You can teach the old workers, says employers’ group

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The Malaysian Employers Federation does not see a problem to prepare those over 60 to face new demands in the workforce.

MEF executive director Shamsuddin Bardan says retraining older workers should not deter them to stay on in employment. (File pic)

PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) said there was a need to retrain workers who are 60 years and above, especially in the face of emerging technological breakthroughs in what is known as the fourth industrial revolution (4IR).

MEF executive director Shamsuddin Bardan said retraining these workers should not deter them to stay on in employment.

“They may take a bit longer to command new technology, but there are always people who can be trained.

“As far as skills and work attitude are concerned, I don’t think we have any problem with this category of people as most of them are dedicated to their work,” he told FMT.

Shamsuddin said the government should reward employers who keep workers over 60, saying the move would also help reduce the dependency on foreign workers.

“When people work, they will be more empowered and actually make the local economy more vibrant because they are not going to send the money overseas, they’re going to spend it here,” he said.

Workplace trainer Myocho Kan said it was not true that older workers are hard to be retrained.
“I do some coaching for senior people as well and sometimes, if they click and are on the same wavelength, they can accept some things better than even the younger generation can,” he told FMT.

He said the emerging 4IR should not be a concern.

“It’s the same thing. If the technology or the skill acquisition is easy for the learner to accept, then it’s easy.”

He said in learning, there are factors more important than age.

“Time is one of them. If you can spend more time on people then they can learn better.

“Another is the trainer himself. If the trainer knows how to design the training in a way that is easy, simple and interesting, then it becomes easier for the trainee to learn as well.”

Last year, then health minister S Subramaniam said some 500,000 Malaysians would live to over 90 years old in 2050, adding that questions would be raised on when they should stop working.

“If we maintain the current retirement age at 60 years, the young won’t be able to support the older generations.”