



Best Practices Inspiring Indonesia

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FOREWORD



The measurement of environmental protection and management is in accordance with the Law No. 32 of 2009 and is the obligation of the government, businesses sectors and people in Indonesia and elsewhere in the world. The environmental protection and management will not be effective without community participation.

We already know many of the government and the business measurements in environmental protection and management, however maybe our knowledge on the people movement in environmental protection and management is still limited.

People movements in the environmental protection and management in Indonesia have been widespread and carried out by various groups. However, literature regarding these efforts is relatively limited. Through the GEF SGP Indonesia funding, people movement is facilitated in a relatively widespread area, all across the archipelago. People movements that were carried out through the GEF SGP are considered quite effective in achieving the objectives of protection and management of environment while providing income for local communities in the same time.

The book is compiled based on a story written by the actors themselves who are working in the grassroots level through the GEF SGP funding. They are very interesting in conveying messages to the public at the grassroots level in terms of the environmental protection and management. These written stories are source of inspiration for other measurements in other regions by anyone else who reads them.

We hope this book adds to a collection of writings about people movement in the grassroots level that presents the sharing of breakthrough experiences and knowledge by the pioneer of people movement in the environmental field.

Finally, we congratulate the GEF SGP Indonesia, which has contributed to the measurement, -even the slightest one - and has encouraged a global movement for the Protection and Management of the Environment.

Jakarta, June 2013

Regards,

Prof. DR Balthasar Kambuaya, MBA
Minister of Environment,
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PREFACE



People all around the world, both in developed and developing countries plays an important role in the global effort to protect the earth and the environment. They find creative ways to manage natural resources in sustainable manner because they are at their most vulnerable position in facing global warming and the impact of diminishing environmental quality.

Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP) or a small grants program for the environment throughout the world, including Indonesia, has been trying to facilitate the development of capacity of local community to adapt to the impacts of global warming and climate change.

Up to this current time, the GEF SGP has provided support to 16,000 community-based projects in more than 125 countries. GEF SGP supports community efforts to protect biodiversity, international waters, to restore land degradation and to promote the use of renewable energy. In Indonesia, GEF SGP has disbursed more than 8 million U.S. dollars fund since 1994 to support 426 community projects across Indonesia. Community has been successful in mobilizing matching funds from their own ability to increase and carry out their activities.

Knowledge derived and managed by the communities are now reaching out to policy makers as an input to promote the development based on resource management in environmental-friendly and sustainable manner, as well as provide livelihoods for local communities.

On this occasion, as the GEF Operational Focal Point Indonesia (GEF OFP) and the Chairman of the National Steering Committee (NSC) of GEF SGP Indonesia, we are proudly presenting a collection of stories told by the children of Indonesia, the innovators, the initiators and activists in the field. The partners of GEF SGP Indonesia are important figures in the society and their own community because together with the people, they find innovative ways in facing the existing environmental challenges. The explorations of the existing local potentials become the important baseline for the innovative works that have been created. This collection of stories can be a source of inspiration for other communities who are interested in joining the global movement to protecting and making the betterment of the environment.

Jakarta, June 2013

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dana'.

Dana A. Kartakusuma
Staff of Global Environmental Expert/
GEF OFP Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

BEST PRACTICES, INSPIRING INDONESIA



The journey of the Global Environment Facility - Small Grant Programme (GEF-SGP) Indonesia together with the people and the local community has lasted for more than twenty years. The journey is colorful due to meetings with the initiators, activists, innovators, and inspirators who have the love, passion, and pride in anything to save, maintain, and conserve the environment. The actors have fresh and interesting ideas that just need to be given a little leverage to make the idea become wild and accelerate the mandate of environmental conservation and achieve an increase of community's welfare.

Breakthrough of creative work of the activists and initiators on the field scattered from Sabang to almost Merauke for over twenty years.

They try to answer and find bulletproof ways to face the ecological challenges on the issues of biodiversity, climate change, land degradation, the use of chemical substances, and issues along the international waters, by utilizing possessed local potentials.

Many experiences and stories were born from this long journey. Experience is the best teacher, so the saying goes. Proven experiences and experiences that are used as a consideration can turn to be knowledge. In biodiversity rescue, the heart of the experience is on the experience of the individuals, the groups in the villages where biodiversity became an integral part of everyday life of the community there. For GEF-SGP Indonesia, the experience and the knowledge are spread in more than 400 biodiversity rescue projects, which has started since 1992.

The experiences and knowledge generated in those projects of GEF-SGP are thus so various. Starting from saving endangered species, unique ecosystem of mountains to the coastal, community-based mitigation and adaptation, local wisdom and rescuing critical land, organic farming and food sovereignty, to saving of the local culture. Learning from these experiences can inspire other groups, which are far from these projects.

Learning from hundreds of GEF SGP Indonesian projects, which are generally carried out in western parts of Indonesia, needs to be shared in order to inspire and become knowledge for other communities.

Particularly for communities in the eastern part of Indonesia, which is facing heavy pressure due to policies that cripple community development. Same story that once also occurred in the western part of Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

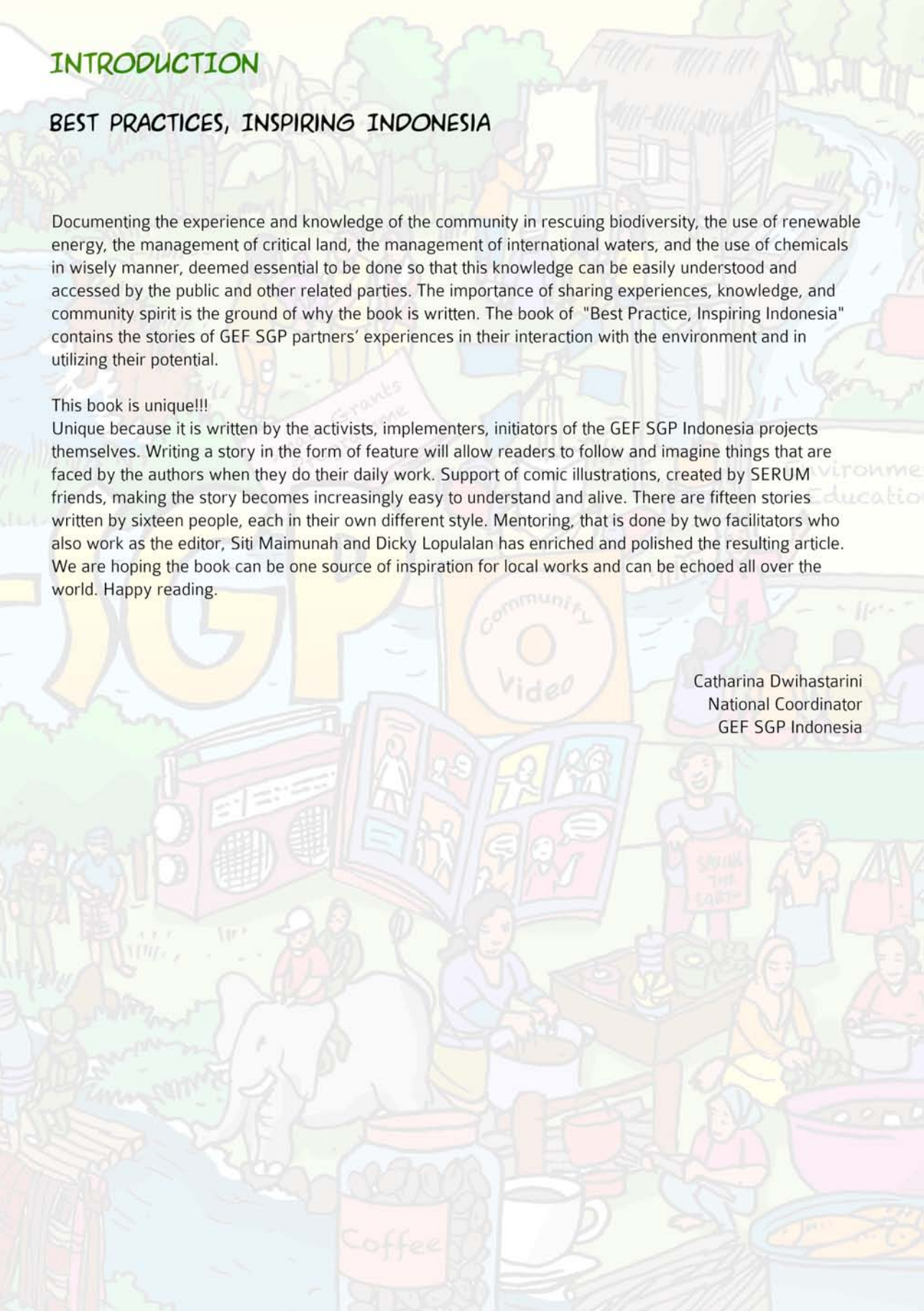
BEST PRACTICES, INSPIRING INDONESIA

Documenting the experience and knowledge of the community in rescuing biodiversity, the use of renewable energy, the management of critical land, the management of international waters, and the use of chemicals in wisely manner, deemed essential to be done so that this knowledge can be easily understood and accessed by the public and other related parties. The importance of sharing experiences, knowledge, and community spirit is the ground of why the book is written. The book of "Best Practice, Inspiring Indonesia" contains the stories of GEF SGP partners' experiences in their interaction with the environment and in utilizing their potential.

This book is unique!!!

Unique because it is written by the activists, implementers, initiators of the GEF SGP Indonesia projects themselves. Writing a story in the form of feature will allow readers to follow and imagine things that are faced by the authors when they do their daily work. Support of comic illustrations, created by SERUM friends, making the story becomes increasingly easy to understand and alive. There are fifteen stories written by sixteen people, each in their own different style. Mentoring, that is done by two facilitators who also work as the editor, Siti Maimunah and Dicky Lopulalan has enriched and polished the resulting article. We are hoping the book can be one source of inspiration for local works and can be echoed all over the world. Happy reading.

Catharina Dwihastarini
National Coordinator
GEF SGP Indonesia





Best Practices Inspiring Indonesia

Through Weaving, Empowering Women

By Adinindyah



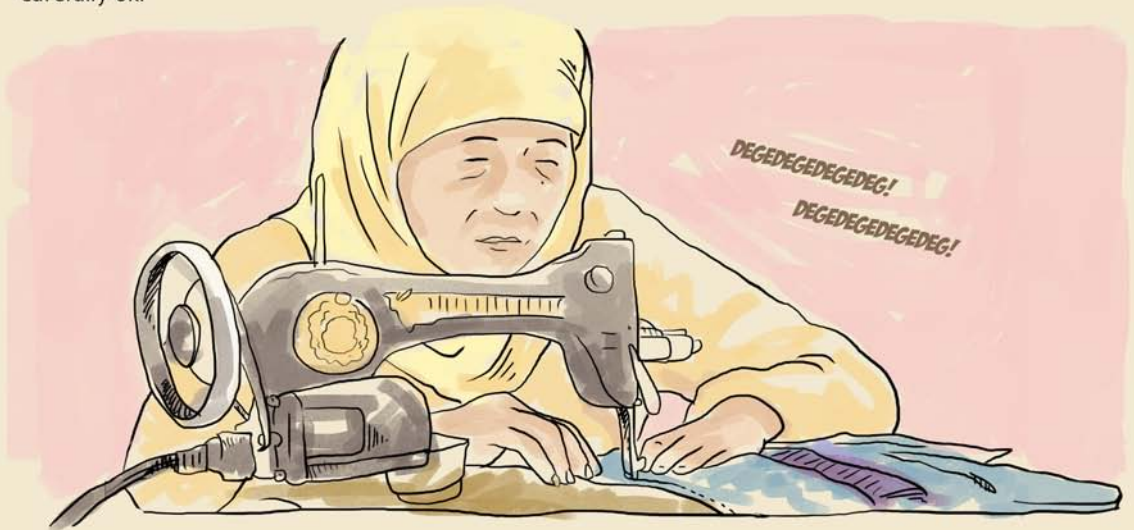


The two women stood face to face, having a dialogue without any sound. One took a piece of paper full of numbers scribbled down and a metal ruler in 30 cm size. Another one held a tote bag that has just finished being sewn. Around her neck hung a cloth measuring tape. Several times she put the meter into the body bag, her fingers forming symbolic numbers. The first woman was likewise. She matched the record number in the paper, and measured the new bag. Her hands showed different figures.

Bu Eni is the backbone of Lawe's product development. Although having hearing and speech impaired, Mrs. Eni is very skillfull at sewing. She was able to realize a simple sketch doodled into a beautiful woven bag. Ability defeats limitations. Besides her work as a seamstress, Mrs. Eni is also a teacher for students of deaf and speech impaired School (SLB) who intern at Lawe. In fact, she often becomes a resourceperson for students who have college tasks' or write a thesis about Lawe.

Both re-examined the notes in the sketch-drawing. The second woman, Quratul Aini (49) who was used to be called as Mrs. Eni, smiling shyly. She was wrong in reading size. As she blushed, she brought her thumb and fore finger together, then touched the tip in her dimples, her mouth formed the word "sorry." The other woman, Dian Ritri Pratiwi (25) slowly said, "Read the size more carefully ok."

Sample of bags made by Mrs. Eni will pass through the counting process raw materials, pricing and brief market research. If it is worth it for sale, examples will be distributed to the other women artisans, most of whom work in their homes. They will make prototype products based on samples made by Mrs. Eni.



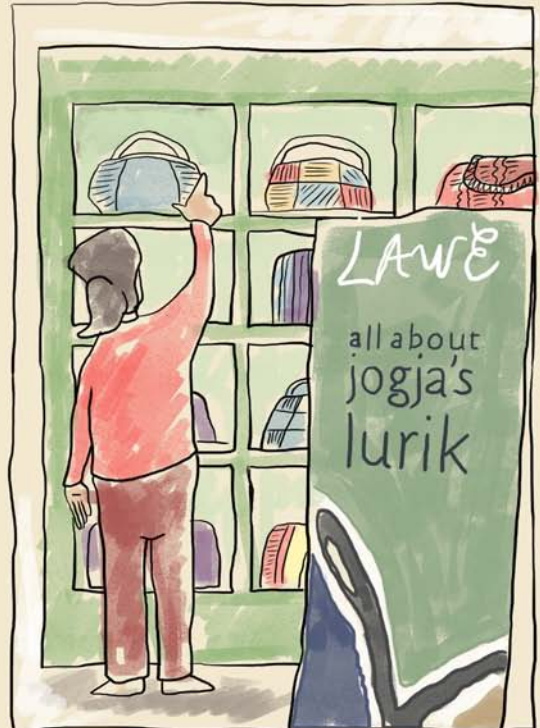
"This prototype products are then considered in the continuation of production process. If the results meet the quality standards that have been established, mass production will be carried out. If not, the manufacture of prototype products will be repeated. In fact, it could be improved with a more simple design. This would enable artisans with limited ability to take part in production," said Dian Ritri Pratiwi who acts as head of production at Lawe and was responsible for the entire long process of production.



Lawe it self is a social enterprise founded by a group of women in Yogyakarta in 2004. Handicrafts and merchandise products made from woven fabrics have been produced by the enterprise for eight years. Businesses that they do are not just simple business. There are social missions to be achieved, namely the preservation of weaves and traditional fabrics, as well as, in particular, women empowerment.



Empowering women is a very strategic option to increase family's welfare. Women are the spearheads of the household's economy. If women can be empowered, family then automatically can be saved. The indicators are simple, it is always the woman who thinks about the fulfillment of the basic needs of the family, for example, asking in rhetoric on "what are we going to eat today?" If she can answer that question then basic needs of the family is fulfilled.



Discrimination and limited opportunities experienced by women is indeed a particular concern. Especially in the situations of poverty and disaster, the position of women as victims and bearers are the greatest, thus need to be strengthened and opportunities need to be opened.

The methods are varied, but the basic thinking when building the working systems at Lawe is to give attention and appreciation to the limitations of the women artisans.



One of the women artisans' limitation is that many who do not have flexibility to be mobile. The reasons are many, because of having small children or living just down the hill away from the town. Or, because of having no means of transportation.

However, the working system built in Lawe still enables them to work and earn an income. They can work from home with a flexible time management.

As for the limitations of skills, in addition to the organized training in tailoring, Lawe makes a fair production process and design, as Dian elaborated above. Thus, no women are left behind in the production process just because of her lacking skill in sewing compare to other artisans. The spirit of collaboration is more dominating than competition between artisans.

Along the way, some of the women artisans began to flourish. Some borrowed capital to replace her old sewing machine into a sophisticated new sewing machine with higher speed and more stitches models. There is also some who borrowed capital to enlarge their workplace. The artisans can take advantage of Laras Usaha Mulya Saving and Loans Cooperative (KSP) initiated by Lawe to obtain loans for working capital with easy terms.

One of the craftsmen who use the services of the cooperative, Mbak (informal way to greet older sister) Kustiyah (40). She is one of the sidekicks of Lawe's production line. Less than five years after training on craft organized by Lawe, Mbak Kustiyah has its own tailor business. If you come to her workshop, immediately it can be seen that the space is no longer able to accommodate her materials and her sewings. "Yeah, the result is not bad. I am able to collect money to build a house in the village," said Mbak Kustiyah with a happy face and a little bit embarrassed. Proud mixed with being shy.

The early involvement of Mbak Kustiyah was actually somewhat unplanned. "I was taking my chance to register for craft training held by Lawe right after the Yogyakarta earthquake in 2006. I didn't have any thoughts, I was the latest participants and then was assigned to be in the last group. And again, I registered quite late," said Mbak Kustiyah energetically with a humorous expression.

After training and being involved in the production process, Mbak Kustiyah continue to develop herself. Her sewing skill is increasing. No one guessed, this artisan is later become trainer for the novices. She was sent to train women in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), some time ago.



Another story, Elzalita Prastyani (31). Mother of two children, which one of them is still a baby, is actually quite busy with her work as a committee of saving and loan cooperatives for artisans and members of Lawe's marketing team. However, her will to develop is so huge. In between available times, she was still willing to learn a design that is not part of their responsibilities.

Elza's learning outcomes is exceptional. Some time ago, she won the award in Lurik Product Design Development in a provincial level (Special Region of Yogyakarta/DIY). She then had the opportunity to attend assistantship of the Department of Industry and Trade DIY for a month. There, she learned the brushes technique which is now emerging in Japan. At Lawe training last end of October 2011, Elza became one of the instructors to pass on her new knowledge.

For some artisans, Lawe then developed to be more than a workplace. Rather, it is an entrance to livelihood and opportunities that can be very different from the original plan.



Just look at the experience of Kris Isdani (25) as known as Danik.

Danik started working as a part-time seamstress when Lawe get large orders. After a while, she became a permanent one. But, when given the choice, she instead want to join the mobile team. "I do not stand being behind a sewing machine. I would rather assigned to go somewhere else, anywhere is no problem as long as I can see the road," said Danik.

Now, Danik no longer sitting behind a sewing machine. Every day she was on the street on her motorcycle to shop for raw materials, sending deliveries to the artisans, as well as picking up the finished product. Her job is not yet finished. She must also supervise delivery of the package to the cargo.

Interesting to know that a person's potential is often far buried in routine work, waiting for a chance to be mined. Agustin Nurhayatie (27) for example, has a hobby of counting. Used to be called as "Miss Cost" as her main task is to calculate detail of the use of raw materials and production costs. The "Miss Cost" was not only fond of number, but also details of knick-knacks. When Lawe is about to make accessories product line, she is the most excited person.

It did not take too long for the "Miss Cost" to develop herself. Briefly she supervised the production process and became trainer for accessories product made from weaving scraps, sharing new skills to 30 women as training participants. Still there are many names and stories about the empowerment of women after joining in Lawe.



All the raw materials were unloaded and lined up on the floor. There are glass beads of various motifs and sizes, colorful woody beads, woven rag that has been processed into cloth bead, tens of meters of leather strap. Then, she took the position, sitting in the corner of the room that was left, preparing to make a design. Her eyes dilated as she asked, "what are we going to make? How is the composition of the color? "

The story of a Islamic Education Center (Taman Pendidikan Al Qur'an/TPA) teacher, Suparmi (29) who can travel deep into Kutai, East Kalimantan, will continue to be remembered and encouraged the successor of women artisans in the future. She is becoming an inspiration about the ability to go beyond limits. If in the past, Suparmi would get car sick only by sitting in the car for a few minutes, not to mention hopping islands by planes for hours. However, her passion and open opportunities make Suparmi pay no attention to the car sick problem.

Also the story about Fitria Werdiningsih (32) who was able to bring Lawe products in the biggest handicraft exhibition in Indonesia in 2007, INACRAFT that can be a benchmark of collective and individual achievement. It can act as abilities' baseline to determine the next steps, exhibitions in Vietnam and around Europe, while preparing products for export. In the spirit belongs to Fitri, there is no option of going back. It is a matter of keep forging.

Lawe is like paving the way for the women to develop talents. And, the open talent automatically increase the capacity of the enterprise. A feedback process that is dialectical and beneficial to all parties.

However, is the whole story of women's empowerment only dealing with the processing of *lurik* woven fabrics and revolving in Yogyakarta alone?

Apparently, not. Sisterhood of Lawe program involving female woven lover throughout Indonesia is the answer. The goal is to replicate Lawe's work.

The woven lovers are encouraged to be new entrepreneurs. Together with Lawe, they are invited to build their own brand, with the support of product development and production processes from Lawe.

One of them, Harining Mardjuki (41), the owner of Daughter of Klaten brands, has developed *endek* Bali weaving combined with Klaten and Yogyakarta's *lurik*. Now she is combining her products with processed plastic waste from the housewives from Pugeran village, Yogyakarta.

Andi Tenri Paweli (40), is another examples. This architect of Kalla Group creates Dalle, Beautiful Bugis brands that highlighted the woven clothes of South Sulawesi as Makasar's distinctive products.

There are so many things experienced by women who are involved in Lawe. Interestingly, all stories came with the same flavor, excitement. "Choose the job that you like." This sentence is always circulating in Lawe. Love what we do first. Whatever gets in the way will then be overcome, with a cheerful heart.

Lawe's option to develop woven fabrics as well as empowering women was not a made up story. In many traditions and cultures in this archipelago, woven cloth and women are two inseparable things. It is the hand of the woman who is capable of forming a smooth and beautiful woven fabric. And now, through the woven fabric as well, these women find their strength and life path.



Adinindyah

The love of Adinindyah, who is often called as Nin, towards Indonesian women and woven fabric has made her continue to develop weaving-based products. Not only Lurik, the woven fabric from her hometown, Nin, an architecture graduate of Gajah Mada University, is also developing products made from other regions' woven fabric. Say from Bali, West Nusa Tenggara, East Nusa Tenggara, Southeast Sulawesi (Wakatobi and Kendari), Klaten, North Sumatra, Riau, and West Kalimantan. Nin did not want the diversity of Indonesian culture become extinct and history. She said that Indonesia, a nation rich in the diversity of culture, should have been capable to be prosperous through its traditional woven fabric.

Supported by a joint capital with some of her friends, Nin founded Lawe. Lawe is the house for anyone who loves and wants to develop Indonesian weaving for the welfare of Indonesian people, especially the women. The house has a soul of service, dedication, and a big dream for Indonesian culture and women.

Through Nin hands and thought, Lawe created many products such as handbags, home décor, and other knick knacks. Every product being produced is a contribution to the lives of many women and to the development of Indonesian culture. Her endless and persistent struggle over the years since 2004 is finally fruitful. Indonesian woven fabric is increasingly recognized and in demand by many people. Nin is often invited as a speaker to share her experiences to many groups. Her products begin to be targeted as export products. Lawe start to participate in international level exhibitions without leaving the national market. Nin inspired by the words of Ismail Serageldin :

*No man is an island,
And no society can remain isolated from the world.
Together,
let us think of the unborn,
remember the forgotten,
give hope to the forlorn,
and reach out to the unreached.
With bold and thoughtful actions today,
We can lay the foundation for better tomorrow...*



Revitalizing Rubber Community

By Akhmad Fauzi





One middle-aged lady playfully held the knife with a hooked tip. Just like an accomplished dancer, she swirled around and nicked the trunk of rubber trees along her path. While, occasionally, blew her cigarette's smoke into the air.

The lady's name is Mrs. Monon. She is a rubber tapper living in the village of Tempayang. The village is located in Kotawaringin Lama District, Kotawaringin Barat Regency, Central Kalimantan. Tempayang village is remote and secluded, bordered by the Lamandau River Reserve (SMSL) and surrounded by palm oil plantations. To reach this village, it takes about four hours drive from Pangkalan Bun, the capital of West Kotawaringin, using speedboat, followed by an ojek (motorcycle taxi).

Tempayang village actually has the potential of becoming small holder rubber plantations. It can be seen from the rubber plantations belong to the people. Even so, cast away the image of smallholder rubber plantation as a clean, neat and orderly state-owned large estates.

Smallholder rubber plantation contains local rubber plants mixed with other gardenplants, with different ages and they all grow randomly. This is because most of the rubber trees grow naturally.

People of Tempayang Village are already accustomed to using natural rubber latex for generations. Rubber tapping can be considered as a daily activity for Mrs. Monon and a number of other people. As soon as the dawn broke, with makeshift equipment they would go along the forest to the garden to tap rubber.

The rubber tapper approached the rubber trees, nick the outer skin neatly and carefully in order to not hurt the inside part of the trunk. Drop by drop of the sap fills the bowl underneath. The sap which have been collected is then frozen to form a slab ready to be marketed.





Formerly, almost all people started their morning with a ritual of nicking rubber tree. Now, it is no longer happening. Only a few who are still loyal, one of them is Mrs. Monon. The others, have taken side to palm plantation that has opened around Tempayung village in the early 2000's.

The impact of oil palm plantations' presence is very clear, it changes all situations. More than half of the rubber plantations turned into oil palm plantations. And, people are more prefer to be palm oil plantations' workers. Income calculations are felt to be more profitable.

The lowest worker gets a wage of Rp1.400.000, - plus 15 kg rice per month. Many people are tempted to be as one, that number is obviously more lucrative than tapping rubber that has unclear profit.

Does oil palm plantation improve the lives of the villagers of Tempayung then? Not really. Wages are high, but it needs to be paid with the time spent. They had to work from 06:00 until 14:00. Not much time left to produce other purposes, such as growing vegetables, keeping fish, even taking care of rubber plantations.

Consequently, there is a shortage of daily goods that makes prices soaring because the goods are not produced by many and have to be imported from neighboring villages.

If previously they can pick vegetables in the garden behind the house or bought cheaply from neighbors, now they have to pay Rp. 5,000, - to Rp. 7,000, - for one kilogram of vegetables and Rp. 35.000, - for one kilogram of tilapia fish. Wages as workers of oil palm plantation which once felt high become meaningless. There was not much money left at the end of the month. All is used only for daily meals.

Forest and land clearance for a large palm oil gives negative impact on the environment. Community can directly feel that. They are now having difficulties to get clean water and fish as many rivers dried up. Biodiversity around their village are reduced significantly due to monoculture palm oil plantations that do not give any space for other plants and wild animals.

The presence of other plants and wild animals tend to be seen as a pest. Although in fact, it supports the daily life of the community.



Forests' vegetables such as fern shoots, the young leaves of mango tree, *salam* (Indonesian bay) leaves, etc., as well as forest fruits, trees and fishes or games are no longer visible in the dominating palm oil trees.

"Mixed rubber gardens provide many additional advantages. Besides rubber, community can get a variety of other food sources in the rubber plantations. It provides high economic benefits. In addition to that, mixed farms also provide ecological benefits since plants and animals can live together and contribute to each other to maintain sustainable life," said Wardi, commonly addressed as PakDe, agricultural facilitator of Yayasan Orangutan Indonesia.



Palm oil plantations have changed the story. People who used to live blended with nature, in an instant become wage earners who have lost their livelihood sources.

I am among those who worry of the change in Tempayang village. For me, when people is in distance with nature and it can no longer provide the basics, that would means that the people is in trouble. If it is being neglected, the bleak future of Tempayang village can easily be imagined. To minimize that condition, in my opinion, the solution is simple. Sustainable economic activities within the community need to be established. One of them is by looking back at mix rubber garden that provides economic and ecological benefit. It is a legacy of Tempayang predecessor that is maintaining the harmony of live.



I am working in Yayasan Orangutan Indonesia, or commonly abbreviated Yayorin. It's a local institution in Pangkalan Bun, Central Kalimantan. Yayorin is founded in 1991. The focus concern is on environmental preservation through education, advocacy and research.

Tempayang and Babual Baboti village were included in Yayorin work program, along with the support from GEF-SGP to implement agricultural programs based on integrated rubber cultivation.





The focus is the development of permanent without burning mixed garden demplot. This is a strategy of forest fires prevention around SMSL conservation area and of rural economic income increase.

Consequently, the essence of the meeting was not conveyed smoothly. The idea of revitalizing mixed rubber garden also was not quite interesting because it can't produce big money in a short time.

Program can be designed, but community support is not an easy thing. And, indeed, without community's support, the program could not be implemented.

Having refusal was not convenient indeed. But that's not what primarily concerns me and Pakde that night. The meeting with no results was ended at 10 pm. It was already too late to return to Pangkalan Bun.

Me and my colleague, Wardi, commonly called as Pakde, feel a polite rejection when trying to offer and explain the program to be implemented in Tempayang village.

Our efforts to meet community representatives in a meeting got no positive response. Not many people attended the meeting, even those who attended were coming in late and did not stay long in the meeting.





No motorcycles and speedboats operated that time of the night. There was only one choice, to stay in the people's houses. But, where? After the meeting, none of the people offered us to stay.

Amidst the confusion of where to stay, I met one villager named Mr. Mantra. He greeted us friendly. He asked who we were and our backgrounds, as well as the intention and purpose of coming to the village.

"I'm from Yayorin, from Pangkalan Bun. We'd like to see the potential of the village, who knew there could be something to be developed," I answered the question.

"Did you mean there would be aid for us?," asked Mr. Mantra in curious.

"Not an aid, Mr., but we wanted to facilitate some activities that were already existed in the community. For example, rubber cultivation, aquaculture, and others. Quite incidentally, we have a little agricultural knowledge and we want to share and learn with the community here. Who knows that could be useful," I said.

For me it is important to explain from the outset that our presence were not as people who will provide assistance. Rather, as facilitator to share knowledge and learn from each other. This is to avoid false expectations and dependence in the future.

Mr. Mantra seems to be a social person and responsive to new ideas. He invited us with open arms to stay at home that night. Speaking of the devil, I said to myself while smiling faintly at Pakde. I didn't know whether he saw it or not because we were enveloped in blackness of the night.

After dinner we talked with Mr. Matra and Mrs. Monon, his wife. We're talking about rubber and tilapia fish farming in ponds in Tempayang village. We also shared stories about the success of Setia Kawan fish group in Tanjung Terantang village, Pangkalan Bun.





It was a pleasant conversation, especially since Mr. Mantra and Mrs. Monon were excited to share various informations and asked questions about new things they did not understand.

In the next day, we went touring. Mr. Mantra invited us to see his rubber plantations and fish pond. Not far, it's just a 5 minute walk from his house. But we saw no ponds. Just meadow grass and shrubs.

"Where is the garden and fish pond sir," we asked in confusion.

"The garden is over there, and the pond is over there," said Mr. mantra, pointing to the right and then to the left.

We understood once we came to the place he appointed, by brushing the grasses and shrubs. There are indeed newly planted rubbers and fish pond, but they were abandoned and covered with grasses and shrubs at breast's height.

That condition became the topic of our discussion. We tried to explain the techniques of rubber cultivation and tilapia aquaculture that have been successful elsewhere.

One of the techniques is a garden and pond's care in proper ways. Mr. Mantra was interested, especially about aquaculture. It seems to be answering his longing. Over the last few years, he has always failed in tilapia aquaculture.

Pak Mantra did not only speak. He even decided to come with us to Pangkalan Bun and asked for accompany to visit fish farmers who were already successful. For two days we took Mr. Mantra for a tour of fish ponds owned by Setia Kawan Farmers Group in Tanjung Terantang village.

Visits and direct dialogue with farmers and fish breeders made Mr. Mantra excited. He was determined to prove his ability in raising tilapia and catfish.

Meetings, conversations and shared knowledge with Mr. Mantra have opened my eyes. Personal approach is important when trying to offer programs to the community.

We can not just gather people in the village hall, discuss, have agreement, then the program will be implemented. Me and my friends in Yayorin, accompanied by Mr. Mantra then intensified visits to people's houses to exchange information and to carry out awareness process.





It takes time indeed, but it was also more convincing because we can directly discuss in depth the things that were still considered confusing.

Slowly but surely, the shifting of perception began to happen in Tempayang village.

That afternoon, the heat and dust from the quarry scattered along the village haunted Tempayang village. The village was quiet without any sound from the occupants, but that did not dampen the spirit pounding in my heart, in Pakde's, Mr. Matra's and Mr. Sachyuni's. All four of us clean the bahaum hall (village hall). Later that evening, we will hold a meeting. And, we believe there were at least 20 people attending.

True, 24 people present at this meeting. It is so different from the previous meeting. Since the beginning of the meeting, participants chattered lively, excitedly.

They questioned the background of farmer groups formation: from the objectives, benefits, up to terms of membership.



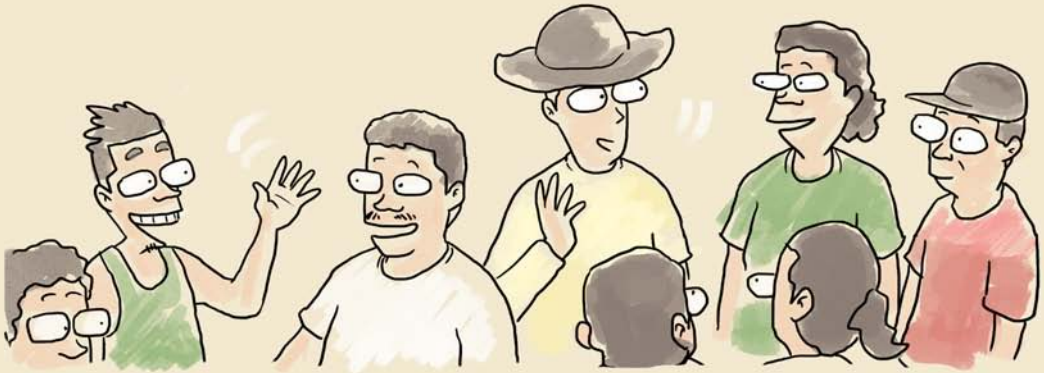
We discussed them in open. "Being organized not to ask for help, but to grow and establish an atmosphere of mutual cooperation that has long been missing in Tempayang village," said Pakde firmly on them. The audience who came to the meeting agreed. Groups to strengthen their independence will not be a media for the beggars mentality.

That evening, July 7, 2012, participants were agreed to form an integrated farming group called Suka Maju Farmers' group. The group's principal activity is the cultivation of rubber combined with other activities, such as freshwater fish ponds, vegetable farming, and others.

The agreement of group formation was followed by the discussion of the rules that must be adhered to all members of the group and activities plan. The atmosphere of the discussion of these two topics was very festive.

Everyone was eager to speak, whether conveying good opinion or just throwing jokes that created laughter. Intimacy and openness were spreading, made the evening feel warm. I thought seriously that this meeting was in contrast to the previous without enthusiasm meetings. Secretly, I said thanks.





The establishment of Suka Maju Farmers' Group started the story of changes in Tempayung village. Every month, the group carried out regular monthly meetings in different places, depending on the draw result of their arisan (informal community social gathering). Members of the group that got the draw will become the host in the next social gathering.

Since the formation of Suka Maju Farmers' Group, people who become members often gather and discuss outside the regular meeting schedule. Atmosphere of mutual cooperation were already seen to grow again. Every Sunday, a group of people did not hesitate to get themselves into the murky and muddy water to make the group's fish pond.

Four months is a short time for a journey of a group with big goals. And, within that short time, the achievements of Suka Maju Farmer's Group are not small. They have two fish ponds measuring 5x12 meters intended for tilapia and catfish aquaculture. Last October, they also carried out training of rubber cultivation techniques. The matters were about the good way of selecting rubber seedlings, nursery techniques, grafting techniques and rootstock orchard management, as well as ways of maintenance, fertilization and control of disease in the rubber plant. The future plan, the group will learn the techniques of fish hatchery and explore the rubber market to get a better price.

Indeed, the most important results achieved by this group is the revival of the spirit of togetherness and mutual respect that had withered.

It looks increasingly strengthened in every activity undertaken together. Another thing is equally important, they are confident to continue their rubber-based farming in the pressure of palm oil plantations.

I, as the facilitator of Tempayung villagers, of course, hope that the small steps taken by Suka Maju Farmer's Group can have a real impact. Not only for the members of the group, but also to inspire other community members. From the land and ancestor knowledge there are prosperity and virtue that they can benefit of.

I was daydreaming, it would be nice to see Mrs. Monon no longer "dancing" alone among the gum trees one day. Rather, they will in group dancing, nicking rubber tree, especially when the rubber culture get back to life in Tempayung village.

"Titt... tiitt...tiit..."

I stopped my daydreaming and grabbed the mobile phone that just rang. There was a short message inside. From Mr. Mantra apparently.

"Mr. Fauzi howou? FYI, on the 12th month tilapia pond will be harvested. Pls make some time to come to the village... "

Thank God, I immediately murmured. My throat was choked up to read the text. Really, it was a happy story untold, it was a benchmark that what we were doing so far were not useless.

Tightly I knotted my fingers while chanting the prayers.

Akhmad Fauzi

Ahmad Fauzi is known as Fauzi. This man joined Yayasan Orangutan Indonesia (Yayorin) which is based in Pangkalan Bun, Central Kalimantan. Central Kalimantan is a province on Borneo Island with a majority of Dayak tribe and their "Kharingan" belief. Actually, Fauzi came from Pandeglang, Banten. He learn about Yayorin in 1999 when Fauzi was doing research on Proboscis in Borneo. Currently, Fauzi is responsible for managing development programs of mixed demonstration plot as measurement effort to avoid fires in the forest and area around Baboal and Babuti Tepayang villages.

His love of the community and the environment makes him endure living far away from family. His family settled in Pandeglang, Banten, and usually they meet once every two years.



Koro the Treasure of Wonogiri

By Asti Pramudiani





"Velvet-bean tempeh, ma'am.. traditional food from Wonogiri", Surati was trying to sell her *bacem* (marinated) velvet-bean tempeh by offering a plate of it during a meeting in Jatirejo, Wonogiri.

The names of those groups are Harjaning Bumi, Dewi Sri and Sidomulyo, which are all located in Sendang Mulyo Village. At least 3 to 4 times a month, she sets a side time to visit the groups that she assists, but sometimes more. If the groups need her, then Surati must come, not to mention if she is asked to assist other groups.



Velvet beans (*Koro Benguk*) are widely used by the people of Wonogiri to make tempeh. If you enter Wonogiri in Central Java, you can find velvet-bean tempeh in the markets, food stall and itinerant vegetable vendors. The chips are also sold in stalls and even souvenir shops.

Fortunately, Katimo, her husband is very understanding when it comes to her wife's activities. It is not just this time that his wife has outside activities. In the beginning it was difficult for him to understand his wife's activities. In 1997, Surati was invited to take part in an integrated agricultural field school training which was held by Gita Pertiwi Foundation, a non-governmental organization that is based in Yogyakarta which focuses on environmental conservation and community development. Since then, she became active in Harjaning Bumi farmers group.

"Velvet-bean chips are actually a traditional food from Wonogiri as well, but they are not as well known as *Gaplek* or *Tiwul* which have become the hall marks of Wonogiri City", Surati explained during the break of the meeting. *Gaplek* is sliced and dried cassava, while *Tiwul* is a food made from *Gaplek* flour, usually cooked with brown sugar mixture.

Later, Gita Pertiwi developed the idea of farming consultants. The idea is simple, by developing the capacity of one farmer, the farmer is expected to pass his/her capacity to other farmers. Surati was selected as one of the consultants who would assist women farmers groups in preserving *Koro* (large pulse) plants.

In between her busy life as a farmer and mother of two children, Surati still has to make the time to assist groups of women farmers.



Planting *Koro* is not new to Surati family or Wonogiri people in general. In their paddy fields, they plant these climbing plants on the bunds or edges of the fields. In one year, the rice field is cultivated twice. In the second planting season, the land is intercropped with *Koro* as the second crop. "There are six species of *Koro* grown in our fields, namely *Glinding*, *Benguk Ompleh* (pole beans), *Benguk Taun* (velvet beans), *Benguk Rase* (pigeon peas), *Begog* (common jack beans), and *Kecipir* (winged beans)," explained Mrs. Surati.

The agricultural land in Wonogiri is a rain-fed land which can only be planted with rice once a year. In the first season, farmers plant rice and other subsidiary crops such as corn and soybeans. On the next planting season, most farmers grow subsidiary (*Palawija*) crops as the main crops. In the third planting season, farmers rely on perennial crops such as cassava and *Koro*.

