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21 SEP, 2026

UMS, UMB back marginalised children

Daily Express (KK), Malaysia

UMS, UMB back marginalised children

KOTA KINABALU: University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) continues to expand its contribution to community development through an international collaboration with Universitas Mercu Buana (UMB), Indonesia.

The programme, initiated by UMB lecturer Associate Professor Dr Setiawati Intan Savitri, has made a positive impact on the psychosocial well-being of marginalised children through an integrated approach combining psychology, art and nature.

Held under the theme "Empowering Marginal Children through Psychology, Art and Nature," the programme took place at Ruang Publik Terpadu Ramah Anak (RPTRA) Rawa Jaya in Pondok Kopi, Bekasi, West Java.

A total of 30 children aged between seven and 12 participated in the programme, which was designed to enhance their self-confidence, strengthen emotional resilience and foster positive attitudes.

UMS Faculty of Psychology and Social Work (FPKS) Senior Lecturer Associate Professor Dr Getrude Cosmas said the programme highlighted a motivational talk titled "Reaching Dreams Beyond Reality," delivered through storytelling and role-playing based on the stories of "The Tortoise" and "Bukit Sosodikon".

"This approach effectively conveyed messages of perseverance, determination and self-belief in pursuing one's dreams in a way that resonated with children.

"The participants also took part in a Decoupage art activity, which provided them with an opportunity to express their dreams, hopes and emotions creatively by producing artwork decorated with inspirational messages.

"Besides nurturing creativity, the activity also helped improve participants' communication skills, self-confidence and social interaction," she explained.

She said the programme also received support from the ERBE Foundation (Education, Religion, Bee, Entertainment), established by Abdul Rohim in 2016, reflecting the strong collaboration between higher education institutions and community organisations in implementing social development initiatives that benefit society.

UMS was represented by five students from the Master of Counselling (Specialty Program for Alcohol and Drug Abuse – SPADA), accompanied by programme coordinator Dr Patricia Joseph Kimong.

Getrude added that the participation of UMS students enabled them to apply their counselling knowledge in real-life settings while enhancing their intercultural communication skills, empathy and experience in conducting community-based programmes at the international level.

"The collaboration with UMB lecturers and students has also created opportunities for knowledge sharing, the exchange of best practices and the strengthening of academic networks between the two institutions.

"In line with UMS' aspiration of being a community-centred university, collaborations such as this continue to support the university's efforts to produce competitive graduates while contributing to community development through the transfer of knowledge and expertise," she said.



Programme organising committee led by Associate Professor Dr Setiawati Intan Savitri (sixth from right).

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SUMMARIES

K OTA KINABALU: University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) continues to expand its contribution to community development through an international collaboration with Universitas Mercu Buana (UMB), Indonesia. The programme, initiated by UMB lec turer Associate Professor Dr Setiawati Intan Savitri, has made a positive impact on the psychosocial well-being of marginalised children through an integrated approach combining psychology, art and nature.

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