

# GSS, Pangrok Sulap work together to break silence against rape

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KOTA KINABALU: Internationally acclaimed Sabah art collective Pangrok Sulap has joined forces with Good Shepherd Services (GSS) to produce a T-shirt design exclusively for this year's 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign.

The campaign, known also as 'Or-

ange the World' (OTW), kicked off yesterday (November 25) as the world observed the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

It will end on December 10, in tandem with the celebration of International Human Rights Day.

This year's campaign theme 'Generation Equality Stands Against Rape' calls for everyone across all generations to take a stand against rape.

Adi Helmi Jaini from Pangrok Sulap said collaborating with GSS was the right move, considering that both organisations held the same core

beliefs on zero tolerance for all forms of violence.

"Pangrok Sulap has primarily expressed this sentiment through art, while GSS' advocacy has been through its community engagement activities," he related.

Adi said the community must stand

up against rape and combat issues such as toxic masculinity.

"Although most of the victims are girls, rape also happens to boys. No matter who it happens to, rape is still a crime.

"Inequality leads to injustice and breeds discrimination. These have been the central themes in our artwork, and we can fully resonate with the campaign theme," Adi added.

GSS executive director Chin Poh Choo said while both organisations had worked together on other projects in the past, this would be

their first time collaborating on an advocacy campaign.

"The OTW campaign will further strengthen our partnership," she noted.

Chin explained that this year's theme calls for people to consciously challenge the barriers that promote gender-based violence and hinder gender equality.

"There is a need to end this pervasive and negative culture of silence against rape. It is not an easy task, but we can make it happen by starting with ourselves in small ways such as having conversations about

the issue with people we care about to break the silence.

"If we find it difficult to speak about the issue, imagine how much more difficult it is for the victims to open up to others," she said.

GSS and Pangrok Sulap urged the government to collaborate with NGOs to develop and adopt victim-centered protocols to support rape survivors in their pursuit of justice.

"The advocacy against rape essentially starts with gender inequality. The first step for key stakeholders to address this is by increasing the participation of women in policy-

making across legal, social, economic and political sectors," said Chin.

In the run-up to the OTW campaign, GSS organised workshops in Tambunan and Ranau to encourage youths to explore the issues of gender-based violence and to artistically express themselves through wood carving and printing under the supervision of Pangrok Sulap.

GSS will be conducting programmes throughout the 16-day campaign in various communities around Sabah, with the first activity being a community run held in Kg Pinipi, Keningau.