

Indonesia

step 2 for
Telex arrangement.

CLARKE URBAN SYSTEMS

Management Economics Planning Engineering

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Sayan, Bali
2 December 1980

Dear Bruce:

Many thanks for your air-letter dated 21 October which was waiting for me when we returned last week from a three week tour of Singapore, Jakarta, Semarang and Solo.

The most exciting event on that trip was learning about the proposed UNDP UNCHS Project that you so kindly told me about in your letter. An Assistant Res Rep, Jan W. Swietering, an economist, at UNDP Jakarta gave me a copy of the UNCHS Project Document entitled "Urban Development Policy" numbered INS/78/059/A/01/56 (undated) 36 pages plus title page, 2 bar charts and 6 job descriptions, including that of Senior Adviser on Urban Policy and Senior Urban Planner, either of which I would love to tackle.

I spent a week seeing relevant Indonesian officials and resident foreign experts and now have a reasonable grasp of the political, ~~and~~ technical and organisational difficulties associated with it. Jan Swietering told me he had written a Res Rep letter to Nairobi and to Cipta Karya, giving specific criticisms of the unrealistic nature of the Project Document. It is indeed unrealistic, seeming to have been written by someone with no knowledge of the facts of Indonesian life, of Indonesian institutional capability or of their most pressing policy needs. I have been itching for a chance to edit or redraft the Project Document to meet these criticisms, although I have no illusions that it would be possible for anyone to write an ideal PD, or to carry through an ideal project.

But more of that anon. First I must bring you up to date with where I am, what I've been doing, and what I'd like to do.

Where I am

I'm at my desk at one end of the verandah of our temporary home at the rear of Wayan Ruma's traditional house-compound in Bandjar (hamlet) Kutuh, Desa (village) Sayan, 25 km or 45 minutes from, and 250 metres above, Denpasar. We have the use of a small "homestay" pavilion well separated from our

host's compound, set among coconut, jackfruit and avocado trees with pineapples growing in between, and papayas beyond, all overlooking one of the most spectacular and beautiful river valley views in the world.

Our residential and office address is:-

Bandjar Kutuh	((our hamlet and local cooperative association)
Desa Sayan	{our actual, traditional village)
Kedewatan	{the Government administrative village)
Ubud	{the Governmental administrative district)
Gianyar	{Local Government Region Level II)
Bali	{Provincial Government Region Level I)

It takes a lot of levels of administration to reach down from a national government over 150 million people on thousands of islands to our little neighbourhood association of 150 households. Consequently, it takes a long time for mail to reach us at that address, and even then we have to go to the post office in Ubud to collect it.

So we use the Denpasar Post Office Box 15 of the Campuan Hotel at Ubud. The Manager there, Nyoman Ruta, and his staff, are good friends; Wayan Ruma runs a mini-bus and taxi service based at the hotel. Nyoman and Wayan also run a company called Easy Rider Travel Service, with headquarters at the Melasti Hotel, ~~Ubud~~ Kuta Beach, Bali; telephone Bali ~~5081-5085~~ **5081-5085 Extension Tuban 68.**

Therefore, send normal airmail to me care Wayan Ruma, Box 15, Post Office, Denpasar, Bali; send telegrams to the same address, although if it's urgent, you might also telegram care Easy Rider, to see if it's quicker that way.

Telexes can be sent to me care of ~~Easy Rider~~ **Easy Rider care the Public**, ~~at Kuta~~. I'm going there tomorrow to make arrangements to have any telexes received there, sent up to me by motor bike. I'll let you know the Telex Number and Answerback Code.

Please confirm whether your Telex is still 22068 UNIHABITAT Kenya.

Anyone who comes to visit can hire a taxi, giving the Bandjar and Desa address, asking for Wayan Ruma (or the rumah di orang Australia/house of Australian people) on arrival on the stretch of road through Bandjar Kutuh, Sayan, Kedewatan. Alternatively go to the Campuan Hotel just past Ubud, and ask for guidance there. We are 15 minutes walk across the ricefields from the hotel westward, or 3 km around by road.

If you want to be met at the airport, telegram Wayan Ruma **at** Easy Rider and book transport to meet your flight.

We can accomodate a single short term guest in the bedroom next to ours, which we use as a dressing and store room. My youngest boy Stephen is coming up tomorrow to stay for 3 weeks.

