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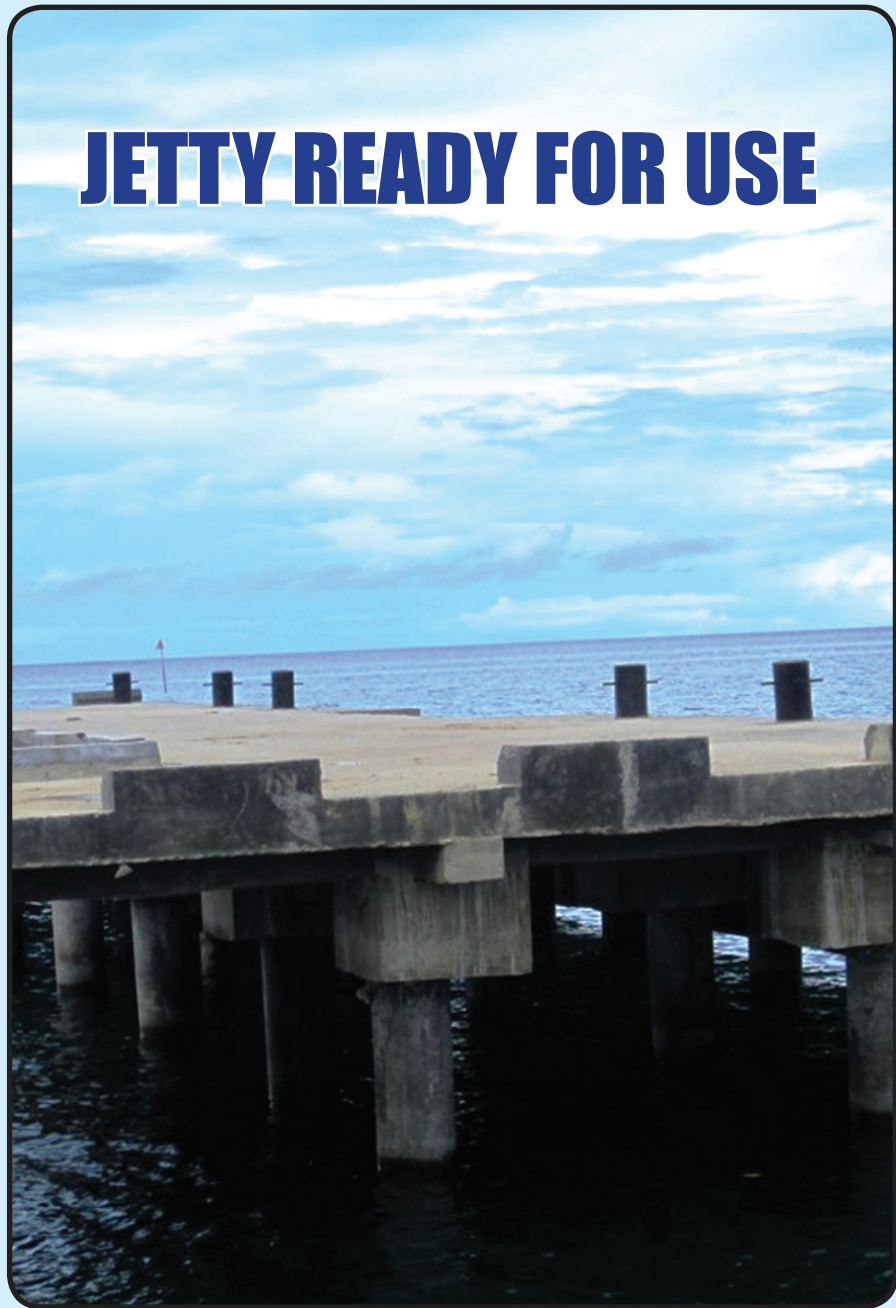
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JETTY READY FOR USE



From the Editorial Team:

In this edition of the SSFSS newsletter, beside the news of the separation of Islamic Relief from Aceh Ocean Coral, there is news of other activities during the past three months. Stories about the many achievements and challenges faced in the field and in the management of assistance in Aceh. We also feature some interesting human interest stories from the field. We hope you enjoy them!

