



# Architects of Diversity

MALAYSIA

## PROSPECTUS

2019

# Architects of Diversity aims to **bridge communities** and **identity groups** among youth in Malaysia.

AoD is a unique programme designed for **secondary school students** in Malaysia to tackle the hard questions of living in a multicultural society. Our future leaders need to learn how to navigate issues of **stereotypes, privilege and conflict** in this fast-changing world. We provide the tools to critically engage in sensitive conversations about race, religion and class through **empathetic learning and listening**.

AoD is an initiative by Malaysian alumni of United World Colleges, operating under the UWC Malaysia Alumni Association. The project is run entirely by alumni volunteers. AoD was conceived in 2017 and ran its first program in 2018.

## CORE TEAM



*Jason Wee  
(UWCCR '16)  
Lead Coordinator*



*Sanggeet Mithra  
(UWCCR '10)  
Lead Coordinator*



*Adriana Manan  
(UWC USA '03)  
UWC Alumni Association*



# UWC Inspired



The United World Colleges (UWC) is an international nonprofit organization with a presence in **more than 156 countries** (national committees) that promotes peace and international understanding through multicultural education. Founded in 1962 and chaired by Queen Noor of Jordan, Nelson Mandela was honorary president until his death in 2013.

UWC has **17 schools spread across the Americas, Asia, Europe and Africa**. Each school has around 200 students representing over 80 different nationalities. It also runs **short course programmes** around the world to increase the number of people who can have access to a UWC educational experience.

UWC makes education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future.

## MISSION STATEMENT

AoD does not depart far from UWC's mission. Social stratification in Malaysia precipitates in almost every dimension - race, religion, economic class, geography, language and gender. Thus, we pioneer structured ways of bridging various communities and identities.

We firmly believe that **empathy built through intimate interpersonal relationships across identity groups will create positive social dynamics for co-living.**

# Our Programme



## SHORT COURSES

A Short Course condenses the UWC experience in a 1-2 week residential camp. AoD brings students from all over Malaysia of various socioeconomic groups during school holidays.



## WORKSHOPS

AoD partners with other organisations to deliver one-off workshops to secondary school students (15-18 years old). These workshops focus on incorporating UWC values into existing communities.

## AOD THEORY OF CHANGE

Who am I?



Who is my community?



Who is my society?



Empathy requires immersive, personal participation that calls into **question one's own background and biases**. We foster an environment where participants engage in **vulnerability and authenticity**.

*Sample activity:*

### **Fishbowl Discussion**

Participants explore flexibility of identity by evaluating aspects of themselves (e.g. gender, skin colour). Group is split in half, with one half asking the other about how an identity feature impacts their lives.

Participants learn to suspend stereotypes and pre-judgement to **form meaningful relationships** with their peers. We facilitate this with both supervised and unsupervised avenues to **share personal stories and reflect on societal expectations**.

*Sample activity:*

### **Tea Party**

Participants are assigned an animal that needs to make certain sounds to other animals (other participants). This activity stimulates discussion on implicit and explicit prejudice towards other groups in society.

**Navigating group conflict** in communities is essential to building successful societies. Participants engage in role-playing activities to experiment in **mediation and resolution**.

*Sample activity:*

### **Refugee Crisis Simulation**

Participants are divided into different parties of a town: a mayor, police, refugees, NGO, pro-refugee and anti-refugee citizens. Each group is required to debate each other to convince the mayor to allow or ban refugee entry, simulating the complexities of a multicultural society.

# Activities

Upcoming:  
UWC Short Course 2020

## Workshops in Partnership with Closing the Gap 28 May- 1 June, 2019



We delivered two main sessions in Closing the Gap's residential camp to 33 Form 5 students from the B40 community.

### Writing Workshop

Participants critically engaged with an object or memory they find important. By opening a safe space to share their personal stories, participants learned to articulate their own experiences as well as forming closer relationships with their peers.