During the third planting season, after the second crops is harvested, *Koro* can still survive even without water or any special care. "During a long dry season, *Koro* crops become more plentiful", she added.

This harsh condition is the reason why most people in Wonogiri leave the area, which is called *Boro* meaning go out of the area. In other places, most of them become construction workers or vendors. They usually go back when the harvesting season comes. Practically all the crops management is left to the women, including planting and tending of *Koro*.

Most *Koros* are climbing plants. Therefore if they are to be planted in the bunds, bamboo supports or trellis must be provided. *Koro* can even flourish by climbing woody plants or rocks that exist in the surrounding area. The cultivation method is also very simple, but it must be tailored to the specific species of *Koro*.



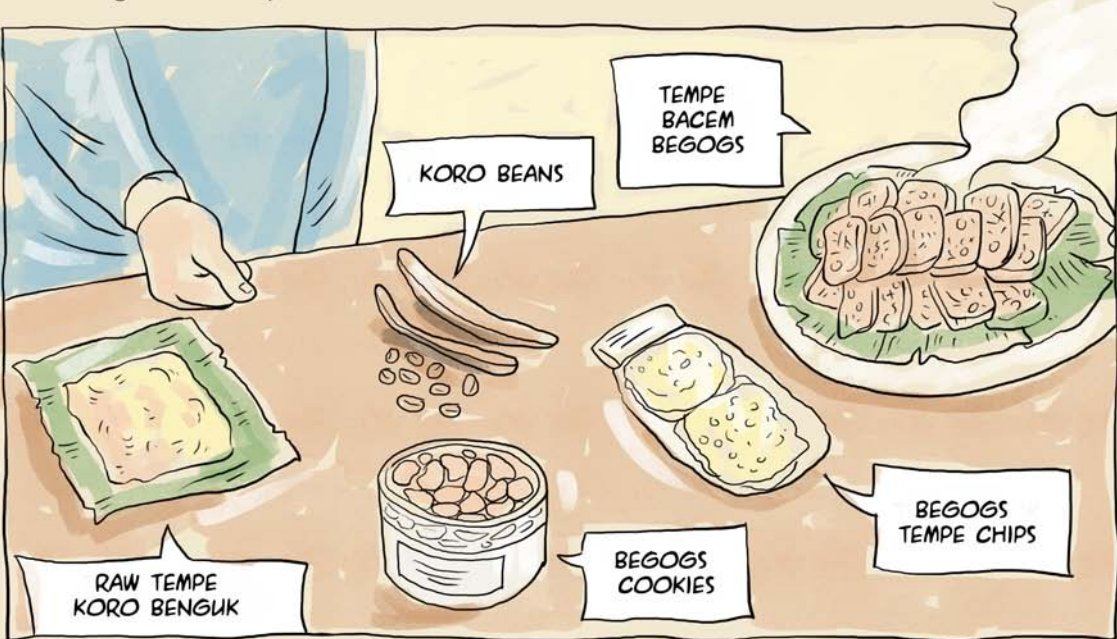
Glinding Koro is planted in the dikes of rice field a head of the first planting season, in the same time as farmers prepare the soil for planting rice. The field is plowed with a hoe, and then holes for the seeds are made with a 2-meter spacing. Next the *Koro* seeds are inserted in to the holes, 2 seeds per hole. The planting of *glinding* is done during "Ngawu-awu" or while waiting for the rain to fall, before planting the staple crops. When the plants are ready climbing at the age of one month, the supports are provided so plants can climb. The direction where *Glinding* climbs should be adjusted in such a way so as not to interfere with the main crop. This *Koro* species is resist an to dry conditions so it can be planted on dry lands or rocky fields. It can reach an age of one year. Therefore when the staple crop is harvested, *glinding* can continue to produce. Even when other *Koro* plants have stopped producing, *Glinding* continues to bear fruits.

Other species of Koros are *Benguk Ompleh* (pole beans) and *Benguk Rase* (pigeon peas) are widely planted on the dikes of paddy fields. They can also be planted in between *Glinding Koro* or along side cassava plants on the dikes. *Benguk's* are also resistant to dry conditions so they can be planted on dry or rocky lands. The planting method is similar to *Glinding*. The supports can be made from bamboo, they can simply be left to climb woody trees or large rocks nearby.

Benguk Ompleh can be harvested in the third month. The young pods are harvested and can be sold as vegetables. In one planting season, *Ompleh* can be harvested 7 to 10 times. The young pods can be harvested every 4 days, while the old pods are harvested when they are 4 months old, after which the plant dies. *Benguk Rase* is the same. In one year, they both can be planted 2 times, during the first two planting seasons. Actually, this *Koro* species can still be planted in the third season, but they are not resistant to drought. However the plants can grow better if in the third season they are planted close to the river.

Another species is *Koro Begog* (common jack beans) which is usually planted in the second planting season, inter cropped with subsidiary crops, usually soy beans or peanuts. *Begog* is planted when the subsidiary crops are about to be harvested. Therefore when the main subsidiary crops are harvested, the *Koro* can start to produce. The planting method is also similar to other *Koro* species. The difference is that *Begog* plants are not vines, so they do not require trellis. The old pods of *Begog* are harvested once when they are 7 to 8 months old.

Another *Koro* species with similar age to *Begog* is *Benguk Taun* (velvet beans). But it needs a support for climbing.



Koros are certain varieties of pulses or legumes which can improve calcareous soil structure due to its ability to fix Nitrogen (N) in the air. Generally farmers give urea to plants to provide nitrogen which is needed for the formation or growth of vegetative parts, such as leaves, stems and roots. That is why the cultivation of *Koros* do not require chemical fertilizers containing the element nitrogen. *Koro* is able to provide the nitrogen on the soil in which it grows, so the main crops around *koro* become fertile as well.

The maintenance of *Koro* is also easy. The only requirement is to keep the land from being flooded. If the rainfall is high, *Koro* plants will flourish with lush leaves, but produce no pods. When the dry season is long, the growth stage that produces flowers and fruit, otherwise known as the generative stage is better, so they produce more beans.

Usually the care of *Koro* is done by women, while men usually pay more attention to the main crop. More over *Koro* does not require special a care.

It only needs to be weeded out, or when the plant is climbing uncontrollably it needs to be tended so that it won't disrupt the main crop.

The crop yield of *Koro* is also more widely used by women for family food, and sold to help the family's economy. *Koro* is commonly sold in the form of beans or processed into food such as tempeh.

"Farmers sell their *Koro* crop yield to supplement the family income. Although the toxicity, namely hydrogen cyanide in *Koro* beans is high, they also have high levels of protein.

Farmers plant *Koro* because they have a nutritional value as a source of vegetable protein. The plant is also easy to grow and well-suited to the various types of dry land," said Surati



According to Ch.Retnaningsih a lecturer at the Faculty of Food Technology, Soegijapranoto University in Semarang, the nutrient composition of velvet beans (*Koro Benguk*) is relatively ideal, comparable to soy beans. She proved that *Koro* has a lower fat and protein content than soy beans, but it contains more carbohydrates and fibers. Each 100 grams of soy beans, contains 40.4 grams of protein, 16.7 grams fat, 24.9 grams carbohydrates, and 3.7 grams fiber, while the rest is micromineral elements in milligrams. Meanwhile velvet beans of the same weight contain 31.0 grams of protein, 5.1 grams fat, 63.3 grams of carbohydrates, and 16.6 grams of fiber.



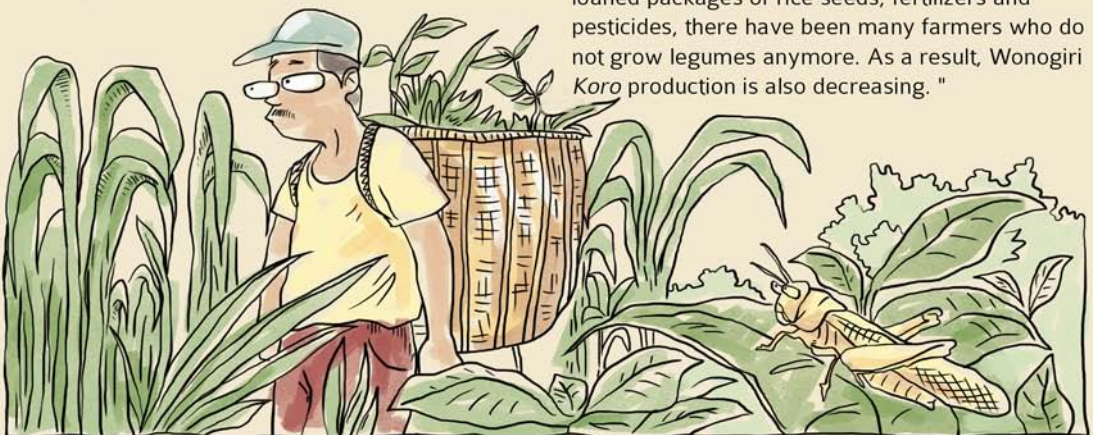
Unfortunately, the *Koros* which are rich in fiber is more and more difficult to find, the diversity of their species is also shrinking.

In the past, people do not have to worry about the preservation of various types of local food such as *Koro*. Wonogiri area arguably had the richest varieties of *Koro* in Central Java province. According to the survey results of Gita Pertiwi in 1998 in four districts, namely Baturetno, Batuwarno, Giriwoyo and Giritontro, there were 32 local species of pulses found that we recultivated by the local farmers.

However, fourteen years later in the middle of this year when another survey was conducted, the results were shocking. There are only eight remaining varieties of *kKoros* which are still planted by the farmers.

They are the common jack beans (*Canavalia ensiformis*), pole beans (*Phaseolus coccineus*), velvet beans (*Mucuna pruriens*), *Benguk Rase*, *Koro Ucheng*, gude or pigeon peas (*Cajanus cajan*), Winged beans (*Psophocarpus tetragonolobus* (L) D.C.) and *Koro Glinding*. Of those eight varieties the ones that are most widely grown are common jack beans, pole beans and velvet beans which are the main ingredient for making *Koro* tempeh. Next is *Gude* and *Koro Glinding* which are widely used as vegetables.

Actually Surati is aware of the declining species of *Koros* in her area. "The people here have been planting *Koros* for generations. However the varieties of *Koros* planted are dwindling. In the past *Koros* were widely cultivated, and species were also diverse. However since the 1960's when the government started a program that provided loaned packages of rice seeds, fertilizers and pesticides, there have been many farmers who do not grow legumes anymore. As a result, Wonogiri *Koro* production is also decreasing."





"In fact *Koros* are actually very suitable to be planted in the dry soil of Wonogiri, and they do not require a special care. But the government program is making the farmers continue to pursue a target of crop production especially rice. The fact is *Koros* actually also support food crops, but the farmers only think of rice, maize, nuts and cassava as food crops," she added.

Although the most widely planted *Koro* now is velvet beans, many farmers do not want to grow them because the selling price is very low, Rp.1.500 per kilogram. "Velvet beans are becoming increasingly difficult to find," said Surati.

Recently however, the price of velvet beans soared to Rp. 7,000 -Rp. 12,000 per kilogram, due the scarcity. This situation resulted in the shortage of the main ingredient for velvet-bean tempeh home industry, so they stop producing velvet-bean tempeh.

The scarcity of velvet beans is becoming more evident because the farmers do not want to set a side some of the seeds from the crop yields for planting. They usually sell all of the crop yields. "Farmers only want to plant them, but they are not willing to save some of the seeds, let alone "*Nguri-uri*", lamented Surati. *Nguri-uri* is a Javanese term which means to maintain or preserve.

The fact is velvet beans are the main ingredient for making the traditional food of Wonogiri, velvet-bean tempeh. Velvet-bean tempeh can be found in almost all areas in Wonogiri, such as in the market, stalls, and even the it inerant vegetable vendors sell velvet-bean tempeh. The people of Wonogiri who have moved to other areas, when they return to Wonogiri they will always ask for velvet-bean tempeh food in form of fried or marinated velvet-bean tempeh, or even its chips. When they leave Wonogiri to go back home, they are asked to bring velvet-bean tempe has a gift. Velvet bean tempeh can be cooked in different ways. Marinated tempeh is often served as a side dish on a daily basis just like soy tempeh. The chips are usually served as snacks when guests arrive.



The scarcity of velvet beans will affect women because the making and preparation of velvet-bean tempeh are done by women. The women farmers group which is assisted by Surati is one example. Not only they grow *Koros*, but also produce velvet-bean tempeh.

The process of making velvet-bean tempeh itself requires care and is time-consuming. The process requires a large amount of water while Wonogiri is a dry area with little water, so the tempeh makers have to buy water to make tempeh.



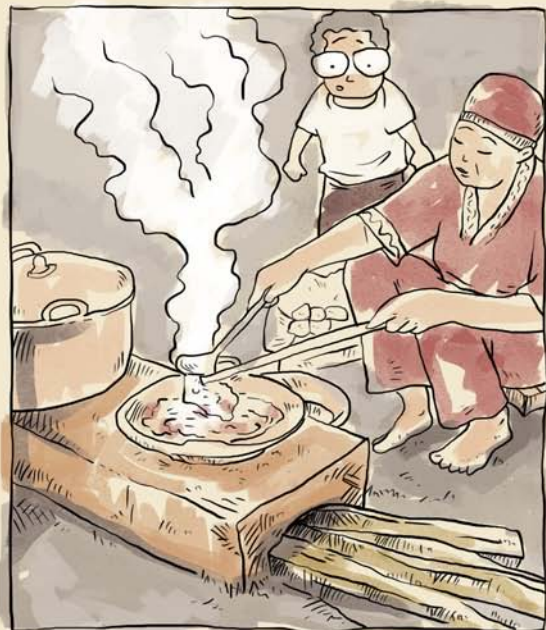
Surati said, "The members of our group have been producing velvet-bean tempeh for a long time. In Giriwoyo area for example, at one time one person could sell up to 10 kilograms of velvet-bean tempeh everyday. But the velvet beans were widely available and easy to get back

However, now their production have declined by 50 percent. One person now only produces 2 to 3 kilograms of tempeh per day, not only because velvet beans are harder to find, but also because the demand in velvet-bean tempeh is decreasing. People now prefer soybean tempeh.

"The scarcity of *Koro* can certainly threaten the sustainability of Wonogiri traditional food which is made by the home industries run by women's groups," added Surati.

In addition to the scarcity of beans, the process of making velvet-bean tempeh it self is a challenge for women because most of the velvet-bean tempeh home industries in Wonogiri are run by women.





The process also takes a long time, up to 5 days. First, the previously cleaned velvet beans are boiled, and then soaked for about 3 days to remove the cyanide toxins in the seeds. The soaking water must be mixed with ash to absorb the sap from the skin of the velvet beans so the sap won't be absorbed back by the beans. The sap is toxic. Ash also reduces the bitter taste of the seeds.

In addition to ash, during the process of soaking, the water must be changed every 6 hours. After the soaking process is complete, the beans are ready to be fermented. This stage uses *laru*. *Laru* or starter is *Rhizopus sp fungus* that has been cultured and is in granular form. This fermentation process is similar to making tempeh from soybeans. The starter is sprinkled on the beans, and stirred by hand so they are evenly mixed.

After that, the beans are wrapped in small pieces of the desired size using banana leaves or teak leaves. Finally, the pieces are then put on a tray which is then placed on the floor or a place that is not damp with good air circulation. The *Rhizopus* will multiply, grow, and its white mycelia will bind the beans together. After one to two days the velvet-bean tempeh is ready to be prepared. "



Surati and her group do not only sell velvet-bean tempeh but also its prepared food. Together with the Harjaning Bumi group of women farmers, she produces snacks from velvet-bean tempeh. Velvet bean tempeh chips are sold in plastic packaging with prices ranging from Rp.3,000,- to Rp.3,500, -. Velvet bean tempeh is sold for Rp.200 to Rp.500 per pack.

Another group, Dewi Sri is now developing *Begog* chips. "Members of our group make chips from *Koro Begog*. The process is similar to making velvet-bean tempeh. The only difference is before fermentation *Begogs* are cut into thin slices and then the starter is added and wrapped. One pack consists of 5-10 pieces of tempeh. After 1-2 days, the thin tempeh can be prepared by frying until dry by first mearing it with cassava flour and rice flour, "she said.



Ever since they started doing a lot of discussions in the group, the view points of the women farmer groups assisted by Surati is expanding. They now understand why *Koro* is increasingly scarce. *Koro* that is considered as a second crop to the subsidiary crops (*palawija*) turned out to be very important for the "nguri-uri" or preserving its diversity. They decided to do *Koro* conservation efforts through several activities, one of which is improve the cultivation method.

"The cultivation of *Koro* is not as easy as it sounds. If the plant is given too much water, the result is not good. If it is fertilized, the plant will produce lush leaves but no fruit. It is advisable for the plant to have rainwater 1 or 2 times and be given manure alone."

One of the challenges in farming *Koro* is the seed crisis, the shortage of seeds and problem in selecting high quality seeds. According Surati, high quality seeds are the main key to the success of *Koro* cultivation. Usually the farmers get *Koro*-seeds by setting a side some of their crop yields. There are some farmers don't keep the seeds and sell them all. The seeds for the next planting season are obtained by asking from their neighbors or by buying them from *Koro* sellers in the market which actually don't have the quality for planting so the result is not good.

Nevertheless this women group is resourceful. They decided to copy the method used by their ancestors, by saving and exchanging seeds. Surati and members of her group together with Gita Pertiwi Foundation pioneered the establishment of a seed bank and *Koro* collection. The hope of the establishment of a seed bank is simple. When the planting season arrives the farmers will have no difficulty obtaining seeds.

The seed banks were established by a group of women farmers in the four districts with the support of Gita Pertiwi Foundation. The idea of a seed bank is collecting various species of *Koro* which are both rarely encountered, and which are still widely planted by farmers. When the farmers harvest their crops, they set a side some of the yields for future planting seeds. They don't sell these seeds because they are only for personal use.



In a seed bank, farmer group members deposit at least one kilogram of seeds to be stored and managed by the seedbank. When the planting season arrives, members of the group can borrow seeds from the seed bank.

"The seeds are stored in the form of *Cengkorongan* and dried beans. The dried beans are placed in a plastic or glass bottle whose both ends are coated with ash so as not to become powdery (*Bubuken*)," said Warsi, a member of Harjaning Bumi group. *Bubuken* is word for the condition of seeds that have been eaten by insects, making the seeds powdery or have a lot of holes.

Currently, the seed banks are still in its early stage. The groups are drafting the rules that are going to be applied in each group. One group made the rule that for each one kilogram of seeds borrowed, 1.5 killograms must be returned. To start the seed bank, Gita Pertiwi Foundation loaned one kilogram *Koro Begog* seeds for each member of the group.

The Banks are beginning to show positive results. At least the positive results were shown during the presentation by Dewi Sri Group at the *Koro* End of Season Forum in October 2012. Here's their report, "From the starting 74 kilograms of *Koro Begog* seeds given to 71 members in February 2012. Currently the bank has already collected 96 kilograms of seeds which will be returned to Gita Pertiwi." The good news lifted up the spirit of the members.

The efforts of *Koro* collection, which are done by each member of the group are also beginning to show positive results. *Koro* collection aims to meet the needs of tempeh industry.

So when there is a demand of *Koro* to make tempeh, either from the members or the order from outside of their group, the seed bank will be able to meet that demand. This is another benefit from the group because small producers can obtain *Koro* from the group, so it will also improve the business of the group.



The hard work of women's groups to popularize *Koro* is beginning to be appreciated. The preparation of foods made from *Begog* by Dewi Sri group in Selopuro, Batuwarno, has brought this group to win the *Koro* End of Season Forum on October 20 to 21, 2012 in Tegiri Batuwarno.

They displayed a variety of cuisines made from *Koro Begog* such as marinated *Begog* tempeh, *Begog* chips, vegetable *Begog* and green chili soup, *Begog* pastries and *Begog* donuts. "*Begog* chips, pastries and donuts have been sold to the people in our village. Praise to God, they provided an extra income of individuals and groups".

However recently they are facing another problem, not only scarcity of seed, but also a lack of funds when the planting season arrives. The funds are needed to buy the seeds and fertilizer, as well as for *Koro* buying and selling business.

Finally they agreed on organizing savings and loans in the group. Later on, the savings and loans became very useful for the members. Ibu Mulok for example said, "Through my group I could borrow money from KSU Gita Pertiwi to invest in my *Koro* selling business. Praise to God, in less than one year I have reached the return of the investment, and my business runs smoothly," she said with a smile.

Although they have not been able to restore all the species of *Koro* that were once widely grown by the people, Surati and the groups of women farmers who are trying to conserve *Koro* plant have made a significant step. The seed banks will be used as the media to ensure that all the species of *Koro* in Wonogiri will not disappear. Therefore the farmers will be able to obtain high quality seeds easily because the banks have a system to provide and meet the demand of seeds among the farmers, either among the members or among the farmers in Wonogiri or even in a larger scope of Central Java.

Hopefully in the future, not only the velvet bean tempeh will become known, but also all the different species of *Koro* will become the hallmarks of Wonogiri, in addition to *Gaplek* and *Tiwul*.



Asti Pramudiani

Her full name is Pramudiani Asti, and Asti is the nickname. This 37-year-old woman is already married. In 2012, Asti participated actively in Gita Pertiwi Foundation, Solo. Currently, Asti is entrusted as facilitator of Koro Plant Conservation program in 4 (four) districts namely Tirto Moyo, Batu Warno, Giri Woyo and Giri Tontro districts in Wonogiri regency of Central Java province. Asti's activities to conserve and to develop the function of Koro (jack beans) with women farmers are expected to boost the economy of farmers' family.

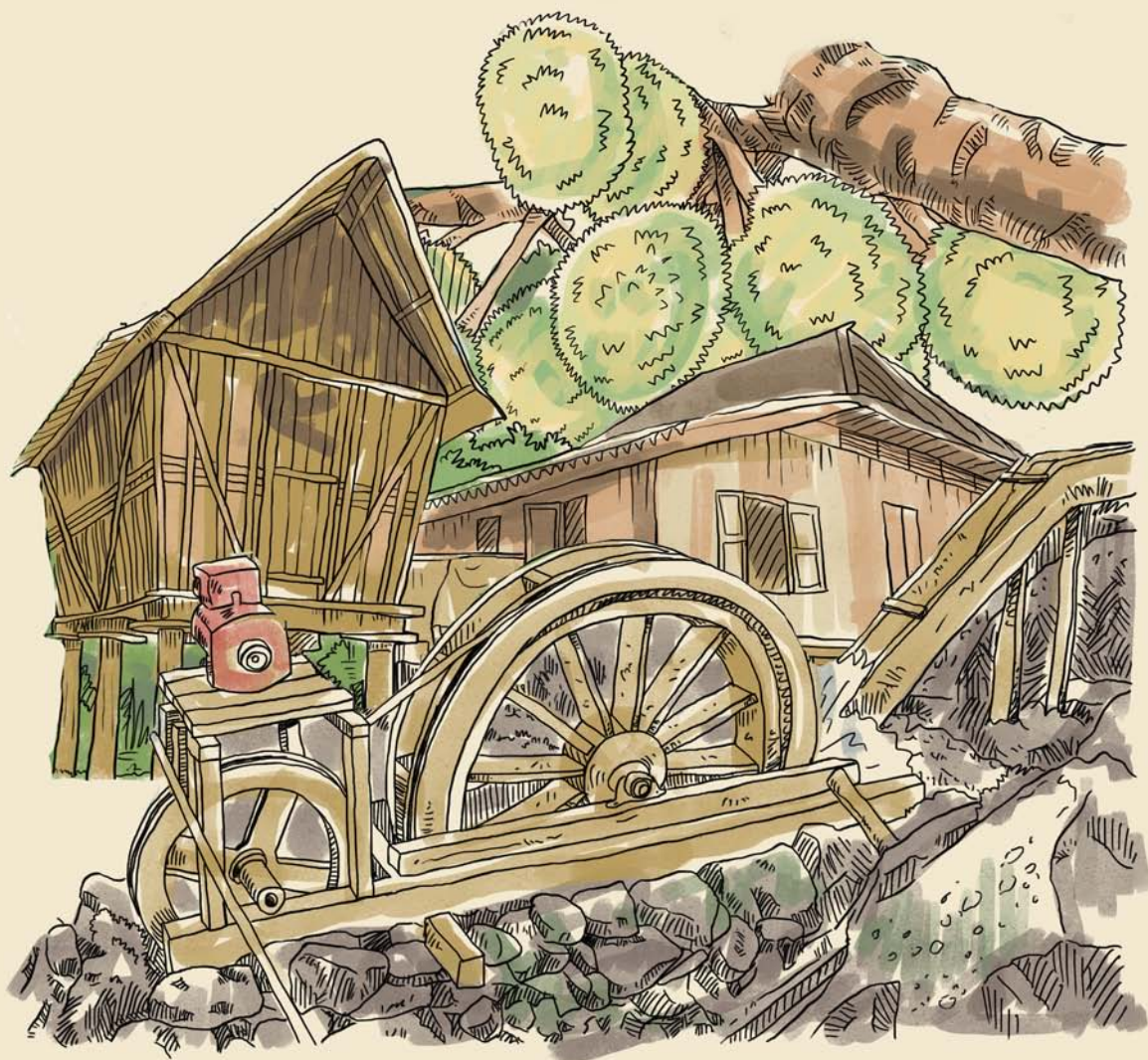




Best Practices Inspiring Indonesia

Life in the Tradition, Death in the Land

By Mikael Edi Sairondi



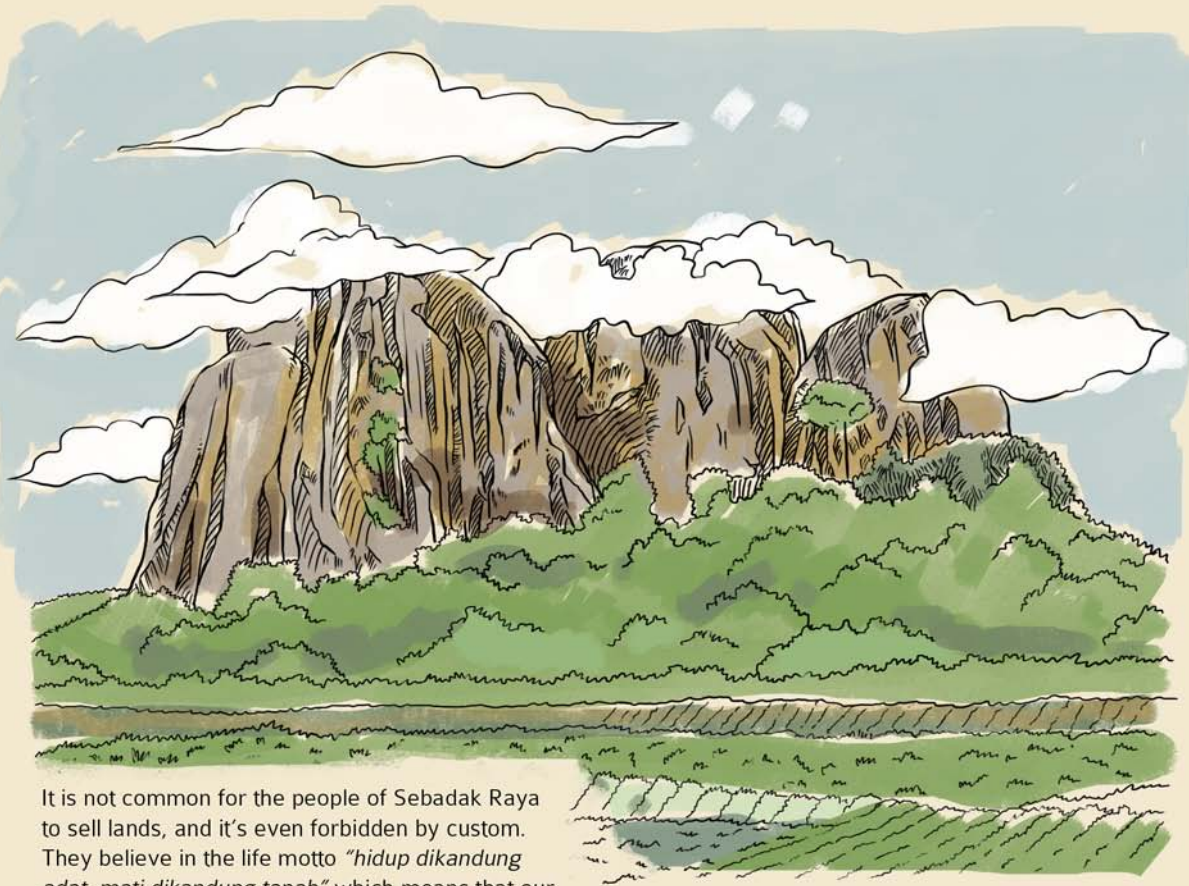


Throughout their history the people of Sebadak Raya have never clashed with the neighboring village, Pangkalan Suka. More over, the two villages were once united as one family. However since the entry of a palm oil company into the area two years ago, there has been a feud between the two villages up till now. In the past, the ancestors of the two villages lived together in Kebuai Hamlet. The traditional chief was then known as *Demung*, while the highest traditional leader was called *Mantir*. The struggle for *Mantir* position in 1943 was the reason for the division into two villages which are now having the feud. At that time, the two sons of the traditional chief, namely Rongas the eldest one and Songat the younger one, both wanted to succeed his father in leading the Kebuai Hamlet.

In the election, Rongas was elected as *Mantir*. His brother would not accept defeat and then led his family and all his followers to move to Tanjung Penjaluran which was located about 23 kilometers from Kebuai. In the new place, they multiplied and formed a new settlement called Sukamaju. In 1975 the settlement changed its name to Pangkalan Suka Village, while Kebuai Hamlet changed its name to Sebadak Raya Village.

Now there is feud between the two villages. The reason for that was the land that is located on the border between the two villages. The land dispute started when the people of Sebadak Raya Village caught in hand the Cultivation Rights Title boundary establishment team which consisted of an oil palm company, PT Permata Sawit Mandiri (PSM), the Forest Service and the Nangatayap District Government. They were entering their traditional land without prior consent of the people. Finally the people sanctioned them with a traditional fine for "*langkah potsa curuk buhu*" which means they entered without permission and have to pay a traditional fine in the form of 6 pieces of *Tajau* or crocks.

After the incident, they finally realized that 300 hectares of people's land had been sold secretly by some people from Pangkalan Suka Village to an oil palm company, PT. PSM in 2010. The land was sold cheaply, only for Rp.300,000 per hectare, or Rp.30 per meter. Since then, the relations between the two villages became strained. The land owner almost clashed with the people who sold the land.



It is not common for the people of Sebadak Raya to sell lands, and it's even forbidden by custom. They believe in the life motto "*hidup dikandung adat, mati dikandung tanah*" which means that our lives are inseparable with the soil and forests, and when we die we will go back to the soil. Moreover, the traditional people have been very dependent on the forest, which is also the source of water.

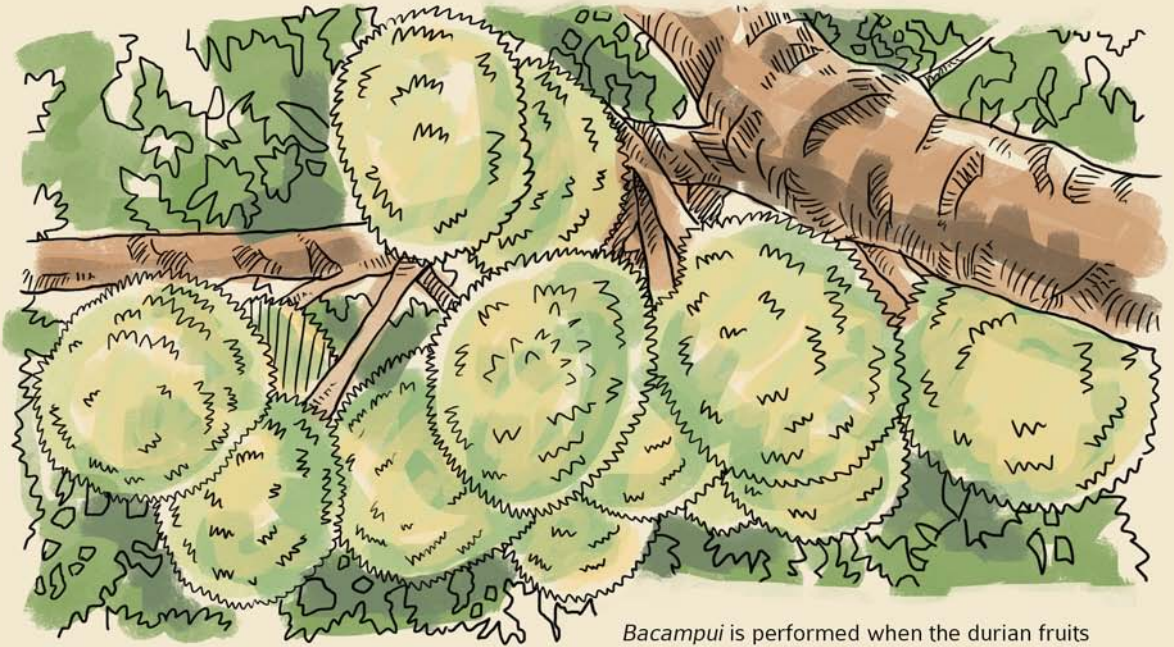
They have a proverb, "*buah kampung caba buah air caba ikan*" which means that when the forest is destroyed the hills will become bare and the waters will dry up and the people will no longer be able to taste durians and eat fish from the river.

Sebadak Raya Village is located in the mountain sand is the up stream area of Tayap River. But the village is not the only people who benefit from its forests and rivers. Almost the entire population of Ketapang Regency in West Kalimantan also benefit from the forests and rivers there because the upstream area of Tayap River is an important water catchment area and the source of water for the lower regions, starting from Ingin River to the capital of Ketapang Regency.

The area is the headwaters of four major rivers in the regency namely Pawan River, Pesaguan River, Tayap River and Kebuai River.

"If the forest is lost there will no longer be a place to look for material for ceremonial purposes" said Martinus—the traditional *demung* of Kebuai. The loss of forest also means the loss of inherited customs and culture such as, the *bacocap bacampui*, *basailih batatobus* and *polas bio bantan tadah* ceremonies. All of those three cannot be performed any more if there is no forest.

The *bacocap bacampui* ceremony is a fruit-related ceremony. The focus of the ceremony is not the regular fruits, but just durian fruits. This ceremony begins when durian trees are flowering, which is also known as *mahalu kombang* ceremony. The objective of the ceremony is to pray for the durian flowers so that the flowers become fruits and fruits area abundant.



Durian has a special significance for the people there. It is regarded as the mother of fruits because durian fruits can be processed into a wide range of useful food and drinks such as *tempoyak* (fermented durian), beverages, *dodol*, or other foods that are preserved. The varieties of durian are also diverse in this place such as *duren*, *kusi*, *trotungan*, *mawai*, *maloi*, *siawak* and *pekawai*. That is why the ceremony is regarded to represent the ceremony for all kinds of fruits harvest from the yard to the forest.

Durian trees are abundant in Sebadak Raya. When the durian season arrives from December to January, usually many fruits fell of the trees uneaten because they are plentiful. "In the three hills in our village including Lincah Hill, a durian tree with its trunk reaching 2 meters can produce over 1000 fruits," said Martin. The fruit harvest ceremony is conducted in Lincah Hill.

Bacocap in the local language means the start of the harvest, while *bacampui* means the completion of harvest. *Bacocap* is done after *mahalu kombang*, right after durian fruits start to fall from the trees. In the ceremony people pray so that the durian fruits are good and won't harm the people

Bacampui is performed when the durian fruits harvesting is finished. This ceremony is also conducted on Lincah Hill in August, when the durian trees start flowering. Usually durian trees produce fruits from December to January.

Bacocap bacampui ceremony is done 3 times a year, precisely when the durian flowers begin to grow in August, when the fruits are ripe and start falling usually from December to January and finally when the harvest is completed.

The ceremony also marks the beginning of harvest for other fruits such as *mentawai*, *duku langsung*, *longan* and others.

They do not only pray for fruit trees, but human health too. This ceremony is called *basasilih bataobus*, which aims to ask the Creator to protect the health of people of the village, in order to avoid disaster and attacks from dangerous animals, such as snake bites, bears, scorpions and others in the forest.

The ceremony is also done so that people survive the journey, and be successful in business. The time of the ceremony can be conducted at any time depending on the demand of people. The ceremonies are led by a local wiseman who is called *Bolin sasidih*.

Actually Sebedak Raya is a village that has incomparable natural wealth. The area of the village is approximately 48,000 hectares, 3,000 hectares of which are the traditional forest and village forest with an area of 2,425 hectares. Most of the people live as farmers. The population of this village is roughly 2,129 people, mostly rubber and coffee farmers. Each family owns a minimum land area of about 4 hectares.

The people also have traditional ceremonies related to their farm. One of them is *Polas bio bantan tadah*. The ceremony is performed to pray for the land so that it provides an abundant rice harvests through out the year, and give blessings for the next year. The ceremony also aims to ask the safety for people who work in the fields from clearing the land until the harvest is over. *Polas bio bantan tadah* is held every May 25. Before performing the ceremony, people are not allowed to cut down or clear the farm land. The ceremony is led by *Belindu ato* , or a shaman.

The people of Sebedak Raya still apply swidden farming method by 5-year cycle slash and burn technique. They will clear up new fields, and will return to the first field five years later. This way they believe it gives time for fields to become fertile again.

They grow rice for their daily food, using varieties that are planted on dry fields. There varieties of rice there are diverse. There are at least 20 varieties of rice that are still cultivated. The names of some of the varieties are for example *kediu* which smells like *Pandan Wangi*, and there are *kelatang Bayung*, *duku*, *tukul*, *sayap*, and *pandan bintik* (red rice).

After the harvest, the people again perform a ceremony called *Menjangan Pantuk Tugak* which means praying when storing rice in *Jurung*. Granaries are called *Jurung* there. The location of *Jurung* is usually not far from the people's homes, just 10 to 30 meters away.

Jurung is a building made of bamboo similar to a small house with an area of 6 square meters but with no doors and windows on the side. The door is located at the top, top event rats from entering. The ceremony is also known as *Naik dangau*.

"No wood and forest, no more *adat kamuh banyak sapata tahun*," said Limin, a traditional leader of Kebuai confirming the view point of Martinus, his friend. It means that when the forests are gone there are no more places to open farmlands, plant rice and gardening. He said even if the tradition is performed it is useless if the forest is gone.





"We are the jungle people who are used to hunt and gather vegetables in the forests," he added. Although they hunt for animals, the people still realize that the forest is the home for deer, pigs, muntjacs, mouse-deer, bears, orang utans and other. If the forest is cut down, there will no longer be a place for shelter and the animals will lose food. Humans also lose their source of meals and livelihood in the forest.

The people also believe in the saying "No forest, no life." When the forests are destroyed life will disappear. Therefore the forests need to be preserved and maintained, as well as the wildlife that exists in the forests. They believe that the loss of just one species of an animal or a plant will result in an imbalance of other living beings.

The traditional people have long been proven to manage their forests wisely. Keeping the forests means maintaining tradition, said Martin. This means that people should keep the forest and animals to preserve the traditions and culture. The traditions can be performed if the ritual needs can be taken from the forests, including the ritual to save the forest itself, such as the *Bapolas* ceremony.

"Traditional law was made to ensure that forests are not destroyed and the people can live in peace," he added.

Not only the forests, they also apply the wisdom in managing farm lands, including fields and rubber. Rubber farmland there is very big that often they are not able to manage their own field. Fortunately they have a mutual aid tradition called *Juruk Barai* which in the local language means mutual aid, working together on the land, taking turns from one family to another. Usually *Juruk Barai* is done to build houses, and clean the sacred forests.

Siswanto and his friends who live in Sebedak Raya actually apply *Juruk Barai* on their rubber farmlands since 2007. "*Juruk Barai* can turn any heavy work into an easy task, the impossible becomes possible." That is the reason why the thirteen men who mostly have rubber and cacao plantations in the area of Cundai Hills are becoming close to each other.

In the beginning Siswanto and his friends were unable to clean up and plant rubber in their large fields. Each family has at least a 4-hectare rubber field. "If you clean the field yourself, one hectare can be completed in half month, however using *juruk barai* thirteen of us can complete the work in one day," said Siswanto. *Juruk barai* is done every Sunday around 10 am, after the church service.



Their lands in Cundai Hills are side by side, so the distances between them are not too far away. In the field rubber, coffee, cacao and *bengkirai* are planted. The total area of their fields is 250 hectares.

