathers frequently want to succeed at work and earn a large salary, without realising that their interactions with their children and spouse may suffer as a result. BDM strives to raise fathers' awareness and develop a movement to help them become better fathers. Men are often not considered natural nurturers, thus they do not naturally spend resources and time to be better fathers. According to Ikhwan Nazaruddin (2020), BDM does not dismiss the mothers role, but emphasises the need of supporting the "queen of the house". A number of studies demonstrate that father absence is a factor in many juvenile criminal cases and social problems. This often occurs because they are thirsty for love and tend to look for it from an outsider, as they do not receive the love they seek from their own father (Kofler-Westergren et al., 2010). In order to improve the health of young people, both co-founders decided to address the fundamental cause, the father, and this led to the idea of establishing Better Dads Malaysia. Their aim is to inspire and equip men to intentionally and proactively involve fathers in their children's lives in order to transform organisations, communities, and the individual. Many programmes have been created by BDM to educate fathers on how to be better fathers and increase awareness and advocate for active fathering, because although there are no perfect fathers in this world, it is possible to improve and become better day by day. One such program that BDM has organized in order to spread awareness to fathers, and father figures, is the ICAN Fathering Workshop.

ICAN stands for Involvement, Consistency, Awareness and Nurturance. According to research on

teen parenting, those who are “most communicative with their teens” have the “greatest fathering satisfaction.” It can prove very difficult to communicate with our teenagers if this bond is not established when children are young. This workshop highlights the significance of father-child relationships and offers practical advice on how to speak to a child in a nurturing manner. After all, every child deserves a father who cares enough about them to help them grow into happy, confident, and resilient adults. The National Board of Population and Family Development (LPPKN), which is part of the Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development, provides assistance and financing to BDM. BDM has been enthusiastic and committed to implementing programmes such as training and workshops for fathers in the public and commercial sectors. Apart from programmes for fathers, they also offer programmes for parents to improve their parenting skills so that their children can grow up happy. They have also created mental health programmes, including talks or workshops, to assist people, particularly parents, in managing their mental health intelligently so that it does not negatively impact on their children.

Both co-founders, Mr. Joshua Hong and Mr. Jason Leong, have known one another for a long time working with young people and in the field of community engagement. They both have unique experiences and stories, and as a result of this, they founded BDM in 2019. Mr. Joshua has been working with young people for over 20 years, and has previous experience working with religious institutions, the Youth Council, and a variety of other organisations. Mr. Jason, however, has worked in many categories of men’s problems, such as husbands, teenagers, and others, but had not dealt with many father-related issues until BDM. BDM uses Singapore as a role model for its actions, since the Singaporean government is very supportive, both financially and physically, of family issues in its society, and believes the entire country will collapse and be destroyed if the family unit is not robust in all aspects. One of the BDM co-founders actually worked with a Singapore NGO on spreading awareness and saw how their hard work brought them achievement, which led to trying to emulate their success in Malaysia. BDM is committed to diversity and tolerance, too, and works with Malaysians of all races, including Malay, Chinese, and Indians, and promotes no particular religious agenda.

## Interview

### Interviewees:

Mr. Joshua Hong (Co-founder of BDM)

Mr. Jason Leong (Co-founder of BDM)

### ***Q: What made you want to establish BDM?***

Mr. Joshua: There was a moment when I realised that today’s youth are not like the generations of our fathers and grandfathers. You guys interact and respond to things in different ways. I joined the fathering movement in Singapore a few years ago, which was organised by Dads for Life, to witness the impact of their movement on father-child relationships. Finally, I could see that their movement was changing every father who joined their programmes to be better than before. So I decided to implement this in Malaysia to offer every father an opportunity to be a better father in the future.

Mr. Jason: For me, I came from a family in crisis, and I don't have a good father, so I'm interested about how one can, or may be a better father. According to the findings of my research, every man grows up in the same way as his father. It's fine if you have a positive fathering experience since you will pass this on to your children, but what if you have a bad fathering experience? The fathering experience is similar to having a habit where a bad habit cannot be removed by simply removing it, but it may be destroyed by replacing it with good behaviour. You must replace bad parenting or bad fathering with a better fathering model. That is why we began our research on fathering and established BDM to assist all fathers around the country in making a change to be a better dad.



Mr. Joshua Hong (far right) and Mr. Jason Leong (far left) with the researchers

***Q: What is the age range of those that usually participate in the workshop and what kind of fathers do you allow to join?***

Mr. Jason: Since the inception of BDM, the majority of participants have been younger dads aged 30 to 40. Less than 10% of grandfathers are joining us, and 5% are soon-to-be fathers in their late twenties. Participants in their early 30s are usually handling a baby or have a child who is already a teenager. They basically can't control their teenagers and come to our workshop to strengthen their fathering abilities so they can control them better.

***Q: How often are the ICAN Fathering Workshops held?***

Mr. Joshua: During the Covid-19 pandemic, we held it once a month but moved the platform from face-to-face to online. Since we began BDM in Malaysia, we have had six trainers and



run it in three languages: Chinese, English, and Bahasa Melayu. We are currently steadily recovering and resuming the workshops face-to-face.

***Q: How many people usually participate in the workshop?***

Mr. Joshua: ICAN Fathering Workshop will not exceed 30 participants since the ideal number of participants is 24 people and it is easier to conduct a discussion when we divide that into 4 or 5 groups. This is also because it may well be uncomfortable for guys to converse with a number of strangers gathered together.

Mr. Jason: Even the LPPKN's Head Director was shocked when they saw how many fathers we got to join our programme. We give advice on the need to engage men and women separately when discussing major problems such as parenthood and many men will sign up when they see that our programme is exclusively for them.



Discussion session with the trainers during the ICAN Fathering Workshop

***Q: Have any kids ever come up to you and said bad things about their father, and ask what they would have to do better when they become a father?***

Mr. Joshua: Although not many young people have come to us in the past, we generally advocate for young people to have a better relationship with their fathers and/or mothers.

***Q: Why does BDM focus on fathers instead of parenting as a whole?***

Mr. Joshua: Lot of Asian fathers think that earning money, working very hard and providing for the family are the only roles for fathers. So, they outsource the nurturing to their wives and



never get involved with their children because they are too busy with work. Our goal through the workshop is to tell them that their participation and involvement will change their children from every aspect. We keep saying that there is no perfect father but you must work hard to be better and we believe BDM's vision can be achieved.

Mr. Jason: We are more likely to work with fathers who are still accompanied by their partner. Because fathers are at the head of the stream, if they can handle it, the likelihood of becoming a single father, absent father, or other will diminish. Many of these issues can be avoided if we address the underlying causes, such as bad fathering. We teach that spending time with children is vital since fathers can often be physically present in the house but not emotionally there, especially if he does not speak to his children and instead stares at his phone, watches television, or does other things. This norm needs to change because both a physical and emotional presence is important to make children happy and feel affection from their father.

***Q: You state that one reason children often despise their father is due to generational trauma and maybe the father instilling a harmful trait in his own children. Is there a part or segment in the workshop that helps to unlearn that destructive trait?***

Mr. Joshua: We do discuss in one section of the session that it is never easy and that the degree of trauma varies. We discuss with the participants a reconciliation with their own father and encourage some study on how their own fathering behaviour was influenced by their father and the need to reassess. With generational trauma and toxic qualities, in particular, it depends on you to either repeat them or make the changes necessary to become a better father.

Mr. Jason: One of the reasons your father is like that is that he probably lacked a good father himself and the good experience needed to treat you better. There is a fallacy passed down from generation to generation, such as from your grandfather, that the responsibility of a father is merely to provide for the family. BDM encourages fathers to modify their behaviour and rebuild their relationship with their grandfather in order to display it to their children. It is a difficult habit to break, but I believe that if they are aware of the repercussions, every man will attempt to break it and avoid repeating it with future generations.

***Q: What do you find the most rewarding about being involved in the BDM, and especially the ICAN Fathering Workshop?***

Mr Joshua: BDM's mission is to raise awareness and advocate for active fathering. So, for me, the most fulfilling aspect of being involved in BDM is watching the father take it seriously and desiring to be a better parent, as well as helping to spread the message to others.

***Q: After the workshop, is it hard for fathers to reconnect with their children?***

Mr. Joshua: It really depends. After the workshop, we will add them to a WhatsApp group or Zoom meeting to provide support when necessary. Once in a while, these fathers will encounter

problems that they will share in the group or text us about directly. In this way, every father can share their experience and get suggestions from other fathers on how to handle it. However, even though there's support, it all depends on the father whether or not he puts in the effort for his children. We are also making an effort to make a new project called *Dads at Work* because we understand that men have to wear a lot of hats, be it as a father, an employee or a husband etc. We feel that it is important to provide working men with a range of practical and pragmatic resources, from leadership programs to training, and these will be published online so that fathers can access it whenever they need it. It's also free of charge, helps them with their work and allows them to invest more time in their children.

***Q: Why do you think these kinds of workshops are important?***

Mr. Joshua: A lot of men come to the conclusion that they want to be a better father, but the main challenge that they always seem to face is 'how?'. From my observations, when it comes to work or finding money, they're often very creative, but in terms of parenting or fathering they seem to simply run out of ideas. That's why we think that workshops play a role in helping them gain the know-how for being a good father.

***Q: Is there any other activity that you've done recently to strengthen father-child bonds in Malaysian families?***

Mr. Joshua: Last month in June, we conducted a Barista workshop. It's not exactly done in a professional setting, but it's a session where fathers can make coffee or bake cookies with their child. We deliberately designed these workshops so mothers could take a rest day and the father and child could spend time together. For example, there are some parts of the coffee machine that the children can't reach, and some kids have creative or innovative ways of baking, so they must cooperate together in order to make it work.

***Q: Do you think that fathering is crucial to the development of the country?***

Mr. Jason: The right father will raise the right children and this will therefore lead to the right development of the country. It must be the responsibility of the parent to make sure their kids are raised well and the country depends on these fathers to make sure that their children become good adults. Whether they become good leaders or followers in the country is really up to how they raise them.

## **Reflections**

During the interview, one question that the founders asked us was "What good memory do you share with your own father?" It definitely gave us a shock because we weren't expecting, or ready for, that kind of question. To be fair, it did make us reflect as Malaysian kids who grew up with equally Malaysian fathers, and that simple question, even after some time pondering, was undoubtedly hard to answer. I (Balqis) only answered that I remembered one point in life when my own father came home and kissed me on the forehead at 3.00 am after he had spent 3 months away with minimal contact in New Zealand. However, Danieal couldn't even answer it due to his strained relationship

with his father, and only briefly mentioned that he couldn't name one. That certainly made us think, because what are the odds on us both finding out that we both have few or no good memories of moments with our fathers. Considering how it impacted our own lives, we have to conclude there are plenty of other children, teenagers and young adults, or even older adults in Malaysia who would definitely struggle to answer that question too.

It wouldn't be wrong to surmise that plenty of fathers in this country think that fulfilling basic necessities and covering their financial needs is enough for them to be good parents. Maybe that thinking was OK back when the country was colonized, or after achieving independence where ensuring the children's survival was considered enough. But times have changed, and with the change of generations, there's other needs to be met in order to raise children well. People who choose to have children must not only be financially prepared, but also mentally, emotionally and physically prepared as well, or they'll end up raising children who will grow up with multiple issues, like feelings of abandonment or mental health issues. If they don't break that cycle from their parents, it will continue on to their children as well. Hence, generational trauma. We shouldn't have children simply because we think it's socially the norm, where 'everyone does it so I should too', but instead reflect whether we are a good fit to raise them. It's also important to be aware of how you were raised as a child and detect any toxic behaviours you think are detrimental to your children and actively unlearn them.

This kind of issue is undoubtedly one that is on-going in Malaysia and deserves to have some light shed on it. Better Dads Malaysia is one of the few, if not only, organizations that focuses on how important fathering is and an issue that needs to be tackled full-on. Although Better Dads Malaysia has only been established a few years, it has done a tremendous job in raising awareness towards healthy fathering. The workshops are definitely a great idea and, hopefully, will grow to be more well known in the near future. With this in mind, we hope that Better Dads will be successful in continuing to inspire more Malaysian fathers to be the best version of themselves for their children and to raise them in a healthy, loving environment.

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## Researchers



Hi, my name is **Muhammad Danieal Bin A. Razak** and I'm a second year student in the Anthropology and Sociology department at Universiti Sains Malaysia. I am a Malay and have 3 siblings of which I am the middle one. I was born and live in Johor, and I love doing research about family and LGBTQ matters. It may sound a bit weird, but I love to hear about their problems and the decisions they have to make. My ambition is to become a teacher, and even though it's outside of my course, I will try my best. The thing I love most is going out, or on holiday, with my friends to help release tension and relax.



Hello! My name is **Balqis Maesara Jamail** and I am a second year Anthropology and Sociology student at Universiti Sains Malaysia. I'm of Malay and Filipino descent and I'm the 10th out of 12 children. I'm also queer. I'm currently pursuing a HR internship in Kuala Lumpur during my semester break. I love immersing myself in books, anime, cosplay, Studio Ghibli films, games, looking for random cafes around KL, and romanticizing life. I'm diagnosed with BPD and GAD and therefore big on mental health awareness. I also have 8 cats and love them more than anything in the world!

# **Disability Issues**





# **Global Campuses Foundation: Universal Design in Chiang Mai**

Researchers: Atcharaphon Kanjai & Pawich Wongkamhang

Chiang Mai University, Thailand

Global Campuses Foundation (GCF) was formed for the purpose of providing advanced learning opportunities for underserved populations worldwide, but first and foremost people with disabilities. The philosophy and methodologies of Global Campuses offer a unique education paradigm that reorients the experience of disability to a positive life experience with an emphasis on ability. In 2001, Global Campuses Foundation, a nonprofit 501(c)3 was founded by James and Sheryl Tewksbury, two seasoned college faculty members in the areas of disability studies and women's history. They decided to bring their passion for higher education and cross-cultural experiences to the formation of GCF's mission of participating with, and supporting, adults with differing abilities worldwide to create, manage, and sustain campuses of advanced learning to enhance their lives.

Global Campus Chiang Mai Thailand (GCC) began as a gathering of people with disabilities who shared common needs, challenges, hopes and dreams, and the Demonstration Campus of the Global Campuses Foundation formally started operations in July, 2002. The GCC is led entirely by people with disabilities, and they serve as administrators, faculty members, students, and field outreach staff. The vision of the GCC is to provide a network of campuses fostering advanced learning opportunities for adults who experience disability, and its mission is to facilitate collaborative learning for adults of all abilities.

The initial courses organized by the GCC centered on day-to-day skills and workforce training such as sewing, electronics, computer skills, and more. As campus participants grew in self-awareness, the curriculum theme evolved to include disability pride and celebration of ability, confidence, and stewardship skills. Campus members soon carried this principle into the greater Chiang Mai area, and actively engaging in community service, they began to assess and address issues of access, and other human rights vital to the disabled community. Moreover, the Global Campuses Foundation honors the natural value of all people and their right to create and pursue education throughout life. They believe that education has the power to uplift, dignify, and honor all lives and they are committed to helping people understand those within the culture of disability. By providing an equal-opportunity environment that fosters respect and communication, the Global Campuses Foundation recommits to creating, updating, and sustaining workplaces and educational campuses that reflect and celebrate the diversity of our community, and one in which all people are respected and valued (Global Campuses Foundation, 2021).

According to the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, "Universal Design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability. An environment (or any building, product, or service in that environment) should be designed to meet the needs of all people

who wish to use it” (CEUD, 2020). The important role of Global Campus Chiang Mai Thailand (GCC) in the community in Chiang Mai is to drive changes for those with disabilities, by helping the general public understand disability culture and also develop skills training for them, pushing society to greater awareness of universal design. They also work with the various faculties in the university to construct knowledge about people with disabilities and the importance of universal design, especially for students or the new generation, so that they understand the goal of universal design. That is, to allow users with different abilities to interact with a product effectively, not just with regards to equitable use, but also so that it is beneficial for both users and businesses. This can be achieved by building value and creating new opportunities, such as for traveling foreigners from other countries.

The Global Campus Chiang Mai Thailand (GCC) is based in Chiang Mai University at Suthep sub district, Chiang Mai. We interviewed Ms. Kachakorn Thaveesri or Kachakorn, who is now the GCF Regional Director, Southeast Asia. Kachakorn is a founding core group member of Global Campus Chiang Mai, who later became the director when it opened in July, 2002. She has steadily evolved as a strong natural leader well known for her successful counseling and facilitating skills, and she loves to encourage the sharing of stories, dreams and learning experiences amongst everyone she meets. In 2009, Kachakorn became the GCF Regional Director for Southeast Asia, and now oversees campus development in Thailand and surrounding countries. Growing in confidence over the years, Kachakorn has confirmed her belief in the power of higher education to enhance the lives of all people, thereby making the world a better place; a world of friendship, love, caring and peace. Kachakorn loves her family and animals, and although she has a lot of cats in her house, she especially loves dogs. In addition, she also loves to express herself through many forms of art. She completed her bachelor’s degree in 2014 through Sukhothai Thammathiraj University. (Global campuses foundation, 2021)

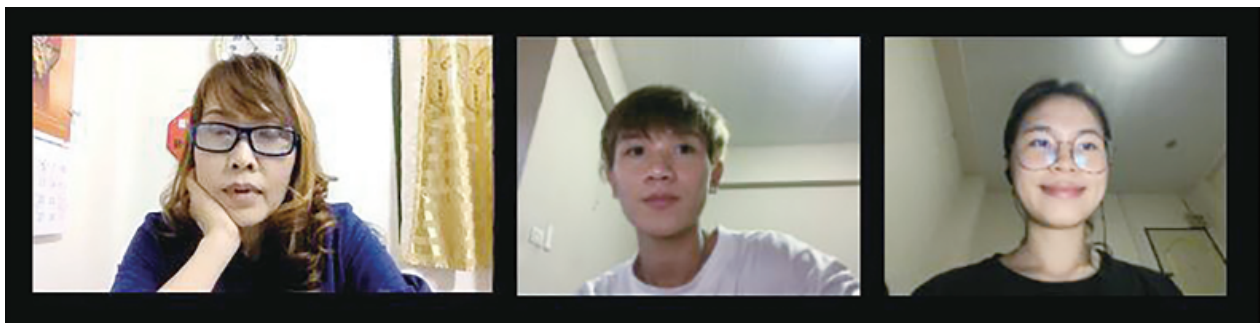
## Interview

### Interviewee:

Ms. Kachakorn Thaveesri (GCF Regional Director: Southeast Asia)

**Q:** *We would like to hear about how you started the GCF, please?*

Kachakorn: It was started about 20 years ago, through the persuasion of friends. They encouraged me to find out more about the issues and I became a co-founder of the organization. I admit that the work we did 20 years ago was very difficult, because in the context of Thai society, people with disabilities are unable to do anything on their own. They must rely on others. As a result, the work has been largely ignored with different opinions from within society.



Talking with Kachakorn on Zoom.

***Q: What are your responsibilities in the organization?***

Kachakorn: Currently, I work as a GCF Regional Director for Southeast Asia, in Thailand and surrounding countries. Me and my team are all people with disabilities. We mainly work by providing advice and organizing activities that promote the ability of people with disabilities to be able to have a career and live on their own in society, and also push the issue of universal design in Thai society.

***Q: What are the organization's objectives?***

Kachakorn: The goal is to promote and support social equality for people with disabilities. This means helping with education, welfare development, and career-building for people with disabilities, so that they can be proud of themselves and live happily.

***Q: What has been the most difficult thing to deal with so far?***

Kachakorn: The hardest thing for me has been to change the mindset of people in society, especially those in the family, who think that people with disabilities can't develop or live on their own. Also local authorities, who do not understand how people with disabilities can improve themselves. It is difficult to change these things and make the situation more beneficial to people with disabilities.

***Q: Eventually, what will people with disabilities and society get from the organization?***

Kachakorn: The most visible thing is the restructuring or designing of things to be of universal design, not just for people with disabilities but for everyone; kids, pregnant women, the elderly etc. Also the provision of opportunities for people with disabilities to work, travel, and lead a happy life in society.



**Informing about Universal Design at the Book fair in Chiang Mai.**

***Q: What is the important role of the organization in the area and to the people of Chiang Mai?***

Kachakorn: We are providing knowledge and understanding of capacity development of people with disabilities in the local area and pushing for Universal Design to be adopted in Chiang Mai. As Chiang Mai has a lot of universities, youths from different areas come together here, and this is a good chance for us to work with them in pushing the issue of universal design. Also, Chiang Mai is an economic area that many foreign tourists visit, and that is why entrepreneurs in Chiang Mai must pay attention to what we are doing.

***Q: How long do you think it will take for Thai society to realize and understand the importance of Universal Design?***

Kachakorn: I think it will take a long time. Maybe in the next generation, or maybe not, because we cannot change people's beliefs that easily. However, now the organization is pushing universal design and developing the capacity of people with disabilities with other organizations and universities. We believe that the actions of the next generation of youth will lead to changes in society in the future.

## **Reflections**

Global campuses foundation is an organization driven by people with disabilities that also provides support and assistance to people with disabilities. In terms of developing their own potential, this allows them to live, work, and earn their own living normally. Moreover, they are pushing universal design into society through cultivating and educating young people about equality and social diversity. Even if it is still quite difficult, because most of society thinks that people with disabilities cannot improve themselves, the organization believes that someday Thailand will become a space for everyone and an area known for equality in the global society.

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Faculty Advisor : Assistant Professor Dr. Alichia Treerotchananon

## Researchers



Hi everyone ! My name is **Acharaphon Kanjai**, but my friends call me May. I am a senior student at Chiang Mai University. I'm studying Marketing Communication and my major is mainly the study of Public Relations. I live in Chiang Mai in the north of Thailand. I enjoy working with people and also love to travel to new places. In my free time I love watching movies and playing games. I am also an animal lover because they are really wonderful and make my heart calm.



Hi everyone ! My name is **Pawich Wongkamhang**, but my friends call me Simon. I am a senior student at Chiang Mai University, majoring in Marketing Communication, minoring in Humanities and English. My main focus for study is in the area of Public Relations. I love working in a team and learning new things.





# Supporting Students with Disabilities

Researchers: Mizuki Kobata & Mao Kemmotsu

Kyoto University of Foreign Studies

In Japan, there are many problems supporting people with disabilities, as barrier-free and universal design are not common. This is particularly true in the field of education, where people with disabilities are facing accessibility issues that cause them to give up on learning and traveling. For example, many cannot get any support for taking notes in class, moving around the classroom, or doing experiments. This lack of support is also true when taking school trips. As students in the Department of Global Tourism, this last point is of particular importance to us.

You might be wondering what a school trip is. In Japanese high schools and junior high schools, students take trips to various places - including foreign countries - to learn the history and culture of the destination as well as the importance of peace, and so on. For example, if students visit Okinawa for a school trip, they must visit the former site of the Pacific War between Japan and the USA, learn about its history and the horrors of war. And if students visit Kyoto, they must visit some historical places to learn about Japanese tradition, culture, and history. Such school trips are part of the culture of Japanese education.

However, students with disabilities always face some difficulties to participate in these school trips. On the one hand, there are often a lot of physical and design-based barriers in the destination, so it can make it difficult for them to enjoy their school trip. On the other hand, some parents of disabled children don't let them go on these trips because they don't think that their children can participate in the trip due to their disabilities. This is a big problem as well. One of the solutions to accessibility issues on school trips is called 'universal tourism'. This is one of the new forms of tourism that emphasizes the important role tourism can play in creating a sustainable society. Universal tourism is that which everyone can participate in and enjoy, regardless of their age, gender, income, and disabilities. When tourism is more universal and accessible to all, everyone benefits, from the tourists, hosts, and local residents.

