



HUMAS YUM UNTUK KALTENG POS

JALAN SINERGI:
(dari kiri ke kanan) Ketua KADIN Provinsi Kalteng, Tugiyo, Ketua Yayasan Usaha Mulia, Ir Purnama dan Board Member Yayasan Usaha Mulia, M Bachrun Bustillo saat mengikuti acara "Seminar Pemberdayaan Tenaga Kerja Lokal Yang Kompeten Di Era Millenial" berlangsung di Gedung Muhammad Subuh Centre (Rungan Sari), Rabu (10/7).

YUM Tingkatan Kualitas SDM Lokal

PALANGKA RAYA-Yayasan Usaha Mulia (YUM) adalah badan amal terdaftar di Indonesia, yang merupakan anggota Asosiasi Susila Dharma yang berstatus konsultatif dengan Dewan Ekonomi dan Sosial PBB (ECOSOC) dan Anak PBB (UNICEF) yang telah bekerja di Indonesia lebih dari 40 tahun.

YUM yang terletak di kawasan perbukitan Tangkiling ini, bertujuan untuk mendukung masyarakat, untuk meningkatkan kualitas hidup tanpa dipengaruhi oleh perspektif ras, agama, etnis, usia atau gender.

Untuk itulah, YUM menyelenggarakan 'Seminar Pemberdayaan Tenaga Kerja Lokal yang Kompeten di Era Milenial' bekerja sama dengan Dinas Tenaga Kerja Kota Palangka Raya dan didukung oleh Kamar Dagang Indonesia (Kadin) Kalimantan Tengah, di Gedung Muhamad Subuh Center, Rungan Sari, Rabu (10/7).

Ketua YUM, Ir Purnama, mengatakan, acara itu berangkat dari keprihatinan atas minimnya tenaga kerja lokal untuk bisa menempati posisi

yang tinggi atau menentukan.

"Seminar ini untuk mencari benang merah atas permasalahan yang sebenarnya klasik pada dunia kerja di Kalimantan Tengah, yaitu kualitas sumber daya manusia (SDM) yang tidak memenuhi persyaratan," ungkap Purnama.

Atas fakta tersebut, lanjutnya, YUM yang telah lama bergerak dalam pendampingan masyarakat lokal dengan bermacam program yang telah di desain sedemikian rupa, siap untuk mengisi peran sebagai fasilitator masyarakat dalam upaya peningkatan ketrampilan dan kualitas SDM lokal.

"YUM sudah lama masuk pada segmen pendampingan masyarakat lokal dengan kompleksitas persoalannya yang rata-rata berada pada level tingkat pendidikan yang rendah dan ketrampilan dan pengetahuan yang rendah," urainya.

Program YUM, bebernya, yaitu pendidikan, penguatan masyarakat dan kesehatan. Sebagai contoh, program pendidikan, yaitu VTC YUM atau Lembaga Pendidikan Pelatihan

Kalimantan yang telah beroperasi sejak pertengahan 2013 dan telah menampung 500 peserta dalam pelatihan jangka pendek (tiga bulan), serta setiap tahun dan telah melaksanakan kerja sama dengan seluruh sekolah di Kecamatan Bukit Batu khususnya tingkat SMP dan SMA.

"Ke depan, YUM telah merencanakan 4 program baru. Yakni perhotelan, adminitrasi perkantoran, pertanian dan agrobisnis dan program bahasa Indonesia serta bahasa Inggris," ucapnya.

