

****FROM A VISIT, A HOUSE OF HOPE WAS BORN****

****The Story of Building a New House for the Bhakti Luhur–ALMA CBR Program on Sumba Island****

A new house now stands tall, embodying a long history marked by cross-border friendship, struggle, collaboration, and a steadfast commitment to advancing the mission of service.

Located in Waikabubak, West Sumba, this new structure proudly supports the service mission of the Bhakti Luhur–ALMA Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) program on Sumba Island. Constructed through the efforts of ALMA Puteri and with support from Kindermissionswerk and KZE Germany, this building represents much more than mere bricks and mortar; it is the culmination of a long journey.

Behind its walls and roof lies the inspiring story of the pioneers who initiated this mission, those who have faithfully continued it, the partners who placed their trust in the work, and the collaborative spirit built on patience and responsibility. Above all, this house stands as a testament to how a small gesture of care can grow into a significant undertaking when driven by love, trust, and cooperation.

It All Began with a Meeting

The story of constructing this house began when Claudia Rup, the Kindermissionswerk Coordinator for Asia, organized a meeting with various partners working in Sumba. Bhakti Luhur was also invited to attend this gathering.

At that time, I attended in my role as the Project Manager for the Bhakti Luhur Adoption Program. Before the meeting, I had reached out to Claudia Rup with a simple request: I asked if she would be willing to visit the Bhakti Luhur–ALMA center in Waikabubak, either before or after the meeting.

The request was straightforward: “Could you visit Bhakti Luhur Waikabubak before or after the meeting? It would be helpful to see if any assistance could be provided.” At that time, Sr. Flora and the PERKASIH group mentioned an existing plan to renovate the house in phases.

The intention to repair the house was clear. However, the challenge lay in securing sufficient funding. Thus, the original approach was to address the repairs gradually, based on available resources. Little did anyone realize that this modest visit would ignite a vision for a much grander renovation project.

When a Visit Changed Everything

Claudia finally experienced the condition of the house in Waikabubak firsthand. The extensive deterioration was alarming. When Sr. Harti and our group purchased the property, the house had already been standing for around 20 years, highlighting the significant repairs needed.

What Claudia observed was shockingly different from the accounts I had previously shared. The urgent need for improvement was tangible, making it clear that a more suitable facility was essential for the ministry's work.

From that moment, Claudia felt a deep commitment to help in the renovation and reconstruction of the house. An inspiring idea began to take shape: rather than settling for incremental repairs, the house would be transformed into a fully functional and inviting space for the ministry's purposes. From a single visit, a renewed sense of hope emerged, paving the way for a brighter future.

Starting with a Mountain of Documents

However, good intentions alone do not automatically get construction underway.

The journey had only just begun.

I had to study various files, requirements, and project documents that needed to be prepared and submitted through the collaborative framework established with the relevant parties at the Diocese of Aachen, Germany.

There were so many documents.

There were numerous requirements, too.

There were many things to study and understand.

For both me personally and Sr. Elis Uran, this was a completely new experience.

It was certainly not easy at first.

But we maintained a specific mindset:

“After all, we are the ones receiving help. If the process requires learning, then we learn.”

That is where the learning process began.

The assistance we received turned out to be about more than just building a house.

It also became an opportunity to learn how to work more professionally—meaning being more communicative, collaborative, critical, and creative.

Learning to Work Professionally

The construction process involved multiple stakeholders. This included the Project Manager, administrators of the Bhakti Luhur Foundation, Mbak Pupu (the Project Coordinator for Indonesia), the construction team, the ALMA community, the sisters, and various others providing support both locally and from afar.

Everyone had a key role to play, and effective communication and collaboration were non-negotiable. Each individual needed to share the same commitment to ensure the project's success.

The journey was not without its challenges; we encountered numerous obstacles. Adjustments and changes were essential throughout the construction process. However, these changes could not be

treated lightly. Any alterations to the original plan required a formal request. Implementation could only proceed once approval was granted.

While this process might have initially seemed convoluted, we learned a crucial principle: trust must be accompanied by responsibility.

Three-Stage Reporting: Narratives and Audits—Learning from Experience

Project accountability was managed through narrative reports and audits conducted in three stages.

For some, the term "audit" might sound intimidating. However, for those of us involved in the house construction project, the audit became an integral part of the learning process.

