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B40 traders' income soars since signing up for govt initiative



Students wait in line to purchase a snack or meal from Wan Asikin Wan Hassan's vending machine. (Wan Asikin Wan Hassan pic)

PETALING JAYA: An unassuming vending machine stands in a corner of Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Kelantan, with a long line of students patiently waiting to purchase their meals.

As unremarkable as it may seem, the vending machine – stocked with a variety of food costing less than RM10 – has transformed the life of a B40 family.

Wan Asikin Wan Hassan, who signed up for the People's Income Initiative (IPR), cooks and restocks the meals sold in the vending machine three times a day, seven days a week.

“The sales from the vending machine have contributed to the increase in our family’s income, which means I can buy my children what they need for school.

“I don’t feel financially burdened anymore because we know there will be money coming in,” Wan Asikin, the wife of a bus driver, told FMT.

The 42-year-old mother-of-four said she was taking in between RM13,000 and RM21,000 a month, depending on whether the students were on break.

After deducting the cost of raw materials, Wan Asikin said she was making a profit of at least RM5,000 a month, a princely sum compared to the RM500 a month she used to earn from selling kuih.

“After joining IPR, I focused on preparing food for the vending machine and nothing else. I can’t make time for any other side hustles, due to the overwhelming demand from the students,” she said.

The housewife also said she was extremely thankful to her village head, who encouraged her to join the programme last October and make a living at home while taking care of her four children.

IPR is a short and medium-term intervention measure that the government created to eradicate hardcore poverty.

It currently offers three pilot initiatives: the farming entrepreneur (Intan), the food entrepreneur (Insan) and the services operator (Ikhsan).

The programme has benefited 4,100 households as of November 2023, according to economy minister Rafizi Ramli.