

Students raise RM200,000 in 24-hour race

They run a total of 15,500 laps in event against human trafficking

MORE than 800 high school students in Malaysia took part in "Operation 24" – a programme to rescue victims of human trafficking across the globe.

Various international schools came together in support of the 24-Hour Race, a global charity movement organised entirely by high school students between the ages of 14 and 19.

The students from different backgrounds were united by a desire to do more for an important cause, while advocating the cause in their communities and mobilising their peers around them.

What began in 2010 as Hong Kong-based student Christopher Schrader's vision to unite extreme youth endurance with philanthropy, has now taken on global proportions with races being held in Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea and the United States.

Though extensive, the idea behind the movement is simple enough: student teams would compete in an entire student-led, endurance relay race, over the course of 24 hours to raise awareness and funds to fight human trafficking.

The 24-Hour Race in Kuala Lumpur is the largest of all races, with numbers consistently growing each year since its introduction in Malaysia in 2014.

Students form teams of eight people to run for 24 consecutive hours around a course in a relay style.

Held at IGB International School (IGBIS), this year's race gathered more than 1,000 people comprising student participants, team chaperones, teachers, organising committee members and volunteers.

Last year, the 24-Hour Race Kuala Lumpur raised over RM80,000 towards the cause.

This year, the race raised over RM200,000 with a total lap run of 15,500 laps.

To date, the 24-Hour Race has globally raised more than HKD 9,000,000 (RM4,850,000) in support of victims of human trafficking as well as others involved in the fight against human trafficking.

The 24-Hour Race partnered with The Exodus Road – a non-profit organisation that focuses on combating human trafficking, in a programme dubbed "Operation 24" to train and equip 24 national and local law enforcement officers as well as help fund 24,000 hours of investigations across 2,400 locations.

"On a local scale, Malaysia is unfortunately a hot bed of human trafficking.

"As a major transportation hub and one of the more developed nations in the South-East Asian region, Malaysia sees a lot of human trafficking activity, be it as a transit hub or as a final destination.

"Sadly, many are still unaware of the plight of these victims," said 24-Hour Race Kuala Lumpur executive director Esha Mardikar.

"This is what the 24-Hour Race movement hopes to address. The movement has allowed students to find their voice, while taking the initiative to lead the fight against human trafficking.

"The event gives youth, regardless of their background, wealth or physical ability, the opportunity to make a difference in support of this cause in their own communities," she added.

Esha added that since today's youths are the leaders of tomorrow, they hope the event will



Sunway International School's Team M3X won for the most laps in the run. They completed a total of 318 laps or 318km.



Esha officiating the 24-Hour Race at IGB International School.

help the youths to carry the message to fight against human trafficking with them for years to come.

This year, the 24-Hour Race

Kuala Lumpur received the support of the IGBIS Parent Volunteer Organisation as well as corporate organisations that have partnered or helped to sponsor the

event.

The organisations were Beyond Ultron Malaysia, KidZania Malaysia, Shell Malaysia and Cezar's Kitchen.



The International School of Parkcity, which collected RM28,947, walked away with the award for most funds raised.



The event gives youth the opportunity to make a difference in their communities.