

Headline **SFWI Seminar a resounding success**
 Date **05 Mar 2011**
 MediaTitle **New Sarawak Tribune**
 Section **Supplement**
 Journalist **N/A**
 Frequency **Daily**
 Circ / Read **46,471 / 164,773**

Language **English**
 Page No **T1**
 Article Size **975 cm²**
 Color **Full Color**
 ADValue **4,107**
 PRValue **12,320**



SFWI Seminar a resounding success

IT was a hectic but fruitful two days for members of the Sarawak Federation of Women's Institutes (SFWI) during the recent SFWI Seminar 2011. Held last weekend at the Yayasan Sarawak's Education Development Centre at Jalan Sultan Tengah, the seminar saw more than 500 members of SFWI from all over the state participating.

The seminar, which was officiated by the Minister in the Chief Minister's Department, Datin Hajah Fatimah Abdullah, was also attended by members of NGOs, civil servants and students.

Carrying the theme 'Raising Standards of Living Through Creativity and Innovation' the seminar was jointly organised by the Women's Bureau in the Chief

Minister's Department, Women Development Department, Women Family and Community Development Ministry, Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM), Sarawak Biodiversity Centre, Sarawak Timber Development Corporation and Kuching North City Commission (DBKU).

According to SFWI State Chairman and Member of Parliament for Batang Sadong, Hajah Nancy Shukri, the objective of the seminar was to provide participants opportunities and options in changing their lifestyles and raise their standard of living through creativity and innovations.

The highlights during the opening ceremony of the seminar were three performances by the Tunku Putra School choir beginning with the national and state anthems as well as the SFWI anthem sung by the primary school students. This

was followed by a performance by another group of students who sang Michael Jackson's "Earth Song". Later on, five secondary school students came on stage to sing 'Imagine' by the Beatles.

Tunku Putra School is one of the schools under SFWI's smart partnership programme called Friends of WI. This programme was initiated in 2004 to encourage young people to get to know more about NGO activities.

Speaking at the opening of the

seminar, Datin Hajah Fatimah said that SFWI has helped women play their role in national development as well as helping them to be financially independent by improving and upgrading their living standards.

Activities conducted or organised by SFWI over the years included literacy classes for rural women, clean water supply and food intake programmes, handicraft, sewing and cooking classes.

Fatimah also pointed out the importance of education for women as it was the key to a better future.

"With education, women can find better jobs, contribute to the financial support of their families and upgrade their social status. Through education, they are able to hold higher positions in organisation," she stressed.

Two working papers were also presented during the seminar titled 'Innovation Towards A Progressive and Sustainable Lifestyle' by Dr Marziah binti Mokhtar and 'Creativity in Today's Lifestyle Practice' by Edric Ong.

Apart from that, interactive and informal workshops were also held during the two-day seminar. Another highlight of the seminar was an exhibition gallery held at the centre, featuring 25 booths set up mostly by local herbal and traditional medicine manufacturers and spa industry players. SFWI's booth featured the works of the NGO throughout the years.

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ABOVE: FATIMAH signing the visitors book at the SFWI booth during her visit to the exhibition gallery.

LEFT: SFWI Patron and wife of Head of State, Toh Puan Datuk Patinggi Hajah Norkiah demonstrating how to make vegetable salad during her visit to the exhibition gallery. With her are Nancy (right), Ursula (second right), Rugayah (left) and others. PHOTOS: AZIZUL AZHAR



VISITORS at one of the booths at the exhibition.



HANDICRAFTS by SFWI members displayed at their booth.

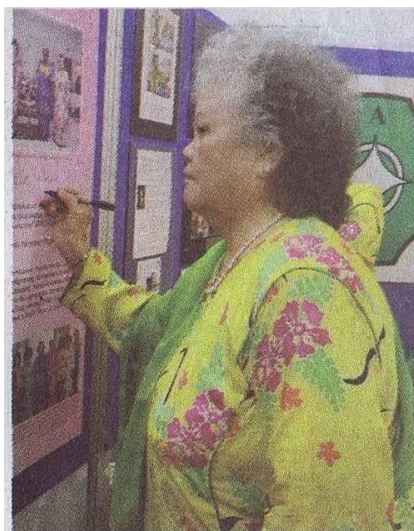
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A section of the participants in the auditorium during the opening of the seminar.

The exhibition, which was also opened to the public, was visited by the wife of the Head of State, Toh Puan Datuk Patinggi Hajah Norkiah on the second day. During her visit, Toh Puan, who is also the patron of SFWI, was accompanied by Nancy and members of SFWI.



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DATO Ursula Goh, current SFWI state Advisor and former Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW) World President autographing a section of the gallery which features photographs of her work with SFWI and ACWW.



TUNKU Putra School students performing at the opening of the seminar.

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