The purpose of this document is to find ways to promote peace by fostering community interaction. Indonesian society is filled with examples of people working together to build things, farm, and improve the quality of life. This first page contains one Sumatran example in which community bonds are created through shared labor and shared space. The following pages discuss ways to identify opportunities, find resources, and build community by creating common space.

precedents of common ground: damar forests

In southern Sumatra, Damar forests sustain many villages. The resin from trees is harvested in moderation by all the villagers and supplements school, food and other expenses. The trees are able to survive, and the forests support a healthy amount of biodiversity. They aren’t as diverse as virgin forests, but damar forests are more ecologically beneficial than normal crop lands.

The forest is called "hutan marga" by the villagers, which means common property, and is controlled and managed by the nearby communities. This form of farming, or agroforestry, is ecologically sustainable, and depends on the cooperation of people within and in between communities. The function of shared forest land evolved over many generations and continues today.

Consider creating this system of forestry from nothing. If these agroforest industries were to be started from virgin forests by people who had never farmed, a great deal of planning, organizing and resource gathering would be necessary. How would you go about this? Consider this problem as a prototype: The decision making processes used to address it could also be used to address any other problem discussed in this pamphlet.

from concept to completion

Now that you have learned about the potential of one form of community space, consider the steps necessary to instigate a damar forest community...

1. Identify resource: available forest land, people who need money and work

2. Identify support that can be found locally: organization by locals, growing damar trees

3. Identify needs to be met by outside assistance: horticultural assistance, land acquisition, environmental impact

4. Put into action: community process, implementation plan, implementation

Now consider the benefits of such a farm system to the health and well being of a community: more income, renewed livelihoods, community members working together, improved quality of life.

Is a more fecund, integrated community less prone to violence? Could all these benefits help provide some shelter from the strife and fighting in Aceh and other areas of civil war?

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Steps to Finding Common Ground

Thousands of people have died in the 30-year conflict between GAM and the Indonesian military. The conflict continues, and will no doubt obstruct the tsunami reconstruction process. In this and other conflicts, one way to create peace is to nourish communities from the bottom up. This document outlines ways for Aceh citizens, NGO and aid workers, and government officials to consider paths of peace through grass-roots, community-based processes by creating places, opportunities and metaphors for peace.

**Four steps to finding common ground in your community**

1. **Consider challenges and opportunities:**
   - Conflict within local communities
   - Conflicts between local people and government
   - Need for community gathering space
   - Need for farm space and equipment
   - Need for drinking water
   - Need for transportation

2. **Identify community resources:**
   - Spiritual
   - Economic
   - Environmental
   - Spatial
   - Cultural
   - Natural
   - Community
   - Other local resources?
   - Other regional, national or International resources?

3. **Identify supporters:**
   - Friends and family
   - Community members
   - Local governments
   - NGO's and aid workers
   - International community

4. **Explore potential solutions:**
   - Community gardens and resource sharing program
   - Land restoration and reclamation
   - Common space and neutral, peaceful ground
   - Swap shops and market places
   - Inter-community gathering areas
   - Physical metaphor for peace

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This diagram works from left to right and shows how a specific resource in a community can yield many opportunities for a community. This is a framework for only a handful of ideas; there may be more resources, and there are certainly more opportunities. This can be a starting point for identifying resources in your community and identifying what opportunities for common ground lie ahead. The far right column is describes a “specific opportunity” such as a community garden.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>common resources</th>
<th>things found locally</th>
<th>outside assistance</th>
<th>potential benefits</th>
<th>specific opportunity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cultural</td>
<td>knowledge of tradition</td>
<td>tools, marketing, distribution, organization</td>
<td>cultural recognition, education of new generations, profit</td>
<td>producing arts and crafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community</td>
<td>garden types, plant materials, labor</td>
<td>organization, design, tools</td>
<td>food production, profit, community interaction</td>
<td>community garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>economic</td>
<td>labor, eventual management</td>
<td>business administration, organization, management</td>
<td>land stewardship, property rights, profit</td>
<td>commercial farming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environmental stewardship</td>
<td>environmental values, organization, labor</td>
<td>land acquisition, political maneuvering, restoration and environmental impact</td>
<td>land stewardship, restoration, re-acquisition of property</td>
<td>environmental restoration projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>natural (physical)</td>
<td>management, labor</td>
<td>forestry management, processing</td>
<td>building materials, profit, jobs</td>
<td>timber for houses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>religious</td>
<td>knowledge of tradition, new adaptations</td>
<td>construction, community design process</td>
<td>promotion of religious tradition, community gathering</td>
<td>mosques and religious gathering places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social</td>
<td>construction, community process</td>
<td>community design process</td>
<td>social interaction, child interaction, networking</td>
<td>community gathering places</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

for more information please visit http://courses.washington.edu/larescent
Community Garden Prototype

This garden began an identified resource: the tradition of community gardening. It then used local abilities to organize and design a plan for a community garden. There are many benefits from a community garden or any community-organized project. One is the benefit of food and profit for the community. Also, the social opportunities here are great: people working together to accomplish something and then enjoying the benefits.

common resources
common

things found locally

outside assistance
organization, design, tools

potential benefits
food production, profit, community interaction

specific opportunity

community garden

ideas for a community garden

First, try to place the community garden in the center of the village, or at least provide access for all citizens. Next, place social structures near it, as well as other important infrastructure, like a well, to create a social hub. Some communities plant an area which is communal, and is given to poor or struggling families. Consider ways to share resources in the maintenance and care of your community garden.

It might be worth while to organize a group compost pile or compost tea bucket. Also, tool sharing or a community tool shed could help the garden run more smoothly while also keeping costs down. During harvest season, people will be working hard, and when it's over, a celebration will reward hard work and bring the community together to acknowledge it.

Though seeming small these community-based events and practices strengthen individuals and villages and in some small way foster peace by providing people with sustenance for survival as well as human interaction. Following the examples of this paper can inspire other common places and promote community welfare.

elements of a community garden
- Water source
- Gathering space
- Tool shed & sharing program
- Market space
- Community/shared plot
- Private plots
- Compost area
- Harvest teamwork program

parts of a community garden area: