



**FINAL REPORT**

**AIX1005: COMMUNITY BUILDING, SOCIAL ACTION AND INNOVATION**

**PERSON WITH DISABILITIES (PWD) STUDENT IN UNIVERSITY MALAYA**

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## **BACKGROUND OF COMMUNITY**

After the pandemic Covid-19 hit Malaysia, the students of University Malaya spent most of their time in online classes. After the gradual decrease in infection cases, University Malaya reopened the campus for students to come back and join physical classes in their respective faculties. After two years of pandemics, many students preferred to stay with online classes because online classes are far easier to access even from the comfort of their own homes.

Before initiating our project, we had an interview with the Assistant Registrar of the Centre for Counselling & Disability Empowerment (CCDE) of University Malaya. He is Mr. Firdaus, a Person with Disabilities (PWD) and the closest university management officer with the whole PWD community at University Malaya. He claimed that the PWD students are often battling insecurities to socialise with the non-PWD students beyond their academic needs. This situation will affect the PWD students negatively and eventually will become a significant obstacle for the university to create an inclusive environment for all students. It does not improve the situation considering that PWD students are often the marginalised minority of most local universities, not only University Malaya.

In fulfilling the objective of engaging directly with communities, our project leaned towards contributing to communities closer in the vicinity. Engaging with communities within our institution will be much more impactful as we can understand and empathise with their problems on a more personal level due to our similar status as students of University Malaya.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT**

The primary purpose of this project was to make the Person with Disabilities (PWDs) students feel included by providing them with a platform to get their voices to reach the rest of UM's community. The reason for this is because those who are Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) are frequently invisible and marginalized from others and may face significant discrimination and problems in their daily lives. The project outlines several other objectives that it aims to achieve, which are;

- To look into how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the Person with Disabilities (PWDs) students in UM.
- To help the Person with Disabilities (PWDs) students gain support and acceptance from the UM community in facing their everyday difficulties by acting as a medium with the CCDE.
- To provide social activities that contribute to the acceptance and socialisation of our fellow students while also providing a platform for them to voice grievances.
- To increase the empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) students to speak up for themselves and seek help when necessary by gaining their trust through relationships built.

## **PROBLEMS FACED BY THE COMMUNITY**

Throughout our project, we reminded ourselves that whether or not our chosen community was going through hardships and precisely what kind was not for us to decide. It was imperative to the success of our project and the individual learning experience for each group member that we give the PWDs the space to raise any issues, concerns, or suggestions for how we can help. Sitting in four separate groups, we compiled all their stories and problems that they shared with us.

### **Having a hard time socialising**

Persons with Disabilities (PWD) students find it difficult to socialise with and eventually befriend the non-PWD students. This is why many PWD students tend to befriend those within their community who are labelled as PWD. A PWD student who shared this concern during the session said that their most significant obstacle in doing so is the issue of acceptance. In a room of many friends, the PWD students often felt excluded due to their ‘difference,’ which often stems from the attitude of non-PWD students that lack awareness and understanding of the PWD students. A non-PWD student who joined the sharing then voiced their opinion, further agreeing to this fact by saying that they (non-PWD students) are usually hesitant to reach out to the PWD students because they do not know how to communicate with them with sensitivity.

### **Low self-esteem**

Being labelled a Person with Disabilities (PWD) is never an easy journey, especially as a higher-education student. Despite the better disability awareness among people surrounding them than anywhere else, there will always be a particular stigma that deems the PWD as helpless, useless, and so on. This persisting stigma does not only exist among non-PWDs but is also a daily struggle of a PWD, where they often become very conscious of their disability, which, in turn, lowers their self-esteem. The decreasing self-esteem affects these PWD students’ daily lives significantly, mainly when they inevitably have to interact with the non-PWDs because they have no way of knowing what sort of stigma they have to face during the interaction and how the non-PWD will act according to said stigma.

## **Non-inclusive environment**

As En. Firdaus mentioned in his disability awareness, “a person with an impairment is only disabled if their environment makes it so”. From this sentence alone, we can see the impact that society has on the livelihoods of PWDs is enormous. When the status quo is decided without inclusivity taken into consideration, it automatically makes things inaccessible for a large group of people. Our students shared that while UM is in the top 10 ranking in SouthEast Asia, its facilities are nowhere near international standards. When I mentioned to one of the blind students that the elevator in our Anthropology and Social science department was not functioning, he was surprised to learn that we had no elevator. This lack of accessibility hinders our classmates from attending physical classes, which they all agree are more fun and are part of the university experience.

## **Discrimination in institutions**

Some visually impaired students shared with us that signatures were a significant obstacle in many of their lives, and institutions were unwilling to accommodate them. Opening bank accounts and using debit cards and online banking are near impossible without a signature. Since visually impaired people do not write, they have no signature and often use their thumbprints as validation. Without a bank account or access to a credit card, a person’s independence and purchasing power are greatly restricted. Without the chance to build a good credit score, PWDs are less likely to receive loans for big purchases in the future like a car or house. Furthermore, many private health insurance providers do not accept PWDs as clients, and they must entirely rely on the government healthcare institutions, which are massively overrun.

## **Entitled to their feelings**

Some PWD students need help from non-PWD to complete their assignments, to help them read a note, and also to lead them to class so it makes them hesitate to show or express their feelings, it is because they are afraid that non-PWD students will stay away from them and it will pwd student hard to ask help.. Especially for blind students, they can’t say anything. So if there are any group members who do not do the assigned task, then PWD students should not show his

feelings at that time such as angry, sad or disappointed. It is not easy for them to hide their feelings, but they have to do it in order to make a living at the University.

