



INVISIBLE PEOPLE

POVERTY AND EMPOWERMENT
IN INDONESIA

presented by PNPM Mandiri —
Indonesia's National Program for Community Empowerment

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Text by Irfan Kortschak
photographs by Poriaman Sitanggang
with an introduction by Scott Guggenheim

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Ambon, Maluku

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, COMMUNAL CONFLICT

On January 19, 1999, communal conflict between Muslim and Christian communities broke out on a massive scale in Ambon City, Maluku. In the days that followed, the conflict rapidly spread across the island of Ambon and beyond to a number of other districts in central and southeast Maluku.

By the end of the year, more than 100,000 people had been forced to flee their homes. Previously integrated communities became divided along religious lines. This resulted in large numbers of internally displaced people being unable to return to their previous residences. In addition, thousands of houses and places of worship were destroyed.

By November 2001, in the period when the most extreme acts of violence occurred across the province of Maluku, according to some estimates more than 13,000 people had been killed. Many more were maimed and injured. Large numbers of people participated in, suffered from, or witnessed acts of extreme violence. Many saw family members and friends being killed. Entire communities were driven from their homes and villages.

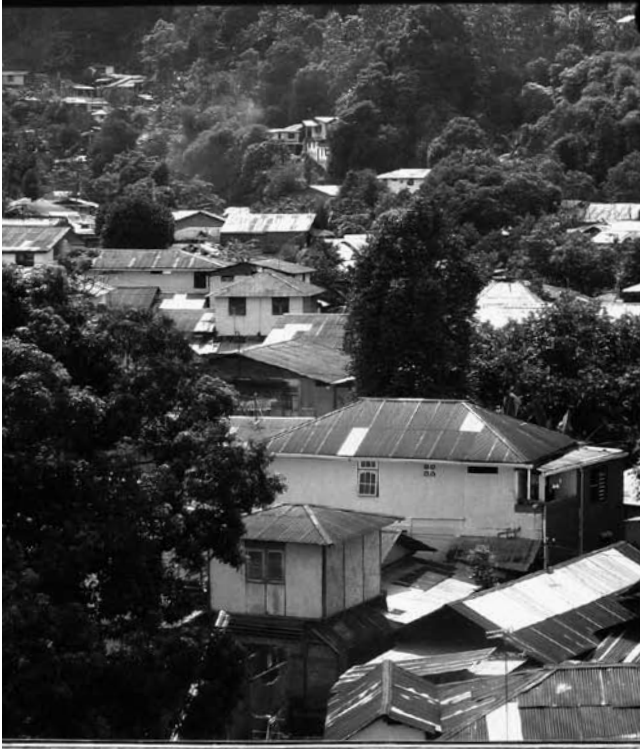
In Ambon, the psychological impact of the conflict has been alleviated by communities working together to deal with practical issues. After the conflict, when the government established a public trauma counseling drop-in center, very few people used the service. People were much more willing to become involved in activities that they considered practical, such as children's playgroups and communal housing projects, or even working together with former enemies to achieve common aims. All these community activities may alleviate psychological trauma.

It is much more difficult to involve the community in dealing with issues it isn't prepared to acknowledge or face. Incest, rape, and domestic violence are all taboo subjects. Women who are beaten, tortured, or abused by their husbands may be isolated from any community support.

When women are not supported by the community, they can learn to help each other. As part of this process, group therapy for women who have had similar experiences is an extremely effective tool. By meeting with other women, women can overcome their feelings of isolation, the sense that they are to blame for the violence and abuse that they have suffered. As well as providing psychological support, the women can assist each other in practical matters related to divorce, housing, and employment.

In conflict zones, ordinary men, women, and children experience the trauma of dealing with extraordinary events.

When the trauma is acknowledged, the community can recognize and deal with it. However, when women suffer violence at the hands of their husbands, society often looks the other way and refuses to see it.



