

CommUnity

Communicating Unity

MARCH 2022



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JUST 30 SECONDS

We are now in Q1 of 2022. How time flies indeed!

We would like to mention 2 significant events in the State that have direct bearings to what we do here in YPS – the opening of Borneo Cultures Museum and the International Women’s Day celebration. The former would enrich our cultural and creative experience while the latter provide the recognition and honour to about 1.35 million women (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2020) in the State.

Congratulations to both!

Our Conversations for this issue features YBhg Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri (Dr) Alfred Jabu ak Numpang, *Deputy Chairman of Yayasan Perpaduan Sarawak* and YBhg Tan Sri Dato’ Sri Empiang Jabu, *Advisor of Sarakup Indu Dayak Sarawak & Founder & Chairperson of Iban Women Charitable Trust.*

Both have a wealth of knowledge and experience to share with our readers.

Happy reading and stay safe.

Thank you.

Datu Aloysius J. Dris

*Chief Executive
Yayasan Perpaduan Sarawak*

News flash

SARAWAK NEWS / TOP STORY

Borneo Cultures Museum to showcase Sarawak



The iconic Borneo Cultures Museum stands proudly in the heart of Kuching city.

By: Sarah Hafizah Chandra | March 3, 2022

KUCHING: Sarawak Museum Department will officially launch the biggest museum in Malaysia and the second biggest museum in Southeast Asia, proudly named Borneo Cultures Museum, in less than 24 hours.



Fatimah (fourth right) flanked by Lee (on her right) and Rowry, poses with Sarawak Premier Award recipients (from left) Aisha, Sandra, Raja Noor, Mohamad Razil, Dr Lailie and Dr Catherine.

Sarawak to remove legal obstacles to women’s progress

Philly Kiew

MIRI: Sarawak state government will remove any legal obstacle which holds back the progress of women, said Sarawak Premier and Gabungan (GPS) chairman Datuk Patinggi Abang Johari Tun Openg.

This is in line with the ruling coalition’s principle of women empowerment and recognition of their role and contributions towards Sarawak and the country, he added in his speech yesterday which was read out by Dato Sri Fatimah Abdullah, Minister of Women, Children and Community Wellbeing at the

opening ceremony of Sarawak Women Day 2022 celebrations held in Miri.

The ruling GPS coalition believes that women is a key development pillar in all aspects of state and national development, and this was spelled out in its last state election manifesto, he remarked.

There is no doubt that our women in Sarawak have achieved many successes in various fields. I want to assure you that nothing in terms of legislation will be allowed to curb the achievements of women, he said.

He opined that men and women are equal partners in

any field and the old adage of ‘Behind every successful man there is always a woman’ is no longer relevant and be replaced with ‘Alongside every successful man, there is always a woman’.

Abang Johari, who was represented by Fatimah, was unable to attend the function after been tested positive with Covid-19. He is currently undergoing mandatory quarantine.

The premier said women empowerment has improved leaps and bounds with 38,000 single mothers and low income earning women undergoing training at Wisman Women

Training Centre since 2015, allocation of entrepreneurship grants of RM 3.5 million since 2018, leadership training and other programmes under Fatimah’s ministry.

However, much more needs to be done, particularly in women leadership at public and corporate sector, on the road to gender equality.

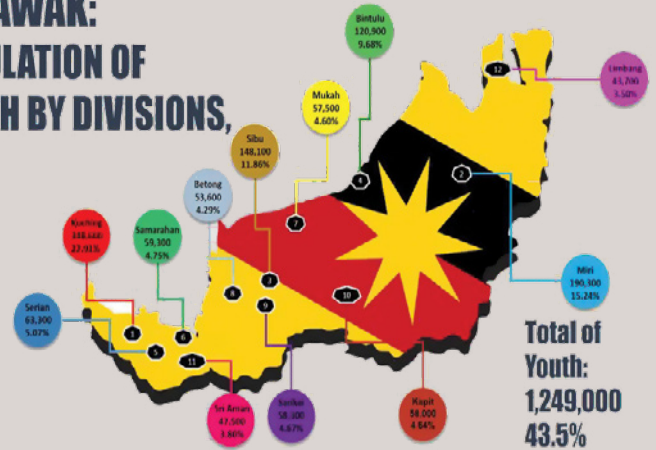
Fatimah in her speech earlier said GPS won a thumping 76 out of the 82 state seats in the last state election where women played an overarching role in shaping the political direction in Sarawak.

