

“Ulam Asu” Advocacy Against the Dog Meat Trade in Bali

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“Ulam Asu” is a documentary movie about dog meat trade in Bali directed by I Putu Raditya Pandet. Released in 2018, “Ulam Asu” has been used to advocate the resistance against the dog meat trade by Yayasan Seva Bhuana through their education program. Yayasan Seva Bhuana is a local foundation that works in improving animal welfare in Bali and concern in dog meat trade issues. Historically and culturally, the Bali dogs have a close relationship with Balinese life. Balinese people and the Bali dogs live side by side. The Bali dogs even have a special position in Balinese ceremony called *caru*. This research will discuss how “Ulam Asu” is used as video advocacy by Yayasan Seva Bhuana and how “Ulam Asu” works as media resistance against the dog meat trade. This research was carried out with descriptive qualitative methods. Through the elements of the movie, “Ulam Asu” presents a strong emotional influence. It is able to connect the audience with personal stories that they have experienced with Bali dogs. Yayasan Seva Bhuana uses “Ulam Asu” in their educational program as a process of integrating documentary movie into advocacy efforts. Real results and impact on the campaign against the dog meat trade were achieved by building public awareness through the video advocacy.

Keywords: Bali dog, dog meat, advocacy, documentary, resistance

INTRODUCTION

“*Ulam Asu*” is a documentary movie released in 2018 representing the reality of the dog meat trade in Bali. Directed by I Putu Raditya Pandet, “*Ulam Asu*” aims to resistance media to the dog meat trade. Based on the regulations of the Directorate General of Livestock and Animal Health, dog meat is not included in the food category because it is not a product of livestock or forestry. Raditya Pandet as director of “*Ulam Asu*” felt the need to reveal all the stories related to the dog meat trade in Bali in the form of a documentary, so that it can be used in a movement against dog meat consumption, especially in Bali.

The existence of dogs cannot be separated from the life of Balinese people. Apart from being pets and house keepers, there are wild dogs (unattended dogs) aswell. Dogs also have a role in Balinese culture, one of which is the existence of dogs as a means of *caru* ceremony which is a part of *yadnya* ceremony. Dr. Lawrence Blair, a British anthropologist who has spent more than 25 years in Indonesia stated that the Bali dog is a very special dog because of its pure genetics, different from other breeds of dogs. The Bali dog is suspected of being a proto-canine or purebred dog that evolved from wolves-like animals. In fact, the age of the Bali dog is thought to be older than the Dingo - a native Australian breed.

Bali Dog has a unique characteristic. Despite living side by side with humans, Bali dogs usually live in packs with one alpha as the leader and don't really become domestic animals. The habit of Balinese people who let their dogs loose is also related to the characteristic of Bali dogs. From there then came the term community dogs, where a group of dogs live and guard a certain area. Bali dogs are also territorial. So that in one area there may be only one dog pack that controls the area with a hierarchy within the pack.

Until now Bali has not been able to get out of the rabies endemic status. This is suspected to be related to the dog meat trade in Bali. In the dog meat trade, the distribution of dogs from one area to another can expand the spread of rabies. In addition, dog meat process does not have operational and hygienic standards, considered to be at high risk of spreading zoonotic diseases including rabies and other diseases. The dog meat trade is also closely related to the number of cases of lost pet dogs, to street dogs being poisoned for their meat. It can be said that the consumption of dog meat has a very high health risk. On the other hand, the dog meat trade that is spreading in Bali is inversely proportional to the cultural values adopted by the Balinese people who tend to respect the existence of dogs. The complexity of the problems in the dog meat trade is what was later raised in “*Ulam Asu*”.

Yayasan Seva Bhuana was formed in 2013 and has two main programs : subsidized sterilization and education. The subsidized sterilization is aimed for street animal and people with their local domestic animals (dogs and cats) who could not afford sterilization fee in clinic. Meanwhile education program is aimed to give fresh education towards young local people about animal welfare and environment. After received its legal entities as registered Indonesian Yayasan in July 2016, two main programs of Yayasan Seva Bhuana are now thriving to work with communities in Bali.

