KitaConnect (WeConnect)
Assessment Report

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PREFACE

Adolescents and young people are hidden victims of the COVID-19 pandemic. They are heavily affected by school closures, movement restrictions, the increasing unemployment rate, and the continuous worry about their own health and of loved ones. They are deprived of opportunities related to learning, participation, employment, and access to mental health services. The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent movement control orders have limited their social interaction with others and have even created an isolated environment for many. At this stage of their lives, adolescents and young people are facing important decisions that can have a long-lasting impact, but their voices are not often heard.

During this critical period, **it is crucial to have access to a platform where they can maintain their level of social interaction and learn something new from their peers to stay motivated.** Despite the limitations of face-to-face interaction during the pandemic, UNICEF Malaysia came up with a new way to communicate with adolescents and youths beyond the traditional UNICEF social media platforms. Within the first few weeks of lockdown in Malaysia, UNICEF Malaysia utilized RapidPro technology to create a dedicated online social space on Telegram called @KitaConnect, for young users to get regular updates on COVID-19 and mental health-related information in an adolescent-friendly manner. This platform is meant to set up a participatory environment through different engaging activities and challenges.

As of March 2021, **KitaConnect has successfully engaged more than 500,000 young people, through more than 23 online sessions, 237 messages, 13 polls, 134 social media posts and 5 challenges. At least 60% of the KitaConnect members comprise of adolescents and young people aged 10-24 while 40% are adults aged 25 and above. Of these KitaConnect members, 77% were females and 4% were Persons with Disability.** A survey was disseminated to KitaConnect members to assess their interest in activities, their preference in topics, their learnings, and their satisfaction with current platforms. The findings of the survey are presented in this report, and will inform the design of the next phase of KitaConnect starting from this year. UNICEF is committed to scaling up this online youth engagement platform to meet the diverse needs of young people, especially from the marginalized communities, in the next phase. As UNICEF marks its 75th anniversary this year, we continue to respond, recover and reimagine a better world for every child and young person.

We would like to thank all the young people who participated in KitaConnect initiatives so far. **Your participation has made today's KitaConnect and will make tomorrow's KitaConnect better.**

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The onset of COVID-19 caused the youth in Malaysia to be vulnerable to a multitude of issues such as education, mental health, and the pressing need to keep themselves safe. These uncertainties meant that the youth faced an ever changing environment as well as the challenge of navigating through an influx of information regarding the pandemic.

In consideration of the situation, UNICEF Malaysia created a virtual space for communicating with youth, among youth, and by youth, to provide them with the support they needed through a dedicated Telegram channel called KitaConnect where "Kita" means "We" in Malay. Through KitaConnect, youth were able to engage with accurate information on how to deal with the pandemic, particularly through providing access to mental health and psychosocial support as well as a platform to participate in different activities and challenges. KitaConnect has successfully engaged more than 500,000 young people, through over 23 online sessions, 237 messages, 13 polls, 134 social media posts and 5 challenges.

500,000 KitaConnect Members

3 Million Social Media Reach

75% Average Attendance Rate

4.8/5 Average Participant Satisfaction Rating

To assess and analyze the rate of participation and overall experience with KitaConnect, UNICEF Malaysia disseminated a survey to its KitaConnect members on Telegram with varying questions based on their level of engagement, the theory of change, and the three guiding pillars.

