

International Newsletter for Sustainable Local Development

Newsletter #95 – February 1st 2013

Summary

Message from the Editorial Team.....	1
Eradicating Poverty in Indonesia: A convention to introduce a University-pivoted synergistic approach.....	2
Katosi Women’s Development Trust in Uganda: When women take a hand in their own development.....	5

Message from the Editorial Team

In this, our first Newsletter of 2013, we would like to thank all our readers, some of whom have been faithfully reading this publication since we first began in November 2003.

We are very happy to inform you that the Newsletter is now published in six languages. Thanks to a meeting that took place last October in Indonesia, the AKSI UI foundation has offered to translate it into Bahasa Indonesia. This new version is in addition to the Japanese one that has been published since 2010 by the *Syakai Undo* (Social Movement), published by the Civil Policy Research Institute (CPRI) of the Seikatsu Club, who publish to a readership of 1,200/ AKSI UI send the newsletters out to about 2,000 readers in Indonesia. We send our Newsletter to about 325 people, some of whom redistribute it within their organisation, such as the ALOE list that has 125 subscribers.

This means that our Newsletter is sent to several thousand readers. Our thanks to all the people and organisations who provide this voluntary support for our publication.

This issue continues with articles on our main theme, that of local initiatives. Both Judith’s article and that written by our Indonesian friends concern the struggle against poverty and building sustainable local development in their respective environments.

*Editorial Team
Judith Hitchman
Yvon Poirier
Martine Theveniaut*

Eradicating Poverty in Indonesia: A convention to introduce a University-pivoted synergistic approach

By Alina Darmadi

Yayasan Aksi Sinergi Untuk Indonesia (AKSI UI Foundation) is an organization that dedicates its work to fighting poverty, growing society's independence and increasing living condition in a sustainable manner. The organization was founded as the follow-up to a seminar themed "Indonesia Without Poverty" held by the Faculty of Economy, University of Indonesia, or what people refer to as the education cradle of the most prominent national figures. The seminar was conducted in 2011 to commemorate the faculty's 60th anniversary, thus the foundation was initiated and supported by some of the prominent national figures rooted in the faculty, as well as other leading individuals in people's empowerment and social entrepreneurship such as Prof. Dr. Subroto, and Drs. Bambang Ismawan of Bina Swadaya, the Social Entrepreneurship Father of Indonesia.



Keynote speaker's lineup on opening night.

Dr. Dorijatun Kuntjoro Djakti, a former Coordinating minister of economy and former Indonesian ambassador to the United States of America, Nur Mahmudi Isma'il, the mayor of Depok city where the convention was held, Prof. Dr. Subroto, AKSI UI founder, Prof. Firmanzah Ph.D, Aksi UI founder and Special Staff to the President on Economics and Development, Drs. Bambang Ismawan MA, Aksi UI founder and Social Entrepreneurship father in Indonesia, and HS Dillon, Special Envoy of President of Republic Indonesia on Poverty Alleviation

Learning from its mentors in its efforts to eradicate poverty, AKSI UI believes that the key ingredient to building sustainable impacts is by developing synergy between the existing strengths in the community. Poverty, one of the biggest challenges in Indonesia, is multidimensional, so AKSI UI recognizes that it takes a

comprehensive and sustainable multi-sectoral effort to solve through the synergy between community strengths.. This is why AKSI UI does not work alone.. It encourages collaboration and participation from as many functions and elements within society as possible in the fight to eliminate poverty from Indonesia. In other words, it works as a glue cohesive force, bringing all the actors and strengths in society together to build sustainable solutions.

Such efforts have been conducted with success among others in Klaten in Central Java, West Nusa Tenggara and in TaposTenjo, a suburb of Jakarta. However, given its very young age, AKSI UI does not have the capacity to work all over the five million km² area of Indonesia. What now needs to be done is to identify an element in society that can replicate the cohesive role played by AKSI UI , and disseminate the concept. This structure needs to have a strategic position in the society, to be trusted, and to have the complete resources and the capacity to build cohesion between the many elements in society.

Meanwhile, looking back at history, we know that in Indonesia it has always been educational institutions that have inspired and led meaningful movements in Indonesia. It is therefore clear that universities should and can play a pivotal role in leading the fight to combat poverty in their respective areas.

