

**Media Monitoring**

Publication: **Borneo Post Online**

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Date: **8 June 2022**

Reference: **Ekuiti Nasional**

Headline: **Life-changing opportunity for Sabahan youths**

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| Life-changing opportunity for Sabahan youths

BY ELTON GOMES ON JUNE 8, 2023, THURSDAY AT 8:16 PM

SABAH

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*Imran (seventh left), Marc (sixth left), Hizwani (seventh right) and Haji Nazri (sixth right) with the 16 students and DMT teams.*

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KOTA KINABALU (June 8): Discover Muay Thai (DMT), a homegrown social enterprise that offers Muay Thai martial arts and fitness training and services, has expanded its academy program in Kota Kinabalu.

In collaboration with ILTIZAM, the corporate social responsibility (CSR) arm of Ekuiti Nasional Berhad (Ekuinas), alongside Persatuan Muaythai Negeri Sabah (PMNS), DMT Academy has selected 16 underprivileged youths from Sabah to embark on an intensive four-month programme designed to hone martial arts and living skills, instil discipline, build resilience, self-esteem and open pathways to attain sustainable livelihoods.

DMT Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer Imran Harth said the programme first started in Kuala Lumpur with its aim to not only help underprivileged youths or school dropouts, but to also give them a second chance and a better life for their future.

“The programme has proven to transform the minds, character and lives of the many youths we work with at Klang Valley in Kuala Lumpur.

“We are truly excited to expand this initiative and empower the youth of Sabah through Muay Thai and the programme we curated.

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"It's rigorous, starting at 5:00am to 10.00pm but a comprehensive approach to personal growth, emphasising character development.

"We see them flourishing both inside and outside the training ring. The end in mind is for these youths to have dignified and independent lives," he said at the launch of Discover Muay Thai (DMT) Batch 06/23 in Tanjung Aru Baru.

Also present were Ekuiti Nasional Berhad (Ekuinas) director Hizwani Hassan, Persatuan Muaythai Negeri Sabah president Haji Nazri Ab Razak and Borneo Tiger Mixed Martial Arts owner and head coach Marc Marcellinus.

Meanwhile, Hizwani said Ekuinas had been working with DMT Academy in 2022 for Batch 5 of the DMT programme in Kuala Lumpur.

"We saw how the programme successfully unlocked the full potential of underprivileged and at-risk youths and created a ripple effect of positivity within their respective communities.

"At ILTIZAM, we know that not everyone will be academically inclined, and we actively look for projects such as this to support. We strongly believe in the impact of experiential learning, opening opportunities for marginalised youths in personal growth, empowerment and a pathway to building sustainable livelihoods.

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“It was a deliberate decision for us to take this programme out of Kuala Lumpur. It will be a life-changing opportunity for the 16 Sabahan youths of this new batch. We are blessed to have great partners in Sabah,” said Hizwani.

As a social enterprise, DMT has been making a significant impact on at-risk youth for the past eight years through various programmes. The expansion to Sabah marks the sixth batch of DMT Academy programme. DMT has three branches in the Klang Valley, primarily staffed by alumni of the DMT Academy who have progressed to become trainers and administrative staff.

DMT aims to provide participants with career pathways for diverse roles such as professional Muay Thai athletes and coaches, or retail, marketing, hospitality and administrative personnel, and more. In Sabah, DMT works closely with ECHO Resorts, creating opportunities for graduates to secure careers in the state’s thriving hospitality industry.

“The impact of DMT’s initiatives can be witnessed through the remarkable achievements of its alumni as several have emerged as top Muay Thai and Kickboxing athletes, proudly representing Malaysia and bringing home medals from prestigious events like the SEA Games while others have leveraged their expertise and passion for the sport to become successful coaches, even establishing their own Muay Thai gyms,” said Imran.