

UMS engages community through childcare programme

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KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) recently engaged students and local families at the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) Base in Teluk Sepanggar through the Smart Care: Safe Childcare, Thriving Community programme, reinforcing its role as a community-focused institution of higher learning.

Organised by the Early Childhood Education Programme (PAKK) under the Faculty of Psychology and Education (FPPS), the initiative involved 105 participants, including UMS students and 50 community members, primarily mothers from the RMN BAKAT Association.

The programme focused on holistic child care, covering health, nutrition, teaching techniques, and child behaviour management,

aimed at enhancing family well-being and community resilience.

PAKK FPPS programme head Dr Mohd Zafaren Zakaria said the initiative offered valuable opportunities for parents, educators, and students to learn through hands-on experience.

This programme offers participants the opportunity to deepen their understanding of child care and education, including exclusive breastfeeding techniques, healthy nutritional practices, as well as exposure to basic first aid skills such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) to prepare for emergency situations.

Through hands-on participation in the activities, participants gained meaningful experiences that contribute to



UMS students posing for a group photo with the guest of honour and participants.

children's holistic development as well as the well-being of families and the community," he said.

The programme was delivered in collaboration with the Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH), the Malaysian Civil Defence Force

(APM), and the BAKAT community, strengthening networks between the university and external agencies in empowering community education.

Participants also took part in group competitions, where BAKAT

mothers and UMS students worked together to produce simple teaching kits for use at home.

Special activities for children were organised using play-based learning methods, incorporating creative, sensory, and social

activities tailored to developmental stages. The opening and closing ceremonies were officiated by RMN Eastern Fleet Deputy Commander First Admiral Erman Shahril Adlan, who praised the programme coordinator, Satoria Amiruddin, for her commitment to its success.

Programme director Nurul Fatin Fasiha Norhambe described the positive response from the community as evidence of the importance of such initiatives in raising awareness of quality child care.

The Smart Care programme reflects UMS' ongoing commitment to early community development, the lifelong learning agenda, and producing graduates who are knowledgeable, skilled, and socially responsible.