

SAINS bridging digital divide via RIGHT



Teo (seated right) and Haji Hamsien (standing right) watching Nina (seated left) working on a computer at her centre.

LUNDU: Fulfilling Corporate Social Responsibility is fast becoming a popular Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for many corporations. Sarawak Information Systems Sdn. Bhd. (SAINS) which is the dominant ICT player in Sarawak is no exception.

It has been collaborating with the State Ministry of Rural Development to bridge the rural-urban digital divide in Sarawak since 2006. Under this initiative SAINS is training rural youth and assisting them in providing useful ICT services to their respective communities through its Rural ICT Guided Home-based Technopreneur (RIGHT) Programme.

Apart from that, SAINS also adopts graduated RIGHT participants in further developing and sustaining human capital among the rural communities.

For event, the beneficiary is a resident of the rural community of Kampung Sungai Lundu. The village is witnessing the launching of the very first RIGHT Internet and Services Centre owned and operated by a female participant of the programme, Nina Bobo Philip Bawel, 24.

A total of six re-conditioned computers were donated by SAINS to assist Nina with her ICT operations, both as an income-generation opportunity for her, and to support the adoption of ICT in rural communities on a sustainable basis.

The Chief Executive Officer of SAINS, Teo Tien Hiong, and Haji Hamsien Haji Atar, Principal Assistant Secretary to the Ministry of Rural Development, who represented Haji Chaiti

Bolhassan, Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Rural Development, were at the village to officiate and congratulate Nina on her commitment to success.

Teo was pleased to see the first female participant setting up a RIGHT Internet and Services Centre and that he would like to encourage more candidates, especially female participants, to come forward to take the challenge of being ICT "anchors" in their respective rural communities.

He expressed satisfaction that the RIGHT programme which started in a rather small way has grown from strength to strength over the years and hoped that other government institutions and private sector corporations would come forward to collectively bridge the digital divide in the State the "RIGHT" way from the bottom up.

According to Haji Hamsien, the RIGHT programme has played an important role in bringing sustainable ICT development to the area, particularly in providing opportunities for those wishing to start up home-based businesses.

"Nina is another success story for the RIGHT programme. Today's event shows the tremendous support the rural community has for this programme," said Hamsien.

The RIGHT Internet and Services Centre in Kampung Sungai Lundu operates daily from 9.00 am onwards. The Centre offers internet services and provides training services on office automation for its customers, which include community members such as students, teen-

agers and teachers from the nearby villages.

Nina, a 2008 RIGHT programme participant from Kampung Sungai Lundu said that, in addition to training services, her centre also provides computer repair services, and scanning, photocopying and printing services. The centre sells computer accessories as well. On top of all these services, she also designs wedding cards and prints photographs for the villagers.

"The support provided by SAINS allows me to start my business with minimum cost. The Centre generates an income of about RM900 a month," she said.

During the event, Sarakup Indu Dayak Sarawak signed an MOU with Zenith ICT Centre, a company wholly owned by Nina, to provide computer training services for 43 members of the local community.

The RIGHT programme began in 2005, in line with the State Government's goal of bridging the rural-urban digital divide. Candidates of the RIGHT programme who are chosen from rural areas of Sarawak are given six months' training by SAINS experts before they are exposed to various aspects of ICT operations.

As of today, SAINS has adopted two other existing Internet and Services Centres, managed by RIGHT participants, in Kampung Baru Hulu, Betong and Sebangau, Simunjan. SAINS will continue to develop RIGHT participants in other rural areas based on availability of candidates and sponsors. For more information, please visit the RIGHT Programme website at www.right.sarawak.gov.my