

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS NETWORK

ASIA HEADQUARTERS
IMPACT REPORT
2022-2023

SUNWAY UNIVERSITY

A CLASS ABOVE

Supported by:

Jeffrey Cheah Foundation

Nurturing the Seeds of Wisdom

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VICE-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It has been one year since the official launch of the Asia Headquarters of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (UN-SDSN Asia) on 17 November 2022 in Sunway City Kuala Lumpur. As will be clear from the succeeding pages, it had been an exhilarating year in mobilization of research organizations in Southeast Asia, and in collaboration with regional bodies (e.g., the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta and UNESCAP in Bangkok) and national government agencies to accelerate progress on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the targets of the Paris Climate Agreement.

Our flagship programs have become well-known in the seminar rooms of universities and the corridors of power in several Asian countries. They are:



- Networks, which undertakes matchmaking in regional research projects and crossfertilization of ideas among country chapters of UN-SDSN in the Asia-Pacific region;
- The SDG Academy, which offers free, world-class online educational content and training programs on various subjects relating to sustainable development;
- The ASEAN Green Future project, which has nine country teams analyzing the different regional pathways for net zero CO₂ emissions;
- Mission 4.7, which works to transform K-12 education in the Asia- Pacific region by making sustainable development a key feature of national curricula;
- The Science Panel for Southeast Asia's Biodiversity Protection, which is presently focusing on Borneo to help (a) the expansion and scientific management of the rainforests, (b) joint dynamic development and green transformation of the economy, and (c) uplifting the welfare of the minority indigenous communities;
- Institutional Design, which focuses on the reforms of electoral, party and parliamentary politics, and access to information as a key civil liberty, to improve governance;
- Poverty Eradication, which will have pilot intervention sites in rural Jeli, Kelantan, and in the urban Klang Valley; and,
- SDG Dashboards projects for Southeast Asia, which are starting with dashboards for Malaysia at the national, state, and district levels.

I must thank the Sunway family, particularly the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation, the Sunway Group, and the Sunway Education Group, for empowering UN-SDSN Asia to undertake these missions, which are natural extensions of Sunway University as the campus with a conscience, founded on the virtues of humility, integrity, and excellence. None of the achievements on UN-SDSN Asia would have been possible without the generous backing of the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation and its Founding Trustee, Tan Sri Dato' Seri Sir Jeffrey Cheah KBE AO.

Since 2016, the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation (JCF) has been supporting the work of UN-SDSN globally, first via a gift of US\$10 million to cover the 2016-2020 period; and thereafter, another gift of US\$10

million to cover the 2021-2025 period. The latter enabled the establishment of UN-SDSN Asia at Sunway University, complementing existing offices in New York and Paris, to fast-track projects that harness the rapidly growing significance of Asia in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Climate Agreement.

Because of this generous JCF endowment, important projects encompassing decarbonization, biodiversity conservation, financing sustainability, and education for sustainable development could make headway globally. Having the Asia Headquarters hosted in Malaysia also allows the good work carried out in Malaysia and the region to be featured prominently on the global stage; including, in recent months, at the UN General Assembly in New York City in September 2023; at the East Asia Economic Convention in Seoul in October 2023; at the China International Import Expo in Shanghai and the World Young Scientist Summit in Wenzhou in November 2023; and at COP28 in Dubai and the UNESCO ESD-Net Global Meeting in Tokyo in December 2023.

Sunway University is the place UN-SDSN Asia lovingly calls home. It provides us the exceptional institutional and administrative support we need so that we can focus on the work at hand comfortably and in an intellectually stimulating environment—with access to experts ready to be engaged according to their involvement in the various fields that constitute sustainable development. Likewise, UN-SDSN Asia enriches Sunway University by being always ready to provide our own expertise and consultation on matters involving educating staff and students on sustainable development; connecting experts with counterparts in the wider global UN-SDSN network; organizing and co-organizing important events under the Sunway banner; and collaborating on the many areas of research-backed solutions-building for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Climate Agreement that will transform our country, region, and world.

The leadership of the Sunway Group has been another source of great support. The resources that have been made available to UN-SDSN Asia through the Chairman's Office and the Group Brand, Marketing and Communications division have allowed our work to reach relevant audiences, including the Malaysian government, the corporate sector, civil society, academia, and the public at large, through the media and high-profile meetings and events.

Undeniably, all the achievements in this report are due to the talented team of dedicated people that I have been so fortunate to assemble—a small team of 20, but a formidable one, and a diverse one in terms of talent, gender, age, nationality, and ethnic background. Their work will speak for itself in this document.

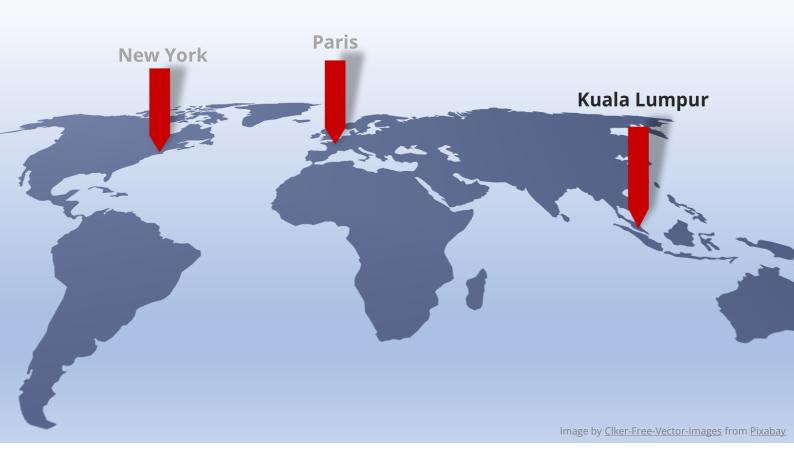
UN-SDSN Asia is most grateful for the immense support from so many well-wishers committed to sustainable development. UN SDSN Asia pledges to pursue greater achievements in economic growth and stability, social inclusion and mobility, and environmental sustainability and vibrancy in the coming years.

Woo Wing Thye Vice-President for Asia, UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network Research Professor, Sunway University



The UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (UN-SDSN) works under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General to mobilize the world's universities, think tanks, and national laboratories for action on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change; empower societies through free online education; and translate scientific evidence and ideas into solutions and accountability.

