

CommUnity

Communicating Unity

APRIL 2022



In this issue:

Just 30 Seconds (p2) • Health Facts (p2) • Food Unites (p3) •
Inspirations (p4) • Conversations (p6) • Quick Take (p8)

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED @ YPS

JUST 30 SECONDS

Ramadhan Kareem to all our Muslim friends and families!

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines health as a *state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (illness)*. Wellness is defined as *the optimal state of health of individuals and groups, which is expressed as a positive approach to living*.

In conjunction with the World Health Day celebrated in April, we decided to talk to the Deputy Chairman of YPS, YBhg Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Dr George Chan Hong Nam, a medical doctor by training, on health and the importance of unity in nation-building. We also seek his advice on strengthening unity for the young people of Sarawak.

We share with our readers four Sarawakians who inspire us in their chosen fields, and we hope these personalities could inspire our readers too.

Happy reading and stay safe.

Thank you.

Datu Aloysius J. Dris
Chief Executive
Yayasan Perpaduan Sarawak

HEALTH FACTS



World Health Day is celebrated on 7th April annually and each year the focus is on a specific global health concern.

(For details, please refer to <https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-health-day/2022>)

In 2021, the World Health Organisation (WHO) listed 10 ways to help build strong health systems and healthy populations. These are:

1. Build global solidarity for worldwide health security
2. Speed up access to COVID-19 tests, medicines and vaccines
3. Advance health for all
4. Tackling health inequities
5. Provide global leadership on science and data
6. Revitalize efforts to tackle communicable diseases
7. Combat drug resistance
8. Prevent and treat NCDs and mental health conditions
9. Build back better
10. Act in solidarity

We must not take good health for granted. Just because you're healthy now, it doesn't mean that you'll be healthy forever. It is important that you are very conscious of what good health means. In other words, you must eat properly, have enough exercise, enough sleep and relaxation.

(YBhg Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Dr George Chan Hong Nam,
Deputy Chairman YPS)

SARAWAK HEALTH

(Adapted from **Poket Stats Negeri Sarawak ST1 2021**.)

For details, please refer to www.dosm.gov.my

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH, 2020

Male
74.6

Female
78.4

VITAL STATISTICS 2019

Gross Birth Rate
13.0
(for every 1,000 residents)

Gross Mortality Rate
5.0
(for every 1,000 residents)

POPULATION
2.82 million

Male **1.46 million** Female **1.35 million**

Gender Ratio*: 108

* Gender ratio refers to the number of males for every 100 females.

Population density
23 people per km²

POPULATION BY AGE GROUP (%)

Young
(0-14 years)
22.0

Working
(15-64 years)
70.0

Old
(65+ years)
8.0

HEALTH SERVICES

Hospitals
42

Government Clinics
273

Doctors
4,684

Nurses
9,864

DEATH DUE TO ISCHAEMIC HEART DISEASES

SARAWAK
793

Kuching (192)
Miri (97)
Sibu (90)

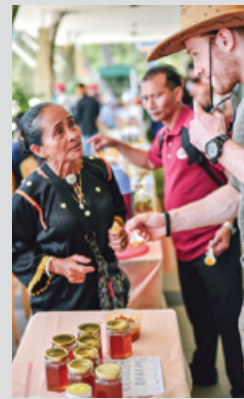
COMMON CAUSES OF DEATH, MALAYSIA 2020

Ischaemic heart diseases remained as the principal causes of death (17%), followed by Pneumonia (11.4%), Cerebrovascular diseases (8.3%), Transport accidents (2.9%) and Malignant neoplasm of trachea, bronchus and lung (2.5%).



FOOD UNITES

Roland Barthes (2008), a French literary critic, described food as **a system of communication, a body of images, a protocol of usages, situations, and behaviour**. In other words, food and people are inextricably connected. Food could function as a marker of communal identity and bring people together, creating bonds, friendships and relationships.



Based on the premise that food unites which would lead to a long-term cross-cultural understanding, the Yayasan Perpaduan Sarawak, Sarawak Development Institute and the Champions collaborated to organise **MakanMakan** in 2016.

