**Ristafah’s Story**

**Bringing Clean Reliable Power to Island Village**

As a child growing up in rural Indonesia, environmentalist Ristifah only had electricity for three hours each day. With limits on when she could charge her phones and access the internet, she often studied by candlelight and felt cut off from developments happening across the rest of the country.

Now 29, Ristifah is working to connect Indonesians living on remote islands with clean reliable power sources. As one of 23 “Energy Patriots” recruited by Indonesia’s Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources with UNDP support, Ristifah will spend a year living in a coastal fishing village in Muna, southeastern Sulawesi. There, she will assist the community in setting up local solar energy generation projects, including determining electricity tariffs, liaising with contractors, and recruiting operators and technicians. Like most island villages, Muna is heavily dependent on fuel-fired generators for its electricity. Such generators are often inadequate for communities’ needs, and the toxic fumes they spew that can harm the environment and cause health issues including respiratory illnesses and cancer.

Ristifah’s assignment will require her to relocate to Muna from her home in Java 1,500 kilometers away. She says that the chance to make a difference in the lives of her compatriots makes that sacrifice worthwhile. “I hope to inspire more girls to achieve higher education,” Ristifah says. “I dream of the day when the houses sparkle with lights that the community installed, and children can have a better future.”

**Indah’s Story**

**How Coordination Built Resilience in a Flood-Hit Community**

Indah Putri Indriani, the Regent of North Luwu in South Sulawesi province was cooking in a public kitchen when her phone started buzzing with alerts informing her that flash floods in the area had forced 14,000 people from their homes. As regent, it fell on Indah to coordinate response, recovery, and reconstruction efforts in an environment already complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As of 30 April 2021, some 600 people in North Luwu were still in temporary shelters after the July 2020 flash floods, which stripped many residents of their incomes as well as their homes. But the impact would have been much more devastating had Indah and her colleagues at North Luwu regency not established two local task forces to manage the disaster response. Through their efforts, North Luwu engaged with regional and national governments, civil society, the private sector, and the international community. That included IOM, whose Displacement Tracking Matrix assessment tool helped monitor displacement and population movements to ensure people affected by the flood were able to receive help. IOM is also supporting Indah and her colleagues with camp coordination and management and provided training in basic entrepreneurship skills to 30 women at the temporary shelter, including helping them create sustainable business plans.

“Being a strong and great leader has nothing to do with gender,” said Indah. “Both men and women can be one when there are no barriers from cultural values, religious beliefs, and social assumptions.”

**Renanda’s Story, UNICEF**

**Fighting Disinformation, One Story at a Time**

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, an ‘infodemic’ of false and misleading information has spread alongside the disease. Claims that wearing masks inhibits breathing and that the COVID-19 vaccines contain microchips have been amplified on digital platforms, undermining prevention, and vaccination efforts to devastating effect in Indonesia, where a government-backed 2020 survey found that between 64% and 79% of respondents could not recognize misinformation online.

“Once [people] fall for fake news or hoaxes, especially religious and political, it’s not easy to change their minds,” says Renanda Putri, a third-year communications student studying media literacy and education. “They might become more intolerant, turn against the truth and science, and may be driven to conflict.”

Renanda is one of hundreds of young Indonesians pushing back against infodemic. She volunteers as an online fact-checker at MAFINDO, an organization fighting fake that has collaborated with UNICEF in Indonesia to create a hoax buster section on the National Agency for Disaster Management’s official COVID-19 website. Just one of several UNICEF-backed initiatives to fight misinformation, the website has published more than 1,300 hoax busting articles, several of them written by Renanda.

“People can understand which is fake news or not on the internet through education, specifically media literacy,” Renanda says. “So that’s why I want to contribute, to educate people in Indonesia on how to counter the fake news that is spreading everywhere.”