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Malaysian Red Crescent Society



RED

Leaving No One Behind.

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Prologue

To introduce the Malaysian Red Crescent Society's Red Gallery book to everyone, a detailed compilation of the initiatives and achievements for the past year during the pandemic. It is a great pleasure, and I feel called to congratulate and appreciate the important work and contribution of all those who has done so much, and knowing how much has been achieved.

MRCS main vision is to prevent and alleviate human suffering. The past year has proven to be challenging times for our country and we as an organisation that strive to serve must follow suit to accomplish our dreams. The moto "Leaving no one behind" regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic status must accompany all our efforts. Ensuring the vulnerable are adequately protected is a humanitarian imperative. We continue to serve the community every day, whether for disaster relief and recovery work, disaster and emergency related training, health services, and the 24-hour ambulance service, empowering youth or disseminating international humanitarian law.

That being said, I believe our most significant role in this community is to continue spreading the spirit of volunteerism, and community-mindedness.

Dato' Seri Diraja Tan Sri Tunku Puteri Intan Safinaz binti Almarhum Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah

DKH., DKYR., SHMS., SSDK., PSM., PAT., JP., Hon. Ph.D (UUM)., Hon Ph.D(KUIN), Hon. PH.D (UPNM)
Tunku Temenggong Kedah

National Chairperson of Malaysian Red Crescent Society.

01

Introduction

The pandemic has brought us a long way.

In the spirit of **Leaving No One Behind**, this book exposes photographs and untold stories throughout the process and progress of reducing the devastating effect of the pandemic.

The theme is the stories surrounding us at Malaysian Red Crescent Society (MRCS), who was given access to these stories through humanitarian aid through our line of work. From setting up a team of just 5 man to commanding a nationwide operations to reach the vulnerable and marginalised communities.

It explores the hidden stories of individuals who are a part of our society, yet tend to be neglected because of how our systems are built and how we perceive our surroundings.

Ultimately, to empower the vulnerable and marginalised communities across Malaysia. It's time to appreciate those who have done so much.



ProtectHealth - Ensuring No one Gets Left Behind

Dato' Dr. Anas Alam Faizli

Incorporated on the 19th of December 2016, ProtectHealth Corporation Sdn Bhd (ProtectHealth) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of ProtectHealth Malaysia, established under the Ministry of Health, Malaysia (MOH). As a not-for-profit company, ProtectHealth coordinates, administers and manages initiatives related to financing healthcare services as mandated by MOH. ProtectHealth is the healthcare scheme administrator for Skim Peduli Kesihatan untuk Kumpulan B40 (PeKa B40), an initiative to address the growing trend of NCDs, specifically among the lower-income population.

Through the pandemic, there was a silver lining that offers opportunities for us to accelerate public-private partnerships through the implementation of the National COVID-19 Immunisation Programme (PICK). We have catered COVID-19 vaccinations to adults, adolescents, and children by providing private medical practitioners inclusive of general practitioners, specialist clinics ambulatory care centres, private hospitals, healthcare companies and Health NGOs for PICK.

As of 14 March 2022, PMPs and Health NGOs under ProtectHealth have successfully contributed over 36.5 million doses of vaccines or 48.8% (2021) and 80.0% (2022) of the total 68.2 million doses of vaccine involving more than 2,500 Pusat Pemberian Vaksin (PPV)s nationwide. The effectiveness and success of Malaysia's "whole-of-government" and "whole-of-society" approach in the vaccination programme are evident and seen at the end of PICK programme which also is by far the largest ever government programme and public-private partnership ever executed in the country.

ProtectHealth is very grateful for the support and participation of all NGOs in ensuring the smooth promotion and implementation of the vaccination programme for the benefits of the B40 groups. Last but not least, we would like to thank MRCS for filling the gap to vulnerable groups and to ensure that no one gets left behind including migrants, undocumented, stateless, and indigenous community.

THE BEGINNING.

Beginning of the Pandemic

11th March 2020 was the day The World Health Organization declared a pandemic, as its first such designation since declaring H1N1 influenza a pandemic in 2009. A week later, **18th March 2020 is when Malaysia announced it's very first lockdown.**

The beginning of this pandemic has brought life across most of the world to a near-standstill. It has profoundly altered the lives of countless people. With most countries reacted to the outbreak, most were locked down to prevent the spread of the very infection disease and international travel ceased. As most countries struggled to contain the virus, scientists on the other hand were rushing to identify treatments that worked against the Covid-19.

With many vaccines approved, countless doses have been administered, while the vaccines offer a glimmer of hope for a return to normal.

02



As the COVID-19 lockdown mandate put in place, majority of Malaysians were encouraged to stay at home to break the COVID-19 chain.



Photo by Nazir Sufari



Photo by Nazir Sufari



With some across the country struggling to strive through a day with the whole situation. Our dearest front liners were there at the forefront to help those in need.

COVID- 19 mass testing was held to find people with active infection to interrupt the spread of a strange disease. Those who were having symptoms had to get themselves checked often, just to be sure.



Photos by Ahmad Yusni



Photo by Ahmad Yusni

Malaysia goes into total lockdown in March 2020, amid worsening COVID-19 outbreak worldwide.



Barbed wire fencing were installed at Enhanced Movement Control Order (EMCO) operation areas due to large cluster outbreaks, aiming to facilitate a more systematic monitoring by Armed Forces and police.



Photo by Nazir Sufari



Photo by Nazir Sufari

Many attempted to keep in touch with loved ones on the other side of the fence as front liners began to try to contain the virus. Most people struggled to get enough food for the day and some for the week.





Movement and travels were restricted throughout the country.



