

Strengthening Learning Community from the Experience of Tsunami in Aceh

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Background

The western coastal areas of Aceh, including the cities of Banda Aceh, Calang, and Meulaboh were among the areas hardest-hit by the tsunami resulting from the Indian Ocean earthquake Ocean earthquake on 26 December 2004. While estimates vary, approximately 230,000 people were killed by the earthquake and tsunami in Aceh, and about 500,000 were left homeless.

It is utmost important to think and reflect on the experience and learning which had impacted people's life. The people had missed out things that they should have done during the disaster, the need to record the journey people had gone through.

The study

- ❑ Was inspired by the people who had provided assistance in the disaster.
- ❑ To record the journey people had gone through. Focuses on the areas of **challenges, overcoming challenges** to provide information for the next generation.

Method and sample

- A mixed-method design.
- Will be conducted in two phases
 - ▣ Phase 1: Qualitative data
 - ▣ Phase 2: Quantitative data

- ▣ *only phase 1 have been carried out thus far

Sample

□ Phase 1

58 respondents were interviewed

- Community leaders
- NGOs staff
- Schools administrators
- Teachers
- Students
- Survivors of disaster

Findings

□ The challenges:

- Lack of knowledge facing the disaster
- Inadequate skills in managing during disaster
- Lack of community leaders

□ Overcoming the challenges

- Fostering a learning community
- Developing community leadership
- Mobilizing human resource effectively

Lack of knowledge

Excerpts:

No. we don't know anything. It was so shocking to see water coming up so strong, so fast and we could not do anything at all. We surrender to Him...

It was shock to me to find out that there was no single ulama who was so famous in Aceh but did not come to lead and coordinate his ummah even to victims from similar traditional boarding schools that he led...

Inadequate skills

Excerpt:

- All equipment was destroyed. The Indonesian army, Indonesian Police did not have any skills. It was so so slow. Then, we see people from outside (foreigners) arrived and started to get things done one by one...

Lack of community leadership

Excerpts:

The time was difficult. The disruption of communication is so serious. We can't get in touch with people. We wanted to help. Sad, very sad, some of the leaders themselves fled away...

It was a country without leader. No authority (civil, police or military) came to help and provided assistance to the victims. I wanted to command people to unite and help each other. As a religious leader, I should do that but I was too old and weak to do such a thing. Those who survived and had found their own families or relatives, gathered to provide assistance to the victims at nearby their home. However, only few of them and many left Banda Aceh to other cities in Aceh and even outside of Aceh

Overcoming challenges

Fostering a learning community:

People need to talk about it. Some kind of system should keep all this information in a book. So, people know what to do next time. Very important that each share their experience. We need to learn from the past....

Overcoming challenges

- Developing community leadership
 - *I want to do something. But nobody said anything. We just do very little. No leader to say anything. I remembered suddenly a doctor came and said what we should do at that moment. People followed. ...*
 - What people should do next time in any crisis or disaster, the first thing is to gather all the local leaders or identify people with leadership skills to take charge of the work. They can coordinate with various agencies or organizations. So, things are not wasted, more systematic....
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Overcoming challenges

□ Mobilizing human resources effectively

- The location of SAR, however, is not appropriate. It is still within the reach of the last tsunami. It should be removed to a location, at least 4 more km away from the beach to guarantee that it is safe for the workers to work and for the victims to seek for information.
- Community leaders should be trained regularly to anticipate a disaster. Many houses and schools are rebuilt along and nearby coastal lines. It should be relocated partially in the near future.

Discussions

- This significant learning experience contributed to the notion of learning.
- People should be aware of their own role towards learning, at the same time empowering people to learn. Thus, every effort has to be made to introduce continuous learning.

Conclusions

- The awareness and responsibilities towards the urge of seeing learning as part of the way not only during disaster, but utmost important learning is the key to sustain living together.

Thank you



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