Established in 2012 by former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and world-renowned economist, Professor Jeffrey Sachs, the UN-SDSN promotes integrated approaches to implement the SDGs and the Paris Agreement through education, research, policy analysis, and global cooperation. As of 2023, UN-SDSN has over 1,900 members in 53 networks across 140 countries.





In 2022, the UN-SDSN established its third Secretariat office, the UN-SDSN Asia Headquarters (UN-SDSN Asia), in Kuala Lumpur to operate alongside the existing New York and Paris offices, in overseeing the ever-expanding space for innovative solutions-building for sustainable development, and in recognition of the growing importance of Asia, a continent of immense significance in the achievement of the SDGs. UN-SDSN Asia is generously funded by the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation, hosted by Sunway University, and headed by Professor Woo Wing Thye, Vice-President for Asia. The Jeffrey Sachs Center for Sustainable Development at Sunway University additionally serves as a strategic partner for UN-SDSN Asia programming.

HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2022/2023

The UN-SDSN Asia Headquarters was officially launched with a two-day event in November 2022. Its flagship projects include the ASEAN Green Future initiative, the Science Panel for Southeast Asia, and Mission 4.7 for the Asia-Pacific. UN-SDSN Asia also houses the Asia-Pacific Network Management team, a branch of the SDG Academy, and the UN-SDSN Malaysia national network. Recognizing their national and regional relevance, additional workstreams—Institutional Design and Poverty Eradication—have also been added.

UN-SDSN Asia works closely with the Malaysian Ministry of Economy and is one of the few organizations invited to be on the National SDG Steering Committee, where it co-leads the Working Committee on the Private Sector. Notable contributions to the National SDG Steering Committee are a state and district SDG Monitor, utilizing the methodology of UN-SDSN's *Sustainable Development Report*, with data primarily from the Department of Statistics Malaysia. UN-SDSN Malaysia held its inaugural National Solutions Forum in April 2022 and has since been consulted on similar events by other networks around the world. The National Solutions Forum paved the way for the first Asia-Pacific Solutions Forum, which was held in November 2023.

The VP for Asia regularly represents UN-SDSN on various platforms locally and internationally.

Numbers at a Glance

10

MAJOR & SECTIONAL EVENTS

5,946

PARTICIPANTS ENGAGED ACROSS EVENTS

180

PUBLISHED ARTICLES (Op-eds, journal articles, reports)









On November 17 and 18, 2022, UN-SDSN launched its newest Secretariat office, hosted by Sunway University. The office in Sunway City Kuala Lumpur serves as the organization's Asia Headquarters, one of only three such global centers, alongside Paris and New York City. A blog post about the launch can be viewed here.

Receiving Visitors



Hosting delegations from like-minded universities helps introduce the work of UN-SDSN Asia to relevant stakeholders and elevate our profile in the region.



26 students and staff from the Master in Public Policy (MPP) Seniors Class Committee of the National University of Singapore (NUS) had a closed-door presentation and dialogue with UN-SDSN Asia staff in November 2022.



28 students and 4 faculty members from Xiamen University's Tandem Program visited UN-SDSN Asia in August 2023 as part of their Summer Program Overseas to learn about how UN-SDSN is making a difference towards sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific.

The National Cheng Kung University (NCKU), Taiwan, also paid a courtesy call in September 2023. Leading the delegation was President Emeritus and Distinguished Professor of Environmental Health Sciences, Dr. Huey-Jen Jenny Su.

The office also received a delegation from Temasek Polytechnic, Singapore, on November 9, 2023, led by Mr Lim Teng Leng. We were joined by colleagues in Sunway University to talk about how sustainable development education are embedded throughout Sunway University.



The 2023 ASEAN Workshop on Sustainable Development (AWSD), held at Sunway University on July 21-22, 2023, resumed the strengthening of ASEAN regional partnership in sustainable development, a process that had been held in abeyance by the COVID-19 pandemic. With the leadership of Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, Secretary-General of ASEAN, and Professor Jeffrey Sachs, President of UN-SDSN, AWSD 2023 empowered participants with ideas to accelerate progress on the SDGs and climate action to make up for the time lost in the last three years. AWSD updated and affirmed national commitments to the SDGs ahead of the 2023 SDG Summit and 2024 Summit of the Future. Over 200 people participated in the workshop across four plenary sessions and seven parallel sessions. On the sidelines, the first meeting of the Science Panel for Southeast Asia and a working meeting of ASEAN Green Future country teams were held.















Asia-Pacific Perspectives on Happiness



On March 20, 2023, the International Day of Happiness, UN-SDSN and partners officially launched *World Happiness Report 2023* (*WHR 2023*). To mark the occasion, on March 23, UN-SDSN hosted a webinar aimed at exploring happiness and wellbeing from various perspectives within the Asia-Pacific, reflecting on Asian countries' 2023 rankings and discussing the future of happiness in the region. The 90-minute webinar drew an audience of 120 attendees from 19 countries from across the Asia-Pacific and beyond. The webinar was moderated by Dr. Shun Wang, one of the editors of *WHR 2023*, and the panel included a former Minister of Education of Bhutan and speakers from SDSN Malaysia; SDSN Australia, New Zealand, and Pacific; and SDSN Southeast Asia.

Co-Hosted Events

February 11-12, 2023 **ASEAN Education Cities Conference**(AECC) 2023

In partnership with the Future Cities Research Institute, ElastiCities Research Cluster, Sunway School of Arts, and the Sunway Campus with a Conscience Committee

November 14, 2023

Side event at the Asia Pacific Climate Week: Pathways for a Low Carbon Energy Future in Southeast Asia

Hosted by the Johor state government in collaboration with the Government of Malaysia. Professor Leong Yuen Yoong chaired the side event with UN-SDSN Asia discussants Low Wai Sern and Justin Liew.

October 31, 2023

Reform the Financial Sector for SMEs to spearhead the National Industrial Master Plan for Inclusive, Dynamic Growth

In partnership with Sin Chew Daily, a leading Chinese-language newspaper in Malaysia. Professor Woo Wing Thye was a speaker, and Professor Wong Chin Huat served as a moderator.

14 November 2023 **ASLI Banking Summit**

Organised by ASLI and co-hosted by UN-SDSN Asia. The event attracted over 600 finance industry insiders from both domestic and foreign markets.



