NUMed’s aspiring doctors give back to society

WHILE a typical Tuesday during term time sees most students in the lecture hall, the library or on campus, fourth-year medical students at Newcastle University Medicine School Malaysia (NUMed) find themselves giving back to society by providing free healthcare to local communities.

With public service being at the core of the medical profession, NUMed is intrinsically known for their hands-on practical teaching, allowing students to gain experience in the field.

The annual NUMed Health Camp, spearheaded by the fourth-year medical students at NUMed, encompasses the thematic spirit of “Bridging the Gap Between Poverty and Health”.

As a first, the NUMed health camp occurred simultaneously in two locations: Kampung Sambang Arang and Kampung Sungai Pinang. This was set up by NUMed’s aspiring young doctors.

The hard work and dedication put in by the students were not just limited to a day. These 17 students shadowed behind the scenes in the run-up to the camp, to achieve maximum camp participation from students and patients alike.

Two weeks prior, students visited the two villages to distribute flyers for the health camp.

“We decided to split the health camp into two different locations to maximise the amount of people we could help,” said project leader and NUMed fourth-year medical student, Bhithorn Sughontha.

Bhithorn said it created more work but was worth the effort.

“In remote areas of Malaysia many people do not have good access to medical care so we wanted to provide it to them,” he said.

“The day was a great success; we nearly treated five times the amount of patients than the previous year.”

Fourth-year students amounting to 120—almost the whole of the cohort—made the day a success.

But it was not only the students who were contributing to the health checks as the wider NUMed community also participated, including 12 NUMed lecturers.

The NUMed students also worked hard to secure doctors and pharmacists from the local area to contribute to the cause.

Free dental and health checks

They even hid the government dental clinic providing free dental checks for the villages.

“We are grateful to those outside of NUMed who helped, as it allowed us to provide full healthcare screenings to the villages, with over 250 people treated at the health camp,” Bhithorn added.

Villagers had their urines tested and their general health history recorded.

Upon completion, doctors undertook a physical exam on the patients and further assisted those who required treatment. Additional doctors gave general advice on living a healthy lifestyle.

“I think NUMed sets a wonderful example—not only to medical schools but to all educational institutions—that such organisations can take a little time out to make a large impact on the local community,” Bhithorn added.

Over 20 societies and clubs are housed on the NUMed campus with a variety to meet all interests.

NUMed is the established international branch campus for Newcastle University UK in Johor, offering undergraduate degrees in Medicine (MBBS) and Biomedical Sciences (BSc). Both programmes provide opportunities for periods of study in the UK.

A one-year foundation certificate in biological and biomedical science is also available—its successful completion leads to progression to the MBBS or BSc (Hons) Biomedical Sciences programme.

All programmes of study are equivalent to those of Newcastle’s UK-based provision, and lead to the award of the same degree. By choosing to study at NUMed Malaysia, students will obtain a reputable UK qualification, from an internationally recognised university, at a cost significantly less than that of studying in the UK.

For details, look out for the advertisement in this Star Special.

A crucial part of medical education is learning to serve the public and that is what NUMed’s fourth-year medical students did at the NUMed Health Camp.