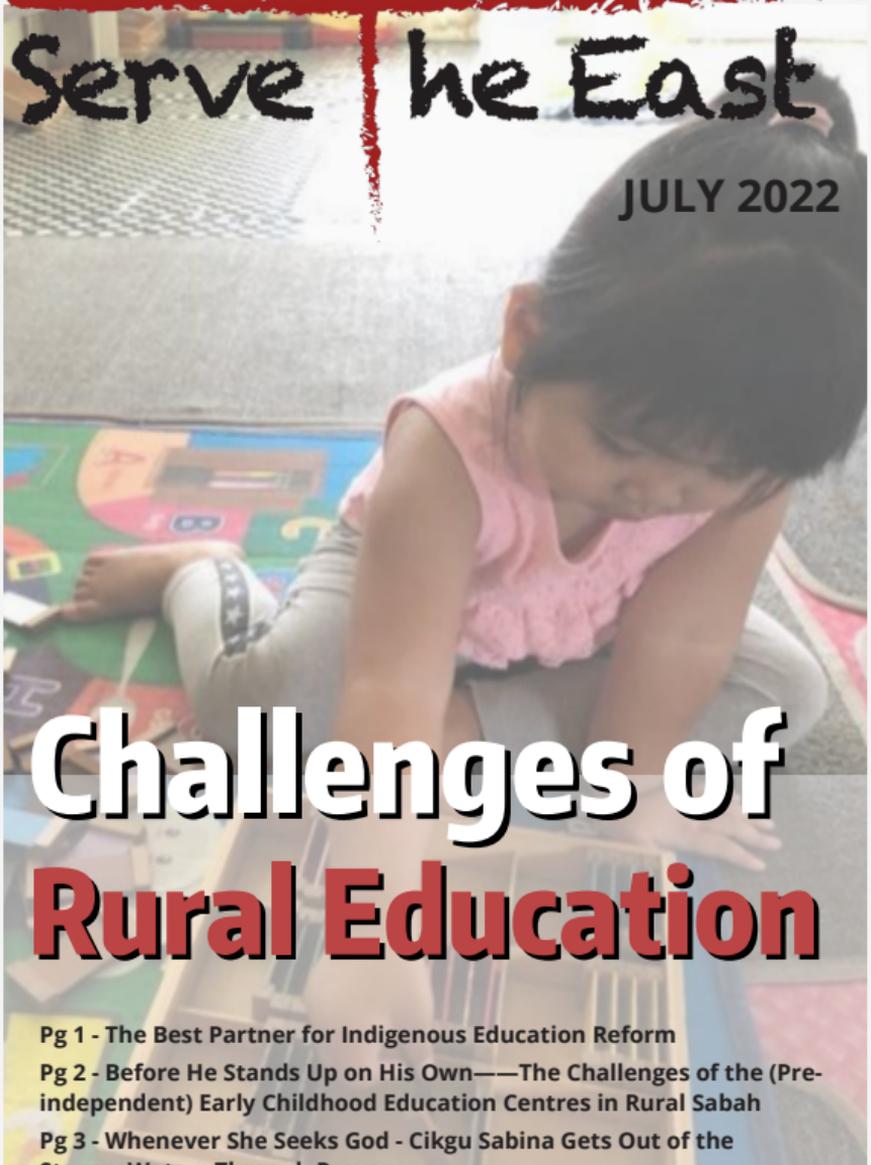


向东服务

Serve the East

JULY 2022



# Challenges of Rural Education

Pg 1 - The Best Partner for Indigenous Education Reform

Pg 2 - Before He Stands Up on His Own—The Challenges of the (Pre-independent) Early Childhood Education Centres in Rural Sabah

Pg 3 - Whenever She Seeks God - Cikgu Sabina Gets Out of the Stormy Waters Through Prayer

**IT IS OUR DESIRE TO SEE YUAN-HAN JOURNEYING TOGETHER, THAT IS, THE INDIGENOUS AND CHINESE CHURCHES, WALKING HAND IN HAND AS FAMILY MEMBERS, SUPPORT EACH OTHER IN CHRIST, AND WORK TOGETHER TO PROSPER THE GOSPEL.**

## MINISTRY STRATEGY

### EMPOWERMENT

To empower Indigenous churches in economy and education.

