



Newsletter No. 7

August 2012

Hello Friends of Bamboo Micro Credit

Report on Tony's progress

As you may recall, our Secretary, Tony Burgoyne, sustained head injuries in an accident at his home three months ago. I can report that he is on the mend and has had a titanium plate inserted in his skull and since the operation, he has made considerable progress. He is still an inpatient at Shenton Park rehab hospital, but it looks like he will be there for a while longer. We wish him well for the future and hope he can return to his position as Director of Bamboo soon.

Partnerships

The partnership agreement with Pesat, which we have been negotiating, has been signed and the first funds will be sent to them shortly. The Bamboo Directors are delighted with the connection with Pesat and we look forward to a long and fruitful relationship with their Directors and staff in Bandung. This organization has an extensive track record in working with villagers around Bandung and the addition to their existing micro credit program will be very valuable. The partnership provides great advantages to both Bamboo and Pesat as it ensures our funds will reach more eligible borrowers, while extending the service Pesat provides to the villagers with whom it works. It also gives us a base in Bandung for our operations as we will be able to access Pesat's offices. Pesat will report to Bamboo on a monthly basis, in a similar way as Fikar does from Bukittinggi. Information about borrowers will be provided in later Newsletters with photos and a full story about their business plans, which will be incorporated in our website.

Membership

At our recent Directors' meeting, the issue of eligibility for membership of Bamboo was discussed. It was resolved that all donors since May 2012 will automatically be "members" within the context of the Rules of the organization, plus all donors who have given over \$60 in the last 2 years. This includes non-government agencies and companies. Essentially, at the moment, member's rights are confined to voting at the AGM, but we hope to be able to provide additional benefits in the future. We can currently offer members the opportunity to visit Bukittinggi in West Sumatra and we will be discussing similar arrangements with Pesat in West Java (Bandung). Members are very important people.... it's your organization and we are your Directors with the

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responsibility to ensure that it is managed responsibly. Many supporters find it a nuisance to have to renew their membership every year. The Directors have therefore decided that anyone donating \$300 or more will become Life Members. This will of course, include donors who pay their contribution on a monthly basis. We hope, however, that they will continue to donate in excess of their membership fees, as our work depends on our income.

Director profile

Bamboo is managed by a Board of Directors who come from a variety of backgrounds, but who have a common interest in combating poverty in Indonesia. They do this entirely voluntarily and, in fact, they are the “workers” of the organization (we have no Australian employees). We have decided to profile a different Director each newsletter so that you can have a better idea as to who is managing Bamboo. One of the most important roles is that which has responsibility for finances. Bernie Fisher is the Finance Director and comes to Bamboo with extensive experience in working in the non-government sector, especially the management of funded organizations. He has considerable experience in child protection and community development and is currently working with WACOSS, the peak body for community services in WA. He took on management of Bamboo finances and very quickly sorted out the complexity of our income and expenditure. Our accounts are unusual, in that we do not operate on a “profit and loss” basis and our funds are rotated as borrowers repay their loans. Bernie is responsible for managing our income from many sources, primarily from Australia, but also for ensuring that funds are correctly disbursed to our projects in Indonesia, as well as making sure that donations are registered and acknowledged. His tasks are many, but his sense of humour and patience are essential attributes.

Website

Our website is now 3 years old and looking rather dated. A generous supporter has agreed to help us update it and this is currently underway. We will let you know when it's finished and we will welcome your feedback about it. In the meantime, if you could take a little time to look critically at our existing website and tell us what you like about it and what you don't like, it would help us in our aim to provide an informative and interesting website. Email your comments to oztrack@gmail.com.

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Auditor

We are looking for an auditor for our annual accounts. Our preference is to find someone to be our auditor on a pro bono basis, but we are willing to pay a modest fee. Let us know if you know of anyone who may be suitable.

Australia Indonesia Business Council (AIBC)

Bamboo has been a member of AIBC for the last 3 years. Bamboo has participated in many AIBC events and a number of members have become supporters. We are keen to develop relationships with more companies who are in business in Indonesia and will be working on connecting with companies to seek their support. The Directors are working on how to maximize the opportunities to attract funding for Bamboo. If you have any ideas about possible contacts or ideas about how we could develop connections with companies, we would appreciate hearing about them.

Publicity

We are always keen to talk to groups about our work. One of our Directors recently spoke to a Soroptomists Club and her presentation was very well received. If you know of any group who would like a speaker, please suggest Bamboo to them and we will happily do a presentation. We usually find that people are very interested to hear about our work and often are willing to donate as a consequence. We are interested in making more use of the social networking phenomenon and Bamboo has a Facebook page...have a look at it and "like" us. One of our supporters has assisted us in developing a Yahoo Group and it has attracted some interest. To access it, log on to Yahoo Australia website, scroll down and click on "groups". We are seeking someone to help us actively access social networking sites and if you know someone who could help, let us know.

A story from our files

Sawaldi is a farmer in a village about 20kms from Bukittinggi in West Sumatra. In 2010, he approached Fikar our local manager about borrowing funds to repair an old truck he had. His plan was to fix the truck and use it to carry his produce and that of his neighbours to market in Bukittinggi (which has one of the biggest and best markets I've seen in Indonesia). He borrowed 2 million Rupiah (\$250) and, with the help of his neighbours, he carried out the repairs the truck needed. He now regularly transports produce to market and has successfully repaid his loan. This was an example not only of Bamboo giving him a "hand up", but also of a community helping itself, by co-

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operative efforts. Farmers in the area now get better prices for their produce by getting their crops direct to the market. Sawaldi has 5 children, so not only has he benefitted from the loan, but his family's standard of living has improved as has that other farmers.

Bamboo AGM

Our AGM will be held on 22 October 2012 and members will be advised of details shortly. Please reserve the date and try to come along, as we will try to make it an enjoyable event.

Peter Johnston
Chairperson, Board of Directors
Bamboo Micro Credit (Inc)
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