



Predica Verbum: Jurnal Teologi dan Misi  
Vol. 1, No. 1 (2021):47-61  
<https://ejournal.sttii-yogyakarta.ac.id/index.php/predicaverbum/index>  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51591/predicaverbum.v1i1.12>  
ISSN: 2798-1444 (online), 2798-1495 (print)

## An Asset Based Approach (ABA) toward Self-Sustaining Mission in Indonesia

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**Article history:** Received: March 25, 2021; Revised: May 11, 2021; Accepted June 05, 2021; Published: June 12, 2021

### Abstract

*Pandemic is virtually unprecedented. Churches and mission works alike are forced to think differently on how they do their respective work. With the restrictions of gathering in big groups and the economic crisis crippled the market, the mission works also suffers in what already difficult environment in Indonesia. The voices of restlessness seeing how oblivious we are in the state complacencies are finally being heard in the time of crisis, namely, pandemic. This is the time we need to listen to the Spirit and Truth to understand the sign time. In the midst of this difficult time missions are not required to look elsewhere but surrounding. It is a pathway to discover, not invent, the God given assets in next door neighbor, and that's what Asset Based Approach (ABA) is all about, contributing to the self-sustaining mission in the long run.*

**Keywords:** *Mission; Self-Sustain; Independent; Scripture; Indonesia; Asset-Based*

### INTRODUCTION

Long before COVID-19 pandemic various political issues and economic crisis forced many mission agencies to alter their strategies and reduce the expenditure of their mission funding substantially. In 2015, David Platt, the President of International Mission board of Southern Baptist Convention remarked that he has to cut funding of 600 to 800 staff workers and missionaries because of 21 million deficit in their mission budget.<sup>1</sup> While now the Catholic Church, which is well known for the well-structured church government, also announced this month that Vatican is forced to decrease the mission sending to the dioceses around the world due to Covid crisis and furthermore the

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<sup>1</sup> “Southern Baptists to Cut up to 800 Missionaries Due to Lack of Funds - Christian News Headlines,” accessed April 29, 2021, <https://www.christianheadlines.com/blog/southern-baptists-to-cut-800-missionaries-due-to-lack-of-funds.html>.

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Pontifical Missionaries Society (OPM) has warned the people about difficult months ahead.<sup>2</sup>

As mentioned above infectious disease is not the sole distributing factor on thus decrease. Politic also takes important role. Politic will know no border and no religions. Donald Trump, the former US President, was well known for defending the nation interest rather than international's. The politic dichotomy painted the picture of him as friend to the evangelical and conservative alike. Yet in his politic discourse he put the Christians missions and relief funding in difficult situation.

In his infamous fight against the illegal immigrant from the south by building the wall, he made decision to cut the aid enormously to three suspected caravans countries, which are Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador. The Christians reliefs and missions in those countries are facing really tough year, as this decision come as response to the aggressive exodus of the people, so- called Caravan, march out north to seek better life in USA.<sup>3</sup> The local leader in Honduras said that this decision is huge blunder for Trump administration because the very program they defunded in Honduras was the program to stop immigrant to come north.<sup>4</sup> These dependencies proven to be problematic in the long term, because one cannot rely on single resource and support in ever changing environment. Sadly when we are getting used to doing something, that includes the mission work, we are so fixated on one particular method and do not take time to reflect and observe how the field has been changing rapidly.

Paul Bedor, on his essays on mission and global pandemic, pointed that the initial prevailing mission paradigm of sending “From West to the globe” has turned into the form of “From everywhere to everywhere.” Several reasons contributing to that shift, one particular is “Unsustainable financial management of sending”.<sup>5</sup> Unsustainable doesn’t always necessary negate the system, but the existing condition of send away funding to foreign country is not sustainable, if that’s the only option mission work has. God has always been providing for the kingdom work, that’s absolute, and we can trust confidently to His providence. Yet, we must not neglect what God also already put in places where He leads us to go. This is not mere independency tendencies as in the realm of thought, but this is a process of discovering the biblical truth come into being in our surrounding.

The mission work in Indonesia is in struggle as well. With global crisis perpetuates even before pandemic and seemingly will last longer than expected, the mission work will likely be crippled. The Paralyzing condition is the end, especially to the one relies solely on supports from outside the country. As we are, seemingly, in threshold of political uncertainties and the tensions between superpowers are increasing

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<sup>2</sup> “Vatican Forced to Decrease Funding of Mission Dioceses,” accessed April 29, 2021, <https://international.la-croix.com/news/religion/vatican-forced-to-decrease-funding-of-mission-dioceses/13698>.

