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UMS to conduct survey

Database soon on problems of Sabah youths

By Hayati Dzulkipli

KOTA KINABALU: A comprehensive database on youth deviance will soon be available in the State.

Youth and Sports Minister, Datuk Masidi Manjun, said his Ministry has targeted the results of a survey on the subject to be completed by August this year.

"Universiti Malaysia Sabah's School of Psychology and Social Work head, Dr Rosnah Ismail, has been commissioned to establish the survey involving 10 selected secondary schools within the city area for a start.

"Presently, we do not have a credible database that can be our reference pertaining to problems faced by the local youths and how we can resolve them. That is why carrying out the study is necessary...the Ministry wants the results early and we hope to obtain it by August, as I believe Dr Rosnah is very efficient in her work," he said.

Masidi said this at a press conference after launching the "CHOOSE L.I.F.E" campaign and the presentation of questionnaires for the database on youth deviance in Sabah, at SM Lok Yuk, here, Wednesday. (L.I.F.E stands for Love, Impact, Freedom and Excellence).

The Working Committee on Addressing Youth Issues, which is within the ambit of the Sabah Youth Consultative Council, came up with the idea of organising the campaign to create awareness on current youth issues and provide an appropriate forum for discussion of these issues. The campaign is an exciting youth-centered initiative targeted at youths between the ages of 13 and 18.

Among those present were the Committee Chairman Josephine Hadikusumo, City Hall Director-General Dr Chua Kim Hing, UMS Deputy Vice-Chancellor Datuk Prof. Kamaruzaman Ampon, the Ministry's Permanent Secretary Suzanah Liaw, representatives of government departments, agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and school principals.

"Basically, we try to shoot in the dark...not knowing where our work will lead to. So, what we are trying to do today through the first initiated campaign is to prepare some reliable data or database facilities to enable us to better organise activities meant to cure social ills among the youths.

"The results of the study will be made available to the public and organisations which are interested in working with youth issues," said Masidi.

He said it would also be helpful to policy-makers as it will allow them to have better perspectives of what needs to be done rather than relying on figures and assumptions which are not verified.

Also, he said, the NGOs will be able to make full use of the statistics and data that has been compiled.

"What we expect from the survey is that Dr Rosnah will be able to give us some indications and guidance on certain places in the Kota Kinabalu area that are high-risk locations for youths.

"And if any of the 10 schools show an inclination towards social ills, then we will keep in touch with the school concerned to work together in finding ways to tackle the problems," he said.

Masidi is expecting maximum participation from youths in programme that is initiated and organised by young people.

He said there would be a variety of activities under the campaign to convince and guide youths in choosing the right ways of life by showing them glaring statistics if they decide to opt for negative lifestyles.

"I must say that I am totally motivated by the fact that more NGOs have come forward to assist the Government in addressing the issues faced by youths like in drugs and criminal activities.

"However, at the same time, I am urging Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) to come and work with us in resolving youth problems," he said.

Masidi asserted that parents' involvement is imperative as the real policemen of moral consciousness are the parents themselves.