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# **Strengthening Women's Participation through Collective Action for Inclusive Decision making Processes: Lessons Learned from Two Villages in Jambi Province, Sumatra, Indonesia**

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*In the context of decentralization, community participation becomes a key to the building of a successful learning process. By providing the opportunity for access and control, to both men and women, better decision making processes can be created. This paper presents preliminary research findings from the villages of Sungai Telang and Lubuk Kambing, Jambi Province, that reveal women's experiences of various types of gender inequity. These inequities preclude women from participating effectively in decision making processes for development planning, both within the family and at the village level.*

*We have been using the Participatory Action Research approach, and working with four groups, two all women, and two all men. In Sungai Telang, there are significant matrilineal tendencies; whereas Lubuk Kambing presents more patrilineal or at least bilateral leanings. In both communities, women are actively involved in day to day natural resource management. A central purpose of our research is to catalyze more effective collective action among these naturally occurring groups. One of our goals is to strengthen community members' capacity to make their aspirations known at the district level.*

*This paper will examine both people's motivations to engage in collective action, and provide some indicators for the assessment of its effectiveness in these two communities.*

*Key Words: collective action, participatory action research, decision making, learning process, Indonesia*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

For decades, natural resource management in Indonesia has been controlled by a highly centralized state, characterized by authoritarian rule, massive exploitation of the nation's natural resources, and the marginalization of forest dependent communities, justified through national laws and policies. Since the fall of Soeharto in 1998, political reform and economic crisis have engendered important changes to governance and policy in Indonesia, creating unprecedented opportunities and challenges for forest dependent people. One of the changes has been the shift in power relations from central to district governments, through what is referred to as decentralization<sup>2</sup>. The decentralization effort was then realized at the beginning of January 2000, devolving most authority of governance to the district (*kabupaten*) level.

Although new decentralization laws transfer decision making over forest management to local governments (district level), these laws are vague and filled with loopholes, creating a great deal of uncertainty, as well as opportunity, in interpreting how they should be implemented. Conflicting laws between departments also complicate finding legal solutions to problems with few mechanisms for meaningful input from communities. Communities are given new responsibilities to deal with resource management and creation; while at the same time legal and administrative support is often lacking, assuming these new responsibilities is therefore near impossible. Decentralization and better procedure and mechanism are important factors for recognition of property rights and promoting collective action for the poor.

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<sup>2</sup> The Government of Indonesia initiated decentralization in 1999 by the issuance of Law No. 22/1999 on regional governance, where the central government transferred some functions to a lower level of authorities. Having learned from four years' experience with the implementation of decentralized policies, the GoI has recently issued a new law (No. 32/2004 replacing Law 22/99) which provided criteria for subsidiary between central, provincial and district governments and called for a stronger and interlinked relationship among the levels of the governance system.

In parallel, further legislation<sup>3</sup> was also issued to enable people's participation and the wide involvement of women in the decision making processes. The new law on political parties requires that political parties include a minimum of 30% women representatives in the list of candidature for election. Another law provides a better mechanism for involving a wide range of stakeholders, including women, in determining the development programs based on local aspirations. However, women in the Local House of Representatives remain few in number and their voices seem to remain weak at the family as well as governance or policy levels. The new laws have yet to ensure that women have better access to decision making processes and resource benefits. The laws are also not enough to guarantee equal participation.

Even in day to day life, women face severe inequalities in the division of labor, putting them in a weak position with regard to economic opportunities. As a consequence women also have a weak position in controlling, accessing and influencing decision-making processes. This paper addresses women's inequality in decision making at the family as well as the village level. We have attempted to engage women's collective action towards inclusion in decision making.

In the following pages, we first describe the context of the research and then outline the methodology and site description. The third section describes the PAR (Participatory Action Research) process in catalyzing collective action conducted in targeted groups through facilitation. Finally we conclude with lessons learned and suggestions for further research.

## **COLLECTIVE ACTION, PROPERTY RIGHTS AND WOMEN'S ROLES**

Collective action can be defined as an action taken by a group of individuals (either directly or on its behalf through an organization) to achieve common interests; the group can be voluntarily self-formed, or informally or formally instigated by external institutions (Marshall, 1998). Ostrom (2004) suggests that "collective action occurs when more than one individual is required to contribute to achieve an outcome". In our case, collective action can also be defined as conscious working together by local stakeholders to take advantage of social and political opportunities in development plans. Moreover the coordinated actions in policy development by different governmental agencies and other stakeholders with their shared goals, can deliberate issues towards a coherent and integrated program that benefits local people. This particular project's aim was to improve benefits for the poor, so special attention has been paid to this aspect.

Bromley (1991), as cited in Di Gregorio et al (2004), defines property rights as "the capacity to call upon the collective to stand behind one's claim to a benefit stream". This does not only include the right to completely and exclusively control a resource (ownership), but also the right to utilize, manage and make decisions over the resources. The Indonesian State recognizes various types of rights such as state rights over forestland – which include protection forests, national parks, production and limited production forests - and over areas classified for non-forestry uses. The land classified under forestland is considered state owned which the Ministry of Forestry has the management rights to, while areas outside forestland can be under state, private or community control. The state forest is classified as Production Forest (*Hutan Produksi*), Conversion Forest (*Hutan Konversi*), and Protected Forest (*Hutan Lindung*). At the community level, the state recognizes community rights, traditional or customary rights both individual and communal. However, there are serious limits to these rights as the "national interest" and its implementation of these rights do not always go by the book.

One of the great concerns of people living in forested areas is access to resources. Ostrom (2004) mentioned that property rights recognized by the state not only reinforce collective action needed for collective management, but also provide security for individuals and households. For women it is often particularly challenging to obtain equal access to property rights which enable them to participate freely in decision making processes and economic activities. However, there is also a growing recognition that collective

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<sup>3</sup> Law No. 30/2000 on Political Parties and Law 25/2004 on Development Planning System

action allows people to overcome limitations linked to the lack of resources, power and voices. Collective action also underpins many Community Driven Development (CDD) programs for service delivery, e.g. of water supply, health care and agricultural extension (Nitti and Jahiya, 2004). As with property rights, the poor and women are often at a disadvantage when it comes to collective action because of social exclusion, lack of resources, and domination of meetings by local elites (Di Gregorio et al. 2004).

This research is based on the joint assumption that improvements in the well-being of both people and forest will depend on a) clarification of land ownership and use rights for both men and women, and b) a stronger civil society to monitor the activities of policy makers and to contribute to the development of locally appropriate policies and legislation. This study hypothesized that collective action is a viable route to accomplishing these intermediate goals, through the facilitation processes this study tried to catalyze the collective action processes among groups to achieve their goals.

## METHODOLOGY

This research is part of a collaborative action research project conducted at the district and village level, designed to identify, test and disseminate lessons on suitable decentralized governance mechanisms and processes for securing a routine and influential voice for local communities in decision-making on land use planning and resource benefits distribution. This project aims to engage local people throughout the research to ensure optimal capacity building for collective action over property rights; to secure more equitable flows of natural resource benefits for the poor and marginalized; and ensure uptake of project findings by government and local stakeholders.

