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The Effectiveness of Community Engagement Program Towards Urban Poor Community Development: A Study Of MSU MyNeighbours Program

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Abstract

MyNeighbours initiative has gained significance in recent years, collaborating with Management and Science University (MSU) to support the urban poor. HeARTS, aiming to realize Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, employs its community project, MyNeighbours, to promote community and collaboration. MyNeighbours, themed "Nurturing Generation, Building Society," aims to enhance the economic capabilities of the urban poor through knowledge and skills. The program offers free courses such as basic business design, basic sewing, make up, a food costing guide, cooking and baking workshop, establishing a knowledge transfer bridge between the university and the community. This research aims to assess the effectiveness of the MyNeighbours program on the perceptions of 40 urban poor regarding their standards of living, entrepreneurship, skills and knowledge. By exploring these factors, the study aims to provide insights into the significance of the MyNeighbours program for the urban poor. To gather the data, the researchers employed structured interviews, utilizing the qualitative descriptive method implemented through questionnaires, which are essentially interviews. The data collection involved face-to-face interviews, drawing upon previously collected data in the form of videos and voice notes. Most of the interviewees expressed that the MyNeighbours program played a crucial role in enhancing their standard of living, enabling them to sustain themselves. A significant number of respondents who participated in the program provided positive feedback, stating that it contributed to their improvement and proficiency in managing their businesses. The program exhibited a favorable impact on individuals' skills, knowledge, and the development of a supportive community. The research successfully achieved its objective, as it established a positive correlation between the effectiveness of the MyNeighbours program and the respondents' standard of living, entrepreneurship, skills, and knowledge.

Keywords: *Effectiveness of MyNeighbours program towards urban poor, Standards of living, Entrepreneur, Skills and Knowledges*

Introduction.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in Malaysia is an interactive tool that assesses the SDG performance of Malaysia's 16 states and federal territories across the 17 SDG. The SDG are a worldwide call to action to eradicate poverty, safeguard the earth's ecology and climate, and guarantee that people throughout the world may live in peace and prosperity. As mentioned by Granicus (2023), governments may make decisions that are more legitimate, transparent and efficient by including the community. By acknowledging and conveying the needs and interests of all parties involved including decision makers it encourages decisions that are sustainable.

In order to accomplish certain goals for the organization and the society at large, this entails cultivating connections, creating communications, and controlling interactions (Simply stakeholders, 2023). However, according to Hussey (2023), community engagement is founded on the democratic principle that everyone affected by an issue affecting their community should have a say in the decision-making process. It also holds the promise of influencing decisions that affect the provision of services, future visions, and the sustainability of our communities. People, governments, and organizations work together to develop and implement long-term visions for their community's future. It is important for governments and organizations to work with and listen to communities in order to develop long-term relationships and meaningful solutions to complex issues. By deepening these relationships, the value of inclusivity, where government entities create dialogue with the very diversity of their communities, should be central (Granicus, 2023).

Along with the various forms of community engagement, there are numerous models for it. Relationship-building projects that help bring a community together and form stronger bonds, community education projects that provide instructional services or educate the public on specific issues; direct service projects that provide something to a group in need; and others are examples of these models (Hendricks, A. (2023)). These various forms of community engagement occur in communities all over the world. While not every community has the same level of engagement, the same percentage of the population that is passionate about it or the same types of community engagement, it should come as no surprise that those with higher levels of engagement outperform those with lower levels of engagement.

According to Jung (2020), the term "urban poor" refers to a set of economic and social difficulties that exist in industrialized cities and are the result of a combination of processes such as the establishment of comfortable living standards, the rise of individualism, social fragmentation processes, and the dualization of the labor market, which translates into social dualization. Urban

poor families frequently face a lack of community support, inadequate housing, limited access to education and higher living costs (Malaymail, 2023). As stated in faithour website, In Malaysia, the term "poor" refers to any B40 person who resides inside the boundaries of a city. This group is further divided into two categories: hardline poor (monthly household income below RM1,169) and poor (monthly household income below RM2,208). Urban and rural impoverished people encounter distinct obstacles, however some may also be shared (Jung (2020).

Ranked among the top ten universities in Malaysia, MSU is committed to improving societal well-being via knowledge sharing, awareness-raising, skill development, and talent management in line with UNSDG programmes. In order to accomplish these objectives and provide top-notch instruction, MSU transcends barriers based on race, culture, and religious views via inclusion. Additionally, MSU interacts with the community through worthwhile programmes that address and lessen issues associated with poverty. Apart from that, MSU's effort to assist the urban poor was designed to enable the participants from the disadvantaged neighborhood to utilize the information they acquired from the course to raise their level of living. The brief courses that were offered gave the impoverished people the skills they needed to launch their own enterprises or to land an impressive employment.

