



# PROGRESS REPORT 2020 - 2021

Iskul Sama Dilaut Omadal



# » Table of Contents

**03**

## **Foreword from Co-founder**

A few words from our chairperson and co-founder, Chuah Ee Chia.

**04**

## **2020 At a Glance**

A summary of our activities in 2020, including how we handled the pandemic and the increase of class days.

**05**

## **2021 At a Glance**

A summary of our activities in 2021 where we initiated a community healthcare program providing supplements and clean water.

**06**

## **Our Milestones**

A run through of our milestones for the past two years.

**18**

## **Iskul Success Stories**

A few success stories of our students and programs.

**21**

## **Donors and Partners**

A list of all the people who are involved in making Iskul a reality.

**22**

## **Outlook for 2022 and 2023**

Our hopes and plans for the next year.

**23**

## **Iskul on the News**

A sample of news on Iskul.

# HOW WE GOT HERE

*a foreword from our co-founder and chairperson*

In 2020, Covid-19 crisis showed us that “we are only as strong as the weakest members of our society”. And “we are only as healthy as the most vulnerable, no matter where they are”. #OnlyTogether can we move ahead. With this spirit, Iskul Sama DiLaut Omdal (Iskul) rose up to the challenges Covid-19 brought. We became the mainstay to not only our students, but their families and community in Omdal. Indeed, we found silver linings in the pandemic.

Iskul’s vision is to build young leaders among the stateless and local communities through holistic education. We aim to foster inclusivity among communities with and without nationality. We want to make their voices heard. In essence, we become a bridge. A bridge that connects the stateless and underprivileged community with the resources and networks we have.

Iskul started as a community-run project in 2015 to provide basic literacy for stateless children at Omdal Island. The year 2020 and 2021 has enabled us to expand our support to Covid-19 relief and started community healthcare. The latter includes four parts. First, nutritious meals and hygiene programmes for our students. Second, a maternity and children’s health programme. Third, the community water access project. Finally, a "mini clinic" that provides basic emergency medical relief to the community. It was made possible with grants from Yayasan Hasanah, collaboration with various partners and the Malaysian public. We’re grateful to be entrusted by our funders and donors with the opportunity to serve the stateless community in Omdal beyond providing basic literacy. We hope you will enjoy reading our 2020 and 2021 milestones in this mini-progress report.

Magsukul!

Chuah Ee Chia  
Chairperson of Iskul



# 2020 AT A GLANCE: COVID-19 AND A GRANT!



2020 was a tough year for us all, but it was even tougher for the community in Omadal who, before covid, were already living day-by-day. However, as tough as it was, the community banded together to rise up to the challenge. Iskul became a homebase to the students and their families in Omadal. Our work was recognised when we received the Yayasan Hasanah Special Grant (YSGH 2020). It has sustained our operation from July 2020 to September 2021. Moreover, it also enabled us to kickstart social development projects for the community.



# 2021 AT A GLANCE: INITIATING COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE

In 2021, on top of providing basic literacy classes and nutritious meals to our students, we also kick-started two social development projects for the community. It centred around community healthcare in two aspects. First, is a community water project. We provided improved water access for hygiene education and practices which is critical in view of the Covid-19 pandemic. Second, we provide nutrition by way of supplements to increase maternity and children's health. These two milestones reinforce our holistic approach to education. Students can achieve their academic potential when they and their families are healthy and secure. This program was mainly funded by the Yayasan Hasanah Special Grant (YHSG) 2020.



