

PRESS RELEASE

United Nations Development Programme



Employment Centres in Aceh- Matching the People's Skills with Reconstruction Needs

Sometimes, filling out an application form can be a difficult task.

On a sunny mid-afternoon at the Employment Centre in Meulaboh, a city on the Westcoast of Aceh, two wooden tables and benches are occupied by people filling out one-paged documents. It looks like a scene out of a mid-term exam, except in this case, everyone is allowed to chat and ask their neighbors how to fill in the questions.



2,000 women have registered into the job database. They come with a variety of skills and are looking for a variety of jobs

A young man sitting next to an older lady patiently answers her question on how to fill the section titled previous experiences. "I can cook really well", she proudly proclaims to him, "I can also sew, wash and clean". When asked what type of job she is looking for, the lady replies she would like to work as a cook. Some of the men sitting on the same bench say they want to continue farming, while others have aspirations to, "...be a driver for international organizations to drive their people around town".

The Employment Service for the People of Nanggroe Aceh Darrussalam (ESPAD) was jointly set up by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Government of Indonesia.

It is located at the local government's Vocational Training Center (Balai Latihan Kerja). Funded by UNDP along with donor countries Australia and the Netherlands, the Employment Centre seeks to match job seekers with a big pool of prospective employers that include international organizations and local companies. It has developed a database of skilled Acehnese people to meet the needs of reconstruction efforts taking place in cities across the province.

According to a recently published ILO report, almost 400 people in Banda Aceh have received either temporary or fixed term employment in the first few weeks the Centre was opened.

By the end of March, more than 10.000 job seekers, including around 2.000 women, had registered in the Centre's database. They come with a variety of skills and are looking for a variety of jobs. One woman said that even though she recently graduated in Environmental Studies, she was open to applying for anything, "...my friend told me that they're (the Centre) looking for qualified professionals in all sorts of fields. I thought I might try my luck and find a job so that my parents don't have to support me anymore".

Before the Tsunami, unemployment stood at 250.000 people (Population 4.2 million). Now the number has reached 600.000. According to the ILO report, some 38% of the population in NAD and North Sumatra are in danger of falling into poverty. Those already classified as poor are likely to become poorer.

UNDP and ILO will continue to work closely with the local government to ensure the effectiveness of the Centres. Following the establishment of the Centres in Banda Aceh and Meulaboh, ILO is in the process of expanding its service to the city of Lhok Seumawe. A centre will be opened there in the coming weeks.



Employment Centre seeks to match job seekers with prospective employers, including international organizations and local companies