

# REFUGE

## Jesuit Refugee Service Indonesia

Accompany, Serve and Advocate the Cause of Forcibly Displaced People



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### Preface

*The 8th of March marks the United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace, reason for JRS and the Acehnese people it accompanies to reflect on peace and peace education. The people of Aceh in the most western province of Indonesia lived over decades under a situation of violent conflict, until after a devastating Tsunami in December 2004 a peace agreement was signed in 2005. But peace is not just a situation to be declared it is a continuing process that will only sustain when community, youth and future generations support it. Peace is a path taken. JRS displacement prevention program for that reason aims to develop skills and values in children, young people and adults to promote and support a culture of peace.*

## THE CONCEPT OF A ZONE OF PEACE, SCHOOLS BASED ON A CULTURE OF PEACE

*"Averting war is the work of politicians; establishing peace is the work of education."  
( Maria Montessori, Filsuf Italia, 1870 -1952)*

*By Amsa, JRS Tapaktuan*

When armed conflict occurs in an area, education becomes one sector suffering its negative impacts. It is not surprising that when this sector is hampered, this will affect the quality of the whole community since education is interrelated with the development and qualities within a community.

There are at least two impacts of armed conflict on education. Firstly, armed conflict breaks the mental and spiritual development process of individuals, which

is the main purpose of education. This could happen due to the discontinuation of the learning process, the destruction of education facilities or the unavailability of human resources. Data from Save The Children International, an international children's rights organisation reveals that today, there are 43 million children out of school in conflict-affected fragile states (see *Rewrite the Future, Education for Children in Conflict Affected Countries*, International Save the Children Alliance, 2006). Secondly, armed conflict endorses





the perspective to children and students that problems can be solved in a violent way. This of course is very contradictory to the objectives and aims of education. Especially when in conflict areas around the world ten thousands of children are recruited into armed forces or militias (see: *Child Soldiers Global Report, 2008*, [www.child-soldiers.org](http://www.child-soldiers.org)).

### The Concept of School as a Zone of Peace

In every armed conflict, a zone of peace exists. A zone of peace is not merely a demilitarized zone, but a site where members of communities can express and realise their aspirations without pressure from any of the outside parties, a place where they participate and cooperate to achieve their goals, rejecting violence as a method to solve problems. In this respect the Zone of Peace is a sanctuary that operates within the ethical principles of non-violence, free of weapons, acts of hostility, injustice and environmental degradation (Zone of Peace International Foundation, [www.zopif.org](http://www.zopif.org)).

Many regions such as the South Philippines, Africa, Sri Lanka, the Balkan, Tibet and other conflict areas around the world have practiced this concept of the Zone of Peace. These zones are intentionally formed not only for homogeneous communities but also for people from various backgrounds, religions, cultures and ethnicities. Besides that, these Zones of Peace are also protected and guaranteed by governments, the military forces and even by insurgents to be left alone regards any issues and acts of violence.

In a post-conflict situation the Zone of Peace is still vital for assuring the continuation of a peace process. The values, activities and interactions among the communities become the relevant model to maintain the achieved peace and to prevent future conflicts.

In this context, school as a learning institution plays a role in sustaining peace in a post-conflict situation by adopting the concept and values of a Zone of Peace. This is possible as schools not only enjoy the formal recognition of the government but also are regarded in the community as an institution that develops capacities and improves the qualities of an individual. Moreover, schools also become a place where people with different potentials and characteristics meet.

School as Zone of Peace is expected to create a Culture of Peace. Such a Culture of Peace is characterised in the UN Charter as "an integral approach to prevent violence and violent conflicts, and an alternative to the culture of war and violence based on education for peace, the promotion of sustainable economic and social development, respect for human rights, equality between women and men, democratic participation, tolerance, the free flow of information and disarmament" (The UN Declaration on a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence).

Finally, the role of a school is not merely this of an institution that just teaches knowledge and technical skills but should be seen as a small space in a more complex society, which is able to provide a model and inspiration of peace for every single member in a community. In order to become this space there have to be fundamental changes made to turn a school from an institution teaching knowledge and cognitive skills into a place promoting a Culture of Peace. A school based on this Culture of Peace will be a school, which is able to create a peaceful atmosphere in the school surrounding and to make a positive contribution to peace in the wider community.

A school based on a culture of peace could be accomplished through a curriculum teaching students to see problems from a local and global perspective, to discuss issues concerning justice; develop the skills needed to overcome conflict using non-violent methods, promoting the appreciation of multiculturalism, the principles of human rights and equality and the respect towards the environment.

