

U N P

CHRONICLE



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NOELLE JNYX TACAS

PROFESSORS FROM INDONESIA, MALAYSIA AND THAI PARTNERS GRACE ASEAN CONFAB

MARK LOUIE TABUNAN

As part of the 59th foundation anniversary of the University of Northern Philippines, the ASEAN Conference on Business, Education, and Social Sciences for Sustainable Development featured professors from ASEAN universities at the Tadena Hall on October 10, 2024.

Guest speakers from Indonesia and Malaysia graced the morning session. Meanwhile, the faculty members of the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Teacher Education participated in the affair.

In his opening remarks, Vice President for Academic Affairs

Rolando B. Navarro explained how these fields—business, education, and the social sciences—shape the trajectories of today's technology-driven and progressive landscape in the ASEAN region.

They do so by shaping the understanding of social issues ethically, providing opportunities for progress, upscaling ASEAN peoples' economic, social, and cultural capital, and advancing ways of respecting the environment.

University President Erwin F. Cadorna also discussed how *(continue reading on pg.2)*

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WHAT'S
INSIDE?



knowledge from these fields “can shape a future that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

“As business leaders, educators, and social scientists, we each

bring unique perspectives to the table. When we combine our insights, we unlock innovative solutions that can drive sustainable development across ASEAN and beyond,” he said.

Dr. Christine N. Ferrer, director of the CHED Regional Office I, also

delivered a message and commended UNP’s internationalization initiatives.

Three professors from Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Indonesia, and one from Universiti Malaysia Sabah served as the lecturers.



SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) AND SOFT SKILLS

Social-emotional learning (SEL) and soft skills were the focus of the talk of Dr. Mauly Halwat, vice dean of academic affairs at the Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta.

She echoed existing research on the long-term impact of SEL on students’ academic growth. It aims to not only develop positive dispositions for learning but also help learners show empathy for and establish and maintain positive relationships with others.

According to her, the components of SEL must go hand in hand with the development of soft skills, including communication, teamwork, and emotional intelligence. They must be integrated into academic programs through curriculum design and dedicated SEL

programs. She also shared that Indonesia has done this through education policy, curriculum development, and training for teachers.

TRANSFORMATION OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Explaining John Dewey’s oft-quoted theorization on pedagogy, Dr. Koesoemo Ratih, chief of the Learning Innovation Center of the same university, called for the transformation of teaching and learning.

This arises out of global policies such as the fourth sustainable development goal (quality education), the strategic plan of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) on the revitalization of teacher education and adoption of 21st-century curriculum, and the emphasis of

the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on learner-centered pedagogy and ICT integration.

Thereafter, she presented the principles and steps of four teaching methods that respond to these imperatives. They include case, problem-based, project-based, and team-based learning methods.

TOWARDS CONDUCTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Dr. Murfiah Dewi, vice dean of financial affairs of the same university, discussed the importance of conducive learning environments, focusing on “having” a good school condition, “loving” which leads to social relationships, “being” which actualizes self-fulfillment, and health and well-being of students

and teachers.

According to her, challenges in managing school facilities and infrastructure remain, especially in most Southeast Asian countries. Nevertheless, she posited that these can be addressed through partnerships, awareness campaigns, smart budgeting, and technology integration.

GLOBAL GOALS AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY: MALAYSIA AND THE PHILIPPINES IN A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Lastly, Dr. Balan Rathakrishnan of the Universiti Malaysia Sabah discussed the imperative of attaining sustainable futures and global goals while promoting cultural diversity.

He did so by comparing the best practices of Malaysia and the Philippines, namely: the Malaysia 2050 Blueprint, which includes diverse cultures in decisions, and the Philippine Development Plan, which ensures that everyone benefits from growth.

This point is even more pronounced in the ways in which Malaysia anchors its goals on the Rukun Negara which promotes unity among different

ethnolinguistic groups and the Philippines includes Indigenous knowledge to help students value their cultures.

In addition, he asserted that the sustainable development goals aim to tackle global challenges through local solutions as can be seen in Malaysia’s MySDG and the Philippines’ Ambisyon Natin 2040.

He called for the imperative to sustain these moves through inclusive policy frameworks, support for local practices, community empowerment, and collaborations among government and non-governmental organizations and communities.

The ASEAN Conference on Business, Education, and Social Sciences for Sustainable Development was envisioned to strengthen UNP’s ties with other ASEAN universities and organizations and facilitate the sharing of knowledge, best practices, and innovations.

The International Affairs and External Linkages Office, College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business Administration and Accountancy, and College of Teacher Education led the event. At the helm of these

offices were Dr. Sally A. Jarin, Dr. Remedios T. Navarro, Dr. Erwin T. Tolbe, and Dr. Ma. Teresa Susan L. Manzano.

THAI PARTNERS SHARE KEY BUSINESS STRATEGIES

In the afternoon session, Thai Partners featured an impressive lineup of speakers. These partners, representing various sectors of the business world, shared their insights and strategies, contributing to a rich dialogue on sustainable development in the ASEAN region.

Mr. Kridtapas, a manager at Universal Robina Corporation (URC) Thailand, delivered a compelling talk on “The Art of Negotiation: Strategies for Success in Deal Making.” His presentation offered valuable insights into effective business negotiations, drawing from his experience in a multinational corporation.

Ms. Petcharat Chimakulpanrob from Thailand’s National Human Rights Commission provided an engaging perspective on “Artist Management to Artist Business.” Her talk bridged the





gap between creative industries and business management, offering a unique viewpoint on this niche sector.

Ms. Sasrintr Thaentong, a Customer Service/Cabin Manager at Jetstar Australia, shared her expertise on "Cross-Cultural Challenges in the Airline Business." Her presentation highlighted the importance of cultural intelligence in the global aviation industry.