### **Visibility for invisible disability**

Visibility for invisible defects. Issues like these often occur in public places where people do not believe the individual is PWD because it is not clearly visible. This is because, sometimes these lay people just assume that these defects need to be seen clearly, like blindness, but there are still many types of invisible defects like speech defects and also physical defects like worn prosthetic legs. For example, one of the participants recounted his experience of riding a public bus, he asked people to lift his bag as he could not lift anything heavy as this would cause his legs to hurt, unfortunately people ignored his request and said that he was healthy, so he can lift his own bag. Whereas, without the public realising that he was in fact an oku who wore a prosthetic leg. So this is clearly a challenge for the PWD students to survive.



## **COLLABORATION**

### Centre for Counselling and Disability Empowerment (CCDE)

The first contact in this project is the Centre for Counselling & Disability Empowerment (CCDE), where the centre for the PWDs students' affairs. The PWDs students at the University of Malaya had complaints and issues regarding the management inside UM or residential college through CCDE. Our PR Team contacted the Assistant Registrar of CCDE, Mr. Muhammad Firdaus bin Abu Hassan. The PR Team explained our project that chose PWDs students at the University of Malaya as our target community, and as soon as he listened to our objectives, he agreed to cooperate with us.

Without further delay, PR Team informed that CCDE joined the collaboration with the Part of Us team. Mr. Firdaus often met with the PWDs students and shared their concerns with him. He understood that the PWDs students faced the same situation as the other students, where they were shy to meet their friends and new people when physical classes started, a phenomenon caused by being placed in online learning for an extended period. Therefore, it would be the best possible for us to get closer to them and start to join the activities they organised to approach them. Getting to know each other step by step is part of the outcome we can do for them.

### University of Malaya's Special Students Association (PERMIUM)

In the Seventh Residential College or Kolej Kediaman Ketujuh, where the PWDs students stayed, there was an association of students called Persatuan Mahasiswa Istimewa Universiti Malaya (PERMIUM), where the members were PWDs and non-PWDs students. PERMIUM has given a warm welcome for us to join and make collaborations with them. The project coordinator contacted the PERMIUM President Azaruddin Azmi via University Malaya Students Union as soon as we had finished finalising PWDs students in UM as our target community. The communication and engagement also improved, and our group decided to volunteer in their activities. The collaboration between PERMIUM and the Part of Us team began more closely when the team joined PERMIUM's activity, Telematch Day, on Saturday, 14th May 2022. There, PERMIUM had specially organised games that were unknown to the group, which exposed us to how to play the game with unique approaches. The game played was

blind ping-pong, goalball, blind dodgeball, and finding marbles in an ice bucket. The games were not just bringing fun but also adding our knowledge regarding PWDs sports that can be implemented and exposed more to the students at KK7. Therefore, our event, Part of Us Get Together with PWDs Students, was held on Saturday 5th June 2022 at Bangunan Seri Jati and was helped through the PERMIUM. Azaruddin suggested we could use that venue since that room was the place for PWDs doing meetings and organising their activities. He also mentioned that if we used that facility, it would be free of charge due to the collaboration with PERMIUM. When he proposed the idea, it was a great help and contribution from PERMIUM to ensure the smoothness of our project. Thus, this also showed that PERMIUM knew our team wanted to ensure that our objectives could come true and deliver the messages and voices of PWDs students at UM.

## PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND SOLUTIONS

PROBLEM ENCOUNTERED	SOLUTION
<p><b>Rejection of initial proposal</b></p> <p>Our team faced rejection of our initial proposal from the project supervisor, which was intended to engage with the PWD community outside of University Malaya. The main reason for this rejection is the lack of clear project planning.</p>	<p>Our team unanimously agreed that in order to give a much clearer path to our project, we need to find a more specific community, talk to experts or authorities involved with the community as well as provide clear objectives for our project. Hence, we agreed to engage with the PWD students community within our university. Our Public Relations team then consulted the Assistant Registrar of the Centre for Counselling and Disability Empowerment (CCDE), University Malaya, who is also a PWD himself to provide the team with brief information about the PWD students as well as to establish a collaborative connection between our team and the CCDE. After further discussions among ourselves as a follow-up from the meeting with the CCDE representative, we were finally able to come up with a much more solid project proposal which was then accepted by the project supervisor.</p>
<p><b>Miscommunication with collaborators</b></p> <p>Communicating effectively with the collaborators is one of the most important aspects of our project. Throughout the project,</p>	<p>Our team members worked hard to smooth any miscommunication by discussing with each other as we continued to contact the collaborators and in the end, we were able to</p>

<p>we did face issues in communication due to misunderstandings, late replies, and last-minute information.</p>	<p>ensure that in every matter that required the collaborator's attention was properly relayed and discussed.</p>
<p><b>Lack of facilities to cater to the needs of PWD students during events</b></p> <p>During the event, we did not have a PA system. So without the PA system, our technical team cannot play the songs throughout the event, and there was also no microphone to speak to and communicate with the PWD's students.</p>	<p>However, our team members made sure the event went peacefully and nicely. The event was controlled. The problem where the songs cannot be played was solved when Arif brought his personal speaker. We used his speaker to play songs along with the event. Baqiyah, on the other hand, uses her voice loudly to talk, communicate to the audience (PWD's students), and conduct the event since she's the MC that day. The event went well and all the PWD students were happy.</p>
<p><b>The number of attendees in Part of Us Get Together with PWD Students: Raya Style</b></p> <p>Although this is not such a major problem in our project, having more non-PWD students attend our event would be much more meaningful for the PWD students, not to mention that it will contribute to our objective of raising awareness about PWD much better.</p>	<p>However, our team members did their best to promote the event among their acquaintances and roommates. We were then able to get more non-PWD students to attend the event and it went very well.</p>
<p><b>Inability of several team members to attend certain events and meetings</b></p> <p>Inevitably, some of our team members were unable to attend meetings, programs, and</p>	<p>Our team members agreed that in order to balance their absence from the events, those who were unable to attend will be given more project documentation tasks. The problem</p>

