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INDONESIAN CAMPAIGN UPDATE

APHEDA and Binawan University, Indonesia to run innovative pilot project.

Annually over 130,000 tonnes of asbestos fibre is imported into Indonesia, a country already riddled with millions of square metres of asbestos roof sheet. Based on the amount of asbestos processed, the WHO estimated that there should be approximately 1000 lung cancer cases and 400 mesothelioma cases in Indonesia a year. Yet, health system statistics record there are zero deaths from asbestos related diseases.

In a first of its kind, APHEDA and Binawan University signed an MOU to run a pilot project at their campus in Jakarta, aimed at building the capacity of medical practitioners to diagnose asbestos related diseases and educate students and staff. This is a unique and exciting pilot with the potential to extend to other institutions in coming years and drastically improve the recording and treatment of asbestos diseases.



The first training will begin this June 2023, with Australia's Asbestos and Dust Diseases Research Institute (ADDRI) delivering a 3-day intensive clinical training to 60 medical and nursing specialists across Indonesia in the fields of pathology histology/cytology, radiology, oncology, specialist nursing, epidemiology and public health. Australian experts in these fields will travel to Binawan University to deliver the training in person, with ongoing online support thereafter.

Additionally, 200 students and staff at the university will gain a better understanding of asbestos issues in Indonesia and regionally, with presentations from our local partner LION as well as WHO, ILO, Australian Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency and APHEDA.

Following this training, APHEDA will coordinate onsite testing of in-situ asbestos materials at the University campus and run further training as well as establishing an information booth at the University's medical clinic.

Indonesian Earthquake Prompts Asbestos Hazards Training for Search and Rescue Personnel

The magnitude of 5.6 earthquake in Cianjur, West Java, Indonesia late last year claimed the lives of 334 people and a further 593 people suffered serious injuries. The earthquake damaged 53,408 houses and more than 800 public facilities such as schools and health facilities. For Search and Rescue (SAR) personnel (pictured) and local communities, the risk of exposure to airborne asbestos fibres was very high because asbestos roof sheet is still widely used in residential and commercial buildings.





Ajat Sudrajat, a ban asbestos campaigner from our Indonesian partner *Local Initiative for OSH Network* (LION), was on the ground documenting the destruction on the day of the earthquake and took these photos showing broken asbestos roofing sheeting on top of collapsed houses. During the clean-up, emergency personnel are seen desperately removing the broken roof sheet, unaware that they are being exposed to deadly, loose asbestos fibres. The communities impacted by the earthquake will needlessly suffer the legacy of asbestos-related diseases in years to come – a double burden from this natural disaster.

Following the earthquake, LION and the Indonesia Ban Asbestos Network (INA-BAN) carried out targeted training for SAR personnel and other humanitarian workers to raise awareness of asbestos related diseases and how to avoid exposure to the deadly fibres while undertaking their essential work during natural disasters.

Understanding of Asbestos Hazards for humanitarian workers in Bandung City, West Java. This event was attended by SAR (Search and Rescue) officers and various environmental and disaster response organisations.



LION also conducted mapping and took samples of damaged asbestos-containing materials at various earthquake affected locations. The results have been taken for laboratory testing and will become important evidence for future research and policy advocacy related to controlling and eliminating the risk of asbestos exposure, especially in post-disaster areas.

Sampling of damaged asbestos-containing materials at various locations in Cianjur, West Java, post-earthquake.

APHEDA partners with LION to train workers and campaign in the communities to raise awareness of asbestos hazards, provide health checks and to advocate for a ban of this deadly material in Indonesia.

Australian unionists visit LION in Bandung

APHEDA partner the *Local Initiative for OSH Network* (LION) warmly welcomed APHEDA & ASU NSW/ACT Services Branch members - Maddie, Nick and Bella - to the LION office in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia.

LION is well known by APHEDA members for their work in campaigning against the use of asbestos in Indonesia. Maddie, Nick and Bella were surprised to learn from LION that asbestos is so readily available to purchase in Indonesia. Using the Indonesian Online Shopping App 'Tokopedia,' you can search and purchase *asbes* (asbestos) for approximately 60,000 IDR the equivalent of \$6 AUD per meter. There is no hazard warning. No alert to people in Indonesia of the grave risk to their health and safety when buying or selling asbestos.

"Having lived most of our lives with an asbestos ban in Australia, we were shocked to learn just how widespread the use of it is. It is everywhere in Indonesia – in homes, in kampungs (local villages), in schools, in workplaces. Working people and their families are exposed to asbestos every day."

Indonesia sits in the Ring of Fire and is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world. Following any major disaster – such as the recent earthquake in West Java - disaster relief workers, health care workers, whole communities are exposed to asbestos fibres. LION is now running training for search and rescue personnel and other front-line workers.

"The one thing that has really stuck with me, is the sheer size of what they are up against," said Maddie. They confront a strong pro-asbestos lobby with a "safe asbestos" campaign, a broken system for compensation, limitations in the ability to test asbestos in labs, limitations on the medical-expertise in detecting asbestos-related





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disease, low wages (the average wage of a factory worker in Bandung is between \$3-3.5 million rupiah per month the equivalent of \$300-350 AUD) and very little bargaining power.

Nevertheless, LION successfully campaigned for an asbestos ban in the City of Bandung and continues to advocate for worker and consumer rights to compensation for exposure to asbestos. They run local Work Health & Safety training and workshops with union members and whole communities, performing health checks and material sampling. LION, through their coordination of Indonesian ban network, lobbies for policy change at the national level with other civil society actors.

Opportunity! Volunteer at LION, West Java

After undertaking a needs assessment, APHEDA, LION and Australian Volunteers International collaborated to offer three volunteer positions at LION (six-month placements).

Please circulate to appropriate networks and if you have anyone in mind who would be a great fit, please encourage to apply and APHEDA can nominate as a preferred candidate.

<https://www.australianvolunteers.com/assignments/asbestos-removal-operative-trainer-in-indonesia/>

<https://www.australianvolunteers.com/assignments/fundraising-mentor-asbestos-in-indonesia/>

<https://www.australianvolunteers.com/assignments/campaign-amp-networking-officer-in-indonesia/>



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