A total stand-still at malls.



Photo by Nazir Sufari

Amidst the uncertainties, the fear, and the pain, we stood firm and fought.



Malaysians were not refrained from socialising. The look on their faces say it all; they miss their friends and relatives.

VACCINATION BY THE MALAYSIAN RED CRESCENT SOCIETY (MRCS)

The journey that entails.

Malaysian Red Crescent Society (MRCS) was the first NGO in Malaysia who were given the mandate to help the country move forward with the vaccinations.

July 6th, 2021, the programme began with the home-to-home vaccination that was aimed to vaccinate the vulnerable, bedridden and the physically disabled.

Then soon after, we were given the permission to vaccinate more, which covers the Orang Asli's, migrants, asylum seekers, the homeless and even the adolescents throughout Malaysia.

03





3.1 The Bedridden & Physically Disabled.

A elderly woman being vaccinated at her home by a MRCS volunteer.



Photo by Maryam Nasir



Malaysia's Health Director-General, Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah supporting MRCS on the deployment of the mobile home-to-home vaccination program for at risk and vulnerable communities.



No One is Safe, Until Everyone is Safe.

Story by Suhana Sidik, A Malaysian Red Crescent board member

While vaccine is abundantly available in Malaysia, it is not necessarily accessible to all. Providing vaccine equity became our mission.

6-July-2021. The historic day when the Red heroes went home-to-home to support Protect Health vision of leaving no one behind, and we were the first Civil Society to lead the vaccination of the underserved.

Our first vaccination recipient for the day was Mak Cik Yah, a 93 year old woman. She looked frail but face beaming with eagerness. Her whole household - children and grandchildren were vaccinated. She was the last one standing, and shielded the very least. She reminded me of my late mother, also bedridden. Ma was wheelchair bound for 15 years before spending her last 2 years in this world confined to the bed, fully bedridden and half paralysed. She had a major stroke that her ability to remember her kids, were almost non-existent. Her 120kg body makes it hard to bring her outside, without having 3 of my brothers carrying her out. Mobility is a huge privilege.

But then whether you are at home, or in the hospital, you are exposed. She had sepsis, even when she was barely out. I lost my dad to sepsis. This strong army man who in the end fought and failed against infection in what was supposed to be the most secure place. Being strapped onto the bed, barely moving, does not mean that you are not exposed.

Before we boldly took the humanitarian call and insisted for MRCS to run vaccination for the bedridden and physically disabled, we had to beat the scepticism that they are not exposed to covid since they are home-bound and don't go out. But sometimes we forget that everytime the healthy ones come back home, we bring outside influence. And exposed our loved ones. Vaccine equity must be made for all.

And this is true even for Mr H, who had schizophrenia and was locked inside his room so that he does not run out of the house and self-hurt. It was for his own safety. I don't blame them, I have a little sister, dyslexic, and would run amok around the neighborhood at times when she gets into her mood. So, I understood, not judging. While Mr H looks healthy, he was not mentally ready to go and face the crowd and follow the normalcy of the vaccination centers. The family, all fully vaccinated, was truly appreciative. Without the red heroes going to the houses, they would probably still lock him in his room, without vaccine access. It's the reality. No malice, not ignorance and not because of vaccine hesitancy, just 'logistics'.

We spent the next few days climbing up the stairs from one flat to another at times, to more comfortable houses, but we bear no discrimination. Disability does not affect gender or status, and we vaccinate everyone regardless. In states where religious belief was the deterrent, we produced videos from the mufti and community leaders to advocate for vaccine access, and sometimes we received not so encouraging messages. It has been a challenge preaching the same broken record over and over, but we persevere in the hopes that the benefit will soon prevail.

We visited Mak Cik Yah for her second dose 3 weeks later, and her face lit up when she saw our red vest. Thankful, and grateful. Her lack of mobility was no longer a deterrent for vaccine equity because truly, **no one is safe until everyone is safe.**





Priority was given to those who do not have the means to travel to and from vaccination centres.

Photos by Miera Zulyana

A bedridden women being vaccinated by Tan Sri Jemilah Mahmood, MRCS' Honorary Advisor.



Photo by Maryam Nasir

A volunteer doctor consulting a bedridden patient on the risk and benefits of the COVID-19 vaccine.



Family members comforting the loved ones during the administration of the COVID-19 vaccine.

It hurts to see our loved ones in pain, which is why we do everything we can to protect them.



