
Development Cooperation and Islamic values in Indonesia

Objectives

This Information sheet presents a sector-specific introduction to the priority areas of Development Cooperation (DC) in Indonesia, focusing on the socio-cultural factor of Islam. The areas analysed and considered for this paper are governance, the economy, education and health. The target audience is specialists in the field of DC. The main purpose of the information sheet is to provide an overview of the priority areas in which Islam influences theoretical and practical development work in projects based in Indonesia. Due to the current demands in the context of the peace process and the post-tsunami reconstruction process, this paper focuses on the province of Aceh.



GTZ-financed measure: Instruments of DC and Islamic Values in Asia

To date there has been no systematic assessment of experience in the thematic area of Development Cooperation and Islam in Asia. This GTZ project aims to fill the knowledge gap in the field of international cooperation and provides the basis for the development of applicable instruments and sector strategies as well as the preparation and advanced training of personnel. A better understanding of Islamic values, concepts and players improves the sustainability of cooperation projects in South and Southeast Asian partner countries.

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1. General overview: Islam in Indonesia

Indonesia is the most populous Muslim country in the world. In 2004, more than 200 million people or 88% of the Indonesian population were practising Muslims, almost exclusively Sunnis (Sunna: the path of the prophet). Shiites¹ represent only a small part of the Indonesian Muslim population. Muslims constitute the dominant majority of the population in Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), Sulawesi and North Maluku. In contrast, Muslims make up the minority of the population in other parts of Indonesia, such as Papua, Bali, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), North Sumatra and North Sulawesi. Domestic migration and the national resettlement programme have changed the composition of the population towards a Muslim preponderance in certain previously mostly Christian areas, mainly in East Indonesia. This happened, for example, in parts of the Moluccas, where Christians became a minority in the 1990s.

First contacts with the Arabian peninsula, via the Indian subcontinent, were established in the 7th or 8th century. The slow but steady spread of Islam and the establishment of Islamic sultanates did not begin until the 12th and 13th century, however, first in Sumatra and then later also in Java. By the 16th century, Islam was established as the dominant religion in the Indonesian archipelago. During the long process of its dissemination, Islam became mixed with pre-Islamic beliefs (adat), the traditions and customs of animism, Hinduism and Buddhism and various Islamic beliefs and concepts. This happened most notably in Java, where elements of Islamic mysticism (Sufism) and pre-Islamic beliefs mingled and now harmonise with each other. These different influences have determined the liberal stance of Islam and the openness of Islamic teachings and doctrines in Indonesia today.

Islam in Aceh

Islam and Acehnese identity are congruent in a predominantly Muslim region (99% of the Acehnese population adhere to Islam). It is said that Islam arrived in the Malay Archipelago through Aceh and is deeply rooted in the life of its people and in the region’s history, thus Aceh is called the “Veranda of Mecca” (Serambi Mekkah) by its

¹ Shiites refer to the 4th caliph Ali and reject his three predecessors as legal successors of the Prophet. Thus they follow their own legal traditions.

own people. In July 2001, Aceh was granted special autonomous status as Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, NAD. Aceh is now the only province in Indonesia where Sharia² has been implemented as the legal basis.

2. Main Islamic organisations in Indonesia

For the purposes of this information sheet it is sufficient to present a brief introduction to three of the most important Islamic mass organisations of relevance to development policy. Besides these organisations there are a multitude of other Muslim actors, but describing them all would be beyond the scope of this paper.

Muhammadiyah:

The leading modernist socio-religious organisation in Indonesia has branches throughout the country and claims to have 30 million followers. Founded in 1912 as a result of the Islamic reform movements that emerged in the 19th century, Muhammadiyah runs mosques, prayer houses, clinics, orphanages, poorhouses, schools, public libraries and universities all over Indonesia. The main activities are religious teaching, education, health and social services and economic empowerment. Among all Indonesian Islamic organisations working at the national level, Muhammadiyah exerts the strongest influence on institutions in Aceh. It supports the rehabilitation and reconstruction process in Aceh, mainly in the fields of education and health. Muhammadiyah represents a democratic and civil Islam, though with conservative influences.

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU):

NU is the largest Indonesian Islamic socio-religious organisation, with an estimated 40 to 60 million followers. Founded in 1926, NU represents the traditional brand of Indonesian Islam deeply rooted in Sufism and “popular Islam” in Java. NU also operates at a national level, but it remains strongest in rural Java. NU is an umbrella organisation for numerous affiliated organisations. Its power-base are the religious scholars (ulama) and leaders (kyai) of pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) and their students and followers. NU is engaged in similar activities to those of Muhammadiyah but additionally focuses on communal development work as conducted by pesantren. NU is generally known as a very liberal and moderate organisation.

Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI; Indonesian Ulama Council):

MUI was established in 1975 on the initiative of Suharto as a mediator institution between the government and the Muslim community, to translate the development goals of the government into Islamic terms and to authorise them through Islamic legal opinions (fatwas). As a partly state-sponsored religious body, MUI was supposed to secure stronger participation of religious scholars in developmental efforts at national, regional and local level, to improve the religious infrastructure (mosques and schools) and education, and last but not least help to fight poverty among Muslims through the intensification of zakat and other kinds of donations. MUI still performs these tasks, but its most important function is the formulation of fatwas on religious and social matters, on behalf of the ulama.

² Sharia is often referred to as Islamic law. However, in the sense of Islamic normativity it means the divine order decreed by God. Consequently Sharia is the foundation for Islamic law.

MUI's viewpoint can be classified as very conservative: judgements in 2005 that declared secularism, liberalism and pluralism as un-Islamic sparked intense controversy. MUI acts as an umbrella organisation that brings together ten of the most important Islamic mass organisations in Indonesia and also 50 smaller organisations with representations at the province, district and sub-district level. The Acehese branch of MUI, Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama (MPU), has a high degree of independence. MPU was responsible for the prosecution of illegal gambling and alcohol consumption in Aceh in summer 2005.

3. Dimensions of governance

Perceptions of the state and law

Indonesia, although a country with a predominantly Muslim population, is not an Islamic state. The state's ideological framework Pancasila³ regulates the belief in the one and only God, but does not favour a certain religious community. The Indonesian state is a secular and pluralist state,⁴ with a constitution strongly influenced by European state law. In principle the role of the state remains restricted to setting the legal framework and administrative matters; intervention in theological matters is rare.⁵

Efforts by Islamic parties to anchor the Islamic state principle in the constitution have not been supported by the broad majority of Muslims. Such an attempt last failed in 2002.⁶ The separation of secular courts under the Department of Justice and Sharia courts under the Ministry of Religious Affairs dates back to the Dutch colonial era. Sharia courts are actually responsible for the enforcement of Islamic law, certain elements of which can be implemented under regional autonomy legislation (Law 22/1999). But in reality, their jurisdiction remains limited to cases under Islamic family law (concerning marriage and divorce) and requires the approval of secular district courts in order to be legally enforceable. Though nationwide application of Sharia law in Indonesia seems unlikely, there has been an ongoing debate on the implementation of Sharia since the beginning of the policy of decentralisation. Besides Aceh, some other provinces have introduced elements of Sharia since 2001, and in others there is at least the tendency to follow the Acehese role model.⁷

Governance in Aceh: autonomy and Islamic law

Within Indonesian regional autonomy legislation, which was drafted against the background of the secessionist conflict, Law 18/2001 granted Aceh special autonomy status, including the right to apply Islamic law to Muslims. At the regional level, government decrees (Qanun) defined more precisely the jurisdiction of Sharia courts.

³ The national philosophy of Pancasila, five principles serving to support the state: monotheism (belief in the one and only God), nationalism (the unity of Indonesia), humanism, democracy, and social justice.

⁴ In summer 2005 MUI issued a fatwa about the incompatibility of the three principles of liberalism, secularism and pluralism with Islamic law and belief. This resulted in a debate about the liberal, secular and pluralist nature of the Indonesian state.

⁵ After an initial exclusion strategy, a national Islamisation process started under Suharto's rule in the mid 1980s for political and economic reasons.

⁶ Surveys in 2002 and 2004 indicated a majority in favour of the introduction of certain elements of Sharia in Indonesia under certain circumstances.

⁷ For example in West Sumatra, Riau, Banten, West Java, Madura, South Sulawesi, Gorontalo, North Maluku.

They relate to the obligation to Islamic worship, the prohibition of liquor, and the illegality of gambling and moral misconduct, such as adultery. The establishment of Sharia offices (Dinas Syariat Islam) goes hand in hand with the enforcement of the autonomy legislation. The Sharia offices handle public education about the new regulations at the provincial and district levels.