With each successive experience, we gained a deeper understanding of effective project management. We learned how to:

- Prepare reports
- Maintain documentation
- Account for the use of funds

- Communicate effectively when changes occurred
- Be receptive to evaluation

Ultimately, this entire process provided us with invaluable lessons in professionalism, transparency, accountability, and integrity.

Why Is Germany Willing to Help?

A question that arises is: Why are partners from Germany willing to support the work of Bhakti Luhur–ALMA in Sumba? The answer is closely linked to the long history of friendship between Bhakti Luhur–ALMA and Germany.

This collaboration did not begin simply with the planning of the house in Sumba; its roots trace back to the early days of Father Paulus Hendrikus Janssen's mission. When ALMA was first established in Madiun, relationships and partnerships with German counterparts began to form.

Initially, the focus was on Father Paul Janssen's work at Widya Mandala Madiun. One significant form of support was aimed at the catechetical students in the program established by Father Paul Janssen. These students were allowed to receive an education to prepare themselves for serving the development of the Church and the Indonesian nation.

Simultaneously, attention began to shift toward assisting children with disabilities. They were provided with access to education, housing, and essential life necessities, specifically shelter and accommodation. From these early efforts, the relationship evolved and grew stronger.

From Madiun to Sumba

What started in Madiun blossomed into a lasting friendship. It began with catechetical training for students and support for children with disabilities, as well as providing educational and residential assistance. Various social and humanitarian endeavors have also contributed to this relationship, which has endured, evolving to meet the changing needs of the times.

Today, one of the fruits of this bond can be seen on the island of Sumba. The center for the Bhakti Luhur–ALMA Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) program stands as a tangible manifestation of a friendship built over decades.

Although Madiun, Malang, and Sumba are far apart, and Indonesia and Germany are separated by thousands of kilometers, a shared concern for humanity serves as a bridge connecting them all.

No Great Endeavor Without Pioneers

The home that stands today is closely linked to the long history of ALMA's work on the island of Sumba. Before this new home was established, many individuals paved the way for its creation. Some arrived with limited resources, while others began their journeys in a spirit of great simplicity. Many contributed to building the community, walking alongside the children and their families, and persevering through challenges to sustain this mission.

Among those worthy of remembrance are Ibu Harti and Sr. Eta Dondo, who formed the initial team to conduct site surveys and manage licensing requirements. They were later joined by a second team, which included the late Sr. Genoveva Eva (serving the faith mission), Sr. Elis Witin (a CBR practitioner), Erni (a social work intern from IPI), and Ibu Yuli Loka (a physiotherapist from SMPS). This team initiated and pioneered the first ALMA community in Sumba, located at "Kilo 2," right behind Idola Restaurant.

It was through the efforts and courage of these pioneers that the seeds of ALMA's work—encompassing both a mission of faith and a mission of love—began to flourish in Sumba. They moved forward together, dedicating Sundays to the faith mission and weekdays to CBR activities. These initial seeds were nurtured and sustained by the generations that followed

Remembering Those Who Came Before Us

As this journey unfolds, we must honor the late Sr. Genoveva with deep respect and gratitude. She devoted her time, energy, heart, and life to the work of service.

Her legacy is an integral part of the history of ALMA in Sumba. As the journey progressed, the baton of leadership was passed from Sr. Harti—affectionately known as Ibu Harti—to others.

Sr. Sisil Murwati and her team, along with Sr. Flora and her team, and ultimately Sr. Regina, have all continued the important work initiated by their predecessors. They did not start from scratch; rather, they built upon what had already been established by the previous generation. Their task was to nurture, develop, and advance this vital mission.

A Relay Baton That Must Not Be Dropped

The work of service is indeed like a relay race. Some run the first leg, and when the time comes, the baton is passed to the next person. The one who receives the baton must not say, “This is not my job.” They must carry it forward, perhaps in a different way and while facing different challenges. Yet, the spirit remains the same: serving people with love and honoring the dignity of every individual.

Thus, this new home is truly the result of a long relay. There have been hands that pioneered, hands that continued the work, hands that built, hands that offered support, and hands that will use this home to serve.

August 10: A Day of Gratitude

After a long process, the house was finally completed, and the much-anticipated day had arrived. On August 10, the blessing of the new house took place, marking a day filled with joy and gratitude.

In attendance were the Regent of West Sumba and his officials, the Bishop of Weetebula, various priests, religious brothers and sisters, members of the congregation, and ALMA sisters from nearby communities. They gathered to witness and give thanks for a project that had spanned a long journey.

The house was recognized not merely as a building, but as a place of service; a place where hope is kept alive; a haven for children and families living with disabilities to receive support; a space where caregivers can work and serve; and a community where the spirit of brotherhood continues to grow.

This House Is More Than Just a House

The house now stands proudly in all its grandeur. However, what truly makes it valuable is not the magnificence of the structure itself, but the story behind it.

It is the story of Claudia, a coordinator who wanted to witness the work firsthand and champion the cause. It is the story of a sister who dared to ask for help. It recounts the journeys of the pioneers who first launched this mission and the sisters who carried the torch forward.

It includes the dedication of the workers and the construction team who strived to complete the project, as well as the commitment of the partners who placed their trust in the mission. It reflects the support from the people in Germany who have walked alongside the Bhakti Luhur–ALMA mission for decades.

Above all, it is the story of the children and families who are the very reason this house was built.

From a Single House, Many Hopes Blossom

This new house is designed to be a hub that supports the development of the Bhakti Luhur Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Program in Sumba. Within its walls, activities such as support, education, empowerment, family communication, and various forms of care for children with disabilities will thrive.

The vision is straightforward:

- **No child should feel lonely.**
- **No family should feel they are walking this journey alone.**
- An increasing number of children with disabilities should have the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential within the community.

Gratitude to All Who Have Sown the Seeds

In the end, there are no words more fitting than: THANK YOU.

Thank you to Ibu Harti, Sr. Sisil Murwati, Sr. Flora, and Sr. Regina, for carrying the baton of leadership and service forward.

Thank you to Claudia for our long-standing collaboration. Your dedication in reading and scrutinizing every report submitted, identifying the genuine needs in Waikabubak, and paving the way for the construction project to develop the CBR Program in the Tanah Merapu region of Sumba has been invaluable.

I appreciate how Claudia presented the work of Bhakti Luhur and ALMA to the Katholische Zentralstelle für Entwicklungshilfe (KZE) through meticulous documentation, which helped earn their trust.

Thank you to Kindermissionswerk and the Katholische Zentralstelle für Entwicklungshilfe (KZE) in Germany for the trust and support you have extended to Bhakti Luhur and ALMA.

Thank you to Mbak Pupu, the Project Coordinator for Indonesia.

Thank you to the Board of the Bhakti Luhur Foundation, the Project Manager, and the entire construction team.

Thank you to the ALMA Sisters, lay colleagues, the local community, donors, partners, and everyone else whose names may not be listed individually, but whose contributions have become part of this home's history.

And finally, thank you to all who believe that **a small act performed with love can bring about great change.**

A Conclusion That Is Also a Beginning

The journey of building this house has taught us a simple lesson: great endeavors often begin with a small step. It starts with a simple request, a visit from Claudia, a dilapidated house, and an idea. This leads to a proposal, followed by reams of documents, various approval processes, numerous changes, and three phases of narrative and audit reports. Ultimately, it results in a long-term partnership.

And finally, a new house stands tall.

Yet, the story is not over;

in fact, it is just beginning.

This house will be filled with life.

Children will come, families will be supported,

sisters will serve, and colleagues will work together.

There will be collaboration and networking among all components of society and the Church.

A community will learn acceptance, and hope will continue to burn bright.

This house is the fruit of the past, a place of service today, and an investment for the future. May this new house become a home of hope for children with disabilities in Sumba.

May the work of CBR Bhakti Luhur–ALMA continue to flourish.

May the friendship between Bhakti Luhur–ALMA and our partners in Germany endure, and may the baton of service, passed down by our predecessors, never cease moving from one hand to the next.

In the end, we are building more than just a house.

We are building hope.

We are building human dignity.

We are building the future.

Praise God for this entire journey. Thank you to everyone who has been part of this story.

May this new house be used to continue serving with love. ❤️

Malang, August 14, 2026

Sr. Elisabet Witin, ALMA

Person in Charge of the Project Aachen – Jerman