



Sriharjo village | Photo source Yanmar

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INDONESIAN PROJECT CREATES BALANCED, SUSTAINABLE VILLAGE LIFE

 AGRICULTURE & ENERGY

Using indigenous and modern technology, the project aimed to develop energy self-sufficiency and food security to improve quality of life

Spotted: Just south of Jogjakarta in central Java, is a village that whilst looking like other nearby villages, is, in reality, a model of sustainability. The village of Sriharjo has been turned into a model of sustainability in a project supported by Yanmar Environmental Sustainability Support Association, and the Department of Agricultural and Biosystem Engineering at the Gadjah Mada University. Using indigenous and modern technology, the project aimed to develop energy self-sufficiency and food security to improve the economy and quality of life in the village.

The project established an agri-environmental park in the village, which provided education and assisted in developing enterprise activities such as agri-tourism and new businesses. Irrigation systems, screen houses and other infrastructure was introduced to support an organic vegetable and fruit farming system. The project also empowered women's groups to develop new food production businesses, using agricultural products grown in their own gardens.

In order to improve village sanitation, safe water gardens were installed. Waste is piped from homes to a storage tank, where bacteria convert it into nutrients. The nutrient mix rises to the top of the tank and is piped to a gravel bed underlying the garden. Garden plants absorb the nutrients, eliminating smells and improving the local environment. Waste from the village's livestock was processed in bioreaction tanks to be converted into methane, which is piped to village households for cooking fuel. Slurry from the bioreaction tanks is also used as a fertiliser.

To better manage water resources, irrigation and water storage technologies were improved, in the form of detention basins to hold surface runoff and mitigate the impact of dry spells. An automatic weather station was also installed, to allow the villagers to monitor the weather patterns

themselves. Professor Lilik Sutiarso of the Department of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering at the Gadjah Mada University summed up the goal of the project to Springwise: “We have to look at the three pillars of sustainability: the economy, society and the environment and ensure that these are all developed in balance.”

One of the key aspects of the Sriharjo project is that it does not seek to impose a new system on the rural village but to incorporate sustainable solutions into village life. At Springwise, we have seen similar, balanced approaches in other innovative schemes, including a biodynamic coffee brand and a sustainably built [development centre](#).

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Takeaway:

Villages like Sriharjo are faced with multiple challenges, including high poverty, poor waste management, lack of water resources, the impacts of climate change and a lack of educational and business opportunity. The project, however, is demonstrating that by combining different types of sustainable technology – and by mixing low tech and high-tech solutions – it is possible to successfully address these issues. The project has developed techniques for sustainable agriculture in a way that not only protects the environment and improves productivity, but also maintains the way of life and traditions of these regions.