

# INNOVATION CRUCIAL FOR COUNTRY'S COMPETITIVENESS — NANCY

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Nancy (centre) purchases some buns at the SSPCA Christmas Carnival 2016.

KUCHING: Innovation is crucial for the country's competitiveness as well as finding solutions to societal challenges.

According to Minister in Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Nancy Shukri, innovation is needed to address societal challenges such as youth unemployment, homelessness and juvenile crimes.

“Ultimately, innovation is about finding ways to achieve sustainable growth and sustainable societies,” she said at Sarawak Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SSPCA)’s ‘Christmas Carnival 2016’ at the Christian Ecumenical Worship Centre here yesterday.

Nancy, who is also minister leading the innovation portfolio, also shared some initiatives by the National Innovation Agency of Malaysia (AIM) – an agency under the Prime Minister’s Department.

“One of the six approaches to innovation adopted by AIM is promoting social innovation through public-private partnership (PPP) similar to what SSPCA is doing.”

Citing the ‘Bridging the Gap Campaign’ under the Social PPP initiative in partnership with the PPP Unit as an example, she said the campaign was aimed at tackling increasing social issues.

“Matching grant worth RM1 million has been allocated to support social purpose organisations (SPOs) such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), social enterprises and community-based organisations with fresh and innovative solutions but lack the funds to carry them out.

“Through this model, the burden and risk of social service programmes will be reduced through the sharing of resources, while hailing the involvement of government, private and social sectors,” said Nancy, who is Batang Sadong MP.

She also commended SSPCA for being the only animal welfare NGO in the country with a formal agreement with local councils to actively educate the nation on the need to care for animals.

“It is not easy to run an NGO like SSPCA, as it requires huge sacrifice of one’s time, finance and commitment. Therefore, I would like to congratulate SSPCA and I believe we should work together and further encourage this kind of initiative.”

Nancy said SSPCA had also continued to play its role not only in raising awareness of animal welfare but also in bringing people together through events such as the SSPCA Christmas Carnival.

“SSPCA has shown the true spirit of 1Malaysia by providing a platform to encourage members of the public to respond in kindness and generosity to the needs of the community.

“Every gesture of a helping hand goes a long way in touching hearts and this will build ties amongst the people, which will contribute to national unity,” she added.

Meanwhile, SSPCA president Datin Donna Drury Wee said the society had been actively pushing the ‘Capture, Neuter, Vaccinate and Release’ (CNVR) concept this year.

“We have helped Galacity and Brighton Square reduce strays in their areas through neutering and we also did one campaign at the Sarawak Fisheries Department.

“We are also in talks with the Customs Complex, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) and Politeknik Kuching with regard to CNVR programme in their areas,” she said, expressed her hope to see the state government through the Ministry of Local Government adopting this approach as its policy statewide.

Meanwhile, this year’s carnival hosted 64 stalls selling a variety of items such as cakes and pastries, snacks and ice-creams, as well as second-hand goods. There were also exciting carnival games and performances, including Christmas carols to liven up the festive mood.

SSPCA chairperson Rebecca D'Cruz was also present at the event.