### AWARENESS

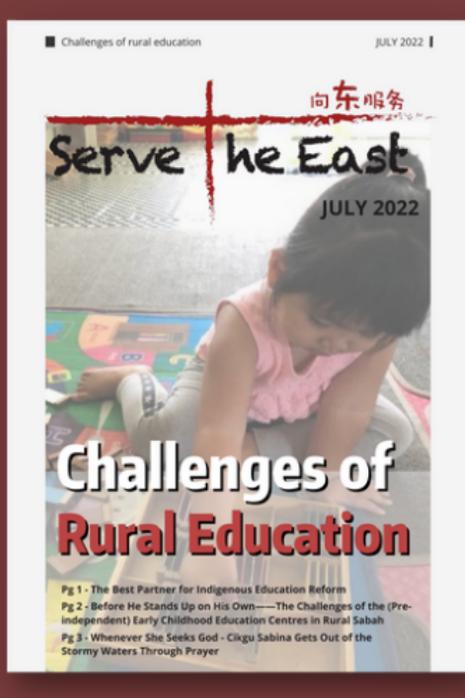
To share the vision of 'Yuan-Han Journeying Together' with Chinese speaking churches

### SUPPORT

To link the Chinese speaking churches together in supporting Indigenous churches

### TRAINING

To equip Chinese speaking churches to involve in caring mission



Electronic  
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JULY  
2022

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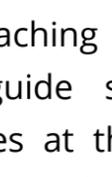
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## The Best Partner for Indigenous Education Reform