One organization that is working to support disabled students, both in and out of the classroom, is called UNI. UNI is a fruit that grew out of the experiences of a young man named Ken Sato, who was a university student with disabilities. When he first enrolled in Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto, he was faced with many problems and difficulties that affected his learning. So he decided to set up a student-led organization to provide support to other students with disabilities. After gaining more knowledge and experience, he and his fellow students established UNI as an official NPO in 2011. The meaning UNI is related to the concepts of 'universal', 'university', 'unique', and 'unity'. Based in Kyoto, a city with a high population of university students, UNI provides support through various human resources, doing everything it can to solve problems that disabled students and their families and teachers have. It provides three kinds of support: learning support, school trip support, and livelihood support.

We thought the support of school trips by UNI was a good activity to contribute to this universal and sustainable tourism. The reason why we chose this NPO as the target of our research and interview is because we thought we could introduce the most important thing to help disabled people and students and the area of tourism. We want readers to know the ways that tourism can contribute to education and an equal society through this investigation. In July of 2022, we got in touch with a representative of UNI, named Mr. Kuboyasu. a former Ritsumeikan University student, Mr. Kuboyasu was one of the founding members of UNI, along with Ken Sato. We sat down with him and asked him some questions about UNI and its work to help students with disabilities in the Kyoto area.



## Interview

### Interviewee:

Mr. Kuboyasu - The non-profit organization UNI

### *Q: Who are you and what kinds of work do you do in this organization?*

Mr. Kuboyasu: First, this organization is not so big. We have four staff and some student supporters. Our work is helping students with disabilities to do what they are willing to, but they have some difficulties due to their disabilities. This is really tough. Supporting their school trips is one of these tasks. I mainly help with their learning in the university or in other schools.

***Q: How was UNI established and what is its main mission?***

Mr. Kuboyasu: Yes, well Ritsumeikan University is just near this office, and we started there. Our founder, Ken Sato, who has a disability called muscular dystrophy which makes all of his muscles weak, enrolled in this university in 2003. After enrollment, this disability had gotten so bad that he needed help breathing, and his hands and legs had become paralysed. He could still learn things by himself, but the equipment and support was not enough at that time. For example, he was not able to take notes. That's why people around him started a movement to help these students and made a student organization. Before our founder and I graduated from university, we set up a student-led organization for supporting disabled students. There is also the same organization in Kyoto University of Foreign Studies (KUFS). In this way, there are also some students who have the same difficulties. To change this situation, we set up the NPO around the time when I graduated. We see our main mission as improving the situation where students with disabilities are unable to learn.

***Q: Could you tell us about the situation for disabled students in Kyoto?***

Mr. Kuboyasu: It has been improved since 20 years ago, but there are still some barriers. For example, what if there is someone who can't hear or see? If there are no problems doing your project with them, then that's fine. But, if there are some problems or barriers, those are preventing them from participating in your project. We are trying to break down these barriers. There are some disabled students in KUFS, and we are going to help them. These students are few in some small universities, so if such schools have these students only once in 20 years, they won't know how to support and deal with them. We often talk with them and consider ways to help them.

***Q: Why did you decide to focus on the “studies” of students with disabilities?***

Mr. Kuboyasu: Well... to help them, there are various forms of support by the state using taxes. These types of support are defined as, for example, when they have to go to the university, a helper is sent to push their wheelchair. However, this law is limited according to the situation such as when they can't live without it. Therefore, in the university, they often can't get the support from the state. Although studying is part of their life, if there is no group or organization to help them in the university, they can't get any support for learning, such as taking notes in class, or moving around the classroom. So we have to fill in these gaps.

***Q: What is the support for supporters?***

Mr. Kuboyasu: You have seen our website a lot. Thank you very much. Well, there are various forms of support which require a lot of manpower. In this case, it is absolutely necessary to increase the number of supporters. And the more students and young people who have experienced the support for disabled students, the more people will notice barriers and the problem of the environment surrounding them, such as there being no braille textbooks or no voice assistance at the bus stop. Actually the disabilities are

not the problems. So we have to change such an environment, and we are struggling with it. As a part of this effort, we do educate supporters well to improve the problem of not having enough supporters. For example, some of the diagonal support beams in the buildings on campus are actually dangerous for blind students because they have to use a guide cane to confirm their step, but they can not see around their head. Only the architects are able to make such a pole, but if there is a person who has helped the blind or other disabled students, he or she might mention the pole. This is what changing the environment around them is. That's why we try to educate our supporters.

***Q: Why did you choose students, not adults or professionals as supporters?***

Mr. Kuboyasu: It is not necessary to choose students, but we think there are a lot of good points for student supporters. We do help learning, so students studying the same thing as students with disabilities can provide better support. For example, if the disabled student who wants some learning support is in the faculty of medicine, and we are asked to support an experiment, we don't know the way to do that at all. That's why it's better for them to be with someone who is really close. In addition to that, we think it is important that disabled students have a chance of choosing the student supporters or professionals. An environment where they do what they can do with fellow students and ask for a professional to do what they can't do with them is the best for all of disabled students.

***Q: What made you decide to support their school trips (school excursions) in addition to study support?***

Mr. Kuboyasu: The problem of not being able to attend classes at school in the first place arose in many places. Especially in irregular situations such as school trips, the hurdles to participation tend to be higher. If a student says they don't want to go, that's their own choice. But due to pressure from others, for example, "It's too dangerous" or "You might get hurt, so you shouldn't go" or "Parents must come with them"...that is a problem. Unfortunately, these things happen a lot. Especially in the second or third year of high school, it is very uncomfortable for students at this age to go on a school trip accompanied by his or her parents. There may be some students who say it's fine. But the conditions are different only for that student (who has the disability). There are a lot of students who give up on school trips because of this. This year, school trips have finally started to come back. And since April we have received a great deal of consultation, and those problems are still happening. I think it's not good that problems are happening in the first place. And Kyoto happens to be a place where a lot of people come for school trips, with the Kinkakuji temple, Arashiyama, and various other places for school trips. So, Kyoto is a place where problems like that can easily happen.

***Q: What kind of students have used UNI's service so far?***

Mr. Kuboyasu: The largest number of disabled people are in wheelchairs or have limb disabilities. In

the first place, historical buildings are not barrier-free (universal design). For example, Kiyomizu-dera is at the top of a very steep slope and there are many gravel paths. It is very difficult to get up there. There are noticeably more environmental barriers when traveling. The majority of the children we work with are physically disabled. But some of our users have autism and need to be looked after, as their parents can not always accompany them. Furthermore, there is also the question of whether or not parents should accompany them on the trip. Also, it is not always possible for teachers to be with them all the time, but they need to be looked after. So, there are cases where UNI's helpers go when necessary.

***Q: Do the UNI's supporters who are still university students also provide support for the students who have handicaps?***

Mr. Kuboyasu: Yes. We think it is best if disabled students could have a student as a helper. When we go, in any case, the student has a helper qualification, or has received training equivalent to a helper qualification. I have been doing this (helping disabled students) since I was at university, but my age is getting older and older from high school and junior high school students. I guess in some ways it is easier to work with people who are closer in age. In terms of physical disability, recently, in addition to supporting students with disabilities on school trips, we also have the whole class take our training as part of their school trip program. Of course, there are times when students with disabilities are among the students in the classroom who come to receive the training, and if that happens, it makes the experience even better. For example, we go to Kinkaku-ji together, including able-bodied people, and check for barrier-free access (accessibility). We do some thinking about any barriers in the system of school trips or in the education system itself. UNI has been conducting such training as part of the school trip program, so that students themselves can find barriers that might be a problem for disabled classmates in their everyday school life.

***Q: Is it like teaching “Those places need more universal design” during the trip?***

Mr. Kuboyasu: Yes. And the way of looking at the things that I mentioned earlier. It is not like that because their legs are disabled, so we have to do something about the legs to become better. It's the system or the way the school is run that make it difficult for disabled students to participate in the first place. If the students in the surrounding environment were to become aware of that, maybe the barriers would become smaller. So, we are conducting training courses to make students aware of these issues. Of course, if there is something physically inaccessible, we will point that out as well.

***Q: What kind of support is there depending on the type of disability, and what kind of consideration is given to it?***

Mr. Kuboyasu: It's easier to understand by seeing the similarities rather than the differences. As I said earlier, there are different functional disabilities, such as hearing, eyes, limbs, etc. But UNI considers the systems and people around them to be preventing participation, rather than the functional disabilities. Based on that aspect, the support



depends on what the barriers are in each case. The most important thing is to find out how they can participate, so that they can participate beyond the barriers, and participate in the same way, and go on a school trip and receive training. For example, if the student is in a wheelchair, they may need assistance when they move around, or they may need someone to push them, or they may need a helper when they go to the toilet, and when they eat, sleep, and take a bath. School trips include such things, so assistance for those is necessary. On the other hand, UNI has not been involved in school trips for the blind.

But how we support when blind people go sightseeing is, whether there are things that can be understood by touch or not. For example, the stone pagoda at Ryoanji Temple is famous for its *karesansui* (dry landscape gardens). They don't let you touch them, do they? It's not easy to understand for blind people. However, there is actually a model of the garden there, that you can touch and check. If there is such a thing, students can understand what the stone garden is like, and if there is something they want to know, you can give information orally.

Well, sometimes we go on school trips, or rather, we go just for fun. But we go with students who cannot see, or with students in wheelchairs. It's like if we are really doing a survey on accessibility or not. However, when we go outside, we discover many things.

In terms of hearing, we've done things like this: a junior high school student who couldn't hear, went on a school trip to Okinawa. He couldn't hear the guide but we didn't have enough money to go with them to Okinawa. So, we used a communication system to get the voice of the guide, and we sent the written texts of the guide back to the student's tablets. We have also provided support for school trips where students can listen to the guide's explanations while looking at the objects, or listen to a lecture by a senior student, graduate or active member of society in real time.

***Q: Are you focusing on the similarity of barriers rather than the differences in disability when you support school trips?***

Mr. Kuboyasu: Yes. Basically, we think about what we can do to help them participate in the school trip. For example, we are sometimes asked if our child with disabilities can participate in the school trip in the first place from parents, or how to charter a care taxi from the school. The problem is how the child can participate in the school trip, but parents, teachers and even the student him/herself don't think they can participate in the first place. If there is a problem from such a point of view, we start from there and say that it is normal for them to be able to participate. And then if there is a problem, we will do something about it. For example, there are questions from teachers such as whether a chartered taxi is necessary, or which type of care is better for us, or what we need to prepare depending on the assistance. The teachers want them to participate in the same way, but they don't know what to do technically. So, UNI will figure out with the knowledge we have what to do in such a situation to help the student participate.

***Q: I think there are environmental barriers such as hills and gravel roads. In order to support school trips, are there any places where you would like to see more barrier-free access?***

Mr. Kuboyasu: In older buildings, there are usually many physical barriers. For example, when going up to Nijo Castle, the floor is too high to climb, but it is usually manageable. In an extreme example, it was not a school excursion, but there was a study tour for wheelchair-bound students from a university specializing in antique arts. They were allowed to see relics from the Nara period, or to look closely at sliding doors in the temples from the Nara period, which they normally would not be allowed to enter. For the first time, a student in a wheelchair participated in such an event. The building was built in the Nara period, when there was no such thing as barrier-free access, and there were many barriers. Naturally, the buildings are full of barriers. But the reason why I didn't feel any environmental barriers was because the teachers in charge of the department basically took the stance that the students should participate because this trip was a key course of the department. So, they were always trying to get the student to participate in the same way. The place they were going to was special, like a temple managed by an old lady who looked like a "Kyoto lady" so it was difficult to negotiate with her. We kept thinking about what we should do because the tatami mats would be damaged if we rode on them in a wheelchair, but we wanted the student to look at the sliding doors. So, I thought, "What should I do?" We thought about having him go up and down on our back and sit down on the tatami and look at the sliding doors. If there was a narrow space that physically cannot be entered by two people in a wheelchair, we organized a different program for that area and had the student go to the museum while the others didn't, and have an exchange of impressions later on.

Anyway, we spent about two weeks trying to figure out different ways. The places we went to were full of barriers, but there weren't many barriers in terms of obstacles, and that student was able to participate in the two-week programmed rather smoothly. In that sense, the surrounding environment was very important. If the teacher had said that students in wheelchairs were not allowed to participate, and had taken the stance that it would be too difficult from the start, we probably wouldn't have been able to do this, and the student probably wouldn't have participated for two weeks. First of all, the teacher closer to the wheelchair devised a way to make it possible for the students to participate. By combining the expert's knowledge of how we could do it without destroying the antiques and our (UNI) knowledge of assisting, we were able to do it. So, while we are most grateful that the building is barrier-free. It was also a benefit for us to know that it was possible to do this even in an ancient building, which is the opposite of barrier-free. In this sense, I sometimes wonder if it can be managed just by the awareness and consciousness of the people around, but I think that is a surprisingly important part of the project.

## Reflections

In the interview with Mr. Kuboyasu, we learned how the stereotypes of the people around us affect the participation of disabled students on campus and on school trips. He told us how we can help people with disabilities. Many people think disabled students cannot do the same activities as others because of the disability or the activities are not barrier-free. However, the problem of not being able to participate is that people around disabled students and sometimes even the student him/herself has a misguided belief that they “cannot participate.” All students can participate in all school activities if the people around them and the student him/herself all believe that the disabled student can indeed participate. With this belief, teachers, parents, students, and UNI can think of ways to overcome the physical barriers that exist, such as the inaccessibility of the facility. It is important that the facilities around us are universally designed, however it is more important to cultivate the belief that “everyone can participate.”

To be inclusive toward people with disabilities, we should believe in the possibility of the disabled people. We can start by erasing the stereotype that it is difficult for disabled people to participate in any way. Then, we should always think of the way we can help those disabled people. The disabilities are not problems; we need to have some knowledge about the disabilities, for example, the physical environmental barriers that wheelchair people face. If we have the knowledge, we can avoid making those environmental barriers, such as small bumps on the road, that make it difficult for wheelchair users to ride upon. To change the environment to be more inclusive of disabled people, we should focus on the solutions, not the problem.

## Researchers



Hi, I'm **Mao Kemmotsu** from Kyoto University of Foreign Studies. I'm in the Faculty of Global Engagement, Department of Global Tourism. I am from Kanagawa Prefecture near Tokyo, but I live in Kyoto now. I love trips and Kyoto! So I enrolled in this university to learn language, tourism, and the culture of Kyoto. I played softball from 9 to 15 years old. For now I love softball and I think softball and the people I met through it absolutely changed my life. I learned a lot from them, and it gave me the base of my humanity. I love Japanese culture, tradition, architecture and history, so Kyoto is the most special place for me. I'm really happy to live and learn there! I'm also excited to join this project. It's one of the wonderful gifts which Kyoto gave me.



Hello everyone! My name is **Mizuki Kobata**. I am a student of Kyoto University of Foreign Studies in Kyoto, Japan. I am in the Faculty of Global Engagement. I major in Global Tourism. I am from Osaka. I enjoy traveling to explore new cultures. This is why I chose Global Tourism as my major. I've been to New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, and Taiwan with my family. I lived in New Zealand for three years and went to high school there. I met a lot of people from different cultural backgrounds which inspired me a lot. In my free time, I enjoy visiting museums, temples, and shrines. Kyoto has many museums, temples and shrines which attract me a lot. Every time I visit those places, I learn new things about the culture and history of Japan which is really interesting.



# Community-Based Rehabilitation Center

Researchers: Muhamad Firdaus Mohd Nazri & Alissa Anne Alexander

Universiti Sains Malaysia

Our interview session was conducted physically with two respondents at the Community-Based Rehabilitation Center, Universiti Sains Malaysia, and the researchers had a chance to spend time with the disabled children at the center.



**The Community-Based Rehabilitation Center Building, Universiti Sains Malaysia**

The Community-Based Rehabilitation Center, Universiti Sains Malaysia (hereafter referred to as CBRC USM), was established on the 9th of July 2019 and has now entered its third year of establishment. Adhering to the principle of “Training Of Trainers”, it functions as a central base for children with disabilities, who are referred to as “trainees”, as well as the involvement of parents themselves. This program encourages an education plan that does not rely 100% on the rehabilitation center and the teachers alone, but also the parents of the disabled children. Among the selected trainees are children with disabilities or who are suffering from Down’s syndrome, autism, hearing problems, and vision problems due to cancer. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and cerebral palsy, are caused by abnormal brain development or damage to the developing brain, and affects a child’s ability to control his or her muscles.





**The researchers with trainees at the Community-Based Rehabilitation Center**

At the beginning of the CBRC USM establishment in 2019, 10 trainees consisting of USM staff joined the center, and now, in 2022, there are a total of 30 trainees. To date, not only the disabled children of USM staff have joined as trainees at CBRC USM, but also disabled children from the local community have been sent here by their parents. The average age of trainees at CBRC USM ranges from 3 to 15 years old. The main objective in establishing the center was to help parents who have children with disabilities to improve the functional development of their children. The second objective in the initial establishment was to help the staff with disabled children at Universiti Sains Malaysia, and people in the community, increase their happiness index, facilitate welfare matters and lighten their burden.

In the initial stages of USM's CBRC development, two categories of the workforce were established: supervisors and staff called teachers, with the teaching staff recruited based on open interviews. Following this, selections were made through criteria set by the Department of Social Welfare and interviews by the Department of Social Welfare and the CBRC Founder, Dr. Syazwani. Selections were based on experience and skills as well as teaching potential. The Department of Social Welfare makes an assessment first before extending a proposal to the CBRC Founder. The Department of Social Welfare pays the allowances of teaching staff through an annual grant allocated by the government to the department. At the beginning of the establishment of CBRC, there were three teachers, which has now been increased to six.



**Learning space at the Community-Based Rehabilitation Center**

The philosophy held by the CBRC USM is to “develop and improve the development of disabled children towards the maximum capacity and capability of the children’s ability” because each disabled child can develop very differently according to their physical and mental abilities. The vision held by the Community-Based Rehabilitation Center is “Leader of rehabilitation transformation in the community towards new hope and a meaningful future”. Disabled trainees are enrolled in a rehabilitation program that can help them lead a more active and fulfilled life with their current disability and function according to their individual level of disability. For example, the instructor teaches the trainee how to walk according to their maximum ability. The mission of the Community-Based Rehabilitation Center is “Driving the transformation of rehabilitation through the sustainability of community development with special needs on and off campus, integrating knowledge transfer with the involvement of parents or heirs and active collaboration partners’. The purpose of this content is to transform the rehabilitation of trainees with the involvement of parents and collaborative partners in the development of children with disabilities through the transfer of knowledge, as well as to encourage collaboration from outside parties to contribute as much as they can to the development of the CBRC. This would include, for example, lending their skills or expertise to the development of the potential of the CBRC trainees. The motto of the Community-Based Rehabilitation Center is “Empathy develops potential,” which means that the empathy shown by stakeholders will be evident in their best efforts to improve the abilities of children with disabilities, to form positive development, and to bring about the kind of change that gives joy to the parents of the trainees.



**The researchers with trainees at the Community-Based Rehabilitation Center**

The CBRC is becoming an increasingly well-known rehabilitation center, and is acting as a role model for many other disabled centers in Malaysia. Indeed, it was cited as the benchmark for several Institutes of Higher Education in Malaysia when it was presented in the Twelfth Malaysia Plan, 2021-2025 in Parliament by the Malaysian Finance Minister, Senator Dato' Sri Tengku Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz. This, to some extent, shows a positive direction for the development of children with disabilities in the country.

## **Interview**

### **Interviewees:**

Dr. Syazwani Drani - Founder of Community-Based Rehabilitation Center, Universiti Sains Malaysia  
Madam Wan Zahira Yu - Supervisor of Community-Based Rehabilitation Center, Universiti Sains Malaysia

### ***Q: Can you please tell us a little about yourself?***

Dr. Syazwani: My name is Dr. Syazwani Drani, I am a Senior Lecturer in the Section of Social Work in the School of Social Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia. I am also the founder of the Community-Based Rehabilitation Center (CBRC) on the main campus of Universiti Sains Malaysia.

Madam Wan: My name is Ms. Wan Zahirah, and I am a supervisor in the Community-Based Rehabilitation Center, Universiti Sains Malaysia.





The researchers with interviewees at the Community-Based Rehabilitation Center

***Q: What are the roles you both play in the Community-Based Rehabilitation Center USM?***

Dr. Syazwani: As the founder of the Community-Based Rehabilitation Center, Universiti Sains Malaysia, I am also known as the Chairperson of the Center. A founder should look at all matters involving the administration of CBRC USM as a whole and include all management aspects to ensure the program's smooth implementation. For example, monitoring and ensuring financial affairs, the welfare of trainees and teaching staff, the development of each trainee, changes in trainee ability, management of teaching staff resources, and teaching effectiveness to trainees. In addition, I also monitor most aspects of education and security. In order to monitor the smooth running of the CBRC, I am present at the center twice a week.

Madam Wan: My primary role includes management and administration of matters related to salaries and monitoring of staff, and I am also one of the teachers in the center.

***Q: Dr. Syazwani, how did the idea to create/build the Community-Based Rehabilitation Center USM come about?***

Dr. Syazwani: It resulted from a One-Off program and the desire to continue contributing to the community, and also I have a disabled child.



Interview session with the Founder of the Community-Based Rehabilitation Center

***Q: Madam Wan, how long have you been working at the Community-Based Rehabilitation Center USM?***

Madam Wan: I have been serving for two years now. Before, I was involved in a special children's school for eight years. I changed my professional direction to come and work at the CBRC USM to add to my knowledge and experience. I then became a teacher for a year and following that was promoted to supervisor. The rules and regulations here are under the guidance of the Department of Social Welfare.

***Q: As a Founder & Supervisor, what are the essentials required of an instructor at the Community-Based Rehabilitation Center USM?***

Dr. Syazwani: Anyone can do the work, but when it involves special and disabled children, it requires a high level of tolerance and a lot of patience. This is because it can be very challenging taking care of these children. For example, they throw feces accidentally or unconsciously, have tantrums, and get out of control, sometimes with biting, hitting, and so on. The aspects of experience, skills, and academic level are secondary assessments because gentleness, patience, and calmness are far more important traits in a teacher here.

Madam Wan: In my opinion, teachers need to have feelings of love and affection within their souls in order to understand the behavior and wishes of these children.

***Q: What are the daily or weekly activities of trainees at the Community-Based Rehabilitation Center USM?***

Madam Wan: We prepare a timetable that can be used as a guide. Learning here follows a syllabus created by us. For example, main skills, fine skills, language, and mathematics. Each of them is evaluated through an assessment of their respective capabilities. For example, each trainee has a lesson evaluation plan to measure their ability.



**Organization chart & Daily activity schedule at the Center**

***Q: Is USM's Community-Based Rehabilitation Center the first in a Public Institute of Higher Education?***

Dr. Syazwani: Universiti Sains Malaysia is the first Public Higher Education Institution or PHEI to have a Community-Based Rehabilitation Center on campus. The first CBRC to be established was at the Universiti Sains Malaysia Health Campus in Kubang Kerian, Kelantan. They focused on training and vocational skills for trainees aged 15 to 18 years. While the USM main campus CBRC is the second project based on early intervention, it can be said that the strength of the two CBRCs at USM makes Universiti Sains Malaysia the first PHEI in Malaysia that has had a significant impact on the community. In the Twelfth Malaysia Plan, 2021-2025, which was presented in Parliament by the Minister of Finance of Malaysia, Senator Dato' Sri Tengku Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz, Universiti Sains Malaysia is recognized as the first PHEI to establish a CBRC and further provide inspiration to other Universities to get involved with the Social Welfare Department.

***Q: What have been the most challenging things to overcome during your service at the Community-Based Rehabilitation Center USM?***

Dr. Syazwani: I have definitely faced several challenges. In the initial stage of establishment, with



little knowledge about how to establish a CBRC, the administrative process, implementation, and the syllabus used for learning were very difficult things to bring about. Everything started from zero knowledge. Also, the CBRC needs to look at trainees' achievement levels according to the trainee category; sometimes, the disability is the same but at a different level. There is a need for a daily lesson plan or a quality individual lesson plan. It is necessary to plan for each trainee because they all have different capacities, capabilities, limitations, and focus. Finally, the solution has been the existence of daily and individual lesson plans, and guidance and encouragement from the Department of Social Welfare, as well as help from supervisors from other CBRCs.

