



STEPPING INTO THE NEW YEAR 2023 – DIRECTOR'S HIGHLIGHTS

Prepared by: Farah Wahida Amran



Image: Prof. Dr. Suhaimi Ab Rahman, Director of PUTRA International Centre (i-PUTRA)

2022 has been nothing but a great year! It has brought so many achievements and milestones achieved for i-PUTRA. As we close the last page of 2022 with modesty, we are ready to face and embrace the new 2023 with new opportunities, new adventures and fresh starts.

For a start, i-PUTRA did a major internal restructuring to provide better services to clients. It is also to allow the staff to venture new opportunities beyond their expertise and to be out of their comfort zone. Two staff from the Mobility Section, one staff from the Global Engagement Section, and four staff from the Visa and

pass section were involved in the internal reshuffle. In addition, a heartfelt welcome to two new additional members Mr. Mohamad Iskandar Sulaiman and Mr. Alifimran Nordin. They reported for duty on 3rd and 16th January 2023 respectively as Executive Officers at the Visa and Pass Section.

On another note, a workshop was held from 26th – 29th January 2023 in Klana Beach Resort, Port Dickson, Negeri Sembilan. The main purpose of this workshop is to determine the direction of i-PUTRA and KPIs for 2023. The Director, YBhg. Prof. Dr. Suhaimi Ab Rahman highlighted mainly on integrity. Integrity means the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles. Hence, the Director requests that all i-PUTRA family members work with full commitment, honesty and transparency. He also urged i-PUTRA family members to be accountable and comply with all regulations and laws.

May the new year 2023 be filled with new hopes, successes, and fortunes. May it be the brightest and most successful year for

i-PUTRA, thus ensuring the realisation of the university's internationalisation efforts.

i-PUTRA with Community: CSR Ramadan

Prepared by: Farah Wahida Amran

Ramadan is the most awaited month by Muslims around the world. A glorious month that is full of grace and rewards. It promises multiple rewards for every deed even it is only giving a sip of water. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is reported to have said, "Whoever gives food for a fasting person to break his fast, he will have a reward like theirs, without that detracting from their reward in the slightest." Muslims who observe fasting will train their inner self to be empathetic, patient and kind to others.

With that, to celebrate this glorious month, PUTRA International Centre (i-PUTRA), Universiti Putra Malaysia encouraged to take the opportunity to share joy and warmth with the UPM community. In the month of Ramadan 2022, i-PUTRA has successfully performed three (3) series of i-PUTRA with Community: CSR Ramadan. In 2022, i-PUTRA distributed soy-based products for three consecutive weeks.

For 2023, i-PUTRA once again seized the opportunity to share and do good deeds with the UPM community during this holy month of Ramadan. For the first series of i-PUTRA with the Community: CSR Ramadan on 24th March 2023, the Vice-Chancellor YBhg. Dato' Prof. Dr. Mohd Roslan Bin Sulaiman together with i-PUTRA distributed 1000 packs of *onde-onde* to the UPM community. *Onde-onde* is a traditional Malay dessert made with screwpine leaves dough filled with palm sugar.



Image: The Vice-Chancellor distributing *onde-onde* together with international students

The distribution started at 4.30 pm and finished 30 minutes later. The preparation started at noon when the staff was divided into groups to prepare the dough and the fillings, boil the dough, and pack the *onde-onde*. Besides that, the preparation and distribution involve international students from various backgrounds hence, introducing them to the food and culture of Malaysia. This act not only benefits others but also strengthens the spirit of togetherness and unity among the staff.

i-PUTRA is also planning to distribute *bubur jagung* (sweet corn cooked in coconut milk) and i-PUTRA's trademark homemade *taufufa* (soybean curd served with sugar syrup) soon. May Allah accepts our good deeds and grants His infinite mercy and blessings.



Image: *Onde-onde* distribution to the international students

Welcome Aboard!!!

