

# DESTINATION: GOOD



The AirAsia Foundation ([airasiafoundation.com](http://airasiafoundation.com)) team talks shop about the people they meet and the ideas they come across as they travel the Asean region on their unique mission: to meet social entrepreneurs and explore ways to support their growth.



HiveSters, Thailand



Soksabike, Cambodia

## ASEAN ON FOOT

Seeing a new city can be overwhelming, but what better way to get to know one than by exploring its nooks and crannies on a walking or cycling tour? Let us show you how you can delve into the heart of your Asean destination with social enterprises whose proceeds fund their larger causes.

For history lovers, join the Jagalan Tlilih Heritage Walks ([airasiafoundation.com/social-enterprise/arkomjogja](http://airasiafoundation.com/social-enterprise/arkomjogja)) in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, developed with our grant and led by youth guides who introduce the ancient village's history, cultural points of interests and artisan clusters. Income earned from the tours goes into conservation efforts in the old city of Kotagede.

If you're in northern Malaysia, learn about the fascinating origins of UNESCO World Heritage-listed George Town on foot with the Penang Heritage Trust's ([pht.org.my](http://pht.org.my)) interactive tours. Continue south to Kuala Lumpur for Rakan KL's ([facebook.com/rakankl2012](http://facebook.com/rakankl2012)) educational walks for an insider's view on the city's most iconic spots, run by volunteers concerned about the cultural preservation of their city.

Up in Thailand, HiveSters ([hivesters.com](http://hivesters.com)) takes you through the backstreets of old Bangkok to enjoy Thai food and learn traditional arts. The Architecture Walking Tour of Singapore's intriguing Waterloo Street offered by Backstreet Academy ([backstreetacademy.com](http://backstreetacademy.com)) introduces the city state's diverse culture through its cluster of religious buildings.

Adventure travellers can plan a cycling route with another of our grantees – The Basikal ([fb.com/thebasikal](http://fb.com/thebasikal)) in Kuala Lumpur – or join Wanderlust ([idwanderlust.com](http://idwanderlust.com)) in Jakarta's Kota Tua in Indonesia to rediscover the former Dutch colonial capital of Old Batavia. In Manila, Philippines, you can sign up for a ride with Bam-bike Ecotour ([bambike.com](http://bambike.com)) to explore the historic enclave of Intramuros on a trendy bamboo bike.

If going off the beaten path is more your thing, head to Cambodia and join countryside cycling tours with our grantee, Soksabike ([soksabike.com](http://soksabike.com)). Let local guides enlighten you on Battambang's French colonial architecture or Buddhist art history. Lastly, don't forget Sapa O'Chau's ([sapaochau.org](http://sapaochau.org)) treks if you are up in northern Vietnam – you will not only be sustaining jobs for hillside indigenous guides, but also supporting funding of free schools for ethnic Hmong children.

**AIRASIA FOUNDATION IS AN ASEAN ACCREDITED ORGANISATION**



## Word Up!



**Yap Mun Ching**, Executive Director of AirAsia Foundation, is always on the lookout for exciting new social enterprises. Write in at [foundation@airasia.com](mailto:foundation@airasia.com)



I am a big fan of walking and cycling tours, especially when exploring old cities. While there are digital guides aplenty, it is never quite the same as seeing a historical neighbourhood with people who grew up there.

Creating a good tour is no easy feat – as I experienced first-hand when AirAsia Foundation began funding Arkomjogja's Conservation Through Enterprise Initiative in the historic city of Kotagede in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Arkomjogja began by training 40 local youths in survey techniques. Then, over three months, the trainees navigated a warren of alleyways to gather data for architectural and demographic maps. What these maps revealed stunned us.

We found that traditional houses were being carted away week after week. We also found Kotagede's famous silversmithing tradition on its last legs. In a city known for its silversmithing heritage, we found less than 30 active artisans. Several had to take up second jobs to make ends meet. It put urgency into Arkomjogja's efforts.

The Jagalan Tlilih Heritage Walks is the outcome of activities that stretched over a year. Back and forth discussions were held, illustrations created, youth guides trained and families persuaded to be part of the initiative.

This is only one half of the story. The other half lies in sustaining the interest of the youths, creating value out of their ownership of their heritage and generating income to embark on the next leg of the journey. For this, visitor patronage is crucial. If you are in the vicinity of the places highlighted in our main story, do take up a tour or two. You will come away with a renewed appreciation of travel.

## TRAVEL WITH A DIFFERENCE

If you have more than a day to spare for a guided tour, here are some truly unique experiences that will make great conservation stories for your travel blog.



**BAMBOO-BIKING IN THE MEKONG DELTA** Go on a cycling and camping adventure in the Cambodian and Vietnamese countryside with Mekong Plus. You'll be pedalling bamboo bikes made by our grantee Thien Chi and experiencing the trip of a lifetime. [mekongplus.org](http://mekongplus.org)



**LIVING ARTS TOURS** Cambodian Living Arts is better known for their daily traditional arts shows at the National Museum of Cambodia. But they also arrange dance and music classes. Visit the classrooms where persistence transforms into perfection. [culturecambodia.com](http://culturecambodia.com)



**CAT WALKS** Take a walk on the wild side with the Malaysian Conservation Alliance for Tigers (MYCAT). MYCAT organises volunteer treks in Malaysia's famous Taman Negara, a national park that spans three states – Pahang, Kelantan and Terengganu – to patrol poaching hotspots. [citizenactionfortigers.my](http://citizenactionfortigers.my)