

Global Learning Award Scheme
Self-initiated Report

About me

Having been majoring in journalism and communication, I have the opportunity to be exposed to social issues and solutions. During my second year in university, the concept of social innovation is introduced to me by my schoolmate Hayley. With further exploration in such field, we have discovered a suitable solution for alleviating social problems in a sustainable way, which is by social entrepreneurship.

We believe that social entrepreneurship is an essential mindset for all, such that both personal and social good could be achieved. We hope to spread her vision to the youth, such that they could break the social perceptions and pursue their dreams bravely.

With such vision, we co-founded a student- led organisation WeLeap. WeLeap aims to promote social entrepreneurship among teenagers by empowering social entrepreneurs and engaging teenagers into social innovation. We hope that the young generation could explore their value and an alternative career path in this impactful model.

WeLeap sources social startups by founded by young adults and facilitate partnership between impact businesses and corporations. It also cultivates social entrepreneurial mindset among teenagers by engaging them into events and media production.

Brief reflection

To most people, Bali is the paradise on earth with beautiful sceneries. This less-developed city, however, is beyond that.

When I first visit Bali in January 2019, I'm impressed by the active involvement and contribution by different sectors in the society on environmental protection and other socially-related movements. Although they face serious waste mismanagement and water pollution, locals turn problems into opportunities by setting up impact businesses that can alleviate social issues as in a self-sustainable way.

As I'm actively working in my social startup WeLeap, I firmly believe that Bali is the right place to learn from. By performing an in-depth study on their impact businesses, I hope to bring their experience and strategies back to Hong Kong. The interviews and site-visits we conducted have also helped me to establish a wider network of connections with social entrepreneurs in all around the world. I have dedicated myself to be involved in socially-related projects and as I believe social innovation is all about collaboration and creativity, the impact of this field trip is not one-off but life-long.

Reflection

Indosole

Indosole is a 10-year impact business that aims to produce responsibly made footwear through recycled tyre technology. Its objective is to alleviate tyre waste problem, as the massive amount of tyre waste is harmful to our environment and personal health. Apart from manufacturing upcycled sandals, Indosole also creates professional, safe and healthy working environment in Bali. The workplace is filled with positivity and staffed by professional adult artisans. In 2014, Indosole becomes a certified B Corporation, which is a proof of meeting the standards of social and environmental performance required by the non-profit B Lab.

It is not an easy journey for Indosole to sustain for 10 years, since the operational cost of upcycling wasted tyre would not be low. The visit to Indosole has allowed us to experience their success in person. Apart from discussing the daily operation with their employees, we have also filmed in the flagship store and released some review videos on our social media. We believe the branding and marketing has allowed Indosole to successfully survive in this competitive business environment and spread their vision at the same time. The interior design of the flagship store is also nicely designed, such that the customers can have a nice shopping experience and learn more about its impactful story.

Potato Head Beach Club

Potato Head is an Indonesian lifestyle and hospitality brand expressed through a collective of dynamic dining and drinking venues in Bali. They support sustainability and local communities. Their restaurants source seasonal ingredients from local farmers and producers and their cultural and musical programming promotes emerging talent from around the region. They work globally with like-minded people across music, art and fashion, offering an eclectic experience in each neighbourhood they are in and bringing our local spirit and tropical soul wherever they go.

We are really impressed by the effort for sustainability in Potato Head Beach Club. They strive to achieve zero waste. We visited the restaurants and most importantly, Sustainism Lab.

Sustainism Lab is an upcycling showroom adjacent to Potato Head Beach Club. Filled with Lego-colored machines and peculiar objects, Sustainism Lab carries its research and design workshop dedicated to finding innovative solutions to waste. It aims to keep the operation zero waste and become a circular brand in which every element fits into the three Rs of sustainability—reduce, reuse and recycle.

The products they design are upgraded and have really turned trash to valuable goods like containers and coasters. It is right next to the entrance of Potato Beach Club so it shaped the identity of the club. It demonstrated the process of upcycling to the public to increase public awareness and knowledge about upcycling and recycling, conveyed the message that recycling is not meaningless and there are ways to increase value effectively.

