

Volume 2 • 2020



CONFRONTING THE PANDEMIC

IN THE MIDST OF LOCKDOWN



Foreword

“Not the Usual” as we promised, so; our work at HAC has been more intensive during the pandemic.

We strive to meet the dateline in our refurbishment of the hostels without interruptions.

Our student volunteers did a marvelous job essembling the furniture and ensuring the hostel rooms are ready on time.

While the pandemic has changed the university’s daily routine, we at HAC have been working to ensure students’ livelihood is not severly disrupted and their learning process can go on.

This volume has introspectively highligted some of the admirable work done by HAC and other departments on campus.

Enjoy reading it!

LATIFAH ABDUL LATIF

Deputy Registrar
Housing and Accommodation Centre (HAC)
Universiti Sains Malaysia

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SOME FINAL
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FUN AND FROLIC

MANUAL FURNISHING @ F26



Did you know that the premium and executive rooms at F26 were manually furnished solely by our HAC ambassadors! The mastermind behind the project, namely Min One, and his Co-PD Spencer, along with a number of dedicated USM students were responsible for putting all the furnishing together for all the rooms.



It was a humbling experience being able to handle such a big project while still being a student.

Yes, we actually furnished the rooms ourselves. The unassembled furniture was delivered to F26 and we had to assemble most of the IKEA furniture. We mostly assembled it at night as that was our only free time. It was fun but definitely a challenging experience, as I had to juggle between studying and the project at the same time. But I managed with the help of my friends who were always there with me. Not only assembling the furniture but moving them to the respective rooms, dealing with the supplier of the items, and drilling the nails for the paintings. It was a humbling experience being able to handle such a big project while still being a student. It definitely equipped me with knowledge and experience that I would not have gained from any where else.

- Chiah Min One
USM Alumni and HAC Ambassador





FROM BASIC TO PREMIUM! F26 PREMIUM HOSTEL

HOSTEL FOR GIRLS • DEFINE YOUR COMFORT • PARADISE ESCAPE





THE STORY BEHIND UPGRADE

Last year, HAC started the project of upgrading a few hostel rooms at HARAPAN F26 to a premium standard. The project started on a small scale, with only 4 rooms upgraded, however, after feedback was received from students about the experience of living in premium rooms, it was concluded that students were in favour of the initiative and desired more premium rooms. On the basis of that, HAC expanded the project and upgraded 80 more rooms.

Moreover, HAC considered the creation of a new category that could cater to a wider variety of students. Taking that into consideration, HAC took another initiative to upgrade 67 more rooms, turning them into an executive standard for those who preferred an average rental rate.

One more reason associated with the upgrading of the rooms was that HAC wanted to offer permanent rooms for students who wish to occupy a long-term tenancy. Meaning that if a student appreciate their stay at USM, they were given the options to rent the premium or executive rooms. HAC is seeking to improve the on-campus experience for the students, offering them a comfortable and convenient lifestyle. That being said, we will always look for ways to make the students appreciate their studying at the university.

All in all, the upgrading of the block offered a unique and exquisite hostel experience for the students.

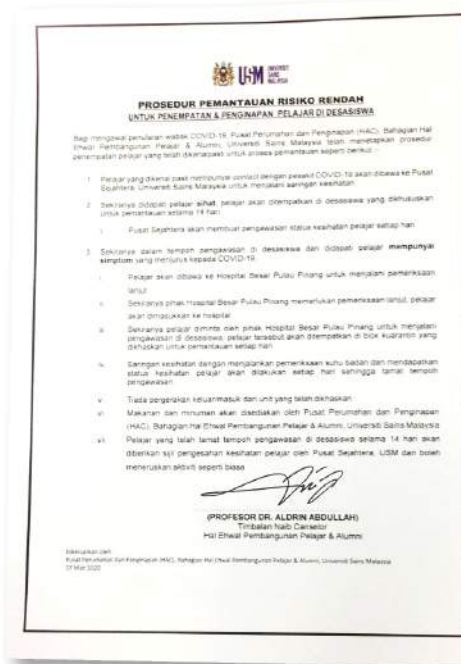


Meet Sabrina!

As for the tenancy documentation and administrative work related to the premium accommodation, Sabrina Abdulloeva, our HAC ambassador, is responsible for keeping records and updates of all the tenants. Sabrina is in touch with all the tenants to ensure all their needs are met and their comfort secured.

THE CENTRE KEEPS OPERATING

HAC SPECIAL OPERATIONS TEAM TO FIGHT THE PANDEMIC



HAC SPECIAL OPERATION'S TEAM

With the emergence of COVID 19 in early 2020, HAC took the initiative to facilitate the process of arrival of students to campus and their accommodation needs, as all departments in the university were temporarily shutdown. The process included the following steps:

- Students underwent health screening at *Pusat Sejahtera* (USM's health centre) upon arrival

- Students underwent a period of isolation inside the campus

- Students were released from their isolation blocks once they tested negative.

