


THE COMPASS

 Jeffrey Cheah Institute
on Southeast Asia

 JEFFREY SACHS CENTER
on Sustainable Development
Sunway University, Malaysia

MARCH 2021
ISSUE #7



**SPECIAL FOCUS:
COVID-19,
Malaysia and Asia**

THE COMPASS

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

PROFESSOR WOO WING THYE

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IS a multi-dimensional phenomenon, and so it challenges us constantly with “chicken-and-egg” dilemmas. A system-wide perspective helps us to see that simultaneous actions on many fronts are needed. Coordination is clearly desirable both for reasons of efficiency and effectiveness, but there is no such comprehensive benign coordination mechanism in existence or being put in place rapidly.

It is therefore gratifying to recognise that progress in Sustainable Development has been made since 2015—when the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Climate Treaty were adopted by the global community—through largely uncoordinated self-initiated actions at the individual level, the community level, the state level, the national level, the regional level, and the global level. The overarching human spirit and the individual audacity of hope are what that have inspired and kept the Sustainable Development project going. The bad news is that the progress on Sustainable Development has not been fast enough to ensure that ecologicide (“The Sixth Extinction”) will be prevented.

At the end of 2019, JCI-JSC had decided that its 2020 work agenda would be to accelerate the pace of progress in Sustainable Development by supporting Southeast Asia to launch an ASEAN Green Deal in 2021. However, with no thanks to COVID-19, we were not able to implement this work agenda in 2020.

We hope that with the recent positive news on the RAPID development of COVID-19 vaccines, and with our better knowledge and ability on how to contain COVID-19 infection, we will be able to implement the 2020 work agenda in 2021. I am happy to also report to you that the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation has decided to deepen its collaboration with the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) with the gift of another (almost) USD 10 million.

SDSN has experienced a tremendous growth in its global membership (now over 1,300 think tanks and research institutions), with particularly fast growth in Asian membership. It has become increasingly difficult logistically for SDSN-NYC and SDSN-Paris to coordinate the expanding activities of SDSN members, and so a new SDSN-Asia office will be set up at Sunway University in 2021 to coordinate SDSN activities of members located in the New Zealand-to-Turkey geographical area, and to promote inter-regional collaboration between SDSN-Asia members and SDSN members in the Americas, Europe, and Africa.

The SDG Academy—the educational arm of SDSN—will be relocated to Kuala Lumpur as well. University College Dublin (UCD), the Jeffrey Sachs Center on Sustainable Development, and SDG Academy has just launched a high-quality 12-month online Global Masters Program on Sustainable Development. For this purpose, JSC has created a 12-month Open Distance Learning (ODL) version of its popular 18-month Master in Sustainable Development Management (MSDM) program for the global community, particularly for students and working professionals from New Zealand to Turkey. The

PARTNERING WITH JSC THROUGH SDSN

If you are an organisation committing substantial resources towards finding or implementing solutions for sustainable development, consider joining the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN). Membership is open to university departments, research institutes, civil society organisations, and other expert organisations.

ODL version and the traditional version of MSDM now offer courses jointly taught by JSC faculty and experts from the SDG Academy.

As a result of the deepened JSC-SDSN collaboration, there will be three new thrusts in the work agenda of JCI-JSC initiative in 2021.

The first thrust is to work with the national chapter of SDSN in each ASEAN state to convince the home country to support the ASEAN Green Deal as the key regional development program in the next decade. The objective is the establishment of an ASEAN Green Future Coordination Unit under the ASEAN Secretariat.

The second new thrust in the 2021 JCI-JSC work program is to work with SDSN members in Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, and Australasia to conduct research on how to bring about cost-effective deep carbonisation of their economies in order to be net zero-carbon economies by 2050.

The third new thrust is the initiation of the Mission 4.7 project of SDSN which seeks to provide “Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship” from primary school onward. This is a joint project of SDSN, UNESCO, Ban Ki-moon Center for Global Citizens, Columbia University, and Sunway University; with Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah being the Co-Chair of Mission 4.7. Mission 4.7 was launched on 16 December 2020. JSC will implement the Malaysia component of this project, and work with other ASEAN members on their implementation.

Therefore, the hiring priorities of JCI-JSC in 2021-2022 will be: (a) two SDSN-Asia Network Managers; and (b) two researchers on Deep Decarbonisation. The mission of the two SDSN-Asia Network Managers is to help create synergy among the myriad individual efforts by Asian-Australasian members to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the hope of initiating a virtuous cycle in Sustainable Development at the ASEAN regional level. The JCI-JSC Deep Decarbonisation team will work to help de-fossilisation of the Malaysian national energy system, and to help decarbonisation in other aspects of daily life.

As you can see, 2021 will be a turning point in the trajectory of JCI-JSC in terms of ambition and effort in accelerating the pace of Sustainable Development in Malaysia and beyond. We will repay all the hardship that we have endured from COVID-19 in 2020 with sterling achievements on Sustainable Development in 2021 that will justify the renewed optimism we now have upon the imminent departure of Donald Trump from power and, with it, the welcome end of mismanagement of COVID-19, international relations, natural environment, and social justice.

I thank all of you deeply for your many sacrifices in 2020 to keep JCI-JSC on an even keel amidst the COVID-19 storm. I wish you a most Happy and Healthy 2021, and I look forward to working with you to accelerate the pace of Sustainable Development in 2021.

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SDGs AND AGENDA 2030: THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19

BY NUR AMIRAH ABDUL MAJID
Outreach and Education Executive

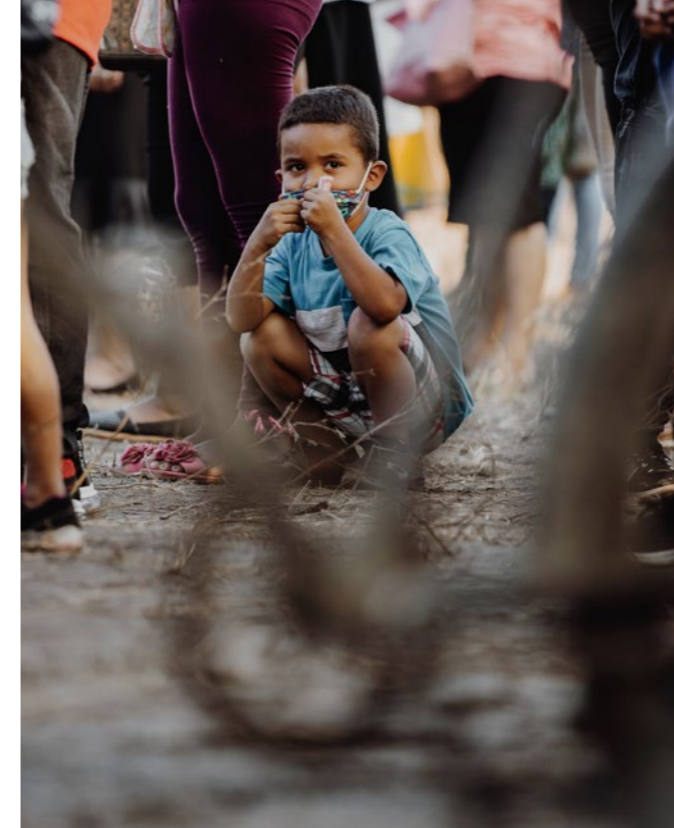


THE UNITED NATIONS Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under Agenda 2030 are ambitious goals serving as the world's guide for a better world altogether. While notable progress has been made in progressing towards these goals, it is evident that COVID-19 has caused a massive disruption on a global scale, including our efforts towards achieving Agenda 2030.

The MDGs were a 15-year commitment, signed in 2000, aimed at achieving eight goals surrounding poverty, universal primary education, gender equality, reducing child mortality, maternal health, environmental sustainability, and controlling HIV/AIDS and malaria. While the MDGs were a success in making progress in some of those areas, it was evident to leaders worldwide that there was still much work yet to be done. As a continuation from the MDGs, Agenda 2030 and the 17 SDGs were established in 2015, providing 193 member states a more inclusive and holistic blueprint for transforming our world and to achieve a more sustainable future for all by 2030. These goals cover the three

pillars of economic, social and environmental sustainability, and were created with the intention of being actionable (with 169 targets) and to improve the lives of everyone everywhere, and to 'Leave No One Behind'.

Just as the world began to gain some momentum on Agenda 2030, however, when the pandemic hit, there were both positive and negative impacts on the SDGs, which reflect our progress in achieving Agenda 2030. Some key positive impacts seen, albeit temporary, were: fast technological advances due to the need to adapt virtually; a reduction in pollution levels; mobilisation of resources and collaboration to suppress COVID-19; and, the centralisation of governance on an unprecedented global scale. For the most part, the pandemic has had a mostly highly negative short-term impact on the SDGs, and while some impacts still remain unclear, there is also evidence of how the pandemic has had moderately negative impact on the SDGs, exacerbating some of the most complex, time-sensitive, pre-existing issues of our time.



“NOTHING SHOULD GO BACK TO NORMAL. NORMAL WASN'T WORKING. IF WE GO BACK TO THE WAY THINGS WERE, WE HAVE LOST THE LESSON. MAY WE RISE UP AND DO BETTER, BE BETTER” -UNKNOWN

and SDG 17 (Partnership for the Goals) were impacted by way of increased pressure for a plan of action to mitigate the severe consequences of the pandemic, with measures such as closing country borders, debt crisis and the possible reduced responsiveness of the international aid community to help serve the needs of the poorest countries. While the quest for COVID-19 vaccines brought about scientific collaborations and quick delivery due to rapid research and development, it also brings about numerous challenges, including distribution and global access (SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure).

Though the report suggests the impact of COVID-19 on some SDGs remain unclear, it would not be surprising to have seen an increase in plastic pollution (e.g., use of single use face masks and protective wear). It is possible that we have experienced some short-term reductions in natural resource use (SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production), in global greenhouse gas emissions (SDG 13: Climate Action), and in threats to marine, terrestrial and freshwater diversity (SDG 14: Life Below Water and SDG 15: Life on Land), due to reduced global economic activity and consumption, especially in the onset of the pandemic.

It seems we are experiencing a major setback in regards to Agenda 2030. As vaccines roll out around the world, governments focusing on recovery plans, and the global community greeted with a new sense of 'normal' in their day-to-day, the big questions remain: *Where does Agenda 2030 sit in the list of our priorities? Can we really afford not to make this a priority when we are already seeing such devastating impacts in our lifetime?* Agenda 2030 has a deadline of another nine years. However, experts from around the world, including the scientific community stress the fact that we just do not have as much time as we thought, and we need to take every opportunity we can to advance these goals and achieve what we committed to—for the sake of our lifetime, future generations and the human race.

The Sustainable Development Report 2020: The Sustainable Development Goals and COVID-19 (Sachs et al., 2020), has identified how COVID-19 has had an impact on the SDGs. It is evident that COVID-19 incidences and mortality negatively impacted SDG 3 (Good Health, Wellbeing and Mental Health). Furthermore, the economic crisis, mass unemployment, business closures, trade disruption and decline in touristic activities highly impacts SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). Poverty and food insecurity increased due to job losses and economic lockdown (SDG 1: No Poverty) and to disruption and reduction in global food supplies and hunger due to a significant decrease or loss of income (SDG 2: Zero Hunger). Consequently, this series of events have only exacerbated inequality globally (SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities), disproportionately resulting in negative health and economic impacts on vulnerable groups.

The areas where the world witnessed mixed or moderately negative short-term impacts regarding social issues are measured by SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). The loss in development of human capital, school and day-care closures, which were coupled with an increase in urban poverty, possibly caused disproportionate economic impacts on women, in addition to increased reports of domestic violence.

The natural environment has suffered as well. Limited access to clean water among vulnerable groups have impacted their ability to adhere to strict hygiene practices (SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation). Efforts in promoting the use of affordable and clean energy (SDG 7) and the provision of incentives for renewables may have been impacted by way of reduced energy prices because of the slowing of economic growth, resulting in a possibly increased access to energy but reduced incentives for renewables. SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions)

Read the 2020 Sustainable Development Report: <https://sdgindex.org/reports/sustainable-development-report-2020/>





MALAYSIA UNDER COVID-19

BY CHONG KOK BOON
Senior Fellow

ON 18 MARCH 2020, the Malaysia government implemented the most stringent form of Movement Control Order (MCO) to cut off the spreading chains of SARS-CoV-2. Based on previous experience of pandemic control in human history, imposing such a drastic Wuhan-inspired, *all-or-nothing* approach to containing the virus at an early stage of a pandemic makes logical sense. After all, the mortality rate was recorded as a catastrophic high of 5.7% in Wuhan, China in early March 2020. However, this by no means implies that issues raised by such measures are less harmful, and yet they tend to be ignored by the government and the public alike.

One year later, on 15 March 2021, Malaysia has reported 324,971 cases of COVID-19 in total and a cumulative mortality rate of around 0.37%. In comparison, the mortality rate of COVID-19 worldwide is around 2.21%. Given that the relatively low mortality rate and low number of ICU patients in Malaysia, it was harder to justify the application of another strict MCO. Furthermore, political interference and declaration of Emergency on 12 January 2021 made things worse and counterproductive in the pandemic combat.

Due to loose regulations enforcement, the vast majority of migrant workers have been placed by their indifferent employers in congested and uninhabitable living conditions by any standard, which served as horrifying incubators for the infectious pathogen. The affected migrant workers had little chance to avoid the ill fate, and rapidly became dispensable victims with nowhere to run. Unfortunately, the Malaysian government does not penalise employers who violated the laws. Instead, the government ordered the employers to enforce mandatory pre-work COVID-19 swab tests for the migrant workers. Given that more than 80% of COVID-19 cases in Malaysia are asymptomatic or with mild symptoms, so should be the case for migrant workers (if not better due to their relatively younger demographics).

For the past year, the Malaysian border has been almost completely closed, and mandatory quarantine was imposed for the remaining few coming into Malaysia. Thus, most COVID-19 cases are locally transmitted. The Ministry of Health (MOH) reports the positive cases in categories of citizen and non-citizens. The categorisation of citizens and non-citizens add fuel to discriminatory sentiments against the migrant workers amongst the public, who are already a xenophobic society. Sadly, MOH has not admitted or apologised for their insensitivity, caving into xenophobic popular demand.



On the other hand, Malaysians are curious why MOH did not disseminate the year-long timeline data, i.e., the infectious and ICU trends, analysis such as infection biological impact according to patient age group and health history, the latest findings about the mechanism of the disease transmission etc? Furthermore, I wish that MOH does not exploit the "*Kita Jaga Kita, Kita Tegur Kita Menang*" slogan for grassroots appeal among the public and utilise the sentiments to enforce social-polarising mandatory measures by putting themselves at a higher moral vantage point.

I find the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in Malaysia have failed from the perspective of practicality. More troubling are the double standards, i.e., VIPs can travel interstate to attend wedding ceremonies, whilst ordinary people are banned for interstate family visits (except for couples that stay apart in different states). With the absence of *in situ* scientific experiments, evidence for the validity of the hypothesis on wearing a face mask and social distancing in reducing COVID-19 spreading risk, MOH pre-emptively imposed mandatory mask-wearing and social distancing without a proper definition of a crowded space. In addition, there have been cases where the contact-tracing app, *MySejahtera*, had failed, which includes issues such as technical glitches typical for any technological product. Thus, the mandatory check-in using contact-tracing apps is doubtful and unjustifiable.



"AS COVID-19 WILL NOT BE THE LAST PANDEMIC OF ALL TIME, IT IS THEREFORE BETTER FOR US TO ASK AND DEBATE ABOUT THE LARGER LOOMING QUESTIONS, TO BETTER PREPARE OUR SOCIETY IN DEALING WITH BOTH THE CURRENT COVID-19 PANDEMIC BUT ALSO WORSE PANDEMICS IN THE FUTURE—THUS LIVING UP TO THE SPIRIT OF 'NO ONE LEFT BEHIND'!"

All these have led to a situation which unfairly penalises common people who violated the SOPs. There are too many cases where police officers have abused their powers by issuing penalty tickets, which can be as high as 10,000 MYR. It would be great if the government could study, reflect, and garner more feedback on the design of the SOPs. Sadly, the Government is reluctant to respond to the double standards of SOPs enforcement, let alone rectify these problems.

During the MCO, the state of Malacca had reported an increase in domestic sexual abuse and/or incest cases by 100%, compared to the same period for previous years. The mental stress inflicted by loss of income had triggered a lot of domestic issues. Even amongst the middle- and upper-income families, mental stressors still exist due to various reasons, i.e., loss of human connection within social circles. Should we also not care for these victims whilst the authorities and the vast majority of the society are championing the cause of "*stay at home, stay safe from the virus*"? We must bear in mind that, home is a safe nest for many people, but not for all.

The examples shown above are just the tip of the iceberg. The Malaysian government is expanding its authoritarian power by using the pandemic as a convenient excuse, as most governments in the world did, regardless of whether they are authoritarian governments or well-established democracies.

The government should share all the relevant and necessary details regarding the rationales for the appropriate policies (according to the level of pandemic severity) with the public. A mature society and democracy should have sufficient wisdom, knowledge, and rational sense to understand them. As COVID-19 will not be the last pandemic of all time, it is therefore better for us to ask and debate about the larger looming questions, to better prepare our society in dealing with both the current COVID-19 pandemic but also worse pandemics in the future—thus living up to the spirit of '*No One Left Behind*'. Becoming an advanced nation is about creating a society with a willingness to participate, with the full knowledge and awareness to comply with and take ownership of the SOPs.



THE BAJAU LAUT IN SABAH: STATELESSNESS IN A TIME OF COVID-19

BY KONG PHUI YI
Outreach and
Education Executive



WITHIN THE MEGABIODIVERSE waters of Sulu-Sabah-Eastern Indonesia, there exists sea nomads whose presence predates the arrival of European traders. These nomads are known as *Bajau Laut* or Sea Bajau.

The Sea Bajau are a subset of the Bajau, who have comprised between 10–17% of the population, since the first census by the North Borneo Chartered Company in 1891. Linguistic evidence suggests that 800 years ago, speakers of the Bajau language spread through the stretch of sea from what is today the Philippines to the waters surrounding Sabah's northern apex, proving that the Bajau have long resided in North Borneo. Actual numbers of the Sea Bajau, are difficult to estimate due to their statelessness and informal nature of coastal and just-off-the coast island settlements.

Unlike the Bajau who settled on land before the formation of Malaysia, the conditions of statelessness of many Sea Bajau prevent full participation as contributing members of Malaysian society. Under COVID-19 circumstances, features of the Sea Bajau community have resulted in higher barriers to achieving progress as defined by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The two main impacts of COVID-19 on Sea Bajau reported in 2020 were income stability and the fear of government healthcare. An interview with an individual based in Lahad Datu, Sabah, provided insight on how some of the Sea Bajau community located around Pulau Tanjung Peras have been impacted by COVID-19. For the Sea Bajau whose fishing practices involve luring fish at night, restrictions on fishing past 7pm has severely reduced the Sea Bajau's income stability. Healthwise, an NGO working with Sea Bajau on Omodal Island found that Sea Bajau who tested positive for COVID-19 were highly reluctant to undergo quarantine at government hospitals. 10 out of the 11 who tested positive in a first round of testing by the Semporna District Health Office decided to return to their communities. This anecdote further cements the need for a holistic understanding of context and the need to extend the full privileges of citizenship to indigenous peoples.

COMPLICATIONS OF STATELESSNESS

Despite Bajau constituting Sabah's largest Muslim ethnic group, the Sea Bajau face ongoing marginalisation from land-dwellers and are seen as different from the mainstream Bajau category. Sea Bajau have no overall religious community leader, because

their isolated boat-dwelling lifestyles were not conducive to communal religious participation. As a result, the Sea Bajau are perceived as disparate family units without an overall political constituency. Furthermore, many still hold belief in the supernatural and adherence to unique customary practices. This feature differentiates them from the larger Muslim Bajau identity, which places the Sea Bajau outside the majority ethnic group and reinforces a perception that they are "other" and not entitled to citizenship.

Furthermore, despite being born in Sabah and having parents who are from Sabah, thousands of Sea Bajau are constitutionally entitled to Malaysian citizenship but cannot prove it. The Malaysian Federal Constitution has safeguards against statelessness: Section 2(e) of the 2nd Schedule of the Federal Constitution stipulates that every person born within the Federation who is not a citizen of any other country is a citizen of Malaysia. However, at the application level, there is a strict need to prove the parents' Malaysian citizenship (as opposed to citizenship by birth), whom themselves could not do as well. This practice perpetuates a chain of statelessness, passed down from one generation to the next.

Finally, the issue of Sea Bajau statelessness is the Sea Bajau being dwarfed by the existence of numerous non-citizen groups in Sabah which is highly politicised. One out of three of Sabah's 3.9 million residents are non-citizens. Being culturally and linguistically distinct from the political mainstream, the *Bajau Laut* are often unfairly lumped together with other migrant groups. Sabah's extraordinary cosmopolitanism overshadows Sea Bajau's rightful recognition as Malaysian citizens, making them straddle an unlikely predicament of being at once at home and invisible—both *indigenous and stateless*.

STATELESS POPULATIONS THROUGH THE SDG LENS

The SDGs advocate for a multidisciplinary approach: economic, environmental and social factors are interdependent on each other to achieve societal development. Economically, most of the Sea Bajau live in a state of chronic poverty. But without a legal identity, they are not able to seek formal employment in the labour market. Environmentally, marine degradation and non-participatory marine park management have made it difficult for Sea Bajau communities to sustain previous levels of marine catch, compromising food security. From a societal standpoint, Sea Bajau who seek livelihood from marine environments face the threat of detention under heightened state securitisation of Sabah's waters. Lastly, without citizenship, Sea Bajau are excluded from the Malaysian national education system. Circumstances of limited access to piped water result in increased risk of communicable disease. Taken together, these factors constitute the main drivers of Sea Bajau poverty and marginality, further worsened by the COVID-19 crisis.

FURTHER INDIGENOUS SOLUTIONS

The stakes of recognition for the Sea Bajau as *indigenous citizens* carries legal right to ancestral domain. Multiple Malaysian court rulings have upheld the right of Indigenous Peoples to customary lands. A possible legal framework which enhances coastal indigenous access to water bodies could be found in Canada and New Zealand, where rivers have been granted personhood



rights. However, this approach requires clear implementation frameworks—poor communities living off waterways in Bangladesh have been evicted under personhood for nature legislation. Having legal rights for water bodies with provisional access to Sea Bajau and other coastal indigenous communities in Sabah not only preserve indigenous ancestral ties to water, but also sustain traditional livelihoods.

