iPS Institute of
Policy Studies

Projek Bicara: Conversations on Social Capital among Malay-Muslim Youths

By Aisyah Yusoff

Engaging in dialogue is often the first step to problem-solving. The voices of individuals who experience first-hand the inimical effects of social issues in their everyday lives should be given attention when generating solutions to tackle these problems.

However, the "pain points" and concerns surfaced during conversations are sometimes drowned out by louder voices emanating from dominant parties with divergent interests. A platform to harness the various perspectives from among the different groups making up the Singaporean public is therefore critical.

Under the guidance of Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) Research Fellow Dr Shamsuri Juhari and initiated by a group of alumni, undergraduate, and postgraduate students from NUS, *Projek Bicara* aims to facilitate crucial conversations among Malay-Muslim Singaporean youths on social capital.

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What is *Projek Bicara*?

Projek Bicara ('Bicara' means 'Talk' in Malay) was established by undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as alumni of the NUS Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy

and Law Faculty in 2020. It is an initiative which comes under the auspices of IPS' Malay-Muslim Research Network (see below for more information).

The aim of *Projek Bicara* is to spark conversations and explore solutions surrounding social capital among youths in the Malay-Muslim community in a structured and guided manner.

For instance, *Projek Bicara* focuses on the topics of the availability of social networks and resources among the Malay-Muslim community, and the quality of connections which link these individuals and groups.

In a study done by scholars Vincent Chua and Irene Ng (2015), the Malay-Muslim community has less social capital than their ethnic counterparts in Singapore. This poses issues ranging from educational under-achievement to added risks of unemployment.

Through focus group discussions and interviews, the project seeks to inform how channels of information and cultural capital transmission can be better developed to benefit youths of the Malay-Muslim community.

Projek Bicara is supported by the Leadership and Benefactions Fund of the Community Leaders Forum that is administered by Yayasan Mendaki.

Upcoming: Engaging Malay-Muslim Youths for Policy Discussions
Over the next few months, *Projek Bicara* plans to launch focus group discussions and interviews with Malay-Muslim youths.

Based on the findings from this project, the team will draft a policy paper and organise a conference with relevant government stakeholders for further policy discussions.

The Malay-Muslim Research Network
In 2018, the Institute of Policy Studies established the [Malay-Muslim Research Network](). The Network aims to connect researchers and advocates invested in tackling issues facing the local Malay-Muslim community by sharing and implementing actionable practices.

IPS provides a transparent and non-partisan platform to facilitate consensus-building among the diverging interests and demands from various private and public stakeholders.

The Network has two key objectives. First, it aims to bring together policymakers, academics and community leaders interested in raising the status and general well-being of the Singaporean Malay-Muslim community. Second, it hopes to bridge the gap between research and practice by putting forward actionable insights translated from research findings, with implications for policy and practice.

Currently, four types of activities fall under the purview of the Research Network. These are workshops, closed door discussions, interest groups and action groups. More details on past events can be found [here]().

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