



Breaking the cycle of poverty

SELF-SUSTAINABLE: Caltex Sew4Life provides poor women with relevant skills towards financial stability

CHEVRON Malaysia Ltd, which operates the brand Caltex, has initiated a self-sustainable skills programme for MyKasih Foundation welfare recipients in the Klang Valley.

Launched in May, Caltex Sew4Life is a five-month community programme aimed at empowering women in Lembah Subang with skills to enable them to be financially independent. Weekly workshops include traditional wear tailoring, hand applique, beading, smocking and quilting.

MyKasih Foundation coordinates the programme with non-governmental organisations and small businesses.

Caltex Sew4Life students comprise mothers from lower income groups who are either sole breadwinners of their respective families or have a high number of dependants. Financial stability helps their children complete proper education and a chance to step out of poverty through better job opportunities.

"At Chevron, we're about enduring relationships. Caltex Sew4Life harnesses the capability of trusted community partners to facilitate the requirements of communities in need," said Chevron Malaysia Ltd country chairman Jeremy Oh.

"With MyKasih Foundation's help and expertise, Chevron is able to contribute towards a self-sustainable programme that provides enterprising women with relevant skills towards financial stability.

"The success of the Caltex Sew4Life graduates also helps to pave the way for others in the community to gain skills and break the cycle of poverty in the long term."

Chevron contributed RM54,000 to fund the programme, which includes start-up interest-free loans totalling RM9,000 for promising graduates.

Graduates in turn will channel sale proceeds back to MyKasih Foundation within a mutually agreed period to fund future students with their own respective businesses and act as mentors.

In thanking Chevron for its contribution,

MyKasih Foundation chairman and co-founder Dr Ngau Boon said: "We always seek to engage with partners who support local initiatives aimed at improving the wellbeing of the underprivileged.

"Caltex Sew4Life programme is an excellent example of how community-based corporate social responsibility initiatives can make a positive long-lasting difference in people's lives."

According to Dr Ngau, the real benefit of the programme is that it provides those from lower incomes with an alternative to a handout.

By empowering mothers to take charge to better the lives of their children, their success and mentorship also empowers others in similar situations.

MyKasih Foundation's advisory council member who leads the skills training component of MyKasih's programmes, Nazrin Aneeza, said: "Our students have been hard at work and are very excited by the Raya festivities. The prospect of increased demand for their handicrafts has resulted in *baju kurung* with intricate beading; smocked dresses, *telekong* with lace and even toys. All items will be on sale via our MyKasih Foundation website, and proceeds will go directly to the students."

Caltex Sew4Life student Norsila Saat, 45, is a keen participant in the smocking workshops: "My specialisation is dresses for children. I can stitch any design that the customer requires. I have always enjoyed smocking, and hope to be the top graduate to earn the start-up loan to purchase a smocking machine."

Caltex Sew4Life is powered by Chevron's Energy for Learning global initiative. The initiative aims to support learning-based programmes, which help people acquire new knowledge and gain new skills.

It targets groups who do not have the opportunity to benefit from mainstream education.

For details on Caltex Sew4Life, visit www.mykasih.com.my

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Jeremy Oh (third from right) and **Chevron staff** presenting the mock cheque to **MyKasih Foundation's** representatives.