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Voluntourism (Volunteer Tourism) Dynamics: Tourist Experience That Might Save the Bali Starlings

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Abstract

The FNPF, a non-profit organization, has made a one-of-a-kind initiative to save Bali starlings. The FNPF has incorporated volunteer tourism (voluntourism) into their Bali starling conservation project. The foundation has established a Bali starling conservation facility on the small island of Nusa Penida, Bali. Their activities are ranging from accommodating volunteer tourists from other countries to work and assisting in conservation activities. This paper intends to examine whether this voluntourism activity has a significant impact on the conservation of Bali starlings. Due to pandemic condition, this study had been conducted from a distance interview with the head of the Bali starling conservation activity in Nusa Penida. He also helped collecting data from the volunteers. According to the study's findings, volunteer tourism has an influence on Bali starling conservation. Despite the fact that the influence is indirect, it is considerably significant. As a result, voluntourism will continue to be implemented in Nusa Penida's Bali starling conservation efforts.

Keywords: Volunteer Tourism; Voluntourism; Nusa Penida; Bali Starling.

A. INTRODUCTION

Bali's indigenous fauna, the Bali Starling, has been designated as an endangered species (Van Balen, Dirgayusa, Adi Putra, & Prins, 2000; Jepson, 2016). The blue-masked bird has been the subject of several conservation initiatives. The outcomes, on the other hand, are not so favorable. The FNPF, one of Bali's animal-loving foundations, is likewise dedicated to the preservation of these rare birds. The FNPF has built facilities for endangered species conservation, including the protection of the Bali Starling, as part of its activities. The Bali starling conservation center is located on the island of Nusa Penida in Bali. The attempt to save Bali starlings in Nusa Penida is unique in that the FNPF is heavily reliant on volunteer tourism to keep its operations going. Volunteer tourism holds importance and is thought to be highly valuable to observe.

Environmental sustainability is one of the international issues that has emerged in the tourism industry. Several forms of tourism activities assertively contribute to environmental sustainability, with a number of activities to improve the environment in which they visit. We frequently hear ecotourism activists say, "Take nothing but photographs, leave nothing but footprints." However, rarely do we see any tourism activities that encourage tourists to actively work to improve the environment in which they visit. Volunteer tourism, on the other hand, as an increasingly popular activity, has the potential to engage tourists to play that role. It leads to the research question, Is voluntourism directly beneficial to the conservation of the Bali starling, which is on the verge of extinction? The primary focus of the study is the Friends of the National Parks Foundation (FNPF). This paper is a preliminary research into how volunteer tourism can truly contribute to the activities of the Bali starling conservation.

1) Friends of National Parks Foundation

The FNPF, the phenomenon of this study, is a foundation that focuses on environmental sustainability. This foundation has three major activities: one on Nusa Penida Island in Bali, one in

Tabanan, also in Bali, and one in Central Kalimantan that focuses on Orangutan rehabilitation. In fact, the FNPF is asking people to participate and work as volunteers to protect the environment. They also noted that volunteers play an important role in their operations.

The foundation's operations include a tree nursery, an organic garden, tree planting, and sustainable farming. Volunteers should also teach English or art as part of the social activities. FNPF is also constructing its newest center in Pejeng. It was created in order to involve the local community and try to inspire them to protect wildlife and their habitat. The project also aims to promote organic farming as much as possible, while also developing sustainable tourism that is expected to benefit the locals (Friends of the National Parks Foundation, 2017).

2) Nusa Penida Bird Sanctuary

Since 2004, FNPF has been running conservation and community development programs on Nusa Penida, with a focus on wildlife. One of its major operations has been to rebuild populations of endangered Indonesian bird species, including Bali's iconic bird, the Bali Starling (Leucopsar rothschildi, also known as Rothschild's Mynah, Bali Mynah, and Jalak Bali). FNPF has turned the entire island of Nusa Penida into a special bird sanctuary where endangered birds can be released to live and breed safely in the wild by inspiring and mobilizing community protection of birds from all 46 villages on the island. Each village has enacted traditional rules requiring people to protect birds from poachers and bird traders.