Santi

My husband set fire to me in 2003. I was in the hospital for eight months. He was held in the police station for three months, but he was never charged. The police let him go. They said there weren't any witnesses to prove there was a crime. But he tried to kill me. He picked up a plastic bucket when I was still burning. He put it over my head and held it there. The plastic melted all over my face. He wanted me to die. Of course he wasn't going to kill me in front of witnesses.

Later, my husband said that the stove had exploded. When I was still in the hospital, he came and threatened me. He made me say that that's what happened. When the police took my first statement, that's what I told them. Later, I told them what really happened. But they said it was only my word against my husband's. My husband's father used to be in the Air Force. He is retired now. He gets a pension. The police don't want to get involved in a case with a member of the military.

My husband often used to hit me. He usually beat me when he was drunk. I hated him when he was drunk. If I ever said anything when he came home drunk, he hit me. No, I didn't ever ask for a divorce. My father left my mother when I was young girl. I didn't want to be like my mother. I didn't want to bring up a child without a father, so I never tried to leave my husband.

My boy's name is Rezza. He is eight years old. He is living with my mother-in-law. She lives about one kilometer away. I'd like to look after him myself, but I can't. I can't lift my arms. I can't move my head. I can't eat properly, the food falls out of my mouth. I can't look after my own child.

"My husband came home after midnight. He was drunk. He started smashing things. He hit me and shouted at me. When I answered him, he grabbed a kerosene lamp and poured the kerosene all over me. Then he set fire to me with his cigarette lighter."

Opposite page

Santi meets her son, Rezza, regularly, although since she left her husband, the boy lives with her husband's family.





My mother-in-law is good to me. She often sends me rice. She let me build a house on land that belongs to her. She sometimes sends me money. But she has never talked to me about what her son did. After my husband tried to kill me, he moved back with her. He found himself a new wife. No one in the village punished him for what he did. No one in his family blamed him. In Ambon, it's normal for men to hit their wives if they talk back to them. When I visit my boy, I see my ex-husband fight with his new wife. I heard he's threatened to do to her what he did to me if she doesn't watch herself.

I want an operation. I want to be able to move my arms again. I don't care about the way I look, but I want to be able to look after myself. I want to get a job or run a business. There are a lot of factories in this area. I could get a job in a factory if I could move my arms. I could look after my own child. I wouldn't be dependent on my mother-in-law. The doctors said I'd need to go to Makassar or Surabaya to have an operation. I don't have the money for it.

When I got out of the hospital, I went to the local newspaper to show them what happened. I thought that if they published a story about me, someone would give me the money so I could have an operation. That's how I met Ibu Leli. She was working at the newspaper. Several newspapers published my story, and the deputy mayor promised the local government would pay for my operation. But later, whenever I went to try to see her, her staff said she was busy or sick or in a meeting. In the end, I gave up. I never got anything.

I went to the deputy mayor's office by public transport. I'm not ashamed of the

Santi, horribly disfigured when her husband poured kerosene over her and set her on fire, lives in a hut provided by her former mother-in-law.





way I look. I know that it's not my fault that this happened. I'm not going to let it stop me going out. No one has ever said anything to me about my face. People in the street are mostly kind to me. No one says anything.

Ibu Leli once took me to meet Augustina. She was hurt by a bomb in the conflict. She's got a few scars on her face, but she wasn't nearly as badly disfigured as I am. Even though her face is hardly damaged at all, she's too embarrassed to go out of her house. When I met her, we just talked for a while. She's a nice person. We joked and talked. She shouldn't be so shy.

I want to be independent. I want to be able to earn money to look after myself. And I want somewhere to live. I don't want to be dependent on my mother-in-law. I don't want to live alone. I'd like to live with Leli and Augustina. I'd like to live with women who have been through the same kind of thing that I have, in a place where we could look after and help each other. I'd like to live with other women like me because they would understand.