We can also accomodate a single, or a couple with 2 kids, in more complex style for a longer period, in a nearby clifftop house which we also have the use of.

Telex
Office
at
Kuta.

Hover, if more comfort and services are needed, full board at the relatively romantic Campuan Hotel is still only US\$13 per day per person including tax service and 3 meals.

If and when you are able to come, either by yourself or with Shirley and the kids, let us know; and /or write/ telegram to Nyoman Ruta, Campuan Hotel, PO Box 15, Denpasar if you have any reason to think we may not be here.

For people like us, it's cheaper, cooler and more fun to stay up in the hills than either at Sanur (expensive) or Kuta (vulgar crowds, slummy and a bit of a drug scene).

In the 1930s, an American musicologist, Colin McPhee and an antropologist, Jane Belo, lived in a house on this same site in Sayan. Both wrote several good books, including "A house in Bali" (McPhee) and "Trance in Bali" (Belo). The lady that cooked for them as a young girl, is now a veryold lady and cooks delicious half Balinese, half western food for us.

By the way, I keep up Box 423, G.P.O. Sydney, NSW 2001, as a permanent "Australian head office" address. Mail from there is forwarded up here by my Real Estate Management Agent in Sydney.

What I've been doing

I've been visiting Indonesia several times a year for the six years since 1974. USC was shortlisted for a World Bank job here in 1975, and I spent time here in Jakarta, Semarang, Jogjakarta and Solo, preparing the Proposal. I gained confidence when my Proposal was top marked out of 15 international consultant firms competing for 3 identical jobs in 3 different regions. Cost negotiations dragged on for 2 years because the Indonesians were not ready for us. Clarke Urban Systems took over the major planning clients of USC, including the Indonesian job. The rest I passed over to a new Australian firm run by my former younger associates because I was by then bored with Australian work other than the Sydney and Adelaide City stuff.

Meanwhile, I visited and talked to scores of foreign firms and experts here, and learnt all the ways in which they had been bugged about, ripped off, delayed, fooled, frustrated and upset. So when I established my Semarang office I was forewarned and forearmed. I brought in 6 expat families, leased houses, bought 3 buses, hired local staff, bought supplies, arranged utility services etc etc, and then got production going, bearing in mind all the points on which others had slipped, and taking care to avoid or forestall similar problems. The result was a dream job, the only IBRD job in our series to be fully completed without a hitch. It was also highly profitable.

Neither I nor anybody from CUS ever blotted our copybook or had any trouble with anyone from Cipta Karya, Perumnas or the World Bank. I spent three weeks at the Bank recently and everyone was happy to see me. Everyone in Jakarta from Radinal Moochtar, the Director General Cipta Karya, down to the lowest young professional in Perumnas and the Directorate of City and Regional Planning, was kind, welcoming and helpful on my recent visits to their offices.

The Semarang 5,000 houses project is finished now except for, as usual, the final details of parks, playfields, shops and mosques. The Semarang and Solo 5 year Kampung Improvement Projects are in their second year of construction. I took 4 rolls of film there a few weeks ago.

While I was spending months at a time away from home in Adelaide from 1973, and Indonesia from 1974, Eva and I drifted more and more apart as I became closer to Valli Moffitt (nee Battaglia) a graphic designer who designed a number of Sydney and Adelaide Plan books for me.

Valli's family had migrated to Griffith and the MIA from Padova in the Veneto in 1949 when she was 6 years old. She did Design (Graphic and Industrial) at East Sydney and UNSW and married UNSW graduate Peter Moffitt, who worked with CGP at Harrington Street. They were later successful in a combined architectural/graphic design practice until the crash of '75, when practice slumped and they were caught over-extended in real estate mortgages.

Valli and I have been together^{er} for some years now, and she has converted me to the joys of being a one-woman man! Eva has rebuilt her life well, with all her old, and many new, friends, and with a stunning new mountain holiday house at St Albans on the MacDonalld River past Wiseman's Ferry. Andrew, Rebecca and Stephen still live at Vaucluse with Eva, and have coped well with their parents' new life styles. Andrew, 20, is sensible and mature in some ways, but uninterested in going to University. He is pursuing a business career, experimenting with small ventures, importing and selling products from Hongkong and Taiwan, and doing labouring work in between. Rebecca, 19, is at North Sydney Tech, studying film and TV technical stuff, and looking for a job next year in which she can get experience working with a film or TV outfit. Stephen, 11, seems more academically adept than either of the others, and is doing well at Sydney Grammar Preparatory School at Edgecliff. He's been to Bali many times and is coming again tomorrow. He loves swimming in the river below us, and doing wood carving with one of our neighbours.