In exchange for community-based wildlife protection, the foundation also funds children to attend school and university study. Furthermore, the foundation operates community libraries, funds traditional dance classes, teaches sustainable agriculture, openly extends and distributes tree saplings to villagers in order to produce future revenue from agro-forestry, and plants trees on degraded land in order to regenerate forests. Local communities can increase their well-being and involvement in conservation through environmental education and economic improvements. Forest restoration lowers soil erosion, increases rainfall, and offers economic benefits to people as well as bird habitat.



Figure 1 FNPF Location in Ped Village, Nusa Penida, Bali

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Volunteer tourism is based on the idea of integrating travel with volunteer work. Such initiative is expected to encourage people looking for mutually beneficial tourism experiences. Some researchers feel that volunteering will benefit not only to their own personal development but also directly to the social, natural, and economic environment in which they actively engage (Wearing, 2001). Despite the fact that this is not a new phenomenon, there has been a rapid increase in the number of people participating in short-term, organized volunteer tourism programs (VTPs) (Callanan & Thomas, 2005). This is not to say that every volunteer participant will naturally understand or necessarily contribute to the destinations they visit. In achieving voluntary tourism goals, organizations also play a significant role. Contribution initiatives can be undertaken out by non-profit organizations.

1) Volunteer

Volunteers are defined as those who assist others without expecting monetary compensation, and volunteerism is defined as a type of activity that is designed to enhance the well-being of others (Mowen & Sujan, 2005; Widjaja, 2010). More concise concepts, on the other hand, define volunteerism as a voluntary, continuing, scheduled, helping behavior that improves the well-being of strangers, provides no monetary compensation, and normally takes place within an organisational setting (Clary et al., 1998; Finkelstien, 2009; Penner, 2002). According to the informant, those who come to the FNPF are predominantly from Western countries or are inspired by Western culture. Volunteering efforts, he claims, are only widespread in Western nations. It is not yet common among Asians, especially among tourists from ASEAN countries.

2) Tourist Experience

Experiences encourage visitors to do things other than just look at them, such as participate in activities for self-development, explore multi-sensory environments, and communicate with other people. Tourists in such experiences are directly engaged in developing and choreographing their activities from moment to moment. Participatory experiences help to create meaningful personal narratives and enduring memories. They are also ways for tourists to realize their creative potential and accomplish their life goals by using personal resources such as talents, technological competence, culture, or expertise (Campos, Mendes, do Valle, & Scott, 2018).

3) Volunteer Tourism

Volunteer tourism (also known as voluntourism) is a mix of volunteer and tourism activities. Voluntourism allows tourists to learn about a country's culture and environment while also contributing to the destination. The nature of its activities will contribute to the long-term growth of environmental tourism. Voluntourism will thus be more beneficial. Tourists can enjoy tourism activities while also contributing to the well-being of the country they visit. As appealing as it is to regard voluntourism as a tool to increase collaborative efforts in environmental sustainability, research shows that including a volunteering activity in one's vacation may only appeal to a subset of the population. This was also verified by the informant, who only received volunteers from a specific country and group of people. It has also been discovered that volunteer tourism is still not the preferred motive of traveling for tourists visiting destinations (Suhud, 2013). Another study suggests that instead of commercial marketing, social media marketing should be used to promote voluntourism. According to the study, it is preferable for volunteer tourists to have recommendations from others before engaging in such activity (Suhud & Wilson, Giving over Taking/Receiving in Volunteer Tourism, 2016). It also emphasizes the importance of participants in voluntourism having a positive attitude toward helping others, particularly those in other countries. In other cases, tourism is seen as a tool for promoting environmental sustainability in a single country. For example, some nations have shifted their primary source of income from one that relies on natural resource exports to one that focuses on tourism development. This is especially true in third-world countries, but it can also be applied to developed countries (Mowforth & Munt, 1998).

C. RESEARCH METHOD

The study's goal is to identify ways in which voluntourism can contribute in Bali Starling preservation. As a result, this type of subject for inquiry necessitates particular research, which should be conducted using a qualitative research design rather than a quantitative research design since the study's goals are to classify and interpret a particular phenomenon. As a result, a qualitative research design was used as the study design, which is suitable for understanding the process by which events and actions occur. In general, the data for this study came from desk research, a literature review, and an interview.

1) Research Approach

For the purposes of this study, an inductive research approach was used. According to this method, researchers begin with particular observations, which are then used to generate generalized theories and study findings. The inductive method was chosen because it considers the context in which research is being conducted, and it is therefore best suited for small samples that generate qualitative data.