This paper presents our approach to catalyzing community groups in two villages with both men and women through facilitation to strengthen their collective action efforts to reach common goals. The research has also been looking at how collective action enhances local people's access to influential decision-making networks so that policy outcomes reflect their long-term development interests. We have developed this paper based on our preliminary findings of intensive participatory action research with four groups, in particular with women groups in the two communities.

We have been working together with two village facilitators to catalyze collective action among community groups in the two village sites. These two facilitators reside in the villages to facilitate community groups through the learning cycle of PAR. At the district level, we are working in partnership with the District Development Planning Bureau (*BAPPEDA*) and District Forestry Service, (*Dinas Kehutanan*) in two districts. *BAPPEDA* is currently tasked with involving the public in preparing the district's development plans, and spatial plan for land use. Our *BAPPEDA* partners are well placed to use the findings and lessons generated through participatory action research with stakeholders at all levels, to develop a more inclusive and equitable spatial plan for the area, based on clear and transparent property rights.

A fundamental aspect of this research is a commitment to a participatory approach to understanding communities and the problems that they face. The research methodology used by the project reflects this commitment to the understanding and the facilitation processes used in collective action.

## SITE SELECTION

The research was carried out in the two villages of Sungai Telang (Bungo District) and Lubuk Kambing (Tanjung Jabung Barat District hereafter Tanjabbar), in the province of Jambi in Sumatera. A visit in December 2004 was made to each district to select the research sites (Figure 1).

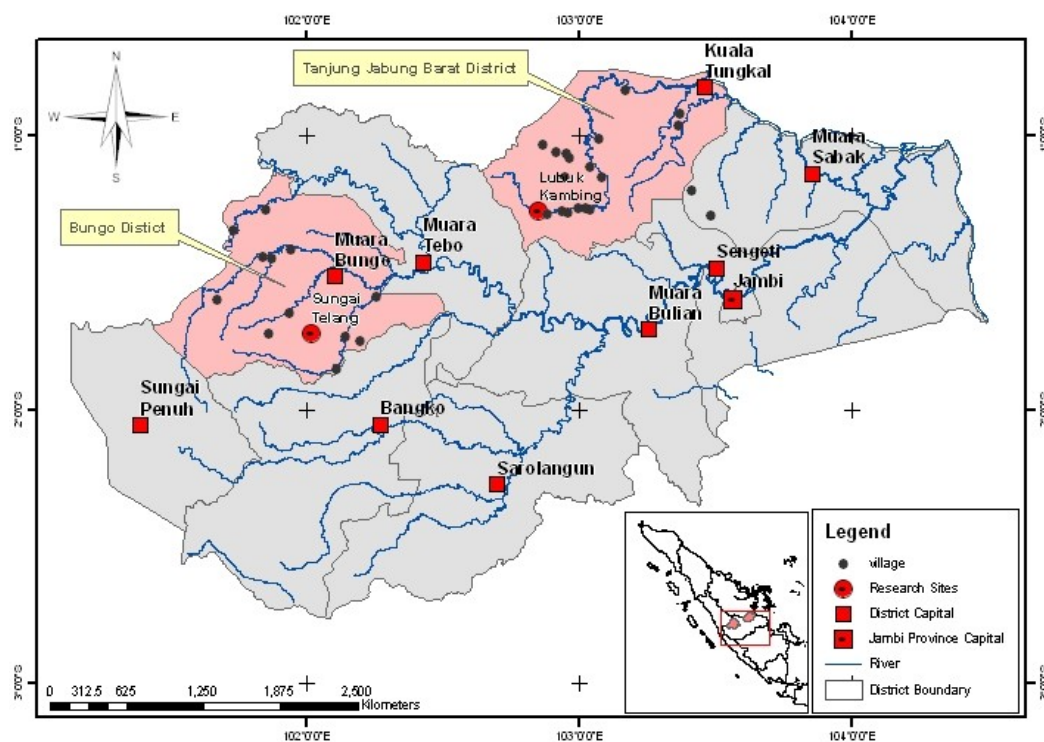
The two research sites were selected based on these criteria:

- The composition of the community includes a diversity of ethnic groups and culture. We were particularly interested also in comparing matrilineal and patrilineal and/or bilateral inheritance systems, and their effects on women's roles and status.
- Community dependency on forest resources and some pressure on them.

- Community has access to forest resources.
- Level of conflict (possible pressures from outside the community and potential conflict or threats towards community and forest sustainability). We were initially seeking a middle level of conflict meaning that there was no fighting yet, but there was some disagreement.
- Possible opportunities for overlap of interests between the communities and existing district government development programs (so that research findings could contribute towards district government efforts to improve their district policies).
- Existing research activities or other development agencies/institutions (government, university or international organization).

In Bungo district 34.53% or 182,869.35 ha of the total area is under forest cover (Bungo Forest Agency, 2005), while in Tanjabbar forest cover is 29.09 % of the total area, or 257,344 ha. of forest cover (Tanjabbar District Forestry Services, 2004). The two sites are located in similar ecological zones and have similar socioeconomic characteristics but differ in terms of access to forest resources, forest governance arrangements, ethnic group diversity, strength of kinship relations, and level of interest in sustainable forest development as presented in Table 2. Both villages are located near the border of national parks, Kerinci Sebelat and Bukit Tiga Puluh, and are equidistant from former timber concession areas<sup>4</sup>.

Figure 1 – Map of Research Sites (CIFOR, 2005)



### Sungai Telang Community

Sungai Telang is a village in Bungo District, located on the border between West Sumatra and Jambi Province. Sungai Telang occupies a land area of 12,089.75 ha, 75% of which is devoted to forest (production forest, protected forest and national park) and 25% to agriculture. The main economic activities in the village are farming and collecting timber and non timber forest products. The education levels are low. There is an elementary school near the village, which has grades one through six. While some students stop schooling before sixth grade, others generally completed the elementary school. Very few students continue on to a higher level of education. This village consists of 3 original hamlets and 2 transmigrant areas with a total population of 1,551 people. Sungai Telang is also relatively isolated, though it is located only 53 km

<sup>4</sup> Forest concession occupies the area of production forest, also known as Industrial Forest Plantation (*Hutan Tanaman Industri*)

from Muara Bungo, the district capital, the only villagers who regularly visit are the members of the village government. Women visit the city less than men; many of the women we spoke to had never been to the district capital, and had been come to the sub-district capital, which is only 23 km away, once or twice.

Most of the indigenous communities in the original hamlets of Sungai Telang are ethnic Minang who originally came from West Sumatra and have a strong matrilineal tradition in their inheritance system. The transmigrants on the other hand, came from Java and other provinces bordering Jambi. Some social rules in Sungai Telang have also a patrilineal influence practiced by some of the community who have adopted Jambi culture. The village has relatively strong customs and traditional institutions maintaining a matrilineal system where women have the right to inherit and manage land. However the right to make decisions over land is controlled by their male relatives.

Community groups, both women and men voluntarily organize collective action, mostly in agriculture. However, latent land conflicts characterize interactions between indigenous community members and the trans-migrants. Moreover, medium levels of conflict occur between the community and the forest concessionaire. Because of the large portion of forest area and its proximity to the village, the community has a high dependency on various forest resources. This dependency and the activities of various timber companies have put significant pressure on this forest.