Sementara itu kegiatan yang dihadiri 60 orang peserta yang berasal dari perwakilan perusahaan, yayasan, perbankan, perhotelan dan koperasi yang ada di Kecamatan Bukit Batu dan Palangka Raya ini, dibuka oleh Kadis Disnaker Kota Palangka Raya, Barit Rayanto S.Sos,M.Si. Selain itu yang hadir saat itu, Ketua Kadin Provinsi Kalteng, Tugiyo, Perwakilan dari Dinas Pariwisata Kalteng, serta pembina Board Member Yayasan Usaha Mulia, M Bachrun Bustillo bersama Dra Woro Aryati Prawoto M Psi. (kom/rin/b-7,5/aza)

KEBUDAYAAN > YOGA SAMBIL BERAMAL

AKSI SOSIAL

Yoga Sambil Beramal

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NIKOLAUS HARBOWO

Dua instruktur yoga, April Ulanday (Kanada) dan Adam Smith (Australia), memberikan arahan gerakan dasar yoga yang benar kepada delapan peserta yoga di Taman Interaktif Bintaro Jaya Xchange Mall, Tangerang, Minggu (21/1).

Dua instruktur yoga, April Ulanday (Kanada) dan Adam Smith (Australia), berkeliling membenahi gerakan dasar delapan peserta yoga yang berada di atas sebuah terpal berukuran sekitar 8 x 5 meter, di Taman Interaktif Bintaro Jaya Xchange Mall, Tangerang, Minggu (21/1). Di dalam kegiatan itu, mereka disatukan dalam satu tujuan yang sama, yakni berbagi kepada sesama.

April mengatakan, yoga yang dijadikan sebagai bentuk donasi baru dialaminya kali pertama di Indonesia. Karena itulah, April mengaku tertarik datang jauh-jauh dari Amerika untuk mengajarkan ilmu yoga yang telah ia pelajari selama hampir enam tahun. April mendapatkan informasi soal kegiatan donasi tersebut dari Adam, teman lamanya ketika belajar yoga bersama di Australia.

”Saya sangat antusias ketika Adam bercerita mengenai kegiatan ini. Ini adalah hal unik dan belum pernah saya temui di negara-negara yang pernah saya kunjungi,” ujar April yang pernah mengajar yoga sampai ke India, Filipina, dan Laos.



NIKOLAUS HARBOWO

April Ulanday (Kanada) dan Adam Smith (Australia) menunjukkan salah satu gerakan yoga di Taman Interaktif Bintaro Jaya Xchange Mall, Tangerang, Minggu (21/1).

Adapun acara bertajuk ”Yoga for Charity: Bring Your Positive Vibe to Help Those Less Fortunate” itu diinisiasi sebuah organisasi sosial, Yayasan Usaha Mulia. Setiap peserta yang ikut mendonasikan uang sebesar Rp 150.000.

Salah satu peserta yoga, Priscillia Rasyidi (34), mengatakan, dirinya mendapatkan banyak hal dari kegiatan tersebut. Selain mendapatkan instruktur yang berkompeten, ia juga merasa senang dapat sekaligus berdonasi. Apalagi, menurut dia, biaya Rp 150.000 tersebut masih terjangkau.

”Saya biasanya ikut yoga tinggal bayar saja, tetapi ini kan kayak bonus sekalian menyumbang. Karena ini buat donasi, jadi saya lebih merasa puas dan bermanfaat,” ujar perempuan asal Menteng tersebut.

Hal serupa juga diungkapkan Lupita Reksodiputro (32). Perempuan asal Bintaro ini mengaku baru kali pertama mengikuti yoga karena diajak temannya. Ia tertarik dengan konsep yoga sambil beramal.

”Sekali dayung, dua pulau terlampaui. Lumayan, saya dapat olahraga juga, tetapi dapat pengalaman berbagi juga,” ujar Lupita.

Ketua Yayasan Usaha Mulia (YUM) Purnama Widjajakusumah mengatakan, hasil donasi yang terkumpul dari kegiatan tersebut akan digunakan untuk kegiatan sosial di dua tempat masyarakat.

”Semua hasil dari kegiatan ini akan dikembalikan ke sosial, bukan profit perusahaan. Saya senang, para peserta yoga ini mau berbagi dengan sesama melalui kegiatan positif buat mereka juga,” ujar Purnama.

