

Reaching out



EDUCATION

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THE pandemic has prevented many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from getting to B40 students but where there is a will, there's a way. Here's how two local NGOs made sure the underserved did not fall behind.



"We started by helping B40 families apply for free devices and data plans offered by corporations before moving our own education programmes online. When we realised that many parents – especially those with big families – could not afford data plans, we provided them with 40GB of data every month so that their children could attend online classes. But digital accessibility alone does not lead to good learning outcomes. The issue with self-learning was that most students would skip topics that they did not learn in school or did not understand. So instead of being able to learn more on their own, they kept revising topics they already knew. With the right guidance, the children from our KidzREAD English literacy programme improved their reading and writing in just 10 sessions. We are now advocating for not just digital accessibility, but also for quality online learning solutions. We have also launched the KidzRead Network to support volunteer groups or other non-profits who want to carry out English literacy programmes in their respective communities because we believe that learning is the right of every child." — **Yayasan Generasi Gemilang section head of education services Caryn Ng**



"We encourage science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education through the sponsorship of computer labs, aquaponic edible gardens and robotics equipment. When schools closed last year due to the pandemic, we focused on robotics, while the school teachers focused on home-learning. To-date, we've given away RM627,000 worth of robotics kits to schools to encourage STEM learning and digital literacy in a fun and interactive way. All teachers have been trained virtually on how to use the kits. During the MCO, the students were able to access the robotics modules via a software that was installed in their desktop or laptop at home. Students are guided by their school teachers on using the software. For Orang Asli students without computers at home, the school teachers will select those who are interested and train them at the school's computer lab, and guide them to prepare for competitions." — **MyKasih Foundation chairman and co-founder Tan Sri Dr Ngau Boon Keat**

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