

Disability Awareness and Inclusive Preschool Programme



Together, we will serve the special needs community and create an accepting environment for all.

(Photo credit: Joanna Andreas)

Malaysian CARE’s team for special needs in East Malaysia (Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan) has been conducting trainings to create awareness among children, parents and teachers on disability and inclusion in schools, churches and the community. Our Disability Awareness (DA) programme generally includes an introduction to common learning disabilities; the impact of these disabilities on education, behaviour and social skills; identifying appropriate support for persons with special needs; and the biblical perspective. The interactive sessions allow participants to simulate some of the experiences and challenges faced by persons with disabilities and to learn from each other.

In 2018, the East Malaysia teams conducted a total of six DA trainings involving 240 parents, teachers and children. The trainings aimed to equip and better inform existing or potential caregivers and supporters. In Labuan, the training was timely as the organisers are aiming to set up an inclusive school in 2019 as well as to meet the great need for special needs services on the island.

Another CARE initiative is the Inclusive Preschool Programme (IPP), which aims to include children with special needs in mainstream school environments from age 3. IPP uses a specially tailored curriculum to ensure that children of all abilities are able to learn through play and interaction with one another. Taska Visi St James,

Kudat, Sabah has been successfully running IPP since 2015. As parents with children attending inclusive education have seen improvements in their children’s academic and social skills development, IPP becomes exemplary to our East Malaysia teams to equip churches and teachers to implement IPP in their schools. In 2018, two IPP trainings were conducted, covering Applied Positive Behaviour Strategies. These trainings aimed to empower the 57 teachers and parents who attended, with hands-on knowledge and skills to manage behavioural challenges in their classrooms.

Trainings Conducted in East Malaysia in 2018		
Programme	No. of trainings	No. of participants
Disability Awareness	6	240 Parents/ teachers/children
Inclusive Preschool Programme	2	57 Teachers/ parents

In 2019, CARE will continue to work together with our partners and communities to create greater awareness on disabilities while promoting inclusive education. CARE looks forward to advocating and implementing more Disability Awareness and Inclusion programmes, while promoting inclusive education in rural and urban schools across East Malaysia. Together, we will serve the special needs community and create an accepting environment for all. ■

■ Sharon is a Community Development Leader who believes that it is always “cake” o’clock somewhere in the world, so celebrate at all times.