

UNICEF NEWS

Aceh & Nias

July 2007



Let's Go To School!

UNICEF launches Back To School Campaign 2007

“Let’s Go to School!” UNICEF launches Back to School Campaign 2007

Under the motto “Learning is exciting, playing is fun!” and introducing the new child friendly school mascot, UNICEF this month launches the Back To School Campaign for the third time in Aceh since the tsunami.



The launch in Banda Aceh is only the first of three stages of the celebrations. In the month to come, Back to School festivities will also be held both on the West Coast and in Nias to welcome the new school year.

The focus of this year’s campaign is threefold – focusing on the continuing construction of safe and child friendly schools, on improving the quality of education and on involving the community in school maintenance.

As the kick-off, UNICEF and the Aceh Ministry of Education are symbolically opening 10 newly completed schools in Banda Aceh and its neighboring district Aceh Besar. Many more openings are to follow in the coming months, as school construction progresses in Aceh and Nias at full speed. So far, 28 schools have been completed and more than 100 are

under construction. UNICEF is planning to build 367 school units on 346 sites.

As a second part of the campaign, UNICEF is distributing teaching aids in 11 districts. The materials cover the subjects of Math, Science and Social Science, and will help teachers at 420 schools to improve the quality of their lessons. Education officials, local representatives, principals and teachers are also receiving training on making schools and communities more child friendly, and UNICEF has already reached over 2686 teachers with its teacher training program. Together with the Ministry of Education, UNICEF is working on developing a 5-year-strategic education development plan, to improve the quality of education in this province in the long-run.



SDN Simpang Keuramat, host of the BTS campaign launch 2007

Another main focus of the campaign is to get teachers, parents, students and the community actively involved in maintaining and caring for their new school. “One of the major challenges we have been facing is the fact that the new schools are not taken care of properly”, says Mohamed Fall, head of UNICEF’s education section in Banda Aceh. As a consequence, schools often very quickly show first signs of neglect, such as dirty toilets or broken door handles.

To address this issue, UNICEF last month held its first “School Maintenance Forum” which included the participation of principals, community leaders and government



Some of the teaching materials provided by UNICEF.

counterparts, as well as UNICEF staff from the construction, education and water and sanitation sections and which resulted in a common action plan. (See also News from Aceh and Nias on the following page.)

With the new campaign, UNICEF wants to encourage students, teachers and the communities to develop a sense of ownership and responsibility for their school.

Supporting this effort will be the new “My school is my friend” mascot – a friendly little blue school with big eyes - which will accompany all information materials given out to the schools and communities. “We want every one to understand that it is fun and a community building effort to take care of a school” says Mohamed Fall.

10 new schools ready to go!



News from Aceh and Nias

Candlelight Memorial on HIV/AIDS



More than 500 young people showed they are not ignoring the issue of HIV/AIDS in Aceh when they staged a march through Banda Aceh and held a candlelight memorial on one of the biggest gathering places of the city. During the day, they were joined by many more Aceh residents and passers-by. Information material was handed out, and theater plays shown to provide knowledge about the deadly disease. The event was organized by Yakita, a renowned youth organization in Indonesia, and was funded by UNICEF. "At the end, we all stood in a circle and held hands, and it was a moment that made us all very proud, very strong", says one of the young organizers. In Aceh, which is strongly dominated by Islam, raising awareness about HIV/AIDS is difficult as the subject is still considered a taboo. As a follow-up to this event, the group is planning further events on World Aids Day in December and increased advocacy to the government.

School Maintenance Workshop

Teachers, principals, government officials, construction companies and students came together in the first forum on school maintenance held in Banda Aceh this month. The goal was to discuss and find strategies on how to deal with the lack of maintenance and hygiene behaviors at newly completed schools. "We can learn from some schools," says Mohamed Fall, Head of UNICEF's Education section in Banda Aceh. "But at other schools, door handles are broken off, and the toilets are in bad condition – just to name a few examples." The participants drafted a declaration and action plan which included strategies to overcome these challenges.



