



Empowered 2 Teach Report (2015)

Empowered2Teach is a SUKA Society project that works towards empowering the indigenous community to have greater access to education. This report details the project's progress and impact achieved in 2015.





Everyday I teach my students how to write the alphabet, read phonics and count numbers. But they seem to forget easily. To help them remember, we do a lot of revision and practice together. I do have students who also can't write at all. So we start learning the basics by joining the dots. Ultimately my hope is to teach and guide them until they are able to read, write and count independently.

- Haini, April 2015

A. Overview

Empowered2Teach is a project that works towards creating greater access to education for Orang Asli (OA) pre-school children. The project started with five pre-school classes back in September 2013. We currently have six pre-schools located in Slim River, Gopeng, Gerik and Gua Musang. In 2015, we started our seventh initiative in Tasik Bera, Pahang. The class in Tasik Bera is an after-school programme that targets OA children attending primary school.

The project works not only to provide education for OA children, but also to develop the OA Community's appreciation of the importance of education. Over the past three years, we have progressively incorporated systems and structures to better govern and develop the pre-schools.

Firstly, we developed a syllabus and lesson plan for Level 1 (four years old) and Level 2 (five to six-years old) pre-school children. The syllabus and lesson plan ensure that the students are taught Mathematics, Bahasa Malaysia and English in an organised and systematic manner.

Secondly, we implemented an assessment tool to gauge the students' performance in each school. The assessment tool gives the teachers good insight into the progress of the students, therefore allowing the teachers to adjust their lessons to suit the standards of each student.

Thirdly, our monthly supervision and on-the-job training programme ensure that the teachers continue to make progress and stay committed to their role as educators. The systems and structures we put in place enabled us to replicate and grow our pre-school model. As such, we were able to add the second pre-school in Slim River and start an after-school programme in Tasik Bera. We have also ensured that the development of the pre-schools was carried out in tandem with the readiness of the OA communities themselves.

At this moment, we have seven OA teachers with the drive and passion to push for education within their own communities. By setting up six pre-schools and one after-school programme within remote villages, we now have over 123 OA children who have direct access to education.





The Orang Asli Situation

A significant number of indigenous children in Peninsular Malaysia do not have pre-school education.

In fact, statistical figures in 2007 from the Jabatan Kemajuan Orang Asli (JAKOA) report that 7,029 indigenous children in Peninsular Malaysia have never been to school.

The current Standard One syllabus assumes that students have basic reading, writing and mathematical skills. However, Orang Asli children attend Standard One hoping to begin learning English, Mathematics and Bahasa Malaysia. This puts them at a significant disadvantage right from the start.

As such, it is not surprising that many of them fail to catch up with the national school syllabus and eventually drop out of school.

According to a 2006 report by the Centre of Orang Asli Concerns (COAC), for every 100 Orang Asli children who enter Standard One, only about six are expected to make it to Form Five eleven years later.

Without access to proper education, many indigenous communities will continue to be trapped within the vicious cycle of poverty and struggle to be self-sustainable.

The Solution

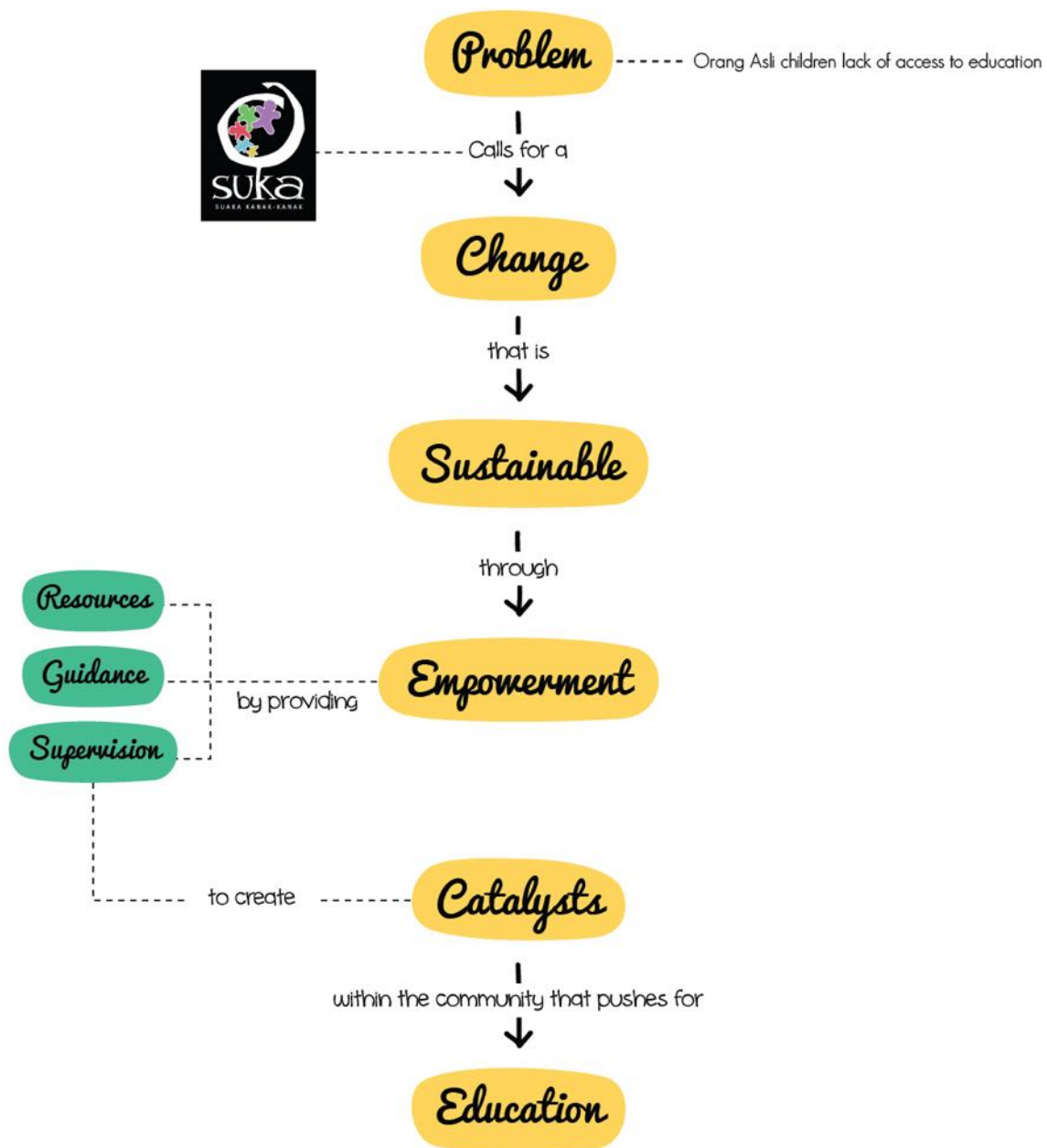
Empowered2Teach is a project initiated by the SUKA Society, developed in response to the educational challenges faced by the indigenous community.

