

Cycle For Cancer 2022: The Journey

Cycling for Cancer: Thoughts from the Organizer

The MMA launched its inaugural fund-raising cycling event in July 2022 from Sandakan to Sibuh that saw 10 cyclists ride 1100+ km, to raise RM200000 for our National Cancer Council (MAKNA)

The idea popped into my head sometime in November 2021 as I was sitting in a café in Sandakan. The pandemic was slowly burning out, but people were fearful to meet physically in large numbers. MAKNA had stopped its yearly fund-raising climb Mt Kinabalu.

Why don't we cycle? I thought to myself.

A few phone calls to interested friends and the plan was underway. The MMA council under Dr Koh Kar Chai and our HGS, Dr Arasu was very supportive of the idea. Dr Vijay, the then SCHOMOS chairman was one of the key people that helped connect us with the Sarawak government; while Rafikah our SCHOMOS secretariat played a vital role in communications and sponsorship.

The time passed and it was March 2022, two months to flag off and we only had 6 cyclists. Having not cycled more than 10km nonstop in my life I had planned to just drive along as part of the support convoy. However, after much consideration I decided to be a part of the cycling team and started training about a month before the event.

After a few online meetings and many emails back and forth from the organizing team to cyclists and sponsors, accommodation partners, the police and medical teams, we were ready.

Our 10 cyclists consisted of riders from Singapore, a UK national residing in Kuching, Sarawak and riders from both East and West Malaysia. One of them, Zaidi is an oral cancer survivor; while Danny Goh, a thyroid cancer fighter drove one of our support convoy vehicles.

On 15th July 2022, 7am, the Sandakan flag off at Eagles Rugby Club (ERC) was graced by the director of Hospital Duchess of Kent, Dr Francis Paul; IJM Sabah Regional Head, Mr Steven Goh and MP for Sandakan, YB Vivian Wong. We thank ERC for the accommodation and their warm hospitality!





After a bumpy 120km ride along the infamous “moon crater” road, we arrived in the rest house of Sabah Forestry Institute to enjoy a night’s stay courtesy of Datuk Frederick Kugan, Chief Conservator of Forests of Sabah. We enjoyed some KFC while getting to know each other as many of us were meeting for the first time.

First night’s stay at Sabah Forestry Institute Rest House, Telupid

The next day saw a journey of 115km and total ascent of nearly 3000m to Kundasang where our accommodation was sponsored by Ceaser’s Place. A lunch stop in Ranau was very much welcomed to recharge before the final 20km climb to our destination.



Group picture with the majestic Mt Kinabalu



Dinner and durian (from a roadside stall) in the cool Kundasang weather was simply amazing.

Roadside durian!

Day 3 was relatively easier, being mostly downhill and we arrived in Nuluhon Garden Resort (yet another sponsored night’s stay) after a 90km ride. The cold water of the rockpool soothed our aching legs and we had a sumptuous dinner on the house. We cannot thank the Majimbun family (Shone, Kathie, Edna) enough for your generosity!



Nuluhon Garden Resort – comfortable stay with delicious food!



Flag off from Aeropod, Kota Kinabalu

The last day of our Sabah leg, 18th July was a long, arduous 190km ride from Kota Kinabalu to Lawas. Flag off and breakfast was from Aeropod in KK and we quickly made our way down to Beaufort for lunch. One of our cyclists suffered a front and rear tyre puncture along the gravel roads from Sipitang to the Sindumin checkpoint but was quickly changed by our ever-able mechanic Abel.



The bumpy gravel road from Beaufort/Sipitang to Sindumin (Sabah/Sarawak border)

A quick immigration check at Sindumin-Merapok and we were on our way to Lawas where Hotel Seri Malaysia Lawas kindly provided accommodation for the team.



Group photo after the KK-Lawas 190km leg!



Cyclists and volunteers boarding the MASWings flight from Lawas-Miri

As the Brunei border was still closed, the team flew Lawas-Miri while sending bicycles and luggage via a transporter across to Miri.



Danny Goh who had been nursing a neck abscess that ruptured during the Sabah leg was forced to turn back and drive to KK for further treatment. (Edit: Danny passed on 20th Jan 2023 peacefully. May his soul RIP)

Danny Goh being treated by our capable Hospital UMS medic team

After a two-day rest in Miri, we left for a quick 90km ride to Niah on 21st July. One of our volunteers opened her house to us in Kg Lajong, Niah and we enjoyed delicious home cooked cakes and dinner upon our arrival. The team had time to visit Niah National Park, a Malaysian archeological heritage.



Delicious homemade cakes and snacks by our volunteer's family in Kg Lajong, Niah (and the home we stayed in)



The team heading to Mukah from Bintulu

The next three days were long, undulating journeys of about 140-150km each, from Niah-Bintulu, Bintulu-Mukah and Mukah to Sibü. Rest stops were mainly by the road or at small stalls along the way due to scarcity of eateries.



Group photo on the way to Sibü



The team riding past a longhouse



90km to Sibul!



Sarawak Deputy Minister of Public Health and Housing Michael Tiang graced the closing ceremony in Paramount Hotel, Sibul and pledged a contribution of RM3000 to MAKNA. A heartfelt session of sharing by all the cyclists over lunch; one last photo session and it was time to clean our bikes and pack up.

Our trusty police escort



Last group photo outside Paramount Hotel, Sibul

As one of our cyclists said, “We started off as friends, but ended as family”. The 10-day journey has given us memories we would not forget for many years to come. On behalf of MAKNA (Majlis Kanser Nasional), cancer patients in Malaysia; the entire CFC2022 team – we would like to say a big thank you for sponsoring/supporting/contributing – whether in money or in kind, you have indeed made a difference. This will be the beginning of future similar fund-raising events for charity.

The link and more information to sign up for our event in 2023 is here: <http://bit.ly/SAB2023info>

Timothy Cheng
CFC2022 Organizing Chairman

<https://codeblue.galencentre.org/2022/07/27/mmas-cycling-cancer-fundraiser-raises-rm200000-for-MAKNA>

<https://www.thestar.com.my/metro/metro-news/2022/08/13/1100km-bicycle-ride-raises-rm200000-for-cancer-care>