

Children Storybook
WORDS National
Competition 2019

The Unexpected Journey

3rd Winner

FULBRIGHT

AMINEF
American Indonesian Exchange Foundation

WORDS

Future
of
Indonesia



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As Director of AMINEF, the binational Fulbright Commission in Indonesia, I am pleased to provide a few words of explanation and encouragement for this series of three books, which represents one of the outcomes of the Fulbright English Teaching Assistants (ETA) Program this year, 2018-2019.

American ETAs work together with local co-teachers of English in various secondary schools throughout the archipelago. The program is now in its 15th year in Indonesia.

In 2007, the fourth cohort of ETAs came up with the idea to hold what they called a “WORDS Competition” at the schools where ETAs are placed and then to bring together for a national competition the student winners of those local contests. In previous years, this has mostly meant a speech and talent contest and has since its beginning always been an exciting part of the AMINEF year. The 10th or 11th-grade students got to demonstrate their prowess in spoken English (helped of course by their ETA and co-teachers over the previous months) as well as to tell their personal stories and to show off local cultural riches and their own talents. This format was fine-tuned by last year’s cohort into a storybook and story-telling competition instead of a speech and talent contest.

This year’s cohort of 22 ETAs – who by the way come from all over the US and are very diverse in background and interests, and are spread out in 22 schools in eight provinces in Indonesia – together with the AMINEF American Program staff who work closely with them came up with this year’s story-telling theme “The Future of Indonesia.”

The national competition was held in Jakarta on April 4th at @america. Each of the 22 students participating had to first win their local school competition to qualify for the national competition. In addition to the competition itself, there were also evening activities (bowling at a local bowling alley), a trip to Monas, and a visit to the newly built US Embassy in Jakarta. Other sessions focused on peace education and tolerance building in collaboration with Ayu Kartika Dewi, a Fulbright Visiting Student alumna who is currently Managing Director of the Indika Foundation and co-founder of SabangMerauke.