Rubber plantation produces latex. Every day, on average they are able to harvest at least 20 to 30 kilos of latex. "Now the price of latex is still high at about Rp10,000 per kilo" said Siswanto. Rubber prices actually go up and down, depending on international market demand. But the problem is Sebadak Raya is located in the remote place so it is not easy to sell rubber especially when the price of rubber is uncertain. But people have a unique way of storing rubber latex. They store it along the Tayap river.

The river there is like a natural storage area that is vast and long. Once the latex is harvested and processed into white sheets, they are then rolled up, lined up and stored along the banks Tayap River.

They roll them using a log and tie them with rattan ropes, before immersing them in the river. Typically, each family has its own storage area along the river with a length of 7 to 10 meters. Usually latex sheet is stored for a maximum of 3 months submerged in the water. Sometimes they store as much as 800 kilograms latex there.

Usually the rubber is stored until it is enough to make a lot of money when it is sold or they wait until rubber price in the market becomes stable, before they sell it to the traders who come and sell it in Pontianak.

The experience of working on rubber fields using mutual cooperation or *Juruk Barai* have made Siswanto and his friends realized that when they work together they will become stronger and the task becomes easier. In 2008 they finally agreed to set up a farmers group called Cundai oh Cundai. The name was taken from the name of Cundai Hill where their fields are located. "The hill is high. If we go up there we have take a breath, and usually sigh, "Cundai oh cundai," said Siswanto.



The Cundai oh cundai farmers group not only grow plants but they also grow freshwater fish by making fish ponds, and growing pond fish such as carps, *parau*, *gabis* and catfish. They also started making nurseries and planting endemic plants such as agarwood and ironwood, *keladan*, *meranti*, *Omang* and others. Now there are 20 species of endemic plants that they grow, about 10 thousand trees in total.

Apparently the group efforts were observed by the people of Sebedak Raya. The cooperation that they do is considered successful. That is why, when there is a threat to the forest and a land dispute occurred with an oil palm plantation company in 2010, Cundai oh cundai was asked to intervene.

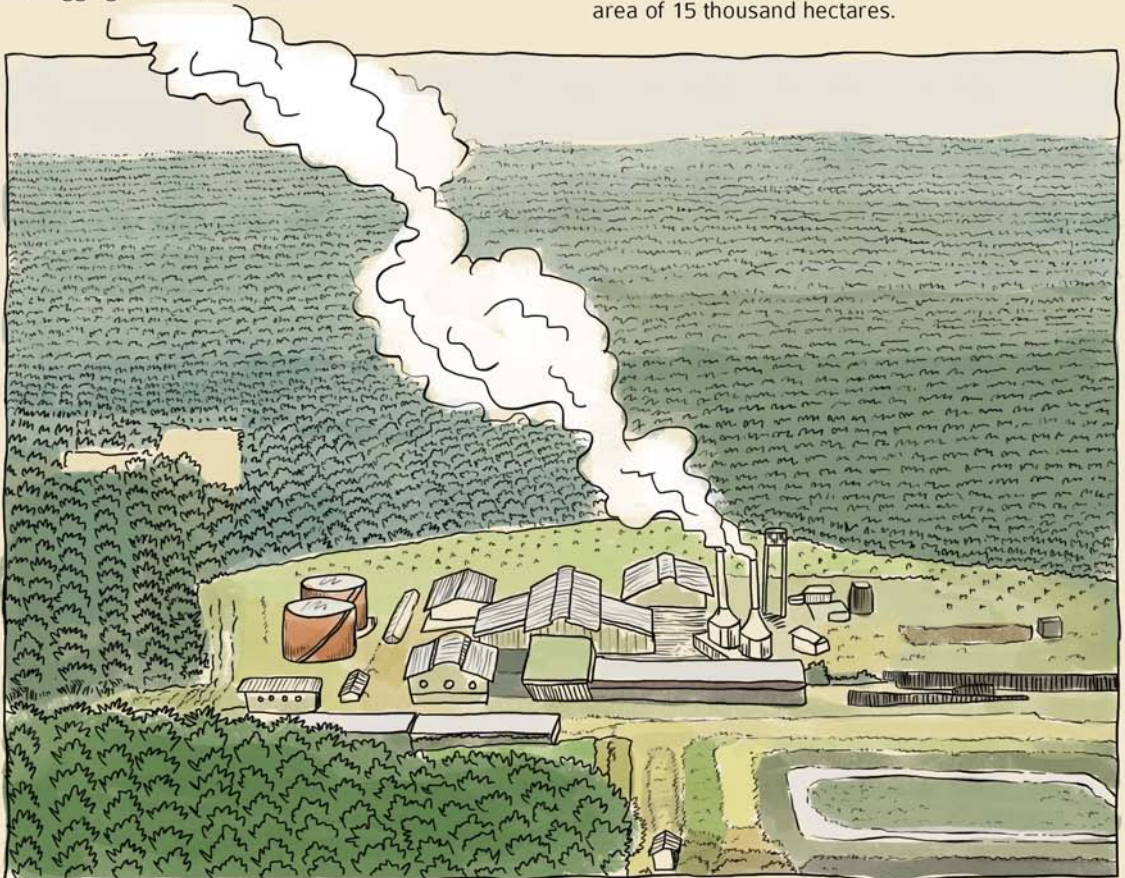
Actually it was not the first time that the forests there were threatened. The forests there have been targeted by investors since 2001. At that time there were some businessmen who funded the logging of traditional forests.

These forest encroachers come from outside their village. They cut iron wood and *bengkirai* illegally because the two types of wood are expensive. They sold it to capitalists in Sandai and Kelik River.

Before illegal logging was rampant, the government also gave logging permission to PT. Wana-Mukti Lestari which operated in the traditional forests around Layang Hill. Meanwhile, another company, PT. Alas Kusuma Grup was also granted a license to cut down the forests of Pancong and BatuPutih Hills.

As a result, the forests become degraded. The river waters become polluted due to open forests and erosion, thus polluting the waters of Tayap and Uangan rivers. Slowly but surely their traditional rights are beginning to be undermined.

Most recently, the government issued a permit for an oil palm company, which is PT. Permata Sawit Mandiri (PSM) in 2008 to work on a land with an area of 15 thousand hectares.



Another permit was also granted to PT. CitraSawit Cermerlang (CSC) for 800 hectares of Sebadak Raya Village territory. Oil palm is a type of plantation with uniform plants. If the forest is turned into oil palm plantations, the plants and animals will no longer be able to live there.

The people of Kebuai were united in rejecting the presence of those two oil palm companies. Their reason was PT. CSC and PSM will clear the forests and eliminate their traditional rights on the forests. But the company backed by the local government actually intimidated the people so that the people were becoming afraid to demand justice on their traditional rights.

According to Siswanto, although the situation was difficult, the people continued to try and find a way out. They compared the prosperity of their village to other villages that have received oil palm plantations. In their view, Sebadak Raya is more prosperous without the presence of oil palm plantations. They were determined to manage their forests on their own as opposed to releasing them to other people because forests are inseparable from their lives.

Especially in the last fifty years they have proved that the rubber fields have been able to sustain their economies. The people really understand the method of planting rubber and its maintenance is easy. The rubber plants do not require special care. Not only rubber, they also plant coffee and fruit trees. The coffee and fruit trees are grown in between the rubber trees. Each family can have 400 to 500 coffee trees and the yield is mostly for personal consumption. About 80 percent of the people there drink coffee.

The people's efforts in coffee cultivation finally got the support from Ketapang Regency Forest Service. In August 2010, the people received training to improve the quality of the coffee fruit, coffee and to choose the appropriate coffee varieties that are suitable to the soil condition there. Hopefully, the training will help the farmers improve their coffee quality. The high quality coffee will improve their economy so that they do not need to sell their land to companies, but manage the land on their own.



"We have also started to think about how our forests and rivers can generate electricity," said Siswanto. They want to make use of water resources as a driver for village's lighting which will become the reason for them to keep the forests there. The initial idea was to build a micro-hydro, a small-sized power plant that uses the power of river water to turn turbines. The church was actively involved in the discussion the plans with them.

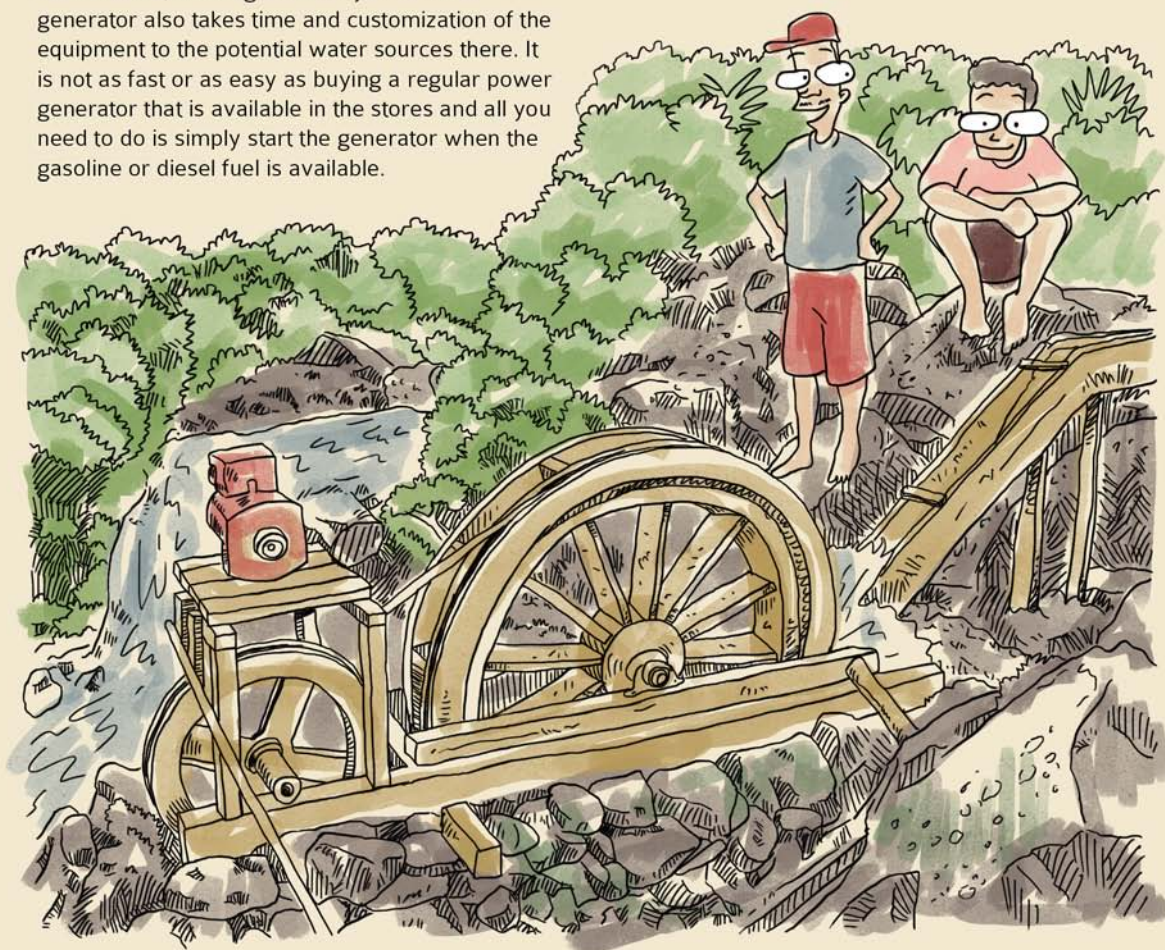
The plan to build a micro hydro electric generator was the starting point for Cundai oh cundai to become acquainted with the GEF SGP, around the end of 2010. They asked for support on the procurement and management of micro hydro.

Unfortunately, they have to face many obstacles in providing sustainable energy for the whole village. In addition to technical knowledge and coordination, building a microhydro electric generator also takes time and customization of the equipment to the potential water sources there. It is not as fast or as easy as buying a regular power generator that is available in the stores and all you need to do is simply start the generator when the gasoline or diesel fuel is available.

"The first stage did not meet our expectations, but it was a struggle, not only in getting lights, but also a weapon to save the forests. Forests produce water and we need water to produce electricity" said Siswanto.

That's why they are determined to build a micro-hydro. Currently, GEF SGP is hooking them up with another one of their grantees, Cibuluh community from West Java, which has managed to build and run a microhydro. Cibuluh community will help them immediately in designing a village scale microhydro.

Cundai oh Cundai believes if they are successful in realizing this electricity which is generated by nature, everybody will become aware that the forests have the power to give life. Their spirit in saving the forests gained a lot of support. "Aids flow just like water," he said.



Later several conservation organizations also made programs in Sebadak Raya, including CIFOR and Fauna & Flora International. "They did a research and made village forests," said Siswanto. In August 2011, the villagers got permission from the Ministry of Forestry to manage village forests, although in reality the forests are their traditional land, which are established as State Forests.

Ever since large organizations made their programs there, the people become more aware of the wealth of their forests. "We were also taught how to calculate forest carbon. We were offered to sell forest carbon credits so they can get an extra income," said Martin.

The traditional forests in Sebadak Raya village are now widely known.

The governments and companies are becoming increasingly cautious in imposing their intention to forcibly clear the forests.

At least everything that has been done by the people has made them more confident about their efforts in preserving the forests. Although their relationship with neighboring village has not improved and their forests are still threatened, they have managed to stop the wider destruction of their forests.

They also proved that the traditional people are capable of maintaining and managing their forests not only for their economic value, but also social and cultural values. The threats of rainforest destruction were successfully answered with the actions planting and maintaining forests, planting rubber, coffee, bengkirai, rattan and building a sustainable power source.

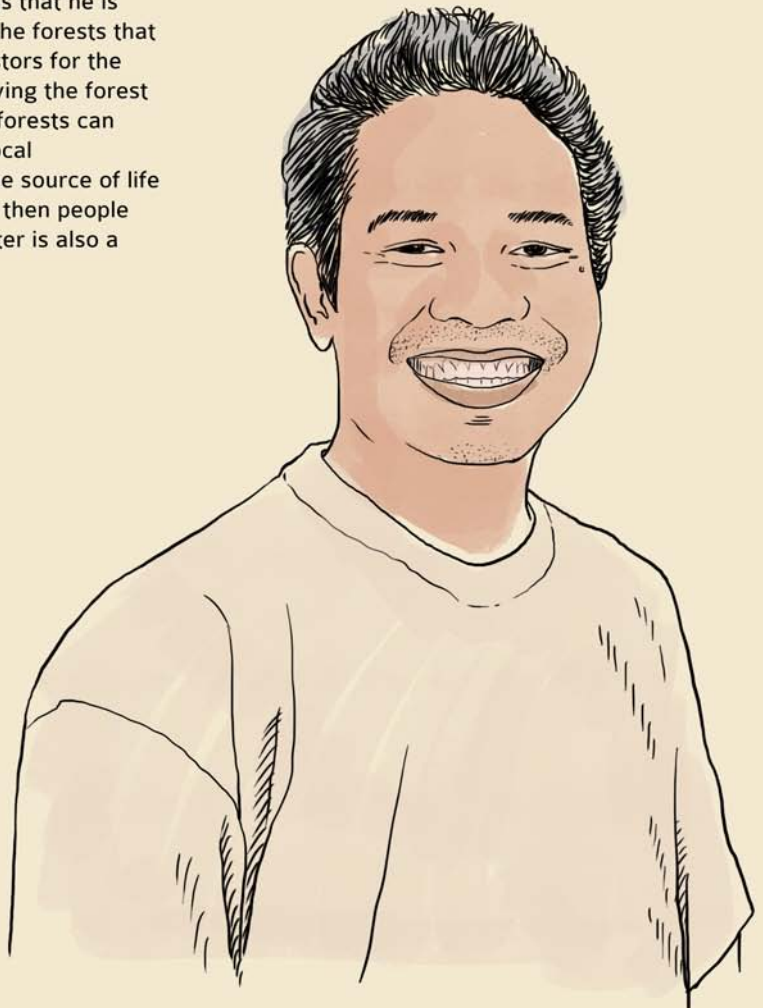


Mikael Edi Sairondi

The man's nickname is Eddie. He is 39 years old, with a wife and two children. He comes from the village Cundai oh Cundai, West Kalimantan.

Edi devotes himself to a community organization that specifically addresses the case of deprivation of the rights of indigenous peoples by both company and or the government. The organization is "Commission of Justice and Peace of Papua Borneo". His motto of live is "Environmental Conservation". Besides working on his IP rights organization, he also allocates his time to facilitate people to express the issue of "Environment".

The most interesting thing of Edi is that he is directing the people to conserve the forests that have been destroyed by the investors for the purpose of protecting and preserving the forest for the community. For example, forests can provide water for the life of the local community. For Eddie, water is the source of life and if people want to be secured, then people should protect the forest, and water is also a unifying symbol.



Lurik Peeking the Global Market

By Fitria Werdiningsih





A woman in her 50s came up to a handcraft exhibition stand. The woman was wearing a silk batik, kebaya, and carrying a Louis Vuitton handbag. She was standing in front of the stand, and holding the bag. She looked at a price tag, frowned, and then said, "It's just a lurik cloth, lady. Why is it so expensive?"

Herlin, the stand keeper, was stunned by the woman's comment. For her, the woman's comment sounded odd particularly because it was in contrast to her upscale look and the internationally branded product that she was carrying. Nonetheless she understood. This was not the first time that people could not appreciate the products made from lurik cloth that were on display.

"Most people consider lurik fabrics as cheap fabrics," Herlin said.

Indeed, most people still consider lurik fabrics are identical to cheap printed batik cloths which are often used as the raw material of handcraft. The fact is the lurik fabrics used by Lawe, a non-profit enterprise from Yogyakarta, were traditionally woven by village women who used natural fibers and dyes. Making a single piece of these traditional woven fabrics takes at least more than one month. Therefore the price becomes relative.

In the hands of Lawe craftsmen, those traditional woven fabrics were then converted into functional products that can be used every day.



"We changed the traditional fabrics into products as a way to promote Indonesian traditionally woven fabrics," said Adinindyah, a co-founder of Lawe.

Lurik is actually not the first material used to make Lawe products, although now it is its main material. The early Lawe products actually used traditionally woven cloth from West Sumba, East Nusa Tenggara.

The story of Lawe began when Adinindyah worked for a non-governmental organization in West Sumba. Her job was to assist the communities living around the forest so that they would not damage the forest by cutting down the trees. Adinindyah saw that these people actually had an economic potential from their woven fabrics. The women in the area produce beautiful fabrics, but they have a difficulty in selling them.

"It's probably because they are expensive that they are hard to sell. And then I got an idea that maybe if I make small things from them, people might want to buy because the price is so much cheaper, and the fabric also has additional functions," said Adinindyah.

And then she started to create a simple products of these fabrics such as bags, book covers and a few other small items.

Before her initial effort produced any significant results, Adinindyah had to return to Yogyakarta. However, her passion to produce items from traditionally woven fabrics was already flaming.

"I found it hard to abandon what we had started, but at the same time it was difficult for me to continue my effort in Sumba," said Adinindyah who then tried to find traditional woven cloth in Yogyakarta. It was then that she became acquainted with *lurik*.

With an initial capital of Rp 3.000.000, - collected from her and her four friends, Adinindyah founded a handicraft company called the Lawe in 2004. In the beginning of its establishment, Lawe experimented with stationery handicrafts such as book covers, memo pads, and other small souvenir items.





After just two years of Lawe operation, Yogyakarta was shaken by a strong earthquake. The lurik workshop which supplied the main materials for Lawe was damaged, both its building and all its production equipments. In fact, the owner was about to shut down his business. This was certainly a serious problem for Lawe which fully depended on the raw materials from the weaving workshop.

Eventually the Lawe managers tried to help by buying all the remaining stocks of lurik fabrics that were still in good enough condition for selling and producing handicraft items. They also tried to convince the workshop owner not to stop their business and continue to produce. After just a period of three months, the workshop was already back in operation and started producing again. "It's a relief to know they're back in business shortly," said Adinindyah proudly.

Since then, Lawe began to develop new product lines, such as large bags, purses, pillow cases, knick-knacks, and even receive orders to produce company merchandise items.

The idea of promoting the Indonesian traditional woven fabrics is very noble. The initiative to convert woven fabrics into handicraft products is an innovation. However, those Lawe products were not necessarily received well by the public.

"At that time, there were no other players who used lurik fabric. On the other hand, the handicraft market was dominated by printed batik fabrics that are much much cheaper. It's hard for us to compete," said Westiani, one of Adinindyah's friends who also co-founded Lawe.

Recognizing the market conditions that were still unfamiliar with lurik fabric products, the managers of Lawe used a different marketing strategy. "We didn't sell it to the mass market, but using a "guerrilla tactic" through our friends," said Westiani.

They contacted some friends who were considered able to understand the value of their products and help sell them. Most of them come from the non-governmental organizations. Westiani believes that activists are able to appreciate their products better than the market in general. So are numbers of expatriates who live and work in Yogyakarta.

"At one time we were given a table to sell our products in their internal meeting. In fact, on another occasion we were given an opportunity to present and introduce Lawe. It really helped our campaign," said Westiani.

Another strategy was to market the products through exhibitions. One of the exhibitions that were considered very important was INACRAFT which was held in Jakarta.

Due to limited funds, they were initially only able to place their Lawe products there through a business partner who participated in the exhibition. The result was never satisfactory which raised doubts as to whether the *lurik* products were marketable.

The opportunity to prove market acceptance of Lawe products came when they got a small grant from The Samdhana Institute to take part in the largest handicraft exhibition in Indonesia which was held in Jakarta Convention Center in 2007. "Now that we think about it, we were actually not prepared for it. It was such a big exhibition and none of us had any experience in marketing," Adinindyah said with a guffaw.

The direct experience of participating in an exhibition turned out to be important. The lurik woven products that they offer to got a surprising response. Many people wanted to know and bought those products. "It was possibly because we were the only one offering lurik product on the exhibition," said Adinindyah.

The exhibition was an opportunity for the Lawe managers to learn. The responses of visitors become the basis for them to devise appropriate marketing strategies. There are at least three types of visitors that can be identified by them.



First, the type of visitors who do not know much about *lurik* fabrics will explore more about the specificity of the fabrics such as, asking about its origins, how it was produced, the traditional values, and things other than the price. Typically, this type of visitors will buy the products if stand keeper is able to explain the significance and uniqueness of *lurik*.

The second type visitors are those who are familiar with *lurik* fabrics but they have never seen the innovation of *lurik* use in craft products before. Typically, they will be keen to further deepen their knowledge about the coloring techniques and product processing. Because they already knew the value of *lurik* fabrics, these visitors usually don't mind much with the price, but they rather pay attention to the designs. If the colors and designs are considered appealing and fit their taste, they will readily decide to buy the product.

The third type of visitors is the people as illustrated earlier in this article. They are the people who have known about *lurik* fabrics, but position *lurik* as low grade fabrics commonly worn by herbal tonic ladies or a clothing material of *Kraton* (palace) servants. Despite having the money and comes from a high social class, usually this type of visitors will try to bid the prices up to 50% cheaper.

The experience of taking part in the exhibition makes the managers of Lawe confident in promoting the their products. The invitations to participate in other exhibitions were eagerly accepted and they learn further that positive responses are not always be found in each exhibition. This means that their products do not always sell. And interestingly, or ironically, Yogyakarta is not the right place to sell *lurik* products.

No serious research has been done on the subject, but Lawe team suspects that it might be due to the low purchasing power of the people or because *lurik* is seen as an ordinary thing.





These lessons are important and they become the best teacher for Lawe managers. They become selective in choosing the exhibitions. Even if the exhibition is free, if the visitors are not the targeted consumers, it will be difficult to sell the products.

"We prefer to join the exhibition in Jakarta despite having to pay Rp 2.000.000, - to have a table for three days as opposed to a free exhibition in Yogyakarta with 3 x 3 meter stand for five days," said Adinindyah.

In addition to taking part in exhibitions, Lawe products are also marketed in a special showroom in Yogyakarta. Also Lawe distributes its products to six stores in Yogyakarta and three stores in Jakarta. Another marketing system is through a reseller business model. This is mostly for those who run an online business.

The future plan of Lawe is to expand its market overseas. "Export is the dream of every handicraft maker," said Adinindyah.

The dream was welcomed by Bali Export Development Organization (BEDO) Bali and the Center for the Promotion of Imports from Developing Countries (CBI), which provide training and mentoring programs. "For two years we will be assisted so that we will be able to export to Europe, especially for home décor products," said Adinindyah.

During the training and mentoring program, the Lawe team will be provided with the knowledge about export issues, such as how to dissect the identity of the product, how to determine a reasonable price, pack a product and to prepare for the exhibitions. To test the export market, Lawe products will be included an exhibition in Vietnam in April 2013 where there will be many buyers who come from Europe.

This is indeed an important step and a serious leap for Lawe. It is a way to prove the ability of Lawe managers to market lurik fabric to the global market and at the same time emphasize that lurik is not a low-grade fabric that can be underestimated.

Fitria Werdiningsih

Appreciating the work of the artisan is one of Fitria Werdiningsih passions. This friendly lady in short hair was born in Wonogiri 32 years ago. Fitri, that is how she is called, is a business unit manager of Lawe Association. Fitri wants to be known as Lawe's "spokeperson". Fitri is so flexible, a straightforward type of person, and she is always beaming with pride everytime she has to tell about each program and the works produced by Lawe.

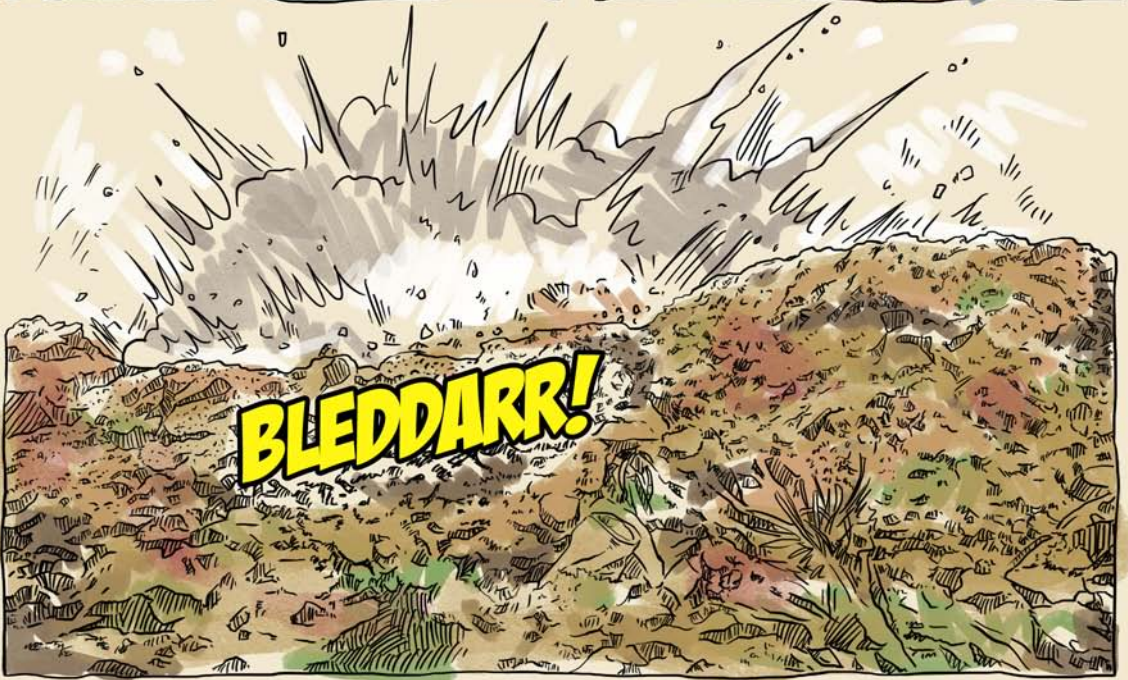
Passion is one of the words that Fitri counts on during creating. The lady who had studied Communication in the University of Gajah Mada (UGM) has a dream of 'Traveling all around the World'. Fitri feels that Lawe is "her bridge" to achieve that dream. Fitri hopes that Lurik Jogjakarta through Lawe's works can go international and be an icon of Indonesia. Thus, impacting the artisans' livelihood and making them improved and sustainable. Previously, not so many people knew Lurik (striated woven fabric) as a typical of Jogjakarta fabric, and not many lurik weavers were proud of their works. The weavers are usually elder people. Currently, Lurik has become famous and being transformed into interesting products by Lawe. Fitri and Lawe continue to campaign and encourage weavers in various regions of Indonesia through Lawe sisterhood program. Bali, North Sumatra, Riau, Palembang, Sumba, South Sulawesi and East South Central (Mollo, Amanatun, and Amanuban) are area rich with weavers and products out of the woven fabric has been successfully created by Lawe.



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 slid.

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.

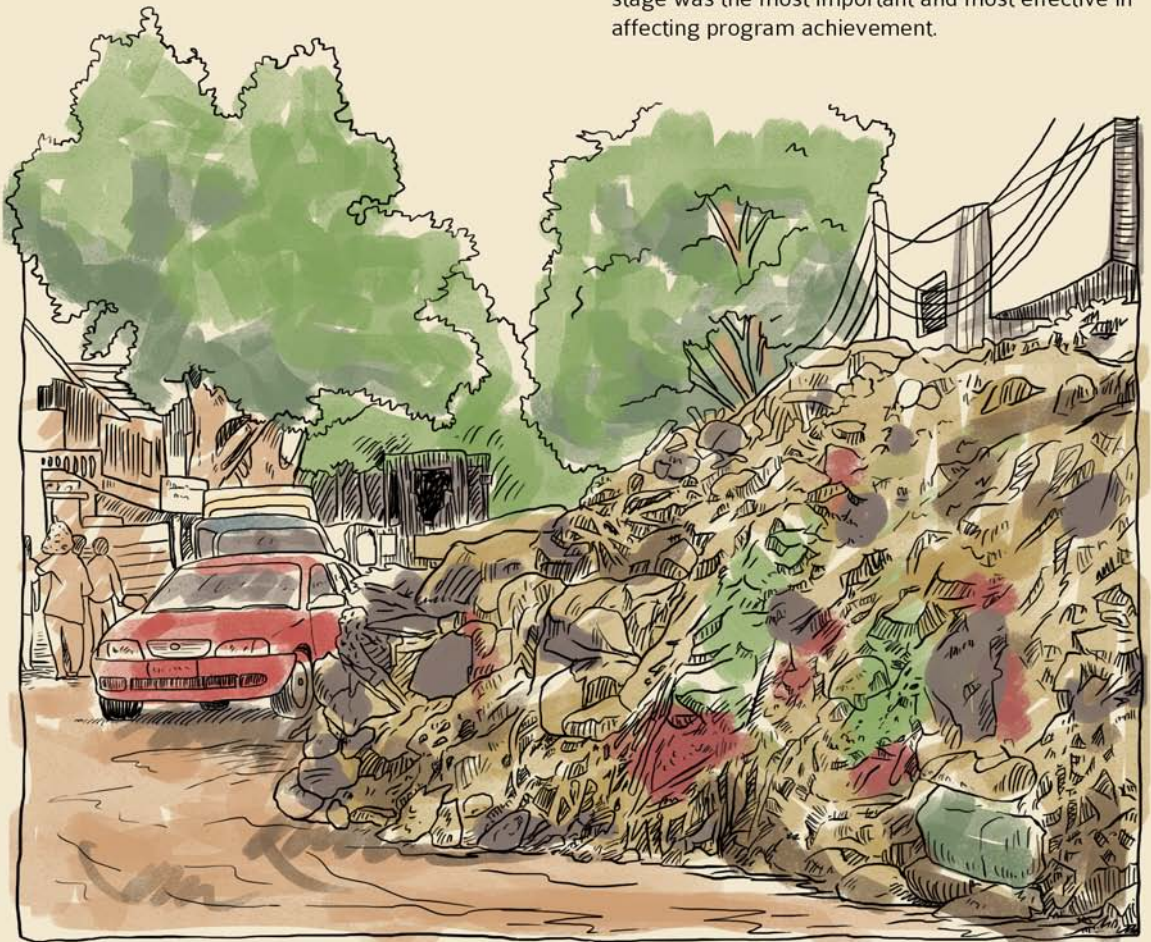
Looking at these facts, Sano who completed school in the Faculty of Environmental Engineering, Institute of Technology Bandung (ITB) assessed that garbage management should be started at home. Through Greeneration Indonesia, Sano made a community assistance program called Garbage Management for Household (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



Planting Mangrove, Harvesting Blessing

By Jumiati





West monsoon is the toughest season for fishermen in hamlet III, Sei Nagalawan Village. The community called this season as 'Bakat' or 'wak Uteh', which is the time when the weather was bad, the waves are high so that fishermen could not go to the sea. The peak of Bakat is in October to December when fisherman families are in economic crisis.

Bakat season makes the men could not go to the sea, while the wives could not go to the market because there is no shopping money. Finally, there was no other choice, the wives had to borrow or loan some money from a boss or moneylender, or in debt to the local shops.

In Bakat months, the most favored conversation by the women in this fisherman village was debt. "Who do you owe to, Las?" asked Nanik to Lastris when she was passing by her neighbor's house at Gang (alley) Jawa one afternoon.

Both were Sei Nagalawan villagers, still young. Nanik is 38 years old while Lastris is eleven years younger than Nanik, each had 2 children. Lastris and Nanik have average body with dark skin and curly hair. Both of them became best friends and often poured each other's heart about the condition of their household.

"As usual, Neneng's shop," answered Lastris. Neneng was the name of the owner of the biggest and complete shop in hamlet III. The shop provided all fisherman needs, from groceries to fishing gear, such as gasoline, diesel, and fishing rod. The villagers preferred to shop at Neneng's shop because the price was cheaper than other shops.

"Las ... if we go on like this, we might die standing, every day we just pay the debt without being able to save, we don't have extra income, and the expense is increasing. The rich get richer; the poor is poorer," said Nanik.



Indebtedness in bakat season was usual. The debt was not only in the form of money, but also in the form of groceries or other necessities, such as rice, oil, gasoline and cigarettes. Moreover, there are always some people offering loans, such as bosses and moneylenders who offered loans with high interest rates.

Fisherman families frequently were in debt. Iwan Acong was one of them. He was a father of three children. In the beginning there was no burden. His wife, Erni regularly borrowed some money for meeting family daily needs when he had trouble in getting some income from the sea. Sometimes she borrowed from a neighbor, sometimes she owed to the shop.

But little by little their debt got bigger. The family could not help borrowing from someone to pay someone else's debt, it was rob john to pay paul. Until finally Iwan had to borrow money from Bakir with 20 percent interest rate. Bakir stands for Batak Kredit, a designation for moneylender from Batak ethnic.

Since then the condition of Iwan and Erni's household was more difficult. Having had no choice, Erni eventually sold her family's inheritance rice field to pay off their debts. Even so, he still has high ambition,

"I am determined to send my three children to school until college. I hope they don't have the same fate as their father," said Iwan, who did not finish elementary school.

However for the women in hamlet III, debt made them unite and have same goal to be free of debt.

The goal was started in one evening of August 2005, at Incan's house, one of Nanik's sisters in law. That afternoon Nanik visited Incan. They chatted at the porch with holed nipa roof. The topic was still the same, debt. They complained about their own family's financial situation which was getting worse.



Then Niah joined them, while holding her baby. She had just given birth to her ninth child six months ago. Niah is still young, almost forty. She got married at the age of 19. Her first child was 20 years old. She spent her days by taking care of her nine children. She had to get up really early in the morning, and then prepared breakfast for her husband who would go to the sea.

She then bathed her baby and prepared breakfast for her children who would go to work and school. Her oldest child has already worked. Four of her younger children are at school, one is in a senior high school, one is in a junior high school and two are in a primary school. After the children have gone, she then cleans the house and prepares lunch for the family. Remarkably, during her busy schedule, she is still able to manage a stall in her house. "To get some extra income," she said.

Niah's arrival made the evening chat more excited. "How if we - the wives, have additional income too?" suggested Nanik. She proposed to create a group of women whose activities was selling groceries, because fisherman families often borrowed groceries. All of them agreed to Nanik's suggestion.

But selling groceries needed funds. Finally they agreed to fundraise by contributing Rp. 50,000 for each person. Towards dusk, they ended the chat. Before going home they promised to invite other friends to join.

It turned out that the invitation was welcomed by the villagers, not a few women wanted to join. In the first week of raising funds, they had collected Rp. 600,000. They spent the money on rice immediately. "We get about four gunnies of rice," told Nanik. One gunny contained 30 kilograms of rice.

More days, more women wanted to join. Two months later, the member had reached 40 women. Apparently this success made the women in hamlet III more enthusiastic and they wanted to form a fisherwoman group.





It was in early October 2005. The women in hamlet III gathered at a stilted house with woven bamboo walls, nipa roof and boards floor. If rain fell, the house with the size as large as volleyball field was always wet because of leaking roof. The house which belonged to Jumiati's family was chosen as a meeting place because its location was in the middle of the village, right beside the street, so it was easily reached

Jumiati's house that day was very noisy. There were 30 women aged from 21 years to 50 years who attended the meeting. Everyone wanted to talk. They were discussing the name for their group. Ijum, the homeowner proposed Melati (Jasmine) as the name of the group, while Incan proposed Teratai (Lotus), others suggested different names. The debate about the name took a long time.

They did not realize someone watching the debate: Mr. Zaman, Jumiati's father in law, who was lounging in the corner of the house, wearing blue sarong. After some time, he became impatient with the long discussion about the name. Although he was not counted as member of the meeting, he suddenly interjected, "You all live on the tip of the estuary (Muara) near the cape (Tanjung) why don't you name the group after Muara Tanjung?"

Magically, as if the names previously proposed lost in the air, they all agreed. Muara Tanjung Fisherwoman Group was agreed as the name of the group. At the same day, they also chose the committee. Jumiati was chosen as the chairman, Nanik as the secretary, and Saniah as the treasurer.

But apparently the meeting had not yet finished. There were still many unasked questions about the name of the group. Two days later, one member of the group asked a question. "Why should there be a word fisherman in it, while we are women," asked Sri.

Nurlia, Sri's neighbor patiently explained. "Because we live in the coast and we sometimes also look for mussel, barnacle, fruit soil, and sea shells. We also cleaned up our husbands gear from fishing. Aren't we also fishermen? I think we are also fishermen.

Fisherman is not only for man but also for woman. Why should we be ashamed with the designation of fisherman? It's not a contemptible or plebeian job. We should be proud because of them we all eat fish." Nurlia's explanation could be accepted by her friends.

Since the founding of fisherman woman group, the members started to gather and discuss more frequently. Not only pouring their feeling and complaining, they also began to discuss issues that happened around the village, such as water scarcity and Perdani flood that usually came annually in February.

Besides Perdani tide, Sei Nagalawan villagers knew two other tides, high tide and low tide. During high tide the volume of the sea would usually increase, while during low tide, the contrary. The high tide usually happened for one week, after that it continued with low tide.

During high tide, flood usually occurred. Sea water entered fisherman houses. Their house became dirty and muddy. And they had trouble in getting clean water when the flood occurred. In the flood season like this, women usually got more workload. They needed to clean their dirty house because of the flood, and they also had to make sure that clean water for their daily needs was available.

Getting clean water in coastal areas was not an easy thing. They should make boreholes to obtain clean water. The borehole should be deeper than normal. It usually needed at least 18 shafts of 6 meter PVC pipes. For fisherman to make a well, it certainly cost no little amount of money, not to mention the cost of buying the pump. Those who could not afford it could only ask for water from the neighbor who had it, or they had to buy the water from the people who had it in the village.

Hamlet III was the only hamlet in coastal area of Perbaungan district, Serdang Bedagai regency, North Sumatra province. The hamlet was 7 kilometers away from the edge of Medan Tebing Tiggi highway.

There were about 150 fisherman families who lived there. The entrance to the hamlet was a river dyke. Along the river until near the estuaries grew various types of mangrove tree, but the coastal area was eroded by seawater.





Formerly, in around 1980's the coastal area of hamlets III was full of mangrove trees. Grandma Hamsyah, one of the elders there said that the mangroves in the area were cut down completely by the villagers. "People don't know the benefits of mangrove forest that time; they cut the mangroves for the opening of shrimp ponds owned by outside entrepreneur."

As the result of the cutting down, the coastal areas got abraded. Not only that, sea water also began to enter agricultural lands. That was the reason why Tris, a member of Muara Tanjung group encourage her friends to plant mangroves.

But apparently it was not easy to persuade residents of Hamlet III to plant mangroves. Tris decided to give an example. She believed mere words were not enough to encourage people; it had to do with real evidence. Tris started to look for mangrove seedlings around hamlet III, she began to plant them alone. The action raised questions from surrounding residents. What the mangroves are for? What is the benefit?

