

# Seeds of Change

Newsletter

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InfiniteEARTH  
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## RIMBA RAYA CONSERVATION RECYCLE BANK INITIATIVE

At a waste sorting station in the village of Telaga Pulang on the Seruyan River, a three-wheeled motorcycle delivery van arrives to drop off several bags containing plastic bottles and other household materials.

Two men quickly sort the goods into different types and then weigh them while another colleague records the weight of each material and the name of the household that collected the items.

Within minutes, another deposit has been made with the Recycle Bank.

"People used to throw rubbish into the river, but not anymore," said Eneng Heriyanto, 40, the Recycle Bank manager.

"They collect waste and bring it here. This is the first Recycle Bank in Seruyan regency," he said in a recent interview. "Families now have an extra income."

Nearly 80 percent of the 600 households in Telaga Pulang, in Central Kalimantan, now recycle their household waste, using the bank to literally deposit the materials and in return receive a small sum per kilogram. Villagers can either take the money on the spot, or bank it and receive interest if the money stays in the account for more than a month.

Jenis Produksi Sampah		Harga Produk/Kg	
		menabung	tunai
<b>SAMPAH PLASTIK</b>			
	<b>PLASTIK CAMPURAN</b>	Rp. 1500	Rp. 1300
	<b>PE</b> (plastik bungkus bening, tas kresek putih)	Rp. 600	Rp. 600
	<b>KERAS</b> (Helm, dek motor, alat elektronik)	Rp. 600	Rp. 600
	<b>BOOT</b> (Selang, Sepatu Boot, dll)	Rp. 1500	Rp. 1300
	<b>KEPING CD</b>	Rp. 2000	Rp. 1500
	<b>KARPET</b>	Rp. 300	Rp. 300
	<b>GEMBOS</b> (Sepatu, sandal rusak)	Rp. 300	Rp. 300
<b>SAMPAH LOGAM</b>			
	<b>BESI</b>	Rp. 2500	Rp. 2300
	<b>OMPLONG</b> (Kaleng susu, cat, pilox dll)	Rp. 600	Rp. 600
	<b>SENG</b>	Rp. 600	Rp. 600
	<b>KALENG</b>	Rp. 6000	Rp. 6000





**Nearly 80 percent of the 600 households in Telaga Pulang village, located on the border of the Rimba Raya Reserve, now recycle their household waste**

The village is one of 10 supported by Rimba Raya Conservation and the programme team suggested the Recycle Bank idea as a way to reduce pollution and improve household incomes.

"This programme is a success and many villagers do drop by. They are mostly housewives but there are also school children," said Pak Eneng.

In less than a year, the programme has grown rapidly and now four other villages also send their waste to the sorting centre. Palm oil companies also bring in selected items but they only get the money after the bank sells the goods.

More than a dozen different items can be recycled, each with a different price per kg, and include paper, plastics, iron and aluminium, which fetches the highest price.

Once the materials are sorted, they are trucked to the city of Sampit about four hours away to be sold to dealers.

So far, most villagers prefer to leave their money in the bank, Pak Eneng said. There's also a plan to reward villagers with basic essentials, such as rice and cooking oil, instead of cash.

Rimba Raya hopes to expand the Recycle Bank to other villages along the river and also promote another related programme that turns materials that cannot be recycled into handicrafts. Already, a group of women in Telaga Pulang are skillfully turning household waste, such as old fabric, into key chains, fans and brooches for sale.

This is part of Rimba Raya's broader goal of improving villagers' economic independence by promoting new skills and job opportunities, working in consultation with them and providing technical advice. A little extra income and new skills often go a long way in strengthening communities, particularly if the programmes bring villagers together to cooperate for a common good.





# RIMBA RAYA CONSERVATION HANDICRAFTS INITIATIVE



Most of us wouldn't think twice about reusing most of the waste we throw out each day. But to the women of Telaga Pulang village in Central Kalimantan, something as simple as shiny paper packaging, coffee powder sachets or old fabric can be turned into decorative and useful goods that can be sold for extra income.

All it takes is a little imagination and technical advice.

