



OUTWARD BOUND
VIETNAM

NEWSLETTER



Q2 2024 - 8TH EDITION

Foreword



Dear Colleagues, Partners, and Friends,

I am excited to share with you our key initiatives at Outward Bound Vietnam (OBV) for the second quarter of 2024!

Our outdoor adventure programmes continue to flourish, highlighted by our collaboration with United World College (UWC) for their summer course at our Binh Dinh basecamp. Read about their adventure experiences with OBV in this newsletter!

We witnessed leadership transitions at OBV's Governing Council (GC) and our Risk Management Committee (RMC) in June this year. Professor John Rickard has retired from his role as the Chair of our GC. I thank John for his guidance to OBV since 2015 and wish him a happy retirement! Ms. Debi Howarth has been appointed as OBV's new GC Chair. We also welcomed Dr. Clare Dallat as our new Chair of OBV's RMC. Hear more from them in this edition of our newsletter!

A key highlight in the last quarter was organizing a 3-day in-person GC meeting and strategic planning sessions in Vietnam. This provided an excellent opportunity for our Patrons, GC members and my senior management team to network, discuss issues and chart OBV's strategic priorities for the next 4 years. Our GC members are volunteer leaders who are experts from various fields from around the globe and I thank them for making the trip to Vietnam to share their expertise. Speaking of overseas visitors, I had the pleasure of hosting senior officials from the Ministry of Education of Singapore in May to explore staff collaboration opportunities with OBV; we are working towards piloting an overseas staff attachment programme.

Our emphasis on staff training showed no signs of abating as our instructional staff continued to deepen their expertise and skills to remain competent in the outdoors. 2 of our instructors completed a demanding 21-day programme at Outward Bound Singapore, which stretched them to their limits! We conducted a Kayaking Ground Deployment Exercise (GDX) to test our emergency response and rescue systems at OBV. All staff also undertook an Open-water Rescue course to build up their water and rescue capabilities. We are proud to have piloted our first Instructor Selection Programme (ISP) at OBV to select a new batch of instructor trainees. I am also excited to introduce our new Senior Manager of Safety and Risk Management at OBV – find out who he is and read about his impressive background! Finally, we are saying farewell to our three interns from Republic Polytechnic after their exciting 5-month internship with OBV.

It has been a fast-paced and breathless quarter! I hope you enjoy reading the second edition of our newsletter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elamaaran Balakrishnan'.

Elamaaran Balakrishnan
Executive Director

Governance

Appointment of new OBV Governing Council Chair

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Ms. Debi Howarth as the new Chair of the OBV Governing Council. Currently Head of Academic Success at Torrens University and Vice President of the Association for Academic Language and Learning (AALL), Australia, Ms. Howarth also brings valuable experience from her previous role as OBV's Risk Management Committee Chair. Please join us in welcoming Ms. Debi Howarth!



"Outward Bound Vietnam is my passion! I was part of the original thinking to establish OBV and I remain deeply committed to its growth and purpose. For several years, I chaired the OBV Risk Management Committee; a tremendous opportunity to interact with risk experts and committee members who carefully reviewed risk strategy as required. I have also been Deputy Chair of the Governing Council for many years.

In June 2024, I was honoured to be appointed Chair, OBV Governing Council. I am grateful to the OBV Patrons for this leadership opportunity and hope to continue the excellent and incisive work undertaken by the former Chair, Emeritus Professor John Rickard. John was instrumental in creating an atmosphere of collaboration across the Council, and within OBV itself, through his thoughtful leadership.

Outward Bound's value as an experiential learning mechanism to support personal growth, to transform thinking, and to build an individual's resilience remains as true now as it did in Kurt Hanh's day. If learning, growth, transformational thinking, and building resilience are the expectations we hold for OBV participants then I propose that my leadership of the OBV Governing Council should rest in supporting Council members' efforts to 'learn', through individual and shared experiences, and to develop a Council that is, in fact, transformative."

Ms. Debi Howarth

Chair, Outward Bound Vietnam Governing Council

Appointment of new OBV Risk Management Committee Chair

We are excited to announce the appointment of Dr. Clare Dallat as the new Chair of Outward Bound Vietnam (OBV) Risk Management Committee. Dr. Dallat brings a wealth of experience as a risk specialist and a deep commitment to enhancing our safety and risk management. As she steps into this role, Dr. Dallat shared, *"Great programme outcomes rely on so many factors - highly skilled staff, adequate resources, the ability to continuously adapt, and effective risk and safety governance, are just a few. It is an honour to support the team at OBV continue its great work through chairing the Risk Management Committee. Since joining the Committee, I have been so impressed with the level of focus, curiosity and commitment of every single staff member at OBV to openly and genuinely welcome opportunities to analyse and improve their practice."*



