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RSOG INSIGHT

MOVEMENT CONTROL ORDER EDITION

IN THIS ISSUE

With the COVID-19 impacting countries at various stages, everyone is trying to understand what is required to protect themselves and their communities.

We spoke to some of our friends around the world, on how it has affected them and their views of the situation.

ABOUT OUR GUEST

Dr Masliza Mahmud is presently a University Research Lecturer, Head of Clinical Trials, and Honorary Consultant in Cardiac Imaging at the University of Oxford, Centre for Clinical Magnetic Resonance Research (OCMR), Division of Cardiovascular Medicine at the Radcliffe Department of Medicine. She obtained a DPhil (PhD) in Cardiovascular Medicine from Oxford University, followed by a period of postdoctoral fellowships at OCMR. She is a member of the Royal College of Physicians (MRCP), London and holds a Master of Internal Medicine from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. She obtained a primary medical degree from Otago University, New Zealand. She sits on the Steering Committee of the British Society of Cardiovascular Magnetic Resonance (BSCMR) Heart Failure Research Task Force.

Disclaimer: Views expressed in the article are of their own and do not reflect the opinion of Razak School of Government.

VIEWS FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM

In this edition, we spoke to Dr Masliza Mahmud who is currently with the University of Oxford, United Kingdom. Dr Masliza previously shared her leadership experience as a cardiologist at Razak School of Government (RSOG)'s Leadership in Action: Braveheart on 6 September 2018.

RSOG: How has the pandemic affected your daily life?

Dr Masliza Mahmud: The COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone including myself. As a medical doctor, the Movement Control Order (MCO) does not affect me fully. Although I am not involved directly with patients with coronavirus, I still attend the hospital to deal with non-COVID-19 patient issues. Living in the United Kingdom during the crisis suits me well as I still have the freedom to leave the house to exercise and to get basic necessities without anyone or authority questioning me. The wonderful spring weather helps reduce stress and anxiety during this period. Groceries are mostly done online. The initial panic buying, which resulted in unavailability of basic necessities, seems to have settled and the delivery services are quite efficient. Having teenagers staying 24 hours at home can be challenging but the school system is quite helpful in organising their online study programme and homework to occupy their time efficiently.





RSOG: In your opinion what would be the top three leadership lesson that we can learn from this global pandemic?

Dr Masliza Mahmud: *Trust.* At the start of the coronavirus epidemic in February there was a sudden, unexpected change in leadership in the government. This has resulted in a lack of trust in the people in power who were making decisions that affect the whole country. This has created some difficulties and friction for the rakyat to follow orders. It is critical for leaders to gain trust by the rakyat, in particular, in the period of crisis. The key message is that there needs to be a strong sense of trust in the elected leaders. These leaders, they bear heavy responsibilities on their shoulders, and have to take the right, evidence-based decisions, not just ones that make them popular and to help them get re-elected.

Open-mindedness. The COVID-19 is full of uncertainties. There are no definitive answers as to the right solutions, considering the situation changes almost on a daily basis. Leaders all over the world struggle to find the right solutions and we know that there is no magic pill, no “one size fits all” solution to this. Different countries are handling this deadly virus infection differently. The key message is, keep your mind open, be prepared to change if the current approaches fail to work.

Resourcefulness. This is often overlooked in a leader. I am amazed by the resourcefulness of the Malaysian government and their strategy to solve problems and overcome difficulties. For example, the military is used to help enforce the MCO. Millions of ringgit are used to support the medical team who treat patients with coronavirus, and those people who are disadvantaged (e.g. starving, income loss) as a result of the movement restrictions. The people should be grateful for this. However, leaders need to be mindful not to be overdoing this, to avoid economic implications in the long term. Foods supply have been reported to be excessive, more than what they need. The key message is resources need to be prioritised without over subsidising people. It is always good to do something in moderation.



RSOG: Any messages you would like to share with our alumni, and everyone involved, whether directly and indirectly in curbing the COVID-19?

Dr Masliza Mahmud: Stay calm. Trust the authorities. Produce something useful i.e. get the best out of the current situation with regards to your career. For example, I am writing 3 research grant applications during this relatively less hectic period.