



Special Edition

ILO Mentawai Project

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Rebuilding Livelihoods of Mentawai Islands after the 2010 Tsunami and Earthquakes

THE Mentawai Islands are a chain of more than seventy islands and islets off the western coast of Sumatra in Indonesia. The islands are a district in the West Sumatra province with an area of 6,011 square km, and a coastal line of 1,402 km. There are four main islands, Siberut (the largest island), Sipora, Pagai Utara, and Pagai Selatan Islands, and other 98 smaller islands, which are administratively divided into 10 sub-districts and 43 villages. With a total population of 70,174 people, the indigenous inhabitants of the islands are known as the Mentawai people

The Mentawai Islands is home to one of Indonesia's most isolated and vulnerable communities. There are four factors which shape the state of the economy of the Mentawai Islands, namely: its distance from large demand centers and population concentrations; its tropical climate; its archipelago nature (including some 70 islands) within the Indonesian archipelago; and its situation within a disaster prone area. These factors lead to a local high cost economy, unfavorable terms of trade and the lack of comparative and competitive advantage within the national economy. While the climate provides a facilitative environment for agricultural and fishery development, producers face high costs associated with transport and time.

On the 25th of October 2010, the islands were hit by an earthquake 78 km southwest of Pagai Selatan Mentawai, West Sumatra, with a magnitude of 7.2 SR and a depth of 10 km. Minutes later, this earthquake was followed by a tsunami and a series of aftershocks. These events have resulted in severe damages and losses to the population residing in the Mentawai Islands. Four sub-districts have been directly affected by the earthquake and tsunami: Pagai Selatan, Pagai Utara, Sipora Selatan, and Sikakap. Around 509 people were killed, 17 wounded, 21 were missing, and 11,425 people were displaced.

The tsunami is estimated to have caused 117.82 billion IDR in damages and losses, whereby nearly 80 percent of this total occurred in the plantation sub-sector and fisheries sub-sector. Prior to the earthquake and tsunami, the economy of Mentawai Islands was heavily reliant on the traditional productive sector of fishing



and agriculture, contributing to 56 per cent of the islands' overall gross product.

As a result of the tsunami and earthquake and the dominance of the agricultural and fishery sectors, many people in affected communities have lost their income source as fishing equipment were washed away, harvests were disrupted, and more importantly displaced people were taken away from their prior livelihood sources and were obliged to start over.

In the fisheries sub sector, 1,936 residents are reported to have a loss of livelihood not to mention the reduced supply of marine fishery of about 328.51 tons. In total, 2,072 households that had been affected by the tsunami in addition to households living in high risk areas were relocated to the 11 relocation areas in the land sites. The tourism sector, which is the second largest sector in Mentawai, also incurred losses, though to a lesser extent of 10.6 percent. ❁

Rebuilding Mentawai Islands Empowering Local Communities

TO rehabilitate and rebuild the Mentawai Islands after the disaster, the National Agencies for Disaster management (BNPB) immediately formed the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) for Mentawai on the 11th of November 2010. The assessment involved BNPB, the National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas), the Provincial Government of West Sumatera, the District Government of Mentawai, and the Presidential Working Unit for Development Supervision and Control (UKP4).

The PDNA was completed in the 2nd week of December 2010 and its results have become the basis for the formulation of the Action Plan for Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (RENAKSI) for Mentawai Islands, which was endorsed on the 11th of January 2011. A total budget of IDR 1.160 trillion was allocated for rehabilitation needs, reconstruction and relocation, including development, for the period of 2011 – 2013. The first priorities of the RENAKSI are permanent housing construction as well as livelihood and social recovery.

To support the government of Indonesia's development acceleration in the Islands, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) formulated a joint livelihoods recovery programme, "Mentawai Islands Livelihood



Recovery Programme", under the guidance of the Office of the Resident Coordinator. Funded by the New Zealand Aid, the joint programme aims at fulfilling the immediate needs of affected communities in North and South Pagai sub-district (approximately 501 households).

Mentawai Rehabilitation Strategies

TO accelerate the rebuilding and livelihood recovery initiatives and processes in the Islands, immediate strategies were implemented, such as the relocation strategy to higher grounds and the development of backyard crops to provide daily incomes to the affected communities.