One of the problems about Law 18/2001 and subsequent decrees is that they do not contain adequate regulations on how Sharia law should actually be implemented. The relationship between Sharia and Indonesian civil and criminal law remains equally unclear. Religious leaders demand that the implementation of Islamic law should exclude criminal-law aspects (hudud) of the Sharia. Instead, the enforcement of Sharia should rather depend on public education and societal consensus. This objective, however, was contradicted by recent developments, such as the punishment of illegal gambling through public caning in summer 2005. The application of Sharia to women's rights is criticised as a one-sided interpretation of Sharia; for example, the compulsory wearing of a veil (jilbab) by women, which is enforced by the state.

Women's rights

Debates on the introduction of Sharia in Indonesia directly influence women's rights and efforts to secure gender equality. The formal interpretation of Sharia in Aceh has shown that in a society characterised by patriarchal structures, Islamic law is used to regulate and control the behaviour and outward symbols of women. Experience with decentralisation in Aceh and other regions shows that women are marginalised through exclusion from decision-making processes in political, social and economic spheres. This discrimination arises because patriarchal influences dominate the interpretation of the Islamic law sources, the Quran and Hadith⁸, although these are open to other interpretations. In some cases, however, the application of Sharia can also strengthen women's rights. For example, judgements in inheritance cases after the tsunami in Aceh showed that Sharia courts grant more rights to widows than traditional courts do. However, as the application of Islamic law is not yet generally adopted in society, widows remain without legal rights in many places.

Since the end of the Suharto era in 1998, the public debate on gender questions in Islam has been pushed forward by women's organisations. These organisations are gaining increased political influence. Their impacts and achievements so far are the authorisation of female judges for Sharia courts, open opposition to polygamy and efforts to reach a 30% quota of women holding office in political parties.

Islam and democracy

The introduction of the democratisation process in 1998 coincided with the emergence of political Islam. The establishment of many Islamic political parties reflects this. (The most important political parties are: PAN, Partai Amanat Nasional; PBB, Partai Bulan Bintang; PKB, Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa; PKS, Partai Keadilan Sejahtera; PPP, Partai Persatuan Pembangunan).

Some of these political parties still call for the anchoring of Sharia law in the constitution, but despite their conservative views these political forces obey democratic rules, as seen in the latest parliamentary elections in 2004. Liberal Islam,

⁸ Hadith: collected sayings and deeds of the Prophet Mohammed.

following a neo-modernist doctrine, has established itself as one of the most significant doctrinal orientations in Indonesia. It combines traditionalist and modernist elements⁹ and argues very strongly in favour of democracy. The most important representatives of this movement are former president Abdurrahman Wahid, the intellectual Nurcholish Madjid and the members of Jaringan Islam, the network of liberal Islam. Countless Islamic civil society organisations that actively participate in the reorganisation of state and society towards democracy are part of this new pluralism. In addition to the state, civil society organisations naturally also act as agents for “development”.

4. Islam and the economy in Indonesia

Islamic economic concepts can be seen as an alternative to the Western idea of globalisation and to demands for modernisation. In the 1980s, Muslim leaders were already drawing attention to the growing problem of poverty and inequities in distribution. They maintained that Islamic ethical and moral ideals and traditions should solve these problems. Especially after the Asian crisis in 1997, these concepts gained more weight in Indonesia due to the dramatic economic problems of the country after the Suharto era.

The Islamic approach has its own inalterable moral principles, with the goal of economic and social justice.¹⁰ The essential feature of Islamic finance is the prohibition of interest (riba) on credits and loans to prevent usury and economic exploitation. Financial products or services similar to interest are prohibited (haram). The legally binding payment of alms based on wealth and income called zakat (which is one of the five pillars of Islam¹¹) is intended to lead to reallocation and redistribution of wealth in favour of the poor. In general the Quran and Hadith are also regarded as providing a basic orientation on economic issues (around 200 verses). Trade and entrepreneurship are accepted and desired if the prohibition of usury is respected. Activities relating to economic issues should follow the ethical principles of Sharia.

