

Headline **Business with heart**
Date **03 Jul 2011**
MediaTitle **Sunday Star**
Section **Star Education**
Journalist **N/A**
Frequency **Weekly**
Circ / Read **320,964 / 1,072,000**

Language **English**
Page No **3**
Article Size **197 cm²**
Color **Full Color**
ADValue **7,372**
PRValue **22,116**



Business with heart

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DEPUTY Higher Education Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah has praised students from some 30 public and private universities for participating in the Sife World Cup 2011, an event which encourages students to come up with socially responsible and beneficial business models.

He described Sife as "one of the most important co-curriculum activities" for students and the best way to get students interested in entrepreneurship skills that was inclined more towards social responsibility rather than profit.

Affiliated with Sife Worldwide, Sife Malaysia Foundation empowers students to positively change the quality of life for communities in need, through the global partnership of business leaders and academic professionals in the Sife network.

With business models presented having positive social impact on the community's lifestyle, Saifuddin said it was about time that students from the remaining 69 universities in the country take part in the programme.

"I hope the remaining 69 universities would also get on board and contribute to the programme as the country needs more entrepreneurs seeking ways to make people's lives better," he said after meeting up with several students taking part in the Sife World Cup, where all 39 countries come together to present their business models from a particular business entity.

"The government supports this activity as it is not like any other business presentation related to corporate social responsibility (CSR) but one that tests your knowledge in improving the world.

"It is basically solving social problems with business models.

"I was told that several presentations held in the past had studied ways on making



orang asli settlements better," he added.

Sife Malaysia Foundation director Datin Norela Nuruddin said it was the first time the competition was being held here.

"Our universities have reached top four in World Cups but this time, since we are hosting the competition here, I hope we make it higher than that," she said.

Among the universities taking part in the competition were Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Sunway University and Taylor's University.

In previous competitions, Norela said the "fear of public speaking" was among several shortcomings which kept students from bagging the cup.

"We had good business models in the past but due to lack of presentation skills, we fell short," she said.

Mohd Mokhtar Hairuddin, 24, a student from UUM said he was inspired to take part in the competition after his lecturer informed him of Sife.

"I have always wanted to make the country a better place to live in, but I did not know how to do it.

"Through Sife and the business organisations, I believe our projects will be known to people via their CSR efforts, even if we do not win," he said.