Community

Professor Turun Padang: Empowering Orang Asli Learners Through Outdoor English and Environmental Education

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CAMERON HIGHLANDS, 31 October 2025 – In a fresh initiative combining language acquisition with environmental engagement, the programme Words in Action: Outdoor Language Learning, under the banner of the broader series Professor Turun Padang, a corporate social responsibility (CSR) programme, was held at Sekolah Kebangsaan Menson in Cameron Highlands on 31 October 2025.

The programme was organised by the Centre for Modern Languages (CML), Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah (UMPSA) in partnership with the Centre for Industry and Community Network (ICoN) and working collaboratively with the District Education Office (PPD) Cameron Highlands and Sekolah Kebangsaan (SK) Menson.

This programme brought together 80 Orang Asli primary school pupils (years 4-6) outdoors, aiming to enhance pupils' English language skills through outdoor experiences while promoting environmental responsibility, and raise awareness of quality education by immersing learners in nature-based activities that integrated language learning with sustainability and community values.

They engaged in three hands-on activities where they explored their surroundings, selected natural and man-made objects, and used them as prompts for drawing, description, and storytelling in English.

This approach blended sensory exploration with language practice to boost confidence and fluency.

The CML team, led by Associate Professor Dr Hafizoah Kassim, comprised 10 facilitators and support staff, and was further supported by three teachers from SK Menson.

Using a module titled Pick&Tell, the outdoor learning approach centres on leveraging natural materials as learning tools to develop students' productive English skills, particularly in speaking, writing, and storytelling.

By stepping beyond the conventional classroom, pupils participated in language activities within an immersive outdoor environment that fosters self-expression, builds confidence, and sparks creativity.

The programme was graced by the presence of Badrul Hishan Mohd Tahir, the Deputy District Education Officer, Planning Sector from PPD Cameron Highlands, and Asmadi Ahmad, the Headmaster of SK Menson.

In his remarks, Badrul Hishan expressed appreciation for UMPSA's commitment to supporting the Orang Asli community and highlighted the importance of integrating language learning with environmental education, alongside the need for inclusive educational opportunities.

He also praised the programme as a strong example of school–community–university collaboration, uniting CML's academic expertise with the efforts of the local education office and SK Menson.

In brief, by integrating language learning with environmental awareness, the programme supports the principles of SDG4 (Quality Education), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG15 (Life on Land).

It provided Orang Asli learners with a meaningful, hands-on educational experience that fostered collaboration, environmental responsibility, and practical language use in a real-world setting.

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