



# ERTR News

## Aceh-Nias Emergency Response and Transitional Recovery

### ■ *Oleh-oleh* from Aceh

Buying an '*oleh-oleh*' (gift) for friends, family or relatives is a must for Indonesians travelling anywhere outside their residential zip code. It sounds odd, but it's a fact. Handicrafts such as *ulos* from Medan, *batik* from Jogja, bas-relief from Bali, or sandals and shoes from Bandung are common gifts Indonesians 'need' to bring home when returning from a trip. Only one percent of Indonesians can afford to travel annually. However, with a population of over 240 million, there is potential for two and a half million domestic handicraft purchases per year.



A broadcloth factory in Banda Aceh

What's the ultimate *oleh-oleh* to buy when in Aceh? Selecting a single item may prove difficult as many traditional gifts exist in the region: coffee, dried beef, bags, hats, broadcloth, etc. Some products offer stylish packaging and high-quality contents. However, sales of many crafts and products remains stunted as standards of quality and supply do not meet the market demand.

Current reconstruction brings thousands of humanitarian workers from around the globe to Aceh. Like travelling Indonesians, these international workers look for gifts to take home when they complete their assignment. Some admit Acehnese gifts are unique and interesting yet they don't always satisfy current trends and styles so they are not bought. Without improving standards, the local craft market will quickly be saturated with unwanted products.

The handicraft industry in Aceh suffered greatly from the 2004 earthquake and tsunami. Immediate response by UNDP has been linked to medium- and long-term programming support. This includes recovery of the small trade industry which is coordinated with Banda Aceh Dinas Perindag (Office for Small Industries and Trades) and UNDP's implementing partners. UNDP supports this programme by providing training and grants to more than 4,000 small business owners and handicraft artisans of Banda Aceh and Aceh Besar.

UNDP now expands its support by bringing design consultants to focus on making handicraft products more suitable for a wider audience. Products are assessed with international standards in mind and consultation is given on packaging, product quality and variety, and marketing strategies. The program is coordinated with Dutch Design in Development (DDID), a Dutch government initiative matching professional Dutch designers and export companies with design academies in developing countries. DDID works closely with *Aceh Dekranas* (the National Craft Board) which further supports local craft industries.

DDID consultants Yvonne Bovee and Marly Huibregtse have been advising Aceh craftspeople since July 2006. With their knowledge of the European market and tastes, they work with local producers to select color, fabric and style to make local products more attractive to the European market.

In addition to its work with Dekranas, the Dutch programme targets entrepreneurial-minded handicraft producers who have a potential to sell goods beyond Aceh. These targeted producers are able to meet international quality standards and quantity demands. The long-term goal of this programme is to open up non-traditional export markets, such as Europe, as well as explore the possibility of web-based marketing. How likely are Acehnese products to be purchased once the memory of the tsunami fades? Creating a 'brand' for Acehnese products may gain market visibility and keep Aceh in the public's mind.

A great opportunity exists for Aceh artisans to tap into a two-million strong domestic market and, with the current influx of ex-pats, to attract international buyers - all of which will boost recovery and expand the handicraft industry.

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The ERTR Programme commenced activities in January 2005 in the immediate aftermath of the tsunami disaster of 26 December 2004. It builds on the United Nations Indian Ocean Earthquake/Tsunami Flash Appeal which was launched by the UN Secretary General in Indonesia on 6 January 2005.

*UNDP is the United Nations worldwide development network. It advocates change and provides countries with access to the knowledge, skills and resources their populations need to improve their lives.*

The latest information on tsunami recovery efforts is available at <http://www.undp.or.id/tsunami>

## ■ UNDP Supports Civil Society Organizations

The facts are astonishing. In the December 2004 tsunami and March 2005 earthquake, 92,000 small/home industries in Aceh were incapacitated, 23,330 hectares of rice fields and 22,785 hectares of cultivated land were destroyed, farming equipment and tools were lost or damaged. 9,563 vessels of Aceh's 16,070 fishing fleet were damaged. Fishpond and fishery infrastructure such as landing docks were destroyed. In the employment sector, an estimated 25% of the 2.2 million labour force lost their work due to the natural disaster.

Recovering from this mass destruction requires comprehensive planning based on consultation and participation. In order to promote the recovery of sustainable livelihoods, UNDP designed a framework which strengthens the capacity of local civil society organizations (CSOs), local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs).

The Support to Civil Society Programme provides technical and small grant assistance to local organizations which allows them to implement community-based development activities. The programme supports local CSOs to undertake participatory livelihoods assessments, develop community action plans, and deliver livelihoods recovery activities based on the results of the assessments. Recovery activities focus on micro-rural and urban livelihood creation, small enterprises and trades (including women's enterprises), as well as fisheries, aquaculture, agriculture and livestock.