<sup>3</sup> “Christian Nonprofits Reeling from Trump Cuts to Foreign Ai..... | News & Reporting | Christianity Today,” accessed April 29, 2021, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2020/february/trump-foreign-aid-cuts-impact-ministry-northern-triangle.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Bendor-Samuel, “Covid-19, Trends in Global Mission, and Participation in Faithful Witness,” *Transformation* 37, no. 4 (2020): 255–65, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265378820970225>.

with time, inevitably it will impact the economy contributing to mission welfare as well. As stated above, the global recessions, political instabilities and volatility tensions necessitate the reducing of mission funding and resources. Question then must be posed: “How can we use whatever reduced resources God hath given for us for maximum use?” We believe ABA will be a significant approach in answering thus question.

The former ways of bringing foreigner to the country and build infrastructure, even though arguably still needed, are expensive and deemed impractical for the long run. One must come back to the truth of the Scripture where people of faith in the OT and NT understood how God taught them to recognize the gifts of creations and talents God already put in their possessions before proceeding in delivering divine revelation to the nation of Israel. We will observe the Words of God in its context and expose the message to the mission’s need nowadays, where ABA occurs as possible way of doing mission in resources scarcity.

## **METHOD**

The writing will utilize literatures study on recent finding about mission in various journals or writings and describe the relevance with mission in Indonesia. Subsequently we will do synthesis bible study from some verses in the Bible to see the general ways in OT on how God worked in the life of men to accomplish what He intended to do. We believe those selected verses in the bible will give us glimpses of what God intended His people to do to utilize God’s given resources in difficult time then and now. Having finished that we will then exposed the message from thus verses, see the commonalities and then propose alternative paradigm in doing mission, namely ABA. Finally we will observe and describe how the ongoing projects can adopt or even already has adopted thus paradigm.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

### **Observation on Biblical Narratives**

When God asked Moses to go to the Pharaoh (Exodus 3:10), he was bewildered by the animosity he imagined could befall on him. After couple hesitations questions (v.11,13), and God then asked Moses to gather the elder of Israel (v. 16), Moses stated pessimistically about possible logical inquisitions from the elders in the beginning of chapter four.

<sup>4:1</sup> Then Moses answered, “But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, ‘The LORD did not appear to you.’”

<sup>2</sup> The LORD said to him, “What is that in your hand?” He said, “A staff.”

<sup>3</sup> And he said, “Throw it on the ground.” So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses ran from it.

<sup>4</sup> But the LORD said to Moses, “Put out your hand and catch it by the tail”—so he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand—

<sup>5</sup> “that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you. (Exodus 4:1-5)

Instead of disagreeing with Moses' apprehension demeanor, which clearly showing gap on his character, God pointed a staff which Moses held and demonstrated supernatural power for Moses to behold. After shape shifting into snake, God asked Moses to touch the tail and it returned into staff. The point is crystal clear in verse 5 which was affirmation of God's sighting before Moses which brings favor to his credibility before the elders of Israel. God was so patient with Moses and chose to use whatever it is that Moses had. Later on we certainly know that the timid and reluctant Moses was the one God is pleased and He appraised him as the beloved servant which "the great orator and insecure sister" better not mess around with. (Numbers 12:1-16)

Fast forwards 600 years later in the time of the Kings, there was Elisha confronted with the grievances of the widow who was hard pressed by the debt collector and threatened to seize her two children as ransom. Elisha asked what the widow had in the house. In disbelief she told Elisha the every last thing she had which was almost empty jar of olive oil, and God worked miraculously to this household. Watch carefully that v.7 concludes with unexpected result for the widow because she had enough olive oil in her vases and even more than enough so that she could sell it and pay her debt. (2 Kings 4:1-7) We can also see in NT that in virtually two consecutive occasions Jesus asked what it is that people have before feeding 5000 and 4000 in gospel of Matthew. If we put those four passages in comparison we see similarities on how God worked out problems in existing goods people have.

