

Abstract

Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) is the poorest province of Indonesia, with a base in subsistence agriculture and dry climate. Its population of over four million comprises several ethnic groups, each with firm foundations in adat. The Protestant and Catholic Churches are strong, and have major influence. The recent economic growth of NTT has been substantial, with benefits to most of its population.

The paper first examines these aspects, going on to explore development possibilities with their social, economic and environmental impacts. It reviews previous unsatisfactory approaches to poverty alleviation and improvement by the Indonesian government and foreign agencies, then appraising recent more successful efforts by the Indonesian government and NGOs. It considers routes for the future, suggesting how international donors might assist.

Biographical Sketches

Colin Barlow is an economist who has worked on rural development in Southeast Asia for over 40 years, concentrating especially on problems of small farmers and ways to improve their living standards. He has for over 15 years been President of an Australian NGO, the Nusa Tenggara Association (NTA), which works on bettering village education, social infrastructures and income-earning activities in the Indonesian province of East Nusa Tenggara.

Ria Gondowarsito is a sociologist who specializes on rural community development, especially in Indonesia, and has wide experience as a consultant in international and national development projects. She too is a member of the NTA, and she and Colin are wife and husband.