

DISCOVER FASS

FACULTY OF ARTS
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITI BRUNEI
DARUSSALAM

DECEMBER 2025



**NOOR AZAM
HAJI-OTHMAN
IN THE SPOTLIGHT:
A DEFINING
PROFESSORIAL
LECTURE**

**FREDOLIN
TANGANG
NAMED EMERITUS
PROFESSOR**

**AHSAN ULLAH
CONFERRED
PROFESSORSHIP**

**FASS
ACADEMICS
RECEIVE STATE
HONOURS**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

From the Desks of the Dean, and Deputy Deans of FASS

Thank You and Farewell

Welcome Our Newest Faculty Member

Insight From Visiting Professor

FASS Feature: Stories That Shape the Faculty

FASSence: At the Heart of the Faculty

FASScination: Fascinating Stories from the Faculty

FASStudent: Student Voices, Journeys, and Achievements

FASS Support & Media

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FROM THE DESK OF THE DEAN OF FASS

"FASS will continue to provide strong platforms for students and faculty by fostering an inclusive environment that nurtures a strong pool of future-ready graduates, innovative academics, researchers and leaders."

Dr Hjh Asiyah Az-Zahra Ahmad Kumpoh



2025 has been a significant year for the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS). The year has been marked by important events and research achievements that reflect the faculty's dedication to scholarship, societal impact, and partnerships beyond academia.

In this issue of Discover FASS, we reflect on the milestones we have achieved in 2025 which include forging new academic and research collaborations and pursuing innovative research by our academics. One of the most momentous highlights for FASS this year is the 25th anniversary of Southeast Asia: A Multidisciplinary Journal (SEAMJ) in February. Just six months later, in August 2025, SEAMJ achieved another significant milestone with its acceptance for indexing in Scopus. This stands as a testament to the SEAMJ's rigorous standards and increasing international presence. In the same spirit of striving for excellence, FASS academics have continued to expand the frontiers of knowledge with the launch of new academic books across disciplines ranging from history and literature to transnationalism.

Beyond publications, FASS continues to foster more innovative research across areas such as tourism education, disaster preparedness, language use, migration, and climate literacy. These research efforts critically inform our module content, pedagogy and methodological approaches to ensure the faculty's academic offerings remain relevant and research-focused. They also strengthen our international networks and deliver meaningful contributions to local and regional communities.

As we look towards 2026, FASS is ready to welcome the new year with firm optimism and a continued dedication to excellence. Building on the successes of 2025, FASS aims to expand its impactful scholarly activities further and boost its international profile. FASS will continue to provide strong platforms for students and faculty by fostering an inclusive environment that nurtures a strong pool of future-ready graduates, innovative academics, researchers and leaders.

FROM THE DESK OF
THE DEPUTY DEAN OF FASS
ACADEMIC & STUDENT AFFAIRS



"Looking ahead to 2026, academic excellence will continue to be guided by inclusivity, future-readiness and critical thinking."

Dr Shariza Wahyuna Hj Shahrin

2025 has been a transformative year for FASS in strengthening academic quality, teaching innovation, and student engagement. With the continuous refinement of programme structures and assessment and the integration of experiential and digital learning strategies, our modules have increasingly reflected the faculty's commitment to relevance, adaptability, and research-informed teaching.

The year also saw strong student involvement in collaborative projects, including as RAKIS UBD's participation in the National Theatre Festival Brunei, the AN-2307 Literatures of SEA study trip to Singapore, Festival Sastera, and the 8th PRISM Short Film Festival, as well as internships and Discovery Year placements, all of which help prepare students to navigate complex global and regional challenges.

Looking ahead to 2026, academic excellence will continue to be guided by inclusivity, future-readiness and critical thinking. FASS will remain focused on nurturing graduates who are reflective, globally aware, and grounded in local values.

I extend my appreciation to all staff and students whose commitment to learning, teaching, and mentoring continues to make FASS a dynamic and impactful academic community.

FROM THE DESK OF
THE DEPUTY DEAN OF FASS
RESEARCH, INNOVATION & SUSTAINABILITY



"By bringing together scholars from different disciplines, we hope to generate richer insights, offer more holistic solutions to societal challenges, and enhance the visibility of our research both locally and internationally."

Dr Shirley Chin Wei Lee

As we conclude another productive year at FASS, it is my pleasure to reflect on the milestones we have achieved throughout 2025.

This year, FASS scholars have continued to demonstrate their commitment to impactful and forward-looking research. Numerous projects were approved across the faculty, strengthening our contributions in diverse areas such as disaster readiness, language and communication, migration studies, tourism and climate sustainability literacy. These initiatives not only reflect the expertise within our faculty but also our aspiration to address national and regional priorities.

Our academics are also venturing into emerging and contemporary fields, exploring topics such as generational behaviours, digital and intercultural communication, film and media, as well as multilingualism. Through these emerging areas of study, FASS continues to stay relevant in a rapidly changing world while maintaining a solid disciplinary foundation.

Entering 2026, our focus will be on further nurturing interdisciplinary and collaborative research. By bringing together scholars from different disciplines, we hope to generate richer insights, offer more holistic solutions to societal challenges, and enhance the visibility of our research both locally and internationally. Interdisciplinary work also strengthens our engagement with communities, industry, and policymakers allowing FASS research to contribute meaningfully to sustainable development and evidence-informed decision-making.

We remain committed to supporting a vibrant research culture that values curiosity, creativity, and collaboration. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to all staff and students whose passion and hard work continue to elevate FASS as a hub of knowledge and innovation at Universiti Brunei Darussalam.

Wishing everyone an inspiring year ahead as we journey into 2026.

Image by
Mohammad Azhar Haji Mohammad Khir
21B8004 (DCI, FASS)



THANK YOU & FAREWELL

Dk Dr Noor
Hasharina Pg
Haji Hassan



This year, we bid farewell to several esteemed colleagues who contributed immensely to FASS.

Their dedication and warmth had left a lasting impact, inspiring students and staff alike.

To our departing team members: thank you for your hard work and invaluable contributions.

Dr
Muhammad
Arafat bin
Mohamad



You will always have a special place in the FASS family, and we wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

WELCOME OUR NEWEST FACULTY MEMBER

**Dr Marcelo
Schellini**



Dr Marcelo Schellini joins Universiti Brunei Darussalam as an artist and Assistant Professor of Photography and Screen Studies, bringing with him a dynamic visual practice that explores identity, photography, and political imagination. His work is deeply engaged with the ways images shape everyday life, culture, and perception.

Holding a PhD in Visual Poetics from the University of São Paulo and a Master's degree in Visual Culture Studies from the University of Barcelona, Dr Schellini's academic journey spans continents and disciplines. Beyond the classroom and studio, he is also an Associate Fellow at the Centre for Conservation of Sustainable Ethnic Heritage, Museum of Malacca, Malaysia.

We warmly welcome Dr Schellini to the Faculty and look forward to the creative energy and critical perspectives he brings to our academic community.

Image by
Hermizi Markineh
23B8006 (DCI, FASS)



From Seville to Brunei: A Visiting Academic's Journey in Teaching, Film, and Global Collaboration

My name is Juan Pablo Mora Gutiérrez, and I am an Associate Professor (AP) at the University of Seville (US), Spain. This is my fourth time serving as a Visiting Academic at the Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD). My first visit lasted 28 days in 2012, the second one for a full month in 2019, and the third for three months in 2023. Throughout all my visits, I have grown significantly both personally and professionally. This time, I am fortunate to be able to stay for almost six months.



What I have enjoyed the most is the interaction with the talented students of the Beginner Spanish class I have had the privilege of teaching at the LC of UBD, as well as from the modules I have attended this semester. I have also learned a great deal from the students and faculty through the many events and showcases I have attended. I am impressed by UBD's commitment to the SDGs and to innovative teaching methodologies such as Challenge-Based Learning and Design Thinking.



I have facilitated Collaborative International Learning (COIL) activities involving students from UBD (both FASS and the LC), as well as students from my home university and from California. Two English Studies students from the module Intercultural Communication, Syaza and Elyza, produced a short film, Tanjung Geranjang, with the technical and creative assistance of two Spanish students, Alejandra and Nuria, from the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Seville. This film has been shortlisted for the 8th PRISM Short Film Festival at UBD.

On 19 November, I delivered a talk at the FASS Seminar Series on the RASDELE project, an international cooperation initiative between the University of Seville and the University of Tifariti of the Sahrawi refugee camps in Tindouf, Algeria. The discussion with the UBD students and faculty who attended was extremely enriching.

Before I fly back to Spain on 31 January 2026, I hope to finalise the signing of an MOU and mobility agreements between my home university and UBD, which I believe will benefit both UBD and US faculty and students.

Image by
Nurhanisah Binti Muhd Hannan
24B0092 (DCI FASS)



FASS Honours Professor Dr Noor Azam Haji-Othman with Professorial Lecture



FASS hosted a professorial lecture by Professor Dr Noor Azam bin Orang Kaya Maha Bijaya (OKMB) Haji Othman.

Professor Dr Noor Azam, an established scholar in English language and linguistics, has made significant contributions to linguistic studies, media studies, and language education throughout his distinguished career.

30.04.2025, UBD – In his lecture titled “The Ecology of Language in Brunei: Diversity, Interplay and Equity,” Professor Dr Noor Azam presented a critical synthesis of his lifelong research into the multilingual landscape of Brunei through an ecological framework of language. From a sociolinguistic perspective, he argued that languages in Brunei coexist, compete, and adapt within cultural, educational, and political contexts. He further emphasised that multilingualism should be understood as a dynamic and evolving system, rather than as a problem to be solved. The lecture also highlighted his long-standing advocacy for ecological equity among languages in Brunei, acknowledging that each language holds important roles and instrumental value.

Professor Dr Noor Azam’s research primarily focuses on analysing language, education, and state policies, with an emphasis on sociolinguistic and socio-cultural patterns. He believes that Brunei remains a veritable laboratory for linguistic research that deserves greater recognition by local scholars.

Currently serving as Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor Dr Noor Azam has held various leadership roles at UBD. His academic journey includes tenures as Director of the Language Centre, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and Dean of the Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Institute of Education (SHBIE). From 2014 to 2017, he was Director of the Centre for Advanced Research (CARe), where interdisciplinary research and innovation thrived under his leadership. He later served as Director and Visiting Professor at the UBD-FPT Global Centre in Da Nang, Vietnam (2017–2018), further showcasing UBD’s global presence.

A deep passion for academia, a relentless pursuit of self-improvement, and enduring support from family and colleagues have been central to Professor Dr Noor Azam's promotion to full professor at UBD.



Beyond the university, he was appointed Acting Deputy Permanent Secretary (Policy and Corporate) at the Ministry of Education from 2023 to 2024.

Throughout his career, Professor Dr Noor Azam has received numerous accolades in recognition of his academic and administrative excellence. These include the UBD Teaching Excellence Award for the Arts and Humanities (2012), the *Pingat Indah Kerja Baik* (PIKB)/Meritorious Service Medal (2013), a Special Mention Award during the 28th Brunei National Teacher's Day (2018), and the *Pingat Kerja Lama* (PKL) in June 2022.

In his remarks during the lecture, Professor Dr Noor Azam expressed heartfelt gratitude to his family, mentors, colleagues, and friends for their unwavering support.

One of the earliest local academics recruited into UBD's Department of English Language and Linguistics, Professor Dr Noor Azam shared that his aspiration to become a scholar and contribute to the development of linguistics in Brunei has always been his driving force. He has since published numerous academic works that have been cited both locally and internationally.