The project plays an empowering role in providing the tools needed for Orang Asli teachers to serve as a catalyst for education and development in their respective villages. The project prepares indigenous children for primary education by teaching them how to read, write, speak and count. The project also assists these children in their physical, emotional, social and intellectual development.

The project provides training, support and resources for the indigenous communities living in remote areas to start pre-school education classes within their villages.

We do this by training and equipping indigenous teachers who are recommended by their village leaders based on their strong desire to educate children. Using the project as a platform to start up their classroom, the teachers will teach up to 20 young children on a regular basis.





Project Objectives

Empowered2Teach has four key elements –

1. Training indigenous young people to become teachers with the knowledge and skills to teach pre-school education within their own communities.
2. Providing educational resources for the indigenous teachers to start community pre-school classes within their own villages.
3. Providing consistent guidance, monitoring and support for the indigenous teachers and their community pre-schools.
4. Creating awareness and community support for the indigenous community pre-schools through social media (www.empowered2teach.org).

B. The Teachers



Nora (Slim River)

Nora has more than ten years of teaching experience. She began by teaching her own children at home, as there was no pre-school in her community. Her journey as an educator for the community began when she realised that the children living in her community should also be given the opportunity to learn.



Dinah (Gopeng)

Dinah is one of our more experienced teachers. Prior to joining this programme, she was teaching in a pre-school in Petaling Jaya. After returning to her village community in Gopeng, she connected with us to start a pre-school. As one of our experienced teachers in the programme, Dinah also takes charge of the on-the-job training for our pre-school teachers.



Jisam (Gerik)

Jisam has a great sense of humour and enjoys making people around him laugh. He has always been passionate about education and would do what it takes to teach his students in spite of the challenges of living in a remote village. He juggles between teaching in the school and also providing healthcare talks in the village.



Busan (Gerik)

Busan is someone who comes across as a quiet and contemplative man. He cares deeply about his students, his school and his village. Busan is also a creative person. He draws well and often conducts arts and crafts sessions for his students. He uses art as a creative outlet for the students to have fun while learning.



Haini (Gua Musang)

Haini is someone who is shy and reserved. Over the years, Haini has come out from her comfort zone and is now more confident about her role as a teacher. Despite the fact that Haini's pre-school in Kampung Jader is one of the least accessible and remote among all our E2T pre-schools, Haini has persevered and displays a great determination to teach.



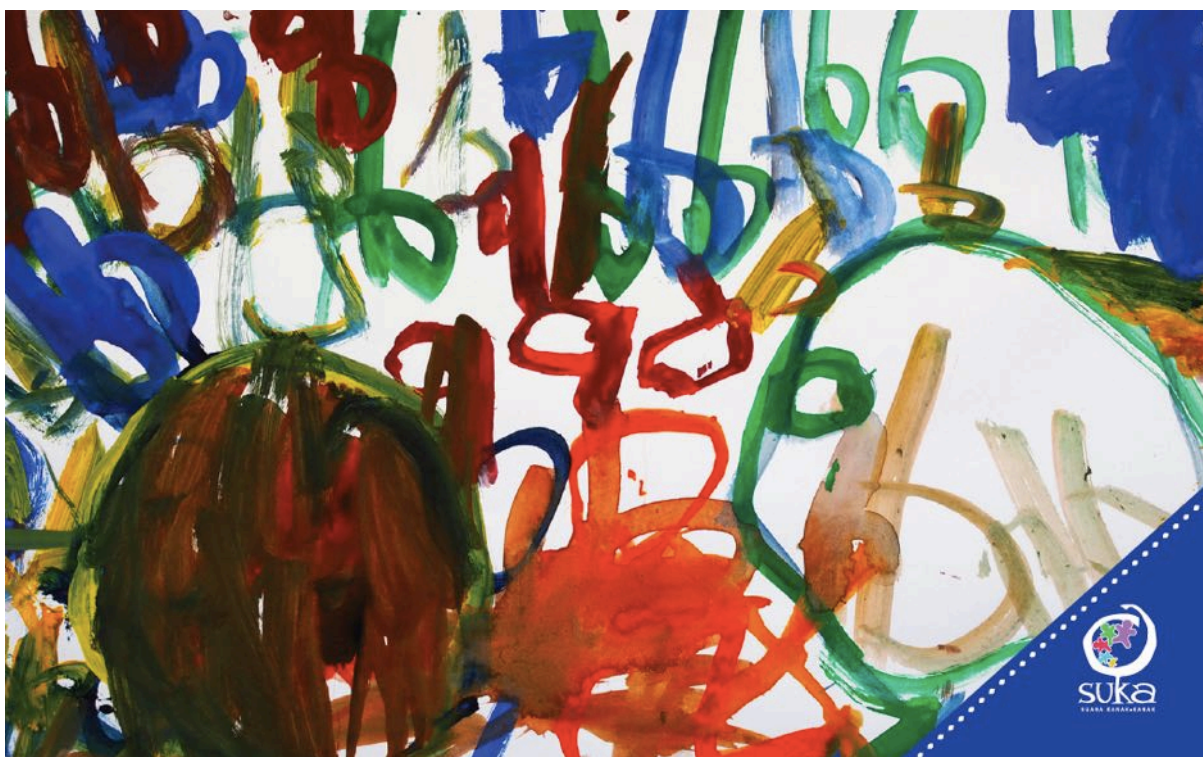
Umi (Slim River)

Umi has a great drive to make a difference in her community. When she was still in secondary school, Umi was already teaching the children in her village. She did this for three years. After completing her SPM examinations, Umi joined this programme in November 2014. She has been coping well with teaching the syllabus so far. Teaching comes to Umi naturally as she is good with children.



Masina (Tasik Bera)

Masina (more fondly known as Mas) is from the Semelai tribe. She is an outgoing and bubbly girl. Mas joined our program after completing her SPM examinations. She teaches in an after-school program for Primary One and Two students in Tasik Bera, Pahang. Inspired by her former school teachers who constantly encouraged her, Mas is determined to help students do well in school.



I love the letter B, Armila, 4 years old



C. The Schools

For the 2015 school term, the Pre-Schools in Slim River, Gopeng and Gerik started their school term on 12th January. The start of the school term for the pre-school in Gua Musang was delayed to 22nd February, as the area was devastated by flood. Our after-school programme in Tasik Bera started on 1st July after Mas joined the programme. All seven schools ended their school term on 20th November.

There have been new developments and initiatives for the pre-schools in 2015. Firstly, we introduced a beginner-level syllabus for three-year-old students. At this level, they are introduced to various activities to prepare them for Level 1 (four years old). The activities include tracing numbers (one to ten), tracing small letters (a-z), joining dots, colouring pictures and pre-writing.

