

Headline	It may be the pits for SEED residents		
MediaTitle	The Star		
Date	24 Dec 2014	Color	Full Color
Section	Nation	Circulation	288,916
Page No	14	Readership	866,748
Language	English	ArticleSize	535 cm ²
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 26,925
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 80,775



It may be the pits for SEED residents

Many will lose place to turn to for help if centre shuts down

By WANI MUTHIAH

KUALA LUMPUR: The homeless and destitute community in Chow Kit will be in a quandary should the shelter run for them by Pertubuhan Pembangunan Kebajikan dan Persekitaran Positif (SEED) close at the end of the year.

SEED acting executive director Mitch Yusmar said the half-way centre faces inevitable closure as the Federal Government had stopped its annual funding.

SEED receives RM700,000 yearly from the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry through the Malaysian AIDS Council to help the homeless community, made-up of female and transgender sex workers, drug users and people living with HIV.

The centre provided this community a home as well as an avenue to turn their lives around, said Mitch.

A letter dated Dec 4 was sent to the council informing them of the cessation of the funding. Subsequently all 17 employees of the centre received termination notices.

Mitch said the closure would result in members of the community losing a place to go to during the day to bathe, wash their clothes, have a meal and to rest.

Those coming to the centre are

also taught English and given basic computer classes as well as skills, such as baking and making various accessories.

Those living with HIV and family members of those who had died of AIDS also receive help in monitoring their health and managing hospital visits.

“We collect medicines on behalf of people who live far from the hospitals,” said Mitch.

SEED also does job referrals and has referred 226 transgender persons, 123 female sex workers and 128 people living with HIV for job placements.

Out of these, 143 transgendered people, 107 former female sex workers and 66 people living with HIV have successfully found jobs.

The council's honorary secretary, Hisham Hussein, said SEED started receiving the RM700,000 grant in 2007 after then minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil visited the area in 2006.

She was saddened by what she saw and decided that the marginalised community in Chow Kit needed help, said Mitch.

He said the closure of the centre would result in the current ben-

eficiaries losing the three meals the centre provides daily from Tuesday to Saturday.

Malaysian Mental Health Association deputy president Datuk Dr Andrew Mohanraj said the SEED centre played an important role in reintegrating members of the marginalised community into mainstream society by getting them jobs.

“Besides taking care of their physiological well-being – by empow-

ering and motivating them – the centre helps to secure them a livelihood,” said Dr Andrew, who is also a member of the Health Ministry's Mental Health Promotion Advisory Council.

The Ministry's National Social Policy Department secretary Che Samsuzuki Che Noh, who had signed the letter to the AIDS Council on the cessation of the funding, was not available for comment at press time.

A ministry source said an official statement pertaining to the matter would be issued soon.

The Women, Family and Community Development Ministry is reportedly working towards building a data profile of the homeless, including the Chow Kit destitute community, that is expected to be completed in 2016.

Headline	It may be the pits for SEED residents		
MediaTitle	The Star		
Date	24 Dec 2014	Color	Full Color
Section	Nation	Circulation	288,916
Page No	14	Readership	866,748
Language	English	ArticleSize	535 cm ²
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 26,925
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 80,775



Finding comfort in each other's company: SEED committee members (from left) Wan Kamariah, Angeline Amerthasamy, 61, Jessie Rajandren, 43, Fabilah Yunus, 54, Fauziah Abdullah, 50, Rahmah Ali, 56, Lim and Karni Iskandar, 39, at skills training in Wisma Tan Com, Kuala Lumpur. – SAMUEL ONG / The Star