



FARMING WITH WISDOM

This photo essay is a result from a series of focus group discussions, interviews, observations and data collecting activities of the **Study on Revitalization of Local Values and Role of Local Institution *Keujreun Blang* in Kabupaten Aceh Besar.**



Harvest Season and *Keujreun Blang*

When harvest season comes, farmers in some areas of Aceh Besar practice providing voluntary contributions to *Keujreun Blang*. This donation is assigned on the basis of mutual agreement as a token of appreciation for the role of *Keujreun Blang* officers. This is a generational practice in rice farming community and still continues until now.



Communal Gathering - *Khanduri*

Rice farmers at Gampong Lamseunong, Kuta Baro sub-district Aceh Besar, led by *Keujruen Blang* and village officials practice a traditional procession known as *Khanduri Treun U Blang* (to go to the field) to discuss farming issues, establish and maintain relationship with the community, conduct appreciation to God, and foster the spirit of togetherness.

At this event, people in communal bring rice and dish to *Meunasah Gampong* and enjoy the meal together after reciting prayers.



Fulfilling the Family's Need

Farmers in Aceh Besar are mostly women. They play a very important role in meeting the needs of their families. A mother accompanied by her daughter was sorting rice (*peukrui pade*) in the paddy field at *Blang Jaroe, Indrapuri*, in Aceh Besar.

She said good water management is needed by farmers to increase harvest. Since the water is not well managed, farmers must stay awake all night to ensure that their paddy fields have enough water.

In addition, in year 2015 harvest count was slightly down due to pest attack, especially by rats.



Keuneunong and Simultaneous Planting

M. Adam AR, a community leader from Lhong sub-district Aceh Besar (dressed in white), states one of *Keujreun Blang* roles is to determine and to coordinate simultaneous timing to begin the rice planting process by farmers. Based on Acehnese traditional knowledge, the process by which time is determined to go to the field is called *Keuneunong*. This is a practice to determine harvesting time based on nature's reading specifically referring to conditions of climate and pests attack. It is an effort to minimize pest attack and increase harvest result.



Maximizing the Role of *Keujreun Blang*

Study and discussion with local government was carried out as an effort to revitalize the function and activities of *Keujreun Blang* in support of rice farmers' welfare.

The involvement of local government since the beginning of the study has made it easier to advocate the research result and formulate recommendations for public policy. Dr. Samsul Bahri, Assistant II *Setdakab* Aceh Besar during the FGD in Aceh Besar (20 October 2015) states that *Keujreun Blang* has been in existence for decades as they are needed by the community to support and facilitate efforts in agriculture field.



Revitalizing *Keujreun Blang* as a Local Institution

A result from the FGD conducted in *Indrapuri* sub-district Aceh Besar (17 September 2015) was an agreement between traditional leaders and related stakeholders on the importance of improving policies to revitalize the function of *Keujreun Blang*. Currently, few active *Keujreun Blang* are initiated by the community itself, with no effort from the government. The goal is to ensure that the farming system is well- managed, systematic, and well-integrated with the government's regulation.