

SUSTAINABLE Development Projects

by IIUM Administrators



Edited by
Nor Aminah Kistor



IIUM
Press

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CHAPTER 9

Health and Wellness of IIUM Community

Ilmyzat Ismail &
Badrul Shahri Basri

Introduction

The idea of protecting the health and wellness of human being has been the priority in Islam. The matter is explained through the concept of *Maqasid al-Shariah* (objective of *Shariah*). Accordingly, the *Maqasid al-Shariah* principle explains the requirement of providing protection and safeguarding five human necessities which are the preservation of (i) religion (*Ad-Deen*), (ii) life (*An-Nafs*), (iii) intellect (*Al-Aqal*), (iv) lineage (*An-Nasab*), and (v) property (*Al-Mal*) (Kamali, 1998, Khan 2002). Jesser (2008), depicts that the elements protecting life is essential to human, including the protection of health and wellness. Consequently, it is a must for the Muslim community or individuals to take care of their health which eventually will give effect in doing *ibadah* and performing the role of vicegerent of Allah SWT in this world. Deuraseh (2012), based on the following hadith, accentuates that *ibadah* cannot be achieved without good health and well-being:

Abu al-Darda' (R.A) said to the Prophet SAW: 'To be healthy and grateful is much more better than to be ill and endure patiently', the Prophet SAW answered him by saying: "Allah loves healthy people, as you do."³

Deuresh also accentuates that besides seeking knowledge, Muslims also are required to manage their betterment of health and strength of the body. This is supported by the Quranic verse in *Surah al-Baqarah* (verse 247): "Allah SWT says: "Allah hath chosen him above you, and hath gifted him abundantly with knowledge and bodily prowess."

The importance of taking care of one's own well-being was also explained by Ibn Sina (known by the Westerner as Avicenna), one of the Muslim scholars in modern medicine. According to Emtiazy and Choopani (2015), Ibn Sina was the first author who discussed the lifestyle factors and how to modify these

³ Ibn a-Qayyim, 1988.

factors in achieving quality health and reducing many occurrences of diseases. In his most prolific book, *Al-Qanun fi al-Tibb (the Qanun of Medicine)*, Ibn Sina derived six factors that influenced the lifestyle of individual's health which are (i) environmental air-breathing, (ii) physical movement, (iii) sleep and wakefulness, (iv) emotion movement, (v) food and drinks, and lastly (vi) depletion and retention. Ibn Sina also explained the causes that triggered these factors and its implication on human health.

Today, a similar concern has become the main agenda of the international institution, such as the United Nations (UN). This can be seen through the initiation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in which the matter of health is outlined in Goal No. 3: Good Health and Well-Being. Under this goal, the UN is urging all governments, agencies, communities, societies and individuals in the world to give their full commitment and priority to ensuring a healthy living and promoting well-being of people irrespective of at all age (United Nations).

We certainly have had heard the popular Arabic quotation relating to maintaining good health physically and mentally, i.e. *Al-'Aqlu al-Saleem fi al-Jismi al-Saleem* which means healthy minds in a healthy body. This quote points to a simple understanding of the positive relationship between physical and mental conditions. Therefore, as an individual Muslim, one must be able to maintain and improve their physical health to generate better minds and thinking. Many studies have shown that both components (i.e. physical and mental conditions) have a positive correlation and may affect one's commitment in a workplace. According to Contoyanis and Rice, 2001, an employee who has degraded mental and physical state would be less productive in their daily works. Bad mental and physical conditions also affect the decision making process (Mani et al. 2013). Besides, the consumption of alcoholic drink and smoking would also increase mental anxiety (Stampfer et al., 2005) and this condition can be improved by doing physical exercise (Lang et al., 2007).

At the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), a group of administrative officers has taken the lead to come out with initiatives to improve and promote both physical and mental good health and wellness. The project is placed under the SDG Administrators Project which is coordinated by the Management Services Division (MSD). The group is named as IIUM Health and Wellness Group which consists of administrative officers from various departments and offices. After several workshops and discussions, the group has agreed to focus on three main areas and actively had conducted related activities and programmes

towards having IIUM 'Sejahtera' Community. The concept of having the IIUM Sejahtera Community is mooted by IIUM Rector. It aims to create a community of staff and students possessing a comprehensive and positive attitude, character and motivation to achieve the vision and mission of IIUM. The three main areas illustrated in Figure 9.1.