When the village elected to join up with Rimba Raya Conservation, villagers said they wanted assistance to expand their livelihood options. Fishing is on the wane as catches from the adjacent Seruyan River decline and many in the village now rely on jobs at neighbouring palm oil plantations. But the incomes from palm oil firms, while welcome, are often not enough to cover daily needs.

With Rimba Raya's help, the villagers turned to something they are naturally good at – making attractive handicrafts out of simple materials.

In less than a year, a group of women from the village have created a cooperative that sells their goods to local markets and as far away as Bali. They source much of their materials from the village's successful Recycle Bank recycling centre.



"We are turning coffee sachets into flowers. People do buy our products but marketing is not easy. Marketing will be the main goal," said Ms Galuh Dariani, 44, the coordinator of the handicraft workshop. "I believe this activity is beneficial for housewives here, and is a valuable experience. The money can be used to buy daily needs."

On a recent visit to the co-op, half a dozen women were laughing and chatting as they worked in a spacious village hall. On a table nearby was a range of goods ready for sale.





**In less than a year, with funding & other support from Rimba Raya, a group of women from the village have created a cooperative that sells their goods to local markets and as far away as Bali**

“This activity helps the housewives by turning waste into flowers, key holders and fans. The products are often brought to Jakarta, Bali and people from the palm oil plantations also buy them,” said Endah, 25, one of the women in the cooperative. Her husband is a foreman at a palm oil plantation.

“We are thankful for this cooperation with Rimba Raya. This is better than doing nothing. Our husbands don’t complain either,” she says with a laugh.

Liliani, 28, said she welcomed the extra income. “Our children also help us by cleaning the waste and cutting it into pieces,” she added.

Telaga Pulang is just like any other village. Living costs are rising and villagers aspire to own motorcycles, smart phones and other gadgets. To keep the village growing and working together, local leaders understand the need to provide greater livelihood and employment options as traditional sources of income, such as fishing, decline.

The regional government has development funds available for villagers but often village leaders need help in crafting plans to use the funds in a way that provides long-term benefits. Sometimes outside technical advice and ideas sharing can help.

Rimba Raya is expanding the handicrafts programme to other villages and it is limited only by the imagination and materials available.

Down river, the village of Muara Dua has enthusiastically chosen wood-working using recycled timber. Rimba Raya has provided tools and training to local craftsmen to make everything from tables to kitchen implements. At a recent expo featuring crafts produced by different regencies of Central Kalimantan, Muara Dua’s woodwork proved a hit, with many of the items sold.







To keep the village growing and working together, local leaders understand the need to provide greater livelihood and employment options, as traditional sources of income, such as fishing, decline

Pak Jarman, 53, is one of Muara Dua's leaders and he embraced the idea of making rosary beads from local gaharu, or agarwood. The beads can be used for praying or, depending on the design, for decoration and jewellery.

Agarwood is valuable and some villagers simply sell the raw material, often old or recycled timber, to dealers in bigger towns. The wood is then made into more expensive goods.

Rimba Raya suggested starting a local enterprise in Muara Dua using agarwood. Better for the profits and the jobs to stay in the village.

Pak Jarman was keen on the idea. He started using basic tools to turn the wood into small rosary beads, then drilled and strung them together in a chain.