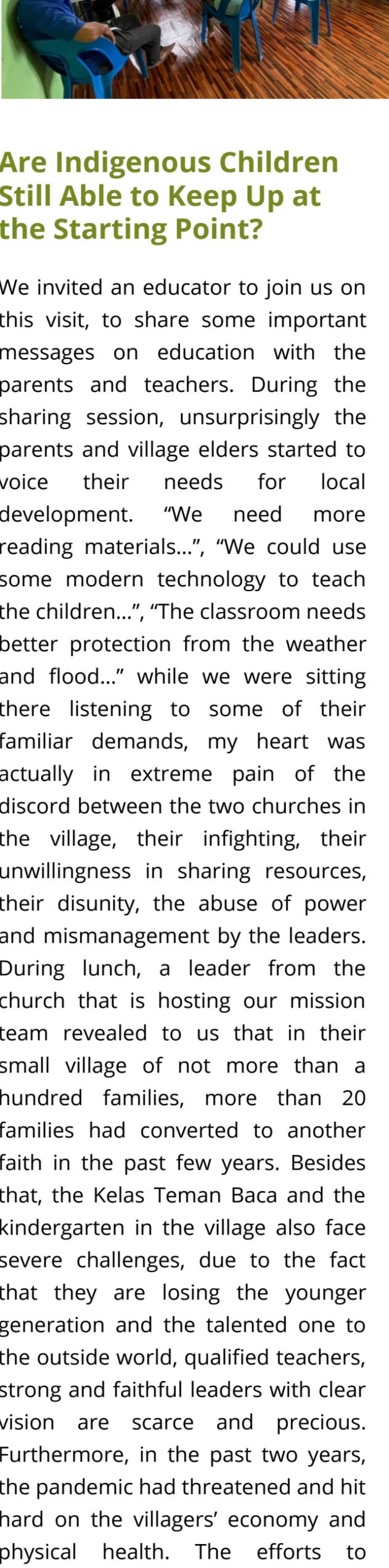


Written by Rev. Andrew Wong

Translated by Earnest Chiam

### How are the Old Friends at the Other Side of the Bridge of Hope?

In early June, we led a mission team to visit some villages in the interior of Sabah. As our convoy was approaching our third destination, our guide suddenly stopped the vehicles at the riverside. Only then we were informed that to reach the village, we had to cross a suspension bridge on foot, then trek through some trails across the countryside before we could reach our destination. As I was slowly walking across the Bridge of Hope, my mind was filled with memories of my last visit to this place eight years ago, and I missed the Indigenous people I met there – I wondered how my old friends were doing? Eight years ago, my co-workers and I came to launch the first Kelas Teman Baca (Companionship Class) in the village; eight years later, I sat inside the classroom chatting and sharing with the leaders and teachers of the Kelas Teman Baca. How things have changed in these eight years! The Kelas Teman Baca has undoubtedly served the village well, providing the children and students in the village a healthy place to spend their time, to learn, study, and play, yet I was saddened to hear about the challenges and hardships the class had to face in this eventful village.



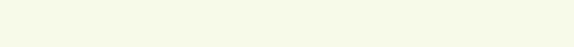
### Are Indigenous Children Still Able to Keep Up at the Starting Point?

We invited an educator to join us on this visit, to share some important messages on education with the parents and teachers. During the sharing session, unsurprisingly the parents and village elders started to voice their needs for local development. “We need more reading materials...”, “We could use some modern technology to teach the children...”, “The classroom needs better protection from the weather and flood...” while we were sitting there listening to some of their familiar demands, my heart was actually in extreme pain of the discord between the two churches in the village, their infighting, their unwillingness in sharing resources, their disunity, the abuse of power and mismanagement by the leaders.

During lunch, a leader from the church that is hosting our mission team revealed to us that in their small village of not more than a hundred families, more than 20 families had converted to another faith in the past few years. Besides that, the Kelas Teman Baca and the kindergarten in the village also face severe challenges, due to the fact that they are losing the younger generation and the talented one to the outside world, qualified teachers, strong and faithful leaders with clear vision are scarce and precious. Furthermore, in the past two years, the pandemic had threatened and hit hard on the villagers’ economy and physical health. The efforts to provide the Indigenous children with quality and sustainable early childhood education had become increasingly difficult than ever.

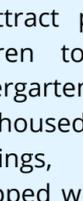
When many Chinese parents are juggling between choices of sending their children to Chinese or Malay national primary school, home-school or private school, or even international school, sarcastically, many of the Indigenous parents in Sabah are struggling to find the starting point of their children’s education journey. Even at this day and age, many rural Indigenous villages across the country still do not have an early childhood education centre, and those that have, the schools are usually extremely shabby and lacking. Let alone primary schools, secondary schools, or colleges – what is to most a basic necessity and right, to many Indigenous people, education is a luxury. I am imploring you to witness this outrageous injustice towards our family in Christ, I invite you to see it for yourself, that you may come to the realisation of our riches and be moved by their scarcity. And I would say, for our commitment towards education, we the Chinese can be the key to rectifying the loss of the Indigenous people in education. This is the time for the Chinese Church to repay our debts; I truly believe that we, the Chinese Christians, are indeed the best partner for the Indigenous people in their education reform! I invite you, in the name of the Lord, to join us on this “Yuan-Han Journeying Together!”

