

**Strengthening Farmers' Awareness Regarding Loss of Biodiversity in Tropical Forests through
Community Seed House in Central Borneo**



**First Project Year
Narrative Report
(May 2021 – May 2022)**

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Summary Table

SCHEDULED REPORT:	Progress Report
PROGRAMME:	Strengthening Farmers' Awareness Regarding Loss of Biodiversity in Tropical Forests through Community Seed House
TOTAL FUNDED AMOUNT:	26.670 EUR
FUNDED FIRST PERIOD:	11.030 EUR
TOTAL UTILISED:	10.369 EUR
BALANCE:	661 EUR
FIRST PERIOD:	MAY 2021– MAY 2022

Executive Summary

This is the first-year progress report of the project: Strengthening Farmers' Awareness Regarding Loss of Biodiversity in Tropical Forests through Community Seed House in Central Borneo from May 2021 to May 2022, implemented by Standy Christianto in Manuhing Raya, Central Kalimantan. The project targets including objectives, number of communities and total number of targeted beneficiaries has remained unchanged during the period under review.

However, the ongoing Covid outbreak has plagued the country since the beginning of the project in 2021, and it is very likely that some of the activities including training of farmers will be achieved behind schedule. Key reasons for this delay are related to health and safety regulations as well as travel restrictions that affect public gatherings and thus our trainings.

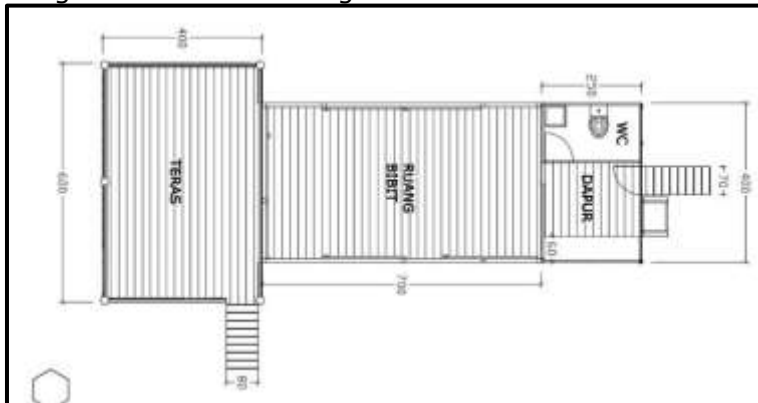
During the reporting period the following key results were achieved through a number of activities:

- A Local seed house has been built that farmers can use for seeds storage, place of gathering and training, and as seeds information center;
- Training were conducted for 56 farmers for seeds maintenance, regulation and storages in Tumbang Samui villages and Tumbang Oroï villages.
- Social programs for farmers and stakeholders in the Manuhing Raya districts were organized.

Results Achieved

Output 1. To develop one community seed house in Manuhing Raya Village

- 1.1 Building one seed house:** The house construction equipped with storage and cabine is completed and already in use by community members. The construction of the house was made by local wood from the villages. It was built during June 2021 – December 2021. It took longer than expected because some materials were not available in the villages and while construction time prolonged the rainy season started (September – December). That made it necessary to stop construction work periodically because of heavy rains. The sketch picture was created voluntarily by Yongki Aden, Student of Palangka Raya university. He is dayaknesse and knows the traditional design of wood houses in the villages. He felt honored to contribute by designing a local seed house for farmers. The house is of length 13.5 meters, and width 6 meters with seeds storages/display room, WC, small kitchen and balcony for gathering and used as training room.



Completed sketch in this [link](#)



We called the local seed house "Pasah harati", whereas "pasah" is a hut, and "harati" is smart. The meaning is that the place can cause an enlightenment for our life. This resonates to Dayak tradition and philosophy where the seed is representing the "small life in the universe". Hoping this hut can be a center of information and knowledge for seeds to conserve from threats around villages, especially the land conversion by the palm oil industry.

Pictures

link :<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1EbMwoz3xez1PPTeV9YbVGiCgo8VFT8Xt?usp=sharing>

- 1.2 Buying equipment and maintenance:** The collection of local seeds stored so far in the seed house consists of 90 accessions from 40 varieties of seeds from 14 farmers. The details of the seeds are 19 types of vegetables, 1 type of fruit, 13 types of rice and 7 types of sticky rice. We took the coordinates of all of the seeds from the farmers' lands. We did seed processing and cleaning before safekeeping in Pasah Harati. We bought glass bottles for seeds storage and some storage used as traditional storages that are made of rattan or wood. Of course we expected that already before starting this project but we were finally amazed at this diversity of traditional varieties. We felt greatly reconfirmed that Central Kalimantan has really a big potential for local seeds, especially for rice, maize, cowpea and eggplant. We calculate that there must be a minimum of 200 varieties of rice and 50 varieties for maize, cowpea, and eggplant in central Kalimantan. This also motivated us to apply for a partnership with the Global Crop Diversity Trust in order to increase and internationalize our capacity of traditional seed conservation. In June 2022 we will start collecting seeds from farmers not only to be stored in the local seed house but also for long term storage in the global seed vault at Svalbard, Norway. For this purpose a small laboratory in Palangka Raya at the Borneo Institute office will be set up (read more about this new partnership with the Crop Trust under Recommendations).

Please check the [data seeds](#) and more [photos](#):



- 1.3 Program socialization:** We conducted the socialization programme in January 2022, when more than 100 villagers came to our Pasah Harati. We invited stakeholders including the sub-districts head of Manuhing Raya and village officers to spread information that there is a local seed bank now in Manuhing Raya. During these activities, we also inaugurated a traditional ritual which needs to be done if someone has built a house in these villages. Please take a look at the [other photos](#) and [participant list](#)



Output 2. To improve knowledge and capacities of farmers regarding seeds maintenances and biodiversity

2.1 Focused Group Discussion (4 times): planned for the **second project year**.

2.2 Comparative Study: planned for the **second project year**.

2.3. Training of seed management (once in the first and once in the second project year): We facilitated a training for 66 famers in total with an average composition of 80 % female and 20% male. Because this is an important training, we try to do it as much as we can in one year. We so far managed to conduct trainings 3 times in two villages in [October 2021](#), [January 2022](#), and [march 2022](#). The training focused on the following topics:

- Seeds cleaning
- seeds storages and processing
- Seeds reduplication
- Organic farming
- Problem sharing between farmers

Following are some of the key messages of the sessions:

- There are certain methods to process and store the seeds in Pasah Harati
- Farmers should actively participate in the seed maintenance, because the local seeds bank has intentionally been built for the farmers and it belongs to them.
- The organization of farmers is responsible for maintaining the seeds bank.
- Farmers can still use the traditional way for keeping the seeds in their house, but the local seeds bank helps and supports to keep the seeds safer and conserve them longer.

Please check the other Photos [1\)](#) [2\)](#) [3\)](#)



2.4. Training for seed regulation (1 times): We trained 21 farmers in May 2022 on how to reduplicate local seeds and breed the seeds if needed. We have targeted 50 farmers in training while conducting the training twice. This training was given a little bit later than originally planned because of technical issues. We will hold this training again including a focus group discussion in the second project year. In the beginning of this year there was also heavy rain that caused flooding, which cut off the road for several days. The content of the training was:

- definition of seeds regulation
- seed reduplication
- property right for hybrid seeds
- seed regulation in Pasah harati
- seeds maintenance



Please take a look [photos](#) and [participant list](#)

Output 3: To share knowledge between farmers and stakeholders (government, donors, and other NGOs) (in second project year)

- 3.1. Developing the Website
- 3.2. Catalog writing and publishing
- 3.3. Catalog Launching

Challenges

- The official declaration of the covid outbreak in mid of 2021 caused a restrictive situation that made it challenging to implement most of the project activities that involved the gathering of people for meetings and trainings. This delay of activities in 2021 is also the reason why in April 2022 we still have a little bit of funds left over that were originally dedicated to be spent in the first project year.
- The distance between villages is very difficult to overcome. In the rainy season,

we cannot cross the road, because the road is often times flooded or damaged. It causes farmers from 4 villages to be unable to reach our Pasah Harati. We therefore focus on 3 villages with the closest distance to the Pasah Harati.

- The project area is a remote area without internet connection, electricity, and signal for handphones. In order to have an internet connection we need to go to the nearby villages or hike on hills. That makes communication difficult and urgent communication sometimes impossible. The distance to overcome is around 1 hour by car if we want to communicate with experts in case we need some advice.

Recommendations

Based on the learning from this first project year, the following recommendations and assumptions can be made for the continuation of this project:

- We will focus on 3 villages that are involved already to save their seeds. We will reach the target of 100 farmers in total and more than 50 varieties of seeds will be stored in Pasah Harati.
- Ideally we need one more seed house that is near to the other 4 villages. This has not been planned for to be achieved in this pilot project, but we can now be assured that it is a recommendation for a follow up project.
- End of May 2022 we have signed a partnership and funding contract with the [Crop Trust](#) that has let us collect more seeds from the Dayakness with the purpose of long-term conservation at the global seed vault in Svalbard. This may not immediately benefit the local farmers but the international recognition our project activities receive by this partnership is tremendous. The Dayak people feel so proud that their efforts to conserve the traditional crops and biodiversity is now truly internationally recognized and valued. It boosts their ambitions to not give up their traditional lifestyle and to continue their struggle against the palm oil industry. We are very thankful of our first partner, Weltweit e.V. and the Ursula Merz Foundation, for their primary support because only through that we were able to start the seed conservation activities which became the basis enabling us to reach out for the Crop Trust. We now assume that this momentum can give us an even better chance to increase our efforts and scale-up this project by reaching out to other partners and collaborators.

The last two years have seen an unprecedented crisis when the corona virus created chaos in nearly every country. This year the international order is disrupted by the war between Russia and Ukraine, and again it means the focus of common people, global communities and leading institutions are drawn to this immediate crisis and away from little seeds that we humans put into the soil. But these seeds mean the survival of our traditional communities and ultimately they can mean the survival of humanity. We therefore encourage and welcome with thankfulness the continuation of support into the second project year.

Sincerely,
Standy Christianto
-Project Manager (BIT)

Additional photos