Consequently, to commemorate its first anniversary, AKSI UI held a 3-day National Convention on Poverty Eradication, inviting universities from throughout Indonesia, as well as organisations, NGOs and individuals concerned with the issue of poverty. The convention was held on 3rd -5th December at the University of Indonesia in Depok, and was themed “Universities and their Strategic Role in Enhancing Sustainable Community Empowerment.”

Academics responded positively to the event. “Many regions have had a poverty problem for a long time, be it in coastal or farming areas”, said Prof. Dr. Hj Badia Perizade, the rector of the University of Sriwijaya, Palembang which is located in the farming area. Badia, the only female rector among state universities added, “We need to support each other to create a breakthrough in solving poverty problems”.

Weeks before this initiative was held, additional support was also obtained from the Directorate General of Higher Education, the Ministry of Education and Culture. This strengthens AKSI UI’s access to the many universities in Indonesia. Furthermore, AKSI UI also obtained support in promoting the event from many university groups and associations such as the association of private universities (APTISI), and the association of Catholic universities (APTIK). They were also supported by the association of Nahdlatul Ulama universities (APTINU), and Muhammadiyah assembly of higher Education; these are the biggest Muslim organizations, thus representing the majority of the Indonesian population. All in all, the convention has succeeded in gathering representatives from 93 universities from 86 cities throughout Indonesia from the most Western part of Aceh to the most Eastern part of Papua.

“This event is owned by Indonesian’s universities to once more answer the call of history that has proven them as one of the main pillars in determining the direction of the Country,” said Bambang Ismawan, the founder and the Chairman of the Board of Executives AKSI UI, also the chairman of Bina Swadaya Foundation, one of the oldest and biggest Indonesian NGOs established more than 45 years ago, that has grown into a giant social enterprise, comprising 17

smaller social enterprises today. The very first winner of the Social Entrepreneur Award of the Year, established by Ernst & Young in 2006 among many other awards also added, “This ownership is important to cement their commitment to boosting the empowerment process in the community wherever they are located, because our nation’s challenge today is to eradicate the poverty that is still widespread in such a rich country as ours.”

With the interest acquired during the event, this convention is set to become an annual event, so that as the years pass, there will be a continuous learning and networking process among universities in creating strategic synergy aimed at increasing community empowerment and capacity and eradicating poverty in a real, comprehensive and sustainable manner.

To ensure that a wide horizon and in-depth insight are well shared among the participants, the convention brings together experts and prominent national practitioners in areas of poverty alleviation, community empowerment, micro financing, demography and other social issues. To name a few, governmental speakers include Special Envoy of the President of Republic of Indonesia on Poverty Alleviation, HS Dillon, Special Staff to the President on Economics and Development and Founder of AKSI UI, Firmanzah, Special Envoy of the President of Republic of Indonesia on Millenium Development Goals, Nila F Moeloek, and Poverty Reduction Director of the National Development Planning Agency, Rudy S. Prawiradinata.

“To widen the horizon, this convention also engages speakers from corporations, such as Sugiharto, the president commissioner of state-owned petroleum company Pertamina, and one of the founders of AKSI UI.” said Dewi Hutabarat, the Executive Director of AKSI UI. Also representing corporations in the speakers’ lineup were Jerry Ng, President Director of Bank BTPN which is actively involved in a micro financing programme that reaches out to the remotest area in the country, and the Pertamina Foundation with its intention of inviting universities to join the tree-planting movement as part of the economic solution for empowering the community. Dewi further stated that apart from the open opportunity to network and exchange experience, this convention also allows us to build a database of various efforts to alleviate poverty and empowering the community that has been performed so far in many regions of Indonesia. This will then become comprehensive data for common reference.

In total, the convention presents approximately 40 speakers from academics, poverty-related government bodies, activists as well as corporations. “We want to make sure there will no longer be any silos in the effort to eradicate poverty” Dewi said.

This convention is set as a medium for participants to share experience, elaborate thoughts and ideas on driving strategic synergy in various areas according to the respective geographical character and condition. Furthermore, this convention also aims to formulate points of understanding among the universities on its role to build cohesion and become a driver of multi-party synergy in the effort to enhance community empowerment in a sustainable manner.

