

What Parliament Says About Us And What It Doesn't: a #MonitoringOKU Project

Evidence from the Malaysian Hansard OKU Analytics Project (2008–2025)

By Adhura H. Farouk, Sinar Project 2025 Civic Tech Fellow

Audience

Disabled stakeholders, civil society & aspiring civic technologists

Period Covered

17 years of parliamentary Hansard (2008–2025)

Framework

Pelan Tindakan OKU 2016–2022 (10 Strategic Thrusts)

Executive Summary

A data-driven analysis of 17 years of Malaysian parliamentary debates has been conducted through the lens of OKU (Orang Kurang Upaya) rights. This project applied natural language processing and sentiment analysis to the official Hansard record, mapping every relevant debate to the ten Strategic Thrusts of the Pelan Tindakan OKU 2016–2022.

The results reveal that parliament debates disability in deeply uneven ways, concentrating on welfare and education whilst remaining largely silent on legal rights, economic empowerment, and crisis protection. For disabled people, civil society advocates, and those building civic technology to serve marginalised communities, this evidence base is a powerful tool for accountability and strategic advocacy.

Key Findings

Finding 1: The Policy Attention Gap

Parliamentary debate is heavily skewed towards education (Teras 3) and social welfare (Teras 5), framing disability primarily as a welfare issue. By contrast, Teras 7 (Safety & Disaster Management) and Teras 10 (Legislation & CRPD Compliance) receive negligible attention. Parliament is prioritising foundational welfare over structural rights.

Finding 2: The Implementation Deficit

Teras 1 (Accessibility) and Teras 2 (Economic Participation) consistently attract the highest volumes of negative sentiment in debate. This negativity is not directed at policies themselves, but at the chronic failure to implement them: broken public facilities, inaccessible transport, and persistent non-compliance with the 1% OKU employment quota by both public and private sectors.

Finding 3: The Concentration of Advocacy

OKU rights advocacy in Parliament is carried by a very small cohort of MPs. The vast majority of Members rarely or never raise OKU issues, and when they do, it is almost exclusively during budget debates concerning the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (KPWKM). OKU rights have not been mainstreamed across portfolios such as Transport or Human Resources.

What the Data Reveals in Detail

1. A Skewed Legislative Agenda

Mapping debate volume against the Pelan Tindakan OKU's ten pillars reveals severe imbalances. The two dominant pillars: Education and Social & Cultural Affairs account for most of OKU-related parliamentary time. This comes at a cost.

The pillars that remain under-debated are related to structural empowerment:

- Teras 7 (Keselamatan & Pengurusan Bencana): Disabled Malaysians face heightened vulnerability during floods, fires, and other national emergencies. Parliament barely discusses how to protect them.
- Teras 10 (Perundangan / CRPD Compliance): Malaysia ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, yet legislative alignment with that commitment is almost invisible in the Hansard record.

KEY IMPLICATION

Parliament's silence on legal empowerment and crisis preparedness is not a neutral absence: it is a political choice with real consequences for disabled people's safety and rights.

2. Existing Laws Are Not Being Enforced

Sentiment analysis of OKU-related debates tells a consistent story: It is almost always directed at implementation failures rather than at policy design. MPs across party lines have raised:

- Broken ramps, lifts, and tactile paving at public facilities that go unrepaired for years.
- Public transport networks that remain effectively inaccessible to wheelchair users and those with sensory disabilities.
- Both government agencies and private employers routinely failing to meet the legally mandated 1% OKU employment quota, with little accountability.

The data makes a compelling case: the primary legislative need in these areas is not new policy, but rigorous enforcement of mandates that already exist, coupled with systematic auditing of executing agencies.

3. Advocacy Depends on Too Few Champions

Entity extraction across the 17-year dataset identifies a pronounced 'champion effect'. A small group of MPs are responsible for the overwhelming majority of OKU-related interventions. This pattern carries two significant risks:

- Fragility: If these champions leave parliament, retire, or lose their seats, OKU advocacy loses its primary institutional voice.
- Siloing: Because advocacy is concentrated within the welfare portfolio, key ministries with enormous impact on disabled people's lives such as Transport, Education, Human Resources, Housing, rarely face sustained OKU-focused scrutiny.

There is a need to mainstream disability rights across all ministerial portfolios beyond KPWKM.

For Aspiring Civic Technologists

This project demonstrates what is possible when open government data such as the publicly available Hansard record, is combined with accessible open-sourced tools. The pipeline used here includes:

- Automated extraction of OKU-relevant debate paragraphs from the Hansard corpus.
- Mapping of extracted text to the ten Strategic Thrusts of the Pelan Tindakan OKU.
- Sentiment classification using the *malaysia-ai/malay-sentiment-deberta-xsmall* model.
- Speaker tracking and entity extraction to identify parliamentary champions and silences.

The resulting datasets and visualisations are reusable advocacy infrastructure. They can be updated as new Hansard records are published, used to brief MPs, incorporated into civil society reports, or built upon by future technologists.

Recommendations

For Whom	Recommended Action
Parliament & MPs	Expand OKU debate beyond KPWKM. Involve major ministry such as Transport, Housing, Health, Human Resources. should face regular OKU-specific scrutiny. This data should be used to identify and fill the silent pillars.
Civil Society & OKU Organisations	Use the <i>hansard_sentiment_final.csv</i> and <i>oku_hansard_mapped.csv</i> datasets to produce evidence-based briefings for allied MPs. Call out the silent MPs and ministries. Celebrate the champions.
Government Enforcement Bodies	The implementation deficit finding demands an urgent audit of Teras 1 and Teras 2 compliance, particularly the 1% employment quota and accessibility standards in public infrastructure.
Civic Technologists	Extend and update this pipeline. Build public-facing dashboards that allow OKU communities and journalists to track parliamentary attention to disability rights in real time. Make government accountability visible.
Disabled People & Community Groups	Demand that your MPs engage with these findings. Ask your local representative: when did you last raise an OKU issue in Parliament? What is your position on CRPD compliance?

Available Data Assets

The project has produced the following open datasets and visualisations that civil society, researchers, and technologists may use freely:

- *hansard_sentiment_final.csv* — Foundational dataset of OKU-specific debate paragraphs with positive/negative sentiment scores and confidence intervals.
- *oku_hansard_mapped.csv* — Enriched database linking debate texts to each of the 10 Strategic Thrusts of the Pelan Tindakan OKU.
- *chart_focus.png* — Visualisation of which policy pillars dominate parliamentary time and which are neglected.
- *chart_sentiment.png* — Proportional breakdown of constructive versus critical debate for each policy pillar.
- *chart_champions_volume.png* — Ranking of individual MPs by their historical volume of OKU advocacy over 17 years.

The data does not lie: parliament has more to say, and more to do, for OKU Malaysians.

This brief is a starting point for a conversation that is long overdue.

AUTHOR

Adhura H. Farouk

Sinar Project 2025 Civic Tech Fellow

adhurah@gmail.com

[Project GitHub Repository \(linked\)](#)

ORGANISATION

Sinar Project

Open data & digital rights for Malaysia

team@sinarproject.org,

sinarproject.org