

NEWSLETTER

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APPGM-SDG

**DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC MODELS
FOR THE SMALL ISLANDS OF TUMPAT:
STRATEGIC, INTEGRATED, AND ALIGNED WITH
NATIONAL POLICY**

YB Dato' Hajah Mumtaz Md Nawi
Member of APPGM-SDG Committee;
Member of Parliament for Tumpat

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DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC MODELS FOR THE SMALL ISLANDS OF TUMPAT: STRATEGIC, INTEGRATED, AND ALIGNED WITH NATIONAL POLICY

By YB Dato' Hajah Mumtaz Md Nawi
(Member of APPGM-SDG Committee;
Member of Parliament for Tumpat)

The small islands in Tumpat hold a unique and strategic position compared to many other small islands in Malaysia. In addition to relying on fishing and coconut cultivation, their proximity to the state's administrative and economic hub, Kota Bharu, as well as Tumpat town itself, provides significant advantages in terms of market access, logistics, and public services. This geographical proximity allows for development solutions that are more realistic and cost-effective.

As highlighted in the APPGM-SDG Policy Recommendation Report, small island communities typically face challenges such as physical connectivity, a lack of alternative economic resources, and the risk of recurring poverty. In the context of the Tumpat islands, these geographical advantages can be leveraged to strengthen the economic resilience of the community.

Existing Economic Foundation

The economy of the Tumpat islands is centred on river, estuary, and coastal fishing, as well as high-value freshwater prawns. Coconut cultivation is a vital resource through the production of coconut milk, *kerisik* (toasted grated coconut), coconut shell charcoal, *gula melaka* (palm sugar), and coconut leaf crafts (*kraf lidi*). Products based on *nipah* (mangrove palm) and the potential for community-based fishing village tourism also contribute to the local income.

However, high dependency on the fishing sector makes local income highly vulnerable to weather conditions, the monsoon season, and fluctuations in catch volumes.

Coco Peat Industry Integration

The development of the coco peat industry completes the coconut value chain through a "zero waste" approach. While coconut flesh is utilised for coconut milk and *kerisik*, and shells are used for charcoal, the husks are processed into coco peat as an alternative agricultural medium. With the Kota Bharu market nearby, coco peat products can be marketed to fertigation farmers across Kelantan without high logistical costs.

Additionally, the concepts of agro-education and community tourism—such as coconut processing demonstrations, homestay experiences, and traditional foods like *keropok* (crackers) and dried fish—can further enhance the local economic value.

Alignment of Policy Recommendations for Tumpat

In line with the recommendations in the APPGM-SDG report, Tumpat can serve as a pilot project through:

- Strategic Island Development Zones for the formal recognition of special development clusters.
- Boat Subsidies and Fixed Schedules, as the short distances allow for cost-effective implementation.
- Integrated Coastal Industry Clusters that combine fishing, coconut, coco peat, and community tourism.
- A Tumpat Island Committee Platform, aligned with the proposed establishment of national thematic working groups.

Conclusion

The small islands of Tumpat are not merely vulnerable communities; they are strategic assets for the state of Kelantan. By integrating traditional economies with new industries like coco peat and providing structured policy support, Tumpat has the potential to become an inclusive, resilient model for small island development that aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



BEHIND THE SCENIC BEAUTY: DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES AND THE SUSTAINABILITY OF ISLAND COMMUNITIES

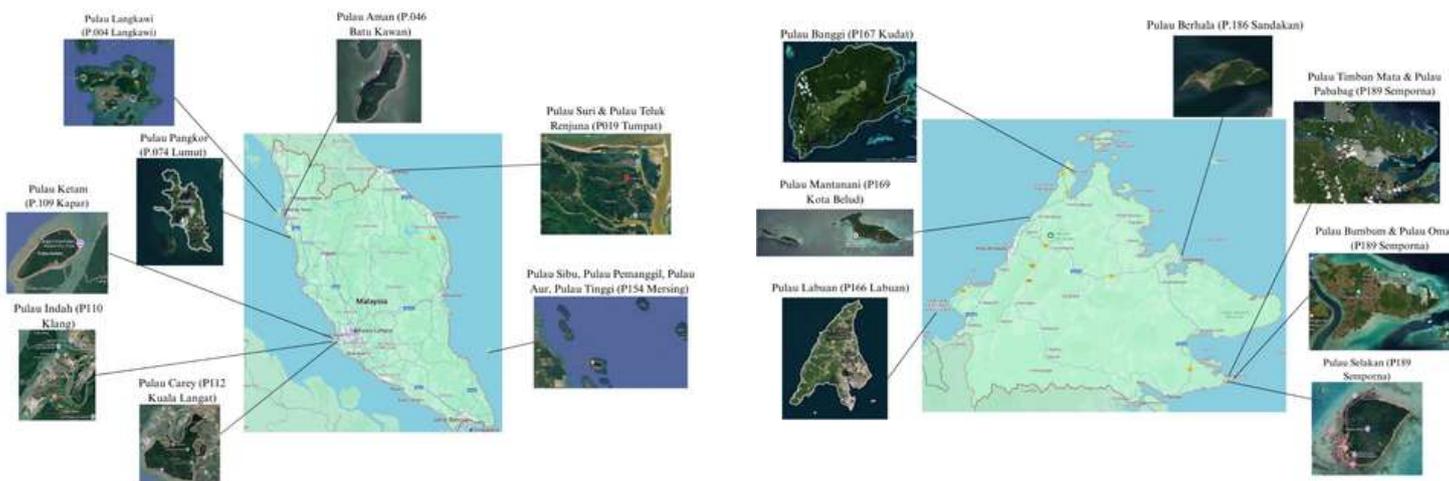
Special Feature Column

Malaysia has a total of 879 small islands, with 418 located in Peninsular Malaysia, 319 in Sabah, and 67 in Sarawak. Of this total, 344 islands remain inhabited. While Malaysia's islands possess unique natural scenic beauty and cultural diversity, most small island communities still face a significant development gap compared to the mainland.

Based on APPGM-SDG issue mapping research data from 2020–2025 and a case study in Pulau Mantanani (Kota Belud, Sabah), island residents still lack access to basic facilities similar to those on the mainland. This includes access to health clinics, as well as primary and secondary schools. This is due to remote geographical locations and long travel distances from the mainland, which create physical connectivity challenges. Furthermore, high transportation costs and inconsistent boat services affect the mobility, educational opportunities, and economic access of the residents.

In terms of the local economy, small islands rely on traditional sectors such as fishing and agriculture. Only a few islands have developed rapidly as tourist destinations, including Langkawi Island, Tioman Island, and the archipelagos in Semporna. There are also islands developing based on the industrial sector, such as Indah Island and Carey Island. Nevertheless, many small islands—such as Suri Island, Berhala Island, and the islands in Mersing—still require more comprehensive economic development attention.

The impact of the lack of economic structural support can be explained through a comparison between Langkawi Island (466 km²) and Banggi Island (440.7 km²). Although both islands have nearly identical land areas, their populations differ significantly. Langkawi Island has 94,138 residents, while Banggi Island has 30,000. This disparity is influenced by the differing economic structures and development policies between the two islands. For instance, the declaration



Map of Peninsular Malaysia & Map of Sabah: Locations of small islands where research has been conducted under the APPGM-SDG initiative

of Langkawi Island as a duty-free island on 1 January 1987 stimulated tourism growth and strengthened its economic structure, subsequently reducing the migration of residents to the mainland.



In this regard, a strategic approach toward the development of small island communities must be prioritised. This includes expanding budget allocations and incentives for the provision and improvement of comprehensive sea physical connectivity, particularly for small islands that are still lagging behind. An initiative of this nature was announced by the government in 2024, where diesel subsidies were provided to islands such as Labuan, Langkawi Island, and Redang Island. This situation demonstrates how transportation support is capable of stimulating local development.



Secondly, the community-based tourism (CBT) model should be expanded as a sustainable economic alternative with a local identity. This approach can be supported through the implementation of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes focusing on sustainable tourism, hospitality, and local entrepreneurship. Such a move is capable of creating local economic value chains, increasing the employability of island youth, and reducing over-reliance on traditional sectors.