Additionally, the programme builds the technical capacity of local CSOs and helps them establish effective and transparent management practices. Capacity-building support includes training in sustainable livelihoods methods, participatory mapping and appraisal, community organizing, gender-mainstreaming, project management, financial management and accounting, project monitoring and evaluation, and other skills. Training in skills ranging from financial management and bookkeeping to chili cultivation has been received by over 400 participants who are members of local NGOs.

As of July 2006, 56 local NGOs from Banda Aceh, Aceh Besar, Bireun, Aceh Barat Daya, Pidie, Aceh Selatan, Aceh Utara, Lhokseumawe, Sabang, Singkil and Nias have received grants of over USD 600,000 benefiting 2,500 families. Beneficiaries now work in farming, fisheries and fishing, kiosks, brick manufacturing, corn harvesting, livestock, poultry, and small trades and home industries. Grants are also used for revolving fund schemes and scholarships.



*School children are able to receive scholarships from grants provided by the Support to Civil Society Programme*

## ■ Aceh Prepares for National Olympics

For the 2008 National Olympics, the province of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (Aceh) will focus on intensive training for its 64 olympic athletes competing in 16 different sports. This will be a challenging task for the Aceh Sports Committee (KONI) who manages the province's athletes as Aceh lost many athletes and sports facilities to the tsunami.

Current reconstruction efforts have resulted in significant progress in the rehabilitation of schools, housing and health facilities. However, rehabilitation of other public structures, particularly sporting facilities, has been limited.

UNDP, coordinating with Aceh Youth & Sports Agency, KONI, and Hope International, is currently working to restore community sporting facilities in 12 tsunami-affected districts. Sports facility restoration is crucial to provide the community a public venue for fitness, entertainment, and social events. The project not only refurbishes facilities but will provide temporary employment for local construction workers and replace lost sporting equipment.

Like many cities in Indonesia, popular sports in Aceh include football, volleyball and basketball. Restoration of these specific sporting facilities is a priority. Currently 12 sports courts have been completed. Over 90 courts in total are scheduled for reconstruction in Banda Aceh, Sabang, Aceh Besar, Pidie, Bireun, Lhokseumawe, Aceh Utara, Aceh Jaya, Aceh Barat, Nagan Raya, Simeulue and Singkil.

In the 2008 national olympics, Aceh KONI expects its athletes to defend their position from the last competition and hopefully bring home some medals!

*Left, above: Finishing touches are put on a volleyball court in Ketapang, Banda Aceh. Below: Former NBA Player Arthur "Big Art" poses with local kids in newly constructed basketball court in Lampriet, Banda Aceh*



## ■ New Disaster Preparedness Code Introduced

Nias pioneered new disaster preparedness efforts by introducing a building Code of Minimum Standards during a recent training course on Design and Construction. Twenty-four building supervisors attended the course on 25-27 July 2006 in Gunung Sitoli, the capital of Nias.

The group was trained using the *Handbook on Good Building Design and Construction*, an informative text in Bahasa Indonesia clearly illustrating good and bad construction examples with colorful photos and diagrams. With its easy-to-understand style the handbook has also attracted interest in the general public.



Newly trained building supervisors are given examples of disaster preparedness during a Design and Construction course held in Gunung Sitoli, Nias

Robin Willison, Technical Advisor on Disaster Preparedness to UNDP Indonesia, developed the handbook for Aceh and Nias to improve hazard resistance of houses built in the aftermath of the major earthquakes of 26 December 2004 and 28 March 2005. The handbook includes the Code of Minimum Standards for house construction, formatted in a step-by-step checklist.

With over 1100 seismic events in the region in 2005, the Code of Minimum Standards is a welcome and practical application for ongoing reconstruction. Technical guidelines in construction abound; yet this is the first time a structured code has been established.

In a field study, the building supervisors applied the Code's checklist to assess construction quality of a random housing project. By assigning principles learned in the course, the group determined the project was not up to BRR Nias standards.

"Before we didn't know what factors made a building earthquake resistant. Now we understand," explained one of the participants.

In the course evaluation, participants listed points – as reminders to themselves and the public – to improve area-wide reconstruction: ensure the quality of building materials, select only qualified professional contractors, establish price controls on materials and labor, and create effective coordination between BRR, the building contractor, the building supervisor and the public.

With the newly introduced Code of Minimum Standards, UNDP continues to make a major contribution to the "Build Back Better" strategy in Aceh and Nias.

## ■ Ownership Equals Success in Village Reconstruction

Cash-for-work programmes help clear roads of debris, clean schools for re-opening and build or repair critical infrastructure. Post-crisis, it injects much-needed money into local economies, offers local labourers employment, and helps to restart small businesses. By helping people envision a speedy recovery and a return to normalcy, cash-for-work positively impacts the individual and the community.

In Cot Paya, a coastal village in Baitussalam sub-district, UNDP and Mercy Corps implemented a cash-for-work programme in the construction of a new drainage canal.

