



You are here: | [Home](#) | Australia Day 2018

Stephanie Arrowsmith

Co-founder, Impact Hub Jakarta

[Read in Bahasa](#)

Stephanie Arrowsmith believes in the power of people, collaboration and innovation to change the world. As co-founder of Impact Hub Jakarta, a co-working space that promotes and supports local social entrepreneurs, Arrowsmith is determined to prove that business can be a force for good.

How did you start? What made you choose this career path?

Before moving to Australia in 2001, I grew up in Indonesia. In my early career I worked for non-profits and larger organisations in the social sector, but I've found that it's not up to large institutions or governments alone to create change, but investing in people, innovation and collaboration is at the heart of those solutions. I found my passion supporting social entrepreneurs who work at the intersection of business and social change, and eventually returned to Indonesia to start Impact Hub.

I studied Health Science with majors in Public Health (to focus on holistic, systemic change) and Anthropology (always curious about people) at the University of Western Australia – which is still one of the most beautiful campuses I've ever seen! During my degree, I studied abroad in Indonesia, Denmark, Guatemala and completed an internship in New York. I had access to so many international experiences during my time in Australia and I am incredibly grateful for that.

How did your Australian experience contribute to your success, your approach to your work?

My years at university in particular were influential...at university there was an opportunity to become fully involved with campus life and take up leadership positions, connect with likeminded individuals and people with radically different perspectives, volunteer, study abroad and learn more languages. This kind of diversity of opportunity, interactions with people and exposure to new contexts has pushed me to seek more from myself and expand my own ideas of what a career pathway could look like. Particularly, growing up in Australia's multicultural environment I believe prepared me for a global work setting.

"Our team genuinely loves what we do, so we bring authenticity, integrity and a sense of purpose to our work..." – **Stephanie Arrowsmith**

What made you take the leap overseas and why Indonesia?

As much as I loved Australia, curiosity and a drive for experiential learning is what took me overseas and traveling solo from the age of 18. I chose to go back to Indonesia after studies for many reasons, and initially it was to be closer to my family and reconnect with my heritage. What I had discovered was a whole lot more – a thriving and growing entrepreneurial spirit, growing social movements, leapfrogs in the digital era leading to more innovation and empowerment of civil society. It's diverse, contradictory and complex. Indonesia still faces many challenges and holds a lot of unrealised potential, and it was a growth opportunity I wanted to be part of.

What were the biggest hurdles in building your business and how did you overcome them?

The terms 'social entrepreneurship' and 'co-working' were new at the time and I had to rebuild my networks from scratch – that was a scary prospect. Business in Indonesia is built on relationships and trust. So I put myself out there and started conversations with people I respected and shared my ideas, mentored and volunteered my time, ran regular Meetup events for the social enterprise community and eventually did consulting work in the sector and speaking engagements that helped me to expand my network and ultimately find my co-founders.

"Being in Indonesia...makes you feel alive and surprised all the time" – **Stephanie Arrowsmith**

What do you think is the single most influential factor in your business success?

Collaboration. I believe the success of future businesses in an increasingly competitive environment rests on our ability to collaborate effectively and create more value to society by doing so. Our team genuinely loves what we do, so we bring authenticity, integrity and a sense of purpose to our work – and that resonates with people. We treat our community as members of our family. We balance business sense with maximising collective impact.



What's one of your most favourite things about living and working in Indonesia?

It's the intensity of the experience of being in Indonesia, a place with so many contradictions, that makes you feel alive and surprised all the time. The morning commute on the back of a Go-Jek during rush hour, the access to incredible islands and volcano hikes on the weekend, the fiery sambal (chilli paste) in almost every meal, the genuine warmth and curiosity of people, the diversity of culture and religions across the archipelago and finding tradition embedded in the modernity.

What makes you proud to be Australian?

Our recent wins in social movements have made me immensely proud as well as our commitments to international aid being both generous and innovative in its approach, but of course there's more work to be done. Since moving to Australia, I've admired that we are so culturally and linguistically diverse, we respect our natural environment, young people are celebrated, we work hard, play hard and have a lot of heart. Also, nothing beats the feeling I get when flying back to Perth and looking down into rich, red desert and the long, uninterrupted coastlines before we touch down. Australia, in its raw form, is one of the most beautiful places in the world.

More on Impact Hub Jakarta: Co-founded by Stephanie Arrowsmith, Impact Hub Jakarta is a business incubator, innovation hub, and co-working community of purpose-driven entrepreneurs and organisations located in Indonesia's capital. The Hub gives social entrepreneurs and innovators flexible access to places where they can work, learn, and collaborate. Arrowsmith believes fervently in the power of collaboration to make visionary ideas happen, and focuses on facilitating cross-sector partnerships to support social entrepreneurs and organisations that come up with those life altering ideas.

Australians in Indonesia



Ewa Wojkowska

Ewa Wojkowska is determined to improve the life of people in developing countries. Her devotion to the task has found expression in Indonesia in the f ...
[read more](#)



Moses Lo

Moses Lo created Xendit, an Indonesian-based fintech startup that makes it easier and cheaper to accept and send funds across banks, after seeing the ...
[read more](#)



Janet DeNeeffe

Bali has been home to Janet DeNeeffe for more than 30 years, and the island and its people continue to weave its magic on her. The author, artist, restaurateur ...
[read more](#)

Footer Information

Subscribe to our newsletter

Subscribe to latest news [Subscribe](#)

/AusUnlimited /AusUnlimited

© Copyright 2019 Australian Trade and Investment Commission.