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**KLANG:** Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) recently organised the first disruptive technology empowerment programme for students from underprivileged communities in Carey Island.

Led by UPM Faculty of Science associate professor Dr Suriati Paiman, the programme received RM23,000 in funding from the National Commission for Unesco Malaysia.

She said the initiative is in line with UPM's desire to contribute to the socio-economic development of the country by improving the skills and abilities of students.

"Disruptive technology is an innovation or progress that introduces new approaches, methods, products or services that replace existing processes, technologies and services.

"The programme serves to (help) students on Carey Island who do not have the opportunity to explore technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT) and artificial intelligence (AI)."

Suriati said giving students exposure at school level could enrich disruptive technology itself and strengthen knowledge in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

"Malaysia, like other countries, is experiencing changes because of

# Initiative to empower underserved students

➤ UPM, Unesco hold workshop on disruptive technology to prepare Carey Island youths for digital job market

Industrial Revolution 4.0 (IR4.0), in which most jobs or processes would be executed either automatically or semi-automatically through the integration of disruptive technology. Disruptive technology is flourishing alongside the advancement of IR4.0.

"It could positively impact communities, particularly in farming and agriculture, in which socio-economics play a significant role."

She also said the programme was launched with an introduction to disruptive technology and a "hands-on" workshop, with a total of 150 participants from SK Sungai Judah (A), SK Sungai Bumbun (A), SJK(T) West Carey Island, SJK(T) South Carey Island, SJK(T) East Carey Island and SMK Pulau Carey.

"Participants witnessed several demonstrations of technology, which included 3D printing, drones, augmented reality, virtual reality and metaverse technology.

"They also had an opportunity to experience a live online demonstration of IoT and AI technology with experts from abroad.

"The exposure and transfer of disruptive technology knowledge will open up opportunities among target groups and teachers to prepare the next generation for the future," she said, adding that this is in line with an initiative that was just introduced in Malaysia, which is AI for the People.

Suriati said to ensure the programme is implemented effectively, there was also a training

workshop prepared for teachers to familiarise them with disruptive technology.

"The workshop focused on two modules, which included home automation control and AI. These two projects introduced the teachers to AI and IoT technology through the 'runline microcontroller' in everyday applications. Apart from the students, trained teachers could also benefit from diversifying digitalisation techniques in their teaching and learning."

She said she participated in the workshop to enhance her knowledge and expertise in disruptive technology, adding that UPM plans to expand the programme to reach out to more underserved communities.

"We will continue this programme to provide students access to quality education and prepare them for the digital job market. We also plan to extend the programme to local communities through events such as science carnivals and similar initiatives."