



BINA CITA UTAMA SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

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Kalimantan School News

Our first school year finished in June 2006 with a real sense of achievement. We had gone from being a tutorial center for 12 children a year earlier, to an officially recognized school within the Indonesian school system. We had a student population of 25, a teacher training program, a scholarship program, and a group of dedicated and increasingly capable Indonesian teachers.



Karim

The icing on the cake, and perhaps some confirmation that we were on the right track, was the fact that almost all of our local teachers and support staff had joined Subud.

Countering the sense of achievement was an almost overwhelming sense of how much still needed to be done before we re-opened in July 06. There was the testing and admissions process for new students and to accommodate them, renovations and fit-out needed to take place in what would become our new high school building.

"What happened between May and when the school re-opened in July is proof for me that God's grace is at work."

The most pressing issue however was our staffing problem. Salamah Dick and her husband Simon felt that their time in Kalimantan had come to an end, and were preparing to move on. Salamah had been principal counterpart, and high-school coordinator and teacher. Simon was our high-school English teacher. I was able to take on Salamah's role as principal counterpart to Pak Gunarjo, our Indonesian Principal, but I was too busy in the primary school to take on any additional teaching. Finding someone to replace our two key high school teachers within the given time frame, seemed impossible.

It's surprisingly difficult to find Indonesian teachers who are able to speak English and are willing to live in Kalimantan. After

searching locally without success, we advertised in Jakarta. In a country with a population of 240 million and an unemployment rate of 40% we only received four applications! Three of the four applicants showed up for an interview, and none of them were qualified. I remember one of the applicants at the interview asking us where Kalimantan was! As Utami patiently explained the geography I watched the woman's face go blank and her eyes glaze over. People in Jakarta don't want to go to Kalimantan. They see it as a wild, scary place populated by dangerous jungle- people, and a long way from home and family. So we returned from Jakarta empty handed.

What happened between this time late in May and when the school re-opened mid July is proof for me that God's grace is at work here. We started the new school year ten weeks ago with three new teachers, all English speaking, all Subud members and all incredibly competent! Each were compelled by their inner guidance to travel to Kalimantan to work in our little school for a salary which is basically just enough to live on. We are truly grateful to Raphaela, Felix, and Brianna for coming to join our team.

Not long after we returned from the interviews in Jakarta, Utami said something like 'Don't worry, the right person will show up.' I agreed with her and tried to have faith that they would. But, I know that if someone had popped into that conversation and said, "Guess what? When school re-opens in two months you are going to have three incredibly competent, English-speaking teachers here with you to welcome the children! And by the way, the renovations to the high-school building will be finished on time too." I would have laughed and said, "In my dreams!"

But that's what happened. Of course there was lots of work involved in facilitating the process of having these teachers come and getting the high-school building finished on time. Never-the-less, all Utami, Isti and I had to do to allow this miracle to take place was simply to be here and to do our jobs sincerely. The rest unfolded with God's grace.

Karim MacDonald



Raphaella and Brianna

WELCOME RAPHAELA, BRIANNA & FELIX!

Welcome to our three new Subud teachers! Raphaella Schipper has come directly from her job teaching at the French International School in London. (No summer vacation for Raphaella!) She is our new high-school coordinator, teacher-trainer and also high-school math and history teacher. Raphaella is professional and dedicated and in the short time she has been here has already raised the standard of our local teachers.

Felix Hude arrived from Melbourne and is teaching high-school English. Felix previously lectured at RMIT University,

Melbourne where he taught writing, film and animation. He is using film and animation as a medium for teaching English and has already done some lessons which I'm sure his students will never forget.

Arriving as a much needed addition to our primary school is Brianna Bryson-Haynes, a volunteer from the U.K. who arrived off the plane carrying stilts and hoola-hoops! Brianna is not a trained teacher, but she is smart, and full of energy and creativity. It seems that there is virtually nothing she can't do. *Karim*



Felix with his students

HIGH SCHOOL ART NEWS with RASHID CARRÉ

With larger facilities, more equipment and supplies, and the active support of the new 'management', the High School art class on Tuesday morning is in full action.

