



How urban poor communities in Asia are dealing with the **Covid** crisis

Case studies in **INDONESIA**

1

RICE DISTRIBUTION: In this rice distribution project by the JRMK network in Jakarta, the network purchased high-quality organic rice in bulk from the farmers in the Kendeng region in Central Java and sell it - either at cost or at subsidized rates - to out-of-work community members, in a system managed by the kampung-based cooperatives and the network.



2

HERBAL DRINKS: A group of poor women in Kampung Marlina got together and developed a cooperative enterprise to produce these traditional herbal drinks powders (called "jamu" in Indonesian) and sold them at cost - or at a discount - to community members, to help them keep in good health during the lockdowns and in the face of unaffordable health care in Jakarta.



3

LANDRY SERVICES: The clothes-washing service that was started by a group of women members of the cooperative in Kampung Akuarium is the first of several planned cooperative laundry enterprises in the JRMK Network, which will lighten the Covid-times load of domestic work for women in the kampungs and also boost membership in the cooperatives.



4

PUBLIC KITCHEN: This public kitchen was set up especially to cook regular, nutritious meals for the women market porters who carry loads in Yogyakarta's traditional markets, during the months when the pandemic lockdowns reduced tourism and commerce in the city and caused the market porters (many of whom are elderly) to lose so much income their survival was in doubt.



CASE STUDY 1: Cooperative rice distribution project in Jakarta

JRMK Network in Jakarta: The projects described in the first three of case studies were implemented by communities that are part of the Jaringan Rakyat Miskin Kota ("Urban Poor Network"), a network of 25 large kampungs (informal communities) and 6 street vendors' cooperatives in the northern and western parts of Jakarta. The network has been undergoing an enormous expansion in the past few years, growing from 12 to 25 kampungs - some with as many as 900 households. The network is supported by the Jakarta-based NGO Urban Poor Consortium (UPC), and works closely also with the Rujak Center for Urban Studies. All of the kampungs in the JRMK Network have fully-registered cooperatives now, as part of their long and successful campaign to persuade the Jakarta municipal government to recognize their member communities and provide them with collective tenure of the land they occupy now or have negotiated to relocate to nearby.

For more information about the JRMK Network or the case studies described here, please contact Gugun or Dian:

Gugun Muhammad:

gugunmuhammad21@yahoo.com

Dian Tri Irawaty:

diantri@ucla.edu

exchange rate: 14,400 rupiah = US\$1

The context of the rice distribution project:

The Covid pandemic hit Indonesia with a vengeance in 2020. Infections soared, the death toll climbed, hospitals were overwhelmed and the country quickly became one of Asia's hottest Covid hot spots. Soon afterwards, in March 2020, the government imposed a "semi-lockdown", which greatly limited people's ability to move around and to gather. In Jakarta, where the greatest number of infections were mounting, roads were blocked, curfews were imposed, transport systems were shut down and people going out were stopped and questioned by policemen. Government policies required companies to reduce by 50% the number of employees coming into the workplaces, and the rest had to work from home.

During those early months, the urban poor had an especially hard time coping with both the health and economic aspects of the pandemic. Everything happened so suddenly. Many of the urban poor work in the informal sector and earn their living day-by-day, but all the public spaces that they normally used for their vending and earning (like markets, footpaths, streets, outside shopping malls, busy corners, etc.) were off-limits under the lockdown. So the poor lost their income and lost their means of supporting themselves. And there were no clear policies or programs from the government to support the urban poor or provide them with any welfare assistance in the pandemic crisis.

At the same time, staple foods like rice, fish, vegetables and cooking oil became increasingly scarce in the local markets, and prices climbed rapidly. It got harder and harder for the urban poor to get essential foods to feed their families - especially rice - and hunger became a serious issue. As the rice became increasingly scarce and the prices went up, the quality of rice that was available in the markets went down. The national government has an aid program for the poor which buys and distributes inexpensive rice during what it deems to be periods of greater need. The program is called Beras BULOG (*Beras* is the Indonesian word for rice and *BULOG* is the acronym for the national government's staple food logistics agency). But as anyone in the kampungs will tell you, the *Beras BULOG* rice is very bad - nobody likes to eat it.



JRMK Network:

Jaringan Rakyat Miskin Kota ("Urban Poor Network") is a network of 25 large kampungs (informal communities) and 6 street vendors cooperatives in the northern and western parts of Jakarta. The JRMK Network is supported by the Jakarta-based NGO Urban Poor Consortium (UPC). All of the kampungs in the JRMK Network have fully-registered cooperatives now (some cooperatives cover more than one kampung), as part of their long and successful campaign to persuade the Jakarta municipal government to recognize them and provide them with collective tenure of the land they occupy now or have negotiated to relocate to nearby.

The JRMK Network started right away to discuss collectively what they could do as a network - and as a network of kampung-based cooperatives - to deal with the hardships people were facing during the Covid crisis.

And particularly how they could help their members get cheap and good quality rice, which is the primary staple food for Indonesians and essential for survival. Through their partnership with UPC and other activists, the network had links with several networks of farmers in different parts of Java. They began to contact friends they already knew in these farmer networks to see if they could find a source of good quality rice, which they could buy at a cheaper price, directly from the farmers, and then sell at cost to their network members.

To understand how important rice is in people's household food economy in the kampungs, we asked several members of the cooperatives to describe their daily rice consumption and how much rice figures in their total food expenses:

Name	Kampung	# family members	Rice cooked daily	Rice % of total food costs
Mr. Komarudin	K. Muka	4	1.5 liters (1.2 kg)	20%
Mr. Miming	K. Block Eceng	6	2 liters (1.6 kg)	30%
Mr. Abdur Gofur	K. Marlina	4	1 liter (800 grams)	5%
Ms. Herdayati	K. Elektro	7	1.5 liters (1.2 kg)	30%
Mr. Paris Manurung	K. PWKB	5	2 liters (1.6 kg)	15%
Mr. Gugun	K. Tongkol	7	1 liter (800 grams)	8%

First try with the Kobeta Farmers Cooperative in West Java:

After gathering information about possible sources of rice and prices in several areas, the network decided to link first with a group of rice farmers in West Java who had come together to form the Kobeta Farmers Cooperative. JRMK requested the Kobeta farmers to send them a ten-kilo sample of their rice, which they then distributed to members of the kampung cooperatives in the network in Jakarta, to give everyone a chance to test the quality of the rice. All the cooperatives began promoting the scheme. JRMK has a WhatsApp group, and they used that social media to announce the rice scheme: *The network is organizing to buy rice directly from the farmers, and this is the price, so which kampung cooperative would like to buy and how much?* Many of the cooperatives placed orders, and when the JRMK put the orders all together, it was 300 kilos - their first order for the Kobeta Rice Farmers Cooperative.

The farmers packed the rice in the standard 50-kilo bags, brought it to Jakarta in a truck and delivered the load to one kampung, where the JRMK network paid them for the rice. Then representatives from the kampung cooperatives came to collect the rice and took it back to their kampung to distribute to their members who had ordered rice. The cooperatives paid the JRMK network for the rice after collecting the money from their members. After distributing this first load of rice to the cooperative members, JRMK conducted a little "customer" survey: *What did people think about the rice? Was it good for the network?* Unfortunately, most of the customers in the cooperatives reported that the rice was of poor quality. Indonesians relish a rice that is soft and moist - but most found this rice to be very dry, more like Indian rice. So the Kobeta rice got the thumbs down.

Second try with Kendeng rice farmers in Central Java:

After getting bad reviews of the first batch of rice, the network started over again, looking for a different source of rice. In their second try, the network linked with another network of farmers - this one in the Kendeng region, in the highlands of Central Java Province. Again, they requested the farmers to send them a ten-kilo sample of their rice, and again they distributed the sample to members of the cooperatives in the network, to test the quality. They followed the same cycle: announcing to the cooperatives that they had new rice samples from a different group of farmers, which could be purchased for 10,000 rupiah (US\$ 70 cents) per kilo, and who would like to order rice at this price and how much?

This time, everyone was a little more cautious, so the total order from all the cooperatives was just 100 kilos. The distribution system was the same: the Kendeng farmers delivered the rice to one point, and then all the cooperatives from different kampungs came to collect their rice orders, brought them back to the kampung and distributed them to the members who had ordered rice. JRMK did another survey, and this time, the rice from Kendeng got a more favorable review from the customers. The quality of rice was good, everyone agreed, so this was a good partner for JRMK to continue collaborating with.

