

Green School set up in Bali forest

School will groom future leaders to tackle climate change

■ BY VICTORIA VAUGHAN

SPIRALLING bamboo structures tucked away in the rainforests of Ubud, Bali, mark the site of the unique Green School.

Built entirely of bamboo, surrounded by fields of crops, managed by the students, and powered by a nearby river, the school aims to be carbon neutral.

Alongside the school's traditional curriculum of maths, science and English, the 125 students take part in a green studies curriculum and a creative arts programme overseen by Mr Ronald Stones, formerly head of the Tanglin Trust School in Singapore.

Canadian jewellery designer John Hardy hired Mr Stones as director when he decided to set up the school after watching *An Inconvenient Truth*, a film by former United States vice-president Al Gore.

Mr Hardy was one of six environmental pioneers who spoke in Singapore earlier this month at the launch of Qi, an Internet-based social enterprise which aims to provide a platform for inspiring individuals working for the environment in Asia.

Qi was set up by publisher Paul Coleman and his partner Mette Kristine Oustrup, who has worked in the fashion industry as co-founder of the French trend agency Style-Vision.

Through these talks, the environmental pioneers hope to inspire people to live their lives in ways which sustain the environment.

Mr Hardy, 59, hopes his school will be the start of a network of green schools nurturing leaders to help rescue

the planet from the perils of climate change.

The students at the Green School hail from 26 countries and 20 per cent are local children on scholarships.

Annual fees for the secondary school are US\$9,262.50 (S\$12,900), with an additional US\$850 annual building fee.

The school has 21 teachers and has space for 700 students.

Another speaker at the launch of Qi was Dr Willie Smit, 52, founder of Tapergy, a company which uses sugar palm for biofuel. He was spurred into action after he rescued a dying baby orang utan from a garbage heap in Balikpapan, Indonesia.

He now takes care of more than 1,000 orang utan in his rescue centres in Balikpapan and Palangkaraya in East and Central Kalimantan.

Seeing that deforestation is the primary destroyer of the primate's habitat, Dr Smit has worked to recreate a rainforest in Samboja Lestari in western Borneo.

In 2002, the area was one of the poorest in the district - with half of the population unemployed.

Dr Smit - who is originally from the Netherlands and now lives in Tomohon, Indonesia - surrounded his forest with fire-resistant sugar palms, which need to be harvested daily, providing jobs and incomes for local people.

The project provides employment for 3,000 people who fill a range of roles from working with the orang utan and carrying out reforestation and research to making furniture from waste wood.

The forest has lowered the temperature in the area by between 3 deg C and 5 deg C.

Qi's next event will be held next month to coincide with the Apec meeting in Singapore, and the theme will be sustainable business, reforestation, carbon financing and renewable energy. For more information visit www.qi-global.com

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