OVERVIEW

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THE PROJECT
MARLIN BESWETHERICK

In my initial thoughts for a Capstone project, I imagined some form of story telling; capturing messages and experiences through fairy tales and lives told by people I met in Malaysia. As it happens, this is not that book. Arriving in Malaysia as a new intern, I found that MSRI need not just a story teller but a megaphone to tell that story!

ENGAGED SOCIAL MEDIA

As an NGO, MSRI has to balance keeping a low profile but also manage to reach out to potential donors to continue to help refugees.

Over the 6 months I worked with MSRI, I assisted developing engaged social media and communications; helping MSRI reach out to wider audiences. I was very fortunate to be able to help out in this way as I was given the opportunity to truly understand the organization and the impact it has on so many lives. My Capstone project tries to showcase some of these projects and to continue to spread the reach of MSRI. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did!
MALAYSIAN SOCIAL RESEARCH CENTRE
A Refugee Support Centre

SOWING SEEDS OF RESILIENCE

Good seed, cast onto land, will grow into a tree,
Cast into the sea, will become an island

1 2 3 4

4 CORE PROGRAMS
INTRODUCING MSRI

What do they do?

1. **Emergency Support**
   Provided to meet the needs of MSRI's most at-risk community members.

2. **Livelihood**
   To increase self-reliance and empowerment with skill-building and vocational training.

3. **Education**
   A safe learning space for children and adults, meeting nutrition and mental health needs.

4. **Health Care**
   MSRI works to create a safe space where health needs can be addressed.

As refugees aren't recognized in Malaysia, they are at risk of deportation and have difficulty accessing education, work, and safety. MSRI works to mitigate these risks.
The first MSRI event that I went to was a Poetry & Eid Open House. It was a lovely gathering where refugees and friends of MSRI read their own poetry but it received no media attention and a very small turnout - achieving none of the goals the event was designed to achieve.

It was through this event that I found what I could help MSRI develop: brand outreach and presentation.

This didn’t come without any challenges. It has been only recently that MSRI switched to online records and most of the knowledge about it’s past was hidden in a wealth of boxes in what was basically an attic. From records to ethics forms, there were concerns of privacy and safety for the refugees. Even the brand colours and logo were still under debate. Recreating a brand was a big challenge.
MSRI is a refugee support centre currently dedicated to providing education, health, livelihood and emergency programmes to refugees and asylum seekers from minority communities living in Malaysia. There are currently about 5,000 individuals registered with MSRI.

One of the first tasks I tackled was updating the main brochure. Deciding what photos would represent MSRI and what to say really began to shape how I understood the organization’s challenges and successes.

Above is the front page on the main brochure. This ended up being a template for another 3 brochures that were worked on by other interns and staff!
BANNERS

From the initial brochures, everything began to unfold! On the left are two banners that I designed with the creative guidance of MSRI staff.

The question that shaped the debates around these images were “What does MSRI want to represent?” and “How do we stand out?”

REPRESENTATION

One of the main issues identified with the Poetry & Eid Event was a lack of media. These banners were one of the first steps to combat this.

Used in the background of Instagram and social media posts as well as placed at events, the banners now identify MSRI immediately and help explain the NGO to interested viewers.
PROMOTION & EVENTS

Media Activism

CIVILIAN DEATH IS NOT AN INEVITABLE PART OF WAR
WORLD HUMANITARIAN DAY
#NOTATARGET

INSTAGRAM CAMPAIGNS

#YOUTHDAY
#YOUTHBUILDINGPEACE
International Youth Day
2017 YOUTH BUILDING PEACE

“ONE DAY I WANNA GO BACK WITH ALL OF MY FAMILY... I WISH ONE DAY...PEOPLE BREATHE IN A CALMNESS AND PEACEFULL LAND.”
- MIRI 13, AFGHANI REFUGEE

LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY
DEC 10

OTHER PROJECTS INCLUDED DEVELOPING INSTAGRAM CAMPAIGNS

Check out MSRI’s instagram @msri_official

CENTRE FOR ASIA-PACIFIC INITIATIVES | UVIC
"THE FORGING OF A SHARED CONSCIOUSNESS"

FINDING UNITY IN DIFFERENCE

MSRI FOUNDER, ALIJAH GORDON
COMMENORATION

This fundraiser titled ‘Aijah Gordon and the Children of Her Legacy’ aimed at celebrating both MSRI and Aijah, bringing them forward to a new generation.

What follows these pages is the cover page for the fundraisers programme book, some of the exhibition boards that my team designed and researched, and photos from the day and night gala itself!
IN HONOUR OF OUR FOUNDER, THE LATE
DATO’ DR ALIJAHL GORDON
&
UNIVERSAL CHILDREN’S DAY
MSRI PRESENTS
ALIJAHL GORDON
AND THE
CHILDREN OF HER LEGACY

FUNDRAISING GALA DINNER

PROGRAMME BOOK
Alijah Gordon shaped the lives of hundreds. But before she was Alijah, she was Shirle Gordon. Born in 1929, Shirle and her brother were raised by her parents and Nana. She grew up headstrong and independent, part of which she credits to her Nana who would scold her “Are you made of sugar that you will melt?...The worst they can tell you is no, so go on and ask!”

She graduated from Columbia University in the early 50’s with hopes of pursuing law but found herself drawn to the political scene instead.

Fascinated by Middle Eastern-Islam studies, it was Shirle’s involvement with fellow students from the University’s debate club that introduced her to the question of Palestine.

Passionate and headstrong, at 24 years old she was invited to debate against Abba Eban the Israeli ambassador to UN hosted by the New York Times.

The NYT debate was broadcasted widely, and although it received some positive reception among the university community, her outspoken beliefs resulted in the withdrawal of her doctoral dissertation scholarship.

However, her passionate defense of Palestine inspired an invitation to go to Egypt and complete her thesis on the Kurdish National Movement there.
Many more stories than are shown here were gathered and will be used in the future for funders reports and for possible donors that are interested in what MSRI has to offer.

This exhibition board included various success stories of refugees who have been part of MSRI’s journey. Gathered through interviews with staff and working to protect the identity of participants offered unique challenges and insights into the daily lives and struggles of refugees in Malaysia.
2017 MSRI GALA FUNDRAISER

Photos from the day and night event
While being able to not only leave behind records of my work and see their impact was uplifting, MSRI’s impact upon me was much greater. Having the opportunity to learn and be shaped by this experience was beyond incredible and I could only hope to give back half as much as what was given to me. The future is open! May we all sow seeds of resilience in our lives.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marlin Beswetherick is a 4th year anthropology major with a concentration in bio-culturalism, migration, and health. Holding a background in biology and an interest in humanitarian applications, Marlin spent 6 months with MSRI as a programme-coordinator intern.

ALL MY GRATITUDE TO CAPI AND MSRI