Tris explained that mangroves served as a barrier for coastal areas and also as a place for breeding of various marine lives. She asked her friends to compare fishing income before and after the destruction of mangrove forest in hamlet III.

Mangroves eventually became the attention of Muara Tanjung group and the villagers. Tris and Sutrisno, one of the fishermen there became the motivators. "Who else if it weren't us who plant," said Tris. She often motivated her friends to plant mangroves. Her explanation could convince her friends that mangroves could save the beach in the village from seawater erosion.

Muara Tanjung group started to look for mangrove seedling and plant it along the river in front of the villager houses and on the beach. They got the mangrove seedlings from the remaining trees on the riverbank. This activity was carried out regularly, not only by the women, but also by the husbands who later participated.

Since then the relationship between Muara Tanjung group and mangroves became more intimate. Moreover they met Ratna, a guest from Sulawesi who came visiting in around 2006's. She came to Sei Nagalawan Village to see the potential of nature especially mangrove forest which could be processed into food.

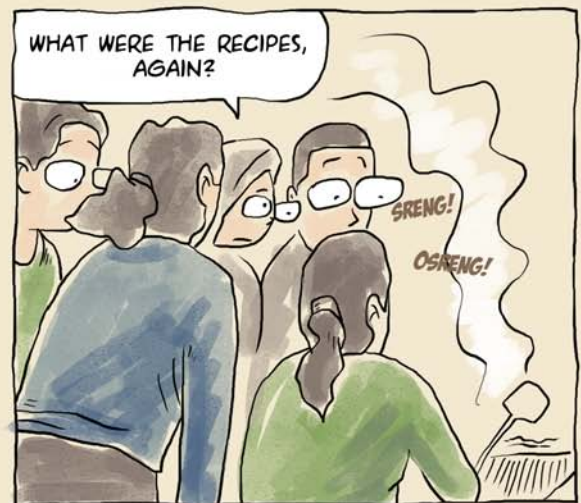
Ratna knew mangroves very well. She told Muara Tanjung group diverse information about mangroves, from the types, how to plant, till how to utilize part of the tree. One of them was how to process sea holly into food and beverage. Sea holly could also be used in medicine for lung disease and asthma.

Acanthus ilicifolius, the Latin name of sea holly is one type of mangrove trees, with spiny-edges dark green leaves. The stalk of sea holly leaf is as big as of a little finger. It grows wild and lives along the riverbank, with purple flowers. Young sea holly leaves could be processed into food and beverage such as sea holly tea. While its flower could be used as a dye for batik.

Many questions were asked by the group members during discussion with Ratna. What interested them most was how to process sea holly into food and beverage. Apparently the recipe was simple. For example, the way to make crackers using sea holly leaves. First, sea holly leaves were cleaned, the spines were discarded and then were mashed with a blender, and boiled for 5 minutes.

The sea holly solution was then mixed with starch flour, added with spices such as garlic, coriander, sugar, and salt. The raw crackers dough would be greenish white. The dough was then molded, thinly sliced and placed on winnowing basket and dried under the sunlight. Once dry, the raw cracker was fried, it was then packaged and sold.

Making tea from sea holly was much simpler. Once cleaned, the sea holly was thinly sliced and then dried till dry. It could also be fried without oil in a skillet over medium heat until the color was brownish. Sea holly leaves that had been dried just need to be put into hot water and served.





Muara Tanjung group began testing it. "We busily looked for sea holly along the river," said Nanik recalling their learning process. They did not care if their hands were pricked by the sea holly spines.

The lacking of knowledge in utilizing mangroves did not disempower the spirit of the fisherwomen group. They started to make processed food and tea from sea holly.

Initially there were many who scoffed their efforts. "There, crazy women, how come sea holly become food," recalled Nanik mimicking the ridicule of some people. At that time, sea holly did not mean anything, was only a regular tree that grew in the coastal area, and its leave became a waste when it fell to the ground, meaningless.

The first experiment was to make sea holly crackers. They managed to make it, but failed to market it. Not infrequently they brought back the crackers which they had made together to their own house. "We are broke, the crackers don't sell well. It's a big challenge for the group," said Nanik.

They still produce the sea holly crackers a number of times, until finally marketing difficulty reason made them stop the production for a year from 2007 till 2008.

The difficulty of marketing the crackers and tea made Muara Tanjung run out of money. Nanik said that those days were hard times since the group was established. Each group meeting on the 14th of each month returned to be the arena of complaint about the economic problem and the role of the group that can be taken to solving their common problem. Sea holly production was stalled, while the mangrove trees they had planted were still small, could not make any money yet.

"We have done the effort but we are still in debts," complained one member of the group. However, someone gave a brilliant suggestion this time. "What if we make savings and loan, but we must save, not borrow all the time, we then collect it for funds, for groceries. Those who needs most, we lend first," suggested Incan. The suggestion was welcome. The problem was they did not have any experience in managing savings and loan at all, but they agreed to try it.



They started it by saving for funds, and lent it to the group members. It ran for four months, but soon the first obstacle was in the way. They had difficulty in bookkeeping.

Fortunately, Muara Tanjung group received support from KEKAR foundation in Tebing Tinggi, neighbor of Serdang Bedagai regency. The organization willingly trained all members of Muara Tanjung group for 2 days. The group was taught to know what savings and loan are, credit union principles and its bookkeeping systems.

After asking around and discussed among members of the group, they agreed to form a business unit of Savings and Loan or it is known as Credit Union, the abbreviation of CU. It was officially established on May 16, 2007. The number of the members at that time reached 22 people. Each member must pay registration fee of Rp. 10,000, also monthly fee of Rp. 5,000 and voluntary savings.

Hard work and courage to try finally paid off after the first 6 months. They began to feel the benefits of CU. The savings and loan helped the group members slowly get out of debt. Through CU, they could borrow and save with ease without having to provide collateral. Installments were also made under an agreement between the borrower and the CU committee. The members also get the surplus by the end of the year.

Seeing the success of the women in running the savings and loan institutions, made the men, the fishermen want to join too. Muara Tanjung group committee agreed to extend CU membership to man. Fishermen who need funds to repair boats, engines and fishing gears could get a loan if they become the member of the CU.

Now every month the CU was able to turn over the funds as much as Rp. 3,000,000 – Rp. 5,000,000 to be borrowed by the members. At least 30 fisherman families there had felt its benefit. To foster a sense of belonging, each member had a task of taking CU members' daily routine fee in turn.





After the savings and loan business run smoothly, Muara Tanjung group returned to think about the production of sea holly food and beverage that had been stalled. They agreed to start it again in 2009. If they used to make sea holly crackers by steaming and then cutting, drying under sunlight and frying. Now they tried a new recipe.

After several attempts, they finally got the right recipe. Sea holly leaves that had been cleaned and mashed was then boiled and mixed with flour which had been added with traditional seasoning. The seasonings were coriander, garlic, salt and sugar. Once mixed, the dough could be molded according to taste.

Their crackers were now more favored. "People say it tastes good and savory," said Nanik. Sea holly crackers were increasingly known. More over, they were becoming smart in promoting it to their friends and through exhibitions organized by the government.

Exhibitions or bazaars were considered important in introducing the sea holly crackers, that the crackers were delicious and not dangerous.

Now sea holly cracker had become one of the typical foods of Bedagai Serdang regency.

Not only sea holly, this fisherman women group started to process other sea produce for crackers material. Now they produced crackers from tuna and anchovies, also syrup and jam from Pidada, another type of mangroves. The sales of the products each year could deliver a profit of Rp. 4.3 million.

Muara Tanjung group also began eyeing other marketing opportunity, i.e. the habit of the husbands to drink coffee or tea after fishing. Usually the fishermen would stop by at a coffee shop for a cup of tea or coffee, or just for chatting with other fishermen after fishing. "Something is missing if we go home without stopping by at the coffee first," said Ahmad Yani, one fisherman in hamlet III.

In 2010, they decided to make a coffee shop near the place where the fishermen landed and sold their fishes after fishing. They named this coffee shop after 'Posko'. It was built in collaboration with Muara Baimbai group.



The initial funds for the coffee shop were not much, only Rp. 75,000. It was taken from the cash of Muara Tanjung group which they collected monthly in the group. The funds were for buying sugar, tea, coffee, flour, vegetables and other ingredients to make fried cakes.

Every day, some members of Muara Tanjung group looked after the coffee shop in turn. Each day Rp. 5,000 was deducted from the sales to be set aside for the group's cash. After the day's sales were subtracted with the day's expenses, the remaining money was used as the wages to pay the women who had looked after the shop that day.

The coffee shop was favored by the fishermen. The profit was quite decent. They could even equally give the money they had collected to the members of the group every Lebaran. Last year net income which reached Rp. 700,000 was distributed to 22 people. This year's income was higher. "Now it has reached around Rp. 900,000."

Seven years had passed swiftly since Muara Tanjung group was founded. The members were now busier. Muara Tanjung began thinking about how to make similar group or multiply the group so that it could help and encourage other women and also how to have a strong network externally. They decided to form another woman group; True Woman group (literal translation from kelompok perempuan Sejati). The members of True Woman group were 8 women; they were also fisherman's wives.

Muara Tanjung group is now also a part of Muara Baimbai mangrove conservation group whose members are about 65 people. In the past, a lot of the women's time in the village was wasted everyday, but now it was not any more. "In the past if there was an invitation for training and some members were asked to go and stay there, nobody wanted and their husband forbade, but now they will sulk if not invited and all husbands allow," told Nanik. The woman group has managed to bring change and learning enthusiasm in the village.





Their knowledge was also broadening because they were invited to various meetings and trainings, and they had a lot of friends too. In the national level they joined Indonesian Fisherwoman Sisterhood (PPNI, Persaudaraan Perempuan Nelayan Indonesia) and actively became a part of the People's Coalition for Fishery Justice (KIARA).

"In the group we also start discussing about the government, government policies, and the importance of the existence of regulation that is in favor of the fisherman," said Nanik. Muara Tanjung group began entering the domain of politic in decision making.

Their first experience was during discussion about local regulation on the removal of fisherman tools that damage marine habitat in Serdang Bedagai regency. The meetings made their spirit flare. They believed that fisher women's voices should be listened in the decision making process.

They sent their members to join the protests in the parliament office of Serdang Bedagai regency with other fisherman groups. The participants of the protest demanded the Parliament to pass the regulation immediately.

Their demands were fulfilled. The regulation was approved by the Regents and the Parliament of Serdang Bedagai. To this day the local regulation was still being adapted at the Legal Bureau of North Sumatra Province. The regulation would be a powerful tool for the fishermen so that they could securely make a living at sea without any fear of being crossed by a great vessel using large trawling.

Since then Muara Tanjung group began to establish relations with the government. They were often invited to attend the exhibitions and discussions organized by local government. They did not take this good relationship for granted. They proposed collaboration with the government to manage mangrove tourism object in Sei Nagalawan Village.

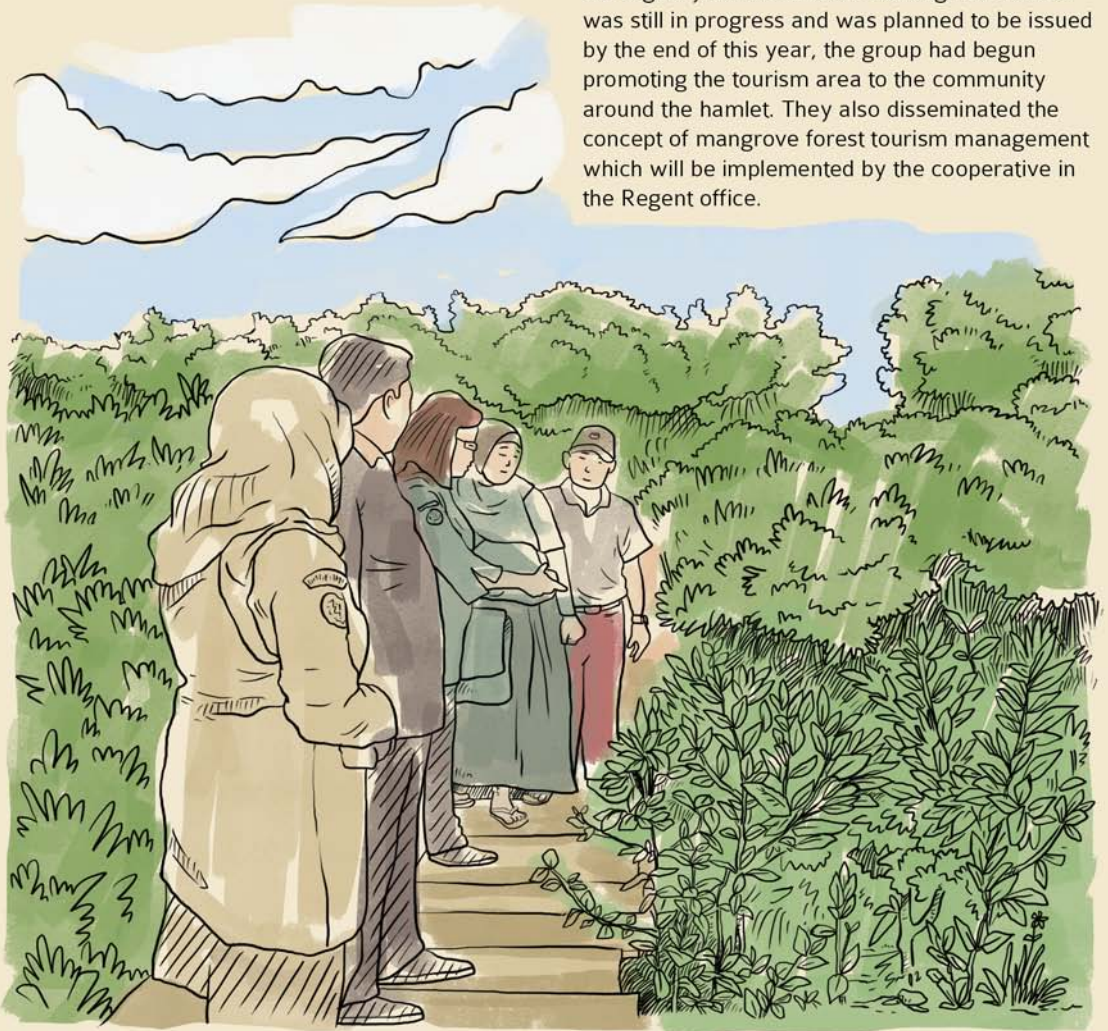
The mangrove trees which had been planted regularly since 7 years ago were now 3 till 7 meter tall. Not only mangroves, they also planted a variety of trees; they took care of them, cleaned the area and replaced dead trees. All of it became the group's main work now. The group members also agreed to share work in taking care the mangrove forest once a week. They chose every Saturdays starting at 2 pm.

Their patience and perseverance had brought result now. The coastal area looked verdant. The goal of Muara Tanjung group went to the next level, from freeing the members out of debts, now they aspired to manage the forest area into tourism and learning area about mangroves.

They believed the management of mangrove forest would give benefits to fisherman families in increasing their income, and also to the environment in making the area protected from abrasion and other threats.

However, they could not manage the tourism area in the group's name. They must have a business entity. Finally they made a cooperative form of business entity. Muara Tanjung group and fisherman group of Muara Baimbai cooperative member worked together to pioneer the management of mangrove tourism park.

The first requirement was to take care of the management license. They used the name of the Muara Baimbai Cooperative to get the license from the regency administration. Although the license was still in progress and was planned to be issued by the end of this year, the group had begun promoting the tourism area to the community around the hamlet. They also disseminated the concept of mangrove forest tourism management which will be implemented by the cooperative in the Regent office.



The management of mangrove forest as tourism area and its food and beverage products would become the mainstay of Muara Tanjung group in the future. They did not mess around in realizing this dream. They began to invite other groups to support their mangroves restoration efforts. One of them was GEF-SGP. The institution provided support for mangroves seeding and planting.

The saying "Those who sow, will reap" was proven in hamlet III, Sei Nagalawan village. The goals of Muara Tanjung fisherwoman group were realized one by one. They had proven that unyielding spirit and a sense of sisterhood among the members of the group which had begun seven years ago bore fruit.

"We believe woman is a person who can do anything and has brilliant ideas. Mangrove forest which was considered as nothing has been proven to be the contrary by Muara Tanjung fisherwoman group. Forest is a source of knowledge and life. "

"Bakat season is not as tough as before. We change failures and challenges into opportunities for advancement. Keep forging, never go back," said Nanik in excitement.

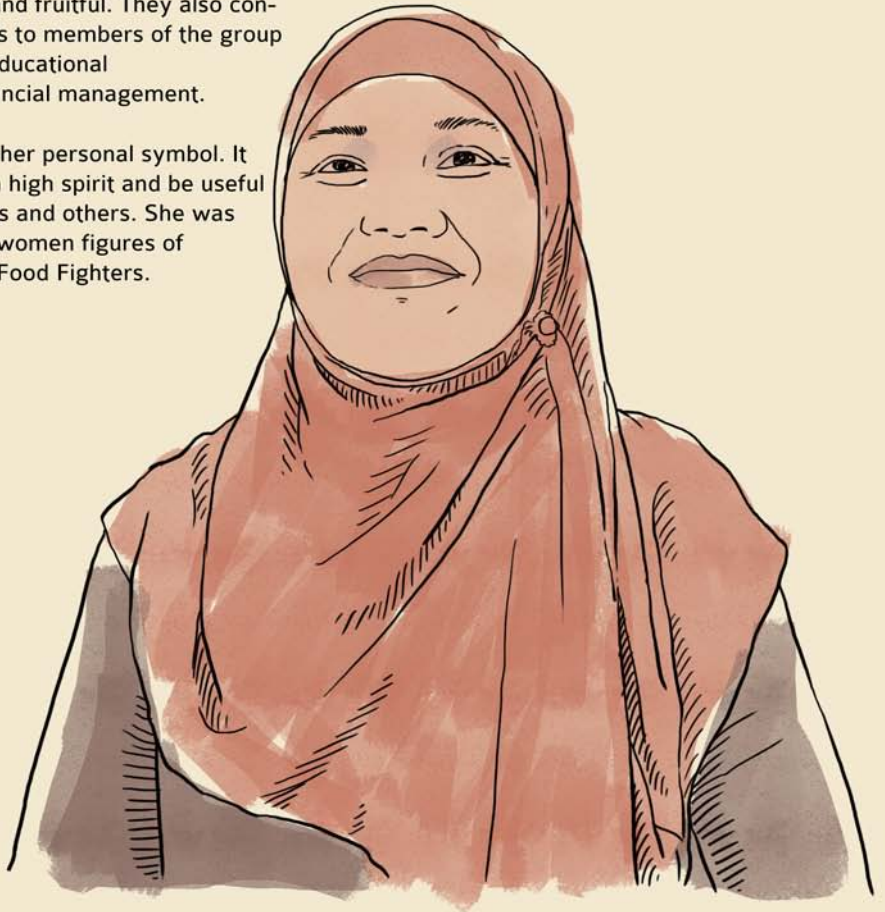


Jumiati

This calm, cheerful and friendly lady is always excited when telling her activities with the other 22 women from Muara Tanjung women group in Seinagalawan village, Hamlet III, Perbaungan district, Serdang Berdagai regency, North Sumatra.

The 32-year-old lady was initially a reserve person who slowly changes into an open and active person because of her love toward Muara Tanjung group, the group where she is currently chairing. The environmental conditions added with a low standard of living, especially the women, inspire Jumiati to help to improve the lives of women in Seinagalawan village. Jumiati with her women group conduct mangrove conservation activities as well as post-harvest processing mangrove product (crackers and tea of jeruju/sea holly leaves (*Achantus Illicifolius*)). Their struggles for seven years slowly pay off and fruitful. They also conduct savings and loans to members of the group as well as introduce educational material of family financial management.

Coconut tree became her personal symbol. It inspires her to keep in high spirit and be useful to themselves, parents and others. She was elected as one of the women figures of Indonesian Women's Food Fighters.



Weaving for Life (Tenun untuk Kehidupan) Movement

By Meinar Sapto Wulan





That July morning the temperature in Mollo was cold even though the sun was so bright. That's because Mollo is situated at the foot of Mt. Nausus in South Central Timor (TTS). Its' altitude is 1,200 meters above sea level. Nonetheless, the cold air does not deter Mama Maria (50) to tell me about the issues with *ikat* woven fabrics production today.

"It's hard to produce woven cloth these days, ma'am. There is hardly any cotton tree. Dye plants are also scarce," said Mama Maria who has been weaving since she was 12 years old while endlessly twisting and rolling up cotton fibers into yarn.

Nowadays, Mama Maria and her friends are forced to use synthetic yarn and dyes purchased from the market. Of course the prices are high. "Actually I do not really like them because the synthetic colors are not durable and fade quickly," said Mama Maria who needs two months to produce a single piece of woven fabric.

This mother from Amanatun also has some concerns about the weaver's group organization in her area.

The group is not growing. There are not many weavers who want to join the group. Most of the weavers choose to sell their woven fabric themselves. As a result, the prices of woven fabric become unstable or even drop. "They do not want to join the group for fear of financial loss," said Mama Maria who finances her two children by weaving.

The increasing financial need of the family is also the reason for competition between the weavers. When cash is needed for something urgent such as traditional ceremonies or to pay school fees, it is not uncommon for these women weavers to lower the prices of their woven fabrics so that they "sell quickly".

There is another issue of regeneration. Nowadays many young women are not able to weave and they often leave the village to look for a job in the city. They ignore their traditional heritage that has been passed down for many generations. This includes the customary rule that "a woman must be able to weave in order to marry."



The traditional woven cloth seems out-of-date. It will probably be extinct someday. Mama Maria did not say this, but I can read it from her eyes and long sigh, showing the turmoil in her heart. She continued to spin the cotton fibers, rolling it into a yarn, in a blanket of cold air that wouldn't leave.

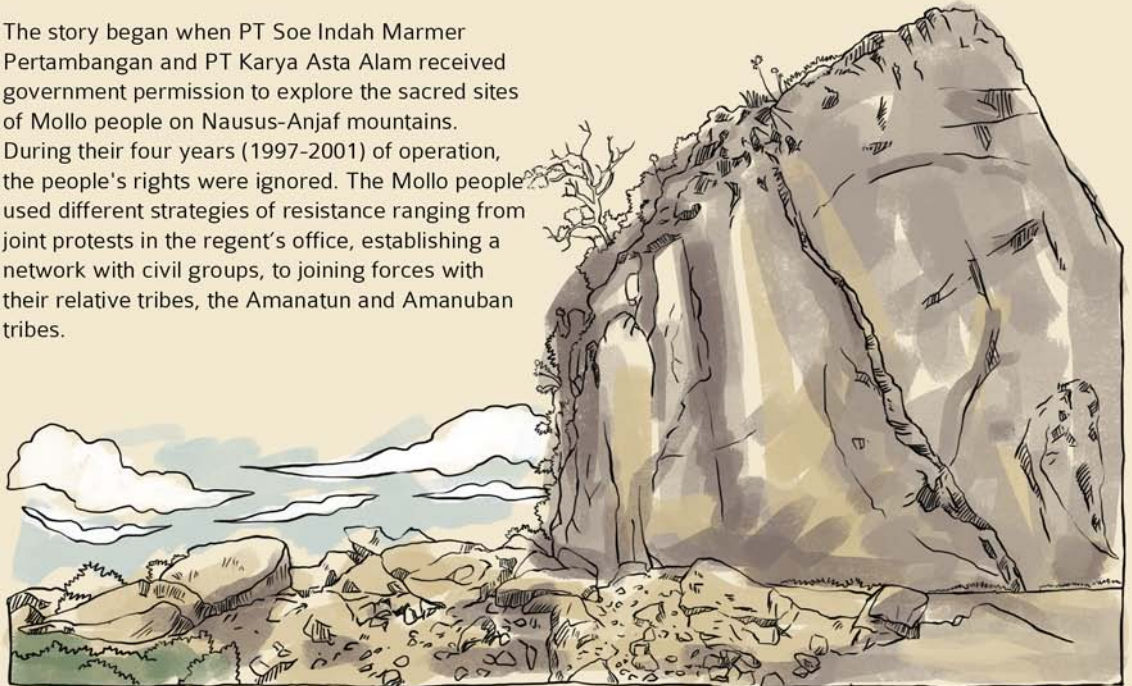
Woven Fabric and Resistance

The people of Mollo, Amanatun and Amanuban in South Central Timor (TTS) are actually inseparable with woven fabrics. For these three tribes who are united in a traditional association called "*Tiga Batu Tungku*", the woven fabrics have a very important significance for customs and they are needed in various ceremonies, such as births, marriages and death. They are also important for the survival of the family. In addition to gardening, the family economy is dependent on the sale of woven fabrics produced by the mothers.

The study of the traditional woven fabric does not necessarily end at the cultural studies of traditional textiles. The woven fabrics from *Tiga Batu Tungku* community actually contain a "present" spirit and are a symbol of resistance as well as a symbol of the power of the Mollo, Amanuban, Amanatun people against external aggression that is damaging their life cosmology.



The story began when PT Soe Indah Marmer Pertambangan and PT Karya Asta Alam received government permission to explore the sacred sites of Mollo people on Nausus-Anjaf mountains. During their four years (1997-2001) of operation, the people's rights were ignored. The Mollo people used different strategies of resistance ranging from joint protests in the regent's office, establishing a network with civil groups, to joining forces with their relative tribes, the Amanatun and Amanuban tribes.



At the climax of their resistance, they have to put their own lives at stake. The *Tiga Batu Tungku* community (association of Mollo, Amanatun and Amanuban tribes) decided to occupy the Nausus and Anjaf area. Hundreds of mothers were also involved in the occupation. They were weaving there under the threats, pressure and gunpoints of soldiers who protect the interests of the companies. They did the occupation for a year and finally managed to drive the marble mining companies away from their sacred land. However they cannot restore the beautiful face of Anjaf that was torn apart by the companies.

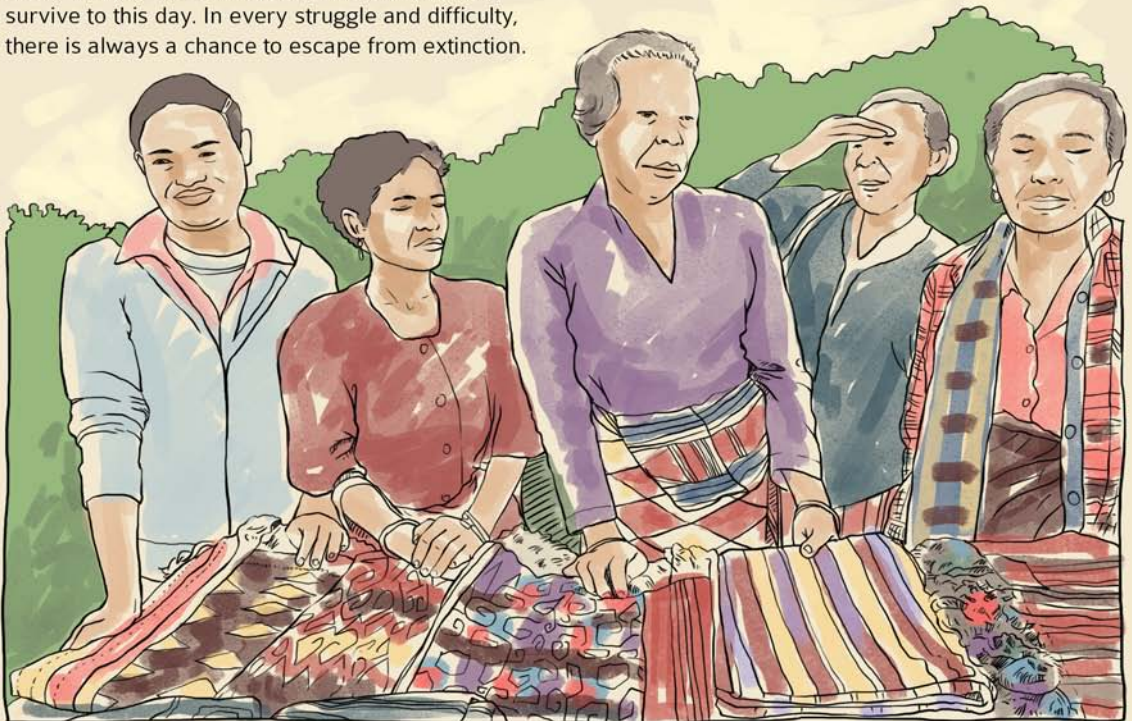
That historical incident is extremely important for *Tiga Batu Tungku* Community. It was a moment of victory which proves that the unity of kinship can defeat the greed of the capitalists. At the same time, it also showed that women and their weaving tradition can play a role as the stronghold of resistance facing the "external" intruders. So, why is the weaving tradition now defeated by the internal problems like what Mama Maria stated above?

It should not be easily defeated like that. *Ikat* woven fabrics have endured across ages. They have been able to adapt to difficult situations and survive to this day. In every struggle and difficulty, there is always a chance to escape from extinction.

Weaving for Life (Tenun untuk Kehidupan) Movement

The solution for the future survival of *Tiga Batu Tungku* Community *ikat* woven fabrics unravels when a group of women entrepreneurs from Yogyakarta Lawe Association sympathize with the situation. They created a movement called Weaving for Life. With the support of GEF SGP, the movement seeks to enhance the capacity of weaving mother both in terms of weaving, and joining a cooperative so that the prices are stable and their products are appreciated by the customers. In addition they also gave the support for sewing machines to add to the family income. " *Weaving for Life* presents young Indonesian designer collections so that the women of Mollo, Amanatun, and Amanuban can continue to weave and work," said Adinindyah, chairman of Lawe Association.

The movement which started in 2011 was prepared in stages and began to materialize in early 2012 which was marked by the designs of clothes made from Mollo woven fabric by three young designers from Yogyakarta, such Propercha, Dede Bastam, and Lulu Lutfi Labibi.





The name Weaving for Life for movement comes from an idea that woven fabrics are an important cultural product for the lives and families of women from Tiga Batu Tungku. According to Adinindyah, an architect graduated from the University of Gadjah Mada (UGM), when the lives of those women become stable the lives of their families will in turn get better as well. Women are at the forefront of family survival.

Thus, by placing women as the motor of the movement and making their woven fabrics as a major asset, the hopes of prosperity for Mollo, Amanatun, and Amanuban people will be realized. Of course, the fundraising movement is also aimed to introduce the woven fabrics of Mollo, Amanatun and Amanuban to the public, especially the urban people so they will love the wealth of Indonesian native cultural products.

Weaving for Life products was exhibited for the first time at the South to South Festival (STOS), March 2012, at the Goethe Institute, Jakarta. This is a documentary film festival with an environmental theme. The response of visitors was very enthusiastic and encouraging. Four of the six clothings were successfully sold during the event.

The success of this first appearance encouraged the crew of Weaving for Life. In April 2012, they introduced 50 pieces of clothing made from the woven fabrics which are the works of young designers at INACRAFT Exhibition at the Jakarta Convention Center (JCC), Jakarta. The volunteers did not only display their products, but they also shared stories about the struggle of their movement and interesting stories behind the making of the garments and woven fabric of *Tiga Batu Tungku* traditional people.

They also explained that all the profits from the sale of the clothings would be donated to increase the capacity of the people and purchase sewing machines for the weaving mothers. As a result, as many as 15 pieces of clothing with prices ranging from Rp 1,000,000 to Rp 3,500,000, changed hands, purchased by the visitors.



The Weaving for Life movement continues. After INACRAFT, they participated in VOTE Exhibition at FX Sudirman and Femina Bazaar at the Atrium Plaza. Various creative marketing efforts were done such as sending promotional materials, by word of mouth, electronic mail, mailing lists, and social networking media such as Facebook and Twitter. They also include strategies such as mobilizing volunteers and provide discounts.

Many marketing efforts were done by the volunteers of Weaving for Life. However, everything did not necessarily go smoothly and all the products are "sold out". In places where the upper middle-class visitors come, they actually still get basic questions such as "Why so expensive? I can buy the fabric myself for only about Rp 200,000 to Rp 300,000," said one visitor who looked fashionable and trendy with her Guess shoes and Furla handbag.

What Mama Maria said during our conversation in the cold morning at the foot of Mount Nausus is true. The traditional woven fabrics are actually considered cheap by the urban people. This is not only because the weaving mothers sell their two or three month work cheaply, but also because of the invasion of machine-woven fabrics that use synthetic yarn and dyes. The limited knowledge of urban consumers to be able to distinguish between the traditional woven fabrics and factory produced fabrics is one of the reasons.

Lessons and Expansion

The experience in creatively marketing the products based from the traditional woven fabric makes the Weaving for Life activists feel optimistic. There is a bright future for woven fabrics. The keys are in maintaining the quality of woven fabric, consistency of production, product innovation, and the expansion of marketing network particularly abroad. The fact is that foreign consumers have a higher level of appreciation than the urban middle class in Indonesia.

The lack of interest among domestic consumers on the woven fabric is a challenge for the Weaving for Life activists. The knowledge about Indonesian traditional woven fabric is still low among the general public. It is not yet a common knowledge. Therefore it is important to create and distribute communication products that can open the public insight. Equally important, the simplest thing that can be done is to keep telling the stories certainly not just about woven fabric itself, but also the story of the cultural life of the people behind the woven fabric.

The Weaving for Life Movement must not stop on just the innovative products that are based on Mollo, Amanatun and Amanuban woven fabric. Instead, it should continue to expand on other traditional woven fabrics from other areas in Indonesia. "The Mollo woven fabric is the first step for Weaving for Life. We are now also developing crafts made from Wakatobi woven fabric and henceforth we will be working with the weavers in Lombok, Belitung, Palembang and Bugis," said Adinindyah with gusto.

The Weaving for Life activists realize the issues of traditional weavers are not only faced by the Tiga Batu Tungku traditional people, but also almost by all the craftsmen in Indonesian archipelago. The expansion and inclusion of other weavers in Weaving for Life movement will definitely be beneficial. The weavers, who are exclusively women, will get assistance for capacity building, creativity in craft products, support in work equipments, as well as a marketing system with a wide network.

Indeed, there is still a long way to go in order to ensure the future of the traditional weavers in the country to get the appreciation that they deserve. However just like the process of making a woven fabric, every step taken by this movement like the interlacing between one yarn and other yarns. The perseverance and loyalty in weaving the processes will produce a beautiful finished work, which is a better life.



Meinar Sapto Wulan

This friendly lady with a veil is 27 years old. Meinar is an assistant program of GEF / SGP Indonesia who has just joined the board about a year ago. Previously, Meinar is a marketing support officer in Kidzania, a children's playground which introduces different types of jobs to children.

Meinar, a former best artist in high schools' theater festival in Jakarta in 2002 feels delighted to learn that her hobby of travelling is channeled by joining GEF SGP Indonesia. Various visits to SGP partners make her learn a lot about communities who are facing many environmental challenges and how they find creative ways to deal with them.



Ciliwung is Our Life

By : Rudolft Abdul Muiz

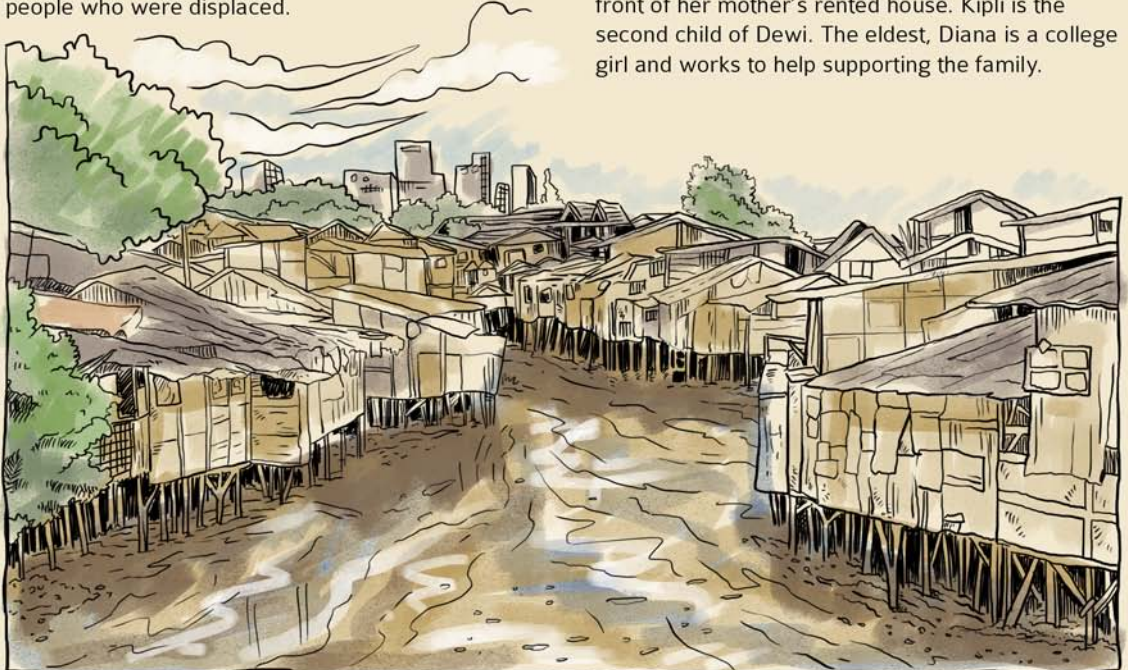




The walls in the alley entering Bukit Duri area are full of eye-catching graffiti.

The graffiti contain messages like "Green Ciliwung", "Mutual aid (*gotong royong*) society area", "Refuse relocation", and many more messages alternating with paintings of human faces, and drawings of plant roots spreading on the wall. The graffiti are almost 500 meters in length providing a different atmosphere to the Ciliwung riverbank, a more colorful atmosphere. It is not evident that the area is prone to flooding.

Like the General Election, the banks of Ciliwung River experience a great flooding every five years such as the great floods in 2002 and 2007. The great flood of 2007 took a death toll of about 48 people, and about 1,500 homes in East Jakarta were damaged not to mention the thousands of people who were displaced.



However no matter how cruel Ciliwung is, it is still the life sustainer of many people, at least for Dewi whose husband had left her since 2003. She works alone to support her four children. They live in a rented house with an area of 6 square meters, with a tin roof-located on the second floor. Every day, Dewi works as the washer of clothes belonging to her neighbors. Her income is not steady depending on how many customers she has. For ten sets of clothes, Dewi can earn up to Rp 20,000. If business was slow, sometimes no one asks her to wash their clothes.

Dewi's rented house is small and crowded and cannot accommodate her four children at once. Arwaldi Saputra, who is a 17-year-old teenager, is forced to sleep in the yard. "Since I am the oldest boy, mother tells me to sleep outside". When the night falls Kipli, his nickname, sets up a mattress in front of her mother's rented house. Kipli is the second child of Dewi. The eldest, Diana is a college girl and works to help supporting the family.



Ciliwung River is also the source of livelihood for *Mpok Yahyah*. Her work is similar to *Dewi's*. She washes clothes. The difference is that *Mpok Yahyah* has regular customers who mostly work in the *Mester Jatinegara* market. She does all the washing on a small bamboo raft. In the afternoon, *Mpok Yahyah* takes the muddy river water and puts it in a large bucket to settle. After the soil and debris settle the water is clearer. "This is used for rinsing," she said. *Mpok Yahyah's* work is finished around 5 pm, when the clothes are dry.

Ciliwung River provides a living, especially to low income earners who generally work in the informal sectors. They live from a variety of activities that do not count as a formal work such as *Bang Kurdi* who opens his coffee shop in the morning. Likewise, *Ibu Yati*, opens her food stall opposite to *Bang Kurdi's* coffee shop.

From dawn to dusk, Ciliwung acts like a beating heart, alive until that unwanted day comes. It is a day that no one looks forward to, when Ciliwung becomes angry, that is when the great flood comes. When that happens, everything changes instantly. A pile of garbage fills the river that crosses behind the houses of the people. The water is murky with unbearable stench of waste.

The wrath of Ciliwung is unpredictable, it can happen at any time with no warning. Often times it happens in the middle of the night when the people are asleep. Suddenly the sound of water rushing is heard, waking up the people. At dawn the water has already flooded the area.





The floods which frequently come in the area make the people more vigilant. Pedro, a small pet monkey of bang Herman has a treehouse made for him, so he is safe from flooding. On the other hand, Mr. Ajud, the owner of a food stall is so used to packing up and securing his belongings, such as the refrigerators and cooking utensils. The empty attic space under the asbestos roof of his rented house can be used as a temporary storage at the time of flooding. He wraps all his belongings with a tarp to keep them safe from rain and flooding.

However such vigilance is often not enough especially if the flood comes unexpectedly. At one time the flooding lasted up to a week in 2007. Many people were forced to give up their electronic equipments that were damaged and unusable. But that's not comparable to the misery of hearing what happened to *Bang* (informal way to greet someone older) Herman who was found dead in the morning. His neck was caught in a rope which he used to tie his own body. He probably used the rope to try to save himself from the flooding the night before.

