



PARTNERS *International*

Update – May 5, 2006

School Opening

Cahaya Suku organized the rebuilding of an elementary school, which was just completed. The Partners International-sponsored workers coordinated the construction of six classrooms, an office, and a house for the single teachers in only three months. World Relief funded the reconstruction. Apart from adding a fence to keep the goats, water buffalo, and ducks from wandering through the school yard, the building is complete. Now the 227 students enrolled in the elementary school are able to attend classes again in their own village. The school was formally handed over at a ceremony in April where many local leaders were present.

The government leaders gave speeches thanking Cahaya Suku for rebuilding the school. They mentioned that not all organizations were following through on their promises. One organization had promised to rebuild nine schools but until now there has been no sign that they would follow through. The district head of the Department of Education encouraged Cahaya Suku to continue to be involved in building up the education system in the area. There are many needs and opportunities.

The highlight of the program was the song presented by the 5th and 6th grade students. Their song expressed the joy they felt as a result of having a new school building. Since the tsunami, they have been sitting on the floor during school and each classroom was shared by two classes.

Boats

All of the boats have been completed that Partners International committed to, apart from six small canoe-type boats. The boats have been distributed to those who lost their boats in the tsunami.

One of the recipients of the boats is Madsyah. He lives in the region of Samaria. Madsyah is around 50 years old and has 9 children. Two of his daughters are married. When the tsunami happened, he was out at sea in his friend's boat. When they returned to the shore, they were shocked to see the condition of their village. They lost everything. His family and most of the people from his village survived the tsunami by running up a nearby hill.

After that horrifying day, Madsyah struggled to earn money to meet his family's needs. His boat, which was on the beach, was destroyed in the tsunami. The food aid he received from some organizations helped but was not enough for all the mouths in his family. To earn money, he borrowed a boat from another person. This meant, however, that he had to split his catch with the boat's owner in addition to buying the fuel for the boat. Consequently he could only bring home about \$2.50 for every full day of fishing. This still was not enough to cover his family's needs.

After waiting for six months, he finally received his boat from Cahaya Suku. Madsyah says that this has helped him so much that he no longer needs to borrow other boats and therefore can bring home more money for his family.

As the increasing fuel costs have affected people around the world, so too these fishermen are feeling the crunch. Many have reduced their operating hours because of high fuel costs. Sometimes the fishermen lose money because they did not catch enough to pay for their operating expenses. “Our hope is that these fishermen will realize that the true solution to the problems that they face will only be found in the Lord. They must put their trust in the Master Fisherman who will guide their lives through all the storms,” said one of the workers.

Shelter

We are nearing the completion of the shelter projects. The last few houses around the school need to be built. We have completed 12 homes behind the school and have another 36 homes to do in front of the school. It is wonderful to see people cleaning up and moving into their houses.

We need to finish about 40 other houses that we stopped construction on due to some land issues. Now that the issue is resolved, the construction can continue in May.

Shrimp Ponds

Work on the 160 hectares of shrimp ponds in Samaria is progressing well. Cahaya Suku sent a backhoe over to the ponds, which involved crossing a river at low tide. The backhoe floats on a log raft to keep from sinking into the mud. Many challenges, such as this one, have been overcome by the ingenuity of the villagers. The backhoe is plugging the sea walls to keep the tide from flooding the ponds. After this, it will begin to reconstruct the individual pond walls and irrigation channels.

In Bethel, the community’s ponds are ready to be stocked. This will be some of the first community ponds in Aceh to be restored to operation. The shrimp will be placed in the ponds in the middle of May. We pray that the Lord will keep disease from their ponds and that they can have a full harvest.