Ms. Patsita Narasirikulpat, co-founder of Life Beauty Co. Ltd., discussed "Cultivating a Positive Mindset: Strategies for Overcoming Negativity and Embracing Optimism." Her talk provided practical advice on personal and professional growth, emphasizing the role of positive thinking in business success.

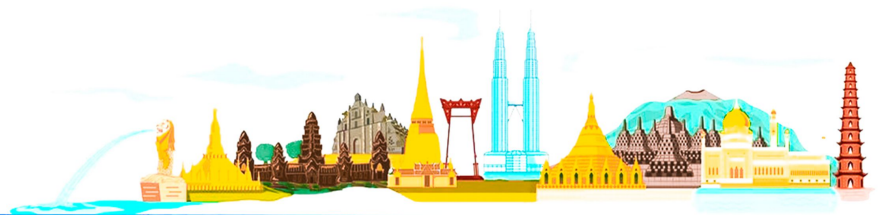
The conference concluded with a presentation by Ms. Sirinya Pongprayoon, CEO and co-founder of Serise Manufacturing (Thailand) Co. Ltd., and General Manager Aphiphu Wechokitikorn. They shared innovative approaches to "Growth Hacking for Cosmetic Businesses," offering insights into this rapidly evolving industry.

This conference not only showcased the diverse talents of Thai business leaders but also reinforced the importance of cross-border knowledge-sharing for sustainable development in the ASEAN region. It aligns with UNP's broader goals of strengthening ties with other ASEAN universities and organizations, as evidenced by their recent initiatives in international collaboration.

The event also reflects UNP's commitment to providing its students with exposure to international perspectives and practical business strategies. By hosting such conferences, UNP is actively contributing to the development of a more interconnected and knowledgeable ASEAN business community.

As UNP continues to grow and evolve, events like this ASEAN conference play a crucial role in shaping the university's international profile and providing valuable learning opportunities for its students and faculty. The success of this conference sets a promising precedent for future international collaborations and knowledge-sharing initiatives at UNP.





ASEAN Conference on Business, Education and Social Sciences for Sustainable Development

THEME: "Empowering Minds, Enriching Earth: Bridging Knowledge for Sustainable Futures"

OCTOBER 10, 2024 | UNP TADENA HALL | 8am to 5pm

List of Speakers:



Dr. Mauly Halwat
Vice Dean in Academic Affairs
Universiti Muhammadiyah Surakarta,
Indonesia



Dr. Koesoemo Ratih
Chief of Learning Innovation Center
Universiti Muhammadiyah Surakarta,
Indonesia



Dr. Murfiah Dewi
Vice Dean on Financial Affairs
Universiti Muhammadiyah Surakarta,
Indonesia



Prof. Dr. Balan Rathakrishnan
Faculty of Psychology
Universiti Malaysia Sabah,
Malaysia



Miss Petcharat Chimakulpanrob
Government Officer
The National Human Rights Commission
of Thailand



Mr. Kridtapas Srivarin
HR Group Manager
URC Thailand Co., Ltd.



Miss Sasirintr Thantong
Customer Service Manager/Cabin Manager
JetStar Australia



Miss Patsita Narasirikulpat
Co-Founder
Life Beauty Company Limited



Miss Sirinya Pongprayoon
CEO & Co-Founder at Serise Manufacturing
Thailand Co., Ltd.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

- Professors from Universiti Muhammadiyah, Surakarta, Indonesia
- Government Officer, Manager and Co-Founders of Thailand
- Faculty from Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia
- Customer Service Manager of Australia
- Professors from University of Northern Philippines

CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVES OF ASEAN CONFERENCE:

1. Networking is a crucial aspect of academic, and professional development, particularly in the context of the ASEAN conference. This objective aims to create opportunities for participants to connect, collaborate, and share ideas across borders and disciplines.

Key aspects:

- Creating platforms for formal and informal interactions.
- Encouraging cross-cultural and interdisciplinary dialogues.
- Promoting long-term professional relationships.

2. Enhance capacity building is essential for sustainable development, as it empowers individuals, and institutions to effectively address complex challenges. This objective focuses on strengthening the skills, abilities, and resources of participants, and their organizations.

Key aspects:

- Providing training, and workshops on relevant skills and methodologies.
- Sharing knowledge on emerging trends, and technologies.
- Developing leadership capabilities in sustainable development.

3. Research, and innovation are the engines of progress, particularly in addressing sustainability challenges. This objective aims to stimulate new ideas, methodologies, and technologies that can contribute to sustainable development in the ASEAN region.

Key aspects:

- Promoting interdisciplinary research collaborations.
- Showcasing innovative solutions to sustainability challenges.
- Encouraging the application of research findings to real-world problems.

FULL SCOPE

Speaker 1 – Innovative Curriculum Design for 21st Century Learners: Balancing Traditional Knowledge and Future Skills
Dr. Mauly Halwat - Vice Dean in Academic Affairs, Universiti Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Indonesia

Speaker 2 – Reimagining Education, Integrating Innovative Learning Models for 21st Century Skills
Dr. Koesoemo Ratih - Chief of Learning Innovation Center, Universiti Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Indonesia

Speaker 3 – The Psychology of Financial Decision-Making: Implications for Institutional Management and Student Financial Wellness
Dr. Murfiah Dewi - Vice Dean on Financial Affairs, Universiti Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Indonesia

Speaker 4 – Societal Transformation for Sustainable Futures: Bridging Cultural Diversity and Global Goals
Prof. Dr. Balan Rathakrishnan - Faculty of Psychology, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia

Speaker 5 – Artist Management to Artist Business
Miss Petcharat Chimakulpanrob - Government Officer at The National Human Rights Commission of Thailand

Speaker 6 – The Art of Negotiation: Strategies for Success in Deal Making
Mr. Kridtapas Srivarin - HR Group Manager at URC Thailand Co., Ltd.