Photo by Azneal Ishak

Vaccination at the Deaf Community

Story by Azneal Ishak, a photojournalist

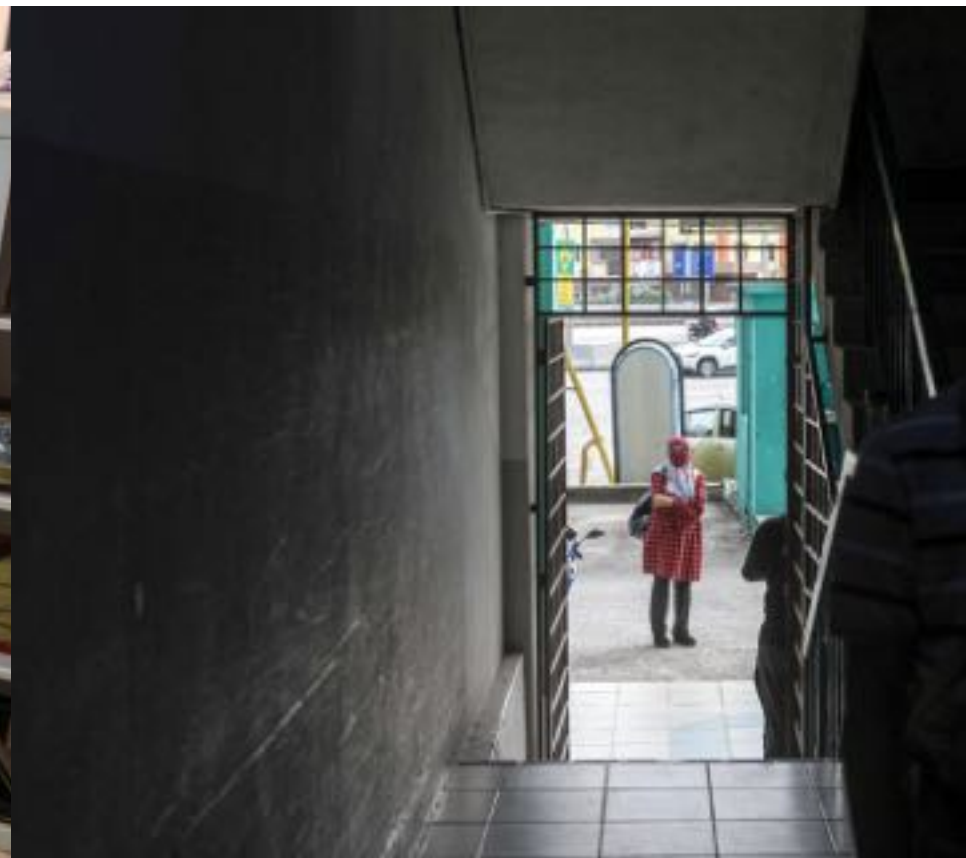
According to the Malaysian Health Public Department's 2021 report, over 40,000 deaf Malaysians had voluntarily registered for vaccination. Our deaf citizens' society consists of 15 centres all over the country.

An interesting insight, the vaccine programme for the deaf community organised by the Malaysian Red Crescent Society with more than 1000 databases were opened for registration. Vaccination programs for the deaf are different from the others because they need an interpreter to communicate, hence more precautions need to be taken into account before vaccinating them.

With the interpreter and medical experts on the field, they can detect the conditions of deaf people before receiving their vaccine. Communication is key to allow everything to work with a sign language interpreter.

These vulnerable groups often join the activities organised by the Persatuan Orang Pekak Malaysia, at the state level such as Malaysian sign language activities. The Malaysian signature session has been crowned as a native language. It also allows deaf people to communicate to meet non-deaf citizens, at the same time, removing the gaps of communication between the society.

A pop-up vaccination centre was held at the Malaysian Federation of the Deaf to vaccinate the deaf community.





Nursing homes was one of the places that the team at MRCS was attending to, ensuring that the vulnerables are not left behind.



3.2 Orang Asli

MRCS team travelled to an Orang Asli village at Tapah, Perak to administer COVID-19 vaccinations for at risk and vulnerables.



Photo by Ahmad Zamzahari



Photo by Ahmad Zamzahuri

Tapah, Perak

Story by Ahmad Zamzahuri - A photojournalist

COVID-19, no country is spared from its devastating effect, Malaysia included. The way of life has changed tremendously after having to live with it for nearly 2 year now. Facemasks, and hand sanitizer is a must needed “necessity” when we go out to prevent the deadly spread of the COVID-19 disease. Aside from self-care measures, vaccination has proven to be one of the main method to cut the infectivity of the COVID-19 virus.

The Malaysian government has initiated an aggressive campaign to inoculate its’ population with the COVID-19 vaccine. Beginning with its’ frontline forces and now with the pediatric population. From the greater interiors to the urban regions, no one is excluded from the initiation.

In a recent mission, Malaysian Red Crescent Society aided Tapah District Health Office for an outreach program to serve the indigenous population (adult and children) in Pos Musoh , approximately 50 km from Tapah township, Perak.

The program was aimed to accomplish at least 200 vaccines amongst the indigenous population in 3 villages (Pos Musoh, Lubuk Gaharu and Who Intek) that is accessible only by 4wd vehicles. The villages are situated about 25 kilometers from the main road.



Photo by Ahmad Zamzahuri

Outreach vaccinations are always challenging, the team at MRCS had to open the back of their trucks at an Orang Asli village in Pos Musoh to administer the vaccines.





Photo by Ahmad Zamzahuri

The team had to endure a journey of nearly 2 hours of harsh terrains. The program was gear towards making vaccines accessible for these population as they don't have the capacity to receive they vaccination in centers that are located in town. The majority of these population doesn't own a smartphone what more the My Sejahtera application and also internet connectivity is null at these region.

What's interesting about the outreach program is that, when our volunteers arrived at the location, the indigenous villagers were already in line to receive their vaccination. Most if not all of them are keen to receive their primary inoculation as well as the booster dose. They believe in the benefits of the vaccination and that it can reduce severity of the COVID-19 pandemic even though the COVID-19 infectivity rate is low in their village.

Even parents were excited to get their children vaccinated under the PICKids program. The PICKids program is to ensure accessibility of vaccines to the minors.

Beside the vaccination, volunteers from MRCS as well as doctors from the local Health District Office provided health education to the villagers. COVID-19 Home Care Kit was distributed to the villagers as means of prevention and continuous education of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Leaving No One Behind.



Photo by Ahmad Zamzahuri

An Orang Asli woman who willingly walked a mile to get her booster shot since she's missed every other opportunity previously.

Photo by Amy Ng



Photo by Amy Ng



Portraits of the vaccinated Orang Asli in Tapah, Perak.

Photos by Amy Ng



3.3 The Migrants & Asylum Seekers



A man peeking through the window to watch as the others were getting their COVID-19 shots.

