

Seeking for A Sustainable Living in Program Perumahan Rakyat (PPR) in Klang Valley, Malaysia

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MASA POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

POLICY BRIEF 13

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**Peter Aning Anak Tedong
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2022

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Publisher:



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PREFACE

Institut Masa Depan Malaysia (MASA) is an independent think tank that brings together experts in government and academia to provide quality research, policy recommendations, and analysis on the full range of public policy issues guided by the shared prosperity values.

Since its inception, MASA has been actively involved in shaping national policies and frameworks. MASA Policy Development Programme (MPDP) was introduced as a pioneering initiative aimed at promoting policy research among researchers from public and private universities across the country, in alignment with the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, which are integrated with the 12th Malaysia Plan.

Through the MPDP 1.0 initiative, 30 Policy Briefs have been successfully produced, encompassing policy input and recommendations across sectors such as economics, social issues, education, and sustainable development.

MASA expresses its gratitude to Dr. Peter Aning Anak Tedong and his team for the production of this policy brief. The commitment of the MPDP grant recipients, along with close cooperation with relevant stakeholders, is highly appreciated and is hoped to continue making a positive impact on national policy development.

Azril Mohd Amin

Chief Executive Officer

Institut Masa Depan Malaysia

ABOUT MASA

Institut Masa Depan Malaysia (MASA) is an independent think tank that brings together experts in government and academia to provide quality research, policy recommendations, and analysis on the full range of public policy issues guided by the shared prosperity values.

MASA was established in January 2019. The formation of the organisation was inspired and mandated by the Seventh Prime Minister, YABhg. Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the Eighth Prime Minister, YB Tan Sri Dato' Haji Muhyiddin Bin Haji Md Yassin. It was founded out of a passion to forward the philosophy of shared prosperity in Malaysia and this region.

MASA also was commissioned by the government of Malaysia to author and develop the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 plan as the new socioeconomic plan for Malaysia.

Our Vision

To be a thought leader on policy ideas and analysis guided by shared prosperity values.

Our Mission

To create a world where no one is left behind by influencing policymakers to develop data-driven policies that ensure equitable wealth distribution and continuous improvement of people's well-being.

ABOUT MPDP

MASA Policy Development Programme (MPDP) is a pioneering effort in promoting policy research that has become part of MASA's flagship project, in line with the 12th Malaysia Plan which is aligned with the Shared Prosperity Vision and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The research grant, introduced for the first time in 2021, received an encouraging response public and private institutions of higher learning as well as non-governmental organizations.

MPDP researchers have produced studies across various strategic areas, including multidimensional poverty, education for the B40 group, sustainable urban planning for low-income communities, regional inclusivity in Sabah and Sarawak, social enterprise models for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), green economy potential and food security.

Other strategic areas of studies include empowerment of the ecotourism sector, climate change, health preparedness and crisis resilience, addressing learning loss, business acceleration, affordable housing and social protection.

All these are reflections of the initiatives and aspirations, inspired by the 8th Prime Minister and Chairman of MASA, Tan Sri Dato' Haji Muhyiddin bin Hj. Md. Yassin.

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13.	Revitalizing the Urban B40 Communities Through The Development of a Multidimensional Integrated Community Sustainability Planning (ICSP) Framework	Dr. Peter Aning anak Tedong
14.	Grey Matter - An Examination of Malaysians Perspectives Towards Ageism and Impacts of Health	Prof. Dr. Choo Wan Yuen

NO	TITLE	PROJECT LEADER
15.	Road Safety and Health Risks of Food Delivery Riders During COVID-Implications and Recommendations	Dr. Laila Suriya Ahmad Apandi
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NO	TITLE	PROJECT LEADER
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21.	Ketahanan dan Kapasiti Adaptasi Sektor Ekopelancongan Terhadap Pandemik COVID-19: Kajian Kes Komuniti Setempat di Pulau Tioman	Dr. Siti Nor Liyana bt Harun
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NO	TITLE	PROJECT LEADER
26.	Mental Health Services Mapping for School Going Children and Adolescents	Dr. Tengku Amatullah Madeehah bt Tengku Mohd
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BIOGRAPHY

