

A Need for affordable housing in Banda Aceh, Indonesia

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Abstract. Banda Aceh recently received Adiputera Puritama award, an award given by the Housing Ministry for cities that have successfully manage its housing and settlement. While there is no doubt that Banda Aceh has made a good achievement in terms of providing housing for its residents, there is always a room for an evaluation of the previous and upcoming policy to improve and to develop a more effective housing policy. Similar to many cities in Indonesia, Banda Aceh experience massive urbanization although in a much smaller scale compare to Jakarta or Surabaya. This has been affected housing stocks in Banda Aceh, in particular the need for more affordable housing for low income residents, which were mostly provided during the tsunami reconstruction program. On the other hand, there is an intense plan to develop a vertical housing (Rusun) to fulfil the need for affordable housing for the public as the land price is increasing. This paper attempts to look at both available affordable housing stocks and upcoming plan of affordable housing for low income residents to support local authorities and other key players in delivering higher quality of affordable housing in Banda Aceh.

Keywords: affordable, housing, Banda Aceh

Introduction

Housing is considered as a basic right for Indonesia's citizen as stated in UUD 1945 : "every person has the right to pursue happiness, to dwell and obtain a good and healthy environment and the right to health services"¹. In line with Indonesia's Law, as agreed by the international community and stated in the Global Strategy for Shelter in the Year 2000, it is the responsibility of all governments to provide adequate and affordable shelter for all. This commitment was further strengthened by the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul, which declared that the right to housing is part of human rights. In Indonesia and most developing countries, providing adequate and affordable housing for millions of the urban poor is one of the most difficult challenges. It is predicted that in 2004, the housing backlog reached 5.8 millions units and increased to 7.4 million units in 2009 (Kemenpera, 2009). Every year more than one million housing units should be built to meet Indonesia's housing demand. In Indonesia, there are many supply problems in the formal housing sector (both the public and the private sectors).

Banda Aceh considered has relatively small population that there is no evidence of shortage of land, thus that will enable the city to meet the housing demand, in the form of houses built by the residents themselves, a practice they have been doing for a long time. However, due to tsunami and earthquake that swept away almost half part of the city in the end of 2004, affected to the decrease of housing stocks in Banda Aceh. It is estimated during the disaster, Banda Aceh lost about 100.000 houses. Nowadays, Banda Aceh, similar to many cities in Indonesia, experiences difficulty in providing affordable housing for its residents.

To rebuild Aceh, the Indonesia's government received assistances and donations from international communities. One institution who is actively assisted Aceh reconstruction program is the Asian Development Bank's, which estimated that in Aceh and Nias, approximately 14,000 completely destroyed housing units need to be reconstructed, and around 10,000 partially damaged housing units were to be rehabilitated, with priority being given to urban and peri-urban areas (Steinberg and Smidt, 2010). The design of the housing program reflected the policy of the Government of Indonesia granting a 36 square meter core housing unit to all families affected by the earthquake and tsunami, regardless of their previous housing status. By the end of 2009, the housing program had constructed 6,001 new homes, rehabilitated 1,109 houses, and provided on-site basic infrastructure to these residences (Steinberg and Smidt, 2010).

Nowadays, the current government focus on boosting Banda Aceh development by beautification. The government propose to eliminate slum areas and transform them into a walk-up flat (Rusunawa). A walk-up flat is considered a popular solution to provide affordable housing in urban areas, particularly in big cities, where land experience scarcity. This paper investigates the effectiveness of the proposed walk-up flats as well as investigates available affordable housing for low income in Banda Aceh.

Housing Policy

To address housing problems in Indonesia, national government have developed various policies and strategies; offering the low income people formal housing or public housing (RS, Rumah Sederhana and RSS, Rumah Sangat Sederhana). Formal housing and public housing have a long history in Indonesia. From the mid-1970s both central and local governments have tried to utilize the welfare concept of housing by developing public housing and urban renewal projects. Perum PERUMNAS, the National Housing Corporation is the institution who are in charge of the implementation the housing projects. Walk-up flats were introduced under redevelopment or urban renewal programs by central and local government (Winayanti and Lang 2004). Despite some questions of the successful of walk-up flats in terms of giving access to and targeting of the poor, the project still become the major government favor in present resettlement.

