

# Success Story

## Indonesia – The Power of Collective Action: Stronger Together

by Diah Ivoniarty

Business Owner of VOY Collection

### Birama Cipta and Voy Collection in Bandung, West Java

#### Operates in the fashion and architectural landscape industries

- Four permanent staff members
- One consultant expert
- One architecture landscape with three permanent staff members

- Diah Ivoniarty is the owner of the fashion and craft company VOY Collection and of a landscape architecture consultancy called Birama Cipta. Among her many roles she is also Chair of the Regional Board of the Indonesian Muslim Women Entrepreneurs Association (IPEMI) West Java and a member of Women in Integrity (WIN), the Alliance for Integrity's Working Group for female professionals and entrepreneurs in West Java, Indonesia.

#### Bribery: A systemic problem

After receiving an unofficial payment request by a public official and realising how wrong and illegal it was, I decided to work on my company's compliance programme. At the time, we did not have clear guidelines on how to deal with compliance. While I had always instructed my staff to act with integrity, we had no specific platform that promoted those values and no safe place to exchange ideas about how to respond to unofficial requests. Employees made their decisions based on their conscience, wanting to keep growing profits, and this often entailed an ethical dilemma: on the one side the employees felt compelled to go along for the business' sake, on the other side their conscience kept telling them it was not the right thing to do. The solution back then was not to manage compliance, and only to try and avoid such requests.

#### Unity is strength

The Alliance for Integrity conducted a Dari Usaha Ke Usaha (DUKU) corruption prevention training for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Bandung providing practical knowledge on how to implement anti-corruption mechanisms. The workshop confirmed that the unofficial monetary demands we received were indeed illegal, and I was obliged to learn about the options we have to handle such requests. The compliance programme also helped me understand all ramifications of bribery and how I can change

the situation and support businesses and public officials become more honest. Under the guidance of the Alliance for Integrity I learnt how to set up an effective compliance programme and how to refute illegal requests. In the course of the training, I became more and more aware that I also want to encourage other companies and organisations to act with integrity in order to contribute to a sustainable business environment.

#### Ethics guidelines with a personal approach from the top

Following the DUKU training we decided to set up our ethics guidelines which required defining our vision first. Today, when the employees go into the field, they follow our Code of Ethics. In addition, the tone from the top is essential. As owners of small companies, we have direct access to our employees. Thus, it is my responsibility to act as a role model and always remind my employees, otherwise the Code of Ethics is only a mere document without any real meaning. I continue to make sure that the staff fully understand the values and norms of integrity and implement these every day in the business.

#### How to refuse bribery

The biggest challenge we had to overcome was to deny all unofficial requests for payment. Many of our staff were reluctant to change. They doubted that avoiding paying

bribes would help the business thrive. They worried that if they did business with integrity, they would lose a project or that it would take longer to get a permit. However, with the assistance of the Alliance for Integrity, I was able to encourage my staff to apply our new methods and deny any unofficial demand. It took time, but they are now convinced of the many advantages of acting with integrity.

Our company offers two kinds of trainings for employees: one is related to the business operation; the other aims to communicate our corporate values in personal meetings. It gives employees the tools to decline bribes. This is not an easy task, but we teach them how we can all defend the value of integrity.

### Compliance strategies for all business areas

One added benefit of the compliance programme is the on-going education. By targeting both the public and the private sector in its awareness raising activities, the Alliance for Integrity has a much greater reach in helping us fight corruption across the board. Since stakeholders such as banks and financial institutions require a high degree of compliance, our relationship with them has improved considerably thanks to our compliance programme. In the general community, too, there is increasing support for business integrity.

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Strengthening our company's integrity programme has had the bonus of being regarded as a positive brand. We are now recognised for our integrity and compliance by other stakeholders. This also relates to faith and morale: by doing business with integrity, the company has implemented its values.

### Together we can fight corruption!

After completing the DUKU corruption prevention training, I was eager to join forces with other women to establish Women in Integrity (WIN). WIN, which is now part of the Regional Advocacy Committee (RAC) West Java, is a safe platform for female entrepreneurs and professionals where we discuss key challenges related to corruption in day-to-day business. We are committed to promoting business integrity and raising awareness of the importance of anti-corruption efforts among women. As female entrepreneurs who are particularly affected by corruption, we are actively engaged in promoting business integrity and sustainable change within our trade associations and in the Indonesian economic system.

Our joint power in fighting corruption was proven when we were invited to an exhibit abroad which required us to pay "additional costs" to participate. However, our entire group of female entrepreneurs refused, and the host had to abandon its illegal demands. Through Collective Action all members of the community won. The Alliance for Integrity's focus on the power of Collective Action showed me that together we have a stronger standing and a much bigger impact.

### Upholding integrity every day

WIN as a safe platform supports the promotion of business integrity and institutionalises it. It helps strengthening business integrity and keeps the company on a positive path. It may require a big effort, but the spirit and motivation keep the members positive about the future of anti-corruption in Indonesia if not the world.

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