Secondly, as mentioned in the overview, we developed an assessment tool for all the pre-schools. The assessment tool was created to gauge the students' performance based on the different subjects taught. Through this assessment tool, we were also able to monitor each school and each student's performance. We put the assessment tool to the test for the first time in 2015.

The assessment methodology is still a work-in-progress as both the teachers and the OA children are new to assessments. We hope that the students will get used to the idea of being assessed over time and thereafter improve in their results.



Updates on the Schools

Nora's Pre-School (Slim River, Perak)

There are 20 Orang Asli children attending Nora's pre-school regularly. Apart from the daily lesson plan, she would incorporate fun activities for her students.

Activities such as watercolour painting, vegetable stamping and singing nursery rhymes standard features in her school. She also uses the rural village environment to help the kids relate the lessons to their way of life.

In 2015, we funded the renovation of her pre-school. A kitchen was added to the existing school building. The kitchen was equipped with a basin so that the students could learn hygiene and wash their hands before meals.

The classroom area was also expanded to enable the students to have a larger space to learn and play. The extension took four months to complete.

During that period, classes went on as usual in the community hall. It was a community effort, as the villagers also helped with the cleaning and moving of the furniture.

Table 1: Number of Nora's Students

Level 1	6
Level 2	14
Total Students	20



Dinah's Pre-School (Gopeng, Perak)

Dinah has 18 students attending her pre-school. Her strategy for the year was to emphasize teaching the English. Dinah has found teaching English to Orang Asli children especially challenging. This is because she has to use three different languages (Semai, Malay and English) when teaching. Despite the difficulties, she still feels strongly that English is an important language for the students to master.

Apart from teaching English, Dinah also allocates time in class to teach her students the customs, cultures and traditions of her indigenous people. She wants to instil a strong sense of identity in her students to inculcate confidence and pride in being an Orang Asli.

Dinah has also received good feedback from the parents and the primary school teachers that her former students are able to cope well in school.

Last year we helped Dinah with some repair and maintenance of her school. The ladder leading up to her school classroom was unsafe. We replaced the ladder with stairs and railings. The wooden flooring and bamboo walls in the classroom that were starting to rot were also replaced. We also added a sink for the students to wash their hands.

Table 2: Number of Dinah's Students

Level 1	5
Level 2	11
Total Students	16



Jisam's Pre-School (Gerik, Perak)

Jisam has a big class of 27 students. His co-teacher, Rosmaniza, teaches the three- and four-year-old students while Jisam focuses on teaching the five- and six-year-old students.

Over the past year, Jisam has organized special events for his pre-school, such as Children's Day, Sports Day and Cultural Day.

He feels that it is important to gain the community's support of the work so that they will prioritize sending their children to school.

During these special events, Jisam spoke on the importance of education and how education paves their children's way to a brighter future.

He puts a lot of effort into promoting the importance of education because he feels that there are still many families in the village who do not appreciate the value of education.

Busan's Pre-School (Gerik, Perak)

Busan has 18 students. All his students are three to five years old. Over the past year, he focused on teaching his students phonics and numbers. He also incorporated more activity-based teaching methods. He felt that teaching through games was an effective teaching method for his students, as his students tended to be restless and playful during classes.

Throughout the year, there were a few students who were often absent from school. Initially he would be discouraged when their parents did not ensure that their children went to school. He took the initiative to find out why his students did not attend class by speaking with their parents. He would also remind the parents about the importance of education.

He occasionally organized a clean up of the school compound. A number of parents turned up to help cut the grass and to plant flowers around the school. At the end of the clean up, he would organize a small thank you meal for the parents.

Organizing the clean-ups and the meals helped Busan get to know the parents of his students better. He hopes that this will indirectly increase the parents' awareness of his pre-school and their own children's education.

This year will be Busan's last year with us. He has been with us for the past three years. He feels that he is ready for a change and will therefore hand over the responsibility of the pre-school to his assistant.

Table 3: Number of Jisam's Students

Beginner level	10
Level 1	4
Level 2	13
Total Students	27



Table 4: Number of Busan's Students

Beginner level	4
Level 1	6
Level 2	8
Total Students	18



Haini's Pre-School (Gua Musang, Kelantan)

Haini's pre-school was badly hit by the floods in December 2014. The water level rose to the rooftops of buildings and destroyed many homes and roads.

Fortunately the floods did not affect Haini's village, but roads in and out of the village were submerged. Along with the village folks, Haini had to take a two-day walk out of the village just to get supplies into the village.

Eventually, the flood subsided and she was able to open her school on 22nd February 2015. At first, she had to make do and teach with pieces of scrap paper and basic stationaries, as we were not able to access the school due to the damaged roads. On 22nd March 2015, we were able to deliver the school supplies and Haini could finally resume school as usual.

Haini has 13 students this year. Of the 13, seven are new students. Four of her students who joined this year began without knowing how to hold a pencil. As they progressed throughout the year, she has slowly learned the basics.

Last year, the linoleum floor in Haini's school began to tear and wear out. Therefore, we replaced it with new linoleum flooring so that the children can sit and write more comfortably.

Table 5: Number of Haini's Students

Level 1	7
Level 2	6
Total Students	13



Umi's Pre-School (Slim River, Perak)

The pre-school is located in a village called Kampung Sungai Pisang in a small town of Slim River, Perak. There are currently 15 children aged four to six years old attending the pre-school regularly.

Umi runs the pre-school with the help of her assistant, Susie. Together, they teach subjects, such as English, Mathematics, Bahasa Melayu and Science, on a daily basis.

Her school is a small basic building with just one tiny room as a classroom space. Umi teaches diligently and emphasizes sticking to her lesson plans. In that way, her students are able to learn progressively.

She also incorporates a lot of interactive sessions such as games, exercises and craft activities for her students.

Umi is very happy that parents have been very cooperative in sending their children to school. She recalls that when she first began her class, her students were shy and required their mothers to company them in school. After a week, her students adjusted to the class routine and Umi was able to run her school smoothly.

Table 6: Number of Umi's Students

Level 1	6
Level 2	9
Total Students	15



Masina's After-School Programme (Tasik Bera, Pahang)

The after-school programme is located in a village called Kampung Paya Buluh, Tasik Bera, Pahang. There are currently 20 children aged seven to ten years old attending the after-school programme regularly.

Masina runs the after-school programme together with her co-teacher Asmida five days a week. Masina focuses on the seven- to eight-year-old students while Asmida focuses on the nine- to ten-year-old students. Midway through 2015, we developed an after-school syllabus designed to help the students improve their knowledge of core subjects, such as Bahasa Malaysia, Mathematics and English. The students attend the class in the afternoon after returning from school.

The parents in the village are very keen to have their children improve in their studies. They feel that their children still struggle in their studies despite attending regular school. The after-school programme helps the students catch up on their studies.

