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EmpowerNCER MyKasih empowers Orang Asli to soar in education

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BERNAMAPIX

KUALA LUMPUR: "Eng Hok' (i like) empowerNCER Academic @ Perak programme. The teachers are Orang Asli and this has made the learning process easier for me and my friends," said a Year 5 pupil from Sekolah Kebangsaan (SK) Batu 7 at Batang Padang, Perak, Nazira a/p Noli.

Nazira is among 900 Orang Asli pupils from the state's remote areas selected to participate in the empowerNCER Academic @ Perak programme to improve their academic and personal development skills, following the closure of schools due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The NCER Academic @ Perak (Orang Asli) programme is a human resource development initiative under the Northern Corridor Implementation Authority (NCIA) in collaboration with Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) and the Department of Orang Asli Development (JAKOA).

The programme is designed to enhance the academic achievement and school attendance among Orang Asli pupils as they move to next phase of Year 6 and secondary level through effective learning modules prepared by UPSI lecturers and education specialists, with emphasis on the acquisition of reading, writing and arithmetic skills (3M).

At the same time, NCIA is working jointly with MyKasih Foundation (MyKasih) to provide Orang Asli students in remote rural areas access to the latest learning aids and facilities, as well as food assistance.

The programme complements the academic training which focuses on the health and personal development aspects. Participants are from Year 5 and Year 6 from SK Pos Kemar in Hulu Perak; SK Batu 14 and SK Batu 7 in Batang Padang; as well as SK Pos Legap and SK Pos Perwor in Kuala Kangsar, mainly from various Orang Asli ethnic groups such as Murut, Semai and Temiar.

Fully funded by MyKasih Foundation, the programme is divided into four main components, namely, cashless food aid for students; 21st Century Classroom for further improvements in 3M; Robotic Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Learning to create awareness in STEM and other learning applications; and Aquaponic Garden initiative to encourage students to sell their own products.

The programme has shown positive impact in improving the school attendance of participating students and has spurred their interest in STEM.

NCIA Chief Executive Datuk Seri Jebasingam Issace John said education is key to lifting the poor out of poverty, noting that NCIA's partnership with MyKasih through the programme was geared towards assisting the Orang Asli community.

He said before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, UPSI teachers were mobilised to Orang Asli settlements to conduct learning activities related to 3M skills.

"However, as a result of school closures and the measures taken to stem the spread of the coronavirus, UPSI has appointed 31 Orang Asli facilitators to conduct teaching and learning programmes in their villages.

"These facilitators are Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) leavers who are equipped with teaching modules from UPSI. Lessons continued despite the pandemic to ensure they could enjoy better life in future.

A facilitator, Norfazlyna a/p Shaari, who was proud to contribute towards Orang Asli, said the programme provided her with a wealth of experience to realise her ambition of becoming a teacher.

Meanwhile, Jebasingam said UPSI is also collaborating with participating school canteen operators to provide food and drinks for students and facilitators.

"Previously, student beneficiaries were given monthly cashless bursaries worth RM60 via their MyKad-linked student smartcard to buy food and drinks at the school canteen.

"As schools were closed during the Movement Control Order (MCO), the monthly allocations via the smartcard were used by UPSI for food arrangements with the school canteen for students and facilitators.

"We fully optimised the facilities provided by MyKasih. In addition to providing food for students, MyKasih also contributed food baskets for Orang Asli children in the five participating schools," he said, adding that each food basket worth RM150 comprising basic items such as rice, flour, sugar, etc, were distributed to 1,600 students to ease the burden of their families during the pandemic.

According to Jebasingam, nearly 400 laptops, projectors and printers were delivered last year to 19 Orang Asli schools and were placed at the respective schools' computer laboratories.

"With the new laptops, it is hoped that Orang Asli children will be drawn to tap on the boundless learning opportunities available to them. This is also one approach to encourage them to attend school, which allows them to utilise the latest digital technologies in the globalisation era," he said.

Due to the implementation of the MCO and school closures, MyKasih has allowed UPSI-appointed facilitators to utilise the facilities for the teaching and learning process in their villages.

"With these facilities, we hope to stimulate the students' learning interest to ensure they are not left out of the national transformation programme, in line with the Malaysian Family concept and the 12th Malaysia Plan (12MP)," he said.

The government has assured that no ethnic group would be left out in Malaysia's goal of achieving a high-income economy, he added.

MyKasih, among others, provides teaching and learning materials to prepare students for the Virtual National Robotics Competition 2021 which was held for a week from Sept 24.

"A total of 74 students took part in the competition under the empowerNCER MyKasih programme including 10 Orang Asli children from five schools. This allows them to gain new experience as well as to spur their interest in robotics," he said.

Meanwhile, in the same competition, Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Langkawi which was also involved in the empowerNCER MyKasih programme, was selected for the Robot Virtual Games (RVG) World Championship 2021 next month.

Jebasingam said the synergy between MyKasih, NCIA, UPSI and Jakoa is vital in assisting the underprivileged students receive quality education and to provide a better life for their families.

"It is our hope that other organisations especially the private sector would take part in similar programmes to boost student participation in the future. This is in line with the 12MP's aspirations of eradicating poverty and developing inclusive communities, including the Orang Asli community," he said. -Bernama

SUGGESTED STORIES

Sarawak tax revenue from petroleum

18 minutes

Driving against traffic: Drunken

36 minutes

Jurutera mabuk pandu lawan arus

48 minutes

Khairy asked to explain difference in

58 minutes

94.5 peratus populasi dewasa lengkap

1 Hour

Disabled skaters in Brazil aiming for

1 Hour

TODAY NEWS

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2. Driving against traffic: Drunken engineer nabbed

3. Jurutera mabuk pandu lawan arus sebabkan individu cedera, ditahan

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5. Khairy asked to explain difference in reported number of Covid deaths