Finally, the government should consider establishing a national discussion platform or a Thematic Working Group specifically focused on small island issues. This approach could serve as a policy coordination mechanism across ministries and agencies, while strengthening cooperation between the government, private sector, academia, and local communities.

*By Lydia Ann Bill
(Parliamentary Policy Advocacy Department, APPGM-SDG)*



For further reading, please refer to the APPGM-SDG Parliamentary Policy Recommendation Report:



The report is in Malay language.



VOICES FROM THE ISLAND: SDG CHRONICLES FROM SAKAR ISLAND

Voices From The Grassroot



Daily Challenges: Life Without Clean Water and Electricity

The primary reality on Sakar Island is the absence of electricity and treated clean water. Residents have no permanent electrical connection and depend entirely on generators to light their daily lives. Surrounded by family and relatives as neighbours, their close-knit relationships become the main pillar for mutual aid.



During our study, when asked about how they purchase generators, residents shared that they often pool their money together. Meanwhile, the cost of kerosene depends entirely on their kindness and cooperation. Generators are usually only switched on at night until 9:00 PM to save on fuel costs. This situation forces residents to adjust their daily activities according to a limited electricity schedule—children study under minimal light, while other routines are carried out with immense planning and patience.

Located in the waters of Lahad Datu, Sakar Island is a small island community living far from the basic amenities typically enjoyed on the mainland. Here, daily life is shaped by geography, resource limitations, and the strength of a community that relies deeply on one another.

A Way of Life Shaped by Resilience

For the residents of Sakar Island, the sea is not just a view but their primary source of life. Fishing is a multi-generational occupation and a core part of the local identity. Each day begins with fishing boats heading out to sea, while the evenings offer a space for families to gather after a long day's work.

Life on the island demands constant adaptation. Activities that are considered simple—such as cooking, bathing, studying, or charging a phone—require meticulous planning. Without basic utilities, residents form life routines based on what is available, rather than what is convenient. From a young age, children understand the responsibility of helping their families: managing water reserves, ensuring the generator usage is sufficient, and managing supplies brought back from the mainland.



As for water, residents rely entirely on harvested rainwater stored in tanks—contributed by a local hospital—for daily needs like bathing and cleaning. During droughts, water scarcity becomes a major challenge, forcing them to manage their usage with extreme thriftiness. Local water cannot be used for drinking or cooking; instead, they must buy clean water at markets on the mainland and transport it back by boat in gallon containers. This process requires not only extra cost but also significant time and energy, as every drop of water must be carefully managed until the next trip can be made.

A Story of Community Strength and Spirit

Despite all constraints, Sakar Island radiates a beauty of togetherness rarely found elsewhere. Residents are always ready to help one another, especially when facing difficulties such as fuel or rice shortages, or during storms that prevent travel to the mainland. The culture of sharing is more than just a custom; it is a way of life—neighbours lend generator power, rice, sugar, and salt, helping when water tanks run low and planning boat trips together to save on costs.

These tight social bonds not only strengthen the ties of kinship but also serve as the primary mechanism for community survival. Parents instill hope through education, love, and tolerance, even though children must endure great sacrifice and effort just to travel to school. Amidst limitations, the people of Sakar Island have built practical habits rooted in their own lived experiences—sharing, mutual help, and cooperation are the foundations of their resilience. These practices show that scarcity is not an obstacle to a meaningful life; instead, it provides the space to strengthen solidarity and build solutions based on community wisdom.



More Than Just Challenges: A Tale of Resilience

Sakar Island is not merely a place lacking basic facilities; it is a true story of the strength of the human spirit. It is about how survival is built from simplicity, how noble values are preserved in hardship, and how community solidarity becomes the ultimate source of strength. Despite the clear development gap, the islanders continue to weave their lives with a spirit of mutual care and brotherhood.

Here, life teaches them that having little is no reason to stop giving. In their limitations, they learn to share without hesitation, because every hardship is faced together, and every relief is felt collectively. The story of Sakar Island reminds us that resilience is not just the ability to survive, but the capacity of a community to create hope, strengthen one another, and find the true meaning of humanity—that when life is limited, the human heart grows wider to avoid greed and always share.