Table 7: Number of Mas's Students

Level 1	8
Level 2	12
Total Students	20





D. Progress & Results

During our bi-annual training in June 2015, we introduced our E2T Assessment Tool to the teachers. Our main trainer, Ms Marie, conducted the training for the teachers to teach them to use the assessment tool for the pre-school students.

The assessment tool has the following purposes:

- To keep track of the students' learning performance and development.
- To evaluate the students' proficiency level based on the different criteria tested for each subject.
- To identify and monitor students who need extra guidance.
- To provide feedback on the students' progress and performance to their parents.
- To reflect on the areas in which the teachers would require further training to improve the students' performance.

The assessment is divided into two levels. The first level is intended for students aged four years old. The second level is for students aged five and six years old. However, if a student aged five years old has not mastered the level two syllabuses, he/she will be tested on the level one assessment first.

Their levels of proficiency are graded based on the following criteria:

- **Mastered** – Understand and able to do the assessment accurately without guidance
- **In Progress** - Understand and able to do the assessment with guidance
- **Weak** - Further improvement and effort needed

Assessment Tool Process

Teachers will give each of their students an assessment exercise. They are to complete the assessment exercise by the end of the school term in November. The assessment exercise is a compilation of work sheets based on different criteria that will be tested. The following steps have been developed for the assessment tool:

Step 1	Planning
	Teachers teach the students the lessons covered by the assessment exercise six months ahead of the assessment.
Step 2	Discovery
	Students sit for the assessment exercise at the end of the school term based on their level.
Step 3	Analysis
	Teachers submit the assessment results to SUKA Society for analysis.
Step 4	Feedback
	Teachers provide feedback to parents based on their students' performance.
Step 5	Recommendations
	SUKA Society advises the teachers on the next step to improve students' performance.



Level One Assessment

The following criteria are tested in the Level One assessment:

Subject	Level One
Malay	Student can read phonics
	Student can speak with correct grammar
Mathematics	Student can recognise the numbers 1 to 10
	Student can write from 1 to 10
	Student can count from 1 to 10
	Student can identify numbers in the correct order (1 to 10 and 10 to 1)
	Student can differentiate the difference in quantity
English	Student can recognise all small letters of the alphabet
	Student can write all letters of the alphabet
	Student can make the sound of the phonic alphabet
	Student can read words with combination of three phonic sounds

Level Two Assessment

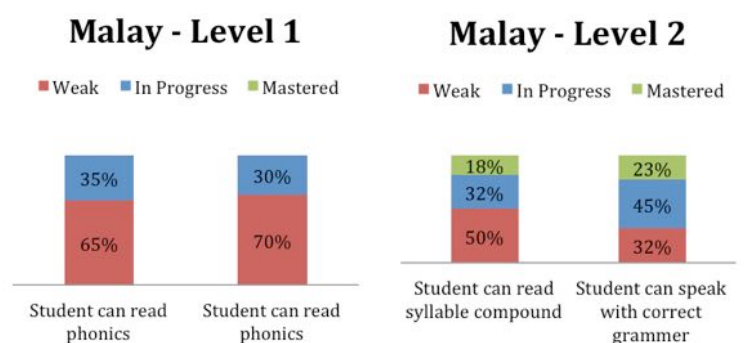
The following criteria are tested in the Level Two assessment:

Subject	Level Two
Malay	Student can syllable compound
	Student can speak with correct grammar
Mathematics	Student can recognise the numbers 11 to 20
	Student can write the numbers 11 to 20
	Student can count from 1 to 100
	Student knows how to add and subtract
English	Student can recognise all capital letters
	Student can write all letters of the alphabet
	Student can make the sound of all phonic compound
	Student can speak with correct grammar

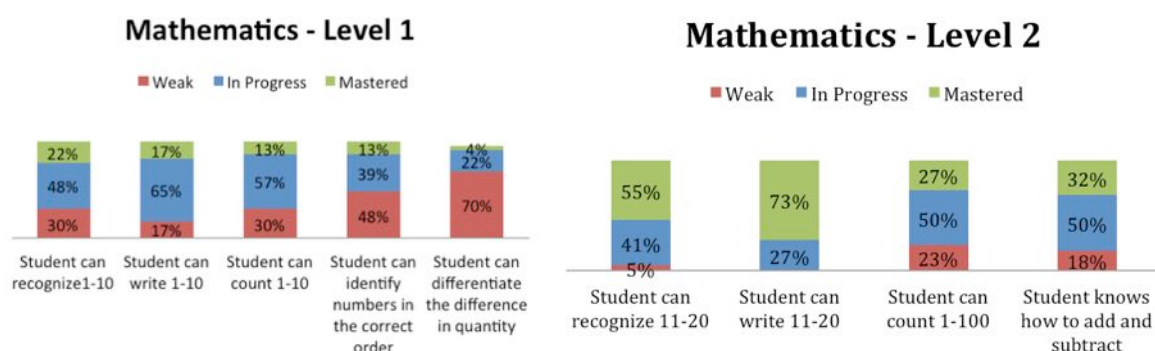
Pre-Schools Assessment Results

The following results have been collected from Level One and Level Two students from five pre-schools in 2015. The participating schools are Kampung Sungai Bil (Slim River), Kampung Sungai Pisang (Slim River), Kampung Sungai Malela (Gerik), Kampung Saruk (Gerik) and Kampung Sungai Poh (Gopeng). Haini's pre-school in Kampung Jader could not conduct the assessment exercise due to the major floods in Gua Musang.

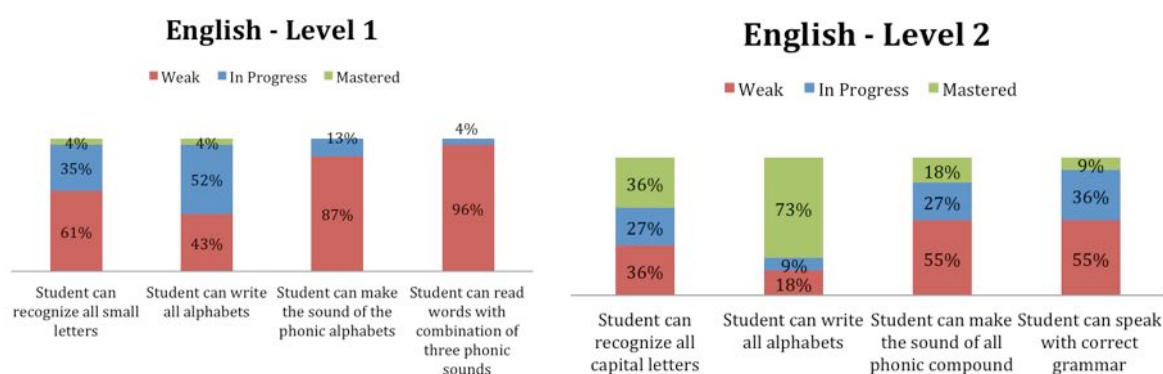
Comparison Between Level 1 and Level 2 Students by Subject



