

JIS Cares Again Aids Flood Victims

In February 2007, Jakarta was hit by the worst flooding in five years. JIS Cares, along with Yayasan Emmanuel Water Program, AmCham Indonesia, Nike, RTI, Coca-Cola, Indonesia Media Technologies, PT Flora Bahari Marine Services (FBMS), Consolidated Services Indonesia and hundreds of JIS faculty, staff, alumni, parents and students got together to pack and distribute emergency kits of food, water and toiletries in areas where people had been stranded for days. This report comes from Mindy Wiemer ('96), who led part of the relief effort.

Wednesday, 7 February 2007, at Kampung Kandang.

Today was definitely the most difficult so far. Though when we arrived, the participants in our program were "jumping for joy" as my friend Lilia Gardner would say. "Ka Mindy" the kids called and took my hand, then started telling their stories of the flooding as we worked our way to the tent set up on the bridge. They asked for Mita, their public health teacher, and when would she be back. I told them that unfortunately she is not feeling well and has gone to Bandung to recover, and that I missed her too. They seemed to understand and continued telling me about how high the flood is in their house, and the mothers concurrently explaining how they made rafts and help didn't come for two days. When we got to the bridge, it was obvious this was one of the worst hit areas. There are displaced people from all the communities surrounding the one we work with weekly. They are 11 participant families under a tarp on the nearby bridge, another 10 participant families similarly situated alongside. They have been sleeping on cardboard boxes, so I was grateful mats were given to bring them. Actually, I am grateful for all we had been given to bring. At this point there are literally hundreds of displaced people



Craig Money ('96), a former JIS middle school teacher, and some middle school students form a 'bucket brigade' in preparing relief kits for Jakarta's flood victims in February of 2007.

around us as attention grows and we work our way to the head-of-community. We went there to give supplies to the people we usually serve whose homes are ruined, though there were so many desperate people around it was evidently clear that we would go through the local leaders. Of course we had doubts about this because of the infamous corruption issues. So there was that, and that our participants were begging us not to give supplies through the local leaders.

Our Food Program Coordinator Maria was clever to point out that if we did give specially to our participants, it may put them in danger by angering their neighbors and not receiving future rations. Knowing there will be times ahead to specially serve them, and we didn't want to undermine the local coordination, we gave our supplies to the local leaders, stipulating that we had to oversee the distribution "so we could take pictures for our donors in case they see on TV how Pulo Kandang people are suffering and ask us what we did with all the supplies." Maria continued telling them to look at how we were dressed; we had come ready to walk through the flood to reach the people we serve regularly each week. So after some negotiation, goods were overseen distributed fairly to not only those we know, but the others most in need. It was controlled chaos.

Then "to show just how much we care" Maria whispered in my ear, we followed our participants to see their flooded homes. Now I must admit I would have happily skipped this part because this was some yuck water. And I wished I didn't know just how yuck the water quality was. Nevertheless, I hiked up my pants and got wet. Roaches, trash, and I'll just use "etc." here. It was gross indeed, though Maria was right; people to people, it was a heartfelt gesture.

This dialogue could go on and on, because as I am typing it up I am thinking of all these other parts to add, but I'm too tired. It is sincerely wonderful to get back home at the end of a long day surrounded by people suffering in those conditions,



A flood victim carries a JIS Cares/Peduli relief kit.

to a pile of donations dropped off by our expatriate Jakarta community during the day to bring out tomorrow.

Monday, 12 February 2007, at Tanjung Priok and Pulo Kandang.

Today was the first day I got sunburned. Good to have sunshine nonetheless. We also had five security guards gratefully sent by Jakarta International School. We were all very glad to have them there to help with crowd control. I suppose if my baby was hungry I would push and shove too. The hardest was the parents begging me on Saturday for milk for their baby. Since the mothers hadn't eaten properly they stopped producing breast milk and the babies were very hungry.

We had brought milk, soap, water, food etc. but the need was more than we had that day. JIS High School sent a busload of relief kits full of all kinds of great things from towels to crackers today that we distributed. We have over 500 hygiene kits to distribute tomorrow thanks to AmCham and JIS Cares!

It will be a long and fulfilling day. Maria and I split up the leadership tasks to manage the distribution efficiently on-site. She is managing the food and adults, and I am managing the water and babies. The hardest part for me is when it comes to that last box of formula or bottle of water.

Arian Ardie ('77) reports

The Jakarta floods of February 2007 inundated two thirds of the city, closed JIS for two days, and left hundreds of thousands people homeless. JIS Cares/Peduli joined with AmCham Indonesia and Yayasan Emmanuel, which is run by JIS alumni Emmanuel Laumonier ('97) and Mindy Weimer ('96), to assist flood victims with hygiene and sanitation kits.

The kit materials were purchased with donations from JIS Cares/Peduli and AmCham and its member companies. The hundreds of boxes of materials were delivered to the new JIS Resource Center which proved to be an excellent venue for making the kits.

The kits were assembled by more than 100 middle and high school volunteers, assisted by teachers, parents, alumni and staff. A "bucket brigade" was created and within five hours 700 complete personal hygiene and sanitation kits were prepared that included a mosquito net, house cleaning materials and personal hygiene items such as soap, shampoo and toothbrushes. Each kit also contained vitamins for children and adults.

The completed kits were delivered to beneficiaries in North Jakarta, the area most heavily impacted by the floods. They were distributed to communities in which Yayasan Emmanuel had already been working on clean water and sanitation programs. 100 kits were also given to KKIS/ACT for distribution to our classified and contract staff whose houses were flooded. The Middle School and PIE also collected clothing, food, water and other materials for the flood victims. These were also distributed by Yayasan Emmanuel to the communities. The hygiene kits and other materials were greatly appreciated by the flood victims.



Children smile as the JIS Cares/Peduli relief caravan leaves for other flooded areas in Jakarta.