

Sabah is still far from drug-free status – Jainab

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August 25, 2015, Tuesday

KOTA KINABALU: Sabah has a long way to go when it comes to the battle against drugs amongst the state's teens and youths.

"Agensi Anti-Dadah Kebangsaan (AADK) Sabah or National Anti-Drugs Agency statistics show that teens and youths represent the largest group involved in drug addiction," said AADK Sabah director Bakri Bibi at the closing of the Drugs and Teen program here yesterday.

"This is very worrying because from January to July, 2015 alone, out of 479 drug abusers detected, 80.8% were found among teens and youths, 39 years old and below.

"Teens should always be aware of their environment and not be victim to bad influences and avoid risky behaviours such as smoking and trying drugs," he advised.

AADK statistics reveal that drug addiction in Sabah is prevalent among males at 93% or 447 out of the total number of 479. The females represent 7% or 32 out of the total count.

Out of the total, 192 or 40% represent age category of 25 and below; 195 or 40.7% represent age category of 26 to 39; 79 or 16.5% represent the 40 to 49 while 13 or 2.7% represent the 50 to 59.

According to Bakri, the state receives enough allocations to run programs according to the demand based on the level of situation of the area.

"The programs run depending on the area's situation, risks and environment of the place such as hotspots. The higher the risk, the number of cases, the more programs and focus will be done and given there.

He added the hotspots recently identified were 35, specifically for drug issues only and not crime alone. He disclosed that Sepanggar and Sembulan still remain as hotspots in Kota Kinabalu.

"We should accept the fact that our agenda in the struggle to eradicate drugs is not yet finished. Our journey to achieve the vision of a drug-free country is still a long way ahead," said Community Development and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Jainab Ahmad Ayid, who was represented by the deputy minister, Datuk Anita Baranting.

"There is no doubt that drug abuse cases are daunting and rising till it involves women, youths and teens, including students at school. In connection with that, the problem of drug addiction must be overcome through integration and involvement of every community level because we all know the impact of drug abuse will also invite criminal problems," she added.

Jainab also reiterated her call for concerted efforts between the community and all relevant government bodies to free the people from the clutches of drug abuse, starting from home as well as at work and, especially, in schools to prevent the future generations from easily becoming prey to it.

When met by the press, Anita confirmed that the frequency of random urine checks will be done at schools depending on the situation and needs.

The one-day program, organized by AADK in cooperation with the Sabah Women Advisory Council (MPWS), involved 10 schools, which are located close to the drug hotspots around Kota Kinabalu area.

Some 245 students from SMK Tebobon, Sekolah Sukan Malaysia Sabah, SM St Peter's Telipok, SMK Bandaraya Kota Kinabalu, SMK Inanam, SMK Kolombong, Kolej Vokasional Likas, SMK Likas, SM Maktab Sabah and SMK Sanzac took part in the program which included three talks on the effects of drug abuse, its current issues, related regulations and safety as well as a motivational talk.

Joannes Yabin from AADK, ASP Roziah Abd Rashid from the Narcotics Department of the Royal Malaysian Police (PDRM) and Dr Ananglangka Mat Kassim from SMK Perempuan Likas were the speakers at the program organized in partnership with the Sabah State Education Department, PDRM, Sabah Women Affairs Department, National Population and Family Development Board and Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission.