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The Alumni Magazine

Contact



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“In nature, we never see anything isolated, but everything in connection with something else which is before it, beside it, under it and over it.”

-Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

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About Contact

Contact is the medium for OUM graduates to stay connected to their alma mater. Published as a quarterly e-magazine, **Contact** tells the inspiring stories of those who have realised their dreams and shares updates for our alumni to keep track of what's happening at OUM.



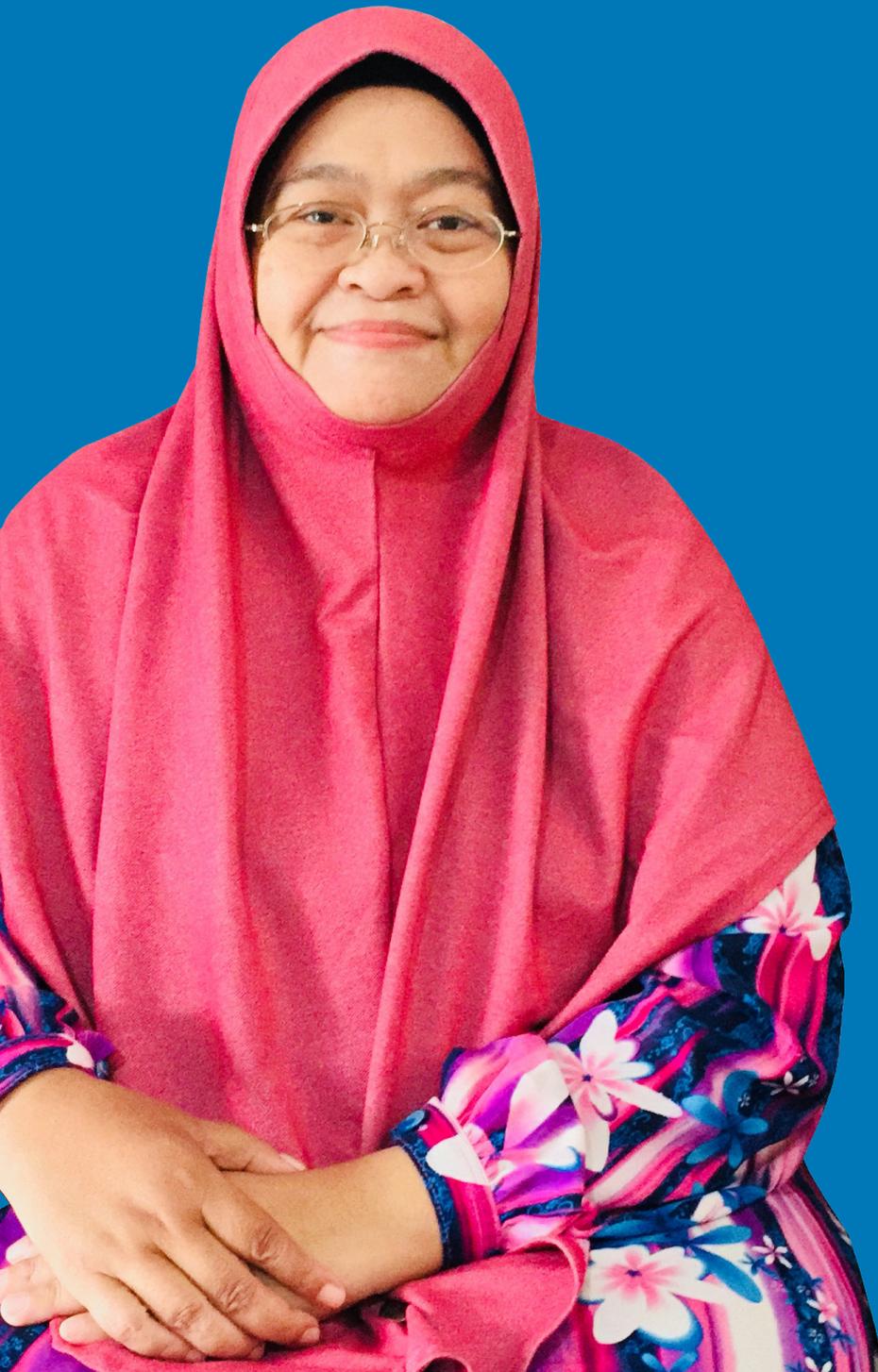
In

This Issue

The inaugural issue of **Contact** kicks off with inspiring stories of three alumni who have carved successful lives. Dr Aliza Ali, acting Chair at the Cluster of Education and Social Sciences, discusses one of the most common social problems in Malaysia and finally, we also share tips on preparing a stand-out résumé!

LIVE & LEARN:
**A True
Lifelong
Learner**

By: **Tengku Amina Munira**
(tg_munira@oum.edu.my)



This two-time OUM graduate (and current PhD candidate) proves there is no mountain too high when it comes to achieving her dreams.