Prepared by: Farah Liyana Abd Halim

Assalamualaikum! Hi! Ni Hao! Bonjour! Hallo! As 2023 progressing, we would love to welcome back our beloved international students to the campus for the Second Semester 2022/2023. As all of you know, our daily life had been heavily impacted by the pandemic Covid-19 during late 2019 until mid-2021. We hope all of you are in great health and shape to kick start the semester with new goals, achievements and spirit.

On this volume of newsletter, we would love to recap a few important things for you to adhere to in order to make your stay legal and to get a hassle-free approval to enter Malaysia.

First and foremost, to all our new students who come with Electronic Visa Approval Letter (eVAL) , for those countries that needs to obtain Single Entry Visa (SEV) or eVISA before travelling to Malaysia, please ensure that the Single Entry Visa that you obtain from the Malaysian Embassy near your area are still valid before travelling to Malaysia. You may check the list here ; https://visa.educationmalaysia.gov.my/media/docs/List_of_Malaysian_Missions_to_Obtain_Single_Entry_Visa_From.pdf

To those who are coming in with eVISA, please ensure that the appropriate documents are uploaded during the application to ensure that the right eVISA is issued in order to enter Malaysia. Please choose 'student' when applying the eVISA

from the Immigration Department's website to ensure a problem free process at the Malaysian Immigration counter at the airport. You can check the website here; <https://malaysiavisa.imi.gov.my/evisa/evisa.jsp> Please ensure that the eVAL is always available to be presented at the airport. This is important in order to get the right entry stamp for conversion to student pass later. Failure to get the correct entry stamp will result in prolonging the process of getting your student pass.

Secondly, for our current student with a valid student pass, please gain entry at the Immigration counter and get the correct stamp to do the renewal application in our office. Please make sure that you gain entry 2 or 3 months before the student pass expires. To those whose student pass has expired for more than 3 months, you are required to apply for the new eVAL before proceeding to enter Malaysia because that is the new guidelines and procedures set by the Immigration Department of Malaysia. If your student pass has expired for not more than 3 months, you can still enter Malaysia as per current student's procedure and do the renewal application in our office, but be informed that there will be penalty charged (if applicable) in order to get the student pass and the approval is solely by the Immigration Department in EMGS Kuala Lumpur.

Thirdly, please ensure that the validity of your passport is more than 12 months, best if your passport is more than 18 months of validity. If it is less than that, you need to renew your passport before you can get the student pass or renew your student pass. Please bring your old passport together if you have a new passport in order to proceed with the student pass application. The old passport should be cancelled by the embassy either physically or by providing a cancellation letter from the embassy. Also, please ensure there are no misspelling of your name and if there is, you need to get an explanation letter from the embassy in order to resolve the issue or, depending on the advice from the Immigration officer, you need to renew the passport again according to the right

spelling of your name. If by any chance you have changed your name, please attach the embassy letter and other relevant documents to resolve the matter.

To recap, new students who come with eVAL need to make sure that the SEV or eVISA is still valid upon arrival, the current student must enter Malaysia 2 or 3 months before the expiry of the student pass and please ensure that the passport validity is within 12-18 months and there are no spelling errors to avoid any inconveniences in the future. We wish you all the best and keep on striving for your future undertakings but do not to forget to create great memories with your friends while you are here.

Renewal of a Student Pass by the Malaysian Immigration Department upon Expiry

Prepared by: Farah Liyana Abd Halim

Previously, EMGS had notified (Updates – Clarification for International Students and Institutions on application processing during and post Movement Control Order period dated 18th July 2020) education institutions that the Malaysian Immigration Department is still allowing international students to enter Malaysia and to continue renewing their student pass if it expired after 1st February 2020 because they are outside Malaysia. This regulation was implemented as these students were unable to travel to Malaysia because of global border closures due to the Covid19 pandemic worldwide and the students are advised to go back to their respective home countries.

The Malaysian Immigration Department has now issued a circular (Ref: **IM.101/HQG/1130/1/1-2JLD.16 (62)**) dated 23rd February 2023 stating that this regulation is no longer facing any travel

restrictions imposed due to the Covid-19 pandemic as the border had reopened and all regulations are now back to normal as before. Thus, it is no longer applicable.

