

**Read books to improve English, students told**  
**TheStarOnline**  
**April 19, 2012**  
**By KANG SOON CHEN**

KLANG: Reading a book a month is the best way for students to improve their command of the English language.

Performance Management and Delivery Unit (Pemandu) chief executive officer Datuk Seri Idris Jala said it was through reading that he knew there was a different world beyond the Bario Highlands where he grew up.

“You must have ambition. If a boy from Bario like me can be successful, so can you,” he told a class of Form Four students at SMK Tengku Idris Shah.

Jala, who is Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, said reading, setting an ambition and having self-discipline were three habits that would lead to success.

He also shared his life experiences and passion for reading during the hour he spent teaching the class English with a Teach For Malaysia fellow in conjunction with Teach For Malaysia Week.

The students were delighted when Jala spoke about his schooling days in Sarawak.

“When I was in school, the classrooms had mud floors and we were given a slate and chalk because we had no books to write on then. The nearest town was two weeks' walk away,” he said.

Jala also presented the class with a set of *The Chronicles of Narnia* novels by C.S. Lewis and promised that the most avid reader (from the class) would receive a RM1,000 cash prize and the chance of dining with him at the Malaysian Petroleum Club in KLCC.

Jala told reporters later that it was important to boost the pride young people felt towards the teaching profession so that more talented and high calibre graduates would make it their calling.

“The whole process of education rests with teachers and their commitment towards their job,” he said.

He was joined at the school by veteran journalist R. Nadeswaran and YTL Communications Sdn Bhd executive director Yasmin Mahmood who taught English and Mathematics respectively.

Other personalities involved in the Teach For Malaysia Week being held until tomorrow include actress Lisa Surihani, Sunway Group chairman Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah, comedian Harith Iskander, Miss Malaysia Universe 2011 Deborah Henry and Miss Malaysia Universe 2012 Kimberley Leggett.

Teach For Malaysia is a non-profit organisation set up in 2010 by social entrepreneurs Dzameer Dzulkipli and Keeran Sivarajah to address education inequity in the country.

Inspired by Teach For America founder Wendy Kopp, Dzameer and Keeran took the challenge of starting a similar programme here where participants, known as fellows, commit themselves as teachers for two years in “high need” schools around the country.

Copyright © 1995-2012 Star Publications (M) Bhd

Source: <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2012/4/19/nation/11135306&sec=nation>