

ACEH PROVINCE, INDONESIA

CUSTOMARY RIGHTS TO CO-MANAGEMENT



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Aceh fishery: small-scale, source of employment and food

- Fishery of Aceh was beach-based, small-scale fishery before and after the tsunami
- In 2001 there were 11,288 small fishing boats.
- Fisheries is an extremely important source of livelihood and vital source of food.



Pre-tsunami management (1)

- The coastal commons was governed by a customary institution called the Panglima Laot (PL) (Sea Commander)
- Set up in 16th century by Sultan for coastal/naval protection
- The PL commanded fleet, manned by the men of his territory called **LHOK**
- The PL always elected by the group of skippers of the village
- There are totally 173 PL in Aceh
- Being a customary institution, there are no written rules



Pre-tsunami management (2)

- The main realms of authority of the Panglima Laot are:
 - over the allocation of fishing space and fishing gear;
 - care of resources such as corals, mangroves, beach grass, sand dunes, trees meant as wind-breakers;
 - but most importantly fishing-related conflict resolution.
- The institution has always functioned in an open and transparent manner and remained outside the influence of the secular and religious authorities





Tsunami – 26 December 2004

- One fifth of the fishers died in the tsunami (between 14,100-18,800 individuals)
- In the year of the tsunami the number of boats was 15,576. By 2008 it increased to 17,584 due to the post-tsunami development assistance.
- Share of larger-scale boats increased from 12 to 20 percent.
- By 2011 boats in Aceh dropped to 15,995 due 'mortality' and 'disuse' of poor quality and inappropriate gift boats.



Management after Tsunami

- No resource assessment. Increasing number of boats and inappropriate gear (mini-trawl) led to overfishing of valuable demersal resources.
- As many as 22 PL of western coast of Aceh perished in the tsunami.
- Within weeks of the tsunami, in each coastal village, a new leadership was elected.
- However, they were in no position to replace the huge repository of unwritten customary knowledge that was suddenly lost forever

FAO American Red Cross Program (1)

Negotiating Co-Management

Program adopted an approach of awareness creation and capacity building for community youth, PL and fishery officers along 160 kms of western coastline.

The vision was to negotiate the fishery from being totally custom driven to adopt steps towards co-management

First, an informally constituted co-management forum was set-up in each district.

Lead role in putting together this initiative taken by the cadre of trained Motivator Masyarakat (Community Motivators) in each district.



FAO American Red Cross Program (2)

Negotiating Co-Management

- Co-management forum a vehicle for getting on board the PL members, fishery staff and other authorities
- As a result five fishery co-management centres were initiated in different parts of the west coast of Aceh.
- Legal framework for governance was also constituted.
- It was a decree of the Bupati (District Head). Served as as authorization “for exercising rights over a designated space, by a defined group of persons, for the good of society.”



FAO American Red Cross Program (3) Negotiating Co-Management

- Co-management arrangement did not alter the tenure rights. Continued as a TURF with regulated open access in each lhok
- But it altered significantly the governance of this erstwhile customary system
- The social implication of involvement of youth and women in this process was a meaningful step
- There was greater openness to new organisational arrangements, alliances, technology etc.
- The participation of the state helped to demystify its role in natural resource management



FAO American Red Cross Program (4)

Negotiating Co-Management

- To maintain the significant elements of custom a feature film – Bollywood style – was produced.
- The humorous, yet substantive script and story of the film, helped the process of conflict resolution was communicated
- It became an effective tool to keep the creative elements in custom within the new co-management governance structures.



Post-Program Review (1)

- The FAO/ARC Program ended in mid-2010.
- In 2013 an informal review of the centres was undertaken
- Representatives from all the five co-management centres, initiated at the time of the Program, were invited to discuss.
- There was consensus that:
 - centres provided a fresh set of institutional initiatives
 - collective action by fishers, communities and the state to rejuvenate resources and revive livelihoods gave coastal people confidence
 - The outcomes from conservation of coastal resources led community to believing that protecting and rejuvenating nature was possible by collective efforts with the participation of different interest groups.



Post-Program Review (2)

- Collective action was an important therapy for coastal communities recovering from the trauma of disaster and/or conflict.
- These actions also provide the possibilities for establishing new relationships between people and the resources of the sea.
- Co-management centres were influenced both by the form of decentralization policies of the central government and the dynamics of the new political processes within Aceh and Indonesia.

Some Lessons Learnt

- Development assistance dealing with user rights has to be long term, embracing at least a 10 years life cycle.
- Assistance programs should have clearly defined exit policies that must envision and provide support for some follow-up, post-exit activities
- Changes in user rights have to be communicated to the public and to the youth
- The use of popular film stars and good film scripts is a meaningful way to communicate the philosophy of improved management and sustainability of fisheries resources.



THANK YOU

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