The government also tried to increase the housing stocks to the market and setting targets for each five-year development plan. However, despite the private sector contributing housing stock for low-income communities at higher levels than the government policies required, the total of government and private housing projects contributed only 10% of the housing demand in Indonesia's urban areas. During the 1980s and 1990s, the central and local government issued exclusive permits (location permits) for developers to obtain land for housing and urban development. Under this policy, there is a requirement that developers should build housing in the proportion of 1:3:6, meaning that in any particular site the developer was obliged to build three units of middle class housing and six units of low-income housing for every unit of exclusive housing. Since no sanctions were enforced, most developers did not follow this policy. In the case that the developer provide houses for low-income people, they were mostly unaffordable for the poor, inaccessible by public transport and far from job opportunities. Therefore, many of low-income houses are owned by either middle or high income people.

Kemenpera (2009) has some priority programs in the period of 2005-2009 such as providing rented walk-up flats (Rusunawa), facilitating low income apartments (Rusunami), building special houses, and facilitating the 'self-help' form of housing provision for the poor (Rumah Swadaya). In big cities like Jakarta, Surabaya, and Medan, where land is very expensive, the top priority is boosting the development of rented walk-up flats and low income apartment. In the period 2010-2014, Kemenpera aims to built 180 Rusunami and 650 rented walk-up flats (Rusunami) as these type of vertical housing have better access and relatively close to the centre of the city. Despite there is no evidence of the effectiveness of these vertical type of housing to house the urban poor, the national government strongly encourage the development of building Rusunawa and Rusunami for many cities in Indonesia.

Banda Aceh and Housing problem

Banda Aceh is the capital city of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam province and is covering nearly 61,63 kilometres square (see Figure 1). With population nearly 220.000 (BPS, 2008), Banda Aceh is considered has low density. In terms of housing, Banda Aceh has several small housing complexes built by the private sector. Public housing built by PERUMNAS, found in the village of Ujong Batee. Many houses for the Aceh disaster victims have also been built in this area. Provision of houses by the private sector is still relatively small. Similar to many Indonesi's cities, 90% of the housing stock were built by the people themselves. In Banda Aceh, the problem with the 'self-help' form of housing provision for the poor were that houses are located along the shoreline, where the price of the land is

relatively cheap. These were the most vulnerable at the time of the tsunami and were heavily damaged, such as in Ulee Lheu, a place almost totally destroyed as a result of the earthquake and washed away by the water.

No.	KECAMATAN	LUAS	
		(Km ²)	Persentase
1.	Kec. Meuraxa	7,258	11,83%
2.	Kec. Baiturrahman	4,539	7,40%
3.	Kec. Kuta Alam	10,047	16,37%
4.	Kec. Syiah Kuala	14,244	23,21%
5.	Kec. Ulee Kareng	6,150	10,02%
6.	Kec. Banda Raya	4,789	7,80%
7.	Kec. Kuta Raja	5,211	8,49%
8.	Kec. Lueng Bata	5,341	8,70%
9.	Kec. Jaya Baru	3,780	6,16%
JUMLAH		61,359	100,00%

Sumber : Banda Aceh Dalam Angka 2007, BPS Kota Banda Aceh.

Figure 1. Districts in Banda Aceh and coverage area (Sumber: BPS, 2007)

The current low income housing, including houses for the tsunami victims are located on the hilly side of Ujong Batee and far enough from the shore-line. The housing type follow the public housing type provided by Perumnas, wic is the 36 m² type. There is, however, a tendency of shifting ownership to middle and upper income people. The main cause is that because the location of low income housing are quite remote, so that poor people are not able to afford the transportation cost to their jobs and schools. Many of them choose to sell the houses and to rent a smaller house in the inner city. On the other hand, the infrastructure embedded in the low-income housing in Ujong Batee which is relatively appropriate, attracts middle and upper income to invest their money in there. Another interesting factor is that, the location of the low-income housing which is on the hill area provides wonderful scenery of the ocean as well as the mountain. Thus, many middle and upper income utilize the houses as villa, a place where they spent their weekend and experience totally different situation from their daily life.

