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**iKOM Students Aid Perlis SMI Entrepreneurs**

Kangar, 7 June – A university's function should not merely be to produce graduates. All the skills and expertise possessed by students and lecturers could be harnessed for the benefit of the local community.

On that basis, Universiti Malaysia Perlis' (UniMAP) School of Human Development & Technocommunication (iKOM) has employed their expertise to aid Small and Medium Industry (SMI) entrepreneurs in Perlis.

For Mohamad Haziq Mohd Hidzir, a Bachelor of New Media Communication sophomore student said that the opportunity to help small business owners that their lecturers provided has been a great experience for them.

“We have to identify and select an entrepreneur and help rebrand their products.

“Our group chose to help a bamboo shoot and fruit pickle business owner, so we had to figure out a more attractive packaging and devise a marketing strategy using the latest approaches with knowledge we had received in class,” he said.

Meanwhile, Muhammad Ajmal Harun who lead the team that helped a *keropok lekor* entrepreneur expressed that he had troubles marketing his product.

“Our group performed a study on the market difficulties that the entrepreneur had experienced to fully understand the obstacles that need to be surmounted.

“Therefore, after our study we helped the business owner from the aspects of packaging, corporate rebranding, product diversification and to help acquire halal certifications for the products,” he said.

Muhammad Ajmal said that his group was proud that all the ideas they had provided were adopted by the business owner to help his business grow.

“We are pleased to be able to help these entrepreneurs expand their businesses. Perhaps these products were selling poorly before because of lack of marketing knowledge.

“All the experiences we gained during this activity were not available as theory lessons in class, and we must do field work to acquire them,” he further stated.

iKOM Deputy Dean of Academic Dr. Hanum Hassan said that the University Corporate Social Responsibility (UCSR) Programme was held as part of the Integrated Marketing Communications subject.

“Students were divided into 27 groups to help the Perlis SMI entrepreneurs to help promote their products.

“This is the best method to get students to understand the concepts and methods of integrated marketing communications because they needed to apply the theoretical knowledge they learned,” she stated.

Dr. Hanum further explained that the students' involvement with the SMIs helped them to comprehend real situations in the business world.

“This experience will also help students to be exposed to the correct methods of starting up a business as soon as their course is over. Students will also hand over their marketing plans to their respective businesses as UCSR service to the Perlis community,” she conveyed.

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