The Star

Sabah teacher in running for global Cambridge award

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Sydney: It's important that we create a learning environment rooted in cultural exchange to help students develop skills for the future.

TOMORROW is the last day for the public to vote for the Cambridge Dedicated Teacher Awards 2024.

Sydney Engelbert, an English language teacher at Keningau Vocational College in Sabah, is among the nine regional winners competing for the overall global title, which will be announced on May 29.

She was named the South-East Asia and Pacific regional winner for her commitment to cross-cultural collaboration, which helped develop her students' communication skills.

The award was announced by the International Education group at Cambridge University Press & Assessment (Cambridge) on April 25 in Kuala Lumpur.

Sydney, who teaches at a rural school where her students rarely leave the district, received £500 (RM2,988) worth of books for her class and a trophy. She will also be featured on a "thank you" page at the front of new Cambridge textbooks.

During the regional round of the competition, the judges praised Sydney for enriching her students' education despite the isolation of their rural setting.

Notably, Sydney kick-started an online exchange class in 2022 with several other vocational schools in Malaysia, the Philippines, Cambodia and Indonesia.

"I am greatly honoured to receive this recognition. It's important that we create a learning environment rooted in cultural exchange to help students develop the practical and communication skills needed for the future.

"I am deeply proud of my students' success in our online exchange class, which is centred around cultural competence and exploring topics beyond the standard curriculum," said Sydney in a press release.

The Cambridge Dedicated Teacher Awards is a global competition that celebrates the achievements of teachers worldwide.

Now in its sixth year, the competition highlights the important role teachers play in shaping the lives of their learners and preparing them for the world. It gives students, parents and peers the opportunity to nominate a current primary or secondary schoolteacher for outstanding commitment to their students' education.This year saw a record number of nominations. Cambridge received 14,840 nominations from 141 countries, surpassing the previous record by over 1,000 nominations.

International Education managing director Rod Smith said we need 44 million teachers worldwide by 2030 if the world is to meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education.

For this to happen, we should celebrate the teaching profession and highlight the hardworking teachers currently instilling a love of learning, often in difficult environments, he said.

"We launched the Cambridge Dedicated Teacher Awards to ensure we take the time to thank those preparing their students for the world, whether by tackling challenging educational issues like climate change or by breaking down cultural barriers.

“I wish to congratulate Sydney for her immense accomplishments, which I’m sure will inspire teachers and learners across Malaysia,” he said.

To vote for the Cambridge Dedicated Teacher Awards 2024, visit dedicatedteacher.cambridge.org/vote.