

'Choose to see Malaysia as Malaysians'

Don't view the nation through racial lenses, says Anas

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KUALA LUMPUR: For unity to exist, we must choose to see Malaysia as Malaysians, instead of viewing the nation through racial lenses, says unity advocate Anas Zubedy.

"When we choose, we pay attention. And when we pay attention, it becomes our reality.

"Have you experienced how when a friend buys a new car, you suddenly start noticing it everywhere you go when previously, you were blind to that particular model?

"When we're conscious of something, it becomes a part of our daily lives," he said at the launch of the #SaySomethingNice campaign at UCSI University in Cheras yesterday.

The campaign covers over 30 unity-related projects with more than 10,000 participants nationwide. UCSI University is among the participants, organising student-led projects in support of the campaign.

Organised by Zubedy (M) Sdn Bhd to promote unity among Malaysians, the campaign held between National Day and Malaysia Day annually has been running since 2011.

This year's theme – "Through the eyes of a Malaysian" – calls on Malaysians regardless of their ethnicity to see the country as the sum of all communities here.

Anas said it was important to focus on words like "*muhibbah*" to promote unity. *Muhibbah*, he added, makes values like respect, tolerance, empathy and love a part of our daily practices, while guiding us away from words like

“If we're focused on saying good things, we'll do good things. It becomes part of our culture.”

Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh

"*pendatang*" (immigrants) and *pariah*.

"We also want to focus on the Rukun Negara because it generates important keywords like democratic, fair, progressive, just and liberal," he said, adding that Zubedy was also working with the National Unity and Integration Department on a poster contest with #RukunNegaraSomethingNice. "Hopefully, we can also work with the Education Ministry to bring the campaign to schools," he said.

Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh, who launched #SaySomethingNice, said good thoughts and words can have a positive impact.

"If we're focused on saying good things, we'll do good things. It becomes part of our culture," he added.

UCSI University vice-chancellor and president Senior Prof Datuk Dr Khalid Yusoff said it was easy to be critical, but much more difficult to be creative.

He said #SaySomethingNice is a step towards fostering responsibility in our acts and speeches, and a shift from being critical to being creative.