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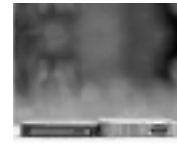
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The Water Heroes

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Photo by Suhartina Sindukusumo

Join Bali water protection program to help preserve fresh water in Bali...

Water is one of the main sources that sustain our livelihood. However, the supply of ground water in this island is way more limited these days. Recent research stated that 60 percent of Bali's freshwater has gone because of extreme use over the past 20 years. Concerned by this issue, a group of people from the IDEP Foundation, Politeknik Negeri Bali (PNB) University, and some committed business leaders have initiated the Bali Water Protection (BWP) program, whose vision and mission aims to save the water in Bali. Bali & Beyond (BB) got the chance to chat with Julien Goalabre (JG), the Communication and Fundraising Officer of the project.

BB: We heard that the BWP is trying to save Bali's ground water, but before that, could you explain about the water shortage in Bali?

JG: Our compilation of research about freshwater in Bali has been going on since five years ago, and the results said that more than 60 percent of Bali's clean water is gone because it is being overly used by people since 20 years ago. The saltwater intrusion resulting from over extraction is also polluting



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age. The saltwater intrusion resulting from over extraction is also polluting the water tables. Fresh ground water used to be found mostly in the central and eastern part of Bali or other areas with many rice fields, but turns out they also supply the water mostly to the south for its intense tourism activities. In the meantime, the water is not enough. So we need to sustain the water again because every part of Bali deserves a clean and fresh supply of water.

BB: What is the core point that makes the BWP's initiators maintain the program?

JG: The situation is urgent and we have a simple solution to solve this issue that cannot be ignored. People who come here for business, leisure or even for yoga retreats notice that clean water here is limited. When they see the color of the tap water they use and notice that it is not clear enough, they become more aware of this issue. We noticed that it was an example that made them want to contribute in making Bali a more sustainable tourist destination. So they try to support our project by giving donations or at least use water more efficiently. And this makes us feel secure and confident to start and maintain the program. And ultimately, we want to fix this issue because we are trying to avoid an ecological disaster.

BB: What are BWP's plans to solve the issue?

JG: We are currently campaigning to fundraise for three sub-programs. The first and most important is 'Adopt a Well,' where we will build 136 rainwater-fed recharge wells in 13 critical intervention areas in Bali including Nusa Lembongan, Nusa Ceningan and Nusa Penida. We will also train 10 building contractors who will build the wells using a manual and designs developed by PNB. Aside from that, we also have created 'Adopt a River,' an educational program where we will go to 132 schools to educate their 9 to 12-year-old students who live by the rivers with the largest watersheds. We will motivate them to "adopt" their river by keeping it clean from trash and chemicals. For each school we will also provide 10 bilingual books about ecology and water as well as teacher aid banners that showcase water cycles. Lastly, we create 'Adopt Water' where we will approach the media in order to raise a Water Awareness Campaign through articles, billboards on the big roads and talk shows on television.

BB: What has BWP accomplished so far?

JG: So far, a lot of work has been done with PNB to raise awareness and inform public agencies as well as to put this issue on the forefront of upcoming policies. Also, we held a plastic-conscious fundraising event named "Trashstock" where half of the event's profits are used to fund the production and distribution of educational comic books as a part of BWP's 'Adopt a River' sub-program. We hope we can get more support and sponsors from people and business leaders who are also aware and willing to contribute to bring back Bali's fresh water for their own and their community's benefit.

BB: What is BWP's message to the people in Bali, both tourists and residents?

JG: We all need water so please note that this program is made for all of us who consume water in Bali. We need to preserve its quality and use it efficiently because in the end, like IDEP's slogan, "We help people to help themselves."

www.idepfoundation.org/bwp

By Suhartina Sindukusumo



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