Ms. Herdayati ("Herda") is a leader in the cooperative in Kampung Elektro, a large, densely-crowded riverside kampung of about 700 households in the industrial area of North Jakarta. Here is how she describes the rice-testing process: "I took the sample and went door-to-door, to members of the cooperative, and showed them the rice. The women didn't need to cook the rice - they could just look at it and feel it in their hand to be able to judge the quality. They could tell that the Kendeng rice was a good rice. I don't know where this knowledge comes from, but the women knew! And later on, when I cooked some of the sample myself, I found that it was in fact very good rice. In Kampung Elektro, we ordered one ton (1,000 kgs) of rice for our cooperative members in seven areas of the community. We even sold some rice to non-members."

Mr. Duwi Purnomo is the soft-spoken chairman of the cooperative in Kampung Marlina, another big and densely-crowded kampung in North Jakarta, with 882 households. "At first, my wife would cook some of the rice sample from Kendeng, and then go around showing the cooked rice to everyone. The rice looks quite different than the normal rice that comes from the factory - it's less white, because the rice isn't bleached and there aren't any preservatives in it. The farmers rice may look uglier than the normal rice, but when she cooked it and invited people to taste it, they realized how good it was, started believing in the scheme, started purchasing rice. If we couldn't go around in person, we would post photos of the cooked rice on our WhatsApp group within Kampung Marlina. That was one of our marketing tricks, and it worked very well. The rice is very popular, and there is so much demand that the cooperative in Marlina usually orders half a ton (500 kilos) from every shipment from Kendeng."

About the Kendeng rice farmers:

Kendeng is a mountainous region in the province of Central Java. It's a beautiful, fertile place with forests and a long tradition of growing high quality highland rice and other crops. The mountains in Kendeng are made of karst (limestone), which is an important ingredient in making cement. Since 2007, the farmers in several villages in Kendeng have been fighting against some cement companies that are aggressively buying out small farmers, destroying the villages and mining those karst mountains to supply the region's voracious demand for cement. Mining has already begun in several areas and is causing enormous environmental destruction, deforestation, pollution and ground-water contamination.

The friendship between the farmers in Kendeng and the urban poor in Jakarta is a profound one, because both groups, in their different ways, find themselves struggling against eviction and against the market forces that threaten their homes, lives and environment. The farmers are happy with the collaboration for several reasons: they have a regular customer for their rice, and the rice project also becomes evidence that their farms are producing essential rice for the country's urban poor. That is one thing that strengthens their argument to fight these companies. Their hope is to convince Central Java Provincial government that Kendeng is a crucial food-producing region for the whole country. The rice, vegetables, fruits and cattle produced there are vital to Indonesia's food security and self sufficiency. If the farmers are evicted and the land and water sources are destroyed by cement factories, it's an incalculable loss for the country's food sovereignty.

Link to a documentary film about the struggle of the Kendeng farmers against the cement company that is trying to force them off their ancestral land:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CYbXvOGYRuU>

Two problems emerged though - one at the supply end and one on the demand end. The cost of transporting relatively small quantities of rice from Central Java to inner-city Jakarta was very high. The only way to reduce the transport costs would be for the network to purchase rice in much larger quantities, in loads of at least 8 tons (8,000 kilos) of rice. Otherwise, the high transport costs would be too much for the network to cover. At the same time, the cooperative members were experiencing serious problems of lost jobs, lost income and dramatically-reduced buying power, because of the pandemic and lockdown. So even though the rice was cheaper than the market price and better quality, and even though they were buying it at cost directly from the farmers, many community members still couldn't afford it.

Raising funds from donations to subsidize the rice:

So the JRMK network began to call for public donations, so they could subsidize the rice selling price. The network used social media to announce the rice scheme and call for donations. Their goal was to raise enough funds to provide a 50% subsidy for JRMK cooperative members to purchase the rice. JRMK also raised donations through a crowd-sourcing platform that is popular in Indonesia called kitabisa.com, which makes it easy for ordinary people to donate small amounts of money to social projects like this one. They were able to raise about 47 million rupiah (US\$ 3,350), and with those donations, the network was able to purchase 9 tons (9,000 kg) of rice from the Kendeng farmers.

JRMK then sold that rice to cooperative members at a subsidized price of 5,000 rupiah (US\$ 35 cents) per kilo, which was half the rate the network had sold the rice to members before (10,000 rupiah per kilo), and which was already well below the market rate. To make it fair, so that those with more money wouldn't have an advantage and everyone could benefit from the scheme, they set a limit that each cooperative member could buy a maximum 10 kgs of rice at the 50% subsidized rate. Between the donations, the crowd-sourcing and the money they collected from members buying the 50% subsidized rice, the network was able to buy



and distribute two truckloads of rice from the Kendeng farmers (9 tons in the first load and 8 tons in the second, for a total 17 tons, or about 17,000 kilos of rice).

Continuing the rice distribution program after the subsidy:

After all the donations had been spent, the Covid situation in Indonesia was starting to improve, and people were able to earn again. The rice distribution scheme moved into the next stage, in which the network developed a sustainable system for buying and distributing the rice at cost, without any subsidy. They continue to buy rice in bulk from the Kendeng farmers, but now they sell it to cooperative members without any subsidy. Here is how they manage the rice distribution system now:

Buying the rice from the farmers: The capital they use to buy the bulk rice from the farmers, which has to be paid before the rice is delivered, comes from the collective savings of JRMK member cooperatives. All the cooperatives operate community savings groups as part of their cooperative activities in the kampung. The Kendeng farmers' selling rate for the rice fluctuates, according to the harvest and time of year, going down as low as 8,100 rupiah (US\$ 56 cents) per kilo, and up as high as 9,100 rupiah (US\$ 63 cents) per kilo.



Distributing the rice to the cooperatives: Trucks from Kendeng deliver the order of 9 or 10 tons of rice to one point - usually in one kampung in the northern part of Jakarta. In the new system, instead of having all the cooperatives then come to this central point to collect their rice orders, the network hires a few guys from one cooperative who form a "courier team" to carry the rice from the drop-off point to a drop-off point in each kampung, according to the order. The courier team is paid a small fee for this work, based on how much rice they carry. The courier team is paid 250 rupiah (about US\$ 2 cents) per kilo of rice they deliver to the 20 or 25 kampungs in northern and western Jakarta, to cover their costs of renting the vehicle, gasoline and earning a little payment for the guys. The cost of this courier service is part of the 10,000 rupiah/kg rice price the coop members pay.



Distributing the rice within the kampungs: The local cooperative then distributes the rice at several points within the kampung - and it is usually the women cooperative members who manage this part. Coop members come to purchase the rice in cash. They can purchase as much as they need - the 10-kilo limit was only for the subsidized rice. They must bring their own bag or basket to carry the rice home (to avoid adding more plastic waste to Jakarta's already overloaded garbage dumps, rivers and sea). The money from the sale is transferred to the cooperative's financial manager.



Selling the rice to cooperative members: The network has set the selling price for the non-subsidized rice at a maximum of 10,000 rupiah (US\$ 70 cents) per kilo. If any cooperative decides to sell the rice for less than that amount, they can do so, but the rule is the selling price to coop members should never be more than 10,000 rupiah per kg, to keep this crucial staple affordable to the poor, with no profiteering. In Jakarta, larger quantities of rice (above 5 kgs) are sold by the kilo. But in smaller quantities in local shops, rice is usually sold by the "liter." A liter is a little less than a kilo - about 800 grams. This price is much cheaper than the standard rice rate in the kampungs, where a similar quality of rice will sell for 10,000 rupiah per liter, which works out to a rate of 12,500 rupiah per (US\$ 87 cents) per kilo, or 20% higher than the cooperative's rate.

No profiteering on basic needs:

Whatever small profits are generated from the selling of the rice in this stage (after paying for the transport and the courier team) are divided between the local cooperative (which keeps 70%) and the JRMK Network (which gets 30%). But as Gugun pointed out, "One of the very important principles of the cooperatives in the JRMK network is that the purpose of the cooperative is to serve the members, to help the members meet their basic needs and make their lives better in various ways. If a cooperative profits from people's basic needs, they are no different than the usual middlemen and capitalists. So if the cooperative runs a business unit that supplies essential needs like rice or eggs or cooking gas, then there shouldn't be much profit. And if there is a small margin or profit,



then it should be used for the operational costs of the cooperative." And that's what happens.

In Kampung Marlina, for example, they use the small profit they have generated from 6 cycles of selling the Kendeng rice for the cooperative's operational costs, meetings and transport. When JRMK organized their yearly evaluation meeting recently, in a place on the outskirts of Jakarta, the people who represented the Marlina Cooperative at that meeting had their transport and food expenses covered by the cooperative. This makes both the cooperatives and the network self-supporting.

The network has purchased rice from the Kendeng farmers seven times now (1 time in the small initial order, 2 times with the subsidized price and 4 times at the normal price). Each order is 8 to 10 tons. The network would like to order more and scale up their rice distribution project, but the JRMK's capital is still limited, and the network has to pay the farmers the full amount for the order in advance, before the farmers deliver the rice). So for the time being, the network's capacity remains 8-10 tons per cycle.

Achievements over the last year and a half of the rice project:

After running the rice distribution project for a year and a half now, the network has established a permanent working relationship with the rice farmers in Kendeng, who supply good quality rice to the network at a price the kampung residents can afford. The network now has a lot of experience in buying rice in bulk and selling it to their cooperative members. The benefit for cooperative members is that they can get fresh, good-quality rice at a much lower price than in the local market. They also understand that being a member of the cooperative gives a good feeling of being supported by the JRMK network, and allows them to purchase essential goods at a much cheaper price than the local market and so reduce household expenditure. By buying rice directly from the farmers, the network has successfully cut out all the middlemen who are usually part of the rice distribution chain and who eat up most of the profits, and keep the rice selling price low for farmers and the buying price high for consumers.

Difficulties:

As the network develops its plans to continue and expand the cooperative rice distribution scheme, they face several challenges, and these challenges will be familiar to any entrepreneur. The price of rice from Kendeng goes up and down, according to the quality and quantity of the harvest, which in turn depend on unpredictable factors like weather and rainfall. Kendeng produces two crops of rice each year and depends entirely on rain - there is no irrigation. At the same time, the purchasing power of the urban poor in the JRMK network also goes up and down, and is not consistent enough to make the network a reliable or regular customer yet for the rice farmers. The network is trying to change people's food consumption habits by encouraging them to purchase more things monthly (in larger quantities at lower rates) and fewer things on a daily basis (in small quantities at higher rates) to reduce their food expenses. But this is not easy, since most of the poor earn daily, and so they purchase their needs daily also, from the local shops ("warung"), where the unit prices are invariably higher. Because the rice from Kendeng is grown organically, without any chemicals or preservatives, and comes fresh from the farm, it has to be sold right away, and JRMK doesn't have a warehouse to store unsold rice. So the purchasing and selling of the rice shipment has to happen quickly. The network still has to pay for the rice in advance - the system is not yet connected with financing directly from the cooperatives, which are still new and have very limited finances.

Plans for the next stage of the rice project:

To establish the rice distribution system more firmly in the cooperatives, the network would like to create a subscription system, where the cooperatives purchase a certain quantity of rice for the members in each order, on a regular basis, with a fixed schedule and volume and price agreement between JRMK and the Kendeng farmers. This would be ideal, but is still difficult because everything is in flux, at both ends - in the rice fields in Kendeng and in the kampungs. The network would also like to make rice procurement and selling a business unit in each kampung cooperative eventually, with the capital for purchasing the bulk rice coming from the cooperative, not from the JRMK Network.

Strategy to strengthen the cooperatives:

The rice distribution project is one of several initiatives the JRMK Network is using to promote the cooperatives, which are still very new, as a self-managed and multi-sided support system which belongs to the community and exists to help make people's lives in the kampung better on several fronts.

As Mr. Duwi Purnomo, the chairman of the cooperative in Kampung Marlina explained, "It was much easier, of course, to market the rice to cooperative members when we could sell it at the subsidized price - rice for half the local market price! We let everyone know that you had to be a member of the cooperative to buy the subsidized rice, and many people joined then to get the rice. Membership in the cooperative grew a lot, and now 205 households - or about a third of the community's structure owners - are members of the cooperative. But other initiatives of the network also help persuade new members to join the cooperative and see the cooperative as a larger support system - like the network's successful negotiations to get temporary building

permits from the city, and the cooperative's housing upgrading project that is now beginning, with support from ACHR. Our cooperative in Kampung Marlina has other programs to supply cheaper staple needs like eggs and cooking gas to cooperative members. People see those many benefits of being members and that attracts them to join the cooperative."

But expanding membership in the cooperatives is not easy. The internal politics in these large and long-established kampungs is very complicated and difficult, with lots of overlapping and conflicting vested interests. In Kampung Elektro, for example, only 94 of the 700 households in the community (13%) have joined the cooperative so far. As Ms. Herdayati explains, "There are still a lot of local leaders in the kampung who resist the cooperative or see it as a threat to their patronage, and make it difficult for JRMK to organize and to bring more families into the cooperative."

CASE STUDY 2: Herbal drinks project in Kampung Marlina in Jakarta

Kampung Marlina is a large and densely-crowded informal settlement built on a narrow strip of state-owned land, sandwiched between factories and warehouses, in the Muara Baru area of North Jakarta. 882 families live in the kampung, which has been occupied since the 1970s. The community was first settled by fishermen from the Bugis ethnic group, but later swelled with the families of low-wage workers who had jobs in the port, warehouses and factories in the area. Many residents of Kampung Marlina also earn their living as food vendors and seasonal fishermen. The kampung also provides a big stock of inexpensive rental rooms.

The Covid pandemic hit Indonesia very hard. At one point in July 2021, the country had the highest rate of infections and deaths of all the countries in Asia. During those dark days, the government imposed strict lockdown measures and community quarantines. People's mobility was limited, many were forced to work from home and remote schooling became a new way of life - all measures aimed at containing the spread of the virus. Communities like Kampung Marlina, where large families live crowded very closely together - sometimes with houses built right on top of each other - in airless, lightless houses with poor services, had a very hard time of it. Besides being unable to go out and work and earn, the residents had little protection against the virus, which spread quickly. With hospitals being too expensive, the absence of a viable public health care system and no vaccine yet at all, people were left on their own.

Ibu Enny ("Mrs. Enny") is a community leader in Kampung Marlina. For many years, she was also the coordinator of the JRMK community network (Jaringan Rakyat Miskin Kota Jakarta – Urban Poor Network) - a network of 29 kampungs, mostly in the industrial areas of North Jakarta. Enny is a widow and lives in the house she and her husband built themselves after getting married, 34 years ago, on one of the narrow lanes inside Kampung Marlina. She raised five children in that house and lives there now with her two youngest - one of whom works at the Old Jakarta Port as a stevedore, as his father did.

For several years, Enny has made a little extra money for household expenses by making herbal drinks powders at home. The powders are called *jamu* in Indonesian, and they are made by a complicated process of boiling a variety of fresh herbs and spices with sugar until they crystallize. She makes several kinds of *jamu*. They all have different medicinal and nutritional qualities, but all of them are delicious and aromatic. The powders can be mixed with hot water or milk - or even with coffee. Enny's recipes have their origin in an alternative health program that was organized by UPC in the early 2000s. Through the program, community leaders were trained to produce these herbal drinks. For UPC, the alternative health program was one of several strategies to help the urban poor improve their health and reduce their dependency on the market-driven medical industry, which many cannot afford to access.

Making *jamu* was something Enny did only occasionally and on a small scale, selling the powders mostly to friends and neighbors in the Marlina community. In the past six years, though, she's been so busy with her work with the JRMK network that there has been little time for *jamu*-making.

But when the Covid pandemic hit and people were falling sick and stuck at home, with no help from anywhere and no access to vaccines or unaffordable medicines, word got around about Enny's *jamu* and she started getting requests from other kampungs in the JRMK network for her herbal drinks powder. It quickly became too many orders to handle by herself. So using a small grant from the ACHR-IIED Covid project, she got four other women in the community (Ibu Atun, Ibu Sum, Ibu Rum and Ibu Ibet) to help make the *jamu* and boost production substantially.

By September 2021, the five women were making *jamu* every day, starting at seven o'clock in the morning, and finishing the day's batch only at six pm, breaking off only long enough to go home to pray or to take a few moments' rest. Making *jamu* has become a full-time job for the five women.

The team makes four types of *jamu*, and they all have different medicinal properties and benefits:

- **Temulawak** (*curcuma*, or *turmeric*) This was the most popular *jamu* during the pandemic because it improves stamina and boosts the immune system, while the turmeric's antibiotic qualities help with digestive problems and stomach disorders.
- **Jahe Merah** (*red ginger*) This one, made from a beautiful rose-colored ginger that is native to Indonesia, is good for healing exhaustion, body aches and colds. In Enny's recipe, several other spices are added which make the drink good for maintaining stamina, especially in the rainy season in Jakarta. Many customers drink it twice a day.
- **Temulawak Asam** (*turmeric and tamarind*) is also good for healing wounds in the intestines and helps women to reduce menstrual pain. During the hot season, this *jamu* can be made into a cold drink that cools the body.
- **Beras Kencur** (*galangal*) This *jamu* has been another pandemic favorite, because besides strengthening and adding stamina, it's good for people who have the kind of respiratory problems, coughs and colds that come with Covid infections. The drink's warm feeling can soothe the throat.