PETER ANING ANAK TEDONG

Peter Aning Tedong is an accomplished academic professional with significant roles at the University of Malaya, where he heads the Centre for Malaysian Indigenous Studies and serves as Deputy Head of the Malaysian Population and Migration Research Centre. He also leads the Unit of Housing and Settlement at the Sustainable Urban and Real Estate Research Center. Peter's expertise in urban studies and housing policy encompasses a range of topics, including housing governance, political economy in urban planning, and neighborhood sustainability. He has a track record of securing research grants and recently completed projects on socio-spatial planning in Malaysia's urban future and addressing poverty in indigenous communities. His research extends to governance issues concerning vulnerable communities, and he investigates housing and migration dynamics in Malaysian cities. Currently, Peter is exploring themes related to affordable housing governance, the Sustainable Development Goals in community planning, and the impact of migration on regional and urban development, with a primary focus on Southeast Asia while also conducting fieldwork in various international regions.

ZAFIRAH AL-SADAT ZYED

Zafirah Al Sadat Zyed is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Real Estate, Faculty of Built Environment, Universiti Malaya. She holds a Bachelor 's Degree (Hons with Distinction) in Estate Management and a Ph.D. (Housing Studies) from Universiti Malaya in 2010 and 2014, respectively. Her research area includes housing studies and urban studies. She has published several journal articles in real estate, particularly in housing. She has also been awarded research grants from Universiti Malaya and the Ministry of Education, Malaysia. Apart from that, she was involved in consultation projects with private companies in Malaysia.

Executive Summary

Sustainable and affordable housing is essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities. It is critical that housing policy and guidelines support environmentally sound housing that takes into account socio-cultural and economic issues.

Therefore, the concept of the SDGs should be embedded in housing policy and guidelines, particularly for the Program Perumahan Rakyat (PPR), with a focus on environmentally friendly design and green technology. If supported by government policies, community acceptance of such ideology can serve as a catalyst for a smooth transition to sustainable housing.

However, despite numerous government plans and initiatives aimed at achieving the SDGs, urban B40 residents in PPR housing continue to face issues related to sustainable living conditions such as poor waste management, unpractical housing layout design, a low level of accessibility, and severe overcrowding in residential areas.

This situation, however, is unsurprising given that the government has designated PPRs as low-income housing – but without special government intervention, the quality of life in PPR communities will deteriorate.

Therefore, providing PPR that is developed or revitalized in line with sustainable principles will contribute to better living of urban B40 in Malaysia.

Introduction

The concept of sustainable development emerged following the publication of the Brundtland report in 1987. Subsequently, sustainable ideologies have come to dominate urban development practice, particularly when it comes to planning and developing new townships or cities.

In general, sustainable development includes economic, social, and environmental components (Holden, 2012; Jepson, 2004; Berke, 1994). However, in some cases, sustainable development encompasses the cultural, political, and governance aspects of cities.

The definition of sustainable development varies, but most sources define it as a process of growth that meets the needs of the current generation without jeopardizing the opportunities of future generations (Wheeler, 2000; WCED, 1987).

Some scholars explained that sustainable development concepts are not static, but rather changeable processes that involve a complex urban development process (Pacione, 2007; Pelucha et al., 2011).

Although the concept of sustainable development is increasingly popular among city builders and policymakers, there is a lack of agreement on how this idea can be translated into practice.

The issue of unsustainable housing and communities among the urban B40 population in Malaysia has become a national concern. Although current development practise and a top-down approach emphasise "inclusivity" and give priority to underprivileged and urban poor groups, government strategies have proven to be less effective in improving the socioeconomic status and sustainable living of the B40 group.

The government built Low Cost (LC) housing and Program Perumahan Rakyat (PPR) to provide a comfortable house with infrastructure and basic amenities at a convenient location for B40 groups. For instance, as of March 2020, a total of 1346 LC and PPR projects completed in Selangor state, with 220 086 housing units (SUK Selangor, 2020).