Augustina Reonhard

Before I was scarred, I used to go out and have fun with my friends. I used to chat with boys. Since the bomb, I don't go out of the house. I've only been out in daylight by myself three or four times since the attack. I can go out at night with my family if I wear long sleeves to cover my arms.

My whole life changed in a split second on December 11, 2001. I was asleep on the motor boat *California*. It was carrying Christian passengers. The Islamist militia put a bomb on the boat. When the bomb exploded, the whole boat was suddenly on fire. I remember that the plastic chair I was sitting on was untouched, but the other chairs next to me had melted. My burns were caused by melting plastic. Everyone was shouting and jumping into the sea. Even though I couldn't swim, I jumped overboard. Somehow, I was washed up onto the shore. The people on the shore helped me get to a hospital in Halong. Later, I was taken to another hospital in Ambon. I was there for several months while they treated my burns.

Physically, I'm fine now except for the scars. I'm perfectly healthy. But I don't want people to see me. I'm ashamed of the way I look. My mother always tells me that I shouldn't feel that way. She says that everyone here will know I was hurt in the conflict. It's true, when I did go out of the house, nobody said anything cruel, but I'm still scared to go out. My face and left arm look hideous. I want to live a normal life, but I just can't bring myself to leave the house. I'm frightened of people I don't know.

I'd really like to be able to go to church again. I've gone two or three times since the bomb. I love praying in church. I love the music. I feel closer to God there. When I went there, everyone was very kind. They knew about what happened to me. I'd like to go to church again, but I don't have a long-sleeved dress to cover my burns.

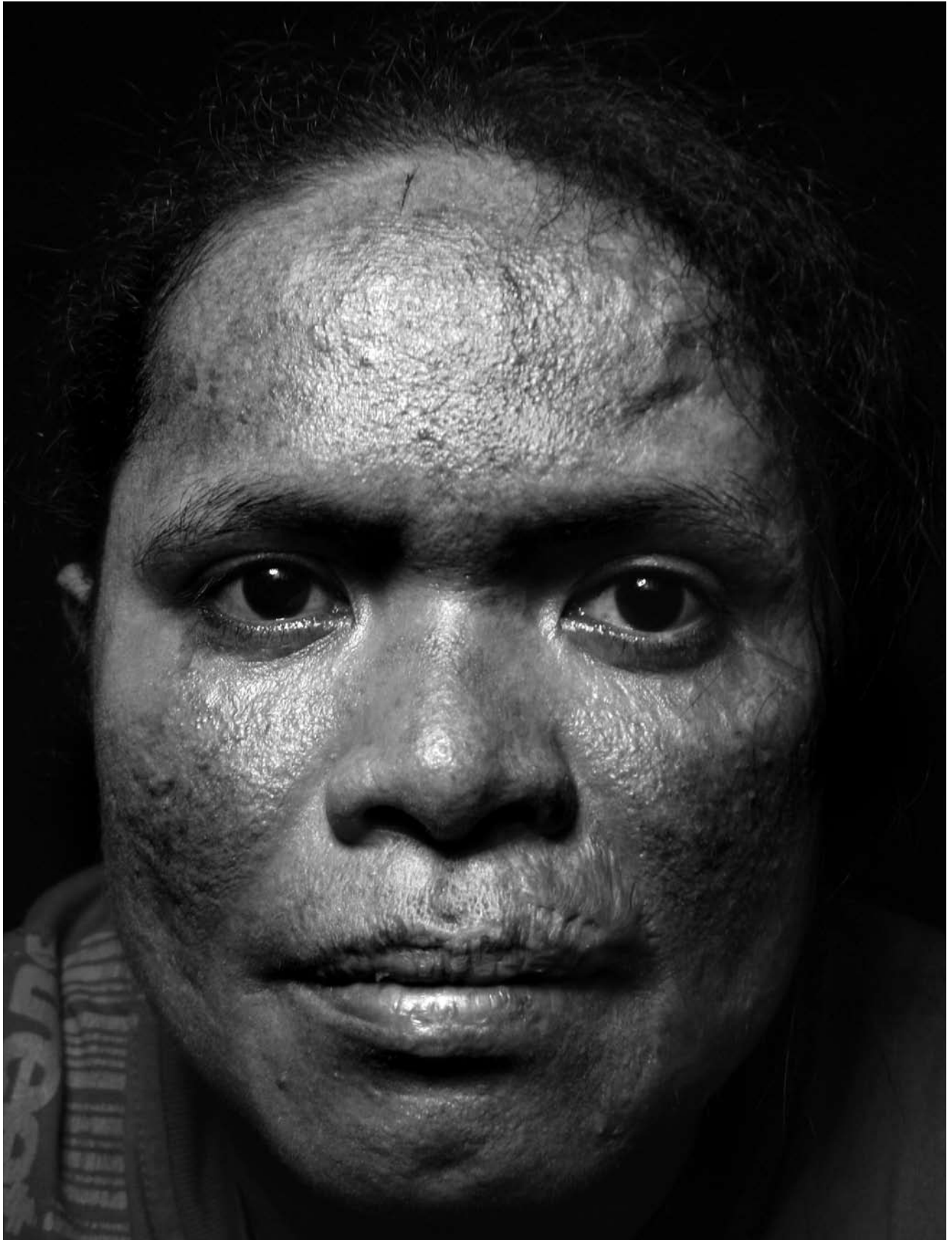
I was trained to be a religious studies teacher. I have a diploma from the Christian college. I'd just graduated before the bomb. I don't seriously consider teaching now. I don't think I could teach with my damaged face. Sometimes I operate a small stall at the front of my house. I sell telephone vouchers. Most of my customers are neighbors. I don't mind dealing with my neighbors because they know who I am. They know why my face is like this.

