



Eco-Tech Team members doing a demo for the villagers.

Two Sabah teams selected for DiGi Challenge in KL in March

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PENAMPANG: Two teams have been selected to represent Sabah in the "Challenge for Change Social Venture" competition to be held in Kuala Lumpur in March 2012.

The two team representing Sabah are the Eco-Tech team led by its Gan Siaw Chin, a second year bio-tech student from Universiti Malaysia Sabah and the Grand Lady team, also students of UMS.

The event is held for the third time nationwide by organiser DiGi Telecommunications Sdn Bhd, focusing on the energy, talent, creativity and inspiration of Malaysia's youths in starting up ideas that transform communities.

Its Marketing and Shareholding Manager for Sabah, Glenn Chin, said the two teams representing Sabah would be competing with another 10 teams.

"These 12 finalist teams will be awarded seed funding and assigned DiGi mentors to start up their Social Ventures and given approximately three months from December 2011 to March 2012 to develop their project.

"The main challenge for them in the Social Ventures which is basically to see if the project that they bring into this competition is something which is sustainable for the under-deserved community and how the community relates that social venture back into their daily life.

"This time around, we have the support from Malaysia Multimedia and non-governmental organisations like Partner of Community Organisations (Pacos) and Sabah Women Entrepreneurs and Professionals Association (Swepa), among others.

"This is the first time we do it at such scale and also the first time where DiGi lets the teams pick the under-deserved community to work with.

"It doesn't have to be something drastic in favour of DiGi, because some of the communities may not have a full scale of the internet

equipment, so maybe just simple internet where they can do small scale business as long as it relates to DiGi," he said.

Eco-Tech's Gan said: "We choose to do the garbage enzyme because it is low cost, eco-friendly and also because we ourselves are science students and we know that enzymes are very good for the environment."

According to Gan, their garbage enzyme project was based on the simple formula by Dr. Rosukan Poompanvong from Thailand.

"The process is actually fermentation and needs the composition of 1 + 3 + 10. One is for brown sugar, three for organic waste and 10 for water. These are mixed together and allowed to ferment on its own for at least three months.

"For the first month, you have to open the bottle cap to allow its gas to come out. The recommended fruits are lemon, orange and lime because of its refreshing smell.

"The water extracted can be used to mop the floor, wash the dishes, remove air odour and washing the car, among others," she said.

The team comprising five members is currently working together the Tinimungan Mororobuat Group from Kg. Tampasak led by its group advisor Winnie Joannes.

"We have a group called Tinimungan Mororobuat (dusun dialect) which in English means farmers group. We have started an organic farm in collaboration and sponsored by Pacos quite awhile ago," she said.

"We think this DiGi programme is very suitable and in line with what we are doing which is organic farming," she said adding that the group has 50 members, comprising mostly mothers.

Joannes, who is also a member of Pacos, explained that they had a discussion with the Eco-Tech team on Nov 11 and decided to accept their offer.

Overall winners of the competition will take home a start up, including a cash prize of RM10,000, among others.