

# Hope for Renewal

Photographs from Indonesia after the Tsunami

Images by Marco Garcia, featured in an East-West Center exhibition



"When I met people the first thing out of their mouths was 'salam alaikum' (peace be with you). Their faith never wavered. Their strength never dissipated. They held strong. Many told me it was God's will they lived, no one else's. Their strength, their belief, got them through."

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EAST-WEST CENTER

Proceeds from the sale of this book support tsunami relief efforts.

## Foreword

On a peaceful Sunday morning in Banda Aceh, Muslahuddin Daud made his way to his favorite fishing spot on the coastline of northern Sumatra. He had not been fishing long when the ground began to shake violently and coconut trees crashed against each other. He raced toward home just as a series of enormous waves generated by the tremor struck the coastal city and swept him away.

As he recounts at the end of this book, Muslahuddin, his wife, and daughter miraculously survived the devastation of December 26, 2004. But more than 225,000 people perished in 13 countries along the Indian Ocean.

Although a quarter of the world away in Honolulu, we at the East-West Center were deeply affected by the disaster. We have been working with the nations and peoples of the Asia Pacific region for 45 years, providing educational and exchange opportunities and conducting collaborative research projects. Many of our students, visiting scholars, and alumni come from tsunami-affected countries. One of our current students lost more than 100 relatives. Muslahuddin had participated in our program for young leaders.

In the days and weeks following the tsunami, we showed how large and caring our “East-West Center family,” as Muslahuddin calls it, truly is. We immediately established an aid and rebuilding fund and on January 2 held what may have been the first concert

in the United States entirely devoted to tsunami relief. The residents of Hawai'i responded with generous financial support, as did our alumni chapters around the region and the public schools we work with across the United States.

The East-West Center Tsunami Relief Fund is benefiting organizations in India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. Initially, funds were given to short-term relief efforts; now we are working closely with institutions to provide long-term support through our education and research programs.

What of the people whose lives have been changed forever by the tsunami? Six months after the disaster, an exhibition by Honolulu photographer Marco Garcia opened in the

East-West Center Gallery entitled "Hope for Renewal: Photographs from Indonesia after the Tsunami." Through his photographs you will see how the ordinary people of Aceh experienced and are coping with a truly extraordinary crisis. Their resilience and determination are an inspiration for our continued work in promoting an Asia Pacific community.

The East-West Center presents this book as a tribute to the memory of the dead and the courage of the survivors throughout the Indian Ocean region as they find new hope and rebuild their lives.

CHARLES E. MORRISON  
PRESIDENT, EAST-WEST CENTER

## About the Exhibition

In mid-January 2005, Hawai'i photographer Marco Garcia was invited to travel with the U.S. Air Force to Aceh Province in Indonesia to photograph the international rescue effort following the Indian Ocean tsunami. "Witnessing this tragedy changed my understanding of life," Garcia would later write. "It wasn't the disaster itself.

It was the strength and resilience of the survivors, and their ability to move forward. All those who had lost something were able to smile at me and greet me with such kindness. I witnessed the struggle to rebuild, to survive."

After Garcia returned from Indonesia he was unsettled by the U.S. media's waning coverage of the tsunami and "feared people would lose interest and forget about Aceh and everyone lost to the tsunami." He decided to approach the East-West Center Arts Program. When Garcia first showed us his portfolio of photographs from his trip to Aceh, we were moved by the vivid, tragic, and often heroic images he had captured. We were also struck by his sensitive portraits of people who were struggling to make sense of the magnitude of all they had lost, and all that lay ahead of them.

Listening to Garcia describe his admiration for the people of Aceh, I realized that his photographs emphasized the devastation, but not peoples' faith and resilience. It was

apparent that an exhibition solely documenting the disaster and rescue effort would be a disservice to the survivors and would not adequately reflect how their world had changed overnight. The East-West Center arranged for Garcia to return to Aceh so a more holistic photographic exhibition could be created—one that looked not only at the disaster's impact, but also at the people's extraordinary responses to tragic circumstances.

The photographs in this exhibition are from Garcia's work during the early days of the rescue operation and his subsequent trip in May 2005 under the auspices of the East-West Center. Many of the images are tragic and painful, but we believe the photographs are respectful of and sensitive to both the living and those who perished. Through

images and  
excerpts from  
Garcia's journal, this  
exhibition explores themes  
of disaster, rescue, recovery, and  
rebuilding, and emphasizes the indomitable spirit  
of both survivors and rescuers and the hope for renewal despite horrible adversity.

