

THREADS OF LIFE

May 2009 newsletter



The Tewuni Rai Cooperative of Mehara on the island of Savu

Dear Friends,

The economic crisis is challenging to all of us and we continue to be grateful to the guests who come through Ubud and buy textiles from Threads of Life. We are grateful to our friends and supporters for sending their friends.

It has been two years since we decided that our website and printed newsletter could no longer keep up with the developments within our organization, or the changes in the communities we are working with. A detailed overhaul ensued during which we refocused our goals, and then designed and wrote an extensive new website. Launched at the start of 2009, this new internet presence showcases the remarkable heritage-quality textiles, baskets and craft objects made by the women's cooperatives we work with, while exploring the complex interactions between livelihood, culture and conservation within their communities.

We have designed the website so that it can expand over time, making our ongoing work easily accessible to visitors. The 'Field Notes' section is an obvious example and will include slide shows and narratives from every field trip we make. Currently, there are slide shows on: [The Rain Cloths of Nggela](#) in Flores from April; a workshop with the [Women Headed Household Empowerment Program](#) and the [Songkets of Bali's Singaraja regency](#) in March; the [Power of Nusa Penida and its Textiles](#) and [The Embroidered Story Cloths of Negara](#), both from Bali, and [The Textiles of the Karataun Toraja in Sulawesi](#) from February; and a [Savu Field Trip](#) in December 2008. Of his [Timor Field Trip](#) in November 2008, field staff I Made Rai Artha (Lolet) writes, "Theresia Alle Ngaing is a weaver in her sixties from the Helong ethnic group of Kupang, Timor. In 2006, when we first met her, she was often sick. She could do no red dyeing as there were no local Morinda dye trees. We had her ikat-patterned threads dyed in nearby Amarasi. She and her daughter then wove with these threads. As I sat with Theresia admiring the newly finished pieces, she told me her health and enthusiasm had returned. She feels useful again and is eager to revive Helong's textile tradition."

The "Our Textiles" and "other Products" sections feature an array of sumptuous artworks. Take your time to appreciate the textiles, especially those of [Sumba](#), [Timor](#) and [Flores](#), using the "Click to Enlarge" icon above the main images to get a thread-by-thread view! For basketry enthusiasts, visit the [Sumba](#) and [Kalimantan](#) sections. For insights into the women and cultures behind these extraordinary art pieces, the "Indonesian Textile Arts" section is a rich resource.

Our sister nonprofit, the [YPBB Foundation](#), continues to flourish and is currently working on several community forest management projects that protect dye plants and their forest homes while promoting community enterprise. Bookkeeping is also being taught to weavers' groups, and we are helping the women establish small credit unions. While the Ford Foundation and the Australian government fund most of this work, private donations are critical for addressing immediate needs that arise outside the institutional funding cycles. Those who have donated in the past will notice that the credit card donation link is not on the new site. This is because the US umbrella nonprofit that processed donations recently went into Chapter 11 reorganization. Fortunately, all recent donations had been transferred to the YPBB Foundation the week before the announcement, so no money was lost. We are now looking for a new umbrella nonprofit, and considering setting up our own US-registered 501(c)(3) charity. In the meantime, please send donations to the [YPBB's account](#) in Indonesia.

We hope you enjoy browsing the new www.threadsoflife.com. Send us your feedback (we are still working on a few sections), and update your contact information so we can stay in touch. We are always happy to answer questions. This newsletter will be sent quarterly with the next editions in June, September and December.

Best wishes,
from William, Jean, Pung, Lolet, Weti,
and everyone at Threads of Life

On Threadsoflife.com

Threads of Life is a fair trade business that utilizes culture and conservation to alleviate poverty in rural Indonesia. The heirloom-quality textiles, baskets and crafts we commission are made with local materials and natural dyes. With the proceeds from sales, we help weavers to form independent cooperatives and to manage their resources sustainably.

WHAT WE DO

This section explains the breadth and depth of our work. Behind the beautiful textiles seen in the gallery are months of [field work](#) each year [supporting womenis weaving cooperatives](#) through [fair trade](#), [revitalizing traditional textile techniques](#) , and [conservation efforts](#).

INDONESIAN TEXTILE ARTS

Fourteen slide shows explore the traditional [textile arts](#) from across the Indonesian archipelago while introducing the [weavers](#) and their [cooperatives](#), and the [materials](#) , [natural dyes](#), and production [techniques](#) they employ.

OTHER PRODUCTS

Traditional links between livelihood, culture and nature are expressed through some of the world's finest [basketry](#). Diverse [culture arts](#), including pottery, woodcarving and bead work, also retain a remarkable vitality.

HOW TO PURCHASE

Threads of Life sells its textiles, baskets, or other cultural artefacts through its [gallery in Ubud](#), Bali, and occasional overseas exhibitions and sales. Books, music and videos are available [online](#).

THREADS OF LIFE TEXTILE ARTS CENTER

Jalan Kajeng 24, Ubud, Bali 80571, Indonesia
Open 10 am to 7 pm daily. [Click for directions](#).
Gallery Tel +62-361-972187.
Office Tel +62-361-976581.
Fax +62-361-976582.
Email info@threadsoflife.com.

FIELD NOTES

Keeping people informed of our ongoing work in the communities is important to us. Every time our staff return from a field visit their experiences and observations are turned into a [field notes](#) slide show. Over time a rich archive of these will build up for visitors to browse through.

OUR TEXTILE

Detailed descriptions, cultural references and photographs with high-resolution images [catalog](#) a varied and exciting sample of the best textiles produced by the weavers' cooperatives associated with Threads of Life.

CLASSES, TOURS and UPCOMING EVENTS

The [classes](#) offered at the gallery on the history and diversity of Indonesia's textile arts are an excellent way to gain a new level of appreciation. News of any tours, events or exhibitions we are offering is also to be found here.

YPBB FOUNDATION

YPBB stands for Yayasan Pecinta Budaya Bebal and is the name of the Indonesian nonprofit that the Threads of Life business is partnered with in its community work. [Read more](#) about YPBB's projects and funding.

GET INVOLVED

To join the Threads of Life mailing list, click [subscribe](#). To update your contact information in the mailing list, click [update](#). To remove your name, click [unsubscribe](#). To send us an email, click [contact us](#).