



SERI MENGASIH CENTRE

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A BRIEF PROFILE

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INTRODUCTION

SERI MENGASIH CENTRE is a charity non-government organisation known as the Registered Trustees of Seri Mengasih Trust; relying on fundraising projects and donations for its operation costs.

It operates as a special developmental day training centre providing specialized training for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities from as young as 4 years old up to adulthood.

It was established in **January 1981** as the first special education school in Sabah for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities; long before the government and non-government organisations began to provide for this same category of disability.

Intellectual and developmental disabilities include those with autism, Down syndrome, other types of chromosome abnormalities, cerebral palsy, and below average intelligence.



Class of 1981 at the Likas Sports Complex

More than **40 years ago**, most Sabahans were ignorant about persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities; dismissing their “out of the norm” behaviours and difficulties as mental illness, to be only referred to psychiatrists.

During that time, **a group of 10 children** aged 6 to 12 years old from the government primary schools were wrongly referred to the Bukit Padang Hospital (now known as Hospital Mesra) for psychiatric treatment because of that ignorance. However, these children were actually not able to cope with the mainstream school syllabus, and the teachers at that time did not know how to teach them or how to handle their cognitive and behavioural challenges.

Hence, the Sabah Mental Health Association had initiated the set up of the first class for them using a footballers’ changing room at the Likas Sports Complex for two and a half years until it moved to its current location next to the Tanjung Aru 3rd Beach. With this relocation in 1983, Seri Mengasih was able to expand further in student numbers, and able to begin providing a more comprehensive range of specialized training programmes, and services for the students, and their families.

MISSION & GOALS

Seri Mengasih Centre’s primary mission is to enable and empower our students towards a life of hope and dignity within the community. Thus, we train our students to achieve, as far as

each individual is able to, towards the goals of **employment, adult living and social inclusion**.

In other words, we train them to become contributing, productive, well behaved and law abiding members of our community. This in turn will also lead to them having more fulfilled and meaningful lives. In addition, society will not regard them as burdensome, and aging parents will have peace of mind knowing their adult children with disabilities will be able to care for themselves eventually.

We also continue to seek through any means available, to increase the awareness, understanding, and acceptance of the community at large towards persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This will inevitably mean an increase in employment and living opportunities for them within the community.

TRAINING PROGRAMMES & METHODOLOGIES

Our special needs students do not sit for government school examinations (unless he/she is potentially able to) as our focused goals for them is employment, adult living and social inclusion, and therefore, at the core of our comprehensive training programmes is Functional Living Skills (FLS) which covers the following main training areas and is applicable to every one of our students:

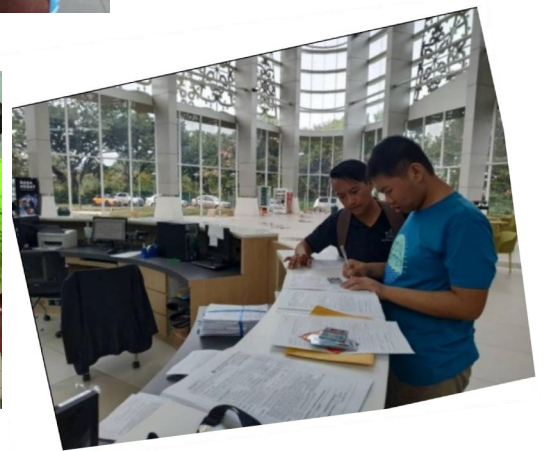
- **Learning Readiness** – *attention, focus & compliance*
- **Communication** – *comprehension, non-verbal & verbal*
- **Personal & Social Development** – *self-knowledge & appropriate social interaction*
- **Health & Safety** – *knowledge, prevention & actions*
- **Gross & Fine Motor Skills** – *for practical use in work, leisure, writing, and so on*
- **Functional Academics** – *writing, reading & math skills for daily practical use*
- **Activities of Daily Living** – *self-care & home management skills*
- **Community Skills** – *knowledge, access & usage of public facilities*
- **Work Skills** – *for future employment, taking into account the student's interest & abilities*
- **Leisure Skills** – *acquiring a range of skills & managing personal leisure time*

Family involvement and teamwork with Seri Mengasih in the regular training and overall development of the student within the home and community settings, are very important as these contribute much to his/her achievement of the training objectives.

