IMU COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR THE NEW NORMAL

In the current challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic where hardships, uncertainty and fear abound, community is more important than ever – both within the University as well as in the broader community. All of us rely on those around us for support, guidance, information and empathy and also vice versa. Community engagement in the present situation serves to highlight the unique challenges that communities face during difficult times such as this and by working together, engaged communities can play a meaningful role to carry out activities that can affect and benefit them.

As the COVID-19 continues to spread in an unpredictable manner throughout the world, Malaysia is also not spared. Even though we have been able to flatten the curve and bring the COVID-19 under control, we as a nation would need everyone to still comply to the advisories and guidelines. The public has been urged to now play a role as frontliners to curb the spread of COVID-19. In this context, community engagement serves to address and prevent health and other social inequities which is standing out more prominently during the pandemic.

> " .....where hardships, uncertainty and fear abound, community is more important than ever. "

This guide aims to support IMU teams involved in community engagement work as well as those who continue to engage communities in various ways. It provides general guidance on community engagement during this COVID-19 pandemic situation and in the post-MCO period in the months ahead, including how to continue to support communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and its ramifications.

Prepared by
IMU Community Engagement
July 2020

Adapting to the 'New Norm'

The pandemic has forced us to adapt and change the way we live. Due to the lack of a definitive solution to eradicate/prevent the COVID-19 infection, we need to "live with it" by practicing social distancing, having good hand hygiene, wearing face masks and avoiding crowds. Adapting to this new context requires us do things differently in order to keep ourselves, our families and the communities we live with, safe and yet maintaining our normal function and engagement as much as possible. This includes safety precautionary practices, how to communicate differently with different groups, how we collaborate with each other, identifying the key perceptions, risks and challenges with communities and providing safe but pragmatic solutions.

> *The life that we once knew has shifted and we are left with what can only be described as the <u>new</u> normal. Adapting to the changing situation and may require alternative engagement plans.*

- Review communication and information chains - Identify key information providers in the community, channels of communication (including digital availability) that are accessible to all in the community

- Identify specific needs risks and prevention/mitigation measures for different communities, monitor them, and continually adapt what you are doing as the situation evolves

- Identify vulnerable communities who may be more impacted by the pandemic and movement restrictions. Consider the care burden and how they will ensure continued access to food, water and medication.

- Discuss with and inform the communities your engagement /action plan via digital platforms where face-to-face engagement is not possible/need to be avoided. Consider alternate modes for community engagement (Appendix B).

Working Safely

Because COVID-19 is highly transmissible and can be spread by people who do not know they have the disease, risk of transmission within a community can be difficult to determine. Regardless of whether you are in the university location or out in the community site, you should always work with the assumption that community transmission or spread is occurring and to err on the side of caution. Protecting the health of self and others is paramount especially those who have increased risk for severe illness.

To reduce the risk to communities, there will need to be changes in the way we interact. Certain SOPs that will need to be followed to stop the transmission and help prevent outbreaks

Personal safety

If you or someone on your team is feeling ill, or you have had contact with someone who has confirmed COVID-19 symptoms, seek medical attention immediately, inform the university and isolate yourself at home, to ensure that you do not expose yourself to others.

Respiratory and hand hygiene

- **Avoid coughing or sneezing into your hands**. Instead, use a tissue or your flexed elbow. This can help limit transmission.
- **Wash your hands frequently** with soap and water where possible, especially before and after interacting with others. If not possible, use a hand sanitiser.

Physical distancing

When interacting face-to-face, adopt physical distancing measures to avoid inhaling or having other contact with liquid droplets that may contain the virus. These measures include:

- **Avoiding bodily contact**, including shaking hands
- **Maintaining a distance** of at least 1m (3 feet) between yourself and another person
- **Avoiding having large gatherings**. Smaller groups are encouraged for better management. If the activity site is unable to accommodate the total capacity of people with the recommended physical distancing, the planned activities should be repeated with smaller groups of people each time.

Triaging

Where face-to-face activities are to be conducted, prior adequate arrangements need to be made to triage all who are involved ie. the University's staff, students and the external community.

