**Model Name: Post-Conflict Reintegration in Aceh**

**Region: Aceh, Indonesia**

**Time Period: 2005 to Present**

**Introduction**

The Free Aceh Movement and Boko Haram share similar underlying grievances, but the circumstances for these two post-conflict reintegrations are incomparable. While program efficacy may not be transferrable, Aceh’s programmatic challenges and lessons learned should inform the logistics of any reintegration program for Boko Haram in Nigeria.

**Insurgency Description: Free Aceh Movement (GAM)**

Struggles for Aceh autonomy and independence predate the establishment of an Indonesian state. The most recent and organized form of Acehnese insurgency, GAM, was formed in 1976 with the objective of self-determination and implementation of Shari’a law. Since then, GAM-related violence and corresponding violence by the Indonesian military has come in waves. Military campaigns launched in response to GAM activity killed thousands and resulted in massive human rights violations. Following the 2004 hurricane that killed 167,000 in Aceh, the GAM and Government of Indonesia (GoI) reached a peace agreement that was signed in 2005.[[1]](#footnote-0)

**Causal Elements: Autonomy, Economics, Military Abuses**

For the Acehnese people, the desire for autonomy and multiple iterations of failed independence efforts stood at the heart of the conflict. For GAM specifically, grievances included economic marginalization, especially with consideration of Aceh’s oil and gas resources, lack of cultural and political autonomy, especially with consideration of the practice of a more conservative Islam, and human rights abuses by the military.[[2]](#footnote-1) These expressed grievances are reflected in the Acehnese people’s perceptions of the causes of conflict.[[3]](#footnote-2)

**Civilian Agency Involvement: Yes**

In accordance with the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding’s agreements on reintegration, the Aceh Reintegration Agency (BRA) was formed under the Governor of Aceh for coordination.[[4]](#footnote-3) Since 2005, BRA itself has seen variations in structure, form and activities.[[5]](#footnote-4)

**Military Involvement: No**

**International Agency/Expert Involvement: Yes**

International agency support and funding flooded Aceh in 2005 following the destructive 2004 tsunami.[[6]](#footnote-5) The international agencies involved in Aceh reintegration included the International Organization of Migration (IOM), European Union (EU), World Bank, and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Foreign agencies involved included the Dutch Agency for International Development (GIZ), Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).[[7]](#footnote-6) Below are a few of the many ways in which international agencies were involved in Aceh reintegration and development efforts:

The participation of these organizations in reintegration efforts varied from funding to monitoring to technical assistance to establishing and running programs. IOM was invited by the Government of Indonesia (GoI) to oversee the release of political prisoners and provide for the reintegration of former combatants. IOM provided critical coordination for these procedures, and facilitated public information sharing by printing and distributing copies of the Helsinki MoU to the public. IOM also managed the Village Prosperity Through Peace Program (*Makmu Gampong Kareuna Damē)* for quick-impact projects and traditional reconciliation activities for communities.[[8]](#footnote-7)

The World Bank began the Kecamatan Development Project in October 2006, which was transformed into the Kecamatan-Based Reconstruction and Reintegration Program (KDP) in order to aid BRA with their economic empowerment efforts.[[9]](#footnote-8) These coordinated efforts led to the transformation of BRA to BRA-KDP.

The UNDP’s Strengthening Sustainable Peace and Development in Aceh (SSDPA) Program provided technical assistance to BRA, as well as programs for livelihood improvement of ex-combatants and victims of conflict.[[10]](#footnote-9) The UNDP, in conjunction with the EU, also created the Strengthening Access to Justice for Peace and Development project, which aimed to clarify legal framework for customary law, support transitional justice, and increase awareness and access to legal counsel.[[11]](#footnote-10)

**NGO Involvement: Yes**

Civil society representatives were given initial seats at the BRA table, although their roles and continued representation remain unclear.[[12]](#footnote-11) International aid organizations often funded civil society organizations to provide services, such as the UNDP’s Gender-Responsive Approach for Reintegration and Peace Stabilization, which provided CSOs with funds to support the reintegration of female ex-combatants and women left out of the official DDR process.[[13]](#footnote-12)

**Impetus for Reintegration: Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**

**Criteria for Reintegration:**

The three populations for reintegration identified in the MoU were former combatants, political prisoners, and affected civilians.[[14]](#footnote-13) Through political negotiations, BRA’s Economic Empowerment program also came to include GAM non-combatants and Pembela Tanah Air (PETA) pro-Indonesian militants.[[15]](#footnote-14) Beyond individual programs, community and village-based programs broadened the addressed populations.