The Functional Living Skills training programmes are supported by the following therapy programmes and methodologies:

- **Sensory Motor** - *an occupational therapy activity for those with sensory difficulties*
- **Speech Therapy** – *conducted by a speech therapist*
- **Kololo Method** - *for those with Autism and challenging behaviours*
- **Psychological Rehabilitation (Dohsa-Hou)** - *applicable for all disability types*





OTHER SERVICES

Besides providing a comprehensive range of training and therapeutic programmes for the students who are under Seri Mengasih's enrollment, we also provide the following services:

- **Assessment & Consultation** – *for newly referred individuals with special needs*
- **Training the Trainers** – *this is also catered for parents, family members, and care givers for the purpose of equipping them with the knowledge and skills to train the individual with special needs under their responsibility*
- **Job Coach** – *training individuals with special needs aged 18 years and above, from within and outside of Seri Mengasih Centre, towards open employment (in the community)*



SUCSESSES & MILESTONES

Seri Mengasih Centre had reached its 40th anniversary of establishment in January 2021.

We look back with a sense of pride and fulfilment at how much had been done, and how many people had been helped; yet looking ahead, we humbly acknowledge that there is still so much more that have yet to be done.

It is an unending task and responsibility towards those with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Sabah which Seri Mengasih Centre must continue to carry.

Its goals remain the same for the students; and the students' dreams remain the same, which is, to be able to live productive and meaningful lives within the community.

Where there is LOVE, there is hope
Where there is HOPE, there is integrity
Where there is INTEGRITY, there is dignity
Where there is DIGNITY, there is caring and sharing

These above words of Seri Mengasih's founding Chairman of the Board of Management, the late Datuk Haji Mohd Safari Manan, have been the guiding philosophy of Seri Mengasih Centre since the beginning, and also now, and always.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS – a few highlights

➤ **Marriage and Family**

Caroline, a student in the class of 1981, has proven that anyone can live a productive and fulfilled life in spite of any challenges. She is now a mother of 3 children and is employed as a staff of Seri Mengasih, working as an office assistant.

➤ **Scaling Mt Kinabalu**

Several of our young adults had joined the group of climbers for the heighting of the mountain in 1997

➤ **Travelling Abroad**

Our students were invited to attend the United Nations ICT Forum in Geneva in 2007



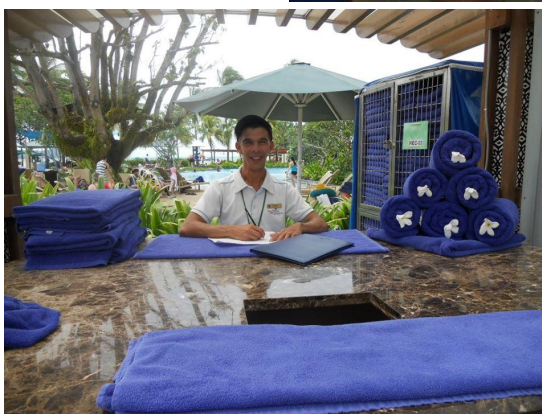
- **The 2nd National Self Advocacy Conference 2007** – organized by the “Kangaroo Club” of Seri Mengasih, a club set up by our young adults for the purpose of friendship and self-advocacy



We want to be independent & have good friends. We want to look for a job, and one day to have our own house to stay in

This is Andrew, a graduate of Seri Mengasih Centre speaking on behalf of his friends with special needs during the Conference; expressing what is their hope - that is, meaningful and fulfilling lives

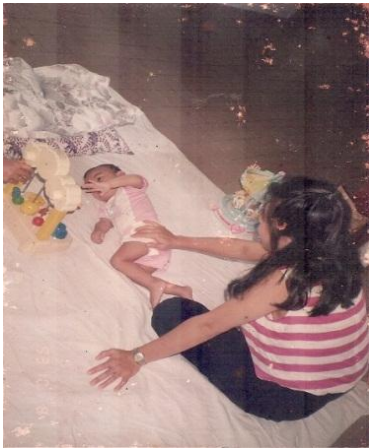
- **Being part of the work force** - over the past 30 years, many of our graduates are gainfully employed within the community in various sectors; for example, hotels, fast food joints, veterinary clinic, supermarkets, bakery, retail shops, factory and so on



