Village Conservation Program: Community Readiness Assessment and Strategies Arrangement

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Abstract: This paper presents the results of a baseline study on community empowerment plans through the Conservation Village scheme. Data were collected through key respondent interviews and Focus Group Discussion in Kampung Meranti, Minas Jaya-Siak Village, Riau Province, Indonesia from February to June 2017. This study aims to determine the level of community readiness in implementing the conservation village program and to develop an implementation strategy based on internal environmental analysis and external conditions. Result of study get value of readiness of society is at level 4, that is in Preplanning Stage. The result of SWOT analysis shows that the value of the strength element possessed by the prospective community is greater than the value of the weakness element; And the element of opportunity gets a value greater than the value of the threat element. Thus, an appropriate option for the development of a conservation village program is the S-O, S-T and W-O strategies.

Keywords: Community readiness, Conservation Village, SWOT analysis

1. Introduction

In Riau Province, Indonesia, there are several conservation areas that are currently deforested and degraded due to encroachment, illegal logging, forest fires, and other problems. One of them is the Great Forest Park (TAHURA) Sutan Syarif Hasyim (SSH). Most of the land cover has been turned into oil palm plantations and a small part has become a critical land. Based on Minister of Forestry Decree No. 348/KPTS/II/ 1999, the total area of TAHURA SSH forest is around 6,172 ha, but currently only 2,087 ha of forested area. According to Dev Roy, people living adjacent to the forests admitted their illegal access due to a lack of alternative economic opportunities. One of the villages directly adjacent to TAHURA SSH is Kampung Meranti Minas Jaya Urban Village Minas Sub-District Siak District. The population of Kampung Meranti is about 750 families, where there are already some farmer groups. Last February, 2017, the community service team communicated with representatives from five farmer groups, we offered them the Conservation Village program. The program aims to (1) improve the condition of the watershed while enhancing the growth of rural economy and the income of community groups through the activities of various conservation-based forestry enterprises, and (2) empowering the community groups in various conservation-based forestry business both institutional and business capabilities.

Based on the experience of village conservation program implementation in the villages around Bukit Barisan Selatan Selatan Lampung National Park, Ristianasari et al. Reported that community empowerment of conservation village model tends to decrease forest destructive community activity. Similarly, Suhendri in his research in Gunung Palung National Park, West Kalimantan.

In other words Sarkar and Dev Roy state that people are more oriented towards conservation provided alternative livelihood opportunities are available. Regarding on experience in mangrove forest restoration program in Karawang, Indonesia, Randy et al. Stated that the collaboration between the private sector, local government and the community is an important factor in the success of the program. While Brooks et al. and Brooks suggest that program design, particularly capacity building for local communities, local participation, environmental education, and programming times are

highly positively correlated with success. These aspects can strengthen the community's ability to participate in program management, take advantage of opportunities, respond to change, and adapt from time to time. In addition, several characteristics of local communities, such as ownership and cultural regimes that support and institutional, play an important role for success.

This study is the initial stage of community service plan that will be done to the community in the Meranti Village. The study aims to find out the level of community readiness in implementing the conservation village program. Because, to successfully implement community efforts, it is valuable to assess the level of community readiness to address some issues. The second, to arrange the implementation strategy based on the analysis of internal environment and external conditions (SWOT). The SWOT analysis provides helpful information for a defining management strategies to assure conservation program.

2. Method

This sudy was conducted in February until June 2017. The location of research in Minas Jaya Village, Minas Sub-District, Siak District. This study uses a Community Readiness (CR) Model to measure the readiness of the community of prospective participants of the Conservation Village program. CR is the degree to which a community is willing and prepared to take action on an issue. The CR Model defines 9 stages of readiness. Those are from the lowest to the highest order: No Awareness, Denial/Resistance, Vague Awareness, Preplanning, Preparation, Initiation, Stabilization, Expansion/ Confirmation, and Community Ownership [13]. CM is composed of five dimensions or aspects that can help guide the community in moving their readiness levels forward. Those dimensions are: Community Knowledge of Efforts, Leadership, Community Climate, Community Knowledge of the Issue, and Resources. Each dimension will receive a CM score. Each dimension can be at a different readiness level, vary from 1 to 9.