Photo by Maryam Nasir



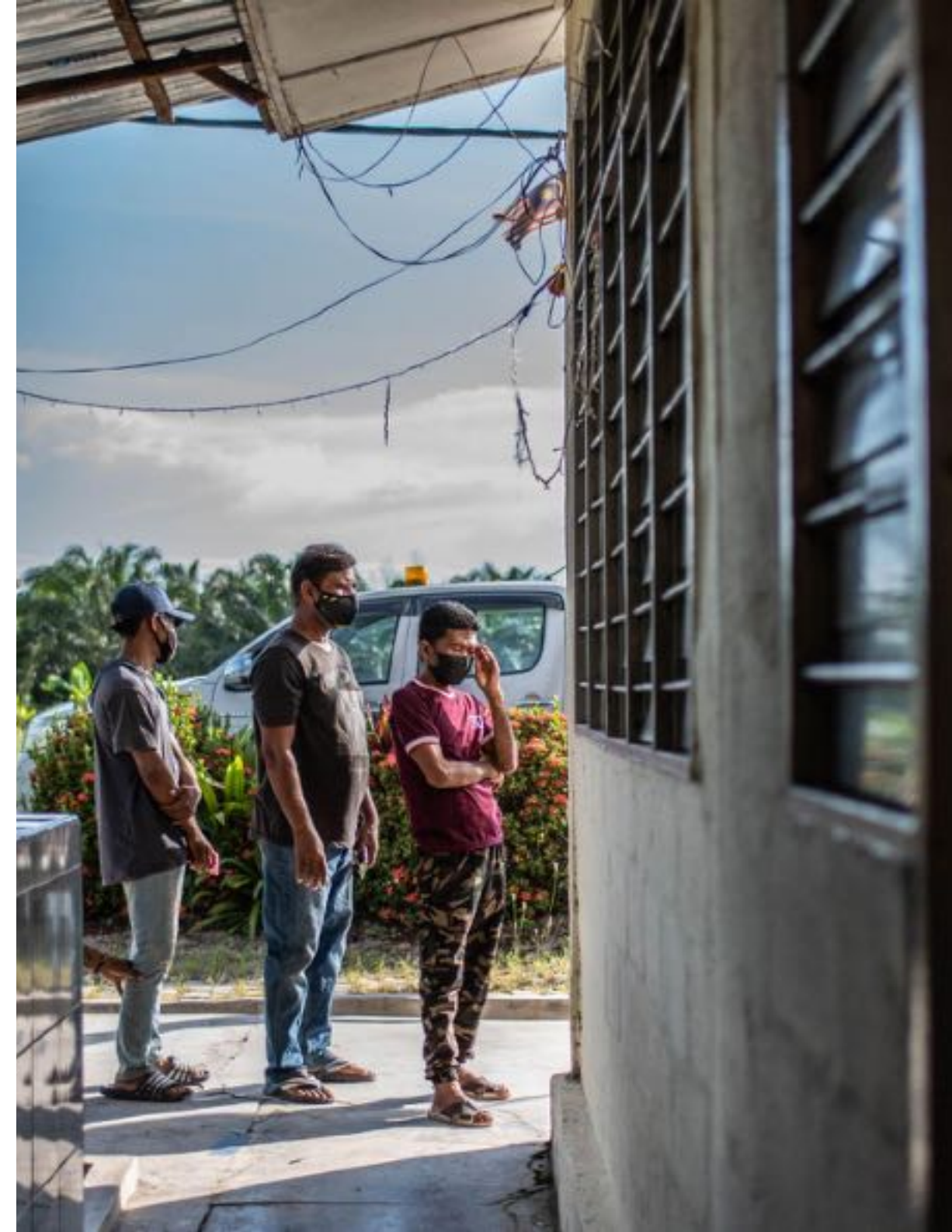
Photo by Puah Sze Ning



Among the vaccination locations was a small cabin with quite a handful of migrant workers at a construction site, where majority of the vaccinees worked at.



Photo by Miera Zulyana



COVID-19 has affected people differently, and it may have the greatest impact on the marginalised communities.

The very least we could do is provide equal medical care to all.

Despite the hot scorching sun, they patiently wait to get their vaccines.

Photo by Maryam Nasir



MRCS at Pahang opened up their office doors as a temporary “Pusat Pemberian Vaksin” (PPV). Many recipients waited at the doors to be vaccinated.



Many people jumped at the chance to get vaccinated in order to keep their jobs after it became a requirement.

The goal was not only to save lives, but also to protect livelihoods.





Photo by Puah Sze Ning.

The team travelled far, to hard to reach places, and even to Rumah Kongsu to vaccinate Indonesian workers who was in desperate need of the vaccine in order to get to work.





A collaborative work with the Vietnam Women Association Malaysia, where they have gathered at Pudu, Kuala Lumpur for their vaccinations.

On Day 1 itself we at MRCS, had 200 over pax of Vietnamese attending for their vaccine appointment.





The team hiked to a remote Cambodian settlement to ensure the inclusion of all migrants in the COVID-19 vaccination roll-out.

Photos by Puah Sze Ning





***Liber8**, an organisation dedicated to empowering youth to take action against human trafficking, forced labour, exploitation and discrimination among trafficked victims, migrant workers and refugees.*

***Sahabat Wanita Selangor**, an organisation aimed at building a society that provides equality and justice for all, regardless of their class or gender.*



The team, which consisted of MRCs, Liber8 and Sahabat Wanita Selangor, arrived to a sawmill at a remote location to vaccinate Indonesian migrant workers.





