

PMI Experience Working for Women Sinabung Eruption Response



Background

Mount Sinabung is located in the Karo plateau of Karo Regency, North Sumatra, Indonesia, 25 miles from the Lake Toba super volcano. Solfataric activities (cracks where steam, gas, and lava are emitted) were last observed at the summit in 1912; recent documented events include an eruption in the early hours of 29 August 2010 and eruptions in September and November 2013, January, February and October 2014. Between 2013 and 2014 the alert for a major event was increased with no significant activity. On 2 June 2015 the alert was again increased, and as of 26 June 2015 there are 3,149 HH with total of 10,644 people have been evacuated, fearing a major eruption. The long eruption of Mount Sinabung is similar with Mount Unzen in Japan, which erupted for 5 years after 200 years dormant.

The conditions in each IDP camps are different from one to another, there are IDP camps with good facilities, people can be placed accordingly, less crowded, good sanitation. But there are also conditions where people are overcrowded, lack of sanitation facilities, and lack of clean water. From that situation, it is obvious that there is no structural and systemic coordination mechanism in place. All the reliefs are run individually by each IDP camp coordinator without being consulted or being informed through the main post command.

Sensitivity and Resilience

Women group is one of the vulnerable groups based on the risk of power inequality, social discrimination or financially dependency to others. In disaster situation, those risks can be increased along with the high pressure for them to survive. For

women group in Tanah Karo, generally they are playing a very big role in their family and social environment. They have to wake up early to prepare the food and the needs for their children, and then they will go to the field from 8 AM until 5 PM, and then return to their domestic life afterwards.

Most women in Tanah Karo can be found in the field or at home, as most of the men will spend their time at the local coffee shop to play chess and talking among them. In Tanah Karo, the family culture is that men as the head of the household and it is a pride for the women to be able to please their husband. Most of the women in Tanah Karo will force themselves to provide money for their husband to be able to treat their friends for drinks. This circumstance is leading to the information source is different between women and men. The men will get the information about the policy from the media, newspaper and TV at the local coffee shop, as for the women will get the information of how to fulfill their basic needs at the IDP camp. In addition to that, there is one camp that even build a temporary coffee shop to ensure that the men will not go anywhere far from their families.

For women in Tanah Karo at the children age, teenager and adult can be found at the temporary shelter located at the tents, sport building, church, and also the local multipurpose building usually used for culture purpose, locally known as Jambur. They will alternately work in public kitchen, clean up the IDP camp, do the washing and keep an eye on the babies and/or the elderly, including taking care of the sick. The children or the teenager usually helps out the domestic activity at the IDP camp, as mostly for the grown-up will work in the city.

The Resources and Commitment of PMI

During the operation, plenty of activities have been carried out by the PMI, such as evacuation, psycho-social support, mobile clinic, clean water supply, even the Cash Transfer Program supported by the Australian Red cross. In every service delivered, PMI always prioritize the vulnerable group, such as for psycho-social support for children and also for women by making the handy craft. Aside from that, PMI also conducted the exercise that is suitable for the elderly, by hiring the trainer from the local fitness facility.

Nonetheless, there are things that need to be improved. The local resources are still minim. The board members are just being structured in June 2015 after the latest Sinabung



eruption. It is important to have the Red Cross orientation. It is an urgency as well to build the capacity of the staff and volunteers. The volunteers that have been trained are no longer stay in Tanah Karo, therefore the PMI Tanah Karo is open for the support from other neighboring PMI, such as PMI Kota Medan District and PMI Deli Serdang District. Due to the limitation circumstances, PMI cannot deliver the service in a systematic and in optimal way. Nonetheless, the good will and the spirit still exist.

PMI is very well known among the society. In many events, PMI is also known as the representative from the Government. During this operation, PMI is included as one of the Task Force for the Sinabung Eruption Operation developed by the local government. From the point of view of the society, many expectations is given to PMI to be more active in the humanitarian activities. Once, Kalbe Farma, one of the famous pharmaceutical company companyalso contribute their relief through PMI who later on deliver their support to the beneficiaries.

Creating the Safe Environment in Emergency Response

Since the first eruption in 2010, PMI has the data based on gender, group of age, religion and level of education. This data is collected by carrying out the assessment directly to each IDP

camps and not from the secondary source. The data is used for the relief distribution and also monitor the logistic, such as milk for the elderly or the baby kit. For PMI, all the relief will then collected at the main post before handing them directly to the beneficiaries. Should the person is not there at the time, the volunteer will then revisit the IDP camp to deliver the relief directly. The schedule for the relief distribution is usually adapted to the daily schedule of the IDPs.

The IDP camps in the Sinabung eruption operation are considered as unsafely environment. There are no clear boarder between men and women, no separation between families, everyone is just blended. There is no privacy that allows people to change

their clothes properly or for the husband-wife to fill their biological needs. The emergency bath rooms have minimilighting; some of the bath rooms even have no door or proper lock at the doors. Usually, when the mothers are in the bath room, they will ask their daughters or small children to guard the door until they finish their activity.

For the temporary shelter, PMI also contribute to run the IDP camps even not in direct function. PMI provide the tarpaulin to cover the open walls or open roof, vegetables supply for the



public kitchen and also clean water supply. When providing the clean water supply, the volunteer will clean the bath rooms before refill the bath tub or water torn with the clean water. This is why the clean water supply is the excellent programs for PMI in the operation.

During the respond in 2013-2014, PMI also mobilize the mobile clinic that is very work with the IDPs since the people trust the doctor more compare to the 24 H stand-by nurses. At the service, the people not just consult their illness with the doctor but also their feelings. By consulting their feelings with the doctor, the people are more comfortable and this can be considered as the healing process.

Challenges and Opportunities

There are some notes that need big attention in terms of the limitation resources and the length of duration of the operation. Most of the activities in the local Red Cross are supported by other sisterhood of PMI and also PMI NHQ. The cost needed is quiet high especially for transportation, logistic and operational cost. It is unfortunate that at the moment, the capacity of the local PMI is still low. Nonetheless, there are plenty of spaces to be improved especially considering the positioning of PMI in Sinabung operation.



PMI has the expertise to run the temporary shelter but not being implemented optimally. PMI has the good reputation to access the logistic and volunteers mobilization. During the coordination meeting, the input coming from PMI was usually considered as an offer whereas PMI just want to remind based on our knowledge. For example, PMI suggested adding more bath rooms following the SPHERE standard on a coordination meeting; this is considered that PMI will support everything including the cost.

Another situation is that the minimum control for the children at the temporary shelter. During our visit to one of the camps, there is a group of volunteer from a university that worked with the children by teaching them computers. All the activities are carried out without any supervision from the parents or any adult. It was seen that the university's volunteers do not have a good knowledge to act and behave while working with children. Since PMI has the knowledge and experience of psycho-social support and working with the vulnerable group, should allow us to contribute better and deliver the service in an effective manner, and this should be carried out accordingly and based on the capacity.

For the Sinabung eruption, it is expected that in the future, the PMI can deliver the better humanitarian service accordingly. Hence it is necessary to build and maintain the capacity of the local PMI in many aspects to be able to apply the humanitarian service in an effective and efficient manner.