

REFUGE

Jesuit Refugee Service Indonesia

Accompany, Serve and Advocate the Cause of Forcibly Displaced People



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Preface

On 14 November 2010 Jesuit Refugee Service will be celebrating 30 years of accompaniment, service and advocacy for forcibly displaced people. Witnessing the suffering of people arriving from Vietnam and Cambodia in Galang Island, Indonesia in 1980, Fr Pedro Arrupe took initiative to address their plight. The initiative led to the founding of JRS, which 30 years later accompanies about 500,000 displaced people in 57 countries all around the world, providing services in the field of education, emergency assistance, healthcare, livelihood activities and social services. Refuge this month pictures some of JRS core strengths: advocacy efforts during the celebration of the long expected Entry Into Force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, education efforts for Asylum Seekers in Indonesia and a reflection of one staff member about her personal role in the process of reconciliation.

A TRIUMPH OF HUMANITY: ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE CLUSTER MUNITIONS CONVENTION

By: Lars Stenger

"I had a normal life, a family life. And then suddenly all of that was gone. I am no longer the same person. The bombs fell kilometers off target, directly in a residential area of town where there were absolutely no military targets. I would go in first to clear the bombs so that no civilians would be hurt. But instead it happened to me. In some way it's better like

this. Better me than some innocent child. When I was lying on the ground I did not feel any pain. I saw immediately that my right arm was missing. It was horrible. Horrible," shared Sladjan Vuckovic, one of thousands of cluster munitions survivors in the world during a film screened at Kolese Kanisius Jakarta to mark the Entry Into Force of the Convention on Cluster



Munitions.

It is the 1st of August and today the ban of these weapons is becoming valid international law. The ban prohibits the production, use, transfer and stockpiling of cluster bombs and provides obligations to governments to clear contaminated areas and assist survivors of cluster munitions accidents.

A group of around 50 people including students, NGO representatives and members of the media came together to celebrate this day and express their support for a ban of this indiscriminate and inhuman weapon in Indonesia and the world.

In over 80 countries in Africa, Europe, Latin America, Asia and even in Antarctica, drummers and campaigners came together beating traditional drums in support of the international campaign "Beat the Drum to Ban Cluster Bombs".

"We are happy to be playing on this occasion as we care about peace and the suffering caused by this weapon," stated a member of the drumming group Kunokini, from Jakarta, who participated in the event.

The event followed an earlier Sunday mass held in the Cathedral of Jakarta for 300 people where Fr Suyadi led a prayer for peace and the survivors of landmine and cluster munitions accidents. Thousands of civilians including women and children have fallen victim to this kind of bomb in recent decades. They have lost limbs, lives and loved ones from their encounters with the funny shaped and coloured bomblets that failed to explode. Long after a conflict or war is over these bombs continue to claim victims, half of whom are children who are attracted to the shape and color of the weapons.

The campaign to ban this weapon began only in recent years as a reaction by the international community to horrific images of the injuries caused by the bombs and through NGO's making public their experiences of this "deadly legacy of war". JRS, as an agency which accompanies people displaced by conflict in over 50 countries, became a part of this campaign after witnessing the terrible injuries of refugees arriving in camps. Apart from the physical injuries, refugees also held fears of returning to their homes and their fields which were still contaminated with unexploded parts of cluster bombs.

"Today we have come together to celebrate a very important step for humanity. This day, the 1st August 2010, is a special day for us and peace loving people all around the world. We celebrate this day because it is the day a new international treaty will enter into force to ban the use of



Fr Adrianus Suyadi opened the celebration at Kolese Kanisius

cluster bombs which are a danger to the lives and health of innocent civilians," Fr Suyadi, director of JRS Indonesia stated during the celebrations of the Entry Into Force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

The event was also attended by Andy Rachmianto from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Indonesia, who spoke about Indonesia's participation during the drafting and promotion of the convention. "Indonesia has a small number of cluster munitions and will have to destroy them in 8 years (once ratifying the convention)," he stated.

The 1st August event was the highlight of a one week program which included film screenings at KINEFORUM Jakarta, inviting a wider audience to learn via film about the impact of the weapon on people's lives and families. The aim of this event was to create a momentum for Indonesia's swift ratification of the treaty.