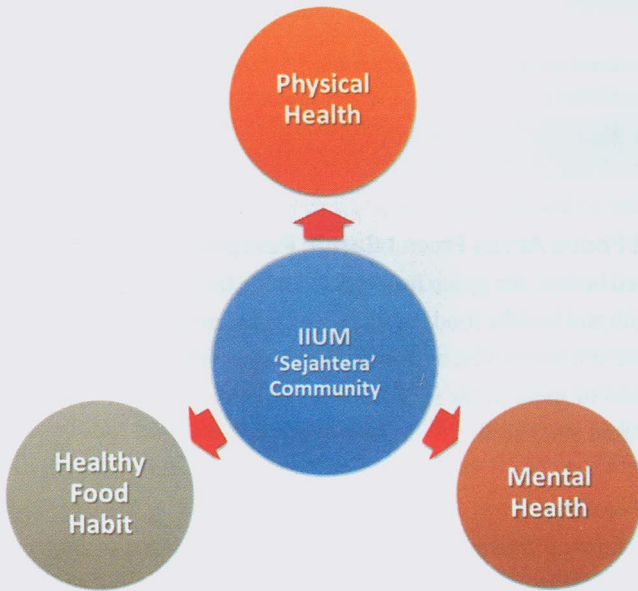


Figure 9.1: Areas of Focus by IIUM Health and Wellness group

The group believes that the planned programmes should focus on physical health, mental health and healthy food habit. The selection of these areas by the group is also based on the medical cost borne by IIUM. In 2018, it was recorded that the medicine and outpatient cost paid to PMCare are RM1,350,301.30 and RM1,269,393.00 respectively (IIUM Medical & Wellness Centre). The cost incurred by IIUM most probably to cover the expenditures involving students and staff of the university. The IIUM population in 2018, comprised students numbered by 24,914 and staff 4,955 (see Table 9.1).

The medical cost could be considered high and it would escalate in the future. Hence, it is important to find a solution in reducing the cost, and the saving can be channeled to teaching and learning activities. This assumption is supported by Fabius et al. (2018) who discovered that the result of in spending or focusing more on healthy work culture had inverse correlation with cost spend for health care.

Table 9.1: Breakdown – Number of IIUM students and staff⁴

Item	Total	Percentage
Students		
• Undergraduate	19,046	76.45%
• Postgraduate	5,868	23.55%
Total	24,914	
Staff		
• Administration & technical	3,021	58.84%
• Academic	1,932	41.16%
Total	4,955	

Selected Focus Areas From Islamic Perspective

As explained before, the group has selected three focus areas (i.e. physical health, mental health and healthy food habit) on which the group will develop and conduct programmes and initiatives, and these will be participated by IIUM community. The selection of these areas is in accordance with the requirements mentioned in the al-Quran and hadith.

Physical Health

Regarding physical fitness, Muslim believers are required to take care of their physical health. It is suggested for Muslim to be strong instead of being weak for them to perform the duty as the vicegerent in this world. Sahih Muslim (6441), cited a hadith by the Prophet (SAW) who said: “A strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak believer...”⁵

As mentioned by the Prophet (SAW), Allah prefers a strong individual with strong faith compared to those who are physically weak. The action of doing fitness activities by the Prophet is mentioned in a hadith as narrated by Abu Dawood (2572): “‘Aisyah (R.A) said, I raced with the Prophet and I beat him. Later when I had put on some weight, we raced again and he won. Then he said, ‘this cancels that (referring to the previous race).’”⁶

⁴ Data from i-Perform, IIUM.

⁵ Sahih Muslim, Vol. 6, *Book of Destiny*, Hadith No. 6441.

⁶ Sunan Abi Dawood, Vol. 3, *Book of Jihad* (Kitab Al-Jihad), Hadith No. 2572.

The above hadith tells the failure of Saidatina 'Aisyah (RA) to compete with the Prophet (SAW) in the later race because she neglected her physical condition.

According to Imam Tirmidhi, the Prophet is a person who walked fast. His companions found it difficult to catch up with him. This action of Muhammad was narrated by Abu Hurairah in the following hadith:

Hazrat Abu Hurairah (R.A) says, "I did not see anyone more handsome as Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihe wasallam. It was as if the brightness of the sun had shone from his auspicious face. I did not see anyone walk faster than him as if the earth folded for him. A few moments ago, he would be here, and then there. We found it difficult to keep pace when we walked with him, and he walked at his normal pace."⁷

Mental Health

Besides physical health, the group also wanted to focus on programmes or activities that improve would the mental health of the IIUM community. The group suggested that the mental condition is equally important to the physical condition. In the Al-Quran, there are certain verses that focus on having positive mental health.

Surah al-Balad, ayat 17 says, "And then being among those who believed and advised one another to patience and advised one another to compassion." This shows Muslims are asked to maintain self-control and be compassionate and patient to other people. This act of self-restraining for doing bad to others reflects true believers of Islam.

Surah at-Tin, Allah (SWT) reminds the Muslim to overcome their inner weaknesses by pledging to religious devotion and useful act. "(4) We have certainly created man in the best of stature, (5) Then We return him to the lowest of the low, (6) Except for those who believe and do righteous deeds, for they will have a reward uninterrupted." (At-Tin: 4-6)

Indeed, by having a meaningful psychosocial and healthy mental life, Muslims will be able to construct and improve positive attitude, thus overcoming negative

⁷ Shama-il Tirmidhi Chapter 018, Hadith No. 116.

actions by upholding the faith to Allah SWT. According to Baasher (2001) and Wagdy (1970), the Quran describes the sharp contrast between the magnificent physical development of humans and their inner emotional turmoil and inherent tendency to cruelty, passionate reaction, greediness and aggressive behaviour. According to Basheer (2001), the act of overcoming the inner weakness by doing good deeds is clearly stated in

Surah al-Baqarah, verse 177: “Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; [and who] establishes prayer and gives zakah; [those who] fulfil their promise when they promise; and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous.”

