



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Success Stories

Indonesia: The future is looking rosier

By Renjani P.S.



The Jayagiri Centre in Indonesia is a fine example of the problem-solving power of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). It has not only reduced the number of school dropouts but it is solving social, economic and environmental problems for rural residents and the urban poor through its support of smaller organizations. For its efforts it was awarded the 2015 UNESCO-Japan Prize on ESD.

Yusuf Hadik is a risk taker. Back in 2005, he quit his job as a public servant to build a learning centre. He wanted to help his fellow villagers in Suntenjaya, a rural community on the slopes of Mt. Tangkuban Perahu in Bandung, where many were poor and illiterate. The centre, called Geger Sunten, was opened to young people and adults free of charge. Most of the learners came from the small farming families who made a living planting vegetables on the land owned by a state company near the village. When the government imposed a ban on horticultural farming in the foothills to prevent landslides, which often occurred during monsoon, they suddenly lost their livelihoods.

Yusuf, with the help of four local farmers, became actively involved in developing a way forward. He made training available for women and young people in a wide range of skills so that they could launch other

businesses and started a playgroup and kindergarten to educate young children while their mothers learned.

But it was only half a solution. The root problem was the fathers who had no jobs, no more land and only gardening expertise. With the support of Jayagiri Centre



Students © Rezza Estily

– an institution for early childhood, non-formal and informal education under the Ministry of National Education and Culture of Indonesia – Yusuf raised enough funds to rent four hectares of land for farmers to cultivate a new crop: roses. The project is still going strong.

"We tried to plant strawberry and cactus but roses are the best option. The farmers only need a one-time investment, the plant can last up to six years, and roses can be harvested every three days. Besides, the village already had its own market, as the district of Lembang is widely known as a flower centre," Yusuf says.

He adds that his learning institution – one of 47 organizations supported by the Jayagiri Centre - currently works with 60 rose growers and that each family can now earn approximately 2 to 3 million Indonesian rupiah (140 to 210 euros) per month, or about twice the minimum wage for workers in Bandung. As the rose garden does not need daily care, most of the farmers also have side jobs, such as construction work increasing their ability to provide for their families even more.

And that's not all. While the farmers work at two jobs, their wives bolster their family's income with home-based businesses, such as bridal makeup or making traditional handicrafts on the basis of local and recycled resources. In the meantime, dropout youths in the family take a course to earn an equivalency high school diploma and join an art group or an entrepreneurship class, like rabbit husbandry or organic vegetable gardening.



Geger Sunten uses a special approach to encourage villagers to learn to read or attend the equivalency school, which is called Kejar Paket A, B and C. "I offer them training and various sports competitions, but only on the condition



that they join the reading class or schools in Geger Sunten," Yusuf explains.

According to Yusuf, this learning centre currently supervises activities in seven villages in Lembang District, including Suntenjaya. While in 2005 the total number of dropouts and illiterate people in these areas was 3,000, it has declined in the last decade to about 1,700 people. Up until now, his centre has trained or educated more than 6,900 villagers by way of various courses, classes and early childhood formal schools.

As Hidayat, Head of Information and Partnership of the Jayagiri Centre says, in each case the non-formal education is designed to solve particular social problems. "We assist them by providing trainers, advocacy, consulting, learning tools and models, and even funds. Also, by creating a meeting forum for the learners, farmers and start-up groups to meet third parties, such as banks, big companies, or relevant government agencies."

Each region and learning centre in the Jayagiri Centre network finds its own solutions to its problems. For example, a group of farmers in Bandung whose land was requisitioned for a highway project eventually turned themselves into puppet craftsmen, reviving local tradition.



Hidayat © UNESCO/Adri Irianto

Nonetheless, Hidayat sometimes receives an appeal from villagers for government financial aid. The Jayagiri Centre has therefore created a system of revolving funds for each group. The amount varies according to the needs of each member, ranging from 5 to 40 million Indonesian rupiah (350 to 2,800 euros), either in cash or equipment. The money must be paid back to the respective groups in agreed instalments. "The money won't be returned to the government; instead it will be managed by the group, so it can be lent to other members who will need venture capital," he explains.

An organization that has received supporting capital for a bio-digester processing machine is the Guna Bakti Foundation in Cicalengka District, Bandung. Its founder and coordinator Idin Baidillah says they will collect household garbage in the neighbourhood, in order to convert it into bio-digester to be used as fuel. Garbage is a serious environmental problem in Bandung. "We are currently testing and it's working. We plan to use the bio-digester as fuel for home industries, so that our members won't need to buy gas anymore and can save money," Idin explains.



Idin Baidillah shows how to use biodigester for stove © Adri Irianto

Idin had initially started his foundation as a traditional dance and music studio. But when he became more aware of the economic, environmental and educational needs of the families in the neighbourhood, he decided to develop his studio as a more varied activities centre, including a playgroup, kindergarten and Islamic learning centre for kids, entrepreneurship training, and support for a number of food processing home industries.

Like Idin, the manager of the Bina Mandiri Training Centre in Cimahi city (Bandung), Devi Damayanti, says they emphasize recycling and finding uses for unused resources. In her learning centre, she trains mostly housewives and dropout students to learn entrepreneurship skills like plaiting dried water hyacinths into valuable craft materials and selling them. Women participants usually attend the class accompanied by their toddlers. Bina Mandiri currently offers a range of courses, such as knitting, weaving and sewing. Most of the students who study here are also taking a class to earn a high school diploma.

Although learning centres teach environment-friendly business skills, not all the learners decide to become



Young learners in Guna Bakti's studio © Adri Irianto

entrepreneurs. Many of them choose to be skilled employees. Edi Rukmana, a tutor at the Jayagiri Centre, says: "Sometimes the results turn out to be what we expected, sometimes not. For example, when we trained about 30 vegetable farmers in a village in Lembang who had lost their arable land to cultivate strawberries, only two participants decided to become entrepreneurs. The rest of the farmers opted to be suppliers, trainers or employees."

The Jayagiri Centre currently has about 120 tutors and its 47 learning centres are located in five provinces: Bengkulu, Bangka Belitung, Banten, Special Capital Region of Jakarta and West Java. UNESCO's National Programme Officer for Education in Jakarta, Gunawan Zakki, explains that Indonesia has applied this concept at many levels, from government to school institutions and from cities to villages, "because ESD events are actually educational activities, which involve all levels of societies and have impact on all aspects of living, including culture and environment."



Processing waste to produce biodigester © Adri Irianto

Contact: Section of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship

esd@unesco.org