

Coffee and civet coffee development

Karang Panggung 13. – 14.01.2016



(Source: JG Photo/Jurnasyanto Sukarno)

One focus of BIOCLIME is the empowerment of communities living in and around protected forest areas in South Sumatra. The project supports local community groups in the identification of income generating measures and sustainable financing mechanisms in order to improve their livelihoods. BIOCLIME emphasizes the development of community-based timber and forest product enterprises by using tools like community livelihood appraisals and product scanning, as well as market analyses. In Karang Panggung village in Musi Rawas district, coffee, and specifically civet coffee (*kopi luwak*), were identified as

commodities with the potential to benefit villagers.

The Karang Panggung community is currently focusing on the development of organic and civet coffee¹. Civet coffee is a “type of coffee whose production requires the gastrointestinal skills of the common palm civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*) also known as the *luwak*. It is indigenous to rainforests from northern India to the Philippines. The *luwak* is frequently seen climbing coffee trees where it eats the coffee cherries. The cat is unable to digest them, so

¹ “Civet coffee, or *kopi luwak* in Indonesian, was discovered by plantation workers in colonized Indonesia. Forbidden from consuming coffee beans picked from the plants, they picked up, cleaned and then roasted the beans excreted by wild Asian palm civets that entered the plantations

to eat the ripest coffee cherries. The civets’ digestive systems gave *kopi luwak* a uniquely rich aroma and smooth, rounded flavor — so much so that the Dutch plantation owners soon became die-hard fans.”

(<http://world.time.com/2013/10/02/the-worlds-most-expensive-coffee-is-a-cruel-cynical-scam/>)

the beans pass through the cat's digestive system unscathed and into its droppings.²

Commonly, women and children in Karang Panggung collect the droppings and sell them to the market manager, Fatkhurrozi. He and his employees process the coffee beans into powder. After being sun dried for 6 to 12 days depending on weather conditions, the coffee beans are roasted in a traditional oven (see Figure 1) and then ground to powder by machine (see Figure 2). For 1 kg of organic coffee powder villagers earn around IDR 50,000, while civet coffee fetches IDR 150,000 per kg.



(Figure 1. Source: BIOCLIME)



(Figure 2. Source: BIOCLIME)

Considered one of the most expensive coffees in the world, with a price of approximately USD 300 per kg for coffee beans, civet coffee is billed as one of the rarest beverages in the world.³ The general goal in Karang Panggung is to establish a community enterprise and improve the quality of coffee beans in terms of harvesting, drying, grading, storing and marketing.

According to an article published by the Jakarta Post on 14 January 2016, Indonesia's appetite for coffee is growing. The chairman of the Indonesian Coffee Exporters Association (AEKI) said per capita domestic coffee consumption has risen to 1 kg - from around 0.5 kg previously - thanks to higher demand from young coffee drinkers. "[...] Now is a good time to develop our coffee", he stated in an interview with the Jakarta Post. Indonesia produces around 600,000 tons of coffee beans a year but the domestic market could still grow, particularly when compared to neighbouring countries. According to AEKI data, the country's coffee plantations produce 741 kilograms per ha every year, a far cry, for instance, from Vietnam (1.5 tons/ha/year).

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<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Kopi+Luwak>

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<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Kopi+Luwak>

Another challenge to Indonesia's coffee industry production has been this year's El Niño weather phenomenon, which severely impacted production with only 400,000 tons produced. While Indonesia's coffee production remains behind that of other countries, it should focus on developing its specialty coffee, which is widely seen as being among the world's best.⁴

Remaining challenges in Karang Panggung

Challenges which remain include the packaging and labelling of the coffee. So far there is no label on the vacuum-packed coffee. Furthermore, a question is how to guarantee the product is genuine wild civet coffee. Many news articles⁵ have described how civets are being abused and confined in cages to produce coffee. Therefore, training and awareness raising activities are needed in Karang Panggung in order to sensitize the community and ensure that civet cats remain free.



(Source: BIOCLIME)

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<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2016/01/14/local-traders-told-profit-coffee-s-growing-popularity.html>

Conclusion and future outlook

Overall, the community is highly motivated to develop its coffee production. Men and women are both included in the process. From the villagers' perspective, packaging and labelling remains a challenge as many buyers do not believe the civet cats roam free and are not confined in cages.

A possible solution could be for the composition and quality of the civet coffee to be tested in a laboratory belonging to a respected institution. Such analysis could lead to product certification. Additionally, BIOCLIME could support the designing of a *kopi luwak* label indicating that the coffee is a genuine wild product produced by the Karang Panggung community enterprise.

Contacts:

1. Scarlett Apfelbacher (author)/
scarlett.apfelbacher@giz.de
2. Nyimas Wardah (editor)/
nyimas.wardah@giz.de

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