Apart from legal recognition of water bodies, the Sea Bajau can leverage on the indigenous electorate in Sabah being the majority. Further strengthening of the Sea Bajau's political identity as indigenous in Sabah can assist the Sea Bajau in being recognised as rightfully Sabahan. Unlike the states of Peninsular Malaysia, indigenous peoples in Sabah are numerically capable of controlling political power through democratic rights. The Sea Bajau can utilise this position to gain visibility as a potential electoral base and increase their bargaining rights to access resources, especially those which increase their resilience against crisis.

The SDGs call for an end to statelessness. Target 9 of SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions requires Malaysia to provide legal identity for all, including birth registration by 2030. To achieve this, an NGO-led stateless mapping exercise has been carried out in Peninsular Malaysia. However, this has not been done for East Malaysia. Therefore, the Malaysian federal government must work closely with the Sabah state government to conduct a similar exercise, being sure to not leave the Sea Bajau out. Understanding the interlinkages unique to Sea Bajau help policy makers ensure that no one is left behind; not only on treating the *symptoms* of indigenous poverty and marginality but undertaking concerted effort towards bringing the Sea Bajau and all indigenous peoples to sustainable progress.



MALAYSIA: ACCESS TO INFORMATION UNDER COVID-19 FOR SDG 16.10

BY HO YI JIAN
Research Associate

THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH in Malaysia has been exemplary in providing information daily on many COVID-19 indicators, and its Director-General has been open in answering questions in livestreamed press conferences. In these unprecedented circumstances, the ministry has bravely judged that public communication on the ongoing public health crisis is more important than the risk of criticism and scrutiny of its performance.

The right to information is incorporated in the SDGs as indicator 16.10.2, i.e. “number of countries that adopt and implement constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information”. At an international level, this indicator is considered “relevant and measurable”, but the Department of Statistics Malaysia in its initial assessment considers it only “partially available, needs further development”. Otherwise, it is

not well-reflected in the SDG Voluntary National Review 2017. There are at least two dimensions to public access to information: proactive disclosure and requests for information. From what we can gather, the information environment in Malaysia is not ideal. The 11th Malaysia Plan outlined plans for an open data framework across Federal, state and local governments. Some progress has been made through a government circular establishing the open data initiative at the Federal level and the creation of an Open Government database and data license.

Because data disclosure under this open data framework is at the discretion of the respective ministries, it needs to be complemented with a legal mechanism to request for undisclosed information that is within the public interest. Typically, this would be covered by a Freedom of Information law, an act



that would institutionalise a standardised process for citizens to submit requests for government information and documents, the appointment of information officers to manage the requests, and the appointment of an oversight board empowered to review any appeals. A law would necessarily outline what kind of documents and information can be reasonably withheld, but also the process of how they can be eventually be disclosed in the case of overriding public interest.

In Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand, some level of formal law/executive order that gives a framework for requests for information are in place. In Malaysia, however, only Penang and Selangor have explicit Freedom of Information enactments that cover state-level government offices. Citizens can write to ministries to request for information, but there is no legal mandate to reply or a formal appeals process. This leaves one only reliable channel to obtain information: for Members of Parliament to submit questions to ministers during Parliamentary sessions—but with the emergency declaration suspending Parliament until August 2021, ministers are temporarily released from that accountability.

Both Malaysia and Thailand have declared emergencies, and have punitive orders to combat “fake news”; both which are concerning. This brings into mind how whistle-blowers such as Chinese national Li Wenliang, who tried to warn his colleagues about the COVID-19 outbreak, have been silenced by his government to downplay the severity of the issue. Laws which give the discretion for governments to punish individuals over information they release put medical professionals and journalists at greater liability for calling out abuse or poor scientific advice being peddled by opportunistic politicians—oftentimes politicians who are able to activate the punitive order in their favour. It is instead better democratic practice to regulate social media companies, such as WhatsApp or Facebook, to actively incentivise fact-checking.

There are also additional specific needs to ensure vulnerable populations are able to get the information that affects sustainable development, such as indigenous peoples’ access to information within the concept of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). The flow of information is often unfairly restricted in projects that severely impact indigenous communities, such as in the cases of the Papar/Kaiduan dam in 2020, or the Sungai Selangor dam in 2003. At the very least, JAKOA has communicated that visitors to Orang Asli villages be denied, although communities are attempting to cope as best as possible.

But what about the future for better disclosure? Under the previous Pakatan Harapan government (2018-2020) they had announced an intention to join the Open Government Partnership, which required at least a roadmap to enact a national-level Freedom of Information (FOI) law. By mid-2019, PH announced plans to draft an FOI law to replace the Official



Secrets Act. Unfortunately, with the change in government to the Perikatan Nasional (PN) in March 2020, the FOI bill seems to have been deprioritised at a political level.

Thus there is still a lot to do to get back on track with SDG Indicator 16.10.2. The current PN administration needs to re-propose a roadmap to enacting a Federal-level Right to Information legislation with harmonisation with the Official Secrets Act and state-level jurisdictions; draft and enact an Open Data Initiative law, elevating it from an internal government circular to legislation, with appended schedules on what should be openly published; and, draft and enact indigenous-related Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) law that compels commercial firms and government agencies to adhere to a standard of meaningful engagement and information provision to indigenous peoples.

Will an FOI law improve crisis communication? Not necessarily. However, it is likely to create an extra hurdle for any sort of opportunism for corruption during the chaos of a crisis. A good information environment will help prepare civil service agencies to better coordinate and ultimately form better policy responses when the next crisis strikes.

“IN THESE UNPRECEDENTED CIRCUMSTANCES, THE MINISTRY HAS BRAVELY JUDGED THAT PUBLIC COMMUNICATION ON THE ONGOING PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE RISK OF CRITICISM AND SCRUTINY OF ITS PERFORMANCE.”



COVID-19 AND WORKING FROM HOME

BY OOI KEE BENG
Senior Fellow



ON 18 MARCH 2020, the government imposed a Movement Control Order (MCO) throughout the country, and from that day onward, daily life changed.

The lockdowns applied in various forms and for various lengths of time by governments throughout the world deeply affected the very nature of the global economy. At the personal level, the drying up of income and the sustainability of whatever sources are left became the major worry for every household.

Handouts to keep poorer families going were the obvious short-term measure undertaken by governments. As the crisis dragged on, it became clear that the world would transition into something quite different from what it had been. That appears to be the proper definition of a world crisis. It brings down old structures and old actors, and changes the world for good.

What is new in this crisis is that the world economy was already handling an endless series of disruptions brought about by innovative applications in information and communications technology. These include the almighty smartphone, the internet search engine, online shopping, and social media of all kinds.

These are also the tools we use to manage life under the crisis. In that way, getting through the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated a whole range of disruptive trends that we suspected were inevitably approaching.

In many ways, we can say that the pandemic is clearing the way for the unhampered adoption of digital technology. All competition—be it between nations, corporations or individuals—will take the form of digital innovation.

Certain sectors have been favoured, such as the rubber glove industry, while others have suffered severely, like the hotel business. In such disjointed times, organising to protect common interests becomes almost impossible. Protesting against the wearing of masks and such dissent hardly improves prospects for the working population. The crisis has put long-term policymaking in limbo.

One year after COVID-19's outbreak, the dust has yet to settle in Malaysia. Meetings are arranged on Zoom, shopping is done online and home delivery of food has become the norm. For those who still have a job, work from home is a growing reality.

But can that last? Will socialising, spontaneous meetings and networking no longer be an essential part of meaningful living? For most of us, work is not, and never has been a goal in itself.

As the COVID-19 pandemic comes to an end or evolves into a seasonal dilemma, finding a balance between maximising efficiency through digital tools and raising individual gratification in social interaction should come to configure the work place of the future, and determine the concept of work itself.

In general, organisations consider it vital to generate and maintain a work culture conducive to profitability and sustainability. On the one hand, cultivating team work, team spirit and company identity requires social interactions and the building of personal bonds. At the same time, and just as importantly, customers and clients relate to an organisation through preferences for its products, its personnel and its branding.

For most industries, a permanent focus on remote working with minimal office space, will probably not succeed because the nature of staff creativity and efficiency—and market presence, requires spontaneous and informal interactions between colleagues, and the nurturing of goals and behaviour that define the organisation.

The evolution of the work place is therefore an interesting thing to watch in the near future. There is no doubt that much inter-human communication will be digitally-determined, but physical relations predate such interactions. Even the most significant digital disruptions such as Grab or AirBnB live off societal structures, which in turn are built on physical interactions, inter-personal trust and informal understandings.

Therefore, to achieve the balance between digital efficacy and analogical inspiration (i.e., inter-personal informalities), the work place of the future will probably function more like a club, offering reasons for people to limit working from home. This is in order to discourage counter-productive excessive disconnectedness between staff members, to diversify their information bubble, and to provide emotional content to their work life.

One may work well remotely, but one cannot develop a sense of belonging without common physical experiences, such as face-to-face meetings, group lunches, casual run-ins and spontaneous interactions with colleagues and clients.

The brave new digital world post-COVID will be many things, but it will still need human social skills and delight, and the experience of spontaneity and inspiration that so often comes from interacting with our fellow men and women.

“TO ACHIEVE THE BALANCE BETWEEN DIGITAL EFFICACY AND ANALOGICAL INSPIRATION, THE WORKPLACE OF THE FUTURE WILL PROBABLY FUNCTION MORE LIKE A CLUB, OFFERING REASONS FOR PEOPLE TO LIMIT WORKING FROM HOME.”





BY KAREN CHAND
Director of Strategy
and Operations, JCI
and JSC

MALAYSIA: COULD AN EDUCATIONAL REVOLUTION ARISE BECAUSE OF COVID-19?



A CHILD IN an affluent suburb, where every member of the family has their own computer, keeps up with online lessons, while a child living in a Bottom 40% (B40) household lags even further behind than she already was. In Malaysia, a Ministry of Education survey revealed that only 5.8 percent of students owned a tablet or computer; 46.5 percent relied on smartphones for online learning; while 36.9 percent did not have access to any digital device.

A field visit to an *Orang Asli* village by a research team from JSC uncovered an alarming rate of school dropouts among *Orang Asli* children due to the pandemic-induced disruption in education simply because it was too difficult for them to keep up with their studies. Most of their parents work either as day wage earners, microentrepreneurs or participate in other forms in the informal economy, and as such, inhabit an economic space that cannot access social protection for their families. Many had to rely on their children to also bring in an income.

Even prior to the pandemic, inclusive and equitable quality education was advancing at too slow a pace. Malaysia's brand of inequality and chauvinism is as evident within its education system as in other parts of its socio-economic fabric. Even before Malaysia became a nation, it had for generations been a diverse community. It is therefore a wonder that the majority of young Malaysians are not fluently trilingual, and it is consternating that, today, most public schools are largely monoethnic.

Study upon study to propose remedies to Malaysia's not only mediocre but dangerously divisive education system, have drawn numerous passionate views that, though varied, eventually all arrive at one consensus - that a renewal of the system is long overdue.

