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16 HIV cases a day

HIV/AIDS is as much a Malaysian problem as it is in Africa. It is not someone else's problem but our collective problem. According to UNAIDS (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS) in 2007, an estimated 4.9 million people in Asia were living with HIV. HIV prevalence is highest in Southeast Asia.

Liew Tong Ngan, CEO of World Vision Malaysia

MIRI: An average of 16 HIV cases is reported daily in Malaysia.

Many of those affected are children and married women in heterosexual relationship.

"HIV/AIDS is as much a Malaysian problem as it is in Africa. It is not someone else's problem but our collective problem," said the CEO of World Vision Malaysia, Liew Tong Ngan at a three-day One Life Revolution (OLR) Exhibition held at Bintang Megamall which ended yesterday.

"According to UNAIDS (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS) in 2007, an estimated 4.9 million people in Asia were living with HIV. HIV prevalence is highest in Southeast Asia," he disclosed.

AIDS claims a life every 15 seconds, leaving a generation of children orphans. Some 6,000 children lose one or both parents to AIDS daily.

"Some of these children are no more than seven or eight years old who need someone to help them grow," he said.

Liew said much more must be done to protect these children and orphans from exploitation and provide them with the opportunities for the future.

"No one can do everything, but we cannot allow what we cannot do to hamper what we can do. Each of us can do something – personally – to help turn the tide against AIDS," he stressed.

World Vision as an international humanitarian organisation has been addressing the global AIDS crisis for nearly 20 years and has invested a decade in advocating the funding and protection of children.

"The One Life Revolution is one such action that World Vision has undertaken. It started as a cause to unite youths in the US to act on the plight of AIDS victims. Since it began in 2002, this experiential life-size exhibition has attracted thousands of visitors throughout the US.

"Because of its overwhelming response, World Vision offices outside the US have decided to mount similar OLR exhibition in their respective countries," he said, adding that the exhibition enables people to step into the shoes of those affected to learn more about the effect of AIDS and how they can help.