How they make the *jamu*:

The production process is complicated and takes the whole day to make a batch. Usually they make three or four kinds of *jamu* at the same time, and use the narrow space in the alleyway out in front of their houses as their make-shift *jamu* kitchen. The process begins in the early morning, at about 7:00, when they receive the raw materials they've ordered from the local market. After cleaning, peeling and grating the herbs and spices, they soak them in water for about 15 minutes, until everything sinks. Then they put the mixture in a great big shallow pan on the stove, and boil it over the fire, mixing in sugar at the ratio of 1 kilo of sugar for every 2 kilos of herbs. They keep cooking the mixture, stirring constantly, for about five hours, until crystals start forming. It's a lot of work! Besides the main herbal ingredient in each *jamu*, they also boil a separate mix of another nine supporting aromatic spices, which are added to the *jamu* to make it taste delicious and add other beneficial properties. The two parts are mixed together only after both are finished - they don't cook them together. Enny is the official taster and adjuster. After cooking, they save the leftover nine spices for bathing - it's good for the skin. The packing process takes about an hour, and it's usually about six o'clock in the evening when the women finish up the day's batch of *jamu* and go home.

In this way, the team can produce about 20 kilos of *jamu* each day. Those 20 kilos will sell out in a few days, so they don't wait for the stock to disappear before making new batches. With so many orders coming in from the other cooperatives, they now make *jamu* almost every day. People who drink the *jamu* - especially during the pandemic - feel the benefits of this traditional drink, which has no chemicals or artificial additives. Enny hopes that drinking this healthy, traditional herbal drink may help to transform the culture of drinking unhealthy junk drinks like Coke and all those sugary sodas in the shops, and also make everyone less dependent on buying expensive and harmful manufactured medicines, if they can keep themselves healthy naturally with herbs.

Initially, sales were mostly within the Kampung Marlina community and neighboring areas. During the lockdown, when it became difficult to move around the city, Enny started sending word out on WhatsApp that she was making the *jamu* and it was available to help keep people healthy. This was at a time when there was no vaccine, limited access to health care, no vitamin or medicine supply from the government, and the virus was spreading in Jakarta very fast. That's when people started ordering the *jamu* online, and business picked up fast enough to scale up production. Now a lot of *jamu* customers are members of the other 29 kampungs in the JRMK network, but the team also has lots of customers in middle class housing colonies and government offices. Even the former mayor of North Jakarta is a regular customer. The women are now exploring a potential new market among the boat crews and dock-workers at the nearby Old Port of Jakarta (*Sunda Kelapa*) in North Jakarta, as a means to give them more energy and boost their stamina.



Enny's late husband worked at the port and she has good contacts with many of the ship captains and dock workers.

Progress for kampung cooperatives:

It's important to add here that while this *jamu*-making and Covid-responding was going on, another very important transformation was taking place in Jakarta. The city was in the process of granting secure land tenure to some of the informal communities it once tried to evict. Instead of evicting them and sending them to live in remote resettlement housing they can't afford, the city was working with the JRMK Network to pioneer a new approach, in which the communities formed legal cooperatives, and the cooperatives would then be given collective ownership or tenancy of the land they already occupied, or to the nearby land they had negotiated to relocate to. While waiting for the land legalization to become a reality, the government improved the physical infrastructure in the kampungs through two new programs: Community Action Planning (CAP) and the Collaborative Implementation Program (CIP). The government also issued a temporary building permits for three years for more than 7,000 houses in 15 of the kampungs in the JRMK network, which made these houses (and improvements subsequently made to these houses) fully legal.

This historic shift in policy - from eviction to on-site upgrading and legal recognition of informal kampungs, with secure collective tenure - has come after years of lobbying and advocacy and political contracts by the JRMK network, its support NGO UPC and their allies at the Rujak Center for Urban Studies, Architects Sans Frontiers (ASF) and AKUR (Urban Kampung Architects).

This historic process was playing out when the pandemic hit. At that time, all the kampungs in the JRMK network were going through the complicated process of registering as cooperatives with the government's Department of Industry, Trade, Cooperatives, Small and Medium Enterprises, and struggling to get their community members to join the cooperatives and see the benefits of being members. For the kampung residents who were used to living individually and informally, this was all something new and unfamiliar, and many were wary.

JRMK chose to embrace the formal cooperative structure because it allows communities to address many important aspects of kampung life. Besides facilitating collective secure land tenure, the cooperatives offer a mechanism for boosting economic empowerment and providing services for its members, and create a platform for discussing community problems such as land conflicts and land legalization. As a legal entity, cooperatives also allow members of the kampung to be represented in the city's formal governance and planning structures and to engage with various partners and perform legal activities. By February 2022, all 25 kampungs in the JRMK network had registered as 20 cooperatives (some coops cover more than one kampung).

For Enny, the *jamu* production was another of several community projects which presented an opportunity to show everyone in Marlina that being a member of the cooperative had many other benefits besides tenure security. They sell the *jamu* for 15,000 rupiah (\$1) for a 250-gram packet. But during the worst of the pandemic and lockdowns, they used a grant from the ACHR-IIED project to subsidize the selling price for cooperative members, so they pay only 5,000 rupiah (\$0.33) for the 250-gram packet - one third of the normal price. Only cooperative members get the subsidized price; everyone else pays the full price.

Plus, all the women who make the *jamu* are members of the Marlina cooperative, and all of them are now earning enough from the project to help meet their household expenses. This is a cooperative activity, and it directly benefits cooperative members, on both the production and the distribution ends. Even the labels on the packets say "*Jamu from the Marlina Cooperative.*" There could be many other economic projects that use people's collective power like this to boost people's incomes. These and other initiatives of the cooperatives and the JRMK network are showing people that they can be part of a larger network and support system which has many benefits: you can get rice at half price, you can get the herbal drinks at half price, you can get land tenure, you can get help upgrading your house. These are all ways to attract more people to join the cooperative, when they see the tangible benefits.

The ambitious *jamu*-making team in Kampung Marlina still faces some big challenges though - challenges which will be familiar to any business that is trying to grow. When they tried to apply for a formal business permit a few weeks ago, they were turned down because the government considers the production site in that narrow alleyway to be unhygienic. So far, they make the *jamu* with simple tools like wide cooking pans and a cheap plastic blender. But if they want to increase production to meet the growing demand, they will need



bigger and more sophisticated equipment. They're also facing plenty of competition from commercial products in the local market. Instant ginger and herbal drink powders are available in all the shops in the kampungs - products made by big companies with flashy packaging and low prices. It's hard to compete with those commercial products, even though the Marlina *jamu* is much higher quality, more delicious and has no chemical additives. The women also recognize that their packaging is not very attractive and could be spruced up a bit.

CASE STUDY 3: Cooperative laundry enterprise in Kampung Akuarium in Jakarta

exchange rate: 14,400 rupiah = US\$1

The following case study was drawn from a transcript of the discussion which took place during a zoom meeting on January 14, 2022, with ACHR and some of the key participants in the cooperative laundry project in Jakarta. Those joining the meeting included:

- Mr. Gugun Muhammad, from Kampung Tongkol (community leader and also UPC staff)
- Ms. Vidya Tanny, from the Rujak Center for Urban Studies in Jakarta (Vidya translated)
- Ms. Amalia Nur Indah Sari, from Rujak Center for Urban Studies
- Ms. Asmiawati ("Cece") from Kampung Akuarium (she works in coop laundry enterprise)
- Ms. Musdalifah ("Mus") from Kampung Akuarium (she works in coop laundry enterprise)
- Mr. Esher, from AKUR (Urban Kampung Architects)
- Mr. Miming, from Kampung Block Eceng
- Ms. Minawati (full name?), from Kampung Rawa Barat; new coordinator of JRMK Network
- Ms. Herdayati ("Herda") from Kampung Elektro
- Mr. Thomas Kerr, from ACHR in Bangkok

1. The context: Covid crisis in Indonesia

The Covid pandemic hit Indonesia with a vengeance in 2020. Infections soared, the death toll climbed, hospitals were overwhelmed and the country quickly became for a while one of Asia's hottest Covid hot spots. Soon afterwards, in March 2020, the government imposed a "semi-lockdown", which greatly limited people's ability to move around and to gather. In Jakarta, where the greatest number of infections were mounting, roads were blocked, curfews were imposed, transport systems were shut down and people going out were stopped and questioned by policemen. Government policies required companies to reduce by 50% the number of employees coming into the workplaces, and the rest had to work from home.

During those early months, the urban poor had an especially hard time coping with both the health and economic aspects of the pandemic. Everything happened so suddenly. Many of the urban poor work in the informal sector and earn their living day-by-day. But all the public spaces that they normally used for their vending and earning (like markets, footpaths, streets, outside shopping malls, busy corners, etc.) were off-limits under the lockdown. So the poor lost their income and their means of supporting themselves. At the same time, there were no clear policies or programs from the government to support the urban poor or provide them with any welfare assistance in the pandemic crisis.