*By Sitti Aisyah Orlando
(Local Coordinator for Lahad Datu)*



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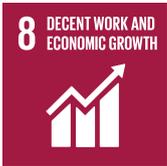
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'ALAH BISA, TEGAL BIASA': THE SPIRIT OF RESIDENTS IN SURI ISLAND, KELANTAN

Voices From The Grassroot



Behind the smallest colony in Kelantan with an area of only 169.5 km², there are plains and hundreds of river islands in Tumpat which are not hilly. Life within these small island communities reveals a side of existence that is vastly different from that on the mainland. These communities have their own unique routines, styles, and ways of life that not only make the mainland population take notice of their presence but also capture the hearts of tourists from across Malaysia, who come to explore the islands' distinct uniqueness for themselves.



While cars are a basic necessity on the mainland, boats are the primary medium of life for this island community. A boat is more than just transportation; it is the heartbeat of daily movement, used for earning a living, ferrying passengers, and sending children to and from school. It also serves as the vital link to the

mainland for access to basic facilities and services. Aside from boats for water travel, motorcycles are used to move around the islands. The pathways on the islands are unlike the roads on the mainland—they are made of cement and designed only for two- or three-wheeled vehicles. Interestingly, the term 'moto' used by the islanders includes the boats used on the water—unique, isn't it?

The island community does not just receive products from the mainland; they produce goods to be sent there. During our fieldwork, we were fortunate enough to meet a snack (*kerepek*) entrepreneur—a working homemaker who produces nearly hundreds of packets daily to meet market demand. There is a family producing bags of coco peat from coconut husks, while others making toasted grated coconut (*kerisik*), and various other products—not to mention those involved in farming. Furthermore, the presence of a floating market on weekends further boosts the local economy, alongside selling products and operating passenger boats.



What is even more interesting is how close-knit and harmonious community life is on this island. It is no surprise that everyone in this island knows one another; compared to the population on the mainland, only a small percentage resides here. I still vividly remember during a previous fieldwork trip, the village head (*penghulu*) borrowed several motorcycles from the islanders to serve as transportation for my team to carry out our work. It was an unforgettable experience touring the island by motorcycle. Indeed, that is the best way if any of you reading this are interested to have a vacation there—you should rent a motorcycle from the local residents.

The Tumpat district is well-known for floods and this island is not spared from such natural disasters. Before the monsoon season, the islanders prepare by organising *gotong-royong* (communal cooperation) to clean the river, ensuring the water flows smoothly and is not clogged. Ironically, the islanders are aware that no excavators can be brought in to clear river sedimentation; therefore, with whatever strength and tools they have at hand, they work together to ensure their settlement is not submerged. The unique geography of this river island makes them different from sea islands like Langkawi. Each is unique in its own way.



The experience of conducting fieldwork on this small island provided a new perspective on the meaning of community resilience and strength. As the saying goes, *'alah biasa tegal biasa'* (or 'practice makes perfect')—seeing young teenagers skillfully navigating small boats is not unusual here; everyone from young children to the elderly possesses extraordinary skills and endurance. The community's perseverance in going about their lives is just the same as life on the mainland—everyone is fighting their own battles in their own space. Their different way of life is not a shortcoming, but rather a uniqueness that deserves to be understood and appreciated. Beneath that simplicity, there shines a very high level of humanity and togetherness.

By Nor Syahida Zol @ Muhammad Zol
(Local Coordinator for Tumpat)



UPCOMING EVENT

STUDIES ON MALAYSIAN INDIAN CONCERNS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Multi-Dimensional Poverty Study & Indian Community

by Dr. Thanaraj Murudi



Political Leadership & Community Concerns Being Undertaken

by Prof. Datuk Dr. Denison Jayasooria and Ms. Darshini Rawichandran

8 March 2026

(Sunday)

2.30 - 6.00 PM

Ruang Komuniti MySDG

A-G-3A, Blok A, 8 Avenue,
Jalan Sungai Jernih 8/1, PJS 8,
46050 Petaling Jaya, Selangor

REGISTER NOW



5 3 FEB 2026



The Sew & Generate Programme: Empowering the Women of Kampung Lohan Skim II through Sewing and Entrepreneurship Training implemented by APPGM-SDG in collaboration with Yayasan Hasanah and the Ministry of Finance Malaysia concluded on 3rd February 2026 with a closing ceremony officiated by the Member of Parliament for Ranau, YB Datuk Jonathan Yasin.

