

*Note: All items appearing in this service have been abbreviated. Items from the Kupang Post (KP) and Kompas are synopses translated by the editor (Denis Fisher).*

*Because of a warning (generated by Google) that the Kupang Post website is a possible virus attack site, the editor has been unable to access the KP between 21-26 August and all editions since 28 August. Hence this edition is not as rich with local NTT news items as it would be if normal access to the KP website was possible. Hopefully the KP will soon realise there is a problem with its website and rectify it in the near future.*

*Any comments or suggestions on this clipping service are welcome and should be sent to the editor at [d-dfisher@homemail.com.au](mailto:d-dfisher@homemail.com.au)*

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## **1 Why is NTT always Poorest?**

*Kupang Post 27/8/08*

*By Dr. Ola Rongan Wilhelmus, Widya Mandala Catholic University, Madiun (Masters and PhD graduate Philippines University)*

Just imagine: Bureau of Statistics (NTT) figures for 2006 indicate that 718 640 (76.45%) of the 952 508 households in NTT are classed as poor. Further, 30% of NTT's population of around 4m live well below the poverty line with per capita incomes of Rp 3 500 per day. In regard to education – the key to social change – figures for 2007 show that 9.46% of males and 13.89% of females have never been to school and only 2.68% of males and 1.56% of females have completed tertiary studies. Not to mention figures on malnutrition, unemployment and infant deaths (72 per thousand births).

That said, a lot of money flows into NTT in the name of poverty reduction, but where are the projects it funds (projects such as IDT, P2DIK, PNPM, PEM, BLPS and BLT), given that the situation is as bad as it is? Indeed all these programs, with international support including from the World Bank, are supposed to run until 2015 or even 2030. And it is not only government projects that are involved. Hundreds of NGOs and international organizations vie with each other to spend hundreds of billions of rupiahs year in year out

with precisely the same aim, viz. the empowerment of the common people's economic situation and state of health in NTT. Ironically, these expensive programs have not changed much, as poverty remains ensconced and is still NTT's number 1 problem. Why is this so?

A critical factor in the success of development programs is that the people be "re-positioned" from objects to become subjects. What has happened up to now? When questions are asked about poverty in NTT, those interviewed are the elite, not local people suffering from poverty, hunger, illiteracy and life threatening diseases in isolated villages. The elite position themselves as "the knowledgeable ones", whose programs the people must fall in with, whereas true development should energise the people from below in an enduring way. Up to now most development projects have been more like projects on paper which Jakarta or the provinces have "mandated and dumped on" the regions for implementation by ordinary people whose problems vary from village to village (or town to town).

This elite-dominated approach to development almost always gives priority to program planning based on economic rationalisations and calculations, and pays insufficient attention to local cultural and social values and the involvement of local people as the main driving force behind development. This approach implies that development cannot become a collective community activity to collectively change people's lives. So what should we now focus on to energise a process of accelerated development?

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) was of the view that agents of social change and development should not implement measures based solely on privilege, intellectual status or economic yardsticks. Rather they should foster a profound sense of openness, acceptance and involvement on the part of the people undergoing change. He was convinced that the success of a social or development project depended on the extent to which it dovetailed with the socio-cultural values of the people concerned, rather than on its intellectual rigour and economic parameters which were imposed from outside.

This thinking of Bourdieu gives us a clue that top-down and non-participatory development should be avoided. Rather, the community itself should first be brought into the picture and involved in an effective way, so that they can see and be convinced that the economic or social program to be put in place is appropriate and useful in terms of responding to their real life needs.

If we are reluctant to steer away from feudalistic, top-down, non-participatory development programs, the brouhaha about our current development effort amounts to nothing more than the shrieking of a group children playing a balloon game at a birthday party. The balloons are inflated, become airborne and float into the air, with each child then claiming the best balloon. In fact, it is only a matter of time before the balloons burst and disappear without trace. What then? They ask for more balloons be bought for them!

## **2 600 Houses in Belo still without Electricity**

Kupang Post 27/8/08

The inhabitants of Belo village (Kabupaten of Kupang) have asked the local government to install electricity in more than 600 houses occupied in one part of the village for the past 5 years by ex-East Timorese (formerly in Noebaki refugee camp). A local resident told the *KP* that numerous previous requests to this effect had not been met – a source of great disappointment to residents of Belo. The situation was hampering community activity and retarding children's education. Another source of complaint (also reported to the local government) was the inadequacy of storm water drainage in the area, which could not cope with rainy season rainfall, causing many houses to be flooded. When approached for comment, a local government official said he would need to check on the situation before commenting.

