

# REFUGE

Jesuit Refugee Service Indonesia

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



**Bahasa Indonesia for Survival**

**Safe Activities for Children**

**JRS and Do 1 Thing Campaign**

# Bahasa Indonesia for Survival

Tiro Daenuwy SJ



Tiro with some of his students  
(Faces blurred to protect refugees' identity)

I've never taught Bahasa Indonesia before, let alone to a group of Hazara refugees from Afghanistan and Pakistan residing in Cisarua, Bogor. Many villages sprawled throughout the highlands of Cisarua are now a home for approximately 2,600 refugees that live in one room apartments or houses.

Their lives are surrounded by open-air markets they call bazaar ('pasar' in Indonesian) connected by a network of brightly colored minivans they amicably call giri-giri ('angkot' in Indonesian). Somehow in history, a refugee coined the term giri-giri from hearing fellow passengers say "Kiri! Kiri!" indicating the vehicle to stop, actually by saying go "Left! Left!" With the giri-giri, they have access to hospitals, shopping centers, and most importantly – the Bogor train station that can take them all the way to the UNHCR building in Jakarta. About five years

ago refugees would typically transit in Indonesia for two to three years, so a few Indonesian words or phrases was good enough to get by.

However, given the geopolitical climate of their home countries and host nations, the refugee community in Indonesia was informed by UNHCR in early 2018 that their transit in Indonesia would be approximately 20-25 years. Knowing how to speak Indonesian became a key requirement for survival, should they be willing to wait. JRS saw this as an opportunity to offer Indonesian classes at the learning center in Cisarua and restarted its Indonesian classes in February 2018.

I was fortunate to be involved as a volunteer Indonesian teacher in August 2018 for JRS. My intention was to create a relaxing environment where learning is fun. Our sessions took place on Monday

to Thursday afternoons for one hour at the JRS Learning Center. Interested refugees were divided according to their language proficiency. A majority of my students were of Hazara descent from Afghanistan and Pakistan who speak Dari, Urdu, and English. Interestingly, they somehow started calling me *guru* instead of teacher and asked questions such as, “*Guru, why do our neighbors often ask where we are going every time they see us walk by?*” and “*Guru, why do Indonesians eat so often? Even late at night?*” From this I realize the importance of teaching cultural context alongside with language.

Often times Indonesian becomes lost in translation on its way to making any sense in their mother tongues of Dari and Urdu. Especially when words and phrases are translated from the English translation using Google Translate.

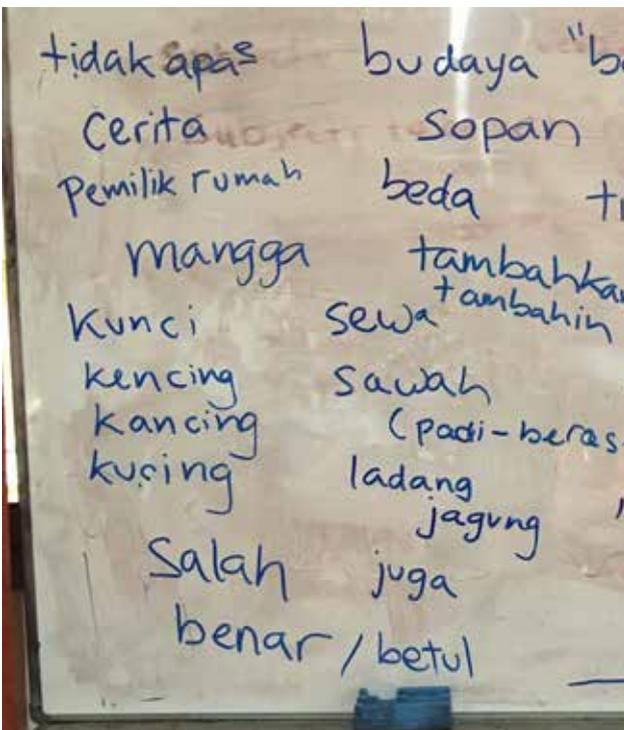
A cultural concept that was little difficult to explain is how Indonesians address others according to their social status. For example, the word *bapak* when used as a noun means father. But we often use *Bapak*

to address an adult man we’ve just met instead of using the word *Anda* or You, which can be quite impolite.