"My life hasn't been easy. When I was a baby, I contracted polio, which caused one of my legs to be weak and deformed. At school, other students made fun of me because I looked different. As for my family, my mother struggled to support my five siblings and me on her salary while we were growing up.

None of these things dampened my spirits. Neither my physical imperfection nor my family's poverty defined me. In fact, what others saw as my disability inspired me to study. I did not grow up with much, so I saw education as the key to a better future.

Armed with an STPM certificate, I managed to enrol in the Bachelor of Education (Education Administration) programme at OUM. This was almost 13 years ago, before OUM set up its many learning centres.

Zalina Abdullah, 48
*Bachelor of Education
(Education Administration), 2011
Master of Counselling, 2015*
Currently pursuing PhD (Arts)

“

What others saw as
my disability inspired
me to study.

Attending tutorials was tough because I had to use the stairs to get to the third floor of the rented building in Shah Alam. I remember feeling so grateful when OUM staff arranged for my tutorials to be held only on the ground floor.

After graduating in 2011, I took up the Master of Counselling programme, which helped me to clinch a job as a counsellor at Persatuan Pengasih Malaysia. Through my job, I help others deal with their challenges.

Then in 2015, I enrolled in the PhD (Arts) programme. Today, I am still a counsellor, and also a part-time lecturer and motivational speaker. Honestly, I never imagined my life would be like this, I owe my success to my love of learning. I tell myself that as long as there are opportunities for learning, I'm going to grab them!

Life will always be filled with obstacles, especially for people with disabilities. Nevertheless, I see no point in feeling sorry for myself. Instead, I hope my achievements will inspire my five children to engage in lifelong learning too.”

PERSONALITY:

Who Said I'm Old? I'm Still a Student!

By: Azeezah Jameelah Mohamed Mohideen (azeezah@oum.edu.my)

Your golden years need not be boring. You don't have to sit at home and wonder where your life has gone and when your children or grandchildren will visit you again. You can take your life in your hands and do something that is meaningful for you. One octogenarian is living life on his terms, furthering his studies for his own fulfilment. This is his story.

Krishnan Arunasalam, 85
Bachelor of Accounting, 2017
Currently pursuing Master of
Business Administration

Instead, he decided to upgrade his qualification, a Higher School Certificate, to a degree. So in 2010, he took up the Bachelor of Accounting programme because he used to teach that subject.

He was born in July 1933 and 21 years later, he became a teacher. As time went on, he rose to become a senior assistant and then headmaster of a secondary school before joining the Education Department.

After his retirement and the demise of his wife, Krishnan went to live with his daughter in Seremban. He could have led a life of leisure.

Krishnan (right)
during his mega
moment in 2017.





Krishnan (second from left) studying with his peers.

Source: Harian Metro

“OUM offers a huge discount for senior citizens and the Seremban Learning Centre is located near my house, so I decided to enrol in the University,” he said.

“I had been teaching for more than 40 years and being able to continue studying at this age is gratifying. The face-to-face tutorials are particularly fun because we get to engage in lively discussions,” he explained.

Besides making new friends, he also had the ironic opportunity of studying alongside two of his former students. “We were in the same class taking the same course! It was heartening that they were striving to also better themselves through education.”

The octogenarian faced some challenges in managing his studies

online but overcame them with the help of his daughter, a lawyer. “I like OUM’s flexibility. When I had to undergo an operation, the University allowed me to defer two semesters and then return to my studies.”

His hard work paid off when he received his scroll at the 20th Convocation in 2017. He was featured in a few local newspapers for obtaining a degree at the ripe age of 83.

Has he stopped learning? Definitely not!

Krishnan, now 85, is back at the Seremban Learning Centre. This time around, he’s undertaking the Master of Business Administration programme.

WORLD VIEW:

What can we do about Child Abuse?

By: Heikal Abdul Mutadir (heikal@oum.edu.my)