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Project Coordinator SSFSS, M. Taufik Hidayat, signing the hand-over documents from AOC witnessed by the Head of District Planning [Bappeda] for Aceh Singkil District

Photo : Doc. IR

End Of Islamic Relief ACEH OCEAN CORAL PARTNERSHIP

There is something different in this edition of the Sustainable Sea Fisheries for Simeule and Singkil (SSFSS) Newsletter because the Aceh Ocean Coral (AOC) logo is no longer in the header on the front page. Indeed, since December 2011, AOC is no longer working as Islamic Relief's local partner to implement the Sustainable Sea Fisheries for Simeulue and Singkil (SSFSS) program. The partnership ended as a result of discussions and a mutual decision taken by Islamic Relief and AOC. This decision has which has been agreed to by Islamic Relief (Worldwide), [by the PMU] and by the Local Governments of both Simeulue and Singkil Districts.

The end of the partnership between AOC and IRI was marked by handover ceremonies both at the village level and at the district level held at the end of December. Islamic Relief expresses our thanks to AOC for all the work done together up till now and wishes AOC good luck and success for their projects in the future.



Signing the documents for Hand-over from AOC to Islamic Relief in Simeulue

Photo : Doc. IR

ISLAMIC RELIEF COMMITTED TO CONTINUE SSFSS PROJECT



Photo : Doc. IR

Prof DR. Amhar Abubakar, M. Si. is giving inputs in the discussion about AOC leaving the SSFSS Project

The District Governments and the Panglima Laot for both Singkil and Simeulue will support Islamic Relief’s program to continue the Sustainable Sea Fisheries project for Simeulue and Singkil (SSFS). This commitment was made during a Coordination Meeting between Islamic Relief and the Departments of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries [Dinas Kelautan dan Perikanan (DKP)] from the Province of Aceh and from both Simeulue District and Singkil District plus the Project Management Unit (PMU) for the Economic Development Financing Facility (EDFF), and the District Panglima Laots from both Singkil and Simeulue.

“We support Islamic Relief to continue the implementation of the SSFSS project, because this affects the welfare of (our) people”, said Mr. Riswan, the Panglima Laot for the District of Simeulue, on Thursday (8/12/2011).

The co-ordination meeting was held in the Grand Nanggroe Hotel to discuss the continuity of the SSFSS Project following the withdrawal of AOC as the local partner with Islamic Relief for the implementation of the SSFSS Program. As you should know, SSFSS is a program that is funded through the EDFF Project.

Meanwhile, the head of the DKP for Aceh Province, Mr A R Razali, who also attended the meeting, stated that coordination and communication between all related stakeholders, especially with the

district governments, is crucial for the success of the project.

The District governments for each of the two project locations will actively participate in the implementation of the project in the future, also in monitoring the project. Up till now, communications between IR-AOC and the two governments has been lacking. “Islamic Relief and the District Governments will sit down together to determine the program priorities. “Because there is only a few months time left (to complete) the program”. he said.

Similarly, the head of the PMU for the EDFF, Prof. DR. Amhar Abubakar, M.Sc also stated: “After the EDFF program finishes, the district government is expected to continue the program that we have started. Therefore, it is important to coordinate with district level stakeholders” he said.

Islamic Relief admitted weaknesses in program implementation, both in management and in the field. However, project continuation is Islamic Reliefs’ main responsibility. “We are committed to continue this project until it is completed,” said Ali Noor, Country Director of Islamic Relief. Islamic Relief promised to work closely with the district governments. “We do not want to disappoint the people,” he added.

The SSFSS program aims to improve the economy of coastal communities, both direct and indirect beneficiaries through infrastructure assistance, capital investment, training programs and capacity building, as well as building networks and market access for (the) fishermen.

