

From Research to Action, UPNVJ Students Take the Lead in Protecting the Coast of Pari Island

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UPNVJ Public Relations — Concern for the environment isn't enough to simply express itself through posts and comments on social media. For Muhammad Akbar and students at the Veteran National Development University (UPNVJ) Jakarta, this concern needs to be demonstrated through direct community involvement.

Akbar, a Political Science student and Deputy Head of the Community Environment Division of the UPNVJ Student Executive Board, was one of 10 students who participated in the planting of 500 mangrove seedlings on Pari Island, Seribu Islands, Monday (8/6/2026).

Along with other students, Akbar didn't just come to plant mangroves. They first conducted simple research on the environmental conditions of Pari Island, studied the issue of abrasion, and explored the benefits of mangroves in coastal protection.

"Before coming to Pari Island, we conducted research on the condition of the island and its beaches. We sought to determine whether abrasion was occurring and to what extent the mangroves could benefit and impact the coastal area," said Akbar.

The research provided a foundation for students to understand that planting isn't just a ceremonial activity. The mangrove planting is expected to be part of a long-term effort to protect Pari Island from abrasion and the impacts of climate change.

Mix and Learn from the Community

The students' journey to Pari Island began on Sunday, June 7, 2026. They arrived one day before the event to prepare the location and interact with the local community.

Akbar and the other students spent one night on Pari Island. They took the opportunity to learn about the coastal community and hear stories about the island's environmental conditions.

"We've been here since Sunday to make preparations. We're also trying to mingle and talk with the community about the current situation on Pari Island," he explained.

According to Akbar, interaction with the community is a crucial part of the activity. Students not only gain knowledge about mangrove planting techniques but also gain a deeper understanding of the issues facing coastal communities.

From conversations with residents, students learned that the coastal area of Pari Island is facing various challenges, ranging from abrasion, changes in coastline conditions, to the impact of the climate crisis on people's lives.

"We learned that coastal conditions in the Seribu Islands are not in good condition. There are climate crises and abrasion issues, the impacts of which are being felt directly by the community," said Akbar.

Racing with the Tides

The mangrove planting project also provided a new experience for the students. In addition to the long sea journey, they had to adapt their activities to tidal conditions.

Akbar said some students were unfamiliar with traveling by boat to the Thousand Islands. This presented the first challenge they had to overcome before arriving at the activity location.

The next challenge arose when the students were about to begin planting. In the morning, the seawater was still high, reaching almost an adult's thighs.

"We have to adjust the planting time to suit the tidal conditions. When we checked this morning, the tide was high and almost thigh-deep," he said.

Students, lecturers, and community members then waited until water levels were favorable for planting. Around 10:00 a.m. WIB, the water began to recede, allowing the activity to begin.

"Thank God, around 10:00 a.m. WIB the water began to recede, and we were finally able to plant. The challenge was adapting to the beach conditions, the tides, and the wind," he continued.

This experience made students understand that environmental conservation activities require preparation, knowledge of natural conditions, and the ability to adapt in the field.

Not Just Planting Mangroves

For Akbar, the primary benefit of the activity wasn't just the experience of planting mangroves. Students also had the opportunity to learn directly from the community and understand the relationship between environmental sustainability and the sustainability of coastal communities.

"We not only planted mangroves, but also engaged with the community. We learned how to plant mangroves and understood why abrasion occurs and how it impacts the community," he said.

This direct involvement provides a different understanding than knowledge gained solely through classrooms or social media. Students can clearly see how environmental issues are closely linked to social, economic, and sustainable aspects of community life.

As a Political Science student, Akbar also sees the activity as a form of youth participation in addressing public issues. Environmental issues, he believes, cannot be separated from policy, community involvement, and collaboration between various parties.

Mangrove planting activities provide a learning space for students to develop awareness and make a direct contribution to the environment.

Don't Just Watch and Comment

Akbar encouraged the younger generation to initiate environmental action in their immediate areas. He argued that every region has environmental issues that require community attention and involvement.

He cited the example of the Thousand Islands, which are administratively part of Jakarta. Despite its proximity to the center of government and urban areas, coastal communities in the region still face environmental challenges that require multi-stakeholder support.

"My call is simple: start with your surroundings first. There are many environmental conditions in Indonesia that require our attention and involvement," he said.

Akbar emphasized that young people don't always have to travel far to contribute. They can identify environmental issues in their local areas and then get involved according to their abilities.

"Don't just watch and comment. Try to get directly involved in the issues around us. If you can't leave your province or island, first see what can be done in your own area," he advised.

He continued, saying that social media can still be used to raise public awareness. However, digital campaigns need to be accompanied by concrete actions that impact society and the environment.

"We can raise environmental issues through social media, but we also need to get involved and do something real for the community and the environment," Akbar concluded.

Through this activity, UPNVJ students proved that the contribution of the younger generation can start from a simple process: finding out the problem, listening to the community, adapting to field conditions, then moving together to create change.

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