# OUR MILESTONES

2020-2021

INCREASE OF CLASSES

2020-2021

HYGIENE PROGRAM

2021

MOTHER AND CHILDREN  
SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

2020

ISKUL'S FIRST GRADUATION

2020

ISKUL CONNECTED WITH  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

2020

COVID-19 RELIEF AID

2020-2021

NUTRITION RESULTS

2020-2021

COMMUNITY WATER PROJECT

2020-2021

ISKUL MINI CLINIC

2020

KEBUN ISKUL

2021

PENTAS BULAN PALUWAK

## FOOD AID DURING MOVEMENT CONTROL ORDER (MCO) APRIL 2020

Being based in the island, we saw how the stateless community struggled for food during the Covid-19 MCO in April 2021. When we realised that no food aid was available to them we kick-started our own food relief effort. We fundraised RM 23,430 within 3 days to help supply food aid to 150 stateless families. F&N Malaysia sponsored one carton of drinking water for each household. We received approval from the Semporna District Officer, Tn Benedict Asmat, to deliver food baskets to Omadal.

We also registered with the Department of Social Welfare Malaysia. This allowed us to carry out bulk purchases and delivery of supplies from town. We distributed 1 food basket to each family in 4 weeks, during which we conducted a simple census and a mapping of the stateless population in Omadal. The relief aid and census helped us understand the community's demographic, needs and socio-economic conditions better. This experience has guided Iskul's programming in the following months. We found that their needs were water, help with basic hygiene and nutrition for young children. The remainder of the funds were used to supplement the community water project.

Full report [here](#)



## FOOD AID OCT-DEC 2020

After consulting both stateless and Malaysian citizen communities, we provided further food aid to 167 stateless and 54 citizen households in Omadal in the form of 5 food baskets, drinking water (provided by F&N Malaysia and K2 Life Water) and vitamin C. We did this with the help of the Yayasan Hasanah's Humanitarian and Disaster Relief (HDR) fund (RM52,541) and private donors (RM12,600). The food basket distribution also became an incentive for the stateless community to voluntarily undergo COVID-19 antigen screening by the Semporna District Health Office. Simultaneously helping increase the resilience of the community and decreasing the number of COVID-19 cases on the island.

HDR report [here](#)





# INCREASE OF CLASSES

In March 2020, Iskul expanded its influence by welcoming a full-time teacher, Jefry Musa, and thereby increasing classes from 2 days a week to 5 days a week. Classes of 30 children are now held from Saturday to Wednesday from 7am to 11am. We also started the arts and cultural class every Wednesday. The art and culture initiative aimed to develop the socio-culture identity of the local community. Various activities such as drawing, colouring, watching movies, dancing, acting and singing were taught in these classes. This class is crucial in building the children's sense of identity by increasing their confidence and efficacy in these areas.

Iskul's syllabus is made up of three levels. Level one is the basics of holding a pencil, recognising alphabets, numbers, and shapes, and using basic words in conversations. The second level is to be able to recognise vowels, consonants, and syllables, be able to identify shapes and values up to a thousand and lastly solve simple addition and subtraction problems. The third level involves the basic skills to essay writing, grammar, and vocabulary, to be able to communicate well and comprehend topics such as fractions, time and money.

In July 2020, we got funding from YHSG 2020. From then the students were divided into 4 classes: class 1A, 1A2, 1B and 2. The first three classes are in level 1, while the last is in level 2. No students are in Level 3 yet. We aim for students to progress from level 1 to level 2, and level 2 to level 3. Examinations were carried out in July 2020, June 2021 and September 2021 which showed positive and consistent progress in reading and writing among the children. 10 students have proceeded to Level 3.



The progress could be seen from the evaluation of the baseline test, test 2 the final test as well as from our teachers’ observation.

**For the former, the results are as follows:**

- It was encouraging to see overall student marks for Bahasa Malaysia and Mathematics improve from April to September, from a failing average of 33% in the first reporting period to 60% and 67% in the second and third reporting periods respectively (Figure 1).
- Males tended to perform better than females across all three reporting periods, scoring on average 22% higher in the latter two reporting periods but as high as 50% more in the first reporting period (Figure 2).
- Older students (11-13 years old) consistently performed better than those in younger age groups, with the youngest students (5-7 years old) having the lowest average subject scores across all reporting periods (Figure 3).
- Students performed better at Mathematics than Bahasa Malaysia, scoring on average 57.5% on the former and 49.1% on the latter.

