

PROGRESS REPORT

APRIL - MAY 2021



Yayasan Pendidikan
Budaya Mentawai



FOREWORD

During April and May, our Mentawai Cultural Education Foundation (YPBM) team continued to implement our indigenous learning hub program across southern Siberut. Our belief in achieving success in providing access to indigenous education for all Mentawai students continues to grow – we can and will. Of course, we are very grateful for the ongoing support from our Australian partner, the Indigenous Education Foundation (IEF). These past months we continued developing our language documentation dictionary project, the completion of reparations to the YPBM office roof, evaluations and strengthening of our learning hub program, and other administration and operational tasks that further our 7 key targets.

I. Increase student participation in our Mentawai indigenous learning hubs

Our learning hub managers continue to work closely with each individual hub committee, providing assistance in further strengthening the learning hub's systems and procedures. Additional efforts to increase student participation include facilitating collaborative events and learning opportunities between neighboring community hubs. For example, the Uma Jaraik Sikerei and Bubuakat Simalainge hubs; and the Baklu and Totoirak. Further to this, we are working to ensure that students are receiving learning experiences and insights into Mentawai culture through teachings both in the hub and in the field. We are seeing increased levels of enjoyment and engagement through this improved balance.

We aim to continue developing this and the collaborative strategy with the aim that students have opportunity to share knowledge and learnings with each other, mutually motivating new students who have yet to explore the learning hub program. Looking to the future, we believe it is necessary to carry out continuous training for hub managers and teachers. During April and May, we also facilitated opportunity for students to participate in a series of local events, including the inauguration of a new Catholic church, the Iska event, the closing of the Pokdarwis (Trisakti) event, and the welcoming of the PDIP political party. During these events, students showcased their skills and talents by performing various cultural arts in collaboration between hubs. During April and May, we documented a weekly participation rate of 200 of the 335 students enrolled



Funds spent this month to further our target:

AUD \$ 0

II. Increase the number of Indigenous learning hubs throughout wider Siberut and the Mentawai Islands

At present, we now have 7 Mentawai indigenous learning hubs in operation across the southern regions of Siberut Island. These are:

1. Uma Jaraik Sikerei (Muntei Village)
2. Bubuakat Simalainge (Maileppet Village)
3. Pasigeugeu (Toktuk Hamlet)
4. Tototirak (Buttui Hamlet)
5. Baklu (Ugai Hamlet)
6. Jaujau Puraukat Simaeruk (Madobag Village)
7. Puronan (Salappak Hamlet).

We continue on our path to open further learning hubs across the Island of Siberut, placing particular focus on our strategy of showcasing the value of our existing hubs and allowing communities to take their own initiative in approaching the YPBM team with request to implement our program within their village. At this stage, our development is much more inhibited by available funding resources than it is by demand for our program. That said, our strategy does encourage villages to take their own initiative and move toward establishing a suitable location, team and so forth without requirement of large amounts of funding



Funds spent this month to further our target:

AUD \$ 240



Uma Jaraik Sikerei Learning Hub



Sipasigeugeu learning Hub



Bubuakat Simalainge learning Hub



Totoirak learning Hub



Puronan learning Hub



Jaujau Puraukat Simaeruk learning Hub



Baklu learning Hub

III. Mentawai students understand cultural knowledge and its value for the future

To further improve students' knowledge and understanding of Mentawai culture, our YPBM team continues striving to improve the learning materials and teaching / learning methodology. Part of our strategy is to increase practical studies in the field to make easier for students to grasp by physically seeing and touching. In April-May, the team continued to develop our teaching materials, including program curriculum, to help increase learning for the second semester of 2021



Students of Sipasigeugeu learning hub, Dusun Toktuk, are looking for nail bodies used as souvenirs and traditional clothes made of Baiko skin called Kabit.



Students of the Bubuakat Simalainge learning hub, Maileppet village, are practicing how to make one of Mentawai traditional food, namely Sago Kapurut, which is guided by the program teacher.

