



Newsletter No. 4

December 2011

Bamboo Micro Credit has been without its Chairperson for the last 3 months while Peter Johnston travelled to the Bamboo project in Bandung Indonesia and subsequently from there to China, where his wife is continuing her studies. He has now returned to Perth and attended a Board meeting on 28 November 2011, so everything is now progressing well.

Donations continue to come in and we now have 74 members, which is extremely pleasing.

BANDUNG, WEST JAVA

One of the reasons for Peter's visit to Bandung was to begin the process of reorganization there. Ibu lin Hasanah, who provided invaluable support and guidance in the early stages of establishing Yayasan Bambu Peduli, for a number of personal reasons, is no longer able to continue as a volunteer. This has meant that other people had to be found to continue the work she has been doing.

We have been fortunate that Colin Singer and his wife Aat have agreed to take on the responsibility of guiding YBP through some changes in structure which are seen as necessary. Colin divides his time equally between Bandung and Perth, where he is a JP and a Director of both Indonesia Institute (Inc) and Australia Indonesia Business Council. Some of the changes will include the re-formation of the Board of Directors of YBP, a change in the location of operations from urban Bandung to a rural community and the formation of partnerships with existing organizations. At this stage, it is hoped that we may be able to begin operations in Tasikmalaya, a town 120 kms south west of Bandung and develop a partnership with a community organization which has approached us, in Cipanas, 50 kms from Bogor, in West Java. We have found that operating in an urban environment poses many difficulties which do not exist to the same degree in rural areas or small towns, so we are keen to implement that change. At the moment, operations in Bandung have been suspended and Peter will again go to Indonesia in mid-January 2012, to begin the implementation of the proposed changes. Further information about the restructure will be provided to members, as they proceed.

"It's not a handout, It's a hand up"



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BUKITTINGGI, W. SUMATRA

Fikar, our representative in Bukittinggi, is managing the borrowers and their loans with his usual efficiency and we are at present directing all funds to him.

For those who do not know, Bamboo was originally conceived in 2007 in Bukittinggi by Peter and Fikar using a small initial investment, as an experiment to see if the idea they developed was viable. Of course, micro credit was not a new concept (the Grameen Bank was founded by Mohammed Yunis in the 90s), but it was a venture into the unknown by both men. Fikar had excellent local contacts as a respected figure in the town, enabling him to communicate with and manage the borrowers, while Peter used his experience as an administrator and community development worker to establish the infrastructure.

He is a tour guide in West Sumatra and is very knowledgeable about the country and his people, the Minangkabau, and their ancient and colourful history. If anyone is interested in seeing this beautiful and exciting part of the Indonesian archipelago, he will be delighted to guide you to the best spots and arrange accommodation. His website is www.liteneasy.nl, you can see his photos at www.picasaweb.google.com/litenezy. His email is fikar_bkt@hotmail.com.

Fikar will join Peter in Bandung in January to assist with the restructure of the organization in Java and his input will be greatly valued.

MICRO CREDIT FOR MOTHERS (MfM)

MfM is a group of business women in the Netherlands who have been raising money for projects in developing countries. They were interested to partner with Bamboo to deliver small loans to women in Bandung and we had reached agreement for them to provide additional funds to Yayasan Bambu Peduli, but in view of the difficulties we have been experiencing, we both felt that the partnership should not proceed at this time. We have resolved to look again at a joint project in the future.

MEMBER MEETINGS

Following on from the successful member meeting with Directors in September, the Board has decided that another meeting will be held in February or March of 2012. We will provide more details early in the New Year.

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Finally, on behalf of the Board, we wish you a pleasant Christmas and an enjoyable New Year.

Peter Johnston
Chairperson, Board of Directors
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