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Country:	Indonesia
Project title:	Rehabilitation of livelihoods for the tsunami and earthquake survivors of Simeulue Island, Aceh, Indonesia
Project No.:	AS 1275 / IDN 1029-07
Project holder:	Welthungerhilfe
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## Evaluation Report

Simeulue, Yogyakarta, Berlin

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# I. Summary

## 1 Brief description of the project and framework conditions

Project IDN 1029<sup>1</sup> is part of Welthungerhilfe's Tsunami Rehabilitation Program AS 1275. It started in May 2007 and was originally planned to last for 20 months, but was recently extended for six more months. Project area is the Sub-district of Teupah Barat on Simeulue Island, Simeulue District, Aceh Province, Indonesia, 150 km west of the coast of Sumatra. 7338 persons of 1779 households live in the 18 villages of Teupah Barat. Originally, IDN 1029 had been planned for two sub-districts with in total 37 villages, but work in the Sub-district of Teupah Selatan was cancelled when it was discovered that CARE was implementing a livelihood project in the same region.

After the Tsunami of 26 December 2004 and the earth quake of 28 March 2005, Welthungerhilfe and its Irish alliance partner CONCERN WORLDWIDE had supported Teupah Barat with different projects: Welthungerhilfe supported the **southern part** of the sub-district with shelters (ten villages on Simeulue plus the village on Pulau Teupah, 150 shelters, IDN 1018, ECHO funds, August 2005-September 2006). The ten villages on Simeulue were afterwards supported by a livelihood project (IDN 1019, ECHO funds, May 2006-April 2007) which also provided support to the sub-district of Teupah Selatan. In September 2006, Welthungerhilfe started supporting seven of these ten villages with housing (IDN 1023, 310 houses, ADB and CONCERN funds, September 2006-December 2008). CONCERN supported the **northern part** of the sub-district (seven villages) with shelters (534 shelters, January 2005 up to April 2007). In **Salang Sub-district**, two sub-districts further north of Teupah Barat, Welthungerhilfe supports another livelihood project (IDN 1025, BMZ funds, January 2007-Dec. 2009). The IDN 1025 and IDN 1029 are run by the same team of staff except one Livelihood Officer and four Assistant Field Officers which are especially assigned to each project.

IDN 1029 is implemented by Welthungerhilfe. Even though the project started already in May 2007, major village interventions only began early 2008. The project is active in the following fields:

- Agriculture,
- Micro-finance,
- Small enterprise promotion/marketing,
- Communal rural infrastructure (only few activities).

The project started with a local rapid evaluation of IDN 1019 and a rapid needs assessment of the seven CONCERN villages, which led to a change in project concept (less material distribution, more capacity building). So far, IDN 1029 has established 17 farmers groups (average group size: 79 persons), 15 women groups (in average 22 persons), and 6 small enterprise groups of 12 persons each. Trainings comprised rehabilitation of living fences, marketing for farmers, organic fertilizer production, use and repair of hand tractors, cultivation of secondary crops/vegetables and of rice (training method: farmer field schools, FFS), group dynamics, bookkeeping, small business management, and start-your-own-business. Most trainings were conducted by external consultants. Furthermore, four agricultural storages, two organic fertilizer centres, two small bridges and one agricultural feeder road were constructed, and one hand tractor each were distributed to eleven villages. One consultancy on suitable crops for Teupah Barat and for Salang was recently finished and the results were shared in a multi-stakeholder workshop for deciding joint actions.

Framework conditions are favourable: Compared to other regions in Aceh, the damages through the 2004 Tsunami are low (almost no casualties due to the traditional early warning

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<sup>1</sup> English name: Rehabilitation of livelihoods for the tsunami and earthquake survivors of Simeulue Island, Aceh, Indonesia, German name: Sicherung der Einkommenserwirtschaftung der ländlichen Bevölkerung in zwei Sub-Distrikten, Simeulue, Aceh Provinz, Indonesien.

system, wave only 2 m high), and prior to the Tsunami the area was not affected by the conflict between the Indonesian Military and the Free Aceh Movement GAM. Simeulue District with its isolated location has considerably developed after the Tsunami and the wave of external help. Infrastructure has improved, an airport has been established, agricultural mechanisation and “modern” agriculture have been introduced, and employment was created in the construction sector. The regional per capita income has increased by 11% in 2007. However, still today most consumption goods in Simeulue come from Sumatra, including agricultural products such as tomatoes, cucumbers, bananas, and water melons. Government programs such as the Village Development Funds ADG and the Sub-district Development Program PPK are available. A big risk for the island is seen in the plans of the district government to convert 10.8% of the island into oil palm plantations.

