



Imagine walking down a street made from assorted bricks and pavers, the tree roots have created a dozen levels in the path, planks of wood are used to cross small streams and there are little shops and stalls selling things from large onion-shaped vegetables to mobile phones everywhere. Then imagine many curious people calling out 'Hello missus' or 'Hello mister' or 'Where do you come from?' taking pictures with you as if you have suddenly acquired celebrity status. The temperature is thirty degrees with 60% humidity, road rules do not exist, KFC sells rice as its main food and chilli is in absolutely everything.

Welcome to Indonesia!

My name is Megan Kenny and I experienced this and many more amazing adventures during the Indonesian In-Country Intensive Summer Program in 2006/07. I had not studied Indonesian before coming to Deakin but I love languages and it looked interesting so I thought I would take it up. I completed first-year Indonesian in 2006 and then completed second-year in the six-week Summer Program.

There were twenty-five Deakin University students who flew to Padang in West Sumatera for a six-week intensive program to study the Indonesian language and experience everything in the textbook first-hand. We studied at Universitas Negeri Padang (UNP) and stayed in accommodation on-campus. I attended classes for three hours in the morning, every day from Monday to Friday. The afternoons were ours to do homework, finish assignments, travel to the market, spend time with friends or use the constantly cutting-out Internet. Living on-campus enabled us to make heaps of friends who were always happy to help us with our Indonesian and practice their English. It was during these conversations that my Indonesian and my confidence using the language improved significantly.

Cultural activities were organised every Wednesday afternoon, which included traditional games, ornament-making, batik-making, martial art practice and a traditional Minangkabau dance that we performed at the closing ceremony. On top of that, a trip was organised each weekend to different places around Padang. We took the bus to Padang Panjang where we visited a major school in the area, competed in some friendly sporting activities and got to ask some much-needed questions about each other's culture. Bukittinggi was a chance to test our bargaining skills at the market and learn that every inch of space in an Indonesian market contains something that can be sold. We realized the hilarious, teasing nature of our tutors on the '44-corner' walk down to Lake Maninjau on an incredibly steep, narrow and winding road. During the course of the program, I grew close to my two tutors and I have them to thank for the amazing development of my language skills.

I wanted two things from this program: for my eyes to be opened and two credit points. I got far more than that. I gained friends, both from Deakin University and UNP, a far greater understanding of Indonesia and her people and a solid basis to continue my Indonesian studies.

Jadi, ini adalah pikiran saya? Unbelievable.

- Megan Kenny, Bachelor of Arts (Indonesian and Photography), Deakin University