**I invite you, in the name of the Lord, to join us on this “Yuan-Han Journeying Together!”**



# Before He Stands Up On His Own

## The Challenges of the (Pre-independent) Early Childhood Education Centres in Rural Sabah



Written by Carol Lim  
Translated by Earnest Chiam

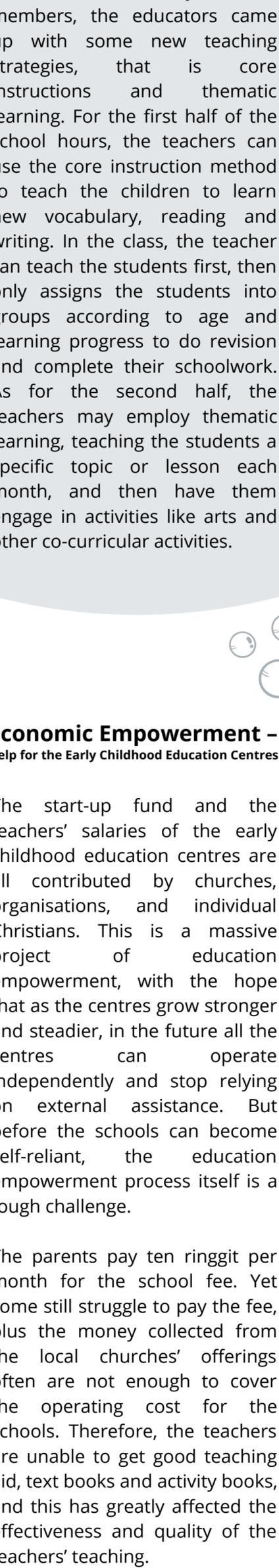
**As a toddler takes his first step to play, and begins to chat and converse with the people around him in his simple manner, then it'll be the time for the parents to start looking for a kindergarten.**

It is a natural desire of parents to want their children to receive good and quality education, and without disappointing this is what the kindergartens in the cities offer too. They have prepared vast varieties of syllabus and curriculums; all intend to attract parents to enrol their children to their school. Many kindergartens in the cities are not only housed in bright and colourful buildings, but are also fully equipped with all kinds of teaching tools and facilities. Their syllabus is well written and organised, teachers are also equipped with teaching knowledge and experiences. In comparison, the early childhood education centres in the interior of Sabah are often facing challenges such as shortage of teachers and resources, poor management, and unstable income.

In 2010, with the vision of providing the Indigenous children of Sabah a better starting platform for their education journey, as well as to protect the faith of the next generation, Jawatankuasa Pendidikan Pra-sekolah SIB Sabah (JPPS) started partnering with the local churches in the rural areas, establishing more than 90 early childhood education centres in the villages. HISTEAM has been privileged to financially support 12 of the schools since 2014.

### Transformation – Solving the Teacher's Shortage Problem

As most in the education sector would agree, assigning classes according to age is a practical way for a better planning of the education syllabus, while also helpful for the students to learn more effectively. This is the primary reason that almost every school would put students of the same age in the same class. But this arrangement posed a huge headache for the early childhood education centres in rural Sabah, as most of the schools face a common problem of teacher shortage. Sometimes a school may have only one or two teachers, who have to be in charge of a class of all three different age groups; the teachers struggle to give their best attention and effort to the class, and the students find it hard to study properly. This condition resulted in the teachers having no sense of achievement and the students' foundations were not well built too; in the end they are unable to keep up with others when they enter into primary school.



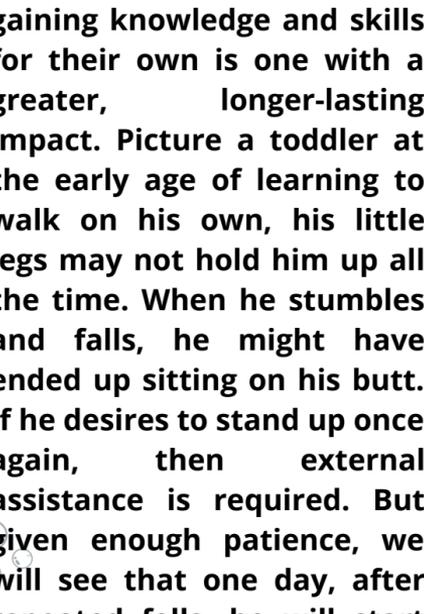
After receiving feedback from the teachers and many dialogues between them and JPPS staff members, the educators came up with some new teaching strategies, that is core instructions and thematic learning. For the first half of the school hours, the teachers can use the core instruction method to teach the children to learn new vocabulary, reading and writing. In the class, the teacher can teach the students first, then only assigns the students into groups according to age and learning progress to do revision and complete their schoolwork. As for the second half, the teachers may employ thematic learning, teaching the students a specific topic or lesson each month, and then have them engage in activities like arts and other co-curricular activities.