His research, particularly on the sociolinguistic situation in Brunei, has gained recognition from scholars worldwide, including his doctoral thesis *Changes in the Linguistic Diversity in Brunei Darussalam* (2005). Through his work, he aims to provide an accurate local perspective for the global academic community.

The professorial lecture also formed part of UBD's 40th-anniversary celebrations, commemorating four decades of academic excellence, innovation, and community impact since the university's establishment in 1985.



UBD Confers Professorship to Professor Dr Ahsan Ullah



13.05.2025, UBD – Professor Dr Ahsan Ullah has been promoted to Professor at FASS, recognising his outstanding contributions to research, teaching, and community engagement. With a PhD in Asian & International Studies and extensive experience working with vulnerable populations, including refugees and migrant communities, Professor Ullah has established himself as a leading scholar in migration, development, and social protection studies.

Throughout his distinguished career, he has combined rigorous academic research with practical engagement, providing insights that inform both policy and practice in Southeast Asia and beyond. His work with international organisations, NGOs, and academic institutions has strengthened regional and global collaborations, while his teaching has inspired and mentored countless students at UBD.

In this interview, we explore Professor Dr Ullah's journey to professorship, his reflections on research and teaching, and his vision for advancing migration and development studies in the region.

DISCOVER FASS: You've had an impressive path, from earning a PhD in Asian & International Studies to working with NGOs and universities around the world. What inspired you to focus on migration, development, and refugee studies, and how has your journey shaped your current research interests?

PROFESSOR ULLAH: Thank you. My academic trajectory into migration, development, and refugee studies was not predetermined; rather, it unfolded organically through field experiences and mentorship. I initially began my PhD at the National University of Singapore, intending to study internal migration, but I eventually discontinued the programme and later joined City University of Hong Kong, where I planned to work on NGOs and development in the global south. It was there that I met my supervisor, Professor Kevin Hewison, who fundamentally altered my scholarly trajectory. He gave me four day's time to consider whether I wished to shift my research toward migration, an area he astutely anticipated would become globally consequential. That unexpected yet formative intervention, coupled with my earlier NGO work across various countries, exposed me to the lived realities of mobility, inequality, and precarity. Together, these experiences crystallized my commitment to examining how and why people move, the political economy underpinning such movements, and the ways states and institutions negotiate and regulate mobility.

DISCOVER FASS: Much of your work addresses migration, displacement, and social protection. Which of your research projects do you consider the most meaningful or transformative, and why?

PROFESSOR ULLAH: One of the most meaningful and transformative projects in my career remains my doctoral research, later published as *Rationalizing Migration Decisions* (Ashgate 2010; Routledge 2016). That project shifted my focus from broad development studies to the heart of migration scholarship. It rooted my interest in why people move, how they navigate vulnerability, and how their aspirations intersect with governance systems, questions that have shaped much of my subsequent work on labour migration, mobility regimes, and the migration–development nexus. A second major turning point was my research on forced displacement and statelessness, particularly on the Rohingya. This work, culminating in *The Untold Stories of the Rohingyas* (Bristol University Press, 2023) and *Refugee Politics in the Middle East and North Africa* (Palgrave, 2014), demanded deep ethnographic engagement and revealed how identity, exclusion, and geopolitics structure refugee lives. Projects on migrant health during COVID-19, on citizenship as a tool of inclusion and exclusion (Oxford University Press, 2025), and on social protection and remittances – opened new areas of inquiry into how global crises, power structures, and inequality shape mobility. What has been most transformative, however, is the larger journey: beginning in NGO development work, entering migration studies almost by accident, and gradually building an interdisciplinary research agenda at the intersection of migration, development, security, and human rights.

DISCOVER FASS: In your role at UBD, you teach modules like Migration Studies, international relations, Globalisation, and Welfare. How do you connect your real-world research experience with your teaching, and what do you hope students take away from those courses?

PROFESSOR ULLAH: My teaching is heavily dependent on my research, which spans South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, Europe, and North America. In courses such as Migration Studies, International Relations, Globalisation, and Welfare, I draw directly on my fieldwork with Bangladeshi, Filipino, Nepali, Syrian, Afghan, and Rohingya communities, as well as my work on labour governance, forced displacement, vaccine diplomacy, and welfare regimes. These lived experiences allow me to illustrate how abstract theories, whether about migration systems, global power structures, or welfare models, take shape in everyday life. I routinely integrate interview narratives, ethnographic observations, and policy encounters into classroom discussions so students understand both the conceptual frameworks and the human realities behind them. What I hope students take away is the ability to connect theory to lived experience. Whether they are analysing labour migration, borders, global inequalities, or welfare reforms, I want them to see how academic concepts translate into real-world consequences for individuals, families, and communities. My aim is to inspire them to think critically, cultivate empathy, and recognise that rigorous scholarship can lead to meaningful impact, whether in government, NGOs, international organisations, or academia.

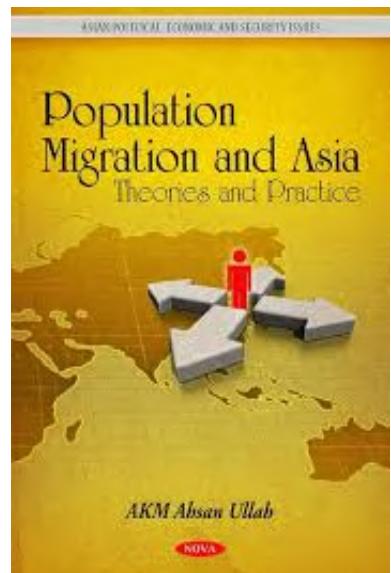
DISCOVER FASS: Your research covers vulnerable populations, such as refugees and migrants. What are some of the biggest ethical challenges you've faced in your work, and how do you navigate them?

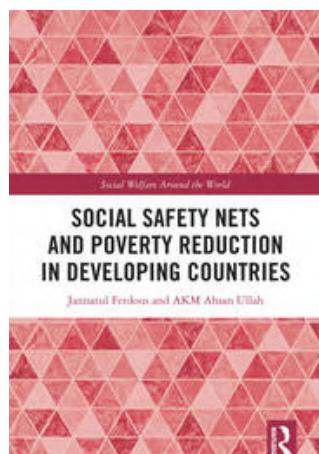
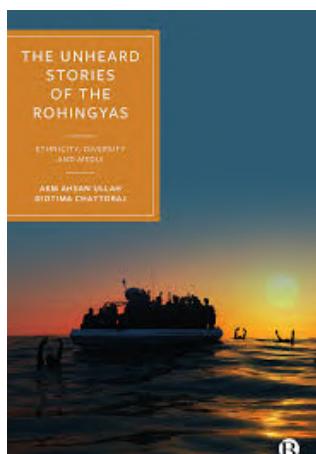
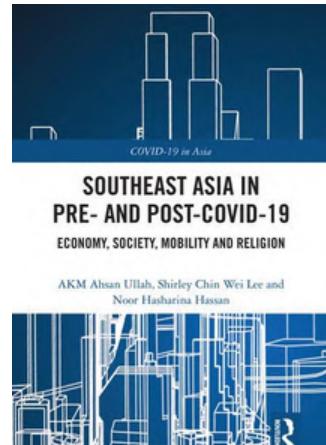
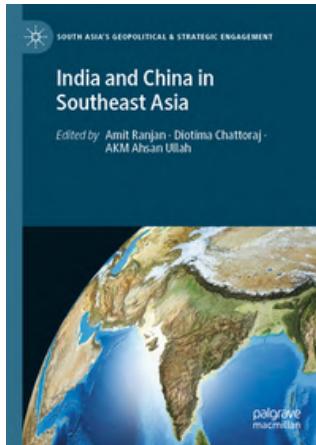
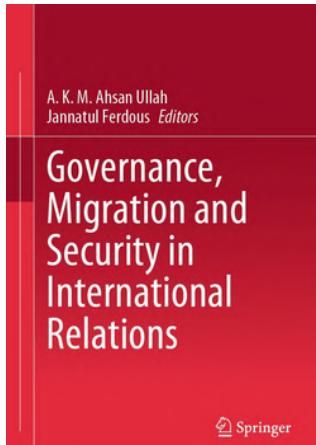
PROFESSOR ULLAH: One of the most persistent ethical challenges in my research with refugees and migrants is negotiating the tension between documenting structural injustice and safeguarding the dignity, safety, and emotional well-being of participants. Working in contexts such as Rohingya camps in Bangladesh, refugee settlements in the Middle East, and migrant labour sites in Southeast Asia, I routinely encounter individuals whose lives are shaped by trauma, legal precarity, and power asymmetries. Ensuring informed consent in environments of fear, managing expectations about what research can deliver, and avoiding the extraction of painful narratives for academic gain require constant reflexivity. I deal with these dilemmas by adopting an ethics-of-care approach – prioritising trust-building, transparency, and the minimisation of harm – alongside strict adherence to anonymity, data protection, and culturally sensitive engagement. Part of my reflections on these dilemmas is elaborated in my recent work (Ullah AKM Ahsan. 2025. "Ethical Imperatives in Migration Health: Justice and Care in Forced Migration Contexts" on *Developing World Bioethics*, 25(2), where I argue that ethical practice in migration research extends beyond procedural compliance to a broader commitment to justice, reciprocity, and the responsible representation of vulnerable lives.

"What has been most transformative, however, is the larger journey: beginning in NGO development work, entering migration studies almost by accident, and gradually building an interdisciplinary research agenda at the intersection of migration, development, security, and human rights"

DISCOVER FASS: You have collaborated with international institutions and provided consultancy to bodies like the World Bank. How do you see your academic work influencing real-world policy, especially in migration and development?

PROFESSOR ULLAH: My academic work has consistently intersected with policy debates in migration and development, allowing research to inform practice in tangible ways. Through collaborations with institutions such as the World Bank, IOM, UN agencies, and regional policy networks, I have contributed evidence-based analyses grounded in extensive fieldwork across South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. These engagements have enabled me to translate empirical insights, on recruitment systems, migrant vulnerabilities, remittance behaviours, displacement dynamics, and welfare gaps, into policy recommendations that shape programme design and governance reforms. My research on ethical recruitment, for instance, has informed discourse on lowering migration costs and regulating intermediaries, while my work on forced displacement and statelessness has supported policy dialogues on protection frameworks and durable solutions. I see academic research as a crucial bridge between lived experience and institutional decision-making: rigorous, context-sensitive scholarship provides policymakers with grounded understanding, and in turn, policy partnerships ensure that academic knowledge contributes meaningfully to improving the lives of migrants and their families.





"My aspiration is for UBD to play a meaningful role in shaping this shift through scholarship that is empirically grounded, theoretically rigorous, ethically conscious, and globally relevant"

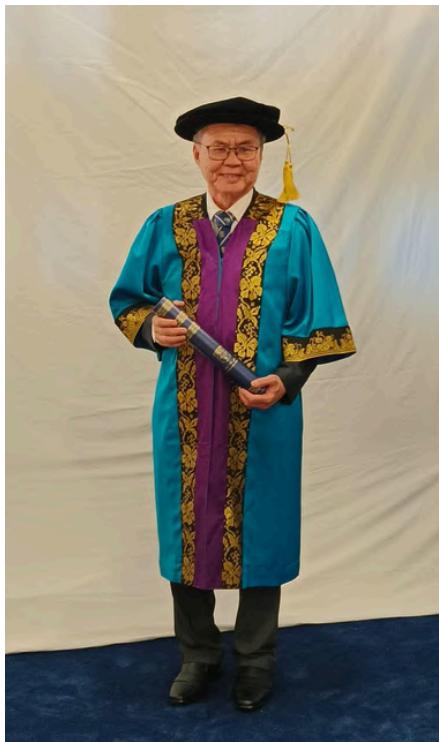
DISCOVER FASS: Looking ahead, what are your aspirations for migration and refugee studies, both at UBD and in the global research community? And who or what do you credit most for supporting and shaping your career to this point?

