



Najib at the launch of the OKU Talent Enhancement Programme (OTEP) by HRDF during the 2017 National Labour Day Celebration in Putrajaya.

Programme to further upskill disabled workers

Scheme offers employers 100% financial aid to send employees with disabilities for training

MALAYSIA is well on its way towards becoming a developed nation with 35% skilled local workforce by the year 2020.

A significant part of the 11th Malaysia Plan, which charts this ambition, focuses on strengthening inclusivity towards becoming a fair society through the empowerment of persons with disabilities (PWD).

In line with this, the Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF) initiated the OKU Talent Enhancement Programme (OTEP) last year.

This scheme enables employers to obtain 100% financial assistance to send PWD employees for training in selected training programmes.

"The programme aims to assist PWDs in securing employment by furnishing them with appropriate knowledge, skills and competencies through relevant training programmes required by the industry," said HRDF chief executive Datuk C.M. Vignaesvaran Jeyandran.

The programme was officially launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre.

This initiative complements the earlier implemented Job Coach Programme for PWDs (which was established in March 2010), which allows registered employers to get financial assistance to send PWDs for training in order for them to gain the necessary skills and knowledge to be able to enter the workforce.

The Job Coach Programme is a structured programme to assist PWDs in learning their job duties and industry standards at the workplace as well as assist them to develop proficiency in their jobs.

During the 11th Malaysia Plan, more programmes are slated to be implemented to empower a productive PWD community.

More accessibility to basic education and skills training will be provided, including entrepreneurship, to build relevant skills among PWDs so that they are employable by the private sector and the government, in line with the target to employ at least 1% PWD among civil servants.

So far, a total of 154 candidates have been trained under the OTEP, according to the needs and demands of industry.

I hope more companies answer the call to upskill and include the persons with disabilities (PWD) community in their growth, and that through the right training, PWDs are able to live an independent and fulfilling life.

Datuk C.M. Vignaesvaran Jeyandran

Sentoria Group Bhd sent 88 PWD employees from its subsidiary, Sentoria Themeparks and Resorts Sdn Bhd, for training in house-keeping, cleaning and interpersonal skills, which are an important aspect of working in the hospitality and tourism industry.

Mydin Mohamed Holdings Bhd sent 66 PWD employees from throughout Malaysia. The trainees were given theoretical and practical training for skills in the wholesale and retail industry, such as customer service, cashiers, security and communication.

"I hope more companies answer the call to upskill and include the PWD community in their growth, and that through the right training, PWDs are able to live an independent and fulfilling life," said Vignaesvaran.

He added that HRDF would continue its mandate of catalysing the development of a competent inclusive Malaysian workforce that was effective, efficient, productive and innovative, towards the goal of becoming an advanced and fair nation by the Year 2020.

Currently 17,583 HRDF-registered employers – and nearly two million employees – from the Manufacturing, Services and Mining & Quarrying sectors are benefiting from the organisation's initiatives.

These numbers are set to rise following the Expansion of the PSMB Act, 2001, which came into effect April 1 this year.