Speaker 7 – Cross Culture in Airline Business
Miss Sasirintr Thantong - Customer Service Manager / Cabin Manager at JetStar Australia

Speaker 8 – Cultivating a Positive Mindset: Strategies for Overcoming a Negativity and Embracing Optimism
Miss Patsita Narasirikulpat - Co-Founder of Life Beauty Company Limited

Speaker 9 – Growth Hacking for Cosmetic Businesses: Learn Unconventional and Data-Driven Approaches to Accelerate Business Growth, Optimize Operations, and Maximize Revenue Streams
Miss Sirinya Pongprayoon - CEO & Co-Founder at Serise Manufacturing (Thailand) Co., Ltd.



ASEAN CONFERENCE

ON BUSINESS, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SCIENCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Students and faculty share their thoughts on the ASEAN Conference on Business, Education, and Social Sciences for Sustainable Development, a part of the 59th foundation anniversary of the University of Northern Philippines.



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The ASEAN conference served as a significant avenue for learning from countries' practices in the fields of business, social sciences, and education. This activity demonstrates an international mindset aimed at bridging collaboration, fostering open communication, and integrating learning strategies for sustainability as we learn to work and live harmoniously as ONE REGION.

Lester Aaron

“

Being part of this conference is an incredible opportunity for my personal and professional growth. Their meaningful, fruitful and impactful lectures are indeed a valuable investment in my future. They offer a unique opportunity to learn, connect, and gain practical experience, ultimately enhancing my academic journey and preparing me for a successful career.



Kyle Matthew Rosete

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We are humbled and honored to be part of ASEAN Conference, a significant event that brings together leaders and key decision makers from Thailand. The topics at the conference include “The Power of a Positive Mindset.” The conference is a platform for addressing challenges and exploring opportunities for collaboration and growth.



Ryan Balilea

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The ASEAN conference serves as an avenue for collaboration along instruction, research, extension, and other engagements that each member of the Asian countries may share that would lead to progress between and among the stakeholder of particular institutions.



Sina Bestre

The ASEAN conference served as a platform for cooperation on socio-cultural education issues in the region.

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Aries Piamonte

“

This is my first time attending an international conference, and it was an amazing experience! It was very informative – stretching our prevailing knowledge on business management beyond national scopes. It was refreshing to listen from speakers in Thailand. They were equipped with interesting real-life experiences and knowledge. I think it was also a great opportunity to learn through interacting with a different country, further strengthening our relations.

Krielle Alyson Quinola



“

In my perspective the lesson I learned goes way beyond the topics that the speakers discussed today. It is a great avenue for us to experience first-hand interacting with the people that are built by different cultures. Their different perspectives towards certain aspects not just in the business world but also in life are what we need to gain more awareness and deeper perspective about others' cultures, as well as their business dynamics and mindsets.

Erl Zigried Nalundasan



“

The ASEAN conference provided valuable insights covering academics, business, and sustainability. I enjoyed the business session where I learned practical advice on management, negotiations, and strategies for industries like cosmetics and airlines. It was a great experience to learn from the experiences of excellent speakers.