<p>events we did due to unprecedented circumstances or prior commitments.</p>	<p>was solved.</p>
<p><b>Postponement of Part of Us Get Together with PWD Students: Raya Style</b></p> <p>Due to a last-minute clash with an event conducted for the PWD students, we had to change the date of this event of ours that was supposed to be held on the 4th of June (Saturday), and this change affected our project flow immensely. We had to postpone the invitations and RSVPs as well as the application to use the venue.</p>	<p>Our team managed to solve the problem thanks to the quick response of the project coordinator who immediately discussed it with the representatives of the PWD students and the date was then reset to the 5th of June (Sunday).</p>
<p><b>The absence of the PA system during the Get Together</b></p> <p>Despite the constant contact our team had with the representatives of PERMIUM and JTKD OKU KK7, we were not provided with the necessary PA system that is very crucial to any event such as ours.</p>	<p>The problem was solved by the Logistics team who brought a Bluetooth speaker to make up for the PA system that we did not have.</p>

## **VOLUNTEERING IN TELEMATCH ORGANIZED BY PERMIUM**

Earlier during the project, we decided and proposed that we would want to make a meaningful and interactive collaboration that would sustain the relationship between our target community and us, the PWD (People With Disabilities) students of University Malaya. Luckily enough, the university telematch event was just around the corner. Thus, we all decided to begin this journey by organizing and participating in the telematch event with the PWD community and the PERMIUM (short for Persatuan Mahasiswa Istimewa Universiti Malaya) members. These committee members can be any student from the university who wishes to join a club directly intertwined with the PWD students and help them however they can by being their representatives. There were only about four games/activities during our telematch; ***blind ping-pong, blind goal-ball, blind dodgeball, and find-the-marbles-in-the-bucket.*** Although the games and activities were all physical, there were rules and guidelines adjusted for playing them that were enough to their abilities, which we all had to adhere to. The telematch event started from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. on Saturday, 14th of May, at the Seventh Residential College. Both Arif and Sufyan from the logistics team were assigned the task of being the event photographers, taking turns while the games/activities were going on.

The day began with all of us assembling at the Seri Jati building, where we were divided into groups of 3 according to the numbers we received. Each group would consist of 9 members. Before starting the activities, We had to begin warming our bodies up at the basketball court outside. We also took the liberty to help guide our blind companions on the positions of the warmups. After that, we all went back to the building where we would start our games/activities. The first activity was the blind ping-pong, which is ping-pong without any visionary aid. However, one also does not strike the ping-pong ball as it should in a regular ping-pong. The player would have to blindfold himself while playing. The good thing is that the ball is modified with a bell inside it to help locate where it goes, and it is similarly scored as how you would play air hockey at the arcade. The game was played indoors at the building and was the shortest of the 3. After our 10-minute break, we proceeded to play the blind goalball. It was more exciting not only because it was outdoors and that it was a three against three, but we were also able to learn and understand the game better from one of our PWD companions, Parteban, who was familiar with the game and is surprisingly a student-athlete himself and playing for the Malaysian team.

Therefore, representing our country. Blind dodgeball came next, where this time, only the throwers would be blindfolded, and the rest remain static. Despite dodgeball being an aggressive sport, we played it most gently so no one could easily get injured. Lastly, we played find-the-marbles-in-the-bucket, the only game that didn't involve blindfolds. This one involved buckets filled with water, sponges, empty plastic bottles, and marbles that were so transparent and clear it would be challenging for the player to find, and that was, after all, the point of the game. Interestingly enough, these games/activities were designed for us to coordinate well with the PwD students, let alone the ones who are blind, so that they could play with as much ease as possible.

### **Significance of the event**

All in all, everyone gladly joined, and it fostered a more excellent bond between us, creating the first chapter of where our interaction with them is now. This is significant in the progress that would entail throughout our whole community project with them, where our initial hopes were for it to turn from only a project into a lifetime bond and lesson for all. It was a memorable day wrapped up with hampers, and certificates were also given for participating. It seemed that this was an accomplishment for us all as a team.

## **VOLUNTEERING IN ZA'BAHAN INCLUSIVE AND AWARENESS PROGRAM**

Za'bahan Inclusiveness & Awareness Programme (ZIAP) was organized by the PERMIUM organization, which was set on Saturday from 8.30 a.m. until 1.30 p.m., 21st MAY 2022, at Bangunan Seri Jati, Seventh Residential College. It opens for the OKU & PERMIUM students, and our group was fortunate to have the privilege to be invited to attend this program just after the telematch event we held earlier with them. The program's main objectives are to promote disability awareness, and empower them, also, by and large, to contribute to a response that better serves everyone, ensuring a more equitable society for all of us. During the day, DR. Ahmad Shamsuri bin Muhamad is one of the senior lecturers in the Department of Educational Psychology & Counselling under the Faculty of Education, and he will be the one hosting the disability awareness talk. And there will be speeches and presentations from the chairman of JTKD along with students. The day's activities were many, from briefing and presentation to ice breaking and Exploration game events, so it was a busy yet meaningful day.

