



## *International Staff Profile:*

### **Elhadi Abdalla**

#### **Country Representative, Indonesia**

##### **What is your nationality?**

I am a Sudanese Citizen.

##### **What is your professional background?**

I am a rural development and microfinance specialist by profession and education. I have been working with INGO for the past 16 years in Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka and Indonesia on various emergency response and long term recovery and development projects targeting IDPs, Refugees, and Conflict and natural disasters affected Communities.

##### **Do you have any personal interests or hobbies?**

Definitely I have a lot of interests and hobbies, I like to listen to music in my spare time and sometimes during work as the music help me to achieve some inner tranquility and assist me to be better concentrate on my work. I like reading very much (history and fictions), my favorite movie genres are comedy, action and musical, but also I spend much time watching news to keep myself updated about developments in my home country as well as in the country where I work. I have passion for travel and long distance driving and always like to explore new places. So far I visited over 35 countries in 4 continents and looking forward for more.

##### **Do you have family?**

Yes, I got married in 1994. My wife is Eritrean. She is also a humanitarian worker. We met in Sudan where she was a refugee and at the same time working as Community Development worker with the Sudanese Council of Churches (SCC). We have 4 kids now, two daughters and two sons. My oldest kid is a girl, 11 years, the youngest is a girl also, and she was born on September, 21, 2005, two weeks after I arrived to Indonesia to work for LWR.

##### **What are some of your daily activities as Country Representative?**

- Because of the (12) hours time difference between Baltimore, USA and Medan, Indonesia, I start my day by checking my emails form LWR Head Offices and start responding or coordinating my team to respond to these emails and also to provide updates or request support, clarifications or guidance on specific issues.
- Check my List-of-things-to-do for the previous day and prepare my daily list of priorities.
- Discuss with the program team the progress on partnerships and projects development.
- Meetings and communications with partners.
- Financial management activities (review of documents, approvals.etc).
- Keep myself updated on the local humanitarian, political, and economic developments in Indonesia.
- Work on concept notes and projects proposals or reports.
- Continue looking for new partnerships and project ideas.

## **What partners does LWR work with in Indonesia? How did LWR find those partners?**

Currently, LWR Indonesia program is working with the following partners:

- Yayasan Solidaritas Sesama Insani (YSSI) The Humanitarian Solidarity Foundation (a Local NGO formed by the Women Desk Officer of the HKBP Church in North Sumatra, the HKBP is the largest Lutheran Church in Indonesia).;
- Yakkum Emergency Unit (YEU) (Relief and Development Organization of the Christian Foundation for Public Health, a huge NGO representing the largest three reformist churches in Indonesia).
- YTBI (The Official NGO for Emergency Response and Disaster Management of the Indonesian Council of Churches).
- Lemaga Posko (Non-religious local NGO based in Banda Aceh, the hardest hit tsunami area).

Some of these partners like YEU and YTBI are Indonesian members of the ACT (the global alliance Action by Churches Together) and they already received various support from LWR in the past through the joint ACT appeals addressing various humanitarian crises in Indonesia. e.g. the Bali Bombings of 2002. When the tsunami struck Indonesia on December 26, 2004, LWR was also one of the first NGOs to provide support for these partners. When LWR established its offices in Indonesia in 2005, those NGOs were considered for bilateral partnerships with LWR outside of the ACT appeal and were supported to implement projects that meet LWR country strategy, vision, and values. The other partners were assessed by LWR Indonesia and supported based on their meeting of the basic criteria for partnership with LWR that include among others, the legal status of the NGO, the financial, technical and managerial capacity of the NGO, their previous experience with similar projects and similar levels of funding, sharing the same vision and values with LWR for humanitarian response and long term commitment, openness to innovations and creativity.etc.

## **How would you describe "accompaniment" and "partnership"?**

I think partnership and accompaniment represent some of the very progressive and competitive aspect of LWR as a humanitarian organization. The concept of partnership reflects in my view a real application of the balanced north-south relationship in which we admit the equal and the complementary roles of both LWR and the local NGOs in addressing the local humanitarian needs in a serious, systematic and cumulative learning process. Accompaniment, although is described to me as a "philosophy rooted in the Lutheran tradition that believes empowerment and justice happen only by "standing with" rather than "doing for" others in need, and that it is a dynamic relationship between diverse partners with complimentary resources and skills working together to empower poor communities to improve their lives'. For me, and as a development practitioner and professional, I see that this concept reflects to a great extent the *Creame de la Creme* of the humanitarian principles and lessons that work to ensure the dignity of the poor, build on the local resources, avoid creation of dependency and lead to sustainability.

