



Trekking for Funding

By S Suretheran

Dear Sir/Mdm,

My name is Suretheran and I am a second year medical student from the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (YLLSoM), National University of Singapore.

I am writing this article to appeal for support for a unique initiative to raise funds for charity. The money raised from this initiative will go to **Project Battambang**, an overseas community project that was covered in the March 2012 edition of this magazine (see <http://news.sma.org.sg/4402/DIT.pdf>).

However, in order for this initiative to be realised, we will need all the support we can.

In this initiative, which will be held this May, two of my close friends and I will be attempting to trek to Mount Everest Base Camp with **absolutely no money**. As we trek up the mountain, we will aim to spread awareness about our initiative and beneficiaries, and aim to collect donations along the way from fellow trekkers and climbers. Their donations will enable us to survive each day and continue our climb to the Everest base camp, which is located at an altitude of 5,364 m. Of course, at the end of the day, we will match dollar-for-dollar the amount of money collected to fund our own climb, and pass all the donations to our beneficiary.

This initiative, Trek For Fund, will be risky and difficult, due to the physical demands of trekking at high altitudes and low temperatures with a heavy load, and the need to continuously fund-raise all the way to the top. Nevertheless, we are aware of the fact that the climb has been completed by a good number of normal able-bodied individuals with sufficient amounts of training, and I thus believe that this feat is within our reach. At the same time, we are aware of the dangers and risks that we will be putting ourselves through, and have drawn up the necessary contingency plans. We have also formulated interesting ways of collecting donations both in Singapore and in Nepal (during our trek) to ensure that we can raise a significant amount of funds.

In order for Project Battambang to carry on its medical social work in Cambodia, it needs around \$25,000 each year

to buy medical equipment, drugs, educational materials, and to support the scholarship programme. Of course we know we can't raise that whole amount here but we are aiming to raise a substantial amount – \$5,364. Since the Everest base camp is at an altitude of 5,364 m, we want to soar as high in terms of donations as well! Thus we will really need your support and help in enabling us to attain this goal. There are several ways that you can support us:

1. Be a donor: donate a fixed amount to the beneficiaries of Project Battambang.
2. Be a dollar-for-dollar donor: match every dollar that we raise in Nepal itself. By being a dollar-for-dollar donor, you will incentivise and inspire many more trekkers whom we meet to be forthcoming in their donations.

If you wish to do any of the above, you can do so by emailing our team at med.battambang@gmail.com or contacting me directly at 9760 2560. Our team will be more than happy to meet you to explain more about our initiative. You can also visit our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/trekforfund> to find out more details about this whole initiative. If you are also keen to join the Project Battambang team as a doctor for our annual trip, we certainly would love to meet up with you to discuss further. Please contact our team via the email stated above and we will get back to you directly from there. Thank you so much.

To end off, we appeal to you once more to support this initiative. This initiative was started in the hope of raising money to help the underprivileged in one of the most impoverished regions in the world, and making a difference in their lives. We are thus ready to do whatever it takes to accomplish this initiative. All we need now is a leap of faith on your part, and a helping hand from you to accomplish this initiative that will never take flight without your support. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Suretheran

About Project Battambang

Project Battambang is an overseas community project organised by students from YLLSoM. For the past two years, the team, mentored by Dr Ong Yew Jin, has been going to the district of Poipet, located near the Cambodian province of Battambang and on the Thai-Cambodian border; with the main focus of supplementing local primary healthcare services, and developing effective and sustainable rural healthcare programmes for the community in the long run.

Aside from community health screenings, the team also conducts household surveys shedding light on the needs of the community, and tailored health education programmes seeking to improve the health situation of underprivileged Cambodians. The team also supports the development of village schools and education of needy students in the area.

To ensure long term sustainability, the team works alongside two main local contacts: the Missionary Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and accompanying students from the Phnom Penh International Medical University.

If you are interested in joining or supporting the project, or finding more about it, email Project Battambang at med.battambang@gmail.com or visit our website at <http://www.projectbattambang.com>. 