

Ranau quake victim helping community through hydroponic farming

By **Olivia Miwil** - June 29, 2022 @ 12:36pm



Kundasang Aquafarm managing director Azizul Julirin, 34, starting modern farming technique at his hometown in Kundasang following 2015 earthquake that disrupts water supply at the fertile soil. - Picture courtesy of Azizul Julirin

RANAU: The 6.0 magnitude quake that struck the district in 2015 disrupted water supply and affected villagers who adopted conventional farming methods at the fertile highland.

However, Azizul Julirin, 34, decided to adopt modern farming methods in Kundasang following the quake.

That same year, he had quit his job with the Sabah Land Development Board to fulfil his dream of getting into agriculture practices like his family has for the past 30 years.

Azizul had been in Japan 10 years earlier, where he was exposed to the concept of aquaponic survival kits for post-quake victims as solutions to address food crisis.

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Today, he conducts training on modern farming for at least 2,000 farmers on ways to sustain their livelihoods while producing good crops.

After winning cash prizes and grants worth RM85,000 in three competitions organised by the government in 2016, he set up a modern farm in Kundasang.

By using aquaponic and hydroponic methods, which use less water than conventional farming, the farm focuses on producing mainly red and green coral lettuces.

The farm today supplies about 30 tonnes of annual crops worth about RM300,000 to supermarkets and hotels in Sabah, as well as exported to Sarawak and Brunei.

Another farm was opened in 2018 for agrotourism and educational purposes.

Azizul has also trained more than 2,000 participants including students at higher learning institutes across the country.

"Training people is a way of giving back to the community. Hydroponic is something that is easy to learn and does not require the concept of 'green fingers' to make it work," he said.

Azizul, who is currently training youngsters from the interiors of Sabah at his farm, said that although Sabah is blessed with vast lands, many assumed that agricultural lands were meant mainly for commodities such as oil palm.

He said he wanted to educate people on the importance of food security to cushion the impacts of inflation and rising food prices.

"The main target is to ensure community food security through self sustenance. After that, they can sell their crops as side income or commercialise them on a bigger scale.

"We also help by buying back their crops if they are facing difficulties to market it themselves."