

K a b a r I t a h



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Editorial

As we draw closer to year end, I am reminded of our main mission, which is to help empower people and help develop individual and collective capacity in the areas where we work - both in the villages and within local government.

It is very easy to get distracted and forget the overall objective, thus we have to constantly remind ourselves to focus on activities that lead to empowerment and capacity development. And this means that we have to provide whatever training and other support may be needed, so that local people can take greater control of their development agenda and process.

Sometimes this change process can be slow, as it takes time to refine the approach and for people to catch on. And most often, the process of change is not visible, except at major points when results suddenly are easy to see.

YTS is preparing to begin measuring the results of the work we have done to date. And, in doing so, we will look at both tangible and less than tangible elements. It is quite easy to measure the impact of support for chicken or pig rearing, as we can calculate improvement in reproduction, health, growth, and weight gain. But it is more difficult to calculate the internal learning that grows alongside any technical improvements.

I am reminded of the testimony of a woman in a village who, many years after a gender analysis exercise, stated that from that occasion the women in the village became much more active in decision-making processes, because the event had made them aware of new possibilities. We therefore have to find ways to 'see' and 'measure' these types of results as well.

As we are heading into the holiday season, all of us at YTS would like to extend our best wishes. May 2009 bring you much happiness and peace.

Bardolf Paul
Director

Technical Support

Cultivating Rubber Seedlings in a Group Nursery Lessons learned from the experiences of 12 villages



Members of the Rubber Interest Group in Tumbang Posu are working together to prepare poly bags in the nursery

Since the beginning of the second quarter, 12 villages have been developing local rubber nurseries, cultivating a total of 22,000 high-yielding seedlings (type GT-1), brought from South Kalimantan. These seedlings are part of the material-inputs component of the rubber training. The supply of the seedlings by YTS provides a means for interest groups to learn from their own direct experience - preparing seedlings using appropriate technical guidance. The aim is to build capacity so that local nurseries will in future provide rubber seedlings as needed. Ordinarily, these seeds are not easily accessible for rubber interest groups. YTS only provided these seeds to groups that had fulfilled certain pre-conditions. First of all, the interest group had to have studied all of the topics in the rubber training. Secondly, the group has to provide a minimum of 25% of

the total seedling needs from local stock. Additionally, the interest group must provide a planting location. Rubber seedlings are then distributed according to the size of the area that members intend to plant, rather than being distributed evenly among members.

To maintain the nursery, the members of the interest group must work together as a team and take turns on an agreed daily or weekly schedule. Their tasks are to water, to weed, and to guard the nursery from pests. If someone cannot follow the agreed schedule, they need to make it up at an alternate time. Anyone who neglects their duty without a clear reason, receives a sanction which reduces their seedling allotment. By the end of the third quarter, more than 75% of seedlings had grown well, and will be moved to plantations during this planting season. The level of motivation and



Simpei (far left) from YTS explains the consequences of no sanitation, and the benefits of toilet use to a villager from Sei Gohong

In August, two staff from YTS took part in a workshop on Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) in Tangkiling Village, 35 km from Palangka Raya. Yayasan Usaha Mulia (YUM), in cooperation with the World Bank Jakarta, organised the event, and 31 people attended, including Health Department officials from the province, district and sub-district, as well as NGOs, villagers and cadres from Sei

Gohong, Marang and Habaring Hurung.

When people defecate just anywhere, it raises both health and social problems, and these can remain unresolved for a long time. Dr Kamal Kar from Water Aid, developed the CLTS approach in 1999 in a small community in Bangladesh, and it since has spread to Africa and other parts of Asia. In Indonesia, the program is active in Sumatra and West Kalimantan, and now is starting up in Central Kalimantan. This approach is well-received at community level, and can spread easily because it requires no material inputs. The key to its success is good facilitation skills.

Depending on its capacity and the available resources, the community is empowered to become self-supportive in implementing the program. This is based on the principle that any community can choose to change its own behaviour and adopt more hygienic practices.

