

Volunteerism gets a boost, thanks to PM's initiative
New Straits Times
July 17, 2012

KUALA LUMPUR: Measures announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak to support youth volunteers in the Year of the Volunteer next year, including a RM100 million fund, will address the lack of a volunteerism spirit in the country, youth groups said.

World Youth Foundation (WYF) chief operations officer Varsha Ajmera said many people did not know the reason behind volunteering.

"They only go along because they follow their friends' lead but later they find out that what they volunteered for is not what they want to help out in.

"The United Nations has been concerned with volunteer efforts for a long time, so it is a good thing to have concrete plans announced here," she said.

The government's support of volunteerism would likely create a multiplier effect of more youths caring for the community, she added.

She suggested that future youth volunteers look into ways to help the homeless, teach English to rural students and organise river clean up activities using the RM100 million Dana Sukarelawan 1Malaysia (Dre1M) fund, which was established to fund volunteer activities.

International Youth Centre director Datuk Raja Ruslan Raja Samah commended the government for giving recognition to the youth and the spirit of volunteerism.

"The commitment of the government in putting forward such measures to support volunteerism will hone the youth's attitude to be more attentive to the needs of others."

Raja Ruslan hoped the funds available would boost the commitment and morale of youths who wanted to volunteer.

"It is an opportunity for youths to get creative. They must have focus, direction and a target group or community which they want to help."

His advice to them was to volunteer genuinely, without expecting any monetary reward.

Commenting on the 1Malaysia for Youth radio station that would be set up, Raja Ruslan said it should send out more focussed and direct messages related to youths instead of the generic messages on normal radio stations.

"It would be an avenue for young people to get more information about youth movements, activities, job opportunities, seminars, leadership training and places of recreation and fitness.

"They are the future leaders of the country, so we have to develop youths now with the government playing a facilitator role to guide and advise them."

Source: <http://www.nst.com.my/nation/general/volunteerism-gets-a-boost-thanks-to-pm-s-initiative-1.108566>