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TARIKH	SELASA, 17 DISEMBER 2019
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TAJUK ARTIKEL	THE ASPIRATION TO INSPIRE
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KATA KUNCI	CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)

## The aspiration to inspire

To fulfil its belief that everyone can do well by doing good, one corporation sets out to give back to the community through corporate social responsibility (CSR). Sunway Group has been pouring its heart and energy into three pillars – education, healthcare and community enrichment.

The group wants to ensure its contribution to society is sustainable and impactful for the community in the long run and aspires to inspire others to follow suit.

Sunway's efforts to serve the community is not without purpose. They are based on the views of Sunway Group founder and chairman Tan Sri Dr Jeffrey Cheah on giving back to society. He says, "Philanthropy stems from the inner conviction that we, who have prospered from the resources provided by Mother Earth, have a duty to give back to society. It can be done in many ways, not just through monetary means. We owe this to our society, nation and planet."

The group has been committed to advancing and empowering the nation through the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Because the B40 community is the most economically disadvantaged, Sunway has made them a priority in the pursuit of a development that is more inclusive.

Of the 17 UNSDGs, Sunway has placed focus and continuous work to fulfil three of them.

● **SDG 2: Zero hunger** – Sunway has donated eight ATM Beras and more than 8,000kg of rice to needy communities nationwide. The ATM Beras enables mosques to distribute rice donations efficiently without exhausting too much manpower.

● **SDG 4: Quality education** – To provide equal access to education for the B40 community, Sunway Group has held its Back-to-School programme for the second consecutive year. The programme aids poor students from B40 families through distributing basic necessities such as school uniforms, school bags, water bottles and workbooks. To date, 4,500 students from Johor, Penang, Selangor and Perak have benefited from this programme.

● **SDG 17: Partnership for the goals** – One person or corporation can only do so much. Greater change can only come from the joining of hands among the community and organisations. Sunway combined the second and 17th UNSDG by working hand-in-hand with established non-profit organisations, including Rise Against Hunger and Kechara Soup Kitchen Society to feed underprivileged and impoverished communities. The campaign to feed the hungry around Malaysia saw the participation of Sunway volunteers from Ipoh, Penang and the Klang Valley.

### Spreading cheer throughout the year

As Christmas looms and the time of giving nears, it is not unusual to come across companies going out of the way to share the joy. However, spreading festive cheer and serving the community is something that comes naturally for Sunway, who goes out of its way to do such works throughout the year. Last month, the group rolled out the



(From left to right) Lao PDR Foreign Affairs Deputy Minister Thongpanh Savanphet, Primary Industries Minister Teresa Kok, Jeffrey Cheah Foundation founder and trustee as well as Sunway Group founder and chairman Tan Sri Dr Jeffrey Cheah, Jeffrey Sachs Centre on Sustainable Development chairman and UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network director Prof Jeffrey Sachs, and Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change Minister Yeo Bee Yin, at the ASEAN Sustainability Development Summit 2019.

"Giving Truck" as part of its "Celebrate Giving with Sunway" project, which is parked under the #SunwayForGood banner, one of the group's sustainability initiatives. The project invites children from 30

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welfare homes to choose a gift. The public is then invited to fulfil these wishes by sending personalised heartfelt messages along with donations of the chosen gifts to the Giving Truck, which roams the Klang Valley at set times every day. The gifts are then distributed to the children this month.

This is not the only event that Sunway has carried out this year to bring the spirit of cheer to underserved communities. In July, the group undertook its biggest

#SunwayForGood Raya Cheer Initiative, which included the distribution of 7,000 packets of bubur lambuk, installation of eight ATM Beras and donated more than 8,000kg of rice, various *ftar barakah* sessions, and distributing packed food to the homeless and B40 groups spread across Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Perak, Penang and Johor. Sunway is the first corporation to donate ATM Beras as part of its initiative to eradicate hunger, especially for the *asmaf* and B40 community.

Sunway also ensured the Deepavali celebrations for more than 900 underserved Perak schoolchildren were enjoyable and memorable when it hosted the children to a trip to the Lost World of Tambun in October. Aside from bringing smiles to the community, the #SunwayForGood Deepavali Cheer programme also aims to ensure the children's long-term future through education. Therefore, the event also included an educational tour and provided school supplies to students, upgraded school libraries and implemented an ICT Literacy

### Aid programme.

The group first started celebrating festive seasons with underserved groups who live in its surrounding communities 18 years ago. This year alone, #SunwayForGood initiatives have reached out to almost 50,000 beneficiaries as of 2019.

