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# UPM's Dragons showcase innovation

**GLOBAL STUDENT CHALLENGE:** Only Malaysian university team to make the cut in a Hong Kong event



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1. Team Dragon members in front of Hong Kong Polytechnic University's Innovation Tower. 2. Mohd Fauzi Ramlan 3. Team Dragons getting ready to present their innovation before the panel of judges at the Global Student Challenge.



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**I**N this rapidly evolving world, social innovation has become a key element in driving a nation.

Universiti Putra Malaysia vice chancellor Professor Datuk Dr Mohd Fauzi Ramlan has been aggressively promoting social entrepreneurship by providing several grants to potential projects.

One of these is an innovation by Team Dragons called Neolexic, a software intended for visually-dyslexic children to learn how to pronounce, spell and read effectively within just six months.

Team Dragons leader Kaviyarasu Elangkovin said: "As my team had come up with an exhaustive business plan, we decided to compete in global business plan competitions in order to discover and rectify any shortcomings in our plan."

In the past, the team members had won several awards in various international competitions including the Global Social Venture Challenge South East Asia, Sasin Business Plan Competition, Dell Innovation Challenge and

Standard Chartered ICT Challenge.

Their most recent foray was in Hong Kong Polytechnic University's Global Student Challenge earlier this year.

"Although this competition was held in Hong Kong, we learnt the importance of penetrating in global market to further establish our product," said Kaviyarasu.

"The competition was pretty tough as there were top universities taking part, like Johns Hopkins of the US.

"Nevertheless, we did our best and we know we couldn't have done better. We will grow stronger in time to come and we foresee every international competition as a stepping stone for us to achieve greater heights."

The team's mentor, Associate Professor Dr Vijayaletchumy Subramaniam who is Neolexic software's head researcher, said she was most impressed with the drive and dedication of the team members.

"Team Dragons members are from the Faculty of Economics and Management, and they impressed me with the quality of their busi-

ness plan," said Vijayaletchumy.

"The team really paved the way for commercialising the product which can help 600,000 school-going children in Malaysia who are dyslexic."

"The competition in Hong Kong was a memorable experience for the team members as they were able to gain many useful ideas on how to further improve on the business plan."

Vijayaletchumy added that the team was especially grateful to the university vice chancellor for promoting social entrepreneurship which is being seen as a key driver in the nation's economy.

Team Dragons' two other members, Sri Ramany Pragatheswara Tapasvy Robert and Loh Chu Xin, also shared on their experience in Hong Kong.

"This was a very special exposure for me and helped made possible by my mentor Dr Vijaya and team leader Kaviyarasu," said Pragatheswara.

"The experience has definitely contributed to building my character and motivated me in

striving to be the best I can be."

"The price for attaining this wisdom has been truly worth it."

Although Loh is an accounting student in her final year, she is always keen to take part in different activities to learn beyond her course modules.

She is particularly interested in problem-solving and enjoys the process of developing solutions for various issues.

"In Hong Kong, I was able to meet teams from various countries and also had the chance to be better acquainted with Hong Kong, thanks to the student ambassadors there," she said.

"It was a great opportunity for meeting and interacting with new friends and also share ideas with them."

"The innovations and business proposals presented by the other teams were really creative and just amazing in their way of solving society's problems."

"These in turn have inspired me to be more creative and think out of the box when developing a sustainable business idea or solution."