2) Data Collection

FNPF is the primary source of this research. Its major operations include protecting and even breeding the Bali Starling on Bali's Nusa Penida Island. Purposive sampling was used in this study, which selects sample members based on their skills, interactions, and expertise about a research topic. Our primary source is the foundation's CEO and director, who is also a veterinarian. Furthermore, the head of the FNPF assisted researchers by collecting data from a number of volunteers who participated in Nusa Penida programs. Three volunteer tourists were interviewed with the help of the FNPF's executive director (secondary data).

The following individuals are the primary informants in this study:

- Informant: I Gde Nyoman Bayu Wirayudha, founder and director of FNPF
- Informant: David Donato, volunteer tourist
- Informant: Louisa Lee, volunteer tourist
- Informant: Véronique Delpire, volunteer tourist

In-depth interviews were conducted remotely for the purposes of this study. In depth interviews are personal, unstructured interviews designed to elicit participants' thoughts, feelings, and thoughts about a specific study topic. While for the volunteer tourist, interviews were done in written.

3) Data Analysis

The information gathered was organized into topics and sub-themes so that it could be contrasted. What it does next is reduce and simplify the data gathered, while still delivering results that can be evaluated. Furthermore, the researcher has the option of structuring the qualitative data gathered in a manner that meets the research goals. Conclusions are drawn in the final stage of the study by highlighting the key points gained from the research findings. Specifically, what studies have looked whether voluntourism activities contribute significantly to the conservation of Bali starlings.

D. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Volunteers first appeared at the FNPF in 2011. At the time, the foundation was only too pleased to welcome volunteers to assist with some of the conservation center's projects. However, the foundation eventually realizes that the presence of those volunteers would incur additional costs (for accommodation and meals for the very least condition). Then, beginning in 2014, the FNPF began charging those who wanted to participate in voluntary activities (Wirayudha, 2017). Furthermore, it has been observed that volunteers not only donate money but also contribute their time and energy to the development of conservation in Nusa Penida. The facility created in Nusa Penida attracts the majority of volunteers.

Furthermore, it has been observed that volunteers not only donate money but also contribute their time and energy to the development of conservation in Nusa Penida. The facility created in Nusa Penida attracts the majority of volunteers. This facility is concerned with the preservation and breeding of birds, primarily the already endangered Bali Starling.

Initially, since the foundation has a lot of publications in Australia, they have the most volunteers from that country. However, thanks to social media, the FNPF now has volunteers from all over the world. The majority of the volunteers are from Australia, the United States, Europe, and China.

1) Volunteer Tourists Activities

The volunteers also teach English while they are at the facility. It is the most widespread service they can provide to the people of Nusa Penida. Furthermore, those with specific skills can train FNPF personnel as well as local Nusa Penida residents in those skills. For example, they may assist the foundation in persuading locals to plant organic plantations. Some activities include ocean cleanup. There are also several incidental activities that occur as a result of any event that occurs at the moment.

One of the most common and periodically performed activities is the observation of the Bali Starling. On occasion, there are volunteers with special skills who may assist in providing agricultural and livestock training. Some of them assist in the construction of basic infrastructure, such as a simple road and other facilities at the conservation. There are also volunteers who do reforestation after the wet season. Some of them also aid in the reproduction of plantation seedlings or crops (Wirayudha, 2017). Some volunteer tourists consider that their tourism activities have had a direct impact on the conservation act, as David Donato put it, "it has involved helping to establish a scientifically rigorous monitoring program and establish a nest box network for the Bali Starlings to breed." This suggests that there are volunteer tourists who are capable of participating in conservation efforts. With competencies on conservation of birds, in particular. There are also volunteer tourists who just have a general understanding of the issue and so have no direct influence on Bali starling conservation.