Madam Wan: Teachers are certainly required to possess a high level of care and concern to ensure that the trainees at the CBRC achieve the objectives of this rehabilitation center.

***Q: What was the most valuable experience you have had during your service at the Community-Based Rehabilitation Center USM?***

Dr. Syazwani: The creation of the Community-Based Rehabilitation Center was inspired by my experience as a mother with a disabled child. Therefore, I am the holder of two hats, namely as both founder and parent. There are many small things that have made me happy with the experience. For example, some parents shared that their children had a good relationship with them, but were not so responsive. However, after being at the CBRC, the child now prefers a closer relationship. Also, a child once made a flower from lego and presented it to their parents. They appreciated that so much. Some parents shared that their child could not communicate well because of autism, but after receiving intensive training at the CBRC, the child can now call both parents by title.

Madam Wan: At the beginning, there was a child who could not utter a word to their teacher, and then suddenly they called their teacher by title. This really touched the teacher's heart.

***Q: In your opinion, should the USM Community-Based Rehabilitation Center be established in every IPTA? Why should it be mandatory?***

Dr. Syazwani: Yes. This is in line with the Twelfth Malaysia Plan, which encourages all public higher education institutes to establish Community-Based Rehabilitation Centers because there is still a lack of knowledge about disabled children in Malaysia. This would be the best platform because, in every PHIE, many opportunities can be created to improve the development of children with disabilities.

Madam Wan: Community-Based Rehabilitation Centers will help in opening the eyes of the community. This is said to be so because the community is less aware and concerned about these special children. Therefore, it is appropriate to establish one in every institution.



Researchers' interview session together with the supervisor

***Q: Has establishment of USM's Community-Based Rehabilitation Center impacted on the local community with disabled children?***

Dr. Syazwani: Of course. Naturally, it has impacted well on the university being the first to have a Community-Based Rehabilitation Center, but results from a focus on community volunteering show that the trainees show excellent development such as doing daily activities well and improving in terms of abilities and potential. In addition, the CBRC can also train parents to control the behavior of these disabled children and develop their skills, and encourage better quality care by holding workshops for knowledge transfer.

Madam Wan: The existence of USM's Community-Based Rehabilitation Center has had a good impact on the local community, as once they get to know more about the CBRC it helps to reduce the burden on the community.

***Q: How do you see the establishment of USM's Community-Based Rehabilitation Center impacting the lives of the local community and the country in the long term?***

Dr. Syazwani: The Department of Social Welfare was basically the forerunner of the CBRC. However, now USM's Community-Based Rehabilitation Center can run independently under the supervision of the Department of Social Welfare. In addition, it should really be considered an advanced rehabilitation center because it has modules. Next, CBRC can be a very beneficial program, depending on the activity. From the perspective of impact on the country, we highlight the potential of trainees, for example, in academia, sports, and so on, and this could become truly iconic in the future.

Madam Wan: In my opinion, the impact the CBRCs have on society is excellent, and many more

people will come to know more about special children.

***Q: What motivates you to stay with the Community-Based Rehabilitation Center USM?***

Dr. Syazwani: I want to help parents and trainees because I am a parent of a disabled child. Having a normal child surely brings happiness, but having a special child; there is a real sweetness to it.

Madam Wan: I am already attached to these disabled children in my heart, and it is difficult for me to stay away from them.

## **Reflections**

The interview session was exciting because we got perfect responses from both interviewees. All the information obtained was beneficial in the process of completing this report. Overall, the Community-Based Rehabilitation Center of Universiti Sains Malaysia is seen as a medium that has great potential in producing more iconic individuals from among the disabled. In addition, it is achieving its mission, vision, and objectives, working positively in the community, and also giving maximum impact towards the development of the country's human capital. We hope that the Community-Based Rehabilitation Center continues to be looked upon and taken seriously by every level of leadership so that those with disabilities, as equal Malaysians, do not get left out of whatever incentives are on offer.

In addition, a million thanks are also expressed to the KUFS professors for giving us students the opportunity to enter the field in this community engagement project. Appreciation also goes to all lecturers who are equally involved in helping in this completion process. It is hoped that this project will be able to help anyone who sees, reads, and refers to the Community-Based Rehabilitation Center.

## **Researchers**



Hi everyone! My name is **Muhamad Firdaus bin Mohd Nazri**. I'm 22 years old, originally from Malaysia, and the second child of four siblings. I am taking my Bachelors in Social Work, at the School of Social Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia. I am involved in associations and clubs at the University, and in addition, I am also active with several charitable NGOs as a volunteer. In the field of volunteering, I participate in humanitarian missions and in organizing programs that have an impact on the community.



Hola! I am **Alissa Anne Alexander**, but people here call me Lissa. I grew up in Malaysia and have lived here for 21 years. I am currently pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work in the Faculty of Social Sciences on the main campus of Universiti Sains Malaysia. As a student of social work, I am involved in PIHDM which assists people who require the essentials for life, and several other NGOs with the help of a church youth organization. Good day! Nice knowing all of you.

# Association of People with Different Abilities in Davao (SAKADAB)

Researchers: Hanna Mae R. Baloyo & Bella Cleodette U. Pacana

San Pedro College, Philippines

Samahan ng May Iba't Ibang Kakayahan sa Dabaw (SAKADAB) is a community for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) located in Davao City. SAKADAB was established back in 2010 when a group of 27 determined PWDs decided to create an independent organization following their stay at the Our Lady of Victory Training Center rehabilitation facility. SAKADAB is a place to learn and enhance skills that can improve one's livelihood. At the conclusion of that rehabilitation and training session at Our Lady of Victory Training Center, when it was time for the group to return to their own homes in the provinces, the 27 founding members mutually agreed to stay in Davao and live a life independent from their families. Since 2010, SAKADAB has been led by Mr. Ludovico Gecain Mascariñas Jr.

In partnership with Gawad Kalinga Community Development Foundation, Inc. (GK), a Philippine-based movement that aims to end poverty for 5 million families, the previous Davao City Mayor, who is currently the Vice President of the Philippines, Sara Duterte Carpio, granted SAKADAB funds as well as providing a location for the organization in Gawad Kalinga Village, Davao City. Construction started in 2012 and by August 30, 2013, all SAKADAB members had transferred to their new homes.

Since its founding SAKADAB continues to prosper. Their goal is to increase the quality of life for PWD through sustainability and self-reliance. SAKADAB aims to become an inspiration for PWD not to let their disabilities limit their ability to do great things in life and serve a greater purpose. Through their livelihood programs, donations and help from their families, SAKADAB is able to finance itself. This is a group of people with a tenacious faith, unwavering resolution and perseverance. Through their actions they are proving that physical impairment is not a hindrance to living life to the fullest, achieving one's aspirations, and serving the community.

Each individual has a key skill. Some can bake, and the bread that they make is either sold to an orphanage or displayed in their mini-mart. The store, staffed by SAKADAB members, is stocked with food to generic medicines, as well as hygiene and cleaning products. Other members make handicrafts like bags, purses and key chains made out of recyclable materials and beads. These items are displayed and sold on stalls in malls in Davao City. Some members also work at City Hall, in the Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO), where Mayor Sebastian Duterte has promised them a contractual maximum 3-months position where they help prepare seedlings at the plant nursery.

Like many PWD, Mr. Mascariñas, the Executive Director of SAKADAB, admits that there was a point in his life where he felt "useless," "a burden" and a "waste of potential," however this did not stop him from moving forward, creating a community and making a contribution. In the interview,



Mascariñas, who is paralyzed from the waist down, shared that he regrets some of his actions in his youth. Eventually he gained a new sense of purpose in life and a chance to be a better man. Mascariñas wishes that more people, especially the young, would get to know their community, reflect on their experiences, and change their mindset to something more positive. His advice is to value what we have, maximize our abilities and walk a righteous path.

SAKADAB was formed by 27 members but this has been reduced to 20 because some members have passed on due to old age. Among the members, only three are able to walk: two are amputees with prosthetic legs and one suffers from scoliosis. Mascariñas emphasized how they're a family and how delighted he is that people in their area choose to buy goods from SAKADAB to help them. Our school, San Pedro College, has partnered with SAKADAB to allow Physical Therapy interns to conduct their clinical internship program at their organization and provide physical therapy sessions voluntarily. SAKADAB as an organization inspires us to be empowering, accepting and to lend a helping hand to our PWD brothers and sisters.

## Interview

### Interviewee:

Mr. Ludovico Gecain Mascariñas - Executive Director, SAKADAB



***Q: Can you define SAKADAB as an organization, and what do you do?***

Mascariñas: Our mission is to increase the quality of life for PWD through sustainability and self-reliance. We want to be independent without relying on others for basic needs and living in general. We have all contributed our time, effort and money to create this organization. There were difficulties and challenges on the way, but as long as we work hard, do not stop trying, we will get to where we need to be.

I must also thank the local government for their help and understanding. After three years of planning and working towards our goal, the government listened and offered us a location where we could establish SAKADAB Village. We do not want to keep on getting help from other people. There are still things that we as PWD can do. We have physical limitations, but we have other ways to be independent. For me, as a PWD, once you accept who you are, along with your limitations, that is when you will be able to start seeing what you can do and what you are capable of.



***Q: What are the programs or activities you currently have in the organization?***

Mascariñas: We have a handicraft program. It is not really a booming business, but at least we are doing something productive. Sometimes designers come and commission us for jobs such as putting sequins in clothes, which gives us extra income. Our handicraft products also get to be displayed in the SM Ecoland Mall and Abreeza Mall, where they get sold and which also brings us much-needed income. We continue with these livelihood programs so that we can sustain our daily needs.

Other members can do basic bicycle repairs, shoe repairs, baking, hairdressing and also managing our mini mart. We utilize all our available skills to make an income. The training sessions that we attended at the Our Lady of Victory Training Center were especially useful in this regard.





***Q: What difficulties and challenges have you experienced as an organization?***

Mascariñas: The most challenging part is maintaining our livelihood. Everyday this is our first waking thought because unlike many physically-abled people, we do not have regular jobs. Currently, we have contract work from CENRO (the City Environment and Natural Resources Office) and we also generate income from our livelihood programs but sometimes it is not enough. When one of us has a problem, everyone gets affected because we are like family here. We are just thankful that we are able to survive and we hope that we will continue to sustain our daily lives.

***Q: What do you think is the most significant impact of SAKADAB on its members?***

Mascariñas: Well for one we now have a house, a home. That is already a huge help to PWDs. Here, everything is accessible, we are given attention and aid. Traveling from A to B is possible and we can do mundane things like washing our own plates and doing our laundry independently. These things already have a great impact in our lives. Our goal is to sustain our needs from our own work. CENRO, which is just “wheelchair-distance” from where we are, sometimes has paying work for us, where we prepare plant nurseries. All of this helps us sustain our lifestyles, so we do not just wait for our family members to give us financial assistance.



***Q: What can people do to help?***

Mascariñas: People and society getting to know SAKADAB - even just learning that our group exists - is the biggest help they can offer. Then we can create something that might have an impact on their lives.

## Reflections

SAKADAB and their mission to become independent and self-reliant is inspirational to every person, especially in the PWD community. SAKADAB inspires people not to let their current disabilities or limitations define who they are. We all have the ability to rise beyond these limitations and be able to do great things. SAKADAB encounters challenges and difficulties, just like any organization. We recommend that people help and give support through buying their products, assisting in social media marketing, and making SAKADAB products and their cause known to people. Furthermore, we believe that in order for the organization to prosper, if access greater capital, SAKADAB has the potential to be immensely successful.

## Researchers



*Mabuhay!* My name is **Hanna Mae R. Baloyo**, and I am studying towards a Bachelor of Science in Physical Therapy at San Pedro College. I was born on October 21, 2001 and I currently live in Davao City, Philippines. My father is also from Davao City, while my mother is from Samal, Davao Del Norte. I have one sister and I'm the youngest. My interests include volunteering, reading books, watching movies and spending time with my friends. I aim to pursue a career in healthcare because I want to serve the community and help people in need.



*Maayong adlaw!* I'm **Bella Cleodette U. Pacana**, a Bachelor of Science student and Medical Laboratory Science clinical intern at San Pedro College, Philippines. I started volunteering at the Philippine Red Cross in 2015, and I have also been a campus journalist since grade school. I am very passionate when it comes to voluntary service, arts, literature and music. I am going to pursue a career in the medical field because I want to not only heal people but also touch their lives and have an impact without asking for anything in return. I spend my free time reading books, watching movies, biking, swimming, doing something creative, volunteering and spending quality time with friends and family.



# Pertemanan Sejiwa (Soul Friendship)

Researchers: Precella Silvia & Jovanka Rya Ivana

University of Surabaya (UBAYA), Indonesia

The pandemic has changed many aspects of our lives. Some people might still be dealing with the aftermath of the pandemic, and some may be having difficulty adapting to a new lifestyle. A global pandemic can affect the body physically and also mentally. Judging from the data on mental health in Indonesia, sufferers of depression have increased by 35% from 2018 (Widati & Nordin, 2022) and data shared by the Association of Indonesian Psychiatry states 69% of the 2364 respondents experienced psychological problems during the pandemic (Fatahya & Abidin, 2022). This increase in mental illness is a problem because just like physical illness, mental illness can hinder daily activity.

Mental illness affects social interactions, reduces performance and productivity, causes problems in dietary habits, and can even lead to physical illness (Rozali, Sitasari & Lenggogeni, 2021). Awareness about mental health has increased via social media during the pandemic. This is a good thing considering mental health awareness can encourage people suffering from poor mental health to seek professional help. Social media can also facilitate social interaction, give access to information on social support programs, help share experiences and learn about other people's experiences (Fatahya & Abidin, 2022). The use of social media to spread information about mental health might be an effective method considering 170 million Indonesians of a total population of 275 million are active users of social media (Fatahya & Abidin, 2022).

Given this background of growing awareness of mental health online, we thought it would be timely to interview social media platforms that are helping spread useful information about mental health. Pertemanan Sejiwa responded to our request and agreed to participate in an interview. Pertemanan Sejiwa, or Soul Friendship in English, was founded as an online platform in January 2021. At first, Pertemanan Sejiwa was just an idea submitted for a national competition. The idea was to build an online platform that aims to help with mental disorders and nutritional problems in Indonesia. Pertemanan Sejiwa serves to address concerns about the treatment available at public health facilities as well as the negative stigma about mental disorders.

Based on *keluarga sehat* (healthy family) data from February 2020, only 36.75% of families with severe mental disorders are receiving treatment. This data was obtained from 44.4 million households, which makes up 51.9% of the total population (Primadi et al., 2019). Eight provinces in Indonesia do not have mental hospitals and access to mental health professionals is limited with uneven distribution across the country (Ditjen P3, 2018).

Furthermore, 5218 people suffering with mental illness are simply being shackled and not treated for their condition at all, according to data from the Indonesian Ministry of Health in 2019 (Primadi et al., 2019). Pertemanan Sejiwa wants to help people by spreading information about mental health and nutrition in order to educate people and reduce the negative stigma surrounding mental illness. The focus is on providing useful information especially to the younger generation.

Pertemanan Sejiwa has five parts to its mission statement:

- Create an online platform to share information and consultation on mental health and nutrition on a national and international scale
- Improve the quality, structure and content for followers of Pertemanan Sejiwa
- Explore, develop and apply scientific values to the fields of psychology and nutrition
- Spread information through media and hold online consultations
- Educate the public about nutritional and mental health in order to create an Indonesia made up of people that are physically and mentally healthy

The hope is to create a society that is educated in mental and nutritional issues so people can help each other with their problems. Pertemanan Sejiwa operates across social media platforms such as Twitter, Spotify, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Youtube and Tiktok. We interviewed Ubaid Kurniawan (Iwan), the founder and CEO of Pertemanan Sejiwa.

## Interview

### Interviewee:

Mr. Ubaid Kurniawan (Iwan) - Founder of Pertemanan Sejiwa

**Q: *First of all, could you please introduce yourself?***

Iwan: Hello my name is Iwan, I am the founder and CEO of Pertemanan Sejiwa. Currently I am a full-time undergraduate student majoring in Psychology from Trunojoyo University in Madura, Indonesia.

**Q: *Could you please briefly describe Pertemanan Sejiwa?***

Iwan: Pertemanan Sejiwa is basically a non-profit organization that focuses on mental health education and nutrition. At that time, I noticed that there were no organizations in my city focusing on these issues, so that is why I along with a couple of close friends founded Pertemanan Sejiwa.



Interview with Ubaid Kurniawan (Iwan), founder of Pertemanan Sejiwa

***Q: How long have you been involved in Pertemanan Sejiwa?***

Iwan: As the founder, I have been actively involved in Pertemanan Sejiwa since it was established in January 2021.

***Q: What do you do on a daily basis?***

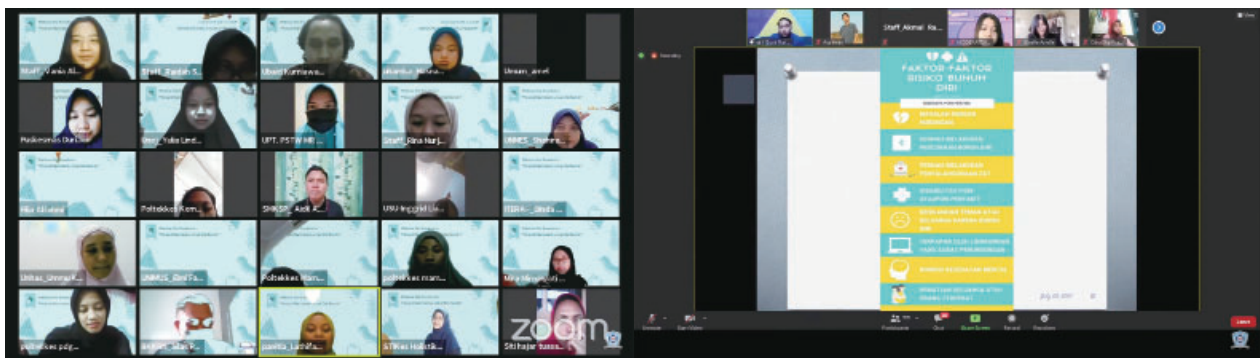
Iwan: Pertemanan Sejiwa has nine divisions which work on different tasks, such as our Support Group Division which focuses on sharing sessions, our Event Division which plans the events held by our organization, our UI/UX Division which works on website development (coming soon), etc. As the leader of the organization, my job is basically to check all of our daily activities and make sure that everything is running well.

***Q: What is the background story to founding this non-profit organization?***

Iwan: I was concerned about public health facilities in terms of mental health in Indonesia. I knew that not all of the public health facilities can provide enough professionals to handle patients with mental disorders. There is still a negative stigma about asking for help from professionals. People tend to keep all of their problems to themselves and this can lead to serious problems in the future. So it is important to educate people about the importance of mental health. Pertemanan Sejiwa can provide the information needed and we hope that negative stigma about mental disorders can be reduced and eventually eliminated.

***Q: What events has Pertemanan Sejiwa held?***

Iwan: For 18 months we only conducted online events because of the pandemic. During that period we held some web seminars and one of them, which mainly talked about self-love, reached 5000 participants. Participants vary from students to regular citizens. We were also happy to see participants from other countries, like Malaysia and Timor Leste.



Webinars on Mental Health (left) and Nutrition (right)

***Q: Pertemanan Sejiwa is an organization that educates people in terms of mental health and nutrition. What has Pertemanan Sejiwa done in some specific cases?***

Iwan: Basically for the past 18 months, we have held the same activities for both mental health and



nutrition, such as counseling, webinars, volunteer work, etc. but the topics were different for each session. For example, for mental health education, we held web seminars about self love, PTSD, OCD, and depression, while for nutrition, we looked at stunted development and malnutrition.

***Q: What happens when someone contacts you to consult about their problems?***

Iwan: There have been plenty of instances. Our Support Group conducts online sharing sessions. We have supported victims of cyberbullying, sexual harrasement, etc. As most of us have not graduated yet, our job is only to assure them they are not alone, give them advice, and tell them that it is okay to ask for professional help. I always remind my staff that we are not allowed to give any form of diagnosis or violate our ethical code.

***Q: How many members does Pertemanan Sejiwa have? Are all of them volunteers?***

Iwan: All core members and staff are volunteers. To date, we have 100 volunteers that work across nine different divisions. For the selection process, we did open recruitment followed by interviews.

***Q: Who can become a volunteer?***

Iwan: They should be an undergraduate or graduate student. For some cases, we also accept professionals or people who have just graduated. We do not have specific majors that we prefer, but those who want to join support groups or research divisions should have a background in psychology or nutrition.

***Q: What are the criteria for those who want to be a part of Pertemanan Sejiwa?***

Iwan: During the selection process, usually we looked at their commitment and enthusiasm. If they had experience related to the division they wanted to join that was great. But Pertemanan Sejiwa is a space for an individual to try something new in order to enhance their own experiences.

***Q: What has been the most rewarding and challenging thing you have had to deal with?***

Iwan: Helping people and giving the right information about mental health is rewarding in itself. One of the best moments was when we held a webinar about self-love and there were so many people attending who were really enthusiastic.

That said, being founder and CEO of Pertemanan Sejiwa is such a big responsibility. I have to handle many things at once to keep moving the organization forward.

***Q: What is your hope for the future?***

Iwan: In the short term, we will continue to disseminate information about mental health and nutrition through webinars. On October 10, 2022, timed to coincide with World Mental Health

Day, we would like to conduct a webinar along with some other events.

Looking to the future, I hope that we can build an offline community, eventually making this organization into a foundation for those who have mental illness (ODGJ - Orang Dengan Gangguan Jiwa, or the stigmatization of people with mental illness). We plan to collaborate with the local government and investors to help us make these dreams come true.

## Reflections

Being able to interview Iwan and hearing him talk about his organization was an eye-opening experience. Health is essential for human beings to be able to do their activities well. When we talk about health, it is not only about physical health, food we consume, or exercise that we do. Health is a broad concept encompassing both physical and mental health. Mental health is a serious problem in Indonesia, with a lot of stigma attached to any form of mental illness in society. As a result, many young people in Indonesia suffer from anxiety, depression, and many more mental illnesses because they tend to keep their problems to themselves. Pertemanan Sejiwa, along with other organizations that focus on mental health in Indonesia, are trying to solve these problems by providing better information about these issues.

One piece of good news is that the government is trying to provide free services for mental health consultation via public health in local communities. Hopefully this will help reduce the number of people suffering from mental illness in Indonesia. Changing long-held perspectives is not an easy challenge to meet. Despite all of these difficulties, organizations like Pertemanan Sejiwa are proving that it is not impossible to influence others in a positive manner as well as spreading awareness about mental health. We are inspired to be more sensitive about issues around us. We believe that, if the younger generation is willing to contribute to society, Indonesia will become a better nation in the future.

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## Researchers



My name is **Precella Silvia** and I live in Surabaya. I'm a senior at the University of Surabaya majoring in Biotechnology. As part of my studies, I have researched Bioinformatics, Drug Development, and Molecular Biology. I am also an activist and serve as President of the Student's Representative Board. My passion for teaching has driven me to be a private tutor. Currently, I teach mathematics, physics and chemistry to middle and high schoolers. I also love music, having played piano since I was in second grade. Over the last 3 years, I learned how to make digital art and it led me to set up my own online business. My dream is to pursue a master's degree overseas and research medical science to improve the quality of life in Indonesia.



Hello everyone, my name is **Jovanka Rya Ivana**. I have lived in Malang for the last 18 years and am currently living in Surabaya for college. I'm majoring in psychology at the University of Surabaya, and this year I will be in my third year. I have liked drawing since I was a child, and that hobby led me to get involved in many events in college. I'm really hoping I can develop my drawing and design skills further and try to work as a freelancer. I'm interested in psychology but I'm actually still undecided about what I want to be or what specifically in the field of psychology I wish to focus on.