HAC also provided all the necessities to the students who were at the last 3 stages of the process. Our staff sacrificed the time and effort to make it survivable for the students, no matter what it took. Additionally, we facilitated along with *Pusat Sejahtera* for the health screening. Following that, HAC assigned isolation destinations for the students, providing 4 meals everyday for each isolated student. In case any student tested positive, HAC along with *Pusat Sejahtera* enforced stricter SOPs to ensure the safety of the student and those inside the campus.

While HAC ensured that the experience was smooth for the students, our staff struggled, yet managed, to keep themselves and their families safe and protected. While the country enforced the first lock down on March 15, 2020, HAC staff were on duty 24/7.



ANECDOTE

A student from China arrived late at night and she was dragging her luggage all by herself to get Covid screening. The campus at that time was lifeless, our staff came to the rescue; fetched the student and assisted her. The staff, maintained SOP to ensure safety of both; the staff and the student.



**HAC staff
were
on duty
24/7/365**



The most crucial thing for me was time management, especially making sure that I have finished all the necessary work at home, before spending most of my day at work. I had to make sure we had enough groceries and supplies at home for the month as we were all not allowed to go out often. It was not easy at all, but it was all in my line of duty which I was obligated to fulfil. It was the only time of my life where I had to eat multi vitamins more than my daily meals and also had to wear PPE as my daily outfit.

Working 16 hours a day while having short breaks! Thinking back, I was amazed at everyone, I was lucky to have worked with wonderful people. I am truly blessed to have an understanding wife and family. They sincerely understood my sacrifice and the long hours I have to spend on campus. After all, it was a good experience for all of us.

- Mohd Fitri A Wahab
Accommodation Supervisor



CAT!

TEAM!

Did you know that USM possess an incredibly professional painting team? Meet the key players:

- *Abang Fitri - Abang Pian*
- *Abang Arip - Abang Hafis*
- *Abang Ajis - Abang Din*
- *Abang Shidi Jamil - Abang Shidi*



Not "cat" the pet
but "cat" for paint!



Back in November 2020, the team took on a project to paint 23 houses on campus. The project happened during the appointment of New *Pengawaja* and Assistant *Pengawaja*.

Some maintenance work took place as well, such as repairing electrical plugs, switches, changing lamps, pipes, and key holes. The project was completed by the end of January 2021. The motive behind the project was to level up the units and give them a new and fresh look.

The process involved:

- Scrap out the old paints
- Undercoat (layer up) the walls
- White paint as a base layer
- Paint with the main colour that was requested

P.S. We think that the *Cat* Team deserves a round of applause!



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Food coupons were distributed among all the students on campus during the COVID 19 outbreak

JPT JABATAN PENYEDIAAN MAKANAN TINGGI

SEBARAI SEPERTI EDARAN

YBhg. Tan Sri Dato' Seri/Dato'/Prof./Dr./Tuanku/Puan,

TAMBAHAN PERUNTUKAN KHAS BANTUAN PENYEDIAAN MAKANAN KEPADA PELAJAR-PELAJAR DI KAMPUS/ASRAMA SEPANJANG PERINTAH KAWALAN PERGERAKAN FASA 4 (PKP 4) BERMULA 29 APRIL HINGGA 12 MEI 2020

Dengan segala hormatnya perkara di atas adalah diujuk:

2. Adalah dimaklumkan bahawa Agensi Pengurusan Bencana Negara (NADMA) telah bersetuju dan meluluskan permohonan untuk melaksanakan bantuan makanan kepada pelajar-pelajar di Kampus/Asrama semasa Perintah Kawalanan Pergerakan Fasa 4 (PKP 4) bermula 29 April 2020 sehingga 12 Mei 2020. Keseluruhan jumlah peruntukan ini adalah seperti yang tertera dalam jadual berikut:

LAPORAN PROGRAM

TAMBAHAN PERUNTUKAN KHAS BANTUAN PENYEDIAAN MAKANAN KEPADA PELAJAR-PELAJAR DI KAMPUS/ASRAMA SEPANJANG PERINTAH KAWALAN PERGERAKAN TAHAP 2 (PKP 2) BERMULA 14 APRIL 2020

Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM)

Projek: TAMBAHAN PERUNTUKAN KHAS BANTUAN PENYEDIAAN MAKANAN KEPADA PELAJAR-PELAJAR DI KAMPUS/ASRAMA SEPANJANG PERINTAH KAWALAN PERGERAKAN TAHAP 2 (PKP 2) BERMULA 14 APRIL 2020

Penyediaan: DOKY RAZALI, ABD RAHIM

RUAN LATIFAH ABDUL LATIF

1 APRIL 2020 hingga 14 APRIL 2020

PERUNTUKAN KHAS BANTUAN PENYEDIAAN MAKANAN KEPADA PELAJAR-PELAJAR DI KAMPUS/ASRAMA SEPANJANG PERINTAH KAWALAN PERGERAKAN TAHAP 2 (PKP 2)