I am getting braver. After it first happened, I wasn't brave enough to go out at all. Now I can go out sometimes. I hope that one day I'll be able to get over it. I know it's all in my mind. Not long ago, I went out by myself in broad daylight. I went to the Telkomsel office by myself, even though no one there knew me. I wanted to find out how to buy telephone vouchers. I want to set up a business selling telephone vouchers at the front of my house. I'm ashamed that I'm a burden on my mother. I want to earn enough money so that I'm not a burden on her, so I made myself go to the office.

I don't know what anyone can do to help me. I did meet some women from the Pulih Foundation, an organization that provides trauma counseling. They came and talked to me. They told me that my face and arm didn't look bad. They told me about another woman who was burned much worse than I was. They said that she goes out and lives a normal life. She had a boyfriend who married her, even after she was burned. She has children now. I'm the only child in my family who isn't married yet. I don't even think about getting married anymore.

A few times I went out to meet a group of women who were wounded in the conflict. It was a group meeting organized by my friends from PULIH. I felt OK about going out to meet other women who'd been through the same thing. I wasn't ashamed when I was with them.

“When the bomb exploded, the whole boat was suddenly on fire. I remember that the plastic chair I was sitting on was untouched, but the other chairs next to me had melted. My burns were caused by melting plastic.”



Can I forgive the terrorists who blew up the boat? Something strange happened when I was in the hospital. A man was brought in for some reason. He saw me lying in my bed with my burnt face. He came up to me and asked me how it happened. I told him I was on the *California* when it was bombed. He went pale. He walked out of the room without saying another word to me. I found out later that he was one of the men who put the bomb on the boat. He went to jail later for a few years. He's out now.

What would I say to him if he were here now? I wouldn't say a word. I'd just pick up his hand and make him touch my face. I just want him to realize what he did to me.



Top
Augustina selling prepaid telephone card from her kiosk.

Bottom
Augustina is relaxed and at ease with family members, such as these nephews, but she feels that it would be unthinkable for her to get married and have her own children.