### **Lubuk Kambing Community**

Lubuk Kambing is located 195 km from district capital of Tanjung Jabung Barat district. This village has a land area of 33,640 ha with a population of approximately 4,000 people. Lubuk Kambing is less isolated. Situated on a major road between Merlung and Simpang Niam, cars and trucks regularly pass through the village. The education system, however, is similar to that of Sungai Telang, there is a primary school, but no secondary school. Some children choose to continue school in the neighboring village of Sungai Rotan, approximately 12 kilometers away. Most, however, choose to stop school at sixth grade or below. In Suka Maju hamlet, home of the men's group (*Kelompok Tani*), this is particularly true, with only a small percentage obtaining a secondary education.

The community has a diversity of ethnic backgrounds. The indigenous people are descendents of the ethnic Malay from Jambi Province and the migrants from Palembang-South Sumatera, Minang and Kerinci-West Sumatera, Batak-North Sumatera and Javanese. Because of the large number of ethnic Malay, Lubuk Kambing community implements the patrilineal inheritance system. Due to a long tradition of interaction with people from outside the village, there is a relatively good relationship between the indigenous community and the migrants. Surrounded by Bukit Tiga Puluh National Park, a forest concession and an oil palm plantation area, one potential conflict was detected based on high interest of control of the land and forest resources by various stakeholders. The whole ecological system of the area characterizes the community's economic activities which include rubber farming, labor and forest resources especially timber (highly dependent on). As the population grows, the community is beginning to face difficulties finding sufficient land for swidden fields. Community land is now becoming scarce, particularly for young married couples who are finding it difficult to expand their holdings

In both research sites, research projects such as ACM-CIFOR<sup>5</sup> and ICRAF<sup>6</sup> and local NGOs have been working in these areas for many years. Based on the field visit and secondary information provided from previous studies conducted by other research institutions, we were able to pull out some characteristics of both research sites, Sungai Telang and Lubuk Kambing as presented in the Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Characteristics of Research Sites

<sup>5</sup> ACM refers to Adaptive Collaborative Management, a participatory approach built on participatory action research at the village level (cf. Hartanto et al. 2003, Colfer 2005; and Kusumanto et al. 2005, which describes ACM activities in nearby Baru Pelepat (Bungo District). CIFOR is the Center for International Forestry Research, in Bogor, Indonesia.

<sup>6</sup> ICRAF is the International Center for Research in Agro-forestry (now called the World Agro-forestry Center). It has a branch office in Bogor as well.

Criteria	Bungo District	Tanjabbar District
	Sungai Telang	Lubuk Kambing
Diversity of ethnic groups	Minang + Malay Jambi, Javanese, Palembang, Aceh, Batak	Minang + Malay (Mendaluh, Lingkis, Mawan dan Antimong tribe)+ Migrants from Aceh, Palembang and Javanese
Strength of customs and traditional institutions.	<b>Relatively Strong</b>	<b>Relatively Strong</b>
Strength of kinship ties in relation to potential internal conflict within the community	<b>Relatively Strong</b>	<b>Relatively Strong</b>
Social Capital	Jealousy between the indigenous community and trans-migrants	Relatively good relations between the indigenous community and migrants (refugees)
Level of conflict with outside actors	<b>Medium</b> (community vs forest concessionaire)	<b>Medium</b> (Potential conflict with National Park, Industrial Forest Plantation, and oil palm plantation over land)
Level of interest in sustainable forest development	Conservation and reforestation in protected forest $\pm 200$ ha, destruction has reached $\pm 30\%$ of total forest area	High potential conflict on boundaries and land sustainability
Accessibility	Good road; easy to reach, only 53 km from district capital, Muara Bungo	Good road; easy to reach, only 195 km from district capital, Kuala Tungkal
Accessibility to forest resources.	5 km to the production forest and 2 km to the protected forest.	1 – 5 km to the non forestry area 10km to the production area, and; 15 km to Industrial Forest Plantation
Presence of District Government Development Programs related to forests and forestry	Reconstruction of forest boundaries, production effort group ( <i>Kelompok Usaha Produktif</i> ), National Movement for Forest and Land Rehabilitation Program ( <i>GNRHL</i> ), social forestry	National Movement for Forest and Land Rehabilitation Program ( <i>GNRHL</i> ) <sup>7</sup>
Formal and informal institutions within the community with potential for collective action	Village government, village representatives, customary institution, Karang Taruna (youth group), farmers' group, women's group.	Village government, village representative, customary institution, farmer's group, loggers' group and women's group.
Relative poverty level	<b>poor</b>	<b>Is one of the poorest villages in the district</b>

## GROUP SELECTION

In Sungai Telang, we identified 2 different types of women's groups called *Gotong Royong* and *Pelhin*. The first group was selected as our target group and worked with our facilitation while the second group worked without facilitation. While our targeted groups are not a perfect random sample for the residents of the study villages, the results of the interviews appear consistent with our more general observations of life in the village and lead us to believe that they are sufficiently representative. To maintain the validity and accuracy, the facilitators have continued to maintain a daily field diary to record the process information.

The four targeted groups were selected based on its representation of ethnic diversity (local vs transmigrant), gender differences (male, female), as well as different likely interests. We

<sup>7</sup> *Gerakan Nasional Rehabilitasi Hutan dan Lahan (GNRHL)*

anticipated that the *Pelhin* group would be linked to land use, but might be interested in health matters as well. We anticipated that the *Gotong Royong* group would represent economic interests of women. And the *Kelompok Tani* group would tie in well with our activities at the district level, relating to land use planning. These groups also represent scales from family to dusun. Village-wide possibilities were rejected because of the complications of getting members of widely dispersed hamlets together (and the costs that entails), as well as our belief that starting small is more sensible, given the time and money available. We wanted to try a less intensive approach, where we focus on stimulating parts of the community to act, with less being done directly by the facilitators. Village facilitators planned to focus more on straightforward facilitation and networking.

The primary method of collecting detailed information was by way of semi-structured interviews with key members of the community. The lists of questions were developed by the village facilitators with in-puts from researchers and district-level teams. This process, which is still ongoing, is being conducted with all members of the targeted groups we are working with in both villages. The interviews are done individually in the interviewee's house, although family members and neighbors occasionally participate. The information collected includes questions about land ownership, land use, income, familial and gender-based responsibilities. In Sungai Telang, we identified 2 different types of women's groups called *Gotong Royong* and *Pelhin*. The first group was selected as our target group and worked with our facilitation while the second group worked without facilitation. While our targeted groups are not a perfect random sample for the residents of the study villages, the results of the interviews appear consistent with our more general observations of life in the village and lead us to believe that they are sufficiently representative. To maintain the validity and accuracy, the facilitators have continued to maintain a daily field diary to record the process information.