Table 1. Direct Comparison

Passages Narratives	Exodus 4:1-5	2 Kings 4:1-7	Matthew 14:13-21	Matthew 15:32-39
Problems	Enslavements, Doubt	Debts	Hunger	Hunger
Resources in hands	Staff	Vases little oil	Five loaves two fish	Seven loaves few fish
Miracles	Staff became snakes, Leprosy	Abundant olive oil from vases,	Breaking Multiplying the loaves and fish	Breaking Multiplying the loaves and fish
Conclusion	Moral leverage before elders and Pharaoh	the son was ransomed, has enough food	Five thousands were fed, 12 leftover baskets	Four thousands were fed, 7 leftover baskets

God did this to show His people of His might and purpose. One might wonder why would not God bring miracles of creating something from nothing, as for the widow's case by miraculously drop money to her and pay her debt. We see in here that probably God did the favor in such ways so that the recipient of the blessings, or those who witnessed the miraculous signs had faith toward the miracles maker rather than the supernatural.

J. Alec Motyer in his famous writing of the Prophecies Book of Isaiah said that the promise of God as the deliverer requires fulfillment of thus promise. Despite the fact

that the fulfillment of the promise, or in Isaiah's case was prophecy, will not by any mean necessitate human's demands on how and when the prophecies will be fulfilled, His people also need a visible and tangible assurance that the Lord is God who is mighty will fulfill the spoken promise in the chronological history. He (Motyer) calls this *Interim Fulfillment*, a fulfillment needed to show His people that God is perfectly reliable.<sup>6</sup> The passage he takes is from Isaiah 13, the prophecies of the utter destruction of the Babel, and the interim fulfillment is the massacres of 185,000 Sennacherib's army in Jeremiah 36-37.<sup>7</sup> Arguably the writing of Isaiah 13 and 14 took place in the time of King Uzia, Jotham or Ahaz ( as Motyer said that the interim fulfillment took place in time of Hezekiah when he was under siege). The supernatural was needed for the residences of Jerusalem, as they were confronted by the most powerful empire in the fertile crescent at the time, and seeing that the mocking of their King Hezekiah and the Lord God of Israel was to no avail, must had had been an edification for the faith of the Judah.

When we come back to the table above, there is a commonality between the passages, and there are the existing resources in hands. Assuming that they had held the resources for quite some time, God deliberately pointed that out (or through prophet) and did the supernatural works on the quantities or the physical shape of the resources. And it always ends up for the glory of the miracle giver and empowerment for the recipients. ABA approach will concentrate on what God already put in the hands of missionaries and what resources God already give in the area for us to see and cultivate. We believe God works in different ways but those passages again pointing that rather looking for what's missing, we better looking for what is available.

### **Biblical Indigenous Mission**

Now when we talk about resources, ABA not only talking about tangible materials but also intangible, such as human's skills and passions. We believe ABA will work perfectly when indigenous missionary also involve in the development. It will not only make the spending lower but also enhance the existed capacities of the missionaries.

Jonathan James described Indigenous mission as a practice the Bible has been telling us all along. Jesus who came to this world in human flesh and lived and thrived in Jewish community, showed outstanding knowledge of the tradition and operated within the Judaism. When he died in the cross, raised again and ascended to heaven, the first disciples were Jew.<sup>8</sup> Andrew Walls said that Apostle Paul deliberately pointed indigenous gentiles as church leaders or elders in the church for the purpose of the local growth of local church. As the conclusion in council of Jerusalem, none must not impose particular style of life to the believers in different places and context.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> J. Alec Motyer, "The Prophecy of Isaiah," in *The Prophecy of Isaiah An Introduction & Commentary* (1993).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Jonathan James, *Christianity and Culture : How Asian Missions Can Be Modelled According to the Indigenous Principle*, n.d.

<sup>9</sup> Andrew Walls, "The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith," in *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*. (New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 7.

Jonathan believes that the tight relation of the knowledge of mission in Asia with Western understanding of what mission is perpetuating. Yet he argues that indigenous approach is what the Words of God teaches us to usher the sustainable, healthy and exponential Kingdom of God. He takes one example of how after the western missionaries in China had been banished in the past, the seeds which fell in fertile ground are nurtured with Chinese culture and setting and grew into tall and powerful tree we see now. The rapid growth is continuing on and the numbers swell enormously despite heavy persecution, by 2025 approximately, the number so Christian population will reach 160 million.<sup>10</sup>

