

KOGAMI

Capacity Building for Local Communities

Tsunami Alert Community – *Komunitas Siaga Tsunami*, known as **KOGAMI**, is a local organization that works on disaster preparedness, especially for earthquakes and tsunamis, in communities in Padang. Initiated by volunteers who worked under Surfzone Relief Operations (SRO) after the 2004 Aceh tsunami, KOGAMI works particularly in awareness raising, thus improving the community's preparedness in dealing with earthquakes and tsunamis.

Following the experience of dealing with the earthquakes in the area in April 2005, the fact that Padang is one of the areas in Indonesia with highest tsunami risk due to its high population on the coastline, became the primary concern that encouraged volunteers to establish a local organization to work at the grassroots level. The approximately 400,000 people who live along the coastline in the city of Padang knew very little about earthquakes and tsunamis. When an earthquake shook Padang in April 2005, many people fled to distant areas and stayed there for over a week, worrying that a disastrous tsunami would hit Padang. Activities in Padang were suspended, children didn't go to school, the government officials didn't report for work, and traditional markets were empty.

In the beginning, it was very difficult for KOGAMI's volunteers to develop community preparedness. Most people in Padang were still traumatized by the Aceh tsunami and tended to deny that West Sumatera was a tsunami-prone area. In addition to the community's resistance, most of the government's officers were concerned that KOGAMI's activities would have a negative impact on tourism and investments in Padang because they might create fear among tourists and investors who would then decide not to visit and invest in Padang.

Despite the resistance of the community and the government, KOGAMI continued to advocate and campaign for tsunami preparedness in Padang. The advocacy involved the local parliament (DPRD) and government. KOGAMI was supported by noted geologists, Prof. Kerry Sieh from California Technology Institute and Dr. Danny Hilman from the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI), who voluntarily went to Padang to present their research on the geological condition of Padang. Their visit resulted in an agreement from the local government, schools, communities, and the private sector to contribute to establishing preparedness based on their capacities.

KOGAMI works with the government in developing concepts, regulations, and other policies regarding tsunami early warning and disaster preparedness, and mitigation in Padang. The government of Padang city has produced local regulations and a strategic plan.

At the community level, KOGAMI works in pilot areas and has developed different groups of preparedness:

1. **Community Group for Disaster Preparedness – Kelompok Penanggulangan Bencana (KPB).** In Pasir Kandang village, KOGAMI works with groups of people appointed by the community at the RW level to develop strategies in reducing disaster risk in their areas. The groups are responsible in facilitating risk reduction strategy development and implementation in their areas.



KOGAMI Team



Tsunami Information for Private Sector



Fire Drill



Dissaster Management Team in Padang



Scholl Drill

2. **School Disaster Preparedness Group – *Kelompok Siaga Bencana Sekolah (KSBS)***. KOGAMI works in 36 schools, from primary to high school, in Padang, Padang Pariaman and Pesisir Selatan. Each school formed a group of students, teachers and school staff representatives, armed with knowledge and skills about disaster with a multi-hazard approach, risk assessment method, and strategic planning and implementation in reducing disaster risks.
3. **Network of NGOs in West Sumatra for disaster preparedness - *Pal-anta Siaga Bencana*** KOGAMI shares information and collaborates with 21 NGOs in West Sumatra in regards to disaster risk reduction.
4. **Journalist Network for Disaster Preparedness – *Jaringan Jurnalis Siaga Bencana (JJSB)***. Together with 29 print and electronic media, KOGAMI is currently working to develop a community radio to support the dissemination of information on disaster and tsunami early warning that is expected to broadcast within this year.

The 30 September 2009 earthquake (7.9 magnitude) was a real test for those community groups, especially KPB and KSBS, to implement their plans. During the earthquake, the pilot communities (KPB, KSBS, and JJSB) responded immediately when the ground began shaking and effectively disseminated information from the Government. They also supported the emergency response by providing help/support for Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs).

KOGAMI has earned trust from the government, communities, the private sector, and other national and international organizations who have seen the impact of our work. We are grateful for their continuous support, while hoping that preparedness will be the norm in the communities and internalized by individuals everywhere. **“Semua Bisa Siaga! – Everybody can be prepared!”**

CHALLENGES:

KPB, KSBS, Palanta Siaga Bencana, and JJSB are pilot projects that need to be upscaled. Taking all organizations that work in disaster risks management into account, only a small part of the vulnerable community in Padang is covered. We, however, are optimistic that all communities will be well-prepared to face disasters in the future. With support from the media and other significant institutions in the community, such as mosques, to disseminate information on disaster preparedness, KOGAMI continues to work together with the local government and other actors in developing a better system and management to minimize potential loss in tsunami disasters.



Trauma Relief for Students after the Earthquake



Raising Community Awareness



First Aid Training

Author:
Patra Rina Dewi
patrarinadewi@gmail.com

Executive Director of KOGAMI

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GTZ Office Jakarta
Menara BCA 46th Floor
Jl. M.H. Thamrin No.1
Jakarta 10310
T: +62-21-2358 7111
F: +62-21-2358 7110
E: gtz-indonesien@gtz.de
I: www.gtz.de/indonesia

Further information:
www.gitews.org/tsunami-kit
KOGAMI: www.kogami.or.id
GITEWS: www.gitews.org