

## STREETS **YOUR STORY**



Participants *treading carefully* through the *slippery terrain*.





The 'Much About Mangroves' participants are keen on conservation.



Nick Tan providing some insight on the programme.



Sharing a joke while engaging in a good cause.

# Saving the mangrove forest

**CONSERVATION:** Ricoh's Much About Mangroves programme sees 70 people planting 500 saplings within an hour

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**A** SLIPPERY terrain, insects and humid weather seemed to be the last thing on the minds of over 70 people who took part in Ricoh's mangrove rehabilitation programme.

The "Much About Mangroves" programme is part of Ricoh's "Go Eco with Ricoh" campaign and sees the company joining forces with the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) to rejuvenate the mangrove forest in Kuala Selangor.

There is indeed much to learn about mangroves. An integral part of the ecosystem, mangroves act as natural barrier against strong winds, waves and erosions while maintaining the water quality.

Mangrove forests are also home to a variety of life forms such as insects, fish, crabs, frogs, reptiles, birds, and monkeys, including vulnerable species like milky storks and silvered leaf monkeys.

Aside from the local species of animals, migratory birds such

as the common greenshank also seek food and shelter in the mangroves during their migration.

This year, Ricoh's merry band of eco-warriors, comprising Ricoh employees, business partners, customers and members of the media planted 500 mangrove saplings.

The saplings were planted on a 0.8ha site where the fruits of Ricoh's previous excursions showed promising signs.

Upon arrival, participants were given a briefing on mangroves and their importance, as well as the threats facing the mangrove forests by KSNP park manager S.P. Maichel Isthyben.

"The main threats to the mangroves are development and excessive pollution. We have even found an old refrigerator in the mangrove," said Isthyben, adding that in 1987, there was an unsuccessful attempt to turn the site into a golf course.

In Peninsular Malaysia's west coast, mangrove forests are vanishing at an alarming rate.

Over a period of 24 years, more than 14 per cent of mangrove forests have disappeared.

After the briefing, the participants posed for a group picture and put on their Wellington boots

before heading to the planting site.

At the site, the would-be-planters learned the correct way of planting the mangrove saplings and were each given a pair of gloves, a stick and strings.

Though the participants had to trudge through thick, slippery mud and navigate their way around a seemingly endless network of roots, they were in high spirits, joking and laughing throughout the outing.

Using the sticks given to them, the participants bore holes as deep as 30cm in the ground.

They then planted the saplings and tied them to bamboo sticks to ensure the young mangroves would not be washed away with the tide.

In the end, all 500 saplings were planted within an hour.

For first-time participant, Kavitha Parthiban, who came along with fellow employees from the Dorsett Regency Kuala Lumpur hotel said the programme was a fun learning experience.

"I never knew that planting mangroves in such muddy terrain would be so much fun."

The bubbly communications manager added that it was time well spent for such a good cause.

Equally elated was Ricoh Malaysia general man-

ager Nick Tan who was delighted with the turn out.

"Environmental sustainability is at the heart of everything Ricoh does," said Tan.

Tan explained that Ricoh's products were mostly made from recyclable materials, and that Ricoh's global headquarters allocates one per cent of its annual profits to run environmental programmes around the world.

"The mangrove is a key area in sustaining the environment. We are committed to preserving the mangroves and this is Ricoh's way of contributing to society," he continued.

Tan also said that they hoped to continue the programme.

One person who would love to see the continuation of "Much About Mangroves" is Isthyben.

"Rico's support in funding and volunteering manpower for the conservation efforts are invaluable. We have spotted water birds like sand pipers in the area where Ricoh's saplings are growing and this is a good sign of the programme's positive impact," said Isthyben.

For information on the Go Eco with Ricoh campaign, visit [www.goecowithricoh.com.my](http://www.goecowithricoh.com.my).



Tan planting the saplings in an effort to save the mangrove forest.

