

# REFUGE

Jesuit Refugee Service Indonesia

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



**JRS Indonesia Annual Report 2016**

**Three "S" for Freedom**

**Warm Welcome for a Refugee**

**Letter from a Refugee**

# JRS Indonesia Annual Report 2016

*Lars Stenger*

Indonesia, the ‘world’s largest country comprised solely of islands’ is home to 258 million people. Between January and December 2016 Indonesia hosted about 16,500 men, women and children seeking international protection via UNHCR Indonesia.

As Indonesia does not grant asylum seekers or refugees a right to work, many run out of financial savings over time and become dependent on support provided by organisations like JRS. Some even decide to give up their freedom in order to access food, shelter, and health assistance at one of the 13 Immigration Detention Centres (IDC’s) throughout the country.

JRS Indonesia’s biggest project is situated in West Java south of the capital Jakarta, where about 2,500 asylum seekers and refugees live. Here JRS provides education and psychosocial activities to over 500 people. JRS is the main service provider for those most vulnerable providing access to food, housing and health care as well as needed information and legal advice. JRS acts as key stakeholder in regards to monitoring protection concerns, which it voices to UNHCR and local authorities.

JRS was present most days of the week in two IDCs facilitating activities aimed to support the detainees’ well being as well as to advocate for better protection for asylum seekers and refugees detained in Manado, North Sulawesi

and Surabaya, East Java. Enduring often years in detention, JRS accompaniment and outdoor activities like picnic, city walks or sport activities are a welcome change to people detained, many suffering under stress and frustration. JRS activities provide a chance for social interaction between detained asylum seekers, and refugees with members of the local community, which JRS invites to participate in its activities.

In Yogyakarta JRS provides information, English classes and computer lessons to refugees released from detention and waiting for resettlement to a third country in one of IOMs community housing projects.

JRS Indonesia’s country office responded to the eviction of more than 7,000 members of the Gafatar (Gerakan Fajar Nusantara/Dawn Movement of the Archipelago) community from their homes in West Kalimantan, January 2016, addressing gaps in the emergency responds to remaining 103 IDPs in transit in Donohudan, Boyolali, Central Java. Gafatar have long generated public suspicion due to their belief system, which combines Islam with Christian and Jewish beliefs, leading to accusations that Gafatar members practice “deviant” teachings.

One local volunteer continued to support coordination efforts between NGOs and local government in the Rohingya responds during the first months of 2016 in Langsa, East Aceh.

Project Location	staff		volunteer		people served		EDU		Psychosocial		Livelihood		Healthcare		Adv/Protection		Emergency	
	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f
CO - IDP	4	1	2	3	50	53	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	53
West Java	3	4	11	16	500	300	0	0	390	189	86	59	44	27	81	58	0	0
Syrabaya IDC	3	0	0	0	148	0	0	0	132	0	0	0	0	0	148	0	0	0
Manado IDC	2	1	3	1	165	11	0	0	149	6	0	0	0	0	165	11	0	0
Yogyakarta	1	0	6	7	50	0	50	0	50	0	0	0	0	0	24	0	0	0
Aceh	0	0	1	0	131	43	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	131	43	0	0
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>1044</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>721</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>53</b>
	<b>19</b>		<b>50</b>		<b>1451</b>		<b>50</b>		<b>916</b>		<b>145</b>		<b>71</b>		<b>661</b>		<b>103</b>	

# Three “S” of Freedom

*Chaman Ali Dawoodi*

“S” means a suitcase, a pair of shoes and a shirt. These three things are precious to me, as I had waited for exactly two years in a detention center to receive them from an organization called IOM. Along with other detainees, my life was colored with such a journey of struggle and long waiting. There seemed nothing we could do in the detention center except waiting for a call to get the news of release.

One day was the time for twenty two people to be announced for a release. I supposed I was included in this number as that turn should have been for detainees of the same period of mine. Indeed, there were twenty two names on the list, but my name. I was left behind and my place was shifted to a friend, who was also our English teacher in the camp. There might not be any relation between his capability in English and the release. Somehow, the fact left me in unstopable wonder.

With the troubled heart, I got back to my cell to find everybody cheer me up by saying, “*You’re just unlucky, Man.*” I know that it was the way the people tried to be nice by saying some words to give comfort. The truth was there wasn’t any comfort at all. Such comments soon became common to my ears stating how unlucky I was that I felt heavier each day to just realize that I had no other choice. Counting back those days, the only option was to be waiting for my turn the following ten months.

The length of ten months was not only days and weeks. It was the fact that I had to accept that the other detainees were released before my turn. Within ten months I had to witness six times of releases. With the feeling of unease, I always watched other detainees to be released equipped with the same suitcases and outfitted with the same shirts and shoes. Each scene of farewell had made me hopeful and sure that one day I would wear those outfits myself. It was not about the price, even the style or free stuff, but it was a freedom out of the “prison-cell” detention center. I was longing for the day;



Chaman Ali Dawoodi wearing his new shirt

the day with the sight of my own farewell.