Comparison between Level 1 & Level 2 students' results for Bahasa Malaysia



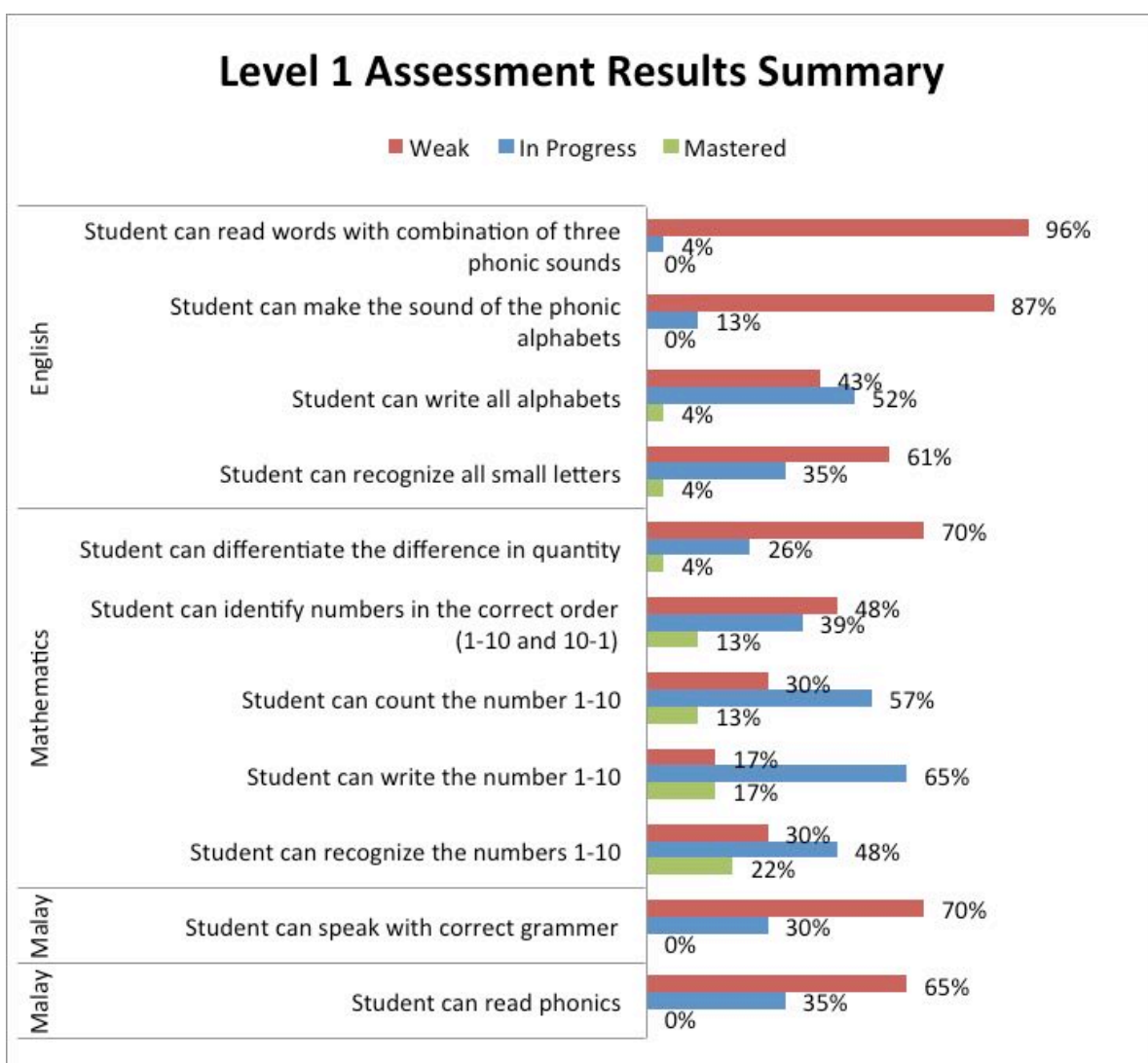
Comparison between Level 1 & Level 2 students' results for Mathematics