UN-SDSN mobilizes the world's leading academic and research institutes and leverages their strengths to help promote practical solutions to sustainable development challenges and realize the SDGs and the Paris Agreement. Spanning six continents, the UN-SDSN global network comprises over 1,900 member institutions, primarily universities, coordinated by 55 National and Regional Networks.

In their respective countries and regions, UN-SDSN's national and regional networks focus on distinct projects and priorities in line with their local contexts and challenges. Each of these networks is coordinated by one or more host institutions, which have a strong track record working on issues relating to sustainable development.

This past year, networks in the Asia-Pacific have seen much effort and a special focus on creating platforms for innovative solutions and sustainability champions to be presented to the wider community, as well as opportunities for knowledge exchange within the region.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE





Organize the National Solutions Forum 2022

Malaysia's inaugural National Solutions Forum (NSF) was held on April 28, 2022, to advance a whole-of-nation approach to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The call for submissions drew a total of 39 entries from across the country. Participants responded to the theme of "Wellbeing" in a wide variety of approaches and at different scales. Of the 39, nine shortlisted solutions were selected to be featured at the NSF and received grant funding courtesy of the Sunway Group. More information can be found here.

SDSN China Hub and SDSN Hong Kong Featured at "Universities for Goal 13" Competition

On September 20, 2023, UN-SDSN and Siemens Gamesa announced the winner of the "Universities for Goal 13" award, a competition promoting university talent in the fight against climate change through disruptive solutions. Six universities from around the world participated in this second edition, including Tsinghua University, China; the Chinese University of Hong Kong; the Nelson Mandela University, South Africa; University of Göttingen, Germany; the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; and Case Western Reserve University, USA. The winning solution from China, Reducing Carbon With Carbon, addressed the issue of graphite waste from lithium batteries, which will represent 32% of all combustion emissions worldwide by 2030.



On November 2, 2023, UN-SDSN and the Sunway Group hosted the inaugural Asia-Pacific Solutions Forum (APSF), themed "Accelerating Local Action for the SDGs in the Asia-Pacific," at the Sunway Resort Hotel in Sunway City Kuala Lumpur. Taking inspiration from UN-SDSN's past four Global Solutions Forums, APSF showcased research-backed, innovative, replicable, and scalable solutions identified from among the members and local business partners of UN-SDSN. Networks in Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia and Southeast Asia presented six innovative solutions to an audience that included representatives from civil society, academia, government, and the corporate sector. Further information can be found here.







Joint Webinar Explores the Incubation of Sustainable Solutions

On April 19, 2023, the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Thailand Networks jointly organized a webinar on "Incubating Sustainable Solutions" for university and high school students who are pursuing a lead role in sustainability in their respective communities. The webinar featured three sustainability champions from different countries. More information can be found <a href="https://example.com/here-



























Hong Kong Hosts its First Sustainable Development Conference

On October 4-5, 2023, SDSN Hong Kong held its first Global Conference on Sustainable Development (GCSD 2023) at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. GCSD 2023 brought together over 1,600 online views and more than 300 on-site participants to address pressing environmental and social challenges and forge meaningful collaborations in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals. It served as a platform for global leaders, visionaries, and experts to convene and explore innovative solutions. Professor Jeffrey Sachs and the ASEAN Green Future, Mission 4.7, and SDG Academy teams participated. More information can be found here.

SDSN Malaysia Youth Formed

In January 2022, SDSN Malaysia convened a group of youth leaders from Sunway University to implement SDG-related projects. SDSN Malaysia Youth's main solutions-building focuses on SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing, particularly the indicator on promoting mental wellbeing. The Wall of Kindness initiative received over 240 handwritten notes. Most recently, a campus postcard delivery service engaged over 400 staff and students to pen heartfelt messages to students and colleagues on kindness cards, which were then hand-delivered. More information can be found here.





The SDG Academy is the flagship education initiative of the UN-SDSN, with teams based in New York and Kuala Lumpur. Its goal is to be the premier source of high-quality resources and guidance on education for the SDGs, with the mandate to enrich the field of sustainable development and advance Agenda 2030.

Since launching in Kuala Lumpur as part of UN-SDSN Asia, the SDG Academy team has worked to promote and enhance education for sustainable development locally, regionally, and globally.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

47

TOTAL COURSES AVAILABLE FROM THE SDG ACADEMY 8

NEW COURSES LAUNCHED

595,699

TOTAL LEARNER ENROLLMENTS ON edX

Eight New Courses in the SDG Academy Catalog

This year, the SDG Academy produced eight new fully online courses—bringing the total to <u>47</u> active courses.

- Using the SDGs for Government Action with Apolitical
- Ecosystem-based Adaptation: Working with nature to adapt to a changing climate with IISD, IUCN and GIZ
- Changing Behaviour for Sustainable Development with BehaviourWorks Australia and Monash Sustainable Development Institute
- Making Universal Social Protection a Reality with ILO
- One Health in Practice: Solutions for healthy people in Biosphere reserves with UNESCO
- Equity and Inclusion in Education with UNESCO
- Shaping Urban Futures with IIHS
- Decent Work and Economic Growth: Achieving SDG 8 with UNU-WIDER

Growth in Malaysia

Geolocation trends of <u>SDG Academy Library</u> users show a 4000% increase from Malaysia for the year 2023, as compared to the year 2021 when UN-SDSN Asia began its operations in this region. Malaysia accounts for nearly half of total viewership, followed by the United States and Canada.



Sunway School of Hospitality student Vi Pham was one of four speakers, selected from 600 delegates, during a dedicated youth session at MENA Climate Week 2023.



Over the past year, the SDG Academy has built a portfolio of projects aimed at upskilling professionals across a variety of industries. To date, the SDG Academy has launched three professional certificates on edX—Foundations of Sustainable Development, Sustainable Water Management, and Sustainable Cities and Urban Development—as well as an innovative Master's Pathway in Foundations of Sustainable Development, which provides flexible access to University College Dublin's online MSc. in Sustainable Development for learners from non-traditional academic backgrounds.

