

Working Together for a Healthier Malaysia

Pfizer employees reach out to make a difference in the lives of the communities in Sungai Tiang, Perak



Notes : Salt Lick Rafflesia Waterfall Base Camp Orang Asli Settlement

Quick Facts: Encompassing 15,200 hectares of jungle, the prized national treasure, Belum-Temengor Rainforest Reserve, houses the Jahai tribe, the main sub-ethnic group of Negrito.

KUALA LUMPUR, 2 April 2014 – Located in the heart of Belum-Temengor rainforest lies a tiny village, nestled in one of the oldest rainforest in the world. The 130 million year old rainforest, surrounded by the manmade lake of Tasik Temenggor is home to the small community of 450 Orang Asli in Sungai Tiang.

Surrounded by an immense wealth of flora and fauna, much of the area remains unexplored and undisturbed. The breath taking journey takes is hour boat ride from the jetty of Pulau Banding.

Sungai Tiang

The Jahai tribe from the Negrito group living in Sungai Tiang are a semi-nomadic tribe who prefers to

take advantage of the seasonal bounties of the forest.

Like any other village, the Sungai Tiang community live in common wooden houses. On a regular day, the women will go about their daily routine while the children roam about and play together around the village.



All the men in the village have left to hunt for seasonal wild honey combs in the forest where they are usually gone for weeks before they return with supply of foods to feed their families.

Pfizer Health Fellows Programme

Malnutrition is a serious problem among the community and the Orang Asli women are the most malnourished adult group in West Malaysia. This is due the foraging of farm land, increase in river pollution, dietary inadequacies; the increase in level and frequency of infectious diseases and intestinal infestations.¹

This has only made worse the nutritional degradation among the most vulnerable groups i.e. women of childbearing age and young children. Therefore, Pfizer, a research based pharmaceutical, nutrition and consumer healthcare company, and Mercy Malaysia organised a health screening programme for the community of Sungai Tiang.

The Pfizer Health Fellows Programme provided general health screenings comprising of BMI calculation, blood pressure test, general blood test and lice treatment for children. A workshop to create awareness and educate the women on breast cancer conducted by Mercy Malaysia was also part of the programme during the health screening.

The record of each health test is kept by the organisers to keep track of their health condition. Professional consultation was provided by a team of trained personnel from both Pfizer Malaysia and Mercy Malaysia.

¹ <http://www.consumer.org.my/index.php/development/socio-economic/294-the-sorry-state-of-orang-asli-health>



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Health is Wealth

The health screening programme conducted primarily focuses on improving the health of Orang Asli community of Sungai Tiang, but the purpose of the programme is to improve health literacy and to provide basic healthcare amenities to the vulnerable community of Sungai Tiang.

Health education is the key to improving the health condition of this community. The programme includes general health talk by Dr Dr Gayathri Gunasagaran, Product Physician from the Medical Department of Pfizer Malaysia and breast cancer awareness talk by Dr Lindy Bak from Mercy Malaysia who also taught them self breast examination.

While the adults were occupied with health education, the children were not left out. Amilia Sharni Arshad, Area Business Manager (ABM), Central of the Sales Department in Pfizer Malaysia educated the children on germs and cleanliness. She said, "The children are the future of the tribe. If we can teach them how to take care of themselves, we believe we can build a sustainable community where health is concerned."

Human Touch

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a common practice for corporations to fulfil their task in contributing to society. Some corporations conduct programmes to help those in need besides contributing financial assistance. Consistency is the key to sustaining the well-being of the community.

Pfizer Malaysia has taken a different approach to serving the people; with a human touch.

"A few years ago, Pfizer Malaysia Health Fellows, visited the Sungai Tiang community. We made a promise and vowed to come back again. And so we did, for the fourth time," said Damaris Kiat, Manager of Public Affairs, Policies and Communications, Pfizer Malaysia.

"Apart from monetary aid, we get involved at the ground level. We believe that helping the community first-hand is the best way to reach out and make a difference," she added.

The key person behind this programme is retiree Lee Lip Foong, Project Manager of Pfizer Care-A-Van and Pfizer Health Fellows who has been heading the project for 7 years. Lee Lip Foong is a retired nurse who came back to feed her passion to help the less fortunate.

"This is my fourth time to Sungai Tiang and I do what I do because I get a lot of satisfaction in doing what I love – in this case giving back to the community and re-living my nursing experience," said the enthusiastic Lee Lip Foong.

Pfizer Malaysia's Partnership with Mercy Malaysia

"It is exciting that we have now partnered with Mercy Malaysia – which enables us to reach a wider scope where health is concerned. This is our second visit with Mercy, as we have visited the community last year with our Mercy friends. In fact, last year when we signed an MOU with Mercy, we made a commitment – not only monetary but also the commitment of our colleagues, who volunteer to be part of the programme to increase the healthcare literacy level of this community," said Damaris Kiat, Manager of Public Affairs, Policies and Communications, Pfizer Malaysia on the partnership with Mercy Malaysia.

"The tagline "Working Together for a Healthier World" is not just a company direction, but it's a culture that has been embedded in every Pfizer employee," she added.

"I am also thankful that Pfizer Health Fellows is able to work with Mercy Malaysia to minister these folks. Health programme such as Pfizer Care-A-Van should not be a one-off initiative. Consistency is the key in order to sustain the health of the community. We are grateful that there are dedicated MOH doctors and nurses monitoring the health status of the villagers at least once every fortnight because the most



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challenging task is maintaining the health of the community. Pfizer Health Fellows is here to supplement the good work that the Ministry of Health is already doing among them," said Lee Lip Foong, Project Manager, Pfizer Care-A-Van and Pfizer Health Fellows.

Committed to Make A Difference

The Pfizer Health Fellows Programme allows Pfizer Malaysia employees the opportunity to have hands-on experience in the remote parts of Malaysia catering to local needs.

Dedicated employee with a passion to help the less fortunate, Dr Gayathri Gunasagaran, Product Physician from the Medical Department of Pfizer Malaysia whose participation in the health fellows programmes for the second time said "The Pfizer Health Fellows Programme has given me a different kind of personal satisfaction because I am putting into practise my daily job in the medical field to reach these people with a lot of unmet needs and I want to take action to see if I can do something to improve their medical situation."

Amilia Sharni Arshad, Area Business Manager (ABM), Central of the Sales Department in Pfizer Malaysia has a very busy schedule where she deals with medical professional on a daily basis. Joining the health fellow enables her to look at business from a different perspective.

She said, "The one thing that I love about Pfizer is the community outreach programme opportunities that we are actively involved in. They not only develop my skill set at work but also enable me to contribute to the community such as Sungai Tiang. This is my first time in Pfizer Health Fellows and it won't be my last," said Amilia."



The health screening programme in Sungai Tiang was one of Pfizer's Malaysia Health Fellows Programmes which allow Pfizer Malaysia employees the opportunity to have hands-on experience of spending time in the remote parts of Malaysia catering to local needs. Other Pfizer's community health initiatives include Care-A-Van, SWAT, MenCare Male Support for Breast Cancer Screening, and the HOPE Programme. Conceived in 1998 and launched in 1999, Care-A-Van has been offering medical accessibility throughout Malaysia for 15 years and has screened more than 150,000 Malaysians in more than 500 locations to date.

Love is not patronizing and charity isn't about pity, it is about love. Charity and love are the same -- with charity you give love, so don't just give money but reach out your hand instead." – **Mother Theresa.**

No one has ever become poor by giving."
– **Anne Frank, diary of Anne Frank**