



SUMMARY DOCUMENT OF THE TOGETHER WE CAN:

IMPROVING LIVEABILITY IN PUBLIC HOUSING SYMPOSIUM

14TH DECEMBER
3.00PM - 5.00PM



Supported by



Citi Foundation





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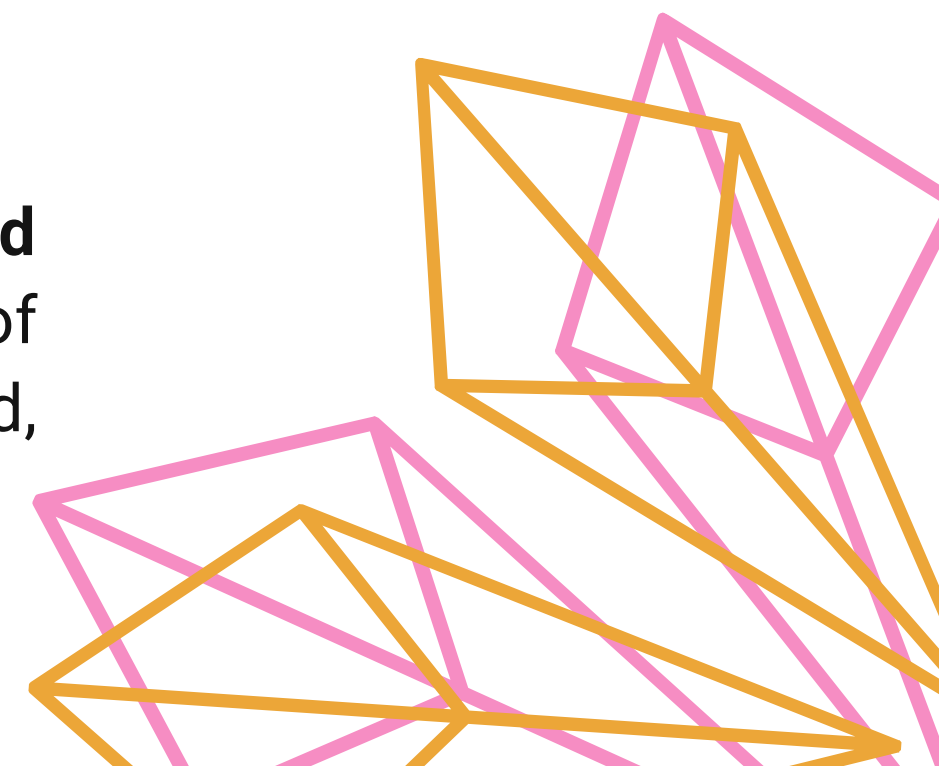


INTRODUCTION

RIGHTS TO THE CITY & PUBLIC HOUSING PARTNERSHIP



- **Rights to the City (R2C)** is a programme by Think City to improve **liveability** and strengthen the **resilience** of vulnerable **communities** living in Malaysia's **public housing**, be it **through policy recommendations or practice**. Given the complexities surrounding liveability in public housing, there is a need for different stakeholders and vested parties to come together to ensure lives are changed for the better.
- To address this, a network of **impact-oriented organisations** and individuals across disciplines and sectors - known as **Public Housing Partnership (PHP)** - will be set up to resolve Malaysia's most pressing public housing liveability issues.
- With PHP at the driver's seat and supported by Think City, R2C's focus is **geared towards Research, Partnerships, Indicators and Awareness** with the ultimate goal of achieving **systems change** in the way Malaysia's public housing is planned, implemented, maintained and managed in the long-term.





BACKGROUND OF SYMPOSIUM

It is projected that by 2030, Malaysia will have **80% of its population residing in urban areas**, with most residing in vertical public housing. While housing projects have created dividends for its occupants in the 1990s, there is an urgent need to halt and **reverse the decline in the standards of living** in public housing. To further examine issues, Think City through our Rights to City (R2C) programme supported by Citi Foundation, hosted a Symposium focused on **identifying ways of improving liveability** and strengthening the **resilience of communities** living in Malaysia's public housing.

