

## [The Star Online](#) > Southneast

Thursday December 8, 2005

EU group visits village project

**BY SHARON LING**  
**PHOTOS BY RAPAEE KAWI**

A 16-member European Union delegation recently visited an EU-funded project in Kampung Tringgus, a Bidayuh village about 63km from Kuching, and were impressed by what they saw.

After a traditional welcome by the villagers, the delegation, which included six members of the European Parliament and EU Ambassador to Malaysia Thierry Rommel, released fish fry into the river at the village.

They then signed a plaque and exchanged souvenirs with community chief Penghulu Ason Johor.



WARM GREETINGS: Members of the EU delegation getting to know a couple of villagers dressed in traditional costumes in Kampung Tringgus.

Kampung Tringgus is one of 15 villages in Krokong, Bau district, where a community-based eco-tourism project was introduced in April this year.

The project, implemented by the Krokong security and development committee, is supported by the EC UNDP Small Grants Programme for Operations to Promote Tropical Forests.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) resident representative in Malaysia, Dr Richard Leete, said the project would help bring development to the villages involved and empower the people with the necessary skills to overcome poverty.



TRADITIONAL FINERY: Bidayuh teenagers waiting to perform a welcome dance for the EU delegation.

“UNDP is pleased to be working on this project with the EU. I hope the EU delegation will consider further support for it,” he said.

Rommel said he was happy that EU funds were being put to good use to empower local communities in Krokong.

“Hopefully, the success of this project will be an example to help other indigenous communities in the world,” he added.



BIDDING FAREWELL: Dr Leete (right) and a member of the EU delegation shaking hands with villagers before leaving.

Penghulu Ason, meanwhile, said the project had received an encouraging response from the villagers.

“What we have done so far is to preserve the cleanliness of our river and make sure it will not be polluted.

“We are also trying to address the problem of unemployment,” he said.

The two-year project, scheduled to end in March 2007, aims to assist local communities to preserve their natural environment by providing sustainable forms of income generation through community-based tourism.

Project activities include surveys of natural and cultural resources, training in eco-tourism and managing natural resources, preserving fish stocks in Pidea River and creating a network of hiking trails in the forest.