

Can collective violence be prevented?

Project report April 2006

BANDA ACEH, SUMATRA: The visit to Banda Aceh was a whirlwind of activity. I was accompanied by my colleague Tiwi and two students of Surabaya University from Java. They represented the students organization which had helped to collect money for the brick factory we sponsor. The factory is already producing bricks and the first two loads, burned in the new kiln were already sold at a profit. We discussed the accounts, expenses and profits with the participants of the brick group and how the donated money was used as well how to improve the quality of the bricks. Presently, the earnings from the brick factory are feeding 47 people directly and indirectly. We also considered possibilities for spreading this income to benefit more people, including the proposal that part of the profit should be used to sponsor people not connected to the group. Among the suggestions now under consideration are providing school fee support for children whose parents vanished in the tsunami, and supporting other people in building their own small businesses.

WOMEN EMPOWERING WOMEN: our women's group in Lampseung shared with us their experiences of the projects which were initiated during our last visit (enlarging the sewing shop, the kiosk and the gasoline drum business)..Several women have already shown a profit. We added more money to each project to increase the capital and gain better profits. We invited the women to reflect how others outside of this initial group could benefit from our support as well -- how they could pass on the gift they had received. The purpose of these small business projects is to empower the women, stimulate creativity, leading to increased self-esteem and gaining financial independence.

We suggested to the second women's group the possibility of keeping the money to be disbursed in a common pot, a bank so to speak, to which each participant would add an additional small amount. This larger sum could be given as a loan on a rotating basis to the participants. Thus the women would have more capital at their disposal to expand the small business projects. This was a completely new idea for the women and they asked many questions. We offered the women the choice of receiving individual small amounts or trying this new loan concept. They chose the first option of receiving the money directly. During the Aceh stay, Sofayani, a young very intelligent Acehnese woman, sponsored by PPPF for her University studies, accompanied us everywhere..

BLITAR, EAST JAVA, Prison Youth Project: Our detailed proposal and budget for training the prison employees and the youngsters presently in prison, for a period of one year was accepted by a Javanese foundation. Based on the previous two years of experience working with the children and the staff, my colleague Yusti and I had developed an intensive training program to support children and staff, increase motivation and provide hands-on skills for life after prison. The training will be offered to one hundred staff members and about ninety children.

Of our initial core group of 20 participants, three youngsters were left. One is up for release within the next two months. He had called his family about his release. He was told that because he was a murderer he was not welcome. Thus he has no place to go to and is in a deep depression.

Lengthy discussions were held with the prison director to coordinate the proposed program, which consists of four days training every three months, a monthly follow-up by students; the development of a manual, how to reduce the violence among the children and how to model empowerment and nonviolence on the part of the staff. Presently 105, all boys, are being detained

LAGU DAMAI, BALI, Youth Center: The number of sponsors for high school students and university students has increased. Presently, PPPF is supporting eight children in high school, two of whom will begin University studies in the fall, in addition four other students and one girl from a Banda Aceh are presently registered in the university.

At the youth center, English classes are offered twice-weekly for beginners and advanced students. The sponsored students have committed to keeping the building clean. Office hours have been newly scheduled. Martini, our office manager will begin studies in management and public relations this fall. Agung, one of our senior high school students, is now an apprentice, learning the administration of the Foundation.

JIWA DAMAI, BALI, Seminar Center: An unusual and long rainy season caused flooding and several trees to be uprooted. The infrastructure is presently being assessed and will be strengthened, to better deal with future flooding. The garden is abundant in flowers, plants and colors. A small zoo somehow came into being. First, four tiny kittens, eyes still closed, found their way to the entrance. Three died and one male survived. The week before another three weeks old kitten had found its way to us. The following night, after hours of barking and yelping outside, three small, three week old puppies that must have been abandoned were begging to be fed. They must have been abandoned. Now we take care of and feed three puppies, two kittens, the two grown-up dogs, Kinta and Blackie and the grown cat, also a stray, Tigerli. The staff loves and cares for all.

PPPI, Staefa, Switzerland: A newly developed training program, to become a psychopolitical peace initiator is beginning in May.

Thank you for your continued support, emotional and financial, which allows us to continue the various projects

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