In the mid-1980s, the Indonesian Government, which establishes the institutional and legal framework for Islamic business ethics, reacted to growing pressure from Islamic movements and influential Islamic circles. Since then, the debate on Islamic business ethics has taken tangible shape:

- The first Islamic bank in Indonesia BMI (Bank Muamalat Indonesia) was founded in 1991 with the assistance of MUI.
- A new law on Islamic banking implemented in 1992 facilitated the official formation of an Islamic bank based on Sharia law (“profit-loss-sharing”:

⁹ Traditionalists aim towards the conservation of Islamic and historical traditions and reflect the deep relationship of the broad masses of the population with Islam. Modernists follow the tradition of reform Islam of the 19th century. This movement supports a more contemporary interpretation of the Quran and Hadith.

¹⁰ A framework of Islamic business ethics exists at least in theory: initial and further education provide the ethical basis, including the Islamisation of education, a balance between production and consumption, improved living conditions via more jobs, welfare, fair distribution of resources, pro-poor tax policy through zakat; technology has to be in harmony with the requirements of a Muslim society and has to be in their hands; and integration into an international Islamic economic system to reduce dependence on non-Muslim markets.

¹¹ The five pillars of Islam: declaration of faith (shahada), prayer (salat), paying of alms (zakat), fasting (saum), pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj)

Mudharabah, and “joint ventures”: Musharakah); from 1999 onwards, these principles were applied to all monetary transactions.

- A regulatory law of 1999 elevated zakat to the status of a national development instrument. This step was based on efforts during the Suharto era to expand and institutionalise zakat as a measure of poverty reduction (for example through BAZIS, a quasi-state institution organising the distribution of zakat).
- Charitable foundations (Wakaf), which have an influence on rural laws, are subject to stronger state regulation and are used to maintain public amenities such as mosques, schools and hospitals.
- Public and private universities as well as Islamic universities offer courses on Islamic economics, finances, business ethics and commercial law.

The two most important socio-religious organisations in Indonesia, NU and Muhammadiyah, differ in their view of Islamic economics, especially on the issue of riba: NU allows the application of interest, considering that customers should decide for themselves, whereas Muhammadiyah basically regards interest as illegal. Consequently, Muhammadiyah encourages and facilitates the establishment of Islamic financial and economic institutions.

In the reality of economic and development policies in Indonesia, Sharia-based institutions have not so far played a significant role. In the year 2000 there were only eight Islamic banks and 80 rural banks (BPRS; Bank Perkreditan Rakyat Shariyah) based on Islamic law. However, rapid growth in the number of local Sharia-based Islamic savings and loan cooperatives (BMT; Bait Maal Wat Tamwil) was observed in the 90s. Almost 2,500 of these BMTs were registered throughout Indonesia in 2000. Furthermore, in the same year approximately 1,400 small savings and credit institutions were registered in Indonesia, attached to mosques or Islamic boarding schools, known as Kopontren (Koperasi Pondok Pesantren). In the 1950s, NU tried but failed to establish Islamic banking institutions without prohibition of interest. Since the 1990s, NU has sponsored local microfinance institutions and microcredit programmes explicitly addressing Muslim customers.

In **Aceh**, the above-mentioned BMTs are usually called Baitul Qiradh (BQ). Besides these 76 Islamic cooperatives, there are also five Islamic banks, a comparatively high density of Islamic financial institutions. BQs not only operate as Islamic microfinance institutions, they also collect Islamic tax (zakat) and donations.

Problems and challenges: Despite 13 years of experience with Islamic banking and Islamic financial concepts, the sector is characterised by a lack of demand and expertise. Two further factors are the lack of regulation and lack of institutionalisation, especially in the microfinance sector. It is only in Aceh that Islamic rural banks and microfinance institutions can be used in the context of reconstruction and rehabilitation. Partly this is due to the high density of Islamic financial institutions and their popularity within the local population. Problems also occur through the lack of trained personnel and the unawareness of efficient working techniques and formal regulations. Islamic microfinance institutions facilitate financial services especially to otherwise underserved, poor groups of the population, above all small producers and low-income consumers. Zakat could provide many opportunities for sustainable poverty reduction and could be utilised to a greater extent by DC.

