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The theme of this edition is reconstruction. It has been ten months since the giant tsunami waves swept Aceh, however, the reconstruction and rehabilitation process there is very slow. This is because of various factors land status certification and some other problems elaborated on this edition. On this occasion we would also like to share a little about our accompaniment of returnees on Kesui Island in the Maluku Province.

PUBLISHED SOON



By Bambang A. Sipayung SJ

The reddish purple sky closed the wet and cloudy day. The color composition of land and sky, accompanied by the sound of an azan signaled the end of the fast of the day and led to about seventy people entering the *Meunasah* of *Pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) Bahrul Ulum Diniyah Islamiyah (BUDI). They attended the dinner break-a-fast with a special menu. The people were *santri* (moslem religious students), *tengku* (graduated *santri*), and JRS staff. The dinner was special, since it was a thanksgiving dinner for installing 100 knock down houses in the *pesantren*.

Setting up an emergency post in Lamno, JRS assisted the tsunami survivors with food and clothes. During this time, the leader of *Pesantren* BUDI asked for help. The first contact was then

Thanksgiving Dinner at the Reddish Purple Dusk



Boarding houses for the girl *santris* at Pesantren BUDI Lamno



Boarding houses for the boy *santris* at Pesantren BUDI-Lamno

followed by other contacts by *tengkus* with a request for wood to construct the meeting hall. The *tengkus* and *santri* wanted to build a meeting hall, as they gathered around to begin their studies in the *pesantren*. By this time, JRS was already known as an NGO distributing zinc for housing construction. As a joke, it was said that JRS (Jesuit Refugee Service) stands for *Jatah Rumah Seng* or Zinc House Distributor.

Formerly, JRS also distributed the zinc for *Pesantren* BUDI. However, an exception was applied for them, since Eternit Gresik PT offered JRS 100

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.....Thanksgiving Dinner at the Reddish Purple Dusk

prefabricated houses to assist the *pesantren*. Unfortunately, it only promised building materials and a technical assistant to install the houses. Facing this, JRS personnel in Lamno had to find a way to construct the houses in the area which was full of debris and some building experts to start the project. Gratefully, all *santris* and *tengkus* of *Pesantren BUDI* understood these difficulties. They cleared the area and prepared the land for the houses, even in bad weather. The damaged road to Lamno slowed

down the development process, for it hindered the delivery of materials. Once, five big trucks, loaded with prefabricated houses, were stuck on the sandy road. The *santris*, *tengkus* and JRS staff had to unload the materials from these trucks and load them back on to other trucks. Another time, they had to unload eight trucks full of housing materials during the night. They succeeded in unloading the materials in two hours, instead of taking all night as it was estimated. It surprised the drivers and the people around seeing the enthusiasm of *santris*, *tengkus* and JRS staff.

Keeping in mind the memory of the hot sun, the rough land, a rainy night of unloading and pushing the truck on the sandy road made the dinner really a thanksgiving time of brotherhood. As they were eating, jokes and friendly chat reminded them of several things which made them laugh. The dinner turned into a memorable time and recognition of struggling together, for the tsunami survivors and their assistants. After the tsunami, many victims and most of the big NGOs flooded Aceh with their aid, housing, funding and even cash. At the same time, the

story of survivors with a little help from assistants with empathetic hearts continues.

The dinner was not just an ordinary one. It was a special one; a thanksgiving fully filled the minds and hearts of those gathered at the *Meunasah*. Nature seemed to agree and conveyed its thanksgiving also, with the combination of the reddish purple sky and the gray-brown water and sail in the compound of *Pesantren BUDI*. Furthermore, the story and struggle of human survivors, cooperation and solidarity continues. □

Eight Knock-down Houses Built in Meulingge

By JRS in Pulo Aceh

In the first week of October, the housing process in Meulingge in Pulo Aceh Island continued, with the coordination of the Secretary of Village (*Pak Sekdes*) supervised by the team of ATMI, a JRS' partner, while the staff were off to attend the National Meeting in

Java. After the National Meeting, Rudi, one of the JRS personnel, in charge of shelter assistance, followed up some plans in the housing program, i.e. collecting data of the houses that have been built, coordinating with the team of ATMI and that of Mr. Safari the Contractor, employing Huseini, an IDP of Langsa, in job training and reconstruct-



dr. Bernard from JRS, with JRS cap, visited Pulo Aceh IDPs in Seulum camp, Aceh Besar. Some of the IDPs are living in the camp while others are constructing knock-down houses in Meulingge.