## **3 Inhabitants of Puimang Need Fresh Water**

Kupang Post 27/8/08

**KALABAHI:** The inhabitants of Puimang ward (Langkuru village, Kabupaten of Alor) badly need fresh water to meet their daily needs. According to a local regional assembly member, up to now the people have used a water source containing water with high lime content. It was feared that such water was having a deleterious effect on the health of the people, especially children. He said that money had been allocated some years back to provide fresh water to Puimang and a plan had been developed, but for some reason nothing happened. He suggested that the main thing for the government to do now was to survey the water source being used and its effects on the people's health.

## **4 Anti-Rabies Vaccine Sufficient in East Flores**

Kupang Post 27/8/08

**KUPANG:** There are still sufficient stocks of anti-rabies vaccine (VAR) for vulnerable animals (dogs, cats and monkeys) in East Flores. Of the ±15 000 available doses 140 have been used to vaccinate animals liable to infection. By contrast, anti-rabies serum (SAR) suitable for human use has run out. According to the provincial coordinator for the control of rabies (Dr Maria Geong), the unavailability of SAR is of concern to locals, given that 178 people had been bitten by rabid dogs in the past two months. That situation was not too dangerous, as most of the dogs in East Flores had been vaccinated. Separately, the vice chairman of the East Flores local assembly said the assembly would seek clarification from government on the shortage of SAR. He noted that, although the cases of 178 dog bites were worrying, no deaths had yet resulted and around 20 000 domestic dogs had been vaccinated. Geong noted that the idea of totally eliminating animals susceptible to rabies was an out-dated approach and was not now the best option, especially as animals like dogs were important allies of farmers. Because of that, the central government was fully focused on the control of rabies in Flores. In September, the central government would channel 70 000 more doses of VAR into East Flores which was the first area of Flores to be infected with rabies in the 1980's.

## **5 Farmers in Alor Growing Maize in Pots**

Kupang Post 27/8/08

**KUPANG:** Farmers in the Kabupaten of Alor are growing maize in pots, as one way of

overcoming the food crisis caused by the threat of drought which hangs over almost all agricultural land in the area. According to a local farmer, pots have been used since last year's dry season, with satisfactory results in terms of securing family food supplies. The use of pots enabled farmers to constantly re-plant, irrespective of the time of year. According to the Bupati of Alor (Ans Takalapeta), maize planting is a priority for 2008 and he therefore attaches importance to developing this new method of maize cultivation. He noted that by using pots a farmer did not have to delay planting until the arrival of the rainy season. Coastal areas with limited water resources or limited rainfall had been given priority in the testing of the use of pots, and the results had been quite pleasing to farmers. According to Takalapeta, the Governor of NTT would take on board this method of maize production for use in a number of coastal areas.

## **6 Population growth in 12 provinces beyond national average**

*The Jakarta Post* 2/9/08

The population growth in 12 Indonesian provinces is between 3 and 3.5 percent, beyond the national average growth at 2.4 percent per year, according to the National Family Planning Board (BKKBN).

BKKBN deputy Kasmiyati told *Kompas* the 12 provinces were West Nusa Tenggara, East Nusa Tenggara, North Sumatra, West Sumatra and all Java provinces. Indonesia's population grows by 3.4 million people per year, Kasmiyati added.

"The KB (family planning) program is the only alternative expected to control population growth so as to reach a balance in 2015," she said. Indonesia has been implementing the family planning program for the last 30 years. The program is largely deemed a success, as it is said to have prevented the birth of 80 million people.

Kasmiyati, however, argued that local enforcement was still needed to curb population growth, particularly after seeing how some regions experienced more growth than others.

## **7 Aussie helps fight NTT rabies epidemic**

*The Jakarta Post* 7/9/08

KUPANG: East Nusa Tenggara: Following the failure of the central government program to eradicate rabies in Flores and Lembata islands, an Australian researcher has promised to help fight the disease.

Maria Geong, head of the animal health division of NTT's provincial animal husbandry office, said her office had recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Australian Center for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) to eliminate rabies.

"ACIAR is interested in fighting the disease because foreign tourists frequently visit the islands," Maria said in Kupang last week. She said her office had recorded that 178 people have been bitten by rapid dogs in the past two weeks, but no fatalities were reported.