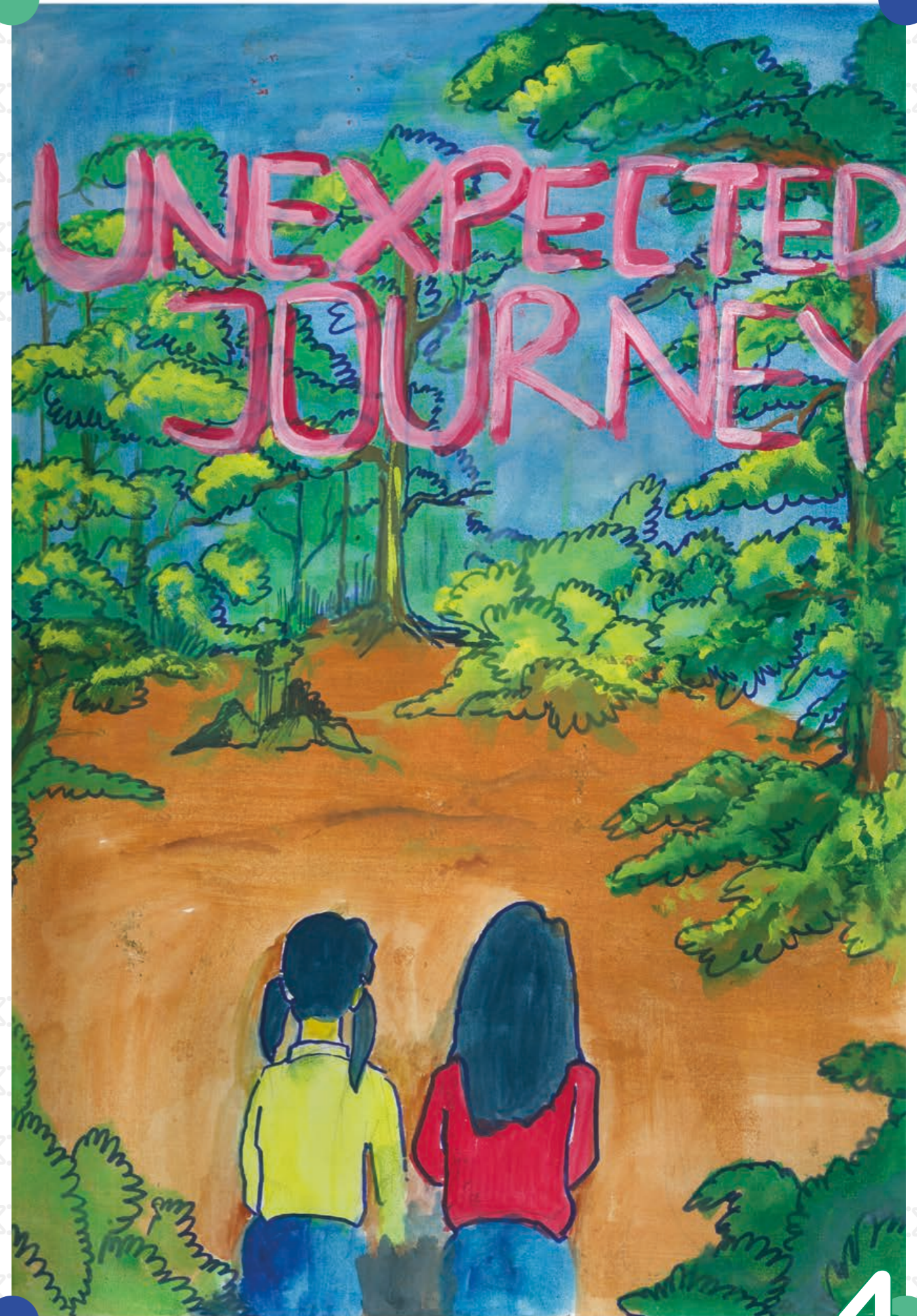
But the real excitement of the event was in the oral presentation of the stories and the judging of the presentations and the physical books themselves. The jury consisted of Americans and Indonesians and included Aziza Noor, a graphic book artist, and Fulbright Visiting Student alumna; Brad Horn, Regional English Language Officer at US Embassy, Jakarta; Peggy Shaw, Education Coordinator, Public Affairs Section, US Embassy, Jakarta; Aditio Tantra Danang of Dongeng Toleransi, and Theresia Pratiwi, Fulbright Visiting Student alumna and English language specialist.

The three books are “Big Sharkie and Little Remor” by Tiara Fitra Ramadhani Siregar (SMAN 1 Padang Sidempuan, North Sumatra), who was the grand-prize winner; “Bella, The President” by Carina Hakim (SMA Don Bosco Padang, West Sumatra) who took home the second prize; and “Unexpected Journey” by Laksmi Anindita Kusnanto (SMAN 1 Temanggung, Central Java) who garnered third place.

Another change in this year’s competition concerns the prizes. AMINEF chose to work with Ferdinandus ‘Nando’ Watu, a Community College Initiative Program alumnus. Nando is involved with ecotourism efforts in his hometown of Detusoko, Ende, East Nusa Tenggara. The winning storybooks are combined in a collection of story books that AMINEF is donating to the Taman Bacaan Masyarakat Ende and RMC Detusoko libraries in Ende. The three national winners, Tiara, Carina, and Laksmi, and their ETAs will travel to Ende to lead reading and writing workshops for these communities, among other activities.

I want to congratulate here the student winners of the competition and to salute all the 22 student participants for their creativity, enthusiasm, and high spirit. I also want to thank all the judges who gave of their time to help make the WORDS competition a success. The 2018-2019 ETAs did a tremendous job in conceptualizing and realizing the whole project and showed dedication and enthusiasm at all stages. Finally, my thanks to this year’s ETA Coordinator Arshelle Carter, and the tireless staff of AMINEF’s American Program led by Astrid Lim: Ceacealia Dewitha, Muhammad Rizqi Arifuddin, Thasia Rayinda.

Alan Feinstein,
Executive Director,
AMINEF



Camelia



Ashley



Local Villagers



President



Indonesia Green Project Team

She talked to her best friend, Ashley, about her idea.