Knock-down houses for Tsunami survivors from Meulingge village, Pulo Aceh Sub-district, Aceh Besar, built together by people of Meulingge, ATMI and JRS.

ing a sample house for *Pak Keuchik* (head of village).

Some IDPs of Meulingge took part in the program as carpenters, bricklayers and laborers to move the sand and stones for the foundation and walls. They worked from nine a.m. to five p.m. with one hour of rest. By the end of October, eight out of 55 unit houses

were ready. JRS found out that the team of Mr. Safari was much more effective than the IDPs in building houses, since he coordinated his team well. At the same time, JRS faced a difficulty in providing materials which were unavailable on this island. □

Housing Aid for Kuala Tripa and Babah Lueng

By JRS in Meulaboh

Kuala Tripa and Babah Lueng are two villages in Darul Makmur Sub-district, Nagan Raya District of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam. The two villages were severely damaged by the Tsunami on the 26th of December 2004. 106 deaths were reported from Kuala Tripa, but none from Babah Lueng.

In Nagan Raya District, there are about 1,115 survivors living in seven camps, in Padang Rubek, Puloe Ie, Padang Panjang, Cot Mee, KUD Alue Bilie, and Gedung Pengadilan Sukaraja Darul Makmur. The government and the humanitarian organizations provided them with shelter.

Ten months after the giant disaster, Dahlan Jalil, aged 34, from Kuala Tripa gradually arranges his normal life, going to his field and selling timber. He and his family now can occupy his house, type 36, from JRS. He regains his confidence to carry out his role as energetically a youth leader in Kuala Tripa and to direct the social activities which in the end also inspire others to follow in his steps. Besides him, 117 families will receive housing assistance from JRS. Currently, 52 houses are ready in Kuala Tripa and 12 in Babah Lueng, many of which have been occupied by the beneficiaries.

"Fortunately, JRS cares about us here and provides us with housing assistance,"



A couple standing in front of their new house provided by JRS

ce," said Dahlan who is also a timber supplier for the reconstruction process in Kuala Tripa and Babah Lueng. JRS in Meulaboh allocates the housing for Kuala Tripa and Babah Lueng, as both are isolated

and not given any attention by international organizations like the other survivors in Nagan Raya or West Aceh areas. Survivors from Kuala Tripa and Babah Lueng once took refuge in the KUD building in Alue



JRS visiting and monitoring the reconstruction process in Kuala Tripa

Bili, Darul Makmur Sub-district and Nagan Raya District for two weeks and then returned to clean up the debris while preparing for housing assistance from JRS.

JRS calls for beneficiaries' participation in planning and implementing the reconstruction process by holding several meetings with them and with the local government, to guarantee the continuity of the reconstruction process. Each family was obliged to settle the land status, prepare the construction site and control the construction process, together with the volunteers appointed by JRS. The construction workers were chosen from the communities. There were ten groups of three construction workers in Kuala Tripa and three groups from Babah Lueng. JRS provides each family with 14 million rupiah for housing materials and two million rupiah for the reconstruction workers. However, the construction workers demanded one million more for their work, otherwise they would stop the process. After long negotiation, finally, JRS agreed to add 500 thousand rupiah for the first 16 houses and one million for the rest. JRS also makes use of local resources to supply housing materials, such as those from the workshop of *Yayasan Petani* (Farmer Foundation) that provides doors and windows. Other supplies were procured from Medan. □