In July 2023, the SDG Academy became a partner on LinkedIn Learning, launching five custom minicourses on sustainable development. In Europe, the SDG Academy is a partner in the BuildSkills Academy, a European Commission-funded project to develop sustainability training for the European construction sector. In Asia, the SDG Academy partnered with seekMAX, the new learning content platform on SEEK Asia's JobStreet mobile app, contributing 75 educational videos spanning topics such as technology and the SDGs, macroeconomics, behavior change, climate change, and wellbeing. In August 2023, the SDG Academy facilitated UN-SDSN's partnership with Sunway Malls on the Sustainability Collaboration Action Network (SCAN), a capacity-building collaboration for the Malaysian retail sector. The SDG Academy helped design the sustainability basics course available on SCAN's ReX platform.



Support for SDG Learning at Sunway

The SDG Academy works closely with colleagues across the Sunway Education Group (SEG) to support SDG learning and engagement on campus. In 2022, the SDG Academy designed and piloted the first MPU on Sustainable Development in Malaysia, taught by Professor Leong Choon Heng. Later that year, the SDG Academy worked with SEG's Human Resources team to roll out a mandatory SDG learning e-module for all faculty and staff, ensuring that everyone on campus, regardless of their discipline or role, has a basic understanding of the SDGs and how their work in education contributes to sustainable development.

The SDG Academy has been active in presenting about the SDGs and sustainable development at Sunway to international visitors, such as delegations from Indonesia's Global Youth Action, Singapore Polytechnic, Temasek Polytechnic, and the Royal Commonwealth Society.

Finally, the SDG Academy is pleased to have had the opportunity to bring Sunway University students to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, as part of UN-SDSN's collaboration with the Saudi Ministry of Tourism's Sustainable Tourism Global Centre. In 2022, four students and one faculty member from the School of Hospitality joined UN-SDSN's youth delegation to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) Global Summit; and in 2023, six Sunway students travelled to Riyadh for MENA Climate Week.

(Right) SDG Academy team with Sunway School of Hospitality Senior Teaching Fellow Hairani Nur and her students at At-Turaif Historic District during WTTC Global Summit 2022.





The SDG Academy continues to be a leading voice in education for sustainable development, and has contributed its expertise in several fora, both regional and global:

- September 18, 2022: As part of the Mission 4.7 Secretariat, co-hosted a high-level Ministerial Panel alongside the UN Transforming Education Summit (TES) featuring Ministers of Education from Ghana, Belize, Greece, and Malawi;
- November 28-December 1, 2022: Led a global youth delegation to the <u>World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) Global Summit 2022</u> in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia;
- January 31, 2023: Hosted an official <u>Spotlight Session</u> on partnerships for science, technology and innovation at the UN ECOSOC Partnership Forum; and led a <u>side event</u> on lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic for the future of education, featuring H.E. Niki Kerameus, Greece's Minister of Education and Religious Affairs, and experts representing policy, academia, and practice;
- June 12-24, 2023: Spoke on a panel about the Greening Education Partnership at the <u>UNESCO</u> <u>ESD-Net 2023 Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting</u> in Bali, Indonesia.
- October 9-12, 2023: Led a global youth delegation to <u>MENA Climate Week 2023</u> in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia;
- September 18-19, 2023: Hosted <u>multiple events</u> at UN Headquarters in New York during SDG Action Weekend on the intersection of science, policy, and sustainable development;
- September 20, 2023: Launched <u>the Joint Committee on the OER Recommendation</u> in collaboration with UNESCO during the SDG Summit in New York;
- October 4-5, 2023: Spoke on a panel alongside the UNESCO Chair of York University in a session on education for sustainable development at the Global Conference of Sustainable Development (GCSD) 2023 in Hong Kong;
- October 30-November 3, 2023: Served as a speaker, mentor, and judge for the first annual ASEAN-China-India Youth Leadership Summit in Singapore;
- November 11-12, 2023: Spoke about the role of education in achieving the 1.5° limit on a panel at the World Young Scientist Summit in Wenzhou, China.



ASEAN Green Future (AGF) is a multi-year research project launched in 2021 involving UN-SDSN, ClimateWorks Centre, and nine country teams from leading universities and think tanks across Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, and Vietnam). The research focus is on developing capacity for quantitative and qualitative climate policy analysis, and to chart net zero pathways that support the strategic foresight of policy makers.

With the support of UK Partnering for Accelerated Climate Transitions and the Stockholm Environment Institute, AGF is nurturing a generation of climate change and decarbonization researchers across Southeast Asia. This is essential for enhancing the region's understanding of climate change, developing tailored mitigation and adaptation, building capacity and knowledge, empowering local ownership of climate solutions, and attracting and retaining talent. Investing in local climate expertise is an investment in the region's resilience, sustainability, and long-term prosperity in the face of a changing climate.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE





Throughout 2023, the Stockholm Environmental Institute (SEI) trained AGF researchers on the use of the Low Emission Analysis Platform (LEAP), a widely used software tool for energy planning and climate change mitigation assessment. A workshop at SEI Asia, Bangkok, in May 2023, consisted of collaborative, hands-on sessions in which the participants worked on data collection and processing, model design, model building, and results analysis. More advanced modeling techniques were also introduced, along with next steps to continue improving the regional model. LEAP gave the AGF researchers a common language, shared tools, and a transparent platform for communication and collaboration. This has helped to accelerate the progress of research on decarbonization and inform the development of effective policies and strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.



On November 14, 2023, AGF presented at Asia-Pacific Climate Week (APCW), one of four Regional Climate Weeks held this year to build momentum ahead of COP 28 in Dubai. Hosted by the Johor state government in collaboration with the Government of Malaysia, APCW attracted a broad audience from across the region. At AGF's session, the Malaysia and Singapore country teams presented their findings from quantitative and qualitative climate policy analysis. A discussant from a government-linked investment company was invited to provide a critique.

Engagement with Key Stakeholders

AGF has been developing dialogues with Malaysian federal and state ministries, statutory bodies, government-linked energy companies, and government-linked investment companies to ensure that research, capacity building, and investment support tomorrow's policies rather than yesterday's priorities. In parallel, other country teams report similar dialogue channels in their respective countries.

AGF also engages in dialogues with international organizations like the Global Energy Interconnection Development and Cooperation Organization (GEIDCO), the ASEAN Centre for Energy, Asian Transport Outlook, the International Union of Railways, and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). These connections are crucial for AGF to access knowledge, harmonize policies, engage stakeholders, mobilize resources, and advocate policy recommendations.





(Above and left) Professor Leong Yuen Yoong speaking at COP28 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates in December 2023.

Major Events for AGF

Research findings have been presented on international platforms, such as:

- April 5, 2023: Presented at the Global Climate Hub: Systematic Review on Integrated Assessment Models for Decarbonization Pathways in Athens, Greece;
- April 29-30, 2023: Presented at Civil 20 India 2023: Sustainable & Resilient Communities Climate, Environment and Net Zero Targets in Sikkim, India;
- July 21-22, 2023: Hosted two panels at the ASEAN Workshop on Sustainable Development in Sunway City Kuala Lumpur;
- August 23-24, 2023: Presented at the Heart of Borneo International Conference: An Ecosystem that Provides in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia;
- September 7, 2023: Presented at Bank Indonesia International Seminar on Advancing Green Initiatives for the Sustainable Kalimantan Through Action and Collaboration in Banjarmasin, Indonesia;
- September 18, 2023: Presented at the International Conference on Sustainable Development;
- October 5, 2023: Presented at the Global Sustainable Development Conference in Hong Kong;
- November 14, 2023: Presented at Asia-Pacific Climate Week in Johor Bahru, Malaysia;
- November 15-16, 2023: Keynote speech on "Ocean is a Productive Capital Asset" at the Borneo Environment Conference in Kuching, Malaysia;
- December 1, 2023: Presented "Linking the Quest for Renewable Power to Ecosystem Healing in Southeast Asia" at the Systemic Pathways to Sustainability, Climate Neutrality, and Resilience session at the United Nations Climate Change Global Innovation Hub at COP 28;
- December 2, 2023: Presented "Linking the Quest for Renewable Power to Ecosystem Healing in Southeast Asia" at the Systemic Pathways to Sustainability, Climate Neutrality, and Resilience session at the Greek Pavilion at COP 28;
- December 3, 2023: Presented at the 18th Global Forum on Human Settlements in Dubai;
- December 4, 2023: Presented at the session on "Investing in Southeast Asia's green economy: Have we done enough?" at the Monash University Pavilion at COP 28.
- December 28, 2023: Keynote speech on "Soil is a Productive Capital Asset" at the First International Seminar and Workshop on Public Service in South Kalimantan, Indonesia.



(Left) Professor Leong Yuen Yoong speaking at the Global Forum on Human Settlements.



Mission 4.7 brings together leaders from government, academia, civil society, and business to accelerate the implementation of transformative education around the world. Mission 4.7 is one of the flagship projects of the UN-SDSN Asia Headquarters, where it is spearheading a regional effort to rally leaders to champion transforming education through Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in education systems from early childhood to tertiary levels, using Malaysia as its pilot site.

Globally, the Mission 4.7 Secretariat comprises members from UN-SDSN (via the SDG Academy, Global Schools, and the Mission 4.7 Malaysia team), UNESCO, the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens, and the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

50+

REGIONAL EDUCATION STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGED 7

PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN MALAYSIA ENLISTED FOR PILOT PROGRAM

370

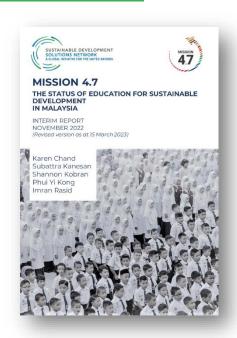
SCHOOLTEACHERS INVOLVED IN PILOT PROGRAM



The Mission 4.7 team is working with the Malaysian Ministry of Education's Education Policy and Research Division to pilot a custom-developed teacher training program in schools across the country. The pilot training program entails five in-person modules and 15-20 learning hours that will be conducted on-site for all teachers of the seven pilot schools. Ideally, the pilot will result in a large-scale teacher training implementation plan for all 11,000 public schools in Malaysia, with the potential to bring transformation that correspond with the aspirations of MADANI, as well as eight out of the 11 shifts put forward in the Malaysian Education Blueprint.

Report Published on the Status of ESD in Malaysia

The findings of a situation analysis study on the status of ESD in Malaysia were released in November 2022. The <u>report</u> identified three key areas for ESD implementation: Teacher Professional Development, Leveraging Trans-disciplinarity in the Curriculum, and a Whole-of-School Approach. Findings were subsequently presented to the Director General of the Ministry of Education, and an educator capacity-building intervention was proposed and accepted.





National ESD Framework

Following the release of the report on the status of ESD in Malaysia, Mission 4.7 Malaysia co-convened a coalition of national ESD stakeholders comprising the Education Policy and Research Division of the Ministry of Education, WWF Malaysia, Green Growth Asia Foundation, Yayasan Lestari Alam, UN-SDSN, and ESD experts to develop a workplan for a National ESD Framework for implementation by 2030, encompassing the themes of policy, curriculum, educator capacity-building, and whole-of-school approaches. The Framework is expected to lead to meaningful incorporation of ESD into national education planning, consistent with UNESCO's ESD for 2030 Roadmap. The Mission 4.7 Malaysia project was showcased at the UNESCO ESD-Net 2030 Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting in Bali, in June 2023, and the team has been invited to speak again at the UNESCO ESD-Net 2030 Global Meeting in Japan in December 2023. Subsequent phases of the project will include regional advocacy and adaptation in other countries in Asia-Pacific.

An ESD Workshop at SK Bandar Sunway

Teachers from SK Bandar Sunway benefitted from a workshop to build their foundational understanding of the SDGs and help them bring Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into their classrooms. On August 15, 2022, the Mission 4.7 Malaysia team shared best practices on how to incorporate ESD into the existing curriculum, regardless of which subject is being taught, and led a lesson building activity with teachers from a variety of disciplines. The workshop confirmed that teacher guidance is needed to successfully implement ESD, and the teachers saw its value in creating a more engaging and meaningful learning experience.