PROFESSOR ULLAH: I envision migration and refugee studies at UBD evolving into a regional hub for evidence-based research, South–South dialogue, and policy innovation. Brunei's strategic position and multicultural landscape make it an ideal setting to study mobility, labour governance, and humanitarian challenges in Southeast Asia. I aim to deepen collaborations with organisations such as IOM, UNHCR, and ASEAN partners, while training a new generation of scholars capable of conducting rigorous fieldwork and contributing fresh insights on climate-induced mobility, migrant health, statelessness, and protection regimes. Globally, I hope the field advances toward more inclusive and decolonised knowledge production. My aspiration is for UBD to play a meaningful role in shaping this shift through scholarship that is empirically grounded, theoretically rigorous, ethically conscious, and globally relevant. The foundations of my career were shaped most profoundly by my parents, teachers, community builders, and war survivors, whose lives embodied integrity, resilience, and service. My father, who founded several educational institutions, and my mother, whose spirituality, struggles, and unwavering commitment to children's learning shaped my earliest values, taught me what it means to live with purpose. Their prayers, sacrifices, and belief in education gave me the courage to pursue a life of inquiry across continents. I also owe much to mentors such as Professor Kevin Hewison, who redirected my academic path toward migration studies, and to the colleagues and students who continue to challenge and inspire my thinking.

Discover FASS congratulates Professor Dr Ahsan Ullah on his promotion to Professor at UBD. His passion for research, dedication to teaching, and commitment to uplifting communities have left a lasting impact on students and colleagues alike.

We wish him continued inspiration, success, and joy as he embraces this new chapter, and we look forward to seeing his work continue to shape migration and development studies both in Brunei and across the region.

Professor Dr Fredolin Tangang Received Emeritus Honour



22.11.2025, UKM – Professor Dr Fredolin Tangang has recently been conferred the prestigious title of Emeritus Professor by Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), in recognition of his outstanding contributions to climate science, research, and higher education in Southeast Asia. Holding a BSc from the University of Malaya, an MS from Iowa State University, and a PhD from the University of British Columbia, he has dedicated over three decades to advancing meteorology, climatology, and regional climate modelling.

Beyond his research achievements, Professor Dr Tangang is widely recognised as a mentor to generations of students and a leader in fostering collaboration across universities and research institutions. In this interview, he reflects on his career, shares insights from decades of climate research, and outlines his vision for the future of climate science.

At the international and regional levels, he has made significant contributions to climate change science, including serving as Working Group I Vice-Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) during the Fifth Assessment Cycle (AR5). He also championed regional climate downscaling in Southeast Asia by helping to establish CORDEX Southeast Asia in 2013, providing leadership in advancing regional climate understanding until his retirement from UKM in 2023.

In this interview, we explore his reflections on his journey, his most memorable contributions, and the legacy he hopes to leave for future generations of scholars.

DISCOVER FASS: Congratulations on your conferment as Emeritus Professor at UKM. Looking back, what have been the most defining moments in your academic and research career?

PROFESSOR TANGANG: Thank you for this opportunity. My academic journey has been a long and meaningful one, beginning when I started as a Tutor at UKM Sabah Campus in 1986 and continuing until my compulsory retirement in March 2023. As an academic, teacher, and researcher, I have always found deep fulfilment in sharing knowledge with students and guiding them through their master's and PhD degrees. Continuing my work here at FASS UBD reflects my ongoing passion and personal commitment: as long as I am healthy and needed, I wish to keep contributing. These are the true sources of satisfaction in my career. Along the way, I have also been fortunate to receive various recognitions and awards. In 2021, two years before my retirement, I was honoured with Malaysia's 14th *Anugerah Akademik Negara* (AAN) for Best Scientific Publication. In 2011, I was inducted as a Fellow of the Academy of Sciences Malaysia (ASM) for my contributions to climate change and climate variability research, and for advancing knowledge both in Malaysia and throughout Southeast Asia.

DISCOVER FASS: Your work in climatology and regional climate modelling has been influential across Southeast Asia. Can you share which of your research projects you feel has had the most impact, and why?

PROFESSOR TANGANG: To tell the truth, I have been involved in many research projects throughout my academic career – both big and small – probably around 30 in total. I still remember my very first research project after returning from Canada, where I completed my PhD at the University of British Columbia (UBC) and developed a model to forecast the El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) phenomenon. When I returned to the UKM Main Campus in Bangi in July 1997, Peninsular Malaysia was experiencing the impacts of the strongest El Niño event ever recorded. We faced the worst and most prolonged haze episode at the time, and the public did not understand what was happening. I suddenly became an “academic celebrity,” as the print media and television began portraying me as the only person who could explain the effects of the El Niño phenomenon, thanks to my PhD research at UBC.

However, I must admit that at that time, I did not actually have much knowledge about the mechanisms through which El Niño affects Malaysia's and the region's climate, because my PhD work focused on the El Niño phenomenon itself, not on its regional impacts. This lack of understanding shaped my very first research project on examining the effects of El Niño in Malaysia and Southeast Asia. *Alhamdulillah*, through that project and several subsequent ones, we were able to advance the scientific understanding of El Niño teleconnection effects in Malaysia and across the Southeast Asian region. In the early 2000s, I shifted my attention more towards global warming and climate change. By 2013, we successfully established CORDEX Southeast Asia, which became a major pillar of regional climate modelling activities in the region, and I had the privilege of leading it until 2023.

“...if we are sincere in our work, do our best, avoid unnecessary conflict, and remain humble—choosing instead to work as team members—InshaAllah, the rewards will come”

DISCOVER FASS: Every researcher faces challenges along the way. Could you share a significant challenge you encountered in your work and how it shaped your approach to science and leadership?

PROFESSOR TANGANG: At a personal and institutional level, challenges and obstacles will always exist and can hinder your progress. At the institutional level, issues such as limited funding, competition, unhealthy political culture, and even backstabbing can arise and drag you down if you are not careful. However, if we are sincere in our work, do our best, avoid unnecessary conflict, and remain humble – choosing instead to work as team members – *InshaAllah*, the rewards will come. At the same time, courage is needed to step into the vacuum when leadership is lacking and to show the willingness to lead the way. I was fortunate enough to be nominated by the Malaysian Government for the position of IPCC Working Group I Vice-Chair, and I was elected. However, operating at the global level is an entirely different game; one must learn quickly, cover the ground fast, show confidence, and lead effectively. My engagement with the IPCC broadened my leadership skills, confidence, and professional network. This experience helped me in establishing CORDEX Southeast Asia when I realised that, despite the region's high climate vulnerability, there had been very limited regional climate downscaling and projection activities prior to 2013. I seized this gap, provided leadership, and built the initiative over more than a decade.

“The Emeritus title is a pinnacle of academic life, but titles have never defined me. I remain the same person—humble, hardworking, and committed to serving through knowledge”



DISCOVER FASS: Climate science is evolving rapidly, especially in Southeast Asia. What do you see as the key priorities and opportunities for the next generation of climate scientists in the region?

PROFESSOR TANGANG: I have just finished writing my latest article for my column in *Utusan Sarawak*. I write in Malay, and I am grateful to have proficiency in *Bahasa Melayu*. If we want to educate the public on a complex issue like climate change, we must be able to communicate in a language that the masses can read and understand. The article is a reflection on the recent chaotic and extreme weather events in Malaysia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia that have killed hundreds of people and affected millions across the region. The article is titled “*Kecelaruan cuaca di Malaysia, rantau Asia Tenggara dan Selatan Asia sejak pertengahan November 2025*”. Please feel free to read it to understand the gravity of the extreme weather and climate conditions that lie ahead for our region in the coming decades if the world fails to act collectively and urgently to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and limit warming to below 1.5°C, as stipulated in the Paris Agreement.

DISCOVER FASS: As you receive the Emeritus title, how do you reflect on your legacy, and what advice would you give to aspiring academics who hope to make a meaningful impact in their field?

PROFESSOR TANGANG: The Emeritus title is a pinnacle of academic life, but titles have never defined me. I remain the same person – humble, hardworking, and committed to serving through knowledge. I am grateful to begin a new chapter at UBD after retiring from UKM, even if it meant taking a lower position. Brunei feels close to home, both geographically – being near my hometown of Menumbok – and personally, especially when I can enjoy ambuyat again. To me, joining UBD is not just a job; it is a calling. It is an opportunity to build climate research and modelling capacity for Brunei, to bring global and regional expertise – including CORDEX Southeast Asia – into a national context, and to help prepare the country for the climate challenges of the future. This is a responsibility I take very seriously. But before we can address complex questions about future risks and adaptation, we must strengthen the scientific foundation – the physical understanding of climate change in Brunei. From the moment I arrived at UBD, I worked towards building this capacity, despite not knowing the research landscape or anyone here. With perseverance and teamwork, we formed the UBD Climate Change Modelling Group, uniting colleagues from FOS, SDS, and FIT. Within a year, we completed a major national proposal that will allow Brunei to produce 1 km – resolution climate projections, extreme sea level simulations, and nationwide flood maps – data that will be vital for decades to come. This proposal also sets the foundation for an integrated Climate Change Data Centre at UBD. But this is just the beginning. We must push forward with the Climate Change Adaptation Research Cluster and undertake multidisciplinary research that truly helps Brunei navigate the risks ahead. I sincerely hope colleagues in FASS will walk together on this important journey.



Discover FASS congratulates Professor Dr Fredolin Tangang on his well-deserved conferment as Emeritus Professor by UKM Malaysia. His remarkable contributions to climate science, mentorship, and higher education have left an enduring legacy in Southeast Asia and beyond. We wish him continued success, good health, and fulfillment as he embarks on this new chapter, inspiring future generations of scholars and leaders.

FASS Academics Honoured with PIKB



Three FASS academics – Dr Rommel Curaming (Senior Assistant Professor at the History and International Studies Programme), Dr Asmali Hj Sulaiman (Lecturer at the Sociology and Anthropology Programme), and Dr Shariza Wahyuna Hj Shahrin (Lecturer at the Sociology and Anthropology Programme) – have been awarded the Medal of Honour, Pingat Indah Kerja Baik (PIKB), in recognition of their meritorious service, commitment, and contributions to the nation.

1.05.2025, Istana Nurul Iman – The Investiture Ceremony took place at the Balai Singgahsana Indera Kenchana, Istana Nurul Iman. His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office, officiated the conferment of the State Honorary Medals as His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam's personal representative. Also in attendance was His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdul Malik.

The conferment of the PIKB on these academics reflects not only their individual excellence but also the faculty's sustained commitment to advancing scholarship, public service, and nation-building. Their recognition underscores the vital role of academic leadership and intellectual contribution in supporting Brunei Darussalam's social, historical, and cultural development.



Discover FASS extends its heartfelt congratulations to the award recipients and takes great pride in their achievements, which continue to inspire colleagues and students alike.

FASS Celebrates SEAMJ's Anniversary and Scopus Achievement

21.02.2025, UBD – FASS UBD celebrated the 25th anniversary of Southeast Asia: A Multidisciplinary Journal (SEAMJ). The event was held at the Ruang Bicara Minda, UBD Library.

