

Building a Library in Bungaya Village Bali

After raising \$17,000 of the \$20,000 we needed, the construction of the Bungaya Library started in March 2017. I travelled to Bali and joined the construction group, with 10 others from the Sunshine Coast on 1 April.

The day before we started work we had the great honour of being invited to a special feast prepared for us at the home of 1 of Indonesia's most respected, now retired politicians, a resident of Bungaya village and Director on the Board of Puspadi Bali. The feast was attended by the staff of Puspadi Bali and their families and the Directors on Puspadi's Board. Tyas and I were asked to make a speech about why we decided to build a library in her village. A special meal was prepared for us including rice shaped like a cone called tempeng, Indonesia's national dish. As the honoured guests we were asked to cut the tempeng.



The group from Australia included Graeme Smith, teacher librarian from Immanuel Lutheran College, his wife Cristin, a special needs teacher and a group of 5 of their friends. It also included my 80 year old grandmother Jan Picton, a triathlete from the Sunshine Coast.

Day 1

In villages in Bali all construction is done by hand. With many people earning \$25 a week or less, villagers could not afford earthmoving equipment and there is little in Bali anyway.

One of our tasks on the 1st day was to clear a Marigold field as this is where the Bale is going to be built. Marigolds are used extensively by the Balinese in their offerings to the Gods and religious ceremonies. Photo is grandma and Graeme clearing the field. A Bale is a very important community meeting centre used for community meetings & education sessions and dancing classes.



We also had to move big piles of soil and stones from 1 end of the site to the other so it could be used as fill to level the site. So we formed chain gangs and passed buckets from 1 person to another, right down the line. Our chain gang had about 20 people in it & everyone helped including Puspadi Bali staff in their wheelchairs and Tyas's little sister, 4 year old Arina.

Sentosa who runs Puspadi Bali's Wheelchair Program, Arina & Tyas





Day 2
On day 2 we had a big delivery of soil that we had to move from the road down to a water pit where the local builders would use it to mix concrete.



This is grandma and Tyas working hard to move the soil closer to the library building.



We were joined by some of my friends from my Bali school Bali Island School, who also raised \$1500 for the library. So teenagers from many cultures are helping to build the library.



60% of the life of a Balinese is taken up with cultural events so it was not unusual to witness a ceremony. Some of the village children stopped by to say hello on their way to the temple.

The red & gold cloth is unique to Bungaya & woven in the village



Day 3

Day 3 saw a delivery of rocks that had to be moved from the road to the Bale site at the very end of the library. The rocks will be used as base and also to assist with drainage. Tyas and I worked together on this. The man with the artificial leg works for Puspadi, 80% of Puspadi's staff have a physical disability.



Then I had a break and did some digging. We had to dig ditches to put the rocks in.



It was hot work so we all loved the fresh coconut prepared by Pak Guning, Puspadi's Operations Manager. Like most of Puspadi staff he has a physical disability and is missing his fingers on his left hand.



Day 4

Day 4 saw us still moving the rocks to the back of the site.



We were also joined by the teenagers from Interact, the Rotary group for teens that Tyas started at her school. They helped us during the morning & we had another very long chain gang.



Then in the afternoon we all went to the temple. Bungaya had a major ceremony on, that only happens once every 10 years. So grandma, mum & I dressed in our kebaya's & met everyone there.



Day 5

There was no building today because it was the last day of the ceremony so everyone was at the temple again. 100 pigs were brought as offerings and hundreds of multi layered offerings, called banten tegeh, made by women and worn on their heads were brought to the temple.





It was also time for me to say goodbye to Tyas and Bungaya as my school holidays are coming to an end. I feel very sad to be leaving especially as I will not be here to see the library finished. But I am very happy and grateful that with the help of many teenagers of many nationalities we have been able to make a difference for the young people of Bungaya village.

When the library is finished at the end of May it means children can improve their readings skills, which means they will have a better education. A better education means they will get better jobs and hopefully lift themselves and their families out of poverty. In this, we have done our bit to help achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



