

## UNICEF Indonesia's Tsunami Response in Aceh



Twelve-year-old Farida was among thousands of children who survived the deadly waves that swept away entire villages along the coast of Aceh on 26 December 2004, claiming around 170,000 lives and leaving half a million people homeless. Left on her own after losing her family in the disaster, Farida found shelter in the temporary emergency barracks in Bakoy, Banda Aceh. At UNICEF's Bakoy Children's Centre, she was adopted by a counselor and attended teen support groups and recreational activities. Eventually she enrolled at the Muhammadiyah Junior High School in Banda Aceh, one of 345 schools constructed by UNICEF in tsunami-affected areas across Aceh.

It was through this kind of support provided by UNICEF and other international organizations that communities across Aceh recovered from the devastation caused by the tsunami, which was one of the deadliest natural disasters in recorded history. The hardest hit among the nine countries affected, Indonesia suffered the greatest loss and worst destruction. Within 48 hours, UNICEF arrived in Aceh and spearheaded what would prove to be the largest emergency and recovery operation in UNICEF's history.

UNICEF rushed in staff and emergency relief supplies, taking the lead in restoring water and sanitation facilities, reopening schools, establishing children's support centres, reuniting families deployed social workers and special police to offer child protection services for the nearly 3,000 children separated by the tsunami.

UNICEF's strategies for supporting reconstruction efforts were applied in four phases through 2009, beginning with emergency relief operations and progressing to transitional recovery, reconstruction and long-term development.

## Aceh Reconstruction and Peacebuilding

The enormous humanitarian aid programmes launched by the international community represented a critical turning point for Aceh, where earlier peace efforts had failed to end a 30-year conflict between the separatist Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Indonesian government. Relief operations launched in response to the tsunami emergency prompted both sides to agree immediately to a ceasefire and brought in a massive international presence that offered unique opportunities to combine reconstruction with peacebuilding efforts.

After decades of war, a peace agreement was signed in August 2005, granting Aceh special autonomy and leading to GAM's disarmament. Subsequently, government restrictions on the entry of foreign aid workers into Aceh were removed and the destruction forced open the region to massive international humanitarian

relief operations. The influx of millions of dollars in funding from international donors to support Aceh reconstruction efforts resulted in investments in rehabilitation and development across the province, beyond the tsunami-affected areas.

The provision of tents to meet emergency housing needs was soon followed by the construction of permanent houses, clinics, schools, government buildings and other infrastructure. More than 140,000 houses, 1,700 schools and nearly 1,000 government buildings were built as well as 36 airports and seaports and 3,700 kilometres of new roads. Farming, fishing and other local livelihoods were re-established with the support of foreign aid development programmes, commerce recovered rapidly and economic activity progressed steadily through the years of reconstruction that followed.

## From Tent Schools to Quality Education

UNICEF's immediate response to the emergency educational needs:

- Recruitment of 1,110 temporary teachers for 13 districts
- Setting up more than 1,000 makeshift tent classrooms
- Providing 230,000 textbooks and 6,940 'School-in-a-Box' teaching aids and supply kits for more than half a million children.



Launched in collaboration with Save the Children, World Vision, the International Rescue Committee, AusAid, USAID and other aid agencies, the Back-to-School Campaign enabled children survivors of the tsunami to resume their education in the midst of widespread destruction. From this initial emergency response, UNICEF proceeded with a \$100 million school reconstruction project that built 345 new, earthquake-resistant child-friendly schools.

In the decade following the early post-tsunami reconstruction period, UNICEF's education support in Aceh has shifted its focus from school access to improving the quality of education in schools across the province.

- UNICEF has continued to play a leading role in efforts of the Aceh Provincial Education Office (PEO) to provide quality education. UNICEF also works on standardizing "School-Based Management" (SBM) programmes and has established a District Master Trainers programme that provides SBM training in 23 Aceh districts and plays a vital role in supporting Aceh schools throughout the province.
- It has also established Early Childhood Development (ECD) training programmes in three districts in Aceh. The trainers now provide regular training for ECD cadres (volunteers) in each district, with government funding and UNICEF-supported activities. The impact of training is evident in the increase of the ECD gross enrolment rate in Aceh from 26.8 percent in 2010 to 42 percent in 2013. To reduce the disparity between urban and rural access to ECD programmes, UNICEF is now focusing on developing strategies for ECD access to expand in rural areas.
- Since 2008, UNICEF has actively participated in the Provincial Education Office's (PEO) Five-Year Strategic Plans for education development. The Provincial Planning Board (Bappeda) invited UNICEF to review and provide input for the education chapter of the 2012-2016 Provincial Medium-Term Strategic Plan, for which UNICEF has successfully advocated for the inclusion of ECD programmes as a government priority for Aceh's education system.

The existing system for child protection in Aceh today grew out of initiatives adopted in response to the 2004 disaster. Even before the tsunami struck, the separatist insurgency had broken up families and thousands of children had lost parents to insurgency-related violence. Of all the tsunami-affected countries, Indonesia faced the greatest need for child protection measures, given the sheer numbers of orphaned and separated children. Nearly 3,000 lost one or two parents and needed both emotional support and legal protection.

