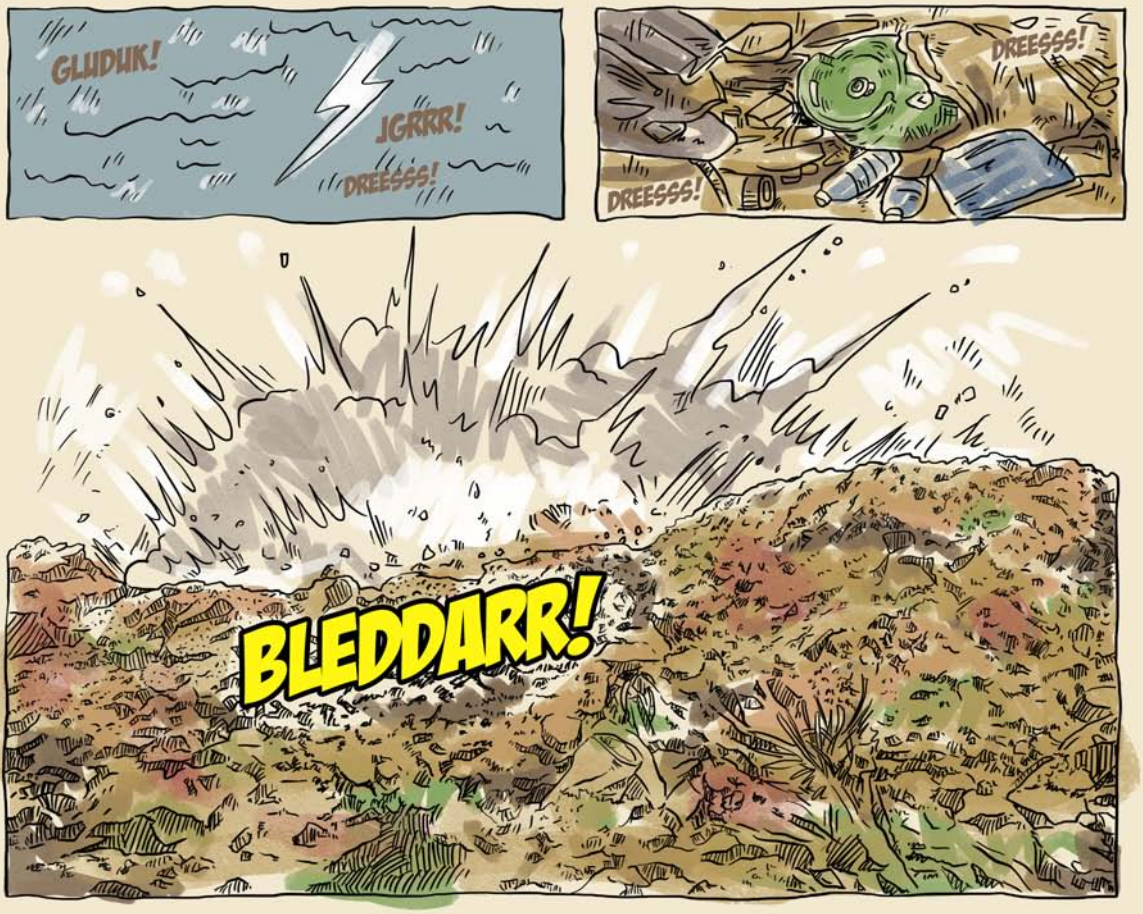
Small Solution for Big Problem

By Indri Widyanti





Leuwi Gajah, Cimahi, February 21, 2005, 150 people died in one night. A landfill (TPA) where garbage from Bandung city, Bandung regency and Cimahi city was deposited exploded and slided.

Methane gas was trapped in the garbage heap. Its concentration increased by time. Until one time, it was no longer bearable, it blew up heap of garbage and caused avalanches to the settlements.

The incident shocked many people. It also indirectly made the community of Bandung and Cimahi as the contributors for the disaster. The community had already assumed that they had done the right thing by disposing garbage at the right place.

"Disposing garbage at the right place is not the right solution," said Mohamad Bijaksana Junerosano, founder of entrepreneurship organization of Greeneration Indonesia in Bandung.

So far, we are taught to always dispose garbage in the right place and keep the environment clean. However, according to Mohamad Bijaksana Junerosano as known as Sano, the solution is not appropriate in addressing garbage problem in Indonesia.

