

Training to be a cut above the rest

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KL initiative empowers B40 youth with barbershop know-how

THREE young entrepreneurs who took up skills training are proud owners of a barbershop in PA Seri Perlis 2, a government housing scheme in Kampung Datuk Keramat, Kuala Lumpur.

Mohd Zulkifli Shamsudin, 26, Fitri Roslan, 28, and Bharath Prakash, 21, are part of a pilot project called Community's Barbershop under Puji@Wilayah by Federal Territories Department and Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL).

Puji (Usaha Jaya Insan Programme) was set up to empower low-income groups by providing skills training and business opportunities.

The initiative, part of DBKL's commitment to community empowerment, sees selected participants undergoing training in technical and vocational education on running a barbershop.

The training, which started last year, includes both practical and supplementary sessions for participants to acquire skills and own a business.

Participants are trained in financial management, customer service, hygiene standards and marketing strategies.

The three young men completed two months of training, graduating top of their class, and were given the opportunity to run their own business within



Fitri working on a customer as (from right) Dr Zaliha and Kuala Lumpur mayor Datuk Seri Maimunah Mohd Sharif look on.



(From left) Mohd Zulkifli, Bharath and Fitri (right) with their friends outside the Community's Barbershop outlet in Kampung Datuk Keramat. — Photos: AZLINA ABDULLAH/The Star

the housing scheme.

"I am grateful for the opportunity and hope to make the most of it," said Mohd Zulkifli when met at the shop.

"I make about RM1,800 a month and am hoping to improve my skills.

"Our opening hours are from 10am to 10pm and we work in shifts, so it's not too bad," he added.

Minister in the Prime

Minister's Department (Federal Territories) Dr Zaliha Mustafa, who launched the initiative at the Kampung Datuk Keramat flats, said the effort was designed to empower low-income folk.

"We offer them opportunities through training and select the top four participants to start their own barbershop business.

"DBKL offers shop units at a subsidised monthly rental of RM250, allowing entrepreneurs

to run their business operations independently.

"The programme equips participants with new skills, creating opportunities for them to generate income.

"This ultimately improves their living standards and that of their families."

Dr Zaliha said she hoped to expand the initiative further.

"The ministry and DBKL are hoping to open a community

barbershop in every parliamentary constituency in Kuala Lumpur," she said.

Plans were also afoot, she added, to train women in hairdressing.