National Youth Survey 2008
13th November – 9th December 2008

Supported by:

MERDEKA CENTER
FOR OPINION RESEARCH

The Asia Foundation
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Introduction

Objectives

• The objectives of this survey was to get young adults in Malaysia to speak for themselves (rather than others who speak on their behalf) on issues pertaining to their participation in community activities and politics as well as their views towards lifestyles and values held.
• This is the third consecutive years the Merdeka Center for Opinion Research has conducted this survey with the funding support from the Asia Foundation.

Important events during survey period:
Barack Obama elected US president, Kuala Terengganu seat fell vacant following the death of incumbent, starting of JERIT cycling campaign, Bukit Antarabangsa landslide.
Methodology

1. The survey was conducted utilizing Merdeka Center’s Household Telephone Database whereby interview calls are distributed throughout Malaysia.
2. In total, 2518 respondents provided completed feedback using a structured questionnaire instrument. Each respondent is defined as a youth aged 20 until 35 years old.
3. A structured random probability sampling was used to select the sample involving the following stages:
   • Selection of state-based telephone blocks from Merdeka’s National Household Telephone Database
   • Random selection of respondents from each state; and
   • Listing of all sampled households and contacting the respondents for interviews.
   • The poll was conducted between 13th November to 9th December 2008.

The qualitative survey is carried out via 8 focus groups amongst youths, engaged and not engaged in civil society work in the Klang Valley, Taiping during February 2009, and in Kota Kinabalu and Kuching during the month of April 2009.
Respondent Profile pt. 1

Ethnicity

- Malay: 51%
- Chinese: 26%
- Indian: 7%
- Non-Muslim Bumiputra: 11%
- Muslim Bumiputra: 6%

Age

- 20-25: 57%
- 26-30: 23%
- 31-35: 19%

Gender

- Male: 50%
- Female: 50%

Location

- Peninsular Malaysia: 67%
- Sarawak: 13%
- Sabah: 20%
Respondent Profile pt. 2

Level of education

- Primary school: 3%
- Secondary school: 39%
- Diploma & equivalent: 31%
- Degree: 27%
- No response: 0%

Total monthly household income

- < RM1500: 35%
- RM1501 – RM3000: 30%
- RM3001 – RM5000: 15%
- RM5001 – RM7000: 6%
- > RM7001: 4%
- Don't know: 8%
- No response: 1%

Religion

- Islam: 56%
- Buddhism: 15%
- Hinduism: 7%
- Christian: 16%
- Taoist: 3%

Internet access

- At home: 34%
- Workplace/school/university: 14%
- At home and workplace/school/university: 9%
- Other locations: 13%
- No internet access/Do not surf internet: 30%
MEDIA
CONSUMPTION
Young Malaysians are generally well informed. High rate of internet usage, large numbers use it for news.

Skeptical over news offerings by the mainstream and the internet
Thinking about the past week, please just tell me how many days have you read a newspaper? / Dalam seminggu yang lepas, sila nyatakan berapa harikah anda membaca suratkhabar?

- 1 day: 7%
- 2 days: 13%
- 3 days: 17%
- 4 days: 8%
- 5 days: 6%
- 6 days: 1%
- 7 days: 34%
- Don’t read newspaper at all: 15%
- Don’t know: 1%

Almost half of Malaysian youth read papers more than four days a week.
Television

Thinking about the past week, please tell me how many days have you watched the news on television? / Dalam seminggu yang lepas, sila nyatakan berapa harakah anda menonton berita di televisyen?

- 1 day: 4%
- 2 days: 10%
- 3 days: 15%
- 4 days: 7%
- 5 days: 6%
- 6 days: 1%
- 7 days: 39%
- Don’t watch news on TV at all: 18%
- Don’t know: 1%

53% of Malaysian youth watch television for news more than four days a week.
How strongly do you trust or distrust the mainstream media in terms of its reporting on political and current issues? / Sejauhmanakah anda percaya atau tidak percaya dengan media arus perdana dalam melaporkan isu-isu politik dan semasa?

- **Strongly trust**: 40%
- **Somewhat trust**: 44%
- **Somewhat distrust**: 6%
- **Strongly distrust**: 5%
- **Don't know**: 4%
- **No response**: 1%

"Most of the news being reported is being exaggerated by the media and it serves for the benefit some particular parties."

