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USM EMPOWERMENT EFFORTS HAVE YIELDED GLOBAL-MINDED STUDENTS

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PENANG, April 2016 - The move by Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) in empowering its students has yielded positive results. The students of today have the tenacity in exploring their own potentials as global players in speaking their minds on issues which transcend boundaries.


Basyirah Al-Iman Mohamad, 22, a third-year student in Management is an example of those who love to explore new avenues. Having a deep interest in issues relating to sustainability and the environment, Basyirah financed her own trip to join "The Climate Reality Project" founded by the former Vice-President of the United States, Al-Gore in Manila, the Philippines last month.

"I was interested and have always followed the 'Sukarelawan Kampus Sejahtera' volunteer programme," said Basyirah in sharing her story on her early involvement in the programme which is wholly run by USM students.

Participation by students in programmes organised through 'Kampus Sejahtera' which focused on empowering students on environmental issues since 2013 has been on the rise; for example in 2013, 8,008 students were involved in various activities on sustainability awareness and actions while in 2014 and 2015, there has been a sharp increase numbering at 10,147 and 11,510 as each programme conducted by the 'Kampus Sejahtera' Secretariat has become better organised, with the introduction of more strategic activities through the 6 clusters which are the Water Cluster, Energy Cluster, Health Cluster, Agriculture Cluster, Biodiversity Cluster, and the Zero Waste Cluster.

"During my stay in Manila, we were trained and exposed to various issues relating to climate change and crises, as well as in looking for solutions to those issues," said Basyirah.

What brought her excitement the most was the time when the programme ended and every participant was given a certificate of confirmation and elected to be a Climate Change Leader, tasked with doing 'Acts of Leadership' when returning to their own countries.

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In sharing her story about the programme, Basyirah said she had sent an application based on the information provided by her colleague from India, who had requested that she applied for it.

Basyirah together with another local participant were selected to be among the 700 participants, from a total of 2,000 individuals who had requested on joining the programme.

“I was truly excited to take on the responsibility of spreading and committing myself to such activities, together with others from different levels of society and of all ages, to be involved in issues that could be harmful to the environment due to climate change,” she said enthusiastically.

She added that, it has truly been a valuable opportunity and experience, when she was able to gain knowledge directly while being in Manila, as Al-Gore had provided information that many are still unaware of and now is the time to take appropriate actions.

“Moreover I was so happy to have the opportunity to meet and interact with individuals from differing backgrounds, coming from 120 countries.

“I would like to continue with this effort, not just mainly to share with my friends at the university, but also to go to the primary and secondary schools to inform the students of their roles in reducing the effects of climate change,” said the girl from Johor Bahru further.

She has proven that it could be done, when her talk on this issue attracted more than 800 students in USM recently.

Basyirah, who aims to have a business of her own one day, is an example of how the youth at the university nowadays, are able to see a world that is different, to move out of the daily norms and finding the confidence to be involved in matters ‘outside the box’.

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