“Ashley, I’m so bored with my job.

I think I want to try something different.”

Ashley responded, “Different like what?”

“I think I want to travel all around Indonesia”
she responded.



“Wait, what? Are you serious, Mel? Why?”

“I want to describe our wonderful country in a book.”

“Wow, you really did mean different.
Do you mind if I join you?”

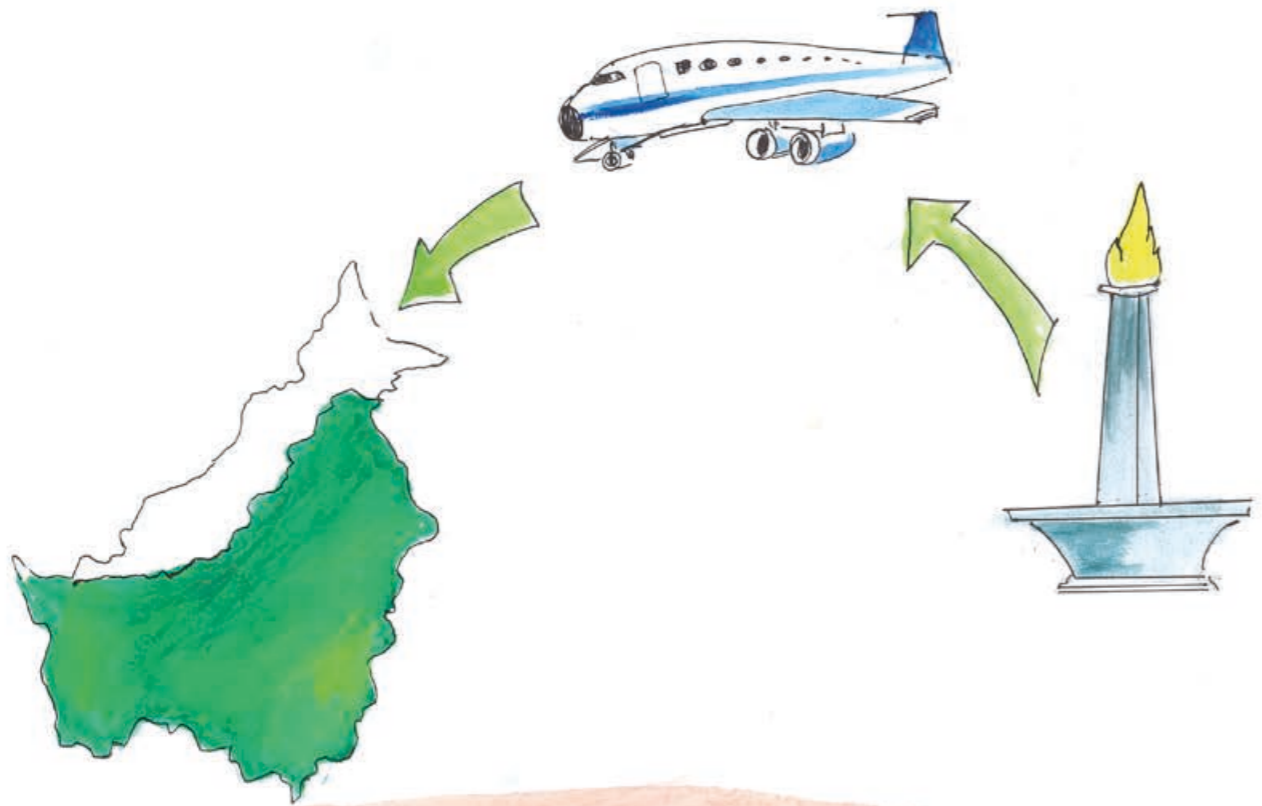
“Of course, I don’t mind! I think it would be much more fun
if I make this trip with my best friend!”