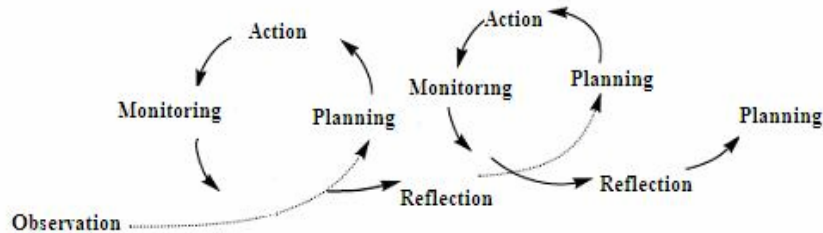
## PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH FOR FACILITATING COLLECTIVE ACTION

In recent years, research approaches have paid more attention to the perspectives of the local people, an approach now often called "bottom-up" or "participatory," where the scientist considers the local society to be both part of the solution and involved in debate on an equal footing (Castellonet and Jordan, 2002).

Action research is a form of collective self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of those practices and the situations in which the practices are carried out. The approach is only action research when it is collaborative, though it is important to realize that action research of the group is achieved through the critically examined action of individual group members (Kemmis and McTaggart 1988).

McCutcheon and Jung (1990) also described Action Research as systematic inquiry that is collective, collaborative, self reflective, critical and undertaken by participants in the inquiry. With PAR, we are trying to organize bottom-up identification of priorities through phases of planning, action, monitoring and reflection as presented in Figure 2. As a continuous cycle, PAR allows insiders and outsiders together to decide what needs to be assessed, design the research and collect the necessary information.

Figure 2 – Participatory Action Research process



Another element of this research that is a typical its simultaneous efforts at both the village level and at the district, governmental level. By using participatory action research at both levels, we have hoped that important links and synergies can be realized between the two levels. Other researchers have found that simultaneous pressure at the local level and at higher, governmental levels is often effective in bringing about meaningful and beneficial change (e.g., (Richie and Haggith 2005); (Carlsson and Berkes 2005); (Agrawal and Ostrom 2001) ). This is an idea we are also testing.

Our intention, in contrast to much of the research reported in the collective action literature (e.g., (Kelly and Breinlinger 1996); (Meinzin-Dick, Knox, and Di Gregorio 2001)), was to *stimulate* collective action (rather than only to understand the conditions under which it occurs). At the same time, we hoped to observe the process, noting which institutional settings and approaches seemed to yield the best results.

We assessed background information regarding the villages and the communities, and then identified collective action groups that already existed in the community. The project focused on pre-existing groups for two reasons:

- First, beginning with pre-existing groups ensured that the members were already using some collective action in their day to day activities and already had good personal connections with each other, experience working together, previous forms of collective action and still continued to work together;
- Second, the advantage of working with existing groups is that they represent an ongoing expenditure of people's time. Working with them does not require people to develop new communication patterns (at least initially), and it reduces the number of additional meetings people must attend. It represents an acknowledgement of the value of a part of their existing way of life. Such acknowledgement can be very important for developing or strengthening people's self-confidence---also important for bringing about effective collective action (Colfer, in press).

In an effort to strengthening women's participation in the general process of decision making, we have been using Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) to provide various techniques for analyzing, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating collective action in rural development and resource management. PRA can be understood as growing family of approaches and methods to enable local people to share, enhance and analyze their knowledge of life and conditions, and plan, act, monitor and evaluate (Chambers, 1981). The use of different tools such as observation, joint walkthrough, resource mapping, ranking exercise, group discussions, etc., not only quickly generate valid information and support analysis by stakeholders, but also are enjoyable for those involved.

A series of PRA tools to assess background information, such as resource mapping has been used in both of the villages to gain a better understanding of resource rights and resource capture. In both villages, resource mapping has been conducted with male participants, and resource mapping with women's groups is being planned for the near future. This mapping has helped in generating discussions to identify and establish current land uses and develop shared, local objectives for land use planning, as well as helping to establish a clearer understanding of relative access to benefits. Another tool, land transects, have been used to understand how land use has changed over time, particularly with the introduction of large transmigration projects. These tools, along with participant observation, have served to give us a good understanding of the



social, economic, and cultural background, including social cohesion, presence of formal and informal organizations and women's groups, ethnic diversity, customary relations, etc., in the villages.

Through PAR process in collective action we look at the efforts, approaches, successes and constraints that group had during the facilitation. We selected two groups per village as focus groups. Currently, some of these groups are directly linked to government programs and policies, and some have focused on resource rights. These groups also represent scales from family to hamlet. Village-wide possibilities were rejected because of the complications and costs of getting members from widely dispersed hamlets together, as well as our belief that starting small is more sensible, given the time and money available. We wanted to try to focus on stimulating parts of the community to act, with little (other than straightforward facilitation and networking) being done directly by the facilitators. Each village facilitator focused on one all-male and one all-female group. In Lubuk Kambing, we focused on one all male *Kelompok Tani* (Farmers group) and one all female *Dasa Wisma* group, a subset of the government sponsored *Pendidikan Kesejahteraan Keluarga (PKK)* or *Family Welfare Movement* program. In Sungai Telang, we chose to focus on the all female *Gotong Royong*—Shared Work—group and the all male farmers group.

We worked with the groups to identify issues, beyond the group's scope of normal action, that they might be interested in addressing. By applying a participant observation method, the village facilitators are involved and participate in the day-to day life of the communities while aiming to study and experience the events in the way the community experiences them. Through discussion and group brainstorming, each group selected a specific focus for collective action. Their ideas included income generation efforts through selling cake and raising ducks, and addressing property rights issues through land certification and government sponsored rubber sapling programs. These projects were undertaken in addition to the naturally occurring collective action that the group had already planned, although not all groups had on going projects. These new focus for collective action will be discussed later on in this paper.

After outlining initial topics, we began to lead the groups through the PAR steps of, planning, action, monitoring, and reflection. For the initial months of the project facilitation, the monitoring process was considered part of the reflection process, although it has recently begun to be considered distinctly. Throughout this process, we worked with the community to ensure that all relevant stakeholders were present in group discussions and to ensure community awareness of the importance of involving various stakeholders in their planning discussions. This is also to assure that all stakeholders have a share in the action processes. Action, which often involved going to the sub-district (*kecamatan*) or district (*kabupaten*) level for information, involved rotating members of the groups who went to meet with government officials. The information gathered is then put into practical applications or used to identify new ideas. A variety of facilitation techniques, including silent brainstorming using index cards, focus group discussions, individual discussions, informal discussions, etc. were used to ensure that even those who were not comfortable sharing were given the opportunity to share their opinions.

While facilitating these collective action processes, the village facilitators observed the groups' progress. The facilitators were able to note changes, as they developed, both in the groups and in the ways that the individuals themselves changed as a result of the process. These results will be covered in detail in the following sections.

## GROUP CHARACTERISTICS AND PAR LEARNING PROCESSES FOR CATALYZING CA

In this section we describe how the learning process was introduced and implemented by the women's groups and men's groups, how they are task divided among them and how they work collectively.

