General

UMP holds ‘Jalinan Kasih Bersama Komuniti’ for Balok’s Rohingyas

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Concerned about the plight of displaced fellow Muslims of Rohingya ethnic from Myanmar, Universiti Malaysia Pahang’s (UMP) Association of Professional & Administrative Officers (PPTI) recently conducted a community programme called ‘Jalinan Kasih Bersama Komuniti’, in collaboration with a number of the university’s strategic partners.

Akin to a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activity to bridge public institutions of higher learning with their surrounding communities, the ‘Jalinan Kasih Bersama Komuniti’ programme saw PPTI embracing and opening its doors to the Rohingya community residing at a refugee settlement in Balok, Kuantan.

Held on October 13, 2019, the community programme was both an eye-opener and opportunity for about 300 Rohingya men, women and children, who learnt new skills and got reacquainted with the formal education system.

Several activities were specifically designed for Balok’s Rohingya community – among them were English Language class; reading, writing and computing (3M) class; and basic household skills classes, like cooking, sewing, personal grooming and make-up; as well as hydroponic planting.

The community programme was also part and parcel of UMP’s and its collaborative partners’ initiatives and efforts to boost the surrounding community’s well-being, especially to cater to those in dire need. Donations to the needy was the final curtain for the programme.

Among the strategic partners participating with UMP Co-curriculum Management Council in the latest ‘Jalinan Kasih Bersama Komuniti’ programme were Islamic Medical Association of Malaysia Response & Relief Team (IMARET), The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), Dentistry for the Needy, KEMAS, Giat MARA, Sekolah Kebangsaan Balok, Kelab Penyayang volunteers and the undergraduate brigade.

The one-day community programme was officiated by Indera Mahkota’s Member of Parliament (MP), Dato’ Saifuddin Abdullah, who is also Malaysia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Among those present at the official launch of ‘Jalinan Kasih Bersama Komuniti’ were Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Affairs & Alumni), Professor Dato’ Dr. Yuserrie Zainuddin; Deputy Director of Pahang State Education Department (Learning Sector), Abdul Rahim Mohd Yunos; Head of Education Department for Kuantan District, Miftah Surif and President of the Rohingya Society in Malaysia (RSM), Faisal Islam Muhamad Kassim.

In his official address, Dato’ Saifudding expressed his appreciation to the commitment exemplified by UMP and the initiative by its strategic partners, as well as to every individual involved, especially the

volunteers and UMP students, in organizing such a noble community programme for the displaced Rohingyas.

“Malaysia has actually started receiving the exodus of the Rohingya community since 1998, but am not too sure when they started a settlement in Kuantan,” said the Minister, who came accompanied by his wife, Datin Norlin Shamsul Bahari.

“As we are all aware, the Rohingyas had to flee their country to escape being victimized of unimaginable violence and so-called ethnic cleansing. To date, several local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have come forward to assist this community in their basic living needs and education.”

According to Dato’ Saifuddin, the Government hopes and continues to encourage more NGOs to get involved in lending a helping to this displaced community

“The Government is in the midst of getting international sponsors to pool adequate fund to help the Rohingyas, especially where it concerns their children’s formal education.

“The questions that would soon beg some answers are, what is the direction and where would these Rohingya children go when they excel in their studies?

“On this note, the Government is analyzing the issue, and is presently getting the Rohingyas to adopt part of the country’s education curriculum,” he remarked.

The Indera Mahkota MP also called on Malaysians to be open-minded to the increasing presence of the Rohingyas and to lend the latter a helping hand.

Meanwhile, Programme Director of the ‘Jalinan Kasih Bersama Komuniti’ and President of PPTI, Mohd Raizalhilmy Mohd Rais, said the community programme is part and parcel of the Assocciation’s social responsibility, in areas of education and experience acquisition, to its surrounding communities.

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