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A SHARED VISION



SARAWAK: POPULATION OF YOUTH BY DIVISIONS, 2019



Courtesy of Happenings in Sarawak Magazine

The youths make up about 43 percent of Sarawak's 2.9 million population. Given that huge potential, YPS collaborated with the Sarawak Premier's Office and the Owl & Badger Group Sdn. Bhd. (OBG) to organise the **Project SUARA** (*Strength through Unity, Alliance & Responsive Action*).

This first segment of the project was carried out in Kuching and Miri, with a total participation of 84 young people.

The second segment was carried out in **Bintulu** and **Sibu**, participated by 74 youths.

The project provided the youth with a platform to voice their aspirations and concerns in 5 areas – shared vision and identity, socio-economic development, inter-generational understanding, political participation & activation and religious harmony.



INSPIRATIONS

In conjunction with the **International Women's Day** celebration, we decided to share some inspirational takes from these 4 amazing personalities. We posed these 2 questions:

1. What motivates you to reach the level of success that you have now?
2. How can women promote and mainstream unity in our State?



REBECCA CHIENG

Founder of **Kids Speak**, a centre dedicated to the training of oracy and leadership skills in children (7-17 years), which she started in 2013. On top of the centre's regular programmes, Kids Speak organised advocacy projects which allow the students to use their speaking skills to give back to the community. In 2018 and 2019, Kids Speak partnered with 7 local NGOs to organise "Say Yes", an advocacy event where the students spoke to raise awareness and funds. During the MCO, the centre partnered with the Wildlife Conservation Society to advocate for wildlife.

Q1: My motivation comes from being able to contribute my skills and expertise meaningfully to the community.

Q2: While many women are currently playing a role at the micro level, I think women can play an even more significant role if they are given more leadership positions in the state. Having said that, whether women or men, all genders should play a part in upholding unity.

Founded **Prodigy Music Centre** in 2010, a platform for music education and performing arts. She has had numerous stage performances, both at national and international arena.

Q1: In my world of classical music, musicians would understand and practice the **concept of grit**. This skill technically and artistically cultivates the power of persistence, just like a long-term project. Through music education and performance, I have learned to start and finish a repertoire, a golden rule for musicians. Ms. Irina Titova, my piano teacher/mentor taught me to embrace self-worth and to be independent. Now I am happy to share the joy of music at **Prodigy**, a homegrown brand that I founded in my mom's living room. Take the risk, break the 'rules' with integrity. Just do you.

Q2: Women must work together to collectively address the issues of inequality, injustice, insignificance and diminishment of our rights. To be the voice of our opinions will lead to social change. We must speak up to achieve peace and stability. Unity in diversity runs as deeply in women's veins as it does in men.



SHARNAZ SABERI



KINA@KANSAR KARAR

An agropreneur and the owner of Kina Karar agrofarm, Kina was awarded the **Women Entrepreneur Award 2020** by the Sarawak Premier. She started her business in 2009 and now has 18 products for sale, besides having her own shop, providing training on fertigation and producing her own fertilisers.

Q1: My motivation comes from the desire to see that entrepreneurship is recognised as a profession, not only as a source of income. There are vast potentials and opportunities in the processing and downstream industries, with a limited number of players. In this field, we lack Iban or Dayak entrepreneurs especially women. My motto is that *kalau orang lain boleh, kita juga boleh*.

Q2: Women especially entrepreneurs, could play a role in enhancing unity and harmonious relations in the State by having collaborative programs such as dialogues and trainings as well as mentoring. These could be done with other fellow entrepreneurs from various ethnic backgrounds.

A professional speaker, trainer and life coach and the founder of **POSITIVE IMPRESSIONS**, a human resource training and consultancy company established in 2003. He was Toastmasters International District 51 (Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei) public speaking champion and competed in 2006 World Championship of Public Speaking in Washington DC, USA. He is also the Past Region Advisor for Region 14 comprising all ASEAN countries. He is currently the Honorary Secretary of AZAM Sarawak.

Q1: I was highly inspired by my late mother, who was a teacher, in terms of wanting to contribute to society by making a difference through knowledge sharing to people from all walks of life. I believe that in life, one must do something with a higher purpose and thus creating meaning in what one does. My late mother also shaped my character and outlook in life. She taught me from a very early age that the most important contribution we can make in this life and the greatest success we can enjoy comes from helping others achieve their goals. My mother demonstrated this value every day. She is the reason my profession has become helping others realize their dreams.