The facilitators help people understand that defecating anywhere has negative consequences. They raise awareness by getting people to talk about the impacts and map all the locations they use. Villagers learn about the content of feces, and then look at the trail of contamination. Finally, the facilitators quote something from religion about the importance of cleanliness.

The experience of the CLTS training clearly demonstrated that subsidies from government and the private sector is not the best way to change community behaviour, as it kills initiative and increases dependency.

Rubber, Family Main Income

Kristian Adul, member of rubber interest group in Tumbang Manyoi

Kristian Adul, more commonly known as 'Bapak Obo', started to grow rubber when his first son was born, 26 years ago. This father of three children, plus three grandchildren, already has three productive rubber plantations, yet he aims to have five more. Besides working on rubber, he also cultivates dry rice and is in a position of trust as head of a section of Government in Tumbang Manyoi village.

Bapak Obo is confident that rubber is very promising as a main livelihood and family income source. His rubber plantation produces about one kilogram of latex in one week - three working days on average.

Notwithstanding the recent drop, there have been huge increases in the rubber price over the last three years. The increase from Rp 2,000 to Rp 9,000 per kilogram, has been very helpful to cover his family expenses and the cost of sending his three children to senior high school.

Together with his wife, his children and his son-in-law, Bapak Obo has a plan to plant 2,000 more rubber trees to provide resources to fulfill their future needs. He intends to use one of the new planting and spacing patterns suggested by the expert, in either a 3x7 metre or a 5x5 metre formation.

He is interested to join in any activities that could improve his knowledge, especially to manage his hill rice and rubber plantation in a better way. He sees that Tumbang Manyoi's cooperation with YTS has brought benefits to villagers, especially in improving the knowledge and skills of villagers in growing rubber properly. Bapak Obo has already tried out some of the knowledge that he gained from the rubber training.

Bapak Obo has tried the branching technique to increase leafiness and improve latex production, and to avoid the problem of

tall trees toppling over. He has tried out three different methods that presented by the rubber expert: cover top leaves, prune leaves, and scratch stem. Based on his own experience, Pak Obo observes that the best results come from the last method, which produces more branches and leaves, and trees that are not too high.

For several years now, Bapak Obo has avoided planting cassava in his hill rice area, as he intends to plant those fields with rubber. In the training, he learned that cassava is a very good medium for fungal disease - locally known as 'kulat tepas'. Fungi are very damaging in his rubber plantation. Thus, he acknowledged that: "The theory provided by the expert is in fact very useful for farmers who want to manage their plantations." Now, his rubber plantation suffers much less fungal attack.

Bapak Obo also devised his own experiment to combat termites - locally known as buhei - by mixing semi-liquid soap with salt and water, then spraying it onto the rubber trees that are being attacked. Although not fully successful, he was happy to see a slight reduction in termite attacks.

As a final word, he suggested that all villagers who are interested in improving their rubber plantations should attend the training and apply the knowledge provided. Otherwise, they will never see the results, he said with a smile.



Kristian Adul is a successful rubber farmer from Tumbang Manyoi

Organic Fertilizers and Pesticides Improving Dry Rice Agriculture in Sekatak



Villagers in Sekatak collect local materials to make organic fertilizer

Growing rice in the forest is a time-honoured activity which forms the basis of Dayak and Punan agriculture in Sekatak. The form of subsistence farming practiced here is 100% organic, as no chemical inputs are used. However, as the local community complains that the harvests are often minimal, we are attempting to help them to increase their rice yield per hectare.

In doing so, we are not attempting to change existing practices, but rather trying to enhance local practices so they become more productive. Although we are introducing new elements with which they are unfamiliar (such as the use of fertilizers and pesticides), the essential rotational pattern of clearing, burning, and harvesting will remain unchanged.

