

ORGANISATION PROFILE



9 Full-time staff members



33% Female Staff members



Located in **Melolo, Sumba Island, Eastern Indonesia**



Founded in **2009**

Partnered with Amos Australia since **2017**



1,533

People supported through micro-finance loans



178

Women's weaving groups supported



932

Number of school children currently supported



300 +

Weavings sold through BKAD's fair trade Gallery

BACKGROUND

BKAD, known more formally as *Badan Kerjasama Antara Desa* (or the Agency for Inter-Village Cooperation) was first established in 2009 through an Indonesian Government initiative seeking to support the growth of local community organisations in rural Indonesia.

Initially BKAD was established as a micro-financing organisation that provided small loans to local women's groups, enabling them to invest in small businesses and other income generating ventures without needing to turn to the high interest loans offered by local loan sharks and commercial banks.

BKAD has since expanded their operations, increasing the size of their micro-financing groups whilst also utilising any returning profits to fund additional community development programs, with a particular focus on supporting the local traditional weaving industry. In late 2016, BKAD opened a gallery on the ground floor of their office to showcase and sell many of the intricate traditional weaving products created by local sewing groups, with the original creator being paid at a fair market price.

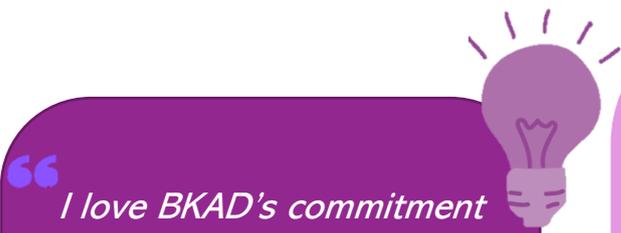
Amos Australia first partnered with BKAD in 2017, and our first project delivered business training to over 260 local women representing nearly 100 sewing groups. Since then, Amos Australia has partnered with BKAD on a number of initiatives, including a School Weaving Program which currently supports over 900 school children to learn traditional weaving practices.

ABOUT BKAD

Originally established in 2009 as part of a government initiative to bring micro-financing programs to rural Indonesia – BKAD has exceeded expectations and is now a successful non-government organisation helping thousands of local Sumbanese.

Today, micro-financing is still the backbone of BKAD's operations, with 1,533 clients across 178 different loan groups. BKAD provides small loans to groups of female business owners, enabling them to invest in and expand their small businesses and generate increased profits and income. The loans are typically quickly paid off through the savings generated by increased revenue. The collective nature of the loans also allows these women to pool together their resources to offer collective collateral, whilst also providing a level of social and peer support. Normally, these women would be locked out of traditional financial and banking processes or forced to borrow high-interest loans from local loan sharks.

BKAD has used the income generated from these loans to expand their micro-financing work and re-invest into the community, creating new programs to further help local women's groups and school children.



“*I love BKAD's commitment to assisting the Sumbanese people to earn a living wage without leaving their ancestral lands or cultural traditions behind.*”

Clinton Bergsma – Amos
Australia Chief Executive Officer

Additionally, BKAD offers specific support to local weaving groups, supporting them with business training whilst also working to create a fair-trade market for their products.

These weaving groups are typically made up of 10-15 women who use traditional Sumbanese methods to sew, colour, and dye weavings known as *pahikungs* which are sold for decorative or cultural purposes. BKAD provides micro-financed loans to these groups to allow them to purchase equipment and materials, whilst also upskilling them to produce more in-demand and high value products.

In 2016 BKAD transformed the ground floor of their office building to create a gallery in which these weaving products created by the weaving groups, school children, and the wider community could be displayed, traded, marketed, and sold at fair market prices. This allows the weavers to directly sell their goods to consumers, eliminating 'middle-men' traders, who would often collectively force weavers to sell their goods at undervalued prices in times of drought or crop failure, before re-selling with significant profit margins.



Image 1: Weavings for sale at the BKAD Gallery



Image 2: A women's micro-finance group meeting

THE BKAD AND AMOS AUSTRALIA RELATIONSHIP

Amos Australia first officially partnered with BKAD in 2017 and has supported 6 different proposals in that time. Two key projects we have undertaken with BKAD include the Women's Training Groups and School Weaving Program.