Leli Ketipana

“In Jogja, I made contact with some women from organizations to help survivors of domestic violence. Those women helped me get through the worst period in my life. I started going to group counseling sessions.”

Rape? I can't bring myself to call it rape. People would laugh if I said it was rape. He was my boyfriend. But I didn't want it to happen. I wasn't ready to lose my virginity, but I would have been ashamed to call for help. Yes, I know about the new laws that say that it's rape even when a husband has sex with his wife against her will. I think those are good laws. But it's still difficult for me to use that word to describe what happened to me.

After I lost my virginity, I just wanted him to marry me. I'd been brought up to think that a girl isn't worth anything if she loses her virginity before she gets married. The only way that it would be OK was if we got married. I knew that he had other girls. I knew that he was a bastard. But I still wanted him to marry me.

After I let him have sex with me, he lost interest in me. I would have done anything for him to marry me, but he wasn't interested. It was only when another guy became interested in me that he changed again. I met another man, a good, kind man, but I really felt I wasn't good enough for him. When my ex-husband heard that there was someone else, he demanded to know if I'd had sex with him. He even made me take my clothes off so that he could inspect my private parts. I just told him the truth: that I'd never had sex with anyone but him. Even though I'd been close to the other man and liked him, we never had sex.

But I couldn't refuse my ex-husband when he wanted to have sex. I felt that since he'd taken my virginity, he had a right to have sex with me. I still hoped that he'd marry me. He promised that he'd marry me if I got pregnant. He said he didn't want to marry me if I couldn't have children. But when I did finally get pregnant, he told me to get an abortion. We couldn't find a doctor who was willing to do it, so in the end he agreed to marry me. I was relieved. I hoped that after we got married, everything would be OK.

When I had our baby, my ex-husband didn't understand how difficult infants can be. I usually only got a few hours' sleep each night. If I was asleep when the baby started to cry, my ex-husband used to wake me up by pushing me with his foot. He never helped.

Often he stayed out late, hanging out with his friends and drinking. One night when he got in I told him he was drunk. That was the first time he hit me really badly. For a long time after that, I kept quiet around him. I didn't want to make him angry again. Even so, he hit me often. Sometimes after he'd hit me, he was sorry. He brought me my favorite foods and tried to be sweet to me. But it was hard for me to trust him. I never knew when his mood would change again.

When I was breastfeeding my first baby, my nipple was bleeding and bruised. I told my husband that I was in pain. I asked him to please buy a feeding bottle and some baby milk. At the time, he didn't react badly. But the next day, when I got home from a meeting with my professor at the university, he'd taken my daughter and left without saying a word. He was gone for days.

He'd taken my baby to his sister's house. I went there and pleaded with him to give her back so I could look after her. His family blamed me and told me that I was a bad mother and a bad wife. I'd bought my husband food from a stall a few times when I was busy at the university instead of cooking for him myself. His family said I wasn't looking after him. They even said that I'd abandoned my girl.

I was lucky. I managed to finish my university degree even while I was looking after my husband and my children. A lot of women don't finish school. If a woman doesn't finish school and doesn't work, she's completely dependent on her husband. Even though I finished school, I never had a chance to work and earn my own money. That kept me scared. I never thought about leaving my husband.

In the end, my husband left me. He told me he wanted to go to Jogja to do a master's degree. He told me he was leaving before the conflict broke out. He wasn't at home on January 19, when the worst of the communal violence



occurred. I was alone with the children at home, in a village not far from town. Gangs of Islamist militants were sweeping the area. Hundreds of people were killed. I hid with a bunch of our neighbors under a stilt house at the far end of the village. We hid there for about ten hours. I remember my little girl started crying. The other people were scared the militants would hear her. They told us to get out. I didn't say anything. I just stayed where I was. I just put my girl's mouth on my nipple and held her like that to keep her quiet.