The Malaysian Red Crescent teamed up with the Royal Thai Embassy to organise a “pop-up” vaccination centre and vaccinate Thai expatriates living in Kuala Lumpur.





The Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur was one of the embassies who opened their doors for us to vaccinate the Indonesians living in Malaysia.

They had live streams to encourage their nationalities to come forward.



Photo by Puah Sze Ning

*A portrait of a
Burmese woman
waiting for her turn
to receive the Pfizer
COVID-19 vaccine
shot at Cameron
Highlands, Pahang.*



Photo by Nazir Sufari

Leaving No One Behind

Story by Nazir Suhairi - A Photojournalist

Cameron Highlands is one of Malaysia's most important places for food. Workers on the farms are a mixture of migrants and locals.

The migrant workers are mainly from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Myanmar and Nepal. Achieving herd immunity is very important to this vulnerable group, upon which our main supply of vegetables depends.

"Malaysian Red Crescent Society (MRCS) is the first humanitarian organisation mandated by the COVID-19 immunisation task force to provide vaccination for migrants.

"We will vaccinate everyone regardless of whether they are documented. We want to make sure everyone around us is safe.

"The MRCS will also vaccinate migrant workers with no documents because our policy is vaccine is for everyone," said Suhana Sidik, the board member of the MRCS.

In June 2021, prices of vegetables from Cameron Highlands shot up 40% after the enhanced movement control order (EMCO) was imposed on several areas including Kg Raja (Sg Ikan), Blue Valley, Sun Park, Corina Village Park and Kg Raja New Village.

About 65% of vegetable farm operators in Cameron Highlands were affected at that time. The MRCS works together with the Pahang health department and the local communities to vaccinate migrants in Cameron Highlands.

With a targeted approach, the MRCS has successfully vaccinated 400 migrants in the region and will continue the effort for the coming weeks.

The collaboration between the Ministry of Health and Protect Health Corporation Sdn Bhd (Protect Health), is the first of its kind to be led entirely by a humanitarian organisation.

To date, the MRCS has successfully vaccinated more than 7,000 migrants from at least 10 different ethnic groups in Kuala Lumpur, Selangor and Sabah. As part of the ongoing vaccination effort, the MRCS has also assisted the inoculation of the bedridden, physically disabled and Orang Asli communities.

The group has also started with the vaccination of school children to support the wider vaccination campaign throughout the country to achieve the MRCS objective of leaving no one behind and to ensure the vulnerable are adequately protected against the COVID-19 virus.

Leaving No One Behind.





The Lady in Red

Story by Maryam Nasir - An MRCS Volunteer

I met the Lady in Red through Malaysian Red Crescent.

I took the liberty of approaching her as we were getting ready to head to another location when I heard her and a group of women whispering hurriedly. I was met with teary eyes as she said, “kakak, boleh ka untuk dapat vaksin kalau tiada langsung apa-apa kertas?” (“Can I get vaccinated if I don’t have any documents?”)

Her journey as a migrant began when a group of Cambodian men came to her village and asked if she wanted to work in Malaysia. She said yes. She also stated that she had never seen her passport until now. The only thing she remembered was taking a passport photo.

With no choice of her own, her first employer was extremely abusive. She said if you’re lucky, you’d get treated nicely but she wasn’t one of the lucky ones. “Kalau saya tak lari, saya boleh mati” (“If I hadn’t fled, I would have died”) she said. The statement rang in my ears as I teared up.

There is already stigma and discrimination toward migrants (particularly those with darker skin) which has been exacerbated by the pandemic and those who are deliberately fueling the narrative.

I wondered how helpless and afraid she must have felt when confronted with a hefty dose of unfamiliarity and pollution. A cacophony of city noises and foreign languages. One that she chose to go through in order to live a better life. And at the end of the day, aren’t we all looking for the same thing?

The communication barrier between us two was imminent but she had basic grasp of Bahasa and that was enough. The fastest vaccine appointment was located half an hour away and understandably, she was reluctant to accept the offer because she had never traveled past 10km on her own. She was afraid, given her lack of papers and as one would in an unfamiliar territory.

With so many forces at play which I have little control over, instead of focusing on feeling helpless, I concentrated on what I could do. All the deeds I did for her was essentially to make her feel like she belonged.

People have asked why I went out of my way to help her. For me, the answer was straightforward.

If I were in her shoes, these acts of kindness give me hope. And sometimes, that's all that matters.

Quintessentially human, we see those who are different from us as inferior. We engage the unfamiliar with apprehension. But we can also make a conscious effort to approach them with the same kindness we would show to our loved ones.

The Lady in Red and I occasionally sends voice notes to check on each other, and she never fails to ask whether I've eaten. Most importantly, I'm glad to see that she's happy at her new job.



Until Everyone is Safe

Stories by Puah Sze Ning, A Migrant Vaccination Program Coordinator

A long queue of unvaccinated migrants and refugees had formed outside the community hall. The sun was getting hotter, beating down on the crowd. Our vaccination team was only just setting up. I felt the dread of the worst nightmare for every vaccination centre happening: overcrowding.

It was October 2021, and social media has been abuzz with viral videos of long queues and packed crowds of non-Malaysians rushing to get their Covid-19 vaccinations. While the scene unfolding was nowhere near the scenes in those videos, it could have easily escalated to that.

