

Voices of Community

What's happening in East Java and NTB?

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is prepared monthly in order to share views / concerns of
beneficiaries with partners and to develop common
understanding of how UNICEF-assisted projects bring about
positive changes in day to day life of community.

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School should be a safe environment for children

Article 54 of the Child Protection Law stipulated that 'children attending school must be protected against violence and abuse from teachers, school managers, and school mates both in schools and in other education institutions'. Even though that statement clearly mentions protection of children, however violence against children still continues to occur in schools. In regard with this situation, UNICEF through child forum has supported a child-led research on 'violence against children in school' in Jawa Timur and Nusa Tenggara barat (NTB). This activity is aimed to capture children's experiences and perception on violence that

occurred in schools or other educational insitutions. In NTB the whole mapping exercises started at the end of May 2009 through a Training of Facilitators. There were 45 participants came from Lombok Barat, Lombok Tengah and Lombok Timur Districts and Mataram City. Participants were equipped with facilitation skills to map out abusive practices at school. There were 3 kinds of mapping tool trained. The first tool is named 'Drawing of Abusive Practices'.

In this exercise children can be asked to draw any abusive practices in school that they had experienced or witnessed. The abuse itself consists of physical, mental/psychological and sexual abuses and discrimination. After drawing, children can categorize the type of abuse that happened into those 4 categories. This tool also highlights the importance of understanding that disabled children often become a victim of abuse, especially discrimination.

The second tool is 'Body Mapping'. In this exercise, children are asked to draw a sketch of human body and then put their comments on the body's parts where the abuse occurred. Mental/psychological abuses can be drawn in the "heart" of the sketch. This tool will inform which parts of the body that become objects of abuse, who were the offender, why the abuse happened and what the impact to the victims.

The last tool is 'Tree of Hope'. This tool is designed to understand to whom children can talk to if they became victim of abuse. The tool basically is a drawing of a big tree with 4 big branches which represent parties whom children likely to speak to. They are friends, school (including teachers and headmasters), people outside the school (including parents, police, referral unit) and the last branch is 'self coping mechanism' (including writing in a diary, crying, keeping silence, etc).

Following the training for facilitators, on 29 June 2009, Children Forum of Lombok Barat District carried out the mapping exercise. This activity was supported by District Women Empowerment Office, District National Education Office, District Bappeda, and District and Provincial Child Protection Body

(LPA). Around 120 children from Primary Schools, Junior High Schools and Senior High Schools participated in this activity. About 30 teachers also participated to observe the mapping exercise.

As planned, the participants were divided into groups according to their school level. Each school level was divided into several small sub-groups. Each sub-group consisted of 10 girls or 10 boys. Separation between boy and girl is a must because it is assumed that there are different kinds of abuse against boys and girls. Besides that, the separation can make them feel comfortable to express their experience in the sketch of body.

The whole mapping exercise took around 5 hours. At the end of exercise, preliminary results were showed. There were various offenders of the abuse in schools such as teachers, school guard and friends. In terms of type of abuse, it seemed that physical abuse dominated the cases and happened to both boys and girls. Most of participants chose to tell their friends or simply keep silent when they became victim of abusive practice at school.

Having those preliminary results, Yaya Fradana, member of Lombok Barat Child Forum commented: "When I experienced abuse in school, I also tend to tell my experiences and feelings to my friends. So I hope that in the future Children Forum can facilitate the establishment of peer educators or counselors in each school who will become ombudsperson for children to report and get support when they become a victim of abuse". While Ms.

Kerniasih Mudjitahid, Chairperson of LPA-NTB said: "By having participatory tools in this mapping exercise, we do not only fulfil the rights on protection, but also the rights to participate. We hope that children can easily engage in the exercise and freely express their mind. We will advocate the recommendation came out from this mapping to Ministry of National Education. So, in the future there should be more protection efforts to be taken place in schools". It is true. A school should be the place where children can feel safe and secure so they can grow and develop optimally in a healthy environment. When children are abused by adults, they will learn that abuse is the way for adults to communicate. Children will replicate it. So protection of children from abuse in family, community and school is a must.**



Provincial Team developed the tools for mapping of abuse at school



Girls practiced mapping tool at Training for Facilitators in Senggigi



Participants of Training on mapping exercise in Lombok Barat

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