

**An assessment of the impact of TORAJAMELO, a  
Social Enterprise, on livelihoods in  
Sa'dan, North Toraja**



TORAJAMELO

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*Ne'Senna completing paramba' for a TORAJAMELO order. Photo taken by Chloe Carter 17.1.19.*

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## **What is 'TORAJAMELO'?**

TORAJAMELO, established in 2008, is an Indonesian Social Enterprise committed to rejuvenating the declining art of traditional weaving in Toraja and using this as a tool to improve the livelihoods of the Torajanese. The founder of TORAJAMELO, Dinny Jusuf, specifically identified the out-migration of local women to Malaysia where they would work as domestic workers or labourers, often under severe conditions and exposed to abuse, as a problem. TORAJAMELO saw weaving as a suitable and potentially stable form of income for local women, and a viable way of reducing the out-migration of women.

TORAJAMELO began collecting *Tenun*<sup>1</sup> from weavers in the Sa'dan area of North Toraja as inputs for small-scale product design, prototyping, marketing and sales. Product design and prototyping was carried out in Bandung and marketing and sales were carried out in Jakarta. This led to TORAJAMELO highlighting an issue that created a barrier towards weaving being a reliable source of income. A gap was identified between the products the weavers were producing and the market. TORAJAMELO aimed to close this gap through textile and product design and marketing. Nina Jusuf became a founding member of TORAJAMELO in 2010 with Dinny Jusuf, when TORAJAMELO was established as a foundation (Yayasan TORAJAMELO) and as a Limited Liability Company LLC (PT TORAJAMELO) by Dinny Jusuf and Nina Jusuf. Nina Jusuf's role as creative director enables TORAJAMELO to produce higher quality designs starting from the colour schemes that weavers wove with to the final product design. By being established separately as a foundation and Limited Liability Company, TORAJAMELO is able to focus separately on community and business. TORAJAMELO Foundation focuses on community development and organising, awareness, community production and social support, in partnership with PEKKA, Ashmore foundation, and BNI. TORAJAMELO Limited Liability focuses on marketing and branding in partnership with DMID Indonesia, UnLtd Indonesia-a, Angels of Impact and other media companies such as Biru Terong Initiative.

## **What is a Social Enterprise?**

Social Enterprises provide pathways for social change. Social Enterprises evaluate a problem and change the system which is causing this problem through addressing certain failures. By addressing the certain failures within a system, it allows for problems to be addressed in a more holistic and inclusive way, by working with what works for the communities they seek to help, resulting in sustainable impact. The main goal of social enterprises is to provide capital to marginalised and vulnerable communities, empowering them to participate and contribute to their own change. Social Enterprises place inclusivity and equality at the core of their business/social missions.

## **Social Enterprises in Indonesia**

In the past 5 years, the number of Social Enterprises in Indonesia has been growing considerably. The British Council conducted a study into the state of Social Enterprises in

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<sup>1</sup> *Tenun: Woven Textile*

Indonesia in 2017 as a part of their agreement with UNESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific). This study uncovered the challenges and successes of Social Enterprises in Indonesia.

In Indonesia, Social Enterprises 'work for communities, with communities' while focusing on minority groups such as women and those with disabilities. They have the goal of improving communities and creating more inclusive employment opportunities. Social Enterprises mostly operate in the creative industries (22%), followed by agriculture and fisheries (16%). Creative industry being the industry which is based off the utilisation of creativity, skills and individual talents for employment.

Social Enterprises overcome geographical barriers by focusing their work in rural areas providing opportunities for expanding economic development to rural areas and providing more employment opportunities in rural areas. It is because of this, that the British Council believes that Social Enterprises in Indonesia hold the answer to overcoming poverty and unequal distribution of wealth in Indonesia. They primarily benefit the local community, women and youth. Social Enterprises in Indonesia have also contributed to pathing the way for women in workforce. Social Enterprises are responsible for a 99% increase in full-time female employment and overall 69% of Social Enterprises workforces is comprised of women.

In Indonesia, Social Enterprises face challenges of lack of financial support and becoming legal entities. Currently there is no legal entity in Indonesia that fits the description of a Social Enterprise and often leaves Social Enterprises unsure of how to legally register their business. Social enterprises also struggle with financing. Investors and donors are less likely to assist in Financing Social Enterprises that do not produce high quality products and that do not have a measurement of impacts to present.

### **TORAJAMELO as a Social Enterprise**

TORAJAMELO, as a social enterprise, evaluated the problems of out-migration in Toraja and the decline of traditional weaving and analysed why these problems were occurring. Out-migration of women was a result of lack of employment opportunities in the area and the financial states of families. Traditional weaving was declining in Toraja, with some traditional motifs being almost lost, as only the older generation had the skills to weave them. There was also a decline in traditional weaving activities as it was not providing them with a stable income and weavers found it hard to get access to good quality materials and the market. By understanding the issues with weaving, inhibiting it from being a reliable way to contribute to the livelihoods of the Torajanese, TORAJAMELO was able to create a system that supports the weavers through these issues.

By connecting weavers to an outside market to help increase sales, providing them with direct access to supplies and providing them with textile design (designed by creative director Nina Jusuf) weavers were able to provide higher quality products to the market increasing product sales and prices and therefore the income of the weavers.

TORAJAMELO prides themselves in their collective process approach to textile design by working with weavers to develop colour schemes and allowing them to weave their own designs.

Currently, TORAJAMELO works with 50 to 60 weavers in Sa'dan, North Toraja. They claim to have created a system in which weavers can have better access to quality supplies and better access to a market but access to higher-quality designs and therefore, they also claim to have been able to create a sustainable way for weavers in Toraja to earn an income. Through this TORAJAMELO claims to have successfully attracted émigré Torajan women to return to Toraja from Malaysia, Kalimantan and Papua by allowing them to earn an income of between Rp. 3.000.000 and 5.000.000,00. per month and to have successfully encouraged cultural pride in woven products and the traditional art of weaving.

### **Capacity Building and Community Organising Program with BNI and PEKKA**

In 2012, TORAJAMELO was funded by BNI to conduct capacity building training with 250 weavers, across 7 clusters in Sa'dan, North Toraja. This 3-phase program continued from phase 1 in 2012 until stage 2 in 2015. Phase 1 aimed to empower weavers in the communities by increasing the awareness of weaving and changing the attitudes towards weaving. Phase 2 aimed to accelerate the education of a new generation of weavers with the hope of rejuvenating old motifs and techniques and increasing the quality of products through colour design and providing access to better quality supplies. PEKKA (The Association of Women Headed Households), joined this program during phase 2 in 2014 to facilitate community organising training with the aim of training women to be able to assist the community in community organising. PEKKA also saw the training of 2 weavers from 2 different groups as community organisers in the "National-level Head of Women Leadership Development in Jakarta". Throughout phase 1 and 2 of the program, TORAJAMELO partnered with the Biru Terong initiative which documented the program, assisting with the promotion of TORAJAMELO as a brand and foundation.

This program resulted in the legal establishment of the Weavers Cooperative "Sa'dan Siangkaran" on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April 2015, which 125 of the 250 trained weavers joined. This cooperative was established with the aim of creating a social network in which weavers could support and empower each other. The cooperative had the role of facilitating orders from TORAJAMELO and other buyers and collectively ordering yarn from Makassar which would provide them with better access to better quality yarn at a wholesale price. The cooperative would also allow weavers to collectively decide on a price, allowing there to be no competition between the weavers in Sa'dan.

## **Research Agenda**

The aim of this research agenda is to assess whether or not TORAJAMELO's assumptions about their impact to date in Sa'dan, Toraja are correct. This research will require an understanding of the livelihood context of weavers in the Sa'dan community and the contribution that weaving has had on people's livelihoods.

### **TORAJAMELO's assumptions of impact to date:**

- ❖ TORAJAMELO has been a catalyst for creating a sense of pride in wearing hand woven *Tenun* in Toraja resulting in the increasing popularity of wearing *tenun* to traditional ceremonies.
- ❖ TORAJAMELO has contributed to a rejuvenation of traditional *Tenun* in Sa'dan, through revival of particular motifs.
- ❖ The Sa'dan Siangkaran cooperative allows weavers to have better access to quality supplies and better access to a market through facilitating the production of higher-quality designs for TORAJAMELO orders and orders from other buyers.
- ❖ TORAJAMELO has improved the livelihoods of weavers in Sa'dan by contributing to an increase in monthly income, through providing them with access to a national and international market through collective process of textile design.
- ❖ TORAJAMELO has created a sustainable way for weavers in Toraja to earn an income.
- ❖ TORAJAMELO has successfully attracted émigré Torajan women to return to Toraja from Malaysia, Kalimantan and Papua.

Questions will be developed to gain an understanding of how TORAJAMELO has contributed to a rejuvenation of traditional motifs and weaving in Sa'dan, Toraja.

