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## **Dr Annuar introduces STEM50 programme to attract students to Science, Maths**

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(From fifth right, front row) Dr Annuar and other dignitaries record memories with the participants of Techlympics 2022 East Malaysia Zone Level, Sarawak in UTS.

SIBU (Oct 7): In fostering interest in the subjects of Science and Mathematics among students, a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics 50 (STEM50) programme was implemented in the Nangka state constituency.

According to Nangka assemblyman Dr Annuar Rapa'ee, the programme involved three secondary schools in the constituency; namely SMK Kampung Nangka, SMK Agama Sibul and SMK Jalan Oya.

“The programme which is my project is to attract interest in the two subjects, where I will take ‘foster students’ as many as 150 Form 1 students from three secondary schools in my area.

“I will take 50 ‘foster students’ from each school up to Form 3 because when they reach Form 4, they will be separated into the Science and Arts streams,” he said at the closing ceremony of the Malaysia Techlympics 2022 East Malaysia Zone Level, Sarawak at University Sarawak Technology (UTS) yesterday.

Dr Annuar, who is also the Deputy Minister of Education, Innovation and Talent Development, told the selected students that they had undergone free tuition from Oct 3, and his service centre would work with teachers to provide free tuition for the two subjects twice a year.

“This tuition will continue until January when the school will be closed. This programme will continue after the holidays,” he explained.

Touching on his project, Dr Annuar said that the three-year project just started this year.

He expected that by the end of 2024 there will be 450 people involved in the STEM50.

“My main objective is to ensure that at least 50 per cent of them will be in the science stream when they are in Form 4 and 5. And certainly, my goal is to ensure that all of them will become engineers, doctors, or other professionals,” he said.

Dr Annuar said that although the project was ambitious, he was confident that it could be achieved because of the support from the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI).

“Apart from free tuition, the students will also be involved in activities related to the two subjects, for example visiting hospitals and so on in an effort to introduce them to science products and further attract their interest,” he explained.

However, he noted that many students were not interested in science and mathematics subjects because they were afraid of failing in those subjects.

“This subject is not looking back, but more logical with something learned that can be seen, felt and even enjoyed by translating it into theory and practice,” he emphasised.

He said, if students' interest is instilled at an early stage, there is no reason why they cannot master the subjects well.

"If students continue to put emphasis on those two subjects, they will excel in those subjects and that is why I introduced the STEM50 project in my area to produce more professionals related to the fields of science and mathematics," he added.

Also present were Deputy Secretary General (Culture and STI Services) of MOSTI, Dr K. Nagulendran, permanent secretary of the Ministry of Education, Innovation and Talent Development Datu Kameri Affandi, MOSTI Science Planning and Culture Division secretary Nik Kamaruddin Nik Husin, deputy director of Sarawak State Education Department Dr Les Met and Sibul District education officer Ahli Chikba.