

UNICEF NEWS

Aceh & Nias

January 2007



**UNICEF Opens First Mother
and Child Health Centre**

First UNICEF-Supported Community Mother and Child Centre Opens in Aceh

The first of more than 200 UNICEF-supported mother-and-child health centres in Aceh and Nias was completed early January and handed over to Aceh's Provincial Health Department in a formal on-site ceremony on January 26.



Traditional dances by local children celebrated the opening of the Tanjong Polindes, a midwifery and birthing centre of 190 square metres, built with traditional masonry at Tanjong Village on the edge of the capital Banda Aceh.

Representatives of the Bupati's office, provincial and district health office, resident midwife Ibu Radliana, the Tanjong Village Chief and local residents attended the handover.

The Tanjong Polindes includes a residence for the midwife and a post-delivery recovery room.

UNICEF has committed to build up to 227 health centres across Aceh and the North Sumatran island of Nias under its "Posyandu Plus" programme. Three more health centres are already under construction, 40 are under tender, and another 80 are under design with sites already identified.

"Posyandu Plus" is designed to restore and upgrade the Indonesian Government's 30-year old "posyandu" system, under which mobile health teams visited villages once a month to deliver family health services.



The permanent Posyandu-Plus centres combine community midwifery and basic preventive and curative services for women and children, with early childhood development facilities.

The centres provide not only delivery rooms but antenatal and neonatal care, breastfeeding support, growth monitoring, regular immunization, parental education, micronutrient provision, basic health information and behavioural change promotion.



Most health centres will also have an Early Childhood Development Centre for three to six-year-olds. Seventeen of the Posyandu-Plus centres will also be equipped with a Child Protection Centre.

FIRST MOTHER AND CHILD HEALTH CENTRE HANDLED OVER BY UNICEF



NEWS FROM ACEH AND NIAS

Anti-Trafficking Workshop Moves to Create Provincial Committee

More than 100 stakeholders and policy-makers spent two days debating laws and policies to prevent the trafficking of women and children in Aceh at a workshop supported by UNICEF in the provincial capital.

Representatives of provincial welfare, judicial, health and law enforcement authorities along with academics and civil society groups took part. A roundtable discussion was held on creating a legal framework to set up a Provincial Anti-Trafficking Committee.

“UNICEF and its partners worked very hard after the tsunami to avoid cases of trafficking in the provinces of Aceh and Nias. Although the result has been very encouraging, we must stay on alert,” said Edouard Beigbeder, UNICEF’s Chief of Field Office, Banda Aceh.

“It is essential that stakeholders move to establish a water-tight legal framework which addresses prevention of trafficking, how to deal with women and child victims of trafficking, and how to punish trafficking perpetrators.”

The Governor of Aceh, Dr. Ir. Mustafa Abubakar opened the workshop and Dr. Ir. Irma Alamsyah Djaya Putra, Indonesia’s Deputy Minister for Women’s Protection, gave the keynote address.

Participants canvassed anti-trafficking strategies, referral systems for the protection of women and child victims of trafficking, and the role of law enforcement authorities in handling trafficking and protecting victims. It concluded with a declaration to “Keep Aceh Free of Trafficking”.

UNICEF helps turn Nias Islanders on to composting

On January 23 UNICEF’s Nias office handed over 300 plastic compost barrels to UNDP for distribution to 150 households in 3 sub-districts of the island, southwest of Aceh. UNDP will train householders in using the barrels for compost.

The contribution of the compost waste barrels is part of an inter-agency solid waste disposal management proposal.

Waste management has been a large focus of UNICEF’s WES programme on Nias since an 8.7 magnitude earthquake destroyed 90 percent of infrastructure in March 2005. UNICEF last year donated two solid waste disposal trucks to Nias authorities for environmental disposal of rubble.

Floodwaters Recede, UNICEF Reverts to Regular Operations in Aceh’s Southeast

After running emergency operations in flooded areas of southeastern Aceh for over two weeks over the Christmas-New Year period, UNICEF shifted its focus from emergency relief on January 8 to integrating activities with regular programmes under the Aceh and Nias Annual Work Plan for 2007.

UNICEF deployed an Emergency Response Team to the field a day after the floods hit five districts on December 23. The UNICEF team, based in the worst-hit district of Aceh Tamiang, coordinated the inter-agency Water and Sanitation rescue effort and led the inter-agency Health Response.