- **Family protection and reunification:** UNICEF supported the establishment of 21 Children's Centres that oversaw a registration system and database, which gathered information from more than 2,000 children to help reunite them with surviving family members. Together with the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment, the province's Department of Social Affairs, local NGO PUSAKA and Muhammadiyah (the country's second largest Islamic organization), the Children's Centres organized tracing and reunification, psychosocial support, recreational activities for young children and adolescents and launched campaigns to promote public awareness of child rights issues.
- **UNICEF's advocacy efforts** at the national level led to the issuance of a circular from the Ministry of Social Affairs to stop taking children out of Aceh. This circular was sent to ports of entry and police offices to prevent family separation during the initial period following the tsunami. UNICEF also established Women and Children's Desks at district police offices in tsunami-affected areas.
- **Medical and legal assistance:** At the Bhayangkara Hospital in Banda Aceh, UNICEF helped set up a special unit with integrated health and legal facilities, to bring together social workers and specially trained police officers to investigate women and children patients brought to the hospital for injuries related to domestic violence.
- **Juvenile Justice:** With UNICEF's support a child-friendly Juvenile Court was established in Banda Aceh to improve child protection measures following the tsunami. The diversion measure initiated by law enforcement agencies and communities to address children in conflict with the law influenced national discussions that led to the adoption of a new law on Juvenile Justice in 2012, which changes the legal age of criminal responsibility from 8 to 12 years, increases the age of children receiving custodial sentences from 12 to 14 years.

UNICEF's focus on child protection has continued throughout the past decade and was extended to other regions of Indonesia. For instance, similar child protection strategies were applied in response to the 2006 Yogyakarta earthquake and the 2010 Merapi volcano eruption. To support legal reform, UNICEF supported the drafting of the Child Protection Qanun approved by Aceh's provincial parliament in 2008. The *qanun*, a local regulation based on the canonical laws of Islam, was a milestone for the legal protection of children's rights, enacted to ensure that government, communities and the general public provide a safe, protective environment for children. UNICEF supported the development of the implementing regulations and standard operating procedures following up the enactment of the Child Protection Qanun.

Since 2011, Aceh's Provincial Office of Social Affairs, with the support of UNICEF, established 17 community-based Social Welfare Service Centres (PUSPELKESOS, or Pusat Pelayanan Kesejahteraan Sosial), which provide identification and referral services for cases of child abuse, exploitation and neglect. UNICEF has also supported the Aceh Provincial Department of Social Affairs in developing guidelines for managing the PUSPELKESOS programme and standard procedures for identifying and responding to at-risk children.

While UNICEF's rapid and effective response to the emergency initially focused on the urgent need to provide clean water, basic sanitation and measles vaccinations to displaced communities, UNICEF from the early stages of the response aimed to support long-term improvements in public health.

**Maternal, Newborn and Child Health:** Both due to destruction after the tsunami and chronic deterioration of health systems during the conflict preceding the disaster, infrastructure, human resources and skills to deliver MNCH services were generally lacking. Immediately after the tsunami, UNICEF supported temporary deployment of doctors and paramedics in areas where regular access were limited such as Simuelue Island, to support establishment of emergency obstetric and neonatal care services. A total of eleven district hospitals were re-equipped with standard kits and supported with ambulances to ensure a referral system. New recruits were supported with trainings on normal delivery, life-saving skills and emergency obstetric and neonatal care. Community-based maternity and early childhood development services were supported through setting up physical facilities, training of cadres and institutional support. The model of integrated community-based service known as the Posyandu Plus has since been applied elsewhere and similar approaches have been replicated in Indonesia.

**Immunization:** The emergency measles vaccination campaigns was well funded by the American Red Cross and once the emergency affected areas of Aceh were covered, the campaigns were expanded to a nationwide campaign that led to marked reductions in measles cases nationally. UNICEF also supported the reestablishment of the routine immunization and the cold chain including the provincial cold room that was destroyed by the tsunami. Subsequent efforts in immunizations have provided comprehensive analysis and strengthening of the cold-chain nationally, whilst lessons learned from maternal and neonatal tetanus elimination in Aceh have been and are still being applied nationally as Indonesia edges ever closer to the elimination of tetanus.

**Malaria prevention:** In the immediate period following the tsunami, malaria posed a significant threat, given the expanded habitats for brackish water malaria vectors. Working in coordination with the national government, UNICEF worked to harmonize efforts of NGOs and the GFATM to ensure roll-out of artemisinin-based combination therapy (ACTs), improved diagnosis, expanded indoor residual spraying and greatly expanded use of insecticide-treated mosquito nets in malaria endemic areas. This coordinated effort led to dramatic reductions in malaria, including in the highly endemic Sabang District. Working with the local health department, UNICEF has supported successful elimination of malaria in the district, with no indigenous cases found since 2011. The Sabang model is now being applied throughout Aceh and Indonesia and has been the subject of a study tour by heads of malaria control agencies from numerous Asian countries.

