

Germany, here we come!

AFTER five days in the natural surroundings of Taman Negara, Kuala Tahan, it was back to the city for the 10 Bayer Young Environmental Envoys (BYEEs) for their final presentation.

While they had made new friends and enjoyed each other's company, there was still a week-long trip to Germany at stake for the two most deserving envoys.

Given only one-and-a-half hours to put together their Powerpoint presentations, the participants had to utilise what they had learnt during the eco-camp, as well as their own personal experiences, to come up with a feasible and practical project to promote environmental protection in Malaysia.

Ranging from creating a database of companies that use green technology to introducing reusable grocery bags and an adult environmental education programme, the ideas presented by the envoys were varied, yet relevant.

Said chief judge and TrEES (Treat Every Environment Special) director Christa Hashim: "We worked hard during the judging, but we also enjoyed ourselves."

Speaking during the awards ceremony at Sheraton Imperial Kuala Lumpur, Christa also congratulated the envoys on their "persistence and passion in preserving the environment", describing their proposals as "very fantastic and spirited ideas".

In the end, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) environmental studies student Anthony Leong, 21, and Islamic International University Malaysia environmental biotechnology student Nurhidayati Abdul Aziz, 22, were awarded the trip to study best environmental practices in Germany.

The week-long study trip includes a visit to the Bayer Group's headquarters in Leverkusen to observe environmentally friendly industrial practices, as well as visits to state and municipal facilities



Anthony and Nurhidayati showing off their trophies after being awarded the trip to study best environmental practices in Germany.

to see how Germans integrate environmental practices into their daily lives.

When asked how she felt when her name was announced, Nurhidayati shared: "I was flabbergasted! I seriously didn't expect to be one of the top envoys as the others were so talented and passionate, and had good leadership skills.

"In fact, after my presentation, I told myself that the most important part of the eco-camp had already ended; I was all prepared to just enjoy the night with the other envoys."

Her proposed project involved organising an Environmental Empowerment Week at her faculty and setting up an environmental centre where students can gather and relax while learning about environmental issues.

For Anthony, the honour was "very unexpected" as he only finalised his project idea 20 minutes before they had to submit their Powerpoint presentations.

"After submitting my presentation, I was still thinking about how I could improve my idea and convince the judges because I knew my slides were not persuasive enough," he said.

His initial idea was to establish a

Nature Rangers Club, but he finally opted to organise "A Week of Endangered Species" instead.

To be held the first week of every month for six months, each week will feature a different endangered species to encourage UPM students to take part in conservation efforts.

The trip to Germany will be a first for both Anthony and Nurhidayati. They will be joining around 50 other students from 17 countries around the world.

Both envoys are hoping that the trip will help them learn more about environmental protection methods, as well as network with like-minded young people from other countries.

Also present at the awards ceremony were Natural Resources and Environment deputy director-general (environment) Dr Shamsudin Abdul Latif, German Embassy commercial counsellor Wolfgang Trautwein, South Asean senior Bayer representative Marcus Yim and UPM Environmental Studies faculty dean Prof Dr Mad Nasir Shamsudin.

The BYEE programme in Malaysia is organised by Bayer in partnership with UNEP, TrEES and UPM.