Given the mind-boggling complexities that future generations will be left to contend with, we need to ask if our education system is allowing Malaysians to rise to their fullest potential. First, are we educating our children in ways that prepare them to face current and future challenges? Second, is the present learning environment empowering, mind-opening, and thought-provoking? Third, does the current system ensure opportunities to bring the best educational outcomes to those who are most disadvantaged? Fourth, are our schools instilling the values of compassion for and appreciation of others in the spirit of global understanding and global peace?

In other words, does the education system reflect the type of society that we want?

On 16 December 2020, His Holiness Pope Francis, former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay launched Mission 4.7 in conjunction with the annual Vatican Youth Symposium. Pope Francis, in his opening address, called for a new wave of education based on social justice, fraternity, reciprocal love, and protection of our planet. Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) paves the way:

"By 2030, ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development."



The Global launch of Mission 4.7 on 16 December 2020. (Top row, left to right): Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr Jeffrey Cheah AO, Founder and Chairman, Sunway Group and Chair, SDSN Malaysia; His Holiness Pope Francis; (Bottom row, left to right): Ban Ki-moon, former Secretary-General of the UN; Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO; and Prof Jeffrey Sachs, Chairman, JSC and Distinguished Professor at Sunway University.

"SUNWAY UNIVERSITY, THROUGH THE JEFFREY SACHS CENTER, IS LOCALISING THE MISSION 4.7 FRAMEWORK IN THE HOPE OF CONTRIBUTING TO MALAYSIA'S YEARNED-FOR EDUCATIONAL REVOLUTION."

Mission 4.7 was launched to put this bold vision into practice by advancing Education in Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCE). It is a reminder that inclusive equitable quality education is not just a goal in itself but a means through which all other SDGs can be realised.

Sunway University, through the Jeffrey Sachs Center, is localising the Mission 4.7 framework in the hope of contributing to Malaysia's yearned-for educational revolution. The effort will not only produce SDG-relevant content, but also focus on learning outcomes, teaching methods and a learning environment that can produce changemakers who are prepared to face present and future challenges head-on.

There are cogent arguments for Malaysia's adoption of Mission 4.7:

First, learning at each level of primary and secondary education will be enhanced through high quality expert-created and curated resources, made available in the local language, categorised by grade, pedagogical type, and special needs, and with examples of best practices in delivery.

Second, special programmes will be available to empower and upskill teachers to integrate ESD and GCE in their lessons using innovative and engaging methods.

Third, there will be an elevation in the level of technology use and scientific understanding that is important in realising sustainable development.

Fourth, special attention and resources will be dedicated to schools that are overstretched, underfunded, and that have students who are most in need of additional support.

Fifth, there is evidence that ESD and GCE leads to greater student engagement, better school environments, and teacher satisfaction.

Mission 4.7 was founded by Global Schools and the SDG Academy, both flagship programs of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), in partnership with the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens, UNESCO, and the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University. It is co-chaired by Tan Sri Dr. Jeffrey Cheah, Founder & Chairman of the Sunway Group; Professor Jeffrey Sachs, President of SDSN; Monsignor Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, Chancellor, Pontifical Academy of Sciences and Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, representing His Holiness Pope Francis; and Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO.



BY LEONG YUEN YOONG
Professor

AN ASEAN REGIONAL GREEN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY MUST GUIDE ASEAN'S COVID-19 RECOVERY PLAN

BETWEEN APRIL AND NOVEMBER 2020, ASEAN has convened several high-level meetings to discuss strategies to respond to the challenges posed by COVID-19. The output included:

- COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund
- ASEAN Leaders' Vision Statement on a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN
- Declaration on an ASEAN Travel Corridor Arrangement Framework
- ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF)

Against this backdrop, Sustainable Development Solutions Network launched the ASEAN Green Future (AGF) project in March 2021 to develop roadmaps to net zero carbon. How might AGD build on and go beyond existing regional COVID-19 responses to become a relevant compass for ASEAN policymakers in shaping sustainable developmental paths and investing to generate a rich future?

The answer lies in the adoption by ASEAN of a sustainability mindset that is grounded in the fabric of symbiosis. Cultures and beings that live symbiotically with Nature have successfully sustained themselves since the dawn of time. ASEAN needs to change its current mindset of equating human welfare with immediate gratification from consumption to taking a multi-generational view. The need to shift away from the short-sighted consumer mindset is highlighted by Greenpeace International in their latest publication *Destruction Certified* (March 2021) too as they discuss moving beyond supply chain certification to remove deforestation.

The key to transforming to a sustainability mindset is to understand the web of interdependencies in the ecosystem; and to enhance the vibrancy of the whole ecosystem. I will use an example in agriculture to demonstrate this principle in action.

Agriculture and the food industry account for 25% of global greenhouse gas emissions. In agriculture, the two large energy inputs are fertiliser and transport. According to a data technology company Knoema Corporation, fertiliser consumption per unit of arable land in Malaysia was 1,723.4 kg per hectare in 2016. To provide a context for comparison, all the other ASEAN countries' usage, except for Singapore, ranged from 17.4 to 429.8 kg per hectare. The US used 138.6 kg per hectare and Australia used 68.1 kg per hectare in 2016.



The level of fertiliser use in Malaysia poisons and nullifies what the microbiological ecosystem is supposed to do in the soil - which is to prepare the raw food constituents into the nutrients the plant roots can absorb - thus leaving unhealthy and unproductive plants; and this excessive use of fertiliser also reduces the carbon content in the soil, i.e. overuse of fertiliser is a double negative. This indiscriminate use of fertiliser will lead to environmental disasters that will match those caused in the past by indiscriminate use of pesticide, which Rachel Carson had documented in her classic book, *Silent Spring*, more than sixty years ago.

This unintended poisoning of the soil from chemical fertiliser is a 1960's approach to agriculture. Chemical fertiliser is associated with intensive farming and monocrop plantation, e.g. it can account for between 40-60% of the production costs of high-yielding palm plantations, depending on the management. The resulting topsoil erosion, and vulnerability to diseases and pests, along with the growing preferences of increasingly environmentally aware customers, are now diminishing the financial returns of industrial farming.

Malaysia's Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) is one of the major fertiliser manufacturers in the country. FELDA might have thought that it had developed the land to benefit the farmers but it had unwittingly diminished the quality of the soil in the process. Modern agronomy must be mobilised to help FELDA to come up with new cultivation methods that are compatible with sustainable agriculture in order to end the current serious addiction to fertiliser.

Moving forward, ASEAN policymakers and farmers must stop thinking of fertility as something you pour onto soil as 'fertiliser' and start recognising that soil is a resource that must be nurtured to develop its richness. In February 2015, China implemented the action plan for the zero increase of fertiliser and pesticide use by 2020.

In the Netherlands, manure and fertiliser applications have been limited through governmental regulations since the 1980s. Through a commitment to sustainable agriculture and a national ambition to produce twice as much food using half as many resources, the small country is now the world's second largest exporter of food (by value) after the US. Smallholders in France are treasured as an important and essential component of France. It is this symbiotic model that is human-centric, not energy intensive, that ASEAN countries might usefully focus on understanding and developing.

Cambridge scientist John Archer highlighted to Jim Platts, who was chairing a review for the Malaysian Palm Oil Board Programme Advisory Committee in 2010, that the tropical soils of the ASEAN countries are millions of years old and have never been glaciated. It is a treasure house of micro-organisms that have huge potential for mankind but have never been researched. Can ASEAN get this research going and draw people to work here?

According to Al Gore, there is more carbon sequestered in the soil than above it. How about calculating the achievable carbon sequestration amount across ASEAN and valuing it? Analysis could be performed on samples from different examples of

farmed soil, grassland that has cattle on it and from completely uncultivated land. This will lay the foundation for examining the soil organism composition and developing soil fertility ASEAN-wide.

Using similar symbiosis-oriented thinking, ASEAN will be able to identify decarbonisation opportunities in other sectors that offer big returns on investment and technology roadmaps towards sustainable food, energy, health, medicine, employment etc. ASEAN countries can be the creators of these sustainable solutions, and these transformative ways will ensure that ASEAN will build back better from the destructive effects of COVID-19.

The present collaborative approach in ASEAN regional development must be enhanced. This will enable ASEAN members to make a successful transition to dynamic and resilient growth paths that will lead to the attainment of the 17 SGD goals and carbon neutrality by 2050, in line with the Paris Agreement. The most productive way to make this transition requires:

- Partnerships within ASEAN, characterised by cooperation amongst governments, and cooperation between public and private sectors to achieve economies of scale and prevent negative cross-country spill overs (e.g. haze from Indonesia, Laotian hydropower dams affecting the Tonlé Sap ecosystem etc.);
- Partnerships with international agencies and foreign governments to facilitate technological transfers; and funding not just for the maintaining, but also for expanding the tropical forests as global carbon sinkholes and biodiversity preserves.

At the heart of all productive partnerships is care and growth leadership, which is about leaders empowering people through genuine care, and enabling fair and honest growth for the people through meaningful work. ASEAN leaders carry the responsibility to shape and guide the collaboration process in a way that entrenches the essential principles of sustainability in society's thinking. This involves going beyond self-centredness and calls for significantly mature and competent leadership.



“THE KEY TO TRANSFORMING TO A SUSTAINABILITY MINDSET IS TO UNDERSTAND THE WEB OF INTERDEPENDENCIES IN THE ECOSYSTEM; AND TO ENHANCE THE VIBRANCY OF THE WHOLE ECOSYSTEM.”



BY CHEA SEREY
Assistant Governor
of National Bank of
Cambodia



**SHANDRE MUGAN
THANGAVELU**
Vice-President of
Jeffrey Cheah Institute
on Southeast Asia

FINANCIAL INCLUSION AND VULNERABILITY OF ASEAN TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC SHOCKS

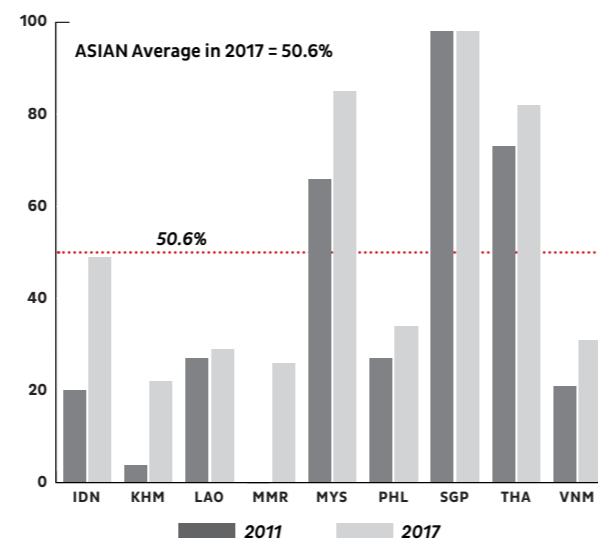
A KEY FUNCTION of financial inclusion is to create sustainable and inclusive growth for all members of society in the domestic economy. The impact of economic shocks such as the Asian Financial Crisis, the Global Financial Crisis and the recent COVID-19 pandemic shocks tend to deepen the economic divide, and increase the vulnerability of people to the loss of key financial and economic resources to maintain basic living and sustain business activities. One possible reason for this heightened vulnerability is the higher risk of lending to vulnerable populations such as the unskilled, women entrepreneurs, older workers and SMEs with small collaterals. Economic shocks exacerbate the problem, increasing the number of those vulnerable. Recent financial inclusion indicators show interesting trends in ASEAN countries. Figure 1 shows the share of adults with bank accounts in ASEAN countries. In 2011, countries like Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia showed a considerably higher number of adults aged 15 and above holding accounts at financial institutions, relative to other ASEAN countries. Cambodia had the lowest number. Nevertheless, Cambodia, Indonesia and Malaysia showed a remarkable increase in proportion of adults aged 15 and above having accounts at financial institutions between 2011 and 2017.

