

Poor family grateful to gov't, public

Rachel Thien
BRUNEI-MUARA

WORDS could not explain how thankful the family of 14 residing in a dilapidated house in Kampung Batong was to the public and to the government after assistance came pouring to help better their living conditions.

After the family's plight was reported last Monday, some people have provided with monetary assistance for the family via *The Brunei Times*, while the government through the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports said that welfare benefits would be provided to the children before January 1.

When *The Brunei Times* paid another visit to the family yesterday, the 41-year-old father of 12, who asked for his name to be withheld, humbly said he was overwhelmed by the support from the government for providing welfare benefits to his children, as well as for handing over food supplies and mattresses.

He also expressed his gratitude to those who have given them monetary assistance and food supplies.

"Thank you very much to the government and to the public for helping us. It is difficult for me to express my appreciation," he said.

The father, who seemed gentle-natured and soft spoken, said he did not want to "trouble" the public with their situation.

"All that everyone has given us is enough already and I want to thank them again. *Rezeki ada sudah* (sustenance has arrived)," he said, adding he will use some of the money to fix their old-rickety car, which can only travel at 20 km/hr.

The couple's 19-year-old daughter said she felt better that help has been given to ease her family's burden.

"I'm very thankful to the good samaritans and the government," she said.

She said it was great that Deputy Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports Datin Hj Adina Othman urged their mother two days ago to encourage her three siblings to return to school as soon as possible.

As the eldest daughter who is currently studying 'A' Levels at a local college, she said she will work hard to obtain a government scholarship to the United Kingdom to pursue a degree in Administration Finance. "When I come back, I want to find a good job and take care of my family," she said.

"This is good because their (siblings) going back to school would give them a future," she said.

She also said that with the money received from the donors, she immediately bought formula milk for her three-year-old sibling.

"It is comfortable for us when we sleep at night as we now have mattresses. We are very thankful," she said, adding the ministry had given them six mattresses and six pillows on Tuesday.

As the eldest daughter who is currently studying 'A' Levels at a local college, she said she will work hard to obtain a government scholarship to the United Kingdom to pursue a degree in Administration Finance.

"When I come back, I want to find a good job and take care of my family," she said.

Since Monday, many have called and sent emails to *The Brunei Times* asking for the family's address, to personally hand over their donation.

The couple, working as civil



(Above) Children of Hjh Siti Rohana Hj Makmun arranging the new mattresses received from the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports. (Below) The siblings unpacking bags filled with food necessities donated by members of the public at their house in Kg Batong, Jln Panchor Murai. Pictures: BT/Zamri Zainal

servants, earn a gross salary of about \$1,400 monthly. However, their liabilities are such that they are just left with \$240 to fend for themselves and their 12 children.

In a previous report, the family said when it comes to food, they have been surviving on instant noodles and eggs as they can only afford meat such as chicken at the beginning of the month.

They could not even afford to buy formula milk for their youngest son.

The family yesterday requested not to reveal their address due to privacy reasons.

However, for those who intend to hand over their donations to the family, they said it can be sent to *The Brunei Times* Sdn Bhd's headquarters at the 3rd Floor, Wisma Hj Mohd Taha in Jalan Gadong.

Donations will be handed over to the family, and pictures of the handing-over will be posted on *The Brunei Times* Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/TheBruneiTimes>.

The Brunei Times



Nature of unemployment in Brunei 'unique'

Hana Roslan
BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN

ONE of the skills that local jobseekers in Brunei lack was having the ability to "sell themselves" to their employers, according to the managing director of SkillTech Training.

In an interview with Lailawati Pehin Orang Kaya Shahbandar Dato Seri Paduka Hj Mohd Salleh, she said that they have made a few proposals such as profiling in researching youth unemployment issues in Brunei, and one of these included finding out what youth jobseekers want.

"Bruneians are respectful and softspoken, but the thing they lack is selling themselves, coming out of their box and speaking highly of themselves," she said, adding that she had the same problem working internationally for ten years.



SkillTech Managing Director Lailawati in an interview with *The Brunei Times* during the "Ready, (Mind) Set, Work" workshop on Tuesday. Picture: BT/Hana Roslan

"My weakness was that I don't give myself enough credit." During the "Ready, (Mind) Set,

Work" workshop, which was a collaborative effort between the Local Work Agency and Workforce Development (APTK) from the Ministry of Home Affairs and SkillTech Training, a questionnaire was handed out to the participants to address more local issues pertaining to unemployment.

"It is basically using international tools and also a questionnaire designed by SkillTech to address more local issues. We are trying to get them to look inside themselves, drag it out of them in how they view themselves," she said.

"What we are saying is that any character can come in handy in any job, even playfulness, as long as they know how to mould it."

From the employers' point of view, Laila said that feedback about who they employ was also important as they want to know

more about who they are employing.

"Employers want to know what they want, what they like and how they see themselves in five years and it's that (kind of information) that convinces employers to take them on," she said.

The managing director also spoke of some findings in the issues of youth unemployment in Brunei and said that Brunei was quite "unique" in that aspect.

"It's not really the quantity meaning the percentage of unemployment, but it's more the nature of it," she said.

There were certain factors that are unique to Brunei such as family pressure, she said, and once again Brunei is different because people really want to work in the government sector.

"Maybe we can understand why that is so. But now it's time for

Brunei to change the mindset into being more competitive as well as (consider) working in private companies," she said.

"There is a certain unwillingness to start from the bottom because of pride and choosiness."

When asked how to ensure that private sectors can give local jobseekers the promise of career progression, she said the jobseekers would have to convince them of their worth.

"Of course it is in any nature to go for something that's better, so local businesses should prioritise Bruneians and place an importance on training and incentives," she said.

"From the government side, I know it's difficult, but they also need to give our locals a chance because there are very good locals out there."

The Brunei Times