



# ONWARDS TOGETHER

OBS 2023 KEY HIGHLIGHTS



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



**Executive Director**  
Outward Bound Singapore



In 2023, Outward Bound Singapore (OBS) remained steadfast in its mission to “inspire individuals and transform communities” as Singapore’s economy regained its momentum. Our unwavering commitment to safety and determination to provide a high-quality outdoor adventure experience propelled us to achieve the ISO45001 certification, a testament to our dedication to providing a secure and healthy environment for all our staff and participants.

Leveraging the power of data analytics, we refined our operations and methodologies, reinforcing and reaffirming our safety and quality capabilities through the rigorous Risk Management Review conducted by Outward Bound International (OBI). 2023 was also an important milestone for OBS as our school was designated as one of the few to pilot an OBI global research project in collaboration with Penn State University.

Despite the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, OBS successfully reinstated the full 5 Days 4 Nights MOE-OBS Challenge (MOC) programme, witnessing a surge in demand that made it necessary to actively look at staff and Instructor recruitment. Working closely with the National Youth Council’s Human Resource department and actively participating in major recruitment campaigns and exhibitions bolstered our outreach and recruitment efforts.

Four OBS staff conducted workshops at both the Wilderness Risk Management and Association for Experiential Education conferences in the United States. The active involvement of our staff in international conferences emphasize our commitment to knowledge sharing within the outdoor education community and staff development. Furthermore, the enduring spirit of Outward Bound was exemplified by our alumni’s engagement with the community in initiatives such as wildlife coexistence advocacy during the Istana Open House and Pesta Ubin, and at various environmental clean-ups organised in collaboration with new and existing organisation partners.

We also expanded our reach and engagement within our digital community. Through targeted social media campaigns, we were able to significantly increase our followers, engaging audiences locally and abroad, and curate a conducive platform for the community to interact with one another.

Hosting regular school staff visits from the Ministry of Education helped deepen awareness of the MOC programme and familiarising partners with OBS initiatives. An example to highlight would be OBS’ environmental stewardship undertaking, which include rainwater harvesting, food composting, and our dedication to Environmental & Sustainability Education (E&SE) training programs. These underscore our commitment to preserving and contributing to a healthier environment in Singapore.

We would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to our stakeholders and contributors. Together, we remain unwavering in our dedication to serving with passion and pursuing excellence, embodying the enduring spirit of OBS- to serve, to strive, and never to yield.



**THIS YEAR, WE HAVE GUIDED PARTICIPANTS THROUGH A TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY WITH 27 UNIQUE PROGRAMMES, ENGAGING OVER 22,750 INDIVIDUALS, AND MAINTAINING 23 VALUABLE PARTNERSHIPS.**



# REFLECTING ON 2023'S OBS JOURNEY

*"I learnt a lot about teamwork and communication. We would be able to accomplish tasks quicker and more efficiently when we work together. This programme has helped me gained more confidence to get my classmates in school to work together as a group to accomplish the task."*

**Xavier Ong**

Bedok View Secondary School, Inclusive Sailing Programme

*"My goal is to be a better leader, more confident and assertive in my decision."*

**Nicholas Wong Zheng Hong,**

Cadet Pilot, SIA Leadership Course

## INSTRUCTOR EFFECTIVENESS

4.69 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

96% rated 4 and above.

## OVERALL COURSE OBJECTIVES

4.47 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

94% rated 4 and above.

## SATISFACTION

4.46 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

93% rated 4 and above.



# MOE-OBS CHALLENGE CONTINUES TO IMPACT OUR YOUTH

*"I have learnt that every little action that we do has an impact and that we should always be mindful of what we do. I will care for the environment more, I will be more understanding with others, and I will treat others with more kindness."*

**Uchenna Jazlan Kenneth,**  
Woodlands Secondary School

Throughout 2023, the MOE-OBS Challenge (MOC) Programme engaged 89 schools, reaching 19,743 participants across 34 courses, with each course spanning 4 to 5 days.

## Learning Outcome and Objectives:

### MORE RESILIENT



84% rated 4 and above.

### MORE CONFIDENT



87% rated 4 and above.

### CONCERNED CITIZEN



87% rated 4 and above.

### SOCIALLY COHESIVE



88% rated 4 and above.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED



94% rated 4 and above.



## OBS GEARING UP

RECRUITMENT OF  
OBS INSTRUCTORS

As outdoor education gains recognition in Singapore and globally, there is a growing demand for dedicated and skilled Instructors. In response to the re-opening of the 5-day MOE-OBS Challenge, OBS has launched an island-wide recruitment campaign, along with internship programmes and job tasters' sessions to attract the most suitable candidates and ensure participants receive the best OBS experience possible.

**Ongoing Professional Development**

At OBS, our instructors demonstrate an unwavering commitment to their professional growth. They actively participate in a series of comprehensive training sessions, showcasing their dedication to continuously elevate their expertise and refine their skills





# Steadfast & Secure Operations

In prioritising the safety of the workplace and participants, OBS regularly conducts scenario training and ground-deployment exercises to enhance capabilities and prepare for potential incidents. This fosters a culture of continuous improvement, ensuring the safety and effectiveness of operations.