Practically, schools based on a culture of peace are achieved when both physical and psychological violence among the pupils in school have disappeared and an atmosphere is created, where any problem can be discussed and the aspirations of different people can be accommodated.

The biggest challenge in creating this form of school is to improve the skills of teachers, sharpening their thoughts and awareness of the importance of the values on which peace is based. A teacher plays a big role in promoting a culture of peace, as he or she with all values and deeds becomes a role model for students. Maria Montessori, a famous Italian educator and practitioner of peace, said once that a teacher is an important factor in the education system, as it is the teacher's responsibility to create the space and an environment, which fits its students' potentials and background. In other words, a teacher's task is not only to transfer knowledge but also to transfer value to support peace in a community.

## A FILM ABOUT PEACE FOR CHILDREN



Children are given an introduction before watching the Tales of Disasters movie at SD Buloh Didi

By Enggal, JRS Tapaktuan

Dozens of children sitting on the floor and stare upon the big screen. Their eyes brighten up when watching scenes of the film presented through the projector. Now and then they break out in laughter about the actions of the puppets. The room is hot but that doesn't impede their cheerfulness.

At the fun DRR (*Disaster Risk Reduction*) activity at SDN (State Primary School) Buloh Didi the film "*Dua Kebun*" (*Two Gardens*) is shown. *Two Gardens* is one of five films from the "Tales of Disasters", developed by No Strings, IDEP, Trocaire and JRS. All stories are animated by puppet characters resembling those in the Sesame Street series. "Some of the people from No String working on the development of the disaster films are the same like those behind the success story of the Sesame Street," said Elis, coordinator of the School Based DRR Project.

*Two Gardens* is a story about the values of peace. The story was written based on experiences of conflicts in Indonesia who have been repeatedly triggered by resentment and cultural differences between local communities and new comers. *Two Gardens* has three central characters, Mr Dodon, Taka and Dani. As a senior garden worker at Mr Dodon's garden the 'local' Taka envies Dani, a 'new comer' who through hard work successfully changes a dry garden full of stones into a beautiful and fertile one. Triggered by his jealousy and envy, Taka spreads bad rumours about Dani. Unfortunately, the villagers start believing in Taka's slander and decide in rage to burn Dani's garden. However, the fire moves on setting people houses ablaze. In the middle of this situation, Dani appears and saves the village from fire, as he had repaired the water pump of

the village days before. Finally, everybody admits their mistakes and accepts Dani as part of "Kampung Maju" (Developed) community.

"JRS suggested to put the theme of conflict and peace in the series of Tales of Disasters," explained Adrianus Suyadi, the National Director of JRS Indonesia. People always interpret disasters as part of natural phenomenon such as earthquakes or tsunamis. Though there are also disasters where people play a big role. These 'man made disasters' have various forms, such as conflict, war or other humanitarian tragedies. "Based on JRS past interventions we experienced a need for a media which is capable to develop peace values in Indonesia, so we suggested a peace education film," said Suyadi further. The task to arrange this theme was assigned to JRS and No String. No String as an institution with technical competencies contributed in composing a script outline, developed the puppet characters, and organised the stage for production and post-production. JRS provided input to No String relating to the finding of neutral names for film characters, explained about the cultural background of Indonesia, the history of past conflicts and how to avoid cultural based confrontations in the future," Elis explained.

*Two Gardens*, together with the other four tales of disasters, is now one media used by JRS in the School Based Disaster Risk Reduction Project. "This film is not only interesting for children but also for parents and the community around the school," said Amsa, JRS school project staff. Movies using puppets are usually seen as the ideal medium for children. However, this was not 100 percent applied here. "In a rural community which is thirsty for entertainment, any kind



Entis and Sukri facilitating the followup discussion together with puppet Kribo

of film becomes interesting," Amsa continued. In fact it opens the opportunity for JRS to promote peace values far beyond the children, reaching audiences from other parts of the community. The expected impact of this movie will not be seen just after meeting one or two times. "Therefore, *Two Gardens* is an entrance to peace education with other alternative media," Elis explained. The facilitator's role is key to changing attitudes. The field experience shows that a good facilitator is the first determined step. "He/she (the

facilitator) should understand the characters of his/her audience (community) and choose the appropriate media for them," Amsa explained. Knowledge on the history of conflict and methods of peace education will strengthen his/her sensitivity to what model of peace education is appropriate.