**For the latter, the results are:**

- Students have gained a better grasp and understanding of the Bahasa Malaysia language as demonstrated through their interactions with Iskul teachers.
- Children’s confidence has improved as they began to slowly speak up and took on various roles in the arts and performing sessions. In total, we had 15 various performances of singing, theatre, dancing and “wayang kulit” performance in small groups according to their classes.

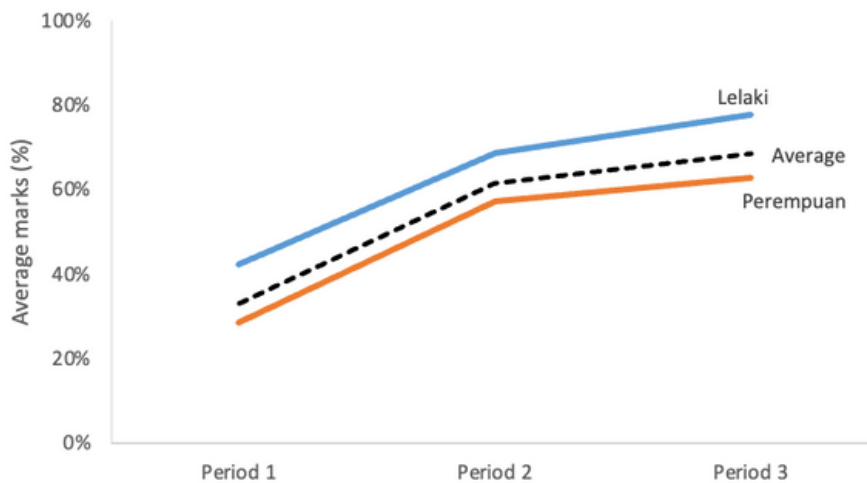


Figure 1. Averaged total marks (%) of male and female students from the first to third reporting periods. The dotted line shows average total marks of both genders.

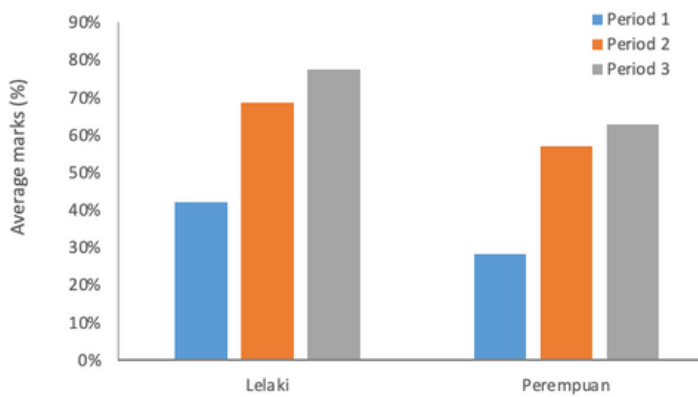


Figure 2. Average total marks from periods 1 to 3 broken down by gender.

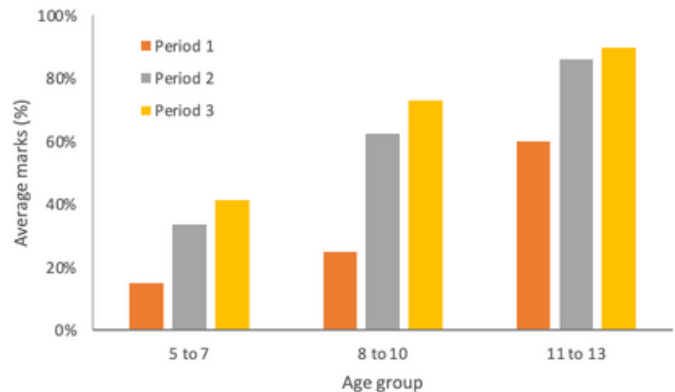


Figure 3. The progress of average marks among three age groups from reporting periods 1 to 3.

