

The Jakarta Post

Ferry gets passionate over breast-feeding campaign

Mon, 08/24/2009 11:16 AM | People



(JP)

JAKARTA: Ask actor Ferry Salim what's the most interesting campaign he has been part of in the past five years, and he will answer "Campaigning for breast-feeding".

For the 42-year-old, campaigning for breast-feeding is nothing tricky even though he is a man.

"I don't find it difficult at all," says Ferry, the Indonesian ambassador for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). "Rather, I think, it's more interesting for such a campaign to be carried out by men."

Ferry based his statement on his own experiences of taking part in breast-feeding campaign events across the archipelago.

"From my experience, I have managed to attract not only mothers, but also their husbands to come to the advocacy events," Ferry says during a telephone interview from Atambua in East Nusa Tenggara, where he is campaigning.

"As a man, it's also easier for me to encourage the husbands to support their wives in breast-feeding," he adds.

The breast-feeding campaign, however, isn't the only advocacy work he has done with UNICEF. Since 2005, Ferry has been campaigning for other issues related to education and health, such as HIV/AIDS and malnutrition.

"I'm so glad this job has taken me to many places across the country," he says. "I'm also grateful for the trust that I've earned from UNICEF since 2005." - *JP*

JakartaGlobe

August 25, 2009

By Dwayne Carruthers

Benefits of Breast Milk Promoted in NTT

To help promote the importance of breast-feeding, Unicef goodwill ambassador and TV presenter Ferry Salim visited Belu district in East Nusa Tenggara this month for Breast-Feeding Month.

"Breast-feeding is extremely vital in the early development stage of every child's life," Salim said. "A child's mental capacity and physical growth take form during the first two years, and therefore breast milk is not only very essential, but has the perfect nutrients."

The province, also known as NTT, has the highest rate of malnutrition in the country and Belu has the highest rate of all the districts in the province.

In 2007, UNICEF and the Australian government's development agency, AusAID, began a project in the region to promote breast-feeding and complementary feeding practices among children under 2 years old.

The strategy includes communication, advocacy, capacity building and improving the health system. More than 150 counselors have also received training in the district in order to provide practical support to breast-feeding mothers.

"With more knowledge, mothers will learn more about the important nutrients for a baby and the proper feeding practices that should be applied in their everyday child care," said Fabianus Lau, head of the district health office.

"Breast milk is the number one food for babies aged between zero and 6 months, and then from 2 years onward they can start receiving supplements," Lau said. "We hope each baby can grow up with good nutrition and a healthy body, because they are the leaders of tomorrow."

The campaign for World Breast-Feeding Week painted the issue as a world health emergency.

The campaign in Indonesia will extend to the end of the month, with advocates continuing to raise awareness about the importance of breast-feeding.

Lau and the Belu district head, Joachim Lopez, also encouraged the people who gathered in Atambua for Salim's visit to practice proper hygiene, particularly hand-washing.

"We hope that more counseling programs can be set up throughout Belu for mothers and children, and that the nurses can be role models for the people in Belu," Lopez said.

"I did not know much about nutrition, but I have learned a lot from the nurses at the health office," Magdalena, 40, a mother of nine, said. "My family and I appreciate what UNICEF has been doing for us and the people of Belu."

JakartaGlobe

August 24, 2009



A Conversation With Ferry Salim: Actor, Model and Unicef Ambassador

Ferry Salim, born in 1967, in Palembang, South Sumatra, is a household name, having appeared in more than 20 soap operas. In 2003, Salim was voted Favorite Actor at the Bali International Film Festival for his role in the 2002 film "Ca-Bua-Kan" ("A Courtesan"). Salim also serves as a Unicef goodwill ambassador.

Salim has three children: Brandon, 12, Brenda, 10, and Raoul, 2, and is married to Merry Prakasa. After a six-hour car ride from Kupang to Belu, and a hectic day of campaigning to promote breast-feeding as part of his work for Unicef in East Nusa Tenggara, Salim sat down to share a little about himself and his profession.

Who is Ferry Salim?

When the cameras stop flashing, the spotlight is dimmed and the curtains are closed, I am just an average Indonesian. Some people think of me as serious and strict, but the truth is I am really flexible and down to earth. I love to laugh.

Why modeling?

I began modeling in the early 1990s. As a teenager, my friends used to tell me that I looked like a model. I didn't think much of it, but I eventually gave it a try. I have always liked clothes and fashion, so I went to study fashion marketing in Seattle, in the US.

How did Unicef come into the picture?

I have always known about Unicef as a young man growing up, however, I did not fully comprehend its functions and objectives. In 2004, someone from Unicef contacted me and proposed the idea of me becoming a goodwill ambassador. Shortly after, the 2004 tsunami occurred and I was in Aceh visiting survivors. To date, this is one of my most memorable experiences serving as a goodwill ambassador for Unicef. I remember talking with children who had just lost their homes and families, but their attitudes remained positive. To me, that was a potent sign of resilience.

I noticed as we got to the airport in Kupang that people began asking for autographs and photographs. Do you ever feel annoyed?

Nope, it's impossible. I am humbled by their interest in my work and my personality. I feel good when I am around them.

What is your perception of success?

Success is not about the material things that one acquires. Success is a process that is never-ending. You set one goal then work toward it, then set another and do the same thing. At the end of the day, your personal success is measured by whether or not you feel satisfied. For me, I am never satisfied, because if you become satisfied then you lose motivation and there is no reason to go beyond your achievements. Success is a mutual feeling; you are happy and the people around you are happy too.

Do you have any goals for the upcoming years?

I want to be the director of a movie and I also want to write a book about my experience as an ambassador. I have a clothing line and am hoping to expand.

Considering your busy schedule, how much family time is there?

My family understands my job and that sometime I have to travel. Sometimes I get home when my children are already asleep and they leave before I wake up. However, it is about time management and dedication to your family.

How do you stay healthy?

Self-care is very important: eating right, exercising and taking care of yourself, physically and mentally. I am getting up in age, I'm now 42. I work out about three times a week and sometime just jog near my home. I try to stay away from fatty foods. Also, I don't worry too much, just kind of let things be.

My photographer told me you are really photogenic — do you practice smiling in the mirror?

That's funny. Being a model you eventually learn what photo angle works for you and which ones don't. Yes, I smile at myself in the mirror, because it is important for you to see yourself as you appear to others.

Is there anything that you've regretted or wished you had done differently throughout your profession?

Nope. Not to say that it has all been perfect, but I think everything builds you into becoming a more rounded person. Yes, there have been some potholes and bumps in the road, but I have learned from them instead of always seeing them as obstacles to what I want to do.