

Entry No. IRRC-0156

Category : International Rice Research Conference

Select Theme : Sustainable and equitable farming systems

Endorsement email :

Keyword 1 : Livelihood and social equity

Keyword 2 : Sustainable management practices

Keyword 3 : Advisory systems

Title of Entry : Promoting Organization that Works to Empower Rice Farmers

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Select only one type of presentation

: 15 minute oral presentation

Abstract

: Mercy Corps Indonesia and the John Deere Foundation are working together to improve the lives of farmers through the support and capacity building of farmer organizations in Indonesia. When given access to resources, farmer groups are powerful forces for improving the lives of those working in agriculture. Therefore, in April 2015, Mercy Corps Indonesia and the John Deere Foundation launched the Promoting Organizations that Work to Empower Rice Farmers (POWER) program, with the aim of enhancing the capacity of farmer groups to be more effective and sustainable in fulfilling the needs of farmers, allowing farmers to become strong and self-sufficient. Through the program, Mercy Corps Indonesia is working to influence household income levels of rice farmers by increasing access to basic agricultural cultivation needs, including access to seeds, fertilizers, financial services, and tools. The POWER program targets rice farmers in Subang, West Java, Banyuwangi, East Java, and Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. Throughout the three years the program has been implemented, the 44 POWER farmers groups have successfully started new business activities and provided agricultural services to 8,000 members, increasing member productivity up to 28% and income by 16%. There is a strong correlation between the farmer group business activities and improvements in the lives and livelihoods of their members, including increasing access to quality agricultural inputs and creating sources of income. Successful development of farmers' groups depends on a number of factors: how business units are organized; the structural aspects of the farmer groups (such as active leadership and regular meetings); good financial management; growth of assets and capital; existence of strong leaders; and board performance. In addition, farmers who started with no understanding of business now consider themselves entrepreneurs and are excited about new opportunities. In response to these powerful results, the second phase of POWER has been set to launch in August 2018, with a goal of creating even more impact.

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