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**MID Student Internship
South Sea Exclusive Foundation
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Internship Report

Report 2.

Environmental Education

Taking part in setting up this project demands a critical look at the concept 'Environmental Education'. There are numerous ethical questions that remain unanswered, not all too surprisingly, but it is a challenge to make decisions regarding the designing of the Environmental Education Program for South Sea Exclusive's project. Jensen and Schnack have an interesting article on the concept of 'action competence' (Jensen and Schnack, 1997) in which they discuss the importance of comprehending *why* the target group of an environmental education project is being asked to act in a certain way towards the environment. They plant an interesting seed of thought in discussing that it is not a matter of *creating* anxiety and worry about the environment in children, but *discussing* anxiety and worry that may already exist amongst children (Jensen and Schnack, 1997). The idea is then that children should be taught how to act on their thoughts about the environment, especially relevant in a world where there is a growing awareness of the changes taking place. It is pointed out that being critical does not necessarily mean to be negative but rather to have an interest in a deeper understanding of a phenomena (Jensen and Schnack, 1997). The idea that experiences and actions are closely related does not seem like a revelation, however, that the cyclical process of numerous experiences and actions influencing each other can be understood as 'continuity of experience' (Dewey in Jensen and Schnack, 1997) gives a nice definition for understanding and evaluating environmental education projects.

A book given to me by Jonah, the manager of South Sea Exclusive, focuses on India but give three aspects of environmental education that build on the 'action competence' (Jensen and Schnack, 1997) concept presented by Jensen and Schnack. The first aspect Prabhakar puts forward is the practical reminder that 'a lot of teaching learning can be carried out through the environment' (Prabhakar 2004). The second aspect he touches on is that it is in people's own interest to learn about the environment, especially the immediate environment because they cannot escape it - they have to make do with their surroundings and often rely on it (Prabhakar, 2004). Together with this, in order to understand locally specific environments, we need to know the agencies present that are responsible for maintaining law and order (Prabhakar, 2004). The third aspect he deals with is the occurrence of many changes in the current environment. There is a global rise in the many different pressures to deal with, such as climate change and pollution. The author suggests we need 'preventative and curative measures' (pg5, Prabhakar, 2004). We can compare this to Jensen and Schnack's 'action competence' (Jensen and Schnack,

1997). Furthermore, Prabhakar suggests that man is a social animal and learning about the environment can be both rewarding and enjoyable (Prabhakar, 2004). This ties in to Jensen and Schnack's focus on the attitudes of the children, rather than on action alone in 'competence action' (Jensen and Schnack, 1997).

Prabhakar suggests that learning about the environment can heighten a person's happiness (Prabhakar, 2004). In many recent personal reading I have done, I have noticed there is, parallel to the growing awareness of citizens around the world on environmental issues, an increasing number of novels and non-scientific reading material that approach this topic. Perhaps considered by some as simply commercialized tapping onto a hole in the market, these books emphasize the history of relationship of man with nature and his built environment. As we grow more dependent on technology and mass production, there is a decrease in our contact with nature and whether this can be attributed to the increasing need for alternative foci for entertainment, recreation and relaxation can be questioned also. In any case, whether this idea falls within the belief of the reader or not, it can hardly be said that there is a negative effect from learning about the environment. The question that is most relevant however is how learning about nature and the environment can be done in the most fruitful way. Both Prabhakar and Jensen and Schnack touch on one of the ways in which I hope to pursue the Environmental Education Project of South Sea Exclusive.

Puerto Princesa City and the Environment.

Puerto Princesa is a municipality with a mayor and 12 elected councillors. It is a municipally authority under the Provincial Government of Palawan and has a population of around 129, 577 (Municipality of Puerto Princesa, 2010). The industry of Puerto Princesa includes tourism, small scale mining, fishing and agriculture (Municipality of Puerto Princesa, 2010). There is employment in agriculture, fishing, retail, trade and service industries such as tricycle drivers. In total there are 68 elementary schools (Municipality of Puerto Princesa, 2010) but South Sea Exclusive's Environmental Education project will focus on those that have less financial opportunities for an environmental program.

As was my first impression here in Puerto Princesa city, it is a place that is very active in a number of environmental conservation/preservation activities. 'Hagedorn, The Man and The City in a Forest' (Klow and Salvaña, 2009) is a book dedicated to the arrival of Edward Hagedorn as mayor of the city and is both advertised and available in a number of places in the city, mostly the more modern cafes. The price of the book is also quite high, about 500 pesos which is about 7.1 euro. For an average resident of Puerto Princesa, it is imaginable that this is unaffordable. This may be rather strange as in the book itself it is discussed that a fine was created to discourage littering, that at P200 was 'a huge amount given that most of the residents didn't earn that much in a day' (Klow and Salvaña, 2009). The question then asked is who this book is actually written for.