Comparison between Level 1 & Level 2 students' results for English

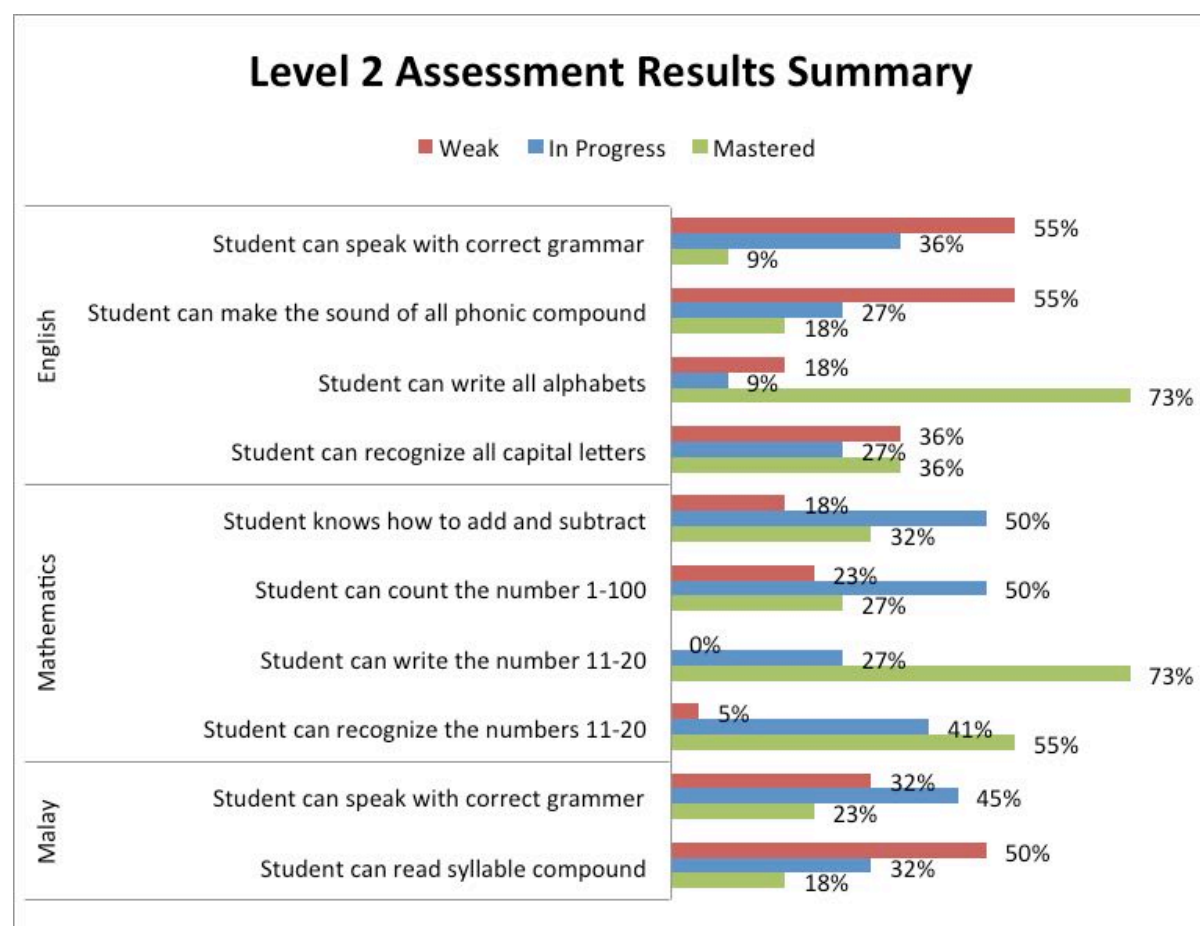
Level One Assessment

Subject	Level 1	Mastered	In Progress	Weak
Malay	Student can read phonics	0%	35%	65%
	Student can speak with correct grammar	0%	30%	70%
Maths	Student can recognise the numbers 1 to 10	22%	48%	30%
	Student can write from 1 to 10	17%	65%	17%
	Student can count from 1 to 10	13%	57%	30%
	Student can identify numbers in the correct order (1 to 10 and 10 to 1)	13%	39%	48%
	Student can differentiate the difference in quantity	4%	26%	70%
English	Student can recognise all small letters of the alphabet	4%	35%	61%
	Student can write all letters of the alphabet	4%	52%	43%
	Student can make the sound of the phonic alphabet	0%	13%	87%
	Student can read words with combination of three phonic sounds	0%	4%	96%



Level Two Assessment

Subject	Level Two	Mastered	In Progress	Weak
Malay	Student can read syllable compound	18%	32%	50%
	Student can speak with correct grammar	23%	45%	32%
Maths	Student can recognise the numbers 11 to 20	55%	41%	5%
	Student can write the numbers 11 to 20	73%	27%	0%
	Student can count from 1 to 100	27%	50%	23%
	Student knows how to add and subtract	32%	50%	18%
English	Student can recognise all capital letters	36%	27%	36%
	Student can write all letters of the alphabet	73%	9%	18%
	Student can make the sound of all phonic compound	18%	27%	55%
	Student can speak with correct grammar	9%	36%	55%



Results Analysis

1. The results for Mathematics are promising in Level One. A majority of the students are progressing in grasping the concept of recognizing, writing, and counting from one to ten. Almost 40% of the students can also identify the numbers in the correct order. However, students would need more practice in learning how to differentiate differences in quantity.
2. In Level Two, the students have continued to show significant improvement in their results for Mathematics as compared to the previous level. 95% of students can now recognize and write the numbers 11 to 20. About 77% of the students are reasonably able to count from one to 100 and 82% know how to add and subtract with guidance.
3. In Level One, 65% to 70% of the students are still weak in reading and speaking Bahasa Melayu. 70% of the students are still not able to speak with correct grammar and 60% are also unable to read phonics.
4. In Level Two, there are also noticeable improvements for Bahasa Melayu. In Level One, none of the students have mastered reading phonics or speaking with the correct grammar. In Level Two, after two years of attending pre-school, 50% of the students can read reasonably in Bahasa Melayu and 68% of the students can speak reasonably with the correct grammar.
5. Similarly, for the English language, a majority of the students in Level One are still very weak and need to focus on learning phonic sounds and reading words with three phonic sounds. However, 35% of the students are in the process of recognizing all small letters of the alphabet and writing the letters of the alphabet.
6. In Level Two, the students also show vast improvements in the English language. 73% of the students can now write all letters of the alphabet. 36% of the students can now recognize all capital letters. There is an 18% improvement in students mastering phonics and a 9% improvement in students who can now speak with the correct grammar.

Key Findings

1. We find that our Orang Asli children's proficiency in Bahasa Melayu is still relatively weak. This is reflected in the Level One assessment results. This is because Bahasa Melayu is not widely spoken among Orang Asli families. They still practise speaking in their own native tongues, such as Semai and Temiar. However, we see significant improvements for Bahasa Melayu in Level Two. We were able to reduce the number of weak students significantly. This is because our teachers are fluent in Bahasa Melayu and are able to deliver lessons effectively to the students.
2. The English language is the Orang Asli community's biggest challenge. The results of the assessment also reflect on our Orang Asli teacher's capabilities in teaching the subject. We see slight improvements when we compare the student's Level One and Level Two English results. We know that our Orang Asli teachers are still trying to improve their confidence in speaking in English. We are working hard to improve the teachers' proficiency in English so that they can deliver more effective lessons. For the past two years, we were able to connect with English Teaching Assistants (ETA) from the United States to help some of our teachers improve in this area.
3. Among the three subjects, Mathematics shows the most promising results in terms of the students mastering the subject. This is because our programme introduces Mathematics in a very systematic manner. The teachers are also able to teach the syllabus well, resulting in the children being able to pick it up easily.
4. The overall improvements on the Level Two assessment results are very encouraging. At Level Two, students have shown that they are a lot more ready for Primary School than they were a year ago. This goes to show that it is important for the students to continue attending pre-school for at least two consecutive years to begin showing results. Mastering the subjects is important so that the students will be adequately prepared to attend primary school.



E. Teacher's Training & Development

Our teachers' training is conducted twice a year. The first training is conducted during the mid-year school holiday and the second training is conducted during the year-end school holiday. All main teachers and co-teachers are highly encouraged to attend the trainings so that they can continue to improve and develop as teachers. These on going trainings are conducted by Ms Marie who holds a Masters Degree in Early Childhood Education and is a pre-school principal from a school in PJ.

Training for 2015 - Part 1

The first training for the Orang Asli teachers was held from 9th to 12th June 2015. The teachers had four full days of training in the following areas:

- Mid-year academic progress review

An academic progress review was conducted twice a year, in the middle of the year and at the end of the year, during which all teachers presented a report on their students' academic progress. They also shared the challenges they faced in teaching the syllabus. Ms Marie and Dinah then gave suggestions on how to address these challenges. The teachers also reported on the special events and activities conducted in their schools. This sharing session gave the other teachers an idea of what the sort of events they could organize in their schools.

- Activity learning with *Peter and Jane* reader books

In 2014, a couple from Australia sponsored six sets of "*Peter and Jane*" 1A and 1B reader books. During the trainings, we conducted practice sessions for the teachers to encourage them to use these reader books with their students.

- Assessment tool introduction and training

We introduced the assessment tool to the teachers for the very first time and communicated the objective and purpose of the assessment tool to the teachers. We conducted a detailed walkthrough on how to conduct the assessment and distributed the assessment books. Ms Marie then gave a timeline for the teachers to prepare and conduct the assessment.

