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‘WOMEN ON A MISSION’ TREK ACROSS SIBERIA FOR A CAUSE’

Independent all-female team to embark on an epic migration with the nomadic Nenets reindeer herders of Siberia on a mission to raise awareness and funds for women survivors of war

"There is a global epidemic of violence against women – both within conflict zones and within societies at peace – and it is still treated as a lesser crime and lower priority." - Angelina Jolie, Special Envoy to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees

Singapore, September 2015 - An independent, self-funded team of 12 women from Singapore, under the banner of **Women on a Mission (WOAM)**, a non-profit organisations that supports women survivors of war and abuse, will embark on a 12 day trek, on **November 24, 2015**, with the nomadic Nenets reindeer herders of the Yamal Peninsula of Siberia.

This will be the first time in history that an all-female team will accompany the Nenets on one of their twice-yearly 60km-journey across the frozen Gulf of Ob, which is a bay of the Arctic Ocean located at the mouth of the Ob River, deep in the Arctic Circle in northern Russia. This intense migration is a race against the clock as there are little or no pasture grounds along the way for the herds, which means the crossing needs to be completed before the reindeers become too weak from lack of food.

During this expedition, the team will completely immerse itself into the lives of the nomads. This means sharing their meals, working with the herders, chopping firewood, collecting ice and making tools, as well as sleeping in ‘chums’ or traditional tents, made of reindeer hides sewn together and wrapped around wooden poles. The team will dress in traditional Nenets suits and boots, which will be much needed, given temperatures can reach up to minus 50 degrees Celsius and are often accompanied by howling Arctic winds.



For this next Trek to Siberia - WOAM's fourth to date - the team has chosen to partner, once again, with UK-based **Secret Compass**, who took them to Jordan's Wadi Rum desert in 2013. Secret Compass,





founded by ex-British military officers of Her Majesty's Forces Parachute Regiment, are pioneers in adventurous travel and lead expeditions to some of the most remote regions on earth. This time, they have put together a very challenging, minimalist-type, journey for the women heading to Russia.

The preparation for this journey is vital to the team's success, and the highly qualified coaches at Gravity, Singapore's most exclusive private member's wellness club, will train them. *"Gravity's coaches at our state-of-the-art training facility will ensure the women build up their strength and endurance, and are in TOP physical condition prior to departure,"* said Sarah See, Head of Marketing at Gravity.



This WOAM expedition has for objective to raise \$ 100,000 SGD for Women for Women International (WfWI) – an independent humanitarian organisation, which provides women survivors of war, civil strife and other conflicts with tools and resources to move from crisis and poverty to stability and self-sufficiency.

Brita Fernandez Schmidt, Executive Director of WfWI in the UK stated, *"The women we work with live in some of the world's most dangerous places – it can be hard for us to imagine their daily challenges. I find it so inspiring that WOAM push themselves far*

outside their comfort zone in order to raise money and awareness for women survivors of war. Each trek they take on is just as challenging as the last, and WOAM members truly go the extra mile to leverage their networks and raise incredible sums of money, which make a real difference to the women we serve."

WOAM, now in its third year of operation, has managed to raise close to half a million Singapore dollars to date, for women survivors of war and abuse. In addition to WfWI, the team also champions and raises funds for, AWARE, Singapore's leading gender equality advocacy group, UN Women Singapore, and Aidha, a Singapore NGO empowering domestic workers.

The women's journey will begin in the Arctic town of Salekhard, in the Yamal Peninsula, one of the least known, but most important, regions of the Russian Federation. In the language of the indigenous Nenets, Yamal means 'the end of the world.' From there, they will drive along the frozen surface of the River Ob to reach Yar Sale village and begin their 60km crossing of the frozen Gulf of Ob. Most of the travelling from there will be on foot, on wooden sledges or on snowmobiles. At the end of the crossing, the team will attend the annual reindeer herders' festival in Yar Sale, which will offer a chance to witness some





extraordinary events such as reindeer racing, wrestling, sledge jumping, lassoing and other traditional sports.