We chatted with the staff and had a call with the person in charge. He introduced the relationship between the lab and the club to us, as well as the goal of the lab.

There are a few of restaurants with different themes. We visited the Seafood restaurant which offers local seafood bred in a sustainable way. In the restaurant, they do not only replace disposable utensils and tissue with reusable ones, but also have their chairs, tables and menu made with upcycled plastic and wood.

Gili island

The Gili Islands are an archipelago of three small islands — Gili Trawagan, Gili Meno and Gili Air. They are off the northwest coast of Lombok, a fast-growing city near Bali. Unlike Lombok, the Gili Islands are still undeveloped. The only transportation is by foot and bicycle or the horse-drawn carriage called cidomo. The culture of local inhabitants is conserved.

Over the past few years, the islands begin to be a popular destination for tourists. Our 4-night field study observe how the locals balance between tourism and cultural conservation.

The experience in Gili Meno is remarkable. Although their population and level of development is a lot lower than that of in Bali and Lombok, their environmental awareness is even higher than that of in Hong Kong. Apart from the eco-friendly utensils, all restaurants and bars also actively promote organic dining. The whole island also emphasise on 'zero-waste'. There are recycling facilities to ensure the cleanliness of the island.

Although the environmental awareness of Gili Meno is high, it's unavoidable to maintain 'zero-waste' completely. We spot a plastic bag tangled in the coral reef when we snorkel, which is the only time we find trash in the ocean. We truly appreciate the effort of the locals in reminding visitors to conserve the environment.

Apart from ocean protection, we also find it insightful on the relationship between the locals and the nature. While tourists live in villas saturated around the coastal area, the locals mostly live inland. Although there are imported daily necessities due to the development of tourism, the villagers still adopt a self-sufficient living model. We can see cows and chicken walking freely on the island.

Most villagers earn extra money by selling various products to the tourists. Apart from managing resorts founded by foreign investors, the locals also sell snorkelling equipments and commodities like sunscreens and toothpastes. We are pleased to see the harmony between locals and tourists. The living standard of the villagers are also above our expectation.

On the second last day at Gili Meno, we take a speed boat to the neighbouring island Gili Trawangan – the largest and most-visited island among the three. The development of Gili Trawangan is much advanced than Gili Meno. The coast line is packed with bars, restaurants and shops. Yet, most of the businesses still comply with the belief of environmental protection, such as using reusable utensils and offer bicycles and horse-drawn carriages only.

After our visit to Gili Island, we believe that the villagers have successfully strived balance between tourism and environmental protection. Yet, we worry that the situation might be worsened due to the development of a new luxurious resort on Gili Meno. Although the construction is still under progress, there are already a gigantic screen (we assume it will be used for movie nights) placed before the construction site near the coast. We cannot imagine how Gili Meno will turn into after the completion of this new resort, but we hope that it can keep its culture and uniqueness.

Finns Beach Club

The night when we return to Bali city, we have our dinner at Finns Beach Club. We haven't expected a normal beach club can integrate such a lot of elements that do good to the environment and the society.

The architectural design of Finns Beach Club is eye-catching and, at the same time, eco-friendly. Built from sustainable bamboo materials, the open-air bamboo pavilion dining area provides a casual yet classy for meals. Such design allow every guest a guaranteed ocean view.

The beach club is also committed to the community and environment in various aspects. Apart from supporting the local community sharing the venues local sporting organisations, charities, schools, orphanages and disadvantaged children, it also upholds the value of waste reduction. There are measures to reduce paper and plastic usage, recycle materials wherever possible, separate trash into organic and non organic parts, and use alternative bags rather than plastic. To encourage staff to join in this complex work, income created through recycling measures is being added to the staff's service charge.

The meals served by Finns Beach Club is spectacular. Yet, their high consciousness in environmental and community commitment truly inspire us. It is a great example that doing good is not meant to be philanthropic. It can also bring economic benefits by creating social value.

Onion Collective

The days in Onion Collective might be one of the memorable experiences in this trip. Founded by a Malaysian 6 years ago, the hostel aims to offer the freedom and the empowerment that comes from it.

They support many kinds of social innovation. They invite different charities and social enterprises to hold weekly sharing sessions and workshop. Topics include but not limited to dance, local craftsmanship and mental health. Visitors can join and learn about each other in the activities.

