



OUTWARD BOUND  
VIETNAM

# NEWSLETTER



DEC 2024 - 9TH EDITION



# Foreword

## DEAR COLLEAGUES, PARTNERS, AND FRIENDS,

As Outward Bound Vietnam (OBV) looks back on a year marked by growth and meaningful experiences, it is inspiring to see how far we have come together. Your trust, collaboration, and dedication to OBV's mission have empowered us to create life-changing adventures for all who ventured into the great outdoors with us this year.



Typhoon Yagi landed in Vietnam in September this year in North-Eastern Vietnam, and that affected our operations. Our base at OBV's Ha Long sustained damages, but thankfully all our staff were safe. Post-typhoon, I am glad to report that most of the damages have been fixed and OBV Ha Long has re-opened from November. We are thankful for all the encouraging messages we received from our patrons', board members, clients and the Outward Bound community during those challenging times.

On a more positive note, in this Year of the Dragon, OBV has welcomed about 1800 participants from various schools and institutions. Every outdoor programme we conduct here in Vietnam is a testament to our passion, professionalism and belief in our ability to impart character-building values through individual, group and team development for youths and corporates. From fostering resilience and compassion to deepening environmental stewardship, our participants' journeys have reaffirmed our core values: commitment, compassion, integrity, innovation and excellence. Many have shared that they leave our programmes with greater confidence, a strengthened commitment to environmental sustainability, and a deeper appreciation for teamwork as well as open communication. The positive feedback from participants, partners, and school leaders reminds us of the powerful, enduring impact of our programmes.

Looking ahead to 2025 and beyond, we are poised for another exciting chapter of growth. However, as they say, the future is for another day. For now, let me again give a huge thanks to you all. It just remains for me – on behalf of my team at OBV to send you our best wishes for the festive season and good health and fortune in the year ahead!

Warmest regards!

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

Elamaaran Balakrishnan  
Executive Director

# Governance

## ● NEW MEMBERS IN OBV'S RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

In the last quarter of 2024, OBV welcomed two exceptional professionals to join our Risk Management Committee: Dr. Nguyen Hong Truong and Ms. Virginia (Ginny) Mitchell! Dr. Truong, an experienced emergency medical specialist, and Ms. Mitchell, a seasoned expert in outdoor education and risk management, bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the Committee. Together, they will play a key role in enhancing OBV's ongoing commitment to safety and risk management for our programmes. Join us to extend a warm welcome to Dr. Truong and Ms. Mitchell!



