

KENYATAAN MEDIA

UniMAP INDRASUTRA MORE THAN MERE ENTERTAINMENT

Arau - Music and dance are often misinterpreted by the community as a form of entertainment that neglects the values and not considering the contribution that can be offered if handled in a correct way.

University of Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP), on the other hand, believes that entertainment is capable of helping and benefits others.

As evidence, the UniMAP performing arts group, Indrasutra, under the Culture and Recreational Unit (UKR) is called upon to use their music and dance to raise funds to help autistic children's organizations.

There were about 39 people from UKR that went to Langkawi Island in April, for three days, to fulfil the University's Social Responsibility Program (USR) for the environmental conservation and also Charity Busking.

According to the program director, Izwan Izhar Haris, who is also the UKR Director, this program is one of the form of assistance to the community.

"We want to keep Langkawi Island clean, especially Cenang Beach, which attracts large number of tourists from within and outside the country every holiday season.

"Consequently, the implementation of environmental conservation program is important to present a positive image of environmental protection of the Malaysian community," he said when contacted by the reporter recently.

Taking initiatives with the large number of tourists to Langkawi Island, UKR is also doing its charitable work by performing busking in the famous public locations to collect funds and channel it to UniMAP's A-Heart fund, a body that focuses on Autism.

"We chose strategic locations such as Cenang Mall and Jetty Point Complex to perform busking.

"In addition to busking, we also convey information on Autism to educate the public and through the provided information, we managed to collect a donation of RM 1500 from visitors," he said.

Izwan added that the collected money was given right away to UniMAP's A-Heart fund to help autistic children in the northern region of Malaysia.

"I believed the results of our information about Autism; the society will understand better what autism is and have an awareness of the behaviour and sensitive about the need of autistic children and their families.

"We are delighted to have fulfilled this program and plan to hold more community service activities to help those in need," he said.

In addition to Autism Charity Busking, Indrasutra has been involved in various community service activities such as busking to raise money for Rohingya Fund; contributed to the Perlis art practitioners during Sahur Tour activities; entertaining orphans; beach cleaning; sharing the knowledge of music and dance with children at Taska Pewaris UniMAP.

Besides, they were also partnered with the Muslim community at Satun and Hatyai for the *gotong-royong* program to clean up the mosques and religious classes.

Indrasutra was established on 1st March 2005 and it is a performing arts group especially for UniMAP. As they have shown an excellent job, they often get invitations to perform at ceremonies from outside.

Izwan when asked about the origin of Indrasutra's name and he shared that it was the idea of the UKR's first director, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Salmah Haji Ayob, which combines the elements of the name "Indra" related to the Perlis State name at that time (Perlis Indra Kayangan) and also "Sutera" which is synonymous with the gentleness of the people of Perlis in terms of character and cultural norms that symbolize the state of Perlis.

"At the beginning of the establishment of "Indrasutra", its members need to go through an interview and an audition process and pass the "standard" that has been set before being

accepted and absorbed into the Culture and Recreational Unit. Most of them are those who have experience in their respective fields.

"Cultural Artist, with vast experience serving with the arts and culture bodies in Malaysia, started joining UKR in around 2005 and it was completed in 2006 with about 5 couples or 10 people," he said.

Indrasutra is not only famous around Perlis and Malaysia but has brought UniMAP and Malaysia's name internationally.

"Indrasutra has represented the country for cultural performances in several countries starting from 2009 in Uzbekistan; Australia (2010); South Korea (2011); China (2012); Italy (2013); UAE (2014).

Even Indonesia and Thailand is like a second home to Indrasutra as we have several opportunities to perform in both countries every year," he said.