

ONEWORLD

STEPHANIE MEE FOCUSSES ON WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND DISEASE PREVENTION.

FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL PARKS

FRIENDS of the National Parks Foundation (FNPF) was formed in 1997 by a group of concerned veterinarians, and community minded Indonesians, with the goal of creating and running sustainable community-based conservation that would respect the interdependence of wildlife, habitat and local communities. Since its inception, this grassroots, not-for-profit organisation has received considerable international recognition and support for their projects on Bali, Nusa Penida and in Kalimantan (Borneo).

One of the reasons that FNPF has been so successful in their endeavours is that they have a deep insight and understanding into local Indonesian communities. With Indonesian founders and key staff members, the organisation understands the local cultures, situations, needs and challenges. FNPF's Founder and CEO, Dr I Gede Nyoman Bayu Wirayudha says, "For conservation projects to be effective they have to be holistic. All of FNPF's projects are designed to protect wildlife, its habitat, and at the same time support local communities."

For this reason, FNPF strives to work closely with local communities, government officials, researchers, volunteers, and the global conservation community not just to protect the environment, but also to improve the wellbeing (social and economic) of the local communities in the areas of each project and to empower the local people to do the same.

Since 1997, FNPF has been working in Kalimantan and Borneo, where the habitats of orangutans are rapidly disappearing as a result of deforestation for palm oil plantations. Over the years, the foundation has relocated numerous orangutans to safety in the Tanjung Puting National Park and Lamandau River Wildlife Reserve.

Although government regulations now prevent organisations from releasing orangutans into areas where they were already living, FNPF still monitor the numbers of orangutans in the wild in Borneo, and work to rebuild their habitat by planting thousands of seedlings. Its projects in Borneo also include monitoring existing forests, supporting community development programs and providing environmental education to the local people.

FNPF also works in Nusa Penida, where they set up a Conservation and Community Development Centre near the village of Ped and began mobilising local communities on the island to protect endangered birds from poachers. In doing so, FNPF has transformed the island of Nusa Penida into a sanctuary for endangered indigenous birds. Here, the birds are rehabilitated and released to live and

breed freely on the island. Driven by the desire to save one of the world's most endangered birds from extinction in the wild, FNPF now uses the bird sanctuary on Nusa Penida for its Bali Starling Conservation project.

More recently, FNPF was asked by the Indonesian government to take over Bali's only Wildlife Rescue Centre (only one of eight in Indonesia). At the centre, located in Tabanan, full-time staff and volunteers work together to rescue wildlife from illegal captivity, care for injured and ageing animals, and when possible, rehabilitate and release the animals into the wild.

Also on request, this time by the local community, FNPF has created a wildlife sanctuary in the forest next to Bali's Besikalung Temple, and has since released over 50 birds into this sanctuary zone. The project has received strong community support, and FNPF hopes to expand the sanctuary in the future to cover a much larger area.

All of the projects that FNPF runs are funded entirely by donations from individuals, international NGOs, small businesses and corporations, and the funds are used in a transparent manner for all to see. The organisation warmly welcomes volunteers, fund-raising efforts and donations, and encourages interested parties to contact them for information about how to help.

www.fnpf.org

BALI AGAINST AIDS

FOUNDER and organiser of Designers Against AIDS, Ninette Murk, always had a special place in her heart for Bali. This is where she married her husband in 2008, and they both fell in love with the island for its people, culture and nature. When she heard that HIV infections were on the rise on the tropical island, she knew she had to use her expertise to help.

Ninette founded Designers Against AIDS (DAA) in Belgium in 2004 in an effort to raise awareness about the disease in the international media and reach young people through well-known celebrities from the music, fashion, sports and arts industries. DAA's aim is to utilise pop culture to incite interest and curiosity about HIV and AIDS and to encourage acceptance of equal rights for seropositive people.

Since its inception, DAA has received a vast amount of coverage in the media, and their website has become its most important platform to supply people with links to AIDS organisations so that visitors can learn how to protect themselves and how to help others who are less fortunate than they are.

Recently, Indonesia's newswire, Antara, reported that there are now over 7,300 known cases of HIV and AIDS infections on Bali—a number double to what it was just five years ago. Even more shocking, Professor Mangku Karmaya of the AIDS Control Commission says that 40 per cent of the people infected are between 20 and 29 years old.

This increase, especially among young people, prompted Ninette to create Bali Against AIDS (BAA) in the same vein as DAA. She says, "We love the island, and it seems such a shame that many people get ill, and some still even die because of a lack of information. Our goal is to reach as many Indonesian young people as possible, and as Bali is more liberal and relaxed than some other parts of Indonesia, it was the perfect place to start BAA. BAA will have a lot in common with DAA, but it will have a strong Balinese identity."

In April and May of this year, Ninette brought together tourism students and potential future activists and trainers in BAA's first HIV prevention workshops in Sanur. The courses aimed to raise awareness and train local young people how to fight against HIV/AIDS.

BAA also launched its website this year, which includes information about HIV/AIDS organisations in Bali and abroad, and where to go for help or to get tested. The F.A.Q. section allows people to ask questions anonymously and get answers from professionals, and the blog and a news section will relay important news about HIV/AIDS from Bali and around the world.

Ninette has big plans for BAA for the future, with social media playing a huge role and a free concert next year in Denpasar in the works, with local bands, DJs, and information booths of NGOs working with young people. BAA also plans to work with students from the Green School to help with promotion. BAA's slogan is "If you're old enough to have sex, you're old enough to have safe sex" and they plan to promote this concept by engaging young people at all levels of society.

She says, "When we launched Bali against AIDS for the media, we attracted a lot of press and got some great articles in local and national media. As even some journalists in Bali have no idea about the increase in HIV infections in Bali, it confirmed my idea that Bali against AIDS is indeed needed and can hopefully be useful in preventing some HIV infections in the future." 📌

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