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# Why These Local NGOs Are Making A Real Difference And Standing Out From The Crowd

Details Published on Monday, 16 November 2015 08:02 Written by Mushamir Mustafa



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Mention non-profit organizations (NGOs) and many will associate the term with anti-government activists and rabble rousers out to stir up dissent and make waves in the political scene.

In actual fact, most of the fresh new crop of home-grown nonprofits movements in Malaysia are making waves where it really matters, in tackling traditional causes with a fresh new twist that appeal to the younger generation and at the same time making volunteerism hip and cool for age-old causes like environmental sustainability, literacy, outreach to marginalized communities and poverty.

One of the NGO representatives interviewed told *Malaysian Digest* how the work they do, while necessary, is akin to putting bandages to a wound.

That puts into perspective the crucial role these NGOs play in our society.

While many world-renowned international and regional NGOs also operate in Malaysia, often playing a pioneering role in establishing charitable foundations, these global institutions often focus on the bigger picture and approach volunteerism in a traditional, somewhat outdated manner.

It is encouraging seeing the fresh crop of home-grown NGOs who are emerging locally and tapping into a range of social and environmental issues that have a local perspective.

Malaysia has also just made top ten placing in the World Giving Index 2015 published by the Charities Aid Foundation's (CAF) in early November, making it the tenth most generous nation in the world. The World Giving Index measures which countries volunteer and give most money to charity and according to the survey, Malaysians are a generous lot, ranked 10 among 145 nations surveyed.

Malaysians helped our country to record impressive results - 27th globally for helping strangers and 17th position for donating funds but with 37% of Malaysians active in volunteerism.

Although several NGOs have grabbed the limelight in fighting against corruption and campaigning for better governance and more democratic space, those making the most impact in people's lives on a daily basis are the ones providing the 'bandage' to those who fall through the gaps of our market economy and offering a support system.

As there are a plethora of NGO's out there, Malaysian Digest reached out to the movers and shakers in the local NGO scene who are impacting society and in need of well-deserved media attention.

### MyKasih



MyKasih Foundation was established in 2009 by Tan Sri Dr Ngau Boon Keat and his wife Puan Sri Jean Ngau to help the poor through food aid and education, regardless of race, religion or descent.

Since the Foundation's establishment in 2009, they have reached out to almost 227,000 low-income households nationwide. The beneficiaries also include 9,618 primary and secondary school students from 187 schools.

Sitting with one of the representatives of MyKasih, they introduce two of their flagship CSR programmes which are:

- The MyKasih 'Love My Neighbourhood' food aid programme, and
- The MyKasih 'Love My School' student bursary programme.

"Both these programmes run on an efficient cashless payment system, which uses the chip technology of the MyKad to disburse welfare aid to target beneficiaries (i.e. poor households earning a combined household income of RM 1,500/month and below).

"Under the food aid programme, registered recipients use their MyKad to draw upon a monthly allowance of RM80, which is contributed by donors, to purchase essential food items from 10 different product categories, like rice, cooking oil, canned foods, biscuits, bread, noodles, seasonings, eggs, beverages and flour at partner retail outlets.

"Likewise, student beneficiaries under the MyKasih 'Love My School' student bursary programme use their MyKad-linked student smart card to buy food & drinks at the school canteen, as well as books and stationery items at the school bookstore.

"Once the students are selected and approved, accounts will be opened against the students' Mykad in the system into which a spending allowance of RM 30-40 will be deposited. The students will draw on the allowances by using their MyKasih Student Smart Card to pay for purchases made at approved outlets.

"The allowance of RM 30-40 will be replenished twice a month. Each student can expect a total bursary payment of not more than RM 720 – 960 per school year."

In essence, the overall aim of the MyKasih programmes is to help alleviate the burden that underprivileged families have in putting food on the table and keeping their children in school.

How To Be Involved: Donate one year's food or school supplies to either a family or student. To find out more of their list of ongoing programmes, please visit <http://www.mykasih.com.my/web/index.php>

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