

# REAPING a RICH HARVEST

in

## KUALA TRIPA

Since the tsunami struck in 2004, the villagers of Kuala Tripa on the eastern shores of Aceh, Indonesia have tried

everything to regain their livelihoods. They tried small-scale fishing, then raising crabs, and were approached by timber brokers to conduct illegal logging activities. Nothing was able to earn them the income they needed to sustain a basic and productive life in the new homes that they had acquired through BRR, the Indonesian agency responsible for reconstruction.



It was only when one resident, Mawardi, came in contact with SERAP, the Canadian Co-operative Association's community development project in Aceh, that villagers were mobilised to make some significant leaps forward.

SERAP staff worked with 13 men and two women to form a small co-operative that would have each of its members plant 1.26ha of watermelon. The first harvest, in November, yielded just Rp. 774,000 (CAD\$84) in income. After reviewing the disappointing results with SERAP organizers, they identified several shortfalls of the first season. These shortfalls included: poor maintenance, inexperience and impatience by group members in maintaining their plants.

With this in mind, Mawardi and his neighbours resolved to try again with the careful support of community organisers. In January, each member re-planted 1.4ha of watermelon using the income from the first harvest to purchase seeds. Through February and March they managed the crop more carefully and earned Rp. 2,155,000 (CAD\$234) per member. Their harvest had risen considerably, and the price of watermelon was better at that time of year. All together they saved 3,500,000 (CAD\$380) to be retained by the coop.

The group members want to learn more about growing watermelon. They have realised the value of farmer experimentation and learning from one another to maximise their production. The next harvest will include more experimentation with organic fertilisers and integrated pest management, which will reduce costs and enhance environmental sustainability.



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CCA is assisting co-operatives in over 20 countries in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and the Americas through financial contributions from the Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada and the Canadian International Development Agency. CCA projects directly benefit more than one million members of 2,500 co-operatives around the world. Another five million people receive indirect benefits from the development efforts of CCA and its partners.