

UMS promotes STEM among Membakut pupils

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Mohd Sani with SK Kg Brunei pupils after the session.

KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) continued efforts to strengthen early exposure to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) by organising the STEM@SK Kg Brunei programme, in Membakut, recently.

The programme involved 71 pupils from Year Four to Year Six at Sekolah Kebangsaan Kampung Brunei and formed part of the Professor@SchoolUMS initiative under the STI 100³ Programme 2026 organised by U-Science, UMS.

Conducted in collaboration with the Faculty of Science and Technology (FST), UMS, the programme aimed to bridge the gap between university academics and school communities, particularly those in rural areas.

As part of the programme, Associate Professor Dr Mohd Sani Sarjadi from the Industrial Chemistry Programme at FST UMS delivered the first lecture in the series titled "Wow! This Is All Chemistry!".

Using an interactive approach supported by engaging visual materials and simple language suitable for primary school pupils, Mohd Sani 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 teeth, bathing and eating, and extends to the use of modern technology. Chemistry is not confined to laboratories, but exists in almost every aspect of daily life," he said during the session.

Throughout the session, pupils were introduced to various applications of chemistry, including in personal hygiene products, everyday food, bodily processes, environmental phenomena, and modern technology, to help them understand that chemistry is present all around them.

Mohd Sani also emphasised that a basic understanding of chemistry can foster scientific thinking, critical reasoning skills, and curiosity among pupils through observation and inquiry.

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

In addition, he drew pupils' attention to the use of food colouring in snack foods, underscoring the importance of making moderate and informed food choices based on basic scientific understanding.

The programme was attended by U-Science UMS Director Md Sazali Md Salleh and received strong support from the school's administration and teachers to ensure its smooth implementation.

Overall, the STEM@SK Kg Brunei Membakut programme successfully sparked pupils' interest in STEM through a relaxed, engaging, and interactive learning approach, in line with efforts to nurture a scientifically literate and competitive future generation.