At the end of the 3-day convention, participants gathered to formulate points of understanding, as the crystallization of the discussions held during the event. These points were then read aloud and signed by all participants as a

declaration. The document will be the starting point of an action plan.

“We will monitor the follow up of the declaration and we will discuss the updates at the convention next year,” Dewi explained.

In his keynote speech, Prof. Dr. Subroto, one of AKSI UI founders and a well-respected Economist, who was also appointed Minister of Cooperatives, and Minister of Mining and Energy during the previous government and appointed the Secretary General of OPEC (Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries) for two periods from 1988 to 1994 said “Indonesia have been blessed with the 3 main assets, namely geographic dividend, demographic dividend, and historical dividend. These 3 assets should give no reason for Indonesia not to be able to free itself from poverty. Indeed Indonesia has become the 16th largest economy in the world; nevertheless, the country still has over 100 of the 250 million citizens living below the poverty line. This means that urgent homework is needed for every element in the country to work together in the effort to eradicate poverty from the beloved land of Indonesia.”

“Indeed this is a starting point, and maybe just as small a point as a drop of water. However, we will continue to build our effort to create synergies all over Indonesia. We believe, even small drops of water, when dropped consistently, can create a hole even in a stone,” said Bambang Ismawan optimistically.

In Bahasa Indonesia

<http://www.aksisinergi-ui.com/>

In Bahasa Indonesia and in English

<http://www.binaswadaya.org/index.php?lang=en>

Katosi Women's Development Trust in Uganda: When women take a hand in their own development

By Judith Hitchman

Margaret Nakato from Uganda founded the Katosi Women's Development Trust¹ in 1996. Her objective, based on her own life experiences, was to empower other women so that they could take charge of their own lives. She had witnessed her father's taking all the decisions on behalf of her mother, a midwife in Katosi, on Lake Victoria, and believed that if women were able to earn their own livelihoods, that they would be able to gain greater control and break with a situation whereby they were mere possessions, at a time when many fisher men had as many as 6 or 7 wives.

Traditionally, the women in Uganda on Lake Victoria had smoked and salted fish that they traded regionally and exported to the Congo, the Sudan and Rwanda. This activity helped these women and their friends to gain some measure of financial control over their lives. But with the demand for Nile perch that led to industrialisation of the fishing on Lake Victoria, the catch had in recent years become a major export industry for Nile perch, caught and sold directly to the

¹ <http://www.katosi.org/>

processing plants, using boats with freezers and improved handling sites all of which are designed for export only. The small-scale fishers' wives no longer had access to the fish for smoking, and had lost what little financial independence they had. In this society, widows, regardless of their order in a marriage (wife #1, 2 or 3, etc.) were not bestowed any privileges or financial assurance for their future, unless the husband had specifically given one an asset such as a house. This meant that single women and widows were all having to leave Katosi, and move to the islands on the lake or rural trading centres to gain access to the fish or to find alternative employment opportunities. The issue of HIV-AIDS is also very serious in the whole of the Lake Victoria region, and many men and women were losing their lives. If a fisher died, the wife lost control of her husband's boat, making the situation even worse.

The first step of the project involved setting up a "tontine", a typical African system of merry-go-round micro-credit, whereby each woman pays a small sum into a pool every week, and each woman takes it in turn to benefit from the total amount saved. She did so with six or seven Catholic women she knew well.

The first initiative of KWDT was to support the women to help them keep control of the boats. Fish catches were high, and the women were paid a good price for their fish.

By 1998, the Katosi Women's Group owned two boats, and a year later, they began a micro-credit fund. Despite the boom, boats and fishing gear were very expensive and unaffordable for many. Some local fishermen and new fishers, interested in gaining from the boom and high prices for the fresh fish started using poison to catch fish, and this led to a ban on fish exports from the region for health and hygiene reasons. The migration of fisher communities from the north due to war also contributed to the introduction of bad fishing practice on Lake Victoria by immigrants.

The Katosi Women's Community was paralysed and poor, as they were so specialised in fishing. Margaret decided that there was a need for multiple development and opted to diversify into farming. A single cow could produce milk to help feed several people - especially the children, and the manure could be used as fertiliser... and help the women to survive.



