



# Refugee

Jesuit Refugee Service Indonesia

Accompany, Serve and Advocate the Cause of Refugees and Forcibly Displaced People

www.jrs.or.id

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### Preface

The theme of this edition is the commemoration 1 year after the Tsunami swept Aceh. One year after, it is time to look back and reflect on what has been done. But also time to look forward to what still needs to be done. The rehabilitation and reconstruction process is still slow and hampered by the lack of strong coordination among all actors in the field. Yet there is progress, as show following stories from Aceh. We would also like to draw attention to other, forgotten parts of Indonesia, as JRS has published a book and documentary on Buru Island, Maluku.

### Prologue

Friedrich Nietzsche wrote about how all great Philosophers have always reminded us to look for the meaning of your life in the mirror of your life<sup>1</sup>. Philosophy can sustain us during crisis, help us understand the deepest meaning of it. It works at the level of logos, at the argumentative discourse. Philosophy sometimes refuses narrative stories that do not reflect the greater spirit of the philosophical thinking. It might not solve all the problems emerging in life, but it can be used as a reflecting mirror to fathom all our struggle in life.

It has been a year since the Tsunami swept Aceh, the Northern tip of the Sumatra Island. In this one year working for and with the survivors of this disaster, JRS staff have gained



Entis, JRS staff in white T-Shirt, and villagers of Meulingge doing a village mapping prior to their return to Pulo Aceh Island.

## The Travelled Road

*A note about accompaniment, service and defending the rights of IDPs  
Reflection on one year service of JRS Banda Aceh*

new experiences. The disaster which killed 129,775 people, vanished 36,786 people and displaced 174,000 people<sup>2</sup> has soli-

dified our personal and collective experiences. A new kind of dynamics has emanated from these interactions between JRS staff

and the beneficiaries. Sometimes, there was confusion and misunderstanding

(continued to page 2...)

.....The Traveled Road

ing, but we also enjoyed collective reflection and togetherness. There were times we laughed together, but sometimes we cried out in despair and fury.

This is the time to trace back the travelled road. This is the time to look at the future. This is the time to look into our own mirror, our saddening tears and laughing joy, our despair and hope, our bitter and sweet lives.

### Accompany

Accompaniment is a natural mechanism in the history of human civilization as well as a materialization of social being. Jesuit Refugee Service emphasizes intimate accompaniment as the basic foundation to serve the displaced people. Accompaniment is the initial phase before serving and advocating, as it enables us to recognize the need of the displaced people. This spirit of accompaniment permeates the soul of anyone involved in this work of love to serve and to give beyond the physical needs, to touch the heart of the people we work with, to become an equal and to give empathy and recognition to their situation, culture and customs.

Being a companion means being part of the community of the people we work with, not an outsider who comes with assistance and leaves when the assistance is finished. Being a friend means being with them.

"Any time I come to Krueng Raya, there's always someone asking

why JRS is not giving this or that assistance. There is one woman who keeps asking me for a *marlin* (fish dryer made of wire netting) since she was singled out unintentionally when an NGO handed out *marlins* to the people there," said Azman, a field officer of JRS Banda Aceh.

"I'm confused since everybody, even GAM members, come to us to ask for assistance," he added.

Being in one place does not mean "being" there. Being means exist, present, ready, having, true and real. When we come as a foreigner, an outsider of the community, we alienate ourselves, create a distance and boundary between us and those we help. In a situation such as the one in Aceh, this boundary is not merely between NGOs and Acehnese, but between the hero and the victim.

To put ourselves in a higher position than the people we visit, promising power as if we were a superman who can accommodate all problems and needs of the IDPs, will make them become dependent.

"Once there was a child asking for a piece of origami paper which I forgot to bring. He felt disappointed and refused to be near with me, although the paper was just one of many vehicles used for accompaniment," said Jovita. "Enggal, I remember when we came to Krueng Raya, we used to bring wooden boards, or *marlin, ampak* (wooden frame for *marlin*), and some tools for stoves. I think they got used to see us carrying and giving things to them, so now they are always expecting something when

we come to them," said Ahmad, the coordinator of JRS Banda Aceh.

"I'm afraid we will no longer be as close to them as we used to be, since we do not give as large capital funds as UNDP. However, the community still asks JRS to be continuously present in Krueng Raya, although we don't give any assistance," said Azman in a staff meeting in July.