### Going the extra mile for health and sustainability

Good education and adequate nourishment are meaningless if one's health is not taken care of. Therefore, Sunway held its second biennial Sunway's The Good Run marathon in October to promote cancer awareness and prevention through healthy living.

Held in conjunction with Sunway Medical Centre's 20th anniversary and supported by Rapid KL and the Subang Jaya Municipal Council, the event drew more than 7,000 runners and raised approximately RM275,000, which will go to assisting with medical treatment costs for cancer patients in the B40 group via the Media Prima-NSTP Humanitarian Fund.

The run also held special significance for a group of cancer survivors from Sunway Medical Centre, who decided to participate in the 5km run event as encouragement to fellow cancer patients battling the disease.

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Students from four Perak schools celebrated Deepavali with an educational tour at the Lost World of Tambun.



Tan Sri Razman Hashim, Sunway Group deputy chairman distributing bubur lambuk to B40 community.



# Integrity, humility and excellence

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Sunway Bhd executive director Sarena Cheah said the run served as a platform to bring the community together in advancing UNSDG 3 and 12, which are Good Health and Well-Being and Responsible Consumption and Production, respectively. "We want to educate the public on the importance of living a healthy lifestyle for a sustainable future."

Besides encouraging healthy habits and lifestyles among the community, the run also advocated sustainability by promoting the reduction of waste and single-use plastic items. Paper cups and single-use plastics were not provided for the run and runners were seen refilling their own bottles at designated water stations. The runners' T-shirts were also made of recycled polyethylene terephthalate (RPET).

To further foster the spirit of sustainability, Sunway University and Lancaster University launched a joint collaboration called the Future Cities Research Institute in July. The collaboration is meant to complement the work already being done by the Jeffrey Sachs Centre on Sustainability Development to establish an innovative and agile portfolio of research, responding to the intractable challenges facing urban environments and deliver critical changes relevant to their context. Sunway City Kuala Lumpur will be utilised as a "living lab" for the research on smart and healthy cities as well as the development of sustainable communities.

## True transformation from everyone's efforts

Dr Cheah's story begins in Pusing, a small town in the state of Perak. Pusing was a tin-mining town so he witnessed first-hand the impact of poverty on families and how it closed off avenues for advancement, particularly in education for children. This experience shaped his views on sustainability, which led to him becoming one of the more prominent sustainability figures in Malaysia.

Starting his business with an investment of just RM100,000 in 1974, Dr Cheah has since expanded Sunway into one of Malaysia's largest conglomerates with a combined market capitalisation exceeding RM17bil. Sunway attributes this success to the founder's discipline in upholding the group's core values of "Integrity, Humility and Excellence".

Dr Cheah explains the definitions of these values:

- **Integrity** is about conducting oneself with honesty and trustworthiness. It is about being professional, ethical and honest. It is not just doing the right thing but doing things right.

- **Humility** reminds us to be humble, polite and respectful. It reminds us that no matter how much we think we know, we still have a lot more to learn.

- **Excellence** is about constantly pursuing the highest standards in all that we do.

That said, he believes all educational institutions should not only impart knowledge and skills, but also good values in their students to build a well-educated and civic-minded society.

Dr Cheah practises what he preaches. In 2015, 193 members of the United Nations General Assembly adopted the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and introduced the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (17 UNSDGs). However, the 2018 SDG Index and Dashboards Report showed Malaysia ranked 53th out of 156 countries and none of the countries were on track to achieve all goals by 2030.

He recognises that these goals cannot be reached if only the Government is held solely responsible for transforming the

country. During the ASEAN Sustainable Development Summit 2019 at Sunway Resort Hotel & Spa, he stated, "UNSDGs are not the responsibility of governments alone. Building a sustainable future requires the commitment of all elements of society – the private sector, academia, civil society and, of course, every single individual. We are all in this together."

Sunway strives to continue offering its support in fulfilling the 17 UNSDGs while encouraging and prompting other organisations and the community to work together to build a healthy, sustainable and inclusive country.

■ For more information, visit [sunway.com.my/corporate-responsibility](http://sunway.com.my/corporate-responsibility)

Sunway hopes its efforts towards advancing UNSDGs will inspire other corporations to do the same.

## Inspiring the next generation

Education has always been the passion of Sunway Group founder and chairman Tan Sri Dr Jeffrey Cheah. He established the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation (JCF) with the personal motto of "I aspire to inspire before I expire" and pledged all of his equity, worth several billion ringgit, in perpetuity to Sunway's educational institutions. He believes that quality education should be made affordable and accessible to qualified students despite their financial limitations.