After lexically state the meaning the word *Indigenous* which is “*originally from the country in which it is found rather than coming or being brought there from some other country*”<sup>11</sup>, he then defines the term *Indigenous Mission* as: the seed of the Gospel planted in local soil, being cared and nurtured so it grows into one of its kind mission itself, distinguishable because of the local culture and situation which shape the seed.<sup>12</sup> Jonathan traced back the *paternal* mission tendencies which brought into being the terms “Christian Rice” a dependent local Christian who regularly receive foreign support, and only come about doing work when foreigner come and ask them to do so. Thus crated what Rufus Anderson an Anglican missionary called a Father-child mission, the fund giver will take control and determine the move and growth or the locals, this is proven unhealthy as the maturity will be very slow or even keep the local as toddlers Christians. The authority of the “Father” will be powerful and the locals just do what the “Father” asked them to do.<sup>13</sup>

Usually the “Father” will also have set of westernized view of how to do the mission. The dialogue will be a dialogue of totalitarian-like where the local just do exactly what the “Father” says will work. The writer spent nine years in helping the mission development in a remote island in Indonesia back in 2002 which ended with disastrous outcome. The local Christians without any dialogue or adequate observation were forced to impose the fixed pre-conceived model of mission works in certain islands in Indonesia. What was a merry and cherry initial works turned into frustration and hitting the walls, as the “Father” keep blaming the “children”, when the work did not grow. Even spiritual condescending words like lack of faith, immature and incapable were the sole evaluations in the end of fiscal year. The gifts and talents of local people were not recognized, the performance indicators only measured by how many coverts and how many events and funds can be raised while frustration and lack of sustainability living individual are put aside from consideration. The technology resources were given freely to the local, imported from far away country yet ended up rusty and broken, because the maintenance system is not set, and people, out of their surviving instinct, fight for the ownership of the

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<sup>10</sup> James, *Christianity and Culture : How Asian Missions Can Be Modelled According to the Indigenous Principle*.

<sup>11</sup> Collins Cobuild Dictionary (London: Harper Collins, 2018).

<sup>12</sup> James, *Christianity and Culture : How Asian Missions Can Be Modelled According to the Indigenous Principle*.2

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.3

techs. Praise God two partners realized these flaws and did their own ministry according to the needs in community and through independent small supports, and it thrives until today. Yet the similar works are collapsing around the world. What worst is that broken relationship entails.

Jonathan cited John Nevius' (1829-1893) ways of setting the sustainable mission works, having criticized the unhelpful relation between missionaries in the west and the locals in the east, especially where the national workers were paid using foreign mission fund, he believed that national workers must be supported by local churches. Nevius invented the criterias for mission work to be independent and healthy, those are: Self-Governing in leadership; Self-Supporting- finances and staff, and Self-Propagating in evangelism and church multiplications.<sup>14</sup>

It is self-supporting that we want to emphasize about, it doesn't mean that we don't open to the blessings from outside, or eliminate foreigners' presence in mission field, it just mean that we are able to keep the ministry live on for long period of time, whether there are supports or not from outside. ABA will emphasize on work toward *self-supporting* aspect of Nevius' premise, where, along with that, the local skills, talents and calling will be used significantly and what he called unhelpful relationship between missionaries will be, hopefully, helpful and last.

### Asset Based Approach on Mission

What is Asset Based Approach (ABA) again? As Rosemary Braun, the chairwoman of Fusion Western Australia said, when answering the needs in the field, ABA is not merely looking for gaps or what is missing, and try to bring about resources needed to fill those gaps, but rather spend extended period of time to identify the resources in the areas, skills, gift and talent in the community and enhance those existing strengths, with resources from outside when necessary. "So it is more from the local little from outside" as she put it.<sup>15</sup>

While Cormack Russel defined it: *Asset Based Community Development builds on the assets that are found in the community and mobilizes individuals, associations, and institutions to come together to realise and develop their strengths.* He reminds us all that, ABA focus on local residents to be empowered to build civil society, where local asset are discovered, connected with others potential in the area, and then mobilize the assets on its own respect to achieve mutual purpose. The local residents will then also have the skills and wisdom to solve their own problems in neighborhood. This doesn't mean that the local will not have help from outside at all, but they are encouraged to lead the process of the revitalization of the community and will have continual support from outside when needed.<sup>16</sup> So to put it into summary the ABA is method of discovering the local resources in the targeted community, mobilized them and ask participatory

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Rosemary Braun, "Interview Record Rosemary Braun," *Fusion Australia*, n.d.