- **Temperature screening** via a thermal scanner (37.5^0C and below)
- **COVID-19 screening** through questionnaire (Appendix A)
- Anyone from the University who is suspected of having COVID-19, with a new continuous cough or high temperature, is advised to not visit community homes or people receiving home care and self-isolate.
- Anyone in the external community who is suspected of having COVID-19 should be advised to seek medical attention. Face-to-face community-planned activities for this community should not proceed until further notification. Off-site engagement is encouraged.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

Use of PPE is advised to minimise the potential risk of disease transmission.

- Wear surgical masks
- Wear disposable gowns
- Wear face shields (if there should be close contact or planned aerosol-generating procedures)
- Wash / Sanitise hands before and after contact
- Proper disposal of disposable items after use

Assessing Risks

IMU community-related activities must not bring harm to IMU's students and staff and neither to the communities who are being engaged. Prior assessment of risks is recommended and to err on the side of caution.

⚜ Working with high-risk vulnerable communities[1]

These are communities with highest risks[2] for COVID-19 infection compared to the rest of the population :-

- aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below
- those who are medically compromised due to underlying diseases eg. Diabetes, obesity, immunocompromised (eg. Undergoing cancer therapy, HIV/AIDS, chronic respiratory disease, chronic renal/cardiac diseases)
- pregnant women
- communities in the lower socio-economic groups due to very poor living conditions eg. refugees, displaced individuals and migrant workers.

Because of the health vulnerability of these communities, consider the following :-

- unless absolutely essential, **avoid face-to-face engagement.** If unavoidable, guidelines pertaining to "Working Safely" is referred to.
- **consider other options for engagement** (Appendix B)
- prioritise tailoring messages for these groups to educate and remind them to limit their contact with others to minimise the potential risk of transmission and to protect themselves
- offer your service by coordinating with the community leader, to help organise support for their access to essential services eg. groceries/medical follow-up at hospitals.

⚜ Working with moderate risk communities[1]

This group comprise in general, women, children, the disabled and people who live below the line of poverty eg. the urban poor and the homeless and thus put them at higher risk for disease transmission than the others.

Although the health-risk for these communities is moderate, the following actions are recommended :-

- unless absolutely essential, avoid face-to-face engagement. If unavoidable, guidelines pertaining to "Working Safely" is referred to.
- consider other options for engagement (Appendix B)
- prioritise tailoring messages for these groups to educate them to limit their contact with others to minimise the potential risk of transmission and to protect themselves
- offer your service by coordinating with the community leader, to help organise support for their access to essential

➕ Plan ahead of time by safe programming

This involves assessing, preventing and mitigating risks.

- **Review programme / project risks** - Work with your teams to review programme risk assessments, making sure that COVID-19-related risks are included as well as adequate risk mitigation measures.
- **Adapt and modify** to adhere to the post-MCO advisory
- For service learning, students' learning outcomes can still be achieved by planning ahead. Innovation is encouraged.
- Modifications would need **to be discussed with the individual programme directors / schools / IMU CE.**

➕ Mitigating risks

Consider community engagement options that minimise the risk of contracting/transmitting COVID-19.

- **Setting of activity** – an open-air place is preferred to a closed confined place.
- **Nature of activity** – avoid activities that require close / bodily contact; where physical distancing is not feasible or aerosol-generating procedures need to be carried out (these should be carried out with full PPE doffing and in a specially-designated location approved for these procedures)
- **Ability to observe all the necessary precautions** in the setting. If the recommended precautions cannot be observed, the engagement with the community should be modified to alternative options or to defer the engagement until a more conducive condition is available.

➕ Voices of the community

In order to be able to better support the community, their voices should be heard, particularly the more vulnerable and marginalised groups. These groups may be disproportionately affected by measures to minimise transmission, such as movement restrictions and isolation procedures.

- **Listening to the voice** of the communities is an activity that can be carried with prior permission from the community, and easily carried out online.
- Consider engaging the communities via digital platforms
- Advocacy - It is a learning opportunity to develop advocacy strategies eg. discrimination against groups of communities and /or civil society.

Vulnerable communities related to COVID-19

[1]https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/covid19-stigma-guide.pdf

[2]https://www.who.int/westernpacific/emergencies/covid-19/information/high-risk-groups

Re-evaluating Needs

When considering what activities you can do for your community, ask them what support they need during this pandemic/ post-MCO period. Their needs may have changed since the pandemic. They may need information on updated government measures/regulations, updates on new outbreak, hygiene practices, etc.; resources (such as financial assistance or equipment); or they may need us to act as bridges between them and other communities, organisations / authorities.

