



ENCORE Vol 2. Issue #3: The Invisible Giants Among Us

There is always something happening here that does not make it into the reports. You can feel it on a Tuesday afternoon when the light falls through the windows of the Orange Block and someone laughs too loud in the corridor. You can see it in the way a woman who advises UNESCO on the future of education still finds time to sit with a first-year who does not know what she is doing with her life. You can hear it in the quiet pride of a man who spoke to parliament about the fate of nations and then came back to campus and spent an hour talking to students about their essays.

The emails pile up. The deadlines do not stop. There is always another form, another meeting, another thing that someone needs from us before we are ready to give it. But here is the thing I keep noticing: we keep showing up anyway. Not just because we have to, but because something in this place makes it feel like it matters. Because we are fueled by something stubborn and quiet and true. Fueled by belief. By hope. By the small, radical virtues that make us human in a world that often asks us to be machines.

Look at the scholar who sits on national committees and still makes time for a student who is stuck. Look at the person who keeps the schedules straight and the payments on time, who makes sure everything runs while asking for nothing. Look at the panel of strangers who came to campus just to tell our students how to navigate worlds we cannot prepare them for. Look at the poet who wrote about aim and accuracy on a bathroom wall and made everyone who reads it smile.

These are the things that hold this place together. The invisible giants. They are the reasons students leave different from how they arrived. They are the reasons we stay.

So let us say it more often. In the hallway, between meetings. Over the cold coffee.

You are doing something good here. You are part of something worth building. We are the reason it matters.

P.S. "Thank you for reading" on the final page is where you will find this month's bonus link.

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Featured in this issue:

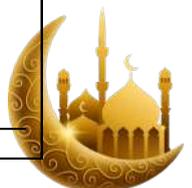
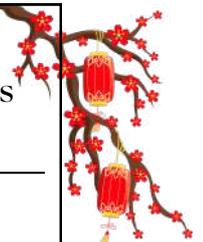
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From Parliament to Classroom: Critical Minerals and Malaysia's Geoeconomic Future

The **School of Politics, International Relations & Economics (SPIRE)**, University of Nottingham Malaysia, was honoured to welcome **YB Howard Lee**, Head of the Parliamentary Caucus on Critical Minerals in Malaysia, for a guest lecture with students from Global Political Economy and International Development.

In his talk, "The Geoeconomics of Critical Minerals in Malaysia amidst the US-China Trade War," YB Howard Lee examined how critical mineral supply chains, strategic resource governance, and geopolitical competition are reshaping Malaysia's economic positioning in an increasingly multipolar world. Students gained valuable insight into the intersection of policy-making, international trade, and sustainable development, bridging academic theory with real-world parliamentary and industry perspectives.

We extend our sincere appreciation to YB Howard Lee for sharing his expertise and inspiring thoughtful dialogue on Malaysia's evolving role in the global geoeconomic landscape.

March promises to be an exciting month for SPIRE, with a line-up of guest lectures, a book launch, and a research talk. Keep an eye out for full details in the upcoming issues of ENCORE.





Advancing Sustainability Education: Dr Subarna Sivapalan's Global and National Leadership

Dr Subarna Sivapalan, Associate Dean Research & Knowledge Exchange continues to play a significant role in shaping sustainability education at both international and national levels.

Internationally, she has been appointed to the Advisory Committee of UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Section, as one of 16 global sustainability education experts invited to advise the ESD World Congress (December 2026, Kenya) and guide the remaining years of ESD2030, including its future direction beyond 2030. The invitation was formally signed by the Assistant Director-General for Education at UNESCO, with the first advisory meeting scheduled for March 2026.

Dr Sivapalan also serves on two technical work groups under the UNESCO Greening Education Partnership, the Higher Education Technical Work Group and the Greening Communities Technical Work Group, contributing to expert guidance on sustainability integration across education systems. In addition, she was invited to serve as a judge at SEAMEO RECSAM's 14th Regional Congress: Search for SEAMEO Young Scientists (SSYS), held in the presence of the Minister of Education (Malaysia).

Nationally, she is a member of the Malaysia Ministry of Education's National ESD Strategic Partners Advisory Committee, advising on the monitoring and implementation of Pillar 6 (ESD) of the Malaysia Education Blueprint. She also contributed earlier as part of the Education Blueprint Drafting Group for Pillar 6.

Further extending her impact, she has been appointed as a Technical Resource Person to the IMT-GT Joint Business Council (JBC), supporting the Green City Action Plan (GCAP) Implementation initiative. This includes capacity-building and knowledge outputs leading toward the Green City Investment Summit in November 2026.

Through these roles, she continues to strengthen the Faculty's contribution to sustainability, policy, and education reform across regional and global platforms.

One of the publications she has co created is accessible [here](#).



Teaching & Learning | Industry Engagement



Thriving Across Borders: Preparing Students for Cultural Agility and the Future of Work

In collaboration with Cultural Impact, **Dr Risky Harisa Haslan** and **Dr Subarna Sivapalan** organised a dynamic, fast-paced panel aimed at equipping students and colleagues to thrive in multicultural teams and global careers.

The session featured distinguished senior leaders and industry experts — **Marie Tseng, Dr Asma Abdullah, Khoo Ching Thye, Pauline Goh, and Halizah Hussein** who shared real-world journeys, practical strategies, and insider insights on navigating international career pathways.



Read the LinkedIn post by Cultural Impact [here](#) regarding the event.





Partnerships & Engagement

CelcomDigi and School of Humanities — Translating Critical Media Literacy into Public Action

CelcomDigi has partnered with Writing for the Media, a third-year module in International Communications Studies in the **School of Humanities**, for its SAFE Internet Campaign. In this module, students produce journalistic narratives across four Instagram Reels that critique common hype and misconceptions about AI. The assignment sharpens their ability to translate complex issues into clear, public-facing media while reinforcing the campaign's focus on ethical and responsible AI use.

As part of the initiative, the SAFE Internet booth (at the University's F1 foyer) offers interactive activities that educate visitors about the risks of online scams and digital manipulation. Students engage directly with the public, turning classroom analysis into real-world communications. The booth will be available between the 3 and 20 March.

This collaboration brings industry and teaching into the same space. Students test their ideas against live audiences. A leading telecommunications provider invests in critical media literacy. The result is applied learning that is timely, public, and impactful. It shows how academic work can move beyond assessment and contribute to digital awareness in ways that matter now.





Research & Knowledge Exchange | External Engagement

Carbon Markets & Community Rights: Why FPIC Matters More Than Ever

The **School of Politics, International Relations & Economics (SPIRE)**, University of Nottingham Malaysia, is pleased to share that **Dr Karma Tashi Choedron (Savinder Kaur Gill)** was invited to speak at the Malaysian Carbon Market Association (MCMA) Convergence 2026 Round Table on 13 February 2026. She contributed expert insights on Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) in nature-based solutions and carbon projects.

The discussion emphasised aligning international FPIC standards with Malaysia's land governance frameworks, strengthening transparent and culturally grounded community engagement, adopting a dual-compliance approach to meet both state and international requirements, and advancing toward a unified Malaysian FPIC framework to support high-integrity carbon initiatives.

These conversations hold strong relevance for students and researchers working at the intersection of environmental governance, Indigenous rights, sustainability, and carbon markets.

Thank you for reading!

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