To avoid misinterpretation, I would always explain through cultural contexts and have them come up with meanings using their own logic. One way to do this was through acting out the word and demonstrating how it is used. There were also issues hearing and pronouncing different vowels in Indonesian, such as words like *teman* (friend) and *taman* (garden). In order to further emphasize the importance of pronunciation, I would provide them with words that sound the same but have completely different meaning such as the words *kunci* (to lock) with similar phonetic variations of *kucing* (cat), *kancing* (button), and *kencing* (urine) – to which they would burst out in laughter when they learn about the meanings.

Now and then, the reality of being a refugee disrupts class. News of terrorist attacks back home or being left behind by friends who have been resettled becomes a reminder of the harsh reality that they have to live with every day. I had to be careful to avoid using words that may trigger trauma or depression. One time, I unthinkingly made a sentence using the word *pindah* or ‘to move’ in the context of resettlement. A student began to complain about how unfair life is because she’s been in Indonesia for much longer than her friends that have left and yet she has not received any news for her resettlement. She even said that “*If I do not hear anything in the next two months, I will jump from the mountain to kill myself!*”

Trying to keep my calm, I tried to lighten the mood by talking about emotions in Indonesian. One of the words that were introduced was ‘*benci*’ or hate. However, many mispronounced the word as *banci*, which meant transvestite – to which all of them burst into laughter. For just a second



# JRS Indonesia 2019



JRS also holds some activities to facilitate integration between refugees and local communities.

there, I was fortunate to be able to flip the mood of the class around.

Volunteering to teach refugees has taught me that social work is not always about providing information or training that they need. Aside from teaching, we have to be their friend, entertainer and caretaker. In one hand, we should fully understand the tragic reality they have to live with every day and yet at the same time create a space where all of that can disappear and they can just relax—just for an hour or two. Coming to class becomes their favorite escape and learning becomes a bonus. At the end of a session, a student came to me and said “*Guru, when I am in your class. I feel happy.*”

For me, to see them smile and laugh sparks joy in my heart and makes me feel like I’ve contributed something positive in their lives. And with that, hopefully many of them can spread positivity to their community so that they would have the courage to hope and gather the strength to carry on.



JRS Indonesia 2019 staff and volunteer  
Top (Left-Right): Daryadi, Indra, Zainuddin, Qoni, Roswita, Gading, Tiro SJ, Taka, Victoria, Peter SJ, Lars  
Bottom (Left-Right): Vembri, Agus, Bonita, Sari, Maswan SJ, Adi, Melani, Elga, Mia



JRS Indonesia Foundation board with JRS Indonesia Country Director (Ki-Ka):  
Bunadi, Suharjanto SJ, Peter Devantara SJ, Baskara T. Wardaya SJ, Maswan Susinto SJ, Andreas Sugijopranoto SJ, Br. Sarju SJ

# Safe Activities for Children

*Entis Sutisna*



*Entis Sutisna, Psychosocial Support Project Coordinator for Survivors of Natural Disasters, Central Sulawesi shared his notes in organizing activities for children in refugee camps.*

*When there's an earthquake, protect your head  
When there's an earthquake, get under the table  
When there's an earthquake, stay away from mirrors and glass  
When there's an earthquake, go into the open area*

I could hear children from the refugee camp singing their new favorite song. The volunteers were singing and dancing together with them. That song became very popular and recognizable under other children songs during this recovery time in Central Sulawesi.

After three disasters, earthquake, tsunami, and liquefaction on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2018 brought deep sorrow to many of the

survivors. Some lost family members and loved ones, their belongings and homes. This natural disaster separated families, hurt people physically; some even became disabled from the injuries.

