

# Community-based Partnership for Improving the Quality of Rural Education

## The Partnership between Tanoto Foundation and SDN 169/V Cinta Damai Village

### Summary of Partnership

The partnership between Tanoto Foundation and SDN 169/V Cinta Damai Village, Renah Mendaluh sub-district, West Tanjung Jabung District in Jambi, is based on mutual trust and interest in the quality of education. For Tanoto Foundation (TF), education is the way to eradicate the poverty among the families in Indonesia. For the local government, the partnership through SDN 169/V will help improve the education system and the educators' quality, particularly in remote areas.

Both partners agreed to implement four activities, namely (1) improve teachers' capacity, (2) increase children interest in reading, (3) improve school infrastructure and (4) involve key stakeholders for the school development. Among other result and impact from the program are that the school has independently built partnerships with other institutions, namely Village Unit Cooperative, Puskesmas (primary health care), parents, and companies where each partner provided various contributions. In addition to the increasing number of the partners, SDN 169/V received various awards in the sub-district, district, even in provincial levels. In term of education quality aspect, SDN 169/V has achieved the Teacher Competency Test above the national standard.

The main challenges faced are the number of the students still below 200, poor access of transportation to school, and status of honorary teachers. In the future, Tanoto Foundation will be collaborating with the local government to strengthen the trainer capacity and make SDN as the pilot school for the other educational institutions.



SDN 169/V Cinta Damai students practice creative learning method by using diorama as a storytelling media. @Tanoto Foundation 2017.

### THE PARTNERS

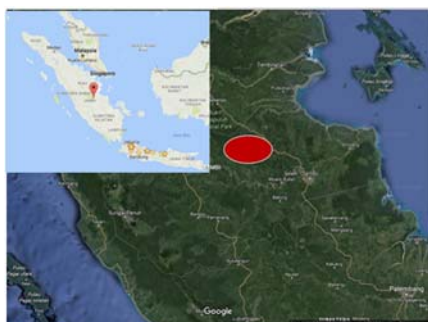
**Tanoto Foundation** ([www.tanotofoundation.org](http://www.tanotofoundation.org)) is a philanthropic institution and was established in 1981.

They started their activities on education issues in line with the passion of its founder, Sukanto Tanoto and Tinah Bingei Tanoto. In line with the efforts to start their business, Sukanto Tanoto and Tinah Bingei Tanoto also established a kindergarten and an elementary school in Besitang, a remote area in Langkat about 100 kilometers from Medan, the capital city of North Sumatera.

Since then, Tanoto Foundation has evolved and developed more social activities, not only in

education but also in community development and improve the quality of life.

Tanoto Foundation focuses on improving the quality and access to education. The activities were implemented by building cross-sector partnerships with corporations, community, and government, i.e. Ministry of Education and Culture along with its local offices, and schools from the elementary level up to university, and also their business units under Raja Garuda Emas (RGE) group established by Sukanto Tanoto. Tanoto Foundation organized the principles of sustainability and self-sufficient in building partnership by emphasizing the role of its partners and put Tanoto Foundation as the enabling agent that encourages the process of changes. Therefore, the partners are expected to continue the program in the future without even creating dependency on Tanoto Foundation.



The location of SDN 169/V Cinta Damai Renah Mendaluh sub-district, West Tanjung Jabung District, Jambi Province. @Tanoto Foundation 2017.

**SDN 169/V Cinta Damai** is a Public Elementary School located at Cinta Damai Village, Renah Mendaluh Sub-district, West Tanjung Jabung Regency, Jambi. The school is located in Asian Agri operational area, a unit of RGE Group.

Under the mandate of national policy, SDN 169/V just like other public schools is designed to provide learning and teaching spaces for children aged 6 to 12 years old, using the national curriculum established by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

### INITIATING THE PARTNERSHIP

Tanoto Foundation has been working in partnership with Cinta Damai Village since 2010. Their first activity was to map the condition and quality of elementary schools within the operational area of their corporate partners or business unit. The mapping has identified schools with problems in terms of transportation access, teacher's quality, poor infrastructure quality, and teacher capacity building system. Tanoto Foundation Team then visited the school to discuss and explore more specific needs that the schools may have. Tanoto Foundation then set a plan of actions and prioritized urgent activities to be addressed immediately. This was done with the consideration of



The front view of SDN 169/V Cinta Damai Village. @Tanoto Foundation 2017.

what Tanoto Foundation could offer to assist, and therefore not all requests are met.

SDN 169/V Cinta Damai welcomed and accepted the offer to partner with Tanoto Foundation under several conditions. First, the commitment to teachers' capacity training should not conflict with the teaching schedule. Second, the training should motivate the teachers with creative games. Third, the commitment of Tanoto Foundation to establish the communication and monitoring of post-training changes.

### IMPLEMENTING THE PARTNERSHIP

Pelita Pendidikan is a program to improve the education quality by addressing key challenges in rural areas in Indonesia, particularly in Sumatera. The challenges in rural areas include (1) low-income community, (2) low awareness on children education, (3) low competency of teachers and principal, (4) poor infrastructure, (5) poor access to teachers' professionalism, and (6) poor access to quality education.

