

## **International Youth Camp**

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Taylor Swift once said, "This is a new year. A new beginning. And things will change." In my perspective, 2015 is indeed a new turning point in my life.

After undergoing rigorous selection process, I had the opportunity to start off my new year by representing Transparency International-Malaysia (TI-M) to attend a one-week-long International Youth Camp which was held in Siem Reap, starting from the 5<sup>th</sup> of January 2015. If I am asked to choose one phrase to substantiate my journey in Cambodia, it will definitely be "BEYOND EXPECTATIONS"!

On the first day of the youth camp, participants were given the opportunity to cycle from the camp site to visit both the Bayon Temple and the Angkor Wat. Although the 10 km journey was very energy-draining, everyone knew that the sweat-drenching journey was indeed worth it when we set our eyes on the magnificent architectures built by our ancestors. While visiting the tourist attraction sites in Siem Reap, participants played a role in raising awareness about anti-corruption efforts by handing out TI Cambodia's calendars to the local community.

After enjoying a day of touring Siem Reap, we then spent our next two days attending lectures delivered by experienced activists and policy makers. The first guest speaker, Mr Khut, a representative of OHCHR Cambodia, highlighted how corruption is associated with the infringement of human rights. Mr Khut also emphasized the importance of governments upholding the rule of law during his talk. In addition to that, participants were also privileged to learn about the basic principles of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) from a representative from TI-Cambodia's Executive Director, Mr Preap Kol. In my personal opinion, the most enlightening talk would be the presentation delivered Mr Ok Serai Sopheak, who is the Chairman of TI Cambodia. In his talk, he pointed out that it is of utmost importance to separate the three branches of government. Interestingly, he also taught the participants how to apply the principles of good governance in their daily life!

After having a better and more thorough understanding about various issues, participants were then encouraged to brainstorm and come up with feasible solutions to promote transparency, strengthen integrity and combat corruption in their respective countries. For instance, TI Indonesia suggested using comics as a tool to raise awareness among young readers. Besides that, the Filipino delegates proposed to provide a platform for local university graduates to be aware of job opportunities in the government sector. Last but not least, team Malaysia, which was comprised of Mei Hwa, Nicholas and I proposed to organize a national debate competition which will serve as a platform for youth to openly discuss issues pertaining to corruption, transparency and integrity.

The International Youth Camp was indeed an extraordinary experience for me. I am truly inspired after meeting so many like-minded peers who want to make the world a better place for everyone. I am motivated after listening to stories of people who suffered as a consequence of corruption. I am empowered after finding out that there is something I can do, as a student, to combat corruption. Thank you for the amazing experience Transparency International!