<sup>16</sup> Michael J. Roy, "The Assets-Based Approach: Furthering a Neoliberal Agenda or Rediscovering the Old Public Health? A Critical Examination of Practitioner Discourses," *Critical Public Health* 27, no. 4 (2017): 455–64, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09581596.2016.1249826>.

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involvement of local people in decision making to answer the needs and problems in their own area.

Again ABA doesn't mean that you isolate yourself from the resources from outside, but the locals will have whatever necessary in their community to solve problem they have. Local leadership must be able to make their own decisions and make strategy, skills, and passion to enhance the livelihood in the community they live in. The initial process might need support from outside to help them see the resources in their surroundings, identify with the local people the skills and passions they already have and with specific enhancement training (not training with new skill) when needed. Simply put, again, eliminating outside help is not the main purpose of ABA, indeed the initial resources needed are from outside the area.

The Anglican Church Alliance, the mission wing of Anglican Church in Myanmar in their *Consultation Report* in Yangon Myanmar 2009, write down summary of what move has the church use to establish ABA in mission work. They listed several ABA foundation points as follow:<sup>17</sup>

- Kingdom Biblical values as transformation foundation
- A mindset transformation rather than projects minded
- Facilitate, instead of taught, with tools of participatory
- Mobilize local resources will replace unhelpful dependency
- Adaptation the whole approach to local context

The emphasize need for Biblical transformation need to take place with perspective change rather than projects, meaning you can invest the best tools possible for local people and yet their mind will still attach to you for help. When we identify local resources and how they can be used in beneficial way, one can bring local people into new perspective of independency, where the proximities, availability and price of local resources will help their confident and moral.

The point of participatory rings true for Tony Booker, a mission facilitator for church development in Asia. He told me that the organization has learnt really well how their bible curriculum and tools became obsolete. Main reason was because in the process of designing the curriculum the local leaders were not invited to be part of it, they did not own it, so it will not last in local context. Should the author want to preserve the integrity of the material, one must include local leaders on the local needs on what colloquial need to be used, or example local people will understand. I recall the moment where I was translating for speaker a sentence like "People die with music still locked inside their head," instead of helping me understanding the context, he just said "Translate as I go!".

Cormack Russell remarked that in the past people ask help to their neighbor of whatever help they may need, but today it has shifted because the neighbor cannot help their next door. So people will contact service provider outside their area to solve their

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<sup>17</sup> *Asset-Based Church & Community Transformation in Asia Held in Yangon , Myanmar*, no. July (2019).

*An Asset Based Approach (ABA) toward Self-Sustaining Mission in Indonesia* problem. This what Russell said has divided people into lasting category of Providers and Recipients. He listed the different former approach of “Deficit based” against “Asset Based”.

Table 2. Deficit Based vs Asset Based <sup>18</sup>

Deficit Based	Asset Based
Problems	Possibilities
Blame	Shared ownership
What's missing	What's there
Scarcity	Abundance
Risks	Courageous leadership
Needs	Strengths, capacities, assets
Control-outside in	Lead by stepping back
Top-down	Inside-out
Do to	Do with & enable to do
Clients & passive receivers	Co-producers & active creators
Provider-led	Citizen-led
Different Perspectives of Deficit Based vs Asset Based	

From the table above we can see how different it is to see problems as opportunities in the right side of the table. More over the deliberate participatory approach will empower and enable local people to take leadership position and be encouraged to contribute in decision making and creative process. The provider will be standing in line, and will help when needed, in difficulties. Jesus Christ demonstrated this approach when He prayed for disciples in John 17:15, having stated the truth that disciples were hated because of their identity, Jesus asked the Father not to take them out from world hating people and rescue them to different world, but to keep them safe from evil people, to be sent into world (v.18), being set apart from the world (v.19). Setting apart disciples will not take place in heaven, it must be in the world!

### **Asset Based Approach Projects in Indonesia**

Having observed the understanding of what ABA is all about, it would be helpful then to see how it is implemented in various settings and various collaborations. There are 15 ABA projects nationwide after three years, two projects ceased to exist because of failures in the early stages of observation which we will discuss later on. These two examples hopefully will bring clarities on how ABA will be applied in mission works in Indonesia.

