

UMS program sparks STEM interest among rural pupils

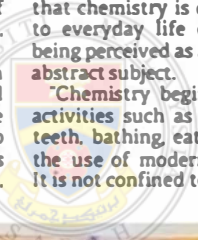
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KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) continues to strengthen early exposure to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) through the recent organisation of the 'STEM@SK Kg Brunei' programme in Membakut.

The programme involved 71 pupils from Year 4 to Year 6 at SK Kampung Brunei and was held under the 'Professor@SchoolUMS' initiative as part of the 'STI 100' Programme 2026, organised by U-Science, UMS.

Held in collaboration with the Faculty of Science and Technology (EST) of UMS, the initiative aims to bridge the gap between university academics and school communities,

particularly in rural areas.

As part of the programme, FST UMS Industrial Chemistry lecturer Assoc Prof Ts ChM Dr Mohd Sani Sarjad, delivered the first lecture in the series titled 'Wow! Ini Semua Kimia Rupanya!'.


Using an interactive approach, engaging visuals and simple language suitable for primary school pupils, he explained that chemistry is closely linked to everyday life despite often being perceived as a difficult and abstract subject.

"Chemistry begins with daily activities such as brushing our teeth, bathing, eating and even the use of modern technology. It is not confined to laboratories

but exists in almost every aspect of daily life," he said during the session.

Throughout the talk, pupils were introduced to various applications of chemistry, including in personal care products, daily food, processes within the human body, environmental phenomena and modern technology, helping them understand that chemistry is constantly present around them.

Mohd Sani also emphasised that a basic understanding of chemistry can nurture scientific and critical thinking skills, as well as curiosity, through observation and questioning.

He highlighted issues

related to single-use plastics and microplastics, which pose potential risks to human health and the environment, while stressing the importance of reducing plastic use and practising recycling from a young age.

He also touched on the use of food colouring in snack foods, reminding pupils of the importance of making moderate and informed food choices based on basic scientific knowledge.

The programme was attended by U-Science UMS director Md Sazali Md Salleh and received strong support from the school administration and teaching staff, contributing to its smooth implementation.



Mohd Sani (back, second left) and others pose for a group photo with programme participants.