Q2: Women, based on research make better managers. This has been proven in many parts of the world and through various studies. Whenever given the opportunity to lead, they accomplished so much better than their male counterparts. It is also evident in Sarawak where women are able to influence and drive leadership with impact. I hope that our government, especially Sarawak would give more leadership positions to women. In terms of promoting and mainstreaming unity, I believe it is their second nature. Women generally, have an unconditional love for their children and this is later translated into a harmonious societal and communal relations.



**MOHAMAD ARIFF
AZAHARI**

Conversations

For this issue, we talked to two prominent leaders in our state – **YBhg Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri (Dr) Alfred Jabu anak Numpang**, the Deputy Chairman of Yayasan

Perpaduan Sarawak and **YBhg Tan Sri**

Dato' Sri Empiang Jabu, Advisor to Sarakup Indu Dayak Sarawak (SIDS) and the Founder and Chairperson of Iban Women Charitable Trust (IWCT). Our discussion centres on Sarawak's unity journey as well as the significant role of women in promoting and enhancing unity in the State.



YPS : As the former Deputy Chief Minister and a respected leader of our country, how do you see unity and harmony among the people of Sarawak now as compared to say 30 years ago? Has development or progress in our State affect this unique relationship among Sarawakians?

DPTS Alfred Jabu : We must accept the fact that in this dynamic and very competitive world, we are subject to changes which at times happen very abrupt, without prior warning. We must always be prepared. The advent of television, multimedia, ICT and artificial intelligence created great influence on our livelihood and survival. Free mobility facilitated by improved communication infrastructures enables rapid movement of people throughout the world and this has significant impact on people. For example, changes of attitude, changes in adaptation, inauguration of new ideas, which can cause serious influence on our customs, traditions and cultures.

The beauty of our Sarawak people is that we still attach very high value to our traditions, cultures and customs as displayed in our everyday life. We still maintain inter-community, inter-religious harmony, mutual respect, and tolerance, which are sometimes very much lacking in many parts of the world. Sarawak has always been known as the model state of peace and harmony, and Kuching city as the most liveable, peaceful city in Southeast Asia. We're very proud to be part of it.

In Sarawak, I have observed and I am convinced that there is a strong bond between peace and political stability which are conducive to generate economic opportunities and prosperity. Many

programs are being organised by the government such as the **Sarawak Cultural Symposium** which recognised the contribution from each community as an important ingredient for us to live together, to guide us so as to observe and respect one another.

I am 81 years now and I find myself comfortable to be present in any part of Sarawak and being accepted by all the various communities, because among other things, we learn to respect one another, which is a very important element in human relations.

YPS : Yayasan Perpaduan Sarawak has played a significant role in contributing towards a better understanding and a harmonious relation among Sarawakians through its various initiatives. What other relevant roles do you think that Yayasan Perpaduan Sarawak can play?

DPTS Alfred Jabu : I always believed that good things are positively contagious. Similarly, good deeds are important ingredients to build a harmonious society and I am very much guided by the very popular Malay saying *buat baik berpada-pada, buat jahat jangan sekali*.

I am very happy to see that the programs and activities organised by the YPS is to gather especially the younger generations, to appreciate all the good inheritance from all the good deeds of their ancestors so that they will not lose sight of their roots. Our multiracial, multi-religious communities in Sarawak have always been guided by good moral principles because we have *adat*, customary law and traditional cultures where the community still strictly adhere to. It is important I feel

that YPS continues to design discussion or forum and formulate its program and periodically invite knowledgeable personnel from many organisations conversing on **Syariah Law, Majlis Ada Istiadat** and **Mahkamah Bumiputera** to enable the participants to understand and broaden their knowledge on our local customs, *adat* and traditions because these three organisations (Syariah Law, Mahkamah Bumiputera, Majlis Adat Istiadat) are the stronghold of the native communities, which form a majority of the population in Sarawak.

Once we are able to get the younger generation to realise this very important treasure, which must not be lost, they will be in very safe hands. I appreciate the efforts by YPS in continuing to collect stories which are put into publications, books and journals. There is a lot of good things that YPS has been doing. I am very happy I am part of this.

