

Experiences from Field Research in West and Central Java, Indonesia

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In cooperation with Organic Foods Indonesia (“OFI”), the research for this case was planned well in advance and started already at the end of 2025. I was so happy that all the requirements had been met and I could finally set off on this four-week trip. My flight from Istanbul to Jakarta was the longest flight I have ever taken, and despite being well prepared, I was relieved to finally see the evening lights of Jakarta, and what I took as a comforting welcoming sign.

In the first week I attended a summer course titled “CoffeeCrack: Unveiling Indonesia’s Bean-to-Cup Journey Through Science and Technology, as a speaker and participant. The course was organized by the IPB University in Bogor (SEAFast Center) under the coordination of Dr. Dian Herawati. At IPB, I had the opportunity to present findings from one of our other case studies, Teikei Coffee, and focused on the design principles of their community-based coffee model. During this week, I learned a lot about coffee processing, quality measurements, preservation methods, brewing techniques, and finally how coffee is actually grown on agroforestry plantations.



I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to Dr. Dian and especially to Dr. Saraswati from IPB University who continuously supported me in the process of acquiring a valid permit and visa. I am looking forward to expanding our collaboration and combining our expertise in the future!

In the second week I continued my journey to Yogyakarta (or “Yogya”) located in Central Java to meet Dippos Naloanro Simanjuntak, the Managing Director of Mega Inovasi Organik

("MIO"). Together, MIO and OFI form a joint venture through which they produce, import and sell products such as palm sugar, spices, and tropical fruits in organic and fair-trade quality to Europe. However, the vision of MIO goes even further, since they support a mixed crop cultivation system which improves the financial stability of farmers who can sell surplus products to local markets or use them for their own consumption. Additionally, MIO actively supports the farmers through funding activities and own investments in local infrastructures and production equipment.

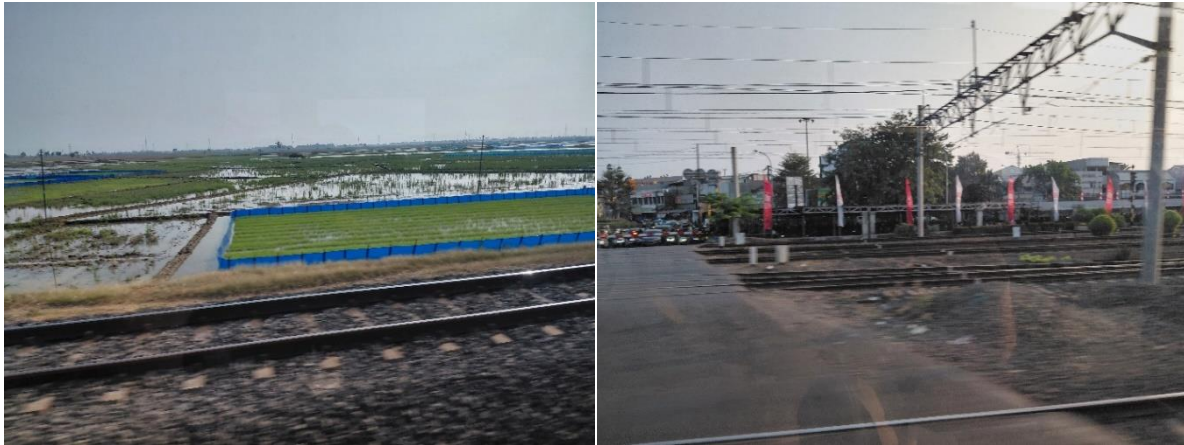
Anro and I had a tight schedule ahead of us: In the upcoming days we visited villages located in the regencies of Magelang, Kulon Progo and Purworejo. On the second and third days we continued our travel to Purwokerto from where we visited two more villages in Banjarnegara and Purbalingga. On the fourth and last day, I was also able to see the factory of MIO on the outskirts of Purwokerto. Overall, he showed me farmer houses, demonstration plots, drying and processing facilities, the towering palm trees and the absolute beauty of the tropical forest. But most meaningful were the conversations that we had with the cooperatives and farmers: learning from their experience, gaining a firsthand understanding of how they work and live, and connecting with them and the environment: All in all, I experienced a true change of perspective.



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Without the support of MIO, Organic Foods Indonesia, and especially Anro, this entire trip and the interviews would not have been possible. Thank you! But I also want to appreciate the help of others: from the drivers navigating the incredibly narrow streets to reach the villages – it felt like a rollercoaster – to the farmer families who showed great hospitality by inviting us into their homes and preparing drinks and snacks for us.

After these four incredibly exciting days it was time for me to slowly head back to Jakarta. This time, I decided to take the train from Purwokerto to Jakarta Gambir Station, and the journey offered me a glimpse of Indonesia's countryside and cities.



In the last days of my journey, but also during the gaps in my schedule, I learned and experienced quite a lot about the country: its young history and vibrant celebration of independence, the unifying role of its language (Bahasa), the traditional art of batik, popular sports such as billiards, black sand beaches and, of course, the diverse and special yet often extremely spicy street food culture.

There is definitely so much more to discover. I could only scratch the surface of what this country has to offer. Truly, what a beautiful place it was... and still is...