We really were there, we did not come as visitors. We were there living in the three tents in Krueng Raya and Seulimeum to be as near as possible to our IDPs friends and to give them spirit.

### Serving

"The help needed is not only material. In a special way the Society is being called to render a service that is human, pedagogical and spiritual."<sup>3</sup>

The service provided by JRS staff to the IDPs is a special service to friends, not a service from a slave to its masters. A slave is never equal to his or her master. They never eat at the same table, nor talk or laugh together. A slave does not have similar dreams as his or her master. JRS' service originated out of equality. It is not an oddity to have similar dreams as the IDPs'. By being closer with them we are able to recognize their needs and dreams.

"Sometimes I wonder whether our program is really based on the needs of the IDPs or our own needs?" asked Probo, the coordinator of Lamno Site, in a sharing occasion on Teluk Bayur boat.

So far, there has been no problem with the form of

service provided by JRS. We do not merely give material assistance, but we also become friends trying to build the awareness that material assistance is only an incentive. JRS cannot change the social and economical lives of IDPs unless they try it themselves.

We should always go back to our first discernment in choosing our beneficiaries since it determines the kind of service for the IDPs.

*"JRS gives priority to situations of great need, to places where a more universal good may be achieved, and to needs that others are not attending to. JRS chooses situations where it can make a special contribution because of its own expertise, because a partner is already established there, or because its initiative can enable other to become involved."*<sup>4</sup>

We did not determine the programs and the services without initial field assessment, without an intense dialog with them, without considering their needs and concerns. We did not choose the place or the community for our own convenience. If we could have chosen, maybe Elis and her fellows working for Pulo Aceh IDPs would not have put their lives in danger sailing on a small boat for three hours to Meulingge, the western-most of Indonesia, nor would they have wanted to face the unpredictable character of Pulo Aceh people.

*"You are all crazy to work in this place like this."* said Jaques, the staff of CCFD France, one of JRS' donors for tsunami response in Aceh, when he was monitoring JRS works in Meulingge.



Workers constructing the JRS-supported Meunasah in Lamsenia.

Yes, if we could choose, maybe we would not come to Pesantren BUDI, Lamsenia, Meunasah Keude, Lhok Me, Durong, Tanah Merah, Malahayati, Tutong, Meunasah Rayeuk, Labui, Abu Lam U. May be we would choose to sit comfortably in front of the computer to chat or play computer games.

However, we do not choose, we are being chosen by our sisters and brothers uprooted from their place of origin.

"It is difficult to refuse any request from people who are always setting out coffee and durians for us," said Probo in a meeting in Brastagi, June 2005.

"I can't refuse Yahne's request for an anchor rope because we often use his boat when we have visitors," said Ahmad in explaining the request for 64-meter of anchor rope.

This attachment with the beneficiaries creates a

serious impact on the service and the implementation of the programs in the field. We can easily fall in the trap of subjectivity because they often serve us lunch or offer us help and data whenever we need it. The feeling of "inconvenience" can be overwhelming.

This inconvenience might come from our different kind of closeness. The closeness that is built from our attachment, our dependence on each other, is not one based on real and open friendship. We want to be close with them because they provide us with data and helping hands. On the other side, they need us because we have programs to help them alleviate their living standard.

I tried to learn from Yayasan Puter's experiences, who have collaborated with JRS from the early emergency situation in Aceh. Since January to

December, they have been living in with IDPs especially in Lamsenia.

"Yes, you are right Enggal. In the emergency phase, the IDPs always asked for staple food," Ahmad, who used to be one of Yayasan Puter's staff, explained.

"However, when the phase levels up to rehabilitation, we never directly responded to any request. Instead, we gathered them to have a discussion on the priorities of their needs," added Ahmad.

"The *live in* method we used is based on our framework for strengthening community structure and accompaniment, especially for the community where there are many parties "playing" around. We assist communities in following their own agenda and in mitigating further conflict," said Eko, one of the founders of Yayasan Puter.

Jovita, JRS' education staff in Meunasah Keude

saw the difference between a mere visit and a live-in approach.

"If we only visit once or twice, people will ask a lot of assistance. But when I live with them in the IDPs camp, I can figure out their needs, without being told, during a gathering or discussion," She shared her experience with Enggal.