Apparently being vigilant alone is not enough. The people need to be ready - alert. They should practice how to deal with the wrath of Ciliwung. That's the reason why they built the Bukit Duri Emergency Response Command Post in 2002.

The command post was built by the people with the spirit of mutual cooperation in the community that is ready to take care of their own village. Mr. Mulyadi for example, one of the Bukit Duri heads of RT 06 (neighborhood association) is always ready with his handy talky to coordinate regularly with the Katulampa floodgate keeper. Typically, two days before the flood happens, the information is already given to the people through the loudspeakers in the mosques that are announcing an emergency situation and telling them what actions should be done.

Some people evacuate to higher grounds, not far from where they live. Others seek refuge in the mosques, emergency shelters, and some choose to keep staying in their own houses.

Many people are even willing to provide their houses as a place of refuge. This is what happened at RT 11/RW 12. Ibu Ilyas provides part of her yard for Bukit Duri emergency response command post.

The command post works at once after hearing the announcement, not waiting for orders from anyone. The food and drink team: Miss Rina, Rosani, Indah, Mrs. Rum, immediately coordinate the kitchen. Meanwhile the health care team, Melvi, Santi, Mrs. Sadiah are ready with the first aid medicine.

This is a very different attitude compare to the time before year 2000. They used to be passive, just waiting and hoping for help from others. This attitude is now being abandoned. Slowly the stereotype that the marginal are considered criminals is melting way by itself. Now the people of Ciliwung River banks are better prepared and more creative.

Let's take a look at what the young people of Ciliwung did. The colorful graffiti in the narrow streets are the proof. They are the paintings done by the young people and teenagers of Bukit Duri. They wrote, drew, designed, and painted the remaining space in their crowded residential area.

On Bukit Duri alley along the banks of Ciliwung River, the houses on both sides of the street are painted green. Each RT region has a different color.

They also put up pictures, signs and directions which allow the visitors to recognize and find the place that they are looking for in the middle of the crowded residential area of Ciliwung riverbank.

For example you can see signs and directions that can help you find places such as the chicken slaughterhouse, or the broom maker, the borders between different RTs, mosques, the public bathing washing and toilet facilities (MCK), rafts to cross the river and Sanggar. You can even see the directions to find the head of RT's house. This creative effort has been done since 2010.

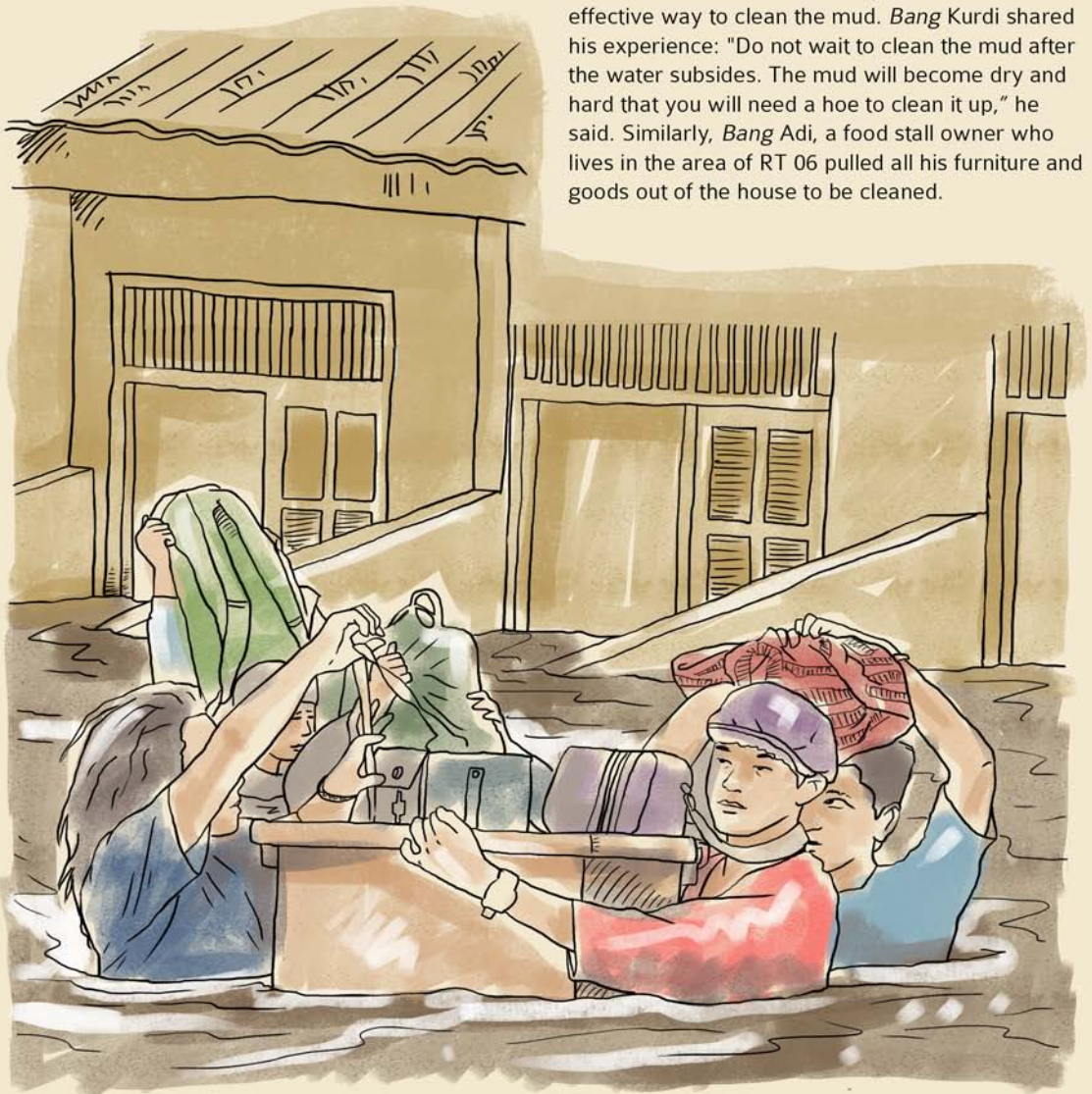


There is also the “Pasukan berani mati (literally translated as Kamikaze Squad)” This is the nickname of a search and rescue team of young people between the ages 15 to 27 years old. Their task is helping the people that are in danger when a flood or other disaster occurs. They will come using rubber boats to help people with no delay.

In addition to distributing instant food, the Squad also monitors the development of the flood. They will come any time if needed to evacuate the neighbors, friends, relatives, or even the people in other residential areas who need help

Do not doubt the skill of this search and rescue team which consists of young people from Ciliwung. Bonar, Cepot, Ucok, Cilonk, Doan, Asep and others have been familiar with Ciliwung River since their childhood. Ciliwung is their playground. If you come to Ciliwung when there is no flooding, you can watch their swimming skills. They jump from tall trees, plunge into the river, and effortlessly swim against the river current.

The mutual cooperation between Ciliwung people does not stop when the flood subsides. After the flood, a layer of mud is usually left in the streets and houses. The cleanup is usually done first in each of their own houses. They know the most effective way to clean the mud. *Bang Kurdi* shared his experience: “Do not wait to clean the mud after the water subsides. The mud will become dry and hard that you will need a hoe to clean it up,” he said. Similarly, *Bang Adi*, a food stall owner who lives in the area of RT 06 pulled all his furniture and goods out of the house to be cleaned.



After their own houses are cleaned up, they turn to the public places, such as the RT posts, mosques, sewers or culverts and toilets to clean. They work together to clean up these public places in their own neighborhood. Everyone takes part in the clean up process. The women work in the kitchen to provide tea, hot coffee and lunch for the people involved in the community cleanup.

Cleaning up the public places is the men's job. Old and young men work together to clean the public places. They usually use a diesel spray from Sanggar to suck the river water and spray the streets that are full of debris and mud. Coconut brooms, buckets, hoes, dustpans are all used to help the cleanup process. Everyone is involved in the cleanup, including Cepot, a man with tattoos all over his arms and body. He participated in the community work to clean up the public facilities.

The people also learned to read the natural signs before the flood. Usually before the flood comes, insects and rodents come up, especially cockroaches and rats. They come out of the river to avoid water. However, this incident is disliked by Cepot, a former thug who is apparently afraid of cockroaches.

"Scary face who's afraid of cockroaches" joked one of his friends. Even though Cepot has a scary face he has a good sense of humor.

Another challenge faced by the people is garbage. This is the reason for the wrath of Ciliwung River which used to be their friend. The combination of high rainfall, accumulation of garbage, river sedimentation, poor drainage, and lack of soil infiltration, are the causes of flooding in Jakarta, which are known for a long time.

In fact, hundreds of years ago Ciliwung River was praised by many foreign visitors. Ciliwung used to be a beautiful river with clear and clean water, flowing in the middle of the city. It was perceived by traders who docked in the port of Sunda Kelapa. Jean-Baptiste Tavernier who was quoted by Van Gorkom said that Ciliwung had the best and cleanest water in the world (*Persekutuan Aneh*, 1988)



In the past, thanks to the clean Ciliwung River, the city of Batavia was dubbed the Queen of the East. Many foreign visitors were praising the city highly, even comparing it to the famous cities in Europe, such as the Venice in Italy. At the time, Ciliwung was able to accommodate 10 merchant ships with a capacity of up to 100 tons. The ships were able to enter and dock safely at Sunda Kelapa. Now forget about big ships, even a small ship will have a hard time passing Ciliwung because its propeller will usually get stuck due to rubbish.

Nowadays Ciliwung receives the waste from various industries and residential areas along its stream. Of all the rivers that flow in Jakarta, the Ciliwung has the most extensive impact on Jakarta during the rainy season as it flows through the center of city and crosses many residential areas, dense housing and slums.

The river flows over a distance of 120 kilometers crossing Bogor, Depok and Jakarta. Ciliwung has the worst damage because its watershed areas (DAS) in the upper part of Puncak and Bogor have been damaged. The watershed areas in Jakarta also have undergone a narrowing and silting which increase the potential of flooding in Jakarta greatly. Bukit Duri and Kampung Pulo are the lower squatters of Ciliwung. Regular flooding in the area inevitably becomes a part of their lives that they should deal with.

They are starting to believe that their lifestyle and habits can worsen the condition of Ciliwung which in turn aggravate the condition of their residential area. Therefore the people start to think about the future of their area. They want their area to provide them a sense of comfort, the area which is able to manage their own waste, and deal with the flood problem which visits them each year.

One of the organizations that begins to think about the future of the area is Sanggar (literally translated as studio) Ciliwung. It is a house open to the public which is located in the middle of the densely populated area along the river. Since 2000, this place became the center of learning as well as playing of teenagers and adults from Bukit Duri and Kampung Pulo. The house is also a secretariat for Ciliwung Merdeka, a non-governmental organization that was founded in August 13, 2000

The Sanggar house consists of two floors. The first floor is usually used as a place of learning, meetings, gatherings, live in, as well as a reading room, etc.. The second floor is usually for PSKM activity or *Pendidikan Swadaya Kesehatan Masyarakat* (Non-Governmental Public Health Education), or simply called as health clinic by the people. There is a special room for a dentist, a special room for a general practitioner a with medicine storage facility. The regular schedule for a dentist is Tuesday and Saturday which is handled by a volunteer dentist Mahendro, a fellow of Ciliwung who is ready to come and help with the treatment and prevention of dental problems.



Sunday is the day of a general practitioner. Just like the dentist, Doctor Indra comes to the Sanggar on Sundays in the afternoon at 13:00. The place is always packed with patients. In the afternoon, the children and the youth gather to study together in Sanggar. The tutors are those who used to be the student in Sanggar themselves when they were children and now they go to high school. Those who go to junior high school help their younger brothers and sisters who are still in elementary school, while those who are already in senior high school help those who are still in junior high school. This is the process of tutor regeneration that is happening in Sanggar.

The activities in Sanggar are diverse. They range from drawing, coloring, English, music, percussion, theater, little doctor, to a composting house. They also plan to study biogas and how to make bricks from Styrofoam.

The composting house was initiated in beginning of January 2008. It was formed out of the concern for the condition of the people in Bukit Duri and Kampung Pulo. The activity was undertaken as part of the environmental movement of the people from Bukit Duri and Kampung Pulo who are involved with the Green Ciliwung Environmental Foundation.

The activity involves the representatives from five regions, community leaders, elders, and the heads of RT, including the people. Four of the RTs are in the Bukit Duri RW 12 area, especially from RT 5 to RT 8, and also from of RT 10 RW 03 of Kampung Pulo, East Jakarta. The advisors for this foundation are the representatives of the people in Bukit Duri and Kampung Pulo, so are the facilitators.

The processing of garbage into compost will reduce the volume of garbage and help keep the area clean. Bukit Duri and Kampung Pulo work together in the compost processing organization through the Environmental Education Program or PLH.

One of the people who are active in the compost processing is Asep. He actively takes care of composting house and he is actively involved in environmental activities in his area. At the time Asep was only 14 years old. At that point, he was responsible for finding wet garbage in Mester Market, Jatinegara. At 12.00 midnight Asep and his friends aged 14 to 17 years, Kurnia, Kurnia, Uting, Ucing, and Zaky are ready to use push cart to take garbage, which mostly comes from vegetable sellers.





Before putting the garbage in the sacks, Asep and his friends sort between the wet and dry garbage. Every morning they sweep the streets of the area in RT 05.

Next, the garbage will be delivered to the yard of composting house. There is already *Mak* (the informal way to refer senior lady) Nur, Mr. Rahmat, Raben, Rujit and Irwan there. *Mak* Nur is a member of Kampung Pulo RT 10 East Jakarta.

Irwan one of *Mak* Nur's children is also involved in home composting. At 08.00 in the morning, the garbage that has been put in the dock at the edge of the river which is then carried by Raben and Rujit, from Bukit Duri using bamboo rafts. The bamboo raft or barge was used as a ferry for crossing the river between the two village.

The outsiders who see them, certainly would not think that these young people who collect garbage with stinking smell, are actually actors, theater performers, as well as music players in Sanggar.

They even managed to put the real experience of Ciliwung people at the stage in a single opera show called "CiliwungLarung" at Taman Ismail Marzuki, Juli 2011, which lasted two days which got some warm response.

Big problems come when the river water rises up. All the materials and the finished compost, including all the tools, utensils and the large machine that cuts up the garbage must be taken to second floor or higher grounds. Unfortunately, nobody can predict when a flood will recede. "If the flood comes at dawn we become confused, because all the garbage that our friends have collected before is gone," Asep said. The garbage that has been put in sacks and tied up is carried away by the flood.

"wet-wet trash, plague threatening,
Containing blessing, can be a suffering
or blessing that is overflowing,
It's all up to our choosing.."

Above is the loose translation to the song lyric written by Father Sandyawan Sumardi which inspires the people to process the garbage into compost.



But apparently, it is not only that flooding and garbage that make people wary. They heard the rumor that all the banks of Ciliwung River will be made into a green belt. Later the rumor developed in the media louder and louder. Many are wondering, "Is our house going to be evicted?"

The people's fears are actually grounded because the Jakarta Public Works Department four years earlier had planned a Structuring and Development Project of Ciliwung-Kampung Melayu, Ciliwung-Pangadegan, and Ciliwung-Kalibata-Cawang Watershed Areas, including Bukit Duri and Kampung Pulo. This three-year project was to be funded as much as Rp 1.7 trillion by the World Bank and JICA.

A year ago a group of men in brown uniform came to the area with surveying equipments. One of the men who appeared to be the leader, ordered his men to measure the whole area of Bukit Duri. The people began to panic, and asked each other what was going on. Unfortunately, the information was sketchy. There's news coming from the village level which made one of the people who previously did not believe the rumor of eviction to panic.

The people actually have been worried for a long time. At one time a conflict occurred due to the unclear information. Some people already started to look for a new place to live. Bang Herman is one of those people. Although he only has a small screen printing business, he is starting to set aside some of his money to buy a modest home in Citayem area. He is worried that his children will be homeless shall eviction happened.

News of eviction heats up the atmosphere. Finally the people who are actively involved in Sanggar organized a meeting between the youth and the people in each RT post. They use the time during a social gathering (*arisan*) at each RT which is held every Sunday night at the RT post.

In this meeting the people received the information on plans and the past experience of eviction that have happened in other areas, such as in BMW Park. The discussion was extremely useful. The people become aware of the situation and are not easily piggybacked by anybody. They agreed to reactivate the night watch and to record more accurately all the new inhabitants, visitors to the area. Guests who stay in the area more than 24 hours are required to report to the head of RT.

Since then, many meetings were done by the people. One of the meetings that deserves a special note is the meeting in front of RT 08 post on October 7, 2012. The meeting place was an area the size of a futsal pitch and the people were sitting on the floor. Everybody wanted to come, both the old and the young people. At that meeting, everyone agreed to form a committee representing the people in the area. All the heads of RT proposed that the committee must include community leaders, and representatives from the women and the elders

The issues affecting the area has now become a common topic of discussion among the people in Bukit Duri area. At least the discussion was heard in coffee shop of Pak Roni, where usually the heads of RT, community leaders, and also the elders gather. The discussion range from small talks to a more serious discussion of eviction issue which is becoming a hot topic. These informal meetings were then followed by more regular meetings.

The people who took the initiative to have regular meetings are those from RT 06. They took the initiative to start the meeting.

The initiative meetings which is called *Sarasehan Warga*, it was quite successful because many people and community leaders were present and active during the discussion.

The talk that night was opened by Mulyadi, the head of RT. He explained what was going on in the area and developing in Bukit Duri area. Pak Suryanto, a community leader and former head of RT became the mediator and moderator of the discussion. "When I first time came here there were still a lot of banana trees on the riverside. All I had to do was to stick some stakes into the earth and I owned a piece of land to build my house on. "There were still a few people who built their houses here," said Napi, one of the elders in the area. He found out later that he is an illegal squatter of the area. He doesn't mind if the area is going to be reorganized. "Especially now because we have a clean Jakarta government. Let's trust the government, as long as they don't hurt the people", he added.

At the end of the discussion, they agreed to propose a "A proposal plan for a humane flat". They do not want to be relocated, especially with no compensation. They agreed to start promoting their area in response to the eviction plan.



They relied their hopes on a program of new Jakarta, which was upheld by the elected governor-Jokowi and Ahok. Their hopes were communicated when both Jokowi and Ahok visited Bukit Duri area. The meeting was conducted in Sangar Ciliwung. At the time Jokowi and Ahok were still candidates for governor and vice governor.

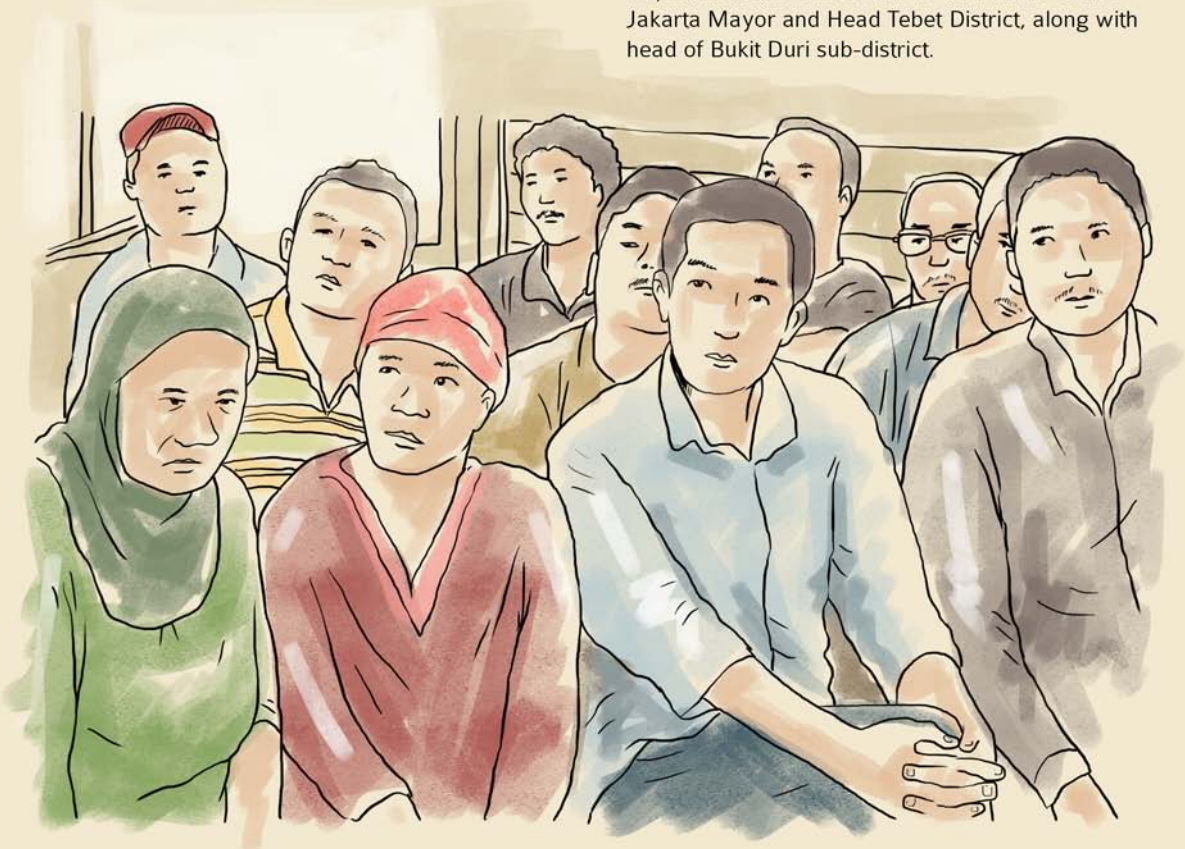
Please do not evict our houses sir. We already feel at home here. Where are we supposed to live if our houses are evicted?" said one of the people during the discussion. The proposed reorganization plan for Bukit Duri area is offered as an alternative to the city government. They refuse to be relocated but they are willing to reorganize the area which is inhabited by about 34,000 families.

The government proposed the construction of Rusunawa (low-cost apartment) Berlaan. But people objected, not only to the cost of rent per-month, but also because they will receive no compensation at all from their old houses.

Not to mention the difficulty of getting a new job in Rusunawa Berlaan, and the long distance to schools for children, as well as their health care services that they have now in Bukit Duri.

"This alternative proposal of reorganization of the area is good. I'm going to listen and learn more about river residential areas from friends who have a lot of first-hand experience. Simultaneously I will also speak with Sandeyawan for the mapping the area here. And I will not give a lot of promises. If we are elected, on the first day in the office I will come back to this area". Jokowi said after hearing the complaints and stories of the families of the victims of forced relocation.

Jokowi-Ahok won the governor election for Jakarta. They came back to Bukit Duri. The meeting was held at the same place, in Sanggar Ciliwung Merdeka on October 16, 2012. This time they came with a full team which includes Joko Widodo the Governor and the Head of Public Works Department, the Head of the City Planning Department and of his staff as well as the South Jakarta Mayor and Head Tebet District, along with head of Bukit Duri sub-district.



Both the new leaders this time heard the explanation from Sandyawan, the director of Ciliwung Merdeka on the community development plan for reorganization of Bukit Duri area. "In regard to the construction of a low-cost apartment, we position the front part of the river, we will not litter," said Father Sandyawan. He also showed the design of Bukit Duri Reorganization Plan. The apartment that will be built there will be four stories high and owned by the people (not rented).

After hearing the whole exposition on the reorganization plan for Bukit Duri area, Jokowi promised to study the whole project first ranging from land acquisition, the costs involved, and the people's acceptance to the project.

At the end of the visit Jokowi said, "I'll give a week to Mr. Ery Basworo, Head of Department of Public Works who are in the field to check immediately, plus the approximate cost needed," Jokowi started to give instructions to his team.

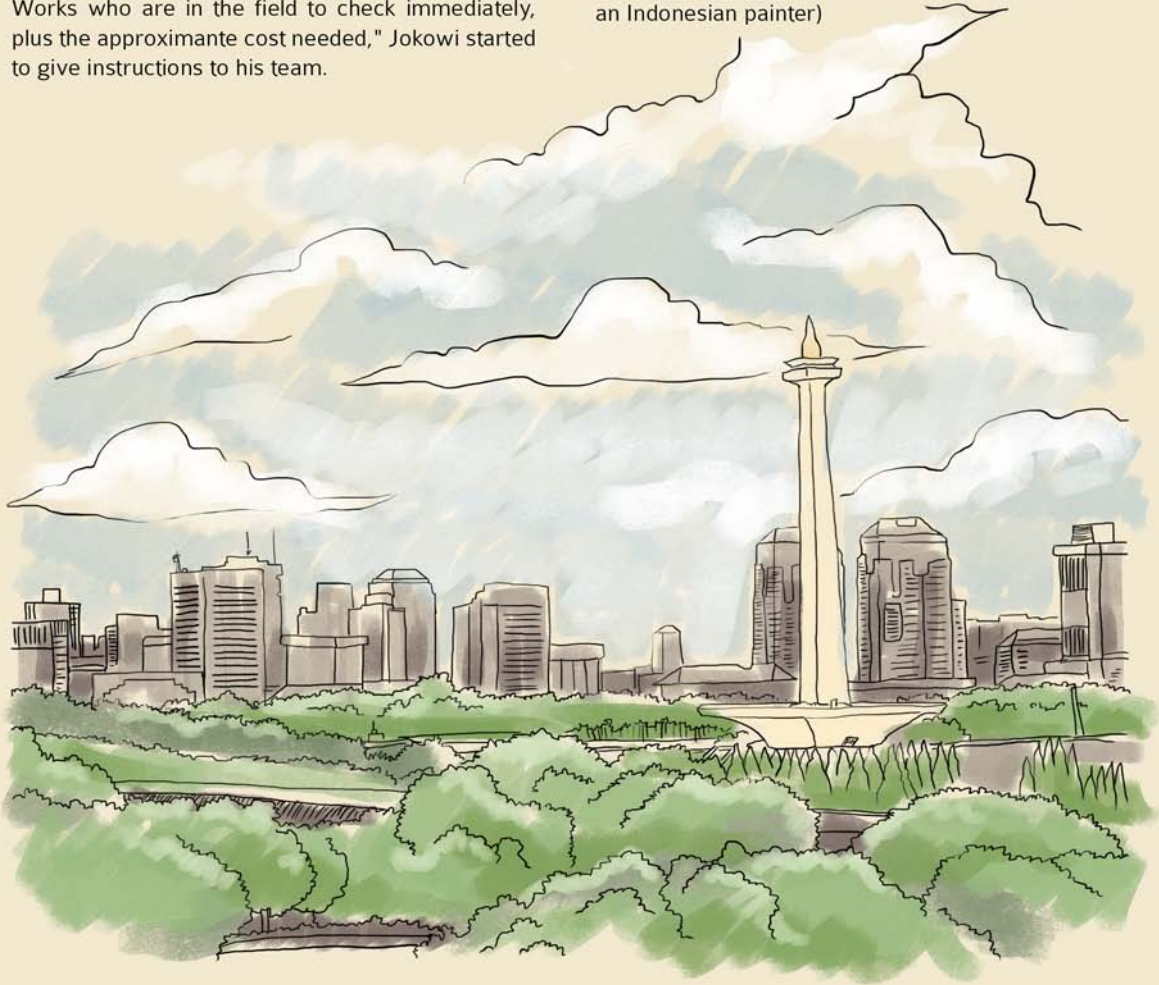
"If the cost is reasonable yes, if it's expensive no," Jokowi said with his thick Javanese accent.

The meeting ended with soaring expectations, to realize the plan for reorganization of a humane kampong in Bukit Duri area.

"For many decades we have lived in this land. We were born and raised, until we are able to shout.....!!!!!!

No matter the amount of money is given,
it can never make us leave,
whatever force you use, it can never make us leave....
ohh our houses are evicted harshly,
we will hold out till death.
Thousands of floods unite our spirit together,
we clench our fists and reinforce our steps..... aaaaaaa,
Thousands of floods, Ciliwung is our Teacher".

(The lyrics of the song written by Yayak Iskra, an Indonesian painter)

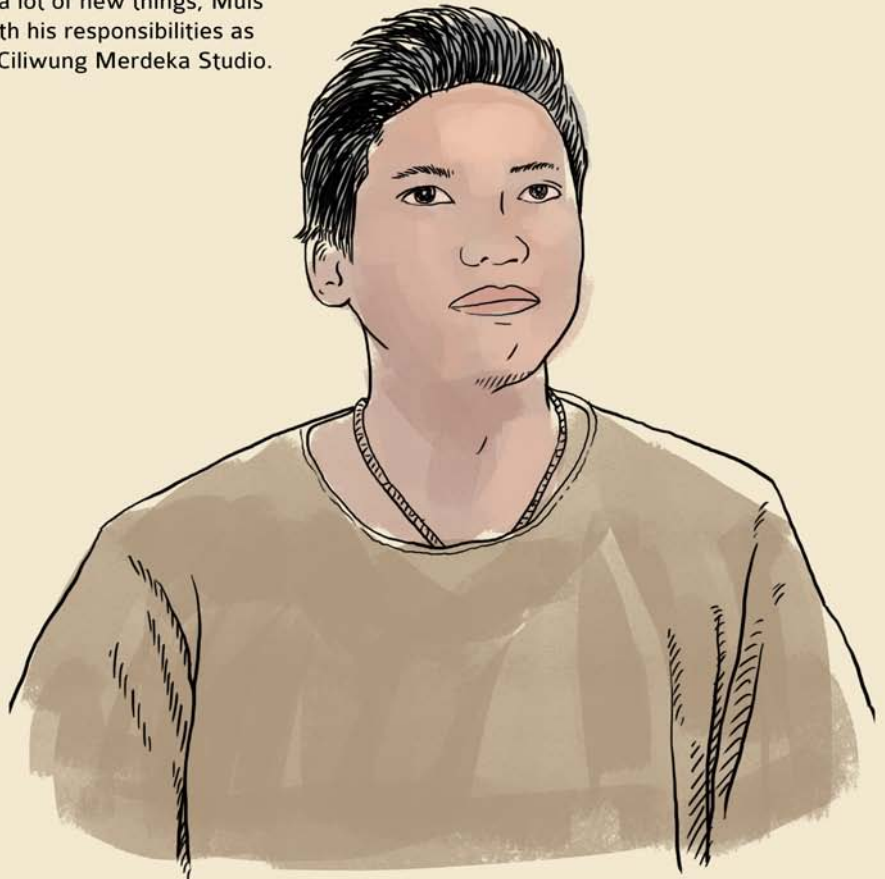


Rudolft Abdul Muis

Abdul Muis is a 27-year-old young man who was born and raised in Jakarta. His love to his home town, encourages Muis, his nickname, to care better for Jakarta. Since 2002, Muis has been involved in community development activities along Ciliwung riverbanks with Ciliwung Merdeka Foundation (YCM).

Muis' early involvement in YCM activity was quite interesting. At that time, Muis was a naughty high school student. His mischiefs making the whole school annoyed and made him to undergo the punishment given by her brother to take part in Ciliwung Merdeka Studio. During undergoing these activities, Muis utilize his craze and musical skills to teach music to children in Kampung Bukit Duri.

Over time, the activities that used to be a mere punishment for him are now part of his life. Despite claiming to have an adventurous spirit and would like to see a lot of new things, Muis remains consistent with his responsibilities as head of household of Ciliwung Merdeka Studio.

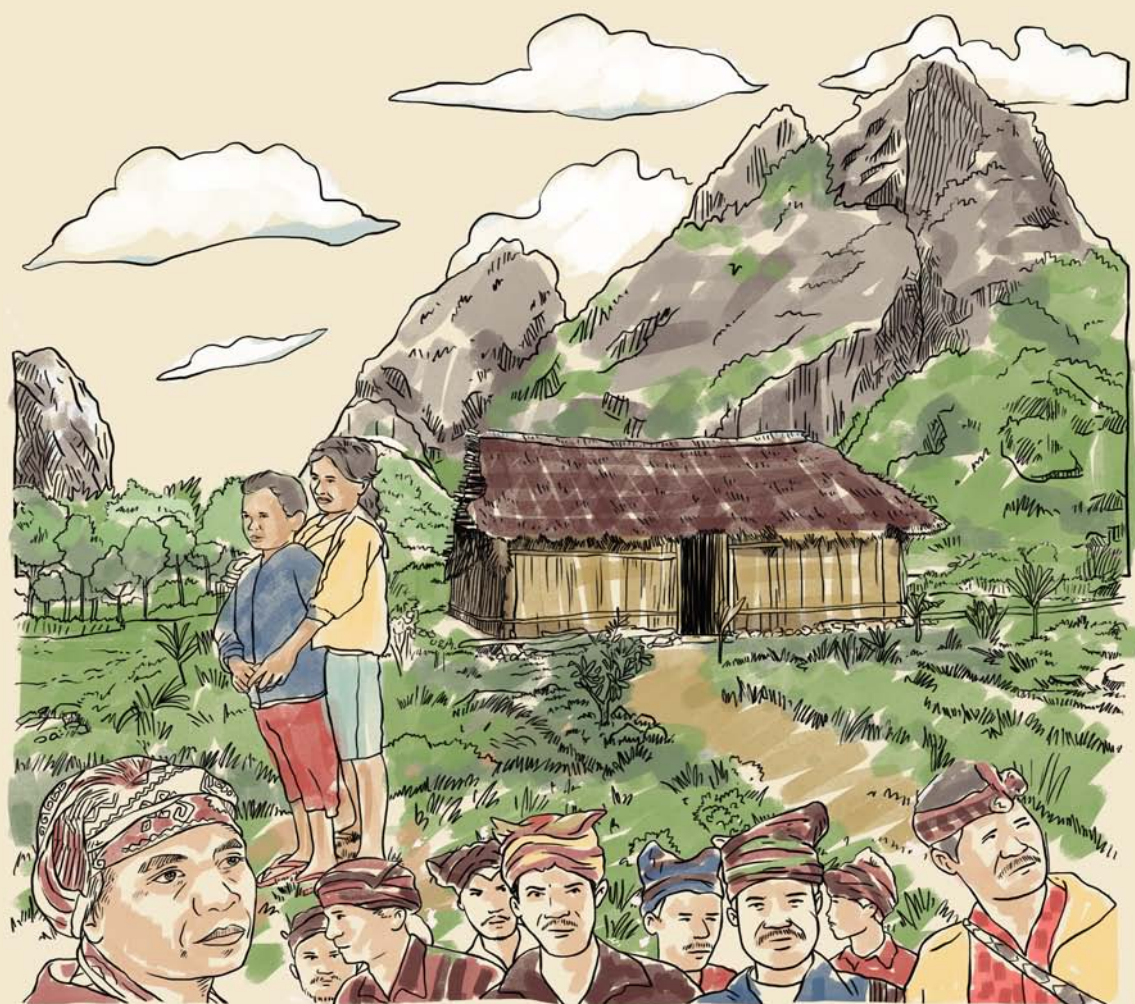




Best Practices Inspiring Indonesia

Fighting, Armed by The Map of Customary Territory

By Nifron Baun



*Onme - Onme Hai Pah Ma Hai Nifu
Tpaot Mat Panat Pah Ma Nifu Neo Sufa-Ka'uf
"Whatever happens, this land will remain to be our
customary territory. And, we are
determined to keep it for our future generations"*

The words above must have some magical power for the members Atoin Meto Tribe in the District of North Mollo, South Central Timor/Timor Tengah Selatan (TTS) Regency. During customary meetings discussing the future of the tribe, uttering these words enable them to cast away any doubts and pessimism that sometimes engulf members of the indigenous group. Just like the flames that ignite and burn their spirit.

These words are not an empty slogan, they have gone through a historic process and it will continue to be remembered by the members of the Atoin Meto Indigenous People which is commonly referred to as The Molloos. It was a triumph for them when they managed to expel a marble mining company which had seized and tore apart their customary land.

It was a long and arduous process which took their lives and liberty, and they seem to gain new strength each time their customary leaders utter, "This is our customary land and we are determined to keep it for our future generations."

These words were kept alive after the victory of the fight for their ancestral land. However, the Molloos realize that they cannot solely depend on these words. Based on learning from past experiences, they are aware that they cannot fight for customary land just by using a slogan, but they should obtain acknowledgement so that the squatters who own the permit issued by the local government cannot grab their land as they like. And, the first step is to create a map of their customary territory.





The History and Richness of the Mollos Traditions

Before the establishment of the current TTS Regency, there were three kingdoms or autonomous regions in the area, namely Mollo (Oenam) Autonomous Region, Amanuban (Banam) Autonomous Region, and Amanatun (Onam) Autonomous Region.

In the past, the Mollo Kingdom was part of the oldest kingdom in Timor Island, the Netpala Kingdom. Its area covered the Villages of Lelobatan, Fatukkoto, Bose, Sebab Leloboko, Nefukoko, Anjabaki, Eyondasi, and Obefi. The Netpala Kingdom then gave birth to Numbena Kingdom whose territory covered the area of Nifu, Lilana, Tune, Bonleu, Fatumnasi, Kuonel and Tunua Villages. Those villages still exist today and the people are mainly farmers who work with their farm, land, livestock, and use the forest by wisdom (Siti Maimunah, 2009).

The Mollos live around the foot of Mount Mutis which is the highest mountain in the western part of Timor Island. Nausus and Anjaf Rocky Mountains are located in this area. It is from this point that all waterflow comes from and all chains of life connects together.

For the Mollos, Nausus and Anjaf are the universe of their lives and the center of their life cosmos. For the Mollos, water, forest, soil and rocks are part of their identity. *Oel nam nes on na, nasi nam nes on nak nafu, najjan nam nes on sisi, fatu nam nes on nuif.* (The water is the blood, the forest is the hair, the soil is the meat, the rocks are the bones).

Nausus and Anjaf are not only a cultural identity of the Mollos, but they also have a strategic function as a water catchment area. There are several upstream of big rivers such as the Noelmina, Benanain, and Oebesi Rivers there, and they provide the fresh water for most of the people in Timor

In addition, since the time of their ancestors, the Mollos have used the area for herding their livestock and farming.

According to CO Sakeng in his writing titled *Cagar Alam Mutis yang Terusik* (The Disturbed Mutis Natural Reserve), the Mutis Mountain area has a homogeneous high land forest type of vegetation. This area is also dominated by various kinds of important crops, such as *ampupu (Eucalyptus urophylla)*, *sandalwood (Santalum album)*, *Timor white gum (Eucalyptus alba)*, *bijaema (Elacocarpus petiolata)*, *Native Olive (Olea paniculata)*, *kakau or mountain pine (Casuarina equisetifolia)*, *manuk molo (Decaspermum fruticosum)*, and *oben (Eugenia littorale)*.

Beside its rich flora, Mutis' tourism area also has a variety of fauna that is typical of Timor. Here visitors can see the Sunda sambar (*Cervus timorensis*), gray cuscus (*Phalanger orientalis*), wild boar (*Sus Vitatus*), water monitor lizard (*Varanus salvator*), Timor monitor lizard (*Varanus timorensis*). There are also Timor python (*Python timorensis*), junglefowl (*Gallus gallus*), Timor pigeon (*Treon psittacea*), Timor parakeet (*Apromictus jonguilaceus*), Timor Imperial-pigeon (*Ducula cineracea*), rainbow lorikeet (*Trichoglossus haematodus*).



In the customary system, the King controls the territory but he does not own the land. The landowners are chiefs of indigenous people or *Atoin Amafs*. Using this existing local wisdom, all the *Atoin Amafs* of Netpala namely Toto, Tanesib, Tafui, Sumbanu, Seko, Ba'un, Bnani, and Lasa, divided the Netpala customary territory into two parts: pasture with trees and settlement area with shifting cultivation (swidden agricultural practice).

The Losing Access and Resistance

The living territory of the Mollos that complies with the inherited customary rules faced some challenges from the outside world when Dutch government colonized the Timor Island. Also after the independence of the Republic of Indonesia, the transition from the autonomous region system into a regency (from 1958 to 1960), which was then consolidated into the local government system (1960 to 1998), and finally in the decentralization era (1999 to present) has systematically weakened the power of Mollos over their customary territory. According to one of the customary leaders from Lelobatan Village, Peter Almet (63), the weakening of their power becomes evident in the 1980s

when a reforestation project entered the pasture area. It was then followed by different forestry projects such as timber estates (HTI), Community Forest (HKM), Forest and Land Rehabilitation Movement, National Parks and Nature Reserves. All of these projects take away the access and flexibility of the Mollos in using their customary territory. For example, the livestock are no longer allowed to be released in the pasture, they should be leashed, because they can damage the young trees planted by the government.

