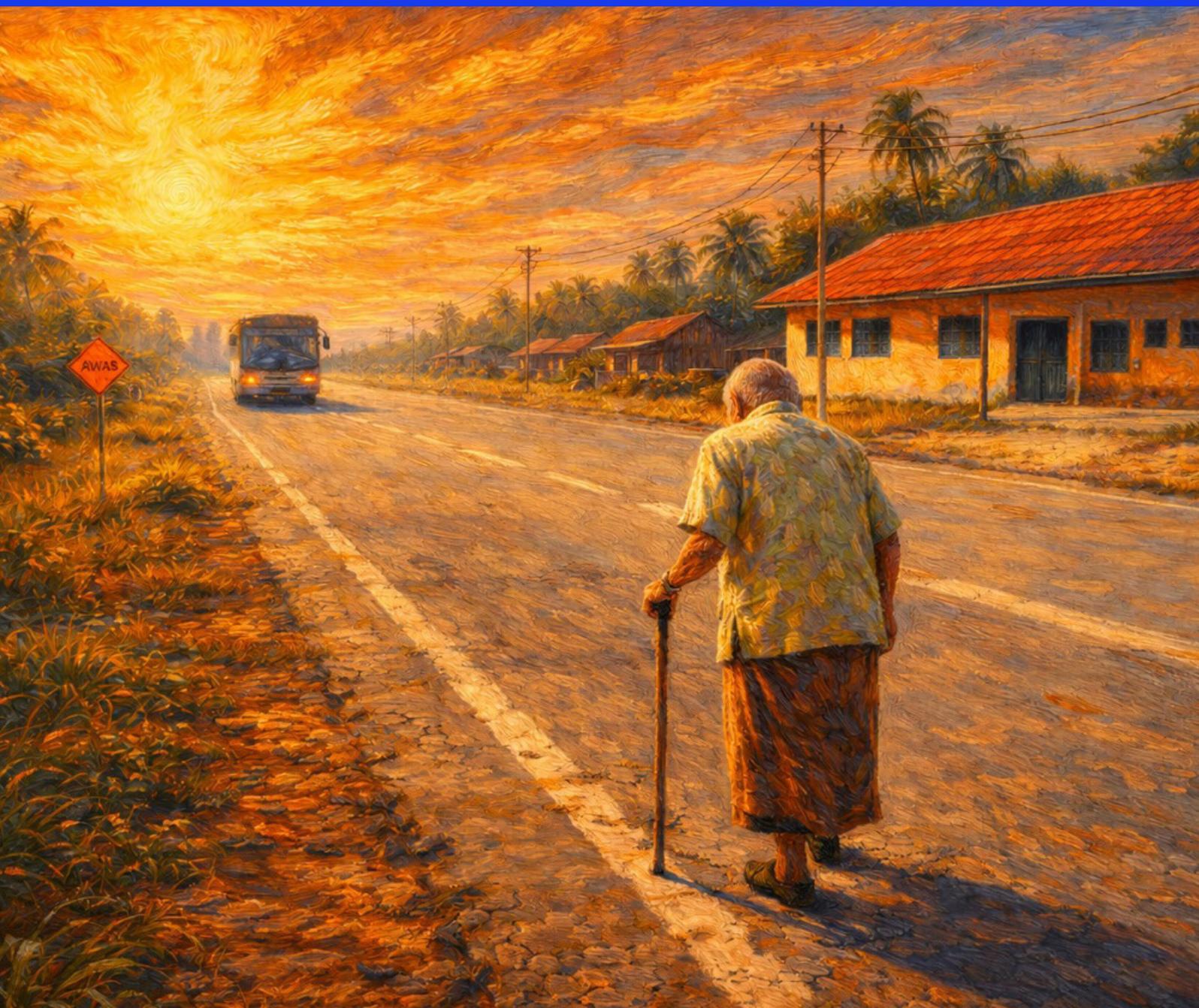


BOOSTING ACCESSIBILITY: ENHANCING SOCIAL PARTICIPATION FOR THE AGEING COMMUNITY

by Adibah Amira Nazarudin



ABSTRACT

Malaysia's transition into an ageing nation in 2021 underscores an urgent need to strengthen structures that support healthy and meaningful ageing. Social engagement has become a key component of national and international ageing frameworks, as social isolation is increasingly recognised as a significant risk factor for older adults, which is frequently exacerbated by deteriorating physical capabilities, low income, and dwindling social networks. Guided by the World Health Organization's (WHO) principles for age-friendly cities, Malaysia established *Pusat Aktiviti Warga Emas* (PAWE) under the Department of Social Welfare (JKM) to provide older adults with accessible community spaces for interaction, skill development, and purposeful engagement. This initiative has garnered positive impacts, reported by older persons participating in programmes hosted at the centre. However, the number of registered members remains lower than desired. This article, therefore, aims to discuss the possible accessibility constraints older persons face when travelling to the centre and to highlight the need for more inclusive, accessible public transportation to support their participation.