During the emergency response phase UNICEF set up the first Child Centre, attracting 120 children a day, and provided tents and recreational materials for an additional two centres. UNICEF also issued 600 family-sized tents for people whose homes were destroyed, set up 74 water bladders to store clean water delivered by tankers,

distributed 150,000 mosquito nets, supported an emergency measles vaccination campaign of children under 2, and issued 23 school tents, 100 School-In-a-Box kits and 90 blackboards for temporary primary school learning.



Pidie Water Treatment Plant Restored



UNICEF WES engineers finished restoring the Garot Water Treatment Plant in Aceh's Pidie District and handed it over to the government water authority PDAM on January 19.

The restoration of the Garot Water Treatment Plant is part of an overall strategy to supply water to the Sigli area, as agreed in an MOU between the Pidie Bupati, BRR, PDAM and UNICEF. Built in 1985, the plant suffered major damage when the December 2004 earthquake and tsunami destroyed 85 percent of Aceh's water and sanitation infrastructure.

In its restored state the plant can now produce up to 20 litres of treated water per second, providing safe water to 14,400 beneficiaries in the town of Sigli on Aceh's northeast coast. The Garot Water Treatment Plant is one of several water treatment plants to undergo major restoration by UNICEF in collaboration with NGO partner International Relief and Development. UNICEF invested \$140,000 in this project.

UNICEF and IRD are now upgrading the Jabul Gafur Water Treatment Plant, which on completion will be able to produce 40 litres of treated water per second, providing an additional water supply to 36,000 beneficiaries in Sigli.



BUILDING SCHOOLS IN JUNGLE ON NIAS ISLAND

Off-Road Remote School Sites Pose Unique Challenges

At the UNICEF-provided semi-permanent primary school of Dahana Humane, just outside Nias Island's capital Gunung Sitoli, morning religion class is under way for the 18 students of the fifth grade.

"Remember we must respect our parents and elders," imparts headmistress Ibu Larosa, who's jumped in to replace the absent religion teacher. "And respect your teachers."

The lessons are interspersed with clapping and religious songs. Next door the fourth grade is in the throes of a Bahasa Indonesia lesson.

Jungle-clad Nias, a predominantly Christian island 350 kilometres southwest of Banda Aceh, was mostly spared the wrath of the 2004 tsunami, but three months later was torn up by a devastating 8.7 magnitude earthquake.

Until three months ago, the 134 primary students of Dahana Humane were studying in tents. In October 2006 UNICEF, with implementing partner IOM, completed a semi-permanent school building to house the classes until a new permanent school building is ready. After 18 months of taking lessons in emergency school tents, the students moved into the semi-permanent building. Next door, the site of the planned permanent school has been fenced off and materials delivered.



For now the students study in a single long building divided into 6 classrooms for 1st to 6th grade. A narrow trail separates the semi-permanent school from the corrugated iron fence sealing off the permanent school construction site.

"This is better than studying in tents. In the tents you can hear everyone's voice magnified, and it becomes hard to concentrate," said Agusmawati Duru, a 6th-grade student. "I'm quite happy with the semi-permanent school, even though there's not much space."

When the earthquake struck at 11 o'clock one night in March 2005, the students were all in bed. Most ran up nearby mountains with their parents, fearing tidal waves. When they came down the next day, their school was gone. "We ran to the hills because we were scared that a tsunami was coming," Duru recalls. "The next day there was no more school. It had completely collapsed."





Around 800 people were killed in their homes and some 5,000 wounded of the population of 700,000. About 90 percent of the under-developed island's infrastructure was damaged or destroyed in the earthquake.

Early this month UNICEF finished building its 41st semi-permanent school - intermediate structures to bridge the gap between emergency tent schools and the planned permanent school buildings.

Now the focus has swung to permanent school construction -- and the vexing question of how to bring in materials to sites that in some cases lie eight kilometres from the nearest accessible road.

UNICEF has committed to build 160 permanent primary schools on Nias. One hundred and twenty sites have already been handed over to implementing partners UNOPS and Nippon Koie. Construction has begun on 20 of those sites.

The remaining 40 sites are remote and still being identified.



Identifying the 40 "remote" sites and starting construction is almost an exercise in carving schools out of the forest. The "remote" sites are all off-road, lying between one and eight kilometres from established roadways. The 4,800 square kilometre island is covered in dense jungle, steep ravines and gorges, 92 named rivers, and hills up to 800 metres high. Rain falls on average 270 days a year.



