

Masarang International 2020 - Report from the Board

Inevitably, the year 2020 has been impacted significantly by the COVID-19 virus. Many Masarang team members in Indonesia have experienced contaminations in their families, struggled with their own health, and suffered from the financial consequences.

Similarly, the financial income of Masarang Indonesia has been hit severely. No more volunteers helping out in Tasikoki, no more international school visits, and no more tourists visiting the Amfitheater and the Eco-lodge. Meanwhile, the operational costs continued and the Masarang team had to scramble to feed the animals and pay the employee salaries.



Tasikoki desperate to buy daily food for the animals

Amidst the COVID-19 crisis, the Masarang mission is more relevant than ever. Clearly, the way our 'civilized world' has been dealing with the natural resources on our planet is not sustainable. We have to dramatically change our lifestyle and find new and innovative ways to help a growing population live in balance with nature and wildlife. This is exactly what Willie Smits and Masarang stand for.

Next to financial emergency aid to the team in Indonesia, Masarang International has continued to focus her financial support on the strategic priorities below. A comprehensive financial overview can be found in the audited financial statements.

Tasikoki

Thanks to a generous gift from the Babel Foundation, we have been able to complete the renovation of our primate enclosure complex. Importantly, we have also been able to release two groups of the endangered North-Sulawesi black-crested macaque into their natural habitat. This created much-needed space for the endless stream of new arrivals. Even during a pandemic, the animal trafficking in Indonesia sadly continues.



New enclosures for the Tasikoki macaques and their release into the wild

Temboan Beach

Temboan Beach will become the ultimate demonstration of the Masarang philosophy striking a balance between ecological, economical, and social interests. Now that the majority of the Temboan land has been acquired (more than 500 hectares of pristine beach and hinterland), exciting plans are being developed by Willie Smits and his team.



Temboan Beach will become the ultimate Masarang landmark

For example, an ambitious reforestation funded by smaller and larger sponsors. Powered by state-of-the-art technology, they will be able to monitor the growth of their trees and measure the related carbon absorption for the benefit of the planet.



The challenging transport of seedlings from our nursery to the future Temboan Forest

Other Temboan initiatives include protection of the endangered Leatherhead and other turtles, restoration of the spectacular coral reefs, release of birds and other animals from Tasikoki rescue center, and zero-waste mini-factories producing organic palmsugar and coconut products. Obviously, all of this will happen with the active involvement and engagement of the neighboring communities.



Temboan Beach initiatives also protect the marine ecosystems from mangroves to coral reefs to sea grass beds

Masarang Mountain

Villages at the base of Masarang mountain benefit daily from the supply of fresh and clean water running from the natural springs on the mountain. Ironically, corrupt politicians and local business men continue to make false legal claims on the mountain. Without formal permission, they have even tried to build an illegal new road on our property. With the help of our legal counsel and an army of law students and other volunteers, we have been able to fend off the corruption.

Tomohon Palmsugar Factory

In a difficult year, the Tomohon factory team has achieved a major breakthrough. After complying to all domestic and international organic certification standards, a major international customer has been secured doubling the palmsugar output and sales. This is terrific news for all stakeholders: first of all the sugar palm plays a pivotal role in Masarang's reforestation programs; secondly, the sugar juice provides additional income to local farmers and tappers, and lastly, the Tomohon palmsugar factory will be able to make a much-needed financial contribution to the Masarang Indonesia foundation.



Palmsugar breakthrough benefitting all stakeholders

Looking back at the turbulent year 2020, we are proud of the resilience of our Masarang team in Indonesia. They have operated under challenging circumstances and prioritized Masarang and the well-being of the animals over their own health and safety. Terima kasih banyak!

Furthermore, we want to seize the opportunity to thank our financial sponsors for their confidence and partnership in a difficult year. We are grateful for your support and hope that you will stick with us going forward. A special word of thanks goes to Esther Klinkum. She has served on the Board of Masarang International for eight years and made a terrific contribution. Fortunately, Esther will continue to be connected to Masarang in the future and help out as a volunteer.

Looking ahead at 2021, we are determined to bounce back from COVID-19 and focus our energy and support on Willie Smits and his amazing projects in Indonesia. As said, the Masarang mission is more important and relevant than ever.

The Board of Masarang International

Hans van Willige (Chairman)

Johannes Freije (Treasurer)