The forestry projects are not the only problems that reduce the power of the Mollos over their customary territory. During 1997 to 2001 the government issued a marble mining permit on the sacred area of the Mollos; the rocky mountains of Nausus, Anjaf, Nanjaf, and Naetapan. Before the exploitation started, the people was never even consulted let alone involved in the process. All they know and feel is that since the introduction of the marble mining company in the area, their lives are affected.



The workers of the company supported by the security forces, prohibited people to have activities around the mining area. They were not allowed to farm, garden, or tending their livestock there. The area was fenced and guarded. These ritual sites inherited from their ancestors which had existed for hundreds of years were destroyed. What's even more painful was the rocky mountains which are the center of their life cosmos were torn and destroyed using dynamites. Since then, the identity of the Mollos was robbed.

"Similar to a human being, this area was once perfect. It had its hair which was the forest and all the trees growing there. It had its life-giving blood, which was the waters stored in the ground. It had its skin and meat which was the soils and rocks that became the backbones of the region. Such was the beauty that was once here. When the marble mining company came, everything was destroyed. Imagine if it's a human being who has no eyebrows, hair, how will he look like?" said Peter Almet

A resistance was launched. Under the leadership of a mother of two children, Aleta Ba'un (46), the Mollos, together with the members of Amanatun and Amanuban indigenous people, which were supported by a network of non-governmental organizations, were able to expel the mining company. Actions such as the land occupation by weaving at the mine location, protests at the regent's office, and other social movements have enabled them to regain their ancestral land.

However, the face of Anjaf and Nausus have already been scrubbed and scraped. Also, there is no guarantee the problem will not be repeated in the future.

The struggle for customary rights requires clear evidences. One of the evidences is a map of Netpala customary territory. This matter was discussed by the Mollos in March 2011 at the Nausus House of Learning. This map is important as a tool for lobbying and negotiation and also a learning tool for the future generations of the Mollos.





Initially, not all customary leaders were optimistic. *"Hai mis hem lul makan Peta ije onme, es fun hitahin ok oke hai ka misskola fa, sa anteni het paek alat GPS,"* said Oshias Oematan, one of the customary leaders in a loud voice which made everyone silent at once. It means, how can we draw a map of our customary territory if none of us ever go to school let alone use a GPS (Global Positioning System) device?

This opinion was addressed wisely by Aleta Ba'un. "It's not a matter of going school or not going to school. It's about our unity in our fight for our land. We can share our tasks and burdens," she said quietly, but firmly. Aleta statement was immediately followed by shouts of agreement in unison and also, *"Onme-onme Hai Pah Ma Hai Nifu!"*. Whatever happens, this land will remain to be our customary land.

The process of making map then began. The tasks and duties were distributed. The first step was information digging. It was done by dividing the people into two groups, the young and the old. The young people's tasks were to write historical stories related to the Mollo-Netpala's customary territory, determine the coordinates, and draw them into a map. Meanwhile the old people's duties was to tell the history of Atoin Meto Indigenous people, lead traditional rituals, and provide local food logistics. The information gathering process went non-stop for two full weeks.

The second step was the training in the map-making of customary territory. Fortunately, the Participatory Mapping Service Node (Simpul Layanan Pemetaan Partisipatif) assisted them by sending two reliable facilitators. The facilitators taught the Mollo young people some skill in making maps. The subject materials and testing on the use of GPS were given for three days, which took place in the never ending, pouring rain.

The third step was surveying the coordinate points. This was actually a difficult step. Not only did the mapping team have to go through forests, rivers, cliffs and canyons, but they also had to deal with bad weather. Some suggested to postpone the step, but Aleta dismissed the idea. "I don't care what happens, the team must go. Delays will only burden the group that provides the logistics."

A traditional ritual to stop the rain was conducted. Mantra was spoken by a traditional rain master (pawang hujan). The author who was the survey team leader was presented with a glass of traditional wine (arak). Also, a small sacred stone was held while a message on the trip was read, "Go ye to trace through the valley and the river, in and out of the woods, up and down the mountains. After that, go home safely and bring the game to me and others who are waiting in this lopo." Unbelievable! Just after ritual ended, the sky was bright and the rain gradually subsided leaving a distinctive smell of the soil. It was time to move, carry out the mandate of hunting the coordinate points.

It took three weeks for us to do the survey. The difficulties faced on the trip became insignificant compared to the spirit that lies in the hearts of every member of the team. Thank God, no serious problems were encountered during the trip. A traditional ritual was held to welcome us. It was exciting and thrilling at the same time because the work was not complete yet. Those coordinate points must be interpreted and connected together to form a map.

The fourth step was the declaration of customary territory map. The map drawing process was completed at the time which coincides with the 2nd Ningkam Haumeni Festival, held on May 29, 2012, the World Anti-Mining Day.

All the customary leaders of Netpala and other indigenous people groups bordering the territory signed the map. This is the instrument of the Mollos for acknowledgement of their rights on land, water, forests and rocks, according to historical evidence.

Unfortunately the people were not given the chance to declare their map in the presence of TTS local government and Ministry of Rural Development officials. I do not know why. Nevertheless, this did not discourage the Mollos to continue their mapping process in the Numbena Kingdom customary territory. It also did not eliminate their conviction in the validity of their map in the future. Aleta Ba'un, other leaders and the people of Mollo, believe they do not face their struggle alone. There are many community networks and non-governmental organizations that have agreed to keep helping them and accompany to the next process.

Indeed, it is not an easy way to go forward. They need support from many stakeholders so that the future of the Mollos are brighter and more defined. This article was written for that purpose, to disseminate the information so that more people will support them. Moreover, the Mollos have promised, *"Whatever happens, this land will remain to be our customary territory. And, we are determined to keep it for our future generations"*



Nifron Baun

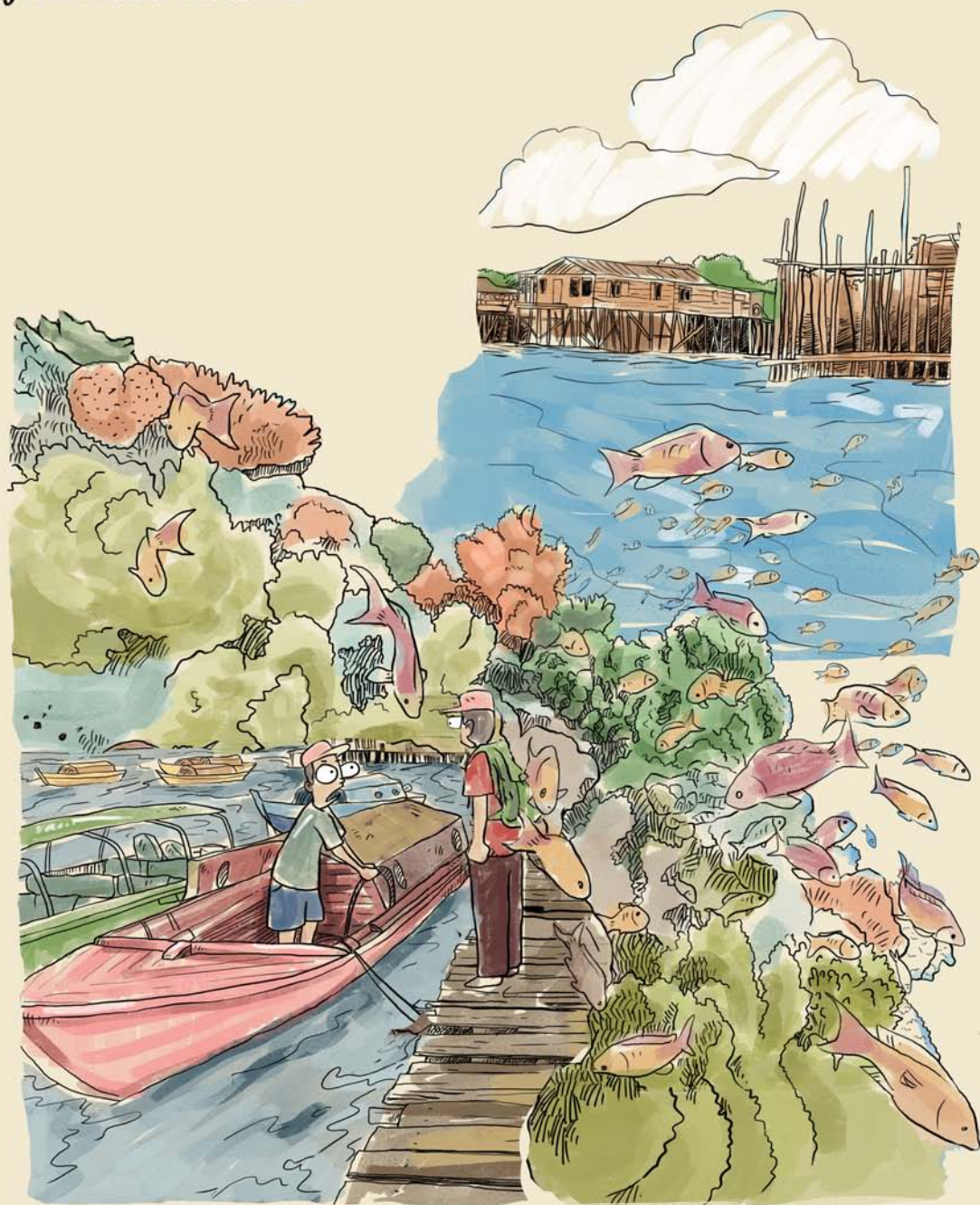
The young man who often wear typical sarong of East Nusa Tenggara is a community facilitator in Tiga batu Tungku (Molo, Amanatun, and Amanuban), South Central Timor, East Nusa Tenggara.

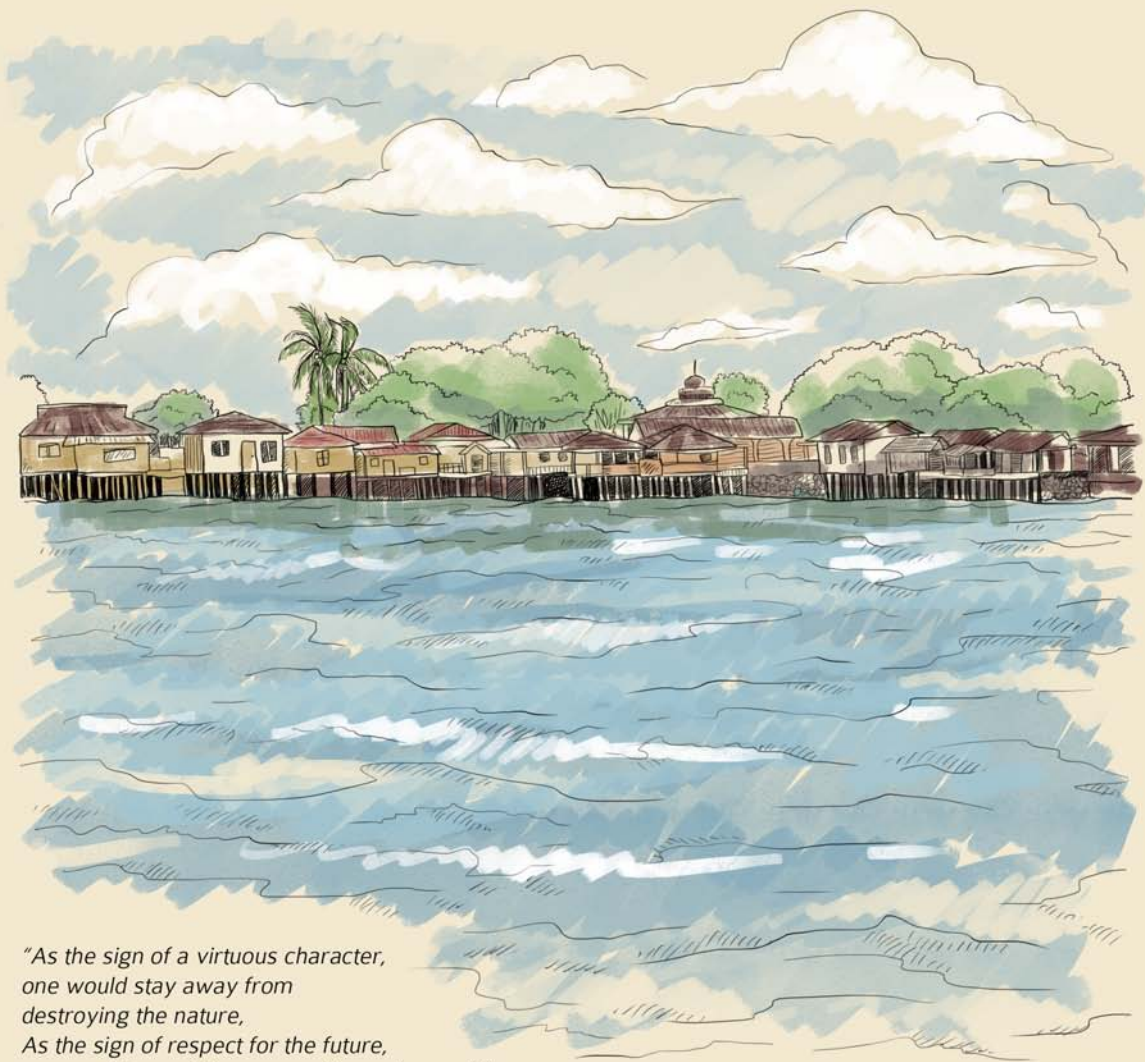
Nifron life's motto in every movement is "Never Surrender, Keep on Trying" which means to not afraid of failure, if persist on trying, someday it will be succeed, both in program and action wise.



Persistence in the Front Line

By Ramses Firdaus





*"As the sign of a virtuous character,
one would stay away from
destroying the nature,
As the sign of respect for the future,
one would guard the seas and keep the earth".*

*"If one wants to survive , one would protect
the seas and the straits,
keep the earth with its lush forests, where
sustenance and grace lie,
there lies all kind of imagery, there lies all
kind of blessings,
there lies all kind of benefits, there lies all
kind of adat guidance" .*

Those two pieces of Malay guidance poems above are what drove my spirit to travel and find out what is really happening in Belakang Padang area, one of the districts in Batam City. It is a point where according to many people all kinds of commodities are smuggled, including natural reefs.

That morning the weather was fine. The sky was clear and blue with no slightest clouds at all. From the corner of Penawar Rindu Island, the district city of Belakang Padang which has existed since the Dutch colonial era, I can clearly see the tall buildings and skyscrapers of the international trade center in Southeast Asia. It is one lost piece of land which used to belong to Malaya; Singapore.

"Where are you going to, sir? Can I hitch a ride?" asked me to someone who was preparing a boat at the dock.

"To Sarang," the man said. Sarang is the name of a small island north of Tanjung Ugang, an industrial area in Batam City.



"Where are you going?"

I paused and thought for a moment. My goal that day was to do a preliminary survey of communities in border areas. The result of the survey will be used by the institution where I work to design economic empowerment program and advocacy on sustainable fisheries in the international waters. Belakang Padang District water is one of the areas where it borders directly to two neighboring countries, namely Malaysia and Singapore.

Actually, my destination was not clear. I got some information from a friend about smuggling activities in Lengkang. Unfortunately, the information was vague.

"I am going to Lengkang," I said after a brief silence. "Okay then," said the owner of the boat who I found out later named Anto.

There were already three women sitting in the boat. One was holding an umbrella and she looked about 50-60 years of age. The other two women were young. I took a seat on the bow of the boat where it was still empty.

The tide was high at the time. Anto took a shortcut passing the small islands overgrown with lush mangrove trees that are still untouched. The shortcut is only passable during high tides.

I became acquainted with people in the boat. Actually, they were a family. I tried to start a conversation with the old woman holding an umbrella. Her name is Mrs. Jumiah.

Mrs. Jumiah told me a lot of things including her son-in-law who was jailed a week earlier because he was caught smuggling cigarettes into Singapore.

I suddenly realized that the smuggling activities between countries are real, not just a rumor. Sarang Island ("Sarang" literally means nest or den) where Mrs. Jumiah and Anto live is apparently a den of smugglers. So I changed my mind.

"Bang Anto, why don't we go straight to Sarang?" I told Anto. "

Why? Aren't you going to Lengkang?" Anto asked. "Just go to Sarang," I replied.

Sarang Island, A Den of Smugglers

Sarang Island is one of the small islands in the border region of Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. This island belongs to the sub-district administration level of Sekanak Raya, which is a 20-minute trip using 40 hp motor boat from Belakang Padang. Almost 100% of the people on this island earn their living as a fisherman.

Some of the houses look nice, in contrast to the narrow wooden houses mostly owned by the fishermen. It takes less than 10 minutes to circle this densely populated small island. In some corners you can see people fixing fish traps, fishing gear in the reef waters.

During the peak of smuggling activities, almost all of the grown-up people of Sarang Island were engaged in these illegal actions, ranging from smuggling cigarettes to the trade of natural reefs.

Their method is simple. They work and deliver when there is an order from the collector in Singapore. "If there is a request from toke (financier as well as collector) in Singapore, then we work," said Ahmad, a fisherman who knows a lot about coral reef illegal trade in Singapore.

"We take the reefs while we set up fish traps, but not all reefs sell," said Hasim, a friend of Ahmad. In fact, Hasim when he was still single used to catch fish using explosives as far as the Sulawesi waters. The delivery is done using a fish merchant ship every week in and out of Singapore.

"The reefs here were once fine. As a result of bombing and reef collection, they become dead," said Jali, Ahmad's neighbor and Hasim as he took a cigarette from his pocket. Jali also told the story of his parents about the wealth of fishery resources in the region long ago.



The stories told by Jali and Sarang village elders are true. The results of the ecological survey conducted at the beginning of the program indicate an integration of ecosystem which enables fisheries to thrive. The integration includes coral reefs, seagrass beds, and mangroves. This integration of ecosystem sustains the presence of fishery resources in the area. However, the current condition of coral reef ecosystems in this region is very poor.

The earnings from selling reefs taken in this area are not always stable and high. Ahmad told his disappointment about the behavior of toke. "Sometimes we deliver 3,000 coral rocks and the toke paid for only 500 or 700 rocks. The rest are unusable (discarded)," said the toke but the fact is all of them are used. Also the prices never go up from a long time ago. They are still 30-80 cents depending on the type, although it is now becoming harder and harder to collect the coral rocks," said Ahmad.

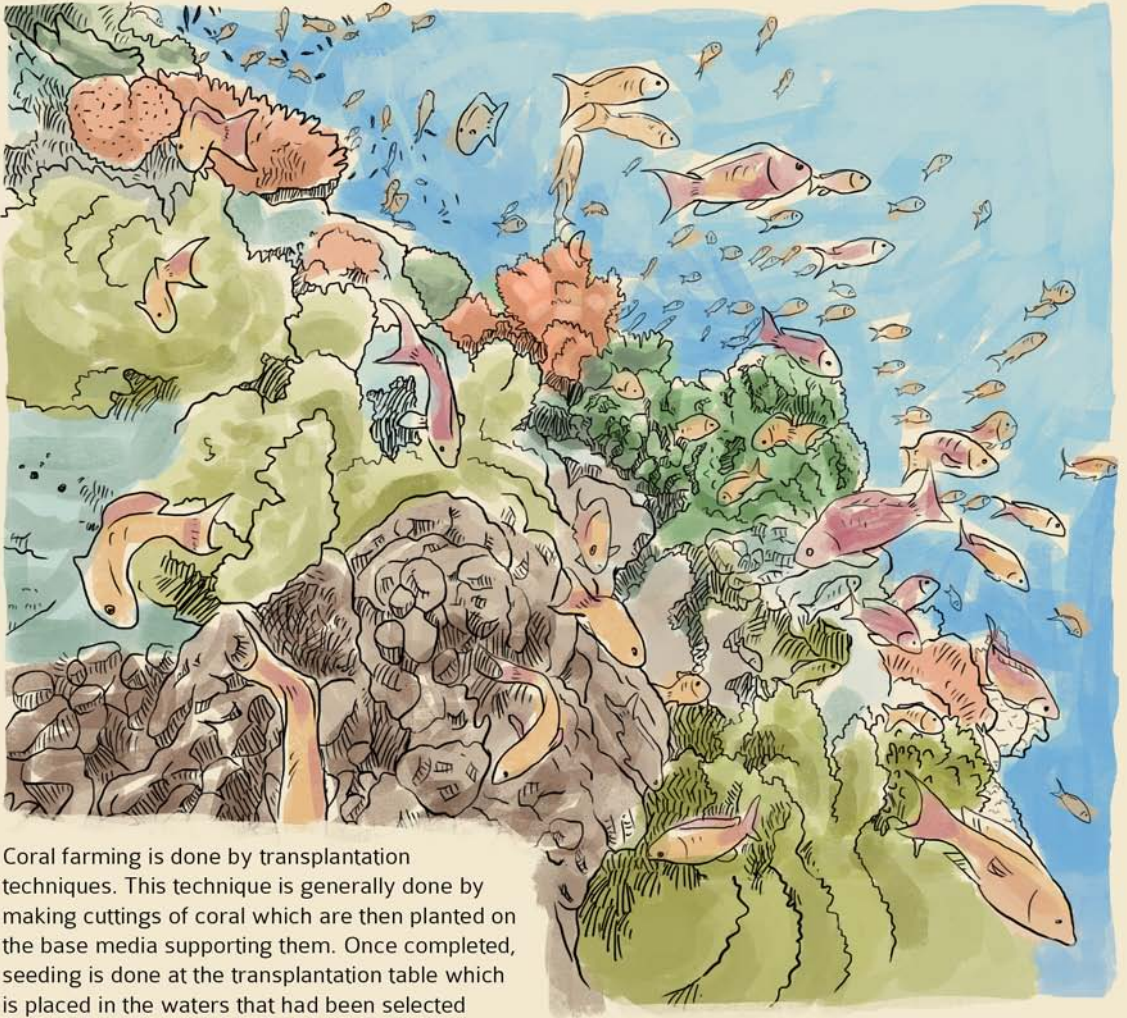
If there is no order from the toke, the coral rocks are usually sold to aquariums and ornamental fish businesses in Batam or even sold out in the open to people passing by on the dock toward Belakang Padang.

A Change

My visit to Sarang Island really helped the next process. The results of the survey there were used by the organization to plan the programs. We then opened a dialogue with the community and performed mentoring process of coral farming groups which were created three months since I came there the first time.

Jali, Ahmad and Hashim, the three sources that I met during the survey, along with other people created the Coral Farmers Group (KBK). Group was born as a form of public awareness of the present condition of coral reef resources. They cultivate corals in the village. On several occasions, Jali, Ahmad and Hashim became the resource person on coral cultivation workshops outside the village.





Coral farming is done by transplantation techniques. This technique is generally done by making cuttings of coral which are then planted on the base media supporting them. Once completed, seeding is done at the transplantation table which is placed in the waters that had been selected before.

Jali was elected as chairman of KBK. Between his main a job as a fisherman, Jali, Ahmad and Hasim as well as other members clean up the coral garden from the trash and water plants swept away by the current. This is a routine activity that is done once a week. "It was us who damaged the corals, and now it is also us who take care of them," Jali said jokingly.

Storm, internal conflicts

"We cannot force them to stay with us. This work, they say, is fruitless. For us, this effort is done purely out of our conscience and our wives can understand that, but we can't expect the same with their wives." Hasim told Jali.

Hasim was trying to calm Jali who was upset with the members of his group who do not care anymore about the group activities. The spirit of members began to decline when direct economic benefits from cultivating coral reefs were not obtained. Their effort was blocked because it is very hard to obtain a permission on the trade/selling of ornamental coral reefs.

Several steps to meet the requirements in order to obtain trade licenses has been completed, ranging from establishment of a business institution, location permit, to cultivation permit for ornamental coral reef from the relevant agencies that have been obtained.



Jali was sitting quietly in the front yard of Hasim's stilt house. No one knows what he was thinking. He gazed across the sea facing Singapore. It was late afternoon. From where Jali was seated, he could see the lights from the tall skyscrapers in Singapore that are being turned on. Jali was snapped out of his daydreaming when the loud call to prayer was heard and he mumbled, "Why are the lights of this village not turned on?"

Hopes and plans

"Hello, assalamualaikum," I started a long-distance conversation with Jali some time ago.

"Good news, buddy. There is a Fantasy Island tourism project that is planning to create and develop a coral reef cultivation and we are asked to handle it," I said. Jali sounded happy to hear the good news from me. Before we closed our phone conversation Jali said, "It's okay if we can't sell these to Singapore as long as we can now show to everybody the fruits of our struggle. Our persistence finally paid off."

The long wait of Jali, Amad and Hasim to reap the results of their coral farming is finally over. Although the coral reefs cannot be sold to Singapore and they are not paid in dollars, a new hope begins to unfold. After the request from the Fantasy Island Project, now Jali and his group landed a similar project from the Batam City Government. This became the turning point of the spirit of the group led by Jali.

The persistence of Jali, Ahmad and Hasim, three people from different generations has been tested over time. Their wait and labor are not in vain. Hopefully, the combination of these three generations is likened the unity of three ecosystems: mangrove, seagrass beds and coral reefs that provide a variety of benefits and support the sustainability of fishery resources.

Hopefully the persistence of Jali, Ahmad, Hasim and members of their group at the frontline of the border is becoming stronger and stronger.

Ramses Firdaus

'Will continue to maintain marine environment in Riau Islands to the end of life'

That's the motto of Ramses Firdaus, a 40-year-old man. Many people consider his motto is too farfetched, but the man who was born in Batu Bersurat, Riau islands, indeed wants to dedicate his life to environment and marine conservation. Ramses claimed to have this 'dreams and passion' since he was in the University of Riau year 1993, in the Department of Marine and Fisheries.

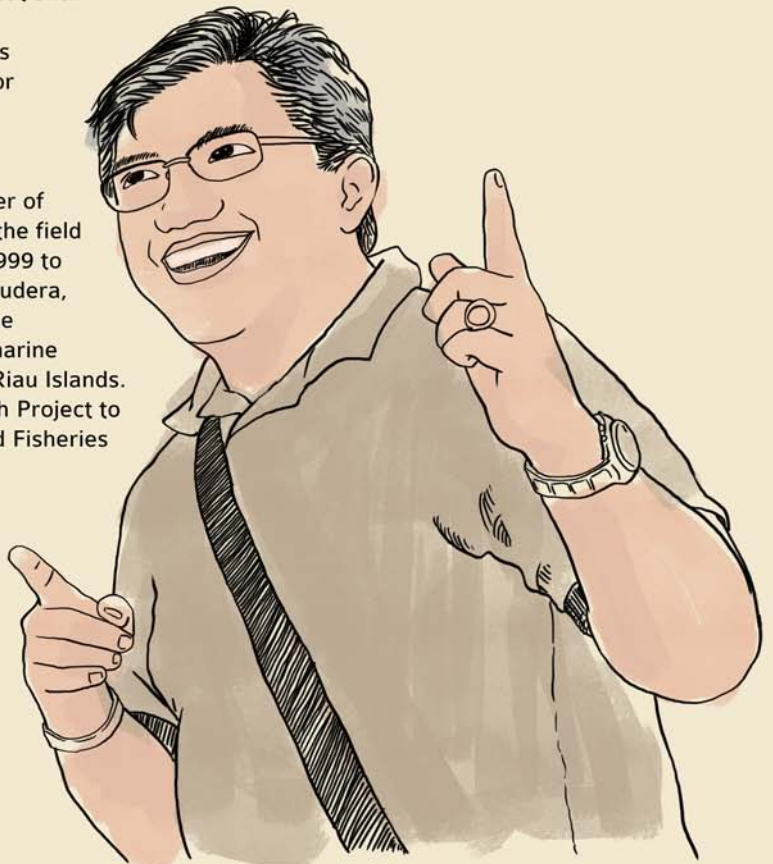
During his youth, Ramses is very active in campus organizations. This has made him need longer years to complete his bachelor degree. Ramses thought that the best school is not only in the classroom, but outside of school such as in environmental and campus organizations.

Being too active on campus did not become any obstacles for him in having accomplishments. Ramses managed to get two educational scholarships, the first one was Supersemar, a tuition scholarships (for 4 years) and a scholarships for graduate study from USAID (for 2 years).

The working experience of a father of two children is also consistent in the field of marine environment. In year 1999 to 2002, he worked in Daksana Samudera, one of the NGOs that deal with the management of coral reefs and marine environmental campaigns in the Riau Islands. After that he also joined in Co Fish Project to manage Mangrove Sanctuary and Fisheries (2002-2005).

Since 2006, Ramses joined Yayasan Gema Lingkungan Indonesia (YGLI) and have collaboration activities with Coral Cultivation Group (KBK/ Kelompok Budidaya Karang) in Sarang Island for conservation of mangroves, coral reefs and seagrass, supported by GEF SGP Indonesia.

Not satisfied with NGOs and CBOs active in the marine environment, Ramses has also taught several environmental courses in the Faculty of Biology, Andalas University to be able to teach several environmental courses in the Faculty of Biology at the University of Education in Riau Islands. For him, teaching is the manifestation of his dream to educate the people of Riau islands in order to conserve marine environment and fisheries.



Farming and Saving the Peatlands

By Sutiawati and Alfeus Kripinus





It was three o'clock in the morning. The air was still cold, but the women in the village of Tanjung Baik Budi were already busy. Siti was one of those women. She had a long list full of activities for the day. Her pandan plants had grown up to two meters. Those pandans must be cut for the material of making wickerwork crafts, her main livelihood.

"Not to mention taking care of my five children, waking them up, telling them to take a bath, preparing breakfast and asking them to go to school," said Siti. Three of Siti's children were still in school. Siti's first child was a man in his 30s who's already married. Her second child was 17 years old and just graduated from high school.



Tanjung Baik Budi is one of the villages in Ketapang Regency, West Kalimantan Province. Most people live from farming. Its total population is approximately 700 families, including 200 families who live as fishermen. However, in addition to farming, most of the people there also weave pandans, especially the women. Farming is done in the morning until late afternoon while weaving is done in the evening. So in the morning they go to the field, and in the evening they weave in their houses.

Rice farming in this area is unique, unlike the common paddy fields which are often found in Java Island, or elsewhere. The agricultural lands here are peatlands. Peatlands are different from the usual agricultural lands. They are different from rivers, although there are also still water throughout the year. When Siti goes to the field for farming, she never uses brightly colored pants or bottom garments. Neither do other farmers in the village, not only because the garments will be dipped in the peat water, but also because the peat water is dark like concentrated tea water and muddy. Bright clothings will be easily soiled and difficult to wash due to the mud that sticks.

The types of plants in peatlands are also different from those found in the garden. One of the characteristic plants of peat lands is Nipa palm, which looks like a palm tree, but its leaves are wider and grow in a wide distance from the base of the stem. Nipa palms grow floating in water. The tree can move along with the water and its direction of flow. The roots which are only embedded in the mud, and not sticking to ground in the bottom allow them to easily shift from one place to another. Nipa palm has many benefits. The leaves can be used as roof material, and the ribs of the leaves can be used to make brooms.

Actually the peat area in the village is very important. Tanjung Baik Budi village along with six other villages such as Kuala Tolak, Sungai Putri, Sungai Awan, Ulak Medang, Tanjung Pasar, Pelang-Pematang Gadung dan Sungai Besar has a peatland area of 70,000 hectares, which becomes the buffer zone, part of the Gunung Palung National Park (TNGP). The depth of peat in Sungai Putri is known to reach 15 meters. Peat forest ecosystem acts as a buffer for the waters in the surrounding area as well as a habitat for endangered species such as proboscis monkeys and orangutans as well as Ramins (*Gonystilus bancanus*).

The peat area is a critical habitat for orangutans. They do not just wander around in the mountains of TNGP. On certain times, they forage in the valleys which are the peat areas. The population of orangutan in this area is not known with certainty. In the area of TNGP the remaining population is estimated to be around 2,000. These orangutans are probably the ones which undertake the "journey" to the peatlands. In August 2011 the people of Tanjung Baik Budi Village captured an orangutan because it was entering and disrupting the people's garden. The orangutan was released a week later.

Farming in the peatlands requires a special skill and is full of risks. At first, rice seedlings must be cultivated by sowing rice seeds on a patch of land on a higher ground which is not flooded.

For each hectare of land at least 20 kilograms of rice seeds are required. When the seeds have grown to a height of around 15 cm, reaching an age of 2 to 3 months, only then the seedlings are ready to be transferred to the peatlands so that they are resistant to the water.





The planting is usually done in July. When the plants are grown but there is too much water which is drowning the plants for up to a week, the plants will definitely rot. This usually happens during the rainy season at the end of the year.

There are also many pests attacking the rice plants, such as rats, crabs, and mini crabs which often like to cut the stems of rice plants. When minicrabs attack the paddy field, the farmers will definitely experience crop failure in February.

Planting is a family activity. There is usually a division of roles between men and women in farming. The women usually grow and plant rice seedlings, and also clear the grass.

Meanwhile the men prepare the land, began slashing land (*nyaka'*) or cultivate the land using a buffalo or a cow. The men also assist during planting. On the other hand the harvesting is done together by both.

Harvesting in peatlands is also different, they do not use a grain thresher machine, but they use their feet. First the paddies are dried, and then to separate the rice from the stalks, they trample on them using their feet so that the grains fall off the stalks. Usually this takes quite some time, because it can't be done all at once. The farmers usually do it at night and if it is not finished they will continue the next night. It takes about two weeks for each one hectare of rice land.



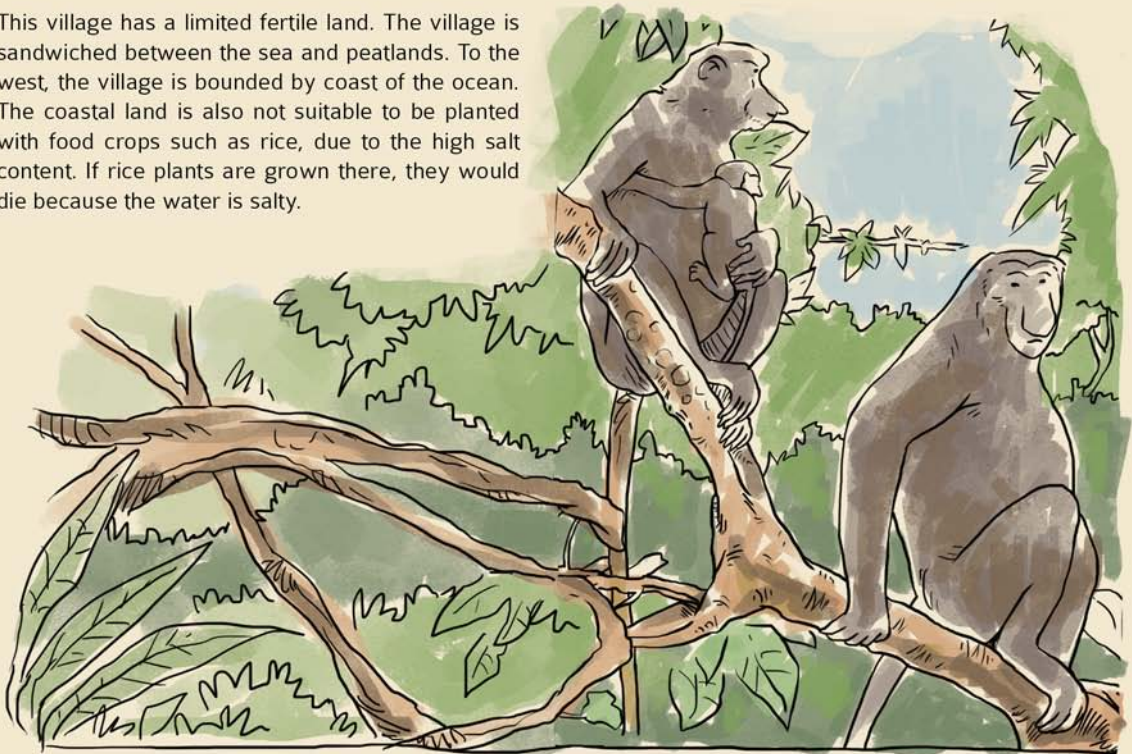
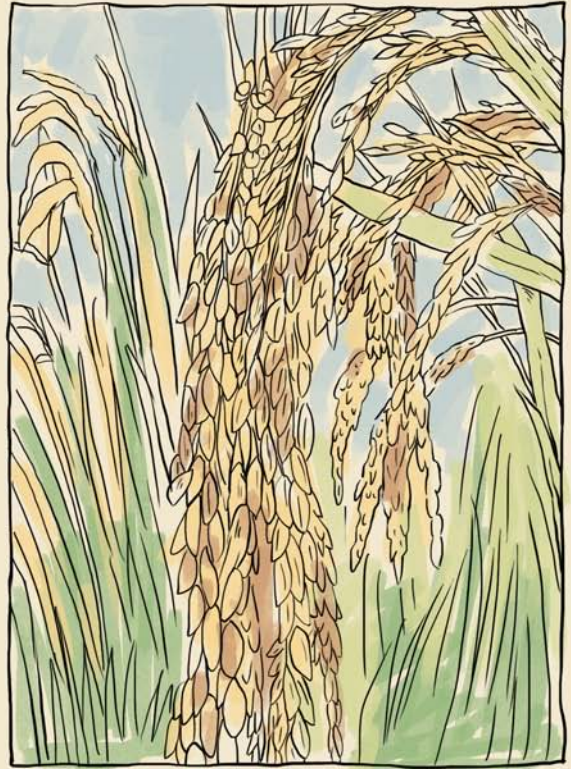
Siti is not a rich farmer. Her paddy field is only one hectare. The average paddy field area of each farmer in Tanjung Baik Budi Village is only about one half to one hectare. If the harvest is good, in one hectare they can harvest up to 1000 gantangs. One gantang is equal to 2 kilograms which means about 2 tons of rice per hectare.

The varieties of rice planted in peatlands are diverse. "There are paddy varieties such as *Seratus Hari* paddy, *serang* paddy which is red in color, *seliung*, *pelita*, glutinous rice and others. There are 10 varieties of swamp rice which are still planted," Siti recalled. Harvesting on peatland can be done twice, but the second harvest usually shrinks down to half because grains come from the old stem of the first harvest, which is left behind to grow wildly after the first harvest was done.

However for Siti family, the harvest is still not sufficient. She still has to buy more than half of her rice from the rice sellers. The food shortage problem is not only experienced by Siti family alone, but also the other families. That's why since 1999 the area has received subsidized rice from the *Raskin* program.

Moreover, according to Siti, peatlands are not fertile soil for rice cultivation due to the high acidity of the soil in the area. That's why not all peatlands are able to be planted with rice. However seasonal crops such as fruits, mangoes, rambutans, and also coconuts flourish in the area.

This village has a limited fertile land. The village is sandwiched between the sea and peatlands. To the west, the village is bounded by coast of the ocean. The coastal land is also not suitable to be planted with food crops such as rice, due to the high salt content. If rice plants are grown there, they would die because the water is salty.





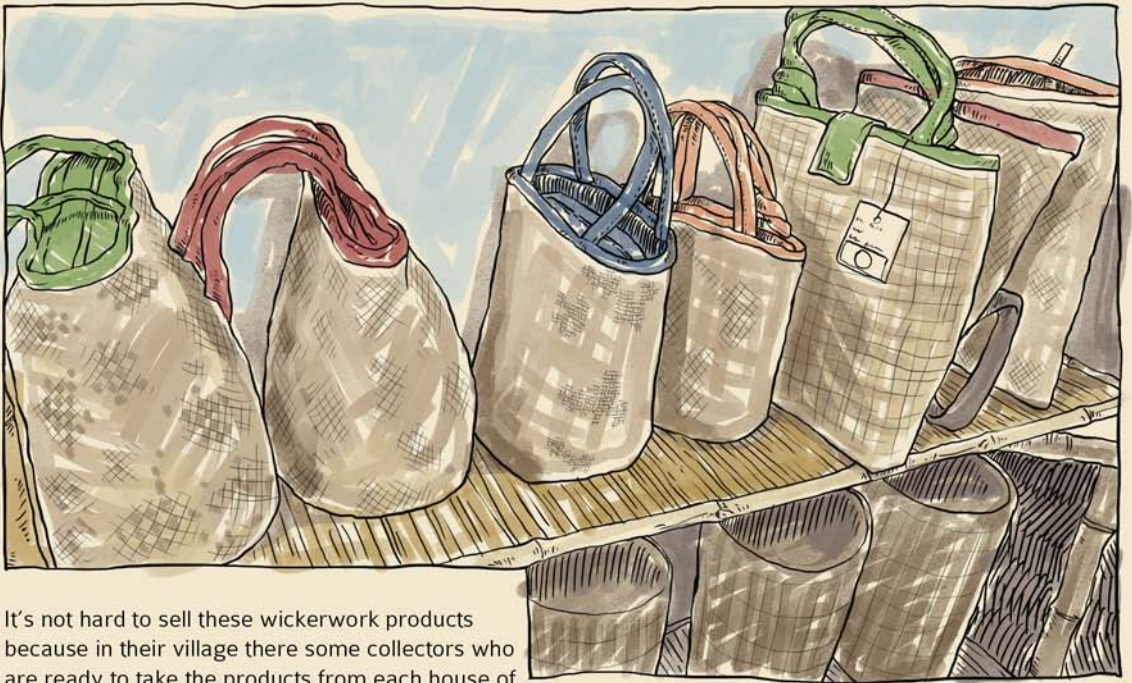
Living side by side with peatlands and the coast makes the cultivation areas of the people there are very limited. This limited area means that the women have to look for an extra income through making wicker crafts from Pandan leaves. About 80 percent of the villagers work doubles as farmers and pandan leaves weavers like Siti. During the day they are busy in the field, and in the evening they are also busy at home weaving the pandan leaves into woven mats, baskets, bags, and tissue boxes, or whatever forms that are ordered by the customer.