It was BRA’s expectation that GAM would provide a list of 3,000 combatants to be served by BRA’s ex-combatant reintegration efforts. The creation of such a list, however, did not occur because: 1) the number of BRA combatants was far greater than 3,000; 2) fear that the peace process would collapse and former combatants would be arrested or punished; 3) BRA’s desire for control over the reintegration process. Instead, BRA provided allowances to GAM that were spread more widely among its network.[[16]](#footnote-15)

The GAM, BRA, and Acehnese civil society agreed on a 10-point criteria for “affected civilians.” The criteria included loss of life, physical damage, loss of wealth, displacement, injury, illness, and loss of employment.[[17]](#footnote-16) Unfortunately, these criteria had little effect on the actual distribution of assistance.[[18]](#footnote-17)

BRA solicited victim applications and was inundated with over 50,000 applications covering 600,000 individuals.[[19]](#footnote-18) As a result, BRA turned to the WB-funded KDP (?) project to facilitate victim assistance. KDP provided community-based assistance to villages, using facilitators to help identify conflict victims and their needs. Villages were required to hold four community meetings in order to identify, propose, and address their needs with a project. These meetings were meant to emphasize community ownership and the last meeting was devoted to accountability reports on the funds spent after project completion. Allocation size was based on a village’s level of conflict, history of successful KDP grants, exposure to violence, village size, and conflict victims’ needs. Following the first round of village funding, KDP reverted their program to targeted allocations to conflict victims.[[20]](#footnote-19)

**Prosecution/Punitive Component: No (Not yet)**

In accordance with the MoU, GAM combatants were given amnesty and political prisoners were released with the exception of “disputed cases” and GAM combatants who continued with violence after the signing of the MoU. Article 2.2 and 2.3 of the MoU mandated the creation of a human rights court (HRC) as well as a truth and reconciliation commission (TRC). Article 1.4.5 held that military personnel who had committed civilian crimes would be tried in Aceh civilian court.[[21]](#footnote-20)

While the granting of amnesty was implemented after the signing of the MoU, the implementation of the human rights court and truth and reconciliation commission outlined in the MoU stalled. For ten years, victims and activists sought the creation of HRC and TRC institutions for justice, in addition to the public release of official government reports on human rights abuses by security forces.[[22]](#footnote-21) In November 2015, the Aceh provincial parliament announced the selection of a team for the TRC to operate between 2016 and 2021.[[23]](#footnote-22)

**Community Engagement: Yes**

The level of community engagement concerning the reintegration of former combatants is unclear. The concept of reintegration may have simply not been viewed as problematic or controversial, and thus not an issue to engage the community on. The community acceptance level of former combatants was approximately 90 percent.[[24]](#footnote-23)

Through KDP, communities were engaged in discussions to determine the funding of community-based projects.

**Reconciliation, Social & Political Elements: No, No & Yes, Respectively**

Official BRA funds focused on economic development and did not include allocations for social reintegration.[[25]](#footnote-24) International aid organizations like IOM facilitated some traditional reconciliation ceremonies in Aceh communities, although the extent and effect of such ceremonies is unclear.[[26]](#footnote-25)

The dissemination of public information was also integral to efforts to facilitate social reintegration. Creating public awareness for the peace resolution, reintegration efforts, programs, and goals was addressed early on by IOM as an important aspect of the peace process.

The MoU provided Aceh with special autonomy and the formation of local political parties. Since then, two GAM-affiliated governors have been elected.

**Psychological Elements: No**

**Education, skills, and job training**

BRA provided economic assistance and capital to former combatants, political prisoners, and affected civilians without much training for the use of such capital. Given this criticism, in 2009, BRA began providing limited vocational training in certain districts. Aside from BRA, IOM has provided vocational assistance to amnestied former prisoners and combatants.[[27]](#footnote-26)

**Incentives: Yes**

The allocation of cash to former combatants, political prisoners, and affected civilians provided incentives for participation, inundating BRA beyond its capacity.

**Follow-up: No**

The broad, community-based level on which reintegration and development efforts occurred is not conducive to a targeted approach for individual follow-up. Broad metrics and trends for Acehnese attitudes and Aceh’s economic development have been recorded.

**Cost Estimate**

Cost numbers vary widely, based on program, agency, and timeframe inclusion. BRA’s pool for allocation totaled to $150 million.[[28]](#footnote-27) Another report from the Asia Foundation estimated that $365 million was spent between 2005 and 2009 by GoI and international donors on peacebuilding.[[29]](#footnote-28)

**Financing**

Funding from the Indonesian government, foreign governments, and international organizations.