*Dr. Truong*

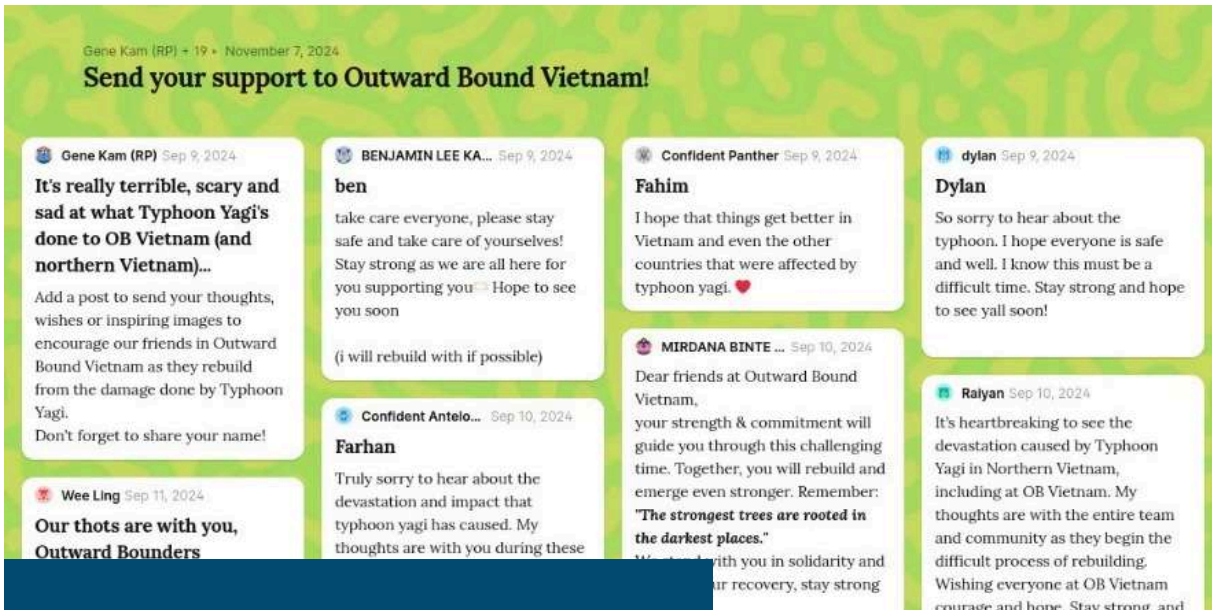


*Ms. Mitchell*



*Dr. Truong's visit to OBV Binh Dinh base*

# Appreciation



## TYPHOON YAGI

In September 2024, Typhoon Yagi made its way across the northern region of Vietnam, causing significant disruption in several areas, including OBV Ha Long. The typhoon brought heavy rains and strong winds, temporarily halting activities at our Ha Long base. Thankfully, our staff were safe, though the typhoon caused some damage to our property that required immediate attention. Nonetheless, we are pleased to announce that OBV Ha Long is now fully operational. Despite the temporary setback due to the typhoon, we have strengthened our operations to better prepare for future challenges and are excited to continue welcoming participants to OBV Ha Long!

## ● THANK YOU FOR YOUR WELL WISHES!

Following the damage caused by Typhoon Yagi, which led to the temporary closure of our Ha Long base for repairs, we are deeply grateful for the outpouring of support from our partners. A special thank you goes to Outward Bound International (OBI), Outward Bound Singapore (OBS), Republic Polytechnic (RP), and the Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS) for their encouragement and solidarity with us during challenging times. Thank you everyone for your words of encouragement—we truly appreciate your support!





# Engagements



*\*\*About 70 international delegates gathered at the Symposium.*

## ● OUTWARD BOUND REGIONAL STAFF SYMPOSIUM 2024 IN ROMANIA

Ms. Nguyen Huong Lan – OBV Director and Mr. Nguyen Tung Linh – OBV Deputy Director, attended the Outward Bound (OB) Regional Staff Symposium 2024 in Romania from November 12 – 17. Centered on the theme "Nature Bound," the event brought together 70 participants from 17 OB schools to share best practices, new initiatives, and discuss key topics like risk management, governance, and sustainability.

The Symposium also provided opportunities to connect with OB schools in Europe, gaining insights into their operations, staffing, activities and programme philosophies. Inspired by global perspectives, OBV is excited to implement new initiatives that will enhance our impact in Vietnam!



*OBV delegates in hiking expedition to Gurghiuului Moutain, Sovata, Romania, as part of the Pre-Symposium activity*

*Ms. Nguyen Huong Lan – OBV Director and Mr. Iain Peter – OBI Executive Director at the Symposium*

A highlight was the strategic updates on Outward Bound International's (OBI) Templeton Research Project, which explores how the OB model is adapted across different countries and cultures—a project that OBV has proudly participated in since last January. The insights gained from this project are already helping to shape our work and approach to design more impactful outdoor programmes.



# Engagements

## ● THE ASIAN SCHOOLS INSTITUTE FOR SAFETY AND SECURITY 2024 CONFERENCE IN HANOI

Mr. B. Elamaaran – OBV Executive Director, and Ms. Nguyen Huong Lan – OBV Director, attended the Asian Schools Institute for Safety and Security (ASISS) 2024 Conference in Hanoi from November 21 – 22. The two-day conference offered an excellent opportunity for learning, networking and exchanging best practices on safety, health, and security management in educational institutions. For OBV, it provided useful insights for us to further strengthen our approach to understanding risk management and safety protocols, especially from the perspective of schools.



*About 60 delegates from schools and organisations attended the two-day ASISS Conference*

## ● SINGAPORE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL HA LONG'S EARTH DAY

On November 28, OBV Ha Long team supported the Earth Day event at Singapore International School (SIS) Ha Long for their Kindergarten students. The theme "A Day at the Beach" included activities like Passing the Ball, Musical Rings, and Freeze Dance. OBV set up a day camping experience by the beach where students enjoyed time in tents, built sandcastles, and participated in team games. The event was a delightful success, celebrating nature and outdoor exploration!