Starting 1st April 2023, all international students with an expired student pass will not be allowed to enter Malaysia using a **social visit pass** to renew their student pass. Existing international students in Malaysia will also not be allowed to renew their student pass once it has expired.

These students will be **required to apply a new application and obtain a new eVisa Approval Letter (eVAL)**. Kindly note that the Malaysian Immigration Department may allow certain international students to renew their student pass **if the current pass expiry has not lapsed for more than 3 months**. The decision is entirely under the discretion of the Malaysian Immigration Department

For those students that had an expired student pass and is residing in Malaysia are required to come to the international office to get more information on how to resolve the issue according to the guideline and latest procedures given by Immigration Department and notified by

the Education Malaysia Global Services on their website.

Source;

https://educationmalaysia.gov.my/news_update/ren-ewal-of-a-student-pass-by-the-malaysian-immigration-department-upon-expiry/

An Auspicious Beginning to the Internationalisation Efforts at UPM.

Prepared by: Siti Hajar Najiyah Mohd Pauzi

Beginning 2023, UPM's internationalisation efforts have experienced a remarkable growth since the border restrictions worldwide have been lifted which allows for the resumption of cross-country travel. Prospective partners and long-standing partners of UPM seized the opportunity provided by the resumption of international travels to establish and strengthen their relationships through discussions on new collaborations and exploring further avenues of cooperation. During the months of January to March, UPM and the PUTRA International Centre hosted seven delegations from various countries, including Japan, the Netherlands, the United States of America (USA), Finland, and Malaysia.

Expanding its outreach initiatives, UPM also actively participated in the 2023 Asia-Pacific Association for International Education (APAIE) event, held from March 13th to 17th at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre in Bangkok, Thailand. The UPM delegations were represented by Prof. Dr. Suhaimi Ab Rahman, Director of the PUTRA International Centre (i-PUTRA), and Mr Firdaus Zakaria from the Academic Promotion Unit, Division of Admission and Division of Academic Governance, at the APAIE Education Fair. This platform provides the opportunity for UPM to engage with potential partners, connect with current partners, and enhance its visibility globally on an international stage.

The combined impact of the resumption of international travel and the effective use of teleconferencing has indeed marked a promising start for UPM's internationalisation efforts in 2023. These endeavours exemplify UPM's commitment to embracing a diverse and interconnected academic community that promotes knowledge exchange, innovation, and cultural understanding. UPM will continue to forge ahead through the expansion of its global partnerships. Thus, strengthening its position as a leading institution in the international academic landscape.



Image: Courtesy Visit from Kokugakuin University, Japan



Image: Courtesy Visit from Central Arkansas University, USA



Image: Courtesy Visit from Soaring Falcon International Sdn. Bhd.



Image: Courtesy Visit from Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology, Japan



Image: Courtesy Visit from Groningen University, Netherlands

Delving into the research landscape in Germany

Prepared by: Siti Hajar Najiyah Mohd Pauzi

Germany is renowned as a leading country for research and development in Europe, offering numerous opportunities for individuals interested in pursuing doctoral programmes and research. Its universities and research institutions provide exceptional education and training in a collaborative environment. Students benefit from a vast network of expert professors and scholars.

Germany also offers various scholarship programmes for doctoral students. The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) is a prestigious scholarship provider, offering competitive scholarships to students worldwide. These scholarships cover tuition fees, living expenses, and

travel. In collaboration with the Putra International Centre, the DAAD Regional Office Jakarta organized a seminar on DAAD scholarships for doctoral studies and research collaborations. The seminar attracted 40 postgraduate participants and provided valuable information.

The four-hour seminar features presenters such as, Dr Guido Schnieders, the Director for DAAD Regional Office Jakarta, and Dr. Ing. Cheng Yee Low, Lecturer from Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM). The program was also joined and officiated by Prof. Dato' Dr. Ing. Ir Renuganth Varatharajoo, Professor from the Department of Aerospace Engineering, Faculty of Engineering. Prof. Dato' Dr. Ing.