MICHAEL SCHUSTER  
CURATOR, EAST-WEST CENTER





Broken City

January 15, 2005

This montage is composed of six sequential still photographs, creating a panoramic view of the Merduati District of Banda Aceh.

Bandah Aceh is the capital city of Aceh Province. Before the earthquake and the tsunami, over 225,000 people lived there. Tens of thousands of people died in the disaster and aftermath.





Oil Field

January 17, 2005

A young boy scavenges for anything useful in the oil depot and fishing town of Krueng Raya, 40 kilometers north of Banda Aceh.

Several oil storage tanks were destroyed and all contents lost. Hundreds of full oil drums were scattered in the area.

# DISASTER

January 2005

"Today. Yes, today. I remember being in Banda Aceh. Last week. It wasn't too long ago.

I was taking pictures. Many pictures of things I don't really care to remember. Smell  
is a terrible reminder of things we would like to forget. It can hit you anywhere."



Crossing

January 19, 2005

Seen from a U.S. military helicopter delivering aid, tsunami refugees cross a destroyed bridge on Sumatra's west coast. Many villages, along with roads and communication lines on the coast towards Meulaboh, were completely destroyed, leaving survivors with little hope of rescue.

Many were forced to walk hundreds of kilometers to seek aid in Banda Aceh.



Mass Grave

January 14, 2005

Body bags and corpses fill a mass grave in a neighborhood of Banda Aceh. One grave near the city's airport is said to hold more than 60,000 bodies.

**Uprooted**

January 19, 2005

Uprooted palm trees litter the landscape on the west coast of Sumatra, one of the hardest hit areas on the island.



**Remnants**  
January 14, 2005  
A man rummages on the second floor of a destroyed home in Banda Aceh. In many neighborhoods close to the shore, water reached more than two stories high. Witnesses on Sumatra's west coast reported the tsunami to be as high as 100 feet.



# RESCUE

May 2005

"The group found a body trapped under the collapsed remains of a home. The younger members tried to remove the woman from the rubble but her body stubbornly remained, clinging to its new home and refusing to let go. We almost surrendered to her will until El Chino, a volunteer, came to the scene. He chased us all away and went to the body alone. I watched him quietly mumble to himself in Spanish, quietly speaking to the corpse of a woman he didn't know, quietly murmuring, placing his red-gloved hands around her rotting fleshy ankles and gently tugging her from the grip of the lumber, tin, and concrete grave. I stood amazed at a magical man who was able to do what three other men could not."



A Prayer for the Deceased

January 15, 2005

Juan Carlos Soria (left) and Hector "El Chino" Mendez, rescue workers from Mexico City, murmur an Islamic prayer over a recovered body in Banda Aceh.



Purgatory

January 15, 2005

Body bags await removal in Banda Aceh.

Corpse

January 15, 2005

Juan Carlos Soria, a member  
of the Mexican rescue team  
TOPOS, pulls a corpse out of  
the rubble in Banda Aceh.







Relief

January 19, 2005

Tsunami survivors reach for boxes of aid from U.S. Navy helicopter crewmember Joseph Sabia, on Sumatra's west coast. The U.S. military launched a massive relief effort delivering food and water to the destroyed areas in the Aceh Province.

*Following Page*

Passing by Mass Grave 1

January 15, 2005

A woman walks past a small mass grave in the business district of Merduati in Banda Aceh.

TOPOS

January 16, 2005

Members of the all volunteer Mexican rescue and recovery team TOPOS, assisted by a German tourist, carry a corpse from a destroyed neighborhood in Banda Aceh.

TOPOS arrived in Aceh two weeks after the tsunami to help.



# SURVIVORS

May 2005

"Many of the survivors who greeted me with their grief, with their sorrow, with their unshakeable faith, would tell me similar stories of an unstoppable earthquake that rattled and shook and made the ground tremble beneath their feet. They told me how the earth moved and everything swayed, rocked, cracked, and crumbled. One man told me that no matter how much he tried, he couldn't stand up straight or, for that matter, stand up at all. He told me how when the earthquake struck he grabbed all of his kids and wife and ran out into the dusty street. The kids were screaming. Fear in their little mouths mirrored the same emotions in the eyes of their parents, neighbors, and strangers. He told me how he tried to hold on to the fence post in their front yard but couldn't manage to grab it as it jumped back and forth, up and down, and side to side."



Passing by Mass Grave 2

January 15, 2005

Two young men ride a motorbike past a group of body bags near Aceh Market.



