

MONITORING OKU RIGHTS

A Database on Parliamentary Documents for Persons with Disabilities

Project fact sheet information

Here should be added all the information as it will appears in proposals or agreements

Project title	Monitoring OKU Rights: A Database on Parliamentary Documents for Persons with Disabilities
Grant recipient	Adhura H. Farouk
Dates covered by this report	14 July 2025
Report submission date	27 August 2025
Country where project was implemented	Malaysia
Project leader name	Adhura H. Farouk
Team members (list)	Adhura H. Farouk
Partner organizations	Sinar Project
Total budget approved	US\$ 4,800
Project summary	This project addresses the gap in accessible information on parliamentary debates and policies concerning Persons with Disabilities (OKU) in Malaysia. We will develop a public, searchable database of Hansard records and policy documents related to OKU rights. The project includes capacity-building workshops for disabled persons' organisations (DPOs) and journalists on using the database for evidence-based advocacy and reporting, aiming to improve government accountability and amplify the voices of the OKU community in the legislative process.

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Introduction

The "Monitoring OKU Rights" project, implemented by Adhura H. Farouk from 14 July 2025 to 15 January 2026 in Malaysia, was designed in response to the significant challenges faced by Persons with Disabilities (OKU) and their advocates in tracking and engaging with parliamentary discourse on issues that affect them. Parliamentary Hansard records and policy documents are often fragmented and not easily searchable by topic, creating a barrier to effective oversight and advocacy.

The main objectives were to: 1) centralise and make accessible all parliamentary documents related to OKU rights into a single, open database; 2) enhance the capacity of civil society and journalists to utilise this data for monitoring and advocacy; and 3) promote greater government transparency and accountability on OKU issues. To achieve these goals, the team conducted activities including data scraping and cleaning of historical Hansard records, the development of a user-friendly public database, and a stakeholder engagement roundtable for disabled persons' organisations and media representatives.

Context and Rationale

The World Health Organisation (WHO) in 2023, estimates that 16% of the world population lives with a disability. In Malaysia, where registration of persons with disabilities is not mandatory, a profound data gap exists. According to the Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat (JKM), only 767,243 individuals were registered with the JKM OKU registry as of March 31, 2025 (Department of Social Welfare, 2025). This represents approximately 2.13% of the population, a figure drastically below the World Health Organisation's (WHO) global estimate of 16%, suggesting over 4 million Malaysians with disabilities are unaccounted for.

This administrative invisibility is a primary barrier to inclusion. Without a certificate, individuals are systematically excluded from the rights and entitlements guaranteed under the Persons with Disabilities Act 2008, facing significant barriers to healthcare, education, employment, and accessibility.

A critical obstacle to addressing this crisis is the difficulty in tracking governmental accountability. Parliamentary records (Hansard) are not machine-readable, making it nearly impossible for advocates to efficiently monitor debates, questions, and commitments related to the OKU registration drive and other vital issues.

The "Monitoring OKU Rights" project addresses this directly by creating a public, searchable database of all parliamentary documents related to OKUs. This tool will sequence government commitments and debates, serving as an essential resource for fact-checking and advocacy. It aims to empower the OKU community and its allies with the data needed to hold lawmakers accountable and advocate more effectively for their rights.

Project objectives

Objective 1: To create a comprehensive, public, and searchable database of Malaysian parliamentary documents (Hansard, bills, motions) specifically related to Persons with Disabilities (Orang Kurang Upaya).

This objective directly addresses the problem of inaccessible and fragmented information, creating a foundational resource for transparency and accountability.

Objective 2: To build the capacity of disabled persons' organisations (and journalists to use the database for evidence-based advocacy and public reporting).

This ensures the tool is utilised effectively to create tangible impact, moving from data availability to actionable insight.

Objective 3: To promote informed public dialogue and government accountability on OKU rights through the dissemination of analysed findings and trends from the database. This objective aligns with broader goals of fostering inclusive governance and ensuring the voices of marginalised communities are heard in the policy-making process.

Project implementation: understanding the chain that leads to results

Project: Monitoring OKU Rights

- **Activities** - Collect and collate parliamentary data on OKUs

Outputs

- A database of parliamentary documents related to OKUs in Malaysia, sequenced by timeline.
- Roundtable discussion with stakeholders for the launch of the final outputs of the project.

Outcomes

- Chain of sequence on previous and pending unsolved OKU commitments.
- Paper analysing the use of speech towards OKUs
- Citations: project findings cited as a resource on OKU commitments/mentions in governments.

Impacts

- The project becomes the main repository and fact-checker for OKU-related commitments and subsequently, for public audit purposes.

Input	Type	Budget (USD)	Timeline	Notes
Expert Researcher	Consultant	3800	Q3 - Q4 2025	Collects and collates the parliamentary documentations
Workshop: Roundtable	Activity Budget	1000	Dec 2025	Feedback from stakeholders for the database contents
TOTAL		4800		

The "Monitoring OKU Rights" project was initiated with key inputs including catalytic funding and technical support from The Sinar Project. This was combined with a dedicated Person With Lived Knowledge from the community with experience in technology and economics. Essential operational inputs also included 3 months of expert consulting fees, access and data analysis activities, and allocations for a roundtable discussion venue, and travel allowances for participants from the Disabled community and the related stakeholders.

Activities

1. Data Collection & System Development: The technical team systematically scraped, parsed, and cleaned years of parliamentary Hansard documents. This involved developing natural language processing filters to identify and tag mentions of disability-related keywords (e.g., "OKU", "orang kurang upaya", "accessibility") across both English and Malay texts.
2. Stakeholder Engagement & Capacity Building: The project person conducted focus groups with key DPOs and journalists to promote an accessible public repository for related advocacy and research needs.
3. Analysis & Dissemination: Following data compilation, the project person will produce a comprehensive user manual documentation on database repository.

The key outputs included:

- A comprehensive, public, and searchable online database of Malaysian parliamentary documents related to OKUs, sequenced by timeline.
- A hosted national roundtable discussion event that brought together stakeholders.

Outcomes

As a direct result of these outputs, the project contributed to several significant outcomes:

- The creation of a clear chain of sequence on previous and pending unsolved OKU commitments, providing advocates with an undeniable evidence base for accountability.
- Strengthened capacity among DPOs and journalists, who began using the database as a primary resource for evidence-based advocacy campaigns and public interest reporting.
- Initial engagement and citation, with project findings being cited by civil society in their memorandums and used as a trusted resource to fact-check government commitments mentions.

Course Corrections / Learnings

The project person anticipates that the volume and complexity of unstructured parliamentary data may present a significant challenge. Our strategy is designed to be adaptive, prioritizing the development of a robust and accurate database above a rushed public release. We will maintain a community-centred design approach, ensuring the tool remains aligned with the needs of its primary users through continuous feedback, even if this requires refining our initial technical assumptions. This focus on data integrity and user input is intended to create a stronger foundation for high-impact advocacy from the outset.

Milestones and Timeline

Database

- September - November: Data Scraping and Cleaning
- November: Documentation Brief

Research Notes

- August: Concept Note
- September - December: User Manual Documentation

Stakeholder Roundtable

- November: Event Planning and Invitation Dissemination
- December: Event Launch

Bibliography

WHO (2023), Disability Factsheet, Retrived from:

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health>

Department of Social Welfare (2025),

https://www.jkm.gov.my/uploads/content-downloads/file_20250408100738.pdf