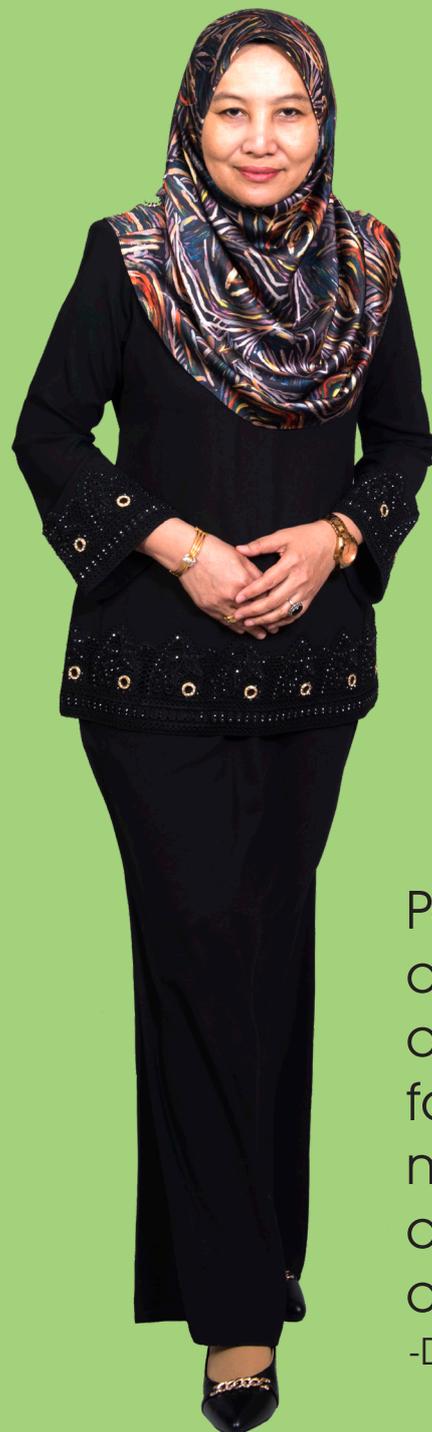
Nelson Mandela once said: "The true character of a society is revealed in how it treats its children." So what must we do to build a respectable society and protect our children from abuse?

Child abuse continues to be a hot topic in this country yet it remains unresolved, with 14 cases reported each day according to statistics from the Welfare Department and UNICEF Malaysia.

"Child abuse cases are on the rise," says acting Chair of the Cluster Education and Social Sciences, Dr Aliza Ali. "We cannot take them lightly because we are indirectly denying children's right to be protected from harm or mistreatment."

Dr Aliza has an extensive background in early childhood education, early language and literacy, curriculum development and pedagogy in teaching and learning. As the Director for the Master of Early Childhood Education programme, she is very passionate about this serious problem.

"Poverty and stress are key factors in most child abuse cases," she explains. "The abuse can be caused by parents or caregivers who cannot control their temper when dealing with children. They may also lack understanding of children's emotional development and needs."



“

Poverty and stress are key factors in most child abuse cases.

-Dr Aliza Ali

“Poor parenting, alcohol or drug abuse, family crises, divorce and financial problems are also common reasons behind such cases.”

The impact of abuse is long-lasting as children often carry their trauma into adulthood, leaving them more likely to develop mental problems and even commit suicide. They also have the potential of turning into abusers themselves.

Dr Aliza emphasises that education is crucial to combating child abuse.

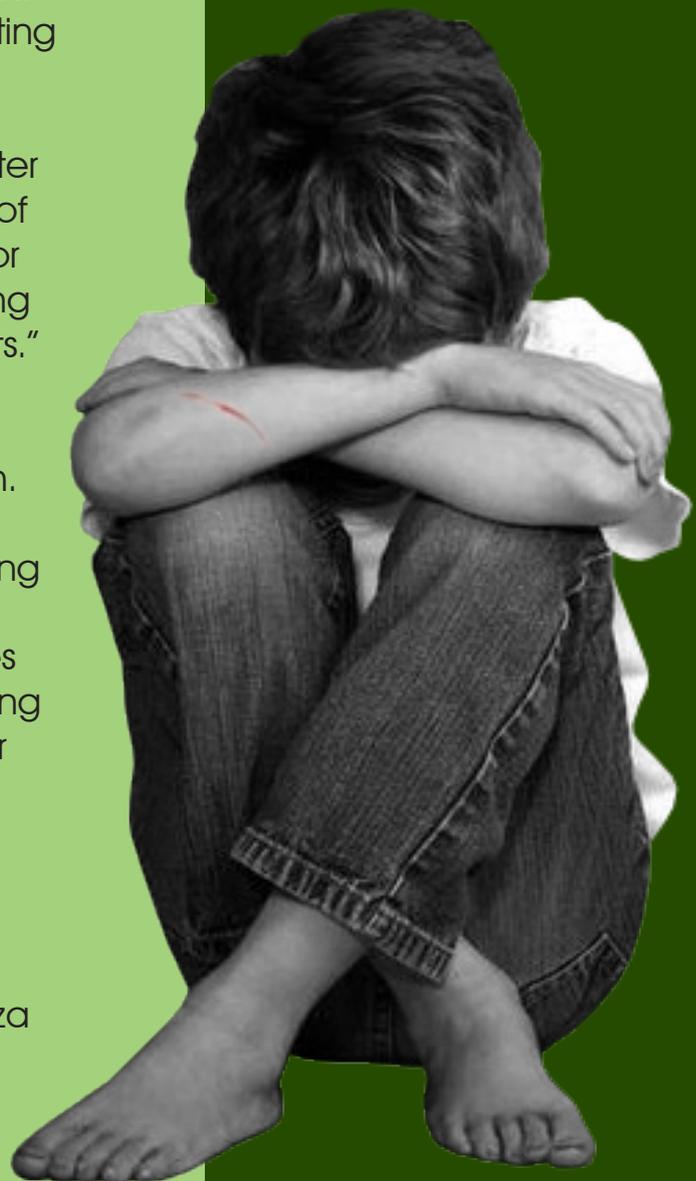
“Universities must play a more active role by educating people on child development, the hidden dangers of child grooming and the impact of child abuse. These entail introducing parenting subjects into the school curriculum as well as offering child development courses at diploma, degree and master levels. In the national context, as part of Child Act 2001, increasing penalties for offenders and improving case reporting would better safeguard children’s rights.”

