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## Spurring innovative thinking

NATION

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Electrifying: Ismail Sabri Yaakob (middle) listening to Allisya Ismail (second from right) from Sekolah Menengah Bukit Mendi explain the workings of an electric circuit board, while secretary general of Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry Datuk Dr Aminuddin Hassim (left) looks on at Bera, Pahang. — Bernama

BERA: Corporations should provide support to the government and assist Yayasan Inovasi Malaysia (YIM) as an agent of social innovation to support the development of grassroots innovators, says the caretaker Prime Minister.

Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said the concept of social innovation has been fast gaining attention and interest in the past few years.

“Social innovation in Malaysia is very encouraging. We can see a rise in the number of social enterprises.

“Social innovation can also solve social issues and has the potential to create job opportunities through new markets that can be developed from ideas from grassroots innovators,” he said when officiating the Bera Keluarga Malaysia Science, Technology, Innovation and Economy (STIE) Design Space in Felda Bukit Puchong here yesterday.

The STIE Design Space, Ismail Sabri was quoted as saying by Bernama, would hopefully create thinkers capable of producing products or services that could be commercialised to boost the country’s economy.

He said the STIE Design Space, which was developed by the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry under YIM, was aimed at sparking an innovative and creative culture and encouraging more people to be involved in the fields of science, technology and innovation.

“I hope there will be more STIE ideas involving automation technology, machine learning and big data, artificial intelligence, robotics technology and the Internet of Things to the extent that they can provide added value to local communities,” he said.

He also asked grassroots innovators to help build the country’s innovation field.

He said that social innovation could help close the gap between urban and rural economies and also make traditional innovation a more competitive source of economic growth.

He said a total of 6,000 grassroots innovators had received assistance since 2012 through funding development in technology and automation, patent ownership, self-capacity guidance, company establishment and product diffusion involving financial investment from the government of over RM50mil through MOSTI.

He stressed that social innovation should not be viewed as a one-off project or initiative but needed to be supported by entrepreneurial thinking so that the generation of new resources would continue to develop in line with organisational growth and sustainable competitive markets.

Ismail Sabri said the Bera STIE Design Space would provide the local community, especially students, youth, small and medium enterprises as well as startups, with the opportunity to adopt the latest technology and generate income.

The Bera STIE Design Space, which is the seventh launched after two in Johor and one each in Negeri Sembilan, Terengganu, Kelantan and Kedah, offers facilities with design and computer labs, innovation corners, digital studios and training areas that can be used for free.

During the event, Ismail Sabri also saw YIM and Universiti Malaysia Pahang hand over a letter of intent to partner, for training and capacity building in innovation to help the people of Bera.