As you know the EDFF project is funded by grants from the MDF with a budget mechanism from the Treasury Department. The fund is allocated through the Ministry for Development of Neglected Areas [Kementerian Pembangunan Daerah Tertinggal (KPDT)], following the National Budget [APBN] mechanism. While the World Bank has been appointed as a (program) partner as well as a project supervisor.



Photo : Doc. IR

Participants representing Simeulue and Aceh Singkil Districts at the Co-ordination Meeting

ALI NOOR'S VISIT TO PULAU BANYAK



Photo : Doc. IR

Ali Noor and M Taufik Hidayat, SSFSS Project Co-ordinator, inspecting the construction of Floating Fish Farms [Keranba Jaring Apung]

“Brother Ali Noor” - as all Islamic Relief staff call him, is the Country Director for Islamic Relief Indonesia. The head of Islamic Relief in Indonesia is a Sudanese who has worked around the world with many international NGOs delivering services to those in need. In mid-October 2011, he had a chance to visit the Sustainable Sea Fisheries for Simeulue and Singkil project in the Pulau Banyak Islands. Mr. Syamsuddin Buyung from Bappeda Aceh Singkil, Ms. Rahmiati from the DKP, and Mr. Amsardin from the Co-operatives [Diperindagkop] in Aceh Singkil accompanied him during his visit to Aceh Singkil. Brother Ali Noor visited the grouper floating cage construction site at Pulau Balai village and the fish-landing jetty being constructed at Haloban village. The Country Director, whose background is in dentistry, also had a chance to meet some project beneficiaries as well as local government representa-

tives. He extended his thanks to all the local people and the local government officials for their support of the SSFSS project.

Straight after his arrival on 16 October 2011, Ali Noor held a lunchtime

meeting with all staff. The meeting in Pulau Balai, the capital of Pulau Banyak sub-district, was held to meet and greet the staff as well as to explain the agenda of his visit to Aceh Singkil. Together with the AOC-IRI team,



Photo : Doc. IR

Ali Noor inspecting the just finished jetty (at Haloban) with staff from the Local Government of Aceh Singkil

he then walked about 2 kilometers through the village from the Islamic Relief office in P. Balai to the construction site for the keramba or floating fish farm pens. The afternoon visit ended with a meeting with some project beneficiaries and the sub-district secretary from P. Banyak sub-district. During the meeting, the beneficiaries complained about the delays in the project. In addition, the sub-district secretary, Mr Mukhlis, mentioned the importance of co-ordination with the local government to smooth the project implementation so that any problems can be anticipated.

On the 17th, Ali Noor and the team set off at 8:30 am by boat to Suka Makmur village, one of the villages that will receive benefits from the SSFSS project. This village, which has only 42 households, is one of the most isolated villages in Aceh Singkil district. It takes about one and a half hours to reach this village in a small, 10GT, fishing boat.

In Suka Makmur village, Ali Noor held a meeting with the people and the village leaders. Representing his community, the Suka Makmur village secretary expressed his gratitude to Islamic Relief for its support and attention. He hoped that the assistance from the project would be delivered soon. In addition, the villagers also expressed their hope that



Meetings with stakeholders and beneficiaries in Pulau Banyak barat.

Photo : Doc. IR

Islamic Relief will involve them in future projects especially in education, health and agriculture to develop their village.

After the meeting in Suka Makmur, the party went by boat to Haloban, the main village in Pulau Banyak Barat sub district to inspect the jetty being constructed there by Islamic Relief to support the fisheries there. The visit continued with meetings with local leaders, beneficiaries of the program and staff from the local government. During the meeting, local women, especially some widows expressed their keenness to become self-supporting by developing their own new small enterprises in fisheries and also in other activities.

During his visit to Pulau Banyak Islands, Ali Noor never missed an opportunity to express his gratitude to the Aceh Singkil District Government for their support and too to the local people for their support of the SSFSS project. He stated this throughout his visits to the project locations in Pulau Banyak Sub-District and in Pulau Banyak Barat Sub-District. According to him although the project locations in Pulau Banyak Islands are quite remote, it does not diminish the commitment from Islamic Relief to do great work to help the local people increase their standard of living.