Mark Louie Battad

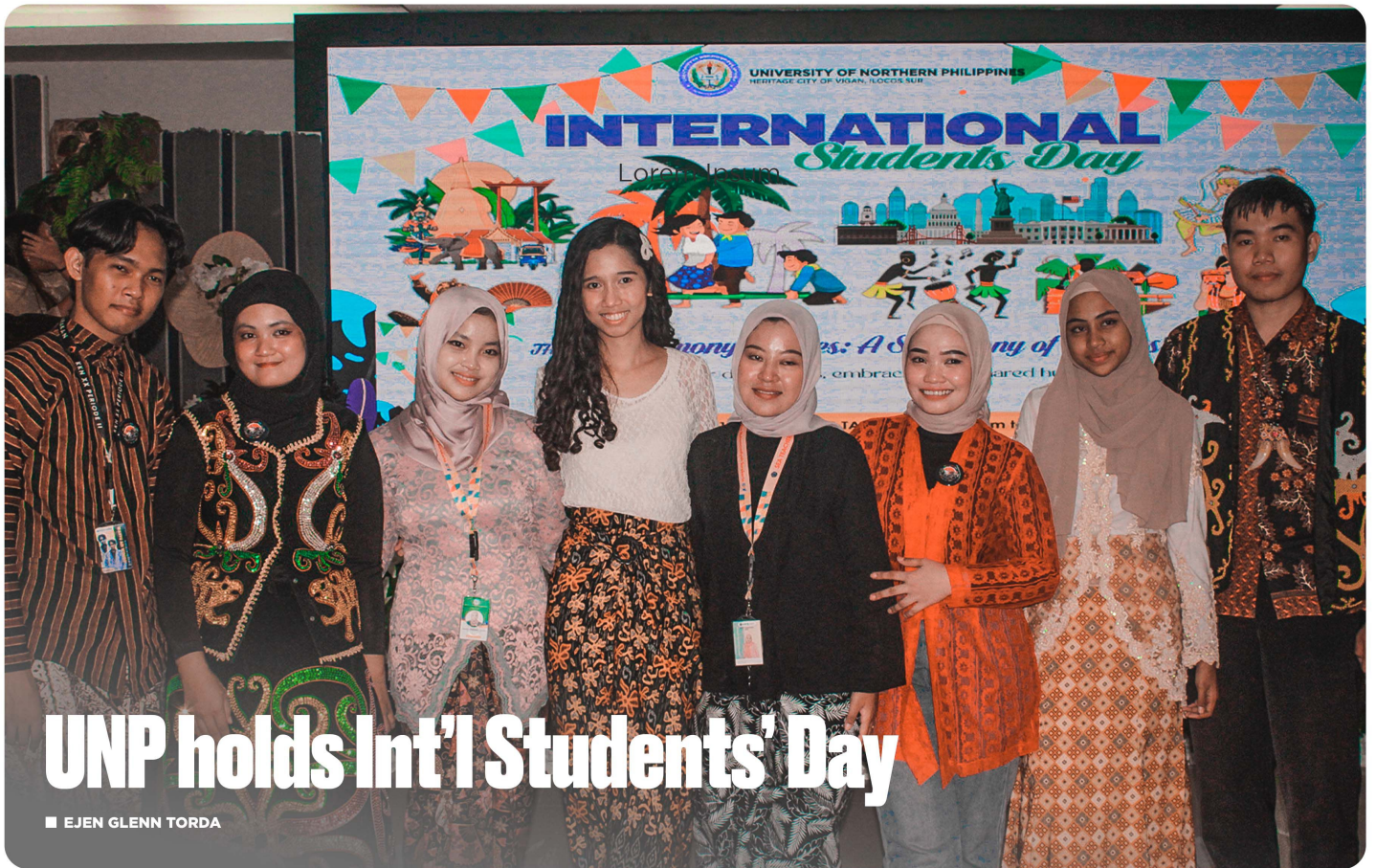


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I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the organizers from the internationalization office for making this conference a reality. This ASEAN conference served as a platform to facilitate the diverse mechanisms in teaching and learning education, as presented by our esteemed speakers. Throughout the conference, we gained valuable insights into various engagement methods that can enhance our productivity as educators. Moreover, the event emphasized the importance of collaborative skills to foster social well-being and respect for cultural diversity among ASEAN countries.

Antonio Ayop





UNP holds Int'l Students' Day

■ EJEN GLENN TORDA

Empowering students with its international initiatives, the University of Northern Philippines hosted the International Students' Day celebration on October 11, 2024 at the UNP Tadena Hall with the theme "Harmony in Hues: A Symphony of Cultures."

The said activity aimed to provide an excellent opportunity to honor a diverse student community and celebrate global spirit education on campus. It also aimed to recognize the challenges faced by international students, encourage the students' success to thrive on campus, and strengthen the bond as a global academic community.

The highlight was the booths made by the exchange students from Indonesia and students from the University of Northern Philippines coming from Thailand, USA, Nigeria, Ghana, India, and the Philippines, with the presence of the selected accredited and

mandated organizations of the University showcasing the rich cultural heritage of their country. Ghana student Patrick Oppong, Indonesian student Faglyne Gonggalang Ramschie, and Filipino student Kyle Christine D. Davalos moderated the event.

Hon. Noriel Jay Paino, Student Council President, emphasized the essential values of internationalization. According to him, it promotes collaboration and knowledge sharing so that students can learn from their strengths and best practices, driving growth and competitiveness.

Moreover, Ms. Melci FA Kerena Alexander, the president of the International Students Organization, elaborated on the theme and celebration of unity, diversity, and resilience of students across the globe.

She explained that each student brings their cultural heritage,

ideas, and experiences, which, when combined, create a mosaic of global learning.

"In a world where conflicts often arise due to misunderstanding and cultural barriers, 'Harmony in Hues' symbolizes the power of education to bridge gaps and build across cultural friendships," she added.

"Yaadhum Oore Yaavarum Kelir. To us, every town is our own and every person is our kin," she ended.

Dr. Mariano Paterno F. Avila, the Director of the Office of Student Affairs and Services, introduced the international students and the student organizations who helped in the preparation of the booths.

Dr. Erwin F. Cadorna, University President, recognized the richness of cultures, backgrounds, and experiences that make the University community truly unique in that diversity is not just

a feature of the campus but also a strength that comes within.

"This International Students' Day reminds us that education transcends borders. These students bring with them not just their academic pursuits but also their cultural heritage, broadening our horizons and preparing us all for a globalized world," he added.

Dr. Cadorna concluded his message by challenging each student to engage and celebrate someone from different places and learn to participate in the event.

According to Sali Benjamin Joseph Boopathi, an Indian medical student, it was the first time such an event had been conducted over the four years she was at UNP. Even though they had a duty, despite the exhaustion, she still managed to come along. She said, "When we arrived in Vigan from our designated clerkship location, we immediately felt a sense of belonging, and I was really happy because this place feels like home."

Ms. Boopathi emphasized that the highlight of the event for her was reuniting with her friends because of a long period without interaction because of their clerkship in Baguio and San Fernando.

Ms. Boopathi's advice to future international students who want to study at UNP is to simply enjoy. According to her, the people in the University will make them feel like everybody belongs. She also expressed how she wishes to stay for one more year because of the love she felt at the University and in the Philippines.

"Everyone is kind, and every patient we treat experiences the same pain and has the same anatomy. Our goal is simply to help people heal and bring a smile to their faces in return," she highlighted. "There's no real difference among us—only the languages we speak," she added.

Likewise, Patric Oppong Kofi, a first-year College of Nursing from Ghana, was also happy because this was the first time he would participate in an event like this as an international student. Even though they didn't have all the resources needed to present their countries, they still managed to make it an amazing event.

"It was heartwarming to see different colleges come together to help with all the activities. Despite the limitations, we made the most of what he had, and the experience was truly memorable," he stated.

He also noticed how hospitable Filipinos are. He didn't experience a hard time presenting his country, Ghana, despite the lack of human resources, making him honored to share his culture with others.

He elaborated that the event is highlighted with diversity, heritage, and unity across all the colleges. Showing that even though people come from different parts of the world, everyone can come together and celebrate differences in a way of understanding and friendships.