Although the ownership of financial accounts among adults in Cambodia lagged significantly behind other ASEAN countries in 2017, the ownership of mobile money accounts was higher in Cambodia than other ASEAN countries, except for Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand (see Figure 2). It is quite interesting to observe that the proportion of Cambodian adults with mobile money accounts was almost twice as high as those of Indonesian and Vietnamese adults in 2017, which suggest the crucial role that mobile and internet technology plays in promoting financial inclusion in Cambodia. Nonetheless, mobile money usage remains relatively low in ASEAN, with Malaysia being the country with the highest proportion of adults owning mobile money accounts at 11%.

FINANCIAL INCLUSION AND RECOVERY IN POST COVID-19 PANDEMIC

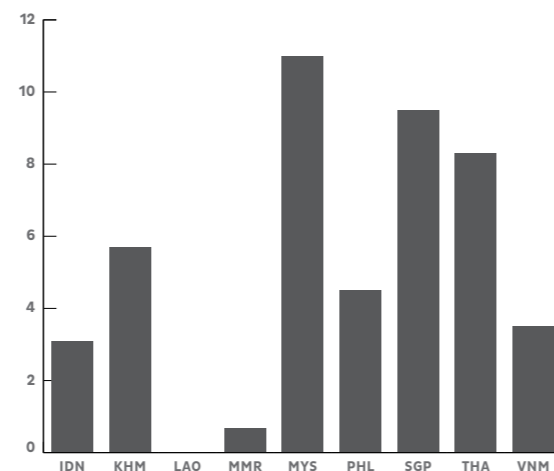
The COVID-19 pandemic shocks present several important policy considerations in terms of financial inclusion. As a significant number of people in ASEAN do not have access to financial

FIGURE 1: PROPORTION OF ADULTS AGED 15+ WITH FINANCIAL ACCOUNT IN 2011 AND 2017 (%)



Source: World Bank's Global Findex data 2011 and 2017

FIGURE 2: PROPORTION OF ADULTS WITH MOBILE MONEY ACCOUNT IN 2017



Source: World Bank's Global Findex data 2017

markets and activities, financial issues not only become critical during the COVID-19 pandemic shocks, but also during the post-pandemic recovery process. It is expected that countries with strong institutions and policies directed at financial inclusion will be able to mitigate the economic shocks and mobilise efficient economic resources for economic recovery in the post-pandemic period.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE THROUGH MOBILE BANKING

Financial inclusion driven by technology, such as e-wallet and mobile banking services, can help mitigate economic shocks. Most governments respond to economic shocks by providing relief packages targeted at those working in the formal sectors through direct transfers via domestic banks. However, many among the vulnerable population working in informal sectors do not have access to banking activities or bank accounts. Thus, countries with better financial inclusion policies, such as ensuring bank accounts and mobile banking facilities for vulnerable populations will be better able to distribute relief packages to those in need. Electronic and mobile banking is also a safer mechanism to manage exchange activities in the economy, as in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, electronic payments reduce the usage of banknotes, and allow better physical distancing between individuals.

USING PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP WITH INTERNET BANKING

Countries with better mobile and internet banking facilities are also able to reach vulnerable populations more effectively. Internet service providers act as another means to reach vulnerable populations in addition to banks. The informal sector and small businesses remain dominant in ASEAN Least Developed Countries (LDCs) such as Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar. Many workers are day-wage earners who depend on their daily income to survive. The slowdown in the economy, particularly affecting the tourism and construction sectors where most day-wage earners are employed, has significantly impacted people's livelihood, necessitating almost immediate assistance from the government. Due to a social safety net system, people are classified by their monthly income, with those in the lower rungs

being eligible to receive support from the government, including free healthcare. ASEAN LDC governments have a database of those who are in need, but unfortunately not many have access to bank accounts. With a significant budget earmarked to provide cash assistance to this segment, the challenge is to find efficient and transparent delivery channels. In such cases, payment service providers or e-wallet providers have better reach than banks, and hence the ASEAN LDC governments have now turned to these institutions to deliver assistance more rapidly. Cash disbursement through this channel does not necessarily require a wallet account. Anyone can receive money through a payment agent with just a phone number and ID card.

DATA MANAGEMENT IS CRITICAL

While the urgency of the situation is to provide assistance to the those in need in the fastest possible way, coordinated efforts amongst different government agencies should be in place to also promote access to bank accounts or formal E-wallet accounts, where better data on spending behavior can be captured that will in turn help financial institutions better understand and serve their customers, particularly in times of crisis.

Data management is critical during economic and pandemic shocks, and countries with better financial data management tend to be more resilient against these shocks. Policymakers with better access to financial data will be able to track the economic and financial impact of COVID-19 in real-time, including the high-frequency transactions of businesses and households, such as deposits, cash withdrawals, and loan repayments.

REDUCING VULNERABILITY OF SMES

During the pandemic, many businesses, especially SMEs and microentrepreneurs from rural areas, will lack funds to sustain their activities. Unfortunately, many banks are reluctant to lend to these groups due to their higher risk profile, which the pandemic exacerbates. Thus, it is imperative for government policies to be targeted at increasing financial inclusion and allowing these vulnerable groups to have access to private and public relief packages, which bigger companies and educated entrepreneurs tend to have.



“NONETHELESS, ENTHUSIASM AMONG ADULTS TOWARDS OWNING MOBILE MONEY ACCOUNT IN ASEAN REMAINS LIMITED AS A HIGHEST PROPORTION OF ADULTS WITH MOBILE MONEY ACCOUNT WAS JUST 11% IN MALAYSIA.”

EVENTS LISTINGS AND HIGHLIGHTS

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JANUARY 2020

Dynamic Economic Development and Shared Prosperity: The Kedah Way

Public Lecture in collaboration with ASLI

YAB Dato' Seri Utama Haji Mukhriz Tun Mahathir, Chief Minister of Kedah

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JANUARY 2020

Why Is It So Hard to Push Chinese High-Speed Railway Projects in Southeast Asia? The Role of Domestic Politics in Malaysia and Indonesia

Public Lecture

Dr Guanie Lim, Research Fellow, Nanyang Centre for Public Administration, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

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JANUARY 2020

Plastic Waste Management on Global and Local Scale & Civic Participation Exercise

Sharing Session

Professor Agamutu Pariatamby, Professor, JSC, Sunway University; **Kong Phui Yi**, Outreach and Education Executive, JSC and Postgraduate Student (MSDM Program), Sunway University; **Nur Amirah Abdul Majid**, Outreach and Education Executive, JSC, Sunway University; **David Ahimaz**, Postgraduate Student (MSDM Program), Sunway University

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FEBRUARY 2020

"Issues in Social Protection in Malaysia" and "JSC and Rimba: Conducting Applied Research to Bridge the Gap Between Scientists and Decision Makers"

Sharing Session (for delegation visit- UN Youth Globalisation Tour (New Zealand))

Derek Kok, Research Analyst, JCI, Sunway University; **Associate Professor Dr Gopaldasamy Reuben Clements**, Associate Professor, Sunway University and Research Fellow, JSC, Sunway University

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FEBRUARY 2020

SMK Sri Hartamas Plastics Workshop

Workshop (in collaboration with Rotary Club of Bukit Kiara Sunrise)

Kong Phui Yi, Outreach and Education Executive, JSC, Sunway University and Postgraduate Student (MSDM Program), Sunway University; **David Ahimaz**, Postgraduate Student (MSDM Program), Sunway University

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APRIL 2020

Happiness & Sustainability Around the Earth: What is Happiness? A Provocative Conversation

Webinar (in collaboration with SDSN Global)

Professor Woo Wing Thye, President, JCI, Sunway University and Director, JSC, Sunway University; **Ms Jacqueline Ann Surin**, Online Facilitator, Web Events That Connect; **Associate Professor Zubaidah Jamil Osman**, Associate Professor, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Cyberjaya; **Dr Khor Swee Kheng**, Founder, Malaysian Health Coalition; **Dr Vilashini Somiah**, Senior Lecturer of Gender Studies, University of Malaya

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MAY 2020

State of Malaysia's Forests & What Can be Done

Webinar

Associate Professor Dr Gopaldasamy Reuben Clements, Associate Professor, Sunway University and Research Fellow, JSC, Sunway University

16 - 24

JUNE - JULY 2020

The SDGs and Climate Change: A Story of What Can We Do Together?

5 Online Training Sessions for Sunway Group

Professor Leong Choon Heng, Deputy Director, JSC, Sunway University

17 - 22

JUNE - OCTOBER 2020

Incorporating Sustainability in Bank Operations

12 Online Training Sessions for Hong Leong Bank Berhad (pilot & expansion programme)

Professor Leong Choon Heng, Deputy Director, JSC, Sunway University; **Dr Chen Jit Ern**, Senior Lecturer, Sunway University and Research Fellow, JSC, Sunway University; **Professor Agamutu Pariatamby**, Professor, JSC, Sunway University; **Tan Seng Lee**, Senior Lecturer, Sunway University; **Jacqueline Wong**, Manager, Group Sustainability at Sunway Group

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JULY 2020

Strategic Engagement on Sustainability Session - Introduction to Climate Change

Sharing session with Senior Management, Hong Leong Bank Berhad

Professor Leong Choon Heng, Deputy Director, JSC, Sunway University; **Dr Chen Jit Ern**, Senior Lecturer, Sunway University and Research Fellow, JSC, Sunway University

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AUGUST 2020

Malaysia's Sustainable Development: The Decade for Action

Webinar (in collaboration with ASLI, EPU, and SDSN)

OPENING REMARKS:

Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr Jeffrey Cheah Ao, Founder and Chairman, Sunway Group and Chair, SDSN Malaysia; **Dato' Sri Mustapa Mohamed**, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department for Economic Affairs, Malaysia

MODERATOR:

Tan Sri Ramon Navaratnam, Chairman, Centre for Public Policy Studies, Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (ASLI); and Corporate Advisor, Sunway Group

PANELLISTS:

Dr. Zunika Mohamed, Deputy Director General (Macro), Economic Planning Unit of the Prime Minister's Department Malaysia and SDSN Malaysia Leadership Council Member; **Lavanya Rama Iyer**, Head, Policy and Climate Change, WWF Malaysia; **Professor Dato' Dr. Mazlin bin Mokhtar**, Director, Institute for Environment and Development (LESTARI), and SDSN Malaysia Leadership Council Member; **Professor Woo Wing Thye**, President, JCI, Sunway University and Director, JSC, Sunway University

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SEPTEMBER 2020

Forum Demokrasi: Diskusi Kajian Nadi Melayu (Democracy Forum: Discussion of The Malay Pulse)

Forum (in collaboration with IDE, FES and IESAD, UNISEL)

OPENING REMARKS:

YB Senator Tuan Hj Ismail Yusop, Chairman of IDE Cluster; Sergio Grassi, Country Director, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Indonesia Office

PANELLISTS:

Tuan Khairul Arifin bin Mohd Munir, Senior Manager, Institut Darul Ehsan (IDE); **Professor Wong Chin Huat**, Professor, JSC, Sunway University; **Professor Madya Dr Hamdan bin Dato' Mohd Salleh**, Director of EISAD UNISEL and Member of IDE Political Education & Democracy Cluster