MakanMakan is a cultural culinary experience intended as a learning and sharing platform of

Malaysia's diverse food culture, practises, and traditions. It was held in conjunction with Malaysia's four major cultural festivals: Chinese New Year, Gawai Dayak, Hari Raya, and Deepavali.

UNESCO recognised food culture

Kuching is a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy, the first in Malaysia to join some 36 cities around the world to be recognised under the UNESCO's Creative Cities Network (UCCN) for its food heritage and diversity.

(<https://sarawaktourism.com/news/unesco-names-kuching-creative-city-of-gastronomy>)

INSPIRATIONS

As a continuation from the March issue, we posed these 2 questions to 4 personalities:

- Q1. What motivates you to reach the level of success that you have now?
- Q2. As an individual, what can you do to contribute towards promoting and strengthening unity in Sarawak?

GERALD GOH



Gerald has been serving the tourism industry in Sarawak with his diverse field of expertise by promoting Sarawak's rich cultural heritage through arts, crafts, food, design and other creative ventures to the international audience.

After 30 years of selling and sharing the unique Sarawak experience through his network of tour agents and wholesalers, he joined and head the

Corporate Development unit in Sinar Tile Industries Sdn Bhd in 2016 where he collaborated with partners from China, Taiwan, Malaysia and Indonesia.

In 2019, he took up a postgraduate research-based Master in Arts program with UNIMAS as well as getting involved in active research and restoration of Sarawak historical buildings. In 2020, in view of the increasing need for training and capacity building in the industry brought about by the new normal of Covid-19 pandemic, he

ventured into the "Train the Trainer" program and is now a Certified Trainer under the Malaysian Human Resource Development Fund.

Q1. Success in life means different thing to different people. To be successful, one has to adjust or adapt one's roles in society. As a single parent and a role model to my children, I have to do that and I have to always upgrade myself and venture into new areas. I remember this quote on the wall of Sarakraf **whatever your hands find to do, do it with all your might.** I uphold this.

Q2. Unity will always be beautiful in places or spaces of diversity. And within this space, there must be a sense of belonging for everyone, whatever your ethnicity or faith. With that sense of belonging, then we can contribute. Also, we must have a sense of confidence in our own culture and beliefs, only then we can embrace others and contribute effectively to society. Some people asked me, why is it that as a Chinese I am promoting the cultures of other ethnic groups? My answer is simple – I am a Sarawak Chinese and I am promoting my own Sarawak cultures.

Our diversity in Sarawak is so unique – so many ethnicities and cultures, yet we are one. So, let's not lose this.

JASBIR KAUR



A food entrepreneur, promoting Sarawak food through pop-ups and demonstrations, as well as conducting cooking lessons.

In 2015, she participated in MasterChef Asia (where the participating countries were Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, India, China and Taiwan). She came in third place after another Malaysian and Singaporean.

Q1. For me, motivation comes from a strong family support. If my husband and children had not supported me and encouraged me to join MasterChef Asia, I would not have come out of my comfort zone. Other than the family, I believe we must motivate ourselves, set simple goals and achieve them. This will motivate us more. Nothing comes easy. Try and try again and you will succeed. **Age should never be a barrier to achieve anything in life.** I am 62 and I am still learning and pushing myself to achieve the maximum. Think positively and stay healthy. Have faith in yourself and carry on.

Q2. For me, you must understand an individual's religious or cultural practices and even restrictions. I have Malay, Chinese and Indian neighbours and so it is important for me to understand them – their faiths or cultural practices. As a chef, if I were to invite them to my house, I must first of all ask these questions "What can they eat or cannot eat?" "What are they adverse to?". By learning and understanding these practices of my neighbours, I could instil and teach my children about respect towards our neighbours who are different from us. For me, unity starts from home, from the parents.

HJ BUSRAH HJ BUJANG



Hj Busrah Hj Bujang is an entrepreneur who has diverse interests in various fields such as hospital laundry services, paper converting, rice packaging and distribution, surimi and seafood-

related ventures, and property development. The former CEO of Angkatan Zaman Mansang, Managing Director of Faradale Development and LFC Construction, Hj Busrah has a Master's degree in urban planning and real estate development.

Q1. I believe in **finishing what I started**. There is a sense of fulfilment there. Of course, my family plays a part in this motivation. Besides, while the energy and the drive are still there, I would continue to work and contribute to the advancement of our society, through my businesses.