Many children suffered, they lost parents or family members, or were separated from their families. It is important to accompany those child survivors and pay attention to their mental health. For example, some children have troubles adapting to life in their shelter, they became irritable, angry, or withdrawn, some expressed their frustrations in challenging behavior.

I hope with some of our activities to provide a clearer direction and support to better cope and grow their resilience. Via our activities that are not just exciting, but also encouraging confidence and help their current adjustment and healing, we provide some safe space, regular activities, and the opportunity to laugh and share feelings with others.

Disasters affect people in different ways, not only children, but also elderly, adults, and people with disability. In Sulawesi as in other disasters, child friendly activities are often first to be thought of, but doing them well and sustainable is not an easy task. While compared to other age groups, most organizations provide psychosocial support for children mostly the 5-12 years old. Data collected by the Psychosocial Support Program coordinator at the Ministry of Social Affairs shows that most organizations provide activities for children (55%), teenager (22%),

adult (12%), and elderly (5%) across 119 displacement sites in Palu-Sigi-Donggala area. Children are provided with the most activities compared to displaced people of other age groups.

In some cases, more is not better. I remember one of the camp coordinators saying there are many organizations willing to help children, but sometimes they do it without coordinating with the camp and consideration, they directly approach children and play with them. There were days when children play with volunteers 1-2 hours each session, about 2-3 times a day with different organizations, as a result they become too exhausted for study and school.

Providing psychosocial activities for children is not as easy as it seems. It has to be well coordinated, prepared and be in accordance to their current needs. When preparing and implementing activities, one has to ask oneself, can I be a good role model for the children, what activities can be of support for them. So slowly our activities can provide a safe and happy space, nurture hope and resilience, and skills strengthening them in their life after a disaster.

Psychosocial activities should pay attention to the individual child, its condition, going beyond promoting skills

towards cleanliness, including practicing a social behavior and living ones values, for example by ensuring all children that want to participate are included, e.g those with disabilities. One simple step is to ask who couldn't come today and why, so we and the children can go to their place to invite them to join us. Accompanying, serving, and advocating for displaced children, one has to be aware of their rights to education, to play and to be involved. Planning our activities in a clean and safe space ensures there are no injuries and children stay healthy.

As one under many NGOs in a disaster area, one has to learn from others mistakes and listen to the communities, ensuring snacks for children are healthy, promoting an environmentally conscious mentality by ensuring waste goes to a bin before ensuring a fun learning experience and the promotion of other values.

Accompanying and serving children can be fun and challenging at the same time, much time is spent preparing and planning and more time for finding ways to ensure their surrounding community and authorities acknowledge and fulfill their rights. I always remind myself that children are the future and healthy and resilient children build a healthy and resilient next generation.

### **Psychosocial Support Project for Survivors of Natural Disasters, Central Sulawesi**

From January to March 2019, JRS Indonesia have served 1,157 grade school children in 10 schools (2 in Palu, 4 in Sigi, and 4 in Donggala) many of which are located on top of the Palu-Koro strike-slip fault zone.

Our activities are designed for schoolchildren with aims to:  
help children cope with the effects of the natural disasters, reduce psychological trauma that may have caused aggressive

behavior and difficulties in focusing in school, provide skills for psychological resilience to help children adapt with their daily problems

JRS Indonesia have also conducted 3 workshops for psychosocial assistance and psychological first aid for teachers and communities for 33 community members that include representatives from the school committee, Family Welfare Movement (PKK), and Karang Taruna Youth Organizations.

# JRS and Do 1 Thing Campaign

*Victoria Sindy M.*



Victoria (Right) with some other volunteers during a fundraising activity in a parish in Jakarta

Initially, I only planned to be with JRS for a few months, but as time goes by this has turned already into 3 years since I started volunteering at JRS Indonesia national office in Yogyakarta. I spend one to two days each week to come to JRS, my main duties being to maintain JRS' website, newsletter, and social media accounts (Facebook page and YouTube channel, for now). Besides that, I help documenting JRS' activities, translating documents, and preparing fundraising events.

