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BFOI opens doors for special needs learners

Borneo Post (KK), Malaysia



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The Special Needs Learners at Borneo Festival of Ideas of Kota Kinabalu Zone in 22nd August 2026.

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KOTA KINABALU: The Borneo Festival of Ideas (BFOI) 2026 has opened new opportunities for special needs learners to showcase their creativity and innovation alongside other participants.

More than 20 Form Five students from Keningau Vocational College (KVC) took part in the Ranau and Kota Kinabalu zones of BFOI 2026, presenting seven projects and securing three gold, two silver and two bronze medals.

The students, comprising those with hearing impairment who communicate through sign language and neurodivergent learners, competed in three categories — the Borneo Solid Waste Management Innovation Challenge (BSWMIC), Borneo Local Wisdom Innovation and STEAMQuest Ignite.

They submitted four entries in BSWMIC, two in Borneo Local Wisdom Innovation and one in STEAMQuest Ignite.

The projects were developed based on the students' respective vocational studies at KVC, particularly furniture-making and dressmaking.

For the students, the participation marked their first experience competing in a physical innovation event that was open to the public.

Despite the challenges associated with communication and interaction, the students were able to present their projects to judges and engage with visitors without difficulty.



A team of hearing impaired and neurodivergent learners with their fabric waste products.

Prof Dr Jidon @ Adrian Janaun, a member of the BFOI organising committee, commended the students for their participation and achievements.

He said the festival was designed to be inclusive and provide Sabahans from diverse backgrounds with an opportunity to showcase their creativity, entrepreneurial initiatives and proposed solutions.

BFOI 2026 comprises a series of innovation and entrepreneurship competitions held in various zones before culminating in the final round at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) on Oct 13 and 14.

The event is organised by UMS

through its Centre for Innovation and Commercialization Management (PPIP), in collaboration with the Institute for Development Studies (IDS).

It follows the Sabah Festival of Ideas held in 2025.

Meanwhile, KVC director Lumang anak Lang said the college remained committed to providing quality education and equal opportunities for its special needs learners through the Special Education Integration Programme (PPKI).

He also expressed appreciation to the special education teachers for their dedication in guiding and managing the students throughout the competitions.



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SUMMARIES

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