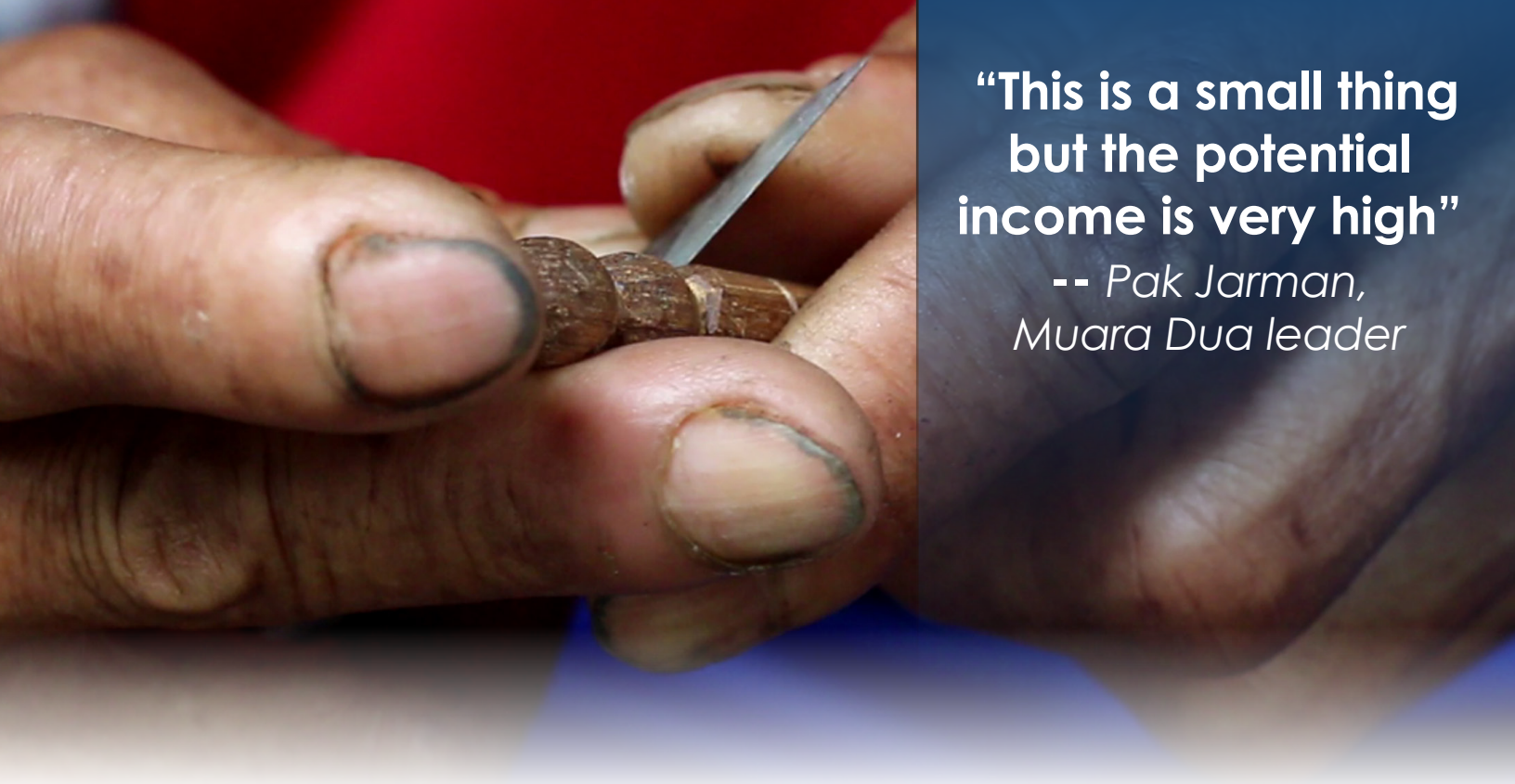
But the work is laborious and Pak Jarman can make only about 36 beads a day, he explained recently as he manually polished the beads of a small rosary on the front porch of his riverside home.

Rimba Raya has recently bought equipment that allows Pak Jarman to make about 1,000 beads a day, ensuring consistent size and quality – essential when the plan is to sell to Jakarta and eventually overseas.

With Pak Jarman taking the lead, other villagers are now keen to join his enterprise.

Ichsan Nasrul, who leads Rimba Raya's programmes in the central region, one of the three regions in the conservation project, says raw agarwood fetches about 2,000 rp (about 15 US cents) per kilogram. But for 1 kg, Pak Jarman can make several rosaries.

**Rimba Raya has provided tools and training to local craftsmen to make everything from tables to kitchen implements.**



**“This is a small thing  
but the potential  
income is very high”**

*-- Pak Jarman,  
Muara Dua leader*

Pak Nasrul said a good quality agarwood necklace in the regional town of Sampit, in Central Kalimantan, sells for at least 300,000 rupiah (\$23).

“This is a small thing but the potential income is very high. There's a market for religion and fashion,” he said as we watched Pak Jarman at work.

Pak Nasrul explained that it was important for the villagers to form cooperatives, or groups, to improve efficiency in making and sourcing of goods and materials. He said Rimba Raya was trying to create a series of cottage industries. It was important, he said, for the villagers to join different groups that support the different activities as a way to improve the bonds of each community.