SEAMJ is a peer-reviewed and open-access journal covering the spectrum of languages and cultures of contemporary Southeast Asian societies with high-quality theoretical, analytical, and empirical works, including language, culture and society in the Malay world, youth culture and social media, digital development, sustainable urbanisation in Southeast Asia, globalisation and security, and migration. SEAMJ also publishes articles in both Malay and English. Since 2010, it has transitioned to online publishing.

The ceremony aimed to showcase SEAMJ's history and publications since its inception in 1999, and celebrate its milestones, including its first special issue, Teaching English in Southeast Asia, in 2002/2003, its growth from an annual publication under FASS to a triannual journal with Emerald Publishing in 2022.



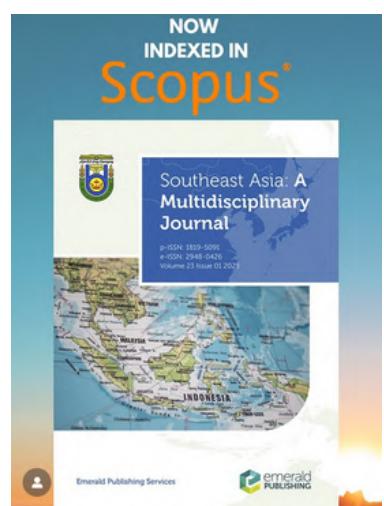
In his opening presentation, Chief Editor Professor Dr Ahsan Ullah highlighted SEAMJ's achievements in terms of its outreach, number of downloads, and citation scores, and mentioned preparations to apply for Scopus-indexing will be done by March 2025. Drs Huong Ha and C. K. Peter Chuah's article titled "Digital Economy in Southeast Asia: Challenges, Opportunities and Future Development" garnered about 14,700 downloads since its publication in 2023.

Chief Editor, Professor Dr Noor Azam Haji Othman also remarked on the history and significance of SEAMJ, emphasising that sustainability has been a key component of the journal since its first published article titled "Indigenous Knowledge and Sustainable Development: The Potential for Sustainable Use of Renewable Resources in Brunei Darussalam" by Dr Rohana Ulluwishewa (1999).

The event was officiated by UBD Vice Chancellor and Guest of Honour, Dr Hazri bin Haji Kifle, and attended by university officials, academics, and former Chief Editors and Associate Editors.

In August 2025, SEAMJ achieved a significant milestone with its official inclusion in the Scopus index. This accomplishment affirms the journal's academic rigour, scholarly credibility, and growing research impact, positioning SEAMJ firmly on the global academic landscape.

Discover FASS extends its warmest congratulations to the SEAMJ editorial team, contributors, reviewers, and editorial board members, whose collective dedication and commitment to excellence have made this achievement possible.



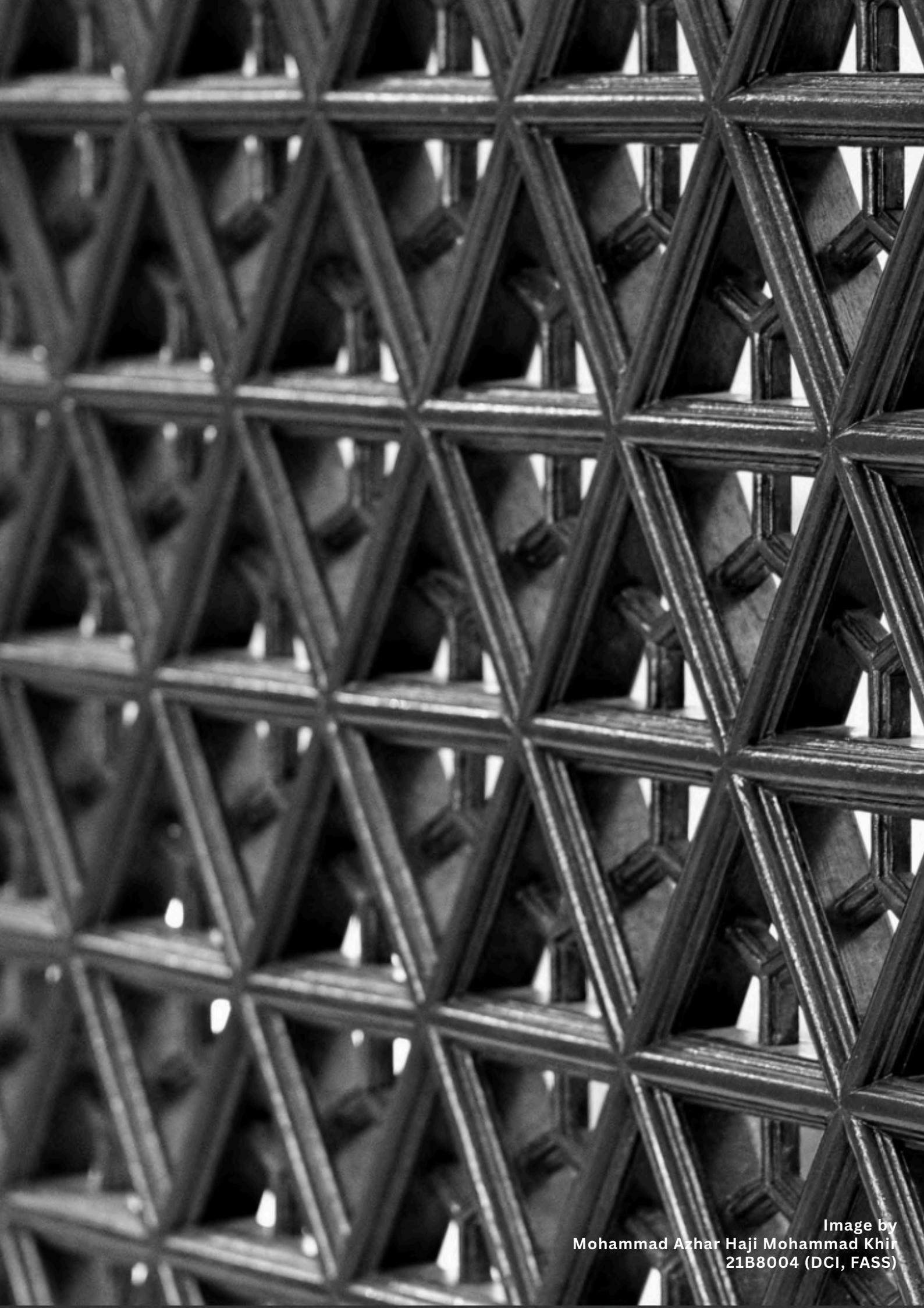


Image by
Mohammad Azhar Haji Mohammad Khir
21B8004 (DCI, FASS)

Residential Fellowship at Loughborough University: A Month of Scholarship and Collaboration



From March 1 to 31, 2025, Dr. Maria Carinnes Alejandria served as a Residential Fellow at the Loughborough University Institute of Advanced Studies (IAS), based at the university's scenic Loughborough campus. During her fellowship, Dr Alejandria delivered two lectures drawing from her ongoing research project on flood preparedness among urban communities in Southeast Asia, particularly within the BIMP-EAGA subregion (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines).

Through the generous sponsorship of the IAS and the intellectually stimulating events it organized, Dr Alejandria engaged with a dynamic network of scholars working on sustainability, resilience, and humanitarian studies. "The fellowship provided me the space to pause, reflect, and reimagine the trajectory of my work," she shared, expressing her deep gratitude to Professor Ksenia Chmutina for the invitation and mentorship. Her main seminar recording is now available for public viewing [here](#).

As part of her residency, Dr Alejandria also visited Loughborough's London campus, where she had an enriching discussion with Professor Thomas Tufte on communicative activism and ecologies, particularly in relation to disaster-affected communities and the networks of actors who engage with them.

Concluding her professional visit to the UK, Dr Alejandria reflected, "I leave this beautiful campus with renewed appreciation and purpose for my work in critical disaster and humanitarian studies." She looks forward to bringing these new insights back to Brunei and sharing them with her collaborators from Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines, as they continue to advance emerging epistemologies in disaster and resilience research.

Read more about her experience:

<https://blog.lboro.ac.uk/ias/2025/05/13/introducing-dr-maria-carinnes-p-alejandria/>

FASS Launches 12 Books at *Denai Ilham*

31.01.2025, UBD – FASS, UBD launched 12 academic books covering various fields in the social sciences, including history, linguistics, education, geography, and international relations.

The book launch, titled *Denai Ilham* (The Inspirational Trail), aimed to celebrate the scholarly contributions of FASS academics, whose works represent significant additions to the faculty's research output, scholarship, and national development.

Officiating the event, UBD Vice-Chancellor and Guest of Honour, Dr Hazri bin Haji Kifle emphasised the importance of continued academic book production. He highlighted that these publications not only reflect the dedication and hard work of UBD scholars but also underscore the university's commitment to being a hub of knowledge for both academics and the wider public.



Some of the books were published by local publishers such as Pusat Sejarah and Qarun Nafis, while others were released by internationally renowned publishers, including Bristol University Press, Cambridge University Press, Springer, Palgrave Macmillan, Routledge, and Taylor & Francis.

The launch event was attended by UBD Senior Management Team, directors and deans, as well as university officials and academics. The launch was held at RnC Café, Business Library, UBD.

Malay Literature Programme Launches a Series of Folktale Books

9.04.2025, UBD – Amid the Eid celebrations at FASS, the Malay Literature Programme, launched a new publication titled *Cerita Lisan Brunei: Beberapa Catatan Pemikiran: Siri Kedua*, a collection of short research essays by postgraduate students.

The volume explores critical reflections on Brunei's oral heritage, offering valuable insights and serving as a useful point of reference for new researchers and students interested in this field of study.

Officiated by the Dean of FASS, the launch reflects the Programme's ongoing commitment to nurturing scholarly engagement with local culture and strengthening the study of Bruneian literature and heritage.



FASS and UK academics hold workshop on embedding equity, diversity and inclusion in Brunei higher education

25.08.2025, UBD – FASS, UBD in collaboration with two academics at the University of the Built Environment, UK, held a workshop on Embedding Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) in Higher Education in Brunei. The workshop was led by Dr Muhammad Qasim Rana from the University of the Built Environment in the UK and Dr Sharifah Nurul Huda Alkaff from FASS, UBD. Two other academics, Professor Angela Lee from the UK and Ms Khairunnisa Haji Ibrahim from UBD, are also part of the project team. The EDI-Brunei project is funded by the British Council and managed by SEAMEO RIHED in Bangkok.



The half-day workshop took place at the Main Library of UBD. It featured three presentations. Dr Rana presented a paper on the significance of EDI for Brunei's higher education, while Dr Sharifah presented preliminary findings from the Brunei higher education institutional gender mapping of faculty and students across the three Bruneian universities: UBD, Universiti Teknologi Brunei (UTB) and Universiti Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA). Ms Khairunnisa meanwhile presented initial findings from a project on gendered patterns of publications in UBD.

More than 30 participants ranging from graduate students to academics and officials from the Ministry of Education took part in the workshop. They engaged in group discussions about the barriers to EDI and potential solutions, with each group presenting their findings at the conclusion of the workshop.



The Brunei project team was invited to take part in the SEA-UK GEDI Leadership Forum on 29 - 31 October 2025, in London, the United Kingdom. The team was represented by Ms. Khairunnisa, who joined fellow project leads from Southeast Asia and other partners who are involved in Phase II of the Strengthening Leadership with Gender Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity in Higher Education Institutions in South East Asia project, including UK partner universities, SEA Ministries and UK government bodies.