Setiap kegiatan ternyata mampu membawa pesan positif, termasuk yoga. Kegiatan ini menunjukkan bahwa beramal pun bisa dilakukan dengan cara apa pun. Semua kembali kepada kita apakah mempunyai tujuan yang sama untuk menyebarkan pesan positif itu. (DD18)

Tagar

Yoga

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Berlibur Sambil Belajar Bertani Organik



Mengenalkan kepada anak dunia yang berbeda dengan dunianya sehari-hari juga bisa Anda lakukan dengan mengajaknya ke Yayasan Usaha Mulia Village (www.yumindonesia.org). Di atas lahan 1,5 hektar di kawasan Cipanas, Jawa Barat, tersebut ada area pertanian organik seluas 6.000 meter persegi. Anda dan anak bisa belajar bercocok tanam secara organik, mulai dari pembuatan pupuk kompos, pembibitan sayuran dan buah, cara memindahkan bibit di *poly bag* ke lahan pertanian, sampai panen sayuran dan buah. Dan, karena merupakan *working farm* - selain *learning farm*, maka setiap orang yang datang ke sana memang akan bertemu langsung dengan petani-petani yang mengolah lahan. Merekalah yang akan menjelaskan apa saja yang mereka kerjakan setiap hari, bukan tenaga pengajar khusus yang tidak bercocok tanam sehari-hari.

“Bertemu langsung dengan petani, serta turut membantu mereka, akan menjadi pengalaman yang bagus buat anak-anak,” kata Vanessa Reksodipoetro, *partner relations coordinator* Yayasan Usaha Mulia. “Siapa tahu, itu bisa menginspirasi anak-anak untuk menjadi petani nantinya. Mungkin selama ini mereka membayangkan petani adalah pekerjaan yang membosankan, tetapi mereka bisa melihat petani-petani di sini yang muda dan sangat antusias dengan pertanian organik, yang benar-benar mengusahakan semua harus alami.” Bukan hanya itu, Anda dan anak juga bisa menginap selama 3 hari, misalnya, di penginapan sederhana di area Yayasan Usaha Mulia Village, dan turut terlibat dalam berbagai program pengembangan masyarakat yang digelar oleh Yayasan Usaha Mulia di *Vocational Training Centre*, perpustakaan, maupun PAUD.

Dan, kalau punya waktu selama 5 hari, Anda dan anak bisa menyambangi *project area* Yayasan Usaha Mulia yang terletak di Bukit Batu, Kalimantan Tengah, sekitar 45 menit dari Palangkaraya, menginap di penginapan sederhana di area Yayasan Usaha Mulia, atau di *eco-village* yang berada di seberangnya. Selama di Kalimantan, anak tentu saja akan diajak berkenalan dengan budaya Dayak, serta berinteraksi langsung dengan keluarga-keluarga di 7 desa yang mengikuti program pertanian organik dari Yayasan Usaha Mulia, membantu kegiatan-kegiatan di *community center* yayasan, posyandu, maupun beberapa sekolah negeri. “Tidak jauh dari tempat kami, ada habitat orangutan Kalimantan yang dikelola oleh Borneo Orangutan Survival. Anak-anak bisa juga diajak ke sana, untuk belajar tentang orangutan,” kata Vanessa.

Diharapkan, siapa pun yang akan mengikuti program di Yayasan Usaha Mulai, memang harus siap 'bekerja', walaupun tidak dipaksa juga, *sih*. "Yang pasti, bukan liburan yang hanya *fun, fun, fun, fun*. Yang datang ke sini memang benar-benar mau *do something meaningful*, mau *holiday with a meaning*. Mereka bisa pulang dengan membawa cerita sudah berinteraksi dengan anak-anak setempat," tambah Vanessa. "Siap-siap *being open minded*, terbuka bahwa di sini kita akan bertemu dengan orang-orang yang berbeda dengan yang biasa ditemui sehari-hari. Siap mengeluarkan **empati** dan bantuan kepada orang-orang di sekitar kita."

