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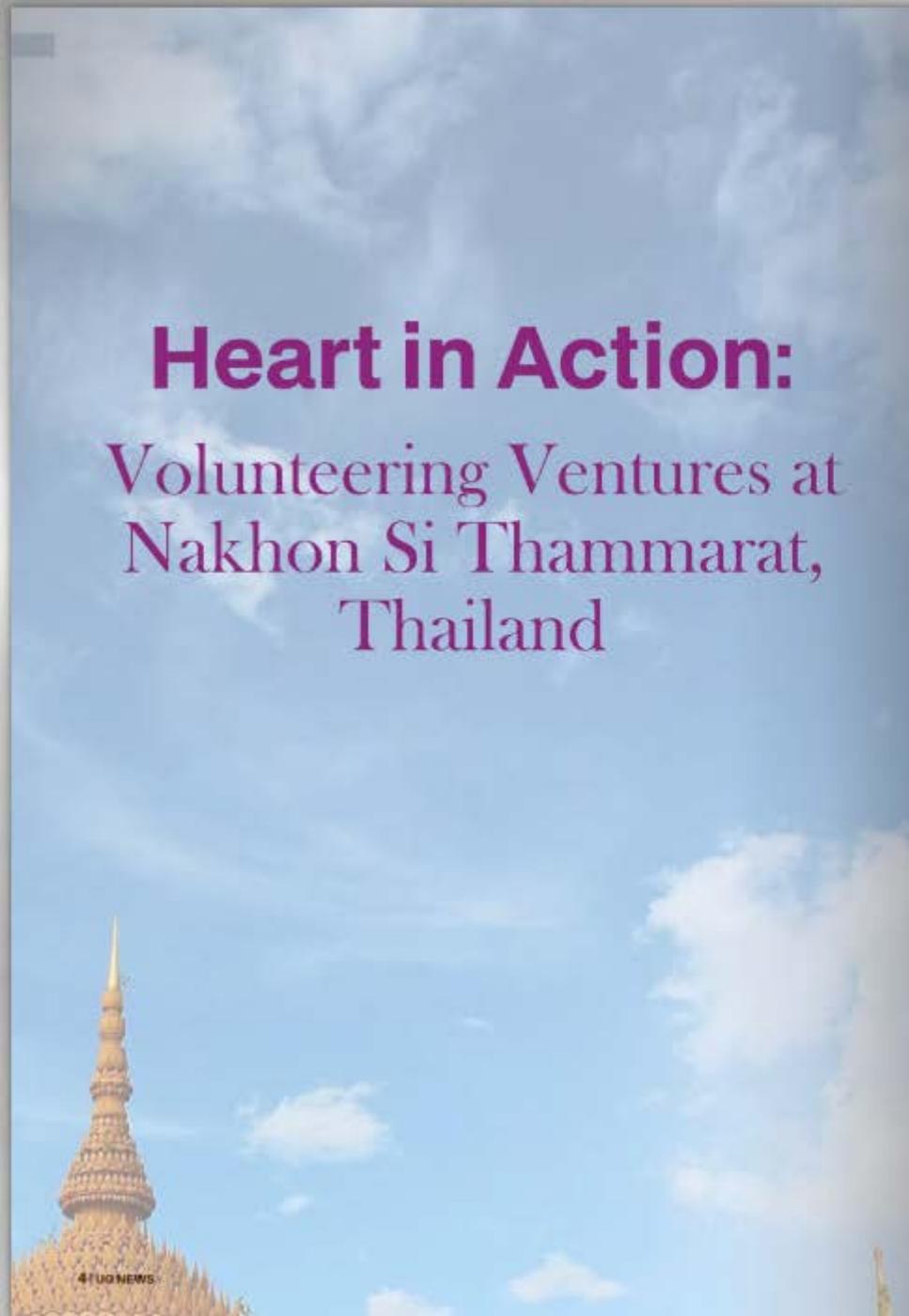
UG UITM GLOBAL NEWS

ENGAGING THE WORLD



UiTM Networking

Visit & Collaboration Meeting
in Australia.



Heart in Action: Volunteering Ventures at Nakhon Si Thammarat, Thailand

Akademi Pengajian Bahasa (APB), UITM have a long collaborative relationship with Walailak University, Thailand. Over the past 20 years, various types of collaborative activities were conducted to continue the partnership and cultural exchange between the two institutions following the MoU that was signed in 2001. Among the most notable achievements of APB was sending its academic staff from the Department of Malay Studies, and the Department of English language and Linguistics to Walailak University as visiting professors, since the year 2001. Other than that, both UITM and Walailak University students have been involved in the 'In Country Study Programme' where they get to experience the cultures in both countries as exchange students. Unfortunately, when COVID-19 pandemic hit the world in 2020, many planned activities had to be put on hold.