In Islamic teaching, Muslims are taught to seek inner strength while facing difficulties and hardship by being patience and being positive. Thus, Allah SWT has urged His followers to seek refuge through prayer as mentioned in the following verse of *Surah al-Baqarah*: “O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient.”

The act of praying and patience, as referred in the above verse, in Islam can be considered as one of the remedies to maintain inner and mental health.

Based on the Quranic verses mentioned before, mankind, by nature, is exposed to mental-illness situation as well as deprivation and desperation of self throughout his life. Allah SWT has commended Muslims to believe Him that solutions are provided for every hardship faced by the believers. The mental condition of an individual needs to be taken care of, just like taking care of physical health. Furthermore, the state of mental health could also be strengthened if Muslim understands the reason of their creation, understand the concept of death, Judgement Day and Eternal life in Paradise; and always be remindful of punishment from Allah SWT (Tahir and Zubairi, 2019).

Healthy Food Habit

It is interesting to know that in Islamic teaching, Muslims are required to consume healthy food. Hence, the matter becomes one of the focus areas that the group would like to emphasis as the SDG project initiatives. According to Wattick et

al. (2018) and Caddy (2014), the dietary intake by the individual will influence the mental health as well as the physical condition.

From the Islamic perspective, Allah SWT has directed Muslims to select and consume a lawful and good type of food. Allah's command is stated clearly in *Surah al-Maidah* (verse 88): "And eat of what Allah has provided for you [which is] lawful and good. And fear Allah, in whom you are believers."

Muslims are also requested to be moderate in consuming food. They should not be greedy and eating excessively. In *Surah Taha* (verse 81) and *al-A'raf* (verse 31), both verses clearly mention that human should not consume food excessively and to also care for others who are in dire need for food.

... "Eat from the good things with which We have provided you and do not transgress [or oppress others] therein, lest My anger should descend upon you. And he upon whom My anger descends has certainly fallen" (*Taha*: 81).

"O children of Adam, take your adornment at every masjid, and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess" (*Al-A'raf*: 31).

A hadith narrated by Miqdam bin Ma'dibkarib, tells the Prophet SAW cautioned his companions to control the intake of food by not consuming excessively: "The human does not fill any container that is worse than his stomach. It is sufficient for the son of Adam to eat what will support his back. If this is not possible, then a third for food, a third for drink, and third for his breath."⁸ The hadith explains that human should divide his stomach into three sections in which one third is for food, another one third is for the water while the remaining one third is for breathing. Hence, we should emulate the eating habit of Prophet (SAW) who eats moderately and this makes him healthy and fit while preaching Islam to the community.

Health and Wellness Activities in IIUM

After a special workshop conducted by the Management Services Division (MSD) in July 2019, the IIUM administrative officers have been grouped into twenty small groups with distinctive projects to be carried out until 2020. These

⁸ Jami' at-Tirmidhi, Vol. 4, *Book of Zuhd*, Hadith No. 2380.

small groups are led by appointed facilitators to assist the group in developing and planning the implementation of the projects. Both authors of this chapter were assigned to manage the project that related to health and the wellness of the IIUM community, especially the staff (Figure 9.2). Several administrative officers from various departments, offices and *kulliyahs* have placed their interest to join the group and their names are listed in Appendix 1. A special workshop was conducted for them (see Photo 9.1). Furthermore, there are departments and offices that have direct involvement and had conducted relevant activities related to health- and wellness- based programmes due to their nature of operations, such as IIUM Health and Wellness Centre (IIUMHWC), Sports Development Centre (SDC), Counselling and Career Services Centre (CCSC) and Office of Security Management (OSeM).



Figure 9.2: Logo of IIUM Health and Wellness Group

Quit-Smoking Campaign

Since 2019 until now there are several programmes and initiatives that were conducted by the offices including the SDG group. Among the programmes is the university-wide smoke-free campaign (see Photo 9.2). The project is spearheaded by the Management Services Division (MSD) and collaborated with IIUM Health and Wellness Centre (IIUMHWC) and Office of Security Management (OSeM). The campaign was launched in March 2019 by the Rector of IIUM, Prof. Emeritus Tan Sri Dato' Dzulkifli Abdul Razak during the second *Al-Liqa' Al-Jamaie* at Gombak Campus (see Photo 9.2). Several programmes were organised during



Photo 9.1: Special workshop with IIUM administrative officers



Photo 9.2: IIUM Rector is launching the Quit-Smoking Campaign

the campaign period such as Quit Smoking Seminar, handing over posters and t-shirts, a clinic for smokers and others.