This programme is a targeted intervention initiative under the Special Intervention for Local Coordinator APPGM-SDG (Ranau District), which included the contribution of four sewing machine units and the implementation of a three day intensive course. The training was conducted by Give 1 For Two (G1FT) as the implementing partner and technical trainer.

In his speech, YB Datuk Jonathan Yasin emphasised that this programme is not merely skill training, but a strategic approach to empowering women and building family economic resilience, in line with the localisation agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) at the community level. He also praised the consistent commitment of APPGM-SDG in bringing development interventions directly to the grassroots.



As a follow-up measure, a meeting with the leadership of Kampung Lohan Skim II will be held to draft a community action plan for a one-year period. This approach aims to ensure that the initiated efforts continue in a phased and structured manner, generating measurable socioeconomic impact.

The ceremony was also attended by the Ranau District Officer, Mr. Tinus Manggam; Managing Directors of G1FT, Ms. Zee and Ms. Ivy; the leadership of the Kampung Lohan Skim II Village Development and Security Committee (JPKK); and the programme participants.

A total of 16 women from the local community successfully completed the training and are expected to be able to generate income through sewing services, the creation of creative products, and more systematic and competitive order management.

APPGM-SDG expressed its hope that this programme model can serve as a reference for other villages within the Ranau Parliament, thereby supporting the agenda of poverty eradication, gender equality, and inclusive economic development in Sabah.

*By Norita Yapi
(Local Coordinator for Ranau)*

6 3 - 5 FEB 2026



PATHWAYS OF HISTORY AND HOPE: THREE-DAY NOTES FROM THE JERANTUT CONSTITUENCY

From 3 to 5 February 2026, the APPGM-SDG team conducted an issue mapping visit to the Jerantut Constituency as part of an effort to listen to the voices of the grassroots community. This three-day visit provided the team with the opportunity to interact with eight target groups, including Malay villages, FELDA settlers, and Orang Asli communities, with the aim of understanding local issues and identifying best practices within the area.

Day One at Kota Gelanggi Cave

The first day began with a visit to Kota Gelanggi Cave, a historical heritage site that stands as one of Jerantut’s significant landmarks. The team was guided by Pok Chat, a FELDA Kota Gelanggi 01 settler who currently manages the cave under a mandate from the Local Authority. Kota Gelanggi Cave is more than just a geological formation; it holds deep historical value as a hideout for local warriors such as Mat Kilau and Tok Gajah during their resistance against British colonial rule. The historical narrative shared at the

site reflects the close connection between heritage, local identity, and the community’s role in its preservation. In a dialogue session with the Secretary of the Jerantut District Council, it was shared that the Local Authority is currently focusing on the implementation of Ecological Fiscal Transfer mechanisms to align financial incentives with environmental conservation efforts. Simultaneously, plans are being drafted to upgrade infrastructure facilities around the cave to support the growth of the local tourism sector.



Day Two with the Malay Village Communities

The second day focused on meetings with the Malay village communities, including those in Kampung Bukit Genting. According to the *Tok Empat* (Village Head), this village serves as a resettlement area for flood victims from neighbouring villages. Although the community here shows a high spirit of togetherness, there are still various shortcomings that affect the residents’ well-being. Among the issues highlighted were the absence of street lights, the lack of recreational facilities such as *sepak takraw* courts, and the need to upgrade the mosque for the use of the local community. The *Tok Empat* also informed us that

he is in the process of preparing documents to apply for the village to be designated as a *Kampung Angkat MADANI* (MADANI Adopted Village), with the hope that the subsequent support would accelerate development and improve the residents' quality of life.