Juli Efendi, Construction Co-ordinator for Islamic Relief, briefing Ali Noor on the construction of the just finished Jetty at Haloban (suggest move caption to lower right corner)

Photo : Doc. IR

PROTECTING NATURE THROUGH MONITORING THE ENVIRONMENT

Islamic Relief is committed to maintain the environment in all the activities it undertakes. Especially as the current SSFSS program is closely related to the environment, specifically the maritime environment. This commitment is shown by the implementation of surveys and monitoring of the environment.

Environmental monitoring describes the processes and activities that need to take place to characterize and monitor the quality of the environment. Environmental monitoring is used in the preparation of environmental impact assessments, as well as (monitoring) the activities of people which can cause harmful effects to the natural environment. All monitoring strategies and programs have reasons and justifications which are designed to establish the current status of an environment or to establish trends in environmental parameters. In all cases the results of monitoring will be reviewed, analyzed statistically and published.

Islamic Relief and Aceh Ocean Coral has had environmental surveys done to identify environmental issues associated with the implementation of activities for the Sustainable Sea Fisheries for Simeulue and Singkil (SSFSS) project. These surveys were conducted in Singkil and Simeulue from 23rd October to 1st November 2011 by a consultant team from CV Ganessa.

According to the initial agreements, the Sustainable Sea Fisheries for Simeulue and Singkil c project



Asnawi, one of the Ganessa monitoring team, taking a sample.

Photo Doc. Ganessa

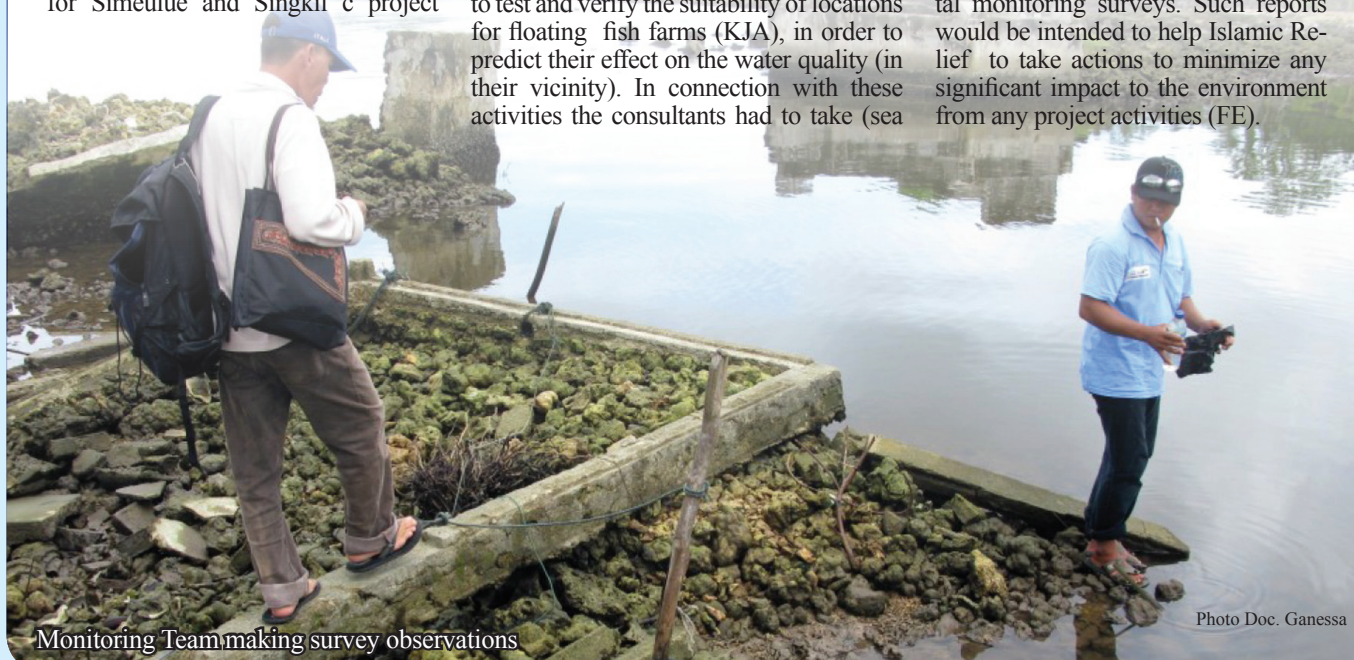
was to end in February 2012. A report on the environmental consequences is one of the important requirements required to be done at the beginning of the project to ensure the sustainability of the project. Islamic Relief is dedicated to implementing a project which results in quality of environment for all of our beneficiaries.