However, the problems arising from increasing population and housing demand is not balanced with housing supply, making these communities unsustainable.

In general, the challenges faced by the urban B40 community includes failure to pay building management fees, selfish and irresponsible behavior towards public utilities and common properties, hygiene and cleanliness issues in the surrounding areas, a low community support system, lack of unity and a sense of togetherness among the community members, lack of concern towards those in need, social problems among the youth and tenants as well as rampant vandalism on public property (National Community Policy, 2019).

According to Zyed and Tedong (2020), most LC and PPR apartments are not integrated with public transportation, and some of these communities are located in suburban areas. Furthermore, a recent Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated what happens when low-income households concentrated in areas with limited social infrastructure, amenities, and facilities.

With limited access to the basic services due to the traditional neighborhood design of these communities, they forced to stay at home and consequently affect their life quality of life in terms of health, education, and employment and contribute to economic instability (Tedong et al., 2022). Thus, making this community far from sustainability.

It is important to note that the traditional housing and neighbourhood design for urban B40 communities in PPR buildings and LC apartments that embraced 650sqft and 850sqft has contributed to social problems within the communities (Tedong et al., 2022).

Typically, these communities lack public spaces, and some urban B40 residents are under severe stress due to malfunctioning elevators, rising levels of petty crime, and a sense of social isolation (Musa et al., 2020). Mohammad et al. (2010) have identified a number of factors that contribute to the problems: lack of early design planning, poor housing quality, lack of basic services in PPR, and Low-Cost Building.

Tedong et al. (2022) also discovered that residents of PPR buildings are dissatisfied with a feature of their residential units and neighbourhood amenities, which negatively impacts their living environment and quality of life.

Poor public transportation and a lack of playgrounds for children, community halls, car parks, security, and facilities for the disabled contribute to the dissatisfaction with the neighborhood's infrastructure and environment (Abdul-Aziz et al., 2018).

This is due to the fact that private developers are profit-driven and pay less attention to providing neighbourhood amenities and the environment. Nooriah (2019), in her research on low- and middle-income housing, discovered that the poor quality of housing and the poor environmental quality of housing areas contribute more to stress and dissatisfaction among residents than economic factors, despite the fact that they spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing.

Faridah et al. (2015) found that the respondent in the PPR building under City Hall Kuala Lumpur gave an unsatisfactory rating for mechanical maintenance of the lift, religious and social amenities, and inadequate parking spaces. Therefore, there is a pressing need to formulate and produce a set of practical guidelines for the sustainable living of PPR and LC buildings in Malaysia.

Key Messages and Recommendations

Recommendation 1

- To revisit the National Housing Policy.

Recommendation 2

- To strengthening governance and institutional structural change.

Recommendation 3

- To retrofitting PPR Development by re-vitalizing social and spatial planning.

Note on Methodology

The investigation was conducted in two distinct phases. In the initial phase, we distributed 150 questionnaires to PPR housing residents in Klang Valley, Malaysia. A quantitative survey was conducted to determine how urban residents perceive the implementation of sustainable development in their neighborhood.

In the survey, we questioned residents about topics such as sustainable practice in their neighborhoods, communication between residents and local authority, regulation, and mechanisms for implementing sustainable development, as well as their perceptions of the roles of government in producing sustainable development.

In the second phase, we used a case study approach to evaluate the application of sustainable principles in four PPR projects in the Klang Valley. As part of the case study analysis, we also conducted in-depth interviews with PPR residents and community leaders. The 30 to 90 minute in-depth interviews were guided by a list of questions.

The participants' perspectives on the role of the government in developing PPR housing that is sustainable were revealed by a thematic analysis.

In addition, we conducted a focus group discussion with various government agencies, private planning firms, non-profit organizations, and PPR residents.

“Building Back Better”: Key Dimensions for a Sustainable Communities in a Public Housing

A central dimension of building back better is the need for a people-centred approach that focuses on well-being, improves inclusiveness and reduces inequality. A new comprehensive policy specifically related to PPR housing is required to improve sustainable communities in PPR housing.

