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Sago exhibits potential of becoming future food source

The Sunday Post (Kuching), Malaysia



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KUALA PENYU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) strives towards elevating Sabah's traditional food heritage through an initiative meant to raise awareness and foster positive attitudes among youths towards sago as a future food source.

This was carried out through a recent programme, 'Attitudes Towards Traditional Sago Food as Future Food Through Psychology and STEM Approaches', organised by the Faculty of Psychology and Social Work (FPKS), in collaboration with Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation Sabah (KPSTI), U-Science UMS, UMS Centre for Academic Development and Excellence (PPKA), St Peter Bundu Kuala Penyu Catholic Youth (KBK) and Native Borneo.

Held at the Rumbia Information Centre, the programme formed part of the Service-Learning Malaysia-University for Society (SULAM) initiative under the PB30803 Course (Attitudes and Attitude Change).

Themed 'Sago Innovation: More Than Just Traditional Food', the programme involved 29 youths from the KBK, as well as 30 FPKS UMS students who also served as the organising committee.

According to programme

coordinator Associate Professor Dr Getrude Cosmas, sago holds significant potential not only as a traditional food heritage, but also as an alternative food source capable of contributing to future food sustainability.

"Exposure among youths to the cultural, economic and innovation value of sago is important to ensure that this traditional food remains relevant among the younger generation.

"Youths need to view sago not merely as a traditional food, but as a resource with the potential to be innovated and utilised in various value-added products," she said in a statement.

Getrude added that the programme reflected UMS' continuous commitment towards strengthening the preservation of local cultural heritage through education, innovation and knowledge transfer to the community, in line with Sabah's community development and heritage sustainability agenda.

"Among the highlights of the programme was the screening of the 'Rumbia Tatana' video, recounting the legend of the rumbia palm, the process of producing sago, and the various products that can be made from the resource.

"The climax of the programme was a food

innovation competition, where six groups of participants produced noodles and crackers made from sago flour. This emphasised creativity, taste and product presentation.

"This activity provided participants with the opportunity to apply STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) elements practically in the development of food products based on local resources," said Getrude.

She added that participants were also given the opportunity to share their experiences and reflections throughout the programme, including suggestions for similar programmes to be expanded to schools in order to raise awareness among the younger generation of the importance of preserving traditional food heritage.

The programme was further enlivened by a sharing session by Miss Native Borneo 2025, Christine Joan Charles, who discussed the role of youths in promoting traditional Bornean food to a wider community.



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The participants and committee members gather for a group photo.



The Tatana youths and FPKS students seen during the activity where they are making sago-based crackers and noodles.



Native Borneo manager Judith Pudrin (third left) leads the evaluation of the crackers and noodles produced by the young participants.