Commenced in early 2012, the programme will operate for a year and will support the recovery

process through the supply of seedlings and fishing equipment, delivery of vocational and entrepreneurship trainings, and general provisional support to the organization of farmers, fisherman and other workers so as to increase the sustainability of the livelihoods recovery activities. The overall objective of the joint programme is to contribute to the strengthening of institutional capacities to increase productive and sustainable livelihoods and decent work for the poor and vulnerable, and the young men and women residing in

Mentawai; as well as strengthening the capacities of communities and the government to respond to and recover from disasters and conflicts in a more effective and timely manner. ❀



Moving up to higher grounds

Residents from the affected communities in the coastal areas were relocated by the provincial and district government to an upper land area in 10 sites across Pagai Utara, Pagai Selatan, and Sipora. The total number of relocated households is 2,072, comprising of both affected families and non-affected families who were eager to relocate in order to avoid living within disaster prone areas. To date, the families still continue to reside in temporary housing in the relocation sites while waiting for the permanent housings to be built and for the disbursement of the rehabilitation and reconstruction funds.

Developing Backyard Crops

Developing backyard crops such as bananas, cassavas, maize, and taro was cited as an effective solution in helping the affected communities gain daily income whilst waiting for their harvest from perennial crops such as cocoa and patchouli. The assessment identified that the type of support needed by the affected communities are those related to effective harvesting practices, post harvest technology, processing, packaging, and marketing. These supports would increase the added value of commodities.

Another side benefit to enhancing the production of back yard crops such as cassava and taro is in regards to the currently low supply of rice that has recently become the staple food in the Mentawai Islands. Rice production was only recently introduced to the Islands in the past decade, and production of rice decreased enormously post-disaster, hence communities have had to rely on the distribution of subsidized rice from the government. Exacerbating this problem, distributions of late have been experiencing delays. To replace rice, communities have resorted back to eating cassava and taro as their staple food. Effective development of this backyard crop would alleviate the difficulties experienced from delayed rice rations. ❀

The Joint Programme Initiatives: **Improving, Diversifying, and Restoring Agricultural Livelihoods**



THE joint programme, in collaboration with a local community-based organization called the Association for the Advancement of Small Business (PUPUK) conducted a value chain field assessment. The assessment identified existing agribusiness value chains, key actors, linkages, and business environment, which was used to formulate a value chain design and an action plan for the development of the selected agricultural commodity at the micro, meso and macro level.

The findings were disseminated in a workshop series to government employees in Tua Pejat, the capital of the Mentawai Islands district in June 2012. The assessment would act as a guideline for government officials in the formulation of relevant policies. Some key suggestions from the assessment are to develop an agriculture commodities information system that would be used by farmers and traders in the Mentawai Islands, and to strengthen the linkages between business and non business actors and key stakeholders.

Along with the value chain assessment, an assessment of the situation of extension workers, farmer groups and fisherman was carried out in the months of May and June 2012. The purpose of the assessment was to create a database of all existing members, identify those who possess the required qualities (i.e. leadership, capacity, commitment) to participate in the demo plot, and determine the level of capacity and knowledge to formulate training needs.

Some key suggestions from the assessment are to develop an agriculture commodities information system that would be used by farmers and traders in the Mentawai Islands, and to strengthen the linkages between business and non business actors and key stakeholders.

The demo plot on farming practices is currently being implemented by the FAO. The purpose of the demo plot is to better introduce intercropping practices which combines cash crops (cocoa and nilam), horticulture (bananas, taro, cassava, maize, and vegetables), poultry (chicken and goats) and inland fishing. The demo plot training would facilitate both an increase in horticulture products as well as an improved quality, which would greatly benefit the production of light meals which is one of the focuses of the ILO's recovery programme.

