

Mina Bahari Taxi Management

Entry Point for Development of Fishermen's Economy and Empowerment in Gorontalo

Presenter

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“When I commenced my service as the Governor of Gorontalo, the socio-economic structure of fishery households in Gorontalo Province still reflected a striking socio-economic imbalance in the fishery sector. About 85.58 per cent of all fishermen were without motor boats and only used basic catching technology. I deliberated on how to expedite poverty alleviation within the fishing community. I thought that there should be a master plan developed based on the results of field surveys and scientific studies of marine economic development and expansion of coastal communities”.

Fadel Muhammad, *Governor of Gorontalo Province*

Two years later, after series of efforts to assist fishermen had not resulted in any significant progress, Bapak Fadel finally implemented a fishery community development program, which later came to be known as Mina Bahari Taxi Management.

Mina Bahari Taxi Management is dedicated to assisting fishermen and fish farmers in accessing facilities that will facilitate their business operation, either with credit or through assistance programs offered by the government. Through Mina Bahari Taxi Management, all the basic necessities needed by the fishermen to operate, such as boats, gasoline, nets, and other essentials, are provided by the Mina Bahari Taxi Management. Fishermen pay for all materials used by selling their catch to the management. They are also guaranteed that their fish will be sold at a reasonable price.

Mina Bahari Taxi Management was inspired by the Blue Bird Taxi management, where taxi drivers are provided with everything they need, such as gasoline, regular vehicle maintenance, cooperative unions and even food as they get ready to work; Mina Bahari Taxi Management offers similar facilities to fishermen and fish farmers. Every supporting essential to breed fish, from equipment, maintenance, boat repairs, gasoline procurement, the nine basic foods (sembako), to marketing of caught fish, is conducted by the entrepreneur unit and the management. The fishermen are only tasked to produce as much fish as they can. Especially for fish farmers, Mina Bahari Taxi Management provides them with young fish, feed, and technology, as well as guaranteeing marketing of their harvest. By relieving the fishermen of all related burdens in producing fish, it is expected that they will be more focused in carrying out their activities.

The innovative model of Mina Bahari Taxi Management is managed by an institution in a form of Project Management Unit (PMU). To date, Mina Bahari Taxi Management has ten

service posts under the management of the PMU in: Kwandang, Anggrek, Gentuma, Tongo, Batudaa Pantai, Tenda, Botumoito, Tabulo, Lemito, and Torosiaje. These industry units are called 'Site Management Units' and led by a manager. The manager leads several sub-unit businesses that support the fisheries industry, including Fishermen Financial Institutions, Fuel Kiosks, ice block factories, and boat garage/repair shops, and Business Clinics. The Mina Bahari Taxi Management is run by an Executive Manager who leads several site managers and is under the authority of the Fishery and Marine Department of Gorontalo Province. According to the Executive Manager of Mina Bahari Taxi Management, Mrs. Hasriati (Dei), "The presence of Mina Bahari Taxi has increased the income of fishermen. When it was established in 2004, the average income of fishermen was only about Rp. 602.115 per month; in 2005 it averaged Rp. 855.667 and in 2008 it was about Rp. 1.449.800."

Target groups that are empowered by the Mina Bahari Taxi Management are individual and group businesses that are not productive due to lack of access to funding resources for their business and business management. Those include fishermen, fish breeders and fishery businessmen/women. Services provided by the Mina Bahari Taxi Management include sale of ice for fish preservation, sale of gasoline, sale of basic food items (sembako), garage services, sale and buying of fish, and credit capital for business.

The biggest effect of this model is the building trust effect. Mina Bahari Taxi Management shows its trust in the fishermen by allowing them to take any goods and use any services they need, without payment or a deposit, from the one-stop shop or supermarket prior to their sailing out to work, and they can repay their expenses after selling their catches. The method of payment is arranged to be easy/convenient so that the fishermen are still able to take home some income. This Mina Bahari Taxi Management model also facilitates families of the member fishermen to take credit out for goods while their husbands or heads of the families are still working out at sea. "The existence of Mina Bahari Taxi has contributed to better welfare for our family and we no longer have to worry about money to purchase catching gear and gasoline," said one fisherman in Kwandang.

Reflecting on the success of the Mina Bahari Taxi Management, it is expected that banking sector will have more trust in the fishermen and consider the possibility of providing financial services to them, who, in the past, were deemed unqualified due to their inability to provide a guarantee and their inability to repay bank loans.

"The entrepreneurship spirit of the fishermen is developed through the implementation of the Mina Bahari Taxi Management model," stated Winarni Monoarfa, Head of Planning Agency of Gorontalo Province as she explained the significant changes that occurred as a result of this innovative program. There are indeed many small-medium businesses of the fishery sectors that emerged in the Kwandang area following the implementation of the Mina Bahari Taxi Management model. In order for the Mina Bahari Taxi Management to continue developing the economy sustainability, the implementation of this model management has been supported by Decree of the Governor of Gorontalo Province No. 10 Year 2006 regarding the Establishment of the Mina Bahari Taxi. Public Service Agency.

It is not impossible that Fadel Muhammad's dream to come true and that Mina Bahari Taxi services will grow from being available in 10 posts to being available in 100 posts. With consistency in implementing this Mina Bahari Taxi Management model, the Gorontalo port can function similarly to the General Santos port in the Philippines, whose fishery production outstrips all combined fishery production in Indonesia.

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