## Defending

*"To do all this work, JRS needs to constantly analyze the context in which it is present understanding what the implications of these changes will require an intellectual discernment on future directions are need."*<sup>5</sup>

Defending does not mean a response against any outside assault. It is also not only an incidental action. JRS should prepare pre-emptive actions to anticipate the worst. Our advocacy should be based on careful field observations and deep analysis. Because

of the rush in which the meeting in Sikeben last February to setup the tsunami response program took place, too little emphasis was given on the analysis of causes and consequences of our actions.

"I'm confused. People who do not receive assistance from JRS envy those who receive. They think that we are picky and unfair," said Azman in the meeting on 3 December 2005.

"If our program creates social jealousy, we should ask ourselves why," Probo responded to Azman's confusion.

*Caritatis-Veritas, Veritas-Caritatif.* Helping out and charity actions are in line with humanism. However, these works of love should be carried out within the right frame and vice versa, struggling for the truth should be done within the frame of love.

Providing 58 fish-steaming houses, 35 boats, 100 houses and capital loans for IDPs in Aceh are good things to do, but we should consider the social impact for the beneficiaries or the neighbouring communities.

Mary B Anderson's DO NO HARM suggested to any humanitarian organizations to apply some critical consideration before giving any humanitarian assistance, as to anticipate any negative effect towards beneficiaries and the communities<sup>6</sup>.

JRS advocacy means *constantly analyze*<sup>7</sup>. Field analysis is always actively observing any changes, opportunities and challenges. Initially, JRS planned to reactivate an economic group called *Tuah Raya* in Lamsenia. The community gathering chose and decided the organizational structure and the range of its activities. However, continuous erosion forced them to switch their priority to moving out from the coastal line. JRS planned to build some semi-permanent housing for the people of Lamsenia. When UN Habitat and Oxfam offered their assistance to build 97 houses, JRS agreed to provide the land for relocation.

JRS advocacy is *promoting sustainable solutions*<sup>8</sup>. It is not shock therapy-based, nor it is a quick response based on a panic decision. It should be based on mature and visionary consideration and thorough analysis. It should never be a reactionary responses.

*Sustainable solutions* means JRS empowers local communities. They are not bystanders nor spectators who watch a theatre performed by JRS all stars. Solutions become sustainable when we let them be the main actors of the drama of their lives and we become the supporting team behind the stage.

"I want a local volunteer to replace Eva in tutor-

ing children in Krueng Raya. Local volunteers know better how to approach children through their respective customs," explained Jovita.

"From Lamsenia we appointed *Pak Adnan*, a Lamsenian who used to be a contractor, as the coordinator of house reconstruction. He made the *meunasah's* (small Mosque) sketch, drew up the budget and monitored the reconstruction process," said Tri Wahyono, field officer of JRS.

*Sustainable solutions* arise when the community has the capacity and willingness for fair and just conflict management. When they have the confidence to face and solve their problems. When they dare to say to NGOs "We can change our lives, with or without you."

*Sustainable solution* arise when the smiling faces of *keuchik* Dahlan, *sekdes* Meulingge, Ismuha, *Pak Adnan*, *Zakaria Ahmad*, *Bang Bob*, *Abah Pesantren Budi* and *Ibu Roos* express; "Look, we can rise up and stand on our own feet."

## Epilogue

Aceh is facing a new problem, the lack of full coordination among NGOs. More than 300 INGOs have been active in Aceh since January right after the tsunami and the earthquake devastated Aceh. This lack of coordination results in conflicting programs and unclear situa-

tions. There is a definite need for better coordination between NGOs in order to speed up the rehabilitation process and to come to a better distribution of allocated funds.

The collision of different cultures in a situation always creates dual effects for the community. The presence of hundreds of NGOs has brought positive effects. The commitment of donor agencies through Multi Donor Trust has gained the trust from the Acehnese to proceed the process of recovering and reconstruction of Aceh after the tsunami.

On the other side, the situation has also created negative optimism, dependency and confusion. The different interests and policies that arise put the people of Aceh on the spectators side, where they could eventually turn into hooligans when the show turns them down.