2. The JRMK Network's cooperative laundry project

JRMK Network: Jaringan Rakyat Miskin Kota ("Urban Poor Community Network") is a network of 25 large kampungs (informal communities) and 6 street vendors cooperatives in the northern and western parts of Jakarta. The JRMK Network is supported by the Jakarta-based NGO Urban Poor Consortium (UPC). All of the kampungs in the JRMK Network have fully-registered cooperatives now, as part of their long and successful campaign to persuade the Jakarta municipal government to recognize their member communities and provide them with collective tenure of the land they occupy now or have negotiated to relocate to nearby. So far, there are 20 registered cooperatives, which cover all 25 kampungs in the JRMK network.

Good support from a progressive governor of Jakarta: As the capital of Indonesia and the country's largest city, Jakarta has a special administrative status as a province. Instead of a mayor, the executive head of Jakarta is a governor. The governor of Jakarta is an elected politician who serves a five-year term. The last election was held in Jakarta on 15 February 2017. The current governor is Mr. Anies Baswedan, a more progressive politician whom the JRMK network helped to get elected, through a "political contract" they struck with the candidate. The political contract is a political commitment, which the mayor signed in a big public

ceremony, to support a list of pro-poor policies in an exchange for votes from the urban poor. For JRMK and UPC, the political contract was a strategy for improving the urban poor's visibility, legality and participation in the city's management. The new governor's willingness to honor the political contract he signed in 2017 has helped enormously to support this big change in the kampungs in the JRMK network over the past five years, including:

- 7,000 houses in 15 kampungs were granted temporary building rights, which essentially legalizes their structures
- 18 kampungs have been made legal residential areas on the city's master zoning plan ("spatial plan"), which strengthens their tenure and prevents them from being evicted for encroaching on zones designated for other purposes in the city's plan.

The process was slowed down a lot by the pandemic, and the current governor's term ends in Feb 2022. The former governor was awful - some of the city's largest and most brutal evictions of informal settlements were unleashed like a bad storm under his watch.

The JRMK Network started right away to discuss collectively what they could do as a network - and as a network of kampung-based cooperatives - to deal with the hardships people were facing during the Covid crisis. They launched projects to acquire and distribute subsidized or at-cost rice to needy families, they developed a community enterprise to make herbal drinks to boost people's health at a time when hospitals were inaccessible. They also launched a project to deal with an aspect of community life that might not immediately seem related to the Covid virus: washing clothes.

Washing clothes in Jakarta's crowded kampungs (informal settlements) is a toilsome business, even in the best of times. And it is a task that invariably falls to the women of the household - the mothers, sisters, daughters and grandmothers, who spend at least two or three hours every day soaking, pummeling, scrubbing, rinsing, drying and ironing the family's clothes. Their task is made harder by frequent flooding, erratic electricity supply and serious water supply and water quality problems.

The burden of clothes washing:

During the pandemic, the clothes washing burden was compounded by many other factors, as described here by Ms. Asmiawati ("Cece") from Kampung Akuarium:

We women always have a huge responsibility for domestic issues in the household - much greater than men do. Our position is crucial to hold the household together and keep everything going. There's a saying that the woman in the house can't afford to get sick, because if she does, everything will stop. We cook, we clean, we look after the children and help them with their lessons. And we wash everyone's clothes every day - this is a task which takes up a lot more time and energy than other domestic chores.

During the pandemic times, the burden of work in the house increased for women - especially the task of washing and ironing clothes. If one family member got infected with the virus, or was even suspected of being infected, we had to separate that person's clothes from the others and wash those clothes in warmer water, to kill the germs. And in the Covid times, we couldn't reuse the clothes we wore when we went out, since they may be contaminated with the virus. Which means some family members changed into clean clothes several times a day. In these ways, the piles of clothes to be washed grew very quickly.



In the kampungs, water supply is always difficult, but during the pandemic, the problems got much worse. It may be because so many more people were stuck at home during the lockdowns that the demand for water increased dramatically, so the meager supply decreased and pipes ran dry more regularly. Water is very scarce in some kampungs, and in many, when the piped water does come, it's very dirty. All of which makes it even harder for women to wash their family's clothes.

The idea of a cooperative laundry service:

(Gugun) The problem of washing clothes was one of several pandemic-related problems the JRMK network has discussed. After a lot of deliberation, the network launched several initiatives which allow us to use the strength of our cooperatives to address some of these problems during the pandemic, like the rice-distribution program and several other enterprises that offer services and assistance to cooperative members. One of these initiatives is using the ACHR-IIED grant funds to help us launch a cooperative laundry service that lightens the clothes-washing burden of women in the kampungs.

In apartment buildings and middle-class housing blocks in Indonesia, coin-operated washing machines have become common in recent years. But that concept hasn't come to the kampungs yet. In Jakarta, the water supply in many of the kampungs is still too inconsistent, and those kinds of washing machines can't work without a good piped water supply. Plus, if you go out and put your clothes in a coin machine, you lose both your money and your time, because you have to stand there and wait for one hour for the machine to finish the washing cycle - you can't go do something else, or someone might steal your laundry. If they have a coin-operated dryer, that will take another hour to dry the clothes, and even more time lost in waiting. In the kampung, people don't have so much time to waste like that - they have families and work and many things they have to do. In those middle class apartment buildings, most families don't go themselves to the coin machine, but send their servants or maids to do it. So the servant wastes her time, not the family.

We thought carefully about this in the network, as we were planning the laundry project, and came to the conclusion that the coin system wouldn't work in the kampungs. So we decided to try another system where the cooperatives set up their own laundry services to do people's washing. The main attraction of a laundry service is that someone else washes and irons the clothes for you, so the clothes are ready to wear when they come back to you. That way, the customer can save money and time - *especially time*.

Criteria for joining the laundry project:

Before we decided where to start the cooperative laundry businesses, the JRMK network developed a set of criteria which kampungs must meet if they are interested in starting a laundry business. First, the kampung has to have established a cooperative, and the cooperative should have at least 50 members, to give a strong organizational base. Then the kampung should also have a good space available for the laundry that is rent-free. That space should have basic utilities for the machines like clean water supply, electricity and waste water disposal, so the washing machines don't make the environment worse. After setting these criteria and circulating them around the network, the cooperatives in five kampungs signed up for the laundry business: Kampung Akuarium, Kampung Rawa, Kampung Elektro, Kampung Walang and Kampung Block Eceng.

Adjusting the strategy a little:

At first, the network planned to launch laundry businesses in all five of those kampungs at the same time. But we decided that would be very risky if the kampungs weren't prepared - and several of them still had problems with finding a space or getting a reliable water supply. So the network decided instead to launch the laundry initiative in two steps:

1. The first step would be to start a laundry business in one kampung, to test the business. The network would promote this first laundry service and invite customers from all the other kampungs to send their laundry and gauge where the customers are.
2. Later, the network will look for potential customers and chose a kampung for the next round that can find enough stable customers in the kampung to make the laundry enterprise viable. If the cooperative in Kampung Rawa, for example, could send at least 50 kilos of clothes to the first laundry each day, that would show that they have enough of a stable customer base to open a viable own laundry business in the next step, with support from the network.

Of the five kampungs that showed interest, Kampung Akuarium was the most ready, so it was selected to be the pilot laundry business. After deciding which kampung would have the pilot laundry business, the network did a survey of laundry machines - both washers and dryers - available on the market, and educated ourselves on how other laundry businesses operate, how they interact with the customers, how they organize the pick-up and delivery, and how they manage their book-keeping and administration. All these things were new to us.

The network's "start up" package:

The JRMK network used the funds from ACHR to buy five "start-up" packages of laundry equipment. Each kampung cooperative that is ready to start a laundry business will then get one "package." The package includes one high-capacity professional washing machine, one drying machine, one heavy-duty steam ironing machine with a boiler, a big table and a stock of good laundry soap. In the kampung, most people hang the clothes to dry in the sun, but in the laundry business, the clothes are dried in a dryer. One whole "start up" package costs 30 million rupiah (US\$ 2,083).

All this equipment isn't given to the cooperatives for free though. The cooperative has to contribute 5 million rupiah (US\$ 348) of the cost of the package right off the bat, from their own cooperative fund, which comes from collective savings of cooperative members. The rest of the cost of the package is given to the kampung cooperative as a loan of 25 million rupiah (US\$ 1,735). The cooperative will eventually pay back the 25 million rupiah loan to the



network, but we haven't decided on any repayment schedule or started any repayments yet. First we want to see how the laundry business goes, and how much the laundry can earn in a month. Once we have a clearer idea of the monthly intake, we will be able to calculate how much of the laundry's profit goes to the workers, how much goes to the cooperative and how much is used to repay the loan to the network. It's still experimental now - that's why the network decided to start with just one kampung first.