# **Community Volunteer Groups**



# **Migrant Assistance Programme Foundation (MAPF)**

Researcher: Voravit Osathananda

Chiang Mai University, Thailand

The Migrant Assistance Programme Foundation (MAPF) is a grassroots non-governmental organization (NGO) that seeks to empower migrant communities from Myanmar that are living and working in Thailand. It became a registered Thai foundation in 2002 and is now a registered foundation under Thai law. MAPF's mission is to empower migrant workers from Myanmar and their communities to take action to claim their rights, by ensuring that migrants really have full access to up-to-date information on rights, policies and laws in their own language. MAPF helps fight discrimination against migrant workers, especially women and families, so that they can receive their full labour rights, basic health care. Through its various programs, MAPF works towards a future where migrants from Myanmar have their rights and freedoms fully protected. To reach this goal, it incorporates a human rights perspective into its policy decisions, increases understanding of the situation of migrant workers in the host country, and takes significant steps in assisting migrant worker communities in improving their overall working and living conditions.

MAPF was born out of a pioneering service provision entity for migrant workers in the health care center setup in Mae Sot by Dr. Cynthia Maung in 1989, which itself now serves many hundreds of thousands of migrants annually. In Chiang Mai, in 1990, a branch opened a drop-in centre for all sex workers and was immediately adopted as an important educational and empowerment centre for both Thai and migrant sex workers. In 1995, a particularly large number of migrants, mostly from Shan State, were employed in Chiang Mai to work in the booming construction industry in the city, including the building of the South-East Asian Games Sports Stadium. On completion of the stadium, many migrant workers were arrested and were held in police cells, where they could not communicate easily with the police. In some cases migrant workers were separated from their children and literally did not know where they were. Other migrants were sick, so translators and medics had to be found. This situation clearly demonstrated that to essentially reach their goal, MAPF would need to incorporate some kind of human rights perspective into their policy decisions, increase understanding of the situation of migrant workers in the host country, try to reduce discrimination, and assist local migrant worker communities in improving their working and living conditions.

Since there was essentially no one organization working directly with migrant workers in particular, several organizations with related skills came together to assist. The Burma Relief Center, Images Asia and WEAVE had made connections to Shan, Karen and Burmese translators, Empowerment had contacts within the social services, Medecins Sans Frontieres provided medical doctors and healthcare professionals, and so on. These organizations, together with concerned individuals from the Thai, Burmese and other foreign communities started to meet regularly to discuss the situation in more depth. Thereafter, they were joined by representatives of Swiss Aid, the National Health and Education Council (Burma), and the Union of Civil Liberties. Each organization pledged a limited



monthly contribution and organized translation services for migrants at hospitals and police stations. In 1996, Diakonia offered a small six month grant to employ a Thai nurse and an outreach worker to survey the situation, provide basic health care and health education, and that was basically when MAPF was born. More volunteers joined the MAPF team from the migrant community, and together these partners formulated a set of Do's and Don'ts for outreach work and formulated the long-term vision of MAPF.

## Interview

### Interviewee:

Mr. Brahm Press (Executive Director)

### ***Q: How long have you been involved with the MAPF?***

Brahm: I have been a director here since 2014.

### ***Q: What is the purpose of the MAPF?***

Brahm: MAPF aims to empower migrant workers by giving them up to date information, and enable capacity building in their own language so they can stand up for their rights. Moreover, we also engage in direct activity with migrant workers.

### ***Q: What is the philosophy of the MAPF?***

Brahm: As I said, we are a grassroots organization, so we believe that it is important that people know the situation so they are able to respond. We also believe in empowerment, so that when people are supplied with the knowledge they need, they'll take action and, at some point, make decisions that can assist others.

### ***Q: What did you do before you worked in this position?***

Brahm: I worked with another NGO in Bangkok before this.

### ***Q: Why did you choose to work at MAPF?***

Brahm: I had been working at another organization in Bangkok since 1998 before deciding to make Chiang Mai my home, because my daughter lives in Chiang mai. At that time, the founder of MAP Foundation had just left and they had a position open. I was already known to the people at MAPF, and as I was pretty familiar with the issues, and was actually in the network of NGO staff, they thought I was a good fit and moved me into this position.

### ***Q: What are your everyday tasks at MAPF?***

Brahm: So, I mainly work as an administrator and communicate with donors, and another partner who gets our name out to the public and generates the interest we need for collaborations

with another organization. I also write project proposals so that we can get funding, and then send progress reports back to the donors, in order to maintain our funding.

***Q: How many staff work with the MAPF?***

Brahm: We have 25 people and they are from Myanmar.

***Q: What is the most important thing for successful operation of the MAPF?***

Brahm: Staff capacity is very important, because they do the work. If they don't know what to do our team will be ineffective, so they have to be specialists in their fields. We have four fields: labor rights; rights for all, such as women's rights; community health and empowerment; and the MAPF multimedia.

***Q: What is the most difficult thing that you have ever had to deal with while you have been working in this position ?***

Brahm: Government policy is pretty difficult when having to navigate the working status of migrant workers, and it's always tough because most of our staff are not Thai nationals. This means we all need visas, and the process for getting a visa is pretty complicated. It takes a lot of time and money and, of course, many people become very concerned and anxious about their visa status while the process is ongoing. However, we finally overcame it; it took a lot of time and energy, but we did it.

***Q: What role do you think that the MAPF plays in the community in the Chiang Mai area?***

Brahm: We support them as much as possible by providing them with direct action and information through a radio broadcast. We also have programs on HIV, labor rights, education rights, women's empowerment and gender-based violence. When people learn about this, they can contact us with their questions, as well as many other things.

***Q: Who are the major sponsors of MAPF?***

Brahm: Primarily, we receive mostly international funding from donors from various parts of the world, like the US, Australia, Sweden, and the Netherlands. Moreover, we receive global funding to fight against health issues like HIV, malaria, etc., and we have been receiving these funds since 2004.

***Q: How did COVID-19 affect the work of the MAPF?***

Brahm: Covid affected our ability to reach out to the community with direct action, but as the community was locked down there wasn't really anything we could do anyway. Fortunately, we could still give out information via the radio station.

***Q: What role do you think the MAPF will be able to play in the local community in the future?***

Brahm: I believe we will be able to keep reaching out to migrant workers, and fixing the gaps in the policies that allow for the exploitation of migrants. And even though they still have problems with accessing services like health care, education, help with domestic violence, etc. that might seem beyond our reach, or even that of another NGO, our staff speak their language as migrants themselves, and that creates trust. This also makes communication easier and our assistants and Thailand will work on solutions so that migrant workers living in Thailand can receive their proper rights.

***Q: What would you like to shout out to the world ?***

Brahm: I think that Thailand needs to embrace its multiculturalism, and the government should allow for that by making it easier for foreigners to work and live legally and conveniently.



**Mr. Brahm Press (left) with researcher**

## **Reflections**

Meeting Mr. Press, the Executive Director of MAPF was an enlightening experience, he was a kind, generous and friendly man. He mostly works in office administration, such as emailing the donors to keep them updated about the funds and he monitors the situation in the organization to make sure that everything is working properly. We also talked about the challenges facing migrant workers in Thailand; their suffering, violations of their rights, their right to access essential services, such as essential information, education, medical services and basic human rights. The MAPF is definitely a strong, grassroots NGO that seeks to empower the migrant community and the migrant workers from

Myanmar that live in Thailand. They work and lobby for them to have their rights, freedom and full protection. It was very interesting to find out that the MAPF also provides migrant workers with a Burmese language radio station in order to increase their understanding of the current situation within Thailand, receive trending news, weather announcements and entertainment.

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## Researcher



Hi everyone! My name is **Voravit Osathananda (Victor)** and I come from Chiang Mai, Thailand. Currently I am studying Food Process Engineering at Chiang Mai University (CMU) and also working part time as a language translator for the Faculty of Medicine, CMU. Over the past ten years I have learned English to an advanced level, along with a basic level of Mandarin. I enjoy talking with a wide range of people from around the world to further explore and understand cultures, history and ways of living. I have been fortunate enough to travel with my family to over ten countries with Japan being my favorite. In my free time I like to stay active and play competitive ultimate frisbee, motocross, plane spotting, martial arts, cooking, baking and hanging out with my friends.





## **Gabungan Sukarelawan Daerah Taiping (Taiping District Volunteers Association)**

Researchers: Ahmad Syukri Bin Mohammad & Nur Athirah Binti Khairul Ferdaus

Universiti Sains Malaysia

Gabungan Sukarelawan Daerah Taiping, hereinafter referred to as GSDT (Taiping Districts Volunteers Association, in English), is a non-governmental organization (NGO) that has been engaged in a lot of volunteer activities to help people who are in need around Malaysia. This organization is called Gabungan Sukarelawan Daerah Taiping because it is a coalition of a few NGOs that operate around Taiping, Perak and outside the district, which have been combined into one group. This group was formed in 2014 when the great floods hit Kelantan, and is based in Taiping, Perak.



**The GSDT logo**

From 2014 until the present day, this organization has successfully implemented volunteer missions in Kelantan, Central Perak, Gerik, Kedah, Pahang, and many other places in Malaysia. Its overall vision is the eradication of rural poverty, while its mission is to ensure that rural communities always have good access to the facilities they need, with two main objectives. Firstly, they strive to perform charity work in the community. They endeavour to help people who are in need through certain unexpected circumstances, and poor people in rural areas, through the provision of both financial aid and food aid, such as rice, eggs etc. The food aid and donated money are handed directly to members of the community so they can use it for their daily needs. Secondly, they introduce religious studies when volunteering in rural areas and the villages of indigenous people, informing them about Islam. Their purpose is to provide exposure to Islam to indigenous people who have no religion so that they

might become attracted to, and embrace, Islam for a more meaningful life. However, they do not force them to convert to Islam and simply provide them with some insight or information on the religion.

They are two main target groups for the work of GSDT. The first is the indigenous people, or native people, in Malaysia (Orang Asli). According to the IIAS Newsletter, the term “Orang Asli” refers to those Peninsular Malaysia indigenous peoples who are not Malay Muslims, Malaysia’s dominant ethnic group (Gomes, 2004). They are a diverse group of native people who make up a national minority in Malaysia. They are Malaysia’s poorest and most marginalized population, with nearly 50 percent considered by many to be inferior and 33 percent living in extreme poverty, compared to the country average of 0.7 percent (Ooi, 2019). Many indigenous villages, especially those close to small towns, lack paved roads, electricity supply, a direct source of clean water, and sanitary facilities. Therefore, the organization’s primary target group is Orang Asli, since they have been left behind in many things in terms of services and facilities in Malaysia. For this reason, the group attempts to make a weekly mission to visit an indigenous people’s village and provide some basic needs, facilities, and other support to the villagers.

Other than the above, GSDT also helps people who have been affected by natural disasters such as floods, mudslides, etc. Usually, a volunteer mission by the group to help natural disasters victims will be implemented immediately upon the occurrence of any natural disaster in certain areas in Malaysia. They will try and help the victims of natural disasters in a variety of ways, since the unexpected nature of the event usually means they have lost many things out of the blue. Due to the unpredictable weather in Malaysia, natural disasters can happen at any time, so this organization must always be ready to help those people affected by them. For example, two unexpected incidents of severe flooding occurred in Malaysia, in Selangor and Kedah, and the people were unprepared for the challenges this brought. Therefore, it became vitally important to get food and other supplies to the victims as quickly as possible. Even though floods occur yearly at some time in Malaysia, the floods in Selangor and Kedah happened so quickly and with such intensity, the people could not have predicted it. GSDT did not miss out on the chance to help these flood victims, and immediately implemented a volunteer mission to help them. They sprung into action to provide food and medical supplies, and also helped to clean up the victims’ houses and living areas during the volunteer mission.

For the Young Global Research Project, we interviewed Mr. Ahmad Faezal Sham and Mr. Junaidi, who are the important people and main volunteers in this organization, about their work and involvement with the Gabungan Sukarelawan Daerah Taiping (GSDT). The interview focused more on the humanitarian aid provided by the organization to the poor indigenous people.

## **Interview**

### **Interviewees:**

Mr. Ahmad Faezal Sham (GSDT Secretary)

Mr. Junaidi (GSDT Active Member)

### ***Q: What is your main job or role in this organization?***

Faezal Sham: I have been the secretary of the group since GSDT was established in Taiping District,

Perak in 2014. I also often lead aid missions organized by this group because I like to get involved in community activities. So, volunteering here definitely gives me an amazing experience.

Junaidi: I am just an ordinary member, but I am very active in participating in the programs organized by GSDT.

***Q: What was the objective behind the establishment of GSDT?***

Faezal Sham: The GSDT organization exists because it wants to carry out charity work for all groups in society in Malaysia. It is our duty as humans to always focus on helping each other. In addition, we also emphasize the importance of religion in various ways. This is because, for me, religion is the key for us to free ourselves from being burdened by difficulties. However, due to the recent outbreak of COVID-19 it has become difficult to maintain our activities because of the existence of restrictions on movement by the government. However, we have extended our volunteer remit to help in the repair of public halls and spaces, toilets and prayer rooms. In addition, we also provide assistance in terms of managing objects such as Genset borrowing. This is because, if the villagers become able to buy the necessary items they have been loaned for themselves, GSDT will then take back those items and loan them on to other villages.

Junaidi: We do not focus solely on one village, but on several that we identify as needing assistance. However, the villages of indigenous people are the main target group for us.



**Ahmad Syukri (fifth from the right), Mr Faezal Sham (fourth from the right), Mr Junaidi (third from the right) with team members of GSDT in Selaor Village.**

***Q: Can you tell me a little of the background behind the establishment of this NGO?***

Faezal Sham: This organization came into existence when major flooding occurred in Malaysia, especially on the East coast, in 2014. Because it was still relatively new at that time, funding became the main problem. However, GSDT firmly adheres to the belief that help comes from God, because God will always help those who want to do charity. For example, GSDT provided clean water assistance to flood victims in Kelantan in 2014 by using recycled bottles.

***Q: What is the vision and mission of this organization?***

Faezal Sham: So, our vision is to eradicate rural poverty and do charity work. This is because rural poverty and charity work is an obligation of every individual and part of human nature. However, we do not have a large number of members now, so we really need additional volunteers to facilitate the work of our team. Through this, I hope that more individuals become aware of the obligation we have, as human beings, to help each other.

Junaidi: Our mission is to ensure that the rural community, especially the indigenous people, always have good access to facilities and also ensure that those in need receive sufficient assistance. This is because not all NGOs in Malaysia focus on the indigenous peoples, even though the majority of these groups live in extreme poverty. So, our organization takes the opportunity to help them and reduce their burden by helping them gain access to good facilities.

***Q: Who really benefits most from your actions?***

Faezal Sham: So, our target group is the indigenous community and victims of natural disasters. These two groups were chosen because they were all involved in a big problem. For example, the indigenous people always have the problem of extreme poverty while victims of natural disasters suffer losses in terms of property, money and even lives. Taking this into account, our organization voluntarily wants to help these two target groups so that their burden can be reduced or completely eradicated.

Junaidi: The majority of the indigenous communities that we often visit are in the state of Perak, Malaysia. For the group of victims of natural disasters, the East Coast of Malaysia is an area that always experiences major floods and we also participate almost every year to help ease the burden of flood victims.





**Ahmad Syukri with an indigenous family while participating in a volunteer mission with GSDT.**

***Q: What are some of the activities carried out by this organization in helping the poor indigenous people community?***

Faezal Sham: The activities that our organization always carries out are related to the donation of food, clothing, daily necessities and religious studies. Usually, we will cook and provide help for this group according to their needs. We try to do a little research on this first before implementing any assistance, to make sure we can be the most effective. This is essential, and is important for avoiding waste and preparing the most appropriate materials. In addition, new activities being carried out in 2022 are the construction of prayer rooms, the repair of the water drainage system and repairs to the public hall. It is hoped that all these activities will reduce the burden on the villagers.

Junaidi: We also built new toilets for the villagers, since the existing toilets are no longer suitable for use. As we all know, villages in rural areas have difficulties in gaining access to clean water. Therefore, we need to build a new water drainage system that links directly to the river water.





Ahmad Syukri giving food aid to the villagers with the GSDT members.

***Q: What are the constraints or challenges that need to be faced in helping poor indigenous communities?***

Faezal Sham: It is inevitable that our organization faces serious challenges and obstacles on each stage of the journey toward program implementation. To be honest, we face a shortage of volunteers, funds and manpower. This is because we are a relatively small group and unknown to many, making it more difficult for us to gather all the human resources we need. Besides that, the awareness of people out there is also one of the factors. As we all know, another big challenge is access. The condition of the roads is a very serious issue, and it is very difficult to access rural areas considering that most roads are still just red dirt tracks. This means, vehicles belonging to our members tend to be prone to damage, and this can be a big expense for repairs. With regard to funding, we do not have a specific injection of funds by other parties and pretty much depend on good will and contributions from the public and the members involved.

***Q: How do you manage the funds donated to help the indigenous community?***

Faezal Sham: Funds are donated by random individuals chosen by God, either among members or from outsiders. So, every amount donated will be channeled directly to the target group. However, we prefer to contribute non-monetarily. For example, we use the funds we receive to buy food, clothes, repair public facilities and build buildings. Not only that, we do not have any membership fees or participation fees for those who want to join our program. We only need human resources to help in carrying out the work.

Junaidi: We use the concept of donation sincerely if anyone wants to contribute to our organization. Although we, of course, would like to find a fundraiser, we are still able to continue our mission despite being in need. I am also grateful that all our agendas can



be realized even though the funds obtained are uncertain every month.



**GSDT members are building prayer rooms and toilets for the villagers.**

***Q: What are the future plans for the GSDT to always be able to provide assistance to the indigenous community in need?***

Faezal Sham: The future planning of our organization is to always achieve our main focus as stated in our vision and mission. However, we hope that more volunteers and human resources will be willing to participate in our programs, regardless of age. Therefore, we really hope to see our target group experience positive development in a variety of ways. Hopefully this organization will continue to thrive in the future.



**Bad road conditions present challenges and obstacles to GSDT**

## Reflections

We are very thankful to our advisor, Professor Dr. Mohamad Shaharudin Samsurijan, for recommending us to interview GSDT. Meeting with Mr. Faezal and Mr. Junaidi about their volunteer mission in indigenous peoples villages has inspired us a lot. We have learned more about the problems of the “Orang Asli” faced in Malaysia. We are able to know what life is like for indigenous peoples, such as their diet, housing, general way of life, etc., which is very different compared to other Malaysians. They are still left behind in many aspects of their lives compared to the rest of society. This group plays a significant role in making changes for the Orang Asli community even though they are just a grassroots team. Contributions in terms of food aid, basic facilities and others provided by GSDT have greatly enhanced the lives of the indigenous peoples. Since they have to operate using their own funds, to ensure the continuity of their work in the future, we suggest that the government help organizations like this more, so that the gap in the quality of life among the Malaysian population, especially those in rural areas, can be addressed. The government must also help in curbing poverty among the indigenous communities while also creating good relations with them. The effective approach taken by GSDT to reach out gives them an opportunity to build good relationships with the communities they serve, even if it is often difficult to approach them because they are known for being shy and afraid of outsiders. In the future, we hope that more organizations like GSDT will step up to help the indigenous peoples of Malaysia.

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## Researchers



Hello everyone! My name is Nur Athirah Binti Khairul Ferdaus. I am from Malaysia, and I am 21 years old. I study at Universiti Sains Malaysia and am currently in my second year of studies. I am taking a Bachelor's Degree in the School of Social Sciences, where my major is Political Science, and my minor is Psychology. I am a person who can blend in well with new people and love to express my opinion whenever I get the chance to do so. My dream is to explore and experience new things in this world.



Hello everyone! My name is Ahmad Syukri Bin Mohammad. I'm from Malaysia, and I am 23 years old. I'm a student at Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, and am currently a third-year in the School of Social Sciences. I'm taking a Bachelor's Degree in Social Sciences, where my major is Political Science, and my minor is Development Management and Planning. I'm a person who likes to try new things, and general knowledge related to world issues is my hobby.



# Davao Volunteer Fire Brigade, Inc.

Researchers: Eishi Iannah Andreille C. Mutia & Mariane Bea D. Bauzon

San Pedro College, Philippines

The Davao Volunteer Fire Brigade, Inc. is a non-governmental and non-profit organization staffed by volunteers. They lend assistance following floods and fires by rescuing victims, putting out fires using their own equipment and donating goods to the people affected by disasters. The organization is dedicated to preventing and suppressing fires, determining their causes, enforcing the Fire Code and other relevant regulations, and responding to crisis situations and natural disasters.

The Davao Volunteer Fire Brigade (DVFB) was founded in 1981 by a group of businessmen with the goal of helping the metro fire department fight fires. The years 1982-1989 were a struggle, and then membership really took off. The organization sponsors various projects like free clinics, water distribution, donating fire hydrants to the city, and volunteer blood donations at the nearby Red Cross blood bank. Additionally, the DVFB offers a free ambulance service 24 hours a day to any medical facility in the city as part of its medical assistance program.



**Davao Volunteer Fire Brigade, Inc. Logo**

Although the DVFB started with just one fire engine - a delivery truck that was converted into a fire truck - the manpower it can call on speaks volumes about the effectiveness of this volunteer firefighting organization. When it comes to serving the community, these volunteer firefighters are available around-the-clock. Their services range from routine firefighting operations to basic aid for the public by ferrying the sick to and from medical facilities. From modest beginnings, the DVFB was able to construct a brigade base outfitted with radio facilities, in addition to pumper truck units 4, 2, and 5, as well as an ambulance rescue service. The organization also offers traffic control support services during major events.

DVFB has inspired several sister organizations, namely the Digos Volunteer Fire Brigade, the Cotabato Fire Brigade, the Tagum (REACT) Volunteer Fire Brigade, and the Toril Volunteer

Firefighter Foundation (TORVO) to name but a few. All units are similar in terms of training, methodology, and organizational structure, with the shared conviction of serving the community. In 2002 the DVFB marked its 20th anniversary by welcoming incoming president Mr. William Tan, along with his officers and board of directors as the new management team. In the years since, the organization has expanded both in terms of locations and equipment. All of the fire engines are reconditioned used models that were either donated to or purchased by the DVFB. In 2006 the Federation of Chinese Volunteers helped purchase three additional fire trucks from Taiwan. Covering the regions of Bunawan and Lasang, the DVFB currently has Unit 8 tankers complete with crew ready to combat fires.



**Volunteer Firefighters**

Mr. Alfredo Berino, a member of the DVFB since 2018, explained that his colleagues have access to sophisticated firefighting and rescue equipment, and that they inspect and maintain equipment between uses. Currently they promote fire safety through presentations, training sessions and practice drills, as well as working with police and ambulance service personnel. We were fortunate enough to interview Dr. Gersacio C. Magno, Jr., a Unit Commander and part of the Training Administration at the DVFB.

## **Interview**

### **Interviewee:**

Dr. Gersacio C. Magno, Jr., DMD - Officer/Team Leader/Unit Commander, Davao Volunteer Fire Brigade

***Q: What role do you think the organization plays in the local community?***

Dr. Magno: We contribute to the community by providing our services at fires without any



compensation from the government. We bring our own equipment, vehicles, protective gear and communications. Our services are focused on firefighting but we also conduct rescue during relief operations after typhoons, and we rescue people from our community during times of disaster like floods, etc. Our volunteers come from all walks of life - some are professionals, janitors and drivers. *Save lives, save properties* - that's our motto.

***Q: What is the most important thing to be aware of when volunteering at DVFB?***

Dr. Magno: The most important thing a person should know or understand is that volunteers must be committed to serve, so there has to be dedication at the heart of their decision. As an officer of this organization, we screen our volunteers to ensure they have the commitment to serve. We want to avoid people who join up just to use the name of the organization to further their own needs, but when called upon they refuse to serve. Volunteers must be committed to serve without expecting something in return.