- Do we see an increased use of traditional woven fabrics in traditional ceremonies?
- Do we see an increase in the number of orders for traditional woven products in Sa'dan since TORAJAMELO began working with the community?
- What are the broader effects of a rejuvenation of traditional motifs and weaving?

A second set of questions will be developed to explore the extent that the weaver's cooperative "Sa'dan Siangkaran" has supported weavers in Toraja.

- What are the broader benefits of being a part of the cooperative?
- Do we see a difference in the 'success' of weavers who are a part of the cooperative as opposed to those who are not?
- Are weavers strengthened by the cooperative? If so, how?

A third set of questions will be developed to explore how TORAJAMELO has contributed to improved livelihoods in Sa'dan, Toraja.

- How has weaving, as an economic activity, benefited households in Sa'dan Toraja?
- Do we see an increase of income in the homes of weavers?
- Do we see an increase in the number of weavers in the Sa'dan community?
- What are the broader benefits of weaving as an activity to earn income?

## Indicators of Assumptions

Below are indicators that were developed to assess whether or not the assumptions that TORAJAMELO has about their impact in Sa'dan are true. These indicators will allow analysis of the impact that TORAJAMELO has had on the communities in Sa'dan, Toraja.

1. Indicators of rejuvenation of traditional weaving and old motifs:
  - a. Has there been an increase in weavers who can weave more difficult motifs such as pa'bunga bunga?
  - b. Has there been an increase of people who can weave in the Sa'dan area?
2. Has there been an increase in people wearing traditional woven fabrics day-to-day and at ceremonies?

Indicators of impacts of weaver's cooperative on weaving activities and weavers:

  - a. Has there been an increase of members of the cooperative since it was established in 2015?
  - b. Do we see regular attendance from weavers to cooperative meetings/events?
  - c. Are resources well managed? Do weavers have better access to higher quality materials and supplies?
  - d. Do we see better access to the market through cooperative-based orders?
3. Indicators of livelihoods and impacts of weaving on livelihoods:
  - a. Has weaving generated an increase in income for weaving families across Sa'dan?
    - i. Has there been an increase in overall household income since weaving became source of income?
    - ii. Or, if weaving was already a previous source of Income how has this increased since being supported by TORAJAMELO?
  - b. Do we see increased investment in:
    - i. children's education beyond SD and SMP levels since weavers have been supported by TORAJAMELO?
    - ii. infrastructure such as electricity, gas and ownership of motorbikes/cars?

## **Results**

**Assumption:** TORAJAMELO has been a catalyst for creating a sense of pride in wearing hand woven *Tenun* in Toraja, resulting in the increasing popularity of wearing *tenun* to traditional ceremonies.

TORAJAMELO has worked with the weaving community and other communities to spread awareness about the importance of traditional weaving, being a catalyst for the outcome of local pride in wearing hand woven *Tenun*. This was done by various exhibitions and weaving festivals locally and nationally.

Trade exhibitions, supported by the Ministry of Trade, in Tokyo, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Milan and Paris connected the weavers to the market, showing the importance of preserving traditional weaving and created a motivation within the weaving community to preserve this tradition.

In 2012, TORAJAMELO held their Untannun Kameloan exhibition at the Jakarta Textile museum. The then current Bupati of North Toraja attended the event and as a result implemented a dress code for civil servants to wear traditional hand woven Torajan textiles to work on Fridays and Saturdays. This was a catalyst in increasing the awareness of traditional *Tenun* and increase the local demand for hand woven *Tenun*. Through a Weaving festival in February 2016, Sa'dan Toraja, involving local weavers and the local community TORAJAMELO was able to connect participants to their aims for rejuvenating traditional textiles in the area, sparking interest within the local community. TORAJAMELO also took headweavers to eight Indonesian 'Meet the makers' events in Jakarta between 2012-2015. This event was established with the purpose of connecting the craftsman to the consumer. In November 2017 'Sole Oha' was an exhibition run by TORAJAMELO, which showcased 250 pieces of hand woven textile from Toraja, Mamasa, Adonara and Lembata and focused on the connection between the weavers and the woven products. These events allowed weavers to understand the importance of preserving traditional weaving across Indonesia and was a catalyst for creating a sense of pride in the weavers of Sa'dan about wearing traditional *Tenun*.

This has resulted in local Torajan's wearing *Tenun* to traditional ceremonies. There has been a large increase in the amount of people who wear traditional *Tenun* to ceremonies such as funerals and weddings in the past 5-10 years. This is reflected in the demand from the local market as weavers have an abundance of orders that they are "too busy to keep up with". These orders are to be made into clothes, sarongs and bags to be worn to events. For each order, the weavers make they are aware of its specific purpose and therefore are aware if it will be worn to a wedding or funeral ceremony.