UNICEF's efforts in immunization and malaria have been integrated with the organization's long-term efforts to reduce maternal mortality and improve nutrition. Lessons learned on the ground in Aceh have served the UNICEF country office well in terms of developing IMCI and community-based IMCI in remote areas of eastern Indonesia. Nutrition programmes initiated in Aceh have helped UNICEF better integrate nutrition services with broader health initiatives in Papua and NTT, while UNICEF's integrated maternal and child health programme targeting eastern Indonesia relies heavily on programmes developed on the ground in post-tsunami Aceh.

**Water, Sanitation and Hygiene:** The tsunami affected existing water supplies in many ways. In areas that were hardest hit by the impact of breaking waves, many of the supply and distribution systems were completely destroyed. Even where the impact was less forceful, rising waters inundated surface sources and

unprotected wells with seawater, sand, debris and, in many cases, faecal matter from coastal areas where open defecation was common and sanitation facilities were largely unimproved. Soon after the disaster, UNICEF water and sanitation experts were among the first on the ground, coordinating the delivery of clean water to displaced people. In 2007, the water, sanitation and hygiene sector made a strategic shift from recovery and reconstruction to sustainable development. Water and sanitation activities in support of displaced persons decreased, water tankering, de-sludging of septic tanks and removal of solid waste from IDP settlements ended, and many Temporary Living Centres were decommissioned as 1,800 families returned home.



UNICEF's Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) programme included support for rehabilitation of dozens of water treatment facilities that, nine years after the tsunami, have continued to provide clean water to a million citizens of Aceh.

UNICEF supported the rebuilding and construction of at least 22 more permanent water treatment purification plants in tsunami affected areas as well as areas that were not affected and began producing large volumes of potable water. Water from the plant was used to fill tanker trucks, and plants were also positioned near IDP camps to supply them directly.

## UNICEF's Aceh Legacy

UNICEF's massive reconstruction efforts in Aceh following the 2004 tsunami continue to shape Indonesian government policies and institutional responses to child protection and children's rights. The Posyandu Plus concept for integrated services of child survival and development applied in Aceh reconstruction operations has received wide recognition from health and education authorities at the national level and has served as a model for other provinces in developing holistic, integrated community-based child health and early childhood development services. The efforts in malaria elimination are yet another example of the longer term and successful continuation of UNICEF's support to Aceh.

UNICEF's endorsement of the Aceh governor's Regulation for ECD Access Provision has provided a legal basis for significant budget increases for ECD services in 2012 and 2013. At the national level, UNICEF has successfully advocated for endorsement of a Presidential Regulation for Holistic Integrative ECD Services providing nationwide policy improvements to strengthen ECD programmes.

Enhancing child protection systems continues to be a top priority for UNICEF Indonesia, including promotion of social welfare services for children, advocacy for laws and policies to safeguard children's rights and promotion of a justice system that effectively tackles violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of children. Building on the Aceh experience on juvenile justice, UNICEF's technical assistance to the Indonesian government supports juvenile system reforms and has successfully advocated for improving the legal framework to strengthen protection of children's rights. In July 2012, the National Parliament passed the Juvenile Criminal Justice System Law, a milestone in the process of establishing a specialized Justice System for children as mandated by international law.

UNICEF has also contributed to Indonesia's efforts to improve Disaster Risk Management through national and subnational level partnership and coordination with the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB)

and line ministries. Under this partnership, UNICEF supported capacity building of national and district level DRR stakeholders on Contingency Planning; School Safety; Education in Emergencies; Education; Water Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion in Schools; and Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies. Specifically, in Aceh in 2011, using a module developed by UNDP and the Aceh Provincial Education Office, UNICEF trained around 150 teachers in the districts of Aceh Timur, Aceh Besar and Aceh Jaya on the integration of DRR responses into existing curricula. Aceh is presently developing a Standard Operational Procedure for Education in Emergencies, which is expected to be finalized in 2014.

In 2013, UNICEF conducted the child centred risk assessment to identify the children's vulnerabilities with regards to specific hazards. This risk assessment will serve as an advocacy tool for policy-making and support risk informed development planning at the provincial level.

Indonesia has made substantial progress in mainstreaming DRR into national and local development policies and programmes. Disaster Risk Management has become a top priority of the Government of Indonesia, as reflected in the Disaster Management Law and the Medium-Term Development Plan (2010-2014) and, most recently, in the President's *Master Plan for Reducing Tsunami Risk* expected to be finalized in 2014. The growing commitment to DRR makes it imperative for UNICEF to strengthen its child-centred DRR approach in order to remain at the forefront of global, regional and national developments.

The harsh realities of post-tsunami Aceh did much more than stimulate a rapid, classic emergency response: indeed, the tsunami catalysed UNICEF and the Government to respond with innovative programmes that continue to improve children's lives in Aceh today and resonate throughout the archipelago.