

The water bearer's

NEWSLETTER | Partner
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Your loans for dignity at work

This third issue of the Water Bearer's Newsletter is also bearer of good news. The cooperative that we have implemented on Flores is snowballing! Our projects are closely intertwined and their results are tangible.

Bringing drinking water to thirty+ communities was the propeller that permitted the extraordinary potential of these communities to take off and develop our 13 hectares ginger and coffee model plantation. In the course of this project, a number of environmental challenges were raised. Based on its experience with model plantations, Program Otonomi is currently developing a 70 hectares Botanical Garden and putting together the foundations of a waste recycling cooperative, the first of its kind on the Flores Island.

MORE DETAILS ON THIS RECYCLING PROJECT IN THE NEXT ISSUE.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH RAINFOREST ALLIANCE AND THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT OF FLORES

Thanks to the Loans for Dignity from our Partners for development, we have been able to gain the support of the Regional Government of Flores and Rainforest Alliance <http://www.rainforestalliance.org/>.

A sign that our efforts are bearing fruit, this new tripartite partnership is binding Program Otonomi with Rainforest Alliance and the Flores Government on a number of projects with very specific deadlines and targets for 2013 et 2014. This partnership

was concluded following a one week visit of the Manager of Rainforest Alliance for Southeast Asia, Mr. Peter Sprang.

Following a tour of the villages and a series of meetings with our local leaders and our Government partners (including a discussion with the Regional Governor – Bupati), Peter appeared quite impressed with our accomplishments and credibility in the field. Concrete results combined with active community commitment and our long-lasting collaboration with the Flores Government were no doubt primary incentives for Rainforest Alliance to sign this partnership agreement.

With the support of these two partners and with your so essential participation at your end of the chain, we are aiming at expanding our network of Partners for development for the purchase of 12 to 15 additional hectares in 2013, thus consolidating our initial complex of 13 in the communities of Wolokoro – Beiwali.

In this respect, your Loans for Dignity remain the spinal cord of Program Otonomi : In June, we will know exactly how many new hectares will be put into production and at the same time how many peasant families will have the opportunity to extract themselves from poverty by planting ginger and coffee on their newly acquired lands.

From Left to Right: Peter Sprang, the Bupati (Regional Governor) Mr Marianus Sae, Gilles Raymond and Mr Sutanto (Director, Regional Development Planning Bureau - Bappeda) discussing the trilateral agreement.



Coop members Markus Tukan et Endy Liko, at the time of preparing the soil.



For information on the Loans for Dignity :
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GINGER AND COFFEE PLANTATION : BEYOND EXPECTATIONS

The planting season is almost over and our initial target of planting 400 kg of ginger by hectare on 13 hectares in December and January has been exceeded : all 13 families have realised their objective of planting 500 kg of ginger seeds on their parcel.

These very concrete and substantial results are probably the longest awaited ones by our partners of day one. I let you imagine how many incredible efforts were deployed in order to reach our target during these 2 months of abundant rainfalls.

At our group debriefing session, we estimated that each of the 13 hectares had enough unplanted land left for 500 additional kilos next year, with the only exception of Om Meus, whose land is largely covered with stones and rocks. Meus will therefore sow his 500 kilos on his own land and this additional crop will be used to pay back his Loan for Dignity as early as possible, just like everybody else.

This implies that based on last year's price of \$1.50 / kg, the 500 additional kg of this year plus the 500 kg of next year should yield over three tons of ginger per hectare annually, generating a minimum annual income of approximately \$4,000 to \$4,500 for each of the 13 families : quite impressive when compared with the maximum average of \$800 - \$900 / year they were earning until very recently! At the end of the day, a feeling of quiet strength has arisen amongst the members of the Coop. Much better than anyone, they realise how deeply such a



Preparing the soil after clearing the "bushes".

Mrs Marie Woldhuis (a Partner from the Netherlands) with Gilles Raymond on her future hectare (yet to be cleaned).



revenue increase is likely to improve their daily lives.

The last few weeks have been dedicated to planting coffee, which is a much easier and quicker process as the soil has already been prepared and the coffee trees are

planted in between the rows of ginger. For example, Joni Poe's family took the lead and just finished planting 700 small Arabica coffee trees lined up side-by-side next to his solidly anchored ginger plants. Joni Poe also took the initiative to diversify his plantation with 250 small cocoa trees,



THE WATER BEARER MOVIE ON THE WEB

THE WATER BEARER, a multi-award winning film by Pascal Gélinas can now be viewed on the web at <http://blogue.onf.ca/2013/02/26/3-films-gratuits-pour-les-40-ans-de-lacic/> (French only for now), a great tribute to this film maker and his movie. A classic in its kind, it is being projected around a world that does not always go so round.

30 young Albesia trees (these fast-growing trees reach full growth within 8 to 10 years and they are widely used in the plywood manufacturing industry), 45 "durian" fruit trees and 40 banana trees.

Results said we? This is just an example of the huge impact of the Loans for Dignity from our 13 day-one partners, an initiative that succeeded in radically improving the daily lives of 13 Indonesian families. Similar results are to be expected with each and every new hectare to be developed, thanks to new Loans granted in the silence of personal decisions made by noble-hearted individuals from the other end of the World.

DEVELOPMENT OF A BOTANICAL GARDEN

On February 4, upon the authorization of the Forest Department of the Republic of Indonesia, Program Otonomi, Rainforest Alliance and the District (Kabupaten) Government of Ngada (Flores) agreed upon a trilateral cooperation project pertaining to the development of a 70 hectares Botanical Garden in the protected area of Wolo Bolo.

This project is very interesting. Our mandate consists in developing and managing model coffee and other crops plantations. Rainforest Alliance will contribute a sum of \$1 300 for the preparation of phase 1 (10 hectares) and provide the budget for a permanent nursery, which will also be operated and managed by Program Otonomi, in cooperation with the Garden management.

Training, supervision and evaluation of the team of peasants will be under the responsibility of Rainforest Alliance whereas the manager of the garden Mr Raymondus Nua, will coordinate the project.

The financial contribution of Rainforest Alliance for the first 10 hectares will allow starting immediately without having to wait for the Central Government's funding for the whole 70 hectares.

EXPANSION OPPORTUNITY

This tripartite partnership leads to a very interesting opportunity for Program Otonomi: The Indonesian Department of Forest and Land owns a protected territory of 600 hectares on the outskirts of the botanical garden. We have thrown lines here and there, suggesting that our model plantation concept would be perfect for the develop-



ment of these 600 hectares. We can count on the Governor (Bupati) to support us on this issue.

In concrete terms, this implies that from then on, each hectare of land could be obtained without having to spend for the acquisition of the land. The Loans for Dignity would then be entirely dedicated to the purchase of quality seeds (ginger, coffee, cocoa, clove, pepper, etc.) and to support the work of the peasant families between the planting season and time of their first harvest. A single Loan for Dignity could then be shared by two or three families working on two or three hectares. Loans could obviously be paid back more quickly and more easily, which would make them more attractive for the partners for development.

This opportunity is real, discussions are under way and chances are that this agreement with the Regional Government will become reality, thanks to the decentralisation powers granted by Jakarta to the Regional Government. Putting our foot in this zone will allow us to establish a precedent that will strengthen the position of Program Otonomi vis-à-vis the Regional Government and materialise our partnership with them.

To this end last month, we have called a number of meetings with the peasants committees of three villages bordering this zone, namely Bea, Welu and Betho Padhiand they all answered yes to join Program Otonomi. The participation of these peasants committees who work together in cooperative mode, will allow us counting

on already organised people for this new development phase.

A MARKET STUDY ON GINGER POWDER

Our agreement with Rainforest Alliance stipulates that RA will provide us training on the ginger drying process and ginger powder production.

Rainforest Alliance will also realise a market study on (a) the comparative advantages of selling natural, dry or powder ginger and (b) the real opportunities and benefits of developing a niche on the international markets versus selling in Indonesia. This market study will be completed before the October 2014 harvest.

In this respect, we have approached other villages in order to bring all the ginger producers of the region together, set up a unique marketing partnership and build a critical mass to compete against the traders who go from village to village, purchasing ginger at so-called friendly prices.

AND WHAT ABOUT WATER?

The Water Bearer keeps up... with at least one drinking water project on his busy agenda. On March 19, the Regional Governor (Bupati) Mr. Marianus Sae is scheduled to inaugurate a drinking water project in the village of Lekogoko, thanks to a subsidy from the Central Government in Jakarta.

Upon termination of this project, we will proceed to a technical survey with another village and restart our lobbying machine in order to get the financing. Otherwise, life goes on...