Dengan begitu, menurut Vanessa, diharapkan mereka bisa belajar bersyukur, menghargai orang, dan berinteraksi dengan banyak orang. "Bahkan banyak anak yang bilang, setelah merasakan pengalaman mengajar di perpustakaan kami, ternyata mengajar itu susah. Jadi, mereka akhirnya lebih menghargai juga guru-guru mereka yang telah susah payah mengajar mereka," lanjutnya. "Banyak juga yang bilang, mereka malah mendapatkan lebih banyak daripada apa yang mereka kasih." Jadi, sudah siap berangkat, Ma?



Source: <http://www.parenting.co.id/keluarga/berlibur-sambil-belajar-bertani-organik->



YUM Brings Nutrition, Health to Rural Indonesia

By John Macdonald on 10:20 am Apr 01, 2015

Category Count Me In

Tags: causes, Count Me In, healthy, learning, nutrition, organic, social, undeprived, yum



Women from the Banturung subdistrict of Palangkaraya, Central Kalimantan, participate in a five-step learning program about nutrition and health care created and conducted by Yayasan Usaha Mulia through its YUM Agro campaign. JG Photos/John Macdonald

Here are some surprising facts: Children can enjoy eating vegetables; a good diet needn't cost more than a poor one; and healthy eating reduces the risk of a range of childhood diseases. In Central Kalimantan, the Yayasan Usaha Mulia, or YUM, is showing communities how.

YUM is a nonprofit group that has been working with local communities in the Bukit Batu district of Central Kalimantan for almost two decades. They are now deeply embedded within this community, and have built strong links with government and academic organizations, NGOs, and aid donors. I am an Australian volunteer working as a media officer with

YUM for the past two years, funded by the Australian government as part of the Australian Volunteers for International Development (AVID) program. YUM has conducted highly successful collaborative projects which have improved conditions conducive to disease, provided clean water and improved sanitation, delivered vocational training, supported education — and established hundreds of organic vegetable gardens. The main goal of the YUM Agro project is to improve home gardening practices, thereby improving nutrition and food security in this poor and mostly infertile region. It's a very worthwhile project; very practical and — with over 300 productive gardens established — the program is clearly very successful, too.

But as YUM staff observed from the early stages of the project, many of the nutritional benefits of having fresh produce are negated by common dietary and cooking practices, and children's health is being compromised by a range of preventable illnesses. These observations were reinforced by a survey of the health of children in nearly 400 families in the area, conducted jointly with the Health Ministry's Health Academy in Palangkaraya, Central Kalimantan.

The survey found high cases of fevers, coughs, colds and influenza, diarrhea, and dental problems — and a generally low level of knowledge about nutrition, basic health principles and first aid. Also, stunted growth was found to be common amongst children, due largely to deficient diets and the impact of preventable diseases. In early 2014, to improve knowledge about nutrition and healthy cooking practices, YUM launched a five-step learning program, developed and delivered in partnership with 16 community health posts in the district.



Women from the Banturung subdistrict of Palangkaraya, Central Kalimantan, participate in a five-step learning program about nutrition and health care created and conducted by Yayasan Usaha Mulia through its YUM Agro campaign. JG Photos/John Macdonald

Each module incorporates a package of health and nutritional information, and a dozen related recipes. Each is delivered through a series of presentations and hands-on cooking classes in the health posts, and via a free reference and recipe booklet, which is given to each participant.

The first module covers the basic components of a healthy diet, and the properties of many commonly consumed foods. The recipes encourage cooking with less oil, lightly steaming (rather than boiling) vegetables, and reducing or eliminating the use of added salt, refined sugar and MSG in family meals.

The second module focuses on the importance of a good diet for mothers-to-be, nursing mothers, babies and toddlers. It explains the special functions of iron, calcium, folate, vitamin A, Omega-3 and iodine — and why children need to eat lots of fruit and vegetables.

