

# REFUGE

Jesuit Refugee Service Indonesia

Accompany, serve and advocate the cause of forcibly displaced people



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# Displacement Prevention and Response Programme

By: Toto Yulianto, SJ

## The Ideal

In the beginning there was an idea during the JRS Strategic Planning meeting in 2007. The background to this idea was acknowledging the need to develop the capacity within communities to use past experiences to manage future threats and risks of social conflict and natural disasters.

More specifically, this idea was to become a program with the general aim of “strengthening capacity in managing conflict and risk of natural disaster through the mechanism of disaster risk reduction, integrated in education and village planning, as well as the ability to put that plan into action, with a target community which is at risk of displacement in the future due to complex root problems which have not been addressed by the community itself or by other stakeholders”. In order to achieve this general aim, three projects were developed, namely the Community Project, Youth Project and School Project. The Community Project was aimed at capacity building in village authorities with the core project of Village Planning from a Disaster Risk Reduction perspective as well as Conflict Management. The core of the Youth Project was Organisational Management and Conflict Management through mainstreaming positive behaviour. Meanwhile, the School Project was based on Living Values Education to promote understanding of values among students, parents, teachers, and school superintendents, up to staff in the Department of Education.

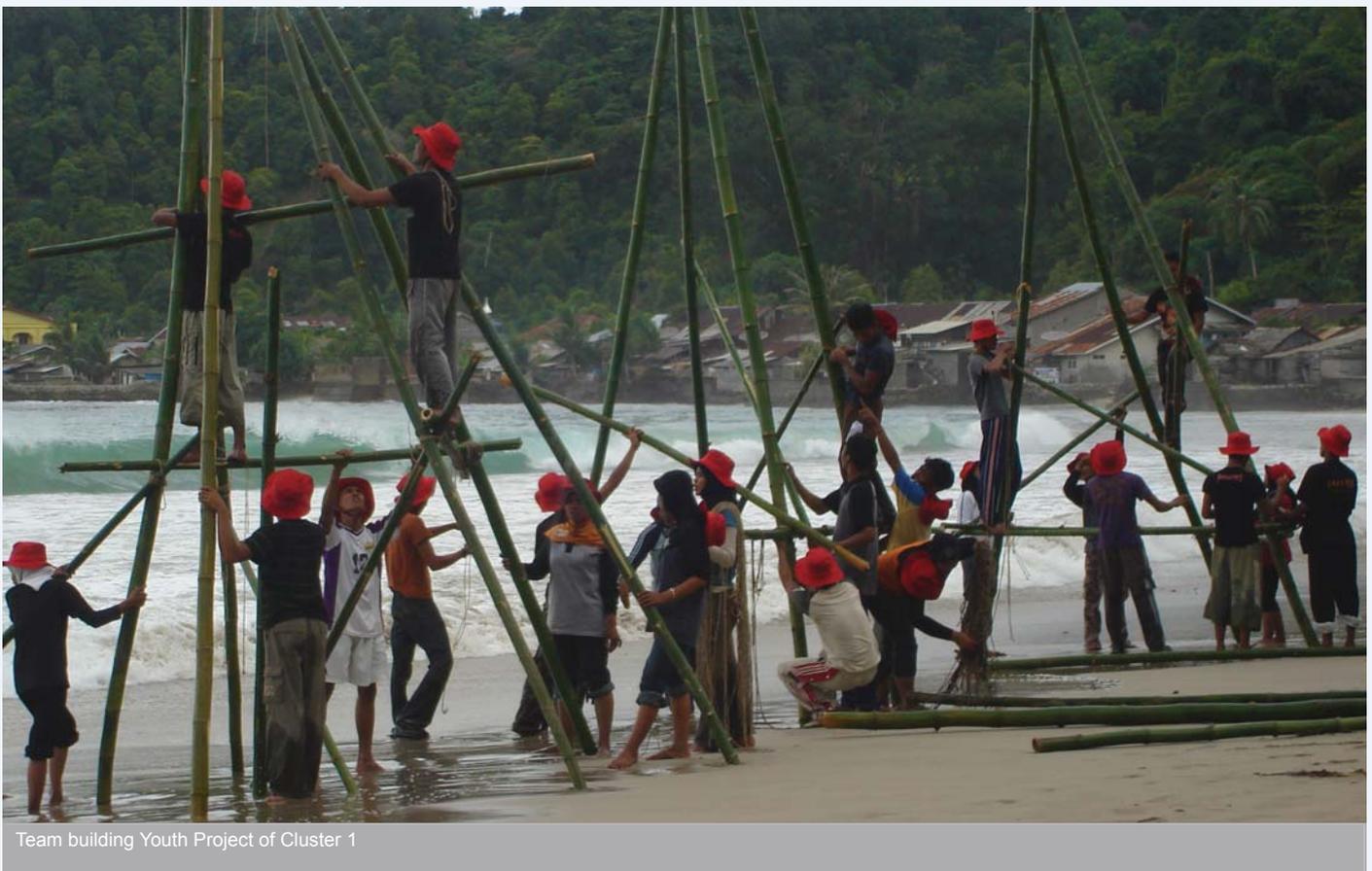
## The Reality

The Displacement Prevention and Response Program was carried out in South Aceh after a needs assessment found that