To align with the initiative, MSU MyNeighbours has introduced a program that is for the community where 40 urban poor that are selected can join the program for free. MSU HeARTS intends to achieve the SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, through its community involvement project MyNeighbours, by fostering both community and collaboration. MyNeighbours MSU was aligned with the community engagement program. It is because it involves community and collaboration. MyNeighbours with the theme Nurturing Generation, Building Society, intends to strengthen the urban poor community's economic capabilities via knowledge and skills. Courses for the urban community include basic business design, basic sewing, a food costing guide, and a baking workshop. The program was held at the MSU.

It is called a Knowledge Transfer Program (KTP) between the university and the community. There will be internal expertise and supported by industry experts from outside the MSU who will be invited and have experience in industry will be instructing the participants during the program. For free, 40 urban poor from Shah Alam have been invited to participate in short courses, which include frozen lasagna making, *roti canai* making, a make-up workshop, and a *baju kurung* workshop. Instructors from the industry were invited to instruct the participants, providing them with real-world knowledge. Hence, this research aim is to investigate the effectiveness of MyNeighbours program in terms of standard of living, entrepreneur, skills and knowledge and towards urban poor.

Rapid urbanization, rural-to-urban migration, a lack of economic prospects, insufficient social safety nets, and unbalanced resource allocation can all contribute to urban poverty. The problems that the urban poor experience vary by area and country, but common difficulties include restricted access to education, healthcare, and good housing. The issue of urban poor is the most common problem in the world (Jung (2020). For example, the United Nations noticed the growing issue of global poverty and made it a top priority in the 2015 SDG (Acheampong et al., 2018). Urban poor is a major issue that the government is concerned about. The community plays an important role to help the urban poor families.

As a result, based on the most recent World Bank data, the proportion of households living in poverty increased to 5.6% in 2020 (The Borneo Post, 2023). In addition, according to the Statistics Department, the unemployment rate was 3.5% in April 2020 due to Covid-19 pandemic, with 586,900 people affected, the B40 and refugee communities, who have little to no formal education are in a worse situation and find it difficult to forge a career path that will support them in the long run (Leong, 2023). Graduates of tertiary education face high unemployment. According to Kebede (2022), this is due to a lack of relevant entrepreneurship education among universities and graduates. Educational system does not provide youth with the basic skills required for the workforce. Therefore, there is a lack of youth-targeted interventions, such as the provision of marketable skills and training for unemployed youth to help them transition from school to work through self-employment.

Furthermore, it leads to lower life expectancy, insufficient clothing, poor quality housing, less access to technology, migration from rural to urban areas and poor communication. Internal factors such as corruption, political, economic, social and environmental factors, as well as external factors such as international trade deficits, debt burden and the refugee crisis, are all examples of internal factors (Hendriks, 2023).

The term "urban area" refers to towns, cities, and their surrounding suburbs. Because of a variety of factors, urban poverty has become one of the most serious development challenges. It is also linked to global developments such as cross-border trade and extractive industries. Nobody can simply walk into a situation and solve the problem of urban poverty. However, issues that we can influence, such as housing affordability, employment and legislation, exacerbate poverty. Because of the high population density in cities, portfolio growth in cities is higher than in rural areas (Nazia, 2022).

Methods

The first and most important study aims is to determine the effectiveness of MSU MyNeighbours program towards urban poor communities which is from the 40 urban poor people in Shah Alam area. To collect the data, the researchers used structured interviews. Structured interviews with this approach frequently have higher validity. The goal is to gather data about the cause-and-effect to investigate case study the independent and dependent variables. Causal research has assisted researchers to determine which variables are cause independent and which are affect dependent. To verify the existence of an investigated case study the causal variables and the predicted effect. To validate the nature of the relationship between the causal variables and the predicted effect.



Figure 1: Basic sewing workshop.



Figure 2: Cooking and baking workshop.



Figure 3: Make up workshop.



Figure 4: Basic design for business workshop.

This research design used to investigate the effectiveness of My Neighbours program towards urban poor community development of MyNeighbours which are from the 40 urban poor people between the ages of 22 to 67. The qualitative descriptive method has used and implemented during the questionnaire, also known as interview. Face to face interview data collected from the previous researcher are used. The sample data collected that the researchers used were videos, voice notes and the researchers also contacted the respondents through Whatsapps. It was used in the collection of data for the questionnaire.



Figure 5: Face to face interview session with respondents.

Moreover, this research used a purposive technique sampling and questions will be provided in interview and face to face approach to the respondents. The researchers used purposive technique sampling because it required the researcher to have a clear and well defined criteria and purpose for selecting the respondents. Purposive technique sampling necessitates that we have precise, well-defined standards or goals in mind while choosing our participants.

