

## UGM Team Help Resolve Malnutrition Problem in Papua

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Seven members of Disaster Response Unit (DERU) UGM team were sent to Agats area in Asmat regency, Papua province, to help deal with the malnutrition and measles epidemic at the end of January 2017.

Dr. Rachmawan Budiarto recalled the difficult journey to the area to help tackle the incident that had killed 77 children. Rachmawan said the team was spread to areas for mapping the problems facing the Asmat people in terms of health services, infrastructure, technology and socio-cultural aspects. The team prepared for the Student Community Service programme soon to be held in the regency,

In Agats city, the capital of Asmat, the medical team helped the care of malnourished children while researchers from centre for energy studies installed solar panels for the local health community centre.

So far emergency response has been conducted by ministries and local government, the military and the police. But a follow-up is still needed to resolve the malnutrition problem due to the long distance to the access to health services. Rachmawan mentioned other problems in the area, which include transportation and place of living as well as source of drinking water.



dr. Hendro Wartatmo, Sp.BD, from the medical team said the children who had died of measles were actually because of malnutrition.

“Malnutrition would cause measles infection and others, because being malnourished will reduce body stamina,” he said.

He explained malnutrition could happen after a long process. To resolve this cannot just by providing logistics but also further programme such as health services, infrastructure, and socio-culture.

Child specialist of UGM hospital, dr. Fita Wirastuti, Sp.A., said malnutrition had the risk for diseases to contract in children. She said immunisation was needed to prevent the case, also the active role of the health centres and residents in accessing health services.

She said the Student Community Service would further need assistance and active role from local medics to promote health affairs due to the low participation of the local people in benefiting from health services. “We would need to think on how to withdraw the attention of the local people to join the programme from the community health centre,” she said.

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