

GROUND Unveils New Community Travel Programs in Asia for University and School Students



Based in the program countries, GROUND staff ensure that long-term partnerships with host communities are at the heart of all student group activities

New community programs in Asia for students at international schools and universities have been introduced by GROUND in Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Indonesia.

Faculty and school administrators can now choose from a selection of GROUND 'journeys' that have been developed with the objective of transforming student lives through positive experiences in different cultures across Southeast Asia. The experiences contribute to the sustainable development of the host communities.

Participating schools and universities receive regular updates back from the community after the trip. This gives the potential to build a long-lasting relationship with local people and base curriculum studies around real-life issues.

Nine new programs have been added, giving 27 in total. The programs are tailored to the needs of each school or university. Typical middle and high school programs run four to five days. University programs can be customized as placement programs for up to a month.

"Our new GROUND journeys have been developed with the objective of opening the eyes of young travellers through positive engagement in Southeast Asia," says GROUND general manager Lauren Groves, who is based in Bangkok.

"Leadership building, resiliency, and cross-cultural connections are the foundation of what we do. The programs are ideal for schools and universities. But we always listen carefully to community needs first," she says.

Now in its 4th year of operations, GROUND has four directors in each country. They know the destinations intimately and are involved with each program from inception to delivery. The new range of programs include coastal ecosystem restoration in Thailand, healthcare and physiotherapy placement in Vietnam, a clean water program in Laos, corporate social responsibility programs in Cambodia and Thailand, wildlife conservation and coral reef restoration in Bali, and cultural high school tours in Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam.

As an example, students studying healthcare find out that Thailand has gone through dramatic demographic and epidemiological transitions. The country has evolved from a society characterized by high fertility and mortality to one defined by low fertility and mortality.

In Vietnam it's a different story. Many of the rural population still has no access to clean water. Students learn that this is a deficiency that facilitates the spread of malaria, dengue fever, typhoid, and cholera.

In Cambodia, one of the new programs involves home building in the Isanborei village community, playing sports with local children, teaching English and staying in a homestay with a local family. The journey includes a house warming ceremony and an appreciation of the area's 7th century Khmer ruins.

In Bali, high school students find out about the island's rich culture. Hands-on activities include turning trash into 'ecobricks,' releasing turtles to the sea, and planting mangrove trees.

"With GROUND, tutors and administrators deal directly with the staff who run the programs," says Groves. "Everything can therefore be customised to fit educational objectives."

Further information on all community travel options for university and high school students is available at GROUNDAsia.com.

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ABOUT GROUND

GROUND partners with communities across Asia to assist in their sustainable development. The communities we work with are our clients. To meet their expectations, we empower them through mutually beneficial programs to ensure their development needs come first. Visit GROUNDAsia.com

ADDRESS

GROUND

33/2 Tiwanon Soi 28, Bangkasor

Nonthaburi 11000 Thailand

Email: contact@groundasia.com

Tel: +66 [0] 2 591 5420

MEDIA QUERIES

Ken Scott

ScottAsia Communications

Email: kens@scottasia.net

Mobile: (+44) [0] 7949 077959

Anchalee Sriwongsa

ScottAsia Communications

Tel: (+66) 91 806 0484

Email: ann@scottasia.net