

## Pesantren and community involvement in managing disaster risks in coastal areas through mangrove planting



Schoolchildren at Lamongan, Indonesia © CBDRM NU

schools, or *Pesantren*, with 1,500 students in total. The project enlisted their support and the support of the Kyai, a locally influential Islamic leader, in restoring lost mangrove habitat. Its main focus was on educating and involving local children in mangrove planting.

### Target beneficiaries

*Pesantren* students, Brondong villagers and the fishing community.

### Outputs

- ▶ Twenty facilitators acquired knowledge on mangrove propagation and planting, coastal conservation, and disaster risk mitigation. Facilitators later transferred this knowledge to community members.
- ▶ An Islamic approach to disaster risk reduction through mangrove planting was adopted with good results.
- ▶ A successful focus on training teachers at the local *Pesantren*, meaning they can now share their knowledge directly with their students.
- ▶ The formation of community groups and the launching of the *Santri* Care for Mangrove Campaign using local media and religious forums to raise awareness.
- ▶ Mangrove planting (7,000 seedlings, 170 participants) and maintenance (3,000 seedlings used to replace others lost to drought, browsing and other factors).
- ▶ Project sustainability guaranteed by engaging local forestry officials in supporting the continuity of project activities.



#### LOCATION

Brondong district, Lamongan, East Java, Indonesia

#### PRIORITY POWS

- Knowledge for Management
- Civil Society Engagement
- Capacity Building

#### DURATION

4 May 2010 to 4 December 2010

#### MFF GRANT AMOUNT

US\$25,873

### Objectives

This project, run by Nahdlatul Ulama's Community-Based Disaster Risk Management body (CBDRM NU) with MFF, sought to involve *Pesantren* (religious schools) and community members in a mangrove planting programme. The two expected outputs were: 1) knowledge and skills transferred in mangrove nursery management and planting; and 2) the *Pesantren* and coastal community mobilized for conservation.

The process involved recruiting and training facilitators, providing field work for facilitators in disaster risk mitigation and coastal ecosystem conservation through mangrove nursery operation and planting, and supporting a *Pesantren* community campaign for nursery production and mangrove planting.

### Background

The site of the project is Brondong in Lamongan, where much of the original mangrove cover has been cleared but local people continue to depend on the coastal environment for their livelihoods.

The community here holds strong religious beliefs and has two Islamic boarding

### Accomplishments and challenges

Helping the *Pesantren* community to establish a nursery and plant mangroves has increased the ability of school students and

community members to propagate, establish and maintain mangrove plantations. Prominent local figures became engaged in raising the profile of the project.

The religious approach proved effective. Simply stated, the community will follow any recommendations or suggestions from their Islamic leaders. And, by involving teachers in meeting the project's objectives, the mangrove conservation message was integrated into school and educational activities. Well-trained and well-informed facilitators helped to build and sustain public enthusiasm during this process.

### Challenges

The survival rate of planted mangroves was low (50%), one cause being the timing of planting in August when the weather was dry and hot. Foraging by free-ranging goats also caused damage to the seedlings.

Follow-up actions included replacement of dead mangrove seedlings, and consultation with a mangrove expert to determine the best time for planting.

### Contributions to cross-cutting themes

#### Communications

Several Bahasa-language articles covering project progress and activities were published in the *Duta Masyarakat*, *Radar Bojonegoro* and *Zona Berita* newspapers (the lat-

ter is online at [www.zonaberita.com](http://www.zonaberita.com)), and in other publications, including [www.nu.or.id](http://www.nu.or.id). Local radio coverage and posters were also produced.

#### Gender equality

Women accounted for 30% to 50% of the participants in activities, including education, lesson sharing, training facilitators, nursery maintenance and mangrove planting. Of the 20 participants in facilitator training, seven were women. Half of those who took part in mangrove planting were women.

#### Climate change

Planting 10,000 mangroves is the community's response to climate change adaptation. Healthy mangroves help to mitigate the impacts of extreme weather events along the coast.

#### Lessons learned

Using religion as a catalyst to mobilize community involvement in mangrove conservation proved effective. Facilitators provided an important driving force in the project, acting as messengers and promoters for the Kyai's religious and ecological message.

#### Partners and their contribution

An in-kind contribution from the Ministry of Education allowed the use of the Community Learning Centre and local radio station.



Santri planting, Lamongan, Indonesia © CBDRM NU

*"If we plant one tree, then the tree grows and has thousands of leaves; all of the leaves will pray to God for those who plant and take care of it."*

— KYAI  
LOCAL ISLAMIC LEADER AND  
HEAD OF THE PESANTREN

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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