

# In pursuit of excellence

> Family of seven graduates create history at AeU

**S**EVEN out of nine in a family from Sabah graduated with the same Master of Education (MEd) degrees from AeU. Five of them who graduated in 2015 comprised four sisters and a brother-in-law. The number of graduates in the family increased to seven with Lily @ Viva Sabil, 37, and her husband, Dymson Zeno, 34, finally obtaining their MEd degree in 2016. This created a new history for AeU.

It started from Puan Lesiah @ Root Sabil, 46, who harboured the ambition of becoming a professional educator. As the second child of the six Sabil siblings who are all teachers, Lesiah teaches in the National School Bongkud, Ranau. The only obstacle to her ambition was the absence of suitable institutions of higher learning near her residence. The nearest full-time learning centre closest to her home is located about 110km in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.

## Fast facts on AeU

AeU is a collaborative multinational university established in 2007 under the auspices of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) countries. All its academic programmes ranging from diploma to doctorate levels are approved by the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia and accredited with the Malaysian Qualification Agency.

Today, AeU has a diverse and robust international community of more than 22,000 students from 84 countries. Over 1,000 students from 46 countries also make AeU as their choice to pursue their studies at the doctoral level.

Registration for September 2017 intake is now open. For enquiries, call 1 300 300 238, or apply online at [www.aeu.edu.my](http://www.aeu.edu.my)

Lesiah's long awaited dream came true when AeU expanded its network of educational services centres in 2012 from all the states in Peninsular Malaysia to Sabah and Sarawak. She started receiving information through word of mouth about AeU from her friends, teachers and also through her own reading of AeU articles in the newspapers. As a mother of five, Lesiah was determined to continue her study in AeU's Master of Education (MEd) programme.

When Lesiah shared her aspiration and intentions with her family, all her siblings and two brothers-in-law who are also teachers were inspired by her. In total, nine members of the family were registered as students of AeU. Eight of them enrolled for the same MEd programmes at the same time on 20 January 2014. They are Lesiah and her husband, Fred P. Jaumis, Rosline, Rosie and her husband, Edmond St. Carolus, Lily and her husband, Dymson Zeno and Jane. The eldest brother, Jun Sabil, was registered in September 2013 and is pursuing his Bachelor of Education programme in AeU.

"It was fun to study and discuss together when my siblings and I shared a common interest in education. Learning together makes it easier for us because we can complete the task, revise and attend classes together. We actually gained more in terms of knowledge and skills after attending the AeU's MEd programme," says Lesiah.

Although the sisters and their spouses worked in three different schools, SK Bongkud, SMK and SMK Ranau Lohan in Desa Wawasan in Tambunan, they did not encounter any difficulties in meeting the needs of the education as the blended learning methodology offered by AeU was accessible anywhere, anytime, which gave them the flexibility including attending class schedules held only in the weekends. They began to overcome their initial worries after being exposed to the blended learning. With proper time management, they were able to cope with their work commitments and studies and believed they can achieve their goals of lifelong learning.

"Learning materials were easily available online and the use of AeU's new technology continuously



Husband and wife graduates, Dymson Zeno and Lily @ Viva Sabil.

made the learning process easier and cheaper," says Jane, the youngest among the four sisters.

Through the blended learning methods, students can get study notes through the student portal, known as My Personalised Learning Space or myPLS.

Classes are held in the weekends once a month in strategic learning centres within the closest proximity to the students. Interactions with academic facilitators (AF) are conducted online in accordance with the schedule agreed by the AF and students.

Within five semesters of their studies, their hard work paid off when five family members passed their exams and all attended their graduation ceremony at AeU's 5th convocation, creating a history in AeU.

A new history was created for AeU as this is the first time, seven out of nine family members graduated with the same MEd degree. It clearly shows their interest and commitment to the teaching profession and the pursuit of higher education is highly regarded and respected by the society.

"My mother and late father were the key influences behind our success. They not only supported and helped us financially to realise the dream of becoming a teacher, they also constantly encouraged and gave us moral support and blessings," says Rosie, in agreement with all her sisters who shared the same teaching passions.

"Besides us, there are two brothers who are current students of AeU. We all chose AeU because it met our requirements in terms of knowledge, time, location and financing," says Rosline.

The unique tale of the seven graduates in the family is not just the success story of the family's dedication to education but also reflected the importance of lifelong learning through AeU's personalised mode of flexible learning that can help working adults to achieve their dreams and ambitions.



From left: Rosline, Lesiah, mother Suliah, Jane and Rosie (four graduates of 2015).