



# Habele

OUTER ISLAND EDUCATION FUND



ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2018

# A Letter from the Founder



Friends,

It's hard to believe that twelve years have passed since three young Peace Corps volunteers established Habelé. Our resources were meager, but we had a clear vision for supporting bright, ambitious students in some of the most remote communities of the Pacific.

That vision was built around incentives, competition, and public accountability to empower ownership and capacity throughout Micronesia. It is a pleasure to see how that vision has stood the test of time. Our programs are thriving, and the number of students who can point to Habelé's investment in their education as making *the* difference continues to grow.

That is no accident. Habelé's successes over the last twelve years stem directly from the committed generosity of our donors and volunteers. Year after year, you have given your resources and time. The tiny seedling of vision has borne life-changing fruit for Micronesian students. It is meaningful to the students, their families, and deeply meaningful to me. You may never set foot on a distant Micronesian atoll, but you are an appreciated, crucial part of the Habelé family.

A new year is before us. We have high hopes of serving more students than ever before. I hope you will be as encouraged by this annual report as I am, and enjoy learning more about the work you make possible.

Sincerely,  
Neil J. Mellen, Founder



# About Habel



Habele is a charity serving students in the Federated States of Micronesia. We have a network of passionate donors and volunteers giving of their time and talents to change lives in one of the most remote places on the planet.

Habele is an IRS-recognized non-profit, and carefully complies with all the public reporting and disclosure required to earn and keep that special tax-exempt status. Former Peace Corps Volunteers founded Habel, and nearly everyone involved has a personal connection with the islands.

## Where we serve

Habele operates throughout Micronesia, the thousands of tiny islands and atolls strung across Western Pacific.



*Director of STEM, Amelia Weiss, with students in Chuuk*

This region is home to some of the most remote and under-resourced classrooms on the planet. In an average classroom of twenty Micronesian first graders, just six will go on to earn high school diplomas, two will complete associates degrees, and only one student will complete a four year college degree in their lifetime.

## How we serve

Habele's carefully works with educators, parents and leaders across Micronesia to ensure that all programs pursue and achieve the best possible results for communities. Our programs are always locally created, locally driven, and locally administered.

**Scholarships:** Habel provides K12 tuition assistance on the basis of need and merit. These scholarships provide ambitious students with access to the best-ranked private schools across Micronesia.

**Language and Literacy:** We partner with libraries and schools throughout Micronesia, providing them with high quality and relevant materials. From computers to dictionaries, our donations always serve local demands.

**Extracurricular:** Habel creates, funds and equips local programs to serve students outside the classroom. From robotics teams and sports leagues to mentor-driven canoe carving and traditional fabric weaving projects, Habel's extracurricular programs provide a place for students to create a sense of worth, belonging and accomplishment in their lives.

# Ha'be-le 1. VERB: to realize a future; to make it be. To wish.

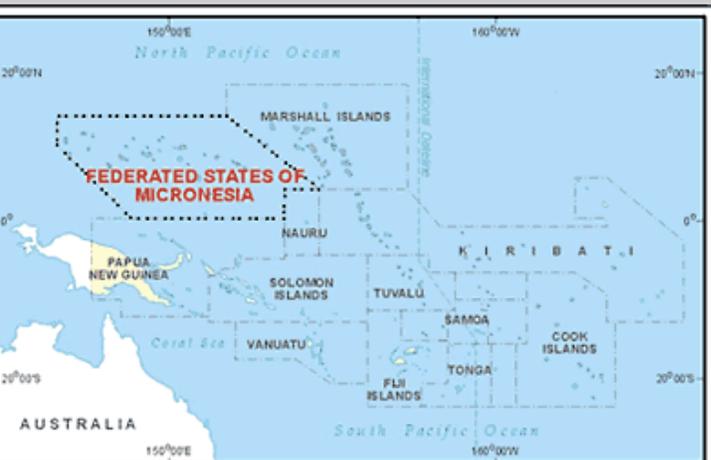
# Where is Micronesia?



