

REFUGE

Jesuit Refugee Service Indonesia

Accompany, serve and advocate the cause of forcibly displaced people



Photo: Oliver

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Survivors and Campaigners Ask the USA to Join the Mine Ban Treaty without Delay

By: Lars Stenger



Song Kosal, ICBL Youth Ambassador, Cambodia:

Even though I am grown up, I often cry after waking up from a dream of having two legs, running and playing happily in the field with my friends. I know for me it is just a dream but I want this dream to be a true one for others, especially for children living in mine-affected countries like Cambodia.

So the US I beg you, you are a great people and you can help me as a landmine survivor to make a dream come true: to save the lives and limbs of others by joining the Mine Ban Treaty. We need you to help us to PUSH for PROGRESS, so that we can all make a better world for our brothers and sisters. Thank you so much for all you do in clearing mines and helping victims.

Do one more thing: STOP MINES EVER BEING PRODUCED OR USED AGAIN!

I met Song Kosal on several occasions. Her calm but persistent struggle for a world free of landmines inspires me to speak to representatives of governments from different parts of the world and ask them to join the Mine Ban Treaty and contribute to a world free of antipersonnel landmines that have destroyed so many people's lives and dreams.

What are these landmines? Explosives put into the ground waiting over years and decades to indiscriminately take the limbs or life of whoever walks over it, be they a soldier, farmer, woman or child. One step in a contaminated area can trigger the explosion and live changes forever.

On the 4 April 2011, the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action I met with Ted Lyng, Political Counselor at the Embassy of the USA in Jakarta Indonesia to speak about the USA policy on antipersonnel landmines. The U.S. announced a review of its policy on landmines in December 2009, but no final decision on a change of its policy has been made yet. Consequently, in 2010 and 2011, survivors, their friends and campaigners in 60 countries all around the world approached the re-

PUSH for **PROGRESS**

**Mine Ban Treaty 11MSP
Phnom Penh, Cambodia
28 November - 2 December 2011**

representative of the USA embassy in their country to remind them that the world is waiting for the USA - one of the last 37 nations that have not yet joined the Mine Ban Treaty (MBT) - to do so without delay.

In the meeting with Mr Ted Lyng we spoke about the horrendous impact of landmines in countries like Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and Laos. The USA is in compliance with many key provisions of the treaty since years. Joining the treaty would put the US in a strong principled position and would increase the pressure on the few other states that remain outside and often use the USA's position for not joining. After sharing key reasons why the USA should join the MBT Mr Ted Lyng promised to report back to Washington DC about our meeting and stated he will be sharing any feedback or news that he receives from his government.

JRS has been campaigning against landmines since 1990 and was one of the founding organizations of the Thailand, Cambodian and Indonesian Campaign to Ban Landmines. It is one of 350 civil society organizations in 90 countries that form the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL). In 1997 ICBL won the Nobel Peace Prize. Tun Channareth ICBL Ambassador and campaigner for the ban of landmines and cluster munitions from JRS Cambodia accepted the award on behalf of the ICBL.



Song Kosal, Miss Landmine Cambodia 2009. Photo by Mary Wareham

If you or your organization is interested in becoming part of the Indonesian Campaign to Ban Landmines and Cluster Munitions Campaign, please contact: infoadvo@jrs.or.id.

For more information please visit:

- www.antiranjadarat.or.id
- www.icbl.org
- www.stopclustermunitions.org

Aerobics is Making Life Brighter

By: Mangatas Alexander Gultom

Introduction

Aerobics is a kind of exercise with music: it is quite rhythmic and is almost like dancing. The difference is that the moves we use in aerobics are more about health, not esthetics, like the movements in dancing. The aim of aerobics is to improve our health by strengthening the body, heart and lungs. Doing aerobics regularly can help you to stay young. Aerobics can be done by anyone: men or women. The movements involved in aerobics can be divided into three parts: warm up, main activity and cooling down.¹

The Beginning

Aerobics can be seen every Friday in front of many government offices. But it is not the same for the staff at Immigration Detention Centres (IDC). Even though the weekly exercise was made official policy by the Minister of Law and Human Rights, Mr Hamid Awaludin, in 2005, but the idea of providing aerobics classes in an immigration detention centre is still a new concept. Starting from discussion between JRS and IDC staff on possible activities in the center. We thought that activities had to be enjoy-

¹ <http://www.anneahira.com/gerakan-senam-aerobik.htm>



able, include lots of people, could be done regularly but inexpensively, and had to have a direct benefit to all those involved. Eventually, we reached an agreement: every Friday JRS staff, immigration staff and other groups working would gather together for an aerobics class. JRS would be responsible for providing the instructors and the IDC would provide the space. After about a month of aerobics classes attendance of IDC staff decreased and JRS suggested that the detainees also be given the opportunity to join the aerobics classes. This suggestion was accepted by the head of the detention centre and the detainees welcomed the opportunity enthusiastically.

Happier and Healthier

The aerobics classes have become an activity that is reliable, fun and healthy for everyone. One detainee said in broken English, "After we were given aerobics classes, fewer people are going to the doctor every week." Another detainee said, "Thank you JRS and IDC for giving us the opportunity to do these aerobics classes. Aerobics is helping us to maintain our physical health, as well as our mental health while waiting without knowing for how long we might have to live in detention." Another detainee added, "During the aerobics classes we can shout as loud as we like. After shouting like this we feel less depressed and stressed. And our bodies become healthier." This has also been an interesting experience for the instructors, Vita and Monita, "At first we felt awkward, nervous and wary of being stared at by all these men from other countries who we didn't know at all. So in the beginning we would rush home straight after finishing the class. We were a bit

scared, but also felt sorry for the detainees." For the instructors, coming into contact with the detainees was a completely new experience. They had never heard about refugees and asylum seekers before. In order to overcome this, we gave them as much information as possible and conducted weekly evaluations about their experiences and observations about the detainees. After a while the instructors said, "After getting all the information from Silvester about JRS and the detainees, we slowly began to understand their situation. After getting to know them better, and communicating with them, we even started to hear their life stories, although sometimes we had to communicate with sign language. We're happy to be able to give aerobics classes in the detention centre. Seeing the situation they are in, we have become more motivated to come up with creative ideas for the classes, so they are not bored and it fits their abilities and the conditions in the detention centre."

