

# REFUGE

## Jesuit Refugee Service Indonesia

Accompany, Serve and Advocate the Cause of Forcibly Displaced People



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### Preface

*A disaster is not only the fatal impact of nature or other human beings on peoples lives, homes and means of living, for example through floods, landslides and violent conflict that forces people from their houses but also the helplessness in facing these challenges. Encouraging communities to recognise and analyse causes and ways to prevent disasters by enabling them to effectively do something about the devastating effects and by encouraging them to take an active role in disaster prevention the real disaster of passive acceptance can be tackled. It is this role that JRS is exploring in its South Aceh projects. With the hope to contribute to the global efforts to reduce the risks of disasters this issue of Refuge gives a glimpse into these efforts by telling stories about the achievements and the people involved not only to prevent future displacement but also to improve stability in their communities.*

### WHEN THE FLOOD CAME

*By: Ricka Fitriana*

"Be careful, Sister," said Abizah. Our feet flew over the broken asphalt road. Splashing water wetted our pants and skirts. We used taro leaves to cover our heads as umbrella so the wide leaves could protect us from the rain.

The young women wanted to meet in PKK (*Program Kesejahteraan Keluarga* - Family Welfare Program) office of

Simpang Dua Village, Central Kluet Sub-district, South Aceh District to discuss about disaster preparedness. However, Abizah and her friends cancelled the meeting eventually. "It's too far and it rains so hard," said Nurmala.

Eventually we agreed to gather at Abizah's house. Abizah is a primary school teacher and activist in her village.



She said that it had rained already for three days. "There will be a flood if it continues raining until tonight," said Abizah while pointing to the clock. According to her, if there would be a flood the alley where she lives would be the first area affected by it. Her house is located nearby the river far from the village's main road. This forced her family and neighbours in the past to leave their houses near the river and move to relatives' houses on higher ground. "We move our belongings first. If the water is getting higher then we start to move too," she said.

"Is that the only thing you can do?" I asked Abizah and other girls. The way they explained this it seemed like a routine for them every year during the rainy season floods would occur. No other thing was done except moving to relatives'. Like in many other communities in Indonesia the experience of floods reoccurring every year was considered a normal phenomenon, including the forced displacement to a safer place.

### DISASTER ANTICIPATION

When Jesuit Refugee Service conducted a training on disaster preparedness early last year the youth of Simpang Dua Village identified floods and landslides as threats for their village. According to Marina, a girl from Simpang Dua Village who attended this training, her village was regularly affected by those disasters. Marina said that farmland was separated since the establishment of gold mines in her and the neighbouring Simpang Tiga Village.

"The river was polluted due to mining activities. Landslides occurred around the mining area. Mining and heavy equipments did lower the ground level," said Marina.

Abizah confirmed Marina's statement. According to her, the people of Simpang Dua Village experienced more floods since one of gold mines started to operate in their village.

"A lot of deforestation happened when the company started to operate, affecting the upstream of the river. Deforestation probably still takes place up until now," Azizah added. Abizah, Marina, Nurmala and their friends planned to replant trees upstream. "Even though the company might oppose this," said Abizah.

### ANTICIPATION

After attending the training on environmental friendly agriculture conducted by JRS and Sun Spirit, Marina and her friends planned to conduct reforestation and invited the community to be more active in preventing disasters. She would also share the knowledge she gained from the training with the community.

"Floods happen every year. Assistance is still provided at present. Do we want to keep depending on this assistance? It's time to do something," said Marina.

Abizah and her village friends also invited their families to build a rice barn in anticipation of floods. "It requires adequate knowledge to realize this. When flood occur and no assistance is provided, there will be no food. A rice barn on save ground is needed. But also the rice fields, water and the surrounding environment should be healthy."

Besides food insecurity, youth groups plan community-organized evacuations in case of floods affecting more than only one family.



Discussion during Emergency Preparedness Training in Simpang Dua Village

## "MAM, WILL JRS COME TODAY?"



Students of Buloh Didi Primary School mapping potential threats for their village

By: Paulus Enggal

Mr Sibid (44) was busy pulling the chainsaw. As the engine started its noise broke the quietness of the morning. He chose a firm semegon tree and cut it with the chainsaw. After less than 10 minutes the old mighty tree fell on the land of Sekorong hill. Mr Sibid looked very satisfied. He imagined the money he would receive for it. This was not the first time for him to cut woods around his settlement. He forgot how many trees his chainsaw had cut already. Sekorong hill once a thick forest is now a bare hill with only dozens of semegon tree left waiting to be cut as well. All trees are gone for the money offered by the *toke panglong* (trader of a traditional timber mill).