- November 18, 2022: Presented the priorities and work plan of Mission 4.7 for the Asia-Pacific on a panel entitled "Advancing Education for Sustainable Development" in conjunction with the launch of UN-SDSN Asia Headquarters at Sunway University;
- November 25, 2022: Invited to speak about UN-SDSN and Sunway University's role in advancing Mission 4.7 in Malaysia at the annual symposium of Program Duta Guru on the theme "Integrated STEM: The Key to a Sustainable Future," organized by Teach For Malaysia, the Ministry of Education Malaysia, and Yayasan Petronas;
- January 10, 2023: Presented UN-SDSN Asia's work and facilitated an experiential learning exercise on behavioral, social, and cognitive outcomes for ESD for the Curtin Academy Interdisciplinary Industry Study Tour Program (CA-I3STP) and Sustainable Future Conference (CA-SFC) in Miri, Sarawak;
- March 29, 2023: Spoke on data-driven approaches to mobilizing intergenerational solidarity for societal impact at a side event of UNESCAP's 10th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, entitled "A Resilient Planet For All: Intergenerational Solidarity in Action to Build Back Better";
- June 8, 2023: Gave a special introduction to the work of UN-SDSN Asia at Universiti Malaya's Sustainable Festival, organized by the Universiti Malaya Sustainable Development Centre;
- June 12-14, 2023: Spoke on a panel about educator capacity building at the UNESCO ESD-Net 2030 Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting in Bali, Indonesia;
- July 5, 2023: Presented to Malaysian state education department officers about the work of Mission 4.7 Malaysia in conjunction with the Malaysian Techlympics Stakeholder Retreat;
- July 21, 2023: Convened a panel of ASEAN ESD stakeholders to discuss "Mission 4.7: Reorienting Education to Contribute to Sustainable Development" at the ASEAN Workshop on Sustainable Development;
- October 4-5, 2023: Represented Mission 4.7 Malaysia at the Global Conference on Sustainable Development in Hong Kong;
- November 1, 2023: Represented Mission 4.7 Malaysia at the 13th Global RCE Meeting to present the status of ESD within the Malaysian education system and the need for capacity building of teachers;
- November 3, 2023: Represented UN-SDSN Asia at Mission 4.7's event on "Global Dialogues for Sustainable Education: Empowering Teachers and Students in ESD" at Helsinki Education Week;
- November 21, 2023: Co-organized with the Ministry of Education Malaysia, WWF Malaysia, Green Growth Asia Foundation, and Yayasan Lestari Alam, a National ESD Stakeholder Workshop at Sunway University to build a work plan for a National ESD Coalition;
- December 18-20, 2023: Invited to present the work of Mission 4.7 at the UNESCO ESD-Net 2030 Global Meeting in Japan.



The Science Panel for Southeast Asia's Biodiversity Protection (SP-SEA), inspired by the success of UN-SDSN's Science Panel for the Amazon, will research and inform pathways to address the five challenges of (a) species over-exploitation, (b) pollution, (c) land and sea use change, (d) climate change, and (e) invasive species and disease. Investing in measures to protect biodiversity in Southeast Asia's seas and forests could bring annual benefits valued many times more than the amount invested, in terms of job creation, higher incomes, and a more sustainable environment.

Expected outcomes include recommendations on achieving a sensible and equitable bioeconomy, green economy, and financial trajectories that can enhance the socio-economic status of marginalized and poor communities in the areas of interest, while protecting Southeast Asia's rainforest as a valuable carbon sink and biodiversity nerve center.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE



COALITION PARTNERS
CONVENED



PUBLIC EVENTS WHERE SP-SEA WAS PRESENTED



ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS



A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between UN-SDSN and the Sabah Forestry Department, witnessed by the Right Honourable Chief Minister of Sabah, at the official opening of the Heart of Borneo International Conference, held on August 23, 2023, in Kota Kinabalu. The Government of Sabah was represented by His Excellency Datuk Frederick Kugan, the Chief Conservator of Forests Sabah. The MOU, which will be effective for three years, has the objectives of enhancing cooperation in the areas of publication, research, communication, education, capacity building, public awareness, and advocacy for biodiversity protection in Borneo under the rubric of the Science Panel for Southeast Asia (SP-SEA).

A Regional Coalition Established

SP-SEA has established a coalition of experts, with a particular focus on Borneo, to form its core research group. The coalition is made up of 15 institutions, including UN-SDSN, six universities in Indonesia (Universitas Tanjongpura, Universitas Palangkaraya, Universitas Lampung Mangkurat, Universitas Mulawarman, Institut Pertanian Bogor, and Universitas Indonesia), the Central Bank of Indonesia, Sunway University, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, University College Sabah Foundation, Sabah Forestry Department, WWF Sabah, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, and the Sarawak Forestry Department. Engagement with several Malaysian federal government agencies, Indonesian government agencies, and the ASEAN Secretariat is currently ongoing.



UN-SDSN Asia was invited to present the work plans of SP-SEA and AGF to the Minister of Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change, Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad, on December 8, 2023, for the Ministry's consideration regarding Malaysia's transition to become a net zero carbon economy. The Ministry is kept abreast of developments at UN-SDSN Asia on these projects and related work. The Minister also delivered a keynote address at the ASEAN Workshop on Sustainable Development on July 21, 2023, at Sunway University.

Major Events for SP-SEA

- November 20, 2022: Presented on the topic of sustainable hospitality and tourism at the International Conference on Sustainable Hotels, Langkawi;
- November 28, 2022: Spoke on "Tourism Futures Reimagined" at the 6th World Tourism Conference (WTC) in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia;
- February 4, 2023: Presented on the importance of a green transition at Universitas Palangkaraya, Kalimantan, Indonesia;
- March 15, 2023: Spoke about collaborative environmental management among local government and the community at the Symposium on Compliance to the Environmental Quality Act Compliance 1974 & Empowerment of Environmental Quality Monitoring by the Department of Environment (DOE), Putrajaya, Malaysia;
- May 23, 2023: Presented views on Malaysia's low-carbon transition at the 2nd AMRO-MEA Roundtable on the Malaysian Economy;
- July 11-13: 2023: Presented on better river basin management at the 29th International Sustainable Development Research Society (ISDRS) Conference at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia;



Danum Valley for the Research Direction Workshop, 14-17 November 2023

- July 21-22, 2023: Convened a panel to discuss Biodiversity Protection for Sustainable Development in Southeast Asia at the ASEAN Workshop on Sustainable Development in Sunway City Kuala Lumpur;
- August 17, 2023: Presented on capacity building for climate change adaptation and mitigation at the Conference on Climate Change Impact on Water Resources in Malaysia, hosted by the National Water Research Institute of Malaysia (NAHRIM);
- August 23-24, 2023: Chaired a session and presented the work of SP-SEA at the Heart of Borneo (HoB) International Conference in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia;
- September 7, 2023: Spoke at the International Seminar on Advancing Green Initiatives for a Sustainable Kalimantan through Action and Collaboration, hosted by Bank Indonesia in Banjarmasin, Kalimantan;
- November 7, 2023: Chaired a session on sustainable finance at the Malaysia Urban Forum in Kuching;
- November 14-17, 2023: Invited by Yayasan Sabah to provide subject matter expertise at the Brainstorming Workshop to strategize on the future of the Danum Valley Conservation Area as a world-class rainforest and biodiversity research hub;
- November 30, 2023: Invited to provide subject matter expertise on the Development of a Transformational Sustainability Leadership Module For National Planetary Health Action Plan (NPHAP) under the Academy of Sciences Malaysia.



