

Celebrating diversity

University students learn about cultural understanding

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JOHOR BARU: About 140 undergraduates from several universities including from neighbouring countries attended a seminar on cultural understanding in an effort to promote diversity.

The Diversity and Inclusion Youth Camp which was organised by KDU University College and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) was aimed at promoting harmony among youths of various races.

The participants were from Indonesia's Sampoerna University, Hong Kong's Shaw College, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), UCSI University, INTI University and College, Netherlands Maritime Institute of Technology (NMIT), UTM and KDU.

The three-day seminar, which included a workshop on cultural diversity, talks on the dangers of stereotyping and biases and other cultural activities.

Helen Li Ho Yan, 22, from Shaw College, said that she attended the seminar to share with everyone some of the issues that youths were dealing with in her city.

"It is sad to see how people who hold different opinions and views, often argue when talking about controversial topics like homosexuality.

"I hope to explore how to tackle these issues especially among my campus friends," she said.

Ugandan Allen Rosette Asaba, 22, a Bachelor of Civil Engineering student in

INTI, shared her experiences studying in Malaysia.

"When I first came here, people were a bit unsure about interacting with me.

"But once they got to know me, we got along very well as I was fluent in English," she said, adding Malaysians are very friendly and welcoming.

Algerian Fatima Soualhi, 22, also from INTI, said knowing many languages has helped.

"I can speak and understand four languages - English, Bahasa Malaysia, Arabic and French.

"Although I am not that good in all of them, knowing these languages is an advantage and helps prevent misunderstandings," she said.

Ni Luh Komang Surminiari, 22, from Jakarta said that this was her first time in Malaysia and she looked forward to learning about different cultures.

KDU University College deputy vice-chancellor Assoc Prof Hon Wei Min said that embracing the diversity of cultures and races is important.

"When students pursue their studies in higher education institutions, it is important to respect and learn about other races and cultures.

"Students must also master English to enable them to communicate better with each other," she said, adding that this was the fourth time the university had organised such an event."



Diversity and Inclusion Youth Camp participants take a group photo.