Table 3. Group Characteristics

Groups	Description of Group	Description of Group Activities before PAR	Opportunity
1. Gotong Royong	<p><b>Sungai Telang</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Comprised of all women that provide paid labor to aid other village members in their agricultural work.</li> <li>- The groups are all female, from young unmarried girls to old women, with the majority of the members being mothers. No one is denied membership in a <i>Gotong Royong</i> group because of age or perceived ability.</li> <li>- The group engages in daily agricultural labor.</li> <li>- There are currently 17 members.</li> <li>- There are one or two <i>gotong royong</i> groups in each hamlet of Sungai Telang.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- When requested by a farm owner, the group's work includes harvesting chili (<i>cabe rawit</i>), clearing rubber forests, preparing irrigated rice fields, or any other form of agricultural work that requires a large number of people.</li> <li>- It is mandatory that all members of the group join.</li> <li>- For each day worked, each group member receives Rp. 15,000 (which must be supplemented out of pocket for those who do not join in that day's work).</li> <li>- The work does not depend on the ability or age of the members—simply on the presence of the people on the work day.</li> <li>- Payment can be made on the work day or later, as long as all debts are settled before the fasting month (Ramadhan<sup>8</sup>).</li> <li>- The money is not used or disbursed individually but is collected by the head of the group. Before the month of Ramadhan, the money is used to buy cooking oil and sugar. Each woman receives roughly 35 kilos of cooking oil and 40 kilos of sugar.</li> <li>- The groups work day is divided into certain divisions, guaranteeing the employer a set work day. Work begins at 8 am and breaks are taken at 10 and 2:30 with a lunch break from 11:30 to 1 pm.</li> <li>- The group depends on the agricultural season. During the busy season this means that Gotong Royong groups will work two days a week. During the off season, there will be many weeks without work.</li> </ul>	<p>As the focus for the research, we selected this group because it is relatively small, with only 17 members. This made it feasible to interact with all members of the group individually. Other than its relatively low number of group members, it is not functionally different than any of the <i>Gotong Royong</i> groups.</p>

<sup>8</sup> Celebrated by Muslim religion to do fasting. Ramadhan ends with the biggest holiday for Muslims, and one in which much money is needed for buying new clothes, sacrificing a goat, etc.

<p>2. Kelompok Tani Sinar Harapan (Farmer's group)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The group is an all-male village level organization that aims to help aid small farmers.</li> <li>- The group receives support from the agricultural extensions officer (PPL), a government official tasked with helping the development of village-level agriculture.</li> <li>- The group was formed when the government offered a program to improve the water ducts for irrigated rice agriculture. The program required that funds be received by a group.</li> <li>- The group draw their members from all of the <i>hamlets</i> in Sungai Telang.</li> </ul>	<p>The farmer group, or locally known as <i>KT- Sinar Harapan</i>, has limited activities. Since the group received government aid in 1998, they have continually initiated collective action on their own. In 2001, the group received government aid in the form of rice seedlings, but only a few members of the group were interested.</p>	<p>We chose to focus on the <i>KT-Sinar Harapan</i>. Of the two groups in the village, this group seemed particularly well organized and interested in working on future projects together.</p>
<p>3. Pelhin</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All-female groups, such as this, operate on a reciprocal work relationship, exchanging work with the unit of day-worked.</li> </ul>	<p>Any woman can call for a <i>Pelhin</i> day when there is the need for a lot of work to be completed in a limited amount of time. Women are free to come to the <i>Pelhin</i> or not depending on their work schedule (in contrast to <i>Gotong Royong</i> groups, which are mandatory). When a woman participates in a <i>Pelhin</i> work day, she is then owed a days work from the owner of the farm. This can be paid off when the person calls a <i>Pelhin</i> day herself. When this woman calls a <i>Pelhin</i> day, it is mandatory that those who owe her attend. If it is not possible, there are two options. First, she can pay Rp. 15,000 to the person she owes, thereby paying off her work debt. Second, she can pay another woman Rp. 15,000 to work at the <i>Pelhin</i>. The woman being paid works off the debt of the woman paying her, and does not accrue any <i>Pelhin</i> debt from the woman whose land is being worked. When a debt is being paid off the woman whose land is being worked does not owe a work day to the woman who is working off the debt..</p> <p>These work relationships can become an extremely complex web, depending on how active a particular woman is in <i>Pelhin</i>. Women who participate in the <i>Pelhin</i> groups keep lists of whom they owe work to, and those who owe them. Because people are completing old debts and incurring new debts constantly, it is hard to define who the members of a <i>Pelhin</i> group are. While some people are better friends and work on each other's land more regularly, there are no set groups of people who work in one group. There is no formal leadership in a <i>Pelhin</i> group, and there are no membership lists or meetings.</p>	<p><i>Pelhin</i> groups were not selected as a focus group but none the less provide an interesting example of the collective action process in Sungai Telang. <i>Pelhin</i> groups have existed in the village long beyond the memory of anyone in the village.</p>

Lubuk Kambing

<p>1. Dasa Wisma</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The group was formed as part of the formal group Family Welfare Movement designated by the government for village women. The Family Welfare Movement is a government programme focusing primarily on women in rural areas, and has been in existence since 1967 (ILO, 2002).</li> <li>- The group comprises of 20 members of women and it is formed in each of the lowest administrative levels.</li> <li>- As also applied in other villages, the village head's wife automatically acts as the leader to the entire Family Welfare Movement program in the village.</li> </ul>	<p>The Dasawisma group was originally formed in one of the hamlets, Lubuk Beringin, which was initiated by the village-head's wife who was interested in revitalizing this group within her own hamlet (Lubuk Beringin), focusing on medicinal plants called TOGA (<i>Tanaman Obat Keluarga</i>). The group was selected by the village-head's wife. She began by appointing two vocal women who became the leaders of the group and then later these leaders had to try to find another 20 members to sign up. Most of these women are engage in daily agricultural labor, this is on top of their daily domestic work. These women are unsatisfied with the way the groups had been formed and the members selected.</p>	<p>Before selecting one group to focus on the learning process, we began to observe 2 existing Dasawisma groups within called <i>Semangka</i> and <i>Pisang Lilin</i>, to get more ideas and information on their strength, motivation and enthusiasm for collective action. Through several semi-structured interviews with a number of individuals in the group and also some group discussions, we decided to select A Dasawisma group called <i>Semangka</i> that appeared to be very enthusiastic and had strong motivation to work together. Even though this group has only recently been formed through a top-down process, based on our observation and information gathered, this group has good potential to link with activities at the district level, it's a formal governmental program and has its own allocated budget for the program.</p>
<p>2. Kelompok Tani Tunas Harapan (Farmer's group)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The group is an all-male village level organization that aims to help aid small farmers.</li> <li>- It is a group of 34 members of farmers in the hamlet of Sukamaju</li> <li>- It is consists of in-migrants, many of Javanese extraction, focusing on agricultural crops.</li> <li>- The group was initially formed by a group of people who have very influential positions in the community.</li> </ul>	<p>Activities conducted by this farmers group in Sukamaju were limited to daily agricultural labor. The group as an organization was kept but not active in terms of the organizational activities. Even though most of the group members felt the need to work together, however, nobody has tried to motivate the group members to act collectively as a group (<i>Kelompok Tani</i>), instead they have become more focused on individual agricultural activities. Meetings among farmers were also rarely conducted, but they often do share work (<i>gotong royong</i>) with the whole community in Sukamaju hamlet.</p>	<p>We selected this group based on their strong motivation to improve their livelihoods and enthusiasm for working together.</p>

## FINDINGS

### (A) LEARNING PROCESS THROUGH PAR

In Sungai Telang, there are currently three different *Gotong Royong* groups, with 17-40 members. Facilitated by this project, the *Gotong Royong* group A is interested in selling weavings to supplement their income. Based on the PAR process, the village facilitator began by working with the group to identify what issues they might be interested in pursuing. Through discussions and informal chats they expressed their interest in developing an activity that would produce a product with good market potential, to supplement their cash income they received from their work with the *Gotong Royong* group. Most women in this *Gotong Royong* group already weave as a regular part of their activities, making mats, baskets, and other household necessities.

