

# PROGRESS REPORT

## *JUNE - JULY 2021*



Yayasan Pendidikan  
Budaya Mentawai





# FOREWORD

Our Suku Mentawai Foundation (YPBM) team continue to implement our indigenous learning hub program across southern Siberut region. During the June / July period, we successfully conducted end of semester exams for each hub. All students received a report card and certificate for their participation and enthusiasm for our Mentawai cultural and ecological education program. In addition, we continue developing our language documentation and plant field guide projects, and are progressing well in the construction of a new learning hub facility for the Totoirak student group in Buttui. Of course, we are very grateful for the ongoing support from our Australian partner, the Indigenous Education Foundation (IEF).

## I. Increase student participation in our Mentawai indigenous learning hubs

During the month of June our learning hubs took part in the first mid-semester exam, encouraging students to exhibit and test their indigenous skill and knowledge in Mentawai traditional and creative dance, cultural foods, arts and handicrafts, traditional clothing, and the methods for processing our staple food, sago.

The purpose for this exam is to measure impact whilst increasing student engagement through deepening and celebrating their knowledge of Mentawai culture. Into July, all students received their results, certificates and awards for their participation. In total, 159 female/male students across 6 of the 7 hubs took part in the first end-of-semester examination activity. The 7th learning hub, Puronan, did not take part in the exam as we are still in the establishment phase.



***Funds spent this month to further our target:***  
***AUD \$ 191***



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

Construction of the new learning hub facility on the formal school grounds in Buttui continued throughout June/July, with great community support - including sponsorship from the Haddad Pharmacy Group (via our Australian partner, IEF). We expect the hub to be finished and in use before the next reporting period.

Thus far we have established learning hubs in three separate districts across Siberut's southern regions. We've listed below each hub within the three districts:

Muntei district: Uma Jaraik Sikerei learning hub (Peining Buttet village), Pasigeugeu learning hub (Toktuk village), Puronan learning hub (Salappak village).

Maileppet district: Bubuakat Simalainge learning hub (Simaonai Baga village)

Madobag district: Manai Simaeru' learning hub (Madobag), Baklu learning hub (Ugai village), and Totoirak learning hub (Buttui village).

At this stage we have limited funding resources which is hindering our efforts to further expand our program and establish new hubs on other communities.



**Funds spent this month to further our target:**

**AUD \$ 2,467**



### 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. Our aim is to make the learning topics and experiences more interesting and enjoyable for both female and male students. Through our endeavors to refine the programs curriculum to suit the aspirations of our student groups, we invite students to deepen their indigenous knowledge for the wealth of their future. For the coming months, our team is preparing planning and budgets for field research activities.



**Funds spent this month to further our target:**  
**AUD \$ 700**



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

We are starting to see positive results amongst our learning hubs, in particular the Pasigeugeu hub in Toktuk who have increased their economic capacity through excelling at skills such as Mentawai handicrafts and performance. The Pasigeugeu hub has received numerous groups of guests (primarily university student groups from mainland Sumatra) over the past few months, whereby they have had opportunity to exhibit and share their skills and handicrafts. As a result, the hub has received economic support from their guests.



**Funds spent this month to further our target:**

**AUD \$ 0**



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

### 1. Mentawai Dictionary

We continue developing the Mentawai language documentation project, focusing on preparing an English language translation whilst adding additional content and amendments to the Indonesian language edition. During June/July, we engaged the support of two English-speaking Mentawai persons to assist us across the next 6 months in finalising the content for design. A funding proposal and timeline has been prepared and submitted to our Australian partner, IEF, for their considerations and support. We believe that with an English language translation of our Mentawai dictionary that all students will have great opportunity to learn an international language through direct translation from our mother tongue. In addition, foreigners will benefit through access to learning our Mentawai Rereiket dialect.

### 2. Learning hub teaching materials

We continue to research, document and refine our program curriculum, which has in total 12 primary topics. These are as follows:

#### Semester 1

Mentawai traditional dance (turu' laggai), creative dance, traditional foods, arts and handicrafts, processing sago, and ceremonial wedding clothing - Pangureijat.

The above 6 topics have been thoroughly researched and documented, however we are still conducting ongoing accuracy checks with informants possessing expert knowledge of Mentawai culture.

#### Semester 2

Introduction to Mentawai's traditional medicine, taboo (keikei), folklore and mythology, traditional music and instruments, art of Mentawai tattoo (Titi'), and the cultural significance and functionality of the Mentawai Uma.

At present, we are working on further researching and enriching the theoretical content of the above topics. We require many varying sources to ensure accuracy of the printed content being shared with the students.

### 3. Ethnobotani Project

During July, the ethnobotany team worked on ensuring all words and sentences are correctly written and in accord with the spelling used in the Mentawai dictionary. Once this task has been completed, we are ready to finalise design and share for final review before printing / publishing the first Siberut plant field guide.



***Funds spent this month to further our target:***

***AUD \$ 0***



## 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. This has been assisted by the commitment shown by hub teachers and committee members from each respective community, providing their expert cultural knowledge to our student groups. Whilst it has been a challenging COVID period, our organisation continues to grow in strength and our students in hope and self-belief.



***Funds spent this month to further our target:***  
***AUD \$ 2,040***



## VII. Conduct and strengthen strategic and monitoring and evaluation programs

During June/July, we continue to observe very positive impact and progress amongst our learning hubs. Students who previously did not understand of value our indigenous knowledge are now thriving as a result of their cultural education. We are still awaiting feedback from the teachers/students with regards to the mid-term examinations, as this was our first attempt at examinations and we believe there is much room for improvement. That said, we now have initial results of how our students are progressing which will prove very valuable over the coming years when drawing comparisons with their future examinations.



***Funds spent this month to further our target:***

***AUD \$ 185***

***Funds spent this month to further our target:***

***AUD \$ 5,583***





**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**

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