### Economic Empowerment – Help for the Early Childhood Education Centres

The start-up fund and the teachers' salaries of the early childhood education centres are all contributed by churches, organisations, and individual Christians. This is a massive project of education empowerment, with the hope that as the centres grow stronger and steadier, in the future all the centres can operate independently and stop relying on external assistance. But before the schools can become self-reliant, the education empowerment process itself is a tough challenge.

The parents pay ten ringgit per month for the school fee. Yet some still struggle to pay the fee, plus the money collected from the local churches' offerings often are not enough to cover the operating cost for the schools. Therefore, the teachers are unable to get good teaching aid, text books and activity books, and this has greatly affected the effectiveness and quality of the teachers' teaching.

In the past, the local churches did try to solve the financial problems of the schools by starting their own planting projects. However, problems like poor soil quality, inadequate planting knowledge and skills, and mismanagement have halted many of the planting projects. Thankfully, a Christian with agricultural expertise and his ministry team offered to help – they went into the rural villages to teach the Indigenous people corn planting, with the hope of improving their economy.



### Holding On, Despite the Hardships

There has never been a lack of adversities and trials for JPPS and the early childhood education centres, yet in order to protect their next generation education and faith, they persistently hold on, by seeking God and praying constantly for breakthroughs and growth.

61% of the Indigenous teachers completed or are still undergoing their Diploma in Early Childhood Education. While the rest either hold a diploma in another specialty, STPM, or at least the SPM certification. In the future, JPPS will continue to focus on helping more Indigenous teachers to receive professional education in the area of teaching, hence improving the teaching qualities of Sabah early childhood education centres. Beside this, JPPS is also open to work with other organisations, to help further develop and improve their early childhood education centres and its financial condition.



**Just as the oft-quoted saying goes, "Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime." The process of empowerment is very challenging, but the work of helping others gaining knowledge and skills for their own is one with a greater, longer-lasting impact. Picture a toddler at the early age of learning to walk on his own, his little legs may not hold him up all the time. When he stumbles and falls, he might have ended up sitting on his butt. If he desires to stand up once again, then external assistance is required. But given enough patience, we will see that one day, after repeated falls, he will start to stand up on his own.**

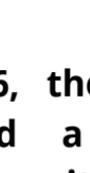


Whenever She Seeks God



Cikgu Sabina

Gets Out of the Stormy waters  
Through Prayer



Written by Carol Lim  
Translated by Gillian Wong

**Cikgu Sabina is the Indigenous principal of a preschool at Ranau, Sabah; she is also the sole teacher at the preschool.**

In 2016, the Indigenous church received a vision, and they worked with JPPS to start a preschool, Cikgu Sabina was appointed as the principal. There are around 10 Indigenous students aged 4 to 6 years old, study at the preschool every year.

**Cikgu Sabina could not find any teaching assistants all these years, and she had to do every single task at the preschool by herself.**

A few years ago, the government pushed forward an agenda requiring preschool teachers to go through training and certification. Hence, JPPS began sending Indigenous teachers including Cikgu Sabrina, for early childhood education training. Like all other teachers, Cikgu Sabina has to go into the city, travelling on hours of bumpy muddy roads and then hours of tarred roads. Yet, these challenges were incomparable to the sufferings brought by the pandemic during the past 2 years such as, her mother had severe kidney problems, she was infected by Covid during her pregnancy, and her families as well as students continuously falling sick.

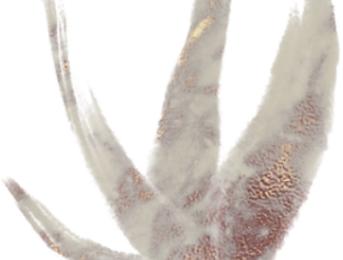
In early 2021, Cikgu Sabina's mother was unable to stand or speak due to severe pain, and she even experienced lapses of unconsciousness.

