

June 2018

A reprieve from the hectic this month!

WED – World Environment Day arrived with much excitement!

Our final meeting was on the Saturday & I checked in with the team the night prior to ensure everything was ticked! Trucks, rice bags, timeline of event, media arrival, recyclables pickup etc....

SMPN7 covered the cost of 10 T-shirts for Teachers & three teachers also covered the cost of gasoline for the three army trucks. KESAB AU covered the badges for 100 students & the man to pick up recycling.

Time to put our plan into action!

The plan was to meet at school at 7am, brief the students, go over what was recyclable, what wasn't & the army trucks to arrive at 7.30AM. Hmhmhmhm

Army trucks arrived at 8.45am (apparently no communication), so students were restless. Schedule completely out the window & my concern was for the people arriving at event – sanitation Dept, local council & politician – 'don't worry Linda' was all I kept hearing.

So we loaded 100 students & teachers into trucks, (my 1st time in an army truck) & we arrived at PG beach at approx 9.10am. Some teachers had gone ahead to meet others. The plan to have 6 groups with 1 teacher to each group to monitor recyclables & motivate was non-existent – there were students everywhere, while the teachers stood in a group chatting. After an hour I checked the recyclables being collected & it was very evident they hadn't understood instructions, but when traced back, the teacher hadn't understood my instructions. Recyclables were not collected, therefore that part of the education did not occur.

So after about 90 minutes, I could see students had had enough – more play, less action! We had some rest before heading back to school.

So... WED, we came, we collected garbage & the beach was cleaner. The sanitation dep't did arrive to pick it up, yet the council nor did the politician attended the event.

I learnt that even one of the best English Teachers who assured me that they understood, didn't & that when they promise that something will be done, that I need to follow up. I learnt that what is important to me (the environment, the ocean & the marine animals) should be, but isn't necessarily as important to them.



The radio interview the day prior was a lot of fun – the 45 minutes allocated rolled into 75 with everyone learning more about #saynotoplastic & #worldenvironmentday



RAMADAN – so the end of Ramadan went off with a bang, everything & everyone came back to life with a cacophony of mosques competing as to who can be the loudest, the daytime traffic back to full roar, fireworks every night, people celebrating & all of the warungs open for lunch.

Ahmed – as my funds dwindled towards the end of the month, I was unable to pay for his evening meal & a good reason for the locals to ‘step up’ to support. I advised Haerul (local laundry) who said he was giving him some food & that he’d located his family & spoken to them – about what is hard to determine.

One day I saw Ahmed walking & noted he has an extremely abnormal ‘gait’, his mobility is quite compromised, putting him at great risk of a fall & injury & I wondered if it’s an old injury or a neurological issue – either way, sadly it adds to his issue of a community regarding him as ‘crazy’ & I’m sure he is in pain.

I have called Endri <https://endrifoundation.or.id> & shared Ahmeds story & asked him to help – hopefully tomorrow we will visit him to see what support Endri can provide. Fingers crossed! The wonderful thing is that a couple of the locals now look at this man through different eyes now, understand he actually is not crazy, but a sad story, exacerbated by a lack of support.

So we’re on school holidays now, I’m fighting boredom with no books to read, no TV & I’ve watched my movies to death.

So I decided to venture up to **Sengiggi** last week for some time on the beach, wow my Apex allowance doesn’t allow for too much of that – western prices aimed at the tourist population. Sadly I note the garbage situation is just as bad & whilst lazing on the beach I picked up the black straws almost unseen in the black sand. And the sellers flocked – “no thanks, no thanks, no thanks, but please sit down & look at this video of a straw being pulled from a turtles nose”. Gasps of horror, discussion about straws on the beach & the dangers to the local marine life.

My Australian contact here in Jakarta, Fiona (Lomboks Forgotten Children), had actually referred me to this beach bar which happens to be operated by Australian women – I’m shocked they’re serving drinks on the beach with plastic straws. I get to thinking – staving boredom & putting school holidays to good use by educating. So I’ve made contact with the ladies at this café/bar today & offered education for their staff – they have jumped at it so now in the process of planning. I’m sure/hope this is only the beginning.

(Also today, the guys from the village we taught at months ago visited, with his friend who makes the bamboo straws – perfect timing. We discussed the possibility of him providing them with the bamboo straws & the education around hygiene with them & he was very eager to participate)

So my day at Sengiggi would not have been complete if I didn’t indulge my sweet tooth at ‘Temptations Bakery’ & ouch, western delicacies for western prices, nonetheless, the small cheesecake was scrumptious. Sitting there, contemplating life & I note, the radio in the background was Sydney radio & I was listening to the bleak wintery weather report – so glad to be in Lombok. I notice or hear the lady at the table beside me was an Aussie also – we engage, she has been here many years, almost a local one might say. She has her fingers in many pies but what had my interest was that she is an RN & just built a state of the art facility here for addicts. WOW! I learn that meth-amphetamine is as serious an issue here as it is in Oz.