## **What are the biggest challenges for Indonesia right now? How is LWR helping?**

The tsunami crisis is one of the major humanitarian crises by global historical measurements and the reconstruction is expected to continue for quite a long period considering the magnitude of the damage to the physical infrastructures and to the people's livelihoods. The tsunami struck region also suffered a long civil and armed conflict for over two decades and also suffered long isolation and marginalization.

Nationwide, Indonesia is quite vulnerable to natural disasters such as earthquakes, volcanoes, tsunami, floods, and land slides considering its location within the *Pacific Ring of Fire*, that account for 90% of the world's earthquakes and 81% of the world's largest earthquakes., and because of the massive legal and illegal incursion on natural forests leading to soil erosion, land

slides and frequent flooding. Indonesia is also equally fragile to various forms of ethnic and religious conflicts that erupt on continuous basis and in different forms considering the unique diversity of this country.

LWR is already committed to long term response to the tsunami recovery needs that can go for up to 10 years. Meanwhile, the organization is seeking very deliberately and carefully a legal status and partnerships that can give the organization, on the long run, a mandate to address as well the root causes of poverty, conflicts, and injustices in other affected parts of the country and is working very hard to tune the organization's regional and country strategies to that end.

**Can you share a story about how LWR made a difference in the life of a specific individual or community?**

Kuala Bubon is a case to the point. Kuala Bubon is fishing-farming community that used to live on the west coast of Banda Aceh. The December 26, 2004 tsunami completely and literally washed out the village and all its infrastructures. During LWR President and Board members visit to the village area on October 2005, almost one year after the tsunami, the whole village area was submerged under the sea water while the villagers were all gathered in the only one structure erected in that vast area. An open-sided, 1.5 meter lifted community Center/shelter. The community leaders and members addressed LWR very passionately about their dreams to come back to their village from their current IDP camps and re-establish their old livelihoods. The community insisted that this is their dream and that they would like to lead the process themselves if LWR can support them through the local partner YEU. In a recent visit to Kuala Bubon on May 2007, I was delighted to see a magnificent village growing outside of the sea water, I was more delighted to listen to the new generation of village women leaders explaining their livelihoods and microfinance activities and how many members were able to start up their livelihoods. The farmers on the other side were able to show us their organic farming activities, their marketing cooperatives and their future plans. That was not magic. Following the LWR Board visit, clear recommendations were made to the program to accompany that community and the partner. The accompaniment processes resulted in LWR, ELCA and EED and in a concerted effort, share responsibilities and resources to assist that community to make its rightful dreams come true. As a result of LWR support, the community established its own development organization, marketing cooperatives and a very impressive strategic plan for the village development that they were able to present to various donors for support. LWR also provided microfinance capital and supported the women and fishermen to reestablish their livelihoods and assisted the community to start its million mile walk to become an empowered and a resilient community.

**Who or what gives you hope for the future?**

I think this is a combination of elements; 1) LWR foresight to commit itself to long term tsunami response in Indonesia. 2) LWR working model of accompaniment and partnerships that enables a very productive relationship between LWR, the local NGOs and the target communities, that enhance the quality of the interventions, and last but not least 3) the generous donations and responses from the Lutheran Constituency to support LWR efforts in Indonesia and in other parts of the world to combat the root causes of poverty and injustices and to respond to frequent humanitarian emergencies.

**Would you like to share anything else?**

I would like to thank the LWR University for giving me this opportunity to share the program activities and concerns with the students. And I would like to encourage those who are interested in any specific aspect of the Indonesia program not to hesitate in contacting us at: [lwr\\_indonesia@yahoo.com](mailto:lwr_indonesia@yahoo.com) or [elhadi\\_abdalla@lwr.or.id](mailto:elhadi_abdalla@lwr.or.id).