The book deals with the rise to power of mayor Hagedorn, his history and praising his achievements as Mayor thus far, with many photographs of the various activities he has been involved in. The Mayor is referred to many times as 'The Man', a term that with its

use of capital letters, connotes a rather Godly status. There is recognition for the need for alternative sources of income with the ban on logging and the activities of 'kaingineros' (slash and burn farmers) and it is implied that this is where the Bantay Dagat (Sea Watch) and Bantay Gubat (Forest Watch) can help give them alternative jobs as 'watchers and protectors of the environment' (Klow and Salvaña, 2009).

It is evident that everywhere there is some environmental awareness and some steps being taken to promote eco-tourism and on a more local scale, recycling and use of both biodegradable and non-biodegradable bins for rubbish. There is a fine for littering, 200 pesos (Klow and Salvaña, 2009) which is much in comparison to the average income. Since most of the people in question are not able to buy and read the book, is the praising tone of the book really fitting or is it a political stunt by attempting to create a romantic image of a novel hero and so promote the Mayor and consequently his wife, with upcoming elections in 2010?

Puerto Princesa Subterranean River

There are two UNESCO World Heritage sites; Puerto Princesa Subterranean River and the Tubabataha Reef which lies far from the island. By normal boat it takes two days to reach and costs around US\$1000, again making it difficult to reach for most people, especially the average Palaweno. The Subterranean River has been especially promoted as they tried to gain votes to reach the top 77 wonders of the world. To promote the Underground River, Palaweno were allowed to take a trip there for free. When foreigners visit the river they must purchase an entry permit and a boat ride. It is well organized and the entry permit includes the entry price to the cave so there are no more new costs that come by. The trip is well worth it, but there are some protests floating around, particularly from foreign residents about the steering of votes for Underground River.

Question to keep in mind for final report:

How does eco-tourism affect the local communities, for example the local fishing communities and those directly dependant on natural marine resources? How does it affect those not directly dependant on natural marine resources?

Palawan Conservation Corps

Palawan Conservation Corps is an NGO founded in 1999 and dedicated to the empowerment of Out of School Youth from the rural areas of Puerto Princesa' (PCC Philippines, 2005). Their mission is to empower these youth by improving their self-sufficiency by developing marketable skills in conservation. The applicants go through a screening process so only the most competent get in and these corps members do not need to pay any tuition fees. The campus/training site is located at the Rural Agricultural Center, Barangay Salvacion in Puerto Princesa and has a dormitory, training site, library, organic vegetable garden and a tree nursery (PCC Philippines 2005). The youth thus follow a school curriculum with more environmentally connected activities in a 10 month program. This means a practical training in forestry management, organic farming and appropriate technology in a team setting (PCC Philippines, 2005). During the time I

visited the graduation, it seemed they also had livestock activities and I will inform more on this.

Plays

We met Edong Magpayo, an author of several childrens books and a founder of PCC, Palawan Conservation Corps. Edong invited Jessa and I to go see he plays he organized together with PCC in an 'Ecological Theatre Caravan' that toured several elementary schools in Puerto Princesa. Unfortunately the bus was not leaving at the scheduled time so we had to find an alternative form of transportation. Unfortunately it was too far (and the roads were too rough) to go by tricycle, but we managed to secure a lift with a motorbike and then a lift with Edong Magpayo's theatre caravan for the remaining drive.



Figure 1: fisherman accidentally catch a turtle in the PCC play for environmental education of elementary school children.

The play took place at a school in Tagabinet and the audience consisted of school children and adults, possibly parents and curious villagers. It was an interesting play with much use of own made costumes and the actors were the students of their PCC, thus between the ages of 16 and 18 and from various backgrounds. Although it was in Tagalog, I was able to understand the main messages that were being given, which I thought made it a good play. It seemed the actors themselves also enjoyed doing the play, despite having to repeat it several times. From Tagabinet they went to another village to do the play again and I then took the local bus back to Puerto Princesa.

PCC graduation

The PCC graduation took place in December and was held at the project site in Barangay Salvacion. The graduation consisted of some speeches by staff and students as well as some awards for various courses. There were awards for best in livestock for example. The group sang a song together at the end and the atmosphere was very emotional and very impressive. It was clear that the project had a big impact not only on those focused on during the activities but also the students of PCC. The students had bonded well during their time and had become a supportive group. We had lunch together in the canteen which was located



Figure 2: With the PCC students and children of Tagabinet after a successful PCC Environmental Education and Awareness play

in the boarding house where it was clear there were separate male dormitories and female dormitories. During lunch they showed a slideshow of various photographs taken during their 10 months which gave a good impression of the activities at PCC.

Environmental radio

We were asked by Edong Magpayo to speak at the environmental radio about our project and goals, but this was unfortunately not allowed as the foundation is not ready to go public. This is especially because the foundation is not yet officially registered. I find this very regrettable as it would have been a chance to have closer contact with the environmental sphere here in Puerto Princesa and I would have liked to have the chance to see what opportunities might have arisen from this. However, it would be interesting to interview Edong about the activities he is involved in and the books he has written. We exchanged a brief word about the books but due to his busy schedule during the plays and before the graduation, it did not offer much extra information.

Environmental Education Project planning

Finally close to completing the main environmental education project material, the children's booklet, we have begun reviewing the total contents. Jessa went to the publishers and got an estimate of the publishing costs. For a thousand booklets of around 50 pages of newsprint each, A5 size and with a full colour cover, the price comes to around 42 pesos per copy. Scanning the images at a local computer shop made clear how we best had to draw the illustrations for them to come out well after scanning. We needed to redo some of the illustrations or just alter a few of them. South Sea Exclusive has now provided me with a scanner at the office but I need to find an installation program as my computer cannot read cd-roms. Kyra reviewed our first chapters and gave us some constructive criticism which we used to alter them. The plan is to complete the four chapters and hand them over to Kyra who will then discuss it in a meeting with the other South Sea Exclusive employees.

I have been looking to find similar environmental education initiatives here but have not yet found one. I am interested in finding any other environmental NGOs on Palawan and getting a better idea of what their activities are here, whether they have an environmental education program of their own. I therefore plan to make a comprehensive list and see if I can make an appointment with each of them for a short meeting. I am not sure how this will be received and if they are willing to meet with me, but I will give it a try. Until now I have already met with Edong Magpayo from PCC and have briefly found an environmental education program of the WWF but this is as far as I can see based in Manila. I have e-mailed them about their activities on Palawan but am still waiting for a reply. There were some positions still open in this environmental education program for volunteers for the maximum time of a week which I also responded to (in accordance with Kyra) but unfortunately they have not yet replied.

After deciding that we would like to run our pilot program with the two classes of grade 4, Jessa and I visited Tagburos Elementary school and sat in a Grade 4 class for a lesson in erosion. The class was quite active, responding to the teachers questions by raising

hands and standing up to give their answers. The teacher used various items to demonstrate the effects of erosion, which confirmed that the students enjoyed a more interactive class with practical examples. I would like to gain more insight into the childrens current knowledge of environmental issues on Palawan, and doing a small test run with a 2 sided A4 paper is I think both interesting and useful to get to know this. I thought of also making some questions to do an informal interview with them around some of the topics we discuss in the booklet.



Figure 4: A grade for class in Tagburos Elementary School responds to the teachers questions on soil erosion

Pilot Environmental Education project

Tagburos Elementary School, 27 January 2010

Introduction plan

Who: children age 9-12

What: pilot for future Environmental Education Program

When: pilot program last week January/ first week February

How: ½ day activities – combine lecture from Environmental Education material created by volunteers of South Sea Exclusive and doing fun activities related to the environment.

Why: We aim to promote environmental awareness amongst the children and at the same time have fun.

Who are we? Jessa is a student from the PSU doing her internship at South Sea Exclusive and I am a volunteer from the Netherlands working together with her to make a start on the Environmental Education project that South Sea Exclusive would like to implement in the future.

Informal interview children

Aim: to get an idea of the knowledge base of the children and in how far the material we have so far correlates to this.

- 1) Do you like the sea?
- 2) What do you like about the sea?
- 3) What is your favourite sea animal?
- 4) Do you like to eat sea food?
- 5) What does your favourite animal eat?
- 6) Which animals or plants have you seen?

*can we bring a live lobster to class?

*bring pictures – ask them to name the animals on them?

Activities:

- 1) EE material selection – A4 of material from Childrens Book
- 2) Fact sheet – overview of some important facts for presentation/ viewing as poster
- 3) Map to show important areas with some imp facts?
- 4) Video? Finding Nemo? Can give idea of animals for the question later?
- 5) Painting

Day program EE pilot:

8:00 am: Start

Introduction

+

8:10 Song: Ask Edong Magpayo for a song to wake the kids up – (J)

8:20 Evaluation questions

Informal interview children as proposed in planning above.

8:30 Small lecture: Hang poster

8:45 Handout

Select interesting things and pictures from the education material. In total no more than double sided A4 sheet of paper. Black and white print. (J & N)

9:00 physical activity

Game with different sounds – write a story to go with it – (N)

+

9:30 Recess

+

10:00 creative activity

Painting – start with making a template drawing on the big sheet of some mangroves, sea, clouds, mountains etc. Let the children paint them. Then give them each an A4 sheet paper/cardboard and ask them to paint an animal or a coral. They can then cut it out and it can be stuck on the big sheet.