Pandanus plants grow on peatlands, coastal lands, also on the house yards of the people. Pandan trees do not have trunks and the leaves are lush, with a length of about two meters. There are thorns on the center and also on the left and right sides of the leaves. The people there cultivate pandan by planting the saplings. If sapling grows well, it can be harvested at an age of three months.

They can harvest pandan every week. Men usually help search the materials for making wicker crafts. The wickerwork skills are taught for generations, as well as between friends. Actually it is not hard to do wickerwork. The tools needed are also simple. All you need are pandan leaves, a *jangan*, a knife, and bamboo. *Jangan* is a kind of ruler tool to measure the size of pandan leaves to be used, but it can also be used as a knife to clean the pandan thorns. Before weaving, the thorns must be removed from the pandan leaves, and the size must be measured in accordance with the desired width and length using *jangan*.

The woven mats produced are varied. There is a type of mats called *songket*, which is the mats that have colorful motifs. There are also regular pandan mats with a plain color. Besides the color, the mats are also available in different sizes. The shape, the price and the level of difficulty in making them will affect the selling price of the products.





It's not hard to sell these wickerwork products because in their village there are some collectors who are ready to take the products from each house of the craftsman. In Siti's village there are at least 20 collectors. All of them are men. Usually the payment is made three days after the products are taken. How much is Siti's income from this wickerwork?

"I can get Rp 800,000 per month. I usually work from 7 pm until 10 pm," she said. Siti prefers to weave songket mats. "The price is more expensive than regular mats," she said. Songket price is higher than the regular mats because of the higher level of difficulty in making them compared to the regular mats. The mats with a regular motif with the size of one square meter is only Rp 7,000, while the price of mats with songket motif can reach Rp 10,000.

But her income from the sale of woven crafts cannot provide the family need. This has made the people of Tanjung Baik Budi Village know Dian Tama Foundation, a Non Governmental Organization which is based in Pontianak. The organization shares the knowledge and appropriate technology in the development of handicrafts with local materials, such as pandan leaves. Dian Tama Foundation modified the products so the pandan leaves can be made into interesting products that have a higher selling power.

Dian Tama Foundation is backed by the head of Tanjung Baik Budi Village to form groups which consist of men and women. Each group has 15 members. In the group they discuss and learn how to find solutions to overcome the problem of limited agricultural land. One of the results of the discussion is the use of local potential for agricultural development such as the use of husks char for growing crops in polybags.

The groups that were enthusiastic to develop the cultivation of vegetables in polybags were Tunas Baru and Harapan Baru groups. Tunas Baru has 10 women members, while Tunas Harapan has 12 women members. Both were formed in February 2009. These groups were backed by the head of the village. "The village actually has a lot of potentials. What is missing is the management. Human resources are needed to manage them. The formation of the group was done so that people can share their stories and solve the problems that they have," said Amir Suhaidah, the head of Tanjung Baik Budi Village during the inauguration of the group in the village office .

Once the group is formed, its members began to regularly conduct meetings. One of the meetings was done to develop learning programs that are needed.

At the meeting held in the Bahagia sub-village a list of the learning programs needed was made which the production of the husks char, coconut shell charcoal burning, composting, cultivation with polybags, and cultivation of rubber. They also included the program of weaving of pandan leaves into various forms such as handbags, purses, tissue boxes and slippers.

The cultivation of vegetables in polybags appealed to the women because vegetables are the daily needs of the family, while the prices of vegetables there are pretty expensive. They learned to plant a variety of vegetables such as peppers, eggplants, tomatoes and more. The polybags were lined up in front of their homes.

Planting in polybags uses soil and husks char as the growing media.

Its composition includes, a third of husk chars, a third part of compost, and a third part of soil. They also make their own compost from organic waste which is used as an organic fertilizer. One of the compost materials is banana stems. Usually banana stems are not recommended for composting because of high water content. However within the group it is chosen to be the material for compost.

First, the banana stems are cut into slices and dried. Once dried, they are mixed with rice husks char and manure. For each banana stem that is finely chopped, it is mixed by two buckets of husks char and two buckets of manure, cow or chicken dung may be used. After that a bucket of water is added to the mixture then covered it with a plastic sheet. The mixture is left to sit for two months. Three times a week, the members of the group take turns watering the pile of compost with a bit of water. Compost is usually used for planting in polybags, but it also can be used for planting in the open land. For half a hectare of land the compost is needed two times.





The cultivation in polybags was first practiced in 2009. The group members grow onions, eggplants, chili peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers, calabashes, and pumpkins. The benefits of vegetable cultivation is felt by the mothers. They can save on food expenditures by 20 percent or about Rp 10,000 to Rp 15,000 per day. The polybags used can also be used multiple times. "They are not replaced until they are broken," said Siti.

At first it did not run smoothly. Each member of the group gets 10 polybags. For the first three tries they planted with polybags, and plants died. Fourth attempt was successful. The vegetables cultivation does need more attention, especially during the dry season because they need to water the plants in the morning and afternoon.

They also learned how to prepare a planting medium that can neutralize the acidity by using husks char. The basic ingredient of char comes from the waste of rice crops which is usually thrown away. The husks are burnt using a burning equipment with chimney so that the husks are not burned into ashes, but into charcoal which is black in color retaining its shape before it is being burned. The chimney can only be used for three times burning. During the burning process, the husks must be stirred so that it is evenly burned producing a good quality charcoal.



Their wickerwork skills also improved shortly after a routine training was done. The weavers are now able to create more diverse products. The wicker products are also finer and neater. Now they not only make the mats, but also bags, sandals, purses, tissues and others. They are also skilled in combining motifs and materials from the previous two songket colors, white and blue into more than two colors.

Most interestingly, they can now combine pandan leaves with other materials such as fabrics, leather, rattan, bamboo and ribbons.

"Their income is slowly getting better, from Rp500,000 previously to Rp800,000 now," said Pipin, a mentor from Dian Tama Foundation. They also receive orders from outside their village.

The development of agriculture in limited farmland using polybags, as well as pandan leaves weaving skills are very useful for the people of Tanjung Baik Budi Village. They are not only able to improve the economy of the family but also manage the natural resources properly, without damaging nature. Hopefully, the women can really benefit from what they are doing today, and continue to develop.



Sutiawati

The young sun eager to shine from Ketapang
Sutiawati or Tia, a young woman in her 20s is from Ketapang, West Kalimantan. Graduated from Al-Hau State Islamic Institute (STAIN) Ketapang, Tia joined Dian Tama, an organization in Ketapang regency working on resource utilization of peat swamp. Tia, along with her friends, around ten women in the age range of 30 -50 years in a group do composting, produce husk and coconut shell charcoal and wickers. Additionally, Tia also teaches hydroponic planting at schools.

Tia felt, her diverse activities are very beneficial for her life. In addition to improving the quality of herself, Tia can develop the potential of the group, as community representatives in conserving forests sustainably because the products they made have added economic value.

Tia looks forward to continue to shine and be useful to others. Being a native of Ketapang encouraged her to have a motto of "Definitely Can" in carrying out her various activities..



Alfeus Kripinus

He is called as Pipin. He comes from Pontianak, West Kalimantan. Currently, Pipin is active in Dian Tama Foundation, as community facilitator for women's group in the District of North Matan Hilir, Ketapang Regency to manage natural resources. Various activities he implemented are organic farming and wickers from pandanus.

Not limited to facilitation alone, Pipin also help to open up opportunities/marketing channels for the products. The love to his family and wicker products makes him weaved a sleeping basket for his own baby. His motto is, "Keep on Learning from experience or Working while Learning" and also "Please others even by doing the slightest thing".



Springs and Planting for Life

By Titi Permata





*"Bubbling springs.
 Pouring out in the reunion with the soil.
 Sipped by the greenery of the trees.
 Growing, seeping into human body.
 Together interweaving a harmony, I sat
 still astounded in the twist of its rhythm"*

This piece of poem above pretty much sums up my life attitude on springs.

When I meet up with friends who also have the same concern with springs, we become more determined to do something good for springs and the people around them.

Planting For Life *Community/Tanam untuk Kehidupan* (TUK) is our gathering place in Salatiga which is located at the foot of Mount Merbabu. Our concern of Salatiga City, which is getting hotter and has problems of water taps in our homes which are providing less and less or even no water at all, to the trees in the city that are often being cut down for different reasons makes us to decide to voice our concern for the springs.



"In Javanese language, 'tuk' can also mean springs. "To maintain the sustainability of springs, all we have to do is to plant trees around the springs," said Rudy Ardyanto (44), one of the founder and the first chairman of TUK.

Springs are indeed the focus of our attention. For us, the starting point of all the environmental struggles is rooted in springs. Even the survival of living things depends on springs. And, in Salatiga City, the respect for water springs is very poor. Many springs are allowed to dry, covered up for buildings or even stacked with garbage.

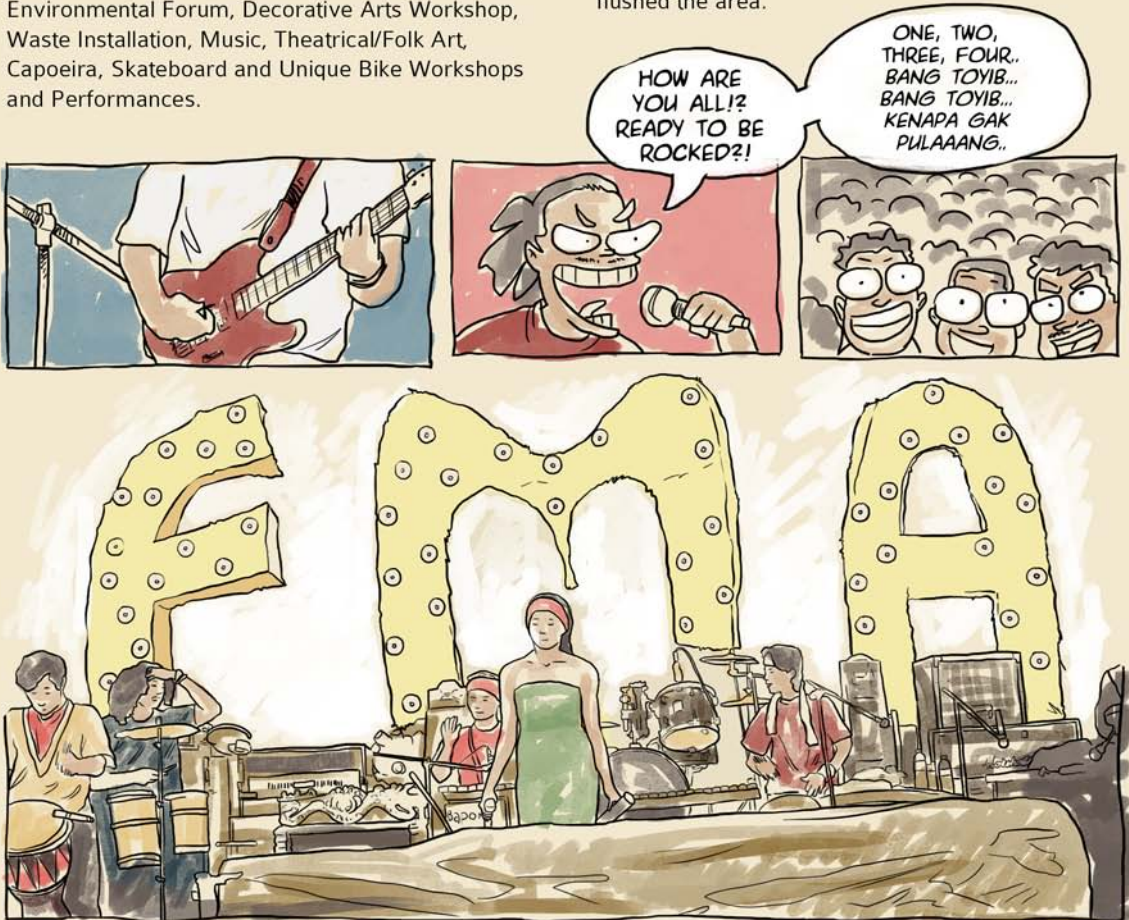
We had to sit together many times and listen to each other expressing our opinions, and scrawl our ideas to find the right strategy and the best way that we should do to save the springs, as well as build the awareness of many people in Salatiga. Finally, we developed some ideas in the form of a Water Springs Festival/Festival Mata Air (FMA) which was to be held on springs in Salatiga City and its vicinity. The festival is held on water springs so that anyone attending the festival can also enjoy the clear spring water and its freshness, can play and swim directly in the spring water, or simply just have a reflection there.

From 2006 to 2010 we have conducted the festival four times in Senjoyo, Kalitaman, Kalimangkak and back in Senjoyo, starting from a trial and error effort into something that has an increasingly bigger impact. All of it is the combined work of art and environmental advocacy groups such as the Environmental Forum, Decorative Arts Workshop, Waste Installation, Music, Theatrical/Folk Art, Capoeira, Skateboard and Unique Bike Workshops and Performances.

If we look back to the experiences our four previous FMAs, there are always memorable moments that appear in the memory. For example, in our first FMA we used the roof top of one of the residents' house, Mrs. Mul, as the main stage. The background of the stage was the houses that were arranged like terraced rice fields.

The live music that night became an unforgettable event. There was nothing like it. "Thank you Mrs. Mul," shouted Sawung Jabo, the musician, one of the performers, shortly after he left the stage. It was a simple expression as a statement of our infinite gratitude.

At another FMA, we set up the stage in the middle of a rice field, not far from the spring which is located on the path to the festival area. It was unforgettable because we all had a mud bath during the closing night of FMA when heavy rain flushed the area.



At one of the FMAs there was also a joke which is hard to forget. Bob Sick, the painter from Yogyakarta was entering the festival area in his Jeep with a loud roaring sound of siren which made the audience to panic. Some thought Bob Sick was a policeman patrolling the area. When he came out of the car, he walked slowly and got on the hood of the car. "You can keep partying, please!!" uttered Bob Sick using a megaphone that he carried. We all suddenly laughed out loud and swore at him in the same time.

Along the way, FMA and TUK did get a lot of pros as well as cons. The supporters saw that the methods and activities shown in FMA were very interesting. The festivals became a platform for many networks of environmental, arts and humanities activists to meet and discuss current issues which certainly offered some creative solutions.

Nevertheless, counter views could not be avoided. Some have seen the celebration in the festival as a waste or even a wild party. Some were criticizing the behavior of festival supporters who liked to carry beer bottles, smoked, and had tattoos. There was also an opinion that discussions and festivals were not enough. There needed to be a real action.

The pros and cons were balanced, equally strong. This became a source of reflection for TUK. Therefore in the following year, FMA was deliberately not held. Instead, TUK and the supporters did an evaluation process in FMA 4½ Gathering.

"This is a good time for TUK to rest before making something bigger," said Jane Fuller, one of the volunteers from Australian Volunteers International who helped TUK organize the event.

In 2011, FMA was also not held. The activists at TUK concentrated more on the activities with in the organizations, groups, institutions and at individual level which for several years previously have supported TUK.



This year is there ciprocal period. For example, I or my fellow administrators organized classes, seminar sand workshops in schools, villages where TUK secretariat is located and in other cities where TUK supporters live.

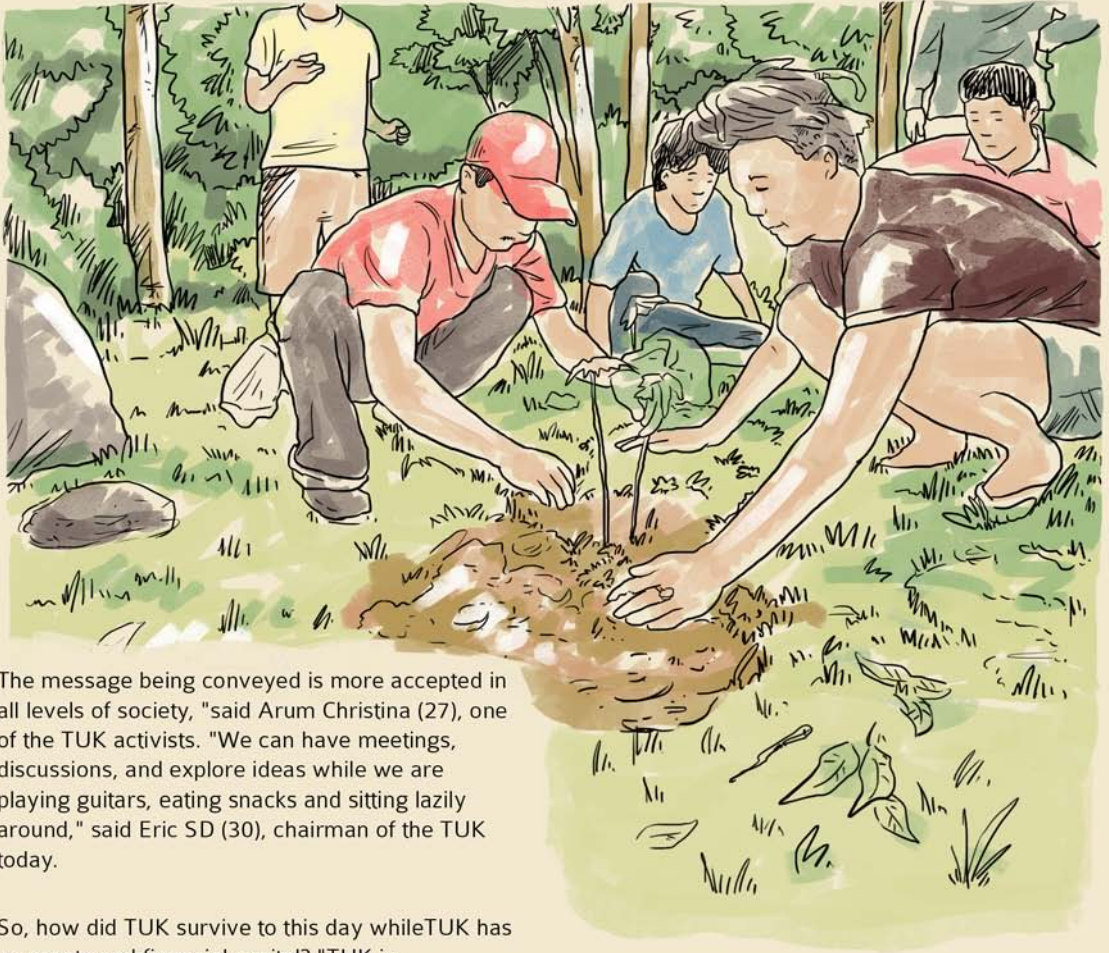
After two years of rest, in 2012 TUK again held an FMA. During the writing of this article (November 2012), the planning and preparation is underway. This time it will beheld at the Soka Old Terminal. Why in the terminal? Because even in what used to be Salatiga Bus Terminal there is aspring. Currentlythe landisfull of household trash and construction debris. The condition of the spring is depressing, muddy and full of moss.

Besides organizing an FMA, planting is one of the activities done by TUK in its effort to conserve springs. For the past six years TUK has planted about 4,000 trees."From that number of trees that have been planted, 3,936 trees are still alive today. They are about 1-1.5m high. The stems and leaves are healthy. The last time I and my friends went there was in the end of last month,"said Pristiawan (31) one of the administrators of TUK. That means the percentage of living trees is 98.4%!

Currently there are seven activities organized by TUK in the community of Tegal waton Village, Tajuk Village and Salatiga City. The activities include the collection of data and aspirations of the people and the government for village regulations draft; the establish ment of a nursery center for spring conservation plants and plants specific to Mount Merbabu; business development of Merchandise 4 LIFE; The Fifth Water Spring Festival 5 (FMA5), and the dissemination of activity arograms and community-based management system. TUK volunteers and activists in those three area are the one simple menting, monitoring, evaluating the activities, and they will certainlybe the ones benefiting from it.

"TUK is a community that has a different approach in raising the awareness of the love for the environment which is through arts and creativity.





The message being conveyed is more accepted in all levels of society," said Arum Christina (27), one of the TUK activists. "We can have meetings, discussions, and explore ideas while we are playing guitars, eating snacks and sitting lazily around," said Eric SD (30), chairman of the TUK today.

So, how did TUK survive to this day while TUK has no asset and financial capital? "TUK is incredible. Although we do not have blood relations, we become brothers just because we have a common mission. In TUK, I get a lot of new friends, new ideas and wider networks," said Hidayat Said (26), a TUK volunteer who now lives in Denpasar, Bali. Yes, TUK relies on social capital. The assistance is in the form of ideas, concepts, thoughts, energy, facilities and caring volunteers who become the driving force of TUK. That's why, as an organization that is based on the participation of volunteers from diverse backgrounds such as age, gender, region of origin, ethnicity, education and the economy, TUK needs a "universal language" that can be accepted by many people," the pattern of comprehensive multilingual (in) approach, observations, concern and saving of the environment is through the synergy of a cultural approach," said Adi (29), another TUK volunteer.

For TUK, the universal language is manifested in the logo of the organization, which is a green shoot with soft roots supporting the letters "U" and "K". In the theory of plant morphology, the growth and development of a plant go through a phase of a shoot, a young plant, a mature plant and an old plant.

Why was a shoot chosen? Physically a shoot represents the letter "T" in the word "Tanam" (Planting). A shoot is an early form from seed plants. Shoots are used in planting. Shoots represent youth.

As time goes on, a change is a process that TUK must inevitably pass such as a change of leaders, members and volunteers or even the secretariat which moved and so on.

However there are some values that should be kept and even developed by TUK. "As far as I am concerned, TUK is very transparent about anything to its members and there are no cliques in it," said Aji Oky (27), a TUK volunteer who is also a djembe player.

"Working together, friendship and empathy are the energy of the past TUK in realizing the goals at present. They will continue to be the energy to build and realize the dreams of equality and harmony between human life, nature and the environment in the future," said Djuwadi (38), another activist.

TUK intends to take part in saving the sustainability of the environment for the future. TUK will keep on trying to in still the awareness on the preservation of life until the goal of being able to provide a medium for the development of caring attitude is fully manifested.

Along the way, TUK has experienced both difficult and happy times.

Names like Eric" the Dread locks", Henry "Berkruk", Jatmiko" the Skateboarder", Wisnu" the Farming Student," Ambon"Punk", Meilana" the Carnival Majorette", Dianne" the Show Creator"and many other shave given color to this organization. And, this is the foundation for the sustainability of TUK.

According to the writer, Jan Cornall, a suppoter of TUK who live in Australia, "TUK is a good example of a grassroots level community organization that works effectively at the community level to educate and inspire an environmental movement. Their creative approach in combining arts, crafts, education and technology, shows that they can bridge the gaps and reach all levels of society. Their hand-in-hand approach provides a model to encourage our spirit and make a difference."

It's fun, but the work is not finished yet.

*"The humming songs of springs stretch the humansoul.
Reluctantlyl move from your long and winding ways,
oh water springs where new live spring"*



Titi Permata

Titi Permatasari who is called as Titi, is a strong and spirited lady in fighting for her life. For nearly two years, Titi lived with a tumor and now, Titi is healed.

Titi joined the Komunitas Tanam Untuk Kehidupan (Community Plant For Life/TUK), realizing that the environment must be maintained. One way of doing that is by planting trees in order to prevent flooding. According to Titi, regardless the number of the tree being planted, it will benefit the people. Her motto is "Drops and Waves" which has meaning bringing benefit regardless of their number.



The Fragrance of Aloes Wood in a Dry Land

Oleh Nur Akhmad Yani



Mahrnun was still young, only 35 years old, he was not a government official. He was just a farmer who lives on the edge of a forest and teaching Koran in his kampong. But his task was beyond of the officials in the kampong. Almost every day, he received numerous complaints from the community. Ranging from less fertile lands to economic difficulties.

"Ustadz (the title of religious teacher in Islam), why life has not been changed? We always live in poverty. We have lands, but couldn't plant anything. Corn or beans couldn't yield. Only cassava and it even yields after 8 months," complained one of his congregation.

Unfortunately, everytime similar question arose; the ustadz was unable to provide a solution. "Hopefully, God's help would come soon; the important thing, we must diligently pray and try". That was the only response coming from Ustadz Mahrnun. Although he knew praying was not enough. The ustadz, a Madrasah Aliyah's graduate from one of Islamic boarding schools in Mataram could just only strengthen his congregation's heart. Not more.

Mahrnun himself wasn't a wealthy person. His family lived in a hut out of bamboo with 20 square meters size, dirt floor and thatched roof. There were three rooms in the hut, two bedrooms and the other for the Koran study. Before marriage, Mahrnun had already been a Koran teacher there. Since 1989, he gave regular lesson of Koran study to the local community.

Like most Sasak ethnic, there was "Berugaksekepat" in his yard. Berugak was a bamboo building usually used for receiving guests and also for other activities at noon. Sekepat is a building with four legs (epat is four in English). Some have six legs or BerugakSekenem (enem is six in English). In Sasak tradition, the house is generally used only for sleeping, but for people who have small house, it is common that Berugak is also used for sleeping at night, like Mahrnun's.





Mahrnun's house itself was small, especially after he got married and his family grew each year. He was married in 1991. The following year, his first child died at the age of 4 months, and then six years later his third child also died at the age of four due to malaria attacks. Both were boys.

The village where Mahrnun lived was on the hills, and directly adjacent to the protected forest of Sempeni, West Lombok. Since he had been living in the kampong, the thing that concerned him most was the condition of education. In the kampong it was really rare for children to go to school. The nearest elementary school was five kilometers away, 1.5 hours of walking distance. The road was in very bad condition. No ojek (motorcycles taxi used for public transportation) was willing to take the route.

Upon seeing this condition, ustadz Mahrnun's heart was moved to provide free education for local children at his house. In 1995, there were 15 kids who were interested in learning with him. He taught them general and religious lessons in the morning and evening in his hut and Berugak. Half of his students stayed at his house.

The number of his students grew each year. In July 2002 the local government got interested in his activities and built a filial elementary school in the village.

The number of students at that time was 60 people. Mahrnun eventually became a permanent teacher there.

The houses in the village were scattered, located at the top to the sides of the hills. The village is directly bordered with the protected forest of Sempeni, in Penimbang village, Gunungsari District. The area was part of the territory of Forest Management Unit of West Rinjani that extended to 40,983 hectares, from the west region of Lombok Island till Bayan District in the far east of Lombok Island.

The land in Mahrnun's village was used to be fertile, but because of the sloping topography, sandy soil texture and the land management system that left out conservation technique, the top soil of the land which contained humus gradually eroded and gone.

Although the area is directly bordered with the protected forest, the condition of the land was not fertile anymore. The black, top soil had gone, leaving only sandy soil with pumice-like color, bright dull. Based on the story of Mahrnun's parents, since he was a child, the land had already been in the critical conditions like that.



The livelihood of most residents in Penimbung Subdistrict was dry land farmer. They had lands ranging from 10 ares or 100 square meters to 1 hectare. Mahrun himself had an area of 1 hectare. Just like other lands owned by the community, his land was also on a slope with over 40 degree angle, unproductive dry soil, unable to hold water because it contained lot of sand.

He could only cultivate his land once a year. And it was only during rainy season. The crop that could be grown was only manioc or cassava. And it could only be harvested after reaching the age of 9-12 months. If cassava was harvested and sold, at most he would get 1 to 1.5 tons from 1 hectare of his land, with a selling price of Rp. 500 per kilo.

Luckily he had some sugar palm trees that helped meet the needs of his family life. Every day he made incision on the trees to obtain palm tree sap for his wife to cook, so that it would become palm sugar. Every day his family could sell 10 pieces of palm sugar at a price of Rp. 3,000 per piece. But not all farmer families there had sugar palm trees.

Residents there did not have many options as to how to meet the daily needs of the family except by cultivating the land. There was other option, but it was a violation against the rule. Entering the protected forest which borders their village, taking the timber and selling it. Economic reason had made the community to encroach the forest.



"They know the activity can damage the environment," said Mahrun. But his neighbors had no other choice, they needed to eat. He himself believed that the root of the problem was the low family income.

"It is even difficult to buy rice, let alone buy side dishes. That is why there are many malnourished children under five here. This village is categorized as undeveloped village," he said, confused. As one of community figures, it was no wonder that he felt troubled. He often thought about the environmental conditions and the poverty of the community, including his own family.





Having seen the forest damage that was getting worse and to rejuvenate the bare forest, in 1995/1996 the Forestry Office of West Lombok Regency launched reforestation activities which involved the communities surrounding the forest. It covered 50 hectares area in Sempeni protected forest and 200 hectares area in Batu Kemalik protected forest. The community was allowed to intercrop in the protected forest area, as long as they were willing to preserve and maintain the main timbers. Mahrun got an allotment of 25 are.

"With this intercropping program, we can use the land for growing seasonal crop to meet the needs of daily life until the next 4 to 5 years, before the timbers get tall and have dense shades," said Mahrun.

By involving the community surrounding the forest in the reforestation program belonged to Forestry Office, aside from increasing the community's incomes, it was also intended for making active engagement of the community in the future to preserve the forest, especially the main timbers in the intercropping area where they were managing. The pressure to the forest area in Gunungsari District was strong enough, considering in this area there were many sawmills, and they were known as suppliers of timbers for building materials in Mataram City and surrounding areas.

Mahrun was not alone. There was Sahli who had similar stories. Sahli lived in Batu Kemalik Kampong, Tunjang Polak Sub Village, on the same village as Mahrun's. The distance between Sahli's kampong to Mahrun's was 9 kilometers. Sahli's kampong was adjacent to the protected forest of Batu Kemalik.

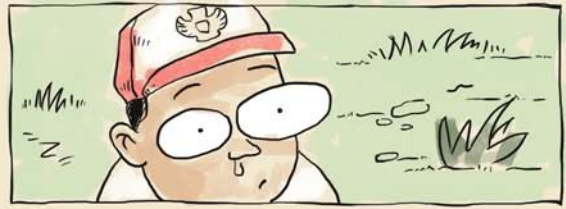
Sahli was two years older than Mahrun, he was also an ordinary farmer. His education was only until primary classes. He married in 1976, had four children, his second child died at the age of one year due to an illness. He lived in a hut with bamboo wall, dirt floor and thatched roof, without any partitions. He also had a "Berugaksekepat" out of bamboo.



Batu Kemalik Kampong had the same condition as Sempeni Kampong. In Batu Kemalik, there were many children who did not go to school because the distance to the nearest primary school was quite far away, a 1.5 – 2 hours walking distance. And the road was also in very bad condition.

Sahli was used to be an active youth. He was listed as a cadre of Integrated Service Station (Posyandu) since 1990. In those days, it was very rare for a man to be a volunteer in Posyandu. Usually the cadres in Posyandu were single women. Sahli was known as a sociable, smart, and helpful man and always interested in new innovations.

Sahli had 27 are of land with angles of above 40 degree. About 7 are of land were planted with sugar palm trees, and the rest were planted with seasonal crops. The soil condition in his land was the same as of Mahrun: arid, unproductive, high erosion rate, soil texture is dominated by sand.



Seasonal crop that could grow optimally in Sahli's and surrounding land was cassava. Sahli could earn Rp. 100,000 a year from an average of 200 kg of cassava yields, and Rp. 90,000 a month from selling his palm sugar. Of course, this result could not make ends meet every month.

Besides farming, Sahli was also known as aloes wood hunter. Since 1988, he used to hunt aloes in the forests, not only in the island of Lombok, but also to the island of Sumbawa. He knew aloes wood from his friend who lived in the neighboring village, Orong Village.

Aloes wood is considered as a rare tree, included in the appendix 2 groups. This tree can produce a resin which yields fragrance. It has long been commercialized and became material for perfume industry, cosmetics, joss sticks, incense sticks, incense and medicine. However, until now the aloes wood resin production is still very conventional. It just depends on natural aloes wood resin, without any technological touch.

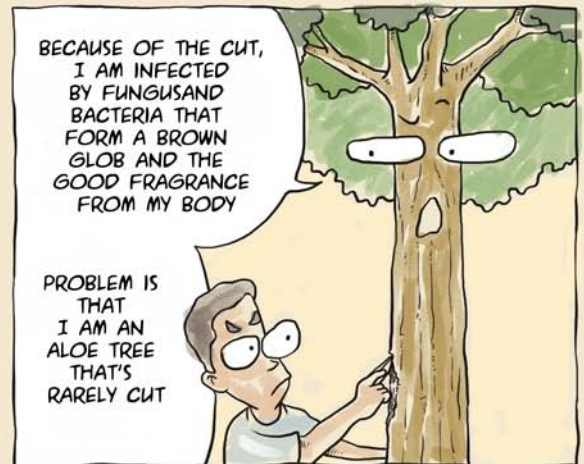
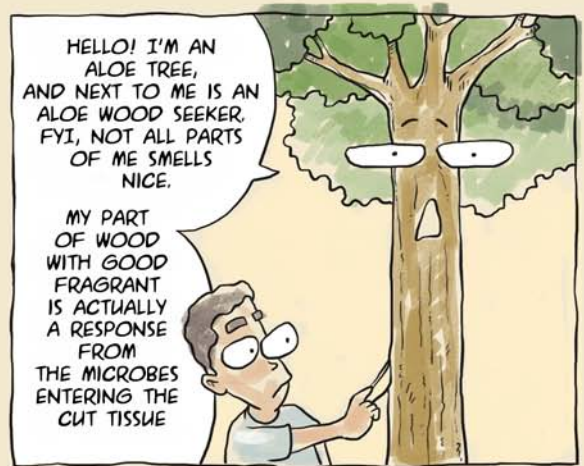
Formerly in the area around Sahli's house, there were many aloes woods. This plant is highly in demand. "The price of aloes wood resin is quite high, in the market it is between Rp. 5 – 15 million per kilogram for super grade resin," said Sahli. When people knew that aloes wood resin has a high economic value, they went hunting for it in the forest. If they found aloes wood, they would immediately cut down the tree and looked for the resin even till its roots, though not every aloes wood produce the resin.

The lack of skill of aloe hunters in recognizing which tree had formed a resin made the logging become useless and aloes wood population shrunk drastically. This is the beginning of the scarcity story of aloes wood.

At that time, aloes wood could not be cultivated outside the forest area. It had not yet been found a technology of aloe resin production. During breaks and small talks with his friends while intercropping, Sahli often recalled the condition of the forest around his residence. "The forest we are managing now was once a dense forest. Many native plants and animals grow and roam here, such as Kowak-Kaok (herons) and aloes wood, but they are not found anymore now."

"I used to cut a lot of aloes woods. Each time I found them, as long as they were woody, I would cut them down although the diameter wasn't yet too big. I would chop the inside of the tree to get the resin. But not every tree has resin in it although it was a teen-aged tree. Often, I injured the tree I met by chopping its stem, hoping fungi would enter the wound, and it could form resin after 6 – 12 months," recalled Sahli about his past.

When aloes wood became rare, Sahli didn't have fixed income anymore. The land he owned didn't help him much to support his four children. To meet the needs of the household, Sahli and most other villagers could not help themselves to fell timber in the forest. He could sell 3 logs in a week.



Sahli had also become a migrant worker in Malaysia for 4 years. He went to Malaysia with 12 of his friends. In Sahli's kampong, there were always some people who went abroad as migrant workers every year. Having come home from Malaysia, Sahli bought a 27 ares land to supplement his farming land.

"The only remaining reminiscence after becoming a migrant worker is the land," recalled Sahli.

When there was the reforestation program from Forestry Office in 1995, Sahli and other Batu Kemalik residents opted to join the intercropping program in the forest area. Sahli got 50 are allotment. Because the land condition was still fertile, he could grow corn and peanuts in the location. This condition sufficiently helped his family. He and his friends realized though, that the intercropping crops could only be benefited until the 4th or 5th year only. After the main timbers became big and had dense shade, they could no longer grow crops.



In October 1996, I visited Mahrnun and Sahli. It was not our first meeting. We had met and worked together in a project on mother and child health facilitated by an International NGO in 1990 – 1993 before. That time, Mahrnun was a religious figure who sat as Village Council Team, Sahli as a cadre of Posyandu and I as the project field staff. Infant mortality rate and the number of malnourished children under five in Penimbung Village were classified as high. The number of children under five who visited Posyandu was still around 20 percent.

When re-visiting the village, after three years of the project, it turned out that the number of malnourished children under five that had been controlled during the project was high again, due to poverty.

Actually my visit to Penimbung was not just to meet Mahrnun and Sahli as friends. Since my early contact with the community in this village, I realized that the root of the problem was poverty. If the case of malnourished children under five were approached by short term program (health) only, without being coupled with long-term programs such as increasing family income, then the program will be useless. The children who had gained normal weight would suffer malnutrition again if they were returned to their family.





There should be a high economic value crop that could be cultivated on a dry land, so that it could boost the income of dry land farmers drastically, making their income equals to the income of wet land farmers.

In mid-1996, information came from a friend who studied at the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Mataram. He told me that his lecturer had managed to manipulate the formation of aloe wood resin. "The 2 years' trial conducted by Dr.Parman has shown visible result on site," told Lalu Kertawan that I remember most.

It was like hitting the jackpot. I had been dreaming about it for so long: a high economic value commodity on a dry land. The good news made me excited, and started looking for a way to meet and discuss with Dr.Parman.

"During this research, I have identified 52 species of fungi and bacteria found in the natural aloe wood resin. Apparently from lots of fungi and bacteria, only one type of fungus (*Fusarium* sp) which can cause the aloe wood to blacken and smells sweet.

It is the fungi that I then isolated and cultured in the laboratory as a stock culture for aloe wood resin," explained Dr. Parman, at the first meeting.

"Previously, aloe wood resin could only be found at certain part of the tree, usually in the wound of the tree, enabling the *Fusarium* sp to infect and then the tree makes a resin around the infected area, but currently, all part of the tree from stalk to root can produce resin wherever the yeast/seed culture is inoculated," continued Dr. Parman at that time.

It looked like this was the answer to my dreams. There was a glimmer of hope to boost the income of dry land farmers. The crop with high economic value and the technical engineering for producing aloe wood resin have been found. It was about time to try aloe wood cultivation on a dry land, because the plant could only grow and thrive in humid areas. I was happy imagining the future success of the pilot.

That was the reason of why I determined to meet Mahrun and Sahli, although that time I came without any program nor any help from any donor. I asked them to make demonstration plot of aloes wood cultivation on their land independently and to motivate local farmers to try it also by groups.

Mahrun and Sahli were very interested and enthusiastic to try. Moreover Sahli was formerly an aloe hunter, he was very well aware of the profit if they succeeded on cultivating the aloes wood. While Mahrun who had not seen the aloes wood himself, but had often heard the fame of aloe wood, was curious to try.

Both of them started to disseminate and hold meeting with the community in their kampong for outreach. "Our prayers were answered. By the grace of God, there is a way to change our lives. But we must work hard. We must struggle in working our lands. At least we will see the result in a year," said Mahrun at one of his Islamic lecture in his village.

"How come, Ustadz?" asked one of his congregations. Mahrun then explained about the idea of cultivating aloes wood on dry land. He advised the congregation to immediately begin setting up the land, as the rainy season would come soon. Mahrun also introduced me to his congregation.

"This is Mr. Yani, he has helped us in facilitating the institutional strengthening of Posyandu in our village. He will assist us in this activity," continued Mahrun.

Besides in Sempeni, dissemination of the program was also done in BatuKemalik kampong by Sahli. "Dry Land Agriculture Management Program we will carry out is very different from what other people has done, because here we will cultivate aloes wood outside of forest area. The cultivation of aloes wood that we have already known for so long will help us to change our lives and our generations," said Sahli at a meeting with farmers in his village.





Unfortunately not a lot of people buys in. According to them it was impossible to change an infertile and unproductive dry land into a productive land. Another reason, "Better to intercrop in the forest with obvious result than to struggle with unknown result. Now we plant, four months later we harvest."

It turned out that the response from the community didn't dampen the spirit of these two farmers. "It is better if we make the demonstration plot by just the two of us, with the assistance from Mr. Yani. Who knows after seeing our success, the community would follow our steps," offered Mahrun to Sahli. His friend agreed.

