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The drawing of the children in the refugee camps

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Introduction

The background of the study was the social conflict between religion communities, Moslems and Christians, in Moluccas the north, Indonesia in the end of 1999; where \pm 2.048 people died, \pm 197.000 became refugees, \pm 20.000 houses destroyed and burned, \pm 173 social facilities (schools, hospitals) and \pm 144 churches and mosques destroyed (Kompas, Jakarta, Indonesia; 28 June 2004)

The government of Indonesia initiated intervention programmes, especially for the children who were primary school students, as it was predicted that children in that areas had some traumatic experiences because of the conflict, and that the experiences would have some consequences on their psychological development and their academic achievement.

The intervention programmes involved the professional psychologist, and took place in 2002-2003. Results from the counseling sessions revealed that most of the children i.e. the primary school students had those traumatic experiences. It was shown for example by the way the children told the stories about the beginning of the conflict, as the experiences just happened the day before; e.g. how they and their families handled the horrible situation, how they ran away and looked for some shelters, how they were evacuated by the army, and how at last they became refugees in Ternate. It was also shown by the fact that most of the children were crying during the counseling session. They still remembered clearly how their family members (father, mother, sisters or brothers, uncles or aunts) were killed in that chaos. They saw for example, how their heads were cut and then were carried along in a procession through the town. They, who called themselves moslems, hate Christians very much.

There had been the moslems areas and the christians areas since that conflict. The moslems areas were the areas occupied by Moslems, while the Christians in these areas were gone as refugees to some places nearby. The christians areas were areas occupied by Christians, while the Moslems in these areas were gone as refugees to some places nearby.

Ternate was a moslem area, where the refugees came from some cities in Halmahera (Tobelo, Malifut, etc.). The refugees in Ternate lived in the houses used to be owned by Christians, in churches that were not used any more, in some schools, and in some public buildings. These places were regarded in this study as refugee camps. People organized schools for the children refugees in Ternate, that was called The Alternative School. These students were the subjects of the intervention programmes.

This study will present the drawing of the children with traumatic experiences because of the conflict, in Ternate. This study will try to answer the question whether there is any characteristic of the children drawing in the refugee camps in Ternate