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Working together to relieve poverty

KUCHING: MyKasih Foundation (MKF) and Ministry of Welfare, Women and Family Development will be working together in programmes to relieve poverty in the state.

MKF managing director Jeffrey Perera said MKF, set up in the peninsula in 2008, is a non-profit organisation that provides less fortunate Malaysians food aid, health awareness and financial literacy programmes, children's education and skills training programmes.

"We talked to the ministry and hope to expand our programme to Sarawak to reach out to more low income households," he said after a meeting with Welfare, Women and Family Minister Datuk Fatimah Abdullah at her Masja Office in Petra Jaya yesterday.

The MyKasih programme drives welfare distribution with a difference. MKF provides

recipients a card called 'MyKad' that enable them to shop for basic necessities at selected retail outlets without using cash.

In Sarawak, the programme started early this month helped over 300 recipients from the Penan community in Long San, Long Keluan and Lusong Laku.

Each recipient was given an allowance of RM100 per month in Sarawak while RM80 per month in the peninsula. Students are given allowance for food and school necessities.

Fatimah said the ministry would help MKF identify potential recipients.

"We have 2,000 over applicants for our E-Kasih system who haven't received any assistance from any organisation yet. We can provide MKF the number of this people," she said.

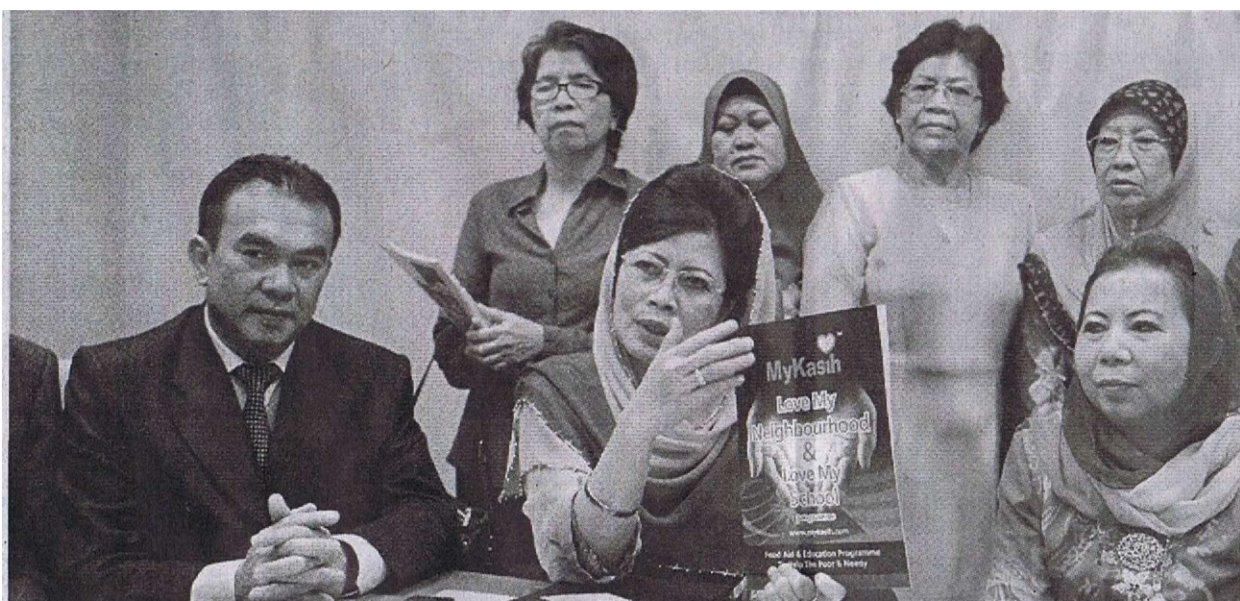
She said it is a holistic

programme to relieve poverty. The beauty of the system was the transparency where every ringgit was channelled from donor to recipient, and updated information on transactions were made available to the donors online.

"MKF also provides training and job-matching to help the poor become financially independent. Children are provided with education assistance," she said.

"We need donors for the programme to work. Next Jan 20, we will have hold a meeting with potential donors. We are formulating plans to approach them," said the Dalat assemblywoman.

Also present were Fatimah's two assistant ministers Robert Lawson Chuat (Welfare) and Rosey Yunus (Early Childhood Development and Family Development)



POVERTY-BUSTING: Fatimah (seated, centre) speaking to the press after the meeting. Also seen are Robert Lawson (seated left), Rosey and several social activists. — Photo by Chen Ai Shih