Ms Khairunnisa presented findings from the EDI-Brunei workshop, as well as the findings of the gender-disaggregated data from the institutional mapping of UBD, UTB, UNISSA, and joined other forum participants in a roundtable discussion, campus visits and stakeholder forum. A full report on the EDI-Brunei project was also presented at the forum.

Researching Ageing Futures: Driving Policy, Possibility, and Purpose in Brunei

17-19.09.2025, Beijing – Dr Siti Mazidah Hj Mohammad, Director for the Centre for Advanced Research (CARe) and Assistant Professor, FASS was invited to speak at the APEC Seminar - Digital Solutions and Technologies for Senior Citizens' Connectivity and Healthiness.

A productive and fulfilling week where academics, policymakers, NGOs, practitioners and experts from various APEC economies were brought together to share and discuss their initiatives, experiences, challenges faced and way forward in developing healthy ageing.



Some of the key concepts that stood out throughout the events were digital literacy, digital inclusion, dignity, spirituality domain, cultural context, gendered ageing and people-centred approach in ageing approaches and solutions.

One of the key highlights of the event was the field trip to the Future Laboratory at Tsinghua University, China Unicorn, and the Robot Mall.

A Literary Journey Through Brunei's Novels

8.05.2025, Gadong – Dr Kathrina Mohd Daud from the English Studies Programme delivered a guest lecture titled “From the ‘Bloody Crown’ to Ecological Saviour: A Brief History of the Novel in Brunei Darussalam” to more than 40 literature-enthusiast students at Duli Pengiran Muda Al-Muhtadee Billah College.

The lecture traced the evolution of Bruneian fiction, highlighting shifts from early narratives centred on power and conflict to contemporary works engaging with ecological and social concerns.

The session prompted lively discussion and reflection, leaving students inspired by the depth, relevance, and future potential of local literary storytelling.



Keynote Perspectives at the APCA–ANPOR–UBD Conference 2025

28.05.2025, UBD – AP Dr James McLellan and Dr Siti Badriyah Hj Mohd Yusof delivered keynote addresses on the second day of the APCA–ANPOR–UBD Conference 2025.

AP Dr James McLellan presented his research on “Sustainable Development Goals and Translanguaging in the Context of Southeast Asia”, while Dr Siti Badriyah Hj Mohd Yusof delivered an analysis titled “Sustainable Communication Reimagined: Opportunities for Language Research and Policy”.

Their addresses were well received by attendees from universities across China, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Korea, highlighting FASS’s active contribution to regional academic discourse on language, sustainability, and communication.



Blue Carbon and the Future of ASEAN Sustainability



29.05.2025, Jakarta – Dr Shafi Noor Islam, from the Geography, Environment and Development Programme, recently participated in the UNDP workshop on ASEAN Blue Carbon and Blue Finance Ecosystem Research 2025, held in Jakarta, Indonesia.

At the workshop, Dr Shafi presented his research on the ASEAN Blue Carbon Ecosystem in Brunei Darussalam, sharing insights into the nation’s coastal and marine resources.

The event focused on scenario analysis of ASEAN Blue Carbon and finance across ASEAN countries and Timor-Leste, as well as mapping blue carbon and blue finance to forecast the future of coastal ecosystems and their contribution to sustainable development.

Driving Inclusive AI Literacy Across Brunei



28.9.2025, Berakas – Dr Mayyer Ling is leading the AI Ready ASEAN Programme (2025–2026), a regional initiative by the Big BWN Project, ASEAN Foundation, and Google.org, as Master Trainer.

As part of the programme, she will conduct AI literacy and awareness training for members of the Brunei Darussalam National Association of the Blind (BDNAB) and Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah (YSHHB) Volunteers. Her work aims to equip participants with essential digital and AI skills, fostering greater inclusion and accessibility in Brunei's digital transformation journey.

Through this initiative, Brunei continues to strengthen inclusive AI readiness, supporting the objectives of the Digital Economy Masterplan 2025 and the Ministry of Education's Digital Transformation Plan (2023–2027).

Multilateral Perspectives on Bruneian Chinese Communities

10-12.10.2025, China – Dr Hannah M. Y. Ho participated in the 10th China–South Asia and Southeast Asia Think Tank Forum held in Kunming.

She presented a talk titled “Inter-Asia Linkages and Civilisational Dialogues: Stories of the Chinese Communities in Brunei Darussalam,” showcasing UBD's research on intergenerational Chinese Bruneians and their evolving cultural connections across national, regional, and global contexts.

Her presentation emphasised cultural sustainability and multilateral understanding, highlighting the role of lived community experiences and narratives in fostering mutual respect among civilisations and advancing Sustainable Development Goals 16 and 17.



From Science to Action: FASS Scholar Engages in International Dialogue



12.11.2025, Singapore – Professor Fredolin Tangang was invited as a panel speaker at “From Science to Action: Addressing Climate-Driven Disease Threats Across Asia & Europe,” held on 12 November 2025.

The event, organised by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) and the Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health (SSHSPH), National University of Singapore, provided a platform for experts to discuss the growing intersection of climate change and public health.

Professor Tangang highlighted the importance of science-driven solutions to address climate-related disease threats and enhance regional resilience, contributing to critical dialogues on sustainable and adaptive strategies across Asia and Europe.

Regional Flood Resilience Dialogue in BIMP-EAGA Seminar-Workshop



22–23.09.2025, Philippines – UBD in collaboration with Palawan State University, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), Universitas Lambung Mangkurat (ULM), and SEA Junction, co-organised the seminar-workshop “Regional Collaboration and Policy for Flood Resilience in BIMP-EAGA” at Palawan State University, Philippines.

As principal convenor, Dr Maria Carinnes Alejandria launched the Urban Resilience Toolkit, developed through a UBD-FASS funded project with SEA Junction, highlighting its potential to strengthen flood preparedness across the BIMP-EAGA region.

Adding Brunei’s perspective to the discussions, Dr Shariza Wahyuna binti Hj Shahrin, Ms Khairunnisa binti Hj Ibrahim, and AK Mohd Saiful Bahri bin Pg Hj Metussin presented papers on Brunei’s flood preparedness strategies, demonstrating the country’s active role in advancing regional resilience and sustainable disaster management practices.



Understanding Brunei's Heritage Through Place Names

30.04.2025, DBP – Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Brunei organised a series of Tamu Bahasa events in conjunction with the Language Month celebration, featuring Dr Yabit Alas, Associate Professor from the Malay Language, Linguistics and Literature Programme, FASS, as a guest speaker.

Dr Yabit delivered a presentation titled “*Etimologi Nama-nama Kampung di Negara Brunei Darussalam*,” offering insights into the origins and meanings of Brunei’s village names, and highlighting the importance of etymological research in understanding local history and cultural heritage.

Rethinking Tourism for a Regenerative Future

20.11.2025, Nepal – Dr Shirley Chin participated in the 12th TTRA Annual Conference held in Kathmandu, where she presented a research paper titled “Regenerative Tourism in Brunei Darussalam.”

The conference, hosted by the Kathmandu University School of Management, was organised around the theme “Regenerative Travel and Tourism Research in the Asia-Pacific,” bringing together scholars and practitioners to discuss sustainable and regenerative approaches in the tourism sector.

This also highlighted Brunei’s efforts and potential in regenerative tourism, contributing to regional discussions on sustainable travel practices and the role of tourism in environmental and community wellbeing.



Bruneian Literature Takes the TEDx Stage



6.10.2025, UBD – Dr Kathrina Mohd Daud took the TEDx stage with her compelling talk, “Imagining Brunei: From Jong Batu to Kampong Ayer 2050.” Drawing on her expertise as a Bruneian novelist and literary scholar, Dr Kathrina examined the history and evolution of the Bruneian novel, highlighting how the nation’s literary ecology shapes local readers and writers.

Her talk underscored the importance of reading Bruneian stories and, more critically, the need to continue writing them as part of sustaining Brunei’s cultural imagination and identity. The session offered a timely and thought-provoking reflection on the enduring role of literature in envisioning Brunei’s past, present, and future.



Strengthening Malay and Minority Languages: Academic Insights at *Tamu Bahasa 2025*

10.09.2025, DBP – Mr Pengiran Haji Ashrol Rahimy bin Pengiran Damit presented a paper at *Tamu Bahasa* in conjunction with the Language Month Celebration 2025.

His presentation, titled “*Pemerkasaan Bahasa Melayu dan Bahasa Minoriti di Negara Brunei Darussalam: Langkah Pelestarian Kepelbagai Bahasa*,” highlighted ongoing efforts to strengthen the position of the Malay language as the national language, while emphasising the importance of preserving minority languages as an integral part of the nation’s cultural and linguistic identity.

The session reflected the continued role of academia in contributing to national language discourse and in supporting initiatives aimed at safeguarding linguistic diversity in Brunei Darussalam.

Language as History: Linguistic Perspectives at *Bicara Sejarah 2025*

26.07.2025, Brunei History Centre – Dr Muhammad Najib bin Noorashid served as a keynote speaker for the programme *Bicara Sejarah: Cerminan Dinamika Sejarah Melalui Pengkajian Linguistik Melayu*.

The programme was organised by the Brunei History Centre through the Pusat Pengkajian Borneo (penBORNEO), in conjunction with the 79th Birthday Celebration of His Majesty Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam.

Through his participation, Dr Najib presented his latest research entitled, “*Suara Kedaulatan: Bahasa, Kuasa dan Identiti dalam Titah Hari Kebangsaan Negara Brunei Darussalam (1984-2025)*,” and contributed linguistic perspectives to historical discourse, highlighting the role of Malay linguistics in understanding Brunei’s historical dynamics and cultural heritage.





Image by
Dk Izzat Zafirah
20B8015 (DCI, FASS)

CHIPZAT

Lights, Camera, Action: UBD's 8th PRISM Festival Shines Again



4.12.2025, UBD – The 8th PRISM UBD Short Film Festival reached a dazzling finale at the Pro-Canselor Art Centre, UBD, with the screening of its award-winning films. The event drew a lively and enthusiastic audience, including representatives from UBD OAVCRIS, the Dean of FASS, academic staff, filmmakers, students, and passionate film enthusiasts.

This year's festival celebrated creativity, innovation, and storytelling at its finest, spotlighting the vibrant talent within UBD's Design & Creative Industries Programme and beyond. Each film captivated the audience, reflecting the imagination, dedication, and hard work of everyone involved.

FASS Discover congratulates Dr Pengiran Mohd Rahiman Pengiran Aliudin, Dr Yong Liu, Dr Marcelo Schellini, Dr Mayyer Ling, and the student volunteers for their outstanding efforts in bringing the 8th PRISM to life, ensuring yet another unforgettable celebration of cinematic excellence at UBD.

Festival Sastera 2025 Celebrates Emerging Literary Talent

4-5 November 2025, UBD – The *Festival Sastera*, themed “*Eksplorasi dan Kebitaraan Sastera Tunas*”, was organised by students of the Malay Literature programme under the Programme of Language, Linguistics and Malay Literature. The festival was conducted through the AS-2206 *Pengurusan dan Pemasaran Sastera* module, in collaboration with AS-2301 *Sastera dan Pendidikan* and AS-1206 *Pengantar Kesusastraan Melayu*.

The festival was officiated on 4 November by Dr Hajah Asiyah Az-Zahra binti Ahmad Kumpoh, Dean of FASS, UBD, as Guest of Honour. The opening ceremony featured a stage performance titled *Awang Sumbilang*, followed by an interactive quiz session that drew enthusiastic participation from attending schools. An afternoon performance, *Penunggu Gaung Nibung*, further captivated audiences through its creative adaptation of Dusun folklore.