1 APRIL 2020 SEHINGGA 14 APRIL 2020

SEBARAI KUPON YANG DIEDARKAN MENGIKUT PTJ/DESA/BIWA

AH PELAJAR : 4,329 ORANG

AH PERUNTUKAN : RM509,090.00

DESA/BIWA/ PTJ	JUMLAH PELAJAR
DESA/BIWA ABAN DAMAI	183
DESA/BIWA CAHAYA GEMILANG HARAPAN	183
DESA/BIWA INDAH KEMBARA	204
DESA/BIWA RESTU	488
DESA/BIWA SALJANA	217
DESA/BIWA TEKUN	402
DESA/BIWA BAKTI FAJAR PERMAI & PETAS	1127
MAH KULUARGA LIAZHAN PERTAMA	19
MAH KULUARGA LIAZHAN TINGGI (APEX HALL)	21
DESA/BIWA JAYA LEMBANG UTAMA (KAMPUS KEAJURUTERAAN)	881
DESA/BIWA MURNI NURAN (KAMPUS KESEHATAN)	878
DESA/BIWA BELIGUM NIDA	360
JUMLAH PELAJAR	6329

Dengan hormatnya saya merujuk kepada perkara di atas.

Seperti YBhg. Prof sedia maklum, Agensi Pengurusan Bencana Negara (NADMA) telah bersetuju dan meluluskan permohonan untuk melaksanakan bantuan makanan kepada pelajar-pelajar di Kampus/Asrama semasa Perintah Kawalanan Pergerakan Fasa 4 (PKP 4) bermula 29 April 2020 sehingga 12 Mei 2020. Keseluruhan jumlah peruntukan ini adalah seperti yang tertera dalam jadual berikut:

Bil	Fasa Perintah Kawalanan Pergerakan	No EFT/Baucor	Jumlah Penyelidikan (RM)	Tarikh Penyelidikan
1.	PKP 1 (21-21/03/20)	202011098830073063	308,000.00	1 April 2020
2.	PKP 2 (14-14/02/20)	202011098830314749	900,000.00	16 April 2020
3.	PKP 3 (16-28/02/20)	202011256604208173	1,019,970.00	6 Mei 2020



HAC directed the initiative and produced the coupons



Introducing the Coupons initiative to our vendors



Food for All!

During the emergence of the pandemic, and as the country was beginning to go into lockdown, many students were stuck inside the campus. As a result, HAC directed the initiative and produced the coupons. Then, coupons were handed out to the students by their respective hostels and were instructed to simply use the coupons as if they were cash. The coupons were obviously valid to use only within vendors inside the campus. The vendors were instructed to collect the coupons from the students and then claim the amount in cash from the university. The Bursary Department of USM was responsible for reimbursing the amount of cash to the respective vendors. A final report of all the transactions between HAC, the bursary, and the vendors was sent to NADMA for transparency purposes.



It wouldn't have been possible to provide food for the students without the efforts of our cafes.

Our responsibility was to set up the food coupons, and the vendors responsibility was to provide the food in exchange of the coupons and then claim the money later on.

Spencer
HAC Ambassador

While we embraced unity with the students during the lockdown, we cannot forget the efforts that the cafeterias and vendors put into making the coupon distribution possible. Although it was hard to buy food stock in bulk, and travel around due to restrictions by the government to curb the spread of the virus, USM vendors and cafes successfully managed to have their stock according to the needs of the students and provided day-to-night catering services. That way, the students got to experience less stress while being locked down, and the vendors were still serving as usual.



UNM APEK		Cafeterias, Convenience and Services Stores	
Makan-makan dan kedai-kedai di kawasan USM		Makan-makan dan kedai-kedai di kawasan USM	
Makan-makan dan kedai-kedai di kawasan USM		Makan-makan dan kedai-kedai di kawasan USM	
USM Cafeterias	USM Cafeterias	USM Cafeterias	USM Cafeterias
1. USM Cafeteria (Main)	43.0000 - 43.0000	1. USM Cafeteria (Main)	43.0000 - 43.0000
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FASTING AND FEASTING

Food distribution across all our hostels for special occasions

FOOD DISTRIBUTION BY HAC

For the students who remain on campus during times like the semester break or the pandemic, when it is somewhat more convenient to remain on campus instead of *balik kampung*, USM and HAC ensure that the well-being of the students is taken care off. During special occasions such as *Hari Raya*, Ramadan, Deepavali, Christmas, and Chinese New Year, HAC celebrates the culture by distributing a variety of food to each student.

CELEBRATING OUR CULTURE DURING COVID 19

As our culture is absolutely diverse and harmonious, we make sure to celebrate each other's differences and similarities. As a result of the novel pandemic, we have not been able to gather all the students around the same place, but what we did instead is distribute the message and the harmony among them, while maintaining safety measures.





SAFE AND SOUND

Safe and sound is the best way to describe the initiative of food distribution. HAC ensured that the food was packed for takeaway purposes, that way there would not be so much close contact between the students while celebrating culture. During *Hari Raya*, we distributed pizza to the students, one box for each student to consume on their own will at their hostel rooms. During Chinese New Year 2021, HAC distributed boxes of noodles to each student. Again, the students were asked to eat at their own will in their respective rooms.