By the next day, things had calmed down a bit. We made our way to the police barracks, where it was safe. That was where I found my husband. He said he hadn't enrolled in a university program but was going to go to Jogja to study English and improve his TOEFL score. Even though Ambon wasn't safe for me and my girl, he didn't change his mind about leaving. He sold all the furniture in the house except a bed and a television set to pay for his trip.

When I finally managed to follow him to Jogja, I found him living with another woman. He'd set up a house with her.

In Jogja, I made contact with some women from organizations to help survivors of domestic violence. Those women helped me get through the worst period in my life. I started going to group counseling sessions. A group of women who had been through domestic violence met to share their experiences. I never knew so many women were going through the same things as me. Before I talked with them, I always felt that I was to blame for what went wrong with my husband. I thought it was my fault that my husband hit me. When I spoke with the other women, I began to realize that it wasn't our fault. Listening to other women who had been through the same things as me helped me to believe in myself.

Eventually, I left Jogja and came back to Ambon. I met with some women here from the PULIH Foundation. They became good friends. Actually, I didn't really go through a formal counseling process with them, but they listened to me and helped me while I went through my divorce. They helped me to deal with it. During my divorce, I couldn't sleep. I had terrible nightmares where I saw bodies being thrown down into a deep well.

Women need more than just counseling. For one thing, a lot of women don't see the need to see a psychologist. Even though it might help, most women feel they need practical support, not just someone to talk to. They don't realize that counseling is about how to deal with practical issues. Perhaps priests and *ulama* could play a role, if they were trained better. Perhaps people would be more prepared to talk to them. But at the moment, they don't provide much support.

But counseling isn't enough. The problem is that everyone thinks domestic violence is normal, even the women who go through it. Counseling is good if it changes the way women think about themselves, but you have to change the way the whole community thinks. I don't know how you do that.

One of the biggest problems is that many women with violent husbands have never worked. They don't know how to look after themselves. I know that in some countries they have a welfare system to provide money and housing to single women. I don't know if the government could afford that in Indonesia at the moment. Perhaps the government could provide vocational training programs. Perhaps it could help set up a shelter for women who've been abused, where they can live together and help each other. A shelter would work better if women set it up and ran it themselves. If it was run by the police, it would end up being like a prison.

I've got a small piece of land outside town. One of my dreams is to set up a place there where women could stay and feel safe. We could grow some of our own food and help each other to earn a living. It wouldn't cost much to run. We could earn enough money to support ourselves.

Postscript

While this book was being prepared, the author and photographer contacted community and social worker Maya Satriani, plastic surgeon Enrina Diah, and the columnist and writer Julia Suryakusuma to see if anything could be done to alleviate the terrible scarring and disability suffered by Santi. As a result of the efforts of these women, funds were raised and facilities provided for Santi to undergo the first of several operations she will require.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND CREDITS

This book was sponsored by the PNPM Mandiri program. The goal of PNPM Mandiri, Indonesia's National Program for Community Empowerment, is to reduce poverty. PNPM Mandiri was established by the Indonesian government in 2007 to act as an umbrella for a number of pre-existing community-driven development programs, including the Urban Poverty Program and the Kecamatan Development Program, as well as a number of other community-based programs that were managed by nineteen technical ministries. By 2009, PNPM Mandiri was operating in every subdistrict in Indonesia.

PNPM Mandiri is committed to increasing the participation of all community members in the development process, including the poor, women's groups, indigenous communities, and other groups that have not been fully involved in the development process. *Invisible People* is one way that PNPM Mandiri can reflect on ways to better include marginalized and excluded groups in development.

Bilateral and multilateral assistance for the PNPM Mandiri program has been forthcoming from a number of donor agencies. The PNPM Support Facility (PSF) was established by the Indonesian government as a means of facilitating the contributions of international donors that support PNPM Mandiri. Contributors to the PSF currently include Australia, Denmark, the European Community, Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. PSF provided financial and other support for the publication of *Invisible People*, in order to raise awareness of the special needs and aspirations of marginalized and excluded groups.

