

## CAN COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE BE PREVENTED? August 2006

**BANDA ACEH:** a powerful, gusting hot wind blew in Banda Aceh. Since our last visit, many small houses had been built, some in straight, long lines along a dirt road, others in clusters, giving an impression of communal life. In our two villages, large areas were now fully cleaned and the beauty of the landscape was once again visible.



**The brick factory group** was making good profits in spite of a drop in the retail price of bricks. Their commitment to distributing part of their profits to others is being realized. Every month they meet with 10 different orphans and make a financial contribution to each. Sharing the benefits in this way was their choice. We reviewed their accounts and the lease contract for an additional piece of land for more brick building and feel that this project, which we have been overseeing since April 2005, is well on its way. A plaque will be placed on the wall of the factory with the names of the sponsors. So we gently said good-bye to Rusti and his group, laughing and crying at the same time.

**Our first women's group**, with its three small businesses of five women each, (kiosk, sewing shop, gasoline) chose to accept our suggestion to try to build a small bank that would allow each business to have a much larger amount of capital available. This step seems possible now that we've worked for a year to build trust among the group members. This was one of the important goals of the actual project work.

We showed the group in detail how this choice could benefit them much more over an extended period of time, than dividing the donated money would. Each group agreed to make a deposit in the pot and our donation was added in. An interest rate was determined. A bank account that can be accessed only through the signatures of the three trust persons of each group will be opened.

The capital now available allows for a much greater expansion of the small businesses. The women were very excited about the possibilities. They were eager to discuss who should receive the first loan and the terms of repayment. Since the sewing shop showed most of the profit, it was suggested that it would receive the first large amount to purchase the needed Singer sewing machine that **offers** them the capability of expanding the business. We promised to return in October to continue our support.

**Our second women's group**, consisting of 16 participants, decided against establishing a common bank. Due to very unhappy past experiences with people who did not pay back the money they borrowed, they preferred to continue their individual small businesses and try to expand them. We agreed with their decision and gave them additional funding for their small businesses.

**BLITAR, JAVA, CHILDREN'S PRISON:** after much budgeting and re-writing, PLAN, our sponsoring NGO, accepted the first part of the one year training proposal for the Blitar prison staff and the children.

**The first seminar day,** Siuni, a lecturer of Ubaya, presented basics on child and youth developmental issues, followed the next day by Yusti, who spoke on causes of youth criminality. I followed up with one day each for two different groups of prison employees (60 altogether), providing them a space where the emotions they experience working with the youth and in the prison could be addressed. Since physical punishment of the children is part of the rules, I worked with their high stress situation and anger management when dealing with the violence in the prison. I stressed their being the role model for these children.

**On the fourth day** we had a meeting with the prison youth to address our proposed program as well as give them space to voice some of their frustrations and anger about the institution and the staff. It seemed an excellent beginning of a new relationship with these young people, building, as it did, on our previous two year experience with our first group, whose comments about our work together was the best publicity for the program we could have had.

I asked the youngsters to reflect on their present situation and how they could use the time they were spending in prison to their best advantage, to join in on projects and to take advantage of the emotional support we offer. Our planned motorcycle maintenance classes will provide them skills and a diploma that will assist them in finding a job upon their release.

One of our members of the pilot group, a 19 year young man who had killed the brother of his then girlfriend who had attacked him, was in a deep depression about what he had done. He could have already been released if his family had accepted him back, but they did not want him back and he had no place to go. We were looking into several NGO programs to find some kind of assistance for a place where he could live.

We are developing a **manual with guidelines** for the Blitar prison project participants.

**LAGU DAMAI, Bali, Youth Center:** I am extremely pleased that, thanks to a new sponsor, Martini, our office manager, will begin to study public relations and management and Suartini, assistant teacher, will begin her studies to become a full fledged teacher. Sofayani from Aceh will also be able to continue her studies and Siwi will be able to add another year to her accounting studies. Thanks to that sponsor we are able to support more children for high school.

**JIWA DAMAI, Bali, Seminar Center:** We are still working on making the infrastructure capable of standing up to the strong rains. The next step will be advertising and increasing the number of accommodations. Right now we can accommodate 12 people comfortably for a workshop and are looking for groups that want to experience this wonderful setting in nature and the Balinese culture

Thank you for supporting our projects emotionally and financially.

For details about them and information on how to become a sponsor go to [www.pppi.net/international](http://www.pppi.net/international) projects

Dr. Margret Rueffler  
PsychoPolitical Peace Institute and Foundation  
[www.pppi.net](http://www.pppi.net)