The **objectives** of the survey are to:
- Understand whether the current platforms and engagement modalities are the most effective in reaching out to the target demographics;
- Explore the extent to which the content and engagement opportunities provided on the platform were able to meet the needs of the target group;
- Identify current gaps and areas of improvement in the KitaConnect platform.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Assessment Framework
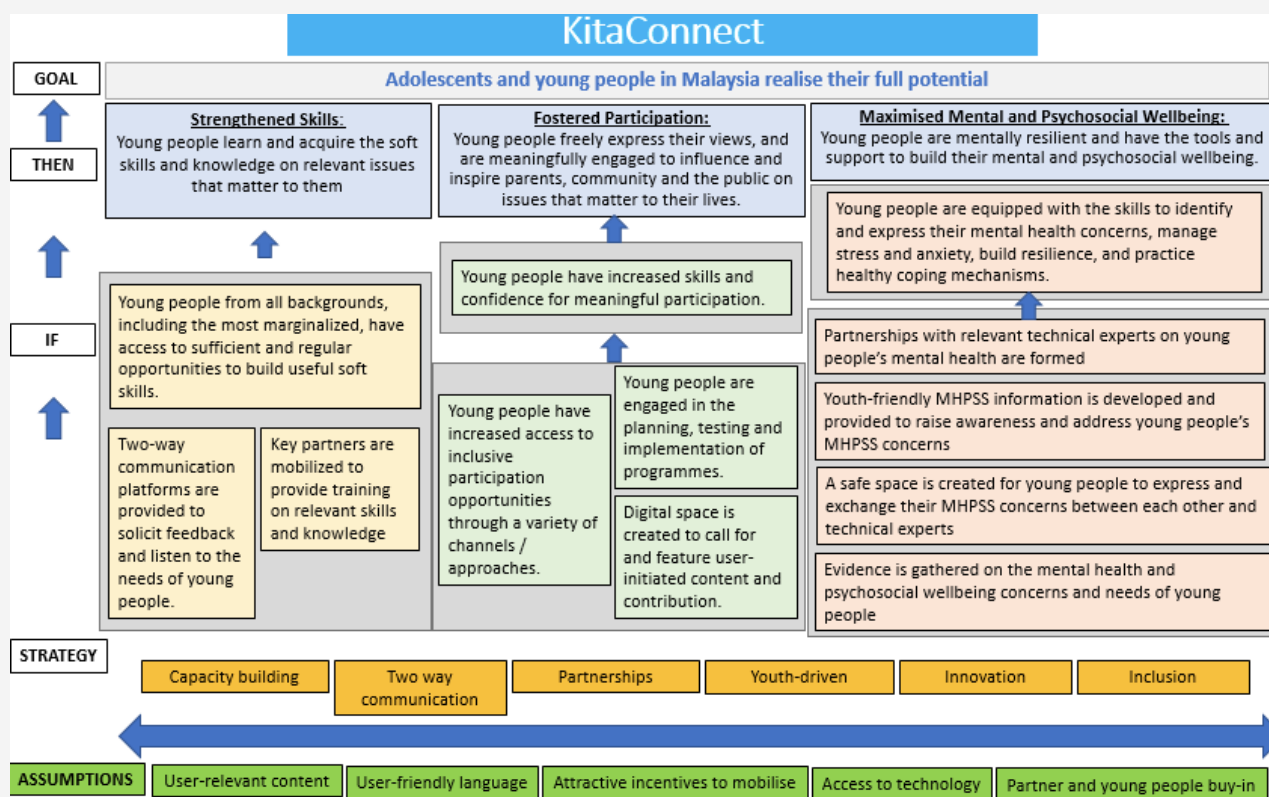
Figure 1: A diagram of the KitaConnect Theory of Change

This assessment took a quantitative approach and was guided by the KitaConnect Theory of Change and the Three Pillars of Content. By developing the survey based on the Theory of Change in Figure 1, it provides a big picture of whether KitaConnect has enriched its users with what it initially promised to do.

The Three Pillars of Content in KitaConnect

Motivation

Building mental resilience and provide **psychosocial support** through online sessions and participation opportunity.

Learning

Helping youths develop transferable life skills such as problem-solving, managing emotions, digital skills, etc.

Civic & Social Engagement

Equipping youths with the skills and opportunity to express their views and **facilitating change within their communities.**

The survey questions were then created based on the building blocks of KitaConnect, the Three Pillars. Engagement questions were designed with the underlying objective of assessing users' levels of motivation, learning, and civic and social engagements.

2.2 Survey Design


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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│           Demographic Questions               │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│           Engagement Questions                │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘

┌──────────────────┐              ┌──────────────────┐
│     Active       │              │    Inactive      │
│     Users        │              │    Users         │
└──────────────────┘              └──────────────────┘

┌──────────────────┐              ┌──────────────────┐
│ Users who had    │              │ Users who had    │
│ attended at      │              │ **never**        │
│ least **one**    │              │ attended an      │
│ online session   │              │ online session   │
└──────────────────┘              └──────────────────┘

