

UNICEF Malaysia Appoints UMS To Evaluate The Pioneering Alternative Education Programme

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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26 - UMS has been given the honour to conduct an evaluation on behalf of The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Malaysia on the 'Reaching the Unreached: An Alternative Education Programme for Refugees, Undocumented and Stateless Children in Kampung Numbak, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah'.

Competing nationally for this prestigious honour, the UMS team led by Prof Vincent Pang, outbided the other rival universities with its winning proposal. The other key members of the UMS team include Dr Lee Kean Wah, Madam Ng Shi Ing, and Ms Crispina

Gregory K Han, from the School of Education and Social Development. Besides these core members, the UMS team is also ably supported by other associate members and students from the School of Education and Social Development (SPPS), and the Centre for the Promotion of Knowledge and Language Learning (PPIB). The fund allocated for this research amounted to RM88,000. The evaluation project is scheduled to be completed by May 2013.

The education center in Kg. Numbak, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah is a first initiative by UNICEF in collaboration with Ministry of Education, and the Sabah Special Task Force to provide access to basic education for out-of-school children in line with the principles of ensuring education for all children irrespective of religion, race, location, or citizenship status. The Numbak Educare Centre was established in 2011 in response to the needs of United Nation's Article 28 (1)(a) Conventions on the Rights of the Child.

Since its inception, the Centre has been responsible for pioneering the implementation of an Alternative Education Programme (AEP) for the stateless and undocumented children. As the principal financier backer, UNICEF was interested to find out the extent of the impact of the AEP on this particular community. The evaluation was thus commissioned to meet the objectives of providing knowledge about the experience, lessons learnt and outcomes from the conception of the project up to the present time that UNICEF, MoE, Sabah Special Task Force and other education stakeholders can use as evidence for advocacy work and in the design of the Alternative Education Policy.

To evaluate the programme, the UMS team employs a participatory evaluation (PE) methodology based on a mixture of quantitative and qualitative, primary and secondary information sources. The participatory approach research method is appropriate because it takes into consideration the focal shift of Social Sciences research from the exclusive use of experimental designs to demonstrate the effectiveness of specific interventions and to foster their adoption in other settings (Patton, 1986). The evaluation process is scheduled to take place for six months.