

Empowering coastal communities in mangrove forest areas



Women processing crab meat at Makassar, Indonesia © Hanying Li

Target beneficiaries

Principally the community members of Bira Lantebung and, initially, the fisher groups.

Outputs

- ▶ In the project's first quarter 80,000 mangrove seedlings were planted. In the last quarter, 46,000 more seedlings were planted to replace mangroves lost in extreme weather events. The seedling survival rate was about 80%.
- ▶ Six mud crab culture cage units were developed and tested by the community.
- ▶ Training in mud crab cultivation was carried out using the cage units. This training was later put into practice by developing a mud crab cultivation business.



LOCATION

Bira Lantebung village area, Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia

PRIORITY POWS

- Knowledge for Management
- Civil Society Engagement
- Community Resilience

DURATION

4 May 2010 to 4 April 2011 (extended to 30 April 2011 at no extra cost)

MFF GRANT AMOUNT

US\$25,717
(from a total budget of US\$26,933 approved by MFF)

Objectives

This project sought to increase community awareness of the importance of coastal conservation and mangrove planting, to facilitate mangrove planting action plans, and to increase local incomes by developing a mud crab fishery business.

Another objective was to help Bira Lantebung, a remote community historically distrustful of outside interference, to integrate its needs and interests with state coastal conservation and development interventions.

Background

Most inhabitants of Bira Lantebung live below the poverty line, subsisting mainly on crab and shellfish gathering, farming, and, to a certain extent, factory labour.

The Community Research and Development Institution of Makassar (IPPM) selected Bira Lantebung as a Small Grant Facility (SGF) project site because of its high rate of coastal erosion and severely degraded hydrological regime, the community's low income, the critical state of its remaining mangroves, and the limited local awareness of mangrove rehabilitation.

- ▶ The community was actively involved in creating land-use and settlement maps for use in land planning and as instruments of future advocacy by the community. These maps were also shared with local authorities.
- ▶ A comparative study tour to Tongke-Tongke village in Sinjai district helped to motivate and raise expectations among community members with regard to restoring their mangroves.

Accomplishments and challenges

Before MFF became involved, the community of Bira Lantebung tended to resist outside intervention. For example, when the local government sent it a truckload of mangrove seedlings, they promptly sent it back. However, after IPPM conducted a sensitive pre-project assessment of local attitudes and feelings, a successful working relationship was established and progress made in improving awareness of the importance of mangroves to local livelihoods.

Overcoming local reluctance to involve outsiders in community affairs was helped by strengthening connections to, government. Engaging government in a dialogue also yielded more support and cooperation. The project and the target area are now also playing host to research studies by the Indonesian and international academic communities.

Challenges

The main challenge was extreme weather which hampered project work, damaged crab culture cage systems, and killed a fifth of the planted mangrove saplings. Despite drawing on local knowledge, the project faced unpredictable and highly disruptive weather conditions.

Involving women was also a challenge, as cultural traditions frown on women taking part in “physical” activity such as planting trees. They are expected to play a largely supportive role, for example preparing food, mending crab nets, and so on. The project took pains to respect these norms, thus avoiding any potential social conflict.

Contributions to cross-cutting themes

Communications

Many vinyl posters (160), stickers (160), T-shirts (160) and wall calendars (160) were produced to promote the project. A 20-minute documentary DVD of the project

was made in the Bahasa language and distributed to audiences in Makassar. Local newspapers also regularly carried articles about mangrove planting and crab culture.

Gender equality

The targeted fisher groups were all male and only a few women took part in project activities because of cultural constraints. Women joined training sessions to some degree (although their numbers were not recorded), and also benefited from awareness-raising events. They have stated their support for any mangrove rehabilitation activities that respect their roles in the community.

Climate change

By planting 126,000 mangrove saplings, the project will help to increase carbon sequestration locally. Healthy mangroves will also serve to mitigate the effects of extreme weather events linked to climate change (such as flooding and high winds). These are major local problems.

Lessons learned

Adopting a sensitive approach to project introduction paid dividends. In this case, an IPPM team approached the village six months before the project began to familiarize itself with local conditions and attitudes. This proved key to the subsequent success of the project in involving the community and building bridges to other stakeholders.



Bachtiar, head of the fishers group, Bira Lantebung, Makassar, Indonesia © Hanying Li

“Since IPPM began working with us, we have won much more recognition from government. After the MFF training, which involved a local government officer as one of the resource people, four fishermen from our group were invited to join training held by the Regional Marine and Fisheries Agency. This had never happened before.”

— BACHTIAR
HEAD OF FISHERS GROUP

CONTACT INFORMATION

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