Community engagement efforts form the basis for advocacy. Advocacy amplifies the voice of the communities

Assessing impact of pandemic

The impact that COVID-19 and the various movement restrictions had on the communities varies among community groups. With the communities you are presently working with or plan to work with, take into consideration the COVID-19 pandemic/movement restriction orders when evaluating / re-evaluating their needs :-

- **Assess the impact** that the outbreak may be having/had on them in terms of access to essential needs (eg. food/daily essentials), services, physical and mental health, relationships and wellbeing.
- **Modify your programme** to minimise negative and increase positive impact on the communities
- **Consider alternative** methods of engagement (Appendix B) where avoidance of face-to-face engagement is recommended.
- **Evaluate and monitor the response** and level of engagement after implementation of activities. Listen and understand communities' and stakeholders' suggestions for improvement during this pandemic/post-MCO period.
- **Encourage innovative ways** of engaging and supporting the communities.
- **Work with NGOs** to optimise available resources and co-learning.

Ask communities for their solutions

In order for you to continue to support the communities, whilst keeping everyone safe, the following can be done :-

- **Identify the preferred means** of communication/ engagement, what available technologies they are comfortable with
- **Determine their level of preparedness** for engagement for you to continue to support them – their commitment to the planned engagement activity and the role they can/will play
- **Identify resilience factors** that contribute to the communities' resilience or lack of.

Communicating and Working Together

In this period of the pandemic /post-MCO, despite the lack of direct face-to-face interaction, engagement can still be made effective with the following considerations. Working together have become more important than ever before, within the university as well as with the greater community. Appropriate and timely coordination and collaboration will ensure good outcomes.

✚ Communication

Different groups of people have different information needs and methods of communication. The internet has enabled communities to stay connected.

- **Tailor messages** to target groups for each communication in ways that relate to them.
- **Identify preferred method** of communication. Use any existing mechanisms to engage communities remotely – eg. phones/internet to tailor to each group in the community.
- **Provide information in accessible format**, in easy-to-understand language, suitable literacy levels and adapted for those who are visually or aurally impaired.
- **Engage everyone** within a community, taking the necessary safety precautions or adopt alternative methods of engagement but continue to engage.
- **Work with influencers.** Due to movement restrictions and/or high risks, identify and work with/through influencers and local capacities eg. youth groups/community leaders to pass on information - people are more likely to follow the example of leaders and trusted groups embedded in their community.
- **Have two-way communication** and give your time and space to listen.

✚ Collaboration

It is essential to coordinate and collaborate in effective ways as much as possible due to the limitations as a result of the pandemic.

- **Review projects** - Taking the opportunity of the reduced face-to-face engagement, it is timely to review and update the data coming from communities, on the various community engagement (CE) activities carried out by your Schools' service learning programme and other community engagement platforms in IMU, to further understand the communities as well as your needs, inputs and outcomes.
- **Review conduct of projects** - how you can be more effective and consider coordinating with other NGOs where there is a need and advocate for change where needed especially with the vulnerable groups.
- **Discuss with IMU CE** (anytime), participate in CE Clinics (once monthly) on how to reach inaccessible communities in different areas/ways. Sharing your challenges and experiences help shape and improve communication engagement practices.
- **Run through a checklist (Appendix C) and email a copy to communityengagement@imu.edu.my before you carry out your community-related activities.**

References and Additional Resources

- WHO community engagement framework for quality, people-centred and resilient health services. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2017 (https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/259280).

- WHO Interim guide - Role of community engagement in situations of extensive community transmission of COVID-19 (May 2020) https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WPR-DSE-2020-016

- Tips for engaging people in low-resource setting Remotely and In-Person (April 2020) (A guide by WHO, IRFC, UNICEF, GOARN) https://docs.google.com/document/d/1gFRthRsvrrg0CC4YPq27fbcutki05MAme0eyMSgGxFk/edit

- IMU Group Safety Guidelines For The 'New Normal' (updated 17 July 2020)

- COVID-19: How to include marginalized and vulnerable people in risk communication and community engagement. https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-03/COVID-19%20-%20How%20to%20include%20marginalized%20and%20vulnerable%20people%20in%20risk%20communication%20and%20community%20engagement.pdf

- COVID-19 Preparedness and response – RCCE Action Plan Guide (Guide by WHO, UNICEF, IFRC) https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/risk-communication-and-community-engagement-(rcce)-action-plan-guidance

- KPN post-MCO SOP for social sector http://covid-19.moh.gov.my/faqsop/sop-pkp-pemulihan/SOP_PELAKSANAAN_SRS_%20dikemaskini_pada_24_Jun_2020.pdf

- MKN List Of Activities Which Are Not Allowed http://covid-19.moh.gov.my/faqsop/sop-pkp-pemulihan/1-SenaraiAktivitiyangDilarang-MKN_10Jun2020.pdf

- MKN New Normal http://covid-19.moh.gov.my/faqsop/sop-pkp-pemulihan/35-SOPNorma-NormaBaharu_11Jun2020.pdf

- MOH infographic resources http://covid-19.moh.gov.my/infografik

- Maintaining Personal Hygiene (IMU)

- Physical / Social Distancing (IMU)

- Disinfecting Spaces (IMU)

- MOH Embracing the New Normal in the Community https://www.infosihat.gov.my/index.php/multimedia/buku-kecil/item/pembudayaan-norma-baharu-dalam-komuniti

IMU COVID-19 HEALTH DECLARATION FORM
bit.ly/IMUCEdeclares

Providing false information is an offence under the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases Act 1988 (Act 342).

NAME:			
NRIC:		☐ MALE	☐ FEMALE
MOBILE NO:			

QUESTIONS		YES	NO
1	Do you have any of the following: Acute Respiratory Infection: BREATHING DIFFICULTY, COUGH, SORE THROAT, RED EYE or LOSS OF SMELL with or without FEVER within the past 14 days?		
2	Have you travelled to or resided in foreign country within the past 14 days? Country: _____ Date:_____		
3	Have you been in closed contact (less than 1m for more than 15-minutes) within 14 days with a positive case of COVID-19? Location: _____ Date:_____		
4	Have you attended an event / location associated with known COVID-19 outbreak or cluster within the past 14 days? Location: _____ Date:_____		

For Office Use:

TEMPERATURE: _____ DATE: _____ TIME: _____ INITIAL: _____

UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM: (please circle)

- **IMU Cares**
- **MPU4**
- **Cross-Boundary Studies (FIS Programme)**
- **Schools' Service-Learning**
- **Student-Led Community Charity Clinics**
- **Student Societies & Clubs**
- **District Partnership Initiative (DPI)**
- **Advocates for Community Engagement (ACE) Programme**

Alternate community engagement actions that the university community could take to remain engaged and supportive of communities within the university as well as of the greater communities:

Activities	Description
Reflect and review	Review your existing engagement practices, the original intentions, purposes, the relationships with the community partners. Were those partnerships beneficial or sustainable?
"Just reaching out"	Reach out to check on our community partners on how they are keeping. Note that people are affected differently – communication activity via an email, a phone call, and/or a scheduled online meeting. This helps to re-evaluate needs and touch base.
Virtual community	Plan to develop a virtual community of practice with your fellow students/staff and other collaborators to meet online to share resources, information and support. This will enhance the project and programmes we are planning for.
'Remaining engaged'	Remaining engaged is a valid activity which is even more important than ever before in this period of social distancing. Show interest in keeping in touch through small actions, such as setting up a regular meeting calendar and reminders to meet online at scheduled dates and times. This simple gesture could build trust and enduring commitments. *eg. Cultivating Citizenship through Connected Communities: Challenging Intergenerational Loneliness through Youth Led Co-Production. https://www.uclan.ac.uk/research/explore/groups/assets/communities-for-change-seminar-26th-june-2019-wilsonwilliamsonv2.pdf*
Community e-newsletters	Create weekly/monthly community e-newsletters to share updates and information and to boost positive community spirits through sharing constructive ideas and insights, practical tips and information to create stronger, more engaged and enabling communities during this unusual and challenging time.
Upskilling	Organise for internal community of students/staff or self/communities to 'Upskill' through webinar workshops/instructional classes – This could be a good opportunity to pick up new skills for engagement eg. teach first-time users of Zoom video conferencing, producing webinars and learning to host an online conference. Developing self/others will help build the quality of engagement in a more wholesome ways.
Creating databases for collaboration	Develop or collaborate on coordinating a database of mental health care providers (or other who are willing to volunteer their time to help health care workers cope psychologically during the time of Covid-19 pandemic; or for other initiatives that might help specific groups of communities. Developing networks for collaboration will encourage more participation beyond the university