Ir. Renuganth in his opening speech shared some of his experiences with the research landscape in Germany as well as extended his words of encouragement to the participants who might be interested in pursuing their study in Germany or establishing a research collaboration with academic institutions in Germany.

The seminar has indeed piqued the participants' interest while raising awareness on the scholarship offered by DAAD. It emphasized the chance to receive a world-class education and training in a collaborative environment. Overall, the event provided valuable insights and opportunities for those considering doctoral studies and research collaborations in Germany.



Image: Introduction on the Research Landscape in Germany and Scholarship Opportunities by Dr Guido Schnieders, the Director for DAAD Regional Office Jakarta



Image: Opening speech by Prof. Dato' Dr. Ing. Ir Renuganth Varatharajoo, Professor from the Department of Aerospace Engineering, Faculty of Engineering.



Image: Group photograph with the panels and participants who joined the “Information Session: Research in Germany” seminar.

Propagate Internationalisation through Mobility in Quarter 1 2023

Prepared by: Rahayu Ridzuan

UPM strives to enhance its competitiveness by focusing on reputation, rankings, and attracting international students. The university recognizes the significance of rankings in determining its excellence in teaching, research, innovation, and student experience. To solidify its global standing, UPM has invested in academic programmes, faculty quality, research output, and infrastructure.

The Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 aims to attract 250,000 students by 2025. In line

with this, MOHE plans to receive around 55,000 international students in 2023 through the Mobility Programme, in collaboration with EMGS and Malaysian universities such as UPM.

UPM has been actively promoting appealing mobility programmes to achieve this target. Despite the COVID-19 disruption, Quarter 1 of 2023 witnessed a rise in the number of mobility students compared to the previous year, reflecting the global trend of students opting for study abroad and exchange programmes.

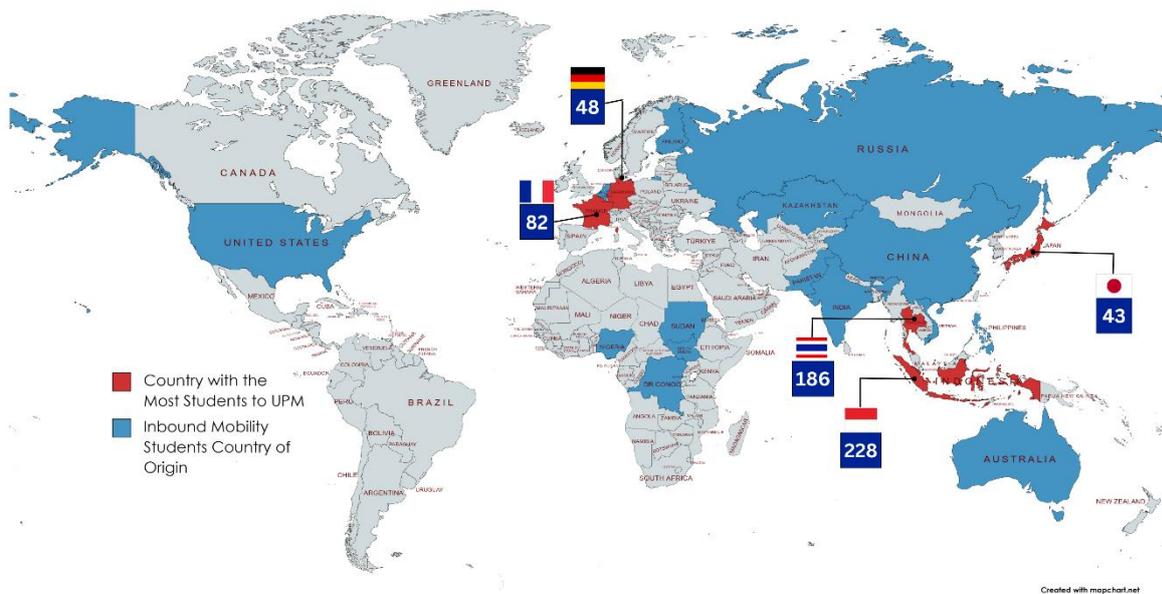


Image 1: The map shows the International Students demographic who pursued their Inbound Mobility Programme at UPM from January to March 2023 with most students coming from Indonesia, Thailand, France, Germany and Japan.

