

IMPROVING EDUCATION, LIBRARY AND WATER FACILITIES FOR THE CHILDREN

By David Booth MBE

The rainy season is fully upon us with all of its positive and negative effects: on the plus side improving the flow of our mountain spring-fed reservoirs and filling household rainwater collection reservoirs, and the usual negative effects of landslides and flash floods in the many usually dry river beds, temporarily cutting off access for hundreds of families. Faced with these difficulties, February 2007 has still been a dynamic month for East Bali Poverty Project (EBPP) team, who don rain capes, mount their trail bikes and push forward with these essential sustainable development projects for the people of their village.

Manikaji "Foster Taylor Classroom" Completed

Sitting outside and often sheltering from the torrential rain is no longer necessary for twenty four young Manikaji children since they moved into their newly completed classroom in mid February, kindly sponsored by Geoffrey and Ellen Foster Taylor during their first site visit on 10th January 2007. In addition the children now have brand new study chairs, a far cry from the woven mats they sat on since starting school in August 2006.



BEFORE: Ellen Foster Taylor watching Manikaji 1st year children study in open air classroom



NOW: A real classroom at last! Joyful Manikaji youngsters fully focussed on their new study chairs

Built on to the rear of the school building, this now makes a total of 7 classrooms for the 84 children, four of whom will take the government exams to graduate junior high school this year.

New Isuzu Four Wheel Drive Pickup Supports Infrastructure Projects

A brand new Isuzu four wheel drive D-Max double cab diesel pickup arrived on site on 16th of February 2007, generously donated by Geoffrey and Ellen Foster Taylor of UK.

This wonderful commitment from Geoff and Ellen came during their bone-shaking ride down from Manikaji in our 2-year old Daihatsu Hilina after visiting our school. "How can you transport materials in this vehicle as it seems ready to fall apart?" Geoff asked. He was right, as the

Daihatsu, with 70,000km on the clock, had to go back in the workshop to have the whole body shell re-welded for the third time due to too many trips carrying cement, concrete blocks and other cargo.



New study chairs offloaded from Isuzu outside Manikaji school



New Isuzu pickup transports almost a ton of cement for Jatituhu water project

Since delivery, the Isuzu spends more than 8 hours a day delivering building materials throughout this widespread village, transporting staff through torrential rains and escorting donors and volunteers to/from the village. Thanks a million Geoff and Ellen.

Safe Water for 110 More Families Sponsored by Rotary Matching Grant

Almost 100 members of Jatituhu community crammed into their small *bale banjar* (community meeting centre) on the 14th of February 2007 to sign a life changing contract ensuring that all of the 92 families will have first-time access to safe water within the next 12 months.



Almost 100 male community members listen intently on 14th February as EBPP's Komang Kurniawan explain MOU terms



Jatituhu's illiterate adults put their thumbprint to the MOU – ready to start work

Sponsored by a Rotary Foundation Matching Grant from Rotary Clubs of Seminyak, Bali, Nassau, Bahamas and Mandurah, Australia, this project will provide: 56 new *cubang* (rainwater collection reservoirs) for families that have none at the moment, cover 36 existing cubangs and renovate 3 artesian wells in the dry river bed which are the only water source for most families after 6-7 months of dry season. In addition, 18 families with the youngest children in adjacent Temakung hamlet will also have their cubangs covered and provided with hand pumps, water filters and aluminium gutters from roof to cubang.

Logistics planning with the communities took some time as *they* must prioritise the order of work, as they build everything with materials and technical expertise provided by EBPP team. Fortunately, they elected to build the 56 new cubangs for those families most in need. This is a

mega task, involving digging into tough volcanic ash to a depth of 3 metres and estimated time for one cubang from start to finish was 10 days.



Jatituhu neighbours energetically digging to finish the first cubang excavation



Eager family with 2 infants observing progress of their first home water storage reservoir



Jatituhu community working together to build the cubang whilst the rain holds off



Local men finish cubang walls, ready for the roof

However, sheer determination and physical effort saw the first cubang almost completed in just 4 days! 30 men took shifts in groups of 10, digging, shovelling and mixing concrete, all with glowing smiles, knowing that soon, all can look forward to safer drinking water, more baths, cleaner laundry and much healthier children.

Village Children Enjoy EBPP's Rapidly Developing Library and Resource Centre

We are delighted to report that EBPP's Centre for Sustainable Development is now being fully utilised by all sectors of the village community, especially children. Our key goal from the outset



Children from local government schools enjoying EBPP library books as EBPP Senior Teacher, Rosmara Dewi, works on her laptop in the background



Government school children browsing EBPP's library bookshelves, deciding which books to borrow

was to empower children with knowledge, not only in the most remote hamlets where we have schools but throughout the region. Thus we have provided a diverse range of library books covering school curriculum subjects and almost every other topic under the sun. As a result, EBPP schools probably have some of the most comprehensive libraries in the whole of Indonesia.

Our most complete collection though is in EBPP library and resource centre at the foot of the village, and whilst we still need many hundreds of new titles, plus additional copies, to facilitate a fully active lending library, many children from the local government schools in our village are already coming to our centre daily to read and borrow many of our books. “Can you please provide some of these lovely books for our school library?” is a daily plea from many of the children as they have NONE in *their* school libraries.

Let’s hope that our collection rapidly expands and that one day we can help provide a mobile library to serve the thousands of children in the region who are very hungry for knowledge.

For more information on any of EBPP activities, The Indonesian Vetiver Network (IDVN) or to support us, please call me on (0361) 410071 or email: info@eastbalipovertyproject.org; Homepage: www.eastbalipovertyproject.org