

Wilmar has more than 500,000 hectares of landbank and over 30 palm oil mills in East Malaysia and Indonesia. We employ scores of migrant workers who reside in these plantations far away from towns. Many of them have since started their own families in the plantations.

The children of migrant workers have little or no access to schools. Education goes a long way into improving the lives of the underprivileged. Sensing the employees' desire for a better future for their children, we work with Borneo Child Aid Society to provide basic education for these children in our Malaysian plantations.

Read on for more information.

Nurture the Future: Bringing Schools to Children



How it all started

We employ many Indonesian migrant workers on our plantations in the states of Sabah and Sarawak, East Malaysia. Their children are often excluded from Malaysia's mainstream education system. The high costs of private and international schools can be prohibitive, while the distance from the only Indonesian school in town can be restrictive for daily travel.

We recognize the concerns of our employees. Their children deserve the opportunity to receive a basic education, so that they can grow up into empowered adults and make a difference in the society. This is also in line with the UN Convention on Child Rights and the UN Millennium Development Goals of basic education for all children.

When we first learnt of the Borneo Child Aid Society, we saw an opportunity for collaboration on Wilmar's Sabahmas Plantations in the Malaysian state of Sabah. The benefits of bringing free education to the children's doorstep, rather than having them seek education outside the plantations, are tremendous. Their parents can entrust the care-giving and education to the schools, while working on the plantations.

In September 2006, we approached Borneo Child Aid Society with the following objectives:

- A conducive venue that is clean and comfortable, which can serve as a school for the children. This venue has to be fairly accessible within the plantation
- Furniture and other basic amenities
- All teaching materials, stationery and required operational materials
- Audio-visual equipment
- Accommodation, salary and honoraria for teachers
- Transport for students to ensure that they get to school on time. This will also reduce employees' financial burden on transportation costs
- Supply students with free uniforms, school books and even food and beverage during class time
- Undertake all running costs associated with the operation of the schools.

What the schools have achieved so far

With help from the Borneo Child Aid Society, we started our first school in April 2007. The school was followed by the establishment of three more schools in the area within a few months. Today, we have a total enrolment of more than 1000 students across 13 schools in East Malaysia. The majority of the students are from Indonesia and they range from five to fifteen years old.

Classes were also extended to the children of the contractors, who work on our plantations, not just our own employees.

The educational levels range from kindergarten to Primary Six for the classes. Children are assigned to the different levels based their own educational level, not by age. The children can attend up to six years of school, which



Signpost: Sabahmas Humana House



Spacious, bright and clean classrooms



Main entrance to one of the four schools

will enable them to obtain an equivalent qualification as the Ujian Pencapaian Sekolah Rendah. (UPSR) The UPSR is a national examination undertaken by all the Standard Six students in Malaysia.

While the schools follow a Malaysian curriculum, they have also included some Indonesian syllabus to enable a smoother integration for the students, if they should eventually return to their home country. Upon graduation, they can choose to return to Indonesia to further their education, or attend boarding schools in Malaysia.

In school, the children enjoy an integrated and well-rounded curriculum of English, Malay and Indonesian languages, mathematics, science, sports and even the arts (music, culture and dance).

Furthermore, we facilitated the set up of the Teachers and Parents Association—a platform that allows the teachers and parents to communicate on a regular basis. This will help them understand the entire educational process and keep track of their children's performance in the classroom.

To ensure that the schools maintain a high standard, there are regular checks from school supervisors from the Borneo Child Aid Society, as well as executives from Wilmar.

The Sabahmas plantation pays for the education from its corporate social responsibility fund. In addition to paying for the cost of the schools' infrastructure, Sabahmas spends about USD55,000 per year on the operational expenses.

The Humana Project Director, Mr Torben Venning, on Wilmar

"We are delighted to work with a company that is committed to the welfare of its employees and their children. Wilmar has been responsive to our requests, enabling a very fast project development and smooth integration.

For instance when Humana suggested the adding libraries and laboratories to the existing learning centres, the (Wilmar) management revised the floor plan immediately. They made space for these facilities that took up more than twice the area of the initial proposal.



Borneo Child Aid Society

Locally known as the Humana, the non-profit social NGO (non-governmental organisation) was first set up in 1991.

It aims to provide basic education to plantation children of Indonesian or Filipino descent in the remote parts of Borneo.

Borneo Child Aid Society is currently operating more than 100 schools, which they call "learning centres," educating more than 8,000 children, mainly from the families of plantation workers. The schools cater to children aged between 5 to 12, although they sometimes accept older children.

“Many parents want to put their children in the schools and we are trying to expand the capacity to offer every child a chance in education and an opportunity in life. To keep up with the demand, we are now working closely and intensively with the (Wilmar) management to develop more schools.”

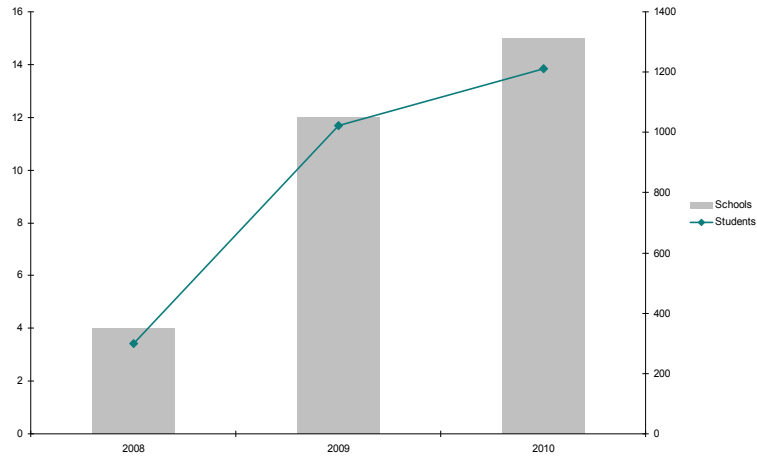
“We are pleasantly surprised with Wilmar’s integrative and holistic approach to children’s well-being. Recognising that proper nutrition can help improve health and enhance learning ability, the company has gone the extra mile to cater food and drinks for the children, a very caring move that we hope our other partners can adopt too.”

Going Forward

The success of the Humana School Project in the Sabahmas Plantations has spawned many more in the pipeline.

Continuing our collaboration with Humana, we have extended this initiative to our Group’s plantations in East Malaysia. There will 3 more schools coming on board in 2010, culminating in a total of 15 schools and providing education for more than 1200 children.

Wilmar aims to provide education for all the children of our Indonesian workers in Malaysian estates. We are also working with Humana to explore the feasibility of introducing higher level education to these children, upon completion of their primary education in these schools.



Children performing for guests



Interactive and fun learning experience



Teachers-Parents Day

For more information, please email csr@wilmar.com.sg