Key informants were chosen purposively by 3 people from four farmer group members, namely Siak Cerdas Farmer Group, Cahaya Meranti Farmer Group, Tunas Maju Farmer Group, and Meranti Sejahtera Farmer Group. The average number of members of the four farmer groups is 15 people. Interviews were conducted to supplement data that could not be obtained through the distribution of questionnaires. Next we do Focus Group Discussion (FGD) for SWOT analysis. SWOT analysis is performed to identify the positives and negatives inside the community (S-W) and outside of it, in the external environment (O-T).

3. Result and Discussion

The results of the measurement of community readiness based on the questionnaire data that filled by 12 key informants shown in table 1.

Tabel 1. Community Readiness Score

Interview Number	**Knowledge of Efforts**	**Leadership**	**Community Climate**	**Knowledge of Issue**	**Resources**
R1	6	5	5	3	4
R2	5	5	5	4	3
R3	4	4	4	4	3
R4	4	5	4	4	5
R5	4	4	4	4	3
R6	5	4	3	4	4
R7	3	3	3	3	5
R8	4	4	6	4	3
R9	4	4	4	2	3
R10	3	5	5	3	3
R11	5	4	5	4	5
R12	5	6	4	4	3
Average	**4.33**	**4.42**	**4.33**	**3.58**	**3.67**
Overall Community Readiness Score					**4.06**

Based on table 1 above the Community Knowledge of Efforts score is 4.33. The score is in the range of the Preplanning Stage. It can be interpreted that a few community members have heard of local efforts and are familiar with the purpose of the efforts. The Leadership score is 4.42. The score is in the range of the Preplanning Stage. It can be interpreted that a few leaderships believe that this issue is a concern in the community and that some type of effort is needed to address it. The Community Climate score is 4.33. The score is in the range of the Preplanning Stage. It can be interpreted that some community members believe that this issue is a concern in the community and that some type of effort is needed to address it.

The Community Knowledge of Issue score is 3.58. The score is in the range of the Vague Awareness stage. It can be interpreted that some community members have heard of the issue, but little else. Among some community members, there may be misconceptions about the issue. Community members may be somewhat aware that the issue occurs locally. The Resources is 3.67. The score is in the range of the Vague Awareness stage. It can be interpreted that there are limited resources (such as a community room) identified that could be used for further efforts to address the issue. It can be interpreted that there are limited resources (such as a community room) identified that could be used for further efforts to address the issue.

For overall CR score is 4.06. The score is in the range of the Preplanning Stage. It can be intrepreted that there is clear recognition on the part of at least some that there is a local problem and that something should be done about it. There are identifiable leaders, and there may even be a committee, but efforts are not focused or detailed. There is discussion but no real planning of actions to address the problem. Communiyy climate is beginning to acknowledge the necessity of dealing with the problem. Stanley explain it with the following points: (1) Some community members have at least

heard about local efforts, but know little about them; (2) Leadership and community members acknowledge that this issue is a concern in the community and that something has to be done to address it; (3) Community members have limited knowledge about the issue' (4) There are limited resources that could be used for further efforts to address the issue . It can be represented in an expression "This is important. What can we do?" .

Some actions that can be done for raising CR levels at Preplanning Stage are: (a) Introduce information about issue through presentations/media; (b) Review the existing efforts in community (activities) to determine who benefits and the degree of success; (c) Conduct local focus groups to discuss issues and develop strategies; and (d) Increase media exposure through public service announcements and other forms of social media.

SWOT analysis results are presented in table 2 below. In table 2 it can be seen that the total score of strength factor is 1,712, while the total score of weakness elements is 1.377. The score indicates that the elements of strengths possessed by the community of prospective participants of the Conservation Village program is more dominant than the weakness. Furthermore in the same table it can be seen that the total score of opportunity elements is 1,959, while the number for threat elements is 1,367. The score shows that the odds factor is more dominant than the threat factor. Based on the results of the identification of the factors of strength, weakness, opportunities and subsequent threats can be formulated strategies to implement the Village Conservation program.