The crucial point lies in the handling of garbage that is still conventional: heap (at home) - transport - deposit - heap (at TPA). The process actually is just transferring a small scale problem (house) to a large scale problem (landfill/TPA).

Even worse, the garbage in TPA was just heaped without any special treatment. Even if there were any treatment, the amount of it wouldn't be adequate compared to the amount of the incoming garbage.

Looking at these facts, Sano who completed school in the Faculty of Environmental Engineering, Institute of Technology Bandung (ITB) assessed that garbage management should be started at home. Through Greeneration Indonesia, Sano made a community assistance program called Garbage Management for Household (MASUK RT). This program was an attempt to create an appropriate and sustainable solution of garbage management.

Sano tried to apply the environmental knowledge he acquired in college by making a concept of garbage management that addressed five aspects, which were community participation, institution, regulation, finance, and operational technique. He saw that garbage is associated with various aspects of life, not something entirely separate.

"Garbage issue is not just about garbage, it's also about social, environment, and human life now and later. A precise and comprehensive system is needed to solve it," said Sano.

Sano regretted that there were not many parties who wanted to deal with garbage management system seriously. And if not promptly treated, garbage was not only a disaster for humans as it was in 2005 in Leuwi gajah, but also a massive damage for the environment. According to the father of one child, all parties actually have major roles in handling garbage problem, from the government to ordinary people.

Sano emphasized the aspect of community participation as the most principal stage that needed to be addressed in garbage management. He emphasized that during facilitation in Geger Kalong and Taman Sari. According to him, this stage was the most important and most effective in affecting program achievement.



However, he also admitted that to increase community participation in garbage management was the most difficult stage of overall facilitation process. "At the moment, the community especially in urban area, had already got used to instant culture so that it was hard to make them have an awareness of the importance of garbage management," said Sano seriously.

In addition, social conflict in the community had the potential to inhibit the implementation of the program. Economic background, social, and public education also colored the dynamics of community empowerment. Sano explained, in addition to environmental science, it was important for the community's facilitators to equip themselves with the accompanying social sciences as to follow the dynamics and keep the stability of program implementation.

Another difficulty experienced by Sano and the team of MASUK RT is that people are reluctant to manage the garbage since they don't get the impact directly. "People do not want to be bothered by sorting out the garbage, let alone composting. They feel that paying the garbage fee is just enough so that their houses are free of garbage," he said.

That kind of garbage management system is already common and has been run for decades. It has been stuck to and become the habits of the community. It definitely needs a long time to change. MASUK RT Program is intended to engage the community to change their habits gradually so as to create new habits that aims at reducing the amount of garbage being transported to TPA.