During this campaign, 30 staff from the Office of Security Management (OSeM) has voluntarily committed to quit their smoking habit with the assistance from doctors of IIUMHWC (see Photos 9.3, 9.4). The campaign also being extended to other campuses in Kuantan, Pagoh and Gambang.



Photo 9.3: IIUM Educare students displaying the quit-smoking poster together with the IIUM Rector during the launching of Quit-Smoking Campaign



Photo 9.4: Executive Director of MSD with staff who are volunteered to commit in the quit-smoking habit

10,000 Steps Campaign

In order to promote a healthy lifestyle in the campus, the IIUM Health and Wellness Centre has initiated the IIUM 10,000 Steps Campaign in Gombak Campus. The objective of the campaign is to encourage the IIUM community to maintain fitness by walking for at least 10,000 steps daily. The first session was conducted on 2 June 2019 at Gombak Campus with the participation of 50 staff and students

(see Photos 9.5, 9.6). The programme still continues on Friday until now and the event is now being conducted at second Friday of each month.



Photo 9.5: Group picture with participants and the IIUM Rector during the IIUM 10,000 Steps Challenge on 2 June 2019

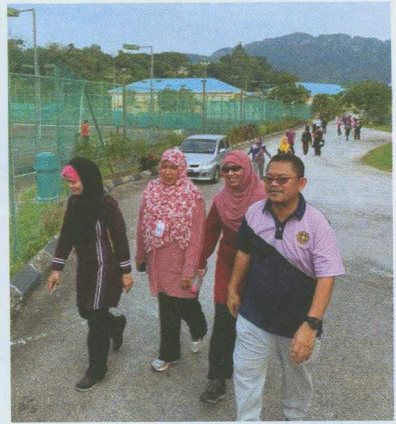


Photo 9.6: Among of the participants who are involved in the IIUM 10,000 Steps Challenge

Cycling Campaign

Besides the 10,000 steps campaign, there is a group that has an interest in cycling. To cater to the interest of this community, the IIUM SDG Health and Wellness group has initiated the establishment of university staff cycling club known as Leisure Cycling Club IIUM (LCCI) (see Photo 9.7). The objective of the club is to promote cycling habit among the staff as part of healthy lifestyle

initiatives (Photo 9.8). To ensure the sustainability of the cycling programmes on the campus, the club has gazetted third Friday of each month for a fun-ride session in the campus.



Photo 9.7: The IIUM Rector receives a shirt during the launching of IIUM Staff Cycling Club on 20 January 2020



Photo 9.8: The participants are ready for bicycle ride around the Gombak Campus

On the 29 February until 4 March 2020, the University had organised the IIUM Inter-Campus Ultra Distance Cycling (MY1200) (see Photos 9.9, 9.10). The project is the first event conducted in Malaysia and it is led by a team from Kuantan Campus. The event managed to attract 461 entries participating in three

different stages, namely Fun-ride (70 km), Endu-ride (280 km) and Ultra-ride (1200 km). The participants were required to complete the respective stages by reaching various check-points and completing the given routes to reach each IIUM campuses.



Photo 9.9: The reaction by the participants on the road during the IIUM Inter-Campus Ultra Distance Cycling (MY1200) (Photo by Ali Shamsul Bakar)



Photo 9.10: The glimpse of the participants passing through the paddy field in Sekincan, Selangor

Hiking and Recreational Programme

IIUM is blessed with green area and hilly landscape surrounding both campuses in Gombak and Kuantan. For instance, Gombak Campus is surrounded by Bukit Tabur and a lush area of secondary forest and traditional villages. While in Kuantan Campus, a well-known Bukit Sekilau stands on the eastern border of University's parameter and becoming a panoramic backdrop of the campus. Thus, both campuses provide attractive landscapes for those who like to do recreational activities such as hiking, trail running, jungle tracking and others (see Figure 9.3).

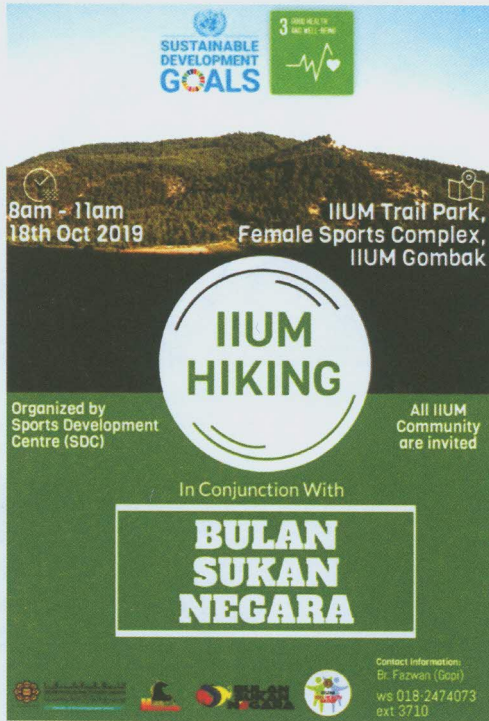


Figure 9.3: Poster of IIUM hiking programme in conjunction with 'Bulan Sukan Negara'

One of the initiatives carried out by the SDG Group is mini-hiking programmes in collaboration with the Sport Development Centre (SDC) (see Photo 9.11).