(Sales executive, Malay, KL)

"When news is publicized, it must have certain level of truth."

(Female, Indian, Taiping)
How strongly do you trust or distrust the mainstream media in terms of its reporting on political and current issues? / Sejauhmanakah anda percaya atau tidak percaya dengan media arus perdana dalam melaporkan isu-isu politik dan semasa?

Sarawak, n = 501

Non-Muslim bumiputra & Muslim bumiputra showed greater trust.

“40% trust in the ‘federal’ news and trust 100% on the local social news.” (Male, Lemanak area, Batang Ai)
Sabahans trust mainstream media more

How strongly do you trust or distrust the mainstream media in terms of its reporting on political and current issues? / Sejauhmanakah anda percaya atau tidak percaya dengan media arus perdana dalam melaporkan isu-isu politik dan semasa?

Sabah, N = 497

Unemployed and students showed greater distrust.

“Kampong folks largely depend on radio. There are no stable supply of electricity so villagers can only get more news when they go to town.” (Female, Kadazan, Penampang)
Youth access to internet is high

Internet access / Melayari internet

With internet access 70%
Without internet access 30%

2008

An increase of 13% from 2007

With internet access 57%
Without internet access 43%

2007

Younger

Age

20-25, 63%
26-30, 63%
31-35, 54%

Higher educated

Education Level

Primary school, 15%
Secondary school, 47%
Diploma & equivalent, 82%
Degree, 96%
If YES to internet access, how many hours per week, on average, would you say you spend on the Internet? / Jika anda mempunyai akses kepada internet, secara purata, dalam seminggu berapakah masa yang digunakan untuk mengakses internet?

- < 5 hours/week: 2%
- 5-10 hours/week: 21%
- 11-20 hours/week: 12%
- > 30 hours/week: 13%
- Access internet when free only/sometimes: 12%
- Others: 2%
- Don't know: 1%

At least 45 minutes to 2 hours online daily.

Respondent with internet access / responden melayari internet (n = 1767)
44% of users surf the internet for news

How frequent do you surf the internet to get news & what sites you surf? / Berapa harikah anda mengakses internet untuk mendapatkan berita & laman web yang dilayari?

Q12A. Which sites do you go to get news? Please name 3 sites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First mentioned</th>
<th>Second mentioned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local mainstream Malay press (bharian, utusan, bernama etc)</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International English &amp; Chinese news portal (cnn, time, bbc.co.uk, asiaone, aseannews, espn, baidu, sogou, yahoo, youtube etc)</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Malay news portal (hmetro.com, sinarharian.com,kosmo.com etc)</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local mainstream English press (thestar.com, nst.com, dailyexpress.com, Borneo post etc)</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local alternative news portal (malaysiakini, merdeka review, malaysianinsider,harakahdaily, agendadaily etc)</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local mainstream Chinese press (sinchew.com, nanyang.com, chinapress.com,guangming.com etc)</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local entertainment news portal and blogs (tranungkite, gua.com, lowyat.net, Chedet, Malaysia-today etc)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondent with internet access / responden melayari internet (n = 1767)
Lifestyle
Soccer and MU are the top favourites

Top 5 favourite sports / 5 sukan paling diminati

- Soccer or futsal: 29%
- Badminton/ tennis/ squash: 19%
- Basketball: 3%
- Field games (rugbi, athletes): 3%
- Netball: 3%
- Do not participate or watching sports: 28%

Top 4 favourite FC

- Manchester United: 36%
- Liverpool: 15%
- Chelsea: 12%
- Malaysian team: 11%
Most of the youth are non-joiners

What kind of group do you belong to? / Apakah pertubuhan tersebut?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sports &amp; recreation</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political party</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural &amp; race</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident association</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societies in university or school (PBSM, St. John, scouts etc.)</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business/professional association</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent teacher association &amp; youth societies</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Active member/ ahli aktif, n = 511

79% do not join an organization
95% own one or more mobile phones

What kind of mobile phone service do you use? / Apakah jenis perkhidmatan telefon mudah alih yang anda gunakan?