Result and Discussion

MyNeighbours was created in 2019. Every year, they will have the same and a new class for the 40 urban poor respondents. The respondents who have been participating in the MyNeighbours program over the age of adulthood have the ability to make decisions, plan ahead of time, have a mature mindset and have more financial discipline than those of other ages. The researchers had data on a list of 40 urban poor respondents, and the researchers took data from the organizers of the MyNeighbors program to check their backgrounds to see if the urban poor met the program's criteria. this program or not. In addition, 40 urban poor respondents are all from Zakat. Those respondents are potential respondents that have experienced participating in the MyNeighbour program. The sample size for the study is saturation point.

Based on the information from the interviews about the people's age, where they live and what they did, researchers want to see if the MyNeighbours program helps them with their basic needs. Because they directly affect the stability of city communities and the health of individuals and families, the basic needs of poor people in cities are really important (Bibri, S.E., 2020). Then, it is also important to understand why the program helps to make their lives better. Program evaluations make sure that the community is involved and that resources are used openly and responsibly. It helps people understand how money is being used, what strategies are being used, and how successful the outcomes are. All the people who were asked in the interview said that their life got better after they joined MyNeighbours.

From the interviewed, the majority of the respondents said that the MyNeighbours program has helped them in increasing their standard of living that can make them survive with their family because there are some donations that the respondents get during the joined Myneighbours program such as food, tablet that the respondents can used for their business and many more. Furthermore, eight of the respondents have said the same thing which is that this MyNeighbours program is effective in terms of standard of living because the classes that this MyNeighbours program provided are good and excellent because it really helped them in gaining the resources to survive. However, there are two over ten respondents that have answered the questions that do not relate with the questions given.

In short, most respondents had good things to say about the MyNeighbours program and felt like it made a big difference in their lives. The people in the program said they were thankful for how it helped them become better at personal and economic things, like making more money, gaining new skills, and having more access to resources. In conclusion, the MyNeighbours program has helped people in a good way, but it's important to also focus on solving money problems to make sure similar programs keep working and making a difference in the lives of poor city communities.

Entrepreneurs are important because they create jobs (Sharma, R., (2023). The way the program creates job opportunities for people helps the customers trust them and want to buy their product. They learn new business ideas and skills from their neighbors, which helps them. From the interviewed, basically on this topic questions the majority of the respondents are lack of understanding on the questions based on entrepreneur. that the MyNeighbours program has helped them in increasing their standard of living that can make them survive with their family because there are some donations that the respondents get during the joined Myneighbours program such as food, tablets that the respondents can use for their business and many more. Furthermore, eight of the respondents have said the same thing which is that this MyNeighbours program is effective in terms of standard of living because the classes that this MyNeighbours program provided are good and excellent because it really helped them in gaining the resources to survive. However, there are two over ten respondents that have answered the questions that do not relate with the questions given.

Majority of the respondents from the program had a positive response to the MyNeighbours program and said it helped them improve and become better at running their own businesses. The program had a positive effect on people's skills, knowledge, and building a supportive community, as shown by the good feedback we received. To make progress, the organizer needs to give continuous help to entrepreneurs and push for changes that will make the economy better. This helped them deal with economic ups and downs and make their communities stronger and more successful. MyNeighbours program has been successful in helping the community. It shows how getting involved in the community can make a positive difference. The program should continue to change and grow to help people in cities who are struggling with money.

Respondents showed that the benefits they gain with the class session organized by MyNeighbours program are, they get knowledge, new ideas in business and they can also share their knowledge to other people. Furthermore, that can also increase their self-confidence when faced with their customer and create awareness that skills and knowledge are important (Lau, J., (2023). People with strong problem-solving abilities and a thorough comprehension of the dynamics of the industry are better able to overcome hurdles, make wise judgements, and come up with original solutions to challenging issues (Sharma,

R,. (2023). Nevertheless, they have not enough money to join any class to enhance their skills and knowledge.

From the interviewed, the majority of the respondents answered the same thing which based on that the MyNeighbours program has helped them in increasing and improving their skills and knowledge that they can know and get more deeply in skills and knowledge they have learn get during the MyNeighbours program such as class frozen food, sewing, makeup class and many more. Furthermore, the respondents also said that the MyNeighbours program is effective in terms of skills and knowledge because the classes that this MyNeighbours program provided are good and excellent because it really helped them in gaining the resources to survive.

