

## EAST BALI POVERTY PROJECT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

*By Dr Scott Younger OBE, Ekoturin Foundation (EBPP) Commissioner*

*Visit to EBPP by Dr Scott Younger OBE, EBPP Commissioner [Pengawas], Saturday, 20 Oct 2007*

On, Saturday, 20 October 2007, I paid a visit to the project in Desa Ban, North East Bali to look over progress since my last one, some 18 months ago, and as part of my pleasant duty as Adviser to the project. I was very pleased to note a number of further developments. For instance, at our Annual Foundation Board Meeting in early 2006, we discussed the introduction of solar electricity to the project site field office, and to the six EBPP schools in the villages as there was no expectation of any of these hamlets being connected to the national grid in the foreseeable future. Now they are installed and offer further training and education opportunities for the children of Desa Ban, as well as facilitating the endeavours of the staff heading up the various programmes within the expansive scope of the project.



Constructing the model bamboo house

The project funding for solar power installations, provided by Raoul Witteveen, one of EBPP's major donors, also provides for probably more important access to communication by electrifying the cadre's houses of the 8 most remote posyandu (community health posts initiated by EBPP since 2003) to ensure emergency help is available by walkie-talkie communication to either the community health centre of EBPP's stand-by health team. Solar power in Desa Ban will probably be saving more lives in the near future.



The solar cell is being intalled at EBPP Bunga school

A second new venture is the construction of a model bamboo house providing a 48m<sup>2</sup> footprint and a mezzanine level for storage or additional lie-down space. The house, designed by one of Indonesia's top bamboo architects, will function as a learning and training centre for all aspects of bamboo development, including planting, reforestation, carbon sequestration, bamboo treatment, and handicraft and furniture making. At the end of construction, apart from the floor and

windows, the structure, which is fully designed for the worst of earthquakes, with bamboo-cement walls will be built entirely of bamboo except for the floor and windows. The bamboo is properly treated on site against termites and other harmful insects. The project's sustainable long term plan is to gradually introduce various beneficial bamboo species to each of the 19 hamlets with the goal of sustainable reforestation and agroforestry and regenerate ecosystems that were devastated by the 1963 Mount Agung eruptions. There is a large number of suitable bamboo trees in the vicinity, but the project is planting more from seedlings, in partnership with all the communities, with one of the goals that they "grow their own house". The construction cost is highly competitive and the structure and technique should be of interest to other such developments, whether simply because of remoteness or in areas of high earthquake risk. In addition, the construction, as here, can be carried out with local people with minimum training. This project is the brainchild of entrepreneur Linda Garland, President of the Nyuh Kuning based Environmental Bamboo Foundation ([www.bamboocentral.org](http://www.bamboocentral.org)), a local resident sponsoring bamboo activities and working with David Booth and the EBPP since 2002. To Linda many thanks are due.

When I was last on site, we were celebrating the success of the schools with the considerable achievements of their pupils. The schooling system of the project has now been extended to cater for SMA grade students, several of whom are availing themselves of this opportunity since they would not have the funds for making a long journey out of the desa to the nearest government school. I also visited EBPP's library in the now very active "Centre for Sustainable Development, Training & Research" now hosting over 3,000 different titles; this compares with the few in number on my previous visit. I was also introduced to Ni Wayan Armiani, the trainee librarian, a girl from Desa Ban who, after graduating primary school, started her EBPP sponsored schooling in July 1999, and graduated from senior high school in 2005, a testimony to the success that children from EBPP's programmes are now demonstrating.

Highly polluted artesian wells, sunk many years ago in a dry river bed and providing the only water source for 450 families in 3 mountain hamlets during the dry season, were being renovated and sanitised to provide a safe water supply, sponsored by a Matching Grant from Rotary Clubs of Bali Seminyak, Mandurah City Australia and Nassau Bahamas. I was also pleased to see an expansion of toilet facilities for the boys and girls of all EBPP schools, courtesy of funding from the RSSG, Jakarta – thank you Cathy Gaze. We are planning for an expansion of sanitation facilities, in keeping with the national drive in this sector.



Scott Younger inspecting the artesian well, accompanied by David Booth

When David Booth and I discussed the sustainability of the project in the early times, tough days grappling with health issues and funding to provide the foundation blocks for the ensuing stages of the project, we forecast that for a project of this type and size, dependent entirely on private support, that it would take from 10 to 12 years from Ground Zero, 1999, to reach proper sustainability. Making an assessment of progress after 8 years would suggest that this projection was about right, thanks to David's drive and the unfailing enthusiasm, dedication and hard work of the many Balinese staff on the programme, from team leaders to the smallest hand, as well as the hundreds of donors that have assisted generously over the years. It is gratifying to be even a small cog in the wheel.

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