



Chairman's chat

In this edition of Rehabilim we give a lot of coverage to Yakkum Bali, soon to be known as Puspadi Bali, (translated meaning Foundation for the empowering of people with disability in Bali).

If you read the story of how I.Nengah Latra (Latra), the incumbent director, has built this yayasan (charity) from the ground up, its hard to have anything but admiration for him.

Latra, of his own volition, returned to Bali to start what we have come to know as Yakkum Bali.

He, alongside the late Colin McLennan, worked hard to get the yayasan started.

As we have said before, the Indonesian Government does not provide the same type of support for its disabled citizens as we have in New Zealand.

If you are disabled in Indonesia you basically fend for yourself unless you have relatives who will look after you. If you are poor, then the outlook is more bleak.

Through sheer perseverance and hard work, Latra has built bridges within the community. He speaks on TV and radio, creating awareness of disabilities and seeking support from the population at large.

He has met with the Governor of Bali, who has been supportive of his work to the point where Yakkum Bali was given a school building to start Latra's

prosthesis workshop.

Latra also has access to some types of surgery free of charge at a local hospital and he has the Governor's private mobile

number to use when required. Not too bad accomplishments for such an organisation.

When I asked him how he managed to do some of the things he has done and get the support he needs, he simply said, "I don't go and ask for things, I just say I have this sort of problem, how do you suggest I tackle it?"

"That approach brings offers of 'I can do this for you or I will speak to a friend of mine who can help'. If you go

in and ask for \$1000 the answer is likely to be 'no, sorry I cannot help'.

In October this year, Yakkum Bali will cease to exist as the new yayasan Puspadi Bali takes over and moves into its new premises (see on the back page). Already Latra is thinking it will be too small but that's all the land that is available for the time being.

The Rehabilim Trust will be continuing its support for Yakkum Bali, until it merges and will also support the new yayasan Puspadi Bali. A foundation trustee from the Rehabilim Trust, Jon Neilson has kindly agreed to represent Rehabilim on Puspadi's board.

On the wall of the existing Bali premises is a marble plaque in memory of Colin McLennan. The plaque says "A New Zealander who cared and made a difference" This plaque will have pride of place in Puspadi Bali's new set up.

BILL RUSSELL,

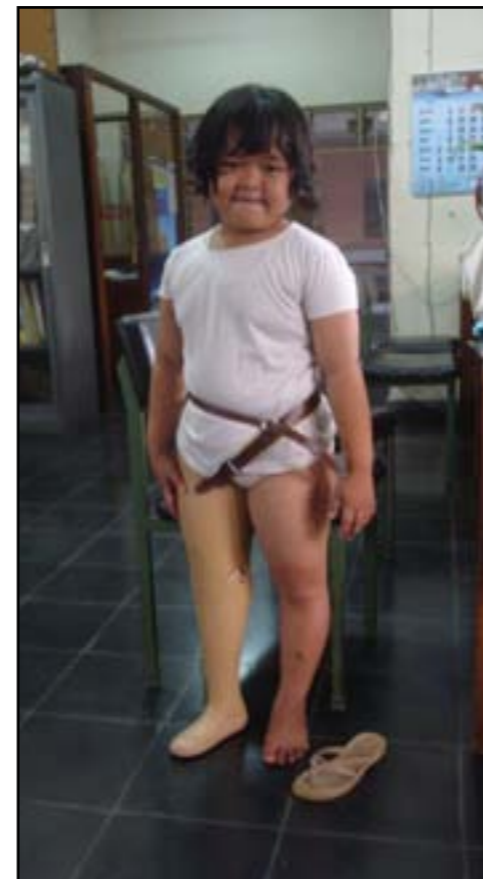


Rehabilitation of a child earthquake victim

When the earthquake hit Bantul in 2006, Dwiska was 1 year old. Dwiska is the youngest daughter of Kristanto, who lives in Salam Village, Patuk Subdistrict, Gunung Kidul District. She was one of the earthquake victims who became disabled. The house collapsed and crushed Dwiska's right leg. The doctors did everything they could, but they could not save her leg and had to amputate it. Tragically, she lost her leg at the very age when children learn to walk. Since the amputation, Dwiska preferred to be carried by her parents, rather than walk. She lacked confidence in herself and chose to stay at home rather than playing with her friends. Dwiska lives in a very modest family on the southern seashore. Her father works as a labourer and does not have a fixed income.