*The students had an amazing time with the camping experience organised by OBV*

# Engagements

- CONNECTING WITH BUSINESS COMMUNITIES: STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS**

OBV participated in a series of networking events hosted by key Chambers of Commerce in Vietnam, including the American and Italian Chambers. These events provided opportunities to engage with local and international corporate representatives, showcasing our diverse programs with a focus on corporate offerings. Our goal is to build strong partnerships with corporate clients, fostering collaboration and mutual growth. We look forward to continuing our involvement in these vibrant business communities and exploring new partnership opportunities with corporations and businesses in Vietnam.



*Ms. Huong Lan – OBV Director @ the American Chamber of Commerce in Hanoi Annual Meeting & Dinner on December 4*



*Mr. B. Elamaan – OBV Executive Director @ the Italian Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam Networking Event – Meet & Greet on October 16*



# Key Programmes

Apart from serving the local and international schools based in Vietnam over the years, OBV has also welcomed overseas clients from educational institutions to our beautiful basecamps in Binh Dinh and Ha Long this quarter.

## ● TEMASEK POLYTECHNIC

OBV and OBS celebrated a significant milestone with our first-ever joint overseas youth programme conducted by instructors from both schools! From October 6 – 13, students from Temasek Polytechnic, Singapore, embarked on an adventurous journey in Binh Dinh, Vietnam.

Over these eight days, participants delved into adventure and growth, hiking scenic trails, conquering abseiling challenges, mastering essential campcraft, tackling rock hikes, and navigating peaceful waters by kayak. Each day was capped with reflections and reviews, deepening their insight. This carefully designed programme strengthened the students' leadership abilities, boosted their planning and teamwork skills, and deepened their commitment to community and environmental sustainability. OBS's Director of Operations – Mr. Ng Thian Choon also spent some time in the field to observe this pilot program. We are excited about this milestone and look forward to many more joint programmes with OBS in the future.



*Temasek Polytechnic's students kicked off their hiking expedition amidst the stunning mountainous landscapes of Binh Dinh, Vietnam*



*Certification Ceremony for students of Temasek Polytechnic @ OBV Binh Dinh basecamp*

## ● SPORTCARES SINGAPORE

OBV was delighted to welcome SportCares Singapore to our Ha Long base camp from November 25 – December 2. Over these eight transformative days, participants embraced the spirit of resilience, leadership, and teamwork through activities like abseiling, hiking, kayaking, cave exploration, and an adventure quest in the city. The outdoor adventure education programme built trust and bonded them as a team. Participants shared how they were able to overcome their fears and insecurities in life through this adventure experience. Additionally, the camp brought them closer to Vietnam's natural beauty and culture, fostering deeper bonds through place-based learning to build connections and friendships.



*SportCares Singapore team on an exhilarant eight-day adventure at OBV Ha Long*



# Key Programmes

## ● SINGAPORE UNIVERSITY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

From December 7 – 14, Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS) students participated in an eight-day experiential programme with OBV, where they engaged in diverse activities at our basecamp in Ha Long. Tailored to build leadership, teamwork, and organisational skills, the programme featured outdoor challenges such as abseiling and jungle navigation, alongside impactful ecological and community service projects. Students gained hands-on experience with Vietnamese craftsmanship and fostered cross-cultural connections through networking opportunities. This immersive journey definitely encouraged SUSS's students to expand their perspectives, build resilience, and embrace the distinctive cultural differences.



*SUSS's students embarking on their hiking adventure at OBV Ha Long*

## ● REPUBLIC POLYTECHNIC

Students from Republic Polytechnic (RP) in Singapore ventured to Ha Long with OBV, embarking on an adventure filled with challenge, discovery, and connection to nature from December 5 – 12. Through activities like abseiling, hiking and kayaking, participants engaged in eight days of self-discovery, growth and adventure. This immersive programme focused on developing key life skills such as leadership, teamwork, and communication, along with promoting environmental stewardship and social responsibility. As they returned home, RP students carried with them more than memories; they were equipped with the skills, confidence, and purpose to make a positive difference wherever they go.



