

Where are the hungry students, question varsities

By **MAZWIN NIK ANIS**
mazwin@thestar.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: Public universities are questioning the accuracy of a non-governmental organisation's survey which said many students are going hungry because of lack of finances.

The varsities have asked the NGO – Muslim Volunteer Malaysia Association – to come forward so that the survey results can be verified and help can be given to the students in need.

Since the issue was highlighted in the press, the 20 public universities said they have tried to identify students in this situation but none have responded.

Universiti Putra Malaysia deputy vice-chancellor (student affairs and alumni) Prof Datuk Dr Mohammad Shatar Sabran wanted to know how the survey questions were framed.

Were the students required to state just “Yes” or “No”, he asked, adding that if this was the case, then the answers may not reflect the actual situation.

“If there are students going hungry because they cannot afford meals, we want to help. But no one has come forward,” he said at a press conference yesterday.

Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia deputy vice-chancellor Prof Dr Mohamed Fadzil Che Din conceded that some students faced financial difficulties but he questioned the numbers claimed by the survey.

He said it was the responsibility of the universities to look after the welfare of their students and they

have various funds and bodies to ensure this.

But the survey “gives the impression that we do not care for the students. This is disappointing”, he said.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) deputy vice-chancellor Prof Datin Noor Aziah Mohd Awal was shocked that the survey claimed three out of four students could not afford to eat proper meals.

She said those at UKM were told right from the start that help was always available to them.

Higher Education Minister Datuk

Seri Idris Jusoh reiterated that the Government and the universities would not allow students to go hungry.

He said that last year, the universities spent more than RM5mil to aid 31,776 students, including giving them meal cards and coupons, and helping with their tuition and medical fees.

The survey polled about 26,000 students in six public universities recently and found that more than half of the respondents only have RM5 a day for meals.

TOP 5 MOST VIEWED ONLINE

1. Sales clerk: Youth asked me to call the cops
2. Student struck down after moving into new home
3. Teen stages IS 'lone cub' attack
4. Telco boss probed in multi-level marketing scam
5. 'Directors paid in line with industry'

Read the latest news at thestar.com.my

PRAYER TIMES

	ALOR SETAR	PENANG	KUALA LUMPUR	JOHOR BARU	KUANTAN	KOTA BARU
Subuh	06:12	Subuh 06.11	Subuh 06:04	Subuh 05:52	Subuh 05:57	Subuh 06:09
Zohor	13:30	Zohor 13.30	Zohor 13:25	Zohor 13:16	Zohor 13:19	Zohor 13:22
Asar	16:51	Asar 16.52	Asar 16:47	Asar 16:39	Asar 16:42	Asar 16:44
Maghrib	19:22	Maghrib 19.24	Maghrib 19:21	Maghrib 19:16	Maghrib 19:17	Maghrib 19:15
Isyak	20:36	Isyak 20.38	Isyak 20:35	Isyak 20:30	Isyak 20:31	Isyak 20:25