

REFUGE

Jesuit Refugee Service Indonesia

Accompany, Serve and Advocate the Cause of Forcibly Displaced People



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Preface

On 21 September people all around the world will celebrate the International Day of Peace. The word 'peace', 'perdamaian' or 'salam' is associated with safety, welfare, security, friendliness and prosperity; qualities everyone longs for especially people who experienced violent conflict and were forced to flee their homes in the past. This month Refuge shares the reflections of teachers in South Aceh on what contribution they see themselves being able to make to a peaceful society and lets youth express their appreciation for the four years of peace in Aceh. In a last part it wants to remind that even today there are many people forced to search for peace, safety and a live in dignity outside their home countries often in desperation and depending on the willingness of other people and nations to support them. Refugees and also Internally Displaced People as some of the most vulnerable people need the solidarity from their host community to gain back their dignity and rights that enable them to rebuild their lives. The celebration of World Refugee Day was a reason to remember them and encourage understanding of refugee's situations and needs to finally strengthen the solidarity with them. Peace is beautiful and its even more beautiful if we share it.

PEACE IN THE EYES AND HEARTS OF YOUNG WOMEN

By: Ninuk Setya Utami

Ainun Syam gazed upon her three trophies standing on the right side of the 14-inch color television set. A pile of compact discs and cassettes covered the writing on it. So she reached out for one of the trophies closest from the TV set. She held the 40 cm trophy in her right hand and started rubbing the dim golden

colored metal with her skirt. She kept cleaning the old trophy and blew the dust from it. It became shinier and beautiful again as the dust was swiped away.

"We got these trophies before the conflict occurred in Aceh. Some of them disappeared. I cannot remember, whether they were taken or broke. Now I only



have these three of them left," she kept staring at the trophies that were obtained in 2003.

Ainun mentioned that before the conflict between Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and Indonesian authority erupted again in 2001 – 2004, the girls in the village were very active in many activities, including volleyball. In fact, their team was able to win some of the volleyball competitions in many areas.

"The good thing was that *pak geuchik* (village leader) played volleyball too. Young women and girls were supported to participate in the competitions in several areas, and we always brought back trophies to the village," she said with excitement as she remembered those times.

Geuchik and other village figures were not just giving moral support for young women, but also provided financial assistance. Ainun, the leader of the young women organization in Malaka Village, Central Kluet Sub-district, South Aceh District mentioned that to that time village authority allocated special fund to run the volleyball training for young women. The fund itself was taken from the village assistance fund also called '*bandes*'.

However, since the conflict, young women were no longer allowed in any sport activity in the area. At first, Ainun and her friend, Eriwati refused to name the person who banned sport activities for young women.

"It would make us more miserable if we name him. *Pak geuchik*, who always supported our activities was killed by the *orang gunung* (hill people) during the conflict. We hope that we could play again one time. It felt so good to achieve something and it made the villagers proud of us. It was good to unite young women and be given the chance to meet other women from other villages through volleyball," Eriwati expressed it gravely, and Ainun nodded agreeing her friend's statement.

Ainun was referring to GAM when she talked about hill people. Ainun and Eriwati have no ideas about the reason of the prohibition. "They told us it was *haram* (forbidden) for young women to play volleyball," Eriwati added.



Samsidar, youth leader of Pulo Kambing Village

Peace is better

Another story comes from Samsidar and her friends from Pulo Kambing Village, North Kluet Sub-district, South Aceh District. JRS assisted the young women to express their wish for sports as well as in having spot activities approved by the villagers and their customary laws. In fact, the ex-combatant youth gave inputs for the program and assisted in providing volleyball field for young women at the initiate level.

"During the conflict, we were all living full of fear and suspicion, filled with distrust between relatives and neighbors," Samsidar stated this after her team competed with other team in Lhok Rukam Village, at the peace festival through sports organized by JRS and ASA Asia, supported by Pulo Kambing Village youth.

Sam also admitted that peace in Aceh has brought a better life for some of them, while others still experienced difficulties.

"Every conflict causes trauma. So it is much better this way, let's live in peace. We feel that even though we have no money, but at least we are not afraid to go anywhere. We used to be afraid even when someone knocked on our doors. Now we can go to school and to the market without fear. Back then, even though we had much more money, but were filled with worries."

'Peace is better' says Siti Hajar, a young woman from Lhok Rukam, Tapaktuan Sub-district. She said that life in the village has been much more improved since GAM and Government of Indonesia signed the peace agreement. Just like Samsidar, Siti also admitted that friendship and relationship among her friends have grown stronger than before.

"Back then, even as Acehnese, we could not admit that we were fellows as we were living full of suspicion to each other. We called it '*orang kita*' (our people). Conflict caused competition, killings and hatred. We should be grateful and maintain the current peaceful situation, so that we can continue to live in peace, that is our slogan in the village," this tall woman added.