The joint programme has identified several priorities, namely:

- 1.** Increasing income through enhancement of agricultural and fishery productivity and improvement of human capital;
- 2.** Increasing food security through agriculture extension, intensification and diversification, and agribusiness development;
- 3.** Increasing the capacity of communities to organize and access alternative livelihood opportunities;
- 4.** Enhancing the capacity of the local government to provide services through provision of technical assistance and training for human capital development;
- 5.** Supporting the strategic planning through value chain assessment and the setting of priorities; and
- 6.** Supporting the strategic planning through provision of technical assessments on basic service provision, including a long-term plan for managing access to clean water.

Rebuilding Local Communities and Economic Development through **Skills Trainings**

TO compliment the agricultural and fishery sector recovery and enhance the sustainability of livelihoods on the Mentawai Islands, the ILO focused its livelihoods recovery interventions on the development of management and business skills through various training programs, which include trainings on micro-enterprise development, marketing and post-production processing. The trainings apply the ILO's relevant training methodologies, such as the ILO "4 in 1" vocational training methodology and the ILO Gender and Entrepreneurship Together (GET Ahead).

The vocational training of selected Mentawai participants was a core objective of the Mentawai Recovery Project. In collaboration with the Vocational Education and Training Centre (BLKI) of West Sumatra located in Padang, a total of 30 participants were selected for the vocational training based on criteria's of motivation, capacity and age (between 20 to 35). The participants were selected for one of three trades: Motorbike repairing, furniture making and light meals product making. The participants initially participated in 5 days of ToE Get Ahead (training of entrepreneurship) in Sikakap in mid-July before departing to Padang where their vocational training was to take place.

"These series of vocational trainings using competency-based programmes were actually the first training ever conducted for Mentawai youth since the Mentawai became self-autonomy in 2002. Prior to the natural disasters, there were no trainings conducted for the people of Mentawai Islands. These trainings are part of the "4 in 1" training methodology which the ILO hopes could be replicated by relevant governmental offices and community-based organizations into their future regular programmes," said Lucky F. Lumingkewas, the ILO's National Project Officer of the Mentawai Livelihood Recovery Programme. ❀



Afridamon, Head of BLKI Padang: Lessons Learnt from the ILO Training Programme



"There is plenty to be learned from the current ILO training programme which we can implement in future training initiatives. One of the most important lessons learned was in terms of selecting the right participants for training. The ILO has a really good selection process which

allows for a more committed group of participants. In future training sessions, we will endeavor to implement a similar selection process which considers the interest, talents and experience of the potential students."

"The government training initiatives can be improved upon. We had a similar training format 20 years ago. Our training was 6 months long – two months spent in class, three months of hands on training, and one month on the job. However, this training format changed because of budget constraints. It is difficult to change and develop our training programmes not only because of budget constraints, but also because our mandate at the moment is to simply equip students with skills; there is no mandate to provide tools or employment assistance, as is with the current ILO training programme." ❀

Motorbike Repair Training

THE motorbike repair training provides skills in an area where many Mentawai residents do not possess basic knowledge. The trainings offer marketable skills that are needed to fill in the gap between the demand and supply of motorbike repairing skills. Participants selected for this training were all young adult males from a farming background. A series of trainings were to take place in the months of July to September 2012 at the BLKI Padang for a total of 240 hours.

The trainings combine 25 percent theoretical training and 75 percent hands on training. This combination is important for the development of the student after the training has completed, as the students would be able to use their theoretical knowledge and theory books to solve problems and further develop their repairing skills.

H. Ir. Eri Bakri, the lead trainer of the motorbike repair training, said that he particularly liked the combination format of the training programme which enforces

discipline among the trainees. "During the commencement of training, we experienced some difficulty from the students as their expectation of the training program was to immediately commence hands on training with the motorbikes. The students were unenthusiastic in learning the analytics of motorbike training, however, they learnt the importance of theoretical knowledge," he said.