WOMEN'S TRAINING GROUPS

Over the course of 2017 and 2018, Amos Australia supported BKAD in the implementation of several intensive training workshops for key members of the local women's sewing groups designed to improve their technical capabilities and expand business and product knowledge.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT – The first, conducted in mid-2017, saw 267 representatives from 100 women's sewing group across 10 different local villages each attend a 2-day training program. Workshops were held on a range of business practices including budget maintenance, marketing, group management, and financial recordkeeping. Groups were also taught how to improve access to fair market opportunities.

PRODUCT VALUING ADDING – The second workshop was held in mid-2018 and saw 18 representatives from 5 key villages attend a 15-day intensive training. This course taught attendees how to add value to their products, including how to create a wider variety of weaving styles as well as more in demand products such as bags and jewellery. These new products generate a higher profit return than that of standard weaving products. Participants would then pass these new skills on to fellow weaving group members and the wider community after the course.



Image 3: A business management training session



Image 4: A young school student in weaving class

SCHOOL WEAVING PROGRAM

In mid-2018, BKAD partnered with Amos Australia to create a new program that would teach traditional weaving practices to local middle-school students in the Melolo area. This program provides experienced teachers and materials for the children to create traditional weavings and build up their artistry and skills over the course of the year. Students are not only given the practical opportunity to create traditional weavings, but a theoretical understanding of the process, including the broader cultural implications and local stories tied to the various colours, styles, motifs, and imagery of the weavings. The products the students create are then sold in BKAD's gallery with profits returning to the students, thereby providing an avenue for additional income generation and a potential future career path. Students may also weave their own traditional designs into their school uniform, which the government has since mandated should be worn twice a week, bringing a sense of cultural pride to the school and local community.

Since this first class in mid-2018, the program has expanded to currently serve 932 students across grades 8-10 at both the local middle and high school.



2

Schools



4

Teachers



932

Students



SHARED VALUES AND COMPLEXITIES

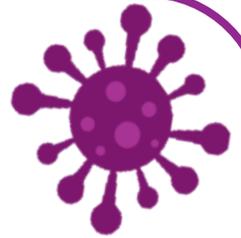
When we first explored the possibility of a partnership with BKAD, they insisted that we look through all their financial records and invited any questions – and that level of transparency continues to be evident in every conversation and report from BKAD. We also love the way that BKAD aim to strengthen existing economic activity in the community, rather than giving handouts or introducing new income streams. BKAD's approach is underpinned by their strong Christian faith which gives them a long-term view of their work and a posture we love.

But it is challenging work. While the loan groups have been largely successful, at times there are cultural roadblocks to women changing the size of their weavings or selling them in the gallery despite the higher prices on offer. External factors like COVID-19, the weather, or local tourist numbers impact BKAD's work regardless of their meticulous planning. The school weaving program has been lauded by the local government who want to expand it in other local schools, but they are hampered by a shortage of resources that are beyond their capacity and that of Amos Australia and BKAD.

But BKAD remain faithful to the work that God has called them to do, and we 'rejoice and weep' with them over the joys and challenges of their work. We're incredibly thankful for their partnership.

IMPACT AND RESPONSE TO COVID-19

BKAD was hit hard when the COVID-19 pandemic first emerged, with many programs forced into a lengthy hiatus. Both the women's weaving and school weaving programs were paused as schools shut and social distancing requirements were put into place. Many small loan recipients could no longer repay their fees as many lost their jobs and searched for food and income. Sales from the BKAD Gallery fell sharply as tourists disappeared and product demand collapsed.



Without income from the micro-financing program and gallery sales, BKAD was forced to temporarily reduce staff wages by up to 60%. In their initial response to COVID-19, BKAD quickly sought ways to generate a new income stream as the organisation's savings and the support from Amos Australia could only sustain staff wages and costs for a short while.

BKAD initially began an informal marketing campaign for their gallery products using Facebook and WhatsApp to advertise to local buyers. However, given the socio-economic conditions in Sumba, this generated limited success.

In late 2020, Amos Australia supported BKAD to develop a functioning website and online store through which the traditional weavings and other gallery products could be showcased and sold, particularly to a wider domestic and international market. Amos Australia also pre-purchased a bulk order of products to assist the cash flow of BKAD and traditional weavers. BKAD is excited to expand their reach and start a wider marketing campaign. If you would like to see the range of products on offer just scan the QR code or visit the link below (Google will translate the site for you!)



SCAN ME

For more information:

Amos Australia's Website – <https://www.amosaustralia.org/bkad>

BKAD Gallery Website - <https://www.galerysumbaheritage.com/>