The University is also conducted a trail run challenge event annually and it is coordinated by the student societies (see Photo 9.12). The event has attracted external community and public since the routes the participants have to take are very challenging and tough (see Photos 9.12, 9.13).

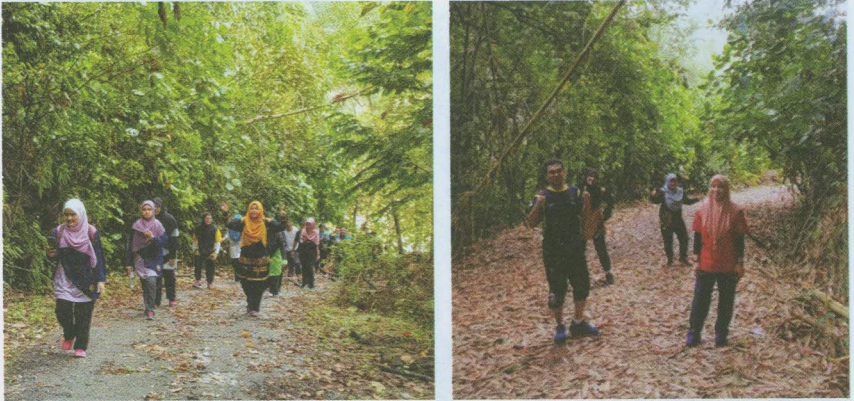


Photo 9.11: Group of IIUM community taking part in IIUM hiking programme



Photo 9.12: The participants of IIUM Trail Run during the flag-off ceremony

Mental Health Programme

The mental health programmes in the university are managed by the Counseling and Career Services Centre (CCSC). The Centre offers various services, including counselling and career advice to the students. Many programmes have been conducted by the Centre for the students and staff through workshop, training and talk. Furthermore, with qualified counsellors, the community can benefit from the service by improving the mental health and having a positive lifestyle in the

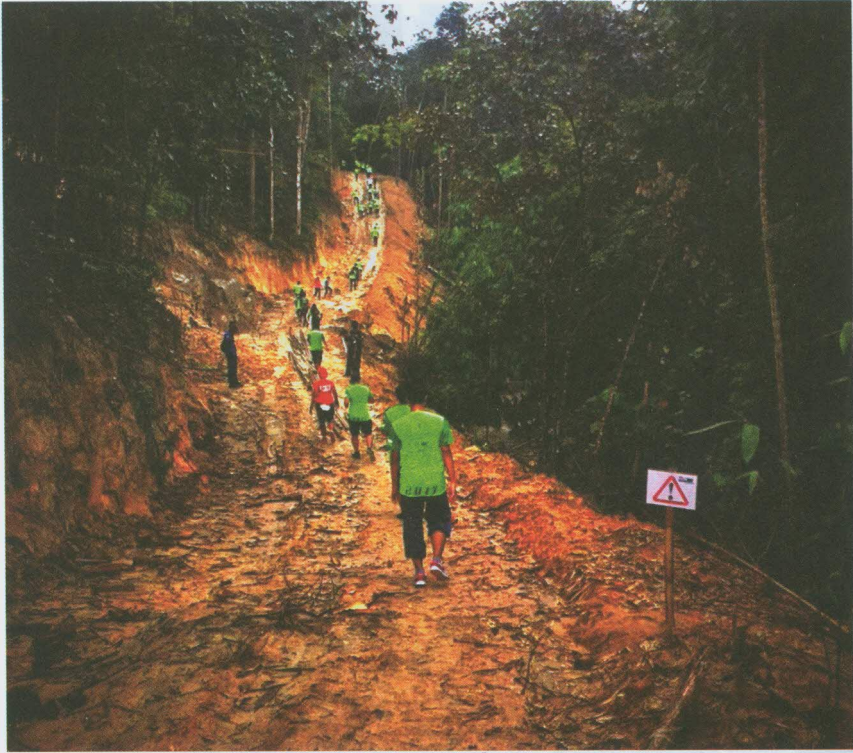


Photo 9.13: One of the Routes that had to be completed by the IIUM Trail Run' Participants

campus. Recently, the Centre has introduced a new approach to managing stress by creating expressive arts room (Figure 9.4). The function of the room is to offer the community to explore and express feeling through expressive art technique.

In addition to that and part of the SDG group initiatives, it is proposed to have a mental health profiling database among the staff of IIUM. For the initial phase, the Centre is currently conducting profiling for the administrative staff by using an online instrument and the data will be analysed accordingly. This project will help the university to identify the current working condition of the office that may lead to a stressful work condition to its staff.

In term of spirituality, the Centre has also conducted the concept of reduction of stress through the recitation of Al-Quran. They introduce the *Rumah Ngaji* concept in which of Quranic recitation sessions are conducted in a group within the 30-minute period (see Photo 9.14).