The two-day programme attracted more than 600 participants from 12 primary and secondary schools across Brunei. Highlights included student-led creative exhibitions from the AS-2301 and AS-1206 modules, as well as the launch of *Mengenal AI*, a booklet produced under the AS-1306 *Sastera dan Industri Kreatif* module and supervised by Dr Ena Herni Wasli.

The festival also welcomed *Komunitas Taman Bacaan Indonesia*, whose participation included a stage performance and a short story writing workshop facilitated by young Bruneian writer, Ms Liyana binti Awg Haji Julay. Now in its 11th edition, the *Festival Sastera* continues to provide a vibrant platform for young learners, educators, and the wider community, fostering appreciation of Bruneian literature while bridging literature, education, and the creative industries.



Driving Impact Through Innovation: FASS Participates the International Higher Education Summit & Exhibition 2025



11-12.11.2025, UBD – FASS took part at the Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Commercialisation showcase at the International Higher Education Summit & Exhibition 2025 (IHEEIC2025), where the Sociology & Anthropology Programme together with the Malay Language, Linguistics & Literature Programme presenting two cutting-edge research initiatives led by our dedicated academics.

“KitaAlert: Urban Flood Resilience Toolkit for BIMP-EAGA,” spearheaded by Dr Maria Carinnes Alejandria and her team, introduces an innovative community-driven platform that strengthens climate resilience through real-time reporting, participatory mapping, and integrated disaster management across the region.

Complementing this, “Being Malay in Non-Malay Land,” led by Dr Lalu Nurul Yaqin, provides fresh empirical insights into identity, cultural continuity, and the lived experiences of Malay communities outside their homeland, illustrating the value of linguistic and ethnographic scholarship in understanding multicultural dynamics. The event reaffirmed the faculty’s commitment to advancing knowledge, inspiring innovation, and contributing to a stronger, more connected region.

UBD Spectrum 5 Presents Stellar, Celebrating Final- Year Design Talent



17.04.2025, UBD – The 5th UBD Spectrum proudly presented Stellar, an art and design graduation exhibition showcasing the work of final-year students from FASS DCI.

Officially launched by UBD Vice-Chancellor Dr Haji Hazri bin Haji Kifle, the exhibition brought together academics, parents, and friends in celebration of the graduating cohort’s creative achievements.

Open to the public from 16 April to 16 May 2025 at the right wing of Chancellor Hall, UBD, Stellar invited visitors to engage with a vibrant and imaginative “interstellar” experience, reflecting the innovation and artistic vision of the students.

Bringing Heritage to Life: *Hikayat Awang Kamaruddin*

Hikayat Awang Kamaruddin featured in two major cultural events this year: the Royal Birthday Celebration on 7 August 2025 in Temburong, officiated by the District Officer as Guest of Honour, and the National Theatre Festival Brunei (NTFB) on 16–17 August 2025 at Jerudong International School. Adapted from a Malay Literature secondary school text, the performance brought Bruneian heritage to life, inspiring students and the wider public alike.



This year marked the production's fourth staging and its third participation in NTFB, which hosted nine groups over two days. A total of 19 students and alumni from the Malay Literature programme, all members of RAKIS, collaborated under the direction and scriptwriting of Dr Ena Herni Wasli, Lecturer in Malay Literature.

These initiatives reflect the programme's ongoing commitment to promoting cultural appreciation and academic engagement through creative performance, while providing students with experiential learning opportunities in heritage and the arts.

Creative Voices Excel at National Literary Competition



In conjunction with the 79th Birthday Anniversary of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, through its Literature and Magazine Division, organised the Poetry Song Competition. Representing the Malay Literature programme under the Language, Linguistics, and Malay Literature track, a student and two postgraduate alumni participated and achieved notable success, winning third place and a consolation prize.

The group Sri Kencana, comprising Dr Mohamad Fathullah bin Haji Rashid (postgraduate alumni) and Mr Muhammad Firdaus bin Awang Abdul Sani (student), secured third place with a poetry song adapted from Morsidi M.H's *Sungai, Laut dan Kita*, titled "Melodi Alam." Meanwhile, the group *Alunan Jiwa*, featuring Mr Awangku Muhammad Nur Safiuddin bin Pengiran Haji Harun (postgraduate) and Ms Nur Farahiah binti Awang Haji Abd Sani, performed a poem by Yahya M.S transformed into the song "Kembara yang Semakin Jauh," earning a consolation prize.



The achievement highlights the programme's commitment to promoting Bruneian literature through innovative performance and creative adaptation, while offering students and alumni opportunities to showcase their artistic talents on a national platform.

Launching Stories, Inspiring Audiences: A Celebration of Bruneian Folklore



26.08.2025, ICC, Berakas – Fifteen Malay Literature students brought Bruneian folklore to life through a stage performance during the launch of two children's storybooks at the International Convention Centre.

The medley skit featured excerpts from *Penunggu Gaung Nibung* by Ms Harni Susanti binti Sayong and *Awang Sumbilang* by Mr Ak Muhd Nur Safiuddin, both postgraduate alumni of Malay Literature. Published by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka on the same day, the stories were enhanced in the performance through the creative use of AI technology, blending visual projections with AI-generated soundscapes to bring the narratives vividly to the stage.

The event was officiated by Yang Mulia Dr Shamsiah Zuraini Kanchanawati binti Haji Tajuddin, Permanent Secretary (Core Education), Ministry of Education, and attended by academics, writers, and students. The script and direction were led by Dr Ena Herni Wasli, Lecturer in Malay Literature, under the Programme of Language, Linguistics and Malay Literature. The collaboration highlights the programme's commitment to nurturing literary talent and promoting Brunei's rich storytelling heritage.



SDG Commitment at Gemilang 40 Celebration

24.04.2025, Jerudong – At the launch of Gemilang 40: Gemerlap Aidilfitri celebration, Dr Ishamina Athirah Muntassir presented Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) posters showcasing the academic work, research, and initiatives undertaken by the FASS community to Yang Berhormat Datin Seri Setia Dr Hajah Romaizah binti Haji Md Salleh, Minister of Education, and Dr Haji Hazri bin Haji Kifle, Vice Chancellor of UBD.

At FASS, the academic community is actively engaged in supporting the SDGs, particularly in areas such as cultural awareness and social inclusion, community mentoring programmes, health and wellness, environmental projects, and community outreach initiatives.

Also present in support were colleagues from FASS.

Celebrating Youth and Learning: FASS Welcomes Tsinghua Delegates



6.06.2025, UBD – FASS warmly welcomed delegates from Tsinghua University to Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD).

During the visit, selected UBD students shared their experiences on youth leadership, student life, and personal growth, offering insights into campus life and academic opportunities at UBD.

The exchange provided a meaningful platform to celebrate learning, foster dialogue, and explore future collaboration between the two institutions.

Bridging Literary Worlds: A Regional Learning Journey

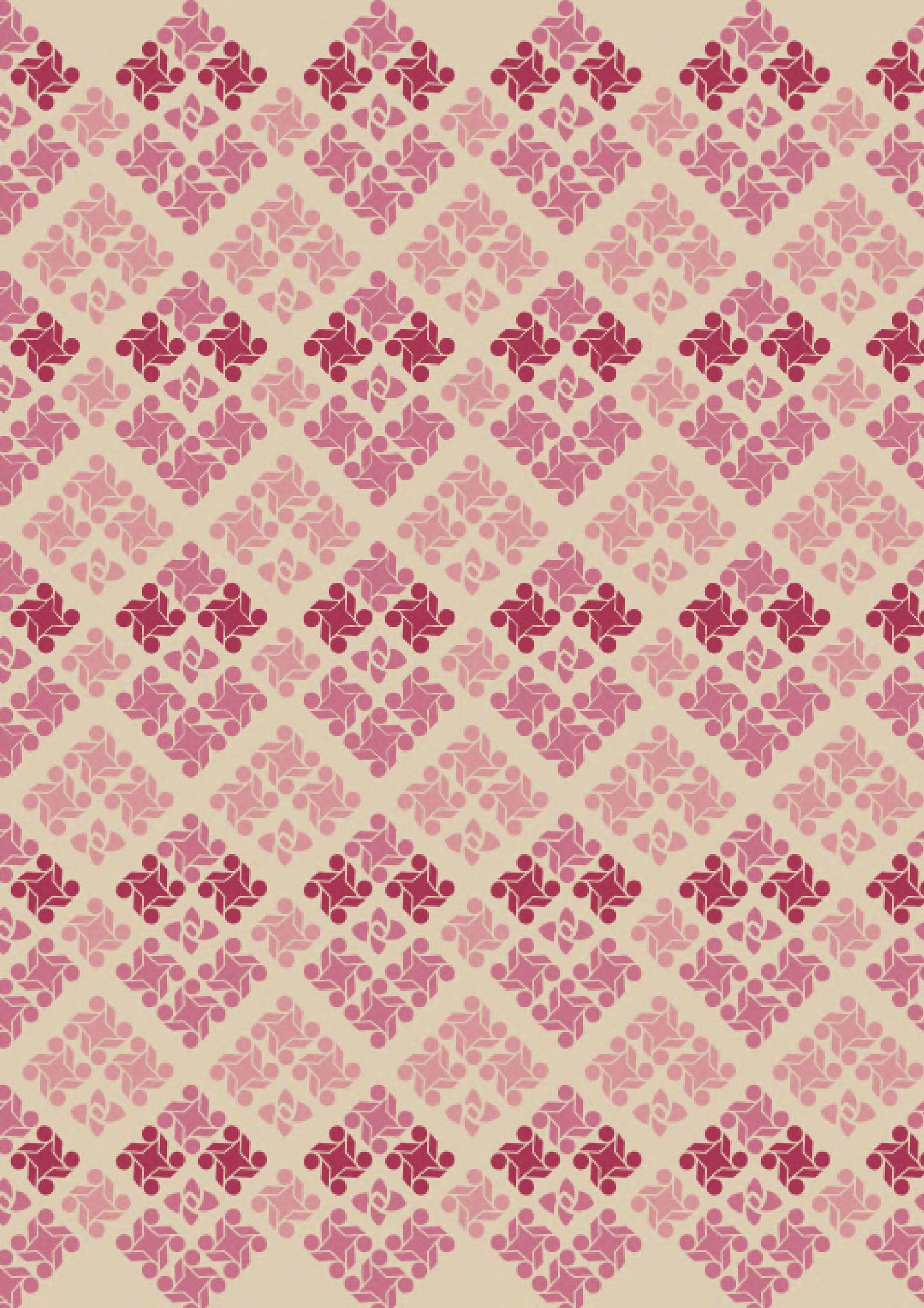
Students from AN-2307 Literatures of Southeast Asia recently embarked on an engaging study trip to Singapore, gaining first-hand insight into the region's vibrant literary scene.

During the visit, students participated in a meaningful dialogue with Ethos Books, a prominent Singaporean publisher, exploring the inner workings of their inventory and publishing practices.

The literary journey continued in Kampong Gelam, where students met Ibrahim Tahir of Wardah Books, whose work and passion for literature provided inspiration and perspective.

The experience is set to continue as Singaporean students are welcomed to Brunei for a reciprocal visit to a local publishing house, creating opportunities for comparative learning and fostering connections across Southeast Asia's literary landscapes.





Threads of Creativity: The Story Behind UBD's 40th Anniversary Garment Design

In this special edition, we shine a spotlight on the creative brilliance emerging from our FASS's Design & Creative programme: Mr Mohammad Nurhanafi Abdul Azim Bin Hj Mohd Saiful Bakhtiar (22b0039) and Ms Kotchawan Chueathong (22b8040).