By age

Overall

Prepaid: 72%
Postpaid: 19%
Do not own mobile phone: 5%
Both Prepaid & Postpaid: 4%

Overall

20-25: 16% Prepaid, 3% Postpaid, 4% Both Prepaid & Postpaid, 3% Do not own mobile phone
26-30: 20% Prepaid, 4% Postpaid, 4% Both Prepaid & Postpaid, 8% Do not own mobile phone
31-35: 61% Prepaid, 8% Postpaid, 3% Both Prepaid & Postpaid, 3% Do not own mobile phone
One in three youth has financial obligations.

Do you presently have any type of obligations to a private or public financial institution? / Pada masa sekarang, adakah anda meminjam wang dari institusi kewangan swasta atau awam?

Yes 38%
No 61%
No response 1%

Higher educated

Older

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>20-25</th>
<th>26-30</th>
<th>31-35</th>
<th>Primary school</th>
<th>Secondary school</th>
<th>Diploma &amp; equivalent</th>
<th>Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One in four youth thought of residing elsewhere

Have you ever thought of leaving Malaysia and living in another country? / Adakah anda pernah berfikir untuk meninggalkan Malaysia dan menetap di negara lain?

- Yes: 27% (21% Muslim Bumiputra, 23% Non-Muslim Bumiputra, 23% Malay, 21% Male, 30% 20-25 years old)
- No: 73% (73% Muslim Bumiputra, 24% Bumiputra, 30% 26-30 years old, 19% Chinese, 30% Female)

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Issues
Split over the country’s direction – unhappy over political bickering and economic concerns but grateful that country is at peace and there is more democratic competition.
Considering how conditions are in the country today, would you say that things are generally headed in the right direction or wrong direction? / Melihat keadaan dalam negara sekarang, sejauh manakah anda rasa bahawa negara kita menuju ke arah yang betul atau tidak betul?

Wrong track : 41%
- 12%
- 8%
- 9%
- 2%

Right track : 48%
- 36%
- 33%

“There are weak governance, lack of transparency and efficiency among the leadership team. Weak leaders are not capable to govern a multiracial country well.” (Lecturer, Malay, KL)

“Our country is moving in the right direction because of the changes within the society. People now can evaluate and they are more educated.” (Male, Bajau, KK)
And what would you say is the issue that is the main reason for your answer?
/ Apakah isu yang menyebabkan anda berkata demikian?

Top 6 reasons

15% of respondents who said the country is moving towards the right direction cannot give a reason, “Don’t know”.

Hate it =>
Political bickering

Like it =>
political competition, more democratic

Political instability
Economic downturn
Price hike & rising cost of living
Racial inequality
Corruption
Quality of national leadership
Don’t know
Social values
Ethnicity and religion remains an important factor in influencing views on whether women or minorities can hold top positions in the country.
If you can only choose one identity, would you say that you are...? / Jika anda hanya boleh memilih satu identiti sahaja, anda mahu dikenali sebagai….

“Ethnic identification is mainly cultural based and is being politicized by politicians.” (Male, 28, Kuching)

“There is no point to be a Malay or Malaysian if we are not Muslim.” (Male, student, Kota Kinabalu)

Overall / keseluruhan, n = 2518
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More Sabahans and Sarawakians see themselves as Malaysian first

If you can only choose one identity, would you say that you are...? / Jika anda hanya boleh memilih satu identiti sahaja, anda mahu dikenali sebagai....

**First choose Malaysian, n = 1083**

- Non-Muslim Bumiputra: 77%
- Muslim Bumiputra: 59%
- Malay: 29%
- Chinese: 51%
- Indian: 42%
- Muslim Bumiputra: 59%
- Muslim Bumiputra: 59%
- Peninsular Malaysia: 34%
- Attended Chinese school: 52%
- Attended national school: 39%
- Attended Tamil school: 37%
- 31-35: 47%
- 26-30: 45%
- 20-25: 39%
How strongly would you accept or not accept a …. as Prime Minister in Malaysia? / Sejauhmanakah anda terima atau tidak terima …. menjadi Perdana Menteri Malaysia?

