

Citizens of the World ?

Written by Mitra Ardron
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Who would believe its only two weeks since Cyclone Thane took out 70% of the trees, roads, power, water, phone, and Internet and trapped most of us wherever we spent the night for 36 hours.

They must have power on in the village now because I wake up at 5:30 to amplified chanting from the village temple a couple of km away. We still haven't got power back, but at least Steffen (German) borrowed a generator yesterday to pump water, so I can wash clothes as I take a shower.

With the pumping oddities, I don't trust the water yet so breakfast, with my neighbors (Indian / French couple) is porridge & hot tea. First stop of the day is the Town Hall, where Min (indian), a colleague on the wind turbine project works. He's got power and more important Internet, so I can setup logistics for tomorrows meetings in Chennai. The net drops out mid-morning so I head over to the workshop where Jorge (Ecuadorean) is teaching a 5 day seminar on renewable energy to a class including participants from Nepal, Belgium, India, and Canada.

Lunch, noodles & Indian veg, is with an Indian solar engineer, comparing notes on inverter models and prices, and I meet afterwards with an Austrian sustainability consultant to compare notes on costs and yield of urban agriculture between Oakland & Indian cities.

The net still isn't back up, so I head to the next village, to buy petrol for the clunky motorbike I've been renting, and to beg time in a Spanish friend's office where they design solar street lights. He's got both a generator and his net is working :-)

Pick up a couple of returning school-kid hitchhikers (Tamil), and dodge the rest of them, hay wagons, buses, trucks and cows for my next meeting in the industrial zone with a French sanitation expert to discuss UV Aquastar's war treatment device, and his use of Effective Micro organisms.

Work is over for the day and I head to a concert by a French flutist. Before dinner of south Indian dosa and pumpkin soup with an English teacher of collaborative games. We both head to an improv theatre show by the kids with unsurprisingly a cyclone theme. After the show, I sit

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with friends, (A Faroe Islander & her Egyptian partner & their baby; French & Danish) to listen to music by a Portuguese Didge player, and others I don't know on bamboo & steel flutes, and space-drum.

So what are we ... are we the nationalities of our birth, or citizens of an ever more inter-connected world, enjoying sharing the differences of our upbringing.

Enough for today, I've got to be up early for a 4 hour taxi ride to Chennai. So I fall asleep to the sound of next door's generator accompanied by frogs, and crickets.