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Introduction – Active Social Participation is a Powerful Prescription for Healthy Ageing

Malaysia officially became an ageing nation in 2021, with at least 7% of its population, or approximately 2.29 million people, aged 65 and above¹. As life expectancy increases, the elderly population will continue to grow, making it imperative for Malaysia to prepare for its projected status as an aged nation by 2048 (Department of Statistics Malaysia 2025).

Beyond physical health risks, social isolation and loneliness pose a significant threat to the elderly population. A review paper examining the relationship between social participation and physical health concludes that engagement in social activities in later life is associated with better health outcomes, with evidence suggesting that socially isolated older persons are more vulnerable to illness (Bath and Deeg 2005). This is particularly critical, as they naturally lose opportunities for social connections

due to retirement and the passing of partners or peers. Combined with declining physical and cognitive abilities, as well as limited income, the worst-case scenario for socially isolated older persons is the risk of not being noticed in time for treatment during an emergency.

Given this risk, social participation is included as one of the key considerations in the World Health Organization (WHO) Guide for Global Age-friendly Cities ("WHO Guide"). It argues that social participation provides a platform for connection and contribution, allowing older people to sustain their skills, demonstrate their competence, and receive respect and appreciation (WHO 2007). This aligns with the biopsychosocial framework of mental health², which suggests that subjective experiences, such as social participation, can improve an individual's overall well-being.

¹ An individual is categorised as an older person when they reach the age of 60 years, as adopted in the United Nations World Assembly on Ageing in Vienna in 1982. However, most documents use 65 years as the threshold when calculating the proportion of the elderly population.

² The biopsychosocial model is a framework that considers all aspects of the human condition, including biological, psychological, and social factors, in order to understand and address presenting symptoms within the broader context of a person's life. ("Biopsychosocial Model - an Overview | ScienceDirect Topics," n.d.)

Building an age-friendly social participation, as outlined in the WHO Guide, encompasses seven categories (**Table 1**). In short, the guideline placed a strong emphasis on making activities affordable and accessible for older persons. This can be accomplished, among other things,

by making use of neighbourhood facilities in strategic and nearby locations, providing options for caretakers to co-participate, and ensuring clear communication regarding how to get to the facilities.

Table 1: WHO Age-friendly social participation checklist

Category	Description
Accessibility of events and activities	The need for convenient location and time of the activities, and options for caretakers to also participate
Affordability	The need for the activities to be affordable and the organising institution be financially supported by the public or private sector
Range of events and activities	The need for a wide variety of activities be made available, appealing to both older persons and people of different ages and cultural backgrounds to participate in
Facilities and settings	The need for the activities to be organised in various locations such as community centres, schools, and libraries
Promotion and awareness of activities	The need for clear communication on the activities, location, and transportation
Addressing social isolation	The need for continuous engagement with older persons via personal invitation, calls, and visits
Fostering community integration	The need for multipurpose facilities which promotes shared usage and interactions among all user groups

Source: WHO Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide

In Malaysia, *Pusat Aktiviti Warga Emas (PAWE)*, or Activity Centres for Older Persons, were established under the Department of Social Welfare (JKM) to promote social participation among seniors. This community space aims to provide a platform for older persons aged 60 and above to interact, participate in productive activities, and develop skills across various areas.

The establishment is governed by the Guideline for Pusat Aktiviti Warga Emas 2018 Amendment (“PAWE Guideline”) and the Societies Act 1966³ (Act 335), with an annual budget allocation of RM50,000.00 each. The primary operational concepts of the centres are covered by the PAWE Guideline, which is in line with the WHO Guide (**Table 2**) and generally influences the types of activities that are organised there (**Figure 1**). In particular, the activities or programmes must be in line with the five ageing dimensions outlined in the National Policy for Older Persons or *Dasar Warga Emas Negara (DWEN)* (**Figure 2**).