Funds spent this month to further our target:

AUD \$ 700

IV. Increase economic capacity for students and the wider Mentawai community

We are working with each hub to encourage them to develop their own strategies and initiatives to increase economic capacity for their hub. Our intention here is for each individual hub to become self-sufficient in terms of raising funding for operational, maintenance and other program expenditure that arises or that they wish to pursue. At this stage, some of the hubs have received support from the Mentawai government and also the Trisakti Tourism Collage to further increase economic capacity through cultural performances and sales of handicrafts

Funds spent this month to further our target:
AUD \$ 100

V. Strengthening indigenous learning hub materials for present and future generations

1. Mentawai Dictionary

Our work on the language documentation project continues, with further research and referencing being conducted for the Indonesian language to Mentawai Rereiket dialect dictionary. We are striving to ensure accuracy so that these dictionaries become valuable, long-term resources and learning materials for the Mentawai people and people abroad

2. Learning hub teaching materials

Continuing our development of a comprehensive and accurate program curriculum, during April and May we have added further detail about the Turu' laggai, which is the sacred cultural dance performed during ceremony and ritual including healing (lajot simagre), innuagurating a new Sikerei whereby there are multiple dances performed including turu' gurut ukkui, and the ceremonial dance on hot coals. In addition, we further developed the topic of marriage (putalimougat) including definitions, the steps in the process – starting with proposing (panounou). We have also added further detail about pangureijat. Of the six topics taught in the first semester, we are at about 90% completion.

Our team also continued working on the curriculum materials for the second semester, which includes learning about taboos (kei-kei). At this stage we have now inputted data on two additional topics for the second semester, which are Mentawai's traditional medicines, and traditional music and instruments. Once completed, we shall check accuracies amongst a variety of informants based on their specific region. This is important because Mentawai is very diverse in its cultural knowledge and practice, varying from region to region

3. Ethnobotani Project

At this stage we are putting final touches on the Ethnobotany field guide project, namely checking accuracy of the guide's dictionary. Once completed, we are then focusing on securing funding support for printing and publication. The results of this publication will be a very valuable reference for our learning hub students as well as other communities who need to source information and obtain knowledge about the Mentawai plants

Funds spent this month to further our target:
AUD \$ 0

The signed of the cooperation and commitment to the construction of the Totoirak Indigenous learning hub in Dusun Buttui by the foundation and the Buttui Elementary School.



VI. Increase the organization's capacity to improve the administration, operations and financial security of our foundation

At present, our foundation team of staff consists of 7 people, plus 14 learning hub program teachers and managers. By utilising the funds available, we continue to implement positively impacting and cost-effective indigenous education programs for Mentawai students. April / May also saw the continuation of restoring our office roof and continued research and documentation on our language dictionaries and program curriculum projects. Additionally, the cultural and education staff divisions have been preparing materials for the upcoming end of semester exam. Pending availability of funds, we are currently seeking to employ an additional Mentawai staff member to assist us in a variety of tasks, particularly relating to English language as he is very skilled in this area. We believe he will be a great asset for our team and mission



Funds spent this month to further our target:
AUD \$ 1,819

VII. Conduct and strengthen strategic and monitoring and evaluation programs

During April and May, we observed very positive affect through the collaborative activities between students from varying hubs. We see this as an area we should continue strengthening and facilitating opportunity. In addition, we note that these collaborative activities – particularly community events – brings great benefit to the community as a whole as they are involved in cultural practice and learning through more aspects of their community life. With this strategy, we see that students are much more motivated and have an increased interest in learning.



Students of the Bubuakat Simalainge learning hub, Maileppet village, are practicing how to make a Mentawai specialty, namely Subbet, which is made from taro, banana and coconut.

Funds spent this month to further our target:

AUD \$ 252

Funds spent this month to further our target:

AUD \$ 3,111



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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