Yayasan Seva Bhuana started their education program by creating successful campaign of #SaveBaliDogs in 2012 on twitter, which became a trending topic in Indonesia. Seeing a potential in youth, the education program continued into street feeding and movie screening. Yayasan Seva Bhuana have played several movies: The Cove, Dancing Monkeys, Bali The Island of Dogs, and *"Ulam Asu"*.

Movie screening is seen as one of the most appropriate forms of campaign to do in Bali. By watching a movie, the audience will get information through audio-visual form so that the information is easier to understand. Movie is also used as a form of media campaign for various issues raised by Yayasan Seva Bhuana. Specifically for the campaign against the dog meat trade, Yayasan Seva Bhuana uses *"Ulam Asu"* as a form of video advocacy. Yayasan Seva Bhuana views that *"Ulam Asu"* is able to convey information on why the dog meat trade in Bali needs to be fought through his movie. Education is needed so that people understand the dangers behind the dog meat trade, and *"Ulam Asu"* packaged it in a documentary form that is easy for anyone to understand.

The use of *"Ulam Asu"* as an advocacy video for the dog meat trade is in line with the aim of *"Ulam Asu"*'s director. Yayasan Seva Bhuana and Sri Redjeki Films, which is the Production House that houses *"Ulam Asu"*, have an agreement regarding the use of *"Ulam Asu"* as an advocacy video against the circulation of dog meat in the education program of Yayasan Seva Bhuana. Lastly, *"Ulam Asu"* was played on Animal Health Social Work, Udayana Faculty of Veterinary Medicine on June 30, 2021.

METHOD

This study used qualitative research methods. The subject of this research is the *"Ulam Asu"* movie. The object of research in this study is a study of how *"Ulam Asu"* is used as an advocacy video by the Yayasan Seva Bhuana and how *"Ulam Asu"* works as media resistance against the dog meat trade.

The researcher used snowball sampling technique. Some of the initial informants in this study were members of the Yayasan Seva Bhuana which is engaged in educational

programs, Raditya Pandet as the director of *"Ulam Asu"*, and people who had watched *"Ulam Asu"* in movie screening education program organized by Yayasan Seva Bhuana. The research location is Bali. The analytical technique used in this study is a qualitative-interpretative method, which is a method that focuses on signs and texts as objects of study, as well as how researchers interpret and understand the code behind these signs. The results of the study will be presented analytically descriptively through descriptions and supported by pictures.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Video, to quote Sam Gregory in the introduction to the book *Video For Change* published in 2008, is an abbreviated term for a number of audiovisual media of different formats, lengths, and purposes ranging from feature documentaries and short films to video clips, public service advertisements and raw footage. In this discussion, *"Ulam Asu"* is a video. Video can have a strong emotional impact because they connect viewers with personal stories. Video can illustrate true visual contrast and provide direct visual evidence of an event. Video can reach many people on a wider scale because it does not require literacy to communicate the information in it. A video can also be used in a very wide variety of segments and for different contexts.

Video advocacy is the process of integrating video into an advocacy effort to achieve higher tangible results or to influence the ongoing campaign. Advocacy is the process of working for a position, result, or solution. In this case, Yayasan Seva Bhuana is conducting a campaign against the dog meat trade in Bali. When integrating *"Ulam Asu"* as an advocacy video, there are several things that Yayasan Seva Bhuana pays attention to, including:

1. Define the goal, which is to provide education about the dangers of the dog meat trade to the wider community so that they are willing to be involved in efforts to fight against the dog meat trade in Bali. Yayasan Seva Bhuana which has an educational program realizes that education plays an important role in making a change. People are often considered not to care about the problem of the dog meat trade in Bali. In fact, this ignorance arises because of the lack of public knowledge about the dangers of dog meat trade in Bali. These dangers include the transmission of the zoonotic disease outbreak of rabies, which is currently endemic in Bali, as well as the dangers of dog theft and dog poisoning. By providing education, public awareness of the problem of the dog meat trade is built, so that the community can support the resistance of the dog meat trade.