Siti Hajar, from Lhok Rukam Village



Mrs Helmawita shares her experiences during the Living Values Training

By: Saefuddin Amsa dan Paulus Enggal

There can never be peace between nations until there is first known that true peace which is within the souls of men
(Black Elk, 1953)

Peace is not the absence of war; it is a virtue, a state of mind, a disposition for a benevolence, confidence, justice
(Baruch Spinoza)

Even though there have not been any big scale horizontal conflicts recently, it is not possible to describe Indonesia as a conflict-free country. In the terms of peace building, the situation Indonesia could be described as 'latent phase', where conflicts may still erupt at any time when supported by triggering events in the community.

Indonesia is densely populated by a wide variety of different ethnical and religious communities, it is a complex society facing multidimensional issues such as participation on economic welfare, political power and socio-cultural rights. Conflict potential is latent where differences in the degree of welfare follow the lines of ethnical, religious or other socio-cultural backgrounds. The resulting tension can lead to violent conflict if this plurality is mismanaged or even misused for individual gains.

On a smaller scale, conflict potential lies in the use of a language of violence, which is perceived by some people as a successful method to solve problems. A culture of violence is cultivated through acts and communications of individuals and institutions in social, political and economic life. It is used to attain individual profit and to serve specific interests. On top of that, mass media that should be informative and educative not seldom directly promote violence in features and articles. Through a variety of forms and media violence influences mental development and individual attitudes.

"We felt that TV programs have a great influence on childrens behavior," said Helmawita (45) a teacher of Lhok Rukam Primary School. "Children tend to imitate the behaviour shown on TV programs," added Abdullah Isa (29) a teacher of Pulo Kambing Primary School during the workshop on Development of Values in Learning and Teaching, conducted by Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), supported by Living Values Indonesia and the Education Department of South Aceh District. The workshop was held in the aula of the local Education Department from June 29 to July 2, 2009.

The answer to the issues raised was simply a system that has the ability to promote justice, respect and humanitarian principles to young generations as a base for a peaceful and harmonic living together. In other words, there is a general need for peace education, that is not limited to only areas that experienced war or violence, but would benefit every individual and citizen empowering their personality and increasing their quality of life.

"Actually, there are many modules on peace education one for example was developed by UNICEF. However, JRS chose to use the Living Values approach as a tool for its peace education program in South Aceh," explained Saefuddin Amsa, the coordinator of JRS's Living Values Training. "There are three reasons why we choose this model. Firstly, Living Values is relevant in any situation, during con-



Art appreciation by teachers of MIN (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri/ State Islamic Primary School) Air Pinang

conflict as well as during peace as Living Values explores the universal values in each person. Secondly, the Living Values approach provides a comprehensive set of tools and since Living Values develops universal values, it can become a basis for a lot of other activities," said Amsa further.

"The training 'Development of Values during Learning and Teaching in School' is in line with the mission and vision of the Education Department and can be integrated into the *Sekohat* or *Sekolah Sehat* (Healthy School) program," explained Kasman (45), the secretary of Education Department of South Aceh. "*Sekohat* covers three main points, i.e. healthy learning and teaching activities, healthy environment and, healthy administration". "Living Values tries to create healthy schools in learning and teaching process," affirmed Taka Gani (44), the facilitator of Living Values Training.

How does it work? What is most important is the process creating a peaceful school environment through learning activities, which provide space for students to develop and reflect on their values and base their actions on it. Some of these peace principles are respect, love, tolerance and cooperation. During the training the participants interpreted a culture of peace into their vision of an 'ideal school'.

"An ideal school is an environmentally friendly school," expressed Hamnis (43), a teacher of MIN (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri/ State Islamic Primary School) Air Pinang. "And a school where the teacher understands the background of their students," he added.

"An ideal school is a school where teachers are willing to serve students and agree to temporarily replace their parents," added Marwati (40), the school principal of Ie Mirah Primary School.

"An ideal school will be formed through love, when teachers do not discriminate between their students whether he/she is smart or not, rich or poor," explained Yasmalinda Ningsih (41), the principal of MIN Air Pinang.

A peace education program for schools that emphasizes the importance of the process will ask to follow peace education principles and approaches in each activity or interaction between individuals within the school. In the learning and teaching process teachers are generally the main actors. As the main objective of peace education is to create a culture of peace, the peaceful learning environment is a first step towards this objective. The teacher is the key person promoting this environment at school.

A teacher concerned about the character development of his/her students should be aware of his/her own values and capacities for peace. Teachers are educators and as such they do more than just transferring knowledge to students. Teachers play an active role in the student's character & psychological development, as the teacher becomes a role model for the students.

"Therefore, teachers and school principals are the first asked to explore the 12 values essential for the Living Values concept, then to integrate those values in the learning and teaching process and other daily activities of teachers at school," said Elis, the School Project Coordinator of JRS South Aceh. "The School Project holds Living Values training before all other trainings, since the values are the core of each following activity of the School Project," she added.

In relation and interaction with the students, a peace educator would not consign himself as teacher who teaches students in the class. Moreover, a peace educator is capable of creating an open learning environment and is able to share and implement peace education skills in everyday's life, e.g. with other educators, the principal or other parts of the community.