YOUR HEALTH MATTERS

USM takes all measures to ensure health safety of students amidst COVID 19 virus

16 FEB 2020: COVID 19 virus safety Process and Protocol measures are in place for new and returning students from China to ensure that the health of the University Sains Malaysia (USM) community is safeguarded. The USM community should be rest assured that all COVID 19 virus monitoring measures are planned out for students from China arrivals at Penang International Airport and to the monitoring stage at *Pusat Sejahtera* USM. There should not be any unnecessary concern or panic upon seeing any students from China. We want to welcome the students from China and make them feel comfortable with our complimentary health check, transport, accommodation and free Wi-Fi. They are a part of our USM family and we do not differentiate between local and international students.

Two strict and tight screening measures are in place to ensure that any persons exhibiting COVID 19 symptoms will be placed under quarantine. Firstly, the students from China are screened at two locations; the Penang International Airport and secondly at *Pusat Sejahtera*, USM. Any students from China that exhibit COVID 19 symptoms at the airport will be brought to designated hospitals immediately.

Housing and Accommodation Centre (HAC), Division of Student Development Affairs and Alumni works closely with *Pusat Sejahtera* USM in the handling and monitoring of these students. So far, we have to date, 204 students from China checked in. HAC will bring the students with no symptoms to various designated housing. Should any students exhibit mild symptoms, they will be placed at a separate guarded block transit housing K21 with three floors, nine units and twenty two rooms under quarantine and no movement is allowed. Food will be provided four times a day to them. Any student that exhibits severe symptoms will be then brought to a designated hospital discreetly in an ambulance. To date, there have been three cases but they have been cleared and already discharged. They have gone back to respective homes.

At HAC, we always advise the students to drink plenty of fluids, stay on campus, report any health issues to the health centre. Any concerns they have we take note and quickly act upon any grievances for example any mosquito or pests related issues that could pose another health issue. Cleanliness is our priority to combat the COVID 19 virus. Hand sanitisers are placed in each block, toilet and exit points to ensure hands are clean.

All the students that go through the first screening without showing any symptoms will be placed at *Desasiswa Harapan* Block F26 under close monitoring for two weeks whereby they will have restricted movement. A goodie bags with necessary items such as facial mask, hand soap, mineral water, apples, cookies and wifi password will be provided.

At *Desasiswa Harapan* Block F26, the local students will not use the same entrances and have their own entrance and exit points. The local students will not come into contact with the students from China. As of today, the number of female students at *Desasiswa Harapan* Block F26 with a capacity of 67 rooms with a capacity of 133 pax and they will be placed on two floors. To date there have been 84 students checked in. The number of male students will be designated at the whole *Desasiswa Aman Damai* Block K08 with the capacity of 143 pax. Consequently, there have been 91 students checked in. Any leftover students will be place at transit units H40 with three units with a capacity for 10 pax. So far, there already are 9 students. These students will have access to the cafeteria which is next to the block. This will make monitoring easier as they do not need to look for food outside.

The USM community should be rest assured that every precaution, procedures and protocols are being put into place to identify any new and returning students from China that may exhibit the COVID 19 virus. Tight monitoring and screening will strictly be adhered to. We value the health and safety of each student and staff here at USM and your patience and trust in us in handling this health issue is much appreciated.

CHEF DE MISSION



**The Epitome of Professionalism:
Sharudin Mohamad**

Speaking of HAC heroes, *Abang Din*, being one of them, utilizes his skills and professionalism to do tasks behind the scenes. *Abang Din* is the technician at HAC, and he supervises all the maintenance work inside and outside the office. His immediate response to urgent calls and his continuous presence speak for his professionalism.

Behind the scenes during the pandemic.

During the emergence of the pandemic, to date, the isolation blocks in USM require constant maintenance and touch-ups. *Abang Din*, being skillful in that, manages to maintain the blocks as necessary.



Story Time:

Abang Din was once called to attend to some technical work at one of the blocks. He showed symptoms of feeling ill with gastric pain at the time, yet he still committed to his work. He worked until he had to be admitted to USM's health centre (*Pusat Sejahtera*). HAC received a call from *Pusat Sejahtera* that he is feeling ill, and his colleagues rushed to look after him.

Moments later after he was admitted to the clinic, he stood on his feet and willingly decided to get back to work to avoid any delays.



Featuring Jamil Mohamad, the Chief Accommodation Supervisor @ HAC

When isolation blocks started filling up as more and more students arrived on campus, *Abang Jamil*, the Chief Accommodation Supervisor, became in charge of looking after the students at the blocks, and the special COVID 19 team chosen by HAC. *Abang Jamil's* roles exceeded his roles as the Chief Accommodation Supervisor. His responsibilities started to include transporting some of the students' needs while they were isolated. Needs such as food, groceries, stationaries, and whatever else the students requested. Chef de Mission Featuring Jamil Mohamad, the Chief Accommodation Supervisor @ HAC Story



Story Time: Read with Caution

One day when *Abang Jamil* was delivering food to the students at the isolation block, he fainted out of exhaustion. HAC staff rushed to transport him to a clinic but as he became conscious again, he insisted on finishing his work first, claiming that he is feeling perfectly fine. To him, looking after the isolated students was more important than his own well-being.

Warning: Do not try this at home.