The volunteers looked at me, waiting for instructions, while I struggled to decide which of the 20 things on my checklist to start delegating. Ibrahim, a young Somalian refugee volunteer, saw my moment of panic and said, “Don’t worry, I know what to do.” And he did. He led the other volunteers and started troubleshooting and registering the crowd for their vaccinations, and slowly but surely, moving the queue outside steadily along. He was already an old hand, coming out to volunteer every week for several months. “Teamwork makes the dream work” was a slogan often used in the Somali Refugee Center’s weekly Instagram story updates on Ibrahim and other volunteers hard at work in the iconic red MRCS vest. Cheesy? Perhaps. But it rings so true. Because without the migrant and refugee grassroots groups convincing and registering unvaccinated people to step up for vaccinations, without them running the crowd control and joining the MRCS team to run the operations, the programme would not have been possible.

Meet some members of the team that made the dream work.



Madam Chang, the Vietnamese nurse

Closer to home is the Vietnamese community working in Malaysia. Madam Chang moved to Malaysia in the 90s and is one of the longest serving nurses at the Institut Jantung Negara (IJN).

Through The Vietnamese Women's Association of Malaysia, Madam Chang helped MRCS organise the first migrant vaccination programme on 4 September 2021. In just a remarkable two days, she booked a venue in an empty mall and mobilised her community for vaccination.

Working closely with her embassy, she has helped to provide over 1000 doses to her community.

Ustaz Rafik, the Rohingya preacher

The Covid-19 pandemic shone an unwanted spotlight on the Kuala Lumpur wholesale market in Selayang. Declared a hotspot due to Covid-19 cases detected among undocumented workers who make up the majority of the workforce in the market, the community endured long periods of strict lockdown and loss of work and income.

Was it succumbing to public stigma to feel apprehensive about running a vaccination programme there, or just good common sense? Ustaz Rafiz did not discount concerns over crowd control, as the vaccine at the time was highly coveted because people could not resume work until they were vaccinated.



With a capable team of volunteers living there, Ustaz Rafik mobilised the community around the Selayang market and in nearby townships for vaccination. It was no easy feat, and one that could only be undertaken by Ustaz Rafik who is not only charismatic but also consistent, having served the community there through humanitarian work for over a decade.



Salah, the Somali driver

Part of a team of 12 regular volunteers from the Somali Refugee Community and Youth Empowerment Group is Salaax. In Somalia, Salaax was a trailer driver. He arrived in Malaysia four years ago, fleeing an ongoing civil war. Here he swapped his eight-wheeler for an eight-seater Perodua Alza.

Salaax drove the team across Kuala Lumpur and Selangor to volunteer at various vaccination locations, from a squatter in an oil palm plantation to a vegetable farm in Hulu Selangor. While the team took turns to volunteer, Salaax came out almost every week since he had to provide transport.

Beyond his burly physique and stern expression, he never ran out of warm smiles and energy even after long and tiring days. Always the first to arrive and last to leave, he is never idle and always making sure not one chair is out of place.

Dafa, the Indonesian Construction worker

“Akk... ada vaksin tak? Kak.... kalau mengandung boleh ambil vaksin tak?” (Sister, is there vaccine? Sister.... can pregnant women get vaccinated?)”

My phone chimed almost every night for a few months with audio messages from Dafa, asking questions about vaccinations and about where our next outreach is.

The youngest of three siblings, Dafa came to work in Malaysia as a tile layer to provide for his ageing mother back home in East Jawa, Indonesia. He was vaccinated at one of our pop-ups in Kuala Lumpur. It was in a simple tent in a playground in a housing estate. But he said it was such an easy process and he was treated so kindly, that he decided to bring his friends and colleagues for their vaccinations with MRCS.

Every weekend, he would bring people for vaccination wherever we were. From Ampang Jaya, Kayu Ara Damansara to Pudu, he would bring a car full, a van full, or even a bus full of people. Most of them were from his workplace, the construction site of 1Razak Mansion, a high rise public housing flat.

If there was a loyalty card for our vaccination outreach, his would be stamped full. He eventually acquired a new nickname in the *kongsi*, “Ejen Baksin” (vaccine agent).

“Some of them said they can collect some money amongst themselves to pay me. But I didn’t accept. It would be illegal, right? Anyway, I just want to help them. Someday I may need help myself too, right? Life is hard for us here, we need to help each other out,” Dafa shared.

And so he did. Dafa brought well over 100 people for vaccination in a short three-month period.



Ramesh, cashier by day, activist by night

In less than two months after arriving from Nepal, Ramesh was wrongly arrested by Malaysian authorities on the pretext that he was working without a permit. Confident that he would be out of lockup by the next day, Ramesh unexpectedly spent a harrowing six months in jail.

The ordeal which would have broken many migrant workers, instead, left Ramesh with a new sense of purpose, to ensure that other migrants in the same predicament are able to seek the help they need.

Ramesh resumed his life in Malaysia out of prison with valour, excelling in his position as a cashier and helping other Nepali migrant workers after work hours.

Some of his volunteer work include buying flight tickets home for injured workers, helping them solve disputes with their employers and even making funeral arrangements for those that lost their lives working in Malaysia.

Ramesh easily rose to the occasion during the Covid-19 pandemic, first with helping with food relief and later, helping spread information about Covid-19 vaccine and helping them get vaccinated at MRCS' migrant vaccination program.



Sipah, The Indonesian cleaner

Sipah cleans homes and offices in a growing township in Klang Valley. If offered by her clients, she will fill up her water bottle with drinking water from their filtered dispensers before heading home. Because home, which she shares with other migrant workers working either in the same industry or in construction, is in an old oil palm plantation with no running water. For washing and cleaning, they would collect rainwater or use water from a well. But for drinking, they would normally purchase bottled water, just to be safe.

Her neighbours live in a makeshift house like hers, made from recycled wood and zinc. Like her, as daily wage earners, they struggled during Malaysia's Movement Control Order to curb the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, as they were not able to work. With no income at that time, she had to swallow her pride and ask her clients to spare some food.