The group decided that the best way to get answers to their questions would be to meet with a women's group from Baru Pelepat, a village about 5 hours away in a neighboring sub district (also the research site of CIFOR's Adaptive Collaborative Management project), who had been successful in marketing their own weavings. These women were invited to present what had worked for them and answer questions from the women from Sungai Telang. Three women from Baru Pelepat came to Sungai Telang at the end of July 2005 for one evening, and spoke with members of the *Gotong Royong* group A. Members of the other two *Gotong Royong* groups in the village were also present. A meeting to reflect on the results of this meeting and plan for future meetings is currently being planned.

As for the *Kelompok tani* (farmers group) in Sungai Telang there are two farmer groups. One group, *Maju Bersama*, focuses on rubber and other agro-forestry crops. The other group, *Sinar Harapan*, focuses on irrigated-rice agriculture. Similar with the *Gotong Royong* group, the village facilitator began by working with the group by determining together what activities or issues they might be interested in pursuing. The group was already interested in pursuing land certification. The reasons they gave included a concern about possible land conflicts, wanting to ensure that their land boundaries are stable, and that they will have a legal way for their children to inherit their land..

After expressing interest in certification, the village facilitator reflected with the group on what their initial steps might be. The group had a large number of questions about land certification that the village facilitator was not prepared to answer. Together they decided that the first step in the process would be to get information on the certification process. They invited a government official from the relevant agencies to come and answer their questions. A meeting took place and was attended by over fifty participants. With the relevant information in hand, the group reflected that they were interested in getting their land certified through PRONA (National Agrarian Program), a government program aimed to provide mass certification of lands for poor people on a low cost basis. Together they completed the application and sent it to the government office. The process is currently underway and in the recently held reflection process, the group decided to send a group member to the city to follow up on where the process has reached.

*Pelhin* as one of the identified groups was considered as a good example of collective action in Sungai Telang. They are capable of cultivate their lands collectively without any facilitation. The member relation is bounded by the work system (see description of the group in Table 2). Many years ago (20-30 years in the estimation of the village head and his wife), an all male *Pelhin* group was developed. This group followed the same rules and arrangements as the all-female group. The male group failed after a few months because, according to the village head's wife, they did not have time to trade labor and were working for cash..

Although we have chosen one group to work with in Lubuk Kambing, through the PAR learning process, in practice we couldn't work with only one group as other groups would surely be jealous. Through the facilitation of the learning process, two *Dasawisma* groups were interested in focusing on income generation efforts to supplement their cash income from agriculture using the skills they have. The *Semangka* group has decided to sell cakes, while the other group, *Pisang Lilin*, plan to raise ducks and sell the eggs in the market. These ideas derived from some of the women in the group who have experience in this field before. The village facilitator then began to work with the group on the process of how the group wanted to plan, take

action, monitor the process and reflect back of what/how the process had worked and what hadn't work and why. The groups decided to conduct a regular meeting to reflect on their activities to reach their common goals. In this process of learning with the community, the village facilitator has only one role that is to catalyze the learning process within the group. From a village workshop that we conducted in May 2005 involving both women and men, we found that the amount of time that women spend on domestic work limits their access to external information and economic sources.

However, the farmer group (*Kelompok Tani*) in Lubuk Kambing was formed when the government offered relevant programs to help the farmers. Formed by a group of influential people in the village, this elite group promised to find oil palm investors for the area for partnership cooperation. As it turned out this was never realized. Later in the future development of this group, they decided to give up on oil palm development in the area, instead they continued to work together to improve their crop yields. Most of them are farmers who live permanently in this area; while others have recently moved to this area in order to open new land.

Based on the informal discussion with a number of farmer group members, village facilitators found that the group was very seriously interested in seasonal cultivation activities on their agricultural land. For example is soya bean cultivation on ex-irrigated rice fields. For this activity, one of the farmer group members said that each member can afford to cultivate at least 1 ha of land. The group also mentioned that they will regard this as their main source of income. Most of the members of this group are new this area. Most of the lands cultivated by the farmers in Sukamaju have not yet come in to production therefore the community depends on non irrigated rice paddy fields for their main source of income.

The group found that there are challenges which need to be faced in terms of the lack of information and skills for cultivating soya beans. After reflecting on their challenges, they realized that they would need an expert on agricultural practices such as an agriculture extension to feed them with more information about good agricultural practices. Further processes were catalyzed by the village facilitator through the learning cycles. The groups have met regularly to discuss their plans and members have become more confident in discussing their plans and monitor their own progress.

## **(B) STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS**

In the daily lives of the communities there is a clear cultural differentiation between men's and women's roles. This cultural value is very influential in the division of work between women and men. The Women's Studies Encyclopedia describes gender as a cultural concept developed within the community to differentiate roles, behavior, mental and emotional characteristics between men and women. In our case this differentiation of gender roles created many forms of inequality both for men and women. Although in reality, gender inequalities such as subordination, stereotyping, marginalization, multiple burdens and violence are more often faced by women than men.

The current legal system and bureaucracy in Indonesia have also increasingly marginalized women in accessing economic sources such as land, credit and markets. For example, the banking bureaucracy is such that married women are unable to get loans without their husbands' signatures. Likewise, in the business world, women who manage businesses cannot get a company tax number and a legal permit to expand their businesses without written approval from their husband, as the 'legally responsible party' of the family. The government's policies clearly do not offer gender equity and women are continuously marginalized by their lack of access to the economic sources mentioned above

There is sometimes conflict between governmental systems in the organizing of women's lives and traditional systems. This often leads to conflict or a lack of buy-in from other women when, for instance, the village head's wife tries to run things (as she is in fact supposed to according to the governmental system). In Lubuk Kambing, the village head's wife selected members from various neighborhoods to work together, ignoring the considerable distances between their homes and resulting difficulties in meeting. In this case, the women first grumbled, and then decided, with CAPRI facilitation, to talk directly with her. The women decided to group by neighborhood, which has so far been successful. In some cases, this kind of problem can completely stop all progress toward the group's goals.

What commonly occurs in Jambi, as in other part of Indonesia, is that agricultural intensification programs only focused on male farmers. In the main, agricultural information sessions held in villages only invite 'household heads' (a term long since synonymous with 'men') to offer information and assistance programs such as agricultural loans. Whereas, in fact nearly 90% of women in these two villages (Sungai Telang and Lubuk Kambing) state that they are the ones who work most on their agricultural lands, whilst many of the men go to the forests to harvest timber for long periods (up to two or three weeks at a time) of time, leaving their fields. At those times, women are automatically responsible for all the work, both in and outside of their households. If information only reaches the men, whilst women as the key actors are not directly or actively involved, how can the targets of agricultural programs possibly be achieved? (Wiliam and Sutarti, in press).