# NUTRITION RESULTS 2020-2021

We aim to increase the children's nutritional intake by supplementing them with 1 balanced meal 5 days a week. Their daily staple consists of tapioca/rice and any catch of the day. We provided meals to 3 groups of people: 30 Iskul children, 6 graduate students and 9 students' siblings beginning July 2022. Under the YHSG 2020, we hired 2 cooks to prepare the daily RM4 meals for our children. Every two weeks, Iskul's coordinator travels to Semporna town to purchase the ingredients. Every week, we would purchase fish from the local fishermen for our menu. Our menu includes carbohydrates, protein, vegetables and fruits. At the beginning of the program, all children's BMI readings were underweight.

All 30 students showed substantial weight gain by mid-September 2021. 25 students' BMIs have grown since joining our meals program in July 2020. Even though 83.3% of the students have improved BMI rates, their BMI readings still fall in the underweight category.

For the 6 graduate students who participated in the meals program, 60% showed an increase in weight. For the 9 students' siblings who participated in our meals program, 56% (5) have gained weight, 33% (3) lost weight and 10% (1) didn't gain nor lose weight,

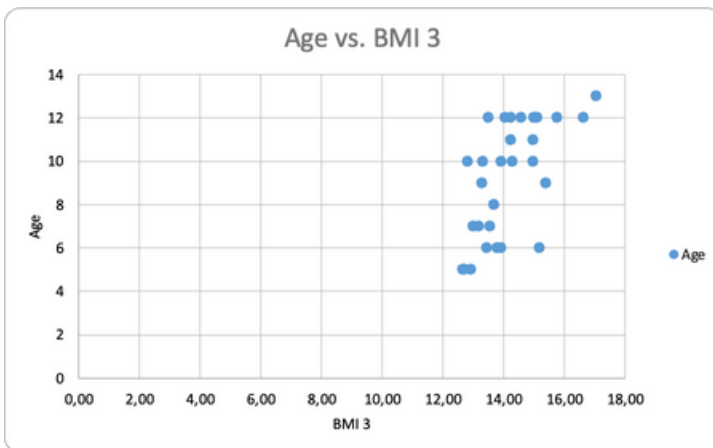


Figure 5. Students BMI at Reporting Period 3 According to Age at Year 2020.

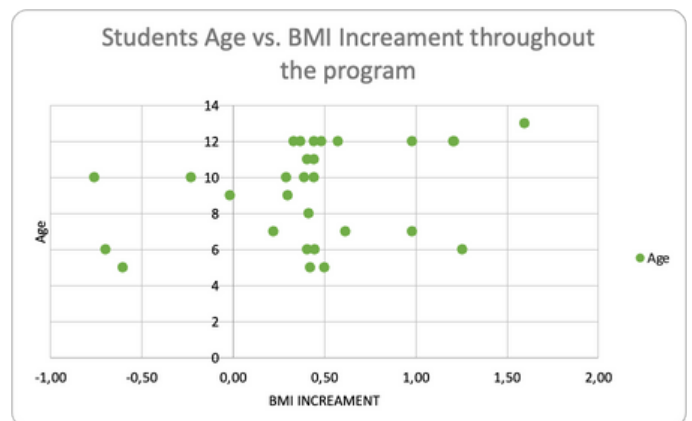


Figure 4. Students' BMI Increment Throughout the Program According to Age.



# HYGIENE PROGRAM 2020-2021

We launched our hygiene program in August 2020 where our 30 students began their morning routine of brushing their teeth before class. Pre-program, at least 5 students reported toothache and bleeding gum problems. By September 2021, we saw a great improvement in their oral hygiene where only 2 students reported toothache and none complained about bleeding gums.

Students were also taught to wash their hands and wear face masks as a Covid-19 prevention method. We held two workshops on the 18 (conducted by Jefry Musa, sponsored by the YHSG 2020 and Semporna Aid Team) and 25 July 2020 (conducted by Mercy and Unicef) where students were given masks, hand sanitizer and soap and taught the correct methods of use.



## COMMUNITY WATER PROJECT

Our community water project eases hardships for Omodal households that have no reliable source of potable water. Inaccessibility to clean water made personal hygiene secondary to cooking and drinking water. For hygiene education to be effective, we needed to improve their water access. This project was done in two phases under the YHSG 2020.