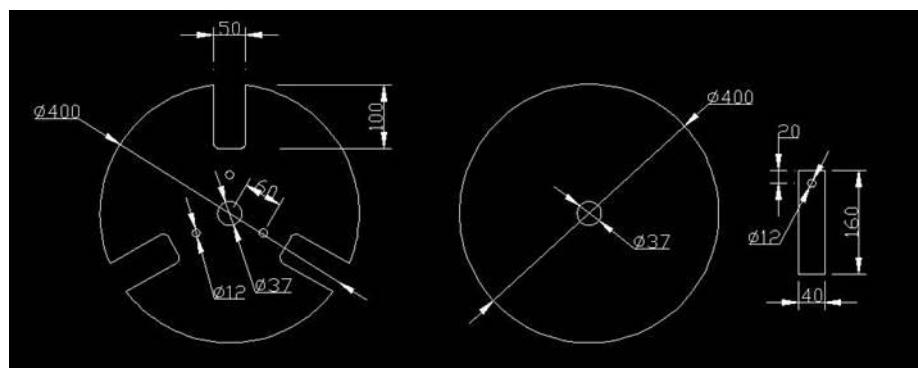
#### ***Manure Machine Project***

Our ministry to the UPG in Sumatra faces challenges during this pandemic. The restriction to worship in church, and mobility limitations also reduce the faith based organization to develop income for their livelihood too. The leadership also faces difficulties to send regular fund, as the local church is autonomy independent church, and

<sup>18</sup> “Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) - Nurture Development,” accessed April 29, 2021, <https://www.nurturedevelopment.org/asset-based-community-development/>.

they are fully aware of the difficulties churches are facing, even more in this pandemic. After much prayer and discussion with the pioneer worker over there, we could identify together the strengths and skills workers have. The most important aspect is the industrious talent God has given them in the field. They proposed to buy pellet machine to produce organic manures, as farmers sometime need to pay much money to buy manures. The leadership, R&D wings of the church also sees this as opportunities, yet another problem occurred, because of the severe pandemic in the middle of 2020, it was so expensive to purchase the machine in Pekanbaru, and have it delivered to this particular area which are 17 hours' drive with the distance of nearly 500km away.

This was where the ABA mindset kicked in. It turn out that our missionary is a vocational high school alumni and he has designed and made his own machine from scratch. He then proposed to make his own machine with his friend who is expert in wielding steels and grinding iron. He designed the machine, and even they can design their own spare part should the maintenance need to happen in the future.



The leadership than agree to send fund for him to build DIY machine. By grace of God, in less than two weeks the machine was ready, and in first trial our partners could produce 100 kg manure. Last January 2021 they produced 7 ton of manure, and most of it has been sold with affordable price to farmers surrounding the church, and as mean to reach out to the UPG who lives and never heard the gospel. They are now can live from the productions and travel to the place they never been before because of the connection they have.



Picture II. Manure Machine

The ABA approach on project we have seen here is not limited by certain, static system, but dynamic with main goal to enable our missionary to use his potential to the fullest and keep the lowest cost as possible. The participation of the locals of making decision and praying on what form of projects was needed for itself took at least 3 months. We also have fix prerequisites for the recipient of ABA fund, for example this man must have excellent ministry accountability for long period of time and is recommended by their supervisor.

### ***Water Drill Projects***

In Java the challenges are different with Sumatra. Back in 2019 the church in central Java was struggling to do their ministry because of lack of fresh water supply. This particular ministry has been struggling to go to neighbor town almost every week to get fresh water as the parched land would not yield any crops. So our director of R&D came and observed in the field that there is stream of river close to the rice field, but the water is depleted during the long drought, and the underground water is at least 50 meters deep. So drilling is a must!



Picture III. Observation of parched rice field

How then ABA approaches influence this? We ask the local to participate to the process of drilling for the water, so we offer to pay 50% and they will fund raise and work together to raise the rest. And they agreed, they even looking for the best spot and find their own trusted drilling service provider in the area. Working days and night they reached the aquifer in matter of few days. They own the projects and the water can be accessed by the farmers surrounding the church. Speaking about miracles, when the drilling process was happening, there were some culprits from surrounding areas who wanted to sabotage the drilling, they threw the crowbar to the hole we drilled and out of their amazement, and the crowbar was floating in the water. They said “The Christians are powerful!” they now are part of the community who enjoys the benefit of the water.



