

Giving NGOs online platform

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COMMUNITY

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New online platform: Raj (right) showing the ngohub.asia website to SOLS 24/7 outreach and development manager Indhuja Ravindran (centre) and communications and outreach manager Ista Kyra Sharmugam.

EVEN heroes need a platform – that is the tagline for ngohub.asia, a new online platform by Science Of Life Studies 24/7 Malaysia (SOLS 24/7) and 7-Eleven Malaysia.

The site aims to help NGOs build an online presence, reach out to volunteers and similar organisations for project collaborations, as well as opportunities to receive aid from donors.

SOLS 24/7 is a humanitarian organisation that started more than 14 years ago to provide education and social services to under-served communities.

It has a presence in many South-East Asian countries.

Director and co-founder Raj Ridvan Singh said many platforms were more volunteer-based and might not be able to provide a comprehensive online solution to the challenges faced by NGOs.

“We are different in the sense that we cater exclusively to serving NGOs, not business or corporate social entities,” said Raj.

“As we started off as a small NGO, we understand the challenges that these groups face, from funding to registration, to getting volunteers, support and networking,” he said.

Raj said they were working together with 7-Eleven as the company was very big on empowering local communities, such as through their Community Cares project, whereby funds collected from the donation box at all stores nationwide are donated to charitable causes.

He added that they were targeting the smaller NGOs in areas outside the Klang Valley.

“There are many NGOs all over Malaysia, such as those in small towns, who are very dedicated and sacrifice their time, money and careers to serve.

“However, they might not get much exposure and support, whether it’s financial or people volunteering,” he explained.

Raj said there would be a team to help these groups build their profiles, promote them through social media or viral sites and raise awareness on their causes.

NGOs can also put up volunteer listings, events and apply for grants, which will be provided by SOLS24/7 and 7-Eleven in the form of supplies needed by each NGO, such as tables and chairs or stationery.

To ensure authenticity, the team will coordinate with the Registrar of Societies and relevant government agencies.

About 40 NGOs, such as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), Generasi Gemilang and Mercy Malaysia, had registered within the first three days of the site’s soft launch. The official launch will be on Sept 25.

Raj believes that many Malaysians genuinely care about the causes championed by NGOs, but do not have an outlet or do not know if the NGOs are above-board.

“Technology has become so advanced that we can get everything under one roof.

“For example, if you want food, you use a certain app on your mobile device.

“We want NGOs and the public to use this platform as a central location to engage and connect,” said Raj.

He added that he hoped to see a radical improvement in NGO operations and increase the trend of volunteerism in the country.

Local celebrities Aishah Sinclair, Thanuja Ananthan and Sarah Lian are supporting the platform as ambassadors.

For details, visit www.ngohub.asia.

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Family & Community , NGOHub , SOLS 24/7

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