### Student Council Simulation

By assigning participants into groups with irreconcilable differences that have to work together to complete a task, they were forced to balance emotions while debating one another while communicating effectively with a disagreeing party. Participants learned how compromise and tolerance are crucial yet challenging values to uphold.

## 1st UWC Short Course 18-25 August, 2018



AoD kicked off with a week-long residential camp in Janda Baik, Pahang. We partnered with Teach for Malaysia and UNHCR to expand our recruitment.

### Deliberate Diversity

31 Form 4 students were fully-sponsored from all over Malaysia, representing various states, ethnicities, religions and socioeconomic classes.

### Bilingual Instruction

All sessions and activities were conducted in both English and Bahasa Melayu to increase accessibility to all participants.

### Post-Camp Engagement

Participants applied lessons from the Short Course to investigate issues of diversity in their own communities, culminating in a keystone project. They covered topics such as refugees in Malaysia, mental health and racial discrimination.

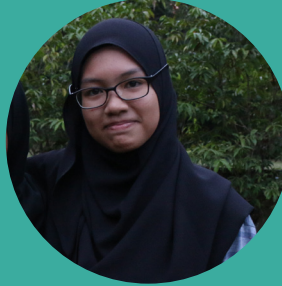
# Testimonies



IAN CHANG  
(SHORT COURSE 2018)

"The difficulties that I face in the comparison between race and religion is that people sometimes stereotype the humans with a specific race which have a definite religion. For instance, I noticed that Malay people are stereotyped in having an Islam religion. To be honest, I would sometimes think that way. Changing this perspective would be difficult for me due to my influences.

However, this AoD has changed me in ways that I couldn't have imagined. My opinion on race and religion are completely different now. My identity is a vast variety of attributes that I barely know of."



NURUL AFIEFA  
(SHORT COURSE 2018)

"AoD is the most memorable camp that I've ever attended. I've met people from different places, ethnicities and religions around Malaysia. We discussed a lot of things about identity, personality, stereotypes, refugees and others. I can't forget all the experiences that I've been through with my friends and facilitators."

"I learned that competing to achieve a goal is really important, but most of all, compromising to achieve a goal together is more important."



SUSHANTHINE A/P S.  
VIVEKANANDAN  
(WORKSHOP 2019)

In our 2018 Short Course,

**100% of participants** said they made a **close friend of a different race or religion** in AoD.

*48.4% previously reported that they had very few or no close friends of a different race/religion.*

In our 2019 Workshop with Closing the Gap,

**85% of participants** agreed or strongly agreed the activity motivated them to **do something different**.

# Looking Ahead

## INCREASE CAPACITY

AoD currently relies on volunteers and ad-hoc funding. Moving forward, securing stable sponsorships and revenues is crucial to establish a full-time team capable of running programmes consistently.

### Main challenges:

- Lack of permanent work force due to financial limitations
- Difficulty in accessing public school network
- Deficit in research makes it difficult to assess impact of programming

### Possible sources of funding:

- UWC alumni network
- Private donations
- Paid workshops and training sessions
- Consultancy

## EXPAND REACH

In line with our mission, AoD needs to ensure areas outside the Klang Valley are able to access our programming. Expanding partnerships and leveraging government support is necessary for improving intergroup relations among various groups in the country.

## DIVERSIFY PROGRAMMING

Beyond short courses and workshops, we are seeking to create more long-term programming that would maximise our impact in communities. Working together with educational institutions to implement structural changes would be important to forward large-scale change in Malaysia.

### Potential collaborators:

- Youth-related NGOs
- Educational institutions
- State and federal-level education departments
- Leadership camp businesses

# Architects of Diversity MALAYSIA

[aodmalaysia.org](http://aodmalaysia.org)

We are looking for ways to expand our programming and curriculum to make a bigger impact in the country. If you would like to support us financially or in-kind, or may be interested in having a conversation on possible projects and collaborations, please contact:

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