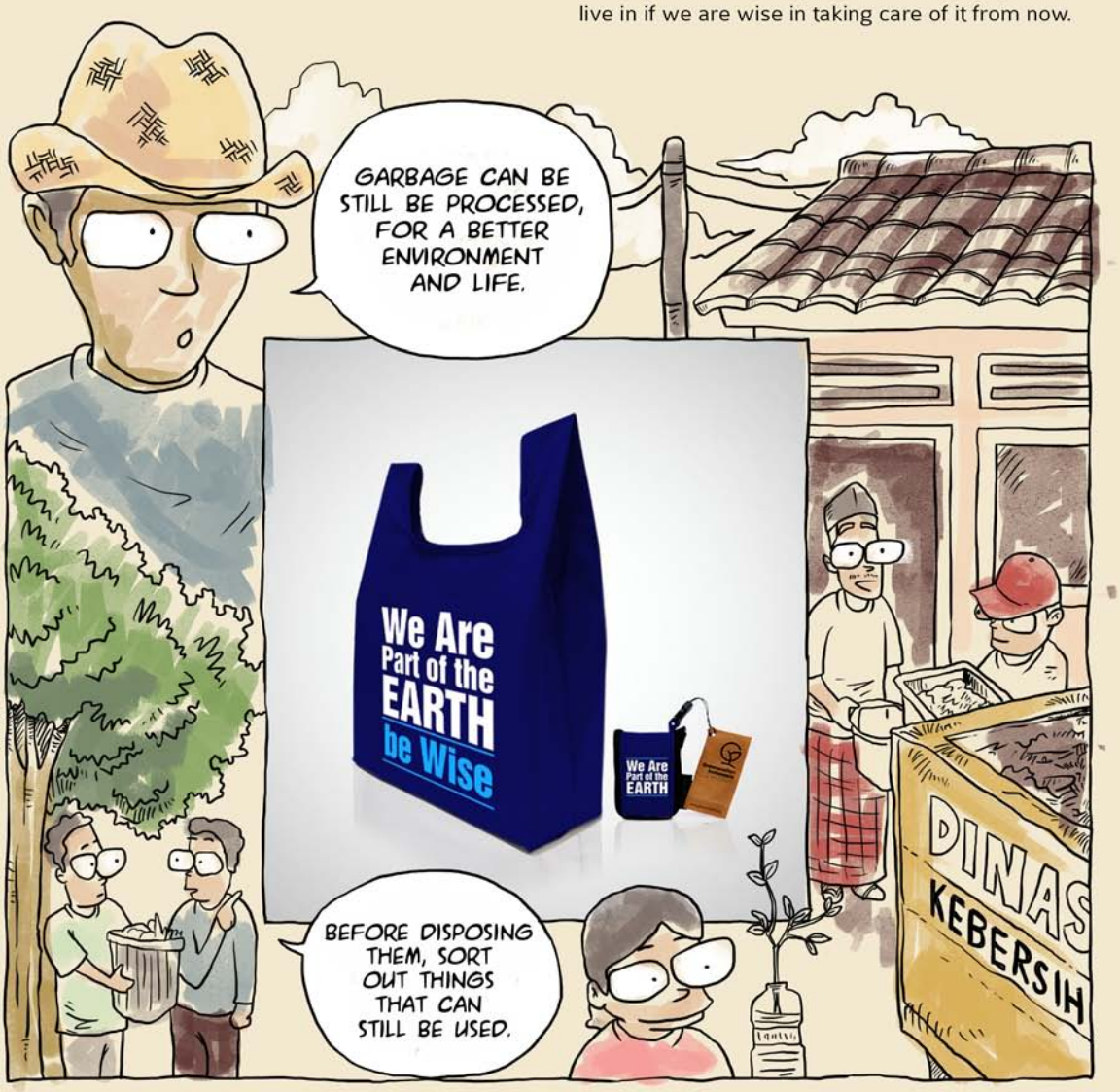


Sano explained that in manifesting the reduction of the amount of garbage being transported to TPA, it must be preceded by a reduction of the amount of garbage being produced. "It doesn't mean that we may not produce garbage, but it should be reduced little by little. If we still produce garbage, try to utilize it before actually discard it. That way, the garbage we produce will be reduced," said Sano.

Garbage reduction can be started by doing simple thing, namely garbage sorting. The garbage that has been sorted out according to its type makes the utilization and the processing of that garbage easier.

.Organic garbage that is not mixed with other garbage could be easily used as compost and be used directly by the community, either for themselves or for sale. Clean inorganic garbage that has been sorted out could increase the use value or selling price. "If we sort out the garbage, it can be useful for the environment as well for the people. Simple but have great impact if being done by everyone," said Sano.

Garbage management can be started by doing simple things from our homes. If we can minimize the disposal of garbage from our house, it will greatly affect the existing garbage at the TPA. Our environment will always be a comfortable place to live in if we are wise in taking care of it from now.



Indri Widyanti

Indri Widyanti is known as Guli. This veiled young woman was born on February 23rd, 1985 in Bogor.

Guli was deeply involved in journalistic world for more than four years. One of her unique experiences was when Guli was driven away by one officer in Indonesian Stock Exchange (BEI) for her nature as a journalist insisted her to keep asking and asking questions to the officer. Actually Guli, as a graduate of the University of Pakuan, Bogor with the major of Japanese Literature has no basis at all as a journalist.

It is her curiosity that makes Guli always eager to learn new things. Her involvement with Greeneration Indonesia in Bandung, is one proof of her desire to learn with the community. Facilitation program of Masuk RT (Immersed to Neighborhood Unit) involving people in seven Neighborhood (RT) of Taman Sari, Bandung becomes Guli's responsibility. According to Guli, everyone is a teacher and the universe is a school.

"I think therefore I am"
(Cogito Ergo Sum) is her life motto