***Q: How can the organization play a larger role in the community in the future?***

Dr. Magno: We can help Filipinos prepare better for a disaster. If the community is prepared and equipped, we minimize the risk of injuries and fatalities. We can protect ourselves and our community. We are planning on giving disaster preparedness lectures in Barangays, schools, as well as in hospitals and hotels. We have already held seminars at the Palau royal resort on how to be prepared for earthquakes, floods, mass casualty disasters and even terrorist events such as a bombing. We will provide a training and lecturing team for any facility in our district. This is very helpful in our community as we provide our services free of charge. All we need in terms of payment is for someone to say "thank you".



**Interview with Doctor Gesacio Magno on July 29, 2020 (left of Dr. Magno is Ms. Eishi Iannah Mutia)**

***Q: What is your main job/role in the organization?***

Dr. Magno: I oversee the Training Administration for the Davao Volunteer Fire Brigade. At the same time I'm the Unit Commander for two units: the ambulance and one of our new fire truck teams, and I am also a fire truck and ambulance driver.

***Q: What are some of your duties or activities in the organization?***

Dr. Magno: Usually I go to the base or inspect my own units. For new trainees we hold meetings at the base once a week. I always review the daily reports from the other team leaders to ensure things are in order. Once a week we clean our unit fire truck and ambulance. We also have to check our PPE (personal protective equipment), oxygen and medicines. On a monthly basis, we conduct drills and run training sessions for our volunteers. Senior officers support the younger volunteers during the training drills.

***Q: What do you find most rewarding about your involvement in DVFB?***

Dr. Magno: Seeing the smiles of the people despite their house being under flood water or damaged by a typhoon. We serve for the gratitude of the people and seeing them smile. It doesn't matter to us if we have been awake 24 hours, we just want to help.

## **Reflections**

Community engagement - such as volunteering - has the power to change a community. Being a volunteer is never easy because you need to accept that you cannot help everyone, but at the same time you need to be strong enough to help others. We were really touched by the fact that even when the firefighters got injured when responding to a fire or flood, they continue doing what they love because they know the victims need them. One does not need to be wealthy to volunteer, because all one needs is dedication, skills and strength. No amount of money will equate to a simple "thank you" from the people you have helped.

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## Researchers



Good day, everyone! My name is **Eishi Iannah Andreille C. Mutia** and I am 20 years of age. You can call me Eish. I am a third year college student and I am studying for my Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN). I am currently residing in Davao City together with my family. I am the eldest daughter and I have a sibling. I chose nursing because I want to work in different hospital departments and also serve the community.



Hi everyone, my name is **Mariane Bea D. Bauzon** and you can call me Bea. I am the youngest in our family of five. I am 21 and currently studying towards my Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science at San Pedro College. I live in Midsayap, Cotabato. I am very grateful to be a part of the Young Global Research Project (YGRP) as it is an opportunity to discover inspiring stories in our community and to share these stories with a wide audience.



# Hiraya: Volunteer Service Provider

Juvin Chlayne Gloryne L. Elid & Flormarie L. Tuado

San Pedro College, Philippines

Volunteer Service Provider serves as a source of manpower for community engagement programs and services focusing primarily on three aspects, namely: health, literacy, and environment. The spirit of volunteerism inspired an organization that exists to serve the needy, marginalized and underprivileged. Back in 2007 a large number of students interested in volunteerism who needed an organization to facilitate schedules, training and other activities decided to establish Volunteer Service Provider (VSP) to do just that. A year later, VSP became an independent student organization of San Pedro College in Davao City, governed by its own laws, officers and members and is headed by a moderator that leads alongside the president.

There are three main programs: Health, Literacy and the Environment. Each program covers a variety of projects that aim to address key social issues in a specific community. The ultimate goal of VSP is to serve God. Volunteer students are conditioned to be critical thinkers, compassionate and resourceful in responding to the needs of others. Despite the adversities and obstacles encountered during the pandemic, VSP project G.R.A.C.E. (Green Restoration and Awareness of Coastal Ecosystem) was still pushed through in June 17, 2022. It was the first limited community face-to-face activity since the start of the pandemic. As part of the G.R.A.C.E. initiative, volunteer students planted mangrove seedlings in tidal ecosystems in Barangay Bucana, Davao City.



**Volunteer students planting mangrove seedlings for project G.R.A.C.E.**



Project C.A.T.C.H. (Confidence Achieved Through Collected Hair) is an ongoing project of the Health program that started in 2019. It provides wigs to cancer patients in the House of Hope Foundation who are suffering from hair loss. With the advent of COVID-19 these projects have encountered a number of challenges, but recently on the Project C.A.T.C.H. facebook page, an announcement confirmed that hair donations are once again being accepted for the first time since the pandemic started. Google forms are provided for those who are interested in donating their hair for cancer patients.



**Cancer patients from the House of Hope Foundation with volunteer students from VSP**

Project K.U.M.P.A.S.S. (Knitting the Unable and Medical Practitioners through Awareness of Special Speech) aims to mitigate the language barrier and was launched on May 13, 2022. *Kumpas* is a Filipino word that means hand movement, it can also be translated into *Compass* as it will serve as an instrument providing directions. In Davao City, the deaf community has received a total of 508 free hearing aids from the United States-based Starkey Hearing Foundation (Opiana, 2018) and VSP wished to offer their help to this important program. Project K.U.M.P.A.S.S. was originally planned to be conducted in a face to face setting, but due to the pandemic, it was conducted online. The organization invited 500 attendees from the SPED community to impart their skills in sign language.



**Ma'am Imeemaren S. Buca, LPT, taught the attendees sign language**

VSP has garnered several awards at both the national and international level. Three projects were singled out for awards, one from each program. The first is Project S.E.L.F.Y. (Sexuality Education with Love for the Youth) from the Health Program. This project seeks to reduce the rate of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in certain communities. The second is Project H. O.U.S.E. (House Opened to Usher Students' Education) from the Literacy Program. This project seeks to ameliorate the drop-out rate from the children of the Matigsalog tribe attending the Patag Elementary School. The third is Project D.O.M.E.S. (Developing Ocean's Man-made Eco-friendly Shelters) from the Environmental Program. As the name suggests, Volunteer students produced domes that will serve as a habitat for the growth of coral and other ocean life. Aside from the environmental aspect, the project also made an economic contribution to the community, since the source of income of the people living in the community is fishing.



**The implementation of Project D.O.M.E.S.**

On July 20, 2022 we had an opportunity to conduct an online interview with Mr. Remark Z. Mortalla, PTRP, MSDEA. He is currently the director at Volunteer Service Provider, having served the organization for 18 years by training students in the spirit of volunteerism in the local community.

## **Interview**

### **Interviewee:**

Mr. Remark Z. Mortalla, PTRP, MSDEA - Director, Volunteer Service Provider

### ***Q: What is VSP?***

Mortalla: VSP is a volunteer student organization based at San Pedro College. Originally, this is the source of our manpower for our community engagement programs particularly in the aspects of health, literacy and the environment.

### ***Q: What is the background of VSP?***

Mortalla: VSP first started in 2007 to help students get organized for volunteer activities, providing guidance on schedules and training. In 2008 it was registered as an independent student organization with its own laws and officers. VSP has since partnered with other student organizations, inside and outside campus, to facilitate and implement other civic welfare projects and environmental projects. The organization has been continuously responding to the call for student leadership and volunteerism in our community.

### ***Q: How did you become involved in the organization?***

Mortalla: Back in 2007 I was one of the moderators. I oversaw the health program at that time. In



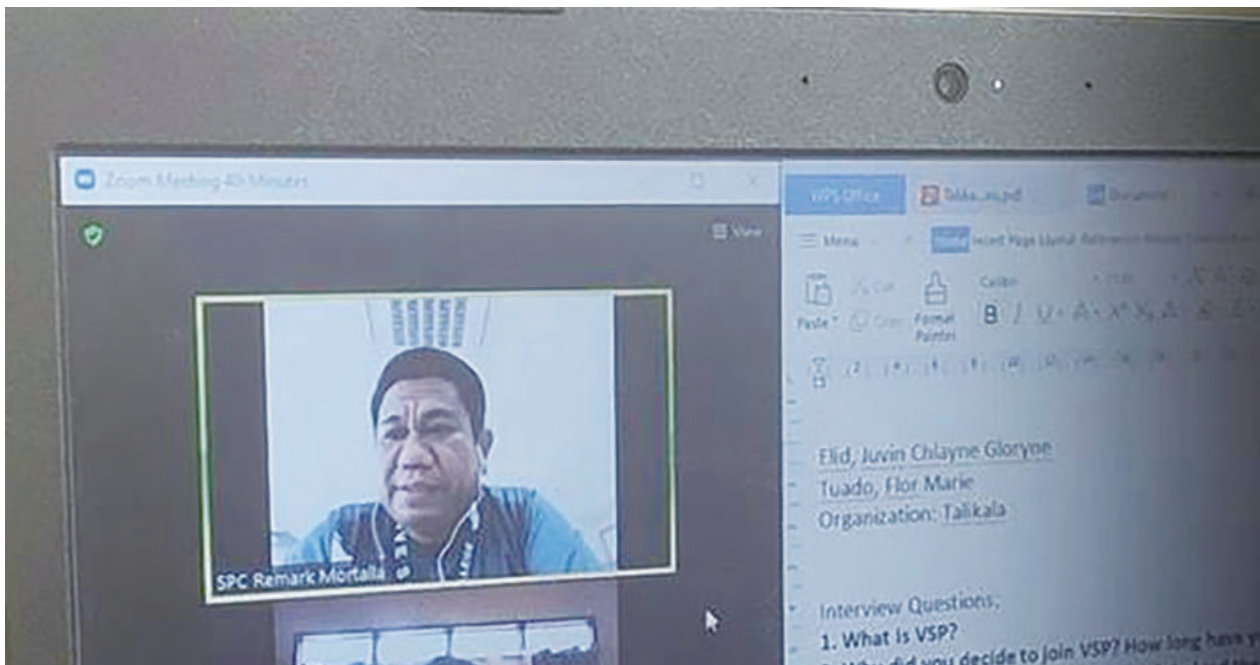
2008 when we decided to establish VSP as an independent student organization so that we could elect our own officers with a formal membership, I became the first moderator of the entire organization, which is a post I hold to this day.

***Q: Is that when you started recruiting students to be officers?***

Mortalla: We also provide a lot of empowerment training for our volunteers so they can become leaders, not just for recruitment, but to motivate and inspire them to do more.

***Q: What do you think is the driving force behind the organization?***

Mortalla: The ultimate purpose of the organization is to serve God. We partner with other organizations and implement projects for the benefit of the community. Along the way, we also train leaders, who become responsible, proactive and responsive to the needs of others. We seek to empower volunteers. We serve the needy, marginalized and underprivileged.



**Mr. Remark Z. Mortalla, the current moderator at VSP and Ms. Flormarie Tuado, YGRP participant and interviewer**

***Q: What do you think differentiates VSP from other organizations?***

Mortalla: There are a lot of volunteer organizations out there. VSP is about student volunteerism, not volunteerism among professionals. We see schools, colleges and universities as a fertile ground for training and empowering youth. VSP also looks at the welfare of those who are in need. We are there to serve those who don't have the resources, privilege and the access to avail the services. I think that's what makes VSP different from other volunteer or other student organizations.

**Q: *Do you have any challenges in reminding the students what to do or in briefing them about their roles and responsibilities?***

Mortalla: Like any other organization, there are a lot of challenges but what's unique with a student organization like VSP is that there is always going to be a tug of war between volunteer work and one's academic requirements. Our officers are diverse especially in terms of their schedules because they are coming from different courses. If one group is not available during a certain time of a project implementation, there is definitely another group of students who will be available. I think the most important characteristic is the commitment of the officers and volunteers to the organization. Students will try to balance school and volunteer work. At any time they can manage one of the two and sometimes they can do both.

**Q: *What is the most valuable experience that you have had?***

Mortalla: The most valuable experiences for me are when we reach out to areas with no roads, electricity and access to potable water. We implemented projects that required hours of walking through mountain trails. Sometimes we have to ride in small boats. To be appreciated by people we serve in these areas is both fulfilling and memorable. The things that money can't buy – simple appreciation, seeing project beneficiaries smile or laugh and seeing them starting to have a little more comfort in their lives. I think that's more than what I expected from my work at VSP.

## Reflections

It does not take much to become a volunteer. All you need is a desire to serve, empower and create a better place for everyone to live in. In VSP, volunteers take action in providing accessible health care, education and a better environment. That is what the volunteers call their *hiraya* or the fruit of their dreams and aspirations.

In generating this article the researchers have realized that Davao City is a hotbed of activity when it comes to NGO activity. The metro area is filled with outstanding groups but the researchers landed on VSP as they saw the passion to serve in each of its members. Its impact on the community can be seen, both in past projects and future aspirations. Volunteer Service Provider does not just empower but it also generates change for the people it serves and for the volunteers themselves.

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#### INFOGRAPHIC

<https://tinyurl.com/2p99yhta>

#### INTERVIEW VIDEO

<https://tinyurl.com/3nxuy97w>

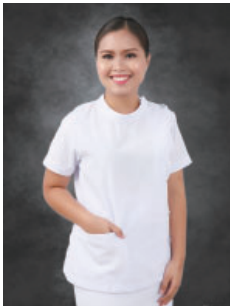
#### INVITATION LETTER

<https://tinyurl.com/355zu4b7>

#### POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

<https://tinyurl.com/ypweu6va>

### Researchers



Greetings! I am **Juvin Chlayne Gloryne L. Elid**, or “Juvin” for short. I was born, raised and currently reside in Davao City, Philippines. I am a medical technologist intern at San Pedro College. I enjoy collaborating with other people from different parts of the world as well as learning new languages and different cultures. I love traveling, spontaneous adventures, nature, hiking, chasing waterfalls and cliff jumping. During my free time, I read books, watch TV series or movies, play the piano and enjoy sports.



Hello! My parents named me **Flormarie L. Tuado** but everyone calls me Bambi. I was born and raised in the humble province of Don Marcelino, Davao Occidental - a place filled with mountains and beaches. I became a volunteer, because fortunately I am surrounded by kind people who love to help others especially those who are in need and I got inspired. During my spare time, I like to read books, climb trees and teach *lumad* or native children like me in the neighborhood how to read and write as well as basic mathematics. My goal is to become a voice for young children who want to have a better life through education.



# **Environmental Issues**



# Mori Mori Land - Serious Problems for Japanese Forests

Researchers: Yuwa Kan & Yusuke Sakai

Kyoto University of Foreign Studies

Mori Mori Land was initially started as a volunteer organization in 2004. However, the following year, in 2005, the organization was incorporated and became a non-profit organization. Based in the Keihoku region of Kyoto, Japan, its activities are aimed at preserving and regenerating the region's natural environment, promoting forest work and environmental education, and passing on traditional culture and techniques, such as charcoal-making using wood from thinning. Keihoku charcoal is locally produced for local consumption, and eco-friendly. In addition, The Forest Kindergarten was established on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the NPO's establishment, and supports environmental education for children using the region's unique forests. The organization is working hard to raise awareness of environmental issues in the community as well as society through these activities.



The organization's base of operations is in the Keihoku area, located in the north-western part of Kyoto City, a verdant, green environment with 93% of the land covered by forest. The area has long been famous as a producer of high-quality wood products, and has been supplying timber locally and further afield for around 1,300 years. In addition to this, the forestry industry here was once so active in the town that it used to pay tribute to the Gosho (Imperial Palace), a place where the Japanese emperor and his relatives lived. In recent years, however, imports of cheap foreign timber have reduced the demand for domestic timber, and the forestry industry in Japan as a whole, including Keihoku, has been in steady decline. In addition, Japan has a declining birthrate and an aging



population, which naturally affects the forestry industry. The aging of the forestry workforce and the shortage of new workers entering the industry are serious problems, and the forests of Keihoku, most of which are privately owned, have become depopulated and poorly cared for because money cannot now be earned so easily from forestry work.

## **The relationship between people and forests in Japan**

Japan is one of the most forested countries in the world. It is said that two thirds of the Japanese land mass is forest, or about 25 million hectares, and because of this there are strong bonds between forests and Japanese culture. Cherry blossom viewing (hanami) in the spring is a wonderful example of this, and a custom that has been continued yearly since the Nara period (8C). In addition to this, many precious artifacts, as well as fine examples of Japanese ancient architecture, are made from wood. Horyuji Temple in Nara, which is one of the oldest wooden structures in the world, is made of cypress, and as a national treasure, is in need of regular repairs and upkeep. If the forests continue to decline, or nobody cares for them, some of the best parts of Japanese culture may fade away with them. Therefore, in terms of Japanese culture, forests have played a strong role in its development since ancient times and consequently hold a special place in the hearts and souls of the Japanese people and society.

## **The reason we choose this NPO**

This NPO's activities are basically focussed on preserving the forest and regenerating it. We (Yuwa and Yusuke) are members of the eco group in our university and, therefore, thought it best that we connect to a topic familiar to us when we conducted our field research for this community engagement project. However, surprisingly, we found it difficult to find a suitable NPO that is especially related to the natural environment. Perhaps this is because Kyoto city is relatively urban, having the eighth largest population of all Japanese cities. More than 1.4 million people live and do business in the hustle and bustle of Kyoto, and the place where our university is located is no exception. However, this urban sprawl also has a different face. When we look at the north-west part of the city, it is easy to see there are plenty of natural resources and this helps the environment surrounding Kyoto city bring some kind of balance between the urban and rural. There are many planted forests here, mainly populated by coniferous trees such as cedar and cypress. The NPO we found in this area is very interesting, as the people who are volunteering in it are particularly highly motivated, as they had to learn a great deal about forests from scratch. This was because they had no knowledge about forestry when they first formed their organization. Therefore, they are not working for profit, they are working for their beliefs. In addition, they are working for their region. With this in mind, we decided we had to visit the organization's base in the Keihoku area, and conduct an interview.

## **Interview**

### **Interviewees:**

Ms. Etsuko Miyanishi - Chairperson

Mr. Taichi Furuya - General Manager

***Q: Who founded this organization, and why?***

Taichi: The predecessor was a volunteer organization formed in 2004, which quickly acquired NPO status in 2005. The event that led to the establishment of the predecessor organization was actually the World Water Forum. Following it, there was an exchange meeting between residents of the upper and lower reaches of the Katsura River in the Keihoku area, and members who were present in some of the sub-committees felt that something should be done. This is the point when we started the organization.

***Q: What position do you hold in the organization?***

Taichi: I am the General manager and Ms. Miyanishi is the chairperson of the board. We have about 30 members in total, but only about 5 of us are what you could call full-time volunteers. Therefore, everyone is involved in all activities. As the youngest in the organization, I am also in charge of public relations through the Internet.

***Q: What do you have to do on a daily/weekly/monthly basis?***

Taichi: To make the most of the forest, we thin out the trees and make charcoal from the thinned timber. Under the slogan “nurture in the forest,” we also offer the forest kindergarten activities as part of forest environmental education. We have been given permission to manage Keihoku Forest Park, and our goal is to burn charcoal once a month. However, we are not able to do it once a month at present. The forest kindergarten is held during the spring, summer, and winter vacation periods when we gather the children together, but only the forest park is managed year-round.

***Q: What kind of people are in the group?***

Taichi: There are a lot of senior citizens. I guess the main volunteers are usually around 65 years old. They are complete amateurs when it comes to forestry.

***Q: How old are the children who attend Forest Kindergarten and where do they come from?***

Etsuko: They are usually of kindergarten or elementary school age, and come mainly from the city and around the Keihoku area.

***Q: Do you advertise your group and its activities?***

Etsuko: We don't advertise. Just use word of mouth. If we put it on our website, they access the information from there. We have an 18-passenger kindergarten bus, and we use it to take the children to and from school. We go there in the morning, pick them up, play in Keihoku for a day, and then drop them off again. If you lived here permanently, you might not understand the advantages of this place. So people who live here are not so interested in the natural environment because they take it for granted. However, many people from the city have a strong desire to play in the river, play in the forest, catch insects, and so on. Basically, the

townspeople seem more interested. I think that if people are exposed to nature from a young age, they will be kinder to others and become a little tougher when they grow up. This is the reason why we are trying to use the forest for education. We are also working with a developmental psychology professor at Ritsumeikan University to plan classes throughout the year.

***Q: How is climate change affecting forests now?***

Etsuko: In the years following the launch of the kindergarten project in 2015, we never had to cancel due to weather warnings, but considering that last year we had to cancel due to two warnings, I think we are seeing more extreme weather. Typhoons are becoming more frequent and larger in scale, and we even had a landslide that closed the road for a week.

***Q: What is the difference between natural forests and planted forests?***

Furuya: It is said that there are almost no natural forests in Japan. All of these areas are planted forests. It is believed that there is no mountain left that has not been touched by human hands. Basically, planted forests are artificial forests, such as cedar and cypress. I think it is safe to say that there are no natural forests left.

***Q: Actually, according to the data I researched, there are some natural forests in Japan. Is it really possible?***

Taichi: Well, that really depends on how we define it. For example, maybe it hasn't been inhabited for 100 years or 200 years. A forest that has not been touched by humans since the Edo period (1603 - 1867) would be considered a natural forest. Once a forest has been touched by humans, it is already considered an artificial forest.



***Q: What is the purpose of maintaining healthy forests and planted forests?***

Taichi: As a result of trees cut and left unattended in forests, trees were washed away when the Katsura River flooded, and bridges were destroyed or flooding occurred due to the gathered trees. Trees will grow vigorously when they are cared for, and those on neglected mountainsides are often not thinned. Especially in the northern mountains, trees are planted too densely, making it difficult for photosynthesis to take place. Without thinning, trees tend to become soft, and when heavy rains or typhoons hit, the soft roots are unable to support the soil and it runs off into rivers. Thinning trees to prevent these problems can reduce harmful effects. It is also important to thin old trees. In the case of natural forests, natural regeneration occurs, and even if a tree falls, new trees will grow back from underneath due to exposure to light.

***Q: How do you think this project will change or grow in the future?***

Etsuko: In forestry, we plant trees for our children's and grandchildren's generations. Even if trees are planted, they will not be harvested for decades to come. In the past, trees were planted because there was a demand for them, but the demand for trees has decreased due to foreign timber. Many mountainsides are planted but left unattended because there is no money to be made from them, but if they are planted, we want to make sure that they will last the lifetime of the timber.

***Q: Was the forest kindergarten created from the viewpoint of human resource development?***

Etsuko: No, we established it with the hope that people would become familiar with nature, just as grandparents would expect their grandchildren to become familiar with nature. It doesn't have to be trees, it could be something natural, for example, climate change, or even living creatures, and I want people to be able to think about that because the earth is made up of many species of animals, including human beings. We would like to say thank you to Ms. Miyanishi, and Mr. Furuya of Morimori Land for cooperating with us and providing us both with some interesting information and knowledge.

## **Reflections**

Before we went to the interview, we did some background research on the topic and the organization. Through this, we found out there were a lot of things that we didn't know. For example, almost all of the trees in the area are coniferous varieties, such as cedar and cypress. Because of this, if no one takes care of them, the trees will fall down easily and this will devastate the forest gradually. Coniferous trees have a certain characteristic, and that is their roots are weak compared to broadleaf trees. In addition, traditional Keihoku charcoal made from cedar is particularly suitable for barbecues. This is because cedar wood ignites quickly due to the low density of the wood, and this extends the burn time. All of this information was new to us.

Finally, forests play a major role in preventing catastrophes such as floods and landslides. Trees in the forest keep the ground solid even after the soil absorbs rain. By allowing forests to become

healthier, people can avoid many disasters in advance. However, how many people know this? Recently, many children in Japan aren't familiar with the natural world around them, although they are living in a country that has many forests. It is believed that developments in technology have created this situation and it is the way of the future. Still, when we visited the group's office, it was incredible to be surrounded by nature so close to the city, and we could feel at one with it. During the summer vacation, another forest kindergarten will be held here, and more children will be able to learn something about the wonderful nature that surrounds them. We also personally learned many things through the interview and we would like to live from now on with the sense we are a part of the earth we live on.