Environmental surveys conducted for the environmental effect assessment include various tasks including monitoring of the environment at the site for construction of the wharf including analysis of the quality of sea water, air pollution by dust, noise and vibration also nuisance which could be caused to aquatic biota including disturbance to coral reefs.

As well as that, surveys were also done to test and verify the suitability of locations for floating fish farms (KJA), in order to predict their effect on the water quality (in their vicinity). In connection with these activities the consultants had to take (sea

water) samples and do laboratory tests to get accurate results for each of the parameters being tested. Samples were taken at several project locations in Pulau Banyak and in Simeulue. In addition, the survey also analyzed employment and business opportunities and changes in attitudes/perception of the villagers.

The results from these surveys showed that generally there will be no significant effects from Islamic Relief's activities. However, there are a few minor effects that can be easily prevented. The Consultants have given Islamic Relief the survey data, results and conclusions and have also recommended bi-annual environmental monitoring surveys. Such reports would be intended to help Islamic Relief to take actions to minimize any significant impact to the environment from any project activities (FE).



Monitoring Team making survey observations

Photo Doc. Ganessa

■ Midterm Evaluation Report for the Program: SENSE OF BELONGING NEEDED FOR SUCCESS OF SSFSS

Although the Sustainable Sea Fisheries for Simeulue and Singkil (SSFSS) Program has been going for one year, the program has not reached it's hoped for targets. This statement is one of the findings from the Midterm Evaluation of the Program conducted by Yayasan Aceh

Banda Aceh.

The results of the evaluation in general show that the Sustainable Sea Fisheries for Simeulue and Singkil (SSFS) Program that is being implemented now has not yet shown the results expected. There are still many aspects of the program that need correction and improvement. These aspects include the coordi-

is fishing. The villagers of these two Districts feel very fortunate to have this program in their island areas.

Seen from the side of results planned for this SSFSS Program, it is clear that this program will push these two districts into line with other Districts in Aceh which are valued by the Provincial Government so the



The Panglima Laut (traditional leader of village fishing fleet) for East Simeulue

Photo Doc. YAMA

Meutuah (YAMA). The evaluation was conducted over 45 man days in October in the two intervention areas: Singkil and Simeulue.

Yayasan Aceh Meutuah (YAMA) is a local Acehese institution working in the fields of Research, Monitoring, Program Planning and business consulting. For this evaluation, YAMA sent out a team of three experts with backgrounds in Fisheries and Marine, Economy and Development, and in Marketing. The abovementioned finding was obtained following a series of interviews with various stakeholders in the project such as beneficiaries, local government and staff of AOC and Islamic Relief from the field and from

nation between the two implementing organizations, the beneficiary identification system, socialization or public information about the program, coordination with personnel from the District governments and construction planning and programming that results in delays on project and sub-project delivery. The consequence of such shortcomings in the work program is restlessness amongst the beneficiaries in the two districts.

Nevertheless in the future the SSFSS program will bring positive results to the district as production & incomes will increase. The SSFSS project is very appropriate for these two Districts considering their geographical locations and that the main livelihood of the villagers

two districts will get further attention for their development

On the other hand, the program is facing many challenges, including the time remaining for the project plan, which is very short. This fact with other problems within the project puts the program on red alert, on the horns of a dilemma, since the capacity for implementation does not balance the activities needed.