## **2 Outcomes and impacts**

Short- and especially longer-term effects/changes due to the project are difficult to assess as the project only started early 2008 with major interventions. Outcomes and impacts will further improve with the evaluation’s recommendations applied.

At present, impacts most remarkable are due to the farmer field schools and the women’s saving and credit activities. The former resulted in introduction of new crops and their cultivation methods to the area, and that farmers started to think in new ways (improved knowledge and skills, change of farming system from traditional subsistence agriculture to more economic farming); the latter provided women an opportunity to obtain money in times of need for productive and consumptive purposes. Some women used group credits for home-based industries, such as poultry husbandry, snacks making, running small shops.

Economic outcomes and impacts are at present still limited, but are expected to occur in the future (agriculture, micro finance). Socio-cultural outcomes and impacts are already now visible: farmers start promoting what they learned in the FFS in their own groups, and the women gained a lot of self-confidence and respect from others with their successful saving and credit activities. Institutional/political outcomes and impacts are limited; the project has not yet put its attention on strengthening the civil society and there is no initiative to facilitate networking among the facilitated groups. The groups are only facilitated in technical aspects, but not yet on how to advocate their interests and aspirations and how to make maximum use of the opportunities provided by the government. For the time being, environmental outcomes and impacts are limited, but can be expected for the future (promotion of organic farming, tree crops activities, providing alternatives to oil palm cultivation).

## **3 Sustainability**

Even though originally planned as distribution project, the project had been able to re-orient its approach according to the results of the local rapid evaluation of July 2007 and adjusted its strategy towards less material distribution and more capacity building. However, there is still a high distribution component in the project although people’s livelihoods are no more in danger.

The project has tried hard to assure that project effects would last after the end of the project (grading of groups, social contracts, appointment of local people as village facilitators). However, the good ideas behind these concepts were insufficiently put into practice - options for improvement exist. With improved ownership feeling of the target group, sustainability of measures will increase.

At the present stage of the project, with the approach applied, sustainability of project measures will only be small. Some effects will probably last when the project has withdrawn, such as some of the vegetables introduced in the villages and the knowledge accumulated in the farmer field schools. Also, some of the women will probably continue their saving and credit activities.

#### **4 Relevance**

Considering the massive flood of support which will stop in the years to come it is extremely relevant to prepare the local communities to stand on their own. The concepts of Welthungerhilfe (Self-help Promotion, Rural Development, Food Security, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation) call for changes of the present project approach (e.g. handing over more responsibility to villagers, reduce distribution of material support, conduct more capacity building).

In Indonesia, the awareness of self-sufficiency in food production and low-input agriculture is growing - and the project's activities are very relevant in the isolated area of Simeulue. At present, project IDN 1029 tries not to get involved in government affairs; it concentrates on supporting groups (farmers, women, small entrepreneurs). So far, the project missed to capacitate villagers to play an active role in the development of their villages and to enable them to make good use of the opportunities provided in the new regulations.

#### **5 Effectiveness**

It cannot be expected that the project purpose would be achieved by now. The project conducts activities to support agricultural production and non-agricultural income. The project did well to introduce the method of farmer field schools for supporting the farmers in their agricultural production in order to increase food self-sufficiency as well as for local sales. Also, the promotion of the women saving and credit groups was very effective in improving the livelihoods of the local population. The approach applied in supporting groups of small entrepreneurs is assessed as less effective (putting training participants from different enterprises from different villages together into one group for material support).

There are short-comings in project planning as well as in M+E (monitoring and evaluation). The project would have been more effective in self-help promotion if participatory planning sessions were conducted for each village in the beginning. Using a project planning matrix also would have helped the project a lot; and without a proper monitoring system in place, it is difficult to steer the project into the right direction.