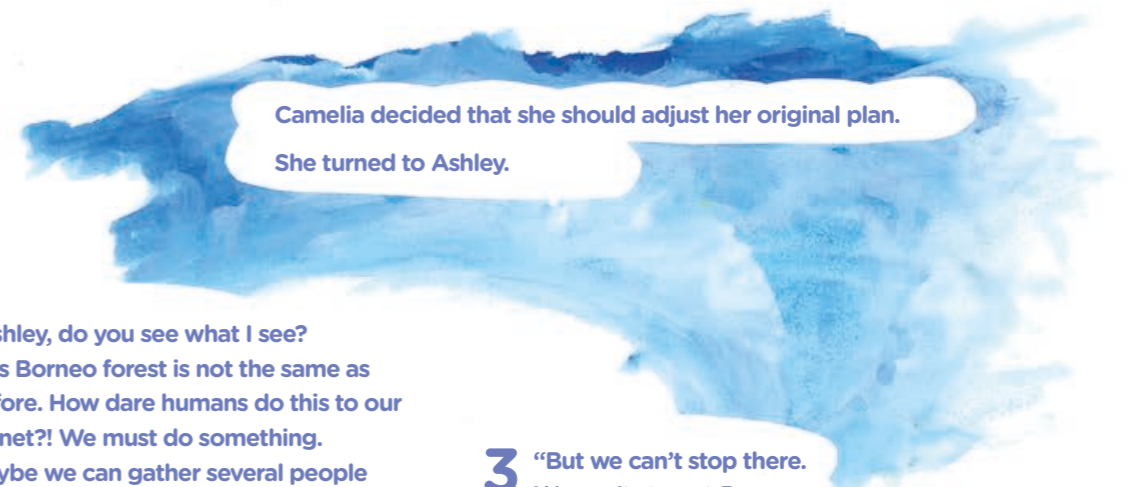
It was a tough day
for Camelia.
She was so exhausted
from her job.
She constantly felt
both bored and tired.

One day, she had
a spontaneous idea.





The girls began their journey on Borneo island where 13 million hectares of the dense forest stood. Camelia and Ashley arrived and were shocked. Most of the trees had been cut sporadically and the forest had nearly as much trash as it had trees.