"Indonesia has no contaminated areas and has to my knowledge never used this weapon but it has a stockpile and for the safety of the civilian population. It should destroy this stockpile as soon as possible and, as a leading example in the Asia Pacific region, ratify the Convention on cluster munitions," states Lars Stenger from JRS Indonesia.

The campaign to ban cluster munitions has achieved a goal many thought impossible years ago. The entry into force of the convention is an important event for everybody, but especially for all the people who are affected by this weapon or could be affected by it in the future. It is also an example of how a coalition of committed campaigners, the UN and governments can successfully advocate and implement humanitarian standards on an international level.



Andy Rachmianto as keynote speaker



Participants from various background interested to celebrate

“IT’S GOOD TO LEARN ENGLISH ...”



Fr Sacha (second left) during his visit to JRS BeFriend Project in Cisarua

By: Melani Wahyu Wulandari

“Something I would like to recommend to you is learning English. For those of you that are already waiting for resettlement, speaking English will be a key to making friends, finding employment and integrating into your new community. Even if you one day decide it is safe enough to go back to your home country, English will be a skill that can help you make friends and find work.” stated Fr Sacha, director of JRS Australia in a question and answer session with an English class during his short visit at the JRS project in Cisarua. Many questions were raised and his help enabled refugees waiting for resettlement to develop a more realistic understanding of the challenges and opportunities still ahead of them.

Recognizing the importance of being able to communicate in English, JRS Cisarua has been organizing English

language courses for adult asylum seekers since August 2010. English classes are intended for asylum seekers who have minimal skills in English. JRS Cisarua is aware that increased proficiency in English will help asylum seekers to follow the process of Refugee Status Determination (RSD) and increase their chances of a smooth integration in countries of resettlement.

English classes are provided three times a week for one and a half hours per lesson at the JRS Cisarua office. Two teachers assist during sessions in the classroom. Around 6-7 asylum seekers regularly attend the classes. “The asylum seekers here are those who receive JRS’ assistance, though JRS does not close the possibility for other asylum seekers who do not receive JRS’ assistance to join,” stated Lolita, caregiver from the JRS BeFriend project in Cisarua.

“The biggest challenge is we do not share a mutual language. Therefore, we have to be quite creative in explaining exercises in a way that students understand,” said one teacher. A month before the classes began, JRS Cisarua conducted a brief needs assessment to understand the needs of asylum seekers in Cisarua. Based on this assessment, JRS decided to provide these adult English class. To determine the English skills of the participants a brief interview was conducted with interested adult asylum seekers. After assessing the average English language ability of interested students, teachers from the language school ACCESS in Bogor compiled teaching modules appropriate for the student’s abilities.

The first class began with introductions. The students initially seemed very shy to speak in English. To overcome shyness among them, teachers chose a ‘speaker of the day’ to start the class. This student came forward and introduced themselves to the other students and the teachers.



JRS volunteer provides English course for asylum seekers

This gradually relaxed the atmosphere in the classroom and students started to speak with more confidence about their journey to Indonesia to seek asylum.

"I am happy in this class because I like to keep on learning and thinking. Sometimes I get very bored when there is nothing to do," said Swary (28) one of the asylum seekers from Sri Lanka. Swary, a mother of two, grew up in Colombo and went to an international junior high school. Learning English was not a completely new experience to her and the English classes caused her to recall memories from her years in school. Ysan (28), an asylum seeker from

a different city in Sri Lanka has never learned any English. During his time in Indonesia he has learned to speak some Indonesian. "It is good to learn English to be able to go to Australia," commented Ysan in broken English.

JRS believes, that by being able to communicate in English asylum seekers will have better chances to secure a life in dignity and safety for themselves.

To protect asylum seekers and refugees, the names used in the article are not their real names.

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER MADE US RESPECT EACH OTHER

By: Ninuk Setya Utami

After telling my Javanese friends I would go to Aceh to work for JRS I received very mixed reactions from them. "You are a Javanese. Do you want to die in Aceh?" said Mbak Elvi a friend of mine. At the time I could only respond with the question: "Why not?". She elaborated her concerns that, based on the stories she had heard and read, she had the opinion that "Acehnese people hate people from Java. Your name alone is typically Javanese". Aceh is known to some Indonesians as a conflict area, where the Acehnese fought for their independence from Indonesia. The Indonesian army sent many Javanese soldiers to counter their struggle and the following violence, conducted by both sides, made people from both sides suspicious of each other. On the other hand I had met close friends of my cousin who are from Aceh and had experienced how politely and well they treated me so I had my doubts about my other friends' prejudices.

Looking back at my two years with JRS in Aceh I feel fortunate to have learnt in Aceh about Indonesia, especially as

many of my colleagues in JRS came from different ethnical and religious backgrounds and from regions all over Indonesia. They were from NTT (East Nusa Tenggara), Northern Sumatra (Batak) and Java and we were a mixture of different religions, mother tongues and traditions. About half of my new friends were born in Aceh and I learned that in Aceh alone there are many ethnicities and languages, like Kluet and Taluak. One of my colleagues was in the past active in GAM (the Free Aceh Movement), the organization my Javanese friends were so afraid of.

Living and working in this multicultural and multi religious environment I felt accepted and part of a group of people trying to improve the lives of people in South Aceh who were previously forced to flee their homes and are now threatened by natural disasters. We kind of represented a little Indonesia a country with hundreds of ethnicities, languages and traditions. A group of people who embrace different beliefs, spending time together and having a common aim strengthens our solidarity and friendship.



Ninuk had a discussion with one of youth leaders in Lhok Sialang Rayeuk, South Aceh

On my visits in the communities I was ritually welcomed with the conversation: "Where are you from?", "I come from Java.", "Oh, which part of Java are you from?". My friend's prejudices were never confirmed and so I became comfortable with being a Javanese in Aceh.

Once, during a peace tournament for the youth of South Aceh villages, one of the local youth leaders Bang Marwan told me with a serious face, "Our mind is full with prejudices. Acehnese feel they have to make Javanese people fear them. Many Acehnese also remember that Javanese soldiers killed many Acehnese. However after knowing you, the reality challenged our prejudices. Like the saying, knowing each other made us respect and like each other."

In fact, just three days after the tsunami hit Aceh on 26 December 2004 I had rejected a friends' invitation to be active in Aceh. Now, five years later, Jesuit Refugee Service has enabled me to get to know the people of Aceh, their culture and the culture of Kluet, and Taluak people. Acehnese, who once were seen with suspicion by some of my Javanese friends, have turned out to be my brothers and sisters now. It is this experience of challenging our own and our environments prejudices that makes me feel like I played a personal role and made my own small contribution to the reconciliation between Acehnese and Javanese. It fills me with pride and happiness hearing my Acehnese friends say: "Ah Ninuk please stay in our house so we can talk until the morning."

INTERNATIONAL DAYS

14 November	30 years JRS
16 November	International Day for Tolerance
20 November	Universal Children's Day
25 November	International Day for Elimination of Violence against Women
3 December	International Day of Disabled Persons
10 December	Human Rights Day
18 December	International Migrants Day
20 December	International Human Solidarity Day



During peace tournament in South Aceh

JRS Indonesia Events

JRS Indonesia invites to celebrate its 30th anniversary at Bentara Budaya Yogyakarta, Jl. Suroto No. 2, Kotabaru, Yogyakarta entitled "Displaced People in Our Hearts and Eyes"

Friday, 12 November 2010

3PM "Opening Ceremony" – opening of the photo exhibition by Fr Suyadi, surprise guests

3PM – 9PM "Photo Exhibition"

Saturday, 13 November 2010

10AM – 9PM "Photo Exhibition"

1PM – 9PM "Non stop film screening"

Siska's Dream, Boats of Hope, Friend on a Journey, Those Who are Powered, Two Gardens, Running, Molly and Mobarak, A Well Founded Fear

Sunday, 14 November 2010

10AM – 7PM "Photo Exhibition"

3PM – 6PM "JRS Anniversary Celebration" – film screening of "Pedro Arrupe", sharing, discussion on IDPs and Refugees in Indonesia

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