Another Australian gent joins us, but the conversation turned to him, he was extremely unwell & she diagnosed him with possible Hepatitis & enlarged liver, swollen belly, yellow skin & eyes - talk turned to him returning to AU asap & getting him a flight & next minute - his head smashes against the table, everything goes flying, he’s going down & immediately starts having a seizure. Times like these I’m so grateful for the tedious year after year CPR & 1st Aid training my job always required!

She & I both swung into action - talk of ambulances being too slow, getting him to the international hospital 40 minutes away, getting her car closer to the door & whilst I mop up blood, keep him calm & in the recovery position & next thing, he was unconscious! His breathing is labored & had a very weak pulse, I call his name again & again & he’s conscious again. Phew – he was a big guy & the thought of doing CPR for any length of time caused me some anxiety.

Car is at the door, some men help him up & out to the car, he’s conscious but not lucid & his eyes rolling back into his head & we yell for another passenger & they’re off, not sure how they got through Mataram at peak hour rush. I said a little prayer to the universe! A lovely day ending with a bang.

Visa

Immigration here - what a circus, so after much to’ing & fro’ing to get appropriate paperwork signed, stamped & stamped via a stamp from the post office & 3 trips to Immigration, we went back to pick up visa, only to be told

their 'server' was down & couldn't provide me with visa. Irwandi gave them his number for them to call & today, over a week later & I'm still without a visa. I question 'what if people need to leave the country'? I have a document from Immigration to say that they have my passport, but it nearly didn't work for WU & it was only because I stood my ground for them to accept it. What if I needed to leave the country in an emergency?

2 Weddings & a funeral

So this past month has seen me attend 2 weddings, one I was formally invited to – Teacher Irwandi's family & another an impromptu invitation by Irwandi's friend in a village in south, east Lombok. Both very different, the one in the village very traditional & little money spent & the other here in Mataram, that I'm sure cost a whole lot more. And of course, as I remarked to Irwandi entering the Village, I could make some money here on 'photos' & I was right – all eyes on the foreigner & requests for many, many pics. We did note that there was some recycling going on in the village. After the wedding we went on to another village where the ladies showed me how to basket weave, drying tobacco & ornamental timber carvings sold to tourists in Bali. Awesome day, but a long way on the back of a motorbike.



Sadly Irwandi's Uncle passed away quite suddenly with a heart attack – he was a lovely man & the one that drove us down to the Village to teach & then onto Selong Balanak. A quietly spoken man, but very much loved by his family. It's been rather sad.

It all comes down to education – I asked security for a ladder, they shake their heads & appear in disbelief, I show them a picture of filters in an air conditioner – I want to clean mine. Two days later a ladder is delivered & the guys shaking his head, I show him pictures of what I want to clean & he's still shaking his head, off I go, up the ladder, remove the filters – ohh dear, how is this AC even working! We clean together, I can tell, he's never seen this before & I'm thinking, perhaps he's thinking of a new business venture – hahahaha.....

All the power points in the house have been fixed and are now secure – more learning for me as I thought I was being taken advantage of & Teacher Baihaqi confirmed – aww Linda, very expensive! I had a gut feeling that I was. So I've learnt, I don't pay for services until they're completed & I get the teachers to do the negotiating for me. Nonetheless I feel safer now plugging things into electrical points.



The Apex phone one night blew a fuse, just plugging it in – funny experience trying to explain to the men here, however once they understood & came to the house, all was sorted & I was back under lights again.

Ohh & CS & Saris are talking about coming for a visit & to do some work here, so not sure if he's contacted you regarding a contact for a holiday home you rented here, but I have found them a driver. It will be nice to see them again & no doubt get to eat delicious Indian food.

I also have a friend stopping over enroute from Bahrain to Australia – at teachers request for information about starting/creating a 'community garden' & as my friend has a lot of experience in this & managed one in Adelaide, so we're starting to plan. Also Irwandi & I have visited 2 'waste banks' to learn the how, what, where & why & he's very keen to set one up at Mambalan Village. It's a very interesting project, whereby the locals get paid for their plastic waste – interesting.

I have also begun growing some vegies here just with seeds from my scraps, & re-purposing yoghurt containers into plant pots. Currently I have tomatoes, capsicums & sweet potato seedlings. I'm actually surprised they're growing in the soil here from the yard.....



So a quieter month as far as school goes, however, and as much as I don't do 'downtime' very easily & enjoy a faster pace, it has freed me up to do other things. Ohh & I get to sleep in some days.

Roll on July – my birthday month & so happy to be spending it in the warmth of Lombok as opposed to the dead of winter in Oz! Grateful for the little things....