Rebakah Daro Minarchek has spent her life surrounded by agriculture. She grew up in rural Missouri amidst corn and wheat fields. Her early exposure to farming communities influenced her desire to work in similar circumstances in Southeast Asia. For her Master's degrees from Ohio University and Cornell University, she researched rice agricultural development programs, including Fair Trade and System of Rice Intensification (SRI) in Thailand and Indonesia.

Daro Minarchek’s current research (2013-2015) focuses on the impact of land and tenure rights for forest dependent communities in rural Indonesia. Specifically, she is exploring the impact of land law changes on the food security of adat (customary law) communities in West Java. This photo essay takes an in-depth look at the lives of children living in these adat communities.

Currently a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Development Sociology at Cornell University, Daro Minarchek also works as Associate Director of the American Institute for Indonesian Studies (AIFIS). AIFIS is a consortium of universities and colleges that fosters scholarly exchange and research efforts between Indonesian and U.S. scholars to further the development of Indonesian studies.

**Photo Essay**

**Growing up Adat in Indonesia**

*Photos from the Gunung Halimun Region of West Java, Indonesia*

Village children gather for an afternoon of games. The winners receive small prizes such as school notebooks, pencils, toothbrushes, toothpaste, and soap provided by the community leaders.
Left: A teenage boy takes part in a debus display. Debus is a mix of self-mutilation, martial arts, and mysticism from the Banten region of Indonesia. Despite cutting, stabbing, impaling, and other forms of self-mutilation, the participants rarely bleed or show pain.

Right: An intricately woven decoration of young coconut leaves hangs in front of a young boy preparing to perform a highwire act. The rope he performs on is hung 20-30 foot above the ground, between two flexible bamboo poles. This type of performance is rare, usually only occurring during important ceremonies.

Below: Five village girls pose for photographs before the annual harvest festival. They were chosen to carry the sacred rice for the festival and wear the white to symbolize the purity of the rice. The teens must be pre-pubescent to be chosen for this task. The older women beside them will carry out the task of milling the rice by hand during the ceremony. They must be post-menopausal to play this role in the ceremony.
Above: Two young village boys take video and photographs of village activities. Their *adat* village has both a radio and a television station that broadcasts to community members. Both boys have already left school and are learning to work at their village’s television station.

Right: A young girl takes a break from a morning of hand-milling holy rice. Only pre-pubescent girls and post-menopausal women are allowed to grow, mill, and cook this holy rice, which is used for *adat* ceremonies.