- First Aid & CPR Training

Ms Catherine, a registered nurse, conducted a first aid and CPR Training for our teachers. The first aid training was very useful to enable the teachers to deal with potential emergency situations that could happen in the classroom. Ms Catherine also taught the teachers CPR, a life-saving technique useful in many emergencies. Each teacher then demonstrated the techniques learnt on a CPR mannequin. The first aid and CPR training is crucial for the Orang Asli teachers because their villages are located far from the nearest clinic or hospital.

- Third and Fourth Quarter lesson planning and syllabus revision

As was our usual practice, we reviewed the teachers' lesson plans for the next six months and went through the workbooks together. The lesson planning aspect is important to ensure that the teachers teach the syllabus according to schedule.

Training for 2015 – Part 2

The second training for the Orang Asli teachers was held from 7th to 11th December 2015. On the first night, SUKA Society organized a barbeque dinner for the teachers as a sign of appreciation for their hard work throughout the year. It was an opportunity to bond and to get to know the teachers better. For the next four days, the teachers underwent training and sessions in the following areas:

- Reflection on their journey as educators

To kick off the training, Mr Keith Chin, an educator, conducted a motivation and sharing session with the teachers. Through this session, the teachers reflected on their journey and purpose as Orang Asli pre-school teachers. At the end of the session, the teachers felt refreshed and motivated to continue pushing for education within their communities.

- Pre-school challenges

At the end of every school term, the teachers would share on the challenges they faced in running their pre-schools. They shared about different aspects, such as the syllabus, teaching, students, involvement of parents, and their communities. Ms Marie then shared some tips on overcoming the different challenges. When it involved challenges pertaining to Orang Asli matters, Ms Nora, our project coordinator, advised them accordingly.

- Activities for pre-schoolers

It is important for the teachers to incorporate fun activities for the students to stimulate the children's cognitive and physical development. Ms Marie conducted a session on how to organize fun and engaging activities, such as music classes and physical education, outside their regular syllabus.

- Assessment results collection

During the last mid-year training, we introduced the assessment tool to the teachers. In November, each teacher conducted the assessment with the students and collected the results. The results were passed to us to be analysed. The results for 2015 are summarized in the pre-schools assessment results section.

- Year-end academic progress review and Curriculum for 2016

The end of the school term is usually a busy period for the pre-school teachers to wrap up the year and prepare for the school term in the next year. The teachers shared their ups and downs throughout the year. The positive feedback regarding their student's development of the year was encouraging for the other teachers. The teachers also provided us with the list of their new intakes for 2016. Ms Marie then conducted a syllabus revision with the teachers for the first half of the next year.



English Lessons by English Teaching Assistants (ETA)

In 2014, we had great help from three ETA's from the US to help us improve Nora's (Slim River) and Dinah's (Gopeng) proficiency in English. In 2015, we continued our partnership with a new batch of Fulbright English Teaching Assistants (ETA) in Malaysia. Our Orang Asli teachers had the privilege of learning English from six ETA's this year. The ETA's that helped our teachers in 2015 were Jonah and Bryan from Gerik, Rie and Akirah from Lenggong and Sarah and Alizeh from Gopeng.

The weekly English lessons have been an opportunity for the Orang Asli teachers to come out of their comfort zones and to speak in English. We have also received feedback from our teachers themselves that they are now more confident in delivering lessons in English.

It has been as rewarding an experience for the ETA's as it was for the teachers. We hope that this partnership will continue. The ETA's have shared their personal experiences obtained from this volunteering experience with us:

Feedback from ETAs



"Working with SUKA Society's Orang Asli program was an extremely rewarding experience. I and three of my friends, all foreign English teachers in Perak, met with several Orang Asli teachers every week, who would then use what we taught them to teach their pre-school students. By training the teachers in English, my co-teachers and I were able to better develop our communication skills, adapt our teaching styles to suit our students, and learn about the Orang Asli lifestyle. Jisam, Juna, and our other students were very kind, patient and hard working, and they were even so kind as

to invite us to their village. I could not have asked for a better experience, and I hope that our students got as much out of the exchange as we did." - Rie Ohta, ETA (Lenggong)



"Volunteering with the SUKA Society has been such a rewarding experience and has truly accounted for some of my fondest memories here in Malaysia. Upon arriving here, I knew I wanted to volunteer and give back to the community, but I did not know how. When presented with the opportunity to teach Orang Asli with this organization, I immediately jumped at the offer. It was like my prayers had been answered. As the months passed by, I watched as our students transformed from shy cats to fearless tigers. It was a work in progress, but the outcome was truly amazing. Through the use of pictures and animated teaching, we were able to communicate and build understanding despite the language barriers at times. We

refused to let them stop us. The students came to our meeting space each week with lots of energy, confidence and warm smiles despite their two-hour commute to get to Gerik town. They wanted to learn English and would not let anything get in the way of that. Through their commitment, I saw the importance of English as a catalyst for upward mobility and a way for them to be self-sufficient in this changing world. I hope our time spent together has positively impacted their lives and their English speaking abilities. I am forever grateful for this experience. I will carry the memories with me forever."

- Akirah Crawford, ETA (Lenggong)



"I want to say how much I enjoyed working with the SUKA Society teachers this year. It was one of the best parts of my time in Malaysia. Of all the things I will miss, the teachers from Gerik are number one. We hit it off the first time we met, and I was able to build a deep relationship with them throughout the rest of the year. They are so great! They are always so happy and optimistic, and I find them really inspiring." - *Bryan Connan, ETA (Gerik)*



"Working with Dinah from the Orang Asli population in Gopeng was as much of a learning experience for us as I hope it was for her. Dinah's enthusiasm for her pre-school students was apparent, and her pride as a member of Orang Asli community shone through.

Every time we met with her, she would share stories of both her students' curiosity and the challenges they face growing up in a remote area. Yet, she never doubted her students' potential.

These challenges only seemed to make her more determined to succeed in her goal of exposing them to English and getting them ready for school." - *Sarah Mehtora, ETA (Kampar)*

F. Project Structure & Support

Monthly Supervision and Mentoring Visit

A SUKA Society volunteer, Mr Lor Kien Teck, facilitates and coordinates the monthly supervision visits to the Orang Asli Schools. Along with our programme mentors, Nora and Dinah, they meet up with Umi in Slim River, Busan and Jisam in Gerik and Haini in Gua Musang.

During these visits, Nora will help to collect the monthly reports from all the teachers. These updates will be posted on our project website, www.empowered2teach.org. During the mentoring session, the teachers will discuss the issues and challenges faced. Nora, Dinah and the teachers will then brainstorm the best ways to address the issues and challenges. They also share lesson plans and provide updates on their schools. The monthly supervision and mentoring sessions have helped build the confidence and capabilities of all teachers through the support and sharing of knowledge.

