

<b>NTA – Press Clippings on NTT Edition No. 8</b> <b>14 January 2009</b>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------

*Note: Items from the Jakarta Post in this edition are only slightly edited versions of the originals and items from Kompas are synopses translated by the editor (Denis Fisher). Because of a warning (generated by Google) that the Kupang Post website remains a possible virus attack site, the editor has been unable to access the KP since mid-August. Efforts to contact the editor of the Kupang Post to remove this problem have so far been unsuccessful. Any comments or suggestions on this clipping service (and the KP virus issue) are welcome and should be sent to the editor at [d-dfisher@homemail.com.au](mailto:d-dfisher@homemail.com.au)*

1. Three more dead in NTT from malnutrition
2. E. Sumba acts against malnutrition
3. Govt hands over 2,000 houses in NTT
4. Life Situation of ex-East Timorese in NTT Still of Concern
5. Malnutrition claims 6 lives in Kupang
6. Adonara women find voice through others
7. Independent women make a modest income through weaving
8. Wilhelmus Mimi: A cacao kind of life
9. Two die of diarrhea
10. School System's Achievements Have Plummeted
11. Poverty: Expensive Cars and Victims of Oedema
12. West and East Nusa Tenggara Still Lag behind Bali in Development

**1 Three more dead in NTT from malnutrition**

*Jakarta Post*, 12/1/09

Three more infants have died from malnutrition in the East Nusa Tenggara. Monika Monteiro and Soni Haning from Oebelo village Central Kupang district, and Defiana M. Kefi from Pasir Panjang subdistrict, died on Friday. They had been undergoing treatment for malnutrition at W.Z. Johannes General Hospital. Their deaths bring to nine the number of infants killed this year because of malnutrition and related illnesses. Seven came from Kupang municipality and regency, while the other two were from East Sumba regency. On Sunday, Soni's father, said his son had died from complications of diarrhea and malnutrition.

**2 E. Sumba acts against malnutrition**

*Jakarta Post* 11/1/09

East Sumba Regent Gidion Mbilijora has instructed all relevant agencies to intervene with emergency measures to deal with widespread malnutrition that has killed two children in the regency. "I just learned from media reports that there were toddlers dying from malnutrition," Gidion said Friday. "We have deployed a team to take records at all community health centers and hospitals so we can have exact figures of toddlers suffering from malnutrition and treat them." Matius Kitu, East Sumba Health Agency head, said cases of malnutrition were caused by a lack of proper nutrition for both children and breast-feeding mothers.... He added that 50 malnutrition cases had been recorded in the regency in 2008.

### **3 Govt hands over 2,000 houses in NTT**

*Jakarta Post* 10/01/09

The central government handed over 2,000 houses Thursday to former East Timorese refugees opting to reside in East Nusa Tenggara. The houses were built by the Social Services Ministry in 2008 and handed over by the ministry secretary-general Chazali H Situmorang ...on Thursday afternoon. Wirasakti Regional Military Command chief Col. Winston Simanjuntak said the 30-square-meter houses were built at several regencies, including 500 houses in Kupang regency and 150 houses in Belu regency. "The construction of the houses is a part of the government's attention to former East Timorese opting to be Indonesian citizens," Situmorang said. "This aid also proves the government is trying to improve people's welfare, including former East Timorese." ...Currently there are about 100,000 former East Timorese opting to be Indonesian citizens living in East Nusa Tenggara province. The government has built 8,000 houses since 2006 and will end the program this year.

### **4 Life Situation of ex-East Timorese in NTT Still of Concern**

*Kompas* 10/1/09

Ex-East Timorese in NTT are wondering about their future. In the former East Timor they belonged somewhere, but in Indonesia they have no permanent place. A leader of the former East Timorese refugees, Felisberto Amarao, said on 10/1 that leaders of the community often discussed the likely future of the 200,000 former East Timorese in NTT. "We left everything and became one with Indonesia, but after almost 9 years in Indonesia we see very little change to our life situation", he said.

