

THINK BIG, STUDENTS TOLD

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Aim for big business with Protégé know-how

KUALA LUMPUR: The Entrepreneur Development Ministry has so far reached out to 17,000 graduates, undergraduates and youths at 13 public universities nationwide with its programmes to produce more job creators.

Protégé secretariat head Norashikin Ismail said the programmes held for its target groups included career fairs, entrepreneurship expos, skills festivals and motivational sessions with celebrities.

The Protégé team visited Universiti Malaysia Trengganu last week, and will be calling on Universiti Malaysia Sabah today.

"We have exceeded our target of 15,000 people this year," she told newsmen at the Career and Entrepreneurship UPM (Universiti Putra Malaysia) Expo 2019 held at the campus in Serdang.

Response to Protégé has been overwhelming, she said, and the youths were receptive and appreciative.

"Most of them were unaware of Tekun Nasional financing schemes, that Institut Kecemerlangan Koperasi Malaysia provides funds for grooming and there are many other incentives from Entrepreneur Development Ministry agencies," she added.

Norashikin said the students and youths registry in the Protégé database would be available to more than 600 companies to select candidates for training.

Trainees will receive a RM2,000 monthly allowance from the companies during their eight to 12-month attachment, she said.

Protégé is a rebrand of Skim Latihan 1Malaysia (SL1M), which emphasises entrepreneurship training to produce more entrepreneurs or job creators and job seekers.

The entrepreneurship programmes are Protégé Entrepreneurship Intern, Protégé Boot Camp, Protégé Business Accelerator, Protégé Co-op and Protégé in ICT, while the employability programmes are Protégé Ready-To-Work, Protégé Booster and Protégé for Industry.

Young and successful

The ministry will also rope in students or graduates to share their success stories, Norashikin said.

"For example, there is a 27-year-old Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin female graduate who earns RM40,000 a month by selling popcorn online.

"There's also Noorazeaty from UPM who is successful in the chocolate business," she said.

Noorazeaty Mohd Khalif, 25, a final-year Bachelor of Human Development student, said she earns about RM12,000 to RM13,000 monthly from the sale of Delish chocolates.

The chocolates priced at between RM8.90 and RM17 are sold in Langkawi, Serdang and the Klang Valley.

"I came from a broken family. I was later adopted by a family which gave me the encouragement to be successful in my life.

"The Protégé programmes can help me build a name for my chocolates and expand my business overseas," said Noorazeaty.

The ministry's secretary-general Datuk Wan Suraya Wan Mohd Radzi said the National Entrepreneurship Framework



Youth programme: Wan Suraya (middle) with Norashikin (second from left) and her fellow panellists in a student forum at the UPM career and entrepreneurship expo, (from left) Dr Mass, Baptist, Mohd Fauzi and Hasanul.



Tell all: Noorazeaty (in cap) sharing details of her chocolate business with (from right) Wan Suraya and Norashikin at a press conference.

(NEF) was currently being fine-tuned to create an integrated ecosystem to help the younger generation become successful entrepreneurs.

"The NEF will be ready for launching in July or August. Protégé is part of the framework for training. We want to have integrated data to reach out to the targeted groups," she said.

Wan Suraya said the Government through various ministries and agencies planned to train 50,000 entrepreneurs each year.

She hoped that more government-linked companies would be involved in Protégé programmes, and called on investors to support the initiatives.

UPM Centre of Entrepreneurial Development and Graduate Marketability director Associate Prof Dr Mass Hareeza Ali found

Protégé to have high impact on the university students.

"We now have an 85% employability rate for our graduates and the remaining could be groomed with Protégé programmes. We are very aggressive in our entrepreneurship programmes and Noorazeaty is one of our beneficiaries," she said.

Dr Mass said that UPM targets to assist 80 students to be registered with the Companies Commission of Malaysia each year with the help of Protégé and relevant agencies.

Ditch the kerepek

During a forum with students at the UPM career and entrepreneurship expo, Wan Suraya urged the students to go beyond small ventures such as selling *kerepek*.

"Don't miss the opportunities offered by Protégé. Explore its

game changer programmes. You must make the choice, then follow it with determination and discipline to be successful entrepreneurs," she advised.

Centre for Entrepreneur Development and Research (Cedar) business coach Hasanul Israaq told the students that "entrepreneurs are shaped, not born."

Yayasan Bank Rakyat administration and human development department head Mohd Fauzi Md Fadzil said the younger generation was fortunate to have Protégé to groom them and they should grab the opportunities.

Institut Kecemerlangan Koperasi Malaysia (middle zone) director Christopher John Baptist suggested that the students could set up co-operatives and become entrepreneurs through Protégé, and this could enhance the employment rate.

Ministry's mission

THE Entrepreneur Development Ministry aims to produce entrepreneurs who can compete in the global market.

Its mission is to increase entrepreneurship among Malaysians, especially the lower income group from each geopolitical layer.

The ministry formulates the National Entrepreneurship Framework (NEF) and shapes small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to be well-rounded and competitive; steers the development of the B40 and M40 groups and social entrepreneurs; and co-ordinates the implementation of the bumiputra equity ownership policy.

It is the facilitator for entrepreneurs and SMEs to start their businesses including co-coordinating funds for them, and also forms co-operation and strategic partnerships with the private sector.

It also co-ordinates the development of SMEs and bumiputra businesses in strategic industries such as the automotive, aerospace, renewable energy, digital economy and halal sectors.

The Protégé initiative launched on Jan 28 is to reduce unemployment within society, specifically among the youth.

Protégé gives importance to entrepreneurship training to produce entrepreneurs or job creators, in accordance with the NEF Strategic Objective #10: The Application of Entrepreneurship Skills for Unemployed Youth. Protégé programmes are open to students, graduates and youths.

As of February this year, 226,251 graduates have undergone training programmes with the participation of 649 companies since 2011.