To produce sustainable communities in PPR housing, the policy must emphasize issues such as affordable and quality housing, environmentally friendly neighborhoods, and, above all, complete and connected neighborhoods.

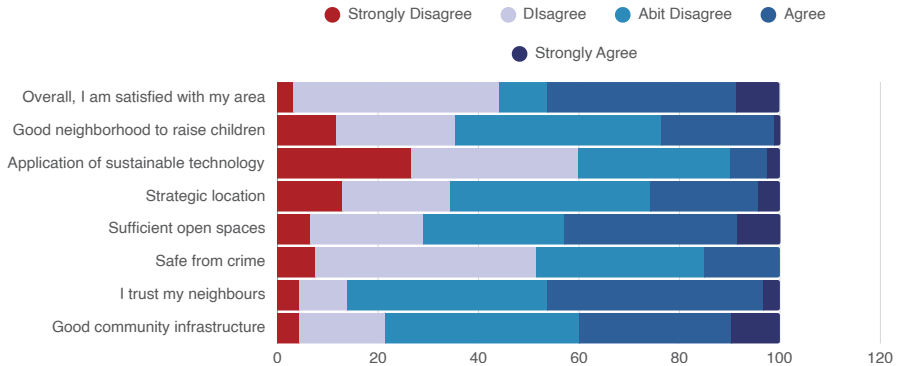
In this study, we asked respondents briefly about the elements of a sustainable neighborhood. The survey asked seven indicators of on a five-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Quantitative data in Figure 1 revealed that the majority of respondents are dissatisfied with their neighborhood. Therefore, the survey results validate the recurring theme from the in-depth interviews: PPR housing is "far" from sustainable.

When discussing the issues of open spaces, transportation, technology, and the environment, majority of responses are negative. The majority of respondents agree that the proximity of public transportation to their neighborhoods is poor in terms of traffic and transportation.

Figure 1

Residents Perceptions on the Sustainable Development Indicators (N=150)



Half of the respondents believe that their neighborhood's pedestrian accessibility and network coverage are inadequate. Most respondents were negative regarding the issue of safety from crime. Additionally, the majority of respondents believe that their community is not conducive to raising children. More than half of respondents believe that their community does not actively participate in sustainable programmes such as recycling and composting of food waste. The majority of respondents are dissatisfied with their respective neighborhoods.

Searching for Sustainable Cities: What Do Residents Want for a Sustainable Public Housing?

In the quantitative surveys, we also asked respondents about the future components of sustainable PPR housing. When planning for sustainable public housing, the majority of respondents (28.1 percent) agreed that policymakers should emphasize the elements of smart transportation and urban mobility. Smart transportation and mobility, according to 24.9 percent of respondents, should be well planned to achieve sustainable cities in the near future.

This result primarily reflects negative perceptions of connectivity and accessibility in their immediate surroundings. Even though the local government provided pedestrian walkways in some neighborhood areas, the walkways were in disrepair. Residents who were interviewed also stated that the design of their neighborhood's pedestrian walkways is unsafe and lacks continuity from one area to another.

Table 1

Residents' Aspirations towards PPR Housing Principles

Future Sustainable PPR Housing Principles	Percentage	Rank
Smart transportation and urban mobility	28.1	1
Smart waste management	11.4	4
Inclusive and diverse community	24.9	3
Cultural and heritage	3.8	6
More green and open spaces	6.7	5
Increase security and safety	25.1	2

According to Table 1, the second most important principle that policymakers must consider when designing sustainable PPR housing is safety and security. 25.1 percent of respondents support a more comprehensive approach to improving safety and security, particularly in their neighborhoods.

Inclusive and diverse community received higher marks from respondents and were ranked third. Our case study analysis clearly demonstrated that current neighborhood planning practices embrace the concept of housing differentiation by clearly separating low-income and high-income groups.

