
THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Fifteen minutes of Hope in Indonesia

CrossFit Equator in Jakarta raises over US \$37,000 for sick kids. Emily Beers reports.

By Emily Beers

July 2012



All images: Brian Pandji/CrossFit Equator

When Brian Pandji told Mary's Cancer Kiddies that his gym was going to host an event to raise money for kids with cancer, they were polite but seemed skeptical.

"I don't think they thought we would raise much money just by doing a 15-minute workout," said Pandji, who owns CrossFit Equator in Jakarta, Indonesia.

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But Pandji knew something the Mary's Cancer Kiddies charity didn't: that an entire community of CrossFitters around the world was excited to collectively tackle the workout Hope to raise money for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. He also knew that his own members at CrossFit Equator had the will and were prepared to work their asses off for the cause.

However, instead of donating to St. Jude, Pandji and Scott Hanna, his partner for the event, decided to give the money they raised to the Jakarta-based charity instead.

"We elected to keep the donations local to help kids in Indonesia with cancer. St. Jude does amazing work, but the access to treatment for Indonesian kids is even more limited," Hanna said.

Pandji felt that focusing on a local charity would help his athletes feel more connected to the cause.

"Mary's Cancer Kiddies is a group of volunteers taking care of kids, something everyone can identify with," Pandji said.



Hope: where every rep is more money for sick children.

He continued: "A man named Scott Thompson did a fundraiser for Mary's Cancer Kiddies a while ago. He ran from Bali to Jakarta and raised a lot of money, so we knew we could do the same."

CrossFit Equator on June 9

At Pandji's home in Jakarta, amidst the palm trees and blue skies, athletes mill about his garage gym. Some of them roll about on foam rollers to loosen sore muscles, while others socialize happily in corners. With the television on and a toddler or two running around, the box has a comfortable family-like feel, almost as if the group has gathered for a dinner party rather than a workout.

As the area starts to fill up, people spill into the backyard, an extension of Pandji's gym. One man wears a shirt that says, "Know Pain, Know Gain." "Hope" is written in big letters on the whiteboard.

In many ways it looks like a regular morning at CrossFit Equator.

But it's not.

With 36 athletes about to compete in a grueling workout, today's Hope WOD isn't about who finishes first. And it's not about work capacity or personal bests. In fact, it's not about the 36 athletes at all. It's about something bigger than that.

**Today, working out will
benefit children who need all
the help they can get just to
stay alive.**

It's a day where people will go harder than they normally do because something other than pride is on the line. Today, working out matters. Today, working out will benefit children who need all the help they can get just to stay alive.

Pandji admits the day is refreshing because some days being a CrossFitter can feel like a selfish endeavor.

"Sometimes I feel selfish. We usually CrossFit for ourselves, for our personal health and fitness, which is good, but it doesn't really help anyone else," Pandji said.

He added: "There should be a time where we do this, where we work out for something that matters ... for a cause. It helps when you do it for someone else."

Through pledges, admission charges and direct donations, Pandji's crew manages to raise US \$37,171.

\$2,400 Per Minute

Pandji addresses the group of eager CrossFitters who have gathered at his home: "Let's make a difference. Today is our chance to not just do a workout, but to do a workout to make a difference."

Everyone cheers.

"3-2-1 ... Go!"

Suddenly, Pandji's backyard is filled with people busting out thrusters, burpees, snatches, box jumps and all sorts of variations of pull-ups, from chest-to-bar to chin-over-bar to band pull-ups to jumping pull-ups.

"It's controlled chaos," Pandji says.

It's controlled but beautiful chaos as the group fights for children. Each rep means more dollars.

Amidst the chaos, someone is sporting a shirt that says, "Think this hurts? Try chemo."

With that motto in mind and on the brink of physical collapse, Pandji's athletes push a little harder for one more rep. Just one more rep. Again and again.

And after just 15 minutes of work, through pledges, admission charges and direct donations, Pandji's crew manages to raise US \$37,171.

Everyone is thrilled with the result.

"We didn't have any formal goal articulated, but my thinking was that \$5,000 would be a great result," Hanna says. "When I saw the check, I was shocked and amazed."



"One more rep!"



Proud athletes from CrossFit Equator.

10K Tjandranegara

The top individual fundraiser in Jakarta on June 9 was Agnes Tjandranegara.

"I had approximately two and a half weeks to raise money," Tjandranegara said. "I did a mental calculation and decided to reach out to five people per day, with no goal to the end dollar amount."

So she did. She reached out to her family, to her friends, and when the results were tallied, Tjandranegara managed to raise \$10,706 in two weeks.

"Most of my friends and family members are very charitable and supportive of Hope, and the fact that it was a CrossFit event makes it an even bigger deal, as CrossFit has helped me with my physical and emotional transformation," Tjandranegara said.

As proud of his pupil as he is, Pandji explained that the day wasn't just about raising money. It was also about generating awareness of CrossFit in Indonesia. For some, the Hope event was their first CrossFit experience.

Drew Harkness is a newbie to CrossFit. He joined CrossFit Equator in April and is rapidly falling in love with it. He brought his wife to the fundraiser as a way to expose her to the culture and community for the first time.

"She appreciated the camaraderie here," Harkness said. "There were a lot of people experiencing CrossFit for the first time, who I would say really learned something that day, and it opened their eyes to a different way of exercise—and life."

Pandji is so proud of everything that went on at his box that day.

“Everyone really used their networks and their diligence and bought in,” said a humble Pandji, who doesn’t believe he had much to do with the success. “I didn’t really do anything special. I just told them we would be doing Hope, a worldwide event, and they just got excited.”

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Tjandranegara added: “Maybe it was because the workout was dedicated to a very good cause, or maybe it was due to having a much bigger audience than normal. Whatever the reason, the energy level that day was such a positive high that most of us went above and beyond our personal goals.”



***This same scene played out all around the world,
raising millions for charity.***

Pandji believes it was ultimately the spirit of CrossFit that led to both the excitement and the success in Jakarta.

“We maintain a very competitive culture on every WOD and every skill—beginner to advanced,” Pandji said. “And when I look back, that is the one thing that I think made it all work: competition.”



About the Author

*Emily Beers finished a master’s degree in journalism at the University of Western Ontario in the spring of 2009. Upon graduation, she worked as a sportswriter at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games, where she covered figure skating and short-track speed skating. Currently, she hosts **WOD HOG**, a not-always-PG publication of the CrossFit Vancouver School of Fitness. She was the 2011 Canada West Regional Media Director and competed in the 2011 Reebok CrossFit Games with CrossFit Vancouver. She finished third in the 2012 Canada West Regional.*