

VOLUNTEER REPORT

We have thoroughly enjoyed our stay in Bali. Ron, Gayatri and the staff here have been most welcoming and friendly. They were obviously well prepared for our visit and had worked out the areas where they needed our help.

Building on the work that Jo had done, they provided a good introduction to the work of the foundation and we were able to visit the middlemen and exporters. At the weekend we were taken to the north coast where we saw the field staff in action in their meetings with the fish collectors group and the women's group.

We also visited two primary schools where they hope to provide input in environmental education relating to the care of the coast and coral reef ecosystem.

Hugh has given guidance in financial and governance matters including budgeting, financial software and monthly reports. He has assisted staff in making donor proposals and Joan has "polished" the English.

Following on from the meeting with the women's group he held a workshop on micro-credit schemes.

The staff are all marine biologists and scientists, apart from the accountant, and their English requirements involved checking power point presentations, report writing, conversation and help with pronunciation. They also prepared presentations on given topics. Gayatri involves everyone in discussions and decision making and we had a number of 'brain storming' sessions on subjects such as stakeholders and governance.

The arrangements for our weekends away have been excellent and tailored to our interests. These visits have been wide ranging; monkey forest, rice fields, handicrafts, temples, lakes, former palaces, botanical gardens, orchid gardens, fishing and salt making communities and local traditional villages. The hotels have all been of a good standard and Indonesian and western food has always been available.

Our accommodation was in a small guest house, modest and comfortable, just 10 minutes walk from the office. Breakfast was included and it provided a laundry service and a swimming pool. The only drawback was poor lighting for reading in the evenings. Anyone with a laptop would find a desk useful. Gayatri supplied us with tea making facilities. Shops selling drinks, snacks, ice cream and fruit are nearby. After work it was good to make our way to the beach to enjoy the cool breeze and sample the food in the many restaurants in the area. Sanur is a quiet resort and very peaceful, not at all like the heaving mass of Kuta. The Balinese are a gentle people and we felt safe everywhere we went.

We feel that our skills have been well matched to the needs of the staff and it has been a pleasure to serve them. In the time we have been here they have certainly gained in confidence in using English. We wish them every success in their work.

P.S. Tips for future volunteers

Remember to bring a torch with you as there are occasional power cuts. A universal plug is also useful as washbasins do not always have them here. An adaptor plug is needed for recharging camera batteries etc. We brought an electric mosquito burner with us for use at night as well as mosquito repellent. We were not troubled by midges, although it may be different at other times of the year. Bring a cotton shopping bag to eliminate the use of the dreaded plastic bag. Litter is a problem here.

Hugh and Joan Belshaw
18 June 2008

Please do not republish this report without the permission of people and places
www.travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk