

MCMC VOLUNTEERS TO HELP RURAL PEOPLE UNDERSTAND BETTER ICT

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KOTA SAMARAHAN: To ensure no one is left out from the many benefits brought by information communication technology (ICT), and that the technology is not misused, the Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) has appointed 40 volunteers to help Sarawak's rural population grasp the virtues of ICT.

The volunteers come from MCMC's 'Malaysia ICT Volunteer' (MIV) programme and they have been stationed at the nine 1Malaysia Internet Centres (Pi1M) in Sarawak, the pioneering state for the programme.

For Eneng Faridah Iskandar, MCMC's senior director for the Advocacy and Outreach Division, it has always been the goal for MCMC to establish the ICT volunteer corps throughout the country to help the masses especially in the rural areas learn of the many benefits of ICT.

"Apart from these 40 volunteers, we have been targeting to train more volunteers to serve within their communities all over the nation.

"The volunteers will be the ones where the society could refer to on how they could benefit from ICT and how to use it responsibly," she said during the 2016 MIV programme here recently.

Among the objectives of MIV are to create a digital literate society with the ICT facilities provided by the government, improve the daily activities through digital means and expose the society to the huge potential of the online business.

International volunteers

In ensuring effective volunteerism, MCMC has invited South Korean volunteers from Programme IIV (International ICT Volunteer) to team up with the local volunteers.

The four Korean volunteers with the help of four local volunteers have been exposing the locals on information technology, including computer programmes, in using the social media responsibly, creating graphics and coding.

“Like what we know, Korea is ahead in information technology compared with Malaysia.

“I’m confident that, the Korean and local volunteers and the community in Kampung Pinang here will get to know each other’s culture, enhance their ICT skills and the friendship between the two countries. It is hoped that they too will woo more youngsters to become ICT volunteers,” she said at the Anyeong Haseyo Day’ carnival held at Sekolah Kebangsaan Kampung Pinang, Samarahan.

At the one day carnival held to help the locals and the ICT volunteers to get to know of each other, a cultural presentation was held.

The story from the volunteers

Becoming a volunteer and disseminating knowledge on the advantages brought by ICT to the local communities are an interesting experience for these volunteers.

For Korean volunteer Hyung Gyum Kim, language proved to be no barrier for him in sharing with the locals on ICT as the local volunteers were ever ready to help.

“The training sessions are also conducted in English and we are proud to teach the students on how to use ICT properly for their own benefit,” he said.

Hyung, 23, noted that this is the first time he had been overseas under the programme where he also took the opportunity to hold Korean cooking classes during his one month stay in Kampung Pinang.

A local volunteer, Norlia Salleh, 22, derived satisfaction from helping the community, especially the students, by teaching them on the benefits of ICT and that it should not be misused.

Norlia, an information systems undergraduate with Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas), was initially sceptical of the rural students’ ability to effectively capitalise on ICT.

“Surprisingly, they could easily absorb whatever is taught to them. They could even create graphics like postcards using computer and this is something to be proud off,” she said.

Success story

Though it is just a pioneering project, the success of the local volunteers from the MIV programme is something to be proud off.

Among the outcomes that one can be proud is 18 online business through Facebook have been established.

According to Eneng, among the online businesses are Strawberry Shortcakes by Nor Aliza Matden, Black Orchid Recipe food business by Siti Nurul Izzah Sidi, gadget accessories business 'Macam-Macam Aksesori Gajet Store' by Yumizal Juan and accommodation 'Homestay Desa Samarahan' by Nor Fazlin Safari.

Following the success, Eneng said MCMC would present certificates to 40 of the MIV volunteers so that they could continue disseminating knowledge on ICT to the locals.

"The plan is to expand the programme to other states and open opportunities to the others with ICT knowledge to serve as volunteers throughout the country.

"There are many things to consider, however we are confident this positive plan can be rolled out in the future," he said adding that Sabah could well be the next destination for the MIV programme. — Bernama