

Welfare benefits will be given to children of Kg Batong couple

Rachel Thien
BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN

THE Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS) has promptly responded to the plight of a Bruneian couple with 12 children to support after only being left with about \$240 monthly, by offering to provide welfare benefits for the children.

Deputy Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports Datin Hjh Adina Othman yesterday told *The Brunei Times* after learning of the family's

situation, officers at the Community Development Department (Japem) immediately paid a visit to the family in the morning to send food and compile a report on their stance. Upon receiving the report, Datin Hjh Adina said the ministry will definitely support the couple's children with welfare benefits, which they will receive by January 1. However, no further details on the amount given to the children could be disclosed until further assessments were made.

The deputy minister said it is

pertinent that the couple's three children aged 13 to 15, "go back to school immediately". The children had recently dropped out of school because there is no food to eat and it has been difficult for them to study at night as there is only one working lightbulb in their house.

She said MCYS will discuss with the Ministry of Education whether the three children can be placed in hostels near their schools.

Yesterday afternoon, 40-year-old civil servant Hjh Siti Rohana Hj Makmun met with Datin Hjh Adina



at the ministry. When the issue was raised, the mother of 12 immediately agreed to allow her children to stay in government hostels, said the minister.

Meanwhile, the deputy minister said MCYS will also consider providing other welfare benefits for her children, provided all of them remain in school. She said the ministry will further assist the family by looking into providing advice on

financial management. Following Japem's visit to their residence yesterday, Datin Hjh Adina noted that the ministry will be sending mattresses and beds for the family.

She explained that when the ministry considers providing welfare benefits for such cases, they will take into consideration how much the family earns, as well as the cost of basic utilities such as electricity and water, among others, as part of their formula line.

In this particular case, Datin Hjh Adina said the family "falls below the formula line". "The government will step in in cases like this, but the first line of responsibility starts with the family," she said.

The family of 14 live in a three-bedroom house in the interiors of Kampung Batong, which is bereft of basic furniture or even mattresses to sleep on. They have been surviving on instant noodles and eggs, and sadly, the parents cannot even afford to buy formula milk for their youngest child, a three-year-old son.

The Brunei Times

(Above) File photo of Datin Hjh Adina Othman, MCYS Deputy Minister (Left) Hjh Siti Rohana Hj Makmun with one of her 12 children outside her house in Kg Batong. Pictures: BT



Workshop helps jobseekers to start 'somewhere'

Hana Roslan
BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN

THE Local Employment and Workforce Development Agency under the Ministry of Home Affairs in collaboration with Skilltech Training began their workshop yesterday to assist local jobseekers in their journey to employment.

Training Supervisor at the agency Noor Hidayatun Na'imah Hj Amir Hidayat said that one of the aims of hosting this workshop was because sometimes jobseekers "didn't know where to start when it comes to seeking employment".

She said that they will learn CV writing as well as interview skills to prepare them for the upcoming job fair on December 12. One of the highlights was getting "role models" to speak about their successes in employment, even with low or high qualification.

"By listening to the success stories of these role models, we hope to inspire local jobseekers

and be more motivated in search of employment," she said.

Managing Director of Skilltech Training Lailawati Pehin Orang Kaya Shahbandar Dato Seri Paduka Hj Mohd Saleh said the selection of role models were not typical examples of high flyers who have done very well in their careers.

Instead, she said that these were people who have shown exemplary personalities and character in their quest to find jobs.

"One of them is a graduate who couldn't find job for a year, and she told herself that instead of wasting time, she went to work in a fast food chain. Another man from Tutong drives for one hour to Bandar and works from nine in the morning till nine at night," she said, adding that he was a very loyal worker who was always on time and grateful to have a job.

There are a total of six sessions in the workshop which is began yesterday and will end December 3.

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