³ The approved PAWE Committee must be registered under the Societies Act 1986 if it is currently not supported or affiliated with any registered voluntary welfare association

Table 2: PAWE operational guidelines and the alignment to the WHO Guide

WHO Guide Category	Alignment in PAWE Guideline	
Accessibility of events and activities	7(1)(b)	The location of the premise must be strategic and easy to be accessed by older persons and the public
Affordability	7(1)(e)	The establishment of PAWE must be supported by the JKM officer, i.e., to ensure the flow of federal budget to the centres
Range of events and activities	4(1)(c)	The activities or programmes organised in PAWE must be interactive and suitable to the local/ members' needs and wants
Facilities and settings	7(1)(c)	The chosen PAWE premise must be elderly-friendly and suitable for the activities organised at the centre, such as government building, housing quarters, multipurpose hall etc.
Promotion and awareness of activities	13(1)(k)	The elected Chairman of the PAWE committee must promote the centre to the local community
Addressing social isolation		No alignment
Fostering community integration	6(1)(a) and (b)	PAWE services and facilities are to be enjoyed by both the direct and indirect target groups. The direct target group refers to the physically capable and independent older persons, while the indirect target group refers to the other local community members such as children, teens, women etc.

Source: (Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat, n.d.)

Figure 1: Examples of activities organised at PAWE Jejawi

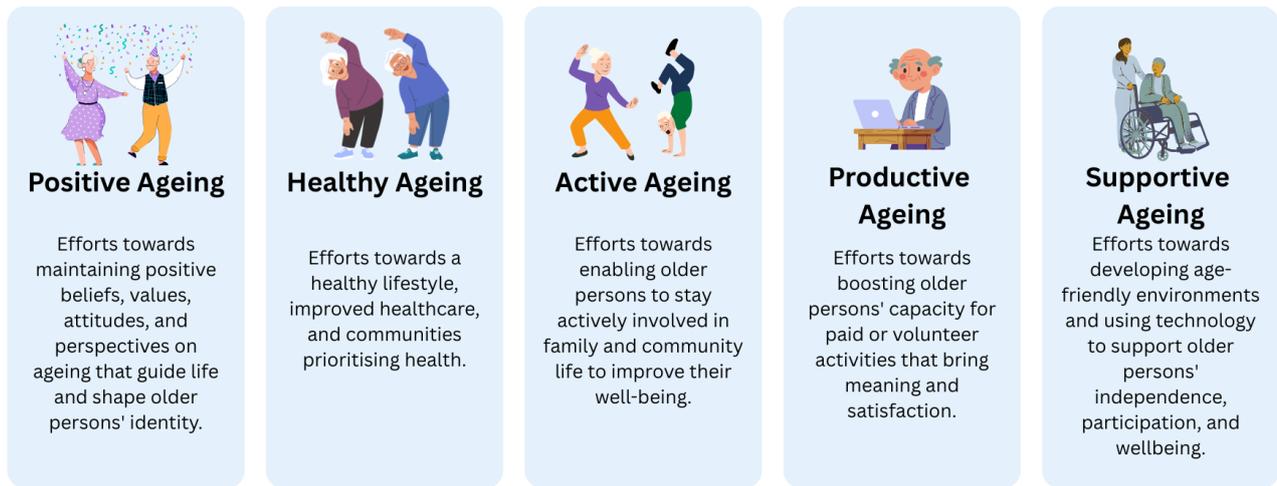
PAWE Jejawi
 Kompleks Penyayang Dr. Siti Hasmah, Kampung Jejawi Utan Buloh
 Perlis, Perlis
 Tel: 049765587

Tunjukkan entri

NO.	NAMA AKTIVITI	TARIKH
11	GOTONG ROYONG PEMBERSIHAN KAWASAN	2025-10-30
12	PROGRAM CERAMAH KESIHATAN DARI OLIVE HOUSE.	2025-10-23
13	KELAS MEMASAK	2025-10-22
14	ZIARAH KASIH DAN SAMBUTAN DEEPAVALI RUMAH AHLI PAWE.	2025-10-20
15	ZIARAH KASIH WARGA EMAS KAUM INDIA	2025-10-17
16	KELAS MEMASAK	2025-10-15
17	WARGA EMAS BERIADAH BERSAMA PERSATUAN IBU TUNGGAL	2025-10-12
18	KELAS MEMASAK	2025-10-08
19	MAJLIS SAMBUTAN HARI WARGA EMAS, KANAK-KANAK DAN ORANG KURANG UPAYA PERINGKAT NEGERI PERLIS TAHUN 2025.	2025-10-04
20	JEMPUTAN PAMERAN BAGI PERHIMPUNAN BULANAN PENTADBIRAN KERAJAAN NEGERI PERLIS	2025-10-02

Source: Screenshot from the Portal e-Warga Emas, accessed on 18 December 2025

Figure 2: Five ageing dimensions according to DWEN



Source: Author's illustration

The role of PAWE centres is further emphasised in the recent update of the Elderly Health Services Action Plan (PTPKWE) 2023-2030. The action plan anchors the WHO “Healthy Ageing” concept in planning comprehensive health services for the elderly, which includes community intervention strategies such as empowering registered older persons as change agents, organising healthy activities, and conducting screenings at PAWEs.