Module three is currently being rolled out. Its message is promoting the tremendous potential of moringa and amaranth seeds to supplement diets. These plants are easy, cheap and quick to grow,

and provide concentrated amounts of important vitamins and minerals, as well as significant amounts of protein. Recipes are now being "road-tested" and refined, and dietary impacts are being tested and monitored in conjunction with the Palangkaraya polytechnic.

Development of the fourth module is nearly complete. It deals with stir-frying — the benefits, techniques and recipes. The fifth and final module, to be delivered later in 2015, will cover dehydration and other techniques for preserving fruit and vegetables. Throughout the program, YUM's approach has been to provide clear, practical, and useful information to participants. Each module is tested and fine-tuned prior to rollout, and the recipes are all tested for ease of use — and flavor!

To assist families in cooking with less oil, YUM subsidizes the purchase of non-stick frying pans by families in the program, making these pans as affordable as the conventional variety. Response to the program has been overwhelmingly positive, with 380 women — accompanied by an even greater number of babies and toddlers — attending sessions in the health post so far.

They are highly motivated to improve the diets of their families, and are pleased to find that cooking with less oil is cheaper, and that the meals produced can actually taste better. As Fitriani, from Banturung subdistrict says: "I'm especially happy because my child is now eating eggs mixed with vegetables. Before, he didn't like them!" Meanwhile, Kanis has found financial benefits, too, noting that: "Before I used a liter of oil every week, but now I only use a little bit."

The next phase of the project will be implemented by mid-2015, again in partnership with the polytechnic. It will explain the causes of the most common childhood diseases, and how they may be prevented by addressing dietary deficiencies and improving hygiene. And, when illness occurs, it will give a step-by-step guide to treating it at home and how to know when to visit the doctor.



Through the YUM Agro Project, nonprofit organization Yayasan Usaha Mulia is teaming up with remote communities of Central Kalimantan to teach its residents the most efficient methods of sustainable agriculture. JG Photos/John Boyd Macdonald

A 'YUMmie' Vegetable Garden for Every Home

John Macdonald

Central Kalimantan may be better known for depressing reports about the loss of its forests, but every so often good news does manage to come to light.



One involves Yayasan Usaha Mulia (YUM) a non-profit organization currently working with local communities in the Bukit Batu district to establish hundreds of home vegetable gardens, providing a year-round supply of tasty and nutritious produce for local families.

YUM has been working to improve the lives of people in some of the poorest communities in Indonesia since 1975, and in Central Kalimantan since the '90s, with targeted and highly successful projects to combat malaria, provide clean water and improved sanitation, and to support early childhood health and education.

It became increasingly clear that a lack of access to fresh and good quality fruit and vegetables was undermining the nutrition and basic health of people in the subdistrict's seven villages. So, in mid-2011, with support from Susila Dharma Germany and the German government, the YUM Agro Project was born.

The district suffers from poor soil fertility, with acidic soils of sand and peat, and the equatorial climate is rather challenging. The environment has been compromised by logging and burning of forests, drainage of wetlands, siltation and mercury contamination of the rivers. Most fruits and vegetables are imported, rarely fresh, and often contain high levels of chemical residue.

The YUM Agro Project aims to help by facilitating the establishment of home gardens, delivering a continuous supply of clean, fresh, healthy vegetables.

"I worry about pesticides in the imported produce," says Khoiratun from the village of Suka Mulia. "But thanks to YUM I can now plant and grow my own organic vegetables — and reduce my spending at the market."

Prior to working with the local Dayak and "*transmigrasi*" (mostly Javanese) communities, YUM established two rural

centers. These incorporate model gardens to demonstrate what can be achieved, and a small laboratory and other facilities for research and trial of "best practice" techniques (adapted to local conditions) — before their use in the field.

The focus was on developing a successful Homegarden Model, using sustainable organic practices and permaculture principles. Newer techniques such as bokashi, biochar and beneficial bacteria are employed — indeed, any technique to improve soil quality which is proven to be effective, practical to implement and sustainable over time.

