

By M. MAGESWARI
mages@thestar.com.my

INVESTING IN THE NATION'S CHILDREN

REGARDLESS of their socioeconomic status, every child has a right to proper education. It is this strong belief that has led Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) to continue its efforts in educational development to benefit underprivileged groups at schools.

Newly branded as the "Ceria Ke Sekolah" (CKS) programme, the corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative that started in 2013 was known as the "Back to School" (BTS) programme up until last year.

Under the BTS programme in 2018, TNB spent RM2mil in contributions to meet the various educational needs of 10,000 poor students.

This year, the utility giant has allocated over RM1mil for the CKS programme, with 5,000 students from low income families (B40) in 30 areas were selected as beneficiaries of its contributions.

Its most recent CKS programme, which was held at the sports complex multipurpose hall at TNB's Bangsar headquarters, saw 750 underprivileged students from six primary and secondary schools receiving contributions such as uniforms, school shoes, stockings, stationeries, scarves and school bags worth RM200 each.

During the event, TNB chairman Tan Sri Leo Moggie and Lembah Pantai Member of Parliament Ahmad Fahmi Mohamed Fadzil were present to hand over the contributions to the students, in the presence of their respective school teachers, Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) chairman, TNB top management, education officers, and the media.

Located in the same neighbourhood as TNB's headquarters, the six shortlisted schools include SK Bangsar, SK Bukit Bandaraya, SK Bukit Pantai, SMK Bangsar, SMK Bukit Bandaraya and SMK Seri Pantai.

A total of 100 students were selected from each school, while another 150 secondary school students were picked up from TNB's B40 Education Aid programme. Since last year, the B40 Education Aid programme has provided a one-off assistance of RM1,500 for selected Form Three to Five students each year. The aid, which spreads over a three-year period, covers food, books, uniform and stationery.

Harmony and CSR

Throughout its 70-year history, TNB has taken care to maintain harmony with its neighbours, said Moggie, adding that efforts to boost its surrounding communities' prosperity has been done in accordance with its capability and ability.

The CKS programme is one example of its various activities that involved the surrounding communities around TNB headquarters. It is part of TNB's CSR initiative, which covers three main areas, namely education, socio-economic activities (including sports) and environmental conservation.

In doing so, the utility giant's efforts support the national agenda of the Shared Prosperity Vision blueprint announced by the government earlier this year.

TNB has pinpointed education as the best way to make a difference, he elaborated, as giving good education opportunities for students could go on to change many aspects in their lives.

Addressing a packed audience, Moggie said, "We hope that the children we help today will be successful, as their success can be jointly enjoyed by their families.



TNB chairman Tan Sri Leo Moggie (fourth row, in blue) together with Ahmad Fahmi Mohamed Fadzil (beside Moggie) posing with the recipients of the CKS programme, TNB top management and other invited guests at the sports complex multipurpose hall in TNB's Bangsar headquarters.

"TNB will continue to move forward and continue this shared prosperity practice together with the society, as we have done today. "We hope that TNB's efforts will give motivation to these students to start their 2020 schooling term cheerfully and achieve success."

Foundation for a bright future

In his speech, the event's guest-of-honour, Lembah Pantai MP Ahmad Fahmi Mohamed Fadzil, also urged the students to make good use of the contributions from TNB.

"It is not easy to get aid or contributions, so use it as a foundation for a bright future. Use it to build up your strong spirit to continue to be successful in your schooling term," he said.

Moreover, he also expressed his hope that there would not be dropout issues among the students and further shared his expectations for them to further their studies at institutions of higher learning.

He added, "Have a good school holiday and make good use of this period to increase your knowledge, as you can also read e-books from mobile phones."

SMK Seri Pantai PTA chairman Nazri Ahmad said that they felt honoured that their students were selected for the CKS programme, noting that it had helped reduce the financial burden of the beneficiaries' families.

"The CKS programme will act as a motivation for those students to study hard and improve their educational performances at schools.

"TNB contributed for the benefit of underprivileged students in many ways, including donating spectacles to them. There are also students who cannot afford to eat breakfast and come to school without any pocket money, which was where TNB's B40 Education Aid



Nazri: The CKS programme will act as motivation for those students to study hard.



Norhayat: It was the second time SK Bukit Pantai was selected for the programme.



Mastuki: Students from the school came in a bus and were excited to get the contributions.

programme was very valuable for them," he said.

In addition, SMK Seri Pantai students affairs senior assistant Ramizu Ibrahim said that they were touched by TNB's gesture as the CKS programme was meaningful for the poor students.

Each qualified student received two pairs of Canggih uniforms, two pairs of shoes, a bag and stationeries for the next schooling term.

He said, "Some parents cried when their children received the contributions. There are some parents who continue to send their children to school with old uniforms as they cannot afford to get new ones for them."

SK Bukit Pantai PTA chairman Norhayat Kassim agreed with his view and expressed appreciation for the contributions, adding that it was the second year the school has been selected for the programme.

"These contributions make those underprivileged students felt humbled, as their families cannot afford to change their uniforms yearly," he said.

SK Bangsar teacher Mastuki Mahari added that 100 students from the school came in a bus and were very excited to get the

contributions.

He shared, "This is the second year that our school was selected for this programme. Their parents were grateful that they could reduce their expenses. Some of them were emotional as most of the time, their children have no choice but to go to school in faded uniforms every year."

Making meaningful contributions

SK Bukit Bandaraya teacher Hazim Lajis also expressed hoped for the CKS programme to be continued every year and extended to more underprivileged students.

"We hope more students will be able to enjoy the programme next year. It inspires students to study and gives confidence to them to attend school sessions," he said, adding that they have brought 23 pupils from the special education class to be among the 100 beneficiaries of the programme.

Wheelchair-bound Muhammad Emril Zafuan, who is a nine-year-old student from SK Bukit Bandaraya, relayed his happiness in being able to receive the contribution.

His teacher Hazim, who accompanied Muhammad Emril, said that the nine-year-old boy affected by cerebral palsy was taught self-management among other skills at the special education class.

"He was enjoying himself when we brought him to the stage to receive the contribution," added Hazim.

Muhammad Emril's schoolmate, nine-year-old Damia Batrisyia Latiff, who is a slow learner, shared her excitement in receiving new uniforms and other items for her schooling term next year.

Her schoolmate, 11-year-old prefect Muhammad Wariths Rafi Hassan, also a slow learner, shared his pride in getting a new bag and other items from TNB.

The fourth child out of five siblings, he said, "I felt motivated to study after receiving the contributions."

In the years to come, TNB has expectations that its CKS programme can be extended to more schools across the country and benefit more underprivileged students each year, in order to inspire students to pay attention during classes to get proper education to enable a better future.