

KAHJU VILLAGE, first Coastal Ecosystem Arboretum in Aceh

Project & location

This project has established the first Coastal Ecosystem Arboretum in Aceh which integrates conservation efforts, ecotourism and education. The Arboretum will be located in Kahju Village, Baitussalam Sundsitrict, Aceh Besar District.



Problem description

Kajhu village is one of the areas worst hit by the December 2004 earthquake and tsunami. Damage included the devastation of \pm 100 ha mangrove and coastal forest and destruction of the fish ponds. This affected the community's source of income as fishing and fishfarming were their major livelihoods.

The northern coast of Aceh Besar district itself claims an area of more than 1,500 ha, covering a coastline stretches from the villages of Syiah Kuala

and Alue Naga (administratively part of the municipality of Banda Aceh) through the villages of Baet, Kajhu, Kampong Baru, Cot Paya, Ujung Batee Ladong, Duyung, Ruyung to Krueng Raya in Aceh Besar district. The variety in ecosystem types along this coast is supported by the presence of the watersheds of Krueng Aceh, Krueng Teupiendinuang, Krueng Neuhun and Krueng Raya, as well as the freshwater swamp ecosystems in the villages of Gano, Ujong Batee, Rukoh, Tanjung, Blang Krueng, Kajhu, Baet, Limpok, Cot Kleng, Lam Ujong, Neuhuen, Labui and Cot Kareung. This area has an important role as the buffer system for life on the north coast of Aceh Besar district.

Changes in social value

Along with the large number of donors channelling tsunami assistance to Aceh, changes in social value within the community occurred. For instance, the Yayasan LEBah foundation observed a decline in the community's own initiative to rehabilitate the coastal ecosystem, when they started coastal ecosystem rehabilitation activities, under Green Coast Phase I in 2006.

Nevertheless, the approach used under the Tsunami response phase has had a positive impact on public awareness. Although it was relatively small, the groups' members voluntarily carried out replenishment planting to replace dead, failing or damaged seedlings at least.

Within the Tsunami response phase, the total coastal area of Kajhu rehabilitated was 30 ha. The rehabilitated area comprised 30,000 seedlings of 7 species mangrove and 15,000 seedlings of 23 coastal forest species. The survival rate for mangrove reached to 95.5%, whilst 82.5% for coastal trees. Small grants facility was also distributed to a group of women (24 families) who obtained benefit from shellfish harvest. The women also used the small grant facility to develop an organic farming and create an informal "saving-borrowing" facility.

Expansion needed

Given the fact that there's a need to rehabilitate Kajhu's expanded coastland (about 70ha) and to empower approximately 1000 households and ongoing housing projects in the area, it is considered both necessary and important for LEBah to extend and expand the activities on the coast of Kajhu village. The extended activities will, in addition, include the tending of 45,000 trees planted under the Tsunami response phase.

Recovery goals

Under GC phase 2, this area will be set as the first coastal ecosystem arboretum which an extended 50 ha along the coastline in Kahju Village will be restored with 50,000 mangrove and beach trees. A centre of public education and awareness-raising on coastal environments will

be built to support the goal. Moreover, this project will continue to empower the community groups in the area through the financial services of the “saving-borrowing” facility.

Funding allocation

The total budget available for this project equals 50,000 Euro. Under the project, the fund will be allocated for the following activities:

- Rehabilitation program by planting of 7 mangrove species (37,500 seedlings in total) and about 50 coastal forest species (12,500 seedlings in total).

- Coastal Ecosystems Assessment Centre which will be used by schoolchildren and the general public as a place to learn about and become more aware of the functions of coastal ecosystems.

Boat engine procurement, jetty construction and empowerment of the saving-borrowing facility for the local (fisher-folks) community to improve their welfare.

Beneficiaries

It is expected that 3000 people will benefit from this project; the number of women participating and benefiting will be half; 1500.

Partners on the ground

The implementation of project will be conducted by NGO Yayasan LEbahin close collaboration with Kahju Village community groups.

Results so far (May 2008)

- Replenishment of dead mangrove/beach trees seedlings planted during Green Coast's Tsunami response phase

- Planting of mangrove seedlings (37,500)

- Planting of coastal beach tree seedlings (12,500)