For example, low-cost apartments are physically separated from high-end condominiums. As a result, Malaysian neighborhood planning faces enormous challenges in terms of community mix and inclusion.

Furthermore, 11.4 percent of respondents believe that smart waste management should be one of the principles in developing sustainable public housing, which was ranked fourth. Residents interviewed stated that waste management in their neighborhood was ineffective, particularly during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, the findings revealed that approximately 6% of residents believed that green and open spaces are essential for creating sustainable public housing, placing them in fifth place.

This is primarily due to the fact that none of the public housing communities we examined had made significant strides in energy efficiency and waste recycling.

Water pollution and flash floods are two of the most pressing issues facing Malaysia's environmental planning. Last but not least, culture and heritage were ranked sixth and are regarded as the least important principles for creating sustainable cities by locals.

Policy Recommendations

(1) Lack of coordination and coherence

Focus group discussion revealed that cross-sectoral and inter-ministerial collaboration can be difficult because it is not always clear how the activities of different ministries relate to one another, and coordination between institutions can be challenging.

Although numerous agencies worked diligently to monitor and enforce the government policies, implementing sustainable public housing proved challenging: some agencies cited bureaucratic obstacles, while others cited a lack of political will and budget constraints.

(2) Poor Community Planning and Design

Planners and developers in Malaysia are currently implementing sustainable development principles in a manner that makes neighborhoods more attractive and livable. Can it create better communities for individuals of all income levels? The results of a focus group discussion indicate that older public housing features an unfriendly neighborhood design.

For instance, open spaces are typically situated close to garbage collection points, making it difficult for residents to use the area. In the future public housing must therefore incorporate a placemaking philosophy.

(3) Great Plans but Poor Implementation

Although Malaysia's planning authorities and mechanisms are sufficiently adaptable to accommodate a wide range of sustainable development ideas and concepts, the implementation of sustainable development remains less effective. Various stakeholders frequently employed the terms sociability, walkability, eco-friendly materials, and livability in their discussions regarding sustainability.

Despite the fact that urban residents may debate the merits of particular ideas, there is widespread consensus that the concept was difficult to implement in practice. While government policies and plans are essential to creating a sustainable community in public housing, we discovered that residents do not take the sustainable elements seriously.

In general, Malaysia's sustainability plans emphasize a sustainable urban environment, including in public housing; however, according to interviews with urban residents, there is no specific mechanism for implementing this concept.

Policy Implications: Future Development VS Retrofitting

Based on findings from quantitative data with PPR residents and focus group discussion with various stakeholders, the following two recommendations are provided for local policymakers and housing practitioners to advance the adoption of sustainable technologies and design in low-income housing strategies.

(1) (Re)Visiting the National Housing Policy

The National Housing Policy (2018–2025) was enacted in 2018 in order to provide adequate and affordable housing for all. The policy focuses on five key areas:

- Focus 1: Ensuring good quality housing for all
- Focus 2: Improving accessibility and affordability of housing
- Focus 3: Ensuring quality and cohesive neighborhood
- Focus 4: Improving housing and transportation coordination for better quality of life
- Focus 5: Strengthening institutional capabilities to deliver DRN (2018-2025)

For the purposes of this policy brief, three focus areas have been identified as shown in Table 2 in order to enhance the current practice of producing sustainable living in PPR development. Adopting and enforcing effective policies at all levels of government is necessary to ensure the sustainability of PPR housing.

Table 2

Recommendation for Improvements based on the National Housing Policy

Proposed Improvements	Action Plan	Implementing Agencies
Current Focus 1: Ensuring good quality housing for all		
Ensure quality and liveable people's housing	A comprehensive inventory of the current condition of public housing built by the federal and state governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHLG) • Local Authority • Various agencies under state government
Create a livable and conducive housing design and layout for PPR building	<p>New guideline on the minimum housing size in PPR</p> <p>Special planning permission conditions for PPR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MHLG • Local Authority • PLANMalaysia
Rejuvenating existing PPR that has been built for more than 15 years	Rejuvenate internal and external PPR building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authority • Private sector through CSR programs
Current Focus 2: Ensuring quality and cohesive neighbourhood		
Provide suitable public facilities and open space according to current demands	<p>Placement of public facilities that are strategic and easy to use through a good layout plan</p> <p>Increase the ratio of provision of open space in PPR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MHLG • Local Authority • PLANMalaysia