Symposium Agenda:

- **Introductory Remarks** by Dr Shahridan Faiez, Principal Advisor of Think City
- **Keynote and Launch of Public Housing Partnership** by YB Dato' Sri Reezal Merican Naina Merican, Minister of Housing and Local Government Malaysia
- **Systems Map Presentation** by Chun Wah Hoo, Managing Director of NGOHub
- **Panel Discussion Session** moderated by Hana Badriah Zulkifli of Think City
 - *YB Haniza Talha, Chairperson of Syarikat Perumahan Negara Berhad (SPNB)*
 - *Lakshwin Muruga, Chief Operating Officer of Women of Will*
 - *Badrul Hisham Ismail, Director of Programmes of IMAN Research*



INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Presented by: Dr. Shahridan Faiez

- Dr. Shahridan set the tone of the Symposium by explaining how **rapid urbanisation** in Malaysia has given birth to the **urban poverty challenges** we are seeing today.
- In the late 1960s, **only two in ten Malaysians** lived in urban areas as opposed to today, where approximately **eight out of ten Malaysians live in urban areas**.
- Along with this rapid urbanisation, changes to **social structures, demographics, economic, and cultural changes** have impacted urban poverty including the construction of informal settlements or “slums” especially among communities that cannot afford to own or rent a home.
- To mitigate this, Malaysia has been successful in running its public housing programme over the last few decades, which aims to **relocate “slum” communities** to comfortable and safe homes. However, this has birthed a **new set of challenges** within the public housing ecosystem.
- For us to address this, investments in **community development** are fundamental in creating an **effective, robust, and sustainable management system** for public housing projects that currently exists and for future builds.



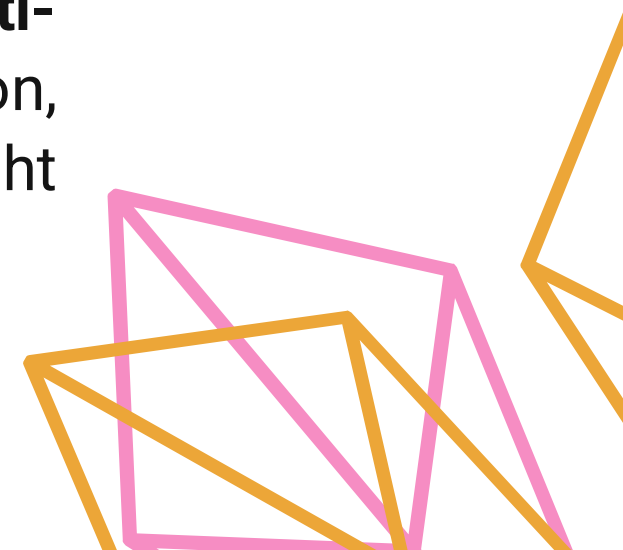
KEYNOTE ADDRESS



Presented by: YB Dato' Sri Reezal Merican

- The Minister highlighted that the growing number of **urban poor living in public housing** has been among the **unintended outcomes** of Malaysia's rapid urbanisation, whom have been strained further by the **COVID-19 pandemic**.
- The issues of **space, access, connectivity, and health** that has affected the lives of public housing community for decades, and it is further exacerbated by the pandemic and movement control order.
- In the Ministry's effort to building a **resilient public housing community** and assisting those financially strained especially during the pandemic, they have introduced "**Rumah IKRAM KPKT**" as a cushioning measure, by offering minimum rental rate of RM124 per month. Other such programmes include **Jalinan Digital Negara (JENDELA) PPR¹ Programme** to widen internet accessibility.
- In launching the Public Housing Partnership, the Minister acknowledged the **importance of multi-stakeholder involvement** to address issues related to shelter, health and nutrition, security, education, employment, and all **issues related to liveability**. He believes the PHP will be effective, in order to highlight the plight of the community and at the same time collectively work towards **tangible solutions**.

¹- Projek Perumahan Rakyat (People's Housing Project)