2. Discuss with other organizations and communities that have worked on the same issue, what methods have been and have worked and what have not. Yayasan Seva

Bhuana has raised various issues regarding Balinese dogs since 2012. During its journey, Yayasan Seva Bhuana has discussion with various communities and other organizations that are also concerned with the the dog meat trade issues. From experience, the form of campaigns such as demonstrations is difficult to accept in Bali. For that, a campaign form that minimizes the potential riots but can bring accurate information to the public needed. From this it is known that video advocacy is the right way to fight against the dog meat trade in Bali.

3. Analyze the style and strengths of Yayasan Seva Bhuana, and identify possible partners to work with. Yayasan Seva Bhuana is a foundation founded by local Balinese people who care about the environment. The proximity of Yayasan Seva Bhuana to the locality is a strength to be able to build a narrative with a perspective that is more easily understood by the Balinese. In addition, Yayasan Seva Bhuana always chooses the path of advocacy in every issue it raises. So far, the Yayasan Bhuana Foundation has partnered with local communities and organizations in running each of its programs.

4. Define the target audience and think deeply about how to communicate the message to the target. The main target of Yayasan Seva Bhuana's educational activities is young people. Young people are seen as a generation that is more able to receive new information quickly and immediately apply it in their daily lives to make changes. In addition, young people are more familiar with forms of technology that are currently developing such as social media, so they are able to disseminate the information they receive more quickly with a wider reach. Yayasan Seva Bhuana always uses a light and fun style of language in each of its campaigns, teaching by conducting discussions that familiarize the speakers with the target. The movies selected in every movie screening activity are always adjusted to the campaign being carried out.

5. Determine the level of involvement and start to be involved in the production to distribution of the film. In "*Ulam Asu*"'s advocacy video, Yayasan Seva Bhuana has been involved in the research phase. The director of the film "*Ulam Asu*", Raditya Pandet has contacted Yayasan Seva Bhuana as one of the informants in the movie. In addition, Yayasan Seva Bhuana has also made a movie distribution agreement, where "*Ulam Asu*" can be played in every movie screening activity of Yayasan Seva Bhuana for educational purposes.

The word "*Ulam Asu*" comes from the Balinese Language, *Bahasa Bali Alus* where *Ulam* means meat and *Asu* means dog, so "*Ulam Asu*" means dog meat. The use of the *Bahasa Bali Alus* in the title of the movie has the aim of making people aware of the existence of the Bali dog which in Balinese culture should be respected and not consumed. "*Ulam Asu*" presents a reality of the dog meat trade that occurs in Bali in the form of a participant observation

documentary. This type of participant observation documentary aims to make the audience feel close to the filmmaker and participate in the process of investigating the dog meat trade carried out by the filmmaker in the film. The genre of "*Ulam Asu*" is an investigative documentary, where the director is the main character who investigates the dog meat trade. In this way, the audience can feel truly in every scene in the film and share in the emotional experience of the filmmaker. In video advocacy, this is known as participatory video. Participatory video is used in a development context as a way to help document and a way to identify solutions to challenges.

"*Ulam Asu*" is present in the form of a documentary that lacks narration, where all descriptions of events in the film are written in the form of a dialogue between the director as the main character and the resource person. Reality from the planning process to the investigation process is shown to create the impression of inviting the audience to participate in every process that occurs during film production. "*Ulam Asu*"'s production stage is broadly divided into interviews, investigations and stockshots, all of which can build on the elements of a documentary.

The elements of the documentary film must be arranged, reprocessed, arranged in the presentation structure so that the message to be conveyed can be well received by the audience. The elements of documentary movies are divided into visual elements and verbal elements. In the book *An Introduction to Film Studies*, the third edition, by Jill Nelmes, it is mentioned that the visual and verbal elements commonly used in a documentary are:

1) Visual elements, consisting of:

(1) Reactive observationalism

Documentary filmmaking with as much material as possible taken directly from the subject being filmed. This relates to the accuracy of the observation by the camera director or director.

(2) Proactive observationalism

Making a documentary movie by selecting movie material specifically in connection with previous observations by the camera director or director.

