Community

18 UMPSA volunteers join Kashmir Humanitarian Mission to repair bridges and improve access for residents

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KASHMIR, INDIA, 7 October 2024 – In a heartfelt effort to make a meaningful impact, 18 volunteers from Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah (UMPSA), including staff and students, embarked on a humanitarian mission to Kashmir, India, under the International Mobility Travel Programme.

This initiative not only allowed participants to expand their technical and academic skills but also fostered close connections with the local community, embodying the spirit of collaboration and care.

One of the mission's highlights was a project to repair the main bridge in Kampung Bhat, Kashmir.

Stretching 500 metres, the bridge serves as a vital lifeline for villagers, connecting them to schools, public facilities, and essential shops.

The volunteers worked tirelessly to restore the dilapidated structure, ensuring safer and more reliable access for the community.

Alongside this, they organised a communal work activity to clean up the surrounding area, creating a cleaner, more welcoming environment for the village.

The head of Bhat Village, Gulam Hussain, expressed his heartfelt gratitude for the UMPSA volunteers' efforts.

"Repairing this bridge is crucial for improving accessibility and safety for our residents.

"Beyond that, the communal work activity has raised awareness among villagers about the importance of keeping our environment clean and well-maintained," he shared.

But the mission extended beyond physical repairs. The volunteers also engaged in academic collaboration with the University of Kashmir (UoK).

On 7 October 2024, UMPSA students participated in a short-term Internet of Things (IoT) course at the Faculty of Applied Science and Technology at UoK.

This collaboration gave students valuable exposure to cutting-edge technology, equipping them with skills that will shape future development.

According to the Programme Director, Muhamad Zubair Faiz Zulkefly, this collaboration marks a significant step in fostering innovation and knowledge-sharing between the two universities.

“This programme serves as a platform for exchanging ideas and creativity while strengthening the bond between UMPSA and UoK.

“We are deeply grateful for UoK’s hospitality and support in providing accommodation and facilities throughout the programme,” he said.

The mission also included charity-focused activities centred around education. On 9 October 2024, volunteers visited the Government Middle School in Pahalgam, Jammu, and the Jammu and Kashmir Yateem Trust in Srinagar.

In the mountainous region of Pahalgam, nearly 200 schoolchildren enthusiastically participated in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) activities.

Practical experiments and a lively ‘Street Science’ exhibition allowed students to experience how STEM concepts apply to their everyday lives, sparking curiosity and excitement.

In collaboration with Muslim Care Global (MCG), the volunteers distributed school supplies to students and provided care kits to the Jammu and Kashmir Yateem Trust Orphanage.

MCG Chief Executive Officer, Tuan Haji Zakaria Latif, shared his delight in partnering with UMPSA.

“This is our first programme in India, and it has been an honour to work alongside UMPSA through the UMPSA Foundation.

“Together, we’ve been able to make a difference in the lives of these children,” he said.

Organised by the Student Affairs and Alumni Department (JHEPA), this programme reflects UMPSA’s commitment to developing students with a global perspective and a deep sense of volunteerism.

The dedication and compassion shown by the volunteers during this mission serve as a powerful reminder of how acts of kindness, no matter where they occur, can leave a lasting impact on communities around the world.

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