3. The first cooperative laundry in Kampung Akuarium:

This description of the first cooperative laundry enterprise is a slightly edited transcription of the presentation made in the January 14, 2022 zoom meeting by Ms. Asmiawati ("Cece") and Ms. Musdalifah ("Mus"), who are both members of the cooperative in Kampung Akuarium, and are both working in the cooperative's laundry enterprise - the first in the JRMK Network.

Our laundry business in Kampung Akuarium just started in December 2021, so we have been operating only for two weeks so far. One of the apartments in the new building had been allotted to be the cooperative's busy office and meeting place. The laundry business has been set up in one corner of that office. It's a very nice place, in a brand-new building, with good light and all the utilities and everything painted with a fresh coat of white.

We can already see that the cooperative laundry enterprise offers many advantages to our kampung. Providing an inexpensive laundry service to cooperative members, especially during the pandemic, lessens the burden of housewives and also lessens the family's use of water, since they don't have to wash their own clothes. At the same time, the enterprise provides extra work and extra family income to the cooperative members who work in and manage the laundry business. Most of the profits from that business will go into the workers' pockets, but some will also go back to the cooperative to support other initiatives and enterprises which provide good things to cooperative members.

The laundry enterprise is also another way to strengthen the JRMK network. The cooperative in Kampung Akuarium is piloting this business, but others within the network will start laundry businesses soon. The same model and methods we are testing here can be applied to other kampung cooperatives. And in the mean time, cooperative members in other kampungs with water scarcity can get their clothes washed here in Kampung Akuarium.

How the laundry service works:

Each kampung that wants to send laundry to Kampung Akuarium has to identify its own courier, to pick up the dirty clothes from people's houses, brings them to Kampung Akuarium, and then bring the cleaned clothes back to the family. Not all of the kampungs in the JRMK network have couriers yet, but we are now collecting laundry from nine kampungs.

When the courier brings the clothes to the laundry, the clothes are weighed on a scale, and the weight and list of items is put on a nice customer receipt that looks very proper - just like in a hotel. Each customer gets a separate receipt for their clothes. After the clothes have been washed and ironed, they are folded neatly, stacked up and wrapped up in plastic. The courier then delivers the clean laundry to the customer in the kampung, collects the payment and brings it back to the laundry on the next trip. For the work of carrying the laundry back and forth, the courier gets paid 10% of the overall bill. We promise our customers that their laundry will be returned within three days, but most orders take only one or two days.

There are three women working full time in our laundry in Kampung Akuarium, and all of us are housewives. One person receives the laundry and works on the washing, one person sorts the clothes and packs up the clean laundry, and one person irons the clothes. It's a lot of work. At the beginning, we worked every day, from about 9am to 4pm. But as the laundry has gotten busier, we've had come earlier and leave later. But because it's our own business, we can take breaks to go home when we need to and attend to things. Our three-woman team can wash and iron about 60 kilos of laundry per day.



The price for having clothes washed is 6,000 rupiah (US\$ 42 cents) per kilo. The minimum order is five kilos, which costs 30,000 rupiah (US\$ 2). If someone sends only three kilos of laundry, they still have to pay the full rate for five kilos. During the first month, the network is offering a subsidized rate of 4,000 rupiah (US\$ 28 cents) per kilo for laundry - but only for cooperative members - as a promotion, to pull in customers (the 2,000 rupiah promotional subsidy comes from the ACHR-IIED budget). Before we started, we prepared a poster and small stickers about the laundry and posted them all over the kampungs, and on social media, to let everyone know that the cooperative in Kampung Akuarium has a laundry that is open for business.

In the first two weeks of operation, our laundry has already washed 720 kilos of laundry, which came from 147 customers, in 9 kampungs in the surrounding area, including Kampung Akuarium. Some customers from offices in the area are also bringing us their laundry. We wash everything - clothes, towels, bedding - even dolls and stuffed animals. We give all our customers a little form to rate the service, and so far, the customer satisfaction rate is 90%. There have been a few complaints.

Advantages:

Our laundry service offers many advantages, compared to others. In most kampungs, 7,000 rupiah (US\$ 49 cents) per kilo is the standard rate local women charge for doing other people's laundry. Our price, at 6,000 rupiah (US\$ 42 cents) per kilo is 1,000 rupiah lower than that, and is a fraction of what people pay for similar laundry services in middle class neighborhoods. And the quality of washing is better, because we use professional machines, good detergent and have access to better quality water than surrounding kampungs. The laundry service also provides flexible working hours for the women who work there. All of us have children and we can bring our children along with us to the laundry, or we can go back home to attend to things when we need to, since our apartments are right here in the same building. It's flexible, as long as our responsibilities in the laundry are finished. The laundry workers are all chosen from among the cooperative members, so all the benefits of the laundry business go to cooperative members - either the service or the job and employment. We haven't worked out yet how much we will earn from the laundry, but at the end of the first month, we'll look at the accounts and then decide how much.

Running our own business:

We're happy because we have been able to learn all about the laundry business. We're not just workers being paid by somebody else, but we are managing our own business, in all the different aspects. If the machines have problems or break down, we have to figure out how to fix them or find someone to repair and maintain them. At first it was difficult to learn how to operate these washing machines, which are quite different than the simple washing machines many people in the kampungs have at home. But after learning and doing for some time, we can do it easily.

When we started our laundry business, we got one "start-up package", according to the network's plan. Nobody knew how enthusiastic the laundry customers would be, or how busy the business would be. But on our fifth day of operation, we realized we needed another washing machine. Since the JRMK network had set the rule that each kampung would get only one "start-up package", our cooperative in Kampung Akuarium had to find a way to get another washing machine. Luckily, one of our cooperative members had a machine that wasn't being used, so we made a deal with her to use that machine, and in exchange she would get a discount on laundry services.

Some background on Kampung Akuarium:

(Mus) Kampung Akuarium is the name of a long-established informal settlement built on shoreline land next to the Jakarta Aquarium, from which the community takes its name.

- **Eviction crisis:** In 2016, long before the cooperative, our kampung faced an eviction by the Jakarta government and our houses were bulldozed. During the five years that followed, there was a lot of politics, a lot of struggle to rebuild their community.
- **Forming a cooperative in 2018:** One of our important acts to rebuild our kampung was to form a cooperative, which would be a legal body in the kampung to negotiate and organize. The cooperative in



Kampung Akuarium was formed in 2018. There are a total of 103 members so far, out of a total 241 households in the community.

- **Rebuilding the kampung in 5 multi-story blocks of flats:** After the local elections in February 2017, the new governor of Jakarta (whom the JRMK network had helped to get elected, as part of their "political contract" with the mayor) was willing to rebuild their kampung in a new form, as five low-rise blocks of housing, which the people designed and will manage collectively, but the city built and paid for.
- **Temporary housing:** While the new buildings were being built, which took a long time, the governor provided temporary housing so everyone could stay on the site. They started construction in 2018, and two of the buildings are now finished and occupied. The other three will soon start. It's a famous project in Jakarta, and has been a real breakthrough for the cause of on-site and people-driven housing redevelopment.
- **241 families total:** When all 5 buildings are finished, they will house 241 families. As families move into the buildings, they join the cooperative. All the 103 families now living in the two finished buildings are cooperative members. The kampung buildings are maintained by the cooperative.



Tenure terms still under negotiation in Kampung Akuarium:

The JRMK network has worked with its legal team to propose two possible schemes to the government for how the Kampung Akuarium housing will be managed:

- Freehold ownership of land by the cooperative, through a transfer of land rights.
- Formal rights to build and utilize the buildings, held by the cooperative.

The current governor is coming to the end of his term, and these kinds of land rights transfers are supposed to be applied for at least a year before they are implemented - which is already too late. So the JRMK and its allies have requested a formal MoU between the governor and the Kampung Akuarium Cooperative to continue to move forward with the stages of land rights transfer. Meanwhile, the Kampung Akuarium residents will remain in the buildings (both the completed buildings and the temporary housing) with the status as renters, but living rent-free because of the Covid crisis.

4. How the cooperative laundry fits into the kampung

(Gugun) There are lots of families in the kampungs who won't be able to afford the laundry service and will continue to wash their clothes by themselves, as they have always done. But it's not just a matter of affordability. In many kampungs in the JRMK network, there isn't sufficient water to do the washing, or the water is very bad, dirty and polluted. Washing clothes requires a lot of water. So we think a laundry service that charges 6,000 rupiah (US\$ 40 cents) per kilo will be very helpful for many people in those situations. Kampung Block Eceng makes a good example. The kampung is in the Maura Angke area, near the port, where there are five kampungs in the JRMK network, and the water supply is a serious problem for all those kampungs. There is insufficient supply, and the water is badly polluted also.