The big day finally came when I got the three important things as a symbol of my release. These three things turned out to be good things for me that day as all of my friends congratulated me. I could not forget how nice it was and how happy I was. The moment was unforgettable for me as I was so amused myself even to try the shirt and the shoes on. While I checked the look from the left and the right, put on my shoes and saw how it looked, they said “*It looks good on you, Man!*” I believe it was such a sight for those who were still expecting their turns. As they wished me success ahead in my life, I was hopeful that the day would also finally come for them to wear such “freedom.”

I know that the story of freedom doesn’t end here. It will still be continued to another struggle. With the bad and good things that have happened to us, we are taken to wherever we are and to be whatever we are now. In every struggle, there will always be a choice, a freedom to give meaning to even small things surrounding us such as suitcase, shoes and shirt, as simple as salam, smile, saying sorry and more other “Ss” ... .

# Warm Welcome for a Refugee

Chripina Maria Gracia



20 teachers and staff members of Don Bosco Junior High School Manado listening to Azizullah's story of why he became refugee

*“My life is threatened in Afghanistan. I was chased by the Taliban because of my face and my religion, and because I work for foreign institution,”* Azizullah\* a refugee living in Manado Immigration Detention Centre (IDC) spoke before 20 teachers and staff members of Don Bosco Junior High School Manado recently during a public awareness session initiated by JRS. This session was aimed to share information about refugees and asylum seekers to the public and introduce JRS work for refugees and asylum seekers in Manado IDC.

JRS brought Azizullah to this session with special permit from the IDC. That day, Azizullah told of the difficult life of Hazara people in Afghanistan, being the minority whose rights are violated and who are often treated unjustly. Longing for a life in peace, escaping threats and violence Azizullah and his friends went to seek protection in other countries. His speech made a strong impression on the teachers and staff members. Knowing about refugee issues only from the news and media, they could finally meet a cross border refugee in person. They were also quite impressed by Azizullah’s ability to speak Indonesian, even

with an Manadonese accent. Some of the teachers admitted that they were not aware about refugees living in Manado. Some also shared their experience being displaced during the Ambon conflict years ago. Listening to Azizullah’s story brought back memories of that difficult time. Even though the situation was quite different, they could understand what Azizullah had been through.

Then some of the teachers asked questions; how is the refugee status determination process, who is responsible to pay for refugees’ living cost, what are their daily activities in the detention centre, and what are refugees backgrounds. JRS answered all those questions and shared that refugees come from various different backgrounds. They are just the same like us; they have families, jobs and business, some have good education degrees. Some were bachelor, and some were Ph.D candidates. But they had to abandon their education and lost everything when they left their country in search for safety.

JRS Manado facilitates community service activities for refugees who like to share



Azizullah, a refugee living in Manado Immigration Detention Centre (IDC) spoke before 20 teachers and staff members of Don Bosco Junior High School Manado recently during a public awareness session initiated by JRS.

their knowledge and experience to local communities. For example, one refugee from Irak is now regularly teaching Arabic language at IAIN Manado, and another one from Iran is now teaching graphic and website design at Citra Kasih Senior High School. Other refugees have also expressed their interest to be involved in community service activities.

JRS took this chance to offer this opportunity for Don Bosco School to facilitate such activities. The Headmaster of Don Bosco, Fr. Drs. Herman Mandagi, CMM showed his interest. He emphasized that the refugee is also one of the Church's concern. The Catholic Social Teaching has boldly stated preferential option for the poor, including the refugees, those who had to flee and seek for protection in other countries. As part of the church, both teachers and staff, individually or as one school institution, have to realize their concern in real action. The school is open for refugees to teach in the English club. This can also serve as a learning opportunity for students to meet those refugees who live near them.

In his closing words, Azizullah expressed his gratefulness for being welcomed as a guest in Don Bosco Junior High School. He experienced the warmth of Manado people. Therefore he'd like to return the kindness by doing something useful for local society. *"Thank you for your kindness in welcoming us, refugees. We are here to serve you with our knowledge and skill,"* Azizullah said to the teachers and staff members.

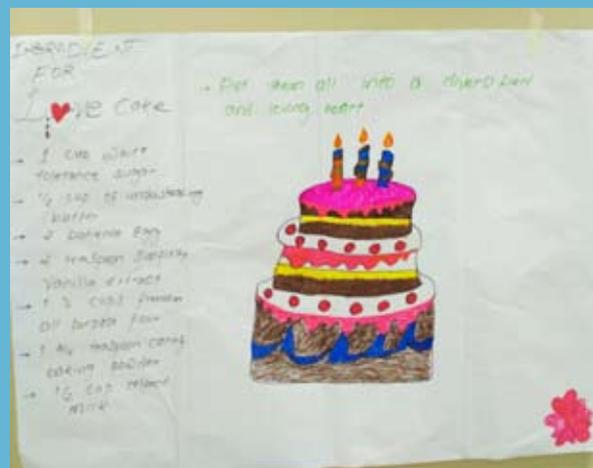
\*Name has been changed to protect identity

In Pontianak, JRS held a Public awareness session with almost 60 students from the Faculty of Law, Tanjungpura University discussing about refugee issues.