There are many factors that affect rice harvests, but in Sekatak, low soil fertility and pests are two of the major adversities. Thus, our first training commenced in August by demonstrating two different compost-making techniques aimed at increasing soil fertility. In addition to compost, a pesticide was made from a local weed called 'Umbi Gadung'.

Obtaining the raw material for compost is not difficult and requires no financial outlay. It can be made using grass-cuttings after clearing a field; or after harvesting, from the remains of vegetable crops such as cassava, kangkung, taro, or banana leaves. Nutrient values can be boosted further by the addition of effective microorganisms. Thus, both the fertilizers and the pesticides promoted in this program are made from local plant matter and natural sources, in keeping with the principles of organic agriculture.

Villagers also learned to measure slopes, so that they could choose the right type of micro-terracing to apply to their field. Micro-terracing improves water retention and therefore boosts plant growth. It is also important for soil and water conservation. Lastly, villagers also learned more about working cooperatively, and the importance of forming working-groups.

In October, practical sessions in the field demonstrated

how to optimize the rice-planting-pattern, select productive strains of rice, and separate bad seeds from good. Participants also manufactured a pesticide from grasses, tubers, betel leaves, serai, and kencur (mixed with detergent and water for liquid application).

There was a good level of interest and participation in both of these training sessions, and many are looking forward to the next one. Among other things, the December session will examine: correct identification of pests; pest management and the use of insect traps; methods of pesticide application and dosage levels.

Delivery of all these elements has coincided with relevant farming activities, so the new skills have been demonstrated during the appropriate stages of the cultivation cycle.

As these skills have been successfully demonstrated this season, we hope that the farmers will consider adopting the practices next season, even though some may be more labour-intensive.

Technical Support

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commitment of members does vary. Some groups conduct maintenance as scheduled, but others do not and sometimes even change their own plans. For example, it was planned to move seedlings into polybags at the age of 1-3 months, as this will improve the condition of seedlings, make for easier maintenance, and reduce the potential stress at planting. However, not all members of groups were willing to work together, creating more work for those members who were more active. They in turn decided not to move the seedlings, but rather, to pull seedlings out directly when they are going to plant. This makes for spacing that is too tight; seedlings which do not grow well, as there is too much competition for nutrients; dry leaves as a result of not enough water; and yellow leaves, as they receive less sunshine. One nursery, at a distance from the village was badly neglected, with many weeds, and attacks of leaf-diseases and animal pests.

Interest groups have learned that management of these group nurseries requires strong commitment and participation from members, and good leadership to make it work. YTS realizes that this approach is more difficult compared to direct assistance or a program that just provides material inputs, but we believe that activities that are managed directly and get villagers to participate will improve and empower people substantially more. Therefore, it is more important to see a learning process occur and a spirit of cooperation and self-improvement develop among villagers.

We hope this nursery program will provide alternative ways for villagers to prepare rubber seedlings or cultivate other plants, rather than simply extracting them from older rubber forests, buying them from outsiders, or waiting for government support. Once interest groups have gained this knowledge, they should be able to make a simple nursery to fulfill their own needs and even grow seedlings for sale.

Workshop: Village Governance Workshop in Kebumen

From the 24th to the 28th of August, FPPD, the Development Forum for Village Renewal, and the Forum of Civil Society, dubbed 'Formasi', organized a 5-day workshop in Kebumen in Central Java. The aim was to get participants to share experiences and learn directly about village planning and budgeting processes. The main participants were village heads from Java, Sulawesi, and Kalimantan, some NGOs that assist in the Musrenbang process, and one private company (KPC).

The workshop started with a one-day seminar, to better understand the position of the village in the current regulatory framework of the Indonesian government – looking at the situation before independence, in the new era, and after reform. The facilitator emphasized that even though there is more regulation for autonomy now, it has had limited impact on improving village capacity. This is mainly because funding and control has not yet devolved to the village. On the second day, all participants were sent to six different villages to discuss and learn about village planning and budgeting processes within each village. Three YTS staff stayed in three different village settings – Mayang, at the beach; Tohar, in the hills; and Leony, on the plains.

