

A Multi-stakeholder Forum as An Approach to Address Partnership and Land Tenure Conflicts in North Konawe District, Southeast Sulawesi

Mutmainnah¹, Alfian², Fitria Nur Indah Djafar³

{mutmainnaha@komunitasteras.org¹, alfianlawi@komunitasteras.org², indahdjafar23@gmail.com³}

Komunitas Teras, Jl. Konasara No. 4, Kelurahan Bonggoeya, Kendari^{1,2,3}

Abstract. Status of the land versus the corporate domination, and the local government authority place the community as the victim of the signed policy, thus a conflict of each becomes inevitable. This study aims to identify the most possible approach that is applicable to build a good medium of communication between three stakeholders: local government, community, and private sector. It is expected to generate land tenure management that is fair in three pillars of development: economy, social, and environment. This study uses the Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) method as the best way to gain the information to have a good understanding related to the issue and of each stakeholder's perspective. The study finds that the conflict between the partner community and the private sector is caused by the absence of direct communication of each where the private sector finds it difficult to explain the benefit-share.

Keywords: multi-stakeholder communication, community-company partnership, Participatory Rapid Appraisal.

1 Introduction

The Sulawesi Islands is well known as a global commodity producer. Agricultural products such as cocoa, coffee, oil palm, coconut (copra) are included in the list of commodities that meet world demand. The supporting factor is the history of plantation agriculture that is connected with regional to global markets. In addition, hilly, highland, and lowland landscapes and coastal areas are factors for the agricultural culture of several global commodities, such as cloves, cocoa, coconut, and later oil palm. Around the early 2000s, Sulawesi was once victorious as a superior quality cocoa supplier to various countries, such as the United States of America, stated [9]. In Southeast Sulawesi, oil palm plantations started to become a mainstay commodity around 1996 when the state-own enterprises so-called PTPN XIV came to North Konawe and started the oil palm seeding and planting. The existence of the PTPN XIV then becomes a trigger to other private companies such as Damai Jaya Lestari and Sultra Prima Lestari to do so with different schemes with local communities in North Konawe.

The patterns of land tenure and management of the production of palm oil commodities conducted by the private companies have certain complexity, especially in the plasma scheme. This is reflected in North Konawe. While for self-support or independent oil palm agriculture, oil palm land is managed by one family unit (household), although sometimes in one family there are several units of family heads (KK). In the case of plasma farmers, it is very limited in accessing and controlling their palm oil production even though they are considered the landowners. In Langgikima Subdistrict, some palm oil landowners who are partners of the company no longer recognize the location of the land. This condition is pretty much the same with the land cutting that is very possible to trigger the conflict. When it is related to the land acquisition, most of the reason of the conflict is the hunger that is faced by local community [3]. This is due to the lack of knowledge of the landowners about the cooperation scheme that they received from the company. The same is true for some plasma farmers in other sub-districts such as Landawe and Wiwirano in Konawe Utara.

Even though some of them were not heard enough to question this case, rather than the issue of profit-sharing which was considered inadequate to meet their household needs. This is one the several reason of the occurred conflicts in North Konawe and it might be the same in another places another time. Understanding of land frames requires special effort and becomes essential in any situation where participants have different knowledge, values or economic status, as it is the case of conflict management or negotiation process related to agricultural land use [7]. Hence, chaotic protests and demonstrations between the local community and local companies are unavoidable. It is also important to highlight that to do research in the insecure community that prone to conflict as their nature brings its own difficulties in conducting and elaborating the variables in the field [4]. That is why, to be able to make each party could sit together is a long process and efforts. The number of moments took by the government to mediate the two parties but ended up wasting as each side was in high temper and hold on to each other's assumptions and perspectives.

2 Method

This is a Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) study using the concept guide of PRA for Community Development by Joachim Theis and Heather M. Grady [10], which believe that PRA is one concept of learning from, and with, community members regarding the problem faced started by investigating, analyzing and evaluating the obstacles and chances for project's development. In general, in this study, the method of PRA could be seen by the figure below:

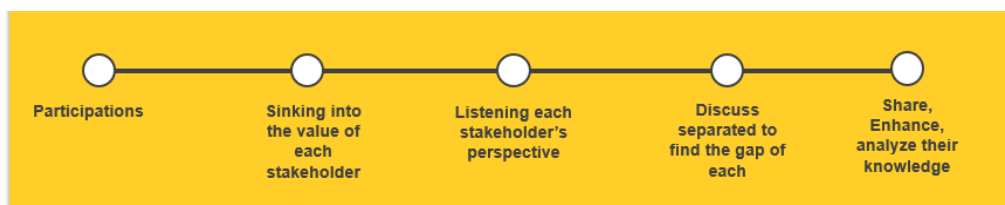


Fig. 1. Steps in collecting data using PRA.