The division of work between men and women is not only applied individually but also in groups, consciously or unconsciously. There are for example women's groups, the Family Welfare Movement (PKK) and Gotong Royong groups, and men's groups or farmer's groups (*Kelompok Tani*). This gender division reinforces the idea that there should be activities that only women do and or only men do.

In both research sites, the division of roles is male or female oriented. There is a strong tendency among the communities for the formation of single gender groups, this limits the involvemt of the opposite sex. For example women group limit men to be involved in their activities and this is also happening to the men's group.

Focusing on both women's and men's groups in the case of Sungai Telang and Lubuk Kambing, information gathered from observations and discussions revealed that women experience various types of gender inequity. It was also shown that people are still confused about the understanding of men's and women's roles in society. This confusion has been derived from the different biological characteristics of men and women which have led to common perceptions and norms that have developed in society.

Men have different social roles to women. In both villages the roles of women are seen as synonymous with domestic tasks such as cleaning the house, cooking, rearing their children etc., which are not valued as productive work, but are instead seen as a 'wife's duty'. Their lists of duties, which may run for 20 hours in a day, have put women in a weak position with regard to access to external information and economic resources with the result that these women also have a weak position in controlling, accessing and influencing decision-making processes both within the family and society. Both directly and indirectly, this has restricted development in the region and precluded women from participating effectively in the process. If the existing social structure gave more opportunities to women to participate in policy making processes, this would also ensure better use of more of the region's potential, hitherto 'buried' along with the voices of women.

The effectiveness of action approaches are founded on principles of empowerment, community control, and respect for local knowledge (Burns and Burns, 2004). Through facilitation processes, the target groups which consist of a diverse mix of women - poor people, ethnic minorities, elders, youths and others - encouraged to voice their full range of concerns through the steps of the PAR learning cycle. The use of different tools such as observation, joint walkthroughs, resource mapping, ranking exercises, group discussions, etc., not only quickly generate valid information and support analysis by stakeholders, but also are enjoyable for those involved. The processes of the learning cycles require people's awareness to listen and appreciate others' opinions, and also help bring groups together, to build trust and mutual understanding.

Through the learning process of PAR, these women have come to understand the importance of involving different stakeholders and the need for shared learning in the process of planning, action, monitoring and reflection. To facilitate and encourage local communities to implement the monitoring framework and use it as a decision-making tool, they need to be engaged as key players and develop strong ownership over the development process (Hartanto et al., 2002). In order to make sure that the process that has been conducted will sustain itself, each group developed their own indicators for monitoring to make sure that they can tell when their activities are effective. These indicators also provide sanctions to those individuals who were not committed to the common goals. Everyone in the group has an important role to play to keep the group together. The group members work together to monitor the process in a way that ensures that the work is

being done. The reflection and planning discussions during the learning process are an important opportunity to bring everybody's views into fruitful discussion and shared learning among members of the group.

In one of the discussions conducted in the village, led by the village government people and customary leader, there was some argument regarding the number of women involved in the previous discussion process. One of the members brought up this issue as they were trying to select a head for their hamlet. They began to reflect on the process of the general election where women were given space and opportunity to contribute their voice in the discussion. Through the facilitation process, it was agreed by a number of people that women should be more involved and their views heard in future discussions.

During the process, we also learned that the district and national societal policies and programs might have significant impacts on how women could better participate in decision making and how people could collectively act in the pursuit of shared interests.

First, although there has been a national policy that requires a wider participation of women in the House of Representatives, at national, provincial and district levels, we found no similar policies that provide a framework for village women to take part actively in the decision making process at this level. However, another regulation on the preparation for regional development planning seemed to offer a wider participation of stakeholders in forums that are conducted in stages.

Secondly, we found that periodic interventions made by Women Empowerment Ministry in two districts, through gender workshops and gender mainstream programs, have also to some extent influenced the way women in the village become more informed of the latest development of regulations and aware of their roles in the development. Though there might be the downside of the top-down approach applied in the ministerial programs, we believed that continued efforts from the government institutions could lead to women participating in village decision making more effectively.

Thirdly, we found that a district policy program, referred to as Productive Efforts Aid or *Bantuan Usaha Produktif (BUP)* that provides community groups with revolving funds and other assistance aimed to stimulate and enhance their productive efforts to generate income. Through our facilitation, the women's group in Sungai Telang was found to express their interest in preparing an application for BUP funding.

Fourth, though it remains to be seen whether women's participation will be strengthened, the ministerial decree has granted to individuals, cooperatives, groups and small-scale enterprises, timber utilization rights, such as:

- ◆ Improvement program for estate crops in specific areas (*P2WK*)-a district program providing revolving funds for local community groups.
- ◆ Family welfare movement (*P2WKSS/PKK*) – a district program on women empowerment effort that provides revolving funds.

## **DEVELOPMENT FROM COLLECTIVE ACTION**

We decided to investigate personal development using three different categories to analyse what characteristics of individuals could be strengthened through collective action: Personal Development, Group Development, and Other Outputs.

### **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

One of the most important aspects of using PAR was to determine if collective action could help community members increase their confidence in themselves and their abilities, and make it possible for them to pursue collective action without the help of an outside facilitator in the future. While outputs such as land certificates obtained or ducks raised are easy to quantify, determining the success or failure of improving



self-sufficiency is much harder to measure. Some of it can only be detected later, a while after the project has been completed.

The first category, personal development, that was witnessed was broken down into three subcategories based on field observation. These are:

- 1) Comfort in meeting with members of the government
- 2) Personal Motivation
- 3) Personal Commitment

At each step of the PAR process, the facilitators continuously record their observations of the group members. These were recorded in a spread sheet format that could be added to during each step of the process. Personal motivation was, of course, different for different individuals. The facilitators observed general reactions arising from the meetings and discussions, with specific examples where relevant.

### **1. Comfort in meetings with members of the district and sub-district government**

Until we began working in Sungai Telang and Lubuk Kambing, most of the village members had never gone to a government office for help. Interactions with officials occurred mainly when the latter, in particular those from the Agriculture and Forestry and Plantation department, made a visit to the village. .

During the learning cycle, the women groups were found to agree on a plan to approach government officials to seek information, financial support and, the donation of seedlings and cattle. While the village facilitator participated in a number of meetings that the goal was to plan the work to actually be done by group members. At the beginning of the process, both facilitators found it extremely difficult to persuade group members to attend meetings. The group members stated that they felt discomfort when meeting the government officials, they were shy, that they would not know what to say to government officials, and that it was the role of the head of the group to go. They were dissuaded by the amount of time would take to get to the nearest capital center of government (1.5 hours from Sungai Telang and 3.5 hours from Lubuk Kambing), and the implications that they would have to leave their work and farm. Moreover, transportation costs could have been an additional dissuading factor, although the transport cost was covered by the project.

