

ONF

Ono Niha Foundation

Newsletter – December 2019



Farewell to 2019 – welcome to 2020!

Apologies for the silence. A lot has happened on the home front since our last newsletter in April last year.

Steve Brassington and I visited Nias in May. Following is an update on the visit, and other happenings since then.

Foundation self sustainability

We are working closely with Matt to help the Foundation become financially self-supporting by the end of 2021. The main strategy is to improve the operations and efficiency of Matt's coconut oil factory (Ono Niha Oil) so ONO can contribute more to the Foundation's operational costs. The factory already provides about 20% of the Foundation's operating costs through in-kind support.

The plan is:

- We (Steve, I and others) help Matt design a more efficient oil factory.
- The Foundation funds some of the construction costs from donations.
- These funds will in effect provide the Foundation with shares in ONO, which will provide income to the Foundation through a proportional share of the profits.

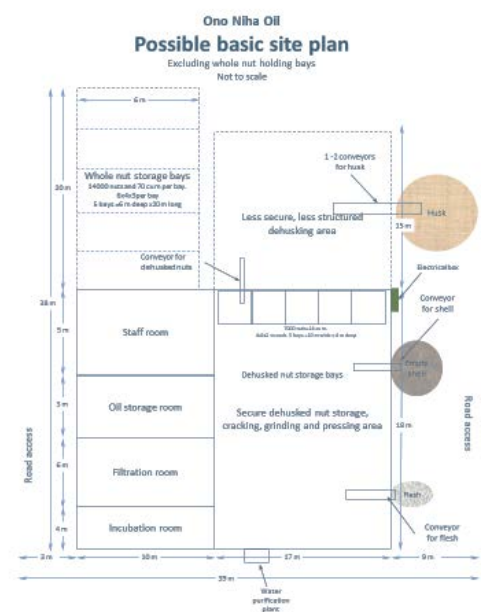
It is expected that the cash and in-kind support from ONO will cover about 80% of the Foundation's operations. The balance will be via student sponsorships, which we will continue to support.

Local employment – the oil factory

Steve, Matt and I dreamed and planned for the new factory during our visit in May. Since then:



Steve and Matt inspecting the site for the new factory



The factory plan

- Factory plans and budgets are finalised. The plans include waste water management (Steve's expertise) and back-up power supply. Total costs (including land) is about \$90,000.
- Land has been purchased.
- A legal agreement between the Foundation and ONO has been drafted guaranteeing income to the Foundation based on profit share. This will be signed by the end of February.
- The Foundation has already received commitments of \$40,000 for the factory. We are aiming to raise another \$30,000.
- Land clearing will likely commence in February.

In the meantime Matt continues to improve factory efficiency by:

- Building more efficient oil filtration systems
- Purchasing a refrigeration system and centrifuge to increase oil yield and quality

Education

The sponsorship program is going well, with about 20 students supported by sponsors in Australia. We met most of the students during our recent visit, as well as the English and computer teachers.

Four new students from three families were sponsored since May. All families lost their fathers, and one of the students lost both hands in an electrical accident.

About 36 students from nine villages attended computer classes from August. The classes were split between Saturday and Monday and then into two groups per class because we have only eight working computers.

When I (occasionally!) get a bit down I read about some of the students and I realise that I truly have nothing to complain about. Hestina is one of these students. Her widowed mum harvests rubber when the weather is fine. The price for rubber continues to fall so mama Hestina makes cakes for Hestina to sell to the surfers after school each day. Sales have been very slow because there has been less surfers, and mama Hestina is struggling. The small support provided every month (the equivalent of eight cups of coffee) makes all the difference for her and her family! "lightens the burden on my shoulder" she said.

Disabilities

It is exciting to see the impact of this program!

I mentioned mama Argen and her family in the last newsletter. Mama Argen's husband died several years



Matt describing the new oil filtration process to Steve



The new centrifuge, increasing oil yield by about 10%



English classes in the Centre



Computer classes in the Centre

ago. She looks after her disabled grandchild, as well as looking after Argen (her daughter) and trying to earn an income all at the same time. Her house was falling down-literally. Matt and his team, with generous donations from Matt and several in Australia, completely re-built the home. She now has a roof over her head that does not leak and will not fall down for many years.

Several volunteers helped the program during late 2019. A team from America spent time with the disabilities members. Jannick is a therapist from Germany. He was a volunteer with the Friends of Nias Foundation which has a medical clinic in Sorake (about 5 km from our base). Jannick provided therapy support for some of the disabilities children. Icum videoed the sessions so they can continue the therapy.

Yermina joined the program two years ago. She was a bright senior high student who was struck by an infection just before final exams which left her temporarily paralysed. She has struggled emotionally (totally understandable reactions such as "Why me?") but since joining our program she has blossomed. She has now started further studies but joins the program when she can. She is a great example of how the disabilities program is helping both the body and the mind!

Community health

The ONF community health program has been closed. Dr Raf's Friends of Nias program at Sorake Beach is continuing the community health work. Volunteers from around the world committed to at least 20 weeks at his clinic for 2019. See <https://friendsofnias.org> for more details.

How you can help

Come with us to Nias in April or May this year!

Donations can be made at <https://www.wra.org.au/1901wholisticdevelopment>.

Follow us on Facebook. Search for LSM Ono Niha Foundation. Also check out our website; <http://ononihalsmfoundation.squarespace.com/> and Facebook page, which I freely admit I don't update enough.

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Mama Argen's house – before.....



.... and after, with Matt and his factory team



The Grace Wave Ministries team from the US helping with aqua therapy



Jannick providing physio support



Cristin and Yermina