



Photos: UNICEF/Grace Tan

Sime Darby Property's First Inclusive Playground Levels Playing Field for All Children

THE Cambridge Dictionary defines the word 'playground' as "an area designed for children to play in outside", but does this archaic definition include all children regardless of their (dis)abilities?

Understanding that not all playgrounds are level playing fields for the young, Sime Darby Property has embarked on a meaningful journey to ensure that children with and without disabilities are given the opportunity to exercise their right to play.

Earlier this month, the property developer launched *Malaysia's first Inclusive Playground in the City of Elmina* in Shah Alam, a move that marks a major shift in the designing of sustainable property developments, with great emphasis on the inclusion of people living with disabilities.

The journey began in 2018, when UNICEF Malaysia propounded the idea for Sime Darby Property to become an "Inclusion Champion" by designing and developing a playground for children with or without disabilities. It didn't take long to convince Sime Darby Property to embark on this dear cause that resonates with its company-specific 2030 Sustainability Goals.

"We always strive to build beyond the four walls of a home and introduce various lifestyle features for every member of the community to enjoy.



“Play is an integral part of children’s physical, mental and social development, and therefore, it was only right that we championed a playground where all children can play as equals and have access to learning and interacting with their peers.”

- Appollo Leong,
Sime Darby Property
Deputy Chief Operating Officer,
Township Development

If you look at our townships, we have actively turned little pockets of land that connect enclaves into communal spaces, and the Inclusive Playground is a purposeful one at that," said Sime Darby Property Deputy Chief Operating Officer - Township Development Appollo Leong.

He added: "Play is an integral part of children's physical, mental and development, and therefore, it was only right that we championed a playground where all children can play as equals and have access to learning and interacting with their peers."

Meeting of great minds

Choosing the City of Elmina as the home for the maiden Inclusive Playground was a no-brainer as the Sime Darby Property flagship township is a proponent of inclusive, sustainable, and holistic living.

The property developer partnered with UNICEF Malaysia and proceeded to work closely with a number of subject matter experts on the playground's design and development, with the stamp of approval from the Shah Alam City Council. Without a doubt, the most important collabo-

rators for this monumental project were the children with and without disabilities, as well as their parents and caretakers who gave valuable input on the design of a playground that best suits their needs.

"This partnership combines Sime Darby Property's strength in property development with UNICEF's global expertise in advocating children's rights, resulting in the development of a truly inclusive play space that is co-created with children of diverse abilities," said Leong.



The playground applies the principles of 'Universal Design' which promotes an inclusive approach towards designing a product or an environment while ensuring that it is accessible to as many people as possible, regardless of age, gender, and disability.

In addition to the development of the playground, Sime Darby Property had also collaborated with UNICEF to develop the 'Best Business Practices Circular and Guidance Toolkit' which shares the best practices to build communal facilities for individuals with disabilities.

Leong added: "We hope that our playground will inspire other property developers and government bodies to build more inclusive play areas in their future developments. As a Force for Good, Sime Darby Property advocates the importance of providing equal opportunity to every child in Malaysia and let us start here with this Inclusive Playground at the City of Elmina."



Inclusive Playground at City of Elmina, Shah Alam

Officially launched on
2 March 2022



Fulfils United Nations' promise to **Leave No One Behind.** **unicef** for every child

For all children with and without disabilities | **37** integrated play structure components

Contains swing seats, trampoline, climbing net, see-saws, sensory poles and balancing logs

Equipped with ramps and **wheelchair-friendly** walkways

Customised sculptures and structures | **0.54-acre** play space

Open daily from **7 a.m. to 10 p.m.** | **No entry fees**

