

*Advancing Rural Community Resiliency and Sustainability in Asia*  
**12<sup>th</sup> AsiaDHRRA General Assembly**  
7, 8, 10 December 2020  
Online via Zoom

**HIGHLIGHTS OF OPERATIONS/ PERFORMANCE**  
**(2019-2020)**

**I. Developing and strengthening rural communities / rural peoples' organizations (RPOs)**

**Empowerment of Malaysian Grassroots Women CSOs as Agent of Development and Change in Strengthening Women's Role in the Society**

The Overall Objective of the Action is to strengthen capacity of grassroots women CSOs through civic education in promoting gender equality in Malaysia.; to create platforms for the engagement between CSOs and Political Leaders in facilitating women's participation in decision making process; to increase overall awareness on gender equality in Malaysia

Developed Modules on 4 key areas in Capacity Building—Legal Literacy Training, Organization Development Training, Civic Engagement Tools and Monitoring Tool which will be used to train identified women CSO leaders and political leaders.

**Community Based Paralegal**

**I. Empowering Community Paralegals in Engaging Government Agencies to Address Statelessness Caused by Gender Inequality Practices**



The project aims to train Community Paralegals to be more confident and have increased knowledge to monitor administrative procedure and engage government agencies on statelessness to ensure equality between women and men in their ability to confer automatic citizenship to their children.

120 community based paralegals are being trained to engage government agencies to address statelessness caused by gender unequal practices. Previously trained paralegals have

successfully bridged the communities in need with direct assistance of mapping and registration with 3,000 over stateless applicants successfully acquiring nationality.

**II. To reduce drop out and education aid for stateless children**

DHRRA's continuous effort to ensure the right of stateless children to access formal education which supports the implementation of SDG 4: "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". The project has been able to increase stateless children receive admission in school , Stateless children enrolled in school receive education aid (new and continuing students), SDG is localized among relevant stakeholders to orient and ensure right to education and identity is realized for children, Teachers, Parents

Teachers Association (PIBGs), CSOs and community leaders are capacitated to assist stateless children to access education and health care.

In the last 2 years, 360 stateless children have been supported with levy fee to access education in government institution. The number stateless children being denied access to education due to inability to pay fee has reduced with no new cases reported in the mainstream media in West Malaysia.

### **Empowering through Entrepreneurship Skills**

#### **I. Engaging in Rural Indian Entrepreneurs – UNMAI**

Realising the potential of Social Entrepreneurship and community betterment it brings on 22nd April 2015, DHARRA took a huge leap in facilitating the growth and progress of the Indian



entrepreneurs in Malaysia with the establishment of the United Malaysian Indian Entrepreneurs Chamber (UNMAI Entrepreneurs). Through this initiative, a business referral network is created for the local Indian entrepreneurs to engage and exchange ideas, business links and experiences. With a newest initiative of 1 Family 1 Entrepreneurs Campaign.

1500 women and 100 Male Entrepreneurs under UNMAI- Vanaigakalam Initiative

#### **II. Building Resilient Communities by equipping targeted B40 entrepreneurs affected by COVID19 pandemic**

A community-based mentoring approach is being utilised in empowering the targeted B40 entrepreneurs by engaging a team of 12 Community-based Mentors, identified from our existing pool of community leaders. We have prioritized community leaders who have gained the trust of their community and aspire to make a difference in their community, in the selection of the Mentors. In addition, targeted B40 entrepreneurs with viable knowledge, skills and guidance to generate sustainable income by strengthening the performance of their existing business or starting a new business endeavors.

12 Community based Mentors and 120 targeted B40 entrepreneurs are being trained with this initiative. The project is in the initial stages of equipping b40 entrepreneurs to be acquainted with digital and internet knowledge.

### **COVIDCAREMY**

Mooted by the grave plight of the marginalized and vulnerable communities, DHRRA Malaysia sprung to action by leading a coalition of NGOs in supporting the affected communities by



addressing their basic needs during the difficult time through the initiation of COVIDCAREMY on 23rd March 2020. COVIDCAREMY is mobilized and supported by a coalition of NGOs, called the Marginalized Community Support Group, which consisted of 12 local NGOs at the time of inception, and has grown in strength and numbers in the subsequent weeks to form a partnership of 20 community organizations working for a mutual cause. The affected communities is assisted with food baskets, medicine aid, mental health support.

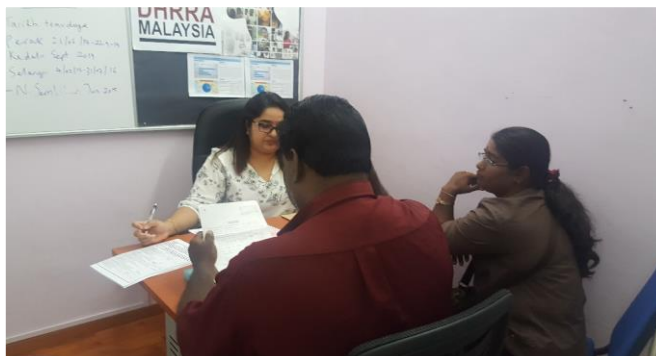
Till date 9,007 families and 38,992 individuals have benefitted through this initiative

### **Free Psychological Support**

Community members are able to seek free counseling through our Community Call Center, referrals, outreach program via mobile community unit, media and online request. We have a

team of qualified multilingual psychological counselors providing assistance in English, Tamil & Bahasa Malaysia. These experts provide the counseling through face-to-face session, tele-conversation, call-back, online session and group-counseling as per the seekers' convenience.

Some/Most cases include depression, discordant couples, parent-child relationship issues,



domestic violence, addiction, interpersonal communication, divorce, and etc. Our experts also provide follow-up-assistance make necessary referrals on case to case basis.

5 of pro bono counsellors, 1,611 communities were reached out. DHRRA's free mental health access continues to be an vital source of support for grassroot communities who continues to face social stigma and financial barriers in accessing mental health. Some of the notable success includes, individuals facing domestic abuse who has been successfully placed in protection and provided with recovery support. Couples needing divorce advises and relationship support have been assisted. Youths in addiction has been placed in rehab for recovery by providing counselling to family members to ensure they are supported and prepared with the side effects of substance abuse withdrawal.

### **Free Legal Advise**

Community members are able to seek free legal advice through our Community Call Center, referrals, outreach program via mobile community unit, media and online request. We have a team of qualified multilingual lawyers; English, Tamil, Mandarin & Bahasa Malaysia. These experts



provide the legal advice through face-to-face session, tele-conversation, call-back, online session and group-counseling as per the seekers' convenience. The issues include divorce, contract, employment and accident claims SOCSO, housing, finance and etc. Our experts also provide follow-up-assistance make necessary referrals on case to case basis.

We also conduct talks to raise the awareness of the community on legal issues order to equip them with knowledge and skills to overcome it. By assisting one to address the legal issue(s),

DHRRRA hopes to elevate a sense of wellbeing.

5 pro bono lawyers, 2,082 of communities benefitted with free legal advise. Outcome of the initiative have been observed that communities we work with are able to build their lives back after being well informed of the legal context of the issues they are facing, whether it is to do with bankruptcy, unlicensed money lenders, inability to pay housing or hire purchase loans. DHRRRA also leads them to initiatives by government agencies to assist communities who are impacted with extreme financial conditions.

## **II. Engaging public programs/sector and private program/sector**

### **Policy Advocacy on Statelessness**

Continuous awareness was raised among youths and public.

Increased awareness among policy and decision makers issues and challenges facing persons rendered stateless due to gaps within policies and practices of nationality law.



Apart from reaching out to member of parliaments of affected constituencies, our breakthrough engagement came with Tan Sri Muhiyiddin Yasin (TSMY), Minister of Home Affairs and continued involvement of the ministry on the issue of statelessness:



1. Stateless people Heart to heart session with TSMY- 11 July 2019 For the first time in the government interaction on the issue of statelessness, the Ministry of Home Affairs organized a session to meet families of stateless persons which provided them with the space to express the gaps of the SOPs that limits opportunities for stateless persons in accessing basic rights.

