

30/03/18 Loving my very busy life in Lombok!

Two months in & I'm missing many things, a cool change in the weather, lamb, bacon, fresh green salad & the opportunity to wear appropriate clothing according to the weather are among them. However I'm extremely busy in amongst teaching & garbage & having the most fabulous cultural experiences, including participating in Muslim & Hindu celebrations. It's difficult to put everything that happens here in a 2 page document – so I'll just report of the most significant.

The teachers at school have certainly taken me under their wings & include me in mostly everything that's possible. A week ago I was invited to join the teachers at school in the evening as they were grilling fish – whilst I refuse to eat fish that caught here WILL have traces of plastic in it, I did try a new dish 'pelecing'. A green vegetable cooked with coconut & nuts & way too much chili, I didn't enjoy it though I would try it again made somewhere else. But the experience could not have been bought – I sat on the floor of the multi-media room with 10 men, ranging from the principal, vice principal & teachers, eating rice with my right hand, not left, sharing language & laughter all the while listening to them chatter away in their native tongue. Note: they were rather amused by my concern about the hungry cats that joined us.

Two weeks ago I was included in the annual Hindu Ogoh Ogoh celebrations – put simply, they work all year making these huge very scary looking effigies which represent evil, they march them down a main street & at the end of the day burn them, essentially getting rid of the evil. Ogoh Ogoh is followed by Nyepi Day, (also known as Silent Day) which is a day of fasting & meditation.

This past week I was invited to join 'dharma santi' celebrations, another Hindu ritual of dancing, spectacular costume & make up & music. I have been invited & attended 2 weddings, one a Teacher from school, the 2nd being Pak Win's nephew. For the life of me I don't understand how there are no fans at these events, everyone dressed sitting under these tent like structures where it has to 50+d.

I have begun **extra smaller classes** after school for students wanting to improve their pronunciation, we call it The English Club, currently 7 x year 9 students & soon to start a year 8 group. Luckily we can have the library as it's the only accessible room with AC.

Tomorrow Saturday is our 4th meeting to continue planning:

- 1) **Poster completion** – this is being introduced to our students now – there is excitement in the air. It requires student/class participation to research to determine the content of their poster.

A friend in AU has donated some art materials, crayons, water colours, paint brushes etc. I have created the flier, see attached.

My friends in AU are donating \$100 prize money, to be partially spent on re-useable products such as drink bottle, cloth shopping bags, re-usable take away food containers etc & school is providing 2nd & 3rd prizes.

- 2) Planning for **WED (World Environment Day)** is under way – it will be at the local beach, simply as it's in such a mess, we also want to have an albeit miniscule impact on the ocean there & for exposure purposes etc. From my understanding, the school principle will write letters to the Health & Sanitation Dept.'s. The teachers will advise local media for further exposure & are approaching local organisations, phone company, water company, and tour operators etc to sponsor the event. Even going as far as requesting the **military** to provide 2 trucks on the day to transport students & teachers to the local beach.

We are looking for sponsors to fund t-shirts & re-usable water bottles for the day. A proposal in Bahasa is being drafted by one of our Teachers as I write this.

My other idea is to have 'batik' cloth bags made with perhaps the school logo imprinted on it – again it comes down to funding.

I have written to **ABC Australia** – 3 weeks ago, no response as yet. I will email again.

I have just written to **Apex Environmental** 3 weeks ago – no response. I will email again.

KESAB is providing \$250 + support & advice to me.

The team of English teachers & I meet at school each Saturday & we're looking to **find local sponsors** – I approached the local **Yamaha** dealer (where Apex purchased a brand new motorbike), however my request only seemed to confuse the dealer – (language barrier) so I asked a local teacher to explain, I still don't feel too optimistic.

Finding the **local Rotary Group** has been difficult – I've found a FB for them, however nothing has been posted on it since 2016 – I have sent a private message – though I don't hold out much hope there – would you have a contact for them here in Mataram or Lombok?

- 3) **PP presentation (Education for students & teachers)** – this is almost completed. This is now being planned, though we're now including as many parents & the sellers at school that are handing out single-use plastic like there's no tomorrow ☹️ I've suggested a couple of evening sessions to provide education to as many as possible.
- 4) **Student Environment Group** – a team of 'waste warriors' as such & this will be determined by students passionate for the cause post education. We've planned to create a FB group for them so I can provide support & motivation after I leave.
- 5) **Mambalan Village Clean-up** – we've had 2 clean-up events there – first at Community Centre & second was last Sunday in the village, a big day to say the least – bins, bags, gloves & brooms purchased, 100 bags of garbage collected which as you can imagine, only touched the surface. A friend of mine in Australia provided the funding for this. Hopefully I have time to provide some education out there.
- 6) **SMP7 School Clean-up** – this plan was hatched yesterday at school after the principal drove us out to the village last weekend & seeing me take pictures of all the garbage at school. So 200 garbage bags were purchased along with gloves & is planned for tomorrow 31/03/18.
- 7) I have managed to locate a local resource – '**Surfer Sam & the Turtle**' – its published in the 3 languages used here – though it's 2 hours away, getting there to pick it up has taken a back seat to all the other activities.

