

Voices of Community

What's happening in East Java and NTB?

UNICEF Surabaya Newsletter
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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"It is a rare opportunity for my students to raise their ideas to public" [Ms. Ani Rusmini]



Group discussion

This statement is meaningless if we do not know who she is. Ms. Ani Rusmini is the Headmaster of Radlatul Jannah Elementary High School. It is a Special Education for disabled students. She accompanied her students who were participating in the Probolinggo Children Meeting. She added her response to the meeting: "It is a rare opportunity for

children like Hasan to participate in this kind of event. The existence of Special Education is always overlooked. We are happy to be invited in this Children Meeting". Mohammad Hasan introduced himself to VoC reporter: "I am 16 years old and a 5th Grade student at Radlatul Jannah School. I am blind since I was born. I am happy to participate in this event which is not merely participated by disabled children. This is my first time in attending such a meeting. I met a lot of friends. The committee asked me to deliver prayer in the opening session. I also participated in a group discussion to develop recommendation of this meeting. I am very proud to be here".

The First Probolinggo Children meeting was conducted on 25-26 June 2007 at Candi Bentar park. It was participated by 135 children from all around Probolinggo district and representatives from Sumenep, Tulungagung, Lamongan and Malang city. Participants from District of Probolinggo came from various background such as students from Islamic Boarding School (Pondok Pesantren), public schools and Madrasah; street children; children with disabilities; children from 'remote' areas; children of community leaders; and child workers.

Participants carried out peer education on child rights, HIV/AIDS prevention and healthy living behaviour. They also watched movie on environmental conservation, sang songs, played drama, conducted group slogan competition and planted trees in beach area.

Besides UNICEF and Government of Probolinggo, this meeting was also supported by private sectors. Government officials involved in this event came from Bappeda, Health Office, Education, Environment Conservation, Manpower and Rural Development. Local parliament and PKK also supported this meeting. Private sector provided financial and in-kind supports.

Back to the comments of participants on this meeting, VoC reporter interviewed Syahrul Muklas Habibi, a 13 years old boy, a first grade student of Junior High School. Syahrul said: "After school I should

help my family in selling newspaper on the street. I enjoy being here because I am getting new friends. It is my new experience in attending a big meeting of children. I learnt about the dangers of smoking and drugs to our body as had been discussed through a body-map exercise. The discussion clarified about the parts of our body that being harmed by cigarettes and drugs. I will tell my friends about the danger of smoking and using drugs. I personally commit to not smoking".

Mr. Timbul Prihanjoko, the Chairperson of DPRD (local parliament) in his closing speech said: "I will follow up the recommendations drawn by the children to the Government of Probolinggo. I recognize that children words are great contributions for the development of this district, especially for the next generation. Therefore, the recommendations should be followed up by government. This meeting is very important. Someday, children who participated in this meeting will become leaders in Probolinggo. So, besides raising recommendations, children can learn how to lead their colleagues to reach their targets. They learnt how to identify problems and developed solutions".

The recommendations that are raised to government, community and children, cover several issues related with creating healthy and clean environment, promoting personal hygiene, preventing of smoking behaviour, drug user and HIV/AIDS transmission.



Mr. Timbul and several participants sing together

UNICEF contribution to this event is as much as Rp. 31,500,000. We did not have yet the total amount of expenses for this event. However, it is clear that this event gained awareness of government, leaders and private sectors on the importance of children for our future nation. So, the challenges are to advocate and facilitate government, community and private sector to implement the recommendations that raised up from this meeting. Still a lot of works for UNICEF and GOI.***oooooooo***



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