Today more than 10,000 nomads herd 300,000 domestic reindeer on the pastures of the Arctic tundra. Under those pastures are huge gas deposits holding almost a quarter of the world's known reserves. The Nenets reindeer herders have retained an extraordinarily rich and well-preserved culture. They are the guardians of a style of reindeer herding that is the last of its kind. Over the course of a yearly migration of over a thousand kilometres, they move gigantic herds of reindeer from their summer pastures in the north to winter pastures just south of the Arctic Circle. No-one knows for certain who is leading who – the reindeer or the people – but whoever is in charge, they have to battle one of the world's harshest environments.

By trekking in such challenging conditions, WOAM hopes to bring international attention to the need for societies, governments and corporations to get involved and help end violence against women. The team passionately feels this reality can no longer be tolerated, in any form, in any context, and by anyone around the globe. Ultimately, WOAM's objective is to inspire women to want to leave their comfort zone, their families and homes for a certain period of time, while pushing their limits in an effort to rally support for a worthy cause. At the core of their culture is a passion for adventure and a deep respect and love of nature. They seek to travel and explore the world, and as a result make new discoveries, flourish as individuals, and most important, contribute to society, while championing the cause of women around the world.

FIND OUT MORE

About WOAM

WOAM is a non-profit organisation registered in Singapore, that combines challenging, self funded, expeditions and trek to remote and majestic locations around the world, with inspirational fundraising events and workshops in Singapore and Nepal, as a means to raise awareness and funds for women survivors of war and abuse. <http://www.womenmission.com>

About Women for Women International (WfWI)

Since 1993, WfWI have supported over 420,000 of the most socially-excluded women survivors of war in Iraq, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo; and their work has never been more pressing than it is today. With the rise of extremist groups like ISIS and Boko Haram, the women that they serve live in some of the world's most dangerous places. Where extremism and conflict take root, the livelihoods, freedoms, and security of individuals suffer – and it is women and children who bear the brunt. Yet when given the tools, resources and knowledge to access





livelihoods and protect their rights, WfWI know that women can literally transform their families, communities – and ultimately their nations.

This is where they help. Through their 12-month programme, women learn about their rights, as well as key life skills (such as health, managing their finances, how to build social networks for business and emotional support). They also learn vocational and business skills to access livelihoods and break free from poverty. Communities are not, of course, made up of just women and because the whole community benefits when everyone in the community is involved, WfWI work hard to engage men in their programmes. Men are powerful advocates for women's empowerment, breaking down prejudices and practices, which prevent women from reaching their potential. <http://www.womenforwomen.org.uk>

About Secret Compass

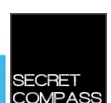
Founded by former military commanders Tom Bodkin and Levinson Wood, Secret Compass have designed some of the most ambitious expeditions, bespoke adventures and challenging films shoots on the planet. Their team of expert military guides are some of the most experienced in the industry and have worked in every kind of environment, achieving ground-breaking world firsts such as mountain biking in Afghanistan, mountaineering in Iraq and white water rafting in South Sudan. Secret Compass plan and design unique experiences for WOAM, which are exciting and creative, inspired by the bold explorers of old but with a modern approach. No idea is too ambitious. Give them a challenge - whether it's parachuting into the African Bush, following the migration of reindeer herders in Siberia or rock climbing in the Jordanian desert - they'll rise to it. <http://www.secretcompass.com>

About Gravity

Gravity is an exclusive private member's club designed to cater to senior executives and individuals seeking a highly personalised holistic health and wellness solution in a single location. Gravity is an all-encompassing wellness haven, combining exercise, wellness therapy and nutrition programmes with business amenities delivered through highly personalised service. Every aspect of well-being is taken care of seamlessly with an in-house doctor dispensing advice and health tests, wellness practitioners that include massage therapists, nutritionists and osteopaths, and certified fitness experts all working together. Located at the top floors of CapitaGreen in Singapore, members will also have exclusive access to the Breakfast Club at Gravity's restaurant, Artemis, on the 40th floor when the restaurant opens in October 2015. <http://www.gravityclub.com>

The press release is issued by Skyy Creative Consultant Pte Ltd

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