communities in the Kluet region were still vulnerable to forced displacement. Firstly, this region had previously experienced violent conflict, which led to evacuation. Secondly, the danger and frequency of natural disasters, especially floods, was increasing. Another reason for choosing the Kluet region was that although these areas have the potential to be economically independent, they are still experiencing poverty due to a lack of basic goods, infrastructure and land rehabilitation. Logging and mining for iron took also place in the area. Years of armed conflict and structural changes in society have contributed to the weakening of traditions and customary law locally known as *Rantuk Ratus* as they could not provide the answers to emerging socio-political problems. The vulnerabilities discussed above pointed to the potential for displacement in the future. And so JRS was called to accompany, serve and advocate by strengthening the capacity of the community in South Aceh.

## Measuring success, between the ideal and the reality

There are many ways to measure success, but none of them can be separated from quantitative and qualitative dimensions. Quantitatively one could think the program has failed if we only look at the fact that during three years JRS only accompanied 15 villages out of the 25 villages that were planned. However, if we look at it from a qualitative point of view then we can say that the program succeeded in achieving the general goals set out at the beginning. We leave communities including youth and schools with an improved capacity to manage conflicts. Villages now have the organisational structures needed for effective village planning and value their children’s education.



Team building Youth Project of Cluster 1

So, did JRS bring something new to the communities in South Aceh? The answer will have to be “no”. All activities, including training in Participative Rural Appraisal, Disaster Risk Reduction, Conflict Management, Village Planning, Emergency Preparedness Systems, Organisational Management, Skills Training, Living Values Education and Class Management, could all build on past practices and experiences of the communities. Before the armed conflict the communities had mechanisms for solving conflicts between individuals in the village peacefully, disaster preparedness mechanisms existed, so did teaching methods, traditional youth organisations, and regulations on how to use the natural resources in each village. JRS’s contribution could be described as a process of re-encountering. Encounters started from JRS personnel meeting the community and facilitating those members of the community to come together in activities. This process of encountering united the communities and helped to re-discover past practices that had been forgotten or lost.

**Time to step back**

Saying “hello” is easier than saying “goodbye”. This is what we feel as we come to the end of the Displacement Prevention and Response Program. The communities we accompanied were more than just people we served but became teachers to JRS too by sharing their experiences, thoughts and traditions with us. During these three years we have been given the chance to see and hear and being heard, to experiment, improvise, and work to make a contribution to social change for the better. In other words, one idea gave rise to a coming together, and that coming together gave rise to a hope. This hope together with all the experiences shared I believe leaves strengthened communities better able to face challenges ahead.



United before a game at the peace Sport Festival between villages in South Aceh

## They are More Optimist and Have Self Confidence

By: Daryadi Achmadi

*“Now we feel more confident to speak in government offices, both sub-district and district, which is different from before JRS came. Back then, even to meet with the sub-district administration it was hard to express ourselves.” (Bustan, the secretary for Pantan Luas Village)*

Expression of optimism and self confidence as well as a braver attitude, particularly from the village authorities were often heard at the end of the JRS program in South Aceh. These attitudes were part of a long encounter and accompaniment between JRS and the community.

In some meetings, people admitted this is the first time an organization has tried to teach the community, particularly the village leaders, to speak directly with the government in order to propose development plans for the village. This effort was organized in a Strategic Planning for Village Development from Disaster Risk Reduction Perspective.

On other occasion community expressed thanks since at least their village is safe from the threat of disasters. Capacity building, through increasing knowledge of disasters and other things has opened their eyes to the importance of communicating with the government, based on the desire to build up their village in accordance with existing conditions.

Encounter, discussion and communication in its various forms among village authorities, community representatives and government finally opened the awareness that village development cannot be separated from one another. Everything unites in a joint action towards the well being.

The commitment to development is not only owned by village authorities or government official but also owned by all community members. The key lies in the open communication between communities and government.



Hearing session about Village Planning on Sub-district level

# JRS' View on Empowerment

By: Didik Dwi Budi Saputro



Youth Group rebuilding their 'Rangkang' (cultural center for the village youth)

Witnessing displacement as a result of transformations, Pedro Arrupe once stated, "...Struck and shocked by the plight of thousands of boat people and refugees, I felt it my duty to send cable messages to some 20 Major Superiors around the world. Sharing my distress with them, I asked what they in their countries and the universal Society could do to bring at least some relief to such a tragic situation..." (Everybody's Challenge).

That brief reflection cited above was formulated into three words: to accompany, serve and advocate. These three words have become the ground of JRS' actions and missions to "be with" or "doing something with" rather than "doing something for" displaced people.

Every individual who are involved with JRS are always expected to live, share and befriend the people within our reach. Then, we would be able to get experiences and an empathy of the importance to fight for the people we serve.