Video-conferencing for activities	Embrace video conferencing (Zoom, Teams etc) and continue to engage via one-on-one for discussion with community partners for continued engagement. The electronic platform has the added benefit of being able to meet more often, increasing productivity and reducing costs arising from the elimination of travel time
Synchronous activities/ pre-recorded resource development	Use webinars to replace face-to-face workshops – move events online. These can be designed to share information; to discuss local issues and to obtain ideas and innovative thinking for a way forward for a project; the strengths and weaknesses of various concepts, or they can be focused on the risks and opportunities of an idea or project. Webinars can be pre-recorded if the purpose is to inform or present, or they can be a live and interactive online workshop if the purpose is to consult or collaborate with stakeholders through real-time conversation. The pre-workshop planning is similar in terms of preparing an invitation, registration tool and event material (presentation, maps, quick-poll questions).
'Ensuring Essentials'	Organise a project activity where vulnerable communities can be reached on a regular basis to assess their needs, establishing whether they need masks, medicines or food, then delivering supplies to their door. Organise a team/group of volunteers with the various roles to ensure the vulnerable communities continue to be supported.
Supporting via organising multiple teams	Develop a system engaging local volunteers to collect, shop for essentials/medicine on behalf of the communities and arrange for its delivery. Collaborate with NGOs or develop a support lines for people at risk of domestic abuse
Front liners supporting communities in need (mental well-being)	Organise expertise who can respond to requests for help by collaborating with specific communities for remote mental healthcare sessions
Training	University can provide support to local neighbourhoods and families through training related to mental health and the prevention of domestic violence
Self-care kits	Staff and students' work on projects to develop and distribute COVID-19 self-care kits for vulnerable populations.
Public health education activities/resource material	Organise public education/awareness via online talks, webinar to help advocate the public on mitigating the spread of COVID-19, maintain health and hygiene and engage in new learning opportunities. Similar project activities can be conducted for vulnerable communities.
Learning resources	Develop and mobilise lifelong learning resources eg. provide pre-recorded audios/videos/MOOCS for general public/communities to disseminate relevant knowledge in this period of social restriction, helping people to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and help change of behaviour

Health and wellness resource	Promoting health and wellness online where public/various communities eg. parents, teachers, individuals working from home can benefit from information on facilitating healthy home lives and home-based/family-based activities for themselves and their families.
Research	To better understand the communities, plan research and research outputs eg. effect of COVID-19 on their respective communities/individuals and their vulnerabilities – can be conducted online/off-site. This will form the basis for improving the lives of these communities. eg. https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/research/centres/crihs-research-centre/working-with-crihs/)

IMU COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN THE NEW NORMAL

CHECKLIST

Below is a checklist of the essential elements of community engagement in the context of the new normal. Select and tick the boxes against the respective items where applicable. Please submit a copy to communityengagement@imu.edu.my before you carry out your community-related activities.

REVIEWING NEEDS AND COMMUNICATION

☐ The needs of the community have been reviewed in light of the COVID-19 pandemic /post-MCO situation and planned activities have been discussed with the community ahead of time.

The objectives of the planned activity/activities are best met via:-

☐ A. face-to-face engagement.

☐ B. alternative modes of engagement.

ASSESSING RISKS & WORKING SAFELY (Only for face-to-face engagements)

☐ A suitable environment (according to the IMU CE Guidelines*) has been identified for the face-to-face engagement.

☐ Team / community members have been briefed on the recommended precautionary measures to be taken by all.

☐ Team / community members will be triaged and wear PPEs before the activities are carried out; maintain physical distancing throughout the session and wash/sanitise hands often and at the completion of the activities.

FOR OFFICE USE

Project Leader	Name				Signature				
Name of Project (Location)					Date of Activity				
CE Platform (circle ONE)	Schools' Service Learning	Student Club/ Societies	CBS	MPU4	Student-led Community Charity Clinics	DPI	IMU Cares	ACE Programme	Others