YUM hasn't tried to reinvent the wheel, but has worked closely with a range of external organizations with relevant expertise. These have included the South-east Asian Regional Center for Tropical Biology, Bogor Agricultural University, the Indonesian Research Institute for Animal Production, the Indonesian Development of Education and Permaculture and the Sukabumi Freshwater Aquaculture Development Center, amongst others.

YUM employs a young team of agriculture graduates, all with enthusiasm, local knowledge and connections to the communities. Their technical skills, and their ability to deliver training in cultur-

ally appropriate ways, have been critical to the project's success. They provide training to new participants over a total of 15 days, broken into stages to coincide with key milestones such as bed preparation, planting, integrated pest management, seed saving and harvesting. This is backed up by ongoing monitoring, assessment and support.

Small groups of mostly women go through the training together. After contractually committing to the project, they are provisioned with basic equipment to get them started — a hoe, watering can, a bucket, fencing materials and seeds. Within three months, each home gardener has prepared eight garden beds, and is already harvesting their first crops of legumes, leafy vegetables, tomatoes, eggplants, chilli and tubers.

Three-and-a-half years after inception, 300 active family gardens are established and supported by monthly visits from YUM field staff. Feedback from mothers is that their home-grown vegetables are tastier and stay fresh longer, and that their children are eating — and enjoying — more healthy fresh foods.

From its focus on home gardens, the project has expanded into small animal husbandry, with village participants raising poultry and commencing small pond fish farming, and a popular program of cooking classes at the local community health posts (*posyandu*), promoting good nutrition and healthy cooking practices to local women.

Future plans for the YUM Agro Project include expanding selected home gardens into small scale farms, improving food sources for chicken and fish, and development of the nutrition program.

For more information, visit Yumindonesia.org or follow [Facebook.com/yayasanusahamulia](https://www.facebook.com/yayasanusahamulia)



I worry about pesticides in the imported produce. But ... I can now plant and grow my own organic vegetables — and reduce my spending at the market.

Khoiratun, YUM Agro Project participant



Helping the Helpers Be Better in Improving Indonesian Lives

By **Anita Surewicz** on 10:19 am Aug 04, 2013

Category **Featured, Life & Style**

Tags: **education, Indonesia education, Jakarta**



Olivia Reksodipoetro has helped communities get access to libraries, clean water and education. (JG Photo)

When Olivia Reksodipoetro arrived in Jakarta from France in 1974, she never imagined that she would still be living in the city nearly four decades later.

While Reksodipoetro has witnessed countless changes since she came to Indonesia, including the fall of Suharto and the country's emergence as one of Asia's key economic powers, she has also been the catalyst for change in the lives of countless Indonesians.

Currently the chairwoman of Yayasan Usaha Mulia (Foundation for Noble Work) — an NGO that strives to improve the quality of life of Indonesia's poor — Reksodipoetro has played a pivotal role helping the charitable institution.

"I had been working in Paris in the fashion world for big American department stores for eight years, and felt it was time to move on and do something else," Reksodipoetro says of the foundation known as YUM.

"My plan was to do some soul searching at Wisma Subud [a spiritual organization in Indonesia] for two months, hoping to find a new direction regarding work."

As luck would have it, Reksodipoetro didn't have to wait long for a new work opportunity to present itself. After less than two weeks in the country, she was offered a job with the United Nations, and worked there for almost five years, in which time she met her husband and had her first child.

It was in 1997 when Reksodipoetro became interested in social work when the Asian financial crisis hit Indonesia.

"I felt that something had to be done, and started a foundation with several friends called Indonesia Relief and Development Network [IRDN] to provide rice, sugar and cooking oil at half price to hundreds of families in Java, as well as sponsorships to assist children to continue their education," she says.