Volunteers' reactions are also overwhelmingly positive. One volunteer thoroughly enjoyed her time at FNPF Nusa Penida because she was able to learn about Indonesian birds and see them in the wild. Another indicated that he canceled his trip to other islands in order to continue his volunteer work at the foundation. He really complements the FNPF's flexible approach to conservation and enjoyed being a part of the activity. His work focuses primarily on reforestation, education, and permaculture gardening, but he also participates in tree planting, gardening, bird counting, and beach cleaning. He even took part in a painting contest with students from local schools and English classes. Another volunteer provided a positive review, stating that this volunteer tourism experience is "a perfect combination of a wonderful traveling experience and eco-responsible volunteering." Or, in the words of another volunteer, "a decent blend of volunteering and hanging out in tropical paradise." The tour also provides a good level of service in terms of infrastructure. For example, it is said that the facilities were excellent, as was the food (Friends of the National Parks Foundation, 2017). Learning about the local culture after working at the conservation center is another activity that volunteer tourists appreciate. "We started our activities with nursery work. We seedling Sunflower and Agar wood," explained Véronique Delpire. She continued, "After exhausting hard work, we took the time to learn Balinese dances at the community center. The excitement of learning to dance closes our activities today." There are also volunteer tourists who actually learn how to undertake work related to Bali starling conservation. Despite the fact how she had no special skills prior to joining this volunteer activity, she was able to contribute to the work she had just learnt. "I've learnt to enjoy the different Munias' nesting behaviors, and I've also learned to spot bali starlings and jungle fowls caught and trapped in cages," Louisa Lee remarked. She also noted that after returning from volunteer tourism activities at FNPF, she now has new knowledge and abilities.

2) Character and Motivation of Volunteer Tourists

In terms of character and motivation, it is revealed that basically those who take part in volunteer tourism are people who already have the willingness to help carry out community service at their destination. So they weren't just thinking of helping out just as they arrived. They are already planning to do volunteer work and are already aware of and preparing to undertake volunteer tours. Generally, they come to help. Among the many volunteers it was found that they had different attitudes in doing volunteer work. Volunteers who come to do assignments from school are usually not as enthusiastic as those who really come on their own accord. Volunteers who come because their school has assigned them usually have other plans in mind aside from volunteering.

In terms of Asian tourists, the FNPF has a sufficient number of volunteers from Singapore, China, and Malaysia. In this case, voluntourism is thought to be more akin to 'western' culture. There aren't many students or tourists from Asia, especially from ASEAN countries, who have experience volunteering in other countries.

3) Impact on Conservation Activities

If viewed as personal or group activities, voluntourism may create a sense of concern in the community where they are volunteering. Looking back at the impact of voluntourism thus far, it is clear that the volunteer work is only beneficial to the foundation itself. As a result, the foundation's contribution to the environment is minimal. It still has a minor impact. Voluntourism, on the other hand, will help to keep conservation alive without relying too heavily on donors.

During year 2014 - 2017, FNPF have received approximately 1500 volunteers. Aside from voluntourism, they also offer research tours and Ecotour product. The majority of volunteers remain in Nusa Penida for three to ninety days. In terms of length of stay, this is quite remarkable. It is estimated that they will arrive for 1 to 3 weeks on average. This is unusually long when compared to the normal length of stay in Bali. It's remarkable that it is believed the foundation produced nearly 4 billion rupiahs from those operations. It is estimated that voluntourism accounts for nearly 60% of total revenue. This does not include the funds they get from donors. It's understandable that they now have a dedicated page for volunteers to participate in the activities. Table 1 shows the figures they charged for the accommodation:

1 Person in Single Room or 1 Person Occupying Twin Room	Price Per Night	Price Per Week
1 to 6 nights / 1 week	USD 25	USD 158
8 to 13 nights / 2 weeks	USD 23	USD 150
15 to 20 / 3 weeks	USD 21	USD 142
2 Persons Sharing in Twin Room	Price Per Night	Price Per Week
1 to 6 nights / 1 week	USD 36	USD 237
8 to 13 nights / 2 weeks	USD 34	USD 225
15 to 20 / 3 weeks	USD 32	USD 214
1 Person sharing in dormitory	Price Per Night	Price Per Week
1 to 6 nights / 1 week	USD 14	USD 82
8 to 13 nights / 2 weeks	USD 13	USD 78
15 to 20 / 3 weeks	USD 12	USD 74

Table 1 Sample Accommodation Rate of FNPF in Nusa Penida (Source: fnpf.org)