MODERATOR:

Nur Afiqah Tajuddin

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NOVEMBER 2020

Taking it to the Ground: The Work of the APPGM-SDG*Sharing Session (in collaboration with APPGM-SDG)*

Professor Datuk Dr Denison Jayasooria, Head of Secretariat, APPGM-SDG; **Anthony Tan Kee Huat**, Finance Officer, APPGM-SDG; **Alizan Mahadi**, Director of Research, ISIS Malaysia; **Dr Lin Mui Kiang**, Head of Solutions, APPGM-SDG; **Dr Zainal Abidin Sanusi**, Associate Professor, International Islamic University Malaysia; **Nur Rahmah binti Othman**, Programme Officer, APPGM-SDG

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NOVEMBER 2020

The Borneo Dilemma: Sabah and Sarawak under the Muhyiddin Administration*Webinar (in collaboration with Australian National University)*

PANELLISTS:

Professor James Chin, Director, Governance Studies Programme, JCI, Sunway University; **Jannie Lasimbang**, Sabah State Assistant Minister of Law and Native Affairs; **Marianne Ghani**, Advocate and Solicitor; **Trinity Bungan Tajang**, Sarawak Youth Activist

MODERATOR:

Kean Wong, Journalist and Editor

20 – 21

NOVEMBER 2020

SDGs for Indigenous Peoples Stakeholder and Expert Roundtable Session 1 & 2*Expert Roundtable (in collaboration with WWF)*

OPENING REMARKS:

Dr Delfin Ganapin, WWF International, Practice Leader, Governance Introduction; **Professor Wong Chin Huat**, Professor, JSC, Sunway University

DISCUSSANTS:

Dr James Mohd Alin, Senior Lecturer, Universiti Malaysia Sabah; **Dr Colin Nicholas**, Founder, Centre for Orang Asli Concerns (COAC); **Dr Wong Young Soon**, Executive Director, Malaysian CARE; **Dr Khor Swee Kheng**, Founder, Malaysian Health Coalition; **Prof Fadzilah Majid Cooke**, Professor, Institute of Biological Diversity and Sustainable Development, University Malaysia Terengganu; **Peter Kallang**, Chairman and Founding Member, SAVE Rivers; **Dr Trixie Tangit**, Senior Lecturer, Universiti Malaysia Sabah; **Dr Welyne Jeffrey Jehom**, Head, Center for Malaysian Indigenous Studies (CMIS); **Senator Adrian Banie Lasimbang**, All Party Parliamentary group; **Dr Vilashini Somiah**, Senior Lecturer, University of Malaya

PRESENTERS:

Jeremy Lim, Research Associate, JSC, Sunway University; **Kong Phui Yi**, Outreach and Education Executive, JSC and Postgraduate Student (MSDM Program), Sunway University; **Nur Amirah Abdul Majid**, Outreach and Education Executive, JSC, Sunway University; **Ho Yi Jian**, Research Associate, JCI, Sunway University

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DECEMBER 2020

9th Asia-Pacific Forum on Economy and Finance: Global Economic Recovery and Structural Changes in the Post-Pandemic Period*e-Forum (co-organised with Center for International Finance Studies, Central University of Finance and Economics; Collaborative Innovation Center for Global Financial Governance, Central University of Finance and Economics; CBN Research Institute; and PwC, China)*

OPENING REMARKS AND KEYNOTE SPEECHES:

CHAIR:

Liqing Zhang, Professor and Director of Center for International Finance Studies, Central University of Finance and Economics

WELCOME REMARKS:

Yaoqi Wang, President and Professor, Central University of Finance and Economics

KEYNOTE SPEECHES:

Xianglong Dai, Former Governor of the People's Bank of China; **Barry Eichengreen**, Professor, University of California, Berkeley; **Yongding Yu**, Academician and Former Director of Institute of World Economics and Politics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; **Lei Lu**, Deputy Director of the State Administration of Foreign Exchange

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DECEMBER 2020

PANEL #1:

Global Economic Recovery and Financial Risks in the Post-Pandemic Period

CHAIR:

Professor Woo Wing Thye, President, JCI, Sunway University and Director, JSC, Sunway University

SPEAKERS:

Yiping Huang, Deputy Dean of National School of Development, Peking University; Director of Institute of Digital Finance, Peking University; **Steven Alan Barnett**, International Monetary Fund's Senior Resident Representative for China; **Haizhou Huang**, Chief Strategist, Managing Director of China International Capital Corporation Limited; **Masahiro Kawai**, Representative Director, Economic Research Institute for Northeast Asia (ERINA), and Professor Emeritus, University of Tokyo; **Anwar Nasution**, Former Vice Governor, Bank of Indonesia; **Yunjong Wang**, Adjunct Professor, Kyunghee University; **Yansheng Zhang**, Chief Researcher of China International Economic Exchange Center

PANEL #2:

Expanding Financial Opening and RMB Internationalization

CHAIR:

Yide Qiao, Secretary General of Shanghai Development Research Foundation

SPEAKERS:

Haihong Gao, Director of Research Center for International Finance, Institute of World Economy and Politics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; **Chengjun Zhou**, Director of the Financial Research Institute of the People's Bank of China; **Ming Zhang**, Deputy Director of Institute of Finance, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; **Chuanwei Zou**, Chief Economist of Wanxiang Blockchain; **Ulrich Volz**, Director of the Centre for Sustainable Finance and Reader in Economics at SOAS, University of London; **Xiaofen Tan**, Professor and Deputy Director of Center for International Finance Studies, Central University of Finance and Economics

PANEL #3:

Prospects of International Economic Patterns in the Post-Pandemic Period

CHAIR:

Yanqing Yang, Managing Director of CBN Research Institute

SPEAKERS:

Stephany Griffith-Jones, Professor, Columbia University and Sussex University; **Qingguo Jia**, Director and Professor of Center for Global Governance Studies, Peking University; **Xiangyang Li**, Director and Professor of the National Institute of International Strategy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; **Jiadong Tong**, Former Vice President and Professor of Nankai University; **Xinbo Wu**, Dean and Professor of Institute of International Studies, Fudan University; **Liqing Zhang**, Director and Professor of Center for International Finance Studies, Central University of Finance and Economics

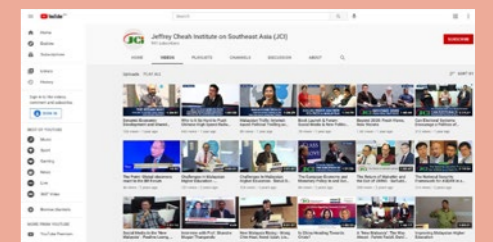
CLOSING REMARKS:

Zhigang Huang, Vice Dean and Professor, School of Finance, Central University of Finance and Economics

Video recordings of our public events are available on our YouTube channels:

JCI: <https://www.youtube.com/JeffreyCheahInst/>

JSC: http://bit.ly/JSC_Youtube



JCI AND JSC MILESTONES



Research Grants

- **Professor Agamutu Pariatamby** secured a 100,000 GBP Collaboration with University of Exeter, UK and a 20,000 MYR grant from the British Council. Title of projects: "Justification for Resources: Risks and Solutions: Marine Plastics in Southeast Asia (RaSP-SEA)" and "Capacity Building in Waste Management with Cranfield University, UK."
- **Dr Chong Kok Boon** secured a 389,000 RMB grant with the Guangdong Centre of Excellence and 420,000 RMB grant with China Spallation Neutron Source from a CGN Research Grant. Title of projects: "Impact of stress-corrosion Cracking on Eutectic Melting Point for Fuel-to-cladding Chemical Interaction" and "Fluorinated Diamond-Like Carbon Films for Gen-IV Reactors Application"
- **A JSC team** secured a 30,000 USD grant with FABLE Consortium, SDSN for a project on Food Agriculture, Biodiversity, Land Use, and Energy (FABLE) Pathways. Team members include: **Low Wai Sern, Andrew Fan, Jeremy Lim, Danesh Prakash Chacko, Chen Jit Ern, and Goh Chun Sheng.**
- **Another JSC research team** secured a 163,200 MYR grant from World Wildlife Fund (WWF) to develop a framework of Sustainable Development for Indigenous Peoples. Team members include: **Prof Wong Chin Huat, Karen Chand, Jeremy Lim, Kong Phui Yi, Nur Amirah Abdul Majid, Ho Yi Jian, Danesh Prakash Chacko.**
- **Prof Yeah Kim Leng** and **Prof Mohamed Ariff** secured a 87,700 MYR grant from the Ministry of Education Malaysia- Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS). Title of project: "Sovereign Debt, Credit Rating and Fiscal Sustainability".
- **Dr Chen Jit Ern** was awarded two grants to conduct the following two projects: "Experimental Evolution and Retrotransposon-mediated Genetic Engineering of the Coral Endosymbiont Alga Symbiodinium to Develop Increased Tolerance to Higher Water Temperatures" (245,000 MYR for collaboration with University of Cambridge and University of Hamburg, from Sunway Collaborative Research Fund) and "Transformation and Expression of Recombinant Antiviral Protein in Transgenic Green Micro-algae" (RM 91,740 grant from AlgaeVir Sdn Bhd).
- **Professor Gopalasamy Reuben Clements** secured a 12,438.40 MYR grant with the University of Tennessee from the Sunway University Internal Grant Scheme 2020. Title of project: "Securing the future of the 'king of fruits': Elucidating the Pollination Ecology of Durian (*Durio zibethinus*) Across Peninsular Malaysia".
- **Prof Koh Hock Lye** was awarded three grants to conduct the following three respective projects: "Bifurcation Analysis of New Regime Shift Model for Tropical Lakes: Towards Effective Eutrophication Control and Resilience Amid Climate Change Concern", "Sea Level Rise Impact on Coastal Groundwater and Vegetation" (100,000 MYR and 80,000 MYR both under Fundamental Research Grant Scheme, MoHE (Malaysia)) and "Pharmacoeconomic Model for Dengue Vaccine in Malaysia: A New Approach Towards Affordability and Cost Effectiveness" (80,300 MYR, under USM Apex Research University Grant).

Achievements

- From 2021, **Jeffrey Sachs Center (JSC)** will host a new Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Asia office to complement existing offices in New York and Paris. Headed by Prof Woo Wing Thye as Vice President of SDSN Asia, it will work on SDSN's major priority programs: The ASEAN Green Future, Mission 4.7, and the SDG Academy.
- **Professor Agamutu Pariatamby**, won the WM&R Award for Best Paper 2019- Runner-up, for the outstanding contribution to WM&R, "Worldwide distribution and abundance of microplastic: How dire is the situation?" and was named in in Stanford University's "List of Top World's 2% Scientists".
- **Professor Jeffrey Sachs** was appointed as Honorary Tan Sri Dr Jeffrey Cheah Distinguished Professor of Sustainable Development, Sunway University.
- **Tan Sri Dr Jeffrey Cheah ao, Professor Jeffrey Sachs** and **Professor Woo Wing Thye** received honorary PhDs from University of Cambodia.
- **Jeffrey Sachs Center (JSC)** worked closely with Hong Leong Bank Berhad (HLB) and successfully rolled-out a robust training module for its relationship and credit risk managers.

New Appointments



Prof Leong Yuen Yoong, co-lead for the ASEAN Green Future Project



Prof Tan Sri Dr Noorul Ainur Mohd Nur, former Secretary General in multiple Malaysian ministries

MASTER IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT: FIRST COHORT GRADUATES



The first cohort of candidates enrolled in the Master in Sustainable Development Management in 2019, with the faculty members (6th from left onwards), Professor Leong Choon Heng, Dr Chen Jit Ern, Professor Jeffrey Sachs, Professor Woo Wing Thye and Professor Mazlin Mokhtar.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE first cohort of the Master in Sustainable Development Management (MSDM) programme for completing their studies at the end 2020. MSDM is the first postgraduate degree in Sustainable Development Management offered in Malaysia. It is run by the Jeffrey Sachs Center on Sustainable Development that is based at Sunway University.

The inaugural cohort of 52 students will graduate from this 18-month MSDM programme in 2021. They are working adults from both private and public sectors who wish to acquire expertise in designing and implementing sustainable development practices. Students were predominantly working professionals comprising leaders and management of corporations, NGOs and government; social entrepreneurs; engineers; architects; educators; and environmental consultants, among many others.

One of the graduating students is Steven Sim, Member of Parliament for Bukit Mertajam and former Malaysian Deputy Minister for Youth and Sports. He said, "the programme gave me the privilege to learn from world class thinkers, and experienced practitioners in the various fields of sustainable development. As a legislator and policymaker, I find myself better equipped with up-to-date knowledge, skills and tools to deal with my work."

Another graduate, Tahirah Banu Mohd Ariff, works with WWF Malaysia's Plastics Initiative. "We were exposed to the economic and business considerations to sustainable development in relevance to climate change, urban sustainability, energy, water, infrastructure, biodiversity, land-use, waste management, and business responsibility. As my work involves working with businesses, I am able to apply this knowledge and bring valuable technical insights on addressing sustainability challenges faced by the private sector," she said.

Selvaraj Supramaniam, Director of RAPS Solutions, a renewable energy provider said, "Through the programme I now have in-depth understanding of the importance of balancing economic, environmental, and social factors in equal harmony for sustainable development. Covering multiple disciplines, the programme was well structured to deliver practical strategies required in my field of renewable energy. A team of dedicated and experienced experts also made the programme very interesting."

The MSDM is delivered through an 18-month programme comprising classroom sessions, virtual tutorials, e-modules, research projects; individual and group assignments; and a 12-month program that is fully online with virtual lectures and



tutorials, e-modules and online assignments and research projects. In October 2020, the MSDM programme expanded to include a full online delivery mode, in parallel to the existing blended mode of in-class-cum-online delivery, in order to accommodate students who have difficulties in coming to campus.

We at Sunway University congratulate the inaugural cohort of the Master of Sustainable Development Management, and wish the programme all the success in producing more graduates working towards meeting the goals of sustainable development.

GRADUATION MESSAGES FROM THE TOP



"My heartiest congratulations to the first cohort of Master in Sustainable Development Management. I believe with this new generation of leaders equipped with the knowledge, science and analytical as well as critical thinking skills, we can make real, positive and lasting changes for our nation, our region and our world. I would also like to express my gratitude for the dedication and commitment of our educators in Jeffrey Sachs Center. Advancing the sustainability agenda is not the responsibility of Governments alone. Building a sustainable future requires the commitment of all elements of society—the private sector, academia, civil society, and, of course, every single individual."

– **Tan Sri Dr. Jeffrey Cheah Ao, Founder and Chancellor of Sunway University**



"In the short time since its launch, the program, the first of its kind in Malaysia, has gained international attention that subsequently led to its expansion to a fully online programme that can attract students from all across the world. This to me is a testament to the tenacity of Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah to constantly strive to build human capacities to tackle the societal and environmental challenges in Malaysia, Asia and the world. I see this program growing from strength to strength. My congratulations to its first graduating class of changemakers."

– **Jeffrey Sachs, Chairman of the Center and Distinguished Professor at Sunway University**



"Thanks to the hard work and incredibly ingenious innovations of the instructors, the move to online teaching and online discussion was accomplished successfully and quickly. Academic quality was maintained and physical safety were assured for the MSDM class. I am most proud that the inconvenient campus lockdown has not delayed adversely the completion of study by the first cohort, nor did it diminish the professional and personal interaction among the students and between the faculty and the students. Moreover, this successful adjustment to adversity has motivated the MSDM program to create a second track of the program to reach students who are outside Malaysia through a fully online track. My congratulations to the graduating students who studied hard together under adversity!"

– **Professor Woo Wing Thye, Director of the Jeffrey Sachs Center**



"The journey began in January 2019 with the hope that through learning together, students, faculty and staff will develop ideas and practical solutions to help achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and promote a manner of development that is good for humanity, the environment and our planet. Each graduate, in his or her own way, has gone on to lead organisations in the direction of sustainability. Each will be an inspiration for many more cohorts of students to come. Indeed, it has been deeply gratifying to have worked and learned together with so many in this cohort."

– **Professor Leong Choon Heng, Programme Leader**

SELECTED STAFF PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

2020 Highlights

PROF WOO WING THYE

President, JCI; Director, JSC.

PUBLICATIONS

- With Koh Hock Lye and Teh Su Yean, 'Achieving excellence in sustainable development goals in Sunway University Malaysia', In *Universities as Living Labs for Sustainable Development: Supporting the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals*, World Sustainability Series. (Switzerland AG: Springer Nature, 2020).
- With Goh Chun Sheng, and Amanda Ahl, 'Sustainable Transformation of Land-Based Economic Development in the Era of Digital Revolution'. *Trends in Biotechnology* 39.1 (2021), 1-4.
- With Derek Kok, *The Wide Range of National Reactions to the Common COVID-19 Shock: Observations on Causes and Effects*, JCI-JSC Policy Briefs (2020).

PRESENTATIONS

- With Shandre M. Thangavelu, 'Unlocking the Lockdowns of COVID-19 Pandemic in Malaysia: Impact Analysis of Moving to "New Normal" in Movement of People Using Input-Output Framework', online paper presentation, *The 44th Southeast Asia Seminar: The Covid-19 Pandemic in Japanese and Southeast Asian Perspective: Histories, States, Markets, Societies*, (1-2 March 2021), Kyoto, Japan.

PROF SHANDRE M. THANGAVELU

Vice-President, JCI; Senior Fellow, JSC.

PUBLICATIONS

- With Anbumozhi Venkatachalam, and Fukunari Kimura (Eds.), *Supply Chain Resilience: Reducing Vulnerability to Economic Shocks, Financial Crises, and Natural Disasters*, (Singapore: Springer Nature, 2020).
- With Anbumozhi Venkatachalam, 'Global Financial Crisis and Firm Activities in Global Value Chain: Case of Vietnamese firms'. *Journal of Social and Economic Development* (2021).
- With Wang Wenxiao, and Christopher Findlay, 'Trade, Technology and Labour Market: impacts on wage inequality within countries', *Asian-Pacific Economic Literature* (2021).
- With Wang Wenxiao, and Faqin Lin, 'Global Value Chains, Firms and Wage Inequality: Evidence from China', *China Economic Review*, 66.21 (2020).
- With Fukunari Kimura, D. Narjoko, and Christopher Findlay, 'Pandemic (COVID-19) Policy, Economic Cooperation and the Emerging Global Production Network' *Asian Economic Journal*, 34.1 (2020), 3-27.
- With Hing, Vutha, and D. Narjoko, 'Human Capital and Participation in Global Value Chains: Evidence from Small and Medium Sized Enterprises in Indonesia', *Asian Development Bank Institute Working Paper* no. 1142, Tokyo, Japan.

PRESENTATIONS

- With Woo Wing Thye. 'Unlocking the Lockdowns of COVID-19 Pandemic in Malaysia: Impact Analysis of Moving to "New Normal" in Movement of People using Input-Output Framework', online paper presentation, *The 44th Southeast Asia Seminar: The Covid-19 Pandemic in Japanese and Southeast Asian Perspective: Histories, States, Markets, Societies*, 1 March 2021, Kyoto, Japan.

PUBLICATIONS

- 'Mid-century Sustainability Lifestyle', *The Edge Malaysia*, October 2020.
- Re-opening Amidst Covid-19', *The Edge Malaysia*, 20 July 2020
- With Cheng Mien Wee, 'Accelerating Education for Sustainability: Sunway University, Together with Others', *Higher Education in Southeast Asia and Beyond 7*, The HEAD Foundation, 12 March 2020.

PROF LEONG CHOON HENG

Director, Education and Social Progress Programme, JCI; Deputy Director, JSC.

PROF JAMES CHIN

Director, Governance Studies Programme

PUBLICATIONS

- 'Malaysia: the 2020 Putsch for Malay Islam Supremacy'. *The Round Table*, 109.3 (2020): 288-297.
- 'L'Australia vista dal nord: le relazioni con l'Indonesia e la Malaysia' ("Australia Seen from the North: Relations with Indonesia and Malaysia"), *RISE (Relazioni Internazionali e International Political Economy del Sud-Est Asiatico, International Relations and International Political Economy of Southeast Asia)* 5.3 (July 2020).
- 'The (re) making of Malaysia and its fabulous 1963 promise', In Kean Wong (Ed.), *Rebirth: Reformasi, Resistance, and Hope in New Malaysia* (Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: Gerakbudaya, 2020).
- With Anthony Milner, 'Malaysia: History' in *Far East and Australasia* (52th Ed), Europa World (London: Routledge, 2020).
- 'Race & Religion in Command: Malaysia Returns to Identity Politics', *Global Asia*, March 2020.
- 'Is Malaysia heading for 'BorneoExit'? Why some in East Malaysia are Advocating for Secession', *The Conversation*, 25 Sept 2020.

PUBLICATIONS

- 'The Economic Voting Puzzle of Malaysia', *Spotlight on Research*, 4 (2020), Sunway University.
- 'Malaysia's 2021 Budget Aims to Sustain Recovery Momentum and Kickstart Post-pandemic Rebuilding of the Economy', *ISEAS Perspective Issue 2020 No. 147*.
- 'Some Aspects of Forestry and Economic Development in Malaysia: Past and Present', *Economic History of Malaya Project* (2020).

PUBLICATIONS

- With Sadhan K Ghosh, Ramakrishna Sen, and H.N. Chanakya, *Bioresource Utilization and Bioprocess*, Singapore: Springer Nature, 2020).
- With Paul Selvam Michel Devadoss, Mehran Sanam Bhatti, Santha Chenayah, and Fauziah Shahul Hamid, 'Strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from municipal solid waste management in Pakistan', *Waste Management & Research* (January 2021).
- With Dwi Hantoko, Xiaodong Li, Kunio Yoshikawa, Mika Horttanainen, and Mi Yan, 'Challenges and practices on waste management and disposal during COVID-19 pandemic', *Journal of Environmental Management*, 286 (2021).
- With Jayanthi Barasarathi, 'Clinical Waste Management under COVID-19 Scenario in Malaysia', *Waste Management & Research* (September 2020).
- With Fauziah Shahul Hamid, Mehran Sanam Bhatti, Norkhairah Anuar, and Norkhairiyah Anuar, 'Status of Microplastic Pollution in Aquatic Ecosystems with a Case Study on Cherating River, Malaysia', *J. Eng. Technol Sci.*, 52.2 (2020).