Table 2 (continued)

Proposed Improvements	Action Plan	Implementing Agencies
Current Focus 2: Ensuring quality and cohesive neighbourhood		
Strengthen solid waste management at PPR	Waste management guidelines at PPR Introduce green neighbourhood initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MHLG • Local Authority,
Current Focus 3: Improving housing and transportation coordination for better quality of life		
Compulsory requirement for pedestrian walkway, bicycle lanes and people with disabilities (OKU) paths at PPR	Special guidelines need to be introduced to make development of pedestrian walkway, bicycle lanes and people with disabilities (OKU) paths compulsory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MHLG • Local Authority, • PLANMalaysia
Increase number of carparks in PPR	Refine car park ratio in PPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MHLG • Local Authority, • PLANMalaysia

(2) Strengthening Governance and Institutional Structural Change

The government across levels play a pivotal role in producing sustainable development. Policy makers should be thinking long term about what is good for the community by involving citizens in the planning process.

Moreover, it is not effective to have dozens of ideas without detailed attention to implementation capacities and community acceptance.

Therefore, stronger collaboration across different organizations, departments, agencies, and three-tiers of government system is needed to implement sustainable principles to practice effectively.

The sustainable development strategies must contemplate collaborative work, integrated amongst public, private, and civil society entities. There are three immediate actions that could be taken to enhance the sustainability of living in PPR:

- Increased coordination and coherence in planning for sustainable public housing is required by involving all agencies and ministries. In this policy brief, we propose establishing a new "Housing Integrated Platform" to avoid the overlap of power among various agencies. Establishing the "Housing Integrated Platform" can help policymakers overcome sectoral silos or overlapped decision-making in policy-making processes, as well as support the principles of sustainable public housing. This must be clearly reflected in the National Housing Policy.

- One-size-fits-all approaches are ineffective for addressing the multifaceted challenges of public housing. Policies and housing guidelines for public housing should be revised to reflect the complexity of Malaysia's multilayered governance of PPR. For example, there should be a distinct policy or set of guidelines for managing and governing PPR managed by the federal or state government.
- Stakeholder engagement must be encouraged at the policy development stage to ensure that concrete areas of need and all aspects of sustainable development in public housing are adequately addressed. Having said that, urban residents, developers, and practitioners in Malaysia should be actively involved in the production of public housing. This requirement can be implemented at the local authority levels.

(3) Retrofitting PPR Development: (Re)Vitalizing Social And Spatial Planning

PPR residents search for vibrant, diverse, attractive, and exclusive living. Policy makers should be more flexible in embedding the sustainable principles in public housing by considering what residents really want rather than what the government want to approve.

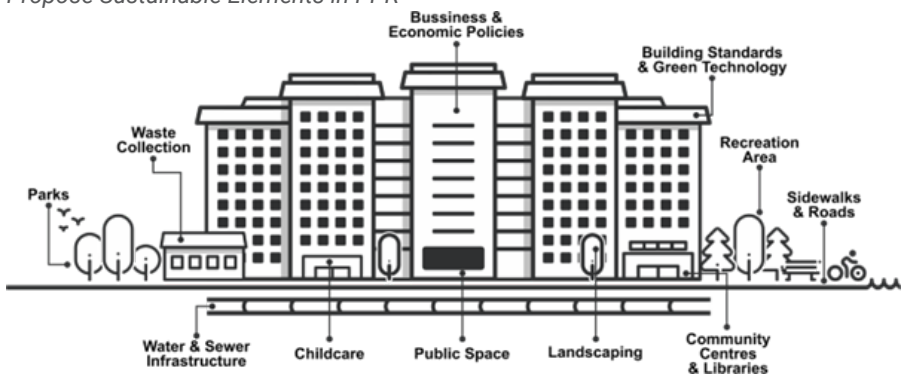
For instance, by improving traffic and transportation system within and surround the public housing more people can walk, roll and ride to their daily activities and amenities, instead of driving.