In 1979, I bought and rebuilt a small terrace house at 15 Albion Avenue, Paddington (on the west side of Victoria Barracks). That is now rented out, but remains our permanent home base and a debt-free security to which we can return if and when necessary.

Late in 1979, as the Paddington house was nearing completion, Valli and I bought some bargain basement round-the-world air tickets (A\$2,000 each) and promised ourselves a year's long service leave cum sabbatical. She had never before re-visited Italy, and we both wanted to start work on our dream house in Sayan. We left Sydney for Bali at Christmas, 1979, immediately the Paddington house was finished and rented.

I had to refuse a 3 year contract offered by TAMS of NYC to act as their Co-ordinator in Egypt, supervising a number of consultant teams on behalf of the Egyptian Government; one of the jobs was the National Urban Policy Project.

I did accept Honjo's invitation to the February, 1980, UNCRD Nagoya Conference on Training for Regional Development, which was as usual very pleasant, but a dreadful gab-fest which couldn't come to grips with training because it couldn't define what "regional development" was. Nevertheless it was good to meet my old MIT gurus, Ben Higgins and Lloyd Rodwin, and Ruslan Diwiryo, the new Director of City and Regional Planning, Cipta Karya, together with Toyiman Sidikprawiro, the Director General of Education and Training of the Indonesian Ministry of Home Affairs, which controls and staffs regional and local government, and which is shaping up to take over the real job of City and Regional Planning from the rather isolated and academic boys in Ruslan's office.

From Japan, we returned to Sayan, and pushed ahead with the house here. I have paid for Wayan Ruma to lease for 30 years a cliff top site of 10 ara (1,000 square metres, 11,000 sq ft or $\frac{1}{4}$ acre) at the rear of one of his neighbour's house-compounds. The lease cost US\$ 4,500, lump sum cash.

Wayan helps me to organise the building, and I pay him a 10% fee on materials and labour costs for organising, and the use of his transport. We keep construction accounts quite efficiently. So far, I've [^]\$7,000 for materials and \$4,000 for labour, for which we have done the earthworks (considerable), 2 metre high brick boundary walling, 2 latrine pits 4m deep, one completed meditation/contemplation pavilion (or balè) and quite massive foundations for sleeping, living and kitchen pavilions. So far, it's better value than many a \$15,000 I wasted in USC !

I have a Letter of Agreement with Wayan, witnessed by the local authorities, under which he has rented me the house for 30 years. It's not permitted for foreigners to lease (or own) land in Indonesia. I've obtained a copy of a pretty comprehensive series of translations of Indonesian land law and administrative practice, prepared pursuant to a World Bank sponsored Jabotabek regional strategy plan. The more I read of it, the more I realise what a mess it all is, and that land law and administrative reforms must come as an essential part of any national urban policy. Anyway, it's also clear that no foreigner can ever have any legal property rights here, whether as leasee, tenant or user. So one's security is really only the goodwill of one's landlord and neighbours. If one lost that, it would be

impossible to stay here, whatever one's legal rights under Indonesian law. So I'm relying on the strength of unwritten, customary or adat law, which could survive the present governmental system, as it survived many others over the centuries.

While the saga of the new house unfolds, Valli and I have made ourselves snug in our temporary quarters. One end of the open part of the balé is set up as my "office" because after all those years of driving a desk, I feel a bit lost without one. One table serves for both typing and drawing, with a 100 watt globe in a Japanese white paper lantern to the left of me for night time work. Electricity came to the village last year, but water is still carried up from the springs 40 metres down the cliff, on the heads of the girls.

I do all my designs and drawings on sheets of millimetre graph paper, avoiding any need for tee or set square. I have a small library of Indonesian reports on economic and physical development, and on Balinese architecture and anthropology, including a 1970 Melbourne University thesis which is a translation of the cosmological and physical rules and significances of traditional Balinese house-compound layout, and of the constructional details of pavilions.

