

Dear friends,

Welcome to the 9th volume of our newsletter!

As a kick-off event for 2008, UID held an annual meeting on 9 January. During this event, we reviewed our works in 2007 and revealed our plans for this year. In particular, we will continue to focus on three areas: leadership education, community development, and publications.

LEARNING TO LEAD

We are about to admit the first batch of participants for our IDEAS (Innovative, Dynamic Education and Action for Sustainability) program!

At the same time, our team, led by Dr Ben Chan and Frans Sugiarta, has conducted several workshops for organizations and corporations on the theme of “Crossing the Chasm: Moving Toward a Learning Organization” (focusing on understanding complexities).



UID Executive Director Frans Sugiarta (standing) at a workshop on "Systems Thinking" at Santa Ursula in Jakarta, Indonesia

The aim of these workshops is to introduce to leaders and organizations across sectors “Systems Thinking” as a profound tool with which to learn and understand systems complexities, which have become vital in our globalized era because of increasing interdependency across sectors.

Through these series of workshops, our team seizes the opportunity to engage their participants in learning about the IDEAS program and also introduce them to the U-Process, the backbone of IDEAS Indonesia program.

As our preparation for the launch of IDEAS this year continues, we plan to conduct more of these workshops in organizations across the public sector, private sector and civil society.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

As we did in 2007, we continue to distribute wheelchairs to Indonesians with disabilities.



The governor of Jambi (2nd from left, front row) posed for a group photo with wheelchair recipients and UID team

In January, the Monaco-Asia Society (MAS) and ZENZEN donated 300 toys, which had been collected in Monaco during Christmas of 2007. Through UID, these toys were then given to children of Sirombu, Nias Island, where MAS has financed the reconstruction of 239 homes for victims of the Asian tsunami.



Sirombu children with toys and other gifts from MAS and ZENZEN

The kindness that MAS and ZENZEN showed was, indeed, touching as it was

reflected in the smiles on the faces of those who received it. Thank you, MAS and ZENZEN.

Because conservation is central to our community development program, UID has signed a memorandum of understanding with Conversation International (CI) Indonesia to form a partnership on projects in this area—in Indonesia and abroad.



UID Committee Member and Asia Co-Chair of Conservation International, Dr. Enki Tan, with the Climate Change Communications Award

On this note, we are pleased to share that at the Bali Climate Change Conference on 12 December, Dr Enki Tan, UID Committee and Asia Co-Chair of Conservation International (CI), received the Climate Change Communications Award from the World Bank on behalf of CI for its innovative campaign that raised awareness of nature and climate change.

In partnership with the Indonesian Ministry of Environment and the State Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah, on 11 December, CI also hosted a conference on the theme of “Religions and Conservation: Partners in Protecting Our World”.

The conference was held “to demonstrate the role that religions can play in mobilizing their followers to address climate change and to showcase efforts already being implemented by the faith community in protecting forests and replanting degraded areas to reduce greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.”

Among participants in this event were leaders from Islamic, Hindu, Catholic, Protestant, Confucian, and Buddhist faiths, and it was opened by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia. We congratulate CI on this award and initiatives and look forward to continued close collaboration to between the foundations for a better Indonesia!

CHANGES IN UID

As of this writing, we have had some changes in our team. First of all, on of our executive directors, Gina Dharmawan, resigned from her position to spend more time with and meet educational needs of her two children.



Outgoing UID Executive Director Gina Dharmawan made her farewell comments as UID President Rosihan Arsyad looked on.

Before joining UID in 2004, Gina—who is married to UID executive director Frans Sugiarta—was, together with her husband, instrumental in the organizing and logistical arrangement for our founding conference in Bali back in 2003.

During her time at UID, Gina contributed a great deal to the administration of our Jakarta headquarter. In addition, she took charge of our scholarship initiative in Sirombu, Nias, helping hundreds of tsunami-affected children returning to school.

Also, our editor and director of public affairs, Thang D. Nguyen, has also relocated to his motherland Vietnam.



Gina, Thang, UID Board Members, colleagues, and guests in a group photo

While trying to find new ventures in this fast-growing economy, Thang continues to work with UID on its 2nd book on Indonesia, newsletters and public events.

Thang met UID board member Cherie Nursalim at the World Economic Forum (WEF), where he was regional manager for Asia, and moved to Indonesia to join the UID team in designing and launching our Bali conference.

We wish both Gina and Thang well in their endeavors!



Thang Nguyen opened his farewell gifts as UID Co-founder Aristides Kattopo and others looked on.

As the launch of our first IDEAS class is only a few months away, Dr. Ben Chan, our director of the UID Academy, will be based in Jakarta, so that he can easily work with the team on it and cut traveling costs.

Thank you, Ben, for making this effort.

Until our next newsletter, we thank you for your continue support.

With kind thanks and regards,

The United in Diversity Forum