How to transport between 250 and 350 tonnes of building materials into these sites from the road is now being thrashed out by UNICEF's Construction Unit.

The permanent schools will take on one of two designs: light-gauge steel frame with concrete substructure, or reinforced concrete. The steel frame method requires some 250 tonnes of building

materials, while the concrete method require 350 tonnes.

"The options are either to carry the material in by hand, mount the materials on small all-terrain vehicles, or contract helicopters to air-freight the materials over the jungle," says John Townsend, UNICEF's Head of Construction for Aceh and Nias.

John Townsend led a team of construction officers from the UNICEF's Nias field office into one of the remote jungle sites in mid-January to observe first-hand the challenges in getting the materials to site.

The site was reported as four kilometres from the last accessible road. But the road became impassable earlier than anticipated, adding an extra two kilometres on to the distance that has to be traversed on foot.

Carrying steel and concrete along muddy jungle tracks is not the only challenge inherent in building earthquake-resistant schools on the quake-prone island.



“We face huge challenges ranging from a lack of local contractor capacity, logistical problems, poor materials, limited skilled labour, poor weather, bad roads and mud, coupled with high design standards for seismic resistance quality,” says John Townsend.

“We’re also up against conflicting work demands. UNICEF is also building up to 80 health centres on Nias, and a lot of other construction by other agencies is happening here at the same time.”

The construction of schools is a highlight of UNICEF’s 86 million dollar recovery programme for 2007. School construction accounts for 37.3 million dollars.

While most of the planned permanent schools are replacing pre-existing earthquake-damaged schools, some of them will be the first-ever primary schools for their area.

NIAS IMMUNISATION WORKERS RECEIVE MOTORBIKES FROM UNICEF

To improve both immunization coverage and reporting

UNICEF’s bid to improve basic immunization coverage on remote Nias Island moved ahead on January 19 when it presented 18 motorbikes to the Nias District Health Office for the exclusive use of their immunization workers.

UNICEF’s Head of Office for Nias, Raoul de Torcy, handed over the symbolic key to the motorbikes to District Health Officer Dr Perdamaian Zentrato at an MOU signing ceremony at the Health Department Office in the island’s capital Gunung Sitoli.

Basic immunization coverage -- against diphtheria, tetanus, measles, tuberculosis, hepatitis B and polio -- for children on Nias is not only low, the figures are unclear. Estimates put coverage rates between 20 and 40 percent across the island.

Quake-prone Nias is covered in dense jungle and steep mountains with few sealed roads, leaving many villages inaccessible by transport other than foot or motorbike.



“This is our contribution to the capacity of the DHO. By providing motorbikes, the objective is double: one, to increase immunization coverage, and two, to increase reporting capacity on the number of children immunized on the island,” Raoul de Torcy explained on handing over the key to DHO head Dr Zandrato. “The exact number of children vaccinated in Nias has not been validated yet.”

Each sub-district health centre or Puskesmas in the 18 sub-districts of Nias district will receive one motorbike each to enable immunization workers to access remote villages.

“In the future we hope with these vehicles there won’t be any more problem with vaccination delivery. We will try to monitor coverage,” Dr Zandrato said on taking possession of the motorbikes.

The MOU between UNICEF and the District Health Office requires monthly reports on immunization activities in return for the motorbikes.



“Immunisation coverage, especially of basic immunization, is low on Nias. From our assessments and meetings with the District Health Office and Puskesmas workers, it’s clear that the problem is because of the wide area and remote villages,” explained Dr Ridwan Gustiana, Health Officer for UNICEF in Nias.

“The health workers face problems in conducting outreach programmes, especially in going to inaccessible villages for immunization. Community awareness about immunization is also low, so

people generally aren’t inclined to come to health facilities. That’s why we’ve provide motorbikes, so health workers can conduct outreach and immunization in remote villages.”

“There are also problems in regular reporting between the District Health Office and Puskesmas due to distance, so hopefully these motorbikes can help solve everyone’s problems and help the Puskesmas provide regular reports, so we can better evaluate coverage.”



TSUNAMI FROM THE RIVER

UNICEF delivers tents, fresh water, safe child-play spaces to flood victims

Near the bank of the Tamiang River in southeast Aceh late December, Rachwaty and her four children spent three days and nights on the roof of the village mosque while floodwaters up to three metres high swirled through the village, submerging their home.

The Tamiang River burst its banks on December 22 after a prolonged monsoonal deluge and flooded 646 villages in five districts across southern Aceh, killing around 70 people and affecting some 450,000 residents. Tamiang district was the hardest hit, with an estimated 200,000 of its residents suffering from destroyed or damaged homes, lost livestock, ruined harvest, damaged schools and health centres, and severed supplies of clean water.



UNICEF was on the ground by December 24, setting up water points, directing water tankering, and issuing family-sized tents to people left homeless. UNICEF set up a field coordination camp in Tamiang district's main city Kuala Simpang and led the inter-agency Water and Sanitation and Health efforts.

When floodwaters receded after four to five days, a layer of thick mud up to a metre high was left behind. Around 90 percent of homes in Tamiang were either damaged or destroyed and wells were left unuseable.

“Wells were submerged in the flood. The floodwaters left one to two metres of mud inside the wells after they receded. Around 54,000 wells had to be properly cleaned and disinfected before they could be used again,” said WES Officer Tai Ring Teh, who led UNICEF’s Emergency Response Team.

“Supply systems from town water plants were damaged. The existing water supply network is not wide enough to reach all the affected area. We have to bring clean water to the people through water trucks and installation of water bladders.”



Rachwaty’s house is still standing, but all the furniture and her children’s school materials are ruined. Half a metre of mud surrounds the house. They have to walk on wooden planks to reach their door. Her children’s school is unable to function.

“Before the flood we got our water from the wells,” Rachwaty said. “But now the wells are filled with muddy water which we can only use for washing and bathing.”

UNICEF installed 74 water bladders at key points in

affected villages, focusing on health centres and IDP camps. The first bladder to be installed was in Rachwaty’s village Rantau Panjang, five kilometres from Kuala Simpang.

UNICEF coordinated the delivery of water to the installed bladders, directing at least seven trucks from partner agencies carrying up to 4,000 litres of water each to 21 locations.



In Rantau Panjang, residents were forced to purchase clean water at 4,000 rupiah (55 cents) per 30 litres until the UNICEF water bladder was installed.

“Everything is gone. There’s nothing left,” said Rachwaty’s neighbour Noor Bastya, whose husband is a vegetable farmer. The area relies heavily on agriculture, especially rice and crops like peanuts, chillies, and vegetables.

Relief workers compared the damage to that caused by the 2004 tsunami.

“In this area there is normally seasonal flooding. But this flood has been particularly devastating and widespread. The aftermath looked just like the tsunami. The irony is that this area was not affected by the tsunami two years ago,” said Tai Ring Teh.

“Houses were submerged up to their rooftops. The main road was impassable and towns were without power and water for up to five days.”



In Kuala Simpang UNICEF set up the first Child Centre on January 7, erecting a tent on an open field next to the local health department and supplying three recreation kits of sports equipment, skipping ropes and drawing materials. Since its first day around 120 children have been using the centre. The Child Centre is providing an integrated mix of activities including recreational, psychosocial and legal protection. UNICEF provided tents and recreational kits for another two Child Centres to be run by local NGO partners.

UNICEF issued 600 family-sized tents to help accommodate people whose homes were ruined or damaged.

In Sukajati village on the edge of Kuala Simpang, 50 families are sheltering in UNICEF tents after their homes were left uninhabitable. “The structure is still there, but we cannot live in it. It has to be pulled down. We’re scared it will collapse if anyone goes inside,” said Sari Rahayu, 34, who is living in one of the tents with her six children aged 2 to 16.

Around 365 schools in Tamiang were submerged in the flood. All furniture and teaching materials were destroyed. On UNICEF’s recommendation the government launched a mass school cleaning operation, deploying teams of soldiers and police to mop up mud-covered school grounds.

UNICEF issued 23 school tents for temporary learning spaces in Tamiang, 100 School-In-A-Box kits, 90 blackboards and 45 recreation kits. All 3,927 teachers returned to their schools and normal schooling activities resumed on January 8, according to the District Education Office.

With 80 percent of sub-district health centres damaged beyond use and around 77,000 people living in temporary shelters, UNICEF helped local health authorities launch an emergency measles vaccination campaign for children under 2. Vitamin A tablets were distributed to children under 5 in 64 villages in Aceh Timur, another affected district.