Beyond participating in activities organised at the centres, PAWE members can also benefit from volunteering as the management committee members, thereby reclaiming their managerial talents. Members with a professional background will have the opportunity to take on leadership roles and apply their expertise to maintain their skills. This will foster a sense of community belonging

and dignity, while also minimising the contrast between their daily activities before and after retirement.

A qualitative study of older persons who have been frequenting PAWE for the past 10 years identified emotional connection, alleviating loneliness, and social solidarity as the main benefits of participating in the programmes at PAWE (Aziz et al. 2025). Participants of the same study mentioned that friends made at the centre become their alternative social support networks, or an “extended family”, effectively combating loneliness, ageism, and related health challenges. Beyond health benefits, financial advantages are also mentioned. Some older persons visit the centres for a meal, where other members sponsor food for the centres (The Star 2025).

Assessing the Availability and Accessibility of PAWEs

As of 2024, there are 190 PAWEs nationwide, benefiting 57,839 registered older persons (Kementerian Ekonomi 2025). This roughly equates to an average of 304 registered older persons per PAWE. However, using the simple ratio of ‘Older persons-to-PAWE’⁴, which measures the number of older persons to the number of PAWEs, Malaysia’s average stands at 13,530 older persons per PAWE (Table 3). Even after excluding older persons aged 80 and above, the ratio remains as high as 11,721 older persons to one PAWE. In comparison, Singapore’s ratio is significantly lower, with one Active Ageing Centre, i.e., their equivalent to PAWEs, serving 6,323 older persons^{5,6}.

The data hints at two important findings:

- Firstly, there is the issue of availability, where the number of PAWEs in Malaysia appears inadequate to cater for the current and growing population of older persons.
- Secondly, there is the issue of accessibility, where low registration and potentially utilisation rates of PAWEs may indicate a potential lack of interest or limited access to the centres for older persons.

⁴ The ratio is calculated by dividing the number of older persons in the state by the number of PAWE available for each state

⁵ The reported elderly population for Singapore is 20.7% of 6.11 million as of June 2025 (National Population and Talent Division et al. 2025)

⁶ A pamphlet on the Agency for Integrated Care website reported that currently, there are over 200 Active Ageing Centres nationwide (Agency for Integrated Care, n.d.). The ratio calculation uses 200 as the denominator.

Availability

Interest in opening new PAWE centres is strong, with proposals calling for at least one centre in every state legislature. (Dewan Negeri Selangor 2025). However, this ambition is constrained by limited federal funding. Under Budget 2025, RM10.82 million was allocated to PAWEs nationwide (Kementerian Pembangunan Wanita, Keluarga dan Masyarakat 2025), which amounts to roughly RM50,000 per centre per year for operational

expenses. Additionally, developing a new centre requires a substantial investment of about RM2.5 million (The Star 2025). Although the allocation increased by 4% to RM11.35 million in Budget 2026, this increase remains insufficient to support the establishment of new centres. Local government and city councils would still need additional funding from the non-profit and private sectors to cover the costs of establishing a new PAWE.

Table 3: States ranked according to the Older Persons-to-PAWE ratio (lowest to highest)

State	Number of elderly adults ⁽⁷⁾ (thousands)	Population of elderly adults ⁽⁸⁾ (%)	Number of PAWE centres ⁽⁹⁾	Older persons to PAWE ratio (thousands)
Pahang	119.4	7.11%	15	7.96
Perlis	25.5	8.56%	3	8.50
Terengganu	78.9	6.33%	8	9.86
Kelantan	141.4	7.41%	14	10.10
Sarawak	231.8	9.16%	22	10.54
Sabah	245.3	6.38%	22 ⁽¹⁰⁾	11.15
Negeri Sembilan	100.7	8.09%	9	11.19
Melaka	76.4	7.26%	6	12.73
W.P. Kuala Lumpur	150.2	6.80%	11 ⁽¹¹⁾	13.65
Kedah	209.5	9.40%	15	13.97
Perak	266.3	10.34%	18	14.79
Johor	326.3	7.76%	20	16.32
Pulau Pinang	151.9	8.42%	8	18.99
Selangor	623.0	8.41%	21	29.67

Source: DOSM, Department of Social Welfare Malaysia

⁷ Data of adults above 65 years old as of 1 Jan 2025, extracted from the DOSM website