At least with our accompaniment, service and advocacy, we can try to eliminate these negative effects. We hope that we can minimize their dependency and confusion. We hope that through our accompaniment, service and advocacy, we can encourage the communities to perform their own play on their own stage. So we can cheer on them. □

## Footnotes

1 Magee, Bryan, *Confessions Of a Philosopher: A Journey Through Western Philosophy (Indonesian Version)*, Phoenix, London, 1997, p. 10

2 Badan Rehabilitasi dan Rekonstruksi Aceh dan Nias, Progress Report, 2005

3 Kolvenbach, Hans Peter, Letter of Superior General Jesuit Fr Peter-Hans Kolvenbach in the commemoration of 25years of JRS, 14 November 2005

4 The Charter of Jesuit Refugee Service, pointno 14

5 Kolvenbach, Hans Peter, Letter of Superior General Jesuit Fr Peter-Hans Kolvenbach in the commemoration of 25years of JRS, 14 November 2005

6 Anderson, Mary, *Do No Harm*, Lynne Rienner Publisher, London, 2002, p.1

7 Kolvenbach, Hans Peter, Letter of Superior General Jesuit Fr Peter-Hans Kolvenbach in the commemoration of 25years of JRS, 14 November 2005

8 JRS in Action, Advocacy, Jesuit Refugee Service Website



Misnawati helping a young customer

Our conversation was interrupted by a girl buying lipstick. Mrs. Misnawati let the girl try the lipstick on the skin of her hand. “I don’t mind buyers to try, because they want to know the colour,” she said. The girl bought the new stick of 5,000 rupiah (0.5 USD). The most expensive product in Mrs. Misnawati’s boutique is a face moisturizer she sells for Rp 47,000.

“She is able to develop her business by buying new different types of cosmetic products. She gets new customers and just added a new shop window. She is enthusiastic and eager to survive and expand her business,” Ricka said.

Ricka explained that Mrs. Misnawati joined the IGA group ‘Semangat Baru’ and became a good member, since she is able to pay back the instalments every month. Her income varies between 200,000 rupiah (20 USD) per month and 700,000 (70 USD), especially with the coming of Idul Fitri.

Ricka continued, “There are many families depending on women like Mrs. Misnawati. Her husband has not found a job yet...” □

## “We cannot Sell Out the Shirts...”

### By Enggal

“It is a pity we cannot sell out all our shirts, as there are many garment stores in the neighbourhood with larger funds that can sell the newest designs and fashion, ” said Mrs. Misnawati a survivor from Lampaseh, Banda Aceh. She is one of the beneficiaries in JRS IGA (Income Generating Activities) program who received eight million rupiah as a

capital loan for her small store of garment and cosmetic products.

She said, “I have three children. The eldest is in the sixth grade of elementary school, the second in the fifth and the youngest is still in kindergarten. As our second one is sick at this moment, he is not attending school. ”

“Before the tsunami, she had a store as big as that one at the corner of the street,” said Ricka, a JRS staff mem-

ber to the writer, pointing out a large building.

In Lampaseh, NGOs are facing problems on land ownership, the delivery of materials, illegal taxation, and the rising costs, so from the target of 30,000 units of houses to be build until the end of the year, only 17,000 units have been build. Mrs. Misnawati does not have any house. She lives with her children in a IDP barrack in Lhoong Raya, Banda Aceh.

*Your continued support makes it possible for us to help the internally displaced people in Indonesia. If you wish to make a donation, please send it to:*

Rupiah Bank:	Description:
Bank Name	Bank Central Asia-Sudirman Yogyakarta
Bank Address	Jl. Sudirman, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Account Holder	Yayasan JRS Indonesia
Account Type	Tahapan
Account Number	0372 197 101
Bank Code (if applicable)	#CENAIJA#

# JRS Field reports

## Banda Aceh

### Medic.

JRS has provided mobile clinics for 1630 patients in Pustu Labui, Krueng Raya, MIN Durong and Pesantren Abu Lam U and provided supplementary food and health education for students of MIN Durong and Pesantren Abu.

### Education

JRS provided alternative education for children in Meunasah Keude, scholarships for 3 students from Lamsenia and stipend for teachers of Moslem boarding school in Meunasah Keude

### Support for Local Groups

JRS financially supported the PUTER volunteer team to build a Meunasah (small Mosque) in Lamsenia, and provided 54 bags of cements for the reconstruction of Meunasah in Krueng Raya and a 64-meter anchorage rope for fishermen in Krueng Raya.

