

Voices from the forest



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PANDANUS IN MALAYSIA

weaving into the next generation

by REITA FAIDA RAHIM, Gerai OA

Two Jakun weavers, Maimon and Gayah, weaving small samplers while referring to the 'teaching mat.' This mat proved irresistible to weavers as it contained motifs which many haven't previously seen during the Pandanus Master Workshop held in Bidor, Perak in Malaysia last 4-6 June 2007.



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for the nomadic Penan



CLOCKWISE with large photo: (1) A woman rests in a typical Penan hut, (2) Everyone pitches in to build the nursery to house seedlings of sago palm, (3) Robert Jengan, resource person for nursery establishment and management, demonstrates how to plant a sago seed in a polythene bag, (4) Penghulu Wan Malong, the Paramount Chief, stresses that they can depend only on themselves for their own survival as a people, (5) Jefry Moyong, Ba Puak chieftain explains the challenges they face with the depletion of sago palms, (6) Samy enjoys the taste of the kelirang fruit he gathered from nearby trees

about the seeds. We were distracted by so many traces of wild boars in the forest and we went hunting instead. The seeds can be collected tomorrow."

If only we were all so free and if only the nomadic Penans had their forest as large and in good form to depend for food and a life they had always known.

Dominic is the Community Organiser for the Sarawak project entitled "Reforestation and Strengthening of Penans in Apoh Tutoh to Secure Food, Livelihood and Native Land" which is supported by the Ecosystems

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New film on NTFPs in India for release in October

NTFP-EP's latest film offering promises to be another thought-provoking piece and aims to contribute to the advocacy for sustainable forest-based livelihoods for communities in the region. Jointly produced by Telapak's Gekko Studio (Bogor, Indonesia), Dusty Foot Productions (New Delhi, India) and the NTFP-EP, this film examines how forest-dependent groups are balancing forest use and conservation, as well as how support groups are working to address threats and challenges.

The film focuses on India, where there are over 3000 NTFP species and nearly 500 million people or one fourth of the population dependent on NTFPs for their supplementary income. Moreover, tribal peoples living in forests in India, and their survival as a people and as a culture are greatly dependent on NTFPs.

It is the first collaboration with Ms. Rita Banerji of Dusty Foot Productions. She is well-known for her deft camera work in the award-winning film "Honey Hunters of the Blue Mountains" as well as other films dealing with conservation and environmental issues.

The film documents seasonal NTFPs like hirda fruit (see photo), sal leaf, and mahua. It complements the first *Voices from the Forest* film, providing an even broader context for better understanding of the value of NTFPs and their sustainable harvesting and marketing. Watch out for its release by end-October! (Aloisa Zamora-Santos)



Mission not impossible? by Rita Banerji

Selamat pagi, apa kabar... Terima kasih! Well, these were the three phrases that saw us through our stay in Bogor the "rainy city" where it rains every evening at 4 pm. Aloi from Manila and I from India arrived in Bogor, Indonesia on the 3rd of July to get together with the Mad Team from Gekko Studio, Telapak - Ridzki, Nanang and the gang, to edit "Voices from the Forest Part 2" focusing on India.

The "Mission:" to complete a 30-minute film from 60 tapes in 7 days. Our plan: to try our best. Our back up plan: a tri-nation dance choreographed by Aloi and soundtrack by Nanang.

The next one week was a whirlwind - Nanang on the edit table, me on the script and Aloi with a gun in her hands (sorry not a gun, it was a blow spear just like the NTFP-EP's logo straight from Papua).

It was a fantastic time. All of us had not worked together before, but it turned out to be a great collaboration. In between the edits and huge mugs of tea we shared our experiences, countries, commonalities (the traffic and the food!), and even discussed the country heroes such as Iwan Fals (Bob Dylan of Indonesia) to Rajnikant (you have to see him to believe it).

The best times for us was the food breaks, mostly in the market around the studio. From satay, gurame, nasi goreng, padang... the list is endless! (I am still suffering from withdrawal symptoms. Our next collaboration is an Indonesian cuisine café in India.)

ALOISA SANTOS



On the 11th, we were ready with our first cut! The venue was the Telapak Café in the centre of the town, and buzzing with energy. It is a space not just for coffee, snacks and free internet, but where people can gather for discussions, film screenings, education. There were about 35 people from varied groups such as filmmakers, students, NGO workers, activists. The screening was followed by a

discussion and feedback; there was much curiosity about India, the people and also the difference in forest types, and at the same time many common issues. It was just 10 days, but in that time one forgot countries and borders, and differences... we had the same issues, the same diversity, and the same motivations. Aloi and I left Bogor as BOGORITES!

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Photos: TOP: Rita and Nanang at the editing table. LOWER