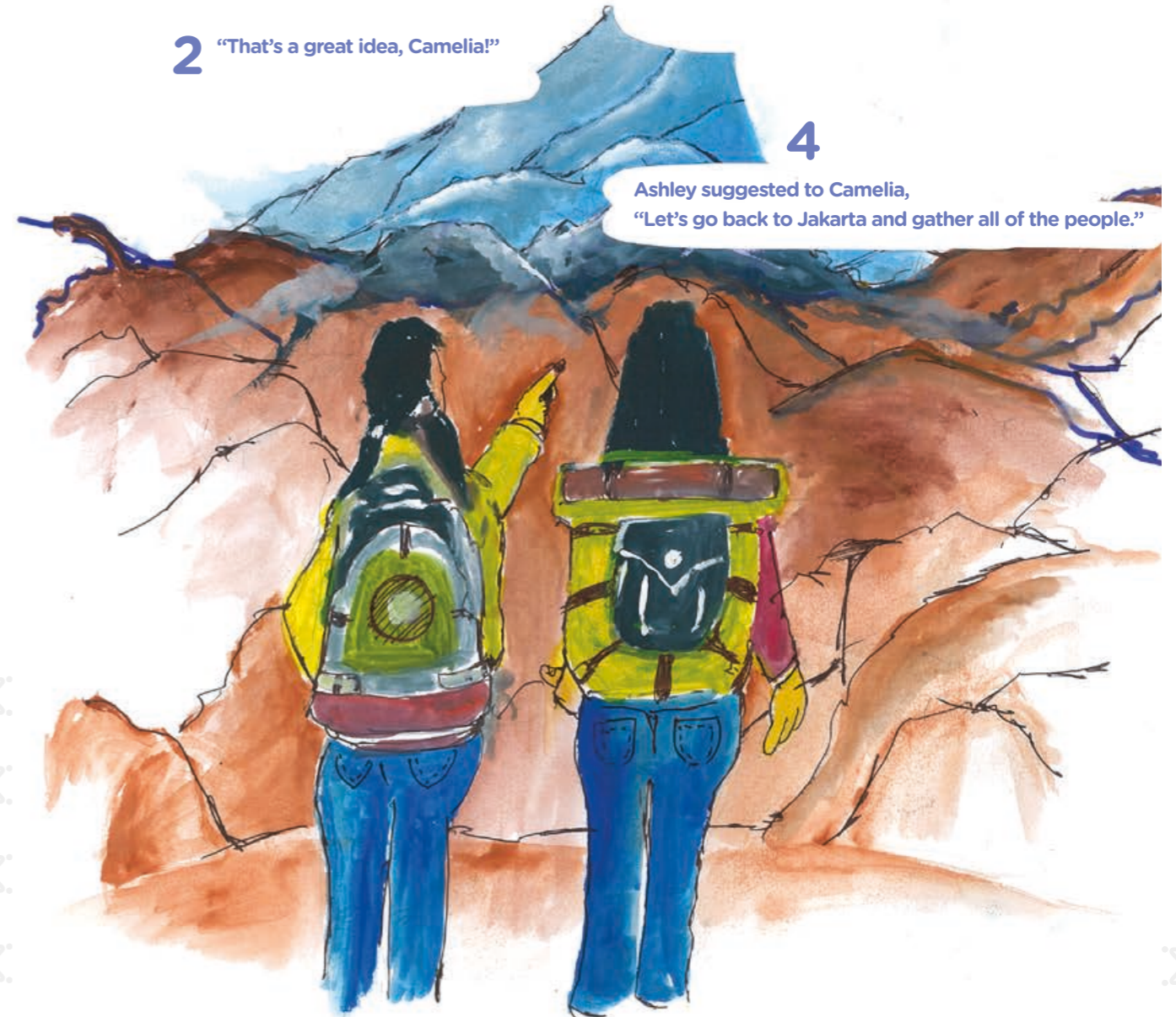


Camelia decided that she should adjust her original plan. She turned to Ashley.

1 "Ashley, do you see what I see? This Borneo forest is not the same as before. How dare humans do this to our planet?! We must do something. Maybe we can gather several people and invite them to take action."

3 "But we can't stop there. We can't stop at Borneo. We must do something to change this problem, little by little at first, but eventually, for all of Indonesia."

2 "That's a great idea, Camelia!"



4 Ashley suggested to Camelia, "Let's go back to Jakarta and gather all of the people."



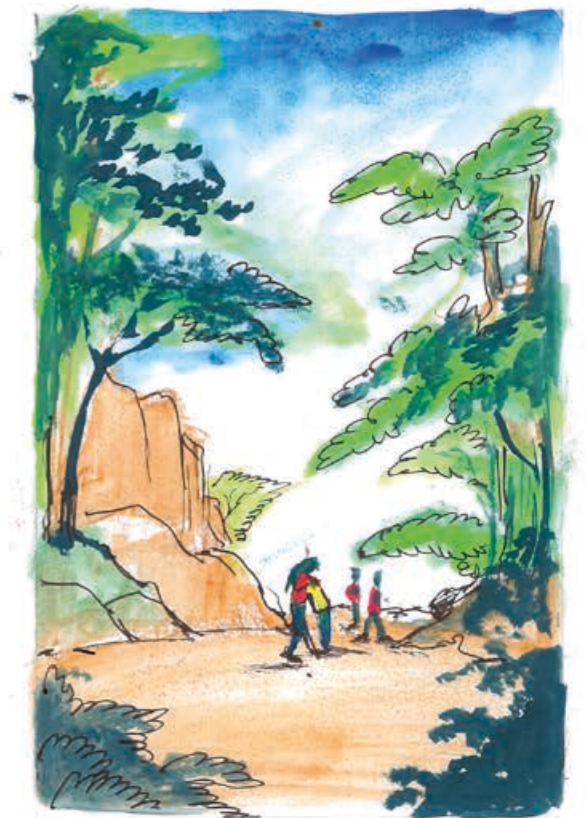
The next day, the two girls arrived in Jakarta and immediately gathered people to build a team, that they called the “Indonesia Green Project”. The team decided it would go out to various forests across Indonesia and begin cleaning. Step by step, it seemed like they were making a difference.



