

On 11 December 2019, 13 students embarked on a 6-day service learning expedition in the lush rainforest of Sumatra. The project titled “Conservation and Development, Finding the Balance”, intended to shed light on the complexities behind the delicate relationship between these seemingly conflicting themes. Through experiential learning and working with forest rangers, students gathered new insights and appreciation for environmental stewardship that intersects with local livelihoods. A total of 218 trees were planted and 329 seedlings were added to the nursery. This expedition was in partnership with IUVA Global.

Post-trip survey showed that students generally developed greater self awareness and greater effectiveness in working with others. They were also given the opportunity to step out of their comfort zones and stretch themselves holistically.



## Seedling Nursery & Tree Planting



1. Rows of tree seedlings, assembled into noodle cups that were collected from households.
2. Students and rangers identifying and selecting tree seedlings for reforestation.
3. A student transplanting a seedling into the forest.
4. Students and rangers setting up spots for seedling transplant in the deforested area.

## Bio-poring



1. Students preparing the content of biopores, which help to compost organic waste and return nutrients to the soil.
2. Students setting up the biopores in the ground.

## Learning Local Wisdom



1. A sharing session with Ari who talked about his experiences on how local knowledge is key in forging new sustainable practices in villages.
2. Learning more about each other's cultures while sketching the forest around us.



Tahura Family Camp

*As a first-timer involved in tree-planting efforts, I gained a new level of appreciation for the rangers and volunteers who dedicate their time to take care of the forest. Their depth of knowledge and understanding of complex environmental issues motivated me to take a step back to examine my own community back here in Singapore. While we may be crowned as the garden city, there is still so much more we can do to preserve and protect what little forestry that we have.*  
Benjamin Png, Year 3

*Coming to the Sumatran forest has challenged my perspectives on sustainability. Seeing the tangible contributions of corporations like Aqua made me realise that they can have mutually beneficial relationships with nature and the community so long as they are committed to being responsible. In addition, the everyday interactions with the rangers helped to gather new insights that I would otherwise would not gain in the classroom.*  
Kong Qi Heng, Year 3

*Building forests with local trees sounds straightforward but during the trip, we heard stories about other tree planting efforts going to waste solely because the trees planted were not adapted to the climate. To be an effective NGO, we must first listen to local wisdom. All of us are capable of care but we need to be informed on how to do so.*  
Nysha Tan, Year 3