Being the first class in the morning, adds to its efficiency and shows its full integration into the curriculum. Starting from nature and geometrical drawings, and looking at slides of Indonesian designs (wood carvings, textiles and weavings, Dayak, Javanese, Chinese, Madurese), we have produced and are still producing stenciled designs.

We have started stenciling the student's designs on to the columns of the main school hall, where the art classes are held.

We will expand the printing as far as we can, giving more life and atmosphere to the hall. On the technical side, we had to get familiar with the nature of stencils, negative and positive space, and the use of color.

I am very pleased with the response and enthusiasm of the students, and particularly touched to

Fennysia and her work



see how the very students who last year were somehow shy and a bit lost in what was going on, have bloomed and participate fully, with spirit and creativity. *Rashid*

NEW HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING OPENED JULY 2006



Grade 1 students play
Limbo in the new
building



A house in Rungan Sari was donated for use as our new High-School Building and offices. The refurbishment took place during the school holidays, and miraculously opened in July at the start of the new academic year.

The new building, opposite the Primary School, is owned by Pak Siregar, a Subud member from Jakarta. This additional building was much needed to accommodate the increase from 25 students last year, to 37 this year. Previously, the whole school was squeezed into six rooms in the wings of the Rungan Sari Hall.

The new building has high-school classrooms, a computer lab and staff offices, as well as a large open central area for children to play in when it is hot or raining. (one or the other every day!)



IS THERE LIFE ON MARS?

What we do at BCU. by Felix Hude

When classes have finished around 2 pm I usually cycle up to Utami Geiger's house for coffee. I enjoy her company and the easy, relaxed flow of the house, but I will admit I'm also swayed by the fact that she stocks the best espresso beans in Rungan Sari and I have 'free-run' of the kitchen.

One afternoon a few weeks back I'd just made myself a 'Pak Felix Special' (plenty of beans, warm the milk and serve it up in the special blue mug) and was heading back out through the front screen-door with the latest National Geographic in-hand, when Utami emerged from the office looking rather tense.

After her usual 'How's Pak Felix today?' (albeit not quite as chirpy as normal) and my usual 'Yeah, well, you know... how's it going with you?' reply, we settled down on the veranda in a couple of the big wicker chairs that overlook the garden, and without further prompting, off she went: 'This student, that parent, this transport problem, that building problem, this computer breakdown, that visa problem, this government regulation, that unforeseen looming crisis...', and on it went.

"Boy, she's really going through it today," I thought, as I sipped on my coffee and eyed the front cover of the National Geo., which lay unopened on the table and announced a tantalising lead article entitled, 'Mars – Is There Life in the Ancient Ice?' The way this conversation was going it was starting to look like I'd never find out. "You know, Felix," she said finally, sagging slightly in the chair and staring off into the middle-distance as the download neared completion, "It's such a financial struggle here, I sometimes wonder why we do it."

I came to Rungan Sari in October last year, and teaching at the school was not high on my list; I had other fish to fry. Slowly I'd gotten involved, starting off with weekly filmmaking

classes, and eventually coming on as the High School English teacher when Simon Dick left to go back to America. It was now the start of a new school year, we'd expanded, things had been tough across the board, and Utami, not only the founder of the school but very much its stalwart, had been under considerable pressure.

Her sentence hung in the air for a few moments, a little like the way orang-utans hang from branches and watch you, wordlessly waiting for your next move, and for the first time I actually admitted to myself that I really loved this job, and I didn't want to lose it. Not that it's the sort of job you'd pay an agency to scout out for you, considering the specs., but I guess there's no telling about love.

BCU is built by the very things that inform us as human beings struggling to find the God we love, and what keeps it going, what moves it, drives it, and keeps it open and free is the latihan.