The environment is so inclusive that made us feel like home. We were so warmly welcomed when we arrived. The founder, Mark engaged us actively while the staff showed us around and encouraged us to use all of their facilities and talk to anyone of them anytime.

There are also some frequent visitors in the Onion Collective. They are mostly freelancers or entrepreneurs that travels to Bali a lot. In Onion Collective, we can exchange ideas and discuss social entrepreneurial topics and support one another. For example, when we encountered problems about filming and social media, we can approach people anytime in the cafe. Moreover, they provide both vegan and non-vegan food in their cafe so vegans can also stay in their cafe to mingle and work. We really appreciate this accommodation plus community and hope Hong Kong would have one too.

Green school

Green school is a non-profit, private and international pre-kindergarten to high school. Apart from its iconic bamboo-made campus architecture, Green school aims to create a community of learners making the world sustainable. They educate for sustainability, through community-integrated, entrepreneurial learning, in a wall-less, natural environment. They aim to inspire and empower their students to be changemakers through holistic and student-guided approach.

Green school has nurtured young changemakers, such as Melati and Isabel, the young founders of a non-profit international organisation Bye Bye Plastic Bag. There are also open tours for visitors to experience their teaching approach.

It is always a challenge for private schools to develop sustainably in both financial and societal aspect. Yet, Green School is definitely a role model of the educational sector. When we first arrive Green School, there are already more than 20 participants waiting for the daily tour to start. We are surprised at such high participation rate as we expect most people visit Bali for beaches and bars. I believe the architectural and societal uniqueness of Green school successfully shape the position of the school not only as educational guru but also a must-visit spot for conscious travellers.

We follow our tour guide to visit different parts of Green School. One of my favourite places is the mindfulness corner. Apart from knowledge enhancement, Green School also focuses on developing the wellbeing of kids. That is why they set up mindfulness corner at the central building. Students are assigned to join the meditation session every day after lunch. Although we are unable to know how they explain and practice such passive and 'boring' exercise with energetic children, we firmly believe it is a good initiate for children to reflect and focus on themselves. Mindfulness is definitely an indispensable element missed out in Hong Kong's so-called all-round education or whole-person development, especially in primary and secondary schools.

Another favourite part of the journey is the aquaponics garden. Before going to Bali, I have already heard of the term 'aquaponics' in some startup competitions. It is, however, my first time to visit an aquaponics garden. What amaze me the most is not only the set up of the garden, but also the little add-ons by students of Green School. A kid realises that the ponds will be with very little water during dry season, which causes

the frogs unable to jump out of the ponds. The kid is so worried about the life and death of the little creature and suggests the school to add a mini ladder on the side of every pond as to allow the frogs to escape from the ponds. Such act might not sound as innovative as inventing a new machine or technology. Yet, it can be seen that Green School has successfully cultivate empathy, creativity and execution mindset of a child. There are also a lot of other creative initiatives by students, such as homes for the chicken, spotted during the tour.

Kembali

After the guided tour, we join an extended tour at Kembali, which is the recycling centre of Green School. The extended tour allows us to learn how to make upcycled products from trash. We observe that most of the participants from the guided tour join this extended tour as well, and quite a number of them are from educational background around the world.

Kembali means 'to return, to come back' in Indonesian. The tour starts off with an introduction of Kembali conducted by two of the students at Green School. They are also the managers of Kembali. Participants also share the recycling trend of their home countries with one another. The two students then introduce the equipments to pick up trash at Green School and demonstrate the way to use them. After a 'Jalan Jalan' (walkabout), gathering trash, and cleaning the area, we learn how to make upcycled products.

The first workshop is turning newspaper and magazines into paper bags. It is not as easy as it sounds, but we all manage to make our own souvenir. The second workshop is using juice boxes as the upcycle material and convert them into a coin fold. The procedure is straight forward and easy to follow. After experiencing two of their workshops, we are also rewarded an upcycled soap.

Before leaving Green school, we are served with a Balinese lunch prepared by Green School's community treasure, Ibu Kadek. Apart from the beautifully-authentic food, we are also amazed by the utensils they use. A leaf is placed on top of the bamboo dish to avoid direct contact with the food. It also reduce the water to be used to wash the dirt away from the dish.