*RP's students in tree planting activity as part of Environmental Stewardship at OBV Ha Long basecamp*



*Course Opening Ceremony for RP at OBV Ha Long basecamp*

*"Our students were really excited to come for this programme and I am sure they surpassed their own expectations when it came to dealing with the challenges of the cooler climate of North Vietnam and moving from campsite to campsite, while experiencing interesting adventures along the way. I certainly hope more RP students will get to experience the natural splendours of North Vietnam through OBV."*

**- Mr. Gene Kam, Senior Lecturer, Diploma in Outdoor Education, RP**



# Key Programmes



## ● OTHER PROGRAMMES

Over the last quarter of this year, OBV also had the pleasure of hosting several local international schools, including Concordia International School, International School of Ho Chi Minh City-American Academy (ISHCMC-AA), and International School of Ho Chi Minh City (ISHCMC), for transformative outdoor programmes at our basecamps.



*OBV's tailored team-building programme for staff of KinderWorld International Group*

Students engaged in activities such as wall climbing, abseiling, hiking, and raft building, pushing themselves beyond their limits, building resilience, and forming stronger bonds with peers. These hands-on experiences not only provided practical skills but also deepened their appreciation for the environment and their role in it. We also hosted the corporate team-building programme for staff of KinderWorld International Group, focusing on communication, collaboration, and problem-solving through challenges that mirrored workplace dynamics. The tailored OBV programmes helped participants foster resilience, teamwork, and skills that extend beyond OBV to enhance their work culture. OBV believes that our impactful programmes will continue to inspire and empower participants to grow and make positive contributions to the community.



*Concordia International School's students engaging in a community service project at the Nguyen Nga Center for young people with disabilities, a long-term partner of OBV*



# Staffing & Training

## ● OUTWARD BOUND SINGAPORE STAFF ATTACHMENT & TRAINING

At OBV, we are committed to growth and collaboration. From September to October, we had the pleasure of hosting two colleagues from OBS, Syafiq and Chong, for a six-week staff attachment programme at OBV Binh Dinh. This initiative, part of our ongoing partnership through an MOU with OBS, was designed to enhance skills and knowledge for our instructors. During the attachment, OBV instructors also participated in specialised trainings led by Syafiq and Chong on Sport Climbing, Abseiling and Kayaking Proficiency Level 1 & 2. Meanwhile, our OBS colleagues had the opportunity to observe our courses, gaining insights into OBV's instructional methods and operations. We are excited about this partnership and look forward to further building on this strong foundation!



Syafiq and Chong on field attachment with an OBV programme

*"A fruitful six weeks at OBV!  
It has been a truly rewarding experience during my six-week exchange programme with OBV. Throughout this period, I gained valuable insights into OBV's operations and deepened my understanding of Vietnamese culture. One of the highlights was the opportunity to join courses alongside OBV instructors, learning from their expertise and working closely with them. The instructors at OBV were exceptionally welcoming, making sure I felt supported throughout the entire programme. The stunning scenery was an added bonus, inspiring me daily. This experience not only expanded my horizons but also helped me form lasting friendships. It is an experience I will always treasure!"*

**- Yeo Zheng Chong, OBS Team  
Manager/Senior Instructor**



*"Six weeks that passed too fast!  
After six weeks of our industrial attachment at OBV, we have gained invaluable insights through course attachments; conduct of technical trainings, and cross sharing of the Outward Bound process. This experience has deepened our understanding of how different Outward Bound centers operate. Despite cultural differences, we found our core approach to outdoor education to be remarkably similar. The collaboration allowed us to exchange best practices and innovative techniques to improve our own programs. We are excited to share these insights with our colleagues in Singapore and apply the valuable lessons learned here."*

**- Muhammad Syafiq Bin Dassian, OBS Team  
Manager/Senior Instructor**





# Staffing & Training

## ● JULIET TRAINING SCHOOL GRADUATION

We are excited to share that our dedicated trainees in the Juliet Training School are on track to graduate as Outdoor Instructors at OBV this December! Their training has been comprehensive, covering a wide range of essential technical activities, including Tyrolean Traverse, Navigation, Low Ropes Course Setups, Indoor Wall Climbing, Abseiling, and more.

