

PROGRESS REPORT

FEBRUARY 2019



Suku Mentawai
Cultural Education Foundation



PREFACE

We are very grateful to the supporters who have always helped the Yayasan Pendidikan Budaya Mentawai (YPBM) and hope that you will maintain interest in our progress and the meaningfulness of our actions well into the future.

This monthly report contains a summary of the YPBM activities that have been carried out in February. This includes the further development of CEEP in each studio; meetings with the community and government officials, and the initial research activities of this year's Mentawai dictionary and Oral Literature projects. Finally, we invite you to read our February Report. We hope that you find it useful.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Yayasan Pendidikan Budaya Mentawai currently has five cultural learning studios where our cultural education program is being taught, namely; Muntei Studio, Maileppet Studio, Saibi Samukop Studio, Suku Mentawai Community and Puro Studio. We continue to refine our YPBM program within these studios. Yayasan Pendidikan Budaya Mentawai is committed to continuing to make evaluations and develop strategy to achieve our future goals and objectives in maintaining the Mentawai culture.

We would like to invite the public and cultural observers to continue to support and provide constructive advice for us during the implementation of our Cultural and Environmental Education Program (CEEP).



II. CEEP ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

A. Muntei Studio Activity

In February, Muntei Studio carried out the usual learning activities such as Turuk dance, Paligagara dance, cultural stories and learning about the introduction of medicinal plants. Our program students are very enthusiastic and excited about learning cultural wisdom.



B. Maileppet studio activities

In February, the Maileppet students participated in cultural lessons such as learning Mentawai songs, learning turuk laggai dances, and hearing folklore stories. The classes this month went well, with the students from Maileppet studio maintaining a very enthusiastic and excited energy whilst participating in the class activities.



C. Saibi samukop studio activities

Our CEEP also continues to thrive in the Saibi Samukop studio. This month, students studied turuk laggai dance, Pokpok turuk dance for women, and also learnt theory about traditional Mentawai medicinal plants and the art of Mentawai handicrafts. The Saibi Samukop students also underwent vigorous training from the beginning of the month to the end. This group has really taken ownership of their studio program.





D. Activities of the Muntei village handicraft community

This month, the Suku Mentawai youth handicraft community continued to make several varieties of handicrafts, such as Inu necklaces, bags for shells, and miniature frames. After several months, the members of the Suku Mentawai handicraft community have submitted a number of suggestions to the YPBM team to assist in the procurement of handicraft tools and materials to be taken from the forest. In addition, they are also in need of a cultural handicraft mentor to assist in guiding their development. YPBM have responded and are now in discussion with a possible candidates for this role. Our plan is to accept Mr. Jonas Salemurat as a mentor and coach for this youth community group.



E. Development of PBPL in Toktuk Hamlet

On Monday February 25, 2019, the YPBM team conducted a meeting with a key leadership team, students and community members of Toktuk hamlet. This meeting took place at the Tokyuk health building. The material and topics discussed during this presentation included YPBM's vision and mission, the system and processes of cultural learning in each of our partner studios, and also a schedule of activities and other important matters.



III. DEVELOPMENT OF YPBM RESEARCH PROJECTS IN 2019

A. Mentawai Dictionary research

This year is a very productive year for the Yayasan Pendidikan Budaya Mentawai team. Included within our program activities is the development of a Siberut language, Mentawai dictionary. We plan to create both a Mentawai-Indonesian and Mentawai-English language version of the dictionary. We are excited to launch this project in celebration of the UNESCO International Year Of Indigenous Languages (IYIL).

B. Mentawai Oral Literature research

This year we are also undertaking a Mentawai Oral Literature research project, documenting Mentawai folk tales, myths, legends, taboos, songs and so forth. This is vital in helping to preserve our culture. The YPBM team has begun conducting surveys and recordings with the hope of developing a series of books later in the year. Our target research villages include Muntei, Mailleppet, Puro, Buttui and Mototonan.



IV. MEETING WITH GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

A. Meeting with the South-Siberut sub-district head

To initiate all these programs, we have contacted the South Siberut Sub-District Head to get permission and approval to conduct research in various villages across Siberut. Our plan is very well received by the South Siberut sub-district head, pak Camat. Pak Camat hopes that the Yayasan Pendidikan Budaya Mentawai team will continue in our efforts to strengthen and protect the culture of Mentawai. He also spoke highly of our Mentawai dictionary initiative. Pak Camat strongly agrees and supports our program. This meeting was also attended by representatives of our Australian partner, IEF.



B. Meeting with the head of the west Sumatran cultural department

This month the YPBM chairman, Yan, traveled to the city of Padang to meet with the head of the West Sumatra cultural department. During this meeting, Yan explained the YPBM program, current project, and that their students were ready to participate in cultural related events within the west Sumatran province or beyond. The West Sumatra cultural department are now in connection and aware of YPBM and our activities.



C. Mentawai district MUSRENBANG meeting

The Chairperson of YPBM, Yan, was invited to the MUSRENBANG meeting in the southern siberut district. This meeting was attended by the Regent, Muspika, and senior central Government and community representatives. The aim is to listen to and accommodate the proposed projects and aspirations of the community in the development of local village and district areas. This is a great opportunity for YPBM to promote and get support from key community and government departments for our Culture and Environmental Education Program (CEEP) and other initiatives.



V. OFFICE ACTIVITIES

This month, the YPBM team continued with team meetings and evaluations of each activity. The meetings that have been held this month include discussion about the Mentawai dictionary program, Oral Literature program, Traditional Ecological Knowledge project, and the situation and expectations of each studio assisted to YPBM.



VI. EVALUATION

February was a very productive month for the YPBM team. We have several exciting projects such as the research and development of a Mentawai dictionary, oral literature research and documentation, ethnobotanical field research, plus our priority CEEP learning programs in each studio. Essentially, all our program activities have gone well. CEEP classes continue to improve, dictionary, oral literature and ethnobotany research are underway. And on March 17, we plan to conduct our second research expedition in the villages of Buttui and Mototonan. This expedition will be to obtain survey data and recordings relating to our Oral Literature and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK). Despite not having a lot of funds at the moment, we keep up the spirit and try to achieve our goals. We sincerely hope that our vision and mission can be achieved.



VII. CLOSING

This report on the activities of the YPBM team was made in accordance with those carried out in February, 2019. Thank you to all those who have supported and helped the development of the YPBM program over the years. We are very grateful for your interest and actions in supporting Mentawai and our culture.

The entire YPBM family would like to thank Rob Henry and the extended family of the Indigenous Education Foundation (IEF) for helping YPBM in achieving our goals. We are very grateful and appreciate this commitment to give us greater strength in saving our indigenous culture and the future of our people.

We realize that this report is far from perfection and for that we welcome your input, ideas, direction, support and constructive suggestions without exception for the improvement and success of YPBM's future goals.

Masurak bagatta,
Martison Siritoitet