**Assumption:** TORAJAMELO has contributed to a rejuvenation of traditional Tenun in Sa'dan, through revival of particular motifs.

TORAJAMELO is contributing to a rejuvenation of the traditional motif pa'bunga bunga in Sa'dan, Toraja. When TORAJAMELO first started in 2008, pa'bunga bunga was a rare motif and only a few older weavers had the skill to complete it. TORAJAMELO was assisted by Ma'Sabbi in teaching weavers in Unnoni village the skills to weave pa'bunga bunga. Currently, in the local market, there is less of a demand for pa'bunga bunga and by ordering this motif from weavers in Sa'dan, TORAJAMELO is motivating weavers to continuing weaving pa'bunga bunga and in some cases motivating weavers to teach it to their children. Currently, due to the demands of the local market, those who are not getting orders for pa'bunga bunga from TORAJAMELO will weave pa'ruki', pamiring or pa'binti' which they have a large amount of orders for. However, as the orders from TORAJAMELO are concentrated in the village of Unnoni there is less of a motivation for weavers in Buntu Sangkaropi, Tanete and Pambalan to learn pa'bunga bunga or continue weaving it.

TORAJAMELO was able to contribute to a rejuvenation of pa'bunga bunga by not only teaching the motifs to the younger generation but by creating a demand for them in the international market, through international trade exhibitions.



*Ne'Nova weaving the pa'bunga bunga motif in her home in Unnoni. Photo taken by Chloe Carter 17.1.19*

TORAJAMELO is directly responsible for the revival of ma'tapa' and kala'apa motifs. In 2008 when TORAJAMELO began working in Sa'dan, no weavers had the skills to weave these motifs. Master weaver Ma 'Sabbi was able to formulate the pattern for each motif from looking at old textiles in each motif. Not all weavers have the skills to weave ma'tapa', with the demand for ma'tapa' on the local market being low, it is a motif that is woven less. However, some weavers have the skills to complete it for when there are orders from TORAJAMELO and other customers. Currently, no weavers other than Ma 'Sabbi can weave kala'apa.

In the villages of Unnoni, Pambalan, Tanete and Buntu Sangkaropi, there has been a large increase in the numbers of weavers. Despite the decline in the members of Sa'dan Siangkaran cooperative, head weavers Ma'ltta and Ma 'Yando (who although cannot provide an exact quantitative value) claim to have seen an increase in the local area of a 'few weavers' to now approximately 300. This is supported through the number of weavers who are new to weaving and were motivated to learn to weave after seeing the income other weavers were earning and the demand for woven material in the local market. Weavers who are new to weaving in the Sa'dan area were motivated to learn as they saw it as a viable source of income, flexible enough to fit in with their daily lives. In Buntu Sangkaropi, TORAJAMELO facilitated the 're-birth' of weaving after weavers experienced a 5- year hiatus, due to lack of yarn supplies. TORAJAMELO also connected the weavers of Buntu Sangkaropi with weavers in Unnoni, Pambalan and Tanete allowing them to be re- connected to the local market and yarn suppliers.

All weavers have a desire to teach their younger female children to weave, if they haven't already started to teach them. This desire is fuelled by their ambition to provide their children with a skill that can earn them a stable income. For most weavers, they started weaving as a source of income to pay for their own school fees. Currently, children are described as "lazy weavers" as they do not have that motivation to start weaving for an income.

***Assumption:*** *The Sa'dan Siangkaran cooperative allows weavers to have better access to quality supplies and better access to a market through facilitating the production of higher-quality designs for TORAJAMELO orders and orders from other buyers.*

The Sa'dan Siangkaran cooperation was developed to create a supportive and empowering social network in which the weavers could collectively purchase yarn at cheaper prices and together complete orders from TORAJAMELO and other customers. Originally, being a member of the cooperative involved attending regular meetings and paying a monthly membership fee of Rp. 10.000,00. People would be able to purchase yarn from the cooperative which was ordered directly from Makassar, giving them access to a wider range of yarn at lower costs. Customers would be able to order through the cooperative and weavers would be able to sell to them, at a price collectively decided by members. Currently, the cooperation doesn't have regular meetings and no members pay their membership fee. Also, the cooperation does not collectively order yarn for weavers or facilitate orders other than those from TORAJAMELO.

