

UPF Indonesia completes 4th leg of National Tour covering Western provinces

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November 10, 2016



UPF Indonesia successfully completed the 4th leg of the National Tour covering the Western most provinces of the country.

Pekanbaru, Riau Province, 8 November 2016

The ninth program of the UPF Indonesia National Tour 2016 on the theme “Building Harmonious Families-Our Shared Responsibility” was organized by Dr. Welly Wirman, head of the Department of Communication Science, University of Riau in the provincial capital of Pekanbaru. Dr. Welly was very excited to host the UPF National Tour at her department and personally picked us up from the airport and took care of us during our stay. The audience consisted of 100 faculty members and students from various universities. The entire program was conducted in English, even the Q & A session for which we allowed extra time due to the great response from the participants. After the Pure Love Pledge, Mr. Alfred Forno and Dr. Welly signed the MOU between the university and UPF. Then UPF appointed the Dean of the Faculty of Social and Political Science, the moderator Mrs. Genny Gustina Sari and Dr. Welly as Ambassadors for Peace for further cooperation.



Banda Aceh, Aceh Province, 10 November 2016

The next province we visited was Aceh known worldwide for the devastating tsunami that struck the province in 2004 and killed about 170,000 people. The following year brought an end to three decades of violence when the Indonesian government signed a peace agreement with the Free Aceh Movement. However, both tragedies left large numbers of the population traumatized.

When we arrived in Aceh, we did not know what to expect. With a 98% Muslim population, Aceh is the only province in Indonesia that strictly observes the Sharia law, however, none of our UPF team was from

a Muslim background. Nonetheless, the warm-hearted hospitality and kindness of the Acehnese people throughout our stay completely won us over. After the program, our host even took us on a tour to the tsunami affected areas and we enjoyed lunch together at the seaside before rushing back to the airport.

The program was co-hosted by the Faculty of Dakwah and Communications of the Islamic State University (UIN Ar-Raniry). Among the 170 participants were representatives from the governor's office, Education Department (DIKNAS), National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN), faculty and students from various institutions. Though the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs had to attend 3 different events on that day, he stayed with us for the Opening Session while the dean of the faculty, Dr. Kusumawati Hatta, stayed with us until the very end. After the UPF presentations, students asked very relevant and personal questions on how to apply the content of the lectures to their own lives. One girl student commented that this was the very best seminar she has ever attended.

The university has a community outreach program that requires all students to go to the villages affected by the violence. The dean and the moderator feel that our UPF family education programs can help to address the post-conflict trauma people are still experiencing. We agreed to come again and conduct further programs in the villages in collaboration with the university.