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## Researchers



Hello everyone! My name is **Yuwa Kan** from Kyoto University of Foreign Studies. I live in Shiga, which is really close to Kyoto. I am majoring in English, and I love history. Speaking of history, what I am really interested in is the connection between cultures. How they are related, how they accept each other, and how they integrate is fascinating for me. When I have free time, I like to go jogging, and although it's tiring, I use it to refresh my mind. In my neighborhood, there is a beautiful lake. Actually, it is the biggest lake in Japan, and I always enjoy its beauty whenever I go on a run.



Hi everyone! My name is **Yusuke Sakai** from Kyoto University of Foreign Studies (KUFS). I am majoring in English and studying business management in some lecture classes. I am also the leader of the KUFS Eco Group, and we are currently engaged in some activities related to ecology and the environment. In my free time I enjoy cooking, reading, watching movies or dramas on Netflix, and working out.



# Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP)

Researchers: Nur Ain Adlina & Muhammad Ikhmal Hafiz

Universiti Sains Malaysia

Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP), Malaysia is a civil society organisation that was established in 1969 to recognise and uphold consumer rights and interests by promoting critical awareness and actions (CAP(a), n.d.). As a grassroots non-profit organisation or non-governmental organisation (NGO), its main activities involve education, training, engagement, and advocacy for local communities. It also carries out various research, educational and representational activities to influence policymakers to give priority to societal and environmental needs. As one of the influential NGOs in Penang, CAP facilitates connections and partnerships between businesses, the general public, NGOs, and government agencies in various community activities. In the last few years, CAP has also been actively propagating natural farming practices by educating farmers and society on the harmful effects of chemical pesticides and the benefits of natural farming practices (CAP, 2022). It has also been actively promoting households' urban farming or kitchen gardening as part of its recent programme to promote urban sustainable agriculture. For many Penangites, CAP's work has always found resonance with them as they recognise CAP as a bastion for redressing the wrongs of economic activities, protecting the environment, and promoting social justice. Among other significant contributions to society, particularly for Penangites include:

- CAP has over the years been advocating pesticide-free urban gardening to the public.
- CAP's organic farming project has trained families, schools and communities in natural agriculture. CAP has been actively promoting urban farming or kitchen gardening among households. Its school garden projects have raised students' awareness of the importance of food production and provided them with training in agriculture, practical nutrition education and also marketing of their produce. CAP intends to inculcate among children and youth that agriculture is a viable career path.
- CAP has also had an impressive record of expanding its boundaries, for example setting up Sahabat Alam Malaysia to take up environmental issues and establishing the Third World Network which has had a major impact globally on policies regarding climate change, trade, biodiversity, and access to medicines. CAP also helped in transforming the global consumer movement, including its new offshoots in the areas of health, food and consumer rights. Many consumer associations in developing countries were formed as a result of our regional training programmes.
- CAP cooperated with the Ministry of Education Malaysia and set up consumer clubs in more than 600 schools.
- CAP has a record of being "ahead of the curve", for example changing the nature of the consumer movement, raising environmental issues, and embarking on anti-tobacco and anti-

sugar campaigns and policy changes in the Housing Ministry.

- CAP has also helped many poor communities stand up for their rights. Many poor communities have benefited from CAP's help.

Source: Adapted from CAP(b), n.d. <https://consumer.org.my/cap-celebrates-50-years-what-is-to-come-2/>

## Interview

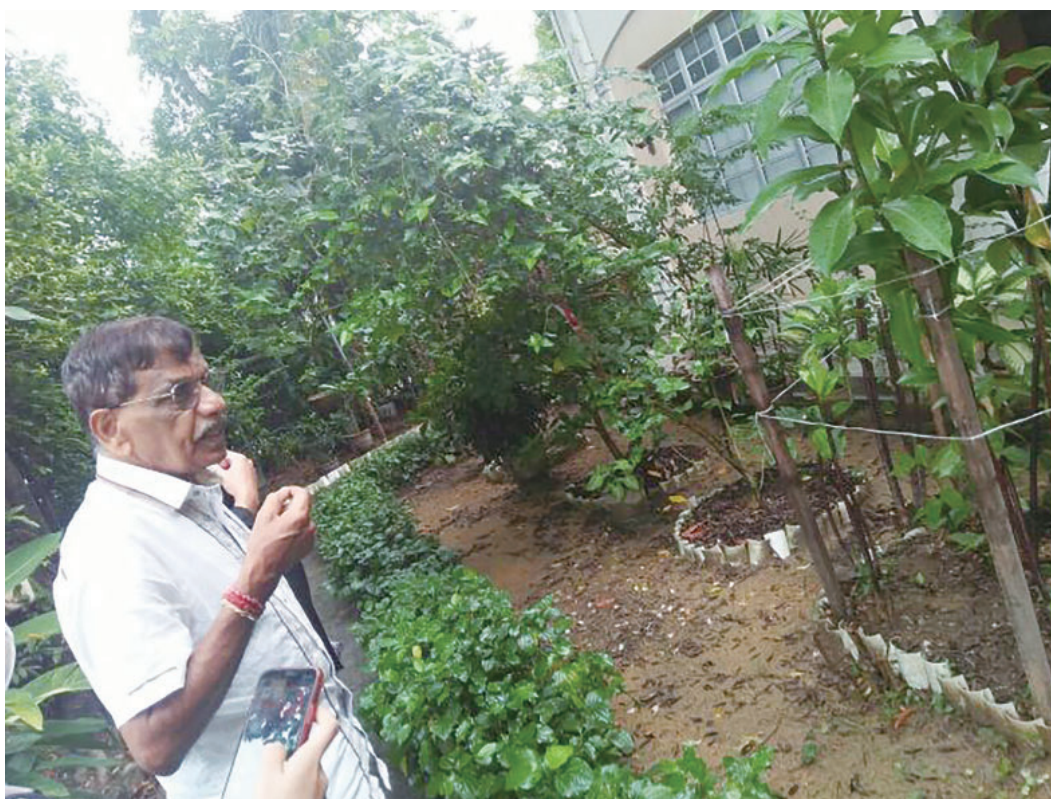
### Interviewees:

N.V Subbarow (CAP Education Officer)

Zulkifli Yusuf (CAP Research Officer)

***Q: How long have you been involved with the Consumers' Association of Penang?***

Mr. Subbarow: It has been 42 years. CAP was established 52 years ago. It is the oldest NGO in Malaysia and is very active in the consumer movement in the Asian region.



***Q: What do you do daily at CAP?***

Mr. Subbarow: Yesterday we had a meeting with the farmer. Every day we will ensure that we read newspapers and find out if there are any issues that we can comment on. Every

morning, I will go to our farm with my friends. We will look at our plants and we also have a habit where we chat with trees, fruits, and vegetables.

Mr. Zulkifli: Every month we will have a CAP program for housewives, farmers, and teachers on nature-friendly farming. We guide them on how to conduct urban farming and train them on how to grow plants in their respective homes. We also encourage them to go around the garden and talk to the plants. Before COVID-19, we were actively involved in exhibitions where we educate consumers about food nutrition and a healthy diet.

***Q: What do you find most rewarding about being involved in sustainable agriculture programmes for the public?***

Mr. Subbarow: Nowadays, many people have cancer, which was not common before. So, we always tell them “You are what you eat”. We always tell people to make sure that they eat good food. We always believe that you can eat good food by growing your own vegetables. Now we can start to see an improvement in Penang. People have started to plant curry leaves, pandan leaves (*pandanus amaryllifolius*), onions, spinach, and many other horticulture plants. Right now, we focus more on the young generation.



***Q: What is the philosophy of such programmes?***

Mr. Subbarow: To save mother earth by reducing the environmental pollution. We must love nature



and live in harmony with nature. Last week, when I did a campaign, a group of teachers from a primary school approached me. They have money to conduct a programme but cannot decide what programme they should do. So, I suggest to them one program called 'one tree one person'. I told them that plants can give you so many benefits. It will make us closer to nature. In fact, if you plant more trees, more oxygen for people.

***Q: What roles do you think CAP plays in promoting sustainable agriculture***

Mr. Zulkifli: We do various programmes. Most of the time I do farming without using chemicals. If we want to repel insects, we will use natural insect repellents. We do not use any insecticides. Good insects will stay at the crops and insects that damage the crops will leave.

***Q: What has been the most difficult thing you have had to deal with while you have been involved with sustainable agriculture programmes***

Mr. Subbarow: The main difficulty is in dealing with and correcting the misleading information brought by the chemical companies. They are going to meet with all the farmers to promote their products. In a traditional or natural practice, it would take a while for crops to grow. But using chemicals or chemical-based practice, the growth period will be much shorter. The challenges are from these chemical companies as they are promoting their product and attempting to change farmers' mindsets. They convince the farmers to use their products so that they can work less. They are promoting the chemical-based practice as the shortcut and fastest way to grow crops. We believe that chemical products can damage the soil. If you tend to apply more chemicals, this can reduce soil nutrients and farmers might not be able to plant any other crops.

Mr. Zulkifli: Another challenge is that lots of people want to plant but there is no land and available space, particularly in urban areas. We suggest to the residents' association that they create a community garden in order to fully utilise the limited land or space. Another challenge is that most people do not know how to grow plants. They might know the names and recognise the vegetables, but they do not know how to go about planting plants.

***Q: What is the most important thing a person should know or understand when they want to volunteer or be involved with the programmes***

Mr. Subbarow: There are a lot of volunteers, especially the retired teacher. The first thing they should know is what is consumerism (Consumer education). You must love your job. I know the problem that people are facing. When they come here for this kind of work, do not expect a high salary. Do not work for money but work for society. Sometimes, I even went to the garbage dump sites because my friend told me there was food that could still be eaten, but people threw it away. As volunteers, we must be ready to go to such places in order to understand the issues.

Mr. Zulkifli: Some of the volunteers hate us. They feel upset because we give them a lot of work and pressure. For instance, we ask them to prepare a report about the environment.



***Q: How do you think the two of you and CAP will play a greater role in promoting sustainable agriculture in the future?***

Mr. Subbarow: This week, CAP will meet with the officer from the Ministry of Agriculture to prepare a memorandum of food security. We will collaborate with NGOs. We cannot stand alone. We must cooperate with other people, societal movements, NGOs, and political institutions. Together, we can play a significant role. It is not only CAP that should be at the forefront of this sustainability campaign, but everybody has a role in it. We are looking to find a way for how agricultural institutions can play an important role in changing people's minds. Not only CAP, but everyone also has a role to play in making the earth a healthy planet. This can be realised if we are ready to shift to traditional (environmental- friendly) agricultural practices.





## Reflections

In general, as one of the influential and vocal Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Penang, Malaysia, the Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) has had a profound impact on society at large, not only in advocating consumer rights, environmental protection, health and nutrition, and public education, but it has also contributed to widening intellectual insights and discourse, public interest law, and educating community members and leaders to protect livelihoods and environment. Through this project, we now realise and understand the important roles of civil society organisations or NGOs in enhancing community and society participation as well as creating public awareness of environmental issues and solutions. Without the active involvement of NGOs such as CAP, mainstreaming pesticide-free urban gardening and sustainable agriculture practices in Penang would probably be impossible.

We hope that CAP could continue its effort to promote sustainable agriculture practices in Penang for

a better and more sustainable Penang. We also look forward to contributing to and taking part in the community programme and activities around us that promote sustainable agriculture practices. From this project, we are growing aware that the world deserves sustainable solutions and actions, and sustainable agriculture would be one of the key solutions. Nevertheless, awareness alone might not be enough without responsible actions from everyone, including us. Our small actions could begin with growing vegetables at home in a sustainable way.

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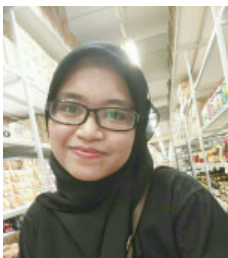
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## Researchers



Hi, my name is **Muhammad Ikhmal Hafiz** and I'm a second-year student from the School of Social Science. I'm majoring in Development Planning and Management and minoring in Management. I have a lot of hobbies such as diving, reading, jogging, and anything that can be extreme. I enjoyed doing this fieldwork because it helped me to develop something new for myself. Good judgement comes from experience, and experience comes from bad judgement.



My name is **Nur Ain Adlina binti Mahamad Asri**. I live in Keratong, Rompin, Pahang. It takes 10 to 12 hours to arrive at USM. I'm a second-year student in the School of Science and am majoring in Development Planning and Management. I love shopping and travelling. I will work hard to get the things that I want. Recently, I travelled to Langkawi using the money that I have to work with my family. I also love watching movies and dramas.



# Green Living Support

Researchers: Patrick Anderson & Irene Santoso

University of Surabaya (UBAYA), Indonesia

Green Living Support (GLS) is an environmental organization founded in 2019 in Surabaya, East Java by Onish Akshani, Yessy Yuliana Amalia, and Annitaqwa Istimagfiroh. Currently they are located in the Rungkut District of Surabaya City. Green Living Support aims to spread awareness regarding how communities can best work together to conserve the environment. The organization has also assisted the government in improving the quality of the local environment. To date, Green Living Support Community has 21 members and continues to grow.



The GLS logo

The philosophy of GLS is *Bumi sudah merawat kita dari awal, sehingga kita juga harus bisa merawat bumi kembali*, which translates to “Since the beginning, the Earth has taken care of us, so we should also be able to take care of the Earth”. The actions of GLS in the community reflect these values. The focus is on providing what the community needs, not what the organization wants. Maintaining this focus has enabled GLS to stay on track as the world changes day to day.

Green Living Support is formed around three community pillars: study, action and business. Study focuses on giving society more opportunities to access environment-related issues through research, discussion and webinars. Action focuses on inviting communities to start a green lifestyle so that more people can contribute to preserving the environment. In order to facilitate this pillar, GLS holds several environment-related training sessions. Business means GLS acting as an intermediate in business-related projects. These projects must have some aspect that benefits the environment. One thing to note is that the money generated by these business projects does not go to their own coffers. Rather, GLS uses most of the money to serve the community and only a little is retained to keep the organization afloat.

One successful initiative in Surabaya by GLS has been to prohibit the usage of plastic bags in grocery stores. Through collaboration with the government to apply the new rule widely across the city, a real and lasting impact on the environment has been realized. Plastic pollution in Surabaya has been one of the most significant challenges in the region. The new rule means the environment in and around Surabaya has been significantly improved. At the start of the pandemic, most organizations found it difficult to make an impact due to limitations imposed on society to prevent the spread of COVID-19. However, GLS changed their approach and were able to make a contribution to the environment even

as the pandemic swept across the nation. GLS began to host ecoliteracy webinars, addressing issues such as trash recycling, farming and campaigns that focused on aspects of a green lifestyle.

Our interviewee, Ms. Onish Akshani, is the Director of Green Living Support. Her role at GLS is to monitor every step that the organization takes. She also comes up with new ideas for the community to work with. Prior to her role at GLS, Ms. Akshani had years of experience in environment-related programs. She has gone on record on many occasions to express her concern at the condition of the environment in Indonesia. In order to make a positive impact to the environment, she has worked as both a community leader and volunteer in the past. With GLS, she finally decided to create a community of her own. Ms. Akshani started looking around for some people with the same passion for environmental conservation and together they founded the Green Living Support Community.

## **Interview**

### **Interviewee:**

Ms. Onish Akshani - Director, Green Living Support

### ***Q: What kind of organization is Green Living Support and how was it formed?***

Onish: This organization was founded out of the concern of many friends who felt compelled to do something about environmental issues. My colleagues come from diverse backgrounds, including business and research. The initial concept came from one individual but it took three of us to get GLS off the ground. And now it is going from strength to strength.

### ***Q: Can you elaborate on the “Three Pillars” of Green Living Support?***

Onish: The three pillars are study/research, action and business. Many of us come to GLS from an economic background, the majority of the research we conduct is economic in nature, but is still related to the environment. We often collaborate with the government on research, so any progress we make can influence government policy. Surabaya, for example, has recently succeeded in eliminating the use of plastic bags in stores, largely as a result of our research. The business pillar, on the other hand, focuses on meeting the challenge of developing green business models that can compete with traditional industries.

### ***Q: What initially attracted you to GLS and how long have you worked with the organization?***

Onish: As I was the one that came up with the idea, I have been a part of GLS since the very beginning! So it's been around 4 years. Before joining GLS, I was involved in environmental preservation work of various types for about ten years.

### ***Q: What programs does GLS run?***

Onish: One regular feature is hosting discussions on aspects of economic research as they pertain to the environment. We also have an education program about wild plants. We're interested in



this issue since wild plants are frequently treated as a problem and sprayed with pesticides while being overlooked as a beneficial source of nutrition. At least once a month we will hold a seminar on wild plants and their benefits for society. Unfortunately, our current routine has been disrupted because we have a book-writing project that is still ongoing and we are also engaged in project research, so our human resources are quite stretched at this moment in time. In addition, we also provide writing and research classes to our members so that they are able to contribute more.

***Q: What has been the most memorable experience and/or challenge that you have faced since you founded GLS?***

Onish: The most recent obstacle was when we first held an educational event about wild plants. The number of participants did not meet our expectations. This made us realize that there are still many people who are not interested in this topic. On the other hand, the most memorable experience so far was meeting people who have the same interests and concerns as me, even though we might come from different backgrounds. This has become a source of encouragement. In addition, another memorable experience was when we were able to host presentations from a writer and an activist which inspired many participants. I am very happy when I see that a speaker has been able to develop skills while sharing their knowledge.

***Q: Is it possible to volunteer at Green Living Support? What does a volunteer do at GLS?***

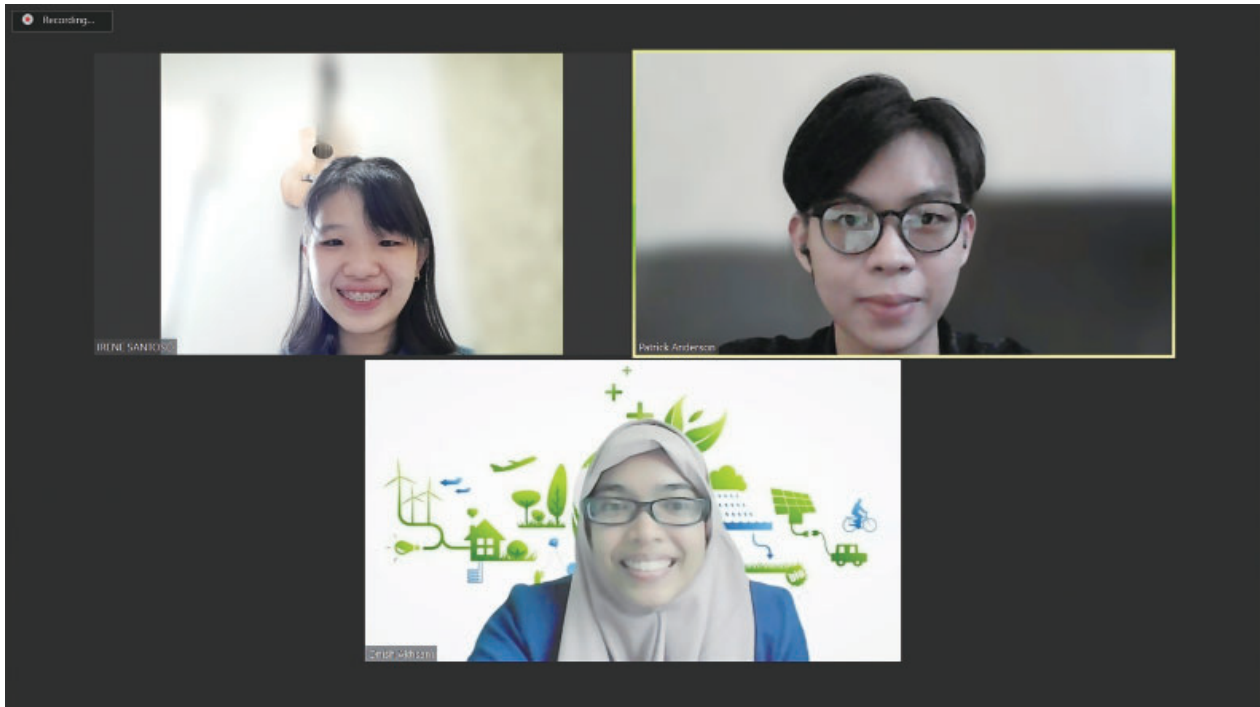
Onish: Of course, you are most welcome to volunteer at GLS! Everyone who has a passion and interest in environmental issues is welcome to join us. We do not have a complicated process for recruitment. If anyone is interested, just send in your CV and cover letter explaining your motivation, etc. and you will automatically be considered a member of Green Living Support. Volunteer activities are usually related to the events we hold. Some volunteers end up on the event committee or are asked to MC the event, depending on what we need. We also provide resources for volunteers, so that they can develop the skills and wherewithal to contribute to their local community. As a community, we want our volunteers to grow with us.

***Q: What are the most common problems you've encountered when serving the community?***

Onish: One issue we experience is the difficulty of finding participants when holding events. Actually, many are interested and want to join, but they want everything for free. On our side, we need money to pay for resources, people (speakers), and to meet our other costs.

***Q: What does the future hold for Green Living Support?***

Onish: One specific aim is to make Green Living Support a non-profit Foundation that is independent from donors. We are distinct from companies and enterprises because we have a mission to protect the environment. At this time, we are competing with conventional companies that do not care about the environment. My expectation for GLS is professionalism, especially in governance.



**Ms. Onish Akshani (bottom) talking with the interviewers on 27th July 2022 via Zoom**

## Reflections

Green Living Support aims to form a community of people who are aware of the importance of caring for and preserving the natural environment, as well as helping the government in its efforts to do the same. Aside from spreading awareness about environmental issues, one of the main aims of Green Living Support is to develop human resources for the future.

Green Living Support has an important and significant role to play in increasing awareness regarding environmental issues. This is already apparent in their efforts to work with the government in banning plastic bag usage in Surabaya, as well as their seminars on the benefits of wild plants.

Green Living Support has a long-term vision for our community and how it can work to preserve the environment for future generations.

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## Researchers



My name is **Patrick Anderson** and I am a student at the University of Surabaya (UBAYA), which I entered in 2020. I was born in Jakarta, Indonesia but I grew up in Surabaya. I'm currently majoring in Biotechnology and learning lots of fun stuff. I'm the kind of person that is hungry for knowledge and experiences. One thing that I like about Biotechnology, or science in general, is that there will always be innovation around the subject, something new to research and understand. YGRP is also a new experience for me and that's why I was very excited to be a part of it. Meeting lots of new people with the same interests was fun and I am looking forward for more experiences like this in the future!



My name is **Irene Santoso** and I am a third-year psychology student at the University of Surabaya (UBAYA) in Indonesia. Currently, I live in Surabaya, but I was born and raised in Surakarta. I enjoy psychology because it changes my way of seeing the world. It struck me how much the past and our environment has on our lives. With regard to psychology, I'm most interested in the clinical field. Aside from being a university student, I spent my leisure time reading, watching movies, and spending time with friends and family.



# Poverty Issues





# Food Bank Kyoto

Researchers: Haruka Miki & Thanavut Prateep Na Thalang

Kyoto University of Foreign Studies

Food Bank Kyoto was established in 2015 in Kyoto Prefecture by local resident, Ms. Yumi Takabatake. She feels that the Food Bank is an organization that is not known well enough by Kyoto residents. However, providing food for people in need should never be something so special and rare. Instead, everyone should be able to easily participate in helping or getting help when they need it. She is willing to take a small step forward, aiming for a future when getting food to those in need is expressed naturally in society. Food Bank Kyoto is a non-profit organization that is small, but growing. It is run entirely by volunteers. Food Bank Kyoto started with only four people, but now has about 30 volunteer members. It regularly collects donated food from food manufacturers, farmers, and retail stores like supermarkets and convenience stores. Staff members sort the donated food by category and then distribute it to organizations for single mothers and children, orphanages, children's cafeterias, and other such organizations in Kyoto City, Uji City, Kameoka City, and Muko City. In addition, Food Bank Kyoto cooperates with city and ward offices to provide emergency assistance to individuals as needed. In this way, Food Bank Kyoto helps people suffering from poverty and hunger, contributes to reducing food waste in cooperation with companies and organizations, and provides volunteer opportunities to people of various ages.

