

Bahasa Basudara – helping each other through language training

Maluku Province is one of the poorest, least developed and least educated provinces in Indonesia. Many Moluccan students can't get access to good English training, and therefore scholarship opportunities, because of their remote locations or poor economic background. And yet there are many Moluccans living overseas (about 70,000 in Holland) who still have affinities to Maluku.

So we set up the Bahasa Basudara platform (www.bahasabasudara.org) in early 2020 and online classes started in May this year. The idea is to have fluent and native English speakers (and other languages) to voluntarily tutor students in Maluku via online training, mainly focusing on conversation skills. All classes are free of charge.

Tutors:

We now have 84 registered tutors worldwide. There are 20 from Indonesia, 11 from Australia, 1 from New Zealand, 6 from the USA, 11 from the United Kingdom, 33 from Holland, 1 from Germany and 1 from the Middle East. The tutors are from all ages with various backgrounds (e.g. university professors, lawyer, social worker, journalist, tourism, unemployed, student, retired, etc.). Some tutors are completely native speakers with no ability to speak Bahasa Indonesia / Melayu Ambon and some are those living and growing up in Indonesia. The only requirement is to be able to speak English fluently.

Most tutors have a Maluku background – either through family or from having spent time there or from conducting research there. Some however have no connection whatsoever to Maluku. We welcome everyone!!

Most tutors have no teaching experience. So we are setting up a "Resources Page" on the website (hopefully in 1-2 weeks time it will be up). This is where all tutors, especially those who are teaching English as Foreign Language, can share tips, presentations about grammar, lesson structures etc.

A large pool of tutors enables us to match the class skill level appropriately with tutor backgrounds. For example we try to put tutors who can speak Indonesian with Beginners Classes and the Native Speakers with Advance English Classes. Also we try to fit in common interests, e.g. musicians tutor classes of musicians, those with a tourism background are matched with students of tourism etc.

Some tutors have changing work schedules (e.g. work in shifts) so we keep them as Substitute Tutors to cover someone who for whatever reason can't make their original class.

Classes:

We run 75 classes (70 English, 4 German and 1 Indonesian for tutors) each week. Each class will run on a 10-12 week schedule. Quite a few of these 75 classes just completed their 12 week schedule and the next phase of 12 week schedule will start in September.

In addition we are also running special themed classes. We just completed a 3 week course on "Team Work in An International Setting". Currently we are running a 6 week course on "Business English / English in The Work Place". We plan to run short courses on writing blogs and journalism, scientific writing etc.

The classes are organised by various institutions in Maluku. These are 23 classes organised by Language Study Centre University of Pattimura, 4 by Polytechnic Ambon, 16 by Universitas Kristen Indonesia Maluku, 8 by Institute Agama Islam Negeri Ambon, 8 by Institute Agama Kristen Negeri

Ambon, 4 by the Heka Leka Educational Foundation and 10 organised by Bahasa Basudara ourselves. We have contacted other universities in Maluku (Universitas Iqra in Buru, Polytechnic Tual and Universitas Darusallam Ambon) but some have not set up classes yet.

The classes are supported by 31 facilitators all based in Maluku. They are the ones who set up zoom meetings, help with assignments and liaise between the students and the tutors.

Student levels are from elementary students, mid-school (SMP and SMA) students, university students, alumni of universities, postgraduate students, lectures of universities (including some rector) and various professionals.

We try to fit in the tutor's experience with the class, e.g. lecturers and post-graduates who want to study overseas are matched with tutors who have a teaching background so that they can have structured classes to improve their IELTS or TOEFL scores, whereas elementary school children are provided with word games and more age appropriate learning.

Although most students are from Maluku, we have students who are not Moluccans and live in Jakarta, Sumatra etc. Most of the students are located mainly in Ambon, but quite a few are from Seram, Haruku, Saparua, Buru, Banda, Aru, Kei, Selaru, etc. We have just started setting up classes for Moluccan students and professionals in Jakarta and other places in Indonesia.

At the end of the 12 weeks all students, tutors and facilitators will get certificates either from our partner institutions (e.g. Pattimura University) or from us. These certificates can be used to help their CVs. All tutors are welcome to put on their CVs that they volunteered for Bahasa Basudara.

For the classes that have completed their 12 weeks' training we ask the students to write their comments and put together a video which can be seen on the [Bahasa Basudara](#) YouTube channel. The comments are overwhelmingly positive, showing students gained an increase in confidence and motivation and a better outlook for the future. (link to blog)

Webinars:

In conjunction with the language training we have also set up a series of webinars. The idea of the webinars is to showcase inspirational Moluccans to motivate the young people in Maluku and also to change the perception of other Indonesians about Moluccans. We will also have practical skills-based workshops on topics such as Leadership Training and Entrepreneur Training. The webinars are run with the help of an Indonesian company P. T. Daya Lima that is concerned with development in Eastern Indonesia.

The first series of these webinars is comprised of 9 speakers with one webinar every fortnight. We will then have a 3-4 month break before running the next series.

The first speaker was Prof. Dr. Seumahu who grew up in Maluku and only had his first pair of shoes once he graduated from high school and ended up as a leading telecommunications expert who represented Australia in many international forums.

The second speaker was Henry Timisela director of Museum Maluku in the Netherlands who spoke about the tragic history of Moluccans in the Netherlands and concluded with the successes that they have accomplished.

The third speaker will be Natasia Malaihollo, born in Ambon, who emigrated to the USA as a small child. She set up a successful technology start-up company Wyzzer which now has over 2,100 clients, including google, PayPal and Facebook, in 42 countries.

All the webinars can be seen on our YouTube channel [Bacarita Dari Timur](#).

Join Us:

Although the platform is still in its infancy we aim to make this a sustainable programme as we can see the real impact and benefit it has. If you are interested in joining us on this journey, please visit our website www.bahasabasudara.org and fill in the Tutors form. There you can also find our Frequently Asked Questions for Students (in Indonesian) and Tutors (in English) which will hopefully help with any questions you might have.

See you in class!