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## Addressing Generational Disadvantage in Songan with Bali Children Foundation

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For the people of Songan, a region close to Kintamani in East Bali, life can be challenging. The life expectancy for people of this community is just 56, and 99 per cent of the population is employed in the informal sector without access to decent wages, healthcare or health insurance.

The majority of people there only went to elementary school – many never went to school at all. For the over 40-year-olds, more than half of the population can't read or write.

Sadly, the problems faced by the people of Songan are compounded by serious infant malnutrition and stunting problems. For a fertile area surrounded by fresh food, this might seem incongruent but with the majority of mothers illiterate and working as field labourers, they have no choice but to wean their children early to get back to the fields. Unfortunately, they don't understand which foods are required to keep weaned infants developing.

As part of Bali Children Foundation's work in the region, they are ramping up their work to help build a sustainable future for this district. The activities include:

- Water supply, handwashing facilities, soap and safe drinking water for 902 children.
- English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for Grades 3-6 benefiting more than 3,000 children.
- Monthly trash collections monthly from July 2021, benefitting 676 children and the districts surrounding their schools.
- Upgrade of a library taking it from a junk room to a comfortable reading space for 316 children with books and a special space for their literacy programme.
- Intensive literacy learning for 450 children in Grades 1-3. Most of these children will return to school unable to read or write. This new curriculum is designed to reverse this problem.

- Project to address infant malnutrition, stunting and better mental capacity for focus and learning in school-aged children for 200 families (in cooperation with Kartika Soekarno Foundation and Bumi Sehat).



- STEM (Science, Technology Engineering & Math) programme for 316 children to learn about sustainable agriculture, forests, and energy sources for Songan district. The children there are building an earthquake-proof house with plasticine and ice cream sticks.



One of the projects they are most proud of and excited about is their bamboo pilot project which they are implementing into their STEM curriculum, in conjunction with The Environmental Bamboo Foundation. Benefitting 316 children. Deforestation, landslides and poor soil is a major problem on the mountainous caldera surrounding Songan, and bamboo is the first step to repair the forest. To help address this they are currently planting bamboo seedlings at SDN 6 Songan which will later be transferred to deforested mountain areas. If the pilot is successful, the programme will be expanded to other parts of Songan and initially include another 360 children.



“The Everesting Batur for Bali” group are fundraising to support this work.

A supporting donation can be made [here](#).