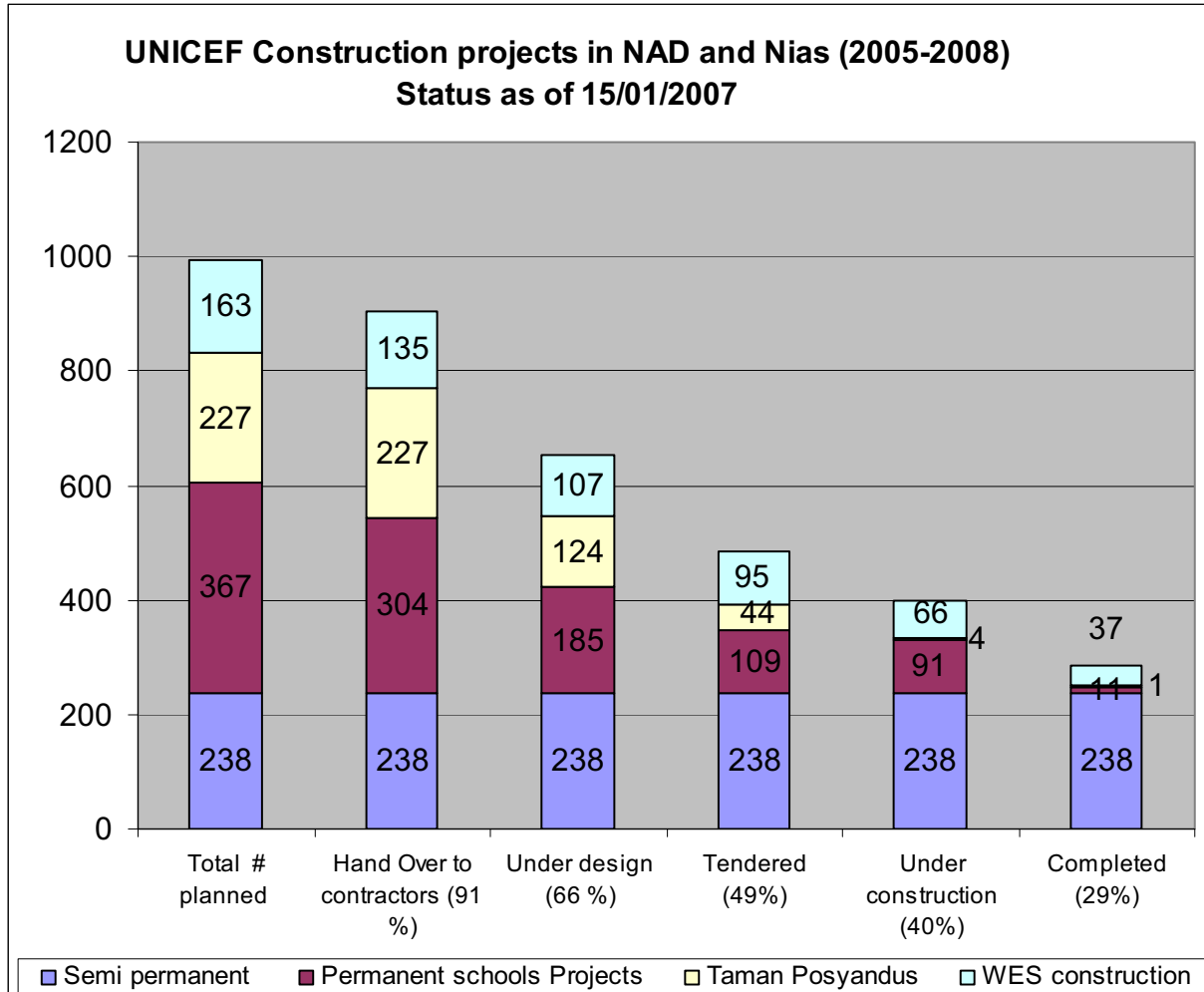
UNICEF donated eight refrigerators to the District Health Office in Tamiang for cold chain supplies to enable vaccination campaigns to take place.

Responding to malaria concerns, UNICEF distributed around 150,000 mosquito bed nets and dispatched malaria prevention education and communication materials to Tamiang, Aceh Utara and Aceh Timur districts.

“There have been several positive testings for malaria,” Tai Ring Teh said. “There are large pools of stagnant water where mosquitoes can breed, and this is already deemed an ‘endemic malaria zone’.”



UNICEF CONSTRUCTION UPDATE January 2007



HIGHLIGHTS:

- Over 90 percent of construction projects planned between 2005 and 2008 have been handed over to contractors (design and supervision)
- 40 percent of projects are under construction
- 29 percent of projects have been completed