

# K a b a r I t a h



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## Editorial

A startling statistic found in one of the articles in this issue is that 80% of the population in a subdistrict in Gunung Mas district is dependent on artisanal and small scale gold mining for their livelihood. For some this has brought very visible material benefits, such as better houses, cars and electronic goods.

We have seen that throughout the province there are tens of thousands of individuals directly engaged in this activity, with many more involved indirectly. This year there has been an increase in in-migration from other provinces, because of new gold discoveries, sparking mini-gold rushes. This is a serious concern for long term sustainable development in areas where this activity predominates. First there is the concern about environmental impacts from destruction of productive land resources and forests, and the pollution of waterways from silt and chemical wastes. Then there is the worry about the lack of investment in longer term development activities, such as animal husbandry, cash crops like rubber, and agriculture.

There also is an increasing loss of accessible land to communities, as more and more land is being taken over and used for industrial development, such as timber harvesting, palm oil and coal mining. Oftentimes these industries offer little benefits to local residents, who may lack the skills for jobs or receive minimal wages for low-skilled labour work.

One positive note is that villages in the area are now receiving annual budgets from district government that they can self-manage, and YTS has been providing support and training to enable village government to manage these funds in a responsible manner. This is a slow process, but is beginning to bear fruits in some of the villages where we work.

Finally, as we have just completed the annual Ramadan fast, we would like to ask your forgiveness for our shortcoming and mistakes in the past year.

**Bardolf Paul**  
Executive Director

## A Hope for Bukit Batu



*With intensive technical assistance from Pak Eko (Muhammad Muhyi) and YTS, Ramin finally managed to grow high quality breeding pairs of catfish and supply fingerlings to fellow farmers in the surrounding villages*

Pak Ramin's hard work in catfish breeding is starting to show some good results after quite a long trial and error period. In the beginning of June, he successfully produced about 12,000 fingerlings in his tarpaulin breeding ponds, next to his house. 10,000 fingerlings have been bought by a catfish cultivation farmer in Bukit Batu. "I still have around 2000 fingerlings in the ponds, waiting for the next buyers to come" said Pak Ramin with a smile on his face.

Pak Ramin admits that breeding business doesn't always bring expected results. In running this business, he is assisted by a YTS

Program Officer and a technical expert, Muhammad Muhyi.

"Sometimes you will be successful and sometimes not, depending on certain factors, such as the quality of the breeding pairs, the physical environment, and technical aspects. However, I just keep doing it, and now I can see the results" Pak Ramin explains.

Pak Ramin has been participating in YTS's assistance program for about two years, and he has been actively running his breeding business since a year ago. He started with agriculture as his livelihood. However, as he often got no profit from the agriculture

## Sharing on Minamata Convention



element, Mercury.

Mercury, on the other hand, is known for its use not only in ASGM, but also in the production of medical equipment and household products. In mining itself, as has been widely understood, mercury is used to separate gold from other minerals. The convention regulates everything about the use of mercury, including in the ASGM sector and the deadline for mine closures in 2020.

In between his explanation, Richard also answered questions raised by YTS staff and clarified that despite the complexity of regulations and