Q2. Most importantly, there must be a high level of tolerance or understanding of other people. We should respect other people's belief or cultural practices/norms.

I do not actually actively promote unity or harmonious relations but based on my experience I can say this. Mix around or do business with people from other background, meet and share music (or any kinds of hobbies or sports for that matter) with people from various social settings. You will learn more about people in this manner, and hence build respect towards each other.

TELEMACHUS LO



Telemachus Lo is the founder and principal consultant at SMT Learning Solutions PLT since 2012. He has conducted

training, speaking and coaching sessions in Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia and Vietnam. Telemachus was the Area Director and Division Director for Toastmasters International District 87 and the current board member of Angkatan Zaman Mansang (AZAM). During his spare time, he loves deep sea fishing, reading and travelling.

Q1. I am inspired to find and pursue my passion by many, such as my parents, family and friends. Most of all, I am inspired by the books that I read especially in the areas of personal development and motivation. I love to read about how one can reach one's full potential, discover one's purpose and passion and pursue them diligently. I believe that if we discover our purpose in life, there lies our passion and the motivation to be excellent will come naturally. So, my mantra for the past 15 years is **Purpose, Passion, Performance**.

Q2. Being a Sarawakian of mixed parentage that is Chinese and Iban, I see first-hand how one lives unity in the family and the community. Respect, tolerance and acceptance of others' culture are paramount to achieving true unity. Being open-minded is important too. I try to promote this in my profession during my training and speaking sessions. Other things include mixing with friends from different race, religion and culture and talking to my kids about them.

C O N V E R S A T I O N S

YBHG DATUK PATINGGI TAN SRI DR GEORGE CHAN HONG NAM

Deputy Chairman, Yayasan Perpaduan Sarawak



YPS : Based on research, the state of health of the citizens, is a good indicator of the level of development of a nation. This includes both the physical and mental health. YBhg Datuk Patinggi, do you think that Sarawak has reached this level of development?

DPTS George Chan : No, I don't think we have, especially in the rural areas. When we talk about mental health, maybe we are not so far behind. But in terms of physical health, especially in the rural areas, we are still behind. This is mainly because of communications - we don't have enough roads, and access to clinics, health facilities and other things. We need to carry out some studies or make an effort to ensure that every Sarawakian undergo health checks every year to assess the level of their own health. We haven't reached that stage yet. Perhaps in the urban area we do since we have access to health facilities much more than in the rural areas.

That's why I think the Premier is focusing on building roads, bridges, and IT infrastructure to make sure that there is accessibility to services for us to attain both physical and mental health.

YPS : The Covid-19 pandemic brings severe health and socio-economic consequences. However, according to reports, the pandemic also brings people together, helping one another irrespective of race or religion. What do you think YBhg Datuk Patinggi?

DPTS George Chan : This is quite right. Adversities or natural disasters like flood or typhoons bring people together. The same goes with the pandemic. It brings people together because we are fighting a common enemy.

The virus doesn't recognise whether you are a Buddhist, a Muslim or a Christian, they attack you. It doesn't distinguish between one from the other.

When you have a common enemy, normally you fight together and you forget what race you are. When somebody is sick, you don't care whether he's an Indian or a Chinese, you have to look after him. That's why I always say *doctors are very open-minded*.

However, we should not depend on disasters or the pandemic to bring us together. It should be a natural thing for us to not think of race or religion when we deal with any problems. We should be very open-minded and very understanding, not only tolerant of other people.

YPS : Unity and solidarity among our people, oftentimes require physical, face-to-face interactions. Now that we are living, and will continue to live in this digital era, how could we maintain or enhance unity and harmonious relations in our country?

DPTS George Chan : I think there is a danger that we do not have enough

social contact and we do not speak to each other face-to-face. For example, my grandchildren. When they want to have dinner with me or when they want to talk to each other, they use their phones. It seems to be common now among young people. It's very important to manage this.

First, of course, to have more interactions. We should be more involved in the **social media** so that people can interact with each other on the social media.