PUBLICATIONS

- Contributing Author. FABLE, (2020). *Pathways to Sustainable Land-Use and Food Systems: 2020 Report of the FABLE Consortium* (Luxemburg and Paris: International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) and Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), 2020).
- With G. Reuben Clements. 'Climate and Environmental Governance: Building Cooler Cities for a Cooler Future', *The Edge Weekly*, 20 February 2021.

PUBLICATIONS

- With Marcela Herrera, Shannon G Klein, Sebastian Schmidt-Roach, Sara Campana, Maha J Cziesielski, Carlos M Duarte, and Manuel Aranda, 'Unfamiliar Partnerships Limit Cnidarian Bolobiont Acclimation to Warming', *Global Change Biology*, 26.10 (2020).
- With Marcela Herrera, Shannon G Klein, Sara Campana, Arun Prasanna, Carlos M Duarte, and Manuel Aranda, 'Temperature Transcends Partner Specificity in the Symbiosis Establishment of a Cnidarian', *The ISME Journal*, 15 (2021): 141-153.

PRESENTATIONS

- 'Turning Up the Heat on Reefs and Retrotransposons', *IMMB Journal Club Talk*, 27 January 2021.

YEAH KIM LENG

Director, Economic Studies Programme

PROF AGAMUTU PARIATAMBY

Professor

ANDREW FAN

Senior Analyst

DR CHEN JIT ERN

Research Fellow

DR CLARISSA LEE AI LING

Research Fellow (2017-2020)

PUBLICATIONS

- M'Cyborgian Episteme as Queer Art-science' in (Eds.) Chris Hables Gray, Heidi J. Figueroa-Sarriera, Steven Mentor, *Modified: Living as a Cyborg*, (New York: Routledge, 2020).
- With Eric Kerr, 'Trolls at the Polls: What Cyberharassment, Online Political Activism, and Baiting Algorithms can Show Us about the Rise and Fall of Pakatan Harapan (May 2018-February 2020)', *First Monday*, 25.6 (2020).

PUBLICATIONS

- With Chin Wei Lai, Christelle Pau Ping Wong, Guan Ting Pan, Kian Mun Lee, Siglinda Perathoner, and Thomas Chung Kuang Yang, 'Efficient SrTiO₃ Nanocubes as Cathode for Rechargeable Aqueous Zinc-Ion Battery', *Journal of Alloys and Compounds*.
- With Tengfei Zhang, Zhaoying Xu, Yongyao Su, Jinbiao Wang, Lu Li, Xiaodong Hou, and Sanjooram Paddea, 'Formation of Tribofilm in the Friction of Fluorinated Diamond like Carbon (DLC) Film Against Ti6Al4V in Bull Serum Albumin (BSA) Solution', *Coatings*, 10.9 (2020).
- 'How Useful are Covid-19 Tracing Apps, Really?' *The Malaysian Insight*, 15 June 2020.

PUBLICATIONS

- *Party-hopping of Lawmakers in Malaysia - A Menu of Remedies*, JCI-JSC Policy Briefs (2020).
- *Reintroduction of Local Government Elections in Malaysia*. Bersih 2.0 Report (Malaysia: The Coalition for Free and Fair Elections (Bersih 2.0), 2020)

PRESENTATIONS

- 'ERC Proposes List of Electoral Reforms', *Radio Interview*, BFM 89.9 The Business Station, 28 August 2020.
- 'Tackling Bread-and-Butter Issues Locally', *Radio Interview*, BFM 89.9 The Business Station, 15 September 2020.
- 'Wacana Bersih#15 Simulasi Pilihan Raya Shah Alam: Kunci Untuk Demokrasi Tempatan? (Bersih#15 Discussion on Shah Alam Election Simulation: Key to Local Democracy?)', *Webinar*, The Coalition for Free and Fair Elections (Bersih 2.0), 16 December 2020.

PUBLICATIONS

- With Woo Wing Thye, 'The Wide Range of National Reactions to the Common COVID-19 Shock: Observations on Causes and Effects', *Journal of Chinese Economic and Business Studies*, 18.4 (2020), 379-383.
- With Woo Wing Thye, *The Wide Range of National Reactions to the Common COVID-19 Shock: Observations on Causes and Effects*, JCI-JSC Policy Briefs (2021).
- *Children and Coronavirus: A Social Protection View*, JCI-JSC Policy Briefs (2020).

PRESENTATIONS

- *Time for a Universal Child Grant in Malaysia*, TEDxSunwayUniversity Talk, 15 September 2020.

PUBLICATIONS

- With Ser Huay Janice Teresa Lee, 'Transforming Exploitative Land-Based Economy to Reduce Terrestrial Carbon Stock Loss: The Case of Kalimantan' In Djalante R. et al. (Eds.) *Climate Change Research, Policy and Actions in Indonesia*. Springer, Tokyo.
- With Osamu Saito and Yoshiki Yamagata, 'Developing Sustainable Bioenergy Systems with Local Bio-Resources: Cases in Asia' *Sustainability Science*, 15:1449-1453.
- With Amanda Ahl and Woo Wing Thye, 'Sustainable Transformation of Land-Based Economic Development in the Era of Digital Revolution'. *Trends in Biotechnology* 39.1 (2021), 1-4.
- 'Transforming Exploitative Land-Based Economy: The Case of Borneo', *Environmental Development*, 33:100487.
- With Takanobu Aikawa, Amanda Ahl, Kanae Ito, Chihiro Kayo, Yasunori Kikuchi, Yasuo Takahashi, Takaaki Furubayashi, Toshihiko Nakata, Yuichiro Kanematsu, Osamu Saito & Yoshiki Yamagata, 'Rethinking Sustainable Bioenergy Development in Japan: Decentralised System Supported by Local Forestry Biomass', *Sustainability Science*, 15:1461-1471.
- Contributing Author. FABLE, *Pathways to Sustainable Land-Use and Food Systems: 2020 Report of the FABLE Consortium* (Luxemburg and Paris: International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) and Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), 2020).

DR CHONG KOK BOON

Senior Fellow

DANESH PRAKASH CHACKO

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DEREK KOK

Research Analyst

DR GOH CHUN SHENG

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PROF G. REUBEN CLEMENTS

Senior Fellow

PUBLICATIONS

- With Jame Schaefer, Kit Magellan, Robert Sluka, Shekhar Kolipaka, Oscar Gonzalez, Akhmal Arif Mohd Razali, and Chantal Elkin, 'The Efficacy of Using SCB Guidelines to Facilitate Conservation Science-Faith Collaboration: Experiences in the Field'. *Frontiers in Environmental Science*, 8 (2020): 558956.
- With David W. Macdonald, Luca Chiaverini, Helen M. Bothwell, Žaneta Kaszta, Eric Ash, Gilmore Bolongon, Özgün Emre Can, Ahimsa Campos-Arceiz, Phan Channa, Andrew J. Hearn, Laurie Hedges, Saw Htun, Jan F. Kamler, Ewan A. Macdonald, Jonathan Moore, Hla Naing, Manabu Onuma, Akchousanh Rasphone, D. Mark Rayan, Joanna Ross, Priya Singh, Cedric Kai Wei Tan, Jamie Wadey, Bhupendra P. Yadav and Samuel A. Cushman, 'Predicting Biodiversity Richness in Rapidly Changing Landscapes: Climate, Low Human Pressure or Protection as Salvation?' *Biodiversity and Conservation*, 29 (2020): 4035-4057.
- With Sheema Abdul Aziz SA, and Marcus A.H. Chua, 'Catch and release: Novel Predation Strategy by White-Bellied Sea-Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) on Island Flying fox (*Pteropus hypomelanus*) Demonstrates Flying Fox Swimming Ability', *Journal of Bat Research & Conservation*, 12 (2019): 64-66.
- With Liew Thor Seng, 'Whittenia, a New Genus of Land Snails from Perak, Peninsular Malaysia (Gastropoda: Diplommatinidae)', *Raffles Bulletin of Zoology*, 35 (2020): 145-148.
- With Nicole S.M. Lee, Adeline S. Y. Ting, Zhi H. Wong, and Sze H. Yek, 'Persistent mosquito fogging can be detrimental to non-target invertebrates in an urban tropical forest', *PeerJ*, 8: e10033 (2020).

PUBLICATIONS

- With Jeremy Lim, *Inclusive Electoral Reforms in Malaysia*, Bersih 2.0 Report, (Malaysia: The Coalition for Free and Fair Elections (Bersih 2.0), 2020).

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- Contributing Author. FABLE, *Pathways to Sustainable Land-Use and Food Systems: 2020 Report of the FABLE Consortium* (Luxemburg and Paris: International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) and Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), 2020).
- With Ho Yi Jian, *Inclusive Electoral Reforms in Malaysia*, Bersih 2.0 Report, (Malaysia: The Coalition for Free and Fair Elections (Bersih 2.0), 2020).

PUBLICATIONS

- With Teh Su Yean, 'Education on Sustainable Development: The STEM Approach in Universiti Sains Malaysia' In *Universities as Living Labs for Sustainable Development: Supporting the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, World Sustainability Series* (Switzerland AG: Springer Nature, 2020).
- With Kh'ng Xin Yi, Teh Su Yean, and & Shuhaida Shuib, 'Sea Level Rise Undermines SDG2 and SDG6 in Pantai Acheh, Penang, Malaysia', *Journal of Coastal Conservation*, 25.1 (2020): 9.
- With Tay Chai Jian and Teh Su Yean, 'Eutrophication Bifurcation Analysis for Tasik Harapan Restoration', *International Journal of Environmental Science and Development*, 11.8 (2020): 407-413.
- With Woo Wing Thye and Teh Su Yean, 'Achieving Excellence in Sustainable Development Goals in Sunway University Malaysia', In Walter Leal Filho et al. (Eds.), *Universities as Living Labs for Sustainable Development: Supporting the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, World Sustainability Series*. (Switzerland AG: Springer Nature, 2020).
- With Teh Su Yean, *Ecological Modeling for Mitigating Environmental and Climate Shocks: Achieving the Aspirations of UN-SDG*. (Singapore: World Scientific, 2021).
- With Teh Su Yean, and Joo, K.S., 'Modeling Effectiveness of Partial Lockdown in Breaking Covid-19 Transmission Chain in Malaysia', in Praveen Agarwal et al. (Eds.) *Analysis of Infectious Disease Problems (Covid-19) and Their Global Impact* (Singapore: Springer Nature, 2021).
- With Teh Su Yean, 'Urban Stormwater Management for Future Cities: Sustainable and Innovative Approaches', in Walter Leal Filho et al. (Eds), *Encyclopedia of the UN Sustainable Development Goals* (2021), Clean Water and Sanitation Series (Switzerland AG: Springer Nature, 2022).

HO YI JIAN

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JEREMY LIM

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Senior Fellow

LOW WAI SERN

Research Associate

PROF MOHAMED SYED ARIFF

Senior Fellow

DATO' DR OOI KEE BENG

Senior Fellow

PUBLICATIONS

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PROF SAIDUR RAHMAN

Senior Fellow

PUBLICATIONS

- With Hong Wei Xian, and Nor Azwadi Che Sidik, 'Impact of Different Surfactants and Ultrasonication Time on the Stability and Thermophysical Properties of Hybrid Nanofluids', *International Communications in Heat and Mass Transfer*, 110 (2020): 104389.
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PROF WONG CHIN HUAT

Professor

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