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SMALL ACTS, BIG IMPACTS

RHB's Touch Hearts initiative transforms communities and fosters environmental protection

THE anticipation was palpable as he pulled and pulled at the cast net. Sweat had begun to bead on his brow, glistening under the warm sun, as he felt the weight of the net begin to change.

With one final tug, Mohd Rashid Mohamad brought the net up with a few fishes of the invasive kind entangled within it.

Elated from his first ever catch, the RHB Banking Group managing director and chief executive officer reflected on how even small actions could contribute to bigger environmental and social impact.

In line with RHB's commitment to making a lasting environmental impact, Mohd Rashid, together with some employees of the banking group, were at the recent Touch Hearts Community Weekend Programme to catch invasive fish species such as black tilapia and suckermouth catfish at the Sungai Kuyoh, Bukit Jalil river.

This was one of the many activities held concurrently by the bank throughout the Asean region during the weekend.

Mohd Rashid said it was all about "small acts and big impacts".

"RHB Touch Hearts supports RHB's broader Sustainability Strategy, under the Community Empowerment Pillar, which focuses on building stronger, more inclusive communities and promoting financial inclusion across Malaysia and Asean.

"Touch Hearts contribute to RHB's broader sustainability goals of empowering two million individuals and institutions by fostering social and environmental resilience," Mohd Rashid told *The Star*.

He added that the programme



Mohd Rashid (third from left) said all efforts of RHB Touch Hearts were in line with the bank's sustainability framework. He is pictured here with volunteers pointing to a few invasive fish species caught. — SHAARI CHEMAT/The Star

embodies RHB's mission to create a lasting social impact by addressing immediate needs and providing long-term solutions that aims to empower communities while driving environmental sustainability.

Established in 2016, the RHB Touch Hearts programme promotes volunteerism among RHB employees, empowering them to give back to the community

through various community engagement activities.

It aligns with RHB's commitment to social responsibility and sustainable development.

The 2024 edition of RHB Touch Hearts saw over 3,000 RHB volunteers from Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Brunei, Cambodia and Laos come together to champion their chosen pro-

grammes focused on community engagement, environmental conservation, educational programmes and business support.

The group's fund-raising efforts have collectively raised over RM600,000 this year.

Since the programme's inception, over 15,000 RHB employees across Malaysia and Asean countries, dedicating more than 10,000

volunteer hours, have actively participated in community service initiatives, directly impacting more than 60,000 individuals in various communities.

These efforts have focused on underserved areas, flood-affected regions, schools and vulnerable groups, demonstrating RHB's commitment to social responsibility.

Reflecting on this year's activities, which centred on people and planet pillars, Mohd Rashid said the meaningful impact can be driven through empowering communities and enhancing environmental awareness.

"By zeroing in on these two pillars, RHB can play a part in addressing the immediate needs of underprivileged groups while providing long-term solutions through education, healthcare and financial literacy.

"We are also encouraging sustainable practices, fostering environmental protection and raising awareness about the importance of preserving Malaysia's natural resources."

Mohd Rashid added that the uniqueness of RHB Touch Hearts lies in its employee-centric approach and long-term impact and comprehensive reach.

"Unlike one-off CSR activities, Touch Hearts is designed to create a lasting social and environmental impact, addressing a wide range of social, business and environmental needs, ensuring our efforts are relevant to the communities and ecosystems in Malaysia and beyond.

"It empowers our employees to take ownership of the corporate responsibility agenda by actively participating in sustained, meaningful volunteer efforts," he said.