In addition to these skills, our trainees have also focused on developing vital instructional soft skills, including group management, environmental skills, safety and risk management, and foundational facilitation techniques. We are proud of their progress and look forward to seeing them excel in their roles as outdoor education leaders!



*Outdoor Abseiling Training*



*Setting up and running Low Ropes Activity*



*Rope Activities set up (Indoor wall climbing & Tyrolean traverse)*



*Soft-Skills Training*



# Staffing & Training

## ● JULIET TRAINING SCHOOL GRADUATION



Juliet Training School Graduation (L-R): Bui Thi Cuc & Truong Minh Ban

*"My three-month instructor trainee program at Outward Bound Vietnam was an incredible journey of personal and professional growth.*

*The training combined hands-on outdoor experiences with expert guidance, teaching me the skills needed to lead and inspire others in nature-based settings. I gained confidence in outdoor leadership, risk management, and group dynamics, all while being challenged in real-world scenarios. The supportive team, passionate mentors, and immersive environment made the learning process both engaging and rewarding. This experience has truly prepared me to become an effective and compassionate instructor in the field."*

**- Bui Thi Cuc, OBV Juliet Trainee**

*"My training to become an instructor at Outward Bound Vietnam was nothing short of transformative!*

*Over three months, I learned not only practical skills but also discovered the strength and resilience I didn't realise I have. The experience challenged me in ways that pushed my boundaries and helped me grow, both physically and mentally. I'm deeply grateful for the unwavering support of my team and mentors, who guided me every step of the way."*

**- Truong Minh Ban, OBV Juliet Trainee**



# Staffing & Training

## ● CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

From September to December 2024, OBV conducted a series of staff training programmes to enhance our team's hard-skills and soft-skills. As part of a six-week staff attachment programme, two instructors from OBS led our team through Climbing and Abseiling Proficiency Level 1 & 2, as well as Kayaking Proficiency Levels 1 & 2 certifications. These sessions covered essential technical knowledge, safety protocols, and technical skills, ensuring our team is equipped to lead abseil and kayaking activities. This initiative also underscores our commitment to delivering safe, memorable outdoor experiences and supporting our staff's professional development.



Climbing & Abseiling Proficiency Level 1&2 Training and Certification by OBS

Kayaking Proficiency Level 1&2 Training & Certification by OBS

The successful completion of the Impact Teaching Module, led by our Programme Manager, Khaliq Khan, contributed to enhancing the effectiveness of our educational programmes. The module equips instructors with essential tools and strategies to design engaging, impactful sessions, creating an environment where both educators and participants can thrive. By focusing on key areas such as debriefing, session structure, energizers, and meaningful activities, it has enhanced instructors' ability to facilitate reflective and transformative learning experiences.



Impact Teaching Training by our Programme Manager



# Staffing & Training

- **SKILLS RERESHERS**

The impact of Typhoon Yagi in September this year, which primarily affected Quang Ninh and Ha Long, required significant adjustments to our scheduled programmes and training. We redirected resources and efforts to salvage and conduct risk assessments in preparation for programmes in late November. Despite the challenges, we seized the opportunity to enhance our training approach to be more realistic and purposeful, focusing on practical skills to improve both programme delivery and staff capabilities. Key training included Hiking, where we reassessed risks and hazards along commonly used trails, as well as Kayaking training to strengthen personal and group management competencies for water activities. We also focused on developing Facilitation skills to ensure impactful programme delivery.



*Hiking Training & Risk Assessment*



*Outdoor-Abseil Training*



*Cave Abseil Set-up Training*



*Improvised Rafting and Water Activity Management Training*



# Staffing & Training

- **SKILLS RERESHERS**

In addition, we held annual Skills Refresher sessions alongside site clean-up activities for technical areas such as Abseiling, Caving, Raft Building, and Advanced Hiking & Navigation. These efforts are all part of our commitment to continuous improvement and readiness as we move forward with our programmes at OBV Ha Long.



*Activity Briefing & Facilitation*



*Bush-Craft Activities for Programmes*

**Contact us for more information!**



*An organisation registered as a life-skills provider with the Vietnamese Department of Education & Training (DOET)*

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