We would like to thank the people who sat down to tell their stories and put their lives on public display for the publication of this book. Across the country, the people who were approached were amazingly open about the most personal details of their lives, their problems, their hopes, and their aspirations.

When they collected these stories, Irfan Kortschak and Poriaman Sitanggang explained the purpose of the project and sought the consent of all subjects. The subjects told their stories, often over several days and during several meetings, after which Irfan attempted to recreate their words in a first-person account that conveyed the individual's ideas, feelings, and voice. In a few cases, subjects wrote their own stories in their own words, which were then edited with the subject and translated. When possible, Irfan provided a written account to the subject so that he or she could check and reconfirm that the account was an accurate representation. Otherwise, he discussed it with them. Subjects were reminded that their accounts would be published and asked to be certain that they had no objection to this. Irfan apologizes if despite this process, inaccuracies or misrepresentations have slipped into the text.

A vast array of people helped facilitate interviews and

meetings and provided all sorts of other assistance. A partial list of these people includes Marjorie, Mateo, Marwan and all the staff of Handicap International in Banda Aceh and Takengon; Ricco Sinaga from the Puskesmas (Community Health Center) in Cikini, Jakarta; Imam B. Prasadjo and the staff of Yayasan Nurani Dunia; the members of the band Cisleng and the young guys and women who hang out in Proklamasi; Kamala Chandrakirana, sociologist, author and former Chairwoman of Komnas Perempuan (the National Commission on Violence against Women); Kodar Wusana and Nani Zulminarni of PEKKA (the Women Headed Household Empowerment Program) in Jakarta and the PEKKA field facilitator in Lingsar, West Lombok, Sitti Zamraini Alauthi; Fenny Purnawan, writer, editor and mother of Gana, Smita, Anggita and Oorvi. Agas Bene of the Dinas Kesehatan (Health Agency) in Belu, West Timor; Maria K'lau, an outstandingly dedicated midwife in Belu; Antonia Godelpia Lau, the manager of the Panti Rawat Gizi and all the doctors, midwives, staff and workers at the Puskesmas in Belu; Anne Vincent, Fajar, and Anton Susanto of UNICEF in Jakarta; Nelden Djakababa and Vitria Lazzarini, psychologists from Yayasan Pulih; Piet Pattiwaelapia of the Maluku Refugees' Coalition (Koalisi Pengungsi Maluku); Nelke Huliselan, a community worker in Ambon; Enrina Diah, a plastic surgeon; Julia Suryakusuma; Richard Oh, novelist and crewcut; Rebekka Harsono, an activist from LADI (the Indonesian Anti-Discrimination League); Pephy Nengsi Golo Yosep and Adi Yosep, activists for the rights of people affected by leprosy in Jongaya, Makassar; Kerstin Beise of Netherlands Leprosy Relief (NLR); Dede Oetomo and friends from GAYa Nusantara (a gay and transgendered rights organization in Surabaya); Irma Soebechi and friends from Perwakos (transgendered rights organization); Nig and friends from US Community (a gay and lesbian rights organization in Surabaya); Ayi Na, previously at UNICEF in Mangkowi, Papua; the indefatigable Sister Zita Kuswati at Yayasan Saint Augustina in Sorong, Papua; Connie de Vos, a linguist and specialist in sign languages; Thomas J. Conners, a linguist at Max-Planck-Gesellschaft; Josh Estey, photographer and crewcut; Dian Estey, journalist; Maya Satrini, community worker and friend of the sex workers in Singkawang; Rina, Dewi, Adhe and Yuyun and other sex workers in Jakarta; psychologist Jeanette Murad of the University of Indonesia; Alexander Sriwijono, consultant; Mustamin, of the Bajau community in Mola Selatan, Wakatobi; the Forkani environmental protection group on Palau Dupa; Veda and Rili Djohani of The Nature Conservancy; Ani Himawati in Jogja; Ayu Sastrosusilo; all of the people from Humana, an organization advocating for the rights of street children in Jogja; Muhammad Zamzam Fauzanafi, visual anthropologist; Mbak Diah, an activist filmmaker, and all the other people at Kampung Halaman in Jogja.

