

SUPPORTING THE NEW NORMAL

What initiatives/tools are available to those who need additional support to adjust to the new normal?

“Everything we do during and after this crisis must be with a strong focus on building more equal, inclusive and sustainable economies and societies that are more resilient ...” (*António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mar 2020*)

- Towards the end of April, many countries around the world have started to lift or ease various lockdowns or movement restriction orders implemented earlier this year.

Likewise in Malaysia, on Labour Day the Government announced the implementation of a ‘conditional Movement Control Order’ (CMCO) to replace the ‘Movement Control Order’ (MCO) which was previously expected to end on 12 May. Subject to conditions, most economic sectors and businesses are now allow to operate.



This Snapshot explores some **emerging issues** as a result of COVID-19 and **living the new normal**, with a focus on how specific groups of individuals were affected and ways to support them.

SOLUTIONS SNAPSHOT

WORK FROM HOME: BALANCING WORK & FAMILY

An online local community portal enables parents to come together to connect, support and share ideas on parenting and work ([TheStar](#)). Another platform invites parents to share their thoughts and feelings, encouraging solidarity during these times ([Parents.com](#)).



CLEAR VIRUS MASKS FOR DEAF COMMUNITY; LONGER-LASTING MASKS

An Indonesian woman creates transparent masks for the deaf community ([TheJakartaPost](#)). As a more sustainable option to N95 masks, a recyclable filter is being designed – reusable up to 1 month ([FastCompany.com](#)). Hong Kong also intends to distribute reusable masks that are incorporated with copper as a key filtering component ([SCMP](#)).



SUPPORT FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Governments are boosting funding for mental health initiatives ([TheSydneyMorningHerald](#); [TheStar](#)) and providing free dedicated hotlines ([TheStar](#); [TheStraitsTimes](#)) including Malaysia’s own 24-hour ‘Talian Kasih’. An NGO enables services via WhatsApp ([TheStar](#)). ‘Meditation’ and ‘wellness’ apps are providing COVID-19 tailored content and releasing premium content for free ([MITTechnologyReview](#)).



LEARNING FOR RURAL STUDENTS

Since schools were closed, much has been said about how e-learning highlights the digital divide between urban and rural students/ those from poorer families with low or no internet connection ([CNA](#)). In Nigeria, lessons were broadcast via traditional media - e.g. radio and TV while a “makeshift classroom” — a blackboard with notes mounted on a veranda, allowing students to manually copy their notes. ([MalayMail](#)).



RE-EMERGENCE OF THE BARTER TRADE

In order to avoid wastage of fresh produce and provide food to the needy, Lumut parliament service centre introduced a barter trade system - exchanging seafood products with vegetables ([MalayMail](#)). Internationally, this concept was seen at the local community level ([Bloomberg](#); [UnionLeader](#)). A digital platform allows hospitals to swap critical medical supplies directly with each other ([FinancialTimes](#)).



PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS / THOSE OUT OF JOBS

Pakistan is offering out-of-job labourers cash in exchange for planting trees ([WEF](#)). There were reportedly 800 homeless in Malaysia who will be provided training during MCO, in order for them to take up jobs post-MCO ([FMT](#)), #KisahSiswa a graduate employability intervention programme is providing training and coaching to new graduates ([TalentCorp](#)). Singapore’s ‘SGUnited Jobs’ aims to create 10,000 jobs to provide employment for locals, with public sectors taking the lead ([TheStraitsTimes](#)).