**Results/Metrics**

* HH perceptions surveys: Asia Foundation (2012); ARLS(2008); GAM assessment (2006)
* Qualitative data: Asia Foundation Locality Case Studies (LCS)
* National Social Economic Survey (GoI)
* Indonesia National Violence Monitoring System (NVMS) (World Bank-supported)[[30]](#footnote-29)
  + Online database of violent events from local newspapers
  + 1998-present[[31]](#footnote-30)

**Lessons Learned**

*Challenges*

**Defining the Target Population:** The MoU was unique in its acknowledgement of victims as a target population for reintegration. Between former combatants, political prisoners, and “affected civilians,” however, the line between the target population and community for reintegration into was difficult to define. Damages could be calculated as lives lost, monetary losses, unemployment, physical destruction, and psychological harm. Approximately 15,000 individuals lost their lives and the monetary value of damages exceeded $10.7 trillion.[[32]](#footnote-31) A Harvard University medical team found that 33 percent of Acehnese suffered from depression and 48 percent from anxiety.[[33]](#footnote-32) Forty-nine percent of the Acehnese population considers themselves to be a victim of the conflict.[[34]](#footnote-33)

**Individual Allocations vs. Community-Based Projects**: BRA-KDP experimented with both individual allocations and the funding of community-based projects. For conflict victims, the original plan for individual allocations was set aside for two rounds of community-based projects, only one of which was completed.

Individual allocations were challenging because of verification and coordination between different programs.Verification, monitoring, and evaluation of individual allocations was minimal. The Multi-Stakeholder Review of Post-Conflict Programming in Aceh (MSR) results suggested that individual allocations did not have a significant effect on economic welfare.[[35]](#footnote-34)

Community-based projects, on the other hand, had more widespread and measurable impacts on perceptions of welfare. Communities that received KDP saw an 11-point decrease in “poor” populations perceived by village heads. The community-based programs were more likely to include marginalized and minority groups, although there was no evidence of stronger social cohesion or government relations as a result.[[36]](#footnote-35)

**Holding Government Forces Accountable for Human Rights Abuses:** The Acehenese NGO Coalition for Human Rights registered over ten thousand cases of human rights abuses during the conflict.[[37]](#footnote-36) Despite mandates in the MoU and calls for the creation of a HRC and TRC over the past ten years, the TRC was only just created and is expected to operate from 2016 to 2021.[[38]](#footnote-37) There have been no reports of the commission’s commencement.

**Systemic Corruption**

*Successes*

**No Violence**

**Program Impact, albeit small**

**Comparison to the Case of Boko Haram in Nigeria:**

*Similarities*

**Religion:** The religious aspects of GAM and Boko Haram can be seen as both a similarity and a difference. Both GAM and Boko Haram’s platforms similarly espouse a more conservative, literalist practice of Islam. On the other hand, GAM’s religious ideals were more local and cultural, based on the desire to practice a more conservative Islam. Boko Haram, on the other hand, has used Islamic extremism as a rallying cry to ----- and link to transnational terrorist groups.

**Oil & Economic Inequality**

**Military Atrocities**

*Differences*

**Tsunami:** The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami Aceh drastically affected the circumstances for post-conflict reintegration. First, the utter devastation caused by the tsunami inflicted widespread injury to fighters and non-fighters alike. Second, the tsunami’s destruction spurred a massive outpouring of international aid to Indonesia. Post-conflict rehabilitation thus coincided with post-tsunami rehabilitation, and it is hard to distinguish between the effects of the two.

Aside from GoI’s official reintegration agency BRA, international aid organizations aprovided a lot of supplemental support to the post-conflict reintegration process. While BRA focused on financial allocations and economic development for the target populations outlined in the MoU, international programs extended aid to psychological elements, traditional reconciliation ceremonies, skills training, and victim populations unacknowledged by the MoU and BRA.

