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Grants worth RM3m allocated to social welfare organisations

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Seventy organisations which provide specific services for children and 28 which cater specifically to the needs of special children are receiving aid from the Welfare Department.

The department has allocated grants totalling RM3 million for these organisations this year, benefiting 7,400 children nationwide.

Its public relations officer, Sobki Saad said in addition, RM3.3 million in grants had been allocated to 42 other organisations which provided educational and learning facilities to special children.

These include children who are mentally challenged, autistic and also those suffering from Down's Syndrome.

Sobki said the Government had always considered organisations as a partner in implementing its various programmes and activities, adding that they had an important role in social development and helping the Government realise its social obligations.

He said this could be demonstrated by the various campaigns the Government had conducted, the latest being the "Say Yes For Children" campaign run by the National Unity and Social Development Ministry.

To be launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Saturday, the campaign will look at ways to create a conducive environment for children to grow up.

The campaign is based on 10 actions and responsibilities. It is part of the Global Movement for Children broad-based efforts to ensure greater action for children and to hold Governments accountable in the run-up to and after the United Nations Special Session on Children, to be held from Sept 19 to 21, in New York.

The 10 areas are "Leave No Child Out", "Put Children First", "Care for Every Child", "Fight HIV/AIDS", "Stop Harming and Exploiting Children", "Listen to Children", "Educate Every Child", "Protect Children from War", "Protect the Earth for Children" and "Fight Poverty: Invest in Children".

Sobki said that contributions of voluntary children welfare organisations were meaningful in children's quality of life.

He said various facilities and services were provided for children. These include care and protection, skills training, educational and learning facilities, and vocational training and programmes to advocate awareness on children's issues.

For example, he cited the community rehabilitation programme that was started in 1983. It is a programme that calls for greater active involvement from parents, family and the community on efforts to prevent and rehabilitate disabled children at the village and local levels.

He said among the important points in the programme was that disabled children should not be separated from their parents. It also calls for rehabilitation programmes and training to be conducted in the local community.

Among the activities at a centre are daily skills training, stimulation therapy, music training, work method therapy and speech therapy.

Sobki said the programme had since gained wide support and to date, there were 243 rehabilitation centres nationwide.

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