To begin, everyone attending the event must sign in at the Seri Jati building at the Seventh Residential College before the start of the event. We were required to pick emojis representing us and then write our names before attaching them as a tag anywhere, either on our clothing or body. The ZIAP's JTKs then hand out a breakfast pack, including bread, biscuits, drinks, and other goodies. Since this event began quite early, they may know that many attendees haven't had breakfast yet. Afterward, we went to Bangunan Seri Jati to wait for our speaker, Dr. Ahmad Shamsuri bin Muhamad. Dr. Shamsuri is one of the senior lecturers in the Department of Educational Psychology & Counselling, under the Faculty of Education, Universiti Malaya. He is an "OKU" with visual impairments. So, the JTKs assist him when he is giving a speech, such as bringing him to the podium and telling him the content of the PowerPoint slide. During his speech, he told us: "There are many persons with impairments, but no disabled people". By this statement, Dr. Shamsuri was going to explain the difference between impairments and disabilities. He also briefly defined exclusion, Segregation, Integration, and Inclusion.

The exclusion occurs when the PWDs are denied access to education. Segregation is a phenomenon that occurs when the PWD students are educated in different environments, either classes or schools that are explicitly designed for students with impairments or with a particular



impairment. The concept of integration involves placing a student with a disability in a regular class without any individualised support and with a teacher who is unwilling or unable to meet the child's learning, social, or disability support needs. Lastly, inclusion involves a transformation of the education system with changes and modifications in content, teaching methods, approaches, structures, strategies, and review mechanisms. To summarise, inclusion is critical to ensuring that no one is left behind in our society. After the talk, we had a photo session with Dr. Shamsuri.

Then we were divided into seven groups according to the number we chose. The number was behind the chair we were sitting in. Each group would consist of 4 to 6 members. Almost whenever we got a new group in any program or event, the first and foremost activity that needed to be done must be the 'ice-breaking session'. During the ice-breaking session, we were required to do a self-intro, explain the reasons for choosing the emojis, and brainstorm about cheers. Then, before starting the Explorace around the 7th Residential College, we had to do warming-up and aerobic exercises in front of the Dewan entrance. After that, all the participants guessed the place and went to the station based on their clues. There were seven different stations during the explorace, and the JTKs would give us clues about our next station and share some information about various disabilities before we moved on to the next station.

Before we started, we were required to do the tasks we were given, such as posting on Instagram, making a poem, and singing the Universiti Malaya anthem. In the first station, we needed to send one of our group members to touch and feel a few objects. And that person will need to give us three hints about that object to let us guess. All group members, either those who described or those guessing, were required to be blindfolded. Then, in the second station, we needed to think about the word/phrase we got based on the theme. To figure out what the thing is, we need to ask any questions about our "things" to our group mates, and they can only answer 'YES' or 'NO'. For example, if the theme is school, our word/phrase will be related to schools, such as classrooms, exam hall, office, etc.

Moreover, there was also a station where we would only blow the balloon and use the balloon to 'pick up' the paper cup and build a pyramid with 4 cups at the bottom, then 3, 2, and 1 cup at the top. We need to move the cups from the table to another table. Besides, there were also

a lot of exciting stations such as song-guessing, a fashion show, '3,6,9', 'bowling' before the closing ceremony. Everyone painted their hand(s) using the brush and watercolour and then pasted it on the poster 'Now You Know Me'. During the closing ceremony, there was a video that introduced the JTKs, a speech that the JTK gave, and a performance performed by Shafiq, one of the UM students with a visual impairment.

At last, the hampers and certificates are provided to all groups and participants. Indeed it was tiring. However, it was fun and exciting.

### **Significance Of The Event**

We can see the significance of benefiting both parties. Firstly, the event's effect is that a member of PERMIUM can spread awareness among them. It is because not everyone in the Za'bahen Inclusiveness & Awareness Programme (ZIAP) knows exactly the types of PWDs, so with the understanding spread through this program, the non-PWDs will learn more about the kinds of PWDs that exist, for example, deaf or hard of hearing, blind people, physical disability and else. Among the ways to spread awareness about the types of PWD is by providing pamphlets related to the kinds of PWD. So this will be a piece of new knowledge for those who rarely have it, and after this, they will be more alert about this.

Secondly, the effect on our Part Of Us team is that we can see these OKU students have no limit to play like ordinary people because the ZIAP's program does not provide PWD-friendly games, so they play as usual and win the game. So we can see here that this PWD group can also be as great as non-PWD. This situation made us realise that they were capable of going through something we considered impossible, and this situation has opened our eyes. In fact, among the PWD, some athletes are involved up to the international level.

In addition, we were also able to get to know other PERMIUM members more closely, making our collaboration with PERMIUM easier and stronger when we get to know each other and exchanged opinions. We will be able to foster better networking with people who can assist in making the PWDs enjoy a normal life here at UM.

## **SENSITIVITY TRAINING WITH ‘MYPOETRYSCHOOL’**

To prepare us for the interaction with the PWD students of University Malaya for our coming Get-Together Forum, we have arranged a sensitivity training for our group members to participate in. Miss Elaine Foster conducted the sensitivity training on the 27th of May, from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. . Miss Foster specialises in disability awareness, which made her fit to be our instructor.

