

CAN COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE BE PREVENTED?

October Report 2009

Java: The training project for the employees of four different youth centers is well under way. It was in the foreground of this visit to Indonesia. Margret and Yusti met in Jakarta to present our training proposal to the director of all Indonesian prisons formally, in an official visit. Our presentation included the criteria for selecting prison employees to participate in the program, the training schedule and the outline of the program's content. The purpose was to gain permission to bring our training into the three institutions on the island of Java. The director said he would issue an official invitation letter to each institution and suggested we include the Bali juvenile detention center in our training, which we agreed to do.

September 30 – October 5: Yusti and Margret left at 4:30 AM for our meeting in Jakarta. At 6:30 AM we drove to Tangerang, an institution with an open feeling that has many programs, and were received by the director. He introduced us to ten people, pre-selected according to our criteria for participation. We screened all and invited five, three women and two men. After distributing our instruction manual and DVD to all the employees, we left to find a home for homeless children that also houses some law offenders that someone had told us about and after a thorough search through various small streets in Jakarta and numerous phone calls we were successful. This shelter serves as a home in which these children may remain up to age eighteen. We were especially interested in the reactions the children encountered in the neighborhood.

A late evening flight took us to Jogjakarta. From there we took a two hour early morning drive to Kujuarjo institution. Even though both the general director and we, ourselves, had arranged our visit, it took quite some time to go through all the procedures to meet the director, who had just been transferred from an adult prison to this institution. After several hours of conversation he relaxed somewhat and we began our screening process with the employees.

We then asked to see the institution, an old prison fort, built by the Dutch in 1785, with cave-like rooms, no windows, surrounding a very small courtyard, without any green plants or sports facility. The ninety youths looked quite depressed in their gray, adult prison uniforms (in none of the other institutions do the children wear uniforms). We were deeply shocked at the conditions. We left our manuals and DVDs with the Director's Office to be distributed to all the employees.

From there we took the eight hour drive to Blitar, arriving late at night. In our early morning visit we found a welcoming director as well as a group of fifteen awaiting our screening process impatiently. We tended invitations to seven people. One of our challenges was the lack of female applicants. The women were mothers who felt they could not leave their children for the time it would take to do the training. We returned to Surabaya, a five hour drive, and Margret then returned to Bali.

In Bali, Margret visited the Karangasem youth re-socialization institution, located in Amlapura on the east coast of Bali, a three hour drive from Ubud. She was received in an open and friendly atmosphere by the director, who had lined up possible participants for screening. After talking with the candidates she was taken on a tour of the facility. The building, where twenty-five youths are now staying, has a capacity of thirty-five. It is located right next to a longterm maximum security prison for adults. The facility is large and has many green spaces within its walls. It lacks a school, since there are not enough participants for it to qualify for one. She left the manuals and DVDs to be given to the employees of the institution.

The first of the three day seminars will take place in Trawas Java. It will be a cooperative venture of the University of Ubaya, KNH Germany and PPPI Switzerland.

Jiwa Damai Bali, agro permaculture and retreat center. It is the middle of the Balinese holidays, Galungan. Most of the team is busy preparing decorations and offerings to the gods. Other work will just not be done for the next week or so. In addition, the grandmothers of two of our team died a few days ago and cremation requires at least five days of preparation. All these ceremonies take priority in Balinese life and everything else, including the workplace, comes to a halt.

Three additional rooms are being rebuilt and we hope that we will soon have enough of a demand for retreats and group workshops to enable the center to become self-supporting. It is truly an extraordinary place, blessed with five springs.

Some windows were broken in the recent earthquake. Also, the biological septic tank, consisting of six parts, was damaged and needs to be dug out in order to be repaired.

Lagu Damai Foundation: Our students, high school and university, are preparing for exams. Presently we are running two educational programs in two villages, encouraging residents not to burn or bury plastic but to bring it to a designated location for collection. We are carrying out this effort in each household as well as in the local schools. Unfortunately, Bali does not have a recycling plant, so we are looking into various possibilities for recycling in order to reduce the huge amount of plastic on this island.

Thank you for your continued support,

Margret Rueffler