
Sarawak: field trip to interview people resettled by dam

Last October, Sahabat Alam Malaysia (Friends of the Earth Malaysia) went on a field trip to Sarawak to interview Dayak Ibans that were affected by the Hydroelectric Batang Ai Dam and relocated in nearby districts during the past decade.

People interviewed expressed different opinions on whether their situation had improved or if they were now worse off than before. Among the positive aspects, the main one was the possibility of access to modern amenities such as electricity, road, school, clinic and water supply. However, money is needed to sustain all these and their sources of income come from tapping rubber and working in oil palm plantations, which means that incomes are meager. At the same time, the land allocated for every family is inadequate for their future survival and many don't have any land titles. People are therefore demanding that:

1. Padi farmland should be allocated immediately to all the respective settlers.
2. Land Tittles should be issued to all the respective families at the resettlement area.
3. The charge for electricity and water supply should be at a moderate price.
4. All the gravel road should be upgraded with tar within the Resettlement area.

Source: Sahabat Alam Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia.