



ANNUAL
REPORT
2021

dignity

transforming the poor
through education

Our Vision

To nurture and empower
world changers through
transformative education.

We accomplish this through our
programmes and people.

together we can break the cycle of poverty

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Chairman's Message

James Ling



enterprises also continued to provide life skills training to over 400 students.

As the effects of the pandemic and lockdowns pro-longed, Dignity also set out to ensure that families were able to survive the financial strain. With your generous donations Dignity's appeal for funds and in-kind items were able to support over 2,200 families and also provide rent assistance to 121 families to prevent them from being evicted from their homes. Furthermore, our mental wellness team also provided counselling and emotional support to our students, their families and our Dignity staff.

Dear friends of Dignity,

After a really challenging 2020, who would have thought 2021 would be tougher but it was. As funds and reserves continue to dry up especially with further lockdowns a glimmer of hope came with the vaccination programs thus reducing the impact of the coronavirus.

With all your continued support we were able to enrol 1,835 students plus over 300 more under the second year of the Community Classroom program in partnership with UNHCR. We were able to provide laptops and tablets and our Dignity team continued to digitise our education content to ensure that the learning continued.

I am happy to report that we had our largest group of IGCSE students with 63 in total and 14 scoring straight A's whilst we had an additional 10 students with at least 3A's each. Our transformational

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I want to say thank you to our supporters and Dignity team for coming together through the spirit of collaboration, the exchanging of minds and sharing of resources. Together we are creating an amazing and wonderful impact in the lives of our students. What better way to bring this to life than through the wonderful stories and pictures of our students and staff in the coming pages.

"None of us, including me, ever do great things. But we can all do small things, with great love, and together we can do something wonderful." — Mother Teresa

May God bless you, your families and our nation of Malaysia.

James Ling
Chairman
Board of Trustees

CEO's Message

Petrina Satvinder



2021 was a whirlwind of a year. Yet in the midst of it, we felt God leading us to build for the future.

Dignity's Farm Academy started on 10 acres of land in Bentong, Pahang in January, 2021. We were inspired by Maria Montessori's vision for adolescent education: a countryside farmstead where teenagers could grow in a nurturing community and learn about the environment, sustainability and commerce.

Across 12 months, we set about making the vision a reality. We transformed the land into a fruitful farm filled with vegetables, flowers and living spaces. The days were filled with the hustle and bustle of seeding, planting, watering and harvesting. Afternoons were taken up by lessons and the evenings were reserved for revision, reflection and rest.

We treasured every experience together: from building access roads and chopping bamboos,

to widening the farm river and rearing organic chickens.

In total, the Farm Academy received 3 cohorts across 7 months: over 150 boys and girls altogether. Back in Sentul, our Form 5 students were experiencing the Live-in programme—an intensive boarding program in preparation for their IGCSE examinations. The results speak for themselves.

Best of all, we observed our youth gradually developing a calm confidence, courage and practical common-sense. This happens when children are entrusted with real responsibilities in a community where everyone relies on each other.

Thank you to every Dignity educator and farm staff who has gone above and beyond to serve the children. Thank you to each volunteer, donor and partner especially our Vice Chairman, Jackson Ho, upon whose land the Farm Academy sits. Thank you for availing yourself and your resources in this journey. You are sowing into countless lives. Together, we are pioneering an education that is inclusive and truly transformative.

Petrina Satvinder
CEO & Principal, Co-founder

Education Program

2021 was the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic. We prepared ourselves to conduct lessons online for the most part of the year.

While our teachers gained experience teaching digitally in 2020, it was still challenging to engage children through 13-inch screens (smaller yet, if the student was using a phone – and the majority were!).

Many of our teachers worked longer hours to teach additional lessons in smaller groups so they could ensure no child was left behind.

Yet, there were still many students who lagged behind because they lacked suitable devices or reliable internet access at home. This made it challenging for them to join lessons consistently.

Furthermore, parents who lost jobs in 2020 were still struggling to make ends meet and this made survival, and not education, a key priority. Yet we knew that for the children, coming to online school was essential: a vital form of connection with peers, something to keep their minds occupied and fruitful during a very difficult season.

We forged ahead and through a combination of different education strategies such as boarding programs, small group tutorials and usage of specially designed inhouse digital materials, we closed the year strong with good school attendance rates (average 90% attendance across) and the highest performance from our IGCSE graduates. We expanded our Community Classroom Program and also took the leap to launch two new projects: Dignity's Farm Academy in Bentong and the A-Levels Boarding & Internship Program.



2,137 students

enrolled from 20 nationalities

**302 students from Community Classrooms*

Early Childhood Program

Montessori Toddler Stimulation Programme
3 - 4 years old

Montessori Preschool
5 - 6 years old

Using the Montessori method, toddlers are guided to become independent in the activities of everyday living. At Preschool level, the Montessori program focuses on helping children learn to read, write and count through specially developed educational materials.

In 2021, 10 toddlers and 219 preschoolers completed a year of education with us. This represented a completion rate of 71%: almost double of what it was in 2020 (37%).

While preschoolers continued with digital learning, our Toddler program opened for a portion of the year to provide daycare services for working parents. Teachers prepared activities and videos for parents to do with children and sent learning kits and art supplies to children!

Due to increasing demands from working parents requesting daycare services, our Toddler Department shifted their Montessori daycare services to a residential home in Jalan Ipoh for part of 2021.

Students presenting their art projects via Zoom during a preschool lesson.



Primary Program

Lower Primary
3 - 4 years old

Middle Primary
9 - 10 years old

Upper Primary
11 - 12 years old

Unlike conventional Primary classrooms, at Dignity we implement mixed-age groupings in all our Primary classrooms. This encourages peer-to-peer guidance, contributes to better social development and allows for academic flexibility in lessons.

Classrooms are set up with a variety of sensorial and practical life materials, reading and art corners, as well as the four core academic subjects: English Language, Bahasa Malaysia, Science and Mathematics. During the pandemic, we utilized videos, audio books, online game platforms and other digital tools to keep children engaged.



In 2021, we enrolled 873 students (+3%) across the Primary Education programs with a completion rate of 83% (720 students). Classes were mostly digital, though there were short periods in which we could conduct physical classes and parent-teacher's meetings!

We ran Teachers' Training on Digital Education, Safe Touch, Child Protection Issues, and Bullying Prevention with all Primary Educators. We also started a pilot project with Chumbaka to provide Coding classes to 3 primary classes.



Secondary Program

Lower Secondary
13 - 15 years old

Upper Secondary
16 - 18 years old

The Secondary Education program in Dignity focuses on building confident and thoughtful youth who can contribute to society. It also is the preparation period for the next stages of their lives - tertiary education and employment.

In Lower Secondary, we focus on confidence building via different activities: debates, camps, workshops, projects and so on. Teachers mentor them as they navigate the transition into adolescence. At Upper Secondary, we introduce a dual-pronged approach: skill classes alongside academic lessons to develop character, critical soft skills and equip students to seek and enter university or the market.

Running parallel to the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) is our Employability track. At Intermediate Post-Primary Track (IPET) Program and Dignity College, students are equipped with functional English Language, Mathematics, character development and entrepreneurship exposure. Dignity College students conclude their education with a one-year internship at any of Dignity's business partners.

Enrolment in the Secondary Education program increased by 6% (669 students) in 2021 with a completion rate of 86%.

Classes were mostly digital with sports, talent shows and other workshops all run online. The Secondary programs made ICT a core subject to ensure students could cope with the various virtual platforms used like Google Tools.

However, for some groups of students, digital learning was presenting a problem with engagement. Dignity introduced a Live-In Boarding Program for students from both the employability track (IPET: 55 students; Dignity College: 42 students) and IGCSE track (46 students) preparing to sit for examinations to ensure they did not fall behind. The IPET students lived at Dignity for 4 months – ensuring 100% engagement and homework submission. Other groups went to the Farm Academy in Bentong.



A levels Program

Many students graduate from Dignity's Secondary Program and find it very difficult to enter local universities due to their refugee status and the high financial costs. So, in 2021, Dignity piloted our A-Levels Boarding and Internship Program with 10 Dignity IGCSE graduates. Students applied and were interviewed before being accepted to the two-year, fully sponsored program.

The cohort lives together in a rented home nearby Dignity. Meals are provided, but otherwise, they live independently as they would in a college hostel. By day, they interned in various education programs and Dignity enterprises, and attended lessons and tutorials in the evenings. Weekends are for homework and study, leisure and visiting family and friends (when COVID restrictions allow!) The combination of work and study requires students to be independent, responsible and motivated. and Scholars are supported by a coordinator who does regular check-ins and their work supervisors. Term study breaks ensure students have sufficient time to prepare for examinations.

“ I am currently assisting as a Mathematics teacher in Foundation 1 (13 year olds) at Dignity while undertaking my A Levels doing Math, Chemistry and Biology. During the first year of this A level program, it was a challenge to juggle between my work and studies. Between teaching for long hours during the day and having classes at night, time management was definitely a skill I had to acquire overnight! Thankfully, it soon became a routine. I noticed myself adapting to the workload assigned to me. What used to feel like a heavy rock of burden was now lifted off my shoulders. This has taught me patience, endurance and to never give up in the toughest times. As it was once said, 'Without rain, there are no flowers.' My favorite part of the job is being able to take a part in the transformation process of the underprivileged children.

One of the highlights in this program for me was staying together with my classmates. I remember the first time I cooked Spaghetti Carbonara with them. It was the first time I ever tasted Spaghetti Carbonara in my life. Everyone just felt over the moon eating it!

Overall, I am deeply grateful for this A level program in Dignity as it did not just provide me an opportunity to learn academically. But it also taught me many life lessons and qualities to be a responsible individual. Thank you, Dignity, for making my dream turn into a reality.

Joseph Hkun, A Level Cohort 1
With Dignity for 7 years



Community Classrooms Project

The Community Classrooms project was a 2-month grassroots pilot project launched in November 2020 in partnership with UNHCR, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. It was well received, and we continued in 2021, launching 5 new community classrooms in September 2021.

This project was an attempt to answer the question: **“What would a decentralised school look like in a COVID-19 era?”** This question came about due during the lockdown when schools were closed and lessons brought online.

The idea was to empower community facilitators to run mini schools from their homes, negating the need for students to have internet access and a device to join online lessons.

With funding from UNHCR, we provided 15 grassroots facilitators with training, educational resources and equipment to launch the Community Classrooms focusing on primary aged children. Facilitators would conduct 2-3 sessions daily, each lasting about 3-4 hours. This strategy enabled teachers to reach more students while keeping the groups relatively small per session in order to maintain physical distancing.



Throughout the year, Dignity conducted weekly online coordination meetings on Fridays with the facilitators and organized 10 training sessions for them. Dignity’s 15 Community Classrooms have provided education to 302 students in 2021, a 34% increase from 2020 (226 students).



Transformational Enterprises & Skills Programs

At the heart of each Transformational Enterprise is the mission to empower and equip youth to fulfill their potential through entrepreneurship exposure and skills training. They also provide employment opportunities to underprivileged and refugee communities.

While, Dignity completely paused our skills training programs in 2020 due to COVID, we began to slowly open up with small batches of skills classes in 2021. Our various Transformational Enterprises also began to see business return. With the partnership of community minded companies like H&M Southeast Asia and Beyond Insights, we were able to educate 143 students in 7 skills.



	eat X dignity	sew X dignity	bake X dignity	cut X dignity	Total (RM)
Income (RM)	636,616	513,632	112,664	103,600	1,361,512
Expenses (RM)	577,373	338,081	129,423	169,414	1,214,291
Total (RM)	54,243	175,551	(16,759)	(65,814)	147,221

**Income vs Expenses of all operating social enterprises (does not include other training initiatives such as art X dignity and grow X dignity that are not yet on a full business model)*

Transformational Enterprises Highlights

- eat X dignity's 'Eat for Myanmar' campaign was an idea by one of our alumni to raise funds for friends & families (Dignity's ex-staff and students) who were affected by the coup d'état in Myanmar. We raised RM4,035 in total to send to two families in Yangon.
- sew X dignity produced 15,000 Sampul Duit for Uniqlo Malaysia's Raya Packet Giveaway!
- sew X dignity also released their first line of hand-stamped and dyed batik cloth for Christmas, inspired by the Jasmine flower – the national flower of Pakistan where many of our students hail from.
- After being closed for most of 2020 and half of 2021, cut X dignity got a facelift.
- After 2 years of paperwork, bake X dignity received its halal certification in December! All our cookies, breads and cakes are made in this halal bakery.



Welfare, Wellness & Socioemotional Programs

- 2211 food packs distributed to families.
- RM 136,732.10 disbursed to 82 families for rental assistance.
- RM 18,7432.90 disbursed to 19 families for medical assistance.
- 52 single mothers on our 'Single Mums' Whatsapp Support Group with their children received scholarships from Dignity.
- Socio-Emotional Learning Education (SEL) was formally introduced across Dignity to teach students self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, relationship skills and social awareness. Dignity uses research-based Second Step instructional materials from USA to run lessons.
- Dignity hosted a multidisciplinary symposium on suicide prevention in collaboration with PERKAMA and the Malaysian Association of Social Workers



Support Team

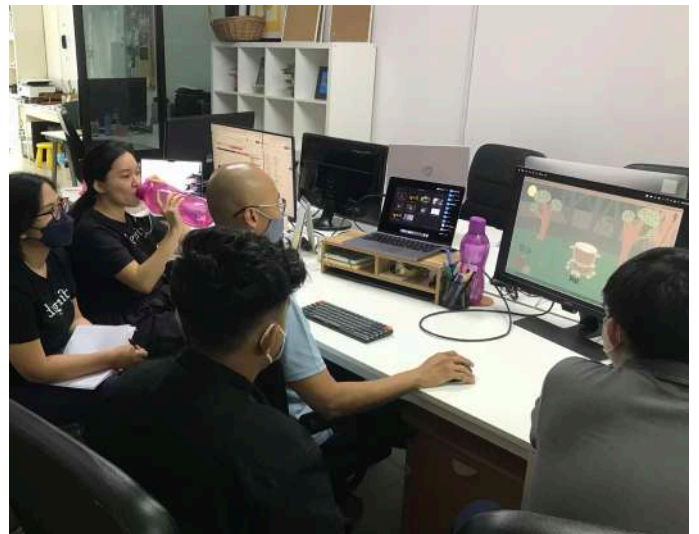
Education Content Creation

One of the main challenges faced by teachers teaching online was that they lacked time to create engaging educational materials for their lessons daily. The “prepared environment” in a Montessori classroom is equipped with specialised educational materials for children to learn from. However, no such materials were readily available to our preschool and primary school teachers when lessons were forced online.

The Education Content Creation (ECC) team was then formed in 2021 as a response to this unique challenge. Teachers were already occupied in facilitating lessons, checking homework and conducting extra lessons that they did not have the time to create engaging materials for their lessons.

The ECC team then compiled an e-library with curated and created materials (which included videos, presentations and worksheets) for teachers to use in their lessons. This allowed teachers to pay more attention to the learning of the child.

The e-library encompassed subjects such as English Language, Mathematics, Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese Language, and Knowledge and Understanding of the World (science education under the Montessori method). Some of the materials were used during lessons, while others were sent to parents to read along with their children. These materials were also shared with Community Classrooms teachers to use in their lessons.



2021 Highlights

January

- We kickstarted the year with orientation: online version since it was MCO 2.0 (Movement Control Order).
- Online learning is a major challenge for many students due to poor internet access and a lack of suitable devices. Hence, our education team prepared learning kits to balance our digital education. Physical workbooks, textbooks, stationeries and worksheets were packed and delivered to support their learning from home.
- BNP Paribas sponsored tote bags and stationeries, and some of their staff also volunteered themselves to help pack!
- For the older students, multiple cohorts of students participated in Live-in Programmes from March to April. Students stayed on-premise so that they could continue their lessons and skill classes without the need for travelling to and from school (due to the extension of MCO).
- We celebrated the best International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) results since Dignity began teaching using the IGCSE syllabus in 2015.
- All 48 students (2020 batch) scored above 82% for all subjects and all passed with credit in these 5 subjects: Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Additional Mathematics and Combined Science.

