Project Name: Pathfinder Cambodia Volunteer Service Trip 2016 拓荒高棉: 柬埔寨義工計劃 2016

Pathfinder has long been emphasizing the concept of “Sustainability”. All our 4 projects will be based on the concept of sustainability. In this service trip, we not just built hand washing stations for them to use, we also taught them the importance of washing hands frequently. We believe that both “hardware” coupling with “software” will be the most essential way in changing the mindset of Cambodian. Providing hardware without educating the community will be less effective in changing the quality of life of Cambodians, so that our construction team and health education team are of vital importance.

Helping people in need is definitely one of the objectives of Pathfinder. Gaining hands on experiences during the service trip is also very important. Committee members and volunteers not only can gain experiences in communicating and organizing activities with overseas parties, but also facilitate self learning among ourselves. Different technical designs, construction methods and programming have not been taught in school, so that we will have to find solution by ourselves and seek advices from professors in order to make our project successful. Researching and self learning are also very essential in conducting our projects.

The purpose of our service trip in June 2016 is to build 4 numbers of hand washing stations to the local high school in Prey Veng Province. Additional piping network, fixation of water filters and renovation of existing toilets are also included in our service projects. The aim of constructing these hand washing stations was to help students develop a habit of washing hands. Due to a lack of hand washing stations, the students did not wash their hands before we came there. Therefore, we decided to cooperate with the high school and aimed at raising students’ awareness on health issues. For construction team, we constructed the hand washing stations as mentioned, so we could provide the hardware for students to wash their hands. On the other hand, health education team educate the students the importance of washing hands. Therefore, they would know the reasons of washing hands and would make use of the four hand washing stations constructed after our service trip.

Our ultimate goal is to promote the importance of hand washing to the entire school with over 2000 students and significantly reduce the health related diseases. We have taught the teachers and staffs how to maintain the hand washing stations and water filter in the long run. This can ensure the sustainability of our project in which they can have the capability in fixing the hand washing stations and water filter themselves.

As I am the vice president of the organization, I am responsible for different administrative stuff in operating the organization and organizing the summer service trip this time. Recruitment of volunteers were conducted to raise more attention to local students in helping the people in need outside Hong Kong. Applying varies funding before the trip in making our project financially feasible is part of my
responsibility. We have seek funding through HKU, companies and other private sectors. The material cost is mainly donated by these parties. Besides, contacting the local high school and supporting parties via email are very important in obtaining useful information for our service projects and ensuring the smooth construction during our service trip. Updated information have to be given to the local parties to facilitate the partnership in between. After the service trip we have to conduct evaluation for the last cooperation and summarising what we have achieved in the trip.

On the other hand, I am also acting as the project coordinator of the construction team. Division of labour is an effective way in utilizing the advantages of different committee members throughout the preparation period. It requires the technical design of the project in building hand washing stations and water filters. Calculation of related construction materials and design of the hand washing stations have to be done before the trip and discuss with the high school in advance. Arrangement of accommodation, flight plan, transportation and translators have been a very difficult tasks that I have to overcome.

To conclude, after 3 weeks of service project and previous trips last year, I have the determination in further helping the people who are lacking of the basic needs of life. It is a priceless experience after all and has motivated me to keep on contributing to the society.