Many did whatever work they could get to stay alive and could have food for the day at hand. Often they did not eat for a whole day. This was because they did not own land for farming or doing business. Any land they managed to buy was only 200-300 m<sup>2</sup>, just enough for building a house. This situation was impossible for the former East Timorese, especially ordinary people who had no permanent work.

At the same time, if they returned to East Timor, there was no guarantee that they would have a secure life or own land or a habitable abode. But despite that it was better for them to return because most of their family and the legacy of their forebears were there.

"But going to East Timor requires a guarantee from the government there. Without a firm guarantee people do not want to risk returning to East Timor" said Felisberto (an official of the Kupang Kabupaten's Transmigration and Manpower Service). He hoped that the pro-integrationists who brought East Timorese to Indonesia could resolve the issues bearing on their future in Indonesia.....

### **5 Malnutrition claims 6 lives in Kupang**

*The Jakarta Post*, 9/1/09

Six children in Kupang..have died of acute malnutrition over the past two weeks .... The two latest victims have been identified as 17-month-old Yayan, and 17-year-old Yustina Ina, from Central Sumba regency, who died in the first week of January. The four other

children died at the end of December while staying at the Oebelo former East Timor refugee camp in Kupang regency.

Dani Ch., director of the Imanuel General Hospital in Waingapu, East Sumba, said Thursday that both victims had initially undergone medical treatment at the nearest community health center before they were referred to the hospital. Dani added that they were already in critical condition and were suffering from severe dehydration. "They weighed less than 3 kilograms. We tried to save them, but they were already in critical condition," he said, adding that six other severely malnourished children below five years old were currently being treated at the hospital.

The Kupang regency administration has taken immediate action, setting up health posts in areas prone to diarrhea in an effort to prevent further deaths. "Most of them are children below the age of five," Lalu Budiarja, head of the Information, Prevention and Eradication of Diseases division at the Kupang Health Agency, said.

In 2008, 28 malnourished children reportedly died -- most were from poor families living in remote villages. Malnutrition has again flared up in the province after the central government rejected a request for Rp 50.4 billion (US\$4.5 million), which was sent to the Office for Coordinating Minister for People's Welfare. At least 100,000 children in 20 regencies and mayoralities in East Nusa Tenggara are suffering from malnutrition...*(more re similar problem in Banyu as area.)*

## **6 Adonara women find voice through others**

*Jakarta Post, Special Report, 3/1/09|*

A recent national survey shows women are the breadwinners in 13 percent of households. In most cases, they work because their husbands have been killed in armed conflicts or have gone missing looking for decent jobs. Divorce is the norm, while others have to support younger siblings because both parents are dead. To commemorate Mother's Day on Dec. 22, *The Jakarta Post's Triwik Kurniasari* was invited by the Mandiri Community Empowerment National Program (PNPM) and the World Bank to observe the women of Adonara, East Nusa Tenggara, in their struggle for better welfare and rights as citizens in a patriarchal society. The following are the reports from the visit.

"Now, please welcome a parade of gardening costumes. Bring it on, *ina-ina* (ladies)!" said the master of ceremonies at a fashion show in Kelubagolit, Adonara Island, East Nusa Tenggara. Eight ladies, wearing *tenun* sarongs, balancing bamboo baskets on their heads and carrying hoes in hands confidently strolled onto the stage as if supermodels gracing the catwalk. Unlike other fashion shows, the women did not simply model outfits but pretended to work like farmers by turning soil and cutting grass. ...

The show was just one of a series of activities held by the Female Heads of Households Empowerment (Pekka) in the region to commemorate Mother's Day, which falls every year on Dec. 22. Besides the fashion parade, local village women also had a chance to participate in quiz contests.

Kristina Meme Kopon, a contestant in the parade, said she was very pleased to have partaken in the costume contest. "This competition really boosted my confidence. Ten years ago, I might not have had the opportunity or courage to do something like this," said Kristina. Kristina said the Pekka program had really changed the lives of some women in the region.

Pekka was set up in 2001 with the assistance of the National Women's Rights Commission. It provides widows, divorcees, single mothers and wives of missing or seriously ill husbands with material assistance, and supports the powerless against discrimination and violence.

Mariam Bengataka, a resident from Pepakgeka village in Adonara Island, said it used to be difficult for a woman to express herself in such a patriarchal society. Mariam had been struggling to support her three children after her husband went to Sabah, Malaysia, to find work when she was 23. She used to have faith that her husband would find work at the coast, but nothing eventuated. "He promised to send me money routinely, but he lied. He didn't send me any money or even a letter for 14 years," she said. Now at the age of 43, Mariam has tried forgetting her husband and focusing on supporting her three children instead.....

Siti Anisah, 43, is also facing the same problems. She has been selling dried fish and weaving *tenun* since her husband went to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, about 13 years ago. "I can earn Rp 50,000 (US\$4) to 100,000 per month from selling *tenun* at the nearby market, while I can scrape together between Rp 5,000 to Rp 10,000 each day by selling fish," said Siti, a Boleng village resident in Adonara Island. "My husband never gave us any money, even when he came home three months ago. I accepted his return because he is still my husband, no matter how bad he is," she said, adding that divorce was forbidden in her community. Siti said her life began to improve in 2003 after she joined Pekka, which allows its members to take loans from the organization for their small businesses. She said she used the loan to renovate her house and establish a kiosk.

Mariam also took advantage of the program. She established her own kiosk and renovated her home using the loan, which is normally a few million rupiah borrowed at low interest. Through Pekka, she learned self-respect and the ability to express her opinion on a range of issues. ...

Bernadette Deram, a field coordinator of Pekka, said convincing women not to be afraid of expressing themselves took a long time. "Women in the villages face discrimination when it comes to their position in a marriage. Traditionally, when a man marries a woman, he can do anything to her," said Dette. "Women cannot ask for divorce. If they insist on separating from their husbands, they receive nothing, even if they have been the sole provider for the family. "So, we try to teach women they are equal to men and that they can improve their quality of life without depending on others," she said. She said some members have gone on to be successful businesswomen and some even lead villages. Others have proven they are the backbone of their families.

These moves toward independence do not always run smoothly though, with Mariam being beaten by her husband after she joined Pekka. "He said the program was not good for me. I could not handle the abuse anymore and decided to leave home," she said, adding that besides beating her, her husband also took over her kiosk. She said she did not want to remain passive and allow her husband to continue beating her. "I'm striving to protect my rights. The kiosk is the result of my hard work. I hope that Pekka can help me out," said Mariam.

## **7 Independent women make a modest income through weaving**

*Jakarta Post, Special Report, 3/1/09*

For women living in some villages on Adonara, East Nusa Tenggara, weaving fabrics has been a part of their lives. Maria Benga Haban, 53, feels the same way. The resident of Hinga village said she started to learn how to weave when she was 15 years old..... *ikat* has been her only hope in earning a living since her husband died about 20 years ago. "I weave and sell *ikat* to support my only child. The money is not much, but it's enough for us to eat," she said, adding that she could produce eight sarongs each month. It takes a long time before the colorful threads are ready to be woven, Maria said. First, the thread is soaked in water and detergent, she said. It is later rinsed before being put into *kanji* liquid (substance from starch) to keep their original colors.

Today, craftswomen in the region tend to use threads dyed using chemicals, instead of using natural dyes, said Siti Anisah, a Boleng village resident. "It is not easy to make thread using natural dyes, which come from plants. The diet of the plant gives natural colors like black and brown," Siti said. "It takes months to turn thread into a perfect color because you need to soak it in the liquid and dry them in the sun about 30 times. "Today, we choose to use chemical dyes because it's more practical," she said, adding that she could produce five sarongs a month.

Lusia Lipat, 29, also relies on weaving *ikat* to make a living. She said she learned how to weave during school holidays when she was at junior high school.... She became more business savvy when her husband left for Malaysia to find work. "I have to earn a living to support my son. I cannot rely on my husband, who never gives me any money, after he left us five years ago," she said.