PIONEERING WORK IN SABAH

Seri Mengasih Centre is a pioneer in more ways than one. Besides being the first school of its kind in Sabah, it had established several other “firsts” in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in the state, notably:

- **Early Intervention Programme (EIP)** - for babies from birth; in the late 1980s. Later, it was released to CBR Kota Kinabalu to run the programme.
- **Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) KK** - in 1995, the State Welfare Department had requested for our help to start one of its first CBR or PDK (Pemulihan Dalam Komuniti) centres within our premises until it could be fully independent of us. It now operates successfully in its own place.
- **Toy Library** - in the early 1990s; in order for parents to borrow home learning equipment for their young children. This was also handed over to CBR KK to manage it.
- **Preschool Unit** - set up in the early 1990s; for children of kindergarten age. It later paved the way for mainstream inclusion of these children into other kindergartens.
- **Special Olympics (SO)** - a sports programme started in the USA, for the wholesome development and achievement of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. SO Sabah was later established, and became independent of Seri Mengasih Centre



A former student and Special Olympics gold medallist, Jason, awarded the BSK by TYT Sabah



- **Christchurch College Of Education (New Zealand) Certificate in Community Services** – in 1996, Seri Mengasih had facilitated this course conducted by the college's lecturers for Sabahan special education teachers, and the graduation ceremony was in 1998
- **International Conference on Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities (ICIDD)** was conducted in collaboration with Universiti Malaysia Sabah in 2011. Speakers and participants came from around the globe
- **Recognition by Suhakam with an Award for Community Services** in 2013



➤ **International and Local Collaborations**

- **Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS)** – signed an MOU for collaboration in the field of special education, and including its students' practical attachment at Seri Mengasih Centre
- **Mount Royal University, Calgary, Canada** – this university had selected Seri Mengasih as a foreign special education school for its final year students' practical attachment. This had been a very enriching experience for both parties during that period.

➤ International and Local Collaborations

- **The Kololo Developmental Treatment Education Centre, Tokyo, Japan**

- A **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** was signed, followed later by a **Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)**. One of the important aims of these was the exchange of research studies and information on the treatment education for students with autism, and the implementation of the Kololo method for autism within and outside of Seri Mengasih Centre.
- Significantly, Seri Mengasih's Senior Officer in charge of Seri Mengasih's Kololo ASD Department is the first person in Malaysia to be awarded the **Kololo GDT Chief Trainer Certificate** by the Kololo Developmental Treatment Education Centre while he was undergoing his advanced training in Tokyo, Japan.
- And Seri Mengasih Centre received from Kololo Developmental Treatment Education Centre, a **Certificate of Accreditation** recognizing it as **Kololo Malaysia**
- With these certification and accreditation, Seri Mengasih is legible to conduct the Kololo Method practical and theoretical training within Malaysia and to certify practitioners up to the first and second levels of the method.



- **Chikushi Jogakuen University, Fukuoka, Japan**

- A **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** was signed for the introduction and implementation of “Dohsa-Hou” a psychological rehabilitation method into Seri Mengasih and into Sabah.
- Seri Mengasih became the first centre in Sabah to include Dohsa-Hou as one of its therapy programmes
- Also, Seri Mengasih became the venue for Dohsa-Hou professionals from Japan and other places to conduct annual Dohsa-Hou training camps for carers and practitioners in the field of rehabilitation from around Sabah and beyond. Through these training camps, a significant number of persons have received their psychological rehabilitation trainers certificates cum licenses from the Japanese Association of Psychological Rehabilitation, to practice the method in their own centres. This has benefitted many special needs trainees who are outside of Seri Mengasih Centre.
- Two of **Seri Mengasih’s own staff** became the first in East Malaysia to be **certified as Dohsa-Hou supervisors**, and legible to conduct training the trainers workshops



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*The late Datuk Haji Mohd Safari Manan
Founding Chairman of the Board of Management
Seri Mengasih Centre
1981 - 2017*