Sipah came here from Madura in East Java, Indonesia, 15 years ago to earn a living to send money home for her widowed mother and children. When the lockdown lifted, she emphasised with some of her undocumented neighbours who are unable to resume work as they were not yet vaccinated.

Working closely with Our Journey, a local NGO, she mobilised a vaccination outreach in her *kongsi* (squatter) to vaccinate over 100 people.





Photo by Maryam Nasir



Portraits of migrants at Cameron Highland, Pahang.

Photos by Maryam Nasir

Somairah, The Rohingya

Amy Ng, A Communication Officer

As we all know, Malaysia is a multicultural country, populated with diverse cultures and traditions. Malaysia is also one of the major destinations for migrants due to its economic opportunities, as well as a haven for a substantial number of irregular and vulnerable migrants seeking protection from violence, persecution, and violations in their home countries.

Being a part of the mission to vaccinate the migrant community, or as we prefer to call them - the vulnerable community, I had the chance to meet a young Rohingya woman named Somairah (not her real name).

Our vaccination center for the day was the home of Jamal, the Rohingya Community Leader, and as usual we started off with the process of getting information from the vaccines. Somairah, was one of those standing in line, with a baby of about a year old in her arms. When we asked for her information, she didn't exactly respond well.



Photo by Maryam Nasir



Photo by Azneal Ishak

“Hello, hello kak, ada card dengan telefon? Mau register untuk MySejahtera”, I said. She could only stand there staring at me, while the other Rohingya ladies tried to translate what I needed from her. Jamal then came along and said, “Oh, dia punye dengan suami dia, nanti I panggil dia punya suami datang.” Jamal knew what we needed, as he witnessed us attending to a few others before Somairah. We then waited patiently for her husband to arrive while attending to others.

Suddenly, our doctor on-duty turned around and asked me, “Is she pregnant? She does seem like she is.” I could not answer as it was not very evident that she was, if indeed at all, but I made a mental note to ask her later.

Soon after, Jamal approached us as he arrived with Somairah’s husband. “Kak, ini suami dia” he said. When asked, “Hello, nak tanya, berapa umur dia?”, there was a moment of hesitation from the husband before he answered via Jamal, who was the translator for the day. She was only 13.

Shocked but calmly, I then turned around to ask her husband politely, “Isteri ada baby?” Jamal then translated my question to the husband and after a brief conversation, turned around and nodded his head, confirming that she was indeed pregnant.

This unfortunately meant that Somairah was not eligible for the vaccine. We had to turn her away.

A little shocked at the revelation that this mother of a year-old baby, with another on the way, was only 13 years old, I could only gather myself to continue doing what we came here to do and vaccinate the rest of the community.

At the end of the day, we ensured that everyone was okay and started to pack up to leave. Jamal approached, “Kak, sorry saya pun tak tau dia ada baby, tapi dia dengan suami tak faham Bahasa.” He then continued, “Oh kak, dia pun ada sikit mental tak baik, sikit susah mau cakap.” Not wanting to offend our gracious host and his community, I could only answer back, “Tak pe, kita faham.”

For a few days, I pondered upon that moment, questioning, and wondering how a young girl who at the age of 13, barely even a teenager, could be the mother of a very young baby and soon to be of two. I wanted to do something about it, but what? How do I help Somairah without disrupting her life? She is not a citizen of Malaysia, and any action I take could lead to her deportation, or worse – detention. I had no answer.

After sharing this story to friends and family, I eventually concluded that civil society plays a huge role in ensuring that Somairah, young girls like her, and everyone from these vulnerable communities is looked out for and given - at the very least – basic education.

Inclusivity is the key to this narrative. Education and knowledge are what we need to share with everyone to create a better society, regardless of citizenship, background, race, and religion.

I hope Somairah’s story will educate the rest of us, the “educated”, that there are human beings out there who are not of this country, who need our help and support.

Leave No One Behind.



Photo by Nazir Sufari



Photo by Azneal Ishak



Photo by Miera Zulyana



Only a few had the luxury of waiting for their vaccinations in favourable conditions. Regardless of the heat, rain or other weather conditions, many people are willing to go through it for the sake of the vaccine.

Photos by Miera Zulyana



Photo by Miera Zulyana



While, friends of the community, Mr Ong Kian Ming worked towards getting people to vaccinate themselves, and ensuring their digital certificates are updated too.

Photo Credit of Francis Choo





3.4 Homeless



Photo by Ahmad Zamzahuri



Despite the rain, the team, along with Dapur Jalanan KL, continued to vaccinate everyone who came for the vaccines.

Photos by Maryam Nasir



3.5 East Malaysia



Photo credit to MRCS Sabah state.

In Numbak, Sabah, volunteers crossed difficult roads in order to reach the 'kampungs' to vaccinate the community.



Volunteers work hard to try to persuade the community to vaccinate themselves. Leave no one behind in all efforts.



Meanwhile, in Sarawak, booster dose vaccination is given to the elderly, bedridden and physically disabled patients at Moyan and Stapok, Kuching, Sarawak.

This is in line with the spirit of Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) that no one shall be left behind and discriminated in the fight against the pandemic.

Photo credit to MRCS Sarawak state.

COVID-19 HOME CARE KIT

In general, a significant number of deaths happen outside of hospitals.

With the rising COVID cases in Malaysia, there is an urgent need to ensure care is given starting from home.

Proper care can be given through a home-monitoring approach to ensure that their condition does not deteriorate while they are doing quarantine at home.

04





Photo by Ahmad Zamzahuri



Reaching out to even the most remote of community ensuring awareness of the disease.



