

# Leveraging UMS expertise to develop Sabah

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**KOTA KINABALU:** Sabah has a wealth of expertise that can be harnessed to advance the socioeconomic development of the community, including through higher education institutions (IPT) such as Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS).

UMS Vice-Chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Kasim Mansor said that several relevant steps and strategies need to be implemented to support the new approach for the Knowledge Transfer Programme (KTP), which aims to advance Sabah's socioeconomic development in line with the Malaysian Higher Education Blueprint (MEB).

He said the strategies include collaboration between educational institutions and industry, capacity building and training, infrastructure and technology development, community involvement and educational initiatives.

"Universities and research institutions in Sabah can collaborate with local industries to conduct research that addresses the state's socioeconomic needs. The research outcomes can be shared with the Sabah community for practical application.

"Collaboration between universities and industries can lead to innovative research that



Prof Datuk Dr Kasim Mansor

benefits society. New discoveries can be applied across various sectors, including technology, medicine and agriculture," he said in a statement.

Kasim said that through technology transfer, industries can leverage research and technologies developed in academia, thereby accelerating innovation and practical application.

He further noted that through collaboration between educational institutions and industry, students could participate in industrial training at local companies, providing them with practical experience while offering companies access to a skilled workforce.

"Industry training collaboration programmes can act as a bridge connecting students with employment opportunities and reducing unemployment rates among graduates. Moreover,

qualified and skilled graduates meeting workforce needs can lower unemployment rates and increase household incomes.

"Collaboration with international industries can also open up opportunities for international partnerships, bringing investment and technology from abroad into Sabah," he said.

Kasim also said that through capacity-building training programmes, community members can acquire industry-specific skills, particularly in high-demand areas like information technology, modern agriculture and entrepreneurship.

He added that this would enhance the employability of the local population, increase their chances of securing jobs or business opportunities, and contribute to local economic growth.

Meanwhile, Kasim said that through the information and communication technology (ICT) strategy in rural areas of Sabah, it can bridge the inequality gap by providing equal access to educational opportunities, employment, and essential services.

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## Digitalisation provides widespread access to information, resources

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"Digital inclusivity programmes ensure that all segments of society, including the less fortunate, have access to technology and the internet. Digitalisation provides widespread access to information and resources, enabling communities in Sabah to make more informed decisions.

"Additionally, digitalisation supports research and development and technological innovation, which can lead to marketable discoveries and improvements. It also helps optimise supply chains and logistics, enhancing efficiency in the distribution of goods and services," he said.

According to Kasim, universities and industries could collaborate on community projects that directly benefit

the local population, such as health, education and skills programmes.

He also said that community projects would encourage community involvement in knowledge transfer initiatives, such as community farming projects or social entrepreneurship initiatives.

"Support for entrepreneurship initiatives and business incubators can help local entrepreneurs develop their businesses, create job opportunities, and boost the local economy," he said.

Through educational initiatives, Kasim believed that providing distance learning programmes allows individuals from rural areas to pursue higher education without needing to relocate to urban areas.

"Distance learning enables students to adjust their

study schedules according to personal needs and other commitments, such as work or family responsibilities. It allows working individuals to continue their education without leaving their jobs, promoting lifelong learning.

"Scholarships and financial aid help students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds pursue higher education, which they might not be able to afford without support. This includes opportunities for those from the B40 group to advance to higher education," he said.

Through these approaches, Kasim said that Sabah could advance its socioeconomic development in line with the MEB, ensuring that the knowledge and technology acquired are fully utilised by all segments of society. — Bernama