PRA is an intensive, systematic, but semi-structures learning experience carried out in a community by a multi-disciplinary team that includes community members. This method applies several variables from physical, social, economic, ecological, institutional, and cultural for sure [1]. Regarding the land tenure conflict in North Konawe, the researchers conduct a 'live in' approach in order to gain the clear scenery related to the conflict among the local community (in three districts; Lenggikima, Landawe, and Wiwirano), local companies (DJL and SPL), and local government of North Konawe.

3 Result and Discussion

Conflict between local community and the palm oil mills or company have been living in the Indonesia for years. The main trigger is the benefit sharing that is unfair for local communities whether through the cooperation or nucleus systems [13]. The selection of locations in the study is based on the availability of commodities and the agenda and program of local government related to the oil palm plantation. The rest of the government's agenda and interests can be seen in the following basic things, including the Regional Regulation on Spatial Plan (RTRW) of Konawe Utara No. 20 of 2012 which clearly states the area of agricultural designation, more specifically mentioning oil palm with an allocation of 15,402 ha, which has now formed the three main sub-districts producing CPO namely Landawe, Lenggikima, and Wiwirano Districts [8]. But in another perspective, it is stated that almost all plantation sector commodities in the North Konawe District showed negative growth, or in other words, the amount of production decreased. This is because in general, the management of farming in the plantation sector in the North Konawe District has not been carried out optimally in the context of increasing the production [6]. Community palm oil production in Konawe Utara has processing relations with several companies, such as PT. Damai Jaya Lestari (DJL) and PT. Sultra Prima Lestari (SPL) is quite familiar to plasma farmers and self-supporting groups when viewed in terms of a larger processing industry or a network of cooperation between farmers and companies. Community palm oil production in Konawe Utara has processing relations with several companies, such as PT. Damai Jaya Lestari (DJL) and PT. Sultra Prima Lestari (SPL) is quite familiar to plasma farmers and self-supporting groups when viewed in terms of a larger processing industry or a network of cooperation between farmers and companies.

The dominant stakeholder in the process and formation of plasma partnerships is the company, namely PT DJL and PT SPL based on the MoU that has been made between the company and the farmer, the companies then have very strong power in determining the operation of the plasma partnership mechanism and the MoU becomes legitimacy for the company to be able to control the land of farmers and plasma farmers themselves as a group that is considered marginal, plasma farmers have a great interest in the establishment of partnerships, because it is directly related to how much the community gets economic benefits or income from profit sharing [5] which is determined unilaterally by the company and the landowner farmers do not have access to their land because the MoU is binding on land tenure. The introduction and expansion of oil palm in Indonesia reflects its economic attractiveness and benefits, but the social interactions between companies and local communities have had a mixed track record that requires attention. Ambiguous and contested land tenure in local communities and the state issuing concession licenses has been at the heart of most of the problems in this regard

[14]. Since then, conflict on land tenure in North Konawe has been one unstoppable topic of discussion, especially since the palm oil corporation landed.

The local government has difficulties to build communication to the local companies as the MoU only binds the two parties which is the company and the community as an individual without any involvement of the government through it. Power imbalances among stakeholders at the governmental and non-governmental level are also a challenge for collaborative efforts within marine regions. In some contexts, regional instruments are considered weak within national systems, while other bodies, such as funding donors, can be overpowering by imposing stringent conditions or processes that potentially instrumentalize partners [3]. This is the first issue that needs to be overcome before bringing every stakeholder into one room. Thus, at the beginning of this study the researchers started to participate more in the discussion in order to get to know more about the problem from each stakeholder, hence vary discussions conducted separately as figure 2 below:



Fig. 2. Depiction of the separate discussion conducted by the researchers.