Land and IDPs: Crucial Problems for Reconstruction

By Daryadi Ahmadi

Land is invariably a crucial issue in the reconstruction program of Aceh. A report by the daily newspaper *Serambi Indonesia*, (28/10) cited that hundreds of people from 23 villages in Meuraxa, Jaya Baru and Peukan Bada Sub-districts demanded that the Badan Pertanahan Nasional (National Land Agency) stop the land measurement. The land had been measured before by an NGO led by Wardah Hafidz, *Uplink* in response to the people's need for land certification, to accelerate the reconstruction process. The villagers felt alarmed that the BPN measurement would slacken the land certification. On the other hand, BPN as an official institution from the go-

vernment stated that the land measurement was done for the sake of the people, for the legalization of people's rights over the land. The impetus of the protest was the tardiness of the BPN in finishing the land certification. The tsunami survivors did not want to wait any longer, because they could not live any longer in the displacement camp.

A different case was experienced by Mrs. Idawati, a widow with one child and a tsunami survivor from Keude Bing, Lhung Kruet kampong of Lhok Nga Sub-district. She lost her husband and her house in the waves. With her only child she took refuge in her native-village in Serui, Kuala Simpang Sub-district, Aceh Tamiang District. She was upset

when she found out that her land was occupied by unknown people. She lodged a report with Keucik Lhueng Kruet, the village leader, about that illegal occupation.

"I'm still trying to claim back my land as it belongs to my late husband," said Idawati when JRS met her in Kuala Simpang (2/11). Idawati who is now working as a housemaid in Kuala Simpang, asked JRS to support her to gain back her land. "It's impossible for me to go to Lhok Nga frequently to take care of the land, because the transportation fee is very costly," she moaned.

The eviction of 201 IDP families from their sheltering camp in Lamrueng, Darul Imarah Sub-district, Aceh Besar District was also based on the land

status. The landowner, Hajj Sofyan reclaimed his land to restart his lumber business, as the land used to be a lumber yard.

The legal status of the land becomes a crucial factor in the reconstruction process in Aceh. However, the legalization process is not easy. The BPN has to assess, collect all data, register landownership, cross check and measure the land, verify and write the certificates, then issue them. According to BPN, these processes take time. One or two months is not enough, especially because the provincial BPN office was devastated by the tsunami. The tardiness of the land legalization process impedes the reconstruction of Aceh. □

Waving Peaceful Life in Koto Indarung



Children of the Koto Indarung village

By JRS in Tapak Tuan

The trip to the villages of Koto Indarung and Siurai-Urai in Kluet Tengah Sub-district was not easy. To reach the two villages, located in the hills inside the area of the National Park of Gunung Leuser, about 53 Km from Tapak Tuan, our group consisting of some JRS staff and Aceh Monitoring Mission, had to

take hours of land travel, a boat ride to cross Krueng Luet River and a 200 meter walk. We visited the returnees, once displaced to Tapak Tuan during Martial Law and just returned to their respective villages on September 20, 2005.

Dirty and damaged houses were the dominated the scene in Koto Indarung. The villagers were sur-

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.....Waving Peaceful Life in Koto Indarung

prised seeing us walking in with two Europeans. They thought that we would begin a big project, because we came with foreigners. We convinced them that JRS was neither an implementing partner of AMM nor a project developer; we came to visit them to see the real situation and the condition of the returnees.

Koto Indarung has been like a dead village for 20 months. 125 families left the village to take refuge in

Lhok Bengkuang, Tapak Tuan, because the TNI could not protect them during the counter-insurgency operation. The peace agreement, signed on August 15, 2005 by the Indonesian Government and GAM (Free Aceh Movement), brought a positive result for the Koto Indarung villagers. They could return to their place of origin, since there was no more gun-fighting in their village. The return of the villagers allowed them to breathe freely again. However, life

was not easy. They had to begin from scratch. They had to fix their houses and fill them again with furniture, as their old ones had been looted. Cleaning up their paddy fields and farms which had almost turned into a jungle kept them busy as well.

