

# THE REPUBLICAN POST



A special newsletter produced by Diploma in Mass Communication students  
from the School of Management and Communication



TFI SCALE2017: VIETNAM



**STRONG MINDS, BIG HEARTS**



**MISSION FOR  
CHANGE**

Find out what our TFI  
SCALE scholars were  
up to in Vietnam  
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**LEADER OF THE  
PACK**

Meet our featured  
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**TRIP DOWN MEMORY  
LANE**

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# MEET THE TEAM

## TFI SCALE TEAM VIETNAM MEDIA TEAM



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# Setbacks and *COMEBACKS*

BY NUR KHALISA



**ALL HANDS ON DECK:** The Republic Polytechnic and University of Social Sciences and Humanities students worked together with villagers of Vietnam's Da Phuoc commune during the two-week programme. **PHOTO: NUR KHALISA**

**T**he Temasek Foundation International Scale (TFI) Outbound Programme commenced on the 16th April 2017 for the scholars from Republic Polytechnic's School of Applied Sciences (SAS). The implementation of the water distillation device took place during this two-week programme.

The scholars were working alongside scholars from Vietnam's University of Social Sciences and Humanities (USSH). The purpose of the water distillation device was to produce clean drinking water for the villagers in the Da Phuoc Commune. The commune is located in District 8 of Ho Chi Minh City. The scholars aimed to install a device in each house of hamlets one and three.

The villagers pay S\$0.80 for 19 litres of water that last up to three days depending on the household size. When approached with the idea of the device implementation, the villagers were initially skeptical. They felt that it was redundant because they lived near dumpsters, cemeteries and barely have water pipelines. Thus, the scholars were motivated to make the idea work despite the doubts.

Upon seeing the device for the first time, the scholars realised that there were some problems in terms of transportation. There were 20 devices weighing up to 40kg each. Also, the pathways in the Da Phuoc Commune are

narrow, allowing only 40cm of walking space.

Since the devices were heavy and bulky, Ms Ho Thi Le Thuy, USSH's teacher, called the authority asking for assistance from the militants of the village. However, only two showed up. Another issue was the design of the device. After a try-out, the scholars realised that the device was not efficient in producing clean water fast. This was a huge setback to the whole project.

However, despite the challenges the scholars faced, they were adapting well. The scholars were creative and resourceful when coming up with solutions to counter the problems. Everyone helped in carrying each device to each house. They made do with what they had and used shoelaces and bamboo sticks to carry the devices.

The scholars had daily meetings and feedback sessions to make sure everyone knew what was the activity for the day. Also, the students were able to improve the design of the device within hours, using only cardboard, aluminium and candles.

Nguyen Trong Hieu, a leader of the USSH scholars, said: "Our plans were messed up and so we had to come up with an alternative solution on the spot. In the end, we managed to do it with everyone's help and seeing us working together makes this a successful project."

# PHOTO ESSAY

## *Rekindling friendships through community service*

IT WAS THE FIRST TIME TEMASEK FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL SPECIALISTS' COMMUNITY, ACTION & LEADERSHIP EXCHANGE (TFI SCALE) CAME TO VIETNAM, HO CHI MINH CITY TO HELP THE VILLAGERS OF DA PHOUA COMMUNE TO HAVE EASY ACCESS TO CLEAN DRINKING WATER. THOUGH THE PROJECT FACED SOME SETBACKS, THE BOND BETWEEN THE STUDENTS PROVED THAT IT COULD OVERCOME ANY OBSTACLE. MARCUS LEONG AND SHARON ELANGO BRING YOU SOME OF THE BEST MOMENTS FROM THE TWO-WEEK OUTBOUND PROGRAMME.