3rd and 4th integrated community health center opened



The Vice Governor of Aceh, Muhammad Nazar S.Ag, opened the third integrated community health center built by UNICEF. The center at Lamsiem village not only offers basic health and midwifery services, but also features an Early Childhood Development (ECD) Center for children under 6 and a residence for the midwife. The UNICEF center will serve the more than 1000 residents of the village and its surrounding communities. The same month, the fourth polindes, located in the tsunami devastated area of Miureuk Lam Reudeup, was officially inaugurated. As the center in Lamsiem, the 4th polindes offers a midwifery residence and ECD center in addition to the regular health facilities.

Playing workshop on how to develop games for children with disabilities

UNICEF in partnership with the NGO Right To Play have been working together in five children centers in the Districts of Aceh Barat and Nagan Raya to enhance the healthy development of children and youth through regular sport and play activities as well as to increase the capacity of Community Group Networks and community leaders to support long-term access to regular and inclusive sport and play activities for children and youth in the community.

Now, UNICEF and Right to Play organized the first workshop for child center staff, focusing on improving activities to better suit children with disabilities.



12 child center staff learned different inclusion strategies and were taught to adapt regular games to work with children having specific disabilities. In the afternoon, the participants were joined by 13 children with special needs who regularly attend the UNICEF child centers in the region. The CC staff applied the lessons learned to meet the needs of the specific children who attended, and in return showed the parents and caregivers new activities for their children.

School Sanitation and Hygiene Education Training on Aceh's west coast



UNICEF together with the district health and education offices and partner NGOs trained 20 participants from 10 semi permanent schools in Aceh Jaya on the importance of School Sanitation and Hygiene Education (SSHE). The headmasters and teachers from schools lacking proper facilities were provided with the knowledge, skills and tools to improve the sanitation and hygiene practices in their respective schools.

The participants developed a school action plan and a lesson plan for SSHE activities. In this pilot project, the 10 schools will be provided with hand washing stand posts, latrine, garbage bins, garbage burner container, water supply through hand-dug well & rainwater gutter, information board to help them start and maintain the activities.

In the end, it was decided that SSHE activities will be conducted at least once a week at each school, and that teachers will help strengthen their students' hygiene behavior through a variety of activities such as songs and games. It was also decided to increase the advocacy to have SSHE included in the regular school curriculum. UNICEF and its partners will monitor the activities.

Quarterly Review Meeting held with Aceh's planning body, Bappeda

The provincial parliamentary planning body, Bappeda, and UNICEF held their first quarterly review meeting this month. UNICEF together with its governmental counterparts from the provincial health, education, social ministries presented the progress on their joint programs, while Bappeda gave an overall view of Aceh's current economic and social situation. Goal of the meeting was to improve the coordination and effectiveness of the activities and to identify further ways to streamline the collaboration process. The next review is scheduled to be held in September.

“Come on- Wash your Hands with Soap!” 500 Kids launch Province-wide Hygiene Promotion campaign

“Three....Two...One!” On the last count, the wife of the Aceh Deputy Governor, Ibu Dewi Mutia M. Nazar, releases 500 balloons into the clear blue sky. Immediately, 500 children and their mothers, assembled in the middle of a soccer field, start washing their hands, everyone wearing colorful T-shirts which read “Let’s Wash our Hands with Soap.” Soon, the smell of soap fills the hot afternoon air.

This was the start of the “Come on-Wash your hands with Soap” campaign, which was launched in the small city of Bireuen, about 5 hours away from the province’s capital Banda Aceh. The event was broadcasted across the province through radio and TV and covered by the major newspapers.

“I am so proud to be able to participate in the launching of this campaign today,” said Rahmi Maulidiana, 11, who is studying at SDN 21 Bireun.



“3-2-1...!” Countdown to the Launch

The event was one of the highlights of a massive campaign called “Come on, wash your hands!” designed to promote adequate hygiene behaviours in Aceh. It is part of a nationwide campaign initiated by the Indonesian Government in partnership with UNICEF and ESP-USAID. The campaign contains conducting intensive mobilization in schools, media coverage for advocacy and peak ceremonial events in Aceh and five additional provinces throughout Indonesia similar to the one in Bireuen.



Let’s wash hands with soap! 500 children and their mothers show how!

To spread the messages across Aceh, social mobilization and education on hand washing with soap is supported by various information, education and communication materials such as posters, leaflets, banners, child friendly games, and hygiene promotion vehicle, which are all provided by UNICEF. The campaign is also strongly supported by Aceh’s religious leaders. Messages are being disseminated through mosques during the Friday praying.

Prior to the event in Bireuen, 10 educators were trained to communicate the messages of Hand Washing with Soap. 60-100 teachers from the selected 10 schools in Bireuen were also socialized and trained on the hand washing with soap messages. Children from the 10 schools and their mothers participated in a workshop on the importance of hand washing with soap. This socialization model will be followed up in more than 150 schools in Aceh and Nias.

The participation of children is crucial for the success of this effort. Children absorb knowledge quicker and combined with practice, hygienic behaviour will easily be formed and sustained. Secondly, children can be messengers of knowledge and promoters of hygienic behaviour.

That a campaign like this is urgently needed is shown by the results of a recent UNICEF study: Only 14 percent of mothers in Aceh province wash their hands after going to the toilet or after changing a baby's diaper. The study, which was conducted in 25 randomly selected urban and rural villages in four districts, also showed that less than 13 percent of adults and only 10 percent of children consider hand washing with soap a hygienic practice for the prevention of infection.

What they don't know: Proper hand washing alone reduces the risk of diarrhoea by approximately 45 percent. It also reduces the risk of respiratory infections, as well as common cold, flu, skin infections, trachoma and other communicable diseases.

Children are the most vulnerable group to be affected by various communicable diseases including diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections. Diarrhoea kills 1.9 million children under five each year, thus accounting for 18 percent of the total deaths in this age group. In Indonesia, diarrhoea is the second biggest killer of children under 5, causing the death of more than 100,000 children per year. Unsafe drinking water, lack of access to sanitation and improper hand washing contribute to 88% of the deaths from diarrhoeal diseases.

The importance of hand washing with soap has long been realized by UNICEF and the world community. UNICEF Banda Aceh and the Aceh Government have developed a WASH in School Program, which started in 2007. It is a comprehensive program to improve the access to sanitation, water supply and hand washing facilities, to enhance and improve the hygiene education in schools, and to mobilize support from government and communities. The major strategies are to integrate the "hardware" – such as the proper facilities- and "software" – such as training of teachers and government counterparts and the implementation of regular hygiene activities in schools.



**GERAKAN
CUCI TANGAN
PAKAI SABUN**

“Hygienic practices lead to a healthy lifestyle –
Campaign to wash your hands with soap”

A Mini- UN in Banda Aceh

By Anna Stechert

During the monthly zone office management meeting my mind drifts to my colleagues at the table. We've been together as a team for a long time, sharing the same issues, the same office, the same frustrations and successes, even the same dinner table, ten of us: friends now more than colleagues. What strikes me is what a different bunch of people we are. No one comes from the same country. There is Mohamed from Senegal, Edouard from France, Tarek from Bangladesh ...UNICEF colleagues from the four corners of the planet together in this small office: a mini "UN" at work.

In all, 155 staff -119 national staff, 36 international staff - and eight UNVs from 34 nationalities work for UNICEF in Aceh, representing Africa, Europe, America, Asia and Australia. For many of my Indonesian colleagues, especially the locals from Aceh, it is the first time they have had such a massive exposure to foreigners, the "bulees" as we are called here. It is a mélange of experience with a common purpose – rebuilding shattered lives and communities.

From my perspective as someone, who has only ever worked in mono-cultural German or US agencies before, it's opened a door to different cultures and backgrounds, life in all its wonderful diversity. It's changed me forever. Everyday I learn something new or experience a viewpoint from an other perspective. You discover characteristics that surprise you – and most of all, you learn a lot about yourself, about doing things a different way, a new way that may improve the way you work and the way you think about issues.