This was not a story of a logger in Aceh nor a real story about the routine of illegal logging in the most western province of Indonesia. It was the content of a drama performed by teachers of Koto Indarung Primary School and Pulo Kambing Primary School during the training on Disaster Risk Reduction education for the School Community from 3-6 August 2009. "We suggested to use creative methods to deliver messages about disaster risk reduction to students, such as drama, games, puppetry, pantomime, songs, also involving references in the traditional culture such as *nasyeed* songs or folk tales," explained Elis (36), one of DRR training facilitators for the JRS school project. Training the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Education for the School Community consists of a series of School Project activities aiming to mainstream DRR and Peace Education in learning and teaching activities to create a culture of prevention at school. "To mainstream DRR and peace education in school we have to involve many parties such as principles, teachers, students, the school committee and the local government, here especially the education department and the department for religion," explained Enggal (34), advocacy staff for JRS

South Aceh School Project. Entis Sutisna (39) school project staff for Fun DRR activities also added that DRR and peace education at school should be made fun for students and teachers at the same time by using many methods, tools and interesting approaches. "JRS uses a mobile library, film screenings, games and puppet shows in Fun DRR activities to introduce peace values, morals and DRR principles to students," added the DRR training coordinator. So far JRS methods to introduce peace values and DRR principles were received well and are still remembered by teachers and students who actively participate in regular weekly activities at their schools.

"I'm happy with JRS's activities and like especially the drawing and film screenings," said Candra gunawan (11) a fifth grade student of Koto Indarung Primary School. According to him, he gained many new experiences and knowledge in JRS activities. "Now I know what to do when there is an earthquake or a flood. I also make peace with friends if something goes wrong," he added. Delima (11), another fifth grade student at the same school expressed her pleasure when she could play with JRS. "I'm happy since I feel secure to play with my friends. JRS staff is kind and willing to teach us about disasters and cooperation. It is fun," she said. Similar statements were made by the principals and teachers who actively join the JRS activities. "It is different now that JRS came to our school," explained Khairussaleh (49) the principal of Buloh Didi Primary School. According to him, the relationship between students and teachers were closer after JRS provided Living Values Training<sup>1</sup>. Teachers did not judge the students directly after they did a mistake. They tried to find the reason why the student did what they did. Probably they have problems with their parents, friends or other reasons. "Our students are getting spoiled from their female teachers. Not in a negative way.



Elis trained simulation on earthquake preparedness at Lawe Sawah Primary School.

They are more confident and able to express an opinion to their teachers," added the man who had taught for more than 20 years. Wasiatun (44) a teacher of Buluh Didi Primary School said that their knowledge increased after attending the JRS training and the following weekly visits. "We now know what to do when disasters such as floods, landslide and earthquake strike. We didn't know anything before," she stated during a session about teaching material on living values. According to her, students were also pleased with JRS's activities. "They often asked will JRS come today?" she added. Yasmalinda Ningsih, the principal of MIN Air Pinang was pleased to attend the training on DRR for schools acknowledging the importance of disaster education for students. "By recognizing the disasters and identifying their cause, we can practice to manage and to evacuate with students, this reduces the risks of disasters," she explained.

It seems absurd to know that many people who live in a disaster prone area still do not know the mechanisms needed to manage or reduce the risks of disasters. In fact, most of the Indonesian people do not know that geographically, sociologically and historically they live on a land that is prone to geological, volcanic and social disasters. These disasters even influenced our history and our perspective towards our environment. We should be aware of potential disasters, starting from our daily attitudes, knowledge, skills as well as government policies on development. We have to be prepared for natural changes and assess the social phenomena instead of becoming paranoid.

"In fact, students in the past had themselves developed mechanisms when a disaster took place. However, it wasn't systematic as it was only based on direct experiences," explained Entis Sutisna. For example the students of Koto Indarung had described their reaction when an earthquake occurred. "They directly ran to the school yard, found an open space and did not stand under big trees," he added further. On the basis of these experiences the students were asked to draw a map on threats and line out an evacuation route and then to conduct a simulation on disasters at school. Henri (12) a fifth grader of Alur Mas

Primary School seemed enjoying the map drawing with his group. "I like to draw with friends," he said while drawing with his crayon. "Now I know about disasters, where to run if something happens and am ready to help my friends who cannot run," he added. Mika Fitriana (10) and Baihaqi (10) both fourth grade students of Lawe Sawah Primary School enjoyed the simulation session on evacuation procedures during the earthquake at school. "I know how to get under the table and how to leave the class without objects falling on me," said Mika. "I'm happy to learn (how to evacuate) when earthquake occurs," said Baihaqi.

