

PROGRAM REPORT : HOUSEHOLD

AMU3248 ATS3248 APG4248 Field methods in Anthropology and International Development (FMA) 2026

Programme Title	Student Research Projects – AMU3248 ATS3248 APG4248 Field methods in Anthropology and International Development Topic of group discussion: How middle-aged adults in Segamat, Johor understand and respond to community expectations surrounding intergenerational care, and how these understandings intersect with contemporary policy discussions.
Date	04 July – 21 July 2026
Fieldwork Period (SEACO, Segamat)	12 July – 15 July 2026
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Name of Facilitator	1. Sharifah Anisfazzuha Balqis binti Syed Mohd 2. Muhammad Fais bin Rasip
Principal Investigators / Academic Supervisors	1. Associate Professor Dr. Narelle Email: Narelle.Warren@monash.edu 2. Dr Stefan Bächtold Email: Stefan.Baechtold@monash.edu
Target Location	Segamat District, Johor (covering the sub-districts of Sungai Segamat, Gemereh, Jabi, Chaah and Bekok)

ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED

As part of the FMA 2026 fieldwork, the assigned group conducted six community and stakeholder engagement sessions in Segamat.

Community Engagement Sessions

1. Bekok Community

- Conducted a group discussion with members of the Indian and Chinese communities in Bekok ages around 35 above to 60 above.
- Explored family structures, intergenerational relationships, caregiving responsibilities and community perspectives.
- Participants were encouraged to share their experiences, views and perceptions regarding family support and care for older family members.

2. Jabi Community - Felda Pemanis area

- Conducted a community discussion with participants from Felda Pemanis 1, Jabi. Most of them is Malays community. The participants aged around 35 above to 50 years old.
- The session explored family caregiving practices, responsibilities among family members and the changing expectations of family support.
- Participants were encouraged to discuss how family members manage caregiving responsibilities alongside employment and other commitments.

3. Gemereh Community

- Conducted a community engagement session with residents of Gemereh. All participants are housewives aged around 50 above to 60 above.
- Discussions focused on family relationships, care responsibilities, support networks and community resources.
- Participants shared their experiences and perspectives regarding how caregiving responsibilities are managed within families and the wider community.

4. Sungai Segamat Community

- Conducted a discussion with members of the Sungai Segamat community, including participants with experience as cancer survivors.
- The session provided an opportunity to understand family and community support from the perspective of individuals who had experienced significant health-related challenges.

- Discussions explored the role of family members, community support and external services in supporting individuals and families.

Stakeholder Engagement Sessions

5. Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat (JKM), Segamat

- Conducted a stakeholder interview with representatives from JKM Segamat.
- The discussion explored JKM's role in supporting families and older adults, challenges faced by families, available support programmes and services, and collaboration with other organisations.
- The discussion guide specifically included questions on JKM's role in intergenerational care, changes in caregiving patterns, social expectations, family challenges and available institutional support.

6. Yayasan Pembangunan Keluarga Darul Takzim (YPKDT), Segamat Branch

- Conducted a stakeholder interview with representatives from YPKDT Segamat.
- The discussion focused on family-related issues, community and family support, challenges experienced by families, and the role of organisations in strengthening family wellbeing and support systems.
- The engagement provided an institutional perspective that complemented the findings obtained from the community sessions.

Across the sessions, participatory approaches were used to encourage participants to share their experiences and perspectives. The FMA discussion activities included the use of flashcards, drawing, memory-based discussions and other interactive activities to facilitate discussion and encourage participants to reflect on changes in family roles and caregiving practices.

KEY DISCUSSIONS

The fieldwork discussions broadly focused on the following areas:

- **Family Structure and Intergenerational Relationships**

Participants were encouraged to discuss their household structures and relationships between different generations. Discussions explored who usually provides support to older parents or grandparents and how responsibilities are distributed among family members.

- **Family Caregiving Responsibilities**

The sessions examined how caregiving responsibilities are allocated within families. Discussions considered the roles of children, spouses, siblings and other family members, including how responsibilities may differ depending on family circumstances.

- **Changes in Family Practices**

Participants were asked to reflect on how family caregiving practices have changed compared with previous generations. The discussion explored differences between "dulu dan sekarang", including changes in household arrangements, caregiving expectations and family responsibilities.

- **Gender and Caregiving Roles**

The discussions explored whether men and women are expected to contribute differently to family caregiving. Participants were encouraged to consider responsibilities relating to daily care, financial support, decision-making and sacrifices involving work or personal time.

- **Family Pressure and Multiple Responsibilities**

The sessions also explored the pressures faced by family members who may simultaneously support older parents and their own children. Discussions included financial pressure, time constraints, emotional stress, employment responsibilities and potential disagreements between family members.