Cikgu Sabina's brother sent her to the general hospital, and she was diagnosed with a severe kidney malfunction that was life-threatening and had little hope of recovery. When Cikgu Sabina learned of her mother's condition, her heart was heavy and she had trouble finding sleep. She cried and prayed to God, "If my mother's time is up, please give my family the strength to face it; if it's not time yet, we will thank You for giving us more time to spend with her."

In the same year, Cikgu Sabina was pregnant. She was weak and felt sick easily, requiring frequent medical check up. In March 2022, she was tested positive for Covid when she was 3 weeks from her expected delivery date. Hence, she had to undergo an early caesarean. At that time, she recalled a news story about an artist who contracted Covid during the 7th month of pregnancy, but her baby did not survive the caesarean. Cikgu Sabina was worried and afraid, but she prayed to God. She was thankful to God for a smooth delivery and a healthy baby.

During the Movement Control Order, Cikgu Sabina could not attend classes on campus. She had to attend online classes in the village, but due to unstable internet connection, she missed many classes. Once, when she was taking an online exam, there was a power outage, the internet connection was cut off, she could not continue the online exam. She was so nervous and cried in panic, not knowing what to do. Thankfully, her friend's internet connection was not disrupted, Cikgu Sabrina could tap on her line to finish her online exam.

**Looking back to all these encounters, Cikgu Sabina thanked God for His grace and mercy. Although she has to face continual challenges, she also experienced God's continuous protection and presence. Currently, she still faces some challenges in her teaching, but her faith in God has grown stronger to face these challenges.**



# Diary of

## Mission

## Exposure

## Trip

Translated by  
Deborah Wong



**After a lapse of 2 years, once again, HISTEAM organized a mission exposure trip to the interior of Sabah in early June this year.**

Apart from two HISTEAM co-workers, there were seven brothers and sisters from Klang Valley, Penang and Kuantan who joined the trip to visit the Indigenous group. Most of them are professionals in the educational sector. One of the purposes of the trip is to study and evaluate the existing preschools that are supported by HISTEAM. We also hope these experienced professionals can help to enhance the development of these preschools. This mission trip also provides the team members, who are mostly the urbanites, the opportunity to get out of their comfort zones for a new encounter to re-evaluate their faith and walk with God.

### Breakthrough is inevitable!

When I saw the plights of the Indigenous people, I realised many Christians, including myself, have failed to do our part to help those who are suffering. God's provision is abundant, but injustice and unjust plundering had caused many to be in poverty. Through this mission trip, God has reminded me that worship cannot be confined within the four walls of the church. Very often, we ritually and habitually worship God in church, turning a blind eye on the sufferings of the poor, even during the pandemic. My heart is filled with remorseful sadness.

This mission trip has brought me closer to God and reminded me to live out the life of the Great Commandment, to love God and our neighbours. I desire to have a breakthrough in the regular routine of my life. James 1:22 says, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." To serve in God's Kingdom, I must allow the Word of God to guide every step of my life, despite inevitable disruptions. I am praying to the Lord, to grant me wisdom and strength to accomplish His Work.

- **Dr. Lydia Foong**



### I want to narrow the gap

I am aware that the world is imperfect, with disparity between the rich and the poor, contributing to serious problems all around the globe. When I personally visited the Indigenous people in the interior of Sabah, only then, I realise that such scenarios also exist in our country. The huge disparity spans across sectors such as health care, social, economic, and also in the spiritual aspect. I desire to be involved in the ministry and do my utmost to narrow such gaps, seeking God in prayers to guide my journey.

During the trip, I was impressed with the generosity of the Indigenous people. They were willing to help us when we encountered difficulties. Without them, our mission trip would not have been so smooth sailing.