Dwiska was one of the clients who had psychological counselling through home visits. Besides counselling, she also had physiotherapy to help her walk. At first, it was very difficult for Dwiska to build her courage and self-confidence to walk by herself. She still preferred to be carried. As she got older, the family was motivated to teach her to walk. She refused to use a prosthesis at first and chose to walk with a crutch, however with persistent counselling and encouragement, now she now uses a prosthesis.

With the prosthesis, Dwiska's mobility has greatly improved and she has more freedom to use both hands without having to hold a crutch. Now Dwiska has started attending a public elementary school nearby her house and is able to play with her fellow class mates



Above left Dwiska uses a crutch for support while at right she stands unaided and comfortably on her prosthesis.

The
**TRUST FOR THE
 REHABILITATION OF
 PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN
 IN INDONESIA**
 the **REHABILIM TRUST,**
 was established to support the
**YAKKUM REHABILITATION CENTRE in
 Yogyakarta, Indonesia.**

Founded by a New Zealander, the late Colin McLennan MBE, the Centre provides assistance to disabled children and young adults to help them become self reliant in daily life and to become independent by learning and using income-generating skills.

The Centre is part of "Yayasan Kristen untuk Kesehatan Umum" (YAKKUM) which means the "Christian Foundation for Public Health", helps all children regardless of religion. The Trust Board usually refers to the Centre by its Indonesian name Pusat Rehabilitasi YAKKUM, or PRY. The Rehabilim Trust Inc depends on service organisations and individual donors for support.

Rehabilim Donation Form

I wish to support young physically handicapped Indonesians and those affected by the Mt Merapi eruption
 Enclosed is my cheque, made out to "The Rehabilim Trust", for: \$.....

Name

Address

Telephone/fax:

E-mail :

Please send your donation, large or small, to:
 The Treasurer
 The Rehabilim Trust Inc.
 P O Box 51 212 TAWA
 WELLINGTON 6230

Donations may be made directly to our Westpac bank account 03 0539 0238389

Receipts will be issued

Important Notice

If you want to receive future Newsletters electronically, please send us your e-mail address.

Tested by fire, not found wanting

BY DUNCAN GRAHAM

It was an evening I Nengah Latra can never forget – 3 March 1986. The 19-year old Balinese farmer's son who had his heart set on a career in the army was taking part in a cremation ceremony.

A kerosene lantern wasn't working properly. He opened the glass and tried to adjust the wick. The lamp exploded, showering him with burning fuel.

After 44 days in Government hospital at Karangase (Rumah Sakit Umum Daerah Karangasem), Latra was sent home to his village in East Bali, only partly healed. His blistered wrist was fused to his upper arm. His fingers on one hand were webbed, like a duck's foot, his flesh appallingly mutilated. He was tortured by pain – and bitterness.

"I was angry with God, my family, everyone," he said. "My hopes of joining the military and breaking free from poverty were gone. I thought it was the end of my life. I was ashamed. For two years I hid, avoiding contact."

But that's impossible in Indonesia, particularly in a small, dirt-poor farming community. Agus Safyi, a one-legged field worker from a Yogya rehabilitation centre (YAKKUM Rehabilitation Centre in Yogyakarta) found the physically and emotionally

twisted man and suggested he go west for training.

Latra resisted for several months. "In my village Java was another country, far away. Even if I'd flown to the US people would still say I'd gone to Java and would probably never return. There had been cases of Javanese collecting Balinese cripples promising work, but using them to beg.

"It took months before I persuaded myself that it was not a trick, and much longer to get my family to let me go. Yet my real motive was to hide somewhere else, to disappear.

"Eventually I went and it was the turning point in my life. I met these extraordinary people who were in a far worse situation, yet they were happy and productive. I realized I'd been wasting my time on self pity."