YAMA hopes that a high-stakes program can be implemented by competent experts who can solve the problems and who also have a high sense of belonging towards the activities of the Sustainable Sea Fisheries for Simeulue and Singkil Program.(SI).

Fiki

AND THE ISLAND BOYS HUNT FOR OCTOPI

While kids in the cities are playing with Play Station and robots, Fiki spends his spare time rowing his small dugout to look for octopi. Fiki, who is only 14 years old has been going to the sea since he was nine; he started as a rookie following older kids, but now he can go by himself with a handmade traditional harpoon and a bottle of water as companions. Today, as on other Sundays, Fiki is getting ready to go. This time he is accompanied by his two buddies: Romi and Miswar.

“All dangers please stay away from us,” prays Fiki before he leaves. Using two wooden canoes, they go to look for octopi and kolong. Kolong is the local name for tripang or sea cucumber which is usually sold to make medicine. After about 15 minutes paddling, they stop near to a mangrove forest, and the hunt begins. Miswar and Romi start to dive in five meters of water.

Not long after there is a shout “Aya riya sara!” from Miswar as he surfaced. It was in the local language and means: Here is one. Being alert, Fiki handed him a traditional harpoon, and Miswar then

dove back down. Soon Miswar returned to the surface with a large octopus speared by the point of his harpoon. The frightened octopus then grasped hold of Miswar’s upper arm and shoulder with its tentacles. Looking scared, Miswar screamed “Help me get rid of this octopus!” whilst swimming to the canoe. For some people, what happened may look horrifying: a small kid being grasped by lots of tentacles in the middle of the ocean. But for these kids, it was nothing to worry about, Romi laughingly said “just hit it on its head”.

When he was asked if he was hurt by the tentacles, “No,” answered Miswar “it was just ticklish.” However, it could clearly be seen that the biting had left red spots on his skin. After freeing the octopus (from the harpoon), Miswar went back to diving like nothing had happened, while Romi took the octopus and estimated its weight, “this could weigh up to 3 kilograms,” he said with sparkling eyes.

Nevertheless, Fiki, who one day wants to be a Social Science teacher, is still just a boy. “I cried one day because I was trapped by a storm when I went to sea alone,” he said innocently.



Fiki (14), a teenager from Muara Aman village, paddling his dugout canoe.

Photo : Doc. IR

Fiki is now a junior high school student. The money that they get from selling the octopi they use to buy books and other needs. They no longer hope for pocket money from their parents because the money they (their parents) make from their garden and their fishing is only enough for food and household needs.

The parents of the three young boys are beneficiaries of SSFSS program. Only now they've not yet received any assistance and as their income is low, the boys have to find ways to help their parents by going to sea as Fiki, Miswar and Romi do.

Hopefully later after Islamic Relief's assistance arrives, they won't need to go to sea again so that they can focus on their schoolwork.(FA)



Miswar (left) and Romi (right), two friends of Fikri, in an outrigger dugout canoe.

Photo : Doc. IR

Ups and Downs of a Community Mobilizer

Being a community mobilizer is not easy. There are many ups and downs, especially when working with communities. A Community Mobilizer is the title given to field staff whose duty is to liaise between the beneficiaries and Islamic Relief as the benefit provider.

“People think that working with an NGO is great, with a big salary” said

Yopi Taufik Lubis, affectionately known as Bang Yopi, when he was asked about people’s opinion of his job. “They don’t know that the responsibilities are very big”

he added. Bang Yopi is well built with a rugged look; he is very

friendly and smiles a lot when meeting the villagers. “I like being a community mobilizer, we get close to the people and become part of their families”, so too agreed Tono Suwito and Warmanida, who are also Community Mobilizers with Islamic Relief. They often visit the villages in the program so the villagers know them well.

“We can socialize with the people, we enjoy this job very much,” added Warmanida. People’s happiness when they get the assistance they’ve been promised is beautiful to see and stimulates their work as Community Mobilizers.

