



Some of the UMS DPLI students who took part in the programme.

# UMS students inspire SMK Petagas pupils with innovative learning and counselling programme

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**KOTA KINABALU:** A group of 106 Postgraduate Diploma in Education (DPLI) students from Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) recently left a meaningful mark on the local education landscape through a two-day community engagement programme at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan (SMK) Petagas.

Held under the theme "Innovation and Counselling for Holistic Education," the initiative aimed to fulfil the academic requirements of two key courses – DT50202 (Instructional Design for Selected Topics) and DT00102 (Guidance and Counselling) – while providing future educators with hands-on experience in planning, executing and assessing integrated learning and counselling interventions.

Day one of the programme centred on innovative instructional methods and educational technology, involving 93 Form Three students including prefects and Peer Support Group (PRS) members. Using interactive, 21st-century learning strategies, students participated in subject-specific modules covering Malay Language, Islamic Education, Mathematics, Visual Arts, Physical Education and Design &

Technology.

Creative and engaging activities included: R.I.C.E First Aid Through Songs (Physical Education), Recycle Race (Malay Language), Recycle Runway – Recycled Fashion Showcase (Design & Technology), Situation Puzzle – Comment or Stay Silent? (Islamic Education), Math Grid Puzzle (Mathematics) and Passing the Arts (Visual Arts).

Students responded enthusiastically, with many praising the group-based games for making learning more enjoyable and accessible. PRS members highlighted the activities' role in building confidence and encouraging open communication.

The second day shifted focus to students' emotional and personal development. Highlights included: A parenting and community engagement talk on the roles of parents and school in shaping student character and academic success;

A youth forum titled 'Teenagers and Emotional Challenges: What You Need to Know'; A career workshop called 'Level Up! From Classroom to Career Guidance and Counselling'.

The programme wrapped up with a video montage, a

certificate presentation, tokens of appreciation to school staff and parents, and a group photo session.

The initiative was led by senior lecturers from the UMS Faculty of Psychology and Education Prof Dr Sabariah Sharif, Assoc Prof Dr Rosy Talin, and Asso Prof Dr Mohd Khairuddin @ Jerry Abdullah.

Dr Khairuddin emphasised that experiences like these offer future teachers invaluable lessons that extend far beyond academic knowledge.

"This programme shows that education is more than just transferring knowledge, it's about building character, developing empathy, and contributing meaningfully to the community," he said.

This initiative directly aligns with several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including: SDG 4: Quality Education, SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being, as well as SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals.

Through the enthusiastic participation of DPLI students, UMS continues to shape future educators as proactive change agents while fostering a sustainable, community-focused education ecosystem.