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Malaysia Design Council chairman Datuk Prof Dr Ahmad Zainuddin looking at one of the awards won by the UNIMAS team at the recent British Innovation Show. At right is Unimas deputy vice-chancellor Prof Mohd Fadzil Abdul Rahman. Pic by Mas Adib Saie

Unrecognised back home

KUCHING: MALAYSIA has a good pool of creative and innovative minds but they face an uncertain future here.

Malaysia Design Council chairman Datuk Prof Dr Ahmad Zainuddin said yesterday despite getting international recognition and offers from overseas, most of the designers did not get the same response locally.

"Currently, it is difficult for designers to move forward with their work. This is because there are no takers in Malaysia. It is different in South Korea or in Europe."

Recently, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) team took part in the British Innovation Show in London and swept 11 gold medals and five special awards.

One of the products which received good reviews was the wearable sleeping bag, the brainchild of Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts lecturers Norhayati Suleiman, Nuraini Mahmud, Dr Nalina Shaari and Norhaslina Senin.

Among the awards they won were BIS Diamond Award, Double Gold Award and Special Romanian Award from the Romanian government. During the exhibition, the four were approached by various companies which wanted to mass produce their product called "EZZ

Bag". It comprises a sleeping bag, a hybrid jacket and a tent, which can be turned into a stretcher when the need arises.

"It would be good if our work is available in the market, but since this was a UNIMAS project, we couldn't simply agree to the offers in London," said Norhayati.

Despite all the offers she received there, none of the industry players in Malaysia had approached her.

Ahmad said: "We want to help designers become industry players. Maybe we can have joint ventures with some industry players who can make these designs available in the market."

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