During my discussions with Haris from Yamaha using Teacher Irwandi to translate, we were told about a couple of innovative men who are also so concerned for the garbage situation, have developed a machine that turns plastic into a gasoline, of sorts.

They drove 1½ hours to my home to show me their video of this machine & whilst I am not an engineer by any stretch, I could understand how it works & I was gob-smacked. They have the land for the factory, are looking for funding which hopefully will come from the government, will employ 10 men & if they can get this off the ground they'll turn plastic into gold, so to speak. Not only will it address the plastic pollution situation, they want to turn proceeds into philanthropic organisations. WOW! We laughed about where my passion lies in education about reducing single-use plastic & one day hopefully put them out of business.

The little gated community in which I live is a constant hive of activity, my neighbours have been so welcoming & very helpful, even remembering my name when I cannot even pronounce theirs. ☺️ I have been invited into their home to join them for food & teaching their children some English.

After now living such a short time within a predominantly Muslim community & observing, as I regard actions higher than words along with what I learnt from my Muslim friend in Cambodia, I will never ever hear another bad word for this religion. Yes it's just another institution whereby people are segregated from others, however they like the Hindu's who all live together in peace & harmony, are generous, welcoming, warm & friendly to others who are not. Out of respect I always ensure I'm covered but not to the same extreme & they've shown nothing but acceptance & friendship

I'm learning, though very slowly some of the language here, but frankly it's not my priority with so much else to focus on, but enough to keep the teachers at school amused at my incorrect pronunciation.

The ridiculously slow to non-existent internet is the bane of my existence here & challenges me constantly as I rely on it to access websites & YT to put education together & contact with friends & family at home. So a new SIM card buys more data than just topping up with credit, but it only allows a certain amount of data, FB & YT each month. Yet friends still complain about the NBN at home & I have to laugh!

After 2 separate & desperate calls for blood donations, I turn up & offer my arm, only to be told as an O-, the rarer type, they do not have the facilities to store or extract the red blood cells. Interesting learning.

So it's been another busy month with the next probably busier, more then.



 	
<h2>POSTER COMPETITION</h2>	
THEME: WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY HARI LINGKUNGAN HIDUP SEDUNIA PLASTIC/MARINE POLLUTION (current situation) SAMPAH PLASTIK DAN PENCEMARAN LAUT CHALLENGES FOR ENVIRONMENT WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP? (why young people matter) UPAYA UNTUK MENGATASI MASALAH SAMPAH PLASTIK	PRIZES: 1st— Rp 1,000,000.00 For purchasing reusable products (cloth shopping bags, drink bottles, food containers) to reduce single-use plastics. 2nd— Rp 300,000.00 3rd— Rp 200,000.00
JUDGES: ENGLISH TEACHERS & MISS Unda's FRIENDS (via Facebook) WHEN: WED 2nd MAY 2018	LANGUAGE: ENGLISH/BAHASA/SASAK POSTERS WILL BE PUT UP IN CLASSROOMS
You will find lots of information & inspiration at these websites: 	http://www.greeningtheblue.org/event/world-environment-day https://www.unenvironment.org/explore-topics/oceans-seas https://www.breakfreefromplastic.org/ http://www.oneworldocean.com/initiatives/PlasticsBreakdown https://theconversation.com/how-can-indonesia-win-against-plastic-pollution-80966 http://cleanseas.org/take-action

Mambalan Village Cleanup – 25/03/18



Dinner with the men in the multimedia room & trying traditional food, eating with hands – 1 experience I'll never forget.....



Ogoh Ogoh with 2 Teachers



Dharma Santi with Teachers & students



Pak Wins nephews wedding.



WED meeting – Saturday in the library.



Teachers wedding.



Learning Bahasa – hilarious!



Heading out to Mambalan Village cleanup with volunteer students & Teacher & school principal driving.



Meeting the Minister of Education from Jakarta.



My English Club receiving art materials from Australia for Poster Comp.



That's all folks!!

2 days to finally get PC & phone to connect using very bad Wi-Fi & changing carriers, again!