As for men's group, the PAR process continues with facilitation, a number of small meetings within the group were conducted for planning, to take action towards what they have planned and reflection on the process. Some group members became more comfortable with visiting government officials and more confident when expressing their aspirations. A good example comes during the facilitation process with the men's group in dusun Suka Maju, Lubuk Kambing. At the beginning of facilitation process, the group's first planning session highlighted the need to get more information about the government aid program for assisting rubber sapling (P2WK) which targeted for farmers. The action to this plan would require a trip to the sub-district level to meet the government officials from the District Forestry and Estate Crops Services. The village facilitator told them that he was not willing to go alone, as this information was for the benefit of the group, he needed group members to ask their questions. After extensive discussion, the group leader was willing to meet the government officials. During the next formal reflection and planning session, he reported back the results of their discussion. He also informed us that he had numerous informal discussions with group members about how the trip had not been too intimidating. Other members of the group were convinced by the process that had not been discomfoting, many members mentioned that they were interested for the next plan that required visits to governmental officials,

Some important side notes: Despite the repeated cycle of action research the villagers have passed through, women in the group were still very reluctant to take a visit to discuss group's issues to government official directly. One particular self-confidant woman expressed her interest to meet the officials, however due to her obligations as the local school teacher that requires all day teaching, she could not take the action to meet the official. Other women said that it was more proper for the men to talk to the government officials. It is also important to note that reluctance was most strong when women asked for face to face talks to the village head, with whom there had been conflict in the past or considered culturaly inappropriate. No one was willing to meet him, whatever the topic.

## 2. Personal Motivation

Personal motivation was defined as the eagerness of each individual group member to pursue the goals of their particular campaign. Any collective action depends on the motivation of group members to accomplish the sometimes onerous tasks that are needed to get the work done. Again, this varied significantly between different members in the group.

When we began the process, certain group members were the driving force behind collective action. These leaders were clearly identifiable, while it was equally clear who was unsure about whether or not they really wanted to participate. For example during the facilitation of the women's group in Sungai Telang, the group members mentioned their motivation to form the group were driven by the need for shared work for other village members in their agricultural activities.

## 3. Personal Self Confidence

Personal self confidence was defined as the confidence of each group member has in him or herself to fulfill the group's goals. Confidence in attaining the goals is another important measure of the possible success of collective action. This includes confidence that the goals themselves are attainable and confidence that the villagers themselves have the skills needed, including the power to attain the goals.

This differed greatly among groups, depending on the end goal of collective action and the experience that they had with attempting this kind of work in the past. Some group members maintained high levels of confidence throughout the process, while others (including the village facilitator) had concerns based on certain setbacks in the process. Some group members never thought this was possible, and said so vocally at meetings. To quote one member of the Suka Maju Farmer group in Lubuk Kambing, "I swear I will eat my hand if this works! There is no way!" Generally, however, there were phases where personal confidence was stronger or weaker. In general, confidence was highest during the action phase. This may have been because during the action phase it was evident that the project was visibly moving forward. During the reflection phase, there was a general lack of confidence either because the goals of the previous action were not reached or because members found it more difficult to achieve their goals than previously expected. There was definitely far less confidence during the planning stage of the PAR process.

The level of confidence was also dependant on outside factors. The Dasawisma- Semangka in Lubuk Kambing had very little confidence in selling cakes because they could not clearly see where they would find sell them. The group trying to get land certificates in Sungai Telang, however, maintained higher levels of confidence because many of the group members had worked with the government before and had experience. The men also generally had more personal confidence than the women, when it came to their own work. As the process continued, few concrete objectives were achieved. There has been a general lack of confidence that any of the goals could be or would be achieved

## GROUP DEVELOPMENT

Group development is analyzed through different forms of trust.

### *Trust in reaching common goals*

In the case of Sungai Telang, several members of the group believe that they will be able to reach their common goals if they act together or collectively. A sense of trust started to build within the group as more members became more optimistic about reaching their common goals, however there are still some who are pessimistic.

### *Trust and leadership;*

The trust of the group's members in their leader was evident at the beginning of our facilitation process. It appears that the groups members completely trust their leader. However, as the learning process continues

some members have began to loose faith in their leader. There is an assumption that social jealousy is the reason for this

*Trust within the group*

At the beginning of the process of facilitation, it was shown that there was a common trust among the team. Later this changed as jealousies arose and some people became more confident in speaking in public.

**COMMUNITY-WIDE DEVELOPMENT**

There have been some changes in the way members involved in the process of PAR address problems collectively. The group began to learn how to make plans and to undertake a collective learning process through implementation of the plans and the phase of reflection.

An example of this has come from the Sungai Telang case, the emerging issue arose when the community expressed their needs for a high school for their children in the village. One of the concerns related to this was the need to obtain certified land on which to build the school. The many questions regarding land certification encouraged the community to seek more information on the possibility of obtaining certification for private farm land. They indicated that they were interested in the certification issuance on their land because the land available for the next generation in the village is diminishing. “Many young married couples do not have land, and must therefore open new land, often far away and difficult to reach” said one of the community member when facilitator had an informal chat during a community meeting in the village.

After a series of visits made by members of the community and the village facilitator to the district agencies to find further information on the procedure for land certification and requirements to be fulfilled, it was then agreed to hold a village meeting to get clearer ideas of what land certification is. The meeting took place and was attended by representatives from the district agencies such as the national land agency (*BPN*), the forestry agency (*Dishutbun*), the regional planning agency (*BAPPEDA*) and the community of Sungai Telang, both men and women. The process also attracted other community members from neighboring villages who were interested to learn more about land certification.

The process of discussion went well, many questions ranging from very basic issues such as what is certification to more complicated ones for example the procedure and price for land certification were answered by various government officials as well as the agricultural extension workers. Villagers were also updated on recent policies and regulations on lands. The community felt the benefit of this discussion and considered it as a good opportunity to clarify matters related to land ownerships. This process has been followed up by the group sending a proposal for mass land-certification through the Indonesian Agrarian National Program (*PRONA*). Currently, the process is still on going.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

The research has confirmed the ealier studies’s findings that the PAR approach has offered a suitable tool to encourage commonly excluded groups such as women and the marginalized, to speak out and become confident in expressing their opinions and be courageous in interacting with other stakeholders.

In order to avoid elite capture, it is not enough to have current vehicles for stakeholder participation in decision making, most of which are through formal mechanisms. Continued interaction among stakeholders should be made through facilitated meetings to deliberate issues on governance systems and options for preventing the elite from taking advantage for their own interests.

The communities started to become more critical of their own leadership. One example of this was when the head of the village kept stalling the signing of an application letter to be submitted to the district government, for a grant under the improvements program called Estate Crops in Specific Areas (*P2WK*). The community showed a greater recognition and displeasure with the village head’s inappropriate behavior than they would

have previously, and tried various means to overcome the problem---from simple nagging, to complaints at the next governmental level, to a complaint to the district head.

Women are often marginalized and separated from community and district decision making. This is partially due to their lack of access to information and to their packed daily work schedule. The community appreciated the project's information sharing and group discussions about gender roles.

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