FEATURING JABATAN KESELAMATAN



It was May 2020 when the government announced that interstate travel was finally allowed, after being banned for over 2 months due to lock down.


Hearing that, students went head over heels to grab the police form that permits them to travel.

Due to an excessive number of students, the police station at Sungai Nibong called USM and asked the university to handle the students and the police forms.

HAC in collaboration with *Jabatan Keselamatan* took over the police forms and facilitated the distribution process.



NO. SIRI:

 **PERMIT PERGERAKAN PERINTAH KAWALAN PERGERAKAN BERSYARAT (PKPBS)**

Kepada : Ketua Polis Balai
 Kawasan Pentadbiran Daerah :

1. Butir-Butir Pemohon

1.1 Nama :
 1.2 Kod Pengenalan : 1.3 Warganegara :
 1.4 No. Pasport [Bukan Warganegara] :
 1.5 Alamat :
 1.6 No. Telefon : 1.7 E-mel :
 1.8 Jenis Kenderaan / No. Pendaftaran :
 1.9 Jumlah Orang : orang (Lampirkan Butir-butir Individu)
 1.10 Tarikh / Masa Meninggalkan Rumah :
 1.11 Tarikh / Masa Dijangka Balik Ke Rumah :
 1.12 Alamat Perulu Destinasi :

2. Sebab-sebab permohonan pergerakan:-

.....


Tandatangan Pemohon :
 Tarikh :

Kegunaan Ketua Polis Balai

Kepulusan Permohonan : Dikuluskan / Tidak Dikuluskan

Uraian :

Tandatangan :
 Nama (Huruf Besar) :
 Pangkat & Jawatan :
 Tarikh :

 Cap Rami
 Salinan Asli sahaja
 sahaja

The police station at Sungai Nibong called USM and asked the university to handle the students and the police forms.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

During the early peak of the COVID 19 pandemic



Crisis, planning, solution, and execution

It was during the early emergence of the pandemic, March 2020, that USM students from China started travelling to Malaysia and chose to stay in USM hostels.

As that was a huge risk in terms of transmitting the virus, especially that China at the time was a hot spot for COVID 19, the university took into account certain procedures to enforce when the students actually arrive in campus.

One of the procedures was to put the Housing and Accommodation Centre in charge of putting the newly arrived students into isolation blocks. That was to ensure that they isolate for 14 days first until it was clear whether they are COVID 19 negative or positive.

But, as the pandemic continued to emerge, more and more students were coming into USM from China, up until the point where the designated isolation blocks were full. This appeared to be a crisis because all other accommodation blocks were occupied by the students who had been on campus the entire time.

The solution to the issue was to start pairing up the students in the isolation blocks, rather than have one student occupy one room. The plan was to locate the students who arrived at the same time together in one room. Eventually, this resolved the issue and allowed more rooms for more pairs of students.

Not only the relocation of the students and pairing them up was challenging. The language barrier between HAC staff and the students was an issue. It consumed double the effort to deliver the issue and the solution to the students. Still, with enough dedication and effort, the students understood and agreed to the proposed solution.





Briefing the cleaners on the SOPs



Briefing the students on the SOPs



The solution to the issue was to start pairing up the students in the isolation blocks



You can call us Ghostbusters!

Hunting down students who ran away from their designated quarantine blocks.

At the time when overseas students were required to quarantine in the university, HAC allocated the students to their respective quarantine destinations. One day, HAC received calls from condominiums outside the university complaining that the students had escaped their quarantine period and went ahead and rented apartments outside (some had prior access to the condominiums as they were residents before) without informing the university or any other concerned department. The residents at the condominiums expressed panic towards the entrances of the overseas students.

As this practice was against the rules, regulations, and SOPs of USM to curb the spread of the virus, HAC had to find all the students who ran away from their quarantine blocks and brought them back to campus. A phone call was addressed to each student warning them about the violation of the university's SOPs. Eventually, the students came back and quarantined until it was insured they were healthy and COVID 19 negative. Following this incident, HAC had to carry out occasional spot-checks on the quarantine blocks to confirm that students are adhering to the SOPs.

STORY TIME!

One day, the isolation block in which houses the newly arrived students suffered a blackout.

It was late at night and it was lockdown period. So, readers, imagine the possibility of calling a maintenance team to fix the blackout. There was no possibility. HAC staff then brought their MacGyver skills into action and responded to the power outage and Fixed the problem and restored power.



HOW TO GET THROUGH THE NIGHT

PANDEMIC EDITION





BRIEFING THE STUDENTS ON SOPS

While distributing the goodie bags, HAC staff made sure to introduce the students to the standard operating procedures of the university such as the do's and don'ts and briefed them on the emergency hotlines in case of illness or other concerns,



DIY Goodie bagsS

Because students were arriving from overseas and cross-state to USM in the midst of lockdown, it was difficult for them to buy food, exchange money, or step outside anywhere. HAC crafted for the students little goodie bags to help them get through the night(s) until they are able to buy their groceries and needs.

The goodie bags included healthy snacks and 3-in-1 beverages and other daily necessities.





