

# Sabah tourist guides still have to improve — UMS

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By Jenne Lajun

**KOTA KINABALU:** Most tourist guides in Sabah are knowledgeable about the State but there is still room for them to improve.

Universiti Malaysia Sabah's (UMS) head of the tourism

management programme, Roseni Ariffin, told press members during the 'A glimpse of tourism in Arabia' held at the School of Business and Economics yesterday that what is lacking among tourist guides in Sabah is the lack of exposure, training,

product knowledge and their inability to converse in other foreign languages.

"I see a lot of tourist guides here speaking in Mandarin, but there is a lack of guides who are capable in speaking French, Spanish and Arabic," she said.

She said that such ability would be an advantage for tourists and the guides.

"A tourist would like someone who can talk to them. Tourism is not about what I buy -- I cannot buy a pyramid and put it in my pocket and take it, but I can take the experience home with me."

Roseni added that it is the experience of living in a different community that lures tourists to visit foreign places.

"The experience is so important -- how the host community touches my life, because I would live with that memory for a long time ... I have spoken about my experience in Hawaii, how I experience feeling the heaven on earth. That, I felt, was important. It is the same for tourists coming into Sabah. When they come to Sabah, (it is) the experience (that) is important -- the warmth of the people, the special language that you speak, the gracefulness when you dance, the mysticism of Sabah."

She also pointed out that when she travelled in Egypt, her tour guide was a professor in Egyptology.

"I learned a lot. I learned about why, in paintings in Egypt, the pharaohs turn their head to look elsewhere instead of straight at the painter ... we hope through our programmes, students will do research and learn more and develop their own culture in Sabah."



Roseni (back row, fifth from right) with her colleagues and students from the tourism management programme.