Mr. Miming (community leader from Kampung Block Eceng): The whole Muara Angke area has water problems. It is very hard to get clean water here. For our day-to-day water needs, we have to buy our water from the water sellers, who sell the water from small water drums. Most of the residents in the Maura Angke area wash their clothes by hand, out in the lane in front of the house, where they have a small tank for storing the water they buy from the water-sellers. It's easier and more efficient to wash the clothes near the water tank, rather than hauling the water in buckets to the bathroom inside the house. And many families don't have a bathroom inside the house for washing anyway. Some families in the kampung have small washing machines, with an agitating tub on one side, and a smaller spinning tub on the other. But they still have to buy the water and then pour it into the machine to make it work. Bigger washing machines are not possible here, because they need a stable water supply. Sometimes there is no power to run these machines anyway, since the electricity supply is not consistent.

Here, if a woman wants to wash five kilos of clothes by hand, for example, she will need at least 80 liters of water, and it will cost her about 20,000 rupiah (US\$ 1.40) to buy that much water. She will still have to buy the detergent and spend the time washing. And if she has one of those small washing machines, she will also have to pay for the electricity. That's why it gives them so much benefit to do their laundry with the cooperative laundry services.

Time saved for women:

(Mus) Washing clothes takes a lot of a woman's time - maybe two or three hours every day for washing and ironing clothes for a family of four or five. In the rainy season, it takes longer for the clothes to dry. For a

normal housewife who doesn't have a washing machine or dryer, she has to find a place to hang her family's clothes so they can dry in the sun - and that's not easy in crowded kampungs. Mostly they wash the clothes during the morning hours, and hang them out to dry in the afternoons, so the clothes get dry by the next day maybe, when they start ironing the clothes. If a mother sends her family's dirty clothes to the cooperative laundry service, she will be saving herself at least two or three hours of time every day. Some mothers will use that extra time to look after their children and family, or help the kids with their schoolwork, with greater concentration. But in most households in the kampung, the mothers are also working, and so they can use that extra time to do things to earn more income: sewing, vending, preparing food to sell, doing piece-work.

(Ms. Herda, a community leader from Kampung Elektro) I am a customer of the new laundry at Kampung Akuarium, and I send all my family's clothes to be washed there. This saves me at least two hours every day, which I would normally spend washing and ironing my family's clothes. I use the extra time to work with my children on their studies. And because I am very active inside the kampung, as a member of the cooperative, and also very active in the JRMK network, I have more time to visit other kampungs and coordinate all kinds of network activities.

5. Next steps for the cooperative laundry project:

(Gugun) The JRMK Network has four plans for the laundry project in the near future:

1. Let the first laundry business in Kampung Akuarium finish their first full month of operation, and then we will have an evaluation, look at how much profit they have been able to generate, how the mechanism worked and how they have been able to pull in more customers to bolster the business.

2. Next we will start a second cooperative laundry business in Kampung Block Eceng, in the Muara Angke area. The cooperative in Kampung Block Eceng has a place for the laundry all ready, and are now negotiating with the government to provide a stable water supply source to run it. The prospects for a laundry business there are good, since residents in the whole area have serious problems with water supply.

- **Many potential laundry customers here:** (Mr. Miming, cooperative leader in Kampung Block Eceng) In my area of Muara Angke, there are five kampungs, with a total of about 2,000 families. All of those kampungs have cooperatives now, but none of them have laundry businesses of any sort, because of their water problems. All those families still don't have access to clean water and so they face big problems with clothes washing. We already have a very big need for the laundry service here, and so we are optimistic the laundry service will go well and many people will bring their clothes to the cooperative laundry to wash. Many people here are already having their clothes washed at laundry businesses outside the kampung, which charge the normal rate of 7,000 rupiah per kilo.

- **And more supporters of the laundry service from outside the kampung:** (Gugun) Cooperatives are not only for communities. A group of professionals who are working with kampungs in Jakarta have come together to form their own cooperative too. The staff from UPC and Rujak Center for Urban Studies and architects and professionals who work with the kampungs and support the JRMK movement - but don't live in the kampungs - are saving their money together in their own new cooperative, which has its own fund. This new professional cooperative plans to collaborate with the cooperative in Kampung Block Eceng to help build their laundry business. The funds to build the network's second cooperative laundry business will come from three parties: from the cooperative in the community, from "package" loan (from ACHR funds) and from the professional supporters cooperative. In Kampung Akuarium, it was easy to set up the laundry because they already had a good place ready for the machines, in the brand new building. In Kampung Block Eceng, it will take more work to make a proper place for the laundry and to get a proper water for it, and that will take more investment.

3. Then we will start more laundry businesses, based on where the customers are: (Gugun) From the Kampung Akuarium laundry business, we will look to see which kampungs already have a good number of stable customers, and those kampungs with stable customers may then become candidates to start their own cooperative laundry business, with the "starting package" of machines and support from the network. That way, not all the kampungs will have to come to Kampung Akuarium any more, but will have their own cooperative laundry business, or can choose whichever cooperative laundry is closer to them.

4. Finding new sources of funds to buy more "packages" of washing machines in the future: (Gugun) We will make use of the "package" loan repayments from the kampungs that already started their laundry businesses to buy more machines, to start more laundry services. But the loan repayment will take many months, and we cannot wait on that, or the growth will go too slowly. So we also plan to work with the kampung cooperatives to make use of their own cooperative funds, for the laundry enterprise and other kinds of cooperative enterprises. Each of the kampung cooperatives in the JRMK Network has its own money. Each cooperative has its own cooperative fund, made up of the collective savings among the coop members in the kampung. So if we can start tapping some portion of those cooperative funds, to blend with the repayments

and outside funds, the cooperative members will become shareholders in their laundry business at the same time the laundry project scales up.

STRATEGY: Using the cooperative laundry service as another way to strengthen the cooperatives and to strengthen the network: (*Gugun*) This laundry initiative was started as an effort to support the cooperatives to develop the ability to manage their own kampung, in different ways. And managing their own kampung means doing things which give service to cooperative members and make their lives better. Not just laundry: the cooperatives in the JRMK network also have the rice distribution project, which provides good quality rice at a cheaper price to members. And in whatever enterprise the cooperatives start, whenever there is profit or benefit, instead of going out of the kampung, it comes back to them and stays in the cooperative, and makes their economic life better. In Kampung Akuarium, for example, the cooperative itself is now the official manager the new land and the buildings - not the government or any private company or agency.

We want to try to build a togetherness which includes every single person in each area and each neighborhood within the cooperatives. This is important because in Jakarta now, everything is individual. Most people in this city are doing everything by themselves. They live by themselves and survive by themselves. People here are alone. For some people who can afford things, that individual system may be OK. But for people who cannot afford things, we want to make the cooperative, which can guarantee that people who are members can afford their basic needs - but *together*, not individually.

Coop Laundry update (May 24, 2022):

- **Next laundry planning in Maura Angke area (which includes 4 cooperatives).** They have a place all ready, but water supply still bad and dirty. No municipal piped water yet. So they are using the laundry project strategically to bolster their negotiations with city gov. for improved water supply in the community, making a water distribution plan, surveying needs, etc. In short term: a system of tankers (4,000 liters each) delivers clean municipal water to points throughout the community, where there will be tanks, and cooperative will organize water distribution from those points. 1 tank for every 20 houses. Longer term plan is piped municipal water supply, but very expensive to bring that infrastructure to area.
- **Laundry in Maura Angke to shared management by 4 cooperatives:** water from tank will be ok for the washing machines, because there is an electric pump to make pressure. As long as supply is clean and sufficient, so they negotiate for that. Only one laundry to be set up, but the 4 coops in the area will share the paying back of the laundry loan, and share in the management of the laundry.
- Maura Angke area, near coastline, lots of flooding problems, bad conditions.

CASE STUDY 4:

Public kitchen for women market porters in Yogyakarta

Exchange rate: US\$1 = 14,300 rupiah (IDR)

For more information about this project in Yogyakarta, please contact Mul at the following email address:
sistersindanger@gmail.com

Yogyakarta (also called "Jogja"), the only Indonesian city still ruled by a sultan, is considered to be the place where all the flowers of Javanese arts and culture are preserved and cultivated and appreciated: things like shadow puppets, silversmithing, batik, poetry, gamelan orchestra, masked classical dance, cuisine and ornate architecture. One special thing in Jogja that isn't often included in these lists, but is no less a beloved Jogja institution, are the women porters who ply their trade in the city's traditional markets. In most Asian cities, the ones who carry things in and out of markets are men. But in Jogja, the porters who heft great loads in baskets, bundles and boxes on their backs, shoulders and heads are almost all women - and a lot of them are elderly women, sixty to seventy years old - a few even closer to 80!

