

News Release

For Immediate Release
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Manulife Malaysia and Roots & Shoots Unite to Empower Wang Kelian Communities

Kuala Lumpur - Manulife Malaysia is excited to announce a three-year community partnership with Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots Malaysia. This collaboration aims to support the rehabilitation of a nature trail in the Wang Kelian region of Perlis and aligns with Manulife's Impact Agenda, which aims to drive empowering sustained health and well-being, inclusive economic opportunity and accelerate a sustainable future.

In support of accelerating a sustainable future, the collaboration will focus on the rehabilitation of a 10km stretch of the 'Denai Warisan' trail in the first year and transforming it into a beacon of eco-tourism and environmental education. Manulife's funding will support biodiversity surveys, extensive trail restoration, and the creation of designated flora and fauna zones along the trail. These enhancements will preserve the unique biodiversity of the region and provide educational opportunities through strategically placed informational signages.

To drive inclusive economic opportunity, the collaboration will include a robust capacity-building program for the local community, which encompasses upskilling in trail-making, nature guiding, business knowledge, and financial literacy sessions. Manulife volunteers will contribute to the financial literacy sessions to drive long-term success and economic opportunities as this initiative aims to empower the local community to leverage eco-tourism as a sustainable income source.

"Manulife Malaysia and Roots & Shoots Malaysia share a vision of empowering local communities and preserving our natural heritage. Representing the launch of Manulife Malaysia's flagship program on Environmental and Biodiversity Preservation, this partnership aims to engage our customers, employees, and advisors in environmental preservation and biodiversity conservation while enhancing local socio-economic conditions," said Vibha Coburn, Group Chief Executive Officer of Manulife Holdings Berhad. "Furthermore, by localising the Manulife financial literacy module, we create engagement pathways for our employees and advisors to actively participate in community development."

Perlis, Malaysia's smallest and most northern state, remains economically underdeveloped despite its pristine nature and high biodiversity. Wang Kelian, with a population of approximately 250 people, is uniquely positioned to benefit from sustainable eco-tourism. The region is home to over 70 mammal species, 200 bird species, and 35 reptile species, including the exclusive Stump-tailed macaque or fondly known as 'beruk kentoi' amongst the local community.

"Building on the foundation of the "Wang Kelian, Perlis - The Forgotten Valley" project in partnership with Think City and The Habitat Foundation, we are excited to move into the next phase with an additional committed partner Manulife, where not only will the physical ecotourism asset of the trail be made available to the public, but we are also now able to upskill the local communities to take full advantage of the opportunities that ecotourism can bring," said TP Lim, President of Roots & Shoots Malaysia.

"Following the holistic approach of conservation practised by the Jane Goodall Institute in 6 countries in Africa, we know that in order for nature and biodiversity to be conserved effectively, we must also ensure that the human communities that live near these reserves are able to access income opportunities in a sustainable manner. Our gratitude goes out to Jabatan Perhutanan Perlis for their continued encouragement and support. This project demonstrates that when government, community, corporations and NGOs work together closely, we can create a better world for animals, nature and human communities." he added

Roots & Shoots Malaysia, founded by Dr. Jane Goodall in 1991, is a youth-led environmental action program that empowers young people to address challenges facing our environment, animals, and human communities. With a strong presence in Malaysia since 2015, the organization boasts 347 volunteers and 3,697 members, making the organisation a perfect partner for Manulife Malaysia for this ambitious project.

For more information on Manulife Malaysia's sustainability and impact agenda initiatives, please visit <https://www.manulife.com/en/about/sustainability/impact-agenda.html>

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About Manulife Malaysia

Manulife Holdings Berhad is part of Canada-based Manulife Financial Corporation. Through its subsidiary companies, Manulife Malaysia offers an innovative range of financial protection, health and wealth management products and services to meet different customer needs. Manulife Malaysia currently serves the needs of over 350,000 policyholders and wealth management customers. Manulife Holdings Berhad has been listed on the Main Board of Bursa Malaysia since 1984. As of 31 December 2023, its assets under management were over RM13.9 billion. To learn more about Manulife Malaysia, visit: www.manulife.com.my.

About Roots & Shoots

Roots & Shoots Malaysia is an environmental and humanitarian programme founded by Dr. Jane Goodall, empowering young people of all ages to address challenges facing our environment, animals, and human communities through community projects and initiatives. It is active in more than 70 countries around the world. The Malaysian chapter was formed in 2015.

More information can be found at www.rootsandshoots.my or get in contact with Roots & Shoots at info@rootsandshoots.my.

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