Picture IV. Rice Field with the water

### Implication

With the world keep changing in our midst, we need to be sensitive on how the Spirit is leading us in Kingdom's works. The ABA might be foreign for some of us, and might be difficult to apply when we are so fixed with former ways of oversight things under our leaderships. Nevertheless we must, again, pray and be ready to change and come back to the truth of the Words of God. We argue that ABA is the closest way possible for us doing mission effectively, efficiently and biblically as God hath already provided all the resources for us and enabled us to conquering them. However, ABA is not there to make the former approaches obsolete, it is not there to criticize the foreign aids and missionaries, but it is there to be, and must be part of what is already happening in the mission works. It is a trait that must be put into consideration about efficiency and longevity of a mission. We believe it is good stewardship for the kingdom of Christ. Meaning the cost and fund for mission to keep on going will be reduced significantly if the missionaries can cultivate local resources and local skills assets, thus the fund and cost work can be exponentially given to another places as well.

The fact is God is in control and He is pleased when we trusted Him and seeking wisdom in all things including make change necessarily. The difficulties that might come from applying this are there is no guarantees that we can collect precisely the immeasurable factors before we start the projects, which are characters, passions and calling for each individual as recipients of ABA, only through prolong relationships we can see that and it won't work overnight. Characters, talents and calling, all the intangible crucial factors in doing ABA must be discovered long before the project start, or you can only give tools to people who will falling down when obstacle come. As we mentioned above, our failure in one particular project was the season or period where the needs in community is seasonal. We identified the skills, we did also discover that the raw materials were abound in the area, but the needs only last for seven months, and afterward the production ceased since the demands were diminishing, and were none eventually. We learned now that ABA closely related to supplies and demands existence as micro business venture. We also cannot, for example, investing in somebody's new skills either through education or training, as there are couples missionaries ask for barista's training

and coffee roasting technique. Reason was skills and technique need to be a ready asset waiting to be enhanced by ABA, while it might sound great in the term of efficiencies, problems then occur when the area has humongous potential related to the absence of skills, and ABA cannot support that. Thus another way of helping missionaries also needs to remain in mission work. As we said before ABA is not here to replace, it is to come alongside other approaches to answer mission's field needs.

In Indonesia itself we have seen how missionaries and ministers evolve significantly on the ABA projects they are doing. The funding we entrusted to them was one time gift and they develop independently afterward with constant biannually reports and monitoring. As mentioned above, one of our workers in Sumatra for example could multiply their manure from 100 kg into 7 ton in period of six months. It was ten times the initial production! More productions meaning more revenues, more revenues do mean the extended longevity is possibly reached. While the water well project is also one time investment we did. Whereas before, in the drought area, our workers relied heavily on continual water truck supplies and continual supports. With this endeavor, the community and church have established self-sustaining farming and food generated system and relies not from outside resources anymore. It does help missions agencies and churches organization alike to reduce the spending and encourage the workers to grow in dependency solely to God. We believe Indonesia, as ABA stressed about local resources, has enormous potential yet to be discover in each and every mission fields. From Sumatra and Sulawesi in rural areas and into the metropolitan city like Bandung in West Java, we see ABA can work well as long as we can observe accurately the potential of skills and resources scatters around in the area.

### **Recommendation for Further Study**

As this writing is brief summary of ABA with couple prime examples, further research need to be conducted with more locations and potentials which are unique and distinct with one another. Believe us, we have failed too doing ABA! Three projects have closed down because we have failed to adapt to the pandemics or we trusted the fund to local who have ulterior motive. We have 15 projects nationwide now by God's grace, and we keep on praying and listen to the people in the ground. Further research on the weakness or debrief on failures are needed.

### **CONCLUSION**

ABA although started as community development strategies, is enormously beneficial to build lasting missionary works. We as a believer who want to see the abundant blessings God has provided for us must stop and reflect in prayer and study of the Words of God to see our surrounding. Again this is not about closing ourselves in isolation from our brothers overseas it is about maximize what God has put in us and the creation surround us.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Proses penulisan dan pengembangan naskah ini mendapat dukungan berarti dari Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Jemaat Kristus Indonesia. Iklim akademik yang terbuka dan dialogis sangat membantu penulis dalam mengolah gagasan dan mempertajam arah pembahasan. Masukan dari para reviewer turut memberi perspektif baru yang memperkaya isi tulisan ini. Peran tim editor juga tidak kecil dalam membantu merapikan naskah sehingga lebih jelas dan mudah diikuti.

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**Pictures**

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