



A green thumbs up for education

Club and foundation cooperate to set up garden in school for orang asli students to grow vegetables

SEKOLAH Kebangsaan Bukit Lanjan (Asli) pupils can now plant their own vegetables in school with the launch of the OA Greens project, an edible garden project for the Temuan orang asli community of Damansara Perdana.

The project organised by the Rotary Club of Lake Gardens Kuala Lumpur in collaboration with MyKasih Foundation and Dialog Group Bhd, is a long-term economic and community development project.

The school, which currently has 164 students with 130 from the Temuan orang asli community, will now guide pupils in planting their own vegetable garden in the school compound.

The project aims to help economically challenged families of the Temuan orang asli community.

With the vegetable garden, it is hoped that the pupils will be able to provide themselves and their families proper nutrition while learning the life skill of producing their own food.

Officiating at the launch of the project, which was held in conjunction with International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples as designated by the United Nations, was Rotary Club of Lake Gardens Kuala Lumpur president Shafinaz Suhaimi.

"Poverty is the number one contributor that sees every six out of 100 orang asli children being unable to complete their secondary education with most of them dropping out of school after Year Six," said Shafinaz.

"This is not just a farming exercise to provide nutrition and food security to those in need, it also provides an avenue for experiential learning as teachers would use the garden to teach the pupils subjects such as English and Science, besides motivating the academically-inclined pupils in the

classroom to study," Shafinaz explained.

Excess vegetables from the garden would be sold by the school's pupil enterprise to assist the school in terms of finances besides ensuring the wellbeing of the pupils.

The garden is set up on idle land which was formerly a dumpsite, enabling the school to also address the problem of potential mosquito breeding ground by transforming it into a vegetable garden.

In his welcoming remarks, SK Bukit Lanjan headmaster Khairul Anuar Abdul Azid spoke on the background and history of the school which was first established in 1950 with 40 orang asli pupils.

He also expressed his gratitude to MyKasih Foundation and Dialog Group that had helped improve the school's facilities and the students' well-being.

"The school has been working closely with NGOs and organisations which have provided financial aid for, among others, the library, computer lab and meeting room," said Khairul Anuar.

"The school hopes that more organisations will come forward to assist us in improving the school's facilities," he added.

For the purpose of this project, Ecocentric Transitions has developed special modules to impart crucial fundamentals of financial management, environmental consciousness and social responsibility amongst the children.

A team from Ecocentric Transitions was present during the launch as they helped 50 pupils in starting up the vegetable garden and educated them on stages of plant growth in their workshop.

Students from the school also performed a launch gimmick on dengue awareness and dance performance during the launch of the OA Greens project.



(Front from right) Rotarian Jee Kim Sun, District Rotary Kasih Committee chairman past president Dr. S.R. Sen Gupta, Shafinaz and Dialog Group Bhd's director Siti Khairon Shariff planting vegetable saplings at the launch of the OA Greens project.



The students performing a traditional dance at the launch of the OA Greens project.



Ecoentric Transitions member Firdaus Nisha (left) demonstrating the stages of plant growth to pupils of SK Bukit Lanjan.