COVID did not stop us.



2nd AMRO-MEA Roundtable on the Malaysian Economy, May 23, 2023



The Institutional Design program of UN-SDSN Asia advocates for the refinement of political incentives structure in political institutions and processes, not only to achieve SDG 16, "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions," but also to enable all SDGs. In the Malaysian context, institutional design is particularly relevant, as the current political system is not designed for multiparty competition, but for authoritarianism. This caused maladaptation after the 2018 democratic transition, which leads to polarization and instability that threaten Malaysia's progress towards sustainable development.

The workstream covers two parts: (a) electoral, party and parliamentary politics, and (b) access to information as a key civil liberty. On the former, UN-SDSN researches and advocates for reforms on a wide range of topics, including constituency delimitation, the electoral system, parliamentary committees, shadow cabinets, political parties, political finance, the constituency development fund (CDF), and Attorney General's Chambers (AGC).

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE







MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND SENATORS ENGAGED



DRAFT BILLS LED OR SUPPORTED IN DRAFTING



Professor Wong Chin Huat organized and was the guest editor on a special journal issue on the 15th Malaysia General Election, featuring six academic articles and seven op-eds centering the implication for Malaysian studies and the democratic outcomes of the election. It can be accessed here.

The special issue was launched at a forum that included YB Tan Sri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar, President of The Senate; YB Dato' Sri Azalina Othman Said, Minister of Law and Institutional Reform in PMD (BN-UMNO); YB Anthony Loke Siew Fook, Minister of Transport (PH-DAP); and YB Dato' Sri Saifuddin Abdullah, Shadow Minister of Education and Higher Education (PN-Bersatu). The forum attracted 200+ attendees and press coverage by *The Sun Daily, The Borneo Post, Malaysia Kini, Berita Harian, NST, Bernama, Free Malaysia Today, Sin Chew Daily* and *Sinar Harian*. The work has become part of the national conversation on restoring political stability after the democratic transition in 2018 and the frequent changes of governments since 2020.



Dr Venkat Iyer, Editor-in-Chief of the journal.



YB Tan Sri Wan Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar giving the keynote address.

Advocacy to Stabilize Malaysian Politics via Institutional Reform

As part of wider civil society efforts, mainly with/ through Bersih and IDEAS, UN-SDSN contributed intellectual or public communication to the advancement of key institutional reforms to help stabilize Malaysian politics, among others:

- 1. The government's announced plan to separate Public Prosecution from the Attorney General's Chambers (AGC) (see here);
- 2. The component of "public funding for political parties" in the proposed Political Finance bill tabled by All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia (APPGM) on Political Finance (see here);
- 3. Legislation on the "equitable constituency development fund (CDF)," which is now being lobbied at both the federal and state levels (see here; here);
- 4. Fixing electoral dates in advance, now a policy brief disseminated to parliamentarians;
- 5. Introduction of party-list seats in the wider discussion of constituency delimitation and parliamentary representation, as discussed in <u>Astro Awani</u> and <u>BFM</u>;
- 6. The Anti-Hopping Law (Article 49A, Federal Constitution), a clarification of its limitations and remedies to defuse public frustration and confusion, as published in Malaysia Kini.

Access to Information (ATI) Marches Forward

UN-SDSN Asia won a research grant from the Center for Independent Journalism Malaysia (CIJ) to conduct further research on the implementation of the Freedom of Information enactment in Selangor and derive lessons on how the wider policy and cultural environment interacts with its implementation. The team also managed to make direct contact with Philippine and Australian FOI offices, paving the way for future international cooperation and output.

The Institutional Design team continues to support SDG 16.10 through cooperation with the Legal Affairs department of the Prime Minister's Department in their stakeholder engagement sessions, and through a Malaysian civil society grouping to push for a model Right to Information bill.

Future plans include a study of the correlation and causation between Access to Information and SDG outcomes at a global level.



Ho Yi Jian presenting ATI research at a government engagement session.



Meeting the Presidential Communications Office of the Philippines, which oversees ATI/FOI there.

Major Events and Meetings

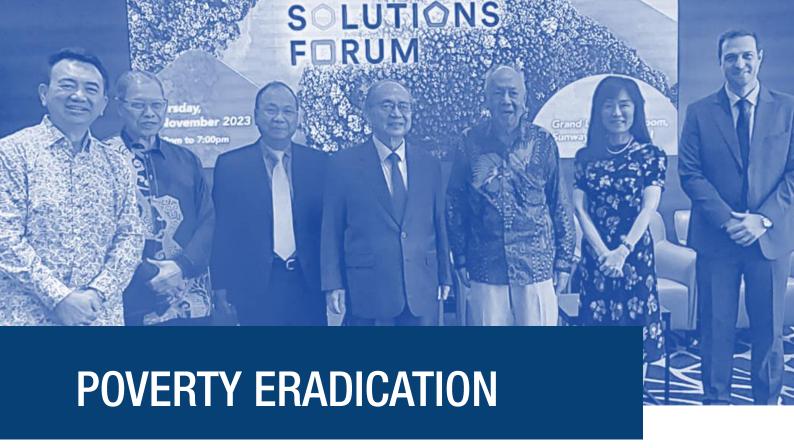
- November 27, 2022: Presented at Malaysia CSO SDG Conference 2022 on the progress of publicly available information in Malaysia;
- December 14, 2022: <u>Presented</u> to His Excellency Mr. Peter Van Acker, Ambassador of The Kingdom of Belgium to Malaysia;
- February 28-29, 2023: Spoke at a government security sector engagement organized by the Legal Affairs department, Prime Minister's Office (BHEUU), about Selangor and Penang's FOI enactment;
- March 11, 2023: Presented to a delegation from Global Bridges, Germany;
- September 21, 2023: Presented to His Excellency Andreas Launer, Ambassador of Austria to Malaysia;
- May 10-11, 2023: Participated in the Roundtable on Deepening Democracy in Malaysia:
 Making Coalition Government and Hung Parliament work, organized by Bersih, the Kofi Annan Foundation, and Global Bersih, supported by the Dewan Rakyat, the EU delegation, the Australian and Canadian High Commissions;
- August 21, 2023: Presented at the Malaysia CSO SDG Forum 2023 on Advocating for Data Disaggregation to Make Indigenous Peoples Visible;
- October 28-29, 2023: Presented at the <u>Asia & the Pacific Roundtable Discussion on Boundary Delimitation & Malapportionment: Practice & Solutions</u>, organized by International IDEA, Bersih, Tindak Malaysia, and The Association for Elections and Democracy, Indonesia (Perludem).