The Sa'dan Siangkaran cooperation currently relies on three core weavers, Ma 'Sabbi, Ma'ltta and Ma 'Andri. Ma 'Sabbi, who belongs on the board of advisors of the cooperation facilitates orders from TORAJAMELO and carries out quality control for TORAJAMELO LLC. Ma 'Sabbi, who does not live in Sa'dan, works closely with the community of Unnoni. Weavers in Unnoni do not collectively order yarn and instead buy it at local kiosks or shops for a more expensive price and have less range to choose from. However, this is less of an issue as Unnoni is predominately completing orders for TORAJAMELO, who provides their own cotton yarn.

The cooperation also relies on Ma'ltta to assist Ma 'Sabbi to help facilitate and distribute orders from TORAJAMELO. Ma'ltta works closely with weavers in her own village, Pambalan, and neighbouring village, Tanete. Ma'ltta plays the role of ordering yarn and distributing yarn to some weavers who live in Pambalan and Tanete. However, not all weavers get access to this yarn and some will purchase from local kiosks and shops.

Ma 'Andri works with weavers in her own village Buntu Sangkaropi, her role is to also assist Ma 'Sabbi in facilitating orders. However, as weavers in Buntu Sangkaropi have less skills than those in other villages and as they can only complete basic motifs they do not have the capacity to complete TORAJAMELO orders. Ma 'Andri orders yarn from Makassar to use for her constant pa'ruki' orders. Other weavers in Buntu Sangkaropi buy yarn from local kiosks or shops when necessary.

Although the cooperative is not working in the way it was designed to do, weavers were equipped with the information and skills needed to facilitate their own orders and supplies as either individuals or smaller groups. Weavers agree that a negative side to the cooperation not succeeding is that competition in price between one another and other weavers in Sa'dan.

***Assumption:*** TORAJAMELO has improved the livelihoods of weavers in Sa'dan by contributing to an increase in monthly income, through providing them with access to a national and international market through collective process of textile design.

Across Pambalan, Tanete, Unnoni and Buntu Sangkaropi weaving is a main source of income for most families. Men face difficulties finding work and therefore weaving as an economic activity is essential to each family. Weaving allows women to earn a stable income providing the only source of cash for their families. The income of weavers differs across each of the 4 villages and ranges from Rp. 1.000.000 and 5.000.000 per month. The differing income is due to the range of skills each weaver has, the amount of orders each weaver gets, the amount of time they can complete an order in and their relationship with those who order for TORAJAMELO.



*Ne'Sela creating colourful pa'bunga bunga to sell to a customer in To'borana. Photo taken by Chloe Carter 19.1.19.*

There has been a dramatic increase in the value of *Tenun* in the past 10 years, due to a large increase of demand in the local market. Approximately 10 years ago a piece of pamiring had a value of between Rp.100.000 and 200.000 and a piece of pa'ruki' had a value of between Rp. 800.000 and 1.000.000. Currently, the value of pamiring is between Rp.200.000 and 300.000 and the value of pa'ruki' is between Rp. 1.500.000 and 2.500.000. The local demand for traditional *Tenun*, in particular pa'ruki', which has increased dramatically in the last 5-10 years, is accountable for the ability of weavers to earn up to Rp.5.000.000 per month. TORAJAMELO was essential in the 'boom' of the local market, spreading awareness of the importance of traditional weaving through connecting the local community with the art of traditional Torajan weaving and by connecting local members of the community to the weavers helping them to facilitate orders. TORAJAMELO was also essential in providing the weavers with the motivation to continue to weave and supply this local demand through the creation of the Sa'dan Siangkaran cooperative.

In Pambalan and Tanete, weavers earn the highest monthly income on average with most weavers earning between Rp. 1.000.000 and 5.000.000 per month. Weavers in Pambalan and Tanete are motivated, diligent and have high skills as weavers and spend the most time weaving daily. On average, during the months of December-to-January and July-to-August when weavers are busy with traditional ceremonies, they are able to complete two pieces pa'ruki' per month, during less busy periods they can complete up to three pieces of pa'ruki' a month, contributing to their high income as weavers. In these villages, all but 1 weaver can do pa'ruki', this weaver is new to weaving and can only complete pamiring and pa'binti' motifs, however she has the motivation and desire to learn pa'ruki'.