⁸ Percentage of population above 65 years old over the total population, by state

⁹ Data as of the end of 2024, extracted from the official portal of the Department of Social Welfare Malaysia (page last updated January 2025)

¹⁰ Including PAWE Labuan

¹¹ Including PAWE Putrajaya

Accessibility

To understand the low rates of registration at the PAWE centres, we sought to evaluate accessibility using social participation as an indicator. The body of literature on low social participation was reviewed. A study in Malaysia examining perceived unmet needs for an age-friendly environment highlighted several factors that may contribute to low participation. These include physical limitations, disparities in digital access (which limit the use of helpful mobile applications), financial constraints, a lack of conveniently located activity venues, and barriers to accessing public transportation (Lim et al. 2023). Similarly, a survey involving 139 stakeholders in the rural Canadian municipality identified 'Access to transportation' and 'Meeting places near home' as among the nine barriers to social participation (Levasseur et al. 2020).

In the case of PAWE, quick address checks indicate that the premises are indeed located in strategic areas such as government housing, community halls, mosques, and hospitals. This aligns with the PAWE establishment guidelines, which state that centres should be well-placed and accessible (see **Table 2**). However, limited data is available to evaluate physical accessibility to the centres. While private transportation generally offers comfort and flexibility for older individuals, it may not always be affordable, safe, or accessible. Therefore, this section aims to explore how accessible PAWEs are for older individuals who need to rely on public transportation.

Assessing the Accessibility of PAWE via Public Transportation

Defining Accessibility

A transportation mode that is affordable, accessible, available, and acceptable shapes older persons' daily use preferences (Shrestha et al. 2017). Additionally, Mohd Noor et al. 2024 found that resources, such as finances, personal vehicle ownership, and physical capability, determine older persons' mobility, or their ability to move freely

and safely from one place to another. While accessibility spans beyond physical access – into dimensions including ethnic inclusion, personal, mental, or physiological health, and social health – this article focuses on the accessibility of PAWEs in the strictest physical sense, particularly physical accessibility via public transportation.

Why Public Transportation?

The government, under the *Unit Penyayang Warga Emas* (UPWE) initiative, provides transportation services to older persons in need. However, currently only nine vehicles are available nationwide, and no additional budget is allocated for this programme as observed in Budget 2026 (Department of Social Welfare Malaysia

2024; Kementerian Pembangunan Wanita, Keluarga dan Masyarakat 2025). Apart from this fully funded option, public transportation remains the most affordable. Stage buses and railway networks often provide senior citizen concession cards, offering either fare discounts or free rides. (**Table 4**).



Image generated by OpenAI DALL·E (2026)

Table 4: Summary of Transportation Discount for Senior Citizens in Malaysia

No	Brand	Coverage Area	Transportation Type	Discount for Senior Citizens
1	Rapid KL	Klang Valley	LRT, MRT, Monorail, Bus	50% fare discount
2	Rapid Penang	Pulau Pinang	Bus	Zero fare (using Pas Mutiara)
3	KTM	Nationwide	Commuter, ETS	50% fare discount
4	BAS.MY	Kangar, Kota Setar, Kota Bharu, Kuala Terengganu, Ipoh, Kuantan, Seremban, Melaka, Johor Bahru	Bus	Zero fare
5	KLIA Express	South Klang Valley	Railway	30% fare discount

Source: MyGovernment and Ihsan Madani website, accessed on 18 December 2025; and KLIA Ekspres website, accessed on 22 December, 2025

Enhancing public transport connectivity to PAWE centres can effectively expand their ‘catchment areas’, enabling these facilities to serve older adults residing beyond their immediate neighbourhoods. Improved accessibility also strengthens opportunities for intergenerational engagement by making it easier for individuals across age groups to participate in programmes at PAWE.

When it comes to safety, driving challenges increase with ageing, necessitating reliable transportation alternatives. A study of 60 older adults with at least 10 years of mobility disability found that participants expressed safety concerns while driving due to slowed reflexes and limited dexterity (Remillard et al. 2022). Public transportation can be a valuable option, as it also promotes walking to and from transit points and supports continuous cognitive engagement and spatial orientation during travel. These factors help preserve functional health in older persons and are aligned with the principles of Active and Healthy Ageing.

Nonetheless, to realise all the benefits mentioned above, public transport systems must adopt barrier-free design standards, including the deployment of low-floor buses, installation of clear and legible signage, and provision of consistent audio announcements, ensuring equitable and safe access for all users¹². A walkability assessment by Ramli et al. 2022 further emphasised the need for features such as signage legibility, horizontal and vertical connectivity, and safety to elevate the accessibility for older persons. Building on these, transforming public transportation into a fully inclusive and accessible system should be the country's long-term strategy. In this paper, we contribute to this effort by taking stock of the current accessibility landscape using PAWE as a proxy for social participation.