The modern textile industry is not threatening the livelihood of these women. "This is different to modern textile products. They are handmade and reflect our great culture. We want to keep preserving the designs," Lusia said. Lusia's neighbor, Elis Baret, also shared a similar thought. "You can wear it for any occasion, as well as combining it with modern clothes," Elis said. "Foreign tourists really admire our textiles. They sometimes come to our village to see the production process. They mostly opt for *ikat* made from cotton with natural dyes, which cost more than Rp 1 million (US\$89)," she said.

The women live modestly because their businesses are not highly lucrative. Siti said she earned a monthly profit of between Rp 50,000 and Rp 100,000. "Besides spending some money to buy threads, I have to pay for *ojek* (motorcycle taxi) to get to the nearby market to sell the sarongs," she said, adding that she sold her woven textiles at Rp 75,000 a

piece. Lusia, who produces about six sarongs per month and sells a sarong for about Rp 130,000, also experienced the same thing. She said she could only earn a profit of Rp 50,000 per month. She said the weaving business was hard these days because of the expensive price of thread. .. *more...*

## **8 Wilhelmus Mimi: A cacao kind of life**

*Jakarta Post* 30/12/08

At 77 years old, Wilhelmus Mimi (from Koting A village, Maumere, Sikka-Flores Kaupaten, NTT) has a face full of wrinkles but his voice is clear and full of spirit. Perhaps it's all that chocolate.

Popularly known as Moat Tua, Wilhelmus is the figure behind Agrobisnis Primatani Clinic farming center in Koting A village. This humble farmer's center has become a source of inspiration for hundreds of farmers, researchers and even intellectuals.

Moat Tua is one of the area's most successful cacao farmers -- a success many other farmers did not share after their crops were attacked by plant diseases, widely blamed for causing the collapse of cacao prices in the market. The father of seven children contributes his success to his 26 years of farming experience. When he started in 1982, he had only one cacao tree, but gradually expanded his trees and land until his farm grew to the more than 2 hectares it is today.

But his success did not come without hurdles. Moat Tua and his wife, Rahma Juang, 71, have had their ups and downs. One time, he planted 1,300 cacao trees near the yard around his house, only to watch all but three of them die. But he never lost hope. He cleared almost one hectare of a coconut farm he inherited -- "some people thought I was mad" -- and replanted the fertile land. Thanks to his hard work, two of his seven children were able to graduate from university, though he himself did not finish elementary school.

But as a farmer he had to deal not only with developing his cacao plantation, but also with volatile cacao prices, which once plummeted as low as Rp 6,000 (50 US cents) a kilogram. When production fell after the diseases attacked the plants in the area, Moat Tua sat down to do some hard thinking. Armed with a little information on farming someone gave him, he experimented by planting nine types of high-yielding cacao varieties at the same time. He also experimented with different grafting methods. He found a method that was simple and effective, involving grafting cacao cuttings of about one centimeter diameter onto the trunks of cacao trees that do not have high productivity.

"With this method, the trees bear fruit in only one and a half years," he said. Cacao trees grown from seeds do not produce fruit for at least four years, he said. The production rates are also quite different. His grafting method, he said, did not compromise quality and could increase the cacao trees' yield by four times.

Nevertheless, he was not completely happy with his method, so he kept experimenting. Through his center, he has succeeded since 2006 in connecting young cuttings to cacao

tops that are just starting to grow. This method also is easy. The result is extraordinary. The colors of the cacao fruits grown using this method vary, from ruby red to yellow and dark green. The size is also different -- bigger. When the cacao fruits are ready to harvest, they are at least 25 centimeters long and about 10 centimeters in diameter. Not surprisingly with this fruit, Moat Tua's income has continued to grow. The method has also helped increase Moat Tua's cacao production, from around 2-3 tons a year previously, to 4-6 tons, earning him up to Rp 48 million a year when cacao was selling for Rp 8,000 a kilogram.

His success attracted many cacao farmers in Sikka regency to giving his method a go, and even asking him to prepare seeds of quality cacao. "Recently," Moat Tua said, pride plain in his voice, "I got Rp 3 million just from selling seedlings."

## **9 Two die of diarrhea**

*Jakarta Post*, 24/12/08

Two died and dozens of others were in critical condition as a diarrhea epidemic hit Oebelo village, Central Kupang district, Kupang regency, East Nusa Tenggara. The victims were Oktavia Fretes, 28, who was four-months pregnant and Martha da Silva, 62.

