

# Meaningful initiatives for the people

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**B**USINESSES are expected to introduce progressive corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives that give back to their communities, the economy and the planet.

Such initiatives allow companies to be transparent with regard to societal, cultural and environmental issues. They are no longer a nice-to-have but rather a need-to-have.

InvestKL, an agency that focuses on attracting and facilitating leading global firms in Greater Kuala Lumpur (Greater KL), has brought in companies with meaningful CSR initiatives.

AstraZeneca, a global science-led biopharmaceutical company, is dedicated to making health happen for "as many people, in as many countries and in as many ways as possible".

"At AstraZeneca, sustainability is about using our capabilities to make the most meaningful impact where society needs it — health. Wherever we operate in the world, we aim to make a positive impact on our local communities and collaborate to address the health issues that most affect people at the local, national and global levels," it told the *New Straits Times*.

The company added that its Young Health Programme (YHP) embodied this belief.

"In 2010, AstraZeneca established YHP as a core part of our sustainability ambition to improve the health and life chances of young people in some of the most under-resourced communities around the world," it said.

In Malaysia, YHP was rolled out in 2021 through a partnership with Hospitals Beyond Boundaries (HBB), focusing on youth and the prevention of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Launched on World Mental Health Day, a pilot programme on youths' mental health, targeted at the adolescent residents of the People's Housing Project (PPR) Seri Pantai, was kicked off.

"Under this programme, around 200 mental health kits containing information on mental health and tools for activities like exercise and gardening were distributed to the young residents at PPR Seri Pantai to help improve their mental wellness.

"AstraZeneca also worked with HBB to run further initiatives to support NCD awareness among youths in the Klang Valley and around Malaysia, giving them greater capacity to make informed decisions about their health," said the company.

Up to last year, the programme had

*InvestKL chief executive officer Datuk Muhammad Azmi Zulkifli*



*Allianz Malaysia supports the Malaysian contingent to train and prepare for the national and international Abilitylympics or Olympic of Abilities, a People with Disabilities (PwD) skills-based competition which aims to overturn traditional views on the potentials and abilities of PwDs, resulting in increased employment and income earning stability.*

reached out to more than nine million young people and trained 420,000 people in 39 countries, including Malaysia.

"Independent three- to five-year impact assessments on programming in Brazil, Indonesia, Kenya, India and Vietnam confirmed that YHP's community-based model supports sustained behaviour change and improved access to adolescent-friendly health services," it added.

Meanwhile, Allianz Malaysia, the global financial service provider, is supporting a two-year clinical research study by University Malaya Medical Centre (UMMC) on the Post-Acute Covid Syndrome (PACS, or Long Covid) that aims to establish infection control practices in survivors.

The study aims to develop vaccination strategies and, most importantly, establish the long-term clinical care needs of Covid-19 survivors.

Allianz4Good department head Ng Siew Gek said as Malaysia continued to navigate the endemic stage, it was crucial for the country to enhance its knowledge of Covid-19.

"We are committed to social inclusion, engaging in partnerships that support meaningful diversity and participation of people of all abilities.

"By supporting and enabling people to showcase their talents and abilities, we hope to help build confidence for their future and

create inclusive socio-economic opportunities in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) No. 8 (Decent Work & Economic Growth) and SDG No. 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

"This includes our long-term partnership with Persatuan Mobiliti



*The AstraZeneca Young Health Programme focuses on youth and the prevention of non-communicable diseases for adolescents in some of the most under-resourced communities in Greater Kuala Lumpur.*



*MetLife Malaysian employees assembling prosthetic hands to help amputees from low-income backgrounds with life-changing impacts during the 'Build-a-Hand' workshop.*

Selangor dan Kuala Lumpur (MOBILITI), a charitable organisation that provides door-to-door transportation for wheelchair users within the Klang Valley, and our proud commitment to supporting the Malaysian contingent to train and prepare for the national and international Abilitylympics in 2023," Ng said.

MetLife Inc, the global brand in pro-

tection planning, retirement and savings solutions, said sustainability was central to the company's business strategy and guided every aspect of its operations.

"Guided by our purpose of 'Always with you, building a more confident future', we are adapting to meet the needs of a rapidly changing world, strengthening our commitment to

address critical challenges such as climate change, inequality and disadvantaged communities.

"With the UNSDG as our guide, we are deploying the full strength of our people, products, services and investments to be a greater force for good in the world. It's what inspired us in the past, fuels our strategy today and will set us apart in the future," said MetLife Asia Centre of Excellence director Daniel Faline.

He added that it aimed to foster strong connections and build a more confident future for the communities where it operates.

"Sustainability is deeply ingrained in our culture and in 2021, more than 25,000 MetLife employees from 37 countries volunteered over 61,000 hours towards community and sustainability initiatives."

Faline said additionally, MetLife Foundation contributed more than US\$33 million in community grants around the globe and collectively, MetLife and MetLife Foundation have contributed over US\$250 million of relief to help people cope with Covid-19, including premium credits and direct contributions.

"Through the work of MetLife Foundation, we create opportunities focused on improving financial health and well-being, diversity and inclusion, youth and education, community improvement, disaster relief, and arts and culture," he said.

MetLife's commitment to the community's betterment is embodied through its CSR programmes and initiatives. The "Build-a-Hand" programme, for example, sees MetLife Malaysian employees assemble prosthetic hands to help amputees from low-income backgrounds.

"We are proud of what we have done to improve our communities in Malaysia, and yet, we recognise that this is an ongoing effort. Therefore, we look to the future for what we can do tomorrow," Faline said.