Conclusion

Naturally, there have been challenges in communicating with the refugees and asylum seekers in the Immigration Detention Centre. But people are still people, and we all have the ability to treat others with respect, empathy and give them hope in an uncertain situation. The aerobics classes have served as an opportunity for detainees and all the other IDC stakeholders to develop their understanding of each other. It is an expression of concern for ones health and for each other. Being able to live a healthy life is a basic right for all people, including refugees and asylum seekers in detention.

Ten Years of Service

By: Yohanes Demu



It all started from my *angkot* (public van) frequently hired by a group of priests and nuns who happened to stay in my uncle's house in Atambua. They hired me to drive them to do some assessments. One day in November, one of the priests named Fr Edy (deputy project director of JRS West Timor then) asked me, "Dare you to enter East Timor using this *angkot*?" Since then I have been involved in Jesuit Refugee Service's work in West Timor.

It was the East Timor post-referendum period when pro-integration and pro-independence groups, as well as neutral settlers were forced to escape into a safer zone. Day by day the numbers of refugees came by land, sea or on planes. The highest number of refugees came over land via the main gate of Batu Gede in Timor Leste to Mota Ain in Indonesia. They were harbored in bordering areas and some of them were sheltered in Kupang, the capital city of Nusa Tenggara Timur Province.

This wave of refugees started to decrease when troops from Australia closed all borders and controlled the security of East Timor. The largest impact from this closure was the disruption of information between Timor Leste refugees in West Timor and their countrymen in East Timor. I admit I got goose bumps when I saw lines of tanks and armored vehicles at the border. However, it turned out that I actually had to frequently pass them to carry out our task with other JRS team members.

JRS then initiated a program to enable the separated parties to exchange information by becoming information messenger between them. The information was exchanged through letters, photographs, and voice records. This activity seems very trivial and simple, but in fact was very useful

for them stay informed about the situation. This small simple program turned out to bear fruitful results because it aroused their longing to return to their homeland. I witnessed how they were emotionally touched when they received mails or recorded voice messages from East Timor.

There is an activity called *Jumpa Kangen* (longing to meet) or reunification which was facilitated by UNHCR in the Free Zone area between Batu Gede and Mota Ain. This activity enabled separated families to see each other again even though just briefly. Some of these *Jumpa Kangen* were followed up with reconciliation meetings and reciprocal vi-sits by both delegates of refugees and their countrymen

and women from East Timor. This finally initiated a repatriation process that JRS was actively involved in. There is one unique fact about JRS. JRS was the only organization which had direct access to the camp while other institutions always received threats from the militias. In my opinion, this is the strength of JRS, always supporting the poor and simple in its works.

I had never left my hometown before, but one day I decided to go to the other end of Indonesia, namely North Sumatera and Aceh. Aceh was at the highest tensions due to the presidential decree establishing this territory as a Military Operations Area. So, I moved from one conflict area to another conflict area. In early 2002 I moved from JRS West Timor to JRS Medan, which covered Aceh and North Sumatera projects. Here too, JRS gained the trust from people displaced in Langkat, most of them Muslim Javanese. JRS even helped relocate those who no longer wanted to return to Aceh. I participated in clearing up the wood, cutting down the trees, and building houses, while fighting ferociously against forest mosquitoes. An experience I had never imagined before.

I continued to work with JRS although the work is slightly different now from the time when I first joined, including the work for the earthquake and tsunami survivors in 2004. For me, there is one thing that has never changed, something that keeps me here after a decade, namely the family bond between us. Everyone is present here. I myself have never felt restricted, and JRS has never betrayed its mission and vision. I think it would be hard to find this dynamic in other places. JRS is unique to me.

Regional Workshop in Yogyakarta

By: Lars Stenger

Staff from three different JRS offices in the Asia Pacific region gathered for a four day workshop in Yogyakarta from the 14th to 18th March 2011 to share their experiences and knowledge of working in immigration detention centers. JRS works in detention centers in Thailand, Australia and more recently in Indonesia.



Photo by Oliver

JRS programs differ from country to country. Services include legal, health, psychosocial support, pastoral care and regular visits to those detained. JRS Indonesia is thankful to its colleagues from other countries for sharing their knowledge and expertise on detention issues and on how to find and support alternative accommodation for asylum seekers and refugees, in particular vulnerable groups, including children, women at risk, the elderly, torture and trauma survivors, the disabled and individuals with physical and mental illnesses.

Sharing JRS Experience in Disaster Responds with Interfidei

By: Lars Stenger

On 16 April 2011 about 30 members of the Institute for Inter-Faith Dialogue in Indonesia (Interfidei) visited the JRS Yogyakarta office to learn about JRS Indonesia's experiences and methods in responding to natural disasters. Students and lecturers were interested in hearing about international standards and best practices that JRS perceives as relevant when serving people displaced by natural disasters such as the recent eruption of the Mt. Merapi volcano.



Photo by Jayni

INTERNATIONAL DAYS

June

- 4 June International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression
- World Health Day
- 20 June World Refugee Day

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