The main challenge encountered in the implementation of similar training programs are disciplinary issues, such as inconsistent attendance from students. However, by housing the trainees near the training centre, these disciplinary issues were mitigated. Mr. Bakri notes the increased commitment level from students, "In fact, the students have really enjoyed the training program. They are committed to the program, can follow instructions, and have had no difficulty in learning. We have even taken extra steps in using simple language and using their local language to ease the learning process," he said, adding that as the Head of the Automotive Department of the Padang Training Centre, he plans to replicate the ILO's training programme in the future. 🌟



“I am living my dream,”

The participants in the motorbike training all share a similar story to that of Januar. Januar, the youngest of three siblings, worked with his parents on the family farm in Malakopa in South Pagai where they cultivated cocoa, coconut and nilam oil. The aftermath of the tsunami however forced Januar and his family to abandon their farm field, which was situated near the beach, and was destructed. Januar and his family relocated to higher ground where they opened a new farm field and recontinued their production of cocoa and nilam oil.

Like the many other community residents who were forced to relocate and open new plantation fields, their income has not recovered to pre-tsunami levels. The cocoa, coconut and nilam oil from Januar's farm



was sold to merchants in Sikakap, and though Sikakap was not directly affected by the destruction of the earthquake and tsunami, the merchants from Sikakap transported and sold the products in Padang. Padang was heavily damaged by the earthquake and as an aftermath effect demand for the products decreased significantly.

Januar had minimal experience repairing motorbikes before joining the training program, the only experience being the occasional repair on his motorbike. Though he had always planned to complete a motorcycle repair training course and was in the process of saving funds for the classes. "When the ILO offered the repair program free of cost, it is like a dream come true. I am living my dream and am planning to open a motorbike repair shop in my village once training is completed," he said. 🌟

Furniture Making Training

“ The quality of the training program has been really good. I particularly like its value in assisting uneducated and unemployed youth gain lawful employment, as they will be able to find to jobs and open businesses after training has ended ”

Zainal, Trainer at BLKI Padang



SIMILAR to motorbike repair training, participants selected for this training were all young adult males from a farming background. A series of trainings were to take place in the months of July to September 2012 at West Sumatra BLKI for a total of 240 hours. The training was targeted to unemployed Mentawai youth, with the intention of providing better access to decent employment and entrepreneurship.

With a simple training method, the trainings offer new techniques and information related to the furniture making business. “The quality of the training program has been really good. I particularly like its value in

Pursuing new, future career in woodworking business



Demailis is 24 years old and lives with his father and younger sister in Malakopa, South Pagai.

Prior to the tsunami, Demailis and his family had dreams of building a new home on their cocoa and nilam field, though the destruction of the tsunami forced them to abandon this dream.

Demailis and his family not only experienced a loss of livelihood, as their farm field was destructed, but they experienced a personal loss. Demailis lost his mother to the tsunami. Demailis recalls the night the tsunami struck, it was a Monday evening and his family was in their home when at 10pm the tsunami had struck. They later found the body of their mother among the house ruins.

“I never thought of establishing myself in the woodworking field. What I only know is farming and my future plan was also to continue working on my family farm,” he said. Though when the ILO presented the training opportunity, he decided to make furniture woodworking his future career. “After joining the training, I learned new applicable skills. My future hope is to open a furniture woodmaking business along with my father,” he said.

assisting uneducated and unemployed youth gain lawful employment, as they will be able to find to jobs and open businesses after training has ended,” said Zainal, the lead trainer for the furniture making training program at BLKI Padang.

He also appraised the high motivation and commitment shown by the training participants. “They are devoted students. I really appreciate their enthusiasms. In addition, we also hope to replicate the ILO’s training programme to ensure the quality of the delivered trainings.”

Light Meals Training

DIFFERENT from motorbike repair and furniture making training, all the participants for the light meals trainings were females except for one young adult male. Conducted by the State University of Padang, the trainings focused on the production of bananas, cassava and taro for a total of 120 hours. The light meals making trainees previously completed the ToE, and it is expected that these trainees will use their new skills and knowledge to conduct light meals training in their communities. It is anticipated that the training will have 200 participating residents in North and South Pagai.

Considering the abundance of natural resources in the Mentawai Islands, the main goal of the light meals trainings is to help the community move forward by

“I want to share my knowledge and skills with my communities”



Lilis Suryani works on the family owned farm in Bulasat village in South Pagai. Lilis's family does not live in this village, but as the farm needed taken care of, Lilis, the oldest child, was sent to Bulasat village to manage the farm, which helps to financially support her parents and siblings. Lilis not only runs the farm business but she also runs a daily needs business.