- Strongly acceptable
- Somewhat acceptable
- Somewhat unacceptable
- Strongly unacceptable
- Don't know
- No response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Strongly acceptable</th>
<th>Somewhat acceptable</th>
<th>Somewhat unacceptable</th>
<th>Strongly unacceptable</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Malay Muslim</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Muslim</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“National leadership should be given to whomever that has caliber. The ability to lead is of utmost importance.”
(Female, Chinese, clerk, Taiping)

“Our constitution stated that Islam is the official religion of Malaysia so the PM should be a Muslim and also a Malay.”
(Male, Malay, Taiping)

“The official religion of the country is Islam and the majority of this country are Muslim. Therefore, a non-Muslim will not be able to address certain issues concerning Muslim well-being.”
(Male, Dusun Muslim, KK)
How strongly would you accept a …. as Prime Minister in Malaysia? / Sejauhmanakah anda terima atau tidak terima …. menjadi Perdana Menteri Malaysia?

*Indicating acceptance

National, n = 2518
How strongly would you accept a …. as Prime Minister in Malaysia? / Sejauhmanakah anda terima atau tidak terima …. menjadi Perdana Menteri Malaysia?

Reflecting national trend

Sarawakian, n = 501
Reflecting national trend

How strongly would you accept or not accept a …. as Prime Minister in Malaysia? / Sejauhmanakah anda terima atau tidak terima …. menjadi Perdana Menteri Malaysia?

*Indicating acceptance

Sabahan, n = 497
Political efficacy
Political efficacy declined – a signal that the youth voice has not been heard enough? Or change is not taking place at desired pace?
Self efficacy decreased by 3%

Thinking about the problems you see in your community, how much difference do you think you can make in solving the problem? / Apabila anda melihat masalah yang berlaku dalam masyarakat anda, adakah anda mampu untuk menyelesaikan masalah itu?

- A great deal of difference
- Some difference
- A little difference
- No difference at all
- Don't know
- No response

Net change = - 3%

“Many young people are naïve, living in suburban areas and there are many problems at home, with friends and in school. They are powerless.” (Male, KK)
How much of an impact would you say government decisions have on your daily life? / Setakat manakah keputusan yang dibuat oleh kerajaan memberi kesan terhadap kehidupan anda?

- A lot
- Some
- A little
- None
- Don't know
- No response

Net change = +5%
How much of a difference do you think your vote makes in influencing the government? / Sejauh manakah undi anda boleh mempengaruhi apa yang dilakukan oleh kerajaan?

- A great deal of difference
- Some difference
- A little difference
- No difference at all
- Don't know
- No response

Net change = -16%

“I don’t see changes even after so many terms the politicians are elected.” (Male, Dusun, Penampang)
Electoral participation
Nearly one-half (44%) remains unregistered to vote. Voting not being seen as high priority in their lives.
Are you a registered voter? / Adakah anda seorang pengundi berdaftar?

- Yes: 55%
- No: 44%

- Busy / other commitments: 49%
- Indifferent/ negative towards politics: 27%
- Others: 9%
- Don't know where to register, lack of knowledge: 8%
- No response: 5%
- Don't know: 2%

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Non-Muslim Bumiputra less likely to register

Are you a registered voter? / Adakah anda seorang pengundi berdaftar?

- **Total**: 59% Yes, 41% No
- **Malay**: 59% Yes, 41% No
- **Chinese**: 70% Yes, 30% No
- **Non-Muslim Bumiputra**: 51% Yes, 49% No
- **Muslim Bumiputra**: 61% Yes, 39% No

Sarawak eligible respondents, n = 245
Older people more likely to register.

Are you a registered voter? / Adakah anda seorang pengundi berdaftar?

Sabah eligible respondents, n = 389
What were your roles during the March 8th general election? / Apakah peranan anda dalam Pilihanraya Umum (PRU) pada 8 Mac yang lalu?

- Voted: 82%
- Voted & volunteered at polling station: 4%
- Volunteered at polling station: 4%
- Voted and campaigned for a candidate/party: 3%
- Observed election: 2%
- Campaigned for a candidate/party: 2%
- Voted and observed election: 2%
- Others: 1%

For voter who voted during March 8 / Untuk pengundi yang mengundi semasa PRU Mac 8 sahaja, n = 1120
Characteristics of Eligible Non-voters (21%)

Demographic characteristic

- Youngest group (27%) – the numbers decline as age gets higher.
- Unmarried (24%)
- Educational level:
  - Least educated (26% - primary school)
  - Highly educated (27% - degree) – mostly because they are young & “still studying”
- 22% of eligible urban youth, 25% Non-Muslim Bumiputra and 32% of Sarawak youth are not register.

