



Remarkable Women In Fair Trade

Five stories from Mitra Bali

Mitra Bali has been participating actively in Bali's economic development since 1993. One of Bali's great sources of potential is the skill of its craftsmen and women. All too often, however, the craft producers are exploited by middlemen and have no idea where their products have been sold or at what price.

Mitra Bali assists marginalized craft producers to understand and develop a Fair Trade model. Their strong belief in Fair Trade is realized in the organization's structure and its business style: there is clear dialogue, equality and a sense of mutual respect throughout the production process. The producers always receive fifty percent of the total payment up front; they are paid promptly, the payment being a percentage of the suitable and Fair sale price which is calculated jointly. Mitra Bali holds regular training workshops on design and product development, including ways to help producers develop their businesses. It has an environmental programme replanting albesia (blalu) trees as a sign of their concern for the fate of Bali's natural environment which is being ruined by investors hungry for land. "We know that what we have done, are doing, and will do is still far from our hopes and dreams . . . that is why we must continue this process. Another wonderful world is possible."

Gusti Ayu Suartini



Gusti Ayu Suartini is 48 years old and has been working for Mitra Bali Fair Trade for ten years. Born with Tourettes Syndrome, she was bullied at school and treated as someone who was different by her family and society.

"When I was 25 years old I became a housemaid, doing sweeping and other cleaning work. Then, one day, I was taken on by Mitra Bali. I am

happy, because I am accepted equally and treated the same as other employees. I was taught how to take incoming calls, was involved in employee meetings to learn to express opinions or complaints about work. Currently I am given the task of quality control over the goods deposited by the craftsmen and women. I am proud because I am independent and have income and insurance and will have a pension when I retire. Thank you my God".



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Mrs. Ni Made Karyawati



Ni Made Karyawati was born in 1973 and has worked with Mitra Bali Fair Trade for more than 20 years. She trained as a silver jewellery maker and, after graduating, she worked at a well-known Balinese silver jewellery shop. After she was married and had children, Made decided to set up on her own and it was then that she got to know Mitra Bali. Made uses simple tools to produce

the silver jewellery, from receiving the design to making the finished product.

Made Karyawati says:

"I am grateful that until now I am still a silversmith and receive orders from Fair Trade buyers. I am happy and proud, because my expertise in silver jewellery is appreciated by buyers. This appreciation really helps me to be independent, to have income as a village women and mother of two daughters. My first daughter has just graduated from nursing college, and my second daughter is now in elementary school.

I thank Mitra Bali for guiding my business through Fair Trade principles from the start. I am financially independent and independent in raising a family and breaking free from poverty. And through my expertise as a silversmith I can help some of my female friends to earn income".

Ni Wayan Marni

Mrs Marni has been working with Mitra Bali for 14 years. Her husband died 5 years ago leaving her to bring up two children on her own. The eldest has now graduated from high school and the younger child will graduate this year. Mrs Marni is a skilled painter of carved wooden products.

"I am grateful to be able to work and be part of the Mitra Bali Fair Trade team. Apart from having a salary every month, life and health insurance, I also feel comfortable working. As a female employee, I am treated the same as others. I feel that Mitra Bali Fair Trade really supports the advancement of women, it's not an exaggeration if I say this is the most



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suitable workplace for me as a woman and a widow amidst a powerful toxic masculinity virus”

Ni Luh Gede Sudiasih (nickname: De Asih)



De Asih was born in 1969 and has two children. She got to know Mitra Bali in 2005 and began making laminated wood frames for them as well as for a couple of other buyers. For a time she employed 15 craftsmen. Then things started to go wrong. Her buyers placed orders without making down payments and then failed to pay her promptly. Her workers borrowed money from her and didn't repay. The business went bankrupt.

Now she works alone from home with simple equipment and only handles orders from Mitra Bali because orders from Mitra Bali are always accompanied by a down payment and fast settlement payments. She has been able to pay off her debts, has bought a motorcycle and is able to finish her children's schooling. And she has an independent income that does not depend on her husband.



Made Asih

“One thing I will never forget in my life, when I decided to make my own business and working at home, I was supported and given an interest-free loan by Mitra Bali. This really helped reduce the burden of my personal life, and made me



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independent as a housewife. Thank God and thank you Mitra Bali with your buyers”.