Figure 9.4: Poster on Detox Stress Programme by the Counseling and Career Services Centre (CCSC)

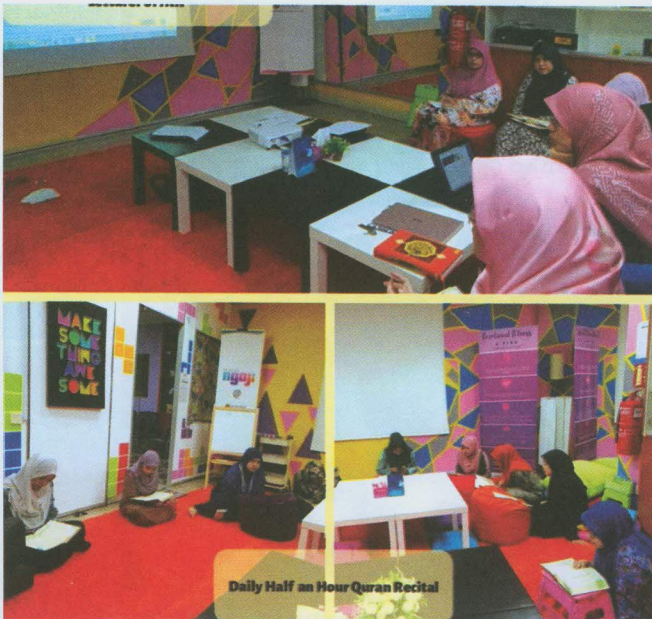


Photo 9.14: Among of the programmes related to mental health being organised in IIUM

Consumption of Healthy Food Campaign

The SDG Group is planning to initiate the campaign on consuming healthy food on the campus (Figure 9.5). The objective of this initiative is to encourage the students and staff to take healthy food daily as well as for the food operators to provide healthy food to the on-campus community. Under this campaign, there are few actions plans to be carried out throughout the year, such as the followings:

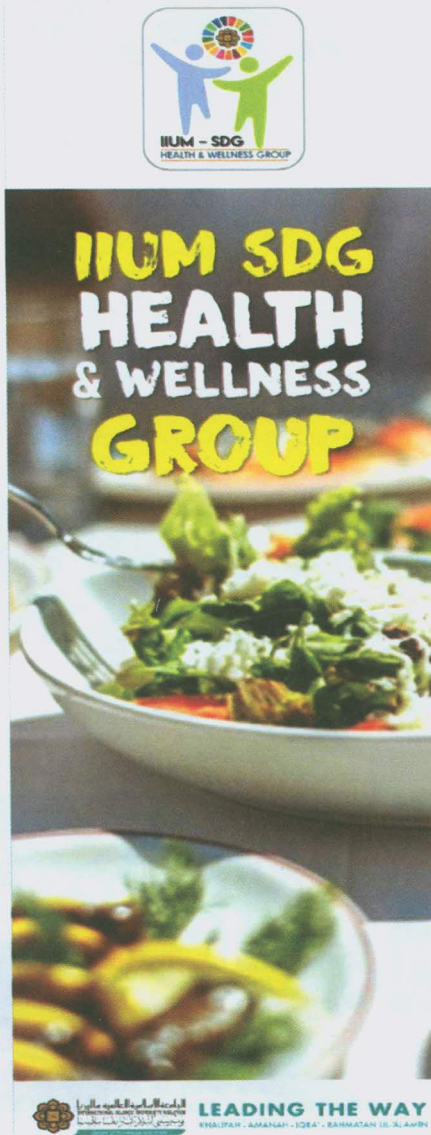


Figure 9.5: Promotional bunting on a healthy food programme

- Conducting Healthy Food Awareness Campaign through talks and seminars
- Displaying of nutrition and calories at the cafeteria area and food court
- Displaying of calories' intake and burning (poster and bunting)
- Establishing a designated food kiosk for healthy meals
- Organising cooking demonstration of healthy food

The group will collaborate with the Facilities, Food and Services Unit and other staff associations to implement these initiatives.

Conclusion

Every Muslim needs to take care of both his physical and mental health as it is required by the teaching of Islam. As for the University, the management can play a significant role to encourage its community to take care of their health. The University has provided many of facilities such as jogging track, gymnasium, sports facilities, swimming pool and others for the campus community to fully utilise them. As an academic institution, the students and staff should be able to contribute to the community in terms of teaching and learning, research and publications, and community services. The contribution will be effective when the students and staff are in good health. The establishment of SDG Administrative Group that focuses on health and wellness in IIUM is to assist the university's management in coordinating and supporting the initiatives for promoting health and wellness among staff and students with the help of other IIUM agencies such as IUMHWC, SDC, OSeM and CCSC. Several programmes have been conducted and will be organised in the future. With this effort, *InshaAllah* we will be able to produce a better community.