A reaction to a disaster builds community capacities preparing them for the event of a disaster. However, the mechanisms established based on direct experiences should be enhanced by a comprehensive and effective management and disaster risk reduction system. This includes assessing the meaning of these experiences and the enriching these with knowledge, skills and a new understanding about the importance of new ways of thinking and new attitudes within the community.

"Previously, when we talked about conflict, we only remembered about armed conflict," said Ridwan (41) a teacher of Koto Indarung Primary School. According to him, this the DRR training for school made him realise that conflict has many forms, for example in personal conflict or an inner conflict, interpersonal conflict or a conflict with the environment. "It is important for us to understand how to overcome conflict within ourselves and with others," explained Yushardi (15) a school supervisor of UPTD (*Unit Pelaksana Teknis Daerah* - Area Technical Executing Unit) of Tapaktuan. We often forget conflicts when we talk about disasters. It is easier for us to identify disasters with common natural phenomenon such as floods, landslides, earthquakes, tsunamis, etc. For Acehnese people, the topic on conflict could be sensitive due to the experiences during 32 years of armed conflict. Therefore, when we speak about disasters, people think that natural disasters were God's will. After the tsunami, for example many people in Aceh, an area with historically strong Islamic beliefs, thought this disaster was a punishment from God. Regards conflict it is similar, people lived so long with it during DOM (*Daerah Operasi Militer* - Military Operation Zone) or DM (*Darurat Militer* - Military Emergency). This mind set becomes a challenge when we talk about DRR since faith refers to something transcendent beyond human influence, this makes people tend to "receive" natural disasters as a given thing. Similar thoughts we encounter in peace education as people still refer conflict to the past experiences of armed conflict. "They (the military and the Free Aceh Movement) should be given peace education since they were the ones who created conflict, not us," suggests one community leader. Participants can only be invited to see conflict from a different perspective for example during the training on Disaster Risk Reduction Education for Schools. "Now we recognize that conflict is something that exists quite naturally and it can be positive when it is managed well, said Marwati, the principal of Ie Mirah Primary School.

The aim of disaster risk reduction activities in school is to enhance knowledge, skills and attitudes that care about the natural and social environment. To become more sen-

<sup>1</sup> Living Values Education Program (LVEP) is a comprehensive values education program. It is an experimental and interactive program designed to provide participants with skills, knowledge and tools aiding to create a values based atmosphere through living values activities.

sitive towards ones environment is a very important step for all efforts towards prevention and disaster risk reduction. "Disaster risk reduction at school is a very important effort since almost all schools in South Aceh are located in areas prone to natural and social disasters. We hope that JRS can expand this attention to other schools not included in the South Aceh program," explained Dahri (55) school supervisor of UPTD of Tapaktuan. It fosters a safe and pleasant school environment where students and teachers meet,

share and learn in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

"What JRS do in South Aceh is supporting the vision and mission of the education department, namely towards healthy schools<sup>2</sup>," explained Kasman, the secretary of the education department of South Aceh in his speech on the opening of the training on Living Values Education in Learning & Teaching Activities at School from 29 June to 2 July 2009. "JRS's role is to create a healthy environment and healthy teaching activities at school," he added further.

## ARYA, THE INITIATOR FROM LAWE SAWAH



Muhammad Arya teaching a group of women in how to cultivate chilli

*By: Mustika Yundari*

Life holds a potential meaning under any conditions, even the most miserable ones (Viktor E Frankl).

Thursday, 2 July 2009, a short message appeared on my cellphone. "How are you, Miss? Please send my message to Mr Doni. I will go to Banda Aceh." I then replied, "I'm fine, how about you? How long will you be in Banda Aceh? What activity will you have there?" He replied, "Insya Allah (God willing), I'm also fine, Miss. I'll be there to attend three days of village training." These short messages were from Muhamad Arya (36), a farmer and also the head of Teladan Hamlet, Lawe Sawah Village. He thought that it was necessary for him to inform JRS Community Project Coordinator that he would attend the training in the capital of Aceh Province. Mr Arya was one among five other heads of hamlets in Lawe Sawah. He was the most active and enthusiastic when talking about the progress of his village, including the disaster risk reduction program.

Mr Arya is a thin and tall man with dark skin, sharp eyes, haggard cheeks and firm jaw – he has the characteristics of a hardworker. Mr Arya was not one of JRS's direct

beneficiaries. However, he is one of the village leaders who showed commitment to JRS's program. He was also a key person in Lawe Sawah Village supporting naturally and voluntarily JRS assistance process over almost one year.