This year alone, RM80mil has been awarded by the JCF in the form of scholarships and grants. To date, the foundation has awarded more than RM482mil to deserving students. Dr Cheah had made it his personal goal to award more than RM1bil in scholarships in his lifetime.

JCF was officially recognised earlier this year as one of the sponsors for the prestigious Chevening scholarship, which is meant for Malaysian students looking to further their studies in the United Kingdom. Dr Cheah said "The selected students would be great assets to our pool of talented people who will go on to contribute to the betterment of the nation upon returning to Malaysia."

Dr Cheah is also a patron of the Malaysian creative community. JCF has extended scholarships to creative arts and music students by establishing the Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali Scholarship for Creative Arts and Music in September and will be giving out scholarships worth RM10mil in perpetuity.

## A stepping stone for the needful

Learning can be done anywhere and anytime, but with the addition of a comfortable learning environment and skilled support, the experience can be a lot more wholesome and holistic for students. Sunway and JCF jointly "adopted" eight schools nationwide and have contributed more than RM30mil for school restoration and upgrading works, including to upgrade learning facilities, multipurpose halls, classrooms and school administrative blocks. To date, more than 30,000 students nationwide have benefited from the programme.

Dr Cheah also has a heart for students

with special needs. Since 2006, Sunway has assisted the special education class "Kelas Khas", established in SMK Bandar Sunway for students with learning disabilities, and disorders that affect learning, such as Down Syndrome, autism, hyperactivity and William's syndrome. Sunway has also given its full support to the not-for-profit organisation Generating Opportunities for the Learning Disabled (GOLD), which began as a parents' support group.

Sunway also helps train and introduce special needs students to the working world through the Sunway Job Training Programme for Special Students. Endorsed by the Education Ministry, the programme provides job training and exposure in hopes of developing and equipping the students with skills for future employment.

The group's subsidiaries, including Sunway Medical Centre, Sunway Pyramid, Sunway University and Sunway Resort Hotel & Spa, work together to provide these students with on-the-job training. This real-world experience under supervision by experienced personnel works to instil confidence, independence and social skills in the students. To date, more than a hundred special students from various backgrounds have graduated from the programme.

## Collaboration for educational equality

Dr Cheah believes that establishing strong and strategic partnerships have always been Sunway's method to ensure a sustainable business and environmental ecosystem. Therefore, Sunway has collaborated with countless governmental and NGOs to work towards this goal.

One such partner is Tesch for Malaysia (ITM), which enlists Malaysia's most promising future leaders in their mission to end educational inequality. Since 2012, the foundation has sponsored RM150,000 annually to assist ITM in achieving its mission of reducing the gap between rural and urban schools.

Beginning 2014, Sunway initiated the Sunway English Language Development Programme and kick-started the annual Sunway-Oxbridge Essay Competition with the aim to elevate the standards of

education in Malaysian schools, particularly in English proficiency. The competition is jointly organised by The Oxford & Cambridge Society Malaysia, JCF, Sunway University and Monash University Malaysia and has seen the participation of more than 17,500 students nationwide.

In September, the Selangor Youth Community (SAY) and Sunway kick-started their three-year Sunway "Seeding Inspiration and Leadership Via Knowledge" (SILK) programme. Form 4 students from SMK Bandar Sunway were selected to participate in this community enrichment programme and were exposed to agriculture in an interactive way. They were also given the opportunity to learn in practical sessions.

With the cooperation of experts from Seeds Malaysia, the Selangor Agriculture Department and Science Bridge Academy, it is hoped that students can view agriculture as a non-conventional career path.

Dr Cheah believes in working with the best and learning from the best. Therefore, Sunway University has established partnerships and collaborations with world-leading universities such as Cambridge, Harvard, Oxford, Lancaster, California Berkeley, and are currently establishing partnerships with Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston and University of Peking. These collaborations and partnerships are aimed at pursuing common objectives in research and education.

Over time, some of these partnerships grew and expanded. The Sunway-Cambridge partnership, dating back to 2014 with the establishment of the Jeffrey Cheah Professional Fellowship Fund in Gorville and Caius College of the University of Cambridge, was further bolstered in June when the "Jeffrey Cheah Biomedical Centre" (JCBC) was launched in the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, the largest biotech cluster outside the United States.

With such precious and fruitful partnerships, Sunway has come far in building towards academic equality in Malaysia. Nevertheless, there is still much to be done, and Sunway pledges to strive until every child in Malaysia attains equal access and opportunities to a good education.



Tan Sri Dr Jeffrey Cheah and Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng with the scholarship recipients of the JCF Scholarships and Awards Ceremony 2019.

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