

INDUSTRY ALUMNI & COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

May Edition

Issue

#15

FROM UPM TO COMMUNITY :

★ SUPPORTING UPM'S BLUEPRINT FOOD SECURITY THROUGH COMMUNITY-BASED AGRI-BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT :

★ ITEKAD AMBANK ISLAMIC X SBE UPM: EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES, STRENGTHENING FOOD SECURITY

INDUSTRY LINK :

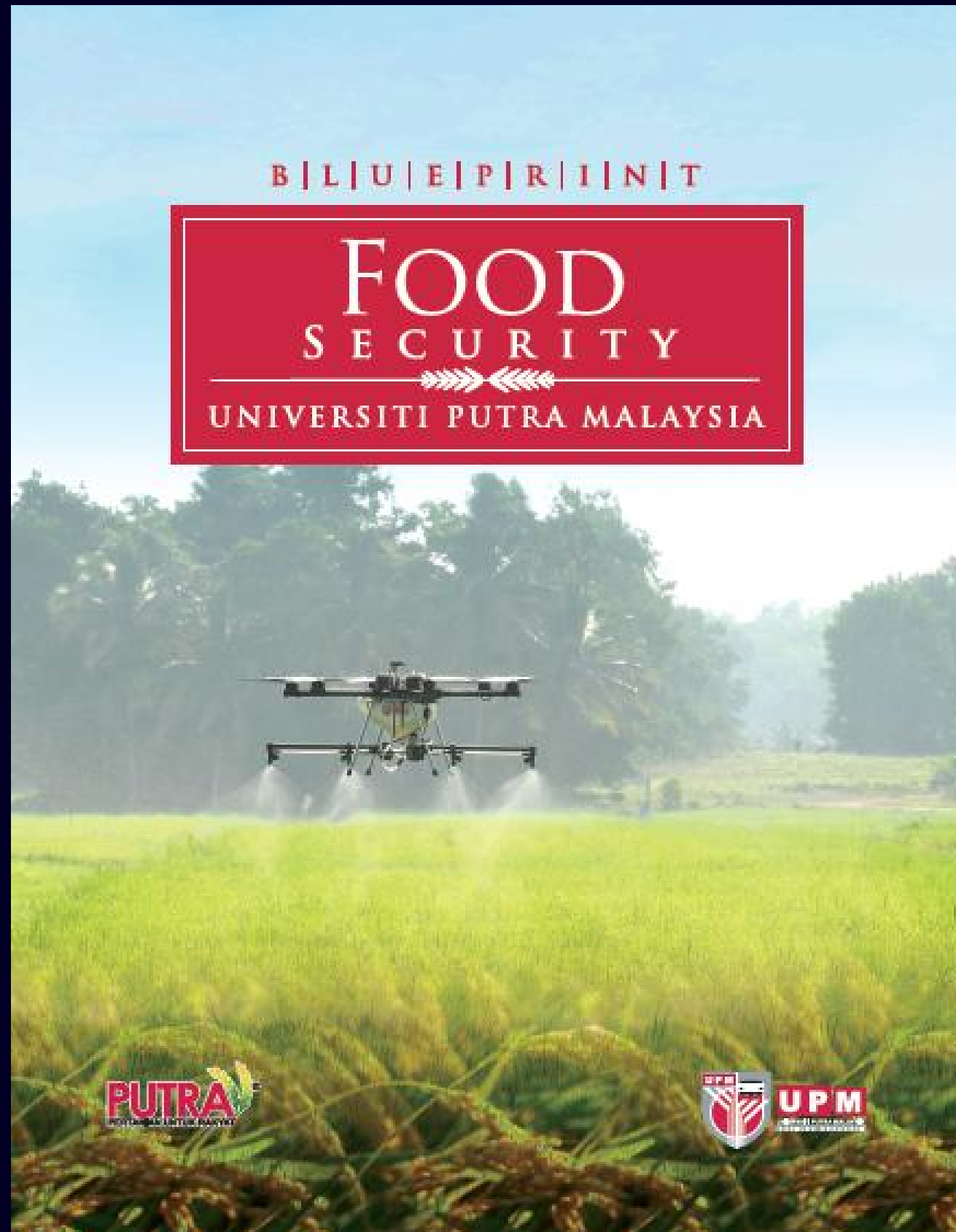
★ FROM BACK-OFFICE TO BOARDROOM : ONBOARDING AND IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT

★ A **TRIBUTE** TO OUR BELOVED MR. MEHAN

★ **ALUMNI SUCCESS STORY :**
ALIF ASRAF'S JOURNEY

FROM UPM TO COMMUNITY

SUPPORTING UPM'S BLUEPRINT FOOD SECURITY THROUGH COMMUNITY-BASED AGRI-BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



The UPM Blueprint Food Security outlines Universiti Putra Malaysia's strategic commitment to strengthening national and global food security through education, research, innovation, and community engagement. Recognising Malaysia's continued dependence on food imports and the growing challenges posed by climate change, global supply chain disruptions, and rising food prices, the blueprint serves as a comprehensive guide for UPM to enhance its contribution to sustainable food systems.

The blueprint is built around the four pillars of food security: food availability, accessibility, utilization, and stability. It highlights the need to develop skilled human capital, strengthen agricultural innovation, promote technology transfer, and support resilient food production systems. UPM aims to position itself as a leading food security university of international repute by producing future-ready graduates, advancing impactful research, and serving as a reference centre for sustainable agriculture and tropical agricultural extension.

Through collaboration with government agencies, industry players, and local communities, the blueprint supports national agendas such as the National Agrofood Policy and Food Security Action Plan. Ultimately, it seeks to improve Malaysia's food self-sufficiency, strengthen rural economies, encourage sustainable agricultural practices, and ensure long-term food security and well-being for future generations.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

ITEKAD AMBANK ISLAMIC X SBE UPM: EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES, STRENGTHENING FOOD SECURITY

Food security is a collective responsibility that requires strong collaboration between university, industries, and communities. In response to this growing need, the School of Business and Economics, Universiti Putra Malaysia (SBE UPM), in strategic partnership with AmBank Islamic, implemented the iTEKAD AmBank Islamic x SBE UPM 2025/2026 Programme. This initiative designed to empower 25 participants from asnaf communities, B40 households, and persons with disabilities through agropreneurship and sustainable agricultural practices.



Empowering Communities Through Knowledge and Innovation

The programme began with the identification of target communities across several locations, including Kuantan, Kuala Lumpur, Serdang, Semenyih, and Linggi. Participants were then equipped with essential knowledge and practical skills through a series of training and knowledge-transfer activities covering modern agricultural techniques, Internet of Things (IoT) applications, hydroponics, fertigation systems, supply chain management, entrepreneurship, marketing, and financial literacy.

Through a hands-on learning approach, participants were guided not only in agricultural production but also in managing their ventures as sustainable businesses. Training sessions focused on financial management, record-keeping, budgeting, profit-and-loss analysis, break-even calculations, and strategic planning. The skills enabled participants to make informed decisions and strengthen the long-term viability of their agropreneurship initiatives.



Building Confidence, Creating Opportunities

One of the programme's most significant achievements was the transformation in participants' knowledge, confidence, and entrepreneurial capabilities. Through the support and expertise of the University Community Transformation Centre (UCTC) Universiti Putra Malaysia.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

ITEKAD AMBANK ISLAMIC X SBE UPM: EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES, STRENGTHENING FOOD SECURITY



Advancing Inclusive and Sustainable Agriculture

iTEKAD also highlights the importance of inclusivity in economic empowerment. Through mushroom cultivation initiatives involving visually impaired participants, iTEKAD demonstrated how urban agriculture and technology-driven farming solutions can create meaningful opportunities for diverse communities.

By providing specialised training, mentorship, and entrepreneurial exposure, the initiative supported participants in building greater independence while contributing to a more inclusive agricultural ecosystem.

Participants with limited prior exposure to modern farming technologies were equipped with practical skills in crop cultivation, nutrient management, irrigation systems, and IoT-based agricultural solutions. This continuous support enabled participants to strengthen their capabilities, build confidence, and pursue sustainable agropreneurship opportunities.

With continuous mentoring and technical support, participants gained the confidence to independently manage their agricultural projects and explore new opportunities within the agropreneurship ecosystem. Beyond technical expertise, iTEKAD also nurtured an entrepreneurial mindset among participants. They were introduced to effective marketing strategies, customer engagement approaches, and methods to expand market access.