In the same way, Henry Uhegbu of Nigeria, a first-year student from the College of Medicine, expressed his thoughts on the event as incredibly thoughtful and well-organized.

He believes that it was a necessary movement as it fosters relationships not only between international students and Filipinos but also with different international students from various countries. He explained, "Events like this allow us to get accustomed to each other's unique cultures and traditions, strengthening the international community within the University and providing a sense of recognition and belonging."

On a personal level, Mr. Uhegbu shared that one major problem he has faced comes from the rigorous nature of his MD program, which

made it harder to fully immerse in the local culture, language, and activities. Such would have enabled a quicker integration with the Filipino community, especially at the University.

On the other hand, Mr. Uhegbu found the food good that the various countries prepared. "I was thrilled to try some delicious dishes that were quite different from what I'm used to but equally delightful," he said.

Moreover, he also defined the event as vital in building connections between individuals from various nationalities that, through these exchanges, they develop a sense of understanding and appreciation of each other's backgrounds.

He also advised the audience to remain open-minded when learning about Filipino culture and language. "I would encourage them to build rapport with their classmates and engage actively in both extracurricular and curricular activities, which are the key to thriving both academically and socially," he said.

The event was formally concluded by Dr. Sally A. Jarin, Director of the International Affairs and External Linkages Office. She emphasized the beauty in diversity, resilience, and ambition, together with learning exciting stories about different cultures.

Dr. Jarin also commended the students because of their dedication. "Your courage to step up in your comfort zone and embrace new experiences is truly commendable," she said.

In the end, Dr. Jarin ended the message by encouraging the students to continue building a connection not just with their peers and different countries but also within the local communities.



International Students' Day: A Celebration of Diverse Cultures and Cuisines

■ JOHN LLOYD ANTONIO

International Students' Day was celebrated on October 11 at UNP Tadena Hall to honor the experiences of foreign students studying at the University of Northern Philippines. The day highlighted the rich cultures and cuisines they bring from their host countries. It served as an opportunity to explore and appreciate the diversity that international students contribute to global education and society.

To celebrate International Students' Day, the University,

through the Office of Student Affairs and Services and the International Affairs and External Linkages Office, organized food festivals and cultural events where international students showcased their traditional dishes.

The events promoted cultural awareness and allowed students to taste the world without leaving their neighborhoods. It also created opportunities for international students to share their culinary heritage

and connect with others.

The international students hailed from various countries, namely: Thailand, the United States of America, Benin, India, Ghana, Indonesia, and Nigeria. They brought unique traditions, languages, and perspectives to the said event.

The event featured cultural presentations, allowing students to share their heritage through music, dance, games, and storytelling.

THAILAND

To celebrate the event, students from Thailand prepared tomyumkong, referred to as yum khao ya in their food booth. Tomyumkong reflects the regional ingredients and cooking techniques of Thailand, showcasing the importance of fresh herbs, spices, and local produce in Thai cuisine. The dish typically balances sweet, sour, spicy, and salty flavors which are hallmarks of Thai cooking. It incorporates ingredients like lime juice, fish sauce, and chili. Like many Thai dishes, Tomyumkong is enjoyed in a communal setting, emphasizing the cultural value of sharing meals with family and friends. It is not just a dish but a celebration of Thai culture, flavors,

and the importance of community in dining experiences.

The Thai students also prepared a cultural dance called Ram Wong, characterized by simple movements and lively music. Participants danced in a circle.

They also showcased the popular festival in Thailand, the Loy Krathong Festival. It is one of the most celebrated festivals in Thailand and takes place on the full moon of the 12th lunar month, typically in November. The name translates to "floating a basket," symbolizing the release of negative energy and appreciation of water spirits.

They also showcased their traditional clothing. Clothing in Thailand is deeply intertwined with the nation's identity, history,

and regional variations. The traditional Thai outfit for women is known as Chut Thai. It consists of a sampot (a long piece of cloth wrapped around the waist) paired with a blouse and is often made from silk or cotton. Chut Thai is adorned with intricate patterns and colors. While men's traditional attire includes a chong kraben, a piece of fabric around the waist, often worn with a simple shirt.

The clothing and cuisine of Thailand reflect its culture, history, and regional diversity. The intricate designs and good foods tell a story of the country's heritage. As Thailand continues to evolve, its traditions remain a vital connection to the past, showcasing the enduring spirit of its people.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The foreign students from the United States of America were also present in the celebration of International Students' Day. In their booth, a chess game was

executed. Chess holds a prominent place in American culture, symbolizing strategic thinking and intellectual challenge. Its popularity spans various

demographics, promoting critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The game serves as a significant cultural and educational tool, reflecting the

nation's values of intellect, competition, and community engagement.

American cuisine was also showcased. They also performed

an American dance like hip-hop. Hip-hop in America is a powerful cultural movement that originated in the 1970s in the Bronx, New York City.

It encompasses four main elements: rapping (MCing), DJing, graffiti art, and breakdancing.

NIGERIA

Nigerian students were also present during the International Students' Day. Nigerian culture was expressed through food, music, and dance, with each element deeply intertwined with clothing. Nigeria's clothing such as the Ankara traditional clothing is characterized by its vibrant, colorful fabric printed with bold patterns. This cotton fabric is popular across various ethnic groups and is often used to create

stylish outfits for both men and women.

Nigeria is home to over 500 languages, with English serving as the official language. Major indigenous languages include Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo, each representing a significant cultural heritage.

The Nigerian palm tree was also shown on their booth, as this is a crucial element of the country's economy and culture. Native to

West Africa, this tree thrives in Nigeria's tropical climate and is primarily cultivated for its oil, a staple in cooking and a key ingredient in various products.