The training objectives were to prepare our team members for the forum day, how to assist our PWD friends, and topics to discuss during the forum. We came to realize that all of our team members are lacking in disability awareness, and we have decided to attend the sensitivity training program to learn more about what to do and what not to do, what is acceptable and what is not - the basic things that we need to keep in mind before the day of our forum. During the training, we were exposed to much different knowledge about disability, such as laws and stigma associated with people with disability who are often treated differently, resulting in them being excluded from many opportunities.

The event, held at Bilik Seminar 1 in the Anthropology and Sociology department, kindly arranged by Dr. Welyne, begins with a brief introduction by the trainer, Miss Elaine Foster, a speech and drama coach specializing in spoken word poetry. She is the owner and lead educator at MyPoetrySchool and works with disabled students. She begins by having us all introduce ourselves with a name game. Getting the icebreaker going helps us feel more at ease, and upbeat. We each have to say our name and do an action. As the game progresses, we learn each other's names and moves, going faster and faster each round. After the game, she asked us to think about how this game would be more accessible to students who can't see the actions or hear the names we call out. We sit and write down some ideas. After we get back up and through a series of challenges, we try to navigate a "blind" person around the room. Here, we learn consent, proper protocol when leading visually impaired people and how important their personal decisions come before our intentions. Because society in Malaysia follows the medical model of disabilities, we tend to have a negative view of the community. The medical model defines a person by illness and disempowers PWDs because it deems them ill or incomplete. This model also views them as people that must be cured or cared for. It dictates their access to housing, education,

employment, and leisure. No matter how much we want to help a PWD, the ultimate choice to receive help and in what form is their choice.

Elaine identifies the difference between being an empowered PWD and a disempowered one. We learn that empowering a person comes with a sense of independence. With proper infrastructure and construction areas that support the needs of a PWD, they can achieve more freedom and enjoy life without requiring help from another human being. We discuss how our University is equipped and ill-equipped for its community. We learn the different ways technology has changed the lives of people today. Through the pandemic, many applications and businesses moved to a remote model that became much more accessible for PWDs. Food, transportation, online shopping, and banking have become more accessible to the community. The next segment of the workshop was dedicated to helping our team form a safe space to engage the community without turning them into tokens and ensuring follow-through, not just ending the project here. She emphasises that significant change does not happen overnight, but it is a disservice to the community to leave them after one event with no modifications. She also suggests we find PWD leaders to help lead the discussion in their way. Nobody knows more about what they are going through than themselves, and letting them set the agenda will engage them in the event and hopefully feel empowered to make decisions. When the discussion came to a close, we packed up and left Seminar Room 1 with far more knowledge than before.

### **Significance of Event**

Language is dynamic and nuanced; it remains important to use respectful and inclusive language when communicating with or talking about people with disabilities. Disability is diverse in terms of conditions and the people who have them. With all the differences in cultures, languages, genders, beliefs, and environments, remember that it is possible for two people with the same diagnosis or circumstance to feel completely differently about their disability. Terms like differently-abled, challenged, and handi-capable are often considered condescending. By shying away from mentioning disability, we may reinforce the notion that disability is something of which to be ashamed. When describing people without disabilities, do not use normal, healthy, or able-bodied terms. Instead, use “non-disabled” or “people without visible disabilities.” Such

terms are more accurate because we often cannot tell whether someone has a disability just by their physical appearance.

- **Protocol with leading blind people**

Do give specific directions like, "The desk is five feet to your right," instead of saying, "The desk is over there." Give a clear word picture when describing things to an individual with vision loss. Include details such as color, texture, shape, and landmarks. After receiving consent, do touch them on the arm or use their name when addressing them. This lets them know you are speaking to them, not someone else in the room. Do not shout when you speak. They cannot see but often have a fair hearing.

- **How to engage disabled students without disempowering them.**

Some PWD Students can often feel like they struggle to succeed, so create opportunities for them to recognize and celebrate their accomplishments. Creating lessons that lead to positive results and introducing rewards can help them stay motivated. If students struggle to stay focused or take in lots of information at once, try to break things down into smaller tasks that feel more manageable and allow them to feel like they are accomplishing things throughout the day.

## **PART OF US GET TOGETHER WITH PWD STUDENTS: RAYA STYLE**

Get together event is our own project where we want to build a communication between the disability student and UM students.

### **Overview**

Get Together with Part of Us: Raya themed style is an event organised by the Anthropology and Sociology Programme students taking AIX1005 (Community Building, Social Action and Innovation). The event intends to create bonds between the members of the PERMIUM and Persons with Disability (PWD) students of University Malaya with the other UM students especially those from the programme itself, further enhancing the social engagement between them that might have diminished since the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has forced students in the University of Malaya to undergo online learning for nearly 2 years, which resulted in low exposure and mingling between UM students in general.

After conducting our research regarding the situation, we found out that the PWD students in University Malaya are very much affected by the situation, where they were unable to form relationships with other students outside of the need of their education. With the country going into an endemic transition in 2022, the management of University Malaya have started to allow students to undergo physical classes starting from May 2022. This is going to be a challenge for the PWD students who feel disconnected from the rest of the UM community, and we are hoping to help them go through this by letting them enjoy socialising with other students during the event.

The main focus of the event, however, is the heart to heart discussion which will be conducted by the members of Part of Us who have undergone sensitivity training to engage with PWD students. This forum will be a platform of empowerment for OKU students to share their concerns and opinions with the members of Part of Us as well as other students, which will then be channelled to the authorities of the University in hope of easing their worries to pursue their education. The team undertaking the project will gain valuable insights into the lives and tribulations of our fellow students and gain sensitivity training that will benefit us in the future.