The role of voluntourism in environmental sustainability can be seen as motivating the foundation to continue doing what they are doing. Which is to protect the Bali Starling and encourage the people of Nusa Penida to practice more sustainable farming and cultivation. It remains to be seen how far voluntourism in the island of Nusa Penida can go in terms of environmental sustainability. Voluntourism, in fact, provides more appealing modes of travel in terms of lower cost. Tourists who do not participate in volunteer work typically stay in hotels and must pay for food and transportation. Voluntourism will save money on lodging while volunteers remain at the conservation center. The quality of the accommodation is not comparable to that of hotels, so the cost of lodging is significantly reduced. This is also the case at FNPF Nusa Penida. Volunteers will have more opportunities to explore the area where they are staying after working at the facilitation. Volunteers in Nusa Penida, for example, will go to great places like Angel Bong, the beach, waterfalls, and visiting fishing villages outside of working hours at the facilitation. These sorts of experiences have also been discovered to be more rewarding than spending leisure time in hotels. It represents another aspect of human nature mentioned by the Dalai Lama, namely that humans seem to be happier when giving than when receiving (Dimitrios, Athanasios, Papayiannis, Varvaressos, & Melisidou, 2015). Aside from being less expensive, volunteer tourism appears to provide tourists with richer experience and satisfaction because they feel like they are accomplishing something while on vacation. Volunteer tourists would feel good about themselves when they are helping to save the environment. Volunteers can have more precious memories if they are involved in something worthwhile rather than simply enjoying a leisurely vacation. Regardless of how small it was, the environment and society surrounding it benefited in ways other than financial benefit. From the perspective of the volunteers, it is clear that the program combines a good travel experience by exploring the beautiful tropical island with volunteering activities. The volunteers still believe they are doing well and contributing to environmentally responsible operations. This seems to have a value that adds to their traveling experience. This also demonstrates that voluntourism provides greater value in that tourists will have a wonderful opportunity to explore the beauty of the tropical island while contributing to environmental sustainability. Furthermore, volunteer efforts entail not only environmental responsibility, but also social attention. At the most basic level, these ideals are worth recognizing because they may be the first step in allowing volunteer tourism to play a larger and more important role in the future.

E. CONCLUSION

Voluntourism activities at the Nusa Penida FNPF have become an important source of funding for the foundation in order to continue Bali starling conservation efforts. Diverse research efforts on Bali starlings have also become possible thanks to funds raised by volunteer tourists.

1) Conclusion

It can be argued that voluntourism did not directly contribute to the conservation of Bali starlings. There was no correlation found between the skills provided by volunteer visitors and the immediate needs for conservation activities. However, without voluntourism activities, the Bali starling conservation efforts will not be as advanced as they are now at FNPF Nusa Penida. It has been noted that voluntourism operations are very beneficial in a variety of ways, which becomes a very supportive factor for the long-term viability of Bali starling conservation efforts. Voluntourism activities directly contribute to the foundation's need for funding. These funds will then be used to power conservation efforts for Bali starlings. The immediate advantages, such as volunteer tourists with expertise in bird study and conservation, are currently limited. The majority of volunteers simply have basic skills such as gardening, delivering English lessons, cleaning cages, and so forth. Volunteer tourists with general skills also still provide benefits, especially in the form of financial income. This advantage is thought to be substantial.

2) Recommendations

It is recommended that when introducing voluntourism at FNPF Nusa Penida, voluntourism packages be improved with increasingly professional tour programs. In terms of both service and packaging and marketing. Furthermore, it is proposed to cooperate with numerous tour operators and tour organizers both domestically and internationally in order to increase sales of volunteer tourist packages. In terms of research, it is recommended to continue with a quantitative approach to demonstrate the relationship or impact between voluntourism operations and the sustainability of Bali

starlings. Furthermore, it is critical to explore possibilities for the development of environmental conservation efforts, not only for Bali starlings but also for the preservation of turtles in the Nusa Penida region. Further observation is also recommended to see what kind of activities that can be improved for the volunteer tourists.

3) Acknowledgement

The researchers would like to express their gratitude to the Friends of the National Parks Foundation (FNPF) Nusa Penida. Special thanks to Dr. I Gde Bayu Wirayudha for providing information on volunteer tourism operations in Nusa Penida. Hopefully, in future research projects, the researchers will be able to develop other key aspects of packaging and marketing of volunteer tourism packages in order to reach a wider market.

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