## **JRS and Social Media**

JRS mission is to accompany, serve, and advocate the rights of refugees and those who are forcibly displaced. Social media is one of the key channels JRS uses to communicate with the world, in carrying out our mission and promoting protection and hospitality to refugees. Social media allows JRS to sustain and expand its role as a credible and trusted voice for forcibly displaced persons and their plight and to reach as many people as possible. Through social media JRS hopes to generate

awareness and, at times, a much-needed response to certain events or situations related to refugees.

JRS hopes to change the public view of refugees; that they are not a security threat because of why and how they enter our country, but people who ask and need our protection because their lives are threatened in their own country.

By sharing refugees' stories, JRS wants to show that they are not just numbers or images in the news. They are human beings, individuals with a story to tell, who have the desire to live a decent and safe life with their loved ones in safety.

I really enjoy working with all JRS staff. It feels like being with my own family. I work with people from various backgrounds, all fighting for the same mission. Even though JRS is a Church's organization, not all of the staff are Catholics. Some are Moslems, there was a Hindu too. Our different religions have never been a barrier in working together for humanity, on the contrary it has enriched JRS and our service.

All of us have different roles to play, each according to our capacity. Some work directly with refugees in detention centers and the urban community. Some interact with different parties and stakeholders to advocate the need to ensure the rights of refugees are respected. Some handle the administration at the office to keep programs and services well organized and on track.

I picture JRS teamwork as a tree. There are fruits that refugees can enjoy directly. There's the stem that provides strength and support. There are the roots to ensure JRS gets all the nutrients (support) in order to bear fruit.

I myself have meet directly with refugees only about 5 times, only when there was an event with refugees in Yogyakarta 2 years ago, and at some fundraising activities in some churches in Jakarta. I often receive the stories about refugees and their struggles from other staff members in field projects, which I then edit and share through JRS social media and this newsletter.

Hearing the story from refugees, it is truly heartbreaking. I find it hard to understand why there are so many atrocities in the world, which uproots more than 68.5 million people from their homes because of war or persecution. They are forced to travel far and dangerously, walking hundreds of kilometers in extreme weather, taking boats that are often far from seaworthy, drifting, in the hot sun, strong winds and the rain, towards the middle of nowhere, with ever new barricades being invented to prevent their arrival.

They just want to save themselves and family members. Too many lose their lives or loved once on those trips. It's so agonizing to imagine fathers risking their lives for their families, mothers who strive to protect their children, little children who follow their parents even though they don't understand why they should stop playing and leave home, or young people who give up education or work for their safety with or without their family.

In detention or in urban centers, a refugees' survival still too often remains unclear. They continue to wait in uncertainty, wondering when they will be accepted by an asylum country, this can take years or decades.

“...We are precious, each and every one of us... Through the darkness of today's conflicts, each and every one of us can become a bright candle, a reminder that light will overcome darkness, and never the other way around.”

Pope Francis

Hope for refugees begins with you.

#Do1Thing



Anyone who realizes their situation will be saddened. But, we shouldn't let this sadness make us frustrated or helpless. Refugees, even in their difficulties and uncertainties, are powerful and hopeful individuals. I learned a lot from their resilience. Many of them, even though in distress, still want to share and be useful to those around them, finding ways to being generous in an otherwise difficult situation.

Pope Francis once said, *“God promises renewal and freedom for all the oppressed in the world, but He needs us to fulfill His promises. He needs our eyes to see the needs of our brothers and sisters. He needs our hands to offer help to them.”*

God meets you where you are. God showed me the opportunity to be a volunteer at the right time, to become an extension of His hands for refugees. He invited me to use the skills I had to help JRS. When I met JRS and was offered to volunteer, I was hesitant, what could I give. Teach and assist refugees? Ah, I was not sure I would have the adequate skill for that. Then through a discussion with Fr. Maswan Susinto SJ, former Director of JRS Indonesia and several other national office staff, we found a simple thing that I can offer, which hopefully can contribute to changing the lives of some refugees.