YPS : The **International Women's Day** is celebrated every year on 8th March. This year the theme is #BreakTheBias. What are your thoughts on how women could contribute towards unity and harmonious relations in Sarawak?

TSDS Empiang Jabu : While I was still actively involved with women's organisations like SABATI, Sarakup Indu Dayak Sarawak, Wanita PPB, we have always had a day to celebrate women. The celebration itself is a sorority and a binding factor for unity among women. The theme *#breakthebias*, if it is biased towards women of course, cut it off. If it is biased towards men cut it off because you should not see gender as a barrier in terms of job qualification, academic performance and economic prosperity. In today's world you achieve not because of your gender, but on your personal merit. How could women contribute towards unity and harmony?

Women play an important role in our society. If women do well, the society does well. I firmly believe that. Women, because of our natural attributes, we are different from men. It's like the book *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*. Women as a mother, we always have that nurturing, loving, caring attitude.

Women are closer to our children. We see them every day. So, while we look after our children, with that nurturing and nursing attitude that we have, we can tell our children how to behave towards other people, how to react to your teacher, how to be polite, and how to understand the difference between them and their friends from other races, other cultures. Children can soak things very easily. Say for example, if you say something bad about your neighbour who is from

another race, they remember. So, it comes from the home, from the mother, to bring in harmony when living in our community.

Women now are more educated, more professional. We interact with other people, with other races and we begin to see that the women's roles become wider in society. It is my hope that more women will be placed at the forefront of this changing landscape in Malaysia and be given due recognition of the breakthrough that they make. Indeed, the International Women's Day is a very good platform for us to recognise the role of women in terms of unity and harmony.

DPTS Alfred Jabu : The **International Women's Day** with the theme, #breakthebias, celebrated on 8th March 2022 is a very important event and must be given full support. The whole world is conscientiously moving towards creating many opportunities to generate equality for all genders. It is sad to notice that in the past, the role of women has been overshadowed. I observed that in Malaysia, more and more women are being appointed into the Board of Public-listed companies. This is very good. I'm always impressed to see that and then in the past several years, when I officiated during UNIMAS' University convocation, I noticed increasing number of women graduates. In fact, they outnumbered the male graduates. It is indeed a very encouraging trend and I can foresee in the next 20-30 years, Sarawak will benefit from this important reservoir of highly talented and very capable manpower resources. I am very pleased that YAB our Premier in his visionary foresight for the future role of women in Sarawak, has many noble programs to empower women in the overall development for Sarawak to achieve Vision 2030 and beyond.

I strongly advise women throughout Sarawak and the younger generation of ladies to work hard with dedication to strive and endeavour in every domain to compete with our men to acquire knowledge and skill in many professions, including in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, ICT, multimedia and artificial intelligence. In the job markets, there are strong preference for candidates who possess multi-skilled disciplines with integrity and dedication.

They already have the intelligence, discipline and integrity, which can be fully harnessed to acquire knowledge. This can be summed up as **dedication is D, intelligence is I, discipline is D, integrity is I, knowledge is K**, the word **DIDIK** – a Malay word which means to educate, to nurture and also to guide. When you can harness dedication with intelligence, synergise it with

discipline for integrity, you acquire knowledge; nobody can take knowledge out of you.



So, you become a very useful citizen, this is my great hope for both women and men in Sarawak for which we have got a lot of potentials to develop, and I believe the infrastructures laid by the government especially educational infrastructures will pave the way far beyond what we have expected and far beyond what other people have expected even though we have started relatively late in developing our *wilayah*.

YPS : Given the current norms and constraints, what challenges do you foresee in the future, when we talk about unity and solidarity?

DPTS Alfred Jabu : I foresee that our people in Sarawak to be resilient, and successful in sustaining unity and solidarity over the challenges of time. It is very important for the rakyat to cultivate and nurture strong dedication for synergistic teamwork; and develop high degree of professionalism with discipline of loyalty and integrity. We must always be thankful to God Almighty for the many development infrastructures designed by the government to facilitate and accelerate implementation or development transformation programs throughout Sarawak. We have noticed no areas are left behind. It takes time, probably over a span of at least 15-20 years, but the start has been initiated. And the momentum is good. We believe that when we do good things, God Almighty will bless us with all the good things; when our leaders have good intentions, the state of Sarawak will be blessed, and everybody will be blessed.

