SINGAPORE: A group of 18 Singapore Management University (SMU) students will attempt to climb up one of the African continent's natural wonders - Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania - in June.

The attempt also has a community service element, the first expedition project of its kind.

During their training sessions at Bukit Timah Nature Reserve, it is not just a physical challenge, but also a bonding experience between the SMU undergrads and eight juvenile offenders.

The team hopes their "Dare to Dream" project will help the boys develop the right attitude and values towards life.

One of the boys, "Joseph", said, "...to know my limit and learn more from the trip, like team work and like helping each other, to help to get to the top together...without any teamwork, I don't think that all of us can make it to the peak....because to support each other mentally and physically is very important for the whole trip."

Interacting with the SMU students will also give the boys a role model to look up to, like a big sister or brother.

Eventually, five of them will be selected to go on the expedition.

Melvin Phang, Expedition Co-Leader, "Dare to Dream", Singapore Management University, said, "The criteria we are choosing is mainly based on how they can fit into the team, whether they are a team player, and very importantly, how fit they are, (whether) they can take the physical rigour of the expedition."

Each climber will be carrying at least 10 kilogrammes in their backpacks.

Apart from ascending Bukit Timah Hill as part of their training, the group has also been working out in the gym and given stairs training with their full climbing loads.

Climbing Mount Kilimanjaro is unique because of its height and location near the equator.

Climbers can experience different climates from the desert to tropics, to even alpine conditions. - CNA/ms