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SDG

06/01/2025 / DR AKEHSAN HJ DAHLAN



KAPIT, 29 November 2024 – In a groundbreaking initiative to address the challenges of an aging population, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), the Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH), and the World Health Organization (WHO) have successfully implemented the My Occupational Engagement Home Program (MyHOeME) in Kapit, Sarawak.

With Malaysia projected to become an aging nation by 2030 and Sarawak expected to reach this milestone even earlier by 2028, the program aims to support older persons by addressing physical, mental, and social needs. The initiative comes at a critical time when 15% of Sarawak’s population will comprise older persons, facing challenges such as chronic health conditions, cognitive decline, and emotional struggles.

Conducted from November 25 to 29, 2024, the program was implemented in Rumah Panjang Rh Dennis Langok, Sg Amang, Kapit. Led by Associate Professor Dr. Akhesan Dahlan from UiTM, along with Dr. Harnisha Haidhir and Pn Nora Hamid from MOH, the program involved local occupational therapists who guided participants through physical exercises, cognitive activities, and social engagements.

“This program demonstrates our commitment to the well-being of older persons. It highlights that every stage of life is valuable and deserves attention,” said Mr. Ambrose Abong Bugek, Political Secretary to the Parliamentary Member and Minister of Works, during the closing ceremony.



The program’s innovative approach has already garnered significant recognition, winning Diamond and Gold Awards at the IIDEX2024 held at UiTM. It aligns with Malaysia’s socio-economic development goals under the 12th Malaysia Plan and the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being.

Participants expressed overwhelming appreciation for the program. “We miss this program. It’s sad that it has to end,” said one participant, while another noted, “We elderly don’t have much to do as our children are busy working. If there are activities like this, we miss them.”

The success of MyHOeME highlights the transformative impact of collaborative efforts between academic institutions, healthcare providers, and international organizations. By addressing the unique needs of older persons and their caregivers, the program demonstrates that aging can be a time of growth, connection, and fulfillment.

The initiative was broadcast on Astro Awani Borneo on November 29, 2024, bringing national attention to this innovative approach to supporting healthy aging in rural communities.

As Malaysia approaches its status as an aging nation, programs like MyHOeME offer hope and practical support for older persons, paving the way for healthier and more engaged senior years.

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