

SPOTLIGHT ON R2P



Malaysian Youth Capacity Building on Hate Speech and Atrocity Prevention

Training in Kuala Lumpur

From 24-27 August 2023, the Malaysian Centre for Constitutionalism and Human Rights (MCCHR) ran a hate speech training workshop for young people, which was expanded from its previous program in 2021. Supported by the APR2P Centre, the program recognised the critical role young people play in countering online hate speech, and aimed to empower youth in Malaysia to contribute to atrocity prevention. A total of 21 people aged between 18 and 30, from Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Terengganu, Kelantan, Penang, Malacca, Negeri Sembilan, Johor, Sabah and Sarawak participated in the program, following an EOI process.

The first day of training was delivered by Nalini Elumalai of Article19 Malaysia, who covered topics relating to freedom of expression and hate speech in depth. MCCHR conducted sessions as part of their civic education program (IdolaDemokra-

si), one of the youth empowerment initiatives under MCCHR's flagship programme, UndiMsia! (Malay for VoteMalaysia!), which aims to impart knowledge and tools on human rights and democracy to young people to strengthen ownership, participation and representation of youth in Malaysia with regard to civic education.

The second day focused on the connections between hate speech, incitement, and atrocity crimes, with sessions by APR2P Centre staff on the role of social media in hate speech, international frameworks for understanding and dealing with hate speech, an introduction to atrocity prevention and R2P, and the role of youth as peacebuilders.

On the third day, a closed-door discussion was held on 'Hate Speech Against the Marginalised in Malaysia', featuring speakers from organisations including Komuniti

Universal Islam (KMU), Justice for Sisters, Architect of Diversity (AoD), and Amnesty International Malaysia. Participants spent the remainder of the program planning social media advocacy campaigns to combat hate speech in Malaysia, which they have been developing and implementing in the months since.

Advocacy campaigns

Say Nice Things is a campaign designed to encourage the public to use positive and affirming narratives as a way to counter hate speech. The objectives include:

1. Conduct four in-person demonstration booths in universities and public places
2. Produce four videos using the shots filmed throughout the demonstration booths
3. Conduct social media campaign with infographics

Booths have been held during October at the University of Malaya (UM), Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) and Pasar Seni KL, as well as at the Central market. They showed a collection of hateful comments gathered from the internet, and passersby were invited to counter the comment with a kind message by writing on sticky notes to place on top of the hateful comment. If the visitor wished, they could share their own lived hate speech experience which may be filmed and posted during the Instagram campaign. In addition to videos, posts are being made on Instagram to raise awareness of issues relating to freedom of speech and hate speech laws. The page can be found here: <https://www.instagram.com/stories/highlights/17998299047269932/>

Bicara Bukan Benci is an advocacy campaign that is interviewing seven hate speech survivors and collecting photos, videos and artwork relating to their experiences and stories. This activity aims to provide a safe space for hate speech survivors to share their stories, and to platform and amplify their voices as a form of counter-narrative against online hate speech content. Videos are posted on the Instagram page at <https://www.instagram.com/bicarabukanbenci/> and on TikTok https://www.tiktok.com/@bicarabukanbenci?_t=8gaTcqARZsW&_r=1.

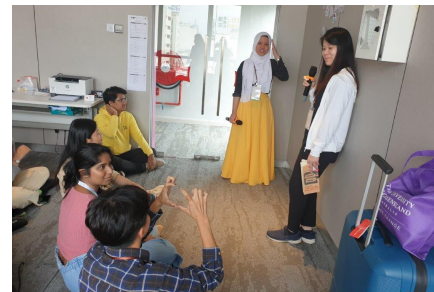
The campaign also aims to educate the general public on freedom of speech and hate speech, by publishing artwork and photos, alongside infographics. Interviews with experts on hate speech will be posted to Instagram Live.

Evaluation and impact

The program received excellent feedback from participants via an evaluation survey, and they completed pre- and post-training quizzes to assess the level of knowledge gained, which showed significant increases in 100% of participants' knowledge across the topics covered. Attendees commented that they are now able to distinguish the difference between hate speech that should be restricted and freedom of expression that must be protected, and have a better understanding of how hate speech can in-

cite violence and the importance of combating hate speech as a means to prevent the escalation of atrocity crimes. They also said that understanding the role of youth in atrocity prevention had inspired them to take action, with some indicating they would share what they learned with their friends and communities, and were more committed to fact checking before spreading information. There were suggestions that the training be offered to youth from other Malaysian communities including indigenous groups.

The combination of high quality and in-depth training content, list of experienced trainers and the engaging delivery methods which combined lectures, case studies, film screenings, breakout sessions, discussions, quizzes, and self-directed learning made this youth program by MCCHR a great success.



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