

Small Grants

In Malaysia, the work of a fishermen's association in its fight for a greener coast has been rewarded again.

The Penang Inshore Fishermen and Welfare Association has received a grant from the Green Coast Project to continue its work in mangrove replanting and rehabilitation.

The tsunami disaster has given the Penang Inshore Fishermen Welfare Association (PIFWA) good reasons to continue with its mangrove replanting activities. Since 1997, PIFWA members have replanted up to 65,000 mangrove saplings. Friends of the Earth Malaysia and the Consumer Association of Penang have over the years supported their initiative.

Now that the important role of mangroves in natural disasters like the tsunami has been highlighted, PIFWA members are worried that the Government might only appoint contractors to replant mangroves.

Mangrove planting important for the livelihood of the fishermen

PIFWA replanted mangroves to replace those which had been degraded, and in locations which had been cleared for projects that were subsequently abandoned. The members replanted mangroves because they recognised its importance as spawning grounds for fish, crabs and prawns. It is also common knowledge that, in the absence of mangroves, their boats at jetties would have little protection against strong winds and waves.

More and more fishermen are aware of the functions of the natural environment, and especially the mangrove forests. PIFWA, with the help of Friend of the Earth Malaysia (SAM) has established links with other fishermen networks all along Peninsular Malaysia. Although very successful at the local level, PIFWA has only recently been able to link it's on the ground work with policy changes.

Small grant project

This project aims to replicate PIFWA's success in other coastal stretches in Peninsular Malaysia. It does so by duplicating PIFWA's model for community based replanting of mangroves and strengthening PIFWA's capacity to influence policies that inhibit the expansion of the community based replanting to other areas. A total sum of 10,000 euro has been allocated for this project.