Day Three at DUN Tahan

On the final day, the team was taken to the most remote area of the visit, the Tahan state constituency (DUN Tahan). The journey began as early as six in the morning, taking nearly two hours across winding, hilly roads with limited street lighting. Despite the challenges, the serene morning atmosphere and the breathtaking mountain views as the sun rose provided an unforgettable experience. We also had the opportunity to visit Bukit Awan, an attraction along the way to Kuala Sat, though we missed seeing the famous "carpet of clouds" that tourists often flock

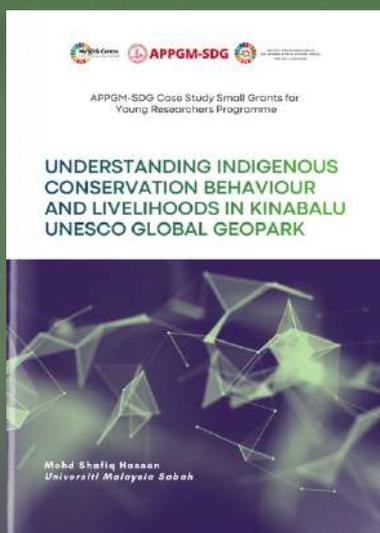


to photograph. Upon arriving at Kuala Sat and Kuala Tahan, it became clear why Jerantut is often called the main gateway to Taman Negara. The tourism sector here is actively driven by the local community; however, constraints in basic infrastructure—such as road conditions, clean water supply, internet connectivity, and solid waste management—remain major challenges that require ongoing attention.



*By Nur Syadhira Mohd Razali
(Constituency Coordination Department, APPGM-SDG)*

LATEST PUBLICATION



Although community involvement is widely recognised as crucial for conservation, most research has focused on awareness and participation, with little attention to the behavioural mechanisms in newly designated geoparks such as Kinabalu UNESCO Global Geopark (KUGGp). This study investigates **conservation behaviour among indigenous communities** in the KUGGp, Sabah, Malaysian Borneo using the Integrative Model of Behaviour Prediction (IMBP).



7 4 FEB 2026



FROM IDEAS TO IMPACT: BUILDING STRONGER PROJECTS THROUGH LOGICAL THINKING

The 13th Malaysia Plan (13MP) calls for a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable nation, one where no community is left behind and where development is shared across all sectors. In this vision, the third sector plays a critical role as a bridge between policy and people, especially at the grassroots level. However, good intentions alone are not enough. To support national aspirations, community initiatives must be structured, measurable, and aligned with clear development outcomes.

With this spirit, MySDG Academy organised its first Logical Framework Approach (LFA) Train the Trainer Workshop to strengthen project planning capacity among third sector leaders. The programme aimed to help practitioners design projects that are not only meaningful, but also fundable and results-driven.



The workshop opened with Prof. Datuk Dr. Denison Jayasooria, who linked the discussion directly to the national agenda under the 13MP and the social economy ecosystem. He emphasised that third sector organisations are key drivers of inclusive development, and they must strengthen their governance, financial sustainability, and project management standards. He stressed that structured project planning and measurable results are key if the third sector wants to be recognised as a serious development partner.

The training was led by Mr. Khairuddin Md Tahir from the Malaysian Institute of Economic Research (MIER), who introduced LFA as a holistic and practical end-to-end project management framework. Participants learned how to identify root causes through problem tree analysis, conduct stakeholder analysis, define objectives, set SMART indicators, and develop the Logical Framework Matrix (LFM). The key message was simple, every activity must contribute to a clear output and outcome.

An interactive session facilitated by Zoel Ng allowed participants to apply the framework in group discussions. They worked on defining strong project outputs and understanding the difference between activities and measurable results. This exercise highlighted how proper output design improves monitoring, accountability, and funder confidence.

Importantly, the workshop also resulted in the formation of three working group committees to continue the momentum focusing on (1) Resilience & Visibility, (2) Partnership & Business Inclusion and (3) Policy Advocacy. These working groups reflect the priorities of the 13MP in strengthening collaboration, improving policy engagement, and enhancing the sustainability of third sector organisations.

More than just a training session, the workshop marked a strategic step towards empowering the third sector to contribute meaningfully to Malaysia's development agenda moving from ideas to structured, fundable, and measurable impact.