This year's 40th UBD anniversary garment design selection has revealed the remarkable talent, imagination, and technical skill of our young designers, each bringing forward a unique blend of innovation and cultural expression. Among the standout works is a striking creation by two students whose dedication and artistry captured the attention of the selection panel.

In the following conversation, we sit down with these promising designers to learn more about the journey behind their work, from the sparks of inspiration that shaped their concepts, to the challenges they navigated during the design process. They share candid reflections on collaboration, mentorship, and the emotions that came with having their designs chosen for this year's showcase. Their stories not only celebrate creativity, but also offer a glimpse into the passion and perseverance driving the next generation of designers.

DISCOVER FASS: To begin, how would you describe your overall collaborative experience while working on this garment design?

MR NURHANAFI: It is quite easy for us to work together as we already know each other, and have collaborated on a few projects prior to this one. We also share similar design directions and preferences, which helps a lot in terms of aligning our visions together.

DISCOVER FASS: Can you walk us through your creative process, especially your choices of patterns, colours, and the overall visual direction?

MS KOTCHAWAN: So, we started with the design brief, which included a batik-style concept and certain color schemes. From there, we played around with the motifs, making tweaks where needed, and went back and forth on colors to make sure the UBD's Ruby really stood out against the beige background. The most important part was exchanging feedback with each other and with our lecturers so we could make sure the designs actually fit the brief.



DISCOVER FASS: What inspired this design, and what personal meaning does it hold for you?

MR NURHANAFI: The inspiration behind this design comes from batik prints combined with UBD's motifs, which we adapted by modifying the colors and arrangements to give it a fresh, modern twist. We wanted to celebrate UBD's 40th anniversary in a way that reflects the university's legacy while presenting it in a contemporary style.

DISCOVER FASS: Every creative project has its obstacles. What were the main challenges you faced during the development of this garment?

MS KOTCHAWAN: We faced a few challenges right away. Since we usually work with traditional painting and digital illustration, getting used to professional graphic design software was a big challenge. It also took a lot of work to make sure all the motifs lined up correctly. The third major task was making sure the colors had the pop and vibrancy we wanted without losing the essential formal look for the anniversary.

If you had to capture the essence of your design in just three words, what would they be?

“Simple, neat, and delicate,” Mr Nurhanafi

“Minimal, modern, and heritage,” Ms Kotchawan



UBD's Senior Management Team in the UBD 40th Anniversary design at Chancellor Hall.

DISCOVER FASS: Who guided or mentored you throughout the process, and in what ways did their support influence your final outcome?

MR NURHANAFI: I would like to give a special thanks to Pg Dr Mohd Rahiman Pg Aliudin, who trusted us to handle this project. He was the one who motivated us to keep giving our very best throughout, and his support really influenced the final outcome by giving us the confidence to push our ideas further and stay committed.

DISCOVER FASS: When you found out that your design was selected for the university showcase, what was your first reaction? How did you feel at that moment?

MS KOTCHAWAN: My first reaction was just, ‘wow,’ and honestly a bit of disbelief. For me, knowing that our design got selected and would be showcased in such a big anniversary celebration was kind of intimidating, but also really exciting. It was a truly humbling moment.

DISCOVER FASS: Finally, did you enjoy the entire process from concept to completion? What part of it did you find most rewarding?

MR NURHANAFI: I did enjoy the process because clothing design was completely new to me and a bit unexpected. Overall, it was a great chance to try something different and grow my creative skills. Honestly, at first we weren't completely confident with our design, so seeing it get accepted and knowing people liked it was reason enough for me.

MS KOTCHAWAN: I really enjoyed the whole process. We struggled at times, but we powered through. For me, the most satisfying part was seeing our design become a real garment. It was so rewarding to see our vision come to life.

Discover FASS extends its heartfelt appreciation to Mr Mohammad Nurhanafi and Ms Kotchawan for sharing their time, creativity, and insights with us. Their openness in reflecting on their journey not only enriches our understanding of the design process but also inspires the wider university community.

Future of Brunei's Filmmaking: FASS-Made Film *WUJUD* Sweeps International Awards

The year 2025 continues to mark a series of remarkable achievements by the academics and students of FASS. One standout milestone traces back to July 2024, when *WUJUD*, a documentary directed by Mr Syafi Halim, a young and promising filmmaker from the Design and Creative Industries programme earned significant acclaim at the South East Academy International Film Festival (SEAiff). The film secured four major accolades: Best Documentary, Best Cinematography, Best Director, and Best Producer.

In November 2025, *WUJUD* achieved yet another milestone, bringing home the top honour at the 7th ASEAN International Film Festival & Awards (AIFFA 2025) Borneo Documentary Awards. The documentary won the Best Borneo Feature Documentary Award, presented at the Borneo Cultures Museum in Kuching, Sarawak.

Produced under New Wave Films, a company co-owned by Mr Syafi Halim, the documentary offers an intimate exploration of Bruneian identity and society through the interwoven lenses of culture, faith, and monarchy. It captures the intricacies of these relationships and presents rare personal narratives from a conservative and private community in the Sultanate. *WUJUD* also delves into Brunei's history and lived experiences, offering an authentic portrayal of the nation's cultural and historical landscape.

With multiple international accolades to its name, *WUJUD* not only celebrates the talent of its creators but also signals the rising visibility and recognition of Brunei's emerging film industry on the global stage.

As part of this feature, we sat down with Mr Syafi to learn more about his creative journey, the stories behind *WUJUD*, and his vision for the future of Bruneian filmmaking. What follows is an excerpt from our conversation with the filmmaker behind one of Brunei's most internationally recognised documentaries to date.

DISCOVER FASS: Firstly, congratulations on the international recognition *WUJUD* has received. When you first embarked on this project, did you anticipate it would resonate so strongly with audiences beyond Brunei?

MR SYAFI: Honestly, I don't think I even thought about it this far due to just the sheer length of the project's production. We started this project in March 2022 and it finally released in January 2025. There were moments where I felt that the film was never gonna be seen by the public. But I am just glad that all that hard work was paid off in the end.

DISCOVER FASS: *WUJUD* explores the intersection of culture, faith, and monarchy in shaping Bruneian identity. What inspired you to focus on these themes, and how did you approach presenting them with sensitivity and authenticity?

MR SYAFI: It was Dr Rui Oliveira Lopes' idea to cover those topics, he believed that in order to uncover what truly makes someone Bruneian, we need to embrace our differences. Not just in religion but in their interpretation of those concepts.

DISCOVER FASS: The documentary features personal stories from a community often described as conservative and private. How did you gain access, trust, and openness from your subjects throughout the filmmaking process?

MR SYAFI: I think that came with how we treated them before the interview, we were patient with them and also gave them a safe space to share, to feel and to be emotional. We had to cut out some parts for the final cut as some were too personal but we were also transparent with them throughout the editing process and letting them know which parts we were planning to include and vice versa.



DISCOVER FASS: Winning multiple awards, including Best Borneo Feature Documentary at AIFFA 2025, is a major milestone. What do these recognitions mean to you personally – and for Brunei's emerging film industry?

MR SYAFI: I think what's important is what it meant to the industry, for young filmmakers to see that it is possible for a Bruneian to compete with other ASEAN countries. Of course, I am not delusional, we are still far behind but it is not impossible.

DISCOVER FASS: As a young filmmaker and co-owner of New Wave Films, you are part of a new generation shaping local creative industries. How do you see the future of filmmaking in Brunei, and where do you hope to position your work within that landscape?

MR SYAFI: The main aim in the next 5 years is to create a sustainable career for other filmmakers in Brunei, not just directors but film crews as well. That comes with collaboration and kindness to one another, it's time for us to bring each other up rather than trying to pull each other down on the way up.

DISCOVER FASS: Every documentary comes with its own challenges. What were the most memorable difficulties you faced during the production of *WUJUD* – and how did you overcome them?

MR SYAFI: This was my first attempt in making a feature length documentary, especially coming from a YouTube and film background. It was quite a hefty task but Dr Lopes really put his confidence in me to make artistic choices and we collaborated well despite us having a lecturer-student relationship. Trying to fit 6 major concepts on what makes a Bruneian into a 90min documentary is also an impossible task but we can proudly say that we tried our best and hope future filmmakers will make better documentaries than this one as they explore the Bruneian identity.



DISCOVER FASS: Your film beautifully captures the nuances of Bruneian identity. What is one message or feeling you hope international audiences walk away with after watching *WUJUD*?

MR SYAFI: I would hope they walk away from the cinema, for them to think that Bruneians aren't just our labels of being rich, conservative or boring. But we exist as people, our stories and our lived experiences. It's easy to judge us from the news headlines or from the YouTube tourist videos. But when you properly sit and have a conversation with a Bruneian, you will realise that we are more than our labels, we are humans too.

DISCOVER FASS: Finally, with the success of *WUJUD*, audiences are eager to know what's next. Are there upcoming projects or stories you hope to explore in your future films?

MR SYAFI: I genuinely believe the success of *WUJUD* has yet to come, this film will be seen as a time capsule in 50 years time, a conversation with the past. Our next project will be released on 10th January next year where I will be co-directing with Joshua Belyan on Brunei's first National Geographic funded documentary, on the dying culture of making Gula Anau.

Discover FASS extends its heartfelt thanks to Mr Syafi for sharing his time, insights, and creative journey with us. His dedication and vision continue to inspire not only the filmmaking community, but all of us in FASS who believe in the power of storytelling.

FASS Alumni Awarded Chancellor's Scholarship to Pursue a Doctorate Degree in the UK

Ms Nurul Hazirah binti Haji Zainuddin holds MA by Research in Sociology and has been awarded with a highly prestigious Chancellor's Scholarship to undertake her PhD in the United Kingdom. Throughout her Masters study, she explored youth volunteerism in Brunei, where she explored notions of youth identity, active citizenship, and meaning-making in advocacy. She was fortunate to have a supportive Master's in Sociology by Research supervisor, Dr Meredian Alam from Department of Sociology and Anthropology, who served as her motivating mentor and guided her thoughtfully while also encouraging her independence as a researcher and an organisational leader.

Beyond academia, she kept herself busy volunteering with Kilang ReRoot and the Global Shapers Community BSB. Both organisations work toward important causes: promoting sustainable food production systems, and developing youth competencies to address unemployment in Brunei. Furthermore, her work experience covering Brunei's annual Legislative Council meetings has helped shape her understanding of key national priorities and the strategies being implemented to achieve them.



She also had the privilege of travelling to various ASEAN countries and beyond to learn from sustainability experts. One of her most memorable experiences was attending a conference in Milan in 2021, marking her first real exposure to the world of climate negotiations and policymaking. There, she learned directly from youth leaders, sustainability advocates, and global policymakers. It was an eye-opening experience that highlighted how young people can shape more just and adaptable policies.

Looking ahead, she will be pursuing her PhD in Human Geography at the University of Bristol, commencing in January 2026. Her doctorate research will be examining the role of youth and NGOs in environmental policymaking in Brunei. In many ways, this research unites the experiences and passions she has profoundly developed over the past few years. She is deeply grateful to have won the Chancellor's Scholarship, which allows me to pursue a topic close to her heart. As young people become more engaged in their communities, she truly believes that we must also recognise and make space for their voices, knowledge, and grassroots connections. Otherwise, we risk a new kind of brain drain – not of people, but of their ideas, creativity, and commitment.