In Unnoni, the weaver's average income is lower than in Pambalan and Tanete, with most weavers earning between Rp. 1.000.000 and 3.000.000. Weavers in Unnoni mostly

complete pa'bunga bunga, paramba' and pamiring motifs, but they also have the skills to complete pa'ruki'. Weavers in Unnoni spend less daily hours weaving than those in Pambalan and Tanete, and as a result complete less finished *Tenun* monthly. Most weavers will complete 1 pa'ruki' a month and either one pa'bunga bunga, paramba' or pamiring. When TORAJAMELO places an order with Ma 'Sabbi and the Sa'dan Siangkaran cooperation, most of these orders are fulfilled by weavers in Unnoni, due to the strong relationship between them and Ma 'Sabbi. When weavers complete orders for TORAJAMELO they complete approximately 4 pieces of *Tenun*, either pa'bunga bunga or paramba' motifs and earn approximately Rp. 1.200.000 and 1.500.000 that month.



*Ma 'Rio completing an order for pa'ruki' to be made into a women's shirt and skirt for a wedding ceremony. Photo taken by Chloe Carter 19.1.19.*

In Buntu Sangkaropi, out of 7 weavers associated with TORAJAMELO only 3 are still actively weaving. Ma' Andri who is seen as the '*maestro*' weaver in Buntu Sangkaropi earns an income of between Rp.4.000.000 and 5.000.000 per month. Her capacity to earn an income so high was due to her diligence and motivation to learn new weaving motifs, such as pa'ruki', when TORAJAMELO began community organising and capacity building in 2012. Due to her weaving skills and being the only weaver in Buntu Sangkaropi, she constantly has orders for pa'ruki', a motif which is in high demand for the local market. Other active weavers in Buntu Sangkaropi have limited skills and can only weave basic motifs such as pamiring and paramba. These motifs have a lower value and these weavers only earn an income of approximately Rp.1.000.000 per month. Weavers in Buntu Sangkaropi face challenges with competing with 'fake' woven products that are produced on machines in Jepara, Java and sold in the local market at

cheaper prices, reducing the demand for handmade *Tenun* in these motifs. Weavers in Buntu Sangkaropi are noticing a significant decline in orders and some have stopped weaving all together. They do not have the motivation to learn new motifs as it is 'too hard'.

