

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

DESTINATION:



Destination: GOOD

The AirAsia Foundation 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. airasiafoundation.com



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Valuing Our Mangrove Ecosystem

On the edge of the ocean lies a very special forest that lives both above and below the water. If you are looking for a glimpse of nature in both worlds, why not make a trip to see the mangroves?

Mangrove forests serve as natural buffers between land and sea. They are clustered along coastlines to protect against erosion caused by storms and floods. Home to a wide range of plant and marine biodiversity, mangroves are also a breeding habitat for various fish and shellfish that support ecological sustainability.

In the Asean region, many coastal communities rely on mangroves for food supplies, forest products and tourism revenue. In Banda Aceh, Indonesia, non-profit groups have started replanting mangroves to combat the effects of climate change. The mangrove roots are home to molluscs like oysters, which are in high demand at local restaurants. Our grantee Natural Aceh developed a

livelihood programme for village entrepreneurs to learn how to cultivate oysters and earn a sustainable income.

In Krabi, Thailand, the residents of Koh Klang have established several economic activities such as fresh seafood restaurants, herbal farms, water transport and homestays. The village benefits from commercial ventures vetted by marine scientists, so that villagers may also properly educate tourists and customers in the process.

If you have experienced the tranquillity of a mangrove, remember that it took thousands of years for that forest to grow. Mangroves are great for carbon storage, which also means that deforestation can cause greenhouse gases to be released. The challenge now is to preserve this high-value ecosystem by understanding and spreading the word on Mother Earth's natural defence.

What's a social enterprise?

A business that tackles social challenges and improves communities or the environment using profits from the sale of goods and services

AirAsia Foundation is an ASEAN accredited civil society organisation.



Contact Us!



Yap Mun Ching, Executive Director of AirAsia Foundation, is always on the lookout for exciting new social enterprises. Write in to foundation@airasia.com

Word Up!



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If you have been following this column, you would have read about Sunit Shrestha, the founder of Change Fusion, a social enterprise incubator in Thailand. It was thanks to him that I found myself in a beautiful mangrove park in Krabi one afternoon, squinting down at a pile of mud. We were on the lookout for the elusive mud lobster.

According to Sunit and marine biologist Jirapong Jeewarongkukul from the Enlive Foundation, mud lobsters are the unsung heroes of the mangrove ecosystem. They burrow deep into the earth at night and bring up fertile organic matter that aids in plant growth. They also build up mounds of earth that, over time, raise the floor of swamps to counter the effects of rising sea levels. In fact, many local villages were spared during the 2004 Asian tsunami when Krabi's wall of mangrove trees blocked off 3m high surges. These same mangrove forests are now threatened by development.

With Change Fusion and Enlive, we are now exploring possible collaborations with local communities to design low-impact activities that enable visitors to learn more about this wonderful ecosystem and be part of its rehabilitation. If you have enjoyed such activities before, let us know about them.

1. Mangrove forest of the Tha Pom Klong Song Nam Park
2. Jirapong Jeewarongkukul (left) with Sunit Shrestha.



Shop for GOOD at RWMF 2018

Our Destination: GOOD social enterprise shop is making an appearance at the famous Rainforest World Music Festival in Kuching, Sarawak, from July 13 to 15. Bring along your recyclable shopping bags as you will definitely find something you like. From bamboo straws to Penan bags, choose from over 200 social enterprise products – all sustainably made in support of good causes.