Inspiration behind moderation campaign

Star Media Group shares how it has evolved with forum participants

The need to unite Malaysians and maintain harmony in the country prompted the Star Media Group to initiate the Voices of Moderation campaign. Star Publications (M) Sdn Bhd group managing director and chief executive officer Datuk Seri Wong Chun Wai shared the inspiration behind the campaign during a forum titled ‘Media in Malaysia’. He said the campaign was initiated out of concern for the disruption of peace and harmony by extreme religious groups, among others. "I felt the need to run the campaign to unite Malaysians. I have received a lot of feedback from readers about the campaign. Although there are some positive comments, some of the response has been negative. "I try not to be intimidated by it," he told the 45 Asia Leadership Trek (ALT) 2015 participants at the forum in Menara Star, Petaling Jaya.

Known as the Harvard Trekkers, the group consists of graduate students from Harvard University including Harvard Kennedy School, Harvard Business School, Harvard Graduate School of Education, Harvard Medical School and Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Science.

The other panellists were acting group chief editor Leanne Goh, corporate planning and strategy general manager Maryann Tan, specialist editor M. Shanmugam, digital business chief operating officer Roy Tan, and women and family editor Ivy Soon.

Goh spoke about the expansion of the group from a newspaper to a full-fledged media conglomerate. "We are constantly looking for ways to improve the newspaper while expanding our online content. "We try to provide a fresh perspective to online stories which appear in the newspaper the next day," she said.

Harvard Kennedy School Masters in Public Policy programme student Susanne Schwarz said the forum was very informative. "Freedom of speech has been in the news over the past few days so speaking to key people in a leading media group was an educational experience," said the German student.

Australian Simon Malian, who is pursuing a MSc in Computational Science and Engineering, was impressed at how far The Star had come. "I have read the newspaper while in Malaysia and the content is on par with international newspapers. "I was also impressed by how the newspaper had expanded into a media group, with a presence in radio, TV and online," he said.

The students also learned about public leadership, education and social entrepreneurship during their 26-day programme. They also visited Tokyo, Manila, Jakarta and New Delhi.

Enthusiastic group: The ALT 2015 trekkers posing with the top management of Star Publications (M) Bhd including (from fifth from left) Wong, Goh, Shanmugam, Maryann, Soon and Roy. Also present was Sunway Education Group senior executive director Dr Elizabeth Lee (fourth from left).

Lively discussion: The 45 graduates were keen to learn more about The Star newspaper’s expansion into an integrated media group.

Interacting with the students: Wong (right) addressing the audience of the forum. Looking on are (from left) Soon, Shanmugam and Goh.
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