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Alzheimer's Disease Association Partners People's Association Kebun Baru Grassroots Organisations To Explore Dementia Design As Part Of Dementia Inclusive Project

Initiatives on dementia design in built environment are aligned with Alzheimer's Disease International's global call on world Governments to recognise dementia as a disability

SINGAPORE, 21 September 2020 – In line with a global clarion call to drastically improve dementia design in the built environment, the Alzheimer's Disease Association (ADA) and the People's Association Kebun Baru Grassroots Organisations (GROs) have embarked on a series of collaborations in a bid to build an inclusive dementia-friendly community.

During the initial stages of the project, ADA had worked with students from the Chua Thian Poh Community Leadership Centre in National University of Singapore (NUS) on a study to identify interventions that help create an inclusive dementia-friendly community in Kebun Baru.

Subsequent dementia-inclusive initiatives implemented include organising dementia awareness talks, improving wayfinding, and enabling the community through informal activities.

Kebun Baru has a high population of seniors, where two in five of its residents are above age 60.

From the findings and recommendations, ADA collaborated with the Kebun Baru Community Club (CC) to pilot dementia-inclusive design efforts with retro items painted around the blocks as means of wayfinding for its residents with dementia. The NUS report is provided in the Annex.



One of the wayfinding murals at Block 102 at Kebun Baru.

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Speaking at Kebun Baru CC where he helped complete a giant mural made entirely of Lego to commemorate World Alzheimer's Day, Mr Kwek Hian Chuan Henry, Adviser to Kebun Baru GROs, said these dementia design initiatives enable persons with dementia to navigate their surroundings better, encouraging them to leave their homes and continue thriving in their neighbourhoods.

"By considering a person with dementia's holistic experience, a consistently more mobility-friendly and dementia-friendly community that instils confidence and motivation in persons with dementia to navigate the neighbourhood independently, can be built," said Mr Kwek.

"DEMENTIA DESIGN 30 YEARS BEHIND"

The Kebun Baru initiatives are in line with a global report launched by the Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI) to commemorate World Alzheimer's Day, where the global body for dementia declared that dementia design in built environment is 30 years behind that of the physical disabilities movement.

This observation is part of ADI's call to all Governments around the world to recognise dementia as a disability.

"If we can cater for those with visible disabilities, how can we refuse to cater for those with invisible disabilities?" asked ADI Chief Executive Paola Barbarino.

"We need to start working now, with new builds, and consider this new way of thinking at the planning stage, and also look at cost-effective retro-fit options for older buildings."

The full report is available at <https://www.alz.co.uk>.

"ADA has always believed that the future of dementia care is through the community and harnessing the strengths that each individual in the community can provide," said Mr Jason Foo, Chief Executive Officer of ADA.

"In particular, we would like to encourage more ageing-in-place, which refers to seniors and people with dementia continuing to live and thrive in their own familiar areas and estates, as opposed to being uprooted and shifted to a nursing home or welfare home.

"The increased focus to improve dementia design in the built environment will be crucial in helping us achieve this."

SUPPORT FROM MUSIM MAS

Asia's leading palm oil conglomerate Musim Mas Holdings has expressed interest in sponsoring Kebun Baru GROs' dementia-inclusive projects. A long-time supporter of the dementia community, Musim Mas has donated a total of S\$2 million to ADA over the past two years.

Musim Mas' Director and Chief Financial Officer, Mr Alvin Lim, said: "Our support goes beyond just donations. There are many areas where Musim Mas as an organisation can contribute and we look forward to bringing value to the lives of Kebun Baru residents."

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Mr Kwek said such corporate support is a key in driving the work of ADA and Kebun Baru GROs. “We are grateful to Musim Mas Holdings as their generous support and role as a key enabler will inspire our work in building a dementia-inclusive society in Singapore,” he added.

BUILDING A DEMENTIA-INCLUSIVE SOCIETY, ONE BLOCK AT A TIME



From left: Mr Jason Foo (CEO of ADA), Mr Henry Kwek (Adviser to Kebun Baru Grassroots Organisations), Mr Francis Leong (Caregiver, Kebun Baru Resident and Vice Chairman of Kebun Baru Active Ageing Committee), Ms Emily Ong (Person Living with Dementia and Self-Advocate)

To commemorate World Alzheimer’s Day at Kebun Baru, Mr Kwek and Mr Foo had helped build a 2.6m by 1.6m mural made entirely of Lego bricks at the Kebun Baru CC.

Presented by Musim Mas Holdings, the full-colour Lego mural depicts seniors enjoying a fulfilling and meaningful life with the support of the community.

The pieces of the mural were distributed to various stakeholders of the dementia community – including persons living with dementia, families, caregivers, Kebun Baru Grassroots Volunteers and residents, corporate partners and ADA staff. The pieces were put together remotely by the stakeholders, collected, sanitised and assembled at Kebun Baru CC.

The mural represents ADA’s hopes to build a dementia-inclusive Singapore, one small brick at a time, where everyone’s contribution, big or small, contributes to a larger good. This content creation is part of ADA’s outreach and reminder efforts to Kebun Baru residents on the importance and significance of dementia.

The Lego mural, which will be displayed at Kebun Baru CC for a year, will serve as a constant reminder to persons with dementia, their caregivers and their families that they have the society’s full support.

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About Alzheimer's Disease Association

ADA was formed in 1990 because of a growing concern for the needs of persons living with dementia and their caregivers. The Association hopes to reduce stigma by increasing awareness and understanding of dementia; enabling and involving persons living with dementia to be integrated and accepted in the community; and leading in the quality of dementia care services for persons living with dementia and their families. Striving towards a Dementia Inclusive Society through its four strategic service pillars – Centre-Based Care, Caregiver Support, Academy and Community Enabling – ADA aims to advocate and inspire the society to regard and respect persons living with dementia as individuals who can still lead purposeful and meaningful lives. For more information, visit <http://alz.org.sg/>.

About Musim Mas Holdings

Headquartered in Singapore, Musim Mas is one of the world's largest, integrated palm oil corporations with operations spanning the entire value chain across the Americas, Europe and Asia. Our global workforce pursues innovative and sustainable developments across the whole spectrum of the palm oil supply chain, ensuring product quality, safety and efficiency as the industry evolves.

As one of the most prominent players in the palm oil industry, it aspires to be a responsible leader in the evolution of the industry, driving a new era of sustainability with innovation. To that end, we work hard with our stakeholders to address their concerns such as greenhouse gas emissions, loss of biodiversity, as well as labour and human rights. We take active steps to go beyond industry-recognized sustainability standards and will continue to step up in response to critical industry issues in our quest to contribute to a more sustainable industry and equitable world.