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Kembara Santun Ummah 2.0: UMission club provides aid in Sabah

□ Guest Submission □ August 3, 2023

By Aini Jasmani and Mazwati Wan Yusoff

A recent humanitarian initiative called “Kembara Santun Ummah 2.0” took place in Kudat and Pulau Banggi, Sabah from 30 April to 7 May, 2023. This was a collaboration between UMission for Peace Malaysia, Persatuan Alumni SMSAH, ADAB Sabah and GENERASI Kudat. Nine students represented UMission Club, IIUM, together with their Advisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Wan Mazwati Wan Yusoff, who assisted over 1,000 beneficiaries consisting of *asnaf*, stateless and undocumented communities.



Volunteers after checking in at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport.

Ever since the COVID-19 outbreak, a majority of the underprivileged there have been unemployed and without income. Due to this, healthcare services and religious obligations like circumcision procedures have become unaffordable for some. Therefore, the funds raised for this project were utilized to provide free circumcision procedures and food aid, especially for the underprivileged who have limited access to humanitarian assistance.

Upon reaching Pulau Banggi on 1 May, all of the volunteers headed to SMK Pulau Banggi where free mass circumcision procedures were conducted. There was a significant demand for mass circumcision, hence at least 60 participants were circumcised. Despite the hot weather, the villagers expressed their gratitude to the volunteers for their assistance.



The first batch of boys waiting to be circumcised at SMK Pulau Bangi, Kudat.

All throughout the day, the volunteers were assigned tasks and stations. This was to ensure a seamless process for all parties involved, including volunteers and participants. Upon the arrival of the participants, the registration team were tasked to ask them for their particulars and signed consent from their parents. The module team engaged and entertained the participants in various activities, such as coloring amongst others, as they waited for their turn to be circumcised. Afterwards, the procedure team then prepared the participants by dressing them in the complimentary “*kain sarung*” provided by us.



Medical officers and their operation theatre (Computer Lab) crew at SMK Pulau Banggi, Kudat.

Once ready, participants proceeded to the operation theatre where the surgeons, assistant surgeons, table assistants, clerking nurse and others worked hand in hand to ensure the smooth sailing process of circumcision. Above all, the cleaning team played an important role in maintaining the hygiene of the operation theatre, by ensuring that of all the apparatus were cleaned and sterilized after each use to avoid cross contamination, then the observation and pharmacy team ensured that the boys were recovering from the circumcision and distributed medication and food parcels to them.



Transporting operation beds from Pulau Banggi to Kampung Tanjung Kapur, Kudat.

To get to the next venue, Kampung Tanjung Kapur, Kudat, where a three-day free mass circumcision procedure took place, the volunteers boarded a ferry. A total of 281 poor and underprivileged participants were circumcised there. The same system was implemented with the motto "*Adopt and adapt*" that kept volunteers motivated to continue serving the villagers despite all the hurdles encountered such as the sudden heavy downpour. According to one of the recipients of the donation, they were very pleased and grateful to receive the donations because they significantly lessened her family's burden.



The first patient requested his photo with the operation crew to be taken at Futsal Court, Kampung Tanjung Kapur, Kudat.

One of the volunteers, Muhammad Afiq Ammar expressed his gratitude to have been given the opportunity to work with high spirited individuals on this mission. He said, "I am very blessed to have crossed paths with amazing and dedicated team members from the UMission club and hope that the experiences gained will be put to good use. May we continue to contribute our time and energy for as long as we can and for the betterment of the *ummah*."



A member of Umission Club IIUM, Muhammad Afiq Ammar, with a patient waiting to be circumcised

Volunteering offers numerous opportunities for skill development, including organizing big events, logistics, and fostering effective teamwork. When engaging in volunteering work that involves planning and executing large-scale events, individuals can develop valuable organizational skills. Even before taking off to Sabah, volunteers were tasked with packing and labelling surgical equipment, medication, operating tables,

goody bags and fun packs for children, and other necessities to ease the whole mission. Around 100 boxes and luggage were transported to the airport and volunteers were assigned tasks to ease checking in process. Without detailed organization, the process of checking in and claiming the boxes and luggage at the airport would have been a disaster. We learnt the importance of logistic planning and realized that any failure in logistic planning would lead to a failure in executing the whole programme.

At the circumcision locations, every individual was tasked at different stations, from the catering team all the way to the pharmacy team who played an important role in ensuring the success of the event. This experience honed the volunteers' ability to plan, strategize and execute tasks efficiently, all of which are transferable skills applicable to many professional contexts. Additionally, the volunteers were required to work hand in hand with diverse groups of people, which nurtured teamwork skills. This collaborative environment fostered the development of many skills, such as communicating effectively, delegating responsibilities and resolving conflicts. These newfound skills in organizing events and teamwork not only benefitted volunteers personally but can also enhanced their professional profile.



Nurul Nabilah entertained a boy while he was waiting his turn to be circumcised.

One of the volunteers, Nurul Nabilah binti Mohd Anuar said, "I feel blessed and happy to be given the opportunity to join this

mission as it is such a priceless experience that you can't get it anywhere else. One of the biggest challenges that I faced there was definitely adapting to changes and going through unexpected situations, but the positive energy kept me going!"



Muhammad Anas encouraged the boy to be brave.

On the spiritual aspect, one of the volunteers, Muhammad Anas Akasyah said, "Despite the many hiccups faced during the mission, I believe good things come to those who are patient and tests are given to us to strengthen our faith. Therefore, we have to *redha* and be grateful with whatever situation we were put in, because indeed, Allah does not burden a soul beyond what it can bear." The first glitch happened in Kota Belud when our bus broke down and we have to wait for more than three hours in the scorching sun. Praise be to Allah, even though the volunteers had to wait in the afternoon heat for hours, everybody was very patient. This is a sign of strong spirituality, and they passed this training to be spiritually resilient with flying colors.

Because of the problem with the bus, the ferry left from Kudat to Pulau Banggi without volunteers. Luckily there was a fishing boat which agreed to ferry all 29 volunteers and medical officers to Pulau Banggi which took three hours to arrive. We were very grateful to all involved. Everybody faced and embraced the challenges with an open-mind and open-arms. Not even one person complained about the discomfort in the fishing boat. They also accepted and endured the whole night sleeping on the

concrete floor without mattresses and blankets. After enduring this hardship, all challenges that came after that were faced with ease.

All in all, all praises be to Allah for the success of this programme and the undying support and cooperation from the donors, volunteers and villagers. ***

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