

NEIGHBORS

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A Peruvian farmer showing his potatoes



Dear Neighbors:

In June, I had the opportunity to travel with four of our Board members on a Journey to Peru to visit our programs in the Andes. We also visited the Amazon region and explored the possibility of expanding our programs to encompass cacao-growing communities in this jungle region. Wherever we went, we saw the power of human ingenuity and the drive to improve life for oneself, one's family and one's neighbors. Even in the most remote mountain ranges where indigenous Indian groups live isolated from urban amenities and

external assistance, there are innovations being developed. With help from our knowledgeable and committed staff, communities are not only thriving, they are experimenting with new ideas and new technologies. Here are some of the impressive advances we saw:

- Nurseries with hundreds of fruit trees;
- Dairies and pig farms;
- Guinea pig farms (this is a very lucrative business in Peru because they are considered a delicacy!);
- Fish farms (fish are a key source of protein and another great way to increase income);
- Reforestation of large swaths of mountain sides; and
- Construction of traditional dams, irrigation trenches and water catchment systems.

In this issue, you will read about how important community development can be in preventing violence and extremism. You will also read about the cutting-edge work that is going on in Indonesia to understand changing rainfall patterns and how they are anticipating these changes to ensure successful harvests. We hope you enjoy these articles.

I want to, once again, thank all of you for your generosity, commitment to our mission and your interest in our work!

With deep gratitude,

Kate Schecter, Ph.D.
President and Chief Executive Officer
The May Ayers Milburn Chair



Peruvian women farmers welcoming us in the Andes



Small livestock, like goats, are an important source of income for farmers

In Mali, Higher Incomes and Social Solidarity as an Antidote to Militancy

This article was previously published on June 17, 2019 in ReliefWeb

In 2013, much of Mali was controlled by armed insurgents. With French military and American intelligence and other support, Mali's government reestablished formal control of the country. French troops are still stationed there.

And militant groups are still active.

Such insurgencies rely on the recruitment of soldiers, especially young men who view armed conflict as a source of income as much as an ideological or political struggle. Militant groups often pay many times what people can earn in the agricultural sector, which dominates Mali and other developing countries.

In the long-term, this must be countered by increased agricultural incomes, better governance and enhanced social ties that make recruiters from outside less attractive.

World Neighbors, an NGO based in Oklahoma City, is

implementing a multi-faceted program in Tominian Cercle within the Segou Region in central Mali. As a semi-arid region, the communities of the Segou region have limited livelihood options. The majority of residents are nomadic pastoralists and semi-sedentary farmers.

The World Neighbors program, started in 2007, is being implemented in partnership with a local community based organization, the Union of Farmers in Tominian District (UACT). It covers 13 villages in 6 communes within the Tominian District.

Key goals include:

- * Strengthening organizational and management capacities of village associations and the UACT;
- * Promoting literacy with a focus on women;
- * Increasing food security and child nutrition by enhancing environmental conservation and promoting the adoption of improved farming techniques;
- * Expanding sources of revenue to reduce household poverty; and
- * Enhancing access to agricultural credit for farming equipment and inputs.

The last initiative is a credit and savings program World Neighbors uses in nearly all its programs around the world. Participants become highly dependent on one another to generate capital for improved farming implements, more productive livestock, home businesses, payments for childrens' education and more. In addition to catalyze economic development, these groups enhance community solidarity and weaken the appeal of outside groups that may attempt to recruit members.

World Neighbors runs similar programs in Burkina Faso.

A NEW WAY TO READ THE WEATHER: Rainfall Predictions for Improved Agriculture and Disaster Preparedness

By Edd Wright, Regional Director, World Neighbors
Southeast Asia

Climate change is playing an increasingly prominent role on rainfall patterns across eastern Indonesia. The region experienced short periods of exceptionally intense rainfall in 2010/2011 and during the El Nino of 2015/2016, affecting all areas of life for the rural populations of Nusa Tenggara who have been working with World Neighbors (WN) since the early 1980s.

Because most farmers tend dry land fields, the agricultural system in Nusa Tenggara is entirely dependent on rainfall. If the annual rain is limited, then harvests are at risk and correspondingly, a village's food security is threatened. On the other hand, over-abundant rainfall can lead to natural disasters, such as the floods which swept through Bima City in December 2016; the flash floods suffered by Sembelia Regency, East Lombok in 2017; and the flooding in Dompu Regency in early 2018, which washed away agricultural lands and destroyed many homes. It also increases the risk of landslides (which have occurred in several areas where WN works) that wash away bridges, roads and other infrastructure, and require huge financial outlays to repair.