HAC HEROES IN THE HOUSE

Transforming hostels to become emergency isolation blocks during lockdown 1.0

RESPONDING TO THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH TO ALLOCATE EMERGENCY ISOLATION BLOCKS

As the time of the announcement was in the midst of the pandemic, the cleaners and contractors withdrew from cleaning the blocks for isolation purposes, namely block K07 and K08, as they were concerned about the risk of being exposed to the virus. As a result, HAC staff willingly took on the challenge to transform and ensure the building is ready for use. The allocation of emergency blocks later on expanded to 4 blocks, instead of 2. The mission included blocks K07 and K08, as well as F26 and K21.





Story time!

HAC front-liners were spotted sleeping on the spot during the mission as they had put in all the energy and effort they had into completing the task.



HAC front-liners transformed into all types of heroes; plumbers, painters, cleaners, electricians, and all else one can think of.

Not only the staff at HAC volunteered to get the blocks ready for isolation students, their spouses also took part in aiding the supporting the mission.

The mission was to clean the toilets at the block and do the plumbing work, repaint the walls as necessary, sanitize every corner of the block, and furnish the rooms adequately. This was in an effort to pass the Ministry of Health spot check since the ministry made it a requirement to allocate the places for isolation.



FEATURING PUSAT SEJAHTERA AND PUSAT ISLAM



Collaborating with USM's *Pusat Sejahtera* and *Pusat Islam* to perform health checks on the students and distribute goodie bags during lockdown.



ANECDOTE

Did you know that since the emergence of the COVID 19 pandemic, HAC has been working on daily basis with *Pusat Sejahtera* to complete the procedure of the students who arrive to campus.

The procedure is that students under go a health screening at the clinic, and are then sent to HAC for getting either a place for quarantine, or regular accommodation.



THANK YOU PUSAT SEJAHTERA, AND PUSAT ISLAM!



FEATURING PUSAT SEJAHTERA

Front-liners from *Pusat Sejahtera*, along with front-liners from HAC, were sent to the isolation blocks to check on every single student and perform a quick health check on them.

As part of the university's efforts to look after the well-being of the students who resided on campus during lockdown, an initiative was taken to perform health-checks on the students at the isolation blocks, every single day.

The initiative also constituted distributing goodie bagss to students during Ramadhan.

FEATURING PUSAT ISLAM

When the government announced that *balik kampung* is finally allowed, students who had remained on campus decided to take the opportunity and go home during the last week of Ramadhan. *Pusat Islam* along with HAC decided to gift the students a little food goodie bags to ensure that they will have some food and drinks during iftar.



HAC TERMINAL

HAC TERMINAL DEVICE

In 2020, the Housing and Accommodation centre was provided a terminal device by the bursary.

The initiative was intended to make the payment for accommodation more convenient to the students, as it makes sense to pay for accommodation at the accommodation centre.

Students are now able to simply walk into HAC and make the payment for their respective hostel.

If students are unable to pay through the terminal device (i.e., they do not have a card) they are given the alternative to pay through USM's online platform ePayment.

Accordingly, the bursary department coordinates with HAC to register all the payments made for accommodation.



THE FIRST OF THE INDEPENDENT STARS

By Siti Hajar binti Bahar

“

My job scope mainly focuses on students' accommodation where I assisted the staff in charge for the hostel application and hostel appeal application for undergraduates. I also prepared all the forms needed by HAC to ensure all procedures are in smooth order. Besides, HAC has given me the opportunity to evaluate and give suggestions regarding the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for hostel application which demonstrated how HAC prioritize the students' opinions. I also answered all calls especially on hostel application and made preparation for HAC meetings on accommodation matters, including preparing the minutes of meeting. Last but not least, I assisted the officer in charge to plan on statistics for students' accommodation for new intake and existing students. I had a great and amazing experience as all HAC staff gave cooperation and helped me a lot throughout the journey. It also has prepared me well for my career development as I'm very interested to explore administration field. I gained a lot of experience that I think it's a rare one and not all people would be given the chance.

First of all, it helped me to enhance my communication skills as I am an introvert person. Having to communicate with the students and working with the officers from Student Admissions made me overcome the challenges of being an introvert. Furthermore, I was also able to strengthen my critical thinking skills as I had to plan thoroughly on the statistics in order to ensure the accommodation is sufficient for our new intake students. It also became a great training for me who have a dream in serving the university/educational institution where I currently serve Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) as Executive Officer. ”



A message from me to the office!

Thank you so much for giving me an extremely beautiful experience, considering me as a family member until now. I never forget the compliment that I received from Ms. Latifah Abdul Latif, “Hajar is the best among the best. We don't choose the second best.” Because of this, I am able to stand where I currently stand. Last but not least, I wish and hope that HAC will keep providing the best experiences to the students, alumni, staff etc.

LIVE IN LUXURY

Premium Accommodation at Saujana, Tekun, Indah Kembara, Aman Damai and more coming soon. . .





WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

As a part of the initiative taken by HAC with support from the university to upgrade the accommodation, renovation is happening now at 3 different complexes, namely Saujana, Indah Kembara and Tekun. The upgrade is happening without any disturbances in the students' daily lives. HAC and USM ensure that the accommodation offered on campus caters to all the different tastes of our students. The accommodation offered ranges between basic rooms, premium rooms, and executive rooms.