"Active listening skills will help me to understand the students' conditions. All this time I only saw the outside by using active listening skills, I can see the background of the students why they act like this or that," revealed Kurnia (40), a teacher of Panjupian Primary School.

"This training of Living Values in learning and teaching

at school will help me to contribute to an ideal school, a school that is safe and peaceful, where students and teachers respect one another," stated Evidawati (22), a teacher of Lhok Sialang Rayeuk Primary School.

"Living Values Training will help teachers who teach in former conflict areas to create peace among the students and students with teachers," explained Syakrimuna (42), a teacher of le Mirah Primary School.

"By sharing experiences with teacher colleagues during this training, we learned about the conditions of other schools and how we can create an ideal school, where our hopes and aspirations for a good national education will be fulfilled," said Mardhiah (48), a vice principal of Pan-

jupian Primary School.

At the end, a peaceful spirited educator is not a teacher that simply goes to school to lecture facts to students. The peaceful spirited educator with all his/her embedded positive attitudes and peace values is able to widely stimulate those in other people. For Indonesia those peaceful spirited educators are needed not only to gain young generations for the aim of building a culture of peace and to provide them with the basics to peacefully solve the latent conflicts they will be facing. If there is a language of violence, we need to learn the language of peace. A first step is to learn its vocabulary like the 12 key Living Values and to practice it in school, in the community and the wider society.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY



(Left) Lars Stenger, Information and Advocacy Officer at JRS, one of the speakers in World Refugee Day event;
(Right) Participants of World Refugee Day

By: Lars Stenger

"... and I thought that I can do something about it and so can you. Maybe with our help and support they won't have to run anymore." The closing words the film "Running-Berlari" left the room silent for a minute. People kept still looking at the screen with the logo of SUARAM (Suara Masyarakat Malaysia/ Voice of the Malaysian People, an NGO advocating for the rights of Refugees).

It was the 20st of June, World Refugee Day, and JRS had invited to come to Sanata Dharma University Yogyakarta. About 50 people including lecturers, representatives of civil society and students from Indonesia, Thailand and Burma/ Myanmar had gathered here to watch the film describing the experiences and challenges faced by refugees in their home country and in the country of asylum (Malaysia). "Personally I appreciate everyone that helps them (refugees) and accepts them in their country ... these people fleeing and their voices touched everyone of us" states Lorence a student from Myanmar/Burma at Sanata Dharma University in Yogyakarta still touched by the stories shared through the film.

The audience was surprised to learn that there are more than 16 million refugees in the world most of them facing the same challenges as the people portrait in "Running": forced to leave their home countries searching for a safe place to live in peace and dignity but encountering suspi-

cion, being labelled as illegal's deprived of their rights put in detention or send back to the countries they are fleeing from, where they often facing persecution and mistreatment because of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or because of their political opinion.

"Indonesia is currently granting asylum to 441 refugees and 1487 more applied for refugee status here recently most of them from conflict-ridden countries like Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Burma, Iraq and Somalia" states Nurul, National Protection Officer of UNHCR during the following presentation. Asylum seekers and refugees are housed in 18 different locations in Indonesia including hostels, camps and detention centres in Jakarta, Bogor, Aceh, Tanjung Pinang and Medan.

Following the questions and comments about the situation and conditions of refugees and asylum seekers one participant asked "What concrete steps can we take to help these people?". "There is a need for a common effort by governments, UN, NGO's and normal people to address the needs of these people fleeing their homes. By opening up and telling the stories of these people like just done in the film, we can encourage understanding, solidarity and support for asylum seekers to challenge their portrait in the media as 'illegals' trying to enter a country. That is a first



Yitra, Melani, Yanti and Aulia distribute JRS publications and material on refugees including brochures and books

step.” said Lars Information & Advocacy officer at JRS Indonesia.

As Christy, a refugee from the Chin minority from Burma, stated in the film: “I realised that being a refugee, we have lost our human and woman dignity”. “What do I want ... for refugee people? I would like to ask to let us stay ... in peace”. Enabling the refugees and asylum seekers to live a live in peace and dignity can only be realised through a common effort and via the practise of solidarity like we have seen in Acehese communities supporting Rohingya refugees after them being washed ashore in Sabang and East Aceh. As Fr Baskara the moderator of the event put it “our planet only knows one species that is willing to kill

other members of the same species forcing them to flee” but this species also has the ability to practice ‘solidarity’ and ‘humanism’. Or will we have to call it differently now?

On world refugee day, Fr. Adrianus Suyadi, Country Director of JRS Indonesia published an article in Kompas newspaper, entitled “Pengungsi yang dilupakan – The Forgotten Refugees” appealing to use the wide definition of de-facto refugees which also to includes Internally Displaced People in efforts to support refugees and people forced to flee their homes. Many of those people still have not found a ‘durable’ (sustainable) solution enabling them to live their lives in dignity and safety also here in Indonesia.

International Days

August

- 9 International Day of the World’s Indigenous People
- 12 International Youth Day
- 23 International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition

September

- 8 International Literacy Day
- 16 International Day for the Preservation of Ozone Layer
- 21 International Day of Peace

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