In 2023, APB had invited Assistant Professor Dr Somrak Chaisingkananont from the School of Liberal Arts, Walailak University as one of the speakers in an online forum entitled 'Indigenous Language Revitalisation: Whose Responsibilities?' as part of the International Mother Language Day 2023. This event was conducted in collaboration with UNESCO, to celebrate Indigenous languages and

cultures, with a focus on indigenous voices from Malaysia. This event was a success and has served as a starting point to continue working with Walailak University post-pandemic.

Following this, a group of lecturers and students from APB visited Walailak University for an academic visit and volunteering program from 6-10 March 2023, with the aims of planning and discussing academic and research strategies moving forward, as well as conducting volunteer activities with the local communities in Nakhon Si Thammarat, Thailand.



Students and Maahad Eemaneyah Foundation School (MEFS)

Associate Professor Dr. Norhazlina Husin was the head delegate from APB during the academic visit to Walailak University. She was joined by Mr. Azhar Abdul Wahab, Dr. Noor Ida Ramli, and Ms. Midlyana Mohamad from the Department of Malay Language. These lecturers were among the visiting professors at Walailak University between 2001 and 2018. Two lecturers from the Department of English language and Linguistics, Dr. Syamimi Turiman and Dr. Haida Umiera Hashim, as well as Dr. Fahad Maromar from the Department of Asian and European Languages, were also present.

Meanwhile, the representatives of Walailak University were Ajarn Kamontip Klaibanmal, the Acting Dean and Head of English Department, Asst. Prof. Dr. Wararat Whanchit and Mr. Abdul Razak Panaemalae. The discussion covered various aspects related to teaching and learning activities, as well as research collaboration opportunities. Both institutions are hopeful for the continuation of visiting professors/ scholars at Walailak University and UITM. Walailak University has also requested for benchmarking of its English programme, particularly in terms of students' enrollment. At the same time, both institutions have identified potential internal grants that can be considered for matching grants. Student mobility programmes were also discussed, and there are possibilities for students from both institutions to undergo their internship either at UITM or Walailak University.

Representative from Walailak University

On the second day, the visit was then continued with a volunteering programme at the Maahad Eemaneyah Foundation School (MEFS) in the Tha Sala district, Nakhon Si Thammarat. During the visit to the school, students had the opportunity to showcase and demonstrate the language applications that they have developed. A total of 10 students joined this programme, where 8 of them are from the Bachelor of Applied Language Studies (Hons.) Malay for Professional Communication programme, one post-graduate student majoring in English language, and another postgraduate student majoring in Arabic language.



They were divided into 3 groups (based on the three languages, i.e. Bahasa Melayu, English and Arabic language) and were tasked to teach/ demonstrate the language applications that they have developed themselves to the MESF students. These students were also joined by a group of volunteer students from the Walailak University, who played the role of assisting them with language barriers issues when the lessons were conducted.

Commemoration ceremony for the visit



The volunteering programme at MEFS has provided an insight for both the students and lecturers, of the real classroom setting environment of an Islamic school in Thailand. Interestingly, MEFS is complete with technology facilities, such as smart boards as well as other teaching and learning materials to assist both the teachers and students with the teaching and learning process in the classrooms. Most of the funds and facilities received by the school were channelled by the Thailand government. The students from APB gained a wholesome experience. The volunteering programme has provided the students with the chance for them to further improve their communication skills.

An outside classroom activity



The next day, lecturers and students headed to the Ban Laem Homestay in the Tha Sala district for another volunteering programme. This time, they gained first-hand experience of mangrove planting. The trip started with a boat sailing to the Morakot Forest to view a stunning scene of the well-conserved mangrove forest. Then, they were brought to the natural source of mud and both students and lecturers participated in the unmissable mud spa activity. Afterwards local cuisines such as mangrove tempura, as well as squid ink rice, popularly known as 'Nasi Selut', were served during lunch.



On the last day of the visit to Thailand, the delegates from APB went on a social visit to the Consulate General of Malaysia, Songkhla. They were briefed about the current processes and procedures for Malaysian students who intend to undergo their internship in Thailand. The information provided by the consulate was indeed helpful, particularly for the students to plan for their internship abroad.

Delegates of APB at the Consulate General of Malaysia, Songkhla

To conclude, the academic visit and volunteering program had opened doors for opportunities to continue the collaborations with Walailak University, as well as the community in Nakhon Si Thammarat, Thailand. It is hoped that this effort will help promote APB to greater heights, in line with UiTM's vision to be globally renowned by 2025.



Discussion between Delegate of APB and members of Consulate General of Malaysia, Songkhla



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