2. (<https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/483414>)
3. TSMY attendance (Malaysia first attendance to speak on statelessness) with DHRRA rep (Maalini Ramalo) at United Nations High Level Event on Statelessness in Geneva, Switzerland – 7 Oct 2019 Following on, the Minister of Home Affairs attended the meeting in Geneva and shared a landmark speech acknowledging the issue of statelessness and citing it requires global attention. The speech also mentions government of Malaysia intention to address stateless children rightful access to citizenship should they have at least one Malaysian parent. (<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2019/10/09/issue-of-statelessness-needs-global-attention>)
4. Commitment from TSMY and his ministry- 28 Dec 2019 In December 2019, then home minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said the ministry has improved the SOP for citizenship applications of individuals below age 21 to be conducted in a faster and fair manner unlike previously where it could take up to 10 years, with the timeline under the SOP from 2020 onwards to be three months and a half months at the NRD and eight months at the Home Ministry. He had also said the updated SOP would now provide reasons for rejection of citizenship applications.  
<https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2019/12/28/home-ministry-acts-to-speed-up-citizenship-applications/>)

### **The Rise Malaysia**

The Rise Malaysia re-echos the vision of the global Rise movement to see the re-emergence of the Tamils as respectable global people. The movement engages relevant private and public sector around 3 key themes: Empower, Connect, Growth which will be delivered through the realization of the following objectives: (1) To EMPOWER Tamil-speaking entrepreneurs and professionals with the required skills, knowledge and expertise to emerge as the leader in their respective field; (2) To CONNECT worldwide Tamil-speaking entrepreneurs and professionals through the establishment of a global business referral network; (3) To reflect on the future direction of the movement to foster the GROWTH of the global Tamil-speaking community.



Since inception with over 25 countries participation, 3 physical conferences has been organized (Madurai, Chennai – India, Kuala Lumpur – Malaysia). In addition during the pandemic 3 online conferences has been organized by the host countries (India, North America, Gulf Countries) The initiative, has connected many Indian origin businessman for a common purpose and have encouraged supporting many underprivileged youth in their business startup.

### **III. Strengthening your organizational capacities and services to your partners**

#### **Community Leaders Empowerment**

The project aims to develop the capacities community leaders, Non-Governmental Individuals (NGIs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs and Rural Peoples Organizations (RPOs) through the empowerment and unleashing of human resource potentials of local people; and to promote a stronger participation in policy-making processes through effective lobby and engagement with policy makers and the donor community

at national, regional, and global levels. action is aimed to train and guide community leaders and secondliners to provide efficient services for the social protection of their community. It involves disseminating skills and information to the community leaders and secondliners who then will be able to identify the problems at community level and address them with the guidance from DHRRA Malaysia. DHRRA seeks to create the enabling environment and guide the next batch of leaders to be more equipped with skills and knowledge to continue the social protection of the vulnerable community members.



263 participants consisting of community leaders, Non-Governmental Individuals (NGIs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Rural Peoples Organizations (RPOs) have benefitted. Some of the important takeaway we have been able to document is that many community leaders and organizations are leaving great impact within the community they work in including very viable and cost effective best practices, however due to lack of coordination among the organizations had led many repetitive initiative in the community over a longer period of time for community development.

### **Capacity Building for members of organization**

Through our funding partners such as the UN agencies, EU, Commonwealth Foundation, ASIADHRRRA, NAMATI SEA and other regional networks, DHRRA Malaysia has been benefiting from the capacity building initiatives/workshops of its project members. We acknowledge the capacity building approaches were able to minimize an over-reliance on outside experts as sources of knowledge, resources, and solutions to community issues.



Encouraging the project members to take action on local issues affecting their community members themselves.

### **IV. Other key significant achievements**

*(Discuss if there are any other major achievements that you wish to highlight.)*

The other notable accomplishment DHRRA Malaysia has achieved in the last two years are:

Published the following Handbooks for public dissemination:

1. Handbook on Understanding Statelessness
2. Handbook on Resolving Statelessness
3. Guidebook on ensuring enrolment of stateless children to schools



After many years of using conventional reporting formats for advocacy purposes, understanding the possibility of law makers not having the time to read through the reports. That encouraged DHRRA Malaysia to build infographic handbooks to ease and quick grasp of basic gaps in the issues the organization was advocating for. We have noted significant improvement in the discourse policy makers were having with us citing their understanding the handbooks has offered them. The similar strategy was also used for community stakeholders to facilitate their understanding and advance DHRRA Malaysia's work.