TSDS Empiang Jabu : I totally agree with what DP said about our harmonious State. If you put together, his life and my life, we have 70 over years of building and contributing to Sarawak. And we both want the state of Sarawak to be united, the people to be united. We are happy to be Sarawakians, but inside each one of us we are proud to be what we are, our ethnicity. We cannot get rid of that. The challenge that I see now is how to bring in the inclusivity or inclusiveness for all the people in Sarawak. The government policy must be inclusive. Like what DP said, education, transport and whatever utilities there are, should be spread throughout the country. We have to share our

wealth, the Sarawak's wealth for everybody. *To be fair to all, not just seem to be fair, but be fair.*

YPS : Please share with our readers some words of advice to strengthen unity and harmonious relations in Sarawak and the country.

TSDS Empiang Jabu : We must all realise that regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or educational background, when you are a Sarawakian, young or old, male or female, you must have a real desire from the heart to be united regardless of the problems and challenges that we face. The **need and the desire to be united should be the key thing that holds Sarawak together**. Remember this - live with it.

DPTS Alfred Jabu : For me it is very important to widen my sphere of knowledge and contact through **education**. Therefore, I place a big importance on education. Parents must give very high priority for their children to have good education.

The importance of **knowing and understanding your own cultures, traditions and customs** because as reported by UNESCO, each year civilisations disappeared over the face of the world because nobody wants to speak their own languages. If their languages disappear, the rest of their civilisations will also disappear. Hence, the importance of making efforts to know and learn of the cultures and traditions of the communities. We live in a plural society, if we do not know the sensitivities of each custom or religion, how can we work together? We must protect our inter-religious and inter-racial sensitivities so that nobody feels *tersinggung* or hurt.

Respect the freedom of religion and the venues of worship. Do not let the subject of religion creates negative feeling amongst Sarawakians. Respect and acknowledge major festivals like Hari Raya, Gawai Dayak, Chinese New Year, Christmas and others.

Be a **role model** for others - a role model for Unity, Solidarity and *Keluarga Malaysia*. Encourage the spirit of voluntarism among the youth so that they are trained from an early age to work harmoniously within the team. Respect the elders with courtesy and humbleness. The Cultural Symposium I think should be continued because with changing times we want to remind the younger generation of *cara-cara bersopan santun* instead of being distracted by their gadgets.

The last one, **do not quarrel**. Quarrel destroys *keluarga bahagia*, quarrel destroys our civilization.

QUICK TAKE

Based on the Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka's database, there are 42 known living languages in Sarawak, and these do not include the various dialects and sub-dialects. Some of the words or vocabularies are brought into the mainstream official use such as *jerayawara*, *ruai*, *merarau* and *awah*.

BAHASA SUMBER	HURAIAN	TAKRIF
JERAYAWARA - roadshow (Dialek Melayu Sarawak)	<i>jeraya</i> (jalan raya) <i>wara</i> (perihal menghebahkan)	<i>Persembahan, pameran, ceramah dsb yang diadakan oleh seseorang atau sekumpulan orang (penyanyi, ahli politik dsb) yg berkunjung dari satu tempat ke tempat lain dengan tujuan memberikan hiburan, menjelaskan sesuatu isu kepada orang ramai, mempromosikan sesuatu dsb; persatuan itu melaksanakan program pendedahan dan pendidikan, termasuk beberapa siri ~ yang meliputi seminar dan pameran.</i>
RUAI - booth (Bahasa Iban)	-	<i>Ruang menunggu, ruang legar</i>
MERARAU - makan tengah hari (Bahasa Iban)	-	<i>Makan tengah hari</i>
AWAH - koridor (Bahasa Kayan, Kenyah, Bidayuh, Lun Bawang & Kelabit)	-	<i>Ruang panjang yang menjadi lorong tempat lalu lalang di bahagian tengah rumah, seperti di rumah panjang</i>

Courtesy of Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka Sarawak

Communicating Unity



CommUnity believes in 3 tangible actions:

- i. open discussions or conversations with a broad spectrum of our society on topics relating to unity and contemporary concerns;
- ii. sharing of stories from our community on initiatives they have taken to live harmoniously with and among each other.
- iii. providing our readers with the necessary knowledge to be more informed advocates or proponents of unity.

CommUnity is published monthly by Yayasan Perpaduan Sarawak. It was officially launched by the Premier of Sarawak on 7th December 2021.

We welcome any suggestions or contributions to further improve your experience with our newsletter.

Thank you.

Contact Us

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