Appendix 1

List of members under the SDG Health and Wellness Group

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Ilmyzat Ismail | 10. Mohd Azhari Mohd Nadzari | 18. Asyraf Fitri Asbollah |
| 2. Badrul Shahri Basri | 11. Ayunita Atan | 19. Mohammad Khairi Roslan |
| 3. Noraini Ahmad | 12. Zeny Sofina Martias | 20. Muhammad Abdul Latif |
| 4. Roestam Effendi Sijar | 13. Salina Sai-dul Haj | 21. Nur Masturah Mohamad Arif |
| 5. Dr. Siti Masitah Jamaludin | 14. Mohd Hakimi Badrol Affandi | 22. Khairiah Abd. Razak |
| 6. Dr. Norlita Bahari | 15. Mazlilawati Murad | |
| 7. Sabirah Abdullah | 16. Azura Hamzah | |
| 8. Dr. Md Soep Sadimon | 17. Shahrulnizam Jaafar | |
| 9. Mohamed Bedruzaman
Mohamed Basir | | |

Contributors

Ahmad Md Redzuan had been working as an Assistant Director at the Public Relations Office, IIUM since 1999 until 2020. Currently, he is working at UiTM Shah Alam, at the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies as Senior Lecturer. He can be contacted via ahmad94@uitm.edu.my

Ahmad Zaki Rashid is a senior librarian, IIUM *Dar al-Hikmah* Library. He joined IIUM in 2009. He was previously in the Cataloging Unit and currently serving as the Head of the Arabic Acquisition and Gift & Exchange Units. He can be contacted via zakirash@iium.edu.my

Asmawati Che Ismail is a Senior Assistant Director, *Kulliyah* of Nursing. She started working in IIUM in 2007. She has long experience on Student Affairs and Development and completed her Master in Business Administration in 2019. She can be contacted via asma_ci@iium.edu.my

Asnili Marniwati Ahmad is a Deputy Director, Management Services Division. She joined IIUM in 2001 and currently leads the Human Resource Management Section. She can be contacted via asnili@iium.edu.my

Azlan Mohamed Zain is a Deputy Director (Information Technology), Information Technology Division. He has vast experience and deep knowledge in IT. He joined IIUM in year 1994. He can be contacted via azlanmz@iium.edu.my

Aznita Ahmad Zaini is an Office Secretary, Office for Strategy and Institutional Change. Her career began in IIUM in 2002. She actively involves in PUSPANITA and Staff Association, namely KESATU. She can be contacted via nitazaini@iium.edu.my

Badrul Shahri Basri is a Senior Assistant Director, Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah (SHAS) Mosque. He began his career in IIUM in 2004. Currently he leads the administration Unit of the SHAS Mosque. He can be contacted via badruls@iium.edu.my

Fadzilah Abdullah is a Senior Librarian, IIUM *Dar al-Hikmah* Library. Currently, she is assigned at Library Technology Section. She oversees IT-related supports and services for IIUM *Dar al-Hikmah* Library, including system administration for Integrated Library Systems (ILS). She can be contacted via fadzilaha@iium.edu.my

Halimatus Saadiah Mahali is an Assistant Director, Office of Deputy Rector (Student Development and Community Engagement). She was recently transferred to Gombak Campus, in charge of Disability Services Unit. She can be contacted via halimatus@iium.edu.my

Ilmyzat Ismail is a Deputy Director, Office of Deputy Rector (Academic and Industrial Linkages) who began his career in IIUM in 2002. He is the President of Professional and Management Association (PMA) and an expert in Strategic Planning matters. He can be contacted via ilmyzat@iium.edu.my

Kamarrudin Ali is a Senior Deputy Director, Office of Deputy Rector (Responsible Research and Innovation). He started work in IIUM in 1994. His areas of interest are strategic planning, quality management and performance analysis. He can be contacted via dinali@iium.edu.my

Latifah Ramli is a Senior Librarian, IIUM *Dar al-Hikmah* Library. She began her career in IIUM in 2008. She has seventeen years of experience in librarianship, and cataloguing Arabic knowledge resources has been her major contribution throughout her career. Currently she is the Head of Islam and Language Unit at the Bibliographic Control Section, International Islamic University Malaysia Library. She can be contacted via latifah@iium.edu.my

Mazlina Mustafa is a Deputy Director, Centre in Languages and Pre-University Academic Development. Began her career in IIUM in 1997. Currently, she leads the administrative staff of the Centre. She can be contacted via mazlina@iium.edu.my

Mir Azrul Shahrudin is a Director at Centre for Foundation Studies, Gombang. He began his career at IIUM in 2001. He is the First Malaysian Administrator from Malaysian Public University to receive CMO Asia Education Excellence Awards in Leadership. He can be contacted via azrul@iium.edu.my

Mohd Farisalharisi Mohd Yaziz is an Assistant Information Technology Officer, Information Technology Division. He started in IIUM in 2003, and

currently responsible for the Customer Care and Commercialization Unit. He can be contacted via farisal@iium.edu.my