- **Community and External Support**

Participants discussed when families seek support outside the household and whether asking for external assistance is considered acceptable. Potential sources of support included relatives, neighbours, government agencies, religious organisations, NGOs and paid caregivers.

- **Institutional Perspective**

The stakeholder sessions with JKM and YPKDT provided an organisational perspective on family support, caregiving challenges and available services. The JKM discussion also covered the influence of culture, religion, gender, family structure, migration, employment and changing social expectations on caregiving arrangements.

OBSERVATION / REFLECTION

The fieldwork provided students with an opportunity to observe and experience the complexity of conducting qualitative research within real community settings.

One key observation was the importance of creating a comfortable and respectful environment before beginning sensitive discussions. The use of interactive activities and open-ended questions helped encourage participants to share their experiences and perspectives.

The engagement with different communities also demonstrated that family structures, caregiving practices and expectations may vary according to individual, household and community circumstances. Discussions involving different ethnic communities in Bekok, as well as communities in Pemanis, Gemereh and Sungai Segamat, provided exposure to diverse experiences and perspectives.

The engagement with the Sungai Segamat community, including cancer survivors, also highlighted the importance of considering health experiences when understanding family and community support. Such experiences may influence the roles and responsibilities of family members and the types of assistance required.

The stakeholder interviews further demonstrated the value of obtaining perspectives beyond the community level. Engagement with organisations such as JKM and YPKDT allowed students to consider how institutional support complements family and community-based support.

Overall, the fieldwork strengthened students' understanding that qualitative research requires active listening, sensitivity, adaptability and respect for participants' experiences. It also demonstrated the importance of building rapport and allowing participants to explain their experiences in their own words.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the fieldwork experience, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Strengthen pre-fieldwork preparation

- Provide students with additional practical preparation on interviewing techniques, facilitation skills and managing sensitive discussions before community engagement.

2. Maintain flexibility during fieldwork

- Facilitators should be prepared to adapt questions and activities according to participants, responses, age, background and level of engagement.

3. Strengthen community feedback mechanisms

- Where appropriate, consider providing communities with a brief summary of key findings or learning outcomes after completion of the programme.

4. Enhance stakeholder collaboration

- Continue engaging relevant government agencies, community organisations and other local stakeholders to obtain a broader understanding of community needs and available support systems.

5. Continue using participatory methods

- Interactive approaches such as flashcards, drawing and memory-based activities should continue to be considered, as they can help facilitate discussion and encourage participants to reflect on their experiences. The FMA guide itself incorporates these activities as part of the community sessions.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Overall, the community members and stakeholders were very welcoming, supportive and cooperative throughout the FMA 2026 fieldwork sessions. Participants were willing to engage in the discussions, share their experiences and provide responses to the questions asked by the students.

The community members also showed positive interest in the activities conducted and actively participated in the discussions. They were supportive of the students' learning process and cooperated well in completing the activities and discussions.

The stakeholders were also receptive and supportive of the engagement, providing their perspectives and information based on their experience and roles within the community. Overall, the sessions were conducted in a positive and comfortable environment, with good participation and cooperation from both the community and stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

The FMA 2026 fieldwork provided students with valuable practical experience in applying anthropological field methods within diverse community and institutional settings in Segamat. Through six engagement sessions involving communities in Bekok, Pemanis, Gemereh and Sungai Segamat, as well as stakeholder interviews with JKM and YPKDT, students were exposed to different perspectives on family relationships, caregiving, community support and institutional involvement.

The programme also provided an opportunity for students to develop practical skills in qualitative interviewing, group facilitation, observation, active listening and community engagement. The collaboration between MUA, MUM and SEACO contributed to bridging academic learning with practical field experience and strengthened students' understanding of the complexity of family and community life in a real-world setting.

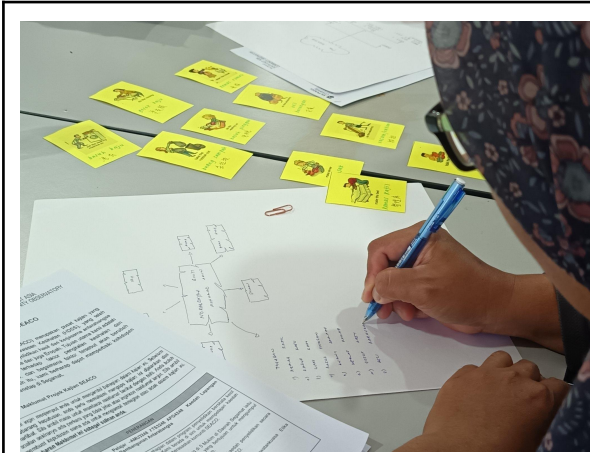
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