

Orphanages in need of e-learning materials

By ILI AQILAH
iliaqilah@thestar.com.my

IPOH: Orphanages and children's homes here are in dire need of more gadgets and teaching materials to conduct home-based teaching and learning.

With the movement control order extended until Feb 18, schools are expected to remain closed with online learning to continue.

Precious Gift Home coordinator Sarah Albeat Morris said the residents had to take turns to share three desktops and a laptop.

"We have 11 children who are studying in primary and secondary schools. The eldest is in Form Five but the school has ordered him to go for online learning.

"We used to have just one laptop but a Good Samaritan donated three refurbished desktops to assist the children," she said, adding that the children were facing some difficulties learning via the online classes.

Prior to this, Morris said the children were already struggling in their academic subjects and it was now even harder for them.

"We used to have volunteers coming over weekly to help the children with their studies. Since the MCO, they are unable to," she said.

Morris said since the implementation of online learning, the children needed more help from her and the staff.

"Besides handling administrative work and preparing meals, we are spending extra time to check their homework and online classes.

"It is quite a challenge and has not been easy to juggle all these tasks," she said, adding that she hoped that someone could sponsor several laptops and desktops for



Class in session: A boy attending online class at Precious Gift Home in Ipoh. — RONNIE CHIN/The Star

the children.

Last week, Deputy Education Minister Datuk Dr Mah Hang Soon suggested a combination of online and offline learning for students who were facing poor Internet connectivity.

He said the ministry had come up with several solutions to counter these issues including setting up educational television channels.

Pertubuhan Baitul Aini Anak Anak Yatim Dan Miskin Ipoh founder and chairman Noraini Abdullah said they do not have any desktops or laptops to conduct

online learning.

"We have at least 18 school-going children and only three of them have mobile phones.

"The rest have to rely on our staff members to help them with their studies," she said.

Recently, Noraini said they accepted a few newcomers who are illiterate and did not go to school, so the staff members have to spend extra time to assist them.

"Most of the children are from poor families. We hope to seek more donations to pay for the bills and salaries, and also to buy laptops

or desktops.

"We don't mind getting refurbished ones as long as these gadgets are still working," she said.

When contacted, Perak Welfare Department director Nor Tipah Majin said they were only given allocations to help orphanages with basic groceries and utilities.

"We have yet to receive any requests or complaints on the lack of electronic gadgets.

"Our budget is limited to assist these homes with their bills, groceries and administration costs," she said.