Reasons not registered

- Busy or have other commitments (49%)
- Indifferent / negative views towards politics (27%)
- 8% said they “don’t know where to register”.
Social characteristic
• Less active in organization (23% not joining any organization)
• Those who said involved in organizations mostly joined sports, cultural, alumni and school societies, less likely to join political parties.

Socio-political values
• Preferred multiracial party (84%) vs. single race party (18%)
• Think their votes will not have much influence: number of non-voters increases as sense of self-efficacy decreases.

No. of eligible non-voters vs. how much influence their vote can make

• Among them, 53% thinks UUCA (AUKU) is necessary.
• Among them whose level of education is degree, 49% of them think UUCA is necessary.
What do they want?
Politically, want multiracial parties that can manage the economy well, fight corruption and take the time to listen to them and bring development to the grassroots (community)
When choosing a party, which one is most important to you? Apabila memilih sebuah parti, yang manakah paling penting bagi anda?

- A multi-racial party that represents the interests of all Malaysians regardless of ethnicity or religion
- A political party that represents the interests of your ethnic/religious community
- Don’t know
- No response

77%
20%
1%
2%
What kind of causes do you want political parties to fight for you? Please choose ONE (1) which is most important to you?/ Apakah isu/ perkara yang anda mahu parti politik suarakan untuk kepentingan anda? Sila pilih SATU (1) yang paling penting bagi anda.

- Managing the economy: 46%
- Fighting corruption: 29%
- Handling inter-ethnic relations: 19%
- All of the above: 3%
- Others: 1%
- Don't know: 1%
- No response: 1%
What kind of causes do you want political parties to fight for you? Please choose ONE (1) which is most important to you? Apakah isu/perkara yang anda mahu parti politik suarakan untuk kepentingan anda? Sila pilih SATU (1) yang paling penting bagi anda.

For the community

- Listening to the people: 59%
- Bringing development to your community: 27%
- Taking care the interests of your race: 9%
- Others: 3%
- Don't know: 1%
- No response: 1%
Political diversity among Peninsular youth

Now, I am going to read you TWO statements. Please choose that is closest to you own views… / Sekarang saya akan bacakan DUA kenyataan. Di antara kenyataan ini, yang mana satukah paling rapat dengan pandangan anda?

Malay-based parties other than UMNO such as PAS & PKR (DAP & PKR) to voice out the Malay interest (community's interests).

Malays/ Our community (The people of your race) should be united under UMNO/ BN (BN) to ensure their political survival.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political diversity</th>
<th>Unity under BN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Peninsular Malaysia</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarawak</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabah</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

44% 46% 51% 40% 63% 56%
Conclusions
### Level of self-efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of self-efficacy</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td>Mostly Chinese, attended Chinese primary school, mandarin speaking and primary school leavers. There are some who are English speaking. Among this group, 43% would first identify themselves as Malaysian.</td>
<td>Mostly Malay and other Bumiputras, from rural areas and attended national school. Among this group, 45% identified themselves as follower of a religion first and 42% said they are Malaysians.</td>
<td>Mostly Indians, attended Tamil primary school, speak Tamil or Tamil dialects, lower income group, and believe in Hinduism. Those who said they joined an organizations (31%). Among this group, 45% identified themselves as follower of a religion first and 42% said they are Malaysians.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Those who are high in household income but low in self-efficacy are identified as younger, urban, white collar or students (from well-to-do family) Malay and Chinese who are contented or ignorant towards politics. A closer breakdown showed the group consisted 44% Malay, 36% Chinese, 72% urban, 71% Peninsular Malaysians, 64% aged 20 – 25 years old, 35% with degree and 31% diploma holders (31%), 55% work in private sector (55%) and 18% students.*
Desired future

- What the youth really want?
  1. Multiracial party.
  2. For the nation – To manage the economy well and fight corruption.
  3. For the community – “Listen to us!!” And bring development

Internet access

- Increase usage from 2007 to 2008.
- Internet will continue to shape the lives of youth.
- Half internet users surf the net for news although usually they surf online version of mainstream papers.