### EAGER SMILES, HIGH SPIRITS:

TFI SCALE LEADERS AQILAH SHAMSURI AND LIM KAI SHENG, ALONG WITH SEVERAL OTHER STUDENTS WERE ALL SET AND EAGER TO EMBARK ON THIS MISSION TO TRANSPORT AND PROVIDE CLEAN DRINKING WATER TO THE VILLAGERS IN THE HAMLETS.  
PHOTO: MARCUS LEONG



### IN SEARCH FOR FRESH WATER:

DUUE TO THE LIMITED ACCESS TO CLEAN AND SANITISED WATER, VILLAGERS FROM DA PHOUA COMMUNE WOULD USUALLY BUY GALLONS OF WATER FROM CONVENIENCE STORES. EACH GALLON OF WATER WOULD COST THEM 10,000VNĐ (S\$0.62) AND A GALLON OF WATER IS ABLE TO LAST THEM FOR AT LEAST THREE DAYS. PHOTO: SHARON ELANGO

### HEAVY BUT STEADY:

TEMASEK FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS FROM USSH AND RP HAD TO WORK HAND IN HAND UNDER THE HOT SUN TO CARRY THE 40KG DEVICE TO HAMLET 3 OF DA PHOUA COMMUNE. THE DEVICE COULD NOT BE TRANSPORTED BY MOTORISED VEHICLES BECAUSE THE PATHS TO THE HOUSES OF THE VILLAGERS WERE TOO NARROW. PHOTO: SHARON ELANGO



## KEEP PUSHING ON:

A 67-YEAR-OLD VILLAGER PUSHES A TEAM OF SCHOLARS TO THE HOMES WHERE THEY WOULD INSTALL AND TEACH THEM ON HOW TO CARE AND OPERATE THE DEVICE. THE BOAT HAD FOUR STUDENTS AND THE RIDE LASTED AROUND FIVE MINUTES. **PHOTO: MARCUS LEONG**



## LAUGHING OUT LOUD:

TFI SCHOLARS WERE TAKING A BREAK AND SHARED A LAUGH WITH EACH OTHER. DESPITE THE HEAT AND ALL THE HEAVY LIFTING, THE STUDENTS SURROUNDED THEMSELVES WITH A TON OF CHATTER AND PLENTY OF SMILES. **PHOTO: MARCUS LEONG**

## ATTENTION TO DETAIL

BESIDES DESIGNING AND TRANSPORTING THE DEVICE, TFI SCHOLARS WERE METICULOUS WITH THEIR WORK AND MADE SURE THAT THE DEVICE IS CLEAN ENOUGH FOR THE VILLAGERS OF DA PHOU COMMUNE TO USE. **PHOTO: SHARON ELANGO**



# PHOTO ESSAY



## NO ENGLISH, NO PROBLEM:

TFI SCHOLAR LIM KAI SHENG INTERACTS WITH THE VIETNAMESE TOUR GUIDE. LANGUAGE WAS CLEARLY NOT A BARRIER FOR THE TWO AS THEY CHATTED HAPPILY AMONGST THEMSELVES, EMBRACING THE SIMPLICITY OF THE CONVERSATION. PHOTO: MARCUS LEONG



## SWEET SURPRISE:

THE VILLAGERS OF THE TWO HAMLETS IN DA PHUOC GREETED THE SCHOLARS WITH OPEN ARMS. THIS LITTLE GIRL APPROACHED TFI SCHOLAR LE HOAI KHANH VY WITH A CANDY ASKING HER TO UNWRAP IT. THE TWO HAD A SWEET EXCHANGE, BEFORE HEADING OFF TO THE NEXT UNIT. PHOTO: MARCUS LEONG



## FUMING CHALLENGES:

AFTER THE INSTALLATION OF THE WATER PURIFICATION DEVICE, A FEW SCHOLARS WENT BACK TO DA PHUOC COMMUNE WITH THE LECTURERS FROM USSH AND RP TO CHECK THE STATUS OF THE DEVICE. OVER THERE, THEY DETECTED SOME ERRORS WITH THE DESIGN OF THE DEVICE. PHOTO: SHARON ELANGO