11:00 snack and student evaluation

During the painting, give the students a non-sticky snack, and easy to consume with paint on hands. Ask some students the same evaluation questions to compare answers.

12:00 finish hang the painting and take a picture

Ask the teachers what they think of the pilot and their suggestions.

Budget Estimate

There are a few options for the materials at NCCC and Drugman. We will need materials for approximately 30 students.

- Paints: watercolours P25.75 (8 colours), P34 (12 colours)
- Paintbrushes: P2 (small), P60 (9 for 60 pcs)
- Pencils P6
- Crayons: P12 (16 pcs)
- Big Sheet of Paper: P4.75, P8
- A4 Sheets: P28 (50 pcs)
- Scissors: P21 (5 ¼ size), P8 (folding metal), P12
- Sticky Stuff: P11 (Even Glue, White), P18 (Paste, small jar), P50
- Snacks: drinks: P38.50 (10 pcs, Refresh)

Discussion points

There are a few things to consider during the pilot Environmental Education project. We first need to be introduced to the headmistress and some teachers, to let them know who we are and what we are up to. To make this initial contact as efficient and comprehensive as possible, I tried to make a short summarized aim by answering the question WHY.

Q: Why does South Sea Exclusive want to do an Environmental Education project?

A: *To encourage environmental awareness amongst the children so that this may spread **through** them and stay **with** them as they grow into the future guardians of the Palawan environment.*

By embarking on this project, we are in a way assuming then that we have additional information for them that they did not already know, or to strengthen what they know already but doing fun activities. Mainly it is the positive attitude towards the environment that should be emphasized rather than simply being a matter of knowledge or changing behaviour. (As Jensen and Schnack emphasize in their article on 'action competence', it is important that the children understand *why*. (Jensen and Schnack, 1997)) The interaction between the company South Sea Exclusive and the Barangay of Tagburos is helped this way as it begins to build more personal contacts between the employees of S.S and the inhabitants of the Barangay.

Initially the first contact that is strengthened is with the younger generation but hopefully there will be a ripple effect from the positive gesture. This might be in the implication that South Sea is interested in more than just the business aspect of the company – that the environment is also important but that this does not mean to exclude the human factor. This is the emphasis of South Sea Exclusive's triangle of goals...Since the human-environment relationship is strong on Palawan and there is still much dependency on direct access to the natural resources, it is important to show that South Sea understands and takes into consideration this sensitive relationship.

The pilot program in particular is a test to see how the project might be received. It is an important stage to realize where there may have been assumptions or mistakes in the material that will make the application difficult. Perhaps there are small details that need alteration or omission for different reasons. We hope that the language and knowledge levels will be compatible, as well as that there are no areas that may be felt as too

confrontational – we need to keep into consideration that many of the parents are probably involved in fishing or other activities that are mentioned in the material and we do not want to cause personal or family conflict or stimulate resistance from the parents. There are many ethical aspects that come to light, especially since this is a foreign owned company

We passed by the WWF office in Puerto Princesa and spoke to one of the employees about the presence of environmental education projects on Palawan. The WWF Palawan itself currently does not have an Environmental Education project for children, but WWF Manila does. The WWF Palawan will receive calendars shortly with caricatures and environmental awareness messages and will distribute these for free amongst the fishermen and some other groups that have the most impact on the environment. They chose to use calendars because they are used often and every month there is a new image and message, so unlike a poster that remains the same and becomes ignored will catch the eye more times than one. The caricatures are used because many may not be able to read and drawings are a universally understood language. We have already included various images with this idea in the education material we are creating, but the confirmation is optimistic in that they will be well received and useful.

WWF has a more negotiating function, sitting somewhere on meso-level and thus interacting between the communities on micro-level and the more official macro-level. Perhaps we can compare the function of the Environmental Education Program to this method as well. South Sea Exclusive communicates with the micro-level, the Barangay community and reflects the government position on various environmental issues in the material but attempts to do so in a more negotiating and understanding way than simply an impersonal law. To finally institutionalize the environmental standards we aim to achieve would mean that such positive perspectives on the environment and protection of Palawan becomes part of the everyday norm so much that the opportunity costs of sustainable methods and attitudes are minimized.

Planning Weeks 10 – 16

10 – 12

1. Preparation Pilot program using created Environmental Education Material of past weeks (children's booklet)
2. Implement pilot Tagbueros Elementary school
3. Evaluation Education material and necessary adjustments

13- 16

1. Write recommendations about the project
2. Design the final Environmental Education program
3. Follow lecture at PSU (Palawan State University) to observe how students participate
4. Design student program for the continuation of the Environmental Education project

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