Food Bank Kyoto is one of many such food bank organizations across Japan and even around the world. Originally, the food banks were in demand for single-mother families. There is a large gender pay gap in Japan, and poverty has been a particularly serious problem especially among single-mother families. At the same time, food loss is also a problem in Japan. Japan is a country known for its services and convenience. In convenience stores and supermarkets, a variety of bento boxes, rice balls, and other fresh foods are sold around the clock. To keep the food products on the shelves looking beautiful, stores will often throw away perfectly edible fruits and vegetables that don't fit strict product standards or foods that are too close to their expiration date.

Under the slogan "Change wasteful to grateful," Food Bank Kyoto is effectively addressing both problems. Due to the effects of the pandemic, the number of impoverished or unemployed people has increased. Furthermore, the number of people in need of food is expected to increase even more as food prices are currently rising in Japan. In response, Food Bank Kyoto moved its warehouse in July of 2022 and continues its activities to deliver food to more and more people. In 2021, it provided a total of 16,708 kg of food to 1,086 people through 443 deliveries.

There is an activity in Food Bank Kyoto called "Food Drive," which receives food supplies from households that can be shared and distributed to others with a nonprofit purpose. Food Drives get support from various organizations in Kyoto such as schools, workplaces, festival events, and sport parks. In the future, Food Bank Kyoto aims to cooperate and connect with more supporters to make the community move forward. The food supplies that Food Bank Kyoto regularly receives from donors include rice, snacks, drinks, instant noodles, canned food, preserved foodstuffs, instant foods,

beverages, seasoning products, etc. It is necessary that the food received from donors can be stored at a normal temperature so that supplies can be kept at a long time. The Food Drive process is clear and straightforward. Starting by collecting food from households, food companies, retailers, family, farmers, temples and shrines, Food Bank Kyoto then manages, sorts, and stocks the supplies. Afterwards, Food Bank Kyoto will cooperate with three sectors which are administrative organizations, The Council of Social Welfare, and various social service organizations to support the community.

## Interview

### Interviewee:

Ms. Kuniko Tashiro (Assortment Journalizing of Food Bank Kyoto)



Ms. Kuniko Tashiro (2nd from left) is a Sorting Specialist at Food Bank Kyoto.

***Q: How long have you worked at or been associated with Food Bank Kyoto?***

Ms. Tashiro: I have been associated with Food Bank Kyoto for about 4 years.

***Q: What is your main job/role at Kyoto Food Bank?***

Ms. Tashiro: At Food Bank Kyoto, I am mainly involved in sorting and managing the various donated foodstuffs according to expiration date and type. I share and divide up the work with other staff members two to four times per month, and I work together with 15 staff members during busy periods.



Interview with Ms. Kuniko Tashiro

***Q: What are some of your duties or activities at Kyoto Food Bank on a daily/weekly basis?***

Ms. Tashiro: In addition to our regular support to organizations, we usually get calls from the local government 2~3 times per week and cope with emergency support to individuals. Since the pandemic, the number of unemployed and mentally ill people itself has increased. As a result, local governments have begun setting up consultation services for these individuals. These are people who had been in need for a long time but did not know where to turn for help. They began to visit local governments, who in turn became aware of hidden poverty. As a result, the rate of assistance to individuals has increased by a factor of 2.5.

***Q: Can you tell us about the situation of lack of food for some people in Kyoto?***

Ms. Tashiro: Actually, it is difficult to figure out how many people seek help. In 2021, we conducted food delivery to 1,086 people in Kyoto. We did our best to support as many people as possible. However, we suspect there is more hidden poverty since it is difficult for us and the local government to notice it without some kind of approach from the people themselves. It is also difficult to determine the amount of support really needed, as the cause of each case is different. The reasons why a person ends up in a tough situation vary. Since there is a limit to the amount of food we can provide, we have to figure out what the real problem is. It might be due to poverty related to another reason such as dependence, mental illness, dementia, or unemployment. Determining what kind of



administrative help is needed for them with the local government staff, we focus on solving radical causes, too. Once the type and content of government assistance has been determined to some extent, we finally start working to determine and deliver the amount of food required in each case.



Food Bank Kyoto receiving food supplies from Costco, Japan

***Q: What part do you think Food Bank Kyoto plays in the life of the local community and in the lives of its citizens?***

Ms. Tashiro: We are mainly working to help facilities for single mother families and volunteer cafeterias for children. We are delivering not only a large amount of food, but also a lot of people's hearts who desire to combat this problem through our food drives. Therefore, I believe that the Food Bank Kyoto is contributing to the community by playing a behind-the-scenes role in creating a society where people in various situations can live together in harmony.

***Q: In what ways do you think you and/or Food Bank Kyoto can play a larger role in the local community in the future?***

Ms. Tashiro: As the number of people in need of support increases, we are looking to expand the scale of our activities. Food Bank Kyoto started out as a small office. Thanks to the increase in food donations, we moved to a slightly larger office near Katsura station this past July (of 2022). However, we still do not have enough space or number of volunteers. We hope to gradually enlarge the scale of our operations to meet the increasing needs, so that we



can deliver a larger quantity and variety of food to more people. Ultimately, our goal is to create a society where poverty and hunger are eliminated and we do not have to provide assistance. However, we feel that this is still a long way off. Therefore, as I mentioned earlier, we hope to reach and support the hidden poor households for now.



Haruka and Ms. Julia sort food received from donors by checking the expiration date to find out if it is usable or not.

***Q: How can we (as individuals) help people who are suffering from lack of food in Kyoto?***

Ms. Tashiro: We can help them by first knowing the situation of hunger in our community. As a student you can use your voice to spread information to other students. Taking one step to engage the community is not difficult as you imagine. Let's start taking action from little things that you can do, for example, donating your food. We accept food donations from even one package of juice or snack. We are especially grateful for donations of canned tuna and canned meat. Foods which have a long expiration date and contain high-protein are ideal for improving the nutritional intake of the recipient. Your small actions can help people's lives.

***Q: How do you deliver food to poor people?***

Ms. Tashiro: We deliver food mainly by personal car. For distant areas, we deliver by mail. Since each recipient has a different family structure, cooking facilities and cooking abilities, we are trying to pack the food to suit their environment. For vegetables which are usually difficult to store and deliver, we also provide handmade products from our farm. Various vegetables such as asparagus, carrots, tomatoes, eggplants, pumpkins, and peppers are grown in a pesticide-free method.

***Q: Are there any partner organizations or government agencies that work together with Food Bank Kyoto?***

Ms. Tashiro: When there is a large volume of supplies, we partner with a transportation company to provide support. For example, when an elementary school was closed due to the coronavirus, we asked them to transport a large amount of school lunch materials such as meat and vegetables to the facility in need.

It was totally impossible to transport two tons of vegetables by private vehicle alone, so the cooperation of the transportation company was a great help.

***Q: Are there any foreign students working as volunteers in the Food Bank Kyoto?***

Ms. Tashiro: There are foreign students from Indonesia, Canada, and Vietnam who are from Ritsumeikan University. There are circles in Ritsumeikan University related to food waste which are facilitated by Ms. Julia, a university professor. Most students know about our organization by participating in such circles.

## **Reflections**

In sum, poverty and hunger actually do exist in a city like Kyoto - which most people think of as being a rich city - and Food Bank Kyoto is working to solve this problem in various ways. Through the interview, we learned that it is difficult to accurately determine how many people are in need of assistance even for food banks, which are working on the front lines against poverty. Due to the effects of the pandemic and rising living expenses, the number of suffering people is rapidly increasing, so it is necessary to efficiently distribute the limited amount of donated food to as many people as possible. Therefore, we learned that it is crucial not just to keep supplying food, but also to work with local governments to find and improve the fundamental causes of why people are in need.

We also realized that it was much easier to start participating in the activities than we had expected. Many people probably have an image that donating food would require a large quantity, but it is possible to donate even a small amount such as one package of snacks. Not only donating food, but joining as a volunteer are also welcomed. Actually, many university students and foreign students are active as volunteers. Sorting and organizing donated food needs more hands. We participated as a sorting team, and it was a great experience for us to see and learn what kind of food was being donated, how much, and how it was being donated.

Researching the problems occurring in your community is a good starting point for thinking about

what community engagement activities you can do. But the important point is to actually take action to begin solving those problems and making your community a better place. We hope this report will help you learn more about issues in the local community of Kyoto and inspire you to get involved.

## Researchers



Hello everyone! My name is **Thanavut Prateep Na Thalang**. I am a foreign student from Thailand who is studying at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies. It has been 5 years since I came to Japan. I came to Japan when I was 15 years old. I was born and raised in Bangkok for 15 years and then I decided to come to study in Japan because I love Japanese culture, tradition, and lifestyle. I came to Japan when I was in high school until now. My hobby is taking photos. I love taking pictures very much because I want to keep every moment as a memory. Thank you very much for inviting me to this wonderful project!



Hello everyone! I am **Haruka Miki**. I was born and raised in Hyogo Prefecture and started living alone in Kyoto when I became a university student. I have many hobbies because I like to try new things and gain new knowledge. In my free time, I enjoy cooking, baking, drawing, walking, reading, and taking pictures. I recently started a Bullet Journal and have become interested in hand lettering. Since I spend more time at home, I enjoy looking up and trying foreign food recipes on YouTube and feel like I am traveling the world.





# **Garda Pangan: Food Bank for Surabaya and Malang**

Researchers: Joshua Tanujaya & Sarah Pondung

University of Surabaya (UBAYA), Indonesia

Somewhere between 20% to 40% of the global food supply is disposed of before it gets to market. Some of this is due to quality standards, namely regarding the physical state of a product (Garda Pangan, 2018). Regardless of the fact that the food is still edible, due to it not being able to meet these quality standards is cause enough for it to be disposed of. Indonesia as a country is a great contributor to this issue: Indonesians dispose of more than 300 kg of food per capita each year. Unfortunately it is one of the worst when it comes to food waste management and policies. Some 19.4 million Indonesians are living in poverty, so there is certainly something to be gained by confronting these issues regarding our food supply. This is where the Garda Pangan community comes in. Dedhy Trunoyudho is one of the founders and once ran a business as a wedding caterer. Dedhy felt distraught after witnessing the amount of food waste produced every weekend. From a business standpoint, finding a way to reallocate this excess seemed the ideal course of action as well as being economically much more sensible. With this in mind, Garda Pangan was founded in March 2018.

The organization operates in the social, environmental and food sectors whilst not associating with any governmental, political or religious institution. The vision of the founders is an Indonesia liberated from starvation by the redistribution of excess food. Garda Pangan aims to promote awareness within the hospitality industry, businesses and government, in order to create a socially responsible and caring community where everyone can contribute to combating food waste. Garda Pangan developed an idea where the organization collects food on the verge of being wasted - but still nutritious and edible - and distributing it to people in need, such as orphanages, nursing houses, shelters and physically-challenged individuals in Surabaya. On the back of this program, Garda Pangan has expanded its reach to the city of Sidoarjo.



**Sorting and distributing food donations**



Garda Pangan conducts its own research when deciding on who benefits from their services, and the organization remains open to recommendations for those who need help. When donating food, they are careful to schedule aid in order to prevent misuse of or over-dependence on the program. Garda Pangan also works together with the farmers who produce, for whatever reason, products that are deemed unappealing to the food supply market. Hence the organization is able to provide support to the farming communities who cultivated these products to maintain not only their income, but the economy in general. Through collaboration with the organizers of national events, weddings, university events, parties and also major players in the hospitality industry such as hotels, restaurants, cafes and bakeries, Garda Pangan has positioned itself to take receipt of excess food. The organization has developed its own Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to help each volunteer that joins to guide them in how to operate within Garda Pangan and the steps for processing excess food. The process involves visual, olfactory and tasting checks.

In addition to collecting excess food, reports are sent to each donor, with details of who received the food that was donated. Moreover, Garda Pangan has set up on- and offline programs to introduce methods to keep food waste to a minimum.



One of Garda Pangan's campaigns

These programs extend to teaching children ways to save food through various interactive games. As of June 2022, Garda Pangan has saved 397,431 portions or 107 tonnes of food and donated food to 26,129 beneficiaries.

## Interview

### Interviewees:

Ms. Eva Bachtiar - Co-founder, Garda Pangan

Mr. Kevin Gani - Volunteer Program Coordinator, Garda Pangan



Zoom interview with Garda Pangan co-founder Eva, Joshua and Sarah



Zoom interview with Garda Pangan volunteer coordinator Kevin, Joshua and Sarah

***Q: How long have you been associated with Garda Pangan and what is your main role in the organization?***

Eva: I have been involved since the beginning, from June 2017 as the co-founder and CEO. I manage Garda Pangan's activities full time which includes stakeholders, funding and our

relationship with our partners.

Kevin: My role is volunteer coordinator. I've been a volunteer myself since 2018. My duties focus on coordinating the volunteers.

***Q: Where did you learn about Garda Pangan? What motivated you to volunteer?***

Kevin: I learned about Garda Pangan from an Instagram post about volunteer open recruitment. I volunteered 10 times, until they offered me the chance to become volunteer coordinator. My main motivation was to make connections outside my campus. Initially, I was ignorant about food waste, but eventually I came to feel this was the right place for me because we can help so many people.

***Q: Why was the organization formed and why is it needed in our community? What problems is it trying to solve?***

Eva: Awareness of food waste is rather low in our community. We hear a lot about plastic waste, but 40% of the waste produced in Indonesia is actually food waste. So we wanted to provide a solution.

Kevin: The food bank concept is still new to Indonesia, despite being the second greatest contributor to food waste worldwide. And we have so many Indonesians who need help with food. So it makes sense to collect excess food and share it with those in need.

***Q: Why does the problem exist in the first place?***

Eva: The problem can be divided into food loss and food waste. Food loss occurs during production, storage, transportation, etc. Meanwhile, food waste occurs at the retailer and when the food reaches the consumer. For food loss, lack of technological advances in storage, transportation or even infrastructure, such as uneven roads, may cause fruits to bruise. Consumers prefer visually appealing products, therefore slight blemishes can be a problem.



**A Food Rescue involving Food Heroes including Sarah**

***Q: What programs do you run that help the community?***

Eva: Our Food Rescue program saves food from being discarded by cooperating with the hospitality industry at events such as weddings or festivals. Gleaning is when we work with farmers and collect visually unattractive crops that are nutritious and high quality despite their appearance. Our offline and online campaigns spread awareness in the community. We also advocate for better policies and regulations on food waste in Indonesia. We have business units to gather funds for our activities. We provide food waste management services and workshops for companies. Our Ugly Produce Business helps process unattractive products into ice-cream, juices, jams and dried fruits to teach people that visually unappealing doesn't always mean inedible. Lastly, our Organic Waste Treatment program processes waste with maggots to produce feed for livestock.

***Q: Where does the donated food come from and who does it go to?***

Kevin: We accept donations without restrictions: raw ingredients, beverages, snacks, breads and others. If you are interested in donating, please notify our contact person and we will do the rest.

Eva: To ensure that the beneficiary is appropriate, we conduct research into their lifestyle, and ask questions about dietary restrictions, etc. Currently, our donations have reached 155 locations in Surabaya, Sidoarjo, Gresik, and Madura.

***Q: How does Garda Pangan work with farmers when it comes to gleaning?***

Eva: Gleaning occurs in two ways. First, we may work with a farmer to gather unappealing produce left unharvested. Second, when a commodity drops in price, some farmers do not have enough money to pay laborers to harvest this produce and it would just go to waste.

***Q: What role does Garda Pangan play in the local community now and in the future?***

Eva: Our role is to reduce food waste. By February 2022, we had saved 99 tonnes of food, which equates to 188 tonnes of carbon emissions. We have donated 367,266 portions of food to 25,764 beneficiaries. We also contribute to improving health indices in the communities we serve.

Kevin: I think nowadays each city needs a food bank to manage and redistribute food waste. Our role is also to raise awareness about this issue.

***Q: Are there any difficulties you face in the community?***

Eva: Food Bank is still an uncommon term and concept to most people and some businesses still waste food. Another challenge is funding. Half of our funding comes from donations.

Kevin: Logistics and geography can be a challenge. To get to some locations, we may need to cross a river. However, with support from our partners, obstacles become easier to overcome.



***Q: What has been a rewarding experience through your involvement in Garda Pangan?***

Kevin: I think it's when I meet the people we donate to. One time, we met an old woman who didn't have access to clean water and had to buy all the water she used. Since it's expensive, she rarely bathes. Experiences like that are very eye opening.

***Q: Are there any plans for Garda Pangan to expand to other cities?***

Eva: Our dream is to spread to other cities. However, we need to do it gradually. We expanded to Malang in 2020, but we didn't have an office and partners when the pandemic hit. After things calm down, we plan to address these problems and start operations.

***Q: During the pandemic did Garda Pangan experience challenges in operating your programs?***

Eva: When the pandemic started, all of our partners received huge setbacks and many stopped operating. Some decreased production significantly, hence there's less food we can collect. We also stopped operating for two weeks as our activities include plenty of in-person interaction. However, the pandemic caused more food crises, so we focused more on distributing food and we collected food waste only once a week. Thankfully now we can return to normal operations.

***Q: What advice would you like to give to people who want to help?***

Eva: We promote reducing food waste in each household through the tips we share in our online campaigns. People can also donate to food banks as well as buying from our Gleaning program. Awareness of these issues is a great first step.

Kevin: The first step would be to know your own food portions and to only prepare what you will eat, no more. However, if you have excess food, you can share it with the people around you or you can contact a food bank.

## **Reflections**

Hearing about the efforts of Garda Pangan to combat food waste has been incredibly motivating. It starts on our own plate - cooking and eating only what we need - and extends to global emissions and health statistics. It was surprising to hear Indonesia was ranked globally as the second largest offender when it comes to food waste, according to a 2017 study by the Economist Intelligence Unit, with 300 kg of food per person wasted each year. Awareness is so poor in Indonesia, and the government and the citizenry do very little to reduce food waste. There are many people who do not receive adequate nutrition, yet we struggle with this issue.

Garda Pangan tries to set an example of how to reuse excess food to achieve two objectives simultaneously: to save food waste from being thrown away and to assist people experiencing food supply challenges. It is a very complex issue and hopefully we can do something to advocate for better food waste policies. All of us can do our part, by preventing food waste in our own homes, or



supporting organizations like Garda Pangan. Together we can build a society free from food waste.

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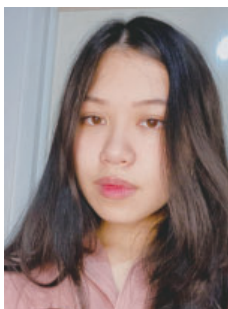
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## Researchers



Hello everyone! My name is **Sarah Pondung**. I am a medical student from the University of Surabaya with aspirations to become a competent, empathetic doctor. I am from Indonesia, but I was born and raised for most of my life in the Middle East, in Kuwait. My passion lies in volunteering, writing, poetry and in appreciating the little things in life. I aim to contribute to the medical field through dedication and hard work. I plan to specialize in either psychiatry or pediatrics.



My name is **Joshua Tanujaya** and I am from Indonesia. I'm a chemical engineering student from the University of Surabaya with dreams of developing innovations to overcome obstacles in society. I enjoy reading novels, playing games, watching movies, hanging out and having a lie in.



# The Silver Jubilee Home for the Aged

Researchers: Audrey Kor Yong Jing & Andrian Lopez Matius

Universiti Sains Malaysia

The Silver Jubilee Home for the Aged, hereinafter referred to as 'The Home', was founded in 1935 by Mr Cheah Leong Keah, a prominent Penang businessman, to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of King George V. Mr Cheah Leong Keah donated 22.5 acres of land for the establishment of the home, located at Sungai Dua. The Home is a non-governmental organization (NGO) for those elderly persons who are unable to afford, or find, suitable senior care. Originally, two blocks of single storey hutchments were built to accommodate 2 residents each, but today there are more than 6 blocks of cluster units accommodating around 175 residents. The upgraded units now consist of bedrooms with adjoining toilets and bathrooms, with a medical ward, recycling center, TV room (otherwise known as the Clubhouse), a dining hall and rehabilitation center on-site.

In terms of staffing, on the administrative side there is a manager, an assistant manager, a financial officer, and numerous additional officers in charge of various other divisions. Overall, The Home employs roughly 57 people in total. The Home is also extremely lucky to have kitchens that cater for both Muslim and non-Muslim residents, a laundry facility, a Surau (a kind of Islamic building used for worship), and a large multi-purpose hall with badminton equipment that can be rented out to provide The Home with some extra income. Additionally, there is the lovely and roomy Cheah Leong Keah Dining Hall, which has two entertainment wings, one of which is an activity block where the residents can watch ASTRO/TV shows and participate in karaoke sessions.

The General Committee has put in a lot of effort to maintain and improve The Home in a number of areas, and were able to do this due to the tremendous generosity of the general public. About 220,000 Malaysian Ringgit is spent on The Home each month, and all cash donations are tax-exempt. The Home is also very happy to receive donations in kind, such as food, clothing, etc. Any destitute person of 60 years of age or older may apply for admittance, regardless of race, creed, or gender. However, the General Committee will ultimately decide whether to accept or deny an application for admission after interviewing each applicant. Candidates must be Malaysian citizens who live in the province of Wellesley or Penang, and entry and living support is offered for free.

## Interview

### Interviewee:

Dato Loh Yeow Boo (Dato is an honorary title in Malaysia)

### *Q: Can you briefly introduce yourself?*

Dato: I am Loh Yeow Boo, and I joined The Home as a committee member in 2017, before becoming Chairman in 2020. Prior to joining The Home, I worked as a professional accountant in a public research organization.



Dato Loh Yeow Boo with the interviewers, Andrian and Audrey.

***Q: What is your main role in the organization?***

Dato: As Chairman, my role is to make sure everything is transparent and accountable.

This is to ensure that the good reputation of The Silver Jubilee Home is not ruined. I also provide the concept and direction for the Home in planning for the future. This is mainly because other people are not so bothered about The Home, especially the younger generation.

***Q: Could you tell us a little about the residents in the home?***

Dato: Currently there are 135 residents in the home. Half of them live in the cluster units, while the rest stay on the medical ward. We are still taking in residents, but we will only take those who meet the criteria. Most of the residents are Chinese, with only a few of them of other races such as Malay and Indian. Every resident that comes to reside at The Home needs to declare their financial situation to the management of The Home, and the cost of all of their living expenses, etc., are thereafter borne by The Silver Jubilee Home.



One of the residents with the interviewers, Andrian and Audrey.

***Q: What kind of activities take place in the Silver Jubilee Home on a daily and weekly basis?***

Dato: The activities that are carried out by the residents on a daily basis include, singing karaoke, listening to the band, gardening, playing mahjong, and so on. Other than the activities in the home, the residents are allowed to go on an outing for 4 hours once a week, and for one full day once a month.





The dining hall and place for organized activities.

***Q: What were the challenges met by your organization during the COVID pandemic, and how did you overcome them?***

Dato: Due to our restrictions on entry and exit from the home, we were able to keep the COVID-19 outbreak at bay for 18 months. However, at the same time, we experienced problems in receiving donations in kind from the public. Therefore, there were shortages in the supply chain for items of daily need such as food, beverages, medicine, and so on. Fortunately, we were able to handle the issues in the supply chain by assigning certain jobs to the staff. For example, some staff were assigned to take care of the residents while some staff were assigned to buy items of daily need from the market. This was done to ensure the supply chain for daily needs was fluid.

***Q: What part do you think the organization plays in the life of the local community, and the lives of its citizens?***

Dato: First of all, The Silver Jubilee Home provides care and shelter for the homeless. For anyone who wants to be one of the residents of The Silver Jubilee Home, they must first register themselves and go through an interview procedure conducted by a general committee member. After the interview, the general committee member will investigate the financial and family condition of the applicant before approving their application. Only those who are the poorest and most needy can be approved. Thereafter, the staff of The Silver Jubilee Home will take care of each resident's needs on a daily basis and also their financial needs to ensure they have their own funds and savings. Economies of scale could be achieved if the number of residents increases as the cost required to support each resident will be lower. Furthermore, The Silver

Jubilee Home provides opportunities for members of society to engage in acts of kindness, by accepting donations in cash, or in kind, from the public.