Some stereotypes even get confirmed. Everyone laughs at my German moments. But what this experience has taught me more than anything else is how much alike we are. Friendship, a shared laugh or a tear, working as a team know no border, or cultural characteristic.

List of Nationalities: Australian, Bangladesh, Belgium, Britain, China, Congo DRC, Danish, Ethiopia, French, German, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Malaysia, Mali, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Romania, Senegal, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, USA, Vietnam



Ulee Tuy: A new health center for four villages Already 29 polindes under construction

“32 villages and not one community health center in the whole sub district – it is difficult”, says the village head of Ulee Tuy village. His community has to use the district level health center which is located more than 5 kilometers away. “Once a month, we conduct routine immunization campaigns in the village. But because we don’t have space, we are using my office”, Pak Razali says. His office, it may be noted, is a tiny room without any health equipment.



Pak Razali, village head of Ulee Tuy

UNICEF has just started the construction of a community-based health center, called Polindes in Indonesian, in Ulee Tuy. In Aceh, there is a lack of adequate health facilities, not only because of the tsunami and earthquake of December 26, 2004, but also because of the 30 year conflict which ravaged the province and virtually cut off many villages, including Ulee Tuy, from any health service.

The new center, which is planned to be completed in October, features not only health and midwifery facilities, but also a midwife’s residence and an early childhood development (ECD) center. Once it is completed, the center will provide a variety of health services to the community of more than 500 people in Ulee Tuy, including the monitoring of pregnancies, examinations and treatment of illnesses and diseases or referral to the hospital for serious cases which cannot be treated in the village. The routine monthly immunizations will also take place here.

“It is crucial that the midwife resides at the health center”, says Dr. Tarek Hussein, head of UNICEF’s health and nutrition program in Banda Aceh. “First, it is an incentive for a midwife to move in a particular –even remote- village. Second, the midwife is available around the clock, in case there are deliveries or emergencies. And third, she has all the necessary equipment and does not need to borrow instruments from other villages and midwives.”

UNICEF also focuses on training several government counterparts at the district and province level on supervision, monitoring, evaluation and advocacy of the posyandu program. The midwives working at the health centers receive training in normal delivery care; counseling and interpersonal communication and breastfeeding counseling, among many other aspects.



Construction is underway in the village of Ulee Tuy.

But sustainability and success of the program would not be possible without the involvement of the respective communities.

Hence, UNICEF works together with cadres and village committees, involving them in the construction process and providing training on the basics of posyandu activities, ECD and community organizing and management to ensure the continued maintenance of the center.

For Pak Razali, it is also important that the new center offers activities for preschool aged children. “We don’t really have a proper space for the children to play and develop their skills at an early age”, he says. “Parents will trust for their kids to have activities at the ECD center, because they know the kids are being watched by skilled and trained cadres.”