Tropical countries such as Indonesia are experiencing increasingly dynamic weather conditions. Traditional farming techniques exist for reading the weather; predicting when it will rain; choosing which crops are most appropriate for planting and which ones to avoid, but these can no longer guarantee maximum harvests. What is needed is a new method which uses data that can more accurately predict rainfall patterns in this changing environment.

Given these considerations, WN, with the financial support of the United States Agency for International Development, developed the Disaster Risk Reduction in

Nusa Tenggara project. One of the main components of the project, done in cooperation with Indonesia's leading university, the Institute of Technology Bandung (ITB), was to develop an algorithmic model for predicting rainfall patterns. The model can be displayed in a series of easy-to-read graphics which are then used by farmers and local governments to improve their agricultural calendars and better plan for climate-based disasters. The predictions cover a five-year period from 2018 - 2022, and cover the regencies (the Indonesian equivalent of a US county) of Dompu, Central Lombok, West Lombok and East Lombok in West Nusa Tenggara Province, and Nagekeo in East Nusa Tenggara Province.

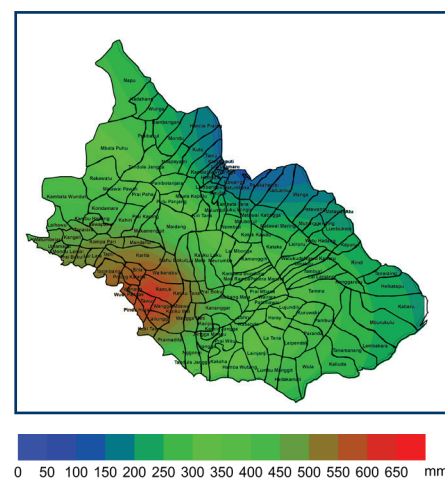
The output of this work is a series of maps showing in 10-day time periods (i) forecasted rainfall patterns; (ii) recommended planting schedules for rice and secondary dry season crops; (iii) potential climate-based disasters; (iv) potential for pests and plant infestations and (v) potential for the spread of malaria and dengue fever.

To implement this project, WN worked closely with many stakeholders -- the regency governments, the Disaster Risk Reduction Forums, the Regional Disaster Management Agencies, Agriculture Departments, Regional Environmental Management Agencies and especially our local NGO partners from each of the five regencies where we implemented this program.

The work was difficult, as changing the mindset of local farmers from their traditional weather forecasting methods is not an easy endeavor. Nevertheless, through WN staff and our local partners' perseverance, the work has brought positive change.

More and more farmers are understanding the benefits and joining the project. A number of the regency governments have enthusiastically committed their own resources to take over the project, which we hope will eventually result in the creation of an easily accessible phone app and website through which the information can be accessed by everyone within their regency.

Below, you will read how local farmers in Nusa Tenggara are adapting and prospering as they face the everyday reality of living with climate change.



A rainfall prediction map



Ibu Badriah, farmer from Songgajah Village

Breaking with Traditions

In the village of Pagomogo, Nagekeo Regency, many farmers did not want to use the forecasts for planting their rice because the seasonal planting times had traditionally always been set by the village elders. Villagers did not wish to go against tradition, afraid of the possible consequences such as being penalized by the elders or bringing bad luck to their community. Because of these powerful beliefs, in the program's first year only a handful of people were bold enough to challenge tradition, but they were rewarded with excellent harvests. Seeing these results, other farmers soon enthusiastically embraced the forecasts in their next planting season.

A different example can be seen from a farm in Songgajah Village, Dompu Regency, whose owner did not follow the predictions. Only one type of crop was planted and after the harvest, the field lay idle, whereas in other fields, farmers who followed the predictions knew there would be enough rain to plant a secondary crop.

Klara Sada, a member of the Maju Terus female farmers group of Nagerawe Village, joined WN's program early on and has consistently matched her farming with the information she's received. *"At the time I learned about the rainfall forecasts we were experiencing regular failed harvests. I did not yet fully understand the forecasts, but I followed the advice and saw the benefits they brought directly. So now every dry season, based on the information I get from WN, I've been planting vegetables and making bokashi fertilizer, so that the rain water can be stored in the ground longer and my crops can grow.*

The land here is classified as infertile, so it requires a lot of fertilizer."

