

PM Najib Knows What at Malaysian Youths Want

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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 19 (Bernama) -- Realising that utilising social media would allow him to better communicate and engage with youths, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak had taken to Facebook and Twitter to connect to people especially youths.

The Prime Minister is now actively using social media to stay in touch with youths and to get feedback and ideas from them on government policies, thus allowing people to have direct access to him.

Currently Najib has about 2.64 million followers on Twitter while his Facebook page has about 2.9 million 'likes'.

Having to cope with responsibilities early in life and with his involvement in politics at a young age, Najib understands the need to have greater youth engagement in development of policies and programmes.

He was the youngest Malaysian deputy minister when at the age of 25 he was appointed Energy, Telecommunications and Posts deputy minister, a post he held from July 27, 1978 to Sept 5, 1980.

In addition he was the youngest menteri besar at 29, when he was appointed Pahang Menteri Besar from May 4, 1982 to Aug 10, 1986.

When he was Youth and Sports Minister (May 20, 1987 to Oct 1990), Najib was the first Malaysian leader to receive the 'Special Testimony award from the United Nations for his contribution towards youth development at international level.

Since his appointment as the sixth Malaysian Prime Minister on April 3, 2009 Najib had introduced various programmes and incentives to help youths, among them, establishing the Young Entrepreneur Fund with an allocation of RM50 million to be managed by SME Bank; giving one-off rebate of RM200 for youths to purchase one unit of 3G smart phone and introducing the Youth Housing Scheme which was opened to 20,000 married couples aged between 25 to 40 years.

An important measure taken by the government was the launch of a more comprehensive New Malaysia Youth Policy on May 15, 2015 to replace the 1997 National Youth Development Policy for the development of youths as Malaysia moves on to become a high-income nation.

The policy to be implemented from 2018 defines youths as those between 15 and 30, replaces the earlier policy that categorises youths as those between 15 and 40.

This commitment was reinforced further in the Eleventh Malaysia Plan (11MP) 2016-2020 which was tabled six days later giving greater emphasis on capacity building, education and skills training,

entrepreneurship, sports and volunteerism.

The Najib-led government also announced the implementation of three pilot projects for three 1Malaysia Youth Cities in the peninsular, Sabah and Sarawak with an allocation of RM100 million.

The 1Malaysia Youth City will each have a comprehensive ecosystem to enable youths to enhance their capabilities and advance themselves in jobs and entrepreneurship while enjoying recreational facilities, housing, including a transit home.

Youths groups were also given a platform to discuss issues and ideas as well as to formulate policies through the Malaysian Youth Parliament with the first session held for two days in the Dewan Rakyat on Jan 10 and 11, 2015.

The discussions were not held for fun as points raised during the session were processed and made into a report to be tabled to the Cabinet before it was submitted to the relevant ministries for further action.

The Prime Minister also sparked off the 1Malaysia For Youth (iM4U) programme in July 2012 to instill the spirit of volunteerism among 12.5 million youths in Malaysia and set up a special RM100 million youth volunteer fund called Dana Sukarelawan 1Malaysia (DRe1M) to help non-governmental organisations and youth groups carry out volunteer activities.

Meanwhile, iM4U Chief Executive Officer Azlan Rudy Malik said iM4U had organised various volunteer programmes and had attracted more youth groups such as Volunteer Malaysia, iM4U Reach Out, iM4U Reach Out Run and ASEAN4U.

"The iM4U volunteers are from different backgrounds in terms of race, religion and education and this spirit of volunteerism had succeeded in uniting the people to work together as a community," he told Bernama here.

He said iM4U was targeting another one million volunteers to add to the two million volunteers currently available, apart from spending 500,000 volunteer hours through activities which would create an impact on society.

He added that iM4U fm radio station, being aired in the Klang Valley and enjoyed by 53,000 listeners had indeed managed to bring youths together through music.

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