



Asia Education Foundation

**Asia Literacy
Ambassadors**
Partnering Businesses & Schools

Introducing a different perspective

Kormilda College, NT and Tania Paul, senior lecturer

Kormilda College is an Anglican and Uniting Church day and residential co-educational secondary school in Berrimah, in the Northern Territory. Two-thirds of the 1150 students are local day students, 300 are residential students, most coming from remote Indigenous (saltwater to desert) communities.

Ambassador Tania Paul, a senior lecturer at Charles Darwin University in agricultural and natural resource management, was researching something on the web when she came across the Asia Literacy Ambassador program. Kormilda College, only 12km from CDU, had already expressed an interest in the scheme, and when Tania made contact with the Asia Education Foundation to pursue the idea, it quickly became clear that these partners were not only conveniently located, but there was also a good match in terms of aims and ambitions.

After the first session, Kormilda College language teacher Kathryn Luscher, said, “Tania’s first meeting with the Year 10 Indonesian students was very inspiring and insightful. Her presentation about her work and interests made students think about a few issues from Indonesia that are also pertinent to the Northern Territory, for example food security.”

Challenging the students

After her first visit, Tania returned with some more challenging topics. She explained, “The first time, I had a Powerpoint presentation, showing the students photographs from my travels in Asia. They were especially interested in the animals, they asked me lots of questions and I asked them about their experiences and how they used their languages. This was for my benefit, to understand where their interests lay.

“The next time was much more of a stretch. The discussion was about nutrition and maternal and child health in Eastern Indonesia and East Timor. I talked to them about the differences between the living conditions in the Northern Territory and in Eastern

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Indonesia, and about what is happening right here on our doorstep. It took them outside their comfort zone, for example to hear about women losing their babies. They hadn't thought about it. They thought Bali was about satay sticks and surfing. This was a real eye opener.

“We went on to have a discussion about whale hunting and the right to hunt, talking especially about the Lamalera whaling village and the Northern Territory's past history of whale hunting. We had a heated debate, which led back to the original discussion about wealth. Students began by saying people shouldn't be allowed to hunt, but once we'd talked more about the issues of food, nutrition and poverty, they could see the other side of the argument. Most students gained a different perspective on whale hunting when they saw that human factors need to be considered in conservation and natural resource management.”

Sowing seeds for the future

The students have certainly benefited from the lively interaction and Tania had her own reasons for participating. “At the moment, there's a focus of students looking for economics and IT courses at the university, and there's a decline in the interest in agriculture. I hope I've planted a few small seeds about the linkage between language and future careers in agriculture and education.

“By taking part in the Asia Literacy Ambassador program, I also hope I've promoted connection with the university and persuaded students to think about how they could use their Asian languages in their future work and study.”