- **Brother Lewis Liew**



MAY-JUNE 2022

STE

Updates

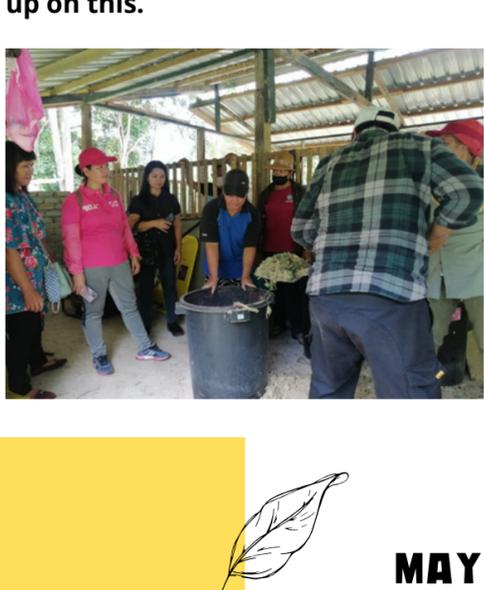


Translated by Isaac Goh

MAY

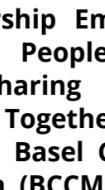
10th - 12th

A team from Malaysian Care provided Financial Literacy Program (Kursus Kewangan Inklusif) training to our co-workers and interns. We hope to introduce this program to the rural Indigenous community to raise their awareness on financial management, and to prepare them for economic empowerment.



MAY

14th

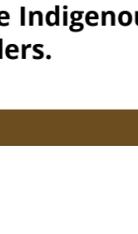


Our co-workers accompanied a few SIB church leaders from Kiapu to learn about odorless pig farming. After the basic training, they showed keen interest to pursue the pig farming project. We will follow up on this.



MAY

23rd



Pastor Lam Kee Hing shared about the Leadership Empowerment for Indigenous People in our third topical sharing of Yuan-Han Journeying Together. Bishop James Wong from Basel Christian Church of Malaysia (BCCM) was invited to share their experiences on empowering the Indigenous pastors and church leaders.

MAY

27th - 30th

Our co-worker went into interior Ranau for community visitation and field study, as well as some preparation work for the upcoming mission exposure trip in June.

JUNE

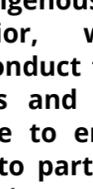
1st

The 5th batch of Micah training officially commenced on 1st of June. There are five trainees for this batch, who come from KL, Johor, Sarawak and Sabah respectively.

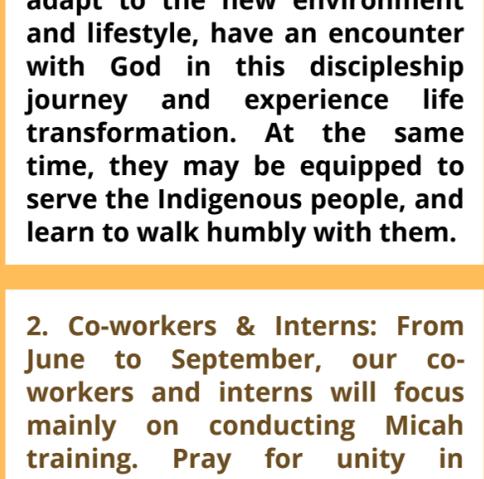


JUNE

4th



After 2 years of pandemic, we finally held the Micah Open Day on-site at Micah Centre, with about 40 guests attended and witnessed the new trainees commencing the cross-cultural journey. On the same day, HISTEAM Sabah organized an appreciation dinner and gathering to have fellowship with our ministry partners and donors. Special thanks to Sis. Annie Chong for her love and hospitality, opened up her house and prepared a welcoming feast for all the guests.