The public housing built by Perumnas, which is located on the same area but further from the centre of the city, experiences different phenomenon. The Perumnas housing complex is built far earlier than the houses for tsunami victim. As many of other public housing provided by government, the main problem is on the maintenance of the infrastructure and facilities. Water supply is a crucial problem, since the collective water-tank provided by governemnt was often broken. Most resident rely their water supply on buying from vendors with quite high price. Another factor is similar to houses built for tsunami victims, is that the location is quite remote. Beside the public transportation has not fully supported yet, the time spent for reaching the resident's jobs and schools is much longer than from inner city. The result is that many of houses are abandont since the location has low access to public transportation and the condition of houses and infrastructure are deteriorated.

Another housing problem occurs in the inner city housing. Previous explanation of public housing built by Perumnas and low-income housing for tsunami victims suggests that low-income people in Banda Aceh prefer to live in inner city location by renting or buying small houses. This situation leads to an increase of density in the inner city as indicate in the draft report of Rusunawa Kota Banda Aceh 2012. The report suggests that there are nine districts considered as slum and that around 1.106 households live in slums (see Figure 2).

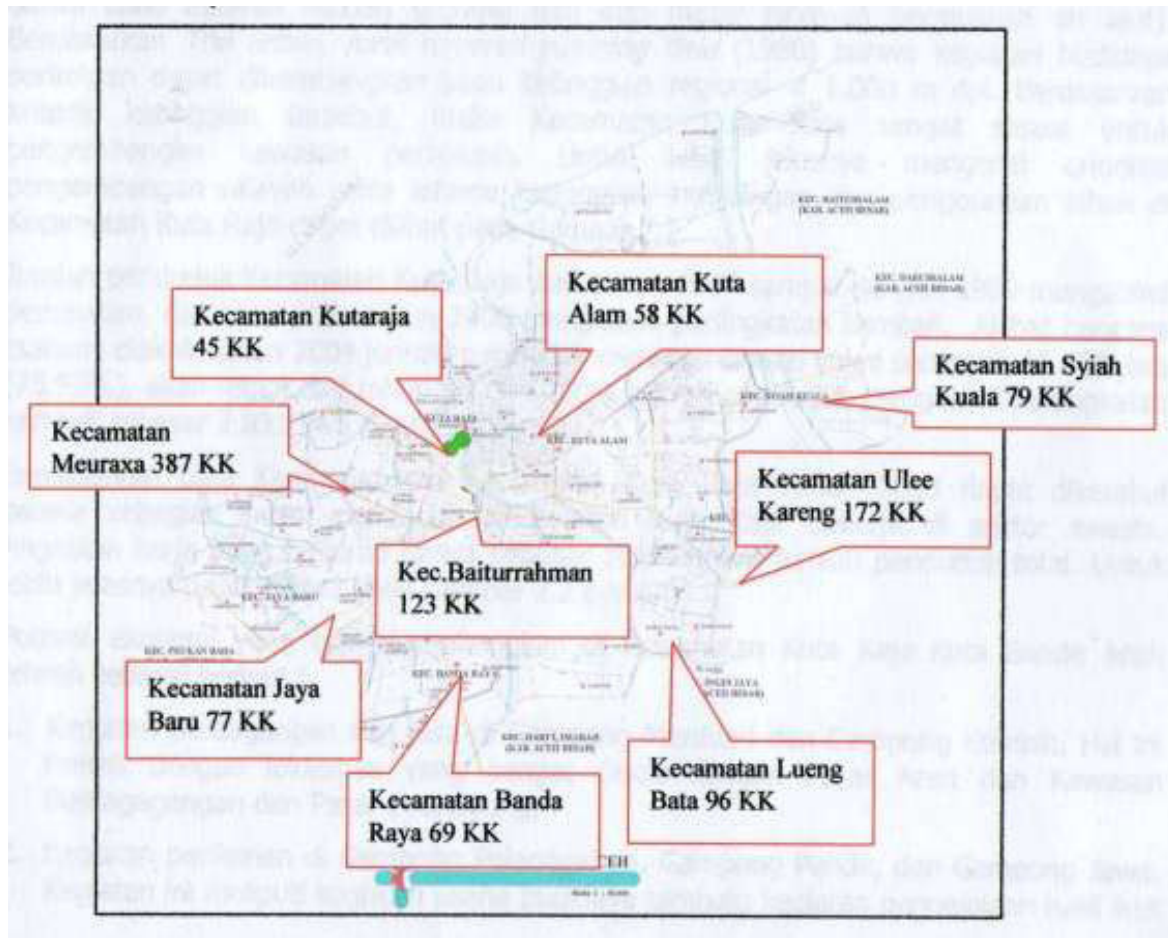


Figure 2. Districts in Banda Aceh with slums (Source: Draft report of Rusunawa Kota Banda Aceh 2012)

Rented walk-up flats (Rumah Susun) in Banda Aceh?

As earlier mention in this paper that building vertical housing (rented walk-up flats and subsidized apartment) is on the top priority of government programs to provide housing for urban poor. In Jakarta where providing houses for the urban poor exaggerated by the transportation problem, where distance is not the only difficulty but traffic jam is worsening the condition. Thus, people who live in fringe area have to spend around two hours to reach their work space. This situation is even worse during rainy season. Thus, living in a vertical building (apartment) become a lifestyle in particular for middle and upper income people to reduce the time spent for traveling to their work space.