¹² Examples of “good practice” of barrier-free public transportation outlined in the EU MEDIANE Good Practice Guide

Are PAWEs Generally Accessible by Public Transportation?

To make this assessment, the physical accessibility of each PAWE is measured by calculating the distance to the nearest station or stop, along with the corresponding walking time¹³. The nearest station/stop is identified using Google Maps and supplemental documents, such as stage bus route maps.

In Kuala Lumpur, the PAWEs are generally accessible.

All 11 PAWE centres, serving 3,342 older persons, are accessible by at least one form of public transportation:

the bus. Additionally, three centres can be accessed by at least two modes of public transportation: buses and MRT/LRT. As shown in **Table 5**, PAWE Segambut appears to be the most accessible, with a walking distance of less than 100 metres (approximately one minute) from the Taman LAWA bus stop. Meanwhile, PAWE Putrajaya appears to be the least accessible, with the furthest recorded distance of 800 metres, equivalent to approximately a 14-minute walk.

Table 5: PAWE in Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya, sorted based on the nearest distance to any public transportation

No	PAWE Centres	Number of Registered Members ⁽¹⁴⁾	Type	Nearest Station/ Stop	Walking Time (mins)	Distance (meter)
1	Segambut	455	Bus	Taman LAWA	1	68
2	Setiawangsa	202	Bus	Medan Makmur Setapak ⁽¹⁵⁾	2	100
			Bus	KL732 Medan Selera Setapak	6	350
3	Cheras Baru	303	Bus	Surau Manbaul Taqwa	3	190
4	Titivangsa	208	Bus	AJ183 PPR Hiliran Ampang	3	160
5	Lembah Pantai	216	Bus	KL1381 Apt Pinang 1A Seri Sentosa	4	210
6	Bandar Tun Razak	141	Bus	Simpang Ikhlas 5	4	200
			LRT	Bandar Tun Razak	16	900
			Bus	Desa Tun Razak (Utara)	18	1,000
7	Batu	148	Bus	SL71 Lorong Nakhoda 25	8	450
8	Wangsa Maju	414	Bus	KL1945 Perumahan Awam Sri Langkawi	8	450
			LRT	Taman Melati	12	700
9	Seputeh	217	LRT	Muhibbah	10	550
			Bus	KL1353 OUG Parklane	18	1,000
10	Kepong	422	Bus	MRT Metro Prima Pintu B	11	650
11	Putrajaya	541	Bus	PPJ374 PPA P15 12B	14	800

Source: Google Maps and the author's calculation

¹³ The normal walking speed for older adults aged above 65 is 3.42 km/h or 0.95m/s on average (Alves et al. 2020)

¹⁴ Updated as of 12 January 2025, according to JKM website

¹⁵ Based on Google Street View, this bus station appears to be the nearest to the centre. The distance calculation using this desired path is an estimate.

Between the states, a similar approach was applied to the PAWE centres in five other states chosen with the highest proportion of older persons: Perak, Kedah, Sarawak,

Perlis, and Pulau Pinang. A summary of the findings is presented in **Table 6** below.

Table 6: Summary of state analysis findings

State	Number of PAWE accessible by public transport	Distance to the nearest public transportation		
		Average (meter)	Minimum (meter)	Maximum (meter)
Perak	13 out of 18	564	65	1300
Kedah	14 out of 15	428	20	1100
Sarawak	6 out of 22	1638	350	4200
Perlis	3 out of 3	1066 ⁽¹⁶⁾	300	2600
Pulau Pinang	8 out of 8	268	76	450
Kuala Lumpur	11 out of 11	348	68	800

Source: Google Maps and the author's calculation

In summary, PAWEs in Pulau Pinang seem to be the most accessible, even when compared to Kuala Lumpur. The average distance an older person would need to walk is just 268 metres, or about five minutes, compared to 348 metres (about six minutes) in KL. Sarawak appears to be the least accessible region, as currently, stage buses operate exclusively within Kuching. The two PAWEs outside Kuching, which have access to bus terminals, are located in significant cultural cities such as Sibu and Mukah. However, in Sarawak, it is important to recognise that cities beyond Kuching are mostly inaccessible, not only the PAWEs.