First we built an extended platform in Pondok Iskul and installed 3 more water tanks. This provided extra water to our students' families while we studied how to improve their home's water access. Unexpectedly, the platform became the main open air space for our Covid-19 food relief operation in 2020.

Second, we partnered with Engineer Without Borders Malaysia (EWBM) in a pilot community water project. We collaborated with 30 households to improve their access to water. We found that the simplest and fastest way to do that is to provide each home a 100 liter (L) water tank. However, participants need to strengthen the platform of their houses first before they receive the water tank. By May 2021, all 30 households had improved water access. They reported it has changed their lives in two ways: cost-saving and improved hygiene.

As a result of our pilot project, EWBM secured a grant from UNDP GEF's Small Grant Programme. The grant provided water tanks and water filtration systems to the rest of the stateless households. Iskul became the key mover in the implementation of this project. Another 35 households have received improved water access from this project by December 2021.



## SUPPLEMENTS FOR MOTHER AND CHILD'S HEALTH

Most of the stateless women in Omadal do not perform routine pregnancy checks and they labour at home. Their newborns are unvaccinated. The main reasons are high medical cost and little exposure and fear of modern medication. Maternal and newborn deaths are not uncommon amongst the community though there is no official data. Hence, we jump-started simple mother and children health programmes. We provided Obimin supplements to 20 expecting and new mothers as well as multivitamins to 30 children below 6 years old. We hope to provide nutrients to the unborn children and also the children in Omadal as proper nutritions are critical to a child's early year development.

We worked with nurses and doctor Leong from Klinik Warisan Semporna. To start, we teamed up with the nurses to conduct an information session for our women and children participants. They learned about the importance of nutritions to children's growth and development. They also learn about the safe and appropriate way to consume the supplement. For the first month, we distributed the supplement daily and monitored their progress. A few pregnant mothers reported headache and stomachache, So, we changed their supplement to Zincofer. As for the children, all of them enjoyed the multivitamins.

This program has given us insight into the vulnerability of the stateless Bajau Laut community. We noticed how sudden deaths are prevalent and unrecorded. By June 2021, there were 3 births. Sadly, one infant passed away one day after the birth. This is about 33% of the infant survival rate from our observation. Furthermore, one child from our multivitamin program died suddenly after a fever. These deaths might be avoided if they received early and proper medical treatment.



## ISKUL'S MINI CLINIC

We hold the belief that a person cannot learn to the best of their ability if their body is not healthy. However, hospitals and clinics are not an option for the Bajau Laut as their lack of citizenship makes it unaffordable to obtain private healthcare. Iskul thus became a makeshift clinic for students to get medicine and emergency treatment. Ringworm, boils, wounds, fever, and toothache are common ailments we attend to. When necessary, we do seek support from private clinics or government hospitals for treatment of patients from our community.

We also assisted the Semporna Health District Office (PKD) when they came to Omadal for their preventing cholera and polio campaign.

### **Preventing Cholera**

On August 11th 2020, a health team from the PKD paid a visit to Iskul to provide cholera medicine to the children. Cholera cases in Sabah had increased sharply in July 2020 to a total of 43 cases. Without immediate treatment, Cholera, a normally curable disease can become fatal.

### **Preventing Polio**

Similarly, on December 4th 2020, PKD sent a team to provide polio vaccines to children of Omadal Island. Our team on the ground helped gather the children of the island to be vaccinated. In 2020, there were at least 4 cases of polio in Sabah leading to a mass distribution of the polio vaccine to children in the state.



## ISKUL'S 1ST GRADUATION & MA APPRECIATION

On 23 February 2020, Iskul celebrated its students with a graduation ceremony in Sekolah Kebangsaan Omadal. A total of 18 students from our pioneer batch graduated on that day. Three Iskul students who were pivotal in coordinating Iskul's Covid-19 relief, graduated to become Iskul assistant teachers.

