

# SCENIC hopes to increase employability of Sabah graduates

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**KOTA KINABALU:** Sabah Creative Economy and Innovation Centre (SCENIC) is hoping to increase employability among graduates, particularly in Sabah.

SCENIC Ecosystem & Industry Developer Lead Almizar Amil Hamzah said since last year, the world was hit by the unprecedented event of Covid-19, causing the worst economic downturn in Malaysia which also led to job losses and unemployment among graduates.

"It has subsequently raised the country's unemployment to about 718,100 people in 2020, according to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM).

"New entrants to the labour markets, especially fresh graduates, are no exception," he said.

In 2020, the number of graduates in Malaysia was 5.36 million people - an increase of 4.4 per cent from 2019 (5.13 million people).

However, Almizar noted the increasing underemployment of graduates is not due to a lack of qualifications, but rather to industries that are not providing enough opportunities due to financial constraints during the

pandemic.

Through Ekuiti Nasional Berhad's (Ekuinas) ILTIZAM Professional Development Programme, SCENIC could collaborate with University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) to get their graduates to apply for the programme.

Such an initiative would also be extended to other public and private institutions in the future.

"SCENIC will help to promote the programme to the graduates across Sabah through online and offline, as well as our social media.

"In addition, we are also helping companies in Sabah to register to become Ekuinas associates so graduates have an option to work in Sabah rather than having to migrate to West Malaysia to look for a job," said Almizar.

Such a move is aligned with one of Sabah Maju Jaya's missions to retain local talents in Sabah.

He also said SCENIC hopes graduates from Sabah could improve their employability by registering for the programme to equip themselves with the necessary skills to become well-rounded professionals or



Almizar Amil Hamzah



Hizwani Hassan

possibly future entrepreneurs through exposure to working with fast-growing companies in an entrepreneurial environment.

"During the pandemic, we hope to lessen the burden of the unemployed graduates in Sabah by giving them chances to be hired with a RM2,500 salary a month and job experience which is needed for their future career developments.

"Hence, we should do everything to promote new forms of employment, new innovative companies and start-ups for graduates post-pandemic by liberalising markets, promoting entrepreneurs, freeing up opportunities, and making life simpler for micro and small and medium

enterprises."

Ekuinas Stakeholders' Interest director Hizwani Hassan said since last year, most of the pre-employment training was conducted virtually due to strict standard operating procedures to prevent the spread of Covid-19 virus.

While Ekuinas is still looking for more East Malaysia-based companies to be its partners, the programme has a portfolio company which is the Cosmopoint Centre in Kota Kinabalu to place Sabahans and Sarawakians for employment.

Therefore, Hizwani hoped there would be more participants from East Malaysia to be part of the nationwide job training programme as previously there were only 10

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percent of them who became trainees.

"However, if they secure job placement in the Peninsula, we will bear the transportation costs when they go there to work for the first time.

"Trainee will receive a monthly salary of RM2,500 and other benefits such as EPF, Socso, health benefits and insurance coverage.

"Regardless of their degree title, we will ensure they get jobs at par with their qualifications to ensure they could raise their standard of living with better careers."

Since its establishment in 2012, Iltizam PDP program has had 432 graduates who have managed to secure jobs and permanent employment

Even during the pandemic last year, as many as 85 per cent of the graduates selected from the programme found permanent employment in various fields.

Ekuinas will select 75 trainees to be placed in Ekuinas portfolio and partner companies.

The programme can be applied at <https://iltizam.ekuinas.com.my/pdp/> before Sept 30, 2021.

SCENIC is an initiative under the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation Sabah. This initiative was approved by the Sabah Cabinet in August 2019 and aimed to accelerate industries in Sabah through technology, innovation and creativity, and collaboration with various stakeholders in the ecosystem.