Indonesia

Did you know that...

Local governments, businesses or individuals cannot take actions that take away people’s access to food, and communities should be involved in plans and actions that affect their food security.

This is my country

With 217 million people, Indonesia is the fourth most populous country in the world.
Made up of more water than land, Indonesia has over 13 thousand islands, over half of which are uninhabited. The country has ten per cent of the world’s remaining tropical rainforests that supply people with food, medicinal plants and building materials.
Indonesia has seen many crises in recent years such as civil conflicts and natural disasters: earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, El Niño, floods and tsunamis.
One out of two Indonesians lives on less than two dollars a day.
Over twelve million people – six per cent of the population – suffer from hunger. One out of four children under the age of five (nearly five million) are hungry.
Almost all young people under twenty-four years of age can read and write, but only half of boys and girls are in secondary school.
Indonesia recently started a school nutrition programme in poor villages to provide children with locally grown snacks made by parents and teachers.

Read my story to find out...

How destroying our forest and polluting our river affected our village.
What decisions we made to restore our environment.
How we learn to grow fruit and vegetables at school and why this is good for us.
Trees, Fish and Orang-utans

IN A VILLAGE IN KALIMANTAN RUSMIAI AND MURAI ARE MEETING THEIR COUSIN JUSAF.

Hi, Jusaf! We haven’t seen you for ages!

Seven years! It is so good to be back again!

Let’s go look for orang-utans in the forest! Like we used to do!

Sorry, Jusaf, there is no forest any more.

Come, we will show you what happened to it.

THE CHILDREN MEET TWO FOREST RANGERS.

Why was the forest destroyed?

But this forest was very valuable for our community. It provided our village with so many necessary things: fruits, spices, oils, nuts...

...hunting grounds...

But this forest was... ratan, resin... Now what shall we do? The forest is gone and we have lost our ways of making a living and access to all these things. Is it right?

A logging company from Jakarta cut the trees to sell in other countries and earn money. Tropical wood from our island is very valuable.

No, it is wrong. The forest was logged illegally. See that house over there? Our community leaders had a deal with the logging company: they got a public building and the company got a permit to cut the trees.

But they cheated us. Our trees and food are gone and the community got a very small part of the money that was made from the trees.

orang-utan: a large, long-armed monkey native to Indonesia
logging: removing trees from a forest for timber
Trees, Fish and Orang-utans

Of course, it is our right to have a say in decisions that affect us.

And the orang-utans? Where did they go?

They moved further away.

That is not fair! How come the community leaders didn’t ask us villagers? This deal affected our lives! Don’t we have a right to know what is going on?

Of course, it is our right to have a say in decisions that affect us.

But how do they move the trees from here? They are so huge and heavy!

Further away? I don’t see anything... No trees... No orang-utans... There is just a sawmill...

But how do they move the trees from here? They are so huge and heavy!

After they are cut, the logs are floated down the river. They are covered with a special chemical that looks like black oil.

This black oil washes off and pollutes the water. The river used to be clear before the logging started. Now look how muddy it is!

Neither swim, nor fish... Because of water pollution lots of fish died.

Now we can’t swim in the river any more...

Our father and other fishermen have lost their work and income. They cannot get enough money to live and buy the simple things they need.

That is true... I cannot remember the last time we had fish for dinner...

pollute: to release harmful substances into the environment
violation: when somebody breaks a law or a rule
right to food: the right of every man, woman and child to always have enough food for a healthy and active life
obligation: a duty, something a person should or should not do
Having said good-bye to the game park rangers, the young people are on their way home.

Well, we have got some good news too.

What is it???

SURPRISE! You will discover it at school tomorrow.

The next morning...

So what secret is waiting for me at school?

...where we plant different fruits and vegetables.

We have a special garden...

Then we eat what we grow for snacks and get the energy and nutrients we need to grow and be healthy and strong.

Good morning

Good mooooorning!

Why do you do it?

We learn how to grow our own food and take care of plants...

Hello Jusaf. Your aunt will be helping us in the garden today.

This is Jusaf, our cousin.

Right, let us split into our usual groups...

...We shall have a Watering Group, a Weeding Group, a Compost Group and a Fruit Group.
And then? What do you do with the fruit?

Sometimes we eat it here and sometimes there is so much fruit that we even take it home!

Does your mum always help you with the gardening?

No, today it is her turn. All mothers take turns to help us. They volunteer to cook our school meals too.

Later, when the gardening is done, the children are having a snack.

We have to collect pineapples and other fruits, put them in these baskets and take them to the storage room.

Hey, this is fun!

Don’t you have a garden in your school?

No. But when I get back, I will ask my teacher if we can have one.

Different foods. Everything that our mothers prepare for us.

What do you have for snack?
Trees, Fish and Orang-utans

Do the students pay for this food?

No, the government supplies us with some food and money for the school feeding programme.

Why do they do it?

Because the villagers demanded that the government help families who lost their income because of illegal logging.

Ever since the trees were cut and the river polluted it has not been so easy. Of course, we would prefer not to depend on the state’s aid, but be able to get our own food.

You mean, people here cannot get enough food on their own?

You are right!

Sago palms need water for growth. And we need sago to cook our food and build our houses. Some families sell the starch that comes from sago palms.

Who can tell me what plant this is?

It is a sago palm!

It grows along the river banks and in the swamps.

Would you like to plant some sago trees today?

Yeah!!!

How are we going to plant them?

swamp: wetland covered by shallow water
There is a meeting of forest experts at the floating market today. They will show you where and how to plant the seeds.

Good afternoon.

Floating market? That must be the gathering the park rangers invited us to.

Hello! Thank you for coming. Let’s go up the river to the place where we shall plant sago trees.

Let us go then.

Here we are. Now we are going to give each of you some seedlings and show you how to plant them correctly.

Your community, of course. This land belongs to your village and it is your right to decide how to use the trees that grow on it.

And who will own the trees? Who will decide how to use them?

Unbelievable! One day this small seedling will provide us with flour, biscuits, starch, brooms...
Trees, Fish and Orang-utans

BACK AT THE RIVER BANK...

Everyone is flying kites!

It is so beautiful here! Hopefully, the river will be clean again and fish will be back!

Hopefully, they will stop cutting down the forests illegally!

Hopefully, our rights will be respected!

SOME YEARS LATER...

The End
Have you thought about...

- how many things changed for the people in the village when the forest was destroyed?
- how people who lose their ways of making a living can get the food they need?

Is it fair that...

- community leaders sometimes make important decisions without involving the people?
- the government should help people who have their access to food taken away?

Everyone can do something

Find out what important decisions are being made by your community leaders and encourage your family, friends, neighbours and your school to get involved.