There are at least 600 islands and atolls that make up what people call "Micronesia." Only 65 of these islands are inhabited.

Don't let the map fool you. "Neighboring" islands can be very, very distant from one another. In fact, some of the islands in Micronesia are as far apart as New York and San Diego!

There are over a dozen distinct languages spoken across these far-flung islands. Habele is proud to have published the first ever English-to-Ulithian Dictionary, as a resource for classrooms on Ulithi Atoll.



The Four States of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)

# Scholarships



Since 2006, Habelé has awarded scholarships to primary and secondary school students in Micronesia. These tuition grants are the heart and soul of our work, and bring learning opportunities that many children could only dream of.

**Tuition scholarships allow low-income children to attend high-quality independent schools of their family's choosing.**

The scholarships cover seventy-five percent of a student's tuition, at one of eight participating schools in three of the FSM's four states. Habelé students primarily come from rural communities and remote outer islands.

Habelé scholarships are far from a handout. Families contribute a portion of tuition costs as an investment, not just in their child, but in the future of Micronesia.

Each student is required to provide Habelé with copies of report cards, a thank you letter, and a photograph during the course of the school year. New applicants also submit details of their family's financial situation, and those applying to renew their scholarships must re-submit their application forms each year.

It is our mission to give the best schooling possible to children - who may otherwise never be able to access it - in hopes that these students will grow to lead Micronesia.

*Habelé Scholars from Yap Catholic High School*



# Robotics League

Practical application of classroom learning is central to Habelé’s approach. One exciting opportunity for hands-on implementation has been in the field of robotics.

## ABOUT THE LEAGUE

The Habelé Robo League began as a very small scale experiment. A partner school in the US contributed equipment for one high school in Yap to form a robotics club. The students loved it! Their enthusiasm generated interest in other high schools across Yap, and Habelé coordinated more equipment and support for new clubs to form. Together, these robotics clubs formed the Yap Robo League. We are pleased to say that - as of 2018 - every high school in Yap State is participating in the Yap Robo League

Team members design and build their own complex robots, learning important Science, Technology, Engineering and Math skills in a hands-on way. Some students participating in the robotics league have since graduated and pursued higher education in STEM fields as a result of their positive experiences.

After a year of applied math and science programs in school, the teams meet and compete in the annual, “Yap Robo Day.” This event showcases the students’ hard work and technical achievements in front of the entire community. Robo Day has become an increasingly popular event on Yap, with growing numbers of community members showing up to see the exhibition.



*Students on Woleai (Yap State) explore their new robot kits. Photo, Joyce McClure*

## GROWTH

This was an exciting year for the Habelé Robotics Program. The success and popularity of the Yap Robo League drew attention from across Micronesia, prompting national leaders to call for an expansion of the program to schools in other states. Thanks to a grant from the Office of Insular Affairs, Habelé was able to provide equipment, support and technical training to twelve high schools in Pohnpei and Chuuk States.

This opportunity has been very warmly received by our new partner schools, and we look forward to a great year. One exciting new component of the program is peer-to-peer instruction across states. This spring, student teams from Yap State will travel to Chuuk and Pohnpei to share their insights and expertise with newly-formed clubs. “Robo Day” exhibitions of what students have learned will be held across all three participating states.

Please follow us on Facebook to stay up-to-date on the latest Robo League developments.

**19 high schools across Yap, Chuuk and Pohnpei States participate in the Habelé Robotics League.**

# Robotics League



# Waa'gey

Waa'gey is a remains one of Habelé's greatest success stories. This unique program spun off from to independently meet a crucial local need.

Through training in traditional skills - canoe carving, weaving, and traditional art - Waa'gey works to keep young Outer Islanders grounded in history, and focused on confronting the unique challenges of urbanization.

Waa'gey pairs master carvers, weavers and other skilled mentors with high school aged boys and girls, with the intent of building academic and personal development.

The exciting side benefit is the preservation and revival of a distinctive and rich tradition of craftsmanship and navigation.



Waa'gey Program Director, Larry Raigetel with handcarved canoe.