They pay you peanuts, there's a Black Hole at the door called 'things to do', there's precious few resources (at least compared to schools in the West), we work in a 'technically challenged greater social environment' (putting it very nicely), which also itself has precious few applicable school resources of any thoughtful or creative nature (we can't even buy Blue-Tak for cripes sake!) and considering the unique mind-bending challenges that arise periodically, and despite our personal areas of expertise and experience, we're all working it out pretty much as we go.

"Well, you know, Utami," I said, "if the school goes down then we might as well all pack up and go home." She looked up, and I'd obviously caught

her attention, and my own for that matter, because I'd started off the sentence thinking about myself and finished up with a picture in my mind of all of us, every single person here at Rungan Sari, marching-off south down Jalan Tjilik Riwut in single file towards Palangkaraya carrying our belongings on our heads in large tea-chests, and I'd never really thought of the school in those terms before. "The school stands right at the centre of what we're doing here at Rungan Sari," I added. "No school, no real place for us in Kalimantan."

By the time I left Utami was feeling a shade better and gave me a smile (I always wash my cup), and on the way home I chewed over this shiny little nugget that had popped-up out of the espresso beans, and the more I thought about, the more I realised it was true. We may or may not be bringing Subud to the world *per se*, we may or may not be bringing the latihan into the active daily lives of the people here, but the school may just be our best shot at really planting 'Bapak's thumb' in Kalimantan.

Where better to place the much-needed seeds of moral value and social ethics but in the fertile soil of the young? How better to witness the transformation that real love and dedication brings to people's lives than in the dignified growth of a joyous bunch of schoolkids? How better to talk about what we're on about in Subud, and prove it?

BCU is built by the very things that inform us as human beings struggling to find the God we love, and what keeps it going, what moves it, drives it, and keeps it open and free is the latihan. It's our core activity, and one step out of that, in the world, stands the school. And as you

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sow, so you reap, and the school, God bless it, gives us back one undeniably critical thing – a real place here in the lives of the people of Central Kalimantan.

We are not just grafted onto the society like some well-meaning NGO operation, we are not a Cargo Cult, and neither are we leaving on the first of next month. We're wedded to this community and we're here for the long haul. This is our home too, and the school gives us that.

I still don't know if there's life on Mars or not, but things should settle down in a week or two, but then I have been saying that ever since I arrived. ✚ *Felix Hude*



We need your old Books & Magazines for THE LOUNGE!

We are in the process of making a reading room in the new high school building. The room will be a 'quiet' room where the students can read, study and do homework. We have the room, we are making the curtains and furniture (cushions, low table and plenty of shelving) but what we don't have is the books and magazines.

What we want is second-hand English language books and magazines, of any level and any subject. They do not have to be strictly educational in the conventional sense; reading for fun is often the best way to acquire general knowledge.

If you have any old books and magazines, we would love it very much if you could send them to us at the address below. Sea-mail is fine if available - the post is reliable, and we aren't going anywhere. Even better, if you know of somebody who is coming to Rungan Sari, ask them to bring a book or three, and a few magazines for us. Thank you.



Indonesia's Independence day is celebrated throughout the nation every year on the 17th of August. The BCU students started the day at 8 am with a formal flag-raising ceremony.

After the formalities, they played soccer, tug of war, hula-hoops, and had donut eating competitions. Although it was hot, the students enjoyed their day of remembering and celebrating.

INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS



SEKOLA BINA CITA UTAMA

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Palangkaraya
Kalimantan Tengah, Indonesia

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If you would like to participate in our school please send credit card donations through SDI or directly to us at :

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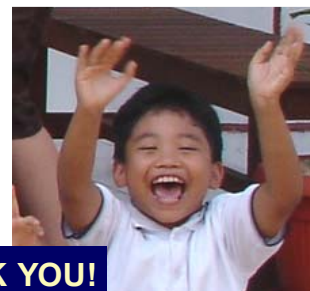
Branch : Palangkaraya

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Account no: 0083731002

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THANK YOU!