### Restoring Life

JRS supports 11 out of 14 women from Kelompok Semangat Baru, a group of small business women from Labui, through Income Generating Activities. In December they paid back the 4<sup>th</sup> installment.

### Livelihood

JRS supported fishermen from Krueng Raya to fix their broken boats. 57 out of 58 jambo rebus (fish steamer) have been built in Krueng Raya.

### Shelter

12 out of 18 forms for tax deduction of land entitling (Surat Perjanjian Jual Beli) have been handed over to the people of Lamsenia. JRS assisted them to obtain the land certificates from PPAT (Pejabat Pembuat Akta Tanah or Land Deed Officer).

### Problems

Ten ex-combatants came with a proposal asking for assistance because they received none from the government. JRS currently doesn't have any program for combatants. Villagers around Krueng Raya asked for fishing boats. They envied Krueng Raya villagers who received 35 boats and 57 fish steamers from JRS.

### JRS-responses.

JRS reported the case of the ten-ex-combatant to AMM (Aceh Monitoring Mission).

## Pulo Aceh

### Medic

JRS-medical team treated patients in the IDPs camps of Seulimum and Pulo Aceh, their place of origin. JRS provided assistance for 3 pregnant mothers in Meulingge, hospitalized one patient to Zaenal Abidin Hospital, and referred a patient with a deformity of the sexual organ to the hospital for surgery.

### Education

Three teachers and a school principal have been sent off to Meulingge to start a tent school in Meulingge, Pulo

Aceh. Dinas Pendidikan has given its recommendation for JRS to build the school in Meulingge.

### Support Local Group

Together with PASE, JRS accompanies the Meulingge returnees. PASE is a local organization with a good knowledge on the returnees' culture and background.

### Restoring Life

69 houses (framing construction) will be ready in the second week of December.

### Problems.

It seems that the local government has difficulties managing the coordination among INGOs working in Pulo Aceh. Most INGO seem to follow their own agenda.

### Plan

JRS will order school uniforms for students in Pulo Aceh from women tailors from the Semangat Baru group. JRS will also order kitchen tools for Meulingge returnees from a group of craftswomen among the beneficiaries of JRS in Lamno.

## Lamno

### Shelter

The reconstruction process of Pesantren Budi has been slow due to the long holidays. The *santris* were agitated by the rumor that JRS would hand over the reconstruction project to businessman and that JRS would run a cash-for-work program, therefore they did not want to carry out the works. Despite *santris'* reluctance, JRS went through with the works to proof that JRS was not doing any cash-for-work program.

### Restoring Life

JRS procured some cutting machines for a group of craft women in Lamno. Together with the craft group, JRS will look for a house to display the crafts.

## Meulaboh

### Emergency Aid, Relief, and Assistance (AID).

JRS distributed supplementary food for 87 babies and children under the age of 5 in the barracks of Leuhan. JRS distributed 500 head scarves to 500 women and 500 rimless caps to 500 men in Leuhan.

### Health Care – Medical Activities

JRS recruited 2 villagers to build wells, latrines and watsan facilities in Kuala Tripa.

### Health Care– Trauma Healing Activities

JRS provided trauma healing for 178 teachers in Meulaboh. JRS conducted monthly meetings with 35 cadres of trauma healing.

### Education

JRS distributed school packages to Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Aceh Barat and Nagan Raya, to 230 students of SD Lamie, 125 students of MIN Mondua, 88 students of MIS Bustanul Jannah and 80 students of MIS Gunong Panah. JRS ordered school desks and cupboards for 80 students



IDPs from Meulingge, Pulo Aceh Island returning to their place of origin.

of SMP Reusak and 93 students of MIN Gunong Reboe. In cooperation with 178 teachers, JRS provided books and teaching modules for elementary and high schools in Aceh Barat. JRS provided scholarships for 427 students.

#### **Support Local NGOs**

JRS proposed HMI, a local NGO, to monitor the teaching assistance and students who have received a scholarship.

#### **Restoring Life**

The reconstruction and rehabilitation of houses for 26 widows and the needy have just begun in Kuala Tripa. JRS recently distributed 450 bags of cements for Kuala Tripa. By the end of December, 100 houses will be ready for the people of Kuala Tripa. JRS also supported house restoration for 37 families in BL.