The aftermath of the tsunami had significant impact on her and her family's livelihood. It became very difficult to attain a decent income as the residents from her village had relocated to higher ground, leaving their previous jobs in Bulasat village and resulting in a profit decrease. The tsunami not only affected her farm and daily needs business but affected her family's income from fishing.



Before the tsunami, Lilis' father would supplement the family income by catching and selling fish. Though after the tsunami had struck, her father stopped fishing because of personal trauma from the tsunami, her father was too afraid to go back in the ocean. When Lilis heard about the light meals training program, she jumped at the prospect as there are currently no light meal producers in her community.

"When I heard about this training opportunity, I just quickly grabbed this once in a life time opportunity," said Lilis. She joined the training program as a means to not only develop her skills and knowledge, but to also employ this opportunity in a manner which would benefit her community. "After my training, I wish to invite young jobless women from my community to learn the tools of the trade. I want share my knowledge and skills that I gained from the light meals trainings with my community. They can produce light meals to be sold to other nearby towns in Mentawai, like Sikakap and Tua Pejat city that, in turn, will improve their living conditions and income." ❀

equipping the residents with the necessary training and tools which would enable them to further explore the development of these resources. "The Mentawai community has many resources which are still yet underdeveloped and underutilized," said Wirnelis Syarif, the Chairman of the Hospitality Department at the State University of Padang.

One underdeveloped food possibility identified is the production of ebi shrimp (small shrimp).

"Ebi shrimp is very expensive in Padang and while Mentawai possesses a healthy population of this shrimp, the production development of this product has not been looked into," Wirnelis noted, adding that cakes and pastries are other possibilities for light meals training.

She also believes that the great potentials of the Mentawai Islands should be explored and unlocked. "I wish that the training programme could be sustained and expanded to other areas of hospitality such as beauty services, sewing, and hotel management. The Mentawai Islands is a great tourist destination which would greatly benefit from this type of hospitality training," she concluded. ❀

Entrepreneurship Training of Trainers

A component of ILO's livelihood recovery programme is the training of trainers (ToT). Training of Trainers equips participants with the necessary tools and knowledge to effectively train entrepreneurship to



other community residents. For the livelihoods recovery programme, a total of 20 participants consisting of 13 men and seven women, from Mentawai and Padang (the capital city of West Sumatra) completed eight days of ToT training using the GET Ahead module. It is expected that these new trainers will train entrepreneurship to 200 Mentawai women who were affected by the Tsunami.

The ToT also involves the ILO's tripartite constituents, including the representatives of the trade unions. Eddy, Chairman of the West Sumatra All Indonesian Workers Union (SPSI), noted his great appreciation for the ILO's training initiatives in assisting the affected communities of Mentawai. "The ILO initiative is like water to our thirsty community. During the eight-day training, the participants, including unions, were trained on how to conduct training for unemployed youth and how to empower local communities. I am going to share what I have learnt here with my union members, equipping them with entrepreneurship training skills that they could also share with other members, their families and others."

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Photo Highlights



Women from the Muntei Kecil Pagai Selatan village proudly show their light meal products. The ILO trained 200 Mentawai women in 10 villages. These women continue to receive assistance in marketing their products.



About 20 women actively participate in a 5-day entrepreneurship training using the ILO's GET Ahead Module in Eruparaboat village.



A cheerful "thumbs up" after being part of the light meals training. They were among the 10 participants who went back to Mentawai Islands and pass on what they learned through conduct of similar light meals training at the State University of Padang.



Two participants of the motorbike repair training doing practical training and internship at the Vocational and Education Training Centre (BLKI) for two months. They were part of the 10 trainees trained by the ILO.



Two participants of the furniture making training learn to make furniture designs. They were part of the 10 trainees trained by the ILO at BLKI in Padang.



Twenty participants, consisting of 5 and 15 participants from the provincial and district levels respectively, actively participate in the ILO's GET Ahead Training on 14 - 22 June 2012. After concluding the training, they have conducted similar trainings to 200 Mentawai women in 10 villages.