Regardless, as the attempt to establish the collaborative or the multi-stakeholder forum is facing the different knowledge and capacity of each [7], the effort is still worth to try with several approaches in the field such as separate discussion and serial workshop for capacity building especially for the local communities to be able to cope with the local companies and government's discussion. From the separate discussion, several significant points were gained from each stakeholder. From the perspective of the local communities, it was stated that (1) the socialization from the local companies only involve the specific person or targeted person in the villages, (2) the profit-sharing needs to be reviewed so it will not harm the partner-farmers, (3) the land boundaries need to be clarified, and (4) the local government needs to take a step in to resolve the conflict between the local communities and local companies. Related to the communication of each party, it is clear that there is no access for smallholders or local communities to have clear information from the local companies.

Meanwhile, the result of the discussion with the local companies are; (1) the company will make efforts to restore the environment/ infrastructure/ public facilities, (2) the company never covers production. If necessary, this time can be delivered, (3) access information related to plasma referee management Companies can access MoU information, (4) company guarantees related to the increased production/farmers' income is difficult, this is because the local companies can only reach 7-9 Tons per year per Ha, (5) reviewing the MoU between the company and the local community as the partner-farmers.

Towards the perspective of the local government in general, there are several points collected from the discussion such as: (1) for the aspect of law enforcement, the local government has no authority related to law enforcement, (2) the regent has a program to re-negotiate palm oil but it is deadlocked. Regarding the review of the revenue sharing system and the MoU between the company and partner farmers, it is desirable to have a new MoU, (3) the government wants a forum with the parties that will continue to renegotiate until an equal agreement is reached, and (4) regarding transparency, the government needs to supervise its environment.

After the implementation, the monitoring and evaluation phase was conducted right after in order to prepare the new upcoming needs of assessment resulted from the evaluation phase as described by the figure below.

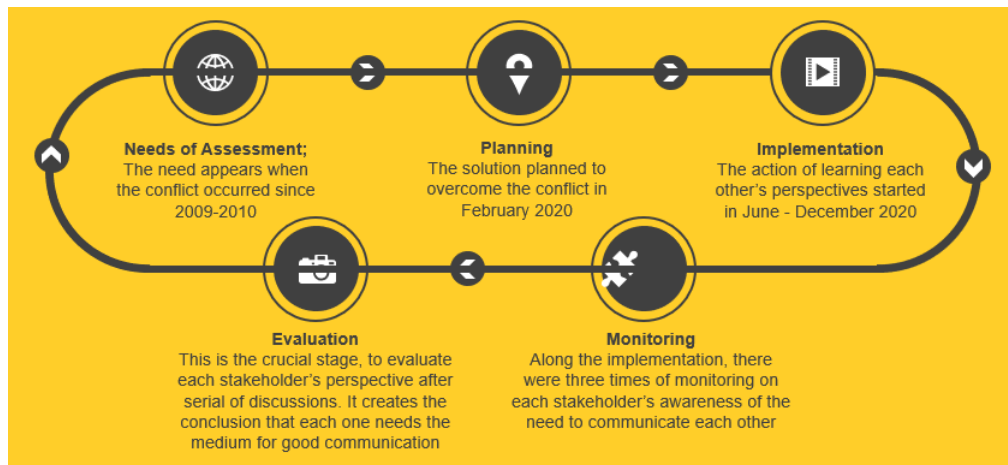


Fig. 3. The cycle of the study

Transparent and engaging stakeholder dialogue processes have the potential to provide guidance for the necessary transformation toward ocean sustainability and support the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) [12]. After a six months implementation of PRA to scrutinize the core issue of the land-tenure conflict in North Konawe towards the 'live in' approach, there are three main points of the result that could be stated that each stakeholder has a different level of knowledge, power, and perspective. Hence, bringing them together at one forum at a sudden will bring no good but chaotic discussion as they are in a different frequency. Understanding better each position by learning and living in leads to the acknowledgment that each stakeholder wants to resolve the problems but has no trust in each other or a new party such as NGO. The aftermath of the series of discussion, each stakeholder realize that they need to communicate each other directly to explain the issue in a good ethic medium of communication so that there will be no suspicion to each. Throughout this time, the multi-stakeholder forum has established good communication between task forces members, between task forces, with a strong support from the Chair of MSF. Furthermore, MSF also managed to build communication between its members, to the extent of providing positive influence [15] between the local communities, local mills, and government of North Konawe. The communication is always the main point of each stakeholder to build trust and

understanding each other, and the forum provides that. Thou not all the problems in the field of North Konawe have solved, there are many to comes such as the fair share, the knowledge, the culture and any other aspects [5] [3], but the establishment of the multi-stakeholder forum is one of the worth steps to find the solution together.