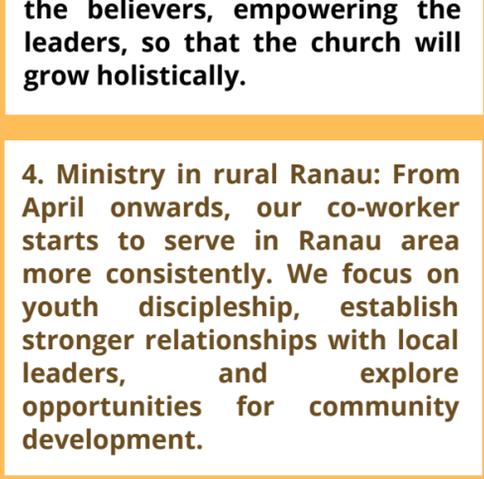


JUNE

4th - 8th



Mission Exposure Trip: This trip was initiated by Rev Andrew Wong, and he brought along 7 participants from Peninsular Malaysia. Among them are professionals in the field of education. The mission team visited 3 Indigenous villages in Ranau interior, with special attention to conduct field study on the preschools and Kelas Teman Baca. We hope to encourage this mission team to participate in our future education empowerment programs for Indigenous people.



Pray

for STE

1. Micah Training (5th batch): Praise the Lord for calling 5 young people to join the training this year. Pray that they will adapt to the new environment and lifestyle, have an encounter with God in this discipleship journey and experience life transformation. At the same time, they may be equipped to serve the Indigenous people, and learn to walk humbly with them.

2. Co-workers & Interns: From June to September, our co-workers and interns will focus mainly on conducting Micah training. Pray for unity in teamwork, wisdom and anointing from God to lead the trainees, and become their role models. Also pray for their safety and health, and to remain passionate in serving the Lord.

3. Pray for SIB Kiapu, a rural Indigenous church located near to Micah Centre. The church is currently without a pastor in preaching and ministering. May God grant wisdom and ability to our co-workers who are assisting in preaching and ministering to the believers, empowering the leaders, so that the church will grow holistically.

4. Ministry in rural Ranau: From April onwards, our co-worker starts to serve in Ranau area more consistently. We focus on youth discipleship, establish stronger relationships with local leaders, and explore opportunities for community development.

Pray for Preschool Teachers



1. Pray for Cikgu Sabina. Besides teaching in preschool and studying in SIDMA College for Diploma in Early Childhood Education, she also needs to take care of her family and a new born baby. May God grant her wisdom and strength, good health both physically and spiritually. Also pray for her family, especially her mother, who needs to go to hospital monthly for dialysis and receiving medication.

2. Pray for Cikgu Ata who is getting weaker, coughing and sometimes with blood. Her condition did not get better even after seeing a doctor and taking medication. May God have mercy on her, protect and heal all her sickness.

JAN - MAY 2022

Financial

Report



STE Ministerial Fund

(Includes fund for empowerment and seed project)



Staff salary



Micah Centre



Thank you for the support and prayer

If you wish to donate, please deposit fund into:

Serve The EAST Bank Account / Maybank 5127-8101-2599 Holistic Integrated Services Bhd

Micah Centre Bank Account / OCBC BANK 707129924-3 Holistic Integrated Services Bhd

After transaction, please send payment receipt to 014-265 5178 (Admin Whatsapp)

# 购买事工车

LOOKING FOR USED 4WD  
FOR MINISTRY USE

供同工长期在原住民偏乡服侍  
*For our co-workers to serve long  
term in rural indigenous village*



## Looking for Used 4WD for Ministry

We HISTEAM plans to purchase one more 4WD, for the long term transportation need of our co-workers who serve in rural indigenous community in Sabah. As current market is facing new car shortage, the car price has increased a lot. Thus, we pray and hope that there are brothers and sisters in Christ willing to sell their car to us, or give offering to bless our indigenous ministry financially.

### We are looking for used 4WD with following conditions:

1. Car age: Within 5 years. We may also consider used car age within 10 years and still in good condition.
2. Gear: Auto or Manual
3. Model: Hilux, Triton, DMax
4. 2.5 cc and above
5. Price: RM50k to RM90k

We also appreciate the favor where you could lend us your 4WD for 3 months (July to September).

**And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)**

**-End-**