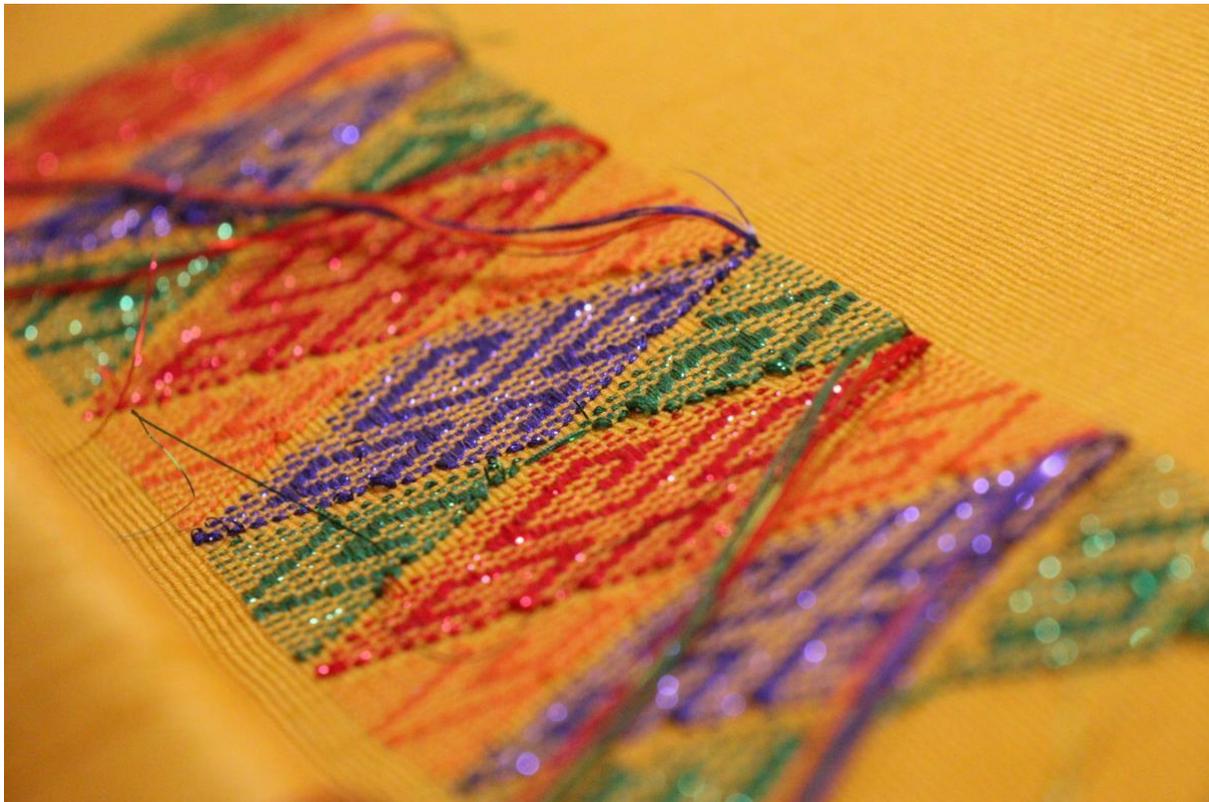


*Ma' Yando weaving pamiring. Photo taken by Chloe Carter 17.1.19.*

The income earned from weaving is able to provide enough cash for weavers to support their children's education, provide food for their families and in most cases, invest in purchasing fridges and Televisions. Across all villages, weavers' children (who are the appropriate age) were either studying at the tertiary level or had already graduated. A large number of weavers were able to invest in purchasing fridges and motorbikes, however all stated that although their ability to purchase these products was from weaving income, it was due to their ability to save a little each month and that not all weavers had the knowledge to do this.

**Assumption:** *TORAJAMELO has created a sustainable way for weavers in Toraja to earn an income.*

Weaving, as a main household economic activity, is a flexible way for Torajanese women to earn an income. All weavers in Sa'dan, Toraja are responsible for domestic work (such as cooking and cleaning) and child care. Weavers are able to weave for a short period of time, complete other activities and return to weaving. The flexible schedule of weaving allows them to focus on domestic work and child care when necessary and return to weaving when time allows it. Improvement to electricity infrastructure in the past 5 years has allowed weavers to work at night when all other domestic responsibilities for the day have been completed. This flexible schedule also suits them during busy ceremony periods between December/January and July/August, which generally disrupt daily activities. Weaving as a source of income also plays an important role in the lives of younger weavers who are using it as a way to support their studies at higher education levels. Weavers are able to complete more orders in their university holidays and reduce their order load during semester to suit their work load.



*Pa'ruki' being woven by Ne'Fino, to be later used to make women's clothing for wedding ceremonies. Photo taken by Chloe Carter 19.1.19.*

**Assumption:** TORAJAMELO has successfully attracted émigré Torajan women to return to Toraja from Malaysia, Kalimantan and Papua.

The main objective and goal for TORAJAMELO is to attract émigré Torajan women to return to Toraja from Malaysia, Kalimantan and Papua. In 2010-2012, TORAJAMELO played an essential role in supporting women who had returned from Malaysia, Papua and Kalimantan by providing them with the appropriate social network of weavers in the Sa'dan area through the Capacity Building and Community Organising Program with BNI and PEKKA. These women, who had either migrated to find work alone or with their husbands and family, returned to Toraja and started weaving for their family's main source of income. TORAJAMELO assisted in creating the network in which these weavers are currently thriving, allowing them to either learn to weave or further develop their weaving skills, connected them to a market and provided them with skills to order their own weaving supplies at cheaper costs. Weaving is continually supporting new émigré women and is an important activity for them and their families. It is also providing younger émigré women with a flexible economic activity that can support their further studies. It is difficult to quantify how many émigré weavers who have returned to Toraja, with their sole reason being to weave for an income, however all weavers contest that there are many in the Sa'dan area who have done so. Ma'Olive, a Weaver in Pambalan is an example of an émigré Torajan woman who returned to Toraja from Malaysia where she worked as a domestic worker with her 3 children and husband. She returned to learn to weave from her husband's older sister Ma'litta. Ma'Olive is a dedicated weaver, she weaves for 5-7 hours per day, starting early in the morning and finishing late at night. She is able to pamiring, paramba', pa'binti' and pa'ruki' motifs. On average, she will complete 2-3 pieces of pa'ruki' a month allowing her to earn an income of between Rp. 4.000.000 and 5.000.000 per month.



*Ma' Olive completing a piece of pa'ruki' to be made into women's clothes for a wedding ceremony. Photo taken by Chloe Carter 22.1.19.*

### **What's next for TORAJAMELO?**

Currently, weavers are facing challenges of competing with 'fake' woven products found in the local market. These 'fake' woven products are replacing more basic motifs such as pamiring, paramba' and borong borong and are also competing with more difficult motifs such as pa'ruki'and pa'binti'. TORAJAMELO is aiming to side-step these issues by working with 'Lembaga Desa Wisata Suloara' to increase CBT (community based travel) tourism in the area. TORAJAMELO hopes to use local tourism as a way of connecting and re-connecting people with Traditional weaving and as a catalyst for the growth in the demand for hand woven products in the local market, especially for motifs which are threatened by imported 'fake' products.

