

# Sowing Sunflower Seeds

*I see trees of green*

*Red roses too*

*I see them bloom*

I attended the Diocese Leadership Conference in mid-July this year, and at the end of conference we were given a small bottle of sunflower seeds. Although I have no prior experience planting sunflowers seeds, I gave it a go.



I planted the seeds in small pots in group of 3 seeds in each pot. To my surprise within weeks the seedling sprang and new life evolved from the seeds. They were growing really well. But one morning, I saw the seedlings were uprooted and laying down on the ground. The orange-footed scrubfowl had visited overnight.

There were some seedlings that were badly injured and need to be binned. However, I was able to recover 7 seedlings that I planted into 2 difference locations as I live in a townhouse with limited garden space.



Days went by, weeks were gone and they were followed by months. Within a few months the sunflowers had flowers.

Two seedlings that were planted in the shady area were small. However, the other five in the full sun area were healthy.

And I thought to myself: there are similarity between sunflowers and us. We are all have no control over our birth. We have no control over which parents we will be born to, which country and what sort of ethnicity etc.



And this is my story...

In 1936 my dad (then five years' old) and his mum boarded in a boat from Southern China to Pontianak, West Kalimantan, Indonesia. My grand-dad had left China a few years back to escape famine. Once he had enough savings, he sent money home so his wife and son were able to come to Indonesia.

I was born in Indonesia. When I was a child, I did not know that I was born in a Chinese family. I noticed that I was bit different to my Indonesian friends. I did not know that I was stateless and when I was in middle school, there was a policy that stateless children can't attend school. That was a stressful time for me and I wished I was Indonesian. I did know what my parents did, however, so I still continued with my schooling and I got my Indonesia Citizenship the following year.

In May 1998, my family and I came to Darwin due to political turmoil in Indonesia. Fortunately the whole family had Australian visas. It took us 5 years to get our Australian citizenships.

I started at CatholicCare NT (back then Centacare) in 2006 as a part-time payroll officer 2 days a week and then became full time. I have seen the growth of the organisation over these years. It is said it takes two to tango and I guess it applies to me. However I am not sure that I am still doing the same tango that I was doing 15 years ago. I think the dance is now bit of everything: tango, waltz, hip-hop (and so on) as we can't stay the same all the time and need to adapt to the changes.



Back to the sunflower story: they live in harmony in my garden with others. Yellow, pink, red, green, brown etc. This reminds me of the Indonesian dish called *Gado gado* which means mixture of everything with peanut sauce.

<https://www.recipetineats.com/gado-gado-indonesian-salad-with-peanut-sauce/>

*And I think to myself  
What a wonderful world.*

Tony The

28 October 2021