4 Conclusion

This research concludes several points that need to be highlighted, there are It needs an independent party to facilitate as each stakeholder has their prejudice to each, hence the appearance of new independent actors to work with is needed. The multi-stakeholder forum is intended to unify the perception [15]. Several argumentation regarding the multi-stakeholder forum or any other collaborative forum have conclude that challenges and opportunities of current collaborative processes— a newly established inclusive dialogue and exchange platform that brings actors together across multiple stakeholder groups, sectors, and marine regions in a genuine effort to enable the transformative change [12] is depending on its process where the entire aspect from its physical to its economic and culture should put on account [1] . To be able to let the stakeholders sit together in one forum, the facilitator needs to raise the awareness of each, given that each stakeholder has inequality of knowledge and power. In this study, before conducting the multi-stakeholder meeting, the researchers have built serial workshop for capacity building especially for the local communities. As resulted in this study that each stakeholder needs an ethical way to communicate with each other, thus the establishment of a forum or group of communication that consists of each stakeholder and the independent party is one of the resolutions and one of the important things is that to be able to create an ethic communication, each stakeholder needs to be empowered and assisted, especially the local communities.

References

- [1] Ahmed and Kelman: Measuring Community Vulnerability to Environmental Hazards: A Method for Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Data. *Natural Hazard Review* Volume 19, Issue 3 – August 2018 (2018)
- [2] El Sawah, S. et al.: Using Participatory Rapid Appraisal and DPSIR Approaches for Participatory Modelling: A Case Study for Groundwater Management in South Australia. 19th International Congress on Modelling and Simulation, Perth, Australia, 12-16 December 2011 (2012)
- [3] Hausermann, Heidi: Land-grabbing, land-use transformation and social differentiation: Deconstructing ‘small-scale’ in Ghana’s recent gold rush. *World Development* 108 (2018) p. 103-114 (2018)
- [4] Lombard, Melanie: Land conflict in peri-urban areas: Exploring the effects of land reform on informal settlement in Mexico. *Urban Studies* 2016, Vol. 53(13) 2700–2720 (2016)
- [5] Mutmainnah: FAIR Partnership Scoping Study Field Visit to North Konawe (Narrative Report). *Komunitas Teras* (2019)
- [6] Nikoyan, Anas: The Analysis of Leading Plant Sector Commodities in North Konawe District. *Buletin Penelitian Sosial Ekonomi Pertanian Fakultas Pertanian Universitas Haluoleo* 2020: 22(1):12-19 (2020)
- [7] Petrescu-Mag et al.: Agricultural land use conflict management—Vulnerabilities, law restrictions and negotiation frames. A wake-up call. *Land Use Policy* Volume 76, July 2018, Pages 600-610 (2018)

- [8] RPJMD Kabupaten Konawe Utara 2016-2021, Bab V – Visi, Misi, Tujuan dan Sasaran (2016)
- [9] Saluang, Surya: Kakao dan Kemandirian Petani, INKAPA. Bogor. (2013)
- [10] Theis, Joachim and Grady, Heather M.: Participatory Rapid Appraisal for Community Development. International Institute for Environment and Development (1991)
- [11] Tovar, Jasmine Gonzales et al.: Can multistakeholder forums empower indigenous and local communities and promote forest conservation? A comparative analysis of territorial planning in two Brazilian states with contrasting contexts. *Conservation Science and Practice*. 2021;3:e326. (2021)
- [12] Weiland, Laura et al.: Advancing Ocean Governance in Marine Regions Through Stakeholder Dialogue Processes. *Frontiers in Marine Science* Volume 8, Article 645576 (2021)
- [13] Suyanto, S: Underlying cause of fire: Different form of land tenure conflicts in Sumatra. *Mitig Adapt Strat Glob Change* (2006) 12:67–74 (2006)
- [14] Budidarsono, S et al.: Socioeconomic Impact Assessment of Palm Oil Production. Technical Brief No. 27: palm oil series. Bogor, Indonesia. World Agroforestry Centre - (ICRAF), SEA Regional Office. 4p (2012)
- [15] Widiati, I R and Irianto: Mitigation and adaptation to climate change on among stakeholder for sustainability: Evaluation a regional multi- stakeholder for an approach of the role of disaster risk management. *IOP Conf. Series: Earth and Environmental Science* 235 (2019) 012103 (2019)