Dr. Rifina

May 10, 2005

Dr. Rifina, an Aceh dental teacher, walks around her destroyed classroom assessing the damaged equipment at a medical center. Many of the staff members were lost when the tsunami struck Aceh Province. It will take years to replace the staff and equipment before the school can reopen.



Faith

January 15, 2005

Irwan and Rismadi find a still wet Koran in the ruins of their home in the business district of Merduati in Banda Aceh.



Memories of the Missing

January 14, 2005

Holding a photo album of their missing colleagues, two police officers search the ruins of their former station hoping to find the remains of their friends.



Roadblock

May 8, 2005

A motorbike passes by two boats tossed more than two kilometers from the sea in the town of Lhoknga, a few miles south of Banda Aceh.

# RECOVERING

May 2005

"The wave swept thousands into its grasp, scattering bodies into the far reaches of the land and back into the ocean. Thousands went missing. Many survivors had someone to bury. Many had nowhere to bury them. Others had no families to return to. Some had no one to claim them. Many had no one to find them. Many of the dead had no one to bury them. The survivors of the tsunami had no choice but to remember, rebuild, and recover from their devastation. Tents now stand where homes once were."



Classroom 27

May 11, 2005

Fakhrur Razi flips through a textbook in the second floor classroom 27, in his former high school, SMP 1 in Banda Aceh. Dried mud still cakes the floor and the water line is visible.

Koran

May 11, 2005

A man turns the pages of a  
damaged Koran.





Grave Marker

May 11, 2005

Muslim tombstones mark a mass grave in Banda Aceh.



Temporary Housing

May 7, 2005

Scattered tents provide housing for many of the homeless in the port town of Krueng Raya.



Dedicated Students

May 7, 2005

Khalid (left), Mustafa (center), and Rizal (right), living inside a tent on the campus of the Institut Agama Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry in Banda Aceh. Many of the institute's students were left homeless after the tsunami. Tents were the only option for many of those who wanted to continue attending school.



Refugees

January 17, 2005

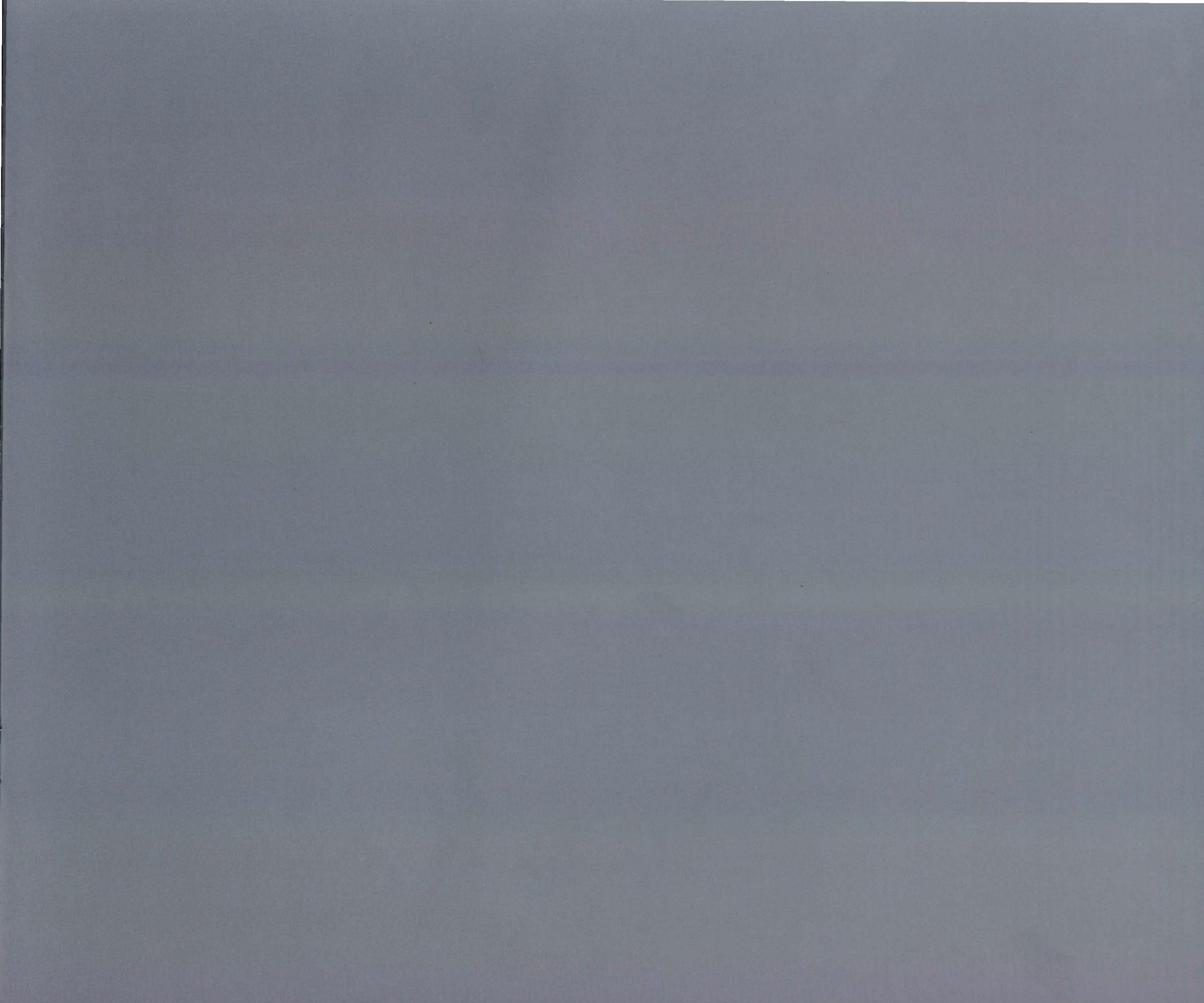
Two Acehnese women serve food inside a tsunami refugee camp on the northeast coast.