The people of Koto Indarung had long depended on traditional agriculture. However, the growth of wild grass and thick bushes during their displacement suspended the field cultivation and forced some men to seek jobs in Kota Fajar, Tapak Tuan and Meulaboh for family survival.

They bred no more livestock, cows and goats, as they used to, because they did not have money to fence their fields and protect them from animals. The local fruits they grew and which actually sustained them economically could not be counted on, since lack of transportation impeded the marketing.

Remoteness and problems of transportation

became obstacles for the education of the children. The only school in the village was in a really in bad condition, a leaking roof, wall graffiti and stains, while tall grass engulfed the schoolyard and cracked the cement-floor. Most school equipment and books had disappeared. They used what was left. The lack of a teacher was also a problem for them, as inviting a teacher from other village would cost them a lot.

JRS also visited the nearby village, Siurai-Urai. Its condition was more or less similar to that of Koto Indarung. Almost all the children from this village did not go to school due to the economic problems of their families.

At dawn, with the Koto Indarung people, we broke our fast celebrating our togetherness. We left the village at 8.20 p.m. with heads full of stories about Koto Indarung and Siurai-Urai. □



JRS visited the only school building in Koto Indarung

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Moluccas: The Reconstruction Process in Kesui Island

By JRS in Kesui

The dynamic of life begins again in Utta, Tanasoa, Wunin, Eldedora and Karlomin, villages of origin, when the returnees fill their days with their daily activities. Their lives are different now. They are at home. Gratitude is expressed in prayer, because they are reunited with the atmosphere of Kesui which gives them new spirit and strength during their displacement.

240 families from five sub-villages returned to their homeland in Kesui Island, from their displacement in Langgur, on May 30, 2005. They were racing against time as the west wind was approaching. A month after their return, the harvesting time for cloves came. They were confused as to which should be done first, harvesting or building house.

The government provided the returnees with 500,000 rupiah per person, with a maximum five person per family for livelihood. They also gave the construction workers fee, 1,500,000 rupiah with its tax deduc-



Returnees unloading housing materials from the boat.

tion amounting to 1.5 million rupiah, which they have never given it to the returnees. They also built water suppliers for Tanasoa, Wunin and Eldedora, while for one other sub-village, Karlomin, JRS did this. Besides, the government promised 200 million ru-

piah to support the construction of four houses of worship in Utta, Tanasoa, Wunin/Eldedora and Karlomin. Furthermore, they planned to build three schools in Tanasoa, Karlomin and Wunin/Eldedora)

The returnees themselves built 123 houses and six more are in progress. Nine families are still living with their relatives.

The returnees made use local materials from the neighbourhood, such as timber and sand. The development process is not without problems. They have to manage their time between harvesting

cloves and building houses, while remoteness also hinders them transporting the housing materials provided by the government which are still in Efflomi, a small mooring place on the island. This situation forces them to use the materials procurement money for transport and porter fees.

JRS assists the returnees with emergency aid, especially during the process of returning, transportation support, kitchen tools for *Pameri* (days of cleaning the entire village) and shelters. In education, JRS provides financial support for elementary school construction in Tanasoa, Karlomin, Wunin and Eldedora. The villagers themselves build the schools. They also cover all the financial necessities. JRS provides teaching-learning books for teachers and students, books for the libraries, stationery, school equipment, shelves and some educational posters. However, the real and urgent need for them is a teacher!

In health care, JRS supplies some medicines for four local paramedics who provide health services for the returnees and receiving communities. They have treated 206 patients. The government, through the Puskesmas (Community Health Center) of Tamher Timur gave Polio vaccines and Vitamin A for under-five aged children and TT vaccine for pregnant mothers in Tanasoa. □



Piles of cement in the small mooring place, Efflomi.

tion amounted 450,000 rupiah then additional money for local housing materials, three million rupiah with 45,000 rupiah deducted for tax. The government is supposed to provide

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