The three of them know what the community feels; especially now that the distribution of assistance has been delayed. They are Islamic Relief’s foot soldiers in the firing line to answer the questions of the villagers and listen to their complaints.



Photo Doc. IR

Although they give explanations often, villagers sometimes do not want to listen or understand. As field staff, sometimes they are not able to provide an explanation that satisfies the villagers and this can become a boomerang for them. Although they work as representatives of Islamic Relief, people know them by their names Yopi, Ida and Tono.

“They even come to my house to ask about the project,” said Tono,

are working.

“That is what we have to deal with on daily basis, I don’t take it personally” Warmanida, known as Ida comments. This petite lady, who comes from Sibulai village (in Simeulue) has a tough spirit which has helped her survive as a community mobilize since 2005. “We understand that the villagers are not familiar with the bureaucratic processes for tendering that must be followed by the office in Banda Aceh to procure the goods

Their friendship began in 2005, and this friendship is the source of their strength and spirit in doing their work, especially in tough times like now. “We are lucky because we get to work together with good friends, so we can support each other,” says Ida smiling.

Nonetheless, they and the people of Simeulue are anxiously awaiting the assistance that hopefully will come in the near future.



Ida, Yopi and Tono, three Islamic Relief Community Mobilizers, in their office at Simeulue

Photo : Doc. IR

who often cools down the emotions of the villagers by joking with them so there is no continuing misunderstanding. “Until today, they still respect us as we are also from the island, but that is our last defence”, said Tono. The villagers are tired of waiting, and that can lead to wrong perceptions added Tono.

Questions that are asked are varied and expressed in different tones, depending on people’s level of anger. Shouts such as “Waa waaa, when is the assistance coming? We are not patient to wait (any more)” some villagers hurl at the staff while they

for assistance, so we have to be patient,” she says. Patience and being humble are the keys to success when working with the villagers. “When talking to the villagers, don’t let them think that you are telling them what to do and never be bossy” Yopi added.

Yopi, Tono and Ida are three of Islamic Relief’s staff who are very dedicated and have an important role in the program starting with socializing or explaining the program to cooling down the emotion of the villagers in certain situations (due to their frustrations) that not even a senior officer could be sure to handle.

When the assistance arrives their steps will be lighter when they make field visits to the villages. Hopefully the processes for providing assistance can be speeded up. Taufik Hidayat, the Project Coordinator for the Sustainable Seafisheries for Simeule and Singkil Program (SSFSS) in Banda Aceh has the same hopes, “We are trying to speed up the processes so that the assistance goods can be delivered sooner” he said. IR is asking the villagers to keep patient and give their support for the success of the program (FA).

■ Mr Amrin from Pulau Balai

A FORMER DIVER WHO SETS HIS HOPES ON GETTING A FLOATING FISH FARM [KJA]



His skinny profile does not hide the hardships and experiences that he has endured over 37 years. Amrin is an experienced fisherman, especially in traditional diving. Amrin started to dive when he was 20 years old. Back then, there was no diving equipment so divers just had to hold their breath and catch fish using traditional harpoons.

Then he was introduced to compressors as a tool to assist in diving. At that time fishermen favoured catching fish by diving because they could get up to 50 kilograms of fish each day, unlike today where even 10 kilograms is hard to get.

However, diving using compressors poses high risks for the health of divers. There are many negative

effects of using compressor especially as the compressors they are using are those used to pump up the tires on vehicles, instead of those specialized for diving. As a result the inside of the compressed air tank is often dirty and rusty so that the air which is breathed can cause headaches.

Apart from the unclean air, another risk is the use of wrong methods for diving. Amrin explained that the weights that they were using were often too heavy so that they fell down to the deep seabed in a very short time. When this happened, their bodies did not have time to adapt to the water pressure that is much higher than that at the surface. Worse still many divers ascended too quickly from deep waters to the surface. As a result, many traditional divers experienced decompression sickness: This is a medical condition, where the decrease in water pressure causes the release of air (nitrogen) within the body that forms bubbles in the bloodstream and the tissues. This sickness can cause joint pains, migraine headaches, paralysis and even death.