***Q: What is your plan to make the organization better in the future?***

Dato: As there is some vacant land in the area, I am planning to grow fruit or vegetables on this land, and rent it out to other people on a short-term basis. In addition, I am also planning to start our own clinic and provide in-house cleaning and care services. Currently, the medical services in the home are provided by part-time doctors, and doctors from Penang General Hospital. By having our own clinic, we could provide better in-house care, and also ensure medical services are provided at the time when residents actually need it.

## **Reflections**

We got to know more about the history and the operation of The Silver Jubilee Home from the interview with Dato Loh Yeow Boo. From the interview, we were amazed by their gratitude for the donation of the land by Mr. Cheah Leong Keah in 1935, as they appreciate each and every acre of it and make sure that it is used wisely and efficiently. Furthermore, they also showed how much they care for the residents in the home. The staff take good care of them by preparing them healthy meals, looking after their daily needs, and monitoring the financial conditions for each one. Moreover, they also provide lots of entertainment and other activities, important services such as laundry and physiotherapy, and generally ensure they can live comfortably and safely. More than that, the residents are encouraged to do a little light work, such as sewing or recycling, and in this way their lives are not boring. To be honest, it was a big surprise to us that The Silver Jubilee Home provides meals and shelter to the residents for free, which means they do not charge fees to any of the residents for living in the home. This is a huge act of kindness from them, especially towards those who are so poor. It is important for us to understand that it is not easy to operate such a big home for the aged without collecting fees from residents, so donations in kind or cash are needed by them to keep things going. Thus, we hope that we can promote The Silver Jubilee Home to more people through this report and also gather the power of more assistance to help them.

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## Researchers



Hello Everyone! My name is **Audrey Kor Yong Jing**. I'm a third year student taking a Bachelor of Economics degree in the School of Social Sciences, USM. I was born at Sungai Petani, Kedah, but currently live in Butterworth, Penang. My hobbies are drawing, watching movies and listening to music. I love to watch the Harry Potter series of movies, too.



Hi everyone! I am **Andrian Lopez Matius**. I am a second year student currently pursuing a Bachelor of Economics degree at Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang. I particularly enjoy studying Economics as I love to seek the answers to the world's problems. I was born in Sibu, Sarawak, and am currently staying at Kuching, Sarawak. During my leisure time, I like playing games, watching netflix series, and jogging. I also like to join volunteer activities as I love to engage with, and help, people.

# **Gender Issues**





# LGBT + Davao City Coalition, Inc.

Researchers: Hyacinthe Te & Jacob De Cilis

San Pedro College, Philippines

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender: LGBT+ is an umbrella term used to describe sexual orientation or gender identity of an individual. LGBT+ youth experience fear of expressing themselves as well as suffering discrimination due of their sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression (Hafeez et al., 2017).

Due to discrimination of this nature, the LGBT+ community suffers from an increased risk of depression, substance abuse, trauma, self-destructive and suicidal behavior (Garofalo et al., 1999, as cited in, Hafeez et al., 2017).

Nowadays, there are certain policies and regulations protecting LGBT+ community as well as individuals with HIV/AIDS; however, these policies have not been sufficiently enforced, allowing bullying and discrimination to proliferate. According to Thoreson (2017), many LGBT+ youths experience harassment in the Philippines. There is a clear need to protect these individuals as some are being pushed to the limits of their mental health. One example of an organization aiming to protect this community is the LGBT+ Davao City Coalition, Inc.



Established in Davao City, Philippines in 2016, the LGBT+ Davao City Coalition, Inc. (LGBTDCCI) is presently headed by lead convener Rejie Boy Mingming. Because of discrimination and the low levels of HIV/AIDS awareness in the local community, LGBT+ Davao City Coalition was formed to help alleviate social discrimination and increase awareness. LGBT+ Davao City Coalition is a nonprofit, volunteer organization consisting of 90 LGBT+ groups from all over the nation, aiming to increase opportunities for self-growth, HIV/AIDS awareness, skills enhancement, economic empowerment, and leadership development for members of the LGBT+ community. Currently the organization is headquartered in Davao City, in a building known as the “House of LGBT” which accommodates volunteers, accredited members, and unaccredited individuals to avail themselves of the programs, activities, and fundraising projects overseen by the group. We interviewed Constancio “Teeny” Arnaiz, Jr., the current communication and media officer, to learn more.

## Interview

### Interviewee:

Mr. Constancio “Teeny” Arnaiz, Jr. - Communication and Media Officer, The LGBT+ Davao Coalition

***Q: Please share a brief history of the organization.***

Teeny: The LGBT+ Davao Coalition was established last 2016 with Mr. Oscar Obenza Jr. as our first lead convenor. Back then, less than 60 accredited LGBT organizations were active across the city, with around 3000 members within Davao. In October 2020, we held an election and appointed a new convenor, Mr. Rejie Boy A. Mingming. Currently, we have 84 accredited LGBT organizations, with around 6000 members in Davao. In 2020, we have invited two notable persons to become coalition advisers — Professor Hadji Balajadia, a transgender woman and part of the Psychology Faculty at Ateneo de Davao University, and also Atty. Meong Cabarde, Coordinator of the Ateneo Public Interest and Legal Advocacy Center (APILA) of Ateneo de Davao University. Since then, the coalition's membership has increased as a result of their persistent efforts of campaigning and advocating for our members. Their work has produced a generation of individuals who can identify as part of the LGBT+ Community.

***Q: What is the inspiration/motivation behind the organization?***

Teeny: Growing up in a society full of animosity and discrimination towards LGBT+ people is motivation enough. Additionally, due to the increasing rates of HIV/AIDS in the city, we are motivated to fight the stigma associated with this illness, not only for those who have this condition but also on behalf of those unaffected people who are part of the LGBT+ community, as well as acting to prevent any further cases. Furthermore, we are aware of the factors that prevent closeted individuals from coming out, and one of them is not being able to know their sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. We wish to help all individuals be knowledgeable, understand, and be proud of their sexuality. We are moved to look out for fellow members and constantly remind them that we are just as important as those who fit established standards of sexuality and gender.

***Q: Who are the clients/beneficiaries of the organization?***

Teeny: The coalition consists of different accredited LGBT+ organizations, and our clients and beneficiaries are certified members. However, there are instances wherein we attend to people who are not coalition members. Since one of our advocacies is HIV/AIDS Prevention and Awareness, we conduct free screening and testing every day for those in need.

***Q: What are the advocacies and programs conducted by the organization?***

Teeny: The coalition has numerous advocacies, but I will mention the main issues. First up is HIV/AIDS Awareness and Prevention. We conduct free testing and screening to help people know their status and organize seminars for awareness. Next is SOGIE (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Expression) Awareness, wherein we assist people in identifying themselves correctly and taking pride in their sexuality. Another goal is to bring together all the different LGBT groups in Davao City. We firmly believe that in order to gain genuine respect and acceptance of society, we must first coexist in harmony. Community engagement is another forte, where we conduct activities that benefit different communities within the city, such as feeding programs, coastal clean-ups, tree planting and book donations. Then there is

leadership and capacity building: we train our members to be effective leaders and individuals in their different communities. Lastly, we advocate for mental health. It is a well-known fact that people who identify as part of the LGBT+ community face an unimaginable amount of discrimination and stigmatization, which can take a toll on their wellbeing.

***Q: How can interested individuals connect with these services?***

Teeny: You can reach us by simply sending a message on our Facebook page. You can also give us a call, text, or even send an email. Then we can address your concerns and schedule an appointment.

***Q: Did you encounter any challenges when starting the organization?***

Teeny: I would say that uniting the LGBT+ sectors in Davao City was a difficult thing to do. Growing and maintaining membership is another challenge. This is owing to the fact that when you form an organization, your members must feel there is some benefit in it for them to participate. We require members to submit activity reports every semester to monitor the member's activities and their progress.

***Q: What are your activities on a daily or weekly basis?***

Teeny: We have a year-long calendar of activities, which consists of scheduled events, such as sports tournaments, international celebrations like Pride Month, Transgender Day, and the like. Thankfully, despite the pandemic and the strict restrictions, we were able to conduct activities face-to-face. Last June, we held our Pride March, which took us from Freedom Park down to Rizal Park, where we hosted some other activities such as singing, dancing, impersonating, costume contests, spoken word poetry and such. This August, we will be celebrating our 6th anniversary, as well as the launch of the LGBT+ Davao City Coalition Inc. Community Center. Hopefully, we can conduct a year-end party in December. Aside from that, we run HIV/AIDS and SOGIE Awareness programs monthly and HIV/AIDS testing and screening daily.

***Q: After years of existing as an organization, what have you learned so far?***

Teeny: I have learned that every LGBT+ individual has love, compassion and support for their fellow members. I also discovered that each of our members has the capacity to stand on their own and face discrimination. Moreover, I have observed a give-and-take relationship within the community. This could be evidently seen when we campaign for HIV/AIDS Awareness and Prevention. When members have the chance to participate in awareness programs, they give back to the community by sharing their acquired knowledge and skills. Also many people in society genuinely love and support us, especially the political leaders in our city. Number one is President Rodrigo Duterte, who has appointed many LGBT+ individuals to different national government posts. Mayor Inday Sara has a special project specifically for the LGBT+ community - an initiative for a sustainable livelihood program whereby participants can learn fundamental entrepreneurial skills and earn extra income. Lastly, our "allies" as well call them support and defend our rights as human beings.

***Q: Any special message you want to convey to our readers worldwide?***

Teen: Each country has its own diverse culture, and there are some factors that contribute to the acceptance of the LGBT+ community. I would like to say that we are living in a new world, and we cannot just stick to the past and its long-established beliefs in order to survive in this new world. We must adapt and be progressive, or else you risk falling behind. Resisting the LGBT+ rights we advocate for, due to those outdated beliefs, is endangering people who are part of the community. Aside from conveying this message, I would also like to ask the world a very simple question: I would like to know why is it so hard for other people to accept or at least respect the LGBT+ Community?

***Q: In your own opinion, do you think you have already reached your goal?***

Teen: Not yet, since the purpose of this coalition is continuously changing and expanding. For example, one of our goals is to empower every member of the LGBT+ community, and due to the increasing numbers of the LGBT+ population this will be an ongoing task. Looking at the bigger picture, we are slowly reaching our goals, especially in our advocacies. That said, the challenges are still significant, which is why we need to persist with our work in the community for the LGBT+ sector, and of course, in society at large.

## Reflections

The Philippines is predominantly a Christian nation, and the teachings of Christianity influence the values of society. Being a member of the LGBTQIA+ Community in an earnestly conservative society that upholds Christian values is not easy. I witness hostile discrimination and wilful prejudices towards my community on a daily basis, especially on social media platforms. The horrid things that people in this community experience are almost beyond comprehension. I could only imagine the psychological toll. I also hear hate crimes reported in the news, and it is incredibly disheartening and at the same time baffling to know the extent of the discrimination they receive. As fellow citizens, we must not accept this unequal treatment in society.

Despite these sad occurrences, we are living in a new world with a new generation, where change is constant and undeniable. The COVID-19 pandemic may be the focus today; however, there are also other social issues such as discrimination that require attention because of the impact on mental health.

Thankfully, certain nonprofit volunteer organizations like the LGBTDCCI are addressing these problems and helping society to adapt to new values. We should support these organizations and aid them in achieving their goals. As their hashtag conveys, #keepgoing and continue on with our lives.

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## Researchers



Good day, everyone! My name is **Hyacinthe Te**, and I am 20 years old and a third year Nursing Student from San Pedro College, Davao City, Philippines. I was born and raised in General Santos City, but moved to Davao City seven years ago. I am currently the class president of my section and the president of Volunteer Service Provider. I am fond of doing volunteer work and taking part in community engagement activities. After graduating from nursing school, I would like to study to become a medical doctor. I enjoy reading, writing, music and watching films.



Good day, everyone! I am **Jacob De Cilis**, a 22-year-old Filipino, currently in my fourth year as a student of San Pedro College (SPC) in Davao City, Philippines. I am presently studying for my Bachelor of Science in Medical Laboratory Science. As a student at SPC, I am fond of conducting research and doing medical laboratory tests and procedures. Aside from that, I enjoy collaborating in a group or with a partner, and I am willing to participate in various activities or events such as volunteer programs, contests, and such. Among my hobbies, the two worth-mentioning are joining community engagement activities and having fun with colleagues and friends.





# Savy Amira Women's Crisis Center

Researchers: Camila & Gerald N. Suteja

University of Surabaya (UBAYA), Indonesia

Sadly, today we often hear of incidents involving domestic and gender-based abuse. News of domestic abuse has become somewhat normalized when it comes to media and popular culture, along with other criminal and anti-social activities. In spite of frequent mention in the news, on TV shows and movies, only a tiny percentage of these cases are brought into the public eye. Abuse of this nature often remains in the shadows, not spoken about in the public space by victims, nor by those who inflict it. In light of this grim reality, a certain few have made it their mission to shine a light in this dark corner by establishing an NPO to provide an anonymous and discreet therapy and intervention service for victims of abuse. This is the story of the Savy Amira Women's Crisis Center. Savy Amira means "ally of women" in Bahasa Indonesian and is the name given to this non-profit organization founded by several female activists from Surabaya on November 25<sup>th</sup>, 1997. From their initial aim of helping individual cases of gender-based abuse, Savy Amira has grown to become a fairly large organization handling an increasing number of cases of gender-based abuse, and in particular domestic abuse against women.

The origin of how this foundation came to be can be traced back to July 1997, when several of Savy Amira's founding members gathered in Bandung, West Java to take part in a Feminist Counselling Workshop hosted by a welfare organization called SPeAK. The workshop was led by none other than the late Raquel "Rock" Edralin Tiglao, founder of The Philippine Women's Crisis Center. As a prominent women's rights activist, her outstanding achievements, allied with her impactful delivery of the material in the workshop sessions, lit a fire in these three young women from Surabaya. Following this inspiring workshop, they were driven to start an initiative to hold small, open consultations with anyone who had concerns over domestic abuse towards women. These early meetings were named "The Reboan Meetings" and were held every Wednesday. Wednesday is *Hari Rabu* in Indonesian, hence the name. Held over the course of six months at a borrowed office in Surabaya, they eventually led to the founding of Savy Amira as an NPO that specifically tends to female victims of domestic abuse.

Over the years, Savy Amira has operated by generating its own resources as well as modest donations from the general public, which has meant rather slow development in terms of administration and active members/personnel. Savy Amira's initial operations started with a 24/7 hotline for victims of domestic abuse, staffed by 5 part-time workers who worked in rotation so that someone was available to field calls any time, day or night. Savy Amira's first office was a repurposed bedroom in a staff member's home. By 1999, an experienced women's rights activist with an NPO and NGO background had joined Savy Amira, which led to increased productivity and improvements in internal organization. By 2001, Savy Amira had attracted the attention of several philanthropic organizations from around Surabaya, which led to more personnel and resources. The involvement of organizations such as the Rotary Club enabled Savy Amira to eventually lease a proper house which could be used as their secretariat. The house also served as a temporary safe house for women seeking shelter from abuse.



**This inconspicuous house serves as the base of operations for Savy Amira**

By 2002, Savy Amira had forged links with numerous partners, many of which were organizations working to support similar causes across different parts of East Java. Eventually, a network of women's crisis centers emerged with Savy Amira being one of its core members, providing services and shelter to women in East Java and beyond. The development of this network also served to balance out the workload across these organizations, enabling them to provide a more effective and broader range of services. By 2005, Savy Amira had become a frequently referenced organization for women seeking psychological counseling and/or legal assistance. In order to build trust and understanding, between 2002-2005 Savy Amira provided workshops, training, and policy advocacy assistance in several locations throughout East Java and Indonesia.

With progress came challenges. Reforms to both the political and economic realms in Indonesia, together with the global climate during the early 2000s, resulted in a dramatic increase in cases of domestic abuse. The need for cooperation between women's crisis centers in East Java and Indonesia has become clearly apparent. Savy Amira has internal procedures that are followed to ensure clear reasoning behind every move the organization makes, all towards the greater goal of providing the best support and service for women in peril. Fostering mutual trust and working together are the axioms for every step Savy Amira has taken since its founding.



**A glass display case filled with accolades received by Savy Amira for their activities and participation in numerous seminars**

Savy Amira holds that all forms of inequality and abuse towards women are unjust acts of violence against humanity. In a country where social values favor men, where women can be treated as second-class beings and where, for some, violence is an ever-present aspect of domestic life, the notion that "...it's no surprise that she has to go through it, she's a woman after all" is a commonly held belief. Savy Amira hopes to eradicate this belief by substituting it with a modern mindset, slowly but surely creating a better world for all.

## Interview

### Interviewee:

Anik Mustika Rahayu - Secretary, Savy Amira Women's Crisis Center

### ***Q: How long have you been involved with Savy Amira?***

Anik: I have been with Savy Amira since June 2019. Someone had just left the organization and I was tasked with replacing them and overseeing the database. At that time, Savy was holding an event at my campus and that's when I found out that they were hiring. A few years later I am now also the Secretary.

***Q: What are your daily tasks?***

Anik: As Secretary, my daily responsibilities include checking email, WhatsApp and SMS, as well as responding to people who have reached out to us. We also have journalists and students contacting us for interviews and with requests for statistics. At the end of each month I create a report with our total cases and consultations, and I also classify the data into different types of cases. I also schedule a monthly institutional meeting and also meetings for our consultants, in order to discuss the cases they have been handling during the month.



**The main administrative wing and the heart of Savy Amira's 24/7 consultation hotline**

***Q: Is Savy Amira open to recruiting more volunteers?***

Anik: Yes, Savy Amira is open for anyone who wants to volunteer but there are a few qualifications that have to be met. We usually have several interns but we currently don't have any. We are always looking to add more members.



***Q: What has been the most difficult thing you have had to deal with during your tenure at Savy Amira?***

Anik: As a crisis center for women, the greatest challenge is always going to be responding to our clients and their cases. Some cases are really hard to deal with, especially when someone is in a position where they are unable to sever the relationship with their abuser. We usually also have projects going on such as training sessions and competitions, but when these projects eventually come to an end, we sometimes struggle to come up with new projects that will serve to energize our members.



**The Front Desk is where staff meet visitors and clients.**

**The Consultation Room is used for recovery therapy and legal consultation**

***Q: How does the local community embrace Savy Amira as a women's crisis center?***

Anik: Since its founding, Savy Amira has moved its base of operations from one area to another, and so far, we are yet to receive any negativity from the communities we serve. Once we move into a neighborhood, we become known by the local community and people begin to reach out and eventually some bring their cases to us.

***Q: What do you find most rewarding about your work at Savy Amira?***

Anik: Helping these women get the justice they deserve, I feel like I am engaged in meaningful work, which means I am living a meaningful life. In terms of personal development, I have learned a

lot about gender and I have improved my soft skills, and I've even made connections with people from different disciplines, such as activists who fight for reproduction-related issues and the environment.



**A poster declaring *Stop Violence. Period.* is displayed in the consultation room**

***Q: What role do you think Savy Amira plays in Surabaya?***

Anik: As a crisis center for women, our main role and goal is to eradicate every form of abuse against women. One of the things that differentiate us from other institutions is that we make a point of avoiding anything that can be framed as “victim blaming”. We believe that our clients are aware of their situation and we are simply trying to help by providing access to recovery therapy and legal consultation.

***Q: How do you think Savy Amira can play a greater role in the local community in the future?***

Anik: By maintaining our current service of direct recovery therapy, which can't be found in any other institutions which usually only offer legal consultation. We're also focusing on advocacy regarding feminism, and we were able to lobby the provincial government to create a shelter for female domestic abuse victims, which I am happy to say they did. The shelter is called PPA (Protection of Women and Children).

***Q: As a crisis center for women, is Savy Amira also open to helping male victims of violence?***

Anik: We have worked on several cases in which the victims were men. One was in 2019, where a queer man was being publicly discriminated for his sexual orientation, and two cases in 2022 who were victims of abuse by a wife and girlfriend respectively. We strive to be open to helping everyone, but in actuality it depends on our therapists and whether they are able to work with male victims. We usually try to refer these cases to other suitable institutions that have more expertise in those areas.

***Q: As we've seen on your social media feed, Savy Amira also has concerns for the rights of the LGBTQ+ community. Are you able to respond to these cases?***

Anik: We have been contacted regarding two cases of discrimination against members of the LGBTQ+ community. Unfortunately as a women's crisis center, we do not have the capacity or reach required to assist in these cases. We usually refer these cases to GAYa Nusantara, a local LGBTQ+ NPO, who are better placed to offer support. As much as we care about discrimination against women, we also care deeply about discrimination in any form and of course that includes the LGBTQ+ community, Which is why we advocate for their rights on our social media.

## Reflections

Since the economic crisis of 1998 and the resulting political restructuring of the country, cases of domestic abuse in Indonesia have grown exponentially. Since its founding in 1997 the Savy Amira Women's Crisis Center has endured some tough times and continues to provide the best possible treatment to female victims of abuse by providing legal consultation, shelter and counseling. Savy Amira has provided guidance and counseling to hundreds of female victims of domestic abuse, taking on 133 new cases in the last year alone. The organization is constantly on the lookout for opportunities to spread awareness about the importance of gender equality as well as the empowerment of women in the modern age, organizing events such as seminars and workshops that are open to the general public. Savy Amira is open to recruiting new members, as long as they have a clear motive for joining the organization as well as the proper qualifications to fill a position within the organization.

As members of YGRP Research Group 4 from Indonesia, it is our sincere hope that Savy Amira can continue to provide these crucial services into the future with the support of a new generation of young Indonesians, so that together we can eradicate all traces of gender inequality in our society. This will be to the benefit of all Indonesians, young or old, everywhere.

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## Researchers



Hello there! My name is **Gerald Natanael Suteja**, and I am a student at the University of Surabaya (UBAYA) in Indonesia. I was born and raised in Surabaya, but I have moved around quite a bit, even spending a few years in Brisbane, Australia. Currently, I'm back home in Indonesia, studying for a bachelor's degree in Biotechnology. My hobbies include reading, watching anime, and occasionally cosplaying with friends. It's always good to see what the world is like, so traveling has also become a hobby of mine. The best place I've been to has to be Japan, and I am very hopeful that I can one day return to Japan and encounter its rich culture and history!



Hello everyone! My name is **Camila**, and I am a psychology student at the University of Surabaya. I also work remotely as a virtual assistant. I was born in 2002 in Madiun, Indonesia and I was raised there until I moved to Surabaya for college. My hobbies are watching shows and playing video games - if I have time between college and work. One of my dreams is to study or live abroad. I'm very eager to learn more about other countries and their cultures, which is why I joined this program.

## **Changemakers in the Community**

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## **Changemakers in the Community**

The first phase of the Young Global Researchers Project (YGRP), “Changemakers in the Community”, was launched in late May, 2022, with an online meeting for all the student participants, along with their faculty advisors, from each institution. The institutions involved in this phase of the project are all members of the Asia-Pacific University Community Engagement Network (APUCEN), and are represented by a total of 43 under-graduate students and 15 faculty advisors from five different countries.

Following the launch, pairs of students from each of the institutions conducted secondary and primary source research in the field on a specific issue, interviewing, and often volunteering with, an organization connected to their chosen theme. There were also further online sessions where all participants were given opportunities to discuss the issues and deliver research updates with their peers. Following the fieldwork activities, and with the guidance of their faculty advisors, participants then compiled written reports, with transcribed interviews, photos and supplementary material. The majority of reports were submitted on, or close to the deadline in mid-August, and were thereafter proofed and edited by the lead researchers’ team in Kyoto. The contents of this publication showcase the fruits of their endeavors and we are sure it will be of considerable interest to members of both academia and the general public.