

# Chief Executive Officer's Review

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**Dr. Hajjah Yatela  
Zainal Abidin**



In the past year, we saw COVID-19 dominating headlines worldwide and continue to affect all layers of society, with a heavier impact on healthcare systems as well as marginalised and underserved communities. At YSD, with support and donations from the three Sime Darby companies, we doubled our efforts on relief initiatives for the country's frontliners, and vulnerable communities impacted by the pandemic nationwide since the pandemic hit the country in early 2020. It is our goal under the Community & Health pillar to work towards improving the lives of disadvantaged and marginalised groups as well as reducing socio-economic disparities.

In total, YSD has committed more than RM21.89 million from March 2020 to September 2021 to execute 165 initiatives. Out of the total commitment, RM3 million was allocated through a matching grant provided by the Ministry of Finance under the Government-Linked Companies (GLC) / Government-Linked Investment Companies (GLIC) Disaster Response Network (GDRN) for the Perlindungan Ekonomi dan Rakyat Malaysia (PERMAI) national assistance package. In the 18 months that COVID-19 had hit the country, YSD has mobilised various assistance benefitting more than 160,000 needy individuals, families, and frontliners and provided medical and non-medical equipment to 47 healthcare facilities.

As apparent today, COVID-19 has indeed had a significant effect on all members of our communities; thus, this year's initiatives laid heavily on YSD's aid and assistance to those affected by the pandemic. Medical equipment for public hospitals, as well as food and hygiene kits for B40 communities, vulnerable groups, students, Orang Asli households and refugee families make up a significant portion of our assistance. We partnered with 93 organisations, including our donors Sime Darby Berhad, Sime Darby Plantation Berhad, and Sime Darby Property Berhad; as well as numerous civil society organisations such as The Lost Food Project, OKU Sentral, Zer0 Hunger, Kechara Soup Kitchen, Sabah AIDS Awareness Group Association, Women's Aid Organisation, and Islamic Relief Malaysia (IRM) in executing these initiatives, all of whom we are proud to work alongside together in lending a hand to our communities.

This unprecedented and unabating pandemic we are experiencing has highlighted the determination and importance of our healthcare workers. We are eternally thankful for the formidable efforts of the frontliners in managing those affected by COVID-19, especially when faced with their now higher-risk jobs, the nature of the virus, and obstacles with resource allocation. In one of the earliest assistances we provided, YSD, through the GDRN, committed a total of RM3.5 million to purchase critically needed ventilators and personal protective equipment (PPE) for hospitals nationwide, among others. Recently, YSD had answered the appeal of the Greater Klang Valley Special Task Force to assist hospitals and COVID-19 Assessment Centres; with the support of 26 ventilators, 20 oxygen tanks, 20 oxygen concentrators, 20 Hyundai Starexes, 150 laptops, as well as allowances for 70 volunteers.

Following the outbreak of COVID-19 infections in Sabah in October 2020, YSD worked quickly and was one of the first corporate foundations in Malaysia to mobilise support for the state. YSD allocated RM1.37 million for much-needed aid initiatives such as medical equipment and PPEs for the benefit of hospitals and the Klinik Kesihatan in Sabah while supporting poor communities affected by movement restrictions through food assistance. Through YSD's collaboration with MERCY Malaysia, we also provided 13 vehicles covering Sabah and Peninsular Malaysia for MERCY Malaysia to execute 520 missions to deploy 172 medical and non-medical equipment and logistics support for the distribution of aid and movement of volunteers.





YSD also committed RM600,000 to fund University Malaysia Medical Centre's clinical trials on treating severe COVID-19 cases using Tocilizumab (TCZ), a medication used to treat rheumatoid arthritis. The trial involved 90 patients whose participation helped clinicians find the best treatments to reduce morbidity and mortality associated with COVID-19 infections. The study's findings have been submitted to the WHO working group for the Rapid Evidence Appraisal of Therapeutics for COVID-19, which will contribute to the body of knowledge around the effectiveness of TCZ, alongside other international studies on the drug. The patients continue to benefit from the trial today, and we hope to extend these life-saving efforts to a broader reach of those suffering from COVID-19 infections.