The rented walk-up flat (Rusunawa) has been a popular solution for resettlement in Jakarta. However, there are some crucial problems, as indicated in the Kemenpera report (2009) that (1) the local government has a limitation in providing land for building the Rusunawa (2) there is low capacity in building management (3) there is no standardization on renting price (4) there is financial limitation for building management. Beside above problems, general problem for the public housing occurs in this type of public housing, which is procedural matter which tend to eliminate the poor from receiving targets. Many of Rusunawa and Rusunami are occupied by middle income people who are able to pass the administrative procedure.

In line with the government housing policy to prioritize building rented walkup flats, Banda Aceh proposes to launch the Rusunawa project in 2012. The reason for building the project is (1) to provide the housing stocks for low-income people previously lived in slum area (2) to support Banda Aceh development with land optimalization (3) to reduce the

future transportation problem.² However, the project need to be reconsidered as Banda Aceh situation is different from Jakarta. Situation in Jakarta forced people to alter their lifestyle to accept living in vertical type of building. Banda Aceh situation is totally different from Jakarta. Time spent for travelling to work and school approximately one hour, can still be tolerated and importantly, there is still no traffic jam in Banda Aceh. In terms of culture, generally, people in Aceh lives in a traditional way of life and have a strong family attachment. Thus, the succesful for upcoming Rusunawa in Banda Aceh is still questionable.

Conclusion

Banda Aceh indeed need a supply of affordable housing for low-income residents, since the available public housing could not accommodate the urban poor and the available low-income housing have several problems which need to be solved. The houses provided for tsunami victims are also shifting in ownership, so that the poor are somehow displaced from there.

The government needs to reconsider what kind of housing those residents in Banda Aceh need not what kind of housing that government desire. Cultural factor surely has to be one important consideration, since the project will be ineffective if the people do not want to live in vertical building. It can be understood that some Banda Aceh residents, who have high education and often travel to Indonesia's big cities have a certain desire for Banda Aceh, to appear as modern as Indonesia's big cities. However, it has to be realized that a certain need is suitable for a certain situation. Thus, Banda Aceh people are not yet ready for Rusunawa in 2012.

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