

PROJECT FACTS

Training Future Experts on Climate Change and Poverty in Aceh



- Total budget : USD 99,553
- Project period : 2009 - 2010
- Implementing partner : UNDP and International Centre for Aceh and Indian Ocean Studies (ICAIOS)
- Donor : Ford Foundation

Background

The severe impacts of climate change have become evident in Aceh over the past decade: frequent landslides, long dry seasons that cause serious problems to small farmers, rural and urban communities, and lethal natural catastrophes have marked the region. One horrifying example of the latter is the flooding in December 2006, which killed five hundred people and displaced two hundred thousand.

The region of Aceh has also contributed to climate change through a dramatic reduction of the tropical forest. Aceh is one of Indonesia's poorest provinces, with 21.80 percent living under the national poverty line in 2009. Previous poor environmental policies and the high poverty level have provided opportunities for excessive and illegal logging and the establishing of plantations; led to a cut and burn of the forest for agriculture purposes; and contributed to the destruction of mangrove forest in coastal areas. The region also struggle with major socio-economic inequalities, including a particularly high poverty rate in rural areas. A key challenge is thus how to raise the population above the poverty level and provide sustainable opportunities for the marginalized population.

The Aceh government has taken an active role in addressing deforestation and environmental protection over the past few years. The full moratorium of logging in June 2007 and the Green Economic Development and Investment Strategy for Aceh, more commonly known the 'Aceh Green-plan', are examples of this. However, to ensure successful implementation of the Aceh Green-plan it is necessary to train local scholars to have expertise in the areas of climate change and poverty alleviation. Currently, the number of well-trained national experts is very limited and



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largely restricted to some universities and research agencies in West and Central Java. Particularly Aceh is in need of developing its human resources to address climate change and poverty. Due to protracted conflict and the massive infrastructural damage and humanitarian losses caused by earthquakes and the tsunami, the province has weakened its capacity in academic expertise. Better local knowledge about climate change and a better understanding

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Objectives

In the long term, the project objective is to increase research capacities of local scholars and universities, non-academic researchers, and officials at relevant government departments. In the short term, an important objective will be to provide information on climate risks and poverty in Aceh's villages, as well as gather information on the efforts of local populations to tackle these problems. Such information is crucial in order to strengthen the local government's capacity to implement the Aceh Green-plan and to develop environmentally sound and sustainable policies.

The project will train local young researchers in Aceh with the aim of them becoming experts on climate risk management and poverty. These scholars will in the future be in a position to provide policy advice on climate change and poverty issues to the local government of Aceh.

Results

A gender balanced group of twenty local academic and non-academic researchers and key government officials will attend an intensive four week training course. In the aftermath of this, four of the most qualified participants of the training course will conduct full-time research for six months. The research topics will cover climate risk management and poverty in communities in Aceh and contribute to the overall research theme.

The results of the research will provide firsthand analyses of the current poverty situation and how the local population in Aceh experience climate risks and respond to these. At the end of the project the research results will be presented in a public seminar where key-stakeholders will be invited to discuss findings. The research results will further be published in a collection of articles. Finally, the project will result in a full size technical and financial proposal for a three year research training program on climate risk management and poverty in Indonesia. The research findings of the project will provide policy guidance to the Aceh government in developing environmentally sustainable poverty reduction policies in the province.

For more information:

United Nations Development Programme
Menara Thamrin Building, 8th Floor
Jalan MH Thamrin Kav. 3, Jakarta 10250
Phone: (62-21)3141308. Fax: (62-21)3145251
Email: media.id@undp.org
Website: www.undp.or.id