

Nias Islands' Rural Access and Capacity Building Project

Human story – A better road for the future

Nias is a beautiful tropical island situated in North Sumatra Province. It is an important tourist destination in Indonesia, especially for surfers, who travel from all over the world to ride the renowned waves of Nias Islands. Despite all that Nias has to offer, the majority of its inhabitants are living in poverty and they face many barriers to market participation and social services access.

Mrs. Murniati Bate'e is one of Nias Island's indigenous people originating from Dahana Village in Gunungsitoli Idanoi sub-district. She works alongside her husband as a farm worker. As a farm worker, the income of Mrs. Bate'e often varies greatly, as does her working hours. She wished for a job so that she could provide her family – especially her children - with a better start in life.

When UNDP-ILO commenced reconstruction on a 1,235 meter road situated in Dahana Village, many local people - both contractors and road reconstruction workers - gained work from the project. There was a glimpse of hope inside Mrs. Bate'e. Her hope was simple - that she too would some day benefit from the increased opportunities that a better road would bring.

During the month of July 2009, when the road reconstruction works were completed. The ILO formed a group for road maintenance from within the local community that was made up of 8 (eight) women in April 2010. The group was responsible for clearing

the drainage along the side of the road and removing the weeds, as well as ensuring that the reconstructed road was in good condition.

A ballot system was used to form of the road maintenance crew, in order to give equal opportunity to all woman in the village. Mrs. Murniati Bate'e was selected as the head of the group, and she was to work alongside 7 (seven) other women in the crew. Mrs. Bate'e was very happy when she was selected as the head of the group. "This is a wonderful opportunity, especially as it allows me and my fellow colleagues opportunity to earn an income, while still leaving enough time for us to care for our families and households," said Mrs. Bate'e.



In conjunction with the skill enhancement of this newly formed woman group, the ILO provided some brief training on group management and also explained the type of work – and the quality of work - that was expected from the group. "I appreciated this training as it helped us to understand what we have to accomplish and how to divide

tasks within the group. Through this training, I now have a greater self confidence. I have learnt that I can maintain the assets of my community if I am given the opportunity. The income that I received from this job has allowed me to pay my children's fees for school tuition and to buy a new stove," said Mrs. Bate'e smiling happily, as she knows that she is giving her children the good food and good education that they need to succeed in life.

Nias-RACBP supports the Government of Indonesia's Nias Continuation of Post-tsunami Reconstruction Programme until July 2012. Nias-RACBP is funded by the Multi Donor Fund for Aceh and Nias (USD 11.8 million) and is executed jointly by the State Ministry for the Acceleration of Development in Backward Regions and the ILO in 5 districts on Nias Islands. Nias-RACBP supports improvements in rural transport infrastructure in selected areas using a local-resourced approach, so that the people of Nias Islands can benefit from enhanced participation in markets and enhanced access to services.

