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INDONESIA

CASE STUDY

Clean Water for an Indonesian Village

Locals in East Kalimantan learn how forest conservation can help their community



Photo: TNC/Indan Astuti

Local people in Lamcin Village connecting a line that pipes fresh spring water to their village

By being involved in the clean water project, the local community learned how to appreciate environmental services and help protect their environment.

Challenge

The Indonesian village of Lamcin on the island of Borneo once used the nearby Kelay River as their water source for basic needs as well as for fishing to supplement their diet. As non-sustainable logging practices became widespread, the river's water quality declined and so too did the villagers' quality of life.

Initiative

A USAID-funded project together with local community members embarked on a collaborative effort to pipe in fresh spring water to the village. The USAID project promotes sustainable forest management and responsible timber trade across Southeast Asia. Based on an assessment conducted by the project, the villagers identified a water spring in the forest and laid out the pipe that brings in fresh water to the village. The activity was especially valuable for community members because it solved a basic need, but more importantly it exposed villagers to the concept of forest conservation in a context that can directly benefit them. Lamcin villagers have since been actively engaged in conservation efforts and are becoming less dependent on outside initiatives to address local needs.

Results

Because of the pipeline project, some 250 people in 40 households and public service buildings including the church, school, and the village chief's office now receive clean water piped in directly from the forest spring. In addition to the benefit for the community, the project also established a buffer environmental protection area around the spring which will protect the water quality for the villagers and the health of the forest.