Nevertheless, Dr Aliza believes stricter laws and punishments are not enough. Caregivers need to better understand children’s needs. They also need training to recognise signs of abuse, such as unexplained bruises and cuts, fractures or burn marks, bed-wetting and sleeping problems, unusual sexual behaviour or conversations, social withdrawal and rebelliousness.

“Training parents and guardians can prevent or stop child abuse. This has been proven through research,” Dr Aliza concludes.

Would you be able to recognise child abuse? These are the ways it can happen:

- **Neglect:** Lack of care to the point that the child suffers from malnourishment, unhygienic living conditions or poor clothing.
- **Emotional abuse:** Verbal and mental abuse which may include indifference from the parent or caregiver.
- **Physical abuse:** Causing deliberate injury, including beating, slapping and using excessive force in handling.
- **Sexual abuse:** Molestation, forcing children into sex acts and exposing them to or using them for pornography.



In 2010, Lugard was awarded the Excellent Service Award for outstanding commitment to his duties as a lab assistant, an achievement he is very proud of.

A fan of Manchester United and Sarawak football clubs, this OUM alumnus started writing about local and international matches after completing his Bachelor of Education (Science) with Honours programme in 2016.

"I usually post my football-related writings on Facebook. One day, one of these postings went viral and a senior editor from *Semuanya BOLA* approached me for permission to publish it on their website," shares Lugard, who has three children.

Shortly after that, *Semuanya BOLA*, which is a popular website managed by a digital media company that covers local and international news

on the world's most popular sport, offered him a job as a part-time writer. He took it on with enthusiasm and was soon promoted to part-time editor.

"It's not easy to commit to two jobs as they both require full commitment. I usually write at night and over the weekends. I find this manageable since I have passion for both," says Lugard who dreams of receiving an award from the Sports Writers' Association of Malaysia someday.

Lugard says he frequently reflects on how fortunate he is to have attended OUM. "It has changed my perspective, boosted my confidence, sharpened my problem-solving skills, and most importantly, taught me how to live life by doing what I want, the way I like it."



POINTERS:

5 Tips for a Killer Résumé!

By: Heikal Abdul Mutadir (heikal@oum.edu.my)

In a competitive world filled with millions of job seekers, a standout résumé is one that can immediately and positively attract the attention of potential employers. To impress your future boss and land your dream job, here are some helpful hints for preparing a killer résumé.

Customise your résumé

Employers want people with the right skills, expertise and experience for their organisations. Highlight your qualifications and attract their attention by adding keywords from their job ads into your résumé. This will help search engines to better notice your application.

Don't curb your enthusiasm

Show an eagerness to demonstrate your ability to learn new skills and upgrade your knowledge. Prove that you are a team player by sharing evidence of roles you have had in specific groups, projects, publications or presentations. Include training programmes and courses you have attended.

Highlight your successes

Emphasise your accomplishments when describing your previous employment. For example, describe how your problem-solving skills made a difference at your previous positions. You can create a separate category to showcase your awards, certificates and other forms of recognition.

Advertise yourself

Think of your résumé as an advertisement – this is your chance to sell yourself to your potential employer. Put your most important selling points in bold fonts and at the top of your résumé. Make your work experience look attractive to readers.

Lead by example

Leadership and teamwork are highly valued in any organisation. Demonstrate your leadership capabilities by creating a section to highlight projects, sales achievements and profits earned from your previous jobs. Try to describe your achievements in numbers like, "Implemented fiscal plan which reduced expenditure by 10%". Use examples to show how each task allowed you to enhance your leadership skills.

Calling OUM Alumni!

Let us share your stories with the world! Take the opportunity to be featured in this e-magazine and be an inspiration to others. Write to us if you're interested!

Keep in touch with friends and former classmates. Join the OUM Alumni Official group on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/kenalanoum/>

Here is how you can reach out to us!

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