Playing cards in Nigeria was also presented, as this is a popular pastime, enjoyed by various ages and groups and communities. Several traditional card games, such as whot, tages, and mankala, are commonly played, often involving strategic thinking and social interaction.

INDIA

Indian students also participated in the event. They showcased their clothing, cuisines, and dances. India's cultures are diverse with styles varying significantly across regions, communities, and occasions, such as the saris, salwar kameez, and dhotis. The clothing of India

blends age-old traditions with modern trends. Whether it is the elegance of a sari or the comfort of a salwar kameez, Indian attire offers a fascinating glimpse into the country's rich heritage and evolving identity.

Indian cuisine was also prepared in the event, such as

chicken biryani and panipuri. Biryani offers a hearty, aromatic, experience, while panipuri delivers a burst of zest and crunch. Together, they illustrate the diverse flavors and culinary techniques that make Indian food a global favorite.

They also presented a dance called bharatanatyam.

INDONESIA

Indonesian foreign students enjoyed the event, bringing their culture with a vibrant blend of tradition and modernity, shaped by its ethnic diversity and rich history. They present their different clothing such as batik and baju bodo that are both rich in history and significance. The batik is a traditional Indonesian fabric created through wax-resist dyeing to create intricate patterns. Originating from Java, this art form has been recognized by UNESCO as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. The baju bodo is a

traditional garment from the Bugis ethnic group in South Sulawesi. This attire is characterized by its simple, loose-fitting design and vibrant colors.

The Indonesians also presented their cuisine. Among its many specialties, brem and rengginang stand out as unique snacks. Both cuisines showcased the creativity and resourcefulness of Indonesian cuisine. Brem highlights the traditional fermentation techniques of the archipelago. Rengginang exemplifies the

practice of transforming leftover ingredients into delightful snacks.

Indonesian dance was also performed. From the elaborate movements of Balinese and Javanese dances to the rhythmic vitality of Sumatra, their dance tells a story and preserves the rich heritage of the Indonesian people. These dances not only entertain but also serve as a vital link to the country's history and traditions.



GHANA

The students from Ghana also participated in the event. Ghana prepared a visual presentation tackling the culture of their country. According to the presentation, Ghana boasts a rich and diverse culture shaped by its history, ethnic groups, and traditions. Home to over 30 million people, the country is primarily made up of several ethnic groups, including the Akan, Mole-Dagbani, Ewe, and Ga-Dangme. Each group

has its unique customs, languages, and festivals, contributing to a vibrant national identity.

Ghana cuisines were also shown during the event, foremost of which is the fufu, a starchy dish from boiled cassava, plantains, or yams. It is served with a variety of soups and stews, making it a communal meal often enjoyed with family and friends. They also prepared banku, which is from

fermented corn and cassava dough. It is cooked in a smooth, stretchy consistency. It is paired well with grilled fish and spicy pepper.

Ghanian clothing such as kente cloth and smock (fugu) has a vibrant reflection of the country's rich history, diverse cultures, and social values.

BENIN

Cuisines and sports of the Republic of Benin were also the other highlights of the event. The unique designs of their traditional textiles, especially the bazin cloth were showcased in their booth. The game dada which involves creating a playing field with

stones, where players take turns tossing or rolling stones to hit specific targets was presented. This game not only provides entertainment but also promotes social interaction and cultural continuity among communities.

The culture of Benin manifests

historical roots, ethnic diversity, and artistic traditions. As the country continues to embrace its heritage while navigating modern influences, its cultural richness remains a source of pride and a testament to its resilience.

PHILIPPINES

The host country of the said event was the Philippines, wherein the Filipino students and teachers showcased the culture of the Philippines and its vibrant amalgamation of indigenous traditions, colonial influences, and contemporary practices, shaped by the country's history and diverse population.

The Philippines is known for its diverse culinary heritage, and among its beloved are kakanin

(traditional rice-based snacks and desserts). These were offered to visitors from various countries such as bibingka (a rice cake traditionally made from rice flour, coconut milk, and sugar and baked in clay pots lined with banana leaves). Puto, sinuman, binagkal, and patupat were also served.

The Filipino participants also wore Filipiniana dresses and barong that symbolize nationalism and pride.

The Tinguian dance, an integral part of the cultural heritage of Tinguian people, an indigenous group from the mountain regions of Abra, was also performed. The dance was called "tadek" or courtship, where men wore baag and women wore piningitan and kimona. This traditional dance reflects the community's rich history, social values, and connection to nature.





The diverse cultures of Thailand, the USA, Benin, India, Indonesia, Ghana, Nigeria, and the Philippines showcase human experiences across the globe. Each country offers unique traditions, languages, and customs that reflect their respective historical contexts and societal values.

Thailand stands out for its deep-rooted traditions and practices. India, with its myriad of languages, religions, and festivals, presents a colorful mosaic that emphasizes the harmony of diversity and the importance of family and community ties.

Indonesia's archipelago of cultures illustrates the balance between tradition and modernity, showcasing its rich arts and communal values. Ghana and Nigeria, with their vibrant music, dance, and rich histories, reflect the resilience of African cultures and the importance of community and storytelling in preserving heritage.

Finally, the Philippines showcases a blend of indigenous and colonial influences, emphasizing hospitality and community spirit through its festive celebrations and culinary traditions.

Together, these cultures remind us of the beauty of human expression and the importance of understanding and respecting our differences. They enrich our global society and foster connections that transcend borders and encourage a deeper appreciation of the diverse ways of life that make up our world. As we continue to explore and celebrate these cultures, we contribute to a more inclusive and harmonious global community.





INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' DAY

INSIGHTS





Sali Benjamine Joseph Boopathi

MEDICINE - CLERKSHIP (INDIAN)

“We were really excited to come here because this is the first time such an event has been conducted. It’s been four years since we started studying at the university, and this is my final year in the Philippines. I am very happy that we are the first batch of international students to experience an event specifically intended for us. We were eager to attend, even though we had a duty yesterday afternoon that was quite tiring. Despite the exhaustion, we still wanted to be here. When we arrived in Vigan from our designated clerkship location, we immediately felt a sense of belonging, and I

was really happy because this place feels like home”.

“The highlight of the event for me was reuniting with my friends after three months. I hadn’t seen them in a while because we were in different rotations in various parts of the Philippines like Baguio, Lorma, and ITRMC. This event brought us back together. It also made me realize that, aside from us Indians, there are other nationalities here too, such as Thai and American. The cultural exchange during this event was very enlightening, and it helped dispel many misconceptions we had through their cultural presentations”.

“My advice to future international students who want to study at UNP is to simply

enjoy your stay. People here will make you feel like you belong. You don’t have to do anything special—just be nice and make friends. Although this is my last year, I wish I could stay for one more because I truly love UNP and the Philippines. Wherever we go, everyone we meet becomes our people. There’s no real difference among us—only the languages we speak. Everyone is kind, and every patient we treat experiences the same pain and has the same anatomy. Our goal is simply to help people heal and bring a smile to their faces in return”.





Melci Fa Kerena Alexander **MEDICINE – 3RD YEAR (INDIAN)**

“I am truly happy that I had the chance to participate in this event. It’s a significant moment for UNP, and I feel incredibly proud to have been part of it. As an international student, my experience here at UNP has always been positive. This is my fifth year at the university, and throughout this time, I have felt welcomed and supported. One thing I truly appreciate is how the staff at CMED (College of Medicine) acknowledge us as international students. They go out of their way to engage with us in English, which really makes us feel at home. It’s these little acts of kindness that make a big difference and

show that we belong here”.

“Today’s event was particularly special because of the cultural showcases. While people may be familiar with the countries that we come from, they might not always know about the different colleges where we, as international students, are studying. This event highlighted that diversity and helped bridge that gap. My favorite part was seeing the beautiful representations of various cultures and how, despite our differences, we can come together to share, celebrate, and learn from one another”.

“For students who are thinking of coming to study here at UNP, my advice is simple: don’t be afraid. This university is incredibly

welcoming, and the community will make you feel like it’s your second home. You will be embraced, supported, and encouraged every step of the way”.

“One key lesson I took away from today’s event is the power of unity in diversity. Even though we come from different parts of the world, this event brought us together and reminded us that our differences don’t divide us—they unite us. I’m grateful for this experience, as it has reinforced how much stronger we are when we come together as one community, regardless of where we come from”.



Patrick Oppong Kofi **NURSING - 1A (GHANA)**

“I’m really happy because this was my first time participating in an event like this as an international student, and it turned out to be so much fun. Even though we didn’t have all the resources to fully represent every country, we still managed to make it an amazing event. It was heartwarming to see different colleges come together to help with all the activities. Despite the limitations, we made the most of what we had, and the experience was truly memorable”.

“So far, my experience at the university has been great. Everything is going as planned, and the support

from the nursing faculty has been excellent. The teachers make an effort to speak in English and explain things to me in a way that I can easily understand, which has made adapting to the academic environment much easier. I feel like I’m coping well and adjusting smoothly”.

“One thing I’ve noticed is how incredibly welcoming the Filipinos are. Even though, as I mentioned, we didn’t have all the resources, especially in terms of human resources, to prepare everything, it all came together beautifully. I was also proud to represent my country, Ghana, at this event, and it was an honor to share our culture with others”.

“My advice to future international students is simple:

don’t hesitate to come! It’s a fantastic experience, and you’ll get to enjoy a blend of cultures and diversity. No matter where you’re from, the Filipinos will definitely make you feel welcomed and at home. The sense of community here is something special, and it’s a wonderful opportunity to learn and grow in a supportive environment”.

“The event highlighted the diversity, heritage, and unity across all the colleges, and I think that’s what made it truly special. It showed that even though we come from different parts of the world, we can come together and celebrate our differences in a way that fosters understanding and friendship”.



Wahyu Adi Widodo

ENGLISH EDUCATION – 4TH YEAR (INDONESIAN)

“Oh my God! It was such an exciting experience! I couldn’t believe we had this event—it was incredible to see all the people, the preparations, and everything they organized for us. We never expected it to turn out so wonderfully. It truly was an honor for me to be a part of it”.

“My experience at the university had been great, albeit hectic at times, but I cherished every moment. To be honest, I had expected even more, but it was exhausting in the best way

possible. The entire experience was beyond words—there simply wasn’t a term to fully capture how much fun I had”.

“I absolutely loved the booths representing different countries, where we could explore their languages, cuisines, and more. We also participated in games that showcased traditional activities from various nations, highlighting their cultures—the kind of people they are and the values they hold dear”.

“My advice to future international students who wish to study here at UNP is to

embrace the experience without fear. There’s really nothing to worry about. Being an exchange student is a *o n c e - i n - a - l i f e t i m e* opportunity, so I encourage everyone to step out of their comfort zones. Opportunities like these don’t come around often, and if you don’t seize them, they might be lost forever”.

“One key takeaway from that day was the beauty of diversity”.



Henry Uhegbu

CMED – 1ST YEAR (NIGERIAN)

“The event was incredibly thoughtful and well-organized. I believe it was a necessary initiative because it helps foster relationships not only between Filipino and international students, but also among international students from various countries. Events like this allow us to get accustomed to each other’s unique cultures and traditions, strengthening the international community within the university and providing a sense of recognition and belonging”.

