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## Eradicating Poverty Yayasan Sejahtera's Way

By Ali Imran Mohd Noordin

KUALA LUMPUR (Bernama) – Oct 17 is the United Nation's International Day for the Eradication of Poverty and Malaysia has every reason to celebrate the day looking at the country's sterling record in poverty eradication.

The number of poor households, both in urban and rural settings, has been reduced drastically since independence. As for example, from 2009 to 2012 itself, poor households were further reduced by 52.7 per cent, from 226,400 to 108,000.

And the poor in the country enjoy social security net, that include the BR1M cash payments. Thus the poor in Malaysia have to consider themselves lucky compared with many of their counterparts in other nations who neither have social security net nor the avenues to improve their lot.

However, as far as the Malaysian government and organisations that advocate poverty eradication are concerned, the battle on poverty is far from over.

Thus for people like Tan Sri Faizah Mohd Tahir, the chairwoman of the board of trustees of Yayasan Sejahtera (YS), the strategic cooperation between the government and organisations like YS remain vital in taking the war on poverty to the next level.

YS serves as the conduit for the Government Linked Companies (GLCs) and Government Linked Investment Companies (GLIC) in helping the government enhance poverty eradication in the country.

### HARDCORE POVERTY THE TARGET

"We are doing our part to complement the government's efforts in poverty eradication. Yes, we have to admit that we still have poor and hardcore poor households around and this is where we play our part as strategic partner to government agencies.

"There are many reasons why poverty incidences still happen. Based on our experience, those living in isolated areas or in the interiors are more vulnerable to poverty", says Faizah.

At present, YS programmes focuses on hardcore poor with long term plans put in place to free these group from the shackles of poverty.

Up to August 2014, a total of 6,431 families have received assistance from YS in the form of equipment, skills and infrastructure to undertake programmes relating to agriculture, tailoring, education and business.

### COOPERATION THE KEY TO SUCCESS

"We don't handout cash to participants. The goal is to guide and enable them to earn sustainable income for the family. For that, we work closely with government agencies, local authorities, universities and in states like Sabah, YS plays an active role in poverty eradication programmes run by the state government", she adds.

YS carries out its mission with the help of Implementation Coordination Unit (ICU) at the Prime Minister's Department that maintains the poverty register, eKasih, a database on households earning less than RM1,000 a month in rural areas and RM1,500 a month in town areas.

Most of the programmes rolled out by YS are training based, and therefore it has established cooperation with government agencies with the expertise in the respective fields.

As for example, in the project to improve livelihood in Kampung Song Song, Kota Belud, Sabah, YS worked with the Agriculture Department and the Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (FAMA) to train participants in ginger cultivation.

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At Lusunng Baku, Sarawak, YS worked with the Rural and Regional Development Ministry, the armed forces and the Mineral and Geosciences Department to set up the gravity water project for the benefit of the 102 Penan families.

In Kelantan, the programme to promote agriculture activities, and food based and tailoring business with the cooperation of the Agriculture Department and Universiti Malaysia Kelantan managed to generate a cumulative income of RM510,528.50 for the 55 participants.

### POVERTY ERADICATION DAY

Therefore, in celebrating Malaysia's success thus far in reducing the poverty rates since independence, and in conjunction with United Nation's International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, the foundation will be organising the YS International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on 26 Oct.

YS will be celebrating with the theme "Urban Poor, Overlooked and Underserved" to highlight the current problem - urban poverty and its wider implication to the nation.

"This is a new area for us. Urban poverty is so different in character and perspective thus we need to learn about it thoroughly before embarking on the mission to formulate our own urban poverty eradication programmes in 2015", explains Fauziah.

The highlights of the celebration organised in conjunction with the Social Entrepreneurship Centre of Bina University are the Forum on Urban Poverty and a discussion centred on the "Perspectives of Urban Poverty" where the views of the international community will be heard.

Among the forum panelist who have confirmed their attendance are the Leading Fellow of the Environment and Sustainable Development Institute Dr Charnhuri Swar, the founder of Yayasan Chow Kit Dr Hartini Zainudin and the director of SRI (PSDT), NKRA (Crime) Performance Management and Delivery Unit (PEMANDU) Datuk Dr Amin Khan.

More information is available at [www.sejahtera.my](http://www.sejahtera.my). Those keen to participate in this forum could contact YS at 03-22680041 (ext 0038) or email to [info@sejahtera.my](mailto:info@sejahtera.my).

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