Moving Forward

May 11, 2005

Fourth grade students continue their studies at SMP 1, Banda Aceh. Outside remain the ruins of their town.



# THEN AND NOW

May 2005

"Three weeks after the tsunami, many of the major roadways had been cleared of debris and were drivable. Many people returned to their former homes only to find nothing. Nothing remained—no driveway, car, motorbike, sink, bathroom, toothbrush, comb, lipstick, or frying pan. Many couldn't find a tree, or any landmark that demarcated their property or told them that this was their backyard. They couldn't find their loved ones. They couldn't find anything."



Body Bag

January 14, 2005

A rescue worker passes a body bag laid out on the brick sidewalk in Banda Aceh.



Garbage Bag

May 5, 2005

A plastic garbage bag filled with dirt spills out on the brick sidewalk in Banda Aceh.



Panglima Polem Boulevard

January 14, 2005

Three weeks after the tsunami struck Banda Aceh, two traditional Indonesian ships sit in front of the Suzuki Building on Panglima Polem Boulevard. The ocean is more than five kilometers away from this street.



Panglima Polem Boulevard

May 6, 2005

Motorists zoom by the once debris-filled Panglima Polem Boulevard five months after the devastating tsunami.



Flooded Street

January 16, 2005

A man rides his bicycle through a flooded street a block away from Aceh Market in the city center.



Dry Street

May 6, 2005

Two women drive down a road once flooded and filled with debris.



Peace

May 9, 2005

Two women zoom by in a truck at the Nusu Market in Banda Aceh.



New Village

May 8, 2005

A new village springs up further inland away from the coastline near Calang on Sumatra's west coast.

# REBUILDING

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# RENEWAL

June 2005

"Dotted across the landscape were the skeletal shells of homes being rebuilt, small villages being recreated. The sound of chainsaws filled the air, along with the beat of hammers pounding nails into pine and coconut wood. The cornstalks gently swayed in the wind as watermelon vines sprouted out of the cement foundation of the remnants of a home."



Reopening

January 16, 2005

A man climbs over a gate to enter a storefront in Banda Aceh.



Back to Work

May 7, 2005

Illyyanti, a teenager in Krueng Raya, dries fish on mesh wire crates outside new housing projects.

Mosque

January 19, 2005

Evening prayer at the mosque  
inside the Pendopo Gubernur  
Aceh Complex.





New Wall

May 6, 2005

A carpenter in Banda Aceh helps rebuild a wall near the Aceh Market.

Corn and Melons

May 5, 2005

Cornstalks and watermelons grow out of the cement foundation of a destroyed home in Banda Aceh's Lamjabat village. Residents began to cultivate the crops to supplement their meager food rations. Many homeless Acehnese were paid the equivalent of US\$3.00 a day to clear debris from the town while living in makeshift homes and tents.



Hammer and Nails

May 7, 2005

Sulaiman, a local carpenter from Beurandeh village, helps to rebuild his town.