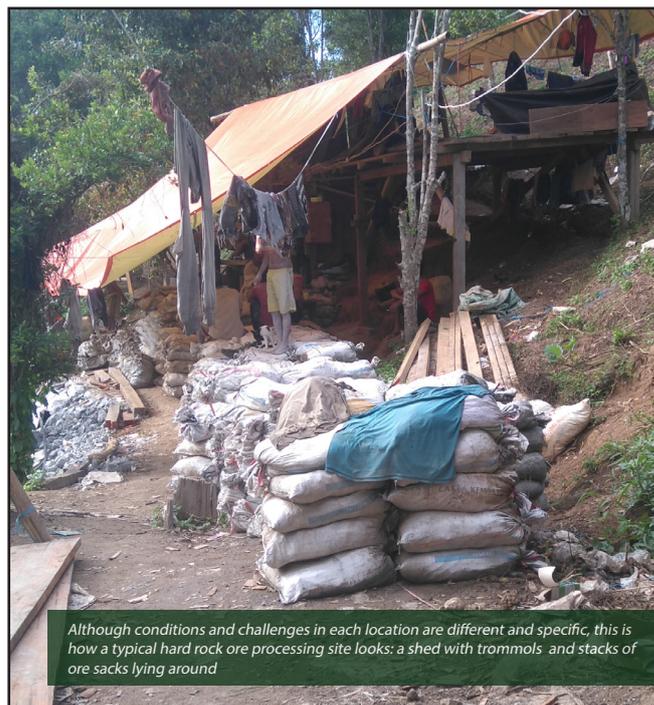
“From cradle to grave” This expression was introduced by the Artisanal Gold Council Project Manager, Richard Gutierrez, during a sharing session in YTS in April. Richard used that phrase to describe how the Minamata Convention regulates the use of mercury, to get us to understand the content of the convention in the context of our national-scale ASGM project. He further explained that the convention is unique among other international treaties as it specialized only on one particular

convention regarding mercury, we believe that the AGC-YTS plan for the project is quite doable. The ultimate reason for our confidence is because of our working history with communities and miners, and our understanding of the reality in the field.

At the close of the discussion, we realized that our work in this project will not only bring a positive impact to Kalimantan, but also to Indonesia and the rest of the world. YTS is now part of the global solution for mercury issues.

## AGC-YTS Scoping Visit

As the AGC-YTS project is in the final stage of the Project Implementation Plan before it starts, we conducted a preliminary scoping visit to South Kalimantan, North Sulawesi, and West Java to assess potential locations for project sites. During this 10-day non-stop road-trip, the team, which consisted of four staff, visited eight community gold mining sites and had talks with the miners about the history, the challenges, and their hopes for the future. We also visited the local mining and environment agencies to discuss about the current condition of community gold mining in the areas. It is interesting to learn about the differences from one site to another, and how local culture has a major impact on the existence of community mining. The trip has not only enriched our knowledge, but also our view on the life of gold mining communities in different places in Indonesia.



## Kahayan Shared Learning: Seeing mining from the village perspective

Despite its impact on the environment, artisanal gold mining can almost be considered a main livelihood in the Kahayan River villages. Agus Husein, one of YTS's Program Officers brought this to us during a YTS learning session in April. Agus said about 80% of the total population in Damang Batu subdistrict now rely on alluvial mining for a living, and mining has brought significant development in the area, such as concrete houses, expensive vehicles, and sophisticated electronic devices.

The other program officers in the meeting confirmed this opinion, and suggested including ASGM in the village planning

documents like the Village Medium Term Development Plan (RPJMDes) and Village Annual Plan (RKPDes). Dinomika, the YTS Training & HRD Officer agreed to this and further explained that under the new village law, there is a possibility to do that as long as it is brought into the village planning mechanism.

"Within this scheme, mining can be considered as a community development activity that can contribute to the village income" Dino suggested. However, as the meeting went on, we realized that many things need to be in place before this can actually happen.

For one thing, ASGM is still considered illegal in many places in Indonesia and globally. The only possibility is in a legal Community Mining Area (WPR) where a Community Mining License (IPR) has been granted by the government. Furthermore, the use of mercury in gold processing needs a separate intervention, as well as some education for the miners on environmental impact management.

This learning session that was initially designed to discuss village-related regulations and their impact on the ASGM Project transformed into a dynamic discussion on the ASGM Project and how to address these arising issues.



Kulansi (left) and Alliah (right), YTS ASGM Program Officers, are collaborating in explaining the field reality of artisanal mining, community mining licenses, and local regulations related to mining

...continued from page 1

business, he decided to shift to the fingerling supply business. "In the past I was an agricultural farmer. However, since I often didn't get profit, and the vegetable market is getting more difficult, I try to focus on the fingerling supply business" he said enthusiastically.

He feels happy and quite satisfied with his business. He said "The buyers themselves come to my ponds to buy the fingerlings and it is very easy to market". He now has more than six ponds around his house. He is still expecting some material support from government through a proposal to the Maritime and Fishery Agency that is assisted by YTS.

