

THE HEART OF BALI

MUM's the Word

By Michele Cempaka

As a result of the Bali bombing in 2002, Mum Foundation was formed. They are a fully registered Indonesian based non-profit organization with a charter to perform social activities including: Formal and non-formal institutions, orphanages and homes for the elderly, hospital clinics and laboratories and sport and other training facilities. Richard Flax, the co-founder and original conceper of MUM along with many others, realized that the problems that they were trying to resolve were as much a problem of education and people duplicating their efforts, as not having the tools to solve significant challenges.

"We realized that probably the most effective way of developing a solution was to bring together a group of the most successful people in the philanthropic field, so I dreamed up MUM (Manusia Untuk Masyarakat) 'People for the Community'. The board members of MUM have a connection to other foundations or effective philanthropic endeavors. The idea being, that if a major catastrophe occurs like an earthquake or tsunami that we have within the auspices of MUM the opportunity to resolve some of these crises without having to run around reinventing the wheel," said Richard Flax.

Soon after MUM Foundation was registered, Alison Chester, who was trying to resolve a problem in Benoa for some children who were in a home which was not properly caring for them, took on the job of removing these children from the home which became rather difficult. Alison tried to start her own foundation, but was faced with many legal obstacles, so she came to Richard Flax and asked for help. He invited her to join the MUM Foundation. Thus, solidifying the collaborative relationship in which the MUM Foundation would become an active part of ensuring that the Jody O'Shea Orphanage would be adequately taken care of.

"The inspiration for this orphanage was Jodie O'Shea, a young Australian woman who was a victim of the 2002 Bali bombing. With the blessing of Jodie's parents, Rhonda and Gerard, this orphanage was established in her memory in August 2005, to remind us all that even out of the most tragic events, truly wonderful acts of kindness and humanity can blossom and bring light to the lives of many." (MUM website) The home currently assists over 50 children some of which live on site and others who live at home with a parent or relative.

Additionally, MUM has been working in conjunction with 'Happy Hearts', a foundation based in the U.S.A. Together they have built 57 kindergarten schools mainly in areas where there have been significant disasters like Yogyakarta and Bandung, but they are also committed to building schools in Bali. MUM donors are now realizing that there are other kinds of victims who have just as great a need as those who are victims of catastrophes – these are the victims of abject poverty. Thus, there are plans to build one or two schools in Bali in 2012.

"The provision of kindergarten schools and equipment is a first step in creating a positive future for children affected by disaster or just poverty. Whilst the results are only a small scratch on the surface of the overall problem, it is a tangible

proof of the concept that the people of the planet do have the resources and can make a real difference." (MUM website)

MUM has also produced two one hour long documentary films, the first for the BBC World About US series in 1977 and the second made in 2001 for the ABC (Australia) and financed by the Film Finance Corporation. This became the ABC's "Accord" film of the year. These films can be easily understood by anyone with the purpose of establishing a true dialogue with those who are in dire need, and to promote a better understanding of the problems they may be required to face in their lives. The media and instructional cds produced in the past years from GUS and IDEP and other local foundations provide a tool kit for the use of needy communities throughout Indonesia.

Other future projects include increasing the quality of healthcare in the Puskesmas system, which are local health clinics which offer a variety of free or very low cost healthcare, to low income and impoverished Indonesian citizens. MUM will get significant support for this training program from the Western Australian government and the associated medical facilities. The idea is that they will send medical professionals to Indonesia to train nurses at the Puskesmas, so that they have a better understanding of how to effectively treat a variety of common medical conditions.

When queried about administration costs Richard commented:

"We are very lean on our administration costs. For every dollar we get, we put at least 90% into our projects. The other 10% goes to pay the administration which consists of Indonesian staff. The MUM foundation doesn't take anything. The board members actually donate to the organization themselves, so that they can get the best value for every dollar that is donated to MUM. Apart from the direct costs of projects, there are no costs that are levied on the foundation itself by the income that is received by donors."

MUM works with so many families in great need and many of the things the foundation does involves health aspects as well. In addition, the foundation would also like to upgrade the standard of their projects all of which require substantial funds. In the future, MUM would like to spread their activities throughout Eastern Indonesia, build more schools and continue helping with the Jody O'Shea home which gives children living in abject poverty a real chance to have a better life.

If you would like to donate or find out more about the MUM Foundation, please visit their website at: www.mumbali.org

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