Dr. Clare Dallat

**Chair, Outward Bound Vietnam
Risk Management Committee**

Governance

Governing Council in-person Meeting & Strategic planning in Binh Dinh, Vietnam

From 26 – 28 June, we were honoured to host our Governing Council and Patrons, Mr. Ricky Tan and Mr. Stefan Tan, in Binh Dinh, Vietnam. This instrumental gathering brought together our volunteer leaders and professionals from various countries and industries to shape OBV's strategic directions. During their visit, the Governing Council also engaged with operations at our Binh Dinh basecamp and interacted with our dedicated staff. Mr. Nicholas Conceicao, Executive Director of Outward Bound Singapore, and member of OBV's Governing Council shared: *"The gathering was both valuable and opportune for us to connect personally and meet the enthusiastic and dedicated OBV team who have been diligently building their capabilities. My personal thanks to the Patrons and the OBV team for their warm hospitality in enabling this important gathering to take place."* We extend our gratitude to the Governing Council members and our Patrons for their invaluable insights and steadfast support.



OBV Patrons, Governing Council and Executive Director during the visit to OBV Binh Dinh basecamp



OBV Governing Council @ the Strategic Planning session



OBV Patrons, Governing Council and staff at OBV Binh Dinh basecamp

Engagements

Ministry of Education (Singapore) visited Outward Bound Vietnam @ Binh Dinh

From 29 to 31 May, OBV hosted Mrs. Eugenia Lim and Mr. Krishnan Arivinthan, senior officials from the Ministry of Education (MOE) Singapore. The visit enabled them to better understand OBV's programs, operations, and appreciate the outdoor terrain in Vietnam, and to explore potential collaboration areas with relation to program attachments and staff training opportunities for MOE's Outdoor Adventure Learning Centers (OALC) trainers at OBV. The MOE officials also met with OBV's instructional staff, interns from Singapore's Republic Polytechnic, and beneficiaries from the Nga Foundation. These engagements provided us valuable networking experiences and deeper insights into outdoor programs and service-learning opportunities at OBV.



Mrs. Eugenia Lim - Divisional Director (Student Development Curriculum Division 2) presenting a commemorative gift to Mr. B. Elamaaran – OBV Executive Director



OBV Executive Director and Director with MOE senior officials and Republic Polytechnic interns in Binh Dinh

Quy Nhon University Job Fair 2024

On 18 May, OBV participated in the Quy Nhon University Job Fair as the sole outdoor education representative. At the event, we showcased the unique aspects of outdoor experiential learning in our programmes and the rewarding career paths available at OBV. The event allowed us to connect with many enthusiastic and adventurous graduates and students, offering them a chance to turn their love for the outdoors into a fulfilling career with OBV. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Quy Nhon University for the opportunity to be part of this meaningful event and for our ongoing partnership.



OBV team showcasing the exciting career opportunities to the students of Quy Nhon University at the Job Fair

Engagements

OBV Scholarships for Cat Hai Secondary School, Binh Dinh



Mr. Stefan Tan (OBV Patron) awarding 50 scholarships for Cat Hai Secondary School, Binh Dinh in June 2024

In June 2024, OBV Patron – Mr. Stefan Tan awarded 50 OBV scholarships to students at Cat Hai Secondary School in Binh Dinh! Cat Hai Secondary School has been a valued partner of OBV and we are proud to contribute to the educational journeys of the students and strengthen our partnership with the school. This initiative also reflects OBV's commitment to advancing learning and development in local communities as well as reinforcing our corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives aimed at fostering education and supporting growth in these areas.

The 59th National Day of Singapore – “Together as One United People!” by Singapore Chamber of Commerce Vietnam

In honor of Singapore's 59th National Day, celebrated with the theme "Together as One United People!", Mr. B. Elamaaran – OBV Executive Director, Ms. Nguyen Huong Lan – OBV Director & Mr. Nguyen Tung Linh – OBV Deputy Director actively participated in two significant events: the Singapore Chamber of Commerce Vietnam's celebration on August 9 and the Singapore 59th National Day Reception organized by the Singapore Embassy in Vietnam on August 14. Our focus, as always, is on raising awareness about OBV and showcasing our diverse range of programmes, with emphasis on our corporate offerings at such networking sessions. We look forward to continuing our active involvement in such vibrant business communities.



