



Scene taken during the flood

# Adopting a village



Donation of furniture and other basic amenities from the hotel



House painting and upgrading in progress

**M**ORE than a year ago, the whole country was traumatized by massive floods hitting the southern parts of Peninsular Malaysia. Lives were lost and personal belongings and properties were destroyed. Those fortunate enough to survive faced an uncertain future.

With thoughts of bringing back the normal lives of the affected citizens and answering the Malaysian Government's calls for help, Melia Kuala Lumpur initiated a seven-month community Involvement programme by adopting a village – Batu 30, Lenga, a small village with 16 families located in Muar, Johor.

A team of staff headed by General Manager Arno Thony, organised their first visit to the village on February 10 with the hope of getting to know villagers better, while looking at areas where help could be extended.

As the village was three hour bus ride from the hotel; any assistance has to be efficiently organized to optimize the outcome for affected villagers. It was determined that Melia Kuala Lumpur would provide assistance for seven full months through monthly visits to the village.

At the start of the relief effort, it was imminent that employees from every department and section



**New computer for the village kids**

of the hotel were needed to transport goods and participate in rebuilding the community.

During the first visit, a meeting with the village chief and flood victims was held to take comprehensive inventory of individual needs and to visit all flood affected areas. The

inventory list was used to prioritize supplies and activities for the following visits.

The list was passed on to suppliers, contractors and other business partners to solicit items which they had a surplus on like paint, wood, furniture, food, computers, beds and

blankets. Other business partners joint in the effort by providing medical services, counseling, transportation, and manpower.

When additional manpower was needed, an international schools was approached to take part in the cross cultural exchange

programme.

The programme was so successful, the school later decided to include 30 hours of community service as part of their high school curriculum.

Follow-up visits were organised on monthly from February until August, where various development and improvement activities were carried out each time.

Active participation from the hotel's business partners added so much more meaning to this project as it went beyond just a donation effort, but an exercise that created an opportunity for new friendships, cross cultural learning experience and most importantly - an opportunity to make a change in people's life!

The Sol Melia Community Involvement Plan was first initiated in December 2002 to integrate all community projects in line with its corporate identity.

The plan consists of nine programmes and supporting resources with priority given at assisting underprivileged community - the disabled, victims of domestic violence, victims of natural disasters, and socially disadvantaged

children.

It focuses on the principle of supporting local sustainable development activities in the areas around the company's facilities in aid of the needy.

Community Involvement at Sol Melia is considered a key part of the company's strategy, culture and organisation from a global view.

It has been incorporated into the company's business objectives and must comply with all requirements stipulated in the Plan, including the definition of objectives and benchmarks, analysis of NGOs, foundations or organisations of which the projects are carried out with, the verification, control and economic impact of the project, or the final analysis to facilitate constant improvement.

Melia Kuala Lumpur like many other organisations depended on the monthly donations collected from guests at the hotel lobby.

With financial limitations, the hotel looked for possibilities to optimize the use of its available resources.

The Batu 30, Lenga



**New furniture for each family**



Health screening was organised in collaboration with Gleneagles Intan Medical Centre



A small bridge was rebuilt

Project takes the understanding of Corporate Social Responsibility to a higher level.

The impact is not just seen as fulfilling the principle outlined in the Sol Melia Community Involvement Plan of supporting local sustainable development activities around the company facilities, and attending to the needs required by individuals and groups but most importantly, influencing the way staff and hotel's business associates think and act about doing more for less fortunate citizens.

By incorporating wit, charm, social grace and healthy work ethics into the activities, the project evolved into something that staff look forward to on a monthly basis, encouraging a more voluntary nature and compassionate attitude,



German School KL students participated in the project

and creating an impact on the level of teamwork generated throughout Melia Kuala Lumpur.

Ultimately the Batu 30, Lenga Project provided a platform for Melia Kuala Lumpur and its staff to benefit the community in more ways than one.

By taking care of the basic needs of the village people, the hotel has relieved some of their burdens so they can live better.

By encouraging the involvement of young

foreign students it promoted cross cultural exposure and integration, while appreciating the simplicity of life.

By contributing to areas outside of their normal working routine and incorporating participation of its business associates, Melia Kuala Lumpur encourages teamwork, which inadvertently helps propel the hotel in a positive direction of growth.

The project made staff realise that doing community activities can be

a source of fun and joy, and the completion of each task is the source of satisfaction, without neglecting the main objective which is to uplift the burden of the people.

Overall the leadership of Melia Kuala Lumpur management, the voluntary support of business partners, the enthusiasm and energy of student volunteers and the undivided dedication and teamwork manifested by the employees, constitute the backbone that contributed to the project's success.