

Davis Projects for Peace Grant Proposal

Environmental Awareness, Community Collaboration and Art in Eastern Bali

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Bali, Indonesia

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Project Summary: With the support of the Davis Projects for Peace Grant, we will partner with Agung Bali Children's Foundation (ABC Foundation) to teach elementary school children and their families about ecological stewardship through collaborative art projects utilizing trash collected from their local environment. We will also work with ABC Foundation co-director Darren Leaver to develop a recycling plan to reduce improper waste disposal, helping to promote peaceful relations between neighboring rural villages that are in conflict over downstream pollution.

Current household waste disposal practices in the neighboring villages of Banjar Sala and Tatiapi include burning plastics and dumping non-biodegradable materials into, and near, local water sources. These practices compromise the local ecosystem, pose significant health risks to inhabitants, and create unsightly, polluted environments. The pollution in these villages also deters tourists from visiting the area, thereby limiting potential income and local job opportunities available through Bali's growing service industry. The central goals of this project will be to raise the villagers' awareness about the environmental impacts of their current system of trash disposal, to engage them in cleaning up their communities by introducing a recycling program, and to facilitate more peaceful and cooperative relations among upstream and downstream village populations by joining them together in collaborative art projects, community events, and in the common cause of protecting their villages' natural resources.

Why: In Bali, a deep economic divide exists between the Balinese who work in the popular tourist destinations on the western side of the island, and those who live in the impoverished rural villages in the interior and on the eastern side of the island. Current non-profit and governmental efforts to educate communities in reducing their waste are largely focused on the western areas most frequented by tourists. The eastern villages of Banjar Sala and Tatiapi, however, remain largely uneducated about proper waste disposal and still engage in harmful practices such as dumping trash into local water sources and burning plastic. Emissions from burnt waste--including methane, benzene, dioxins, and nitrogen dioxide--have been linked to a host of major health concerns including cancer (generally lung, throat and prostate), mutations in the development of the male reproductive system, immune system malfunctions, birth defects, kidney disease and respiratory illnesses.

Environmental degradation also creates conflict among neighboring villages that share water sources. Inhabitants who live in villages along rivers suffer from the waste disposal practices of nearby upstream villages, often leading to deep-seated conflicts among these neighboring populations. Raising awareness about the implications of improper waste disposal plays a vital role in encouraging new practices that can empower the community, aid peace-keeping efforts among local villages, provide sustainable livelihoods and ensure preservation of the ecosystem in eastern Bali. Unlike other, more developed areas in the country, the pollution in this eastern region is not caused by factory run-off, or by tourist-industry waste. Given that the pollution is largely related to local populations' current practices for dealing with daily refuse, great opportunity exists for helping this region to become more environmentally sustainable and to resolve local conflicts related to the pollution through education and community empowerment. Aside from the ABC Foundation, which teaches English within these two rural Balinese villages, no other existing organizations in Bali have focused their efforts in this particular region or worked to educate the populations of Banjar Sala and Tatiapi.

How: Our partner organization, ABC Foundation, provides free language instruction to children in Banjar Sala and Tatiapi, employing local teachers who are trained to teach English to hundreds of schoolchildren after regular school hours. In both villages, teachers have already begun incorporating lessons on environmental awareness into the curriculum, with particular emphasis on raising awareness about plastic pollution. As part of one recent lesson, teachers encouraged a group of local children in the program to collect trash and assisted them in simple art projects utilizing the refuse. Although this project had a limited scope, it was met with great enthusiasm in the community, even drawing some of the children's parents out to participate in the clean-up process and art-making.