OBV Executive Director, Director & Deputy Director @ the Singapore Chamber of Commerce Vietnam's 59th National Day of Singapore event on 9 August



OBV Executive Director, Director & Deputy Director @ Singapore's 59th National Day Reception organized by the Singapore embassy in Vietnam on 14 August



OBV Executive Director, with His Excellency Mr. Jaya Ratnam - Singapore Ambassador to Vietnam and Mr. Ricky Tan - OBV Patron @ Singapore's 59th National Day Reception organized by the Singapore embassy in Vietnam on 14 August

Programmes

Apart from serving students from KinderWorld International Group of schools, which has been our strategic client since OBV's early years, in these recent months, OBV has also welcomed clients from other local and international schools to our beautiful basecamps in Quy Nhon and Ha Long.

Hoi An International School (HAIS)

From 10 – 14 May, OBV welcomed Grade 10 and 11 students from Hoi An International School to our Binh Dinh basecamp. This was their first experience with our unique life skills education course, with engaging activities like team initiatives, hiking, sea kayaking, raft building and low rope challenges. These activities helped students enhance their emotional intelligence, communication skills, leadership traits, while also broadening their awareness of community, societal, and environmental issues. At OBV, we are committed to providing impactful learning experiences that extend beyond the classroom and help students effectively translate their newly acquired knowledge into everyday life.



Students of Hoi An International School participating in Team Initiatives activities to boost team spirit and trust @ OBV Binh Dinh



Certificate Awarding Ceremony for students of Hoi An International School @ OBV Binh Dinh

Programmes

Delta Global School (DGS)

From 27 – 28 May, OBV welcomed 50 students from Delta Global School (DGS) for an exciting 2-day programme focused on enhancing communication skills. Students tackled thought-provoking team and individual challenges such as raft building, caving, low rope courses and other team initiatives. Each activity was designed to promote collaboration and encourage students to explore their own strengths and weaknesses for personal growth. The programme effectively fostered teamwork and provided invaluable experiences that will support the students' development both in and out of the classroom.



Delta Global School students experiencing basket weaving in Hung Hoc village @ OBV Ha Long

“Swing for the Kids” Scholarship Programme



Students of Cat Hai Secondary School during the “Swing for the Kids” Scholarship Programme @ OBV Binh Dinh

Every year, OBV collaborates with Vietnam Investment Review (VIR) for the “Swing for the Kids” charity golf tournament, which aims to raise funds to support students with challenging circumstances. This year, as part of this initiative, OBV’s full scholarships were awarded to the students of Cat Hai Secondary School, Binh Dinh. From 25 – 28 June, these students attended the OBV programme at our Binh Dinh basecamp, where they engaged in experiential activities like hiking, raft building, and indoor wall climbing. This initiative not only provided the students valuable learning opportunities and personal growth but also demonstrated OBV’s dedication to supporting and nurturing the community.

Programmes

United World College Vietnam (UWC) – OBV Summer Camp

From 7 – 17 July, OBV collaborated with United World College in Vietnam (UWC) to host the UWC Short Course: Doing Good at our basecamp in Binh Dinh. This is a dynamic 10-day adventure designed to challenge limits and foster a dedication to doing "Good Work". During their time with OBV, students experienced thrilling days packed with engaging activities such as team initiatives, hiking, and community mapping. We believe OBV's experiential approach added significant value to the programme, offering students exciting opportunities to explore and contribute meaningfully to the world. Through this collaboration, we aim to further enrich students' learning experiences and look forward to creating impactful opportunities together.



Students of UWC Short Course: Doing Good enjoying the two exhilarant days at OBV Binh Dinh where they engaged in team initiatives, hiking, yoga and so much more!

Staffing

Interns from Republic Polytechnic (Singapore)

In our May newsletter, we introduced three talented interns from Republic Polytechnic (Singapore)'s Diploma in Outdoor and Adventure Learning programme who joined us at our OBV Binh Dinh basecamp for a 5-month internship. From March to August 2024, they supported with programmes' participants, managed daily administration, camp operations, worked on environmental education initiatives and assisted lead instructors in the field. Looking back, they shared they loved the vibrant work environment and supportive team at OBV, which helped them grow professionally and make great connections. We extend our heartfelt thanks to our interns for their contributions and wish them all the best in their future endeavors!



Interns from Republic Polytechnic during OBV's internal trainings on Kayaking and Rock climbing



*Interns from Republic Polytechnic (from left to right):
Then Chee Tien, Nur'Atifah Aminah Binte Ahmad and
Gerald Tan Wei Hong*

"Our 5-month internship at OBV was truly transformative. We gained hands-on experience in developing and delivering outdoor programmes for diverse participants. The dynamic work setting and supportive team at OBV also enhanced our professional growth. Thank you to OBV for this valuable experience"

Staffing

New Senior Manager (Safety & Risk Management) – Mr. Robert James



Mr. Robert James
Senior Manager
(Safety & Risk Management)

We are excited to welcome Mr. Robert James as our new Senior Manager (Safety & Risk Management), who joined us on 19 June. With 25 years of Outward Bound experience and a distinguished career at Outward Bound Malaysia, where he served as Deputy Director, Mr. Robert James brings extensive expertise in base operations, training, safety, and programme development. He has also contributed globally as a member of the Asian Outward Bound International Safety and Programme Quality Review Team. As he shared: *“My goal is to develop impactful safety materials and data that will instill a robust safety ethos and culture within OBV”.*

We believe his impressive background will be invaluable to strengthening our team and advancing OBV's quest for setting high safety standards at our workplace!