Entis Sutisna, one of the 'Fun DRR' facilitators mentions that the theme of peace is difficult to transfer to children from primary school. "It requires certain tricks to dig up peace values from children," he said. Watching *Two Gardens* still needs people to be ready to digest the content and to search for the values behind the story of Taka and Dani. "This distinguishes *Two Gardens* from the other four tales of disasters which are rather technical and easier to understand by children," Amsa added. Behind transferring a peace message, *Two Gardens* is an effective media to engage children. It is healthy alternative entertainment. "Though it is hard work to get children to think and speak about peace values, *Two Gardens* is a first step opening the field for other alternative peace media," Entis added.

Students at Buloh Didi are still stunned starring at the puppets on the screen. "At least today they learn that peace is more beautiful than dispute or hostility," Entis whispered and wipes the sweat from his forehead.

As the use of puppet-films and puppets as facilitators is very liked by children JRS Indonesia developed a Handbook with guidelines on how to use film and puppets in teaching children about peace and values of peace. This Handbook is still available and can be requested at JRS Indonesia.

## PEACE MAKES US HAPPY

By Ninuk, JRS Tapaktuan

Though sport is not the only way to create peace, it can inspire anybody to build it. Sport nurtures the spirit of brotherhood, cooperation, solidarity, equality and respect for each other. In encouraging fair play it guides to admit the opponent's strength and bridges the gaps between ethnics, races, religions, cultures or other social or economic differences and ideologies.

Why is it that whenever there is a world-class sport tournament held, people throughout the world will pay attention to it? The Beijing Olympics in 2008 was one of the latest examples for attracting worldwide attention. The opulent event of the Olympics is able to overcome hostilities between countries and to let us forget about ongoing disputes. The world can be united in peace, with the vision of: One world one dream.

### A Peace Campaign from the Youth

This dream of unity in peace was also announced in a small village close to Kluet River, South Aceh Sub-district. On Sunday morning, 21 December 2008, Alur Mas Village, North Kluet District became the stage for young people from seven villages in North, Central and South Kluet Sub-

District, asserting peace through a sport tournament. This celebration of peace is the highlight of a conflict management training conducted by the Jesuit Refugee Service in collaboration with the Asian Soccer Academy using sport to promote peace. The training run since 14 July 2008 and aimed at developing a positive attitude within young people by teaching conflict analysis and conflict management skills in a practical way learning how to successfully solve problems through negotiation.

Coordinator of JRS - Youth Program, Didik Dwi Budi Saputro said the purpose of these weekly trainings is to form and strengthen a culture within the young people that allows them to cope with conflicts. All this starts with developing considerate behaviour towards each other.

"Sport keeps the body healthy and refreshes the mind. However, it also becomes the cause of dispute and conflict. Uncountable times riots and violence broke out during or after soccer games. By understanding the value and skill of conflict management, young people are expected to solve their conflicts when they arise during sports events but also during everyday live. It is important for the people



Soccer match preparation between Simpang Tiga and SMA 1 Tapaktuan at Alur Mas village

of Aceh to continue the peace process and face its challenges.”

Conflict management training is crucial for young people. “The knowledge about the values of peace should be promoted to a wider public. The learned conflict management skills should be practised not only inside one village but also among the villages,” said Rio, a member of the Simpang Tiga soccer team.

“During the last six months conflict management skills were tested only during the weekly training sessions. Now it is time for us to practise them in a bigger scope by conducting a village tournament. Solidarity, cooperation and harmony fostered during the past trainings will be an example to the community during this event. This also proves that young people here love peace,” said Rio.

### To win over hostility

Of course Yusuf Abadi was right, saying that the sport tournament held in his village was not simply about who is the best or which team wins against which team. The youth leader of Alur Mas Village stated that through this event, relationships among the communities, especially between the youth are intertwined.

“We can get to know the youth from other villages. We can learn from each other. Harmony among us is surely significant to create peace,” said this man who is active to empower youth activity in his village.

Baina, a girl from Simpang Dua Village agreed that to win is not the sole objective. It is more about how youth can beat enmity and hatred. “We were already torn by conflict. It is a sad feeling to remember having to run into the mountains to hide. On the run we were unable to go to school. Our life was in danger and our property lost. Now the situation is peaceful. This peace we have to protect by defeating suspicion and hatred”

Tri, a girl from Lawe Sawah Village stated she was happy to meet up and become friends with youth from surrounding villages. “This peace tournament is an opportunity to exchange ideas and to share positive experiences between youth from different villages,” says Tri, who had to drop out of school during conflict times.

“The conflict caused suspicion and hatred. We don’t know each other. So far I only heard that the team from village A is supposed to play very well, but I didn’t know the team members yet and hadn’t seen them play. Through this tournament, you can really see if a team is solid and communicates well. We all learn from each other.”

For us, who were affected by conflict, this peace event is a very touching highlight of JRS’s conflict management training program. Ariaah, a female participant from Koto Indarung Village said this tournament opened her heart realising that the spirit of peace among the youth is still big. Even though her dark memories from times of armed conflict between *TNI (the Indonesian Military)* and *GAM (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka - the Free Aceh Movement)* will not just fade away, but the spirit of fair competition helps to defeat her past conflict trauma.

“The team of Koto Indarung chose red as the colour of their shirts. Red means brave: brave to be fair, brave to support the team, brave to cooperate but also brave to lose,” Ariaah said after the match with Simpang Dua Village team. She admitted that Simpang Dua volleyball team plays very powerful, therefore it is right for them to win.

Over Decades Aceh also known, as “the Veranda of Mecca” was the site of bloody battle. This battle cost the lives of many Acehnese. Sorrow, hatred, hostility and wounds now have to be calmed from every soul through one motivation: peace. According to the *keuchik* (village leader) of Alur Mas Village, Ismun Saleh peace in Aceh should be kept for the sake of Aceh. He predicts that the



The Volley Team of Koto Indarung and Simpang Dua shake hands



The Winners of the fair play award for the soccer and volley ball team

Ismun was proud when Jesuit Refugee Service chose his village as location for this peace event. He said that the message of peace obtained from the sport event should spread to people from other villages. According to him, JRS way of teaching peace to the young people is the right way. Youth are pioneers and will be the nation's next generation. "If youngsters are hostile and fight each other, it will split the country. Aceh in that case will be drown in sorrow."

*Keuchik* and the people of Alur Mas Village were proud of their village since it received the honour to be chosen as site of the tournament attended by six other villages: Simpang Dua, Simpang Tiga, Lawe Sawah, Lawe Buluh Didi, Koto Indarung and Siurai-urai. Before the tournament was held, outside parties including the police department was worried that a riot would break out during the event. A principal in North Kluet was even reluctant to lend the football net to Alur Mas Village, a post-conflict area.

"Our football net is still brand new. Alur Mas Village was a conflict spot. Even though the head of village will be in charge of the event, we are still worried," he affirmed.

The feared riot did not take place and the village head of Alur Mas Village even received new sport facilities for his village from *Disbudpora (Dinas Budaya, Pariwisata & Olah Raga* – Department for Culture, Tourism and Sport)

One of the women in Alur Mas Village stated proudly that she was happy that her village become the host of the tournament. "Young people need this spirit to win. There is a winner and loser in every game. However, they keep laughing and shaking hands. No hurt feelings," she said while carrying her child and watching the volley tournament. She also expressed that the harmony among the village youth at the tournaments are good examples for other villagers like her. Ashamed will be any adult person that

armed conflict of the past will not return to the land of *rencong* (traditional weapon from Aceh).

"Peace in Aceh is very important for the development of Aceh. As people who love peace, we should really foster it for the sake of the Acehnese," said Ismun Saleh when delivering his speech in front of participants and village people.



Closing Ceremony by Keuchik Alur Mas village, Ismun Saleh

still fights, while the youth already lives in peace and harmony," she added in her Kluet dialect.

According to the report of the ASA (*Asian Soccer Academy*) team, the result of the 5 months training showed a remarkable result on the youngsters. Lee Hawkins uttered that the abilities of the young players were increased from 10 percent to 90 percent. Those abilities include skills of communication, manner, motivation, team cooperation, fair play and tolerance to cultural, social and religious differences.

"We did not see any friction during the tournament. There was no injured player during the soccer game. Nobody tried to get across other parties. It was all fair play matches that can become a good model for a community."

The celebration of peace through sport brought happiness not only to the people of Alur Mas Village but also the participants of seven villages and the students of SMU (*Sekolah Menengah Umum* - Indonesian High School) 1 Tapaktuan. Happy was also Ahmad, the ice cream seller. "Well, peace can make us happy. In peace I'm not worried too much about earning a living. The ice cream sells like hot cakes. My family can eat properly," he said when reading the committee's blue long sleeves t-shirt I wore. It reads "*Damai itu Membuat Kita Gembira*" ("Peace Makes Us Happy").

## International Days

### March

8 March	International Women's Day
21 March	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
21-22 March	Week of Solidarity with the Peoples Struggling against Racism and Racial Discrimination
22 March	World Water Day
23 March	World Meteorological Day

### April

4 April	International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action
7 April	World Health Day
23 April	World Book and Copyright Day

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