In early November 1996, Mahrun and Sahli started to work their lands, made demonstration plot on their respective lands. During working intervals, both of them always asked about what would be the next activities and steps to do.

The first step we did was to make terrace ridges on the hill slope according to the height using "Frame A" tool made of bamboo. These terrace ridges had points with equal height above sea level.

The terraces they made were different from the usual terraces made by the community. Usually Mahrun and Sahli's neighbors made terraces by pulling straight line.

But their terraces were different because the terraces followed the height or the contour. The results would be winding, thus in case of erosion either because of soil or wind erosion, the top layer of soil that contains humus would not slide down being washed away, and the erosion would not destroy the terrace ridges as it usually happened. The fertile soil will be retained at the lower terrace ridge, so the soil fertility in the land was still maintained.

After the terrace ridges was finished, Sahli and Mahrun planted the terrace ridges with Gamal (*Gillricideamaculatta*), a terrace strengthener tree. Gamal is a pioneer tree of dry land. If the tree thrived, you can bet other cultivated trees could thrive too. And conversely, if the tree died, other tree would not thrive also.

Gamal has many functions. Gamal leaves could be used for green fertilizer. The stem could be used for firewood. The roots have nodules which contain "Rhizobium" microbes to enrich the soil. In the dry season, gamal leaves could shade or protect the crops underneath it from the sun. And one more benefit of gamal, the tree could become fodder, so that the community had no trouble to find fodder or they need not herd the cow into the forest to feed it.

On the land or on the spaces between two terraces, Mahrun and Sahli planted food crops, second crops and medicinal crops. To strengthen the terrace, they planted forestry tree or perennial tree such as sengon (*Paraserianthesfalcataria*), mahogany, gamelina (*Gmelinaarborea*) and teak in parallel with the rows of gamal. Later the wood from the trees could be used as firewood or boards.

Gamal trees should be treated routinely. At the beginning of the rainy season, when it was about time to plant seasonal crops such as upland rice, second crop or medicinal crop, the stem of gamal should be cut until only about 50 centimeters remained, so that the seasonal crops could get enough sunlight. The gamal leaves could be scattered or buried in the land as fertilizer.

Usually when the seasonal crops were harvested, gamal had already grown taller and it could overshadow other trees below it during the dry season. If done continuously this cycle would fertilize the land. Soil fertility could also be accelerated by placing a movable cowshed on the land so that cattle dung and urine could fertilize the land underneath.





Dry land farming management model developed by Mahrun and Sahli had been introduced a long time ago actually by Nusa Tenggara Community Consortium (KMNT). The consortium was composed of NGOs, farmer groups and other stakeholders in NTB, NTT, Bali and East Timor (prior to its separation from Indonesia) that were concerned with the development of upland communities. This model had many names, some called it Dry Land Farming Systems, Agroforestry, Silviculture, Sustainable Agriculture, The Tree Strata Agriculture, or Lined Fences.

The difference between the models was that in Mahrun and Sahli's aloes wood was cultivated as the pre-eminent crop which had never been cultivated on dry land before, while the other model usually had fruits or other MPTS (multipurpose tree species) such as chocolate, coffee or vanilla as the pre-eminent crop. The result of the model had proved to increase dry land farmers' income, but it had not yet leverage the quality of farmers' lives.

At the end of November until December 1996, after terracing and gamal planting were completed, it was time for us to plant the seeds of aloes wood along the terrace under the shade of gamal, which will protect it from the sunlight during dry season. At that time, there were about 400 aloes wood seedlings grown under the rows of gamal trees.

Seed provision was also another struggle. The struggle was not less heroic than the effort to invite Sahli and Mahrun's neighbor to make demonstration plots. As many as 400 aloes wood seeds with the price of Rp. 1,000,000 were obtained by loan.

When I offered myself to assist Mahrun and Sahli, I was in the condition of financial trouble actually. Moreover, the remaining money had been spent to pay the house contract. Fortunately, my wife was working, she was a lecturer at a college in Mataram. It could be said that it was my wife who assist the pilot of aloes wood cultivation on the dry land indirectly.

If I thought about this, it was impossible the pilot of the three of us could run well without mounting determination and spirit. Why? Because transportation cost is needed to come regularly to the Penimbung district. The road to Mahrun and Sahli's village could only be passed by motorcycles. We even had to be careful, because the macadam roads made by the community were often damaged and difficult to pass by a motorcycle. People sometimes preferred walking to go to their houses.

Fortunately, there was always a way. I was allowed to borrow the motorcycle of my wife's student. After I transported them to campus, I then could go to Penimbang. At noon I had to return to the campus to pick up the motorcycle's owner. This happened for almost a year.

I then thought, if I wanted to expand the demonstration plots to another village, I could no longer rely on loans and a borrowed motorcycle. I also could not do this alone. I needed donations. Apparently, an organization was needed to get donation; it was difficult to get donation for individual. Finally, on January 11, 1997, I and several friends founded the Institute of Study Center and Human Resources Development, abbreviated PSPSDM.

In February 1998, the Global Environment Facility - Small Grant Program (GEF-SGP) willingly funded the program development. This activity had expanded the demonstration plots from two farmers families to 40 farmers families, with 20 people in Lilir I Hamlet and 20 people in Tunjang Polak Hamlet, with Mahrun and Sahli as chairman of the groups.

From the pilot with Mahrun and Sahli, there were lots of important lessons we could learned as an asset for program development. We found that the aloes woods which planted on marginal land could grow but they didn't grow tall despite being planted for 5 years. The pilot also succeeded in proving that planting aloe seedlings under the shade of gamal can retain the soil moisture around the seedlings, provided with the addition of mulch from gamal leaves, banana stem and other leaf litter; or by using a drip watering system whenever it was possible.

Mahrun and Sahli's neighbors soon began interested in joining the farmers groups, because they had seen the success of the program. Mahrun and Sahli's lands that were used to be barren were now green within a year. Seasonal crops and woody tree that were used to be unable to thrive in the lands were now thriving. They also saw that both of Mahli and Sahli didn't need to search for fodder in the forest. Moreover, aloes wood could be planted on the same land.





Now the demonstration plot program had spread to other than Mekarsari and Bukittinggi village. Their neighboring villages, Gelangsar and Mambalan had also adopted this program. Mahrun who lived in Mekarsari village and Sahli in Bukittinggi village became supervisors and resource people for aloes wood cultivation on dry land at their villages.

PSPSDM had expanded the program to Pringgabaya District in East Lombok Regency (2000) and to Donggo District in Bima - Sumbawa Island (2002-2005). There were many farmers and governments from other villages visited Penimbang which has become a training and field laboratory for organizations interested in the management and development of dry land agriculture.

Not only from Lombok, this laboratory had also been visited by NGO, government and farmers from the province of West Nusa Tenggara, East Nusa Tenggara, Java and even East Timor to do a comparative study and learning with farmers.

After 12 years had passed, Mahrun and Sahli could smile now. Their efforts and patience was not useless, even it was useful to others. The stretch of lands in their hamlets that was once dry turned lush. Seasonal crops and woody tree were already harvested. Aloes woods with resin engineering were also successfully harvested. They could buy cows, motorcycles, repair their houses and even send their children to school in the city.

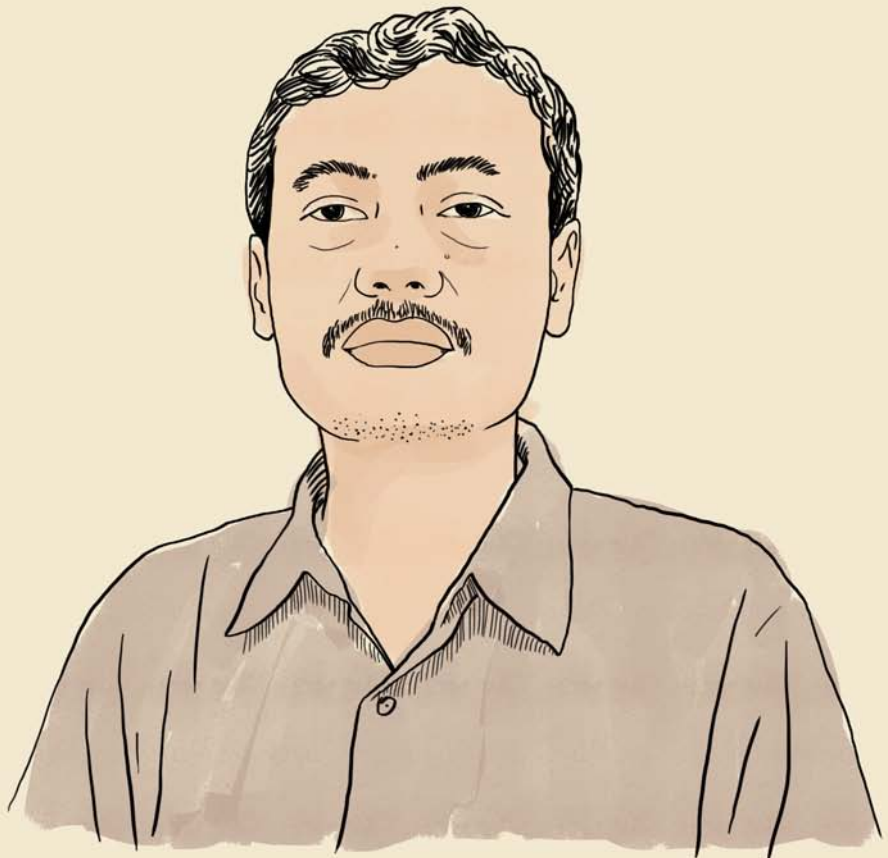
Unfortunately, the price of aloes wood was still low, around Rp. 300,000 - Rp. 600,000 per kilogram. Most buyers who came were local traders who bought at low prices. They hoped there were wholesalers who wanted to buy with high price, so that there would be many more farmers who would follow their steps, restoring soil fertility and preserving aloes wood as well.

"Li, hopefully we can become aloes Haji as we have been dreaming when we planted it," said Mahrun when Sahli and I visited him in his house. "Amen Ustadz", Sahli said.

I am sure, the fragrance of aloes wood would soon make their dreams come true.

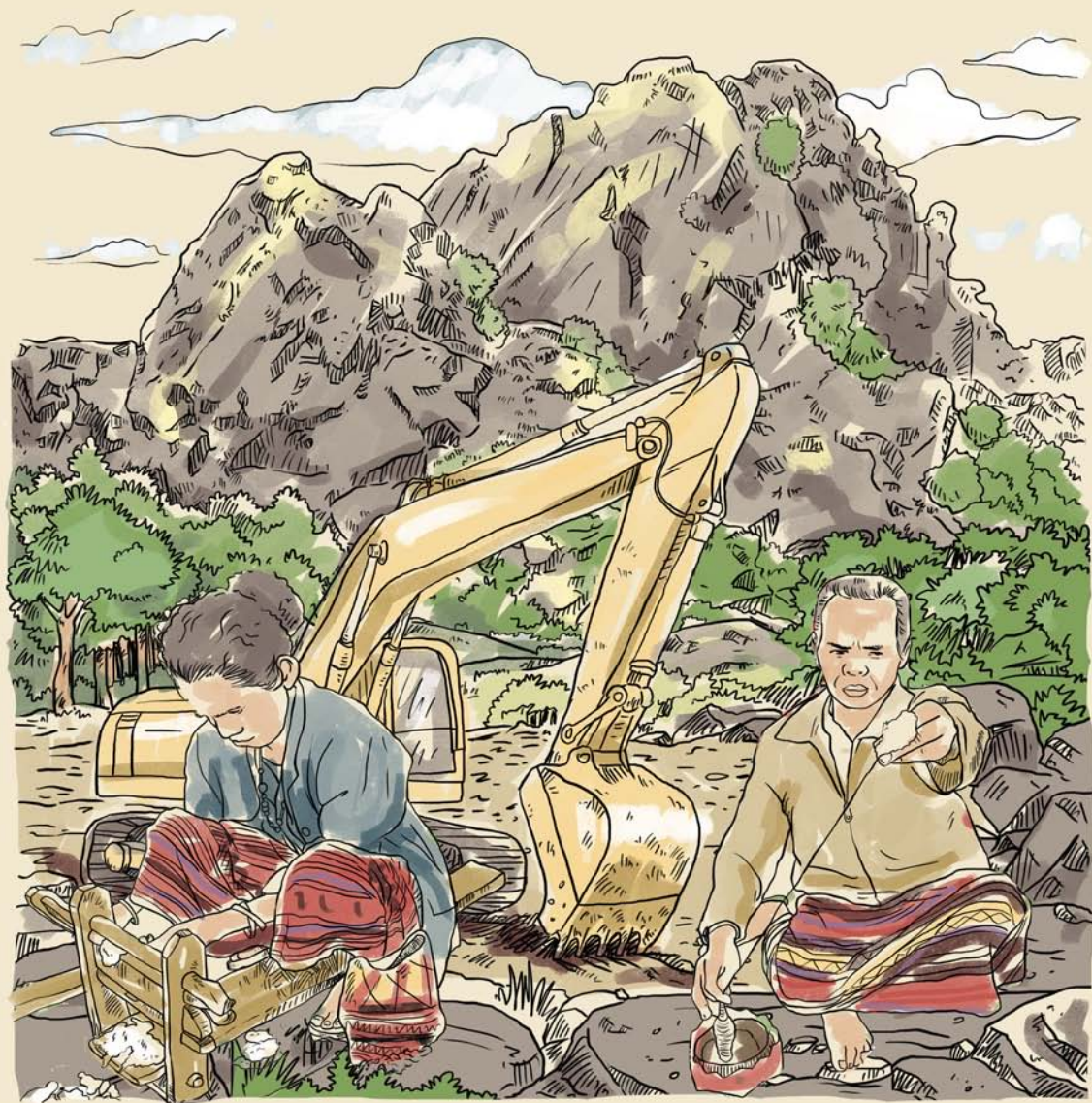
Nur Akhmad Yani

He is called as Yani. This 46-year-old man has a dream to reforest Nusa Tenggara region through aloes wood. His struggle and dream was not in vain, in 1999, the GEF SGP Indonesia supported his struggle. The small groups he helped facilitate keep growing from two groups to four in the village. West Nusa Tenggara, known as dry land area is now green and local economy is improving.



The Weaving Ladies Who Saved Mollo

By Adriyana Kase





The message from Mama Marcelina Anone is still ringing in Yati's ears. At that time Marcelina, also called Mama Salin, was lying helplessly on a wooden bed at the corner of her lopo, or round house. She has been coughing and having breathing problems for over a week. Her health condition was getting worse.

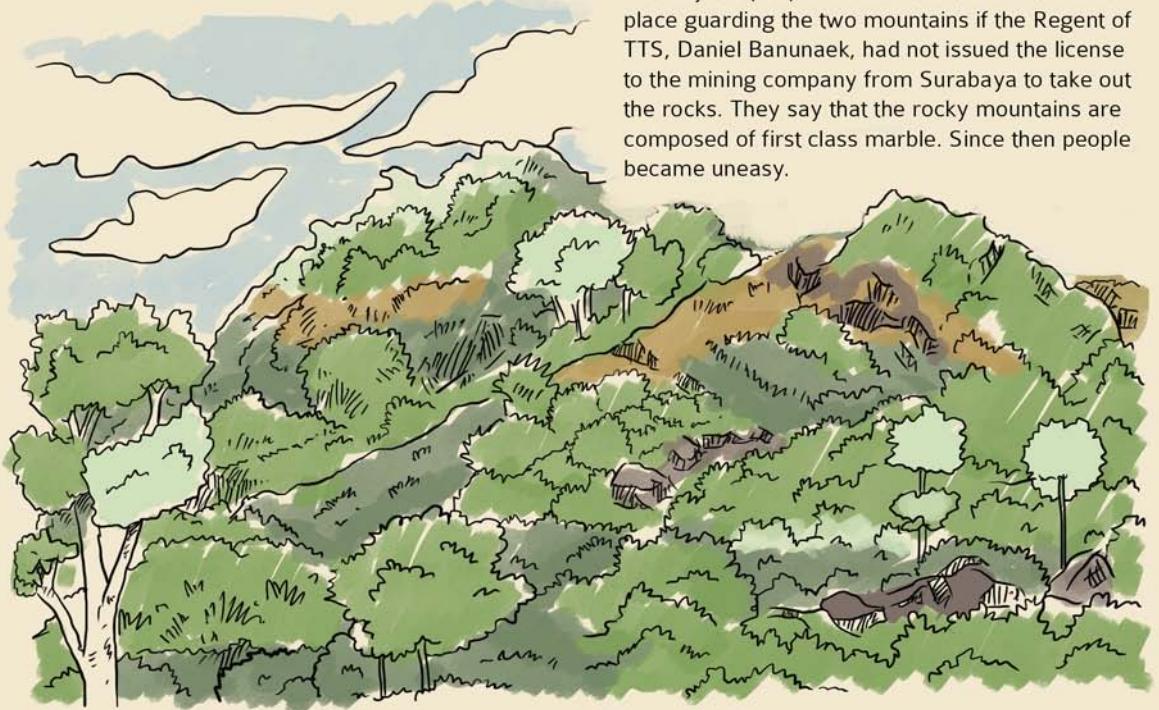
"You must take care of the rock, otherwise you will become a stranger in a foreign land". In the month of November, two days after she gave the message, the woman whom she called her aunt passed away.

Mama Salin was sick for only two weeks. She fell ill right after she tried to stop the drilling machine used by PT. Teja Sekawan to split Faut Ob, or the Ob rock in Kuanoel village.

She, along with her three female friends, Veronika Bay, Mareda Lapenangga and Yuliana Fuka tried to block the company from destroying the sacred rocky mountain in their traditional land.

The incident happened in the morning, when there was only about a dozen people keeping a watch around the Mount Faut Ob. For five days the people of Kuanoel and Fatumnasi villages, Fatumnasi District, South Central Timor (TTS) have been guarding Faut Ob and also Faut Lik which is located next to Faut Ob. Both are the rocky mountains that are not only considered sacred, but also the source of water for the people living in three villages, including the Bijapunu Village, North Molo District in North Central Timor Regency (TTU).

Actually the people wouldn't be there in the first place guarding the two mountains if the Regent of TTS, Daniel Banunaek, had not issued the license to the mining company from Surabaya to take out the rocks. They say that the rocky mountains are composed of first class marble. Since then people became uneasy.



The mining company came in August 2005. Without prior notice and consent from the people, they suddenly came in with excavators, drilling machines, steel chains, tow trucks and other heavy equipments. Soon they began to clear up the plants and trees around Ob and Lik rocky mountains using machetes. They proceeded to drive a drill bit into the rock, and began to split the rock.

RAAAARRRR...RRRROARRR...RAAARRRR...

The roaring drill machine sounded like a large motorcycle that is throttling its engine multiple times before starting a race. Yati could even hear the rumbling sound from her home which is located about 200 meters from the mine location.

A few weeks later, the company managed to cut a giant cube-shaped stone block from *Faut Ob*. The people living around the rock could only watch as their sacred rock was being destroyed, without being able to do anything about it. The company always stated that they were allowed by the government to take the stone. They also argued that the company provided new job opportunities for the people even though there were only about tens of locals who were accepted to work for the company.

However the people began to get anxious. The anxiety of Fatumnasi and Kuanoel people finally turned into anger because the company did not want to hear their protests. The people began to come, started arguing with the company, and ordered the company to stop the drilling and leave that location. But the company wouldn't give in. They did not want to leave and chose to stop the drilling temporarily. They stayed at the house of Mama Yusina Balan which is located right under *Faut Ob*.

The people were actually disappointed with Yusina Balan for allowing the company to use her house as their headquarter. But Yusina Balan, also known as Mama Sina, had her own reason. "The company came with Mr. Lambertus Oematan. We thought they were good people, so we could not do anything". At the time Lambertus Oematan was the head of Fatumnasi District.



The mothers were the ones who were most upset, because the two rocky mountains are the source of their water. In Mollo, mothers are responsible for providing water in the family. Anger peaked again because the company also uses the water to wash their equipments and the marble stones. They were ready to evict the company.

Finally the people agreed to expel company by occupying the mine area. Hundreds of people from the two villages eventually occupied the rock, all day. Adult male, adult female, also parents and even children were involved. Day and night they stayed under the rock. They were cooking, eating bose corn, drinking, chewing betel nut, telling stories and even weaving under the rock.

Since that time the people have two residences, one their own houses and one under the rock. The mothers came with looms and they were weaving around the trees located on the drilled rocky mountain.

The mothers said that if they just sat around all day guarding the rock, they wouldn't be able to do their work. However if they take the looms with them, they can continue working while guarding the rock.

If they left the rock and worked at home weaving, the rock would be mined and they would suffer. "Because the area around the rock is the source of their water and firewood", said Mama Salin.

At the time there were about 50 women who were weaving at the mining site. One of them was Mama Salin. Yati still remember Mama Salin's answer to her son-in-law who asked why she was bringing a loom to the mining site. "Let me take this loom down, I'll weave a scarf with 'STOP MINING' message on it," Mama Salin responded passionately.

That was how the people from the two villages guard Faut Ob and Faut Lik. They were weaving and occupying the mining site since September 2005. There were many extraordinary incidents that happened, one of which was experienced by Mama Salin.



It was the fifth day for the mothers weaving at the mining site. That morning, most people left to feed the cows and pigs in the houses before returning to the mining site later during the day. Mama Salin was still there along with some other women.

Suddenly, the sound of drilling machine was heard coming from the direction of the *Faut Ob*. At first the sound was muffled but it was getting louder and louder that eventually the roaring shook the earth.

Mama Salin quickly got up and screamed. "There is a thief, there is a thief!" She ran up while she was screaming and asked some of her friends to go with her. They saw four men standing holding a drill machine on a marble slab. A cloud of dust enveloped the area.

Mama Salin's anger peaked. She and her friend started yelling at the company workers and ordered them to turn off the drill. But the workers were stubborn.

Mama Salin's rage was so intense that she climbed up the rock, came to the drilling site and seized the drilling machine that was still spinning.

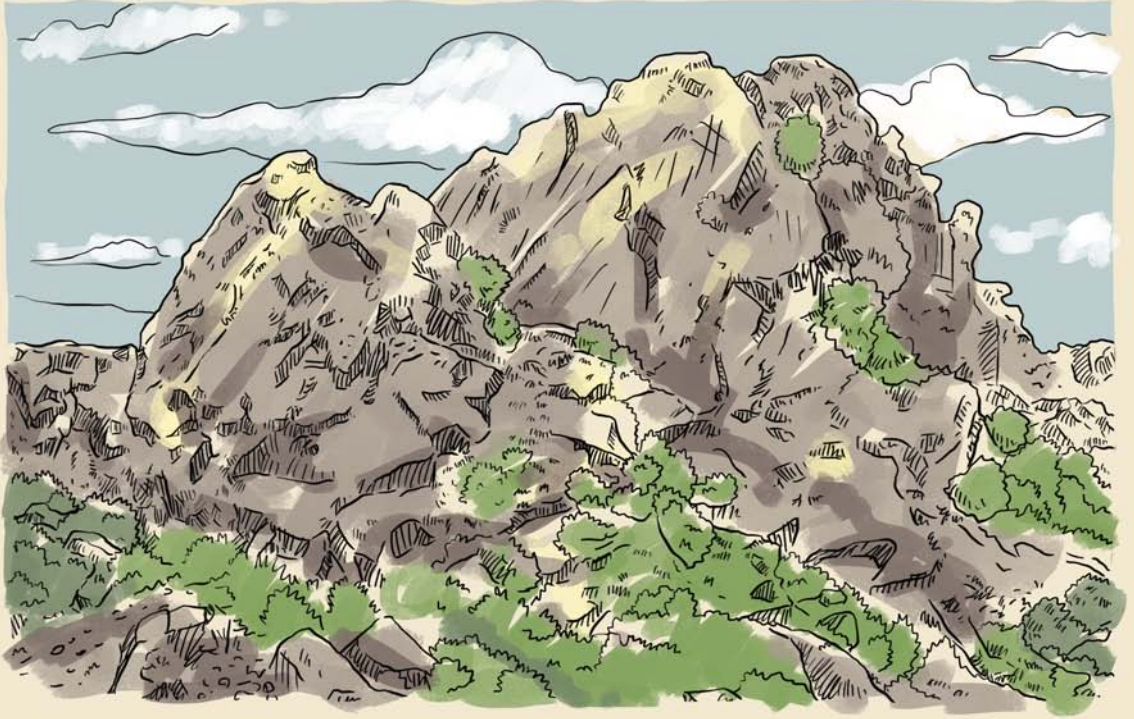
Meanwhile her three friends tried to stop the company workers who insisted on drilling. Finally the drill was released, the engine died. Up to now the drill bit is still stuck in the rock.

The shouting and fighting were heard by the others. Soon, the place was full of people, hundreds of them. Again they managed to stop the activity of the company.

Mama Salin managed to release the drilling machine. But her hands were blistered. She was also coughing because she inhaled the dust from the drilled rock. But she did not care.

Over the next two weeks Mama Salin was still guarding the rock, weaving together with her friends, before she fell ill.





When Mama Salin died, Yati was still in Soe with about fifty people from the two villages. They decided not only to occupy the stone, but also to come to Soe, the capital of TTS District to ask the Regent to revoke the company's mining license. They were mostly women and they came to Soe by two trucks.

Unfortunately, the Regent refused to meet them even though they stayed in front of the Regent's office for 8 days from November 7 to 15, 2005.

When Yati heard the death of Mama Salin, she decided to go home and attend the funeral of her aunt. "I still got to see the body of Mama Salin lying in the tin house. She was wearing a white kebaya and a red woven sarong with a colorful pauf motif," said Yati telling her last seconds before parting with Mama Salin. Traditionally, every person who dies in Mollo should wear woven fabric.

After the funeral, Yati went back to Soe joining her friends who was occupying the Regent's office. Meanwhile Mama Salin's friends were still weaving around the rock.

They occupied the mining area for 6 months. It was a difficult time for them because they need food and other supplies for the rock occupation.

They also need money to pay for the transport of people who went to meet the Regent. Initially everything was done independently. Every day each family donated food, such as bosc corn, sweet potatoes, cassava and bananas for them to eat.

But the donations were insufficient to provide food during the occupation, not to mention the cash for transportation costs. If they do not sell their harvest it is not possible to get cash. But they didn't have time to do it because everybody reduced their working hours to guard the rock.

Finally the people in the two villages agreed to form working groups which would raise funds. There were three groups formed, with about 7 to 8 members each.

They tried to find work as a group and donated their earnings for the struggle. One of the groups tried to make money from working on farms.

Yati and her friends then worked on a land owned by Nicodemus Anin. The area of the land was about one hectare. Their group was paid Rp50,000 for their work from morning till noon.

The money was then used to buy food. Some of the money was also used to rent the truck that took the people to meet the Regent in Soe. They staged a protest in front of the Regent's office.

The company did not sit still. They sent some thugs who constantly tried to disrupt them during their occupation at the Regent's office. Almost every night, the people received verbal abuse. Some times they were stoned. Some even got violent attacks. But the people of Fatumnasi and Kuanole did not budge. "As long as Danial Banunaek won't see us, we will continue to occupy his office," said Yati.

But the regent still would not meet them. After the people blocked all access to the Regent's office and sealed the door, he sent his vice regent to meet them.

The meeting itself was disappointing. Piet Lobo, the vice regent was not dependable. "We cannot promise, but we'll try to revoke the permit," he said unconvincingly.

The people finally had to go back to their homes with disappointment. Meanwhile during the night while they were still occupying the Regent's office, there was a rumor that they will be attacked by thugs from the company. Eventually they were transported to the TTS police station and spent the night there, before returning to the villages the next day. In the village, after the drilling machine seizure incident of Mama Salin and her friends, the situation was peaceful again. The company stopped its activities.



However the peace did not last long. The company sensed the support from the regent which was shown by his refusal to meet the people who came to Soe. They began to act more boldly. This time they brought a 12-wheel Fuso truck to transport the marble stone that they managed to cut earlier. Finally, they managed to transport the giant marble cube.

The people tried to prevent it by throwing large stones into the road so that the company truck could not pass. But the thugs that were brought by the company was able to deter the people. On the same day, there were two trucks that carried the thugs into the village.

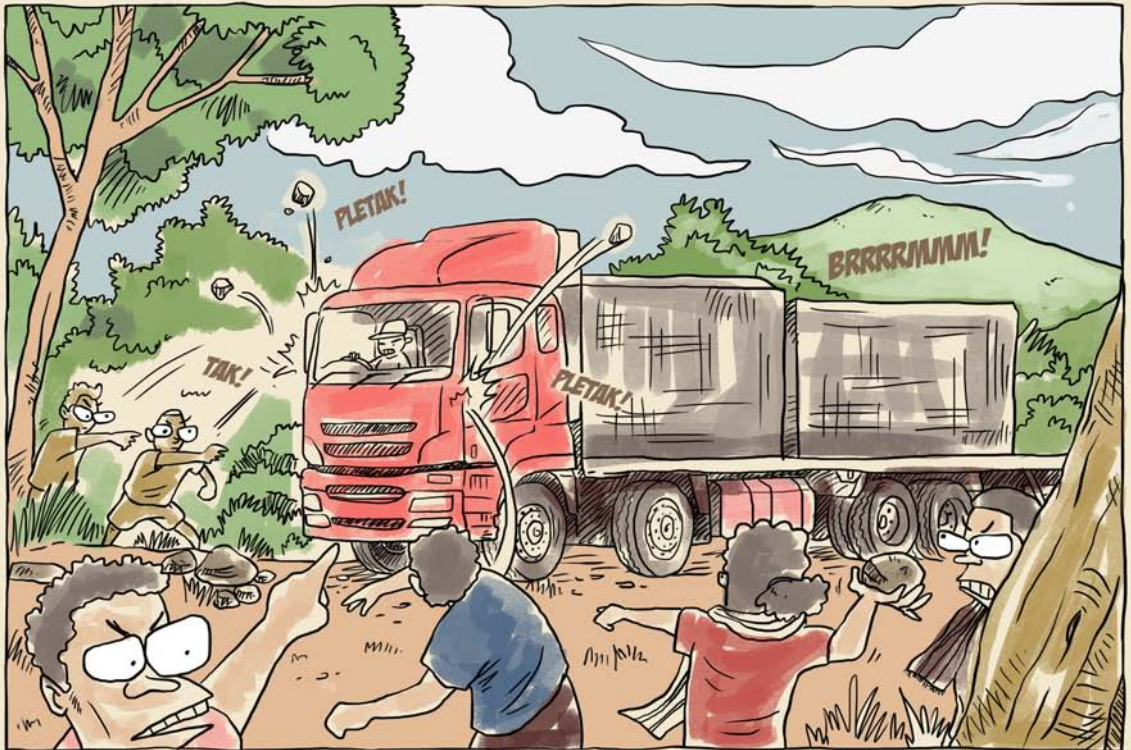
Since then, people showed no mercy. They did not give the company any room to move. They took turns to occupy and guard the rock. They lived there, even celebrated Christmas on the rock.

On Christmas Eve they went to the church. After praying in the church, they walked slowly in line toward the mining site. Everybody was holding a candle because there was a power outage.

A representative leader from the people and the priest were giving their speeches on a stone. The stone was as big as a house. It was cut previously by the company using a drilling machine. Although December is a rainy season, the people kept guarding the rock. They finally returned their own houses when the last heavy equipment was hauled out of the mining location in February 2007.

The safety of the rock and water is the reason for the Mollos to expel mining companies because most of them are dry land farmers. Water is precious there. Corn can only be cultivated once every year, while vegetables, such as carrots, leeks and beans can be cultivated twice a year if water is available.

However in the last two years water availability is becoming more limited due to lack of rain. "There has been no rain for this year from January to November, just like last year. The leeks are dried in the field. We have not been able to plant again," said Mama Elizabeth Oematan who lives in Koanoel Village.



The experience of struggle to keep the rock apparently provided an important lesson for the Mollo people. Not only they have managed to keep Faut Ob and Faut Lik, but also years earlier 22 villages on the slope and foot of Mount Mutis united to drive away another mining company that was destroying Faut Nausus and Anjaf in 1999.

Faut Nausus is known as the mother of rock, the most sacred rocky mountain there. It was once the gathering place for the whole tribes in Timor Island.

Learning from this struggle, the people formed an organization called OAT, or Atoe Mamus Organization in 2002. At the village level, they also formed farming or weaving groups.

"We have a group garden with an area of about one-half hectare," added Elizabeth. The name of their group is Rindu Sejahtera and it was formed in August 2011. The members are 12 women from Koanoel village. The group garden became a demonstration garden to create a terrace and plant vegetables. Unfortunately, in recent months many plants died due to lack of water.

During the planting season, all members of the group worked in the field from 9 am to 2 pm. They bring crowbars, hoes, spades, and machetes to clear up and work the soil together. After the soil is upturned and the rain came, enough water is available and it's time for them to start planting carrots, leeks, beans and kumbang. Kumbang is a type of Chinese cabbage.

The group garden does not only play a role as a demonstration garden, but it also provides a revenue and cash to the group. Since Rindu Sejahtera group was formed last year, the group has collected a fund of Rp. 940.000. In last July, the group decided to use half of the funds to purchase two sacks of rice and divided the rice evenly to the members. Each person received about 7 kilograms of rice.

In addition to farming, the working group also does weaving to develop economic empowerment. "We usually roll the threads together and then the rolls are taken by each member of the group for weaving in their own houses," said Mama Elizabeth, the head of the Rindu Sejahtera group. The finished cloths are collected by Mama Elizabeth. Most of the proceeds from the sale of the cloths are deposited into the group's treasury.



Right now, Rindu Sejahtera group is trying to process the local food crops such as white taro, bananas, carrots and cassava into snacks such as chips and crackers. Currently they only dare to sell snacks to the local community.

Actually what brings together the members of Rindu Sejahtera women's group is weaving. This is because weaving is the work of Mollo women. At one time, every Mollo woman must be able to weave. A Mollo woman was allowed to marry only after she was able to weave her own wedding dress.

Almost all daily activities of the women in Mollo are connected to nature, such as the farming activities that require water which is stored by the land under the forest. Weaving is also related to the forest, because the materials and the looms are obtained from forests.

Before weaving the loom must be prepared. Looms are usually made from wood, bamboo, cow leather, and rope from gewang tree, a type of palm tree that has broad leaves. However today cow leather is rarely used. People replace it with a plastic bag. The ropes are now also plastic. The loom consists of parts such as a pole, *nekan*, *sial*, *puat*, *senu*, *panaf* and *paosniun*.

Nekan, *sial* and *puat* are usually made of old Obyang bamboo in the garden or forest. *Nekan* is a part of loom where yarns are placed while *sial* and *puat* are used to adjust the motif of the cloth.

Pole, *panaf* and *senu* are made of timber, such as an old cassowary tree, *natbona* and *ampupu* wood which are usually planted in the garden or found in the forest.

Pole and *Paosniun* – which are made of cow leather, are used to hold the loom. One section of the loom is fastened to the pole, while the other section is hooked to the body of the weaver. *Paosniun* is usually attached to the waist of the weaver, making her always sit up straight during weaving





On the other hand, the materials for weaving consist of yarns and dyes. The yarns were formerly obtained from the cotton plant, grown in the yards of the houses and gardens. Usually cotton can be harvested after one a year in warmer areas, or after up to two years in colder regions.

Cotton must be spun through several processes using several tools, including *Bninis*, *Sifo*, *ike Suti* and *none*.

The cotton that has been harvested must be cleaned and dried. The seeds should be discarded, which can be done manually, but usually done using a tool called *Bninis*. This tool comes from forest wood, and looks like a noodle machine. If cotton is inserted and the crank is turned, the wheels will crush and separate the cotton from the seeds.

After the cotton is clean, the cotton fibers must be stretched before being spun. This time *sifo* is used. It is shaped like a bow. It is made of bamboo and rope. After the cotton fibers are stretched, then they are rolled into a shape resembling a cocoon. These rolls are called *Nasun*. The number of *Nasun* can be tens, or even hundreds depending on the size of the cloth to be made.

The *Nasun* is now ready to be spun. The tool used is called *Ike Suti*. *Ike* comes from forest wood. It is a place to tie the yarn during the spinning process. *Ike* looks like a yarn spindle with a long slender shape. *Ike* spins above *Suti* which is a type of bowl that comes from coconut shell, sometimes also from a large shell or wooden bowl. One hand is holding *nasun*, while the other hand is spinning the *Ike*. After the yarn fills up the whole body of *Ike*, it must be transferred to the yarn spindles before being sorted by a tool called *None*.

Spinning the yarn takes a great deal of time. That's probably the reason why many Mollo women prefer buying the yarn at the store to spinning it. It is not difficult to get the yarn from the store. All they have to do is go to the market and buy the yarn with the color that they like. The price is cheap, about Rp 1,250 - Rp 2,500 per spool.

Not only that it is becoming harder to find cotton trees, spinning also requires skill and patience. Although most Mollo women can weave, not all of them are able to spin. That is why the weaver's group in Mollo began to cultivate the cotton plant in order to revive this natural material which is used in the weaving according to the tradition passed down from their ancestors.

The efforts to cultivate cotton just began in several areas such as the Hatsampaot group in Tune which is now growing cotton in an area of about one hectare. The cotton trees are only about one-half years old. The Mandiri Noieone weaver's group also planted cotton trees in an area of one-half hectare. Unfortunately, the long dry season made some of the cotton trees unable to thrive. "But we will keep on growing them. This rainy season we are going to plant more cotton seeds," said Mama Maria from Noenoni.

Just like the loom, the dyes are also obtained from the forests and gardens such as the wild arbila leaf for green dye, turmeric for yellow dye, and the bark of Casuarina and noni for red dye, matoj bark, indigo, tarum leaves and meko roots for black dye. Some of these dyes are used without cooking, and others require cooking. Of course cooking needs firewood gathered either from the garden or from the forest. After the dye is prepared, the spun yarn is dyed and ready to be woven.

It is evident that the tools and materials used in weaving come from the forest and gardens. If the forests and gardens are not maintained and cared for, weaving will become a rare activity. Weaving is women's work. "If the forest is damaged the women will suffer because there won't be any materials to weave," said Mama Maria.

Weaving is the identity of the Mollo people, the identity of the traditional community. "From birth the Mollo people are tied to the strong adat. The adat is a very precious thing that cannot be separated from the body," said Metu Salak, one of the traditional leaders of Kuanoe village.

They are required to wear the woven fabrics at wedding ceremonies, adat events and meetings. The Mollo people also wear them when they go to church, or other formal meetings. The woven fabric is also a form of honor and respect. For example, people give a woven fabric when they receive guests, invite people to come, or to express gratitude for someone's help.

However the woven fabrics are also a medium for conflict resolution. During a conflict resolution, the woven fabrics are used to pay traditional fines. For example, in the case of out of wedlock pregnancy, both families of the man and the woman, in addition to paying the adat fine, must also give blankets or sarongs to cover the shame of the families being involved. Similarly, in case of a livestock dispute, a woven fabric is a sign that both sides have reconciled. In addition to paying adat fines, blankets are also used for wedding gifts and to give thank to the invited guests.



However, nowadays, many young generations of Mollo people who no longer knows adat. They prefer using clothes such as pants, short pants and usual sarong. Probably it is due to economical and practical reasons.

Later, since the establishmen of OAT, the Mollo people agreed to reaffirm the Mollo tradition that has been eroded and almost lost in the changing age.

In 2011, when they held the traditional festival of Ningkam Haumeni, they produced adat rule on the use of woven fabrics. When attending a traditional event in any village, including wedding ceremonies, or going to the church, the people are required to wear the woven fabrics, especially when attending wedding receptions and other traditional meetings.

They also pledged to strengthen food security and save their water sources. This is an effort to strengthen their previous pledge to live independently.

“Haimi sosa salehaimo, et mihine,Haikami sosafa sa lehaikamo e fa”.This means that we only sell what we can make such as woven fabrics and locally processed materials and we cannot sell what we cannot make such as rocks, water, soil and the forests.



Adryana Kase

"The Luminaries of OAT Institute"

Adryani as known as Yati is a 32-year-old activist of the A Taimamus organization (OAT) in Kuannoer village, South Central Timor regency. Her involvement began when there is a penetration plan of marble mining in her area. If the investment is carried out, there will be environmental damage such as landslides, given the topography of the hilly area with a quite high slope and there are many scattered residential.

To strengthen the capacity of communities around the mining site, Yati and her friends from OAT institution carried out facilitation on strengthening of Business Activities in Productive Economic (KUEP) in form of processing woven fabric and households-scale farming. The purposes of this activity are so that people will not be easily get provoked and sell their land to investors, because people can fulfill the needs of their families through their regular income. Yati currently facilitates 120 communities group in 32 villages in South Central Timor (TTS) regency, East Nusa Tenggara.



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