

April 2018

What an eventful month it's been!

We've celebrated **Earth Day** – as it was a day post my emergency trip to KL, I was unprepared for the cleanup of the local waterway. Plan B, instead we went to inspect the garbage IN the waterway to determine just what it's made up of – as expected, 98% is single-use plastic. Fortunately we were able to go into the village & engage some locals about their dumping in the waterway, cost & regularity of gov't truck to pick up. It was an educational & enlightening few hours, sadly the locals more interested in the white guru (teacher☺), than the garbage issue.



Year 9's have completed Junior High School

It was a busy time for all with extra study & the normal stress that comes with exams, all culminating in their final hurrah this weekend with a trip to Tanjung Aan beach in the south of Lombok. It took 14 buses to transport 500+ students & teachers. What I am curious about is that I managed to get only 1 student & 1 teacher in for a swim. We had a minor accident when 1 of the students slipped over on the rocks causing a slight graze, but everyone yelling Miss Linda, Miss Linda – 1st aid please. I carry Betadine, band-aids & Paracetamol wherever I go. It was so nice to spend this time relaxing with students & talking about their future pursuits.



An opportunity to check out the local hospital x 2 visits – 2 diagnoses hahaha!

The one I went with was an infected 'parotid gland'. A very painful condition which prevented me from chewing food, I ate a lot of rice porridge over 3 weeks. Funny experiences at the hospital – again I was mobbed by the staff wanting to know more about me than my condition, thank heavens for Novi who understands & speaks good English & was able to translate. Quite confronting when having to put ones health & faith into a translator. Finally I'm able to eat & all swelling is gone.



Poster Competition

This is almost completed, with most art work submitted, judging is this coming week with the winners announced on Wednesday 02/05. It's clear that the instructions given were not understood, (even though it was translated) as the art works overall don't reflect the subject – World Environment Day & plastic pollution. Though some grace allowed for Year 9 exams. Winning art work will be included in next month's report.

Next project is World Environment Day on 05/06 – lots of planning happening for this event – looking for sponsors, the military to provide transport to local beach for cleanup with hopefully a visit from a local politician & the media.

Following this is **education to all students, teachers & parents**. I have developed a PowerPoint presentation & we're discussing running night sessions to allow as many parents to come – fortunately I now have the extra time to do this so the pressure is off.

Learning more every week about the **education system** here which has included an unexpected meeting with the **Minister of Education** at school. She asked for me to help with 'literacy' & my mind automatically went to the several classes daily that have no teachers. These classes run rampant in school disrupting other classes. Meetings for teachers are held during class time, which I don't understand. Government employed teachers leave class for meetings, teachers studying at Uni leave their class to meet with their Uni tutor. It appears to me that while they say they want to improve education, it takes a back seat to many other things. The school library stocks 6 books in English. There is no English on the walls in classrooms. All of which I did not share with the Minister, though I would have liked.



SMP7 Cleanup



English Club

So I meet with 7, Year 9 students who asked for more help with English – we meet weekly in the library after classes. We read & discuss English & work on pronunciation & extend their vocabulary. This is very informal as they share some of their language & culture with me also. They determine time & if they can make it or not, but the lovely thing is, these students are now preparing to start Senior High School, but still want to continue on with our little English Club.

Last but definitely not least – **Visa overstay!!**

After many attempts to engage with a local Apexian for help with extending my visa, to no avail, I eventually called the other Apexian for help. He bought a local agent here to help & as it was discovered I had over-stayed 24 days. In my defense I did lean on my experience from Cambodia in that a visa is issued from start date to end date – not here in Indonesia.

So an emergency exit planned from Australia – thank god for Win, Craig & Hellyn & CS/Saras in Kuala Lumpur. I was packing a suitcase with very few clothes & heading to the airport in a matter of 2 hours & flying to a country & city I'd never been to renew my visa.

I had to face immigration & explain my over-stay, to say I felt anxious was grossly understated, however I survived & it was a very expensive lesson – in that I need to have a full understanding of visa conditions.

New food – I've tried kamping (goat) a couple of times & love it!

I have some Aussie friends arriving next week for a few days as they travel Indonesia & I'm very much looking forward to easy conversation & seeing a little more of Lombok as we have a day planned at the beach & I think maybe a food tour.

Power failure – Lombok has just experienced a very lengthy power blackout, seeing most of the island without power for almost 24 hours. It was a very long & hot 17 hours Here in Pagutan resulting in the loss of all the food in the frig, a day after a food shop! ☹️ A great reminder to be grateful for the simple things.



Another busy & eventful month, with some lessons learnt - and that's it for April 2018.