## **Objectives of the Event**

The event is intended to act as a platform for the disabled students to engage more with other people since they realised that the interaction with others were affected quite a bit especially when the pandemic hit Malaysia two years ago, turning all classes into virtual or hybrid mode. Besides, they might feel segregated by residing in only one residential college, which is 7th residential college. Therefore, through this *raya* celebration, they could socialise with other students who reside in other residential colleges as well as the students who live outside the campus and share their experiences.

Moreover, our team members inserted a special slot in this event where the disabled students get to share their thoughts and experiences living as a disabled person in University Malaya, hence making us, the team members, understand them more. In addition to that, we felt that by gaining their trust to open up regarding their personal experiences to us, our team members who have not worked with this minority group, to be more aware about them, especially to eliminate the prejudice and the discrimination that were created by the society. In the nutshell, this event is intended to make us feel closer to them, by not being sympathetic towards this group, instead, feeling empathetic towards them in a very casual and enjoyable way by celebrating Hari Raya Aidilfitri together.

## **Event flow**

The registration began at 2.00 p.m. as the guests came to the Seri Jati Building. It was not long until all the participants gathered in the building. Each guest was given some goodies that consisted of muffins, cutleries and baked goods together with colour coded name tags that include blue, purple, pink and green. At around 2.15 p.m. All the guests were enjoying the potluck foods that our team members brought such as vegan mushroom *rendang* made by Yohanna, mini *ketupat* with vegan peanut sauce by Fatin as well as some other desserts and snacks brought by others. After everyone is done with their food, the guests were instructed to sit in groups according to the colour of their name tags. Every team has a representative from our team, Part of Us to guide them.

We began the first game of the day which is the ice breaking quiz which includes random trivia quizzes to compete with each other. Team purple, represented by Raudhah, won the quiz with full marks. They were given *duit raya* which is a cash prize in envelopes, since it was a *raya* themed event. The guests enjoyed the game and they were very competitive and passionate to win the game. Shortly after, all of the guests participated in a sharing session in their respective groups. This session is the main highlight of the event, which we allocated the most time for. It was a very heartfelt, warm and personal session, knowing that they were finding the courage to open up to us. Most of the issues discussed were evolving around their lives as disable people, living conditions, their impairments as well as the challenges and limitations they experienced while in UM. Hence, through this session, we understood their struggles and joy better while also creating bonds and memories with them.

After the sharing session, we moved on to the next session which is the lucky draw. Each of the guests drew the envelopes that were filled with various amounts of money as a box of envelopes was passed around the room. The highest amount of money was RM 10 and there were 2 envelopes with different colours. We managed to arrange the amount of money so that everyone got one envelope. The event of the day finally came to an end and we wrapped it up with a very heartfelt speech by our coordinator, Nur Baqiyah. She thanked everyone for their participation in the event, our guests for joining us on that day as well as the assistant registrar at CCDE, Mr. Firdaus who was already gone back by the time the speech was given. We took some pictures with the guests as a memory with them and also some pictures with our team members to appreciate their contribution in this project.



## **Significance of the Event**

### **Students with disabilities**

The students with disabilities will be able to feel more engaged with the community through this event. Although it is a once-a-year event, with only two years living in the pandemic, this is one of the best ways to engage and interact with others by gatherings and enjoying delicious food. This event also acts as a platform for them to voice out their concerns and challenges as a disabled student in University Malaya. There are several of them who experienced some kind of discriminations and segregation in some university's events. Most of them are heartbroken by the way they are being treated as a disabled person. Therefore, by engaging with us they could feel the warmth, in which it will also boost their confidence to talk more with others in the future.

### **PERMIUM Members and Other UM Students**

Since PERMIUM members consist of both disabled and non-disabled students, they are able to show that the bond between them is very strong and that they trust one another. Furthermore, this event has proved that it is perhaps not a waste of time to join such a kind of activity again in the future and can actually be interesting and beneficial. By joining this event, the PERMIUM members managed to promote their association to others, especially to our team members, who might not have been familiar with them before. They promoted the events that they joined or organised using an Instagram account, *@permium\_official*. By reposting the tagged posts or stories in Instagram, they will gain more support and knowledge from UM students. In addition, this event that we have organised opens an opportunity for our team members to join PERMIUM as active members in the upcoming semesters, which shows that this event acts as a trigger to spark our interest in continuing to show our support by joining PERMIUM. Hence, this event has promoted the PERMIUM by not just being a platform to socialise, but also acts as a promotional activity for them to gain more support and acknowledgement, so that they will organise more interesting events in the future with us.

## **INSTAGRAM LIVE WITH CCDE REPRESENTATIVE**

We felt it was important to take the feedback that it was important to spread more awareness regarding the PWDs to our classmates through a live talk with the assistant registrar of CCDE UM, Mr. Muhammad Firdaus bin Abu Hassan.

### **Overview and Objectivity of the Event**

This event was held on 16th of June 2022 (Thursday) in Bilik Multimedia, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, UM for an hour (11 a.m to 12 p.m.). It was intended to spread awareness regarding the PWD, especially in UM through a live session on Instagram so that it would be accessible for everyone to watch. The talk is given by Mr. Firdaus, the assistant registrar at CCDE UM who is one of the PWD as well as the alumni of the Department of Anthropology and Sociology in UM. Mr Firdaus has been visually impaired since he was 14. By inviting him to give the talk, we could listen to his firsthand experience as a PWD student and as a working adult.

