



The journey to Long Tikan involved travelling on unpaved, logging roads.



Over 200 volunteers took part in the Charity Without Borders programme last December.

Bridging borders with kindness

Volunteers journey deep into Ulu Baram to bring aid and joy to remote Penan villages.

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MORE than 200 volunteers undertook an arduous journey to Sarawak's remote Ulu Baram region in December as part of a community outreach programme benefiting several Penan villages. Now in its 11th year, the Charity Without Borders initiative was organised by Kuching-based charitable group Hope Place and the Bintulu 4X4 Challenge Club.

The mission aimed to deliver health services and food aid to the Penan communities of Long Tikan, Long Betao, Long Bee and Long Jekitan. Flagged off in Miri on Dec 12 by Telang Usan assemblyman Datuk Dennis Ngau, the journey to Long Tikan alone took 12 hours, much of it over rugged logging roads.

"Our goal was to help the remote Penan community by

providing health screenings and dental care," said Hope Place founder Kelvin Wan. "A trip to Miri to see a doctor costs around RM450 one way, which many villagers simply can't afford."

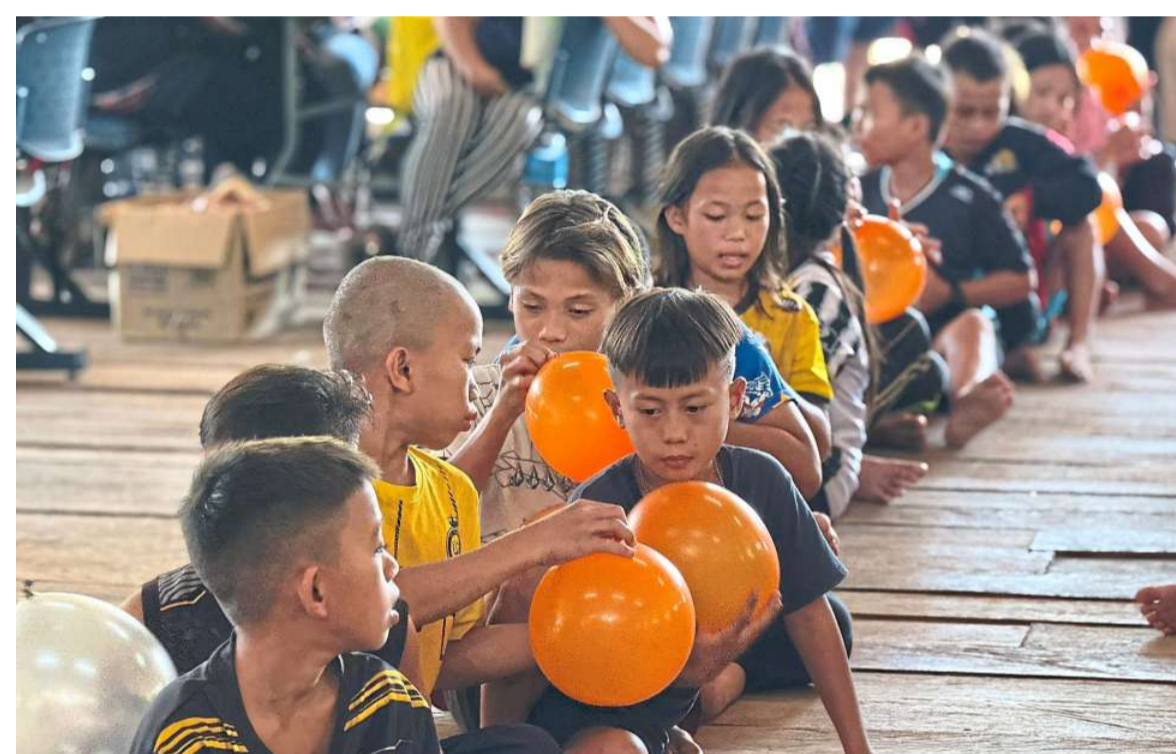
To address this challenge, 22 doctors, dentists and nurses from the Sarawak Health Department, led by deputy director Dr Azlee Ayub, joined the mission.

Over the four-day programme, they provided free healthcare services to more than 200 villagers, including children.

The volunteers also offered haircuts, courtesy of a Bintulu-based salon, while corporate sponsors contributed essential supplies, life jackets and fire extinguishers.

Children were at the heart of the festivities, with games, over 100 Christmas presents and a custom-designed colouring book created by local artist Nia Latif.

"Seeing the children's smiles during the activities was a high-



The Penan children took part in games and other activities organised during the programme.

light for us," said Wan. "The joy we brought them was priceless."

The programme's main food sponsor, Sarawak-based property developer Ibraco Bhd, donated 165 boxes of essential supplies and 250 Christmas treats for the children.

"Ibraco is proud and glad to be part of this humbling initiative by Hope Place," said managing director Datuk Chew Chiaw Han.

"As a company, we believe charity starts at home, where the needs are most urgent. We aim to nurture those in need and foster a better quality of life for

these communities and their future generations."

The outreach was supported by the state Ministry of Tourism, Creative Industry and Performing Arts, which allocated RM40,000 to the effort. Key contributors included Sarawak Energy Bhd, donating 130 life jackets, and Hoe Guan Scaffolding and Trading Sdn Bhd, which provided 15 fire extinguishers.

Looking ahead, Wan revealed that the next Charity Without Borders event is planned for December this year.

Chew emphasised the power of collective action: "This programme demonstrates how community-focused initiatives can make a meaningful difference in the lives of those less fortunate. Ibraco is committed to improving lives where it matters most, embodying the spirit of giving and solidarity."

As the team packed up after four impactful days, they left behind not just supplies and medical relief but a powerful message of hope and compassion for a community that often feels forgotten.



Volunteers from a hair salon providing free haircuts to the villagers.



Penan villagers selling their handicrafts during the programme.



Wan (centre) handing over the life jackets sponsored by Sarawak Energy



Bhd. 15 fire extinguishers for three Penan villages were also distributed.



Ibraco handing over food aid to the Penan community.