

# *TheStar*

## Malaysian a finalist in Global Student Prize 2022

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PETALING JAYA: Alesyah Asa, a construction technology student from Keningau Vocational College, Sabah, has made the country proud by earning a spot as one of the 50 finalists for the Chegg.org Global Student Prize 2022.

The 20-year-old is the sole Malaysian finalist of the prestigious student award given annually to exceptional students who made a huge impact on their peers and the society.

If she wins the US\$100,000 (RM445,450) award, Alesyah will use the prize money to invest in “Eureka Hub” - her science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) project which trains peers and teachers on robotics, drones, 3D printing and entrepreneurship; to improve school infrastructure; and to tackle Covid-19 misinformation.

The Global Student Prize 2022 announcement was made Thursday evening (July 21) on the competition website.

As a woman living in a rural, poorer area of Malaysia studying in a vocational field, Alesyah has risen above various stigmas, stereotypes, and economic hurdles to promote innovation, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education and inclusivity in her school and the wider community, the Global Student Prize 2022 website read.

She has led a number of school initiatives in STEM-related activities, particularly focusing on vocational students and special needs learners.

Alesyah’s mission is to inspire women to excel in traditionally male-dominated fields.

As one of the few female students enrolled in her course, Alesyah has represented her department in various vocational competitions and has mentored other female students to do the same.

Through her determination to break down barriers for students - particularly women, vocational students, those from rural areas and those with disabilities - Alesyah has opened up a swathe of opportunities for students in areas that they previously have limited access to.

Because of her work, more female students represent the school in innovation contests and some of her school’s special needs learners have been nationally recognised as pioneers in using sign language to present their projects in national and international competitions.

In 2020, she led a team to winning an information literacy hackathon organised by Unesco.

The team later received a STEAM grant from the Awesome Foundation (Boston) for its technology-based workshop series.

Expressing his delight, Keningau Vocational College director Johari@Jaibet Sabin said Alesyah's achievement proves that our national education system, particularly vocational education, has been effective in fostering students with great competence, creativity and charisma.

"I hope this milestone will inspire more students to push themselves to live up to their fullest potential," he said in a statement.

The top 10 finalists of the Global Student Prize are expected to be announced in late August this year.

The winner, who will be announced later in the year, will be chosen from the top 10 finalists by the Global Student Prize Academy, made up of prominent individuals.