┌──────────────────┐              ┌──────────────────┐
│ Directed to      │              │ Directed to      │
│ active user      │              │ inactive user    │
│ questions        │              │ questions        │
└──────────────────┘              └──────────────────┘
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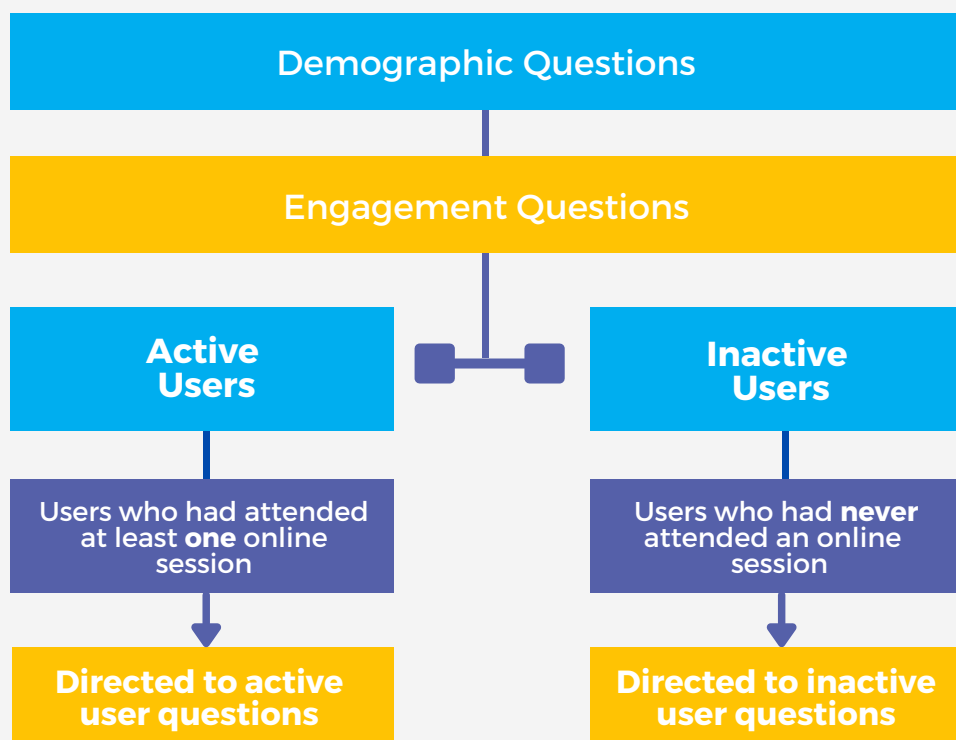
Figure 2: Survey Flow

Both the demographic and engagement sections are required for all users to answer before branching off into two different flows of questions based on whether they were active or inactive users. Active users are defined as members who have participated in at least one KitaConnect online session, while inactive users are defined as members who have not participated in any KitaConnect online sessions before.

Separating the users by participation in online sessions is crucial to understand how and why the users interacted with the online and offline activities. The survey questions delve deeper into what made KitaConnect a platform active users wished to engage with and what fell short for inactive users.

A demographic section welcomed the users with questions that aided the assessment by providing basic information about the general population who utilise the platform. The survey then moved towards an engagement section in order to determine the rate of participation and interest in activities that KitaConnect has arranged in the past.

2.3 Data Collection

The survey was constructed on SurveyMonkey, an online survey development platform. **It was disseminated via the KitaConnect channel on Telegram over four weeks where individuals could only answer once.**

2.4 Data Analysis

The analysis of this survey was done on Microsoft Excel and RStudio by aggregating the percentages for each type of response for each question. **Survey users were disaggregated by age, gender, disability, location, and level of engagement.** The association between each question and these subgroups were analysed to see how they significantly differed in their responses.

2.4.1 Age

In this report, age is divided into two categories: adults and adolescents. Adults are those who are 18 years old and above while adolescents include those below the age of 18. In UN language, adolescents span from ages 10 to 19 and youth are classified from ages 15 to 24. However, these sets intersect with one another and can lead to confusion. Thus, 18 was decided as the cutoff age to define adolescents and adults.

2.4.2 Gender

There were three options for respondents to choose in the gender section; namely, 'male', 'female', and 'prefer not to answer'.

2.4.3 Location

Respondents were able to choose their location based on the 14 states of Malaysia, but for the purposes of our analysis and due to sample size limitations, they are classified as participants from West or East Malaysia.

Examples of Past KitaConnect Session Posters

2.4.4 Disability

Disability has been included as it is crucial that KitaConnect caters equally for all its members, particularly in providing accessible opportunities across all its activities. User with disabilities will be referenced as Persons with Disabilities.

2.4.5 Level of Engagement

The **level of engagement of users was determined by their responses to three engagement questions.** If they respond affirmatively to all three questions, then they fall in the **high** engagement category. If they respond affirmatively to any two questions, then they are **medium** engagement participants. Finally, if they respond affirmatively to only one or none, they are in the **low** engagement category.