#### **6 Efficiency**

The assessment of efficiency of the present project depends a lot on the basis of what is assessed – is it the fast use of funds, is it if funds were used in a cost-efficient way, is it considering costs and the sustainability of project measures? So far, funds have been used in a very economic way considering the costs as well as the quality of the goods/services to be bought. The project refused to spend funds by distributing goods only, but tried to make measures more sustainable. As already mentioned, these efforts have not been very successful. The recommendations provided will increase efficiency of project measures (considering costs and sustainability of project measures).

#### **7 Annual cross-cutting theme “Helping people help themselves”**

As there was no participatory planning of project activities at village level in the beginning of the project, the villagers feel less responsible for project activities. Many of them feel like acting on behalf of Welthungerhilfe (“community supports Welthungerhilfe”, “community implements Welthungerhilfe policies”, “Welthungerhilfe as parent, community as a child that should thank Welthungerhilfe”), but not as self-responsible actors in their own development process. Also, some of the staff have a limited understanding on the concepts of participation and self-help promotion (“Welthungerhilfe as facilitator and mediator, community as supporter of activities,” “Welthungerhilfe as a donor, community as the recipient of the benefits”, “Welthungerhilfe understands and helps what is needed by the community; community gives information on their environment and what they need”) and, thus, can not play the role needed.

However, with the recommended activities to prepare the villagers to stand on their own (e.g. more FFS, intensified mentoring of saving and credit activities, information on the present government support programs), the project will help the people of Teupah Barat Sub-district,

who have suffered from the natural disasters and were provided with emergency, reconstruction and rehabilitation assistance, to stand on their own when the wave of external support has withdrawn.

## **8 Most important recommendations**

The most important recommendations are as follows:

1. Continue the farmer field schools,
2. Continue supporting the women saving and credit groups,
3. Withdraw from the small-enterprise groups,
4. Increase the awareness of villagers about the present government programs,
5. Introduce a proper project planning, monitoring and evaluation system,
6. Capacitate field staff and agree on clear targets to be achieved by each staff,
7. Extend the project for six more months as capacity building needs more time, revise the budget accordingly.

## **9 General conclusions**

IDN 1029 is a good example for a project in an area affected by a natural disaster. Since the three years after the disaster, the conditions have normalized, livelihoods are no more in danger, and society and infrastructure are functioning again. Welthungerhilfe has to decide on criteria and mechanisms to determine which type of support to provide in which situations.

IDN 1029 was not designed upon a clear strategy and neither targeted changes to be achieved nor the project period planned realistically. The project should have taken more time and invited more beneficiaries' participation for designing the project, especially as the emergency stage had already shifted into the rehabilitation stage. A mid-term evaluation provides good opportunities to improve the project achievements.

The present project showed short-comings in the implementation of the self-help approach. Involving the target population sufficiently in the design of the project and its planning, and handing over responsibility to them has shown to be very important for an ownership feeling of the communities. With project staff concerned important project messages have to be discussed again and again. Participatory approaches cannot be understood and internalized over night. Different methods need to be applied (formal training, visiting other organisations and project areas, project discussions, etc.), especially when the background of staff is emergency aid.

Three ideas of the project can serve as examples for others:

1. Group grading: Group grading should be done in a transparent and participatory way. The results should be used for systematic capacity building. Group grades are good impact indicators and should be thoroughly monitored; groups should be further supported in the fields where they showed short-comings.
2. Social contracts: The project tried to assure that project beneficiaries give the benefits they receive from the project to others, either in terms of cash or in terms of knowledge, even though the "social contracts" used by the project have many shortcomings. Contracts should be between the group members based on the local culture (traditional ceremony). Examples are available from the Grameen Bank (before people receive a loan, they get an oath from all group members) and from Heifer Project Indonesia (a kind of marriage ceremony is conducted between the person who receives the cow and the person who will get the calf of this cow).
3. Village facilitators: Motivated and committed people live in every village in the world. They have to be identified during the course of a project and capacitated to further support the development of their village. Money should possibly not be involved.