



## **Asian Productivity Organization “The APO in the News”**

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### **Local freelance writer, Lorena attends tourism workshop in Vientiane, Laos**

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KOTA KINABALU: Local freelance writer, Lorena Binisol was among 20 participants from Asian countries selected to attend a tourism workshop in Vientiane, Laos recently.

She was chosen by the Malaysian Productivity Corporation (MPC) in Kuala Lumpur to participate in a five-day workshop from Nov 21-26, along with fellow Malaysian, Abdul Rahman Abdul Razak, a senior research officer of Mardi based in Serdang.

Lorena from Kampung Suok, Penampang said the trip to Indo-China further boosted her confidence in pursuing writing and future undertakings.

The mother of two teenage boys attended a workshop on 'Development of Rural Tourism Networks and Clusters for Enhancing the Competitiveness of Small Enterprises' organised by Asian Productivity Organisation (APO) which is headquartered in Tokyo, Japan.

During the workshop, Dean of Graduate School on Tourism Management of the National Institute of Development Administration in Thailand, Dr Therdchai Choibamroong emphasised on the importance of intangible 'things' as equally crucial tourism products alongside tangible objects.

"Tangible is something we can see, for example, a place like tourism spot in Luang Prabang, Laos or any product that we can hold such as Laos silk or Sinouk Coffee (a local product of Laos). But intangible is something to do with feelings, experience and emotion," explained Dr Therdchai who is based in Bangkok.

Nowadays, tourists not only want to see things but also want to feel and experience them. And Lorena said she learned from Dr Therdchai that applying the 'hi-touch' approach should be given serious consideration instead of the usual 'hi-tech' technology in tourism.

Delegates from Cambodia, Mongolia, Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, Fiji, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Laos and Malaysia were welcomed by the APO liaison officer of Vientiane cum deputy director-general, Dr Keomorakoth Sidlakone.

Lorena said Dr Keomorakoth regarded the workshop as the beginning of a good network for members in Asian countries which allowed them to come together to share their knowledge and to learn things from each other and encouraged them to continue staying connected.

APO representative programme officer, Jisoo Yun stressed that a proper tourism mechanism must be applied accordingly in order to achieve sustainable products.

Apart from the classroom training, participants also went on two site visits near Vientiane to explore the city. It was also part of a practical project to identify challenges, discuss rural tourism models, find solutions and plan for future actions, said Lorena. – By Paul Mu