THREE ENGAGEMENT QUESTIONS

Do you check KitaConnect messages?

Have you participated in a KitaConnect poll?

Have you attended a KitaConnect online session?

Low Engagement	Medium	High Engagement
Yes to 0 or 1 Question	Yes to 2 Questions	Yes to 3 Questions

2.5 Limitations of the Assessments

This paper acknowledges the shortcomings and the likelihood that those who participate in KitaConnect sessions are also more likely to see the messages regarding this survey. As a result, the respondents' bias may have led to a bigger sample size of active users than inactive users. In order to amplify the response from inactive users, a small incentive in the form of an e-voucher was provided to all survey users. Additionally, it is important to keep in mind that the voluntary nature of the survey limited the sample size despite the incentive. The small sample size restricts the analysis to broad categories, such as East and West Malaysia for location instead of analyzing engagement by the 14 Malaysian states.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Demographic of Survey Users

While there were a total of 108 submissions to our survey, a few did not complete the full course of the survey. There were a total of 99 valid responses to the survey. Of these 99 users, 61 were active users and 38 were inactive users. Overall, the demographics of the survey

Active Users 62%

Inactive Users 38%

A total of 99 Users
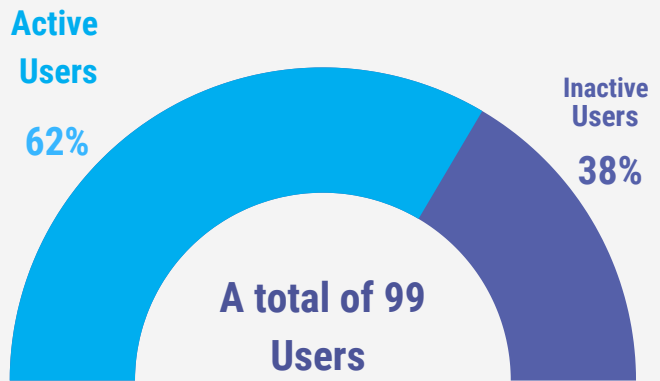
Figure 3: Active vs Inactive KitaConnect Survey Users

sample is not significantly different from KitaConnect population with respect to age, gender, disability, and location.

35% Are Adolescents Aged 13-17 Years Old

57% Are Young Adults Aged 18-29 Years Old

8% Are Adults Aged 30-60 Years Old

7% Persons with Disabilities

7% From East Malaysia

75% Females

3.2 Level of Interest by Engagement Modalities

Ranking of KitaConnect Activities by Interest

#1 Online Workshops (88%)

#2 Promotion of Youth Events (82%)

#3 Videos by Other Youth (82%)

#4 Videos by Mental Health Experts (81%)

#5 Surveys and Polls (74%)

#6 Teen Takeover (74%)

#7 KitaConnect Challenges (74%)

#8 Video Messages by Celebrities (72%)

Figure 4: Users' Interest in KitaConnect Activities

All users were asked to indicate how interesting they found the various activities that KitaConnect has hosted in the past, w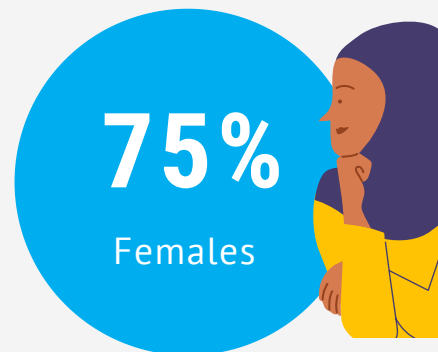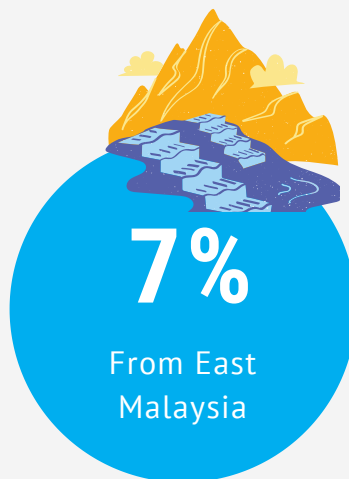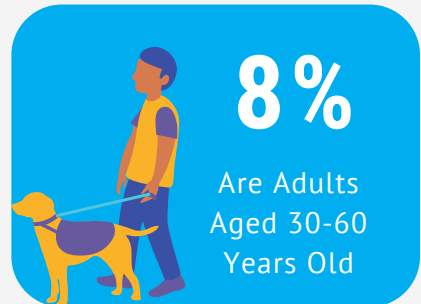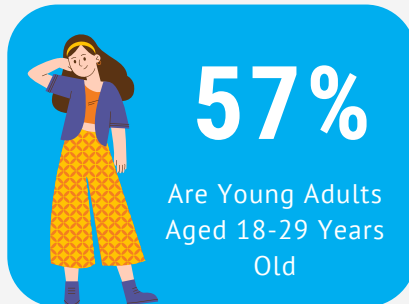ith options ranging from *Very Interesting* to *Very Uninteresting*, and *Did Not Participate*. **Figure 4 displays the combined selection for *Very Interesting* and *Interesting*.** Online workshops were found to be the most interesting for all users of KitaConnect.