But on top of that, we should make a very **conscious effort to have more social events**. We should have more sports, more dinners, and more festivals. In other words, we should have more interactions that would make people relate better. Kuching, for example, has a beautiful waterfront. Lots of people go there, but they don't interact. They just go there maybe to watch the bridge, or the lights but they don't interact. So, we must make some efforts to have some dances or singing, so that people can talk to each other.

YPS : What advice would you give our readers and our younger generations especially, to sustain or strengthen unity and solidarity in our society?

DPTS George Chan : Young people first of all, should be **very proud to be Sarawakians**, to be aware that we are a state where everybody lives together harmoniously. There are no very obvious differences between people.

Our young people should also be very proud that the people before them have started such a good thing, and

they should follow this up. To follow this up, they must be very open-minded, not only be tolerant. Tolerant to me means that you just tolerate somebody, but what is more important is you must understand each other. You must understand that we are all different, even brothers and sisters are different. So, how do we expect people from a different race, or a different religion to think like us? So, understanding must be there. You have to have your own values and of course, other people have their own values too. You must respect those values. I think those are the basics that our young people should know. They must understand their neighbours.



And the other thing is to **share common values, to share common likes** and to **mix as much as possible with other people**, and to really be very conscious that we must **celebrate our diversity**. To know somebody from a different culture is very interesting - how they live, why they do certain things, why they behave in a certain manner. The more you understand, the more you will like the person. So, young people, the more you mix with other people, the more you will know them. If you just keep to yourself, you will become a lonely person and you missed out on getting to know others.

I am almost 86 now. Well, the more I think about it, the more I feel that

friends are one of the most, if not the most important thing in our lives.

For young people, if you have Chinese or Malay, Indian or Dayak friends, and the more different types of people you mix with, the more variety you add to your life. As the saying goes *variety is the spice of life*. When you meet different people, they add exciting things to your life that you don't perhaps find in your own culture or in your own group.

Let me recap - be open minded, understand people and have as many friends as you possibly can. I can assure you when you grow older, you'll find that, that is the best advice I have ever given you.

YPS : What would you like to add as regard health and unity?

DPTS George Chan : We must not take good health for granted. Just because you're healthy now, it doesn't mean that you'll be healthy forever. It is important that you are very conscious of what good health means. In other words, you must eat properly, have enough exercise, enough sleep and relaxation.

As far as unity is concerned, I think we don't have to actually think of unity everyday. Just act naturally, be yourself. Be friendly to people and understand people, I think unity will come very naturally.

We cannot make unity a dry subject and say, "...you've got to do 3, 4 and 5 to be united..." I think that should not be so. My last advice would be...**be a good Sarawakian**.

QUICK TAKE

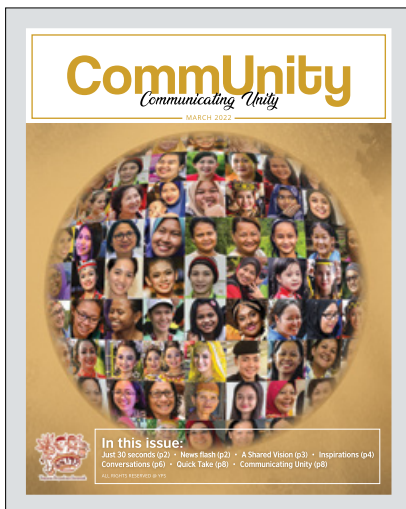
Fauziah Family Café

is the first food court in Sarawak to be recognised as a **Food Court Unity Citarasa Keluarga Malaysia** by the Ministry of National Unity Malaysia in October 2021. The food court has 36 stalls, serving a variety of dishes and hence acts as an informal platform of interaction and conversations for people of various ethnic backgrounds.



Courtesy Fauziah Family Cafe's fb

DID YOU MISS OUT ON OUR PREVIOUS ISSUES?



Contact us

CommUnity is published monthly by Yayasan Perpaduan Sarawak. We welcome any suggestions or contributions to further improve your experience with our newsletter.

Thank you.

Yayasan Perpaduan Sarawak

D270, Level 2, Block D, iCom Square, Jalan Pending, 93450 Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia.
Email: hello@yps.org.my • Tel: +60 82 332 700



YayasanPerpaduanSarawak



unitysarawak

www.yps.org.my