Donation and Delivery of School Supplies

Once a year, we will do our usual delivery of schoolbooks and supplies to all our pre-schools. This year, we were fortunate to be able to partner the CSR team from Exis Tech Sdn Bhd and teachers and parents from PJGH Children's Corner. Both groups were amazing as they generously sponsored all the school materials for our pre-schools. Their contributions made a significant positive difference to the running of the pre-schools.

We also had the privilege of having about twenty Year 7 students from Eltham College, Melbourne dedicating their Thursday lunch slot to create a set of teaching tools for Umi's pre-school in Slim River. Ms Stephanie Lim, a teacher from Eltham College coordinated the effort as part of the students' volunteer component for the Compass Award. Over three days in December, we dropped off all the materials at our pre-schools in Slim River, Gopeng, Gerik and Gua Musang.



Appointment of Project Coordinator

Nora has a strong sense of responsibility, commitment and dedication towards her work. In October 2015, we promoted Nora to the role of Project Coordinator. We felt that as Empower2Teach is an empowerment project, it is crucial that an Orang Asli person leads the project. By appointing her to the role, Nora will have a stronger voice to advocate education for the Orang Asli community.

The Project Coordinator is responsible for the following areas:

- Supervise the Empowered2Teach education program
- Coordinate the monthly supervision visits to provide guidance to the teachers and assistants.
- Represent SUKA Society in advocating Orang Asli education.

Appointment of Project Trainer

In 2015, we appointed Dinah as our trainer to provide on-the-job training for our teachers. She conducts the training at her pre-school in Gopeng. Dinah hosts each teacher on a one-to-one basis for a week in the pre-school. During the on-the-job training, she will guide the teachers in their teaching skills. These one-to-one sessions are very effective, as the teachers' skills are developed in a real-life classroom environment.

G. Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

- Accessibility, Communication and Transportation

Our pre-schools are mostly located in remote locations accessible only by a four-wheel drive vehicle. This makes it difficult for the teachers to travel to the nearest town. There is also no telephone reception in most of our teachers' villages. This makes it difficult to communicate and to arrange meetings with the teachers. To solve this problem, we have come up with a schedule with pre-set dates for the monthly supervision visits from the start of the year. This way, all the teachers can plan their schedules ahead of time to meet with our project coordinator.

- The increase in price of school supplies and expenses

In 2015, the price of schools supplies increased. Our teachers gave us feedback that the RM200.00 allowance for school expenses was no longer sufficient to support their schools for a month. Consequently, SUKA Society adjusted the allowance for school expenses to RM300.00 in order to support the schools.

- Irregular attendance

The lack of interest of parents in their children's education continues to be one of the challenges our teachers face. Some of the pre-schools face the problem of high absenteeism and/or irregular attendance. The irregularity in the students' attendance affects their learning progress. To address this issue, our teachers have gone the extra mile to talk to their parents to encourage their children to be consistent in school. The teachers also invite the parents to special school events, such as Mother's Day and Father's Day. We hope that through the parents' involvement, they will value the importance of education in their children's lives.



Opportunities

- Appointment of project coordinator and trainer

We constantly empower our teachers to grow and develop in the roles as teachers and educators. Nora's strong sense of responsibility, commitment and dedication towards her work has earned her a promotion as project coordinator. We also promoted Dinah to the role of trainer, as she is an experienced and committed pre-school teacher. She will be conducting further training for the teachers to improve their teaching skills.

- Empowered2Teach sponsorship programme

Our pre-schools are on-going projects and require long-term sponsorship for their success. We have developed a sponsorship program where school sponsors will play an important role in making a significant difference in the lives of young children within an Orang Asli community. As a sponsor, you can support a village pre-school teacher or a teaching assistant or to pay for the school materials needed to run the class. If you are interested to be part of our sponsorship programme, you can visit our website for further details; www.sukasociety.org/be-a-sponsor/

- Children's Opinion Workshop for Orang Asli children

After understanding the Orang Asli community a little better, we have found that one of the reasons why Orang Asli students drop out of school is because of their lack of confidence. Many Orang Asli children grow up without a sense of pride in their own cultural identity. Some feel that they are regularly discriminated in school by teachers and their schoolmates. They are also lack the ability to deal with difficult challenges and therefore have not picked up the skill sets to develop a sense of resilience. SUKA Society will be organizing a series of children's opinion workshops targeting Orang Asli children aged 13 to 18 years old to develop their self-confidence and resilience. We also hope that from these workshops, we will be able to create advocacy materials that allow Orang Asli children to voice their own opinions. The materials will also be promoted directly to all key decision-makers.

- The development of an Orang Asli pre-school subject

To foster a healthy self-esteem and an identity among the Orang Asli children from a young age, we have plans to develop a syllabus for an Orang Asli subject. The subject would teach the children about the indigenous culture, rights, food, games and lifestyle. We hope that this will help the students be proud of their culture and identity from a young age.



H. Project Expenses: 2015

No	Details	Total (RM)
01.	Honorarium for Project Coordinators, OA Teachers & Assistants*	81,900.00
02.	School Daily Running Cost*	15,600.00
03.	Monthly Pre-School Supervision	16,422.30
04.	Training for OA Teachers	12,497.90
05.	Advocacy & Awareness (Events & Materials)	1,014.30
06.	OA School Maintenance, Repairs & Upgrade	15,744.20
07.	Lesson Plan, Syllabus, Educational Tools and School Supplies	11,371.90
08.	Special pre-school event fund	1,400.00
Total Yearly Project Cost		155,950.60

* RM750 for project coordinator, RM600 a month for each teacher, RM400 for co-teacher, RM200 a month for each assistant & RM200 a month for each school's daily running cost.

* In 2016, to help the teachers cope with the rising cost of living, we will be adjusting the above allowances to the following – RM1000 for project coordinator, RM650 for the main teacher, RM450 for the co-teacher, RM250 for the assistant and RM300 for the school's running cost.

- This report has been prepared by SUKA Society for all supporters and partners of SUKA Society. All pictures in this report are used after obtaining the necessary consent. For further enquiries regarding the project, please email SUKA Society at enquiry@sukasociety.org.
- We encourage you to keep up-to-date on the progress of the project by visiting our project website, www.empowered2teach.org. The website serves as a platform for the teachers to share their thoughts and opinions regarding their schools, and also provides an opportunity for supporters to encourage the teachers in their efforts to create greater access to education for indigenous children.
- Follow us on our social media platforms for latest updates on our work:

<https://www.facebook.com/SukaSociety>

<https://twitter.com/sukasociety>

<https://www.facebook.com/SukaSociety>

Note: The printing cost of this report has been sponsored.



SUKA Society is set up to protect the best interests of children. We work towards:

- Protecting trafficked survivors
- Advocating for children affected by detention
- Creating greater access to education
- Promoting children's rights through public awareness programmes

Please contact us if you would like to support or donate to Persatuan Kebajikan Suara Kanak-Kanak Malaysia (SUKA):

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