I draw, discuss with the locals, and discard scores of sheets seeking to optimize the trade offs, as the jargon has it, between traditional design and simple technology, cost and comfort etc. We seek inspiration from old Balinese houses and palaces, and from the great diwans of the Mogul palaces in Agra, from the love pavilions set in gardens in Shah Abbas' Esfahan, and from Fatepursikri.... so you see that this is going to be my ultimate folly !

We spent April to June in Italy, touring 8,000 km in a friend's old mini-car; spent July in Switzerland, Austria and Spain; and August September in the USA. Visited Abbas Faridad at UN TCD, and gave him the originals of my P13 forms registering myself as an available individual. I sent you xeroxes of those. Went on to Boston and Cambridge, revisiting MIT and Harvard. Spent most time in Washington with Helen Hughes, now Director of the Bank's Economic Research and Projections Dept; spoke to most of the chaps in the Urban Projects Department, who are gradually being transferred to the regional departments. The Bank doesn't get asked to select consultants for its clients these days.... most clients want to, and can select their own, I was told. Anyway there wasn't much joy for future work for urban development consultants through the Bank. Nevertheless I registered as an individual consultant, as I had previously done with the ADB in Manila.

Wound up with a week or so at Uni Cal Berkeley, with David Wilmoth (now a keen Marxist), Mel Webber and Don Appleyard.

Returned Sydney 1 October, only because our tickets routed us there, but found plenty to do for two weeks, mostly with the children. Returned to Bali on October 15, with the intention of staying as long as our money lasts (maybe 6 months, maybe more, maybe less).

The other limiting factor on visits here is of course the Department of Immigration. Tourist Visas are now limited to 30 days with a possible once-only extension of a further 15 days. We went off to Jakarta and Singapore in November and after much paperwork, achieved Social and Cultural Visit Visas (sponsor Wayan Ruma) allowing us to go a whole 90 days without reporting to Immigrasi and applying for an extension, which can be granted, or rationed in monthly installments, up to a maximum of 6 months altogether. So we can now stay inside Indonesia until 16 February at least, with possible extensions up to 17 May, 1981. Sometime between 16.2. and 17.5. however, we will have to leave the country and apply again for new Visas. One cannot change from one Visa to another inside the country. Even work permits for inter-national project staff can be a hassle. Worrying and fussing with Visas and the like is a time-consuming, costly and nerve-wracking business here. One often wonders why one bothers.

So, in retrospect: I've finally come to share what I believe might be your view of Australia taken in 1970. For me, the years up to and including 1974, were heady... with the City of Sydney and City of Adelaide work, and the accolade of the Luker Medal, which thrilled me because it was home town recognition. But the Whitlam Fraser debacle of 1975, the discovery that Australia had achieved near zero population growth and a stagnant urban economy along with thousands of tons of illiterate reports prepared with DURD millions, the disillusion with planning that followed, the replacement of professional assessment and political decision-making by black and green bans, maoist/feminist confrontations and environmental protest demos and long-drawn out, inconclusive tribunal and court proceedings, all made me glad to seize the Semarang project as a long sought opportunity to escape from the rat-race in rich, introverted Australia. Working here under difficulties in Indonesia at least gives one a sense that one is dealing with real problems, not the psychosomatic trivia that consume one in Australian urban areas.

Outlook

So tonight I'm sitting here in my shorts (I've been so busy typing I forgot to change into a sarong) having just finished our delicious dinner brought by Wayan's mother, and wife, just switched off the Radio Australia news, listening to the soothing patter of the rain on our grass thatch roof and the distant sound of a gamelan, wondering how to explain why we continue to bother about staying on here.

We have life pretty easy in Bali, that's one reason. We have a lovely lady to clean house, wash and make breakfast in our own kitchen. Like the female labourers on the house site, she is happy with US 80 cents a day, to add to her other sources of income, and the presents we give her. But that's the standard female wage here. Our gardener is an amazing chess player, entirely self taught here in the village. To avoid losing more than half the games I play with him, takes all the concentration I am capable of, and I don't always succeed. His wage as a building site labourer is US\$1.35 per 7 hour day; as a gardener on a monthly salary, it would be US \$24 per month.