Many of Reksodipoetro's friends who were involved in IRDN were also involved in YUM, but opted to work for the new foundation because they became disillusioned with the way YUM was run. Ironically, it was Reksodipoetro who helped to turn YUM around after she became its chairwoman in 2005, at a time when it was no longer able to attract funding due to mismanagement.

"After reviewing the situation during the first month, I had to ask a number of employees to leave. There was practically no money left in the accounts, the person in charge of bookkeeping had no clue what they were doing, and the previous board had not been sufficiently involved to realize the depth of the problem," Reksodipoetro says.

All of the projects were in bad shape and a number had to be closed due to the lack of funding. The two remaining clinics funded by YUM were operating without a doctor, and were only attracting half a dozen patients a week as they could only afford to stock the types of medicines easily found at a warung.

"I wanted YUM to become accountable and transparent again in order to grow back to its former status," Reksodipoetro says.

"Donors want to be assured that their funding will be used properly to assist beneficiaries. Without transparency, it is not possible to attract and keep donors and that's the reason many small NGOs in Indonesia are unable to grow."

Never shying away from a challenge, Reksodipoetro contacted the Ford Foundation, a New York-based organization that helps NGOs implement accountability measures. They, in turn, recommended the TIFA Foundation in Jakarta, an Indonesian organization that works to promote an open society that respects diversity and honors the rule of law. Within a short period of time, they had helped Reksodipoetro assess which aspects of YUM needed improving.

"I also hired an independent auditing firm as I was hoping to start on a clean slate," Reksodipoetro adds.

"Unfortunately, documents were not in order or were missing, and it was not possible for the auditor to complete his work at the time."

Fast-forward eight years, and YUM's stellar teams now manage a wide range of educational, health and community development projects.

"We have established community libraries in areas where it is difficult for children to get hold of books and we offer sponsorships that allow children from disadvantaged families to attend school," Reksodipoetro says.

"We also help communities get access clean water and take measures to prevent malaria, among many other projects."

She also co-founded Yayasan Pustaka Kelana (Wandering Books Foundation) around the same time to provide children with access to books.

"At the time there were no mobile libraries in Jakarta, and the only four government libraries had very little funding and had few visitors due to their limited collections," she says.

"On the other hand, we could see children sitting on the floor in bookstores and devouring books they had no other access to and could not afford to buy. Obviously, children were eager to discover books but did not have access to them. That's why we thought that bringing the books to them was the solution."

Reksodipoetro has been able to gradually shift her role at YUM to a less hands-on role of assisting to raise funds and generally monitor the NGO's ventures.

While YUM has been a success story, Reksodipoetro is quick to highlight that she has gotten at least as much out of the experience as she has put in. And there is little doubt that Indonesia is a place she now considers home.

"I enjoy going to France and visiting my relatives and friends from time to time, but I do not miss living there," she says. "In fact I feel a bit like a chameleon. I have no problem adapting to very different lifestyles."

Olvia Reksodipoetro: A winner gives all

Mariel Grazella, The Jakarta Post, Jakarta | People | Wed, October 19 2011, 10:06 AM



JP/Mariel Grazella

For many nonprofit organizations, winning a membership to the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) means gaining access to a substantial pool of potential donors ready to offer funds to community development projects.

Established by former US president Bill Clinton in 2005, CGI is an amalgamation of some of the world's top companies, community leaders and civil societies. Every year members meet at an annual meeting – the most recent took place in September of this year – to exchange ideas on pressing issues such as generating employment and sustainable consumption.

“This is a fantastic opportunity for us because the Clinton Global Initiative has about 900 members with whom we can connect not only during the meetings but through their websites,” said Olvia Reksodipoetro, the chairwoman of the Foundation for Noble Work or Yayasan Usaha Mulia

YUM, founded by Muhammad Subuh in 1976, runs education, health and community development projects in West Java and Central Kalimantan. Together with local communities, they have worked to increase access to education and clean water, as well as wipe out endemic malaria.

“We can see who the ones are that are looking for partners in Indonesia for specific projects so I am hoping this will help us look for funds for projects we have in mind in the next few years,” she told The Jakarta Post.

