

PM: 5,000 youths to be appointed as innovation ambassadors (Update)
TheStarOnline
August 01, 2012
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PUTRAJAYA: A total of 5,000 youths will be appointed as innovation ambassadors to help speed up the country's development under a new initiative called Genovasi.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, who launched the new unit on Wednesday, said the appointments will be made over the next five years once Genovasi goes online in 2013.

He said youths appointed under Genovasi - which is a combination of the words generasi and innovasi - will be trained and put at the forefront of the push to bring positive changes to the country.

Najib said the government was aware that the country's youths are a willing and important asset in helping the country achieve its goal of becoming a developed nation by year 2020.

"Youths are no longer content being mere passengers and spectators (to the nation's development)," he said when launching Genovasi at his office here.

Genovasi will be set up and managed by a new agency under the Prime Minister's Department called Unit Inovasi Khas (Unik).

As an innovation organisation, Genovasi will work with various international and local partners to develop a training and learning curriculum for young Malaysians to pick up innovation.

Among the renowned experts and organisations that have come on board to assist and guide Genovasi include shoe designer Datuk Jimmy Choo, the Hasso-Plattner Institute and its School of Design Thinking, Pearson, Singularity University, Stanford University, The Millennium Project and The Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce.

Upon completion of training, youths selected to be part of Genovasi will then be appointed to take the lead in bringing positive changes in one of three core areas - civil service delivery, quality of life for rural and local communities and new economic wealth creation.

Unik chief executive officer Datuk Kamal Jit Singh said they will need another four to five months to work out the details on how exactly they will run Genovasi, but noted that their target will be university graduates who will largely be in their 20s.

"Their involvement will not be full time. It will be akin to an internship, and we will probably work out a stipend for them," he said.

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