Bali, however, is not Africa; there's no bad smell here of colonialism. The Dutch only took over in 1906, and even then they didn't interfere and change the whole structure of society as they did in Java. Bali therefore retains a continuity of culture... and what a magnificently romantic culture ! A richly embroidered tapestry of religious, social notions, developed over centuries of stability and abundance in a less densely populated, rich agricultural subsistence economy of land owning small farmers, each man tilling his own sawah. To go from an upland Balinese village to Java is to enter a different world, the conventional third world/less developed/ex-colonial mess.

The night music of the frogs has started, after the rain. We love Sayan despite the insects (there aren't many tonight, it must be because of the rain); heat (it's only really oppressive in the middle of the day in the months of September-November and maybe February-April - April to September is beautiful, dry and cool); wet season mud, dampness and mould (but the moss and the sound of water is beautiful); the frustration, delay and confusion that confront any attempt to do anything with western speed or efficiency (that simply means that we must adjust to their pace, I suppose); and of course, the constant tendency to paranoia that all foreigners experience in LDCs.... are they ripping us off ? will we be murdered in our beds if there another political upheaval like there was in 1965 ?

After excursions to ugly, burgeoning Denpasar, seeing the onrush of economic development, traffic congestion and other signs of change, particularly cultural change, we are glad to get back here to our quiet little patch, our tranquil and intimate Bandjar. How much more do we long for it when we're stuck in Jakarta ! or Manhattan !

Now that I've been through the worst of my mid-life crisis, I'm really disillusioned with massive economic development as a recipe for happiness. I remember the thrills of earlier years, thrills over projects, over having a big fancy car (I haven't owned one for years now) etc etc- Now I respect more the strengths of Balinese family life, and the Balinese traditional integration of religion, art and work, so those three things do not have separate existence, are not separate categories, but all part of the flow of life.

Notwithstanding all that, we still persist in striving for our own economic development... we always seem to have a shopping list of extra comforts, such as a good door mat to reduce the intake of dirt, an electric blender, a refrigerator, a pump so we can have water for frog and fish ponds in the dry season, etc etc etc. And culture strain gets us down so we think we would like to go down to one of the luxury hotels occasionally for a hot bath... or go to Tamarama for a swim in the crisp surf of a temperate zone.

In Java, and most other parts of Indonesia, massive economic development is essential simply to head off massive malnutrition, joblessness, discontent and a descent into chaos. Indonesia 1965-80 has been a miracle of recovery, but another miraculous effort is needed to maintain stability over the next 15 years.

I'd be happy to do my bit towards achieving that next miracle, and put up with living in Jakarta or elsewhere, if I could come down here to Sayan fairly often for short breaks, and rests between engagements. That's why I'm so delighted to discover this national urban development policy project, something up my own professional alley, and worth getting seriously involved in.

Strange that you should mention the possibility of a job in Colombo. Shri Lanka attracts us, and we've heard good things about it from friends. So if there's any chance of us going there, we'd be keen, especially if the Indonesian project fails to get off the ground. Do keep me posted about opportunities there.

We blew most of our life savings on the 1980 trip. Now we live on the rent from the Paddington house and of my late mother's duplex at Randwick; she died, aged 89, in 1978. The rents bring in about A\$18,000 gross, about A\$14,000 net. Taxes take about A\$4,000, leaving \$10,000 disposable income.

Barring medical emergencies and unforeseen costs, one can live quietly and comfortably here in Sayan for A\$5,000 and have the rest available for air fares and hotel expenses in search of Visas and Jobs ! But the Sayan house folly could eat up another A\$15,000, specially now that the cost of building materials is rising so rapidly... lime and cement have doubled in price over the past 6 months. Cement is now US\$6.40 a bag, and lime US\$21.60 a cubic metre.

Maybe we'll be forced to look for more people to share in the cost of the house, and share the use of it... we have already accepted a capital contribution from the boss of an Italian construction company. He will only come for a week or so a year.

So that's about enough for now. I hope I've cleared up the mysteries created by my previous cryptic notes. I still want to write a dossier-report for you on my recent discussions and observations in Jakarta. I'll do it in a separate letter, in more formal style, so you can use it in the office if you deem that useful. It will probably come under separate cover in a couple of days time.

Do write and let me have some news of you and Shirley and the kids, and of UNCHS... I trust all is well and that you are learning to see the bright side of life in Kenya. At least it's not much in the news, so it must be relatively peaceful.

Regards

George

P.S. I enclose a new CV slanted towards the Indonesian project.