Although the risks were high, Amrin and the other divers kept diving to get money even though their lives were at stake. "Back then, there were many divers who got sick, and many died," he said. Amrin kept on because of financial reasons. Later on he felt the result: In 2000 he suffered paralysis. The father of 4 children had to lay in bed unable to do anything. He was petrified as very few divers survived paralysis. "At that time, when people suffered from paralysis, many died after two months," he said in a bitter tone.

Luckily, after nearly a month, he slowly recovered. He then promised to never dive traditionally again. Fortunately in 2008, the Indonesian Navy held training in diving, where Amrin had the chance to learn to dive properly. Together with three other friends, he collected enough money to buy professional diving equipment. Even though the equipment was not new, it was a new beginning for them.

Amrin advises young people to never dive using compressors. He wants them to learn from his experience. He also re-

alizes that it is difficult to change the habits of diving, as the income from diving is sure, unlike that from other methods of fishing. Especially to his son, he says, "Sure daddy was a diver, but my son shouldn't be, please find a different job".

Lately Amrin started to think that catching fish like he's been doing might not last long, especially since the numbers of fish in the sea now are much less than they used to be. He is thinking to start growing fish especially grouper because of the high selling price. Thankfully Islamic Relief came to his village offering a sustainable program through the Sustainable Seafisheries for Simeule and Singkil project (SSFSS) that enables fishermen to start a business that is manageable as it is located around the island. He, and his group, have been selected to receive a Floating Fish Farm or Keramba Jaring Apung (KJA). As with other beneficiaries, he cannot wait for the assistance to come so that he can increase the income of his family and of the community around him. He hopes that with the arrival of this assistance, local fishermen will stop diving. (FA).



Photo : Doc. IR

Amrin looking at his catch



Jetty Ready for Use

Islamic Relief has completed the construction of the Jetty or Fishing boat wharf at Haloban village, the main village in the Kepulauan Banyak Barat Sub-District, as part of the Sustainable Sea Fisheries for Simeulue and Singkil (SSFSS) Program. The Jetty is now ready to be used by the fishermen, says Juli Efendi, Islamic Relief’s Construction Coordinator: “The Jetty we have built is now ready for use, as the concrete has had time to cure.”

Curing time is the time needed for the concrete to get it’s full strength. The construction of the wharf uses reinforced concrete piles and deck which are strong enough and satisfactory to tie up a 25 GT medium size fisherman boat: This strong Jetty took six months to construct by PT Zarnita Abadi.

Since its completion last November, many villagers have wanted to utilize the jetty; but are still hesitant to use it, as the official handover ceremony has not yet been conducted. “The people want to use the Jetty, but we’ve stopped them as the Jetty has not been officially handed over to us by Islamic Relief”. said Muhammad Harbi, the Camat of Pulau Banyak Barat Sub-District.

M. Taufik Hidayat, Islamic Relief’s Project Coordinator for the Sustainable Sea Fisheries for Simeulue and Singkil (SSFSS) Program urges the people to use the Jetty although the handover ceremony has not yet been conducted. “We built that Jetty to meet the needs of the villagers so please use it,” he said. Furthermore, the jetty needs to be used to test its strength.

After receiving the green light, the Camat said that they would soon hold a blessing ceremony or kenduri laut . The aim is to thank Allah (Blessed be his name) and to ask for safety from Allah so that the Jetty will bring blessings and safety to the villagers (FA)

COMPLAINTS AND SUGGESTIONS

If you have any Complaints or Suggestions for the SSFSS Program concerning the implementation by staff or contractors of Islamic Relief especially concerning the management of the Project please send your Complaints or Suggestions by SMS to 085359031018 together with your name and the name of your village.

We will reply to your Complaints and Suggestions on the 15th and the 30th of each month.

Thank you.