TORAJAMELO will not work to strengthen the Sa'dan Siangkaran cooperative as they believe its inability to succeed was due to complex cultural and social structures. Although the cooperative has failed in creating away for weavers to order yarn collectively and facilitate orders as a group, it has succeeded in providing the weavers with necessary skills to thrive as weavers in Sa'dan and established a social network in which the weavers can empower each other.

TORAJAMELO would like to work towards having a Geographical Indicator implemented, however this is an initiative they do not want to be completed by themselves and want it to be an initiative of the local government.

TORAJAMELO feels that they have contributed as much as they can to weavers and the weaving community in Sa'dan. In 2017, the North Torajan Government started a weaving festival as a part of their 'Lovely December' initiative. As the local government has taken responsibility of promoting weaving in Toraja, TORAJAMELO feel that they can step back.

### **Possible Indicators for further assessment**

Primary Impact:

- What is the exact number of weavers in each village?
- What is the exact number of monthly sales for individual weavers across Sa'dan?
- What number of different motifs are being woven monthly in the weaving communities of Sa'dan?
- How many villages are in Sa'dan or Toraja where weaving is a cottage industry?

Secondary Impact:

- Is there an improved overall household income amongst weavers in Sa'dan?
- Are families able to participate more in traditional ceremonies? Are they able to payoff ceremonial debts?
- Has there been an improvement in the health and nutrition of families, since being supported by weaving as a main income source?
- Has there been an improvement in overall subjective well-being among weavers and their families in Sa'dan?

## Conclusion

- TORAJAMELO has instilled a sense of pride in Torajans and weavers in wearing traditional Tenun.
- TORAJAMELO has contributed to the Rejuvenation of pa'bunga bunga and ma'tapa', motifs that were slowly disappearing in the region of Sa'dan, North Toraja.
- Since TORAJAMELO began working in the region of Sa'dan there has been a dramatic increase in the number of weavers and in the demand of the local market for pa'ruki' and pa'binti' Motifs.
- TORAJAMELO has been a catalyst in the increase of demand in the local market of Sa'dan and North Toraja through connecting weavers and community members to the importance of preserving Traditional weaving as an activity.
- TORAJAMELO provided weavers with the skills to connect themselves to better quality yarn, through ordering through Makassar.
- Weaving is a flexible activity for weavers allowing them to schedule weaving to fit in with other domestic activities and around their busy lifestyles, being a suitable way for women to earn an income in Sa'dan.
- TORAJAMELO supports émigré women who have returned from Malaysia, Kalimantan and Papua through the development of a weaving social network and a local market which allows weavers to continually have orders to fulfil and therefore have the ability to earn a stable income.



*Ne'Nova in action weaving pa'bunga bunga. Photo taken by Chloe Carter 17.1.19*

## **About this project**

Chloe is a Geography and Indonesian Studies student at the University of Sydney. This assessment was completed as a part of her internship with TORAJAMELO. Chloe is currently in Indonesia studying as a part of the University of Sydney's Geography Indonesian Immersion program, run by Dr. Jeffery Neilson. Chloe's Professor, Dr. Jeffery Neilson mentored Chloe throughout her internship with TORAJAMELO.

## **A letter to Dinny Jusuf**

Spending the past 5 weeks in Toraja between Dinny's house in Batutumonga and the Homes of Ma 'Yando, Ma'ltta and Ma 'Andri, I feel as though I have become a member of such a loving, vibrant and empowering community of weavers. For me, coming to Toraja involved overcoming some personal barriers, was my Indonesian good enough to communicate with the weavers? Was I capable of going into the field and gathering necessary, viable information?

Now reflecting back on my journey, I feel proud of my ability to have immersed myself within the weaving community of Sa'dan, communicate effectively with the weavers and be able to understand the issues that TORAJAMELO are overcome and their current success in doing-so. This learning process allowed me to use many of the skills that I have learnt and am learning throughout my degree at the University of Sydney and allowed me to develop these skills even further. The process of interviewing over 30 community members in Indonesian allowed me to cement the language skills that I spent 6 months learning at the University of Indonesia.

I feel very honoured to have been able to get to know Dinny and learn about TORAJAMELO and her visions/goals for weavers across Indonesia. I am excited for the possibility of working with TORAJAMELO on future assessment projects across their other 3 regions, Mamasa, Adonara and Lembata.

Thank you Dinny,  
Chloe



*Dinny Jusuf and Chloe Louise Carter unpacking TORAJAMELO. Photo by Dinny Jusuf 7.1.19.*