Role of Age

Assuringly, **adolescents significantly find all** of these modalities **very interesting.**

Role of Gender

Females find **specific video messages very interesting**, namely **videos by mental health experts (42%)** and by **other youth (37%).**

Role of Disability Status

Persons with disabilities are very interested in **learning opportunities and platforms to voice their opinions**, such as **online workshops/webinars (71%) and KitaConnect surveys/polls (57%).**

Role of Level of Engagements

Overall, users with **high levels of engagements find all the activities very interesting.**

3.3 Impact on Active Users

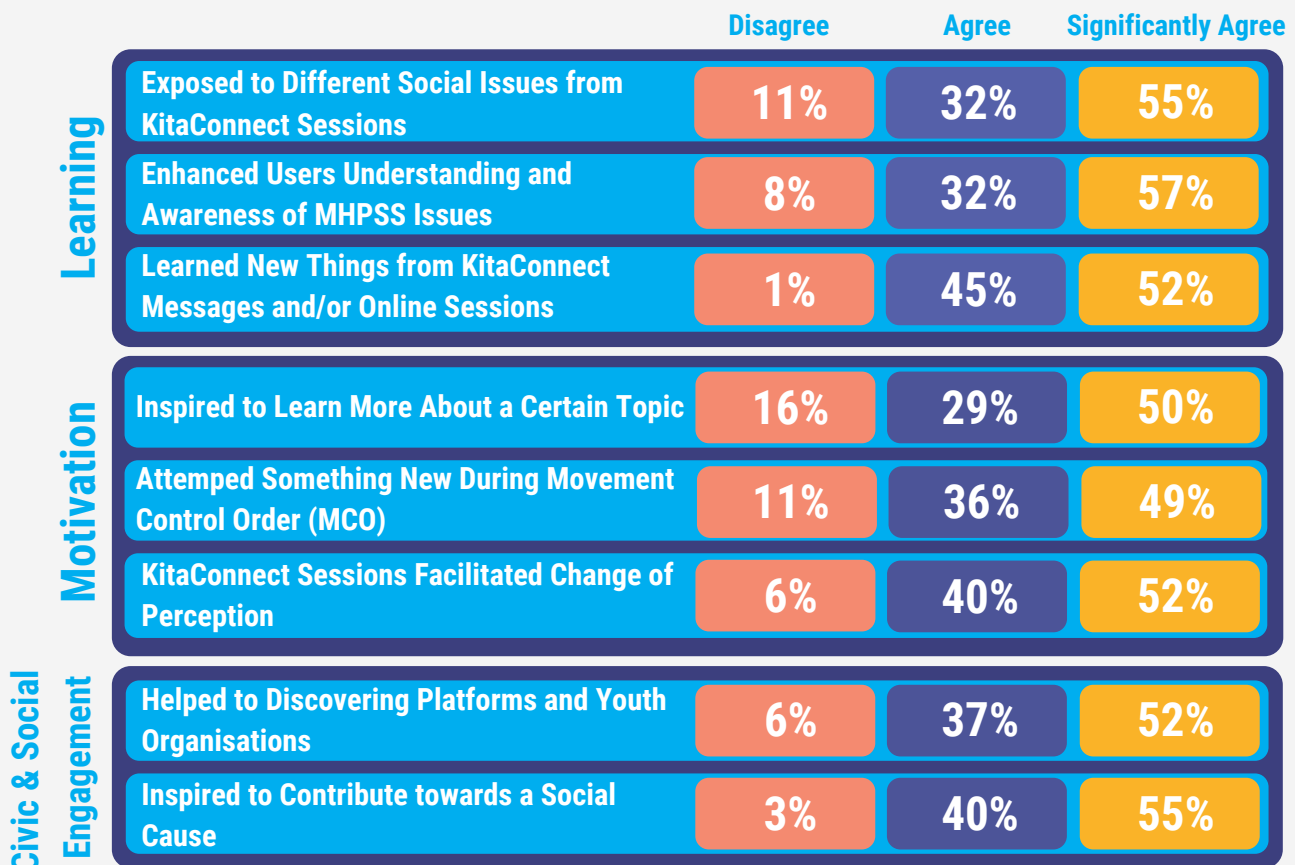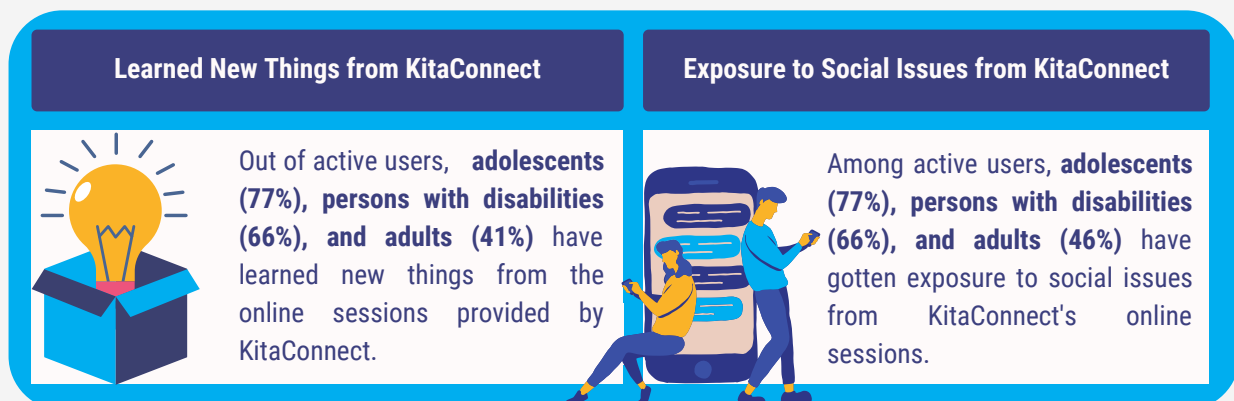|		Disagree	Agree	Significantly Agree
Learning	Exposed to Different Social Issues from KitaConnect Sessions	11%	32%	55%
	Enhanced Users Understanding and Awareness of MHPSS Issues	8%	32%	57%
	Learned New Things from KitaConnect Messages and/or Online Sessions	1%	45%	52%
Motivation	Inspired to Learn More About a Certain Topic	16%	29%	50%
	Attemped Something New During Movement Control Order (MCO)	11%	36%	49%
	KitaConnect Sessions Facilitated Change of Perception	6%	40%	52%
Civic & Social Engagement	Helped to Discovering Platforms and Youth Organisations	6%	37%	52%
	Inspired to Contribute towards a Social Cause	3%	40%	55%