**Community Attitudes:**

1. Patrick Barron, Erman Rahmant, and Kharisma Nugroho, “The Contested Corners of Asia: Subnational Conflict and International Development Assistance, The Case of Aceh, Indonesia,” The Asia Foundation, PDF, 1, 10-12. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. “Indonesia (Aceh),” Escola de Cultura de Pau, PDF, 1; Barron, Rahmant, and Nugroho, “The Contested Corners of Asia,” 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. Barron, Rahmant, and Nugroho, “The Contested Corners of Asia,” 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. Barron, Rahmant, and Nugroho, “The Contested Corners of Asia,” 69; Leena Avonius, “Reintegration: BRA’s roles in the past and its future visions,” Crisis Management Initiative, PDF, 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. Avonius, “Reintegration,” 4-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
6. Adrian Morel, “Using CDD for Post-conflict reintegration: Lessons from the impact evaluation of the BRA-KDP Program in Aceh,” (presentation, Development Impact Evaluation Initiative Workshop, Dubai, UAE, June 1, 2010), 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
7. Barron, Rahmant, and Nugroho, “The Contested Corners of Asia,” 48-52. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
8. Barron, Rahmant, and Nugroho, “The Contested Corners of Asia,” 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
9. “ID-KDP Nias,” World Bank, <http://www.worldbank.org/projects/P100766/id-kdp-nias?lang=en&tab=overview>; Avonius, “Reintegration,” 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
10. Barron, Rahmant, and Nugroho, “The Contested Corners of Asia,” 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
11. Barron, Rahmant, and Nugroho, “The Contested Corners of Asia,” 52. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
12. Leena Avonius, “Reintegration: BRA’s roles in the past and its future visions,” Crisis Management Initiative, PDF, 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
13. Barron, Rahmant, and Nugroho, “The Contested Corners of Asia,” 54. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
14. “Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and Free Aceh Movement,” PDF. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
15. Avonius, “Reintegration,” 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
16. Barron, Rahmant, and Nugroho, “The Contested Corners of Asia,” 50. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
17. Leena Avonius, “Justice and the Aceh Peace Process,” in From the Ground Up: Perspectives on Post-Conflict and Post-Tsunami Aceh,” ed. Patrick Daly, R. Michael Feener, Anthony Reid (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2012), 238. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
18. Avonius, “Reintegration,” 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
19. Blair Palmer, “The price of peace,” *Inside Indonesia*, July 16, 2007, http://www.insideindonesia.org/the-price-of-peace. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
20. Patrick Barron, Macartan Humphreys, Laura Paler, and Jeremy Weinstein, “Community-Based Reintegration in Aceh: Assessing the Impacts of BRA-KDP,” World Bank, December 2009, PDF, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
21. “Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and Free Aceh Movement,” PDF, 2-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
22. “Indonesia: Time to Face the Past: Justice for past abuses in Indonesia's Aceh province,” Amnesty International, April 18, 2013, http://www.amnestyusa.org/research/reports/indonesia-time-to-face-the-past-justice-for-past-abuses-in-indonesia-s-aceh-province. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
23. “Indonesia: Appointment of Aceh truth commission selection team a step closer to truth and reparation for victims,” Amnesty International, November 30, 2015, https://www.amnesty.nl/nieuwsportaal/pers/indonesia-appointment-aceh-truth-commission-selection-team-step-closer-truth-and-. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
24. “Indonesia (Aceh),” Escola de Cultura de Pau, PDF, 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
25. Lina Frodin, “The challenges of reintegration in Aceh,” *Accord* 20, PDF, 57. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
26. Barron, Rahmant, and Nugroho, “The Contested Corners of Asia,” 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
27. Avonius, “Reintegration,” 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
28. Blair Palmer, “The price of peace,” *Inside Indonesia*, July 16, 2007, http://www.insideindonesia.org/the-price-of-peace. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
29. Patrick Barron, “Lessons from Aceh: Early Focus on Institutions Critical to Cementing Peace,” Asia Foundation, June 12, 2013, <http://asiafoundation.org/2013/06/12/lessons-from-aceh-early-focus-on-institutions-critical-to-cementing-peace/>; Note: Aid for post-tsunami recovery totaled to $8 billion. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
30. Barron, Rahmant, and Nugroho, “The Contested Corners of Asia,” 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
31. “Indonesia’s Nationals Violence Monitoring System, World Bank, 2015, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/video/2015/08/17/indonesias-national-violence-monitoring-system>. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
32. Barron, Rahmant, and Nugroho, “The Contested Corners of Asia,” 1, 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
33. Avonius, “Justice and the Aceh Peace Process,” 227. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
34. Barron, Humphreys, Paler, and Weinstein, “Community-Based Reintegration in Aceh,” 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
35. Barron, Rahmant, and Nugroho, “The Contested Corners of Asia,” 50-51. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
36. Barron, Humphreys, Paler, and Weinstein, “Community-Based Reintegration in Aceh,” iii. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
37. Avonius, “Justice and the Aceh Peace Process,” 226. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
38. “Indonesia: Appointment of Aceh truth commission selection team a step closer to truth and reparation for victims,” *Amnesty International*, November 30, 2015, https://www.amnesty.nl/nieuwsportaal/pers/indonesia-appointment-aceh-truth-commission-selection-team-step-closer-truth-and-. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)