Waa'gey sees this as a chance to build bonds between generations, and develop a positive work ethic among young islanders, particularly those who now reside in the more dense and developed state centers.

Waa'gey works with master carvers across the Outer Islands and coordinate projects among teams both on Yap Proper and back on the smaller outer islands where the practices remain more vibrant. In the process they've revived a centuries old process of obtaining trees on Yap Proper (where they grow much taller) and exchanging the logs for specialty items only produced in the Neighboring Islands.



# Financials



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## INCOME

Individual Donations	\$42,161.35
Corporate	\$1,520.15
Public Sector	\$168,246.93
<b>TOTAL INCOME:</b>	<b>\$211,928.43</b>

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## PROGRAMS

Tuition Scholarships	\$10,584.28
LEAD Scholars	\$6,062.12
Cultural Mentorships	\$283.85
Libraries and Literacy	\$942.90
Robotics	\$148,750.09
Misc. School Support	\$1,236.25
<b>TOTAL PROGRAMS:</b>	<b>\$167,859.49</b>

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## ADMINISTRATION

Compliance & Reporting	\$1,973.35
IT & Postage	\$1,462.53
Financial Fees	\$176.05
Publications	\$1,296.96
Travel & Meetings	\$425.17
Materials	\$543.37
<b>TOTAL ADMINISTRATION:</b>	<b>\$5,877.43</b>

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**TOTAL EXPENDITURES** **\$173,736.92**

# Our Team



## Board of Directors

**Alex Sidles**, President  
**Marc MacNamara**, Treasurer  
**Scott Leis**, Director

## Administration

**Matt Coleman**, Executive Director

## Programs

**Amelia Weiss**, Director of STEM



*Board President Alex Sidles with Habele partners in Chuuk.*



*Director Scott Leis talks with students from Outer Islands High School, Ulithi*

# From the Executive Director



Dear Friends,

This past year was hands-down the busiest year in the history of Habele, and certainly one of the most rewarding. As our longtime supporters know, tuition scholarships have been the heart of our work in Micronesia for a dozen years now. Thanks to your generous support, we were able to accept more Habele Scholars in 2018 than ever before. Every year we are flooded with more worthy applications than we have the resources to support. Seeing growth in our ability to provide more hardworking students with educational opportunity is a cause for celebration. On behalf of myself and the Board, thank you.

2018 was also a signal year for the Habele Robotics League, which represents the only program of its kind in the Western Pacific. Over the last five years, our partner schools in Yap have helped pioneer a Robotics League too successful to ignore. Their initiative and ownership paved the way for high schools in other Micronesian states to enjoy the same opportunities. This past spring, the U.S. Office of Insular Affairs recognized the Habele's unique contribution to STEM education in Micronesia, by issuing a grant for a Robotics League expansion to twelve additional high schools throughout Chuuk and Pohnpei.

Thanks to this partnership, Habele spent the last six months carefully working with partner schools in Chuuk and Pohnpei to lay a foundation for successful, challenging robotics instruction. New participants have been provided with the equipment and technical training needed to move them down the path toward holding their own Robo Day competitions. It is a pleasure to see the excitement and responsiveness of the students, many of whom have had no meaningful engagement with advanced technology. During one training workshop on the remote island of Woleai (Yap State), our Director of STEM, Amelia Weiss, was approached by several female students who confided that they had been afraid of what to expect with regard to the robots! They wanted her to know that their trepidation had been replaced with gratitude and motivation. I know we will see great things from them in the year to come.

The Habele family grew significantly this year, and we are deeply grateful for the educators, community leaders, officials, and volunteers who lent their time and talents to make it happen. Our focus is always on meeting local needs, and equipping people on the ground to drive the process. It is always moving to see that come together for the students' benefit.

Habele's work may seem far away, but the impact your support has in the lives of Micronesian students is incredibly real and personal. You have given Habele life year after year, and for that I remain grateful.

Sincerely,  
Matt Coleman, Executive Director

*Executive Director Matt Coleman with FSM Vice President, Yosiwo George*