Framed

May 11, 2005

A carpenter walks down the beams of an unfinished home in a village west of Banda Aceh.

After five months, housing projects have sprouted up all over Aceh Province.



Wedding Celebration

May 7, 2005

Zaki and Cut Megawati Sani greet guests in the parlor of Zaki's home during their wedding ceremonies in a subdistrict of Banda Aceh. Zaki lost his mother during the tsunami.



Kick

May 8, 2005

Eleven-year-old Redi plays soccer in front of a truck destroyed by the tsunami in Leupung, 25 miles south of Banda Aceh. Ninety-five percent of the town's 10,000 residents were killed. Not a single building remained standing after waves that reached more than 100 feet rampaged through Leupung. A new town is being built further inland, away from the ruins of the old.



School is Out

May 9, 2005

Students at a primary school in Banda Aceh are smiling at the end of the day. According to school administrators, many of the students were orphaned by the tsunami.

Hope for Renewal

## A Survivor's Story

My second daughter survived the tsunami inside my wife's womb. For months, Setia Dani and I worried that our baby would be affected by our trauma and by the tsunami water Setia had ingested during our miraculous escape. But she is beautiful and truly a gift from God. She and our older daughter Aisyah, who narrowly survived, represent hope for a new generation in Aceh. So many relatives, friends, and acquaintances are gone. Time will heal our wounds, but not without a vivid scar.

My story starts peacefully. On Sunday morning, December 26, 2004, I got up early to go fishing. Setia had taken our savings from the bank to use later that day for a down payment on our first home. I was blessed with Aisyah, and Setia was in the early months of her second pregnancy.

I had barely started fishing when the earthquake struck. The earth shook violently, coconut trees crashed noisily against each other, and people fell down in prayer. With a racing heart I did the same.

Within 10 minutes the quake stopped. Coming from inland, I did not know of tsunamis. I lingered at the beach to talk with an older fisherman. We watched the water drain from the beach, exposing thousands of fish. I had no idea of the danger until we saw a huge wave on the horizon.

Terrified, I now fled as fast as I could. Arriving home, I found everyone was in the street, fearful of aftershocks. Setia was clutching the down payment. Our sister, Ruhama, was holding Aisyah. But no one believed a wave could travel more than two miles inland until they saw the charging waters, black with debris. I grabbed Setia's hand, but we could not run far before the powerful tide swept us up, separating us from Aisyah and Ruhama. Helpless in the current, we were carried into the yard of a large house and spun around. A sharp stick hit me, and Setia was gulping water and gasping for air. The water and mud in our clothes dragged us downward. The money, of course, was lost, but we now only cared to survive. We were about to die as we were pinned against the house and a car bore down on us. But at the last moment, the door sprung open, and we were swept into the house. We climbed atop a fallen cupboard and pressed our noses to the ceiling. The water stopped rising with only three inches of air left.

After the wave subsided, we made our way to the floor above. Our neighborhood was totally destroyed. The receding water revealed dead bodies pierced with wounds. We were in shock for three or four hours when a man came by and told us that Aisyah was alive. I did not care that the mud was laced with nails, tools, and other rubbish as I started toward where he indicated. An hour later I found Aisyah and Ruhama on the second floor of a game store. Aisyah's mouth, ears, and eyes were filled with mud. I desperately tried to clean her, but now there was no water.

It was already evening, and we were very hungry. Walking inland for hours, we finally found an intact house whose owner we knew. He gave us rice and clothes. Scavenging, I was lucky to find three unopened plastic bottles of water in the debris. But we could not sleep. Aisyah cried incessantly from diarrhea, and the earth continued to heave.

The next day we moved to a makeshift camp. Aisyah was sick for many days but eventually recovered with traditional drugs. Tragically, Ruhama died of tetanus.

Like others, I was anxious to restart my life. I found a job with the World Bank and built a temporary shelter for my family from the rubbish. I am looking for a site for a permanent home and hoping to get help from an NGO to build my house.

I have a strong hope in the future of Aceh. The people of Aceh desperately want peace and reconciliation with the insurgents, and a peace agreement has finally been signed. Many linkages to the outside world exist that did not before the tsunami. Despite the cynicism about some donors and programs, there are committed funds and organizations with serious long-term interest. As an alumnus of an East-West Center program, I am proud that the Center has initiated a training program with my previous university in Banda Aceh.

Finally there are the babies, like my daughters. It is for them that we pledge our efforts at rebuilding, and they will carry forward our hopes for our homeland.