Oebelo village head Apelles Bulan said on Tuesday that a team from the kampung's health agency together with a team from a local clinic had arrived in the village and conducted emergency treatment. "Those who are in critical condition were immediately sent to hospital for further treatment," Apelles said, adding that residents who refused to be sent to hospital because they couldn't afford it were being treated at a health post.

Head of the kupang health agency I Wayan Ari Wijana said that his office was keeping vigilant over the disease. "We believe that the epidemic was caused by a bacterial contamination of residents' wells," Wijana said, adding that his office had distributed oralit (a rehydration drink) to residents.

## **10 School System's Achievements Have Plummeted**

*Kompas*, 19/12/08 Review article by Samuel Oktora

*(the first part of the article reviews the history of NTT's school system from its establishment by the missionaries through its "days of glory" to the present).*

The achievements of the golden years of NTT's school system are now under a cloud. Nowadays many schools lack teachers and classrooms, school buildings are in disrepair and many teachers lack higher education. Most ironically, in 2008 the quality of education in NTT was the lowest of Indonesia's 33 provinces (measured by national junior and senior secondary exam results).

The education decline is regarded as having started in the 1950's, when the government began to exercise greater authority over education. From time to time there were changes in education policy which gave rise to disagreement between private schools and the government. Under the New Order in the 1970's the government paid greater attention to education and provided more funding for it. That greatly increased and diversified the schooling system... Education became centralized, with local characteristics being

overlooked. The position and influence of private schools became weaker and were eroded, with conflict often occurring over a range of issues between them and the government.

NTT's private schools were mainly owned by church groups. The foundations supported by those groups came to "lack teeth" at which point it became evident that the onward march of education in NTT, especially Flores, was to be cut short. A marginalization of education ensued. Private educational institutions were brushed aside by the national education system.

By 2008 schools in NTT numbered 5.760, of which 3 007 were state run (52.2%) and 2 753 were private (47.79%). At the present time private educational institutions seem to be disoriented. As outcomes are measured by national exam results, schools focus their efforts on preparing for national exams. But NTT is at the bottom of the list on that score. The "spirit of education" which once ranked NTT highly in education has disappeared.

Education in NTT must go with the flow, but it has simply lost its sense of direction and identity. Schools are no longer a source of strength for culture and worthwhile qualities, but are branded as being the cause of a decline in values. This situation has made education practitioners "sick as a result of structure" and "sick from disorientation". Creativity is dead, initiative is lacking and no specialness is in evidence. The paradox is that education in NTT is in decline in the face of policies supporting a program to lift the quality of national education.

## **11 Poverty: Expensive Cars and Victims of Oedema**

*Kompas*, 19/12/08

*(following is a summary of some of reported discussion at a seminar in Bali on 10/12/08 on "50 Years on from the passing of Sunda Kecil Province")*

The range of puns often used to make fun of NTT received a good airing at the seminar: Nasib Tak Tentu (Of Destiny Uncertain), Nanti Tuhan Tolong (God Will Soon Help), Negeri Tak Terang (Land of Obscurity), Nasib Tetap Tersangka (Of Always Suspect Destiny), Numpang Tanda Tangan (Land of) Borrowed Signatures and Neraka Tetap Terbuka (Hell Ever Wide Open).

Poor households in NTT number 623 137. Assuming that each household has 5 people (parents + 3 children), that means that of NTT's 4.4 million people 3 115 685 are poor, with 1 283 315 in the middle to upper classes. Health Service figures put the number of children under 5, as at 13/6/08, at 512 407. Of those 84 887 had nutritional problems of varying degrees, with 25 having died from malnutrition. Latest information is that that figure has now risen by 5 to 30. To overcome this problem the Health Service needs Rp50 billion, but only Rp10 billion has been made available. Ironically cases of malnutrition are on the rise, even though the province's overall budget allocations increased from Rp 9 262 trillion in 2007 to Rp10 704 trillion in 2008.