Through networking opportunities with fellow agropreneurs and industry stakeholders, participants strengthened their ability to commercialise their products and establish sustainable income streams.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

ITEKAD AMBANK ISLAMIC X SBE UPM: EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES, STRENGTHENING FOOD SECURITY

Strengthening Food Security Through Collaboration

Beyond individual empowerment, iTEKAD contributes to strengthening local food production capacity through vegetable cultivation, hydroponic farming, fertigation systems, and mushroom production. The integration of modern agricultural technologies and skilled agropreneurs supports the development of a more resilient and sustainable food supply ecosystem.



This initiative reflects SBE UPM's commitment towards advancing food security, community engagement, and sustainable development through impactful university-industry collaboration.



Creating Lasting Impact

The iTEKAD AmBank Islamic x SBE UPM Programme demonstrates how strategic collaboration between university, industries, and communities can create lasting socioeconomic impact. By empowering participants through knowledge transfer, innovation, and entrepreneurial development, iTEKAD not only strengthens household livelihoods but also contributes to building a more resilient and sustainable food production ecosystem.

As part of SBE's commitment to community empowerment and sustainable development, iTEKAD aligns closely with the UPM Food Security Blueprint, reinforcing national efforts to enhance food security and cultivate a future-ready generation of agropreneurs capable of addressing emerging agricultural challenges.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



GAMBANG (KUANTAN), SEMENYIH & SERDANG (SELANGOR), LINGGI (N.SEMBILAN), KUALA LUMPUR (WP)



FROM BACK-OFFICE TO BOARDROOM : ONBOARDING AND IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT

As part of the recent S.T.E.P.S Programme, final-year students of the School of Business and Economics, Universiti Putra Malaysia, had the valuable opportunity to gain industry insights and career guidance from Mr Anderson Chua Oou Chuan, Founder and Principal Advisor of Strarion Advisory Sdn Bhd and alumnus of SBE UPM.

The session, titled “From Back-Office to Boardroom: How to Become a Strategic Architect in the Global Market”, was designed to prepare students for the realities of today’s competitive workplace. Drawing from his experience in corporate strategy, governance, finance, and boardroom leadership, Mr Anderson shared practical lessons on how graduates can move beyond simply securing employment towards building meaningful, strategic, and future-ready careers.



Throughout the session, Mr Anderson encouraged students to shift their mindset from merely completing tasks to creating value. He shared that while a degree provides an important foundation, mindset, adaptability, and the ability to understand the wider business environment are key factors that determine long-term career growth. Students were reminded not to think only within the boundaries of their own academic discipline, but to understand how marketing, finance, management, accounting, and analytics connect in the real business world.

A key part of his sharing focused on career preparation and professional positioning. Mr Anderson explained that a resume should not only describe responsibilities, but should clearly show the value and impact created by the individual. He encouraged students to present their achievements with confidence and to prepare for interviews by understanding the company, its challenges, and how they can contribute solutions.

FROM BACK-OFFICE TO BOARDROOM : ONBOARDING AND IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT



Mr Anderson also shared practical advice on how students can present themselves professionally in the workplace. He encouraged them to communicate clearly, think beyond problems, and offer thoughtful solutions that create value for an organisation. He reminded students that career growth is not built on speed alone, but also on trust, integrity, discipline, and good judgement. By combining confidence with structure and professionalism, students can better prepare themselves to take on greater responsibilities in the future.

The session inspired students to view their career journey beyond simply getting a job. Mr Anderson encouraged them to think like strategic professionals by creating value, communicating with confidence, and understanding how different business functions connect. He reminded students that a degree opens the door, but mindset, trust, integrity, and the ability to solve problems will determine how far they can go.

This alumni sharing session reflects SBE UPM's continuous effort to strengthen industry engagement, enhance student employability, and prepare graduates to become future-ready professionals in the global workplace.



Mr Anderson Chua Dou Chuan
Founder & Principal Advisor, Starion
Advisory Sdn. Bhd.
Alumnus, School of Business and
Economics, UPM



A TRIBUTE TO OUR BELOVED MR. MEHAN

Mr. Neelamehan Manickiam has been a truly remarkable individual whose dedication, kindness, and unwavering commitment have left a profound and lasting impact on the SBE UPM community. Throughout his time with us, he consistently demonstrated professionalism, integrity, and a strong sense of responsibility in everything he undertook. His willingness to guide, support, and encourage both students and colleagues has inspired many to grow, excel, and pursue their goals with confidence and determination.

Beyond his many contributions and accomplishments, Mr. Mehan will always be remembered for his humility, warmth, and positive spirit. He possessed a unique ability to connect with people from all walks of life, fostering meaningful relationships built on trust, respect, and genuine care. His presence brought encouragement and positivity to those around him, creating an environment where individuals felt valued, supported, and motivated to achieve their best.



As we reflect on his journey and contributions, we are deeply grateful for the knowledge, wisdom, and countless memorable moments he shared with the SBE family. His dedication has not only enriched our institution but has also left an enduring legacy that will continue to inspire future generations of students and staff. Thank you, Mr. Mehan, for your invaluable service, friendship, and unwavering commitment. You will always hold a special place in our hearts, and your impact will be remembered for years to come.

PROMINENT ALUMNI

ALIF ASRAFKAMARUN ZAMAN



As Malaysia's tourism landscape transforms, **Hydramas.com** and **JalanOS.com** are reimagining travel by merging heritage and innovation into a unified digital era and ecosystem. Hydramas.com, a seven times World Travel Award winner leads smart business travel innovation, while JalanOS.com strengthens a connected tourism ecosystem and empowers communities across Malaysia.

Established in 1997, Hydramas Travel & Tours Sdn Bhd has continuously evolved alongside the changing dynamics of global tourism. Building upon decades of industry experience, Hydramas.com was developed as a scalable digital platform focused on transforming corporate and business travel management through smart, technology driven solutions. Complementing this vision, JalanOS.com was introduced as a digital ecosystem initiative designed to enhance tourism connectivity, support local tourism communities, and strengthen digital engagement across the travel industry.

The concept and foundation of JalanOS.com were first developed during my Master's studies at the School of Business and Economics (SBE), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM).

Through the Master's program in Entrepreneurship, I gained valuable exposure to innovation, digital business models, strategic management, and entrepreneurial leadership. I was also honored to receive the 2025 Best Student Award for the Master of Entrepreneurship program, an achievement that further motivated my commitment toward academic excellence, innovation, and industry transformation. The academic environment at School of Business and Economics, UPM played a significant role in shaping my understanding of how technology, research, and entrepreneurship can be integrated to solve real industry challenges within tourism and digital transformation.



My academic journey began at St. John's Institution, Kuala Lumpur, followed by foundation studies in Science Physical at the University of Malaya and an undergraduate degree in Chemical Engineering from The University of Manchester, United Kingdom. Inspired by the knowledge and experience gained from School of Business and Economics, UPM, I am currently pursuing a Ph.D. focusing on tourism, entrepreneurship, and digital transformation as key drivers of future economic growth in Malaysia.

PROMINENT ALUMNI

ALIF ASRAFKAMARUN ZAMAN



As Malaysia prepares for Visit Malaysia 2026 and the broader expansion of ASEAN tourism, Hydramas.com, and JalanOS.com are actively supporting initiatives that promote Malaysia as a leading regional tourism and business travel destination. In collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC) and Tourism Malaysia, we have participated in international sales missions and strategic tourism engagements across multiple international markets while expanding our regional focus throughout ASEAN.

Scheduled for its official launch in Jun 2027, Hydramas.com is already planning the next phase of development with the upcoming innovations. Future developments under Hydramas.com will incorporate advanced technologies including Artificial Intelligence agentic systems and immersive Drone Tour experiences integrating Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality technologies to enhance future tourism experiences and smart business travel solutions. Meanwhile, JalanOS.com will focus primarily on blockchain related tourism innovation, including stablecoins, MPT digital assets, NFT based tourism experiences and collectibles, while serving as a digital asset ecosystem designed to strengthen connectivity and digital integration for tourism companies across Malaysia and the ASEAN region.



This journey reflects not only business transformation but also the importance of bridging academia, entrepreneurship, and industry innovation in shaping the future of tourism. So it begin. The two world from the past and present collide into one timeline of new digital era.

Alif Asraf Kamarun Zaman
CEO of Hydramas





UPM
UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA
BERILMUBERBAKTI

S&E

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
AND ECONOMICS
Leading Today · Shaping Tomorrow

MALAYSIA'S
FIRST & ONLY
TRIPLE
CROWN
ACCREDITED BUSINESS SCHOOL

Contact Us

**OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DEAN
(INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS)**

1st Floor, Block A, School of Business and Economics,
43400 UPM Serdang, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia

Tel: 03-9769 5329 E-mail: spe.alumni@upm.edu.my

Agriculture • Innovation • Life

With Knowledge We Serve



econ.upm.edu.my