MUSLAHUDDIN DAUD  
BANDA ACEH

Coordinator for Aceh in the World Bank's Support for Poor and Disadvantaged Areas Project; former curriculum and training officer, Peace and Education Program, Nonviolence International

## East-West Center Contribution to Aid and Reconstruction

Like so many other individuals and institutions, the East-West Center responded to the December 26, 2004, earthquake and tsunami by assisting in aiding the victims and in supporting the longer-term reconstruction of the affected areas. On December 27, Center President Charles E. Morrison announced the establishment of the East-West Center Tsunami Relief Fund. The Center's current participants, its extensive alumni network, and the Hawai'i community have raised more than \$500,000 for the fund, which is being used to assist local organizations providing relief and rehabilitation in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia, and Thailand.

Soon after the disaster, East-West Center Education Program staff twice visited the Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Ar-Raniry—the State Institute for Islamic Studies Ar-Raniry—to expand the Center's relationship with this key Aceh Province educational institution, which suffered great loss of faculty, students, and facilities. As a measure of its commitment to help rehabilitate and strengthen IAIN Ar-Raniry, the East-West Center signed a memorandum of understanding with the institution in July 2005. In addition to providing English language training to enable junior faculty to take advantage of educational and research opportunities at the East-West Center and other institutions, the Center has pledged to assist with rebuilding IAIN faculty, strengthening its research capability and library management, and providing library research support for junior faculty completing doctoral dissertations.

Schools-Helping-Schools, a project of the East-West Center's AsiaPacificEd Program, evolved through the joint efforts of Center staff and a network of teachers who are former AsiaPacificEd participants. Their students from across the United States have raised funds to provide tuition, uniforms, books, supplies, and food for students in areas hard hit by the tsunami. Schools-Helping-Schools aims to connect these students in partnerships that will support long-term recovery and foster ties between cultures.

In spring 2005, students from the Center's Asia Pacific Leadership Program raised funds to travel to Sri Lanka to assist with relief efforts. There, they purchased construction materials and labored alongside local residents building houses in a Habitat for Humanity project.

The East-West Center's Research Program, in collaboration with colleagues from the Human Rights Center at the University of California Berkeley and regional partners, mounted a project aimed at understanding the risks of human trafficking in the aftermath of the tsunami in the five countries most affected. The teams discovered that while governments have been largely effective in preventing human trafficking, more subtle human rights violations have been occurring, including a lack of community participation in the recovery and rehabilitation process. Findings were shared at a Bangkok workshop and in a report to regional governments, UN agencies, donors, NGOs, and others. The project is now focusing on community participation in the recovery and reconstruction process.

The Pacific Disaster Center (PDC), of which the East-West Center is the managing partner, provided an array of support to relief and recovery operations. PDC deployed staff to impacted regions of Indonesia and Thailand, launched a geospatial information service, and kept regional officials notified of potentially destructive earthquake aftershocks. Subsequently, PDC is supporting regional reconstruction efforts by assisting in the development of national "multi-hazard" early warning centers.

The East-West Center will remain involved in the recovery process and in maintaining the relationships established in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami.

### Marco Garcia, Photographer

Hawai'i-based photographer Marco Garcia was raised in San Antonio, Texas. He graduated from St. Mary's University with a master's degree in international relations, focusing on economics and history. He worked for several years in New York before moving in 2003 to Honolulu, where he specializes in editorial and commercial photography. His photographs have appeared in magazines and newspapers, advertisements, and websites nationally and internationally. His work can be seen at [www.marcpix.com](http://www.marcpix.com).

## **East-West Center**

The East-West Center is an education and research organization established by the U.S. Congress in 1960 to strengthen relations and understanding among the peoples and nations of Asia, the Pacific, and the United States. The Center contributes to a peaceful, prosperous, and just Asia Pacific community by serving as a vigorous hub for cooperative research, education, and dialogue on critical issues of common concern to the Asia Pacific region and the United States. Funding for the Center comes from the U.S. government, with additional support provided by private agencies, individuals, foundations, corporations, and the governments of the region.

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*As a member of the Board of Governors of the East-West Center, I was proud to witness the response of the Center community in the immediate aftermath of the devastating Indian Ocean tsunami. It is my hope that this book, documenting human resilience in the face of tragedy, will be an inspiration for us all. The victims of the tsunami continue to need our support as they carry on their efforts to rebuild their lives, homes, and societies. Proceeds from the sale of this book all go to support those efforts.*

THE HONORABLE TUN DAIM ZAINUDDIN

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