



Project DOVE 2015 was made possible through the help and generosity of our sponsors and supporters. The project was primarily funded through donations by Vox Cordis Chorus, Lee Foundation, SingHealth, Narambi Café, NUS Faculty of Dentistry, Health Promotion Board, Aeras Medical Pte Ltd, and the many donors who contributed to our online campaign and donation jar.

For more information on Project DOVE, visit our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/projectdovedukenus>

SMA and the SMA Charity Fund support volunteerism among our profession. SMA News provides charitable organisations with complimentary space to publicise their causes. To find out more, email [news@sma.org.sg](mailto:news@sma.org.sg). Visit the SMA Cares webpage at <https://www.sma.org.sg/smacares>

# SERVICE BEYOND SINGAPORE'S SHORES

Every year, teams of young medical students from Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School (Duke-NUS) are charged by their seniors and faculty to think beyond their books and examination, to roll up their sleeves and serve underprivileged communities within and beyond the republic's shores. Project DOVE is one of many opportunities provided by Duke-NUS to combine the curriculum with real-world experiences, thereby helping students develop and nurture their leadership and clinical skills.

What started out as "Project Karen" in 2010 has morphed into the more encompassing Project DOVE in recent years; DOVE stands for the Duke-NUS Overseas Volunteering Expedition. Duke-NUS student teams have successfully undertaken five annual projects serving the Karen Tribe in Chiang Mai, Thailand and Long Hai town in Ba Ria-Vung province,

Vietnam. Despite the name change, the mission of improving lives in under-served communities beyond Singapore, through sustainable medical care and health education, remains unwavering.

This year, the Project DOVE team has expanded its focus to serve Kampong Speu in Cambodia. The 2015 mission provided free annual mobile clinics to address common ailments, expanded health education to local schools, as well as established partnership with One-2-One Cambodia, a local non-governmental organisation, to ensure the delivery of sustainable and beneficial medical services to the community.

A Project DOVE team typically comprises Duke-NUS student volunteers and experienced physicians. This year, the organising committee of Project DOVE 2015





was formed by a dedicated group of eight students, who worked tirelessly to make the mission a success. In addition, 12 MS1 and MS3 student volunteers assisted in executing the project under the supervision of four faculty members.

Building upon the past experiences of seniors and the clinical faculty has been instrumental in the success of Project DOVE. These invaluable lessons enabled us to better handle cross-cultural health practices and ensured that our approach to improving overall health in these communities is sustainable. Similar to previous trips, this year's project adopted a two-pronged approach – providing mobile clinics and health education to target communities. The mobile clinics served as a platform to provide health screening, address health concerns and provide advice on management of one's health. The educational activities helped to teach village children about personal hygiene and care while training adults about basic first aid and healthy daily living.

For Project DOVE 2015, the three-day clinics were a flurry of activities – from triage and health screenings to history taking, physical examinations and case presentations to the supervising faculty. During the clinics, we discovered that most patients had been living with their medical ailments for years and had not sought help due to fear of incurring high costs. We were glad to address their longstanding health concerns and fears during the clinics.

Treasurer and secretary for Project DOVE 2015, MS1 student Tan Yu Bin says: "It was certainly humbling to see the stark contrast between their

difficulties in accessing healthcare services and our ease in obtaining affordable medical care. Also, so many diseases are easily treatable in Singapore but in developing countries, they can become life-threatening. This experience has given me the desire to do more for these people. It was truly a privilege to have been able to serve and help 450 patients during those three days."

Our mission to serve culminated with health education sessions for the children and adults. Some 470 children learned simple yet important personal health tips like de-licing, deworming, nail clipping, hand washing and dental hygiene, all conducted on the grounds of the village school. Meanwhile, six local teachers received basic first aid training, which they would eventually impart to teachers from schools in the vicinity. As we believe that education gives the people of Kampong Speu a sense of ownership and self-reliance, key ingredients of sustainability, we plan to further expand the project to reach even more patients. Due to the dental and hygiene issues in Cambodia, we will also be considering a water filtration system and collaborations to expand our dental health programme. In short, effective sustainability is our goal for Project DOVE.

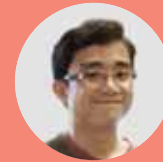
Medicine is both an art and science. Certainly, every member of the Project DOVE 2015 team was reminded of the challenges and achievements faced in medical service. For some Duke-NUS students, the trip also served to reignite their passion for medicine. Lim Mei Xing, a MS1 student who had volunteered in Tanzania, commented, "Participating in Project DOVE has renewed my passion to help the less

fortunate and reminded me of my motivation to pursue medicine."

With fresh perspectives and renewed interests in providing healthcare to the underprivileged, we strive to use the lessons learnt from Project DOVE 2015 as building blocks to expand our service to the people of Kampong Speu.

Personally, I am thankful to have been part of a great team serving the underprivileged beyond our shores. I look forward to the opportunity to help expand Project DOVE in future years. ♦

## PROFILE



TEXT AND  
PHOTOS BY

### GOH KIAN LEONG

Kian Leong is a first year medical student at Duke-NUS. He loves photography and always aims to lower his caffeine intake. Besides that, he loves the great outdoors and finds it hard to turn down an opportunity to go on hiking trips.

#### Legend

1. Focus and attention to detail – that's the way to de-lice effectively.
2. Kenneth Chin, MS3, teaching the children the seven steps of handwashing, alongside translator and medical student Sreymin Huon
3. Students work in pairs at each consultation station to complement one another's clinical impression. Nur Atiqah Binte Adam and Sandra Lynn Jaya, MS1s, examining the oral cavity of a villager.