The tours at Green school is unforgettable, especially the gigantic bamboo architecture and the uniqueness of their education system. I am, however, a bit disappointed on the quality of the upcycled products and doubt if the value is high enough to convert sales in the competitive business market. I think the two upcycled handicrafts are only

suitable for personal use, and could also be an effective way to alleviate the problem of domestic waste.

Apart from allowing us to know more about their education system, we also hope to spread this exceptional style of teaching to Hong Kong and allow people in Hong Kong to rethink the local educational system through sharing our insight on our social media.

Zero Waste Bali

Zero Waste Bali is a the first Zero Waste Bulk Food Store that aims to reduce plastic waste by encouraging customers to bring their own containers to fill and to reuse what we currently have. Apart from container-free, the products in Zero Waste Bali is also label free.

We have planned to interview the female founder of Zero Waste Bali Silvija Rumiha to more about what makes the store being able to transform the habit of customers, and what are the difficulties and competence of being a female social entrepreneur. Unfortunately, she is out of town during our visit as she is dealing with family issue back in her home country. We change our plan to send our questions to her via email, and are waiting for her replies.

We decide to walk to Zero Waste Bali from our hostel to observe the the surrounding environment and see if there are any geographical advantages. We assume that the store will somehow be in areas with higher standard of living since the commodities it sells is above the affordability of a normal Balinese. Out of our expectation, the area near the store is less developed than Ubud centre and the number of pedestrians is so little that we are the only visitor throughout the 1-hour visit. The only place nearby that could have visitors with higher consumption ability is the Four Season Hotel.

We, however, are not totally doubtful about the financial sustainability of the store, since there are also another two shops in Bali that could have higher sales. Moreover, the overall quality of the commodities of Zero Waste Bali is high. The variation of products is not very high, since the space of the store is limited. Yet, most of them are special and hard to be found on Bali streets. Apart from filming in the store, we also buy some chocolate and dried pineapple. The latter tastes really good.

Although the overall of Zero Waste Bali in Ubud is not as impressive as we've expected, I think there is still one main takeaway. Comparing to the similar stores in Hong Kong, the number of products in Zero Waste Bali might not be as high. Yet, the uniqueness wins.

Customers will compromise with the inconvenience of bringing their own container to the store in return for high-quality or special products.

It is hard to compare whether the stores in Hong Kong or that of in Bali is better, since the societal environment is very different. The high rental in Hong Kong makes starting a physical store very difficult, but I can see that the social entrepreneurs are putting a lot of effort in other aspects such as social media marketing and expansion of target audiences to corporate level. I am optimistic to see more and more zero waste stores and help to create the trend of waste reduction in Hong Kong.

Threads of Life

The Threads of Life Gallery sells high-value heirloom-quality textiles and baskets made to an exquisite standard usually only seen in museums. Each piece is made with local materials and natural dyes and is bought, following fair trade principles, directly from over 1000 weavers on 12 islands across Indonesia. These textiles and baskets express traditional aesthetics and embody meanings associated with an indigenous worldview that Threads of Life conveys to its customers through videos, exhibits, and careful curation of the textiles and baskets on display. By aligning with indigenous culture in its fieldwork and marketing, Threads of Life alleviates rural poverty, helps weavers to form independent producer groups, and facilitates their sustainable management of their natural dye resources.

Threads of Life is one of my most appreciated purpose-driven businesses I have ever visited throughout this trip. The vision of the business is, of course, very impressive. Yet, I totally respect and appreciate how they refine the details of the store to increase the value proposition of the brand.

Threads of Life is an impressive illustration of showcasing high-value products. It is a hard fact that the textiles of Threads of Life is produced by hands through thousands of working hours. The value and price should, theoretically, be very high. Most of us, however, will not pay these textiles at such expensive marked price since we do not know the story behind each product. The interior design, however, guides us through the journey of textile production and build up the perception that the textiles is valuable in our mind.