February

- We launched our 10 Community Classrooms ... and added another 5 more in September.



2021 Highlights

March

- 95 Dignity College students participated in another Live-in Program between March to May at the Bentong Farm Academy. The program focused on instilling independence and good character through living in community.
- We got to celebrate 67 Secondary graduates and their achievements through an online Graduation ceremony! Congratulations Class of 2020.
 - 48 IGCSE graduates
 - 19 Dignity College graduates



April

- Hybrid learning continues taking place – a small number of students came back to school for physical learning, whilst the majority continued learning from home.

May

- Raya festive meals distribution to Community Classroom students to spread some festive cheer during Ramadhan. A total of 245 meals were distributed, thanks to generous donors.
- Dignity continued to provide many families with groceries throughout the year with the help of corporate partners and donors. In 2021, a total of 2,211 food packs were distributed.



2021 Highlights

June

- Dignity was nominated, and won, 2 awards by the Global Good Governance (3G) Awards: Children Welfare Award 2021 and Advocacy Award 2021.
- Students from Sunway International School's (SIS) Interact Club organised the virtual Run for the Future 2021 to raise funds for Dignity for Children Foundation (Dignity). Over RM25,000 were raised!



July

- art X dignity distributed 270 packs of art materials and stationery to students. This enabled them to participate in art lessons online.
- Weekly physical education activities for students took place virtually. Our teachers produced videos for students to follow along from home.



August

- 120 girls participated in our annual Peace Camp, conducted online in 2021. Shahlin Zulkifli, former Malaysian professional ten pin bowler, shared her experience and encouraged our girls to work hard and set goals for themselves in life.



September

- One of our Orang Asli staff, Wak Isah, started a preschool class in her village! Our team brought in Montessori tables and chairs to make the environment more conducive for their learning instead of them sitting on the floor.
- Dignity continued food distribution with PPB Group Berhad's in-kind donation of milk, flour, baked beans, sardines, flour and rice. Fresh pandesal buns were baked by bake X dignity.



2021 Highlights

October

- Mitsubishi Motors Malaysia donated a 4WD for our Farm Academy! Picture taken during the handover ceremony with Mitsubishi Malaysia CEO, Mr Tomoyuki Shinnishi and COO, Mr. Ilham Helmi.
- All 173 Dignity staff got together for our first-ever virtual staff retreat themed: 'Triumph Together'! From the planning to the pre-event challenges and 'arena games', everything was done via hybrid mode.



November

- 40 Lower Secondary students were a part of Vans Checkerboard Day planned exclusively for them to experience and learn skateboarding and BMX! Each student received a pair of Vans shoes too.



December

- The Primary graduation for 107 students took place via Zoom! One of our Primary graduate students joined us only 2 years ago – at 10 years old. It was his first time going to school. When he first joined, he was only able to speak in Malay and was very shy. Today, he is able to converse in English, enjoys classes and has gained so much confidence!



Dignity Farm Academy

Imagine adolescents living, learning and growing together self-sufficiently on a farm. The environment is one where they grow, and learn to live alongside nature and each other. Youth participate in the community life of growing their own food, cooking meals together, maintaining the living spaces and taking care of their own chores, all while receiving an education and learning to care for the environment.

This is Dignity for Children Foundation's Farm Academy. It is an expression of our Sentul Youth Education Village, but set in the beautiful nature of Bentong, Pahang. At the Farm, cohorts of secondary students stay with their teachers between 1-3 months for short term programs. Regular lessons are carried out, but healthily supplemented with character workshops, agriculture, animal husbandry, as well as food and environmental science. This is where the youth get their first taste of independence from their families but in a safe, natural and ordered environment.