## Periodic Risk Management Review by OBI

As part of its dedication to good governance, Outward Bound International regularly conducts Risk Management Reviews to evaluate Outward Bound Schools globally. The 2023 review indicated that OBS effectively governs, manages, and operates systems and processes to mitigate risk, meeting OBI's safety standards.

## ISO 45001 and BizSafe Level Star Certification

In November 2023, Outward Bound Singapore achieved ISO 45001 and BizSafe Level Star certification, reaffirming its commitment to prioritizing health and safety. This milestone underscores its dedication to providing a secure and responsible learning environment for participants.





# A Positive & Conducive Environment



## Dedicated Facilities & Assets Management

OBS' committed team of facilities specialists diligently strive to uphold the upkeep and safety of our campuses for students, staff, and visitors.

Their responsibilities range from regular maintenance of buildings, trails, training assets, and infrastructures to resource optimization aimed at minimizing environmental impact. Their dedication ensures that all necessary preparations are made to facilitate the safe and efficient operation of our programmes.

## Medical Centre on "Ready"

OBS bolstered its medical capabilities to address the growing and diverse participant base. Collaborating with healthcare experts via our Medical Advisory Panel, OBS ensured that medical support for all activities was thorough and robust.



# ONWARDS!

The full resumption of courses provides the opportunity to celebrate triumphs, begin fresh journeys, cultivate leadership and teamwork, and forge lasting bonds through shared memories and skills.

The MOE-OBS Challenge Programme is a key component of the National Outdoor Adventure Education Masterplan, offering students a collective adventure.

Outdoor Adventure Learning experiences provide opportunities where students learn to:

- Build camaraderie through working together in unfamiliar yet authentic situations.
- Be resilient, have empathy and maintain a positive attitude when faced with adversity.





# Set Sail for Growth

The MOE-OBS Challenge welcomes everyone to achieve their personal triumphs through unforgettable experiences. OBS programmes are intentionally designed to help develop personal and interpersonal skills, provide resources to help manage emotions, understand the importance of responsibility, and the value of resilience. Our programmes and curriculums are planned with these in mind.

OBS Sea Expeditions provide a unique and immersive environment for character development. They offer participants the opportunity to gain essential life skills, nurture meaningful relationships and cultivate a deeper connection with the natural environment.

*"I am not afraid of storms for I am learning how to sail my ship."*

– Louisa May Alcott

*"It was a new experience. I've never worked together with people from schools different than mine before, and I feel that it's a refreshing experience."*

*Through the camp, I learnt perseverance, which I will apply in my studies, e.g. not giving up when I feel demoralised and don't understand a topic. Instead finding out ways to better improve my understanding of the subject."*

**Fion Tan**  
Edgefield Secondary School





# Navigating Life's Journeys

*"In every walk with nature, one receives far more than he seeks"*

- John Muir

On land, our activities offer participants a transformative experience, inspiring resilience, leadership, and teamwork through activities like orienteering and engaging in the outdoors.

These challenges provide opportunities for participants to work on problem-solving abilities as they navigate unpredictable terrain, promoting adaptability and resourcefulness as they journey on.

With this OBS experience, participants will find their hidden strengths as they learn vital life skills for thriving in diverse environments.

*"I used to take my environment for granted and now I love the environment 100 times more. The environment is way more beautiful than I thought. Without my phone, I finally turned my focus to my surroundings, and I have never felt more in love."*

**Nue Arina Fitriyyah Binte Muhammad Hafiz**  
Woodgrove Secondary School



# Learning Heart Lessons

Reflection times are important in our programme. Participants gather daily with their instructors to bond over the day's adventures, share newfound experiences, and celebrate personal growth through diversity and teamwork.

These reflective sessions facilitate learning, personal development, connections, and collaborations in outdoor education. Our curriculum planning team and instructors ensure these moments foster growth through shared experiences, laughter, and perseverance.

It's not just about overcoming obstacles; it's about embracing the transformative power of shared experiences to emerge as stronger, more compassionate individuals.





# Expanding Overseas Partnerships and New Youth Programmes

With the reopening of borders, OBS has resumed the Leadership and Service Award's final expedition in Outward Bound Trust of Malaysia, offering youths a 21-day Classic Challenge Course to explore diverse outdoor terrains and cultures.

In March 2023, OBS also partnered with Bintan Resort Cakrawala to introduce new programmes, including waterfall abseiling, trekking at Gunung Bintan, and overseas community services, all of which are accessible within an hour's boat ride from Singapore.

The success of these nearby overseas expeditions has enabled OBS to extend our leadership programme to the staff from the Central Narcotics Bureau of Singapore and to the youth from Tasek Academy and Social Services. These partnerships provide crucial logistical and safety support for OBS staff and participants.



## OUTREACH & EXPANSION

# BUILDING BRIDGES, CONNECTING COMMUNITIES



OUTREACH &amp; EXPANSION

In 2023, OBS welcomed over 130 MOE staff members from 70 schools to its campus, providing them with valuable insights into OBS operations.