The interior design of the physical store is divided into two storey. When we first enter the ground floor, equipments to make textiles are put at the entrance. Near each

equipment, there is a short paragraph to introduce the instructions and difficulties in using them. One example is the combination of a simple loom, sticks of bamboo and polished wooden blades. They help the weaver raise and lower the appropriate warps, open a space for the weft, and beat each weft thread into place. Advanced looms can have over a hundred parts, arrayed in careful order. Indonesia's many peoples use looms of varying complexity, but every one requires patience, skill, and physical strength. Some techniques include extra warps or wefts. A songketweaver adds supplementary wefts as she weaves, picking out patterns that float above the cloth. The weaver creates her patterns by adding heddle sticks, which lift just a few warps for the supplementary wefts to pass beneath. Elaborate songket patterns can call for over a hundred heddles, which the weaver must raise and lower in perfect order. The first section of the store has already introduced the challenges faced by producers, which has successfully built up the value of products in store.

After getting to know more about the procedures, we move down to the lower ground floor. With the perception that textile in store is hard to make, this section adds extra value to the products by introducing the history of manmade textile. By showing the transition of textile over centuries, we can see the obstacles in maintaining such historical and artificial culture in Indonesia. The fear of loss in our mind further strengthens our perception towards the products.

At the last stop of the journey, we are granted the opportunity to understand the current work of Threads of Life apart from selling commodities. Other than creating well-paid job opportunities for producers and conserving the traditional handicrafts, it also works on the environmental aspect. As depletion of local forests and loss of diversity in managed gardens threatens subsistence farmers across Indonesia, Threads of Life partners with the Bebali Foundation to take on that role everywhere we work. The field staff works with local cooperatives to develop sustainable harvesting techniques and efficient use of natural resources.

The products at Threads of Life are unaffordable for me. Yet, such detailed branding makes me want to support and even know more about the culture. I am quite upset when I realise that I am unable to join their classes as the schedule does not fit me, but that motivates me to come back to Bali next time for their one- and two-week small-group workshops on fiber arts with natural dyes at their natural dye studio and botanical garden. Led by international teachers and Threads of Life's senior research dyers and staff botanist, and hosted by Threads of Life founders Jean Howe and William

Ingram, there are workshops that employ surface design techniques, explore the dyers art, develop batik skills, and introduce backstop loom weaving and weft ikat.

Nusa island

Nusa Lembongan, Nusa Ceningan and Nusa Penida are off the south coast of Bali. As the geographical location is favourable for diving, the influx of tourists over the past ten years brings massive destruction to its natural environment. Marine conservation, thus, is considered extremely important to sustaining future levels of tourism on the island.

Due to time limitation, we can only draw rough conclusion on the comparison between Nusa and Gili island. As the Nusa Islands are developed earlier, we expect to see better balance between tourism and environmental conservation. The island does not disappoint us.

We stay at Nusa Ceningan and ride motorbike to Nusa Lembongan connected by Yellow Bridge to have dinner. This is my third time to visit Sandy Bay Beach Club as I am very impressed by the quality of food, service and their environmental awareness. Apart from the usage of reusable utensils, Sandy Bay Beach Club also collaborates with The Walking Tree Boutique, a local store that combines beach chic fashion and fabulous homewares with a super selection of environmentally conscious commodities.

We join a snorkelling tour in the early morning of the second day. The snorkelling spots are near the coastline of Nusa Penida. When our boat arrives the first destination, I am shocked by the number of snorkels spotted! It may sound like the bay would probably be contaminated by such a number of small boats and snorkelers. Yet, it looks fine underwater. The number and variety of sea animals is still acceptable, and the coral reef looks healthy. The only concern for me is the safety, since it can be quite dangerous when a boat needs to leave such a crowded bay. The three snorkelling spots are with the same problem. I hope to see some controls and regulations on the number of boats and snorkelers at designated spots, as I cannot predict whether it will harm the marine environment in long run.

Conclusion

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the college for supporting me to revisit Bali and look at my area of interest — social entrepreneurship. Apart from learning a lot more on how purpose-driven businesses are run in Bali, this trip also intensifies my

interest in exploring social entrepreneurship in other cities. I will not only work hard on WeLeap, but also explore the possibility of organising purpose-driven tours in schools or even in form of a new impact business.