

Essi Kautto

**VALTTERI**

**Task 8**

Matkailu

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Marja-Leena Fyhr

## **FINAL REPORT**

I came to Finland 8<sup>th</sup> of May 2011 and I had been abroad four months by then. Now when the exchange period in Bali is finished I'm down to my sweetest memories. I have something to look back down the road with pride, joy and amusement but also with sadness and ache.

This experience was absolutely one of the most unforgettable, amazing and educational part of my whole life. By educational I mean University of course but more than in school I think I learned by daily life in foreign culture. It gave me more courage than I could have ever thought. In Finland I have been positively like a new person. I got new friends and got to know very different kind of people.

### **Practical arrangements before the exchange period**

When we heard that couple of students were in Bali as exchange students we decided to go there too with three of my friends early in the first year in Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences. It was clear to us that we were going to spend the spring 2011 in South East Asia. In the fall of our second year of studies we started to make our trip concrete. We began to consider flights and places to stay at the destination.

Those couple of students turned out to be Pauliina Innanen and Aino Antila and they were very nice to us helping us with the contacts they knew from their first time in Bali and they gave us golden advice with travel and study arrangements. They really stood us in great stead with all the Visa and residence permits for example. I am deeply indebted to them for their help. We fill our applications and the announcement that we were accepted to the exchange period came very fast. We were very excited and

couldn't wait to get to the sun. We got really useful guidebook from Asia Exchange too and some of us luckily familiarized themselves with it quite good before the trip.

In October we thought that flight tickets were so expensive that we should wait those to get cheaper. We checked those prices almost every day for like weeks but those just didn't slip. Then we decided to book the flights before they started to rise again.



### **Practical arrangements during the exchange period**

We arrived to Denpasar couple of days before our school year started and we had booked two hotel rooms for us for the first nights so we had time to get to know the city a bit. First week we drove only taxi because the traffic were so chaotic to us and it was an easy way to learn the shortest route to the University but only after many drives because many taxi drivers tried to rip off us. We didn't believe that we could adapt ourselves to the heavy traffic but in couple of weeks I was driving with my own rented scooter among the locals. It was fierce!

We ended up to live in Denpasar with a host family that consisted of a woman, her sister and her husband and their 3 year old child. There was also 2 housemaids and a babysitter as well as the kids grandmother visited them regularly. It was very nice family but in the end we had some disagreements with the payment because we didn't

receive any receipt from our rental but everything end up just fine. The best thing of all was that Pauliina and Aino were living in the same villa and we didn't know that before one day when they came to the pool because they had heard some Finnish language.

The house was great. We had our own swimming pool and a gym. The house was in the very best place in town because it was near to the University and the bar street where we met our friends. It was also very near to the beach which was probably the most significant thing that affected in our selection. We paid 2 000 000 rupiahs per month per person which is about 170 euros. Price level is completely much lower than in Europe. You could eat a great full meal for like 2 euros and for example the rent for a scooter is about 45 euros.

The standard of living varies hard in Denpasar and we could saw many poor derelicts living on the streets. There is many beggars in Bali and many of them are little children. It was heartbreaking to watch those young boys and girls begging for food and drink. I think it made me a tougher person.

### **Enculturation, entry and re-entry (return) shock**

I think it was bigger shock to come back to Finland than learn to live in a new culture. First of course it took some time to get used to all the manners and customs but I think it was fun and moral experience. I didn't quite have any real expectations but that there was going to be sunny and hot in Bali. In reality there was not that sunny in the beginning than I have thought but way more hot than I could have ever dreamed.

Locals were very nice to us and everywhere we looked we could see people smiling to us. They were very friendly and pleased not to cause any conflicts in public. Good-tempered and respectful behaviour was peculiar to regionals. But in the end we were very alike in many ways. Many of our new friends has the same kind of sence of humour and wants to do same things on their free time than us. But only we fair-skinned people wanted to lay on the beach all the time of course.

On my free time I tried surfing for example like 4 times but it wasn't my thing at all. I also bungeed and I think it is the most immemorial thing that I've ever done. We also

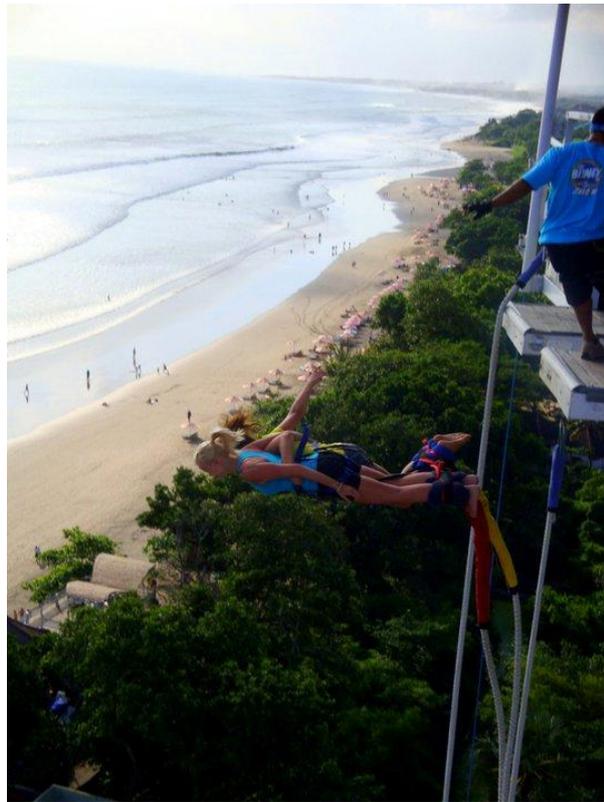
visited many places like Nusa Lembongan, where we snorkeled and Northern Bali, where we saw paddies and temples for example.



### **Description of one intercultural encounter/incident during your stay**

I learned a lot about myself during the exchange period abroad. I learned for example that I can deal with living together with my friends which I thought I could never manage. Thanks to this experience we are living now with Sonja in my rented one-bedroom apartment until December. I also learned that it isn't as difficult to learn to live in foreign country as I expected and I can deal with any ups and downs.

One thing I couldn't possibly understand was that there started to be bomb threats down the Legian street that is the famous bar street. Why would any human on the Earth want to blow up a bar full of people in such a beautiful and lovely place like Bali, Island of Gods. Regardless, we felt ourselves secure. In first place I couldn't understand any taxi drivers either because in Bali it is only to be expected not to tell if you don't know something. There is very important that nobody will ever be dishonoured or discredited in Bali.



### **Value of the exchange period to your intercultural competence and learning**

I think the exchange period will improve my chances to get a job in the future because it gave me advantage over many other candidates. It improved my English skills and especially my conversation skills are now better than before the exchange period. It also gave me new points of view which might help me in my daily life and why not in my search for work. It can also be a benefit to know Indonesian language although it is not one of the most common languages. I also value more the clean environment we have in Finland than before. There is no trash everywhere here and you can smell the pure nature almost anywhere. We should be much more grateful for having such a fresh surround.

### **Tips to peers planning on going to the same place**

I think those who are planning on going to Bali for four months should not agree any kind of fixed-term contracts in Finland like rental agreement that lasts when you are supposed to be on the other side of the planet. One thing they should do is start to eat healthy food that contains carotene for perfect tanning of course. They had better also start to concern themselves to Bali and its culture and civilization.