(Right) All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia (APPGM) on Political Finance meeting at Parliament Building.





(Left) Focus group discussion with Pahang State Legislative Assembly Person on legislating equitable constituency development funds.



Based on Malaysia's 2005 definition, Malaysian households are above the poverty line income (PLI) if they can meet minimum food requirements. Using this definition, Malaysia's poverty rate has declined from 16.5% in 1989 to 0.2% in 2019. In 2019, Malaysia, as an upper middle-income country, decided to define households above the PLI as households who can meet *healthy* food requirements. Based on this more ambitious PLI definition, the poverty rate in Malaysia was 6.2% in 2022.

Recognizing Malaysia's aspiration to address poverty as an upper middle-income country, UN-SDSN Asia began a new workstream in 2023 to convene stakeholders from government, academia, civil society and business to identify solutions towards accelerating poverty eradication in Malaysia.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE





In June 2023, UN-SDSN Asia and Universiti Malaya cohosted the Poverty Eradication Forum at Sunway University. More than 40 experts from government, civil society, academia, and international organizations participated. The Forum identified three key areas of improvement that were communicated to the Minister of Economy, who is overseeing poverty eradication in Malaysia: (a) the process of collecting data on low-income households, namely eKasih and iDamak, need to be revisited; (b) passionate and skilled facilitators are needed to sustainably uplift the poor; and (c) detailed studies in selected rural, urban, and Orang Asli poor households are required to better understand the



Dato' Sri Mustapa talks about the poverty eradication experience of Orang Asli Community at Sungai Rual, Jeli, Kelantan

causes of poverty and strategies to improve income and well-being.

Poverty Eradication Survey with Orang Asli Households



Following the Poverty Eradication Forum, in partnership with the All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for the Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG), UN-SDSN began work to compile data on the socio-economic status of Orang Asli households in Sungai Rual, Jeli, Kelantan. Two-hundred and three Orang Asli households were surveyed by twelve enumerators based on about one hundred questions to deepen our understanding of their socio-economic profile. A comprehensive report on the survey findings will be finalized in early 2024.



UN-SDSN Asia collaborated with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) to host a knowledge sharing session on China's poverty eradication experience by a PwC expert, attended by 25 participants representing government agencies, civil society, and academia.

China has made tremendous progress in eradicating poverty, lifting 99 million households from poverty between 2012 and 2020 and enabling the country to declare that poverty had been eradicated in 2020. China also has robust governance, a database, and an effective delivery and accountability ecosystem. Some of these observations will be shared with the Minister of Economy.

(Right) Discussion with Ungku Aziz Center for Development Studies, Universiti Malaya, on strategic collaborations.





(Left) Meeting with Economic Planning Unit, Malaysia to discuss SDSN's economic interventions.

SDG DASHBOARD

The Malaysian SDG Dashboard projects, led UN-SDSN and supported by the Jeffrey Sachs Center at Sunway University, serves as a tool for education, policy planning, and academic research on the SDGs. The state-level SDG dashboard launched in March 2022 includes data that DOSM makes publicly available and utilizes the methodology developed by UN-SDSN for the annual *Sustainable Development Report (SDR)*. This first Malaysian dashboard included qualitative assessments from academic experts from within the SDSN Malaysia network to elaborate on the progress of and recommendations for achieving the SDGs in Malaysian states.

The district-level SDG dashboard, which similarly uses publicly available DOSM data and the *SDR* methodology, was publicly launched September 7, 2023. It was officially presented to Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) on September 11 and to DOSM on October 5, while a session with UM is tentatively scheduled for December 2023. Sharing sessions on the district-level dashboard have been carried out with Universiti Tun Hussein Onn, Sarawak State Library, *The Edge*, JUPEM, the All-Party Parliamentary Group in Malaysia (APPGM), and visiting researchers from Finland. Three writeups from UUM analyzing the performance of road traffic deaths, unemployment rates, and proportion of population covered by mobile networks have been submitted as part of the district-level dashboard.

The next phase of this project is an aesthetic and user interface overhaul of the state-level dashboard for ease of access and navigation of the dashboard. This overhaul will include the addition of profile pages for each state to indicate their performance and rankings relative to all Malaysian states. We anticipate an increase in our engagement of state-level stakeholders, such as government agencies and local NGOs, in the monitoring and improvement of SDG advancement through the use of the dashboard.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

40

INDICATORS TRACKED AT THE STATE LEVEL

19

INDICATORS TRACKED AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL

114,741

VIEWS FOR THE STATE-LEVEL DASHBOARD

Target 17.8: Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology

Georgieri Syrn

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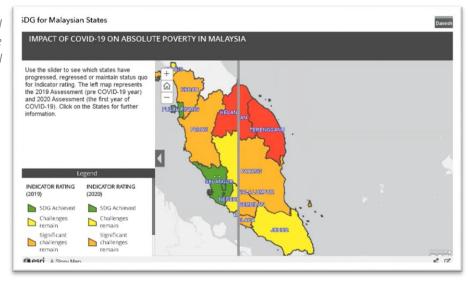
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Singapore

Feri HERE Garmin FAO NOAA USGS Leeri

Example of district-level map of individual SDG indicator performance

A comparative look at individual SDG indicator performance at the state-level





One of the many briefings held with local stakeholders. Here, the team briefed the Centre for Testing, Measurement and Appraisal (CeTMA) from University Utara Malaysia on Kedah's SDG progress.



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