Margaret Nakoto speaking at the World Fisheries Day, Lake Victoria, Uganda, November 21, 2012

By 1998, the Katosi Women's Group owned two boats, and a year later, they began a micro-credit fund. Despite the boom, boats and fishing gear were very expensive and unaffordable for many. Some local fishermen and new fishers, interested in gaining from the boom and high prices for the fresh fish started using poison to catch fish, and this led to a ban on fish exports from the region for health and hygiene reasons. The migration of fisher communities from the north due to war also contributed to the introduction of bad fishing practice on Lake Victoria by immigrants.

The Katosi Women's Community was paralysed and poor, as they were so specialised in fishing. Margaret decided that there was a need for multiple

development and opted to diversify into farming. A single cow could produce milk to help feed several people - especially the children, and the manure could be used as fertiliser... and help the women to survive.

By 2000, there were 48 women involved in the KWDT. The situation regarding the lack of access to clean water and sanitation had become critical in Katosi. Previously it had been possible to fetch clean drinking water from the lake. But now water hyacinth blocked the access, and muddied the water. Furthermore, the big population on the lakeside was creating pollution. There was little or no hygiene available to families; people were no longer able to wash in the lake, as they had done in the past. People used wetlands as lavatories, and any toilets that existed were in a bad state. Because of the high water table, it is very expensive to construct the conventional type of pit latrine in fisher communities, thus many families opt to use the bush. Coupled with the high movement within fisher communities following the fish, many households had temporary toilets.

A programme of water, hygiene and health began in 2003, to enable women to gain access to clean, safe water and adequate sanitation. By the end of the year, KWFDA was engaging successful in agriculture, fishing and micro-credit . The local women were increasingly proud of their achievements!

Another year down the road, word of what KWDT was doing had started to spread throughout the fisher communities. There were 4 applications by other groups to join. With over one hundred members, the crucial issue had become the capacity to manage a single large group! The solution was to form a network of women's groups that started with 4 groups. The network is now made up of 16 different groups, and shared resources, skills and knowledge among 385 women! Training for group leaders became a priority, with Katosi Women's Development Trust acting as an umbrella group. Activities also became extended to cover wider interests, especially fisheries training.

The local economic situation on the lakeside was still however very difficult. Many women were indebted, due to the high costs of nets and engines as well as repairs. Fish was increasingly being sold to middlemen with little or no benefit of added value to the communities. Margaret, ever resourceful in her ideas, encouraged the women to diversify into bee-keeping, mushroom farming and fish farming, as well as animal keeping (chickens and pigs); the trading from these activities enabled the women to access credit. It was all accompanied by training.

Benefits were immediately visible. Children were able to continue their schooling, women's self-esteem improved. An illustration of this is how one house that had previously been referred to as "the widow's house" was now called "the house of the woman who has two cows"! The women have also progressively taken on roles that were previously reserved for men, such as

building water tanks... Women have progressively also become involved as decision-makers within their local communities, at Local Authority level, and helped build both transparency and management of resources within their communities. In a country previously reputed more for corruption than for sustainable local development, this is indeed an important achievement.

In 2012, during the World Water Forum held in Marseilles in France, Margaret Nakato received the award of the third Kyoto World Water Grand Prize on behalf of the KWDT. A fitting recompense for all the inspirational work that she and her exceptional team have done in recent years. She was also co-president of the World Fishing Forum, holding office until November 2012, when she passed on the responsibility. She remains the Secretary General of the WFF, an activity that fall under the umbrella of KWDT.

<https://www.facebook.com/katosiwomen>

Newsletters available on-line:

<http://local-development.blogspot>

**Information & (UN) subscribe:
Yvon Poirier (ypoirier@videotron.ca)**

About this Newsletter

This Newsletter is published in French, English, Spanish and Portuguese. It has always been an entirely voluntary effort, ever since the first Newsletter was published in 2003. The editorial teams particularly wishes to thank the following people for their commitment to translating and revising the Newsletters

Michel Colin (Brazil)
Paula Garuz Naval (Ireland)
Éveline Poirier (Canada)
Brunilda Rafael (France)

We also wish to thank the Civil Policy Research Institute (CPRI) of the Seikatsu Club in Japan, for their translations into Japanese and AKSI UI for the translation to Bahasa Indonesia..