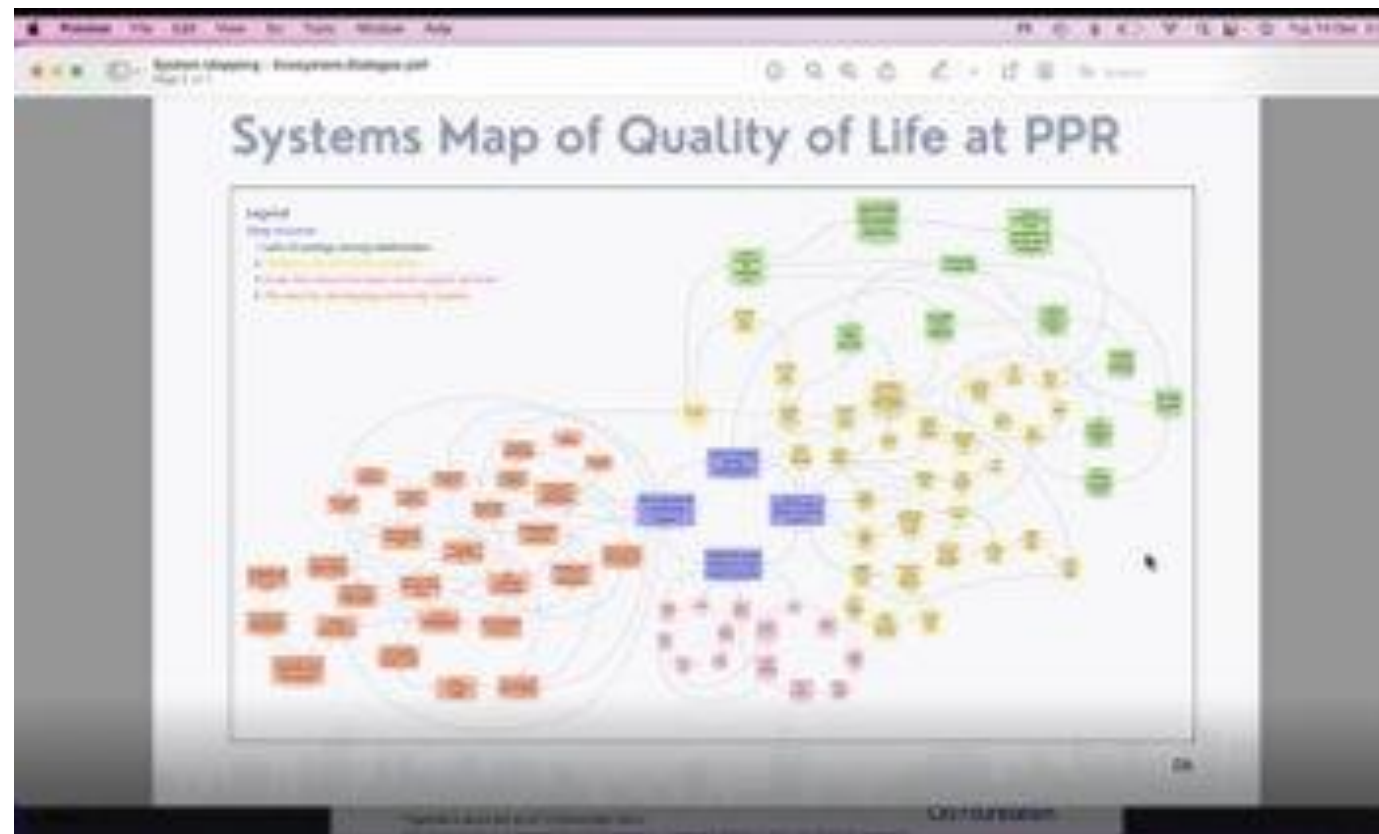
SYSTEMS MAP PRESENTATION



Presented by: Chun Wah Hoo



The Managing Director of NGOHub, presented his study in mapping the relationship between the existing public housing system and quality of life.



- The system practice methodology that was utilised allowed diverse stakeholders to contribute towards mapping the system that exists, recognising that any prevailing issues are **interlinked and multi-sectoral**. Meaningful solutions can only be identified through **collaborations**.
- The question that this exercise aimed to solve was on: “How can we run programs to help to improve the **quality of life** for people living in public housing, specifically those living in Projek Perumahan Rakyat (PPR).”
- Among the reasons why the focus has been on quality of life is because it **encompasses the overall well-being and life satisfaction** of an individual and community.
- The outcome of this study revealed structural problems surrounding PPRs (Projek Perumahan Rakyat) such as **lack of synergy among stakeholders, tendency for short term programmes**, issues that stems from **poor social support systems**, and neglecting the **need to develop community leaders**.

PANEL DISCUSSION SESSION

Participated panelists: YB Haniza Talha, Lakswin Muruga, Badrul Hisham

YB Haniza Talha (Chairperson, Syarikat Perumahan Negara Berhad (SPNB))

- YB Haniza walked us through the various programmes that she has run successfully in the past and in her constituency. She shared her **experiences and challenges faced** when the squatters in her previous constituency of Taman Medan were moved to **Projek Perumahan Rakyat (PPR)**.
- The issues and problems surrounding PPRs has been **same across the board**, and as such this should trigger us to start the work on **building solutions and mitigation plans**. One of such ways that she has done it is through bringing a changing the sombre environment they live in with exciting programmes.
- The **poorly designed PPRs housing units**, limitation as to the facilities provided for recreational activities and social interaction has brought **negative impact to the community** and their daily lives.





Lakshwin Muruga (Chief Operating Officer, Women of Will)

- Lakshwin shared that the **systems mapping process** helped the participants to acknowledge the importance of recognising the **interconnectivity and intersectionality** of the issues that exist in the **public housing ecosystem** despite the **intervention** programmes that are currently being **implemented**.
- The focus of programmes conducted in PPRs cannot just be on an **individual alone**, but the **community** as a whole. Importance should be given towards **building community leaders** and **empowering them**. Women of Will has also shifted its direction towards building local women community leaders.
- He shared that the systems map also allowed them to **step back and assess** the types of **partnerships** that can be **formed** within the ecosystem of public housing. He recognised that when an organisation enters into a community, they never work alone. In PPRs for instance, they work closely with the **Persatuan Penduduk (Resident Association)**, organisations that are **already working within the community** and bringing in **new organisations** that may help to address issues that exists in the public housing ecosystem.