In Yogya he was trained in radio repairs and did so well the center's founder, New Zealander Colin McLennan, arranged for Latra to have plastic surgery.

The operation was a success and he could now use both arms and hands. The anger started to ebb.

But back home he found his new abilities difficult to use. In a village without mains power few appliances needed fixing.

He returned to Yogya and after working as a cleaner learned more skills, including English and

management. Eventually he joined the rehabilitation centre staff. On regular trips to Bali he searched for other disabled people who could benefit from training.

Many were victims of the polio epidemic that swept Indonesia in the 1970s. Others were congenitally crippled or had been injured in accidents. All hid their anguish from the stares of neighbors, silently seething, compounding the agony.

Their misery was twisted further by diehard cultural beliefs. Surely the families had badly sinned to be so terribly afflicted? This was their fate, and nothing could be done.

"Government statistics claimed only three per cent of the population was disabled," said Latra, "yet I knew the real figure was much higher, with even more in Nusa Tenggara. There was a need for a rehabilitation centre in Bali, but no money."

He put together a proposal and sent it to the British Embassy. Within two weeks the sum sought, Rp 75 million (US\$ 8,000) had been granted. The

Governor of Bali gave a building originally set up for the handicapped which served as a school until it became disused

The large foreign community in Bali stepped in with resources and the center was a success. Then came the Bali bomb in October 2002. Most non-Indonesians fled the island.

"Our organization was unconscious," said Latra. "I prayed to God: 'Should I give up and close? Run away, do something new?'" But one outsider did stay in Bali, Kiwi tour operator Jan Mantjika. She helped found a support group.

"The NZ Embassy endorsed Latra and I was impressed with his enthusiasm and integrity," said Mrs Mantjika. "He understood Balinese culture. He knew what the disabled were thinking and how difficult it was to become an acceptable member of the community. But he was doing everything himself."

Among the 202 people killed in

the first Bali bomb was an English-woman, Annika Linden. Her grieving fiancé, finance trader Mark Weingard set up a foundation to help bomb victims and also supported Latra's enterprise.

The philosophy behind the foundation is that "positive action is the only way to counter the negative impact of this event". To commemorate the 10th anniversary of the tragedy the foundation will open a building in the Denpasar suburb of Tohpati to house four charities supporting the disabled.

Latra's enterprise, now named Puspadi Bali (puspadibali = Foundation for Empowering of People with Disability Bali) (center for empowering the disabled) has so far helped rehabilitate, make and fit prosthetics for more than 1,140 people.

It will be housed in the one-stop shop for the disabled, integrating services. The present workshop will be used to repair and store wheelchairs

It all sounds good and grand, but Latra looks forward to the day when there's no need for overseas-funded charities and altruistic foreigners to help the disabled. That's because the government will fulfil its constitutional responsibilities to care for all citizens, and the handicapped will be accepted into society.

The Indonesian Parliament ratified the UN Convention on the rights of

Persons with Disabilities last month (18 October) four years after signing the document.

Latra and his colleagues, including from Australian Danni Sturevski, an occupational therapist volunteer, hope this means action will follow, sidewalks will be made safe for wheelchairs, access to buildings will be up ramps, toilets will have grab rails and employers will recruit the competent disfigured.

In a society where staff selection is often based on youth and good looks, this climb over the barriers will be near vertical. "That's my dream, but it will take a long time, maybe a generation," Latra said.

"There are so many things that need to change. We often find people who cannot be trained because they haven't been to school, so we first have to teach them to read and write.

"Ten years ago charities' reputation depended on what they were doing for the people – now the issue is what they're doing with the community."

Latra no longer wears long-sleeved shirts and doesn't keep his hands in his pockets. Curiously this means his livid scars are barely noticed. The man's personality and unflagging advocacy dominates, pushing aside any disability.

Does he ever think that if he hadn't been burned he would have joined the army and might now be an officer?

"Perhaps, and I might have been killed," he said.



Rehabilim Chairman Bill Russell discussing building plans of the new ALF building (below) with Director of Yakkum Bali, Latra and Australian occupational therapist Danni Sturevski.