Saujana, one of the blocks, currently under renovation is exclusive for girls students while Tekun for male students.

Furthermore, 12 family units (master flats) have already been refurbished to premium and luxury standards.

HAC has kept in mind, the needs of all the students while revamping different accommodations for a better living experience.

Another reason associated with upgrading of the rooms was that HAC wanted to offer permanent rooms for international students who find it difficult to change their hostel every semester, meaning that if a student wanted to stay at a room for as long as they want to, they were given the options to rent the premium or executive rooms.

HAC is always on its toes to improve the on-campus experience for the students, offering them a comfortable and convenient lifestyle. That being said, we will always look for ways to make students experience the best years of their university life.



WITH YOU, FOR YOU, ALWAYS!



NO WORK FROM HOME!

At HAC, we made it clear that we are always operating and facilitating to a maximum and efficient extent. Even with the emergence of the pandemic, during the time where almost every department was shut down and adopted a slow pace during lockdown(s), we as a centre remained open to assist the students who were arriving to USM.

HERE AND THERE, SAFE AND SOUND

Part of the operations that we had to coordinate was the Such operations require us to work 24/7 as students would sometimes arrive past midnight. Handling the isolation operations meant that our staff were scattered across different zones on campus to pick up or drop off the students to their respective venues inside the campus. In other words, we were here and there welcoming the new students in the midst of difficult times.

HAC was, at the time, aware of the risk that came with operating during the peak of the pandemic, but we admitted that there was no other way to do it and therefore we sacrificed our time and comfort for the convenience of the students.



WHAT'S IN AND WHAT'S COMING SOON



At each accommodation, there is a common room for the hostel representatives (MPD - *Majlis Penghuni Desasiswa*) to conduct meetings and to learn or relax. The room is intended to be a conducive learning space that HAC is creating for the student. At *Desasiswa Tekun*, the MPD lounge has been upgraded to an excellent and premium standard. At other hostels too, (i.e., BFPP, Saujana, Restu, Aman Damai, CGH, and Indah Kembara) the MPD rooms are undergoing upgrades; a project that started in early 2021 under the mission of USM's top management to create a conducive living experience for the students on campus. In other words, the university is providing a facelift to the MPDs common rooms.

HAC is taking on the challenge to provide the furnishing and flooring to the soon-to-be renovated and furnished rooms. We at HAC are monitoring the facelift to ensure that the project succeeds and prospers.



Never in my fantasy did I imagine teamwork that was amazing between us mere students with *Tekun's Penggawa*, *Encik Rashid*, and HAC. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor himself, Professor Dr. Aldrin, and all the staff who were there doing all the hard work. Everyone was listening to one another's opinions and it was a great scenario to be witnessed and be part of.

The room that has been renovated is mostly for the use of *Majlis Penghuni Desasiswa*, but we are students as well and on top of that we are giving service for all the residents. For the university to provide us with very comfortable, beautiful, and home-like rooms for us to work in is indeed a very nice thing to give. For the values added, it definitely works to make us more dedicated and energized to do any kind of work/projects ahead, knowing we are appreciated too.

- **Norhashikin Ahmad (Cici)**,
Majlis Penghuni Desasiswa Tekun
on the upgrading of the MPD lounge at Tekun

IT'S NOT GOODBYE, IT'S SEE YOU LATER

SENDING STUDENTS BACK HOME DURING RAMADAN



SURVIVING RAMADAN DURING THE PANDEMIC

Being USM's one-stop centre, HAC took on the task with full commitment and dedication. The task was to provide meals and goodie bags for each and every student who was travelling from the university to home.

The entire task of sending the students home took two weeks, which started on May 1st and ended on the 14th. Over the course of the fourteen days, HEPA and HAC ensured the safety and convenience of the students while they are travelling.

It was May 1st, 2020, when interstate travel had just resumed in the country, after being put on hold for two months as part of the lockdown that the country went into. As May began, students saw the chance to go back to their homes after being isolated on campus for two months since March. As a result, the university in collaboration with HEPA provided trips for the students to many designated destinations and states.

As it was during Ramadan, HAC looked into the well-being of the students and considered providing meals for Iftar and Sahur while the students are on the road.



HAC looked into the well-being of the students and considered providing meals for Iftar and Sahur while the students are on the road



THE LIFE INSIDE

“Our Students are our Stakeholders”



HAC AMBASSADORS

As part of a unique college experience, HAC offers USM students the chance to be official ambassadors and representatives institution or unit or department. Those who have the will to volunteer and represent HAC in the best way possible are always welcome to join the family. An ambassador's responsibilities include creating and managing content for the office, administering the front counter at the office, attending meetings and coming up with future projects, representing HAC at other departments, and more. This opportunity allows the students to experience a wholesome and harmonious corporate setting while also succeeding in their academic lives.

HOW WE GET STUDENTS TO BE PART OF US

HAC is equipped with facilities that cater to the students' needs and comfort. The office has a lounge area furnished with a tea-corner, bean bags for relaxing, a study area, and a pantry. Our students are always welcome for leisure in the provided space.

WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT US

HAC aims to be more than just a corporate setup. We want to offer a home-like experience to our students. We constantly encourage our students and staff to be as welcoming and warm to each other as they can be. Additionally, our office layout and design are made change to set-up to specifically to make the students and staff feel at home.





Working from home!

- Min One
USM Alumni and HAC Ambassador

Min One, being one of our alumni and ambassador, was once asked what he was doing at the office, given that he had already graduated from USM and had started working. Someone playfully responded by saying that he is "working from home".



Teamwork at our office is like a symphony, whenever a student is in need, we know there's always [someone] to help out. We always complete each other here, either in work or non-work situations.

The importance work ethics is well-studied at HAC. We always ensure to maintain work-life balance. Our mission and vision at HAC is to never disappoint our clients [students] in order to serve them better.

- Ziyad
HAC Student Ambassador

RENOVATION AND INNOVATION

Renovating a Learning Space for USM's *Majlis Perwakilan Pelajar* (MPP)

For the Creative Spirits!

To match the young and creative spirits of USM students, the university aims to create fun and bright learning spaces for the youngsters to execute their full potential when it comes to academic and creative excellence. That being the aim, USM and HAC conducted a project to renovate a new learning space for the members of USM's *Majlis Perwakilan Pelajar* (MPP).

Handling the furnishing and the learning space was HAC. The dedicated ambassadors at HAC manually bought, transported, and assembled the furniture completely.



Story time!

While our ambassadors were buying the furniture (requested especially by Professor Dr. Aldrin Abdullah, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Students Affairs Development & Alumni), they took a break to sit for dinner and catch a breath after the furniture shopping.

In the midst of dinner, Professor Dr. Aldrin Abdullah calls the team and asks them to start assembling the furniture as soon as they are done with dining. Our team thought that Professor Dr. Aldrin Abdullah was being sarcastic as it was already late at night, but in fact, he was genuinely eager and thrilled to start furnishing the place.

HAC ambassadors responded to the frank call by heading to the designated place and started the furnishing. The process of furnishing took no more than 4 hours, kudos to the dedicated team at HAC.

A DELEGATION FROM EDUCATION!

A Visit by the Higher Education Ministry Delegation to USM

Meet the Delegation!

On March 20, 2021, an honorable delegation from the Malaysian Higher Education Ministry paid a visit to USM, and part of the visit was to explore the then-new premium accommodation girls block, *Harapan F26*. The delegation was accompanied by USM's Chairman Dato' Dr. Awang Adek, USM's VC, DVCs, Director of Engineering Campus Director, USM's Registrar, and the entire top management of USM.

The distinguished delegation included The Higher Education Minister, YB Datuk Seri Dr. Noraini Ahmad, Chief Secretary, Datuk Seri Dr. Mazlan Yusoff, Deputy Chief Secretary (Management and Development), Datuk Rosli Yaakub, Director General of Higher Education, Profesor Dato' Dr. Husaini Omar, The Higher Education Ministry's Holistic Student Department Director, Dr. Mohd Suzeren Md. Jamil, and other main officers of the ministry.

Anecdote

HAC spent many and many days preparing for the visit by the delegation, The preparations took part in the form of setting, cleaning, presenting the rooms.



CONFRONTING THE PANDEMIC

*We exclusively
deploy USM's
7 core competency
strategies*

PROBLEM
SOLVING

STRATEGIC
THINKING

MANAGING
RESOURCES

NETWORKING
AND LIASING

SERVICE
DELIVERY

COMMUNICATION

LEADING
CHANGE



Crisis, planning, solution, and execution



HAC and NADMA to issue food coupons to the students to make their 'lockdown life' less stressful.



From basic to premium. Expanding the premium accommodation project according to the students' needs and wants.



HAC was, at the time, aware of the risk that came with operating during the peak of the pandemic.



Briefing the vendors on the coupons and making sure they stock up on food and other necessities.



HAC decided to gift the students a little food goodie bags on their way to their destination.



A delegation from (KPT) paid a visit to USM to explore the then-new premium accommodation girls block, Harapan F26.



HAC and Jabatan Keselamatan USM took over the police forms and distributed them among the students.



The office keeps operating 24/7/365



HAC Terminal Device



Briefing the students on SOPs.



USM takes all measures to ensure health safety of students amidst COVID 19 virus.



HAC offers USM students the chance to be official ambassadors and representatives of the place.



Did you know that USM possess an incredibly professional painting team?



Through
thick
and
thin



SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

The subtitle “**In the Midst of Lockdown**” is not just a mere expression, but truly a reflection of all the effort that was put by HAC and the university during a critical period of time.

At a time when national lockdown and international exile were in action, and at a time when panic and distress were in the air, HAC along with various departments in the university took it gracefully to look after the wellbeing of the students and to provide the safest environment possible on campus.

That being said, we are proud to release this volume of articles that narrates all the challenges we faced and memories we created along the way. Hope you enjoyed!

Written with love,
Shahd Abdelhamid



NOT THE USUAL

