



**After joining Raleigh as a graduate venturer in Borneo, Aydan Al-Saad was invited to stay on as a Volunteer Manager in the role of Logistics Coordinator.**

Before the Borneo spring expedition I had been on expedition as a graduate venturer. I was asked if I wanted to stay on as part of the logistics team. I came out of Oxford Brookes University and wasn't sure about continuing with law as the market wasn't great. I didn't want to spend money on qualifications I wasn't sure about. I saw the Raleigh graduate scheme and thought it would be beneficial for my CV.

I thought that just travelling wouldn't be beneficial to a gap year and instead saw it as a good opportunity to get some work experience and a chance to do something charitable. I wanted to see what it is like to work and spend time abroad. I wanted to see what I could offer the other side of the world as well as what it could offer me.

Raleigh has a lot of things that attracted me. Raleigh pushed me out of my comfort zone. There is lots of support for Raleigh in each of the countries where it operates and the work the charity has done in each country is incredible. For example water feeds providing something that we take for granted. I think what Raleigh does for its Host Country Venturers is great as it gives them opportunities they would not otherwise have.

In terms of my role on expedition, logistics was tough but enjoyable. It's a challenge but it has been rewarding. Logistics is about the stuff that no-one else thinks about but is essential to be there. People plan things and it is on the logistics team to get everything sorted. It's about being ahead of schedule; for example, if 'changeover' is on the Friday we need to be ready on the Tuesday beforehand. Logistics is a lot of forward thinking and it was essential that we were always one step ahead. The actual tasks included driving the bravos, collecting and dropping off supplies, visiting groups in an emergency or when the need arose. All the materials that make the expedition possible come from logistics, including radio, food and equipment.

From my feedback on my expedition as a venturer, it was made clear by my Project Managers that I was a natural leader. I've taken the next step within the logistics position to implement that leadership skill within my new role and as a staff team member. I feel that I've gained confidence from working with people that are older than me and being able to hold my own.

One of my best moments on expedition was living and working in Imbak Canyon. More people have been to Everest base camp than have been to Imbak. Living there was like in living in jungle heaven. I saw 14 gibbons and was woken up them every morning which was amazing. I did an overnight trek to Bukit Beruang as well as a trek on my last day. The group in Imbak got on really well and it was a brilliant camp.

Through motivation and direction, I can now see how well I can complete tasks. I'm as hard working as I can be. I've learned how to balance work with fun which is what Raleigh is about. I've learnt from other people that I have worked with, and they've passed on their knowledge to me. I think that being immersed in the culture is very important and I've learnt a lot from the Malay culture.

The experiences, the enjoyment, the involvement and the cause means the Raleigh experience has been one of the most memorable and worthwhile experiences that someone at my stage of life could possibly have.