Perak, with the highest proportion of older residents, has 14 centres located outside the FELDA area. One is inaccessible by public transport, and two are located more than one kilometre from the nearest bus stop, which is roughly an 18-minute walk. Through Google Street View, two PAWEs have bus stations in front of their centres; however, no specific bus routes serving these stops could be identified (**Figure 3**). For the remaining centres, the average distance to the nearest bus stop is approximately 410 metres, equivalent to a seven-minute walk.

Figure 3: Bus stop in front of the three PAWE centres in Perak, as shown by Google Street View, but no bus route



Source: Google Street View

¹⁶ The average distance will be 300 metre if the outlier is removed

In Perlis, two of the three PAWEs are easily accessible by bus, with the stops situated no further than 300 metres, or approximately five minutes' walk. For PAWE YIPs, the Google Street View image of the centre depicts a bus stop (Figure 4) However, no specific bus routes serving

the station, nor any bus stops along Jalan Abi-Tok Hashim, can be identified, and the nearest bus station is approximately 2.5 km away. Nevertheless, a UPWE vehicle can be reserved at the Jejawi centre, which is a 13-minute drive away.

Figure 4: Bus stop in front of PAWE YIPs centre, Perlis, as shown by Google Street View, but no bus route



Source: Google Street View

The mapping exercise reveals that older persons outside Pulau Pinang and Kuala Lumpur, who are physically capable but lack access to private vehicles, either because they don't own one, cannot drive or ride, or have no assistance, are mostly excluded from PAWE activities. This exclusion is especially evident when considering how often the buses run. According to the 'BAS.MY' website, serving Kangar, Kota Setar, and Ipoh, main route buses operate every 60 to 75 minutes, while feeder buses on routes with moderate demand run every 120 minutes or more. In contrast, Prasarana buses under the rapid brand (rapidPenang and rapidKL) run every 15-20 minutes during peak hours and every 30-40 minutes during non-peak times.

Notwithstanding gaps in the bus stop locations and schedules, navigating to some centres remains challenging. As highlighted, the bus stops in front of the PAWE lack stop names and even a dedicated route serving them. From the Google Street View screenshot as well, many bus stops do not have a stop name signage. To reiterate, Ramli et al. 2022 highlighted signage legibility is important in supporting high walkability among older persons. For comparison, bus stops in South Korea feature clear signs displaying the stop name, bus number, and other stops on the route (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Bus stop signage in South Korea



Source: Institute of Basic Science website

This exercise also revealed opportunities to better align the Google Maps pin with the address listed on the JKM website. Ideally, straightforward searches in Google Maps for “PAWE” and the district, such as “PAWE Batu Kawan,” should reliably identify the correct building pin. Alternatively, the PAWE addresses listed on the website should be updated and specific, not generic, to ensure accurate identification of the centre. A lack of, or incorrect, pin on the map for some PAWE centres can make it difficult for older persons to book an e-hailing service or to communicate directions to the driver. This can be solved simply by updating the correct address across all JKM websites that feature PAWE information, and by accurately pinning the centre on the map, which would improve searchability for the centres.

Another interesting finding from this exercise is that none of the stations is named or dedicated to a PAWE centre. A bus stop in front of a school or hospital might be called, for example, “SMK Derma” or “Hospital Jitra”, but unfortunately, this was not the case for PAWE. Promoting PAWE in general can be done by socialising the centres, either by renaming them or adding a dedicated PAWE stop. The dedicated name can improve legibility for older people when navigating public transportation.

Other Measures of Enhancing Physical Accessibility

Accessibility can be achieved through targeted promotion and collaboration with other institutions, including houses of worship. For PAWEs already situated in strategic, high-traffic locations such as mosques, activities can be organised after every prayer time to boost participation. For PAWEs that are not as close, the administrative committee could increase outreach by partnering with nearby religious institutions and municipal spaces to host programmes and activities on their premises. In other words, efforts to expand the availability and accessibility of PAWEs need not be limited to purely physical structures, which rely on federal development expenditure allocations. Instead, the concept of PAWE can be thought of as a virtual package of programmatic activities and administrative protocols that can be physically manifest in other existing physical spaces.

Collaborations with e-hailing providers can help ease the financial burden on older adults, making daily travel to PAWEs more affordable. While this article emphasises improving accessibility to public transportation, it is equally important to enhance other transport options. At the national level, additional budget allocations could support the expansion of UPWE van services, particularly in hard-to-reach areas. E-hailing companies such as Grab Malaysia might also consider adopting initiatives similar to Grab Philippines, which offered discounted fares for registered older persons.

Conclusion

This article highlighted gaps in public transportation access for older adults, using PAWE as an indicator of social participation. Walking distance and time are emphasised in the analysis to underscore an important consideration for inclusivity: older adults' physical limitations. Long walking distances, coupled with scorching heat, unsafe pedestrian paths (like roads used by vehicles), and poor signage readability, can discourage older adults from using public transportation, often leading them to stay home.