It was a festive weekend as we held Hari Sukan followed by the ceremony the day after. It took the whole team almost 2 weeks of preparation prior to the weekend. The invitation cards for parents had been delivered personally to the homes of students and Mastal Arikik, inviting them to witness the momentous ceremony for Iskul. For the first time, our students will be walking into a school compound and receiving their graduation certificate in a school hall.

Besides celebrating our pioneer students who have successfully completed their basic (preschool) learning, we also celebrated their parents who had helped to ensure that they attend classes every weekend. We are very proud of our students and their parents for making learning a priority despite living in poverty!

As the ceremony aptly named, it is also to acknowledge the effort and time invested by our Mastal Arikik (MA) over the years. They took time off their weekends to teach their friends from the stateless community. We have 10 MAs who have volunteered their time for Iskul and the stateless community.

View our blog [here](#)





## KEBUN ISKUL

In 2020, Iskul launched a garden program by planting okra, chilli, onion, lemongrass and many other types of plants. The garden aims to provide exposure and education about agriculture to Iskul students and the island community and to reduce the population's dependence on marine products.

Next we focused on trying out which fruits and vegetables are suitable to plant for the community on the sea. Many things need to be considered such as space, water sources, seeds and types of trees, rat infestations and others.



## ISKUL'S CONNECTED WITH MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

In January 2020, Ee Chia and Hui Ling made a courtesy call with Deputy Minister of Education, YB Teo Nie Ching. It was definitely one of our most important stakeholder meetings to-date!

Such a significant meeting had undeniably given us collywobbles, but we are very grateful that YB Teo was understanding and patient. We presented the challenges and hopes of the stateless children in Omadal island, the background of Iskul and our appeals. Despite having most of our appeals turned down due to the limitation of the Ministry and their accountability to the taxpayers, YB Teo has been encouraging and provided good advice for Iskul as we continue to grow.

Iskul remains thankful for the opportunity to forward the plight of the stateless children of Omadal Island to the Ministry and we hope that this meeting positively positions Iskul within their radar.



## PENTAS BULAN PULAWAK

This year, Iskul organised the Paluwak Moon Stage (Pentas Bulan Paluwak / Full Moon Stage) which is held once a month, on every full moon. It is the brightest night of the month when the tide is lowest and the stateless community gather under the moonlight for games and other activities. Students are able to use this stage as a space to hone their talents. In the future, Iskul plans to start bringing students to perform outside of Omadal Island.



## ISKUL SUCCESS STORIES

### Three Stateless Teenagers Without Access to Education are Now Empowering their own community

YHSG 2020 has provided Iskul sufficient funds to employ three of our graduate students to teach the stateless children in their own community: Delah, Enidah and Bilkuin. The monthly allowance has enabled them to fully focus on the Iskul work in three main areas. First is to teach basic literacy to their friends five days a week. Second, to communicate and oversee the water tanks project which aims to improve the water access of 30 households in the stateless community. Finally, to identify 20 pregnant and nursing mothers and 30 children to administer supplements and multivitamins, and also to monitor their conditions.

Furthermore, when Covid- 19 hit Semporna and Sabah the worst on October 2021, they became the front-liners of the island. They were the mainstay in distributing food baskets to their community. They also became our communicator to convey the message of ways to fight Covid-19 to the community.

We cannot be more proud of them!

2016



2021



# ISKUL SUCCESS STORIES

## Rendy's Story - An Early Medical Intervention by Iskul

Rendy (our student) fell off the bridge near his house, hit some sharp object on the ground and wounded his forehead. He received no medical attention until we found out about it on Day 3. We immediately contacted the Hospital Director in Hospital Semporna and showed him photos of Rendy's wound. He advised us to bring him to the emergency room as soon as possible as they might need to send him to Tawau Hospital as the wound looked bad and contaminated.

On Day 4, we rushed Rendy to the hospital. Rendy received immediate medical attention once we arrived. His X-ray was taken, and thankfully, it was ok. The doctor cleaned his wound and gave him antibiotics, painkillers and panadol.