#### **Income Generating Activities**

JRS conducted a market survey in order to develop an Income Generating Activities program for cassava small industries in Gunong Mataie. JRS provided capital loans for 2 women in Gunong Mataie

**Information, Protection & Advocacy.** JRS attended a shelters-coordination meeting in Nagan Raya and a meeting about education in Dinas PK in West Aceh.

## Langsa

#### **Emergency Aid, Relief, and Assistance**

JRS distributed 6 baby kits for babies in Kuala Parek and provided supplementary food for 70 students of the emergency school in Kuala Idi Cut.

#### **Health Care (HEA) – Trauma Healing Activities**

JRS and *santris* and *tengkus* of Bustanul Fakri had a friendship meeting in Langsa. JRS hospitalized 2 students of Bustanul Fakri and 1 religious leader from Kuala Simpang Ulim.

#### **Education**

JRS staff conducted a needs assessment in Kuala Bugak. 20 Out of 145 families were affected by the tsunami, but had not received any assistance yet. Some of their children already dropped out of school because lack of funds. JRS, together with FPRM, distributed 99 school packages for 99 students of the elementary school/MIN in Kuala Bugak. JRS also had a meeting with the people of Kuala Bugak. Aided by Puspa Indah, a local NGO, JRS distributed school packages donated by the Society of Saint Vincent De Paul, Malaysia for the Raudhatul Amal orphanage in Idi Rayeuk. JRS provided school packages for 40 students of SD Kuala Parek. Moreover, JRS lobbied the Education and Teaching Department to obtain information about the governments planning on “post-tsunami education” in East Aceh. 170 students attended an alternative school supported by JRS in Kuala Idi Cut. JRS Langsa has been preparing a reading center in Langsa office.

#### **Support Local NGOs**

JRS trained 2 staff of FPRM, a local NGO, on education.

#### **Restoring Life.**

JRS participated in the religious ceremonies of the people of Kuala Simpang Ulim. JRS supported 16 small businesses from Kuala Simpang Ulim. JRS visited a small entrepreneur in Banda Aceh who received a capital loan from JRS Langsa.

#### **Information, Protection & Advocacy**

JRS accompanied some representatives of the people of Kuala Simpang Ulim to lobby UNHABITAT, asking information concerning house reconstruction for the people of Kuala Simpang Ulim. JRS together with Transparan and Puspa Indah, local NGOs, visited the GTZ office in Lhokseumawe and Banda Aceh to discuss the return of IDPs from Kuala Simpang Ulim. JRS visited

AMM to discuss the security of humanitarian workers. JRS visited the BRR office to inform BRR officers on the condition and the situation of IDPs from Kuala Simpang Ulim. JRS visited Mr. Muh Husen, the leader of Kuala Parek community. The information officer of JRS Langsa accompanied a documentary film maker to visit and record Bustanul Fakri profile.

## Tapak Tuan

### Emergency Aid, Relief, and Assistance

JRS visited Rantau Binuang camp to assess the condition of 107 families IDPs. The local government promised them they would be relocated soon.

### Health Care – Medical Activities

JRS visited Kota Fajar to assess the health care needs. Generally, the situation was back to normal after the flood. JRS visited three patients who suffered from harelip, osteofibro sarcoma and one patient who once was hospitalized in St Elizabeth, Medan. 145 beneficiaries from Pasie Lembang, Kluet Selatan Sub-district received

wells and wat-san facilities.

### Education

JRS appointed 3 volunteers as librarians for the JRS reading center in JRS' office in Tapak Tuan.

**Restoring Life.** SLTP 1 Kluet Tengah and SD Krueng Batu received sports equipments packages. JRS provided sarongs, women head scarves, rimless caps and praying mats for students of SMK Kecil in Sawang, people of Simpang Tiga, villagers of Jambo Papeun, villagers of Mersak and students of SDN Kampung Kapeh. JRS distributed Lebaran packets for 17 IDP families in Lhok Bengkuang and 145 packets for 145 families of returnees in Koto Indarung and Siurai-urai.