Figure 5: Impact of KitaConnect programme on active users

In the active flow of the survey, users were asked to rate their level of agreement for eight statements related to the Three Pillars of Content guiding KitaConnect. Figure 5 displays how the level of agreement ranging from *"Disagree"* to *"Significantly Agree"* for statements grouped by pillars.

Notably, all active adolescent users agreed or significantly agreed to all the statements provided in this section.

> I think from my first session with KitaConnect, I learned how to be more empathetic and be a good listener. I was inspired to improve and change my perspective and well being.
> **21-year-old Female KitaConnect Member from Kedah**

Learned New Things from KitaConnect

Out of active users, **adolescents (77%), persons with disabilities (66%), and adults (41%)** have learned new things from the online sessions provided by KitaConnect.

Exposure to Social Issues from KitaConnect

Among active users, **adolescents (77%), persons with disabilities (66%), and adults (46%)** have gotten exposure to social issues from KitaConnect's online sessions.

3.4 Topic Preference of KitaConnect Users

Youth Mental Health
74%
active users
79%
inactive users

Education
74%
active users
66%
inactive users

Gender Equality
67%
active users
47%
inactive users

Youth Employability
57%
active users
44%
inactive users

Bullying & Violence Against Children
49%
active users
47%
inactive users

Climate Action
47%
active users
52%
inactive users

Online Safety
45%
active users
57%
inactive users

Child Rights
45%
active users
52%
inactive users

Nutrition
40%
active users
44%
inactive users

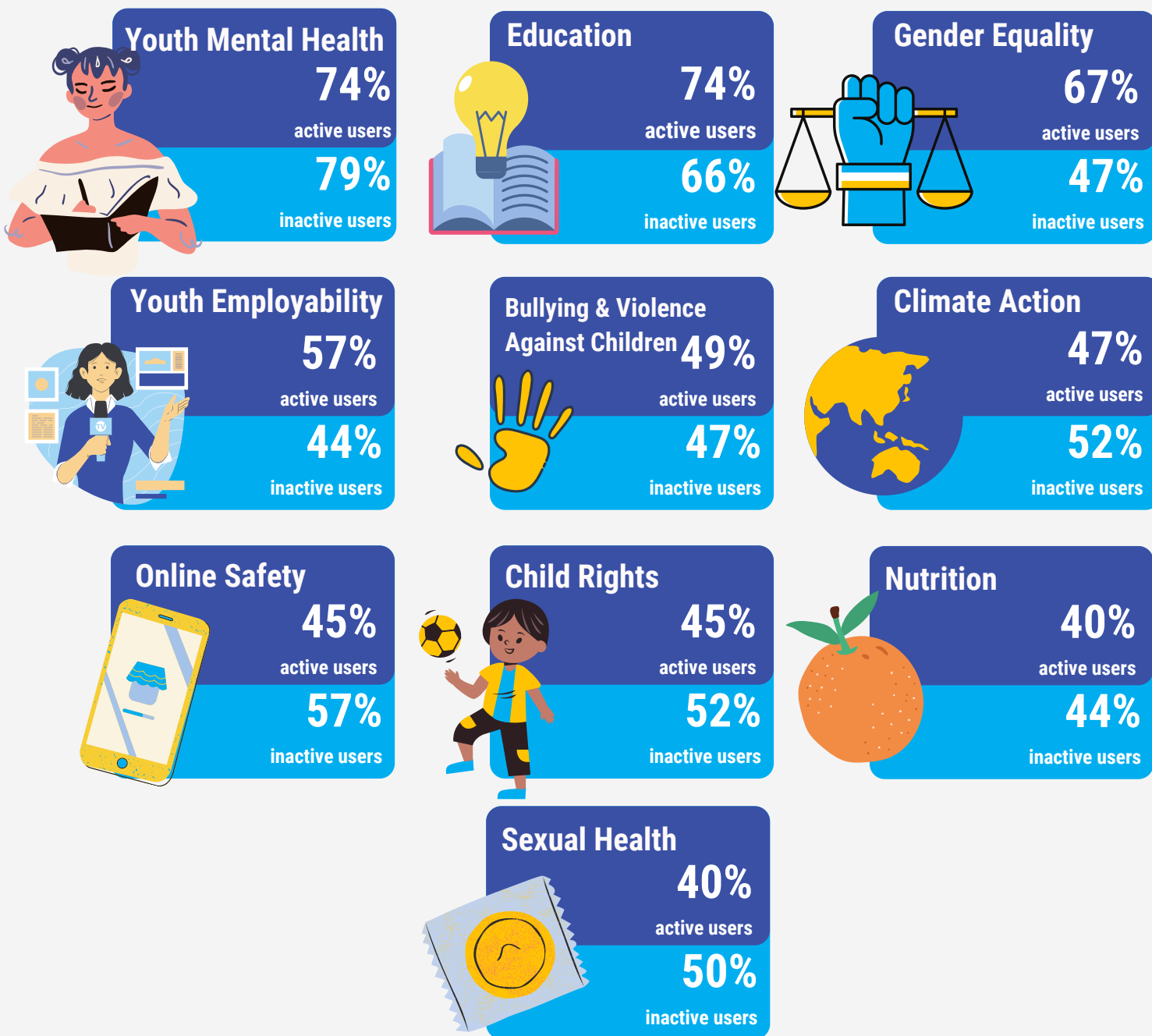**Sexual Health**
40%
active users
50%
inactive users

Figure 6: Overall Users' Preference on KitaConnect Topics

Figure 6 shows that active users are overwhelming interested in topics related to youth mental health and education, at 74% for both. While youth mental health is of interest to specific subgroups of the active users, interest in education is shared across all demographics. On the other hand, **inactive users are just as interested in topics related to youth mental health (79%) like active users, but have a lesser interest in education (66%).**

3.4.1 Topic Preference of Active Users

This section elaborates on the significant preference in topics for specific demographics in terms of location, age, gender, and their level of engagement.

