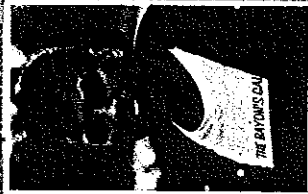


BAMBOO CAMBODIA here!



Kamsial Abdul Rubass,
37,
expedition leader



"Last year, I was in Mongolia to help the people there. This year, it is Cambodia. It's quite similar. Expeditions elsewhere. Each place I visited, I carried out some form of community work. It leaves me with a distinct memory of how one small effort has helped others in a big way. I hope the lives of the Cambodians will be further enriched by our efforts."

Koh Pung Howe,
24,
team leader



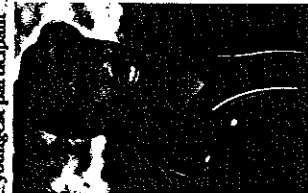
"I see this expedition as a Singaporean's effort and that is why I'm in it. This is the first time I'm leading a multi-racial team. It would be an eye-opener for me not only to know about the Cambodians but how we as Singaporeans can work together as a team in another country."

Hidayatollah Khomochi,
17,
participant



"I'm looking forward to meeting the village people of Phnum Sraob. Unlike Singapore with its modern amenities, the way of life is very different there. It's an opportunity to develop myself and learn about the culture and lifestyle of people of another country."

Lydiawaty Ab. Rahman,
17,
youngest participant



"Last year I went to Chiengmai in Thailand, as part of a humanitarian effort to help the children there. It was part of a school project and I went there with several friends. This time around I'm representing myself alone and will make new friends in the course of the expedition."

Jacqueline Phillips,
21,
participant



"This is my first voluntary work in another country. It would be more than just serving the village folks. We are also going to physically enhance the place. I hope to get insights into different issues from the socio-economic and political perspectives."



The right opportunity at the right time. That sums up the reason for most of the participants' involvement in the Cambodian Expedition.

For student Lydiawaty Abdul Rahman, who is the youngest participant, the June holidays would have been a waste had she not been part of the expedition. After a round of interview, she was successful. Last year, the 17-year-old Jurong Institute student went to Chiengmai to distribute food and clothes and other basic needs to the rural folks there. This time around, she is expecting things to be tougher as she will be involved in building projects.

Like Lydiawaty, polytechnic student Hidayatollah Khomochi, 17, was also attracted to the expedition because it falls during the June holidays. Together with his brother, Ayatollah Khomochi, 19, the two are preparing themselves mentally and physically for the hard life.

Hidayatollah who volunteers at Masjid Radin Mas, says: "Having been used to the comfortable life here, Cambodia

would certainly be a change. But Insha-Allah we will survive." The expedition from 4 to 17 June, organised by the Young Muslim Secretariat (YMS) of Muis, attracted more than 100 applicants. After a series of interviews, only 62 were accepted. The expedition team will be a truly multi-racial mix - Malay, Indian, Chinese, Arab and Eurasian. There are seven non-Muslims in the team. Male participants make up 31, with the remaining 31, females. They were joined by 26 Muis officials and volunteer doctors and nurses who partake in the expedition as part of their humanitarian calling.

Said Expedition Camp Manager, Mr Juraiman Abdul Rahim: "YMS is pleased with this positive response as it augurs well for its strategic plan to promote national integration among young activists. We can contribute to society on the common ground of shared universal values for humanity. Our young will have great opportunities for growth and learning journeys through such expeditions." The objectives are to promote interaction and bonding

between youth of Singapore and Cambodia, and enhance character-building traits. Volunteers who are used to urban living will be exposed to rural surroundings and get a taste of rural life. The experience will create a culture of rugged youth. In support of the expedition's objectives, the Singapore International Foundation has contributed a grant of \$87,000.

As part of the pre-expedition training, all the participants attended a one-day session at Muis on May 20, to foster camaraderie amongst them through team-building games. They were also briefed on first-aid emergencies and camp routines as well as 'crash course' on the Cambodian language by a representative from the Cambodian Embassy, Mr In Vong.

Miss Hidayah Amin, the head of publicity says: "We hope that the participants will enjoy the expedition. It will not be an easy one as we are going to live in rural conditions which most of us have not been exposed to. This is not a holiday camp but an expedition of learning, caring and sharing. We hope participants will work together and learn that the spirit of

volunteering goes beyond racial and national boundaries." Muis hopes to create more opportunities that make young adults more aware of the plight of the less fortunate, develop their socio-economic awareness and a deep appreciation of life. Said Mr Juraiman: "We want to create more leadership training programmes to nurture well-rounded and knowledgeable youths who integrate well into society."

"Apart from being a platform for community service, the expedition will enhance their leadership skills and capabilities, and develop their empathy and compassion as a result of having to learn the sensitivities of other communities."

"Muis hopes that some of the youths who return will contribute back to the community as active volunteers in mosques, organisations and community centres or clubs. We hope too, that the planning and leadership skills, endurance and perseverance levels will be enhanced so that contributions to society will be more effective. They can also become good agents of change."