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Jul/Aug 2016



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EARTH DAY

At Princess Menjangan!



Friends of Menjangan, Alam Alistari and several other local community initiatives come together on this special day to support everyone's stewardship efforts over our land and sea. By **Christopher Dolphin**

Our Earth Day celebrations this year were at Putri Menjangan (meaning Princess Menjangan), NW Bali, which is just around the corner from *Mir's* mooring and opposite to Bali Barat National Park's Menjangan Island. Putri Menjangan is a local community project that was initiated this year to restore about 1km of coastal mangrove forests and coral reefs.

The morning commenced with speeches from government officials about climate change, conservation and education with practical mangrove and coral reef restoration activities such as planting of trees and transplanting of corals. The afternoon event focused on the larger community – hundreds of local school children coming to learn about their environment and join in a trash pick-up along the coast. The highlight was when everyone got together to sing *Menjangan*, a rendition of Bob Marley's song *Jammin* that was adapted with Bahasa Indonesia lyrics by this writer, onboard *Mir* along with 'Wayan Sam and Friends' who are local musicians.

At Putri Menjangan there is no electricity and no major construction. On Earth Day, however, the mangrove ecology was complete with a generator to create electricity and a giant canopy tent to provide protection from the sun and rain. Along with these necessities were banners, flags, refreshments, a stage, a mountain of speakers, hundreds of chairs, food and of course lots and lots of people. All of this was shuttled there via a very skinny and bumpy dirt road. What a great gathering in the midst of nature.

To prepare for the event, we visited three elementary schools in the area to teach several hundred students

about the dangers of plastic and the lyrics of the song. Thanks to Alam Alistari, 14 Balinese student dancers from SMK High School learned a dance choreographed by Nadia Low, another *Mir* crew member. A few days before Earth Day, we held a final music/dance rehearsal onboard *Mir*, comprising teachers, students, musicians, and crew!

By 1600 hrs, everyone had arrived, including the dancers dressed in their beautiful traditional Balinese attire and the five-piece band. When 'Wayan Sam & Friends' and I performed the song along with the dancers, everyone's jaws dropped to the beach! It was perfect and beautiful and all the students joined in to sing along to the lyrics in the chorus.

*"Menjangan, Jangan Jangan Jangan,
Jangan buang plastik ke laut."*

Translation ~ "Menjangan (island) don't, don't, don't, don't throw plastic in the ocean!"

Right after the song was performed, the students began to pick up plastic in the mangroves and along the beach. The music inspired them to fervently go out and find every last piece of plastic! It was great to see so many people excited about helping the biosphere on Earth Day.

The event came to a climax when we invited all the students to return to the front of the stage and sing their hearts out with the band. Everybody was on their feet dancing, singing and laughing as a drone flew overhead and captured the entire thing on video. Earth Day 2016 in NW Bali had it all! Stay tune for the music video! 📹

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