### Income Generating Activities

JRS identified possible beneficiaries for IGA program in Labuhan Haji Barat, Labuhan Haji Tengah, Labuhan Haji Timur, Meukek, Bakongan, Rantau Binuang, Lhok Bengkuang, Koto Indarung and Siurai-urai. □



The deputy of the governor of South Maluku and the officers of the provincial government held a meeting to discuss the rumors which caused a temporary displacement of the people of Kariu.

## Moluccas

### Rumourmongers

#### By Monica Supriyati

Rumours are part of social dynamics. This is not different for displaced people and returnees. It is hard to prevent rumours from intruding people's lives, although there are always ways to counter them.

This story happened just before Idul Fitri. A drunken man fell off his motorbike and hurt himself, but he told the people that came to aid that he had been hit by a stone thrown by somebody from another community. This make-up story could have severely

damaged the peaceful harmony between the two communities. Fortunately, both communities cross-checked the story and handled the issue before the situation got out of hand.

However, more and more rumours came up. Another rumour blamed the other community of hiding guns and planning to attack. When the leader confirmed the news to the head of the district police office in Haruku, it turned out the guns belonged to the district police.

On Idul Fitri, people from one community

spread the news that they would attack the other community in two days time. The people from the community facing the threats set out night watches and sent their women and children to take refuge to Ambon, Saparua and the forest in Kariu.

Seeing the situation worsen, JRS talked to several contact persons from the two communities, the local government and the local police station. All parties agreed to set up a clarification meeting for the two communities facilitated by JRS and the local

government. The meeting was held on Tuesday, November the 8<sup>th</sup> 2005 and resulted in a peace agreement between to communities, Kariu (returnees, Christian) and Pelauw (receiving communities, Moslems). They reconciled their differences and re-established the peaceful harmony by preventing new riots. Right after the meeting, the deputy of the South Maluku governor visited both communities to make sure that all matters were settled. □



The coordinator of Peduli Baku Bae, the Danramil (commander of Haruku district military), the prominent leaders and the representatives of Pelauw and Ori people (receiving communities) sitting together with Kariu people (returnees).

# The Book Launch of A Thousand Dreams of the Women of Buru



From Left to Right. Maria Hartiningsih, Melkiour Soulisa, Sisilia Latbual, Ira Febriana and Sutikno Sutanty.

About two hundred people attended the book launch of *Seribu Impian Perempuan Buru* (A Thousand Dreams of the Women of Buru) on Friday December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2005 in Toga Mas Book Shop, Yogyakarta. The two-hour discussion opened with the premiere of JRS' documentary film *Impian Sisca* (Sisca's dream). This documentary tells about the dreams of Sisca and other indigenous children of Buru for better access to education. The documentary was produced by JRS Buru staff, with the aid of Rani, a volunteer of JRS Indonesia, and Studio Audio Sinduharjo.

The book was written by the staff of JRS Buru, Sutikno Sutanty, Melani Wahyu Wulandari, Vivi Amalia, Theophilus Yanuarto and Bambang A. Sipayung. It tells about the struggle for education of women on Buru Island amid many taboos and prohibitions in their tradition. The book launch was also intended to give a better insight into the life of indige-

nous Burunese which long has been buried under the issue of the ex-political prisoners. JRS invited a number of organizations to persuade them to take an interest in and start up development projects focused on indigenous Burunese.

JRS had invited two key speakers Buru, Melkiour Soulisa and Sisilia Latbual, besides a well known columnist of the *Kompas Daily* who is also a prominent pundit on women's issues, Ms Maria Hartiningsih. The interactive and lively discussion was moderated by Ira, a scholar from Gadjah Mada University.

On December the 9<sup>th</sup> 2005, the team from JRS supported by students of STF Driyarkara organized a seminar on Buru in Jakarta Convention Center. Led by moderator Ignatius Haryanto, Dr. Gadis Arivia, an expert on women's issues and Dr. I. Wibowo Wibisono, an expert of development both offered interesting insights on the problems faced by the indigenous

Burunese. JRS key speakers on Buru, Melkiour and Sisilia Latbual told their stories once more to the –mainly NGO-public, together with the former program director of JRS Maluku, Bambang A. Sipayung.

Previous to the Seminar, the JRS team visited some iNGOs on a tour to advocate the condition and problems of indigenous Burunese with a focus on better access to education and health care.

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