The main idea is to re-build or re-produce a complete, connected, culturally vibrant neighbourhoods using the “15-minute city” principle. Three immediate actions could be taken to accomplish this:

- **Complete, Connected Neighborhoods**

- The older PPR can be retrofitted to reflect what residents value in their communities, including local businesses, arts and culture, amenities, and public spaces. As a result, as shown in Figure 2, we propose that eleven components need to be considered when planning for sustainable PPR. All these elements can be incorporated into the planning permission requirement at the local authority level. A special guideline related to sustainable components in public housing must be produced to serve as a catalyst for local planning to adopt sustainable principles by providing information and financial resources.

Figure 2
Propose Sustainable Elements in PPR

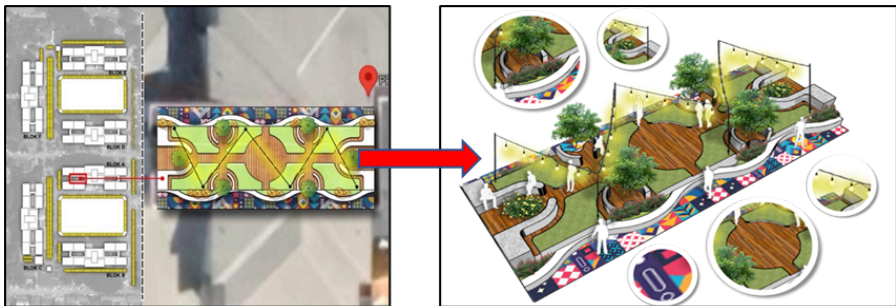


- **Public Participations through Bottom-Up Approach**
 - Participation of the local community in the planning and decision-making process is crucial because a sustainable community requires the participation of diverse interests: some sectors may focus on improving housing and transportation, whereas others may focus on environmental and socioeconomic concerns.
 - The active participation of the local community in planning for a sustainable community is crucial, and policymakers cannot create sustainable communities without the commitment of community residents to alter their lifestyles and attitudes toward the community. Consequently, a new action plan should be developed at the local authority level to actively engage the local community in community planning.
- **Socially Integrated Community through Placemaking**
 - Placemaking is an approach to the planning, design, and administration of public spaces that prioritizes the well-being of the public by transforming public spaces into the community's beating heart.
 - While placemaking involves the physical development and improvement of buildings, streets, and public spaces, it is more than architecture, design, and construction. Placemaking maximizes the social value of a space by fostering connections between it and its users, thereby optimizing the use of an urban space within its larger context.

- Consequently, policymakers should prioritize placemaking ideology when planning for future sustainable public housing. The illustration in Figure 3 demonstrates how placemaking can be implemented in PPR housing.

Figure 3

Example of Placemaking in PPR



Conclusion

This policy brief has highlighted several characteristics of sustainable principles that can be implemented in the PPR. Although the Malaysian government is making strides toward sustainable development, much more work remains to be done. Our analysis reveals that most Malaysia's planning plans demonstrate a lack of political and institutional commitment.

We also discovered that local governments are overly ambitious in terms of achieving sustainable development and, as a result, lack a clear focus on what they want to accomplish. While the concept of sustainable cities appears nicely in various Malaysian planning documents, we can see that it is poorly implemented.

We argue that sustainability initiatives at the local government level could be improved with support from the federal government by providing a platform for introducing new and robust policies and undertaking best practices related to sustainable development.

Despite numerous efforts to promote sustainable PPR, the majority of residents interviewed describe their neighborhood as "still a far from being sustainable and livable." In addition, interview data revealed that they desire a more functional neighborhood layout because the current design is not environmentally friendly. Therefore, we strongly suggest that the government need to conduct participatory planning approach to understand and incorporate residents' needs in building design.

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eISBN 978-629-95648-7-4



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