



CHECK IT OUT! APASWE

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Country Report from Malaysia

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**2017 World Social Work Day Celebration at Universiti Sains Malaysia,
Penang, Malaysia**



**GRADUATE SOCIAL WORK
SYMPOSIUM 2017**

**"GRADUATES PIONEERING THE DEVELOPMENT OF
SOCIAL WORK IN MALAYSIA"**

**IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE 2017 WORLD SOCIAL WORK DAY
PROMOTING COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

**DATE : 17 MARCH 2017
TIME : 8.00AM - 12.00PM
VENUE : UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA**

ORGANIZED BY THE SOCIAL WORK CLUB OF UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA IN COLLABORATION WITH UUM, UKM AND UNISZA





Social Work in Malaysia is striving to seek the professional recognition from the government. Social work education that was initiated in 1975 at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) is leading the pioneering efforts towards institutionalizing social work profession in Malaysia. This year, in conjunction with the 2017 World Social Work Day, the Social Work Club of USM under the guidance of Dr. Paramjit Singh Jamir Singh had organised a day long Graduate Social Work 2017 Symposium with the theme of “***Graduates Pioneering the Development of Social Work in Malaysia***” on 17 March 2017. The symposium was attended by 300 students, faculty members, practitioners and government representatives at Dewan Pembangunan Siswa 2, Kompleks Cahaya, USM.

There was a lot of enthusiasm as social work students from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) and Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UNISZA) have also joined the symposium and celebrations to mark the World Social Work Day 2017. Representatives from the Department of Social Welfare, the Department of Women’s, Family and Community Development, National Anti-drugs Agency, social work lecturers from USM, UKM, UUM and UNISZA further added colours and solidarity to the event. The

symposium has become a platform for discussion, new hopes and aspirations, and gave opportunity to come together and reflect.

The symposium was inaugurated by Professor Dr. Azlinda Azman, Dean, School of Social Sciences, USM and a social work educator. It was a great opportunity to have her as she has the distinction of being the inaugural professor of social work not only for USM but in Malaysia. Professor Dr. Azlinda shared her passion to further develop social work profession in Malaysia. She is one of the chief architects behind the development of social worker's bill in Malaysia. Her sharing and message has given the required momentum, joy and hope for the young social workers in making who came from all over Malaysia.



The second event organised by the students themselves was a panel discussion on the social work education and practice in Malaysia. The forum consists of four panellists being a representative from each social work programme from USM, UKM, UUM and UNISZA. The discussion triggered many ideas and new insights as panel members being social work students discussed in various perspectives throughout the symposium. Among the issues that had been raised includes the relevancy of social work courses taught at universities, students' role in advocating for the social worker's act in Malaysia and public perception towards social work as a whole in Malaysia.



The primary purpose of the symposium was not merely to develop a strong relationship between these four universities which offers social work course, but also an effort to raise awareness among students on the importance of students' role in establishing a better ground for social work field in Malaysia. It was also a platform to provide students and social work practitioners to think critically and innovatively on their role, in order to develop and promote social work profession to the society.

Participation of the four public universities in the symposium had provided new and enhanced knowledge to the student through a brilliant sharing session on important issues of social work. It is a good mechanism to cultivate relationship between social work practitioners, lecturers and social work student from all around the country. Awareness towards social work profession is very important so the public can understand the profession's function and responsibility.

Social work profession is an important profession in 21st century and has become a powerful cornerstone to the Asian society. Despite lack of public recognition due to non-existence act in the constitution, it is a professional line of work which had contributed significantly towards those in needs. Nevertheless, social work practitioners now diligently advocating for Social Worker's Act in Malaysia. Establishment of both act and standard are utmost important and will substantially boost the profession.



As we celebrate 2017 World Social Work Day, let us ponder and gather our thought on social workers' roles and responsibilities in supporting sustainable communities and incorporate respect into our practice towards natural environment. The chair of the social work section, Dr. Paramjit Singh Jamir Singh delivered a vote of thanks and congratulated the student clubs for their innovative and joyful celebrations. We at USM welcome our local and international colleagues to join hands with us to further nurture Malaysian social work!!