Based on the above considerations, Tanoto Foundation then developed activities which focused on the four main topics, namely (1) improve teacher capacity through training program, (2) improve children's interest in reading, (3) improve school infrastructure in need (4) involve stakeholders (teachers, students, and parents/community) in conducting joint activities, such as tree planting in school, clean school environment, and waste management.

One of Tanoto Foundation's partners is SDN 169/V located at Cinta Damai Village, Renah Mendaluh Sub-district, West Tanjung Jabung Regency, Jambi. To reach the village that has 240 households, it takes about 4 to 5 hours by land transportation from the capital city of Jambi. The school is the one and only



In one of the sessions of Pelita Guru Mandiri training held by Tanoto Foundation. @Tanoto Foundation 2017.

public elementary school in that village. The partnership started with Pelita Guru Mandiri, a training to improve the teachers' skills in a fun and creative teaching. The 3-day training was conducted for 41 teachers from 6 schools in the area of PT Inti Indosawit Subur, under the Asian Agri in Kebun Tungkal Ulu. The trainers were from Tanoto Foundation and some facilitators who had participated in the training of trainers. Tanoto Foundation provided a master trainer for each provincial program where the partner schools exist. The master trainer has the responsibilities to develop the network of local trainers/facilitators that would conduct the training for teachers.

The next activity was to improve children's interest in reading. Tanoto foundation help facilitated partnership between the school and one of the business units under the RGE group. Before introducing both parties, Tanoto Foundation had observed the school commitment on how to develop children's interest in reading. The observation showed that even the school has no permanent library, the teachers keep providing the services by finding a vacant classroom, or even outside the class. This strong commitment from the school became the basis of Tanoto Foundation to facilitate a partnership with Asian Agri. The facilitation of Tanoto Foundation and the commitment of the school have resulted in a permanent library.

The impact of the activities above is felt directly by the school with the teachers have become more confident and begun practicing the creative activities with the students. The students' artworks were on display when the school distributed the academic reports at the end of the academic year to the parents, and community leaders were also invited to this event. The teachers used this opportunity to announce the school

achievements to get their attention. The teachers do not just stop there after the event ends. They shared tasks and followed through by meeting with potential partners, and inviting them to help or build partnerships.

In addition to partnering with the parents and public figures, SDN has also developed a new partnership with community health sub-center (*Pustu*) that helped the school to raise awareness about hygiene behaviors (*Perilaku Hidup Bersih dan Sehat*) to students and parents regularly three times a week. This initiative has shown good result that the canteen, managed by parents, has provided healthy and nutritious snack; and Pustu has also conducted regular basic health check.

## RESULT

Among the results and impact of the program are: the school has built a partnership with the Village Unit Cooperatives (*Koperasi Unit Desa*), Health Center, student' parents, and companies; each partner provided various contribution such as school renovation, support teacher/student activities, provide resource person for training, provide books for the reading corner, as well as funds/gifts and transportation for the implementation of school activities. The village head also helped students with no birth certificate. The birth certificate is one of the requirements for school admission.

The Desa Damai village is located quite remote and it is approximately 10 km from its neighboring village, so it is essential that SDN 169/V able to provides basic education for the village. With this partnership program, SDN 169/V is able to accommodate all (100%) primary school-aged children in the village, therefore all children in Desa Damai attend school.

As the number of partners increases, so does the quality of education in SDN 169/V. The school has received many awards for best pilot school at sub-district, district, and even provincial level. The school also won many competitions such as the healthy school, most favorite teacher, National Science Olympic at Tanjung Jabung Barat level and district art festival. On the quality of education, the Teacher Competency Test of SDN 169 has shown 57.06 which is above the national standard of 55.0.

## CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Despite the success, SDN 169/V still faced many challenges such as lack of school facility, lack of fund, low number of students (<200), poor access of transportation to school, and the teacher's honorary



status. Partners learned that a partnership is not always about the funding, but it can be in the form of donation or in-kind contribution such as facilities e.g. vehicle, plant seeds, fertilizers, etc, based on the school needs. Partnership was built based on the principles of trust and same intention to improve the quality of children education in school.

**FUTURE PLANS**

About sustainability, since 2010 Tanoto Foundation kept on supporting the partner schools to become the top school in their area. When the objective is met, then the other schools will come and learn from them (peer learning). When the system works, then the project will be automatically self-sufficient without external assistance, and Tanoto Foundation can move to provide assistance to other schools in need.

Tanoto Foundation is now still developing the partnership with the Batubara District, North Sumatra



Sukanto Tanoto and Tinah Bingei Tanoto together along with the Tanoto Foundation scholarship recipients in the annual Tanoto Scholars Gathering. @Tanoto Foundation 2017.

for teacher’s training program. The expected partnership model is that local government will fund the training, and Tanoto Foundation will provide the trainers.

**About this Case Study**

This is one in a series of case studies based on presentations by the partners at sessions of the Partnerships Forum. The Partnerships Forum is an activity of CCPHI, a project funded by Ford Foundation.

This case study is based on the presentation by Sihol Aritonang, Chairman of the Tanoto Foundation and Susmianti, Principal of SDN 169/V Cinta Damai at the 34<sup>th</sup> session of Partnerships Forum. Dian Rosdiana preparing this study in consultation with Tanoto Foundation.

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