Badrul Hisham Ismail (Director of Programmes, IMAN Research)

- Badrul highlighted the importance of **relevant stakeholders** to form **partnerships** in order to create awareness as to the work that they do individually. Without this partnerships, not only that they **work in silos** but they are not able to **comprehend the interconnected nature** of the issues exists within the ecosystem.
- There is also a need to look at liveability in the public housing ecosystem in a **collective manner** instead of addressing it in **isolated parts**. Looking at public housing from a more **holistic problem-solving approach** helps to pave the path towards improvements in planning for future builds.
- There is also a habit of trying to fit a selected issue into a specific jurisdiction, both in the governmental and non-governmental sphere. Instead, we should be looking directly at the different types of issues that exists within the ecosystem and the delving into how the different agencies can help to solve those issues.



MODERATOR: HANA BADRIAH



PANELIST: YB HANIZA TALHA



PANELIST: LAKSWIN MURUGA



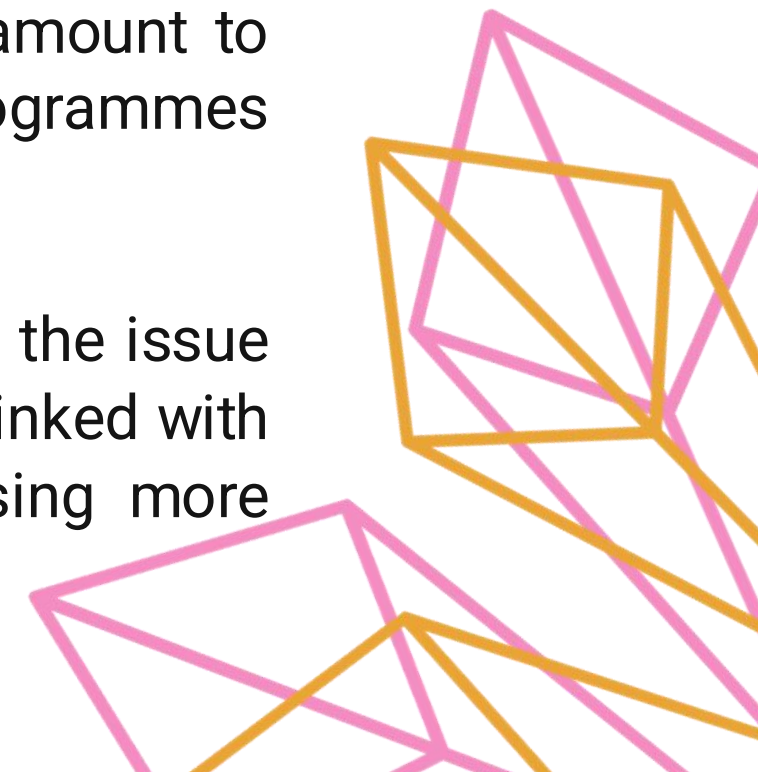
PANELIST: BADRUL HISHAM



SYMPOSIUM CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the issues that were discussed during the Symposium were:

- The **rapid urbanisation** in Malaysia has contributed to the **rise of urban poverty in the form of vertical slums**. To resolve this, community development is necessary to create and maintain an **effective, resilient, and sustainable management systems** for public housing projects.
- The **lack of synergy among stakeholders**, whether internal or external entities within the PPR ecosystem, results in programme duplication without **addressing the interconnected nature of issues** faced by the PPR community. This has proven to be detrimental to the community and hampers efforts of stakeholders involved. Creating avenues for **open communication** between stakeholders could help **resolve the issue of synergy**, and in turn, create programmes that benefit the community.
- In tandem with **community development**, investing in developing more **community leaders** is paramount to supporting the growth of their community. **Capacity building** enables them to lead community programmes with stakeholders in resolving synergy issues outlined above.
- Public housing should **not be isolated** from the **larger housing ecosystem in Malaysia**. For instance, the issue of housing affordability, determined by the property market, affects financing of public housing, interlinked with its design, structure, built materials, location, density, and accessibility. Looking at public housing more **holistically presents opportunities for improvements** to the housing ecosystem in totality.





THANK YOU

Acknowledgements: Think City extends gratitude to YB Dato' Sri Reezal Merican and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government for his keynote and launch of the Public Housing Partnership (PHP), and to the speakers, Chun Wah Hoo, YB Haniza Talha, Lakswin Muruga, and Badrul Hisham.

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