Cot Paya lost almost 70 percent of its population in the 2004 tsunami. Infrastructure was severely damaged. The main drainage canal, which previously functioned as a waste water system, was completely destroyed. Without a drainage system, tides and heavy rains could cause the entire village to flood and worsen the situation.

Mercy Corps, UNDP's implementing partner, has worked in the village since January 2005. Mercy Corps initially proposed structures such as latrines, a water tank, and a community center or *Meunasah* for the village. However, the community identified the drainage canal as the most essential need.

By involving the community in assessing and prioritising its own needs completion of the drainage canal was greeted as a huge success. Because of open and cooperative village communication the entire community possesses a high level of ownership. The project employed 60 skilled labourers from Cot Paya and other unskilled labourers volunteered. Women contributed by providing food and drink.

The five-hundred meter canal, completed in June 2006, not only benefits the people of Cot Paya, but also the nearby communities of Klieng Cot Arun, Kajhu, and Lambaro Angan.



## ■ Lending a Helping Hand in Aceh

**Volunteer** [*vol.en.tir, n.*] a person who renders aid, performs a service, or assumes an obligation. A United Nations Volunteer (UNV) seems to exceed this definition. He or she is more than a dreamer or altruist. Experienced and able, UNVs willingly immerse themselves in a host of cultures, living conditions and seemingly impossible assignments.

Created in 1970 at the request of UN member states, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is the volunteer arm of the UN. It is administered by UNDP. Last year the UNV programme mobilized 8,400 volunteers to support peace, relief and development in 144 countries.

In Aceh and Nias, at least one international or national UNV is present in every UN agency. From Kenya to Australia, Tajikistan to Canada, 15 nationalities have come to offer their expertise. Their skills range from construction engineering and humanitarian affairs to psychology and community development. Here, UNVs encompass duties from strategic planning and research for the ALES election project to the initial establishment and oversight of the UNAIDS Programme in Aceh province.



*United Nations Volunteers in Aceh have been recruited from more than 15 nations*

Deepty Tiwari, an urban planner from India, works with UN Habitat. When deciding to come to Aceh, her friends and family all warned her of what they had heard about Aceh: the conflict with GAM, Sharia law, early curfew, possible outbreaks of disease. But she accepted the assignment anyway.

"I came, and found all the rumours to be false," Deepty says, smiling.

Based on her work in disaster risk mitigation in the aftermath of the 2001 Gujarat, India, earthquake, Deepty was eager to look at a preventive approach.

"My work in Gujarat was all post-construction. So I was excited about the opportunity to work here in a pre-construction capacity."

Deepty monitors the Joint UN Programme for UN Habitat. The Joint Programme advises on urban planning, design and recovery issues. It also promotes the participation of stakeholders at the community level. Forums are held at the community, city, and sub-district levels. Ultimately, the Joint Programme will provide a spatial structure outline for Meuraxa and Nias which will be used as a blueprint for future expansion. Deepty is responsible for updating donors on the programme's development.

To date, UN Habitat has assisted in the construction of 3450 houses in Banda Aceh, Aceh Besar, Simeulu, Pidie, and Nias.

"Aceh is a wonderful place. The Acehnese are cooperative and participatory and forward-looking. And my job here at UN Habitat is very fulfilling," Deepty summarizes.

Francesca Campagnoli of Italy also works with UN Habitat as a Data Management Specialist. Francesca first came to Aceh to volunteer for the UPLink organization, part of the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights. Working with urban poor rehabilitation in UPLink's Udeep Beusaree ("Living Together") program, a self-help network of 24 post-tsunami villages, she fully integrated into local life, participating in weddings and ceremonies, sporting events and traditional music.

"Village life was so rewarding. I felt like I was adopting a country. I wanted to continue my work here in Aceh, but I couldn't continue living off my savings," Francesca said.

The posting with UNV then came up, and soon she found herself at UN Habitat.

Francesca's background in social housing projects in the USA, UK, and Nicaragua, gave her an understanding of urban poor issues. In Aceh, she was able to supplement her experience with housing policy and evaluation methodologies, and also able to observe different approaches to construction.

Francesca manages data for the Policy Unit of UN Habitat. The Policy Unit monitors NGO-sponsored, or third-party, construction projects. Monitoring focuses on material and workmanship quality, the number and placement of housing units, and project financial data and timelines. The unit also looks at the big picture, by inquiring how and if these newly built communities adhere to UN Millennium Development Goals. As part of the team, Francesca organizes public outreach efforts to convey this information.

"With the benefits it offers, the United Nations Volunteers programme gives me a chance to stay longer, to absorb and contribute more to the culture," Francesca comments.

UNDP's ERTR programme embraces volunteerism as an integral part of recovery efforts. By warmly welcoming more than 60 UNVs, Aceh and Nias have gained a wealth of experience and expertise.