> I have been inspired to form my own group of friends where we speak up about issues around Malaysia and use our skills in art and videography to gather voices of Malaysia to speak up.
>
> **18 year-old Female KitaConnect Member from Sabah**

Role of Location

77% of West Malaysians were interested in youth mental health while only 40% of East Malaysians were interested in the topic.
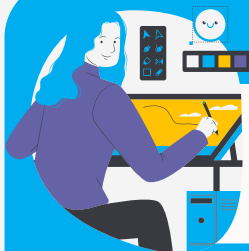
Role of Age

Adolescents (94%) were significantly interested in youth employability.

Adolescents were less interested in gender equality (33%).
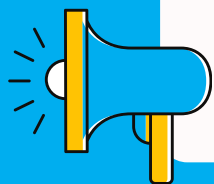
Role of Gender

88% of males were interested in youth employability.

75% of males were interested in sexual reproductive health.

Role of Level of Engagement

High engagement users were interested in mental health (82%), education (82%) and gender equality (75%)

3.5 What do Active Users Want in The Future?

73% Hope for Online Workshops and Activities

60% Want Practical Tips to Contribute on Social Issues

57% Hope for Webinars with Influential People/Youth

36% Hope for Stress Management Videos with Mental Health Experts

36% Want Competitions, Campaigns, Challenges

26% Hope for Relaxed Sessions to Chat about Concerns

26% Hope for Inspirational Videos from Youth/Influencers

At least 44% of adolescents want more inspirational videos!

21% Hope for Online Entertainment

A large number of active users wish to see more online workshops and activities. This finding goes hand in hand with the results from section 3.3 which demonstrates that learning has been a great incentive for KitaConnect users, especially adolescents.

3.6 Why Inactive Users Did Not Join Online Sessions?

73% Inactive Respondents Couldn't Make the Timing

39% Missed Opportunity to Register

31% Were not Interested in the Topics

21% Found that Registration Was Full by the Time They Applied

Having extensively covered what active respondents of KitaConnect thought about their experience on the platform, it is as important to understand why members have not attended any online sessions. **A majority of the inactive users were unable to make the timing of KitaConnect sesssions.**

Although KitaConnect sessions are held after working and class hours, they often run late into the night which can contribute to the lack of participation. In a separate question, **users from East Malaysia indicated that topics covered by KitaConnect were not applicable to their interests (100%).**

3.7 KitaConnect Platform

Inactive users have identified the lack of usage of Telegram, the platform that KitaConnect is hosted on, as a factor that affected their participation (58%). This issue cannot be pegged to technical difficulties as very few respondents encountered them (11%). However, recent development has shown that over 100 million users moving to Telegram due to security concern on WhatsApp, which may be a potential opportunity to see an increase in engagement on KitaConnect.

58% of Inactive Users indicated that they did not use Telegram often.

3.8 How can KitaConnect be appealing for inactive users?

61% of Inactive Users would like more rewards and prizes with at least 88% of them being males.

55% of Inactive Users want more workshops while 52% of users want more fun activities.

Inactive users have stated that they would like more rewards, workshops and fun activities. Nonetheless, there appears to be **a united front across active and inactive users with respect to wanting more online workshops**.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The finding of this study suggest the following recommendations for the next phase of KitaConnect:

- **Continue** KitaConnect activities with a more **intensified use of online workshops** and **varied topics**
- **Promote** KitaConnect as a **youth-friendly learning platform** instead of a COVID-19 information hub
- **Implement surveys after each KitaConnect activity** to collect feedback for the continuous improvement in planning future activities, and comments that can aid with planning of content and logistics
- **Host more online sessions and with differing times** (i.e. weekends) to accommodate various schedules of interested individuals
- **Implement targeted surveys** to understand the needs of **Persons with Disabilities and East Malaysians** to ensure future sessions include their interests and concerns

- **Promote and organise events which foster inclusion**, particularly in the challenges to enable and encourage Persons with Disabilities to attend
- **Allocate more slots led by young people**, such as peer-to-peer sessions
- **Host** KitaConnect in a more **widely-used and youth-friendly platform** other than Telegram (i.e. Facebook page)
- **Combine two or three related topics in one activity** to attract different demographics and allow them to interact
- **Provide the opportunity for users to directly interact** with entities who are **influential or experts in a field and from diverse backgrounds**
- **Design activities** that **promote explicit learning** and **offer fun rewards/prizes** at the same time

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