### COVER STORY:

Peace Cake drawing from JRS - Living Values Education Workshop for volunteer teachers, March 2017 in Bogor, the refugee volunteers were asked to draw a big piece of cake consisting of all the ingredients needed to create peace.



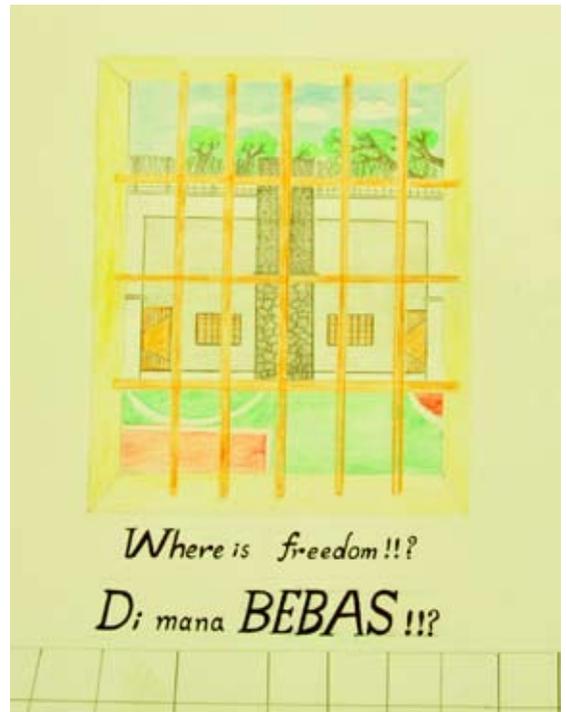
# Letter from a Refugee

Ali Reza

My name is Ali Reza\* from Afghanistan. I lived in Manado since September 2014. I used to live in the building of the former immigration office. There I found so many good Afghan friends who were teaching English for their friends. When they realized that I also knew English, they asked me to join them in teaching English. I started teaching a bigger class there and I saw these people really need my help. That was the time I felt proud of myself because I could do something for the people who really need it. Those days were great because I learned that even though I could not help my mom and my nephews or my family in Afghanistan, I could help other human beings. I was very busy there and I didn't even realize how those six months with all its challenges passed that soon. Then one afternoon, some immigration officers came to ask me to get ready to move to Manado Immigration Detention Centre (IDC), where I live now.

The day after that announcement, I was transferred to the IDC with nine other refugees. It was our New Year day, Nawruz. Even though confined in detention, it was a nice day. I saw so many other people came to our celebration including immigration officers, IOM, and JRS staff. It was my first time to hear about JRS, who works for refugee and asylum seekers. My first day of life here in detention started with fun and joys. On that day I met most of my students who had been transferred from Manado immigration office before me; they came to me and asked me to start the class here. As I realized that I would not face shortage of materials and sources, I started my class here as well.

Though I have kept myself busy, living in detention is still a big challenge for every one of us. Here, we are living like prisoners who don't even know their crime. But in this hard situation, having both IOM and JRS can help us a lot. Once I wanted to find some materials



Drawing by a refugee in one of Indonesia's IDCs

for my class specially to practice reading, and someone told me to talk with JRS staff. It was the first time I wanted to request something from JRS. When I talked to one of JRS' staff, I found her like a kind sister and a best friend of mine. She could prepare the material very soon and told me that any kind of help I need to improve my class would be accessible here. To help detainees with Indonesian language, we had an Indonesian language class with kind staff of JRS, and it was really awesome. I learned much about how to teach a second language for adults from our sympathetic JRS friends. I understood that they are really friendly and very good in assisting the detainees. Despite all problems inside the detention, having JRS staff was like being with your best friends in a very hard situation.

Last year, JRS arranged some very awesome excursions and it has been really great for all detainees. During my excursions with JRS, I really didn't feel that I am a detainee. I have travelled like tourist who has come to visit somewhere legally. After getting back from all excursions, I really felt fresh and energized. It is not only true for me but also for almost all detainees.

In addition to all other support and help for immigrants, I really appreciate the hard work for raising public awareness about refugees. As I know that if JRS don't work on it, people would think that all immigrants are the same.

This is what I learned from my journey and life in Indonesia; we are all born to serve humanity. It doesn't matter how much; the most important thing is to help people when they need it and as best as you can. I know we shall overcome all these difficulties and I believe that everything will be fine because after every hardship comes ease. I know once I have been able to help my mom and my nephews who live in a bad situation in Afghanistan, I will be able to support humanity.

To sum up, I would be very grateful if you could continue your help and support not only for me but also for all immigrants from all nationalities and religion.

*\*Name has been changed to protect identity*



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