We saw continuous heavy rainfall in early 2021, which had caused devastating floods in many parts of Johor, Terengganu, Pahang, Sabah, and Sarawak, which claimed lives and displaced families by the thousands. Responding to this, YSD collaborated with Sime Darby Plantation, Sime Darby Industrial, MERCY Malaysia, OKU Sentral and SMK Setia Wangsa, Kuala Lipis, to mobilise support and provide aid to reach more than 8,500 flood victims.

In our work within the Environment pillar, YSD received RM2 million in a matching grant from the Ministry of Finance (MOF) for environment conservation projects focusing on flora and fauna conservation while sustaining the livelihoods of the local and indigenous communities. The lion's share of this allocation was used to boost anti-poaching efforts in Perak (with Perak State Parks Corporation) and Sabah (with the Sabah Forestry Department and Danau Girang Field Centre). The remaining amount was allocated to marine conservation efforts with Reef Check Malaysia and Marine Research Foundation, human-orangutan co-existence projects with PONGO Alliance, as well as community-based mangrove conservation with sustainable livelihood programme with Global Environment Centre.

Under our Education pillar, we embarked on CERDIK, a CSR initiative aimed at reducing gaps in access to primary education among low-income communities, especially those in rural areas, by providing B40 students access to digital learning. This need is long overdue and is amplified due to the pandemic and closure of schools. The initiative was carried out collaboratively with the MOF, Ministry of Education, and Yayasan Hasanah as the CERDIK secretariat. YSD allocated RM18 million to contribute laptops to 8,558 B40 students nationwide, with their distribution supported by volunteers from the 3 Sime Darby companies. Together with our technical partner Rentwise, we aim to support digital learning while reducing our carbon footprint by distributing remanufactured laptops and ensuring that they are disposed of in an environmentally responsible manner after a usage period of up to 6 years. These laptops are also equipped with the latest software and 3 years warranty to ensure worry-free studying. These outcomes are in line with the goals under both our Education and Environment pillars.

**RM21.89 Mil**  
committed to COVID-19  
related aid & assistance

**93**  
Project Partners in  
executing COVID-19  
aid & assistance

**163,766**  
Beneficiaries across  
Malaysia received  
aid and assistance

**165**  
Relief initiatives  
implemented

**47**  
Healthcare facilities  
received aid  
and assistance



As the pandemic laid bare deep divisions and inequalities, our immediate priority is to continue supporting and safeguarding the welfare of the disadvantaged and the vulnerable from the health and economic impacts of the global health crisis. During critical periods throughout the year in review, we had multiplied our allocation of funds to support essential COVID-19 and flood response work and remain prepared to increase them if the situation calls for it.

Although pandemic restrictions have foiled many of our planned physical activities for many projects across our five pillars, especially under Sports and Arts & Culture, we remain devoted to making a difference in the lives of our beneficiaries. I am incredibly proud of the ways many of the projects we support, whether short or long term, could navigate the COVID-19 challenges innovatively, especially by pivoting their strategies to include more digital solutions.

None of these initiatives would have been possible without the guidance and wisdom of our Governing Council, as well as the trust and confidence of the Sime Darby companies for YSD to carry out philanthropic work for them. My sincerest appreciation goes to them as well as to our cherished partners whose resilience, resourcefulness and optimism have inspired us time and again in this uncertain period. I also thank my beloved team, who continue to go the extra mile in all our endeavours, meeting desired objectives, despite all the challenges faced during the pandemic and working from home.

We have had to make essential but challenging choices to fight against an invisible and virulent enemy in this pandemic. However, this has also brought about positive transformations and offered countless opportunities for change, and I have faith for a brighter post-COVID future. Together, we shall overcome the global threats of the pandemic, and climate change-induced challenges that cause natural disasters. May all our efforts continue to deliver sustainable values and impact for the betterment of society, the environment, and the world for many years to come.