S-O Strategy

1. Encouraging participants, in particular their leaders, to be more proactive in cooperating with the government through FMU Minas Tahura and various parties in the development of Conservation Villages, including in securing the conservation areas of SSH Forest Park (S1, S2, S5, S6, O1, O2, O3, O4, O5).
2. Facilitating the establishment of field schools for participants' learning (S2, S3, O1, O2, O3, O4).
3. Leveraging the experience of farming, breeding and fish farming for further development of farming in integrated agroforestry systems (S4; O1, O2, O5).

S-T Strategy

1) Selecting one of the sub programs of the agroforestry program to create a quick win to build the confidence of the members (S1, S2, S5, S6, W1).
2) Creating MoU between FMU Minas Tahura management with the participating community in securing the conservation area of SSH Forest Park (S1, S5, S6, W2).
3) Involve students and local youth in specific activities of the Conservation Village development (S5, S6: T3).
4) Collecting references and drawing experiences from outside communities in overcoming wild pigs and monkeys (S3; W4).
5) Develop a comprehensive security system with strong support and facilities (S6, T5).

W-O Strategy

1) To mediate and enhance the capacity of participating communities regarding cooperation and expanding the network with other parties (W1; O5).
2) Improve the understanding and skills of participating communities on Conservation Villages, agroforestry, pest, and disease management through counseling and training (W2, W3, W4, O2, O3, O5 and O6).

3) Improving the ability of farmer groups in planning and administration and the preparation of written norms through training (W5, W6, O1, O2, O5).

4) Improve the bargaining position of participating communities through training and establishment of joint marketing institutions (W7; O4, O5).

The W-T strategy was not made considering it is less relevant to this case. Namely from the identification of internal and external elements, the strengths and opportunities owned by the community are considered will be able to overcome the weakness and threats that exist. Thus, the choice of relevant strategies according to the order of priority is the strategy of S-O, S-T, and W-O. Before the implementation of the above strategy is implemented, there are some research results that can be used as consideration. For example, Karki states that effective biodiversity protection and improved human welfare as 'win-win' situations have been the foundation for protected areas and conservation incentives. Her research explored whether Nepal's Bardia National Park and its conservation incentives have contributed to the sustainable livelihoods of households and rural communities surrounding the park.

Differential impacts of conservation incentives showed that Compensatory and incentive-based programmes (IBPs) had improved the livelihoods of few households and households recognized benefits in the form of wider societal development rather than individual benefits. The impact on household livelihoods depended on site-specific factors such as the availability of resources, the characteristics of conservation incentives, and the nature of environmental-livelihood patterns and interactions. As financing in the form of development projects continues to flow from organizations to the communities, it is important that a detailed livelihood planning focuses on the capacity building of rural communities is included in the park management plans. Livelihood planning must include a clear linkage between livelihood enhancing activities and conservation programmes, incorporated in building social capital through the trust with the park management, and address the needs of people to secure participation and sustainability of the IBPs.

In community capacity issues, Fischer and McKee elucidate how organizational, infrastructural and personal capacities of the community interacted, and leads to three major findings. First, interactions between capitals and capacities are crucial to a comprehensive understanding of a community's situation, but tend to be understudied. Second, capacities can not only be 'low', but they can also be negative (thus not only neutral but outright destructive), and extremely hard to overcome through standard approaches to capacity building. And third, in our study case, 'social capacities' that emerged from people's experiences of social interactions acted as powerful microstructures that constrained individuals' abilities to engage in community action.

Finally, Abdul Wahid provides useful supplies of the important things that should be avoided when we work in community development programs. He stated that individuals in a community might not get along well because of conflicts or have opposite arguments that can constrain community empowerment. Favoritisms of local officials impede the community empowerment by not taking into account the view of the community, by preferring personal networks. If the individual in a community does not have a common identity, then they will not cooperate in a real sense and may have conflicting views about a single problem. Trust, social relationships, lack of facilitating institutions, lack of financial and human resources can reduce the effectiveness of community-led initiatives.

4. Conclusion

Community Readiness assessment result is at level 4, that is in Preplanning Stage. While the results of SWOT analysis, score elements of strength owned by the prospective community is greater than the value of elements of weaknesses; And the opportunity element scores greater than the value of threat elements. Thus, a suitable option for the conservation village program development is the S-O, S-T and W-O strategies.

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