Quoting Maria Montessori, the Farm Academy is the "School of experience in the elements of social life."

At the Farm, this is the first time many of our youth learn about the harsh environmental realities facing our planet such as pollution, deforestation and various unsustainable practices in food production. Through participating in the Farm's life and farming routines, they also learn that there are alternative ways to care for our world ... and that they can be a part of that.



As we look forward to the year ahead, it seems daunting at times to think of the big leaps we will undertake. These include converting our water management systems to harvest and store rain water, while reusing grey water before returning it to the environment safely; harnessing and using solar energy; or even efforts to regenerate soil health and encourage the burgeoning of helpful microbes to restore the life-giving features of the land.

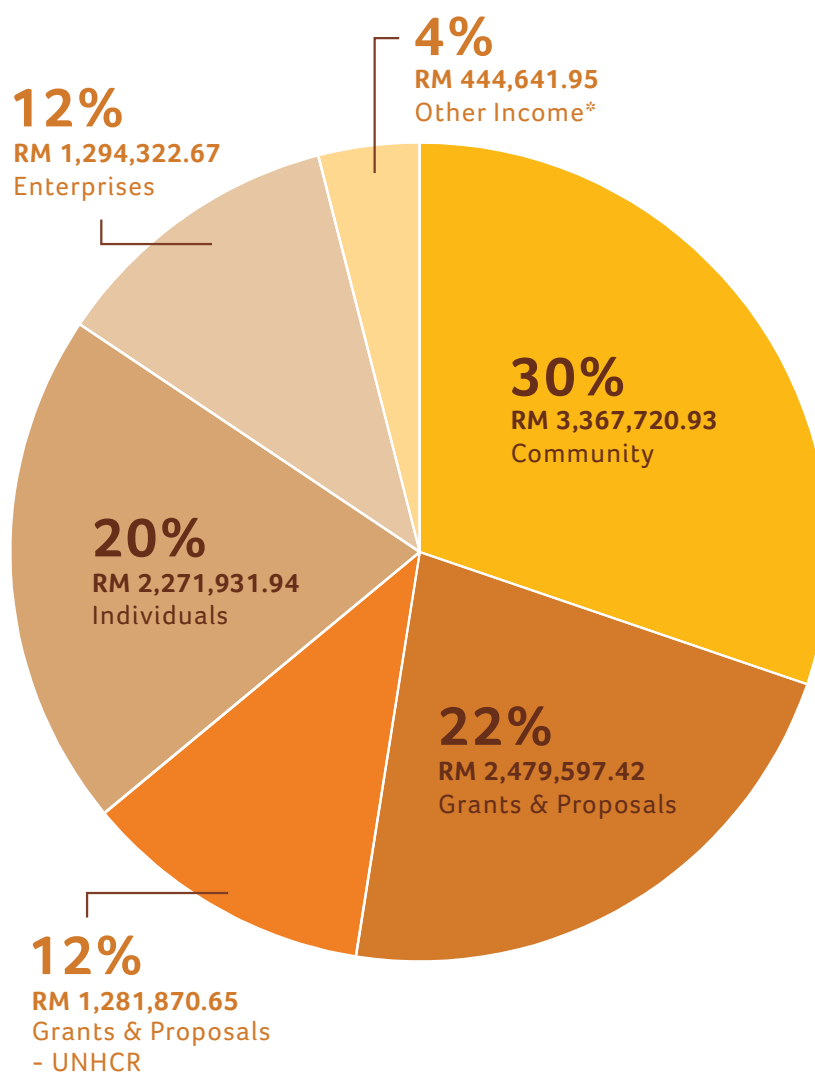
Also, we want to continue rearing chickens and scale it up to feed Dignity’s families and communities. The learning curves for these initiatives are abounding and can be overwhelming. Notwithstanding the great walls that stand before us, we choose perseverance and tenacity to build on the Farm Academy. The team here works tirelessly to put more structured operations in place, to prepare for visitors to experience life at the farm, and bring quality produce to our communities in the coming year.

The hope of Dignity Farm Academy is anchored by this team and as we build on our capacity, we invite you to join us.



Our Finances

2021 Income (RM11,140,085.56)



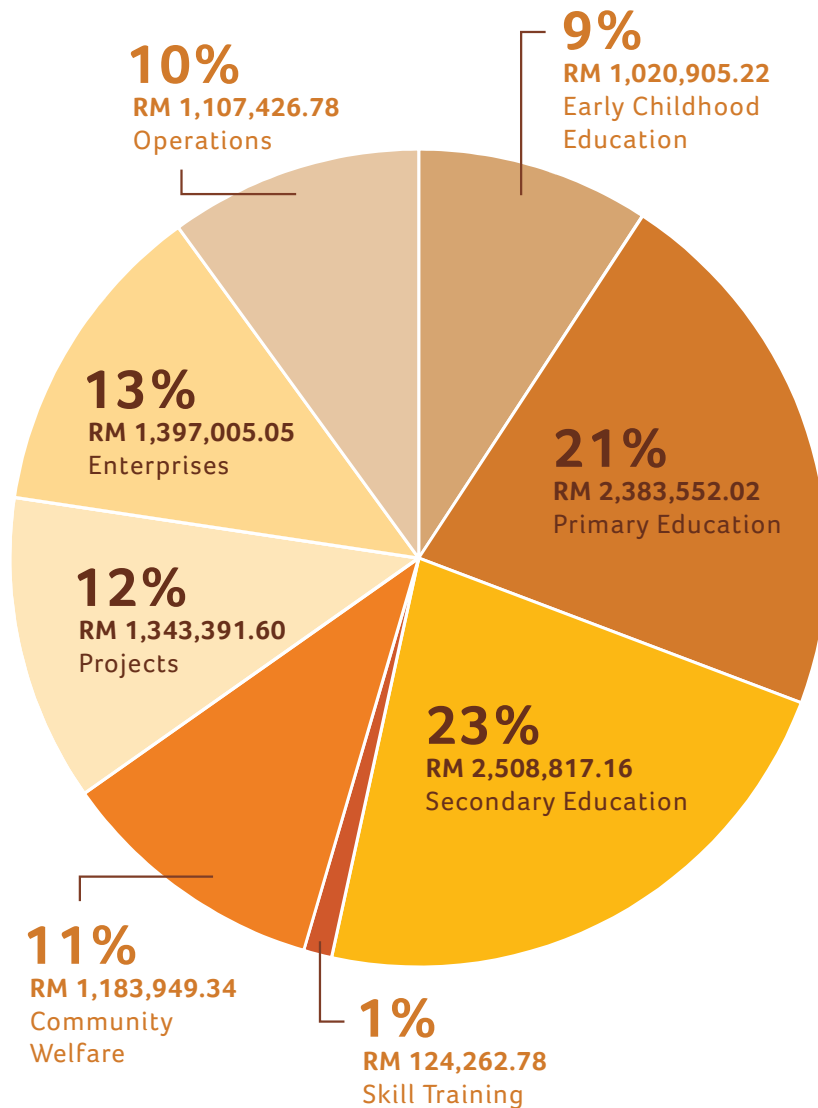
2021		
Income	Amount	%
Community	3,367,720.93	30.23
Grants & Proposals	3,761,468.07	33.77
Individuals	2,271,931.94	20.39
Enterprises	1,294,322.67	11.62
Other Income*	444,641.95	3.99
	11,140,085.56	100

*Other income includes:

- Staff contributions
- Interest earned from FD
- Gifts in kind
- Other internal income

Our Finances

2021 Expenses (RM11,069,309.95)



2021		
Expenses	Amount	%
Early Childhood Education	1,020,905.22	9.22
Primary Education	2,383,552.02	21.53
Secondary Education	2,508,817.16	22.66
Skill Training	124,262.78	1.12
Community Welfare	1,183,949.34	10.70
Projects	1,343,391.60	12.14
Enterprises	1,397,005.05	12.62
Operations	1,107,426.78	10
	11,069,309.95	100

Our Partners & Supporters



BNP PARIBAS