(3) Illustrative mode

An approach to documentaries that attempts to describe directly what the narrator is saying (whose voice is recorded as voice over)

(4) Associative mode

Approach in documentary movies that try to use pieces of the picture in various ways. It is hoped that the metaphorical and symbolic meanings of the literal information in the film can be represented.



Figure 1. Dog meat investigation scene in “Ulam Asu”
Source : “Ulam Asu”, 2018

2. Verbal Elements:

(1) Overhead exchange

Records of conversations between two or more sources that appear to be recorded accidentally and in person.

(2) Testimony

Records of observations, opinions or information that are honestly expressed by eyewitnesses, experts, and other sources relating to documentary subjects. This is the main purpose of the interview.

(3) Exposition

The use of voice over or people directly dealing with the camera, specifically directs the audience who receives information with their arguments.

The proper use of verbal and visual elements is the key to producing a film that can effectively convey a message to the audience so that it can influence the ideology of the audience. At the beginning of the movie, the audience is placed in the position of the director who is completely “blind” about the dog meat trade. As the film progresses, the audience is then exposed to the facts of the investigation carried out by the director. The facts of cruelty to dogs are presented one by one in detail with the investigation method. Messages about against dog meat trade began to be inserted through visual and verbal elements in the film, so that the ideology of against dog meat trade could influence the audience.

Examples of the use of verbal and visual elements in “Ulam Asu” will be explained in the following scene studies that occur in “Ulam Asu” (figure 1)

Visual element: Reactive observationalism.

The subject in this scene is Raditya Pandet and dog meat seller. The camera was hidden inside a bag on the table. This scene gives the impression that the audience is involved in the investigative process that is being carried out by the director.

Verbal element: Overhead exchange.

The verbal element in this scene is the conversation between the subjects in the scene. Raditya Pandet was talking to the dog meat seller, asking information about how much the dog meat price and how to order in big quantities.



Figure 2. Dog slaughter scene in “Ulam Asu”
Source : “Ulam Asu”, 2018

Visual element: Reactive observationalism

The image in this scene is one of the images that impacts the audience visually. The scene of the dogs being brutally slaughtered caused horror to the audience. Knowing the fact that the slaughter of dogs occurred due to the capture of family pet dogs, made the audience feel that the slaughter of dogs was too cruel and should be stopped. The facts about the slaughter of dogs in Bali which are presented openly, raw and uncensored are the strength of the “Ulam Asu” to be able to lead the audience to believe in the ideology of saving dogs.

Verbal elements: -

In this scene there is no conversation or voice over. There are only audio recordings of the slaughtered that occurred. This make the audience focusing on the visual elements, and made the visual impact even more powerful.

The existence of visual and verbal elements as described above is one of the reasons why “Ulam Asu” is appropriate as an advocacy video against the dog meat trade in Bali. Yayasan Seva Bhuana uses “Ulam Asu” as an advocacy video by showing it in a movie screening followed by a discussion, so that the facts about the dog meat trade presented in “Ulam Asu” can be better understood by the target of the education program. The movie screening also played a role in conveying the ideology of resistance to the dog meat trade in Bali so that more and more people supported the campaign.

CONCLUSION

“Ulam Asu” is used as video advocacy by Yayasan Seva Bhuana in their educational program as a process of integrating documentary movie into advocacy efforts. Real results and impact on the campaign against the dog meat trade were achieved by building public awareness through the video advocacy by playing “Ulam Asu” in movie screening education program. Through the elements of the movie, “Ulam Asu” works as media resistance of the dog meat trade. Facts about the cruelty that occur in the dog meat trade are presented through verbal and visual elements in the movie. It’s provide new perspective to the audience: resistance of the dog meat trade. “Ulam Asu” presents a strong emotional influence through visual and verbal elements. It is able to connect the audience with

personal stories that they have experienced with Bali dogs. “*Ulam Asu*” managed to become advocacy video that is used by Yayasan Seva Bhuana, that influenced the ideology of the audience, causing support to save Bali dogs from dog meat trade.

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