Besides being active in the women farmers' group, Klara is also involved in managing the community savings and

"I dared to plant rice early based on the forecasts because often when I followed the village tradition my harvest would fail, because the rainfall stopped earlier than we had planned and my rice crops failed to develop properly."

–Yakobus Kama



Rice fields

credit groups (SCG), which can increase the success of following the forecasts. Often at planting times when there is a need to act quickly, farmers do not have easy access to capital to buy seeds and so can miss the opportunity. The SCG offers an alternative source of funding for farmers to quickly plant the right kind of crops at the right times.



An Indonesian coastline

Disaster Preparedness in East Lombok

Unfortunately, living with the threat of seasonal flooding has become the norm for many communities WN works with in East Lombok. Mrs. Emas, from Sugian Village in East Lombok, described her experience from 2006: *"It was night and there was the sound of thunder coming from the hills above us. We were scared and confused. And then came a flash flood! As long as I have lived here this had never happened. We ran to the hills carrying older people and children, abandoning everything we owned. Our houses were destroyed along with all of our livestock."* Floods have since reoccurred in 2012, 2014 and 2017, with locals now accepting that they will occur roughly every two years.

Sugian, together with the neighboring Dara Kunci and Madayin villages, were surveyed by WN and deemed to be the villages most at risk of flooding in the area, so all three were included in WN's disaster preparedness program.

One of the strategies used by WN to strengthen communities was to create a special group called the Community Disaster Management Group (CDMG). One of the responsibilities of these groups is to share the results of the rainfall predictions with the other people in their villages.

Based on the information provided by WN and ITB, in all three villages the CDMG informed their communities that from December 2016 through January-March 2017 there would be heavy rainfall with the potential for flooding. They then made the correct preparations and a contingency plan should flooding occur. Working with the village officials, from December 2016 to February 2017,

the CDMG readied early warning systems, evacuation tools, controlled evacuation routes and selected and made-known safe assembly points. They encouraged all residents to prepare critical provisions, safeguard valuables and be prepared to quickly and safely move elderly people, children and livestock to the protected sites and away from potential danger.



Flooded village

The predicted floods occurred on 7 February 2017 in Sugian and 11 February 2017 in Dara Kunci and Madayin, and unfortunately proved to be far worse than anything experienced before. The water flow could not be blocked, so dikes burst and bridges between villages were washed away, resulting in villages becoming completely cut off from one another. Paddy fields were submerged under water and become fields of rocks and debris, roads turned into rivers, trees were felled, buildings and houses were demolished and there was no electricity for five days.

“With the forecasts, we can learn when to expect floods so that together we can clean the river a couple times before the rainy season arrives. In previous years, we lost livestock, and crops along the riverbank were destroyed because the river over-flowed. That doesn’t happen anymore.”

– Ibu Badriah (Songgajah Farmer)

But a positive difference to the previous years’ flooding was the reaction of the communities. When the first thunder of flood waters could be heard, the CDMG activated the alert systems, set off warning sirens using loudspeakers in the mosques and musholla; as well as, using tongkeks (a traditional bamboo instrument). Hearing the warnings, and carrying their already-prepared belongings, villagers hurried along the evacuation route to the prepared places of safety. There was no panic as had occurred in the past.

Because of the early warnings given to the whole communities, injuries and material losses were greatly

reduced from those suffered in previous years. People had sufficient time to protect their valuables and secure their properties and livestock. After evacuating the communities to their safe points, the CDMGs continued to monitor the most dangerous areas, keeping people away. Once the worst of the initial flooding was over, the CDMG started collecting data on the number of displaced people, and coordinated with the government and local clinics in the distribution of food stocks and medical aid. Each step in the disaster response was executed according to the procedures developed by WN.

But a lot of disaster preparedness work starts long before disasters are predicted to strike. Before joining WN’s program, villagers from Songgajah would gather together to clean out the river after floods. But now the community, led by the CDMG, can anticipate when the flooding will occur and can gather together to clean the river before the start of the wet season.

Similar actions took place in Dara Kunci and Sugian villages, where, with the assistance of WN, villagers were able to take steps to normalize the rivers in their villages. The Dara Kunci community was able to allocate Indonesian Rupiah 180 million (USD \$12,600) to dredge its river and create a levee and rock barriers 290 meters long, while Sugian received government aid to normalize 300 meters of its river.

Commemorative Gifts Received

February 2, 2019 - July 24, 2019

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OUR MISSION

World Neighbors inspires people and strengthens communities to find lasting solutions to hunger, poverty and disease and to promote a healthy environment.

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