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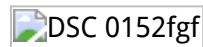
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USM-RICD CONTRIBUTES 30 SPECIALLY-MODIFIED WHEELCHAIRS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (OKU)



BANGI, 6 August 2015 - Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) continues to enhance the university-community network by working together with the Rajanagarinda Institute of Child Development (RICD), Thailand to contribute 30 specially-modified wheelchairs to a group of persons with disabilities (OKU).

This is the third time such a contribution is made since the Memorandum of Understanding was signed between USM and RICD in May 2012, and the first in Malaysia in answering the government's call to provide for the special needs of the OKU.



The specially-modified wheelchairs have been designed and built according to the needs and capabilities of the OKU users, and costing almost RM1.0 million since it was started in 2013.

Deputy Minister of Women, Family and Community Development (KPWKM), Datin Paduka Chew Mei Fun when officiating the programme, expressed her deep appreciation for the commitment shown by USM in championing the special needs of the OKU.

"Congratulations and well done to USM and RICD on the effort, which reflects not only the success in advancing the concept of the university-community network, but also in strengthening the reputation of USM as an institution that strives for the transformation of the future by establishing various cooperation with the community," she said.



She added, currently the government has legislated a policy to protect the rights of the OKU, together with an action plan for the inclusion of the OKU group into mainstream society, in achieving Vision 2020.

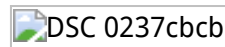
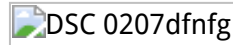
"The 11th Malaysia Plan focuses on efforts to empower the community within the inclusiveness framework, so as to allow the OKU group to be able to contribute to the community. Currently there are 348,280 OKU registered with the Department of Social Welfare (JKM) under the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (KPWKM), showing that with a programme such as this, USM is also assisting the government in easing and completing their lives."



Earlier, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Industry and Community Network) Professor Dato' Dr See Ching Mey, in representing the Vice-Chancellor said, USM hopes that the project can be continued up to the national level, in view of the issue on OKU rights and equalities need to be given serious consideration.

"USM is truly committed in championing the OKU agenda and fulfilling their needs to provide them a life that is healthy, comfortable and productive," said Ching Mey.

She explained, until now USM under the Division of Industry and Community Network (BJIM) has provided lifelong services for the OKU, vocational training, Multi-Disciplinary OKU Assessment, sports programme for OKU and this specially-modified wheelchairs programme.



"In fact, USM currently has a project on Inclusive Education (P.R.I.N.C.E) at the elementary level. It is an effort to reduce the gap and increase the equity in education between those in the mainstream and the OKU group. A grant has been provided to USM (PADU) to implement the pilot inclusive programme for five primary schools in Taiping, Perak," said Ching Mey.

She hoped that this USM-RICD collaboration would be a 'precious' and significant catalyst in fostering and kindling the desire to empower the involvement of the community, in order to forge a society which is willing to provide assistance to one another regardless of religion, race and country.



This programme was held at the Pusat Perindustrian dan Latihan Pemulihan (PPLP), Bangi, Selangor involving 30 persons with disabilities (OKU) who have been identified to be eligible for aid from Selangor, Melaka, Seremban, Pahang and Kuala Lumpur.

Others who attended were the Director of RICD Thailand, Dr. Samai Sirithongthaworn, Senior Director of Mindef Blue Ocean Strategy, Ministry of Defence Malaysia Brigadier General Toh Choon Siang and Director of Department of Development for Persons with Disabilities (JPOKU), Social Welfare Department Malaysia (JKM), Nik Omar Nik Ab. Rahman.

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