Photo by Ahmad Yusni



Educating everyone, including the Orang Asli's is vital, that is so home-monitoring can be done in a proper manner.



Photo by Ahmad Yusni



A MRCSS Negeri Sembilan state member patiently teaching the community leader how to use an oximeter.



Portraits of happy recipients of the Home Care Kit.

THE UNSUNG HEROES.

We are all pretty limited in our physical powers. Yes, we cannot see through walls, we cannot fly. But what's unbounded in us is our ability to see injustices and to take them on, and often at great risk to ourselves.

These unsung heroes are the representation of the best of who we can be.

Their efforts to save people's lives demonstrates our values as a society and they often serve as powerful examples of how to make a positive difference in the world.

Their actions speaks louder than words, and can inspire others to do something heroic too.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented health and economic challenges, especially for the vulnerable among us. What's good, is that many people from all walks of life are doing their part to help them.

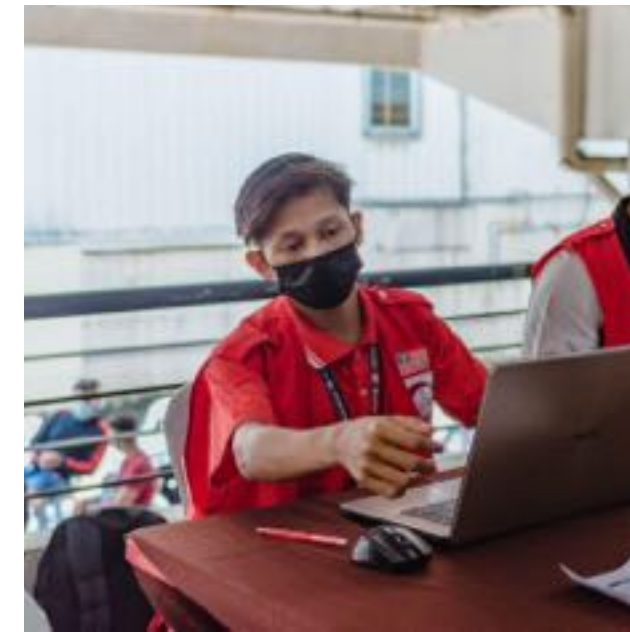
To these heroes and heroes everywhere, **thank you!**

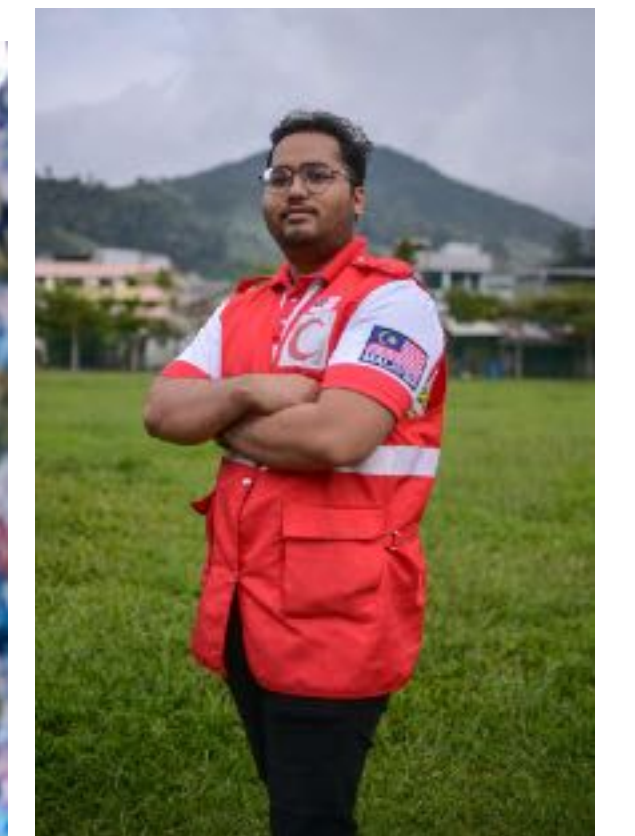
05











We, at Malaysian Red Crescent Society (MRCS) have come a long way throughout the vaccination process that has happened in the past year. We would commemorate and wish special thanks to all our donors and funders for trusting us, and making this happen.

Special Thanks:

Ministry of Health Malaysia, Protect Health Corporation

IFRC, ICRC, Agoda, Canada High Comm, Lazada4Good, Maxis, Shell, WHO and Zurich Takaful.

Special Thanks



MINISTRY OF HEALTH
MALAYSIA



PROTECTHEALTH



MALAYSIAN HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION & ACTION HUB



ICRC



ZURICH
TAKAFUL



To all our NGO friends



Special Thanks

Epilogue

"By January 2022, MRCS has administered more than 50,000 doses in over 2,500 outreach locations throughout the nation. Sometimes we climb up flats, other times we went deep and remote into the jungle or even plantation farm. Sometimes we vaccinate a group of 200, other times we could only get 10 people willingly. Some ran away at the sight of the team for fear that the government is implanting microchip in their arm, while some others, undocumented mostly, grateful that they could find a safe space to be vaccinated so that they can continue to earn meagre salary to support their family back home.

We hope their stories, captured through our volunteers will inspire you. How truly, the whole-of-society approach was most evident throughout the national vaccination programme. Everyone came together regardless of nationality, age, gender or status, to provide vaccine equity to their family, neighbor, friends and the community. We were only able to do this because we come together as a unit.

While achieving herd immunity is indeed a great milestone, we have always set our sight to go beyond, and ensuring that we leave no one behind. As truly, **we are only safe, when everybody is safe.**"