



The Green School

A School in Bali is nurturing green warriors for the future. Alpha Maheshwari swings into the green paradise to read a leaf from their jungle book

The proceedings of the Copenhagen Summit this year might have brought a frown or worry lines on the faces of environmentalists and nature lovers, but this article on the Green School (Bali, Indonesia) hopes to bring a smile on their faces and everyone else's. To know that someone somewhere is trying to nurture future protectors of the earth is undoubtedly a sigh of relief for many. And this is exactly what the Green School in Bali promises to deliver.

Set up across a sprawling eight hectares of land while maintaining the natural landscape of the area, the school buildings and classrooms are built almost entirely out of the abundant Balinese resource of bamboo. Bamboo being a sustainable and eco-friendly construction material was a natural choice for the founders of the school, nature lovers John and Cynthia Hardy. From floors to ceilings, the staircases and even the toilets, everything in the school is made out of bamboo. The very built of the school voices its

motto of 'Growing-up Green'. The main school building, known as the Heart of School, which holds classes for different activities like computers, yoga, art, etc. is a two-storey bamboo structure with open sides allowing in plenty of air and natural light. Another activity arena in school resembles the shape of a spindle and has a roof made of large arches of bamboo. A magnificent boat-shaped bridge (also built with bamboo) connects the two sides of the campus divided by a river. "The unusual architectural designs of the school buildings with no straight lines reflect the unusual (not straight) shapes found in nature and is part of the green philosophy of the school", John explained. All classrooms (from kindergarten to high school) and the desks, chairs and book shelves are all made following similar philosophy. Even though none of the classrooms are air-conditioned, there are a few air-conditioned rooms in the campus in order to ensure the comfort of the children in case of extreme climatic conditions occasionally. Another

environment-friendly feature of the school are the composting toilets, the wastes from which are used to produce manure. To further ensure sustainability, the school uses hydroelectric power produced from the waters of the river and the school canteen uses fruits and vegetables grown in the school's own gardens.

Not only does the construction of the school and its energy-saving methods speak volumes about its green philosophy, the school curriculum and teaching methods are in tandem with its core values too. It combines basic international academic curriculum, sports and creative arts with a constant emphasis on Green Studies, both theoretically and practically in order to inculcate green habits among children at a young age. These practices, as the school believes, will help the children mature as responsible citizens of the world who are compassionate and caring towards the environment and believe in the values of sustainability. According to John, starting young will

help them grow-up green. While swimming lessons are held in the river within the campus, children are taught martial arts in a pool of mud. Surfing lessons are held during trips to the magnificent beaches in the surfer's paradise of Bali. Climbing trees and ropes also forms a part of other sports activities. Art classes teach children various forms of arts using natural products like natural paints, mud, bamboo, etc. Every class has its own patch of paddy within the campus, where students are taught how to plant and harvest rice, as well as mathematics (for e.g. area of their paddy field, etc.) Children also learn how to grow different varieties of fruits and vegetables and are free to work and interact with animals around the campus. By growing their own rice, fruits and vegetables, the children are made to realise the importance of earth's resources and of sustainable methods of using them for basic necessities of life. The school has recruited highly qualified teachers with

expertise in various fields in order to meet high quality teaching standards so that the children graduating from Green School are at par with their international counterparts academically, while still having an edge above them in terms of general and environmental awareness as a whole.

Considering these unique features, it is not surprising to see that children from as many as 19 countries, including Indonesia of course, study at the Green School, providing a multi-cultural and multilingual interactive environment to the school. Not only are the children encouraged to live green, parents of the students, some of who live in rented bamboo houses within the school campus are encouraged to strictly live green in order to maintain the in-class and out-of-class values imparted to the children. By educating the current and future generations to employ sustainable solutions to the various environmental challenges they face, the Green School is giving birth to future protectors of the earth.