This talk also intended to dive deep into understanding his point of view regarding the facilities for disabled people in our university. By comparing the current facilities that we have such as the elevator, ramp, and the transportation around the campus to the old one, when Mr. Firdaus was still studying here, we can see that the university is trying to work towards improving the facilities now. Lastly, this talk is intended to eliminate the prejudice and the bad impression towards this minority group, thinking that they are supposed to be sympathised on when all they need is just some guidance, empathy and understanding. We, as the team members, are hoping that this talk would give the light to other people to understand them more by aiding them the way they should and not marginalising them by thinking they are different when we are all the same.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

### Reason For Collecting Funds:

The reason why we collected funds is that we need some money to prepare for the Hari Raya Event which is an “Open House” with the PWD’s students. During the event, there are some games and lucky draws. The PWD’S students will be given “duit raya” as their lucky draws. The money is also needed to buy goodie bags for the PWD’s students.

### Medium Of Funds Collection:



The medium we used to collect the fund is our Instagram account known as *@part\_of\_us*. We created a poster for the donations and blasted it on our Instagram account. In the poster, we stated how and what the money will be used for. We also put our Instagram QR code for them to scan and know more about the details of the donation. The donor will have to contact the treasurer through the ‘linktree’ that we have put on our Instagram. The reason why we didn't put the treasurer’s account number on the poster is that we want to get in contact with all the donors and invite them as well to our Hari Raya event so that they can also engage with the PWD’s students.

**Fund Collected = RM 901.75**

<b>Details</b>	<b>Budget Allocated (RM)</b>	<b>Expenses (RM)</b>	<b>Budget Surplus (RM)</b>
Guest Goodies	80	76.75	3.25
Lucky Draw (Duit Raya)	100	110	-10.00
Decorations	80	130.40	-50.40
PERMIUM Appreciation Ceremony Donation	400	400	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>660</b>	<b>717.15</b>	<b>-57.15</b>

**Fund collected - Expenses**

= RM 901.75 - RM 717.15

= RM 184.60 (other expenses will be used for Exhibition)

Unexpectedly, we managed to collect a huge amount of funds which is RM901.75. The money used was RM717.15. So far we have RM184.60 left, and this money will be used for the exhibition (the banner and poster) for our project.

## **CONTINUITY OF PROJECT**

With the connection that we formed during the course of the project, we believe that this project can definitely be continued to further help the non-PWD students to gain more knowledge and raise their awareness about the PWD students as well as provide a platform to empower the latter in using their voices to make change. Through our project, we were able to grasp the fact that although the entire world is essentially aware of the issues faced by the PWDs, many of our students here in University of Malaya are still very little equipped with this essential knowledge. Which is why we believe that encouraging collaboration and participation between PWD and non-PWD students within our institution is the best course of action to realise this vision of inclusion in University of Malaya.

Non-PWD students should be encouraged to volunteer or participate in events conducted with the PWD students as a first step towards forming the necessary connection as we did by joining programs such as the telematch and ZIAP organised by PERMIUM and JTKD OKU KK7 respectively. Sensitivity training involving the PWD community should also be organised regularly where it does not only help the non-PWDs to engage properly with the PWDs but will also be the most contributing element to our university's policy of inclusivity. Last but not least, an informal sharing session for the PWD students to express their opinions in a very comfortable setting can also be organised regularly, as we did with Part of Us Get Together with PWD Students: Raya Style. Such events are not only warm and inviting with the element of festivities that allow PWD students to voice their concerns and share their experiences, the students will also be in a comfortable setting surrounded by friends and even new friends who want to form connections with them.

As a matter of fact, our collaborations with PERMIUM has earned us their invitation to have some of our members officially join their association in the next session. The participation of our members in their association will definitely allow events such as what we did to be organised again in the future.

## **PROJECT SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

This project had developed a significance not just to the community, but also to the team members that strived for this project to become a successful outcome that will broaden people's perspectives. We learned that this project wanted us to have connection with the people who deserved equality as humans, their rights need to be respected and hear their voices of what they need. In conclusion, the activities undertaken to establish individualised, meaningful volunteer opportunities were more than worth the effort. Throughout the course's 14 weeks, we participated in nonstop group work, which provided us with opportunities to develop skills, knowledge, and experiences that could not have been gained through reading books alone. Through our various volunteer activities and events for the community, not only do we get experience real-world application of project management, but we also grow in our capacity for compassion and empathy. Before we embarked on our own events, we involved ourselves in their community and their efforts to speak up and raise awareness. By attending the telematch and ZIAP program, we learned how to run an inclusive event. Another particularly enlightening step was to undergo sensitivity training to ensure we were all ready, as a group, to be as sensitive and aware of the needs of students with disabilities before structuring our own event.

During the time that we spent with the students who have disabilities at the University of Malaya, each of us was able to acquire essential insight into the issues that members of disadvantaged groups experience. We achieved deeper understanding into the marginalisation and societal barriers that students with disabilities have to face on a daily basis. Our social integration into the community and open discussions managed to deepen our understanding and in turn, we were able to better educate our friends and followers of this project to the barriers that we have set as a society and how much we have to do to become an inclusive community. We also made great connections and friends along the way that have helped us and we hope to have helped them in return as well. This project was not only a learning opportunity for us but also a gateway into future social endeavours.



