7. What have you done to make your school or your community a better place?

My childhood friend Tita was also my second teacher; she taught me the basic English pronunciations! But I found that in reality, while Tita taught me, there was no one to teach her. In her school, there were barely any teachers who taught her and as a kid, this confused me. Why didn’t she have teachers?

Then, I came to understand education inequality in Indonesia.

By the age of 10, I was determined to tackle this problem myself. But after scouring my neighbourhood, I was turned down every single time because of my young age. Still determined to help, however, I saved up my small allowance to donate to education centres.

At 16, after hearing of a new neighbourhood education centre opening, Educare, I decided to volunteer. Thankfully, I was accepted and assigned to a group of 4 fifth graders, teaching basic English and maths. Since I was also one of the youngest volunteers, I worked hard to ensure my teaching abilities were on par with everyone else. I taught myself how to make practice questions, lesson plans, and time management, whilst incorporating fun activities to keep the kids engaged.

As a year passed, I noticed an exponential increase in the amount of kids joining the centre. Thus, I initiated an outreach for more volunteers. I began helping new volunteers teach children, shared some of my lesson plans for inspiration and together with the teachers, we brainstormed engaging activities to combine with our studies. This resulted in our lessons becoming more effective, and the children more enthusiastic to learn. Eventually, what used to be a small education centre with just 15 children, grew to be a community of 40+ children.

Through my volunteering, I realised a community could help one another in so many different ways. I wasn’t just a teacher; I was a big sister, friend and supporter to my students. My time in Educare has allowed me to create a significant impact to this group of people, inspiring me to achieve larger goals in lessening the education inequality in Indonesia.