

Are Orphanages No Longer Effective for Child Development?

[Unpad.ac.id, 12/11] Based on the data collected by the social organization Save the Children, Indonesia ranked second as the country with most number of orphanages in the world. In the mean time, the paradigm of keeping children in orphanage is considered ineffective for their development.

“There are more than eight thousand orphanages in Indonesia. That’s at least the ones listed in social institution. If we search data from unlisted ones, it might reach 15 thousand orphanage and make Indonesia rank first,” explained Child Protection Specialist Save the Children Indonesia, Suratman.

During the International Seminar entitled “Optimization the Role of Social Workers in Protecting Indonesian Children Through Permanency Plans” at 2nd floor of Building D, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Padjadjaran University, Bandung-Sumedang Highway KM 21, Friday (12/11), Suratman said that the concept of the orphanage was very ineffective because the child will experience a lack of affection.

“In countries like United States of America and European countries where the concept of orphanage was developed, the concept has actually been left behind. Looking it like this, if there is only one caretaker in an orphanage for 30 kids, it’s clear to say that the affection given will not be enough,” told Suratman.

Suratman also mentioned that Indonesia must soon leave the concept of orphanage. Instead, there are several alternatives for children not to be kept in an orphanage. “Give them back to

their family or relatives or to the society where the kids used to live. It will be better for the child's development," he said.

To maintain the children's comfort, Suratman advised the children a custody or adoption. "Based on the UN Children Rights Commission, abandoned children are highly recommended for adoption. Adoption is safe because now we have a regulation to maintain the adopted child's relation with their blood related family," he further explained.

Meanwhile, to protect children's rights against problems like violence and abuse, the role of reliable and caring social workers is needed. "As social workers we have a strategic role in improving our capacities and protect children victims of violence and neglect," stated Senior Specialist, Department of Child Protection Save the Children USA, Shana Peiffer.

Shana said that social workers can share great contribution to child and women protection, not only through direct involvement with the children but also through policy makers that protects children rights. "In war, we cannot protect children directly so we can change point of views through diplomacy to make policy for child and women protection in war," she said.

Shana advised social worker to utilize their role to make a change so children are completely free from the problems they often have to deal with. "The aim of social workers is mostly in directing children's ability to lick wounds. When kids have so many problems, we experts have the obligation to change their lives," he suggests. *(eh)**