NTT seems all quiet on the corruption front because those committing corruption are not being caught. Those who are caught are not being brought to court. Prosecutors and

police only prepare preliminary briefs, then wait until the people concerned are re-assigned outside NTT or retire. One presenter at the seminar jokingly asked: “is there a thief in the night preying on the financial resources of NTT’s people? If such a fly-by-night is making the people suffer, why doesn’t SBY’s government catch it and eliminate it?”

There is surely a contradiction between the poverty of the 623 137 poor households and the way of life of officials and the political elite in NTT. Most of society lives in dilapidated shacks eating whatever comes along, while those who profess to be servants of the people and their families enjoy overabundance. Opulence of lifestyle (individually and as a group) is the goal of their five years in office. In the midst of poverty and oedema, officials and the political elite together with their families compete with each other to enrich themselves. A Rp200 million vehicle is considered no longer suitable after 2-3 years of use. Indeed one Bupati on Flores bought an official vehicle worth Rp 1 billion.....It is difficult to put a figure on the per kabupaten annual expenditure on official vehicles. The only Kabupaten which has not brought new official vehicles since 2003 is East Flores. Not content with expensive cars, some officials build houses worth billions of rupiahs. In Manggarai one official built a Rp2 billion house in the midst of huts of people suffering from malnutrition.

In Kupang the governor’s official residence cost Rp15 billion to build and that of the deputy mayor Rp14 billion (complete with tennis court and pool). By contrast thousands of city dwellers have difficulty obtaining clean water and perforce spend Rp50 000 per week to obtain a tank of it. In Kefamenanu the Kabupaten government spent Rp15 billion constructing a new regional assembly building (completed in December 2008), while 8 750 infants in the kabupaten suffered from various degrees of undernourishment or malnutrition... Some officials have assets outside NTT which are managed by family members or others.

All government policies and programs end up promoting private interests. For example, in the Kabupaten of Lembata, 80% of expenditure is on officials and 20% on the public (and even then corruption uses up 60% of that 20%)

It is as if the people live bereft of government. They wrestle with poverty while officials busily enrich themselves. Oedema has become a project which is rolled out every year and every time there is handover from one regional head of government to the next.

On every outbreak of serious malnutrition the Health Service seeks out the victims for treatment ..or works with NGOs to establish a malnutrition treatment centre. But the underlying problems remain: the dearth of food supplies, the state of the environment, sanitation and the availability of clean water....(more)...

## **12 West and East Nusa Tenggara Still Lag behind Bali in Development**

*Jakarta Post* 11/12/08

Although NTT and West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) offer competitive natural resources, the two provinces still need to contend with several weighty obstacles -- namely poverty,

corruption and education quality -- before they will catch up with big sister Bali, experts said Wednesday.

Activist Sarah Lery Mboeik cited one example: Widespread corruption among officials in poor NTT has choked off any opportunities for residents to get a proper education and basic health services. Sarah spoke at a seminar held by *Kompas* newspaper in Kuta, where she represented the NGO Pusat Inisiatif dan Advokasi Rakyat (PIAR). The seminar was held in conjunction with the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the three provinces on Dec. 20, 1958.

The Supreme Audit Agency found the 1,967 alleged corruption incidents in NTT between 2003 and 2007 had cost the province an estimated Rp 50 billion (US\$4.6 million). Roughly half of those incidents, only 1,080, have been investigated, leaving 887 unaddressed. "Weak law enforcement has led to many instances of alleged corruption ending with the imprisonment of unimportant officials, not the main perpetrators. Indonesia Corruption Watch even found NTT was the sixth most corrupt province in the country in 2005," Sarah said.

NTT and NTB development is literally far behind Bali, even though the three provinces faced similar hurdles back in the 1950s when they were all equally lacking in technology and infrastructure. An economist from Udayana University, Nyoman Erawan, said Bali had managed to improve its economic conditions faster than the neighboring provinces because the Balinese were able to develop agriculture and a manufacturing base as a strong foundation for the development of mass tourism. "Without agriculture and industry, island tourism will not be able to grow simply because people will be too occupied tending to their daily needs," he said. ....(*more on NTB*).....