

THE BALI CARING COMMUNITY

First meeting with Bapak Kadek even before I went on a survey with the Bali Caring Community, I was allowed to meet Bapak Kadek to have a first talk with him. He told me a lot about the BCC and himself as well. He worked with a company which was supposed to donate a certain amount of their profit on a charitable purpose. This task happened to become his. Fundamentally this was the foundation of what we know as the Bali Caring Community today. Eight years ago he started his work on his own and today the BCC counts around 50 regularly working volunteers. The volunteers work without being paid at all!

Their task is not only about going on surveys but about collecting information as well. Lots of volunteers live in rural areas which is why they are close to the needy. Whenever they detect families, single persons or schools in need they transfer those information to the BCC office. Later on the BCC will organize visits in order to see the current situation, do documentation, upload those information on their website and find sponsors to help. Help can appear in monetary form as well as food, mattresses or the construction of a new home - always depending on the needs of the persons.

I have been quite impressed by the website of the BCC. All the needy persons and families/schools are clearly listed in the site. One can find pictures and videos and it is easily visible and understandable who donated what at what time, who still needs support and in which cases donations are not necessary anymore.

Currently the Bali Caring Community goes to Lombok twice a month to provide support after the bad earthquakes. Besides they go on surveys to poor and needy people in the remote areas twice a month and visit schools for medical check-ups and to make the children happy twice a month as well.

The vision is to build up a bridge between the needy and those willing to help but do not really know how to do it exactly.

I was allowed to join the Bali Caring Community for three days:

07.09.2018 → “going on survey”

Together with Bapak Kadek, his wife and three other volunteers I went to the east of Bali to visit very poor people. The main purpose of the visit was to get an impression of the current circumstances the people live in. Bapak Kadek and his wife decide together whether the person should receive help from the BCC or not. The circumstances do not always meet the criteria of the BCC which is why providing help is not always possible. In case the circumstances meet the criteria and they are able to help the BCC will do detailed documentation such as taking pictures and videos and making a record. Everything will be uploaded on the website later on so that donors can be found. In every case the persons visited by the BCC will receive money and/or a bag with food (e.g. rice, coffee and sugar).

Most of the visits we made have been quite sad and shocking and I want to give a short report of every visit:

1. Visit: We have been visiting an unmarried old man who only owns four goats and sells their dung. The man lives in a hut close to his brother's and his wife's house which is why he is allowed to use their toilet. Apart from that his accommodation is far from what we would call "a home"... Because of unknown reasons the government cancelled the financial support for him. Nobody knows why but he has been removed from the list. He owns some little birds who seem to be his companions. Especially his shiny smile - which could be seen once in a while - will remain in my mind.

2. Visit: Secondly we visited an old woman in a hut close to her farm. She only received a packet of food and 200.000 Rp from the BCC and will not be registered further because she has a second home at her family's place. The hut is not her principal residence which is why she does not meet the criteria from the BCC. The BCC would never pretend it was her only home to win sponsors! The work of the BCC is very accurately and honestly done!

3. Visit: To me our third visit was extremely touching. We met a strongly malnourished man who almost seemed to be unable to keep standing on his own legs. He has been "found" by some people who provided him with a small and sheltered place to sleep but it is only provisional. The accommodation is safe and dry but nothing more... nevertheless the BCC decided to not support him for long-term. This was a very sad decision to me and even Bapak Kadek and his wife discussed it for a very long time but in the end they decided that he is sufficiently supported by the family who found him. Even for Bapak Kadek who has been doing this work for years, these kind of decision can be very difficult to make sometimes. Personally I have almost been even more worried about his health condition than his accommodation. I believe that he will not live long anymore if he cannot receive medical support soon.

4. Visit: Even the fourth visit has been very sad. Through the woods we went to the hut of a nine years old orphan boy. He lives together with his grandpa in a small hut on the landed property of his step uncle. His father committed suicide and his mother left him after that. Right now she lives with a new man and has two more children. Sometimes she passes by but without paying heed to the boy. His brother has been adopted by richer people from the city - once in a while they come to visit him. His step uncle provides him 2000 to 3000 rupiah per day. Luckily he is allowed to visit the school and walks there by food every day. (Even his grandma committed suicide which is why his grandpa got a new wife. This is the reason why his step uncle has different mother than his father. The pictures give a good impression of the quality of their hut.

