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Backstage at SUSED2025

Written by: Anis Shahira Bazlan, Nur'Ain Zuraimi & Nurulnabilah Abdul Aziz

When we first agreed to be part of the organising committee for the International Competition on Sustainable Education (SUSED2025), we honestly had no idea what we were signing up for. We had heard stories from colleagues who had been involved in past big events, but nothing could quite prepare us for the scale, the intensity, or the sheer emotional investment this journey would demand.

At the start, it seemed simple enough: a few meetings, some paperwork, and coordination with our partners and team members. Yet as the weeks stretched into months, SUSED2025 grew far larger than just another event on the academic calendar. It became a living, breathing project that tested our patience, pushed us to the limits, and ultimately transformed how we view teamwork, leadership, and the values we hold as part of UiTM.

From the outside, SUSED2025 might have looked like a smooth, well-orchestrated event. Behind the scenes, however, it was a constant balancing act. There were days when the weight of the event felt overwhelming with messages buzzing nonstop, deadlines inching closer, and tasks piling up faster than we could tick them off and what more, many of us held two or even three positions at once. But in

those very moments of chaos, we discovered the strength of not having to carry it all alone.

But, strangely enough, those very challenges became the heartbeat of the journey. One night, as we rushed to finalise the winners' list with videos and certificates for the closing ceremony, exhaustion hung heavy in the air. Yet instead of breaking us, the pressure pulled us closer. Someone volunteered to recheck every detail until 8 p.m. in the office, another handled the designs until late at night at home while shifting duties as a mom and wife, and the rest sent encouraging words that kept us moving. It was chaotic, but it was also beautiful.

In those moments, we realised that SUSED2025 was more than just an international competition or just a mere obligation as a worker—it was a shared journey of perseverance, problem-solving, and resilience.

If we had to describe the organising committee in one phrase, it would be a circle of support. Each of us came in with different strengths: some with technical expertise, others with communication and management skills, others with a flair for creativity. None of us could have carried the event alone, but together, we formed a circle of support that kept the wheels turning.

Teamwork was not just about splitting tasks, but it was about carrying one another

through the storm. When one of us faltered, another stepped in. When doubt crept in, encouragement replaced it. And when we finally saw the results of our hard work, there was an overwhelming sense of pride—not just in what we had accomplished, but also in how we had done it.

It reminded us that the essence of teamwork is not perfection but trust: trusting that others will show up, contribute, and care just as much as you do.

What struck us most about SUSED2025 was how it reflected the very values UiTM strives to uphold.

- Excellence in pushing through fatigue to deliver our best.
- Integrity in making sure processes were fair and transparent.
- Sustainability in reusing resources and ideas to build lasting impact.
- Teamwork in carrying one another when things became too heavy.
- Global collaboration in connecting partners and participants from Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia and beyond.

Through SUSED2025, UiTM was not only a host but a beacon of showing what it means to lead with vision while staying rooted in values.

Amid the deadlines and pressure, there were small, unforgettable moments that

made the journey special. We still remember the joy of seeing the first wave of tasks finally fall into place. It was not just a checkmark on a list, but a sigh of relief, a small victory that gave us the energy to keep pushing forward. With over 300 participants and only a small group of committee members, the personal sacrifices were many, but the gratitude in participants' voices made it worth every effort.

And, of course, the closing ceremony was the moment everything came together. Watching the winners' names announced, seeing the teammates' excitement, and hearing participants' words of thanks made every sleepless night worth it. It was a reminder that our effort had created not just an event, but an experience that touched lives and inspired futures.

SUSED2025 taught us lessons that go far beyond planning events.

We learned that leadership is not about control, but about trust, which is trusting others to shine in their own way. We learned that resilience is not an individual trait but a collective strength, built through support and shared determination. And most of all, we learned the quiet power of gratitude. A simple "thank you" exchanged among team members and a willingness to help others could lighten even the heaviest days.

These lessons will stay with us long after the memory of the event fades. They will

guide ourselves in our teaching, in our research, and in every future project we take on.

As we reflect on this journey, we see SUSED2025 not as an endpoint but as a stepping stone. It showed us what UiTM is capable of when vision meets collaboration, when challenges are met with resilience, and when values are lived rather than just spoken.

For us personally, it was more than a professional duty; it was a personal milestone. It deepened our appreciation for our colleagues, expanded our sense of global citizenship, and reminded us that even the most ambitious projects are possible when we stand together.

Through SUSED2025, we saw UiTM's values not as abstract ideals, but as lived experiences. Excellence looked like colleagues giving their all despite fatigue, teamwork felt like late-night laughter that kept us afloat and global collaboration was not a slogan, but the reality of voices from across nations converging into one shared vision

To the teammates, advisors, and colleagues: thank you for making this journey unforgettable. To UiTM and IIUM: thank you for trusting us with this responsibility. And to our beloved self, we carry this reflection forward as proof that growth often comes from the most unexpected places.

SUSED2025 may have officially ended, but its spirit continues in the lessons we have learned, in the friendships we have built, and in the stories we will keep telling.