## Networking

Congratulations to Yayasan Usaha Mulia (YUM) for their new Vocational Training School Building, and to Yayasan Permakultur Kalimantan (YPK) for its successful art performance collaboration project!

YTS attended the launching of the YUM training facility on May 31st at Cilik Riwut Km 37, while YPK went on a four-day performance tour, starting and ending at the Tugu Soekarno, Palangka Raya. The show featured dancing and other art performances on an environmental theme.

YTS also took part in the celebration of Environmental Day by the Environment Department of Palangka Raya on Sunday, June 5, at the Bundaran Besar, Palangka Raya. Together with other fellow NGOs and government agencies, we promote environmental protection in various ways that are doable by the community on a daily basis, such as to stop littering and planting trees at home.

## Isen Mulang Culture Festival

Thousands of people from every district gathered together in Palangka Raya this year in May to celebrate the 69th Anniversary of Central Kalimantan province. The festivity started with a grand parade in the famous 'bundaran' (the big traffic circle in the middle of Palangka Raya) with people wearing their customary dress and showcasing unique traditions.

The one-week festival was designed to attract local people and visitors from other parts of Indonesia or abroad. It was a great occasion to promote local culture to the younger generation of Dayaks, as well as to the visitors. A series of Dayak practices and games were organised into a competition that visitors could enjoy, such as traditional dancing, decorated boats in the

Kahayan River, fire soccer, cooking traditional foods, preparing firewood using the Dayak axe, and many other attractions.

YTS also took part in the exhibition booth with the provincial Planning and Environmental Agencies: we displayed information about our work with local people and government. This annual event is always a good place to promote any effort to develop Central Kalimantan and is open for participation from almost every sector in the province. It is not only a traditional festival, but also encourages development in the province.



A boat decoration contestant from Public Works, during the Isen Mulang Culture Festival in Palangka Raya

### News Flash

#### USAID events

In April, we took part in two USAID LESTARI events in Palangka Raya. One was capacity building for the Multi Stakeholder Forum (MSF) Palangka Raya to develop the vision and mission of the forum to perform better in the future; and the second was the PRA-RFA USAID LESTARI that was conducted on April 22nd, with the objective of providing information on upcoming grants from this project for Aceh, Central Kalimantan, and Papua.

#### YTS Facebook Launching

YTS has now officially launched a Facebook page. Partners and colleagues can find out the latest update on our recent activities on the page, as well as discussions on issues critical for the sustainable development of Central Kalimantan. Please visit and like our Facebook page @YayasanTumbuhakSinta.

#### Hesperian Project: Worker's Guide Book Translation

Help Indonesian workers to be better informed in health and safety!

We are currently working on a publication project in the recent guideline series from Hesperian Foundation: 'A Worker's Guide to Environmental Health and Safety'. The book offers factory workers and employers practical guidance and information on creating a better, healthy working environment.

We have started translating the book with support from a generous donor, but more funding is needed to keep the whole project running.

Your participation for the publication of this book is mostly welcome. Please contact us at [tumbuhaksinta@gmail.com](mailto:tumbuhaksinta@gmail.com) to find out more about the project and how you can contribute.

### Agenda

#### July-September

##### Kahayan

Monitoring livelihood activities  
Round table discussion  
Lestari Project preparation & implementation

##### Bukit Batu

Monitoring & technical assistance for fish cultivation  
Facilitation of KUB financial support

#### July

##### ASGM

Staff training: Gender, health & environment;  
Staff training: Exploratory Survey  
AGC technical support

#### August

##### Bukit Batu

Project Evaluation

##### ASGM

Exploratory Survey in Parenggean  
AGC-YTS project launch

#### September

##### Bukit Batu

Training Center Establishment

##### ASGM

Baseline Study in Parenggean  
Exploratory Survey in Mt. Muro

#### Kabar Itah

Kabar Itah is the quarterly newsletter of Yayasan Tumbuhak Sinta (YTS), an affiliate of PT. Kalimantan Surya Kencana (KSK), a mineral exploration company.

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