A rabies epidemic was first reported in East Flores in 1997 and a record 2,064 cases have been reported through Aug. of this year. During the same period, Manggarai, Ngada, Ende, Sikka, Lembata and West Manggarai regencies recorded 5,043, 3,362, 2,186, 2,999, 747 and 625 cases respectively.

## **8 Bali Cattle to be Re-named Timor Cattle**

*Kompas* 9/9/098

**KUPANG:** According to the Deputy Governor of NTT, Bali cattle (sapi Bali) which are bred in NTT should be renamed Timor cattle (sapi Timor) to reflect their identity as products of Timor and to give a boost to cattle production in the region. He noted that local income (Pendapatan Asli Daerah (PAD)) in NTT for 2008 was only Rp 250 billion, whereas in the figure for the Kabupaten of Kutai Kertanegara was Rp 1.7 trillion. This difference was astonishing and it had to be asked whether or not NTT could increase its PAD. The NTT government together with the people would continue to do everything to develop NTT and thus would shortly make an announcement changing the name of Bali cattle to Timor cattle. In the past, cattle raised in NTT had been known as Timor cattle but under the New Order government the name Bali cattle was more popular.

## **9 Ambassador Denies Australia has rounded up Indonesian Fishermen**

*Kompas* 9/9/08

**KUPANG:** Australian Ambassador to Indonesia, Bill Farmer, said in Kupang on 9/9 that reports that the Australian navy had captured and rounded up Indonesian fishermen in Indonesian waters and had then entered Australian waters were not true. He made this statement while observing a joint surveillance exercise (along with the NTT Governor and others) of the border areas between Indonesian and Australian waters. He admitted that there had been wrongful arrests some time ago, but the Australian government had compensated the affected fishermen and all was now proceeding as it should. He said Australia and Indonesia had agreed to allow traditional fishermen to fish in mutually agreed areas. "This new cooperative surveillance effort is important", said Mr Farmer, "to prevent fishermen from other countries entering those mutually agreed areas and fishing at will. Thus the joint surveillance will be aimed not only at traditional fishermen from each country but also fishermen from elsewhere". The NTT Governor expressed support for the venture and said his government would inform and educate local fishermen about the need not to fish outside the bilaterally agreed areas.

Indonesia will soon provide a patrol boat to assist in the joint surveillance program.

## **10 High school student dies of rabies**

*The Jakarta Post* 9/9/08

**KUPANG:** An 18-year-old student died Saturday after reportedly being bitten by a rabid dog in Maumere, Sikka regency. Apolorianus K Rehing, a student of St. Gabriel vocational high school, died after being treated for several hours at Maumere general hospital.

"She was rushed here in terrible condition. We tried to help her, but failed to save her life," hospital director Asep Purnama said. Asep said a team of doctors had deduced from

Apolorianus' symptoms that the cause of death was rabies. "She was afraid of light and water. Her mouth was foaming and she shouted like a dog," he said.

### **11 Provincial Library Frequented only by Students**

*Kompas* 12/9/08

**KUPANG:** The NTT Provincial library (which has between 700-1200 visitors per day) is principally used by students and teachers, with the general public rarely using it. Indeed, the people of NTT, including Kupang, have a very low level interest in reading. Members of the library can borrow out two books for a week at a time, while non-members have to read material in the library. As at June 2008, the library had 87 968 titles (216 764 books).

### **12 Two Infants Die of Acute Diarrhea in East Flores**

*Kompas* 10/9/08

**LARANTUKA:** The Kabupaten government has declared a state of alert following the death from acute diarrhea in the general hospital in Larantuka of two infants (aged 5 and 4 months respectively) from the village of Riangkemie, Kecamatan Ile Mandiri. Cases of diarrhea first appeared in Riangkemie on 30 August, with 26 cases occurring (two of which were the infants that died).

### **13 OZ funds 25 projects in E. Nusa Tenggara**

*The Jakarta Post* 12/9/08

**KUPANG:** The Australian government has distributed Rp 58 billion (US\$6.1 million) to finance 25 infrastructure projects in East Nusa Tenggara, Ambassador Farmer said.

Australia Ambassador to Indonesia Bill Farmer told journalists in Kupang on Wednesday funds allocated for the province were part of the Rp 21.25 trillion in Australian assistance committed to the five-year Australia-Indonesia partnership program. Farmer said the partnership aimed to help Indonesia cope with poverty problems, especially in the eastern regions. In the education sector, Australia has approved funds for the construction or renovation of 180 more junior and senior high schools across the province. Farmer added Australia had already constructed or renovated some 100 school buildings in the province in 2007.