About the Co-op

Microenterprises or cottage industries are important in Indonesia, as they are worldwide. Particularly in smaller villages with limited opportunities for steady employment, microenterprises provide women (and men) with a livelihood. Wholly for women, who often shoulder more childcare responsibilities than men, having the flexibility to work around other responsibilities is vital.

Griya Jati Rasa Co-op was founded to help women create their own stable sources of income. It teaches women how to run a business and become financially stable, but it does so by emphasizing economic and environmental justice, relationships and community building. The cooperative is organized around eight principles, with the understanding that individuals in the co-op also prioritize these values in their individual lives. The principles are:

- independence and mutual cooperation,
- organizing and networking,
- natural conservation, eco-innovation and “green” stores,
- high-quality products,
- full equality and participation,
- partnership with the government.


Griya Jati Rasa’s Co-op
Justice, Peace, Relationships and Livelihoods

BY FARSIJANA ADENEY-RISAKOTTA

On September 21, 2017, Griya Jati Rasa, a community-based cooperative made up of village entrepreneurs from throughout the province of Yogyakarta, proudly received Presbyterian Women’s Global Exchange delegation. PW’s arrival had been eagerly anticipated by the women of Griya Jati Rasa. Fajar Batik (“house of batik”), a member of the co-op and host for the PW visit, was noisy as women eagerly awaited the 19 delegates from the United States. The PW visitors arrived to an enthusiastic reception and a lunch prepared by Ibu Wahadah and her husband, owners of Fajar Batik, where village women learn to produce batik fabric. Though the visit was short, the presence of the delegation in the village of Giriloyo, Imogiri, Bantul District, an hour’s drive from downtown Yogyakarta, left a deep and lasting impression.

As a grassroots organization that practices principles of economic justice, Griya Jati Rasa Co-op is a place where people of faith help each other build businesses and save money. The co-op is an extension of the Griya Jati Rasa Foundation, and the related Institute for the Study and Empowerment of National Creativity for Justice and Peace, which we founded two years ago. Griya Jati Rasa—which can be translated into “House of Authentic Senses” (HAS)—initially offered entrepreneurship training in five villages within the Yogyakarta Province. It has since expanded to additional villages. Women learn skills and build businesses around food processing, batik making, goat milk processing, organic tea cultivation and more.

After entrepreneurship training, trainees are invited to participate in the Griya Jati Rasa Co-op. The confidence of its members, who currently total 72 people, inspires them to share their experience and help each other develop their products. Each member is a change agent in the society in which they are located.

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First of all, I would like to express my utmost thanks to Presbyterian Women for including me as part of the Global Exchange. Even though I am a native Indonesian, it was a worthwhile and enlightening experience for me because this was my first time visiting Solo and Bali.

One of the most meaningful moments for me was during our time in Solo. We visited a GPIB church, Penabur, where we heard presentations from a number of people, including women entrepreneurs supported by the GPIB. The women we met are single mothers who have very low incomes. They struggle to survive with their children—to feed them and to enroll them in school. These hardworking women operate their own small businesses, such as beauty salons, massage shops and kiosks selling tempe, tofu and other foods.

After the presentations, we had time to financially support the women. The woman who gave me a massage told me her rate was Rp 25,000 ($2.30/hour). I was joyful to know that my small act of kindness was able to help this woman and her son.

That afternoon, Presbyterian Women came to my husband’s and my home for a cultural evening prepared by Griya Jati Rasa Co-op members. The Cultural House (Kaliagung village, Kulon Progo district), Center of Dancing Training, Pondok Tali Rasa (Catur Tunggal village, Slamet district) and the Nglorak Cultural Sanggar Orchestra filled the night with traditional Javanese music and dance. Members of Griya Jati Rasa also performed wayangs, a traditional style of puppet theater.

The next day, the Global Exchange delegation attended an exhibition of Griya Jati Rasa products at Duta Wacana Christian University (DWCU) in Yogyakarta. Griya Jati Rasa Co-op has a close relationship with DWCU. University lecturers guide the cooperative in economics, product design, architecture and more. Presbyterian Women heard about how members of the co-op, for example, adjusted their methods for packing organic tea, based on design principles outlined by DWCU lecturers. While tasting a variety of processed snacks, the delegation also tasted tea served directly by a tea farmer who is a member of the co-op.

Members of the Global Exchange delegation brought home “peace batik” from Fajar Batik. The batik is called ‘peace batik’ because women at Fajar Batik use the wax to create messages on the batiks. Each has a particular theme. For example, some of the batik tells about how the earthquake in 2006 brought blessing to the people because they got to start making their own business of batik. The words are written in three languages—English, Indonesian and Arabic—to underscore unity in diversity.

Community and Possibility

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