5. Islam and education in Indonesia

The Islamic school system offers an alternative to the state-owned secular public school system. About 10 to 15% of students (40% of them girls) attend Islamic schools. The standard of this education is generally considered to be lower than that of public schools, but it is also much cheaper. A characteristic of the Islamic school sector in Indonesia is its autonomy, due to independent funding by local Muslim communities. Depending on the school type, the curriculum varies from strict concentration on religious subjects¹² to up to 70% of secular subjects. There are three different types of school:

Pesantren:

Self-administered Islamic boarding schools that are not integrated into the national education system. Students and teachers form a community and live (eat, sleep, work) together on compounds with a mosque, school and administrative buildings. The numbers of students range from a few hundred to thousands. They are often located in rural areas. There are estimated to be about 15,000-20,000 pesantren in Indonesia. Approximately 40% of pesantren exclusively teach religious subjects, while 60% offer a mixture of a religious and public curriculum. The heads of schools (kyai), however, exert significant influence on what is taught. In recent times, many pesantren have been trying to combine traditional Islamic values such as the unity of Islam, altruism, modesty and social justice with modern subjects, for example business management, English and computing. Beyond these issues, the students also undergo vocational training in crafts as a path to earning income. Most pesantren are connected with NU.

Madrassah (plural madaris):

Madaris take the form of day schools with a solely religious curriculum and also as schools within pesantren, including teaching on non-Islamic subjects. The Ministry of Religious Affairs is responsible for the curriculum of registered madaris, not the Department of Education. However, only about 8% (or 3,200 of about 40,000 madaris in Indonesia) are registered; hence the majority of these schools are privately run. Despite this, most of the madaris offer classes on the basis of the national curriculum (in a ratio of 70:30) from the primary to the upper secondary level. Students attending these schools can qualify for higher-level schools. This school type offers basic education to children in low-income families from poor rural and urban areas.

Islamic universities:

There are three different networks of Islamic tertiary education: IAIN (State Institute for Islamic Studies), a network of 47 institutions in major cities throughout Indonesia, is also responsible for training teachers at Islamic schools; the network of Muhammadiyah universities with 168 institutions all over Indonesia; and the PTAIS (Private Institutes of Islamic Higher Education) network with 350 schools. Furthermore, there are some free Islamic universities with 87 higher educational institutions associated with NU.

According to informal estimates, the number of Islamic schools in **Aceh** amounted to about 400 madaris with a total of nearly 86,000 students in 1998. Today there are thought to be approximately 1,000 of these madaris all over Aceh. The majority of

¹² Islamic subjects are: theology; philosophy; law and ethics; interpretation, recitation and memorising of the Quran; Arabic literature, grammar or astronomy.

these schools (in Aceh also known as dayah) are not registered, have low numbers of students and are privately funded. Some combine religious and secular teachings and are registered at the Indonesian Ministry of Education as integrated dayah (dayah terpadu).

Problems and challenges:

Traditional Islamic education is often perceived very critically by Western nations, and also in Indonesia itself. As it operates outside the state education system and is largely autonomous, both financially and organisationally, it often encounters suspicion and distrust, as well as accusations of using conservative and old-fashioned teaching methods and curricula. Since 11 September 2001, these educational institutions have often been thought to have links with fundamentalist and radical Islamic organisations and movements in Indonesia.¹³ Some donor organisations already operate in this context, e.g. Asia Foundation and USAID. Using Islamic universities and pesantren as mediator organisations, they have tried to anchor democratic values in the traditional educational system. The pesantren system effectively exemplifies how modern curricula can work alongside traditional Islamic concepts and it simultaneously generates a positive impact on development. Besides their role as educational institutions, they operate as community centres in promoting local community development and economic empowerment through capacity building for poor Muslims. Some pesantren started to procure skills in the technical and agricultural sectors in the 1970s and 1980s and became partners for Development Cooperation. But in addition to rural development and the promotion of democracy, they are also potential partners for Development Cooperation in the health sector, particularly in the field of rural family planning programmes, in which NU has already acted successfully in the past.

Furthermore, Islamic day and boarding schools have the ability to contribute to the peacemaking process in Aceh. In the past there were peace education programmes incorporating both Islamic and traditional Aceh values which received support from donor organisations such as UNICEF and AusAID. Regarding the current reconstruction process, dayah could again play a significant role in the fields of crisis prevention and peace education. Dayah and other Islamic institutions are already involved in working with traumatised children and young people in Aceh, and assist rehabilitation programmes.