### e-Webinars

OBS also revamped its parent webinar format into automated 'e-Webinars' to enhance viewership. This initiative not only cut down the need for manpower, it also boosted our engagement projections for 2024 by more than 10 times (from 2,000 to 22,000 viewers)

### AskGov

Additionally, the collaboration with GovTech led to the introduction of 'AskGov', a self-help search engine providing access to Frequently Asked Questions for parents.

Effective and transparent communication plays a crucial role in helping schools and parents understand how OBS' programmes enhance their children's learning experiences.



PAGE 14



# Our Alumni Paths of Impact

Our Partnership Engagement unit is dedicated to actively engage and nurture the OBS Alumni through various events and initiatives. Our aim is to cultivate a space where OBS Alumni can continuously enhance their personal and professional growth, fostering a vibrant community of individuals who share common values. As part of our commitment, we provide OBS Alumni with exclusive opportunities to serve, grow and inspire.

It was a busy year for our alumni in 2023. They mentored young sailors in the 2023 Singapore Regatta, conducted coastal clean-ups, and volunteered at the Istana Open House to promote co-existence with wildlife.

Through their active citizenry, OBS Alumni inspired others to make a difference in the world.



# Engaging Communities

Our social media presence is a way for us to engage our community by showing our identity, activities, and interesting facts in a visual and relatable manner. To enhance our engagement strategy, we adjusted our tone of voice and connected more regularly with our target audience through trending and relatable content.

We also differentiated our Facebook and Instagram engagement, adjusting our content to better relate to the different demographic groups.

In 2023 alone, our followers grew from 8,800 to 11,800 (34%), significantly expanding our reach and engagement.





# Actively Partnering with the Outdoor Community

We collaborated with the Singapore University of Social Sciences, which hosted the Association for Experiential Education Asia Pacific Regional Conference. The conference aimed to acknowledge exemplary practices among educators, practitioners, and students, while discussing sustainability and inclusivity in experiential education.

OBS facilitated an institutional visit to provide participants with an opportunity to share and exchange ideas and practices, experiencing first-hand the Adventure Heritage and Environmental Trail and observing OBS operations and safety management systems.

Photo by: Singapore University of Social Sciences



**OBS STEPPING UP**

# SUPPORTING OUR SECTOR

OBS has allocated resources to elevate the Outdoor Adventure Education (OAE) sector, working closely with industry partners to enhance safety standards and professional development.

Key initiatives include:

**Developing advisory and best practices**

The OAE Council released an Emergency Action Plan Best Practices and a sectoral advisory on heat stress management between January and March 2024 to bolster safety in the sector.

**Fostering collaboration and information sharing**

The Council convened over 40 OAE professionals from 24 organisations for a sharing session to exchange insights and ideas on the challenges and future of the OAE sector.

**Dedicated website**

A dedicated website for OAE providers is set to launch in mid-2024, offering insights into the Council's initiatives, sectoral developments, and access to valuable OAE-related resources, facilitating providers' access to the latest updates in the Singapore OAE scene.





# Paving the Way

In OBS, we believe our people are our greatest asset and resource. We are dedicated to helping our staff grow personally and professionally. Structured career and development pathways ensure staff learn through formal and informal platforms that help them widen perspectives, foster continuous improvement, and position them for long-term success.

In 2023, 40% of our staff benefitted from the talent development scheme through attending overseas attachments and conferences, industrial attachments and trainings that are aligned to OBS's strategic goals.

Achieving the GOLD Award for National Workplace Learning Certification (NACE) caps our organisation's 5-year transformation into a learning-driven institution that deepens staff engagement, and more importantly, fosters a strong culture of excellence.





## ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDS

# FOSTERING A GREENER FUTURE

As OBS@Coney nears its 2024 completion, serving as the primary headquarters and preparing for an influx of students, there is a growing sense of anticipation and enthusiasm.

Amidst the hustle of preparation and construction, an approved environmental management and monitoring plan is in place to minimise adverse environmental impact from the construction works.

OBS collaborated with the relevant authorities to carefully manage wildlife as well as retain, transplant, and re-plant flora within our site.

Additionally, we also sought input from nature groups which contributed to our collective environmental conservation efforts.

By prioritising environmental sustainability, OBS is committed to preserving Coney Island's natural beauty.



# Green initiatives at the upcoming Coney Island campus paves the way for sustainability and innovative education, continuing to inspire individuals and transform communities.

*There exists within everyone a grand passion, an outlandish thirst for adventure, a desire to live boldly and vividly through the journey of life.*

**Kurt Hahn**  
Founder of Outward Bound





Part Of:

**NYC**  
NATIONAL  
YOUTH  
COUNCIL  
SINGAPORE



<https://www.nyc.gov.sg/en/obs>



<https://t.me/OBSAlumni>



@outwardboundsg



@outwardboundsingapore

Copyright © 2024 Outward Bound Singapore  
All rights reserved. No part of this publication  
may be reproduced or used in any manner  
whatsoever without the written permission  
of Outward Bound Singapore