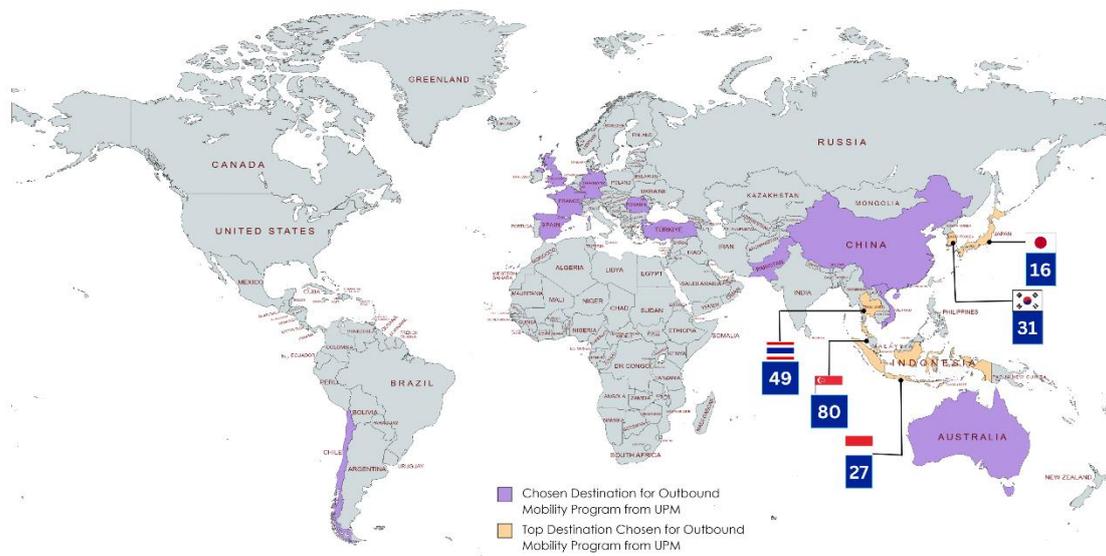


Image 2: The map shows the chosen destination for UPM students to pursue their Outbound Mobility Programme from January to March 2023. The most popular destinations are Singapore, Thailand, South Korea, Indonesia and Japan.

The mobility programmes offered by UPM encompass various options, including semester exchanges, short semesters, internships, research attachments, short courses, visits, and workshops. These programmes have successfully attracted international students from developed countries to study in UPM.

With the reopening of Malaysia's borders, faculties and institutions, in collaboration with i-PUTRA, have introduced programmes showcasing the unique culture, religion, and multi-racial nature of Malaysia. In Quarter 1 of 2023, the Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication led the Inbound Mobility Programme by

hosting 303 students, while Residential Colleges led the Outbound Programme with 67 students.

Each faculty has played a vital role in contributing to the growing number of mobility students. Without their tireless

efforts and commitment, such significant achievements in meeting UPM (KPIs) would not have been possible. UPM aims to continue increasing its numbers in subsequent quarters to fulfil its (KPIs) and further enhance its reputation and competitiveness.

Mobility the Point of Departure for Life Experience

Prepared by: Nadia Zawani Hussin

In 2013, the Ministry thus began developing the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015–2025 (Higher Education) or the MEB (HE). The MEB (HE) introduced 10 Shifts that spur continued excellence in the higher education system. All 10 Shifts address key performance issues in the system, particularly with regard to quality and efficiency, as well as global trends that are disrupting the higher education landscape. One of the shifts is number 8. Global Prominence.

The objective of MEB (HE) shift 8 is to be a country that is well known as an international education hub with a difference, one that provides value-driven and globally relevant education, and is recognised by students for its balance in quality and affordability, good quality of life, and rich cultural experiences.

At UPM, our objective is to become a world-renowned international university that hosts students from all around the world. As part of the university internationalisation efforts, i-PUTRA took this opportunity to tap into the ideas to receive more students by offering attractive programmes such as mobility which provides not only academic but also cultural experience which benefits students on campus and also students that come to UPM.

Since January 2023, i-PUTRA has organised events, programmes and activities for international students such as Summer Programmes, webinars, orientations, and cultural & industrial visits for students. Some of the programmes are collaborative efforts between partner universities and internal offices in UPM.



Image: Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015–2025 (Ministry of Higher Education)

Bahasa with Us

Prepared by: Siti Nursyakirah Saharudin

Malay Folklore: Squirrel Princess

It is said that there is a state called Negeri Berasap. His Highness likes to hunt.

One day, young king was hunting in the forest near Negeri Antah Berantah. After a day of hunting, he did not find anything. He felt tired and rested under a tree.

Before he could even close his eyes, the Young Prince saw a beautiful squirrel. His Majesty got up to approach him. However, the squirrel jumped and ran away.

The young king continued to follow him until he got lost in the middle of the forest. Satisfied, he looked for a way home but in vain.

Finally, the prince saw a hut and approached it. He peered into the hut.

Inside the hut, young king saw an old man sitting facing the kitchen as if he was about to eat. Then he shook the old man's words.

"Hmm, now you know who this bad old man is. Your father used to punish me by banishing me from the country. Your father also asked me to name his daughter, ha, ha, ha!" said the old man laughing.

"Pity, pity. Your father and mother are dead. You become the Squirrel Princess. If no other human mentions your name, you will forever be a squirrel, Princess Gemalai Suri," said the old man again.

The young king was sure that the squirrel he saw was what the old man meant. The next day, before finding his way home, he planned to look for the squirrel he found yesterday.

While searching, the Young Prince saw a squirrel perched on a stump.

His Majesty touched the stump and said: "Are you Princess Gemalai Suri?"

In the blink of an eye, the squirrel turned into a very beautiful princess.

"Thank you young man. If the slave master does not mention the slave's name, the slave will continue to be a squirrel," said Princess Gemalai Suri.

The young king took Princess Gemalai Suri back to the palace. With the blessings of the Raja Muda's father and mother, they were married.



Reference: Othman Puteh & Aripin Said. (2008). Himpunan 366 Cerita Rakyat Malaysia. Utusan Publication & Distributors Sdn Bhd: Kuala Lumpur. Page 13

Celebrations and Festivals

Malaysia, being a multi-racial country has a variety of colourful and lively celebrations throughout the year. The culture in this country becomes more colourful due to the various races in Malaysia. In every celebration, the tradition of holding an open

house provides the opportunity for the various races to visit each other to enliven the celebration. This newsletter issue focuses on festivals celebrated from January until April 2023.

CHINESE COMMUNITY

Chinese New Year (22-23 Jan 2023)

Chinese Malaysian communities celebrate Chinese New Year on the first day of the Chinese calendar in January or February each year. The festival starts with the whole family gathering for dinner together. The festival's gesture of giving 'angpow' is

a tradition that enlivens the atmosphere of Chinese New Year, especially for the children. The celebration lasts for 15 days to the day of "Chap Goh Meh" which is celebrated on the night of the 15th day of the festival.



Source :Adzhar Ibrahim. (2023, January 22). Buck the toxic racial current in the Year of the Rabbit. *FMT Media*. <https://www.freemalysiatoday.com/category/opinion/2023/01/22/buck-the-toxic-racial-current-in-the-year-of-the-rabbit/>

INDIAN COMMUNITY

Thaipusam or Thaiposam (5 Feb 2023)

The Tamil Hindu festival is celebrated on the full moon of the Tamil month of *Thai* (January/February), usually coinciding with Pushya star, known as Pusam in Tamil.

The festival commemorates the legend of the goddess Parvati offering her son,

Murugan (Kartikeya) a vel (a divine spear) so he could vanquish the asura Surapadman and his brothers. It is also commonly believed that Thaipusam marks Murugan's birthday.



Source: Bernama. (2020, February 8). Vibrant Thaipusam celebrations nationwide. *New Straits Times*. <https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2020/02/563746/vibrant-thaipusam-celebrations-nationwide>