Hiring the disabled still a low priority

By Lyda Gomez

KUALA LUMPUR: Only 13 government agencies are hiring disabled people despite a government directive last year to increase their number to one per cent of the civil service workforce. Deputy Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Nancy Shukri said yesterday:

“This means there is a lot more work to be done to raise awareness even within the government to allow disabled people, especially those with learning disabilities, a chance to be fully employed. It’s a huge task for the disabled to earn a living and for employers to give them a chance to make a living.

She said the ministry had employed 109 disabil- ited people, making up 2.63 per cent of its work force and this number was expected to increase in the coming months.

“Some of the disabled do better than some of the able-bodied. It depends on the department and, in fact, many of them are bosses of companies and they are doing as well as the able-bodied,” she said.

If the disabled have the will to work and employers are willing to hire, then we can make this happen,” she added.

Nancy said a seminar on supported employment for the disabled through job coaching, job development, business development and job creation was needed to inform employers and the public to overcome problems they may face when they employed the disabled.

She said the government offered double vaca- tion exemption to employers who hired the disabled, while an allowance of RM300 was given to disabled workers earning RM1,200 and below.

The disabled should also make the effort to be employable,” she said.

“Some of the seminar was a joint effort by the Welfare Department and the Japan International Co- operation Agency (JICA) as part of phase two of its steering committee on special education. The first phase of the seminar was held last year.

— Ooi Ping Yee, Cheew Mei Fun, Deputy Women, Family and Community Development Minister

Job coach a crucial intermediary

KUALA LUMPUR: If you decide to hire a dis- abled person, here are some things to consider.

To begin with, the employer should take a decision to hire a disabled person to begin with. The company then has to train a person and assign them in an appropriate role.

Each job coach is assigned to a minimum of three students until the vacancy is filled. The company then has to train a person and assign them in an appropriate role.

In Japan, the disabled must make up 1.8 per cent of the workforce to private companies and 2.1 per cent in government agencies.

Non-compliant employers have to pay a penalty and there are penalties for every disabled person they fail to hire. The levy is collected and used to finance the government’s vocational rehabilitation programs to promote employment for the disabled.

In Malaysia, Giant hypermarket is the most successful private chain to employ the job coaching method, with 130 disabled employees working in 18 stores throughout the country. In 2007, and after extensive training held in Japan, it began by hiring 12 people. The requirements were simple: if they were able to Communicate, un- dertake and cope, they get the job.

With the help of the Social Welfare Depart- ment, Giant was able to start its training and assign them in appropriate positions.

The same is true for the Giant in Japan, where the company trains and assigns them in appropriate positions.

For further information, contact:

3D 3996 1000
www.giant.com.my

— Cheew Mei Fun, Department Director, Norsa Mohd Noor

Department play support role

KUALA LUMPUR: All ministries should have at least one job coach by 2020 as per the recommendation by the Social Welfare Department to make sure all disabled people are given the chance to work.

Nancy Shukri and Family and Community Ministry is also planning to give all government agencies a minimum of one per cent of their work force to disabled people.

In line with the government’s National Plan for the Disabled, the Department of Persons with Disabilities is working on a national strategy plan for the disabled to enhance the effectiveness of support systems for the job search.

Nancy said the Department of Persons with Disabilities was looking at placing 109 job coaches in 100 welfare offices nationwide to help those who want to become financially independent.

It would also look into its Disability Equality Training programme and use it to help govern- ment and private agencies.

Nancy said the police force had recently asked the department to conduct the training for them because they wanted to know how to interact with the disabled.

“Being employed is good for a disabled person and will not only open the door for them to do better, but they will also be able to move forward. This is why every agency needs to have a job coach to give them the proper training and support before they begin work. They have to get the right type of education as well,” she said at a seminar on supported employment for the disabled.

Statistics from the Education Ministry’s Special Education Division shows that one in five students is a student with special educational needs. About 15,000 students were employed within one month of completing school.

Disabled Persons Development Department Director, Norsa Mohd Noor said there are job coaches who begin to work, they have to get the right type of education.

— Ooi Ping Yee, Cheew Mei Fun, Deputy Women, Family and Community Development Minister

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