So how can this be implemented in the field? How far would a personal relation be maintained? Should we answer all complains and demands of the refugee? How should we react to questions arising which are related to our private lives?

Such questions are not avoidable sometimes and it happened in the field. There is no specific answer. However, from empower-

ment point of view, questions related to privacy would facilitate in creating an equal position between JRS and the people in JRS' reach. Both sides are people with pride and ability to solve problems. In such an equal position, JRS staff position themselves "to be among" the people, to listen to their problems, to share information and to invite them to come up with ideas to solve the problems, to gain more understanding or to encourage them to voice for their needs.

During three years of service in Tapaktuan, there are a few good results but at least we heard Samsul Bahri said, "Like a blindman and a crippled man, now we can stand and walk by ourselves. We know the way, we know what is a stone and what is a beautiful flower to pick. JRS has shown us which way to go and which rules are good to build our community."

Empowerment, is a continuous process. Resilience is shown in distressing situations. JRS is only befriending and distributing resources which are lacking but the main actors are the people themselves. We realized that the displacement prevention program is just the first step of a continuous transformation until the people gaining a fighting spirit and endurance to improve their lives. Therefore, if the question arises, "What is JRS plan for the future?" - We answer "We plan to leave. Leave you empowered."

# Living Values Education at Alur Mas State Primary School

By: Paulus Enggal Sulaksono

*“Living Values Education is not just an asset to peace education, but is also a medium for instilling positive values in teachers and students alike so that the school can become a place that is safe and enjoyable for everyone.”*

Alur Mas State Primary School, located at the village of Alur Mas in North Kluet Sub-district, South Aceh District was selected as JRS assisted school since this village experienced 32 years of conflict. This conflict, which reached a peak with the introduction of Martial Law in 2003, impacted on all aspects of community life, including schools. The school building was burnt, teachers were threatened, classes often had to be stopped because of gunfire, and there were behavioural issues due to students being so exposed to violence.

The School Project as one part of displacement prevention and response program tried to answer the challenge by promoting peace education through Living Values Education and by increasing teachers’ ability to implement Living Values Education principles in the teaching and learning process. Bearing in mind that knowledge, skills, attitudes and behavior learnt at a young age are more likely to endure.

The school community at Alur Mas State Primary School is the example of how a values-based atmosphere was developed at school. The existence of harmonious relationships between different groups in the school (the principal, teachers, students, school committee, and the local community) is one of the visible characteristics of a values-based school. The will of wanting to improve become a struggle, setting the examples for others to



Teachers and students make a school garden

follow. If people see others making positive changes, they are encouraged to change themselves.

In a post-conflict context such as at Alur Mas State Primary School, Living Values Education can contribute to the development of a values-based environment where children’s needs are met, free from the fear and traumatic experiences that characterized the years of conflict. In the end, the creation of a safe and enjoyable school environment realized due to a joint effort from both communities and government.



# Earthquake

By: Yusup Windiarto

Oh! Earthquake  
You are a threat  
You came unexpectedly, at a time when I was happy  
Shuddering  
Shaking  
Body and soul

The people ran to safety  
You could call the seas to rise  
You are the face of disaster in our homeland  
When you snatch away wealth and lives  
And our tears, in the end, are powerless

Truly  
You don't know the moment  
The moment I am praying  
The moment I am resting  
The moment I am studying, with complete concentration  
He doesn't know one moment from another

Oh! Humankind,  
You and I are not strong enough to defeat it  
Learn to be wise and prepared  
To lessen the number of victims  
Let us learn straight away  
Where we can find a safe place  
To save ourselves too

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## A Compilation of Reflections among JRS Tapaktuan Staff

By: Toto Yulianto, SJ

Reading the monthly reports of the three JRS projects in Tapaktuan, I find a lot of interesting thoughts I would like to share. They are not building a comprehensive report; but are rather fractions of reflections from a life of service and accompaniment.

Having been involved in a number of activities assisting communities, I remember the gestures of friendship that developed with the communities. This was not just the usual relationship between those providing and receiving care, but an equal friendship among equal human beings, who walk a length together on their way of life.

When I was talking with members of the community we planned to assist, I encountered hopes, acceptance and refusals. It was not only when I sat down with them over a glass of coffee, I noticed sharing coffee was more than an invitation to knowing each other better but also sharing something more essential of life.

I went back to my office and soon stared at the laptop monitor to start writing the report about our activities that day, when suddenly I received an invitation for a discussion via email. Again, I was amazed, and my lips formed a smile.

Without noticing it three years had gone by and the JRS program was about to finish. In what seemed some times like an endless thinking and rethinking, I went back again through those questions from an initial report on how to best address the needs of the community. After long considering I found that all those questions could be summed up by only two: Is JRS part of the assisted community? or Is the assisted community part of JRS?

Just before we left Tapaktuan, I found some silence after long hours of accompaniment and discussions and this moment was just like witnessing one of the most beautiful sunsets. Even if it seemed the sun set behind a grey sky it couldn't stop me from enjoying this feeling, because under the shadow of the clouds we could find fragments of life that would go on and on ...

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