It is important to note that the discussion is limited to proximity, with gaps such as bus stops without a dedicated bus route and overall map searchability noted. However, other dimensions, such as frequency and facility accessibility, are equally important. This analysis can be further enriched by examining other factors that impact mobility and social participation, such as personal (e.g., physical and health limitations, financial constraints, and attitudes), societal (e.g., motorist attitudes), and environmental factors (e.g., safety and built design for accessibility) (Remillard et al. 2022). This will provide a comprehensive understanding of older persons' decisions in using public transportation for their social activities and participation.

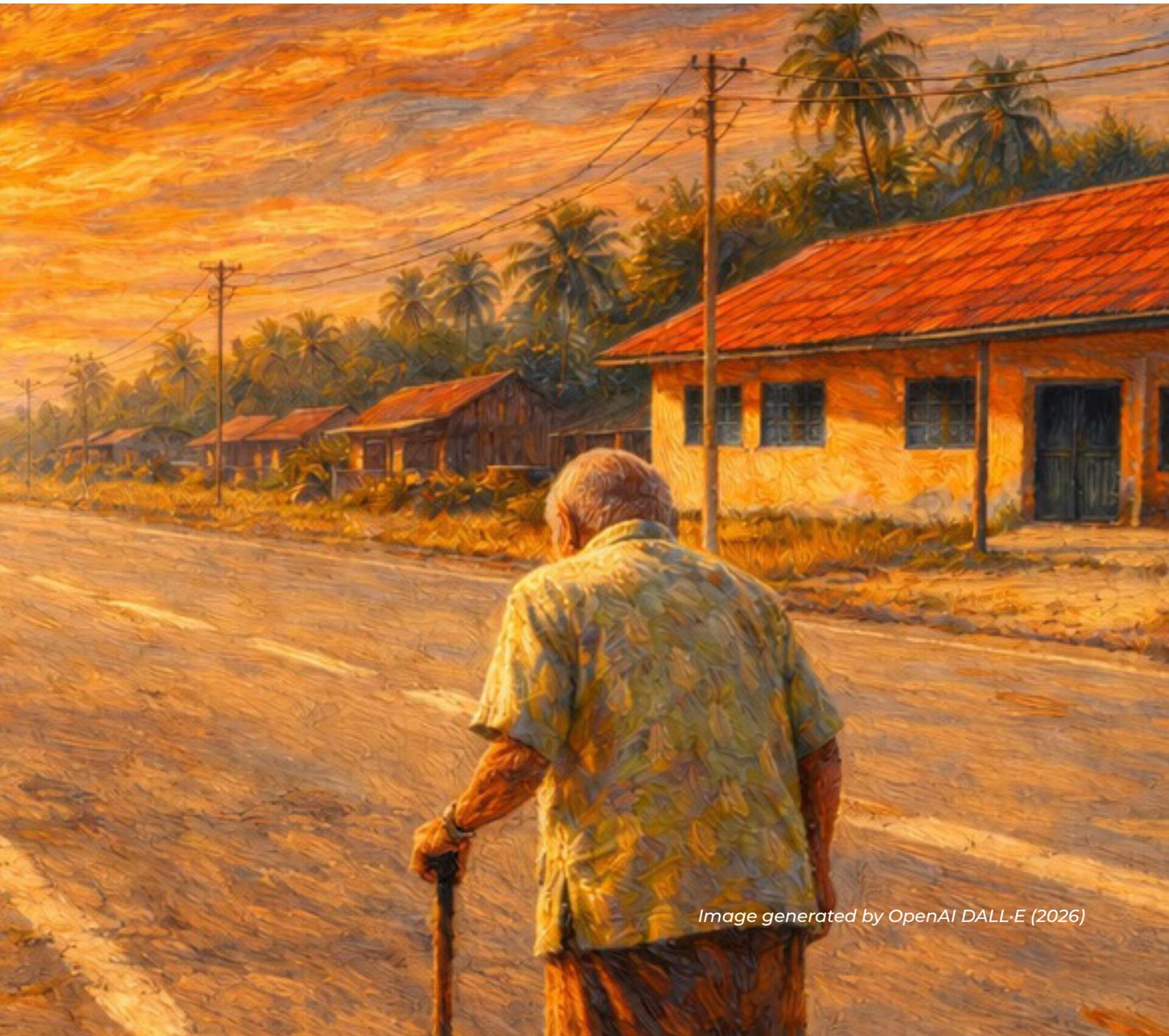


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