As with many other nonprofit organizations, securing funds from robust donors has become critical for Olvia in ensuring that the foundation can continue running their outreach programs.

“We are constantly looking for funding,” Olvia noted, adding that the foundation “luckily has friends who know other organizations” willing to help the fund-raising process.

A “friend of the foundation” interning at CGI was the one who recommended the foundation to apply for membership. After presenting themselves to the CGI, the CGI eventually waived the US\$20,000 membership fee for YUM.

“We couldn’t have afforded it,” Olvia said.

It was through a network of friends that the foundation was able to get in touch with corporate and government-based donors including Barclays and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development or BMZ.

However, fund-raising is not always an easy task for many foundations as many donor organizations were wary of fund abuse.

“It’s difficult to approach the corporate world in Indonesia because they think that they will give money to foundations and the money will be misused,” she said.

Therefore, the government needs to set up an association which assesses foundations, hence sifting the good from the bad.

“The association would have criteria on what is accountable and professional. I think it would really be helpful for those who are trying to do their best,” she said.

According to Olvia, professionalism and accountability was what saved YUM from the downward slump it had been experiencing when she took over the position as chairwoman in 2005.

“I immediately called an external editor to have the accounts audited because I wanted to start with a clean slate. And so the start was to assess where the problems were and what needed to be done,” she said.

She added that a capable staff was essential in achieving accountability. However, this was what many Indonesian foundations lacked, which ultimately lead to their closure.

“I think lots of people who start creating small foundations have lots of good ideas. They want to help, they want to do something good but, they do not have the proper background to really understand management or to establish a proper organization,” she said.

“To really grow, you need to act professionally and also the new foundation laws in Indonesia are quite strict. So we have to be professional in order to abide by the laws,” she said.

And as for Olivia, she said she had honed her management skills when she worked for the United Nations in her hometown of Paris and when she ended up in a consulting firm after moving to Indonesia in 1974 to set up a home with her Indonesian husband.

Yet, the catalyst for her involvement in charity work was the financial difficulties her family faced in the early days of her husband’s career as a civil servant on a limited income, which once could barely cover electricity and telephone bills.

“I started to be interested in social work after I myself suffered from some problems. Then I realized how it feels to not have enough money to live on a day-to-day basis and that really pushed me to get involved with social work projects once my life got back on track,” she told the Post.

She initially carried out social work activities outside her work hours as a consultant. Together with her friends, as well as her sister-in-law Nesti Reksodipoetri, she established the Wandering Books Foundation, or Yayasan Pustaka Kelana, which ran mobile libraries in Jakarta.

“Fifteen years ago I became interested in social work and in 2005 I was asked to be the chairperson of Yayasan Usaha Mulia,” she said.

Through her social work, Olivia learnt some of the most critical issues that the country must loosen itself from in years to come. One problem concerned the inability of people to access sizable social funds the government has prepared simply because the people were unaware that they had rights to those funds.

Another pressing problem was the increasing inaccessibility to education due to fees charged to students.

“Education has become very expensive,” she said. “So how can people with very little income put their kids through school? That is very critical in my opinion because if we have a high percentage of unskilled uneducated people in this country, we are going to have a lot of social problems.”

She added that she, and many other social workers regardless of their nationality, wanted to improve conditions in Indonesia through social work because they have spotted the potential in Indonesians.

“There are a lot of bright people in Indonesia,” said the woman who is now an Indonesian citizen.

“[Social activists] feel something can be done, should be done and they want to help,” she said.

At the end of the day, the woman, who said that she has “brainwashed” her children into committing themselves to charity work as well, noted that she was the ultimate “winner” by reaching out to others.

“I feel it’s so fulfilling to do something that you feel is helping other people,” she commented “I always feel that I am the one who had quite a lot of professional experience through the years of work I had done, and I want to give back,”

“I feel that I am the winner, I am the lucky one.”