## APPENDIX

30 Mei 2022

**Puan Aliaa Diyana Azizuddin**  
Pengurus Kolej Kediaman  
Kolej Kediaman Ketujuh (Za'ba)  
Universiti Malaya

Puan,

### **PERMOHONAN PENGGUNAAN BANGUNAN SERI JATI UNTUK TUJUAN MEMBUAT MAJLIS BERSAMA PELAJAR KELAINAN UPAYA**

Dengan segala hormatnya perkara di atas adalah dirujuk.

2. Sukacita untuk memaklumkan bahawa kami merupakan para pelajar dari program Sarjana Muda Antropologi dan Sosiologi, untuk subjek AIX1005 Community Building, Social Action and Innovation ingin mengadakan sebuah majlis bersama para pelajar kelainan upaya di Kolej Kediaman Ketujuh Za'ba untuk menjayakan aktiviti projek dari kami iaitu "Part of Us Get Together with PWD Students: Raya Style" pada ketetapan seperti berikut:

<b>Tarikh (Hari)</b>	5 Mei 2022 (Ahad)
<b>Masa</b>	2.00p.m. - 5.00p.m.
<b>Tempat</b>	Bangunan Seri Jati, Kolej Kediaman Ketujuh, Universiti Malaya

3. Untuk makluman puan, majlis ini diadakan bertujuan untuk kami lebih mengeratkan hubungan bersama pelajar kelainan upaya di Universiti Malaya ini di samping berkenalan dengan rakan-rakan baharu kerana jurang dalam berkenalan terjejas akibat pandemik COVID-19.

4. Sehubungan itu, kami amat berbesar hati sekiranya puan dapat meluluskan permohonan kami untuk menggunakan Bangunan Seri Jati bagi kegunaan majlis ini. Keprihatinan puan meluluskan permohonan ini akan dapat membantu kami dalam melaksanakan majlis ini dengan jayanya.

Bersama permohonan ini dilampirkan kertas kerja program (Lampiran A) dan surat kebenaran menjalankan projek (Lampiran B). Kami memohon jasa baik puan untuk memberi maklum balas ke emel kami [aix100522@gmail.com](mailto:aix100522@gmail.com). Kerjasama puan dalam hal ini amat kami hargai dan didahulukan dengan setinggi-tinggi terima kasih.

Sekian, terima kasih.

Diluluskan.

  
**ALIAA DIYANA BINTI AZIZUDDIN**  
Pengurus Kolej Kediaman Zon 2  
(KK3, KK4 & KK7)  
Universiti Malaya  
50603 Kuala Lumpur



APPENDIX

Yang benar,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized cursive letters that appear to read 'Nur Baqiyah Binti Mohamad Zukhi'.

**NUR BAQIYAH BINTI MOHAMAD ZUKHI**

Pelajar Antropologi dan Sosiologi

Universiti Malaya

# PART OF US GET TOGETHER WITH PWD STUDENTS : RAYA STYLE

DATE : 5th June 2022

DAY : Sunday

TIME : 2.00 pm- 5.00 pm

PLACE :, Bangunan Seri Jati 7th Residential College, University Of Malaya.

Struggling with making friends and increasing your confidence in socializing 🙄? Feelin' like you only have those same friends and is always in the same circle 🙄? We know exactly how you feel! Online classes have DISCONNECTED most of us 🙄, regardless of whether you're a PWD or a non-PWD student.

We are Part of Us Team from the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of Malaya 😊 We are excited to invite you to attend ✨ PART OF US GET TOGETHER WITH PWD STUDENTS: RAYA STYLE ✨ to further enliven the event. The main purpose of our celebration is to get to know the PWD students as well as strengthen friendship between us as University of Malaya's students 🌻 .

You must be wondering what you'll enjoy if you join the event right 🙄?

## 1. Potluck Lunch

What is an event without FOOD 🙄? As our esteemed guests, you will enjoy potluck lunch 🍲 prepared by our team members during the entirety of the event! (Even if Syawal is over by then, let's not get rid of the Raya vibes 🙄) You are also very much welcome to bring along some food that you want to share with others 😊!

## 2. Fashion Show

Obviously, since it is going to be a Raya themed event, do come over with your traditional outfits 👑! (Time to get dressed people! Your arrival will be announced, so you will get the chance to showcase your style 📷 😊)

## 3. Duit Raya Lucky Draw and Goodie Bags

Think you are lucky enough to draw our Duit Raya 🙄? Let us see if that is true! We will be calling out 10 lucky people to receive Duit Raya and let us hope that is YOU 😊! But worry not! Even if you cannot get the Duit Raya, every guest will still get Part of Us Goodie Bags that our sponsors have prepared (Bless these generous people 🙄 🙄). What are the contents, you ask 🙄? Come join us and see what we got for you 😊!

## 4. Heart to Heart Sharing

This is actually the main highlight of our event. We will be forming what we call Circle of Buddies and here, PWD students will be leading a sharing on their stories 🌻. If you have always wanted to know about the PWD students and be friends with them but are not able to do so, this is your chance to form that connection in a safe and open space that we will provide you with ✨. (Of course, you can also use this Circle of Buddies to just chat around, y'know? 😊)

So what are you waiting for? Save the date and see you soon!

Contact our representatives for any inquiries:

## APPENDIX

017-672 0301 (Adriana)

019-469 6207 (Qistina)

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**\*Required**

1. Name \*

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2. Phone Number \*

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3. Who are you? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Person with Disabilities (PWD) student

PERMIUM Member

Other UM student

4. How will you attend the event? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Physically (Foods and gifts, I'm coming! 🥳)

Online (I'm only going to join the discussion part 😊)

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