You will have a hard time finding a more hardy, resourceful and resilient group than these women market porters, called in Indonesian *buruh gendong perempuan*. It's a hard job, and most of them do it because they are poor and need to sustain themselves and their families. Some used to work in factories, before they closed down during the 1997 economic crisis, but many have worked as porters for decades and prefer the freedom and flexible



hours of being self-employed to a factory shift. Most of the women live in villages on the outskirts of Jogja, and commute into the city each day by bus, starting their day long before the sun rises, and reaching home long after it sets. To save bus-fare or commuting time, some of them find a quiet spot to sleep right in the market, along with other market laborers, and go home only on weekends.

These intrepid porters carry loads of fruit, vegetables and dry goods in baskets or bundles strapped to their backs and shoulders with a long woven scarf the women always carry with them, called *selendang jarit lurik*. The loads they carry - even the elderly ones - range from 25 to 50 kilos and would make most healthy adults stagger. The sellers in the market usually pay the women 5,000 rupiah (US\$ 35 cents) per load, but buyers or shoppers often pay more - 6,000 to 10,000 rupiah (US\$ 40 cents - \$1) per load. On a busy day, a porter could earn at least 50,000 rupiah (US\$ 3.50).

The women porters have their own union to support each other, which they call *Paguyuban Sayuk Rukun* ("Spirit of Harmony Association"). The porters' union, which is supported by Yasanti, a Yogyakarta-based NGO, organizes health and training programs, runs its own savings and loan program and advocates as a block for all sorts of issues which concern the lives and livelihood of the women porters. The union has about 412 members and brings together the women porters in four markets:

- **Beringharjo Market**, on Malioboro Street, is in the city's central shopping area and caters to both locals and tourists, with just about everything for sale: food, textiles, handicrafts, clothes, cheap watches. There are about 220 porters working in this market, and they're all union members. During the pandemic, the number diminished to 160 porters.
- **Giwangan Market** is a fruits and vegetable market, with mostly local customers. (137 porters, reduced to 98 during the pandemic)
- **Gamping Market** another specialty fruit market, mostly for locals. (42 porters, reduced to 35 during the pandemic)
- **Kranggan Market** is another small traditional food market for locals. (13 porters, reduced to 9 during the pandemic)

At the beginning of the pandemic, all the city's markets were forced to close down. Later, under various levels of lockdown imposed by the government, each with its own set of rules, the markets were allowed to operate under certain conditions. During a "Level One" lockdown, for example, only 50% of the market kiosks were allowed to open. Whenever the rates of infection increased, the markets would have to close again. It went up and down. The tourist trade almost completely disappeared.

All these closures and restrictions meant fewer customers and dramatically reduced income for the women porters. Conditions got very bad for them. During the pandemic, the most they could earn was 25,000 rupiah (US\$ 1.75) per day - less than half their normal earnings - and there were plenty who couldn't earn even that much. To add to their troubles, the Beringharjo Market has since 2006 been locked up at night, so the women who wanted to save on bus-fare couldn't sleep inside the market. During the pandemic, some fifteen of them were forced to sleep rough on the streets around the market.

Meanwhile, lots of civic groups and development organizations in Jogja and other Indonesian cities were responding to the terrible circumstances of the pandemic with an outpouring of solidarity with the people who were suffering from the direct and indirect effects of the pandemic. They distributed masks, hand-sanitizer and packets of essential food staples and set up lots of public kitchens to prepare meal packs that were handed out to hungry citizens. As well-intended as all of these *gotong royong* ("people helping people") efforts were, most of them were reaching people only randomly on the street, without any sustained assistance to any particular needy group. And Jogja was full of very badly-off urban poor during those times.

M. Berkah Gamulya ("Mul") is a community activist who used to work with the Jakarta-based NGO Urban Poor Consortium (UPC) on their projects with urban poor communities. Now he runs a cafe, but when the pandemic forced his cafe to close, Mul joined forces with his friend Dodok Putra Bangsa, who still works with UPC, to start their own public kitchen. But instead of cooking and passing out meal packets to people at random, they decided to focus on one particular group of urban poor and give the lunch packets to the same people every day, so they could eat properly, in a more sustained way. There are, of course, many urban poor groups in Yogyakarta, but the group they decided to support was the women porters who work in those four traditional markets - especially the Beringharjo Market, where the greatest number of porters worked. So they called their public kitchen *Dapur Gendong* ("Kitchen for Porters").

After discussing their plan with Yasanti and the women's porter union, they settled on the arrangements with the women porters. Mul and his team (which included volunteers, university students, unemployed people and even professional chefs) would prepare the meals once a day, in the morning, and then drop them off at the market entrances at noon, where representatives from the union would meet the team and distribute the lunches to their members inside the market, with no big fuss. It was the same place and the same time every

day, five days a week, Monday to Friday. *Dapur Gendong* planned their cooking and fund-raising in one-month batches, so the women would know they could count on those meals for at least a month (20 - 25 days of meals). That way, the project gave the women at least some sense of security and safety - at a time when their earnings were very low and uncertain. As Mul put it, "That way, the meals not only provided nutrition, but they helped the women psychologically, because they knew that no matter how much income they got each day, they would always have something to eat. If a woman knows she can count on getting a good meal almost every day, she can save her earnings; she can plan."

To turn the project into a genuinely community-driven public kitchen, *Dapur Gendong* made good use of social media to spread word about the project and to mobilize donations and volunteers from around Indonesia and Jogja to help. They used Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and posted daily online reports which included the lunch menu as well as photos of the volunteers in the kitchen and porters at the market. They also posted weekly online reports which detailed how much money they had raised and how it had been spent, as well as how many women they had and how many volunteers helped that week. At the end of each one-month batch, they published a full report online, which everyone could read.

The public kitchen project began in October 19, 2020, and it soon captivated the city's imagination, for the women market porters are a much-loved institution in Jogja and many wanted to chip in their bit to help these hard-working women. Stories about the project appeared in print and online newspapers. Mul believes that because they focused on one clear group that was feeling the impact of the pandemic very badly, and because they made their operation very transparent, with those daily and weekly online reports, it was easier for the larger public to engage emotionally with the kitchen project and want to support it.

Most people donated money, which *Dapur Gendong* used to buy the ingredients for each day's cooking. They also used a fundraising platform that is popular in Indonesia called Kitabisa.com, which makes it very easy for ordinary people to donate small amounts of money to social projects like this one. But they also got donations of rice and other ingredients from local NGOs. One NGO, for example, donated 600 kilos of rice for one month's batch of lunches. Farmers also contributed to the project by donating vegetables and fruits. Dodok has good links with a union of farmers around Jogja, and when the public kitchen was first taking off, the farmers sent big loads of rice, vegetables and watermelons to the kitchen. There was strong solidarity from everyone - and that solidarity continues today.

When they launched the public kitchen, the first thing they did was to call for volunteers to help cook and pack up the lunches every day. And as luck would have it, some of the volunteers were professional cooks who had worked for catering businesses and big restaurants and knew how to cook food in large quantities, improvising the menus according to what donated ingredients were available. They cook all kinds of Indonesian food for the lunches, which they pack in compostable cardboard boxes - fried rice, fried chicken, fish, eggs, vegetables cooked in different styles - and the menu is different each day.

Depending on how much funding they can raise, the kitchen prepares between 130 and 402 lunches each day. During the worst of the pandemic, when a lot of extra donations and food were coming in and they had big teams of volunteers to help, the team was able to expand their reach and distribute lunch packets to pedicab drivers and street cleaners - sometimes even to doctors and medical staff at the overburdened public hospitals. But the focus was always on their main group of beneficiaries - the women porters in the four markets: they were always the first to be fed.



For the first two months, the public kitchen operated out of Mul's cafe, which had to close down for the pandemic. Conditions were a little cramped, though, and it was a relief when a local NGO offered the team a bigger place, which was more outdoors, had free water and electricity, and even had a little garden where Dodok and friends could grow some vegetables to use in the cooking. After ten months in that place, the kitchen moved again to the place where they are now - a traditional Javanese open-air restaurant, with an even bigger kitchen. In the new place, the team has also started selling food to raise funds. In the morning, the place is a public kitchen, and in the evening it turns into a lively cafe, where they sell fried rice and other Indonesian dishes, and organize movie screenings and public discussions about social issues.

By December 2021, the worst of the pandemic in Indonesia seemed to be over, lots of people had been vaccinated and the markets in Jogja were all fully open again. But trade was still slow, and the daily income for the women porters was still far below the level of their pre-pandemic earnings. Mul and Dodok had enough donations then to continue with the public kitchen for another two months. After that, they are hoping the markets will get much busier, and the women will be able to earn more and get by without the meals. They'll see what happens then, whether to continue the public kitchen or not.