In each location, village-level government staff collected primary and secondary data, and the sub-district staff participated in the village planning process. The primary data was collected using three participatory techniques: village mapping, seasonal analysis, and institutional analysis, in accordance with Home Ministry Regulation Number 66/2007. Problems and potentials are consolidated, ranked for priority, and agreed upon by villagers for inclusion in mid-year and annual village development plans. The forms are now standardized through local government regulations. Formasi provides training on planning, budgeting, and financial management for the village working groups.

However, even with more complete planning and budgeting documents, a tighter administration procedure, and a flexible Village Allocation Fund, poverty will not be significantly reduced if the main focus remains upon infrastructure, and



Participants from village councils and NGOs learn about the process of village planning and budgeting in Kebumen village, Central Java

is too heavily devoted to meeting operational costs, such as administration, meetings, and transportation. Poverty reduction will only work when planning includes local economic development, based on a normal growth sequence. Such plans must contain provisions for strengthening villagers' technical and managerial skills, and not just provide material inputs. Improving welfare and empowering villagers will require strong commitments and cooperation among different government stakeholders in the district, sub-district, and related technical institutions.

An immediate lesson for YTS is to adopt the practice of ranking priorities in each village plan, and to consolidate all plans prior to the district and sub-district meetings, while making available all relevant regulations and supplemental information. This creates a very efficient and effective process now that under local government regulations the planning and budgeting forms have been standardized. In Kebumen, budgeting meetings are also open to any members of the public that are interested in attending.

YTS will check with local government to see if it is willing to adopt some of these procedures.

Profile : Aci (Indu Jon)



Aci (Indu Jon) from Penda Rangas is a member of the Pig Interest Group

Indu Jon is 50 years old and has ten grandchildren. She is one of the 10 interest group members who have been actively involved in pig rearing training at Penda Rangas village in 2007. Her initial purpose in attending the training was just to hear new information about raising pigs. Then, she slowly began to apply the technical knowledge that she gained from the expert.

Before this, she had always raised her two pigs freely, without using a pen. As she realized the benefits of using one - speedier growth and easier maintenance - she and her husband built a simple pig pen from leftover wood and bamboo, as a place to keep her pigs. She also started to pay attention to food sanitation and to provide vitamin supplements.

The normal pig food (a mix of rice husk, wild banana stem, and their leftover food) is now supplemented with Mineral-10.

For her diligence, by the end of the year she had eight piglets. She sold them all, once they got past their suckling period, for Rp150,000 each (US\$16/piglet), and used the money to cover her family expenses. She has continued raising her adult pigs, and acknowledges her newly-improved pig breeding skills. Recently, her pigs reproduced again, providing another five piglets. She is satisfied with their healthy and even growth. To assist piglets to shed their milk-teeth, Indu Jon's tip is to add boiled papaya fruit to the pig feed. The adult teeth will then grow in after the suckling period.

Indu Jon actively seeks out more information that will improve her knowledge. She likes to listen to the rural programs from Radio Palangka Raya and other sources. Indu Jon admits that even as a secondary livelihood activity, raising pigs provides a valuable bonus to her income stream that helps her better manage her household budget.

Funding Appeal

As many of you know, Kalimantan Gold Corporation is experiencing economic problems due to the global financial crisis. As a result, KGC is unable to fund YTS activities, and we have been running on our reserve fund, which is quickly disappearing.

We therefore are asking for contributions from anyone who would like to support our work. Funds can be channeled through Susila Dharma organisations or directly to our bank account, which is listed below.

Many thanks and best wishes.

Kabar Itah

Kabar Itah is the quarterly newsletter of Yayasan Tambuhak Sinta (YTS), an affiliate of PT. Kalimantan Surya Kencana (KSK), a mineral exploration company.

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