6. Islam and the health sector

Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) is an important field of intervention for DC in the health sector, and one which is particularly affected by the predominant Islamic values and traditions. The core issues are sexual and health education, family planning and the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

One of the main health issues in Islamic countries is a high fertility rate and a high mother and infant mortality rate caused by a lack of access to health facilities. Therefore, a core issue for the development discourse under Suharto was the family planning programme. The national family planning board (Badan Koordinasi Keluarga Berencana Nasional, BKKBN) was founded in 1970, funded by the United

¹³ According to estimates, only 150 of a total of 15,000 pesantren throughout Indonesia are or were associated with the terror network, Jemmah Islamiya.

States. In the 1950s and 1960s, there was strong resistance to birth control from Islamic mass organisations such as NU and Muhammadiyah. Many ulama and kyais were convinced that birth control directly opposes God's will. However, the success of these methods in rural areas greatly depends on the judgement of local religious authorities. BKKBN consulted local Muslim leaders on the issues of contraceptives and the renunciation of abortion and sterilisation as means of birth control, as these issues caused the most resistance among Muslims. Including NU in the efforts undertaken by the government finally resulted in a fatwa based on the Quran and Hadith, which approved family planning as a contribution to family welfare. The Ministry of Religious Affairs backed this measure and also declared family planning as being consistent with Islam. The women's organisations of NU and Muhammadiyah, Muslimat NU, Fatayat NU and Aisyah, also supported this process by organising information meetings, training for kyais and other services. Another fatwa from respected kyais declared contraception to be consistent with Islam as far as it does not lead to permanent infertility. NU still involves kyais in its welfare and family programmes and organises discussions with religious authorities on social problems and possible solutions on the basis of the Quran and Hadith.

Involving Islamic authorities in raising awareness of and preventing HIV/AIDS is more controversial. Effective action on HIV/AIDS is constrained by stigmatisation of risk groups and by ethical and religious motives. In 2004, approximately 0.1% of the adult population or in absolute numbers 120,000 people were HIV-positive in Indonesia, with an increasing trend towards transmission from high-risk groups to the general population. The Indonesia Mosque Association Mushallah Muttahidah (IMMIM) in South Sulawesi presents a positive example of an Islamic response to the HIV/AIDS issue. Funded by AusAID, IMMIM conducted more than 300 training sessions for male and female ulama with the objective of increasing awareness and changing people's attitudes towards HIV/AIDS issues and initiating preventive measures. After training, the ulama act as mediators and discuss the HIV/AIDS problem with Muslims at mosques, schools and community centres. The project aims to teach up to six million people in South Sulawesi about the transmission and prevention of HIV/AIDS. The use of condoms as a measure of birth control outside marriage, however, remains a sensitive issue.

The abolition of female genital mutilation (FGM) is part of the right to physical inviolability. According to Islamic jurisprudence, though, FGM is considered permissible. Traditional law (adat) also approves FGM. It permits minor or symbolic mutilations of the female genitalia. According to reports by the US Government, FGM is practised in Indonesia in parts of East, Central and West Java, North Sumatra, Aceh, South Sulawesi and Madura, as well as other regions. Muslim communities practicing FGM refer to religious and traditional necessities. The Indonesian Government has not yet incorporated this issue into national legislation. The matter is, however, covered by the National Action Plan to End Violence against Women of November 2000. This joint initiative introduced by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Ministry of Religious Affairs commits both institutions to strengthening women's rights on the basis of religious doctrines. An awareness campaign on the issue of FGM is also being planned.

Problems and challenges: As mentioned above, reproductive health is an extremely sensitive issue in connection with Islamic values in Indonesia. Topics such as HIV/AIDS, women's sexuality and reproduction are also sensitive issues from the

Islamic point of view. Islamic traditions and institutions may be an inhibitory factor, but could also lead to the crucial breakthrough. In this context it becomes obvious that Islamic authorities must play a pivotal role in DC with regard to health issues. But the tsunami faces **Aceh** with different and even more urgent problems, which are also influenced by Islamic values and practices. Sexually transmitted diseases are spreading in refugee camps and beyond, there is a lack of suitably qualified Muslim local and international medical staff for the provision of certain types of medical treatment, refugees and survivors are traumatised, and there is a lack of development personnel with knowledge of the socio-cultural background.

The special role of women in this context should be emphasised, especially when it comes to seeking suitable health experts. Acehnese ulama might play a key role in work with trauma victims and have expressed their willingness to participate in TOTs (Training of Trainers) in this field.

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