We were advised to bring him to Klinik Kesihatan Bum-Bum for daily washing of the wound for 1 week. We had to purchase the Dermacyn Wound Care 500 ml for this purpose. After a few days of treatment, Rendy had a fever. Thankfully, his fever subsided and his wound became better after one week. We're so glad we managed to intervene in time, else his wound might have worsened and his life could have been threatened.



## ISKUL SUCCESS STORIES

### Iskul Students Stepped Up to Learn How To Make Water Filtration System for Their Community

Iskul collaborated with Engineers Without Borders Malaysia (EWBM) to improve the water access to all stateless households in Omadal under a grant by the UNDP SGP. This project enhances the current Iskul YHSG 2020's commitment to improve water access to 30 stateless households in Omadal. Our model is one that includes collaborative effort with the community. We provide the recipients 100L water tanks and they will strengthen the platform of their houses before the water tanks are given. The improved version includes a water filtration system that was absent in the previous version. The system will filter and clean the rain water before it gets into the water tank.

The engineering team was supposed to travel to Semporna to build the water filtration system for all the households. However, due to the covid-19 travel restrictions, they couldn't come to Omadal. As a result, we decided to involve our students to prepare the filtration system. They learnt to make flush bottles and filter pipes. To do that, they had to cut the bottle, measure the pipes and connect them with glue. These skills will enable them to troubleshoot should any problem arise from the filtration system. Hence, the community themselves can fix any problem in the future. Instead of being shy with low self-esteem as are evident with children in the community, our students are empowered to learn new skills and to help their community to make and fix the water filtration system. This experience also further enhances their confidence.



We would like to thank all our donors, partners and funders for helping make Iskul's projects a reality!

FUNDER & DONORS



I-LANN & FRIENDS

SEMPORNA FOOD AIDS



FRASER & NEAVE HOLDINGS BHD



**K** **kitaFund**  
& Daphne Iking

AND THE  
MALAYSIAN  
PUBLIC!

PARTNERS



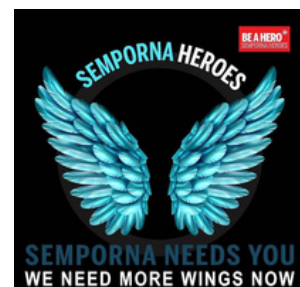
Pejabat Kesihatan  
Daerah Semporna



**SCUBAholics**  
EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE



PAGE 27



# OUTLOOK FOR 2022-2023

PAGE 24

In the next 2 years on top of sustaining our core literacy training and student meals, we have two targets. First, to strengthen Iskul's youth leadership programme which will build confidence in children and youth. The programme will emphasise both the sciences and arts. The former by lessons focused on marine stewardship and life science. And the latter by teaching traditional and modern performance arts. Students can use it to express and take pride in their unique cultural identity. Iskul will also equip Bajau youth from Omadal with media production tools as a means to share their stories with the world and to earn extra income. We envision this will spark motivation and self-confidence in youth.

Second, to foster a healthy community, including both human and environmental health. This vision involves two parts. One is improving water access for all households on Omadal Island. Two is cultivating proper waste disposal behaviour to reduce health hazards and ocean pollution. We will also continue to take care of community health. We do so by bridging local health agencies with stateless households to deliver medical aids and health education.





# ISKUL ON THE NEWS

Impact stories by Yayasan Hasanah

Hari Guru 2022 | ISKUL pastikan anak tanpa negara terima pendidikan  
 , Astro

The gift that keeps on giving – how the Iskul community school pays it forward , Malaysiakini

## **News update on Iskul's Covid-19 relief efforts:**

- Letter: Iskul hopes to help bring aid to stateless community in Sabah island
- 150 stateless families in isolated island to receive food aid during MCO
- Food aid further news
- NGOs left to supervise Covid-19 patients on Sabah island
- Semporna District Health Office to conduct routine checks on Pulau Omdal
- Sabah NGO halts food distribution after field team quarantined