One day while working in Sumatra, Camelia found herself alone, lost in the middle of the forest. Camelia was very scared about the situation. She saw the footprints of a tiger and her heart began beating so fast.

Camelia turned, looking frantically for her team member, “Hello guys, where are you all? I’m scared. Anybody help. Hello? Help me please!”

And then she found her team members but she was still frantic.



(krkkk krrkk krrkkk)

“What is that sound? It’s still getting louder!”



But then the sound stopped. Ashley was confused but quickly realized the sound was from a squirrel behind the bushes.



“Oh... It’s only a squirrel!”



A moment later, two local villagers approached the team and escorted them out of the forest.



The girls decided that maybe they weren't prepared to fix reforestation by themselves. Instead, they decided to start visiting cities and smaller towns across Indonesia and share about environmental cleanliness. The girls made the events interesting with visuals and entertainment.



Ashley even decided to send an email to the President about the project. Within two days, the girls were invited to meet the President and they presented the results of their work, and their vision and mission.

About the Author



The president liked the sustainability and community-focus of the Indonesia Green Project. He believed young people would be the change of the future in Indonesia and that this future needed to look a lot greener.



My name is Laksmi and I'm a 10th-grade student from SMAN 1 Temanggung in Temanggung, Central Java. I enjoy many extracurriculars like Scout, English Club, and music. I really like singing and traveling, and I hope to spend more time traveling around Indonesia. Some of my favorite places in Indonesia are Raja Ampat and Labuan Bajo. After senior high school, I plan to attend university and become a physician.

In 2007, the fourth cohort of ETAs came up with the idea to hold what they called a “WORDS Competition”. They planned competitions at the schools where they were placed. Then, the first place winners of the local competitions along with their ETA’s gathered in Jakarta for a national competition.

Following this same format for ten years, the WORDS Competition was a speech and talent competition. In 2018, WORDS was revamped as a storybook and storytelling competition and includes a service-learning component.

Since the beginning, the WORDS Competition has always been an exciting part of the AMINEF year. The 10th or 11th grade students demonstrate their prowess in spoken English (helped of course by their ETA and co-teachers during months of preparation) as well as to tell their imaginative stories to show off local cultural riches and their own talents.

2019 marks another Indonesian presidential election. Capturing this moment, the theme for this year’s WORDS competition is “The Future of Indonesia.” The top 3 winners of the national competition and their ETAs will participate in a service-learning trip to Flores Island. For the service component, the students and ETAs will volunteer their time to share their storybooks and engage with community members in Ende, Flores.

The American Indonesian Exchange Foundation (AMINEF) is the binational Fulbright Commission for Indonesia. For twenty-five years AMINEF has carried forward the vision and mission of the Fulbright program in Indonesia, which in 2017 celebrated its 65th anniversary. AMINEF’s many programs for educational exchange have increased mutual understanding between the United States and Indonesia and strengthened the ties that unite our two countries. Since 1950, 2,815 Indonesians and 1,120 Americans have participated in exchanges. Approximately 80 percent of the Indonesians received graduate degrees at the master’s or doctoral levels from American universities. The remaining 20 percent participated in non-degree exchanges administered by AMINEF.

About the Fulbright ETA Program

The Fulbright English Teaching Assistant (ETA) Program, one of US State Department-funded Fulbright programs carried out in many countries throughout the world, places recent college graduates and young professionals as English teaching assistants in primary and secondary schools or universities overseas. The program helps improve foreign students' English-language abilities and knowledge of the United States while increasing the US student's own language skills and knowledge of the many host countries around the world.

In Indonesia, the Fulbright ETAs are placed in high schools (both SMA, SMK and madrasah) where they assist local English teachers. The program has now been going for 15 years and has affected many thousands of Indonesian students and their communities across the archipelago over that period. AMINEF, in charge of the Fulbright program in Indonesia since 1992, works closely with the Indonesian ministries of Education and Culture and Religious Affairs to administer the ETA program in Indonesia.