During the Organic Farming Training on mid June 2009 for 70s farmers from 13 JRS assisted villages in Lawe Sawah Village, all participants slept on tarpaulin instead of mattresses provided in huts with sago palm roofs. When I asked one of the committee members, "Why do they sleep in tents?". Mr Arya answered "If you want to sleep well on mattress, you have to be a civil servant. If you want to be a farmer, you have to bear the pain,".

According to the training committee, "training conducted by JRS was very useful for community since farmers so far did not recognize their village's potential to develop organic farming. The government has made a fool of communities by forcing them to use chemical fertilizer from factories" he said.

Mr Arya is respected by youth, village leaders and religious leaders.

"Why do you bother about helping JRS eventhough you did not receive anything?" I asked him once. "I want the people and the village to develop because we are fools. So far we live in foolishness. I want my village to be developed and I will do anything to make that happen. Do you know when the first time Mr Doni and his friends entered my village (to conduct an assessment), I voluntarily left my farm and assisted Mr Doni because I knew that my village would benefit from it," he answered.

During one year experience with Mr Arya, he never complained nor refused a request from the JRS team for example in assisting in the mobilization of a group of vulnerable people. One day, this group, consisting of widows and elderly had difficulties in opening 600 meter square farm due

<sup>2</sup> Healthy School is a vision of the education department of South Aceh towards an ideal school including healthy learning-teaching activities, a healthy administration and a healthy environment.

to their physical condition. Mr Arya voluntarily mobilized the youth in four hamlets to assist the group. Also when the group of vulnerable people started its breeding project, it was Mr Arya, who mobilized the people to help building a shed.

On a certain day, youth, religious leaders, custom leaders, village leaders and women gathered on three points at fields in Matsisir Hamlet, Semegon Hamlet and Tapak Aulia Hamlet. An estimated 100 person were involved in clearing the land. Lunch and snack were provided instead of compensation fees.

At the beginning of the program Mr Arya and Mr Indra held a meeting in their village. At first, people were not willing to help without being paid compensation fees. "What did you do when they were not willing to work voluntarily?" I asked curiously. Mr Arya explained his secret, when gathering people from the five hamlets, "I asked them, if they had school children who did not want to study but only asked for money. Do you still want your children to act like this?" The people said, "No." Mr Arya then responded, "If you don't want your children to keep on asking for money, let's learn together."

The question asked by Mr Arya to the people stayed with me for some time. Mr Arya compared the group of vulnerable people with children who needed to learn while the community was a group of adults who were capable to assist them. Finally they were willing to work without being given any money.

After more than one year accompaniment of the vulnerable group in Lawe Sawah Village, the impression emerged that the community was often held a fool by other parties not seldom to take advantage of them. For example the

usage of chemical substances. Our assisted group admitted that they were "spoiled" by the chemical substances like fertilizer and pesticides due to its instant process. For example the usage of "roundup" that exterminated grass would lead to a poor quality of crop. Local seeds replaced by hybrid seeds became a huge expense for the people having to buy the seeds and chemicals.

Farmers made a good profit before hybrid seeds and chemicals substance were promoted by the government since their soil were very fertile they had good quality crop. They did not need to buy chemical fertilizer. But at present, crop failures become a threat when the fields get no chemical fertilizer or pesticides. Therefore, Mr Arya and other farmers agreed to clear the field with plow instead of herbicides when JRS responded with its community income generating project introducing corn cultivation. 70 hectares of field were cultivated with corn. Again, Mr Arya was the driving force.

According to Muhamad Arya and the planning group of Lawe Sawah Village, pest and crop failure were the main threats to the village. As one of the recommendations from the six day training on DRR (Disaster Risk Reduction) their village plan suggested that those threats could be a disaster without preventative collective management.

Mr Arya is the first person I call everytime I plan to hold a meeting with the group of vulnerable villagers. I always ask him to gather the group at his house or garden, the place where we usually gather. It will be people like Mr Arya that will guaranty the sustainability of JRS program in South Aceh and it is people like him that make JRS work a pleasure.

### JRS Indonesia Events

JRS will screen four films on Refugee, Landmine and Cluster Munition issues in Taman Budaya, Yogyakarta:

#### 12 November 2009

**4PM** "DISARM" - About the problems arising through the use of land mines. Discussion and launching of Landmine Monitor Report 2009.

**7PM** "Unacceptable Harm" - On the Humanitarian impact of the use of Cluster Munitions.

#### 14 November 2009

**4PM** "A Well Founded Fear" - New documentary following the destiny of rejected asylum seekers

**7PM** "Hope" - A film about Amal, an Iraqi woman that survived the sinking of Siev X - 353 people drowned on their way to asylum in Australia.

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