“ Many people from other countries want to help refugees. When a person helps me, I feel happy. I feel close to them. ”  
Najib, Cisaura  
**#Do1Thing**

Daya Adicipta Wisesa once included a dozen of refugees detained at the Manado Immigration Detention Centre (IDC) in a mechanical course. Meanwhile, the sisters from Jesus Maria Joseph (JMJ) congregation taught women refugees to sew and make handicrafts, as well as facilitate some child refugees to attend school, or ensuring the safe birth of refugee children.

In Medan, some Daughters of St. Anne (DSA) sisters joined JRS in accompanying refugees at Medan IDC, providing activities and opportunities to learn to women and children. They have also generously accommodated one Iraqi refugee family after their release from detention.

The Sisters of FMM (Franciscan Missionaries of Mary) in Bogor once gave sewing courses for refugee women and allowed a child refugee to attend their school for some time at Regina Pacis Bogor.

In response to the many refugees who flocked in front of the Kalideres IDC, several parishes in Jakarta (Trinity Cengkareng, St Mary Immaculate Kalideres, St. Monica Serpong, Immaculate Heart of St. Virgin Mary Tangerang) taking turns in providing food and health services for more than 300 refugees.

There are still so many more things big and small being done. For example, some parishes in Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Surakarta, and Semarang have provided opportunities for JRS Indonesia to share concerns about refugees through Eucharistic services and raise support and funds for refugees. Many young Indonesians were involved in helping JRS during those fundraising activities. Then there were medical volunteers who help JRS to check the health of refugees, accompany refugees to hospitals, some become translators for refugees, teach in various classes at JRS learning centers, and translate JRS documents.

### Do 1 Thing

To help refugees, JRS cannot work alone. We need to work together with many parties, we also need support from the wider community. Since the beginning of 2018, JRS has launched an international campaign titled #Do1Thing to show what individuals can do, to welcome, protect, empower, and integrate refugees in living together in the community. Through JRS' various information channels around the world, refugees and volunteers shared their stories, ordinary people who do simple things for refugees, such as offering friendships or helping to teach languages, prepare meals in public kitchens, teach swimming, accompany recreation, and so on. This is not about big and heroic acts, but often only to offer one thing, one form of support, one day a week that after time leads to small changes.

God does not wait for us to be perfect. Starting from the things that seem small and simple at first, we can still contribute in the lives of refugees. The #Do1Thing campaign is also present in JRS Indonesia social media.

Many simple things have been done. In Manado, a Honda dealer staff at PT

By continuing to share the stories of refugees and these simple things that can be done to help refugees via social media, I hope there will be more people encouraged to find and do the one thing they can do for refugees. Hopefully the one little thing I do, can lead to more good being done for our brothers and sisters, who are here as refugees.

In closing my reflection, please allow me to ask you and those around you for your support to join me and others in doing one (or more) simple thing to help refugees. Starting from the easiest to do, let's pray for them. Let's routinely remember them in our prayers, so that the refugees can continue to feel the presence of God in the difficult situations they experience, so that there are more people who are moved to become an extension of God's hand in changing the lives of refugees.

If you can support any services for refugees, by volunteering or donating and are willing to go beyond prayers, please do so. One simple step to participating is in sharing information and stories about refugees to people around us, to touch their hearts and minds so they will understand what it means to be a refugees and forcibly displaced.

Finally, if you want to know more about refugee issues, the activities of JRS Indonesia, and provide support in any form, find us on the [@JRSIndonesia](https://www.facebook.com/JRSIndonesia) Facebook page or on the website [www.jrs.or.id](http://www.jrs.or.id)



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