The project would not have been possible without the support of Sujana Royat, the far-sighted Deputy Minister for Poverty Alleviation in the Department of Social Welfare. In addition to being a driving force behind the Indonesian government's involvement in the PNPM Mandiri program, he has worked tirelessly to raise the profile of Indonesia's invisible people and to include them in the development process through his active support of PEKKA and a number of the people, groups, communities, and programs described in this book.

Nor would the publication of *Invisible People* have been possible without the patience, tenacity, and kindness of Threesia Siregar, of the World Bank's PNPM Support Facility. The support of Victor Bottini, Ela Hasanah, Sentot Surya Satria, Inge Tan, Lisa Warouw, Rumiati Aritonang, Nancy Armando Syariff, Juliana Wilson and all other staff at the PNPM Support Facility. In addition to providing his introduction, Scott Guggenheim, of AUSAID, kept the project alive with his wisdom, and sense of humor, editing the English language text, and making sensible suggestions throughout the project. Erick Sulistio used his extraordinary talents as a designer to transform the words and images in this book into a visually impressive final product. Sila Wikaningtyas worked long and hard to produce profound and sensitive Indonesian translations of the text, which was originally written in English, as well as a number of personal accounts written by the subjects. Jamie James played a valuable role tweaking, proofing, and editing the final English-language text, while Dorothea Rosa Herliany performed a similar role with the Indonesian-language text. John McGlynn, of the Lontar Foundation, provided excellent advice regarding the publication and distribution of the book.

and *Picturing Indonesia, Village Views of Development* (2005).

All the photographs in this book were taken by Poriaman, with the exception of those taken by Irfan on the following pages: female students (p. 37); Ai Anti Srimayanti (p. 43); Heri Ridwani (p. 45, p. 47); Pak Inceu (p. 51); Laminah (p. 70); women's literacy group (p. 72, p. 74); Musinah (p. 73); Kolok Getar (p. 81); Kolok Subentar (p. 83); Erni Bajo (p. 113); Mading (p. 129); harm reduction meeting (p. 131); Benk Benk (p. 133); Apay and Harry (p. 134); Megi Budi (p. 137, p. 139); Rifky (p. 138); and Reza (p. 148, p. 149).

Irfan Kortschak studied Indonesian Area Studies at the University of Melbourne, and International and Community Development at Deakin University in Australia. He is a writer, translator, photographer, and long-term resident of Jakarta. His previous publications include *Nineteen: The Lives of Jakarta Street Vendors* (2008) and *In a Jakarta Prison: Life Stories of Women Inmates* (2000). He is currently engaged in writing assignments and consultancy work for NGO's and development agencies in Indonesia.

Poriaman Sitanggang has worked as a freelance photographer since 1985. He has held a number of photo exhibits, including *Indonesia - Famous People* (1993), *Batak Faces* (1994), *Dani: The Forgotten People* (1997), *Manila: The City of Contrasts* (1999), *The Song of Arini: The Eastern Indonesia People* (2001), and *Burning Borneo* (1998-1999). His work has appeared in a number of magazines and books, including *Kain untuk Suami* (A Cloth for My Husband) (2004),

Invisible People: Poverty and Empowerment in Indonesia

Published by Godown, an imprint of the Lontar Foundation for
Program Nasional Pemberdayaan Masyarakat (PNPM Mandiri) —
Indonesia's National Program for Community Empowerment
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This book is made from recycled paper.

Design and layout by Erick Sulistio
Cover photograph by Poriaman Sitanggang
Printed in Indonesia by PT Jayakarta Printing

ISBN 978-979-25-1002-7