Nor Aminah Kostor is a Director of Management Services Division. Starting her career in IIUM in 1991. She is currently leading the Human Resource (HR) Division and becomes a reference for HR matters in IIUM. She has vast knowledge and experience in Strategic Planning, Quality Management System, Project Management and Human Resource Management and Development. She can be contacted via aminah@iium.edu.my

Noraini Ahmad is a Director of Counseling and Career Services Centre. She is one of the top counsellors in Malaysia who has often contributed her idea in newspaper column. She becomes a source of reference for psychological and mental health issues in campus. She can be contacted via anoraini@iium.edu.my

Noraini Mukhtar is a Senior Deputy Chief Librarian, IIUM *Dar al-Hikmah* Library. She joined the International Islamic University Library in 1991. She is experienced in serials procurement and management, cataloguing, library-faculty liaison, information services, customer service, customer communication and satisfaction, bibliographic control, governance and quality assurance. She can be contacted via mnoraini@iium.edu.my

Norazilee Abdul Aziz is a Deputy Director, Sultan Ahmad Shah Medical Centre (SASMEC). He began his career in IIUM in 2003 and is well performed in Administrative Staff Development. Currently he is leading the Human Resource at SASMEC. He can be contacted via norazilee@iium.edu.my

Nur Khamsiah Ahmad is a Deputy Director, Management Services Division. She joined IIUM in 1998 and currently leads the of Human Resource Development Section. She has vast experience on academic, student affairs, research management and in process of building her knowledge and skills in competency development. She can be contacted via khamsiah@iium.edu.my

Nur Syuhada Mohd Munir is a Senior Psychology Officer at the Counseling and Career Services Centre. She joined IIUM in 2009 and just finished her Master of Education (Guidance and Counseling) Programme. She can be contacted via syuhada_m@iium.edu.my

Nurul Hidayah Abdullah is a Deputy Director (Science) for *Kulliyah* of Pharmacy. She is very active and passionate in her work and studies. She started her career at IIUM in 2008. She can be contacted via nurulhidayah@iium.edu.my

Rasyidah Mohd Daud is a Senior Librarian, IIUM *Dar al-Hikmah* Library. She is experienced in cataloguing and also in monographs procurement and management. Currently, she is the Cataloguer of Arabic knowledge resources at Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas Library. She is involved in the digital manuscript and special collection project. She can be contacted via syida@iium.edu.my

Roestam Effendi Sijar is a Deputy Director, Sports Development Centre. He began his career at IIUM in 2001, and currently he is the focal person for sports-related activities and programme in campus. He can be contacted via roestamfnd@iium.edu.my

Siti Aidah Rabingan is a Senior Librarian at IIUM *Dar al-Hikmah* Library. She joined IIUM in 2001 as a Cataloguer at the Cataloguing Section. Her areas of interests are cataloguing, taxonomy, Malay and Arabic manuscripts, and community engagement activities by the libraries. She can be contacted via aidah@iium.edu.my

Siti Hawa Darus is a Deputy Chief Librarian and currently works at Quality Assurance Section of *Dar al-Hikmah* Library. She joined IIUM in 1991, and has vast working experience at Library Technical and Services section. She can be contacted at hawa@iium.edu.my.

Siti Zainab Tauhed is a Senior Deputy Director, Sultan Ahmad Shah Medical Centre who began her career in IIUM in 1995. She is one of the administrators who has successfully completed her PhD programme in Human Resource Development. Attached to IIUM for more than 20 years, she has vast knowledge and experience in Human Resource matters. She can be contacted via szainab@iium.edu.my

Wan Najihah Nurashikin Wan Abdullah started her career at IIUM in 1997. Having vast experience in Human Resource and Legal matters, she is currently a Senior Deputy Director at *Kulliyah* of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences. She can be contacted via najihah@iium.edu.my

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SUSTAINABLE Development Projects

by IIUM Administrators

This book is the highlight of the successful contributions and achievements of International Islamic University Malaysia Administrators by showcasing their flagship projects conducted over a period of one year. It illustrates twelve (12) projects that cover different themes with a variety of subjects ranging from edible garden, energy saving, stingless bees, sejahtera sports, eco-bags, library classification system, “adab and budi” (manners), health and wellness and e-waste management. In taking up the challenge, a group of International Islamic University Malaysia Administrators with full commitment and passion have embarked on the projects, leading the way for other Administrators to follow and echoing the University’s effort in achieving the UNESCO seventeen (17) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Each chapter narrates the stories of how each project was developed from start to end as well as highlights the challenges and obstacles the teams faced along the way. The success of the projects which gave meaningful and powerful impact to the University was made apparent by the tables of figures and pictures. In a nutshell, this book is a testament and culmination of administrators’ achievement in doing noble things beyond their routine work.

NOR AMINAH KOSTOR is a Director of Management Services Division. She started her career at International Islamic University Malaysia in 1991. She is currently leading the Human Resource (HR) Division and becomes a reference for HR matters in International Islamic University Malaysia. She has vast knowledge and experience in Strategic Planning, Quality Management System, Project Management and Human Resource Management and Development.

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