Our project will build upon the success of this initial effort, but will expand its scope and scale. We plan to work with approximately 60 students, ages six to thirteen, who participate in after-school programming at the ABC Foundation. Half of the students will be drawn from Banjar Sala, and half from the neighboring village of Tatiapi. We will engage the students in a large-scale, multi-community clean-up and collaborative art project that will take place during daily sessions over the course of three weeks, from June 23 to July 13, 2014. The project

sessions--aside from the trash-gathering component--will be held in the ABC Foundation's educational facilities. Although the project will center on this group of students, we anticipate involvement from the children's parents and other family members in both communities because of the Balinese people's strong sense of family ties and the interest that family members expressed during the initial art project. The children will be encouraged to collect trash from both villages as a central part of the project. In order to help motivate them to participate, we will offer appropriate prizes (as determined in consultation with ABC Foundation co-director Darren Leaver) to reward the helpers who collect the most plastic. By turning the trash collection into a contest, we hope to make the process fun and engaging for the children. From the trash that they collect, we will create a type of sculpture called an *ogoh-ogoh*. This culturally relevant statue depicts a mythical being that represents purification of the natural environment of any spiritual pollutants caused by human activity. The *ogoh-ogoh* is an important figure in the Hindu-derived philosophy practiced in this region, and is used in religious rituals and processions. Our goal will be to involve community members from both Tatiapi and Banjar Sala in working collaboratively on the sculptures, with the intention of fostering a sense of shared purpose and teamwork among these populations, and helping to alleviate the inter-village conflict generated by upstream trash dumping.

Prior to creation of the *ogoh-ogoh* sculptures, the contest for trash collection, and the collaborative work days associated with both of these efforts, we will facilitate one or more community meetings in which we will talk to children and their families about the purposes of the project and will answer any questions they may have. We will also present a slideshow illustrating the basic concepts of the project we'll be working on together. We'll address how other communities worldwide have dealt with their trash problems, and will show examples of international artists who have created art from trash. Our intention is to foster collaboration among community members from Tatiapi and Banjar Sala through this activity, but also to give them a sense of how they are connected to a larger global community of artists and environmental activists.

Lastly, in an effort to help resolve the conflict caused by downstream pollution in water sources shared by Banjar Sala and Tatiapi, we will aid Darren Leaver in proposing a recycling program to the village leaders. In Bali, the government often encourages local communities to participate in the Bali Clean and Green program, a program that provides equipment for many schools and communities who are willing to manage their trash. Dozens of community-based garbage management programs organized by schools, communities, NGOs, and government offices already exist throughout the country. The Bali Clean and Green program has not yet been implemented in the villages of Banjar Sala and Tatiapi, however. Part of our budget includes seed money to help start up such a program, which would reduce the amount of trash polluting local streams and rivers and would help to alleviate one of the central causes of conflict between these neighboring villages.

Outcome: While we recognize that establishing peaceful relations between the villages of Banjar Sala and Tatiapi may be a long and delicate process, we believe that with the help of ABC Foundation co-director Darren Leaver, who has strong relationships with both communities, we may be able to make some headway in encouraging local leaders to adopt new recycling programs, which would greatly reduce downstream pollution, limiting one clear source of mutual turmoil for the villages. With Mr. Leaver's help we also hope to encourage community-wide participation in the collaborative clean-up and art project, joining these villages in a shared purpose. Mr. Leaver has worked with the populations of Banjar Sala and Tatiapi since 2007, and took over as co-director of the ABC Foundation in 2011. Mr. Leaver has proposed beginning his conversation with village leaders this spring, in order to pave the way for the help that we would provide during our three weeks there this summer, supported by the Davis Projects for Peace Grant.

In establishing the Davis Projects for Peace Grant, one of Mrs. Davis' stated wishes was to "help young people launch... initiatives [to] bring new energy and ideas to the prospects of peace in the world." We see our roles in this process as very much aligned with Mrs. Davis' vision--we believe we can offer fresh insight, creative energy, and focus to help expand and sustain the ABC Foundation's efforts to promote environmental awareness, community-building and peace among villagers in this region. We believe that with the help of the ABC Foundation, an established presence in this region, the program we develop may also continue to have an impact on the populations of these villages long after we leave. We intend to donate all remaining supplies to the Foundation for continued use within the community, and will also contribute workshop notes, plans, and documentation, as well as seed money, to help fund new recycling programs in both of these villages. We trust that the relationships we form within these communities during our project will also shape the way we envision our own roles in the world, going forward. Whether in Banjar Sala and Tatiapi, or back at home in our own communities, we see the work we do through the Davis Projects for Peace Grant as a beginning, an opportunity to become lifelong agents of peaceful change.