Distinction Awarded: Excellence in Environmental Studies

Ms Syaza Azmi has recently graduated with a Master of Arts in Environmental Studies from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Universiti Brunei Darussalam. Her dissertation, "An Analysis of Belait Forest Cover Changes Pattern Using GIS and Remote Sensing," examined long-term environmental shifts in the Belait region through spatial data analysis and satellite imagery interpretation. Demonstrating strong analytical capacity and environmental research insight, her work received a Distinction at the 37th UBD Convocation in 2025. Syaza's research underscores the importance of scientific monitoring for sustainable forest management and contributes valuable understanding to conservation efforts in Brunei Darussalam.

FASS Students Recognised at Professor Victor T. King Prize Ceremony



11.11.2025, UBD – Four FASS students were celebrated for their exceptional work at the Professor Victor T. King Prize ceremony held at the Institute of Asian Studies.

The prestigious prize recognises excellence in the study of Borneo, encouraging undergraduates to undertake meaningful research in the region. It is awarded each semester to the UBD undergraduate whose final-year project (original thesis) demonstrates outstanding scholarship in the Social Sciences and Humanities.

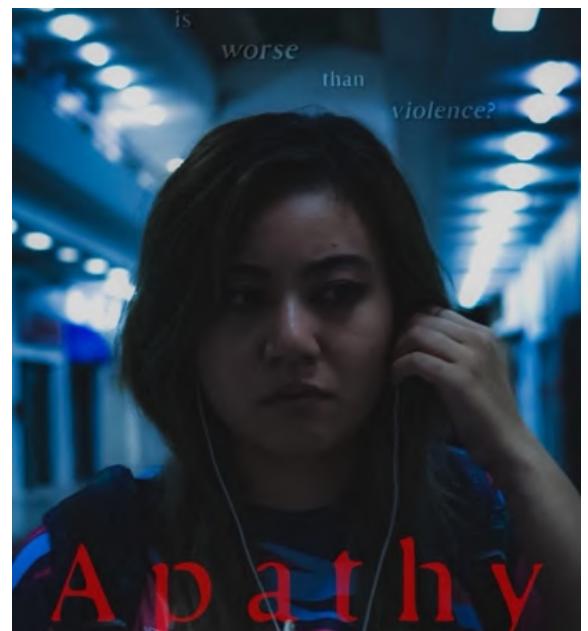
FASS Discover congratulates our exceptional students on their remarkable achievements, and extends sincere thanks to their supervisors for their invaluable guidance, mentorship, and support in helping them reach this milestone.

DCI Student Wins Best Poetic Film at AIFFA 2025

17.11.2025, Kuching – Third-year DCI student, Ms Syahirah Binti Suhairi has triumphed on the international stage, with her short film Apathy winning the Best Poetic Film Award at the ASEAN UniFest SDG Short Film Competition. The competition was part of the prestigious ASEAN International Film Festival and Awards (AIFFA) held in Kuching, Malaysia.

Apathy captivated the judges with its poetic storytelling and creative approach, reflecting Syahirah's talent and the high standards of UBD's Design & Creative Industries Programme.

This achievement highlights the growing presence and recognition of UBD students in the regional creative arts scene, reinforcing the faculty's commitment to nurturing innovative, socially-conscious filmmakers.



Welcoming the bpmFASS Batch August 25/26

20.08.2025, UBD – FASS warmly welcomed the bpmFASS Batch August 25/26 at their first General Meeting. The event marked the beginning of an exciting semester, with students encouraged to collaborate, grow, and make lasting memories together.

Faculty and organisers expressed their enthusiasm for the contributions and energy this new batch will bring, setting the tone for a productive and memorable academic term.

FASS PhD Candidate Secures International Research Grant

FASS PhD candidate, Mr Awais Rubbani from the English Studies Programme has successfully secured a grant of IDR 25 million (Indonesian Rupiah) to conduct a series of research workshops, training sessions, and seminars at the Faculty of Humanities, Airlangga University, Surabaya, under the Global Scholar Program.

Under the supervision of Dr Hjh Sharifah Nurul Huda Alkaff, Mr Awais's visit proved both productive and rewarding, allowing him to share research insights, represent Universiti Brunei Darussalam, and explore collaborative opportunities with international scholars.



FASS PhD Candidates Present Research at NTU Workshop



9-11.07.2025, Singapore – PhD candidates, Mr Awais Rubbani (Applied Linguistics) and Ms Hana Ghani (English Literature) participated in Feeling Formal, a graduate workshop at Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore, which focused on themes of affect, feeling, and emotion.

Mr Awais presented “The Politics of Cure in Brunei: A Literary Perspective on Traditional Healing”, examining traditional healing practices depicted in *Syair Awang Semaun* and *Tarsilah Brunei*. Ms Hana presented “Relatable Rupi Kaur: The Affective Work of Relatability for Digital Kin-making in Rupi Kaur’s Instapoetry”, exploring the role of emotion and relatability in contemporary digital poetry.

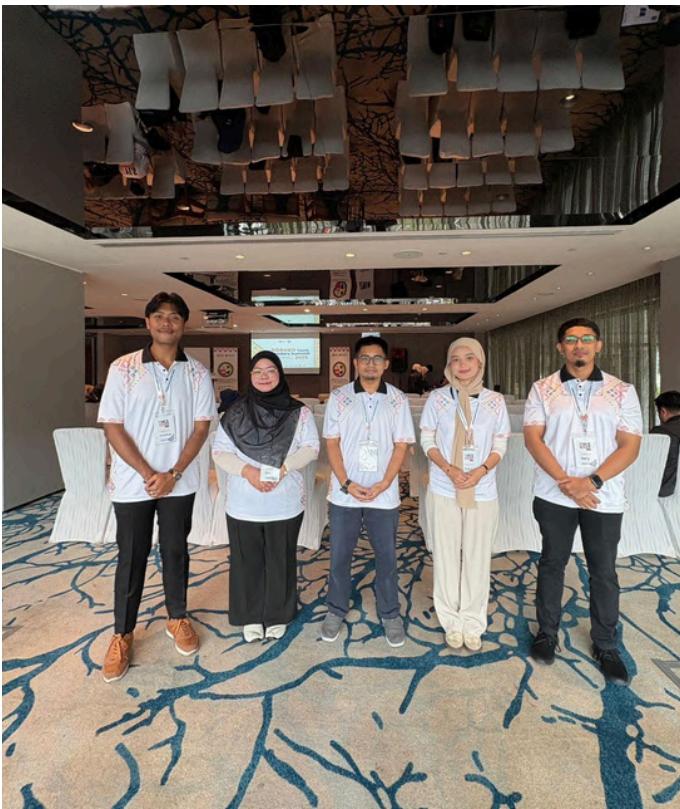
The workshop provided a platform for both candidates to share their research, engage with international peers, and contribute to scholarly discussions on affect, literature, and cultural practices.

FASS Students Participate in Borneo Youth Leaders Summit 2025

8–12.09.2025, Kota Kinabalu – Representing the Malay Language, Linguistics & Literature Programme, postgraduate students Mr Zulfadzlee Zulkiflee (PhD) and Ms Amieziezaitul Syazlien (MA) participated in the Borneo Youth Leaders Summit (BYLS) 2025, held in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. The summit brought together youth leaders from Brunei Darussalam, Sabah, Sarawak, and Kalimantan to strengthen regional collaboration under the theme “Empowering Youth, Elevating Young Pioneers.”

Over the five-day programme, both students actively engaged in leadership forums, Youth Talks, and the Borneo EDU-Hackathon, contributing ideas on education, digitalisation, cultural preservation, and community well-being. Their participation enabled them to network with government representatives, NGOs, and university leaders while deepening their understanding of regional challenges and cross-cultural leadership practices. The summit also enhanced their awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in education, reducing inequalities, and fostering regional partnerships.

Beyond academic engagement, BYLS 2025 offered meaningful cultural exchange and experiential learning opportunities, encouraging self-reflection and growth as emerging Bornean leaders. Their involvement reflects UBD’s commitment to nurturing globally aware youth with strong regional identities and to promoting cross-border collaboration through the strengths of the Malay Language, Linguistics & Literature Programme.



FASS Students Explore Language and Culture in Lombok



An academic visit by Mr Zulfadzlee Zulkiflee (PhD) and Ms Amieziezaitul Syazlien (MA) to Kampung Ampenan, Lombok, provided an engaging and insightful look into the linguistic and cultural landscapes of the Sasak and Malay communities in the region. The visit brought together observation, field engagement, and academic exchange, all of which enriched the students’ understanding of Nusantara heritage.

One of the primary activities involved a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with residents from Melayu Timur, Melayu Tengah, and Melayu Bangsal. The session revealed the dynamic interplay between Sasak, Indonesian, and regional varieties of Malay. The group also visited Desa Sade, a traditional Sasak village known for its commitment to preserving ancestral customs. Students observed traditional weaving, learned about village architecture, and were introduced to the unique *kahwin culik* marriage tradition, an integral cultural practice conducted with mutual consent among families.

The trip concluded with participation in an academic event at Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Mataram, where scholars from UIN and UBD presented at the International Postgraduate Seminar, themed “Islam and the Actual Issues on Environment and Humanities.” The session strengthened academic ties and highlighted shared regional concerns.



Image by
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FASS RESEARCH

Newsletter 2025 | December

Highlights of recent and ongoing research activities at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS), Universiti Brunei Darussalam

SEAM Journal at 25: A Scopus Achievement

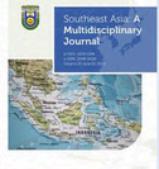
Since its launch in 1999 by FASS, the journal *Southeast Asia: A Multidisciplinary Journal* (SEAMI) has steadily evolved from a regional outlet into a vigorous, high-impact open-access platform that engages scholars across the arts, social sciences, and humanities with Southeast Asia as its focal terrain. Under the stewardship of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Universiti Brunei Darussalam and from 2023 on the Emerald publishing platform, the journal has been able to scale the volume of its output - moving from around 30 articles per year to over 170 annual contributions - and gain indexing in major databases including Scopus. In the past year, download figures have crossed the 100,000 mark, which reflects its growing global usage and influence. The transition to the Emerald platform has brought deeper international visibility, rigorous peer-review protocols, and clear indexing credentials. The journal remains committed to regionally grounded but theoretically informed scholarship on topics such as digital development, migration, urbanisation, Languages, security and culture in Southeast Asia. With its growing throughput and increasing impact, SEAMI is now firmly positioned as a go-to venue for scholars seeking to publish policy-relevant and regionally embedded research on Southeast Asia with global reach.

In this issue

- Featured FASS Scholar
- Research News
- FASS PhD Candidates
- Book Publications
- Journal Articles
- Book Chapters

"I am deeply proud of SEAMI's remarkable journey, from a modest regional journal to a dynamic, globally visible platform for Southeast Asian scholarship. This growth has been made possible by the unwavering dedication of our editorial colleagues, reviewers, and authors, and by the steadfast institutional support of Universiti Brunei Darussalam. In the years ahead, I envision SEAMI becoming a leading voice in shaping multidisciplinary debates on Southeast Asia, advancing inclusive, decolonial, and globally engaged knowledge from the region to the world."

Professor Ahsan Ullah, *Editor in Chief*

FASS Research Newsletter | December 2025

To learn more about the vibrant research culture within FASS, we invite readers to explore the FASS Research Newsletter (December 2025). This issue offers a comprehensive overview of ongoing research activities, funded projects, competitive grants, and the latest publications by FASS academics.

From interdisciplinary collaborations to impactful community-based research, the newsletter highlights how FASS scholars continue to contribute knowledge locally, regionally, and globally.

Follow the newsletter to stay informed about our research milestones and discover the breadth of scholarly work shaping the faculty's research agenda.