

# Appreciating village life

DE 22-03-2017 11

KOTA KINABALU: Social service activities undertaken by university students with the local community can be the bridge between the university and the community.

Thus, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) continues to intensify community services and social works as a community outreach effort, especially the rural population.

Recently, the *Bakti Siswa Perdana* and *Pesta Bubuk UMS* involved a total of 250 UMS students at Kampung Binsulok and Kampung Likas, in Membakut to support the connectivity agenda and disseminate knowledge to the society.

The programme provided an opportunity for as many as 40 UMS students to camp for three days in both villages with their foster families, a valuable experience that can educate them about the values of life in the village.

Uniquely, the programme also involved international students thus was able to

provide a good picture of the cultural diversity of a pluralistic society and a sense of unity within the community.

Azizi Mumwi, from Tanzania, said the programme exposed them to the local culture as well as gave an opportunity to interact with the villages.

"An interesting experience because I learnt about the lifestyle here, food, traditional music and language of the community in the village," he said.

The university students were also given the opportunity to carry out community service and volunteerism through gotong royong in which they worked together with villagers to clean and repair the pier and fish market site, as well as paint the futsal court for the benefit of youths.

Ramida Syahrit, a Faculty of Humanities, Arts and Heritage student said she was excited as it was her first experience at carry out volunteer work.

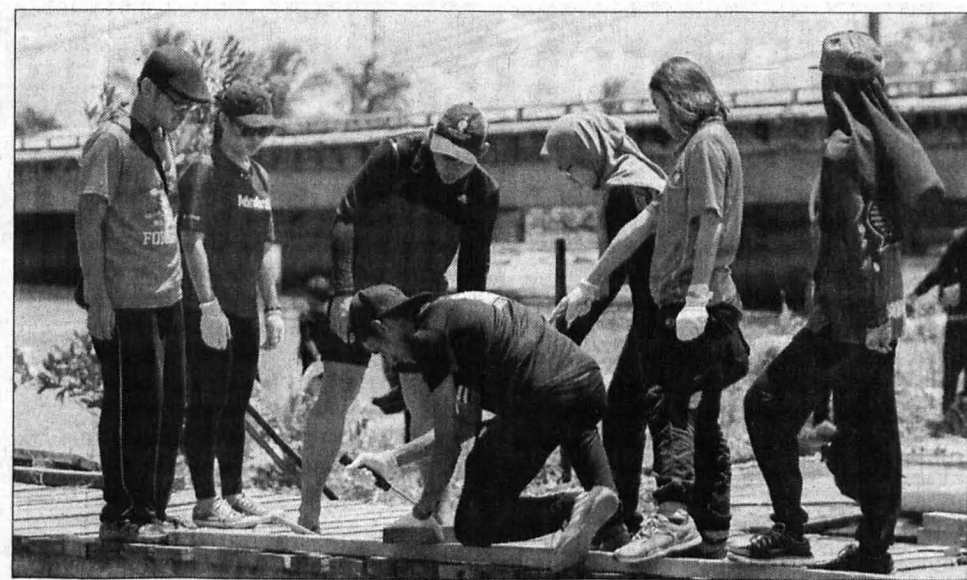
"Hopefully once the repair works are completed, the place will be more cheerful and filled with agriculture activities, selling fish and so on," she said.

The Pesta Bubuk which was also held is seen to have the potential to be an annual event and tourist attraction at Membakut.

This was expressed by Membakut Community Development Officer Latif Osman who proposed a collaboration with UMS to expand the festival to a platform to promote the diversification of tourism products based on food production.

"The presence of local and international students to the village has helped to promote various products and traditional food such as shrimp paste powder that is synonymous with Kampung Binsulok," he said.

UMS Vice Chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Mohd Harun Abdullah in his speech read by Deputy Vice Chancellor (Alumni and



UMS students repairing the jetty near the fish market.

Student Affairs) Associate Prof Dr Ismail Ali, agreed that the time has come to promote Membakut's product and add the festival to the State's tourism calendar.

"UMS is prepared to assist in organising

Pesta Bubuk in future, because throughout the Programme Bakti Siswa held across the State, the programme in Membakut has been the most special especially with such products included in the event," he said.