5. Visit: Even our fifth visit led us to the house of two orphans. The boy visits class 4, his older sister class 6. Their father died and after that the mother left the two children. Right now their unmarried aunt takes care of them. The three of them sleep in one bed without a mattress in a small room. The aunt raises some money by selling small baskets for offering made of leaves. They are very poor, need to go to the river for showering, have no running water and have to cook their water before being able to drink it. But for all that at least they have a roof over their head and luckily they are not malnourished.

6. Visit: The sixth visit has been the most uplifting of all! We went to an elderly woman the BCC has already built a house for. The purpose of the visit was to take pictures of the finished building for documentation issues. The one-room building offers a safe place to sleep and the kitchen is outside

directly next to the house. She gets electricity from her neighboring house for her lamp and even water is accessible. The woman seemed to be very happy and strong although she was so thin and petite. Her nephew takes care of her and the BCC gave her a donation of 200K today.

7. Visit: Our last visit led us to another elderly woman. She lives with two men on a small yard in a little back room. In general they take care of her but she seems to live distinctly (!) less comfortable than they do, which is not understandable for me and very sad as well. Their household seemed to be nicely equipped and they even got some chicken. Although the woman lives in this paltry back room, the BCC will only provide a mattress for her. The reason is that she is connected to a well equipped household.

08.09.2018 → “medical check-up at SDN 1 Duda Utara “

Early in the morning I went with a relatively big group of mostly very young volunteers of the BCC to SDN 1 Duda Utara in the east of Bali. At the school two different activities took place:

1. The volunteers entertained the kids by offering the opportunities to crayon pictures, read, dance and listen to music. Therefore they had brought lots of utensils. The aim was to make the children happy and at the same time to encourage them within their strengths in a playful way. Each and every volunteer was in a very good temper and nicely organized. It has been obvious that the children had a lot of fun and in the end every child got a present including clothing and a book. Only class 1 to 3 could participate in the activities, because for the BCC it would be very difficult to entertain too many and too old children.

2. In addition to the playful activities, three to four nurses had a look at the children. Their activity was about cleaning the children's ear canal. The nurses checked whether the ear canal was free and clean or not. In many cases it was not which affects not only the hearing but the sense of balance as well and can cause fever. The nurses removed the dust from the ears which had been accumulated over time. This treatment is not provided by the government which is why the BCC does it - it is a matter of closing the gap between what is provided and what is needed!

The nurses always treated the children in a very lovely way and the children were extremely patient. Exemplary for the good organization of the BCC was the fact that even children from a nearby school came along, because when the BCC visited their school last time they had not been at school but still they were supposed to get a check-up which is why the BCC invited them to come. The activities were finished perplexingly quickly, we had lunch together in the teachers' room and then the “official activities” were done.

Because the volunteers of the BCC get along very well and because we were close to Besakih Temple and Mount Agung we had to do some tourism in the afternoon including very nice views and culinary diversities.

21.09.2018 → “visiting 3 preschools “

The most important part of today's visit was to have a look at three preschools. The BCC distributed cookies, books and clothing and the current situation was documented.

None of the schools has an own building to teach the students - they just use the community halls. Lessons take place daily for about two hours.

1. Preschool:

- Location: -8.374987,115.434747
- exists since 7 years, children pay 10.000 Rp/months (lessons: 5 days/week), 13 students, 2 teachers with a monthly salary of 75.000 Rp

2. Preschool:

- Location: (close to) Warung Makan Tipat Soto Buk Kadek JULI dan Road, Besakih, Besakih, Rendang, Karangasem Regency, Bali 80863
- the school exists since 2 months, 14 students, 2 teachers (receiving a salary of 600.000 Rp/months) and one assistant

3. Preschool:

- Location: -8.373945,115.464149
- the students seemed to be very active, tables and chairs are in good conditions, they have one toilet but without water, around 20 students, 2 teachers

For further information one can visit the website of the Bali Caring Community!

~ written and translated by Maggy Graf from Germany ~

PS: I am very thankful for having been allowed to join the activities of the BCC!

Their work is done with love & mind and is very inspiring. If you ever get the chance to volunteer with the BCC you should not miss that opportunity! Lots of thanks - especially to Bapak Kadek!

Maggy