*By Iman Nurhakim Abu Sa'ya
(MySDG Academy)*

8 11 - 13 FEB 2026



3 DAYS DIVING INTO THE HEART OF KUBANG KERIAN

Recently, researchers had the opportunity to participate in a series of issue mapping visits to the Kubang Kerian constituency. For three days, we went on ground to listen firsthand to the grievances and hopes of the local community. Honestly, it was an eye-opening experience, it was not just about data, but about real lives.

The Chinese Community of Kg. Cina Chepa

In Kelantan, Kubang Kerian is seen as a small town well-equipped with various social facilities, particularly infrastructure. However, when researchers went on ground, various unique characteristics and issues were voiced by the local community. The first day began in Kg. Cina Chepa. Interestingly, the Tionghua community here has resided along the banks of the Pangkalan Datu River for generations. In terms of assimilation, it is evident that this community is more fluent in the Kelantan dialect and culture; for example, their attire and the food served—such as *nasi kerabu* and *kuih akok*, which are traditional Kelantanese delicacies. This demonstrates a very high level of acceptance in terms of unity. Yet, behind that heritage, they struggle with several basic issues, such as private roads built by themselves without any maintenance from the authorities and a lack of access to treated water.



The Community of Kg. Wakaf Stan

We then met with the residents of Kg. Wakaf Stan, an area inhabited by the elite, yet its bay-like terrain causes them to struggle with persistent flooding. Imagine—since 2022, they have been frequently hit by flash floods to the point where residents had to find their own alternatives, collectively purchasing pump engines to channel water out of the area. Since many residents work in the public sector as doctors and teachers, flooding blocks these people from leaving the area, potentially leading to a shortage of specialists/experts available for medical treatment and teaching.



Tok Kenali Market

Before sunset, we managed to visit the Tok Kenali Market to meet with the youth of Gong Dermin. From our observation, the market appeared somewhat gloomy due to a lack of visitors. However, the products sold—such as fish, chicken, vegetables, and various fruits—were high in quality and variety. Most of the youth we met were highly educated and actively involved in farming; however, the primary concerns raised involved social issues such as the misuse of kratom (*ketum*) and vaping. Researchers

also found that Kubang Kerian still lacks large-scale recreation and leisure spaces, and we were informed that there are no public fields or football fields in the area.

Kg. Langgut and Salor

The second day took us to Kg. Langgut and Salor. The atmosphere here was quite pleasant, with the beauty of emerald-green paddy fields and cool air that soothes the soul. However, the "emotions" of the paddy land were deeply felt. Imagine our farmers working tirelessly, yet their paddy quality only reaches Grade C to E due to irrigation issues with the Kemubu Pump and deteriorating seed quality. It is a stark contrast to the yields found in Sekinchan or Kedah.

In Salor, we met with an Armed Forces (ATM) Veteran. It was touching to hear the story of a 76-year-old veteran who served since the communist era, but now relies solely on a small allowance without a fixed pension.

A fascinating highlight of the second day was the visit to the *Makam Raja Salor* (Tomb of the King of Salor). There is a tragic tale behind this tomb regarding an attack by Sultan Muhammad II following the stabbing of a prince. We viewed the tombs of the King of Salor, his wives, family, and warriors who were reportedly killed during a combined land and sea assault by Sultan Muhammad II. Although it has been gazetted as a heritage site, this 19th-century historical area requires a "touch" of restoration and better road access so that this legacy does not continue to be neglected.



Pasir Tumboh

On the final day, we headed to Pasir Tumboh, focusing on cage fish farmers and the *Penghulu Mukim* (Heads of *Mukim*; *Mukim* is an administrative subdivision of territory). Uniquely, the farmers shared that their fish had once been marketed as far as Temerloh. However, because this farming activity lacks a dedicated irrigation canal, there is a possibility that operations may have to cease. For the *Penghulu*, the main issues raised pertained to congestion and the lack of street lighting at the Pangkalan Datu River Trail and the Gong Dermin Public Field. Both locations are hidden gems for tourism and recreation. Unfortunately, since the COVID-19 pandemic, the River Trail has become unmanaged, while the Gong Dermin Public Field faces the threat of riverbank erosion, posing a danger to visitors.



Conclusion

Kubang Kerian possesses immense potential, ranging from the agricultural and historical sectors to river tourism. A collective effort and coordinated action plan must be implemented to develop these sectors progressively.

*By Dr. Siti Nur Ain Zakinuddin
(Head of East Coast Zone, APPGM-SDG)*

14 - 15 FEB 2026



"Change happens when ordinary people step forward with love and courage, and together we are able to shape a premier initiative towards building a prosperous, just, and free society." — A reflection by Ms. Sridayu Samsuri, Chairperson of the Wanita Inspirasi Kuantan (WINK) and programme participant.



In line with the theme "From Kampung to Parliament," APPGM-SDG organised a Training of Trainers (ToT) Workshop: Empowering Neighbourhood Programmes Through Policy Intervention'. The workshop aimed to train 28 Neighbourhood Leaders as trainers to conduct two workshops for grassroots community leaders on the Citizen Rights and 13th Malaysia Plan (RMK-13) modules.



These two modules have two primary objectives: to empower participants with knowledge regarding their rights as citizens and to encourage participation in the local planning and administrative decision-making processes.

Both modules will be implemented across 46 APPGM-SDG neighbourhoods nationwide, with a target of empowering 1,380 participants.



This programme is part of the Policy Intervention Initiative, a collaborative effort between APPGM-SDG, Yayasan Hasanah, and the Ministry of Finance.

*By Paniirselvam Jayaraman
(Policy Solutions Department, APPGM-SDG)*

10

16 FEB 2026



The Road and Footbridge Upgrading Project was implemented through the Special Needs Fund under the Policy Intervention Initiative, a collaborative effort between APPGM-SDG, Yayasan Hasanah, the Ministry of Finance, and the Perak Caring Association (PCA).

To mark the successful completion of this project, a Road Opening Ceremony was held on 16 February 2026. The ceremony was officiated by YB Thulsi Manogaran (ADUN Buntong).

The event was also attended by Mr. James Raj (Deputy Executive Director, APPGM-SDG), Dr. Thanaraj Murudi (Head of Northern Zone, APPGM-SDG), the President and Vice President of PCA, Ms. Pathma and Ms. Halida as strategic partners, community leaders, and the residents of Spooner Road. The programme included a welcoming address, a brief project briefing, an officiating speech, and a symbolic road opening gimmick.

In her officiating speech, YB Thulsi Manogaran emphasised the importance of providing safe basic infrastructure for the well-being of the people. She also praised the spirit of cooperation between NGOs and the local community in making this project a success.

This project was undertaken to address the previous state of the infrastructure, which was at a critical and unsafe level, affecting the daily movement of approximately 15 local families. The scope of work involved paving an area of 660 m², providing a 150 mm thick crusher-run base, laying 50 mm thick premix asphalt, installing a 5-meter long box culvert, as well as site management and logistics.



The uniqueness of this project lies in the Infrastructure *Gotong-Royong* approach, where the local community played an active role as implementing partners. A road contractor, who is also a local resident, contributed expertise, labour, and the use of machinery voluntarily. Other local residents also contributed their efforts through the spirit of *gotong-royong* (communal cooperation).

This project supports the aspirations of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), specifically:

- SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities – Improving access to safe basic infrastructure.
- SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals – Strengthening collaboration between the community, NGOs, and stakeholders.

This project proves that community collaboration and the spirit of *gotong-royong* can produce a tangible impact on the safety and well-being of residents.

By Pathma Devi
(Local Coordinator for Ipoh Barat)



We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the Members of Parliament and the Speaker of Dewan Rakyat for their unwavering cooperation and commitment. Throughout the month, APPGM-SDG has had the privilege of engaging with various parliamentary constituencies through various meeting and events such as our launch of our Policy Recommendation Reports, the formal handover of the Preliminary Report of Policy Interventions (a collaboration between Yayasan Hasanah and APPGM-SDG), and more. These milestones were made possible through the dedicated efforts between the Members of Parliament and APPGM-SDG. We value this synergy between policy and grassroots action, and we look forward to further strengthening our partnership to advance the Sustainable Development Goals across Malaysia.



APPGM-SDG



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