Instructor Selection Programme (ISP)

In August, OBV successfully launched our inaugural Instructor Selection Programme (ISP) to select a new batch of Instructor Trainees in our Binh Dinh basecamp. This included interviews and a 48-hour field assessment to evaluate candidates' physical and mental fitness as well as leadership skills and the ability to work with young people in challenging outdoor settings. The ISP also provided our candidates an opportunity to explore their own strengths and passion for the role of OBV's Instructor. Truong Minh Ban, an ISP candidate, shared: *“Participating in the ISP gave me a better understanding of OBV and allowed me to experience as an instructor for two days. The activities definitely enhanced my leadership, communication, and team-work skills. Despite the challenging obstacles, completing the ISP was exhilarating and helped me push my limits and discover my strengths.”*

Thank you to all the candidates for participating and we look forward to welcoming them to the OBV family!



Candidates engaging in field-assessment activities at OBV Binh Dinh and receiving Certificate of Completion for the Instructor Selection Programme (ISP)

Training

Outward Bound Singapore (OBS) 21-day training

Two OBV staff, Le Trong Hoai & Dong Thi The Quyen, were among the selected participants to be part of the 21-Day Classic Challenge Course at Outward Bound Singapore (OBS) in May this year. This challenging programme allowed our instructors to experience a wide range of expeditionary learning which included hiking, sea kayaking, and sailing. The course also served as a platform for exchanging knowledge, skills and cultural viewpoints among Outward Bound Instructors from various regions in Asia including Singapore, Vietnam, Hubei, Korea, Japan and India. We extend our gratitude to OBS for conducting this program that develops Outward Bound instructors to excel in the outdoors.



Le Trong Hoai & Dong Thi The Quyen of OBV attending OBS's 21-Day Classic Challenge Course, May 2024

Binh Dinh

We are excited to share with you some updates on our recent staff training initiatives in OBV Binh Dinh that took place from May to July. These intensive sessions focused on sharpening our instructors' technical skills in kayaking, outdoor rock climbing, outdoor abseiling, and indoor wall climbing. Our goal was twofold: to refresh the skills of our experienced instructors and to elevate the skills of our new generation of instructors. We are also proud to update that our instructors at both basecamps achieved the Open Water Rescue certification. This certification is a crucial requirement for leading water-based activities at OBV. It ensures that our team is well prepared with the necessary knowledge and skills to handle water-based challenges and uphold the highest safety standards for our participants. We are confident that these advancements in training and certification will enhance the overall quality of our programmes, delivering exceptional and safe Outward Bound experiences for our participants.



Tyrolean Traverse and Rock Climbing Trainings @ OBV Binh Dinh

Training



Open-Water Rescue Training @ OBV Binh Dinh



Open-Water Rescue Training @ OBV Ha Long

Ha Long

With growing interest in water-based activities, the OBV Ha Long team has ramped up its training efforts. Staff participated in kayaking sessions to enhance their skills and familiarize themselves with Sit-On-Top and Sea kayaks. Senior instructors were assessed on group management and site-specific risks. An intensive 3-day training at our kayaking site culminated in a Ground Deployment Exercise (GDX), which focused on evaluating staff competency and emergency management evacuations in managing a mass kayak capsized scenario. The GDX was a major operational exercise following a Table-Top Exercise (TTX) earlier in the year led by our Executive Director and the Operations team at Ha Long. Such ground exercises ensure our risk and crisis management plans are up to date and validated, safety policies are fine-tuned, and our operations team are highly trained to deal with emergency situations - highlighting OBV's commitment in offering safe and impactful programmes in Vietnam.

Training



Kayaking Trainings @ OBV Ha Long in April



Ground Deployment Exercise (GDX) @ OBV Ha Long in May

Facilitation and team initiative skills are highly valued in instructors. By mastering facilitation methods and strategies, staff can enhance programme activities and apply their knowledge to real-life scenarios. Staff-led training and sharing contribute to overall capability development and inspire the creation of new activities, reinforcing OBV's position as a leader in experiential learning in Vietnam.



Trainings for Facilitation and Team Initiative@ OBV Ha Long



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Contact us for more information!



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