

# KERATAN AKHBAR

TARIKH : 25 SEPTEMBER 2022  
AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES  
MUKA SURAT : 6

Make it gender-sensitive, say groups

## Make it gender-sensitive, say groups

'Coming Budget should be people-centric and focus more on equality'

By GERARD GIMINO  
gerard.gimino@thestar.com.my

**PETALING JAYA:** Budget 2023, to be tabled in Parliament in about a fortnight, should be more gender-sensitive and people-centric, women's and community groups have urged.

They said funds should be allocated to educate frontliners on eradicating sexual harassment, as well as to boost economic opportunity and participation for women, alongside women's health, among others.

All Women's Action Society (Awam) information and communications officer Jernell Tan Chia Ee said it was crucial to allocate funds to carry out anti-sexual harassment training among educators.

This included developing and implementing a gender-based violence curriculum in teacher's training colleges, she added.



"Based on Awam's analysis of testimonies from the Save the Schools programme, we found that figures of authority comprised the second largest group of perpetrators.

"Hence, we propose this training entail not only a gender-sensitised understanding of sexual harassment but also skills in managing such cases," she said.

"This will enable educational institutions to reduce the rates of sexual harassment within their compounds and manage them in the medium to long term."

Tan said funds should also be allocated towards gender-sensitivity training among frontliners within the police force and healthcare professionals.

She added that targeted educational programmes about menstrual hygiene and the provision of menstrual hygiene kits should be conducted among the B40, Orang Asli and indigenous communities beyond the Klang Valley.

The Gender Budget Group (GBG) said education should be prioritised, given how sexual and gender-based violence in schools leads to learning loss and dropout rates among women, teenage pregnancies and child marriage.

Apart from gender-sensitisation courses for teachers, school administrators and Education Ministry officials, accessible counselling services for students who are victims or survivors of sexual harassment

and gender-based violence must also be present," it said in a statement to *The Star*.

The GBG is a coalition of 21 civil society organisations representing various intersectional issues and target groups.

It said that it was also vital that efforts to ensure investments in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) were both gender-sensitive and gender-responsive.

"Its (TVET) potential to encourage women's economic empowerment by reducing institutional barriers must be mirrored in appropriate budgetary allocations for awareness and registration drives.

There should also be fully subsidised vocational training centres in East Malaysia, where there are higher school dropout and unemployment rates.

"This ensures better access for

underprivileged girls and boys in rural areas," it added.

The GBG also said there need to be structural solutions to relieve women's dual role in juggling work and domestic responsibilities.

"Quality childcare centres are needed to target the overall wellness of children, and not just be a place where working parents hand over their children for care.

"With regard to business financial support for women entrepreneurs, approaches or modules need to be developed for varying localities and ethnicities to ensure women feel more secure and confident to formalise their business," it added.

It said at least 1% of the national health budget should also be apportioned towards safe medical services for women which includes follow-up counselling services for rape victims and minors as part of the One-Stop Crisis Centre procedures.