Moreover, all of the respondents said that they really enjoy the classes that they have joined and they do wish that MyNeighbour program provides more variety of classes. Majority of them in the MyNeighbours program reported having a positive experience and feeling like they gained new knowledge. The program helps them feel better about themselves and become better at things. It has definitely made a positive difference for the people involved. MyNeighbours program has been helpful in improving their skills and knowledge, as shown by the feedback received. They said that they learned important skills for their personal and work lives, and gained knowledge that helped them grow as a whole. This has made them feel more confident and empowered.

According to the Borneo Post, the news has mentioned that the incidence of urban poor in Malaysia is defined as the percentage of households with a gross monthly household income less than the poverty line income. The government raised the national poverty line from RM980 to RM2,208 in 2020. This research has demonstrated that the effectiveness of urban poor towards MyNeighbours has answered the research question, which there is a positive relationship between standard of living and the effectiveness of the urban poor in MyNeighbors. The goal of the study is to comprehend how MyNeighbors urban poor achieve their goals in terms of engagement, experience, knowledge acquisition and fulfillment.

To answer the research objective, we give people help with learning and gaining new skills so they can get a job. For example, our program MyNeighbours provides education and skills training. Based on the World Bank (2021), Educated individuals are more productive and employable, make more money, and are better equipped to weather economic downturns. This interpretation is in line with the paper's findings, which demonstrate a positive relationship between the dependent variable urban poor development of MyNeighbours and the independent variable, standard of living.

From the research also, the research question has been achieved because entrepreneurs have a positive relationship with the effectiveness of urban poor. The research objective is to investigate the effectiveness of urban poor. It is

specifically focused on determining whether higher levels of informativeness lead to more positive perceptions and satisfaction among urban poor. Economic expansion and the generation of jobs are two effects of entrepreneurs on society. As a result, there are more job openings and lower unemployment, which can strengthen the economy as a whole (Hendricks, A., (2023). Furthermore, expanding and successful businesses have the potential to create even more employment and boost the economy.

In this study, the research objective has been achieved because standard of living, entrepreneur, skills and knowledge have a positive relationship with the effectiveness of My Neighbours program. The research objective is to investigate the effectiveness of the MyNeighbours program. It is specifically focused on determining whether higher levels of informativeness lead to more positive perceptions and satisfaction among urban poor.

The majority of published theses examined many aspects of community development rather than focusing on it explicitly, and there was also very little information available on how the replies were perceived. As a result, this study must include and adapt from several publications covering a wide range of subjects, as well as from international journals and pertinent subjects being researched by scholars. Next, short-term focus is evaluating the long-term effects of community development program can be difficult because many studies have limited time periods. It is possible that treatments' durability and long-term impacts are not completely appreciated. The main takeaway is that measuring the consistent, long-term effects of community development initiatives is difficult. Good short-term results cannot always transfer into long-term gains in the urban poor's quality of life.

The last limitation identified in this research study is external factors and contextual changes which are economic changes. Events like natural catastrophes, political shifts, and variations in the economy might have an impact on the researcher's results. The lives and financial stability of the urban poor can be impacted by fluctuations in the local or national economy. The benefits of development program may be overshadowed by economic developments, especially if they take place simultaneously.

In order to improve the experiences, satisfaction, and long-term sustainability of community engagement program practices of the urban poor, this recommendation for future research is outlined for exploring perceptions of the urban poor and offers potential research questions and uses qualitative methods to see the results. It may also increase the urban poor development of MyNeighbours. It is important for researchers to use longitudinal techniques, which enable long-term monitoring of changes and outcomes in the urban poor population. This makes it possible to comprehend the program's effects more thoroughly. It can also include mid-term assessments Although long-term research is preferable, including mid-term evaluations can offer a healthy mix. This

strategy makes it possible to record both short- and long-term results, providing insightful information about how the program is progressing.

Secondly, include control groups. Control groups should ideally be incorporated into the study's design. In order to assist researchers, differentiate between the impacts of the community development initiatives and outside influences, control groups might offer a comparative perspective. It might also make it flexible to study designs. Design research with the ability to adjust to shifting environmental circumstances. This might entail routinely reviewing the study and making modifications to the approach to take unanticipated outside factors into consideration.

Moreover, in order to give a more thorough examination of the independent variable in this study and its associated dependent variable, future research by the researcher can concentrate just on one dimension of the independent variable and all of its sub-factors. Finally, by using this advice and getting beyond the obstacles the researcher encountered in this study, more thorough and in-depth research may be conducted in the future.

In summary, based on this research majority, all the respondents that the researcher interviewed said yes and they were satisfied with the MyNeighbours program. The respondents said that MyNeighbours program are effective to them. Moreover, all of the respondents want this MyNeighbours program to keep going so the respondents can join the program. On top of that, they do wish that this Myneighbour program would have more variety of classes because they are satisfied with the classes that MyNeighbours program has provided.

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