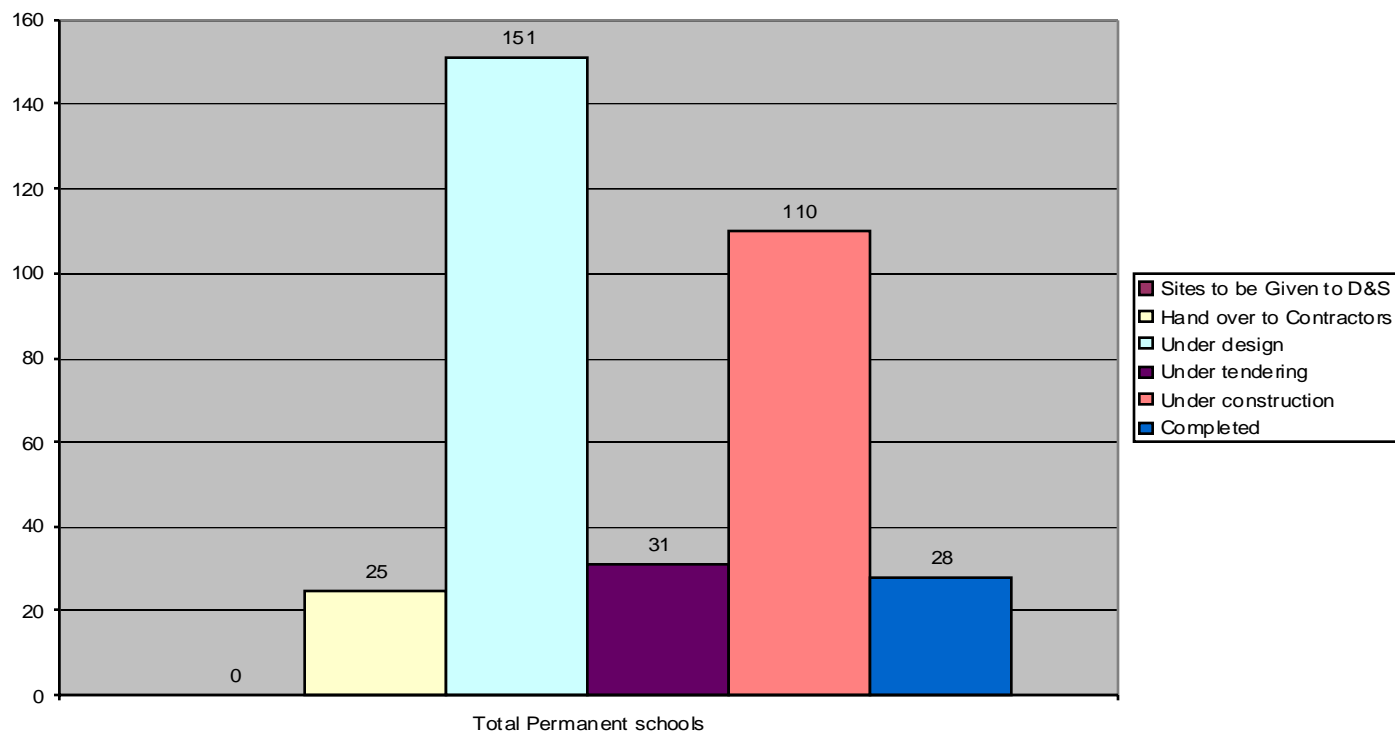
It comes in handy, then, that the new health center is located right next to a kindergarten, which is currently attended by around 40 children under six. “We would like to teach the kids some good hygiene behaviors”, says one of the teachers, Ibu Merita. “But we don’t have any toilets or sinks, so how can we show them? It will be great when the health center is completed, that my students can learn and practice there”. The new ECD center will also have proper playground equipment for the kindergarten to use – a major improvement to the current condition. “Look at the playground now, if you want to call it that”, Ibu Merita says, pointing at an old and rusty jungle jim.

Besides providing playground equipment, which will help to strengthen children’s motor skills and abilities to play with other children - UNICEF’s ECD program also consists of strengthening the knowledge and skills of province and district government staff from health, education and other departments; training the health center cadres and increasing communities’ awareness and parental involvement.

Research has shown that access to ECD services and early learning for young children in this age group will strongly influence their future physical and mental health and social development. Therefore, ECD not only ensures a healthy start into a child’s life but also means an investment into the development of the future society.

Ulee Tuy is one of 29 health centers under construction. Four centers are already completed. In total, UNICEF is constructing up to 227 fully furnished community-based health centers in Aceh and Nias.

Schools construction projects status June- 2007
346 Schools sites representing 367 schools units



Construction Projects	Planned	Sites to be Given to D&S	Hand over to Contractors	Under design	Under tendering	Under construction	Completed
UNOPS	213	0	25	18	31	110	28
Nippon Koie	67	0	0	67	0	0	0
Bitu	66	0	0	66	0	0	0
Remaining	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Permanent schools *	346	0	25	151	31	110	28
Percentage		0%	7%	44%	9%	32%	8%

* 346 school sites representing 367 school units

UNICEF NEWS by Anna K. Stechert

Photos by: Anna K. Stechert, Mika Gynecologia, Bralianto Ahmad, Eka Susanti, Dining Devi, Yayasan Yakita