

Headline	Women in need Please do not close down shelter		
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Women in need: Please do not close down shelter

KUALA LUMPUR: Salina Sukidan walks the streets of Chow Kit every night.

In the morning, she showers, eats and sleeps at the shelter home run by Pertubuhan Pembangunan Kebajikan dan Persekitaran Positif (SEED).

Every day at 9am she will be at the centre, which helps to humanise the destitute by providing skills training and various programmes to give them a glimmer of hope against the social stigma they face.

Salina, 43, is a drug user who is living with HIV. She is eight months' pregnant but still "service clients" to fend for herself.

She said she was thankful to SEED, where the case workers help to manage her health.

"They help me keep my medical appointments and make sure I take my HIV medicines on time.

"I don't know what will become of me should this place be closed.

"I am begging the authorities, don't take this away from us.

"We may lead hopeless lives but

find comfort in our case workers who were once like us and that we have a chance to change our destiny," she said.

Norliza Yusuf, 47, also a drug user and sex worker, said her case worker was helping her to get into a drug rehabilitation programme.

"If this place closes down, there is no longer an opportunity to change myself and I don't think I can manage my hospital appointments," said Norliza, who is also living with HIV.

Siti Fatimah Abdullah, 54, sleeps in the five-foot way at night and visits the SEED centre every day, where she earns RM300 a month cleaning the premises.

The former sex worker says she cannot go back to her life on the streets as she is too tired and worn out.

"Please, please don't close this place down. This place is my only chance to turn my life around," said Siti Fatimah, who ended up on the streets as a teenager after being duped by her boyfriend.