

# Healthy Mind, Healthy Environment

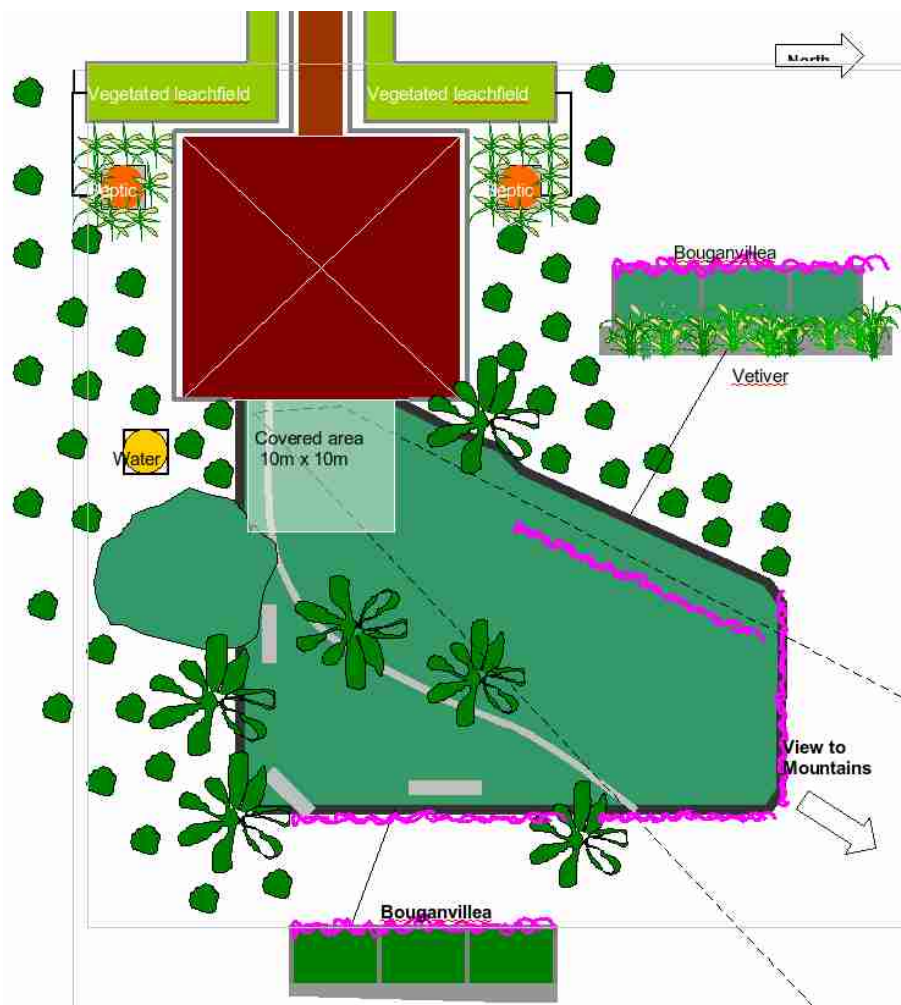
Visitors to the acute care psychiatric unit at the Jantho district hospital in Aceh Besar will quickly recognize that the facility's tranquil surroundings provide a therapeutic ambience that is, in itself, an important part of patient care. The unit's familiar surroundings have a normalizing effect for patients, and its calm and un-obtrusive setting promotes refuge and healing. At the same time, the safe and secure outdoor spaces provide places for patient rest, recreation, exercise and socializing.

As the Health Services Program (HSP) designed the exterior of the Jantho unit with patient safety and recovery in mind, the USAID Environmental Services Program (ESP) conducted an environmental impact analysis that produced a number of recommendations to ensure that the unit met standards for protecting both human health and health of the environment. Issues such as waste disposal, preventing water contamination, vector control, preventing soil erosion and promoting species diversification were then addressed in the external design of the unit.

As a result, the Jantho unit is both patient-friendly, and environmentally-friendly. Key features of the external grounds include:

- The back of the Jantho unit has a safe, enclosed recreation and exercise area, surrounded by a "living hedge" comprised of two rows of vetiver plants.
- The grounds have been graded to provide a pleasant and safe environment, and layered to ensure that run-off grey water is properly filtered before reaching the ground water.
- Waste-water gardens and vetiver leach fields provide decorative cover to the unit's natural system of preventing ground water contamination.
- Two sealed plastic septic tanks prevent the unit's waste water from seeping into the ground water.
- Earth shaping has been done to prevent soil erosion and ensure that standing pools of water do not develop, reducing the risk of mosquito breeding.
- A space for trash management and composting is provided to the side of the building, with easy access for staff but not disruptive of patient views.
- Trees, shrubs and plants have been arranged for edible, useful and attractive landscaping that will also attract a range of birds and butterflies.
- A fenced garden with fruit trees will soon provide the unit with fresh fruit with an eye to safety, as the trees are restricted from patient access.

The Jantho unit's external premises was designed and completed by CV Akar Wangi Jaya. The USAID ESP program donated 50 pots of bougainvillea, 15 palm trees, 30 fruit trees, 10 leguminous trees, 5 bird-attractant trees and shrubs, 5 butterfly-attractant trees and shrubs, 40 pots of heliconias, 20 pots of hibiscus and all of the seeding needed for perennial and leguminous groundcover. As a special touch, the fruit tree planted in front of the unit will produce a type of starfruit indigenous to Sumatra. The *belimbing asem sunti* is so commonly used in cooking Acehnese cooking that there is a saying that goes, "if you want to learn to speak Acehnese, just eat some *asem sunti* and you'll be fluent."



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