



**NEW SABAH TIMES**  
Sabah's First Established Paper

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By Anna Vivienne



**T**he Harvest Festival Celebration month has just gone by. All that is left is beautiful memories shared by acquaintances and friends who forged this relationship in celebration venues. Those who won beauty contests and singing contests will think of their triumph fondly.

But this does not mean that the celebration is over. In fact, villages that were not able to celebrate the festival during May are still in the festive mood.

This is exactly what the people of Kg Kopimpinan Gana Kawang did recently.

They celebrated the festival in their very own way, just among the villagers. They however did not forget their State Assemblyman Datuk Ghulam Khan, who turned up and clapped sportingly through several events including the Children Unduk Ngadau.

Prize presentations were done for the other events including sports and tele-match events held earlier that day.

It was a very family oriented event.

According to the organising chairman Onong Gunah, the coffer for such events was not doing that well and the funds to go towards the celebration was not enough.

"We wish we can celebrate in a larger scale but we can only afford so much. Maybe next year," he shared.

He however expressed his belief that the spirit that went towards organising the event was more important than how grand the merry making was.

The organiser of the Children Unduk Ngadau Doreen Jawani, 37, said the celebration was quite miniscule compared to the celebration held at other villagers but it served its purpose; bringing the villagers together for one day so that they can catch up on each others' news as well as foster rapport.

On the children's contest, she said, they could not afford to hold an adult Unduk Ngadau Contest due to lack of funds, but they still wanted to hold something interesting.

"So we came up with the Children's Unduk Ngadau. It serves two purposes actually. One is to expose the children to the traditional costume of the people of Sabah. In fact the contestants are wearing traditional clothes from the Kadazandusun community of Penampang and

## Celebrating the harvest in the rural area

Papar. If they are exposed to this at this age, which is below 12, they will be able to recognise the costume, and appreciate it even when they grow up," she shared.

According to her the 14 participants were so excited that the atmosphere really felt like an Unduk Ngadau Competition.

The second reason for the competition was to ensure that children are included in the celebrations. In some celebrations, children are treated as something underfoot that should be seen but not heard, or perhaps not heard and seen, if the many shouts of 'shut ups!' and 'Go home!' at some celebrations I attended are to be evaluated.

In Kg Kopimpinan Gana Kawang, the children participated fully, even though they look a trifle over-done with their flaming rouged cheek and bluish eyelids. Be that as it may, their participation in the event was commendable as they evoked the interest of the audience tremendously. As the little girls sashayed on stage parents clapped and called out encouragingly. Some of the girls smiled tremulously while others just marched on, pale faced. Some mothers backstage seemed to be as nervous if not more so than their daughters.

Such events during the month of May and beyond could be carried out in villages that are participating in the Homestay programme.

The festival held in such villages can be an experience of a lifetime for tourists. Perhaps

Homestay participants should consider this seriously.