# PHOTO ESSAY



## WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH:

AFTER IDENTIFYING SOME PROBLEMS WITH THE DEVICE, TFI SCALE SCHOLARS FROM RP AND USSH WERE STILL RESILIENT SO THEY WENT BACK TO USSH CAMPUS TO BRAINSTORM SOLUTIONS FOR THE PROBLEMS THEY WERE FACING. ONE OF THE TF SCALE LEADERS, DARRVIN NAIDU LED THE DISCUSSION. PHOTO: SHARON ELANGO



## THINKING ON THEIR FEET :

AFTER BRAINSTORMING POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO QUICKEN UP THE WATER BOILING AND PURIFICATION PROCESS, TFI SCALE SCHOLAR, AQILAH SHAMSURI, WAS QUICK TO COME UP WITH AN IDEA TO USE ALUMINUM FOILS TO CREATE A MORE CONDUCTIVE SURFACE FOR FASTER REACTION. PHOTO: SHARON ELANGO



## LOOKING FORWARD:

THOUGH THE TEAM FACED SEVERAL SETBACKS IN THE COURSE OF THE PROGRAMME, THEIR HEADS WERE HELD HIGH AND THEY REMAINED OPTIMISTIC. MANY WERE EXCITED FOR THE NEXT RUN OF THE PROGRAMME, WHERE THEY HOPE TO MAKE A GREATER DIFFERENCE. PHOTO: MARCUS LEONG

## FEATURE

# Being a *lifeline* after getting a second chance to live

BY: NUR KHALISA

*Darrvin Gainesh Naidu is a stage 4 cancer survivor who is an active believer in giving back to the community.*



**ON THE BALL:** Darrvin Gainesh Naidu (left) has always been participating in many projects pertaining to service learning. He recently completed the Temasek Foundation International Scale III 2017. **PHOTO BY NUR KHALISA**

**D**arrvin Gainesh Naidu loves to help others.

The 21-year-old TFI Scholar said: "I can't bear to see people hury because there were times when I was hurting as well."

Darrvin is currently finishing his studies in Republic Polytechnic. He is a Diploma in Environmental Science student and an active member of Republic Polytechnic's Service Learning club. He participated in many projects which fueled up his passion to give back to the community. However, he realised his passion not when he gives back but after experiencing a few setbacks in his life.

### His childhood days

What Darrvin went through was tough. In primary school, he experienced bullying and had frequent visits to the counsellor after developing depression.

Then, Darrvin found out that he was diagnosed with cancer at the age of 14. He was diagnosed with Stage 4 Hodgkin's Lymphoma cancer, a type of blood cancer that starts with the lymphatic system which is part of the immune system. The recovery took almost two years. His view on life changed especially when he had only 50 percent chance of surviving.

"Being bullied you go through depression but when you have cancer you really think about what life is," said Darrvin. He

met many cancer patients who did not survive and thus, feel very grateful for being able to experience life again. Surviving cancer only affirmed his purpose of life which is to be part of social service and help people in any way possible.

### The miles he goes to help people

Republic Polytechnic's Service Learning Club is a platform where Darrvin started being dedicated to serving the community. He participated in various programs like Project Infinity, a project involving special need students. Darrvin was able to lead, emcee and mentor the club members. He started from visiting students with special needs to initiating various projects.

One of the projects initiated was Project CHANGE 2016. Darrvin was the chairperson of the project. His team did a home makeover for a family in need. They painted the house, cleaned the toilet and got rid of a termite infestation.

### What keeps him going

Darrvin's motivation is the people in need. He sincerely wants to help them, respecting each and every single challenge they are facing. Being a friend to someone and helping them go through their fight is a rewarding feeling to Darrvin. He would not give back the life lessons he had learned from going through cancer. That only made his will to fight for these people stronger.

Not only does Darrvin want to help those in need but also everyone else in terms of finding their purpose in life. In his opinion, purpose changes depending on our experiences and what we want.

"There are so many people living without knowing what they want to do in life and then they blame life for not giving them joy. It all starts with us. Decide your own purpose and everything else will fall into place. You will find happiness," said Darrvin.