

BUILDING DISASTER RESILIENCE THROUGH CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVES

In 2024, PALUMA Nusantara conducted two capacity-building sessions in Rajabasa Village focused on enhancing the community's preparedness for natural disasters. The training sessions took place on January 30 and April 30 and aimed at equipping local leaders and community members with the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and implement a village disaster plan. The training emphasized disaster management concepts, village resilience assessment, and the creation of structured programs that address the specific needs of Rajabasa Village.

One of the key participants in the training was Syaifulloh Ismail, a 47-year-old Secretary of the Village, member of DRR Forum, and member of Destana in Rajabasa Village. As a local leader, he played an essential role in integrating the lessons from the training into his community's disaster preparedness initiatives.

EXPERIENCE AND KEY LEARNINGS

Syaifulloh described the training as highly valuable for his community. *"Ini adalah sebuah kegiatan yang menurut kami menambah pengetahuan kami atau menambah kapasitas kita di Desa Rajabasa demi untuk mengerti mengantisipasi atau menghadapi bencana mengingat daerah kami atau Desa Rajabasa rawan akan bencana yang kami persentase hampir mencapai seratus persen."* ("This is an activity that, in our view, enhances our knowledge and capacity in Rajabasa Village, allowing us to better understand how to anticipate and respond to disasters, given that our area is almost 100% disaster-prone").

The training was not only informative but also engaging. *"Saya suka kegiatan ini salah satunya ada beberapa hal satu materinya menarik kemudian suasananya tidak tegang dan ada membawa nilai positif seperti mengedukasi kami sebagai relawan dan khususnya Desa Rajabasa pada umumnya."* ("I enjoyed this activity, especially because the content was interesting, the atmosphere was relaxed, and it brought positive values by educating us as volunteers and benefiting Rajabasa Village in general").

IMPACT AND APPLICATION

The training enabled Syaifulloh and his team to involve previously overlooked community members, such as persons with disabilities, in disaster preparedness initiatives. *"Saya petik manfaatnya adalah sebuah kegiatan yang mengedukasi menambah pengetahuan serta wawasan kemudian keterlibatan disabilitas yang selama ini kita anggap tidak ada di lingkungan kita, kemudian setelah adanya kegiatan PALUMA mereka kita libatkan karena hak-hak dan kewajiban disabilitas itu menurut kami itu sama."* ("The benefit I gained is that this activity educated us, expanded our knowledge, and involved persons with disabilities, who we previously assumed did not exist in our community. After the PALUMA activity, we now include them because we believe their rights and obligations are the same as everyone else's").



Furthermore, the community now better understands how to respond to specific disasters like earthquakes and tsunamis. Syaifulloh explained, *“Kalau terjadi tsunami kami harus mencari tempat yang lebih tinggi atau berlari ke tempat yang lebih aman, kemudian terbentuknya tim yang sudah kami bentuk oleh PALUMA setidaknya tahu akan fungsi masing-masing apabila terjadinya bencana atau pasca bencana.”* (“If a tsunami occurs, we know to seek higher ground or run to a safer place. The teams formed by PALUMA are aware of their roles in case of a disaster or in the aftermath”).

Despite the positive outcomes, challenges still exist. *“Salah satunya ada beberapa poin, masih kurangnya waktu anggota forum untuk hadir, yang mana kadang-kadang berbenturan dengan waktu kegiatan atau aktivitas masyarakat atau anggota forum ini; yang kedua, mungkin dari segi peralatan, dimana peralatan ini untuk simulasi dan lain sebagainya masih kurang, masih minim.”* (“One challenge is that forum members sometimes struggle to attend due to conflicting schedules with their activities or livelihoods. Another issue is the lack of equipment for simulations and other exercises, which are still insufficient”).

Financial constraints are another issue. *“Untuk segi biaya, masih minimnya biaya transport atau biaya pelatihan, dimana tiap kegiatan ini mungkin kita mengganggu aktivitas masyarakat atau anggota, dimana kita menggantikan hari kerja atau penghasilan mereka.”* (“Regarding costs, there is a shortage of transportation and training funds, which can disrupt community members’ activities or force them to give up a workday and income”). To address these challenges, the community has adopted self-help initiatives and seeks financial support from local government funds.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK AND FUTURE NEEDS

The community has responded positively to the changes and initiatives implemented after the training. *“Kami pihak desa sangat menyikapi secara positif kegiatan ini, dimana setelah adanya forum ini, adanya simulasi tentang kebencanaan, kemudian desa punya dokumen salah satu acuan untuk pembangunan, kemudian terbentuknya forum disabilitas yang selama ini terabaikan; kaum disabilitas kemudian masyarakat setidaknya jadi tahu dan sangat bermanfaat di tengah masyarakat tentang kebencanaan dalam menyikapi situasi bencana dan menambah kapasitas masyarakat.”* (“The village leadership has responded very positively to this activity. After establishing the forum, we have disaster simulations and now have a document as a reference for development. The formation of a disability forum, which previously did not exist, has also been beneficial. The community has become more knowledgeable, and this understanding has proven very useful in addressing disasters and building community capacity”).

The capacity-building initiatives in Rajabasa Village under the Strengthening Partnerships for Community Resilience in Indonesia and Timor-Leste (SPRINT) program have significantly improved the community’s disaster preparedness and resilience. Local leaders like Syaifulloh have gained the knowledge and confidence to educate others, involve all members of the community, and take proactive steps in disaster management. While challenges remain, the training has empowered the village to make substantial progress in safeguarding lives and ensuring a resilient future.

Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC)

Head Office:
SM Tower, 24th Floor, 979/69 Paholyothin Road,
Samsen Nai Phayathai, Bangkok 10400 Thailand
Tel:+66 2 298 0681-92 | Fax:+66 2 298 0012

Contact Information:
Mr. Sisira Madurapperuma
Director
Preparedness for Response and Recovery
Asian Disaster Preparedness Center
Email: sisira@adpc.net, sprint@adpc.net

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