“On a personal level, my experience here has been both challenging and demanding, yet exciting for many reasons. One major challenge comes from the rigorous nature of the CMED (College of Medicine) department. Although this isn’t directly related to the

event, it has made it harder to fully immerse myself in the local culture, language, and activities that would enable a quicker, more enjoyable integration with the Filipino community, particularly at the university. Despite these challenges, I’ve found the experience rewarding due to my adventurous nature and the hospitality of the Filipino friends and acquaintances I’ve made over time”.

“My personal highlight of the event was the food. I love food, and I was thrilled to try some delicious dishes that were quite different from what I’m used to, but equally delightful”.

“As for the cultural exchange, it was a major highlight for many attendees. I believe events like this play a vital role in building connections between individuals from various nationalities. It’s through these exchanges that we develop a deeper understanding

and appreciation of each other’s backgrounds”.

“For incoming international students, my advice is to remain open-minded when learning about Filipino culture and language, even if they initially seem unfamiliar or different. Additionally, I would encourage them to build rapport with their classmates and engage actively in both extracurricular and curricular activities. This balance is key to thriving both academically and socially”.

“One part of the event that stood out to me was the speech by the university president. His words about fostering a sense of unity among all students, both local and international, were particularly inspiring and left a lasting impact”.



Syafira Izza Sabrina

**BIOLOGY EDUCATION – 2ND YEAR FROM BORNEO TARAKAN UNIVERSITY/
UNIVERSITAS BORNEO TARAKAN (INDONESIAN)**

“I was actually quite surprised to learn that this was the first-ever International Student Day at the university, given how well-organized and wonderful the event was, along with the warm hospitality we experienced. It was an incredible experience for an international student like me, especially since this is our first time attending such an event at the university. My time here so far has been amazing. Everyone has been so kind and welcoming, even though

we come from different backgrounds—whether in terms of religion, culture, or traditions—they’ve embraced us with open arms”.

“I think the highlight of today’s event was definitely the cultural exchange. It’s what brings us all together and reminds us that our differences are what make us unique and special”.

“My advice for future international students is to embrace tolerance and open-mindedness. It’s not just about the local community adjusting to us—we also need to be willing to adapt and understand them. It’s important

that we learn to tolerate and appreciate each other’s differences”.

“What I appreciated most from today’s speakers was their broad understanding and deep knowledge of culture. Their perspectives really opened my eyes to the importance of cultural exchange and unity”.



Trixia Milet Rosario

BS PHYSICS – 3RD YEAR (FILIPINO)

“The university’s initiative to hold the first-ever International Student Day is commendable. It brought students from diverse backgrounds together, promoting cultural exchange and a stronger sense of community. It allowed us to share traditions and experiences, fostering inclusivity and mutual understanding. Events like this help international students feel more connected and supported, enriching our overall university experience”.

“One highlight for me was the cultural performances—traditional dances, music, and clothing. The cultural booths with food,

apparel, and games really made the event vibrant. The theme ‘Harmony in Hues: A Symphony of Cultures’ captured the atmosphere perfectly, showcasing the beauty of our diverse backgrounds. It felt like a kaleidoscope of cultures, all coming together”.

“My advice to future international students is to embrace your cultural identity. UNP welcomes and celebrates diversity, offering opportunities for personal and academic growth. You’ll find a supportive community eager to learn about your culture”.

“One thing I appreciated most from the speakers was their emphasis on resilience and adaptability. Their stories of

of overcoming challenges—whether cultural or academic—were inspiring, reminding us that success is about being open to learning and pushing through difficulties”.

“As Filipino students, we pride ourselves on being hospitable. We welcome international students with openness and equality, making them feel included while sharing our rich culture”.



Katehon Biscarra

BA COMMUNICATION – 3RD YEAR (FILIPINO)

“I’m really happy about the first International Students Day! It’s such a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our diverse cultures, connect with students from around the world, and gain a broader perspective on global issues”.

“One of the highlights for me was definitely the cultural performances. I loved the Loi Krathong dance—it beautifully showcased Thailand’s rich heritage. Engaging with students from different backgrounds was also fantastic; it helped me build friendships and understand each other better. And the booths! Sampling dishes from different countries and participating in the interactive

activities made it so fun to experience various cultures”.

“To future international students, I’d say: embrace the diversity here, participate into campus activities, and make connections with both locals and other international students. It’ll really enrich your experience and help you settle in”.

“One thing I learned today is not to be shy about talking to international students. Even though I’m not the most fluent English speaker, I found that they really don’t mind. What matters is that we can communicate and share our thoughts”.

“As a local student, I want to help make foreign students feel welcome by being friendly and actively participating in cultural

exchange events. Sharing our experiences and traditions not only helps us understand each other better but also encourages us to engage with different cultures”.



Eusebio Nelson O. Dameg Jr.

B SECONDARY EDUCATION-ENGLISH - 4TH YEAR (FILIPINO)

“It’s good that the university started organizing such remarkable activity, since we are aiming and pushing through Internationalization. I believe this is another milestone towards achieving the goal of becoming a globally recognized academic community. Additionally, this would let the international students feel that they are really valued, and with that we can attract more overseas students to come and study here”.

“Students were given a glimpse of other regions/countries culture—their costumes, practices, food, etc. The cultural presentations and

get-together were just some of the highlights of the activity. With this, I feel elated since I, as one of the participants in the SEA Teacher Program Batch 10 will have a brief background about the country where I am going to”.

“To all the future International Students who wished to study here in the university, be in the know that you are most welcome in the University of Northern Philippines. You will never feel alone, you will always feel at HOME, because in this academic institution you are greatly valued. Enjoy your stay”!

“What I appreciate the most is it’s their willingness to participate in the activity, and speak in front of the spectators, even though they were not given ample time

to prepare, they still managed to deliver/render a speech”.

“My radiant smile is one of my greatest assets which could be of the simplest thing that I could offer to let the international students feel more welcome”.



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